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What's on the docket for the coming months? [Click here](#) for the latest list of water conservation events.

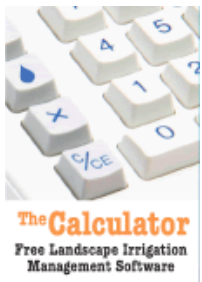
Don't Miss Four Irrigation Association classes scheduled for March 19-20, 2009

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The NMWCA is still



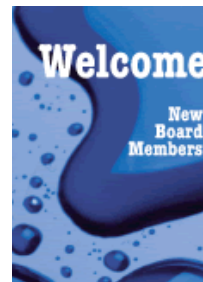
A New, Cool Landscape Watering Tool!
The New Mexico Landscape Irrigation Calculator will be Beta tested at the 2009 Water Conservation and Xeriscape Expo and the end of February. [Read more here](#), and then be sure to swing by our booth for a demonstration.



City of Rio Rancho Water Conservation Office Sponsors Science Fair Award
Rio Rancho High School student, Mercedes Reuel, receives a \$25 cash prize for her science project on purifying brackish water with sunlight. [Read more....](#)



New Mexico Water Rates
Compare water rate data in 94 New Mexico communities. [Read](#) which communities have the highest and lowest rates, and find out where your community falls on the scale.



New Mexico Water Conservation Alliance Elects New Board Members
Help us welcome the newly elected Water Conservation Alliance board members. They are [Lonnie Burke](#), [Elizabeth Barriga](#), [Matthew Dickens](#), and [Marian Wrage](#). [More...](#)



Roof Reliant Landscaping Manual Available on the Office of the State Engineer Web Site
Learn ways to save your rainwater with the new online manual "Roof-Reliant Landscaping, Rainwater Harvesting with Cistern Systems in New Mexico." [Click here](#) for details.

A New, Cool Tool!

Ever wonder how long you should water your landscape? Well, wonder no more.



The New Mexico Office of the State Engineer has a new online tool to help you easily figure it out. **The New Mexico Landscape Irrigation Calculator** will calculate the length of time and number of days per week that your landscape needs water.

This easy-to-use Web site prompts the user for specific information about their landscape, including plant type, irrigation system, and soil type. Enter this information for each zone or area, and the calculator will tailor the information to these specific areas. Drop down menus and help boxes narrow the choices down to what's best for the user's landscape.

As a user, your data is then correlated to the specific evapotranspiration (ET) data for your geographical location. By entering your address into a Google Earth search tool linked to the site, the system retrieves

The NMWCA is still updating its database of water conservation professionals.

Stay connected and communicate the latest in water conservation information. Register today!

If you are already registered, please take a minute to check your entry and bring it up to date. You can find the database at wri.nmsu.edu/wrdis/nmwca/database.html.

Thank you!

your latitude and longitude coordinates. This links to a database of approximately 315,000 quadrants (1 km each) in New Mexico. Each quadrant contains 25 years of historical weather data that was converted into ET rates using the Hargreaves Samani equation. The cool part is the software does all this for you! All you have to do is enter your physical address.

The Calculator will then output an irrigation calendar listing days of the week and run times for each zone entered. The software will even consider watering restrictions, such as one day a week or every other day schedules. The data is not saved on the site, so be sure to print and keep copies of your calendar.

The NM Landscape Irrigation Calculator will be Beta tested at the 2009 Water Conservation and Xeriscape Expo, February 28-March 1, 2009 at NM Expo. Come by the NM Office of the State Engineer's booth for a personal tutorial, or visit our Web site <http://www.ose.state.nm.us/index.html> and click on [Water Use and Conservation](#). The final version is scheduled to be online by April 1, 2009.

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City of Rio Rancho Water Conservation Office Sponsors Science Fair Award

On January 22 of this year, the City of Rio Rancho's Water Conservation Office sponsored a cash award at the Science Fair and Expo held at Rio Rancho High School. The award recognized the best project depicting water conservation/ efficiency or water quality. The \$25 prize was awarded to **Mercedes Reuel** for her project on purifying brackish water using nothing but sunlight by heating it with a solar oven and collecting the vapors in a separate vessel. Way to go, Mercedes!



Mercedes Reuel receives water conservation award for 2009.

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A Quick Look at New Mexico Water Rates

The City Council in Santa Fe recently voted to raise customer water rates again, even though Santa Fe already has one of the highest rates in the state. This action prompted the New Mexico Water Conservation Alliance to look at municipal water rates around the state to see how they compare.

Municipal water rate data for 94 communities are collected annually by the New Mexico Environment Department. A review of the 2007 data, which is the most recent available, provides interesting comparisons. There is a very wide range between the highest and lowest rates charged. For the ten largest municipalities in the state, by number of connections, water rates range from just over \$40 for 6,000 gallons per month in Santa Fe to \$10.50 for the same volume in Hobbs.

Please note: The information collected does not include water rates for water and sanitation districts, private utilities, and other types of drinking water suppliers.

