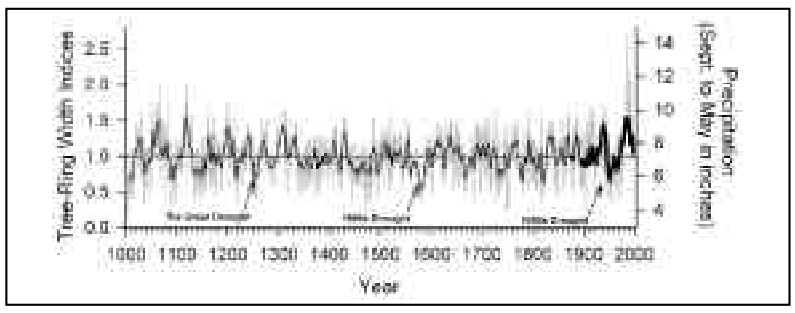
Paid Political Advertisement

City Different or City Deyhdrated?

We don't have enough water. Consider the following:

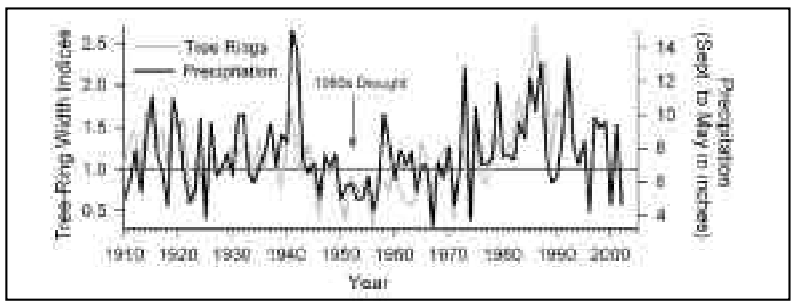
- Santa Fe's average precipitation (snow and rain) for January-May is 3.5 inches. This year, we have received 0.7 inches—20% of "normal".
- The reservoirs above Santa Fe have only 6% of usable capacity.
- Our nearest aquifer is being replenished less than half as fast as we are drawing it down.
- In the 1950s, the entire State experienced a drought that lasted seven years. The average precipitation for this period was 75% of the average. In the lowest year, 1956, we received only half of our "normal" amount.
- The Santa Fe River watershed is a tinder box that could burst into flame at any time.
- The immediate Santa Fe area has five golf courses.
- The County is in the process of approving subdivision plans that would ultimately house 50,000 new residents.
- In April and May, the City approved a record number of building permits.

It is clear that, sooner or later, something must be done. We think: **NOW!** The Santa Fe/Northern New Mexico Group of the Sierra Club firmly believes that all future development must be linked to the availability of water. This is not just Santa Fe's problem. Drought is a crisis that the entire State of New Mexico must address. Regional planning, cooperation and collaboration are an absolute necessity.



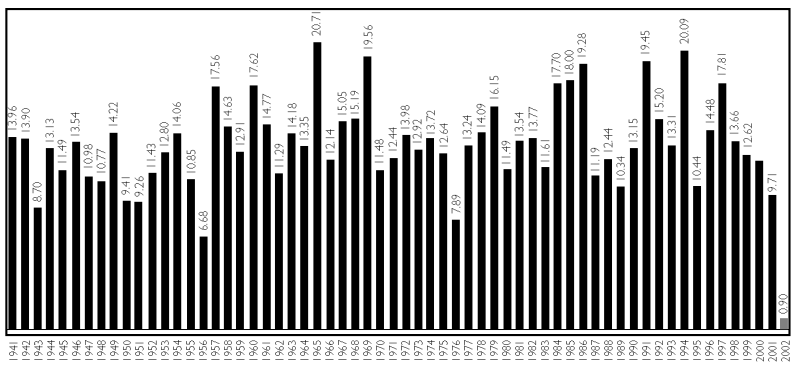
The 1,000-Year Record—New Mexico

The graph above shows the variation in the growth of trees—a good indicator of the variation in cool-season precipitation—in New Mexico during the past 1,000 years. The gray line shows annual tree-ring growth, the thin black line is the ten-year running average of the tree-ring record, and the thick black line is the ten-year average rain-gauge record for all of New Mexico. The tree-ring record for AD 1000-1993 is compiled from forest stands in the Sangre De Cristo Mountains north of Taos, the Sandia Crest above Albuquerque, El Malpais National Monument near Grants, and the Pinaleño Mountains in southern Arizona. Figure courtesy of Tom Swetnam, Director of the University of Arizona Laboratory of Tree Ring Research—www.ltrr.arizona.edu/



The 20th Century Record—New Mexico

Even at the scale of 100 years, widely variable precipitation is characteristic of our region—from more than 14 inches to less than 4 inches of precipitation in any given cool season. In New Mexico, the mid-1970s to the early-1990s was the wettest two-decade period in the 20th Century—and in the past 1,000 years. This was also a period of maximum growth in southwest human populations. Actual rain-gauge records for 1895-2002 are averages for the entire State of New Mexico (the NOAA National Geophysical Data Center). Figure courtesy of Tom Swetnam (see above).



The 60-Year Record—Santa Fe

Note the severe drought in the 1950s—and that we are now experiencing another dry spell. Our planning must take into account the variability of surface-water supply. Data from Western Regional Climate Center—www.wrcc.dri.edu; figure by Marty Peale. For more information, see Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club web site—http://riogrande.sierraclub.org/santafe/home.html

Several southwestern cities, including Tucson and Santa Fe, have good community-wide conservation strategies. In fact, Santa Fe's per capita water consumption is one of the lowest. With our cooler climate, however, we can—and should—have the best conservation record!

