

# Climate Change & Water

Is New Mexico Vulnerable?



**A Final Report for  
Public Forums on Water Policy**

**Forums Sponsored by:**  
National Commission on Energy Policy and the  
New Mexico Office of the State Engineer

**Forums Convened by:**  
New Mexico First

**Dates & Locations of 2007 Forums**

Las Cruces: September 17  
Roswell: September 18  
Farmington: September 24  
Albuquerque: September 25  
Las Vegas: September 26

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## **Introduction**

Throughout the nation, people are beginning to recognize the important connections between climate change and water availability. These potential challenges are particularly troublesome for residents of the southwest, where the climate is already highly variable and droughts are common. This report summarizes the results from five regional citizen forums held throughout New Mexico in September 2007. Participants attending the daylong events learned about basic climate change science and developed recommendations for managing the state's limited water resources.

### ***The Structure of the Forums***

Each forum offered presentations on climate change and water management from nationally recognized experts including: Gregg Garfin, University of Arizona; Joel Smith, Stratus Consulting; and Brad Udall, University of Colorado. These experts addressed the projected impacts of climate change on New Mexico's water as well as identification of possible strategies for addressing the problem.

These forums were not debates about the science of climate change, carbon reduction, or ways to reduce future global warming. Instead, these local forums provided a practical conversation about how New Mexico can respond to water shortages that may already be underway and may be made worse by climate change. These were conversations about risk-management – about how best to plan for the future with each region developing its own unique vision for New Mexico's future.

Participants at the forums represented varying perspectives. There were 215 registrants, including community members, business leaders, tribal members, environmentalists, farmers, ranchers, people working for water utilities, and teachers. Participants were divided into small 15-20 member groups, each led by a two-person facilitation team. Each group explored four discussion questions that would, by the end of the day, translate into a list of top priorities for the Office of the State Engineer as it moves forward with development of the 2008 State Water Plan. Each individual played a substantial role in the development of recommendations in each community. Though all participants had different ideas on next steps, most New Mexicans agreed that water is our most precious resource.

These suggestions are being provided to the Office of the State Engineer for consideration as it reviews and revises the State Water Plan, as well as to the Governor, the Legislature, and other policymakers working to create a sustainable water supply that insures New Mexico's quality of life and economic vitality.

Forums were held in the cities of Las Cruces, Roswell, Farmington, Albuquerque, and Las Vegas.

### ***About the Organizers***

These forums were sponsored by the National Commission on Energy Policy and the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer. They were convened by the nonpartisan organization, New Mexico First, which facilitated the events and compiled the results.

**The New Mexico Office of the State Engineer** is charged with administering the state's water resources. It has authority over the supervision, measurement, appropriation, and distribution of all surface and groundwater in New Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The State Engineer is also Secretary of the Interstate Stream Commission.

The **National Commission on Energy Policy** is a bipartisan group of 20 of the nation's leading energy experts – representing the highest ranks of industry, government, academia, labor, consumer and environmental protection. The commission has produced a consensus energy plan that aims to enhance American national security, strengthen the U.S. economy, and protect the global environment and public health. The commission identifies and addresses the political and analytical barriers that have obstructed previous efforts at energy policy reform. By taking a bipartisan approach, and seeking to connect the expertise and objectivity of scientific research with political realities, the commission seeks both to build on and distinguish itself from past energy policy efforts.

**New Mexico First** is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that engages citizens in public policy. Co-founded in 1986 by U.S. Senators Pete Domenici (R-NM) and Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), the organization brings people together for two- and three-day town hall meetings as well as one-day forums. These events use a unique consensus-building process that enables participants to learn about a topic in depth, develop concrete policy recommendations addressing that topic, and then work with fellow New Mexicans to help implement those recommendations with policymakers.

## **Recommendation Themes**

The forums produced over 200 recommendations. All of those recommendations are printed in the next section. Combined, they fell into eight basic themes:

- Conservation and reclamation
- Education
- Managed growth
- Water resource planning and research
- Government collaboration and funding
- Watershed and forest management
- Agriculture
- Private industry

Within those themes, participants developed specific solutions. Some of the more common of those recommendations are listed below. These suggestions do not necessarily represent the consensus of all the participants. Given that the events were held in five different locations, with different constituencies represented, we did not develop a consensus. However, the themes and recommendations below represent commonly held views presented multiple attendees.

### ***Conservation and Reclamation***

Participants recommended the following solutions in order to reduce the amounts of water used by people or lost as run-off:

- Water recycling
- Water storage
- Low-flow showers, toilets, and washers
- Xeriscaping
- Examining domestic well policies
- Increased use of new technologies such as desalination and waste water treatment
- Rainwater harvesting
- Funding research into reusing produced water from oil and gas

### ***Education***

- Water curricula in the public schools (K-12)
- Public education campaigns
- Water festivals
- "Welcome to New Mexico" pamphlets to educate new-comers about our climate

### ***Managed Growth***

- Development tied to water availability
- Population growth a factor in water management plans
- Economic development strategies that are environmentally sustainable

### **Water Resource Planning and Research**

- Consideration of climate change as a factor in water planning
- Comprehensive examination of NM water laws and policies
- Assessment of existing water rights compared with water availability
- Revision of inter-state water compacts
- Research into future water availability

### **Government Collaboration and Funding**

- Better collaboration among government water agencies – maybe even under 1 roof
- Improved involvement with local communities and the private sector
- Enforcement of existing laws and water plans
- Tribal involvement in water planning
- Regional cooperation (watershed level)

### **Watershed and Forest Management**

- Thinning of forests
- Enabling the state to be involved in managing federal lands
- Funding existing plans to eliminate non-native, water-absorbing vegetation (e.g., *phreatophytes*)

### **Agriculture**

- A healthy balance between agriculture and growth
- More efficient irrigation practices
- Education for farmers on dealing with hotter summers and earlier run-off
- Incentivizing “farm-to-table” production, including growers’ markets
- Avoiding over-regulation of land owners

### **Business Sector**

- Avoiding over-regulation of private industry
- Including industry in water planning
- Funding research into reusing produced water from oil and gas

## Recommendations by Community

Participants from each group thoughtfully compiled a list of priority climate and water recommendations to be presented to both the Office of the State Engineer and New Mexico Policy Makers. Based upon each group's vision for the future of their region of New Mexico, prioritized lists of actionable steps were developed. Each group's recommendations can be found below.

