

Traditions and Climate Change - Cuentos from Chimayó

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Healthy Climate New Mexico

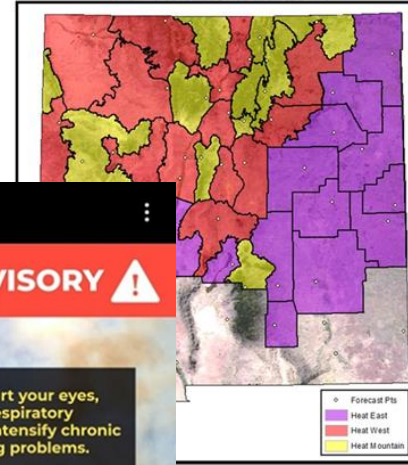
Presented to the NM Legislative Indian Affairs Committee at Alamo,
NM September 25, 2025



Climate and Health in New Mexico



Heat Criteria



Eastern/Southern Valley Zones

Excessive Heat Warning
Max Temperatures/Heat Index \geq 110F

Heat Advisory
Max Temperatures/Heat Index \geq 105F

Central/Western Zones

Excessive Heat Warning
Max Temperatures/Heat Index \geq 105F

Heat Advisory
Max Temperatures/Heat Index \geq 100F

Mountain Zones

Excessive Heat Warning
Max Temperatures/Heat Index \geq 100F

Heat Advisory
Max Temperatures/Heat Index \geq 95F

nmdoh

SMOKE ADVISORY

Smoke can hurt your eyes, irritate your respiratory system, and intensify chronic heart and lung problems.

Residents with respiratory or heart disease, asthma, adults 65 and older, young children, and pregnant women should take extra precaution.

For more info please visit:
nmtracking.org/environment/air/FireAndSmoke.html

19 likes

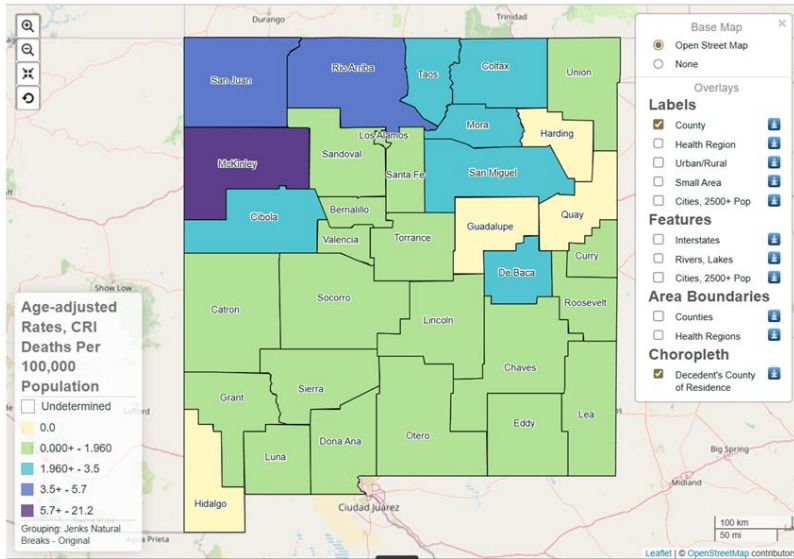
nmdoh Residents of San Miguel, Mora, and Colfax Counties (NW of I-25): NMDOH... more

