

GREEN FIRE TIMES

News & Views from the Sustainable Southwest



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ADVERTISING SALES ADVERTISE@GREENFIRETIMES.COM

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C/O SOUTHWEST LEARNING CENTERS, INC.
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505-989-8898, P.O. BOX 8627, SANTA FE, NM 87504-8627
GREENFIRETIMES.COM

**THIS ISSUE IS A COLLABORATION WITH THE NEW MEXICO FOOD &
AGRICULTURE POLICY COUNCIL AND FARM TO TABLE NEW MEXICO**

COVER: NORTHERN NEW MEXICO FARMERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS BROUGHT APPLES TO LOS JARDINES INSTITUTE IN THE SOUTH VALLEY OF ALBUQUERQUE FOR JOAQUIN LUJÁN TO DISTRIBUTE (PG. 6); NORTH AMERICAN YAK THRIVING IN LEDOUX, N.M. (PG. 40); GEORGINA KEMP OF THE N.M. BEE COLLECTIVE (PG. 34); MATT ROMERO ROASTS CHILE AT THE SANTA FE FARMERS' MARKET, AUGUST 2024 (PG. 43)

THIS MAY BE THE FINAL ISSUE OF GREEN FIRE TIMES.

As you can tell by the wealth of written contributions in this edition, there is no lack of interest in the platform *Green Fire Times* provides for diverse, visionary voices from our region, and a platform for regional, culturally-based economic development. We continue to receive tremendous positive feedback and appreciation—but it has not been matched by sufficient funding to cover increased production costs. As a program of a long-established nonprofit, we have reached out to potential funders and foundations, as well as advertisers. Mostly, we receive small donations from devoted readers. We have been operating on a shoestring for a long time—and it's not sustainable.

We think that GFT, and the way it interweaves community, culture, environment and regional economy, linking cutting-edge innovation with time-honored traditions, still has great potential. Many people say, "Why don't you just go digital instead of continuing to publish a free print (distributed from Albuquerque to Taos) and online publication?" We know that because of the unique, community-driven nature of GFT, with many people from rural and Tribal communities contributing ideas, articles and images, we would lose an important sector of our readership if we did that. Many of those people really like being able to share a hard copy and would be less likely to contribute.



In order for GFT to build on its accomplishments, we need to upgrade our operations. That includes making GREEN-FIRETIMES.COM, with 15 years of articles, more accessible to community members, students and researchers. If you want to see GFT continue to publish, please make a tax-deductible donation through this QR code or our website GREENFIRETIMES.COM, or send a check to Southwest Learning Centers (with a notation 'for GFT') to P.O. Box 8627, Santa Fe, N.M. 87504-8627. Thank you.

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PREPARING CHICOS AT TESUQUE PUEBLO IN NORTHERN NEW MEXICO



A traditional strain of white corn was harvested, cooked overnight in a covered pit, shucked, strung together in bunches and distributed to families. © Seth Roffman

2024 JAMES BEARD LEADERSHIP AWARD IN FOOD ACCESS AND FOOD SECURITY

BY HELGA GARCÍA-GARZA

On June 9, as executive director of the New Mexico-based Agri-Cultura Cooperative Network / La Cosecha CSA, I was presented with the prestigious *James Beard Foundation Leadership Award in Food Access and Food Security*. The awards ceremony was held at the Lyric Opera House in Chicago. It was a weekend full of events and activities. Hundreds of people in the culinary world were in attendance.

*Food is more than sustenance;
it is a conduit for storytelling,
autonomy, healing and
empowerment.*

As an Indigenous woman of Azteca Chichimeca, Coahuiltecan lineage, along with staff and boards of directors of our two organizations, we are helping to create solutions to food access and food security in a community-centered, value-based, ethical way. Our approach is rooted in ancestral knowledge, sustainable practices and cultural traditions to address the challenges our communities face in navigating pathways to healthy and affordable food.

Creating these solutions with community means honoring heritage and preserving traditional foodways that have sustained our communities for generations. Our efforts embrace an alternative economy that increases food access and the consistency of food as a life source. That grounds us in the original teaching of our responsibility of taking care of our environment and each other. It means reclaiming control over food production, distribution and consumption to combat dependence on the global food market system. Many people's access to fresh, healthy produce has been limited by the global market system, and traditional foods and culinary practices have been lost.



Karen Washington, Niax Dorry and Helga García-Garza get ready for the awards ceremony. The evening concluded with 40 chefs from around the country highlighting their culinary talents.

By working to improve food access and food security in New Mexico, Agri-Cultural Cooperative Network and La Cosecha CSA are not only nourishing bodies but also revitalizing cultural connections to the land, promoting health and wellness, fostering community resilience and building community generational wealth. We understand that food is more than sustenance; it is a conduit for storytelling, autonomy, healing and empowerment.

Through years of efforts, we have striven to empower our community to take ownership of their food systems, advocate for policies that support food justice, and build relationships and investment in small-scale farmers and ranchers, producers and food organizations. We strive to create inclusive spaces where diverse voices are heard and where everyone has the opportunity to access nutritious and culturally relevant food. For myself, as an Indigenous woman, creating solutions to food access and food security is a labor of love, a commitment to social, environmental and economic food justice and a testament to the resilience and strength that can be achieved through the self-determination of people. It is about fostering food sovereignty, promoting equity and ensuring that future generations have the resources they need to thrive.



Award honorees (l-r): Niax Dorry of the North American Marine Alliance; Christa Barfield of FarmerJann; Muhammad Abdul-Hadi of Philadelphia's Down North Pizza and Down North Pizza Foundation; Helga García-Garza of the Agri-Cultura Network; Mai Nguyen of Farmer Mai

*We are creating solutions to food access
and food security in a community-
centered, value-based, ethical way.*

this award has profound implications. It shines a spotlight on the urgent need to address disparities in food access and security that disproportionately affect under-invested small-scale farmers and ranchers, as well as consumer populations. My hope is that the award will amplify the voices of those working on the front lines of food justice and encourage greater support for community-driven solutions to these complex challenges. Moreover, the James Beard Award in Food Access and Food Security signals a shift in the culinary world toward recognizing and celebrating individuals who are using their platforms to drive positive social change. My hope is that it encourages more chefs, food advocates, buyers, state and local leaders, and industry leaders to prioritize issues of food equity and justice, which will help foster a more inclusive and sustainable food system for communities in New Mexico and beyond. ■

In addition to her role as executive director of AgriCultura/La Cosecha CSA, Helga García-Garza is currently serving a second year as chair of the New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council. From 2018 to 2020 she was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health leader. From 2020 to 2022 she was a Castanea Food Systems fellow and a Rachel's Network Environmental Justice fellow.

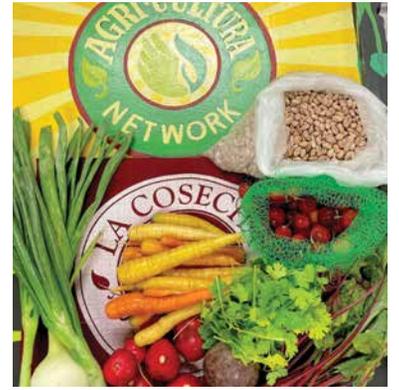
To view the 2024 Leadership Awards, visit [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=BEL-X73VLEW](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEL-X73VLEW)

I am honored to be recognized as a leader as an agent of positive change by the James Beard Foundation Award for Food Access and Food Security. The award is an acknowledgement of Agri-Cultura Cooperative Network and La Cosecha CSA's contributions in promoting access to nutritious, culturally appropriate food for communities, combating food insecurity and advocating for systemic changes in the food system. These are critical issues surrounding food equity, environmental and economic food justice. The award is validation of our tireless work and dedication to making a positive impact on society through food-related initiatives.

The award elevates our platform and provides increased visibility to the important issue of food access and security. It will allow Agri-Cultura / La Cosecha to reach a broader audience and inspire others to join the movement for a more equitable and sustainable food system. In the context of the small-scale farming and ranching communities and the state of New Mexico,

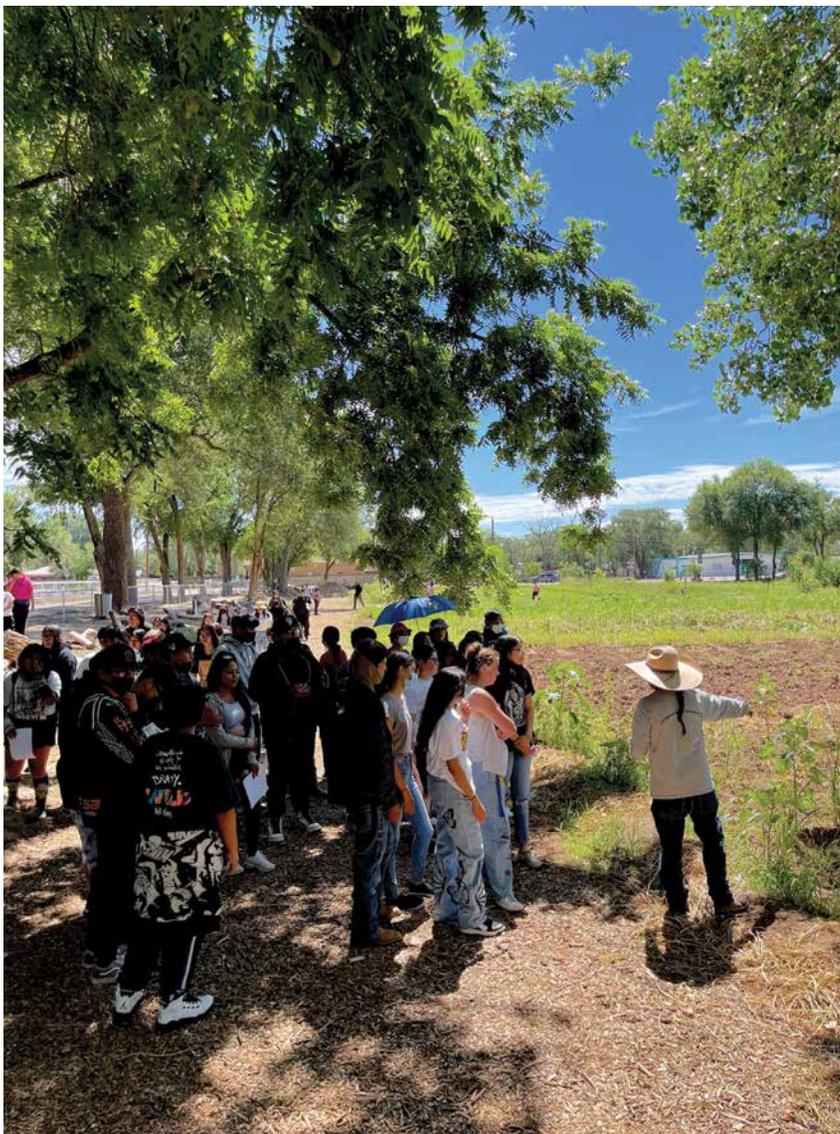
The Agri-Cultura Network

A South Valley Community Gem



Above: New Mexico exports 94 percent of what it grows. You can vote with your dollars. When you sign up for a CSA farm share, you help local farmers, the local economy and the planet. Each family that commits to buying local produce from local producers creates the small changes needed to have a big impact.

Left: Every year, farmers and ranchers from around New Mexico gather with the Agri-Cultura Cooperative Network in the South Valley of Albuquerque to review their accomplishments of the previous season and plan together what to grow for their communities.



Above: Ranchers in New Mexico continue to practice traditional ways of raising animals. At Nacimiento Ranch in Cuba, N.M, cows and tierra are treated with respect and reverence.

Left: Small-scale farmers in the South Valley and throughout New Mexico continue to build food security and resilience in our regional food system. Through Agri-Cultura Cooperative Network and other food hubs, farmers work collectively to keep the region's food feeding New Mexicans.

The Agri-Cultura Cooperative Network is uplifting communities by helping to build New Mexico's small-farming economy. ACN's dedication to food justice by keeping produce local and sustainable not only empowers local farmers; it is also making fresh, local produce accessible to hundreds of families. The organization partners with Bernalillo County Open Space to incubate new farmers to preserve agricultural land and develop local businesses. ACN contributed to a conceptual design for a new agricultural aggregator facility that will be built in the Mountain View community of the South Valley. Agri-Cultura is also tackling water issues with the New Mexico Acequia Association and advocating for policy changes to benefit nutrition programs. ■

Grow the Growers Farm Incubator at the Gutiérrez-Hubbell House Open Space in the South Valley of Albuquerque. Building a regional food system involves the entire community: the farmers and ranchers who grow food, the community that is nourished by healthy food that is grown and is interested in preserving their cultural ways of life.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: JOAQUIN LUJÁN

BY BERNICE J. GUTIÉRREZ

Joaquin Luján is a native New Mexican and gracious gentleman who owns a farm in Polvadera, N.M. He is a member of the Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP), a community organization that promotes farmers who have farms along the Río Grande Valley. Food justice is a focus for the organization, and they work with youth throughout New Mexico to teach sustainable farming practices. Luján has been a force behind the organization for many years. He promotes collaboration among the farmers and organizes them to provide the fruit of their labor as they share what they grow with small, rural communities, areas that are very grateful to get these products. He and the SWOP members grow vegetables, fruit, chile and beans, and give it to these communities for free.

Luján not only gives away what he grows on his farm; he loads up his pickup and delivers the goods to these communities with no expectation of payment. In the last five years, the group has given about 10,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables to senior centers and food banks in Alamogordo, La Luz, Tularosa and Carrizozo. The residents of Carrizozo are especially grateful, as their little community does not have a grocery store.



L-R: Richard Moore and Joaquin Luján; Bags of pinto beans Luján delivered to families

Joaquin Luján gives his time and energy and never complains about the distances he covers or the cost to him personally. His reward is seeing the happiness on the faces of the recipients. He deserves to be recognized for his unselfish deeds. ■

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The graphic features a background image of a woman in a black shirt and a large brown hat standing at a market stall. In the foreground, there are several glass jars filled with various dried goods, including what appears to be pine sap and mugwort. A dog is visible in the background on the left.

La Semilla Food Center

BY RUBI OROZCO AND LSFC STAFF

For La Semilla Food Center, growing a regional food system means transforming an oppressive, extractive and environmentally detrimental system into one co-created by the community, grounded in justice, human rights and biodiversity, as well as soil retention and rehabilitation. Our organization tends a growing agroecology network through six multifaceted, frontline, land-based programs and multiple fellowships in the Paso del Norte region of southern New Mexico and El Paso, Texas, along the U.S.–México border.

Among these is the Food Safety Ambassador Program, through which La Semilla's Farm Fresh team is reframing food safety as a practice rooted in community care, worker safety and wellbeing. Through this program, we partner with small-farmers who are generally not covered by the Food and Drug Administration's Produce Safety Rule and often not represented by food safety specialists. Every year, we extend our Food Safety Ambassadorship scope.

Our curriculum is rooted in decolonizing and indigenizing food-safety concepts. This year's cohort is co-creating a training curriculum that centers farmer expertise and intuition over regulation, which too often relies on fear-based tactics. We are intentionally working with farmers who represent a wide range of agricultural backgrounds, including indoor farming, mushroom farming, farming alongside animals, year-round farming, educational farms and landless farming. This diversity ensures that our curriculum includes the farmers' rich and relevant experiences. Our curriculum will have statewide impact.

Our organizational efforts cultivate a community of practice that nurtures emerging young farmer leadership and beginning farmer mentors; administering a produce prescription program that integrates home gardening as part of foodways education and distributes over \$60,000 yearly in local produce prescription boxes ("veggie scripts"); participating as a key partner in the USDA Río Grande Colonias Regional Food Business Center (RFBC); tending teacher, student and family networks through school-based gardens, and launching the Paso del Norte Food and Farm Fund for BIPOC farmers and food businesses in southern New Mexico and far west Texas. ■



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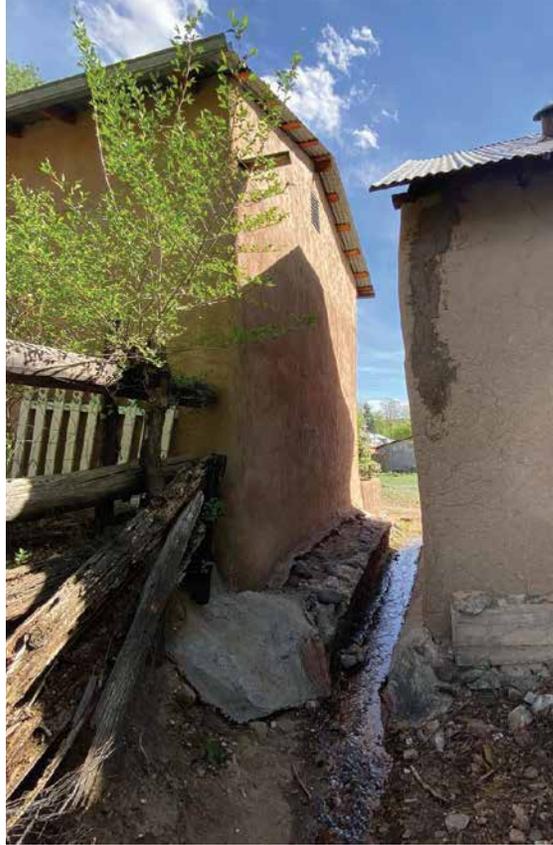
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Top to bottom: Jacky (Growing with Sara), Haylee (La Semilla), Amanda (Growing with Sara) and Ivonne (De Colores Farms) attending the Southern Family Farmers and Food Systems Conference in San Marcos TX.; Veggie Scripts box featuring produce aggregated from a network of partner farmers; Growing with Sara Farm. Ralph, a partner farmer, expressed his frustration with how squash bug pest management is impacting yields. We picked up fresh okra, basil, eggplant, and figs for the Farm Fresh and Veggie Script boxes; Farm walkthrough, identifying risks and hazards at La Semilla Community Farm in Anthony,

NORTHERN NEW MEXICO PHOTO ESSAY BY KATHERINE CHYNA DIXON



Top: Acequia in Chimayó, N.M.; Teatro Acequero, organized by the New Mexico Acequia Association (NMAA). For San Ysidro Day, 2023 in Chimayó, community members, pariantes and acequeros from across northern New Mexico celebrated acequia culture and tradition. The teatro provided poignant lessons on respeto and the importance of honoring water in all forms.

Center: Community planting day in the NMAA's newly revitalized community acequia garden in Chimayó. The garden was seeded shortly before water flowed from the acequia.

Bottom: A traveling ditch crew gathered by moonlight to irrigate a once-fallow piece of agricultural land in an effort to restore productivity and maintain acequia water rights. Taos, N.M., 2023; Friends and neighbors gathered to help prepare a revitalized field for planting. Arroyo Hondo, N.M.

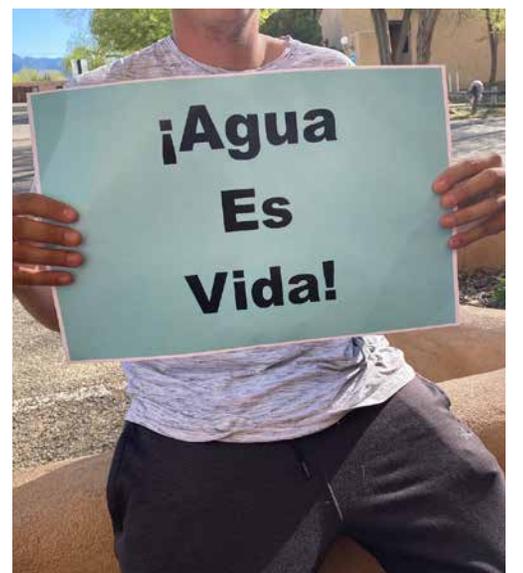




Top: Annual *limpia* (cleaning) of the acequia. Right: Acequia Abajo de la Loma, Ranchos de Taos, N.M.

Center: San Ysidro Day blessing, Chimayó; Altar to San Ysidro. How does *querencia* propel and inform our own ethos of accountability, reciprocity and respect? Vigil y Romo annual *limpia*, Taos.

Bottom: Taos Plaza art installation, summer 2023 by artist Rivala García; signage voicing *parciante* concerns over water quality monitoring, and the desire to protect acequia water rights from Taos Ski Valley development; A young *acequero* holds a sign in defense of community water rights, prior to an Environmental Impact Assessment meeting for the ski valley's proposed expansion, May 2023



Community conversations regarding development pressure, gentrification, coloniality and the dispossession of land and water continue in Taos. A group of women gathered to discuss life, knowledge, motherhood, climate, colonial violence, emotions and our embodied experiences along the acequias. They spoke about the role of accountability and reciprocity in our in-

dividual and collective life-work (as well as the pain that emerges from the absence of such principles). At public events, women brought signs to defend acequias and the surrounding mountains against the expansion of recreational development interests.

Katherine C. Dixon (Chyna) is from Taos, N.M. Her research explores systems of water sharing and governance in northern New Mexico. She is currently a Ph.D. researcher at University of East Anglia School of Global Development. WWW.CHYNADIXON.COM

RECIPROCITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY: WHAT IS OUR TAREA AS ACTIVIST RESEARCHERS?

BY MYRRIAH GÓMEZ

This essay is based on comments I delivered for the panel “New Mexican Scholars in Dialogue: Reciprocity and Accountability in Nuevomexicano Research Practice” at the 84th Annual Meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology in Santa Fe, N.M. on March 26, 2024.



L-R: Doctoral candidate Katherine Chyna Dixon, Dr. Elise Jaramillo, Dr. Sylvia Rodríguez and Dr. Myrriah Gómez. © Seth Roffman

The context in which I learned the word *tarea* was through the acequia. One of my earliest childhood memories is of attending an acequia meeting for *Acequia de los Indios* with my dad in El Rancho, our village in the Pojoaque Valley. There are words I learned in Spanish that I never had an English context for; *tarea* is one of them. Every *parciante* on the ditch was responsible for their own *tarea* when it came time for the annual cleaning of the ditch. If the *parciante* was unable to clean their portion, someone was appointed for them and the *parciante* paid for that worker. *Tarea* was also a male word for me. It referred to the work of the men and the acequia. I recall the first time I helped clean a ditch—I was the only girl among a group of men.

How do I instill in my children the same querencia that I have for my homelands?

When I started college, the word *tarea* took on a new meaning. My “Spanish as a Heritage Language” instructor at the University of New Mexico would write the word *tarea* on the chalkboard, underline it, and bullet-point our homework assignments every class session. The work of cleaning ditches with a shovel, *a pura pala*, was replaced with the tasks necessary to get good grades and earn a college degree. It was a different type of *jale*, this academic work.

For some time over the past 20 years, the word *tarea* has shaped and shifted who I am and how I conceive of “work.” During our panel, I listened to the four presentations—all delivered by New Mexican women with different, land-based experiences and backgrounds—on reciprocity and accountability to our communities through our research. Dr. Sylvia Rodríguez, Dr. Elise Jaramillo, Dr. Divana Olivas and doctoral candidate Katherine Chyna Dixon each reminded me how we define and are defined by our *tareas*, at home and also away from home.

Sylvia mentioned the liminal zone between theory and practice for activist researchers. I guess that is what we are, although I have tried so hard to avoid that term “activist researcher” or “scholar activist” for various reasons. The liminal zone—that in-between space that is sometimes unclear and that we are sometimes incapable of defining—is certainly complex, and it’s a big task. Essentially it means that we always have one hand on the pen *y la otra mano con la pala* (and the other hand on the shovel). And the liminal space, as it turns out, is often a long stretch of road, often I-25 or I-40, between the institutions where we work and the small villages that we call home. I can think of two handfuls of people off the top of my head who live constantly in this liminal zone, or should I say, on the road, traveling back and forth to New Mexico from other states and even other countries in order to maintain their community ties.

These days, Sylvia, a retired professor from the University of New Mexico, is working on a project with community members around the Río Hondo acequias as well as professors at New Mexico State University. The question has become one of keeping community scientists and university scientists on a level playing field. How do university professors and scientists work with community as equals? A lot of us are wondering if that praxis, the union of theory and practice, can be *querencia*, and in some ways, everyone on that panel agreed that it is through our love of home, the safety that it provides and the *respeto* that we uphold through reciprocity and accountability.

