



NEW MEXICO ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Surface Water Quality Bureau

Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for the 2025-2026 Surveys and Field Sampling Plans Middle Rio Grande Watershed, Canadian River / Dry Cimarron River Watershed, and Priority Lakes

February 2025

APPROVAL PAGE

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Date

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Date

I. Public Involvement Plan (PIP) Overview

The New Mexico Environment Department (Department), Surface Water Quality Bureau (Bureau) developed this Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for the 2025-2026 Watershed Surveys and their applicable Field Sampling Plans (FSP). The monitoring locations for the 2025-2026 Watershed Surveys will be detailed in applicable FSP. For a general summary of location included in the 2025-2026 Watershed Survey, see Section IV of this PIP. The Bureau encourages the public to learn about and get involved in decision-making opportunities for watershed surveys. The purpose of this PIP is to provide public participation opportunities and information that may be needed to participate in the FSP process. This PIP integrates information about the community and identifies resources needed by the Bureau to successfully incorporate community participation activities into the decision-making process for the FSPs. The PIP identifies the Department staff and resources needed to accomplish these activities.

The Bureau will meet the public participation requirements for the FSPs by following this PIP, which includes all applicable policies, regulatory and statutory public participation requirements.

In developing this PIP, community participation needs were assessed to ensure appropriate promotion of public outreach by identifying whether there is a combination of environmental and demographic factors (i.e., low income community, minority community, limited English proficiency individuals, Linguistically Isolated Households, etc.) that may impact public participation.¹ This assessment identifies community outreach needs and provides for public access opportunities above and beyond statutorily mandated requirements, and underscores the provision of adequate public access to information about the FSP.

As much as possible, public participation and informational activities related to the FSPs will be held within the timelines outlined in the table below. This timeline is tentative and subject to change. A 21-day public review and comment period is allotted.

More detailed information about planned Bureau outreach is available in this PIP.

Activity	Dates
Notice PIP (invite public input)	February 28, 2025
Public Notice	February 28, 2025
Public Review Period	21-day review February – March 2025
Finalize FSPs and publish on SWQB website	By March 28, 2025

This PIP is a “living” document that may be amended after considering public comments and feedback. The Bureau Chief provides final approval of the PIP and amendments.

¹ See IV. Location and Demographics – Demographic Summary below.

II. Bureau Contacts

Bureau contacts for questions regarding the 2025-2026 Watershed Survey FSPs, the Bureau's website, or this PIP, are listed below:

Lynette Guevara, Program Manager
Surface Water Quality Bureau
1190 South St. Francis Dr.
Santa Fe, NM 87505
Phone: (505) 629-8811
Email: lynette.guevara@env.nm.gov

Miguel Montoya, Project Manager
Surface Water Quality Bureau
1190 South St. Francis Dr.
Santa Fe, NM 87505
Phone: (505) 819-9882
Email: miguel.montoya@env.nm.gov

If you need to contact the Bureau regarding the 2025-2026 Watershed Survey FSPs, please call or email the bureau contacts listed above.

A. Non-English Language Speaker Assistance and Accommodations

Non-English speakers may call the Bureau contacts listed in this PIP and request language assistance services, such as an interpreter, so they can learn more about these FSPs or the watershed survey process.

B. Department Websites

New Mexico Environment Department - <https://www.env.nm.gov/>
Surface Water Quality Bureau - <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/>

C. Surface Water Monitoring Website

The Bureau publishes its Water Quality Survey Reports on the website listed below. The website lists all completed watershed surveys in New Mexico as well as the current survey FSP. The list is organized alphabetically by watershed (e.g., river or watershed name).

<https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/water-quality-monitoring/>

III. Regulatory Framework

Monitoring surface water quality is an important component of the State's water quality management program and is essential to identify and characterize water quality problems, revise water quality standards, and develop and evaluate the results of control actions. Additionally, water quality monitoring data can be used for pollutant allocation computer modeling and as evidence for enforcement actions. The goal of the monitoring program is to provide information to assess the quality of surface waters and direct water quality management activities. The Bureau utilizes a rotating watershed survey design for water quality monitoring. Select watersheds are monitored each year with a return frequency dependent on available staff and financial resources. In even numbered years, the monitoring results are summarized in the State of New Mexico CWA §303d/§305b Integrated Report as required by Sections 303(d) and 305(b) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and 40 CFR 130.7.

