

**MINUTES OF THE
2,239th REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT**

SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

Directors having been duly notified; Vice Chair Baugh called the regular meeting to order at 3:00 pm. The following Directors and Staff were present:

DIRECTORS

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

Jason Casuga
Lorna Wiggins
Jeff Wechsler
Pamela Fanelli
Alicia Lopez
Christine Nardi
Amanda Molina
Casey Ish

STAFF

Chief Engineer/CEO
General Counsel
Chief Water Counsel
Secretary-Treasurer/CFO
Director of Technical Services
Director of Human Services
Director of Communications
Director of Lands & Conservation

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

Anne Marken, MRGCD	John Irizarry, USBR	Michelle Estrada, USBR
Matt Martinez, MRGCD	Leann Woodruff, USBR	Ken Richard
Patrick Taber, BIA	Carlos Aragon, USBR	David Montoya
Tarah Jaramillo, MRGCD	Daniel Aguirre, W&C	John Thompson, MRGCD
Luke Smith, W&C	John Head	Jo Strange, MRGCD
Jimmy Beal	Eresay Alcantar-Velasquez, UNM	

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

David Montoya led the Pledge of Allegiance at today's meeting.

Chairman Kelly was absent from today's meeting. Vice Chair Baugh chaired today's meeting and declared a quorum. The meeting was publicly noticed. This meeting was a hybrid meeting with Directors Sandoval and Jiron attending virtually. Rollcall votes will be necessary for regular motions.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 - APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA .

Mr. Casuga asked to switch Item 5 and Item 6 and add 14(b) to consider/approve a budget adjustment.

Director Dunning made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA WITH THE ABOVE CHANGES**. Seconded by Director Russo Baca. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED**.

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

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 - CONSENT AGENDA

- a. **Consideration/Approval of Payment Ratification – August 2026**
- b. **Consideration/Approval of August 2026 Invoices for Wiggins, Williams & Wesenberg, PC**
- c. **Consideration/Approval of August 2026 Invoices for Spencer Fane LLP**
- d. **Consideration/Approval of the Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting – August 10, 2026**
- e. **Memo on MRGCD Approved Licenses for August 2026 (For Informational Purposes Only)**

Director Dunning asked what happens with the gophers since the ditches have been dry all summer.

Mr. Casuga answered they will still have them and they typically find them when they have water back in the ditch.

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

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

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 - DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 2026 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO

Mr. Casuga asked the Board how they would like to proceed with the October Meeting, as it falls on Indigenous Peoples' Day.

The Board decided to move the October Board Meeting to Tuesday, October 13th.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 - REPORT(S) FROM MRGCD LOBBYIST - John Thompson

Mr. Thompson reported that he, Mr. Casuga, Mr. Ish, and Ms. Strange spent the day with Senator Angel Charley on August 24th, who represents District 30. He stated they went through District boundaries, their mission, and got her up to speed on MRGCD. He said they viewed some treated burn scar and some thinning they did in the Bosque, and Senator Charley asked great questions. He felt MRGCD has a friend and partner in Senator Charley going forward.

He then discussed the Water and Natural Resources Committee Meeting that was held in Socorro, at New Mexico Tech on August 31, 2026. He said MRGCD's role in the meeting was a Texas v. New Mexico panel and Middle Rio Grande Bosque Management panel. He noted the Texas v. New Mexico panel conversation was robust and Mr. Ish did a great job presenting on the Bosque Management Program. He added that Mr. Casuga and Mr. Ish did a great job representing MRGCD at the meeting.

Mr. Casuga added they had a conversation about avoiding a Texas v. New Mexico 2.0 above Elephant Butte, and he noted there continues to be misinformation. He said MRGCD's commitment to delivering prior and paramount water was also brought up, but he did not feel it was the right opportunity to respond to that. He stated New Mexico's commitment to the Compact is state law, as well as New Mexico's commitment to honoring senior water rights of

the 6-Middle Rio Grande Pueblos. He said they provided the letter documenting the role they play and the authority they do and do not have.

Director Lopez felt the meeting went well and a lot of eyes were opened on the impact of salt cedar to the water.

Vice Chair Baugh added the education that Mr. Thompson, Mr. Casuga and Mr. Ish have been doing with state lawmakers is paying off tenfold, and he felt Senator Charley was an ally they need. He said the committee was very receptive to what they presented

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 - EL VADO DAM UPDATE - BUREAU OF RECLAMATION - Leann Woodruff, Civil Engineer, Facility Management Division Manager

Ms. Woodruff gave an update on the El Vado Dam. She talked about the Safety of Dams Act, where they are in the process for El Vado, what is coming next, the appraisal level work they have done over the past couple years, the investigations they did with that work, and the alternatives they are looking at. She said they hope to make the decision on what alternatives are going into feasibility in the next two to three months, after which they will go to final design for alternatives and prepare a modification report. She noted it has to be risk-based, defensible, a least cost approach, and there are strict guidelines on addressing the risk to a facility. She said they have been doing site investigations, mainly drilling, and they have been evaluating structural alternatives for embankment seepage and foundation embankment contact seepage. She noted they have not had to do anything with the spillway replacement and it is still part of the structural alternatives. She shared in the summer of 2025, they drilled 19 drill holes on the abutments and in the reservoir and gathered that information, and in the summer of 2026, they drilled three holes in the embankment. She added all the drilling is now complete and it will be used for the feasibility analysis. In regard to the appraisal work, they have been evaluating embankment seepage and seepage at the foundation embankment contact. Ms. Woodruff voiced they have analyzed eight options and she went over those with the Board.

See also Appendix I.

Director Dunning asked if they found anything new during the previous construction, as she wondered why they did not just go back to the previous study and select the second alternative.

Ms. Woodruff explained the alternative they moved forward with the previous time was the low cost alternative and did not include taking the steel faceplate off or fully taking down the reservoir and putting a cofferdam in, so they did not investigate those areas previously because they were trying to avoid the bigger alternatives at that time.

Director Dunning asked if DOT would still honor the agreement they made with them previously regarding the top of the dam.

Mr. Casuga responded until they get further into the process and understand alternatives, he felt it was too early to figure out whether they need to talk to them anymore or not.

Vice Chair Baugh expressed they are very excited to see things moving forward and emphasized the Board wants to make sure they select the right and appropriate design and project for this. He asked for a timeline for everything in the two-to-three-month selection process.

Ms. Woodruff responded they do not have a timeline laid out at this time, as they do not know what alternatives are going into feasibility and how long those are going to take to analyze.

Mr. Casuga inquired if once they have their decision on the appraisal and what they are taking forward, there will be opportunity to have a version of this presentation with more information.

Ms. Woodruff answered yes.

Director Russo Baca asked when the agreement with the City of Albuquerque to store in Abiquiu expires.

Ms. Woodruff responded 2034, with the option to extend 5 years.

Vice Chair Baugh inquired how the Bureau is addressing some of these uncertain times moving forward and how Safety of Dams roll that into an El Vado picture.

Ms. Woodruff answered they have a group of people in their Technical Service Center that do the hydrologic look at those and incorporate the newest and most state-of-the-art information, and in the feasibility, they look and see if they need to update that again.

Vice Chair Baugh expressed the Board does not want to see a reduction in a reservoir pool and they are excited to see the full measure the Bureau is going to roll out to remedy the situation.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 - REPORT(S) FROM THE WATER OPERATIONS

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

Ms. Marken gave the report on water supply conditions. She said water supply conditions remain extremely limited and MRGCD is currently in prior and paramount only operations. She stated Colorado is currently at 4 CFS across the state line on the Rio Grande at Lobato's Gage, flow to Otowi is up to 190 CFS, and the total release from Cochiti Dam is 125 CFS. She expressed there was rainfall around the basin last night and this morning, but it has not materially changed water supply conditions; however, there is additional precipitation and cooler temperatures expected this week. She shared that earlier in the month, the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority led a pulse flow effort through the Middle Valley to improve conditions for riparian vegetation in the Albuquerque Reach to observe how the river responded when water is introduced after being dry for an extended period. She noted MRGCD contributed 300 acre feet of water to that effort, as they are required to dedicate to environmental purposes under an agreement associated with the 2016 Biological Opinion, and the total release from Abiquiu for the pulse was around 2,000 acre feet. She added that amount was not enough to reconnect the entire Albuquerque Reach of the Rio Grande. She showed a graph displaying the flow measured at the Rio Grande at Albuquerque, which peaked at 90 CFS. Ms. Marken noted it got there later than anticipated due to having to re-wet the dry sections of the river, as well as groundwater pumping. She said the state will be introducing a metering order for groundwater pumping, but domestic wells will not be included in that. She suspected domestic well pumping in the Albuquerque area was one of the contributing factors of the conveyance losses observed during the pulse, and there was robust groundwater monitoring of the pulse, so they look at that data and evaluate it.

Ms. Marken provided a Rio Grande Compact update. She stated New Mexico ended 2025 with around 132,000 acre feet of accrued Compact debit, and so far in 2026, New Mexico is behind on its Rio Grande Compact deliveries, which is not unusual. However, in most years, there is stored water in upstream reservoirs that is moved downstream to Elephant Butte at the end of the irrigation season, which helps New Mexico meet its annual Compact obligation, but there is little left in storage that can be moved down this year. She expressed unless meaningful rain inflows improve deliveries, New Mexico's accrued Compact debt could increase by 30,000 acre feet at the end of 2026, and New Mexico violates the Compact when debt exceeds 200,000 acre feet. The NWS three month outlook through November shows above average temperatures and above average precipitation, and the winter seasonal outlook is showing near normal seasonal temperatures and above average precipitation. She was optimistic about the upcoming winter.

See also Appendix II.

Vice Chair Baugh asked if the pulse and release of 2,000 CFS has ever been done in a situation like this.

Ms. Marken answered no.

Vice Chair Baugh was interested in knowing more about the complexities of a water basin that has been under pressure and all the subtle pressures that can be exacerbated in such hard times, so they can better educate the District on how to safeguard and implement systematic and policy types approaches in the future.

Mr. Casuga clarified they have not really experienced this kind of river drying in Albuquerque to this degree, but when MRGCD is storing water for Ag purposes, the whole system is benefiting.

Vice Chair Baugh expressed it is important to be upfront with education and communicating the reality transparently. He asked if the flows that are often celebrated in November and December will not be there to the volume they usually are and a connected river may not be there until spring runoff.

Ms. Marken answered that is a possibility, but they do not know for sure yet.