As Elise spoke about her work, I was struck by her discussion of trust. Often, community-engaged scholars talk about developing trust with communities, but how often do we think about making trust the “context, mechanism *and* outcome,” as she discussed? Elise offered several possibilities for organically cultivating trust among “the commons,” including vulnerability; relying on one another; sharing values, visions and goals. Audience members nodded along as they thought about how their own projects accomplished this or, maybe, how they have yet to address this. As I looked out at the audience, I saw one colleague who I know takes a backseat when publishing so that community members can be primary authors of academic articles. Think about how that challenges the status quo of academia, with its individualistic goals. This goal places community at center, and it privileges a specific voice. This is but one mechanism for cultivating reciprocity and accountability.

Divana’s paper discussed how land, food, people and economic systems create Chicana food imaginaries. Her scholarship with and about the SouthWest Organizing Project (SWOP) helps us envision the importance of ensuring long-term and lifetime commitments to people, communities and organizations with whom we work. Divana has served as a student intern and a board member of SWOP, and she remains an active member of the organization. Often, we are critical of scholars who “helicopter into New Mexico” to extract information and knowledge with no long-term reciprocity, but how do we ensure that we don’t become complicit in that model? On the other hand, how do we keep with the meaning of reciprocity to ensure that our community partners also treat us with respect? It’s often overlooked that we return to our communities as undergraduate or graduate students without secure income or job security, and when faculty, we are fighting different battles at our institutions, especially for those who are not tenured or in tenure-track positions. We want our community partners to commit to us, and that is also part of reciprocity.

If we learn how to be accountable to our family, friends and neighbors, community-engaged research can and should be mutually beneficial.

Being responsible to communities is clearly our *tarea*, but surely not our only one. Because we split our time between our home communities and our institutions, often that means there is twice the *tarea*. During Chyna's presentation she told the story about a

young man who she knew was at the university a couple hours south of his home community, and she didn't expect to see him one weekend at the ranch baling hay, yet there he was. Chyna also asked an important question: Where does the rubber hit the road? In other words, are we living up to the accountability and reciprocity that we proclaim to be upholding? For me, I ask if we know what our *tarea* is and if we are completing it. Being New Mexican alone does not entitle us the access to research in or on New Mexican communities. If we learn how to be accountable to our family, friends and neighbors, community-engaged research can and should be mutually beneficial.



Dr. Sylvia Rodríguez and Dr. Myrriah Gómez

I also think about my *tarea* as a parent. My children are not growing up in the same place I did. True, they are growing up in the ancestral community of their father, but the Río Abajo is quite

different than the Río Arriba. We take our walks along the Río Grande, but sometimes our walks are across the dry Río Grande. We use a hose to water our garden plants, not the *acequia*. I constantly ask myself: how do I instill in them the same *querencia* that I have for my homelands? I think many of us ask ourselves similar questions, whether as parents or *padrinos*, aunties or *tíos*. I cannot help but think about how as teachers, we parent other people's kids in our college classrooms. We create a new genealogy for the praxis of *querencia* to endure. I see that as my *tarea* at the institution! It was not lost on me that day in Santa Fe that Sylvia has been one of my mentors, and Divana was once one of my students, but now we can sit together in *resolana*. That's reciprocity, and accountability, too!

Something Sylvia said in the Q+A portion of the panel when she was asked who the active *parciantes* are continues to roll around in my brain. At least a portion of her answer is that the *parciantes* are prodigals, people who left their respective communities and have returned home to take up the *tarea*. I think about this furiously, and my heart and brain pull in different directions. Home is very real, and it also lives in our imagination. Sometimes New Mexican researchers want to create connections to a "home" because there is no direct attachment to any solitary, specific place or because they have attachments to various home communities. In any case, we hope to be welcomed by open arms so that we can work toward mutual outcomes. ■



Dr. Myrriah Gómez, a Nuevomexicana from the Pojoaque Valley, is an assistant professor at the University of New Mexico's Honors College and serves as faculty coordinator for the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program.

NM's Unprotected Waters

How Pollution, Drought and the Climate Crisis Converge to Harm Communities

BY CHRISTIAN THORSBERG

The sunflowers behind Conjunto Preschool in Española, New Mexico, are still inedible. The soils that they sprout from are saturated with tetrachloroethene. The water poured by preschoolers, receiving some of their first lessons in gardening around these raised beds, is contaminated



Irrigating a field in northern New Mexico with river water. Photo © Jim O'Donnell

with trichloroethylene. More than two decades ago, byproducts from cleaning supplies flowed from a local dry cleaner and laundromat into Española's sole groundwater aquifer, the only source of drinking water for the town's 10,000 residents. The contaminants also trickled into individual wells, a key water source for Santa Clara Pueblo's 2,400 members.

For 18 years, the 58-acre North Railroad Avenue Plume Superfund site underwent studies, treatments and reviews at the direction of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In 2019, cleanup and maintenance duties were transferred to the state's hands. To this day, according to Beata Tsosie, a member of Santa Clara Pueblo, their water remains affected. "Humans are an

indicator species for the health of the environment, especially Indigenous people," says Tsosie, the organizational director of Breath of My Heart Birthplace, a free midwifery care clinic and birth center in Española. Tsosie is also involved in Indigenous and environmental advocacy work. "We've seen cancers, we've seen miscarriages, we've seen birth defects—the burden of proof of the harm [is] falling on us as one of the most impacted communities," she adds.

Yet these school garden sunflowers continue to grow. And, if they had not been deemed "unacceptable risks to human health" by EPA guidelines, their seeds, stems, leaves and petals could have been used in local recipes



*San Juan Basin watershed near Navajo Dam
Photo © Jim O'Donnell*



Dried up riverbed in the San Juan Basin watershed
 Photo © Jim O'Donnell

and otherwise healthy meals. Until then, the community continues to hope for a future brimming with cleaner, healthier New Mexico waters—a vision that last May, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-to-4 in favor of Sackett v. EPA, turned all the more hazy. The Clean Water Act's scope shrank significantly as a result of the ruling, which removed federal protections for America's small streams and wetlands that do not run with water year-round or are disconnected from major water bodies.

The resurgence of older growing methods may prove vital for small-time farmers, both Indigenous and non-

No state lost more than New Mexico, where an arid climate and mountainous geography make seasonal flows, isolated basins and small

channels the norm. Overnight, 96 percent of the state's waterways—which in addition to supplying water for drinking and sanitation, support the economies of subsistence fishers, growers and a \$2.4 billion outdoor recreation industry—were left federally unguarded, vulnerable to pollution and unregulated usage.

Making matters worse, says Rachel Conn, deputy director of Amigos Bravos, a freshwater-focused environmental nonprofit in Taos, is a well-intentioned yet unprepared state government. The New Mexico Water Quality Act (NMWQA), a strong piece of state-level legislation, is the last safeguard standing for a majority of the state's waters. Yet currently, it's more bark than bite, with virtually no infrastructure to support and enforce it. "We don't have a state program, we don't have the regulations set, we don't have the staff hired, we don't have the systems in place to implement its protections," Conn says. "So we're left really vulnerable to unregulated discharges of pollution into our waterways."

New Mexico is one of only two states without a surface-water permitting program, and one of three states that lack the authority to issue National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPES) permits under the Clean Water Act. Officials estimate between \$43 million and \$54 million would be needed annually to support such a program. A significant victory was achieved this past January, when the state Legislature approved the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund with bipartisan support. The fund's \$300 million appropriation is the state's first-ever consistent and long-term funding source for water and stream conservation.

"We're left really vulnerable to unregulated discharges of pollution into our waterways."

— Rachel Conn, Amigos Bravos

But how and if the funds are allocated and used across New Mexico's departments and communities remains to be seen. For the sake of its waters, the state has only a short window to get its act together. In roughly five years' time, the current EPA-issued permits that regulate discharge and pollution—in mining, construction, or other development-oriented enterprises—will expire. "That's kind of the point we expect to see a lot of permits drop off," Conn says. "It's hard to monitor projects that go forward without a paper trail."

In April, New Mexico's water worries featured prominently in the American Rivers Association's annual "Most Endangered Rivers of 2024" report. It was a unique yet necessary decision to give the top spot to the entirety of the state's riparian ecosystem, says Matt Rice, the association's Southwest regional director.

While a majority of New Mexico's freshwater flows in its four largest rivers—the Río Grande, the Gila, the San Juan and the Pecos—there is virtually no part of the state's vast watershed that is unconnected. High-elevation wetlands filter snowmelt into cool headwaters that flow into tributaries and channels, eventually proceeding to rivers' main stems. But these alpine ecosystems, which act as water-purifying sponges, are no longer protected due to the Supreme Court's decision. What begins in the mountains cascades down to surface water, crop fields, sinks and showers.

"If there's pollution going into one part of the watershed, it's going to end up in the main stem, where there are structures that divert surface water for drinking," Conn says. "If the water is dirtier, it is going to be more expensive to treat, and [that] will be a huge financial burden on New Mexico communities."

In May, New Mexico's government released a new Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan, outlining its intentions to strengthen water infrastructure, supply systems and treatment facilities. The report also included dismal weather forecasts that these goals would need to overcome: statewide average temperature increases of between 3 and 5 degrees Fahrenheit, and from 5 to 10 percent less precipitation in all but a few counties by 2050. "We no longer use the word 'drought,' because it suggests that there's an end," Rice says. "This is a different world, this is the aridification of the West. The climate crisis is a water crisis." Conn adds: "Temperature is considered a pollutant."

New Mexico's current hydrology and its leadership's actions have the potential to be a blueprint for states like Arizona, Nevada, Utah and parts of Colorado. "If we can demonstrate to the western United States that a diverse group of people, organizations and interests can get together and protect rivers of natural, cultural and community value, we can do anything," Rice says.

And it isn't just the West watching. Drier summers and milder winters across the country are already demoting full-time flows to weaker or part-time trickles. In February, a study of North American rivers published in *Science* found that 40 percent of the continent's northern rivers, and 18 percent of its central rivers, are experiencing a "significant decrease in river-flow seasonality."

How and if the \$300 million the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund appropriation is allocated and used remains to be seen.

In May, the U.S. Supreme Court removed federal protections for small streams and wetlands. No state lost more than New Mexico.

“When everyone was talking about Flint, Michigan, it’s like, ‘We have that here, too,’” says Demis Foster, executive director of Conservation Voters New Mexico, a nonpartisan nonprofit dedicated to informing voters and holding leaders accountable on matters of the environment.

Across party lines and in both rural and urban counties, water is a top concern for New Mexico’s voters. According to a 2024 Colorado College State of the Rockies poll, 88 percent of the state’s respondents said that poor water quality due to old infrastructure or pollutants was a serious problem, and 96 percent said low river flows were an extremely serious problem. In the poll’s 2023 edition, 83 percent of New Mexicans said they “support requiring local governments to determine whether there is enough water available before approving new residential development projects.”

The next state legislative session, which lasts 60 days in odd-numbered years, opens in January 2025. For the sake of the state’s waters, Foster says, not a minute can afford to be wasted. “We have to be ready with some kind of state rulemaking and policy that we can get put in place immediately,” she says. “So we have a water

coalition in New Mexico now that is working really intensely on how we can put the policy together. These new candidates are going to be key to getting that done for us.”

The effects of both climate and policy changes are felt first and most intimately at the local level. In northern New Mexico, these impacts are expected to endanger the health of acequias—surface-water community ditches that collect and divert freshwater from headwaters and streams and have been prevalent in rural communities since Spanish colonizers and settlers introduced the practice in the 1600s. In the years since, these have become crucial social and environmental pillars within New Mexican culture and economies, providing small ranchers and growers with the water they need to water fields, grow crops and raise livestock. “Acequias are fundamental cornerstones of New Mexico’s history and culture; they’re important and beautiful components of life and water rights across generations,” Conn says. Those dependent on these shared ditches, which have offered families and low-income residents cost-effective access to water for generations, will now face the real possibility of their contamination. Though acequias aren’t the only water-distribution solution, they also are not ubiquitously appreciated. Indigenous growers know there used to be a greater balance between the use of irrigation ditches and dryland farming techniques that are less water-intensive, such as rainwater catchment, earthwork building, contour farming and food-forest ecologies. In the past, these growing practices withstood times of pre-colonization drought.

But Tsosie has observed an increased number of irrigation systems in her Santa Clara Pueblo—a legacy of Spanish influence. Here, the history of New Mexico’s hydrology has been reflected by the hardiness of her community’s seeds.

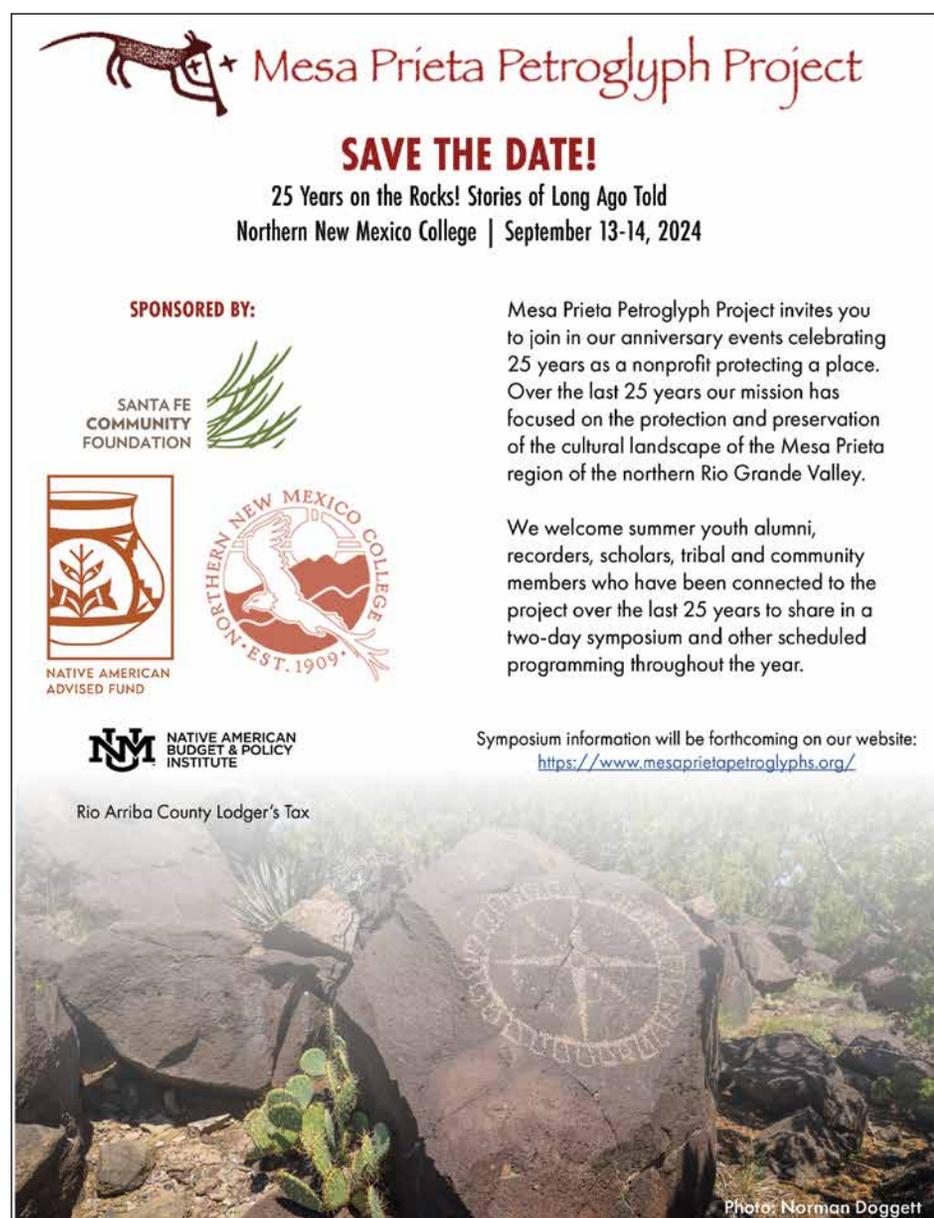
The New Mexico Water Quality Act has virtually no infrastructure to support and enforce it.

“There’s a possibility that some of our seeds may have gotten spoiled by having an abundance of water,” she says. “But we still have a lot of dryland seeds that grow only with rainwater.”

The resurgence of these older growing methods may prove vital for small-time farmers, both Indigenous and non-, whose only water supplies are now doubly endangered by pollution and drought. The possibility of relying on city water systems and state-led testing programs is both uncertain and potentially expensive, sparking questions that New Mexico’s government will need to answer soon.

“The cost to farmers, if contamination in our water and sewage systems is found, is going to be huge,” Tsosie says. “How are we going to adapt and switch over to different technologies? Is crop sampling [for toxic chemicals] going to be available? Are we going to have to pay for that?” ■

This article was originally published on May 29, 2024 in The Progressive Magazine.
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Mesa Prieta Petroglyph Project

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Mesa Prieta Petroglyph Project invites you to join in our anniversary events celebrating 25 years as a nonprofit protecting a place. Over the last 25 years our mission has focused on the protection and preservation of the cultural landscape of the Mesa Prieta region of the northern Rio Grande Valley.

We welcome summer youth alumni, recorders, scholars, tribal and community members who have been connected to the project over the last 25 years to share in a two-day symposium and other scheduled programming throughout the year.

Symposium information will be forthcoming on our website:
<https://www.mesaprietapetroglyphs.org/>

Rio Arriba County Lodger's Tax

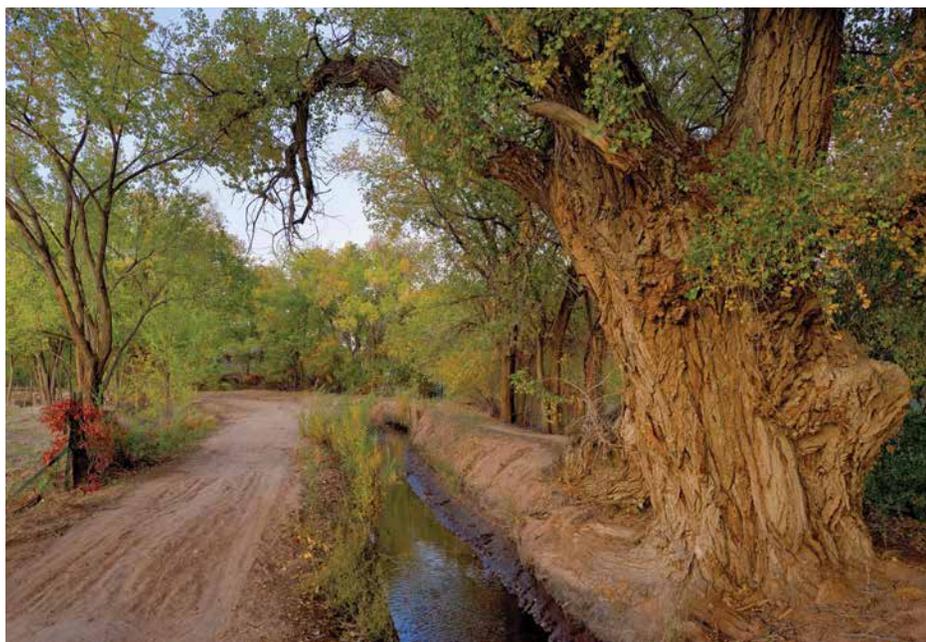
Photo: Norman Doggett

WATER STATEMENT FROM THE NEW MEXICO FOOD & AGRICULTURE POLICY COUNCIL

PREAMBLE

Water is life. It is imperative to know these words are a recognition of the profound nature of water. To Indigenous peoples, New Mexico's first water stewards, as well as many of us, water is a living entity with a female spiritual personification; a miraculous life form that all life needs to live. In knowing this truth, we flow with her to strengthen the clarity of our purpose to protect our water. Indigenous knowledge says giving this recognition prompts the power and authority of water, giving us the greatest advantage to improve our water use and its protection. To *not* give this recognition to the sanctity of water invokes a resistance that compromises the beneficial conclusion we strive for. In living this truth, we have the greatest opportunity to protect water for our future grandchildren.

It is incumbent on the New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council to advocate for policies to assure that our waters are used to the optimum for our life sustenance, and to meet the needs of our citizens to provide food security through agriculture. Water is one of the greatest resources New Mexico has, and it deserves our utmost commitment and vigilant advocacy.



An acequia runs along a dirt road in northern New Mexico

POLICY STATEMENT

The Policy Council values clean water for the cultivation of nutritious, culturally significant, local foods. Thus, water in the state must be protected, conserved and expanded where possible.

The Policy Council is committed to responsible and sustainable use of water. Our waters must be protected with a focus on ensuring a continued adequate supply for New Mexico farmers.

The Policy Council believes that planning for use of all water in New Mexico, or any contemplated strategic initiatives developed by public agencies, now and for the future, must place a priority on providing adequate clean water for local food production by New Mexico farmers, cultivators and growers. By doing so, these producers are economically and environmentally resilient and able to continue to provide healthy foods.

In working toward these goals, the Policy Council identifies the following tasks and objectives. *The Policy Council will support and participate in the following:*

1. Ensuring that agricultural water users have equitable, social, political and economic access to all processes to protect their water rights and eliminating the threat of loss of a water right through non-use.

Often, smaller agriculture water users do not have the financial means to participate and protect their water rights.

2. Supporting and promoting the prudent use of water through conservation projects, the development of new technologies for efficient water use, while recognizing and respecting Indigenous and Acequias' cultural practices and traditions.

3. Expanding and funding the voluntary placement of conservation easements over farms, ensuring that those properties remain in agricultural production and have water rights in perpetuity. Expand the eligibility for the conservation easement tax credit for the protection and conservation of productive soils and farmland.

4. Providing input to discussions about alternative water use agreements between competing stakeholders as needed.

5. Participating in strategic water planning discussions that will serve all water users and uses in New Mexico.

6. Ensuring that those persons or entities that pollute our waters are responsible for returning any such polluted water to its same condition prior to the pollution and holding such persons and/or entities accountable to the full extent of applicable laws and regulations.

7. Ensuring that the Office of the State Engineer and other appropriate agencies and water authorities regulating all waters within the state of New Mexico are accountable to all water users.

The New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council

The Policy Council is a statewide coalition that focuses on policy initiatives that create healthy food and agriculture systems in New Mexico. The council focuses on policy initiatives that create healthy food and agriculture systems in New Mexico. For more information, visit <https://nmfoodpolicy.org>. ■

Pam Roy, of Farm to Table New Mexico and the New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council may be reached at PAM@FARMTOTABLENM.ORG or 505-660-8403.

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Rainwater Catchment – A Path to Traditional Farming

BY ANN MCCARTNEY

The recently articulated vision of the Honoring Water Group, an informal citizen's group meeting at Zuni, Vanderwagen and Gallup, is: "Abundant water, respected and treated ethically. When water is honored as sacred, mutual flourishing is possible." This group, with organizational support from James and Joyce Skeet, seeks to honor and protect water in various ways, including addressing the water scarcity many people experience in the northwest region of New Mexico.

"When water is honored as sacred, mutual flourishing is possible."

In 2015, the Skeets addressed water scarcity directly by establishing

Spirit Farm in Vanderwagen, south of Gallup, in the high desert of the Navajo Reservation, with no water well on their farm. Their vision of "healing the soil, healing the soul" is fully realized, as their working farm draws people from all parts of the U.S. and the world to experience a living example of how we can recover and reclaim traditional farming and spiritual practices, along with modern practices, to establish resiliency in our way of life. The Skeets collect rainwater off rooftops into tanks for drip irrigation and haul water as needed from Gallup for themselves, their animals and plants. They have applied ancient indigenous wisdom on Spirit Farm, integrating new solutions energized by nature. Their



Spirit Farm greenhouse in Vandervagen, south of Gallup, N.M. is irrigated by harvested rainwater.

farming practices, including microbiological compost and rotational grazing, have enhanced soil quality, increased nutrient density in crops, and reduced their water use, fostering environmental resilience and community integrity.

