



New Mexico's Water Future: What do we need to do now?



Webinar Thursday, **Nov. 3**, 7:00-8:00 pm MT

Panelists include 3 members of the State Engineer's Water Task Force:

- Hannah Riseley-White, Deputy Director, New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission
- Dr. Ladona Clayton, Executive Director, Ogallala Land and Water Conservancy
- Norm Gaume, President, Middle Rio Grande Water Advocates

This webinar will introduce and promote the Water Task Force's substantive set of consensus recommendations. These recommendations are essential for New Mexico's balanced water future.



Middle Rio Grande Water Advocates Webinar

Water Policy and Infrastructure Task Force Update

Hannah Riseley-White, NMISC Deputy Director

November 3, 2022



Overview

- 29 Member Task Force
 - 20 Citizen Members Reps including:
ag, municipal and domestic users, Tribes, Pueblos and Nations, acequia communities, environmental advocates, oil and gas industry, philanthropy and academic and research institutions
 - 9 State Agency Reps
 - Organization and Technical Support from NM First and Utton Center
- Two Principal Objectives in Charter:
 - 1) Review and comment on the NMISC's 50-Year Water Plan
 - 2) Develop recommendations to address water policy and infrastructure needs given current challenges, including long-term
- Report with full recommendations set for release **late November**
- **Consensus Based Process**

