

**MINUTES OF THE
2,235th REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT**

MAY 11, 2026

Directors having been duly notified; Chairman Kelly called the regular meeting to order at 3:01 pm. The following Directors and Staff were present:

DIRECTORS

John P. Kelly, Chairman	Present
Colin T. Baugh, Vice Chairman	Present
Brian Jiron, Director	Present
Stephanie Russo Baca, Director	Present
J. Chris Lopez, Director	Absent
Micheal T. Sandoval, Director	Present
Karen Dunning, Director	Present

STAFF

Jason Casuga	Chief Engineer/CEO
Lorna Wiggins	General Counsel
Jeff Wechsler	Chief Water Counsel
Pamela Fanelli	Secretary-Treasurer/CFO
Eric Zamora	Director of Technical Services
Christine Nardi	Director of Human Services
Amanda Molina	Director of Communications
Casey Ish	Director of Lands & Conservation

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

Anne Marken, MRGCD	Yasmeen Najmi	Patrick Taber, BIA
Matt Martinez, MRGCD	John Thompson	Josh Mann
Michael Padilla, MRGCD	Santiago Maestas, SVRAA	Katrina Gallegos, SVRAA
Raquel Dawson, MRGCD	Jonathan Garcia, 6-Pueblo Coalition	
Doug Strech, MRGCD	Kenneth Lucero, Santo Domingo	
Carlos Armijo, MRGCD	Anthony Garcia, Santo Domingo	

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chairman Baugh led the Pledge of Allegiance at today's meeting.

Chairman Kelly declared a quorum, and the meeting was publicly noticed. This meeting was a hybrid meeting with Directors attending in person. Rollcall votes will not be necessary for regular motions.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 - APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA .

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

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 - CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Consideration/Approval of Payment Ratification – April 2026
- b. Consideration/Approval of April 2026 Invoices for Wiggins, Williams & Wesenberg, PC
- c. Consideration/Approval of March and April 2026 Invoices for Spencer Fane LLP
- d. Consideration/Approval of the Minutes for the Special and Regular Board Meetings – April 13, 2026
- e. Memo on MRGCD Approved Licenses for April 2026 (For Informational Purposes Only)

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

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 - DISCUSSION ON DRAFT RESOLUTION CONCERNING PRIORITY OF EL VADO STORAGE RIGHTS

a. Report on Rio Grande 6 Pueblo Coalition Meeting, May 5, 2026 - Jason M. Casuga, Chief Engineer/CEO

Mr. Casuga stated the meat of what staff is proposing sits within the now, therefore, be it resolved statements, and the recitals are like history lessons. He said one of the reasons he is recommending a resolution like this is because they have had back to back terrible hydrologic years, and the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos enjoy the senior direct diversion right of the river and have the ability for the federal government to store water on the Pueblo's behalf that is later released to ensure they have the best chance of getting a season not impacted by hydrology. His concern was with the letter the Coalition pinned to Secretary Burgum with an urgent request to store the full calculated amount of Pueblo entitlement for the 2025 Irrigation Season and a request for formal government to government consultation. He expressed MRGCD was aware that water was stored on behalf of the Pueblos and affirmed support for that, but they need to keep in mind the history of that storage, as there are direct diversion rights that existed prior to El Vado, and he and legal counsel believe MRGCD has a senior priority over a storage right. He voiced concern that what the Coalition requested has the potential to harm non-tribal irrigators. He noted the Coalition has the desire to discuss the 1981 Agreement, and MRGCD is not party to that agreement, but he was not aware of a scenario where that agreement was ever implemented in a way that created an artificial shortening of the river to force non-tribal irrigators to be cut off earlier than the natural hydrology could cut them off to bring operations only for the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos. Mr. Casuga expressed this is only a resolution that is there for the public to comment and for the Board to decide on. He added they are in difficult hydrologic times and they must have difficult conversations, which are hard to have when people do not know what each other believe. He stated that by the Board accepting this resolution, they are being very public about the support that MRGCD has for the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblo's direct diversion, support they have for the pursuit of storage for them, and the responsibility MRGCD has to pursue all of those things while protecting all the rights of Middle Valley Rio Grande Water right holders.

Chairman Kelly asked if there was a similar letter prepared for 2025.

Mr. Casuga answered no, but there were conversations MRGCD participated in that suggested the desire for a full volume of prior and paramount storage as contemplated by the 1981 Agreement, even if that resulted in an unnatural shortening of the valley.

Mr. Casuga read the six now, therefore, be it resolved statements.

See also Appendix I.

Chairman Kelly inquired if there was a definitive recorded date of when the P&P lands were increased from 8,346 to 8,847 acres, as it says approximately 1939.

Mr. Wechsler responded 1939 was the first time they saw that recognized in a historic document, so that is the date used, but it is not definitive.

Chairman Kelly asked if they would flag the recital line at 103, where it states MRGCD executed several O&M contracts with the Bureau beginning in 1958, for further review, to see if it is needed, as it is not referenced again within the resolution. He said regarding line 131, it would be appropriate to term the agreement they have to store water at Abiquiu as a temporary agreement, as it is only to get them through construction until El Vado is back. He stated the resolution laid out the belief that MRGCD's storage right at El Vado is junior to diversion rights and storing water should not impact the senior rights.

Ms. Wiggins asked that they change District to MRGCD in lines 148, 156, and 161.

Chairman Kelly asked for public comment on the item.

Jonathan Garcia

Mr. Garcia, Vice Chairman of the Coalition of Six Middle Rio Grande Basin Pueblos, voiced the Coalition holds aboriginal rights. He said the Coalition does not support the resolution, and they ask that the Board not support or adopt it. He shared the Coalition plans to provide a more comprehensive response to the Board, but right now they ask the Board to consider that the proposed resolution mischaracterizes the nature and scope of their prior and paramount water rights, as the 1928 Act provides that all water rights pertinent to the pueblos irrigated lands shall be prior and paramount to any rights of the District or any property holder. He noted it would be incoherent for Congress to have directed funds for the construction of El Vado Dam and the reservoir to serve the Pueblo's prior and paramount lands while also excluding storage from those rights. He added the purpose of the 1928 Act was to provide an impounding reservoir to deliver an adequate water supply to pueblo lands. He stated New Mexico Law, Section 72-1-2 expressly situates the reservoir and other works for the storage or convenience of water within the pertinence framework, and storage has never been understood as serviceable from a pertinent water right under New Mexico or federal law. Mr. Garcia said the pueblo's prior and paramount storage rights do not arise under Permit Number 1690, and it does not define or limit the Pueblo's entitlement. He commented this resolution would exasperate the conditions they are having by creating conflict and division with the Pueblos and MRGCD, rather than facilitating solutions. He pointed out the Coalition has consistently demonstrated the spirit of collaboration across many years, and all Six Middle Grande Basin Pueblos urge the Board not to adopt the proposed resolution.

See also Appendix II.

Chairman Kelly said the schedule for the resolution is for the Board to review the draft resolution for the first time today, then have irrigator meetings in each county through June to get input from the farmers across all four counties, then staff will give the Board a report on the comments at the July Board Meeting, and the earliest they would take action on it would be at the August Board Meeting. He noted this resolution impacts farmers up and down the river, so the Board is not going to rush anything until everyone has had plenty of time to voice their comments for them to discuss and consider. He granted Mr. Garcia's request to have more time to discuss this at the June Meeting.

Mr. Garcia asked if they were going to give public notice on when and where the county meetings will be.

Chairman Kelly answered they will be scheduled similar to the irrigators meetings they had back in January and the dates are on the agenda.

Mr. Casuga added they will be posted on the web page and they will email them to the Coalition as well.

Josh Mann

Mr. Mann, Water Counsel for the Pueblo of Isleta and San Felipe, voiced it was correct that the Pueblos asked for storage of their full rights, but if the United States believes the current hydrologic conditions warrant a deviation from the provisions and obligations established under the 1981 Agreement, they have to first engage in meaningful government to government consultation with the Pueblos prior to any decision or action that could affect their entitlements or diminish storage needed to fulfil P&P entitlements. He stated they have consistently demonstrated their commitment to collaborate over the years and have been responsible neighbors and stewards of the river. He said this is really an issue of the United States have a binding agreement with the Pueblos, and even though MRGCD is not a party, the Coalition, BIA, and BOR signed the agreement, and it states that any deviations or amendments to the agreement shall be in writing upon approval of all the parties, which has not happened. He added the 1928 Act says pertinent to P&P lands and senior to the District, and the Permit 1690 is a federal storage right, not a state based storage right. He shared he and Mr. Casuga have had many conversations over the last year trying to figure out how to get the United States to ask the Pueblos for their consent to deviate from the 1981 Agreement, and that has been unsuccessful. Mr. Mann reiterated that the Pueblos have demonstrated their collaboration, and this is primarily a matter of sovereignty and unilateral federal action, not Pueblo consent. He asked the Board to consider the broader context as they process the resolution.

Santiago Maestas

Mr. Maestas, with the South Valley Regional Association of Acequias, irrigator on the Pajarito Acequia and commissioner, reminded the Board that in the permit that was submitted to the State Engineer to change the diversion points of their acequias, 70,000 acres of 125,000 acres of the water requested to be diverted were pre-1907 Water Rights, not the District's. He said the District's are the remaining 40,000 of that.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 - REPORT(S) FROM THE WATER OPERATIONS

a. Report on Water Supply Conditions - Anne Marken, River Operations & Telemetry Manager

Ms. Marken reported on water supply conditions. She stated that in an average year, they would still be in the middle of spring run-off, with more water available than needed for irrigation, but there is very little snow remaining in the basin today. She displayed a graph showing snowpack conditions throughout the year at the Cumbres Trestle SNOTEL site, which now sits at zero inches. She noted the usual average for mid-May is about 15 inches. The hydrograph showing measured discharge at the USGS Rio Grande at Otowi Gage was 350 CFS, which is normally 2,700 CFS for this date. She said below Cochiti Dam, inflow into the Middle Valley was 320 CFS, and MRGCD agricultural and convenience demand is 700 CFS. She added prior and paramount demand today is 190 CFS, and Middle Valley water supply is only 110 CFS above that demand. She expected inflow to continue to decline as temperatures rise. She expressed initial drying occurred in the San Acacia Reach more than 45 days ago, and yesterday there were 34 river miles dry in San Acacia and 9 river miles dry in Isleta Reach, with river channel drying in Albuquerque imminent. Ms. Marken stated when flows measured at the Albuquerque Gage are below 450 CFS in the late spring and summer, it indicates there is not enough

water in the system to meet the needs of Middle Valley irrigators, and today it measured 50 CFS. She noted river drying in Albuquerque has only occurred twice since the early 1980s, in 2022 and 2025, and in both of those years, the drying did not occur until July. She expressed that MRGCD has 3,600 acre feet of San Juan Chama Water in storage, and the total allocation for San Juan Chama contractors in 2026 is expected to be about 30% of a full allocation, or 6,200 acre feet, for MRGCD. She shared that because the limited volume of MRGCD's 2026 San Juan Chama allocation and the fact that MRGCD has not received the entire volume yet, releasing San Juan Chama water this year would provide no meaningful benefit to overall water operations. The 7-day forecast looks hot and dry, with limited chances of precipitation, but the 2-week outlook looking more promising for rain but still likely hotter than usual. The 3-month outlook indicates the basin is likely to experience a hot but wet summer, and MRGCD will be reliant on rain inflows for the rest of the season. She voiced that irrigators should expect extended periods between irrigation deliveries unless rain inflow increase available supply.

See also Appendix III.

Director Dunning asked if the snow in southern Colorado last week helped anything.

Ms. Marken answered she would not say it didn't help, as they have helped current conditions drag out a little longer than anticipated, but the small shots of snow and rain they have received have not increased available supply significantly.

Chairman Kelly shared when he was coming back from Farmington a couple weeks ago, he was surprised to see the big arroyo on Santa Ana Pueblo had enough flow of water in it to fill up the initial abstraction and start water moving over the ground. He said to keep their fingers crossed.

Ms. Marken responded maybe that primed the system a little bit.

b. Consideration/Approval to store current year San Juan Chama allocation for use in the following irrigation season

Ms. Marken explained before 2020, MRGCD typically received its current San Juan Chama allocation supply and saved it for release in the following year, but in 2020, the decision was made to release the current year's San Juan Chama allocation once it got down to that situation. She said ever since then, they have been releasing the current year San Juan Chama allocation, but this year, because the allocation is so small and water conditions have declined, they feel there is no overall benefit to the operations of the District to release this year's San Juan Chama allocation.

Mr. Casuga added if they would have had the water, they would have injected much sooner into the system to bring a broader benefit to the whole valley, but now the benefits do not exist since they were not able to do that.

Director Jiron asked how much of that water would be released if injected into the river.

Mr. Casuga said if they wanted to make an impact to the community, they should be releasing enough to bring up the river to flows where all four counties could benefit. He said they may would be able to release 400 CFS, but that likely would not get even an area move through before they would start irrigation and that volume would bottom out.

Chairman Kelly inquired what they have allocated as of right now.

Ms. Marken responded they received a little over 2,000 acre feet of this year's allocation and they had 1,800 left over from last year. She said they should receive another 1,500 acre feet on May 15th.

Vice Chairman Baugh asked if this would just be getting them back to where they were before 2020.

Mr. Casuga answered yes.

Vice Chairman Baugh asked how that would affect when rain falls with allocation and how far the months of the allocation of the San Juan Chama go.

Ms. Marken answered they could expect the last allocation to be the May one with any certainty, as spring runoff is over and that is very predictable allocation they will receive. However, if the basin receives rain inflow and ends up producing more water, they will get later allocations, but it is hard to predict that.

c. Report on Water Distribution - Matt Martinez, Irrigation Distribution Manager

Mr. Martinez reported on water distribution. He voiced they are two months into the irrigation season and things are getting worse by the day, including Corrales Pumps reaching operational thresholds on April 21st, wait times exceeding 30 days between on-Pueblo irrigation deliveries, final efforts to complete delayed second rotations in portions of Belen and Albuquerque Divisions, and difficulty routing water to southern divisions and lower ends of major canals, all of which are not normal for May. He stated there is no longer enough water to sustain the number of concurrent canal rotations and wait times between deliveries have widened. He shared that staff through MRGCD are receiving many calls about wait times, dry fields, wilting crops, and uncertainty about future deliveries, and they are carefully evaluating whether operational adjustments can improve the circumstances and if limitations are hydraulic in nature. He voiced that proximity to diversions, canal length, travel time, and the ability to push water to lower ends of long systems are major considerations as supply declines. He expressed there are canals that have similar days since their last rotation, but they cannot operate them both at the same time, which leads them to making difficult decisions. He assured they are carefully tracking rotations and associated decisions and are always looking to identify improvement opportunities. Mr. Martinez stated extremely dry soils and extended periods between irrigations make it difficult for farmers to quickly move water across their fields and efficiently irrigate, and they must be understanding of the on-farm challenges created by the extended dry periods and realize that fields that normally irrigate efficiently may now require more time and water to replenish moisture. He voiced that he and his team are actively reviewing operational issues within their own system to maximize the use of available water. He shared that a farmer informed them of sediment buildup in the canal that could be contributing to the delay, and crews are now dredging that canal to improve operational efficiency for when water returns. He commented that while water waste should not be tolerated under any circumstances, it is important to understand the cause and distinguish between operational negligence, poor system conditions, and unforeseen events as they take appropriate action. He noted ISOs must maintain open lines of communications, remain understanding and empathetic, and maximize the use of water whenever it is on rotation within their area.

