New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission

Lower Rio Grande Water Rights Purchase Program

Public Meeting Summary

June 26, 2026

Prepared For:

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Executive Summary

In May and June 2026, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC) and Office of the State Engineer (OSE) contracted WSP to support a focused public engagement effort for the Lower Rio Grande (LRG) Water Rights Purchase Program (WRPP), including outreach and public information meetings in the communities of Anthony, Las Cruces, and Hatch, New Mexico and a virtual meeting via Zoom. The meetings were designed to explain the U.S. Supreme Court *Texas v. New Mexico, Original No. 141,* settlement-related need for the program, share program design concepts under consideration, answer questions, and gather public input. Participants included water right owners, agricultural producers, community members, local stakeholders, and other interested parties. Across the four meetings conducted, 162 participants attended. Public comments were accepted through June 21, 2026.

The WRPP is being developed as a voluntary, willing buyer-willing seller program to help New Mexico meet the Groundwater Settlement Agreement requirement to reduce groundwater depletions in the Lower Rio Grande by 18,200 acre-feet per year within 10 years of the effective date and maintain that reduction thereafter. Through the program, eligible water right owners in select basins may have the opportunity to sell water rights to the State. Purchased rights would be permanently retired and removed from circulation to help reduce groundwater pumping, support long-term aquifer sustainability, and potentially assist with compact compliance.

Key takeaways and potential next steps are included at the end of this summary to support ongoing program development, future outreach efforts, and documentation of how public input is considered moving forward.

Public Meeting Overview & Attendance

Each meeting followed a consistent format to support clear, comparable information-sharing across communities. The program began with welcome remarks and introductions, followed by the presentation of meeting goals, background on the Texas v. New Mexico settlement, an overview of the Groundwater Settlement Agreement and depletion reduction requirements, discussion of eligibility and program design concepts, land management considerations, and multiple opportunities for questions and facilitated discussion. The presentation emphasized that public input is being used to inform how the program may be structured as the NMISC continues program development.

Table 1. Public Meeting Schedule and Attendance

Location	Date	Time	Venue / Platform	Attendance
Anthony, NM	May 26, 2026	4:00-6:00 p.m.	DACC Gadsden Center, Rooms 140 + 141	21
Las Cruces, NM	May 27, 2026	4:00-6:00 p.m.	Thomas Branigan Memorial Library	47
Hatch, NM	May 28, 2026	4:00-6:00 p.m.	Hatch High School - Commons Area	23
Virtual	June 3, 2026	4:00-5:30 p.m.	Online via Zoom	71
Total				**162**

Outreach, Notifications & Meeting Materials

NMISC and the project team implemented a coordinated outreach effort to raise community awareness of the WRRP, encourage meeting participation, and provide multiple opportunities for public input. Public-facing materials were developed in English and Spanish and included the following materials **(see Appendix A):**

- Meeting flyer
- Program fact sheet
- Input form
- Sign-in sheets
- A welcome board with a QR code linking to the program website

Additional notifications included a print advertisement in the Las Cruces Sun-News, which ran on May 24, 2026, and was available digitally to subscribers. Promotional support included earned media coverage and a Bravo Mic Communications community spotlight radio interview conducted on May 22, 2026. Community members were invited to learn more about the WRPP and Texas v. New Mexico settlement by attending a public meeting or visiting the project website: www.ose.nm.gov/LRGWRPP. Opportunities for public input were provided through public meeting discussions, printed input forms, and email via NMISCPurchaseProgram@wsp.com.

Presentation Overview

NMISC and OSE led the public meetings with support from consultants from Summit Conservation Strategies, Agri-Land Advisors LLC, and WSP. The presentation provided background on the Texas v. New Mexico settlement framework and explained why the WRPP is being developed. Key topics included the Groundwater Settlement Agreement requirement for New Mexico to permanently retire groundwater rights and reduce groundwater depletions by 18,200 acre-feet per year within 10 years after effective date, while maintaining that reduction thereafter; participant eligibility requirements related to location, use history, and good standing; fair market value and funding considerations; potential participation structures, including a statement of interest process and competitive sealed bid process; and land management considerations such as rotational management, future transfers, and cover cropping.

Public Comment Period & Input Received

In addition to verbal questions and discussion during the public meetings, NMISC and the project team collected written input through physical input forms and the project email. The input form asked participants how they heard about the event, whether the meeting materials were informative and easy to understand, and what questions or recommendations NMISC should consider as the program moves forward.

