

**MINUTES OF THE
2,206th REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT**

DECEMBER 11, 2023 - 3:00 PM

Directors having been duly notified; Madam Chair Russo Baca called the regular meeting to order at 3:04 pm. The following Directors and Staff were present:

DIRECTORS		STAFF	
Stephanie Russo Baca, Madam Chair	Present	Jason Casuga	Chief Engineer/CEO
Karen Dunning, Vice Chair	Present	Lorna Wiggins	General Counsel
Brian Jiron, Director	Present	Dr. Charles DuMars	Chief Water Counsel
John Kelly, Director	Present	Pamela Fanelli	Secretary-Treasurer/CFO
Joaquin Baca, Director	Present	Eric Zamora	Chief Operating Officer
Glen Duggins, Director	Present	Anne Marken	Water Distribution Division Mgr.
Michael T. Sandoval, Director	Absent	Matt Martinez	Water Operations Division Mgr.

The following names of individuals were interested viewers, callers and/or participants

Lt. Col. Jerre Hansbrough, USACE	Brian Sanchez, USACE	Jared Minor, USACE
Jacob Pauley, USACE	Christine Nardi, MRGCD	Scott Armstrong, BHI
Jennifer Faler, USBR	Sarah Delavan, BIA	Jason Shamrock
Mike Talbot, USBR	Julian Avalos, MRGCD	Aracely Chapa
Casey Ish, MRGCD	Tarah Jaramillo, MRGCD	Jose Contreras, MRGCD
Richard DeLoia, MRGCD	Leann Woodruff, USBR	Jason Shamrock, USBR
Cord Everett, USBR	Joels Malama, USBR	Adam Howes, USBR
Anna Jones, Compass Engineering	Josh Gamboa, MRGCD	Neri Holguin
Martin Haynes	Kathy McCord	Joe Lopez
Colin T. Baugh	Josh Hind, MRGCD	

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Director Baca led the Pledge of Allegiance at today's meeting.

Chair Russo Baca declared a quorum, and the meeting was publicly noticed. This meeting was a hybrid meeting. Rollcall votes will no longer be necessary for regular motions.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 – APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

There were no changes made to the agenda.

Chair Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA**.
Seconded by Director Kelly. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 - CONSENT AGENDA

- a. **Consideration/Approval of Payment Ratification - December 11, 2023**
- b. **Consideration/Approval of November 2023 Invoice for Wiggins, Williams & Wiggins**
- c. **Consideration/Approval of November 2023 Invoice for Law and Resource Planning Assoc.**

- d. **Consideration/Approval of the Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting - November 13, 2023**
- e. **Memo on MRGCD Approved Licenses for November 2023 (For informational Purposes Only)**
- f. **November/December 2023 from Amanda Molina, PIO (For informational Purposes Only)**

Director Kelly stated he didn't understand why the District purchased polished concrete for the Cochiti Division. Ms. Fanelli stated it was for their office floors; rather than doing tile they installed polished concrete.

Vice Chair Dunning made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA**. Seconded by Director Baca. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 - ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE VACANCY OF POSITION NO.4 - BERNALILLO COUNTY SEAT ON THE MRGCD BOARD OF DIRECTORS AS OF DECEMBER 12, 2023

Mr. Casuga announced it would be the last meeting for Director Joaquin Baca, as he is leaving the MRGCD to serve on the City Council. He discussed the vacancy and process of replacing a board members position. He said MRGCD would publish the vacancy starting tomorrow. He asked the Board when they wanted to replace the position.

Vice Chair Dunning asked if the new person replacing the position would fill in for the term of the leaving director. Mr. Casuga and Ms. Wiggins both answered yes, until the next election of the vacant position.

Director Kelly said that with the holiday season upon us, he felt it would be prudent to have applications come in by their January meeting, on the 8th and consider a special meeting to review applicants and make a decision on the 22nd or 23rd with a decision to take place at the February meeting.

Mr. Casuga stated the most important thing they could do is set the date of when applications are due and then set the date for the special meeting once they've had time to review calendars at the January board meeting.

Director Kelly made the **MOTION THAT APPLICATIONS FOR DIRECTOR JOAQUIN BACA'S VACATED POSITION DEADLINE BE CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024**. Seconded by Vice Chair Dunning. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 - RECOGNITION OF DIRECTOR JOAQUIN BACA'S SERVICE TO THE MIDDLE RIO GRANDE VALLEY FROM JUNE 2017 TO DECEMBER 2023

Jason Casuga acknowledged Director Joaquin Baca who was a part of many things including the San Acacia Levee and through a large portion of the planning period to the actual implementation. He then presented him with a plaque and gifts to show appreciation for his time on the Board.

Director Joaquin Baca thanked everyone and stated it was an honor to serve the District.

The board members gave Director Joaquin Baca farewell thanks and comments.



AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 - PRESENTATION ON THE SAN ACACIA OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE MANUAL - Lt. Col. Hansbrough, Brian Sanchez and Jacob Pauley, USACE

Lt. Col. Hansbrough introduced his team, Jacob Pauley, his Deputy District Engineer, Jared Minor, Civil Works Branch Chief, and Brian Sanchez, the project manager.

Jacob Pauley, Deputy District Engineer for the US Army Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque District, stated he welcomed the relationship with MRGCD and was excited for the San Acacia Project to be formally handed over through their own manual.

Lt. Col. Hansbrough stated they were still on track for the Abiquiu Water Control Manual, currently in the agency technical review and did not expect any issues to having it done on time. He stated the Water Control Manual allowed them functionally and technically to store. He said the water contract would eventually require a signature by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. He said they were doing everything in their power to make that happen. Lt. Col. Hansbrough discussed Bernalillo to Belen, stating it was exciting to sign the design agreement with MRGCD and were working diligently on the design for the first phase for the Mountain View portion. He stated they were in discussions on how to at least maintain with a regular pace for the project because it was very important for the city and community. He said they were excited and ready to turn San Acacia over to MRGCD and was 85% paid by the federal government. He stated it was done in four phases and three contracts and the goal was set to protect for the 100-year event and were able to get it to a 200-year flood event.

Brian Sanchez presented the ownership of the Rio Grande Levee Socorro Reach, segment 1, to the MRGCD and the operation and maintenance manual. He said the main purpose of the levee was to provide physical protection from flooding for the residents of Socorro and provided MRGCD documentation to continue with the LOMR (letter of map revision) process to remove many businesses and residents from the flood plains in that area. Mr. Sanchez stated they were looking at approximately a 1.3 million dollar refund to MRGCD.

