



Matthew Holmes became the CEO of the National Rural Water Association (NRWA) in 2020, after two decades with the organization. Matt began his career in Rural Water by helping small, rural, and tribal communities in New Mexico to modernize their utilities and provide safe water to their residents. He worked his way up from the grassroots into leadership at the state and national levels. He is accountable to a volunteer Board of

Directors representing 50 State Rural Water Associations and more than 30,000 drinking water and wastewater utility members nationwide.

Matt oversees programs that provide hands-on assistance to communities for regulatory compliance, operational troubleshooting, financial sustainability, workforce development, source water protection, energy efficiency, utility management, and board governance. These programs benefit over 80,000 water professionals annually in all 50 states, tribal nations, and U.S. territories.

He previously served as NRWA's Deputy CEO for six years and was responsible for operations and management. Matt led national disaster response efforts, coordinating field staff from State Associations around the country. In 2017, he was responsible for creating National Guideline Standards of Apprenticeship approved by the Department of Labor, resulting in dozens of registered apprenticeship programs benefiting the water workforce.

Matt has dedicated his career to helping rural and small communities meet water and environmental challenges. He holds an MA in Environmental and Natural Resource Economics from the University of New Mexico and a BS in Business Administration from the University of Arizona. Matt is an Eagle Scout and a lifelong outdoorsman. He holds certificates in avalanche rescue and rifle marksmanship. He grew up in Los Alamos, New Mexico.

EDUCATION

**Master of Arts in Economics**, August 1998  
Major: Natural Resource and Environmental Economics  
University of New Mexico | Albuquerque, NM

**Bachelor of Science in Business Administration**, May 1995  
Major: Business Economics  
University of Arizona | Tucson, AZ

EXPERIENCE

**Chief Executive Officer**, July 2020 – Present  
National Rural Water Association | Duncan, OK

- Responsible for operation of the nation’s largest water utility membership organization, with a \$80.3 million annual budget
- Formulates, plans, and recommends programs, policies, and procedures for consideration by the Board of Directors
- Supervises, directs, and manages all federal programs, projects, and activities of the Association
- Implements the strategic plan established by the Board of Directors
- Responsible for the employment and supervision of staff
- Represents the Association and maintains effective internal and external relationships

**Deputy Chief Executive Officer**, January 2014 – June 2020  
National Rural Water Association | Duncan, OK

- Responsible to the CEO for all operations and staffing at NRWA’s headquarters
- Administers all grants, contracts and programs of NRWA
- Led national disaster response efforts including in Puerto Rico after Hx Maria
- Created National Guideline Standards for Apprenticeship registered with USDOL
- Primary contact for all State Association leaders and agency representatives
- Served as acting Chief Executive Officer in CEO’s absence

**Executive Director**, August 2000 – December 2013  
New Mexico Rural Water Association | Albuquerque, NM

- Responsible to the Board of Directors for effective and ethical conduct of all affairs of the New Mexico Rural Water Association
- Responsible for compliance with federal and state laws and auditing standards
- Managed finances for the association, including preparation of the annual budget and grant writing for technical assistance and training programs
- Recruited, hired, trained, and managed all personnel
- Worked collaboratively with Native American leaders on water issues

EXPERIENCE CONT. **Groundwater Protection Specialist**, May 1999 – August 2000

New Mexico Rural Water Association | Albuquerque, NM

- Provided onsite technical assistance to rural water systems in contamination remediation, Federal and State regulatory compliance and public health protection
- Acted as a liaison between water systems, agencies, and consulting engineers

**Economic & Business Consultant**, August 1998 – May 1999

Hydra Inc. | Tijeras, NM

- Assisted in plant propagation, site preparation and installation of native wetland plants for riparian restoration, wastewater treatment and mine waste reclamation
- Developed new business strategies for riparian plant nursery and aquatic ecology consulting company

**Technical Research Assistant**, Summers 1992 – 1994

Los Alamos National Laboratory, United States Dept. of Energy | Los Alamos, NM

- Analyzed data from a space flight instrument using mainframe computer
- Assisted staff scientists with automated reporting, project cost accounting, digital programming, fuzzy logic, artificial intelligence, and neural network applications

COMMITTEES

- Automation Federation Board of Directors
- Nutrient Taskforce – Water Subcabinet EPA, USDA, DOI, DOC, ACOE & DOE
- Lead in Schools MOU – EPA
- Utility Strengthening Through Consolidation: Guiding Principles for the Water Sector – US Water Alliance
- Rural Workforce Innovation Network – USDA Rural Development
- Drinking Water Action Plan – EPA
- Decentralized MOU Partner
- New Mexico Drinking Water Advisory Group
- New Mexico Drought Task Force
- New Mexico State Water Planning Committee
- New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute Conference Committee
- NM WARN - Chairman
- Water Conservation Fee Fund Advisory Committee
- Water System Capacity Development and Compliance Assistance Team

- ACCOMPLISHMENTS
- National Rural Water Association - Executive Director Leadership Award 2007
  - NRWA - Excellence in Legislative Initiatives 2011, 2009, 2007
  - Appointed Special Master by the State of New Mexico, Seventh Judicial District to oversee water system election & ownership transfer, 2004
  - NRWA - Institute of Association Management (IAM) 2004, Instructor 2005-2006
  - AIARE Level II Avalanche Rescue Certificate – Silverton Avalanche School
  - Honors Student, Dean's List and graduate *cum laude* - University of Arizona
  - Richard A. Harvill Academic Scholarship
  - Wimberly-Johnson Scholarship
  - Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society
  - Golden Key National Honor Society
  - Scored 800/800 on the Graduate Records Exam analytical section
  - National Qualifier in Lincoln-Douglas Debate, 1991
  - State Finalist in Extemporaneous Speaking, 1991
  - New Mexico Mock Trial State Champions, Lead Defense Attorney, 1990
  - Eagle Scout Award, Boy Scouts of America, 1990
  - National Rifle Association - Rifle Marksman 1st Class