Written input received to date generally focused on water-right valuation, residual land value, potential development or reuse opportunities for lands without water rights, access to program documents and meeting materials, eligibility and participation barriers, database transparency, conservation program continuation, and the need for clear, inclusive information. All written comments received to date are documented verbatim in **Appendix B: Written Public Input Received.**

By the close of the public comment period on June 21, 2026, seven physical input forms and five email comments were received.

Public Input Summary by Meeting Location

The following table captures the primary discussion at each meeting, including participant questions, concerns, and clarifications provided by NMISC representatives. While several topics were raised across the meeting series, each location reflected distinct local priorities related to eligibility, valuation, future land use, agricultural impacts, water rights administration, and program implementation. For a consolidated at-a-glance summary of recurring questions and response themes across all meetings, see Table 3: Common Questions and Response Themes.

Table 2. Meeting Feedback Summary by Location

Meeting	Key Discussion Summary
Anthony	Discussion at the Anthony meeting focused primarily on program eligibility, recent-use requirements, and how the settlement framework applies to lands that have not been irrigated in recent years. Participants questioned whether previously fallowed or non-irrigated lands should count toward the State's depletion reduction obligation, noting that those lands may have already contributed to reduced groundwater use. NMISC explained that the settlement requires eligible lands to demonstrate recent water use so that permanent retirement produces a measurable depletion reduction benefit. Additionally, the team also noted that participation in the existing Groundwater Conservation Program may help preserve eligibility during enrollment; however, temporary conservation does not count toward the permanent depletion reduction requirement. Participants also discussed property rights, land value, and program flexibility. Questions focused on whether the State would purchase land or only water rights, how fair market value would be determined, potential impacts to residual land value, and whether landowners could retain a portion of their rights for future development or other uses. Additional discussion explored minimum acreage thresholds, partial rights acquisitions, transfers, and rotational land management as potential tools to balance landowner flexibility with settlement requirements.
Las Cruces	Discussion at the Las Cruces meeting focused heavily on adjudication, settlement obligations, valuation, and broader questions about water management in the LRG. Participants asked whether adjudicated rights remain valid, how the depletion reduction requirement would be achieved and maintained, and whether agricultural users would bear most of the responsibility. NMISC clarified that eligible agricultural, municipal, commercial, and industrial water rights may all contribute toward the program's objectives. A significant portion of the discussion centered on future water use, including data centers and other large water-demand projects. Participants questioned how new users could obtain water while the State is pursuing permanent depletion reductions. NMISC explained that new groundwater appropriations are unavailable in the LRG and that new users must acquire and transfer valid existing rights, subject to review and approval by the NMOSE. Participants also discussed program design and valuation, including fair market value, pricing methodologies, residual land value, domestic wells, property tax implications, and the relative merits of a fixed-price/statement-of-interest approach versus a competitive sealed-bid process. Comments emphasized the importance of transparency, consistent evaluation criteria, and a program structure that allows water right owners to make informed decisions.

Hatch	Discussion at the Hatch meeting focused strongly on agricultural viability, local economic impacts, and the potential consequences of concentrated participation within the Hatch/Rincon Valley. Participants expressed concern that large-scale retirement of water rights could affect agricultural production, local businesses, public school enrollment, farm workers, and the broader regional economy. NMISC acknowledged these concerns and noted that program design is still being refined to balance settlement requirements with local agricultural and economic considerations. Potential options under consideration include acreage capping, rotational land management, transfers, cover cropping, and other land stewardship approaches. Discussion also focused on eligibility and water rights administration. Participants raised questions about how eligibility would apply to larger farms containing both irrigated and non-irrigated acreage and how combined surface and groundwater rights would be treated. NMISC explained that depletion reduction calculations are tied to irrigated acreage and associated consumptive use and that groundwater rights would be permanently retired while surface water components would be managed in accordance with settlement requirements and compact obligations. Additional questions addressed whether voluntary participation would be sufficient to achieve the required depletion reductions, the potential continuation of the Groundwater Conservation Program, participation by commercial and industrial water users, and the advantages and disadvantages of fixed-price and sealed-bid program structures.
Virtual	The virtual meeting provided participants with an opportunity to ask follow-up questions and engage with the program in an online format. Discussion focused primarily on program implementation, landowner flexibility, and long-term land management considerations. Participants also discussed partial retirement of rights, treatment of combined surface and groundwater rights, fair market value, and the potential effects of participation on property values. Several discussion topics focused on the impact of future land use and opportunities following retirement of water rights, such as property values, surrounding infrastructure development, and zoning restrictions. NMISC noted that residual land value, land stewardship, and coordination with local governments remain important considerations as the program continues to be refined. Additional discussion addressed domestic wells, cover cropping, tax incentives, municipal and industrial growth, and whether future development could undermine depletion reduction objectives. OSE reiterated that new uses must rely on valid existing rights and remain subject to the State's water rights administration process.

