

## Report to New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Districts

*New Mexico Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Programs and Resources Division*

<https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/apr/soil-and-water-districts.html>

### January 2025

#### OMA Notification Requirements

Remember that if you have to hold a district board meeting at a date, time or location that deviates from the information you advertised in your Open Meetings Act resolution, you must advertise it accordingly. Here are the guidelines:

**Regular Meeting – 10 Days Prior**

**Special Meeting – 3 Days Prior**

**Emergency Meeting – 24 Hours Prior**

Nov to Dec	Adopt Open Meetings Act Resolution to cover upcoming calendar year (cc: NMDA)
December 1 <sup>st</sup>	Agreed Upon Procedure Report (AUP) Report or Certification forms due to the New Mexico State Auditor Office.
December	Review mileage and per diem policy. (See Item #7)
January	Reorganize district board: Elect chairman, vice chair, and secretary-treasurer
January	Report to SWCC name, address, and phone number of all board members and indicate chair, vice chair, and secretary-treasurer positions
January	Conduct district board mid-year budget review
January	Ensure the proper bonding policy is in place
January 31 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarterly budget report is due to DFA-LGD (cc: SWCC region commissioner and NMDA)
January 31 <sup>st</sup>	WQ&C grant 2nd quarter report due to SWCC
January 15 – March 19	<b>Healthy Soil Program grant application period</b> for Eligible Entities and Individual Applicants
February 3 – March 14	<b>District Opportunities Grant application period</b> for SWCDs and Watershed Districts
Early February – Early April	<b>Water Quality &amp; Conservation Grant application period</b> for SWCDs
March 3 – April 11	<b>Noxious Weeds Program grant application period</b> for: CWMAAs, SWCDs, local governments, state political subdivisions, and special districts, tribes, nations, and pueblos, land grants-mercedes and acequias, and non-profits and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with proven land management capacity

## **1. 2025 SWCD Supervisor Elections**

NMDA strongly encourages all SWCDs to schedule meetings with all county clerks whose counties are within SWCD boundaries, not just the counties where the majority of the district land lies. Each county clerk may run elections differently, therefore you are responsible for contacting them soon to see what they need from your district and when it's needed. The NMDA election timeline, which clearly states what is due and when, is no longer valid for SWCD elections. County clerks are in charge and will be the ones to set due dates and how to comply with the new Local Election Act.

The sooner you make contact with each county clerk within your district boundaries, the sooner you will be on the right track to the 2025 elections. Neither NMDA nor the SWCC has any input if a deadline or document is not correctly fulfilled.

Each SWCD is solely responsible for their 2025 election, in accordance with the Local Election Act.

## **2. NMDA will hold an Elections Training via Zoom, January 24<sup>th</sup>.**

The Secretary of State (SOS) will present exclusively to SWCDs on the election process. Being 2025 is an election year for SWCDs, this training will be beneficial for SWCDs to attend in order to prepare for the November 2025 election.

The training will be held, via zoom, January 24<sup>th</sup>, from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm. To join, click on the zoom link or use the call-in number:

<https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/88208989075>

Meeting ID: 882 0898 9075

One tap mobile

+17193594580,,88208989075# US

+12532050468,,88208989075# US

Meeting ID: 882 0898 9075

Please contact your SWCD specialist with any questions.

## **3. NMDA's Healthy Soil Program: Grant-application cycle opens Jan. 15, final webinars happen Jan. 23**

The Healthy Soil Program's Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) grant-application cycle opens January 15 and closes at 12 p.m. (noon) Mountain Time on March 19. Late, incomplete, and paper applications will not be accepted.

On January 23, NMDA will host two webinars to walk through the online application. Given that they can apply for grants as Eligible Entities and that they can serve as an Individual Applicant's Project Sponsor, NMDA encourages SWCDs and tribal governments to register for both webinars:

1. **ELIGIBLE ENTITIES:** This webinar is for SWCDs; pueblos, tribes, and nations; acequias; land grants; NMSU-Cooperative Extension Service offices; and other local governmental entities with “proven land management capacity to support healthy soil”. This webinar is set for **Jan. 23 from 10 to 11:30 a.m.** ELIGIBLE ENTITIES, register here: <https://tinyurl.com/2dpwadwz>
2. **INDIVIDUAL APPLICANTS + PROJECT SPONSORS:** This webinar is for individuals, businesses, and nonprofits directly engaged in farming, ranching, or another form of land management in New Mexico; SWCDs and tribal governments serving as their Project Sponsors are also encouraged to attend. This webinar is set for **Jan. 23 from 3 to 4:30 p.m.** INDIVIDUAL APPLICANTS + PROJECT SPONSORS, register here: <https://tinyurl.com/v2afuk3r>

