

**MINUTES OF THE
2,210th REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT**

APRIL 8, 2024 - 3:00 PM

Directors having been duly notified; Director Kelly chaired today's meeting and called the regular meeting to order at 3:01 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	Patti Williams	General Counsel
Brian Jiron, Director	Present	Dr. Charles DuMars	Chief Water Counsel
John Kelly, Director	Present	Pamela Fanelli	Secretary-Treasurer/CFO
Glen Duggins, Director	Present	Eric Zamora	Chief Operating Officer
Micheal T. Sandoval, Director	Present	Anne Marken	Water Distribution Division Mgr.
Colin T. Baugh, Director	Present	Matt Martinez	Water Operations Division Mgr.

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

Christine Nardi, MRGCD	Amanda Molina, MRGCD	Josh Gamboa, MRGCD
Norm Gaume	Casey Ish, MRGCD	Don Kettwich
Daniel Arquero, MRGCD	Michael Padilla, MRGCD	Marta Moerch, MRGCD
Kim Murphy, UNM	Jennifer Faler, BOR	Angelina Jimenez, MRGCD
Rebecca Thompson, MRGCD	Michelle Estrada-Lopez	Matthew Chavez, MRGCD
Rudy L. Perea	Tiffany Rivera	Angel Madera Enriquez, MRGCD
Judy McSweeney, MRGCD	Mark Sanchez	Alicia Lopez, MRGCD
Julian Avalos, MRGCD	Rhett Sanders-Spencer, MRGCD	Mike Talbot
Adam Splittek, Bernalillo County	Estella Gamboa, MRGCD	Mike & Kim Lopez
Yasmeen Najmi, MRGCD	Josh Hind, MRGCD	Mark Kelly
Calijah Kaye, MRGCD	John Fleck, UNM	LeeAnn Corwin, MRGCD
Mitch Georgina, MRGCD	Mike Apodaca, MRGCD	Casey Ish, MRGCD

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Daniel Arquero led the Pledge of Allegiance at today's meeting.

Director Kelly declared a quorum, and the meeting was publicly noticed. This meeting was a hybrid meeting with Jason Casuga, CE/CEO, Casey Ish, Conservation Program Supervisor, Vice Chair Dunning and Directors Jiron and Baugh online.

AGENDA ITEM NO.2 - APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

There were no changes or additions on the agenda.

Chair Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA**. Seconded by Director Sandoval. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes and the **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Director Sandoval	Yes	Director Duggins	Yes
Director Kelly	Yes	Vice Chair Dunning	Yes
Chair Russo Baca	Yes	Director Baugh	Yes
Director Jiron	Yes		

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 - CONSENT AGENDA

- a. **Consideration/Approval of Payment Ratification - April 8, 2024**
- b. **Consideration/Approval of March 2024 Invoice for Wiggins, Williams & Wiggins**
- c. **Consideration/Approval of March 2024 Invoice for Law and Resource Planning Assoc.**
- d. **Consideration/Approval of the Minutes for the Special Board Meeting - March 11, 2024**
- e. **Consideration/Approval of the Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting - March 11, 2024**
- f. **Memo on MRGCD Approved Licenses for March 2024 (For informational Purposes Only)**

No questions or concerns were had.

Chair Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA**. Seconded by Director Duggins. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes and the **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Director Sandoval	Yes	Director Duggins	Yes
Director Kelly	Yes	Vice Chair Dunning	Yes
Chair Russo Baca	Yes	Director Baugh	Yes
Director Jiron	Yes		

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 - REPORT(S) FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

- a. **Bureau of Reclamation - Jennifer Faler, Area Manager**
 - 1. **El Vado 30-day Suspension of Work Letter**

Jason Casuga explained that on March 20th, they received a letter from BOR for a temporary suspension of work for a minimum of 30 days.

Jennifer Faler, BOR Area Manager, stated they were working to address the grout production issues. She expressed Reclamation’s sincere commitment to the project and the importance in the safety of the public. She stated the issue has been elevated to the decision makers level and will be convening a meeting on May 2nd to develop a consensus recommendation on how to proceed. She assured that Reclamation and Albuquerque Area Officer were committed to not missing any storage opportunities that could arise over the next few years.

Vice Chair Dunning inquired on issuing 30-day suspension letters and if they keep issuing them once the 30 days has passed.

Ms. Faler explained it is a 30-day stop work order or until the issues are resolved, indefinite.

Director Kelly asked Ms. Faler to comment on the breadth of the solutions they are looking at to restore production.

Ms. Faler responded that they have some innovative, hardworking, and well thought out solutions on the table. She noted some challenges, including lack of production from crews, weather challenges, and grout capabilities. She said she was confident they would pull together a group to make a good decision in May.

Director Kelly asked if they should have a major contractor on that has the capabilities to jump on things.

Ms. Faler reported that all options were on the table.

Director Kelly asked what the options were for not missing storage opportunities.

Ms. Faler said MRGCD has Reclamation’s full support, they can help with any glitches in bureaucracy, there is enough storage in Abiquiu to get through the year, and they are brainstorming options for after this year.

