

Welcome to Earth Matters – field notes on the geology of New Mexico’s enchanting landscapes. I’m Rachel Hobbs.

Have you ever wondered, as you turned on the tap, where your water comes from and how much is available for the future? At the New Mexico Water Data Initiative, we are trying to shed light on that very question.

A report published last year by the New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources spells out a number of increased water challenges due to a warming climate. Data are needed to quantify the complex issues surrounding NM's water. In order to address these challenges, New Mexico's lawmakers passed the water data act in 2019.

The Water Data Initiative is a collaborative effort between five agencies named in the act: the New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources, The Office of the State Engineer and the Interstate Stream Commission, the Environment Department, and the Energy Minerals and Natural Resources Department. The Water Data Act requires that these agencies collaborate with regional and national efforts to improve how we manage, share, and integrate our water data.

This means transitioning from paper forms for data collection to online methods of data entry, and sharing data online through web portals, maps, and applications. You can also check out our data catalog where we have over 200 datasets with information on groundwater levels, water quality, streamflow, and more.

We still have a lot of work to do, and more datasets to make available. But, we are working to increase the accessibility of water data fundamental for management and planning decisions, and to help answer some of those questions that come to mind when you turn on your tap.

Find us at newmexicowaterdata.org.

Celebrating Earth science week, I'm Rachel Hobbs