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New Mexico Office of the State Engineer Offers Water-Wise Landscaping Curriculum

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) – With water supplies in the state expected to get even more scarce in the future than they are now, future homeowners and business managers will need to be more water-efficient than ever.

Helping today's students become tomorrow's water-conscious adults is the reason the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer has published a xeriscape curriculum for middle and high school students aimed at teaching them how to plan, design and install water-wise landscapes.

Recognizing that large amounts of water are used for residential and commercial landscapes, *Learning to Xeriscape: A Hands-on, Problem-Solving Curriculum for Mid- and High-School Students* utilizes xeriscaping as a way to introduce water issues in the classroom. The curriculum teaches students the seven principles of water-wiser landscaping: proper planning and design, adequate soil preparation, appropriate turf areas; wise plant selection, efficient irrigation, adequate mulching, and proper maintenance. It also includes background discussions on broader state water issues.

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The 361-page curriculum employs a problem-solving approach that puts students in the position to participate in critical-thinking and decision-making. It uses xeriscaping as an integrating concept, tying science, social studies, math, and language arts into real-life situations. Students are asked to address typical questions and problems that might occur when planning a residential or commercial landscape through numerous hands-on activities.

The curriculum, which was funded through grants from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Xeriscape Council of New Mexico, is being offered to teachers and other educators throughout the state. The Office of the State Engineer is providing a two-hour mini-workshop for educators who would like an introduction to *Learning to Xeriscape*. The workshops will highlight teaching techniques and help locate local resources

To receive a free copy of the curriculum or obtain more information, contact the Office of the State Engineer at 1-800-WATERNM or through waternm@ose.state.nm.us. The curriculum can also be downloaded from the agency's web page at www.seo.state.nm.us/water-info/conservation/index.html.

The Office of the State Engineer and the Interstate Stream Commission are separate but companion agencies charged with administering the state's water resources. The agencies have power over the supervision, measurement, appropriation and distribution of almost all surface and ground water in New Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The State Engineer is also Secretary of the Interstate Stream Commission and oversees the staff of both agencies.

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