New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources
A RESEARCH AND SERVICE DIVISION OF NEW MEXICO INSTITUTE OF MINING AND TECHNOLOGY
801 Leroy Place,
Socorro, NM 87801-4796

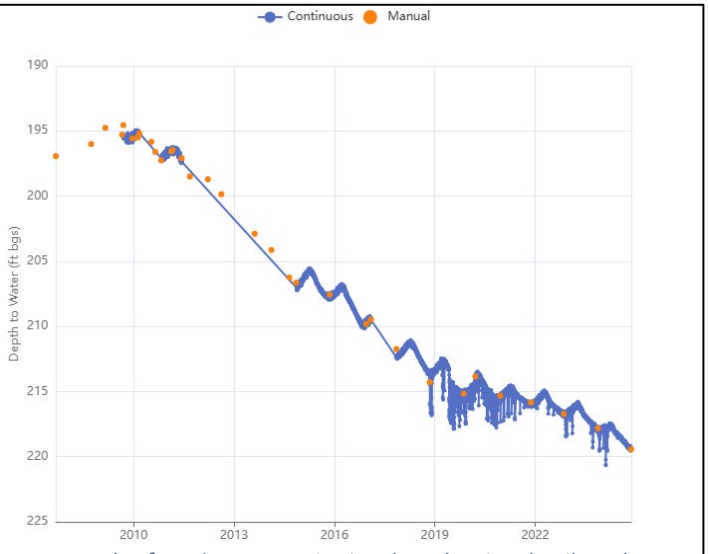
Information: 575-835-5490
Fax: 575-835-6333
http://geoinfo.nmt.edu

New Mexico Project to Strengthen Drought Resilience for Small Community Water Systems

The New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources (NMBGMR) is launching a new initiative aimed at improving drought preparedness and groundwater resilience for small community drinking water systems across New Mexico. The project, ***Enhancing Drought Resilience of Small Community Drinking Water Systems in New Mexico***, has been awarded through the Thornburg Foundation's 2026 Water Grant Program.

New Mexico's small community water systems serve more than 10% of the state's population, primarily in rural and underserved communities. Many rely on a limited number of groundwater wells and lack the tools needed to monitor aquifer conditions or prepare for prolonged drought, increasing their vulnerability to water shortages and declining system reliability as drought intensifies across the Southwest. "By expanding groundwater monitoring and integrating data into local planning efforts, communities will have better tools to anticipate water supply challenges before they become emergencies." says Stacy Timmons, Associate Director for Hydrogeology Programs at NMBGMR.

The project will build upon the existing Healy Collaborative Groundwater Monitoring Network, supported by Healy Foundation, which currently measures more than 300 wells annually throughout New Mexico. This network includes public water systems and mutual domestic water systems, in addition to domestic and irrigation wells. The new Thornburg Foundation supported project will prioritize installation of telemetric groundwater monitoring devices in willing and feasible community wells, allowing water managers and decision-makers to track groundwater levels and pumping stress in near real time.



An example of continuous monitoring data showing details and trends that can help monitor and understand seasonal/local changes

Key project components include:

- Expanding groundwater monitoring for small community water systems.
- Installing continuous telemetric groundwater monitoring devices.
- Compiling and analyzing groundwater and pumping data.
- Developing drought indicators and groundwater "trigger" thresholds.
- Supporting early warning systems and proactive management actions.
- Integrating groundwater monitoring data into local hazard mitigation planning.

The initiative is expected to improve groundwater data availability, strengthen drought preparedness planning, and increase technical capacity among water system operators and local decision-makers. For further inquiry, please contact project manager Monica Rakovan (monica.rakovan@nmt.edu) and for more information about the Aquifer Mapping and Monitoring Program at NMBGMR and its statewide groundwater programs, visit https://geoinfo.nmt.edu/resources/water/amp/home.html.