

**MINUTES OF THE
2,223rd REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT**

MAY 12, 2025 - 3:00 PM

Directors having been duly notified; Vice Chairman Baugh called the regular meeting to order at 2:59pm.
The following Directors and Staff were present:

DIRECTORS

John P. Kelly, Chair	Absent	Jason Casuga
Colin T. Baugh, Vice Chair	Present	Lorna Wiggins
Brian Jiron, Director	Present	Jeff Wechsler
Stephanie Russo Baca, Director	Present	Pamela Fanelli
Glen Duggins, Director	Present	Eric Zamora
Michael T. Sandoval, Director	Present	Anne Marken
Karen Dunning, Director	Present	Matt Martinez

STAFF

Chief Engineer/CEO
General Counsel
Chief Water Counsel
Secretary-Treasurer/CFO
Director of Tech. Services
River Ops & Telemetry Mgr..
Water Operations Division Mgr.

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

Timothy Smith, AES	John Lind, Rubicon Water	Eugene Pickett, BFR
Colleen McRoberts, CABQ	John Fleck, UNM	Yasmeen Najmi, MRGCD
William Turner, WaterBank	Jared Vander Dussen, WARBA	Sean Humphrey
Mac Murray	Blair Dunn, WARBA	Christine Nardi, MRGCD
Jorge Garcia, CESOSS	Julie Jaynes, ACE	Doug Strech, MRGCD
Rob Barr, VCFD	Juliana Lugo, ACE	Mike Padilla, MRGCD
Jimmie Rogers, MRGCD	Jimmy Pettitt	Antoinette Ramos
Rebecca Thompson, MRGCD	Tarah Jaramillo, MRGCD	Raquel Dawson, MRGCD
Josh Hind, MRGCD	Amanda Molina, MRGCD	Mitch Georgena, MRGCD
Amy Erickson	John Thompson, MRGCD	Kim Ward, MRGCD
Casey Ish, MRGCD	Elaine Hebard	Marta Moersch, MRGCD

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Yasmeen Najmi led the Pledge of Allegiance at today's meeting.

Chairman Kelly was absent due to family matters and Vice Chair Baugh 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 to the agenda.

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

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 - CONSENT AGENDA

- a. **Consideration/Approval of Payment Ratification – May 12, 2025**
- b. **Consideration/Approval of April 2025 Invoice for Wiggins, Williams & Wiggins**
- c. **Consideration/Approval of April 2025 Invoices for Spencer Fane LLP**

- d. **Consideration/Approval of the Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting – April 14, 2025**
- e. **Memo on MRGCD Approved Licenses for April 2025 (For Informational Purposes Only)**

Director Dunning asked if they have had any issues with the fiber optic companies they have given licenses to due to the city's stop work orders.

Mr. Casuga responded that as of right now, they have no information of anything like that happening to our right of way.

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

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 - CONSIDERATION/APPROVAL OF 2025 MRGCD ELECTION FORMAL DOCUMENTS - AUTOMATED ELECTION SERVICES (AES), AND ELECTION COMMITTEE AND REPORT OF THE ELECTION COMMITTEE MEETING, APRIL 21 & MAY 8, 2025 (CHAIRMAN KELLY AND DIRECTORS RUSSO BACA AND JIRON)

- a. **Election Director, Election Officer and List Compiler**
- b. **MRGCD Election Calendar**
- c. **MRGCD Election Rule 20**
- d. **Notice of Election & Proclamation Resolution BD-05-12-25-59**

Mr. Casuga read the memo for the recommendation, which asked questions regarding the upcoming 2025 MRGCD election that will be held on October 7th: who the Board will appoint to be the election director, election officer, and list compiler, questions on the election calendar, MRGCD Rule 20, and the proclamation. He stated that staff's recommendation was to appoint Tim Smith, AES, as the Election Director, DeAnna Philips as the Election Officer, and Doug Strech as the List Compiler. Staff also recommended the Board approve the election calendar, Rule 20, and the proclamation, which the Election Committee met multiple times to review.

Director Russo Baca expressed that all three committee members of the Election Committee attended each meeting and went through a thorough review with counsel, other committee members, and AES regarding the election.

Mr. Casuga clarified with Ms. Wiggins that they can approve all of these as one item.

Director Dunning commented that in Rule 20 it mentions a lot about alcohol consumption, and she felt that it was outdated and they may need to update that at some point.

Mr. Casuga stated they can do research that is related to state law.

Ms. Wiggins added that it is New Mexico code annotated and said it was a good idea that should be taken up with our legislators.

Director Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE ITEM 4 (a) THROUGH 4(d)**.
Seconded by Director Jiron. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

AGENDA ITEM NO.5 - ACEQUIA PROJECT PRESENTATION FROM ACE LEADERSHIP HIGH SCHOOL- Vice Chair Baugh

Julie Jaynes, ACE Leadership High School Learning Program Manager, explained that their school focuses on architecture, construction, and engineering and they are always looking for new project ideas. She noted they are the recipient of the Innovation Zone Grant through NMPED and have a lot of paid internship opportunities for their students and wanted to do something with acequias. She said the concept was to put together a group internship that is cofacilitated by CESOSS and Explora, with ACE Leadership High School funding the students, as they are getting paid to participate in the project. She stated the idea was to have students think about a design related to learning experiences with a focus on education about acequia systems, historical and cultural significance, and thinking about, working, building, and exploring potential career opportunities related to the acequia systems and all the work the District does.

Juliana Lugo, student, expressed that she was interested in doing the project because she was told there would be a lot of aspects with water and civil engineering, which is the career she is interested in. She said they visited the acequias at the Hubbell House, and she enjoyed walking through and seeing how the acequias worked with the head gates and the historical and cultural significance of the acequias. She voiced that her role in the group was mainly to use the 3D printers they use with Explora and organize information about the acequias. She noted that since she is planning to be a civil engineer, this really helped her able to think creatively and on her feet about ways to keep this project moving forward and keep ideas going.

Jorge Garcia commented that these projects are very technical in nature and give an understanding of water and hydrology, and they also bring the humanistic part into these projects, as beyond the acequias, there are people, history, values, and a way of understanding why they are important, especially for young people. He said they educated the students on how acequias came to be from the early establishment up until now.

Julie Jaynes stated that the kids met weekly with Jorge at Explora, where they did design and were sometimes out in the field. She said they went to Water Day at the legislature and met with the governor. She expressed that part of ACE's learning model is getting kids out to learn about what is happening in their community, building values around what is important, and exploring career opportunities. She stated that they have a core class at the school now called Water is Life, and Casey and Amelia came and showed some historical photos to them. She stated they have a lot of kids who like to just do hands-on work and are looking to work in trades, so they do a lot of career exploration programming, and she would love to partner with the District moving forward on some job shadow opportunities to get the kids out in the field and see what kind of jobs are happening at the District.

Vice Chair Baugh added that this project was an evolution and seeing that ACE is embracing New Mexico history credit class based in Water is Life is a huge step in the right direction. He thanked everyone involved.

Director Russo Baca asked how many engineers they have on staff that students could shadow.

Mr. Casuga answered they have five, two professional and three engineers in training. He said they will take them up on having a conversation about job shadowing. He said he is excited for the opportunity to cast a vision for what it looks like to work in water, whether an engineer, hydrologist, or ISO. He added that as an engineer himself, he was glad to hear that Juliana is excited about engineering, as it is hard finding young professionals for engineering these days.



AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 - REPORT(S) FROM THE WATER OPERATIONS

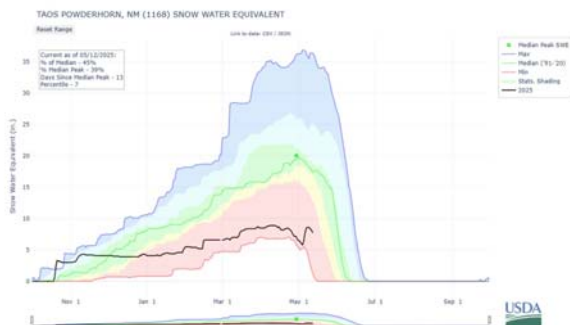
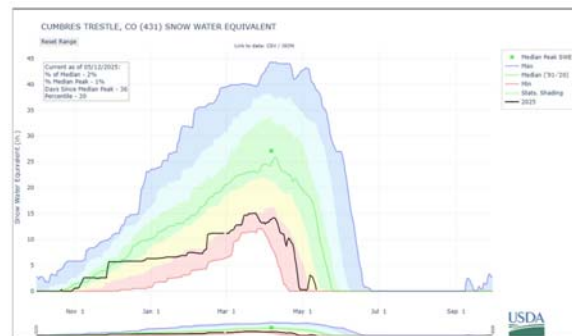
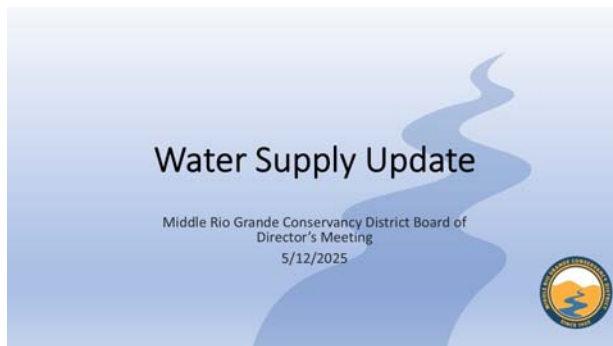
a. Report on Water Supply Conditions - Anne Marken, Water Ops Division Manager

Anne Marken gave a report on water supply conditions. She stated that the Rio Grande Basin received much needed precipitation last week, which elevated river inflows into the Middle Rio Grande and reversed the previous downward trend. She expressed that in addition to the rainfall, it also brought snow accumulation to the mountains within the basin. She went over SNOTEL graphs from Cumbres Trestle, which illustrated a brief increase in

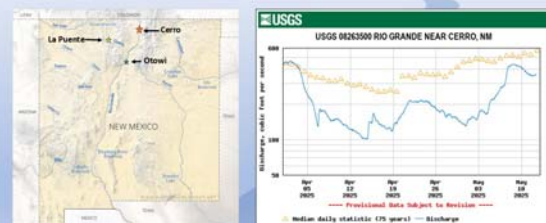
snowpack that melted off quickly due to the warm temperatures and rain, and Taos Powderhorn, which showed an increase in snowpack and rapid snow melt due to warm temperatures. She noted that snowpack levels still remain well below average for this date. She said that since the beginning of May, flows across the state line have risen by more than 200 CFS, and today the Cerro Gauge reported 350 CFS. Ms. Marken shared that the recent storm increase discharge at La Puente to above 1000 CFS, which BIA indicated they have nearly stored the total calculated volume of prior and paramount water for this year. Once it is verified that the full P&P amount has been stored, BOR and the US Army Corps of Engineers will be required to bypass all native Rio Grande inflows through El Vado and Abiquiu Reservoirs. She said Otowi is measuring 1300 CFS, and short term water supply conditions have improved and delayed the need to release 4000 acre feet of San Juan Chama water available to MRGCD, which is the only stored water currently available to MRGCD. She stated that Middle Valley inflows are expected to remain elevated through at least this week and will hopefully stay above irrigation and conveyance demand long enough to delay releases of that water until late May or early June. However, the short term water boost has not materially changed our seasonal outlook, and farmers should be prepared for extended periods between irrigation deliveries if the Rio Grande does not experience inflows from summer rain events, and the public should be prepared for extensive river channel drying. Ms. Marken expressed that the short term forecast is calling for hot, dry and windy conditions and there is also not a lot of precipitation in the seasonal outlook, with likely above average temperatures.

Director Jiron asked what BIA's level of P&P storage is.

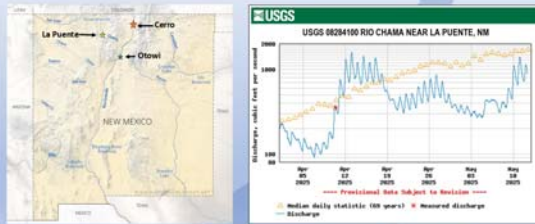
Ms. Marken answered just over 32,000 acre feet.



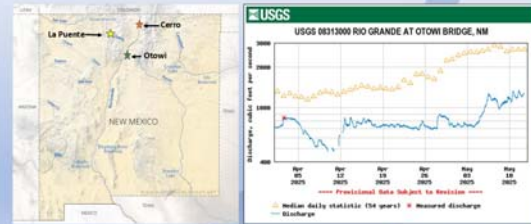
USGS Rio Grande Near Cerro, NM



USGS Rio Chama Near La Puente, NM



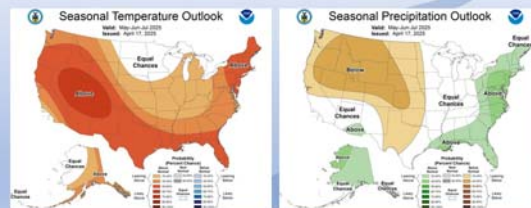
USGS Rio Grande at Otowi Bridge, NM



National Weather Service NM Temperature and Precipitation Forecast Table

Location	Maximum Temperature							Probability of Precipitation						
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Albuquerque	87	86	77	76	80	82	80	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Santa Fe	81	81	72	71	76	79	77	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Farmington	85	81	67	71	76	77	74	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Gallup	81	76	66	70	75	75	71	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Grants	82	78	69	71	76	76	74	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clayton	86	85	80	75	78	81	80	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Raton	81	80	74	72	76	78	76	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Las Vegas	78	77	71	69	73	75	75	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Montezuma	82	82	75	73	77	80	79	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tucuman	87	86	85	80	84	86	86	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Corrales	88	88	86	80	83	86	86	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Roswell	84	84	84	88	91	91	91	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Socorro	81	81	85	83	86	88	88	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chama	71	69	66	61	66	68	65	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Taos	77	76	67	67	72	74	71	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Angel Fire	70	68	59	59	63	65	65	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Los Alamos	77	76	67	67	72	74	71	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ruidoso	77	76	71	70	73	74	71	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Quemado	80	76	69	70	75	76	73	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

National Weather Service 90 Day Outlook



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

Mr. Martinez gave a report on water distribution, expressing that after a challenging start, recent rainfall and new snow melt have shifted the symptom to a more favorable position, and a week ago, water supply exceeded irrigation demand and allowed them to schedule based on actual field needs. He said they have boosted diversions and canal flows to make water more readily available, and they expect supply to remain sufficient through this week and hopefully beyond, but they remain ready to adjust as conditions evolve. He said their first cutting of hay in the southern divisions are underway and farmers across MRGCD are expected to cut by late May or early June. He shared that as harvesting activity increases, they expect moderate demand in the near term and are cautiously optimistic they can delay San Juan Chama storage releases until June. He added that close monitoring of river conditions, farming activity, and weather patterns will remain critical to timing releases. Mr. Martinez gave an update on the Corrales pumping operation and deliveries. He shared that a farmer at the bottom of the Corrales system planned an annual crop and hoped to receive three deliveries before the May 1st following program deadline, and ended up receiving four, is actively grazing the fields, and may get a meaningful hay harvest; however, deliveries in the lower part of the Corrales Main have taken longer than preferred. He commented that they are currently working through the fourth delivery cycle in the Corrales area and most irrigators have received or scheduled them. He said they continue to persevere through pumping challenges and recently implemented a solution to use compressed air to clear debris and sediment from the intake pipes. He thanked ISO Bobby Wagner for his dedication in maintaining pump performance and coordinating deliveries. He gave a reminder that all water users are encouraged to ensure they are current on water service charges, as staying up to date will avoid scheduling delays and ensure smooth coordination with

ISOs. Mr. Martinez thanked everyone who has helped get the season off to a solid start and wished all irrigators a successful first harvest and productive season.

Vice Chair Baugh noted that they have a new ISO, and he has been great, and has been ready to get to know the community and is flexible with accommodating schedules when water is there.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 - ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR (Comments are limited to three (3) minutes)

Elaine Hubbard

Ms. Hubbard attended virtually and provided written public comment (see Appendix I).

Santiago Maestas

Mr. Maestas spoke on behalf of the Pajarito Acequia, stating that this past year the District made major improvements to the acequia, and he thanked them for those efforts. He said they previously asked legislators for an appropriation to make improvements, and they would like to continue making improvements. He noted that next month the infrastructure improvement plans will be requested, and he asked for assistance in obtaining funds for more planning and engineering for additional improvements to the Pajarito Acequia.

