



# Dreaming New Mexico

“Dreaming New Mexico (DNM), a Bioneers project, helps facilitate ecological and social restoration at the state level by reconciling human and natural systems. Its strategic premise: ‘Dreaming the future can create the future.’ It provides a systemic template, methodology and collaborative mapping tools for communities for place-based and bioregional planning.”

**Submitted by:**

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**Entry Website:**

<http://www.dreamingnewmexico.org>

# Stage One Application

## **1. Summarize the purpose and key elements of your strategy:**

Dreaming New Mexico, a Bioneers project, helps facilitate ecological and social restoration at the state level by reconciling human and natural systems. It's a systemic template, methodology and source of tools communities can use for place-based and bioregional planning.

Its strategic premise: "Dreaming the future can create the future." We stimulate citizens to ask: What is it we really desire? What would success look like? It's also refuge from everyday struggles to lift self-imposed limits on our sense of possibility. The act of envisioning is followed by a collaborative effort to discover what we know and do not know. The primary tool of Dreaming New Mexico is the innovative tool of "future maps." These maps envision the state's future and revive a strong sense of and respect for place.

Mapping provides any community an opportunity for collaborative design. It's grounded in rigorous technical and strategic research, as well as multi-sectoral social mapping of networks and players. Combining what we know with our desires, the project creates a "do-able dream" grounded in pragmatic realities.

A second tool is a pamphlet keyed to the map that explains the "whole system:" components, connections, configurations, commons and players. In the process, a "third tool" arises: a "shadow think tank" of top local visionaries. They become part of the collaborative process as a core network that can actually implement the dream. These radiating social networks penetrate trintab constituencies to leverage change. The map/pamphlet serve as educational and organizing tools from grass roots to the canopy.

The final strategic element is the generative and distributive role of Bioneers, its internationally acclaimed conference and 18 satellite conferences, and countless networks with wide outreach including media. Bioneers is exceptionally well positioned to network the project outside New Mexico, and is doing so nationally and internationally. Through DNM, Bioneers is actively promoting the idea of ecologically oriented bioregional planning, plus the basic DNM methodology and tools, including Google Earth visualizations. DNM has completed the first future map/pamphlet: Age of Renewables, as well as web site [www.dreamingnewmexico.org](http://www.dreamingnewmexico.org). These clearly show what we're doing, including purpose and strategy.

## **2. Describe the current stage of your initiative and your implementation plan over the next three years:**

In our second year of operations, DNM has completed the first future map/pamphlet: The Age of Renewables, to considerable interest in NM as well as nationally and internationally. We've been: invited by the Governor to present to his energy staff; Native American organizers and NM's primary renewables coalition Clean Energy Economy/1Sky are using the map as an educational and organizing tool among the Navajo Nation (source of coal-fired plants and electricity) and Pueblos. In January 2009 during the Legislature session, with Clean Energy Economy, we'll present to 30 key players across business, government, and civil society to apply a pragmatic Green Jobs lens to the "dreams."

With a prestigious grant from Google Earth Outreach's (GEO) first-ever pilot grant

program, we completed an innovative “fly-through” of NM’s energy nightmare and dream (DNM web site: [www.dreamingnewmexico.org](http://www.dreamingnewmexico.org)), also promoted on the Google blog. GEO founder Rebecca Moore presented her work and DNM project at Bioneers 2008, to about 13,000 attendees nationally. Moore will distribute the DVD virally via Google and other channels. Via Bioneers 2008: Mexico City, Nebraska and Oregon want to “dream.” Already a “Dreaming Mallorca” group.

We’re distributing the Age of Renewables in NM, nationally and internationally. Warshall presented it at the Tallberg Forum in Sweden with interest from numerous global players. The next future map/pamphlet portrays an Ecological, Localized Food System (completion July 2009). We’ll do similar social mapping, network building and additional charrettes with key influencers. In 2010 we hope to produce an Age of Watersheds future map/pamphlet. At each stage, we’ll link issues to show interconnections and systemic solutions. In 2011 we’ll continue connecting the dots among systems and networks locally, nationally and internationally toward political change. We’ll assess needs for next steps based on experience to date. Would use prize money to further DNM/Bioneers.