Vice Chair Dunning asked how long the process was to be taken out of the flood plain for businesses or homes in Socorro County. Mr. Casuga said as the new owner they would have their own processes to file for certification of the levee and then the LOMR, letter of map revision. He said it was not a fast process and would require back and forth with FEMA on the

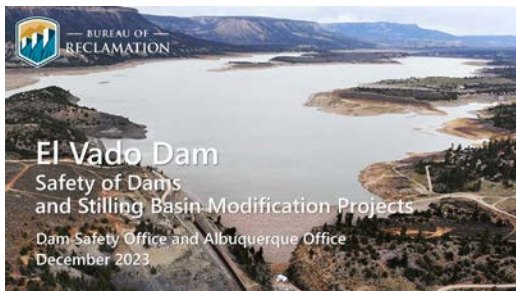
submittal of the certified levee. He also said it was unknown how long it would take FEMA to do their review and respond to any comments.

Director Duggins asked if it was just the city of Socorro and not county. Mr. Casuga stated the levee extended all the way down to Brown Arroyo, which included a portion of an unincorporated area. He said that was one of the things they were discussing with their consultant. He added there was also a piece on the lower end covered by the city's internal drainage master plan that they weren't sure of yet.

Director Kelly said there were some lessons to be learned that they needed to move into their next project with design issues. He stated the Corps needed to take another look at the clear zone because it created a high velocity channel right at the toe of the levee. He said they had 1500 properties impacted by the flood plain and did not want them to be paying and waiting on paperwork. Director Kelly asked when Bohannon Huston would have the FEMA submittal ready. Mr. Casuga suggested working through everything, reviewing, and then reporting back on that.

Director Kelly suggested looking at the procurement method they used on the levee project and would maybe be better off with a traditional bid design and build. He said when the letter was done, he wanted to go with Director Duggins to address the mayor and council of Socorro on what a good job they did.


Lt. Col. Hansbrough said Bernalillo to Belen was always in his top three projects he always talks about and would take the comments into consideration.




El Vado Dam
Safety of Dams
and Stilling Basin Modification Projects
Dam Safety Office and Albuquerque Office
December 2023

OVERVIEW

- **Need for Action**
- Introductions
- Seepage Reduction Modification
 - Changed Conditions
- Spillway Modification and Stilling Basin
- Schedule and Budget




Need for Action




- SOD Recommendation
- Seepage Reduction Modifications
- Spillway Modifications



Need for Action



Need for Action

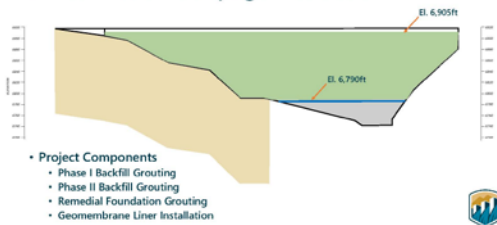


Need for Action

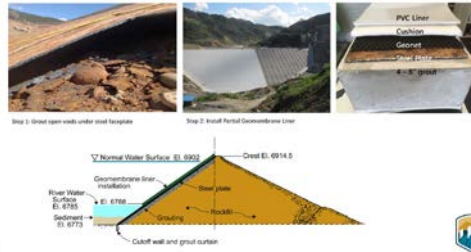



Early 1930s 2023

Planned Action: Seepage Reduction



Planned Action: Seepage Reduction



OVERVIEW

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Introductions – PMT Core Team

- Dam Safety Office
 - Joels Malama
 - Project Manager – Adam Howes (UCB)
- UCB Region
 - Procurement
 - Albuquerque Area Office
 - Leann Woodruff
 - Provo Area Office
- Stakeholder Representative – MRGCD
 - Jason Casuga and Eric Zamora
- TSC – Seepage Reduction
 - Ryan Woodruff (Formerly Chris Ellis)
- TSC – Spillway

Seepage Contract:

- Lisa Vance – CO
- Mike Talbot – COR/Field Engineer
 - Tyler Remund – ACOR
- Carpi – Prime Contractor

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2023 Construction – Bollards Along Crest



2023 – Sink Hole Repair



2023 – Sink Hole Repair



2023 Construction – Bulge Repair



2023 Construction – Bulge Repair



2023 Construction – Bulge Repair



2023 Construction – Bulge Repair



2023 Construction – Bulge Repair



19

2023 - Follow Plate Cutting



20



2023 - Follow Plate Cutting



21

2023 - Follow Plate Cutting



22



2023 – Concrete Saw Cutting



23

2023 – Concrete Saw Cutting



24



2023 – Concrete Saw Cutting



25

2023 – Plinth Wall Crack Repair



26



2023 – Plinth Wall Crack Repair



27

2023 – Outlet Debris Removal



28



2023 – Outlet Debris Removal



29

2023 – Outlet Debris Removal



30



2023 – Outlet Debris Removal



2023 – Wave Deflector Voids



2023 – Slush Grout & Lean Concrete



2023 – Slush Grout & Lean Concrete



2023 – Slush Grout & Lean Concrete



2023 – Slush Grout & Lean Concrete



2023 – Grout Cap



2023 – Grout Cap



2023 – Grout Cap



2023 – Grout Cap



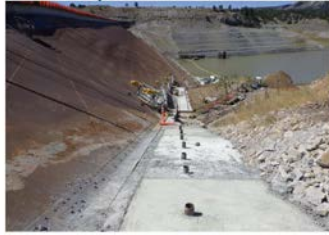
2023 – Grout Cap



2023 – Grout Cap



2023 – Grout Cap



2023 – Grout Cap



2023 – New Drilling



2023 – New Drilling



2023 – Backfill Grouting



2023 – Backfill Grouting



2023 – Backfill Grouting



2023 – Backfill Grouting



2023 – Backfill Grouting



2023 – Backfill Grouting



2023 – Backfill Grouting



2023 – Backfill Grouting



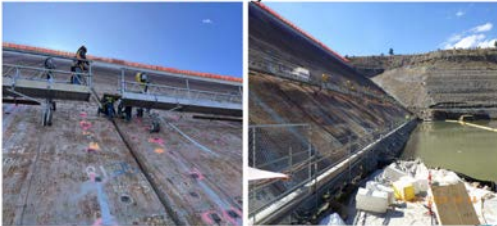
2023 – Backfill Grouting



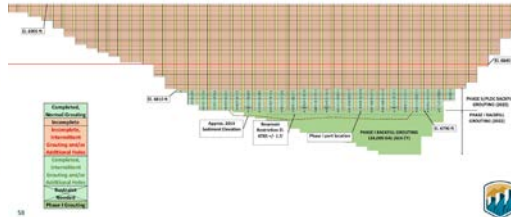
2023 – Backfill Grouting



2023 – Backfill Grouting



Phase I and II Backfill Grouting Progress



OVERVIEW

- Need for Action
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 - **Changed Conditions**
- Spillway Modification and Stilling Basin
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Changed Conditions

- Unexpected Overburden Soils
 - Impacting foundation grouting and grout cap
- Faceplate Bulging During Backfill Grouting
- Contract Modifications
- Record Breaking Snowpack



Changed Conditions

- Overburden Soils
 - Required Changes to
 - Foundation Grouting Plan
 - Grout Cap Configuration



Foundation Grouting Plan Modification



• Reconfigured the remedial foundation grouting program to account for unexpected overburden soils present upstream of the cutoff wall.