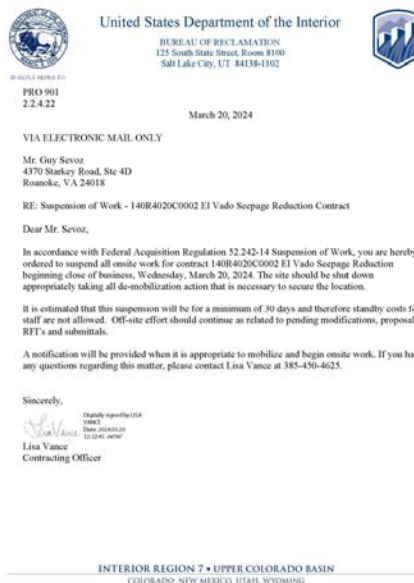
Mr. Casuga added that he, the MRGCD staff, and the water team are looking at every possibility and challenging federal partners to think outside the box.

Director Duggins stated he keeps hearing from BOR that the farmer is number one, but it is like saying sorry without action. He said the famers were dwindling and very limited on where they can borrow money, and they have unforgiving banking industries. He asked who needs MRGCD if the farming is gone. He noted that the federal government should be able to help with things like this.

Director Kelly added that Director Duggins was speaking for many people in the farming community, but they are having a design conundrum with El Vado and when doing a remodel you can expect those things.

Dr. DuMars asked where the water seepage is coming from and where it is going.

Ms. Faler explained that all dams leak, but this one is exceeding tolerances. She said there was a landslide that compromised the left abutment and water is coming in at higher than acceptable levels. She also added that they have not missed an opportunity to store any water.



b. Bureau of Indian Affairs - Dr. Sarah Delavan, Designated Engineer

Dr. Delavan was not available at today’s meeting.

NOTE: At 3:30 pm the chair left the meeting to teach her new Ag law class at UNM.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 - ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR (Comments are limited to six (6) minutes)

Kim Murphy

Mr. Murphy discussed the State Land Commissioner’s proposal to transfer the State Trust Land in the Bosque to the Fish & Wildlife Service. He stated he lives in that area on the Williams Lateral and they are concerned about the overall management and access control if the transfer occurs, and it could potentially conflict with the work of the Conservancy District and City Open Space Division if left in federal hands. He said they felt comfortable with District ownership or the City Open Space Division but not the Fish & Wildlife Service. He noted there was a meeting coming up on the issue on April 16th.

Don Kettwich

Mr. Kettwich also discussed the State Land Commissioner’s proposal to transfer the State Trust Land to the Fish & Wildlife Service. He fears the Fish & Wildlife Service will allow hunting there, after hunting had been banned there years ago for residents hearing so many shots all through the day. He requested the Board to talk to the previous State Land Commissioner on why she banned hunting there previously.

Director Duggins requested this issue be on the agenda at the next meeting to have some back and forth on it. Director Kelly agreed.

Mr. Casuga stated they had been doing research on this issue. He said this will be posted on the agenda item for full discussion in May.



Rudy Perea

Mr. Perea commented that he was not able to water this week because the pumps were hit by lightning and felt the Conservancy could save money if they just did a siphon pipe, because it was dependable for 100 years. He said the pumps were inconsistent and a waste of money to install them. He asked if they had gotten a contractor yet to do the siphon.

Director Kelly responded they had Wilson & Company working on the design of the siphon and they are negotiating with the Pueblo of Sandia about staging an area for the construction.

Norm Gaume

Mr. Gaume called to the Board’s attention that since Interstate Stream Commission relinquished a credit for use in the Middle Valley in 2010, the middle Rio Grande has consumed 217,000 acre feet of water that belongs to the Lower Rio Grande legally and 71% of that total has been consumed in the last six years. He stated their water is going away rapidly and all the depletions of the middle Rio Grande are a problem, and if the Water Authority is still in drought stage one and the Conservancy is diverting and consuming Compact delivery water, they are going to be below the red line and in another Supreme Court litigation.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 - REPORT(S) FROM THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT - Christine L. Nardi, MBA

a. Introduction of MRGCD New Hires

Christine Nardi introduced the new hires and staff changes, including hiring three ISOs and the Division Clerk II for the Water Distribution Division, a promotion to the construction and maintenance supervisor in Belen, and a promotion to the field maintenance lead in Albuquerque. She also announced the vacancy rate is now sitting at 8.6%.

General Office

ANDREW	ORTEGA	IRRIGATION SYSTEMS OPERATOR	04/01/2024
JAZMINE	ROMERO	IRRIGATION SYSTEMS OPERATOR	04/01/2024
ARNOLD	ARAGON	IRRIGATION SYSTEMS OPERATOR	04/15/2024
MARY	ZAMORA	DIVISION CLERK II	04/15/2024

Belen Division

CRUZ	PINO	CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR	04/15/2024 PROMOTION
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Albuquerque Division

WILLIAM	GARCIA	FIELD MAINTENANCE LEAD	04/15/2024 PROMOTION
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AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 - REPORT(S) FROM THE WATER OPERATIONS AND DISTRIBUTION DIVISIONS

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

Ms. Marken reported on the water supply conditions and stated snowpack conditions have continued to improve through the basin and they are above median conditions. She said the current conditions for the Rio Grande Headwaters is 107% of median, Upper Rio Grande is 128%, Upper San Juan Basin is 109%, and the Lower Rio Grande is 255% of median conditions. She stated that while snowpack and spring water supply conditions are more promising than a month ago, they are not as favorable as last year. She displayed the SNOTEL