Blair Dunn

Mr. Dunn was there representing Mac Murray on behalf of his water deliveries not being fulfilled, which involved the State Engineer's Office and water rights being transferred when they should not have been, and the title needing to be sorted out. He explained that Mr. Murray is suffering, as he has water rights, but MRGCD is not delivering water to him. Mr. Dunn asked MRGCD if they could help get this sorted out and avoid litigation by possibly getting Mr. Murray interim water delivered. He noted that they asked for this to be placed on the agenda previously, and they are getting later and later into the season and Mr. Murray will potentially be suffering the loss of crops and grass for his agricultural operations if it does not get fixed. He asked the Board to take immediate action and put this on the agenda under threatened and pending litigation to see if they can figure out a way to help Mr. Murray.

Mr. Casuga suggested taking up the conversation in Executive Session.

Rob Barr

Mr. Barr, Wildland Captain for Valencia County Fire Department, expressed to the Board how much he appreciated the interagency cooperation between his fire department, the municipal fire departments of Valencia County, and New Mexico Forestry, who all worked together in suppressing wildfire. He gave appreciation for Ms. Najmi and all the work they have done together. He mentioned they are working on updating their Community Wildfire Protection Plan and hoping for continued cooperation with MRGCD. He noted they have also worked closely with Mr. Padilla, who helped them get equipment for fires and Bosque keys for all agencies and will now be getting keys for the law enforcement agency, Open Space, and all fire departments, which they can get done in one afternoon. He gave a shoutout to Mr. Otero also, voicing that he is very supportive on any situation with just one call or text. He thanked Albuquerque's Division Manager for coming out in person to the Rio Grande fire and the fire at Bosque Farms.

Colleen McRoberts

Ms. McRoberts, Superintendent of the Open Space Division, gave a shoutout in appreciation for Ms. Najmi, who has been an amazing partner liaison to the Open Space Division and many other entities within the Rio Grande Valley. She said she is knowledgeable, passionate, and

dedicated, and has a deep appreciation for the history and culture of the acequia system within New Mexico, and everyone who works at MRGCD should be proud of the work she has done for them. She then presented Ms. Najmi with a gift from the Open Space Division.

Yasmeen Najmi

Ms. Najmi recognized two gentlemen that she had the privilege of working with almost her entire career, Captain Robb Barr and Fire Chief Anthony Martinez. She said that in addition to them being amazing fire professionals, she has seen them go above and beyond in their work and have made the Bosque, District lands, and communities better and safer.

Glen Duggins

Director Duggins informed Mr. Casuga on the passing of Jason Salopek, whom he has known for many years. He said the coalition they have built with that Board would be a good thing to continue. He mentioned that Socorro had a big Bosque fire with big winds, but the wind all of a sudden stopped amazingly and the fire ended. He added that the reason the fires are so big is because there is so much fuel there.

Eugene Pickett

Mr. Pickett, with Black Farmers and Ranchers of New Mexico, expressed to Ms. Najmi that it has been nice to see her over the years, but warned her that as soon as people think they retire, that is when the phone is going to start ringing and she won't say be able to say no. He thanked MRG for their support and coming out to their Congreso in Isleta, Water is Life. He commented to Director Duggins to keep the calls going even though they may not always agree, but at least he speaks his heart and that is very important. He thanked Director Russo Baca for her encouragement. He gave appreciation to Mr. Zamora for pushing flood control, and he introduced Sean Humphrey.

Karen Dunning

Director Dunning gave a shoutout to all the mothers and their employees who are mothers, as they do a lot of important work for MRGCD and then go home to do an even more important job. She also reflected that San Felipe just had a feast day. She pointed out that five years ago their feast day was right after COVID happened, and the pueblo was devastated by COVID, so she hoped they had a feast day this year like they used to have in the past.

Director Sandoval responded they did get back the original feast day they used to have and noted that it even rained afterwards.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8 - REPORT(S) FROM THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT - Christine L. Nardi, MBA

a. Honoring Yasmeen Najmi for her 27 Years of Service

Mr. Casuga gave thanks to Ms. Najmi on behalf of MRGCD and noted all of her accomplishments and work she has done for the MRGCD. He pointed out that it should not go unnoticed that when you have people show up to a public event to thank you, that means you left a mark and MRGCD is better for those partnerships she has developed. He voiced that her job has been well done and the foundation she has set is in good hands, as the need to partner is probably there more than ever. He presented Ms. Najmi with a plaque giving appreciation for her loyal and dedicated service to the MRGCD.

Yasmeen Najmi expressed that walking away from people, places, and work that you love is not as easy as people think, and she acknowledged her dad, mom, and

stepmother, who were her biggest champions in life, were proud of the work she did here, and proud she chose a career in public service. She said it has been a wonderful journey here and in her career beyond the Conservancy District. She stated that as a planner, she has heard a lot from people in our communities about what they value and what is important about living here, and the three things that are always said are the Bosque and Rio Grande, acequias, and agriculture.

Director Russo Baca shared that Ms. Najmi is a vault of knowledge and she appreciated working with her on the GPA for the Willie Chavez Park and answering her obscure questions with data to back it up. She also mentioned she is a good cook and artist and hopes to see her at the next Congreso. She stated that she appreciates all the kindness she has shown her and that she is the epitome of a public servant. ‘

Director Dunning voiced Ms. Najmi is also a poet. She expressed that she has been the public face of MRGCD and has probably had more interactions with the public and other agencies more than anybody else in the MRGCD, and they appreciate everything she has done. She shared that Chair Kelly sent a note expressing his best wishes and congratulations to Ms. Najmi, as she has always been and will always be a true asset to the District, Rio Grande, and the Bosque.

Vice Chair Baugh thanked Ms. Najmi for encouraging him to view the District in a different light and to look at what the District could be.



Yasmeeen Najmi, Planner & Jason Casuga, CE/CEO

b. Announcement on the 2025 New Mexico Geographic Information Council (NMGIC) Wheeler Peak Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient, May 2, 2025 - Doug Strech, GISP, Systems and Data Integration Program Manager

Christine Nardi recognized Doug Strech for receiving the 2025 New Mexico Geographic Information Council Wheeler Peak Lifetime Achievement Award.

Doug Strech thanked his colleagues, constituents, and the Board and said he was honored to be recognized and grateful for the support over the years. He stated that when he joined MRGCD in 1999, there was a great need and opportunity to bring GIS to the District, and he was thrilled to take on that challenge. He added that GIS at MRGCD has become a long term way to locate, understand, manage and communicate valuable

records of the valley and how they preserve institutional knowledge. He expressed that GIS also supported our operations, right of way decisions, historic water use, license management, and many other areas, and has become the backbone for how we communicate and make decisions. He noted this is a shared effort and he is lucky to work alongside great people.



c. Introduction of MRGCD New Hires

Christine Nardi introduced MRGCD new hires and promotions, which include an ISO that will be working in the Belen Service Area, a new heavy equipment operator in the Belen Division, and a promotion to equipment operation and maintenance supervisor in the Albuquerque Division.

General Office

GABRIEL	MALDONADO	IRRIGATION SYSTEMS OPERATOR	04/28/2025
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Belen Division

ISAAC	MARTINEZ	HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR	04/28/2025
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Albuquerque Division

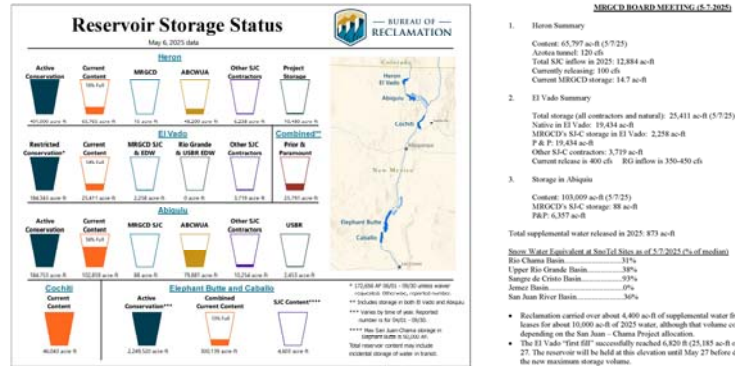
JAKE	JARAMILLO	EQUIPMENT OPERATION & MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR	05/12/2025 PROMOTION
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Mr. Zamora also introduced Antoinette Ramos, MRGCD's new engineer.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9 - REPORT(S) FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

a. Bureau of Indian Affairs - Patrick Taber, Acting Designated Engineer

Mr. Taber did not attend today's meeting.