Common Questions & Response Themes

Questions and comments raised across multiple meetings were consolidated into the following themes to summarize the key topics discussed throughout the meeting series.

Table 3. Common Questions and Response Themes

Theme	Common Question / Concern	Response Summary
Settlement-mandated Depletion Requirements	Does New Mexico have to retire 18,200 acre-feet every year?	New Mexico must achieve an annual depletion reduction of 18,200 acre-feet within 10 years and maintain that reduction over time; it does not mean retiring an additional 18,200 acre-feet each year.

Voluntary Participation	Will water right owners be required to sell?	The program is being developed as a voluntary, willing buyer-willing seller program. No one is required to participate under the current program concept.
Eligibility	Which rights are eligible, and what about lands not recently irrigated?	Eligible rights must meet settlement criteria, including location, use history, and good standing. Irrigation rights generally must have been used on the lands to be retired for at least five years out of every moving 10-year period since 2010.
Groundwater Conservation Program	Does participation in the existing Groundwater Conservation Program count toward the permanent depletion reduction requirement?	Temporary conservation through the Groundwater Conservation Program does not count toward the permanent depletion reduction requirement because the settlement requires permanent retirement of eligible groundwater rights. However, participation in the Groundwater Conservation Program may help preserve eligibility for the WRPP because enrolled lands are treated as having been used during the enrollment period, provided other eligibility requirements are met.
Valuation	How will water rights purchase prices be determined?	A market study is underway and will inform the fair market value range. Participants asked whether value would be based on acreage, acre-feet, location, use type, or residual land value.
Future Land Use	What happens to participating lands after water rights are sold?	The program is focused on purchasing water rights, not land. Landowners would retain the land, and future water use would depend on retained water rights, transfers, domestic well rules, land management options, and local requirements.
Agricultural Impacts	Could the program harm farming communities?	Participants, especially in Hatch, raised concerns about impacts to farms, jobs, public school enrollment, and businesses. NMISC acknowledged the concern and noted that localized impacts are being considered in program design, such as the possibility of capping water rights acquisitions by geographical areas.
Program Design	Will the program use a fixed-price offer or competitive bid?	NMISC presented statement of interest/fixed-price and competitive sealed bid concepts. Participants emphasized transparency, fairness, flexibility, and the possibility of a phased or hybrid approach.
New Large Water Users	How do data centers or industrial users fit into this?	New users cannot receive new groundwater appropriations in the LRG and would need to acquire and transfer valid existing rights, subject to OSE review.
Low Participation	What happens if the State does not meet the requirement?	The 18,200 acre-foot annual depletion reduction requirement is enforceable under the Groundwater Settlement Agreement. If New Mexico does not meet the requirement, enforcement action may be pursued in federal district court.

Key Takeaways

- The voluntary nature of the program should remain central in all communications.
- Participants want clear, plain-language information about eligibility, recent-use requirements, valuation, and what participation means for landowners.
- Agricultural and local economic impacts are primary concerns, particularly in the Hatch/Rincon Valley.
- Program design should consider transparency, equity, and flexibility, including whether a phased or hybrid structure could improve participation and trust.
- Continued coordination with local governments and other agencies may be needed on land use, zoning, property tax, domestic wells, and future development questions.
- Participants expressed interest in continued engagement before the program is implemented.
- Written input received to date reinforces the need for clear public materials, a transparent valuation approach, and information about potential land use and property value considerations after participation.

Potential Next Steps for Consideration

- Conduct a second round of public meetings or targeted briefings once a preferred program design, valuation approach, and participation process are selected.
- Develop a concise program guide or FAQs document that explains eligibility, valuation, timing, documentation needs, land management considerations, and how to participate.
- Consider program design tools to reduce concentrated impacts in areas with high potential participation, such as Hatch/Rincon, including geographic pacing, acquisition caps, phased solicitations, or other criteria that help balance settlement implementation with local economic considerations.
- Refine the valuation and pricing approach based on the market study and public input, including how offers will be structured and how residual land value may be considered.
- Evaluate whether a phased or hybrid participation structure could improve transparency, fairness, and participation, such as combining a statement of interest process with a competitive sealed bid process.
- Further evaluate land management options for participating lands, including rotational management, future transfers, cover cropping, and other stewardship.
- Use input received through the June 21 comment period to document and communicate out how community questions and concerns were considered in program refinement.
- Continue focused outreach to agricultural communities, commercial/industrial/municipal right holders, local governments, and stakeholders in areas where participation could be concentrated.