Through and beyond Spirit Farm, the Skeets, with other community members in the area, have undertaken to do something more about water scarcity and nutrition needs with a vision of Native people growing their own food. In collaboration with the Little Sisters of the Poor, an international congregation of Roman Catholic women who run an eldercare center—Villa Guadalupe—in Gallup, the Skeets have installed a rainwater catchment system on the Villa Guadalupe roof, setting up tanks for holding rainwater that can be delivered to other Native growers who have limited or no access to water to grow their own food.

Funds were raised to purchase and install gutters and tanks at Villa Guadalupe. The next hurdle is the purchase of a water truck to transport the water. To that end, the Skeets have raised more than \$11,000 toward the \$32,000 price and have a GoFundMe, Sharing Rain from Urban Rooftops with Native Growers. Donations are welcome. ■

Ann McCartney writes for Middle Río Grande Water Advocates.

[HTTPS://MRGWATERADVOCATES.ORG](https://MRGWATERADVOCATES.ORG)

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BOOK PROFILES

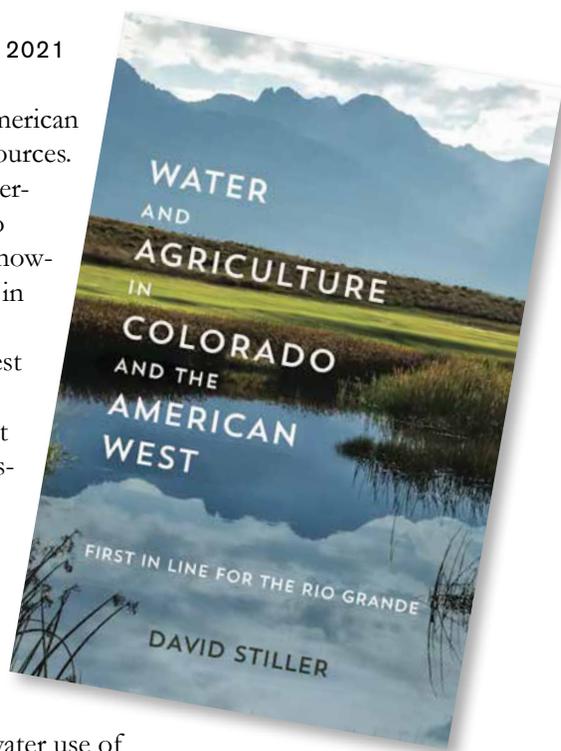
WATER AND AGRICULTURE IN THE AMERICAN WEST FIRST IN LINE FOR THE RÍO GRANDE

BY DAVID STILLER

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA PRESS, 2021

Water has always been one of the American West's most precious and limited resources. The earliest inhabitants—Native Americans and later Hispanics—learned to share the region's scant rainfall and snowmelt. When Euro-Americans arrived in the middle of the 19th century, they brought with them not only an interest in large-scale commercial agriculture but also new practices and laws about access to, and control of, the water essential for their survival and success. This included the concept of private rights to water, a critical resource that had previously been regarded as a communal asset.

David Stiller's thoughtful study focuses on the history of agricultural water use of the Río Grande in Colorado's San Luis Valley. After surveying the practices of early farmers in the region, he focuses on the impacts of Euro-American settlement and the ways these new agrarians endeavored to control the river.



Using the Río Grande as a case study, Stiller offers an informed and accessible history of the development of practices and technologies to store, distribute and exploit water in Colorado and other western states, as well as an account of the creation of water rights and laws that govern this essential commodity throughout the West to this day. Stiller's work ranges from meticulously monitored fields of irrigated alfalfa and potatoes to the local and state water agencies and halls of Congress. He also includes perceptive comments on the future of western water as these arid states become increasingly urbanized during a period of worsening drought and climate change.

An excellent read for anyone curious about important issues in the West, *Water and Agriculture in Colorado and the American West* offers a succinct summary and analysis of Colorado's use of water by agricultural interests, in addition to a valuable discussion of the past, present and future of struggles over this endangered resource.

WATER BODIES

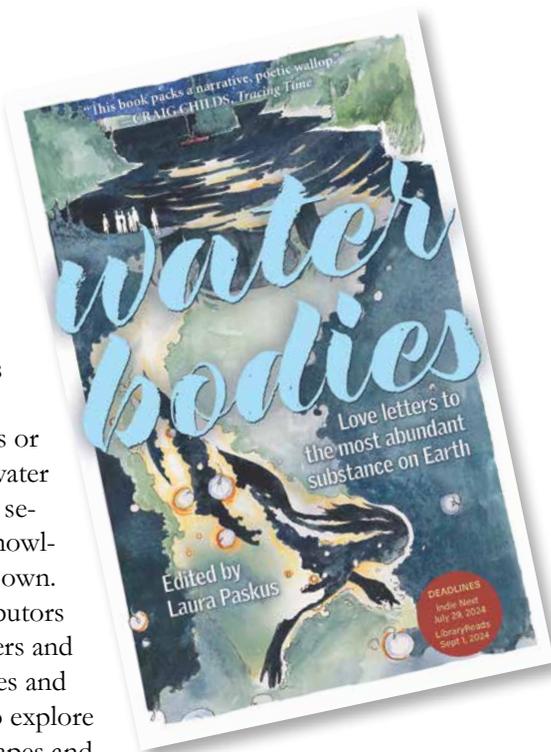
LOVE LETTERS TO THE MOST ABUNDANT SUBSTANCE ON EARTH

EDITED BY LAURA PASKUS

TORREY HOUSE PRESS, OCTOBER, 2024

Laura Paskus, a senior producer for NMPBS, hosts and produces "Our Land: New Mexico's Environmental Past, Present, and Future." She has written for more than 20 years about the West's environmental issues and communities, and has focused on climate change and the devastation of drying waterways. In recent years she has pivoted to see water as an entity full of wonder, connection and intimacy.

As the climate crisis simultaneously pinches water supplies and exacerbates flooding, some of the West's most thoughtful journalists, poets and writers remind us that water isn't a natural resource to manage or a commodity to sell—nor do humans live out their lives at the scale of interstate river compacts, interbasin transfers or 30-year projections. Rather, water is a force that's beguiling and seductive—a creature whose knowledge and will supersedes our own. This diverse group of contributors shares intimate stories of rivers and snow patches, swimming holes and ephemeral streams. They also explore how waters shape our landscapes and our consciousness as they consider what becomes endangered when we lose sight of the power of water.



Contributors will launch the book at Bookworks in Albuquerque, followed by a series of events along waterways and in the cities that depend on them. Contributors include: Aaron A. Abeyta, Christi Bode, C. Marie Fuhrman, Sarah Gilman, Ruxandra Guidi, Maria Lane, Chris La Tray, Desiree Loggins, Regina Lopez-Whiteskunk, Michelle Otero, Laura Paskus, Daniel Rothberg, Luke Runyon, Kate Schimel, Santana Shorty, Leanna T. Torres and Fatima van Hattum.



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San Agustin Plains.

Courtesy N.M. Environmental Law Center

SAN AGUSTIN PLAINS AQUIFER PROTECTED BY JUDGE'S FINAL ORDER

On Aug. 23, Judge Roscoe Woods of the 7th Judicial District entered a final order that the New Mexico State Engineer was correct in denying an application to mine and hoard tens of thousands of gallons per year of San Agustin Plains groundwater. The water transfer application was submitted by Augustin Plains Ranch (APR) LLC, a company owned by an Italian billionaire.

The judge's decision was based on the determination that the application is speculative—ruling that APR failed to identify any end users that would rely on the water. New Mexico state law does not allow anyone to hoard water for someone's hypothetical future use.

On April 5, in a standing-room-only courtroom, nearly 100 community members heard the arguments of several attorneys awaiting a ruling on APR's request to pump groundwater from the San Agustin Plains, a closed groundwater basin. The basin has no outlet and is not recharged by perennial streams. It will not be replenished once the groundwater is pumped out.

Community members fighting against APR's application have included small landowners, mostly from the Datil and Magdalena areas, who came together to protect the groundwater they rely on for their homes, gardens and livestock. Pattie and John Preston, members of the "Community Protestants" group, said, "This is a real win for our community, the local businesses and the ranchers." New Mexico Environmental Law Center staff attorney Ann McCartney said, "The judge's final order keeps this precious water in the ground for now and upholds New Mexico law on beneficial use governing appropriation of water."

For 17 years, residents have been fighting against the removal of the fossil groundwater from the basin after APR filed its first application. The decision marks the third time the State Engineer's denial of APR's application has been upheld by a court. APR has 30 days after the entry of the judge's written order to appeal the decision to the New Mexico Court of Appeals.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR FACTORY FARMING VS. SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

Food & Water Watch is currently mobilizing folks in New Mexico to create the food system that New Mexicans deserve, one that is truly sustainable and prioritizes the health of our planet, our neighbors and our local communities.

Our state has a rich history of responsible agriculture and land stewardship. It's a history we are proud of, and one that should be protected and preserved. Sustainable, family-scale regenerative farms have been the lifeblood of New Mexico for generations; this makes it all the more essential that we push back against the rise of factory farms in our state.

Factory farms abuse New Mexico's freshwater resources at a disproportionately high rate. New Mexico's mega-dairies require 32 million gallons a day to maintain dairy cows. The other agricultural industry that dominates water consumption and is a major source of feed for animals on factory farms—alfalfa—guzzled 85 billion gallons of water in 2021.

Further, factory farms create massive amounts of pollution compared to family-scale farms. Their production of nine Olympic swimming pools of manure per day pollutes the air with contaminants that lead to a host of health issues, and

the water with odorless and tasteless pollutants like nitrates. Additionally, they emit huge amounts of methane that accelerate the climate crisis.

That is why it is so concerning to see the toll agricultural consolidation has had on family-scale agriculture. Compared to just five years ago, New Mexico has about 43.7 percent fewer family-scale dairies under 500 head. These family-scale dairies are inherently more regenerative and more sustainable.

New Mexicans know that a sustainable food system is a local food system. Our state's farmers have known this for years, keeping farmers' markets alive through drought-filled summers. It's time to shift away from a food system that is inherently extractive and exploitative to one that is truly regenerative—one that builds and prioritizes soil health, invests in the long-term fertility of farmland, protects the health of rural communities, and succeeds on natural rather than synthetic inputs. Stopping the spread of massive, industrial facilities is the first step in building the food system that we deserve—one that prioritizes and protects our food, land, water and climate. ■

Emily Tucker, Food & Water Watch, Albuquerque. 505-916-3557, etucker@fwwatch.org, [HTTPS://FWWAT.CH/UPCOMINGEVENTSNM](https://fwwat.ch/upcomingeventsnm)

NEW MEXICO'S URBAN AGRICULTURE AND FARMER INNOVATION PROGRAM

BY MAYA MARTÍNEZ AND EDITH MARTÍNEZ

Living in a state like New Mexico, the idea of urban agriculture is unique. When you hear “urban agriculture,” what comes to mind? Urban agriculture can look like a community garden in the middle of a city that brings community members together. It can look like the large vacant lot across the street from your residence, or public land a farming organization uses to train young farmers. It could be a building in an industrial area where greens are grown in a controlled environment and sold to senior centers, schools and local restaurants. It could be a local PTA establishing a school garden to produce vegetables for the school and provide learning experiences for students. It could even be a backyard family garden where vegetables, herbs and flowers are grown to be sold at a local farmers’ market every Saturday.

Throughout the United States, we are seeing the urban agriculture movement pop up in towns and cities. In some large cities it has been thriving for many years. Detroit and New York City helped lead the way. They established local policies that facilitate urban agriculture. When Congress passed the last federal Farm Bill, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) established the Office of Urban Agriculture and the Urban Agriculture and Farmer Innovation Program. The USDA selected 17 pilot organizations around the country to help support new Urban Service Centers and Urban County Committees. Both are key to providing programs to producers who supply urban areas. Farm to Table New Mexico (FTT) was selected as one of the organizations to support urban agriculture through the New Mexico Farmers Innovation Program (NMFIP).

FTT and 16 other USDA Cooperative Partner communities across the country are learning from urban, rural, small-scale and historically underserved farmers in tribal communities about their needs and the challenges they face in seeking market opportunities as they try to make a living from their farm. This information helps us understand what policy changes are needed. As part of the initiative, FTT works with the USDA to provide direct outreach, technical assistance and financial assistance, and to expand marketing opportunities.

The program includes providing a micro-grant to urban farmers. In 2024, 15 micro-grants were awarded in nine New Mexico counties. FTT awards \$114,000 in funding each year to help farms in urban areas expand and enhance their farms. FTT received 65 applications totaling \$1,165,743.36. The projects included season extension, soil amendments, high-tunnels, greenhouse expansion, a greenhouse hydroponics grow-tower expansion project, aquaponics expansion, farm renovation, high-desert permaculture, microgreens, a school hydroponic garden, and weatherizing wash stations. FTT has also provided sub-awards to capacity-building partners that help urban farms. These two-to-three-year agreements fund the expansion of farmer-training programs.

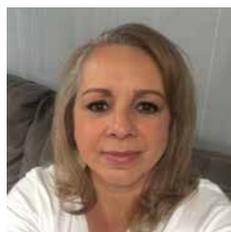
Farm to Table New Mexico is excited to be one of the 17 national cooperators in the USDA’s Urban Agriculture and Farmer Innovation Program. We provide outreach, education and technical assistance to help establish a customer base for new urban service centers. We raise awareness of the resources available and help urban producers enroll in USDA programs, which will increase supply-chain resiliency in local food systems by improving the sustainability and long-term viability of farms in urban areas.

For more information on USDA/FSA/NRCS resources, visit:

NMSO / USDA Service Center
100 Sun Avenue NE
Albuquerque, N.M. 87109
505-761-4441

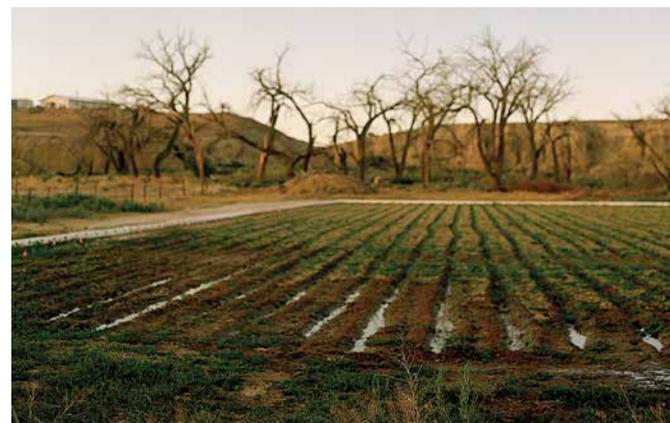
Farm Service Agency: [HTTPS://OFFICES.SC.EGOV.USDA.GOV/LOCATOR/APP?SERVICE=ACTION/1/SERVICECENTERSUMMARY/4/AGENCYTOOFFICELINK](https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?service=action/1/servicecentersummary/4/agencytoofficelink)

Natural Resources Conservation Service: [HTTPS://OFFICES.SC.EGOV.USDA.GOV/LOCATOR/APP?SERVICE=ACTION/1/SERVICECENTERSUMMARY/5/AGENCYTOOFFICELINK](https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?service=action/1/servicecentersummary/5/agencytoofficelink) ■



Maya Martínez is the Farmer Innovation Program director at Farm to Table New Mexico. She worked in local government for over 27 years. (maya@farmtotablenm.org)

Edith Martínez is the Farmer Innovation Program administrator and Policy Associate at FTT. She worked in local and state government for over 25 years. (EDITH@FARMTOTABLENM.ORG)



Top to bottom: Bidii Baby Food Foods’ irrigated field on the Navajo Nation; With an aquaponic system, Andrew Neighbor’s Desert Verde Farm in Santa Fe grows leafy greens, herbs and tilapia. A field at the Indigenous Farm Hub in Corrales, N.M. Photos by Mari Amor

Farm to Table's Farmer Innovation Program Awards Urban Agriculture Micro Grants

Grants will increase the Capacity of NM's Small-Scale Food Growers

In July, Farm to Table's (FTT) New Mexico Farmer Innovation Program (NMFIP) announced 15 projects in nine counties will receive micro-grants. The grants are being awarded to urban farmers, ranchers and food enterprises in support of projects that increase or improve healthy food access in urban and tribal communities and small towns. The grants are awarded in partnership with the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Urban Agriculture Initiative. Urban is defined as "populations over 5,000 people or 2,000 households" from the USDA Census Bureau.

All of the recipients operate with a gross cash income of \$250,000 or less annually, and priority is given to historically underserved communities. The grant application process was competitive, with a goal of increasing capacity-building for diverse, small-scale producers as an investment in the state's food ecosystem. The effort will help deliver locally grown, nutritious products directly to urban communities. "The relationship between food and farms in New Mexico is underscored by the commitment these grant recipients demonstrate," said Pam Roy, executive director of Farm to Table. "These projects will expand farmers' business opportunities, strengthen local food systems, create greater resilience and support regional economies."

FY24 GRANT RECIPIENTS

ALKALINE FIELDS FARM LLC, AZTEC This project will allow Alkaline Fields Farm to expand its growing capabilities to serve a group of daycare centers' needs for nutritious local vegetables. It will enable them to build infrastructure to create hot-beds, which will extend the growing season, and make possible the purchase of materials to grow microgreens year-round in an existing solarium. This project serves the Farmington/Aztec area.

ANTHONY YOUTH FARM, ANTHONY This project will allow Anthony Youth Farm to weatherize its wash station, thereby keeping operations running smoothly regardless of weather conditions, ensuring that fresh produce will continue to be provided to rural youth and families on a weekly basis. The project serves communities in and around Anthony.

ASHOKRA FARM, ALBUQUERQUE This grant will assist Ashokra Farm in building its business so it can eventually shift from an LLC to a worker-owned cooperative. The funding will allow the farm to continue to build its infrastructure in multiple locations. Caterpillar tunnels will be built to extend the growing season, a wash station will be completed, a shipping container ventilated and a tool shed secured. This project also supports BIPOC and queer farmers in farming leased lands in the Albuquerque area.

ARMIJO FARM, SABINA This grant will allow Armijo Farm to expand its fruit trellis system so that blackberry production can be expanded to additional markets. The farm serves the communities of Abeytas, Sabinal and Bosque, as well as distribution through La Montañita Food Co-op.

ATALAYA ELEMENTARY PTA, SANTA FE The Growing Futures: Atalaya Hydroponics initiative promotes food security, fosters community engagement and enhances climate resilience. This project primarily serves Atalaya students and families and will potentially include other community partners and local food pantries. It is a demonstration project for potential adoption in other schools.

BIDII BABY FOODS LLC, SHIPROCK Farmers-in-REZidence (FIR) is an incubator program for beginner, young Indigenous farmers. This grant will allow Bidii Baby Foods to purchase supplies and equipment to expand FIR infrastructure and increase productive acreage, as well as to provide ongoing technical support and training and maintain Indigenous/regenerative farming practices to improve soil health. The project serves the Navajo Nation, San Juan, McKinley and Bernalillo counties.

DE COLORES FARMS & FOODS, ANTHONY This project revolves around the concept of returning to traditional foodways through small-scale regenerative food production

in the Chihuahuan Desert. De Colores provides learning opportunities around sustainable production methods, as well as assisting growers in marketing and food distribution. The grant will support the building of a shared meeting and produce-processing space. The project serves the colonias of Doña Ana County, south of Las Cruces, and well as the distribution of food throughout the state via local food hubs.

DESERT VERDE FARM LLC, SANTA FE This project will allow Desert Verde Farm to complete an expansion of growing spaces at New Mexico's only indoor aquaponics farm, which will increase its food production by 20 percent. The farm serves public institutions receiving support from the New Mexico Grown Program, including senior centers, public schools, food banks and early childhood care centers.

GATHINGS GARDENS, BLOOMFIELD This project, titled "Farming in a Food Desert," will support expansion of a greenhouse system with high-tunnels, which will extend the growing season from five to 11 months. This will result in increasing the amount of healthy food for a community that struggles with access to fresh produce. The project serves San Juan County and the Navajo Nation.

HOZHO VOICES OF HEALING CENTER INC., CROWNPOINT This project, High Desert Permaculture Food Forest, will allow Hozho Voices of Healing Center to increase its growing capacity by 50,000 square feet, install ventilation in a greenhouse, prepare a cellar for storage of fresh food, and extend the growing season for established 4,000-square-foot market gardens. The new growing site will utilize permaculture practices to capture water runoff for irrigation. The project serves the Eastern Agency on the Navajo Nation, Crownpoint and surrounding areas.

RAMEL FAMILY FARMS LLC, RATON This grant will allow Ramal Family Farms to purchase 44 additional hydroponic grow-towers to supplement the 35 they already have and add nearly 2,000 square-feet of raised-bed space to expand year-round greenhouse greens production to 100 percent capacity. There is a dramatic need for fresh greens in the area, and Ramel Family



*Top: De Colores Farms & Foods
Bottom: Anthony Youth Farm*

Farms is the only producer within a 100-mile radius. The project serves Colfax, Harding, Mora, San Miguel and Union counties.

RJ'S LEGACY FARM A: SHIPROCK This project will increase and improve production of produce and value-added food products. RJ's Legacy FARM A is increasing its production area by 15 acres this year, and there is a need to acquire approximately 1,500 feet of irrigation gated pipe, as well as to fence produce growing areas. In addition, soil regeneration will be supported through cover crops and other means. The project serves Shiprock, the Navajo Nation, the Four Corners Region and the state of New Mexico.

SQUYRESTUDIO MICROFARMS, ALAMOGORDO This project will allow SquyreStudio MicroFarms to purchase a small greenhouse to aid in plant nursery production during the spring and fall. The project will also support soil amendments, seed and garden-bed infrastructure to expand growing space to increase the amount of available produce to meet the demand. The project serves Alamogordo, including the Alamogordo Farmers' Market.

STONG FARMS, LAS CRUCES This grant will enable Stong Farms to repair a well that is used to irrigate a greenhouse, thereby extending the growing season and creating a more sustainable use of water. This will allow the farm to provide year-round produce to EBT/WIC customers. The farm serves Doña Ana County.

ZIALIFE, RUIDOSO DOWNS Utilizing water saving techniques, Zialife provides sustainably farmed local produce and microgreens to markets surrounding Ruidoso. This grant will make possible the purchase of water-efficient grow-systems, garden supplies and tools for community harvests. It will also make it possible for Zialife to be able to set up consistently at local weekend farmers' markets and events. This project serves the urban area of Ruidoso and surrounding cities.

NEW MEXICO Food & Agriculture POLICY COUNCIL

Equity. Advocacy. Policy.

The NM Food & Agriculture Policy Council is a statewide body that works towards solutions to New Mexico's food access and hunger related issues while advocating for local food and farming, thus ensuring resilience throughout our food system. Join us to:

- Advocate on behalf of local farmers, ranchers, and consumers.
- Educate policy makers about the importance of local food, agriculture, food access, land and water for New Mexicans.
- Work in and with communities across the state, to connect youth and families to local, healthy food.

