

Water in the Borderlands

Water is life. In New Mexico, it shapes where we live, how we grow food, and how our communities survive. From rivers and acequias to wells and reservoirs, water connects our families, cultures, and land. Over the past 150 years, the water of the Borderlands has been changed by farming, pollution, and decisions made far from the communities most affected. This unit will explore where our Borderlands water comes from, who controls it, and why it matters. You'll learn from oral histories from Borderlands knowledge keepers, geographical resources, storymapping, music, documentaries and actionable tasks.

This unit invites students to ask questions, share their own experiences with water, and imagine how young people can help protect one of our region's and our earth's most valuable resources.

Inquiry Design Model (IDM) Blueprint™

Compelling Question

Is access to clean water a basic human right?

Should water be free?

Is water scarcity caused more by nature or human actions?

Can traditional ecological knowledge solve today's water crisis?

What happens when cultural values about water clash with economic interests?

Standards and Practices

9-12.Geo.3. Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

9-12.Geo.12. Apply a range of deliberative and democratic strategies and procedures to make decisions and take action in their classrooms, schools, and out-of-school contexts.

9-12.NMH.44. Analyze multiple perspectives of how water use, policy, and management has changed over the centuries in New Mexico.

9-12.NMH.43. Analyze how New Mexicans maintain an agricultural industry given that they live in one of the driest states in the country.

9-12.Civ.11. Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, Informed Action regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place

NMPED Indigenous Scope
NMIIS Tenet 3: Language and Stories. Use Oral Traditions, Understand bilingual or multilingual students' learning and communication, connecting elders and knowledge keepers with students and educators,

	<p>NMIIS Tenet 5: Community and Family Engagement. Collaborate and work with elders,</p> <p>NMIIS Tenet 6: Indigenous ways of knowing. Element: Interconnection with nature. Understanding nature is a teacher. Understand responsibility to take care of land/environment. Honor elders, knowledge keepers and cultural leaders</p>		
Staging the Question	<p><i>Is water important to everyone in the same way?</i></p> <p><i>What or Who do you think is wasting the most water?</i></p> <p><i>Why do some places have less water?</i></p>		
<p>Supporting Questions - Supporting questions help unpack the compelling question to provide knowledge and insights to the overall inquiry.</p>			
	Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
	<p>How has the Rio Grande or your local river/water source changed over a 50 year period?</p> <p>How does your local river /the Rio Grande affect your daily life?</p>	<p>How does industrial/industrial-scale farming affect your water supply/access to water?</p> <p>What are the repercussions of the Elephant Butte dam regulating water flow?</p> <p>What are the biodiversity costs of a dry river?</p>	<p><i>Can traditional ecological knowledge solve today's water crisis?</i></p> <p><i>What happens when cultural values about water clash with economic interests?</i></p>
	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
	<p>Story Maps/Instant App link - Look at the Healing Borderlands Water story map then take the survey. Pin locations where you have a connection with water in the place that you live on the map and answer the survey questions. Then upload your photos, reflections and art to compare among the class.</p>	<p>Create an informative Zine about water usage, water supply and access, water regulation and/or local crops. Use <i>Staging the Question</i> to interview class peers, then add the responses as quotes in the zine.</p> <p>Basic materials needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paper ● Scissors ● Pencils, colors, pens, etc. ● Magazines 	<p>Design a PSA campaign about Water, social justice and people stewarding water also known as “ water protectors”</p> <p>Research about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Standing Rock NODAPL - 2015 Gold King Mine wastewater spill - Sunland Park water lawsuit - Project Jupiter (data centers) <p>What were/are the challenges? What are the outcomes? Use this research to make an infographic poster to</p>