AGENDA ITEM NO. 10 - REPORT(S) FROM THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES - Eric Zamora, PE

a. Consideration/Approval of Map 95 Tract 4C Designated as Excess Right of Way - Mike Padilla, Right of Way Specialist

Mr. Padilla asked for approval to state that Tract 4C is surplus land. He explained that they had an application in for purchase and the first step is to deem it surplus so they can start the process. This is .63 acres, adjacent to the Peralta Main, not needed for our operation and maintenance, and has no trail system with any adjacent agency that would utilize it. He added that it does qualify for a land sale.

Director Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE MAP 95 TRACT 4C DESIGNATED AS EXCESS RIGHT OF WAY**. Seconded by Director Dunning. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

b. Updates on the Bosque Fire and Fire Response in Valencia and Socorro Counties - Eric Zamora, PE and Yasmeen Najmi, Planner

Ms. Najmi expressed there were two fairly large fires in the Bosque at the end of April. The Rio Grande Fire started on April 17th, on Isleta Pueblo, and the winds pushed the fire into the east side and into private lands. She said the cause of the fire is still under investigation, and total acreage was 60 acres, with half of that on Conservancy District property, two or three homes were a total loss, and several barns and structures were also impacted. She noted that the vegetation treatments on the Riverside Drain were very helpful in some of the adjacent home protection. She voiced that she has not gotten to walk the entire site, but in general it is fairly high in severity and mortality, as she sees a lot of pretty cooked big trees. She believes a lot of dead and downed wood along the levee aided in that. The Otero Fire started at the end of April in the Bosque, they believe, which was very large and estimated to be 500 acres. The vast majority of the fires are on the east side and not on MRGCD property, but they are estimating about 70 acres are on our property, with no structures lost. She said the reason she thinks they did not sustain as much damage on our property is due to a lot of the Bosque in that area is by riverine parks. She said a lot of the area is open, dry, with not much vegetation, so they were able to get it stopped before moving into areas with more vegetation. She expressed that when they have these bigger fires, usually the Forestry Division and federal agencies will do work to sort of secure and make the area a little bit safer, including dozer lines to take down some killed trees that could be imminent hazards.

Vice Chair Baugh voiced that thankfully it got stopped in its tracks, but 500 acres is still a lot.

Ms. Najmi responded that it jumped over the river into private and other lands that had pretty dense salt cedar, so it got bad over there, but on our property there is a lot of green left on the trees. She is trying to work with the Forestry Division on money for rehab of our lands.

Director Duggins stated that had it not died, it was headed north. He asked if farmers are supposed to get a permit or something with the MRGCD when they burn their fields.

Mr. Casuga responded that burn permits are issued by the county, not MRGCD, so if someone is burning on private property, they are still bound by the county's no burn rules, and MRGCD does not have the authority to impose that.

Ms. Najmi added that as far as she knows, Valencia County is the only county that has a burn ban in effect right now.

c. Discussion on the Rio Grande State Park, Joint Powers Agreement between MRGCD and the City of Albuquerque - Yasmeen Najmi, Planner and Colleen McRoberts, CABQ

Ms. Najmi discussed the Rio Grande State Park Joint Powers Agreement between MRGCD and Albuquerque. She said this Joint Powers Agreement represents a couple years of work between our staff and the Open Space Division staff, some management, and Parks and Recreation, and this is the first update since the JPA was passed in 1997. She noted that a lot of things have changed over time with river urbanization and the use of the Bosque. She said their relationship with the Open Space Division has been overwhelmingly positive but there are always things to tweak.

Colleen McRoberts voiced that they have had their Director of Parks and legal counsel already review this and feel pretty confident. She explained that it went through many revisions, staff working on the ground, and numerous meetings to get where it is today. She said it still needs to be approved by the state per the State Act. She stated that it looks over both of our interests and helps us to do what we need to do to manage the Bosque, and when there are issues that may concern the public or the Board, they will come and present those things through this agreement. She added that if they consider extraordinary facilities or new infrastructure, they will be reviewed by the Open Space Advisory Board and sometimes the Environmental Planning Commission with the city.

Director Dunning asked if this was passed through Chief Medina's Office, as it was promised to him that we would get the police department's input. She also asked about jurisdiction in the JPA where it talks about who is responsible of law enforcement and that officer will assist with major crimes and homicides, fire control, and search and rescue operations. She pointed out that a problem with the other JPA is that it said MRGCD had a Bosque patrol and would enforce things, but we did not have any enforcement capabilities. She said when they talked with Chief Medina, the Open Space officers were going to be deputized. She asked if the patrol officers for Open Space are the only ones responsible for the part in the city or if they could go into county.

Ms. McRoberts voiced that it used to be their ranger program when the original JPA was developed and they had law enforcement within the Open Space Division that was

peeled away and tucked under APD. She said there are a lot of benefits in consolidating all the law enforcement, but it has been quite some time since that has happened. She said they had their unit reestablished and they are wanting to go back to having about 12 officers, as well as PSAs that help with more minor things like patrolling and shutting gates. She stated that the officers are throughout the entire Open Space Area, which includes Sandoval County, but with the Bosque, they have unique partnerships, because Bernalillo County also has an Open Space Unit, so they co-patrol the Bosque. She expressed that they are getting more conservation officers this year so they can get back to the numbers they used to have. She added that they are also trying to work with more temporary staff that are trained to just be a presence, like young interns, who help with general management, meeting the public and reminding people what they can and cannot do, and being an extra set of eyes; however, they do rely heavily on the public to report anything they see.

Vice Chair Baugh commented this is a good idea to get some of our policies that we have passed onboard.

Mr. Casuga stated that the JPA is there for the Board to review over the next month, and the point of the JPA is to layer the authorities that MRGCD has with the authorities that the city has, so it will include our policies as well. He said that there is a requirement in there that says for significant changes in deviations, for our partner to come and have a conversation with us.

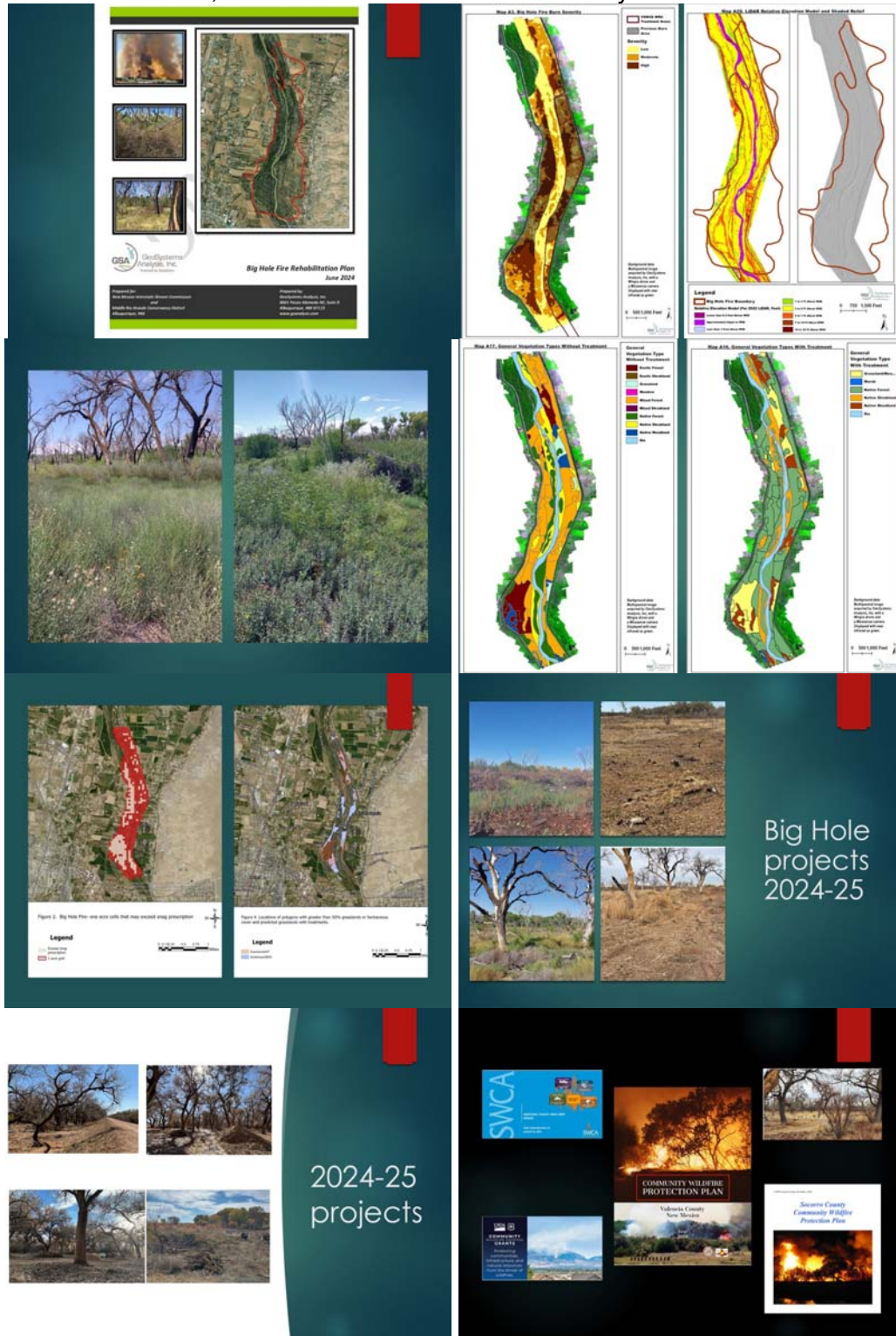
Director Duggins shared that around 6 years ago, the city purchased 150 acres in the North Valley and were going to install a drip, but he told them a drip does nothing for the aquifer. He asked Ms. McRoberts if she was there. He noted Chair Kelly was also there.

