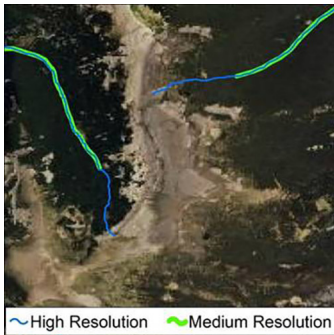


## New high-resolution stream dataset improves accuracy

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 25 September 2020 05:10

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### Better protects hundreds of stream miles

The New Mexico Environment Department recently made significant improvements to the accuracy of mapped streams, resulting in better representation - and better protection - of hundreds of additional miles of streams in the state.

The higher-resolution GIS layer, built using National Hydrography Dataset Plus High Resolution data, captures more of the actual stream sinuosity (curves and bends) and extends higher into the watershed to better represent true stream length. With the higher resolution, New Mexico's assessed stream length increased from 7,832 miles to 8,647 miles.

"Surface water resources are more precious here than most other places in the world," NMED Cabinet Secretary James Kenney said. "We need the very best scientific data available on our streams to make informed decisions about what is best for New Mexico's waters."

"Accurate data on our water resources are essential for scientifically sound decision-making," Project Director of the New Mexico Water Data Initiative Stacy Timmons said. "With the new dataset provided on streams in New Mexico, we can build tools that combine these data with other data, such as water quantity and uses, to help inform our watershed management choices."

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Previous versions of the stream dataset had unnatural breaks and unrealistic stream channel configurations. The more refined, high-resolution dataset extends the stream network seamlessly across the terrain to better connect observational data, such as water quality samples or stream flow measurements, with the stream network at a variety of scales (e.g., local, regional and national), which was previously unreliable in many watersheds across the country, but particularly so in the semi-arid watersheds of New Mexico.

The higher-resolution dataset improves modeling and analysis, such as pollutant load reductions, flood risk assessments, toxic spill impacts, or invasive species threats, thus supporting better planning and management of our state's precious water resources.

The Environment Department's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.