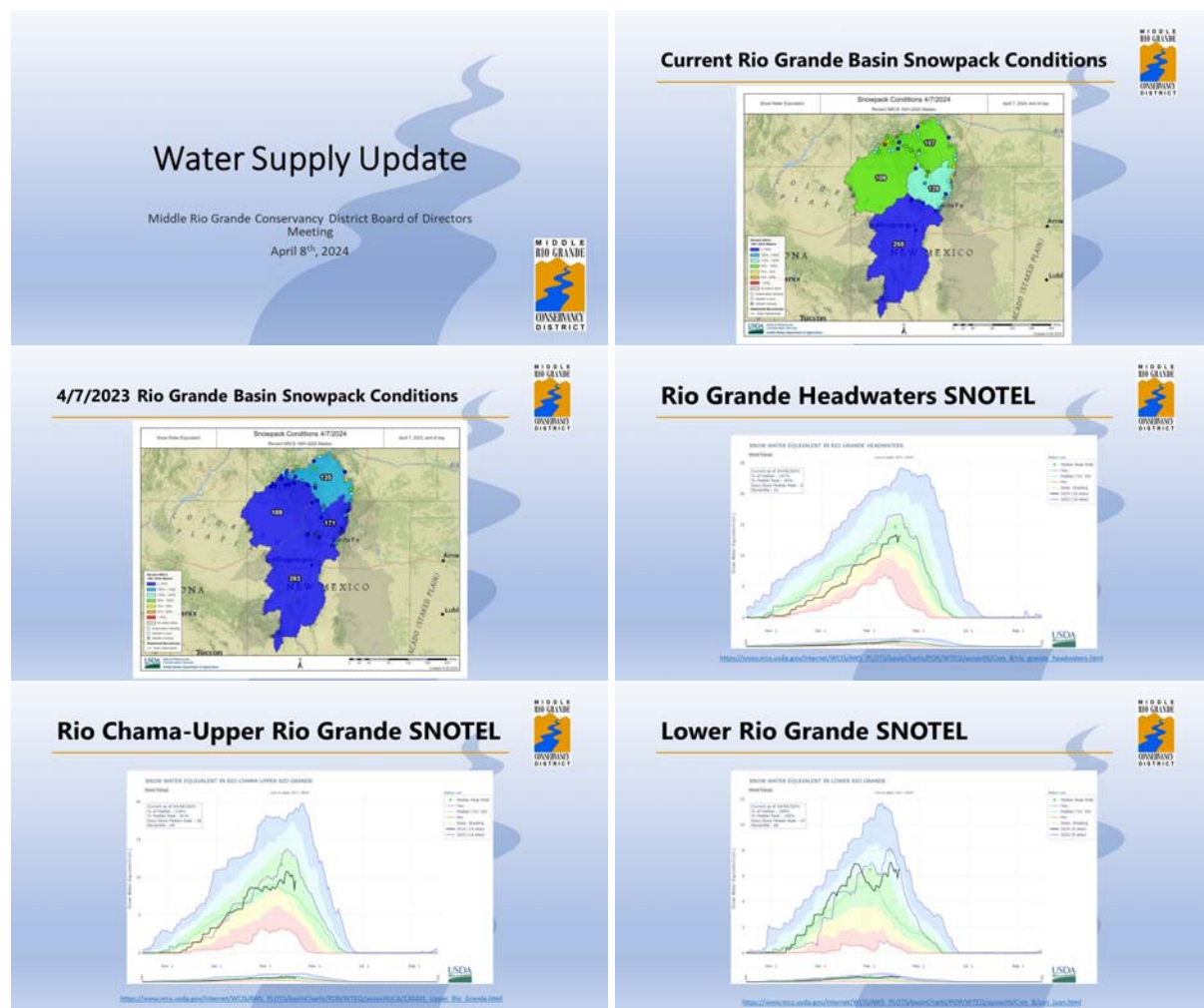
graphs for the Rio Grande Headwaters in Colorado and the April 1st stream flow forecast and compared it to the March 1 forecast, showing they should still expect a below average spring runoff. Ms. Marken explained that forecasts are helpful tools for planning purposes but not intended to predict the future so things can change. She noted that MRGCD will likely be unable to store native Rio Grande water, leaving the only storage available to MRGCD this year the 2024 San Juan-Chama allocation, and once that runs out MRGCD will be run of the river system and meeting irrigation crop demand will be dependent on that. The seasonal temperature and precipitation outlook from the National Weather Service for April through June is likely above average temperatures and below average precipitation with an expectant transition from El Nino to La Nina conditions.