Director Jiron expressed the Belen Highline has been running pretty full consistently for over a month. He asked how farmers are doing on the south end of the outfall, as they have been calling him saying they have not gotten water out there and ISOs are not answering and returning their phone calls.

Mr. Martinez responded he is 100% committed to holding his team accountable, and if there are communication gaps, he needed to know. He said he would address those concerns and see if there is a pattern with a certain ISO. He stated they have made a concerted effort to push the Highline as long as they can, providing three delivery opportunities from the Highline itself. He noted the majority of the laterals it serves have only had two delivery opportunities, and as of yesterday, the Belen Highline dropped to 40 CFS. He added it is no longer sustained to run it beyond the 240 Feeder Canal, and they have received requests from Isleta Pueblo irrigators, New Belen, and Los Lunas Lateral, so they will shift water away from the Highline to meet those needs.

Chairman Kelly noted they have \$300,000 for on-farm efficiency projects as they go into new year's budget coming from their earned internal process. He said Mr. Martinez and his ditch riders probably know the best spots to spend that money.

Mr. Martinez expressed they have a really bright GIS analyst, who has helped to flag properties with excessive duration times relative to their acreages, which will be an important tool to narrow in on those areas. He said he is also tracking rotations and the duration of each rotation, and they have flagged some rotations they think are taking longer than expected and trying to identify the cause.

Mr. Casuga shared that is why they were out in the winter and having meetings with communities. He added this season was exceptionally worse than what they thought was going to be possible, and MRGCD needs to be on their game and doing a better job of communicating. He stated the temperature related to water frustrations in the valley is growing, and he asked that everybody who is angry to walk away and take a little bit to calm down and then talk later, as it is in times like these where professionalism should rise with customers they deliver to with MRGCD staff.

Vice Chairman Baugh asked Mr. Martinez to thank his team for all they have been doing. He suggested it might be worthwhile to go over their monsoon ops in June and emphasize through the upcoming farmer irrigator forums how that really translates to a run of the river operation, what that means, and why they cannot just let the water run by.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 - ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR (Comments are limited to three (3) minutes)

Director Dunning

Director Dunning thanked the Village of Los Ranchos for the bridge that is being converged with the Willaim's Bridge, as it is important for the community.

Chairman Kelly voiced they received an email from **Gina Brenner**, President of the Delmar Neighborhood Association in the North Valley, that they did a big cleanup and partnered with the City Solid Waste Division and MRGCD, who picked up 20 plus bags of trash and took them to the proper landfill. He said they would continue to work with any Neighborhood Association on mutually beneficial projects like this one. He thanked Ms. Brenner for the email.

See also Appendix IV.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 - REPORT(S) FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR -

- a. Bureau of Reclamation - John Irizarry-Nazario, Deputy Area Manager**
Not present at today's meeting.

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

Mr. Taber first thanked the members from the Six Middle Rio Grande Coalition and members of the pueblos that were there, as them being there represents the importance of the resolution being discussed and making sure they understand what it represents not only historically, but the conditions with which those releases were made. He added to the previous statement that releases like this have not been looked at, that they have had storage in those periods of time. He noted the Department of Interior wanted to look at the resolution closely and provide comments toward that. He said he wanted to coordinate with the District to make sure he is getting feedback from Ms. Marken and Mr. Martinez on conditions, as well as maintenance issues from Mr. Zamora. He expressed their final storage amount for prior and paramount was calculated at 40,379 acre feet, and he believed there to be 27,000 acre feet in storage currently. He noted they began prior and paramount rotations on March 7th, and they will continue to monitor conditions. He expected prior and paramount releases to be happening shortly, depending on how conditions occur. Mr. Taber voiced that he is continuing his weekly operation calls with the Pueblos to notify him of water delivery, maintenance, and operations issues. He mentioned he has had concerns regarding cutting of time, so he asked to make sure that is coordinated with the pueblos points of contact.

Director Dunning asked if they are making any progress in the designated engineer permanent position.

Mr. Taber answered he believed so, but he has been the acting designated engineer for 23 months now. He added that June 4th is the Bernalillo County Farmers Association and the next Middle Rio Grande Coalition Meeting. He expressed it was critical to have property representation there given the situation.

Director Russo Baca voiced she has noted a lot of times there is leftover water when the P&P water gets released at the end of the year. She asked how they can ensure that gets to the Pueblos when they need it throughout the season.

Mr. Taber responded that he thought there was a lot of interest in doing that, and it is an ongoing concern.

Chairman Baugh asked if they were going to have the State Engineer there next month.

Mr. Casuga answered they made a commitment to come back and speak on Rio Grande Compact issue, but they could request for them to speak on something else as well.

Chairman Baugh inquired if P&P water that is not used is released and becomes the state's to go against the debt.

Mr. Taber responded yes, that is currently how it is being utilized.

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

a. Introduction of MRGCD New Hires

Ms. Nardi introduced the new hires and job title changes. She announced a promotion to heavy equipment operator in the Cochiti Division and a new mechanic in the Socorro Division.

b. Recognition of Retiring Employees - Doug Strech, Systems and Data Integration Program Manager and Eric Zamora, Director of Technical Services

Mr. Casuga recognized Eric Zamora, Director of Technical Services, who is retiring, and presented him with gifts.

Chairman Kelly, the Directors, Ms. Wiggins, and Ms. Fanelli thanked Mr. Zamora for his hard work and congratulated him on retirement.

Mr. Casuga recognized Doug Strech, Systems and Data Integration Program Manager, who is also retiring, and presented him with gifts.

Chairman Kelly, the directors, Ms. Wiggins, Ms. Fanelli, and Ms. Najmi thanked Mr. Strech for his hard work and congratulated him on retirement.



[The Board took a brief recess at 4:59 pm and reconvened at 5:08 pm]

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9 - REPORT(S) FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LANDS & CONSERVATION

- Casey Ish

a. Update on 2026 Water Leasing Program - Carlos Armijo, On-Farm Water Resources Specialist

Mr. Armijo gave an update on the Water Leasing Program. He said it is underway and they are signing people up weekly. He noted they have 1068 acres registered, 226 of those for late season, and 841 for multi-year. He added that 20% of the participants this year are coming back from last year's program and 28% are coming back from the last two years. He added it will close on the 15th, and they should have a better understanding of the exact participation rate then.

Vice Chairman Baugh appreciated them making a flexible move and was encouraged to see the community responding in an appropriate manner.

Chairman Kelly asked where they were money wise.

Mr. Armijo answered they are beyond what they anticipated regarding budget, and the participants signing up now are going to be in the multiyear program.

Mr. Ish added they anticipate surpassing the original budget, and they have been in contact with NFWF and they have no issue with them extending the budget, especially for locking in multi-year acreage contracts.

Chairman Kelly inquired if everyone from now has to be a multiyear because they already hit that budget threshold.

Mr. Ish answered yes, they will basically cover all late season applications with the initial \$300,000 budgeted, and anything additional will fold into what is considered a multi-year contract anyway.

Mr. Casuga asked when they expect the next season to open back up.

Mr. Ish responded probably mid to late November.

b. Report on Urban Issues Committee Meeting, May 7, 2026 - Casey Ish, Director of Lands & Conservation, Amanda Molina, Director of Communications, Vice Chairman Baugh, Directors Dunning and Russo Baca

Mr. Ish stated they convened a meeting of the Urban Issues Committee last week and the only item on the agenda was reviewing applications they received for the Advisory Committee. He noted they had 16 applicants and 10 seats to fill, and they are now in the process of finalizing. He said they would notify people of their nomination shortly.

Chairman Kelly expressed they needed to be sure and send the non-successful applicants a thanks for applying letter.

Mr. Casuga expressed the goal between now and next month is to make sure the applicants chosen can affirmatively accept, and then they will get a full list of everybody before informing the public.

Chairman Kelly added they also need to determine who is going to serve an initial one year term and initial two year term to start the staggering.

c. Consideration/Approval of Sais Lateral Abandonment and Removal Sta. 58+60± - ISO Zone B13 - Belen Division - Michael Padilla, Right-of-Way Supervisor

Chairman Kelly noted there was a detailed mailout on this item sent to the directors, which spelled out where and why and made a good case for the abandonment of the lateral.

See also Appendix V.

Director Dunning made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE SAIS LATERAL ABANDONMENT AND REMOVAL STA. 58+60± - ISO ZONE B13 - BELEN DIVISION.** Seconded by Director Russo Baca. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

d. Discussion/Approval of MOU between Ciudad Soil & Water Conservation District and MRGCD for Mutual Water Conservation Projects Access - Casey Ish, Director of Lands & Conservation

Chairman Kelly voiced there was also a mailout on this item regarding an agreement to work with Ciudad that was very straightforward.

Director Dunning shared this talked about the projects being in the MRGCD benefited area, but they have other soil and conservation districts in the benefited area, but Mr. Ish assured her they were not going to do projects in those areas.

Vice Chairman Baugh applauded the efforts the District was doing to further strengthen ties with other agencies in times of crisis to come together and make this better for everyone.

Director Dunning made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MOU BETWEEN CIUDAD SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT AND MRGCD FOR MUTUAL WATER CONSERVATION PROJECTS ACCESS.** Seconded by Vice Chairman Baugh. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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

a. Maintenance and Construction Updates

Mr. Zamora gave the maintenance and construction updates. He shared they have recommenced construction activities on the Corrales Siphon Project, as they began installing the conductor casing late last week, which they hope to be done this week and start drilling operations near the end of the month. Regarding the Feeder 3 Project, they should be demobbed by the end of the month, and the delivery of the butterfly valves are delayed but will likely be delivered around October or November. He said work has been

completed and an irrigation event has taken place with significant improvements with the Middle Road Project, their partnership with Socorro County. He noted if irrigators go one at a time, they should be significant improvements with that project. He expressed they are partnering with the City of Albuquerque and provided design services for some upgrades at some city fields in Los Poblanos that begun recently with Lopez Precision. He believed the deadline was June 30th to complete that project and expend the funds, and it should bring significant improvements on irrigation times. He added that things are moving right along with mowing activities and spring activities have commenced throughout the divisions.

Director Russo Baca gave a shoutout to their younger engineer team, who presented at the Dam Owners Coalition Conference, and did a fabulous job representing the District.

Mr. Zamora sent a big thank you to the people at BOR, as they had some HEC-RAS 1D and 2D model training, which gave their engineers an opportunity to start asking questions and learning the process.

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

a. Report on Finance Committee Meeting, April 23, 2026 - Chairman Kelly, Vice Chairman Baugh, and Director Russo Baca

Chairman Kelly reported they had a Finance Committee Meeting, where they buttoned up the budget, which is now ready to approve.

b. Consideration/Approval of Resolution BA-05-11-26-114 Adoption of Amended Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 (07-01-25 to 06-30-26)

Ms. Fanelli explained the budget amendment for consideration is to bring in revenues and expenditures related to the Grant Fund into the FY26 Budget, as there are grant awards they did not initially budget for.

Vice Chairman Baugh made the **MOTION TO RESOLUTION BA-05-11-26-114**.
Seconded by Director Russo Baca. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

c. Consideration/Approval of Resolution BA-05-11-26-115 for the Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2027 (07-01-26 to 06-30-27)

Raquel Dawson presented on the FY27 proposed budget. She shared the budget was developed with maintaining a balanced budget without overspending projected revenues and addressing the District's aging infrastructure in mind. She said two major projects planned in FY27 include the Corrales Siphon Replacement Project and the Feeder 3 Pump Station. She stated in the General Fund, revenues are budgeted at \$33.3 million, and the ad valorem mill rates will not change, but the District projects a 3% increase in ad valorem valuations. She noted that Water Service charges increased from \$59.25 to \$61.03. General Fund expenditure is also budgeted at \$33.3 million, with 57% of that being personnel costs. She talked about some of the increases for FY27, including salary infringes increasing by \$1 million, doubling on-farm funding and Conservation Program, and they added for habitat conservation. She added that professional services are seeing a big increase to accommodate design and studies for investment into future projects, and vehicle maintenance was increased to accommodate increases in parts

and repair costs. She noted they will have to keep an eye on the current fuel prices. She stated board requests were incorporated into the budget and the budget for equipment from the General Fund was minimized for FY27, but they did receive a \$4 million equipment loan this year. Ms. Dawson stated they continue to reserve funding for future levee projects in the Long Term Assets Fund. in the Debt Service Fund, they funded transfers from the Capital Investment Fund, and debt obligations are budgeted in FY27 at \$1.57 million. She noted the Grant Fund was balanced, with revenues and transfers in and expenditures totaling \$16.3 million, with \$11 million of that being grant revenue, \$363,000 loan proceeds, and \$4.9 million grant match from the Capital Investment Fund. She said project ad valorem revenue is \$4.7 million for FY27, \$7.1 million for total expenditures, \$1.57 million going to the Debt Service Fund, \$4.9 million to the Grant Fund for match for the Corrales Siphon and Feeder 3 Projects. She added they budgeted \$525,000 for the electric connection cost for Feeder 3 in the Capital fund. She expressed the project fund balance in the Capital Reserve Fund is \$382.

See also Appendix VI.

Mr. Casuga clarified the Water Service Charge rising by the CPI Index was not a new action.

Chairman Kelly noted the budget includes two new full-time positions.

Mr. Casuga explained that because of the great work staff has been doing and investing in the Bosque, they are leveraging \$9 million worth of investment from the state, as well as a significant investment being made from a technology standpoint to broaden access, which both require more staff to do that work.

Director Dunning noted the Sun Zia is paying for the habitat mitigation, not MRGCD.

Chairman Kelly suggested putting a footnote on the page that mentions that.

Ms. Fanelli responded they will do that, and she added that was being offset by revenue they already paid the MRGCD.

Chairman Kelly mentioned doubling the on-farm efficiency and they had to make some decisions on which projects to move forward, which were the Corrales Siphon and Feeder 3 Pump Station. He noted as they go forward, they will be able to move into the list of urgent projects more.