The public participation requirements of specific water quality programs are specified in 40 CFR Section 25.4 and described in the Water Quality Management Plan and Continuous Planning Process (WQMP/CPP). At a minimum, the public participation process for New Mexico's water quality programs consists of the following:

- Providing the public with the information and assistance necessary for meaningful involvement;
- Providing a central location of reports, studies, plans, and other documents;

- Maintaining a list of affected or interested parties and stakeholders; and
- Notifying stakeholders in a timely fashion prior to consideration of major decisions.

To fulfill this requirement, the Bureau invites the public to comment on the draft FSPs for the 2025 Watershed Surveys. The FSPs describe survey organization, sampling locations, parameters and methodologies. Waterbodies that are monitored during a survey are determined by immediate data needs and age of existing data. Data needs have been determined based on impairments from previous studies, identified data gaps, and consultation with Bureau technical staff as well as other state agencies, federal agencies, tribes, local watershed groups, and interested stakeholders.

IV. Location and Demographics

The 2025 Watershed Survey study areas incorporate the following New Mexico Counties detailed in the table below.

Watershed	New Mexico Counties
Canadian River	Colfax, Harding, Mora, San Miguel, Quay
Dry Cimmaron River	Union
Santa Fe River	Santa Fe County
Middle Rio Grande	Sandoval, Bernalillo, Socorro, Sierra, Socorro,

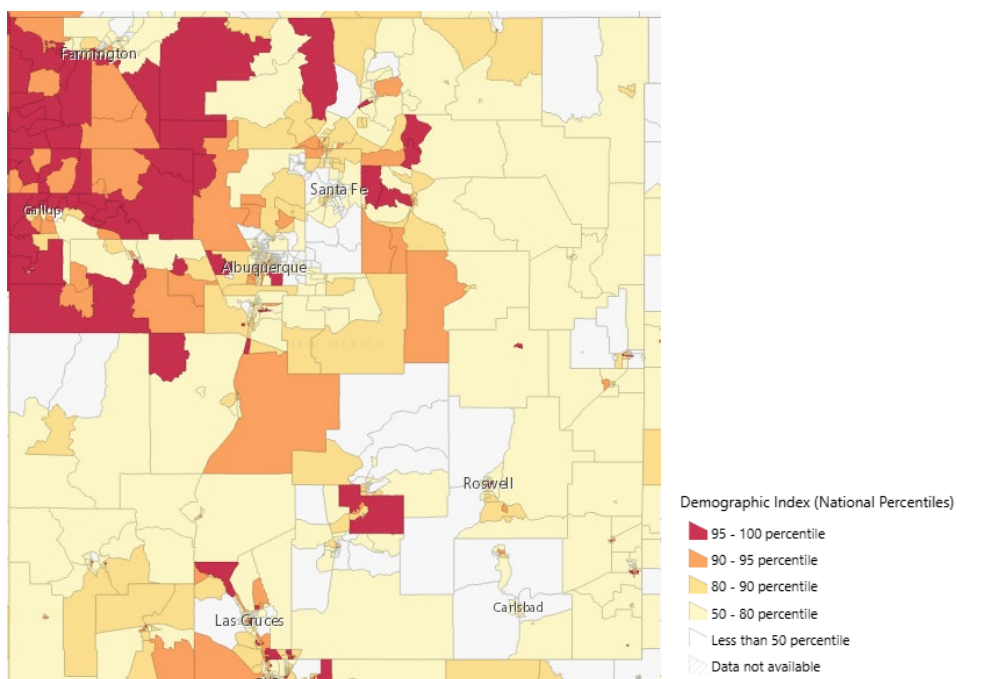
Demographic Summary

Demographic indicators were obtained from EPA EJSCREEN, an environmental justice screening and mapping tool, available on-line at <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>. EJSCREEN is based on nationally consistent data and an approach that combines environmental and demographic indicators in maps and reports. Users choose the geographic area of interest by selecting a point, line or polygon on the map; users may also choose to select a buffer area (up to 10 miles) around the point, line or polygon to better capture the affected community. EJSCREEN then provides a report that describes demographic and environmental information for that area. The 2018-2022 ACS Report link in EJSCREEN provides a report with US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) data in pdf format. The 2018-2022 ACS, through EJSCREEN, provided quantitative information regarding demographic indicators.

