

1 **CITY OF SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO**

2 **RESOLUTION NO. 2025-53**

3 **INTRODUCED BY:**

4
5 Councilor Carol Romero-Wirth

6 Councilor Jamie Cassutt

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10 **A RESOLUTION**

11 **DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO WORK WITH THE SANTA FE RIVER**
12 **COMMISSION AND RELEVANT CITY OF SANTA FE STAFF TO ANALYZE AND, IF**
13 **FEASIBLE, RE-ESTABLISH RIVER FLOWS THROUGH THE PREDEVELOPMENT**
14 **PATH OF THE SANTA FE RIVER FROM BELOW NICHOLS RESERVOIR TO CERRO**
15 **GORDO ROAD; CONTRACT FOR A COMPREHENSIVE ENGINEERING ANALYSIS**
16 **OF THE TWO MILE POND COMPLEX; DESIGN AND ESTABLISH NEW**
17 **INFRASTRUCTURE AS NEEDED; COLLABORATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO**
18 **DETERMINE THE MOST APPROPRIATE LONG-TERM CONDITION FOR THE**
19 **RIVER CORRIDOR; AND PROVIDE PUBLIC EDUCATION ABOUT THE SANTA FE**
20 **RIVER TARGET FLOW ORDINANCE.**

21
22 **WHEREAS**, the City formalized its commitment to restoring the Santa Fe River as a
23 “living river” by adopting Ordinance 2012-10, which established Article 25-13, SFCC 1987, the
24 “Santa Fe River Target Flow Ordinance”; and

25 **WHEREAS**, the Governing Body adopted *Administrative Procedures for the Santa Fe*

1 *River Target Flows Ordinance*, in Resolution 2012-28, which guide the implementation of target
2 flows and adaptive river management for enhanced ecological and cultural resources management
3 and equity for downstream users; and

4 **WHEREAS**, water utility infrastructure including dams, pipes, and diversions has
5 impacted the river corridor from below Nichols Reservoir to Cerro Gordo Road since 1881, and
6 has diverted the majority of river flows out of the predevelopment channel since the 1890s; and

7 **WHEREAS**, beginning in late 2025, a new connection from Nichols Reservoir to Canyon
8 Road Water Treatment Plant will be completed, rendering obsolete several key pieces of
9 infrastructure in the corridor and freeing the City to consider restoring the river to its approximate
10 predevelopment course from below Nichols Reservoir to Cerro Gordo Road; and

11 **WHEREAS**, consistent with the intent of the Santa Fe River Target Flow Ordinance to
12 restore the Santa Fe River as a living river, the City is committed to reestablishing water flow
13 through the approximate course of the predevelopment Santa Fe River from below Nichols
14 Reservoir to Cerro Gordo Road to create a free-flowing and functional riparian corridor; and

15 **WHEREAS**, well-informed decisions regarding infrastructure modifications are crucial to
16 realizing the goal of a free-flowing river while maintaining public safety and ensuring responsible
17 resource management without significantly diminishing flow downstream.

18 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE GOVERNING BODY OF**
19 **THE CITY OF SANTA FE** directs the City Manager and/or the River Commission, as applicable,
20 to take the following steps:

- 21 1) Work with staff to re-establish Santa Fe River flow through the predevelopment path
22 of the Santa Fe River from below Nichols Dam to Cerro Gordo Road. This restoration
23 will be pursued to the extent feasible, consistent with sound engineering practices,
24 acceptable financial impact, and applicable legal requirements, and shall not cause
25 measurable diminishment of downstream flows. This effort shall remain fully

1 consistent with the Santa Fe River Target Flow Ordinance and its administrative
2 framework, including the use of up to one thousand (1,000) acre-feet per year for
3 bypass flows to the Santa Fe River below Nichols Reservoir to support ecological and
4 community objectives throughout the entire river corridor.

5 2) Work with the Public Works and Public Utilities Departments or a qualified consultant
6 to conduct a comprehensive engineering analysis of the riparian corridor from Nichols
7 Reservoir to the confluence below Cerro Gordo Road. This evaluation will determine
8 the purpose and current need for each structure in the corridor, assess its condition and
9 structural integrity, determine whether any features pose barriers to achieving a free-
10 flowing river, and recommend modifications or removal. This analysis shall also
11 include, but not be limited to:

- 12 a. Hydrologic and hydraulic analysis to investigate restored channel flow
13 capacity and potential impacts of riparian channel restoration on downstream
14 river flows.
- 15 b. Geotechnical investigations to assess soil stability and foundation conditions
16 including design requirements to accommodate flow through the region
17 occupied by the former remnants of the Two Mile Reservoir and flow through
18 a modified culvert system beneath Cerro Gordo Road.
- 19 c. Sediment transport analysis to understand current and potential sediment
20 movement.
- 21 d. Ecological assessments to evaluate existing riparian and wetland habitat and
22 potential benefits and impacts of a restored channel, including downstream
23 effects, as well as identifying potential impacts of increased flows through the
24 restored channel.

- 1 e. Financial evaluation for feasibility and prudence of options consistent with
2 applicable state law.

3 The City shall integrate the results of the analyses by applying the hydrologic
4 benchmarks and adaptive strategies outlined in the Administrative Procedures for
5 Santa Fe River Target Flows, previously adopted in Resolution 2012-28.

- 6 3) Design and establish new river infrastructure. Where appropriate and feasible based on
7 the engineering analysis, the City Manager or designee shall work with City staff to
8 design and implement new infrastructure to support a restored and free-flowing Santa
9 Fe River. This work may include, but not be limited to the following:

10 a. Constructing culverts, bridges, or other crossings to accommodate natural flow
11 regimes.

12 b. Implementing bank stabilization measures to protect infrastructure and
13 enhance riparian habitat.

14 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City shall collaborate and engage with
15 stakeholders throughout the above processes, including but not limited to The Nature Conservancy,
16 Randall Davey Audubon Center, Santa Fe County, the United States Forest Service, affected Tribal
17 entities, acequias, State and federal regulators, and other members of the Santa Fe community,
18 including residents from all parts of the city, with the goal of determining the most appropriate
19 long-term condition for the river corridor. Public outreach shall also include public education about
20 the Santa Fe River Target Flow Ordinance and its role in supporting a living river and also include
21 public education about the Santa Fe River Target Flow Ordinance and its role in supporting a living
22 river.

23 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that principles of feasibility and long-term sustainability,
24 taking into account ecological value, water resource management, financial viability, and public
25 safety shall guide all planning, analysis, and implementation of the items above.

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PASSED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED this 27th day of August, 2025.


Alan Webber (Aug 28, 2025 15:48:54 MDT)
ALAN WEBBER, MAYOR

ATTEST:


ANDREA SALAZAR (Aug 28, 2025 16:22:29 MDT)
ANDRÉA SALAZAR, CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Erin McSherry (Aug 28, 2025 14:50:00 MDT)
ERIN K. McSHERRY, CITY ATTORNEY