



NEWS RELEASE

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High Rio Grande Flows Anticipated for the Next Several Weeks in the Middle Rio Grande Valley

Albuquerque, NM - The Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (District) is issuing notice to all local governments and the general public that well above average snow pack in the high mountain watersheds is expected to produce a large volume of runoff. Currently, the 2019 spring runoff is anticipated to be the highest the region has experienced since 2005. There will be high river flows on both the main stem of Rio Grande, and the Rio Chama, for a sustained period of time. Multiple agencies, including the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Bureau of Reclamation, and the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC) are coordinating with the District to monitor and manage flow through the middle Rio Grande region. Abiquiu and Cochiti reservoirs provide flood control, regulating the amount of water passing through to USACE's specified downstream "safe channel capacity."

These high flows are likely to persist through June, and possibly well into the summer. Most of the Bosque will be flooded during this time, and water will be against the levees. The District is actively monitoring and maintaining our levees, particularly the older "spoil bank" levees south of Albuquerque. The NMISC is providing contract support this spring for the hauling and placement of soil and rock to maintain levee and drain banks in areas where erosion or seepage is detected. Both agencies have been working together for the past several weeks to stage materials and perform construction in a proactive manner to prevent serious problems.

The District will be working closely with USACE to regulate releases out of Cochiti Dam. High flows are necessary to maintain adequate channel capacity, but are balanced with the need to

prevent serious damage to District drain and levee banks. Both agencies will be monitoring the levees daily in order to spot and repair problem areas. This public notice is provided to assure the public that these periodic high flows are part of normal operations and that the dams and levees provide a high level of protection throughout the middle Rio Grande valley. Water management agencies are taking appropriate steps to assure continuing performance of these facilities.

Due to construction crews and equipment moving along the levees and drain roads, the District is hereby closing public access to the levee roads, drains and bosque between the south boundary of Isleta Pueblo to Reinken Road in Belen in order to protect the safety of the general public. The District may also temporarily close levee/bosque access in other areas to safely complete levee maintenance. Closure signs will be posted to prohibit entry even though gates may be open for construction traffic. The duration of closures will coincide with the duration of the high flow period and the public will be notified when this order is lifted.

If anyone wishes to report what they believe is a violation of this closure, or erosion or water seepage is noticed along the riverside levees anywhere within the District, please contact the District's main office at 505-247-0234 day or night and report the information.