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

Mr. Martinez gave a report on water distribution. He stated that since June 2nd, restrictions on non-Pueblo irrigation above Isleta have been in place. He said lifting restrictions does not necessarily mean they suddenly get an adequate water supply, but that some water is available above P&P demand for a period of time. He noted conditions become particularly tight in August, which made the difference between the higher and lower flow periods of BIA's 10-day tribal rotational schedule a lot more noticeable. He expressed they have continued distributing available P&P water consistent with the rotation supported by ongoing coordination with BIA and the Pueblos, and they have remained ready to take advantage of opportunities for limited non-Pueblo irrigation whenever additional water became available, like on August 21st, when the Cochiti Dam release increased over P&P demand. He added by August 22nd, they were beginning to reach non-Pueblo areas in the north and south valley of Albuquerque, and rain inflows on the 22nd provided an additional boost and allowed them to advance

those rotations, but the Cochiti Dam release began declining on August 24th and fell below P&P demand. He stated conditions improved again from rainfall on August 31st, where they initially focused on the Cochiti Division, which improved flows for the northern pueblos and allowed limited non-Pueblo irrigation in Sile and Pena Blanca. He noted as additional water moved downstream, they increased flows through the Atrisco Siphon and resumed limited South Valley rotations. He said the Cochiti Dam release was reduced on September 4th, but remain slightly above P&P demand longer than anticipated, which allowed them to continue limited non-Pueblo irrigation through Labor Day weekend in and into last week before returning to P&P restrictions. He shared that conditions downstream of Isleta have been difficult, and on the east side of Belen Division and areas downstream of Isleta Pueblos that typically benefit from Pueblo returns have received very little water. He said historically reliable drain flows in southern Valencia County and northern Socorro County have diminished significantly, with the Lower Peralta Riverside Drain, San Juan Main, Lower Belen Riverside Drain, and Unit 7 systems reaching zero flow. Mr. Martinez voiced a series of tributary pulses provided meaningful opportunities last week to divert water at San Acacia, but the flows were short-lived. He observed extremely muddy conditions in the canals during a field visit to Socorro, with large concentrations of fine sediment suspended in the water and accumulating on farm fields that accepted delivery of the water. He stated on September 11th, Cochiti Dam release reached 125 CFS, of which 100 CFS is being diverted to the Cochiti Division for its high flow period of BIA's rotational schedule. He voiced the forecast for this week gives some reason for optimism, and if those opportunities develop, they will be prepared to act quickly and pick up rotations where they left off and put water to its best use. He encouraged irrigators to be prepared to receive water on short notice.

See also Appendix III.

Mr. Casuga added the purpose of showing the prior and paramount restriction timeline is not to make anyone believe that the issues non-tribal people are facing are because the Pueblos are getting water that should be due to them. He added that is not true and they will carry that message forward to the state legislature as well. He stated 2026 is an extremely difficult hydrologic year and he hoped they are not a community that turns on each other when things get difficult.

Director Lopez asked for an update on the Low Flow.

Mr. Casuga responded they did not get word until today that they met the criteria on the river rise report, and there was conversations about re-wetting of the river down to Bosque del Apache that they were waiting for in their environmental compliance documents. He stated they have not used the Low Flow for monsoon operations but they believe they have met the trigger point, and they plan to start coordinating with water management partners to use it for monsoon events.

Director Jiron thanked Mr. Casuga for explaining how the operations work. He agreed that in trying times, the more information and education they can put out on how these things work the better, and he has been doing that on his end.

Director Sandoval appreciated the clarification Mr. Martinez and Mr. Casuga gave. He felt those in the Cochiti Division understood how the system works, but it is good to have this education out there for others to have a better understanding.

Vice Chair Baugh expressed the District is looking at all options in times of hardship, including working with the state to do a monsoon ops to allow them access to move water through the Low Flow for Compact delivery, and they have met some of that criteria to start that when water comes, which is a huge accomplishment.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8 - ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR (Comments are limited to three (3) minutes)

David Montoya

Mr. Montoya stated they are in a crisis situation, but there are some fixes. He explained there is a diversion north of Alameda that takes the water from the Highland Channel that the irrigators in the Pueblo use, that gets diverted and bypasses through the conveyance channel past Albuquerque. He expressed he would like to see that water be put back into the Albuquerque Main and use ISOs to monitor it to make sure people cannot irrigate it, as it is P&P water. He stated they do that in Bernalillo, and he felt they could do that same thing and save so many wells from being drilled. He asked that they have a conversation on that, like the large irrigators were allowed to do.

Elaine Hebbard

Ms. Hebbard first expressed concerned that they added 30,000 acre feet to the deficit. She said according to the September 8th reservoir storage status report from BOR, the ABCWA holds over 104,000 acre feet of storage, which loses more than 6,000 acre feet annually to evaporation. She felt MRGCD should explore more collaborative operational strategies to keep the river whole. She shared some of the ideas she had for that, which included investigating joint diversion strategies, reviewing the water utilities new plan early, and advocating for OSE's policy reform.

See also Appendix IV.

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

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

Mr. Taber expressed the previously discussed storage curves that BIA produces for determining P&P releases are currently on the board. He said when the Otowi Gage at Otowi does not meet that curve, he releases P&P waters out of storage, and last season there were times they were close to 70-80% of water that hitting Otowi has been from release. He stated there is currently about 3,400 acre feet of storage remaining, with currently releases being around 60 CFS, which is about 120 acre feet a day. He noted distribution has been impacted by the shortness of water and limited supply, and they are seeing increases in travel time through the ditches and upper basin. In regard to currently operations and maintenance, he is engaging in daily calls with the Pueblos and representatives and frequent calls as needed on the ground with operations. He added they are in the process of coordinating off-season projects with the District and Ms. Lopez for issues that may be coming up that they can discuss in the offseason. He voiced that maintenance has been limited with how the year shaped up, and the acting regional director has asked him to focus on making sure there is a good communication plan, which he will be doing.

See also Appendix V.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10 - 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/or title changes. She stated they had a promotion to Human Resource Generalist I in the General Office, a promotion to Medium Equipment Operator and new Heavy Equipment Operator hire in the Belen Division and hired a new mechanic in the Cochiti Division.

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

a. Consideration/Approval for the purchase of Pump Station for Feeder 3

Mr. DeLoia presented for approval for the pump station for the Feeder 3 Project. He said four bid packets were issued to qualified companies and one was received by the 10 a.m. deadline on September 9th. MRGCD staff is recommending award to Alpha Southwest for \$1,811,382, with tax, as funded through the Water Smart Grant #G3747 and Water Trust Board Grant #G3748. He added moving forward with the purchase is contingent on the approval of the Build America Buy America Act waiver.

Director Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF PUMP STATION FOR FEEDER 3**. Seconded by Director Jiron. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED**.

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

b. Consideration/Approval of Unified Fire Levee Road Maintenance and Access Clearing

Mr. DeLoia presented for approval the Unified Fire Levee Road Maintenance and Access Clearing. MRGCD staff is recommending award to Lanford Excavation for \$164,575.68, including tax, as funded through the Interstate Stream Commission Grant #G3753, which will be awarded through a New Mexico State Price Agreement Contract.

Director Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE AWARD TO LANFORD EXCAVATION FOR THE UNIFIED FIRE LEVEE ROAD MAINTENANCE AND ACCESS CLEARING**. Seconded by Director Dunning. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED**.

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

(Chair Baugh noted Director Lopez was out of the building for this vote.)

AGENDA ITEM NO. 12 - REPORT(S) FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LANDS & CONSERVATION - Casey Ish

a. Report on the San Juan-Chama Project Contractors Association Field Trip, August 26-27, 2026 - Casey Ish, Director of Lands & Conservation and Amanda Molina, Director of Communications

Mr. Ish gave an update on the San Juan Chama Contractors Tour that he and Ms. Molina attended. He said it was a good opportunity for contractors and other municipalities to come together around the headwaters of the project to better understand infrastructure issues and to connect with the BOR staff, who operate that project. He noted the private-public partnerships that exist in the headwaters have really blossomed in the last couple years, and the Nature Conservancy has been successful at landing several large grants to do substantial forestry work and the results are starting to show in the headwaters. He stated those projects are focused on fire mitigation and making sure fire is more of a benefit and less of a hazard to the diversion structures of the San Juan Chama Project if they do have a fire up there. He expressed this was probably going to be the lowest allocation year on record for the San Juan Chama Project and the City of Santa Fe has done a lot of work to better understand how to optimize diversions structures and looking at potential opportunities missed in the operation and configuration of those diversions to see if there can be a little bit more water pulled off the tributaries. Mr. Ish shared they toured quite a few large diversion facilities, and pretty significant O&M coming around that are due on those.



Director Dunning asked if they went by where the big plug was and see the work that was done there.

Mr. Ish answered no, because BOR had to access that plug through private property. However, he and Ms. Molina had a dinner with people from the Rio Chama Acequia Association and learned how their water supply conditions have been affected by that plug, and there is still quite a bit of work to be done, as the pilot channel helped but there is still the issue of additional vegetation encroaching in that floodplain if they are not able to get flow conditions back up to where they were before the monsoon event.

Vice Chair Baugh inquired if they had a chance to talk about the reduction of water use on the Colorado that the president said they would take on.

Mr. Ish responded that specific comment did not gain a lot of conversation at the San Juan Chama Contractors Association trip, but the contractors have been contemplating, studying, and making preparations for reductions in supply for years now. He added that comment is something to be heard and recognized, but there is a lot of good work already taking place to try and accommodate a dramatic reduction in water supply.

b. Report on New Belen Outfall/Unified Fire Scar Area Site Visit with Representative Melanie Stansbury and the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, August 27, 2026 - Jason M. Casuga, Chief Engineer/CEO, Jo Strange, Bosque Management Coordinator, John Thompson, MRGCD Lobbyist, Directors Russo Baca and Dunning

Mr. Casuga stated they had the opportunity to go out with the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps and Representative Stansbury joined them. He said the amount of work done by them was pretty tremendous and they talked about the camaraderie that has grown from it. He stated the program is cool because they get paid and he was very impressed with them and the representative on site. He expressed hope that they breed love for the Bosque and give people a vision that they can do stuff like this in natural resources for a living, as this will become exponentially larger as they hit new areas of treatment and then come back year over year for retreatment.

Ms. Strange voiced that it went really well and some of the Youth Corps have formal degrees in forestry and biology, but a lot of them do not and are getting into this field for the passion of it. She noted they have connected Rocky Mountain with another contractor who has reached out. She said things are changing, so they are really learning, growing, and building connection in the community, and they kept stressing to Senator Stansbury that they want opportunities in New Mexico. She shared that next year they will have a survey-specific crew and then will add two project management internships, so they can start them from the restoration work, to the survey work, and start building those careers with them now.

Director Dunning commented they do research and counts of species they are seeing, so they are doing more than just labor. She bet she would see some of them on MRGCD staff in 25 years.

Mr. Ish added the evolving partnership with Rocky Mountain Youth Corps shows great interests at all levels are looking to the Bosque and he was thankful they were able to mobilize and get the team out there and educate the mission they are doing at the District.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 13 - REPORT(S) FROM THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES - Alicia Lopez, PE

a. Maintenance & Construction Updates

Ms. Lopez gave updates on where they sit with technical services. She said Technical Services is responsible for maintenance, construction and engineering of the MRGCD's 1,200 miles of facilities, ensuring they have are functional and ready for water now and into the future. She announced they welcomed their new engineer, Chris Frost, who brings hydrology and hydraulics experience and water operations experience. She said they are working on Pueblo coordination, division district needs, maintenance needs, and finalizing what they can accomplish between this November and March, including engineering plans and ordering materials. She gave updates on several projects, including 240 Wasteway, Corrales Siphon, Socorro Phase 2C, and Feeder 3.

See also Appendix VI.

Director Dunning asked if they were going to be done with the Corrales Siphon by December.

Ms. Lopez answered yes, as the grant has to be closed out by that time and they are still on track to meet that date.

Director Dunning asked if they have to prove they are buying the delivery of products made in United States with the Build America Buy America Waiver.

Ms. Lopez responded because the Feeder 3 Project has federal funding associated, they have to provide justification if they cannot find pumps within the United States. She said the pumps they selected based on their capabilities are German made, and the waiver allows them to utilize grant funding to purchase items made outside of the U.S.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 14 - REPORT(S) FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER/CFO - Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM

a. Consideration/Approval of Resolution No. BA-09-14-26-118 Adoption of Amended Budget for Fiscal Year 2027 (07-01-26 to 06-30-27) Grant and Capital Investment Fund

Ms. Fanelli presented for budget resolution BA-09-14-26-118, a fiscal year 2027 budget adjustment for the Loretta Road Project contracts. She explained they had POs issued in FY26 that were liquidated because they were going to use different funding sources and they did not re-budget for them in '27, so they are now re-instituting that revenue in the budget. She added a portion of the funding will come from the Capital Investment Fund.