### Las Cruces Forum

#### Las Cruces Group One: Vision Statement

*The year is 2030, and the south central region of New Mexico has become a national model for conservation, renewable energy and efficient use of land, air and water resources. The population is educated in how to conserve, use, and recycle water, and they have an understanding of the connection between the uplands and lowlands. Population is committed to sensible watershed management. Growth is managed according to a comprehensive, context-sensitive, transit-oriented model that maintains the inherent custom, culture, and character of the area.*

#### Las Cruces Group One: Top Priorities

Each group developed a comprehensive list of recommendations and then selected their top priorities. In some cases they developed additional lists of "next steps" for achieving those recommendations.

Priority Recommendation	Immediate Next Steps
Increase water reclamation and water conservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Line/cover reservoirs</li> <li>b) Tier rates for consumption</li> <li>c) Replacing antiquated systems</li> <li>d) Meters on wells</li> <li>e) Xeriscaping</li> </ul>
Preserve storm and ground water by banking reclaimed waters into isolated aquifers (aquifer storage).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Comprehensive inventory of approaches and opportunities for achieving banking of reclaimed and storm waters.</li> <li>b) Investigate legality of capturing water in terms of water rights.</li> <li>c) Give incentives for collecting storm water.</li> <li>d) Identify funding sources for infrastructure.</li> </ul>
The state legislature needs to revisit NM water law to create fair and consistent regulations for all water usage.	
Support development of desalination technologies for small communities, individual homes, and tribal peoples.	

### **Las Cruces Group One: All Recommendations**

1. Develop a water reclamation and conservation plan.
2. Hold water festival to educate children and adults.
3. Integrate agriculture and natural resources curriculum into schools.
4. Support walk or bike to work/school systems.
5. Mandate land/urban/water use planning.
6. Harvest precipitation and gray water.
7. Elect leaders who will bring the vision into focus
8. Offer a community course on land and water use for citizens (optional), and make it mandatory for elected officials.
9. Restrict water use related to domestic wells
10. Educate citizens about the importance of thinning the forests and watershed management
11. Conduct research on water yields regarding forest practices.
12. Allow carryover storage on Elephant Butte if it is not already happening.
13. Support smarter growth legislation through which citizens vote on comprehensive plans.
14. Sustainable building practices will be mandated (for all new construction and renovations).
15. Preserve storm and ground water by banking reclaimed waters into isolated aquifers (aquifer storage).
16. Revisit NM water law and create fair and consistent regulations for all water usage.
17. Enforce beneficial use laws.
18. Conduct a campaign on water conservation.
19. Establish a center of excellence for water conservation (NMSU).
20. Expand Drought Task Force to deal with climate change, and draw in private sector, university groups as well as public.
21. Support the development of desalination technologies for small communities, individual homes, and tribal peoples.
22. Encourage and plan for multi-modal transportation.
23. Conduct urban planning that promotes lifestyle changes.
24. Have water planning groups match defined watershed basins.

### **Las Cruces Group Two: Vision Statement**

*In the year 2030 we are enjoying a thriving economy and we can stand under clear skies with open space where there is an archipelago of communities separated except for the Rio Grande Corridor. We conjunctively manage our ground and surface water resources, through planning and development. Our water laws encourage conservation and sustainable use with more water re-use systems, including recycling and surface water treatment plants. We have sustainable water resources, which has been accomplished without burdening our energy resources.*

**Las Cruces Group Two: Top Priorities**

Recommendation	Immediate Next Steps
The governor should re-establish the state planning office, which would provide planning assistance and equitable funding for local and/or regional water projects in southern New Mexico, and the legislature should fund it.	
State and local water management agencies take the lead to implement water marketing and public education strategies and to strengthen civic and political will to participate in best practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Survey the materials that currently exist.</li> <li>b) Determine the available water supply and demand.</li> <li>c) Develop a plan to study relevant aquifers.</li> </ul>
Industry, agricultural producers, local government and home owners will adopt improved water conservation technology and best practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Develop legislation to amend the appropriate water laws to provide incentives.</li> <li>b) Compile &amp; disseminate public education materials.</li> <li>c) Define and/or identify water conservation technology and best practices.</li> </ul>
Local governments should require technically accountable water planning in real estate development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Provide state assistance as needed for review of current ordinances and design standard regulations and recommend revisions as appropriate.</li> <li>b) Develop legislation to change state subdivision laws.</li> <li>c) Identify need for conservation easement.</li> <li>d) Assess the ecosystem adaptability to development.</li> </ul>
Local governments, sanitation districts, mutual domestic water associations, and other private water user groups should develop alliances to collaboratively manage water resources and waste water discharge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Determine existing alliances</li> <li>b) Reach out to groups that are not in existing alliances.</li> <li>c) Stress communication between the different existing alliances.</li> <li>d) Encourage collaborative sharing of resources between groups.</li> </ul>

**Las Cruces Group Two: All Recommendations**

1. Local governments should require technically accountable water planning in real estate development.
2. Local governments, sanitation districts, mutual domestic water associations, and other private water user groups should develop alliances to collaboratively manage water resources and waste water discharge.
3. Legislators should pass water legislation with special attention to adjudication and flexible management of water rights.
4. The governor should re-establish the state planning office which will provide planning assistance and equitable funding for local and/or regional water projects in southern New Mexico. (The legislature will provide funding.) State and local water management agencies should take the lead to implement water marketing and public education strategies and to strengthen civic and political will to participate in best practices.
5. Local government should build water treatment facilities and water supply infrastructure.
6. Local governments should encourage urban growth boundaries that require higher density to save money on expanding infrastructure and use it on water resources.

