

# Water and Natural Resources Committee

## Strategic Water Reserve: Ensuring Compact Compliance and Protecting Endangered Species

Hannah Riseley-White, Director  
New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission  
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# STATUTE

Passed in 2005. NM Interstate Stream Commission may purchase or lease water rights to assist the state in:

1. Complying with interstate stream compacts and court degrees, or
2. Water management efforts for the benefit of threatened or endangered species, or in programs intended to avoid additional listings of species



# PREPARING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

**Leap Ahead Report** from the NM Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources summarizes projected impacts including:

- ***25% decrease in streamflow by 2070***
- ***Declining aquifers***

Full utilization of the Strategic Water Reserve will become increasingly important.

**Water Policy and Infrastructure Task Force** recommendations 2.7 and 3.1





# CURRENT STATUS

*Powerful, yet underutilized tool for NM – lack of consistent and sufficient funding*

## **SAN JUAN**

Up to 20,000 AF/year leased from Jicarilla Apache Nation to support endangered species and potential Demand Management in the Colorado River Basin

## **RIO GRANDE**

~1,085 AF/year leased in the Middle Rio Grande to support endangered species and compact deliveries

## **PECOS RIVER**

~1,649 AF/year purchased,  
~621 AF/year donated,  
~2,326 AF/year leased

All in support endangered species and/or compact deliveries

## **CANADIAN RIVER**

Up to 5 cubic feet per second (cfs) between Ute Dam and Texas state-line permitted to NMISC to support threatened species

*Flexibility in the Reserve has allowed it to be applied in various beneficial ways across the state.*





## **JICARILLA APACHE NATION, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY + NMISC**

- 10-year lease signed in November 2022
- Up to 20,000 AF/year for species or compact purposes
- Creative partnership between sovereigns and with essential NGO support
- State and TNC funding
- *First delivery this year*

*How can we learn from this work and replicate elsewhere?*



An aerial photograph showing a wide, muddy river on the left side of the frame. To the right of the river, there are several rows of young, green trees planted in a field, likely for riparian restoration. A dirt road or path runs parallel to the river, separating the trees from the water. The background shows more greenery and a hilly landscape.

# STRATEGIC WATER RESERVE NEXT STEPS

## ESTABLISH SUSTAINED FUNDING

- \$7.5 million special in 2023
- Non-reverting funding would provide for greater implementation, particularly related to water rights purchases.

## BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

- Lessons learned since 2005
- Identify opportunities for improvement
- Work with partners across the state to strengthen the Reserve



# Questions?

