

Executive Committee Meeting

July 21, 2011

Meeting Materials:

Meeting Agenda

Meeting Minutes

Middle Rio Grande Recovery Program [presentation]

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Report on Las Conchas Fire Actions [presentation]



**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species
Collaborative Program
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING AGENDA
July 21, 2011
9:00 am – 1:00 pm**

LOCATION: Bureau of Reclamation, 555 Broadway Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM

1. **INTRODUCTIONS AND REVIEW OF PROPOSED AGENDA*** *5 minutes*
2. **APPROVAL OF MAY 19, 2011 MEETING SUMMARY and ACTION ITEMS*** *15 minutes*
3. ***DECISION* – SCHEDULING/FREQUENCY OF EC MEETINGS** *20 minutes*
4. **ITEMS FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION** *60 minutes*
 - A. **Path to Recovery Program or Recovery Implementation Program***
 - B. **Draft Adaptive Management Work Group Charter***
5. **PVA WORKGROUP UPDATE** (*D. Gensler/D. Campbell*) *15 minutes*
6. **USFWS and BIOLOGY UPDATE** (*L. Robertson*) *20 minutes*
7. **USACE UPDATE** *20 minutes*
8. **RECLAMATION and HYDROLOGY UPDATE** (*M. Hamman/L. Towne*) *20 minutes*
9. **COORDINATION COMMITTEE/PROGRAM MANAGER REPORT** *20 minutes*

(*B. Wyman, Y. McKenna*)

 - A. **Peer Review Process Update**
 - B. **Annual Report Update**
 - C. **Workgroup Updates**
 - D. **Contract Update**
10. **OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**
11. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
12. **NEXT SCHEDULED EC MEETING – August 18, 2011 (9:00 am to 1:00 pm @ Reclamation)**

**Denotes read ahead material provided for this topic*

Members

ABCWUA
ISC
NMDA
Sandia Pueblo
UNM

APA
Isleta Pueblo
NMGF
Santa Ana Pueblo
USACE

CABQ
NMAGO
MRGCD
Santo Domingo Tribe
USFWS
Reclamation

**Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program
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July 21st, 2011 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Bureau of Reclamation, Albuquerque Area Office
555 Broadway Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87102**

Actions

- The Service will map out a timeline of a process for the Program to become a recovery program.
- The Service will provide information to Yvette McKenna on staff coordinating the EPA regional stormwater consultation.

Decisions

- The May 19th, 2011 EC meeting summary was approved with no changes.
- The EC agreed to continue with monthly EC meetings for the time being; however meetings can be cancelled by the Co-Chairs if there are no pressing agenda items.

Requests

- The EC requests a presentation from the EPA on the Stormwater Program.
- The Consultation Team was tasked by the EC to develop different structural alternatives to move into a recovery program.

Announcements

- San Acacia Reach ad hoc work group will be hosting a Floodplain Land Use Roundtable on July 28th from 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM in Socorro at the BLM office.
- USACE Albuquerque District has issued a public notice for an application for a Department of the Army permit to regrade and stabilize the Rio Grande Embayment at the North Diversion Channel outfall. Comments are due to USACE by August 8th.
- The draft Adaptive Management Plan is out for review and comments are due to Yvette McKenna by August 10th. Comment period has been extended to August 19.
- The draft Environmental Assessment for Price's Dairy is out for review and comments are due to USFWS by August 15th.
- The Santa Ana Pueblo Environmental Fair is on August 27th.
- DBMS will be hosting Pilot DBMS Training Sessions on September 21st and September 27th.
- The Program will be hosting 10th Anniversary Technical Workshops/Open House on October 21st and October 22nd at the Rio Grande Nature Center.

Next Meeting: August 18, 2011 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Reclamation

- Potential agenda items to include: 1) Update on structural alternatives from the Consultation Team; 2) Presentation from the EPA on the Stormwater Program; 3) timeline of the process for the Program to become a recovery program

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July 21st, 2011 Meeting Summary

Introductions and Agenda Approval: Brent Rhees brought the meeting to order and introductions were made. The agenda was approved with no changes.

Approval of the May 19th, 2011 Meeting Summary and Action Item Review: The May 19th meeting minutes were approved for finalization with no changes. All May action items were completed. In regard to the action “Jen Bachus will follow up with Jason Remshardt to see if tagging methods to track where augmented silvery minnow are released into the river will be implemented this year.”, it was reported that Jason verified that it is possible for the silvery minnow to be tracked by reach and that augmentation staff will be meeting in August to discuss the protocol for this year.

Scheduling/Frequency of EC Meetings: Because there were not any pressing agenda items on the June EC meeting agenda the EC Co-Chairs determined that the meeting could be cancelled. Attendees were asked if this was an acceptable reason for meetings to be cancelled and whether 2 days is enough notice for cancellation. Attendees agreed that the EC Co-Chairs could make the decision to cancel a meeting if there are no pressing agenda items and agreed that 2 days is enough notice for meeting cancellation. Attendees then discussed whether the EC should continue to meet monthly. Because it is critical to stay on schedule with the Biological Assessments (BAs)/Biological Opinion (BO) and remain updated on critical issues with drought and the effects of the fires, meeting attendees agreed to continue with monthly meetings.

