

A RIVER PROTECTION BILL FOR NEW MEXICO



TRICIA SNYDER
RIVERS AND WATERS PROGRAM DIRECTOR
WATER AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
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NEW MEXICO'S WATER FUTURE BY THE NUMBERS

7°

New Mexico is set to experience an average temperature increase of up to 7°F over the next 50 years.

20%

Observed snowpack in the headwaters of the Rio Grande has declined 20%.

Projected Change in Annual Average Potential Evapotranspiration Rate (2040–2069)

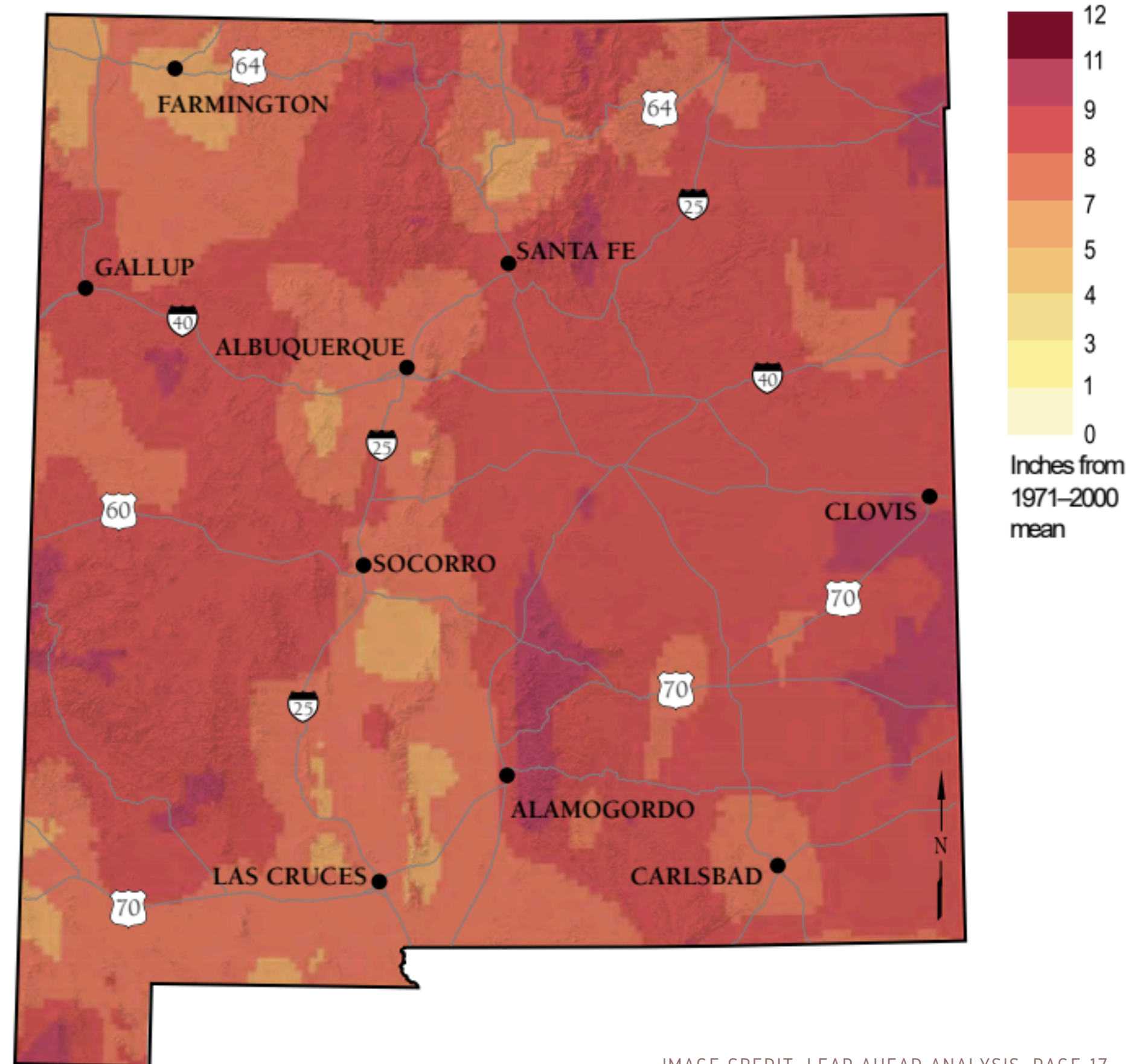


IMAGE CREDIT: LEAP AHEAD ANALYSIS, PAGE 17

IMAGE FROM NM BEAVER PROJECT



IMAGE FROM LARRY LAMSA



IMAGE FROM NM GAME & FISH



NEW MEXICO'S WATER FUTURE BY THE NUMBERS

25%

Both runoff and recharge will decline across the state by about 25% over the next 50 years, approximately 3-5% per decade.

