

EDITORIAL STYLE SHEET  
New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources  
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**A**

<sup>40</sup>Ar/<sup>39</sup>Ar

acid rock drainage (*rather than* acid mine drainage, depending upon context)

acknowledgments (*not* acknowledgements)

acre-feet (or acre-foot)

A.D. (small caps, before date)

a.m.

air fall

ancestral Rio Grande

Ancestral Rocky Mountains

ArcInfo

ArcView

areal extent – why not use “size” if it’s for a general audience

archaeology (archaeological, etc.)

ash fall (as per AGI)

ash flow

ash-flow tuffs

as much as – preferable to “up to” (USGS)

**B**

backcountry

back country byway (an official BLM designation)

B.C. (small caps, follows date)

bedrock

billion (which is 1,000 million)

blue line (as in proofs)

boothel (one word)

borehole

B.P. (before present – small caps)

BTU (British thermal unit)

buildup (a noun)

build up (verb)

the bureau (*lower case*)

buy-in (*hyphenated*)

bylaw

byproduct

**C**

<sup>14</sup>C

ca. = circa  
carbon-14  
C-14  
caldera (generally not cap'd)  
campsite  
cauldron (*not* caldron)  
cattle guard  
circa (*use ca. as abbreviation*)  
cliff former (*or cliff-forming adj.*)  
coal bed  
coalbed methane  
coal field  
coal-fired power plant  
coexist  
Colorado mineral belt (but also sometimes Colorado Mineral Belt)  
Colorado Plateau  
comprise – Be very careful when you use this; it doesn't mean what you think it means!  
(*you may mean constitute...*)  
Congress (when referring to the Congress of the United States)  
congressional  
Continental Divide (*or divide*)  
crossbedding  
crosscutting  
cross section  
cross-stratification  
cuesta (rather than *questa*, unless you're talking about the town)  
cut bank

## **D**

database  
Depression (*as in* The Great Depression)  
dip slip  
dip slope  
doctorate, doctoral (not capped when used as a general term)  
Douglas-fir  
downcutting  
downfaulted  
downriver  
downslope  
downhole  
downwind  
drill hole  
drill-stem test

## E

Earth (*cap only when used without an article, and referring to a body in the solar system: "We spotted Earth from the surface of the moon."*)

Earth's orbit, *but* the earth; the earth sciences) CMS

e.g. and i.e. both take a comma – e.g., / i.e.,

[e.g., = for example; i.e., = that is to say]

e-mail (with a hyphen, not cap'd, and not *email*)

electric power (rather than electrical power?) – check this one with Brian

electrical power generation (correct?)

Elizabethtown-Baldy (*rather than* Elizabethtown/Baldy)

emigrant (*one who leaves a place*)

Eon – do cap when used with a proper name, for instance:

Epoch – *do cap when used with a proper name, for instance: the Pleistocene Epoch*

Era – *do cap when used with a proper name, for instance: the Paleozoic Era*

ESRI

Exit 235 (cap when referring to a specific exit number on the interstates)

exit ramp – pref. to *offramp*

## F

farther (*preferable to further when referring to distance*)

fault-propagation fold (AGI says hyphenate)

federal (lower case, not capped)

field work

firsthand

fiscal year (FY)

floodplain (*AGI and Oxford say flood plain*)

floodwater

flotation (*rather than floatation*)

flow rate

flow top

Fort Sumner Dam

freshwater (or fresh water\*). noun

\*either is correct; be consistent within document)

further (*acceptable, but best used in the sense of "extra" or "additional"*)

## G

gage (preferred USGS spelling, rather than *gauge*)

gases (rather than gasses)

geologic (rather than geological, unless in proper name)

GIS

Goodnight-Loving Trail

Great Plains

groundmass (one word)

ground water (*or groundwater\**), noun

\* two words is preferred, but be consistent within the document  
ground water, adjective (one of those instances where we do not need to hyphenate)  
guidebook

## H

halfway (*not* half-way)  
hard rock  
headwaters  
hillslopes (one word)  
hydrologic (rather than hydrological)  
hydromagmatic

## I

i.e. and e.g. -- both take a comma – e.g., / i.e.,  
[e.g., = for example; i.e., = that is to say]  
immigrant (*one who comes into a place*)  
in situ (*does not take a hyphen, even when used as an adjective or adverb – & does not require ital*) – *according to both CMS and Webster's dictionary*)  
in situ leaching (*no hyphen*)  
Internet (*as in the Internet*)  
Interstate 25 (*but I-25*)

## J

Jemez lineament  
Jemez Mountains volcanic field

## K

ka (small k, small a) = kilo annum, 1000 years (“a thousand years before present”)  
K-Ar  
kW = abbreviation for kilowatt  
kilowatt-hour (abbr: kWh)

## L

Landsat  
Llano de Albuquerque (*not Llano de Alburquerque*)  
longwall mining

Los Alamos National Laboratory (singular)

## M

M Mountain (no hyphen; formal name is *Socorro Peak*)

Ma = millions of years before present, polarized from 1950. Generally used where specific (geochron) dates are available; do not use interchangeably with m.y.

