



# Voices for conservation in our state government

## From your Executive Director....

We often think of landmark conservation legislation coming at the federal level, but our New Mexico state legislature is working on several extraordinary advances to conservation during the current session. One of the benefits of working at the state level is the ability to build coalitions of diverse advocates. Those combined voices will impact our representatives and state officials.

In this Advisory, we highlight three promising conservation initiatives. New legislation takes a

*continuity of purpose, strong advocates, and time.*

*Your support provides the resources to hire the expert staff to help advise and advocate for these vital conservation measures.*



Thank you!

Mark Allison  
Executive Director  
New Mexico Wild



## Creating the state's first-ever dedicated source of recurring funding for conservation

**The proposed Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund would allow the state to unlock hundreds of million of dollars in federal grants.**

Governor Lujan Grisham and legislators are making land and water conservation a high priority this legislative session. The proposed Legacy Fund will better protect communities from wildfire, flood and drought, safeguard urban and rural water supplies, support rural agriculture, grow our outdoor recreation economy, help preserve our cultural

heritage, and protect wildlife that is threatened or endangered. The Fund would give the state the ability to provide matching funds which are required for many federal grants. The proposed bill (SB9) would invest in existing state programs rather than creating new programs.

We are advocating that the investment be increased to at least \$350 million which would generate more than \$20 million annually to state agencies for conservation programs.

This is a bipartisan product of five-years of negotiation among a broad coalition of non-government organizations, legislators, and state agencies. New Mexico Wild is one of 31 partners in a coalition supporting this bill. The current legislative session ends on March 18, so we are in a final push to get this bill passed.

**If you would like more information on this bill and to support it, please visit:**

**[Enchantmentfund.org](https://enchantmentfund.org)**



## We must fully fund New Mexico's Strategic Water Reserve to protect our future

### **A secure and equitable water future for people and wildlife starts with stronger water management tools**

New Mexico is the driest it has been in over 1,000 years. The water shortage affects all of us and it is getting worse. We can take action and the recent report from the Governor's Water Policy and Infrastructure Task Force offers a number of solutions.

Among those solutions is a substantial investment in the state's Strategic Water Reserve. These funds enable the state to buy, lease, and hold water rights to meet the needs of endangered species and to send water downstream to meet commitments to other neighboring states.

The Reserve has existed since 2005, but funding has been sparse and inconsistent. Working in coalition with over a dozen other organizations, we believe now is the time to invest in this important tool. An investment of \$25 million, less than 1% of this year's state revenue surplus, would give the Reserve what it needs to work well for years.



## New Mexico should have local control over its surface water pollution

### **The state has relied on federal protections, but with water scarcity, now is the time for new state laws**

During the Trump Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency removed federal protections from nearly all of New Mexico's surface waters. Those rules are being largely restored by Biden Administration, but they still leave gaps in addressing many of the water pollution challenges the state faces.

The Governor and state leaders, supported by water advocates, hope to change the management of water pollution rules from federal oversight to local control. Through establishing a statewide surface water permitting program, the state can better control pollution going into the unique variety of waterways that exist in the Land of Enchantment.

New Mexico is one of only three states not authorized to issue permits for polluted discharges under the Clean Water Act. The state Environmental Department estimates that more than 45% of surface waters are impaired.



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