

Water Supply Conditions July 23rd, 2021

Spring snowmelt has declined and Embudo gage is at 350 cubic feet per second (cfs) with approximately 100 cfs crossing the state line from Colorado into New Mexico. Temperatures have been in the mid-80's to low 90's this past week and rainstorms above and below Otowi gage have allowed the MRGCD to refrain from resuming releases of its last volume of stored water (San Juan Chama Project allocation). MRGCD facilities damaged by extreme weather events in early July have been repaired and deliveries to impacted areas are beginning to be made as demand increases.

The operations plan is to target passing Rio Grande inflow to Cochiti reservoir through the weekend because demand has remained low due to rainstorms and many farmers waiting to cut their hay. The forecast calls for 50 to 70 percent chances for rain with temperatures remaining in the mid 80's to low 90's through Thursday next week. As demand increases MRGCD will start releases of San Juan Chama water from storage. Releases from storage are anticipated to begin sometime this week as MRGCD staff continues to monitor and evaluate conditions and demand. The last block of San Juan Chama water will be managed to supplement baseflows for as long as possible as they gradually recede and demand increases.

The Isleta dam is set to bypass 20 cfs of federal leased San Juan Chama water to the river. The Rio Salado ran on Thursday night due to an extreme rain event to the west of the Rio Grande, provisional data from the USGS gage in the Rio Grande below San Acacia reported a peak of 5,500 cfs early this morning. Today the river below San Acacia is continuous to Elephant Butte. When the influx of storm water begins to recede at San Acacia, the diversion will be set to bypass only federal leased San Juan Chama water.

Silvery minnow rescue operations will not be conducted in the San Acacia or Albuquerque reaches this weekend as the river is continuous through both reaches and rescue will resume in Isleta if the river experiences unique river channel drying. Rains have also diminished the wildland fire danger so the Bosque will remain open for low-impact recreational use, but current restrictions remain in place so consult your local fire department to get the latest information in your area.

The MRGCD will be completely out of its 2021 San Juan Chama water supply sometime in July as we move toward prior and paramount (P&P senior water rights) only operations for the six middle Rio Grande Pueblos, but we will not be shutting down operations as return flows and hopefully additional rainwater will be distributed where possible.

If you have any questions regarding these operations, please contact Anne Marken or Mike Hamman at 247-0234 or by email at anne@mrgcd.us or mikeh@mrgcd.us.