M.A. (master of arts degree)

master's degree, master of science (not capped when used as a general term)

M.S. (master of science degree)

metamorphism (works for rocks)

metamorphosis (not the same as metamorphism; works for insects, not for rocks)

mid-1990s (*hyphenate when used with a decade*)

midcontinent

Middle Rio Grande (cap Middle when we are referring to the district, or the conservancy)

middle Rio Grande (if referring to a stretch of the river)

minable (-but try to avoid! "Economic" sometimes works instead)

mine-water recovery

modeling

Mogollon–Datil volcanic field (*not* Datil–Mogollon)

Mtn. (abbreviation for "Mountain", as in proper names)

Mts. (abbreviation for "Mountains", as in proper names)

mud cracks (pref. to mudcracks; both are correct)

mudlog

multinational (no hyphen)

MW = abbreviation for megawatt

MWh = megawatt hour

m.y. = million years (not the same as Ma); generally used for undated figures

## N

natural gas (no hyphen, either as a noun or an adjective)

natural gas production (no hyphen)

nearshore

New Mexico Tech (preferred: New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology)

New Mexico (do not abbreviate as NM except in address, as in *Socorro, NM*)

noncombustible

nonhazardous

nonmarine

nonprofit

numerous – *Why not use "many"?*

## O

Ocaté volcanic field

off-ramp  
off site  
oil-bearing shale  
oil field  
one-seeded juniper  
ongoing (one word, not hyphenated)  
online (*rather than* on-line)  
on-ramp  
on site  
open pit (noun)  
open-pit (adjective)  
orebody, orebodies (one word, according to AGI)  
overbank (AGI)  
overlie

## P

Paleo-Indian  
Pangea (*preferred spelling of* Pangaea)  
the park service (*but* the National Park Service)  
pay-off  
PDF  
percent – use % in scientific and statistical copy; in humanistic copy, use *percent*  
Ph.D.  
Piñon  
Plinian (*as in volcanic deposits*) – *better to use* ash fall  
p.m.  
ponderosa (not capped)  
post-mine land use  
powerlines (*one word*)  
pullout (noun)  
pumpjack (*one word*)

## Q

## R

Rb-Sr  
red beds  
resettle  
revegetation (*one word, no hyphen*)  
ridgeline  
rim rock  
Rio Grande – *not* Rio Grande River; CMS says “Rio Grande River” is redundant. But in all other cases—Rio Grande district, Rio Grande region, etc.—be specific.  
Rio Grande rift (don’t cap rift?)

river bed  
road log  
roadcut  
roadside  
rock shelter (*two words*)  
Roswell artesian basin  
runoff (*one word, not hyphenated*)

## S

salt cedar (*two words*)  
San Juan Basin  
San Juan–Chama (*referring to the project*)  
San Juan Generating Station  
Santa Fe Railroad (*not Railway*)  
sea floor  
sea-floor spreading  
sedimentary-copper deposits  
semiarid (CMS)  
servicewide  
shaly  
Ship Rock (the geologic feature)  
Shiprock (the name of the settlement that is close to Ship Rock)  
short ton (= 2000 lbs)  
since (*if you mean because, use because*)  
snakebush – in all likelihood, should be snakeweed (one word), *Gutierrezia*  
snowmelt (*one word*)  
snowpack (*one word*)  
Southern Rocky Mountains (name of the province)  
Southwest (as in the proper name for the region of a country – OK to cap  
southwestern (*adj.*)  
state engineer (*but Office of the State Engineer*)  
state line (*two words*); state-line (*compound adj.*)  
stream bed (two words)  
stream flow  
sub-basin  
Sumner Lake (*as in Sumner Lake State Park – but Fort Sumner Dam*)  
surface water (noun and adjective, one of those cases where we don't need to hyphenate)  
syn-rift

## T

tephra  
3-D  
timescale (*one word; Oxford*)  
time line  
toward (*not towards*)

trackway  
trail – when used as part of a proper name (i.e., Bright Angel Trail), it is cap'd  
trailhead (one word, never cap'd)  
Transcontinental Arch  
traveled (*rather than* travelled)  
traveling (*rather than* travelling)  
tree-ring dating (hyphenated)  
trip meter (two words; not *tripmeter*)  
turnout (noun)

## U

under-delivery (as in the Pecos River Compact)  
underlie  
upriver  
U-Pb  
upsection  
upslope  
upward (rather than upwards – both are correct; this is a preference)  
up to – Better to use “as much as” (USGS)  
U.S. (no space between them, but with periods)  
U.S. Geological Survey (*not* US Geological Survey)

## V

Valles Caldera National Preserve  
valley (as in Rio Grande valley) – lower case  
volcanic center – will the word “volcano” work as well, in works for the general public?  
volcanoes  
volcanology

## W

waterlogged  
watershed  
water table  
the Web (CMS and NYT)  
Web site (CMS and NYT)  
well-being (Oxford)  
wellbore  
wellhead  
well log  
well-log data  
while (*if you mean* whereas, *use* whereas)  
whitewater  
Wilderness (cap'd only if we are talking about officially designated Wilderness)  
wildlands

wildlife  
woolly (as in “woolly mammoth”)  
work force (two words)  
work place (two words)

## **X**

X-ray

## **Y**

year-round

## **Z**

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### *References Used:*

Chicago Manual of Style (CMS)  
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AGI Glossary of Geology, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 1997  
*Suggestions to Authors*, U.S. Geological Survey, 7<sup>th</sup> edition  
Webster’s Dictionary