MINUTES OF THE
2,240th REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

OCTOBER 13, 2026

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

DIRECTORS		STAFF	
John P. Kelly, Chairman	Present	Casey Ish	Director of Lands & Conservation
Colin T. Baugh, Vice Chairman	Present	Lorna Wiggins	General Counsel
Brian Jiron, Director	Present	Jeff Wechsler	Chief Water Counsel
Stephanie Russo Baca, Director	Present	Pamela Fanelli	Secretary-Treasurer/CFO
J. Chris Lopez, Director	Present	Alicia Lopez	Director of Technical Services
Micheal T. Sandoval, Director	Present	Christine Nardi	Director of Human Services
Karen Dunning, Director	Present	Amanda Molina	Director of Communications

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

Anne Marken, MRGCD	Arturo Rio, MRGCD	Jo Strange, MRGCD
Matt Martinez, MRGCD	Santiago Maestas, SVRAA	Jerry Montano
Tarah Jaramillo, MRGCD	Carlos Aragon, BOR	Luke Smith, WCI
Michelle Estrada Lopez, BOR	Santiago Candelaria	Ernest Amestoy
David Montoya	Ryan Ayers, MRGCD	Tim Pitts, MRGCD

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Alicia Lopez 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 all Directors attending in person. Roll call votes will not be necessary for regular motions.

AGENDA ITEM NO.2 - APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chairman Kelly asked to add item 14. Executive Session for threatened and pending litigation, and Director Dunning asked to add Vice Chairman Baugh to 13(i).

Director Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA WITH THE ABOVE CHANGES**. Seconded by Director Lopez. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 - CONSENT AGENDA

a. **Consideration/Approval of Payment Ratification – September 2026**
b. **Consideration/Approval of September 2026 Invoices for Wiggins, Williams & Wesenberg, PC**
c. **Consideration/Approval of September 2026 Invoices for Spencer Fane LLP**
d. **Consideration/Approval of the Minutes for the Special and Regular Board Meeting – September 14, 2026**

e. **Consideration/Approval of the Minutes for the Special Board Meeting - October 2, 2026**
f. **Memo on MRGCD Approved Licenses for September 2026 (For Informational Purposes Only)**

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

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 - 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 shared that Albuquerque experienced its wettest September on record and the significant rain events increased water supply and reduced irrigation demand. She stated due to the late September rainfall, the Rio Grande Basin finished monsoon season with average to above average precipitation and it reconnected the Rio Grande from Cochiti Dam to Elephant Butte Reservoir for the first time since March. She added increased river flows resulted in a substantial increase in storage in Elephant Butte as well, and much of the additional inflow originated downstream of Otowi Gage, which is beneficial to the Compact deliveries. She said they could finish 2026 without increasing accrued Compact debit. However, river flows are declining once again and discharge at the Otowi Gage has fallen to below 500 CFS. She added P&P demand is 85 CFS this week, and she did not anticipate river flows declining below P&P demand again this season. Ms. Marken said if dry conditions persist, they could see some of the southern sections of the MRG dry again before the end of October. The NWS 7-day outlook shows a little chance for rain, with the exception of potential for storms up north; however, windy conditions are forecasted and some parts of the basin are under a freeze warning late in the week. She shared the 3-month climate outlook shows equal chances for above or below average temperatures across the Rio Grande Basin, with above average precipitation favored, and the winter outlook is showing equal chances for above or below average temperatures and increased likelihood of above average precipitation. She gave a reminder that MRGCD cannot store native water for the 2027 Irrigation Season under current Compact restrictions.

See also Appendix I.

Chairman Kelly asked what affects will be put on the Rio Grande from Colorado shutting down in the San Luis Valley when it freezes in the next couple days.

Ms. Marken responded Colorado will probably continue making deliveries, as they have overdelivered under the Compact and want to get as close to zero as they can.

Vice Chairman Baugh heard a report that scientists went up to the headwaters of the Rio Grande in the summer and looked at the bristlecone pines and the ring tree data and said it was the driest winter in the last 1200 years, but in September, it was the wettest period in recorded history. He asked how the District is planning for big swing events like that in the future.

Ms. Marken answered, taking the extremes and seeing the excess water in the river and making Compact deliveries is a way they can approve their operational flexibility in the

future, as well as improving infrastructures to be more prepared to take advantage of monsoon inflows to utilize for irrigation.

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

Mr. Martinez gave a report on the status of irrigation distribution. He said they have more than enough water to meet irrigation in the last few weeks. He stated by September 17th, improved river flows allowed them to lift P&P restrictions, but it also marked the beginning of a series of damaging storms. In the Cochiti Division, they had arroyo flows, significant erosion issues, several breakings and repeated damage to canal facilities, and diversions were suspended to reduce the risk of further breaches and cleanup. He noted the lower Algodones Acequias still needs attention, but they expect to be ready soon. In the Albuquerque Division, the Bernalillo Acequia is out of service after repeated damaging stormwater inflows but should be back online early next week. He expressed the Corrales Pump Station is still facing challenges from sediment accumulations around intakes, and maintaining reliable pumping has required extensive effort, and declining river levels could threaten the ability to continue pumping. He added there were also some localized erosion issues. In Belen Division, there was repeated damage mostly to peripheral canals susceptible to arroyo flows, and the remaining impacts are in the lower portions of the system. Flooding in Socorro County overwhelmed portions of the irrigation system and significantly impacted surrounding communities, which required considerable District resources for facilities, cleanup and repairs. He noted they have suspended diversions at San Acacia for several weeks due to limited canal operations and irrigation demand and sediment-laden floodwaters from the Rio Puerco. Mr. Martinez expressed the storms did bring welcome improvement in soil moisture and water availability, but the saturated conditions limited access to facilities and delayed restoration of irrigation service in some areas. However, urban irrigation activity has begun picking up over the last week, and they have temporarily moved away from restrictive rotational scheduling and encourage farmers to contact their ISOs to arrange deliveries instead of waiting for water to rotate to them. He said they will continue providing flexibility as supplies and canal conditions allow and will return to more restrictive rotations if necessary. He voiced the non-Pueblo irrigation session is scheduled to end on October 31st and the Pueblo irrigation season on November 15th. He encouraged irrigators to stay in close contact with their ISOs regarding late season water availability.

Vice Chairman Baugh asked if they did a monsoon ops.

Mr. Martinez said they satisfied the provisions of the agreement to divert water into the Low Flow Conveyance Channel.

Mr. Ish added they successfully made some direct diversions at San Acacia Diversion Dam but were forced to halt those as the rain was on the horizon. However, they were able to move 200 CFS diversion for several days and saw it at the bottom of the LFCC.

Director Lopez had several requests about extending the irrigation system due to the rain events wetting the fields and causing issues in getting them ready to be seeded for the fall.

Mr. Martinez understood the interest in extending the irrigation season, and they are prepared to adjust operations either way.

Chairman Kelly noted a lot of farmers have asked for extension of the irrigation season, but losing two weeks in part of November would be part of the prime time they do construction work in the system. He said they are also in debt under the Compact, and while the river is wet, they need to take advantage and try to dig themselves out of the debt a little more while they have the options to do it.

Director Jiron understood that, but if the farmers are asking for an extension and the tons of rain they received put a delay in farmers prepping their soils. He did not see the harm in providing water further than October 31st, as they are in debt and going to be for quite some time.

Director Sandoval felt if the water is available, there is no harm in extending it.

Director Russo Baca expressed when the Board decided to end the season early, they had a special meeting for that and a full staff report and it was on the agenda. She said if staff thought it was possible to extend it and not impact all the off-season projects or something financially planned for in their budget, she was in support, but she wanted a full report on it and a special meeting on it.

Ms. Wiggins agreed it was not on the agenda or widely publicized as part of the discussion, so taking action at this meeting would be inappropriate and not give constituents an opportunity to appear and share their views.

Vice Chairman Baugh said this is a worthwhile conversation and a report could better highlight what the District is willing to do in flexible and hard times, as well as how the District encourages thoughtfulness and creativeness around crop rotations or seasonal farming to move into a more fall crop type of an approach to mitigate drier longer spans.

Director Dunning stated she did not know if it was possible and it brings up the whole idea of fairness, but she wanted to see if they could look at what places they could irrigate depending on demand and construction. However, that could open up a can of worms they do not want to open. She agreed and wanted staff to look into it.

Director Lopez shared he personally had land he was planning to put a fall crop in, but it was underwater for days after the flood events and is now too wet to get into and his neighbors are in the same situation.

Chairman Kelly stated they will have the special meeting on this on October 19th, at 9 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 - ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR (Comments are limited to three (3) minutes)

Jerry Montano

Mr. Montano commented they put cement on the Garcia Extension ditch about 50 years ago and some of it is falling apart between Feeder 3 and Chavez Rd that is about a mile long. He said there are trees on the east side and the roots are breaking the cement, which is getting into the ditch, and something needs to be done about that pretty soon. Alicia Lopez was directed to follow up with Mr. Montano.

Santiago Maestas

Mr. Maestas invited everyone to their end of the season celebration burning the El Kookooee, and gave an update on the New Mexico 360 groundwater recommendations by the New Mexico Groundwater Alliance. Those recommendations included controlling and limiting new groundwater permits and pumping.

See also Appendix II.

David Montoya

Mr. Montoya understood the Pablo Montoya transfer to Sandia Pueblo is moving forward or has happened, but there has been very little to no notice to the public. He felt MRGCD should not take that action without them being noticed or involved. He said they recently had a lot of documents given to the MRGCD, many of which were transferred to Southwest Research, but he encouraged them to have a repository there that is readily available and easily accessible perhaps in an MRGCD library. He stated there is a lot out there they really do not know, and MRGCD took over 71 diversions from the river and moved them to 4, and it would be nice for them to know where some of those records are. He also voiced he'd like the irrigation season to be extended to get some fall water.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 - REPORT(S) FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR -

a. Bureau of Reclamation - Michelle Estrada-Lopez, Deputy Area Manager

Michelle Estrada-Lopez presented updates on the work their staff have been doing in the Middle Rio Grande. She said the storage for P&P lands remains at about 3,339 acre feet, and it is unlikely they will need that water for irrigation, so they will move whatever is left down to Elephant Butte Reservoir during November. In regard to El Vado, they are having their annual base plate inspection on October 21st to see if there are any additional issues that have occurred over the last year. Their River Mile 199 Project was completed, which was a riverside levee protection project and conveyance improvement project. She said Phase II Title Transfer in Bernalillo County was submitted to the Commissioner's Office for approval, the Isleta Diversion Dam Sluiceway construction is expected to begin next month, and Reclamation dredged and removed vegetation on the Low Flow Conveyance Channel near the Fort Craig Bridge during the storm events to keep water moving and prevent additional damage. She shared due to the storms and impacts to the Low Flow Conveyance Channel; they will schedule a full inspection and the Drain Unit 7 Extension for October 26th and 27th. In relation to the Lower San Acacia Reach Improvement Project Phase I, the value engineer team is active and will present to Reclamation leadership at the end of the month, and that information will be put in the design build contract, which they expect to be awarded by the end of the calendar year.

Director Dunning asked about the 90-day notification for the transfer.

Ms. Estrada-Lopez answered under the Dingell Act, there is a specific process to follow, where they have to notify congress and they have 90 days to report back any concerns or issues to Reclamation. She added if there is no report back from them, they will move forward with the title transfer.

