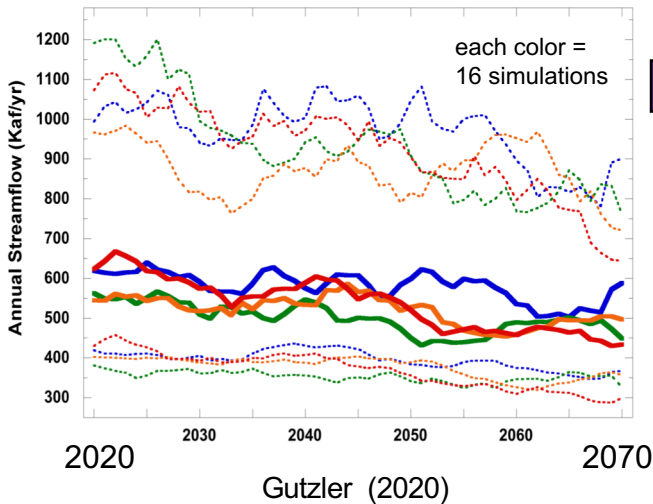


# The End of Reliable Water Supplies in NM

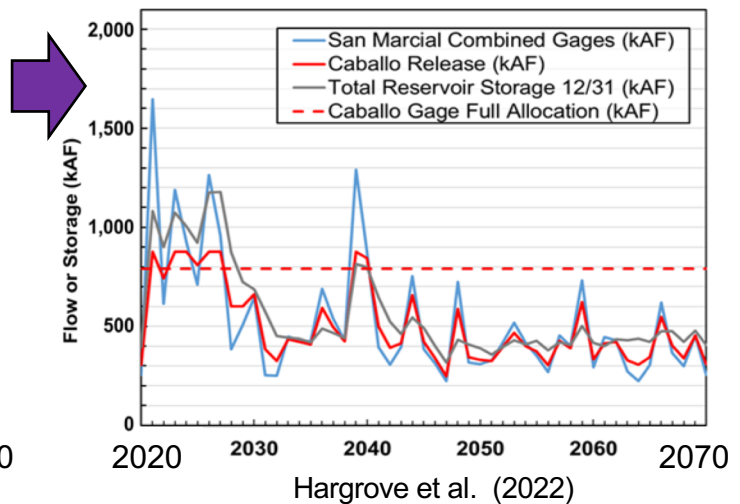
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The ongoing drought heralds a new era for water supplies in NM, characterized by **less snowpack, diminished streamflow, and increased variability of precipitation.**

Projected Streamflow  
Rio Grande @ SanMarcial



Annual Caballo Dam Release  
assuming continuation of present-day  
EBID operating agreement



**Existing** surface water rights allocations already granted by the state will be **unmet, more frequently and less predictably**, in the future.

**New** water rights allocations must be granted **much more conservatively** than in the past.

**New sources of water** (imported, desalinated) will, *at best*, be **much more expensive** than (diminished) existing surface water or (depleted) groundwater. Other western states are searching for new water too.

**Status quo water policies** would result in the need for **crisis management** in times of future shortage.

→ **20<sup>th</sup> Century water management rules won't work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, as the Southwest becomes more arid**

# How Might We Choose To Change The Rules?

## 1. Existing water rights and consumption patterns

- \* Set equitable rules for reallocating and retiring water rights, and plan ahead for future episodes of severe water shortage
- \* Promote flexibility and sustainability in agricultural practices
- \* Push municipal utilities to be more aggressive in further reducing per capita consumption

## 2. New water rights and consumption decisions

- \* Define “beneficial use” more carefully and explicitly
- \* Include projections of diminished and more variable supplies in assessments of future water availability
- \* Couple conservative water management to economic development efforts

→ **Be prudently skeptical about the future availability and cost of “new water”**

**Cooperative discussion and realistic long-term planning for diminished future water supplies can help to maintain some semblance of reliability in future water deliveries.**

**Management rules appropriate for a changed climate, put in place now, are vastly preferable to crisis management later ... as we can see today in California, or among Colorado River basin states.**