

## Permaculture in Practice

# Lots to learn at Xeriscape Council forum

A succinct yet comprehensive list of natural principles comes at the end of the second chapter of *Permaculture: A Designers' Manual*. There Bill Mollison provides a unified but multivalent understanding of nature's nature. It's a two-page primer on being efficient, productive, and ethical. And it's some of the most dynamic reading around — right up there with Shakespeare's Sonnet 129 and Dostoevsky's *Brother's Karamazov*.

Last on his list of principles is one that seems so obvious it might be overlooked. But Mollison's use of italics gives us pause. "Information is *the* critical potential resource," he says. "It *becomes* a resource only when obtained and acted upon."

Before action, information is trash, clutter, trivia at best, entertainment — enjoyed, perhaps, but insignificant in terms of the challenges we face as a culture and our natural desire to confront them. In other words, we know how to save the world. We just need enough people to act.

One place to start is at the 10th Conference of the Xeriscape Council of New Mexico to be held at the Albuquerque Convention Center Feb. 24–26. Information on water conservation, native plants, compost, mulches, greywater use, water harvesting, and more will be available in various formats throughout the three days. Registration for Thursday and Friday is \$100.

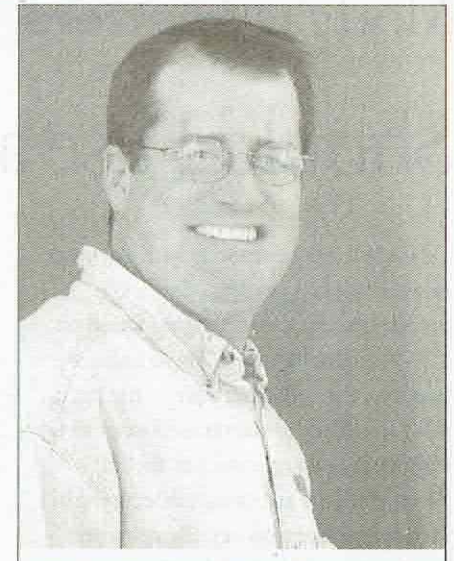
Thursday looks like the best day, but that may be because I know half the speakers. Highlights include Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chavez, who will no doubt kick things off with an upbeat pep-talk. Then Robert Glennon is poised to bring us back to reality with his keynote address titled "Water Follies: The Impact of Groundwater Pumping on the Environment." Next, the sardonically inspiring intellect of Joel Glanzberg will address "Cultural Uses of Water."

After lunch, but fortunately not immediately after lunch, charmer and

greywater guru Art Ludwig is scheduled to take the reigns with a discussion of how to abide by the two-year old New Mexico law allowing the installation of permit-free greywater systems. Finally, David Salzman, owner of Santa Fe Greenhouses, will speak about "New Plant Introductions and Small Scale Water Harvesting."

Friday looks very informative, too, and has an explicit focus on the future. Talk topics range from opportunities in arid landscaping and new, high-tech irrigation methods to saving water by applying smart growth strategies to subdivision development. Of particular interest, perhaps especially to those living in the Aamodt case district, might be Panayoti Kelaidis' seminar called "Waterless Landscape Design."

The extensive lineup of exhibitors and seminars will be free on Saturday. With speakers such as Judith Phillips, Jim Brooks, George Duda, and many more this will certainly be an info-packed day, too.



**NATE DOWNEY**

For more information and/or to register, go to [www.xeriscapenm.com](http://www.xeriscapenm.com).

So, please, take this information, and act on it. Or, if you can't make the xeriscape conference, save the weekend of March 19-20, when I'll be teaching a class at EcoVersity on many of the same topics.

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