Municipality	Residential 6000 Gal Water Rate/Month	Commercial Water Rate/Month	Residential Water Connections	Commercial Water Connections	Total Water Connections	Residential Sewer Rate/Month	Commercial Sewer Rate/Month	Residential Sewer Connections	Commercial Sewer Connections	Average Monthly Water Use/ Connection
Santa Fe	\$ 40.07	\$ 53.11	30,038	3,511	33,549	\$ 21.00	\$ 21.00	31,260	3,552	8,090
Ruidoso, Village of	\$ 24.86	\$ 29.06	7,846	635	8,481	\$ 15.77	\$ 22.25	6,896	526	6,277
Rio Rancho	\$ 24.40	\$ 30.73	26,832	873	29,705	\$ 43.02	\$ 43.02	22,409	2,676	11,725
Farmington	\$ 23.21	\$ 36.17	13,163	2,485	15,648	\$ 16.72	\$ 37.14	11,910	1,774	23,458
Albuquerque/ Bernalillo Co Water Utility Authority	\$ 21.59	\$ 141.02	157,512	15,742	173,254	\$ 13.68	\$ 162.89	157,431	13,731	15,675
Alamogordo	\$ 19.05	\$ 21.28	11,197	885	12,082	\$ 15.78	\$ 15.78	10,330	841	12,118
Las Cruces	\$ 14.68	\$ 24.79	26,325	2,739	29,064	\$ 17.38	\$ 23.90	24,912	2,076	18,981
Roswell	\$ 12.27	\$ 12.27	16,782	1,933	18,715	\$ 10.32	\$ 10.32	16,662	1,915	17,126
Carlsbad	\$ 10.86	\$ 12.85	9,278	1,475	10,753	\$ 13.52	\$ 16.50	8,203	1,140	19,511
Hobbs	\$ 10.50	\$ 10.50	9,552	1,716	11,268	\$ 14.38	\$ 15.13	9,439	1,494	21,733

To see a larger version of this table [click here](#). To return to this page use your browser back button.

Most Expensive Water Rates

Communities that charge the highest water rates vary greatly in size, from Santa Fe to the small community of San Ysidro.

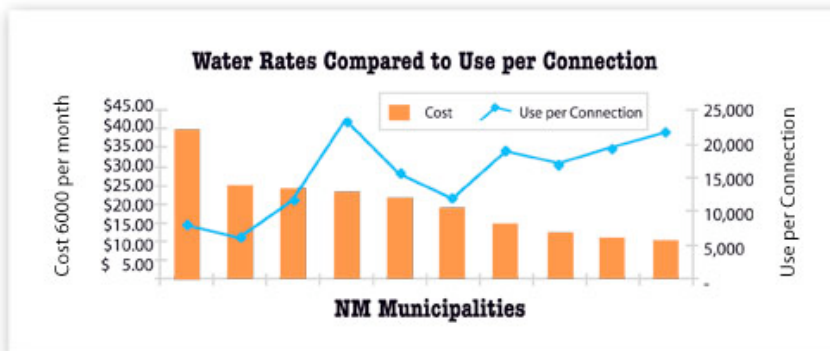
Municipality	Residential 6000 Gal Water Rate/Month	Commercial Water Rate/Month	Residential Water Connections	Commercial Water Connections
San Ysidro	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	81	18
Taos Ski Valley	\$ 42.54	\$ 42.54	133	19
Santa Fe	\$ 40.07	\$ 53.11	30,038	3,511
Willard	\$ 39.40	\$ 39.40	104	2
Bloomfield	\$ 36.02	\$ 58.02	2,929	87

Least Expensive Water Rates

Communities that charge the lowest water rates range from Artesia, with over 4,000 connections, to Causey, with only 30 connections.

Municipality	Residential 6000 Gal Water Rate/Month	Commercial Water Rate/Month	Residential Water Connections	Commercial Water Connections
Santa Rosa	\$ 10.17	\$ 10.17	779	131
Wagon Mound	\$ 10.15	\$ 10.15	210	8
Causey	\$ 8.40	n/a	30	-
Loving	\$ 8.20	\$ 8.20	547	35
Artesia	\$ 7.07	\$ 12.85	4,041	596

When sorted by cost, it becomes apparent that the amount of water used per connection is related to the cost of the water. Santa Fe, with the highest rates, has one of the lowest water uses per connection; while Hobbs, with the lowest rates, has one of the highest uses per connection. The figures in the Environment Department data combine water use for both residential and commercial customers; therefore, they do not provide true apple-to-apple comparisons. They do, however, point out the potential effect that water rates have on water use.



The components included in municipal water rates, such as related energy costs, can vary significantly from community to community, thereby affecting how high or low the rate may be. However, all rates should consider cost of water service, related infrastructure, and water treatment, distribution and administration. Some communities also consider intangibles, such as environmental impacts and the cost of providing the next block of water to serve new connections (i.e., purchasing new water rights or building a new treatment plant).

The water rates documented by the Environment Department are averaged over a twelve-month period and do not account for the structure of the rates (i.e., block or seasonal). They also do not include any fines or fees.

