



“A River Runs Through It.”

The beloved novella by Norman Maclean and film by Robert Redford

FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Many of us who love the outdoors read “A River Runs Through It” or saw the movie by Robert Redford. New Mexico is truly a place where the river runs through it. Our 108,000+ miles of rivers bring life to our communities, our farmers, and our wildlife. Those rivers have been under threat from over consumption, pollution, aridification, and development. In fact, just last year, the national organization, American Rivers, named all the rivers of New Mexico as the most endangered in the country.

This is a critical time for our state's waters. As the federal government steps away from much-needed protections, our state government has taken action to fill these gaps. Now our legislators need to finish the job with key funding needs, covering a variety of water priorities. In this Advisory, we highlight several of these funding needs.

We can help protect our rivers with smart water policy, conservation practices, and watershed protection. Perhaps the most important tool we can use is public awareness

and support. That is why New Mexico Wild has developed a beautiful guide to our state's most important rivers for cultural, scenic, recreational, and biodiversity values.

The “Wild Waters” river guide is being published this month as a companion

to our “Wild Guide” that focuses on the state's wilderness areas. If you'll make a special donation to our water protection work today, we'd be pleased to send you a complimentary copy of the new guide.

Mark Allison
Executive Director
New Mexico Wild



Our state legislature can help create a sustainable water future for New Mexico.

In a year when the Rio Grande ran dry in Albuquerque, water must be a priority for our state government. Beginning January 20, the New Mexico legislature will meet for 30 days with a focus on the state's budget. This session and budget will shape water policy for years ahead. It will determine funding for water priorities that New Mexico Wild has been supporting to protect our rivers and wildlife and the water quality on which we all depend.

As the Trump Administration continues to rollback federal clean water protections and as initiatives to privatize public lands and waters continue, now is the time for our state to take a stand with adequate funding for high-priority water programs and projects. Among these are funding for the Strategic Water Reserve Fund, River Stewardship Program, aquifer mapping and monitoring, and water rights settlements, as well as support for enhanced water resource planning and management.

The leadership, legal, and water policy teams at New Mexico Wild will be actively advocating for these and other funding priorities during this legislative session. While the state water funding as proposed is only about 1% of the state's overall budget, it is vital to our future.

On the other side of this Advisory, we provide more background on two of the key water policy needs being discussed in this year's budget.



Member support allows New Mexico Wild Wilderness Rangers to monitor public lands and waters.

Investing in secure and equitable water for people and wildlife

Last year, legislators created a non-reverting fund to support the Strategic Water Reserve. New Mexico Wild supports investing \$15 million to fill that fund. For over 20 years, the Strategic Water Reserve has been keeping more water in New Mexico's rivers and streams through voluntary water rights transactions. These transactions can help to meet our obligations under interstate compacts, support endangered species, or provide for aquifer recharge. But one of the key challenges to seeing more success has been funding, with funds frequently clawed back due to the length of time water rights transactions take.



Filling this fund will ensure that when water rights are available, the state is ready to move to purchase or lease and keep that water in-stream. The Strategic Water Reserve Fund is a vital water management tool which benefits both people and nature.

Enhancing river health and water quality

New Mexicans benefit from the positive economic impact generated from our rivers for both recreation and growth. Now is the time to expand the New Mexico River Stewardship Program to enhance river health and water quality.

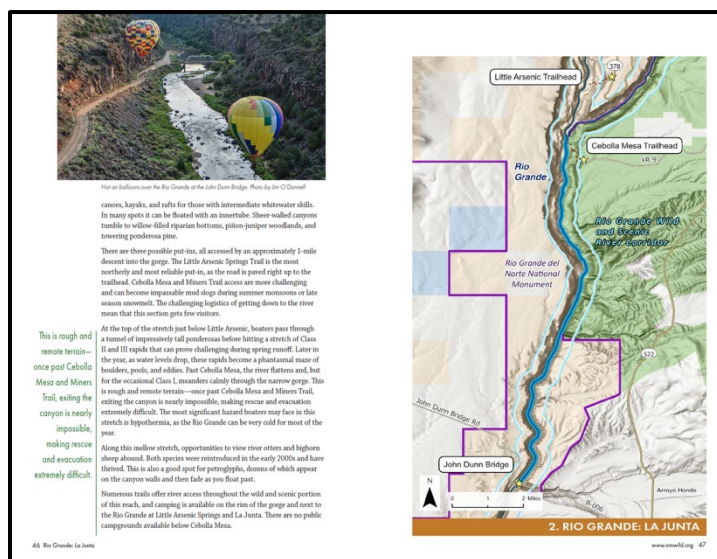
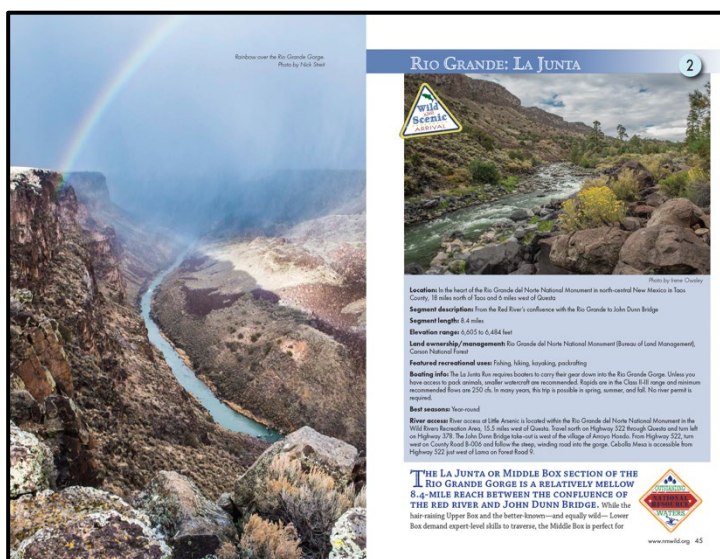
The program funds projects to improve opportunities for recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing by improving habitat. It also helps fund projects to maintain the natural flow of rivers and streams to improve floodplain connectivity and reduce flooding risks downstream.

These funds are often used to leverage federal project funds, creating an even bigger investment in New Mexico's river health. New Mexico Wild supports a \$50 million state investment in this program during this year's budget session.



New River Guide Available

Wild Waters: Passport to New Mexico Rivers is a 244-page guide to 42 river sections across the state. New Mexico Wild created the guide as an important resource for outdoor recreationists and anyone who loves natural beauty, wildlife, and the cultural and historical significance of these treasured waterways.



Please make a special donation to support our work protecting the waters of New Mexico, and we will send you a complimentary copy of the just-published *Wild Waters* river guide.

Please use the accompanying donation form.

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance / PO Box 25464 / Albuquerque, NM 87125 / 505-843-8696 / nmwild.org