



State of New Mexico
Office of the State Engineer
Interstate Stream Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Interstate Stream Commission hosting information sessions for
Lower Rio Grande Groundwater Conservation Program**

LAS CRUCES – The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission will hold four information sessions to inform the agricultural community about 2026 enrollment in the Lower Rio Grande Groundwater Conservation Grant Program.

Sessions will be held on July 8, 9, and 10 in Anthony, Las Cruces, and Hatch followed by a virtual session on July 18. Spanish language support will be available at all meetings.

Meeting information for the sessions is as follows:

- Tuesday, July 8, 9-11 a.m., Dona Ana Community College, Gadsen Campus, 1700 Ohara Rd., Anthony, N.M.
- Wednesday, July 9, 9-11 a.m., Dona Ana Community College, Espina Campus, 3400 S. Espina St., Las Cruces, N.M.
- Thursday, July 10, 9-11 a.m., Hatch High School, 170 E. Herrera Rd., Hatch, NM
- Friday, July 18, 9-11am, online meeting via Zoom:
<https://us02web.zoomus/j/85855979628>

“The information sessions are a chance for our local agricultural producers to talk with us face to face and get their questions answered,” said **Ryan Serrano**, ISC Lower Rio Grande Basin manager. “Agriculture is vital to this region and in the midst of extreme challenges to our water supply conditions, it’s important that we have good conversations to obtain input and identify opportunities about how to manage our limited water resources.”

The purpose of the Lower Rio Grande Groundwater Conservation Program is to initiate groundwater conservation actions that will ensure that New Mexico has a sustainable groundwater supply not only today, but for future generations of New Mexicans. Since its beginning as a pilot project in 2020, there has been robust participation in the program with a total of approximately 11,800 acres of land enrolled, and \$11.2 million in grant payments issued to participants.

Under the program, grants are provided to compensate willing irrigators in the Lower Rio Grande basin for temporarily conserving groundwater by not irrigating previously irrigated parcels for between 12 and 36 months. Applications to participate will be accepted for the program from July 14 until August 29. Grant payments per non-irrigated acre, per year, beginning January 1, 2026, will be awarded as follows:

- 12 months: \$750/acre.
- 24 months: \$775/acre.
- 36 months: \$800/acre.

“We currently have 6,191 acres enrolled for 2025,” said **Ryan Serrano**, ISC Lower Rio Grande Basin manager. “Local support has been tremendous, and the program has room to grow.”

When irrigators temporarily stop using groundwater on even small portions of their land, it helps reduce the strain on the aquifer. Reduced surface water supplies from the Rio Grande and below average precipitation over the last several years have led to an increased reliance on the groundwater reserves in the Lower Rio Grande Basin. This year is shaping up to be a particularly difficult one for drought conditions in New Mexico. More than half of the state, including the Lower Rio Grande Valley, is experiencing extreme to exceptional levels of drought, and current forecasts predict streamflow into the Lower Rio Grande to be about a quarter of normal.

Interested participants are also encouraged to make an appointment with an New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission team member for assistance in completing their application:

- Kate Fauske Maynard: Kfauske.maynard@ose.nm.gov, 575 680 0509
- Anita Tafoya: Anita.tafoya@ose.nm.gov, 505 618 0101

For more information about the Lower Rio Grande Groundwater Conservation Program and to see a sample application, visit <https://www.ose.state.nm.us/LRGGWCP/index.php>.

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The Office of the State Engineer is charged with administering the state’s water resources. The State Engineer has power over the supervision, measurement, appropriation, and distribution of all surface and groundwater in New Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The State Engineer is also Secretary of the Interstate Stream Commission.

The nine-member Interstate Stream Commission is charged with separate duties including protecting New Mexico’s right to water under eight interstate stream compacts, ensuring the state complies with each of those compacts as well as investigating, conserving and protecting the waters of the State, in addition to water planning.
<https://www.ose.state.nm.us>