Conclusion

The May and June 2026 public information meetings provided an important opportunity for the NMISC to share information, answer questions, and receive direct input from communities that may benefit from or be impacted by the WRPP. Participants raised thoughtful questions about eligibility, valuation, long-term land use, agricultural impacts, local economic conditions, new water users, and the relationship between the purchase program and broader LRG water management efforts. As NMISC continues evaluating program design options, input received through the meetings, input forms, and project email can help strengthen transparency, improve public understanding, and support a final program approach that responds to community needs while meeting settlement requirements.

Appendix A: Outreach & Meeting Materials

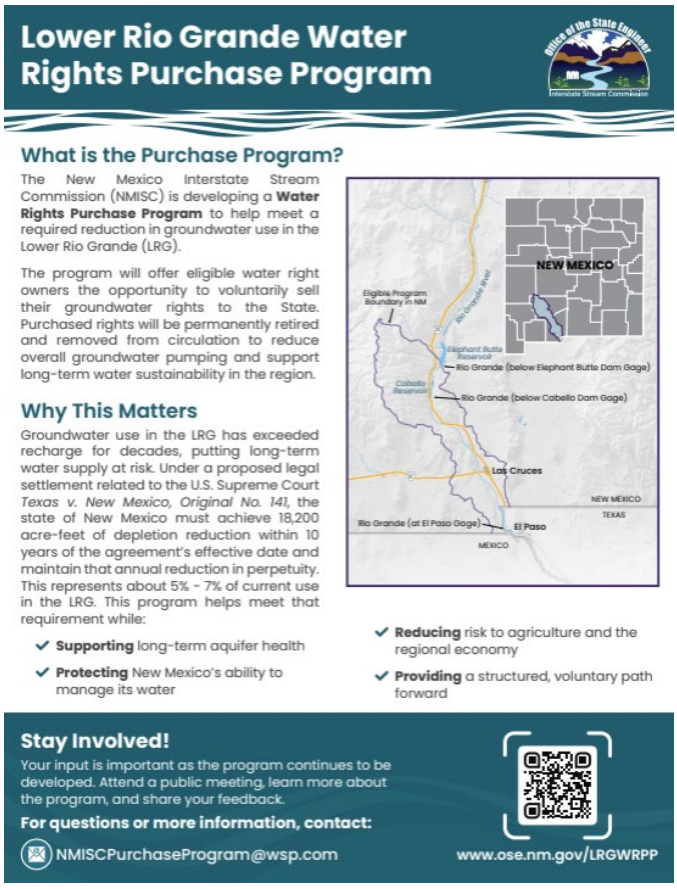
This appendix includes the bilingual outreach and supporting materials developed to inform the public, promote meeting participation, and offer clear channels for public input.

Meeting Flyer (English/Spanish)





Factsheet (Front and Back: English/Spanish)





Programa de Compra de Derechos de Agua del Bajo Río Grande

¿Qué es el Programa de Compra de Derechos de Agua?

La Comisión Interestatal de Corrientes de Nuevo México está desarrollando un **Programa de Compra de Derechos de Agua** para ayudar a cumplir con una reducción requerida en el uso de aguas subterráneas en el Bajo Río Grande.

El programa ofrecerá a los propietarios elegibles de derechos de agua la oportunidad de vender voluntariamente sus derechos de aguas subterráneas al Estado. Los derechos adquiridos se retirarán permanentemente y se sacarán de circulación para reducir el bombeo general de aguas subterráneas y apoyar la sostenibilidad hídrica a largo plazo en la región.



Por Qué Esto es Importante

El uso de aguas subterráneas en el Bajo Río Grande ha excedido la recarga durante décadas, lo que pone en riesgo el suministro de agua a largo plazo. Conforme a un acuerdo legal propuesto relacionado con el caso *Texas v. New Mexico, Original No. 141*, ante la Corte Suprema de los Estados Unidos, el estado de Nuevo México debe lograr una reducción de agotamiento de 18,200 acres-pie dentro de los 10 años posteriores a la fecha de entrada en vigor del acuerdo y mantener esa reducción anual a perpetuidad. Esto representa aproximadamente entre el 5 y el 7 por ciento del uso actual en el Bajo Río Grande. Este programa ayuda a cumplir con ese requisito al mismo tiempo que:

- ✓ **Apoyar** la salud del acuífero a largo plazo
- ✓ **Proteger** la capacidad de Nuevo México para administrar su agua
- ✓ **Reducir** el riesgo para la agricultura y la economía regional
- ✓ **Brindar** un camino estructurado y voluntario hacia adelante

¡Manténgase Informado y Participe!