Ms. McRoberts responded that she did not think that was her and did not remember that.

d. Updates from the MRGCD Planner - Yasmeen Najmi

Ms. Najmi gave an update on some of the work she has been doing over the last year to make sure they are up to date on projects before she leaves, including the Big Hole Fire Rehabilitation Plan that was completed by GeoSystems Analysis and funded by the ISC. She said the plan focuses on the post-fire condition of the site and looks closely at what vegetation is coming back and what natural processes are there to support the habitat returning. She noted that there are a lot of meadows, shrublands, and native forests coming back. She went over maps highlighting everything gathered from the fire and the plan. Ms. Najmi said they did another 100 acres of treatment in Valencia County last year, and the City of Albuquerque did a couple hundred acres of treatment in the Albuquerque Bosque. She noted that they got about \$1,000,000 from the Forestry Division for the treatments on Big Hole and 10 other sites this year. She has been doing work on the Sandoval County Community Wildfire Protection Plan and the Socorro County Wildfire Protection Plan was just updated, so she has spent a lot of time in the field looking at areas and making sure they get information into these plans and future projects. She believes the Valencia County CWP is going to be on deck soon, and she applied for the Community Wildfire Defense Grant for a number of sites in Valencia and Socorro Counties. She announced that after 20 years of work, Valencia County Commission signed an agreement with the District to take over the management of Willie Chavez Park in partnership with the City of Belen and Rio communities. Ms. Najmi said she had a lot of fun working with their younger staff and the Youth Conservation Corps crews. She stated she had a lot of great conversations with the new staff, Open

Space Division, and Forestry Division staff, and they also had the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps working with them last year. She was asked by the Los Lunas Open Space and others to provide basic kinds of training on the Conservancy District, our history, and basic Bosque ecology. Ms. Najmi thanked the Board, Mr. Casuga, the other CEOs she has worked for, and all the staff for a wonderful 27 years.





AGENDA ITEM NO. 11 - REPORT(S) FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER/CFO - Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM

a. Consideration/Approval of the Amended Budget Adoption FY 2025 (07-01-2024 to 06-30-2025) Resolution BA-05-12-25-101

Resolution BA-05-12-25-101 is a budget amendment to reallocate budgeted revenue from the Army Corps of Engineers from the Long Term Assets Fund to the General Fund. The original budgeted amount was \$1,368,000, and the actual revenue received is \$1,063,171.

b. Consideration/Approval of the Establishing a Cash Budget Reserve Resolution BA-05-12-25-102

Resolution BA-05-12-25-102 establishes a cash reserve policy equal to one-twelfth of the District's annual budget in the General Fund, which will be designated solely for unexpected expenses or to address financial shortfalls. She stated they believe this policy will strengthen the District's financial stability and support the continuity of operations into the future.

c. Consideration/Approval of the Adoption of Budget for FY 2026 (07-01-25to 06-30-26) Resolution BA-05-12-25-103

Raquel Dawson presented the FY 2026 proposed budget in Ms. Fanelli's absence. She said they will be submitting it to Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for their budget award program, so it had to be a lot more detailed this time to fit their criteria. She expressed that for FY 2026, ad valorem tax rates remain unchanged, and the General Fund will have 5.0693 mills for residential and 6.3334 for nonresidential. The Capital Investment Fund is one mill for both residential and nonresidential, the District projects a 2.8% increase in ad valorem valuations, and the Water Service charges increased from \$51.25 to \$59.25 per acre. She noted that in FY 2025, the District negotiated two union contracts resulting in increased wages and fringe benefits for FY 2026, additional pay adjustments were implemented to maintain competitive compensation, and the District remains committed to investing in operational and water delivery efficiency. She voiced that the General Fund is structurally balanced with budgeted revenues equal to budgeted expenditures, total revenues are \$34,273,960, including a \$4 million equipment loan, and total expenditures are \$34,273,960, including a \$371,000 transfer to the Debt Service Fund. Major increases include salaries and election costs. She noted that a portion of the Corrales pumping budget was in the General Fund and equipment purchases, and the Grant Fund is balanced with revenues

and expenditures totaling \$29,225,295, Grant revenue \$22,554,014, loan proceeds \$1,361,414, with a grant match from the Capital Investment Fund of \$309,867. Female shared that Capital Investment Fund ad valorem revenue for 2026 is projected at \$4,397,500, and the District plans to use the projected FY 2025 balance of \$2,173,230, along with FY 2026 ad valorem, to fund total expenditures of just over \$6.5 million, which will result in a balance of \$16,288.

Mr. Casuga noted that the budget book is not out for public consumption yet.

Director Russo Baca appreciated them including the glossary of terms with acronyms and a summary of key financial policies.

Director Dunning voiced that the Finance Committee met and went into specifics and all questions were answered. She expressed that the staff working on this had a tough job, as they had to project what they did not know but they paid attention and tried their best in estimating everything. The Finance Committee recommended approval of the budget.

d. Consideration/Approval of Disposal of Obsolete Items Resolution M-05-12-25-222

Resolution M-05-12-25-222 authorizes the removal of obsolete inventory items, specifically parts for a crane no longer owned by the District, with a total value of \$7,851.60.

e. Consideration/Approval of Department of Finance and Administration Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) Resolution M-05-12-25-223

Rebecca Thompson asked for approval of Resolution M-05-12-25-223, the Fiscal year 27-2031 ICIP, that needs to be submitted by June of 2025. She said this will serve as a tool to communicate long term capital planning and prioritize our projects to the state.

Mr. Casuga explained that if they are going to put in a capital outlay request next year, it has to be on this plan, and if they are going to put in for a Water Trust Board application, it has to be on this plan. He said this is the best professional guess they could make and includes many projects that were highlighted in the infrastructure needs analysis.

Director Dunning made the **MOTION TO APPROVE ITEM 11(a) through 11(e)**.
Seconded by Director Russo Baca. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 12 - REPORT(S) FROM THE CHIEF ENGINEER/CEO– Jason M. Casuga, PE

a. Report on the Water Leaders Workshop, April 15-16, 2025 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO Casey Ish, Conservation Program Manager and Director Russo Baca

Mr. Casuga said the workshop was great and it was cool to see a different industry. He stated they went and looked at a mine and the way water is used there.

b. Report on the Rio Grande Compact Commission Annual Meeting, April 24-25, 2025 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO, Casey Ish, Conservation Program manager and Director Russo Baca

Mr. Casuga voiced that the Texas Compact Commissioner inquired about Abiquiu storage, so he provided public comment ensuring that there is knowledge that MRGCD's 1690 permit was temporarily approved for a change of location and use from El Vado to Abiquiu, and stated that overall storage above Elephant Butte was not being increased, but if they were able to physically store in Abiquiu, it is covered by an existing New Mexico permit that is compliant with the Compact.

c. Report on the American Water Resources Association 2025 Spring Conference, April 26-May 1, 2025 - Anne Marken, river Operations & Telemetry Manager

Ms. Marken submitted a written report.



