

What to do when a small community runs dry

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The logo for the El Creston Mutual Domestic Water Consumers' Association is located in the bottom left corner. It consists of a dark brown square with a white curved shape at the bottom left. The text "El Creston" is in a large, bold, white font, and "Mutual Domestic Water Consumers' Association" is in a smaller, white font below it.

El Creston
Mutual Domestic
Water Consumers'
Association

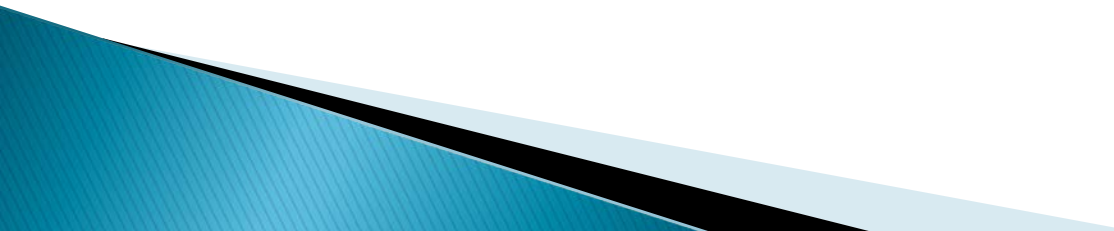


**DON'T
PANIC**

Call RCAC!



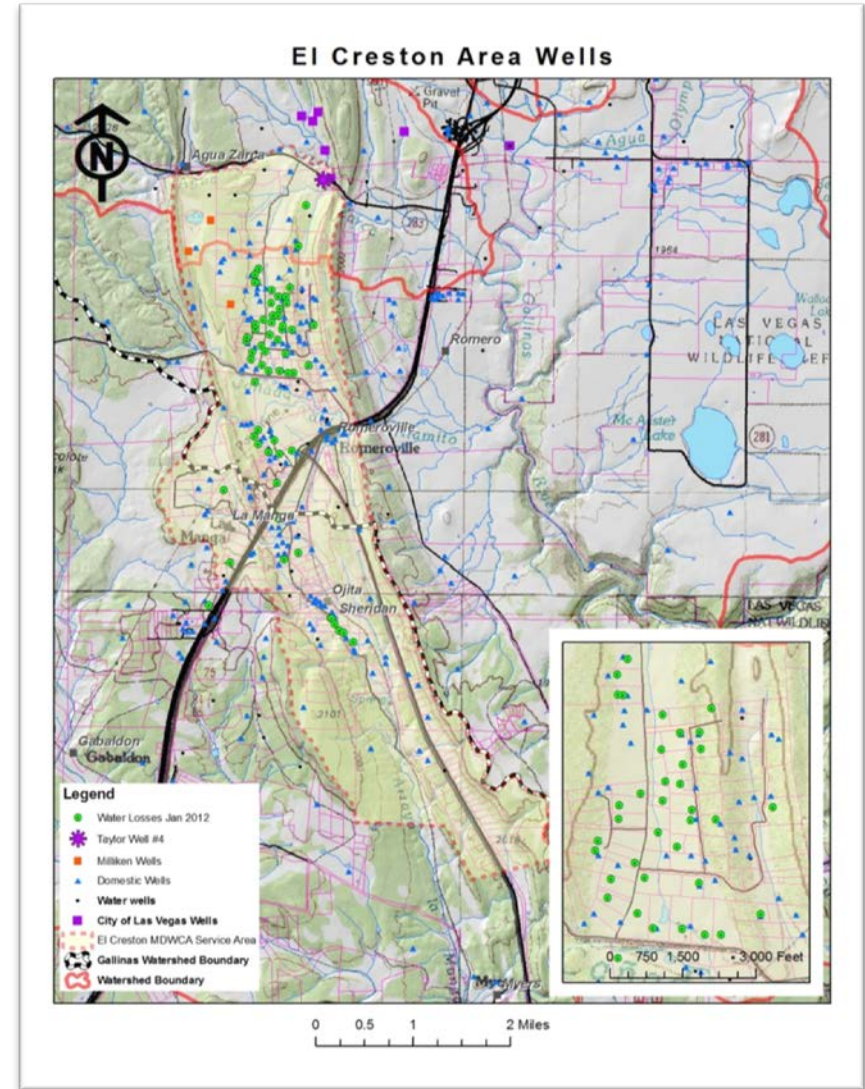
Three themes

- ▶ Plan ahead
 - ▶ Work together
 - ▶ Respect and help your neighbors
- 

El Creston MDWCA

Who we are:

- ▶ Six unincorporated communities and subdivisions SW of Las Vegas
- ▶ Approx 11 sq mi
- ▶ Approx 300 homes, 400 parcels, 200 domestic wells



El Creston MDWCA

What happened:

- ▶ 2009, domestic wells began running dry
 - Drought
 - Large concentration of homes/wells
 - Intensive pumping of nearby municipal well

Initial community response:

- ▶ Anger, panic, confusion
- ▶ Blame

Initial government response

- ▶ Blame, finger-pointing

El Creston Response

- ▶ Anger, confusion, blame...
- ▶ Got organized (reorganized)
- ▶ Asked for help
 - RCAC ♥
 - Elected officials
 - State and federal agencies
 - Neighbors
- ▶ Stopped the blame game
- ▶ Listened and acted on good advice
- ▶ Education and outreach to the community



El Creston Response (cont'd)

- ▶ Started water-hauling service
 - BOF Loan
- ▶ Jumped on the planning/funding train
 - NMFA Planning grant
 - USDA, CDBG, WTB...
 - PER, EA, plans/design...
- ▶ Maintained momentum