80%

80% of vertebrate species across the state spend some portion of their life cycle in riverine environments.

2X

Declines in streamflow and increases in extreme precipitation mean sediment transport in rivers is likely to double

WHY IT'S NEEDED

- New Mexico state agencies have narrow mandates to protect specific aspects of rivers
- A state protection regime could provide a more holistic approach to river management and protection of values that matter most to New Mexico
- Federal protections are increasingly difficult to attain and don't provide funding opportunities for private landowners



WHY IT'S NEEDED

- New Mexico has a thriving outdoor recreation economy that supports over 30,000 jobs across the state and generating \$3.6 billion
- Since 2012 the outdoor recreation contribution to the state GDP has grown to a compound annual growth rate of 5.3% and outdoor recreation jobs have increased by 10.5%
- Rivers also support New Mexico economy in much broader ways, such as providing drinking water for communities, supporting agriculture, and supporting other industries



PHOTO CREDIT: JIM O'DONNELL

KEY COMPONENTS



PROTECTION OF FREE
FLOWING CHARACTER



PROTECTION OF RIVER
RELATED VALUES

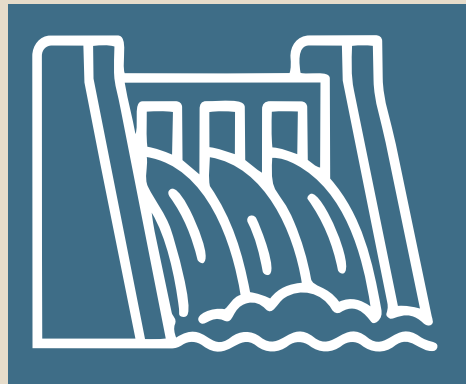


PROTECTION OF HALF MILE
RIVER CORRIDOR

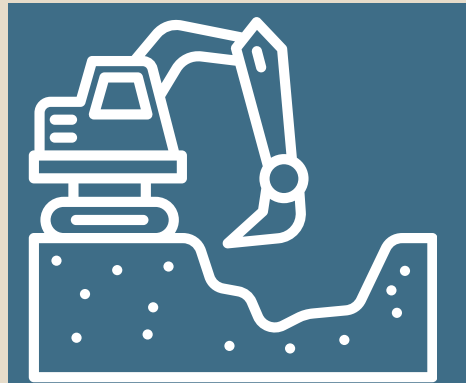


ANTI-DEGRADATION WATER
QUALITY PROTECTIONS

KEY COMPONENTS



PROHIBITION ON NEW
INSTREAM STRUCTURES



PROHIBITION ON ADVERSELY
IMPACTING RIVER RELATED
VALUES ON STATE LAND



PROHIBITION ON STATE
ASSISTANCE FOR PROJECTS
WITH ADVERSE IMPACTS TO
RIVERS ON PRIVATE LAND



FUND TO HELP INCENTIVIZE
GOALS OF RIVER PROTECTION

KEY DEFINITIONS

“Free-flowing” means existing or flowing without artificial impoundment, diversion or other significant modification of the river and may include rivers with low dams, diversion works or other minor structures



KEY DEFINITIONS

“River-related and river-dependent values” means the unique scenic, recreational, geologic, historic, cultural ecological, scientific, educational and other similar values that owe their existence to a river and are significant to the state.



KEY DEFINITIONS

“Adverse impact” means any project, use, or activity that would:

- A) impede the free-flowing character of a designated river or river segment;
- B) cause or contribute to the impairment of water quality in a designated river or river segment as established at time of listing; OR
- C) negatively impact the river-related or river-dependent values of a designated river or river segment as determined at time of listing.



HOW IT WOULD WORK

- Initial legislation in 2027 with a list of designated river segments
- Future designations would also require legislation, prompted by agency review, including public engagement. Public petition could kickstart review to designate specific segments of rivers
- Overseeing agency would be Office of Outdoor Recreation, with collaboration and coordination with other state agencies



WHAT IT WOULD NOT INCLUDE

- Any effect on water rights, Tribal lands, existing diversions and other instream developments, maintenance of diversions and other instream developments, existing land uses
- Water quality protection above what is already included within Outstanding National Resource Water designation



LEVERAGING STATE INVESTMENTS

- State has an array of tools at its disposal to support rivers and river health, these tools can be better leveraged
- A river protection bill could help prioritize investments from Strategic Water Reserve (SWR) and River Stewardship Program (RSP)
- SWR and RSP could work better together to ensure state investments are getting the highest possible return
- Monitoring component of fund proposed as part of a river protection bill could help better understand water quantity and water quality needs



PHOTO CREDIT: TISHA BROSKA

Questions?



Tricia Snyder
tricia@nmwild.org
575-636-0625