### **3. Describe how your strategy meets the entry criteria ("What We're Looking For"):**

DNM is a bold, visionary and highly tangible methodology and tool kit for bioregional restoration applicable locally and globalocally. It addresses the systemic nature of restoration of natural and human systems, including governance and the restoration economy. Success to date indicates our ability to plan and implement. Bioneers’ involvement adds formidable capacity and distribution potential.

Comprehensive: A systemic approach linking key ecological systems and human systems. i.e. re energy: security, generation and transmission, renewables, regional green grids, restoration economy, social justice, and efficiency.

Anticipatory: Core strategic premise of “dreaming the future.”

Ecologically Responsible: Promotes harmonizing human design with nature’s operating instructions at the bioregional level.

Feasible: Pragmatic yet visionary recommendations do-able within existing resources and technologies.

Verifiable: Already in play as tools and methodology that can readily be tracked.

Replicable: While the specifics are endemic to NM, the methodology and tools can be applied almost everywhere under most conditions.

### **4. Describe the qualifications and experience of you and/or your team and your ability to execute your implementation plan:**

DNM co-director Peter Warshall is a polymath - biologist, anthropologist, former editor of Whole Earth Catalog and Whole Earth Review, elected official, and a self-described “infrastructure freak.” He has worked all over the world and extensively across cultures to harmonize human organizations with natural resource management. He has strong experience and skills in working in the business community, government and policy, and with countless NGOs. He is a first-rate editor, writer and speaker.

DNM co-director Kenny Ausubel (founder and CEO Bioneers) is an award-winning

social entrepreneur, writer and filmmaker. Kenny co-founded Seeds of Change in 1989, building the company to national proportions. He founded Bioneers in 1990 and with partner Nina Simons has grown it into an internationally acclaimed organization. The annual conference attracts about 3,400 people, plus 18 live community-based satellite conferences with 10,000 more attendees. Kenny is closely involved in most Bioneers media projects: award-winning annual radio series, book series and 3rd-party media (DiCaprio's 11th Hour film etc). He founded DNM and has been responsible for strategic planning, fundraising, outreach, Google Earth and many other aspects. Other Bioneers personnel participate with strong professional qualifications. The project has received significant validation even at this early stage.

## Stage Two Application

### **1. Summarize your proposal in 50 words or less.**

Dreaming New Mexico (DNM), a Bioneers project, helps facilitate ecological and social restoration at the state level by reconciling human and natural systems. Its strategic premise: "Dreaming the future can create the future." It provides a systemic template, methodology and collaborative mapping tools for communities for place-based and bioregional planning.

### **2. What makes your strategy comprehensive, anticipatory, and well integrated?**

DNM is comprehensive by harmonizing human design with natural systems at the bioregional level. It provides a replicable methodology and tool kit for bioregional restoration applicable locally and globalocally, using a systems approach including governance and the restoration economy. Combining what we know with our desires, the project creates a "do-able dream" grounded in pragmatic realities.

The primary tool is innovative, anticipatory "future maps" that envision the state's future and revive a strong sense of and respect for place. Mapping provides communities an opportunity for collaborative design grounded in rigorous technical and strategic research, as well as multi-sectoral social mapping of networks and players.

A companion pamphlet explains the "whole system" map: components, connections, configurations, contingencies, commons and players. During the map creation process, a "shadow think tank" of top local visionaries becomes part of the collaborative process as a core network that can implement the dream. These radiating social networks penetrate diverse trimtab constituencies to leverage change and use the map/pamphlet as educational and organizing tools from grass roots to the canopy.

The core strategic premise of "dreaming the future" is anticipatory. We stimulate citizens to ask: What is it we really desire? What would success look like?