Director Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION BA-09-14-26-118**. Seconded by Director Lopez. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED**.

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

b. Consideration/Approval of Resolution No. BA-09-14-26-119 Adoption of Amended Budget for Fiscal Year 2026, Long-Term Investment Fund

Ms. Fanelli presented for budget resolution BA-09-14-26-119, which is a budget adjustment for FY26, for the Long-term Investment Fund, which is the Levy Fund. She said they have interest earnings and bank fees in there, and they budgeted \$400 for bank fees, but the actual bank fees came out to be \$590, so they need to make a slight modification for that.

See also Appendix VII.

Director Dunning asked if they would need to go back and notify the state for budget adjustments since this is not a great amount of money.

Ms. Fanelli answered yes, they need to notify the state and get a bar approved by the state. However, it was the General Fund, it would not have been an issue because they budget more than what they need for that. She added there are revenues to cover this.

Director Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION BA-09-14-26-119**. Seconded by Director Lopez. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED**.

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

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

a. Report on 6-Middle Rio Grande Pueblos Coalition/MRGCD Meeting, August 26, 2026 - Jason M. Casuga, Chief Engineer/CEO, Chair Kelly, Directors Russo Baca and Jiron

Mr. Casuga reported on the 6-Middle Rio Grande Pueblos Coalition Meeting with MRGCD to discuss MRGCD's resolution related to storage. He shared legal counsel, legal water counsel, Chair Kelly, Director Russo Baca, and Director Jiron attended as well. He shared they had a great conversation but are not done talking and coordinating. He said they clarified the authority he has as CEO, and legal counsel did a deep dive on that and the nature of his contract to project all District water rights, and that the Board serves a role in reviewing his actions and determining whether or not they agree with him and if he is doing a good job. He stated a large portion of the resolution related to that authority and he felt that was cleared up, so he did not necessarily feel the need for the resolution anymore, but he will leave that in the Board's hands. He added they had a robust conversation about partnerships and how they do not want what is happening in the valley with hydrology be the reason they are divided along the river. He shared they plan to have another follow up meeting with them.

Director Russo Baca thought it was a really good outcome and appreciated the continued coordination with the Pueblos. She suggested Ms. Molina attend one of the meetings in the future to talk about the best way to communicate with the Pueblos on things happening to continue the collaborative nature.

Mr. Casuga expressed that once they know who the new elected officials are, MRGCD sends them a letter with a lot of information, including his contact information and they request a meeting to coordinate.

Director Jiron felt it was a must have meeting and all the important people that needed to be there to express their concerns were at the table. He said there needed to be follow up conversation and they need to continue this dialogue.

b. Information on Upcoming Events:

1. **CESOSS' 2026 Acequia Walk & Talks Series**
 - a. **October 24, 2026 - Pajarito: Durand Open Space**
2. **Coalition of Rio Grande Water Users Annual Conference, September 16-18, 2026: Tamaya Resort, Pueblo of Santa Ana**
3. **Tribal Water Law Annual Conference, September 28-29, 2026: Santa Fe, NM**
4. **New Mexico Water Law Annual Conference, October 8-9, 2026: Santa Fe, NM**
5. **Family Farm Alliance Annual Conference, October 28-30, 2026: Reno, NV**
6. **Colorado River Water Users Association Annual Conference, December 9-11, 2026: Las Vegas, NV**

Mr. Casuga discussed the upcoming informational events.

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

Counsel did not have any reports for regular session.

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

- a. **Report on Corrales Farmers Co-Op Meeting, August 11, 2026 - Director Russo Baca**
- b. **Report on Farmers for Future Farmers Meeting, August 11, 2026 - Director Russo Baca**
- c. **Report on the Basin Study Agriculture Committee Meeting, August 12, 2026 - Director Russo Baca**
- d. **Report on the Los Lunas Ag Science Center Event, August 13, 2026 - Director Russo Baca**
- e. **Report on the Urban Issues Advisory Committee Meeting, August 18, 2026 - Vice Chair Baugh, and Director Russo Baca**

Vice Chair Baugh reported they had a good meeting and now have some good defined roles as a committee.

- f. **Report on the VCSWCD Regular Board Meeting, August 20, 2026 - Director Russo Baca**
- g. **Report on CESOSS' 2026 Acequia Walk and Talk and Keep Los Padillas Green Event, August 22, 2026 - Director Russo Baca**
- h. **Report on the Socorro Community Conversations about Water Event, August 27, 2026 - Director Russo Baca**
- i. **Report on the CESOSS' Acequia Walk and Talk, Armijo, September 5, 2026 - Director Russo Baca**
- j. **Report on Meeting with Terry Brunner with the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency, City of Albuquerque, regarding the Rail Trail Connection, September 1, 2026 - Vice Chair Baugh**

Vice Chair Baugh reported they had a meeting with Terry Brunner and the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency around the Rail Trail, and the ideal place of connection falls on some MRGCD property and facilities.

Director Dunning inquired if they asked Mr. Brunner about the piece of land they own by the Atrisco Project and what their plans are for that or if it can be incorporated into the project.

Vice Chair Baugh answered yes, the Acequia Madre Project came up, and he and Mr. Ish emphasized the strong partnership they have and the robust actions that have to be taken through those allies and partnerships. He said Mr. Brunner was receptive and encouraging on that, and he saw a connection between the Acequia Madre and the Rail Trail, especially around the central corridor.

- k. Report on Farmers for Future Farmers Meeting, September 8, 2026 - Director Russo Baca**
- l. Report on Meeting with Mayor Rael, Village of Los Ranchos De Albuquerque, to discuss Acequia Association, September 8, 2026 - Vice Chair Baugh**

Vice Chair Baugh stated he met with Mayor Rael from the Village of Los Ranchos, largely in response to the issues in the summer there around easement setbacks. He added there has been a discussion coming out of Corrales on how the District allowed for and advocated for the development of the safety associations to take on some interesting things where private property and infrastructure on private property has long been under maintained and have become issues. He suggested maybe putting to bed some issues he or the Village might have had about an organization within the Village. He emphasized this was a good thing and brings a lot of opportunities to get into private areas. He felt it was a great introduction.

Director Dunning shared the Village is having a meeting tomorrow night where they are going to present the Del Norte Open Space conceptual plans, and she wanted to make sure they are on board with what they are planning there and felt they should have somebody from MRGCD attend that meeting.

- m. Report on 6-Middle Rio Grande Pueblos Coalition Meeting, September 10, 2026 - Director Russo Baca**

Director Russo Baca provided written reports.

See also Appendix VIII.

Director Dunning made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE REPORTS FROM THE BOARD**. Seconded by Director Lopez. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED**.

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

Director Dunning made the **MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION at 5:15 pm.** Seconded by Director Lopez. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED.**

Vice Chair Baugh	Yes	Director Russo Baca	Yes
Director Dunning	Yes	Director Jiron	Yes
Director Lopez	Yes		

(Director Sandoval excused himself from the meeting for traditional and cultural reasons.)

AGENDA ITEM NO. 18 EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

Director Dunning made the **MOTION TO GO BACK INTO REGULAR SESSION at 5:52 pm.** Seconded by Director Lopez. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED.**

Vice Chair Baugh	Yes	Director Russo Baca	Yes
Director Dunning	Yes	Director Jiron	Yes
Director Lopez	Yes		

Vice Chair Baugh shared that no decisions were made in Executive Session.

With no further comments, questions, or concerns, Vice Chair Baugh adjourned the meeting at 5:53 pm.

Approved to be the correct Minutes of the Board of Directors of September 14, 2026.

ATTESTED:


Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM
Secretary-Treasurer/CFO


John P. Kelly, Chairman
MRGCD Board of Directors



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Appendix I

El Vado Dam Modification Project Update - 9/14/2026

Introductions

Presenter

- Leann Woodruff, Civil Engineer, Facility Management Division Manager

In Attendance

- John Irizzary, Acting Area Manager
- Michelle Estrada-Lopez, Acting Deputy Area Manager
- Kenneth Richard, Acting Deputy Area Manager
- Carlos Aragon, Civil Engineer, Project Manager



Reclamation Presentation - MRGCD Board Meeting

- SOD Act and the Dam Safety Process
- El Vado Appraisal Level Work
 - Investigations
 - Alternatives
 - Embankment
 - Foundation & Spillway
 - Non-Structural
- Next Steps



Safety of Dams Act 1978 PL 95-578 as amended

Enacted after the Teton Dam Failure

- Authorizes modifications of Reclamation Dams for Safety of Dam
- Does not authorize modifications:
resulting “from age and normal deterioration or nonperformance of reasonable and normal maintenance”



Teton Dam, ID



Rexburg, ID



Safety of Dams Act Changes & Additions

Public Law 98-404 (1984)

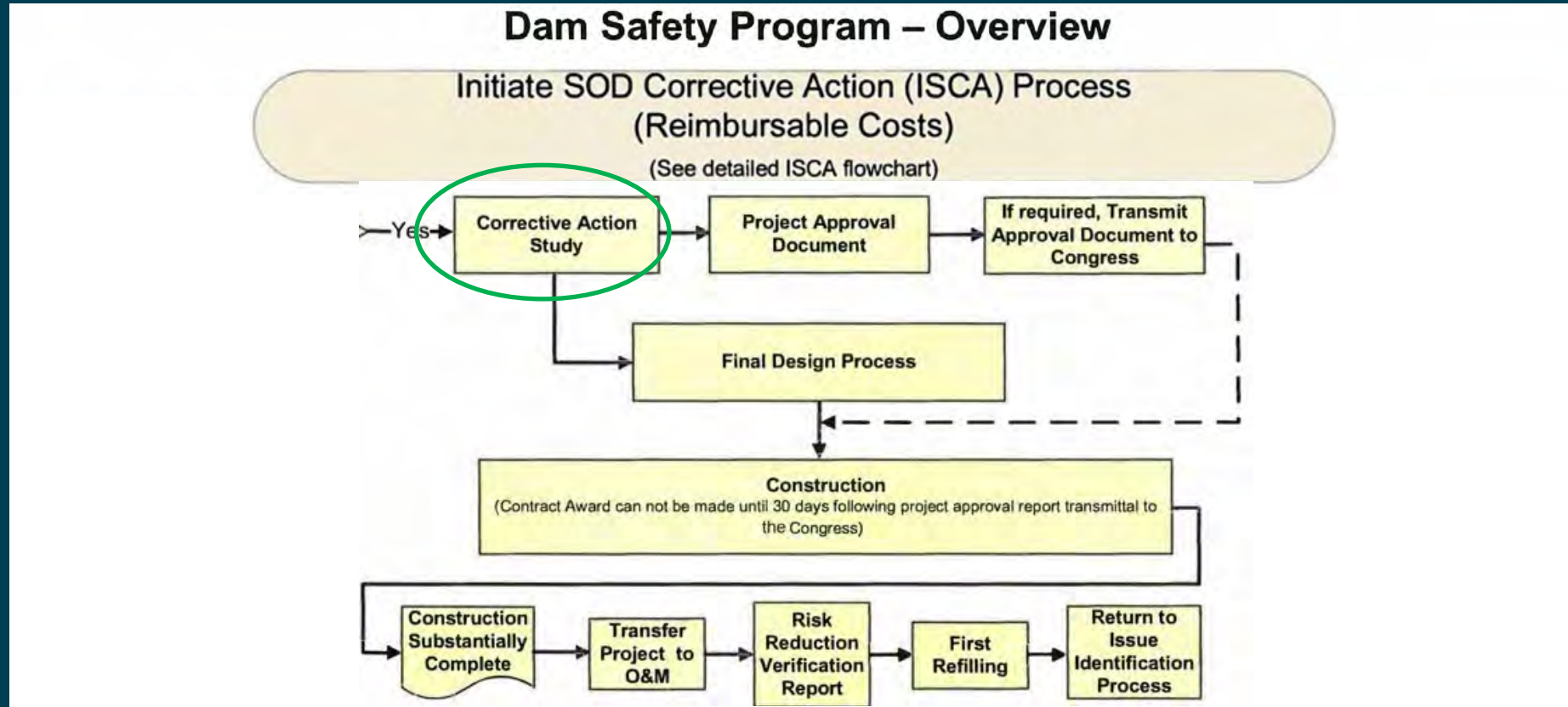
- Costs to modify for dam safety are reimbursable
 - 15% of total costs
 - Reimbursed within 50 years