3 hours ago · See Translation

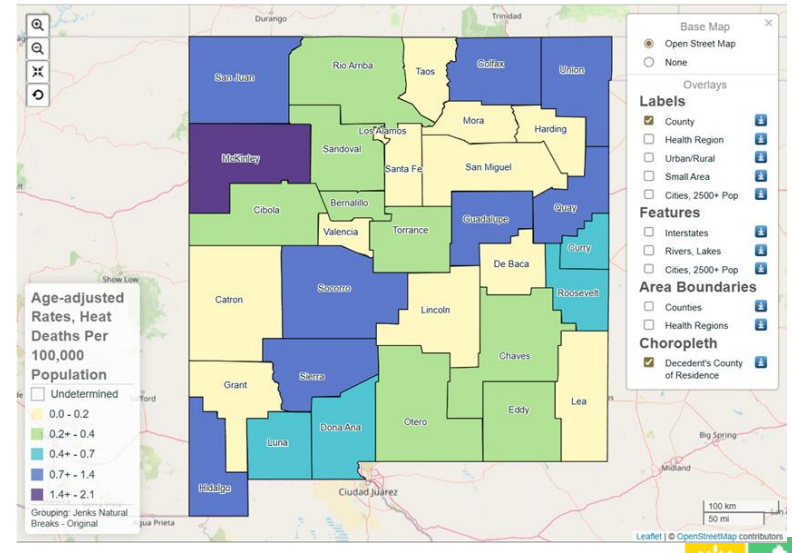


Age-adjusted death rates*, 2013-2023, NM

Cold-related



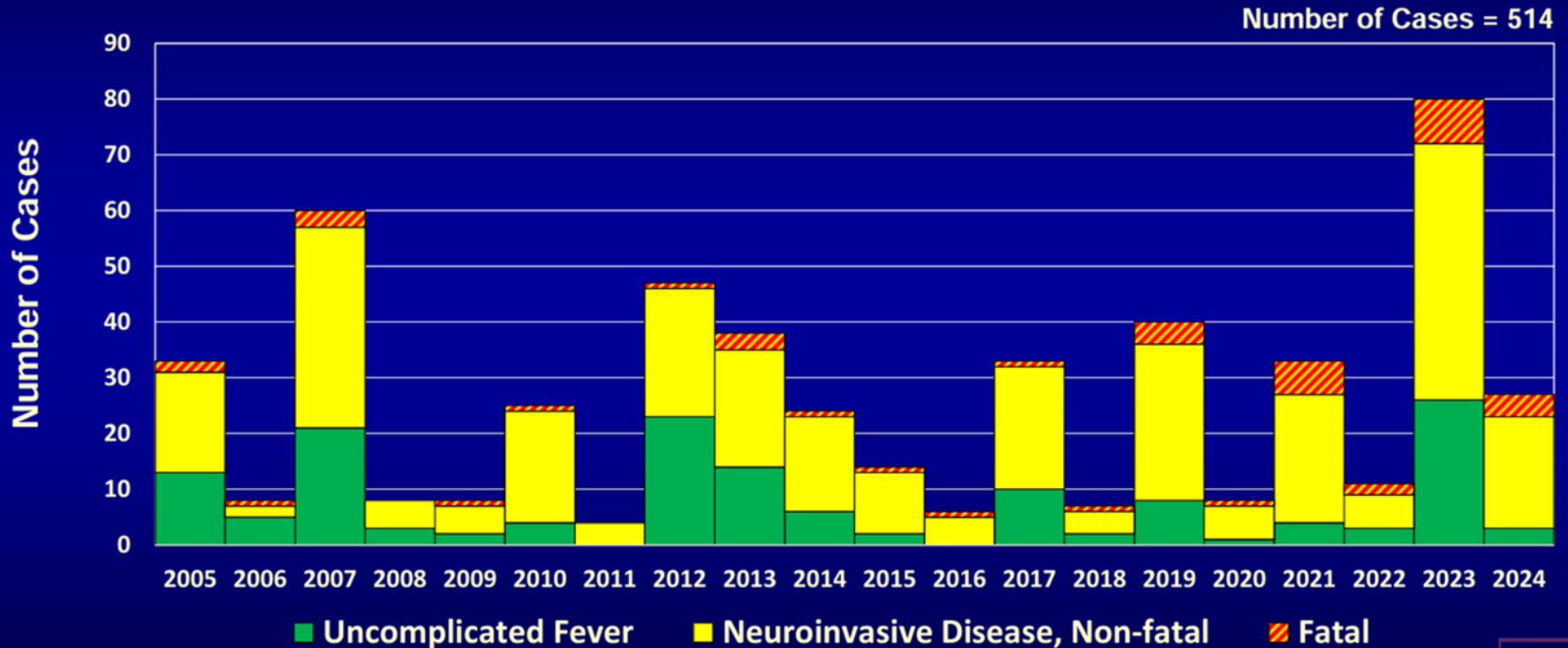
Heat-related



* <https://nmtracking.doh.nm.gov/> accessed 9/2/2025



Human West Nile Virus Cases in New Mexico by Year & Clinical Syndrome 2005 - 2024



Flood in Chimayó NM, September 5, 2025



Nearby residents eye at-risk dam, rainstorms with worry, wariness

★ Follow Scott Wyland

By Scott Wyland swyland@sfnewmexican.com
Feb 26, 2024



*Meet
Wilfred
Romero*



John Trujillo, apple farmer

Apples are burned from hotter sun temperatures

Temperature extremes, such as late frost make crop yields unpredictable

More invasive species growing along the acequia

Elk!

Water flows are diminished from previous years

How methods have changed:

- Multiple water sources, well, direct irrigation, tanks

- Reflectors under trees to prevent frost kill

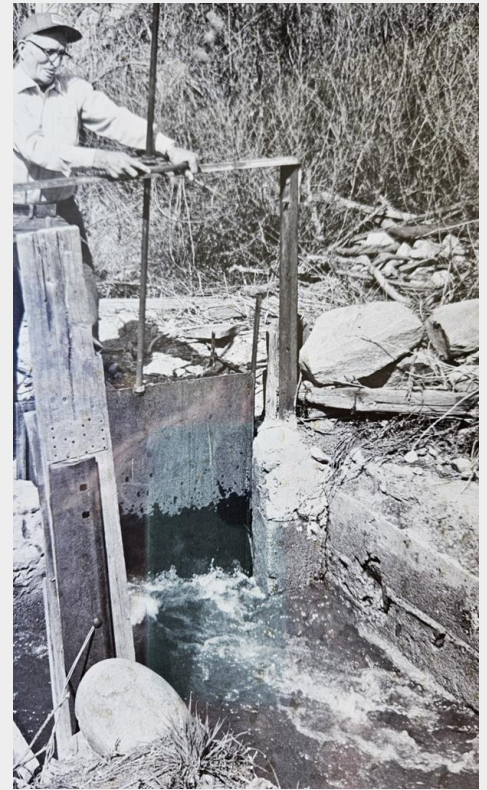
- Cold storage for harvest



*Mr. W.A., the
mayordomo's
son*



“I imagine that it will take 10 years to get the acequia back to normal. The orchards will survive but it is the folks with gardens that will suffer without the acequia running.”



Can acequia traditions survive?

Challenges

- Diminishing water/drought
- Unpredictability of weather
- Extreme temperatures
- Lack of interest
- Aging population
- Aging infrastructure

Potential solutions

- Improve infrastructure
- Alternative energy sources
- Cut reliance on fossil fuels
- Use permaculture methods
- Change crop types
- Get youth interested
- Remember, water is life!



New Mexico farm facts

- Total # of farms: 20,900 (2023), down from 25,044 (2017) a 17% decrease
- Average age of farmers in NM is 60 years! 10% of farmers earn less than \$10,000 annually
 - Over 25,500 have an off-farm job
- Family-owned and -operated farms accounted for 95% of all New Mexico farms, with 82% of agricultural operations being less than 1,000 acres in size
- In Rio Arriba county there were 1,285 farms (2022), less of 11% from 2017
 - 21,304 farm acres are irrigated, 60,052 acres are crop land.
 - #3 in the state for nursery, greenhouse, floriculture and sod
 - #4 for poultry and eggs

