

WATER BATTLE

Summary judgment sought

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By John Larson - El Defensor Chieftain Staff Write Feb 9, 2019

The latest court proceedings concerning the attempt by Augustin Plains Ranch LLC (APR) to obtain a permit to drill 37 water wells on the San Agustin Plains in western Socorro County to pump 54,000 acre feet of water yearly from the San Agustin aquifer is coming up next Wednesday, Feb 13 at the Catron County Courthouse in Reserve.

Seventh Judicial District Judge Matthew Reynolds will hear arguments on a Motion of Summary Judgment from Doug Meiklejohn of the New Mexico Environmental Law Center.

“APR had filed a motion in December asking that the time for briefing on our summary judgment motion be extended until February 13,” Meiklejohn said. “We have filed a response in opposition to that motion.”

“It is my understanding that the hearing in Reserve is scheduled to be a status conference,” Meiklejohn said. “The motion basically requests the Judge to throw out the appeal and deny the application, as did the State Engineer, although I do not expect that it will be a hearing on the merits of the motion for summary judgment that we filed.”

Carol Pittman of Datil, who was part of a lawsuit brought against the ranch, said in an email that all interested parties are encouraged to attend the hearing.

“The Judge needs to know we care as a community about this dreadful proposal to take 54,000 acre feet of water every year from our aquifer,” Pittman said