Grout Cap – Modification



Schedule Risks – Foundation Grouting

Impact to the Schedule	Mitigation Taken
Foundation Grouting/Grout Cap <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexpected overburden soils • Suspension of work to further investigations • Complexity of the design required additional time for calculations, spec changes, and drawing edits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grout cap modification – executed and work completed • Foundation grouting modification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Package sent to the contractor ○ Undefined action can be taken to allow the work to progress ○ Tracking a risk registry for design

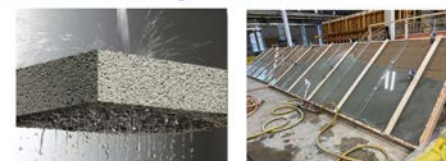


Backfill Grouting – Need for Change

- Bulging of the steel liner
- Apparent grout leakage



Backfill Grouting- Modification



- Selected Permeable Low-Density Permeable Grout in cooperation with contractor
 - Reduces potential for faceplate bulging (wet unit weight 25 to 35 pcf)
 - Sufficient strength to support the lining system
 - Material is permeable (will not float lining system)

Backfill Grouting- Modification

- Allowed contractor to develop faceplate restraint and uplift monitoring systems.



Schedule Risks – Backfill Grouting

Schedule Risk – Unforeseen Change Conditions

Schedule Impact	Mitigation Items
Backfill Grouting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 plate bulging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slower grout injection rates Uplift of the plates required further investigation 2023 plate uplift still occurring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slower grout injection rates Increase in intermittent grouting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-density permeable grout modification Faceplate restraint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempted on the lower sections, but it was discontinued for lack of effectiveness. Collaborating with the contractor other restraint options. Intermittent grouting (i.e. grout ports with >1" plate deflection) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor is working to add additional crews and satellite plants to increase production

Contract Modifications

- Required changes include:
 - Backfill Grout
 - GROUT Cap
 - Foundation Grout



Schedule Risks – Contract Modifications

Schedule Impact	Mitigation Items
Modification Timelines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design package assembly Contractor response Review timelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unfinalized actions issued on several MDD5 Improved communication between design team and construction/contracting team Working closely with GOV cost estimator for discrepancies Continued to meet with the contractor to walk through their response and find needed information. This helps train incoming contractor staff on GOV contracting processes. BOR Cost Price Analyst has done additional training with the contractor

Outlet Works Issues

- Snowmelt runoff well above average and above forecast
- Debris in the reservoir at intake structure
- Mechanical rumbling in outlet works



Schedule Risks – Reservoir Operations

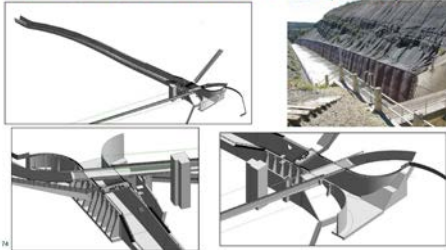
Schedule Impact	Mitigation Items
Contractual Obligation to be at elevation 6,786.5 ft by May 15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well above average snowpack, runoff Debris clogging, reduced ability to manage release Outlet works concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly reporting to PMT on Spring Runoff Forecast Socorro FD and Elephant Butte FD staff assisted Chama FD with debris removal. AAO/Chama FD will develop a debris management plan for 2024 Log boom and debris skit to be installed pre-runoff (March 2024) TSC investigated gate concerns and recommendations were implemented Water operations meetings are ongoing

OVERVIEW

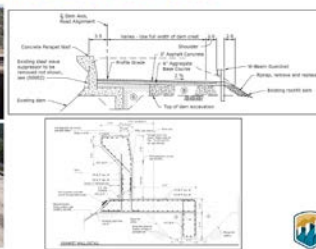
- Need for Action
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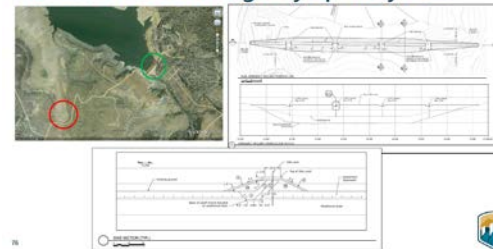
Planned Action: New Service Spillway



Planned Action: Modified Dam Crest



Planned Action: Emergency Spillway Dike



OVERVIEW

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STILLING BASIN

- Repairs to be part of El Vado SOD, Phase 2 work
- Currently working on designs, specs, and NEPA



Photograph shows spillway, outlet works and the stilling basin in the foreground, taken fall of 1995

OVERVIEW

- Need for Action
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Next/On-going Activities

- Contract Modifications
 - Finalize and execute mods
- Backfill Grouting
 - Continue work summer of 2024
- Foundation Grouting
 - Begin summer of 2024
- Liner attachments
 - Begin summer of 2024
- Working to award the spillway contract January 2026 to begin work spring/summer 2026.



Seepage Reduction Modification Schedule

Activities	Baseline Completion	Revised Completion**
Mobilization	April 2022	N/A
Backfill Grouting	November 2022	~November 2024
Foundation Grouting	November 2023	~April 2025
Geomembrane Placement	August 2023	~December 2025
Project Complete	November 2023	~February 2026

- Elevation 6785 Reservoir Restriction

Spillway Modification Schedule and Total Project Budget

Activities	Estimated Start	Estimated Completion**
Overall Construction	May 2026	November 2030

**Revised Completion dates are TBD

- Elevation 6859 Reservoir Restriction
 - When existing approach structure is removed, Elevation 6855
- Approved Overall Budget – \$136.4 Million

Site Visit

- AAO working with MRGCD to schedule a tour this summer



Questions?
AHowes@usbr.gov
 El Vado Project Manager
 Dam Safety Coordinator
 Upper Colorado Regional Office

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 - REPORT FROM THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION - Jennifer Faler, Area Manager

Jennifer Faler introduced her team including Joels Malama, the program manager in Denver over several safety of dams projects; Adam Howes, the new project manager, Mike Talbot, a contracting officer representative on the project, Jason Shamrock, a civil geotechnical, Cord Everett, the engineer and project manager and Leann Woodruff, who's over their facility management division. Ms. Faler stated they would be giving updates on the El Vado Dam.