Because of new Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund monies, Healthy Soil Program **projects can last nearly 15 months**, from mid-July 2025 to late September 2026. To think through how to best utilize this extended timeframe – and for other agricultural and/or natural resource management questions – SWCDs and other Eligible Entities are encouraged to contact Dean Bruce, the technical co-lead of NMDA’s Healthy Soil Program, at [hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu](mailto:hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu).

As always, NMDA’s Healthy Soil Program invites you to **sign up for a brief weekly email** for program updates (application tips and deadline reminders), as well as soil health events and news. To subscribe, simply enter your information in the form at the bottom of the Healthy Soil Program home page (<https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/healthy-soil-program.html>) or send an email to [hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu](mailto:hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu) with SUBSCRIBE in the subject line.

#### **4. District Opportunities Grant (formerly known as the Land of Enchantment Fund Grant)**

The District Opportunities (DO) grant will open on Monday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 12 pm (noon), and close on Friday, March 14 at 12 pm (noon).

Program requirements will be similar to the FY25 grant, in that only SWCDs and watershed districts can apply for the competitive grants. The four categories of funding also will remain the same: Capacity-Building; Conservation Planning/Land Use Planning; Landscape-Scale Restoration Projects; and Community Outreach and Education Projects.

Other than the new name, the main change to the grant is the extended timeline for project implementation. Because of new Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund monies, the Landscape-Scale Restoration projects can last nearly 16 months, until October 31, 2026. The other three categories will have until August 15, 2026.

A webinar will start at 9 am on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, giving a brief overview of the DO Grant.

NMDA Meeting is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.  
Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/89035320921>

Meeting ID: 890 3532 0921

One tap mobile  
+16694449171,,89035320921# US  
+16699006833,,89035320921# US (San Jose)

## 5. NMDA Noxious Weeds Management Grant

The application period for NMDA's FY26 Noxious Weeds Management Grants will open on Monday, March 3, 2025 and close on Friday, April 11, 2025. Program requirements are largely similar to the FY25 grant and the project implementation period can last up to 15.5 months (July 15, 2025-October 31, 2026). Applicants may apply with projects for up to \$60,000 that address state-listed noxious weed management through the following activities:

- Surveying and mapping
- Early detection and rapid response (EDRR)
- Integrated weed management (on-the-ground treatments)
- Education/outreach
- Planning, capacity building, and partnership building

Prospective applicants are encouraged to begin planning their projects ahead of the application period. More details on the FY26 grant program can be found at:  
<https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/apr/noxious-weeds.html>

If you have any questions, please contact NMDA's state noxious weed coordinator, Dylan Burruss at [dburruss@nmda.nmsu.edu](mailto:dburruss@nmda.nmsu.edu) or 575-997-1845.

## 6. SWCD Board Reorganization

During the January board meeting, SWCDs need to reorganize by electing a chairman, vice chairman and secretary-treasurer. Please be sure to have board reorganization on the January agenda as an action item.

Once the board is reorganized, please submit an updated list of all board members **with position numbers** to the SWCC and cc your SWCD specialist. Please indicate on the list of supervisors their contact information and the chair, vice chair and secretary-treasurer titles.

## 7. Review Your Mileage and Per Diem Policy

NMDA recently received some guidance from DFA on the questions posed by some SWCD auditors on the Mileage and Per Diem Policy. Please review the guidance below at the next board meeting.

