

**Article XVI – Irrigation and Water Rights**

**Section 1. [Department of agriculture.]**

There shall be a department of agriculture which shall be under the control of the board of regents of the college of agriculture and mechanic arts; and the legislature shall provide lands and funds necessary for experimental farming and demonstrating by said department.

**Sec. 2. [Forest fire prevention.]**

The police power of the state shall extend to such control of private forest lands as shall be necessary for the prevention and suppression of forest fires.

**ARTICLE XVI**

**Irrigation and Water Rights**

Sec.

1. Existing water rights confirmed.
2. Appropriation of water.
3. Beneficial use of water.
4. Drainage districts and systems.
5. Appeals in matters relating to water rights.
6. Water trust fund.

**Article XVI – Irrigation and Water Rights**

**Section 1. [Existing water rights confirmed.]**

All existing rights to the use of any waters in this state for any useful or beneficial purpose are hereby recognized and confirmed.

**Sec. 2. [Appropriation of water.]**

The unappropriated water of every natural stream, perennial or torrential, within the state of New Mexico, is hereby declared to belong to the public and to be subject to appropriation for beneficial use, in accordance with the laws of the state. Priority of appropriation shall give the better right.

**Sec. 3. [Beneficial use of water.]**

Beneficial use shall be the basis, the measure and the limit of the right to the use of water.

**Sec. 4. [Drainage districts and systems.]**

The legislature is authorized to provide by law for the organization and operation of drainage districts and systems.