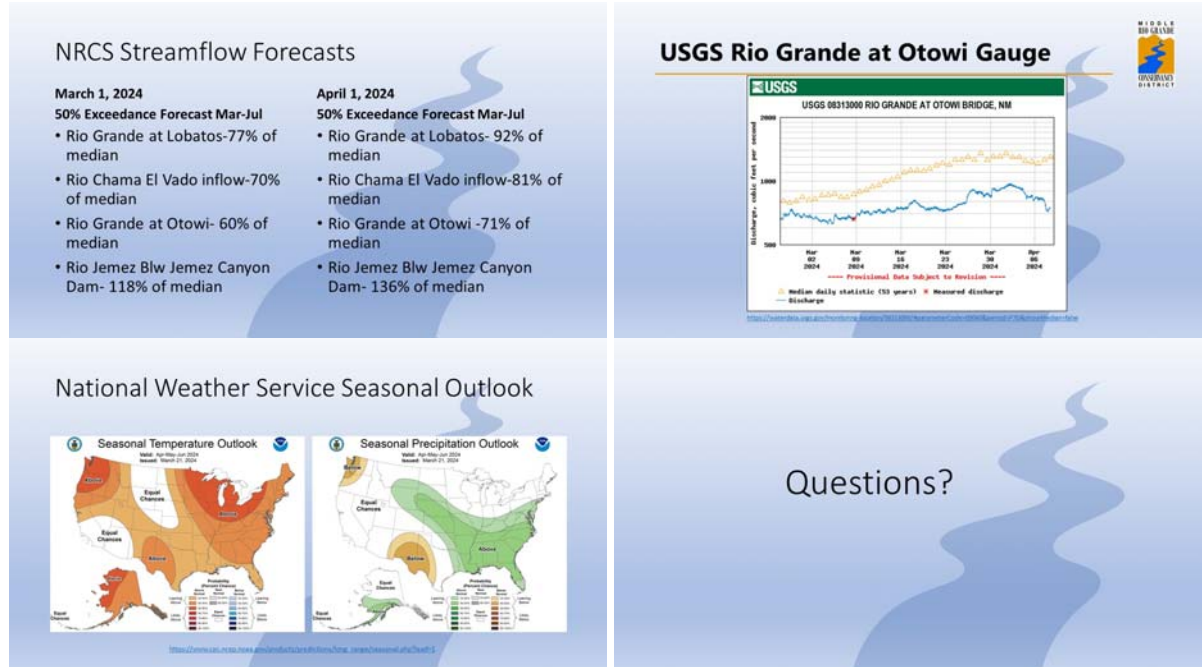
Director Sandoval asked if there was an expected time for spring runoff to end.

Ms. Marken answered the model is showing early June to end of June to see the end of spring runoff this year, but that is just a model and could change.

Dr. DuMars inquired on if it was possible to get cold water for the minnows at some point by the release from Cochiti or somewhere else.

Ms. Marken responded that they believe the spring hydrograph will be beneficial to minnow for spawning for the runoff, but they have not discussed doing any modified reservoir operations.





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

Mr. Martinez stated the team completed charging of the irrigation system and they have been making irrigation deliveries in all divisions. He noted that the river is providing more than enough to meet the demand, but water users should not expect to get water the day they ask for it; it must be scheduled ahead of time. He urged water users to use only what their crops and plants require so they can carefully manage the water. He stated that ISOs have made 2,469 entries with 29 violation reports in the logbooks and he will provide a presentation on the latest version of the logbook applications, the associated monitoring tool, and the progress in enforcing the water distribution policy at the next meeting. Mr. Martinez discussed lightning striking the pumps, causing removal and replacement of the north pump and repairing the south pump, stating they expect to have at least one pump operating later in the week.

Director Duggins suggested a lightning protector for the pumps. Mr. Martinez agreed.

Director Duggins asked what the violations were.

Mr. Martinez explained some of the different violations, including overirrigating. He added that overirrigating was resulting in broken borders, flooding neighbors, and spill back to the drains.

Director Duggins argued that broken borders happen all the time and he did not know how anyone could fix that, so that needs to be taken into consideration.

Dr. DuMars added that he and Mr. Martinez were working on an enforcement policy, and they were trying to keep it between fence posts.

Director Kelly commented that Director Duggins raised good things and they need to have all sides of the story.

Mr. Casuga stated this was something they have directed to the Irrigation Committee, and they will continue evaluating it, and he assured them they were not taking severe steps against anyone at this point.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8 - REPORT(S) FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER/CFO - Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM

a. Report on the Third Quarter and the Report from the Finance Committee Meeting, April 8, 2024 - Directors Kelly, Dunning and Russo Baca

Director Kelly stated the Finance Committee including Chair Russo Baca met and finances are in order. He said they were three-quarters of the way through expenditures and will see a little cushion on the revenue side, with a current forecast to have \$400,000 to \$500,000 surplus at the end of the year to move into the Capital Projects Fund.

Director Duggins made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE THIRD QUARTER FINANCIAL REPORT**. Seconded by Director Sandoval. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes and the **MOTION CARRIED**.

Director Sandoval	Yes	Vice Chair Dunning	Yes
Director Kelly	Yes	Director Baugh	Yes
Director Duggins	Yes	Director Jiron	Yes
Chair Russo Baca	Absent		

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9 - REPORT(S) FROM THE PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER - Amanda Molina

a. Report on the Centennial Committee Kick-off Meeting, March 18, 2024 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO, Amanda Molina, PIO, Casey Ish, Conservation Program Manager, and Directors Baugh, Dunning and Russo Baca

Amanda Molina, Public Information Officer, talked about the March 18th kickoff meeting for the 2025 Centennial, where they were identifying ways to connect better with the communities throughout the middle Rio Grande valley and find ways to bring everyone together for the celebration.

b. Report on the Updated Water Outlook

Ms. Molina continued stating she has been working with Mr. Martinez and Ms. Marken on a way to better organize irrigation and hydrology updates online revised monthly.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10 - REPORT(S) FROM THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER - Eric Zamora, PE

a. Report from the Cochiti Division Manager - Daniel Arquero

Eric Zamora noted that they have completed full cycle for division manager reports and will slow down from a monthly report to possibly every quarter. Requested the board’s feedback on what they might like to hear from the divisions.

