



# Developing a State-led Permitting Program for New Mexico's Surface Waters:

## Protecting Our Water Quality Our Way

New Mexico faces many water challenges. One of these challenges is protecting water quality in New Mexico's surface waters. Rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, and other surface waters sustain the state's culture, economy, and natural ecosystems. The state legislature has asked the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) to create a state-led permit program. This program would protect water quality in New Mexico's surface waters.

### Why Does New Mexico Need a State Water Quality Permit Program?

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency staff in Dallas, TX currently develop and enforce permits to protect New Mexico's surface water quality. New Mexico is one of three states that doesn't develop and issue its own permits. NMED is working to develop a state-led permitting program to protect surface water quality in New Mexico.

### How Would a State-led Water Quality Permit Program Benefit New Mexico?

A water quality permit program for surface waters led by New Mexico would have many benefits. These benefits include:

- ✓ New Mexicans can create and implement a program to protect our surface waters in a way that is best for New Mexico.  
**This means taking ownership of protecting New Mexico's surface water.**
- ✓ Permit writers who know New Mexico's surface waters would draft permits and engage with stakeholders.  
**This means permits developed by New Mexicans using their local knowledge.**
- ✓ A state-led program for surface water would help streamline permitting in New Mexico.  
**This means a permitting program that is more responsive to New Mexicans.**

### How Can You Stay Informed and Involved?

You will have opportunities to share your thoughts, concerns, and questions about a state-led surface water quality permitting program. If you would like to stay informed about this process or if you have questions, please email [swq.pp@env.nm.gov](mailto:swq.pp@env.nm.gov) or visit the Surface Water Quality Permit Program Initiative [website \(https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/spp/\)](https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/spp/).