IRRIGATON SEASON REVIEW

Thanks to an active monsoon season water supply has exceeded expectations. Without adequate supplemental storage, MRGCD water users were dependent on the natural flow of the river during the 2022 irrigation season. River flow varied significantly during the season.

The season start-up was staggered from south to north due to limited water availability and considering differences in the length of growing season. By early April, diversions were being made to all divisions of the MRGCD. Due to limited supply, deliveries were made on a rotational basis.

Water was in short supply prior to spring runoff. As pre-season predictions indicated, spring runoff only lasted for a short period (from the end of April to the end of May). Adequate water supply during spring runoff allowed for more predictability in scheduling , more flexibility in rotations, and more reliability in irrigation deliveries.

On May 31, 2022, the MRGCD held a special board meeting to notify water users of potentially poor water conditions as spring runoff tapered down. Water supply in June was extremely limited until the rains arrived near the end of the month. Rain in late June/ early July provided temporary relief from water shortages.

Hot and dry conditions returned for most of July resulting in historically low river flows until rains returned at the end of the month. Rain continued through August until dry conditions returned for most of September. Additional rounds of rain in late September and October eased irrigation demand and enabled sufficient water availability for the remainder of the season.

The irrigation season will end on October 31, 2022 except for Pueblos who have requested an extension. It is far too early to predict water availability for the 2023 irrigation season. Early snowstorms are encouraging, but conditions can change. One thing is certain, MRGCD water users will be dependent on natural river flows again next season because of Compact restrictions and ongoing construction of El Vado dam.

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2022 IRRIGATION SEASON UPDATE

Updated October 24, 2022

MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

TEMPERATURE & PRECIPITATION OUTLOOK

90-day temperature and precipitation forecasts developed by the National Weather Service indicate that the Middle Rio Grande Valley is likely to experience above average temperatures and precipitation chances are leaning towards below normal.

RIO GRANDE COMPACT UPDATE

The Rio Grande Compact (Compact) is an interstate and international water sharing agreement between New Mexico, Colorado, Texas and Mexico. At the end of 2021, New Mexico's Compact debt to Texas was approximately 127,000 acre-feet. Official Compact accounting is done at the end of the calendar year, and it is too early to tell where New Mexico's Compact debt will be at the end of 2022, but its possible additional debt is not accrued thanks to monsoon rains and effective water management. MRGCD is coordinating with water management agencies to ensure that water is conveyed to Elephant Butte as efficiently as possible to minimize New Mexico's Compact debt. Complying with the Compact is important for the MRGCD and its water users to lift restrictions that currently prevent the MRGCD from storing supplemental water to augment low river flows during the irrigation season.

PRIOR AND PARAMOUNT UPDATE

For the 2022 irrigation season, 20,000 acre-feet of Prior and Paramount (P&P) water was stored in Abiquiu reservoir for the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos. No supplemental releases from P&P storage were made in 2022. P&P water remaining in Abiquiu reservoir will be released for delivery to Elephant Butte reservoir by the end of the calendar year.