Adam Howes updated the Board on the work Reclamation was doing to address the safety of dam issues at the El Vado Dam. He addressed many things, including the project management team, updated the point behind the project and need for action, accomplishments from the last year of construction, and updated the Board on the changed conditions they found from construction, items they presented to the board during the last meeting from the last year, brought them up to speed on where they planned to go on their path forward, the future spillway instilling basin modification work, and updated on the current and expected schedule and budget. He stated it was one of the few steel face plate dams in the world with many safety of dam issues involving seepage, the spillway, and protecting critical infrastructure. Mr. Howes discussed backfill grouting, foundation grouting, and liners.

Mike Talbot gave a synopsis of the work they did over the year. He stated they had to get a bunch of little projects out of the way to make the site safe for the workers first, including replacing crumbling bollards, sinkhole repair, faceplate replacement, vacuuming particulate matter, cutting pieces of the fallow plate, saw cutting, repair of the plinth wall, blowing debris away from the outlets and hauled it off, installation of the grout cap, etc. He showed many

photos of all the work they did. Mr. Talbot discussed a diagram they used to track throughout the grouting process. He stated they were about 15% done.

Adam Howes stated the group that put the scaffolding together won an award for their ingenuity. He talked about some of the things they had to do to help move things forward, such as the unexpected overburden soils, faceplate bulging, contract modifications, and record breaking snowpack. He said that allowed them to pivot and make some changes to the foundation grouting plan and grout cap configuration. He stated that going forward they would modify contracts and work hand in hand with a contractor to find ways to speed up the schedule. He said they would also be doing the spillway modification and stilling basin. Mr. Howes updated on the schedule and budget, stating they were trying to get everything completed so water could be stored at the next reservoir restriction for spillway starting in 2026. He mentioned that the Albuquerque Area Office was working with Jason (Casuga) and others to plan a road trip so the Board could see the work going on face to face and ask questions while on site.

Vice Chair Dunning asked if the life of a normal dam without steel plates was 100 years or if they were having to replace it due to doing an alternative building. He said with the El Vado Dam they had corrosion that provided impermeability to keep the water from getting through.

Mr. Howes said there were different components to large dams with different shelf lives. Mr. Casuga reminded the Board that Reclamation did not construct El Vado, it was the MRGCD and later became property of the federal government.

Director Kelly stated he was pleased with the briefing. Regarding the time versus production and monthly payments, he would like to see the spillway coming in there the sooner, the better. Mr. Howes said they were empathetic to the situation and were very interested in getting it completed.

Mr. Casuga added that Reclamation learned what they were doing and had the right mix with the foam based concrete to hopefully make up some time.

Madam Chair Russo Baca asked how long the construction season was. Mr. Howes answered they tried hard to have a start date of May 15 through the first or second week of November.

Director Jiron stated there were farmers angry with how long it is taking and mentioned it was originally supposed to be done in 2023. He also asked how many workers were actually on the job site because it did not look like many from the photos shown in the presentation. Mr. Howes confirmed the original plan was to have it completed in 2023, but there were unforeseen change conditions that happened. He also said there were safety rules that allowed only a certain number of workers on-site.

Director Kelly reminded them they were lucky to get the project under the Safety of Dams Program and lucky to have a 15% match on a 40-year interest free loan to the District; however, they needed to get it finished. He also offered a proposal to offer a million dollar incentive no fault on the spillway job scheduled to take four years to get it done in three years. Mr. Casuga said he was happy to incentivize speed and talk with Reclamation about that.

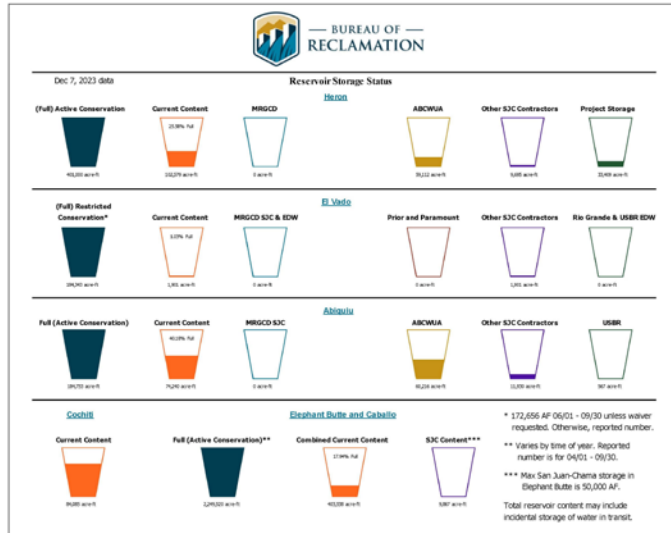
Mr. Casuga stated in 2026, when they get the partial storage back, they will have already had storage available in Abiquiu which would give more flexibility and volume, including 79,000 acre-feet in El Vado and 40,000 acre-feet in Abiquiu.

MIRGCD BOARD MEETING (12-11-2023)

1. Heron Summary
 - Content: 102,554 ac-ft (12/8)
 - Asotta tamed: 0 cfs
 - Total SJ-C inflow year-to-date: 142,127 ac-ft
 - Currently releasing: 30 cfs
 - Current MRGCD storage: 0 ac-ft
2. El Vado Summary
 - A. Total storage (all contractors and natural): 1,898 ac-ft (2/8)
 - B. Native in El Vado: 0 ac-ft
 - C. MRGCD's SJ-C storage in El Vado: 0 ac-ft
 - D. P & P: 0 ac-ft
 - E. All other SJ-C contractors: 1,898 ac-ft
 - Current release is 100 cfs RG Inflow is 40-50 cfs

3. Storage in Abiquiu
 - Content: 74,265 ac-ft (12/8)
 - MRGCD's SJ-C storage: 0 ac-ft
 - P&P: 0 ac-ft
 - Temporary flood storage (native): 0 ac-ft
- Total supplemental water released in 2023: 14,787 ac-ft
- Snowpack Data as of 12/8/2023 (% of median)**
- | | |
|------------------------|------|
| Rio Chama Basin | 60% |
| Upper Rio Grande Basin | 50% |
| Sangre de Cristo Basin | 59% |
| Jemez Basin | 150% |
| San Juan River Basin | 67% |

- Locked in floodwater from 2023 runoff continues to be released from Cochiti to Elephant Butte
- Maintenance work on the Abiquiu Dam outlet works is currently limiting the release and may extend to February 28, 2024



AGENDA ITEM NO. 8 - ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR (Comments are limited to six (6) minutes)

Kathy McCord

Ms. McCord stated the Niagara Bottling Corporation had a facility in Los Lunas and were permitted to extract 285 acre-feet per year through Los Lunas wells. She said they had been taking 320 acre-feet per year for the last four years. She stated they went to the village in 2021 and 2022 to ask for an increase in water. She said a draft water experts report was presented to the village council and included an aquifer study. She said Niagara came back with a request to increase to 782 acre-feet per year, but the aquifer study was never intended to be used for that purpose. Ms. McCord explained that the Valencia Water Watchers and others in opposition would be seeking a real aquifer study to find the true state of the aquifer.