Demographic Index

The demographic index in EJScreen is a combination of percent low-income and percent minority, the two socioeconomic factors that were explicitly named in Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice. For each Census block group, these two numbers are simply averaged together. The formula is as follows: demographic index = (% people of color + % low-income) / 2. See Figure 1 for a visual representation of New Mexico.

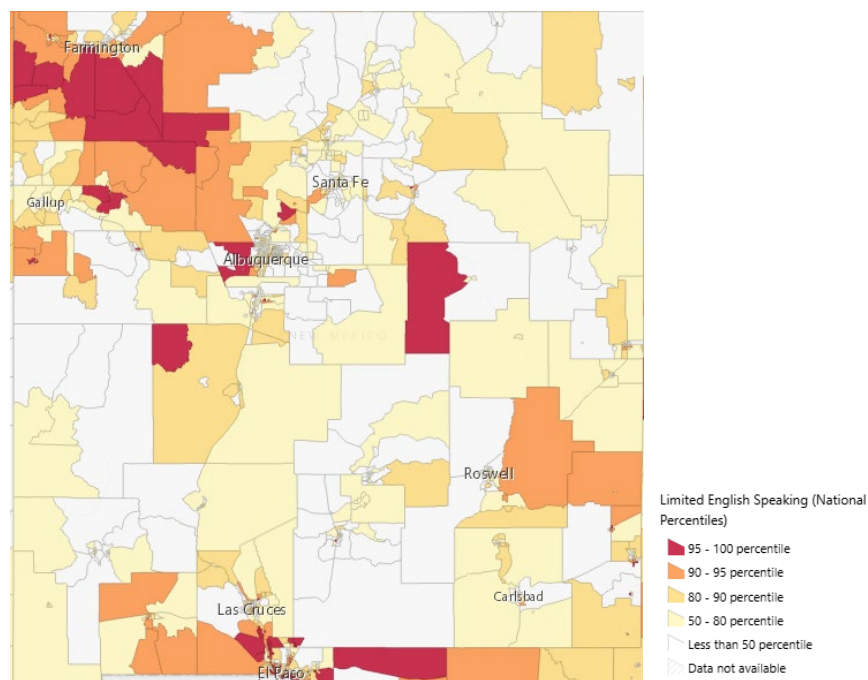
Figure 1. EJScreen New Mexico Demographic Index



Percent Population Limited English Speaking (Figure 2)

Percent of households in which no one age 14 and over speaks English "very well" or speaks English only (as a fraction of households). See Figure 2 for a visual representation of New Mexico.

