



Meet Sam Fernald

Alexander (Sam) Fernald, PhD

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Sam Fernald is Director of the New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute (NM WRRRI). He leads NM WRRRI in its mission to develop and disseminate knowledge that will assist the state, region, and nation in solving water resources problems. NM WRRRI supports university faculty research, provides training opportunities for students, and transfers research findings to the academic community, water managers, and the general public. Dr. Fernald is past president of the National Institutes for Water Resources (NIWR) that advocates for the 54 water institutes in the nation.

Dr. Fernald is also Professor of Watershed Management at New Mexico State University (NMSU). His research interests include water quality hydrology; land use effects on nonpoint source pollution; surface water/groundwater exchange, and systems approaches to integrating social and natural drivers of water scarcity. His earned degrees include a 1987 B.A. in international relations from Stanford University, an M.E.M. in 1993 in water and air resources from Duke University, and a Ph.D. in 1997 in watershed science from Colorado State University. He was a Fulbright Scholar in 2000 at the University of Concepcion, Chile and in 2008 at the National University of Patagonia, Argentina.

Dr. Fernald is a longtime delegate to the Universities Council on Water Resources representing NMSU, a lifetime member of UCOWR! He belongs to various other professional organizations including the American Geophysical Union, the American Water Resources Association, the Consortium of Universities for the Advancement of Hydrologic Sciences, Inc., the American Society of Civil Engineers, and the Society for Range Management.

"How do you plan on advancing UCOWR's mission of leading in education, research and public service in water resources?"

I would like to advance the UCOWR mission by increasing diversity, growing membership, and elevating the profile of the Journal of Contemporary Water Research and Education (JCWRE).

Diversity is the cornerstone of effective education, research, and outreach that meets the needs of all learners and stakeholders. I would actively promote diversity in UCOWR and its programs, most importantly including underrepresented groups, and adding diverse academic disciplines and institutions. UCOWR focuses on connecting people across disciplines, and diligent attention to diversity will strengthen connections by including a fully representative swath of the water community.

Growing the membership will help bring together scientists and educators from different disciplines, leading to innovation for cutting edge science, new funding sources, and new collaborations. UCOWR already offers open arms to water educators and researchers of all stripes. Because of the broad topic coverage of UCOWR, we have a chance to expand into new cross cutting topics and bring on new member institutions.

Elevating the profile of the journal will strengthen the UCOWR organization. I would add to ongoing improvements in JCWRE by highlighting the cross disciplinary nature and applied outcomes that are increasingly important for water science and education. We have a window of opportunity to advance science and to meet community needs at a time when the water research and education communities are grappling with ways to combine social and natural sciences. The JCWRE is the perfect journal to bring together disciplines and catalyze publication of cutting edge topics.