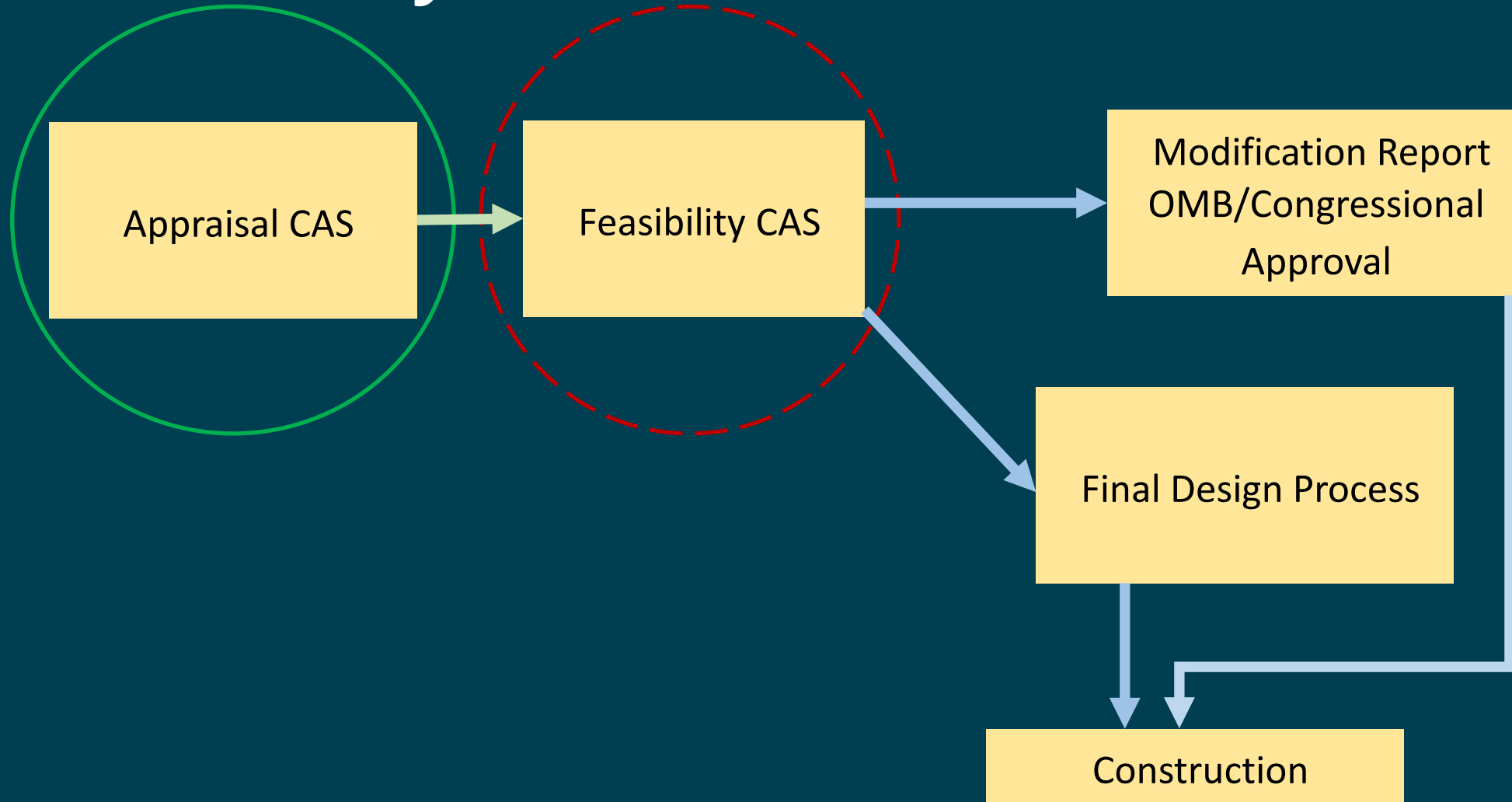
El Vado Dam, NM



Dam Safety Process



Dam Safety Process



Safety of Dams Process – Modification Report

- 85% Federal Spending substantial
- Requires Congressional Approval
- Must be Risk Based and Defensible
 - Strict Guidelines to address risk
 - Least Cost Approach
 - Structural and Non-Structural Fix Evaluations



Appraisal Level Work

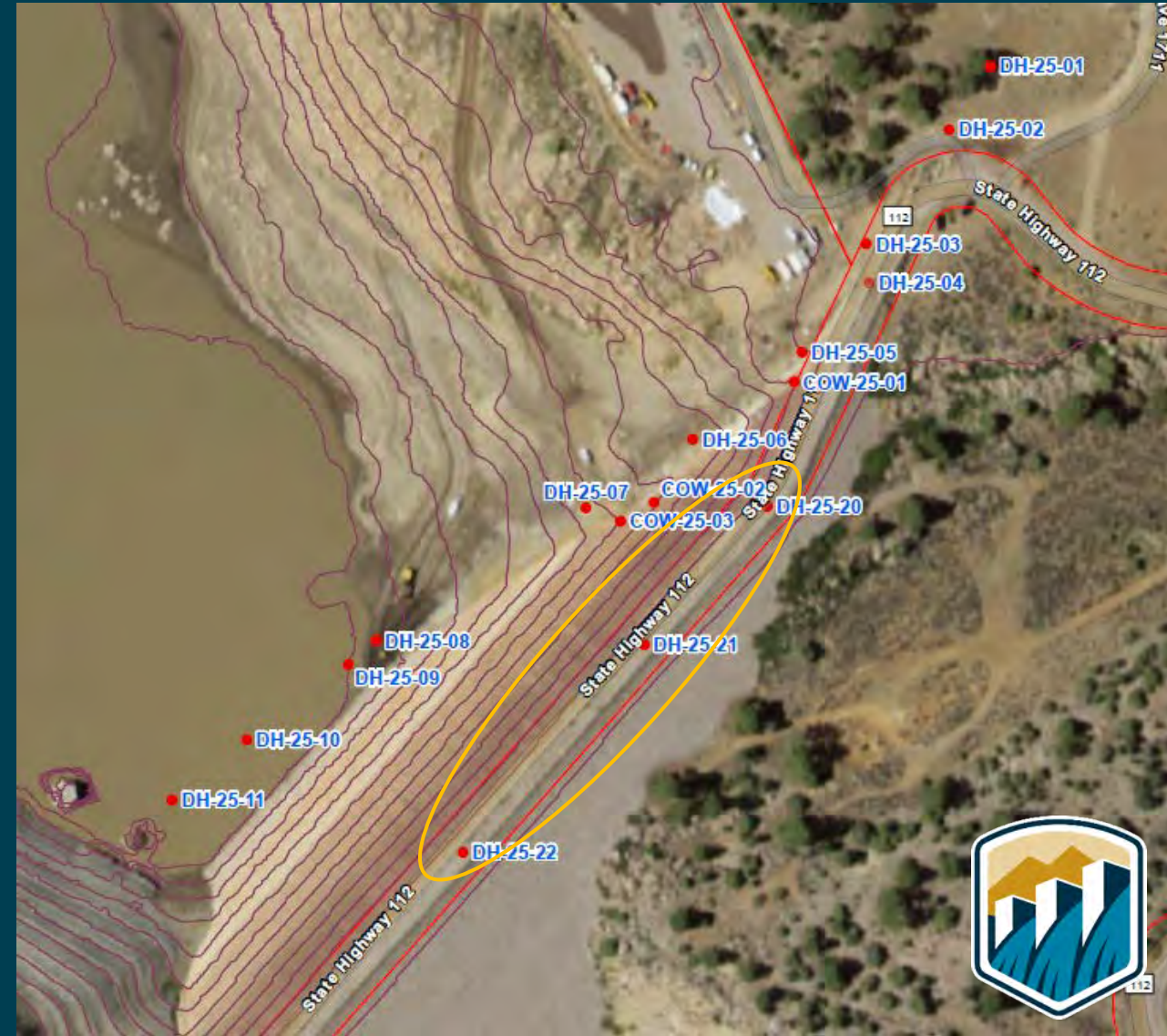
- Site Investigations
- Structural Alternatives
 - Evaluated at Appraisal Level
 - Embankment Seepage
 - Foundation/Embankment Contact Seepage
 - Spillway Replacement
- Non-Structural Alternatives
 - Identified for evaluation in Feasibility



Appraisal Level Work

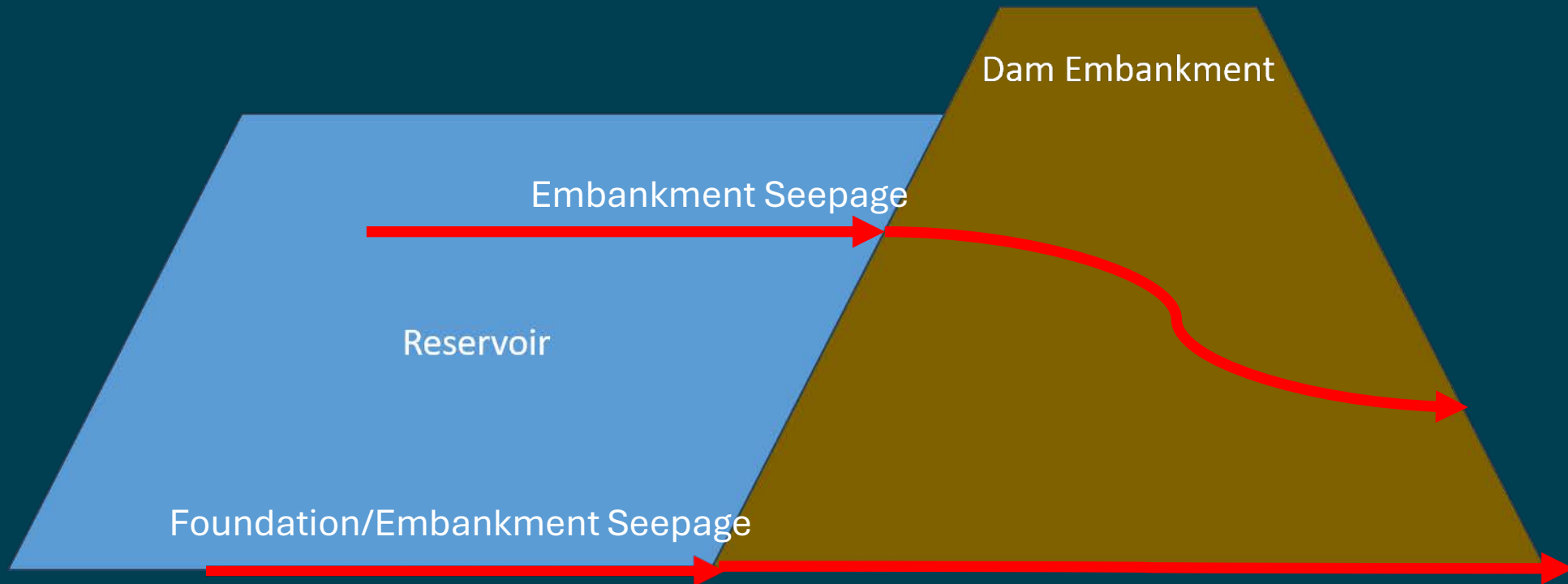
Site Investigations - Drilling

- Summer 2025 – 19 Drillholes
 - Abutments: DH-01 to DH-07 and two companion holes
 - Reservoir: DH-08 to DH-15 foundation and cofferdam
 - Cutoff Wall: COW-02 and COW-03
- Summer 2026 – 3 Drillholes
 - Embankment Crest: DH-20 to DH-22
- August 2026 Drilling Completed