*A Local Public Body can pay up to the full IRS published rate from the previous year **IF** they formally pass it by their counsel/commission/committee **and** have it written into their policy and procedure. If they do not formally adopt this change they can only pay up to the 80% of the published rate from the previous year.*

*This is the **ONLY** part of the travel and per diem rule that a Local Public Body can choose to pay a full IRS rate. A Local Public Body can choose to be more stringent in the other published rates but they **CANNOT** exceed the State issued maximums.*

The Internal Revenue\Service standard mileage rate can be found on the IRS website at: <http://www.irs.gov/Tax-Professionals/Standard-Mileage-Rates>

Beginning on Jan. 1, 2024, the IRS standard mileage rates for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) will be:

- 67 cents per mile for business miles driven
- 21 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes
- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations

The following link summarizes the optional standard mileage rates for employees, self-employed individuals, or other taxpayers to use in computing the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, charitable, medical, or moving expense purposes: <https://www.irs.gov/Tax-Professionals/Standard-Mileage-Rates>

## **8. Open Meetings Act Resolution Reminder**

When preparing to publish the Open Meetings Resolution, remember that the state sets a limit on advertising rates that can be charged to governmental entities for required advertisements. Title 1, Chapter 4, part 4 of the New Mexico Administrative Code states: "...the newspaper publisher is entitled to receive no more than:

- A. \$.63 cents (\$.63) for each column line of eight point or smaller type for the first insertion
- B. \$.49 cents (\$.49) per line of each subsequent insertion
- C. All emblems, display headings, rule work and necessary blank spaces shall be calculated as solid type and shall be counted and paid for as such."

**The items below might be of interest to SWCDs. These items were retrieved from various sources outside of NMDA.**

## **9. Range Monitoring for Small Ranchers webinar, Jan. 14**

*Excerpted from Southwest Drought Learning Network materials by NMDA, Dec. 2024*

On January 14 at 4 p.m., the Southwest Drought Learning Network (DLN) and partners will host a free webinar about range monitoring for ranchers and other interested parties.

Featured speakers will discuss range-monitoring techniques and programs that make use of range-monitoring data:

- Jim Armendariz, state rangeland management specialist for NRCS-New Mexico
- Tom Sidwell, longtime New Mexico rancher
- Casey Spackman, NMSU Extension range specialist

See the attached flyer to learn more and visit <https://tinyurl.com/2j2at4t8> to register to attend.

## **10. Listening sessions Jan. 8 and 15 with comments due Jan. 17: Federal consultation with state, local, and tribal governments in regulatory policymaking**

*Published in the Federal Register Dec. 18, 2024 at*

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/12/18/2024-29931/consultation-with-state-local-and-tribal-governments-in-regulatory-policymaking-request-for-comments>; excerpted by

NMDA

The Office of the Chair of Administrative Conference of the United States (ACUS) is requesting public input on Federal agency processes for consulting with State, local, and Tribal governments when agencies engage in regulatory policymaking. ACUS is accepting written comments and will hold two virtual public listening sessions. Responses to this request may inform an ongoing ACUS project, *Consultation with State, Local, and Tribal Governments in Regulatory Policymaking*, which, if warranted, may recommend best practices for agencies to use.

Written comments must be received no later than 10 a.m. (ET) January 17, 2025.

You may submit written comments by email to [info@acus.gov](mailto:info@acus.gov) (with “Consultation with State, Local, and Tribal Governments in Regulatory Policymaking” in the subject line of the message), or by U.S. Mail addressed to Consultation with State, Local, and Tribal Governments in Regulatory Policymaking, Administrative Conference of the United States, Suite 706 South, 1120 20th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036.

In addition to receiving written comments, ACUS plans to hold two virtual public listening sessions, addressing the themes specified, on the following dates:

*Listening Session 1* —Wednesday, January 8, 2025 (3 p.m.-5 p.m. ET). This listening session will focus on issues pertaining to consultation with State and local governments.

*Listening Session 2* —Wednesday, January 15, 2025 (3 p.m.-5 p.m. ET). This listening session will focus on issues pertaining to consultation with tribal governments.

Registration is required for each virtual public listening session. To register, please send an email to [info@acus.gov](mailto:info@acus.gov) by January 2, 2025 (with “Consultation with State, Local, and Tribal Governments in Regulatory Policymaking” in the subject line of the message). In the email, please: (1) provide your name and organization, if any; (2) indicate which listening session(s)

you would like to attend; and (3) indicate whether you would like to speak during the listening session(s). Online and dial-in information for the listening sessions will be shared with registered participants before each session.