Director Lopez shared some information he received that there is a company that got permission from the BOR to harvest salt cedars and make pallets.

Ms. Estrada-Lopez did not recall seeing that permit but said she would go back and check and let them know.

Director Jiron stated there is a lot of P&P water that will be left over and they just had a board member suggest extending the irrigation season. He asked if there would ever be any way of utilizing some of that water to keep farmers going in the future. He said the tribes are paying into this debt and they were never at the table when the Compact was being negotiated, but that water will go back to the Butte when they have farmers in the valley who are starving. He voiced it was frustrating to hear that as a farmer.

Chairman Kelly expressed they have an Indian Water Right settlement being negotiated, and the MRGCD is not in those discussions yet. He added they also need to look at storing P&P water in Cochiti, where they can sip of the Rio Grande all winter long instead of depending on the Chama and look at Hamas Canyon Reservoir, so they can be storing in three different spots.

Mr. Ish thanked Ms. Estrada-Lopez and Reclamation for their work in helping them dredge out the lower section of the LFCC after the large monsoon events.

Vice Chairman Baugh suggested staff attend the inspection with them on the 26th and 27th.

b. Bureau of Indian Affairs - Patrick Taber, Acting Designated Engineer
Patrick Taber was not in attendance at today's meeting.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 - REPORT(S) FROM THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES- Christine L. Nardi, MBA

a. Introduction of MRGCD New Hires

Ms. Nardi introduced new hires and job and title changes. They hired a new mechanic in the ER&T Division, a new field maintenance technician and a job transfer from ISO to medium equipment operator in the Albuquerque Division and hired a new front desk clerk in the General Office, and a new CFO Secretary-Treasurer.

b. Employee Recognition

Tim Pitts recognized Arturo Rio, GIS/Mapping Technician, with the Allstar Award for going above and beyond his regular job duties. Arturo has stepped up for the past few months, while the General Office has been without a front desk clerk, by greeting and directing customers and constituents and routing deliveries for Procurement and HR.



AGENDA ITEM NO. 8 - REPORT(S) FROM THE CHIEF PROCUREMENT OFFICER - Richard DeLoia

a. Consideration/Approval for 2027 Rocky Mountain Youth Corps Bosque Stewardship Crews

Mr. DeLoia presented for approval for the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps Bosque Stewardship Crews. MRGCD staff recommended award to Rocky Mountain Youth Corps for $690,837 total funded through the ISC Grant G3753.

Director Russo Baca expressed she and Director Dunning went out and saw the great work they were doing, as well as Jo Strange leading them.

Chairman Kelly felt it was a great organization and great opportunity for the youth and requested two of them come to brief the board on the projects they worked on.

Director Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN YOUTH CORPS BOSQUE STEWARDSHIP CRUISE**. Seconded by Director Dunning. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

b. Consideration/Approval of Aqua Systems 2000 Automatic Water Control Gates

Mr. DeLoia presented for approval for the purchase of two automatic water control gates to be partially funded through the ISC Grant G3737. MRGCD recommended award to Aqua Systems 2000 for the water control gates for $190,525 total, including shipping.

Director Dunning asked if these were subject to the recent tariffs since they are in Canada.

Mr. DeLoia answered they are not being tariffed right now, but there is a possibility it could happen by the time they are done.

Director Sandoval made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE AWARD TO AQUA SYSTEMS 2000 FOR THE WATER CONTROL GATES**. Seconded by Director Russo Baca. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9 - REPORT(S) FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER/CFO - Pam Fanelli, CMA, CGFM

a. Discussion/Approval of WSC Reclassification Hearing: Customer ID 15812 - Ryan Ayers, Assessment & Collections Lead

Mr. Ayers gave an update on the protest for Customer ID #15812. He said they found three main points that led to their final recommendation for the protest, including the state of the turnout and MRGCD infrastructure in the area, Historical Ditch Easement, and the consistency within the area. Staff recommended the protest be approved.

Director Dunning asked if the person who protested could legally get back the money they paid over the year.

Ms. Wiggins answered likely no, that they can enjoy the relief moving forward and not an opportunity to look back.

Vice Chairman Baugh thanked them for following up on this.

Vice Chairman Baugh made the **MOTION TO APPROVE STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION ON APPROVING THE PROTEST**. Seconded by Director Dunning. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

b. Consideration/Approval of Resolution No. BA-10-13-26-120 Adoption of Amended Budget for Fiscal Year 2027 (07-01-26 to 06-30-27) General & Capital Investment Fund

Ms. Fanelli explained this is a budget adjustment that covers Fund 1 and 9. She said they are adding revenue and expenditure to cover an MOA with the Village of Los Ranchos that was not budgeted and asking for a budget adjustment to spend loan proceeds for two prior equipment loans.

Chairman Kelly shared the Finance Committee was briefed on this earlier and were in support.

Director Dunning asked what the MOA with Los Ranchos was for.

Chairman Kelly responded it is for the planning assessment on the Del Norte Open Space Pond.

c. Consideration/Approval of Resolution No. BA-10-13-26-121 Adoption of Amended Budget for Fiscal Year 2027 (07-01-26 to 06-30-27) General Fund - Water Rights Acquisition Phase 1

Ms. Fanelli expressed this is a budget amendment covering Fund 1, the cash portion of the Water Right sale approved by the Board in August. She stated they took $1.8 million out of the Capital Reserve Fund in Fund 1, but they have to do a budget adjustment to spend it.

Chairman Kelly added the Finance Committee reviewed this prior and were in support.

Chairman Kelly made the **MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTIONS BA-10-13-26-120 and BA-10-13-26-121**. Seconded by Director Russo Baca. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

d. Consideration/Approval of the First Quarter Financial Statements and Report on Finance Committee Meeting, October 13, 2026 - Pamela Fanelli, Secretary-Treasurer/CFO, Chairman Kelly, Vice Chairman Baugh, and Director Russo Baca

Ms. Fanelli asked for consideration and approval of the first quarter financial statements. She stated the first quarter of FY2027 aligned with budget expectations, but certain General Fund expenditures are trending higher. However, they will make budget adjustments as necessary. She said grant and capital project activity will increase significantly in the second and third quarters as large projects move forward in the Grant Fund. In the General Fund, revenues totaled $1.8 million, ad valorem revenues totaled $433,000, licensing fee revenue totaled $567,665, interest on investments totaled $180,000, and contract revenue totaled $438,000. She noted they will receive their first distribution typically in December and in May. She shared expenditures totaled $7.2 million, fuel is trending higher than budgeted and they are looking at $300,000 fuel deficit, parts and repairs and rock and gravel expenditures are trending higher due to the heavy rainfall in September. She added additional expenditures for rock and gravel in the spring are expected. Ms. Fanelli explained they have $900,000 in grant revenue for the Grant Fund, and expenditures totaled $4.1. The Corrales Siphon Project is expected to be completed by December 31st, additional expenditures will come for the Corrales Siphon, the Socorro Channel Lining Project Phase 2C and Feeder 3 Phase II project will be bid soon, and the Loretta Road Project is underway. She stated the Capital Investment Fund revenue at $76,000, they transferred $325,000 for debt service, and budgeted $6.9 million to go to the Grant Fund from the Capital Investment Fund.

See also Appendix IV.

Chairman Kelly made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE FIRST QUARTER FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND REPORT ON FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**. Seconded by Director Russo Baca. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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

a. Storm Events - Flood Response

Alicia Lopez gave a report on storm events and flood response. She went over the responsibilities of the divisions to restore their system as quickly as possible and what they can learn from every event. She said storm events on September 25th, 28th, and October 1st caused widespread impacts across the District and she showed photos and discussed some of the damage and issues caused by the storms. She stated they have taken a District wide approach and their priority is restoring main canals, and have been documenting damages, tracing costs and prioritizing remaining repairs. She expressed they are helping connect those affected with the appropriate flood control and emergency response agencies. She shared she and Mr. Avalos attended the Socorro County Emergency Management Meeting to share their perspective, abilities, and their limitations. She voiced they know these storms will happen again, and they cannot prevent the impacts, but can improve how prepared they are, so they are seeing about how to formulate emergency contracts, prepare divisions better, and have stronger partnership with their flood control agencies. She thanked their field crews and division managers for their help in getting their system back in operation as fast as they did.

See also Appendix V.

Director Dunning asked if MRGCD or any other agencies are eligible for FEMA money to help pay for the repairs caused by the flood.

Ms. Lopez answered she and Ms. Fanelli have been coordinating on Department of Homeland Security funding. She was not sure about FEMA, but they will explore all avenues to recoup the cost.

Director Lopez commented the NRCS have been out surveying the farms and looking at some kind of emergency funding for the farmers, but he did not like that they cannot start the work until approved, as a lot of farmers need to get things back in production. Ms. Lopez responded they can connect and make sure people have that contact.

Vice Chairman Baugh asked how the District is thinking about how to better create and adapt to this changing landscape.

Ms. Lopez answered they understand and have a lot of historical documentation on how storms in these areas impact MRGCD, but they do not want to fix a problem for MRGCD and their facilities and make a problem worse elsewhere, so it will take thought and analysis.

Chairman Kelly expressed they have AMAFCA in Bernalillo County, Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority in southern Sandoval County, Eastern Sandoval County Flood Control Authority, and a new one in Valencia County. He said at some point, Socorro is going to decide it is time to tax themselves to deal with the upland arroyo threat, which is not part of the mission as the District. He said they need to support their request for Capital Outlay, but they need to be pushed towards making the flood commission a full-blown flood control authority.

Vice Chairman Baugh commented they are resource rich in a lot of information and data, and this is where they get proactive and help mobilize bigger organizations that have yet to organize themselves. He thanked Director Lopez for keeping him up to speed and Ms. Molina for doing a great job getting press out there on what was happening.

Ms. Lopez added they have had positive conversations with Socorro County and the city, who are interested in building analysis on their interior drainage and maybe addressing it. She said they can help in many different ways and the County sounds like they are willing.

Director Lopez shared he was contacted by several farmers who were appreciative of the quick response and got the breaks fixed in the ditches.

b. Corrales Siphon Update and Report on Village of Corrales Regular Council Meeting, September 22, 2026 - Alicia Lopez, Director of Technical Services and Jason M. Casuga, CEO/Chief Engineer

Ms. Lopez gave an update on the Corrales Siphon. She said they had a couple of construction issues that required additional casing, revised art drilling approach, remobilization, additional 40 feet of casing, and soil plug removal. She said in August, the first pilot bore successfully reached the east side of the river moving from the west side. She said their focus now is completing the remaining connections and getting the

system operational, testing the project, restoring the reliable connectivity. She noted the total project cost right now is $9.8 million. She added they presented this to Corrales Council and met with the mayor and his team, and discussed additional ways they could partner on things like fire protection.

See also Appendix VI.

Director Dunning asked if the old siphon would be left in place or be removed.

Ms. Lopez responded they do not have any plans to remove it at this time, but they are open to discussions on how to address that. She added the rock weir they have installed is keeping the sediment deposition higher than the siphon right now, but they can be attentive to the area and discuss what more needs to happen, as well as have conversations with the Pueblo of Sandia.

Chairman Kelly stated in their agreement with the Pueblo, they need to consult with them on the best way to put the old siphon to bed. However, they are not at yet that point for the Pueblo to come to the board with a proposal on that.

Vice Chairman Baugh commented they are doing a lot of projects and the community is interested in what things will look like when they leave.