Su opinión es importante mientras el programa continúa desarrollándose. Asista a una reunión pública, conozca más sobre el programa y comparta sus comentarios.

Para preguntas o más información, escriba a:

NMISCPurchaseProgram@wsp.com

www.ose.nm.gov/LRGWRPP

A Quién Afecta

Este programa involucrará directamente a los propietarios de derechos de agua que decidan participar. También puede afectar a la comunidad en general, incluidos:

- Agricultores y productores agrícolas
- Negocios locales y proveedores de servicios
- Comunidades conectadas con la economía regional
- Residentes que dependen de la sostenibilidad hídrica a largo plazo

Aspectos Destacados del Programa

- La participación es voluntaria; nadie está obligado a vender
- Los derechos de agua adquiridos se retirarán permanentemente y se sacarán de circulación para apoyar la salud del acuífero a largo plazo
- La opinión de la comunidad está ayudando a dar forma al programa
- Los derechos retirados no estarán disponibles para nuevas apropiaciones

Los detalles del programa, los plazos y las oportunidades de participación pueden seguir evolucionando a medida que avance su desarrollo.

Cronograma del Programa

2025
- Desarrollo inicial del programa
- Coordinación con socios estatales, federales y locales
- Inicio de la participación temprana de las partes interesadas

Principios de 2026
- Continuación del desarrollo del programa
- Coordinación continua con grupos de trabajo locales

Primavera de 2026
- Publicación del borrador del diseño del programa de compra para revisión y comentarios del público
- Reuniones públicas y oportunidades para comentar en línea

Verano de 2026
- Revisión e incorporación de los comentarios del público
- Ajuste del enfoque del programa

Mediados a finales de 2026
- Publicación de la convocatoria inicial para la compra de derechos de agua

¡Manténgase Informado y Participe!

Su opinión es importante mientras el programa continúa desarrollándose. Asista a una reunión pública, conozca más sobre el programa y comparta sus comentarios.

Para preguntas o más información, escriba a:

NMISCPurchaseProgram@wsp.com

www.ose.nm.gov/LRGWRPP

Welcome Display Board

Lower Rio Grande Water Rights Purchase Program

WELCOME!

We are glad you're here.

Learn about the program, ask questions, and share your input to help shape next steps.

What kind of feedback is most helpful?

Questions or concerns about the program

Ideas or recommendations to improve the program

¿Hablas español? Consulte a un miembro del personal para asistencia en español.

Questions or comments?
NMISCPurchaseProgram@wsp.com

Visit the project website:
www.ose.nm.gov/LRGWRPP

Appendix B: Written Public Input Received

This appendix documents written input received through public meeting input forms and the project email to date.

Input Form Question: Did you find the material shared informative and easy to understand? If not, how could it have been improved?
We are looking at things that will affect USA in the future. Like the water usage from the data center being built with an unknown water requirement. It would also be helpful to clarify a range +/- price for water rights. Also please provide us with a reason why so many water rights were over issued & not documented until this lawsuit.
Ability to digest/understand all overarching knowledge and important process that effect small community.
Very informative even though many technical terminology. I would rather attend a Spanish presentation.

Input Form Question: What questions or recommendations would you like the NMISC to consider as the Lower Rio Grande Water Rights Purchase Program moves forward?
Consider review of water rights for municipalities/county since we are on the downstream could northern portion reduce by 2 ½ - 3 ½ % to help offset water flowing in the Rio Grande.
Offering partial water purchases. Currently we want to sell some but not all water. Being able to sell a few acres to gain some money but keep more for future use. Could we sell acres that are not fulfilled? We currently have commercial rights we are not able to sell b/c of a lack of fulfillment. If we agree to sell can we work around having to fulfill right to be able to sell.
I would not have recommendations, as I came without being familiar with the topic. I am not eligible to participate, as my land is very small and trees are only one acre occupancy.
More information on possible price / fair market value of water rights, or references to comparables (other settlements) for research. This is a huge decision for water rights owners, we need to know all potential long term impacts on the value of the land.
More written guarantees for possible other scenarios. IE - The current conservation program wasn't transparent about the schedule for payouts (only 25% the 1st year). IE - Participation brings unplanned negative consequences.
The importance of preserving the livelihood of our agriculture and farming while it is a large industry that uses large amounts of water, its water to feed our community and our economy. Possibly re-structuring priorities & closing in on excess use that doesn't provide us a benefit (data centers)
I recommend a database that shows all water users on the same site. I know this information is scattered through each organizations websites. This would enable everybody to see who the water users are and how much water they use. All decisions today are based on data + statistics. An all inclusive website would facilitate finding information and important decision making.