We invite you to engage in this work and help to plant the seeds for change in our local food and agriculture systems in New Mexico.

www.nmfoodpolicy.org

SANTA FE CONSERVATION TRUST



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NM Aging & Long-Term Services Dept.
BBBS Mountain Region
AmeriCorps Seniors Santa Fe RSVP
NMDOH
New Vistas
City of Santa Fe
Randall Davey Audubon Center
La Familia Health



SEPT

3 - Tuesday @ 6 PM

Take a Walk on the South Side
Southside Library to Arroyo Chamiso Trail
Meet at 6599 Jaguar Dr

11 - Wednesday @ 5:30 PM

Wellness Walk
Acequia Trail from Larragoite Park to
Railyard Park. Meet at 1464 Cristobal Colon

14 - Saturday @ 9 to 11 AM

Vámonos Hike
La Cieneguilla Petroglyphs
Meet at 664-666 Paseo Real

19 - Thursday @ 5:30 PM

Find a New Path
Chili Line @ La Tierra. Meet at the Buckman
Motocross Track parking lot,
off westbound NM599/Mirada Rd

20 - Friday @ 10 AM

Walk with our Elders
Bicentennial/Alto Park to SF River Trail
Meet behind MEG Senior Center 1121 Alto St

OCT

1 - Tuesday @ 5:30 PM

Take a Walk on the South Side
Southside Library to Arroyo Chamiso Trail
Meet at 6599 Jaguar Dr

5 - Saturday @ 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM

Vámonos Hike - Pecos Nat'l Monument
South Pasture Loop trail (3.8 miles)
Registration required to info@sfcct.org for
free bus transportation to trailhead

10 - Thursday @ 5:30 PM

Find a New Path
El Camino Real Trailhead to SF River Trail
Meet at 3600 Constellation Dr

16 - Wednesday @ 5:30 PM

Wellness Walk
Acequia Trail from Larragoite Park to
Ashbaugh Park. Meet at 1464 Cristobal Colon

18 - Friday @ 10 AM

Walk with our Elders
Bicentennial/Alto Park to SF River Trail
Meet behind MEG Senior Center 1121 Alto St

For more information and
maps of the walks, visit:

sfct.org/vamonos
(505) 989-7019

TEXT SFWALKS

TO 833-243-6033
FOR WALK REMINDERS

Farmer-in-REZidence™ Program for Beginner, Indigenous Farmers

BY ZACHARIAH BEN

Bidii Baby Foods LLC is in year two of implementing our Farmer-in-REZidence™ program, an incubator uniquely designed to support young, beginner, Indigenous farmers interested in developing agribusinesses on Tribal Trust land. Farming on “the rez” presents challenges and jurisdictional barriers not typically faced by farmers on private land. The majority of such incubator programs fail because the participants do not leave the program with the ability to address structural barriers: access to land, water and capital.

First and foremost, access to land and water is a huge barrier for young/beginner farmers. Agricultural land-use permits can be transferred, as is typically done within families. Land transfers must go through a long, arduous legal process overseen by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). If land is not successfully transferred before an individual dies, it goes into probate with the BIA and must be relinquished through a legal settlement.

On the Navajo Nation, each farming community is overseen by a Farm Board. The Farm Board is supposed to be monitoring fields to ensure production. If fields are not in production for 5-plus years, the board has the authority and responsibility to take the field away from the permittee and transfer it to a new applicant. However, this process is not being done—politically speaking, no one wants to take land from elders and transfer them to new, young applicants. So, without oversight and consequences for lack of production, as well as a slow-moving, understaffed BIA office, nearly 90 percent of the 14,000 acres of farmland in the Shiprock community alone sit idle—in transfer, probate and/or non-productive.



Early spring planting of corn and cover crops in Shiprock. Photos by Mari Amor

agriculture departments do. These challenges put the impetus on the Indigenous farmer growing on Tribal Trust land to source his/her own funds (through personal savings, leveraging other personal assets, grants, etc.), making it far too high-risk or out of reach, especially for young, beginner farmers.

Bidii Baby Foods LLC developed the Farmer-in-REZidence™ curriculum to provide training and resources that address these structural challenges. All participants will gain technical knowledge on traditional and organic farming practices (such as any farmer incubator program might offer). But uniquely, participants will also gain access to two acres of land with piped irrigation, have access to shared heavy equipment, and will be supported through 501c3 nonprofit fiscal sponsorship. This allows them to immediately take the training and apply it to their own fields, build capital off of their field, and utilize fiscal sponsorship to accept grant funding and build infrastructure needed to scale and sustain.

To learn more about this program, or to inquire about the curriculum, check out our website: <https://www.bidiibabyfoods.org/farmer-in-rezidence™> or email ZACHBEN@BIDIIBABYFOODS.ORG ■

Zachariah Ben is a sixth-generation farmer and sandpainter in Shiprock, N.M. He has more than 10 years of experience in traditional Navajo farming. Zach also serves as tribal liaison with the University of New Mexico, where he supports other Indigenous entrepreneurs. Zach and his wife Mary co-founded Bidii Baby Foods LLC, an agricultural cooperative on the Navajo Nation. Mary has over 15 years of experience in maternal and child health development and food systems work.

Participants leave the program with the ability to address structural barriers: access to land, water and capital.

Additionally, Indigenous farmers on Tribal Trust land face access to capital issues. Trust land is leased to Native Americans from the federal government. Even if your name is on a Land Use Permit, you do not own the land. Therefore, you cannot leverage your land as collateral for a loan, and some grant programs do not recognize the land as an asset. The Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture does not currently offer any grant programs to Navajo farmers the way that other state or federal

INSIDE NM'S SCHOOL FOOD SYSTEM

New Mexico is ripe with ingredients for a reliable food system that nourishes every resident, including our children. Our state has a clear problem with hunger—but we also hold the solutions. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, just under 300,000 people are food insecure. In 2022, 20 percent of youth under 18 reported sometimes or often not having enough to eat in the past seven days. A quarter of the people in the state received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. The foundation also found that one in four children were unsure where their next meal would come from.

When we look at New Mexico's Indigenous population—about 12 percent of the state's residents—this picture becomes even more staggering. Depending on the county, 27 to 37 percent of Indigenous children are food insecure. The Navajo Nation is about the size of Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont combined, yet it only has 13 grocery stores.

THE FOOD, FARM AND HUNGER INITIATIVE

These statistics influenced Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham to create and fund the Food, Farm and Hunger Initiative. This legislation, now called the Food Initiative, was intended to address gaps in our food system that prevent local products from reaching youth, college students and elders. The initiative created a fund for farmers and ranchers to build infrastructure to clean, store and transport their products to cafeterias across the state. It also supplemented the New Mexico Grown program, which connects cafeteria kitchens with local produce. The governor's Food Initiative also provides additional funding to food banks and hunger-relief organizations so they can supply more food-insecure families. Because of these programs, we now have aggregated data of local food grown and purchased across the state, alongside the need, allowing us to better evaluate our progress.

And there is more innovation on the horizon. We are investing and creating resources to process, store and ship food from farms to cafeterias and farmers' markets. Farmers' markets are popping up in every county. We have farmers, ranchers, food and garden educators, food- and justice-based organizations, government entities and elected representatives on both sides of the aisle who want to see New Mexico become sovereign in our ability to feed ourselves efficiently and sustainably. With these ingredients, now is the time to be bold in our effort to create the best meals possible for our students, from seed to tray and back to soil.

In addition to the Food Initiative, the governor, along with state senators Michael Padilla and Leo Jaramillo, proposed and helped pass the Healthy Universal School

Meals legislation. In its journey through the Legislature, it passed unanimously. The legislation considered all the elements, including local sourcing, scratch-cooking and culturally

relevant menus. It allows for student and family voices and choices and addresses food waste. Making food free while also considering the entire meal experience for students made this bill unique. Many states across the nation are now looking to New Mexico for how to do it.

Some school districts are already demonstrating what is possible. Zuni Public School District, with the support of the Zuni Youth Enrichment Program, serves cooked-from-scratch meals using local produce, and provides students food and nutrition education. Farmington Municipal Schools provides scratch-cooked meals that are locally sourced and culturally relevant. FMS is also implementing a composting program across the entire district that will benefit school gardens. With support from six FoodCorps Americorps members, each elementary school will provide food and garden education.

Now is the time to be bold in our effort to create the best meals possible for our students.

New Mexico's Public Education Department is currently creating rules for healthy, free school meals. The rules will outline the process and requirements for districts to receive state funds to cover breakfast and lunch for all students every school day.



Top: Youth for Food Day at the Roundhouse (N.M. State Capitol). Photo by Genevieve Russell; Bottom: Esperanza Elementary School students in Farmington, N.M. Photo by Rochelle Li

Many school districts are anticipating difficulty in implementing these rules, even if they are supportive of the ruling. FoodCorps and other community organizations, people, entities and the PED are helping the schools to confidently implement this program. More than 25 stakeholders in school nutrition met in July to talk about how we can support districts. Here are few of the next steps we discussed:

- Create a resource list of organizations/entities and people across the state that can help districts with the different elements of this programming
- Create a visual that easily shares this information for districts, staff, students, families and community members

- Advocate for more funding so schools and districts can refurbish their kitchens
- Advocate for food education funding



Indoor garden lesson with second-grade students taught by Joy Reed in Farmington, N.M. Photo by Rochelle Li

- Support individual schools in implementation
- Continue providing support as the program continues

Youth for Food Advocacy Day

We are planning the 2nd Annual Youth for Food Advocacy Day at the Legislature. We invite youth and families from across New Mexico to advocate for food-related policies.

We need to create and sustain outdoor classrooms that use gardens as tools for learning. School gardens can not only provide produce for school cafeterias; they can also offer fresh food to the community to combat food insecurity.

Additionally, we need to educate students, faculty and staff about culturally relevant food and nutrition. These life skills support families by providing them with knowledge to make healthy choices. Programs like FoodCorps, Cooking with Kids, Kids Cook, Zuni Youth Enrichment Project and others are educating some students. Paired with our improving food system, we need this education for every student across the state.

Re-creating our school food system needs to be a community effort. Now is the time to be innovative, dream big and imagine the effects that our efforts today can have into the future.

The saying goes: “Give a man a fish, you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, you feed him for life.” The same goes for food and gardening. Feed a student a locally sourced, scratch-cooked meal, you feed them well for a day; teach them to grow their own produce and how to cook it, you feed them well for a lifetime. ■



Alicia Chávez is FoodCorps’ Impact & Partnerships lead for Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico. She has a master’s in Community Planning from UNM. She co-founded Abuelas Medicina and is board president of the Center for Social Sustainable Systems (CESOSS). ALICIA.CHAVEZ@FOODCORPS.ORG.

FOODCORPS: NOURISHING KIDS’ FUTURES

FoodCorps is a national organization with community programs. FoodCorps partners with schools and communities to nourish kids’ health, education and sense of belonging. FoodCorps AmeriCorps members serve alongside educators and school nutrition leaders to provide kids with nourishing meals, food education and culturally affirming experiences. In the past school year, 166 members served in 233 schools and districts. Corps members reflect the identities and lived experiences of the students they serve. Last year, 32 percent identified as BIPOC and 70 percent served in their local communities. Building on this direct programming, FoodCorps advocates for policies that will create more sustainable and just school food systems at local, state and national levels. To learn more, visit foodcorps.org.

BOOK PROFILE

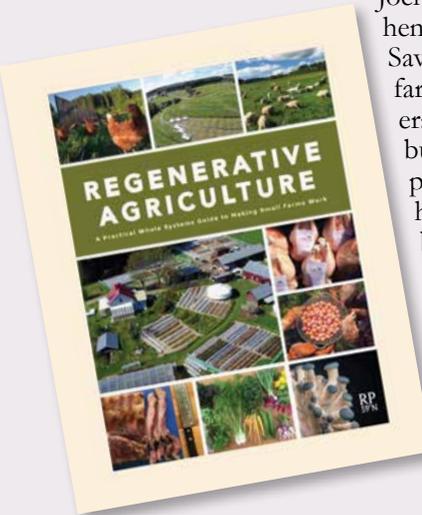
REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

A PRACTICAL WHOLE SYSTEMS GUIDE TO MAKING SMALL FARMS WORK

BY RICHARD PERKINS

WWW.REGENERATIVEAGRICULTUREBOOK.COM

This book is highly recommended for people looking to get into farming of any kind or just producing some food on their homestead. It is great for those wanting to build soil and the environment while also producing quality food and earning a living from it. *Regenerative Agriculture* offers a clear and pragmatic approach to designing, installing and managing profitable small farms through intelligent, human-scale farming. It provides a deep look into the ecological, practical, personal and financial realms of making small farms work.



Joel Salatin called the book “an eclectic, comprehensive compendium of small farm wisdom.” Alan Savory said the book is a “practical guide to any farmer—new or seasoned—seeking to farm regeneratively. And it’s not just about soils and plants, but the quality of life and financial health of the people seeking to regenerate them. Perkins shares his journey in figuring out which practices worked best for him. The power of the book is that it will help you figure out what works best for you.”

With hundreds of photographs and illustrations, *Regenerative Agriculture* is packed with detailed spreadsheets and information covering a huge range of topics aimed at empowering you to plan or redesign your farm confidently and competently.

An Assessment of the Need for Native Seeds and the Capacity for Their Supply: Final Report From the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine
The National Academies Press, 2023; <https://DOI.ORG/10.17226/26618>

Extreme weather and wildfire, intensified by climate change, are damaging the native plant communities of landscapes of many regions. Native plant communities are foundational to thriving ecosystems, delivering goods and services that regulate the environment and support life, provide food and shelter for a wide range of native animals and embody a wealth of genetic information with many beneficial applications. Restoring impaired ecosystem requires a supply of diverse native plant seeds that are well suited to the climate, soils and other living species of the system.

This report examines the needs for native plant restoration and other activities, provides recommendations for improving the reliability, predictability and performance of the native seed supply, and presents an ambitious agenda for action. An Assessment of the Need for Native Seeds and the Capacity for Their Supply considers the various challenges facing natural landscapes and calls for a coordinated public-private effort to scale-up and secure a cost-effective national native seed supply. There are chapters on federal, state and tribal needs and uses of native seed, as well as cooperative partnerships for native seed development.

THRIVING LAND, SUSTAINABILITY AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Monte del Sol Charter School

BY JUDY HERZL

Sustainability is one of Monte del Sol's four school pillars, and in addition to the Garden to Kitchen course, Monte offers high school students dual-credit courses in sustainability that allow them to work toward a Sustainable Technologies certificate and a certificate in Controlled Environmental Agriculture (greenhouse agriculture, hydroponics and aquaponics). Our students feel a broader connection to place as they enjoy the beauty of the land around the school.

The Santa Fe school's gardens serve to teach two concepts: One garden is designed to be an introduction to production farming. It features a vegetable garden of annual plantings. Students are involved with the growing process, and the food that is grown is served for the whole school community to enjoy. Monte del Sol's kitchen makes fresh, nutritious lunches daily using food from our garden, as well as from local farms whenever possible. Students are encouraged to try new foods such as beets and edible flowers. They develop a sense of pride in what they have grown and are more open to new culinary experiences. The other garden features perennials, mostly herbs and flowers planted in spirals and circles that teach about beautification. The cycle completes with a composting system that we hope our neighbors in Nava Adé will soon participate in.

Uvee Witt, garden program coordinator, said, "This is what I wanted from the older generation that was teaching me. I feel privileged to be able to share this with the students at Monte."



Left: Uvee Witt (back) Garden Program coordinator (front) and Tom Kambolz, Garden to Kitchen instructor (back) empower students with a basic understanding of how to seed and start plants; identify the plants that we eat; engage in the growing and tending of plants, and learn when and how to harvest as well as how to cook, process and preserve food. The class is an introduction to understanding food systems. Photo by Judy Herzl

Below: The aquaponic system growing kale, bok choy and peas. Photo by Jim Heidenberger

Center: Greenhouse nutrient flow-trays growing lettuce. Monte del Sol's greenhouse is a geodesic dome. Photo by Jim Heidenberger



Bottom: The geodesic dome greenhouse at night. The greenhouse was built by Monte del Sol students with help from a Santa Fe Community College team. Photo by Christopher "DJ" De Jesus

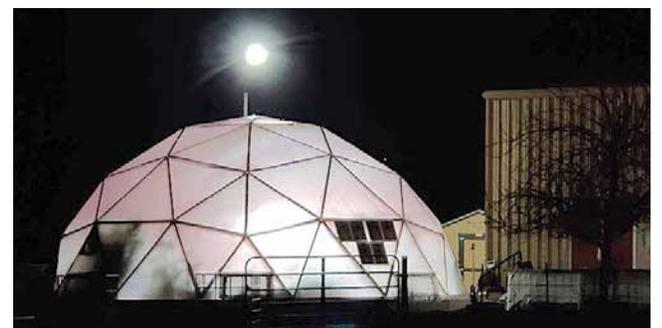


Above: This is a small three sisters raised bed where students learn about symbiosis and plant interactions above and below the surface of the ground. Photo by Uvee Witt

Above: The other side of the garden is designed for more technical tending and production for our lunch program. The staple crops we are growing are tomatoes, squash, cucumbers and peppers. Food waste from our lunch program is collected, composted and used to fertilize these rows to produce more food. Photo by Uvee Witt

Below: One side of our garden is designed for exploration and interaction. Winding pathways and intermingled food crops and flowers show how art and design play into gardening. Photo by Uvee Witt

Below: Middle-school students in the Garden to Kitchen class harvest grapes. Students learn how to determine when the grapes are ripe. The harvest will be used to make jam. Photo by Judy Herzl



The NM Farmers Marketing Association's Approved Supplier Program

BY KEVIN BELTRAN

Getting fresh, tasty, nutritious local food into the hands of New Mexico's children and families is a top priority for many community members, farmers and elected officials. Through years of dedicated advocacy, this dream has become a reality through the New Mexico Grown Program.

In tandem with this program, the New Mexico Approved Supplier Program (ASP), operated by the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association (NMFMA), has emerged as a key support, and now works to grow and diversify the base of New Mexico farmers and ranchers who are ready to sell to schools, food banks and other institutions. The ASP helps assure that the fresh produce, meat and other food products that are distributed to schools, early childcare facilities and senior centers, are safe, traceable and originate from a garden or farm that uses good food-safety practices.

A pathway to a locally focused New Mexico food system

The NMFMA helps local small and midscale producers deliver safe products (including to vulnerable populations

such as young children and elders), while at the same time reducing financial burdens that can prevent small-scale producers from taking steps to grow their operations and reach new markets.

The ASP also works to streamline the internal purchasing processes with produce and meat buyers around the state, helping achieve the goals of incorporating more locally grown foods into meal programs (like school lunches and senior meals) and strengthening the local food systems.

As relationships are built between producers, buyers and local food hubs, the NMFMA focuses on the importance of supporting our communities in nourishing themselves with healthy and culturally relevant foods. This helps prioritize the importance of food to place, increasing the quality of local products available, and growing our local farm economies. The ASP is also dedicated to uplifting Indigenous food practices, while maintaining Tribal sovereignty by increasing food production and traditional food knowledge and food practices in Native communities.



Services the NMFMA provides to farmers and ranchers include technical assistance such as food-safety training and support in creating standard operating procedures for Farm Risk Assessment Plans, and on-site/in-person farm visits to assure operations meet food-safety standards—all ultimately helping producers be successful as they grow more high-quality food for their community.

Over the last several years, the ASP list has grown from 40 producers to 240 and counting in 2024. The NMFMA's food safety team is committed to ensuring free participation, uplifting small-scale producers (no producer is too small!) and empowering children, elders and families to make informed food choices.

Every year the NMFMA continues to learn how to better support and assist local producers with tools that will allow them to take the next step into strengthening

agricultural practices, expanding operations and helping grow the market for New Mexico Grown. Join us in this pathway to growing our local food system here in New Mexico!

Get involved with the New Mexico Grown 'Approved Supplier Program'

- Visit us at [HTTPS://NEWMEXICOFMA.ORG/](https://newmexicofma.org/) and follow us on Facebook and Instagram for upcoming events and communications.
- Are you involved with a school, senior center or other institution with a meal program? Join us in getting New Mexico Grown produce at your site!
- If you're a farmer or rancher interested in feeding your community, become an Approved Supplier! Register at [WWW.NMFMA.MY.SITE.COM](http://www.nmfma.my.site.com) today! Applications will be processed on a first-come-first-served basis.

This year, the NMFMA invested in creating a brand-new application portal for the Approved Supplier Program. Our new portal makes it easy to start your application, save it and return later to finish. Applicants can now upload support documents with their applications to assist in the review process. If you are a previous NM Grown Approved Supplier Program applicant, you



Photos courtesy New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association



must submit a brand-new application.

After submitting your application, you will receive an email confirmation with a copy of your responses. Additionally, our ASP application review team will be notified of your application, and your application will be assigned to a reviewer who will follow up with you during the process. Please keep in mind that applications

are processed in a first-come-first-served manner, and we strive to process all applications within 45 business days.



For further information, questions, or technical support, contact ASP@FARMERSMARKETSNM.ORG . ■

Kevin Beltran, NMFMA Approved Supplier Program manager, is a member of the Pueblo of Zuni/ half Salvadoran. He resides in Alcalde on Teva Lands in northern New Mexico. He is a passionate photographer, skateboarder and new dad.

HOW TO APPLY

1. Open your browser and go to the ASP Portal login page, located at [HTTPS://NMFMA.MY.SITE.COM/S/LOGIN/](https://nmfma.my.site.com/s/login/)
2. New users should click on the “Register Here!” link. You will be asked to provide your first and last name, as well as a valid email address. Your email address will serve as your login name.
3. Check your email for a link to validate your new account. Open the link and create a password for your account
4. Now that you’ve successfully registered, you can login to the portal to access the application itself, as well as a Frequently Asked Questions section. Before you get started, you may wish to review and collect some of the recommended documents based on your application type, which are all listed on the portal homepage.
5. To start, click on “Apply for Approved Supplier” in the top menu or look for the green “Apply to Become Approved Supplier” button.
6. Applications can be completed in one session if you have all the necessary documents and files ready to upload. If you need to save and return to your application later, simply click the “Save my progress and resume later” checkbox, located at the top of every page of the application.
7. When you’re finished, click the “Submit” button on the final page of your application. The portal will now check to ensure you’ve filled out all required fields and file uploads. If you need to make any corrections, you can go back and modify your application before making your final submission.

NEW MEXICO LEGISLATURE ALLOCATES FUNDING FOR THE NEW MEXICO GROWN PROGRAM

During the 2024 New Mexico Legislative session, \$1.7 million was allocated for the Food Initiative to provide locally sourced food products to public and charter schools across the state through the NM Grown program, a state-funded local food purchasing program that nourishes school age children, older adults and families with fresh, locally-produced food. Through this work, NM Grown empowers people to make informed food choices while strengthening the local economy.

Service sites include early childhood facilities, K-12 schools and senior centers. The program works with local farmers, ranchers, food producers, food hubs, state agencies and food banks to connect them to local food in our state. Through these connections, NM Grown is strengthening the state’s food system from farm to plate.

The 2024 allocation comes as a supplement to Healthy Universal School Meals (HUSM) funding contained in Senate Bill 4 during the 2023 legislative session.

Through NM Grown, representatives from multiple state agencies, including Early Childhood Education and Care, Aging & Long-Term Services, the Department of Health and the Public Education Department, work together with nonprofit organizations such as the New Mexico Farmers Market Association, food hubs such as Agri-Cultura Network, San Juan Food Hub and La Semilla and farmers and ranchers in the NM Grown Coalition.

NM Grown operates several initiatives that showcase its work to customers and the community. *Nuevo Thursdays* highlights the use of locally produced foods on Thursdays in NM Grown sites. It encourages nutrition providers to offer a new menu item every Thursday. This program is educating the public about locally sourced food and encouraging facilities to take pride in cooking with local ingredients. Additionally, the NM Grown Coalition promotes NM Grown Month in September. Throughout the month, NM Grown sites showcase local farmers and produce in classrooms and cafeterias across the state. Whether it’s harvesting and serving produce directly from the garden, offering fruit and vegetable lessons and tastings, serving locally grown produce in meals or getting creative with cafeteria promotions, NM Grown Month celebrates all of its food providers’ accomplishments. NM Grown also oversees the Golden Chile Awards program, which recognizes and celebrates innovative and dedicated NM Grown programming, as well as farmers, producers and ranchers on the NM Grown Approved Supplier List.

NMDA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) Agricultural Workforce Development (AWD) Program grant application period opened on June 17 and will continue until funds are fully allocated, or until March 31, 2025.

NMDA's AWD Program offers incentives to the state's agricultural businesses to hire interns. The program is intended to provide hands-on educational opportunities for students aspiring to careers in agriculture, as well as young or beginning farmers and ranchers. Participating agricultural businesses must pay minimum wage (or higher) to each intern, as well as carry workers' compensation insurance. Internships must be completed by May 30. Primary areas of focus for these internships include: agribusiness; agronomy; crop production; farm and ranch management; food safety; fruit and vegetable production; maintenance and repair of machinery and equipment; marketing and sales, and natural resources and conservation.