Chairman Kelly asked Mr. Smith, with Wilson & Company, his thoughts on the project and lessons learned.

Mr. Smith responded the more they can learn about the subsurface condition the better. He said they have talked internally a lot about what they can do to try and learn more and they have started some of that conversation with GoTech.

Chairman Kelly inquired if they have any regrets is not pursuing a cut and cover all the way across the river in spite of the NEPA impacts.

Mr. Smith answered maybe, only because the river was so low this year.

Chairman Kelly noted Ms. Lopez provided an extensive detail on the change orders to date on the project, which were under the CEO’s signature authority. He said even though the project grew, they restored gravity surface to a big portion of the system and the diversion point has not changed.

Ms. Lopez added they are planning to demobilize the pumps within the next couple months, and they are excited to test the siphon.

Chairman Kelly stated they should be able to divert water through Santa Ana from the Angostura Diversion through Sandia when testing the siphon and then drop it back in the river off of Corrales Road. He said they could do that during the non-irrigation season in coordination with the state engineer. He felt as the owner of the project, they need to see a successful operational test and for the farmers to see it running water before the contractor leaves.

Ms. Lopez responded she could help coordinate that with their water team.

Mr. Ish stated biggest concern with the state in testing that out is the distance between the diversion at Angostura and getting it to Corrales to make sure they do not lose any water and minimize losses along the way. However, they will have those conversations and he agreed it was prudent to test it well in advance of making the first deliveries.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11 - REPORT(S) FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LANDS & CONSERVATION AND ACTING CEO - Casey Ish

a. Discussion of Proposed Amendment to Alternate Curtailment Location Policy - Casey Ish, Director of Lands & Conservation

Mr. Ish explained this is a draft of the proposed amendment to alternate curtailment location policy. He felt it was ready to present it, but it needs additional comment from the Board first. He stated the alternative curtailment location (ACL) policy the District relies on is housed within the Water Bank Policy, which has not be operated seriously for years, but they have continued to allow people with different parcel located around the valley to move water rights from one area to another to put the water to beneficial use. However, the process has a limitation of only allowing a landowner to move water if they have ownership interest in both tracts of land. He expressed many farmers have said they have a neighbor who does not farm but has water rights they would consider moving. So, they are extracting the ACL portion of the Water Bank Policy out and creating a standalone ACL policy. He went over the lines they added to or supplemented under the ACL Policy with the Board. He shared if they are successful in getting the ACL Policy as a standalone, the next step would be to revisit the Water Bank Policy to clean it up and update it so there is no conflicting language.

Vice Chairman Baugh expressed it seems the District is moving into a position where they are sort of creating a water market in allowing creative ways for farmers to move water from lands that are not able to irrigate to a better place. He asked if they would do a training on this or communicate it out to constituents.

Mr. Ish answered once they have an approved version, they will then have it as a talking point at the farmer meetings in the offseason, as well as a training section with their mapping team.

Director Russo Baca said they are essentially circumventing the Water Use Leasing Act but also charging an individual right to do that, so she wanted legal counsel to review if there are any issues legally with that. She felt it was a cool idea and would be much quicker than going through the State Engineer's Office.

Mr. Ish responded he shared this with Mr. Weschler and they will get his guidance on how it will potentially impact or conflict with that.

Director Dunning asked if they would ever go back to the Water Bank Policy one day.

Mr. Ish answered he did not envision going back to the way the Water Bank was operated in its original format. He said they want to make sure if there are individuals who want to farm and know about another individual with a valid pre-1907 not farming that right, that it continues to be in beneficial use and the District maximized agricultural production in any given year.

b. Report on Ag Water Users Survey Results & Workshop, September 22, 2026 - Casey Ish, Director of Lands & Conservation, Amanda Molina, Director of Communications, Vice Chairman Baugh, and Directors Russo Baca and Jason M. Casuga, CEO/Chief Engineer

Mr. Ish expressed it was a great event and they met with a great group of people, where they reported on the survey the researchers at UNM conducted. He said it was one of the most responsive agricultural surveys they ever had in the sector, and the most telling survey result was that they trust MRGCD as the local provider the most out of state, federal, local, and family members with information about water. He felt that was a testament to how the District has put communication at the forefront.

Ms. Molina stated 4,733 surveys were mailed and over 2,000 were completed, which is much higher than average. In regard to how the surveyors thought they should invest funds, local infrastructure was at 73%, federal infrastructure at 58%, and 57% for irrigation efficiency. She pointed out they worked with UNM to plan the workshop and they got a wide variety of people attending.

Mr. Ish added the results also showed 64% of respondent farm acreages are less than 5 acres and they are right in line with where the average age of their farmers are. In regard to where people want to see MRGCD put funds, most people chose grant funding going toward local water infrastructure and they were generally happy with the condition of their canals and ditches.

Vice Chairman Baugh stated this workshop was refreshingly different and it was cast very widely to the four counties, and he found that MRGCD is doing a lot of good things and becoming allies in the communities. He said it was awesome to be a part of and a guiding light for them to unpack a lot out of. He thanked Mr. Ish and Ms. Molina.

c. Report on the Coalition of Rio Grande Water Users Annual Conference, September 16-18, 2026 - Casey Ish, Director of Lands & Conservation, Amanda Molina, Director of Communications, Alicia Lopez, Director of Technical Services, Vice Chairman Baugh, Directors Sandoval, Dunning and Russo Baca, and Jason M. Casuga, Chief Engineer/CEO

Mr. Ish explained they had a nice reception and it was well-attended by people from Colorado and Texas. He shared they had data center focused discussions, as well as Lower Rio Grande discussion, and they were able to share, from the District side, what they have been doing to improve and strike a better water balance in the Middle Rio Grande, work they have done in the bosque, and reducing depletions. He said they also had conversations about brackish desal and heard presentations from the Water Alliance on opportunities lost across the state with the permitting process and the opportunity for reclaiming some of the water shipped down to Texas. He mentioned the meeting may be moved up and down the valley in the next year or even out of the state to try and encourage a broader discussion around Rio Grande water use.

Director Russo Baca hoped to see it move, and said there was an interesting conversation about produced water and if it could be used in Ag and how other places are using treated produced water for Ag and other water uses.

Director Dunning said they also learned about people doing cloud seeding at the conference as mitigation for farmers to make hail not as large when it falls.

d. **Information on Upcoming Events:**
    1. **CESOSS' 2026 Acequia Walk & Talks Series, October 24, 2026 - Pajarito: Durand Open Space**
    2. **Family Farm Alliance Annual Conference, October 28-30, 2026: Reno, NV**
    3. **71st Annual New Mexico Water Conference, November 12-13, 2026 - Albuquerque, NM**
    4. **Colorado River Water Users Association Annual Conference, December 9-11, 2026: Las Vegas, NV**

Mr. Ish announced the upcoming informational events.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 12 - 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. 13 - REPORT(S) FROM THE BOARD

a. **Report on 6-Middle Rio Grande Pueblos Coalition follow up meeting with MRGCD, September 21, 2026 - Jason M. Casuga, Chief Engineer/CEO, Chairman Kelly and Directors Russo Baca**
b. **Report on Personnel Committee Meeting, September 24, 2026 - Directors Russo Baca and Dunning**
c. **Report on the Tribal Water Law Annual Conference, September 28-29, 2026 - Vice Chairman Baugh, Directors Russo Baca and Sandoval**
d. **Report on the Corrales Harvest Festival, September 26, 2026 - Director Russo Baca**
e. **Report on 6-Middle Rio Grande Pueblo Coalition Meeting, October 1, 2026 - Director Russo Baca and Jason M. Casuga, CEO/Chief Engineer**
f. **Report on the New Mexico Chile Festival, October 3, 2026 - Director Russo Baca**
g. **Report on the Urban Issues Advisory Committee Meeting, October 6, 2026 - Vice Chair Baugh, and Director Russo Baca**
h. **Report on the New Mexico Water Law Annual Conference, October 8-9, 2026 - Vice Chairman Baugh, Directors Russo Baca and Sandoval, Jason M. Casuga, CEO/Chief Engineer, and Alicia Lopez, Director of Technical Services**
i. **Report on Imagine ABQ Day, September 26, 2026 - Director Dunning and Vice Chairman Baugh**

Director Dunning expressed the Vice Chairman Baugh worked hard and was a leader in getting a homeless encampment removed. She said the turnout was very poor, but it was worthwhile having Senator Maestas show up and have him talk to Vice Chairman Baugh and Ms. Strange. She was impressed with what the GIS Department has done and what the Bosque youth do when they see a homeless camp.

Vice Chairman Baugh agreed it was not the quantity but the quality of people that showed up. He said they picked up tumbleweed and trash, as well as about 100 needles safely. He said this is just the beginning and the kind of community effort they want to further bring in.

Chairman Kelly asked who was the organizing force behind Imagine ABQ Day.

Vice Chairman Baugh answered Imagine ABQ. He said they do it once a year and they were just part of that day.

Director Russo Baca provided written reports.

See also Appendix VII.

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

Director Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION at 5:41 pm**. Seconded by Director Lopez. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED.**

Chairman Kelly	Yes	Vice Chairman Baugh	Yes
Director Dunning	Yes	Director Russo Baca	Yes
Director Sandoval	Yes	Director Jiron	Yes
Director Lopez	Yes		

AGENDA ITEM NO. 14 - EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

Chairman Kelly shared no decisions were made in Executive Session.

Director Dunning made the **MOTION TO GO BACK INTO REGULAR SESSION at 6:39 pm**. Seconded by Director Russo Baca. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED.**

Chairman Kelly	Yes	Vice Chairman Baugh	Yes
Director Dunning	Yes	Director Russo Baca	Yes
Director Sandoval	Yes	Director Jiron	Yes
Director Lopez	Yes		

With no further comments, questions, or concerns, Chairman Kelly adjourned the meeting at 6:39 pm.

Approved to be the correct Minutes of the Board of Directors of October 13, 2026.