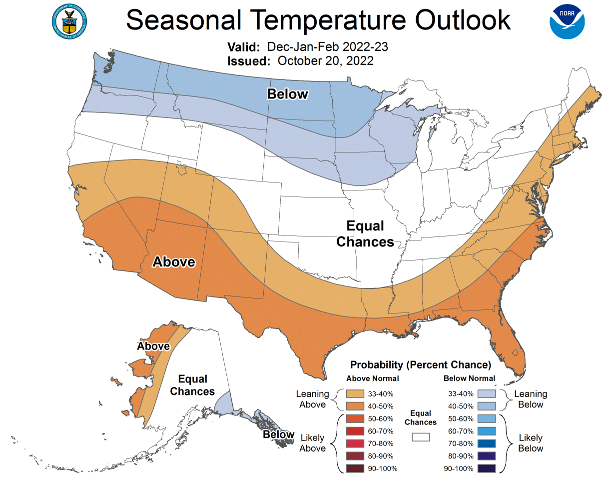

Figure 1. 90 Day Temperature Outlook

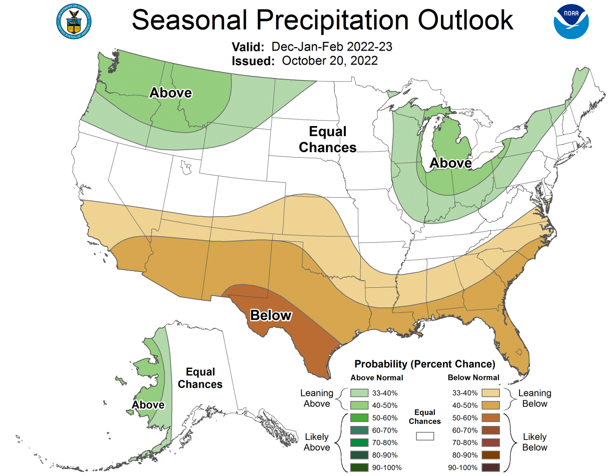

Figure 2. 90 Day Precipitation Outlook

Scan the QR code (right) to access the 90-Day forecast produced by the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center.

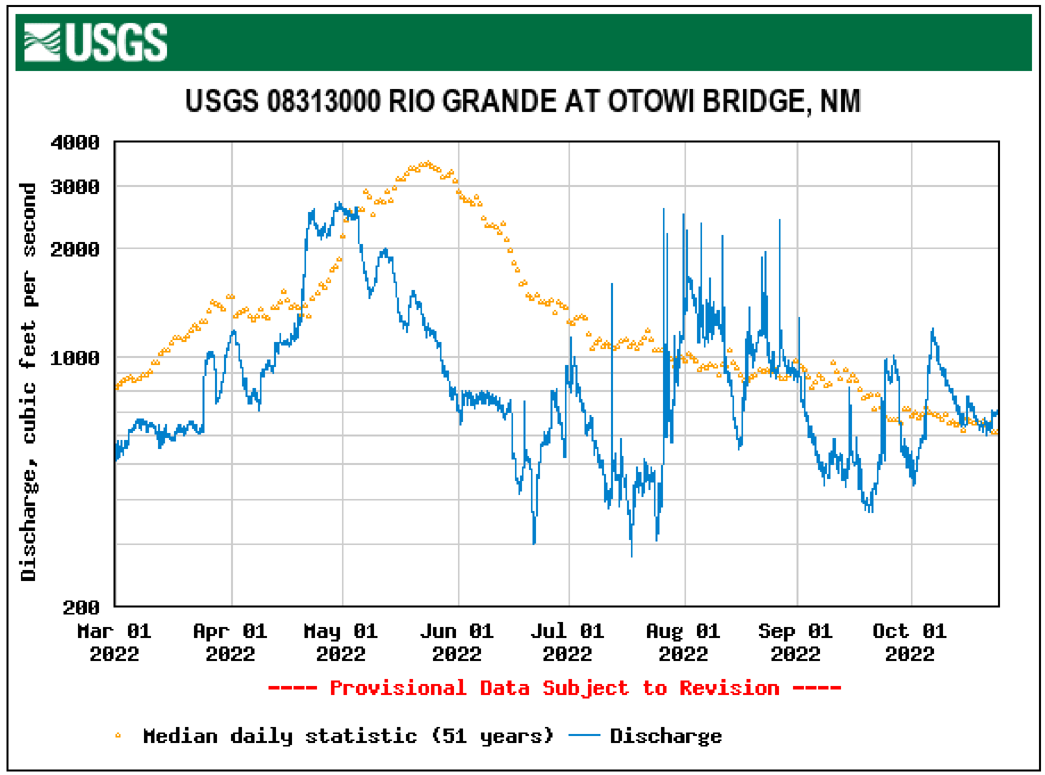

Figure 3. ¢KŜ Otowi rẚØŜ gl·ƎŜ ƻƴ ǘKŜ wẚƻ DǊl·ƴŘŜ ΥŜl·ădzǊŜă natural flow of the Rio Grande plus any supplemental water released from storage (for various water users including MRGCD)ǰ !ǘ ǘKŜ ǘẚΥŜ ƻŦ dzǇŘl·ǘŜ ǘhe discharge ǿl·ă 690 ǑdzōẚǑ ŦŜŜǘ ǇŜǊ ăŜǑƻƴŘ (cfs). For a significant part of the growing season, flow was below normal (median daily statistic). The graph demonstrates variability in water supply throughout the irrigation season. Scan the code (right) for access to the gage data.