MEMORANDUM

To: Chairman Kelly, Board of Directors

Through: Jason M. Casuga, CEO/Chief Engineer

From: Anne Marken, River Operations and Telemetry Manager

Date: May 5, 2025

Re: Report on the American Water Resources Association 2025 Spring Conference, April 26-May 1, 2025

I attended the Spring Conference of the American Water Resources Association (AWRA) in Anchorage, Alaska, from April 26th through May 1st. At the request of Director Russo Baca, I participated in a panel discussion focused on water sharing agreements.

The panel was composed of four members including myself:

- Director Russo Baca, representing the Utton Transboundary Center
- Darel Madrid, representing the Rio Chama Acequia Association
- Ana Gomez Lemmen Meyer, an economist with Ravena Analytics, LLC

Our session provided an opportunity to explain the unique aspects of New Mexico water law and its unique administration within the state. We discussed various approaches to managing water rights outside of strict priority administration and highlighted the economic and social benefits that water sharing agreements bring to participating communities.

The panel was one of the most well-attended sessions at the conference and elicited thoughtful questions from the audience and many attendees approached members of the panel afterward to continue the conversation, demonstrating strong engagement with the topic.

Overall, the conference was highly productive and brought together water professionals from a broad range of disciplines and regions across the country. I made several valuable contacts and gained new perspectives from the sessions and informal discussions throughout the event.

Although I didn't encounter any bears during my visit to Alaska, I did spot moose on two separate occasions which was an exciting wildlife experience to add to a rewarding professional trip.

d. Report on the National Water Resources Association (NWRA) Conference, April 28-30, 2025 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO, Casey Ish, Conservation Program Manager, Directors Dunning and Baugh

Ms. Casuga expressed that the visit to DC was good in that there are conversations they had to keep up every year. One of the things he felt encouraging is Washington, DC, is as busy as ever and there is business being done regardless of what is happening by the leaders of our country. He said they had the opportunity to meet with all but one of our federal delegations and they had questions of us, and we felt more heard. He noted that he, Directors Jiron and Sandoval spent a significant period of time advocating for better accountability for BIA related to how they provide service to the six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos.

Director Dunning submitted a written report (see Appendix II).

Vice Chair Baugh added that is an honor to watch Mr. Casuga and Mr. Ish work a room and hold so much information and make it palatable to people who are not well versed in all these complexities. He also thanked staff for putting together a flawless trip for them.

e. Information on Upcoming Events

1. Socorro County Informational Meeting, July 9, 2025, 9 a.m. - noon, Socorro Convention Center, 1220 Hwy 60 West Socorro, NM
2. Valencia County Informational Meeting, July 17, 2025, 9 a.m. - noon, Tome Dominguez Hall, 2933 Hwy 47, Tome, NM
3. Sandoval County Informational Meeting, July 24, 2025, 9 a.m. - noon, Black Mesa Casino Auditorium, 25 Hagen Rd, Algodones, NM
4. Bernalillo County Informational Meeting, July 31, 2025, 9 a.m. - noon, South Valley Multipurpose Senior Center, 2008 Larrazolo Rd SW, Albuquerque, NM
5. Family Farm Alliance Annual Conference, October 30-31, 2025, Reno, NV (August 30 deadline)

Mr. Casuga noted that he issued two memos to expand delegation of authority to Eric Zamora while he will be out of office, which will take place May 15th through June 3rd.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 13 - REPORT(S) FROM THE MRGCD ATTORNEY(S) - Chief Water Counsel or General Counsel

AGENDA ITEM NO. 14 REPORT(S) FROM THE BOARD

- a. Report on the Farmers for Future Farmers Meeting, February 11, 2025 - Director Jiron**

He stated it was well attended meeting.

- b. Report on the NM Interstate Stream Commission Meeting, April 17, 2025 - Director Russo Baca**

Reference Appendix III for the Director's written reports.

- c. Report on the Earth Day Celebration, VCSWCD, Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area, April 18, 2025 - Director Russo Baca**

Reference Appendix III for the Director's written reports.

- d. Report on the Finance Committee Meeting, April 23, 2025 - Chairman Kelly and Directors Dunning and Russo Baca**

Reference Appendix III for the Director's written reports.

Director Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE REPORTS FROM THE BOARD**. Seconded by Vice Chair Baugh. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

The vice chair requested a motion to go into the closed session at 5:07pm.

Director Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**. Seconded by Director Dunning. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED**.

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

AGENDA ITEM NO. 15 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 vice chair requested a motion to go back into regular session at 6:29pm.

The Board discussed pending and threatened litigation. No decisions were made.

Director Dunning made the **MOTION TO GO INTO REGULAR SESSION**. Seconded by Director Sandoval. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED**.

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

With no further comments, questions, or concerns, Madam Chair Russo Baca adjourned the meeting at 6:29 pm.

Approved to be the correct Minutes of the Board of Directors of May 12, 2025.

ATTESTED:

Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM
Secretary-Treasurer/CFO

John P. Kelly, Chairman
MRGCD Board of Directors

APPENDIX I

MRGCD Board Meeting of May 12, 2025 Public Comment -- Elaine Hebard¹

Despite the recent and quite welcome precipitation, it has been extremely dry this year. Last week's Drought Monitor shows the majority of the Rio Grande Basin in extraordinary drought and that it will likely be 60-70% warmer this summer. Last month, MRGCD users were advised that "supply is no longer sufficient to meet full demand." In April! Also in April, the Bureau of Reclamation declared it to be a "megadrought" when discussing its 2025 Rio Grande Annual Operating Plan, showing a drying river at Central this summer.

According to the ISC, "New Mexico's cumulative (Rio Grande) Compact status will be 124,000 acre-feet for all of 2025 and Article VII restrictions continue to be in effect." After most of this year's spring runoff has melted, Elephant Butte Lake was 13.8% full as of this morning. We have been slacking off from earlier conservation efforts. For instance, between 2015 and 2020, the State Engineer's Water Use Report for Bernalillo County shows that while overall water use went up 6%, groundwater use shot up by 44%. In the MRG, groundwater pumping depletes river flows, although such will mostly occur in future decades.

Streamflow depletion arises from both a reduction in the discharge of groundwater into a stream and an increase in recharge from the stream to the aquifer as gradients are reduced or reversed between the aquifer and the stream. Both constitute capture, and both result in a depletion of streamflow downstream from the capture area.²

These to-be-felt depletions impact all of us, particularly when flows are low, and will impact downstream users.

Groundwater pumping can "stealth vampirize" surface water flows by reducing the base flow of rivers and streams, which is crucial for maintaining water levels and supporting aquatic life. This occurs as pumping lowers the water table, diminishing the amount of water that naturally discharges from groundwater to surface water bodies. (Chance of Rain 2024; google AI)

The water and water rights uses to offset the depletions are often junior to the water users who are being impacted.

Vested rights, given to the ABCWUA and other urban users by the OSE starting in 1963, represent groundwater use prior to the basin declaration in 1956 but often after 1907. The OSE does not require vested rights to be offset. However, given that the Rio Grande was fully, if not over, appropriated by 1907, any groundwater impacts to river flows created thereafter would simply add to the over-appropriation and would likely be junior to pre-1907s. MRGCD's surface water rights and domestic well withdrawals also add to the accounting imbalance. No wonder the river is having a hard time meeting all of the demands, especially as the flows decline due to climate change.

The MRG is consuming more water than it is entitled to and must reduce its consumption by some 26 kafy. Really hard to do, especially in times of a megadrought. Such an undertaking must involve everyone.

