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The Office of the State Engineer Releases New Publication for Water Conservation

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) – The New Mexico Office of the State Engineer announces the release of their newest water conservation publication, "Roof-Reliant Landscaping, Rainwater Harvesting with Cistern Systems in New Mexico."

This on-line manual is designed to introduce the concept of roof-reliant landscaping, a water wise strategy that explores ways to get the appropriate use of natural precipitation, combined with the design and creation of landscapes that need little or no supplemental water to thrive. The manual begins with a basic introduction to xeriscaping (water wise landscaping techniques) and semi-arid landscape planning and design and evolves into a detailed "how-to" discussion of cistern-system design, construction and maintenance.

New Mexico receives 12 inches of precipitation per year on average. A roof-reliant landscape is designed to survive on the natural precipitation that falls on the plant material--plus the water that can be harvested from the roofs of onsite buildings and stored in a cistern for later distribution.

Because New Mexico is an arid state with significant water challenges, there is a renewed interest statewide in the concept of rainwater harvesting and cisterns. Rooftop rainwater harvesting, along with other outdoor water conservation practices, can reduce the demands on municipal water systems and our aquifers.

"Water is a precious resource in New Mexico, and it is in the state's best interest to be good stewards of this resource," said Conservation Bureau Chief John Longworth. "Committed water conservation efforts will result not only in water savings, but also in appropriate public outdoor spaces and beautiful and responsible landscapes."

The Office of the State Engineer continues to respond to the public's need for new and progressive ways to conserve New Mexico's limited water supply. Visit the Water Use and Conservation section of our website www.ose.state.nm.us to view the roof-reliant landscaping manual in its entirety or simply download the chapter, appendix, or worksheet that best suits your needs. The final appendix provides a list of additional information about xeriscaping, dryland gardening, rainwater harvesting, and other methods of water conservation.

In the near future, look for a recommended list of "Waterwise Plants of New Mexico" with a column dedicated to "precipitation only plants." Also, the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer will also be developing an Irrigation Calculator, which will help users to determine the appropriate amount of water to use for their landscapes.

These two publications are made possible by two \$25,000 grants that the U S Bureau of Reclamation recently awarded to the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer's Water Use and Conservation Bureau to further the agency's mission of promoting conservation and the efficient use of water in all sectors.

"These publications will prove to be very valuable to water users in the State of New Mexico," said State Engineer John D'Antonio. "Water conservation is such an important issue for all of us and I applaud the efforts of our Water Use and Conservation Bureau to bring significantly useful information to the public."

The Office of the State Engineer is charged with administering the state's water resources. The State Engineer has power over the supervision, measurement, appropriation, and distribution of all surface and groundwater in New Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The State Engineer is also Secretary of the Interstate Stream Commission and oversees its staff.

The Interstate Stream Commission is charged with separate duties including protecting New Mexico's right to water under eight interstate stream compacts, ensuring the state complies with each of those compacts, as well as water planning.

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