Appraisal Level Work

- Evaluated Structural Alternatives to Address



Appraisal Level Alternatives

Embankment Seepage

- Upstream Berm with Impervious Zone
- Upstream Reinforced Concrete Liner
- Shotcrete with Exposed Geomembrane Liner
- Upstream Roller Compacted Concrete Liner
- Crest Cutoff Wall *
- Mid-slope Cutoff Wall with Upstream Impervious Embankment Zones *
- New Earthen Embankment Dam *
- New Roller Compacted Concrete Dam with Overtopping Spillway **

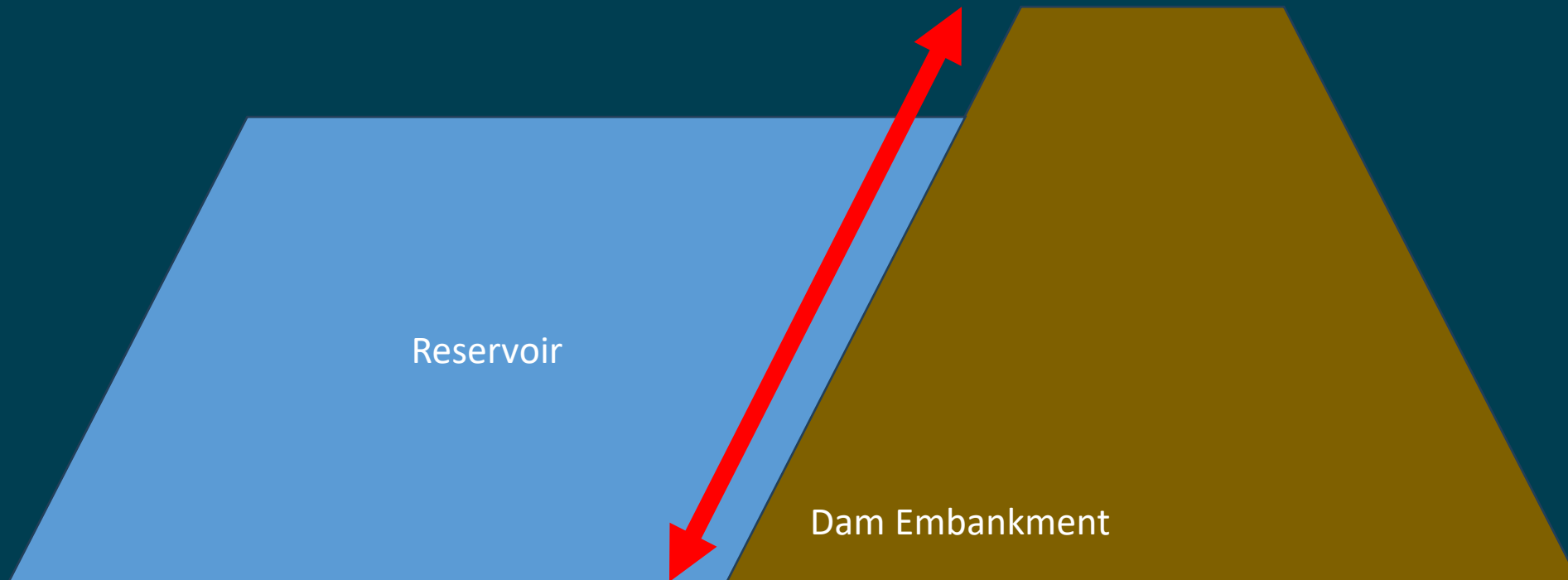
* Embankment & Foundation/Embankment

** Embankment, Foundation/Embankment, & Spillway



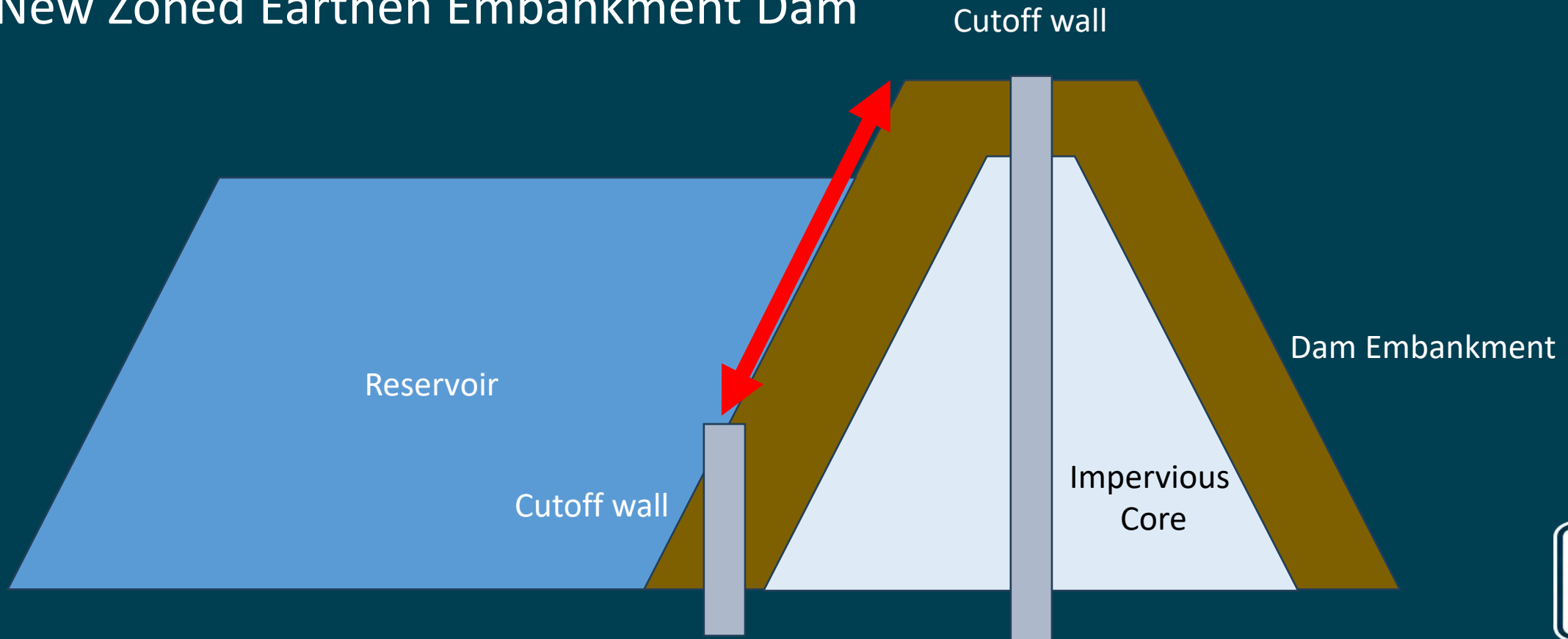
Appraisal Level Alternatives - Embankment

- Upstream Berm with Impervious Zone
- Upstream Reinforced Concrete Liner
- Shotcrete with Exposed Geomembrane Liner
- Upstream Roller Compacted Concrete Liner



Appraisal Level Alternatives Embankment & Foundation

- Crest Cutoff Wall
- Mid-slope Cutoff Wall with Upstream Impervious Embankment Zones
- New Zoned Earthen Embankment Dam



Appraisal Level Alternatives

Foundation Treatment & Spillway Replacement

Foundation

- Remedial Grouting
- Upstream Cutoff Wall



Combined with embankment
stand alone options

Spillway Replacement

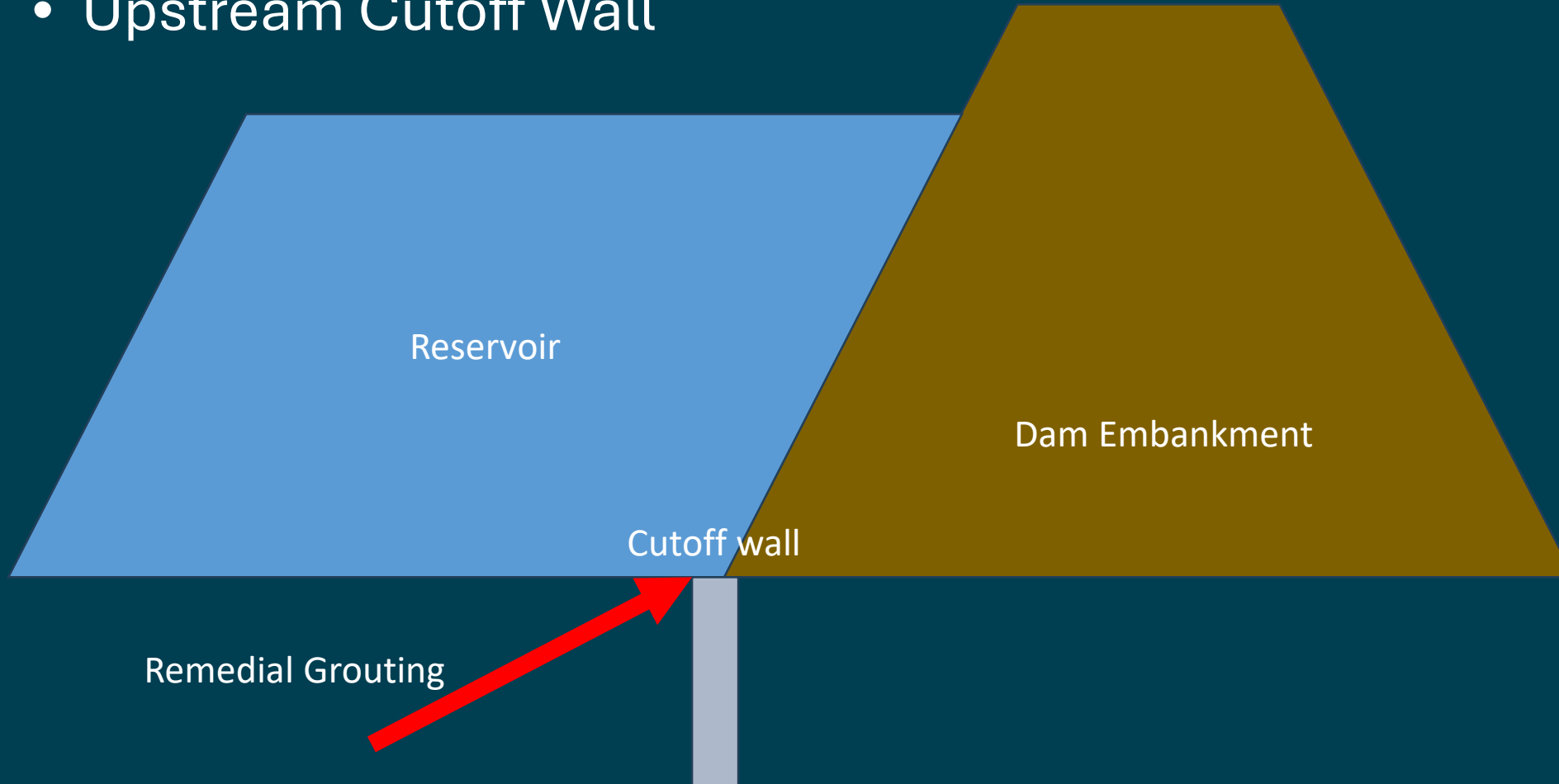
- Adjusted if needed with embankment alternative selected



Appraisal Level Alternatives

Foundation/Embankment Contact

- Remedial Grouting
- Upstream Cutoff Wall



Spillway Replacement

New service spillway

- Reinforced concrete and state of the art defensive measures
- At same location and similar dimensions as the existing spillway



Appraisal Level Alternatives

Non-Structural

- Required for Modification Report.
- Identified for evaluation in Feasibility
 - No Action
 - Dam Breach
 - Reservoir Restrictions



Next Steps

- Complete Appraisal Level phase of Project
 - Decide on alternatives for Feasibility
- Begin Feasibility Phase Analysis
 - Feasibility Investigations if needed
 - Continued analysis and narrowing of alternatives





— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Questions?