Items for EC consideration:

- **Path to Recovery Program or Recovery Implementation Program (RIP):** Lori Robertson presented information on recovery programs and RIPs to assist and support the Program in recovery efforts. A Q&A sheet, steps for a pathway, an example of a Middle Rio Grande (MRG) RIP, and examples of Cooperative and Recovery Agreements and RIP structures were provided as read aheads. *For details please see actual presentation materials.*
 - The difference between a recovery program and a RIP: Though it can be implied that a recovery program seeks full recovery while a RIP only seeks steps that lead towards recovery, it doesn't matter what a program is called as a program is defined by its goals and objectives and the recovery actions it proposes to accomplish. The Service suggest using the RIP terminology because of its familiarity and experiences with other ongoing RIPs in the San Juan and Colorado River.
 - The Program already has a long history of activities that contribute to recovery (e.g., implementing actions that improve status of the species, getting species population

numbers up, and continuing to protect water uses and future water development) and its current goals are already very similar to those of other existing RIPs.

- In order for the Program to become a RIP many of the same documents the Program is working on now will be needed (e.g., Long Term Plan (LTP), Adaptive Management Plan, BO, etc.), however two additional documents that will be needed are a Cooperative Agreement and a Recovery Agreement. The Cooperative Agreement is an agreement between the participating agencies while the Recovery Agreement is an agreement between the Service and the individual agencies.
- The structure of a RIP will generally be made up of a governing body, program management, and technical staff. In addition, RIPs usually have a public affairs component and some mechanism for peer review.
- Some benefits to being formalized as a recovery program are that the formalization could be a mechanism for ESA compliance for the Program, it could assist in specific program authorization and stability of funding, and improvements in the species could provide for more flexibility in water management.
- Discussion/questions
 - **Question:** At what level will the Annual Progress Report by the Service be prepared at and where would the information to complete the report would be taken from?
 - **Response:** The report would be prepared at the field office level and numerous factors (e.g., status of species, threats to species, status of habitat, and the water situation) would be considered for the report.
 - **Question:** There has been lots of discussion on the reliability of the science behind the biology of the minnow, especially in regards to baseline information, in terms of how it can be relied on to determine how the minnow is reacting to actions; is this still a work in progress in the Service's mind?
 - **Response:** New science is always taken into account and whenever the species status is determined the best available information at the time is used.
 - Other programs (e.g., San Juan RIPRIP) use independent peer reviews to help get past difficult or controversial decision points. Other programs also use a biology committee as a forum to debate the science and to inform higher management. There is always going to be risk, but the idea is to reduce the risk and uncertainty as much as possible and make decisions based on the best available science.
 - Something that other programs struggle with is determining what level of uncertainty they are comfortable with and what research can be designed to achieve that level of comfort. A biology committee is one avenue that can be used to gain information around uncertainties and feed that information back into decisions to see if management changes should be made.
 - **Question:** Does there need to be a change in the way the Program is structured in order to have that level of comfort in decision making?

- **Response:** The backbone of the Program seems to be here and maybe efficiency can be gained in combining/disbanding some of the work groups, however different RIPs use different structures and those structures may or may not work for the Program. It will depend on what the Program wants to look like.
- **Comment:** If the RPAs are going to be evaluated against the baseline I think we need to understand that.
 - **Response:** One way to see this process is as a way to move forward, collaboratively, to recover the species rather than measuring the Program against the RPAs. An RPA is there because there is jeopardy. This would be a shift of looking at whether the Program is moving forward toward recovery as opposed to looking at whether the minimum requirements are being met.
 - **Question:** And that would be measured on our incremental annual objectives?
 - **Response:** Yes. Moving forward will take time; it took the Program a while to get where it is today.
- **Question:** If the Program decides to be a recovery program or a RIP what would the group need to do?
 - **Response:** The Program would need to decide what their goals and objectives would be (these may not be very different from the current goals and objectives) and the LTP will be used to develop annual plans to meet the long-term goals in the LTP. These will give the Service something to evaluate in a jeopardy analysis.
- **Comment:** The Program currently has congressional authorization and receives funding through Reclamation; will the only change be in name or is there further value in becoming a RIP? From the state's perspective, the idea is to use the Program as a compliance vehicle. The name change, plus added congressional authorization might add value, and change to a recovery program might also add more certainty for the Service on what actions individual parties might take. Would the Service take over Program management? This has been tried before and it didn't work, but it may be something to look at again. Right now there is a single BO with potentially multiple BAs. How do you know who the right people to have at the table are?
 - **Response:** The Service is still struggling with multiple BOs because it is one system and the Service wants it to be managed as one system
 - A draft BO was submitted to the EPA. It came out of the Aquatics Branch and has to do with the issuance of NPDES or stormwater discharge permits – the only follow on action is that AMAFCA will make a correction to an issue in the outfall of the North Diversion Channel.
 - It was questioned whether EPA work is relevant to the BO. Though the EPA was not involved 10 years ago, it has since become involved with stormwater issues.