7. Industry, agricultural producers, local government and home owners should adopt improved water conservation technology.
8. State government should provide incentives to increase alternative energy use.
9. Local governments should encourage urban growth boundaries that require higher density to save money on expanding infrastructure and use it on water resources.
10. Industry, agricultural producers, local government and home owners should adopt improved water conservation technology and best practices.
11. State government should provide incentives to increase alternative energy use.

## Roswell Forum

### Roswell Vision Statement

*In the year 2030 our agricultural lifestyle continues to be vibrant and our economy is diverse and healthy. We benefit from years of hard work to conserve and preserve the region. Private property and water rights have been protected. Farms that have been handed down for generations are viable utilizing well-managed water resources, including conservation, water recycling practices and development of produced water resources. Sustainable development is balanced with the needs of the agricultural community and growing communities. We have effectively managed our watersheds and they are properly functioning on both public and private land.*

### Roswell Top Priorities

Recommendation	Immediate Next Steps
Require a water right in order to drill domestic wells.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Do research to determine how much water is available.</li> <li>b) Adjudicate water rights.</li> </ol>
Do more work on water conservation and recycling.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Educate the general public and commercial water users.</li> <li>b) Get landowners, ranchers, farmers involved.</li> <li>c) Incentivize conservation programs.</li> <li>d) Discourage washing cars on street.</li> <li>e) Encourage Xeriscaping.</li> <li>f) Determine ownership of oil and gas produced water.</li> </ol>
Enable the state to get involved in effective management of watersheds on federal land.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ensure that land managers understand science of hydrology, geology, and geochemistry of watersheds and aquifers.</li> <li>b) Encourage continued funding and implementation of Forest and Watershed Health Plan.</li> <li>c) Conduct demonstrations of what needs to be done on a watershed.</li> </ol>
Plan housing and economic growth based upon water availability related to agricultural, industrial, and population growth.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Collect basin-wide hydrology reports on quality and quantity (some communities already do this).</li> <li>b) Require the purchase of wet water rights for new development.</li> <li>c) Thin existing vegetation according to population increases.</li> <li>d) Price the water according to usage, (tiered structure).</li> </ol>
Restore original congressional intent of the Endangered species Act to protect species and not advance litigation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Reward landowners who protect and preserve endangered species.</li> <li>b) Landowners should partner with environmental groups, inviting them onto private lands to show what really works in terms of land management.</li> </ol>

## **Roswell: All Recommendations**

1. People need to work better together.
2. More work needs to be done on water recycling, effective management of the watersheds.
3. Hold the federal government and single interest environmental groups accountable for their actions.
4. Recognize historic law (water rights, property rights).
5. Public education – citizens, lawmakers on water issues.
6. Stop allowing domestic well drilling (without a water right).
7. Conduct the hard science/research for the geology of the area (aquifers), with the research done by non-interested third party.
8. Do not handcuff the oil and gas industry.
9. Meter domestic wells.
10. Determine a funding mechanism for research.
11. Avoid over regulating oil and gas.
12. Monitor regulations and legislation to protect agriculture.
13. Develop common definition of conservation.
14. Do not over-regulate agriculture.
15. Conserve resources.
16. Limit the powers of eminent domain.
17. Stop treating symptoms, find causes, and correct (in terms of water and land management).
18. Increase the already existing statewide funding for the conservation practices and easements which protect the lands, make it recurring.
19. State must get involved in watershed management on federal land.
20. Aggressively implement and expand curriculum for schools (K-12) on water conservation.
21. The state and fed government must offer incentives to clean up produced water.
22. We must learn to treat, recycle, and reuse our water coupled with watershed management.
23. Require tying development approvals for new subdivisions to water availability within watersheds and water systems.
24. Seek appropriate funding from the Office of the State Engineer for statewide state water adjudication.
25. Renegotiate compact agreements with other states based upon climate change reports and/or manage water based upon climate change.
25. Establish drought contingency planning (state/communities) in a collaborative manner based on watersheds.
26. Revisit the Endangered Species Act.
27. Offer credits for established water systems that pick up extra connections to eliminate domestic wells.
28. Consider limits on growth based upon water availability related to agricultural, industrial, and population growth.
29. Consider water rights in light of actual water availability and quality.