NMDA will reimburse qualified agricultural businesses up to 50 percent of the actual cost of hiring a qualified intern, not to exceed \$15,000 per internship. A business may request funding to hire as many as three interns per calendar year. Each intern must be provided with at least 130 hours of work experience. To learn more about the program, call (575) 646-2642 or visit the AWD webpage.

ADVOCATING FOR THE REGIONAL FARM TO FOOD BANK

Local Food Systems Are Hanging in the Balance

BY BROOKE MINNICH

Last year, Bonnie Murphy, the Food Depot's Local Food Procurement project specialist, wrote a piece for *Green Fire Times* introducing New Mexico's Regional Farm to Food Bank (RF2FB) program. A year later, our team wants to shed light on the successes and challenges that this program—built from scratch and vital to our communities—faces in changing times.

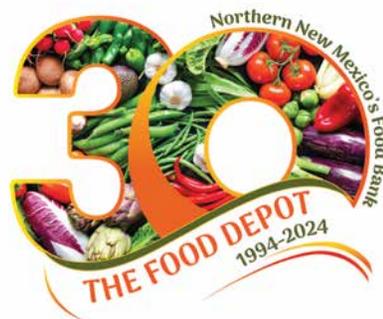
Since March 2023, our program has spent over \$2.2 million on local food, with another \$1.9 million to be spent by June 2025. About 180 producers have participated, and their products—including ground beef, eggs, pinto beans, mutton and a wide variety of fresh produce—have reached every county in the state through our hunger-relief network. That food is going to children, to grandparents, in meals for the unhoused, to the homebound, to employed and unemployed people, to those struggling with mental and physical health, to those recovering from addiction, to families, schools, rural and urban communities, to the pueblos and the Navajo Nation—the list goes on. This program empowers neighbors to feed neighbors and pays a fair price for their work.

Despite this success, we are at a precipice in which this program could end altogether. The Farm Bill, the federal package of legislation for most things food and agriculture, is in a precarious place, and funding is not guaranteed. Meant to be renewed last year, Congress voted to extend the Farm Bill until this September. Disagreements over allocations of funding for programs like SNAP keep things unpredictable and threaten losses of smaller programs like the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA), which funds RF2FB. State funding could be secured in the upcoming legislative session should federal funding not come through, but it is not guaranteed.

There is an incredible amount at stake as this program hangs in the balance. The benefit to our local economies is one thing we can't afford to lose. RF2FB inherently improves the resiliency and capacity of our agricultural economy by providing a supportive avenue for selling products, while keeping that money in the state. Using the USDA/CSU local food impact calculator, we calculated that the \$4.1 million of combined sales in the first three years of the RF2FB program will have a \$7 million impact in New Mexico. According to USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, the total value of New Mexico's agriculture sector was \$3.71 billion in 2022. However, 90 percent of food is purchased from producers outside the state, making it even more important that local food stays within New Mexico. The program also supports vital agricultural communities: Most of our vendors are considered small farmers, and over a quarter of the farmers we purchase from identify as female, Black and Indigenous growers. After two seasons of scaling up small food businesses, offering consistent sales for producers, building a local network in our agricultural economy and creating systems change in the way New Mexican food banks procure food, the loss of this program would be devastating.



From Left: Lisa Fernandez, operations director of Río Grande Food Project; Keegan Kloer of Farm of Song, Albuquerque South Valley; and Ari Herring, co-executive director of Río Grande Food Project





Catherine Knowlton, Food Bank director of ECHO, based in Farmington, with veggies from Elder's Greenhouse and Garden

Hunger relief is another area that depends on the continuation of this program. According to Feeding America's Map, the Meal Gap report, there are 321,370 food-insecure people in New Mexico. As the partnerships manager at The Food Depot, I spend every day supporting organizations that distribute to food-insecure people in northern New Mexico. Ojo Sarco Community Center,

The value of New Mexico's agriculture sector totaled \$3.71 billion in 2022.

one of our partners, serves about 100 families each month and has received local ground beef from the Regional Farm to Food Bank program, a product that is sometimes hard for

food banks to procure due to increased food costs and decreased donations. Their staff reports: "Our clients are so happy to receive proteins. Nearly every community member prefers ground beef... it's easy for our elderly clients to eat. And local food is the best food for our community." Like many other food pantries in New Mexico, Ojo Sarco Community Center serves many elderly folks on limited incomes, multigenerational families and homebound clients. Additionally, like many other isolated communities in our rural state, the nearest full-service grocery store is almost an hour away. And, like many other pantries, they have seen an increase in need. What Regional Farm to Food Bank provides is invaluable and must be preserved: fresh, healthy, easy-to-prepare whole foods that fill a huge gap in food access and equity.

With great risk comes great hope. We invite you to join us as we advocate for the future of this program. Too much has been built and too much is at stake for it to end. Share our story with others. Write to your state and federal legislators. Celebrate the progress we can make when we weave together the most nourishing pieces of our communities.

For more information, visit WWW.NMFOODBANKS.ORG/FARMTOFOODBANK . ■

Brooke Minnich is partnerships manager at The Food Depot, northern New Mexico's food bank, where she manages relations with hunger relief partners, oversees food rescue programming, and administers the Regional Farm to Food Bank program. A former educator, she is passionate about supporting communities in their work toward a thriving food system.

THE FOOD DEPOT IMPLEMENTS RF2FB

Regional Farm to Food Bank is New Mexico's Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) Cooperative Agreement, funded through the USDA to connect local producers with food banks and their affiliated partner agencies throughout New Mexico. The program has been implemented by The Food Depot on behalf of the New Mexico Association of Food Banks. It relies on partnerships with the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association, New Mexico Department of Agriculture and Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's Food Initiative. Working with NM Grown's Approved Supplier Program, RF2FB secures partnerships with local producers, ensures food safety, and offers competitive, fair-market prices for nutritious foods.

LATEST CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE DATA NOW AVAILABLE

The latest Census of Agriculture reflects the diversity of New Mexico's agriculture industry, showing that the Land of Enchantment ranks among the top states in the country for the production of pecans, chile peppers, milk, cheese and onions. Data-sets from the 2022 Census were released in February by the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

- In 2022, New Mexico's total value of agriculture production was \$3.71 billion. This was a 17 percent increase from the previous year;
- Direct-to-consumer or -retailer farm and ranch sales increased by 2.3 percent from 2017;
- 71 percent of producers have been on their operations for more than 10 years;
- Family-owned and -operated farms accounted for 95 percent of all New Mexico farms, with 82 percent of agricultural operations being less than 1,000 acres in size;
- While the average age of the New Mexico producer increased from 59.8 to 60 years of age, 7.2 percent of producers in 2022 were younger than 35 years of age, a one percent increase in young producers from the 2017 census.

NASS conducts the survey every five years. This census counts all U.S. farms and ranches and those who operate them. Even small plots of land—rural or urban—growing fruit, vegetables or some food animals count if \$1,000 or more of such products were raised and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year.

New Mexico Secretary of Agriculture Jeff Witte said, "Through the ag census, New Mexico producers help show the nation the value and importance of agriculture and influence decisions that will shape the future of the industry. For farmers and ranchers, the Census of Agriculture is their voice, their future and their opportunity."

The census highlights land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income, expenditures and other topics. Notable changes for 2022 data include new questions about the use of precision agriculture and updates to internet access questions.

The census gathers information that can be used by Congress, local agribusinesses, policymakers, researchers, local governments and many others for decision-making related to funding for agricultural programs and services. It gives a comprehensive snapshot that helps data users see trends in the industry and helps producers do business.

For more information about the census and its data, visit the USDA website and browse NASS' Quick Stats online searchable database. ([HTTPS://QUICKSTATS.NASS.USDA.GOV](https://quickstats.nass.usda.gov)). You can also peruse the downloadable PDF of the 2022 New Mexico Agricultural Statistics.

YES Housing, Inc.

“Building and Revitalizing Communities”

YesHousing, Inc. is an Albuquerque-based nonprofit community development corporation. Its mission is to be a “positive agent” throughout New Mexico by building and revitalizing communities with quality, affordable housing and services. In August, the Albuquerque City Council approved YesHousing’s \$43 million proposal to build a multifamily complex in West Mesa, in partnership with the city. Earlier this year, the Bernalillo County Board of Commissioners granted YesHousing a zoning change for a multi-use development project on Río Bravo Boulevard SW.

On his website, President/CEO Chris Baca, wrote:

“Central to our mission to sustainable development and healthy living lies a commitment to social equity and inclusivity. We recognize that our efforts have the potential to revitalize neighborhoods, create jobs and improve public health outcomes. Case studies abound of successful sustainable developments that have catalyzed economic growth while preserving cultural heritage and biodiversity. By prioritizing the needs of local stakeholders and fostering social cohesion, we, as developers, can create vibrant, resilient communities that thrive in harmony with nature.

“The ascent of sustainable development represents a significant shift in our thinking and is driven by a confluence of environmental, social, and economic imperatives. Investors, developers and communities stand to benefit from embracing sustainability as a guiding principle, unlocking new opportunities by creating resilient environments. By harnessing green innovation, collaboration and long-term vision, stakeholders can pave the way for a more sustainable and prosperous future.

Successful sustainable development can catalyze economic growth while preserving cultural heritage and biodiversity. – Chris Baca

“We align our vision with community needs, [and] focus on understanding their perspectives and integrating those needs into our strategic planning. For example, we leverage our experience in mixed-use real estate development and engage in community outreach to identify local needs. This approach ensures our projects not only fulfill our organization’s mission but also contribute positively to the community, aligning with their leadership and input in creating impactful, sustainable developments.

“For both community and climate reasons, we fundamentally believe we need to pivot back to development patterns that were used before the car became so ubiquitous. While we believe cars certainly have their place in neighborhoods, communities have been designed with so much

focus on the automobile that we’ve made walking unsafe and inconvenient. By designing our streets and trails safely and conveniently, and by bringing our retail and commercial close to our residential developments, we expect that our residents will walk for many of their daily needs.

“One of the things that we’re trying to determine is, how do we continue to support farmers so that they can actually create a long-term career in agriculture? The role in agriculture that the ‘Agrihood’ can play has to be conscientious and intentional. There’s a way where we can connect affordable housing, connect food access, food security and healthy living with an organic agriculture focus, training of agri-scientists, sustainable and nutrient dense production—all within a mixed-use development’s core. It can be a multifunctional support system to tie these really essential pieces of our day-to-day lives and serve as a model for generations to come.”

Agricultural Aggregator in Albuquerque’s South Valley

YesHousing has donated four acres of land for the first agricultural aggregator in the



South Valley and is navigating the zoning permits and utilities. In July, Baca posted: “We have some final visuals. The aggregator will serve 50-70 small farms from the area; it will process locally grown organic produce; it will address food insecurity in our poorer neighborhoods; it will have greenhouses, gardens and fruit orchards; it will green the site to help offset CO2 emissions and it will create jobs. “We are not there yet, but our community and partners’ engagement strategies have helped us develop a more refined vision of what we can accomplish. This is just the first phase of a larger goal to build a sustainable and healthy living focused community that is more eco-friendly and in tune with nearby the bosque and river. If you can visualize it, it will become a reality!

“This is going to provide YesHousing the opportunity to plant fruit and nut trees near the AgriCultura/La Cosecha agricultural processing facility to go along with their gardens and greenhouses. This will reclaim vacant land with an agricultural past, reinvigorate the soil, and bring organic produce closer to families living in a food desert. Good for people and good for the environment.”

Downtown Albuquerque Rooftop Garden

“Five stories up on our Rooftop Garden at The Imperial Building, we’ve cultivated a remarkable space with 5-6 micro-zones. Our master gardener, James Landry from Mission ABQ, alongside our own Anna Martin, has reaped another bountiful harvest of organic vegetables.

“In less than an acre in the downtown [Albuquerque] core, we can offer affordable housing, implement revitalization strategies, and combat food insecurity. The results speak for themselves. The proof is in the pudding...er... vegetables!” ■



“Providing affordable housing is crucial, but it’s just one piece of the puzzle in enhancing the well-being of families. Offering additional services, amenities, on site access to fresh organic produce, and nearby job opportunities are all vital components in ensuring the welfare of individuals within any community.” – Chris Baca, YES Housing, Inc.

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

BY LANNY TONNING

...the more we try to remain the same. Specifically, our Old Town Farm in Albuquerque. While it’s not easy, it’s fun trying to keep this place as a semi-rural refuge near the heart of the city.

Often, we don’t appreciate that the times we live in are actually history. It just isn’t history yet. And as much as we appreciate history, we sometimes fail to see what is around us as something the future might appreciate.

One of the main attributes that makes New Mexico the incredibly different and special place that it is—is its history. Not much can compare. So it is with Old Town Farm. The land between Old Town and the river was farmland for Tiguex Pueblo, which preceded Old Town by many centuries. The people of the pueblo created the irrigation channels along the river that reportedly astonished Spanish explorers when they arrived in the 1500s.

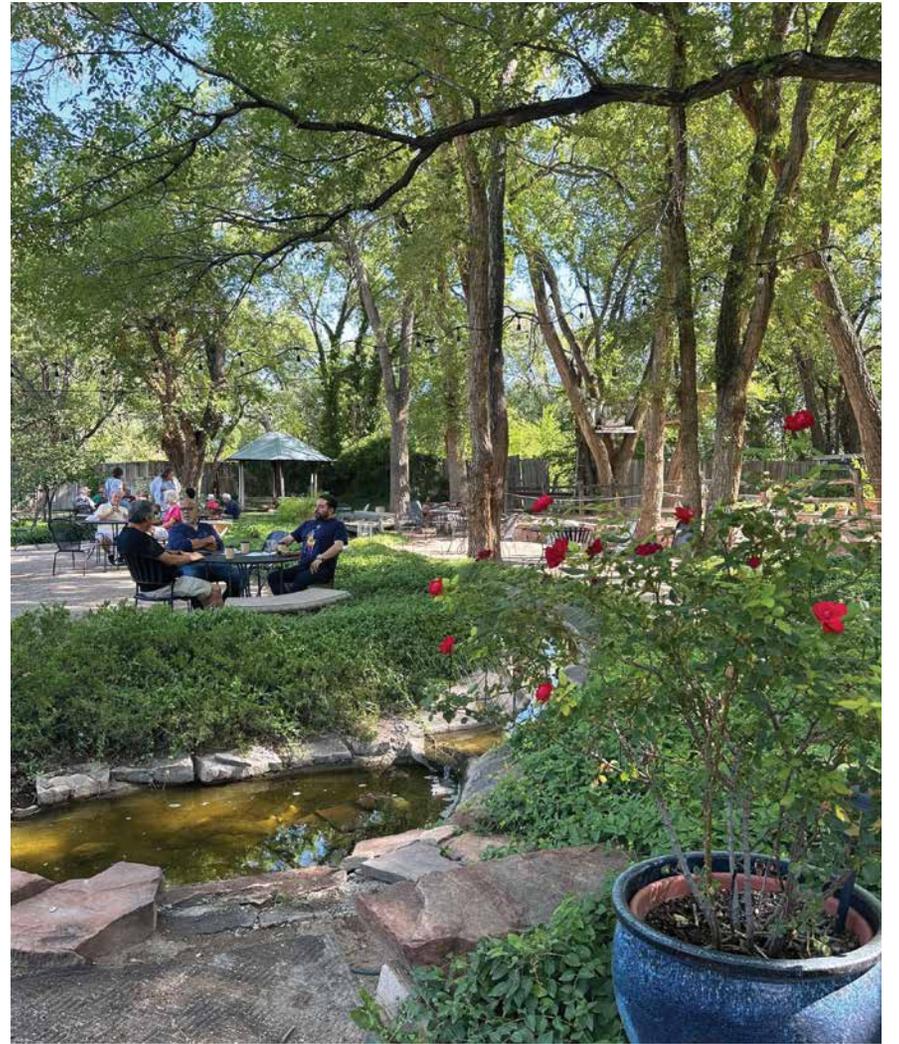
As the Spanish settlers began taking over the Puebloan lands, the area remained farmland and the irrigation channels were maintained and carrier ditches expanded. The Duranes Lateral is reputedly the oldest registered irrigation canal in the United States. It forms the western edge of Old Town Farm.

The land between Old Town and the river was farmland for Tiguex Pueblo, which preceded Old Town by many centuries.

With New Mexico’s shift to a U.S. territory and the coming of the railroad, settlers from the eastern U.S. began coming to the area, and Albuquerque began to grow from a village to a town to a city. Most of the expansion headed east toward the mountains, while the area along the river remained largely agricultural. Growth did put pressure on the small farms, as large-scale farming created a competitive disadvantage.

Another historical factor came into play. In Spain, the oldest son got all the stuff. In New Spain, it was decided that all sons would share the inheritance. In an agricultural culture, the inheritance was most often land. So, we see farms with access to irrigation ditches being divided into long, narrow farmlets with access to the canals. But the smaller the parcel of land, the harder it is to make a living farming. Soon, residential areas began replacing small farms in the valley but some farms remained. Some of the small residential areas near Old Town are older than the U.S. itself. One neighbor’s home is well over 200 years old. Old Town Farm’s Montoya Road was once a wagon trail between Duranes and Barelas. The area was largely off the municipal radar of the rapidly growing city. And that was a good thing!

Almost a century ago, what is now Old Town Farm was part of a larger tract owned by the Alford and then the Edens. It featured pastures for horses, a massive adobe home and, eventually, several barns. In the 1970s, my partner, Linda Thorne, managed to pry two-and-a-half acres on Montoya Road away



Weekend yoga at Bike In Coffee; dining under the trees; Old Town Farm's flower and vegetable gardens. Photos by Linda Thorne

from the 32-acre property. A construction firm owned the property at that time and named it High Lonesome. The adobe home was now an office. The land was still pasture, but parts of it were used for equipment and materials storage.

When Linda and I got together in the early 1980s, her long-held dream of having barns for her horses kept recurring. In 1986, her dream came to be, and Old Town Farm came to be with eight-and-a-half acres with barns to the west and her two-and-a-half-acre property were rejoined. For the next several decades, Old Town Farm was again a horse farm when as many as 35 horses on site for boarding and training. A small garden became a larger garden when Linda started a neighborhood CSA (Community Supported Agriculture program). With surplus from the CSA came selling produce at the Downtown Farmers' Market. As luck would have it,

we noticed that a lot of people came on bikes. Old Town Farm is between the Mountain Road bicycle boulevard and the I-40 bike trail. We invited people to ride over to buy produce. In 2012, that led to the establishment of Bike In Coffee.

The boarding and training business was over, and we thought maybe we could turn the big barn into a place for weddings. In 2014, the barn became an event center and Old Town Farm entered a new phase. But it was still a farm!

Thus far, the city and county have largely resisted efforts to create more dense 'infill' in this historic area. We hope that the older homes and few remaining small farms along the river keep that resistance alive. ■

Lanny Tanning has been the editor of the New Mexico Business Journal, Public Information Officer for the mayor of Albuquerque, and public relations director for the Albuquerque Museum. He and Linda Thorne also ran Club Z In-Home Tutoring for 10 years. LT@FLYRALLYE.COM

ACCESSING FARMLAND IN NEW MEXICO

I was born and raised in Española, New Mexico. Presidential candidates come to visit and take photos to show that they are serious about the opioid crisis. But Española is a lot richer than what the media makes it out to be. It's a place where the sky seems never-ending and the mesas glow under the sunlight; where we do a pilgrimage walk every year to the Santuario de Chimayó for Good Friday and are handed oranges and water along the route by community members. It's a place where we are taught from childhood that water is sacred and vital, and we wait patiently for monsoon season to come; where the soil is full of clay and abundant with nutrients.

Farming is in my blood and bones. I grew up baling alfalfa with my father and grandfather and watching my father work with neighbors sharing the precious responsibility of maintaining and using the acequia. My father knows how to level a field masterfully by hand with a shovel so that the water is evenly dispersed and not a drop wasted. I moved to Albuquerque as a young adult and started interning on a production farm, and the rest is history. I have worked on vegetable farms for the past 12 years as an intern, employee, farm crew member and manager. Throughout all of that time, as a queer butch, I faced severe sexism and discrimination, classism and knowledge-hoarding, and I went into debt by making unlivable wages. After over a decade of farming and in management positions, the most I have ever made is \$14/hour without benefits.

Young farmers like me are forced to leave agriculture because of the inability to access land.

These hardships made it clear to me that if I wanted to find a farm where I could thrive and feel safe, I was going to have to create it myself. Three years ago, I sought to start my own farming operation with my farm partner. As two BIPOC queer farmers without capital to purchase farmland of our own, we sought to lease land. We were at the mercy of wealthy landowners who bought up all the land along the river and acequias. In Albuquerque, landowners are given a property tax break if their land is zoned for agriculture, as a way to incentivize them to grant land access to farmers. Because of so much parceled farmland, we have had to lease four separate fields from four separate landlords in order to make up enough farmland to have a viable business. We haul tools, harvest bins and ourselves from field to field to field to field. The logistics of farming on four separate plots of land adds hours to our weeks.

Despite having legitimate leases and having paid our annual lease fees, we still face regular discrimination and harassment from wealthy neighbors who do not want us in their neighborhood. A neighbor at one of our fields aggressively told us, "I didn't pay \$1 million for my home to look at your trashy trailers." We had another neighbor enter our field to verbally



Winter squash by the truckload; Anita, Ash and Mallika at Albuquerque's Downtown Growers' Market

harass us with profanities while on horseback and report us to the Middle Río Grande Conservancy District for using the farm access road to access our field. They showed up within an hour to forbid us from using the road, and within days welded a metal gate, blocking our entry onto the road. It seems to us that this is another form of redlining.

Land access and the issues surrounding it are rooted in our racist history. We must face the racist policies that have gotten us to this place where 98 percent of farmland and 95 percent of farmers are white. Stemming from the Indian Removal Act of the 1830s, the Homestead Act of the mid-1800s and the Alien Land Law of the early 1900s, Black Americans, Indigenous and People of Color have been systematically removed and barred from land by Congress. This paved the way for the gross inequalities that exist in land access today.

The current generation of 60-plus year-old farmers is aging out, while farmland is being lost to development at rapid rates.

And yet I still have hope for our farming futures even with the barriers to land ownership and the climate catastrophe we face. I joined the NYFC's Land Advocacy Fellowship because I believe that we hold the solutions to these challenges. Young farmers like myself are not without the knowledge, skills, passion and drive to grow food, combat climate change, build soil and create a healthy food future that we all want to take part in. However, we need support in the form of policy change for us to succeed.

The Increasing Land, Capital and Market Access Program (LCM), launched by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) in August 2022, is the only USDA program designed from the ground up to be a flexible source of support and investment that meets farmers where they are. It offers a menu of eligible activities to eligible entities already immersed in the farming communities they serve. An investment of this kind in secure access to land in the next Farm Bill will generate immense returns for taxpayers—increasing food access, strengthening local supply chains, supporting farmer wellbeing, growing rural economies and building climate resilience.

Farmers, especially BIPOC, queer and trans farmers, are blatantly blocked from land access. We do not have the capital to buy land at development prices, and we face incredible obstacles when trying to access land or piece together parcels to farm. My story, unfortunately, is not unique. USDA research from across the nation shows that the current generation of 60-plus year-old farmers is aging out, while farmland is being lost to development at rapid rates—upwards of 2,000 acres per day! Young farmers like me are forced to leave agriculture because of the inability to access land. According to the National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC), the difficulty of finding land to buy is the number one reason why farmers leave agriculture or don't even start farming.

Land access and the issues surrounding it are rooted in our racist history. We must face the racist policies that have gotten us to this place where 98 percent of farmland and 95 percent of farmers are white. Stemming from the Indian Removal Act of the 1830s, the Homestead Act of the mid-1800s and the Alien Land Law of the early 1900s, Black Americans, Indigenous and People of Color have been systematically removed and barred from land by Congress. This paved the way for the gross inequalities that exist in land access today.

Because of so much parceled farmland, we have had to lease four separate fields in order to have a viable business.

Following the announcement of that one-time program and its awardees, the Increasing Land Access, Securities and Opportunities Act (LASO) was introduced in both the House and Senate. The LASO Act would expand on the promise of the increasing Land, Capital and Market Access Program. If enacted, these bills would authorize \$100 million in annual funding for community-led land-access solutions through the Farm Bill. The LASO Act directly responds to the requests from hundreds of farmer leaders in our network and reflects the innovative work that community-led organizations are already doing.