**For further information, contact: Becaja Caldwell, Attorney Advisor, Administrative Conference of the United States, 1120 20th Street NW, Suite 706 South, Washington, DC 20036; Telephone (202) 480-2080; email [bcaldwell@acus.gov](mailto:bcaldwell@acus.gov).**

The Administrative Conference Act, 5 U.S.C. 591-596, established the Administrative Conference of the United States. The Conference studies the efficiency, adequacy, and fairness of the administrative procedures used by Federal agencies and makes recommendations to agencies, the President, Congress, and the Judicial Conference of the United States for procedural improvements (5 U.S.C. 594(1)). For further information about the Conference and its activities, see [www.acus.gov](http://www.acus.gov).

Agencies have adopted a variety of approaches to consulting with State, local, and Tribal governments, and there is still more that can be learned from a comprehensive study of agency consultation practices. To that end, ACUS is undertaking a project to examine when and how agencies consult with State, local, and Tribal officials on regulatory policymaking. Among other topics, the project will address agency policies and procedures for consulting with State, local, and Tribal governments; agencies' approaches to identifying and engaging with appropriate State, local, and Tribal officials; methods for utilizing feedback from State, local, and Tribal governments in agency decision making; and common issues and challenges that agencies face in developing and implementing accountable processes for consultation.

To see the specific topics for public comment, view the Federal Register notice at <https://tinyurl.com/yhbc98h6>

## **11. Public invited to BLM's Northern NM Resource Advisory Council (RAC) tour and meeting, Jan. 16-17**

*Excerpted Dec. 2024 by NMDA from*

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/12/16/2024-29511/notice-of-public-meeting-northern-new-mexico-resource-advisory-council-new-mexico>

The RAC is scheduled to participate in a field trip to Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument on Thursday, January 16, 2025, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. mountain time (MT). The RAC will reconvene for an in-person meeting on Friday, January 17, 2025, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. MT. The meeting and field tour are open to the public

Participants for the January 16 field trip will meet at the Cochiti Visitor Center, 1101 State Road 22, Cochiti Pueblo, NM 87072 at 9 a.m. MT. The January 17, 2025, meeting will be held at the BLM Rio Puerco Field Office, 100 Sun Ave. NE, Suite 330, Albuquerque, NM 87109. A virtual participation option for the January 17, 2025, meeting is available on the Zoom Webinar platform. Registration for the January 17, 2025, meeting can be found at: [https://blm.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_L11-2VgAR-Sw2FH940LboA](https://blm.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_L11-2VgAR-Sw2FH940LboA).

Planned meeting agenda items include updates from the BLM Rio Puerco, Farmington, and Taos field offices, and other issues that may arise. There will also be a discussion and vote on a small, proposed fee increase for Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument that would cover the *Recreation.gov* processing fee. A final agenda will be posted two weeks in advance of the meeting on the RAC web page at [www.blm.gov/get-involved/resource-advisory-council/near-you/new-mexico/northern-rac](http://www.blm.gov/get-involved/resource-advisory-council/near-you/new-mexico/northern-rac).

The BLM welcomes comments from all interested parties. There will be a half-hour public comment period during the January 17, 2025, meeting beginning at 2 p.m. MT for any interested members of the public who wish to address the RAC.

For more information, contact BLM Albuquerque District Public Affairs Specialist Jamie Garcia at 505-761-8787 or [jagarcia@blm.gov](mailto:jagarcia@blm.gov).

## **12. 2025 Annual Hay Conference**

The 2025 Hay Conference will be held at the Ruidoso Convention Center January 22<sup>th</sup>- 25<sup>th</sup>. Hotel reservations can be made at MCM Elegante located next to the Convention Center by calling (575) 258-5500. For more information please visit: <https://nmhay.com/2025-conference>.

## **13. Public invited to BLM's Southern NM Resource Advisory Council (RAC) tour and meeting in Socorro, Jan. 23-24**

*Excerpted Dec. 2024 by NMDA from*

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/08/07/2024-17440/public-meetings-of-the-southern-new-mexico-resource-advisory-council-new-mexico>

The RAC will participate in a field tour on Thursday, January 23, 2025, from 8 a.m. to approximately 4 p.m. MT. The RAC will then hold an in-person meeting, with a virtual participation option, on Friday, January 24, 2025, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. MT, with public comments accepted at 3:30 p.m.

The January 23, 2025, field tour will commence and conclude at the BLM Socorro Field Office, 901 South Highway 85, Socorro, NM 87801-4168. The January 24, 2025, meeting will take place at the Socorro Field Office.

