Speaker Biographies

Melinda Harm Benson is an associate professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of New Mexico. Her research and teaching center on environment and natural resource management challenges, with a particular emphasis on emerging trends in environmental governance. Her work focuses on the complexities associated with many current environmental challenges, including examining the role of law and institutional integration of in emerging concepts including resilience theory and adaptive management. Prior to academic life, she worked first as a lobbyist and then later as an attorney representing conservation groups on environment and natural resources issue in the Intermountain West.

Tom Blaine, New Mexico State Engineer & Secretary, Interstate Stream Commission. Tom is well-versed in the critical water issues facing New Mexico, bringing more than 28 years of engineering experience in the private and public sectors to the Office of the State Engineer. He recently held the position of director of the Environmental Health Division in the New Mexico Environment Department. His background includes extensive experience in civil and transportation engineering, with service to the City of Albuquerque as a senior civil engineer as well as to the State of New Mexico with both the Department of Transportation and the Office of the State Engineer, and in the private sector. Between his years of public service, Blaine also owned and operated his own engineering firm, focusing on surface and groundwater hydrology and water distribution systems. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from New Mexico State University in Las Cruces.

During **John R. Brown's** career in the public policy arena he has worked for federal agencies, the Navajo Nation, the State of New Mexico, Sandoval County, several Indian tribes, the NM Acequia Association, and internationally. He also taught public budgeting as a UNM adjunct instructor. He was executive director of the New Mexico Water Dialogue from 2002 to 2006, and currently serves on the boards of the Dialogue and the MRG Water Assembly. In the mid-1990s, in consulting for an environmental NGO in the Philippines and later for the New Mexico Acequia Association, he became increasingly interested in the role of institutions – the rules, norms, and shared strategies that people develop and use to structure their interactions – in shaping policy change. In 2000-01, as a visiting scholar in the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis at Indiana University, he studied with Elinor Ostrom, exploring the importance of institutional arrangements in effectively governing common-pool resources. He has written several articles about these themes in relation to water planning and policy in New Mexico. John holds a B.A. in English from Harvard College and an interdisciplinary M.A. in African Studies from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Kim Eichhorst, Co-Director of the Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program (BEMP) and Research Associate Professor at the University of New Mexico (UNM). Dr. Eichhorst started research in the bosque in 1995, working with Dr. Cliff Crawford. Her dissertation focused on herbivores, cottonwoods, and pollution in urban and rural areas. She has worked for BEMP since 1999, focusing on bosque ecology and the impacts of historic and anthropogenic drivers. Her work with BEMP also focuses on the importance of environmental education and promoting a sense of stewardship in today's students. Kim states, "We are here, as a society, because of the river. Without the river, we lose the bosques, wetlands, and wildlife corridor that are essential to so many species. We cannot undo many of the changes to the river, but we can increase resilience to this highly modified ecosystem by restoring the mosaic of habitats and river function. We need to remember that we are a part of the ecosystem, and if we support the bosque, it will in turn support us."

David Gutzler is Professor of Meteorology and Climatology at the University of New Mexico. He and his students combine observed data and large-scale model output to assess the causes of global and regional climate variability, and to improve the skill and application of hydroclimatic predictions on seasonal and longer time scales. He holds degrees from the University of California at Berkeley (B.S., Engineering Physics) and MIT (PhD, Meteorology). He is a former Editor of the American Meteorological Society's Journal of Climate. He served as a lead author for the fifth assessment report of the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, published in 2013. He received the UNM College of Arts & Sciences' award for outstanding teaching in 2008 and was named a Fellow in UNM's new Center for Teaching Excellence this year.

Michael Jensen is a staff member of the Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program (BEMP). Through a contract with the EPA, he serves as the Middle Rio Grande Urban Waters Ambassador, under the Urban Waters Federal Partnership. Prior to his work at BEMP, he worked for over nine years at Amigos Bravos, a river conservation organization. He has lived in a number of cities in the US, Japan, Europe and Brazil with rivers running through them. They all flooded at some point.