Mr. Arquero commented that there were a lot of winds and weeds all weekend and pulling weeds is the primary focus right now. He said they have had no requests for water at any of the pueblos right now and Santo Domingo and San Felipe have started charging some of their ditches.

Director Duggins echoed that weeds are a huge problem, and the Conservancy needed to put as much concern on the weeds as they do cloud bursts, because they will break a canal. He suggested identifying where most of the weeds are entering their system, because ditch breaks come more from weeds than gophers.

Mr. Zamora concurred that they did have a very active weather pattern over the weekend, and they were in contact to make sure they had eyes on the ground. He noted an incident that occurred the week prior in the Belen Division with a ditch break that they monitored over the weekend. He said there were weeds coming off a property near Highway 380, and Mr. (Julian)

Avalos was able to take preventative measures to avoid situations with a fallowed field, and he will be working with Department of Transportation staff to get that addressed.

Director Duggins inquired on if there was something in the fallowing program that says they must keep it clean.

Casey Ish responded that the leasing program did not have a requirement that fallowed land be mowed over in the course of the season, but they have language that encourages people to do that. He noted they will likely see a change in that language to be more enforcing of mowing operations in the next round of enrollment.

Mr. Arquero thanked the Board for the management classes that were provided. He felt that Jan (Maples) was a good trainer and appreciated the opportunity.

b. Report on the Meeting with the City of Albuquerque at the Harwood Lateral, March 12, 2024 - Mike Padilla, Right of Way Supervisor, Vice Chair Dunning and Director Kelly

Mr. Padilla discussed the walk on the Harwood Lateral they had on March 12th to go ahead and include it in the green space and make it more accessible to residents, with the possibility of a dog park, vegetation, and benches. They are not yet in the design phase, but the city mentioned \$100,000 to spend, but they needed to get a survey of the property and identify how to utilize it properly. He stated there were good ideas thrown out and homework for the right of way department to look into. He noted if approved, it would be a good partnership.

Director Kelly added that he was also on the tour. He stated the City Parks Department has the forces to do a higher level of maintenance than MRGCD does to turn it into an amenity for the community. He said they may be doing a license agreement for recreational use where they hand over the property and tell them to manage the soft surface trail and things around it.

Director Dunning commented that the head of Parks and Rec for Alburquerque, Dave Simon, was excited about this in a broader context because he wants MRGCD and the city to work together.

Director Duggins asked if there was any water there.

Director Kelly answered that the lower end is vacated, and the ditch no longer exists, but they still retain ownership. He explained the lateral is charged and feeds irrigators and then is turned off. They only run the lateral when someone needs water.

Director Sandoval made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE REPORT ON THE MEETING WITH CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE AT THE HARWOOD LATERAL**. Seconded by Director Duggins. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes and the **MOTION CARRIED**.

Director Sandoval	Yes	Vice Chair Dunning	Yes
Director Kelly	Yes	Director Baugh	Yes
Director Duggins	Yes	Director Jiron	Yes
Chair Russo Baca	Absent		

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11 - REPORT(S) FROM THE CHIEF ENGINEER - Jason M. Casuga, PE

a. Report on the Construction Updates - Alicia Lopez, Engineering & Mapping Departments Manager

Ms. Lopez reported that her team of engineers, contractors, and on-call firms carried out a variety of projects this year and brought her staff from the engineering department to discuss those.



Angelina Jimenez, engineer, discussed the Peralta Riverside Drain Pedestrian Crossing. She explained that with capital outlay funding, MRGCD provided procurement and project management assistance by creating an access point for the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area to the river, and it was contracted by Lopez Precision LLC. The construction included excavation, grating, prefabrication and installation of the pedestrian bridge to spans 60 feet over the drain. She noted there are trails inside the conservation area that lead to the new access point, and the final completion occurred on December 15, 2023.

Overview

1. Construction Project Closeout
 - A. Peralta Riverside Drain Pedestrian Crossing
 - B. Hwy 147 Drain Culvert Replacement
 - C. Socorro Main Canal Channel Lining Phase 1
 - D. Socorro Main Canal Culvert Crossing
 - E. Storey Wasteway OCS
2. Construction Cost Summary
3. Upcoming Projects / Infrastructure Planning



Peralta Riverside Drain Pedestrian Bridge
\$244,629.65
Capital Outlay

- This created River access near Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area
- Contract awarded to Lopez Precision LLC. on October 18, 2023
- Construction included excavation, concrete abutments, grading, and bridge fabrication & installation
- Final completion on 12/15/2023



The next project to discuss was the Highway 147 Drain Culvert Replacement, located in Isleta Pueblo. She stated the project relied on continuous coordination with the Pueblo of Isleta, MRGCD staff, and AUI. AUI performed realignment of the riverside drain and the operation included the installation of a manhole and alignment for conducting regular maintenance within the culvert. The final completion of the project concluded on March 26, 2024.