A virtual participation option is available on the Zoom Webinar platform. To register for the Jan. 24 meeting, go to [https://blm.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_hg9JTuxDQ7yG\\_dENBsP4YA](https://blm.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_hg9JTuxDQ7yG_dENBsP4YA).

The January 23, 2025, field tour will give the RAC the opportunity to see the Box Recreation Area and the Datil Well Recreation Campground.

Planned meeting agenda items for the January 24, 2025, meeting include Albuquerque District updates with programs and major actions overviews (including a presentation on the proposed Datil Well Recreation Area Campground fee increases); Las Cruces District updates with programs and major actions overviews; Pecos District updates with programs and major actions



overviews (including a presentation on proposed fee increases for the Rob Jagers Campground, Valley of Fires Recreation Area, Haystack Mountain Off-Highway Vehicle Area, and Mescalero Sands Off-Highway Vehicle Area); an oil and gas industry presentation by a ConocoPhillips representative; a discussion of land access issues in southern New Mexico; and votes on proposed recreation and campground fee increases.

Final agendas will be posted 2 weeks in advance of the meetings on the RAC web page at: [www.blm.gov/get-involved/resource-advisory-council/near-you/new-mexico/southern-rac](http://www.blm.gov/get-involved/resource-advisory-council/near-you/new-mexico/southern-rac).

All meetings and field tours are open to the public, but members of the public who wish to participate in the field tours must provide their own transportation and meals.

The BLM welcomes comments from all interested parties. There will be a half-hour public comment period during the January 24, 2025, meeting beginning at 3:15 p.m. MT for any interested members of the public who wish to address the Southern New Mexico RAC.

For more information, contact Wendy Brown of BLM's Pecos District Office at 575-627-0259 or [wabrown@blm.gov](mailto:wabrown@blm.gov).

## **14. Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue training course, Feb. 11-13 in Las Cruces**

*From the Southwest Border Food Protection and Emergency Preparedness Center, Nov. 21, 2024*

The Southwest Border Food Protection and Emergency Preparedness Center has been awarded a USDA grant for the improvement of New Mexico's Agriculture Disaster Preparedness and Response Program. The Center is sponsoring a three-day Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue Training Course, Feb. 11-13 in Las Cruces. The training is modeled for first responders, fire department personnel, veterinarians, and livestock producers in order to be better prepared for handling large animals during emergencies, use of rescue equipment and the fundamentals of Incident Command System (ICS). The registration fee (\$800.00) for this training opportunity is being fully funded by a USDA Grant at no cost to the participants. To register, visit <https://tinyurl.com/5n94rj83>.

## **15. WaterSMART Grant Program Opportunity**

The Bureau of Reclamation published a notice of funding opportunity for the **WaterSMART Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Projects Grant Program** for Fiscal Year 2025 and 2026 yesterday. There are two rounds of applications so if you are not able to pull together an application in time for the 2025 due date, there will be a second round due in 2026.

### **WaterSMART Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Projects Description:**

The WaterSMART Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Program provides cost shared funding to states, Tribes, and other entities as they study, design and construct large-scale aquatic

ecosystem restoration projects that are collaboratively developed, have widespread regional benefits, and result in the improvement of the health of fisheries, wildlife, and aquatic habitat.

Eligible restoration activities include, but are not limited to:

- Removal or Modification of Barriers to Fish Passage
- Restoration of Floodplain Connectivity
- Restoration of Aquatic Habitat
- Implementation of Nature-Based Solutions Projects
- Improvement of Water Availability, Quality, and Temperature
- Other Related Activities

**Eligible Applicants:**

**Category A Applicants:** States, Tribes, irrigation districts, or water districts; State, regional, or local authorities, the members of which include one or more organizations with water or power delivery authority; Agencies established under State law for the joint exercise of powers; Other entities or organizations that own a facility that is eligible for upgrade, modification, or removal.

**Category B Applicants:** Nonprofit conservation organizations that are acting in partnership with, and with the agreement of an entity described in Category A, with respect to a project involving land or infrastructure owned by the Category A entity.