Phil King is the John Clark Professor and Associate Department Head in the Civil Engineering Department at New Mexico State University. He specializes in water resources and agricultural engineering, STEM education, and engineering ethics. His research and consulting have included irrigation, hydrology, drought and climate change, and water quality studies of the Rio Grande, as well as technical support for large-scale dispute resolution on area water issues. Dr. King has worked with the State of New Mexico, irrigators, municipalities, Native American tribes, and environmental groups to develop new and innovative approaches to water management and education. Dr. King received a fellowship from the American Association for the Advancement of Science, during which he served with the National Science Foundation (NSF) to design and implement research programs and evaluation methods to inform federal science policy development. Dr. King was the Principal Investigator for Reaching the

Pinnacle, a Regional Alliance supported by NSF to recruit and retain students with disabilities in STEM fields. He served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Malawi, Africa. Dr. King has Ph.D. and M.S. degrees in Agricultural Engineering from Colorado State University, a B.S. in Civil Engineering is from UC Berkeley, and an M.B.A. from NMSU. He is a registered Professional Engineer in New Mexico.

Howard Passell works in the Systems Analysis Group at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico. His work focuses on emerging national security issues associated with water, energy, food, ecosystems (including climate), and population, with an emphasis on the relationships between resource scarcity and human security. Over the years his work has included resource monitoring, modeling, management, capacity building, and policy-related projects at various scales in the US, Central Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa. He teaches as an adjunct professor in the Water Resources Program at the University of New Mexico. His undergraduate studies were in classical literature and the liberal arts at St. John's College in Santa Fe, NM and the Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. He worked as a journalist, photographer, ski patroller, river guide, and instructor/course director for the Colorado Outward Bound School. He lived and worked in Indonesia, including a year at the Orangutan Research and Conservation Project in the rainforest of Borneo, and a year and a half as founding program director at an Outward Bound spinoff in Sumatra. Later he earned his master's and doctorate degrees in conservation biology and hydrogeoecology at the University of New Mexico. Currently, and with his wife and daughter, he experiments on the water-energy-food-ecosystem nexus on his small farm in the Middle Rio Grande Valley.

Susan Rich is the Forest and Watershed Health Coordinator for New Mexico State Forestry. Her career spans three decades working in natural resource management for local governments and conservation districts in the Middle Rio Grande region, as well as for the state. In her current position, Susan works closely with the other Forestry Division offices, partner agencies and organizations to implement New Mexico's Forest and Watershed Health Plan and State Forest Action Plan. Those plans identify key issues facing landowners and natural resource managers, and lay out recommendations for restoring ecosystems across jurisdictional boundaries. Susan is involved in activities ranging from public outreach and policy issues to coordinating landscape-scale projects at the executive level through the state Coordinating Group.

Bruce Thomson is a Research Professor and Professor Emeritus of Civil Engineering at the University of New Mexico. He was Director of UNM's Water Resources Program from 2005 to 2013. His teaching and research focus on water chemistry & treatment, ground water hydrology, and the relationship between water and energy. He is a Director of the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority (AMAFCA). He is a licensed professional engineer in New Mexico.

Bob Wessely co-founded and served as Technical Director of SciSo, Inc., a systems engineering consulting firm. As a water planner, he was a principal in the leadership team which developed the Regional Water Plan for Sandoval, Bernalillo and Valencia Counties. Among several other water oriented roles, he is currently President of the Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly, Chair of the Las Vegas Utility Advisory Committee, and President of the Las Vegas Community Water Board.

The Water Assembly originally was born in 1997 to develop the regional water plan, and became an all-volunteer not-for-profit corporation. In a partnership with the Mid Region Council of Governments' Water Resources Board, the Water Assembly led the public regional water planning process for Sandoval, Bernalillo and Valencia Counties. Since the Regional Water Plan's acceptance by all local governments in the region and New Mexico's Interstate Stream Commission in 2004, the Assembly has been sponsoring conferences and informational forums as well as other activities to encourage public awareness and implementation of the Plan.