- The only adverse effects from stormwater identified in this EPA consultation that were quantified were due to a temporary oxygen sag.
 - The Program spends a lot of funding looking at water quality and this should be the EPA's job as a contributory factor. The EPA's work could provide information on what the Program needs to be as opposed to issues that other agencies are tackling.
 - Meeting attendees agreed that more information on the EPA's Stormwater Program would be helpful and requested a presentation from the EPA on the Stormwater Program.
 - The Service will provide information to Yvette McKenna on staff coordinating the EPA regional stormwater consultation.
- **Question:** Should the Program complete the BO process before it becomes a RIP?
 - **Response:** Discussion on what the Program wants to look like needs to occur now so that it can be included in the BAs and analyzed by the Service in the BO.
 - It was questioned if the agreements could be in place and the structure could be determined in a timely enough manner to continue to drive the BO process.
- **Question:** Is there a way that parts of the process can be done concurrently rather than sequentially?
 - **Response:** The Service offered to map out a timeline of what the Service thinks needs to occur for the Program to become a RIP.
- One reason that the Program tried to be managed under the Service was to have a more neutral party managing funding. The recovery plan projections have more funding requirements than the Program is getting now so it might be good to look at authorizations.
 - The partners from other Programs have attempted to use their partnerships to get more funding and some places have been successful. Annual plans and goals are based on the amount of funding received.
- Attendees were advised to reach out to Senator Udall as Senator Bingaman's term would soon be ending. If the Program is interested in authorizing legislation with that office then it will be best for the Program to educate Udall's office about their activities in case a funding opportunity arises.
- Attendees discussed reorganization of the Program.
 - There were mixed opinions about whether or not the Service should manage the Program should it become a recovery program.
 - One idea was to have Dave Campbell (Program Manager for the San Juan Program) attend the next EC meeting to answer questions about what the San Juan RIP looks like and to help the EC determine how much the Program would need to change in order to become a RIP.
 - The EC agreed to task the Consultation Team to develop and present different structural alternatives for the Program to move into a recovery

program. Discussion on Program reorganization will also need to consider implementation of adaptive management. Reclamation volunteered to take the lead in setting up a meeting of the Consultation Team and on the effort to develop structural alternatives. The Consultation Team will give the EC an update on their progress at the August EC meeting and present the options for reorganization at the September EC meeting.

- **Draft Adaptive Management Work Group Charter** – Meeting attendees discussed the draft Adaptive Management (AM) Work Group charter. The purpose of the AM Work group would be to guide development and implementation of the AM Plan and the Charter includes a transition from AM Plan Version 1 to Version 2. The charter indicates that the AM Work Group would use a decision log to record differences in opinion and meetings will be facilitated by a neutral party. The CC has reviewed the draft charter; however they have not approved the document and it is still under consideration. Though it may be premature to form an AM work group, there is value in forming a group to transition the AM Plan from Version 1 to Version 2 as Version 1 of the AM Plan does not contain enough detail for the Program to implement adaptive management. Included with the draft AM Work Group Charter is one option of a structure for streamlining the existing work groups into a technical work group that would implement AM. In the proposed structure the current work groups would dissolve and the technical staff would attend more focused meetings that are relevant to their particular areas of expertise. The point of the proposed structure is to get cross sections of different technical expertise in the same room to work on projects in various phases. Part of the challenge of the EC directive is that in other programs that utilize AM, AM is not set aside as its own work group but is utilized within all components of the program.
 - Attendees agreed that the draft AM Work Group Charter and the alternative structure be provided to the Consultation Team for consideration while they are working on developing options for Program reorganization.
 - It was one opinion that the current work group structure shouldn't be dissolved as there is a breadth of technical knowledge within the work groups that might be lost if the work groups dissolve. AM should be a form of business that is used by the Program and in the way the Program communicates. It was suggested that the work groups could be made more efficient by meeting less often or by elimination of the ad hoc work groups.
 - Another opinion was that the alternative structure would still allow for all the participants in the former work groups to participate and provide technical expertise and recommendations to projects.
 - There was some agreement that the current work group structure should not be lost and that there is the potential that some of the expertise may be lost if participants meet as large groups but it was recognized that the Program needs to deal with the fact that there is not enough staff to support the current structure.

Reclamation and Hydrology Update:

- *Reclamation Update:* Jennifer Faler has been selected as the Deputy Area Manager and will be attending the August EC meeting. Reclamation is still on target to release a draft BA to the federal agencies on August 1, 2011 and then to the Program and general public two weeks later.

There will be a 30 day review period with the target of getting the final BA to the Service by October 15th. Reclamation is also working on the FY11 contracting end of year fiscal process. The RAMAS contract will be released for proposal soon. Reclamation has also been helping to protect water quality and resources for the Pueblos in the burn areas and has been coordinating with the Burn Area Emergency Response (BAER) Teams for both the New Mexico fires.

