
**Part I:
Policies**

**2018
New Mexico
State Water Plan**

**Part II:
Technical
Report**

**Part III:
Legal
Landmarks**

Adopted by the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission
December 6, 2018



2018 New Mexico State Water Plan

Adopted by the New Mexico
Interstate Stream Commission
December 6, 2018

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Thank you to all of the people who contributed to the development
of the 2018 New Mexico State Water Plan

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In addition, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission would like to thank the many governmental and non-governmental organizations, tribal governments, and interested citizens who provided many thoughtful and useful comments during the public review of the Draft 2018 New Mexico State Water Plan.

NEW MEXICO INTERSTATE STREAM COMMISSION



December 6, 2018

RE: 2018 New Mexico State Water Plan

Dear New Mexicans:

The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission and the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer are pleased to present this **2018 New Mexico State Water Plan**, prepared in accordance with NMSA §72-14-3.1.

Organization

The **2018 New Mexico State Water Plan** includes three parts:

2018 New Mexico State Water Plan Part I: Policies presents a concise, big-picture view of the highest priority water issues in New Mexico and the policies, goals, and strategies needed to address them, as well as information about the agencies and resources available to assist with these issues.

The eight policy topics include:

1. Water Infrastructure
2. Data Collection, Accessibility, and Monitoring
3. Drought
4. Watershed Management
5. Water Supply and Demand
6. Water Conservation
7. Water Quality
8. Water Planning

2018 New Mexico State Water Plan Part II: Technical Report integrates water resource information from the Regional Water Plans completed in 2016-2017, including estimated water supply and demand, projections of population, and strategies proposed by stakeholders to address key water issues.

2018 New Mexico State Water Plan Part III: Legal Landmarks provides information about historical New Mexico water law decisions, events, and circumstances that shaped New Mexico's legal structures for water resource administration.

The **2018 New Mexico State Water Plan** is a strategic management tool to assist and inform decision-makers at all levels, ranging from legislators to citizens, in addressing water resource issues. The plan provides a range of strategies for consideration in addressing the diverse and complex water issues facing New Mexico.

Relation to Previous Water Planning Efforts

The **2018 New Mexico State Water Plan** builds on earlier water planning work in New Mexico. The *2003 New Mexico State Water Plan* outlined goals and strategies organized by statute (State Water Plan Act) that overlap many of the recommended strategies in **2018 New Mexico State Water Plan Part I: Policies**. Like the 2003 plan, the 2018 plan does not attempt to prioritize one strategy, or one type of water use over another, but instead reflects the common priorities and objectives that were identified during the regional water planning process and in the December 2017 State Water Plan Town Hall.

New Mexico's State Water Plan presents a generalized assessment of the current and future water supply and demand statewide to provide decision-makers with a basic understanding of the water resource problems facing New Mexico. It is a living document and will continue to be updated. While the 2003 plan was organized by each statement in the State Water Plan Act, the 2018 plan is organized by objectives that arose from the regional water plans and the 2017 Town Hall. The objectives and strategies presented in the 2003 plan remain valid and are consistent with the policies included in this 2018 plan. Accordingly, the eight policy topics presented in the 2018 plan are complementary to, and not intended to replace, policies from the 2003 plan.

The 2018 plan also addresses some of the unfinished tasks of the 2003 plan. For example, the State Water Plan Act states that regional water plans must be integrated into the State Water Plan. This was not possible until the *2013 Updated Regional Water Planning Handbook: Guidelines to Preparing Updates to New Mexico Regional Water Plans* was revised to include a standardized method of estimating water supply, demand, and population for each planning region, which provided the basis for the water supply and demand estimates presented in this **2018 New Mexico State Water Plan Part II: Technical Report**.

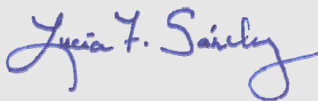
The 2013 Handbook was also revised to provide a framework for capturing the infrastructure needs of the planning regions; thus, the recent update of the regional water plans includes detailed lists of the projects, programs, and policies that are needed to address local and regional problems. The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission appreciates the input by the numerous stakeholders to help capture the infrastructure needs of the regions and help build a foundation for estimating the costs statewide for addressing infrastructure needs and other projects, programs, and policies. Costs were provided for about 60% of the suggested programs, policies, and projects, with an estimated total cost of \$4.3 billion over the next few years.

The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission would like to thank the many individuals and organizations who reviewed the draft state water plan and provided thoughtful comments to help improve it. The input from all these entities, including federal and state agencies and pueblos in New Mexico, have offered valuable constructive feedback, and helped to identify many areas for future collaboration.

Going forward, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Water Planning Program intends to initiate additional water planning outreach and education activities in 2019 and beyond. Upcoming events will be designed to address each topic. Future goals include convening a diverse range of participants and engaging in information-sharing, collaboration, and problem-solving to improve New Mexico water planning efforts.