ATTESTED:

Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM
Secretary-Treasurer/CFO

John P. Kelly, Chairman
MRGCD Board of Directors

Appendix I

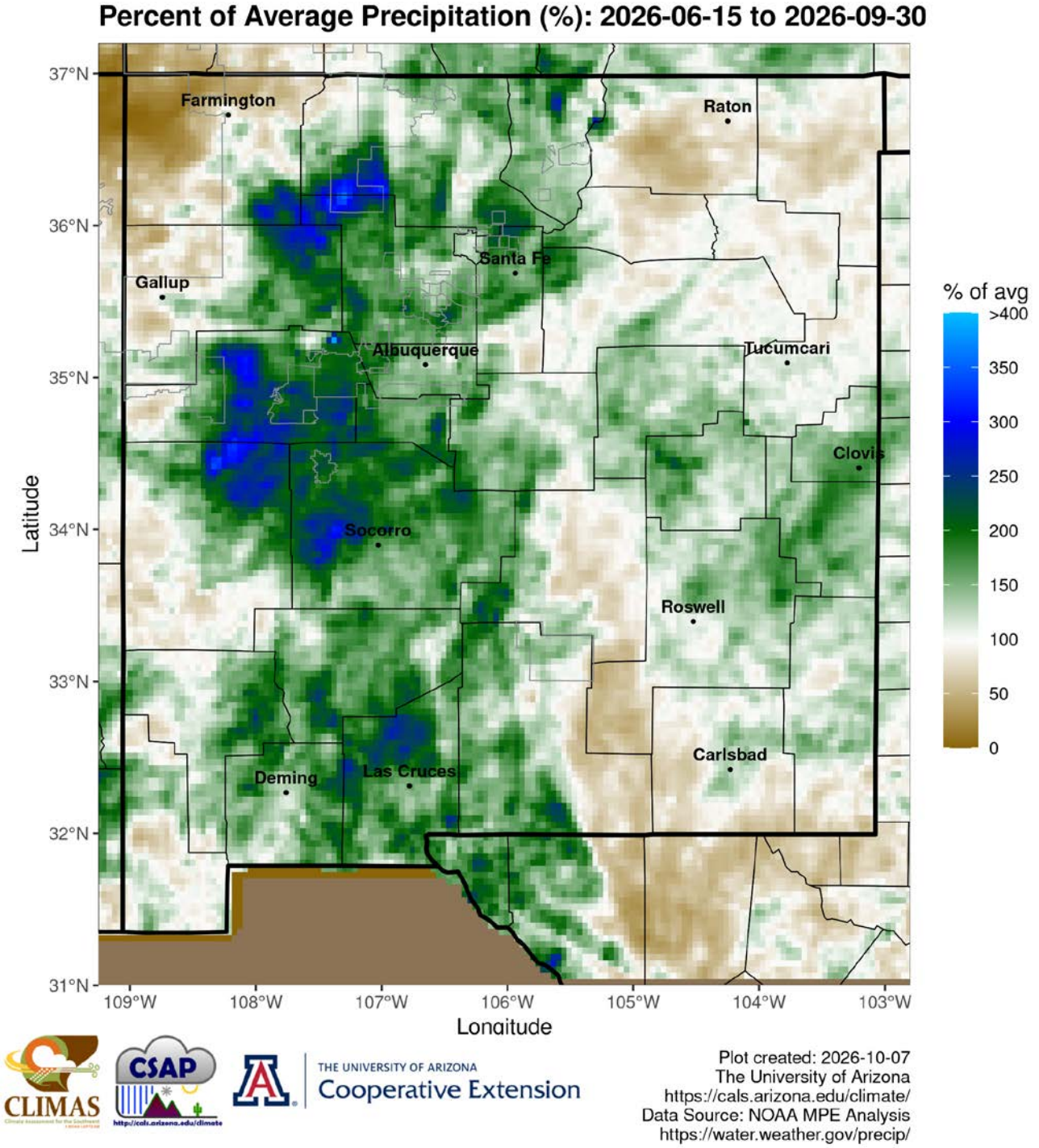
Water Supply Update

Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District Board of Directors Meeting

Prepared and Presented by: Anne Marken

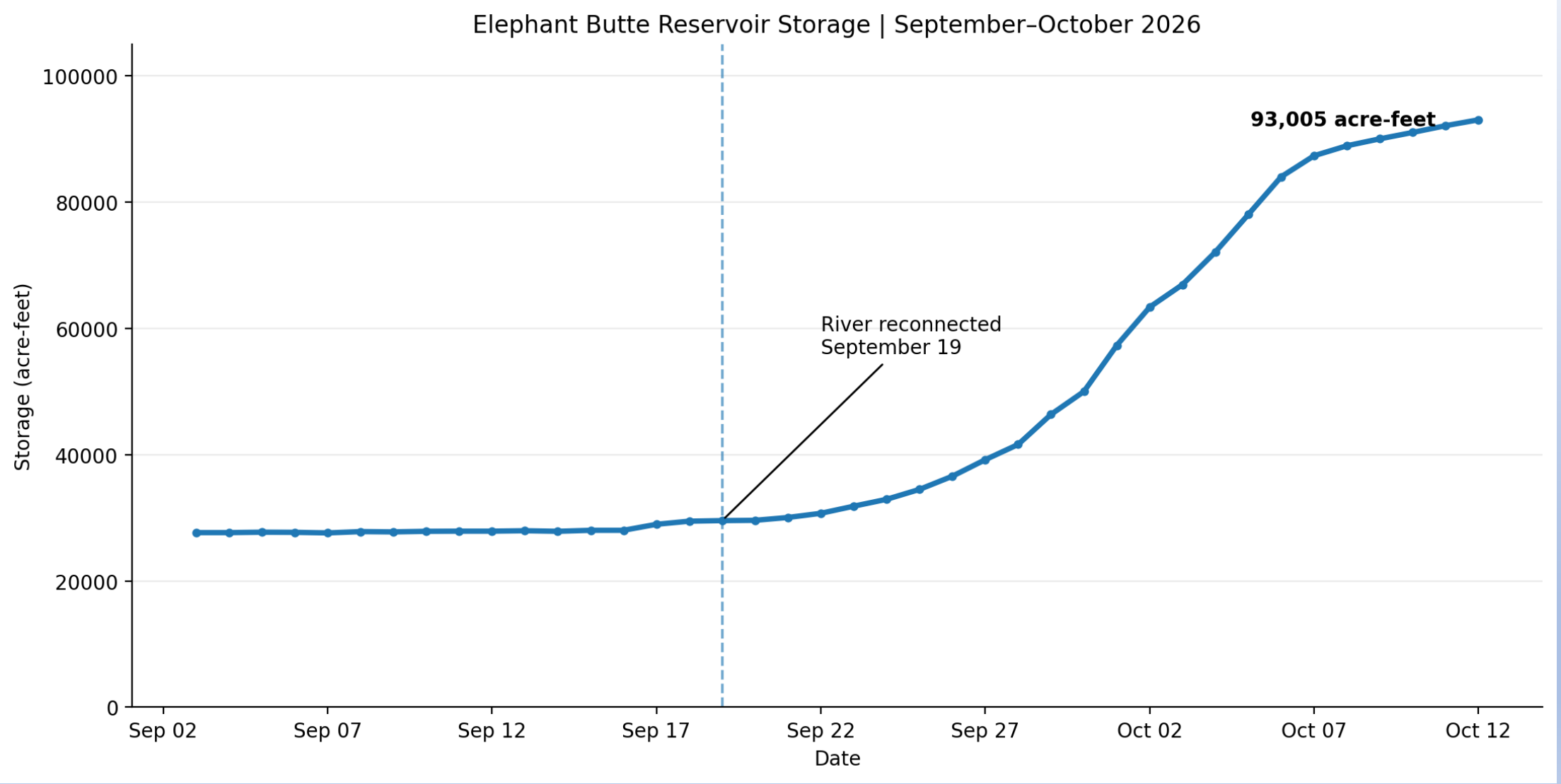
Date: 10/13/2026

New Mexico Monsoon Precipitation



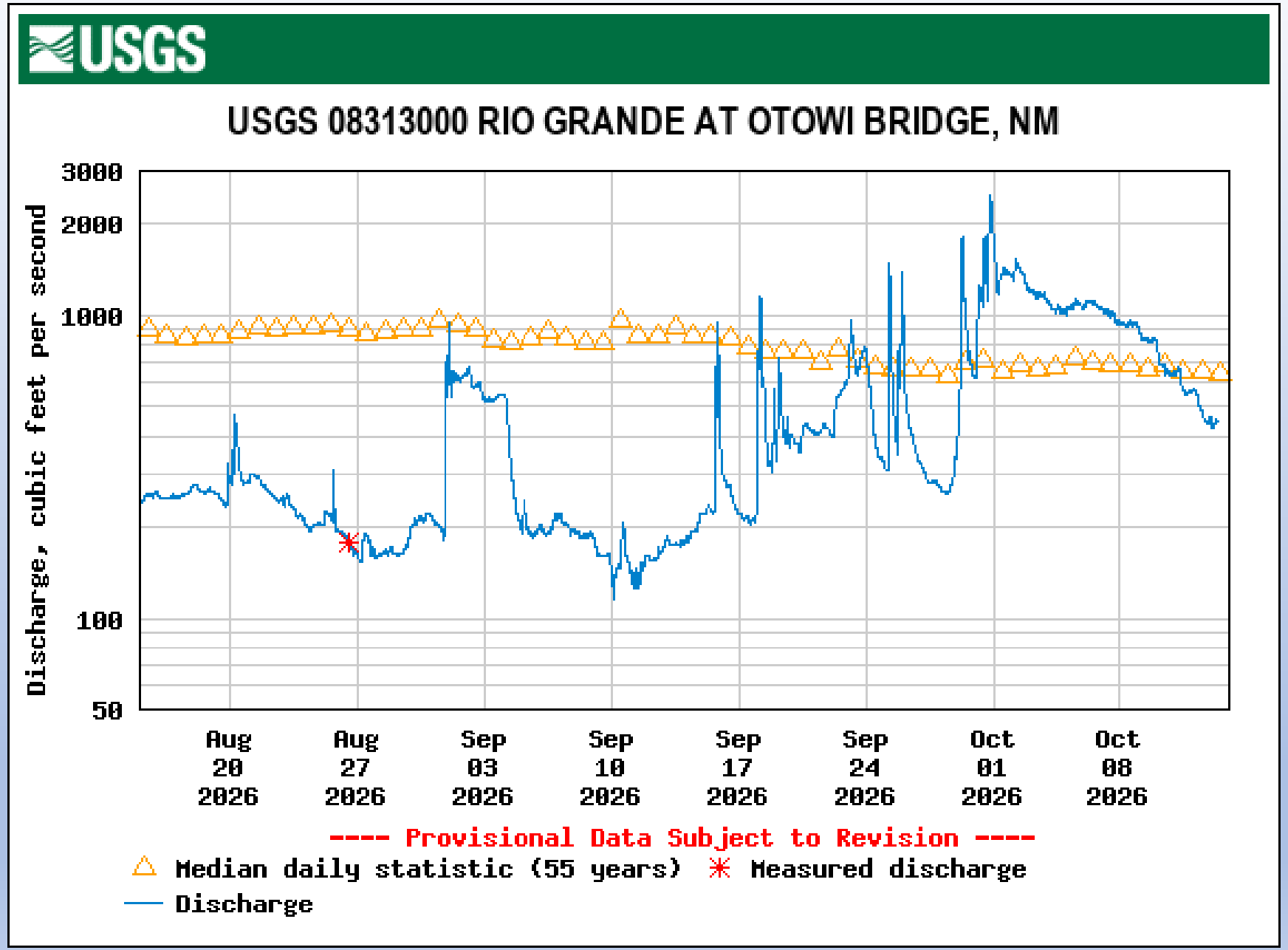
https://cales.arizona.edu/climate/misc/monsoon/NM_Monsoon_PercPrecip.png