Director Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION BA-05-11-26-115**. Seconded by Director Dunning The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

d. Report on Association of Government Accountants Conference, April 28-29, 2026 - Pamela Fanelli, Secretary-Treasurer/CFO

Ms. Fanelli reported the accounting staff went to the Association of Governmental Accounting Conference on April 28th and 29th, which was titled Keeping Accountability on Track. She said the conference mostly discussed fraud, waste, and abuse, and stressed the importance of keeping vigilant and following internal controls.

Chairman Kelly commented there was a preponderance of per diem requests processed here that each board member certifies. He urged them to make conscious decisions if they are social events or business that is part of being MRGCD and a board member.

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

a. Report on the National Water Resources Association Federal Water Issues Conference, April 27-29, 2026, Jason M. Casuga, Chief Engineer/CEO, Casey Ish, Director of Lands & Conservation, Vice Chairman Baugh, and Directors Lopez and Russo Baca

Mr. Casuga reported on the NWRA Federal Issues Conference, which showed great value. He said they had great meetings on the Hill and disappointing meetings. He shared they got to meet with the Water and Natural Resources Committees. He stated they talked about El Vado, funding, storage, and Bosque management while they were there, and he was cautiously optimistic about whether or not it turns into something good or not.

Chairman Kelly voiced one of the most important projects led by the federal government include the Low Flow Conveyance Channel and the riverbed below there. He asked if they should be more involved in that project and if they should budget for it.

Mr. Casuga answered no if he was talking about the River Mile 60 area, as the federal government is going to be there and MRGCD did their role as a public agency to provide comments to the EIS. He understood that a lot of the comments were addressed publicly in a way that they are going to rewrite their new documents, so the process worked. He added one of the most positive conversations at the Federal Issues Conference was around title transfer, and he hoped there would be conversations about the Low Flow Conveyance Channel that come out of that. He felt they were moving to the idea that the State and MRGCD should own and maintain the Low Flow in partnership together.

Chairman Kelly asked what hurdles they have to assume active maintenance of a facility outside of their benefited area as compared to throwing money at the Bureau for El Vado.

Ms. Wiggins responded they have looked at that issue before and having projects supported by MRGCD outside of the benefited area is not a legal issue.

Mr. Casuga added they do not have a legal barrier to do maintenance down there, but the work they are doing on the Low Flow has a drain element and for it to be used as a Compact management tool, MRGCD probably needs the support of the state, as it is a state obligation.

b. Report on Farmers for Future Farmers Meeting, April 14, 2026 - Jason M. Casuga, Chief Engineer/CEO and Director Russo Baca

Mr. Casuga expressed he was invited to a meeting where he let staff sit out and just talked with the farmers himself so they could be really candid. He said the conversations were cordial, even though they were dealing with heavy topics about satisfaction of services provided by MRGCD. He stated hydrology is out of their control, but MRGCD staff professionally approaching their job is the genesis of those type of conversations.

c. Report on the Annual Rio Grande Compact Commission Meeting, April 16-17, 2026 - Jason M. Casuga, Chief Engineer/CEO, Casey Ish, Director of Lands &

Conservation, Anne Marken, River Ops. & Telemetry Manager, Vice Chairman Baugh, Directors Dunning, Sandoval and Russo Baca

Mr. Casuga reported on the Annual Rio Grande Compact Commission Meeting. He noted all the energy was before the meeting and the overall atmosphere around the Rio Grande Compact was more celebratory that the three states were not in litigation. He stated MRGCD and the Pueblos continue to seek an opportunity to have an item on the standing agenda. He expressed he did not love that the Pueblos, as their constituents, have to speak under the BIA item, and he felt the state supported that, but changing the historical process of a Compact meeting requires consent for all three states and right now they do not all consent on that. He added they should be more public at that meeting in the future on the Pueblos having a voice.

- d. Report on the Water Leaders Workshop, April 20-22, 2026 - Jason M. Casuga, Chief Engineer/CEO, Casey Ish, Director of Lands & Conservation, Anne Marken, River Ops. & Telemetry Manager, Brittney Erdmann, Hydrology Technician II, Vice Chairman Baugh, and Director Russo Baca**

Mr. Casuga stated he was impressed with the Water Leaders Workshop. He gave thanks to the New Mexico tech people and the Bureau of Geology who put that on. He came away from that feeling there was no one titling in one direction, as it was just the passing of information and thoughtful answering.

e. Information on Upcoming Events:

- 1. Law of the Colorado River Annual Conference, May 18-19, 2026: Santa Fe, NM**
- 2. MRGCD's Community and Farmers Informational Meetings, 9 am to 12 pm**
 - a. May 28, 2026, Sandoval County - Village of Corrales Gym**
 - b. June 4, 2026, Bernalillo County - Village of Los Rancho Village Hall**
 - c. June 18, 2026, Valencia County - Village of Los Lunas Train Station Auditorium**
 - d. June 24, 2026, Socorro County - City of Socorro Convention Center**
- 3. 2026 Next Generation Water Summit, June 11-12, 2026: Santa Fe, NM**
- 4. Present MRGCD's First Quarterly Update on the Atrisco Acequia Madre Project at the Bernalillo County Commission Administrative Meeting, June 23, 2026: Albuquerque, NM**

Mr. Casuga discussed the upcoming events. He added they are trying to plan a Bernalillo specific tour with Stephanie Telles the new City Councilor, as she is trying to get a broader understanding of things and feels there should be a boarder conversation at the City Council level of water management issues.

Director Dunning wished they would have had the meeting about the Compact 10 years ago, as it is so important. She asked if there was any way to make that information available for the public in a way they could understand it.

Mr. Casuga gave a reminder that UNM is developing a storyboard of the Compact, specifically showing how the Rio Grande Compact affects the MRGCD. He said his team could probably give an update on that.

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

MRGCD Counsel had no reports for the board at today's meeting.

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

- a. Report on Candelaria Tree Nursery Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, April 14, 2026 - Vice Chairman Baugh
- b. Report on the Planning Meeting for the Belen Marsh, April 15, 2026 - Director Russo Baca
- c. Report on Public Comment at APS School Board Meeting, April 15, 2026 - Vice Chairman Baugh
- d. Report on Meeting with APS Real Estate Team and Polk Middle School, April 22, 2026 - Vice Chairman Baugh
- e. Report on Valencia County Soil and Water Conservation District Earth Day Celebration, April 24, 2026 - Director Russo Baca
- f. Report on Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust Birding Tour, April 25, 2026 - Director Russo Baca
- g. Report on Rio Grande Compact 101 Board of Directors Training, May 4, 2026 - Vice Chairman Baugh, Directors Dunning and Russo Baca
- h. Report on NM Water Trust Exploratory Committee, May 5, 2026 - Director Russo Baca
- i. Report on NM Watershed & Dam Owners Coalition Conference, May 6-8, 2026 - Director Russo Baca
- j. Report on Pueblo of San Felipe Feast Day, May 1, 2026 - Vice Chairman Baugh, Amanda Molina, Director of Communications, Casey Ish, Director of Lands & Conservation

There were written reports provided for each report.

See also Appendix VII.

Director Russo Baca hoped people were reading the reports so they can see how the directors are touching the District. She encouraged constituents to reach out if they have questions.

Chairman Kelly made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE REPORTS FROM THE BOARD**. Seconded by Director Jiron. The **MOTION CARRIED 4 to 1**.

Director Dunning noted for the record she was the one no vote.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 16 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**

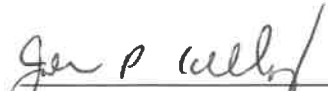
The Board did not go into an Executive Session at today's meeting.

With no further comments, questions, or concerns, Chairman Kelly adjourned the meeting at 6:01 pm.

Approved to be the correct Minutes of the Board of Directors of May 11, 2026.

ATTESTED:


Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM
Secretary/Treasurer


John P. Kelly, Chairman
MRGCD Board of Directors

1 THE MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2 RESOLUTION CONCERNING PRIORITY OF EL VADO STORAGE RIGHTS

3 No. _____

4

5 **WHEREAS**, Congress passed the Act of March 13, 1928 ("1928 Act") (45 Stat. 312)
6 to support the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District ("MRGCD") and fund certain
7 "construction cost of such conservation, irrigation, drainage, and flood-control work
8 apportioned to the" lands of the Pueblos of Cochiti, Santo Domingo, San Felipe, Santa Ana,
9 Sandia, and Isleta ("Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos"); and

10 **WHEREAS**, in the 1928 Act, Congress recognized "prior and paramount" water rights
11 of the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos for lands then under cultivation:

12 [A]ll present water rights now appurtenant to the approximately eight thousand
13 three hundred and forty-six acres of irrigated Pueblo lands owned individually
14 or as pueblos under the proposed plans of the district, and all water for the
15 domestic purposes of the Indians and for their stock shall be prior and
16 paramount to any rights of the district or of any property holder therein, which
17 priority so defined shall be recognized and protected in the agreement between
18 the Secretary of the Interior and the said Middle Rio Grande Conservancy
19 District, . . . and such irrigated area of approximately 8,346 acres shall not be
20 subject by the district or otherwise to any pro rata share of the cost of future
21 operation and maintenance or betterment work performed by the district.

22 45 Stat. 312; and

23 **WHEREAS**, on December 14, 1928, MRGCD executed the Agreement by and
24 Between the United States of America, Acting by the Secretary of the Interior, and the Middle
25 Rio Grande Conservancy District, Providing for Conservation, Irrigation, Drainage, and Flood
26 Control for the Pueblo Indian Lands in the Rio Grande Valley, New Mexico ("1928 Contract");
27 and

28 **WHEREAS**, the 1928 Contract provides that MRGCD shall construct "necessary
29 works," including an "impounding reservoir," to "actually divert and carry the water to the
30 acreage of Indian lands of the several pueblos approximating 23,607 acres and especially so
31 that the new system will carry and deliver to all areas of Indian lands now irrigated an
32 adequate water supply"; and

33 **WHEREAS**, the 1928 Contract provides that "[t]he cultivated area of the Pueblo Indian
34 lands approximating 8,346 acres, has water rights for such area that are not subject to the
35 laws of the State of New Mexico, and are prior and paramount to any rights of the District or
36 any property holder therein;" and

37 **WHEREAS**, the 1928 Contract further provides that MRGCD “hereby recognizes
38 these water rights now appurtenant to the said area of irrigated Pueblo Indian Lands . . . as
39 prior and paramount to any rights of the district or of any property holder therein;” and

40 **WHEREAS**, the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer issued Permit No. 1690 to
41 MRGCD allowing for the appropriation of 198,110 acre feet of storage of Rio Chama water in
42 El Vado Reservoir to supplement MRGCD’s natural flow right; and

43 **WHEREAS**, the State Engineer approval for Permit No. 1690 stated “[t]his application
44 is approved provided it is not exercised to the detriment of any others having prior valid
45 existing rights to the waters of said stream system,” and the “accepted priority date of the
46 filing is September 4, 1923;” and

47 **WHEREAS**, in 1931, the State Engineer issued Permit No. 0620 to MRGCD for
48 MRGCD’s diversions from the Rio Grande; and

49 **WHEREAS**, in its application for Permit No. 0620, the MRGCD asserted water rights
50 appurtenant to 123,267 acres of land, including 80,785 acres of land irrigated prior to the
51 Conservancy Project and well before 1923; and

52 **WHEREAS**, MRGCD’s right under Permit No. 0620 includes diversions to carry water
53 to the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos’ “prior and paramount” and newly reclaimed lands; and

54 **WHEREAS**, MRGCD began principal construction on El Vado Dam in 1933, and El
55 Vado Reservoir filled by 1936; and

56 **WHEREAS**, from initial construction until approximately 1956, MRGCD operated El
57 Vado Dam and Reservoir pursuant to Permit No. 1690; and

58 **WHEREAS**, in 1938, the States of New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas entered into the
59 Rio Grande Compact (“Compact”) (53 Stat. 785); and

60 **WHEREAS**, the Compact apportions the natural waters of the Rio Grande among the
61 States of Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas; and

62 **WHEREAS**, under Article VI of the Compact, if New Mexico is in debit status, New
63 Mexico must retain water in storage at all times to the extent of its accrued debit; and

64 **WHEREAS**, under Article VII of the Compact, whenever Usable Water in the Rio
65 Grande Project storage account at Elephant Butte and Caballo Reservoirs is less than
66 400,000 AF, New Mexico and Colorado may not increase the storage of natural Rio Grande
67 Basin water in upstream reservoirs constructed after 1929; and

68 **WHEREAS**, Article XVI of the Compact provides that “[n]othing in this Compact shall
69 be construed as affecting the obligations of the United States of America to Mexico under
70 existing treaties or to the Indian Tribes, or as impairing the rights of the Indian Tribes;” and

71 **WHEREAS**, MRGCD records show that the estimate for the area of lands within the
72 Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos under cultivation in 1928 changed from 8,346 acres to 8,847
73 acres in approximately 1939; and

74 **WHEREAS**, Congress passed the Flood Control Act of 1948 ("1948 Act") (62 Stat.
75 1171) to appropriate money to prepare a "comprehensive plan" to rehabilitate MRGCD's
76 irrigation structures; and

77 **WHEREAS**, the 1948 Act recognizes that the plan was not intended to affect or
78 abrogate "in any way the laws of the State of New Mexico in which the Middle Rio Grande
79 Valley lies, relating to the control, appropriation, or distribution of water used in irrigation or
80 for municipal or other uses, or any right vested therein;" and

81 **WHEREAS**, Congress passed the Flood Control Act of 1950 ("1950 Act") (64 Stat.
82 163) to appropriate money for "completion of the plan approved in the Flood Control Act of
83 June 30, 1948, for the Rio Grande Basin;" and

84 **WHEREAS**, pursuant to the 1950 Act, MRGCD executed Contract 178r-423, Contract
85 Between the United States and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District for Rehabilitation
86 and Construction of Project Works, and Repayment of Reimbursable Construction Costs
87 Thereof ("1951 Contract"); and

88 **WHEREAS**, the 1951 Contract provides that MRGCD shall transfer "water filings
89 including filing for storage and use of water in the El Vado Reservoir" to the United States "for
90 beneficial use in the project and for Indian lands in the project area;" and

91 **WHEREAS**, the 1951 Contract further provides that "[t]he status of the Indian lands
92 and water rights in relation to the Conservancy District and the Bureau of Reclamation shall
93 not be changed whether the works of said District are operated by the District or by the Bureau
94 of Reclamation;" and

95 **WHEREAS**, MRGCD executed Amendment No. 3 to the 1951 Contract in 1956; and

96 **WHEREAS**, Amendment No. 3 to the 1951 Contract provides that the United States
97 shall assume "operation and maintenance of El Vado Dam and Reservoir;" and