See you there.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lucia F. Sanchez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lucia F. Sanchez

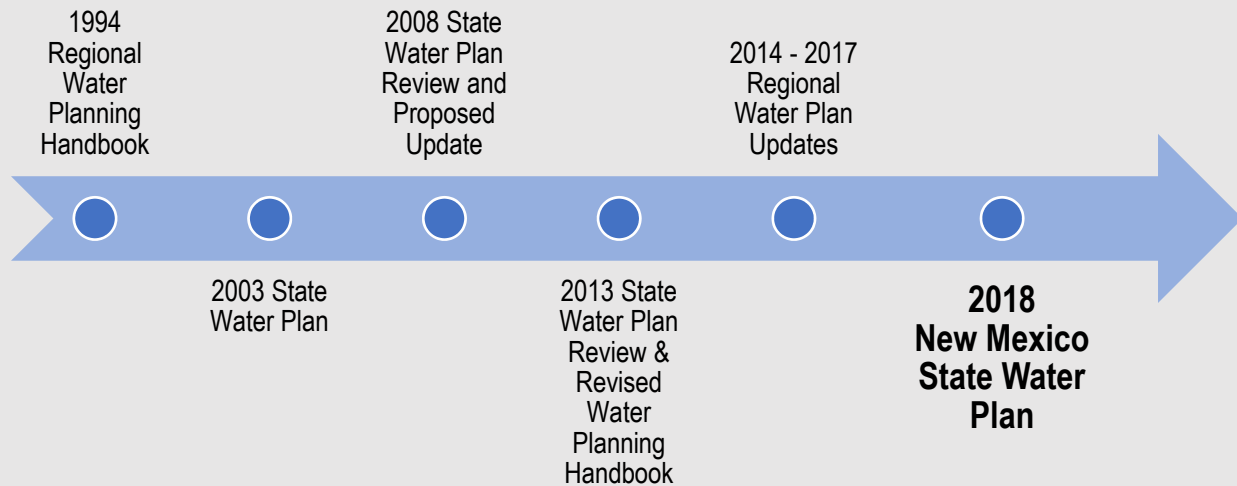
Water Planning Program Manager

New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission

Overview of State Water Planning in New Mexico and Statutory Authority

The state of New Mexico's first water plan was written in 2003 and has continued to evolve over the past 15 years. Since the original plan was written, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission has continued to develop other water planning reports and reviews focused on changing conditions that impact the state's water resources.

Below is a timeline showing some of the significant achievements in the history of regional and state water planning in New Mexico.



The 2003 State Water Plan Act defines the requirements of State Water Plan (NMSA §72-14-3.1 (C)(11)). The act also directs the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, in collaboration with the state engineer and the water trust board and in consultation with other government agencies as appropriate, to develop a comprehensive, coordinated state water plan (NMSA §72-14-3.1 (C)(11)). The 2003 State Water Plan addressed each section of the statute and provided strategies for meeting the purposes of the statute.

The *2008 Review and Proposed Update to the New Mexico State Water Plan* identified the strengths and weaknesses of the *2003 State Water Plan* and recommended that the next plan could be improved by including:

- Technical studies that address water supplies, population projections, water demand, the connection between groundwater and surface water, water conservation, drought management, brackish water and desalination, water availability and land use planning, and riparian restoration for protection of water supply and water quality.
- Increased emphasis on infrastructure needs, priorities, and costs.
- Identification of additional authorities and responsibilities of relevant agencies.
- More emphasis on ecosystem and habitat protection and restoration issues.

Purposes of the State Water Plan Act

- Promoting stewardship of the state's water resources
- Protecting and maintaining water rights and their priority status
- Protecting the diverse customs, culture, environment and economic stability of the state
- Protecting both the water supply and water quality
- Promoting cooperative strategies, based on concern for meeting the basic needs of all New Mexicans
- Meeting the state's interstate compact obligations
- Providing a basis for prioritizing infrastructure investment
- Providing statewide continuity of policy and management relative to our water resources

The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission established a process to respond to the *2008 Review and Proposed Update to the New Mexico State Water Plan* and ultimately worked to improve the next State Water Plan. This process involved updating the regional water planning handbook.

The *2013 State Water Plan Review* described the approach for updating the regional water plans, including using the revised *2013 Regional Water Planning Handbook*, an update to the 1994 Handbook. The 2013 Handbook made technical studies more useful to the state water planning effort by creating a method, called the common technical approach, of evaluating regional water supplies to be consistently used in all regional water plans. This allowed the state to meet the statutory requirement that regional water plans be integrated into the State Water Plan (NMSA §72-14-3.1 (C)(11)).

The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission developed this 2018 plan in accordance with the statute and chose a structure for this plan to group the large amount of information: **Part I: Policies**, **Part II: Technical Report**, and **Part III: Legal Landmarks**. This 2018 plan is intended to complement, not replace, the 2003 plan. Nothing in this State Water Plan shall be construed to grant or recommend the condemnation of water rights. Nothing in this State Water Plan shall be construed to determine, abridge or affect the water rights of Indian nations, tribes, or pueblos.

Using the 2013 Handbook's guidance, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission worked to compile water supply, population, and demand data in a consistent format for the 16 water planning regions. Thus, this **2018 New Mexico State Water Plan** evolved from the 16 regional water plans completed in 2016 and 2017, which were developed using the common technical approach. The common technical approach provided a first step toward planning consistently on the local level and will continue to be revised and improved in future iterations of water planning.

In addition, to add emphasis on infrastructure needs as recommended in the 2008 Review, the recent update of the regional water plans included information about the proposed projects and costs. The 2013 Handbook stated that the regional water plans should include a detailed list of the various projects, programs and policies (PPPs) that are needed to address local and regional problems. The PPP lists served as a foundation for identifying the infrastructure needs statewide and provided insight into the issues and problems facing each region.

To identify additional authorities and responsibilities of relevant agencies, each of the policy topics described in the **2018 New Mexico State Water Plan Part I: Policies** includes a figure to illustrate the various agencies involved and a directory showing the agencies and programs involved in either funding or overseeing the vast and complicated institutional structure for protecting and managing the state's water resources. Also, to provide more focus on ecosystem and habitat health, as recommended in the 2008 Review, this **2018 New Mexico State Water Plan** includes a policy topic of watershed management.

