New Mexico Water Ambassadors

Science, Technology and Telecommunications Committee Meeting

October 7 – 8, 2026

Los Alamos, New Mexico

Mike Hamman, P.E., Retired New Mexico State Engineer

Dr. Ladona Clayton, Ogallala Land & Water Conservancy

Gretel Follingstad, PhD, Environmental Defense Fund

Agenda

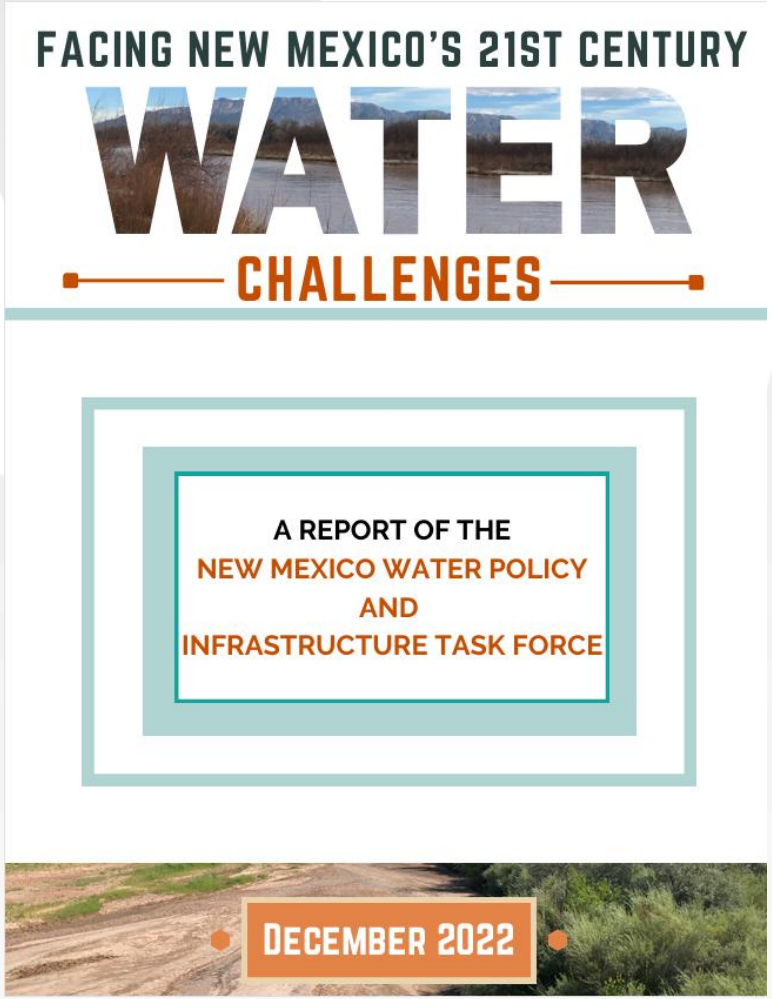
- Water Ambassador background
- Reset with renewed energy, focus, and clearer guidance
- Priorities for 2027

Important Key Takeaways

- Technology can help us manage scarcity, but it cannot change the hydrology.
- Water availability is critical infrastructure.
- Science and data must precede development decisions.
- Strengthening local capacity is important.
- New Mexico needs implementation, not simply continued diagnosis.
- Continuity is essential to sustaining progress in water planning and implementation.

NM Water Ambassadors

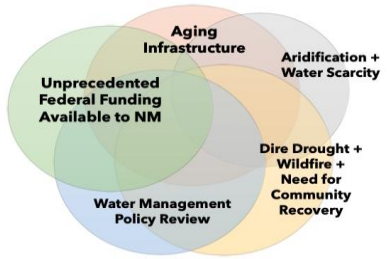
- Governor convened the **New Mexico Water Policy and Infrastructure Task Force** in 2022
- Task Force central question: “How can New Mexico respond to water scarcity, aging infrastructure, declining aquifers, watershed stress, and limited community and agency capacity?”
- It's final report created a common foundation of recommendations.
- The **Water Ambassadors** carry that work forward through policy education, legislative awareness, regional engagement, and collaboration.



Read the full report:

Setting the Stage--Origin and Journey

A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity



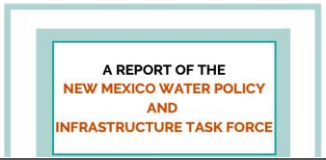
Post-Pandemic

1

2

April-Dec. 2022





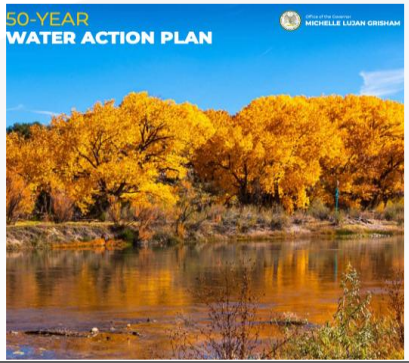


"Year of Water" 2023

3

4

2024





New Mexico Water Ambassadors
Guiding Principles

A Call to Strategic Action and Shared Stewardship

WE ARE THE WATER AMBASSADORS.