Elephant Butte Storage



https://www.usbr.gov/rsvrWater/rsv40Day.html?siteid=1119&reservoirtype=Reservoir

USGS Rio Grande At Otowi Gage



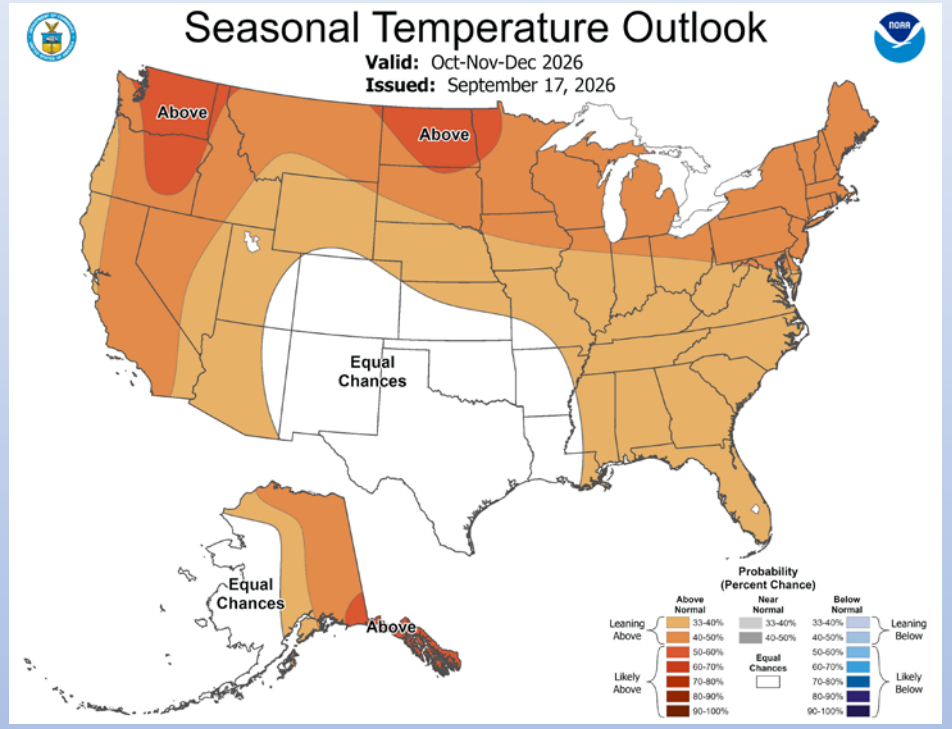
https://waterdata.usgs.gov/monitoring-location/USGS-08313000/#dataTypeId=continuous-00065-0&period=P7D&showFieldMeasurements=true

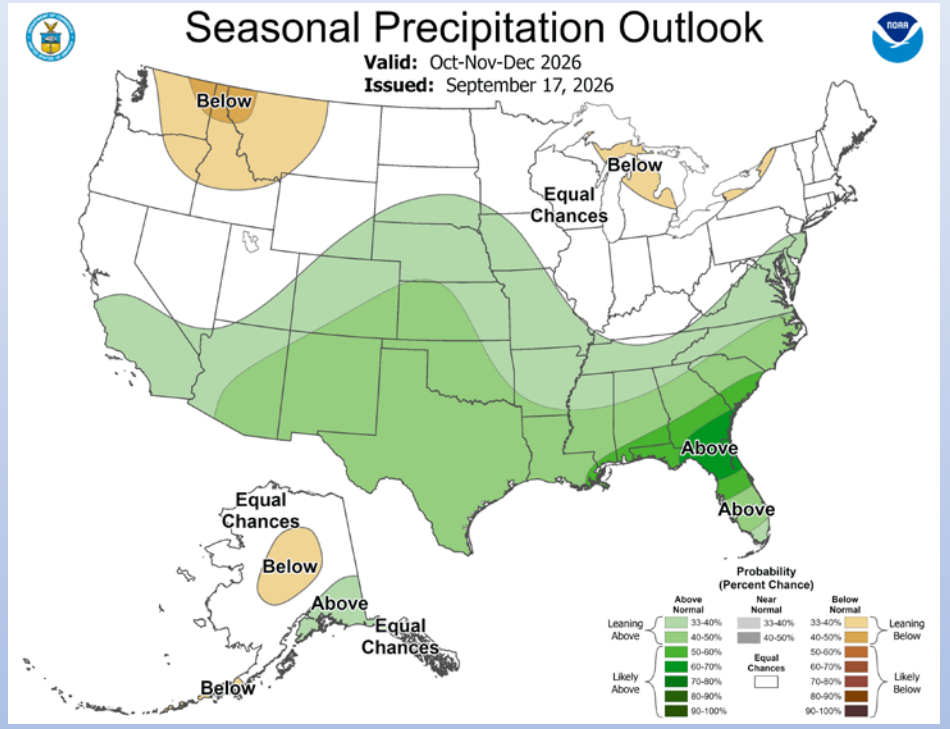
National Weather Service 7-Day Forecast

Location	Maximum Temperature							Probability of Precipitation						
	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
	10/13	10/14	10/15	10/16	10/17	10/18	10/19	10/13	10/14	10/15	10/16	10/17	10/18	10/19
Albuquerque	74	69	71	64	63	68	72	0	0	0	0	10	0	0
Santa Fe	69	63	65	60	60	64	67	0	0	0	10	20	0	0
Farmington	63	55	61	64	62	65	68	60	50	0	10	10	0	0
Gallup	60	54	58	60	60	63	66	60	20	0	20	20	10	0
Grants	65	58	61	56	58	64	67	20	20	0	10	20	20	0
Clayton	80	65	57	55	65	73	73	0	70	10	10	0	0	0
Raton	74	64	55	55	63	69	69	0	40	20	10	0	0	0
Las Vegas	68	63	58	52	58	66	67	0	10	0	10	10	0	0
Moriarty	72	68	66	57	60	67	70	0	0	0	10	20	0	0
Tucumcari	86	76	69	61	68	75	79	0	40	10	10	10	0	0
Clovis	87	78	70	59	64	71	77	10	50	10	20	20	10	10
Roswell	90	86	77	62	62	71	77	0	0	40	40	30	20	10
Socorro	78	75	72	63	63	69	74	0	0	0	20	30	10	0
Chama	53	48	55	55	56	57	58	80	80	0	10	10	20	10
Taos	64	59	61	59	60	63	64	0	20	0	0	10	10	0
Angel Fire	60	55	55	50	57	59	60	0	20	10	10	10	10	0
Los Alamos	64	59	60	57	57	61	63	0	10	0	10	10	10	10
Ruidoso	68	66	65	47	55	62	66	0	0	40	50	40	20	10
Quemado	63	58	64	57	60	65	67	10	10	0	10	20	20	0

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

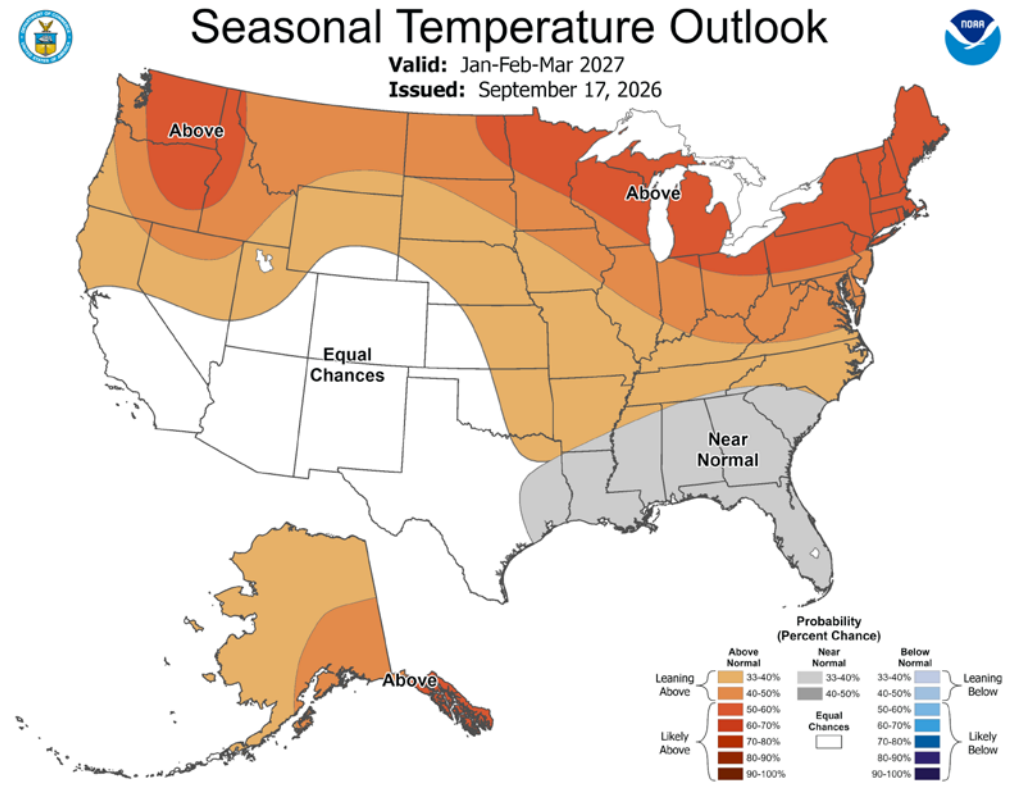
NWS 3-Month Outlook

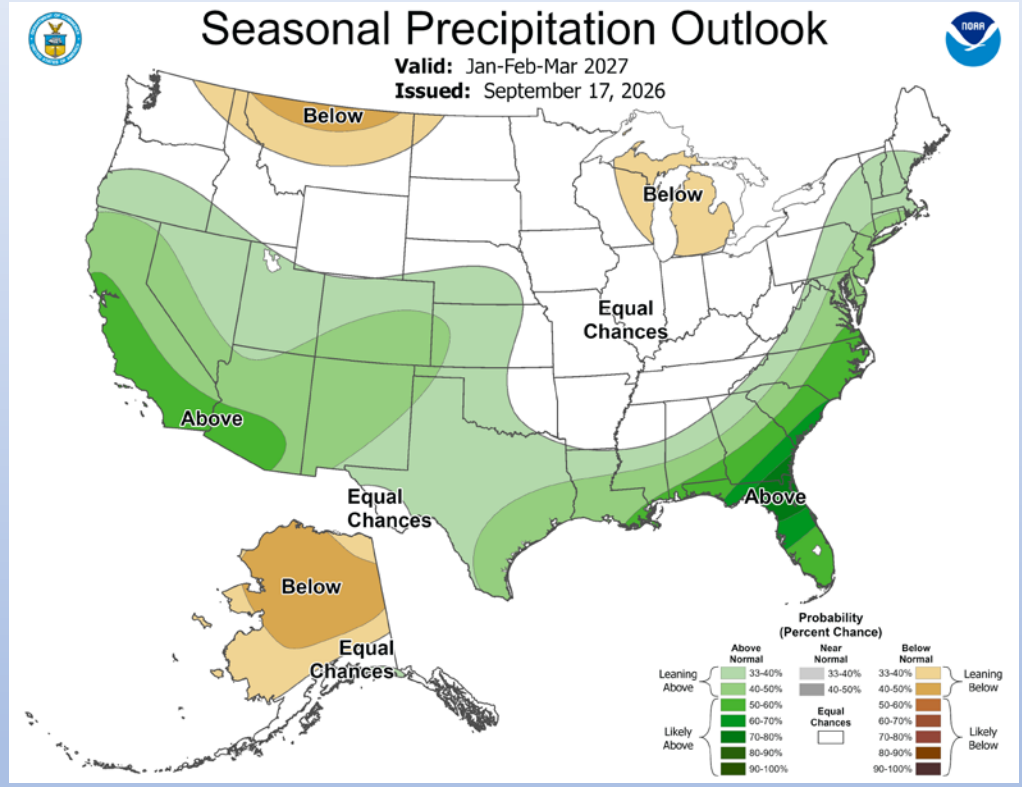




https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/seasonal.php?lead=1

NWS Winter Outlook





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

Questions?

Appendix II



EL KOOKOO
IS COMMIN
5PM-OCTOBER-2
Rio Bravo Pa

EL KOOKOOEE SE' QUEMA

?WHAT ARE YOUR FEARS?