Figure 2. EJScreen for New Mexico Limited English Speaking Area

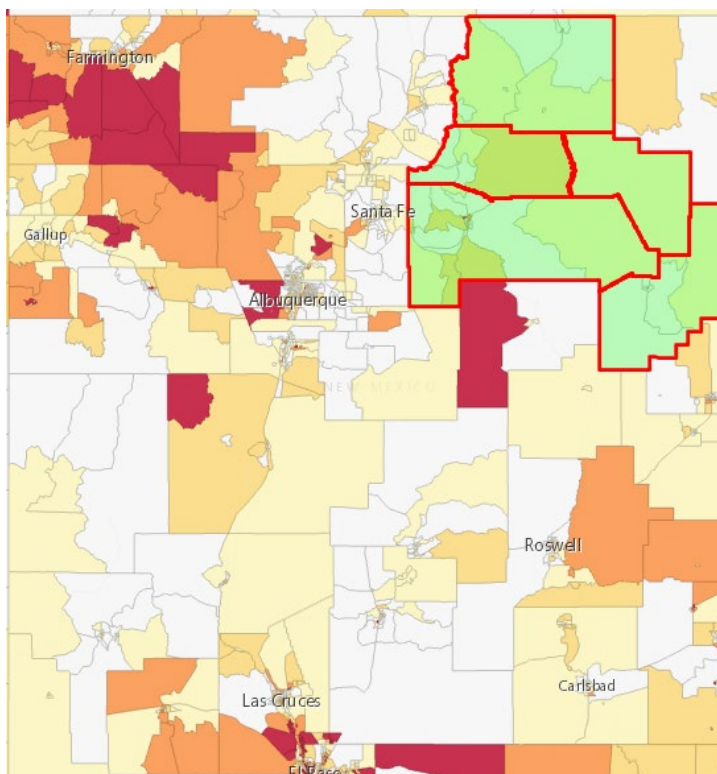


Summary of Site-Specific EJSCREEN Inputs for the Canadian River Watershed(s) Survey Area

- Community of Concern = Colfax, Harding, Mora, San Miguel, and Quay Counties in New Mexico
- Buffer = No Buffer

The Canadian Watershed(s) survey project area has an estimated population of 53,105; 66% identify as Hispanic or Latino (which may be of mixed race) and 1% identify as American Indian. The percent of persons that communicate in a language other than English (non-English) at home is 39%, compared to 21.5 % for the United States (US Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey). The EJSCREEN analysis identified 1,050 of 1,147 households as linguistically isolated, of which 92% speak Spanish and 8% speak various other languages (not identified). The per capita income for the project area is \$35,397 compared to the national per capita income of \$37,683. These results indicate that for the project area, the percentage of Spanish-speaking communication is considerable (i.e., substantially greater than the national percentage) and there are demographic factors (i.e., low-income community, minority community, limited English proficiency individuals, Linguistically Isolated Households, etc.) that may impact public participation.

Figure 3. EJScreen for Canadian Watershed Survey Demographic Area



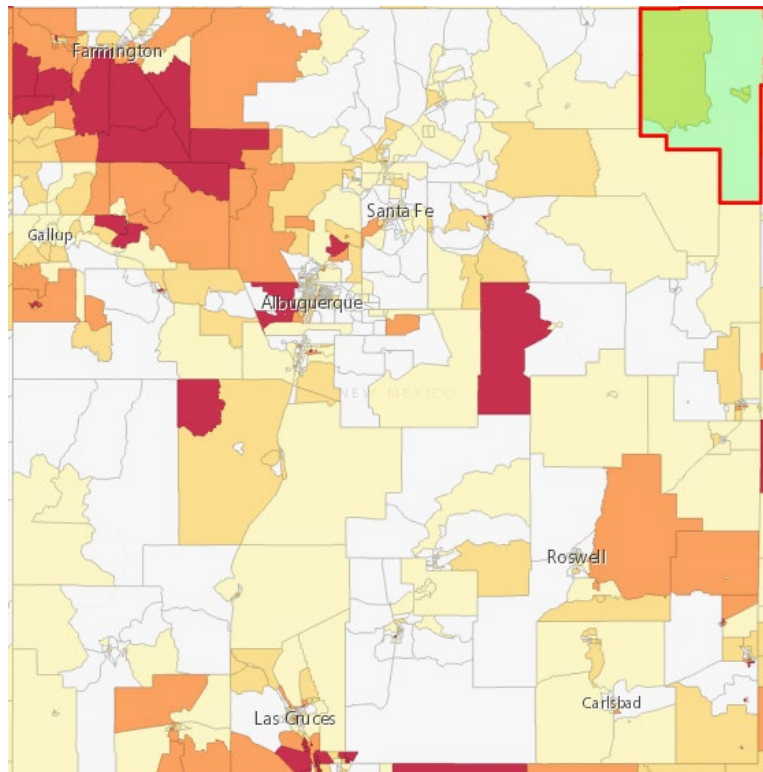
Summary of Site-Specific EJSCREEN Inputs for Dry Cimmaron River Watershed(s) Survey Area

- Community of Concern = Union County, New Mexico
- Buffer = No buffer

The Dry Cimmaron River Watershed(s) survey project area has an estimated population of 4,074; 42% identify as Hispanic or Latino (which may be of mixed race) and 1% identify as American Indian alone. The percent of persons that communicate in a language other than English (non-English) at home is 20%,

compared to 21.5 % for the United States (US Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey). The EJSCREEN analysis identified 92 of 114 households as linguistically isolated, of which 81% speak Spanish and 19% speak various other languages (not identified). The per capita income for the project area is \$20,779, compared to the national per capita income of \$31,177. These results indicate that for the project area, the percentage of Spanish-speaking communication is considerable (i.e., substantially greater than the national percentage) and there are demographic factors (i.e., low-income community, minority community, limited English proficiency individuals, Linguistically Isolated Households, etc.) that may impact public participation.

