

Drought in NM: Long-term Considerations

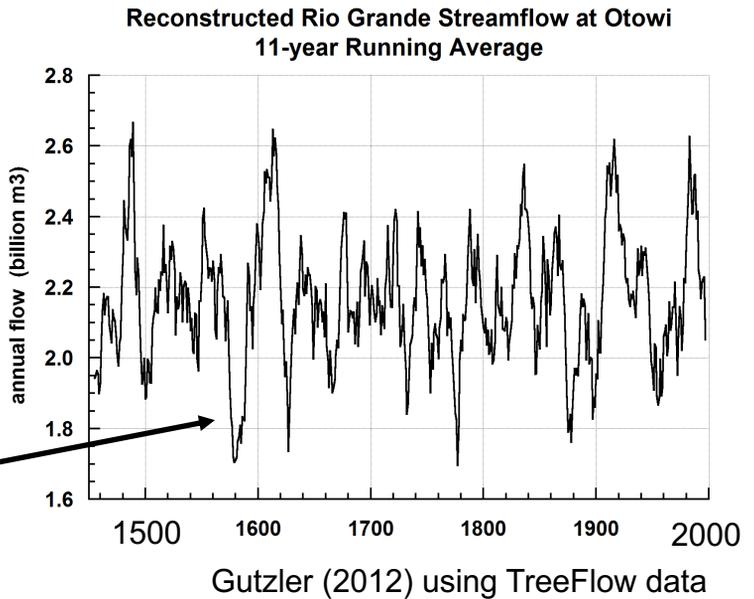
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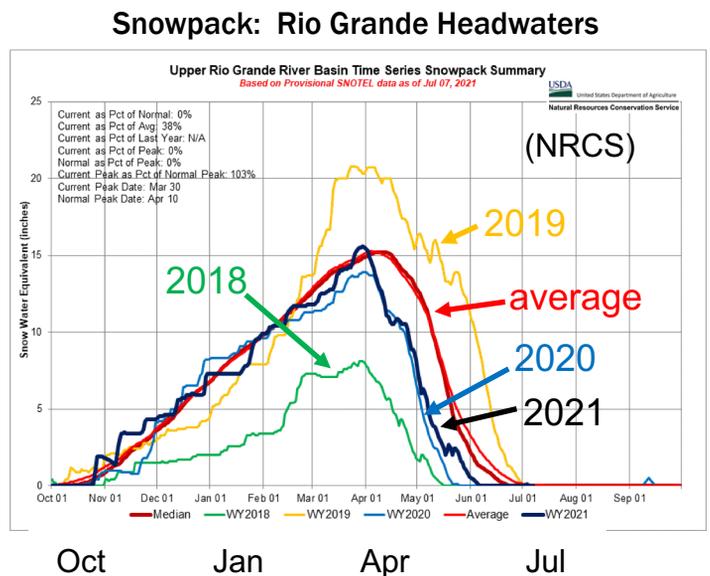
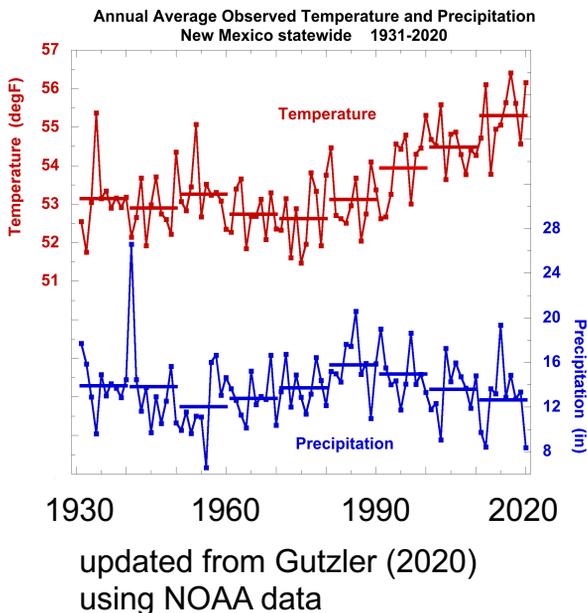
Part I. Hydrology

1. The current drought is historically bad, but longer droughts have occurred previously in New Mexico. However even the worst droughts eventually end.

16th Century Megadrought



2. The effects of this drought on water resources have been worsened by the ongoing, long-term warming trend, making this drought a harbinger of still drier conditions to come as temperatures rise.

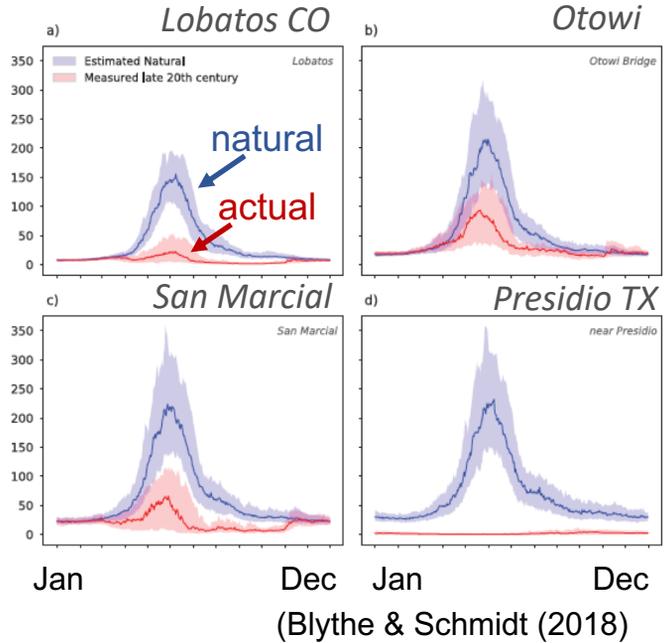


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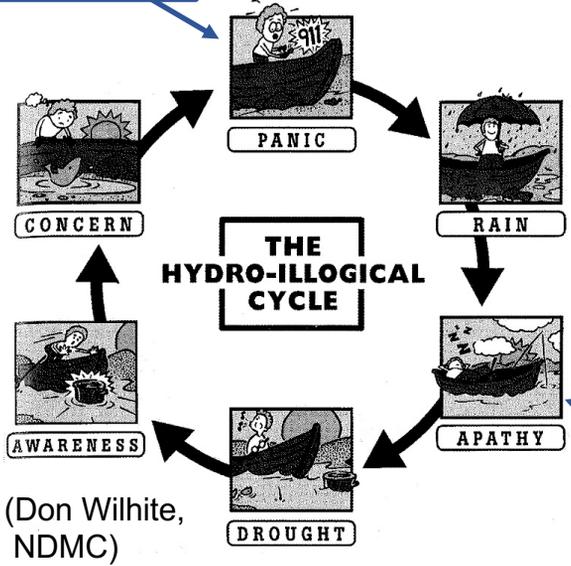
Part II. Values

3. Our water supplies are tapped out. As this drought has shown us, our reliable supplies of fresh water are insufficient to satisfy present-day demands. Climate change will make future droughts even worse.

Rio Grande Gaged and Natural Monthly Flows



We are here



4. Our current overall rate of water consumption cannot be sustained over the 21st Century. We need to end the 'hydro-illogical' drought cycle.

We cannot afford to take this step ('apathy') when we finally receive a year or two of wetter weather

5. Cooperative shortage sharing among existing water rights holders, and thoughtful allocation of new water rights considering diminished future supplies, serve the public interest better than conflict and litigation.

Addressing our water challenges cooperatively will require leadership and political courage.