Please consider contacting your members of Congress today and urging them to support farmers like me by asking them to include the Increasing Land Access, Security and Opportunities Act (H.R.3955, S.2340) in the Farm Bill. This is a pivotal moment to uplift policy changes like the LASO Act and invest in the health and wellbeing of our communities, our food system and the future we all deserve. ■

Ash Abeyta, a National Young Farmers Coalition Land Fellow, co-owns Ashokra Farm in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

NEW MEXICO POLLINATOR PLAN

House Memorial 33, which calls for the establishment of a New Mexico Pollinator Protection Plan Working group, was passed unanimously via the House consent agenda on the last day of the last hour of the 2024 legislative session. The memorial mandates that the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) convene a working group of representatives from diverse stakeholders to further develop a pollinator protection plan and develop methods for assessing numbers of hives and beekeepers, impacts and outreach materials to support pollinator health and conservation across agricultural, urban, rural and wild lands.

For context, in 2014, the Obama administration put forth a call for all states to develop a Pollinator Protection Plan. It has been 10 years and New Mexico has yet to establish one. The efforts began with the New Mexico Beekeepers Association (www.nmbeekeepers.org/ppp) almost six years ago. Then, during Covid, the initiative was revived and a working group within the NMBKA was formed, chaired by Amy Owen, a beekeeper based in Tijeras. Melanie Kirby, who served as interim President of NMBKA, was able to connect efforts to get the initiative on a statewide platform and enlisted the help of the New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council. Kirby is an extension educator and pollinator specialist at the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA). She facilitated the initiative with state legislators. Sen. Bobby Gonzales (Taos) sponsored the effort in 2023. In the 2024 session, Rep. Kristina Ortez (Taos) sponsored HM. 33. Currently, representative stakeholders are meeting regularly with the NMDA and will be submitting a report to the Legislature in October. Efforts are also underway through a stakeholder initiative to advance requests for funding to better support pollinator health, climate impacts and habitat enhancement for pollinators across the Land of Enchantment.

On Collectively Bee-ing

BY JULES SALINAS AND LAURIE IHM

When they walk into the local coffee house, fresh from working in the community bee yards around Albuquerque's North Valley, they are a sight and smell to behold. Wearing heavy, baggy pants, still tucked into calf-high socks and boots, they leave slightly sticky footprints from coming into contact with honey and propolis. Their long-sleeved shirts seem out of place on an already sweltering summer morning; sweat-soaked hair pokes out from behind bandanas and headbands. They waft the scent from the smokers they carried around, smelling of burnt cow manure mixed with sage, rosemary and a hint of sandalwood.

The other patrons' side-eye is palpable but disregarded as they chatter animatedly amongst themselves, comparing notes about the last "spicy" hive they treated, making suggestions for how best to calm it down, and counting stings—noting their locations on their bodies and offering up lavender pomades to relieve the anticipated itch or soreness.

The four women comprise the nascent NM Bee Collective ("The Collective"), an all-women beekeeping group that came together in response to what is often an "old boys club." They operate under the fiscal agency of the NM Beekeepers Association (NMBKA) and dream to create a welcoming space and opportunity for "bee-curious" women and BIPOC folks who have been traditionally left behind in beekeeping.

It's understandable. Aspiring and new beekeepers, particularly in urban areas, often cite a lack of access to land to house hives, education and prohibitive start-up costs, which can include hundreds of dollars of equipment and a significant time commitment. The Collective model seeks to offset land access and material entry cost barriers, particularly for hives, frames, equipment (bee suits, gloves, smokers, grips, extractors), varroa/pest treatment, education, mentoring, bee packages/queen replacement.

The goal is to set up a two-year training program for new beekeepers.

The Collective uses a community garden/Commons model approach. An aspiring beekeeper applies to join. Preference is given to first-time beekeepers, women and Black, Indigenous and People of Color, who have historically been under-represented in beekeeping. Upon acceptance, the new member is lent protective gear and provided with hands-on experience working with the Collective's hives.

The NM Bee Collective envisions a long-term dream of collective beekeeping. The goal is to set up a two-year training program for new beekeepers. After two years of working with the Collective, and attending NMBKA Certification classes, a beekeeper may take ownership of start-up equipment and a hive, thereby able to keep their hive on the collective land or move it to a private location. With their strong hive, they will someday collect the honey for themselves or to help start a business. They can sell honey and hive products under their own cottage label/home business. Hives are cooperatively owned and stewarded by members of the Collective until and unless a member takes ownership of their own hive and equipment after two years. If at any time a former Collective member retires from or otherwise leaves, beekeeping, their equipment and hives revert back to the Collective.



The NM Bee Collective (l-r): Georgina Kemp, Juliann Salinas, Cynthia Wenz, Laurie Ihm, Georgina Kemp holds a frame



The Collective project hopes to support up to 20 new and aspiring beekeepers with access to beekeeping equipment, hives, education and mentoring over the next two years. But for now, the Collective consists of just the founding four members: Laurie Ihm, a Certified NM Beekeeper and educator; Juliann “Jules” Salinas, executive director of Women, Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN) and NM Beekeeper; Georgina Kemp, an author and NM Beekeeper; and Cynthia Wenzl, a Certified NM Beekeeper and therapist.



Top bar honeycomb with bees; Crush and strain honey

“We work with local farmers and landowners who are excited to have pollinators on their land,” notes Ihm, one of the Collective’s founders. At present, they maintain 16 hives.

In addition to expanding the number of beekeepers in the Collective, Ihm and the others hope to make beekeeping more inclusive. “Most of the equipment in modern beekeeping has been made by and for tall, able-bodied men,” states Salinas. “We would like to work more with horizontal hives, including top bar, horizontal Langstroth, and other designs that could be modified for differently-abled bodies and strength restrictions.”

Inclusivity goes beyond hive design and into language access. “Most of the manuals and education are only in English,” Salinas notes. “We would like to have the NMBKA materials translated and bring their excellent courses to the Latinx and Indigenous communities across New Mexico.”

The Collective is currently self-funded, and expansion is impossible without additional investment. “To realize our vision requires funding, which we continue to apply for, but so far has been hard to come by,” notes Ihm. “None of us are millionaires, just beekeepers with a passion to create a culture of community-based beekeeping rooted in reciprocity.”

If you’re “bee-curious,” and want to learn more about the NM Bee Collective, visit WWW.NMBEECOLLECTIVE.ORG or text 505-218-4768. Or buy the oddly-dressed, funky-smelling women at the coffee shop a latte, with honey, of course! ■



Juliann Salinas is the executive director of the Women, Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN), a national organization with a mission to engage women and nonbinary people in building an ecological and just food and agricultural system through individual and community power.



Laurie Ihm is a passionate urban beekeeper who mentors new beekeepers. She also works with high-risk youth as a Special Education teacher.

Hopping Fences

How curiosity led me off the farm and to a regenerative agriculture conference

BY NINA KATZ

I know from my time farming in rural areas that it’s essential to have moments to share with community. More often than not, these conversations are not necessarily planned. Old reliable is the feed store for running into a neighbor. Or in town, where after a long delivery drive, your wholesaler might offer you a coffee, and conversation follows about fluctuations in the market. In these seemingly small exchanges, vital information is shared and momentum is built. It is this type of exchange that inspires all of Quivira Coalition’s gatherings, including the annual conference, REGENERATE, that we host with American Grassfed Alliance and Holistic Management International.

I first came to REGENERATE as a volunteer, during a year spent working and living full-time on a goat farm in northern New Mexico.

Goats are opportunistic creatures. When I spent that year of my early twenties tending to a mixed herd of nubians, alpines and boers, I learned of their nosy nature in the ways they nibbled at the hems of my flannel work shirts, tested the waters of their drinkers with their muddy hoofs, and of course, how they escaped their pastures into the night, perhaps bored or hungry. I often found myself awakened in the middle of the night by a cacophony of goats; whenever the escape bell rang, I would spring from the bed and race toward the ruckus. In the cool night air, I, along with my fellow farmhand, envied the woolly pyrenees as we shivered in our pj’s, attempting to corral the adventurous ungulates back behind the white-netted fencing they had cleverly evaded. The dog was never all that helpful.



Regenerate 2023: Microbes, Markets, Climate, presented in New Mexico by Quivira Coalition, Holistic Management International and the American Grassfed Association at the Santa Fe Community Convention Center. Regenerate 2024: Innovating for a Resilient Future will take place November 6–8 in Denver, Colorado.

As our goats seemed to constantly seek out greener pastures, I grappled with my own piquing curiosities about what a symbiotic relationship between land and animal could look like. Certainly, it was in the goats’ nature to escape, but was every week a normal frequency? Over chile rellenos in town—while the goats, no doubt noting my absence, were likely plotting their next foray—my friend asked if I had ever heard of Quivira Coalition.

Quivira, it turned out, was, and is, an organization working to answer the very questions I pondered. Just before the millennium, what is now a nonprofit connecting a myriad of land stewards and stakeholders up and down the mountain West, began as a circle of people coming together to talk. The organization was founded from a need to unite ranchers and



conservationists in a practice being lost to the industrialization and colonization of our food systems: ranching that fosters ecological resilience.

Ranching that fosters ecological resilience

I began spending my rare days off from the farm attending workshops held by Quivira in the far reaches of the state, where I took in lessons about holistic land stewardship: Here's how to build a one-rock dam. Here's how to measure the ground in mycelium. Here's how to notice the disparateness of land health on either side of a fence line south of Socorro. I was starting to learn so much more about the big picture of regenerative agriculture in a regional context. Perhaps the goats' affinity for exploratory fence hopping was rubbing off on me as I leapt into volunteering at

The big picture of regenerative agriculture in a regional context

REGENERATE in 2018. Each year Quivira, Holistic Management International and the American Grassfed Association, collaborate to convene ranchers, farmers, conservationists, land managers, scientists and thought leaders from all over the world to share knowledge, build community and create a culture of resilience and regeneration. As a young, beginning farmer, REGENERATE was fertile ground for making connections between my local and global food systems, encountering perspectives I would never have come across from my farm, and forming multi-generational friendships over lunch hours and evenings of barnyard dancing.

Eight years later, I've found myself fully on the organizational side: working at Quivira and helping organize *REGENERATE 2024: Innovating for a Resilient Future*. For three days in Denver, we'll honor the innovative thinking and doing which flows from those who advocate for a food system in which true sustainable agriculture is possible. We look forward to hearing from those who are experimenting and gathering data to share and support conservation, regeneration and community-building. See you there?

For more information and to register, visit [REGENERATECONFERENCE.COM](https://www.regenerateconference.com).



REGENERATE 2024: INNOVATING FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE

Denver, Colorado, Nov. 6-8

EDUCATION

Hear from experts. Our diverse group of over 40 speakers will lead extraordinary plenary sessions, roundtable discussions and intensive workshops. We are excited to welcome folks like Hayley and Stephanie Painter, the fourth generation dairy farmers behind Painterland Sisters organic and regenerative yogurt; Emmanuel Adolfo Alzuphar, field director of the National Young Farmers Coalition, who will talk about utilizing mass media to drive policy change, and Latrice Tatsey, a buffalo restorationist at the Blackfeet Nation helping tribal producers improve conservation practices.

INNOVATION

As a land steward facing a changing environmental, economic and social climate, you are already pushing boundaries. At REGENERATE, we will help you go even further. Take in perspectives, practices and ideas from innovators like the Drone Rangers, a woman-led team of drone pilots and rangeland scientists.

COLLABORATION

REGENERATE is a hub for individuals and groups coming together around the concepts of fostering ecological, economic and social health through progressive land stewardship. Make lasting connections and begin partnerships for change at our Career Connections Mixer, USDA Services Fair, and evening socials with good eats, drinks and line dancing.





KHALSA FARMS

ESPAÑOLA, NEW MEXICO

NATURAL • INNOVATIVE • YEAR-ROUND



Khalsa Farms is a community-owned nonprofit 501(c)3 located in Espanola, NM. They annually produce tens of thousands of pounds of naturally grown fruits, vegetables, microgreens, and herbs year-round. The clean-energy and sustainable indoor growing system provide produce to local farmers' markets, co-ops, schools and senior centers in Northern New Mexico. The Golden Temple in Punjab, India, is the world center for the Sikh Faith. It is surrounded by farmlands that were part of the historic Green Revolution of India. The Golden Temple hosts the largest free kitchen in the world feeding up to 150,000 people per day.

Visit the farm online at khalsafarms.com



Shenoah Dalziel
Harvest Manager.
Shenoah has a Degree in Agriculture and Animal Science from UC Davis. She is an expert in food safety and quality control, plus manages all harvesting and distribution processes. Shenoah is also a valued mentor for new farmers.



Sirivishnu Khalsa
President of Khalsa Farms.



Jim Fischer
Farm Manager.
Jim has farmed for decades. He has managed food co-ops and is an expert on farm equipment and Agronomy - the science of soil management and crop rotation.



The USDA
conducted a statewide training for soil evaluation at Khalsa Farms this year. The soil is near ideal for New Mexico farming and a contrast to today's industrial farm soil. Certainly this is what conscious farming should be.



Expansion
The USDA was impressed enough with the farms operations to give Khalsa Farms a grant that is now being used to build two new Grow Tunnels (shown under construction).



Khalsa Farms
produces tens of thousands of pounds of food annually on only two acres of land!



RE-SEARCHING COMPOST

Quivira invites you to think differently about your carbon cycle. How can we find waste carbon sources—like food waste, lawn clippings, or woody waste—and help them benefit agriculture and the climate? According to a comprehensive review of literature of research investigating the benefits of compost application on rangeland, co-authored by Dr. Eva Stricker, the director of Quivira Coalition's Carbon Ranch Initiative, "both field and modeling studies demonstrated that the changes in soil carbon from compost amendments can result in long-term carbon storage. Overall, results suggest that compost amendments may contribute to rangeland resilience to climate change with the additional benefit of climate mitigation via soil carbon sequestration."



The initial collaboration between Quivira and Polk's Folly Farm helped lay the foundation for Soil to Supper, a Climate-Smart Commodities Project funded through the USDA, which supports producers to get more meat and other livestock products into regional supply chains while reducing waste, increasing soil health and building climate resilience.



The project will help 50 producers transform agricultural and wood waste into useful products (like compost), finish livestock on grass, and help enhance biodiversity and potential carbon sequestration on the land. Producers will receive financial assistance and technical support from regional experts and will become part of a network of people supporting this important work.

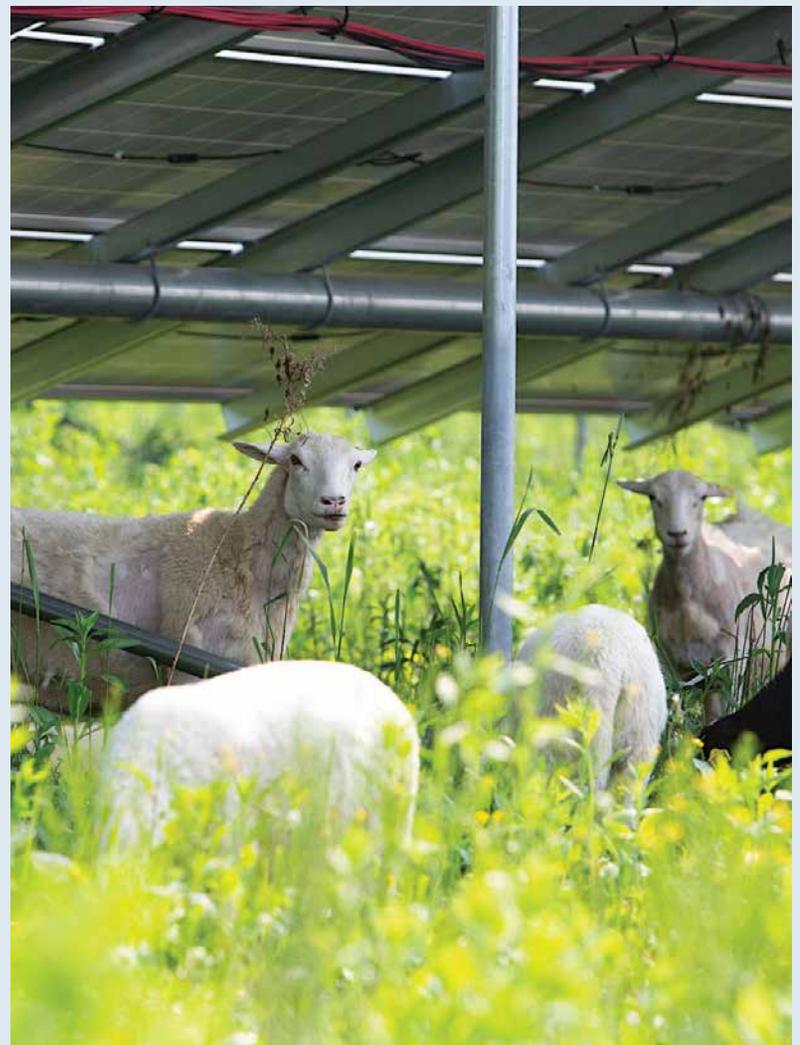
Learn more about this exciting initiative at SOILTOSUPPER.ORG. To learn more about how you can make compost, biochar, or learn about their beneficial impacts on soil health, visit quiviracoalition.org/resources.

SOLAR GRAZING FILM DOCUMENTARY RELEASED

The American Solar Grazing Association, a farmer-founded and -led organization, has more than 900 members across 45 states. In September, the ASGA is releasing a short documentary film about the transformative power of solar grazing. The film tells the story of ASGA member farmers who are creating a new vision for farming and solar energy.

Solar grazing brings together agriculture and solar energy production to create new possibilities, such as keeping farmland in production within rural communities, providing a sustainable future for struggling farmers, and helping solar companies become productive stewards of the land.

ASGA started the film project last year, traveling to five states that represent the geographic diversity of solar graziers, filming at their homes and on solar sites. The association's goal is to foster relationships between agricultural communities and solar developers who support grazing animals on solar sites. To view the film's trailer, visit: [HTTPS://SOLARGRAZING.ORG/FILM/](https://SOLARGRAZING.ORG/FILM/).



From Taos County Economic Development Corporation



Local ranches are part of the backbone of northern New Mexico, dedicated to cultivating and providing the community with high-quality, nutrient-dense beef. Taos County Economic Development Corporation (TCEDC) proudly partners with these ranchers, who maintain a deep connection to the land and the families that depend on their products.

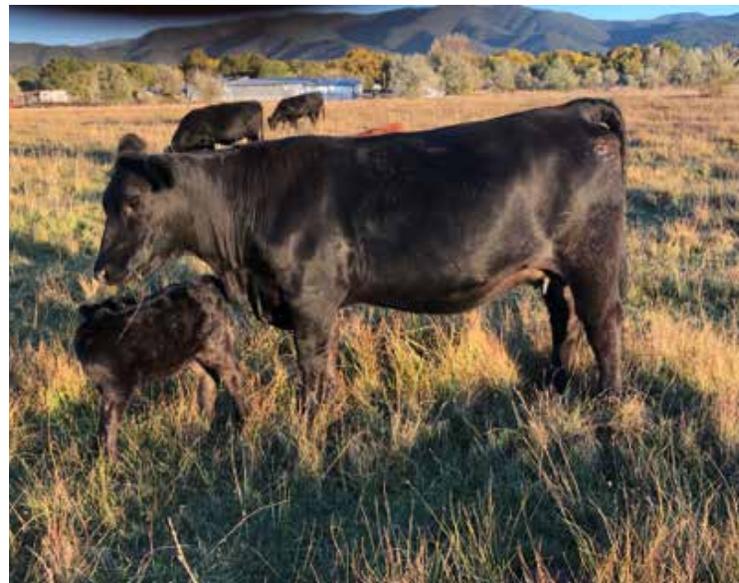
We invite you to consider the daily lives of a few of these committed ranchers and witness their hard work, the land they nurture and the bright future ahead

for our community with the upcoming TCEDC *Matanza*, a USDA-inspected meat-processing facility currently being built in Taos County. This new facility will empower local ranchers by offering a nearby processing option, bolstering the local food system and ensuring the long-term sustainability of ranching in northern New Mexico. For more information and updates, visit TCEDC.ORG.



Local families know when calves are born on the Maestas ranch. Loyal customers are eager to purchase his beef. Photo by Darryl Maestas

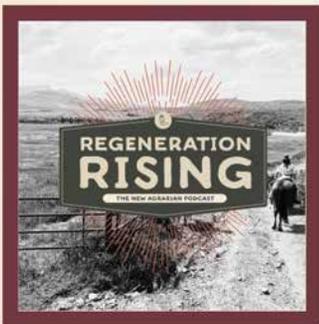
Martínez cattle grazing on high mountain summer pasture in northern New Mexico. Photo courtesy Martínez Family Ranch



A one-month-old calf with its mother. Martínez Family Ranch markets spring calves and some grass-fed yearling steers for fall delivery. Photo courtesy Martínez Family Ranch

**Need something new to listen to?
Check out Quivira's podcasts!**

Available wherever you get your podcasts



Provides information and inspiration to agrarians beginning their journey in regenerative agriculture

Hear about innovative, practical solutions to climate change issues for a better world



Ranching is a family affair for Darryl Maestas in Talpa, N.M. Photo by Darryl Maestas



QUIVIRA COALITION

quiviracoalition.org/downtoearth

YAK AS REGENERATIVE SOIL HEALTH PARTNERS IN LEDOUX, N.M.

BY KRISTIN SWOSZOWSKI-TRAN



Snow comes early to Ledoux at 7,400-ft. elevation.

I decided to find an animal that can protect itself against predation and withstand our 7,400-foot elevation.

When I first decided to raise fiber animals in Ledoux, N.M., the plan was to get alpacas for their warm, soft fiber. Well, sometimes plans and reality don't get along. That idea came to a screeching halt when I spoke with a neighbor who described, in grisly detail, the night that marauding, neighborhood dogs got together as a pack and killed her entire herd of alpaca, save the llama that was there to protect them. After pondering what it would take to raise alpaca and sheep in this particular valley, given the aforementioned neighborhood denizens, I decided to go a different route and find an animal that can protect itself against predation and withstand our 7,400-foot elevation, which includes heavy snowfall and golf-ball sized hail.

Research led me to the North American Yak, a heritage breed classified by The Livestock Conservancy as critically endangered. Modern, domesticated yak were descended from Tibetan yaks imported to Canada in the early 1900s. Formidable members of the bovine family (*Bos grunniensis*—meaning grunting cattle because they don't moo), yak can not only kick, but more importantly, have majestic horns that are intimidating to many species. Yak especially dislike unknown canines, so they can hold their own and will aggress against them if necessary to ward them off their territory. We also have black bear, mountain lions, coyotes and bobcats here in our northern New Mexican village, so yak are a good match for this crowd.

The personality of yak is like a combination of a cow and a dog. My tame yak are handled daily, and as a result, are calm, gentle and friendly. Calmness seems to be an inherited trait, while friendliness can be learned from consistent, positive



Left: Field-training an organic foxtail millet cover crop as a producer-member of the Southwest Grain Collective

Above: Late March brings a close to rotational bale grazing season.

interactions with human caretakers. They are inquisitive creatures who like to follow you around when you're working on fences, checking on things in the pastures, and they are very "in your pocket" if you work with them. Healthy female yak weigh between 500 and 700 pounds, and can live to be 25 years old. Males can weigh up to 1,200 pounds, and generally live fewer years than the females.

Yak, which are domesticated ruminants, can be raised for fiber, meat, milk and be used as packing animals. In their native range of the Himalayas, yak were essential to many people living in the mountains for sustenance and clothing, as beasts of burden, and even companionship. Yak fiber consists of several consistency types well suited for different purposes. The long guard hair can be used to make ropes and outerwear items, while the cashmere-like inner down is incredibly soft and luxurious. As a fiber artist, I especially appreciate that it also felts. Unlike alpaca or sheep, yak are not shorn, but rather, are combed (as are musk ox and bison) to remove this precious fiber. The yak seem to enjoy being combed, as it likely feels good to have the soft insulation removed when spring weather sets in.