?QUALES SON TUS MIEDOS?

GRACIAS

DONATION

Appendix III

Supplemental Review of 2026 WSC Protest for Customer ID #15812



Secondary Review and Supplemental Site Visit

- Upon further review we are recommending that the protest be approved.
  - Current State of Applicable Turnout/MRGCD Infrastructure
  - Status of the Historical Ditch Easement
  - Consistency Within the Area

Current State of Applicable Turnout/MRGCD Infrastructure

Turnout is currently rusted and inoperable, this seems to indicate that the infrastructure would at minimum need to be replaced, possibly relocated as well.

The height of the irrigation infrastructure (feeder ditch, turnout, etc.) make it such that the amount of water required to fill the MRGCD irrigation ditch, to then reach the historic community ditch, is not feasible

The turnout pictured was not tagged and itemized, according to Alicia that process has been carried out historically to track infrastructure, and this indicates that the turnout in question has not been used/considered functional infrastructure for 20+ years.



Historical Ditch Easement

The current state of the easement and review of historical mapping/images indicates that the ditch easement has not actually functioned as such since about the 1960's, coinciding with the parcel being converted from farmland, to dairy, and finally to rural residential.

The observable depression of the easement ends one parcel earlier than the protesting parcel.

The observable depression currently seems to be caused by use of the easement by utility companies driving vehicles along the easement.

Within the easement there is historical/dilapidated cattle/ranch infrastructure that would obstruct the free flow of water through the easement.



Consistency Within the Area

Other parcels within the area that are receiving irrigation water are multiple parcels to the west and are not receiving their irrigation water from the ditch easement/turnout that are in question.

No adjacent parcels are billed a Water Service Charge.



Appendix IV

To: Board of Directors

From: Pam Fanelli
Date: October 6, 2026
Subject: First Quarter FY2027 Financial Summary – Governmental Funds

Overview

The District's first-quarter FY2027 financial performance currently aligns with budget expectations, although certain general fund expenditure categories are trending higher. The District is looking at the budget closely and will make adjustments as necessary.

Grant and capital project activity will increase significantly in the second and third quarters as large projects move forward.

Debt service activity is minimal at this stage, with required transfers already in place.

General Fund – Budget to Actual

- **Revenues**: $1,778,414. Ad Valorem Revenues total $433,996(July and August). Licensing Fee revenue totals $567,665. This is due to revenue collected from license fees collected from Fibertel. Interest on investments totals $180,700, and contract revenue recorded totals $438,500, which includes the 1st quarter billing for the BIA.

  Based on the notice of values, the District believes it accurately budgeted ad valorem revenues for fiscal year 2027.

- **Expenditures**: Total expenditures were $7,237,525 in the 1st quarter of 2027. Expenditures trending higher or expected to trend higher are as follows:

  - Fuel is trending higher than budgeted. If the current fuel prices remain steady, the District is looking at a $300,000 deficit in the fuel budget.
  - Parts and repairs are trending $70,000 higher in 1Q27 than 1Q26. Additional research is required.
  - Rock/Gravel: Due to heavy rainfall in September, the District has purchased additional rock/gravel to fix damaged infrastructure. The current additional cost is $100,000. More unbudgeted expenditures are expected if spring runoff brings a high volume of water.

- **Analysis**: The District expects additional unbudgeted expenditures in future quarters and is looking at the budget closely.

Long-Term Assets (Levee Fund)

- **Revenues**: $2,999 from interest earnings on LGIP balances.
- **Expenditures**: $40 on bank fees.

Debt Service Fund

- **Revenues**: $10,008 in interest from NMFA balances and $325,452 in transfers from the Capital Investment Fund.
- **Expenditures**: None recorded yet; debt service expenses are posted when NMFA releases payments to creditors.
- **Analysis**: The fund is adequately positioned for scheduled debt service payments. All monthly transfers are being made as planned, providing assurance of coverage.
- **The District has applied for a loan with NMFA for a Water Rights Purchase**. The application will be reviewed by the NMFA Board in October 2026. A budget adjustment will be made if the District is awarded the loan.

Grant Fund

- **Revenues**: $909,520 Grant Revenue. Grant Revenue to be billed; total $3,832,492
- **Expenditures**: $4,100,536.
- **Notes**:
    - The Corrales Siphon and NMISC grants will be billed as soon as the payments clear the bank.
    - NFWF EWLP payments have been made for the late season, and billing has been completed.
- **Looking Ahead**:
    - The Corrales Siphon project is expected to be completed by December 31st. Change orders have been budgeted as match and budgeted in the Capital Investment Fund.
    - The Socorro Channel Lining Project PH 3 is going to be bid soon.
    - The Feeder 3 PH 1 project is nearing its end, and the next phase will be bid out.

- The Loretta Road Project is under way and will have to pull match from the Capital Investment Fund. A budget adjustment was made in September.

Capital Investment Fund

- **Revenues**: $76,444, primarily ad valorem collections.
- **Expenditures**: $1,564.
- **Transfers**:
  - $325,452 to Debt Service.
  - $0 for Grant Match at this time but journals will be entered when billing is completed.
- **Grant Match**: Budgeted at $6,923,934, primarily for Corrales Siphon, Socorro Phase 2, Feeder 3, and Loretta Road Projects. These projects are expected to begin drawing on match funds in Q2–Q3. Fund Reserves will also be used to fund the grant match.
- **Analysis**: Current activity is consistent with expectations. The fund will see substantial use later in the fiscal year as capital projects ramp up.

Appendix V

Storm Events- Flood Response

October 13, 2026

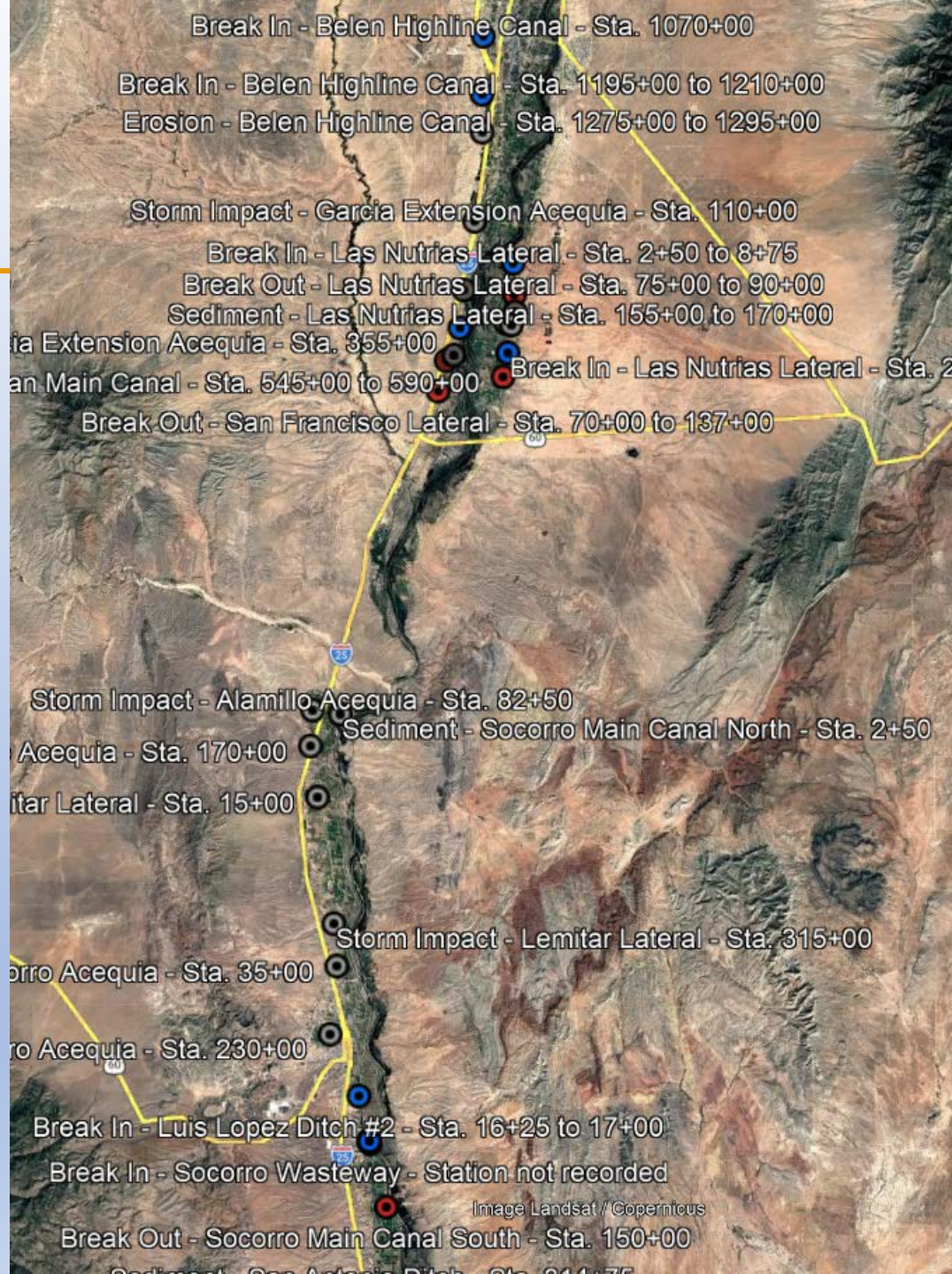
Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District

Prepared by:
MRGCD Engineering Department

MRGCD IMPACTS

Storm events on September 25, September 28, and October 1 caused widespread impacts across the District, with some areas experiencing more significant damage than others.

Our priority is restoring irrigation operations as quickly and safely as possible.



Angostura Arroyo Break





East Belen- Las Nutrias, San Juan Main Canal



Las Nutrias lateral station 123+00 broke and filled with sediment.



San Juan Main Canal Sta. 570+00: Arroyo breaking into the canal and filling it with sediment.

West Belen- Belen Highline, Garcia Extension and San Francisco Lateral



Belen Highline Canal Sta.1210+00: Arroyo breaching into BHLC.



Garcia Extension Acequia Sta.272+00: Arroyo breaching into Garcia Extension.



San Francisco Lateral Sta.75+00: Storm inflow caused the lateral to fill with about 3-4 ft of sediment.

