



NEW MEXICO FIRST
People. Ideas. Progress.

New Mexico First and Project SHARE NM Newsletter

Stay Informed and Engaged

September 28, 2020

CENSUS ALERT: DEADLINE LOOMS

While the deadline for the Census is in a courtroom dispute, we need to act today to be sure New Mexicans are counted by the current deadline of September 30th, which is only two days away. NM's [response rate](#) is only 95.5% This may sound high, but NM is 43rd in the nation in our response rates. This means NM is much more likely than other states to be under-represented and under-resourced. Each 1% undercount means a loss of \$780 million in much needed federal funds over the next 10 years. Help friends and neighbors get counted. Respond TODAY, [online](#), by [phone](#), or by [mail](#).



Protecting and Enjoying our Land of Enchantment

Even in the midst of our challenges, New Mexicans can and do claim one indisputable asset we have, which is our unique and beautiful natural environment. There is a reason --- many reasons, in fact – why NM is the Land of Enchantment. As the 5th largest state in the union, NM’s diverse landscape ranges from wide deserts to rose-colored rocks and mesa, to high, snow-capped peaks with abundant forests. While the attraction to out-of-state tourists contributes significantly to NM’s economy, New Mexicans have day-in, day-out access to these natural wonders. To learn more about the open/close status of

The [NM Environment Dept.](#) (NMED), created in 1991, is responsible for protecting and when necessary restoring our environment and fostering a healthy and

prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations. Implementation of this mission is guided by four tenets.

- Science: Using the best available science to inform our decision-making in protecting public health and the environment.
- Innovation: Employing creative engineering and technological solutions to address environmental challenges.
- Collaboration: Engaging communities and interested stakeholders in environmental decision-making outcomes.
- Compliance: Ensuring meaningful compliance with state regulations and permits; leveling the playing field through enforcement.

Albuquerque Climate Change Task Force

Amidst rising temperatures, severe drought and concern for the region's future, The City of Albuquerque (CABQ) has launched a Climate Change Task Force. This past summer, CABQ released a survey asking city residents for feedback regarding their biggest concerns as well as support for possible climate solutions. Over 3000 Albuquerque residents answered the survey. Now CABQ has partnered with New Mexico First to evaluate the survey results and facilitate a volunteer task force to begin implementation of a plan to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Along with the survey, CABQ put out a call for Climate Task Force applicants. New Mexico First has partnered with the City in the selection process, focusing on diversity of expertise, age, race, income, sector and neighborhood. The survey results will be released in the coming weeks and the task force will begin meeting in October. We look forward to the exciting initiatives that will come out of this community-based project. You can send inquiries and share your name and email

to sustainability@cabq.gov to receive notices and updates about the climate plan. More information is [available here](#), or contact the ABQ Sustainability Coordinator Kelsey Rader at Krader@cabq.gov.



Virtual Field Experiences

Remember nature-oriented field trips? These are still available, just in a different format. The [Sandia Mountain Natural History Center](#) (SMNHC), a program of the [NM Museum of Natural History and Science](#) and Albuquerque Public Schools has switched gears during the COVID-19 pandemic from their usual on-site Ecology Field Program to a new [Virtual Field Experience](#).

The program, currently provided to all APS 5th-grade classes, covers the components and connections within an ecosystem and a variety of phenomena,

species, and activities relevant to local ecosystems in NM. Students delve into scientific concepts and methods with an SMNHC educator on Google Meet, venture outside their homes to do hands-on activities, share and discuss their findings, and take a close look at skulls, scat, wildlife camera photos, and more.

The SMNHC hopes to begin offering this virtual program to schools and groups outside of APS in the near future. In the meantime, check out the many videos on their [YouTube channel](#). More information is available on their [website](#).

Perpetual Screen Time Getting You Down? Join Nature Niños

[Nature Niños](#), a program created by [New Mexico Wildlife Federation](#), aims to get children off screens and out into nature throughout the state of New Mexico. NM Wildlife Federation knows that it's critical to get children connected to nature early so that they can form a life-long bond and sense of stewardship with it. Nature Niños has a variety of programs that provide opportunities to engage in the outdoors.

- [Nature Niños Forest School](#) helps early childhood professional integrate nature and play-based education into their programs.
- [Nature Niños Backyard Nature Classes](#) are online, one-hour classes offered every Tuesday and recorded if you miss them. After the class, children have homework tied to the lesson.
- [Nurturing Your Child with Nature Series](#) is a resource for parents to help their families get off screens and into the outdoors through a series of activities and lessons to do together. The program aims to create an online community of families looking to slow down and cultivate the idea of “slow

childhood”. This six-week series is created in partnership with the City of Albuquerque Open Space.

For more information or to register for these programs, email Sarah Candelaria at sarah@nmwildlife.org.

Regenerative Agriculture

[Kiss the Ground](#) is an online educational hub for regenerative agriculture, a system of farming principles that rehabilitates the entire ecosystem and enhances natural resources, rather than depleting them. Using practices to grow food **that work with nature instead of against it**, regenerative agriculture improves the well-being of farmworkers, health of the soil, and the welfare of animals and other wildlife, all while trapping carbon underground using the unique properties of healthy soil and plants.

[Kiss the Ground](#) is also a new, feature-length movie that explores key soil health and regenerative agricultural principles and features interviews with a wide range of farmers, authors, experts, researchers and scientists. The movie proposes that by regenerating the world’s soils, humans can rapidly stabilize Earth’s climate, restore lost ecosystems and create abundant food supplies. The film uses creative graphics and visuals, along with striking NASA and NOAA footage and stars Woody Harrelson, David Arquette, Gisele Bundchen, Jason Mraz (and others) and three newly minted stars from [Understanding Ag](#): Ray Archuleta, Gabe Brown and Kris Nichols, Ph.D. [Watch the trailer here](#) and [the movie on Netflix](#).

