



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Upper Colorado Region  
Albuquerque Area Office  
555 Broadway NE, Suite 100  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102-2352

IN REPLY REFER TO:

ALB-100

2.2.1.06

10/31/2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY

Mr. Shawn Sartorius, Field Supervisor  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office  
2105 Osuna Road NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87113

Subject: Reinitiated Consultation for Reclamation's MRG Operations and Maintenance Activities

Dear Mr. Sartorius:

The Bureau of Reclamation is considering requesting reinitiation of Endangered Species Act Section 7(a)(2) formal consultation on its Middle Rio Grande operations and maintenance activities. During such consultation, Reclamation would consider in its Biological Assessment, as appropriate, the following issues:

- 1) Development of clearly defined, prioritized, and enforceable conservation measures as part of the proposed action, a subset of which would take into account the minnow's 3-year lifespan.
- 2) Analysis of the impacts of climate change on river flows and species added to impacts of river management actions using the most current climate science.
- 3) Analysis of river management impacts on Rio Grande silvery minnow recovery, as well as survival.
- 4) Analysis of the impacts of river drying on Rio Grande silvery minnow populations, and the efficacy of mitigating these impacts with targeted use of water to support the species.
- 5) Separate from the baseline condition determination, analysis of the impact that certain water rights administrative actions or voluntary reductions in water diversions may have on (a) river flows and minnow population viability, (b) long-term impacts, and (c) proposed conservation measures.
- 6) Analysis of habitat suitability for Rio Grande silvery minnow in the reach upstream of the Angostura diversion dam, known as the Cochiti Reach, and assessment of the potential ecological benefit of providing volitional fish passage at Angostura diversion dam, as a stand-alone measure and in combination with habitat restoration in the Cochiti Reach.
- 7) Analysis of the impacts on river flows and species from development and use of a 30,000- to 50,000-acre-foot conservation pool.

Reclamation anticipates that the Service will also consider these issues, as appropriate, in preparation of new jeopardy determinations for the Rio Grande silvery minnow, Southwest willow flycatcher, and yellow-billed cuckoo.

Should you have any questions about this letter, please contact Ken Richard at [KRichard@usbr.gov](mailto:KRichard@usbr.gov). Individuals who are deaf, blind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Faler, P.E., Area Manager

cc: Debra Hill, Supervisory Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
Chandler Farnworth, Attorney-Advisor (SOL)  
Kim Bannerman, Senior Attorney (SOL)  
Andrew Smith, Senior Trial Attorney (DOJ)  
Emma Hamilton, Trial Attorney (DOJ)