We can't wait. That was the message of the Interstate Stream Commission Director at last week's Water Resources Board Meeting. (see attached handout)

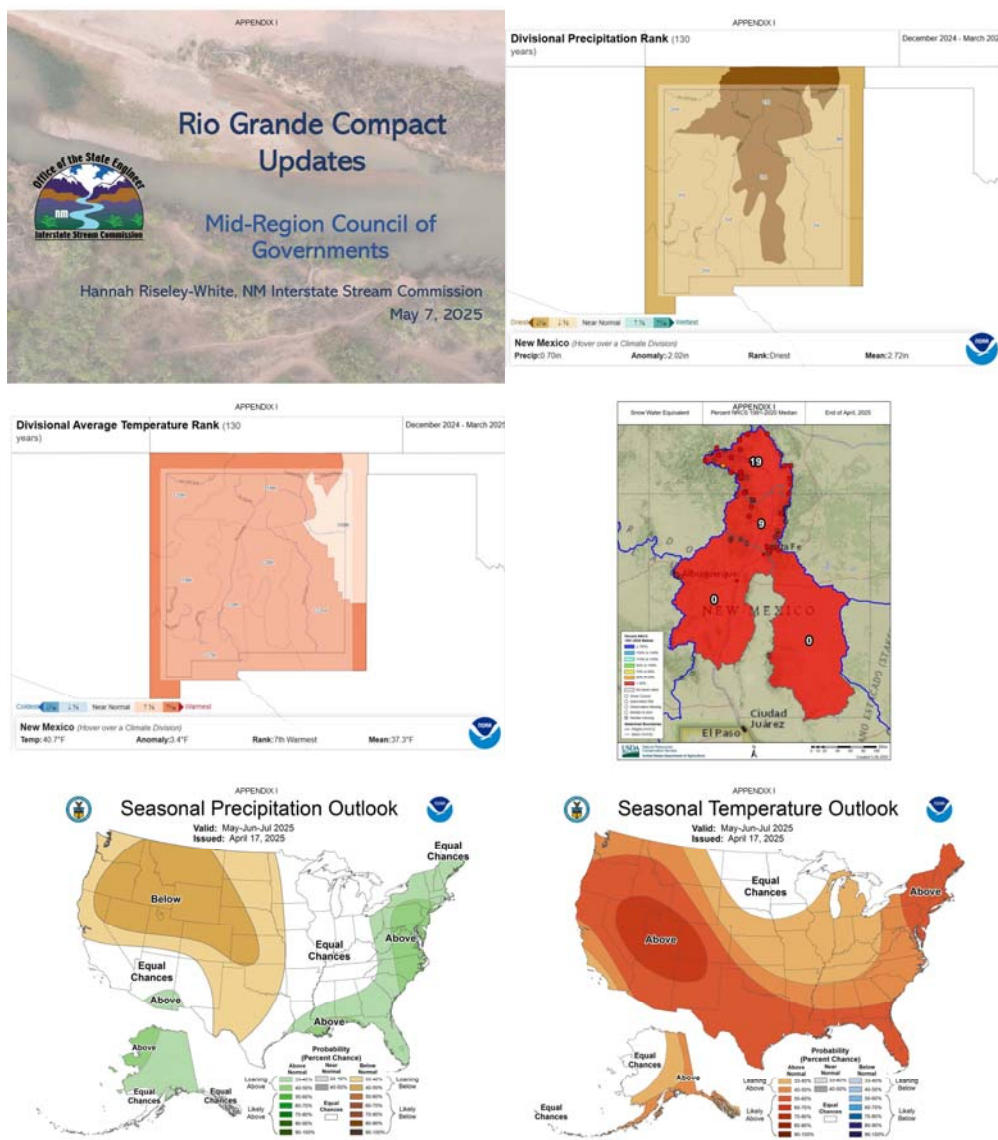
In particular, more effort must be made to reduce pumping, allowing for aquifer levels to rise and depletions be reduced. Such an effort will aid in compliance with the Compact. What is needed

is a mutual understanding of the groundwater resources as well as the timing and consequences of the depletions.

Rather than wait for a lawsuit or the SE to take action, the MRG must act. The MRGCD should suggest ways to reduce consumptive uses and measure success. As a first step, why not propose to align water rights with streamflows? Or at least advocate for water rights to be included in the modeling and scenarios being developed in the Basin Study, now underway, as well as in future regional water planning?

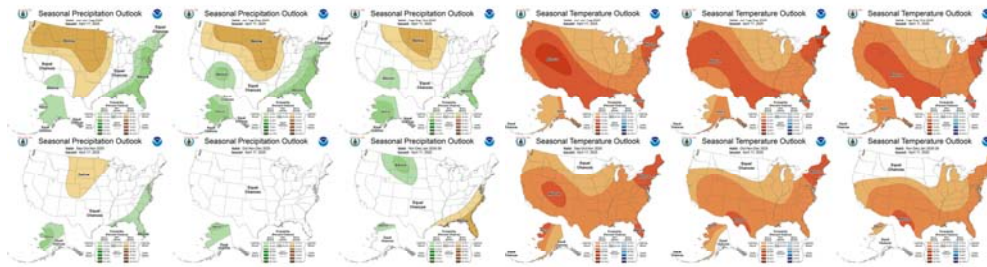
¹ For those who may not know me, I am a retired attorney and water planner, and have been attending MRG water-related meetings for three decades. My intent is to provide information and insights, often with a different perspective than staff's.

² <https://books.gw-project.org/groundwater-resource-development/chapter/streamflow-depletion/>



APPENDIX I

APPENDIX I



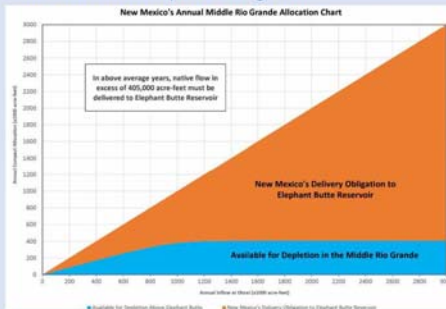
Looking into the future:

- We need to plan and prepare for *25% less water* in our rivers and recharging our aquifers by 2070

Why is NM's Compact status important?

- State water law is subordinate to a state's obligations under an interstate compact
 - US Supreme Court, *Hinderlider v. La Plata River & Cherry Creek Ditch Co.*, 304 U.S. 92 (U.S. 1938)
- Upstream storage of native Rio Grande water for middle valley water users is dependent on compact status
 - Rio Grande Compact Articles VI and VII

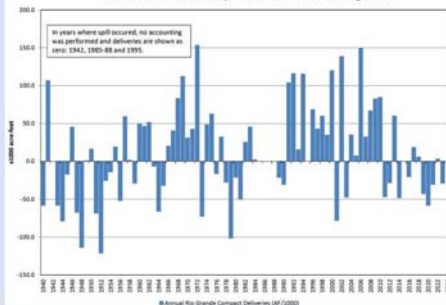
Rio Grande Compact Obligation



Rio Grande Compact Cumulative Departures 1940 through 2024



Annual Rio Grande Compact Deliveries 1940 through 2023



Middle Rio Grande Investments

\$45M in 2023-2025 Legislative Sessions is supporting:

- Active Channel Management for Multiple Purposes
 - Conveyance and Habitat
 - Critical Partnerships with Federal Agencies: Reclamation and Army Corps of Engineers
 - Cooperative Agreement with Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD)
- MRGCD's Voluntary Depletion Reduction Program
- Ongoing Delta Channel Maintenance and Sediment Plug Mitigation
- Data Modeling and Development of Various Management Tools
 - Low Flow Conveyance Channel

Need to prepare for:
More Active Depletions Management

Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos Water Rights Negotiations and Settlement


Lower Rio Grande – TX v NM No. 141

APPENDIX I

The three compacting states proposed a Consent Decree that contained an index obligation quantifying the volume of water to be delivered to Texas as a proportion of releases from Caballo Reservoir. The US opposed the Consent Decree on the grounds that it would dispose of the US' claims without its consent.

- April 20, 2024 – TX and NM presented oral argument at the US Supreme Court
- June 21, 2024 – Court issued a 5-4 decision against the states
- June 9, 2025 – Trial date
- Mediation and effort toward settlement ongoing

NM continues to take action and collaborate with state, federal and local partners to identify and implement solutions




Lower Rio Grande Investments

APPENDIX I

\$60M+ in 2023 and 2024 Legislative Session is supporting:

- Depletions Management
 - Groundwater Conservation Program in 2025 includes ~6,170 acres enrolled as part of a longer-term groundwater leasing program
 - Development of a purchase program with community input underway
- Implement special projects - aquifer recharge, brackish water, water importation, stormwater management
- Engage with local stakeholders to develop suite of long-term solutions
- Cooperative Agreement with Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID)
- Building the NMISC/NMOSE Team

Leverages Federal Funding and Partnerships



What Does this Mean?