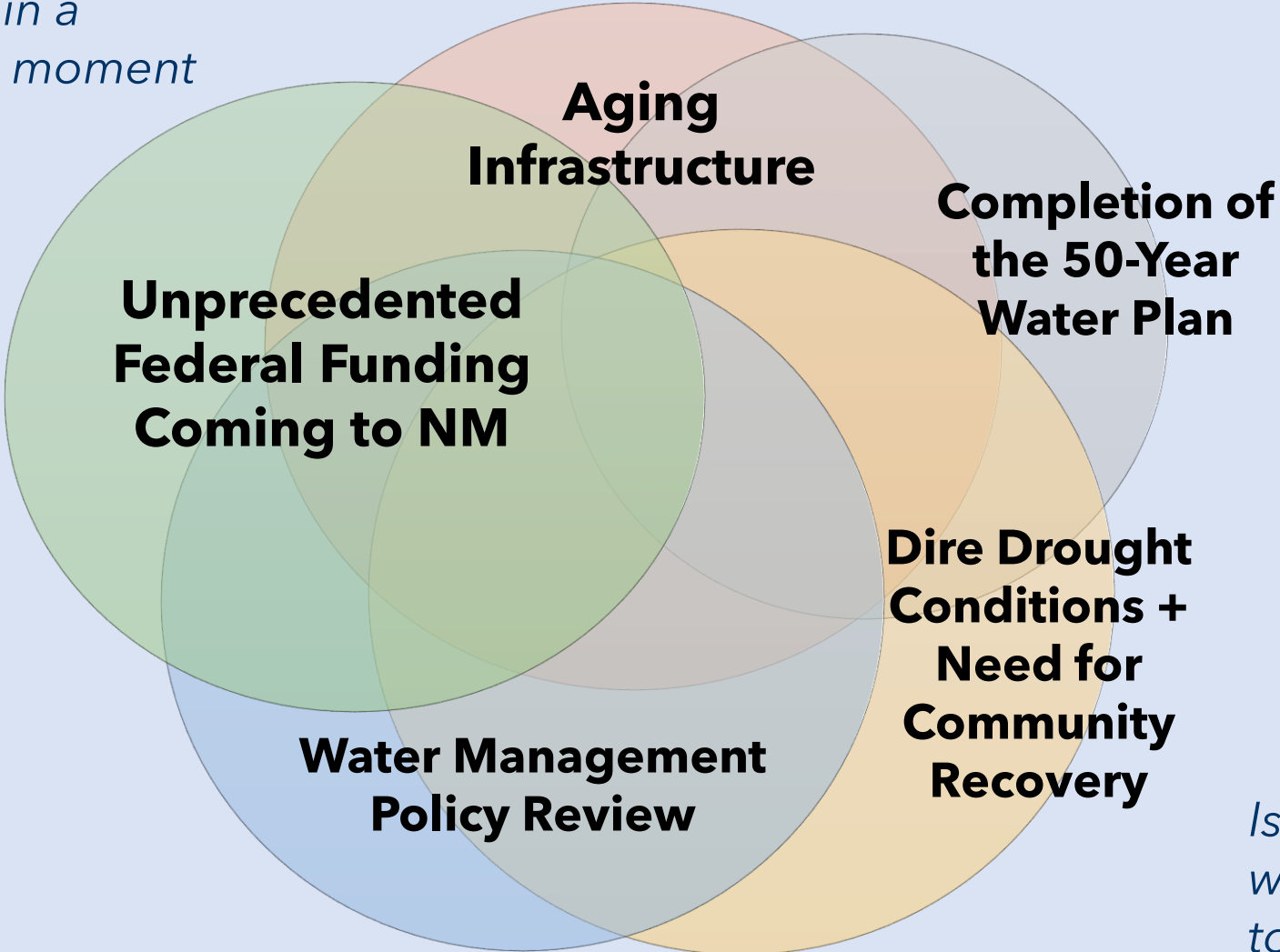


Major Problems Facing New Mexicans in the Coming Decade

- Persistent drought being exacerbated by rising average annual temperatures
- Catastrophic wildfires resulting from watersheds devastated by drought
- Declining aquifers resulting from reduced surface water supplies
- Aging water and wastewater infrastructure, hitting rural systems hardest
- Need for stormwater control investments as intense monsoon events rise
- Lack of consistent funding for proper human capacity development at all levels of government and the private sector
- Need for long-view planning and investment to correct years of under-funding