Figure 4: EJScreen Dry Cimarron Watershed Survey Demographic Area



The Canadian River Watershed and Dry Cimarron Watershed survey(s) will be grouped together in a single FSP due to geographic locations within the State of New Mexico and for planning and managing project.

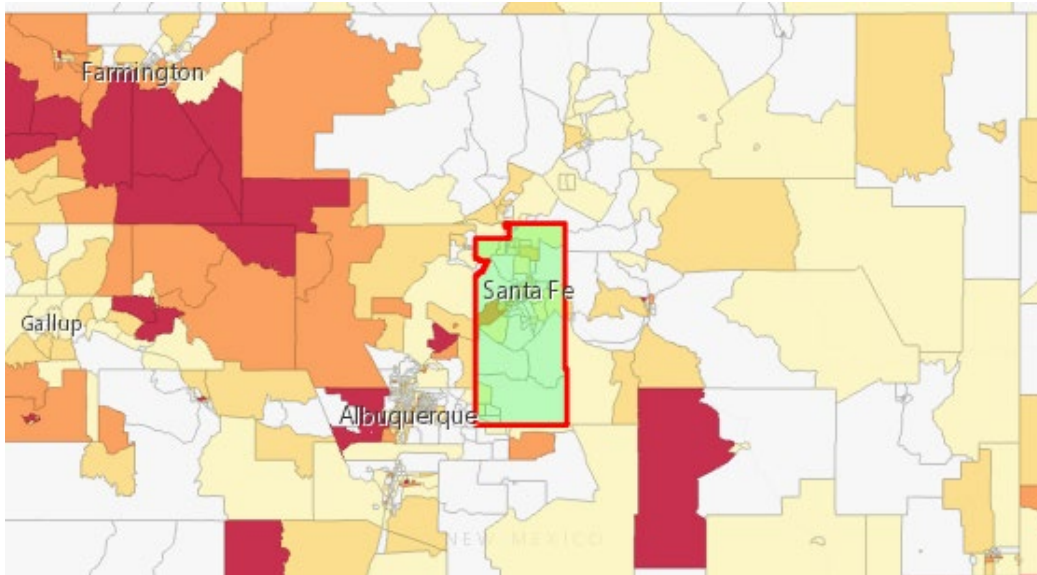
Summary of Site-Specific EJSCREEN Inputs for Santa Fe Watershed(s) Survey Area

- Community of Concern = Santa Fe County, New Mexico
- Buffer = No buffer

The Santa Fe Watershed(s) survey project area has an estimated population of 154,481; 51% identify as Hispanic or Latino (which may be of mixed race) and 3% identify as American Indian alone. The percent of persons that communicate in a language other than English (non-English) at home is 32%, compared to 21.5 % for the United States (US Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey). The EJSCREEN analysis identified 1,718 of 1,927 households as linguistically isolated, of which 89% speak Spanish and 3% speak various other languages (not identified). The per capita income for the project area is \$45,402, compared to the national per capita income of \$31,177. These results indicate that for the project area,

the percentage of Spanish-speaking communication is considerable (i.e., substantially greater than the national percentage) and there are demographic factors (i.e., low-income community, minority community, limited English proficiency individuals, Linguistically Isolated Households, etc.) that may impact public participation.