Martin Haynes

Mr. Haynes, rate payer, first brought Director Jiron up to speed on the siphon on the Corrales Main. He stated three years ago the District made the decision to not use the siphon anymore and then put in two pumps two seasons ago that barely worked and they had a terrible irrigation season. He said this year they had tremendous snowpack and overbank flooding and the District put in work to save the channel. Mr. Haynes explained that the pumps stopped working in July and the Corrales Main was unable to get any water. He said he was happy the District upped the following program but asked for a special condition for irrigators on the Corrales Main for greater compensation.

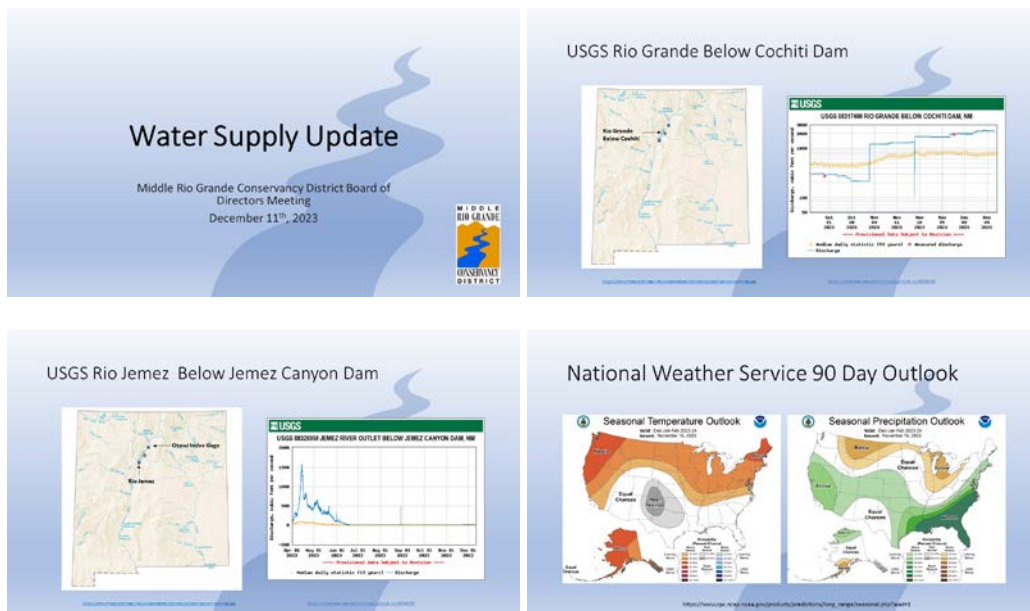
Glen Duggins

Director Duggins wished everyone a Merry Christmas and said to not forget the real meaning of Christmas and to remember those who were alone during this time.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9 - REPORT(S) FROM THE WATER OPERATIONS AND WATER DISTRIBUTION DIVISIONS

- a. **Report on the Water Supply Conditions - Anne Marken, Water Ops Division Manager**

Anne Marken said the US Army Corps of Engineers had been releasing water stored in Abiquiu and Cochiti to prevent flooding downstream and was looking to have all water evacuated by December 20th to get it down to Elephant Butte to count towards the 2023 Compact. She stated the Corps would be conducting inspections on the outlet works of Abiquiu Dam. Ms. Marken said New Mexico ended 2022 with 93,000 acre-feet of debt to the Compact and was expected to grow for 2023 but stay below 100,000 acre-feet. She believed that the District's reduction in diversions earlier in the spring and how much water was contributed to the Middle Rio Grande by the Jemez River were some of the reasons they were able to still meet the Compact deliveries. She stated Article VII storage restrictions were lifted yesterday. She noted that the amount of space they would be able to secure in Abiquiu this year was not going to be enough volume to satisfy Article VI and would likely not be able to store native Rio Grande water in 2024 for farmers because of Rio Grande water restrictions and El Vado construction on the dam but would have San Juan Chama project water available next year. Ms. Marken stated the current snowpack conditions in the mountains were about 60% of median and the National Weather Service Season Outlook through February was forecasting near normal temperatures and above average precipitation for the high mountains in the Rio Grande valley.



b. Status Report on Water Distribution - Matt Martinez, Water Distribution Division Manager

Mr. Martinez said the ISOs were tasked with identifying maintenance needs on facilities within their zones and work lists were consolidated and shared with division managers. He said he's seen notable progress in work so far. He said they had teams of ISOs trimming vegetation that hinders access or flow of water, maintaining and repairing automatic water control gates, and participating in the infrastructure assessment project, which would collect information to use in planning structure repair and replacements. He said they recently hired a new ISO for an opening in the Belen Division and were still searching for an ISO for Albuquerque. Mr. Martinez stated current ISO zone assignments were posted on the website and they would be holding training workshops in January for new and veteran ISOs. He announced there would be an Irrigation Committee meeting next week to have further discussions on establishing a procedure to enforce the water distribution policy. He said it was too early in the winter to predict water availability, but they would be prepared for different scenarios and were committed to begin charging the irrigation system on February 26, 2024.

Vice Chair Dunning asked if they were looking at lining the ditches. Mr. Casuga said there was still a path to allow groundwater seepage even with a liner, but they come in a preset ditch size that was not customizable. However, they were looking for a ditch where it would fit to get information and understanding on the product.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10 - REPORT(S) FROM THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT - Christine L. Nardi, MBA

a. Introduction of MRGCD New Hires

Christine Nardi announced the new MRGCD hires and job changes, including a right of way specialist in the Licensing and Land Sales Division and an ISO in the Belen Service Area. She said there were two promotions, a division clerk II to right of way specialist and field maintenance tech to warehouse specialist. She noted an 8.3% vacancy rate.

