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20 people attend week-long training on "smart" irrigation technologies.

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**XCNM Announces Drought as an Opportunity for Change Conference**

2014 conference will focus on positive change during water crisis.

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## New Mexico Holds its First QWEL Training



The City of Santa Fe Water Conservation Office and the New Mexico Water Conservation Alliance sponsored New Mexico's first Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) training this past March.

QWEL is an approved U.S. EPA WaterSense Irrigation Auditor certification program. As the weather gets hotter and drier, the demand for "smart" irrigation technology increases. With this increase comes a need for "smart" landscape professionals who understand these technologies, local soil and weather conditions, and the trends in water-efficient irrigation systems.

The weeklong training included three days of classroom presentations, a half-day each of fieldwork and exam preparation, and the exam on the final day. Twenty participants gained knowledge in water efficient and sustainable landscape practices, including design, maintenance, and operation of "smart" irrigation systems. All 20 participants successfully completed the training and are eligible to become EPA WaterSense Irrigation Partners.

QWEL certification and WaterSense Partnership can help your business do the following: distinguish itself from the



competition; gain preference on building projects that use green rating systems (such as LEED for Homes); demonstrate your business' commitment to water efficient irrigation practices; and provide you with tools for marketing your services. In addition to listings on the QWEL and WaterSense websites, landscape professionals who achieve and maintain QWEL certification and have a current City of Santa Fe business license will become approved contractors for the City of Santa Fe Water Conservation Irrigation Efficiency Rebate Program.

For more information on QWEL, visit <http://www.qwel.net/>. For information on the City of Santa Fe's next QWEL training, contact Laurie Trevizo at [ltrevizo@ci.santa-fe.nm.us](mailto:ltrevizo@ci.santa-fe.nm.us). For information on bringing a QWEL training to your city, contact Lonnie Burke at [resourcewise@yahoo.com](mailto:resourcewise@yahoo.com).

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## City of Santa Fe Launches New Water Conservation Website

The City of Santa Fe Water Conservation Office has launched a new user-friendly website, [Save Water Santa Fe](#), to help customers preserve Santa Fe's limited water resources and save money on water bills.

The new site has features that make searching, site navigation, and mobile browsing easy and fun. The technologically-advanced, intuitive design provides quick access to resources by displaying important content prominently. The revamped search function helps users find relevant content more easily and effectively.

"The new website is better equipped to make it easier for customers to find the tools, resources and answers they need to save water and lower their water bills," said Laurie Trevizo, City Water Conservation Manager. "Our goal is to provide residents and businesses with the information and resources they need in one convenient place."

The new site includes tools to help customers calculate home and landscape water use and potential savings, fill out rebate forms, and find drought updates, regulations, water restrictions, and information on conservation education. The site also has tips and resources for saving water inside and outside the home and at work.

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## Children's Water Conservation Poster Contest Winners Announced

Third grader Tristan Lujan from La Mariposa Montessori in Santa Fe is the grand prize winner of the 10th Annual Children's Water Conservation Poster Contest. As the judges' top pick, Tristan's watercolor will be displayed on the back of a city bus for one year. Tristan's poster was among nearly 300 submitted by students in first through sixth grades.

Tristan's artwork features the chemical formula for water (H<sub>2</sub>O) with ocean creatures swimming in the letter H, swirls of green and blue in the number 2 to represent the relationship between land and water, the world illustrated in the letter O, and polishing off the artwork are the words, "El Agua Es Vida."

First and second place artwork for each grade in the contest will be featured in the City's 2014 water conservation calendar. All 18 winners will receive a trophy and water conservation prize package.

The theme for this year's contest was "Show Us Your Water Appreciation." Posters were judged on water conservation message, neatness, creativity, originality and artistic design.

"This contest allows students to think creatively about



This contest allows students to think creatively about water,” said City Councilor Rebecca Wurzberger, one of the judges in this year’s contest. “Some of the artwork featured great water conservation messages, but also the understanding that our water resources are limited. After all, it’s important to engage children. Creating water awareness now will encourage them to be water savers in the future.”

The other judges included City Councilor Chris Calvert, Santa Fe Public School Art Coordinator Amy Suma, and Water Conservation Committee members Doug Pushard, Stephen Wiman, and Lisa Randall.

## The winners:

### First Grade

1st, Joaquin Sisneros, Carlos Gilbert Elementary  
2nd, Rio Ryan, NM Academy of International Studies  
3rd, Elle Dunner, Carlos Gilbert Elementary

### Second Grade

1st, Alec Hardy, Rio Grande Elementary  
2nd, Rowan Sullivan, Dragonfly School  
3rd, Josiah Griego, Carlos Gilbert Elementary

### Third Grade

1st/Grand Prize, Tristen Lujan, La Mariposa Montessori  
2nd, Molly Murphey, Dragonfly School  
3rd, Santi Alvarez, Santo Nino

### Fourth Grade

1st, Joanna Whysner, Acequia Madre  
2nd, Deangelo Quintana, Agua Fria Elementary  
3rd, Alex Rigales, Amy Biehl Community School

### Fifth Grade

1st, Sam Matthews, La Mariposa Montessori  
2nd, Eva Sophia Crocker, La Mariposa Montessori  
3rd, Gabby Ruggeiro, Rio Grande Elementary

### Sixth Grade

1st, Carlos Ruiz, Nava Elementary  
2nd, Delilah Rodriguez, Nava Elementary  
3rd, Angela Lowenthal, La Mariposa Montessori

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## City of Rio Rancho Receives National Attention for Water Conservation Efforts

### *Water, Environment and Technology Magazine*

The April 2013 edition of *Water, Environment and Technology (WE&T)* magazine, published by the Water Environment Federation, had a wonderful article about the Rio Rancho Children’s Water Festival, an annual event held for fourth-grade students in the city. The article, “A New Spin on Public Outreach,” highlighted the funding and organizational aspects of the Water Festival, which in 2012 reached 1,357 students and 56 teachers. The focus of the annual festival is to teach students about water through hands-on activities in areas such as water conservation, watersheds, and water quality.