We are not waiting. We are rising—with hope, urgency, and resolve.

We believe water is sacred—essential to the survival of our communities, economies, and ecosystems. We honor the snowmelt, the rivers, the aquifers, the acequias, and the rainfall that sustain New Mexico's soul.

But belief is not enough. Now is the time to act with purpose, guided by knowledge and unity.

In this time of scarcity, we reject the temptation to point fingers.
Instead, we commit to a more courageous path: to face the truth together, to ask tough questions with humility, and to build solutions rooted in fairness, science, and shared sacrifice.

Our Mission

To bring people together across sectors, generations, and geographies to co-create a water-secure future for New Mexico.

2025

5

6

2026— "The Reset"



Reset: A New Chapter for Water Ambassadors

What we've built together

Statewide representation

Diverse expertise and perspectives

Trusted relationships and partnerships

Growing influence in New Mexico water conversations

What comes next

Shared leadership

Meaningful participation

Strong communication

Broader statewide representation

Meaningful impact

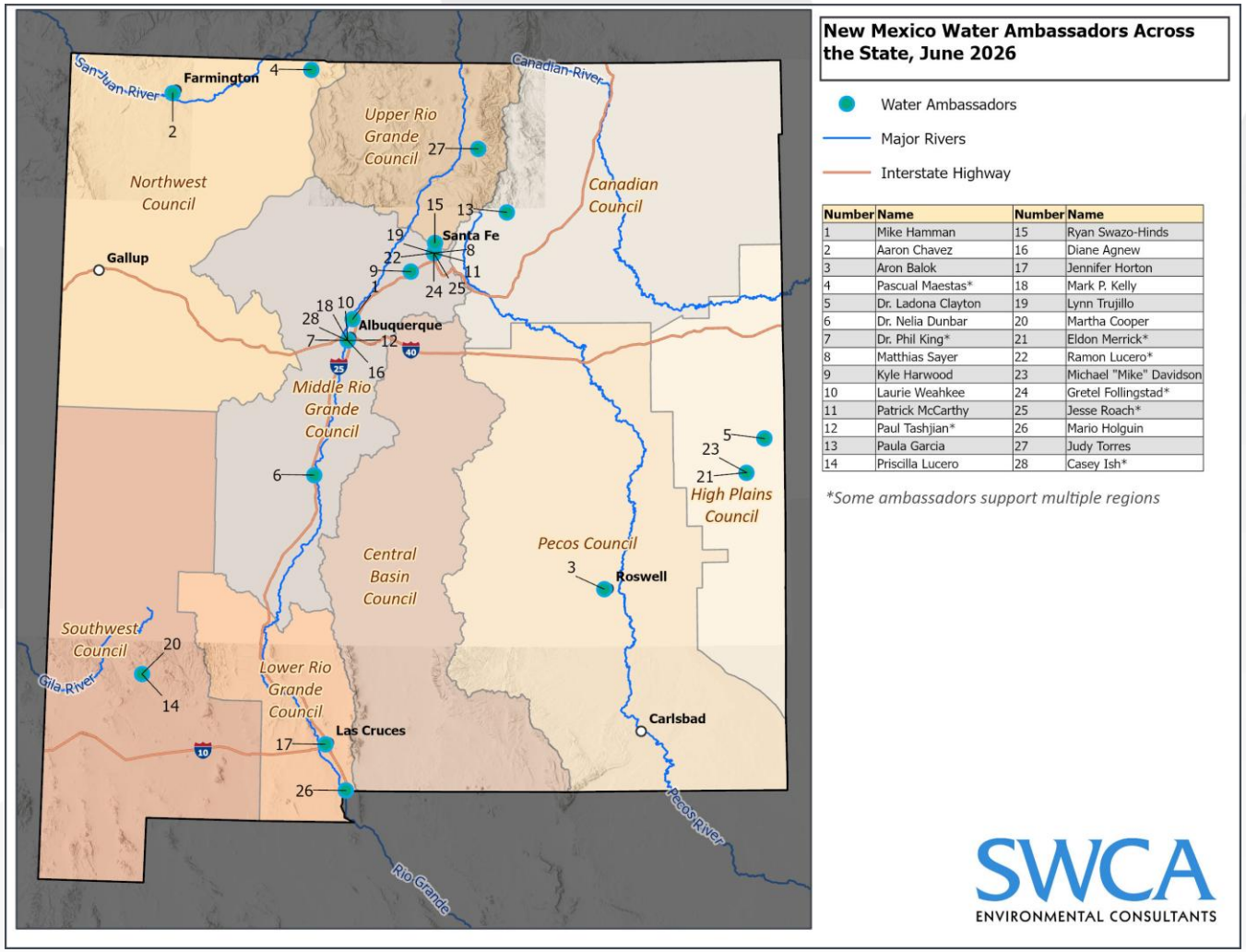
Mission

Bring people together across sectors, generations, and geographies to co-create a water secure future for New Mexico