98 **WHEREAS**, in 1957, the Bureau of Indian Affairs promulgated 25 C.F.R. § 172.1
99 designating the total irrigable area of the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos as 20,242.05 acres,
100 of which 8,847 acres are "[l]ands with recognized water rights not subject to operation and
101 maintenance or betterment changes by the District and designated as 'now irrigated'" for the
102 purposes of the 1928 Act; and

103 **WHEREAS**, beginning in 1958, MRGCD executed several operation and maintenance
104 contracts with the Bureau of Reclamation; and

105 **WHEREAS**, MRGCD executed in 1980 the Agreement By and Between the United
106 States of America Acting by the Secretary of the Interior, and the Middle Rio Grande
107 Conservancy District, Political Subdivision of the State of New Mexico, Providing for the
108 Payment of Operation and Maintenance Charges on Newly Reclaimed Pueblo Indian Lands
109 in the Rio Grande Valley, New Mexico, and for Other Purposes ("1980 O&M Contract"); and

110 **WHEREAS**, the 1980 O&M Contract incorporates terms from the 1928 Contract
111 whereby MRGCD agreed that water rights for 8,346 acres are "prior and paramount to any
112 rights of the District or of any property holder therein;" and

113 **WHEREAS**, The 1980 O&M Contract provides that MRGCD agrees “to implement and
114 protect such storage rights” of the Pueblo as they “have enjoyed . . . since [El Vado]
115 [R]eservoir was placed in operation;” and

116 **WHEREAS**, in 1981, the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos Irrigation Committee, Bureau
117 of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation, and Secretary of Interior’s Designated Engineer
118 executed the Agreement: Procedures for Storage and Release of Indian Water Entitlement
119 of the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos (“1981 Procedures Agreement”); and

120 **WHEREAS**, MRGCD is not a party to the 1981 Procedures Agreement; and

121 **WHEREAS**, the 1981 Procedures Agreement provides, “the [Bureau of Reclamation]
122 shall annually store, or designate for storage, the quantity of water in the El Vado Reservoir
123 necessary to satisfy the prior and paramount water rights of the six [Middle Rio Grande]
124 Pueblos, as determined by [Bureau of Reclamation] and Designated Engineer,” regardless of
125 whether such storage operations may impair senior downstream rights, including MRGCD’s
126 water right; and

127 **WHEREAS**, the Bureau of Reclamation continues to operate El Vado Dam and
128 Reservoir pursuant to the 1951 Contract, as amended, and Permit No. 1690, including
129 storage operations according to the 1981 Procedures Agreement for the Six Middle Rio
130 Grande Pueblos’ “prior and paramount” rights; and

131 **WHEREAS**, during maintenance and reconstruction operations at El Vado Dam, the
132 Bureau of Reclamation, Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority and the
133 MRGCD have reached an agreement to allow the storage of up to 100,000 acre-feet of water
134 for the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos, Rio Grande Compact debit water, and MRGCD usable
135 irrigation water, in the water authority’s allotted space in Abiquiu Reservoir;

136 **WHEREAS**, the Bureau of Reclamation now stores water in and makes releases from
137 Abiquiu Reservoir for “prior and paramount” operations; and

138 **WHEREAS**, storage operations in either El Vado Reservoir or Abiquiu Reservoir
139 pursuant to the 1981 Procedures Agreement and Permit No. 1690 may, depending on timing
140 and hydrological conditions, result in decreased stream flow at MRGCD’s diversion points;
141 and

142 **WHEREAS**, the exercise of the junior right under Permit No. 1690 for storage
143 operations in either El Vado Reservoir or Abiquiu Reservoir may, depending on timing and
144 hydrological conditions, impair MRGCD’s senior water rights under Permit No. 0620,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors that:

1. MRGCD recognizes that natural flow water rights appurtenant to the lands of the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos under cultivation in 1928 are prior and paramount to the natural flow water rights of the district; and
2. MRGCD submits that its diversion right and other water rights for lands under cultivation prior to September 4, 1923, including its diversion right to serve lands of the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos, has priority over any storage right under Permit No. 1690, including storage for “prior and paramount” operations; and
3. MRGCD has not waived or otherwise disclaimed its right to seek priority administration against any storage right, including the storage right under Permit No. 1690; and
4. The Chief Engineer / Chief Executive Officer of the district shall have the power, discretion, and responsibility to do all things necessary or advisable to assert and protect the priority of MRGCD’s water rights, including the right to divert water to serve the prior and paramount rights of the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos or protest any water right applications or other administrative actions; and
5. The Chief Engineer / Chief Executive Officer of the district shall supervise, direct, coordinate, and control studies and monitoring efforts necessary or advisable to determine if and when storage operations impair MRGCD’s water rights, and if the Chief Engineer / Chief Executive Officer determines that storage operations are impairing or imminently will impair MRGCD’s water rights, then the Chief Engineer / Chief Executive Officer may, in his / her / their discretion, request that the State Engineer perform priority administration or alternative administration, make a call on the river, or take such other necessary or advisable actions to demand that junior water rights holders curtail their use to protect MRGCD’s senior rights; and
6. MRGCD generally supports efforts to review the 1981 Procedures Agreement, including discussions of carryover storage, as necessary to allow the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos to receive the benefit of water stored in priority for lands with prior and paramount water rights, without impairing or compromising MRGCD’s rights.

Passed by the District Board this ____ day of _____ 2026.

MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

John P. Kelly, Chairman
MRGCD Board of Directors

184

185 **ATTEST:**

186

187

188 _____
Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM

189 Secretary-Treasurer/CFO

DRAFT

Appendix II

Coalition of Six Middle Rio Grande Basin Pueblos
c/o **Joseph R. Lucero Sr., Chairman**
Pueblo of Isleta, P.O. Box 1270, Isleta Pueblo, New Mexico 87022
(505) 869-3111

STATEMENT TO THE MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT DIRECTORS

May 11, 2026

Good afternoon. My name is Jonathan Garcia. I am from Santo Domingo Pueblo, where I have served as Lieutenant Governor. I currently serve as Vice Chairman of the Coalition of Six Middle Rio Grande Basin Pueblos and provide these comments in that capacity.

The Coalition is comprised of six Pueblos that have resided and farmed in the Middle Rio Grande Valley since time in memorial. From north to south, these are the Pueblos of Cochiti, Santo Domingo, San Felipe, Santa Ana, Sandia, and Isleta. We hold aboriginal water rights, a portion of which Congress has recognized as prior and paramount to the MRGCD.

On the heels of discussion regarding middle Rio Grande operations in a very challenging water year, during our April 9th Coalition meeting, Mr. Casuga informed the Pueblos that this Board would be considering a resolution asserting the seniority of MRGCD's direct flow rights above the Pueblos' storage rights for our prior and paramount lands. I want to make clear to this Board, the Coalition does not support this Resolution and asks the Board to not support or adopt the resolution.

Having just received a copy of the resolution, the Coalition intends to provide a more comprehensive response to the Board, but immediately, the Coalition asks that you take the following points into consideration.

First, the proposed resolution mischaracterizes the nature and scope of our prior and paramount water rights.

The 1928 Act provides that all water rights "appurtenant" to the Pueblos' irrigated lands "shall be prior and paramount to any rights of the district or of any property holder therein." That language has no limitations. Congress would not have directed funds for the construction of El Vado Dam and Reservoir to serve the Pueblos' prior and paramount lands while simultaneously excluding storage from those rights — that would be incoherent. The purpose of the 1928 Act was precisely to provide an impounding reservoir to deliver an adequate water supply to Pueblo lands. Storage was the mechanism Congress chose to fulfill the prior and paramount obligation.

The term "appurtenant" supports this reading as a matter of both federal and state law. Under New Mexico law, Section 72-1-2 expressly situates "reservoir or other works for the storage or

conveyance of water” within the appurtenance framework. Storage has never been understood as severable from appurtenant water rights under New Mexico law, and under federal law — which governs here — the scope of appurtenant rights is at least as broad.

The Pueblos’ P&P storage rights do not arise under Permit No. 1690.

The Pueblos’ prior and paramount rights are federal rights. They do not derive from, and are not limited by, a state-issued storage permit. To characterize them as permit-dependent would subordinate a congressional declaration of priority to the state administrative regime. Permit No. 1690 does not define or limit the Pueblos’ entitlement, it is Congress that established the senior priority of the Pueblos’ water rights.

We know we are experiencing record low water conditions, however, this proposed resolution will undoubtedly exacerbate the conditions by creating conflict and division between the Pueblos and the MRGCD, rather than facilitating real time solutions. The Coalition has shown in the past that we are good neighbors and will work together to get through difficult times and to make the best use of a limited supply. The Coalition has consistently demonstrated that spirit of collaboration across many years. But collaboration is ours to offer— it cannot be demanded or taken unilaterally.

On behalf of all six Middle Rio Grande Basin Pueblos, we urge this Board not to adopt the proposed resolution. We look forward to providing a fuller response at your next meeting and request adequate time on the agenda to present to the Board our full response.

Thank you.



Jonathan Garcia, Vice Chairman
Coalition of Six Middle Rio Grande Basin Pueblos

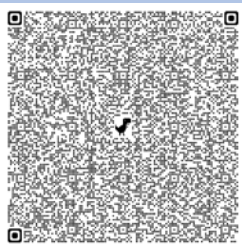
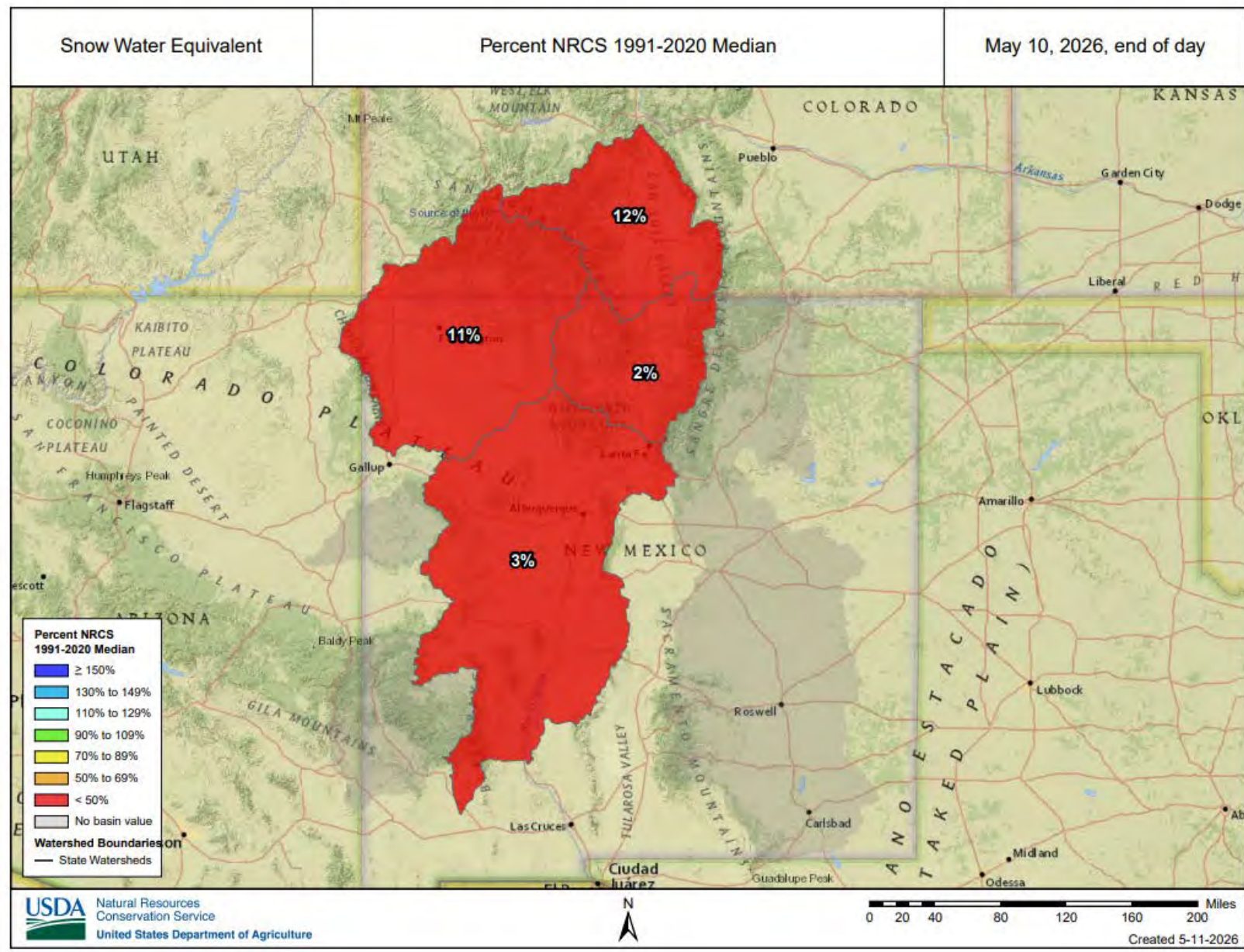
Water Supply Update

Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District Board of Directors Meeting