Input and Questions Received via Email: NMISCPurchaseProgram@wsp.com
I know it is very early in the process, so some of these questions may not have answers yet. However, I was wondering if you had any idea of the price range being considered for the retirement of water rights? Also, is the state considering other forms of help for landowners who do retire their water rights? For example, most of the properties will lose significant value without water. Some of that may be offset by facilitating development opportunities, housing, converting to solar field, etc. Is or will the state consider helping with permitting, road improvements, or other property improvement activities that can help offset the value loss if water rights are retired? Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.
I am currently reviewing the proposed Lower Rio Grande Water Rights Purchase Program and related water management strategies. I noticed that the program fact sheet indicated that a draft purchase program design would be released for public review and comment during Spring 2026. I have not been able to locate that document online and was wondering whether it is available. In addition, if available, I would appreciate copies of any of the following materials if publicly available: • Draft Purchase Program design document • Presentation slides used during the recent public meetings • Meeting summaries, recordings, or transcripts from the public meetings • Public comments received to date • Any analyses or reports regarding anticipated acquisition costs, expected depletion reductions, or economic impacts associated with the program • Any planning documents related to the Lower Rio Grande Water Management Plan referenced in the settlement agreement I am particularly interested in understanding the assumptions underlying the proposed acquisition strategy and how the program is expected to contribute toward achieving the required depletion reductions. Thank you for your assistance. I would appreciate any materials you are able to share.
Do you have minutes from this meeting.
Due to unavoidable circumstances I was not able to attend the ZOOM meeting. Is there a way of my getting the presentation and/or minutes of the Water Rights Purchase Program. Thank you
We currently hold adjudicated water rights within the same basin and district of the Lower Rio Grande region, we respectfully request consideration for inclusion in the proposed Lower Rio Grande (LRG) Water Rights Program. According to the map it appears we are out of the marketed area. We attended the meeting May 26th, 2026 in Anthony, NM. We had the pleasure of speaking with Ryan shortly after our meeting, during which we expressed our interest in being included and participating in this program. We also intend to retain a portion of our water rights for future agricultural operations, particularly in light of the significant setback caused by the collapse of one of our wells. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Appendix C: Advertisement, Promotions & Media Coverage

This appendix documents paid advertising, promotional outreach, and earned media coverage used to increase awareness of the public meeting series and encourage community participation. Materials include the Las Cruces Sun-News newspaper advertisement, Hatch promotional graphic, online media coverage, and documentation of the Bravo Mic Communications community spotlight radio interview.

Las Cruces Sun News Ad: May 24, 2026



The Chile Wrapper, LLC: Hatch Promo



Las Cruces Digest May 19, 2026



Las Cruces, N.M. — The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission is inviting residents to attend a series of community meetings this month to learn about and weigh in on the Lower Rio Grande Water Rights Purchase Program, an effort to address long-term groundwater depletion and meet the state's water commitments in the region. Meetings are scheduled as follows and presentations will begin promptly at 4 p.m.:

- Tuesday, May 26, 4–6 p.m., Doña Ana Community College – Gadsden Center Room 140 and 141, 1700 Ohara Rd., Anthony, NM 88021
- Wednesday, May 27, 4–6 p.m., Thomas Branigan Memorial Library, 200 E Picacho Ave, Las Cruces, NM 88001
- Thursday, May 28, 4–6 p.m., Hatch High School Commons Area, 170 E Herrera Rd, Hatch, NM 87937
- Wednesday, June 3, 4–5:30 p.m., online meeting via Zoom: zoom.us/j/91228323784

Each session will provide an overview of the program– including why it is being developed, its current status and how public input will inform next steps. Attendees can ask questions and speak directly with program representatives. "These meetings are an opportunity to share information, hear questions and concerns, and better understand the perspectives of the communities that may be affected," said ISC Lower Rio Grande Bureau Chief Ryan Serrano. "Community input is an important part of this process." Program development is ongoing, and community input will play a key role in shaping how it moves forward. For more information about the program, please email NMISCPurchaseProgram@wsp.com.