- *Hydrology Update:* An update of the hydrology situation was distributed to meeting attendees (*Please refer to handout for specific details*). Heron Reservoir is in good shape. Run off from the San Juan Basin to Heron Reservoir is similar to last year's runoff. Reclamation has been allowed to maintain just over 300,000 ac-ft at Heron Reservoir. The Rio Chama was the only watershed in New Mexico that received a reasonable amount of moisture over the winter and Reclamation was able to store emergency water for use by the District and the Program to maintain fish flows. Just over 16,000 ac-ft were stored for P&P for the Pueblos; in the event that runoff for the mainstem drops significantly this will be used by the Pueblos to get through irrigation season. 635 cfs is being released from El Vado to match mainstem flows in order to balance flows to meet middle valley demands.
 - It was shared that Bureau of Indian Affairs has hired a new designated engineer, Charles Riley. He is a long standing BIA employee and has experience in water management and is familiar with MRG issues.
- Meeting attendees briefly discussed how agencies can assist with both the short-term emergency needs and the long-term watershed restoration in response to the recent fires. It was said that the best way for agencies to help out is to make the BAER teams for the fires aware of the resources that are available so that they can integrate them into their overall plan. With 80% of the fire being contained the majority of the work will be in assisting the communities that were affected by the fires. The main focus will be in getting early warning devices in place to have sufficient time to engage action plans for dealing with the runoff from the various canyons and in getting water quality tools in place. In terms of immediate assistance, workers have been putting sand bags in place in Cochiti to create a barrier in preparation for flooding.
 - Meeting attendees acknowledged that important wildlife corridors and significant cultural sites, both religious and resources, were significantly burned and that the Pueblos' ways of life have been altered significantly. One measure that the Corps has taken is to have their tribal liaison on daily conference calls with the Pueblos in order to facilitate cooperative coordination and to provide feedback into other forums they've been attending.

PVA Workgroup Update: Yvette McKenna updated meeting attendees that a formal letter from the Population Viability Analysis (PVA) work group co-chairs requesting information was sent to the Population Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA) work group. It's expected that the PHVA co-chairs will be giving a formal response to the PVA workgroup's request. The PVA work group last met in May 2011 and does not plan to meet again until the RAMAS contract is in place; there will likely be a joint meeting between the PVA and PHVA once the contract is in place.

USACE Update: Dennis Garcia, Stephen Scissons, and Grant Kolb presented a report on the Las Conchas Fire Actions. (*For details please see actual presentation materials.*)

- The Las Conchas fire started June 26th and has burned 156, 590 acres. As of this morning the fire is 80% contained. The Cerro Grande Fire in 2000 burned 42,000 acres. Almost the entire western portion of the Santa Clara Reservation was burned and the fire also came within close proximity to the Cochiti Reservation. The basins on the upper end of the Santa Clara Reservation and the southern basins above Cochiti Lake have been burned. The watersheds that flow into Cochiti Lake have also been severely burned. The severity of the burns and ash on the ground have affected the permeability of the soil and will increase runoff in a rain event. Without surface vegetation there is nothing to impede the movement of the runoff. The Corps has used models to try to understand the size and speed of the flow and how far it will go.
- Corps staff used two existing hydrologic models to meet requests from the Pueblos to approximate stream flow volumes in the watershed for Santa Clara Creek that could flow into the Rio Grande and discharge volumes for a stream for Nambé Falls reservoir. The parameters of the models were altered to reflect burn effects on runoff and stream discharge. For Santa Clara, infiltration rates were decreased for the effected sub basins by 20% - 100% based on the severity of the burn area (in severely burned areas infiltration was decreased by 100%). Pre-fire output was then compared to post-fire output. It was found that for both Santa Clara and Nambé Falls Reservoir the volume entering the Rio Grande from the Santa Clara Creek and entering Nambé Falls Reservoir was equivalent to a pre- fire 50-year storm event. It was also found that a 5-year post-fire event today would generate inflow similar to a 200 year storm event pre-fire. The model results are only appropriate for the first 2-3 months following the burn because as the ash layers wash away the environment will change, however the models can be updated based on updated burn information.
- A probability model and a model of the volume of debris flow were used to predict impact to structures in Cochiti and Santo Domingo Pueblos. Existing topography and rain fall intensities were used to analyze 24-hour, 2-year, 5-year and 10-year rain events. Existing soil data and burn intensity are the biggest factors taken into consideration for the likelihood of debris flow. The model outputs reflect a worst case scenario as the Corps has not yet correlated with the BAER Team's index. Peralta Canyon is a high risk area as it's pointed right at Cochiti Pueblo. It was found that the volume of debris flow upstream of Cochiti Dam would be anywhere from 98,000 ac-ft to 130,000 ac-ft. Downstream of Cochiti debris volumes were 17,000-24,000 ac-ft.
- There could be potential impacts to operations if:
 - A debris plug forms upstream of the reservoir and cuts off flows to Cochiti. In this case, water would be provided from the Rec Pool for ESA and the District and then paid back. Current release rates could only be provided for 7 to 10 days. There will also be upstream water management to assist with mechanical removal of the plug.
 - Massive debris inflow into Cochiti Lake. The determination will need to be made of how much of the inflow is sediment and how much is water and then decisions on volume and release rates will be made in order to be prepared for the next event. There is currently 52,000 ac-ft of water in Cochiti reservoir.
 - Debris plug forms downstream from Cochiti Lake, along with flash flooding. Cochiti releases will be adjusted to assist with mechanical removal of a plug.
 - Any of these scenarios would require intensive coordination with multiple agencies and the Rio Grande Compact Commission would likely be involved.