Brown Arroyo

- Brown Arroyo that runs over MRGCD Luis Lopez Ditch #2 Sta. 17+00. Breaching railroad and adjacent fields



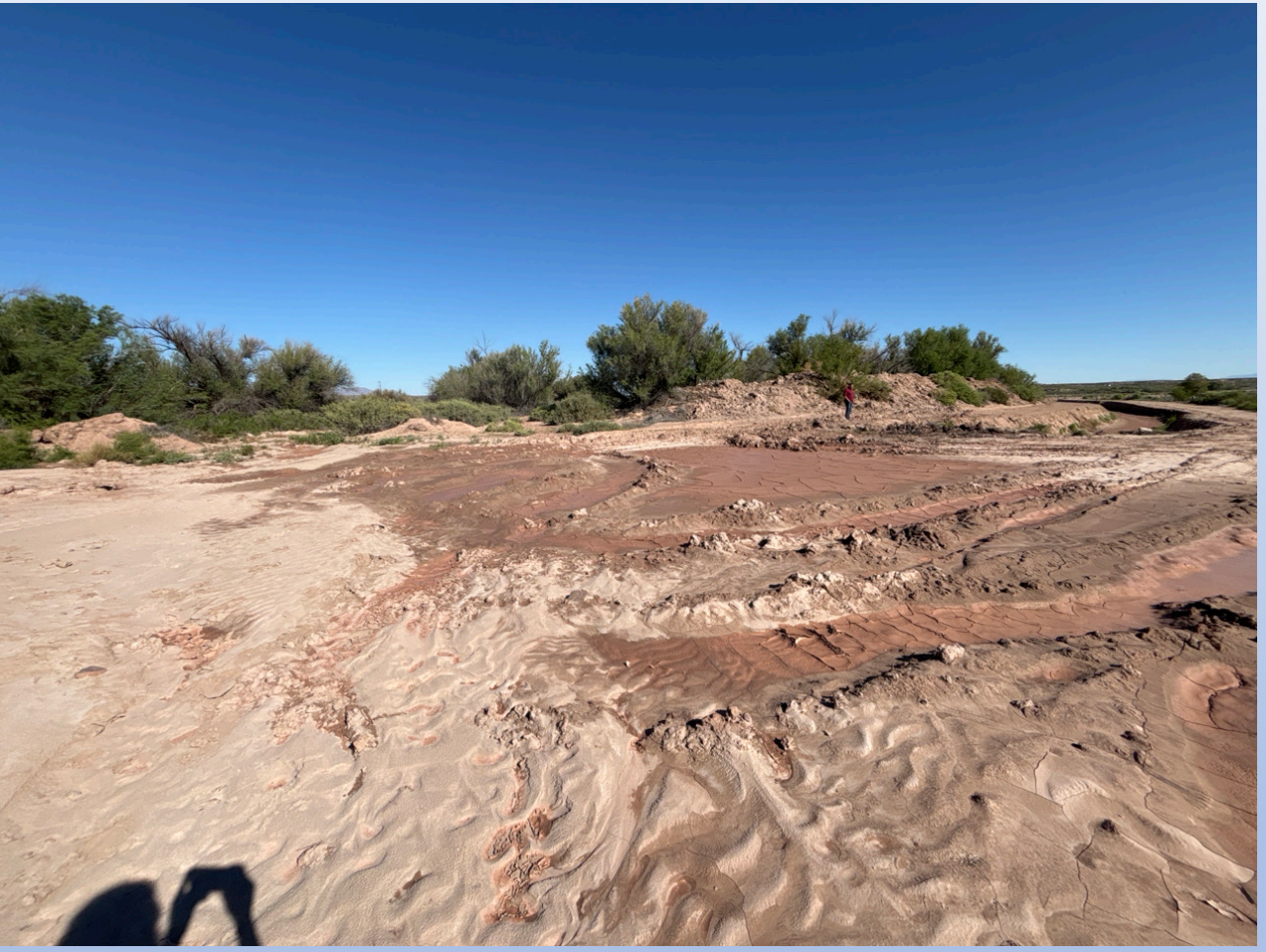
Hwy 380





Arroyo causes the San Antonio Ditch to overtop at Sta. 300 to 315+50. Overtopping water flows into the train tracks and fields adjacent to the railroad.

Alamillo





Arroyo hitting the Alamillo Acequia Sta. 75 to 77+00, buried the existing culvert.

Low Flow Conveyance Channel

Storm flows breaching the Low flow conveyance channel next to the Socorro Wasteway





STORM RESPONSE & RECOVERY

Expanded Capabilities: Utilized on-call contractors and a Districtwide staffing approach to support the hardest-hit divisions and prioritize restoration of irrigation service.

- Documenting damage, quantifying response costs and prioritizing repairs to restore main canals and critical facilities.

- Evaluating how our facilities performed under extreme conditions and identifying opportunities to improve preparedness and response to future events.


Questions

Corrales Siphon Update

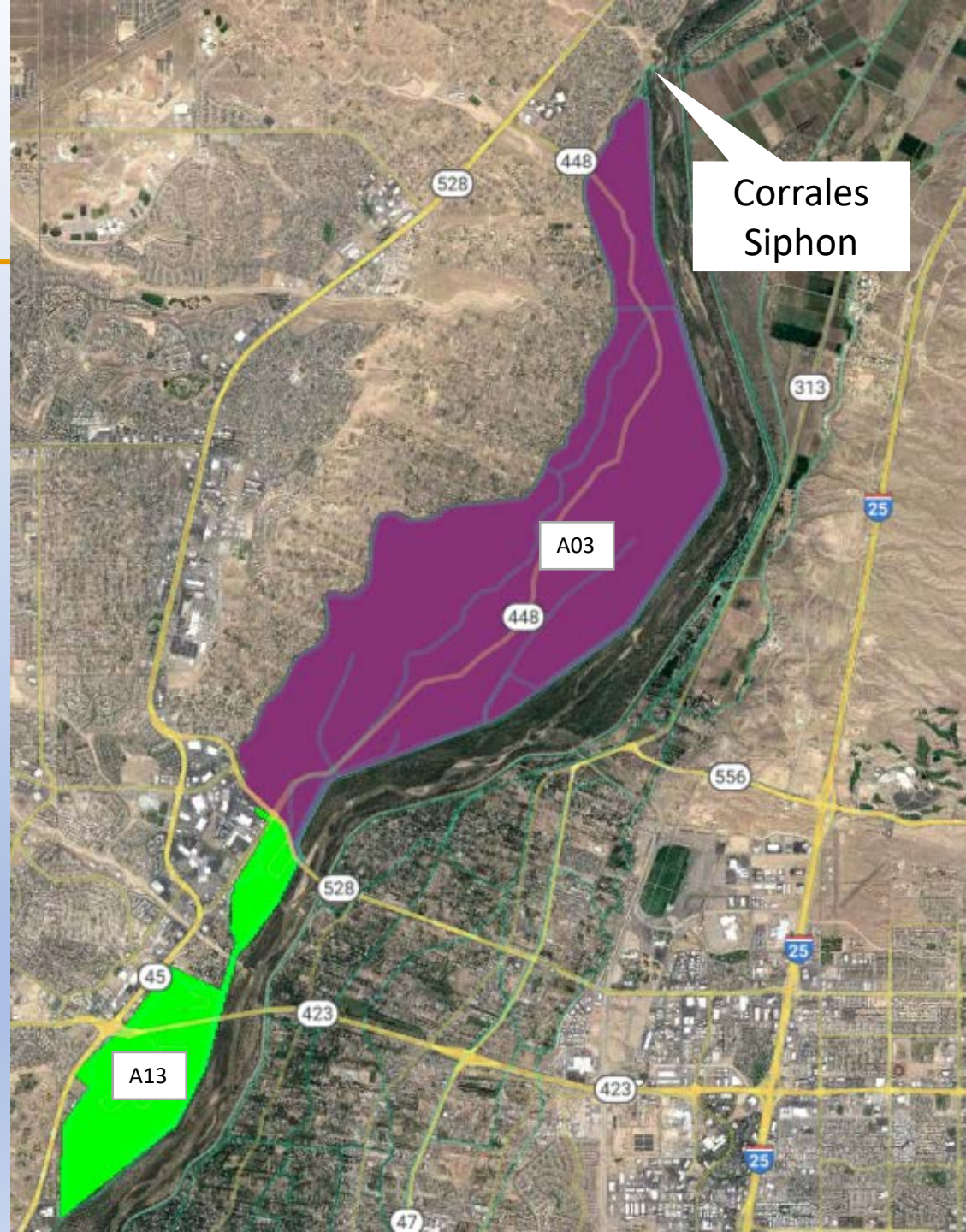
October 13th 2026

Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District

Prepared by:
MRGCD Engineering Department

Corrales Siphon Service Area

- The Corrales Siphon ISO Zone A03 and the west portion of A13
- West side of the river from Corrales Rd. to Montano Rd.
- Approximately 1000 irrigated acres



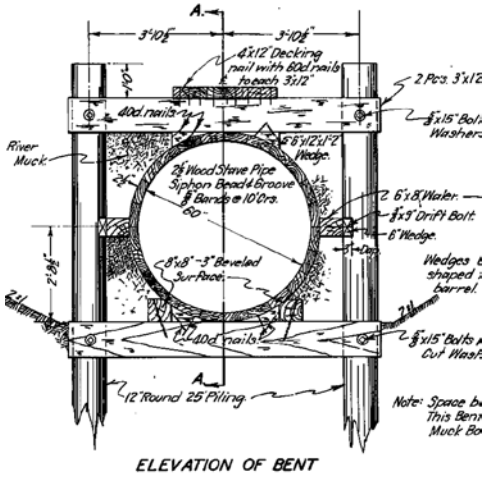
CORRALES

MAIN CANAL

CORRALES SIPHON

ATRISCO FEEDER

- 1200 ft in Length
- Constructed in 1933
- 5’ Diameter Wood Stave Pipe
- Sink holes formed on the upstream side of the siphon alignment