Because they don't sweat, they rely on sources of water/shade to keep themselves cool. Shade is *essential* for these animals during sunny days. Yak's downy coats keep them toasty during winter, making them well-suited to a cold, snowy climate.

The location of my farm contained a former race track and had severely overgrazed, degraded pastures. I needed some way to restore them to increase my yak herd slowly and sustainably on our 34 acres. In my first NMDA Healthy Soil Program Grant, I explored using the yak in intensive rotational grazing plots, moving them every 48 hours or so to a new area and not returning to that area for at least another 30 days. Why yak for this purpose? Yak are grazers (grass eaters), not browsers, and eat about 3 percent of their body weight daily. The bioturbation of their small, cloven hooves are a perfect choice to "poop and stomp," as they are not as heavy, nor do they eat as much as cattle, and they are able to incorporate manure and vegetative refuse into the soil without significant compaction. Yak can be trained to respect electric fences, which we use to create temporary enclosures. I have found it essential to use a very thick, equine-type style of electric rope, as yak need to be able to see the fence. We had an early mishap with the style of electric chicken/sheep netting-style fencing in which one of my yak, Poptart, got entangled



If handled consistently, yak can be gentle giants.



The Three Amigos



Soaps made on the farm using the farm's own produce. Greta Garbo, the yak, was the model for the Pendaries Pumpkin soap label.

and then dragged and ripped it apart whilst trying to get away from the demon fence that was chasing her. Lesson learned. Stick with the equine-style, thick-braided electric rope.

I recently spoke on a panel about our partnership with the yak and the Healthy Soil Program grant at the inaugural New Mexico Soil Health and Soil Carbon Conference this past July, in Albuquerque. Last year, as part of a second NMDA Healthy Soil Grant, the yak were an integral part of a winter bale-grazing program in which they were rotated around large bales for approximately 4–5 days, leaving behind at least 25 percent refuse, per the NRCS standards for this practice. That remaining hay, soaked in manure and urine, was left on the field to decompose and enrich the soil. Yak

Yak can be raised for fiber, meat, milk and be used as packing animals.

along with some bales this coming spring to see if it can produce the desired effects of crowding out weeds, getting roots in the ground, and enriching the soil as a pioneer in the newly hay-enriched, bare areas.

Ledoux Grange is also a producer in Quivira Coalition's Soil to Supper program. Closely aligned to the healthy soil principles, this initiative is for producers who grow meat/fiber, etc, and want to amend their soil with biochar and/or compost. As part of this program, Ledoux Grange will be offering a workshop this coming year to help educate the public about yak and their role as potential regenerative agricultural partners for your farm or ranch. Our Facebook farm/ranch page, (www.facebook.com/ledouxgrange/) will have information about that impending workshop, as well as what's going on now.



As a member ranch of USYAKS, we are able to participate in webinars, research projects and development concerning health and reproductive practices, sharing information about yak nutrition and care, as well as improving yak genetics. Please reach out to USYAKS and explore their website (www.usyaks.org/) if you want to learn more about this versatile animal. ■

Kristin Swosowski-Tran, Ph.D., is the owner/operator of an organic-certified (CCOF), diversified operation, Ledoux Grange, LLC, in Mora County, N.M.



Green Tractor Farms
La Cienega, NM



An online platform cultivating connections across our food community.

Explore our regional Food Community Map:

A searchable database featuring detailed profiles of food producers, food buyers, and resource providers. Learn and connect at: agriratesfc.org



New Mexican Grain On the Verge of a Renaissance?

BY CHRIS VAN DYNE

In recent decades, much light has been cast on industrial food production practices that don't sit well with consumers. Factory farms, Roundup®, Bayer-Monsanto chemicals and genetically engineered seed—are things that conscious foodies don't want to be associated with. As a result, there's been increased demand for responsibly grown and crafted food. The market has grown for small-scale production, despite its higher price tag. We see it everywhere—from craft beer to farm-to-table restaurants and fair trade coffee. Craft growers are popular. Chilean tomatoes shipped halfway across the world are out; farmers' market heirloom tomatoes—in. The trend is spreading. So... could flour be next? That's what Tim Vos, founding member of the Southwest Grain Collaborative (SGC) thinks. "With the right marketing, we're on the verge of a grain renaissance in New Mexico," he says.

Why Grain?

Grains are peculiar. They are heavily subsidized, traded in commodities markets and often highly processed to yield a bag of masa or flour that most consumers don't think much about before tossing into their shopping cart. Wheat ground into powder, stuffed in a bag—it's easy to forget that it comes from the seeds of a plant. Often there are just two types to choose from: white and whole wheat. Yet the varieties of wheat are vast, all possessing unique qualities that provide different flavors and textures: Blue-Tinge Emmer, Sonoran White, Turkey Red and Black Einkorn, to name a few.

New Mexico's Grain Heritage

So what does that mean, "a grain renaissance"? Most people don't know it, but there's a rich history of grain production in New Mexico. In fact, the first New Mexican wheat can be traced to 1599, when Don Juan de Oñate settled the village of San Gabriel, which is now part of the Pueblo of Ohkay Owingeh.

For centuries, northern New Mexico was a bread basket for the state, growing hundreds of varieties of wheat. At its peak, the state had over 300 mills in operation. Sadly, there are now only four. Things are moving in the right direction though. In recent years, three mills opened with the assistance of SGC, including at Owl Peak Farm in La Madera and Los Poblanos in Albuquerque.

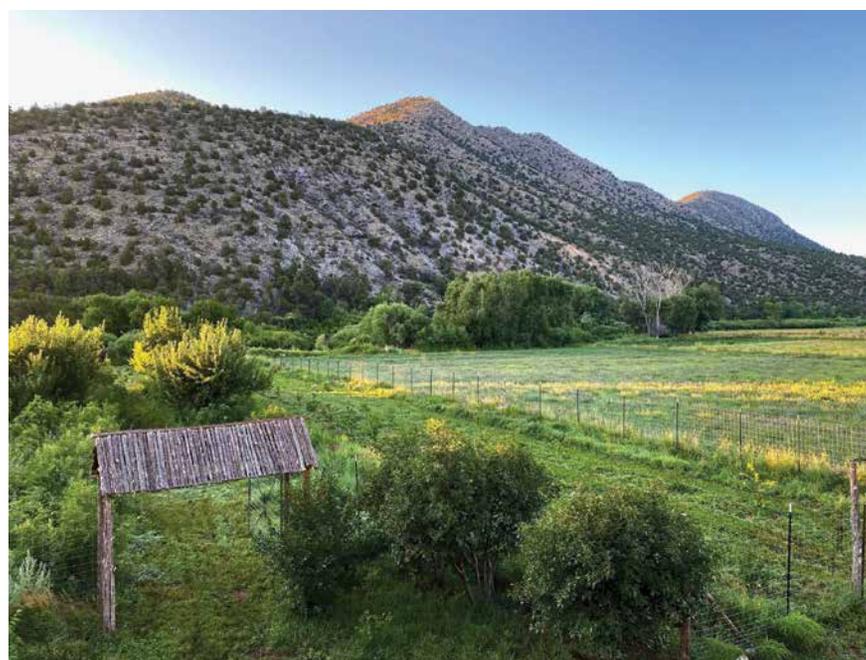
The decline in New Mexican grain production started in the early 20th century, when farms began losing out to large growers in the Midwest. Their expansive, flat fields enabled them to use massive combines—machines that harvest wheat—which reduced the cost of production significantly. More robust nationwide distribution networks and the large-scale farms were able to price out small New Mexican wheat farms and mills.

But often, the pressure to reduce prices backfires. As revenues increase, so does competition, encouraging companies to deploy production tactics that are believed to be harmful to consumers. Many such farms spray their wheat stalks with glyphosate (the active ingredient in Roundup®) in order to dry the crops uniformly, helping to maximize harvest. Flour mills often add pure gluten into flour after it's milled. This could mean that the discomfort some people experience as a result of consuming this flour may not be a gluten sensitivity. It may be because they aren't consuming the plant in its natural state.

Christine Salem, one of the founding members of Río Grande Grain, a group helping to restore heritage grains in New Mexico, thinks the state is a perfect place for a grain renaissance, due to the strong whole-food craving, locavore culture that exists here. Food-conscious consumers are willing to pay a little more for products that are responsibly grown and healthier. However, according to Salem and Vos, there are hurdles that need overcoming in order to see this renaissance come to fruition.

Infrastructure Challenges

In order to see the supply chain turn wheat berries into flour, some infrastructure gaps need to be filled. For instance, New



Owl Peak Farm, a nonprofit founded in 2010 in La Madera, uses regenerative and organic practices to grow wheat, corn, beans, garlic and fruit trees. Water conservation, drought resiliency, field regeneration and erosion control are prioritized. The farm's fields are watered by acequias. In 2022, the farm launched Owl Peak Farm Grains with an onsite small-batch stone mill.

Mexico's unique terrain requires small to medium sized combines to harvest wheat. The only combines being manufactured in the U.S., however, are the massive ones demanded by large-scale Midwestern farms.

With the smaller combines being hard to come by, an equipment-sharing program makes sense. (For a directory of existing programs and tool libraries, check out <https://www.nmhealthysoil.org/tools/>.) But transporting combines across the state to various farms is time-consuming and costly. Where there was once a USDA sponsored program that coordinated the sharing of such equipment, a new cooperative organization for that type of program needs to be built.

So why aren't these varieties showcased at the supermarket the way various tomatoes are? It all starts with awareness—consumers knowing the varieties are out there, followed by a desire to try them. Once there's a business reason to fill that desire, some of the market infrastructure—machinery, storage, distribution, etc.—can start to take shape. As those pieces fall into place, the market becomes ripe for such a renaissance to start.

Cleaning & Storage

After harvesting wheat, there's quite a bit more work to be done. "It's not like harvesting tomatoes," said Salem. Cleaning the grain is a difficult process that requires special machinery. "The key is to find a facility that can clean *and* mill the wheat."

In the last two years The SGC harvested 60,000 pounds of Sonoran White wheat, an unusually high yield. "Storage is an issue," said Vos, "especially when there's a bumper crop with no clear and reliable path for distribution."





Education & Marketing

A key factor in a healthy “grain chain,” as the grain supply chain is commonly referred to, is bringing awareness to consumers, farmers and millers. That includes educating the public about the health benefits of responsibly grown grain, as well as educating players upstream about the availability of New Mexican grain.

SGC sold some wheat to Barton Springs Mill, a major facility in Texas, which said it was the highest-quality Sonoran White they had ever seen. Corroborating that, SGC had their barley tested in a lab,

Ruidoso Waterwheel, Grist for the Mill New Mexico – An online exhibit of the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Museum (nmfarmandranchmuseum.org)

which revealed an unusually high nutrient density. That reflects the regenerative soil health practices that SGC espouses and teaches to farmers who participate in their program.

But are mills willing to pay a bit more for healthier grain? Vos thinks so, “with the right marketing.” If people are willing to pay more for locally crafted, superior tasting beer, why not bread, pizza and flour?

Finally, farmers need to be enticed to grow grain and taught how to do it properly. Part of SFC’s mission is to provide seed at no cost to farmers. There’s a vetting process that farmers need to go through in order to obtain the seed, which includes teaching them how to make best use of it. Even if farmers are not in a position to begin planting grain, they are invited to join SGC and begin learning about the regenerative-organic protocols and practices, which will help get them certified.

Seed Market and Regenerative Agriculture

The seed initiative also ties into a larger goal of improving soil health and encouraging regenerative agriculture practices in the state. Many varieties of grain, such as rye, make excellent cover crops—crops planted between growing seasons. Winter cover crops and in-season intercropping infuse organic material back into the soil, improving its overall health, which in turn produces more nutritious food. The challenge is to produce enough locally grown seed to complete a local cover-crop supply loop. Currently, the seed for cover crops comes from a distance. That can change with robust local grain farming.



Postcard of old grist mill, Ruidoso, N.M.

For centuries, northern New Mexico was a bread basket for the state.

New Mexican farmers have shown eagerness to participate in grain farming. On top of it being ecologically responsible, there’s a business reason. There’s two-fold market demand, both for local wheat berries on the part of consumers, and from farmers for the seed those crops produce.

So, What’s The Hold-Up?

Both Salem and Vos say that the most pressing needs are infrastructure upgrades: more medium/small-scale harvesting and seed cleaning equipment, storage facilities and a mill that could both clean and mill wheat crops. But it’s hard to pin it on one thing. It’s a complex, interconnected system. Awareness and marketing are also key, not to mention funding. In that vein, Salem thinks that a New Mexican version of the Colorado Grain Chain would be wonderful, complete with a robust membership and grant writers.

How to Get Involved

Farmers interested in participating in grain production can start by reaching out to the Southwest Grain Collaborative. Watch Río Grande Grain’s Instagram account for updates on the state of grain in New Mexico as well as local events. According to Vos and Salem, there are some initiatives in the works that are close to getting New Mexican flour into local markets for in-person purchase. In the meantime, if you’re interested in purchasing flour harvested by SWG, you can buy the aforementioned Sonoran White wheat on Owl Peak Farm’s website. ■

This article was originally published on the NM Healthy Soil Blog at NMHEALTHYSOIL.ORG

Chris Van Dyne is a flour enthusiast and pizzaiolo at Cosmic Pie Pizza. [@ctvandyne](http://WWW.CHRISVANDYNE.COM)

Southwest Grain Collaborative:

[HTTPS://WWW.THORNBURGFUNDATION.ORG/GRANTEE/NEW-MEXICO-LANDRACE-CORN-PROJECT-3/](https://www.thornburgfoundation.org/grantee/new-mexico-landrace-corn-project-3/)

PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC GRIST MILLS OF NEW MEXICO

BY JOSÉ A. RIVERA, PROFESSOR EMERITUS, COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING, UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

The small-scale or “traditional” mills of the Río Arriba had little chance of surviving into the present day. Once they fell into disuse, the construction materials were not sufficiently durable to maintain them. Exposed to the elements season to season, some eventually rotted out and collapsed. For those left standing, often the logs used to build the mill house were repurposed as fence and corral posts, or simply chopped for use as firewood in the kitchen stove. The internal components were also made of wood, and after decades of use they would be replaced. And when the mills closed, those too were likely consumed as fuel or made into household objects. Millstones were left lying around the owner’s property, and some were preserved as relics from the past. In more recent times, millstones have been used as landscape materials in front of homes locally or elsewhere, while a few can be found at museum exhibits depicting life in New Mexico during the colonial and territorial periods.

Although reports exist as to many of their historical locations, very little has been done to survey what remnants, if any, exist on the ground. At one time, researchers at the Rancho de las Golondrinas identified and studied the ruins of 30 *molinos*. Photographic evidence can be found for historic grist mills at Chamita, Vallecitos, Pecos, a ranch near Nambé, the Hacienda Martínez in Taos, Santa Fe, Apodaca (near Dixon) and others. Perhaps local historical societies could undertake projects to pinpoint where these molinos once operated and then put together nomination reports to qualify them for placement of historic markers with permission of the property owners.

Elsewhere in mill country USA, some markers are fashioned from or include actual millstones as part of the display, a feasible idea for molino sites in New Mexico where millstones can still be found. For the structures reported as still standing, but not yet listed on any register, they could be documented in nomination forms, such as has been done for the Molino Barelitas de Truchas, the Cordova Grist Mill, the Molino de los Duranes and the Cruz Las Trampas Molino.

One August morning at the Santa Fe Farmers' Market



Photos © Seth Roffman

Slow Food Santa Fe

BY GAIL WADSWORTH

“Slow Food is a global, grassroots organization, founded in 1989 to prevent the disappearance of local food cultures and traditions, counteract the rise of fast life and combat people’s dwindling interest in where food they eat comes from and how our food choices affect the world around us. Slow Food has grown into a global movement involving millions of people in over 160 countries, working to ensure everyone has access to good, clean and fair food.”—Slow Food International website

As part of that international organization, Slow Food USA was founded in 2000, with chapters across the country. The Slow Food Santa Fe chapter, founded in 2002, connects local eaters with local producers and local food-system issues. Often viewed as a “fancy food club,” Slow Food is actually more focused on the benefits farming can bring to soil, water and healthy food, a food system based on food that comes from local, sustainable farms, with positive labor practices, and food that is prepared in a way that makes it nutritious and delicious.

Each year, Slow Food Santa Fe organizes tours of local farms chosen for their ecologically sound and socially just practices. The farms visited have ranged from one acre to over 70 acres. They grow a great diversity of crops acclimated to the region’s soils and climate. Recent tours have gone to Corrales, Dixon, La Ciénega, the Española Valley, Nambé and Tesuque Pueblo, all an easy drive from Santa Fe.

Slow Food Santa Fe has a radio show on KSFR 101.1 FM called *Slow Food Santa Fe Out Loud*, which airs the first Saturday of each month, 10–10:30 a.m. The hosts share information and insights on a wide range of slow-food topics. There are interviews with

farmers, chefs, advocates and food activists who are working to improve local food systems. The full list of interviewees may be viewed at WWW.SLOWFOODSANTAFE.ORG/KSFR-RADIO-SHOW. To maintain contact with participants and continue the transformative work Slow Food aims for, Slow Food Santa Fe has also offered webinars. Topics featured have included healthy soils, meat processing, supply chains, food sovereignty, what it takes to provide good, clean, fair food, and what non-farmers can do to improve the food system. Podcasts can be accessed on Slow Food Santa Fe’s website.

Slow Food Santa Fe also hosts events that bring people together to cook and share meals in a convivial setting such as cooking classes held at Reunity Resources farm. Members are encouraged to “buy local/eat local” from farms, farmers’ markets, restaurants and the co-op. Keeping dollars in the food system local multiplies their positive impact.

The organization also engages local readers in its monthly Dinner and a Book series—a lively discussion and potluck supper. The books are as diverse as the people and crops of New Mexico. For a bibliography of Slow Food Santa Fe’s book choices and to join in the discussion, check out our website, www.slowfoodsantafe.org. ■

Gail Wadsworth has worked on food and farming transformation for over 30 years. She is a member of Slow Food Santa Fe.

Charting New Mexico's Food System's Progress

BY PAM ROY

FARM TO TABLE AND THE NEW MEXICO
FOOD & AGRICULTURE POLICY COUNCIL

The New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council (NMFAPC) is a statewide coalition which focuses on policy initiatives that create healthy food and agriculture systems in New Mexico. Over the last year, the NMFAPC embarked upon a large project to create the "New Mexico Food Charter." Born out of the Policy Council's five-year Strategic Plan, the New Mexico Food Charter is a document that outlines the shared

values, goals and priorities of the NMFAPC to guide its policy work over the next three to five years. It provides a practice-based approach to address food security in an ever-changing climate by investing in local production and consumption of food, with an emphasis on equitable and sustainable practices. You can access the charter at [HTTPS://NMFOODPOLICY.ORG/NEW-MEXICO-FOOD-CHARTER/](https://nmfoodpolicy.org/new-mexico-food-charter/).

The New Mexico Food Charter is designed to:

- **Set Priorities** to improve food security and access to nutritious food, promote practices to mitigate the impacts of climate change, and improve the food infrastructure through government support
- **Guide Decision-Making** within the Policy Council, helping members align their actions with the shared values, priorities and goals outlined in the charter
- **Advocate and Educate** policymakers, community members and others about the importance of food-related issues, the Policy Council's policy priorities, and expected outcomes
- **Build Partnerships** with governments, organizations and others that share similar values and goals, and strengthen our collective impact
- **Monitor and Evaluate Progress** to hold government agencies, policymakers, and others accountable for the intended and unintended impacts of policy decisions and programs

The NM Food Charter's Annual Report Card shows the results and impact of this work. The Report Card will be updated periodically to show how the impact measures change over time. Its approach includes:

Three Priorities: Nutrition and Food Security; Environment, Conservation and Climate, and Government Support and Infrastructure.

Four Strategies: State Legislation; Federal Legislation; Policy Administration, and Rules & Regulations.

Eighteen outcomes are monitored through 60 measurable indicators to assess the Policy Council's progress in improving the food system within its three policy priorities.

To learn more about the New Mexico Food Charter, the Report Card and the NM Food & Agriculture Policy Council, visit: [HTTPS://NMFOODPOLICY.ORG](https://nmfoodpolicy.org).

OP-ED

FROM THE NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE COALITION
AND MEMBER ORGANIZATION FARM TO TABLE

CONGRESS MUST PASS THE FARM BILL

The federal "Farm Bill" is a lifeline of programs that address hunger relief, farm, ranch and food systems, soil and water conservation and much more. The Farm Bill is acted upon approximately every five years, and we are way overdue.

For the past two years, the New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council, Farm to Table and partners have been wholeheartedly informing and educating our federal policymakers on ways we can improve equitable access to and develop new programs that meet current and coming needs of our communities and those who grow food.

New Mexico's Congressional leaders are leading the way for a more equitable and just Farm Bill, yet Congress is slow to move on its passage. Join us in urging the 118th Congress to deliver a 2024 Farm Bill that builds toward a more resilient and sustainable food and farm system—and to reinforce that expediency must not come at the expense of policies that address hunger, public health, farmers, workers and the environment.

The years since the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (commonly known as the 2018 Farm Bill) was signed into law have been among the most tumultuous in our nation's history. We experienced an increasingly disruptive and changing climate and the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in the illness and death of thousands of food workers. These events conspired to thoroughly unveil the fragility of our farm and food system—impacting everything from the food and nutrition security of millions to the livelihoods of farmers, ranchers, food and farm workers and countless others. We also witnessed historic investments in the agricultural economy from the Inflation Reduction Act to the American Rescue Plan Act, and a long-overdue racial justice reckoning.

Policies that address hunger, public health, farmers, workers and the environment

The next Farm Bill should begin to address the needs of the modern food and farm system by reflecting these changes in society and across our food, farm and rural communities by investing in all farmers and ranchers, strengthening our food system, building a fair and accessible farm safety net, improv-

ing climate resilience, and meaningfully supporting workers and the next generation of farmers. It must make meaningful progress against food insecurity and hunger—protecting and strengthening the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—while simultaneously supporting nutrition and access to healthy food. The next Farm Bill must uphold expert advice and existing processes for updating the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and school meal nutrition standards. A new Farm Bill must make long overdue investments in the workers who keep our food supply chains secure, vibrant and resilient. It must invest strongly in agricultural research and conservation programming. The next Farm Bill has an opportunity to double down on the historic climate investments from the Inflation Reduction Act, but it cannot undermine legislative direction to target high-value climate practices. Finally, a new Farm Bill must prioritize investments that support individuals and communities who historically have been and, in some cases, continue to be, underserved by current federal food and farm policy.

Every successful Farm Bill has been built on the foundation of bipartisanship and the active engagement of the various stakeholder communities, and the next Farm Bill will be no different. As organizations representing millions of individuals and families whose lives and livelihoods are impacted by the Farm Bill, we are eager to continue working toward a Farm Bill that builds a brighter future for all.

We want to thank the many organizations leading the way on the Farm Bill that helped develop and share this information, including the Center for Science in the Public Interest, Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) and others.

For more information about the Farm Bill, contact Farm to Table ([FARMTOTABLENM.ORG](http://farmtotablenm.org)) and the New Mexico Food & Agriculture Council ([NMFOODPOLICY.ORG](http://nmfoodpolicy.org)), a statewide coalition that focuses on policy initiatives that create healthy food and agriculture systems in New Mexico.

Here are resources websites to contact the New Mexico Congressional delegation to share your stories and hopes. You may phone the United States Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121. An operator will connect you with the Senate or House office you request.

