

Important Notice to MRGCD Water Users

Updated: 7.31.2023

The delivery of irrigation water within the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) is highly dependent on the natural flow of the Rio Grande. Since the end of spring runoff in early July the natural flow of the river has dropped significantly. Two weeks ago, the natural river flow dropped below the amount needed to meet the irrigation demand.

On Monday, July 17, 2023, the MRGCD began releasing San Juan Chama Project (SJCP) water from storage to minimize the effect of declining natural flow on the irrigation water supply. Approximately half of the current irrigation water supply is from SJCP storage releases, and the other half is from natural river flow. It was previously reported that there may be issues accessing SJCP water from Heron reservoir. These issues have been resolved and the MRGCD has had access to all its original allocation of SJCP water without interruption.

Extreme temperatures and lack of rainfall is contributing to higher-than-normal irrigation demand and lower than expected natural river flow. To keep up with declining natural river flow and high irrigation demand, the MRGCD is releasing SJCP water earlier and faster than it had anticipated. As of July 31st, there is about 13,000 acre-feet of SJCP left in storage and MRGCD is releasing over 700 acre-feet of SJCP water per day. The current release from Cochiti Reservoir available to the MRGCD for irrigation delivery is about 800 cubic feet per second (cfs).

The MRGCD is projected to run out of SJCP water by mid-August if meaningful rain inflows do not come soon. Once MRGCD has released all its stored SJCP water, it will rely solely on the natural river flow to continue making irrigation deliveries in late summer through fall. Without rain inflows, the natural river flow will not be enough to meet crop demand. Water users should plan for the potential of extreme water shortages and limited irrigation deliveries. The MRGCD will continue diverting and delivering available water supply through October 31, 2023.

The MRGCD is beginning to transition from demand scheduling to rotational scheduling. Rotations are used to share short supplies efficiently and equitably. Water users will experience longer wait times during rotations.

Click [HERE](#) for more information about water supply, demand scheduling, and rotational scheduling.

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