The key is sustainable water. We have exceeded our ability to support the growth we are experiencing. What can we do? Let trees die so we can build more houses?

Environmental and Cultural Requirements

- At least 5% of any water transferred from other locations and conveyed to Santa Fe via the Rio Grande must be left in the river. We must keep this great river alive.
- Underground water—our aquifer that is tapped by wells—must not drop during a ten-year running average. Yet today our aquifer is dropping rapidly. Underground water is our security during a real drought: we must make sure it is there when we need it.
- No transfers from acequias. For half a millennium or more, the acequias of northern New Mexico have sustained the people and the land. We must not threaten this cultural heritage.
- Agriculture must be a partner in developing strategies. The land is our food source. The Midwest and the West can suffer drought, and the Rio Grande Valley would become a critical food source to the region.

Economic Considerations

- Tourism is a major lifeblood of the City, with impacts on the entire region. Peak visitation times are also peak water-usage times for the water system. Storage and treatment capacity to meet this peak demand should come from lodging taxes.

Changes Needed

- We must turn off water to golf courses. Removing one golf course saves enough water for 10,000 people. Doesn't water for 10,000 people benefit our families and our economy more than water for a recreational use that employs a small number of workers and caters to a relatively small number of people?
- An open pond of water evaporates less water than the same area of grass. Do we need grass at all except for recreational fields?
- Our shower and washing-machine water can be used for our outdoor plants without any ill effects. Regulations must be changed to allow graywater use.
- It is not fair to us as a community when our neighbors waste water. Just because a neighbor has a well does not give him/her a right to be a water-waster. We must meter all wells to ensure that we are all playing by the rules.
- All new construction must collect and store moisture that falls on the roof. Many folks in the rural areas of the State meet their entire household needs by this means.
- Let us treat some of our effluent, send it "up the river" and let it flow back down the Santa Fe River. It helps to recharge the aquifer. A running river also creates a great place for locals and tourists alike. Let the river live again!
- Water rates should increase progressively with water use.
- Water rates should provide enough money to pay for both the cost of water and all infrastructure.

Immediate Moratorium Needed

Link growth to sustainable water supplies.

Require permanent water **Before** approval of new building permits and subdivision plans in the **City** and the **County**.

A Growth-Rate Ordinance That Ties Growth to Water Availability Is Our Way Out of a Building Moratorium.

Will the City and/or the County Start a Moratorium?

Ask Your Councilors and Commissioners to Act!

Santa Fe City Councilors

Patti J. Bushee (District 1)—984-8744; councilord1a@ci.santa-fe.nm.us
David Pfeffer (District 1)—955-6811; pfef@aol.com
Rebecca Wurzburger (District 2)—955-6590; rwurzburger@ci.santa-fe.nm.us
Karen Heldmeyer (District 2)—955-6590; kheld@earthlink.net
David Coss (District 3)—955-6590; dcoss@ci.santa-fe.nm.us
Miguel Chavez (District 3)—955-6590; miguelchavez@uswest.net
Carol Robertson-Lopez (District 4)—955-6590; crobertsonlopez@qwest.net
Matthew Ortiz (District 4)—955-6590; mortizlaw@msn.com

Santa Fe County Commissioners

Mark "Marcos" Trujillo (District 1)—rgarcia@co.santa-fe.nm.us
Paul Duran (District 2)—pdduran@ix.netcom.com
Javier Gonzales (District 3)—986-6200; javier@uswest.net
Paul Campos (District 4)—986-6060; pcampos@co.santa-fe.nm.us
Jack Sullivan (District 5)—986-6200; jsullivan@co.santa-fe.nm.us

For more information, see the Santa Fe City web site: www.ci.santa-fe.nm.us and the Santa Fe County web site: www.co.santa-fe.nm.us

Is It All Moving Too Slowly For You?—If the City Council does not proceed, the public can force the City to let the citizens vote on a building moratorium and growth ordinance. **You** can sign up. Send an e-mail to:

sfmoratorium@earthlink.net

We Can All Save Water!!—Refer to the Santa Fe City's water-conservation guidelines at: www.ci.santa-fe.nm.us and click on "water wise".

Links To More Information—If you are looking for more information, or if you have more information, refer to the Santa Fe Group's web site at: riogrande.sierraclub.org/santafe/home.html

For more information about tree-ring research in New Mexico, see Dr. Henri D. Grissino-Mayer's web site at the Laboratory of Tree-Ring Science, University of Tennessee—http://web.utk.edu/~grissino/

$1,000 Reward

for the Best Water-Conservation Idea for Santa Fe County

500 words maximum ✡ Must be typewritten ✡ Idea must be realistic & practical
Must be submitted by a team of two or more residents of Santa Fe City or County
There is no age limit ✡ Only one idea per team ✡ Deadline for Entries: June 28, 2002

Entries will be judged by the following panel:

Santa Fe City Councilor David Coss ✡ Santa Fe County Commissioner Paul Campos
Santa Fe Water Coalition Member Karyn Schmitt ✡ Santa Fe Sierra Club Water Chair John Buchser
Santa Fe Land Use Resource Center Research Director Judy Stevens

Send your water idea to:

The Sierra Club, Water Chair • 621 Old Santa Fe Trail • Suite 10 • Santa Fe, NM 87505
or e-mail: savesfwater@earthlink.net

The Sierra Club

For Our Families, For Our Future

This advertisement paid for by the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club • Lionel Soracco, Treasurer • 621 Old Santa Fe Trail • Suite 10 • Santa Fe, NM 87505