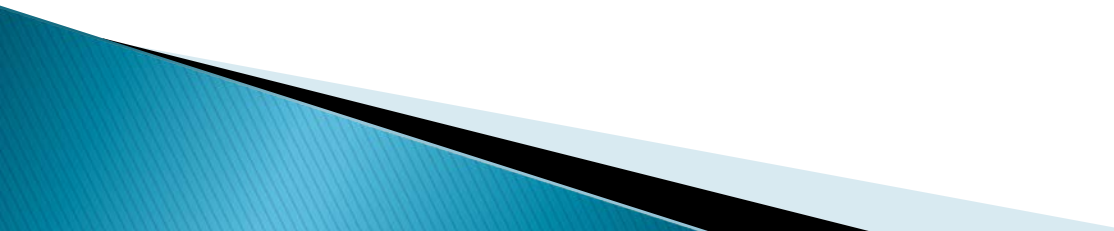


What we learned

- ▶ Listen to the experts
- ▶ Be creative
- ▶ Be persistent
- ▶ Be *impatient*
- ▶ Bureaucrats really are people and they really want to help
- ▶ We are the experts on our community

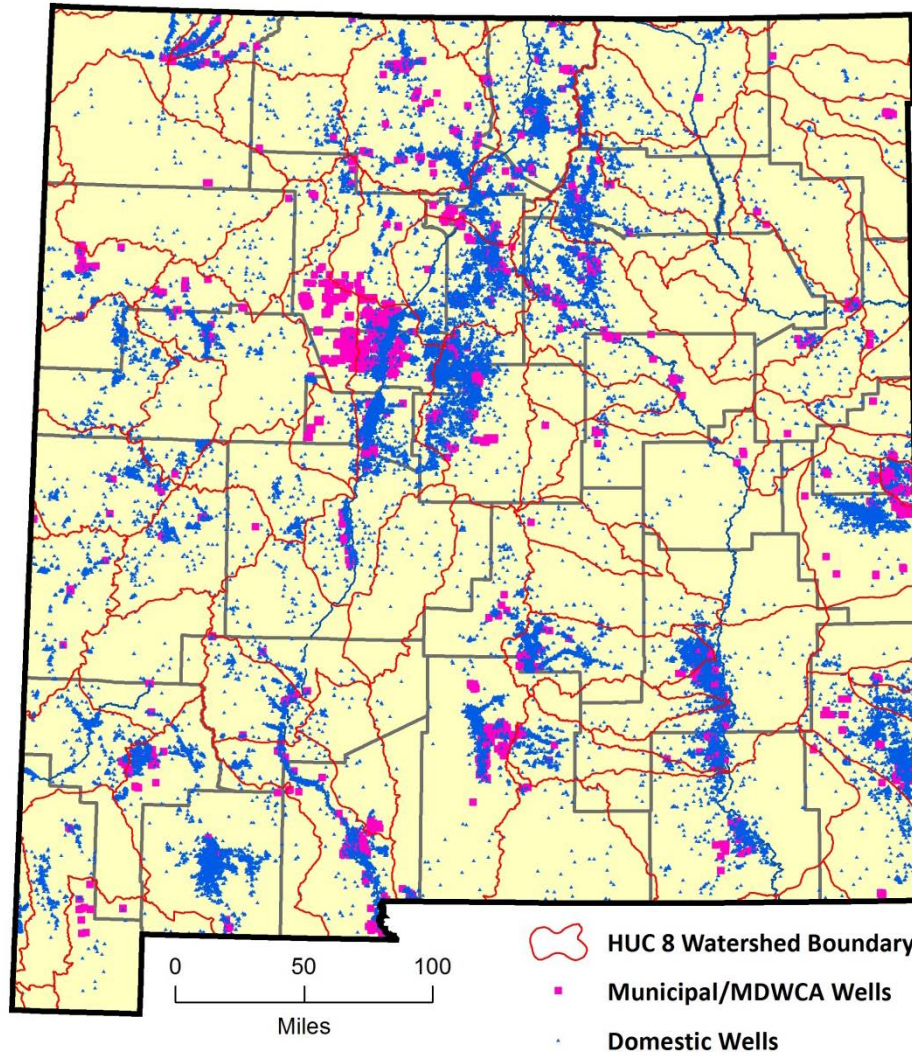


The sad realities

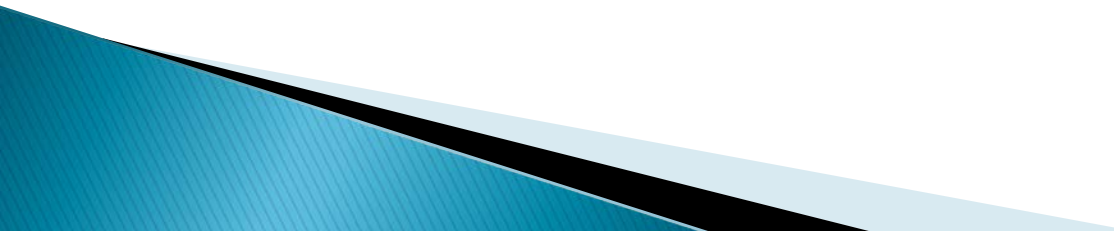
- ▶ People saw this coming and did nothing
 - ▶ Four years later, still no water
 - ▶ Community continues to suffer (*people are suffering!*)
 - ▶ This is **a lot** of work
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Lessons for the New Mexico

- ▶ This will become a more common occurrence
- ▶ Agencies need to plan
 - A more effective response is needed!!!
- ▶ Small communities do not have the capacity to deal with what is coming
- ▶ Telling communities to regionalize is NOT the answer...Leadership is needed
- ▶ Coordinated funding needed
- ▶ **This is an emergency** – our current policies and organizations will fail



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