Bravo Mic Communications, LLC Radio Interview recorded May 22, 2026

Bravo Mic Community Spotlight

Radio Interview Q&A

Lower Rio Grande Water Rights Purchase Program

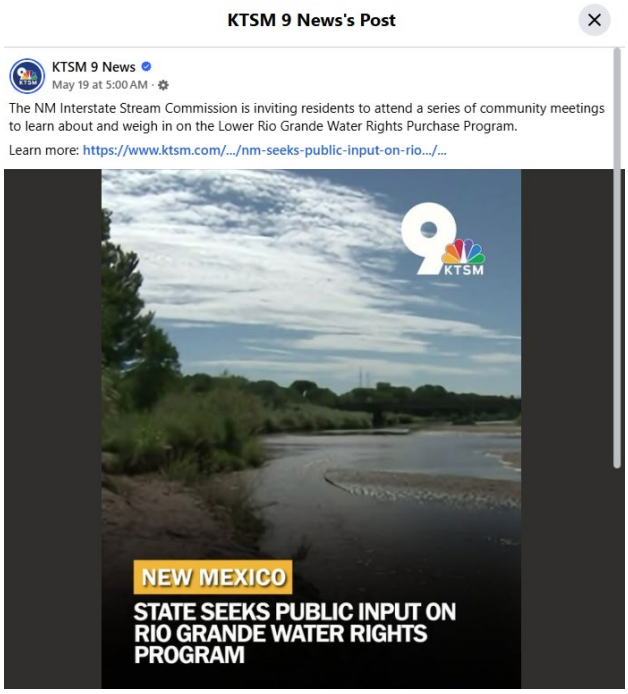
Overview: Host-led Q&A with prepared SME responses. A clear, straightforward, community-focused format designed for a 10 to 15-minute Community Spotlight segment.

Host Intro: Today we're talking about the Lower Rio Grande Water Rights Purchase Program and upcoming public meetings that will give community members an opportunity to learn more, ask questions, and share input. Joining us is [*Ryan Serrano, Lower Rio Grande Bureau Chief*] with [*New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission*]. Thank you for being here.

- What is the Lower Rio Grande Water Rights Purchase Program?
- Why is this program being developed now?
- Is participation voluntary?
- What is the purpose of the public meetings, and when will they take place'
- What do you hope people will take away from these meetings?



KTSM Channel 9 Article published May 18, 2026



EL PASO, Texas (KTSM) — The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission is inviting residents to attend a series of community meetings this month to learn about and weigh in on the Lower Rio Grande Water Rights Purchase Program. This program is an effort to address long-term groundwater depletion and meet the state's water commitments in the region, according to the State Engineer's Office.

Meetings are scheduled as follows and presentations will begin at 4 p.m.:

- Tuesday, May 26, 4–6 p.m., Doña Ana Community College – Gadsden Center Room 140 and 141, 1700 Ohara Rd., Anthony, NM
- Wednesday, May 27, 4–6 p.m., Thomas Branigan Memorial Library, 200 E Picacho Ave, Las Cruces
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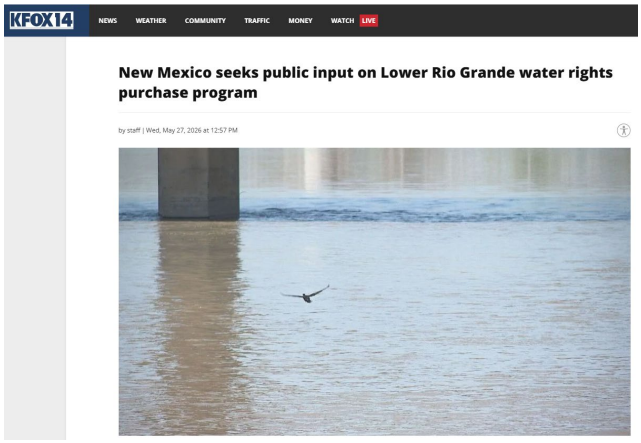
Each session will provide an overview of the program — including why it is being developed, its current status and how public input will influence the next steps. Attendees can ask questions and speak directly with program representatives.

"These meetings are an opportunity to share information, hear questions and concerns, and better understand the perspectives of the communities that may be affected," said ISC Lower Rio Grande Bureau Chief Ryan Serrano. "Community input is an important part of this process."

Program development is ongoing, and community input will play a key role in shaping how it moves forward, the State Engineer's Office said. For more information about the program, email NMISCPurchaseProgram@wsp.com.

