



On-Farm Projects

Project Selection and Qualification Guidelines

On-Farm Projects (OFPs) are critical to the success of the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District's (District) Conservation Program. OFPs are intended to assist landowners with design, installation, and operation of on-farm delivery systems to achieve efficient application of water. OFPs will result in conservation benefits to the District including water (incidental loss) and operational (reservoir storage) savings. OFPs will also benefit water users through increased farm productivity, soil health, and decreased input costs.

The District expects to receive more requests for OFPs than we have resources for. To ensure that limited resources are allocated fairly, and in ways that maximizes benefits, the District will use the following criteria to objectively select and prioritize OFP projects.

Project Size – With limited initial grant funding, the Conservation Program wants to focus on promoting on-farm projects on smaller acreage initially. For this reason, the OFP will accept proposals for technical or financial assistance for on-farm infrastructure that serves land that is ½ - 10 acres in size. The District will, however, accept requests from larger parcels in preparation for future projects as funding materializes. Getting these requests will help us determine interest and help with funding requests.

Project Scoring – Applicants for the program will submit a proposal with a calculated score that will be used to rank and compare applications based on conservation benefits and cost. The following criteria will be used to qualify projects for funding, and to prioritize if available funding is insufficient for all qualified projects. The following data request is highly necessary to accurately determine the right solution(s) to assist in the efficient delivery of water to your field(s) and will benefit you and your farm with less time spent irrigating and ultimately higher quality crops with lower input costs (better profit margin). This data **will not** be used in any punitive manner to prevent you from managing your operations as needed but will help the District as a whole and your neighboring farmers as we face reduced water availability. The goal is to help you fix problems with efficient irrigation, not prevent you from irrigating – we need all those wishing to farm to farm for the future welfare and longevity for the District!!

A.) Existing Hours to irrigate (H) – how many hours does it take you to irrigate all of the acreage served by the existing infrastructure. This is not how many hours/acre, simply the total number of hours needed to irrigate all of your field(s) as a whole. However, if you have a field with borders that irrigates at or below one hour per acre, please identify, and then identify that portion of your farm that may be more problematic.

B.) Is the Rate in compliance with MRGCD policy of 1 acre / hour (P)?
Yes=1, No=2

C.) **Any applicant that is awarded funding must allow the District to perform a one-time rating of the existing infrastructure prior to construction, and a one-time rating of the improved infrastructure after construction. This pre and post measurement is how we report on the success of the program to the Bureau of Reclamation.** However, if the irrigator wishes to make their application more competitive, they have the option to install permanent metering of their turnout. This optional measurement is included in the application score under the following prompt. “Will the irrigator agree to install permanent measurement (M) of water delivery, and share that information with MRGCD?” **This is an optional metering of water which would help you the landowner, and the District better manage water deliveries going forward.**
Yes=2, No =0

Points will be awarded based on the following formula:

Score=(P+M) x H

This point score will provide a baseline grade for projects. Projects with slower irrigation rates will tend to score higher, as they are presumed to represent inefficient irrigation water delivery and increasing the delivery can be expected to reduce water application.

Similarly, those projects that are already in compliance with MRGCD delivery policy ($P \geq 1$) would tend to receive a lower score. For smaller acreage projects there is a corresponding small benefit to improving irrigation delivery rate greater than 1. However, for larger projects there may potentially be great savings associated with increasing the delivery rate to multiples of 1.

There is a benefit to MRGCD and the Conservation Program by including the applicant’s willingness to have water measurement on their field(s) following construction. Measurement can assist MRGCD operationally and assist the irrigator to optimize water use and crop yield. Measurement can also serve to demonstrate good irrigation practice to other users. Because of these benefits, the point score may also be raised by an applicant with a commitment to measure and report water application.

Projects are subject to federal NEPA compliance requirements and will be “batched” and submitted to the Bureau of Reclamation (grant funding agency) for environmental compliance processing. This is standard procedure when federal funds are involved and will only look at the proposed changes (construction) but fully protects the participant’s privacy in all other matters.

Cost Assessment/Score verification. When a project application appears beneficial based on its score, and funding is available, MRGCD staff will perform an independent assessment. This will involve verifying the acreage, reviewing ISO logbooks to understand the historical rate of irrigation, existing infrastructure, and other relevant factors which may be present. The assessment will also include a preliminary estimate of cost which will result in a cost/benefit ratio (CBR) based on water conserved, using acreage as a surrogate for water. Projects will still generally be approved based on total points but may be moved up or down in ranking if the CBR is particularly favorable or unfavorable.

These criteria will aid our staff in the selection of OFPs. There may be other relevant criteria, depending on unique site conditions. Criteria are subject to change and staff discretion in application.



On Farm Program

2021/2022 Funding application:

IMPORTANT: The MRGCD Conservation Program will be accepting applications for On-Farm Program funding for the 2021 -2022 winter season from June 1st – September 30th. Farm Irrigation-Evaluation Worksheet

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE: EMAIL:

Please complete the following farm irrigation efficiency evaluation form as accurately as possible. Use the key at the bottom of the page to generate a score for your application. Once received by MRGCD staff, your application will be reviewed and assessed. **This information will be kept confidential and only used for the purposes stated above.**

Row		Score
A	How many acres are being irrigated? Only list acreage that you want to be evaluated for this program. Acreage range must be between ½ - 10 acres for the 2021-2022 OFP,	_____Acres
H	On average, how many hours does it take for you to irrigate the TOTAL acreage listed above?	_____Hours
M	If you are awarded funding from the program, would you agree to measure your application of irrigation water for the MRGCD through a permanent meter? If YES put (2), if NO put (0)	_____
P	Is your Irrigation Rate (A divided by H) in compliance with MRGCD policy of 1 acre / hour? If YES (equal to or more than 1 acre/hour) put (1), If NO (less than 1 acre / hour) put (2)	_____
Formula	(P+M) x H	

Steps for creating an Irrigation Efficiency Score

- 1) Add Row (P) to Row (M) = _____

2) Multiply your answer from step 1 by how many TOTAL hours it takes you to irrigate (H) = _____ **Final Score.**

Description / Notes for our Review Team: Please provide any additional information that you think will be important for our review team to know once we receive this worksheet.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please return completed to 1931 2nd St. SW 87102, Albuquerque, NM. (Attention: Casey Ish)
or email to casey@mrgcd.us.