WATER POLICY AND INFRASTRUCTURE TASK FORCE

*A once in a
lifetime moment*



*Is there a
willingness
to act?*

First Objective: 50-Year Water Plan Review

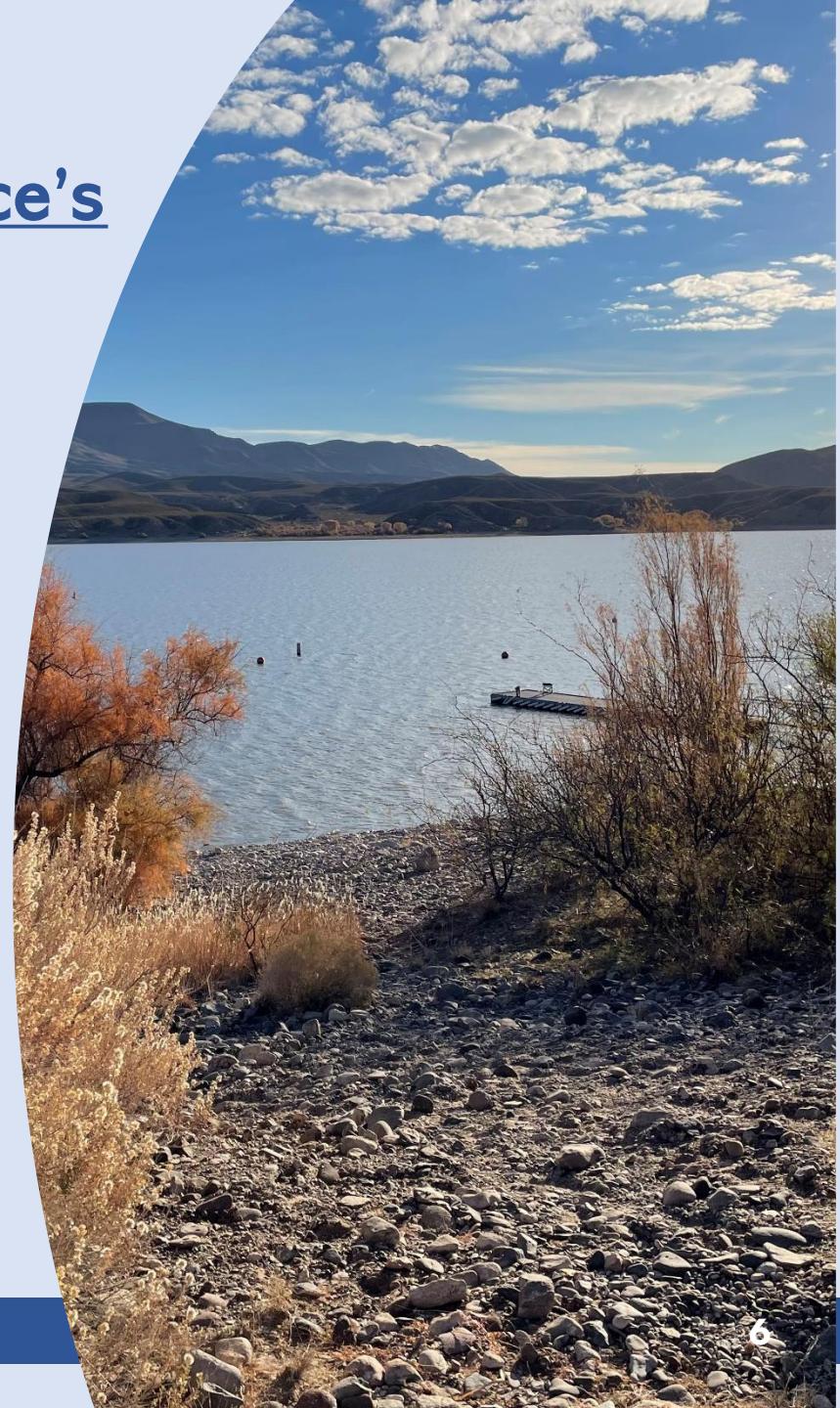


- Water Task Force provided consensus feedback to a July 2022 full draft plan.
- Work underway now with the Governor's Office to add additional *critical action steps*.
- Plan recommendations grouped to address:
 - Stewardship
 - Sustainability
 - Equity
- Separate Water Task Force recommendations intended to provide specific and actionable suggestions to executive and legislative leadership.

Second Objective: Development of the Task Force's Own Recommendations

Self Formed into Three Workgroups:

- Community Drinking Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Capacity, Infrastructure, and Finance
- Water Resources Management and Planning
- River, Aquifer, and Watershed Health



COMMUNITY DRINKING WATER, WASTEWATER and STORMWATER CAPACITY, INFRASTRUCTURE, and FINANCE

THE PROBLEM

Water and wastewater systems are essential for quality of life. Many of New Mexico's aging water and wastewater systems have been left behind and many communities lack adequate and resilient stormwater infrastructure. This leaves communities' health and well-being at risk as they struggle with the growing impacts of climate change.

Recommendations:

- Create a Water Infrastructure Projects Authority to assist small communities
- Support regional water system collaboration
- Enhance technical assistance support to small communities
- Create an emergency relief fund to help communities like those hit by fires and post-fire flooding in 2022
- Grow the water work force



WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING



THE PROBLEM

New Mexico's climate has changed. The state is experiencing higher temperatures resulting in greater aridity and less available water. Scientists project an additional 25% decrease in streamflow and aquifer recharge over the next half century, even as New Mexico's population and economy change and grow. New Mexico lacks adequate capacity to advance current institutional tools to address the scale of the response needed.

Recommendations:

- Transform, empower, and adequately fund the state's water management agencies to fully implement their mission in serving the citizens of New Mexico.
- Elevate water planning, through statutory clarification of its purpose, proper funding and empowerment of regional and local water agencies, to set clearly identified goals for permanent and escalating reduction in water use over the coming decades.
- Provide the necessary state funding needed to leverage the bounty of federal funding currently available for water infrastructure.
- Support the resilience of the state's diverse agricultural communities with effective water rights administration by the Office of the State Engineer (OSE), inclusion of agricultural stakeholders in water management, and consideration of equity, conservation and sustainability.