## Farmington Forum

### Farmington Group One: Vision Statement

*Foreseeing the natural growth of our communities by the year 2030, our region is a place where we maintain a small town and rural atmosphere. With managed growth, people prosper while also preserving the strengths and wisdom of their unique cultures and environments. We engage in a planning process that integrates our priorities to ensure we maintain a sustainable environment for all with access to clean water, protected recreational areas and clear vistas, and healthy ranching and farming communities. Some of our priorities include policies and incentives for sustainable housing, energy efficient transportation, and regional park and river trail systems. As citizens, we foster a culture of conservation in our communities by seeking to understand and act for the preservation of all our resources. We work in harmony, regardless of our cultural points of view, and come to unity regarding the issues that will lead to better communities. We have succeeded by having regional and state water conservation funded and implemented at each stage.*

### Farmington Group One: Top Priorities

Recommendation	Immediate Next Steps
Establish a state and local public relations/marketing campaign to prompt involvement from citizens and provide public education regarding water, water usage, water conservation, and water quality enhancement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Identify target audiences</li> <li>b) Establish goals for campaign.</li> </ul>
Pursue enhanced funding from the legislature for upgraded statewide water/sewer/storm water infrastructure for municipalities as well as agriculture and small water systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Conduct needs inventory.</li> <li>b) Fully fund projects (not partial).</li> <li>c) Submit detailed plans/promises regarding results to be achieved (incentives for full funding).</li> <li>d) Submit regionalization plans to legislature.</li> </ul>
Actively implement existing storm water management plans for municipalities, developers, and homeowners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Educate citizens regarding current water plans.</li> <li>b) Educate and enhance the enforcement of current regulations for farmers and ranchers.</li> <li>c) Monitor the non-point sources of pollution.</li> <li>d) Actively enforce existing regulations.</li> <li>e) Consider referencing local water plans to state water plan.</li> </ul>
Establish benchmarks for water usage, educate public regarding benchmarks, give regular feedback regarding usage, provide incentives and disincentives for achievement/non-achievement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Collect data and set preliminary benchmarks.</li> <li>b) Encourage the use of water saving devices and habits (e.g., water sensors).</li> <li>c) Mandate developers to retrofit existing homes with water saving devices for every new home built.</li> <li>d) Promote new technology incorporating fire and water systems in commercial buildings.</li> <li>e) New developments to include gray water irrigation systems.</li> </ul>

### **Farmington Group One: All Recommendations**

1. Implement projects from state water plan.
2. Get buy-in of municipal and regional managers to develop a sustainable development code.
3. Pursue enhanced funding from the legislators for upgraded water/sewer/storm water infrastructure.
4. Conduct multi-modal transportation planning
5. Effective use of green space
6. Establish benchmarks for energy usage; educate public regarding benchmarks; give regular feedback regarding usage; provide incentives and disincentives for achievement/non-achievement.
7. Develop a solid growth plan for San Juan Basin.
8. Conduct collaborative partnerships between state and tribal organizations to seek grant funding for renewable energy development.
9. Provide more subsidized funding for government mandates that control water quality (e.g., turbidity).
10. Encourage “living building” practices (i.e., conserve energy, water, etc.) for residential, commercial, and government buildings.
11. Conduct an ongoing public relations/marketing campaign to prompt involvement from citizens & public education regarding water, water usage, conservation, and quality enhancement.
12. Market the value of the San Juan Basin.
13. Protect affordable living for citizens in the area.
14. Encourage more local farmer markets.
15. Conduct individual/residential harvesting of storm water (prevent sediment run off, more for landscaping-less erosion, etc.).
16. Encourage planning and implementation of existing storm water management plans for municipalities, developers, and homeowners.
17. Encourage investment in technological advances that conserve water (e.g., water sensors).

### **Farmington Group Two: Vision Statement**

*In the year 2030, the self-sufficiency of the people in this region has been maintained. The diversified culture and lifestyle have been enhanced as a result of implementation of water plans and good decision making by lawmakers and other policymakers. Water rights have been adjudicated and policy and decision-makers have integrated sustainability and equity principles in all plans for the area. Conservation measures have been implemented to maximize efficiency and minimize waste. Every home has clean, running water. Agriculture has been maintained and new appropriate (less water intensive) agricultural growth exists. The region has implemented clean energy choices (solar, wind) that rely less on large volumes of water.*

### **Farmington Group Two: All Recommendations**

1. Implement policies for wiser use of water (i.e. water banking, economic incentives for water conservation, sufficient supplies to ensure health and safety, etc.).
2. Implement water conservation policies that promote full water resource development.
3. Policymakers and decision-makers equitably distribute funding sources to communities.
4. Educate citizens by creating an inclusive and practical curriculum for change, with regard to water issues (conservation, availability of funding, organizational involvement, strategies, etc): for leaders, students, policymakers, tribal peoples, etc.

5. Develop efficient irrigation plans and distribution systems, including reasonable financing; this may include making relevant changes to state statutes addressing irrigation water.
6. Bring entities, agencies, and citizens together to develop regional water plans to include potable water and waste water.
7. State to adequately fund every community's water infrastructure.
8. Revise interstate compacts and water laws to include shortage sharing.
9. Develop legislation that creates rural water infrastructure funding on a 4-year cycle basis.
10. Identify, consolidate, and prioritize funding from tribal, state, and federal sources to put a water tap in every home.
11. Relevant water authority should raise rates to fund water infrastructure needs.
12. Revise Endangered Species Act to consider needs of people.
13. Push for changes to EPA and state standards and regulations to promote recycling of waste-water and gray water.
14. Legislature to significantly increase funding of the state Water Trust Fund.
15. Include industry in all discussions, planning and implementation of water development.
16. Promote research and implementation of desalinization.