Hwy 147 Drain Culvert Replacement
\$3,154,331.00

- Construction was necessary to convey drain & irrigation return water after years of attempted repair to the pipe under Hwy 147
- Construction included dewatering, trench pits and Tunnel Boring Machine setup and boring
- Contract awarded to AUI on 10/9/23
- Bore pit shifted west to avoid unforeseen conflicts
- Final completion on 3/26/2024, currently functioning and operational



Angel Madera Enriquez, engineer, discussed phase one of the Socorro Main Canal Channel Lining Project that is funded using Water Trust Board money to improve efficiency by decreasing seepage losses. He explained the project is located in San Acacia and begins in the heading of the Socorro Main Canal north near San Acacia Diversion Dam. He said procurement for the project was done by Wilson & Company and awarded to CF Padilla. The closeout of the entire project was on March 26, 2024. He noted that CF Padilla created 1.1 miles of shotcrete channel lining for the phase and slip-lined a new 66-inch CMP pipe under the railroad to connect Drain Unit 7 to the Socorro Main Canal. The final cost of construction in phase one was 7.5 million. He then discussed the Socorro Main Canal Culvert Crossing in Socorro Main Canal north to allow Socorro Division to properly conduct maintenance and operations in the section along the main canal. The project was awarded to Lopez Precision LLC and completed on February 22, 2024.



Socorro Main Canal Channel Lining Project Phase I
\$ 7,474,459.90
WTB Funded

- Improving water efficiency by lowering seepage losses
- Procurement conducted by Wilson & Co.
- Contract awarded to CF Padilla, given notice to proceed on 11/1/23
- Completed a total of 6050 ft (1.1 miles)
- Remaining grant funds will be available for Phase II beginning in November.



Socorro Main Canal Culvert Crossing
\$ 132,618.38

- Culvert replacement to provide MRGCD with access to maintenance and operations
- Procured with MRGCD's on-call contract and awarded to Lopez Precision LLC, on 1/2/2024
- Final Completion on 2/22/2024



Matthew Chavez, drafter and field technician, discussed the Storey Wasteway Outfall Control Structure (OCS) Project on the east side of the river and south of Hwy 346 and Hwy 304. The project received funding from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation and MRGCD contribution funds for a total of \$657,000 and was procured through the on-call consultant and Wilson & Company and awarded to Compass Engineering. The project was completed March 27, 2024. The improvements included installation of riprap on the riverside drain and downstream end, with concrete lining on the upstream and downstream of the existing flume structure, and installation of a turnout relief outfall. He explained that a turnout was installed for increased flow reliefs in the main canal to the Storey Wasteway.



Storey Wasteway OCS
\$657,075.38
NFWF / MRGCD Funded

- Conservation effort to increase operational efficiency and flexibility
- Procurement conducted by Wilson & Co.
- Compass Engineering awarded contract on 12/6/23
- Coordinated efforts with Belen Division, Water Ops. And Hydrology team
- Final completion on 3/27/24





Ms. Lopez stated that this year the MRGCD expended 4.16 million dollars to achieve 11.6 million in infrastructure improvement and maintained an average of 25% MRGCD match. She noted the Corrales Siphon replacement was in design right now and planning efforts are underway for the Feeder 3 Pump Station. She said they were hoping to construct a new wasteway at the Bosque One Lateral, were designing a replacement of the first siphon on the Low Flow Conveyance Channel this year and starting phase two of the Socorro Main Canal Channel Lining Project. Ms. Lopez thanked everyone that helped this year for all the projects.



Cost Summary

- \$11.6 Million
- \$7.5 Million in Grant Funding
- \$4.16 Million in MRGCD Contribution

MRGCD Capital Projects

Project	Source	Progress	Start	End	PIFA
Facility 2024-2025					
1.1 Design	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.2 Design	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.3 Procurement (2nd Board Meeting)	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.4 Construction	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.5 Construction	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.6 Construction	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
Bosque Wasteway 2024					
1.1 Planning	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.2 Design	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.3 Design	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.4 Procurement (2nd)	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.5 Construction	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.6 Construction	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
Socorro Main Canal Channel Lining Ph 1					
1.1 Planning	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.2 Design	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.3 Design	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.4 Procurement (2nd)	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.5 Construction	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.6 Construction	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
May 1st Culvert Replacement					
1.1 Planning	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.2 Design	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.3 Design	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.4 Procurement (2nd)	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.5 Construction	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green
1.6 Construction	MRGCD	100%	8/1/23	8/1/23	Green

Upcoming Projects

- Corrales Siphon Project (Construction as soon as Nov. 2024)
- Feeder 3 Pump Station (Construction approximately 2025, dependent on grant funding)
- Bosque 1 Wasteway (Construction Nov. 2024)
- San Lorenzo Siphon, LFCC (Construction by Dec. 2025)
- Socorro Main Canal Channel Lining Ph II (Construction Nov. 2024)

Infrastructure Assessment will help inform future capital project needs



Director Kelly asked if they put any curbs on the side of the Storey Wasteway wooden bridge. Ms. Lopez responded they had not but can do that.