Water Ambassadors Today

- 28 members (diverse representation statewide)
- Executive Committee
- Advocacy Workgroup
- Regional Water Planning Workgroup



Community-Driven Groundwater Management

Locally led partnerships with agricultural producers

- Voluntary financial incentives built on trust
- Landowner and Producer Engagement
- Cross-sector partnerships and shared resources
- Agricultural viability with reduced groundwater demand

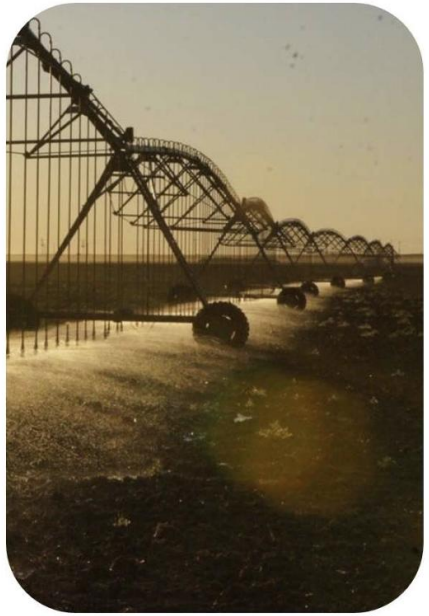
Measured Groundwater Impact & Recovery

36,981 acre-feet of groundwater conserved
(*not pumped over 4 years*)

≈ 12,859 acre-feet/year in potential withdrawals avoided
(4.19 billion gallons/year, based on metered capacity)

- Independent monitoring (NMBGMR, 2023-2025)
- Two consecutive years of measured water-level rise
- City of Clovis wells rising for first time in 3 years

Includes 11,120 irrigated acres transitioned and 56 wells retired



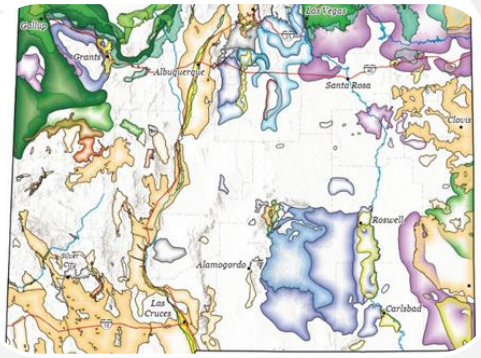
Water Wins in 2026 Legislative Session ($287M in new funding)



$179M – Conservation and Infrastructure



$35M – Strategic Water Supply



$22M – Aquifer Mapping and Monitoring



$51.25M – Protection and Restoration

Continued support into 2027 is critical to maintain progress

2027 Funding Recommendations

1. Robust Regional Planning Process

- Build community networks in 9 regions
- Develop regional priorities to optimize and sustain water resources
- Integrate Tribal and Acequia interests

OSE: $12M Water Security Planning Act (special FY28)

NMED: $50M for 50-Year Water Action Plan Implementation Fund (Fund Transfer)

2. Local Capacity Development

- Support local drought and climate-response capacity
- Support Tribal and Acequia communities as federal programs decline

NMED: $50M Strategic Water Supply Program (Fund Transfer)
OSE: $15M for Strategic Water Reserve Fund (Special FY28)
OSE: $16.5M for acequia projects (GRO)
OSE: $35M for Indian Water Rights Settlements Implementation (special FY26 – FY29)

2027 Funding Recommendations

3. Continued Support for Water Data and Research

- Aquifer characterization to determine sustainable water use
- Conjunctive surface and groundwater management
- Assess brackish water supplies

NMBGMR: $22M (special FY28) for aquifer mapping and monitoring

4. Continued Support for Agencies Budgets

- **OSE/ISC:** Water rights/compact compliance/groundwater sustainability
- **NMED:** Restoration and water quality
- **EMNRD:** Wildland fire and produced water research
- **NMDA:** Agricultural water conservation
- **NMBGMR:** Groundwater resources

Recurring agency funds support agency modernization and durable programs

Water Planning in New Mexico



Water Security Planning Act (2023)

Regional and State-wide Water Planning (OSE/ISC)

- Modernized Public Engagement
- Transparent Data and Tools that Build knowledge and capacity



Governor's 50-Year Water Action Plan (2024)

Implementation of Governor's long-term water action plan.

- NMED, OSE/ISC, NMDA, EMNRD

Importance of maintaining continuity

Important Key Takeaways

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- New Mexico needs implementation, not simply continued diagnosis.
- Continuity is essential to sustaining progress in water planning and implementation.

More Information

Facing New Mexico's 21st Century Water Challenges. 2022. NM Water Policy and Infrastructure Task Force.

- Full Report
- Executive Summary

Climate Change in NM Over the Next 50 Years: Impacts on Water Resources. 2022. NMBGMR.

- Full report

Water Ambassador Materials

- Legislative Letter

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THANK YOU!

