The water in the Rio Grande supports a diverse range of aquatic organisms, such as:

- Fish
- Mussels
- Turtles
- Crayfish
- Macroinvertebrates
- Birds

In the Rio Grande, water quality is a BIG Deal!

Many local, state, and federal groups are working to collect data and address water quality issues in the Rio Grande. To find out more about what’s being done or what you can do, please visit our website:

http://www.ibwc.gov/CRP/Index.htm

What’s the Big Deal about

Water Quality in the Rio Grande Basin?

Water quality is a BIG Deal! Many local, state, and federal groups are working to collect data and address water quality issues in the Rio Grande. To find out more about what’s being done or what you can do, please visit our website:

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Or contact us:

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**Pollutants**

There are many kinds of pollutants that affect water quality in the Rio Grande, such as:

- **Chemicals**
- **Bacteria**
- **Trash**
- **Salts**
- **Sediment**
- **Excess Nutrients**
- **Metals**

**Effects of Pollutants**

Pollutants can negatively affect humans and aquatic organisms. For example:

- Since fish and other aquatic organisms breathe oxygen dissolved in the water, pollution and excess nutrients can cause algal growth and limit the available oxygen.
- Sediment from erosion can cause turbidity and also lower the oxygen available to fish.
- Water with high bacteria can have pathogens present, so swimming or fishing in polluted water can sometimes be unsafe.
- Salt can negatively impact irrigation of farmland.
- Certain pollutants, such as metals and pesticides, can cause health issues for people and children.

**Addressing Pollutants**

There are two main ways that pollutants enter a waterway:

- **Point Sources**
  From specific points, such as through pipes and permitted discharges (treated wastewater)

- **Non-Point Sources**
  From a variety of sources that are not easy to pin-point, such as runoff from streets or farmland during rain events into stormwater drains

**The Clean Water Act**

In 1972, the United States passed the Clean Water Act to protect the nation’s waters.

The Clean Water Act:

- supports the “protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife and recreation in and on the water.”
- is the major regulatory framework for addressing point source pollution by requiring permits to discharge into waters of the U.S.
- requires states to set water quality standards and to monitor waterbodies routinely to ensure they are protecting humans and aquatic organisms