Prepared and Presented by: Anne Marken

Date: 5/11/2026





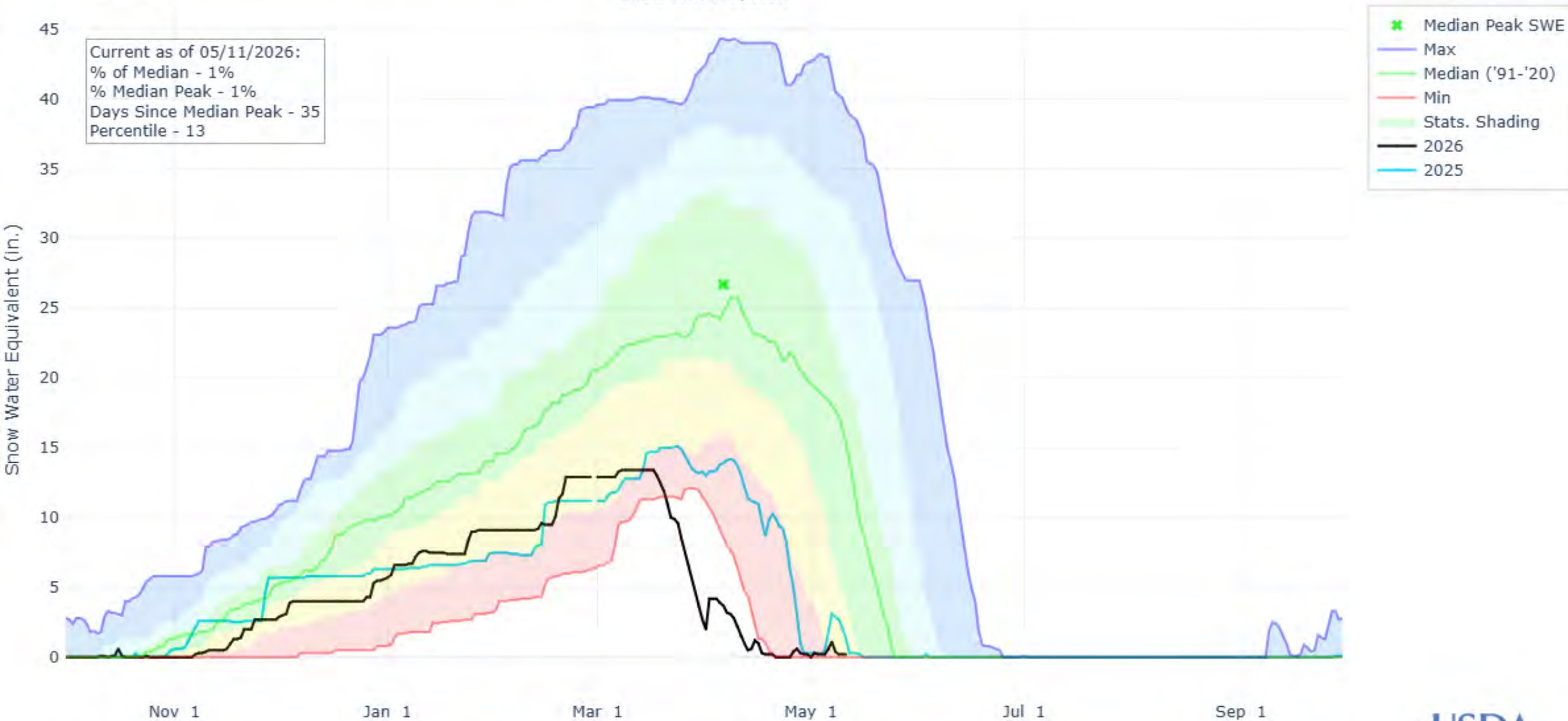
<https://nwcc-apps.sc.egov.usda.gov/imap/#version=2&elements=&networks=!&states=!&counties=!&hucs=&minElevation=&maxElevation=&elementSelectType=any&activeOnly=true&activeForecastPointsOnly=true&hucLabels=false&hucIdLabels=false&hucParameterLabels=true&stationLabels=&overlays=&hucOverlays=&basinOpacity=75&basinNoDataOpacity=25&basemapOpacity=100&maskOpacity=0&mode=data&openSections=dataElement,parameter,date,basin,options,elements,location,networks&controlsOpen=true&popup=&popupMulti=&popupBasin=&base=esriNgwm&displayType=station&basinType=6&dataElement=WTEQ&depth=-8¶meter=PCTMED&frequency=DAILY&duration=!&customDuration=&dayPart=E&monthPart=E&forecastPubDay=1&forecastExceedance=50&useMixedPast=true&seqColor=1&divColor=7&scaleType=D&scaleMin=&scaleMax=&referencePeriodType=POR&referenceBegin=1991&referenceEnd=2020&minimumYears=20&hucAssociations=true&relativeDate=-1&lat=42.300&lon=-114.300&zoom=4.5>



CUMBRES TRESTLE, CO (431) SNOW WATER EQUIVALENT

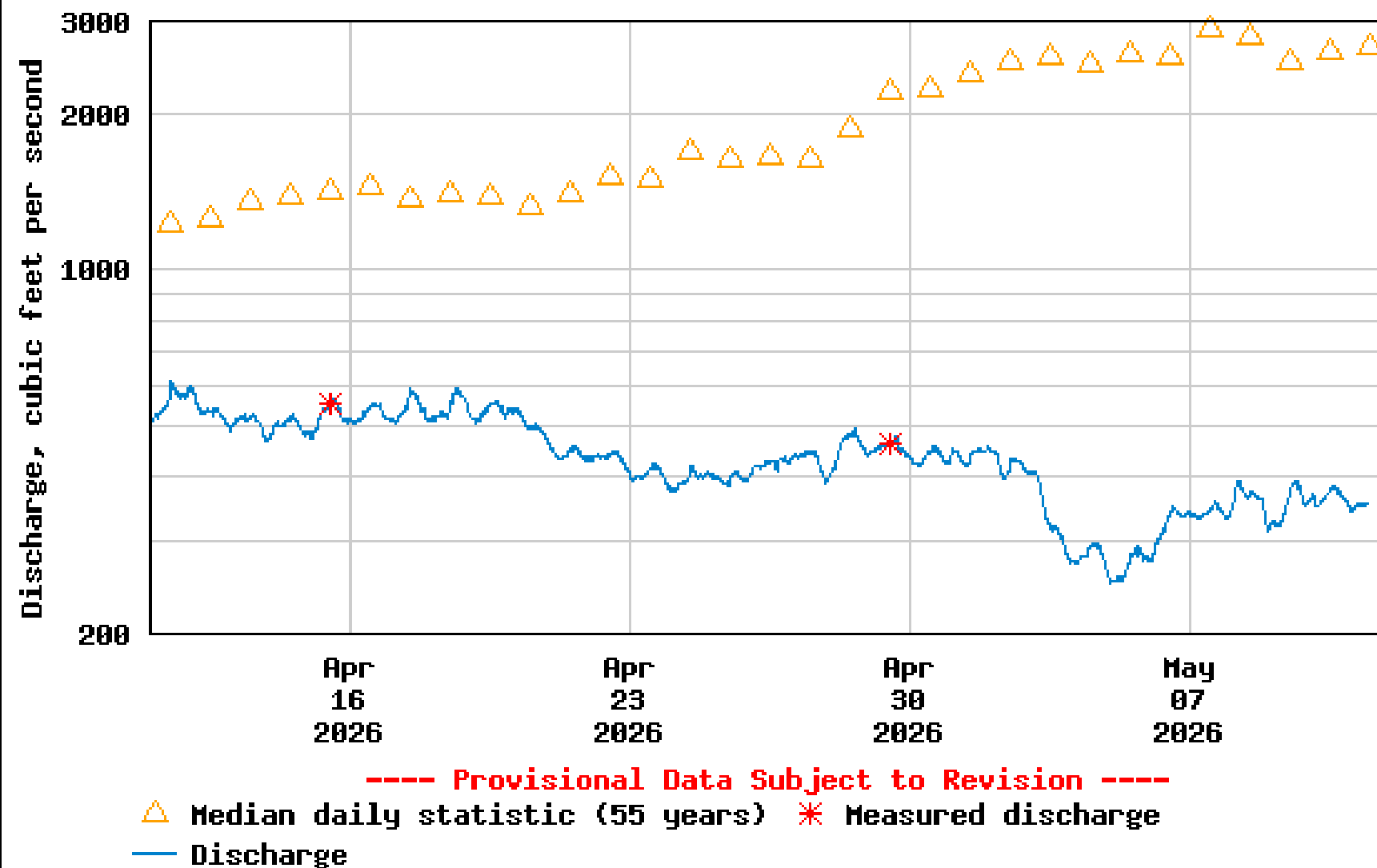
Reset Range

Link to data: CSV / JSON

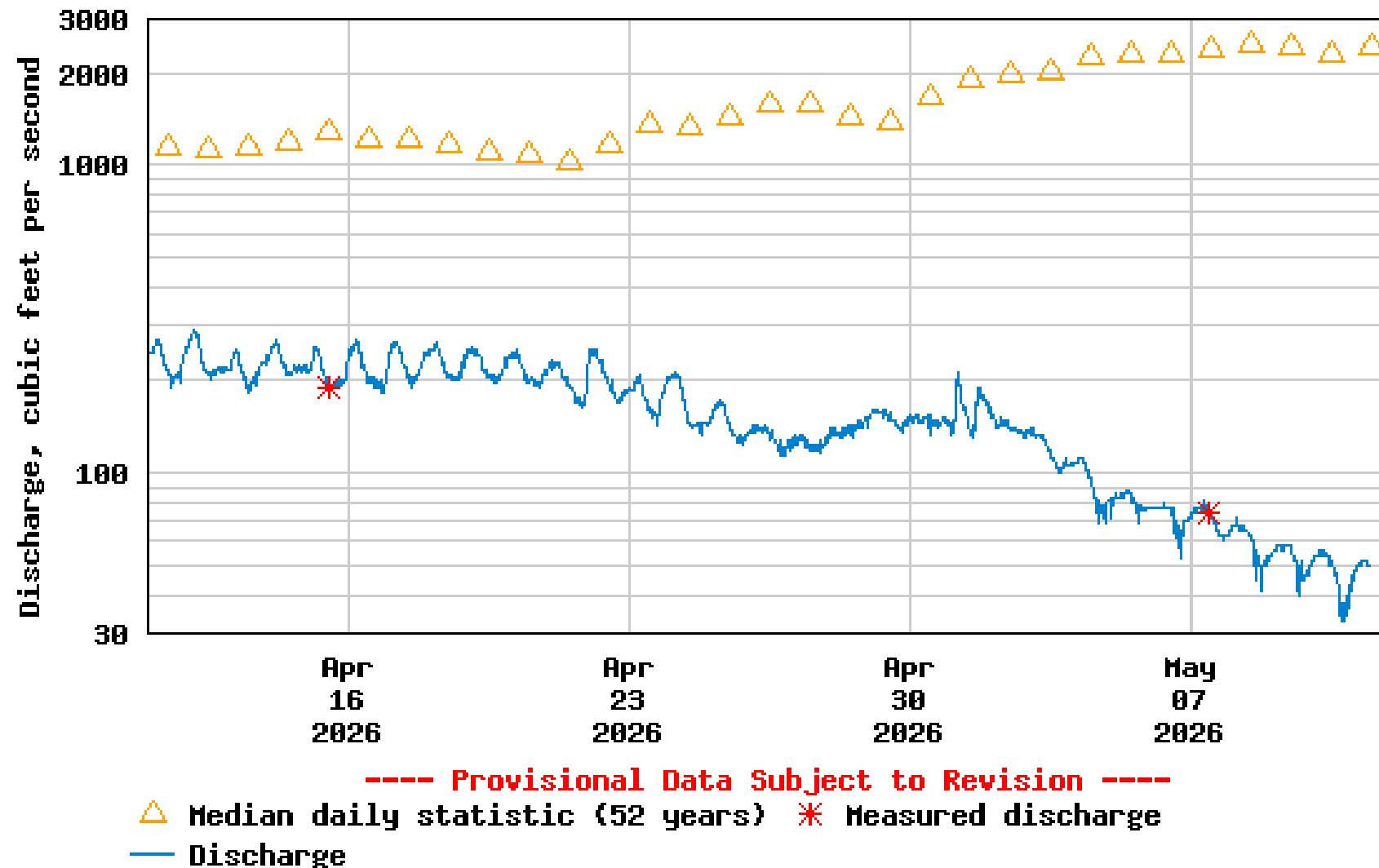


<https://nwcc-apps.sc.egov.usda.gov/awdb/site-plots/POR/WTEQ/NM/Chamita.html?showYears=2026>

USGS 08313000 RIO GRANDE AT OTOWI BRIDGE, NM



USGS 08330000 RIO GRANDE AT ALBUQUERQUE, NM



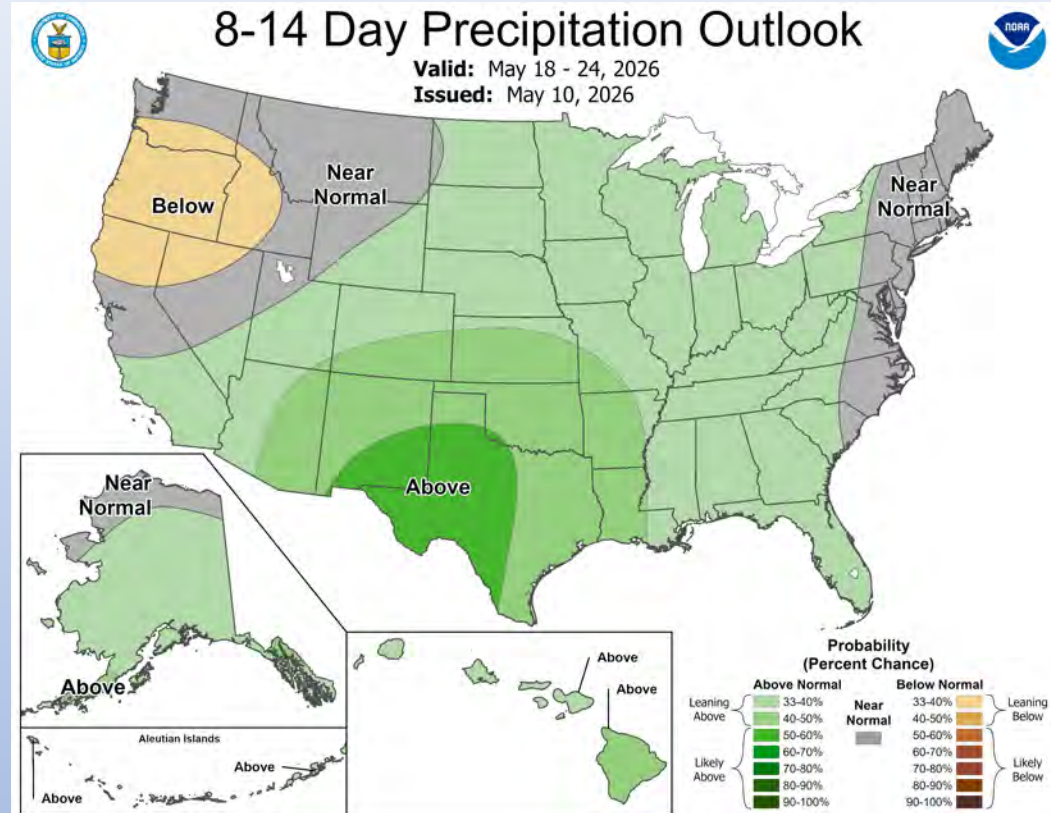
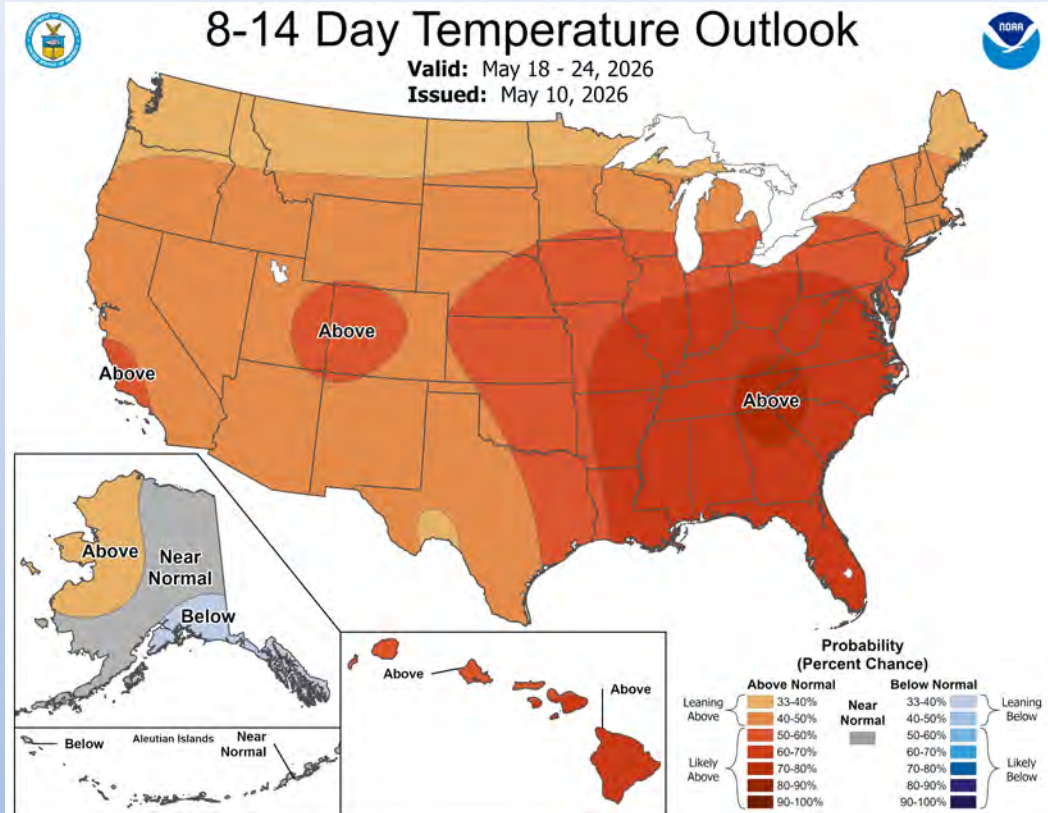
7-Day NWS Forecast

