

PARCIANTE ADVISORY
MARCH 2020

MAYORDOMO:

Michael Martinez, who served as our Mayordomo for the past several years has resigned effective immediately. The Commission thanks Michael for a job well done and wishes him well in his future endeavors! Michael's departure was discussed at our recent special meeting and parcientes present were encouraged to consider this position or perhaps suggest someone who might want to assume the duties. To date, we have not been notified of anyone who would consider this opportunity.

Until then, Commission Chairman, Ron Gallegos, has offered to be our unpaid Mayordomo. The Commission has agreed that Ron will hire Daniel Corona to perform the day-to-day duties of managing the acequia. Daniel will be paid \$900 per month. Daniel, with Ron's supervision, will perform the routine duties of assuring that water is available to all parcientes in an orderly fashion. With Ron's consent, he will make a watering schedule as needed, and will be authorized to remove pumps from the acequia that are used by non-paying parcientes or non-parcientes not authorized to take water. Daniel will inform Ron of all instances of interference and obstruction by parcientes not conforming to an orderly operation of the acequia and Ron will act accordingly in the best interest of the acequia. Ernie will also be available to assist Ron when needed. We ask that Daniel be respected and appreciated for his work as it benefits all of us. If we all get along, we will have a successful watering season. Daniel can be reached by phone at 505-692-8509.

FEE INCREASE:

Because the acequia does not have an emergency fund to deal with out of the ordinary expenses, and mostly because the acequia faces an unknown fate of possibly having to return as much as \$29,000 to the State of New Mexico (more to be discussed about this below), we were compelled to ask the membership for a fee increase. After proper public notice of a proposed fee increase, the membership voted on February 23, 2020, to raise the fees paid by parcientes to \$45 for the first acre or part thereof, and \$40 for every other acre or part thereof. This fee increase is still less costly than what parcientes on some surrounding acequias pay. The need to raise fees was not considered lightly and was done only because of necessity. This increase has become effective with the enclosed billing.

ONE-TIME AMNESTY:

On February 23, 2020, the membership also approved a one-time amnesty program whereby parcientes who have continually failed to pay their fees are given a one-time opportunity to pay their arrearages without having to pay accrued interest. This is a program we hope parcientes view as a good opportunity to catch up on their bill without paying interest. In many cases, the savings can be significant. However, this program expires on April 30, 2020. Accounts not paid in full by this date will have their balances revert to their full amount due on May 1, 2020. The amount due on your attached bill represents your current balance with amnesty provisions built in. This program is not anticipated to be repeated again. Please take advantage of this money saving opportunity.

AUDIT FINDINGS:

Upon taking office in December, 2016, the current Commission learned that our acequia was not in good standing with the New Mexico State Auditor's Office because some tier (income) reports for past years had not been submitted as required. Upon submitting these reports, it was determined by the State Auditor that we had to hire an approved auditor to audit capital outlay monies the acequia had received in 2011 and early 2016. These monies were basically grants from the State Engineer's Office to our acequia for needed improvements. After the audit was completed, the auditor determined that the acequia needed to return over \$29,000 to the State Engineer's Office because some of the monies were not used for the intended purposes. After learning this, the Commission spent countless hours reviewing and scrutinizing the audit. We found that some documents asking for money from the State Engineer's Office for work completed didn't correspond with what was actually done. However, we did determine that the money received did in fact pass through the acequia's bank account for acequia expenses. Although the money was not spent precisely on point, it was nonetheless spent on acequia improvements as best we could tell. Consequently, the question remains, what is the State Engineer's Office going to ask us to do; pay the money back or not? We have asked them to forgive the debt, or allow us to pay in installments if possible.

Although the Commission's initial findings were presented to the State Engineer's Office over 2 years ago, we still have not heard from them regarding what action they will take. We have been in constant contact with them during the entire time and have repeatedly asked that they make a decision. Though the Commission is deeply disturbed with the lack of action on the part of the State Engineer's Office, we are essentially at their mercy.

In the interim, the Commission was awarded a \$90,000 capital outlay grant in 2019 for badly needed acequia improvements. However, the State Engineer's Office has made it clear to us that we cannot access that money until they make a decision on monies we purportedly owe.

PARCIANTE PARTICIPATION:

Over the years, parciante participation at meetings has been meager at best. We continue to ask parciantes to look for public notices of meetings and to come to our meetings. Many insightful topics and ideas are discussed that affect this historical acequia. Please remember that the acequia has been here for your ancestors and will hopefully be here for your great grandchildren. It represents a way of life that not many communities can cherish. Please participate to perpetuate this wonderful blessing!

ELECTIONS:

Annual election of Commissioners will be held in December at the annual membership meeting. One or more current Commissioners will likely not seek re-election. The duties of Commissioners are many and time consuming but rewarding all the same. Please get involved; we all have an obligation to carry on our culture and communal way of life.

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