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KFOX Channel 14 Article published May 27, 2026



Las Cruces, N.M. (KFOX14/CBS4) — Southern New Mexico residents will have several chances in the coming days to weigh in on a state effort aimed at addressing long-term groundwater depletion and meeting New Mexico's water commitments in the Lower Rio Grande region. The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission is inviting the public to a series of community meetings about the Lower Rio Grande Water Rights Purchase Program.

Each session will include an overview of the program, including why it is being developed, its current status and how public input will help inform next steps. Attendees will be able to ask questions and speak directly with program representatives.

"These meetings are an opportunity to share information, hear questions and concerns, and better understand the perspectives of the communities that may be affected," said ISC Lower Rio Grande Bureau Chief Ryan Serrano. "Community input is an important part of this process." Presentations are scheduled to begin promptly at 4 p.m. Meetings are set for:

- Wednesday, May 27, 4-6 p.m., Thomas Branigan Memorial Library, 200 E. Picacho Ave., Las Cruces, NM 88001.
- Thursday, May 28, 4-6 p.m., Hatch High School Commons Area, 170 E. Herrera Rd., Hatch, NM 87937.
- Wednesday, June 3, 4-5:30 p.m., online via Zoom at zoom.us/j/91228323784.

Program development is ongoing, and the commission said community input will play a key role in shaping how it moves forward.

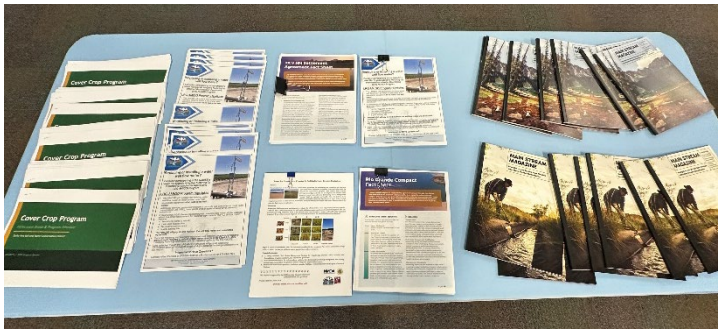
For more information, email NMISCPurchaseProgram@wsp.com.

Appendix D: Public Meeting Photos

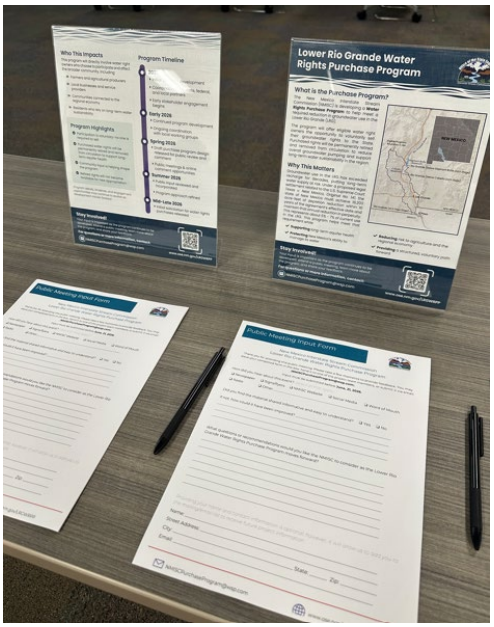
The following photos document meeting setup, public-facing materials, presentation delivery, and participant engagement during the in-person meetings in Anthony, Las Cruces, and Hatch.

Anthony, NM – May 26, 2026





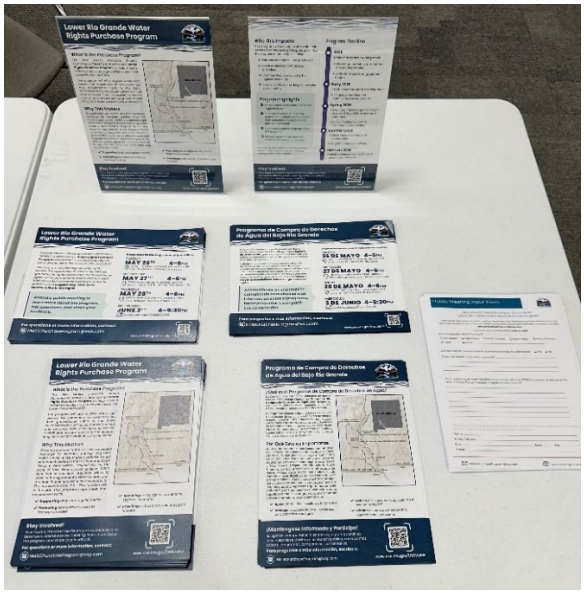




Las Cruces, NM – May 27, 2026









Hatch, NM – May 28, 2026