 Location	Maximum Temperature							Probability of Precipitation						
	Mon 05/11	Tue 05/12	Wed 05/13	Thu 05/14	Fri 05/15	Sat 05/16	Sun 05/17	Mon 05/11	Tue 05/12	Wed 05/13	Thu 05/14	Fri 05/15	Sat 05/16	Sun 05/17
Albuquerque	85	91	90	87	86	87	88	0	0	10	10	0	0	0
Santa Fe	81	87	86	82	82	83	84	0	0	10	10	0	0	0
Farmington	85	90	88	83	82	84	85	0	0	20	0	0	0	0
Gallup	84	87	84	79	79	81	81	0	0	20	0	0	0	0
Grants	84	88	84	81	80	82	82	0	0	20	10	0	0	0
Clayton	80	91	86	89	87	86	88	0	0	0	0	0	10	0
Raton	82	88	84	84	82	83	84	0	0	0	10	0	10	10
Las Vegas	80	86	83	81	80	81	82	0	0	10	10	0	0	10
Moriarty	82	89	87	84	84	85	85	0	0	0	10	0	0	0
Tucumcari	85	98	96	95	92	92	94	0	0	0	10	0	0	10
Clovis	84	97	97	94	95	94	96	0	0	0	10	0	0	20
Roswell	82	97	97	96	97	97	98	0	0	0	10	0	0	0
Socorro	88	94	94	91	90	92	92	0	0	0	10	0	0	0
Chama	76	81	80	74	75	76	76	0	0	20	20	0	0	0
Taos	80	85	85	80	80	81	81	0	0	0	10	0	0	0
Angel Fire	72	78	76	72	71	71	72	0	0	20	10	0	10	10
Los Alamos	78	83	82	78	78	78	79	0	0	0	20	0	0	0
Ruidoso	75	82	82	79	79	80	80	10	10	0	0	0	0	10
Quemado	82	85	82	79	78	80	81	0	0	20	10	0	0	0

<https://www.weather.gov/abq/TempPop>



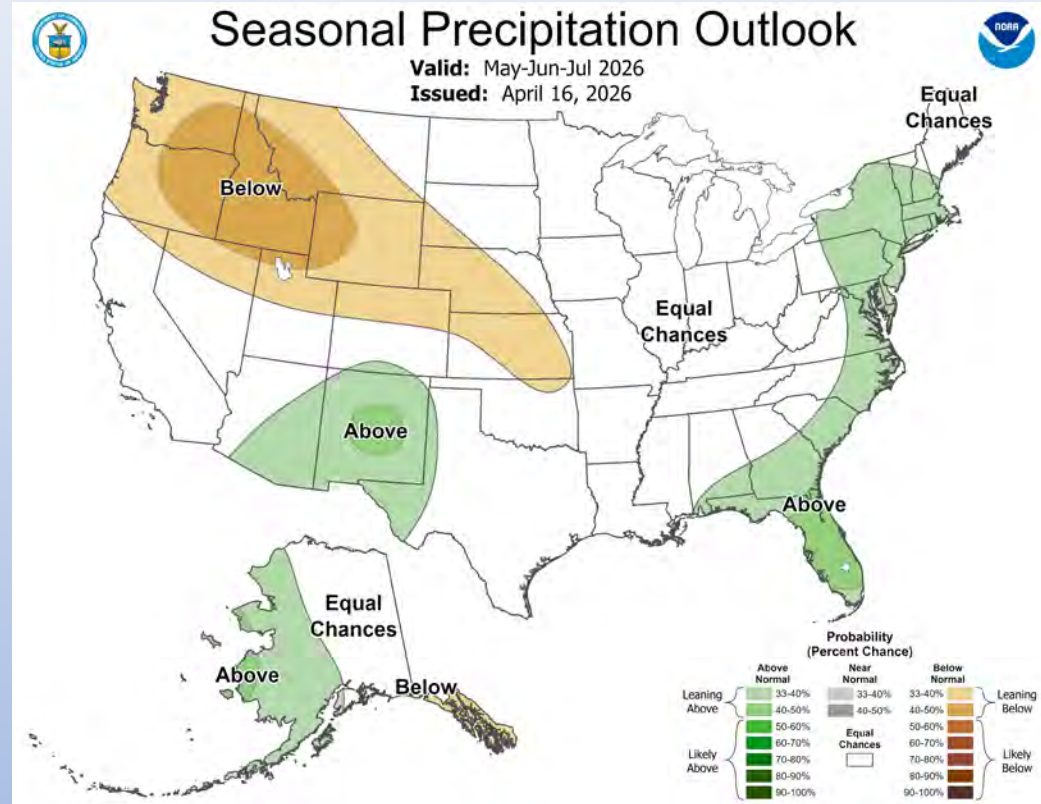
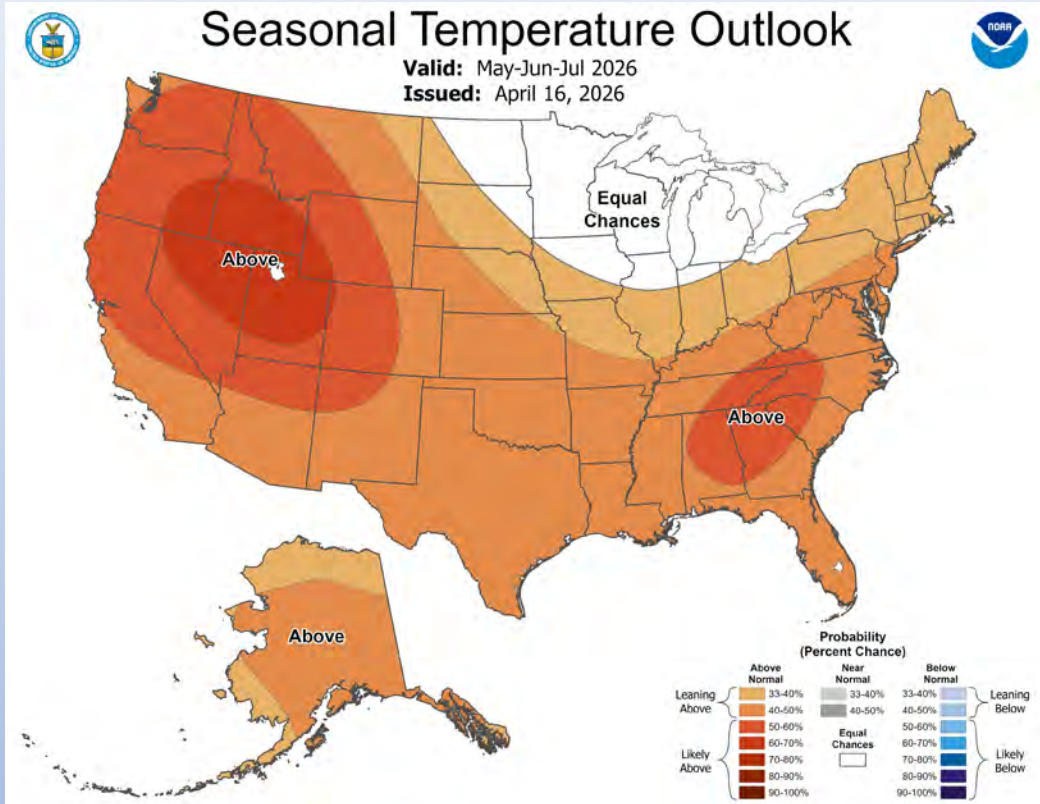
NWS 8-14 Day Outlook



https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/seasonal.php?lead=1



NWS Summer Seasonal Outlook



https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/seasonal.php?lead=1



Questions?



Appendix IV

From: [Delamar Neighborhood Association](#)
To: [Tarah Jaramillo](#)
Cc: [Jancw](#); [Stephen Miller](#)
Subject: Delamar Neighborhood public comment
Date: Friday, May 8, 2026 7:59:27 AM

You don't often get email from delamarneighborhood@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi Tarah,

We spoke on the phone Wednesday. My name is Gina Breña and I am the president of the Delamar Neighborhood Association in the North Valley.

Below is my public comment to be added to the board meeting for May 11.

Thank you for your help!

My name is Gina Breña and I am the president of the Delamar Neighborhood Association in the North Valley. Our neighborhood boundaries are North of Griegos, South of Montaña, West of 4th Street and East of South Guadalupe Trail. Running through our neighborhood is the Harwood Lateral. On Saturday April 18, our neighborhood association organized an acequia limpia. This was the second time we have hosted this cleanup effort on the Harwood since our neighborhood association began in 2023, and we hope to make it an annual event. We partnered with the City of Albuquerque's Solid Waste department for their Earth Day's "Keep Albuquerque Beautiful" initiative that invites groups to clean up parts of the city. They provided trash grabbers, gloves, trash bags and hand sanitizer to our group. We were very grateful for these supplies and for the crew from the MRGCD who picked up the 20+ bags of trash that we collected. It turned out to be a successful collaboration between our neighborhood, the City and the MRGCD! Still, the clean up effort was a reminder to all of us who volunteered just how much work is needed to keep our acequia clean and healthy. We are now wondering how we can best collaborate with the MRGCD to:

- keep trash out of the acequia
- remove and mitigate the broken glass along the walkway (there's still a lot)
- remove and mitigate the growth of invasive species like tumbleweeds and sumac trees
- plant more trees in areas where there are none
- install a trash can
- install signs that remind people to keep the area clean
- stay informed about the Harwood Lateral Trail & Dog Park progress

We cherish our green space and we want to work with the MRGCD to keep it healthy and clean. We are asking for even more collaboration from your organization and we look forward to hearing from you on next steps towards this goal. Thank you!

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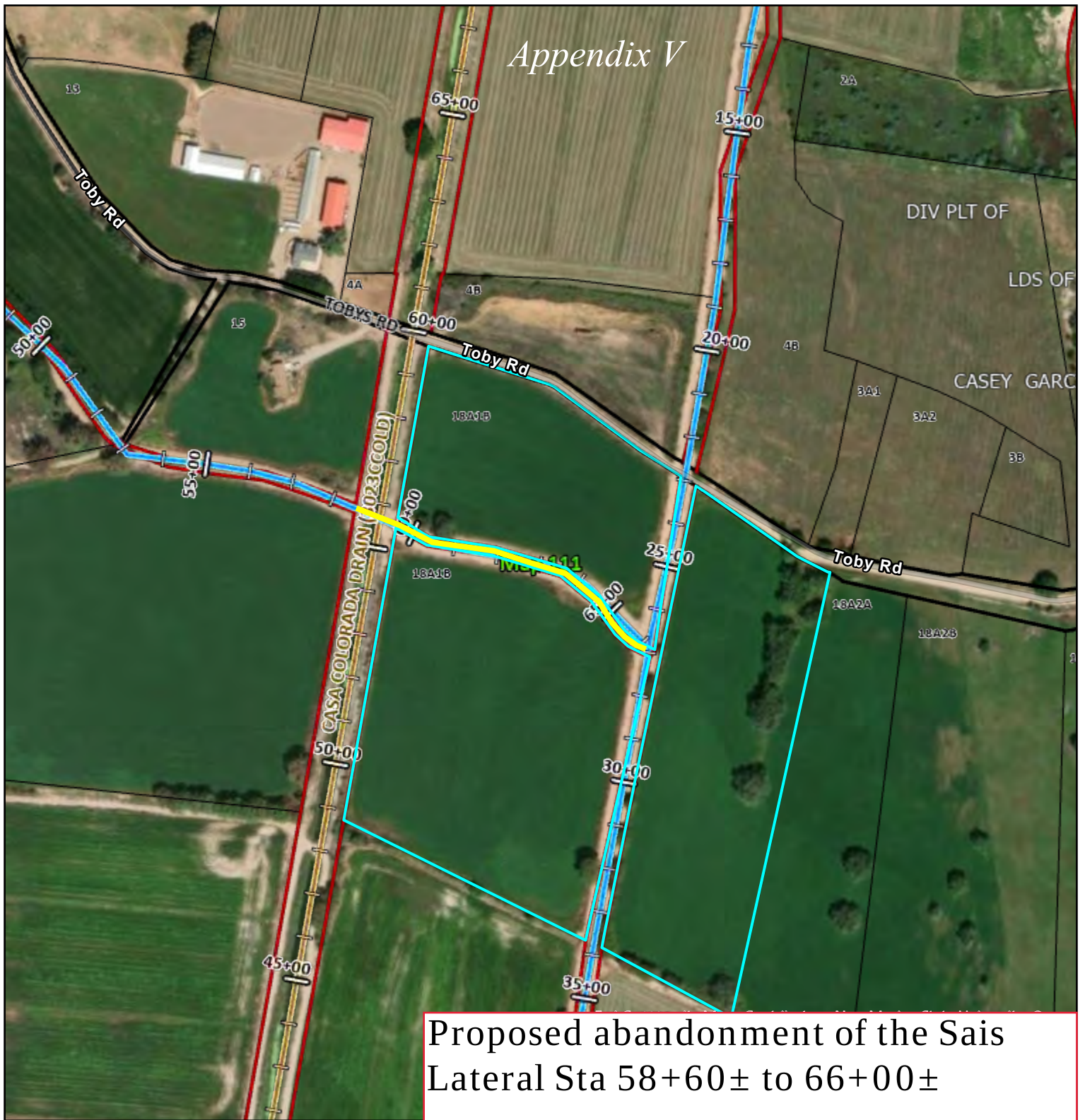
Gina Breña

Delamar Neighborhood Association

<https://delamarneighborhood.wordpress.com/>

Neighborhood boundaries: North of Griegos, South of Montaña, West of 4th Street, East of South Guadalupe Trail

Appendix V



Proposed abandonment of the Sais Lateral Sta 58+60± to 66+00±



Date: 4/8/2026

Exhibit Map



1 inch = 376 feet

This map is for reference purposes only.