Director Kelly felt that this is the way the district has to operate if they're going to catch up on backlog they'll need to make use of MRGCD engineering staff to do in-house design on smaller projects to manage projects with outside consulting engineers. And then we've got to be the person down there every day when something comes up on the job. We've got to make the decision on what do we do. Do we stop the job for 30 days? Heck no, we make a quick decision and keep the project moving. He said it's been a rough year but look at the progress. This is just huge and is looking forward to the pump station going on down there, a whole different style of work than this year's work. That siphon, maybe AUI had a good practice run up there at Highway 147 before they move up to Corrales but that's going to go to bid, not a negotiated contract. He thought they have the time to schedule that and take it through deliberately. So

making good use of the private sector as well as our public sector employees is the way the District needs to work and he's very happy with the transition he's seen over 12 years. He thanked them all.

b. Report on the Farmers for Future Farmers Meeting, March 12, 2024 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO, Eric Zamora, COO, Tyler Otero, Belen Division Manager, Chair Russo Baca and Director Jiron

Mr. Zamora explained that the Farmers for Future Farmers come together to bring discussion and talk about issues related to irrigation and farming in the valley. He said there was good dialogue and there were general concerns about water delivery and maintenance and El Vado. He noted that it was important to get more information out to the folks about the efforts the District is making towards working with our federal and local partners on improving water delivery and coordination efforts.

Mr. Casuga said the style of their meeting is something that was unique and just straight question and answer to allow local constituents to ask them questions, and he hopes to see more opportunities like that throughout the valley.

Director Jiron stated it was a well-organized meeting with a good turnout. He hopes they will continue to have them attend those.

c. Report on the Middle Rio Grande Phase 2 Title Transfer Kick-off Meeting, March 22, 2024 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO and Eric Zamora, COO

Mr. Zamora discussed the kickoff meeting they had with Bureau of Reclamation to discuss the title transfer. He said there will be three members for the Bureau staff leading the project and MRGCD will have Doug Strech, Michael Padilla, and Alicia Lopez joining their mapping staff to provide support services as they identify projects and properties.

d. Report on the Law & Resource Planning Associates/MRGCD Transition Meeting, March 27, 2024 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO, Chair Russo Baca and Directors Dunning and Kelly

Director Kelly reported they had a meeting with LRPA about the transition when Dr. DuMars retires, and that plan will be detailed in the request for proposals for water counsel to where LRPA will stay in their position as chief water counsel until they get through the transition in August.

Director Dunning added that part of the plan is to recognize what Dr. DuMars has done for the District at some point.

e. Report on the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblo Coalition Meeting, April 4, 2024 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO and Eric Zamora, COO

Mr. Zamora stated this meeting was the first opportunity they had to meet the new leadership. He said Mike Hamman, the NM State Engineer, gave some discussion on issues and coordination efforts with development in the compact. He noted there were also discussions on water delivery issues, and Ms. Falter and her staff gave them an update on El Vado. He talked about some of the processes that Dr. Delevan informed them on and said she would be working with the Coalition to work on rotation schedules and things like that, and Mr. Casuga also gave a report on District operations and startup.

f. Information on Upcoming Events

1. **Belen Public Meeting, April 10, 2024 - Belen Public Library**
2. **Law of the Colorado River 24th Annual Conference, May 5-7, 2024 - Denver, CO**
3. **Water Leaders Workshop, May 22-24, 2024 - Ghost Ranch, NM**
4. **El Vado Site Visit & Tour SOD Project, June 25-26, 2024**

Director Kelly discussed the upcoming events and noted April 16th, the State Land Office would be having a public meeting on the land transfer near Valle de Oro (National Wildlife Refuge).

AGENDA ITEM NO. 12 - REPORT(S) FROM THE MRGCD ATTORNEY(S) - Chief Water Counsel or General Counsel

Dr. DuMars stated he studied the transcript of the oral argument in the United States exceptions to the settlement that was reached among New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas, and it was very concerning, and the judge was on the side of the state's rights, but others were not as optimistic with respect to the rights of the BOR where there would be a modification of the accounting point from Elephant Butte down to the border, and other issues resulting in modifications of the contract. He said he had a good meeting with Judge Fouratt on whether or not they would grant the motion of the Wild Earth Guardians to discontinue negotiations, and he recommended some processes.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 13 REPORT(S) FROM THE BOARD

a. Report on the La Joya/MRGCD MOU, March 15, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca

See the chair's written summary attached within Appendix A.

b. Report on the Board of Directors Training, March 19 & March 28, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca and Directors Baugh, and Jiron

See the chair's written summary attached within Appendix A.

c. Report on the Conservation Advisory Committee Meeting, March 20, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca

See the chair's written summary attached within Appendix A.

d. Report on the Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District's Agriculture Appreciation Day, March 23, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca

See the chair's written summary attached within Appendix A.

e. Report on the NM Northern Wetlands Roundtable, March 26, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca

See the chair's written summary attached within Appendix A.

Director Duggins made the **MOTION TO APPROVE ALL THE REPORTS FROM THE BOARD**. Seconded by Director Sandoval. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes and the **MOTION CARRIED**.