General Office

CALIJAH	KAYE	RIGHT-OF-WAY SPECIALIST	11/27/2023 PROMOTION
ANTHONY	CASTILLO	WAREHOUSE SPECIALIST	12/11/2023 PROMOTION
KIMBERLY	WARD	RIGHT-OF-WAY SPECIALIST	01/08/2024
MARIO	JOJOLA	IRRIGATION SYSTEMS OPERATOR	01/08/2024

b. Consideration/Approval of the 2024 Holiday Schedule

Christine Nardi asked for approval of the 2024 holiday schedule:

New Year's Day	Monday, January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr's Birthday	Monday, January 15
Memorial Day	Monday, May 27
Independence Day	Thursday, July 4
Labor Day	Monday, September 2
Veteran's Day (observed)	Monday, November 11
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 28
Day after Thanksgiving Day	Friday, November 29
Christmas Day	Wednesday, December 25
Day after Christmas Day	Thursday, December 26

Vice Chair Dunning made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2024 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE**. Seconded by Director Duggins. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11 - REPORT(S) FROM THE CHIEF PROCUREMENT OFFICER - Richard DeLoia, CPO

a. Consideration/Approval for the Storey Wasteway Project - Alicia Lopez, Engineering and Mapping Manager

Mr. DeLoia said MRGCD staff accepted the results and were asking for approval. They said they received three bids and awarded Compass Engineering that included an alternate for \$472,226.13 including NM gross receipts tax.

Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO AWARD COMPASS ENGINEERING FOR THE AMOUNT BID TO INCLUDE THE ALTERNATE** . Seconded by Chair Russo Baca. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

b. Consideration/Approval of the Film Production Agreement Between MRGCD and Filmmaker Aracely “Arcie” Chapa - Casey Ish, Conservation Program Supervisor

Mr. DeLoia presented the film production agreement contract for the MRGCD Centennial Documentary which was reviewed by the legal team.

Director Kelly asked what the schedule was for production and release. Ms. Chapa said the schedule would depend on when they planned their centennial celebration.

Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT**. Seconded by Vice Chair Dunning. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 12 - REPORT(S) FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER/CFO - Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM

a. Report of the Exit Interview for FY2023 Audit with Carr, Riggs & Ingram, November 20, 2023 - Pam Fanelli, CFO, Chair Russo Baca and Vice Chair Dunning

Ms. Fanelli stated the auditors were Carr, Riggs & Ingram and the audit went well with zero findings. She said the Exit Interview was on November 30th. She added the audit was sent to the state auditor’s office and they would post it on the website when they received it.

Chair Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE REPORT FOR THE EXIT INTERVIEW**. Seconded by Director Kelly. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

b. Report on the Finance Committee Meeting, December 11, 2023 - Director Kelly, Vice Chair Dunning and Chair Russo Baca

Director Kelly said they talked about primarily two things, an early estimate for personnel expenses and the water service charge. He said they would bring a recommendation to increase the water service charge and were looking at different plans and would have a recommendation at the January meeting.

c. Set Date for Special Meeting to Determine Water Bank Lease Rates

The special meeting to determine water bank lease rates was determined to be held on January 8, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 13 - REPORT(S) FROM THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS - Dr. Sarah Delavan, Designated Engineer

Dr. Sarah Delavan, Designated Engineer, said she had been working with Eric Zamora’s team on the offseason work on the pueblos, working on access to the new tracking system to start learning the system and help the transition with pueblo technical teams, working to make sure all the off-season work was completed on important cultural locations and working on having a startup plan that meets cultural needs of the pueblos and irrigation. She said she appreciated the willingness to have more meetings with the teams and she would be working closely with Ms. Marken, Mr. Martinez, and the technical teams all winter to make sure they’re ready for the spring. Dr. Delavan stated she would be working with Ms. Fanelli and Mr. Casuga on the federal budget requests for 2026 to make sure O&M needs and budgets are being met. She talked about some other things she had been working on, including payment schedule, people at the Corrales Siphon and people in Isleta on the Highway 147 crossing.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 14 - REPORT(S) FROM THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER - Eric Zamora, PE

a. MRGCD Division Manager Updates - Julian Avalos, Socorro Division Manager

Julian Avalos, Socorro Division Manager, stated they were working closely with the Bosque Task Force on cleaning up the Bosque. He said there was a crew that picked up the trash and then called them to haul it off. He said they were working on the new service requests from ISOs. He said they were mowing all the drains currently and said they had 180 miles of canal banks, approximately 12,000 acres of farmland to deliver to, two refuges that border the north and south ends, and 25 employees. Mr. Avalos discussed challenges for Socorro, including horsetail and pigweed, but were using the mobile excavator to remove it quicker. He also showed off some of the weld work they had done. He also discussed their wish list, which included a sheepsfoot roller, fleet vehicles, and a dozer.

Vice Chair Dunning made the **MOTION TO EXTEND THE MEETING**. Seconded by Chair Russo Baca. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Director Duggins commented that the ditch bank mowing and cleanliness were better than he had ever seen them.

Mr. Avalos thanked the farmers, and it was nice to learn some history from them and to build relationships with them also.

Director Kelly asked about having chairs under the rebar mat. Mr. Avalos confirmed they did and also had rebar caps on the stakes.

Director Jiron said they were doing a great job. He said he liked it when directors or supervisors were in the ditches with their workers and not afraid to work.

Director Duggins said he mentioned previously they should buy material for the high school kids throughout the District to make no dumping signs or to use their own words, because that would earn more respect than a government sign. He said he would like to see some movement on that. Chair Russo Baca said she would work with him on that.

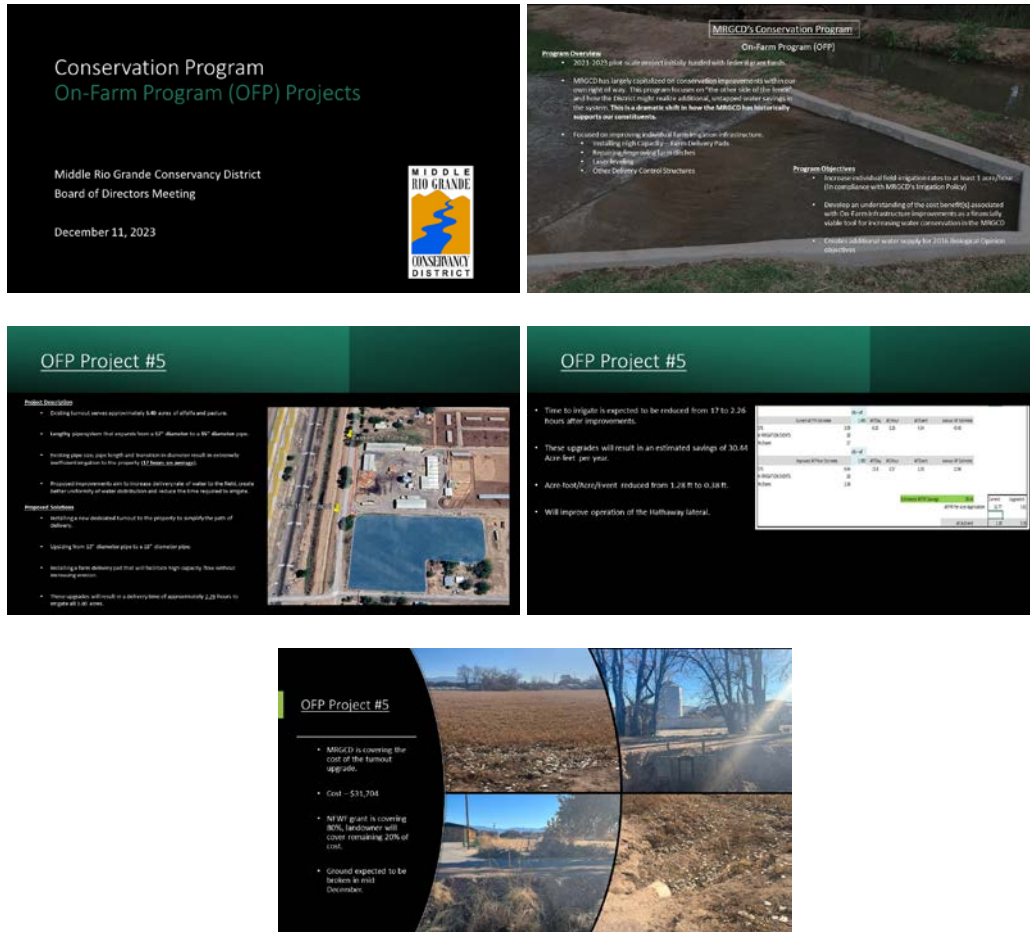
AGENDA ITEM NO. 15 - REPORT(S) FROM THE CHIEF ENGINEER - Jason M. Casuga, PE