Water Supply Update

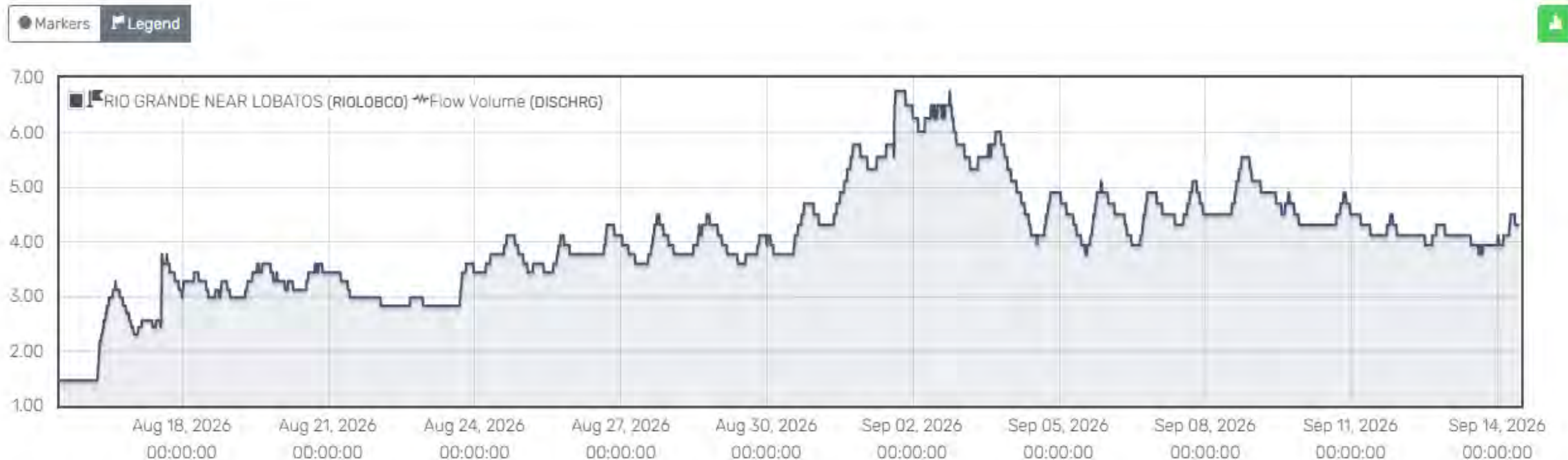
Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District Board of Directors Meeting

Prepared and Presented by: Anne Marken

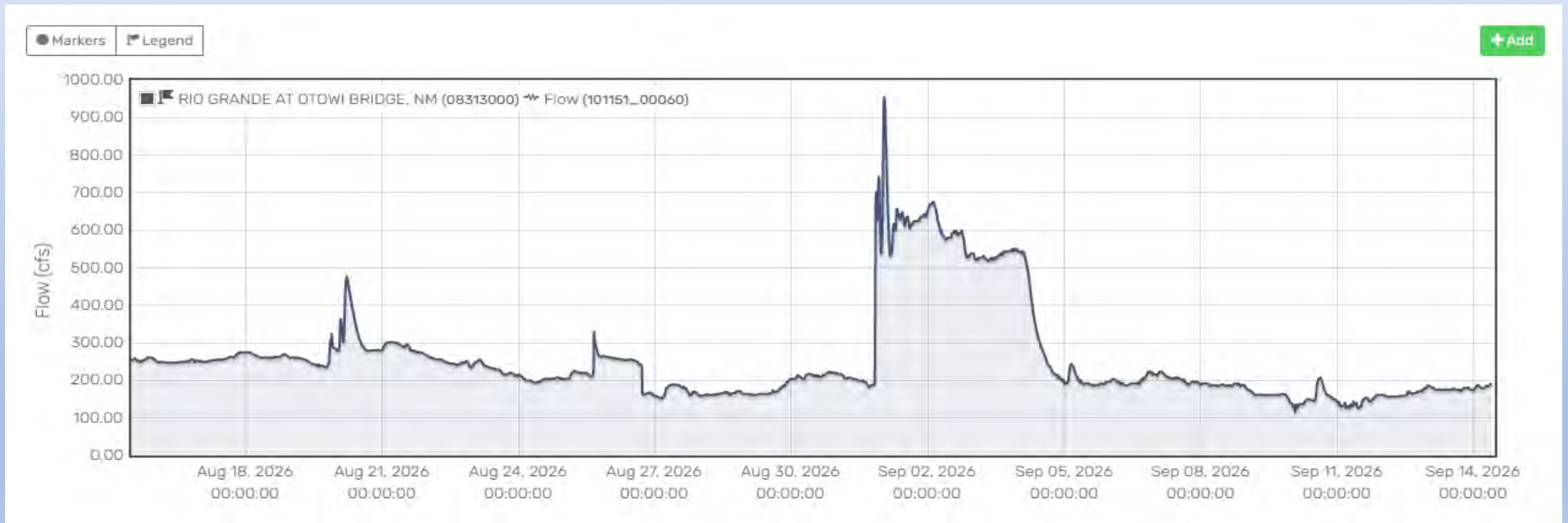
Date: 9/14/2026



CDWR Rio Grande at Lobatos Gage



USGS Rio Grande At Otowi Gage



National Weather Service 7-Day Forecast

 Location	Maximum Temperature							Probability of Precipitation						
	Mon 09/14	Tue 09/15	Wed 09/16	Thu 09/17	Fri 09/18	Sat 09/19	Sun 09/20	Mon 09/14	Tue 09/15	Wed 09/16	Thu 09/17	Fri 09/18	Sat 09/19	Sun 09/20
Albuquerque	86	84	82	80	80	80	81	80	70	90	70	50	30	10
Santa Fe	83	81	80	76	77	77	78	60	70	90	90	50	40	20
Farmington	81	82	80	78	78	78	79	70	60	80	60	40	20	10
Gallup	78	79	76	77	76	76	76	60	60	70	70	50	30	20
Grants	79	79	77	76	76	77	77	70	70	90	90	70	50	30
Clayton	91	80	84	84	84	80	79	20	70	40	20	30	40	40
Raton	86	79	80	78	79	76	77	20	80	80	70	50	50	50
Las Vegas	82	78	76	73	77	75	76	30	80	80	80	50	40	30
Moriarty	85	82	80	77	79	79	80	50	70	90	80	70	40	20
Tucumcari	95	90	89	88	87	84	84	30	90	50	30	30	30	40
Clovis	94	92	89	89	90	86	86	40	90	30	20	50	40	30
Roswell	98	96	92	90	91	89	88	40	70	50	40	50	50	30
Socorro	88	86	84	83	84	84	84	70	70	90	70	60	50	20
Chama	70	73	72	68	71	71	72	90	80	90	90	70	40	30
Taos	79	79	77	75	76	76	77	70	70	80	90	60	40	20
Angel Fire	72	71	71	69	70	69	71	50	90	90	90	70	50	30
Los Alamos	78	76	75	72	73	73	73	70	70	90	90	70	50	30
Ruidoso	79	77	74	73	76	75	75	40	70	90	80	80	70	50
Quemado	77	77	76	76	76	75	75	70	90	90	80	70	50	20

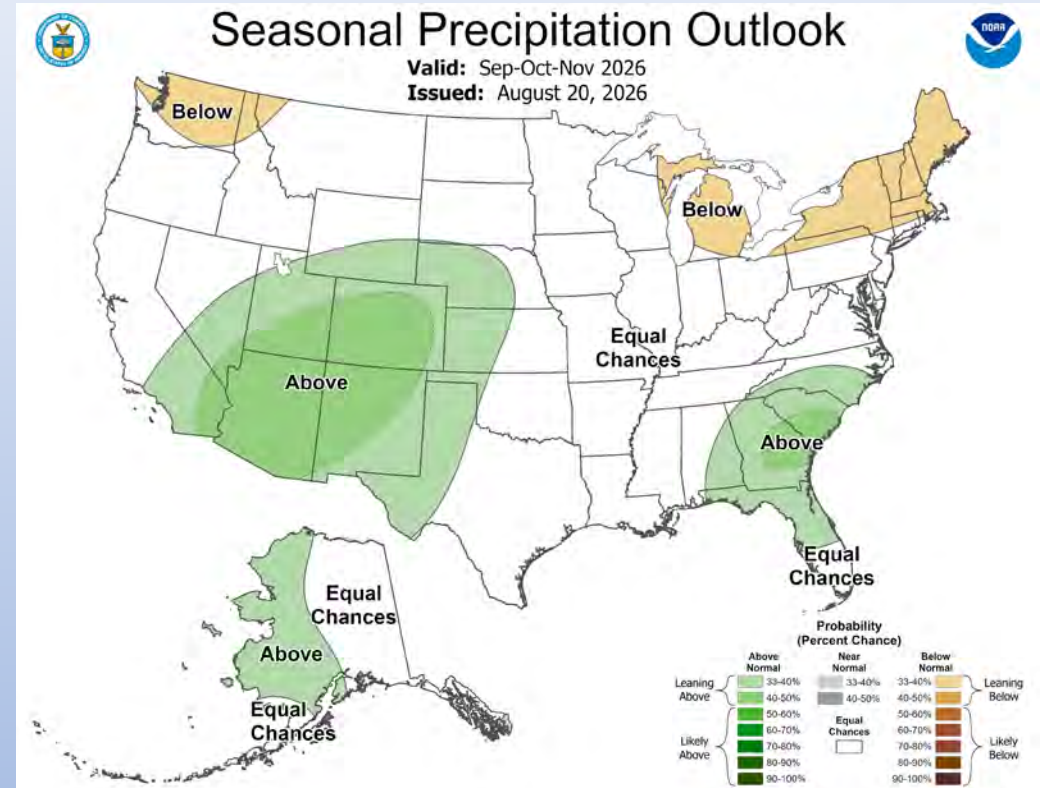
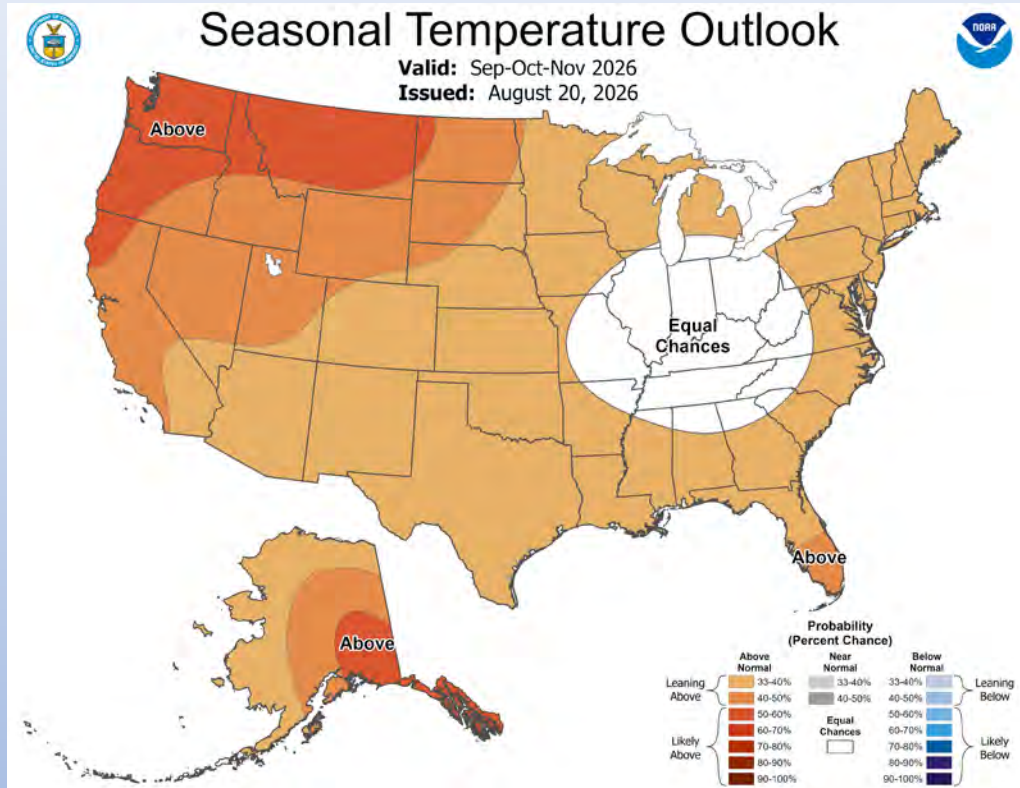
<https://www.weather.gov/abq/TempPop>



