

## Southwest drought feared

ALBUQUERQUE — Researchers studying tree-ring patterns say the patterns suggest that the southwestern United States could be facing serious drought conditions over the next two decades.

University of New Mexico scientist Louis Scuderi analyzed the rings of hundreds of trees in New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and Utah. He said long-term climate patterns inscribed in the trees over the past 700 years forecast dry conditions.

Scuderi believes he has found a recurring 72-year pattern of droughts. The last spanned the 1950s, suggesting the next serious drought would begin around 2020 if the pattern holds.