RIVER, AQUIFER, and WATERSHED HEALTH



THE PROBLEM

New Mexico's rivers, aquifers, and watersheds are experiencing unprecedented stress, depletion, and degradation as we navigate a warming and drying climate. Increasing incidences of drought conditions, intense precipitation events, catastrophic wildfires, and associated destructive erosion and sedimentation threaten our forest and watershed health, and surface and groundwater resources.

Recommendations:

- Fully fund and staff the Strategic Water Reserve and the River Stewardship Program.
- Fund the New Mexico Environment Department to develop and implement a surface water quality permitting program.
- Review modifications to New Mexico groundwater law to enable New Mexico to increase resilience of the state's groundwater supplies and groundwater-dependent users.
- Modernize forest management programs for both preventative and post-fire recovery.

Time to take action toward building a resilient water future!



MIDDLE RIO GRANDE WATER ADVOCATES WEBINAR

Water Task Force Consensus Recommendations

Workgroup #2

*Dr. Ladona K. Clayton, Executive Director
Ogallala Land & Water Conservancy
November 3, 2022*



WATER TASK FORCE

New Mexico's Water Supply

- Climate change is resulting in greater aridity and less available water
- Reservoirs, rivers, and aquifers are at or near record lows
- Scientists project an additional 25% decrease in streamflow and aquifer recharge over the next half century, even as New Mexico's population and economy change and grow.
- Watershed degradation compromises surface and groundwater supplies
- Demand exceeds supply

Ogallala Land & Water Conservancy

A Dwindling Water Supply

Ogallala Land & Water Conservancy reflects the fruition of one action plan in the City of Clovis Master Water Assurance Plan (2017)

The High Plains Aquifer (Ogallala), our sole, non-recharging Aquifer, is being depleted at an advanced rate. For every year 13 landowners continue pumping their wells to irrigate their crops, we lose approximately 4 years of remaining groundwater for consumptive use. In April 2022, we metered 53 out of 72 wells in the first Aquifer paleochannel; we already lost 20% of the remaining groundwater since 2017.

NMBGMR Hydrogeological Specialist said it best: “Clovis has pumped themselves into oblivion!” (7-28-22)



Ogallala Land & Water Conservancy

A Dwindling Water Supply

GOALS:

1. Secure a groundwater supply while it still exists to serve as a supplemental water supply for Cannon AFB (mission resilience), Clovis, and Curry County.
2. Cease the pumping of irrigation wells in two paleochannels residing northwest and west of Cannon AFB, and transition irrigation farming to dryland cropping or grazing land.
3. Save approximately 12 years of water in 3 years (11,919,031,200 gallons saved) by initially leasing the water from 10 landowners – place 80% of the groundwater in conservation easements in perpetuity within 5 years

WATER TASK FORCE

A Consensus-Driven Process

- 29-member task force develops problem statements, proposals, and recommendations (From Water Task Force to Three Workgroups)
- Every voice heard and honored; multiple opportunities for each Task Force member to identify and share recommendations for consideration
- Deliberation and dialogue
- Ranking and voting
- Refining
- Reaching consensus

Water Resources Management & Planning Workgroup #2 Recommendations

- *All but 1 out of 8 Workgroup #2 recommendations received unanimous approval.*
- *The remaining recommendation had only one no vote.*
- *All 8 recommendations reached consensus.*

Water Resources Management & Planning Workgroup #2 Recommendations

WATER RESILIENCE – *Water Demand & Supplies*

– Agency

- 2.1: Ensure a water resilient future for New Mexico (empower state water management agencies to meet the challenges of the 21st Century – water scarcity, aridification, supply and demand imbalances, contaminants, equity)

– Planning

- 2.2: Elevate regional planning (equity, capacity to govern and manage water)

– Funding

- 2.3: Leverage federal funds to increase water resilience and modernize water infrastructure for 21st Century needs

Water Resources Management & Planning Workgroup #2 Recommendations

WATER RESILIENCE – *Water Demand & Supplies* (Continued)