ELEVATION OF BENT

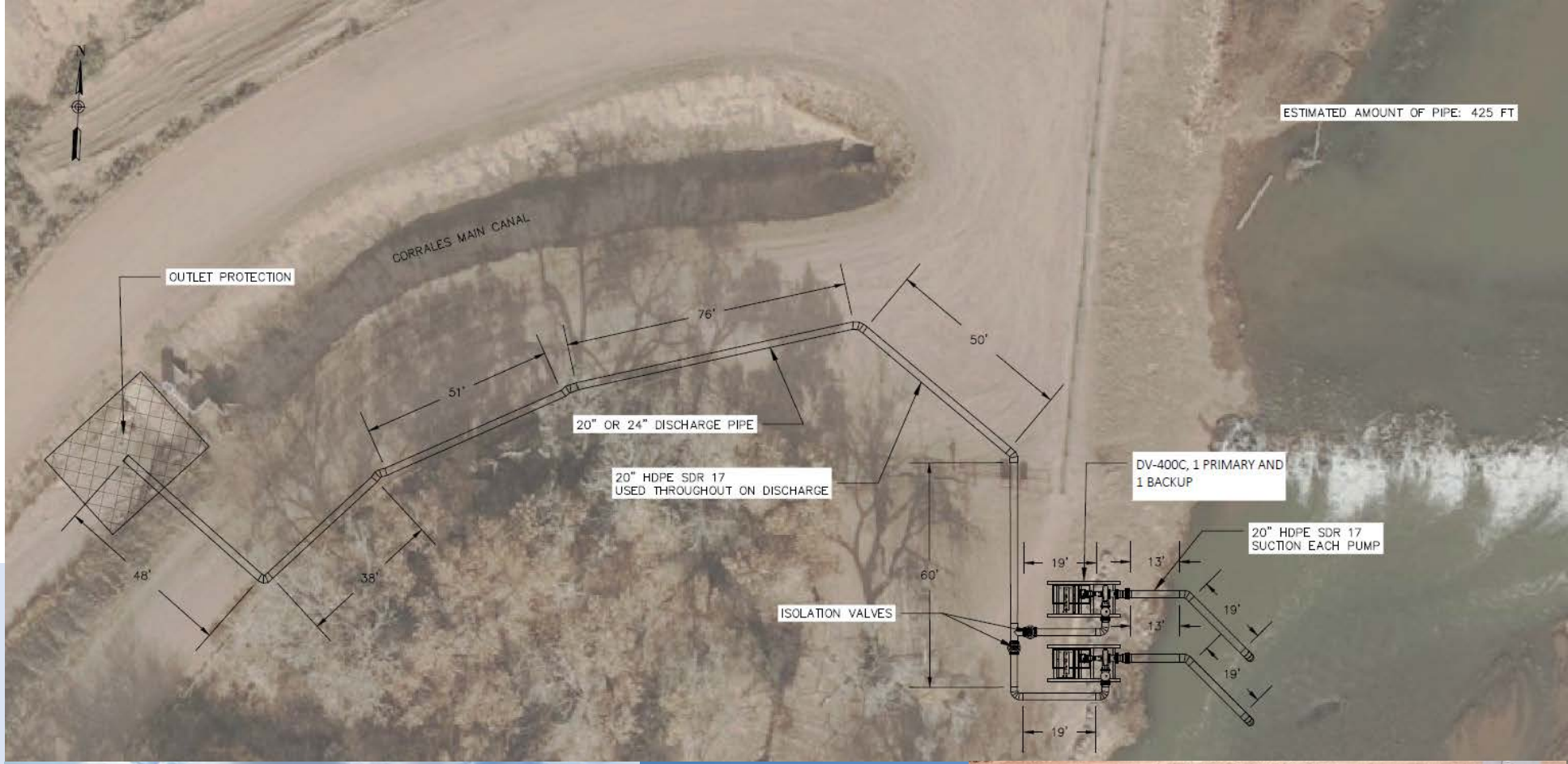


Pumping Operation

Two Diesel Pumps Installed from the river to the Corrales Main Canal

- 15-20 cfs per pump

Environmental Minnow Monitoring Conducted









Design & Construction

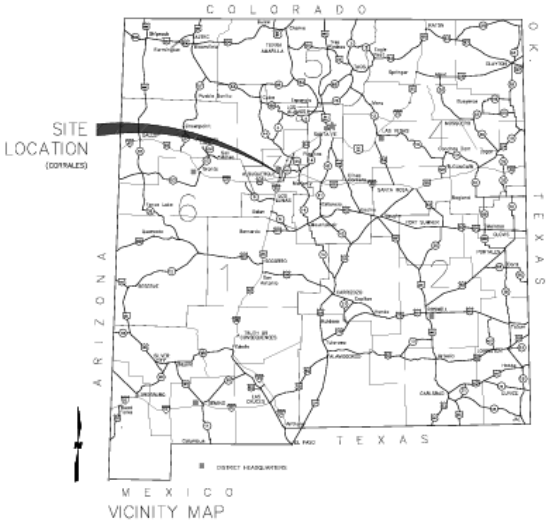
Bid: Oct 2025

Construction Start: Dec 2025

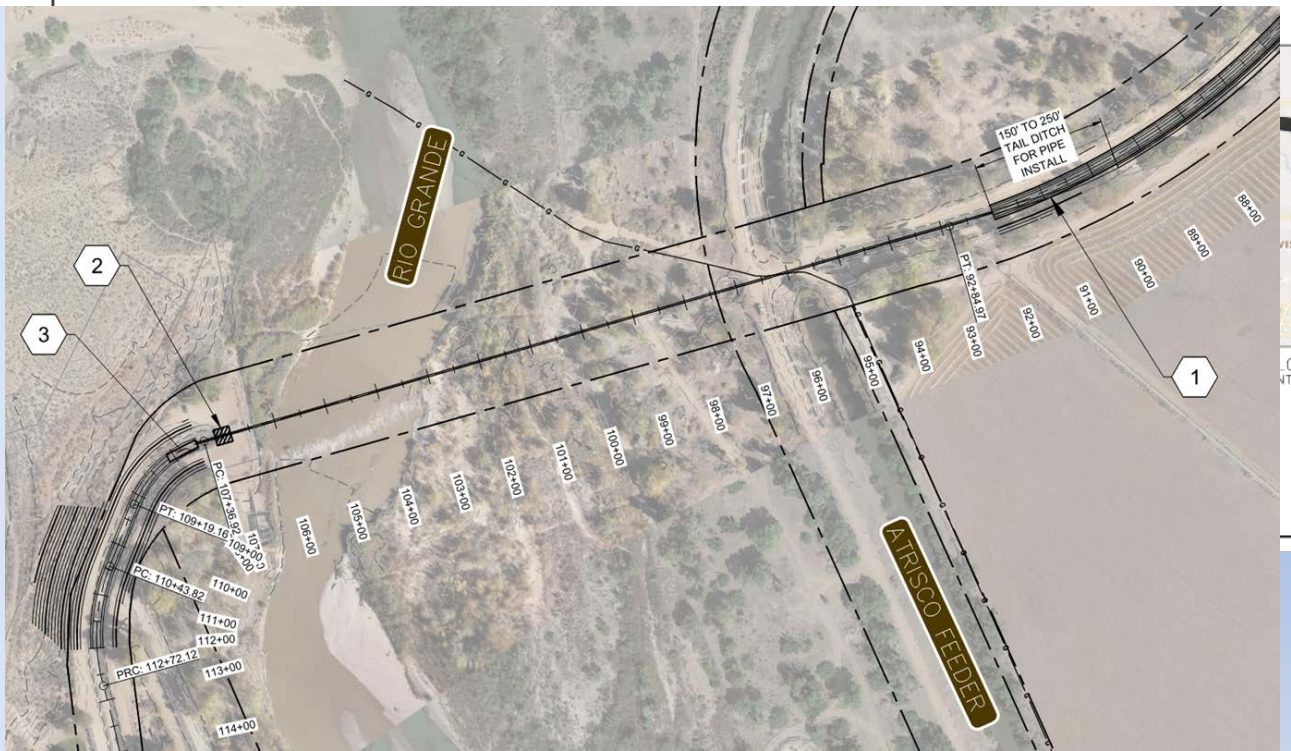
MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

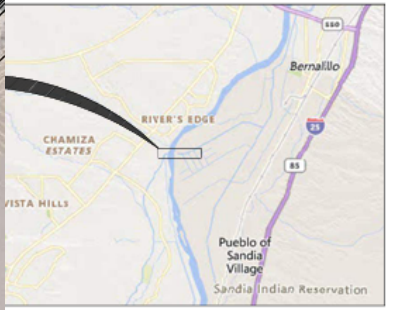
CONSTRUCTION PLANS FOR

CORRALES SIPHON REPLACEMENT



VICINITY MAP





LOCATION MAP

WILSON & COMPANY
401 MAESTHEAD ST. NE., SUITE 100
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87102
PHONE: 505-348-4000
FAX: 505-348-4055
www.wilsonco.com

CONSULTANTS

SEAL

PROJECT NAME
MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT
CORRALES SIPHON REPLACEMENT

REV.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY
2	02/17/2025	ADDENDUM #5 - VE UPDATES	LAS
1	11/27/2024	ADDENDUM #3	LAS
	10/30/2024	ADDENDUM #1	LAS

PROJECT NO: WCI: 2180034301
DESIGNED BY: LAS
DRAWN BY: ILJ
CHECKED BY: LAS
DATE: FEBRUARY 2025

SHEET TITLE
COVER SHEET

SHEET NO:
G-001





Global Underground – Ongoing fusion on HDPE.



NPL – 58” Barrel exiting conductor casing.



NPL – Continued pulling 58” barrel back to the drilling rig.


MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT
SINCE 1925



Questions

Appendix VII

Director Russo Baca Board Reports, October 2026

Report on the Coalition of Rio Grande Water Users Conference, September 16-18, 2026

Director Russo Baca attended the conference along with Vice Chair Baugh; Directors Sandoval and Dunning; Jason M. Casuga, CEO/Chief Engineer; Casey Ish, Director of Lands & Conservation; Amanda Molina, Director of Communications; and Alicia Lopez, Director of Technical Services. The conference provided an opportunity to learn about water issues affecting Rio Grande water users and connect with others working on water management, agriculture, and regional planning. Both Mr. Casuga and Mr. Ish presented at the conference.

Report on the RG 6-Pueblo Coalition Meeting, September 21, 2026

Director Russo Baca attended the follow-up meeting along with Chair Kelly and Jason M. Casuga, CEO/Chief Engineer. Participation supported continued communication and coordination between the District and Pueblo representatives regarding shared water interests in the Middle Rio Grande.

Report on the Ag Water Users Survey Results & Workshop, September 22, 2026

Director Russo Baca attended the workshop along with Vice Chair Baugh; Jason M. Casuga, CEO/Chief Engineer; Casey Ish, Director of Lands & Conservation; and Amanda Molina, Director of Communications. The workshop focused on UNM's survey of agricultural water users within the MRGCD, conducted primarily between January and March 2026. The survey received 2,067 responses, a 43% response rate. Pueblo agricultural water users were not included in the survey.

Respondents identified drought and reduced surface water availability as their most significant challenges while expressing a strong commitment to continued irrigation and crop production. Local water infrastructure improvements ranked as the highest investment priority. Respondents also favored management approaches that retain water within agriculture and the District, with greater support for temporary transfers than permanent transfers.

Only approximately 7% of respondents reported previous participation in the Environmental Water Leasing Program. Concern about losing water rights was the most frequently cited barrier among nonparticipants; other barriers included unfamiliarity with the program, field restoration costs, insufficient compensation, and agricultural tax concerns.

The findings underscore the importance of reliable water delivery, infrastructure investment, and clear communication about conservation programs. They provide useful guidance for District planning and outreach aimed at addressing water scarcity while sustaining local agriculture.

The survey results can be found here: https://mrgsurvey.unm.edu/

Report on the Personnel Committee Meeting, September 24, 2026

Director Russo Baca participated in the Personnel Committee meeting along with Director Dunning as part of their Board committee responsibilities. The meeting focused on the new CFO position to replace Pam Fanelli, who plans to retire.

Report on the Corrales Harvest Festival, September 26, 2026

Director Russo Baca attended the Corrales Harvest Festival. The event offered an opportunity to connect with community members and celebrate Corrales and the Middle Rio Grande Valley's agricultural traditions. Director Russo Baca provided handout materials for the festival.

Report on the Tribal Water Law Conference, September 28-29

Director Russo Baca attended the conference along with Vice Chair Baugh and Director Sandoval to further understanding of Tribal water law and issues relevant to water management. Continuing education in this area supports informed participation in District discussions involving Tribal water interests and regional coordination, as well as tribal water law settlements.

Report on the RG 6-Pueblo Coalition Meeting, October 1, 2026

MRGCD representatives reported the MRGCD water update to the coalition. These meetings support ongoing relationships and communication with the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos.

Report on the New Mexico Chile Festival, October 3, 2026

Director Russo Baca attended the New Mexico Chile Festival. The event highlighted the importance of agriculture, particularly chile, to New Mexico’s communities, economy, and cultural traditions and provided an opportunity to engage with community members.

Report on the Urban Issues Advisory Committee Meeting, October 6, 2026

Director Russo Baca participated in the meeting along with Vice Chair Baugh. The committee provides a forum for community input and discussion of District issues affecting urban areas, including opportunities to improve public understanding and engagement. The next meeting will include a presentation by the MRGCD lands and licensing team.

Report on the NM Water Law CLE, October 8-9, 2026

Director Russo Baca attended the conference along with Director Sandoval, Jason M. Casuga, CEO/Chief Engineer, and Alicia Lopez, Director of Technical Services. Mr. Casuga sat on a panel with other conservancy and irrigation districts to discuss sharing water during shortages.