- Water quality is a concern. USGS has been capturing baseline information on a gage downstream of Cochiti so that any activity can be identified; gages to monitor water quality have been placed in Cochiti Reservoir as well.
- Questions/Discussion
 - **Question:** Do the drainages at the north end of the fire go into the Rio Grande or the Chama?
 - **Response:** The drainages go into both rivers with the majority of them going into the Rio Grande.
 - **Question:** Will Cochiti Lake be open to recreation?
 - **Response:** Cochiti Lake has been shut down for recreation since June 29th. Based on BAER Team activities and aviation assistance operating from there, Cochiti Lake is not expected to open until at least July 24th and may be kept closed longer to foster public safety in the event of flooding.
 - **Question:** Did the recent rains that hit Albuquerque also hit Jemez?
 - **Response:** There was no precipitation at Cochiti Lake but the reservoir gages were monitored closely and there was no activity.
 - **Question:** Has the Corps been coordinating with the District and the Authority to inform them of how they would operate on some kind of warning?
 - **Response:** Staff within the Corps come together daily to share information and make sure that the information is provided to stake holders. The BAER Team has also presented a model for implementing early warning pieces and funneling information to the regular emergency response system. Any actions will be event driven and stake holders will be informed in advance of the Corps plans.
 - **Comment:** This situation could affect the Program's ability to work on some projects over the next couples of years and will also require that additional efforts in coordination be made.
 - **Question:** Will the Service be doing any additional monitoring for wildlife and fish in relation to the fires?
 - **Response:** The Service will be in a "fact finding" mode for the foreseeable future. It's likely that there was an emergency consultation on the firefighting activities. There may also be long term consultations over the remedial activities.
- Dennis, Stephen, Grant, and the Corps were thanked for the presentation and update on the fires.

USFWS and Biology Update: Lori Robertson reported updates on the silvery minnow population monitoring, rescue operations, the PIT Tag Study, the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (flycatcher), the salt cedar leaf beetle, designation of critical habitat, as well as highlights and updates on the Reintroduction/Cochiti Reach biologist monthly work.

- *Silvery Minnow population monitoring:* Recent data indicates that silvery minnow density has decreased to levels below those measured in 2001 and 2004 but not as low as those measured in 2002 and 2003.
- *Rescue operations:* The Service's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office conducted rescue and salvage activities on 24.7 unique miles as of July 11th, 2011; 2,374 silvery minnow were salvaged

and 111 silvery minnow were identified as incidental take. The Corps was thanked for participating in the operation.

- *PIT Tag Study*: On March 11th, 2011 6,000 PIT Tag Study silvery minnow were released into the river. As of last week, there have been 170 detections (2.6%) in the Albuquerque fishway. Most of the detections were in the downstream direction and approximately 7% moved upstream. Fish were found as far as 19.7 miles downstream and 13.5 miles upstream.
- *Reintroduction/Cochiti Reach biologist*: Mark Brennan continues communication with Pueblos regarding Cochiti Reach silvery minnow augmentation; the Service is waiting on consent from the tribes before they proceed. Mark assisted with a Big Bend monitoring effort in June; they are finding that there is a broad distribution of silvery minnow in the area; silvery minnow have been collected as far as 70 miles downstream of the most downstream release site and 15 miles upstream of the most upstream release site. It was shared that the Interior Secretary and his Mexican counterpart will be visiting Big Bend; attempts will be made to coordinate this visit with the October release of silvery minnow.
- *Southwestern Willow Flycatcher*: Flycatcher numbers appear to be good for this year and the flycatchers seem to be moving around within their patches. Nesting was delayed this year but that was true for all perching birds. Nesting flycatchers were detected in Los Lunas and flycatchers are colonizing new areas in the Bosque Del Apache Wildlife Refuge. Flycatchers were also detected north of the San Acacia Diversion Dam. Flycatchers in the Elephant Butte Reservoir seem to be expanding further to the west.
- *Salt cedar leaf beetle*: The Pueblo of Santa Ana has reported that the beetle has arrived on the Jemez about 3 miles from the Rio Grande and a large patch of salt cedar has become defoliated.
 - Attendees were updated that the beetle is moving very quickly. In other areas, the beetle has been reported to move as much as 50 miles within a reach in a year.
 - The only other plant that the beetle has been known to effect is a different type of salt cedar that is desirable that looks similar. The concern for the flycatcher is if there are nests in salt cedars or nests in native vegetation that is in a stand dominated by salt cedar the patch will change.
- *Designation of Critical Habitat*: Proposed designation is expected to be published in early August of 2011. Land owners included in critical habitat designation are encouraged to work with the Service if they would like an area to be excluded.