**Farmington Group Two: Top Priorities**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Immediate Next Steps</b>
Implement policies for wiser use of water (i.e. water banking, economic incentives for water conservation, sufficient supplies to ensure health and safety, etc.).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Influence local codes changes.</li> <li>b) Develop incentives to implement best practices for water conservation (e.g. for farmers to switch from flood irrigation to more efficient irrigation, low flow toilets, xeriscaping).</li> <li>c) Work with each community ditch system on how to implement water banking.</li> </ol>
Educate citizens, policymakers, students, and tribal peoples by creating an inclusive and practical curriculum for change, with regard to water issues (conservation, availability of funding, organizational involvement, strategies, etc).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Develop curriculum</li> <li>b) Participate/bring back water fair.</li> <li>c) Hold regional informational workshops.</li> </ol>
Promote research and implementation of desalinization.	
Revise Endangered Species Act to consider needs of people.	
Urge the legislature to significantly increase funding of the state Water Trust Fund.	

## Albuquerque Forum

### Albuquerque Group One: Vision Statement

*In the year 2030, the communities in our region are sustainable with respect to water, transportation, and energy. In-stream flow of rivers is maintained and the air is clean. Communities have required development to be more compact, emphasizing and prioritizing infill development. The built environment supports walking, biking, and public transit. Traditional agricultural water use has been transformed to locally produced higher-value and organic foods, leading to a more self-sufficient food supply. The region has grown, but in an appropriate degree, and has not outstripped available resources. Watersheds are recognized and used as the primary unit for water planning and management. Economic development is tied to water use and availability. Consumers make lifestyle decisions tied to and based upon wise water use. For example, local, more appropriate materials for our climate are used in new houses, and homes incorporate systems that capture and collect run-off water. Gray water is increasingly used for domestic purposes and there is an increased use of treated waste water. Well-designed xeriscaping is universally implemented. Landscapes are regional in context and ecologically functional and designed to maximize water retention in the ecosystem and the cooling effect of the ambient air. Micro-farming, urban agriculture and home gardening are everywhere a part of the community. The region is energy self-sufficient based on use of renewable resources; energy sources are decentralized and municipally owned. Urban development is restricted from mountain slopes, ridge-top development is prohibited, and growth is restricted to locations with existing infrastructure. A long-distance transportation system based on rail transportation, supported by local public mass transportation moves people and goods. Alternatives (especially walking and biking) to the private automobile over shorter distances are reasonably available to all citizens. Safe, well-shaded walkways provide pedestrian access in neighborhoods and activity centers. All eroded and disturbed landscapes have been repaired and restored and the region has retained its diversity of flora and fauna. Spiritual and social uses of water are recognized as important in the system of beneficial use.*

### Albuquerque Group One: Top Priorities

Recommendation	Immediate Next Steps
Educate the public about climate change and water issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Encourage consumers to link decisions about purchases to their impact on water.</li> <li>b) Encourage public awareness of the state's water availability and uses through mechanisms such as comprehensive reporting of water forecasts.</li> <li>c) Develop tools to engage public about water issues.</li> <li>d) Incorporate water issues and climate change into state standards for science education.</li> </ul>
Provide no issuance of permits for development without proven water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Revise local ordinances.</li> <li>b) Enforce current subdivision laws.</li> <li>c) Draft legislation to amend subdivision and other relevant laws.</li> <li>d) Define "proven water".</li> </ul>

### **Albuquerque Group One: All Recommendations**

1. Pass laws that authorize transfer of development rights.
2. Educate the public about climate change and water issues.
  - Encourage consumers to link decisions about purchases to their impact on water
  - Encourage public awareness of the state's water availability and uses through mechanisms such as comprehensive reporting of water forecasts
  - Develop tools and processes to engage public about water issues
3. Continue to plan water regionally to address the following issues
  - Reallocate water rights.
  - Limit water transfers.
4. No issuance of permits for development without proven water
5. Direct and fund the Department of Agriculture to educate and support development of greater economic and health value, more water-efficient, agricultural products in NM.
6. Revise zoning ordinances and subdivision rules to enable and encourage more compact development and reduce sprawl.
7. Promote small farms, urban agriculture, and home gardening to increase local food supplies.
8. Quantify instream flow requirements accompanied by a plan that sustains these flows.
9. Quantify true economic value of water.
10. Increase investment in alternative transportation infrastructure.
11. Develop realistic water budget to ensure paper water rights don't exceed wet water rights.
12. Consider alternatives to adjudication of water (i.e. administrative processes).
13. Include all stakeholders, including tribal governments and acequia associations, in decision-making.
14. No new approvals of coal-fired power plants without carbon sequestration technologies.
15. No new power plants that have adverse impacts on water conservation.
16. Expand incentives and provide more funding for new water conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy technologies.

### **Albuquerque Group Two: Vision Statement**

*In 2030 the region's water uses are balanced with its renewable supply. We sustain a healthy balance between agriculture, public lands, open spaces and urban development. We work hard to protect our watersheds, acequias and open spaces. We achieve this with compact, innovative, livable communities, conservation and open dialogues which bring the best ideas and solutions regarding our communities and their growth from a group that has a broad background of experience, wisdom and cultures for all ages. We recognize the intimate connection between land use, water use, energy use and transportation. We adhere to greater water conservation, less consumption, healthier rivers and watersheds along with vast water harvesting and reuse of water, encouraging compact communities, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, expansion and use of public transportation, wise goods transportation, and protection of open spaces not only for our benefit but also for the benefit of our region's wildlife. We support our local agricultural community, and promote agricultural efficiency and consume more regional (seasonal) foods. Our communities offer accessible educational programs which teach practical water conservation.*