USGS Rio Grande At Albuquerque



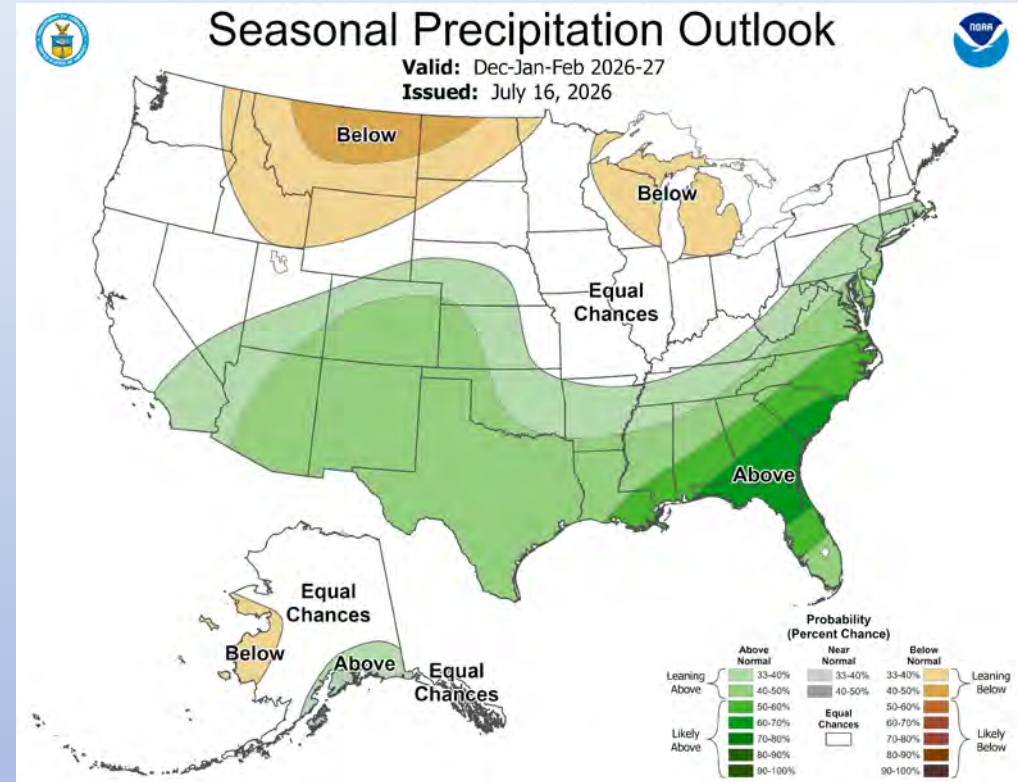
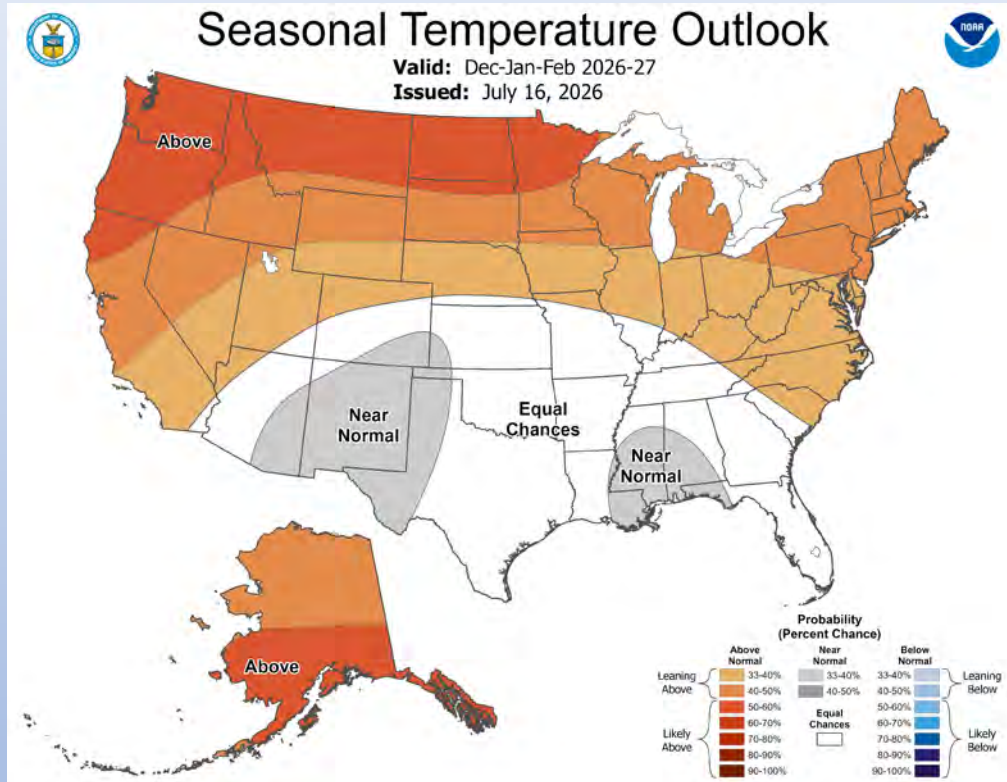
NWS 3-Month Outlook



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



NWS Winter Seasonal Outlook



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



Questions?



PRIOR AND PARAMOUNT RESTRICTIONS TIMELINE

June 2 – September 14, 2026 (Inclusive)

Appendix III

JUNE 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

JULY 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

AUGUST 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

SEPTEMBER 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14					

PRIOR AND PARAMOUNT
RESTRICTIONS (P&P)

RESTRICTIONS LIFTED

SUMMARY

76

Days with
P&P Restrictions

29

Days with
Restrictions Lifted

105

Total Days
(June 2 – September 14)

Appendix IV

MRGCD Meeting – September 14, 2026 Public Comment – Elaine Hebard

While recent rain and cooler temperatures offer welcome relief, last week's 2-kaf pulse provides a critical opportunity to consider new ways to address regional water depletions. According to the September 8 Reservoir Storage Status report, the ABCWUA holds over 104 kaf in storage -- a volume from which Abiquiu Reservoir loses more than 6 kaf annually to evaporation alone.¹

Rather than agencies developing strategies in silos, the MRGCD should explore more collaborative operational strategies. Specifically, I suggest the MRGCD pursue the following actions:

- **Investigate Joint Diversion Strategies:** The MRGCD and ABCWUA should evaluate releasing San Juan-Chama (SJC) water even when native river flows prohibit diversion. A partial shared diversion at Angostura would allow SJC water to be diverted and treated, thereby reducing groundwater pumping and protecting future river flows. Such alternatives must be considered in the Basin Study and Regional Water Planning discussions.
- **Review the ABCWUA 2030 Water Plan Early:** The MRGCD must conduct an early review of the developing ABCWUA 2030 Water Plan. For instance, how do commitments to new users impact the District? Deep groundwater pumping depletes river flows and lowers aquifer levels, directly harming surface water, neighboring well users, and Compact delivery obligations.
- **Advocate for OSE Policy Reform:** The current Office of the State Engineer (OSE) policy of granting return flow credits for effluent discharged into the river or used for turf irrigation fails to recharge the source aquifer. The MRGCD must join a concerted interagency effort to push the OSE to update its basin administration rules to create a closed-loop system. Return flow credits should only be granted if wastewater is purified and either directly re-piped to consumers or physically injected back into the deep aquifer via permitted injection wells.²
- **Commit to "All Hands on Deck" Engagement:** Active, consistent participation from MRGCD leadership is vital to reversing our Compact deficit. Unfortunately, the MRGCD was absent from the last MRCOG Water Resources Board meeting, where the State Engineer and the Interstate Stream Director addressed member concerns and a new draft Work Plan (below) was presented.

