

riors who steal much of the town's livestock, kill a young shepherd and kidnap another.

This violence did not begin with the arrival of Europeans.

ently there.

One of the most egregious errors one can make when considering the lives of the citizens of this foreign country is to judge them by the standards of one's own time.

as, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Kansas — would be able

Experts say that much of the problem is due to the pro-

director of the Miles Mineral Museum at Eastern New Mexico University.

OP-ED

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Stakeholder involvement critical in dealing with NM drought

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New Mexico is in a severe drought that negatively impacts the state's water dependent economy, environment, and society. Successfully confronting drought requires a multi-pronged strategy, and the New Mexico Drought Relief Act recently introduced by our U.S. Senators proposes just such an approach.

In New Mexico, we need to muster all of our resources in a comprehensive and coordinated suite of local, state and federal activities to maintain economic development, ecosystem integrity and community health in the face of drought.

Stakeholder involvement in policy formulation is critical, and the New Mexico Drought Relief Act is based on priorities of water users and water stakeholders in New Mexico.

Water issue priorities were solicited from over 500 attendees at the New Mexico Annual Water Conference of 2012 hosted by the New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute and co-sponsored by New Mex-

ico State University and Sen. Tom Udall.

The day after the conference, a group of 18 people representing interests across the state was brought together for a one-day workshop, and following the workshop, Udall's staff put together a conference white paper that summarized the stakeholders' solutions to drought that could be addressed by federal legislation. The New Mexico Drought Relief Act exemplifies stakeholder inclusion in policy formulation.

The bill supports a wide range of different options tailored to different hydrologic situations in New Mexico.

For example, efforts to increase groundwater recharge would raise water tables, while lining ditches for irrigation efficiency and installing new wells might lower groundwater levels in the short-term.

These contrasting efforts appear to be in conflict, but are actually appropriate for different local situations. Research sponsored by the New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute shows that in many places, seepage from irrigation

ditches is beneficial for groundwater recharge, but in other places lining to reduce seepage is required for efficient irrigation system management.

In locations like Hatch there are potential new sources of groundwater available for drought relief, and installation of wells to extract now unused deep groundwater could make the difference for survival of family farms.

To effectively make these water sources available requires scientific research and planning supported by the bill. Meticulous characterization of water inputs and outputs will help New Mexico legislators and policy makers craft specific projects to confront drought using tools supported by the newly introduced bill.

The New Mexico Drought Relief Act illustrates that there is not a single magic bullet and that blanket solutions don't work in hydrologically diverse New Mexico, so we need to use all the tools we have to confront drought.

Among other provisions, the bill authorizes emergency funding for 16 different technologies and activities to

address drought. Dependence on large federal water projects will not solve New Mexico water issues, so we need to work with communities, stakeholders, municipalities and user groups to have effective projects. The entire array of new and existing water sources needs to be considered such as aquifer storage and recovery, brackish water desalination, water reuse and water conservation.

The bill is a manifestation of the perspective that we can use a full palette of options for coordinated water resource management and that improved understanding of water systems will help guide the best choices of technology and information systems to manage water.

There is widespread agreement that New Mexico is in drought. We need to do all we can to improve our water availability so New Mexico can thrive.

The New Mexico Drought Relief Act lays out federal options, that when combined with state and local efforts, will make a real difference to the water situation in New Mexico.