**Due Dates for Applications:**

First Round: **April 15, 2025**

Second Round: **February 17, 2026**

**Link to Apply**

<https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/357615>

**Link to Look at Previously Selected Applications**

[Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Program | Bureau of Reclamation](#)

**Local WaterSMART Contact**

Genevieve Allan, [gallan@usbr.gov](mailto:gallan@usbr.gov), 702-275-7893

**Overall Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Projects Program Contact**

Katherine Tucker, [ktucker@usbr.gov](mailto:ktucker@usbr.gov), 303-445-2586

**Other Open Funding Opportunities**

**FY24/25 Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects funding opportunity.** Applications are due January 14, 2025.

**FY24 Environmental Water Resources Projects funding opportunity.** Applications are due March 11, 2025.

**FY25 Large-Scale Water Recycling Projects funding opportunity.** Third round of applications are due April 7, 2025.

**FY25 Small Storage Program.** We are expecting a notice of funding announcement soon with a due date of April 30, 2025. There is a required feasibility study for this program that can be submitted any time prior to July 15, 2025.

I also wanted to draw your attention to the EPA's Environmental and Climate Justice Program, created by the Inflation Reduction Act, which provides funding for financial and technical assistance to carry out environmental and climate justice activities to benefit underserved and overburdened communities. [Environmental Justice Grants, Funding and Technical Assistance | US EPA.](#)

**Please call or send me an email if you have any questions or want to chat about potential projects you may have.** Genevieve Allan: Cell: (702)-275-7893 or [gallan@usbr.gov](mailto:gallan@usbr.gov)

For those not eligible to apply, please share with eligible parties that may be interested.

## **16. Regional Water Planning: You Spoke and We are Listening**

by **Andrew Erdmann**, NMISC Water Planning Program Manager

Published Dec. 15, 2024 at <https://www.lcsun-news.com/story/opinion/2024/12/15/regional-water-planning-you-spoke-and-we-are-listening/76923326007/>; retrieved by NMDA Dec. 17, 2024

In New Mexico, water is the foundation of our communities and ecosystems.

Managing it effectively is more than a policy challenge — it's a cultural, social, and climatic imperative. Evidence indicates that rain and streamflow will be reduced by 25% over the coming 50 years. This means New Mexicans need to plan and prepare to ensure our water supply can continue to meet our needs.

To achieve this balance, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC) launched the Main Stream New Mexico campaign in December 2023. The campaign aims to educate New Mexicans about regional water planning and our process for developing a ruleset and guidelines for implementing the Water Security Planning Act of 2023.

The idea behind regional water planning is to bring communities together to discuss their water values and infrastructure project/program needs. This will help establish priorities for legislative funding. To this end, NMISC gathered public input on the ruleset and guidelines during a series

of in-person and online open houses between April and August. Together, we brought the voices of New Mexicans into the heart of our process.

To engage as many New Mexicans as possible, our outreach spanned multiple platforms. Our Meta and Google ads resulted in 9.9 million impressions. We aired 79 radio ads statewide and placed 47 print ads in 32 newspapers. Our website, MainStreamNM.org, attracted more than 75,000 visitors and logged over 109,000 page views. We hosted open houses in 16 cities—one in each of New Mexico’s existing water planning regions. We met with 710 people in person and more than 1,600 people online, ensuring that voices from across the state—including remote areas—were heard.

By offering both in-person and online participation, we ensured accessibility that allowed New Mexicans to share their challenges, experiences, and ideas about water use. More than half (54%) of those who participated reported that it was their first involvement in water planning.

New Mexico’s landscape, like its people, is diverse and unique. Each region faces its own set of challenges regarding water use and conservation. The input NMISC gathered from the public clearly showed that New Mexicans care deeply about protecting the beauty and sustainability of our desert climate for future generations and developing solutions that are unique and specific to local communities. Public engagement is vital. When we work alongside our neighbors, we’re better able to craft solutions that reflect local needs and concerns.

What’s Next? The insights we gathered over the past eight months will guide the next phases of New Mexico’s regional water planning. Public input will help shape the future of water management, from how regions are delineated to strategies for conservation. The New Mexico Water Security Planning Act: Engagement Summary Report is available online now at [MainStreamNM.org/data-and-reports/](https://MainStreamNM.org/data-and-reports/).

This is just the beginning. As our water becomes more scarce, all ideas should be considered which is why there will be new public input opportunities as the ruleset and guidelines begin to take shape in January. Continued public involvement is essential. As we enter the next phase of developing the ruleset and guidelines, we are excited to offer additional opportunities for New Mexicans to help shape regional water planning in New Mexico. By listening to New Mexicans, we hope to ensure our solutions remain relevant and effective.