Coordination Committee/Program Manager Report: *Please refer to the CC/PM report read ahead for details and additional information.*

- *Peer Review Process Update/CC Update*: The CC continues to look at peer review processes used by other programs and by other academic institutions. The LTP work continues to be ongoing; the work groups are reviewing the future activities. The CC recommended funding for 1 year for the O&M of 2 additional USGS gages and recommended funding for *Sexing of the Age/Growth Specimens*. The next CC meeting will be on August 3rd, 2011.
- *Annual Report Update*: The Annual Report for 2008 and 2009 will be distributed at the end of today's meeting and is also available on the Program website. The 2010 Annual Report will be available soon and will include information from the Corps.
- *Workgroup Updates*: The Habitat Restoration Workgroup (HRW) has been in need of a federal co-chair and will soon need a new non-federal co-chair. In consideration of the number of

current co-chairs provided by federal agencies, the Service and Reclamation were asked to consider providing a co-chair to the HRW; non-federal agencies were also asked to consider providing a co-chair to the HRW.

Other Business/Announcements:

- Susan Kelly has resigned as the UNM representative to the CC; it's not known if UNM will nominate someone else to participate at the CC level.
- San Acacia Reach ad hoc work group will be hosting a Floodplain Land Use Roundtable on July 28th from 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM in Socorro at the BLM office.
- USACE Albuquerque District has issued a public notice for an application for a Department of the Army permit to regrade and stabilize the Rio Grande Embayment at the North Diversion Channel outfall. Comments are due to USACE by August 8th.
- The draft Adaptive Management Plan is out for review and comments are due to Yvette McKenna by August 10th. Comment period has been extended to August 19.
- The draft Environmental Assessment for Price's Dairy is out for review and comments are due to USFWS by August 15th.
- The Santa Ana Pueblo Environmental Fair is on August 27th.
- DBMS will be hosting Pilot DBMS Training Sessions on September 21st and September 27th.
- The Program will be hosting a 10th Anniversary Technical Workshops/Open House on October 21st and October 22nd at the Rio Grande Nature Center.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Next Meeting: August 18, 2011 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Reclamation

- Potential agenda items to include: 1) Update on structural alternatives from the Consultation Team; 2) Presentation from the EPA on the Stormwater Program; 3) timeline of the process for the Program to become a recovery program.

**Executive Committee Meeting Attendees
July 21st, 2011, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm**

Attendees:

<i>Representative</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Seat</i>
Rolf Schmidt-Peterson (A)	NM Interstate Stream Commission	Non-federal co-chair
Brent Rhees	Bureau of Reclamation	Federal co-chair
Michelle Shaughnessy (P)	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	USFWS
Ann Moore (A)	NM Attorney General's Office	NMAGO
Subhas Shah (P)	Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District	MRGCD
Matt Schmader (P)	City of Albuquerque	COA
LTC. Jason Williams (P)	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	USACE
Alan Hatch (P)	Pueblo of Santa Ana	Santa Ana
Rick Billings (A)	Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority	ABCWUA
Hilary Brinegar (P)	NM Dept. of Agriculture	NMDA
Cody Walker (P)	Pueblo of Isleta	Isleta
Mike Hamman (P)	Bureau of Reclamation	BOR

Others

Yvette McKenna – PM	Bureau of Reclamation
Terina Perez	Bureau of Reclamation
Jim Wilber	Bureau of Reclamation
William DeRagon	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Susan Bittick	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Janet Bair	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jen Bachus	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Christopher Shaw	NM Interstate Stream Commission
Grace Haggerty	NM Interstate Stream Commission
Brooke Wyman	MRGCD
Stacey Kopitsch	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Rick Carpenter	City of Santa Fe/BDD
Joseph Maestas	Bureau of Reclamation
Mary Carlson	Bureau of Reclamation
Ali Saenz	Bureau of Reclamation
Lori Robertson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jonathan Kasprisin	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
LeeAnn Summer	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Patricia Dominguez	Senator Bingaman's Office
Matt Zidovsky	Representative Heinrich's Office
Amy Louise	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Sarah Beck	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Don Gallegos	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Dennis E. Garcia	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
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Middle Rio Grande Recovery Program



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Southwest Region
July 21, 2011

Background

- The EC decided in August 2009 to become a recovery program as the vehicle for broad ESA compliance
- However, there is uncertainty as to what that means for the Collaborative Program
- The Service was tasked by the EC to present information about recovery programs and how to formalize



Purpose of today's presentation

- To be responsive to the EC
- To assist and support the Collaborative Program in recovery program efforts



Read-aheads: A Path to Recovery Program

- Q&A
- Steps in a pathway
- An example for conducting a MRG RIP
- Example Cooperative Agreement
- Example Recovery Agreement
- UC RIP org structure
- SJ RIP org structure
- Strawman MRG RIP org structure



“recovery program”

- It does not matter what the program is called.
- The program is defined by its goals and objectives and what recovery actions it proposes to accomplish.