– Agriculture

- 2.4, 2.5: Support the resilience of the NM's diverse agricultural communities (water rights administration, inclusion in water management, consideration of equity, water conservation, sustainability, water-supply demand imbalances)
- 2.6: Enhance irrigation entities availability of and accessibility to infrastructure improvement funding

Water Resources Management & Planning Workgroup #2 Recommendations

WATER RESILIENCE – *Management Tools*

– Employing Authorized Tools

- 2.7: Put existing tools to work for a water resilient future (capacity, funding, staffing, education) [e.g., State Water Plan Act, 2003; Strategic Water Reserve, 2005; AWRM, 2003, 2012; Water Data Act, 2019, Water Quality Act, 1967]

– Groundwater Monitoring

- 2.8: Protect quantity and quality of groundwater resources (funding to build groundwater monitoring network; enhance technical capacity; scientific understanding)



NM WATER
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MIDDLE RIO GRANDE
WATER ADVOCATES



Rio Grande North of Albuquerque @ 2000 cfs , November 2021

November 3, 2022

Norm Gaume, P.E. (ret)
President

Water Task Force Consensus Recommendations
Show the Way to Equitably Increase Water
Resilience and Reduce Future Water Insecurity



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Water Task
Force:

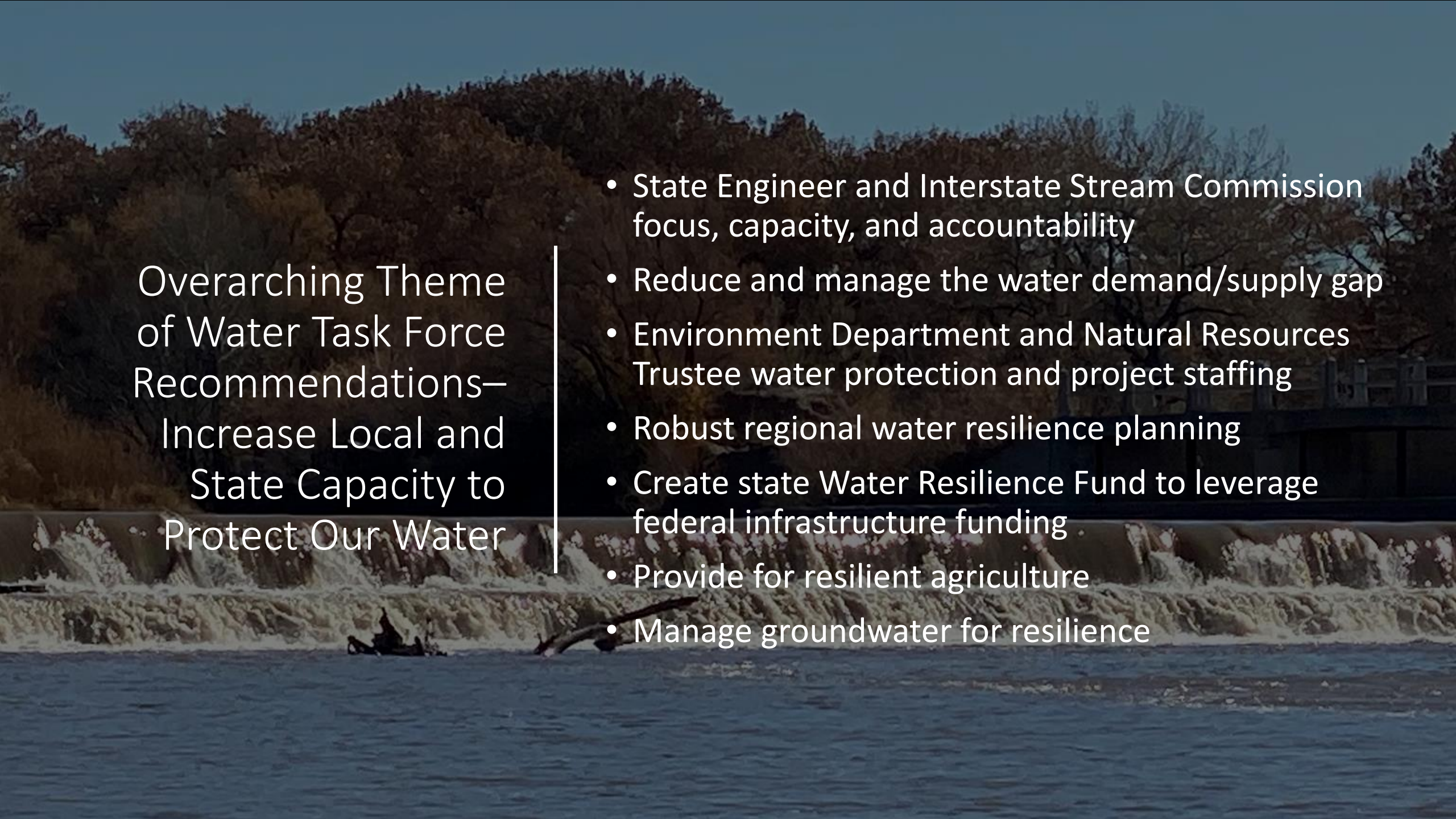
Four Core
Problems

Water Supply

Community Capacity

State Government Capacity

Watersheds, Rivers, and Aquifers
At Risk



Overarching Theme
of Water Task Force
Recommendations—
Increase Local and
State Capacity to
Protect Our Water

- State Engineer and Interstate Stream Commission focus, capacity, and accountability
- Reduce and manage the water demand/supply gap
- Environment Department and Natural Resources Trustee water protection and project staffing
- Robust regional water resilience planning
- Create state Water Resilience Fund to leverage federal infrastructure funding
- Provide for resilient agriculture
- Manage groundwater for resilience

2023 Legislation and Funding



OSE/ISC mission, focus, modernization, capacity, and accountability

- Implement Active Water Resources Management to balance demand with the resilient water supply
- Information systems and business processes modernization
- Enforcement authority
- Project implementation support
- Technical support for all agency functions
- Staff capacity and resources to utilize existing statutory tools—funding and staffing