MRGCD Cadastre Lines

- Lot Lines
- - - Combined Lots
- MRGCD ROW
- Public ROW

Facility Network

- Drain
- Other

MRGCD Map Index

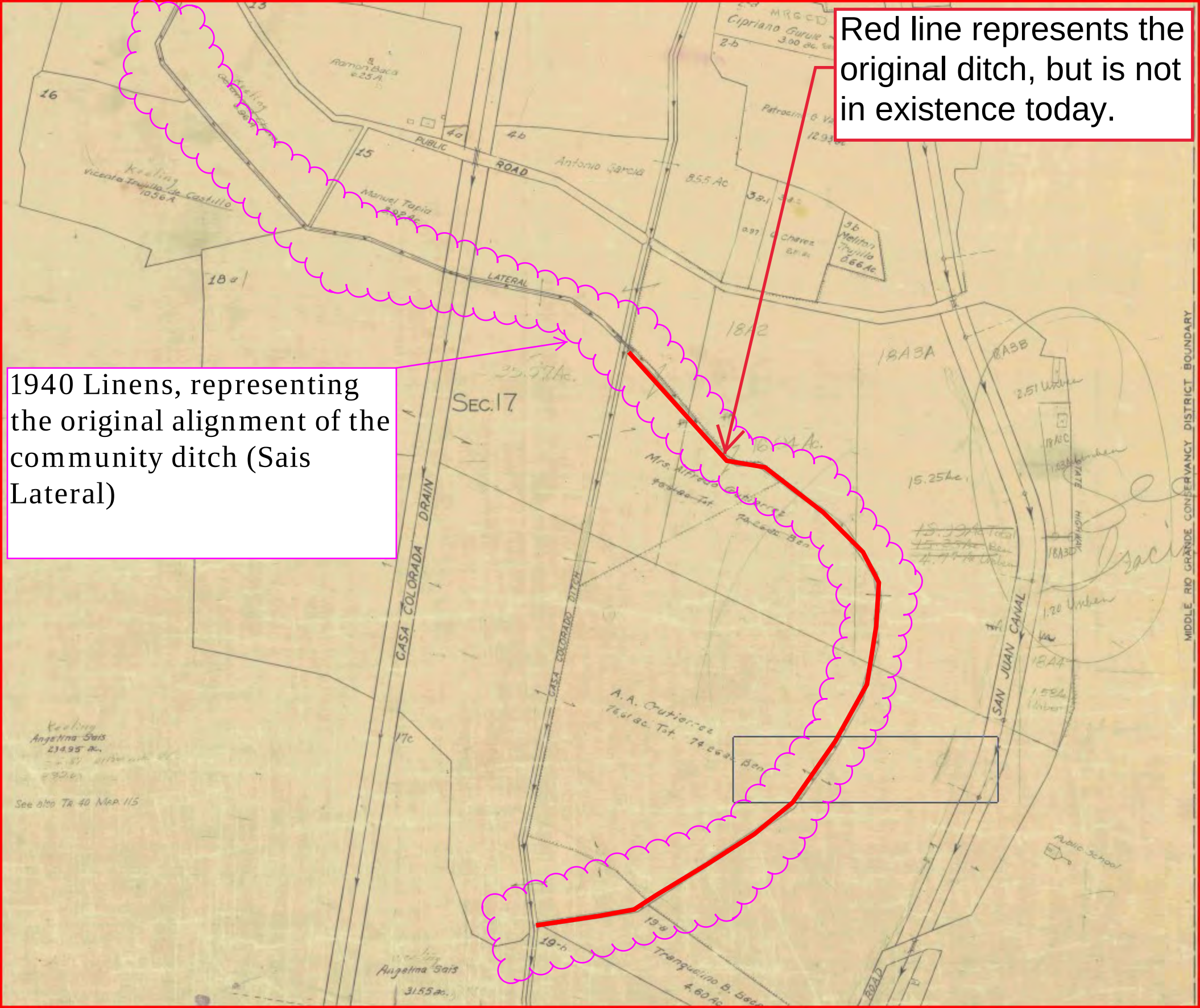
NEW WASTEWAY - SAIS LATERAL TO CASA COLORADA DRAIN



NEW TURNOUT - TBD ACTUAL LOCATION

Red line represents the original ditch, but is not in existence today.

1940 Linens, representing the original alignment of the community ditch (Sais Lateral)



North West

☀ 305°NW (T) ● 34°34'23"N, 106°45'16"W ±9ft ▲ 4782ft



Photo 1, looking west from the Casa Colorada Acequia at the discharge point of the Sais Lateral. The Check downstream is up, Irrigation water from the Casa Colorada Acequia is backing into the Sais Lateral.

07 Apr 2026, 09:37:28

South West

☀ 215°SW (T) ● 34°34'25"N, 106°45'18"W ±16ft ▲ 4786ft



Photo 2, Turnout that supplies the southern half of Tract 18A1B.

07 Apr 2026, 09:38:29

South West

☼ 226°SW (T) ● 34°34'26"N, 106°45'22"W ±16ft ▲ 4785ft



Photo 3, Second Turnout that supplies irrigation to the southern half of Tract 18A1B

07 Apr 2026, 09:39:43

West

☉ 278°W (T) ● 34°34'27"N, 106°45'23"W ±13ft ▲ 4786ft



Photo 4, Water pass across the Casa Colorado Drain.

07 Apr 2026, 09:40:22

South East

☀ 131°SE (T) ● 34°34'27"N, 106°45'24"W ±9ft ▲ 4785ft



Photo 5, Water pass inlet, Proposed area of a new wasteway to the Casa Colorado Drain.

07 Apr 2026, 09:40:47

Fiscal Year 2027 Proposed Budget

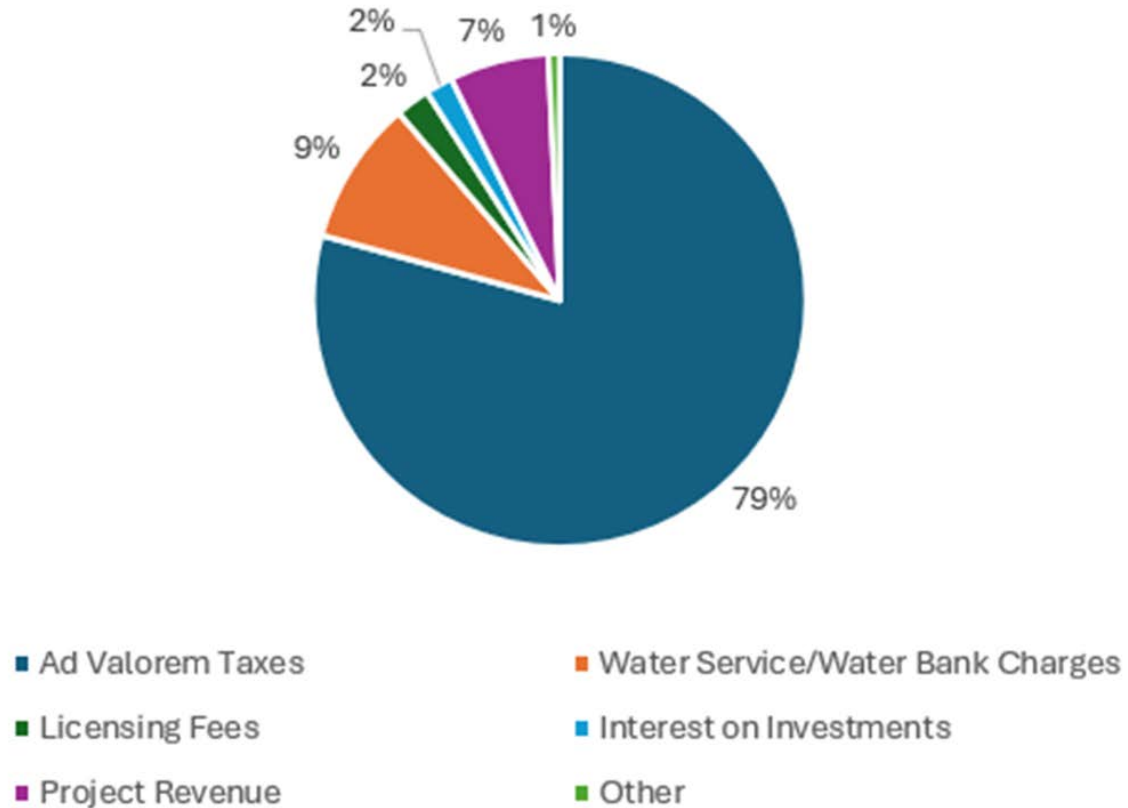
Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District

May 11, 2026



General Fund - Revenue

FY27 Revenue Sources General Fund



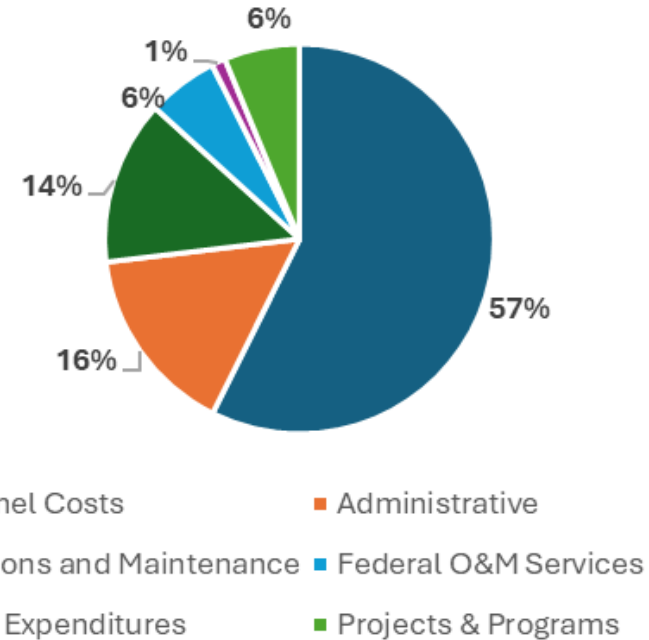
	FY2027 Budget
Ad Valorem Taxes	\$ 26,190,000
Ad Valorem Interest	220,000
Water Service Charges	3,129,750
Water Bank Fees	23,000
Licensing Fees	750,000
Interest on Investments	600,000
Project Contract Revenue - Federal	1,790,000
Project Contract Revenue - Local	383,000
Other	190,639
Equipment Proceeds - Loans	-
Equipment Disposition Proceeds	50,000
Total Revenues	33,326,389



General Fund - Expenditures

Salaries	13,749,465
Employee Benefits	5,363,816
Employee & Board Related Costs	527,473
General & Administrative Expenses	556,220
Professional Services	1,128,979
Insurance & Legal Services	1,655,246
Technology & Communication	809,121
Ad Valorem Collection Fee	571,600
Utilities	208,800
Facility Maintenance	119,000
Division Maintenance, Const, Rehab	1,611,850
Vehicle & Equipment O&M	2,598,560
Conservation Program	900,000
Safety Program	50,630
Federal O&M Services	1,954,950
Agreements & Community Outreach	422,377
Watershed Management	100,000
Projects	490,000
Endangered Species Act Projects	125,000
Capital Expenditures	383,056
Total Expenditures	33,326,143

FY2027 Summarized Budgeted Expenditures by Category



Long-Term Assets Fund

FY2027 Budget

	FY2026 Original Budget	FY2027 Budget	Incr (Decr) FY27 over FY26	% Change	Recurring	Non Recurring
Interest on investments	\$ 50,000	\$ 25,000	\$ (25,000)	-50.00%		\$ 25,000
Total Revenues	50,000	25,000	\$ (25,000)	-50.00%	-	25,000
Investment Fees	400	400	-	0.00%		400
Professional Services	-	500,000	500,000	Add		500,000
Total Expenditures	\$ 400	\$ 500,400	\$ 500,000	125000.00%	-	\$ 500,400
Excess (deficiency) of Revenues less Expenditures & Transfers	49,600	(475,400)				
Fund Balance		0				
Surplus/Deficit	\$ 49,600	\$ (475,400)				



Debt Service Fund

FY2027 Budget

	FY2026 Original Budget	FY2027 Budget	Incr (Decr) FY27 over FY26	% Change	Recurring	Non Recurring
Interest on Investments	\$ 22,000	\$ 77,200	\$ 55,200	250.91%	\$ 77,200	
Total Revenues	22,000	77,200	55,200	250.91%	77,200	-
Transfers In - Capital Investment & General Fund	1,186,922	1,575,164	388,242	32.71%	1,575,164	
Total Revenues & Transfers In	1,208,922	1,652,364	443,442	36.68%	1,652,364	
Debt Service Principal Payments	1,018,961	1,365,637	346,676	34.02%	1,365,637	
Debt Service Interest Payments	167,961	209,527	41,566	24.75%	209,527	-
Total Expenditures	\$1,186,922	\$1,575,164	\$ 388,242	32.71%	\$1,575,164	
Excess (deficiency) of Revenues less Expenditures	22,000	77,200				
Surplus/Deficit	\$ 22,000	\$ 77,200				