The Collaborative Program as a Recovery Program

- Collaborative Program already has a long history of many activities that contribute to recovery
- Current goals are very similar to those of other existing recovery programs
- Almost all interests are represented
 - Tribal, Federal, State, local, water users, academic



Current Collaborative Program Goals

1. Alleviate jeopardy to the listed species in the Program area
 - Identify and articulate the critical scientific questions that will help evaluate flexibility in the system that wasn't known to be there in 2003.
 - Understand the system well enough to develop adaptive management tools to support a sustainable Biological Opinion.
2. Conserve and contribute to the recovery of the listed species
 - Stabilize existing populations
 - Develop self-sustaining populations
3. Protect existing and future water uses
4. Report to the community at large about the work of the Program



So what would be different?

- Implementing a recovery implementation program would serve as the principle measure to offset impacts of the actions described in BAs, thereby providing ESA compliance
- Some founding documentation
- Flexibility over time



Documentation

- Biological Assessments
- Long Term Plan
 - Annual work plans
- Adaptive Management Plan
- Framework for Annual Water Ops Plan
- Biological Opinion(s)
- Cooperative Agreement
- Recovery Agreement (between Service and each participating organization)
- Other agreements with Reclamation as needed
- Annual report of sufficient progress



Organization

- Governing body
- Program management
- Technical
- Also public affairs, peer review



Why formalize recovery program?

- Mechanism for ESA compliance for the Collaborative Program
- Could assist in specific program authorization and stability of funding
- Improvements in species provide for more flexibilities in water management



Discussion/Questions?