Director Sandoval	Yes	Vice Chair Dunning	Yes
Director Kelly	Yes	Director Baugh	Yes
Director Duggins	Yes	Director Jiron	Yes
Chair Russo Baca	Absent		

AGENDA ITEM NO. 14 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

Director Kelly stated there was no need for an executive session and with no further comments, questions, or concerns, he adjourned the meeting at 5:01 pm

Approved to be the correct Minutes of the Board of Directors of April 8, 2024.

ATTESTED:

Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM
Secretary-Treasurer/CFO

Stephanie Russo Baca, Madam Chair
MRGCD Board of Directors

APPENDIX

Stephanie Russo Baca Written Reports April 8, 2024

❖ **Report on the Farmers for Future Farmers Meeting, March 12, 2024.**

This was a well-attended meeting with over 30 individuals. The format was a Q&A session, and the officers of FFF recorded the session and ran the meeting efficiently. Jason Casuga, Eric Zamora, Casey Ish, and Tyler Otero from MRGCD gave updates about the irrigation season, construction, maintenance, and conservation program. Director Jiron also attended. The group meets every second Tuesday of the month at 4 Daughters Land and Cattle and encourages anyone interested to attend future meetings.

❖ **Report on the La Joya/ MRGCD MOU, March 15, 2024.**

La Joya Acequia Association parciantes and commissioners, along with MRGCD board members and staff, met to discuss the MOU and continue the discussion of the possibility of La Joya joining the MRGCD-benefited area.

❖ **Report on the Centennial Committee Kick-off Meeting, March 18, 2024.**

Attendees: Stephanie Russo Baca, Karen Dunning, Colin Baugh, Jason Casuga, Yasmeen Najmi, Casey Ish, Amanda Molina

Overview: The MRGCD will mark its centennial in 2025; the committee met to discuss initial ideas for the milestone.

MRGCD Centennial Program Goals: 1. Increase knowledge around the purpose and mission of the MRGCD. 2. Improve relations with communities throughout the Middle Rio Grande Valley. 3. Strengthen partnerships and highlight work amongst the MRGCD industry cohorts. 4. Honor history, focus on future.

Key Centennial Program Components for Consideration:

Event or acknowledgement during '25 NM legislative session, new branding/logo, screening of the MRGCD documentary, speakers tour/industry and community presentations, panels and/or “wonk” events, transportable educational trailer with a model for educational demonstrations, community event support and participation, fundraiser/industry event, with conservation-related beneficiary, support/attend tribal environmental fairs, feast days, schedule “listening sessions”, school contest/scholarship (poem or essay submission).

The first MRGCD board meeting took place during August in 1925, thus the Centennial program will have a heavy August focus, but the committee is open to marking the milestone throughout the entire year of 2025.

❖ **Report on the Board of Directors Training, March 19 & 28, 2024.**

This was a training course for board members to attend to learn about the rules governing elected officials including the OMA, IPRA, GCA, as well as the history of the district and the benefitted area.

❖ **Report on the Conservation Advisory Committee Meeting, March 20, 2024**

This was a short CAC meeting, and the topics discussed were:

Current Hydrology Update – Casey Ish Del Norte (San Luis Valley) –180 (January) – 305 (February) – 196 (March) Lobatos (NM/CO State Line)– 275 (January) – 310 (February) – 314 (March) La Puente (Chama) –0 [ice affected] (January) – 31 (February) – 70 (March) Below Abiquiu (Chama)– 56 (January) – 56 (February) – 94 (March) Otowi (Main Stem)– 500 (January) – 662 (February) – 748 (March) Below Cochiti - 552 (January) – 664 (February) – 856 (March) Bosque Farms–461 (January) – 516 (February) – 431 (March) Narrows (Just above EB)– 539 (January) – 788 (February) – 652 (March) 2024 IDM-EWLP –

Ashley Veihl • Current update on program administration.

❖ **Report on the Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District’s Agriculture Appreciation Day, March 23, 2024.**

I was invited again to attend VCSWCD annual Ag Appreciation Day. I was asked to bring my dairy goats, and I also brought homemade fresh goat cheese for attendees to sample. This was a great event where individuals were able to learn about conservation programs, soil health, livestock, and more!

❖ **Report on the NM Northern Wetlands Roundtable, March 26, 2024.**

The NMED Surface Water Quality Bureau Wetlands Program organizes this Roundtable. This is a free event, and I encourage anyone to attend. I would be happy to share any of the presentations with interested board members. This event was important because it included many hot topics in water that affect MRGCD water resources. Some of the issues included Communicating the Impacts of Sackett in New Mexico, New Mexico Riparian Habitat Map (NMRipMap): A Public Map Resource to Support Riparian Conservation and Restoration, New Mexico Water Data Initiative: Working to Make Water Data Accessible for Management and Planning in New Mexico, Meeting Community Needs with SWQB funds: A Review of Experiences and Lessons Learned, Surface Water Quality Bureau Harmful Algal Blooms Program, and the Opportunity for Immediate Self-Organization to Assert Riverine, Riparian, and Wetlands Values in New Mexico Water Resources Planning.

❖ **Report on the Law & Resource Planning Associates /MRGCD Transition Meeting, March 27, 2024.**

Directors Dunning, Kelly, and Mr. Casuga attended the meeting to discuss the transition process after current water counsel Dr. DuMars announced his retirement.