Figure 5. EJScreen Santa Fe River Watershed Survey Demographic Area

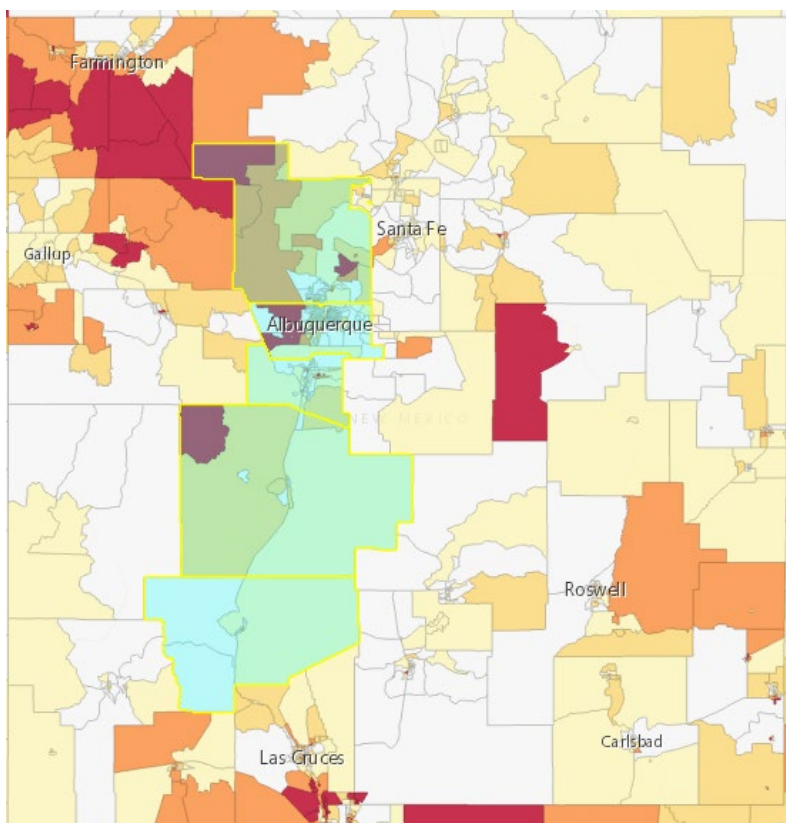


Summary of Site-Specific EJSCREEN Inputs for Middle Rio Grande Watershed(s) Survey Area

- Community of Concern = Sandoval, Bernalillo, Valencia, Socorro, and Sierra counties in New Mexico
- Buffer = No buffer

The Middle Rio Grande Watershed(s) survey project area has an estimated population of 928,724; 50% identify as Hispanic or Latino (which may be of mixed race) and 5% identify as American Indian alone. The percent of persons that communicate in a language other than English (non-English) at home is 27%, compared to 21.5 % for the United States (US Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey). The EJSCREEN analysis identified 12,347 of 15,264 households as linguistically isolated, of which 81% speak Spanish and 8% speak various other languages (not identified). The per capita income for the project area is \$30,121, compared to the national per capita income of \$31,177. These results indicate that for the project area, the percentage of Spanish-speaking communication is considerable (i.e., substantially greater than the national percentage) and there are demographic factors (i.e., low-income community, minority community, limited English proficiency individuals, Linguistically Isolated Households, etc.) that may impact public participation.

Figure 6. EJScreen Middle Rio Grande Watershed Survey Demographic Area



The Santa Fe River Watershed and Middle Rio Grande Watershed survey(s) will be grouped together in a single Middle Rio Grande FSP due to geographic locations within the State of New Mexico and for planning and managing project.

The SWQB will also develop a FSP for priority lakes within the watershed described in this PIP.

All reports used to generate statistics in this section will be attached as in Appendix.

V. Public Participation & Outreach Activities

The public may ask questions about the draft 2025-2026 FSPs at any time. Interested community members do not need to wait for a formal public comment period to contact the Bureau. However, the Bureau emphasizes that to be included in the administrative record, comments solicited by public notices must be submitted during the noticed comment periods, and in accordance with the public notice.

Specific outreach activities related to the draft 2025-2026 FSPs include:

- Developing a public notice announcing the opening of the 21-day public comment period,
- Posting this notice, the draft FSPs, and related ArcGIS Story Maps to the SWQB website,
- Emailing this public notice to SWQB's extensive email list through the GovDelivery e-mail delivery service (1,936 email addresses as of January 17, 2025), and
- Posting to NMED's Events Calendar.