### **3. Compare and contrast your initiative with others addressing the same critical need. Why is your project more likely to succeed and/or how will it make a distinguishing impact?**

To our knowledge, DNM is unique in its approach using future maps and related tools and methodologies to bring about comprehensive state-level integration of multiple human and natural systems. Other parallel projects generally focus on a single issue (energy, food etc.).

DNM is already making a distinguishing impact as evidenced by inquiries from other communities to emulate our process and mapping tools (Dreaming Nebraska, Oregon, Florida, Mallorca, Mexico City). In-state, our Age of Renewables map, pamphlet and web site including the cutting-edge Google Earth feature are being used from the grass roots to policy-level players, formal educational institutions (high schools and colleges), the funding community, and engaged citizens as an educational and organizing tool.

DNM will produce a second map/pamphlet on an Ecological, Localized Food System in summer 2009. It will reveal connections among food and energy, in a systematic unfolding process of connecting the dots among core issues facing the state. We use standard lenses for each issue of social justice, environmental justice and governance, also a distinguishing feature. Our hope is to produce a third map/pamphlet in 2010 on the Age of Watersheds, and further connect the dots among food, water and energy. DNM is sponsoring an annual charrette, in partnership with other local groups, on each topic to foster collaboration and network cultivation.

Another key distinguishing impact is our ability to leverage the national/international Bioneers conference and organization to promote and disseminate the project nationally and globally, which has already yielded significant impacts.

#### **4. What are the primary obstacles that might prevent your initiative from being realized? How do you plan to overcome them?**

One potential obstacle is funding. Despite success to date, the economic downturn could negatively impact our ability to support and implement DNM ongoing. We are actively raising 2009 money. Most prior donors appear likely to commit at a similar level. We're reaching out to new prospective donors.

A related obstacle is that, for funding reasons, we've had to limit our in-state outreach to promote the project. The principal solutions are: more funding (working on it); and/or leveraging other groups' outreach, which we are doing. DNM is sponsoring with New Energy Economy the January 2009 Energy/Green Jobs charrette, gathering 50 key players statewide around renewables and green jobs, featuring the map/pamphlet and a presentation by Peter Warshall.

Depending greatly on the specific sector (energy, food etc.), another obstacle is the fragmentation and/or disinclination to cooperation within the NGO community in NM. Our approach is to offer our work to support the work of the many groups, and to engage them in the creative "dreaming" process as well as in charrettes. In reality, some will participate, and some won't, which has been the case to date. We also obtained a "cluster" grant that directly funds two other groups to cooperate on DNM.

#### **5. Describe specifically the important outcomes you will be able to achieve in years one (1) through three (3) given the prestige, money, and media attention that come with winning the Buckminster Fuller Challenge?**

The Fuller Challenge award could variously leverage DNM to achieve our desired outcomes. It could stimulate more project funding. It could add credibility in-state within certain professional sectors, especially policy-makers, public servants and educators.

In the next three years, we hope to influence public policy around the transitions to renewable energy; an ecological, just and more localized food system; water

management; land and wildlife management; social and environmental justice; and governance. We seek to create widespread public awareness and education, and to bring our materials and ideas into formal education. We seek to leverage public education into political traction. We seek to support and cohere the existing work of many invaluable NGOs, and stimulate activity in neglected and under-served work. We aim to leverage greater funding at large for the state's restoration from foundations, individuals and government. We seek to identify key business opportunities and provoke support to address them from both the public and private sectors. We seek to promote DNM outside NM to communities both domestically and internationally. We seek to import into NM relevant successes from elsewhere. We seek to help bring a systemic, comprehensive, anticipatory approach to problem-solving into NM culture, politics and education.

**6. What range of funding is needed to bring your project to fruition and from where do you anticipate additional funding will come, if needed? Explain how your initiative will financially sustain itself.**

The DNM budget for startup in 2008 was approximately \$420,000. The 2009 budget is about \$340,000. We estimate a budget around \$350-375,000 in years to come. Our current donors are a mix of private individuals and family foundations from both New Mexico and nationally. Kenny Ausubel is principal fundraiser, and is an experienced fundraiser with a long track record. Bioneers provides a development support system as well as a base of donors from which to draw for prospects. We anticipate future funding from a similar mix of donors to sustain the project.

