



January 4, 2022

President's Conference Message

Thank you for participating. New Mexico and our younger and future generations need you to engage. Please help persuade our elected officials to fund New Mexico's water future.

Our climate emergency—Surviving New Mexico's arid future requires us to mitigate carbon emissions and adapt to warming and drying. Mitigation has begun. New Mexico has not yet begun to adapt.

Our Water Situation—Current water uses are depleting aquifers in many regions of our state. In the Middle Rio Grande, current water uses are greater than our agreed legal share. We are in imminent danger of another violation of the Rio Grande Compact. Water supplies will continue to decrease. An average water year in the future will be like today's bad years.

Adaptation Is Essential—New Mexico must adjust to a future with significantly less water. We must face the facts that (1) throughout New Mexico, current water uses cannot be sustained, and (2) our future needs for water will increase as climate change substantially reduces our water supplies and dries our soils and watersheds. New Mexicans need to decide what they want New Mexico and its diverse regions to look like and equitably allocate our declining water supplies accordingly. Our diverse cultures, our people and economy, food production, and riverine and riparian ecosystems are at stake.

Scientific Basis—In 2020, Governor Lujan Grisham demanded the State Engineer and the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission prepare a 50-year water plan for the state. A "Leap Ahead" analysis by New Mexico's best experts—organized by New Mexico Tech—shows what we can expect. Climate change will decrease river flows and aquifer recharge, accelerating the drying of our rivers and depletion of our aquifers. Inflows to the Middle Rio Grande will decrease by one-third by 2070. Snowmelt runoff is disappearing. Aridification is happening.

Grassroot Lobbying—The Middle Rio Grande Water Advocates urge you to demand our Legislature stop turning its back on our water realities. We need an "all hands on deck" response to face the state, regional, and community water crises that are playing out in slow motion. Adaptation requires funding. Adaptation also requires reform of New Mexico's water statutes, institutions, and policies. We must adapt to preserve what we value while living with less water.

Strategic Actions by Our Elected Officials—Our Governor and Legislature in 2022 and 2023 must take these four strategic actions, which our conference will present and discuss:

- Fund New Mexico's Water Future (2022 and 2023)
- Reform Water Policy and Governance (2023)
- Ensure Reliable Middle Rio Grande Compact Compliance (2022 and 2023)
- Increase the Equity of Sharing Water Shortages (2022 and 2023)

For our beloved New Mexico and Middle Rio Grande Valley,

Norm Gaume
President