Amend the 1987 regional water planning statute

- Criteria for state to fund and approve robust regional water resilience plans
- Create regional water resilience planning entities.
- Water planning staffing
- State provides the science and hydrology foundation for regional water planning
- Dedicated state water planning agency support for planning and implementation

2023 Legislation and Funding



Water Resilience Fund

- Create and capitalize the Water Resilience Fund to provide non-federal match to capture and utilize federal infrastructure funding
- Vet and support community projects that are ready or close
- Implement projects justified in approved regional water resilience plans
- Fast-track a state water infrastructure groundwater measurement and monitoring program for critical aquifer systems—well meters and dedicated groundwater monitoring wells

Holistic and Responsive Community Infrastructure Support

- Authorize and begin holistic support to help communities plan, design, construct, and operate and maintain local water infrastructure projects—drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater

Call to Action—It's Urgent

Now is the Time to Respectfully Demand the 2023 Legislature and Governor Pivot to Protect our Water

- Pivot in 2023, and fully implement Water Task Force recommendations over the next few years
- Pass and sign 2023 legislation to authorize, provide statutory direction and criteria, etc.
- In 2023, provide first increment of increased funding and staffing
 - Appropriate non-recurring funds in 2023 for one-time expenditures over next four to five years
 - Start to modernize and build agency staff capacity and productivity
 - Direct agencies to provide the groundwork and foundation for 2024 and beyond



**NM WATER
AMBASSADORS**



MIDDLE RIO GRANDE
WATER ADVOCATES

Water Policy Vision and Commitments

New Mexico will equitably and effectively adapt to climate change and best sustain what we value: our diverse cultures, our people and economy, food production, and riverine and riparian ecosystems. New Mexicans must act now to secure New Mexico's water future. We must support equitable, evidence-based, water planning, management, and stewardship.



We affirm:

1. As Indigenous and traditional communities know and honor, El Agua es Vida, Water is Life; and
2. We must recognize that science clearly shows we will have much less water in the future