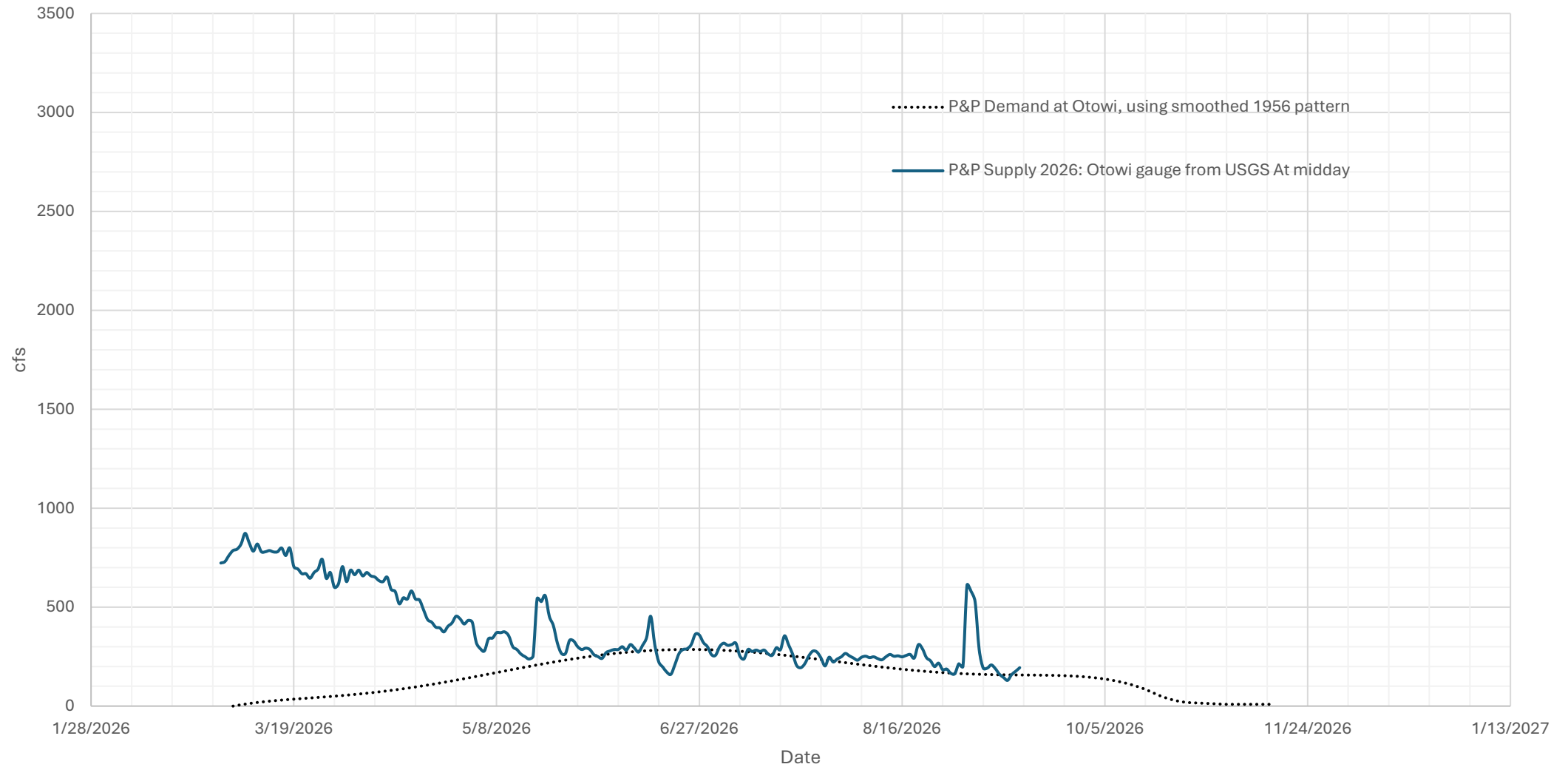
¹ A year of storage results in evaporate loss of 2 billion gallons (more than 6 afy) at Abiquiu lake, https://www.abcwua.org/wp-content/uploads/Education-PDFs/Grade8_Evaporation.pdf

² These are not new ideas. For example, both Chandler, Arizona, and Reno, Nevada, have abandoned the linear waste model, forcing 100% surface reclamation and advanced closed loops.

WRB Work Plan Discussion		
Potential Goal	Potential Strategies	Board Discussion / Decisions Needed
1. Prepare for Regional Water Planning	Review previous regional water plans and identify goals that remain relevant but have not yet been completed.	Which previous plan recommendations should be revisited?
	Prepare MRCOG-area council members to participate in the Water Security Planning Act process.	What should WRB accomplish in FY27 to prepare for regional water planning?
	Monitor state guidance and the regional planning schedule.	What is the appropriate role for WRB?
	Identify issues and priorities the region should be prepared to bring into the Middle Rio Grande Council planning process	What groundwork can be completed before the Middle Rio Grande planning process begins?
2. Expand Water Education and Awareness	Use WRB meetings for education on regional water issues.	Who should WRB be trying to educate - members, elected officials, legislators, the public, water users, or some combination?
	Develop information WRB members can share with their jurisdictions and organizations.	What topics should be prioritized?
	Increase understanding of Rio Grande Compact obligations and potential consequences of noncompliance.	
	Encourage WRB members to advocate through their own jurisdictions and organizations.	
3. Develop Legislative Priorities	Identify a limited number of specific water-related legislative priorities.	What issues require state action? Which are realistic priorities for the 2027 legislative session?
	Develop recommendations for consideration by the MRCOG Board.	What should WRB formally recommend to the MRCOG Board?
	Educate legislators about Middle Rio Grande water issues.	
	Identify potential legislative champions.	
4. Identify Actionable Water Management Priorities	Consider potential WRB involvement in/advocacy for:	Which of these should become FY27 priorities?
	Bosque/invasive species removal	For each selected priority, what can WRB realistically influence?
	Water metering	Should WRB's role be education, advocacy, coordination, policy recommendations, project support, or something else?
	Nonfunctional turf reduction	
	Rural water systems	
	Water-use reduction and conservation	
	Groundwater depletion and water-supply reliability	

Appendix V

2026 Prior and Paramount Supply and Demand 2026/09/14



Maintenance & Construction Update

September 14, 2026

Presented by:
Alicia Lopez PE
Director of Technical Services



240 Wasteway Project



Corrales Siphon Project



Corrales Siphon Project



Socorro Phase 2C



Loretta Road Project



Feeder 3



QUESTIONS?

Rio Grande at 240 WW,
Looking South Sept 26





Appendix VII

14b

MEMORANDUM

To: Chairman Kelly, Board of Directors

Through: Jason M. Casuga, CEO/Chief Engineer

From: Pam Fanelli, CFO, Finance

Date: September 14, 2026

Re: Consideration/Approval Resolution BA-09-14-26-119

Summary:

Resolution BA-09-14-26-119 authorizes a budget amendment to the FY2026 Long-Term Assets Fund. The amendment adjusts the FY2026 budget to account for additional bank fees that were received after the fiscal year-end. The fees will be recorded in Accounting Period 13 as part of the FY2026 year-end adjustment.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Board of Directors approve this budget amendment.

John P. Kelly, Chairman

Colin T. Baugh, Vice Chairman

Stephanie Russo Baca, Director

J. Chris Lopez, Director

Michael T. Sandoval, Director

Brian Jiron, Director

Karen Dunning, Director

ATTEST:

Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM
Secretary-Treasurer/CFO

Appendix VIII

Director Russo Baca Board Reports September 2026

Report on Corrales Farmers Coop Meeting & Farmers for Future Farmers Meeting, August 11, 2026.

Director Russo Baca provided the Corrales Farmers' Cooperative with MRGCD informational resources and handouts. Later that day, Director Russo Baca attended the Farmers for Future Farmers meeting with MRGCD CEO/Chief Engineer Jason Casuga and staff members Casey Ish and Amanda Molina. The group discussed opportunities for MRGCD and Farmers for Future Farmers to collaborate in support of local agriculture and future farmers.

Report on the Basin Study Agriculture Committee Meeting, August 12, 2026.

Director Russo Baca participated in the Rio Grande Basin Study Agricultural Sector Committee meeting. The committee reviewed the development of the Acequia, Tribal Agriculture, and MRGCD agriculture reports and received an update from the Bureau of Reclamation on the Basin Study and adaptation-planning process. The discussion focused on agricultural values, indicators of increasing stress, and potential adaptation strategies to sustain irrigated agriculture, improve water-supply reliability, modernize infrastructure, protect agricultural lands, and strengthen drought resilience in the Middle Rio Grande Valley.

Report on the Los Lunas Ag Science Center Event, August 13, 2026.

Director Russo Baca and MRGCD Bosque Management Coordinator Jo Strange staffed an informational table, distributed resources, and answered attendees' questions about MRGCD. The field day highlighted agricultural research and practices relevant to semiarid environments, including saffron and other specialty crops, soil health, water conservation, sustainable weed and pest management, grape production, tomato stress mitigation, chile flavor quality, and food demonstrations featuring locally grown peaches and jujubes. MRGCD helped to sponsor this event.

Report on the MRGCD's Urban Issues Advisory Committee, August 18, 2026.

Director Russo Baca and Director Baugh participated in the Urban Issues Advisory Committee meeting with MRGCD staff and community representatives. The committee reviewed the developing MRGCD Rio Grande Compact Story Map, Bosque FAQs, and public-education materials, recommending broader historical and water-use context, more interactive features, Spanish-language accessibility, Indigenous perspectives, and clearer explanations of MRGCD's responsibilities and partnerships. Members also discussed community outreach opportunities and the committee's role, priorities, and desired outcomes. The next meeting will include an MRGCD 101 presentation and continued discussion of how the committee can best support MRGCD and the broader Middle Rio Grande community.

Report on the VCSWCD Regular Board Meeting, August 20, 2026.

During partner reports, Director Russo Baca provided the Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District Board with a water report and updates on MRGCD activities and initiatives.

Report on CESOSS' 2026 Acequia Walk and Talk and Keep Los Padillas Green Event, August 22, 2026.

Director Russo Baca participated in CESOSS's educational community walk along the acequias of el Valle de Atrisco and provided attendees with MRGCD informational handouts. The event highlighted the history and cultural significance of South Valley acequias, community efforts to protect these waterways, acequia governance, the Rio Grande Compact, and current water conditions in the Middle Rio Grande Valley.

Report on the RG 6-Pueblo Coalition Meeting, August 26 & September 10, 2026.

Director Russo Baca participated in a meeting between MRGCD and members of the Rio Grande Six-Pueblo Coalition. Participants discussed MRGCD updates, coordination for the remainder of the 2026 irrigation season, and opportunities for continued planning and collaboration for the 2027 season.

Report on the Rep. Melanie Stansbury Site Visit, August 27, 2026.

MRGCD staff and Director Russo Baca joined Congresswoman Melanie Stansbury and representatives of Rocky Mountain Youth Corps New Mexico for a project site visit in the Jarales area. Rocky Mountain Youth Corps members discussed their training, work experience, community service, and future goals. MRGCD and project partners also provided an overview and tour of the collaborative project, including the crew's work and its benefits to the surrounding community and environment.

Report on the Socorro Community Conversations about Water Event, August 27, 2026.

Director Russo Baca attended the quarterly community conversation focused on Socorro-area groundwater resources, uses, and governance. MRGCD River Operations and Telemetry Manager Anne Marken participated in a panel with representatives from the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge to discuss current and anticipated surface-water and groundwater needs for agriculture, wildlife, hunting, and recreation. Director Russo Baca and Marken also responded to questions from community participants.

Report on the Water and Natural Resources Interim Committee Meeting, August 31, 2026.

Director Russo Baca, Director Lopez, and Vice Chair Baugh attended the legislative Water and Natural Resources Committee meeting. MRGCD CEO/Chief Engineer Jason Casuga participated in a panel concerning the Texas v. New Mexico settlement, Rio Grande Compact status, regional water management, metering, and water-law enforcement. MRGCD Lands and Conservation Director Casey Ish also presented Middle Rio Grande bosque management, drought impacts, water delivery, conservation strategies, and interagency efforts to improve river conveyance and reduce wildfire and flood risks.

Report on the CESOSS' Acequia Walk and Talk, Armijo, September 5, 2026.

Director Russo Baca and her family visited the Sánchez Farm Open Space, which they found to be a beautiful and valuable community resource. The event highlighted the history and cultural significance of South Valley acequias, community efforts to protect and preserve them, acequia governance, and current water conditions in the Middle Rio Grande Valley.

Report on the Farmers for Future Farmers Meeting, September 8, 2026.

Director Russo Baca spoke with Farmers for Future Farmers about the Rio Grande Basin Study and opportunities for the organization to participate in the agricultural planning process. Director Russo Baca explained the study's work to identify agricultural values, warning signs, conditions, and potential adaptation strategies. The group also discussed the possibility of Farmers for Future Farmers hosting a workshop where Middle Rio Grande farmers could review the committee's work and identify needed changes or missing priorities.