Copies of the draft 2025-2026 FSPs may be obtained via download from the Bureau's website at

<https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/water-quality-monitoring/>, or by contacting Miguel Montoya at (505) 819-9882, miguel.montoya@env.nm.gov, NMED SWQB, P.O. Box 5469, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87502. This is the most direct way to learn more about and be involved in the decision-making process for the 2025-2026 FSPs.

Based on the demographics report discussed in the PIP, basic information about public involvement opportunities will be in both English and Spanish. This information will include how to request materials in Spanish or to speak with Bureau staff through an interpreter. Further details about public participation for this activity are outlined below.

D. Postal Mailing or E-Mailing of Notices to Persons on the Surface Water Quality Bureau's Email List

The Bureau maintains an extensive email list (1,936 email addresses as of January 17, 2025) that includes individuals interested in surface water quality issues and activities. This list is a combination of all previously interested persons who requested the Bureau provide them with information about surface water quality in New Mexico. The Bureau regularly maintains contact information, which is updated or supplemented if additional information is found. Interested persons providing both an address and email may receive physical mail and an email. Additional individuals, organizations, and other interested parties are added to the email list as requested.

E. Email Updates

The Bureau's email list is regularly updated and is available on the Bureau's website at: <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/> by clicking on the "Subscribe to SWQB News" button on the bottom of the home page. The Bureau's website liaison is Heidi Henderson at 505-819-9986 (or email heidi.henderson@env.nm.gov).

F. Public Meeting Notices, Public Comment Notices, and Other Notices

Based on the Bureau's evaluation of the community, public notices will be translated into Spanish. In addition, the Bureau will post notices on the Department's Events Calendar at: <https://www.env.nm.gov/events-calendar/>

A virtual public meeting will also be scheduled for **March 11, 2025, at 1:30pm-2:30pm** Mountain Daylight Standard Time (MDST) and **March 12, 2025, at 1:30pm-2:30pm** MDST via Webex.

March 11, 2025, at 1:30pm-2:30pm via Webex::

Join from the meeting link

<https://nmed-oit.webex.com/nmed-oit/j.php?MTID=m46c790cff8c1537cd3ad7f4190b9bf9e>

Join by meeting number

Meeting number: 263 236 73688

Meeting password: JVjAtAnP969

March 12, 2025, at 1:30pm-2:30pm MDST via Webex:

Join from the meeting link

<https://nmed-oit.webex.com/nmed-oit/j.php?MTID=m2d377fd4216ea1e45382c730847686e4>

Join by meeting number
Meeting number: 286 683 83685
Meeting password: BQtiAUDH887

G. Informational Pamphlets

The Bureau may develop informational pamphlets for the 2025 FSPs that briefly explain what is happening relative to the watershed surveys, the appropriate Bureau contacts, and next steps in the survey process. To the extent such informational pamphlets are produced, the Bureau may determine whether they will be available in languages other than English and will post online (e.g., Bureau website). They may also be distributed via email to interested organizations and individuals, including those who sign up for email notices through the website.

H. Public Comment Period

The 21-day public comment period for the draft 2025-2026 FSPs is planned to start February 28, 2025, through March 21, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. MDST.

I. Other Outreach

Other means of outreach such as flyers or other hard copy postings will not be used. However, any updates will be posted on the Department's website.

J. Information Repositories

Copies of the draft FSPs may be obtained via download from the Bureau's website at <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/> or by contacting Miguel Montoya at (505) 819-9882, miguel.montoya@env.nm.gov, NMED SWQB, P.O. Box 5469, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87502.

The Bureau will not provide hardcopies and other information at NMED district offices, post offices, community centers, public libraries, or other repositories. The Bureau requests that individuals access the FSPs and supporting documents and information online at the links noted above. If requested, the Bureau will work with individuals to provide hard copies. If you would like to request hard copies of important documents and information about how to comment on the draft permit, please contact Miguel Montoya at (505) 819-9882 or email: miguel.montoya@env.nm.gov.

K. Field Sampling Plan (FSP) Proceedings, Outcomes and Responses to Comments

For these surveys, a virtual public meeting will be scheduled in March 2025 and the Bureau will consider information received from the public input process that may be incorporated into the final version of the FSP. Final FSPs will be posted to the SWQB website.