**Albuquerque Group Two: Top Priorities**

Recommendation	Immediate Next Steps
Tie development to water availability.	a) Synthesize knowledge on assessing water availability before approving plans; change statutes to mandate water assurances and zoning and regulations. b) Require State Engineer to look at cumulative impacts.
Protect ground water.	a) Urge local governments to adhere to area and sector plans generated by people there who understand the area. b) Determine first where the ground water is located. c) Identify vulnerable areas and identify pollution sources. d) Educate population on ground water and surface water connectivity. e) Develop suitable ordinances for proper mitigation and protection activities. f) Consistently enforce existing regulations; reduce mining of ground water.
Eliminate “use it or lose it provision in state law.	a) Identify communities which have suffered from this provision. b) Redefine “beneficial use”.
Maximize water re-use (residential and municipal wastewater).	a) Continue and increase incentives from municipal to individuals and businesses. b) Educate citizenry about water conservation and how to do it. c) Research to alleviate public health concerns. d) Consider the impacts of water re-use, including addressing return flow credit. e) Revise zoning codes to allow for use of gray water.
Measure, meter, monitoring all water in same metrics.	a) Get local governments who provide water together to collect data and agree on a reporting format along with the Office of the State Engineer. b) Analyze data and make it publicly available and educate public on how to use it. c) Establish water basin baseline metrics.

**Albuquerque Group Two: All Recommendations**

1. Measure, monitor and meter in same metrics.
2. Tie Development to water availability.
3. Legislate in-stream flow protection.
4. Make spiritual and cultural values a beneficial use.
5. Protect ground water quality.
6. Review building codes for maximum efficiency with expanded incentives for retrofitting.
7. Increase incentives for businesses to practice water conservation.
8. Create incentives for micro-farms.
9. Guarantee community stakeholder involvement for all – including bilingual.
10. Complete statewide water adjudication process fairly.
11. Link land use planning with water management.
12. Restore water irrigation rights for those who lost due to decreased use.
13. Require responsible water management.
14. Cost-share program for farmers to conserve water.
15. Eliminate “use it or lose it” provisions in state law.

16. Create more muscular regional government entities.
17. Protect open space.
18. Distinguish between wet and dry water rights.
19. Fund studies to investigate and evaluate conservation options.
20. Control drilling of wells.
21. Assist local elected officials with technological expertise-1
22. Change state law to allow state engineer authority over all waters in state.
23. Fund survey of maintenance state of all water, sewer and treatment systems and facilities – rehabilitate priority list.
24. Require all water utility to adhere to industry standards.
25. Plan for drought.
26. Reduce open reservoir storage.
27. Investigate feasibility of water banking.
28. Mandate use of water efficient appliances.
29. Make water knowledge widely accessible to regions so people understand the need.
30. Maximize water re-use.
31. Investigate reducing water loss at Elephant Butte.
32. Fund fundamental scientific studies to get foundational data.
33. Renegotiate all 9 water compacts.
34. Balance local entities water budgets with regional.
35. Stop mining water.
36. Tie federal funds to comprehensive land use planning with incentives.
37. Investigate urban and rural agreements for funding of efficient water use.
38. Reward best land management – public and private.
39. Value agricultural lands as open space, water recharge and habitat.
40. Keep NM on leading edge of climate change investigations for potential funding.
41. Convert landscape and ag to decreased water consumptive vegetation and crops.

## **Las Vegas Forum**

### **Las Vegas Group One: Vision Statement**

*In the year 2030, New Mexico is the national leader in renewable energy, conservation of natural resources, water management and reuse, and regional transportation. Having invested in education two decades ago, young people have grown into national leaders in these areas, implementing a statewide green building code, developing innovative ways to capture, store, and re-use water while protecting acequias, critical habitat, and balancing the use of natural resources. Our economy is vital, in part because we have mastered the use of renewable energy and the sustainable use of natural resources. We have created an environment in which local businesses thrive and employ local people. Public participation in policy matters is at an all-time high.*

**Top Priorities**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Immediate Next Steps</b>
<p>Create/increase more open communication to and from policymakers to make them more accountable to the public.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) People in this the forums go to lawmakers with these ideas.</li> <li>b) Invite lawmakers to public events such as this one (particularly relevant committee chairs).</li> <li>c) Make it easier for common folks to submit letters / comments on issues to lawmakers.</li> <li>d) Establish a public tracking between what candidate said and what lawmaker does (use the media?). "Report card".</li> <li>e) Regionalize.</li> <li>f) Use technology.</li> <li>g) Involve the public in the decision-making process by using technology.</li> <li>h) Require PSAs about local issues during prime time.</li> <li>i) Enforcement of existing "open documents and meetings" laws (either Attorney General or courts).</li> <li>j) Create ethics committees to define behaviors of government officials.</li> </ul>
<p>Promote sustainable, renewable, and/or decentralized energy projects through incentives that support the local economy and produce local jobs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Increase the ceiling on "net metering".</li> <li>b) Education for job training.</li> <li>c) Modify tax code to increase incentives for energy-efficiency projects.</li> <li>d) Increase incentives for new companies that explore/make new technologies.</li> </ul>
<p>Support improvements in education through all means possible. Lawmakers and educators should work together to ensure a coherent water / sustainability educational program throughout all grade levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Involve all educational institutions.</li> <li>b) Increase funding for public outreach / education programs.</li> <li>c) Work with local school boards to include in local curriculum</li> <li>d) Create information for newcomers, such as a "Welcome to the Desert" flyer.</li> </ul>
<p>Greatly increase the amount of money available to maintain and improve rural and small water systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) State and federal earmark for an allocation.</li> <li>b) Support regionalization efforts for effective planning.</li> <li>c) Support the existing network to help small and rural systems deal with the various bureaucracies.</li> </ul>
<p>Coordination of water agencies across multiple levels by housing representatives under one roof for better. collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Achieve common goals.</li> </ul>