Thanks to the voices of more than 2,300 New Mexicans so far, we’re on the right path. Water management is complex, but with the public’s input, we are better equipped to meet the challenges ahead. Together, we can ensure that New Mexico’s water future is one of sustainability, equity, and innovation.

We invite you to join us in planning for that future. Visit [MainStreamNM.org](https://MainStreamNM.org) to learn more and get involved.

*Main Stream New Mexico is the public’s guide to revitalized regional water planning under New Mexico’s Water Security Planning Act of 2023. It is a campaign of the Interstate Stream Commission Water Planning Program.*

## 17. Surface Water Permitting to Protect State Waters

*By Pam Homer and Jocelyn Harimon, NMED-SWQB Point Source Regulation Section - State Permit Program Team*

*Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/yc5r2ekc>, 12 December 2024; **emphasis added by NMDA***

New Mexico is an arid state whose culture, economy, and natural ecosystems are sustained by rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, and other surface waters. The 2023 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)* severely reduced the federal regulatory and protective reach which New Mexico has relied upon to protect its surface waters. The development of a surface water discharge permitting program at the state level, as prioritized in New Mexico's 50-Year Water Action Plan, is imperative for the protection and preservation of New Mexico's water resources.

Many of New Mexico's waters are no longer subject to permitting requirements under the federal Clean Water Act (CWA). For example, these waters no longer require CWA permits:

- Ephemeral waters that flow in response to rain or snowmelt;
- Wetlands without a continuous surface connection to other surface waters, for example, where a dike or road has been built;
- Isolated ponds, lakes, and wetlands, including playas and springs; and
- Drier reaches of interrupted streams, where the water goes underground.

In addition, intermittent waters that flow seasonally could be at risk in future court challenges.

**The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is developing a state-led Surface Water Quality State Permitting Program that will protect not only those waters still covered by the federal CWA, known as Waters of the United States or "WOTUS", but all Surface Waters of the State.** To that end NMED proposes a two-prong approach.

NMED is seeking delegation from EPA for the federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program to regulate point source discharges into WOTUS. At the same time, NMED is proposing a state permitting program under the New Mexico Water Quality Act to cover both point source discharges and discharges of dredged and fill materials into Surface Waters of the State. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will continue to regulate discharges of dredged and fill materials to WOTUS. Overall, the result will be a modernized, integrated surface water permitting program to proactively protect water quality and watersheds.

NMED has been working hard this past year on stakeholder outreach, the solicitation for and formation of the Surface Water Advisory Panel (SWAP), and the drafting of statutory and regulatory proposals. The SWAP just wrapped up a series of six full-day sessions from August through October, where key stakeholders engaged in productive conversations covering the most critical aspects of the development and implementation of the permitting

**program. Next steps include taking the statutory proposals to the 2025 Legislature for adoption and releasing draft rules for public comment in the summer of 2025. In the Fall of 2025 NMED plans to petition the Water Quality Control Commission for a rulemaking followed by a hearing in the Spring of 2026.**

For detailed information about the development of the program including the specific information covered in the SWAP meetings, visit Surface Water Quality State Permitting Program ([nm.gov](http://nm.gov)).

If you have any questions or feedback, or would like to be added to the project mailing list, please send an email to [swq.pp@env.nm.gov](mailto:swq.pp@env.nm.gov).

# The Southwest Border Food Protection And Emergency Preparedness Center

## Save the Date

# Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue *3 Day Awareness/Operational Level Course*

**When:** February 11-13, 2025

**Where:** Southern NM Fair Grounds Las Cruces, NM

### [TLAER Registration](#)

**Emergencies involving large animals are exceptionally dangerous  
to all involved-both humans and animals.**

First responders are often unfamiliar with handling large animals and require specialized training in animal behavior, best handling practices and rescue equipment.

Participants in this training will get real world experience handling large animals.

They will master the practical application of large animal rescue equipment, tactics and use of the Incident Command System (ICS). The registration fee (\$800) for this training is being fully funded by a USDA grant at no cost to the participants.



**For Additional Information,**

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College of Agricultural, Consumer  
and Environmental Sciences  
New Mexico Department of Agriculture

