



Mike Neas is a property owner in the Wild River Section of the Rio Chama directly west of Navajo Peak and adjacent to the Rio Chama Wilderness Study Area.

To the Interim Water & Natural Resources Committee,

As a property owner in some of New Mexico's most beautiful wild country, I am always watchful for activities or circumstances that might jeopardize this wild place. My land is in the River Canyon and not above the canyon rim where for the past 2 years there has been a threat of a toxic pesticide spraying for a grasshopper infestation that has never been verified.

I spend roughly one half of an eight month period hiking and exploring this entire area of the Rio Chama drainage. I often cover 15 miles in a day on foot and more by bike. I have floated the Rio Chama probably 50 times. For decades I have walked and ridden the entire area where APHIS proposed to spray toxic pesticide treatments that would have been far more harmful to all life in the area and downstream than it would have been beneficial. In fact a better and proper management of the BLM lands where APHIS proposed to spray would be the best practice and use of public funds. Overgrazing is rampant in the area and overgrazing is a cause for grasshopper infestations and detrimental to all plant and wildlife of the area. To compound the overgrazing with pesticide spray is continuing in a downward spiral.

I consider myself a river keeper. The Rio Chama and the watershed is a portion of the source water system for 600,000 water users. I have spoken before the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA), Water Protection Advisory Board many times regarding my concerns for the water and water shed upstream. I have spoken at the NM Legislature and before the Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) regarding dangers to our water. These are not limited to Produced Water and forest neglect.

We are too slowly becoming aware that there is a danger to all life from the indiscriminant use of pesticides.

All members of the Water and Natural Resources Interim Committee should be concerned about the way that APHIS improperly attempted an aerial spray which would affect all life in the area and beyond.

Please recommend that pesticide spraying by all parties be greatly curtailed at least here in New Mexico. Protect our birds, bees, butterflies and all from needless toxic waste.

Thank You

Mike Neas
River Canyon