[The Future of Tourism Summit](#) will take place October 6, 8:30 am – 4 pm. The free, virtual event is offered by the NM Tourism Department with state and

national industry partners to discuss challenges facing the tourism industry and opportunities to support recovery. [RSVP directly](#) or [learn more](#).



Fire Season is Upon Us

So far NM has been spared the havoc and destruction of the fire season now ablaze along the west coast. But we can't be complacent. The [scientific community](#) suggests that the ferocious fires we are now experiencing may be due to natural weather patterns, climate warming, human behaviors, and a century of fire management practices, specifically aggressive fire suppression, that all may be contributing to the fires.

Here in NM we have the benefit of centuries of traditional wisdom and experience in managing fires. Traditional fire management draws from Indigenous science and is intentional about when, where, and how fires are burned. Deliberate

burning practices increased the abundance of plants for food and tools, enhanced wildlife grazing areas, and controlled insects and diseases. Burning also removed dead vegetation and promoted plant growth.

An inspiring [Story Map](#) describes Santa Clara Pueblo's "collective journey to develop forest resilience" following several devastating wildfires over the past 20 years. The Oso, Cerro Grande, and Las Conchas fires all originated outside the Pueblo boundary, yet burned nearly 80% of Santa Clara Pueblo forested lands. In response, Santa Clara Pueblo Forestry has developed a plan in collaboration with tribal, state, federal and non-governmental agencies to keep fire an active component in restoring and maintaining tribal lands. The story map includes strategies for developing forest resiliency that provide valuable guidance for protecting our forests and communities from fire.



Pandemic Resources

Tens of thousands of people in New Mexico have lost their jobs as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, resulting in greater needs than ever before. The [New Mexico Foundation](#) has opened another grant cycle for emergency grants from the [Vecino, Neighbor Helping Neighbor Fund](#) to nonprofits that support those impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Funding will support direct service

organizations providing food, water, and other emergency needs to some of the hardest hit areas. Submit [this form](#) via email or postal mail to NM Foundation, 8 Calle Medico, Santa Fe, NM 87501, or email edavila@newmexicofoundation.org.

The [Spark Justice Fund](#), housed at the Borealis Philanthropy, is accepting applications now through October 20, 2020 from grassroots organizations working to end cash bail, transform pretrial justice and build power in communities most impacted by incarceration. The rapid response funding is intended to meet the needs arising out of the current COVID-19 pandemic in jails and in communities. [Download the complete RFP](#). For more information, visit the [Borealis Philanthropy website](#).

NEW MEXICO FIRST COUNTDOWN



"The only way to practice democracy, is to practice democracy." — Hu Shih. A democracy is only real when people go out and take part in it. Voting is the most basic element of democratic participation.

- The deadline to [register online to vote](#) is **Tuesday, October 6, 2020**.
 - If you do not have a driver's license or state identification card issued by the MVD, or would prefer to use a paper form to register to vote, please fill out the Voter Registration Form ([English](#) / [Español](#)) and send to your local county clerk's office postmarked by October 6, 2020. You will find the contact information for all 33 county clerk offices [here](#).
 - Stay healthy while voting. Check out these [healthy voting suggestions](#) for NM.
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Debate Watch Parties

New Mexico First is partnering with the Commission on Congressional Debates and the [New Mexico Black Voters Collaborative](#) to host the Cross-Partisan Debate Watch Parties, a series of conversations from the comfort of your home, following the 2020 Presidential Debates. The Presidential Debates are scheduled for September 29, October 7, October 15, and October 22. The Watch Parties will follow the debates and are dedicated to thoughtful and cross-partisan discussions about issues important to New Mexicans. These events will be hosted through Zoom. Participants will be able to join these educational conversations through one of two event options: Night Owl Sessions and Early Bird Sessions. Night Owl Sessions will be held immediately after each debate. Early Bird Sessions will be held the morning after each debate, at 8:00 AM MST. It's FREE and not too late to register by going to <http://nmfirst.org/events/debates>.

Tip for Civic Engagement

Many public policy conflicts that arise related to natural resources go far beyond differences in positional interests. The conflicts are deeper than, “I want to use X natural resource for purposes Y, and you want to use X natural resource for purpose B.” Rather, these conflicts are often deeply embedded in fundamental differences in our understandings of our relationship with and to the natural world. A failure to discuss and understand values when addressing public policy disputes about how we interact with and are strengthened or harmed by our natural world results in a greater likelihood of win-lose outcomes.

Committing to the hard work of engaging people with diverse world views in authentic dialogue and deliberation about how we interact with the natural world and the impact of those interactions is crucial to better decision making and better outcomes.

This section is authored by Lilly Irvin-Vitela, President and Executive Director of New Mexico First. She invites you to connect! Email her at lilly@nmfirst.org.

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Our Mission. Our Values.

Our Mission

To be a catalyst for positive change by engaging citizens in policy and enabling action.

Our Core Values

Meaningfully engaging New Mexicans in public policy; Striving for and respecting consensus; Pursuing and respecting diverse points of views; Ensuring inclusion and transparency; Rising above partisan politics; Changing policy to improve people's lives; Creating an informed citizenry that is powerfully motivated; Reaching out statewide including rural and tribal communities; Partnering with others; Promoting civility and Democracy at its best!

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