



# Communicating Outcomes

## *Collaboration leads to water conservation*

Sunny skies and cool weather greeted project participants as they arrived at the fourth annual Rio Grande Basin Initiatives (RGBI) Conference, April 12-14, 2005, in Alpine. It was a productive week that provided numerous discussions on local water issues, agency reports, and Task Group breakout sessions and concurrent Task Group reports.

The RGBI is a federally funded effort involving Experiment Station researchers and Extension educators from both Texas and New Mexico. The project partners with a number of other state and federal agencies to enhance water conservation programs. The purpose for the initiative is to develop and adapt water conservation practices through research, and then through Extension education, to implement water-saving practices. Primarily, the project

focuses on irrigation efficiency in both agricultural and urban areas.

RGBI project participants from New Mexico State University (NMSU) and Texas Agricultural Experiment Station and Texas Cooperative Extension attended the meeting as well as participants of new projects from the Texas State University System (TSUS) and the University of Texas (UT). This three-day event brought together project administrators, state and federal agency partners, irrigation district managers, Extension agents and specialists, and Experiment Station researchers.

“A wealth of information is being developed, not only by ourselves, but collaboratively with a number of others involved,” said B. L. Harris, Project Manager of the Rio Grande Basin


Initiative and associate director of the Texas Water Resources Institute.

The purpose of this conference was to put all three of the separately funded projects together to discuss methods and ways to collaborate and cooperate, and to prevent unnecessary duplication, Harris said. The conference brought together several RGBI Task Groups for annual reporting of significant accomplishments and joint planning for future efforts. Peer and merit reviews evaluated on-going activities, and participants discussed partnership opportunities with federal and state agencies for both Texas and New Mexico.

“Obviously one of the principal themes over the past few days and life of the project has been collaboration, collaboration, collaboration,” said Craig Runyan, Water Quality and RGBI Program Coordinator for NMSU, during closing remarks. “It’s meaningful and it’s helped a lot. It’s certainly helped our water program at NMSU. Collaboration isn’t something new to us. Institutionally, professionally, career-wise, that’s what we do—we collaborate.”

The cooperation between the universities and the interaction with those universities, stakeholders, and other agencies has given us an institutional capacity to keep this project relevant, Runyan said.

The RGBI is in its fourth year and continues to work toward the common goal, conserving the water in the Rio Grande Basin.

For conference presentations and reports, go to: <http://riogrande.tamu.edu>. 

## Live, Learn and Thrive

### *RGBI team award presented at NMSU ceremony*

by Danielle Supercinski

Rio Grande Basin Initiative (RGBI) participants received the Team Award from New Mexico State University (NMSU) on April 21, 2005, during the NMSU Live, Learn and Thrive awards convocation.

New Mexico efforts are led by Craig Runyan, coordinator for NMSU project efforts, and assisted by Leeann DeMouche. Runyan, DeMouche and 40 other members of the RGBI received this award for demonstrating the power of team action in achieving significant water savings in agricultural irrigation and in addressing community water needs. Other partners who also received this award were B. L. Harris, Sterling Grogan, Gary Esslinger, and Subas Shah.

The RGBI is a joint project involving NMSU and The Texas A&M University System agencies, Texas Cooperative Extension and Texas Agricultural Experiment Station. It is a federally funded effort through the Cooperative Research, Education and Extension Services. The project partners with a number of other state and federal agencies, including Elephant Butte Irrigation District and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District in New Mexico.



(From left to right) Leeann DeMouche, Bill Harris, Craig Runyan, and Gary Esslinger were all present to receive the RGBI Team Award for their collaborative efforts in water conservation and efficiency.