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Remaining

A glossary of liquid assets

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Nate Downey/For The New Mexican | 0 comments

They say Eskimos have 50 to 100 words for snow. Here in the Southwest, we could list ten times that many for water. Here's a mini monsoon of them:

Acequia water – surface water diverted to a field via a canal or canals. It's the type of water that sustained Santa Fe for centuries, from Oñate into the 1950s.

Aquifer – an often-shrinking groundwater reservoir (typically full of muddy gravel).

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Blackwater – effluent or sewage that requires treatment before it can be recycled. Many systems exist at the homeowner level.

Brackish water – saline water with the potential of being transformed into potable water, but the financial and environmental costs are typically too severe to consider desalination. Water at an industrial scale.

Greywater – liquid waste from bathroom sinks, showers, and clothes washers. It can be legally used in the residential landscapes of the Land of Enchantment without a permit as long as the New Mexico Environment Department's regulations are followed.

Groundwater – water found below the surface of the earth.

Ice – the solid form of water that's melting too quickly – from the highest Himalayan glaciers to the South Pole.

Irrigation-quality water – water that is suitable for agriculture but should only be drunk in a pinch.

Non-potable water – water that is unsafe to drink.

P'óe – water in Tewa, the language of six local, pre-Coronado communities.

Precipitation – rain, snow, sleet, hail, dew, fog, and every other form of condensation, typically involving a quick, atmospheric-temperature change and some microscopic dust particles.

Potable water – drinking water.

Ripple – 1) a wave indicating the movement of water; 2) a lovely and powerful Grateful Dead tune.



Rainwater – rain and other forms of precipitation especially with the potential to be harvested.

Roofwater – precipitation that has landed on the top of a human-built shelter. Roofwater can be stored in the soil near plant roots or in cisterns.

Runoff – see stormwater.

Snowmelt – snow that has turned into water or runoff.

Stormwater – precipitation that hits the ground but is not absorbed by the land and creates an ephemeral flow over the surface of the earth. Stormwater can be stored in rain gardens, on-contour swales, bioremediation basins, and more.

Surface water – water that exists in rivers, lakes, reservoirs, etc.

Treated effluent – wastewater that has been cleaned to a desired standard.

Virtual water – the water that goes into the food you eat, the clothing you wear, the energy and materials you use.

Wasted water – a crying shame.

Wastewater – blackwater and/or greywater that has not been treated.

Water – the universal solvent and infinitely cleanable liquid form of the force of life.

Water footprint – the amount of water and virtual water an entity uses.

Water harvesting – the collection, conveyance, filtration, storage, and distribution of rainwater, or what you should do if you own property in an arid land.

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Water vapor – the gaseous form of water.

You – pronoun, a being with a brain that's almost entirely water.

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