APPENDIX I



- Commitment to holistic management and a multipronged approach
- Need for planning and capacity development at all levels
- Build on legislative wins from 2023 and 2024 legislative session

NM's Regulatory Framework is Prepared to Tackle the Challenges Ahead

APPENDIX I

Conjunctive Management of Surface and Groundwater

- NM has the oldest regulatory regime for conjunctive management in the US – since 1956. NM courts recognize the State Engineer's ability to conjunctively manage surface and groundwater rights to ensure compact compliance, including Rio Grande offset requirements. *City of Albuquerque v. Reynolds*, 1962-NMSC-173, 71 N.M. 428

Active Water Resource Management (AWRM)

- The State Engineer can enforce all laws related to use of water even in the absence of a complete adjudication.
- In addition, the State Engineer can administer based on agreed upon alternative management plans, which can provide for better win-wins.

Strategic Water Reserve

- NM Interstate Stream Commission has ability to support river flows for Compact and species purposes, including owning and leasing water and storage rights. NMSA 1978, § 72-14-3.3

Water Security Planning Act



APPENDIX I

Senate Bill 337 - Passed unanimously. Will transform and reinvigorate regional water planning in New Mexico.

Ensures Regional Water Planning:


- Involves Robust Public Involvement – including from Major Water Rights Holders
- Is Grounded in the Best Available Data, Science and Models
- Ties to Implementation through Prioritization of Projects for Funding
- Builds Local Capacity

• Recommendation of the 2022 Water Policy and Infrastructure Task Force, implementation called for by the 50-Year Water Action Plan

TIME TO WORK TOGETHER

APPENDIX I



APPENDIX II

Director Dunning's written report

Report on the National Water Resources Association (NWRA) Conference, April 28 – 30, 2025
Some very important connections were made, and the Board will hear about one of them in future meetings. The most meaningful conversations occur outside the meeting rooms in breaks and socializing.

The meeting with federal partners did not have a lot of details because they are in the midst of a major reorganization. The staff person from the administration side of the BOR is from Denver and was formerly a staff person for Senator Loomis of Wyoming. It's helpful to have someone in that position who is from the West and should understand the issues the West faces with drought, agriculture, ranching and Indian sovereignty. The administration has still not nominated a Commissioner. We were told that several names have been put forward, but all have been turned down. The administration is looking into turning more O & M activities over to the local authorities.

We were able to meet with all of the actual elected officials except for Representative Ledger Fernandez. This time we felt heard and especially heard by Senator Lujan who is an irrigator and understands on a personal level the challenges we are facing. We may get help from our delegation on the WOTUS decision, funding for Valle Vista Elementary and help with the Low Flow Conveyance channel. The delegation was updated on what is happening at the Corrales siphon and our concerns with BIA were expressed.

Speakers at the conference were very good, it was well organized, and Water Strategies did an excellent job of coordinating all of our visits.

APPENDIX III

Director Russo Baca Board Reports May 2025

Report on the Water Leaders Workshop, Silver City, April 14-16, 2025

This was a three-day workshop in Grant County hosted in Silver City. Although it was hosted in Silver City, there were presentations on statewide perspectives including those that affect MRGCD. Notably the State Engineer, Elizabeth Anderson, presented on the State of Water in New Mexico, ISC Director Hannah Riseley-White presented on Interstate Stream Commission Updates. Further Rebecca Roose gave a Water and Infrastructure Update from the Governor's Office—Rebecca Roose, and OSE General Counsel Nat Chakeres gave a presentation on Legal Updates and Ongoing Indian Water Rights Settlements. One of the most interesting presentations was on Farming and Agricultural Water Use in the Cliff–Gila Valley: Past, Present, and Future from Wendel Hann a local agricultural producer.

Report on the Interstate Stream Commission Meeting, April 17, 2025

RIO GRANDE BASIN KEY UPDATES

2025 Rio Grande Compact Status – New Mexico's cumulative Compact status will be 124,000 acre-feet for all of 2025 and Article VII restrictions continue to be in effect.

Abiquiu Reservoir and Dam Operations – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Reclamation are considering the best storage options for Prior and Paramount (P&P) water in 2025. Releases from Abiquiu Dam will be monitored during spring runoff.

El Vado Reservoir Operations – Reclamation is currently storing approximately 16,600 acre feet of San Juan Chama Project and P&P water. Reclamation's reassessment regarding construction to rehabilitate the dam is ongoing.

WORK AREA OVERVIEWS

INTERSTATE COMPACTS Article VII restrictions remain in effect and only water stored for P&P needs may be stored in 2025. There will be no native storage in post-1929 reservoirs this year.

WATER OPERATIONS

El Vado Operations – Reclamation is continuing to test the safe water storage capacity at El Vado while they study new alternatives to rehabilitate the dam. Currently, about 6,300 acre feet of San Juan-Chama Project (SJCP) and 10,300 acre-feet of P&P water are being stored in the reservoir, for a total of 16,600 acre-feet of storage in El Vado. Reclamation plans to increase the storage up to 25,000 acre-feet in the spring.

Abiquiu Operations – New Mexico is expecting very low water supply conditions in 2025, which will result in an above average storage requirement for P&P purposes. Based on the March forecast, the updated draft P&P storage requirement increased to approximately 38,000 acre-feet, but this volume will be extremely difficult to store given the low snowpack conditions. The Bureau of Indian Affairs will determine the final P&P volume to store in May. P&P water is now stored in El Vado, and Reclamation and the Corps are considering the best storage options for P&P water in 2025. Releases from Abiquiu are not expected to exceed 700 cfs during runoff, and due to sedimentation in the Rio Chama, the Corps plans to make incremental releases from the dam to test the channel capacity.

Rio Chama Plug Updates – The NMISC is continuing to collaborate with partners at the Corps, Reclamation, Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority, and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) to find solutions and further increase channel capacity. The

NMISC is also exploring various programs to provide technical and/or planning assistance, as well as educational opportunities for local communities in the Rio Chama basin.

Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) – The MRGCD began charging their conveyance system on February 24th, and active irrigation began in mid-March. Current models are predicting the allocation for all SJCP contractors will be about 36% of a full allocation.

River Mile 60 – Reclamation is still collecting and analyzing data from its experimental operations at River Mile 60 (south of San Marcial) for the bird habitat to the west. These data will likely help determine minimum flow thresholds out of the Low Flow Conveyance Channel to the west to avoid or minimize negative impacts to habitat, while reducing consumptive losses and improving river efficiency. For 2025, Reclamation is reducing the operation flows used in 2024. These reduced flows will continue through October and will discontinue from November through January 2026. Reclamation is reviewing the 2024 data, and the data will be shared with the NMISC when their evaluation is completed.

Report on the Earth Day Celebration, VCSWCD, Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area, April 18, 2025

Despite the wind and much needed rain throughout the day, this was a wonderful event bringing the community together. There were many groups present at the event and also a group presented about the history of camels in the Rio Grande in 1857.

Report on the Election Committee Meeting, April 21, 2025 & May 8, 2025

Review of the 2025 Election Calendar, revising MRGCD Rule No. 20, and MRGCD notice of election. Both meetings were review and editing / drafting of the documents to reflect NMSA 1978, Section 73-14-62, Laws 2025, ch.21, section 10, chaptered March 21, 2025 ("Removing conservancy districts from the Local Election Act") which requires that the members of the Board of Directors shall be elected at an election held on Tuesday, October 7, 2025.

Report on the Finance Committee Meeting, April 23, 2025

The committee members went over the MRGCD balanced budget and the 3Q FY2025 revenues and expenditures and changes in fund balance with a comparison of 3Q FY2024.

Report on the Rio Grande Compact Commission Annual Meeting, April 25, 2025

This was the 86th Annual Meeting (110th Meeting) of the Rio Grande Compact Commission of Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas.

https://www.ose.nm.gov/Compacts/RioGrande/isc_RioGrande.php The Agenda, and 2025 Report of the Engineer Advisers can be found by following the link above. MRGCD staff were recognized in attendance at the meeting and although the Texas Compact Commissioner recognized and introduced EBID, the NM Compact Commissioner, Elizabeth Anderson, also recognized all of the New Mexico districts as well.