## **Las Vegas Group One: All Recommendations**

1. Enable more and better communication between policymakers and the public.
2. Support improvements in education through all means possible. Lawmakers and educators should work together to ensure a coherent water / sustainability educational program throughout all grade levels.
3. Promote a committed and meaningful combination of western and native science.
4. Evaluate water policies (i.e. water rights).
5. Lawmakers at various levels of government should initiate green building codes.
6. Improve the policies and laws that would enhance and encourage better regional cooperation, i.e. major watersheds.
7. Support mass transportation.
8. Hold people accountable for their actions.
9. Incentivize public participation, green building, public transportation – incentives all around.
10. Put teeth into the various plans that exist statewide and locally.
11. Pass meaningful tax incentives for renewable energy adoption.
12. Improve communication among government agencies. (“Cut government red tape”).
13. Policies that support urban as well as rural communities.
14. Greatly increase amount of money available to maintain and improve rural and small water systems.
15. Be realistic about population growth when formulating what you want to accomplish. Factor population growth into plans.
16. Open meetings and open records – politicians need to do things in the open.
17. Reduce the need for reliance on oil & gas, have a more sustainable environment.
18. Public wind and solar systems on a decentralized energy system.
19. Promote sustainable economic development.
20. Concentrate on low water-use energy sources and low energy-use water sources.
21. In exchange for incentives, insist that companies hire 80 to 90% locals.
22. Support the consolidation of water agencies being under one roof so they can talk to each other better – multiple levels.
23. Support and encourage regionalization of small water systems to promote collaboration (not consolidation) among small water systems to improve flexibility to manage a common resource.
24. Look for other sustainable means of water conservation. Be smarter about how we use water.
25. Develop a plan for disposing of process wastewater disposal.
26. Fund State Engineer well enough so it can do the job.
27. Have New Mexico State University help the agricultural industry deal with the earlier runoff and the hotter summer.

## Las Vegas Group Two: Vision Statement

*In the year 2030, the northern region of New Mexico continues to thrive after adopting regional long range, smart, sustainable water management solutions, good water conservation, water consumption and protection policies and development of the regions' water resources. Citizens, policymakers and law makers, government entities, and corporate entities are educated and informed on how to manage and use renewable energy sources. The area is the supplier of renewable energy to the entire Southwest. The forests, watersheds and acequias are healthy and vibrant. The rivers run and are clean. Agriculture is strong; drinking water is fresh and clean and everyone has equitable access to efficient waste water systems. Every one uses resources in water-wise ways.*

## Las Vegas Group Two: All Recommendations

1. Form a committee to look at NM laws and policies which inhibit conservation and the development of the state's water resources.
2. Undertake a robustness and resilience analysis of all water management groups in the state w/respect to climate change.
3. Evaluate what realistic population growth increase can take place in the state without changing our quality of life.
4. Fund the non-native phreatophyte management plan.
5. Develop multi jurisdictional and landscape scale forest management plan to reduce risk of fire and forest health issues.
6. Develop a suite of incentives to enable residences and small biz to use solar electric and thermal technologies on their roofs (i.e. rebates, revolving loan funds, etc.).
7. Create a department of water and climate change.
8. Develop incentives for small scale agricultural farms to increase "farm to table" food production.
9. Identify funding sources and educational sources to increase the pool of certified water and waste water operators in the state of NM.
10. Expand ecological data gathering into ag systems (i.e. acequias) and integrate local K-12 education into that program.
11. Implement incentives for transmissions of renewable energy throughout the state.
12. Provide information incentives and penalties for the ag sector to adjust to year to year water fluctuations.
13. Create a free statewide program to swap out old high flow shower heads/toilets/washing machines for new low flow showerheads/toilets/washing machines (trade).
14. Reduce water used in fossil energy production by 5% each decade for the next 100 years.
15. Use existing infrastructure for safe Co2 sequestration.
16. Reuse produced water.
17. Create a position of Regional Authority to ensure all water projects (state/local/federal) are regionalized rather than local. (Has authority to determine which projects will be funded.).
18. Facilitate installation of meters and strong legal instruments to help protect communities interested in water leasing.
19. Fund the development of industry to use small trees.
20. Incentivize the use of gray water systems in households (tax credits).
21. Analyze suitability of all aquifers for Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR).
22. Integrate concepts of watershed science and water use in the curriculum for students K-12.

23. Fund three pilot ASR projects.
24. Provide funding to government entities for the use of advanced waste water treatment technology.
25. Adopt an assured water supply program that includes required proof of a 100 year water supply for any commercial, residential and industrial users.
26. Fund universal education for all state/local/tribal municipalities so all are on same page with regard to water education.
27. Protect seed supply heritage.
28. Place a moratorium on new coal fire power plants that don't have CCS (carbon capture and sequestration).
29. State Engineer to coordinate their regulations with gray water use, cistern capture.
30. Have OSE renegotiate all compacts as a result of climate change.
42. Re-define state water planning process to be inclusive of a state plan, regional plans and most importantly, local plans.
43. Assure the OSE works within the legal parameters of the position.
44. Respecting the tribal govts, implement water planning and development to benefit the whole state.
45. Require approval of any water plan (state/local/regional) before any project money is allocated.
46. Get the state climatologist to be involved with climate change.

