IRRIGATON SEASON STARTUP PLAN

Charging and flushing the irrigation system requires a lot of water. The historical practice of opening all diversions at once would require more water than anticipated river flow will be this March. For this reason, the system must be started gradually. A staggered start, like last season, is an effective way to charge the system and begin irrigation deliveries. Diversions for charging and initial deliveries are scheduled as follows:

Division	Begin Charging	Begin Deliveries
Socorro	March 13	March 18
Belen	March 6	March 25
Albuquerque	March 20	April 1
Cochiti	March 27	April 1

Actual dates are contingent on weather, water availability, and completion of off-season ditch work. Water deliveries within a division are not allowed until the division has substantially completed charging. Once a division is charged, deliveries will be made to irrigators as water is available and as they are ready to receive it. Established crops, new seed and winter/fall crops are all eligible to receive deliveries on the first rotation. Given the uncertainty in water availability for the season, the MRGCD cannot guarantee the number or frequency of irrigation deliveries. Irrigators are urged to use caution when making farming plans.

New Mexico's Rio Grande Compact (Compact) cumulative debt at the end of 2022 is expected to be under 100,000 acre-feet, which is down from 127,000 acre-feet at the end of 2021. The reduction in Compact debt is largely due to New Mexico meeting its 2022 delivery obligations and a settlement of a dispute between New Mexico and Texas that credited New Mexico with 32,500 acre-feet of water.

Considering outstanding Compact debt, MRGCD committed to adhere to a demand schedule that is reduced to 80% of full demand while the river is connected. This is an important contribution towards increasing deliveries to Elephant Butte which moves the MRGCD closer to its goal of storing native Rio Grande water in El Vado reservoir once construction on the dam is complete. A caveat to the 80% diversion commitment is that the MRGCD will work to ensure the river does not dry prior to the start of spring runoff which is important in meeting Endangered Species Act (ESA) obligations.

CONTACT THE MRGCD

1931 2nd Street SW Albuquerque, NM 87102

Tel: (505) 247-0234

Email: waterdistribution@mrgcd.us

Website: www.mrgcd.com

2023 IRRIGATION SEASON OUTLOOK

Updated February 3, 2023

MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

TEMPERATURE & PRECIPITATION OUTLOOK

The National Weather Service predicts La Nina conditions to persist through the winter months of 2023. This weather pattern typically brings warmer and drier than average conditions in the Southwest of the United States.

WATER OUTLOOK

January was very snowy for the Rio Grande Basin. As of February 3rd, snowpack conditions were 106% of median conditions. Soil moisture and groundwater benefited from an active monsoon season in 2022. Fall river flow was improved compared to recent years. Improved soil moisture and river flow should result in better runoff efficiencies during spring snowmelt compared to recent years. However, there is still about 44 days until peak median snowpack in the Upper Rio Grande Basin. Current conditions are encouraging, but more snow is needed to boost spring runoff and benefit irrigators.

The biggest water supply challenge for this year is the MRGCD's inability to store native Rio Grande water for later use. Native water is water that originates in the Rio Grande Basin. This water is subject to the Rio Grande Compact, a water sharing agreement between Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas to equitably allocate the waters of the Rio Grande Basin. This Compact currently restricts the storage of native water due to low water levels at Elephant Butte reservoir and a water debt carried by the State of New Mexico. To complicate matters, El Vado dam is under construction until at least 2025. During this time water cannot be stored in the reservoir even if Compact restrictions are lifted.

For the 2023 irrigation season, the only storage water available will be San Juan-Chama (SJC) water. This is water is diverted from the San Juan River to the Rio Grande watershed via a series of tunnels and channels. SJC water is not subject to the Compact. Water provided by the SJC project is helpful, but not enough to provide a reliable supply throughout the growing season.

Without native water storage in El Vado reservoir, the excess flow from spring runoff cannot be captured and released when river flow does not meet irrigation demand. MRGCD will rely on rain runoff to continue making irrigation deliveries after spring runoff ends. If monsoon rains do not produce significant runoff, irrigators should unfortunately expect limitations to irrigation deliveries in the summer and fall.