**7. Explain how your commitment, capabilities and capacity and/or those of your team are well matched to the scale and complexity of your proposal. Identify the key strategic partners with whom you intend to collaborate.**

We believe our efforts and achievements to date with DNM and Bioneers (1990) demonstrate our commitment, capabilities and capacity. Our core team has exceptional expertise and experience for the singular complexity of implementing deep strategic research, systems thinking, communications, media, public education, community-building and social action. We have substantive experience working with diverse communities and cultures, a necessity in New Mexico (and today's world). Because we're collaborating with a sequence of partners who are each focused on a single issue, there are and will be multiple partners in an expanding circle over time. At this time, our principal Renewable Energy partner is New Energy Economy (Dr. John Fogarty), a statewide coalition and network. We worked with 25 citizen experts in the Renewables "think tank." On Food Systems, our current primary partner is Arturo Sandoval of Voces, a respected NM Hispanic elder with strong expertise in community-based traditional food systems.

## **Interview**

**1. What are the deliverables beyond community engagement and education? What happens next? How to get the maps in front of policymakers and get ideas implemented?**

Our overall goals are both to influence policy and to open up new possibilities for business opportunities and community engagement.

We didn't map out a tight strategic plan. We wanted to let the process occur somewhat organically and see what might come out of it once we initiated it. The Governor is very sympathetic to environmental and renewable energy issues, and has assembled excellent people in government. With Obama being elected and putting forth a green jobs plan and Governor Richardson then staying in New Mexico, the stars aligned for fresh ideas. The Governor is making green jobs a centerpiece of the state's business. So we've got tremendous buy-in from the government, NGOs, and the education system here, and we're working on the business community.

Flowing from the January Green Jobs Summit we co-sponsored with our two partner groups, New Energy Economy and the Regional Development Corporation (RDC), the Dreaming New Mexico presentation proved to be the "highlight" for the 55 influential participants across all sectors including city, county and state government. It opened up possibilities that had not been on the table, and has begun to produce results.

As result, we were invited to present to Governor Richardson's Senior Energy/Environmental advisors, including the Science Advisor (on loan from Los Alamos Labs). Two allies joined us, including Regional Development Corporation and a member of the Governor's Environmental Improvement Board. The presentation was well received and we were invited to participate in further activities.

Another result of the Summit was an invitation to present to the Governor's newly created Green Jobs Cabinet, championed by the state Green Economy Manager of the New Mexico Economic Development Department. Also attending specifically for the DNM presentation were the Secretary of the Environment, Deputy Secretary of Indian Affairs, and Special Assistant for Renewable Energy of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department. The meeting resulted in formal requests to use and cite the presentation in official state communications and reports, and to adopt specific planks of the DNM platform ("dreams" or positive scenarios) as action items. We were also invited to advise the newly formed Ecotourism Division in the Economic Development Department.

The New Mexico Green Collaborative that formed out of the Green Jobs Summit (a multi-sectoral coalition across government, business, education and civil society) has requested to embrace the DNM vision and goals as part of its agenda. Along with the state Green Economy Manager, the Collaborative has invited us to explore creating DNM: The Age of Renewables Part 2, emphasizing a Green Jobs focus.

In the interim, we've made substantial progress on creating the DNM Age of Localized Food Sheds map and pamphlet, scheduled for completion in the fall of 2009. Then we can show the connections with energy as well.

We've spent a lot of time looking at the idea of the green grid and where those lines need to be sited to capture solar, wind and geothermal. The real struggle across the board is between decentralization versus centralization (energy, food or any other sector). We're making the strong case that decentralized energy will create a great deal more jobs, local prosperity and economic opportunities, as well as engendering ecological and social resilience.