Grant Fund

FY2027 Budget

	FY2026 Original Budget	FY2027 Budget	Incr (Decr) FY27 over FY26	% Change	Recurring	Non Recurring
Operating and Capital Grants	\$ 22,554,014	\$ 11,029,764	\$ (11,524,250)	-51.10%		\$ 11,029,764
Loan Proceeds	1,361,414	363,573	(997,841)	-73.29%		363,573
Total Revenues	23,915,428	11,393,337	(12,522,091)	-52.36%	-	11,393,337
Transfers In - Capital Investment Fund	5,309,867	4,906,101	(403,766)	-7.60%		4,906,101
Total Revenues & Transfers in	29,225,295	16,299,438	(12,925,857)	-44.23%	-	16,299,438
Projects-Non Capital	7,090,587	434,000	(6,656,587)	-93.88%		434,000
Professional Services	200,000	5,711,960	5,511,960	2755.98%		5,711,960
Capital Grant Expenditures	15,263,427	4,883,804	(10,379,623)	-68.00%		4,883,804
District Match for Capital Grant Expenditures	5,309,867	4,906,101	(403,766)	-7.60%		4,906,101
Loan Portion for Capital Grant Expenditures	1,361,414	363,573	(997,841)	-73.29%		363,573
Total Expenditures	29,225,295	16,299,438	(12,925,857)	-44.23%	-	16,299,438
Transfers out - Indirect Overhead General Fund	-	0	-	0.00%		
Transfers out - General Fund	-	0	-	0.00%		
Total Transfers Out	-	0	-	0.00%	-	-
Total Expenditures & Transfers Out	\$ 29,225,295	\$ 16,299,438	\$ 21,344,948	73.04%	-	\$ 16,299,438
Excess (deficiency) of Revenues less Expenditures	0	0				
Surplus/Deficit	\$ -	\$ -				



Capital Investment Fund

FY2027 Budget

	FY2026 Original Budget	FY2027 Budget	Incr (Decr) FY27 over FY26	% Change	Recurring	Non Recurring
Ad Valorem Taxes	\$4,393,800	\$4,745,000	\$ 351,200	7.99%	\$4,745,000	
Ad Valorem Interest	3,700	0	(3,700)	-100.00%	-	
Total Revenues	4,397,500	4,745,000	347,500	7.90%	4,745,000	-
Total Revenues & Transfers In	4,397,500	4,745,000	347,500	-30.53%	4,745,000	-
Ad Valorem Collection Fee	92,653	103,150	10,497	11.33%	103,150	
Projects	300,000	-	(300,000)	-100.00%	-	-
Capital Expenditures	-	525,000	525,000	Add	-	525,000
Total Expenditures	392,653	628,150	235,497	59.98%	103,150	525,000
Transfers Out - District Match Grants Fund	5,309,867	4,906,101	(403,766)	-7.60%	-	4,906,101
Transfers Out - Debt Service	815,922	1,575,164	759,242	93.05%	1,575,164	
Total Transfers Out	6,125,789	6,481,265	355,476	5.80%	1,575,164	4,906,101
Total Expenditures & Transfers Out	\$6,518,442	\$7,109,415	\$ 590,973	-3.81%	\$1,678,314	\$5,431,101
Excess (deficiency) of Revenues less Expenditures	(2,120,942)	(2,364,415)				
Estimated Fund Balance/Capital Reserves	2,137,230	2,364,797				
Projected Surplus/Deficit	\$ 16,288	\$ 382				



Questions?



Appendix VII

From: [Colin Baugh](#)
To: [Tarah Jaramillo](#)
Subject: Meeting write ups
Date: Thursday, May 7, 2026 9:22:04 AM

4/14 – Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at Candelaria Tree Nursery (2:00 PM–3:30 PM)

Attended the ribbon cutting ceremony at Candelaria Tree Nursery from 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM. The event celebrated the opening and continued growth of the nursery while bringing together community members, local partners, and supporters. Participants had the opportunity to tour the site, learn about the nursery's services and community impact, and network with attendees during the ceremony and reception.

4/15 – APS Public Comment at Board Meeting (5:00 PM–6:30 PM)

Attended the APS public comment session during the board meeting from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM. Community members and stakeholders shared comments, concerns, and recommendations regarding district matters and ongoing initiatives. The meeting provided an opportunity for public engagement and discussion with APS board members and district leadership.

4/23 – Finance Meeting (10:00 AM–11:30 AM)

Participated in a finance meeting from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM to review budget updates, financial planning items, and upcoming expenditures. Attendees discussed current financial priorities, funding considerations, and strategies to support organizational and program goals. The meeting also included updates on ongoing projects and future planning efforts.

4/22 – Zoom Meeting with APS Real Estate Team and Polk Middle School (1:45 PM–2:30 PM)

Participated in a Zoom meeting with the APS real estate team and representatives from Polk Middle School from 1:45 PM to 2:30 PM. The discussion focused on property-related updates, coordination efforts, and ongoing planning related to school and district needs. Attendees shared updates, reviewed next steps, and discussed opportunities for continued collaboration.

5/4 – Compact Meeting (1:30 PM–3:30 PM)

Attended a compact meeting from 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM to discuss program updates, collaborative initiatives, and upcoming activities. Participants reviewed current goals, shared community and organizational updates, and discussed strategies to strengthen partnerships and engagement efforts moving forward.

5/1 – San Felipe Feast Day (9:00 AM–2:30 PM)

Attended the San Felipe Feast Day celebration from 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM. The event brought together community members for cultural, spiritual, and traditional activities honoring San Felipe Feast Day. Attendees participated in gatherings and celebrations that highlighted community traditions, fellowship, and cultural heritage.

Sent from my iPhone

On May 6, 2026, at 3:00 PM, Colin Baugh <cbaugh@mrgcd.us> wrote:

In person
Sent from my iPhone

On May 6, 2026, at 1:53 PM, Tarah Jaramillo <tarah@mrgcd.us> wrote:

Received; was the APS public comment in person or virtual?

-----Original Message-----

From: Colin Baugh <cbaugh@mrgcd.us>

Sent: Wednesday, May 6, 2026 1:49 PM

To: Tarah Jaramillo <tarah@mrgcd.us>

Subject: Meetings invoiced

4/14-rubbin cutting ceremony at candelaria tree nursery 2pm-3:30pm

4/15-aps public comment at board meeting 5-630pm

4/23- finance meeting 10am-11:30am

4/22-zoom meeting with APS real estate team and Polk middle school 1:45pm-230pm

5/4- compact meeting 130pm-330pm

5/1- San Felipe feast day 9am-230pm

Sent from my iPhone

Director Russo Baca Board Reports May 2026

Report on Farmers for Future Farmers Meeting, April 14, 2026

Director Russo Baca attended the Farmers for Future Farmers Meeting along with Jason M. Casuga, Chief Engineer/CEO. Mr. Casuga presented the 2026 water outlook and answered any questions from participants.

Report on Planning Meeting for the Belen Marsh, April 15, 2026

Director Russo Baca attended a planning meeting regarding the Belen Marsh at the MRGCD Main Office along with Casey Ish, Director of Lands & Conservation, and Jo Strange, Bosque Management Coordinator. Participants discussed restoration planning, habitat enhancement opportunities, long-term stewardship considerations, and coordination efforts related to wetland and riparian management in the Belen area. Discussion also included drafting a collaborative letter to Valencia County regarding the future stewardship of the Belen Marsh property following the County's recent acquisition of the site. The letter emphasized the ecological, educational, recreational, and economic value of preserving the Belen Marsh as open space. It highlighted the importance of maintaining the property as a wetland and wildlife habitat resource. The correspondence also discussed opportunities for conservation-oriented management, including passive recreation, birding and wildlife observation, environmental education, scientific partnerships, and potential stormwater mitigation benefits associated with the property. The letter reflected support from numerous conservation, wildlife, and community organizations and encouraged continued collaboration regarding long-term stewardship and protection of the marsh.

Report on Annual Rio Grande Compact Commission Meeting, April 16–17, 2026

Director Russo Baca attended the Annual Rio Grande Compact Commission Meeting along with Jason M. Casuga, Chief Engineer/CEO, Casey Ish, Director of Lands & Conservation, Anne Marken, River Operations & Telemetry Manager, Vice Chair Baugh, and Directors Dunning, Jiron, and Sandoval. The meeting included updates from Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas regarding Rio Grande hydrology, reservoir operations, compact accounting, and projected water supply conditions for the upcoming irrigation season. Participants discussed ongoing drought conditions, compliance obligations under the compact, reservoir storage limitations, and operational challenges associated with reduced flows throughout the basin. Additional discussion focused on interstate coordination, river operations, and continued collaboration among federal, state, and local partners to address water management challenges affecting the Rio Grande system.

Report on Water Leaders Workshop, April 20–22, 2026

Director Russo Baca attended the 2026 Water Leaders Workshop along with Jason M. Casuga, Chief Engineer/CEO, Casey Ish, Director of Lands & Conservation, Anne Marken, River Operations & Telemetry Manager, Brittney Erdmann, Hydrology Technician II, and Vice Chair

Baugh. The workshop, hosted by the New Mexico Water Education Foundation, brought together water professionals, community leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders from across New Mexico to strengthen leadership skills and increase understanding of complex water management issues facing the state. Workshop sessions focused on water policy, river operations, groundwater and surface water management, agricultural water use, community engagement, and collaborative approaches to addressing long-term water challenges. Participants also discussed communication strategies, stakeholder collaboration, and opportunities to support informed water policy and management decisions across New Mexico.

Report on Finance Committee Meeting, April 23, 2026

Director Russo Baca attended the Finance Committee Meeting along with Chair Kelly and Vice Chair Baugh. The committee reviewed financial reports, budget updates, and ongoing fiscal planning for District operations and capital projects. The discussion included a review of expenditures, operational priorities, and financial considerations associated with current and upcoming District initiatives. The meeting also provided an opportunity for continued oversight of District financial management and long-term planning.

Report on VCSWCD Valencia County Soil and Water Conservation District Earth Day Celebration, April 24, 2026

Director Russo Baca attended the Valencia County Soil and Water Conservation District Earth Day Celebration held at the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area. The event focused on environmental stewardship, conservation education, and community engagement through a variety of family-friendly activities and educational programming. Activities included stargazing, composting workshops, and guided nature walks. Director Russo Baca brought two of her goats to discuss the importance of animals in agriculture. The event promoted sustainability, conservation awareness, and public education regarding natural resource stewardship while providing opportunities for community members to engage with local conservation organizations and partners.

Report on RGALT Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust Birding Tour, April 25, 2026

Director Russo Baca attended the Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust (RGALT) Spring Birding Tour at conserved La Joya Farms. The guided tour provided participants with opportunities to observe migratory birds and wildlife habitats across agricultural fields, wetlands, and bosque areas while learning about ongoing land conservation and stewardship efforts in the Middle Rio Grande Valley. The event highlighted the relationship between agriculture, habitat conservation, and watershed stewardship, as well as the importance of preserving working agricultural lands that support ecological health and migratory bird habitat. Participants also discussed collaborative conservation efforts and opportunities to strengthen public awareness of agricultural land preservation.

Report on National Water Resources Association Federal Water Issues Conference, April 27–29, 2026

Director Russo Baca attended the National Water Resources Association Federal Water Issues Conference in Washington, D.C., along with Jason M. Casuga, Chief Engineer/CEO, Casey Ish, Director of Lands & Conservation, Vice Chair Baugh, and Director Lopez. Participants met with federal agency representatives, congressional staff, and elected officials to discuss water management priorities and issues affecting the Middle Rio Grande and the State of New Mexico. Discussion topics included Rio Grande Compact compliance, Low Flow Conveyance Channel operations, the Habitat Conservation Plan, El Vado Reservoir, sediment management, and federal appropriations requests.

Meetings included discussions with representatives from the Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Interior, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, congressional offices, and federal policy staff regarding operational challenges associated with compact debt, drought conditions, endangered species compliance, and long-term water storage capacity. Participants also discussed opportunities to streamline federal review processes for Low Flow Conveyance Channel operations and explored strategies to improve coordination across river management, sediment removal, habitat restoration, and reservoir operations. The continued discussion emphasized the importance of federal partnerships, compact compliance, and collaborative approaches to addressing long-term water management and infrastructure challenges in the Rio Grande Basin.

The conference also provided an opportunity to advocate for continued federal support for critical infrastructure and water management initiatives, including protecting El Vado Reservoir's storage capacity, habitat restoration efforts, acequia education programs, and long-term watershed management planning.

Report on Rio Grande Compact 101 Board of Directors Training, May 4, 2026

Director Russo Baca, along with Director Dunning and Vice Chair Baugh, participated in the Rio Grande Compact 101 Board of Directors Training held virtually. The training provided an overview of the Rio Grande Compact, including its historical background, legal framework, compact accounting requirements, and operational implications for water management in New Mexico. Discussion focused on interstate compact obligations, reservoir operations, compact debit and credit accounting, and the relationship between compact compliance and river operations within the Middle Rio Grande. The training also provided Board members with additional context regarding current hydrologic conditions, operational challenges, and the broader legal and policy considerations affecting water management throughout the Rio Grande Basin.

Report on NM Water Trust Exploratory Committee, May 5, 2026

Director Russo Baca attended the New Mexico Water Trust Exploratory Committee Meeting held at the Randall Davey Audubon Center & Sanctuary in Santa Fe. The meeting focused on continued development of a potential statewide water trust and included discussion regarding the vision, mission, governance structure, and long-term organizational framework for the initiative. Committee members reviewed the prior work of the exploratory committee. They participated in discussions regarding potential organizational models, funding considerations, staffing needs, and the role of a water trust within New Mexico's broader environmental flow and watershed management landscape. Participants worked collaboratively to evaluate near-term organizational structure options and discussed approaches for continued committee engagement. The meeting also included discussion of the potential scale and focus of a New Mexico Water Trust, as well as opportunities to support long-term water stewardship, conservation, and environmental flow initiatives across the state.

Report on NM Watershed & Dam Owners Coalition Conference, May 6–8, 2026

Director Russo Baca attended the New Mexico Watershed & Dam Owners Coalition Conference held in Albuquerque. The conference brought together watershed organizations, dam owners, engineers, emergency managers, conservation districts, and water resource professionals to discuss issues related to dam safety, watershed management, flood mitigation, and infrastructure resilience throughout New Mexico. Presentations and discussions focused on watershed restoration, post-fire recovery, sediment management, infrastructure funding opportunities, emergency preparedness, and strategies to improve long-term resilience of water infrastructure.

Jason M. Casuga, Chief Engineer/CEO, participated as a speaker during the conference, and members of the MRGCD Engineering Department, including Antoinette Ramos, P.E., Engineer II, Angel Madera, Engineer I, and Angelina Jimenez, Engineer I, delivered a technical presentation titled "Understanding Watershed Effects on Irrigation Water Supply." The presentation highlighted watershed challenges affecting the Middle Rio Grande Valley. It focused on the Belen Watershed Study, sediment impacts on irrigation infrastructure, stormwater management, and long-term planning solutions to improve irrigation system resilience and protect surrounding communities. The engineering team presented analyses of sediment yield, watershed runoff, overflow structure design, and the proposed Valencia Channel alternative as part of long-term flood mitigation and water delivery reliability efforts. The presentation also emphasized the importance of coordinated watershed planning, emergency overflow structures, and infrastructure improvements to protect agricultural water delivery systems during severe monsoon events. Director Russo Baca was proud to see MRGCD engineering staff professionally represent the District and share their technical expertise and innovative planning efforts with water management professionals and partner agencies from across New Mexico.