**Top Priorities**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Immediate Next Steps</b>
Create a department of water and climate change.	a) Craft language for joint memorial that would pass in next legislative session that would create a body that would design a department.
Integrate concepts of watershed science and water use in the curriculum for students K-12.	a) Utilize already existing models (i.e. Bosque School, State Board of Education (or whomever approves curriculum). b) Create task force of educators to review current curriculum. c) Get a grant from appropriate foundation to research what other states are doing and develop a plan for NM. d) Get conservation materials from Bureau of Reclamation for students. e) Develop a bilingual web resource page.
Develop incentives for small scale agricultural farms to increase direct "farm to table" food production.	a) Evaluate incentives that would help state/federal funding through passing a memorial. b) Survey/involve small organizations involved on this issue. c) Determine how to leverage Farm Bill to determine incentives available. d) Support USDA in creating funding for farm to table production. e) Develop marketing strategy. f) Contact local seed banks on raising heritage and native crops.

## Appendix

### Registration List: All Forums

The following list includes the registrants from all five regional forums: Las Cruces, Roswell, Farmington, Albuquerque, and Las Vegas.

#### Las Cruces

**Elizabeth Bardwell**  
World Wildlife Fund  
Las Cruces

**Judy Bartlett**  
Citizen  
Las Cruces

**Tom Bates**  
City of Deming  
Las Cruces

**Robert Bishop**  
USDA (retired)  
Las Cruces

**Tiffany Bloom**  
South Central Council of Governments  
Las Cruces

**Hilary Brinegar**  
New Mexico Department of Agriculture  
Las Cruces

**Craig Cathey**  
Office of the State Engineer  
Las Cruces

**Laurie Churchill**  
New Mexico State University  
Las Cruces

**Penelope Costello**  
UNITED COUNTRY-Mimbres Realty  
Las Cruces

**Tim Darden**  
New Mexico Dept of Agriculture  
Las Cruces

**Jerry Donaldson**  
Phelps Dodge Tyrone Mining  
Las Cruces

**Gary Esslinger**  
Elephant Butte Irrigation District  
Las Cruces

**Eugene Gant**  
Las Cruces Board of Education and NM  
Public Education Commission  
Las Cruces

**Bea Garrett**  
New Mexico State University/Cooperative  
Extension Service  
Las Cruces

**Paul Gutierrez**  
New Mexico State University/Cooperative  
Extension Service  
Las Cruces

**Bob Hearn**  
QGA  
Las Cruces

**Woodrow Irving**  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Las Cruces

**Win Jacobs**  
HACLC  
Las Cruces

**Jerry Johnson**  
Citizen  
Las Cruces

**Michael Landis**  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Las Cruces

**Margret Leverett**  
League of Women Votes  
Las Cruces

**Steven Loring**  
Agricultural Experiment Station--New Mexico  
State University  
Las Cruces

**Steve Meadow**  
Dona Ana County  
Las Cruces

**Mark Moll**  
Sierra Vista South Co-operative  
Las Cruces

**Michael Nivison**  
Otero County  
Las Cruces

**Peter Russell**  
Town of Silver City  
Las Cruces

**Dan Santantonio**  
City of Las Cruces Utilities  
Las Cruces

**Maureen Schmittle**  
City of Alamogordo  
Las Cruces

**Thomas Schmugge**  
New Mexico State University  
Las Cruces

**Gerald Schultz**  
Black Range RC&D  
Las Cruces

**Beverly Singleman**  
Hubert & Hernandez PA  
Las Cruces

**Allyson Siwik**  
Gila Conservation Coalition  
Las Cruces

**Sharon Thomas**  
Quality Growth Alliance  
Las Cruces

**Dan Townsend**  
Student of Water/Energy Issues  
Las Cruces

**Wayne Treers**  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Las Cruces

**Elvin Vickers**  
SEMCOG Assoc  
Las Cruces

**Frank Ward**  
NMSU/Agriculture Economics & Agriculture  
Business  
Las Cruces

**Karl Wood**  
Las Cruces

**Trisha Zendel**  
Village of Cloudcroft  
Las Cruces

## **Roswell**

**Judy Bock**

Carlsbad Soil & Water Conservation District  
*Roswell*

**Brent Bullock**

Pecos Valley Artesian Conservancy District  
*Roswell*

**Walt Davenport**

Grassland & Livestock Mgmt Service  
*Roswell*

**Jim Davis**

Village of Capitan  
*Roswell*

**Cheryl Goodloe**

Carrizo Valley Ranch AND Southern Rockies  
Agricultural Land Trust  
*Roswell*

**Sid Goodloe**

Carrizo Valley Ranch AND Southern Rockies  
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*Roswell*

**Sammy Hammons**

Village of Capitan  
*Roswell*

**H. Harvard**

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*Roswell*

**Harold Hobson**

Chaves County  
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**Alvin Jones**

Henninghausen & Olsen, LLP  
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**Steve Kittrell**

Helena Chemical Company  
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**Sharon Lombardi**

Dairy Producers of New Mexico  
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**Claire Manatt**

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Pecos Valley Artesian Conservancy District  
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**William Morris**

Village of Ruidoso  
*Roswell*

**Morgan Nelson**

Fred M. Nelson Farms  
*Roswell*

**A.J. Olsen**

Henninghausen & Olsen, LLP  
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Division of Resource Management and  
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NM Interstate Stream Commission  
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**Jim Wilcox**

Mosaic Potash  
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City of Portales  
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**Carl Wilson**

Penasco Valley Telecommunications  
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## **Farmington**

**Jacqueline Alcorn**

San Juan Water Commission  
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**El Brown**

Dooda Desert Rock Organization  
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**Marnie Carroll**

Dine College  
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**Ervin Chavez**

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Grad Student/High School teacher  
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City of Aztec  
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**Edward Vigil**  
Taos County Planning Department  
Las Vegas

**Bob Wessely**  
Water Assembly  
Las Vegas

**Steve Wilson**  
NMHU  
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**Stephen Wust**  
Creativity Merchants  
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