a. Report from the Conservation Program's On-Farm Program Projects - Jose Contreras Alvarado, Agriculture Irrigation Specialist

Jose Contreras, Agriculture Irrigation Specialist, discussed the On-Farm Program. He said the program started as a pilot scale project that was funded by federal grant funds and the mission was to capitalize on the potential water savings on the other side of the fence through selling high capacity farm delivery pads, repairing and improving farm ditches, laser leveling, and other methods. He stated they wanted to increase individual farm irrigation rates to get to one acre per hour and develop an understanding of the cost benefits associated with On-Farm infrastructure and improvements to increase water savings in MRGCD. Mr. Avalos explained that the turnout served around 3.5 acres of alfalfa and pasture, but the pipe system had an undersized turnout, which resulted in extremely inefficient irrigation. He said they aimed to increase delivery rate of water to the field and create a better uniformity of water distribution by

installing a new dedicated turnout and upsizing it from 12 to 18 and a farm delivery pad. He said MRGCD would cover the cost of the turnout upgrade, which was \$31,000, and 80% of funding was provided by NFWF. He said they would start in mid-December.

Director Duggins said they talked in the past about providing the 20% with a low interest loan for farmers. Mr. Casuga said they were still exploring that program, but more research needed to be done on making sure they could be fiscally responsible.



b. Report on the Socorro Farmers-Irrigators Meeting, November 30, 2023 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO, Chair Russo Baca and Directors Jiron, Kelly and Duggins

Jason Casuga thanked the Harris family for allowing them to use their barn. He said there was conversation about the modification of MRGCD facilities. He said his end goal for the meetings was to be direct, give factual information, hear constituents either good or bad and have good communication. He said they received both positive and negative feedback.

c. Report on Middle Rio Grande Flood Control Association Breakfast, December 5, 2023 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO, Chair Russo Baca, Vice Chair Dunning and Directors Baca, Kelly, Sandoval and Jiron

Jason Casuga said he used five minutes and stuck to one topic. He said the magic in the room was getting to talk to technical and non-technical people who work on flood control issues. He extended an invitation to Director Jiron to attend the next one.

d. Report on the Water Leaders Workshop, December 6-8, 2023 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO

Jason Casuga said the workshop was widely attended by water agencies, state representatives and senators. Mr. Casuga stated they went over the offseason and had a discussion about the water moving through the river currently. He noted Mimi Stewart attended and asked good questions. He said one of the things that came out was there were two delivery points and there would be no mixing of the lower and upper Rio Grande. He said it was a good opportunity to network with federal partners and was going to try to get a GSA fleet card to get access to excess fleet. Mr. Casuga mentioned the Ghost Ranch Workshop in 2024 and wanted MRGCD staff and board members to attend.

e. Report on the San Juan Chama Project Triannual Contractors Meeting, November 28, 2023 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO and Pamela Fanelli, CFO

Jason Casuga said things were more expensive and they should expect the bill to go up. He said no overtures were made about returning the dam to MRGCD.

f. Report on the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblo Coalition Meeting, December 7, 2023 - Eric Zamora, COO, Casey Ish, Conservation Program Supervisor, Anne Marken, Water Operations Manager and Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO

The meeting did not occur after all.

g. Information on Upcoming Events

1. Family Farm Alliance Annual Conference, Reno, NV - February 22-23, 2024
2. Land and Water Summit, Albuquerque, NM - March 6-8, 2024
3. National Water Resources Association (NWRA) 2024 Policy Conference, Washington DC - April 9, 2024
4. Law of the Rio Grande Conference, Santa Fe, NM - April 11-12, 2024

Mr. Casuga discussed the upcoming events.

Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE REPORTS FROM THE CHIEF ENGINEER**. Seconded by Director Duggins The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 16 - REPORT(S) FROM THE MRGCD ATTORNEY(S) - Chief Water Counsel or General Counsel

Ms. Wiggins updated the Board on the City of Albuquerque homeless case with Judge Alison. She said New Mexico Supreme Court granted MRGCD's motion, accepted the conditionally filed amicus brief, and granted Sam Bregman's request, but denied the County of Bernalillo. She stated after they were granted amicus status, the real parties and interests wanted a chance to respond. MRGCD declined to agree and filed a response in opposition to the request. The Court agreed with MRGCD and denied the real parties and interests effort. She said oral arguments would proceed in Wednesday.

Dr. DuMars said they had multiple issues with Wild Earth Guardians and all of the things going on with the state. He said he and Jason agreed to push those into next year.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 17 - REPORT(S) FROM THE BOARD

- a. **Report on the Conservation Advisory Committee Meeting, November 16, 2023 - Chair Russo Baca**

See appendix "A" for the chair's submitted written reports.

- b. **Report on the NM Acequia Association Congreso de las Acequias, November 17-18, 2023, Chair Russo Baca**

See appendix "A" for the chair's submitted written reports.

- c. **Report on the NM Northern Wetlands Roundtable, November 29, 2023 - Chair Russo Baca**

See appendix "A" for the chair's submitted written reports.

- d. **Report on the Valencia County Commission Meeting, December 6, 2023 - Chair Russo Baca**

See appendix "A" for the chair's submitted written reports.