New Mexico Senators, Representatives and Congressional District Maps: [GOVTRACK.US](http://govtrack.us)

[HTTPS://WWW.SENATE.GOV/GENERAL/CONTACTING.HTM](https://www.senate.gov/general/contacting.htm)

[HTTPS://WWW.HOUSE.GOV/DOING-BUSINESS-WITH-THE-HOUSE/LEASES/CONTACT-US](https://www.house.gov/doing-business-with-the-house/leases/contact-us)

[LASG.ORG](http://lasg.org), [HTTPS://WWW.CONGRESS.GOV](https://www.congress.gov)

WHAT'S GOING ON

ALBUQUERQUE / Online

SEPT. 5-15

NEW MEXICO STATE FAIR

Expo New Mexico

[HTTPS://STATEFAIR.EXPONM.COM/](https://statefair.exponm.com/)

SEPT. 7, 2 PM

FIFTH ANNUAL LEOPOLD LECTURE

Main Library Auditorium, 501 Copper Ave. NW

'Golden-Eyed Lightning Rod: A Wolf Story' featuring Dan Flores, award-winning author and historian. \$10. LEOPOLDWRITINGPROGRAM.ORG

SEPT. 7, 145-5 PM

FORUM ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN NM

UNM Student Union Bldg., Ballroom A

Policy experts, spiritual leaders and prominent academics will explore nuclear strategy decisions. Hosted by Catholic leaders from UNM and USC. Livestream: [YOUTUBE.COM/@UACSUSC](https://youtube.com/@uacsusc), Info: DORNSIFE.USC.EDU/IACS/NUCLEARPROJECT/

SEPT. 20-22

LATINX GAMES FESTIVAL

National Hispanic Cultural Center

Video game industry event for Latinx game development. A platform for global opportunities within the industry. Panelists, breakout sessions. LATINXGAMESFESTIVAL.COM

SEPT. 21

INDIAN PUEBLO CULTURAL CENTER GALA

2401 12th St. NW

Tributes, performances, auctions and dinner. A fundraiser for a campus expansion that will pay tribute to the legacy of the Albuquerque Indian School. INDIANPUEBLO.ORG/GALA

SEPT. 28, OCT. 19, 12:30-5 PM

FARM FIELD DAYS

Chispas Farm, 229 Saavedra Rd. SW

Farmer-to-farmer education & outreach. Healthy soil principles & applications, cover cropping, organic weed management, integrated pest management, organic orchard management. Co-hosted by Rodale Inst. and USDA's organic program. WWW.CHISPASFARM.COM/FARM-FIELD-DAYS

THROUGH SEPT. 28

NEW WORLDS: NM WOMEN TO WATCH 2024

516 Arts, 516 Central Ave. SW

Exhibit showcases the work of Nikesha Breeze, Szu-han Ho, Eliza Naranjo-Morse, Jennifer Nehrbass and Rose B. Simpson. 505-242-1445, 516ARTS.ORG

OCT. 11, 1-7 PM

TECHFEST 2024

3225 Central Ave. NE

Expert panels, educational breakout sessions. Free. Hosted by Techqueria Latinx in Tech. WWW.EVENTBRITE.COM/E/TECHFEST-2024-TICKETS-939701210617

THROUGH OCT. 27, 9 AM-5 PM

PUEBLO BASEBALL: STITCHING OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, 2401 12th St. NW

Video Interviews, photographs, memorabilia. \$12/\$10/children under 5 free. INDIANPUEBLO.ORG

OCT. 27-29

GEAR UP NEW MEXICO CONFERENCE

ABQ Convention Center

Educators, administrators and advocates will focus on college and career readiness, guided by the theme: "Where Cultures Converge, Futures Flourish." WWW.GEARUPNEWMEXICO.ORG

OCT. 28-30

WORLD INDIGENOUS BUSINESS FORUM

Clyde Hotel

A venue for Indigenous people from around the world to network and invest in business opportunities. 15th forum hosted by the Indigenous Leadership Development Institute. The ABQ Hispano Chamber of Commerce is a partner in the event. \$749. [HTTPS://WIBF.CA](https://wibf.ca)

THROUGH NOVEMBER

THE HEALING LAND: FINDING SACRED CONNECTION

THROUGH GARDENING

Agri-Nature Center, Los Ranchos, NM

Hands-on course for your home garden. WWW.SCHOOLOFTHEDESERTGARDEN.COM/THE-healing-land

THROUGH DECEMBER

CONSERVING AMERICA'S WILDLANDS: THE VISION OF TED TURNER

NM History Museum of Natural History, 1801 Mountain Rd. NW

Dramatic wildlife and landscape photography. Tickets: \$8/\$7/\$5 ages 3-12. 505-841-2800, WWW.NMNATURALHISTORY.ORG

THROUGH FEB. 9, 2025

VIVARIUM; EXPLORING INTERSECTIONS OF ART, STORYTELLING AND THE RESILIENCE OF THE LIVING WORLD

Albuquerque Museum, 2000 Mountain Rd. NW

Works by Nathan Budoff, Patrick McGrath Muniz, Steven J. Yazzie, Eliza Naranjo Morse, Stanley Nachez, Julie Buffalohead, Eloy Torrez. 505-243-7255, ALBUQUERQUEMUSEUM.ORG

THROUGH FEB. 23

CONVERGENCE X CROSSROADS: STREET ART FROM THE SOUTHWEST

National Hispanic Cultural Center Visual Art Museum, 1701 4th St. SW

Exhibit highlights the beauty and ingenuity of street art in the SW and northern México, exploring webs that connect graffiti art, murals and practices of placemaking. First Sunday of every month free to NM residents. 505-383-4471, [HTTPS://WWW.NHCCNM.ORG/EXHIBITIONS/](https://www.nhccnm.org/exhibitions/)

JUNE 2-5, 2025

10TH NATIONAL FARM TO CAFETERIA CONFERENCE

Biennial event convenes hundreds of movement leaders working to source local food for institutional cafeterias and foster a culture of healthy food and agricultural literacy. WWW.FARMTOSCHOOL.ORG/OUR-WORK/FARM-TO-SCHOOL-CAFETERIA-CONFERENCE

TUES.-SUN. 9 AM-5 PM

"ONLY IN ALBUQUERQUE"

Albuquerque Museum, 2000 Mountain Rd. NW

Permanent exhibit told through four galleries: Spirited, Courageous, Resourceful and Innovative. Hundreds of the city's beloved artifacts are featured. \$3-\$6., Free Sun., 9 am-1 pm. CABQ.GOV/ARTSCULTURE/ALBUQUERQUE-MUSEUM

TUES.-SUN. 9 AM-4 PM

INDIAN PUEBLO CULTURAL CENTER

2401 12th St. NW

"Gateway to the 19 Pueblos of N.M." Museum galleries, exhibits and restaurant. Cultural dance program Sat., Sun. 11 am, 2 pm. \$12/\$10/children under 5 free. 505-843-7270, INDIANPUEBLO.ORG

FRIDAYS, 5-8 PM THROUGH SEPT. 27

LA FAMILIA GROWERS MARKET

Westside Community Center, 1250 Isleta Blvd. SW

Vendors, musical performances. LAFAMILIAGROWERSMARKET.ORG

SANTA FE / Online

AUG. 31-SEPT. 8

FIESTA DE SANTA FE

Santa Fe Plaza

Pre-fiesta show, escort of past royalty, bandstand performances, arts & crafts market, pet parade, Historical/Hysterical Parade. SANTAFEFIESTA.ORG

SEPT. 7, 9 AM-5 PM

A DAY WITH SANTA FE AUTHORS

SF Women's Club, 1616 Old SF Tr.

Memoir and Mystery—Fundraiser for Reading Quest. Held in association with Partners in Education Foundation. Keynote by Anne Hillerman. Two half-day sessions with presentations by four women authors. \$99 includes lunch. WWW.BETTYEKEARSE.COM/FUNDRAISER

SEPT. 7

STAND UP FOR NATURE

SF Farmers' Market Pavilion

Acclaimed author and environmentalist Bill McKibben. Fundraiser for the SF Conservation Trust. WWW.SFCT.ORG/EVENTS/SUN

SEPT. 13-15

EARTH USA 2024

Scottish Rite Center

12th International Conference on Architecture & Construction with Earthen Materials. Podium presentations, poster sessions, speaker meet & greet, 9/16 bus tour. Organized by Adobe in Action. KURT@ADOBEINACTION.ORG, WWW.EARTHUSA.ORG/

SEPT. 19, 10 AM-2 PM

INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN INDIAN ARTS OPEN HOUSE

Santa Fe Community College Open House

Campus tours, demos, open studios.

SEPT. 21-26

WATERSHED FEST 2024

Community cleanup, recycled art party, elm-thinning workshop, canyon preserve hike, film night at CCA, SFWA Legacy Walk and Talk. 505-820-1696, AMARA@SANTAFEWATERSHED.ORG, SANTAFEWATERSHED.ORG

SEPT. 28-29, 3-6 PM

2024 FALL FEST

Reunity Farm, 1829 San Ysidro Crossing

Celebrate the harvest season. Farm-fresh food, live music, festival activities. \$20, kids free. WWW.REUNITYRESOURCES.COM/

SEPTEMBER

SCHOOL FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH HUMANITIES FESTIVAL

9/25, 6 pm, NM History Museum, 113 Lincoln Ave.: What Can We Learn from the Archaeology of Sustainable Agriculture? lecture by Chelsea Fisher; 9/29, 2 pm, NM History Museum: Complex Cultural Meanings of Moral Eating; 9/30, 10 am, SAR, 660 Garcia St.: Book Discussion: Contested Tastes: Foie Gras and the Politics of Food presentation by Michaela DeSoucey. [HTTPS://SARWEB.ORG](https://SARWEB.ORG)

OCT. 5-6

52ND HARVEST FESTIVAL

El Rancho de las Golondrinas, La Ciénega

Living history museum's programs and activities. Local foods, talks and demos. GOLONDRINAS.ORG

OCT. 6, 2 PM

THE FUTURE OF FOOD

Lensic Performing Arts Center

Agroecosystems of NM discussion with Manny Encinas, Buffalo Creek Ranch, Moriarty, Exec. Dir., SF Farmers' Market; Elan Silverblatt-Buser, Silver Leaf Farm, Corrales; Roxanne Swentzell, Flowering Tree Permaculture Institute, Santa Clara Pueblo. Moderated by Kathleen Merrigan, former deputy secretary, USDA. Tickets \$17.50. 505-988-1234, [HTTPS://TICKETS.LENSIC.ORG/](https://TICKETS.LENSIC.ORG/)

OCT. 14, 9 AM-4:30 PM; 12 PM GRAND ENTRY

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY / NATIVE NATIONS POWWOW

Santa Fe Plaza

9 am opening prayer, land acknowledgment, Pueblo dances. Native art booths, Presented by the SF Indigenous Center.

OCT. 24-27

WE ARE ALL RELATED: UNEARTHING THE ROOTS OF OUR SHARED HUMANITY

Hilton Santa Fe Buffalo Thunder, Pojoaque, N.M.

40th anniversary of the International Council of 13 Indigenous Grandmothers. Launch of Grandmothers' Wisdom book. Special guests include Dr. Vandana Shiva. [HTTPS://GIVEBUTTER.COM/WEAREALLRELATED](https://GIVEBUTTER.COM/WEAREALLRELATED)

THROUGH MAY 4, 2025

OFF-CENTER NEW MEXICO ART

Vladem Contemporary, 404 Montezuma Ave.

Surveys three decades of New Mexican art featuring 125 artists. NMARTMUSEUM.ORG/VLADEM-CONTEMPORARY

NOV. 7-8

NATIVE LANGUAGE SYMPOSIUM

Buffalo Thunder Resort Casino, Pojoaque

Indigenous Montessori: Language \$225/adult, \$125/youth, group rates 6 and more. 505-526-8059, TENASHA@KCLCMONTESSORI.ORG

THROUGH DEC. 31

THE UGLY HISTORY OF BEAUTIFUL THINGS

Nuevo Mexicano Heritage Arts Museum, 750 Cam. Lejo

Exhibit explores objects created to express environmental concerns, issues of race, the pandemic and even bullfighting. 505-982-2226, NMHERITAGEARTS.ORG

THROUGH FEB. 3, 2025

HOME ON THE RANGE: FROM RANCHES TO ROCKETS

NM History Museum, 113 Lincoln Ave.

History of the Tularosa Basin exhibit. 505-476-5200, [HTTPS://NMHISTORYMUSEUM.ORG/](https://NMHISTORYMUSEUM.ORG/)

SUNDAYS

RAILYARD ARTISAN MARKET

SF Farmers' Market Pavilion

Gifts, souvenirs and mementos from local artisans and creative small businesses. SANTAFEFARMERSMARKET.COM

MON.-FRI.

POEH CULTURAL CENTER AND MUSEUM

78 Cities of Gold Rd., Pueblo of Pojoaque

Di Wae Powa: They Came Back: Historical Pueblo pottery. The Why, group show of Native artists. Nah Poeh Meng: core installation highlighting Pueblo artists and history. 505-455-5041

MON.-SAT., 8 AM-4 PM

RANDALL DAVEY AUDUBON CENTER & SANCTUARY

1800 Upper Canyon Rd.

Free guided walks to see birds, Sat., 8:30-10 am. RSVP for Randall Davey House tours. 505-983-4609, RANDALLDAVEY.AUDUBON.ORG

TUES., SAT., 8 AM-1 PM

SANTA FE FARMERS' MARKET

Market Pavilion, 1607 Paseo de Peralta

Farmers and producers from northern NM. 505-983-4098, SANTAFEFARMERSMARKET.COM

WEDS-FRI. THROUGH APRIL.

MUSEUM OF SPANISH COLONIAL ART

710 Camino Lejo, Museum Hill

Generations and Imagination: What Lies Behind the Vision of Chimayó Weavers, highlighting the shifting tradition through four generations of the Trujillo family's work. \$10 admission.

WEDS-SAT., 10 AM-6 PM; FRI.-SAT., 10 AM-6:30 PM

SANTA FE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Interactive exhibits, play areas, weekly programs. Masks required for ages 2 and older. \$10/\$8/\$7/\$3/one & under free. 505-989-8359, SANTAFECHILDRENSMUSEUM.ORG

WEDS.-SUN.

EL RANCHO DE LAS GOLONDRINAS

334 Los Pinos Rd., La Ciénega

Living History Museum dedicated to the heritage and culture of 18th- and 19th-century New Mexico. 505-471-2261, GOLONDRINAS.ORG

SATURDAYS

SANTA FE ARTISTS MARKET

Santa Fe Railyard

Outdoor arts & crafts booths. SANTAFEARTISTSMARKET.COM

IAIA MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY NATIVE ARTS

108 Cathedral Place

"Womb of the Earth: Cosmivision of the Rainforest" through July 19. Closed Tuesdays. \$5-\$10; under 16, Native and Indigenous peoples free. 888-922-4242, IAIA.EDU/MOCNA

NATIVE DANCE SERIES

Museum of Indian Arts n Culture, 710 Cam. Lejo

Sept. 1, 11 am, 2 pm: Oak Canyon Dancers (Pueblo of Jemez); Sept. 21: Extravaganza on the Hill (music and dances throughout the day); Oct. 6, 11 am, 2 pm: White Mountain Apache Crown Dancers. 505-476-1269, INDIANARTSANDCULTURE.ORG

MUSEUM OF INTERNATIONAL FOLK ART

706 Cam. Lejo, Museum Hill

"Protection: Adaptation and Resistance." More than 45 artists explore themes of climate crisis, struggles for social justice, strengthening communities through ancestral knowledge and imagining a thriving future. Through April 7.

NEW MEXICO HISTORY MUSEUM

113 Lincoln Ave.

The Lamy Branch of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad model train; Palace Seen and Unseen: A Convergence of History and Archaeology, photos and artifacts; Telling NM: Stories from Then and Now. Closed Mondays. 505-476-5200, NMHISTORYMUSEUM.ORG

SANTA FE HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Seeking land, donated or for sale, to build affordable housing. Low-income homeowners help build homes and make mortgage payments to the nonprofit HFH. Property owners can qualify for 50% Affordable Housing tax credit through the NM Mortgage Finance Authority. 505-986-5880, ext. 109

STATE MUSEUMS

Museum of International Folk Art (10 am–5 pm), Museum of Indian Arts and Culture (10 am–4 pm), N.M. History Museum (10 am–4:30 pm), N.M. Museum of Art (Tues.–Sun., 10 am–4 pm). NEWMEXICOCULTURE.ORG/VISIT

WHEELWRIGHT MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

704 Cam. Lejo, Museum Hill
505-982-4636, WHEELWRIGHT.ORG. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

YOUTHBUILD / YOUTHWORKS!

Paid training for Youth 16–24. Construction, Culinary, GED. 505-989-1855, WWW.SANTAFEYOUTHWORKS.ORG/SANTA-FE-YOUTHBUILD/

TAOS / Online

SEPT. 21–JUNE 1, 2025

NICHOLAS HERRERA: EL RITO SANTERO

The Harwood Museum of Art, 238 Ledoux St.
Herrera's lineage includes Spanish, Native American and Mexican ancestry. He crafts bultos, retablos and mixed-media works. [HTTPS://HARWOODMUSEUM.ORG/](https://harwoodmuseum.org/)

SEPT. 27–OCT. 6

50TH TAOS FALL ARTS FESTIVAL

Exhibitions, talks, awards party and more. TAOSFALLARTS.COM

OCT. 3–6

THE PASEO 2024

Kit Carson Park
Festival features performance art, installations, interactive arts, live music and more. PASEOPROJECT.ORG

OCT. 5–6

TAOS WOOL FESTIVAL

Revolt Gallery
Celebrates fiber artists, ranchers and sheep. TAOSWOOLSFESTIVAL.COM

LA HACIENDA DE LOS MARTÍNEZ

708 HACIENDA WAY

Northern NM-style Spanish colonial “great house” built in 1804 by Severino Martínez. Open daily. TAOSHISTORICMUSEUM.ORG

MILLICENT ROGERS MUSEUM

1504 MILLICENT ROGERS RD.

Tuah-Tah/Taos Pueblo: Home, highlighting the pueblo's culture and artistic achievements. Pop Chalee! Yippee Ki Yay! paintings. Open daily. MILLIF4N65OY45E.ORG

HERE & THERE / Online

SEPT. 9–12

2024 NATIONAL TRIBAL AND INDIGENOUS CLIMATE CONFERENCE

Hilton Anchorage, Alaska/Online
Third biennial. Knowledge holders passionate about climate change and resilience, with special focus on traditional and Indigenous knowledge.
Registration: \$250 in-person/\$50 virtual. NTICC@NAU.EDU, [HTTPS://LNKD.IN/DQ5CDTWZ](https://lnkd.in/DQ5CDTWZ)

SEPT. 12–13

2024 NEW MEXICO ENERGY POLICY SYMPOSIUM

Santa Clara Hotel Casino, Española, NM
A holistic and inclusive stakeholder convening for NM's 10-year Energy Strategy. Hosted by Rep. Tara Lujan and Vida Major Capital. NMENERGYPOLICYSYMPOSIUM.COM

SEPT. 13 APPLICATION DEADLINE

REMATRIATING ECONOMIES APPRENTICESHIP

Are you an Indigenous woman interested in a career in investment management? Sessions begin Feb./March and conclude June 2025. REA@ROANHORSECONSULTING.COM, WWW.REMATRIATINGECONOMIES.COM/APPLY

SEPT. 13–14

MESA PRIETA PETROGLYPH PROJECT SYMPOSIUM

Northern New Mexico College, Española, NM

25 Years on the Rocks: Stories of Long Ago Told. Youth alumni, recorders, scholars, tribal and community members. [HTTPS://WWW.MESAPRIETAPERROGLYPHS.ORG/](https://www.mesaprietapetroglyphs.org/)

SEPT. 13–15, 21–22

CULTURES AND CREATORS VISUAL ARTS FESTIVAL

Los Luceros Historic Site, Alcalde, NM
9/13, 6–8 pm opening reception. Traditional and contemporary artists from Río Arriba, Taos and Santa Fe counties. Presented by the Northern Río Grande National Heritage Area. Admission: Sat \$7/Sun. \$10. Children free. [HTTPS://CULTURESANDCREATORS.COM](https://culturesandcreators.com)

SEPT. 23–25

OUTDOOR ECONOMICS CONFERENCE & EXPO

Las Cruces Convention Center, N.M.
Panel discussions, outdoor trips, networking. \$155.

OCT. 12–13

ABIQUIÚ STUDIO TOUR

Self-guided driving tour through the village and surrounding Chama River Valley. ABIQUIUSTUDIOTOUR.ORG

OCT. 24–28

FRED HARVEY HISTORY WEEKEND

History talks, Fred Harvey foodie dinner/auction and other events. NMHISTORYMUSEUM.ORG

NOV. 6–8

REGENERATE INNOVATING FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE

National Western Center, Denver, Colo.
Quivira Coalition, Holistic Management Intl. and American Grassfed Assn. convene ranchers, farmers, conservationists, land managers, scientists and thought leaders to build community and create a culture of resilience and regeneration. [HTTPS://REGENERATECONFERENCE.COM/](https://regenerateconference.com/)

THROUGH NOV. 22; FRIDAYS, 2–4 PM

BUSINESS AS ARTISTS WORKSHOP SERIES

Northern NM College (Española) and Los Luceros (Alcalde)
Curriculum covers essential aspects of running an art business. Contact Virginia at 505-747-5477 or visit [HTTPS://NNMC.EDU/DOCUMENT_REPOSITORY/CONTINUING_ED/BUSINESS-AS-ARTIST_FLYER_V3.PDF](https://nnmc.edu/document_repository/continuing_ed/business-as-artist_flyer_v3.pdf)

THROUGH JAN. 15, 2025

SELLING THE SOUTHWEST

Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff
Exhibit unpacks how the marketing efforts of the Santa Fe Railroad and Fred Harvey Company romanticized and exploited the artistry and culture of Indigenous people.

THIRD THURS. MONTHLY, 6:30 PM

AGUA ES VIDA: DO YOUR PART WORKSHOP AND SPEAKERS SERIES

Online
Water experts and community leaders discuss solutions that can be implemented to create a sustainable and resilient water future. Begins 1/18. Presented by Water Advocates for NM and the Middle Río Grande. WWW.WATERADVOCATES.ORG

THURS–SUN, 10 AM–4 PM

BOSQUE REDONDO MEMORIAL

Fort Sumner Historic Site, Fort Sumner, NM
Exhibit, 30 years in the making, tells the story of ‘The Long Walk’ and the Bosque Redondo. \$7, children 16 and younger, free. NM residents with ID free first Sun. each month. NMHISTORICSITES.ORG/BOSQUE-REDONDO

TCTAC PARTNERSHIP NETWORK

Dedicated individuals and organizations are building coalitions and partnerships to connect communities and resources with Justice40 opportunities. The South Central Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center provides technical assistance, training and capacity-building in AR, LA, NM, OK, TX and 66 tribal nations. Oct.–Nov. workshops discuss research on climate intervention. [HTTPS://SCERC.NMSU.EDU/GET-INVOLVED.HTML](https://scerc.nmsu.edu/get-involved.html)

SUSTAINABLE BUILDING TAX CREDITS

NM residents can apply for tax credits to make homes and businesses more energy efficient. There are extra incentives for upgrades that reduce energy use and lower utility costs in affordable housing or homes occupied by low-income residents. [HTTPS://WWWAPPS.EMNRD.NM.GOV/ECMD/ECPSUBMISSIONS/](https://www.apps.emnrd.nm.gov/ecmd/ecpsubmissions/)



**SINCE 2014
\$2.5 MILLION
NMGROWN PURCHASES**

2024 SALES

**\$350,000 PRODUCE SALES
\$100,000 NMGROWN MEAT
PURCHASES
\$75,000 PROCESSED FOR VALUE
ADDED
USDA HARMONIZED GAP+ SINCE
2021**



**LA COSECHA CSA
SERVING 600 FAMILIES
THROUGHOUT NEW MEXICO**

SCAN TO SIGN UP



MISSION

**A COMMUNITY DRIVEN
MODEL BUILDING NM
SMALL SCALE FARMING
ECONOMY THROUGH
SUSTAINABLE AND
REGENERATIVE FOOD
JUSTICE**



**RAICES SAGRADAS
ECOWELLNESS
CENTER**

**\$8 MILLION FOOD/FARM SITE EXPANSION
2024 RECEIPT OF SOUTH VALLEY COMMUNITY
FORESTRY GRANT \$2.5 MILLION**



View from Southeast showing overall site layout

ALDEA DEL RIO
Aggregator Facility



**GROW THE GROWERS
FARMER TRAINING
PROGRAM AND
INCUBATION**