		display in your classroom or around your school.
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
<p>Jaggie Sounds Podcast - Agua, Tierra Pueblo</p> <p>Water Is Life Documentary LAB</p> <p>Article - A Sacred River's Sovereignty by Andrea Everett</p> <p>Healing through whitewater: Indigenous youth paddle the newly free-flowing Klamath River</p> <p>Dam Removal on the Klamath River</p> <p>Tigua Youth Connect with the Rio Bosque</p> <p>Songs to listen to-</p> <p>Rio Abajo</p> <p>Like Water</p>	<p>Podcast Session- Israel Chavez</p> <p>How to make a Zine: Future Healthy: How to make an 8-page folding zine with Sticky Institute</p> <p>Industrial Farming Resources</p> <p>The Rio Grande's Pecan Problem</p> <p>Requiem for a River - Trailer</p> <p>Thank You, For Showing Me How To Live</p> <p>Archival Materials</p> <p>Photos from the Rio</p> <p>Songs to listen to-</p> <p>Water Is Life (OFFICIAL MUSIC VIDEO) - Def-i</p> <p>Water Is Life (feat. Oliver Enjady) - Official Music Video</p>	<p>Video - Echoes of the Rio</p> <p>For Native 'water protectors,' Standing Rock protest has become fight for religious freedom, human rights PBS News</p> <p>Water Protector Legal Collective</p> <p>CRRUA fined \$189K for years of drinking water violations</p> <p>Navajo Nation sues EPA over 2015 mine spill</p> <p>Article - The Project Jupiter Chronicles: A charged countdown to September 19</p> <p>Blog Press from New Mexico Environment Department v. Camino Real Regional Utility Authority</p> <p>A river in New Zealand legally becomes a person</p> <p>Rights of Rivers</p> <p>Song to listen to-</p> <p>Supaman - Miracle feat. Maimouna Youssef</p>
Summative Performance Task	Argument	

<p>What is the end result of this unit? How to gauge the unit as whole (i.e. performance, test, interview, a class rap)</p>	<p>Extension</p>	<p>Design /draw a farm plan that uses less water (extension research and performance task within agriculture and ecosystems)</p>
<p>Taking Informed Action</p>	<p>The standards do not prescribe the actions that are appropriate for a particular classroom context or for a specific inquiry. However, students will need tangible opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom to consider, discuss, debate, plan for, and undertake action oriented experiences that would culminate their academic inquiries.....What does it look like when students take informed action? - NM PED Social Studies Instructional Shifts</p>	
<p>Citation Styles</p>	<p>In this unit, many of the citations we use are not from official academic publications—but that doesn't make them any less important. Knowledge isn't only generated in universities; it also arises from personal stories, community experience, and grassroots research. Our goal is to respect and uplift these varied voices, recognizing that official-sounding sources aren't the only path to truth. As Trouillot explains, the way history is told is shaped by power and perspective. Sometimes what's left out—the silences—matters just as much as what is included. By using a variety of sources, even ones that might seem “unofficial,” we can uncover truths and challenge dominant narratives, helping us build a fuller, more honest understanding of the past.</p> <p>Moving Away From A Singular Dominant Narrative - The discipline of social studies is, and always has been, about examining multiple sources through a lens of inquiry. However, sometimes social studies has been taught in a way that promotes a singular story, rather than recognizing there are multiple and varied experiences of people, places, and ideas. These new standards move away from seeing social studies as a singular story, and toward one that recognizes and embraces counter narratives and provides equitable inclusion of historical stories reflecting Indigenous, Hispano/Latino, Chicano, Mestizo, Genizaro, African American, and other cultural perspectives. - <i>NM PED Social Studies Instructional Shifts</i></p>	
<p>Key Terms/Ideas and Vocabulary</p>	<p>acequia, community ditch association, water rights, Rio Grande, GIS mapping, storymaps, aquifer, sovereignty, Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID), Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, pecans, Gadsden Purchase, land rights, NM Civil Rights Act, indigenous rights to water, water stewardship, chile, corn, Doctrine of Discovery, settlers, squatters, water acquisitions, homesteading laws, zine, cultivate, dam, civil rights, traditional ecological knowledge, western science, borderlands, agua, pa'a (Tigua), Tó (Diné), Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, Pehla Usla, River Season, colonialism, “forgotten stretch”, Big Bend, Culebra (water serpent), Pueblo, Time in memorial, monocropping,</p>	