### *American Water Works Association Journal*

The June 2013 edition of the *American Water Works Association Journal* contained an article titled “Water Loss: The North American Dataset.” For several years, the City of Rio Rancho has partnered with one of the article’s authors, A. Chastain-Howley, to share the city’s water use accounting information. Rio Rancho was one of 26 water systems in the U.S. and Canada to partner with Chastain-Howley, who has launched a North American program to benchmark and understand utility water losses. The aim of this effort is to help the water industry establish a better understanding of water loss and create the basis for evaluating the most efficient water loss control programs.

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## Adults Travel the Fun Route Toward Water Conservation Education

This summer provided two opportunities for educating adults about water conservation.

Staff from Rio Rancho's Water Conservation Office was invited to Presbyterian Medical Center to give a presentation to volunteers about water conservation.

Marian Wrage, city environmental programs manager, opened with a brief overview of how to read water bills, since understanding what causes increased use can help residents conserve water. Volunteers were then divided into two "cities" to play a rousing rendition of Water Jeopardy, a game similar to the television show Jeopardy but with all water-related questions and answers.

"We usually play this game with fifth-graders where we give them the answers before we play the game," said Lynn Kronowit, sustainability manager for CH2M Hill-OMI, the city's water contractor. "The volunteers' water knowledge was amazing."



## Science Teachers Tour Arsenic Removal Facility

Staff members at Rio Rancho Water Complex gave a tour to 16 local teachers that began with a classroom-style lecture about Rio Rancho's drinking water source, wells and pumping, and how naturally occurring arsenic is removed. The Complex is one of the largest arsenic removal facilities in the southwest. The tour and lecture was part of an educational opportunity provided by a Sandia National Laboratories grant designed to enhance teachers' science-related knowledge and help them expand their students' science knowledge.







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## And the Winner Is . . . Elizabeth Barriga from the City of Gallup

We recently received word that Elizabeth Barriga is the winner of the 2013 Alice Darilek Water Conservation Award from the Rocky Mountain Section of the American Water Works Association (AWWA). The Rocky Mountain Section encompasses Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico.

"I have known Elizabeth Barriga for seven years," said Marian Wrage, City of Rio Rancho environmental programs manager and Secretary for the New Mexico Water Conservation Alliance (Alliance). "I first met Elizabeth at an Alliance meeting. When a board position became available, she became the Secretary for the Alliance. She held the position for one year and then moved into the Treasurer position where she has remained for several years.

"Elizabeth has been very active with the Alliance, driving two and one-half hours one way from Gallup to attend the meetings in Albuquerque, held every other month. She has run a one-woman water conservation show for the City of Gallup for the past nine years. As Water Conservation Coordinator, she is the director of Gallup's annual Water and Energy Awareness Fair where the first day is for fourth-grade students (about 350), and the second day is at a middle school where about 900 sixth through eighth-grade students attend. As a presenter at her festival this year, I was amazed at how smoothly it ran and how well Elizabeth was able to use her festival volunteers. I have certainly "borrowed" a couple of ideas to incorporate into our outreach and education programs.

"When conservation opportunities come around, Elizabeth is quick to volunteer her time and her city. She has taken advantage of learning how to do restaurant water audits through participation with a NM Office of the State Engineer (NMOSE) grant, and she was also one of the first in the state to use AWWA's Water Use Accounting software. She has also partnered with other cities and organizations to participate in New Mexico's EPA Fix a Leak Week and attract local residents to various Fix a Leak Week events and distributing water conservation materials, showerheads, and aerators."

Please join all of us to congratulate Elizabeth Barriga for this prestigious award!

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## ***XCNM Announces Drought as an Opportunity for Change Conference***

In 1986, green-industry professionals interested in water conservation formed the Xeriscape Council of New Mexico (XCNM), a non-profit 501(c)(3). The XCNM is a small group that focuses on education surrounding water conservation, native and arid-adapted plants, rainwater harvesting, low impact/reserved building materials, and



impact recycled building materials, and landscaping/irrigation methods. The group has run 18 conferences under the title "The Xeriscape Conference." Over the years, the scope of speakers and presentations has expanded far beyond traditional xeriscaping, so in light of that, the XCNM has rebranded the annual conference to better reflect its actual content. We are proud to announce the Land&Water Summit 2014.



As we all know, drought has dominated our lives for several years. Demands on water use stress our limited and decreasing water resources, yet new demands are continuously being added. This year, the XCNM will focus on *Drought as an Opportunity for Change*. We will strive to find both traditional and non-traditional speakers who emphasize positive change during a water crisis.

Author Cynthia Barnett has agreed to keynote the conference. An award winning journalist and author, Ms. Bennett has reported on freshwater issues from the Suwannee River to Singapore. Author of the books *Mirage: Florida and the Vanishing Water of the Eastern U.S.* and *Blue Revolution: Unmaking America's Water Crisis*, she is now working on a human and natural history of rain. She will discuss how the Dust Bowl helped inspire the land ethic in this country, and how the Big Dry in Australia completely changed their water behavior in just one decade.

The conference will be held February 20-21, 2014 at the Sheraton Airport in Albuquerque. Registration is now open, and there are several early bird specials, including before December 13, buy one full registration and get the second one half price. For more information and to register, visit [www.xeriscapenm.com](http://www.xeriscapenm.com).

Let's use drought as an opportunity to promote creative solutions.

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