The other significant factor is Bioneers itself. As a national and emerging international organization with wide outreach, we were able to present DNM at the annual Bioneers

conference last year, to considerable interest. We're now connected with other states and cities, including Mexico City, which is doing a Green Plan. Dreaming New Mexico is meant to be a template and toolkit that any city or state can pick up and embark on this process. There have been inquiries for Dreaming Oregon, Nebraska, Florida and others, and there's a Dreaming Mallorca group operating in Spain.

**2. How does the shadow think tank function? How are stakeholders like these public officials brought into the process and kept engaged?**

The idea of the shadow think tank has been to connect people working in various roles in government, civil society and business around a common goal: to bring interdisciplinary and intergovernmental cooperation across sectors. Essentially this network of people is already right there working on all this, but were not necessarily connected. Many participated in the Green Jobs Summit and have become connected.

These existing social networks tend to be very focused around one sector and don't cross-pollinate. We want to help them connect – for example, connecting food to energy to water groups.

As the politics keep changing, we hope more and more NGO leaders, educators and scientists will move into public office, and we want to help encourage and connect the social systems to make that possible.

**3. Collaboration is the centerpiece of your project. Given the availability and sophistication of Web 2.0 collaboration and social network tools, do you plan to use them or other communication tools to foster ongoing, geographically distributed collaboration or to track activities once vision groups are formed and activism deployed?**

We would like to have been doing much more web work, but we haven't had the money. We were selected for one of the first "pilot" grants from Google Earth Outreach's new nonprofit program to apply this powerful visualization technology for public-interest purposes. The Googlers helped our team create an innovative "plug-in" that maps and visualizes how to replace coal with solar and wind energy in one part of the state (on our web site at: [dreamingnewmexico.org](http://dreamingnewmexico.org)). We've started to implement some tools to allow more distributed communication. The Bioneers web site does have the *connectbioneers.org* function that has about 2,000 users. People can subdivide into leadership groups within this space, so we want to apply some of these pathways to the DNM project.

Our hope for the website is it eventually becomes a sort of online Whole Earth Catalog to show all the groups and what they're doing, and get them connected. The ultimate destination is to facilitate working groups on-line who can build their dreams together collaboratively on the web, from local communities to state-level action. Imagine citizens of Albuquerque visualizing a solar city with panels on every roof and local "smart substations" that feed locally generated renewable power back into the Big Grid. Please, imagine that! Then organize to make it happen as a community.

We've also had a financial barrier in terms of doing more public events. We'd love to do public events on food and energy and bring together all of the local groups and players, and educate the public more. We can do a live broadcast statewide, and get good press coverage.

We are incredibly fortunate to work with several great groups who also have strong networks. The work at hand is far too big for any one party to address. Collaboration is key. It's not easy, but gathering people around a shared vision of restoration is really what the project is about, and realizing the dreams together.

One thing that is unique in New Mexico is there are 21 sovereign Indian nations in the state, and the federal government owns 1/3 of the state. So we want to begin to address those areas and support the implementation of renewable energy technologies.

**4. Give me some broad examples of how the challenge award would be applied to your project.**

We need core operational support. We're a skeleton crew with very modest resources! We need research support. We want to apply more web-based interactive tools. Doing some public outreach events could really help educate the public and build engagement and political traction for the "Age of Renewables" and "Age of Localized Food Sheds" dreams. Face-to-face interaction among stakeholders at these events is essential for the process. Public pressure really does affect political leaders and public policy, and in New Mexico we have the advantage of very intelligent, well-informed public officials who want to do the right things. We want to bring our materials into the education system, which is already starting to occur. Educating the coming generations and training them for green jobs is crucial.

We'd like to leverage the outreach capacity of Bioneers to build greater connectivity with other cities, counties and states, as well as other countries.

The hard reality is that humanity has a very, very narrow window of time to avert the completely catastrophic effects of climate change, and although climate change is getting all the ink these days, all our basic life-support systems are declining at perilous rates. It's all connected. We've got to rapidly develop bioregional planning that links the systems together. We've got to link many networks and sectors, and spread the best practices. Above all, we need a bold, practical vision of what Buckminster Fuller called "the preferred state" – the dream.

## References

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