- e. **Report on the Village of Los Lunas Council Meeting, December 7, 2023 - Chair Russo Baca**

See appendix "A" for the chair's submitted written reports.

Vice Chair Dunning made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE REPORTS FROM THE BOARD**. Seconded by Director Kelly. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 18 – EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. NMSA 1978 Open Meetings Act, Section 10-15-1(H)2
1. Limited Personnel Matters
- b. NMSA 1978 Open Meetings Act, Section 10-15-1(H)7
1. Threatened or Pending Litigation

The closed session was not needed; with no further comments, questions, or concerns, Vice Chair Dunning adjourned the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

Approved to be the correct Minutes of the Board of Directors of December 11, 2023

ATTESTED:

Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM
Secretary/Treasurer

Stephanie Russo Baca, Madam Chair
MRGCD Board of Directors

APPENDIX "A"

Stephanie Russo Baca Board Reports 12.11.23

Report on the Conservation Advisory Committee Meeting, November 16, 2023.

Topics for Discussion

Current Hydrology Update – Ashley Veihl – Water Resources Specialist

Del Norte (San Luis Valley) –320 cfs (September) – 232 (October) – 155 (November)

Lobatos (NM/CO State Line) –126 cfs (September) – 112 (October) – 73 (November)

La Puente (Chama)– 54 cfs (September) – 37 (October) – 34 (November)

Below Abiquiu (Chama)– 1,190 cfs (September) – 985 (October) – 1,100 (November)

Otowi (Main Stem)– 1,370 cfs (September) – 1,290 (October) – 1,530 (November)

Below Cochiti–304 cfs (September) – 310 (October) – 1,320 (November)

Bosque Farms–28 (September) – 43 (October) – 1,190 (November)

Narrows (Just above EB)– 72 (September) – 37 (October) – 1,540 (November)

Irrigation of P&P land ended on the 15th of November.

On-Farm Program Updates – Jose Contreras – Ag. Irrigation Specialist

- Update on OFP5 (Quote for construction has been received), waiting on landowner approval to proceed.
- Exploring 3D printing options for lowering the cost of constructing Farm Delivery Pads
- Awaiting an installation quote from a manufacturer of HDPE canal lining product (likely less expensive than concrete or pipe).

2023 EWLP Deliveries – Ray Hartwell & Ashley Veihl

- Combined Credit of 3,612 AF in the EWA/SWA as of October 31st (End of Season)
- Combined Debit of (3,609) AF in the EWA/SWA as of October 31st (End of Season)
- Remaining Balance of 3 AF – 99.9% of water leased was used this year. Remaining Balance does not carry over to 2024.

2024 Irrigation Demand Management-Environmental Water Leasing Program Update (IDMEWLP) – Ray Hartwell and Ashley Veihl

- Joint effort by MRGCD and New Mexico's Office of the State Engineer to generally reduce irrigation demand temporarily (2024-2025) while also continuing to lease water for the Strategic Outfalls.

APPENDIX "A"

- Enrollment will open Nov. 27th and run through February 16th.
- Program is Voluntary
- Prices are still being finalized but will not exceed \$400/Ac for Partial Season and \$700/Ac for Full Season.
- Acreage Cap is 8,000 acres.

Outfall Project Updates – Ashley Veihl, Paul Tashjian, Tucker Davidson, Todd Caplan

- New Belen Outfall – Flushing of Backwater Channel
- San Francisco Outfall – Modification of existing channel deflectors, excavation of floodplain terraces, flushing activities to be carried out next week.

Storey Wasteway OCS Update – Ashley Veihl

Project is currently being advertised for Bid.

Harvest Reports

Opportunity to hear from the multiple farmers on the Advisory Committee on how respective harvests are going for the season and plans for 2024.

Report on the NM Acequia Association Congreso de las Acequias, November 17-18, 2023.

This important event was held in Taos, NM and had a large turnout from acequias all over New Mexico including La Joya and others in the Middle Rio Grande Valley. The history of the MRGCD was highlighted in the film, *Acequias: The Legacy Lives On*.

Report on the NM Northern Wetlands Roundtable, November 29, 2023.

The Roundtable is organized by the NMED Surface Water Quality Bureau Wetlands Program, Maryann McGraw, NMED Wetlands Program.

This virtual event had many important presentations on a multitude of topics by a variety of entities including: Surface Water Quality Permit Primacy, Landscape Planning, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Update, Implementing The 2023 Water Security Planning Act - A Vehicle for Collective Action to Transform New Mexico Water Governance, Federal Funding Opportunities to Support Wetland Protection & Restoration.

Report on the Socorro Farmers Irrigators Meeting, November 30, 2023.

This was a well-attended meeting my both MRGCD staff, board members, as well as farmers and community members in Socorro county. There were many questions asked and answered about the upcoming irrigation season as well as the off-season maintenance of the Socorro Division.

APPENDIX "A"

MRGFCA Annual Breakfast, December 5, 2023.

Many great presentations from members of the Mid Rio Grande Flood Control Association. Many if not all, have partnerships with MRGCD. It was great to hear about the many ongoing projects happening the Middle Valley and along the Rio Grande. Jason Casuga, presented about the history of the MRGCD and the ongoing projects.

Valencia County Commission Meeting, December 6, 2023.

The Valencia County Commission had their regular business meeting as well as tree lighting ceremony. At MRGCD we are trying to continue our partnerships with all of the counties in the district, including Valencia County.

Village of Los Lunas Council Meeting, December 7, 2023.

The hot topic issue item on the agenda is “Item 1. AMENDED WATER AGREEMENT WITH NIAGARA BOTTLING ALLOWING NIAGARA BOTTLING TO EXPAND ITS PRODUCTION CAPABILITIES. TAB 1. ACTION REQUESTED OF COUNCIL: Approve or disapprove. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE: On February 23, 2017, the Village and Niagara Bottling entered into an amended agreement for the provision of water and wastewater services to Niagara Bottling by the Village. That Agreement provides that Niagara would be a regular customer of the Village water and wastewater services. In the February 23, 2017, Agreement, the Village agreed to supply Niagara up to 285 AFY of water. In order for the Village to supply Niagara Bottling with the amount of water as stated in the Agreement, Niagara Bottling transferred water rights it leased from PNM into the Village’s wells. Niagara Bottling has requested to expand its plant and is requesting the Village agree to provide up to 782 AFY of water to them. An analysis of this request and its impact on the Village water and wastewater system. Niagara has secured these additional water rights with a lease from PNM through February 28, 2028.”

There was a motion made by the council to table the item above after almost two hours of discussion. There was also a comment made by a council member that MRGCD’s ad valorem tax structure is outdated and that there is “no benefit” to landowners that do not irrigate. The council took a short break and then reconvened to continue discussion on water use and ordinance 488 Impact Fees.