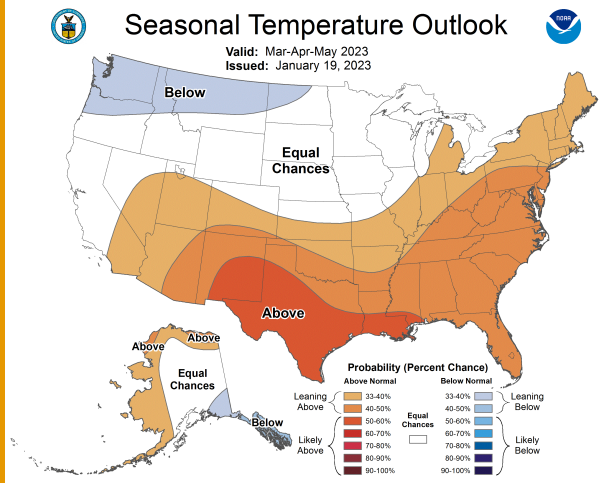

Figure 1. 90 Day Temperature Outlook

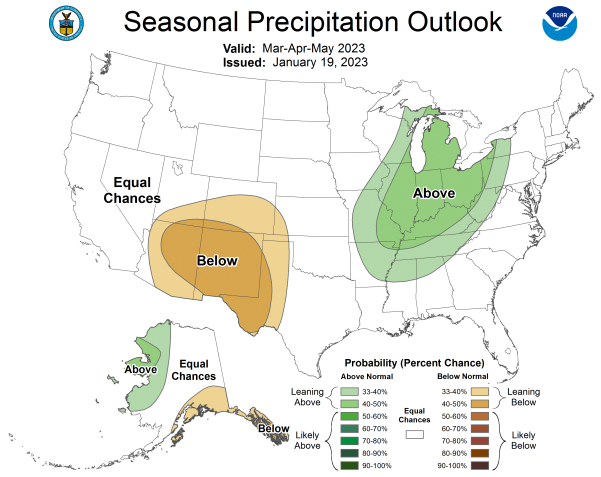

Figure 2. 90 Day Precipitation Outlook

Weather in the Middle Rio Grande region can be unpredictable. Without water storage in El Vado reservoir MRGCD irrigators will rely on monsoon rains for irrigation deliveries in the summer and fall. Scan the QR code (RIGHT) to access the 90-Day forecast produced by the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center.

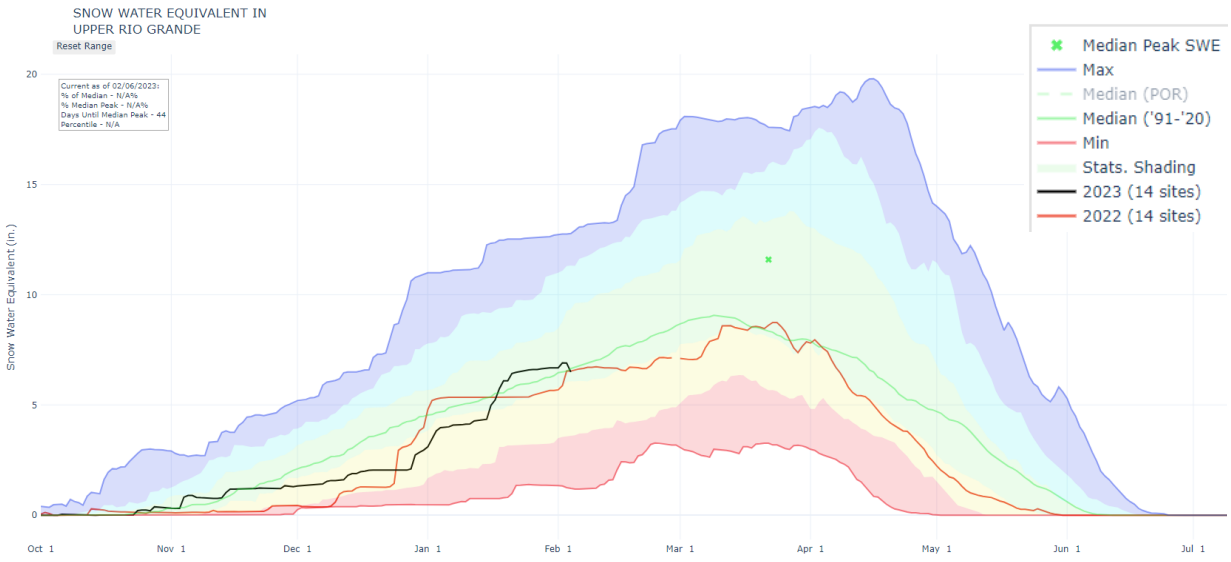

Figure 3. The graph above demonstrates Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) for the Upper Rio Grande Basin. SWE is the amount of liquid water contained in snowpack. As of February 3, 2023, SWE is 106% of the median and 60% of median peak in the Upper Rio Grande Basin. There are still 48 days until peak median in this basin. Scan the QR code (LEFT) to access the NRCS Upper Rio Grande SNOTEL plot.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: ENVIRONMENTAL WATER LEASING PROGRAM (EWLP)

THE EWLP COMPENSATES IRRIGATORS FOR TEMPORARILY LEASING A WATER RIGHT BACK TO THE MRGCD. IRRIGATORS INTERESTED IN ENROLLING IN THE 2023 PROGRAM CAN SCAN THE QR CODE (RIGHT) FOR MORE INFORMATION.