Average rates of the 94 municipalities that provide a public water supply

	Residential 6000 Gal Water	Commercial Water	Residential Sewer	Commercial Sewer
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	Rate/Month	Rate/Month	Rate/Month	Rate/Month
Average	\$ 21.70	\$ 28.65	\$ 19.54	\$ 28.63
Minimum	\$ 7.07	\$ 8.20	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.50
Maximum	\$ 50.00	\$ 141.02	\$ 173.14	\$ 173.14
Median	\$ 21.15	\$ 23.60	\$ 15.00	\$ 21.00

For additional information on rates and rate structures, see the Alliance for Water Efficiency [resource library](#), and [Designing, Evaluating, and Implementing Conservation Rate Structures](#), published through the California Urban Water Conservation Council.

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New Mexico Water Conservation Alliance Elects New Board Members

The New Mexico Water Conservation Alliance (NMWCA) held its first meeting of the New Year on January 8, 2009 and elected new board members. They are:

Lonnie Burke, Treasurer

Lonnie continues his role as Treasurer for another year. Lonnie is the proprietor of Resource Wise, a consulting company specializing in water conservation and water audits of both residential and commercial properties. He has 31 years experience as a licensed plumber and plumbing contractor and is an award winning conservation expert with over 22 years of practice in water and resource conservation management.



Lonnie Burke (right) receiving Bureau of Reclamation Water Conservation Award

Elizabeth Barriga, Secretary

Elizabeth hails from the western part of New Mexico, specifically Gallup, where she is the Water Conservation Officer. This is her second year as Secretary for the Alliance and does a wonderful job of taking and keeping minutes and sending out agendas for the meetings. In Gallup, Elizabeth is a one-woman show for water conservation, taking care of the annual children's water festival, adult and youth education, as well as performing water waste inspections.



Elizabeth Barriga, Secretary

Matthew Dickens, Vice President

Matt is the Water and Energy Conservation Coordinator for the Department of Public Utilities, Los Alamos County. Although he has only been in Los Alamos for a year, Matt has a plethora of experience in the water conservation arena. Matt's background includes a B.A. in Political Science from the University of New Mexico, 9 years conservation experience with Smart Use, LLC, Program Manager for the ABCWUA's Residential Water Conservation Program, and general water conservation services for the cities of Phoenix, Durango, Santa Fe and Belen.



Matthew Dickens, Vice President

Marian Wrage, President

Marian is the Environmental Programs Manager for the City of Rio Rancho. Her background includes 15 years as a quality control and project manager at an environmental laboratory in Albuquerque. She manages other water and wastewater programs in addition to Rio Rancho's Water Conservation Office. Marian served as Vice President of the Alliance in 2008 and Secretary in 2007.



Marian Wrage, President

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Roof Reliant Landscaping Manual Available on the Office of the State Engineer Web Site

The New Mexico Office of the State Engineer (NMOSE) announces the release of its newest water conservation publication, "Roof-Reliant Landscaping, Rainwater Harvesting with Cistern Systems in New Mexico." This online manual is designed to introduce the concept of roof-reliant landscaping, a waterwise strategy that explores ways to get maximum use of natural precipitation, combined with the design and creation of landscapes that need little or no supplemental water to thrive.

The manual begins with a basic introduction to xeriscaping and semi-arid landscape planning and



design, and then evolves into a detailed “how-to” discussion of cistern-system design, construction and maintenance.

New Mexico receives 12 inches of precipitation per year on average. A roof-reliant landscape is designed to survive on the natural precipitation that falls on the plant material, plus the water that can be harvested from roofs of onsite buildings and stored in a cistern for later use.



Because New Mexico is an arid state with significant water challenges, there is a renewed interest in the concept of rainwater harvesting and cisterns. Rooftop rainwater harvesting, along with other outdoor water conservation practices, can reduce the demands on municipal water systems and aquifers.

NMOSE continues to respond to the public’s need for new and progressive ways to conserve our state’s limited water supply. After February 1, 2009, visit the Water Use and Conservation section of our Web site at www.ose.state.nm.us to view the new manual. Users can download the whole manual or specific chapters or worksheets that best suits their needs. The appendix has a list of additional information about xeriscaping, dryland gardening, rainwater harvesting, and other methods of water conservation.

In the future, look for a recommended list of “Waterwise Plants of New Mexico,” with a column dedicated to “precipitation only plants.” NMOSE is also developing an Irrigation Calculator (see [A New Cool Tool!](#)) that will help users determine the right amount of water to use in their landscapes.

“Roof-Reliant Landscaping, Rainwater Harvesting with Cistern Systems in New Mexico” was made possible through a grant awarded to the Office of the State Engineer by the Bureau of Reclamation. The Office of the State Engineer administers the state’s water resources and has power over the supervision, measurement, appropriation, and distribution of all surface and groundwater in New Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The State Engineer is also Secretary of the Interstate Stream Commission and oversees its staff.

The Interstate Stream Commission has separate duties, including protecting New Mexico’s right to water under eight interstate stream compacts, ensuring the state complies with each of those compacts, and water planning.

For more information, contact:

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