Albuquerque District

July 2011 EC Meeting

Corps Report on Las Conchas Fire Actions

Stephen Scissons
Dennis Garcia
Grant Kolb

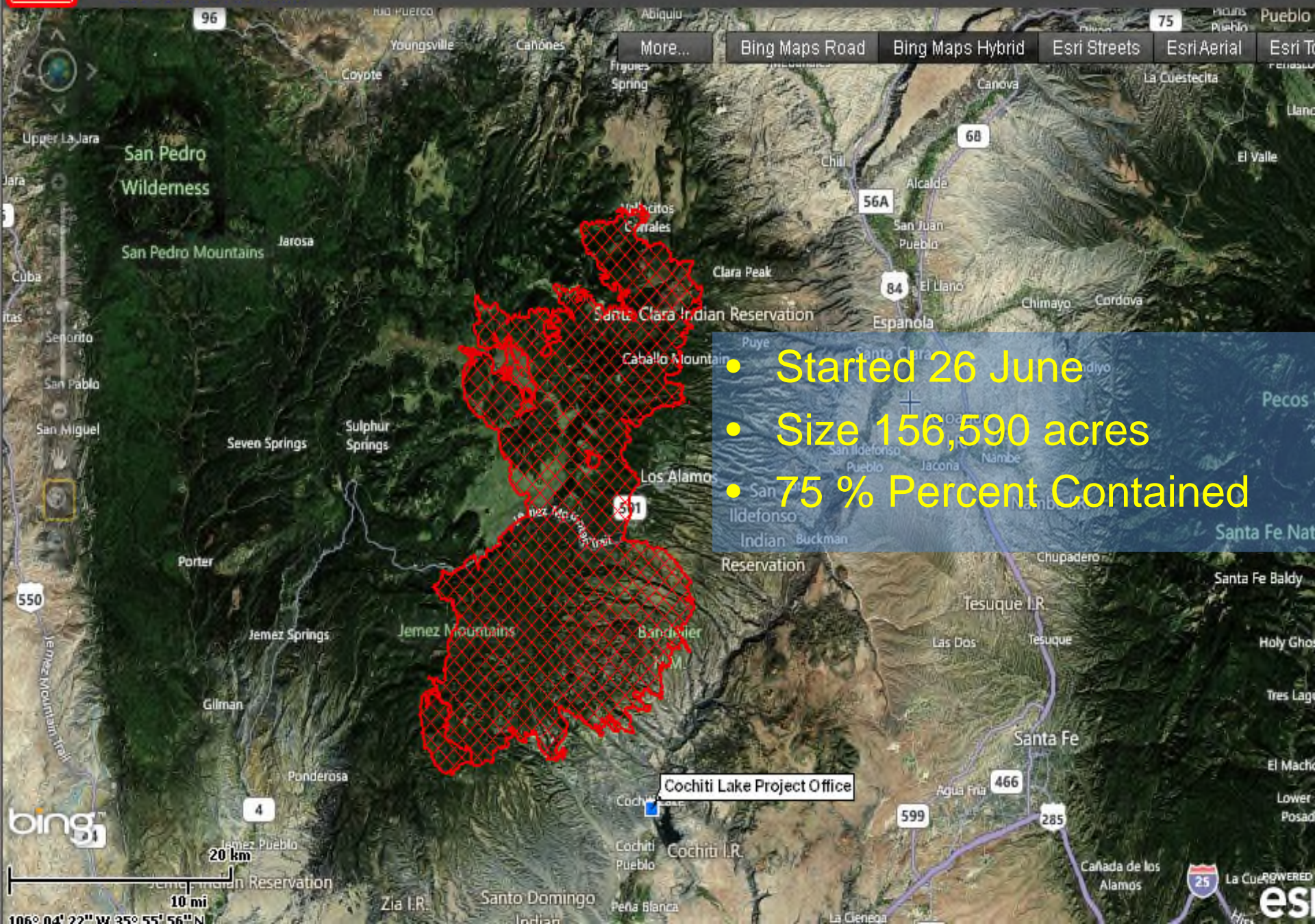
21 July 2011



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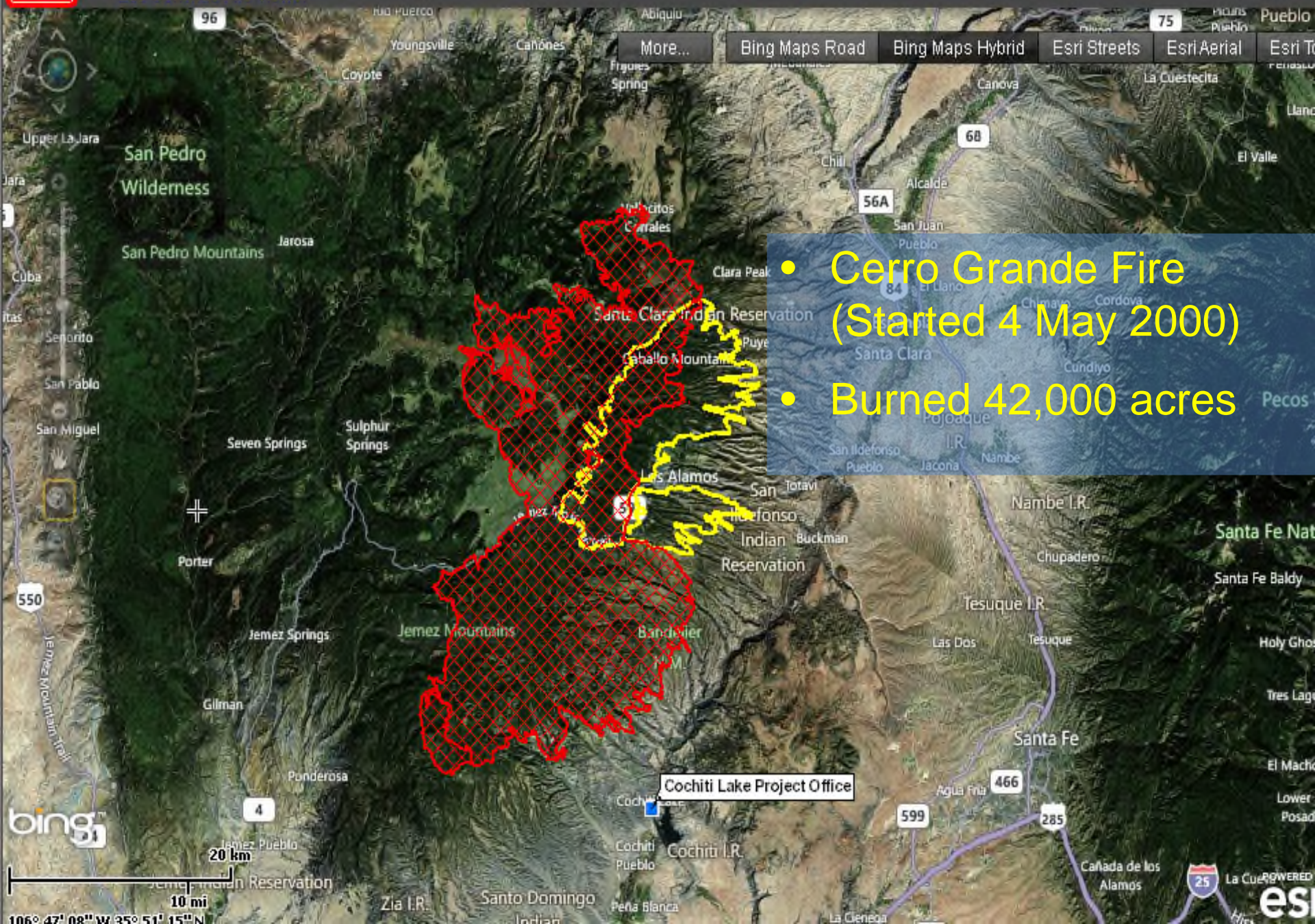
- Started 26 June
- Size 156,590 acres
- 75 % Percent Contained

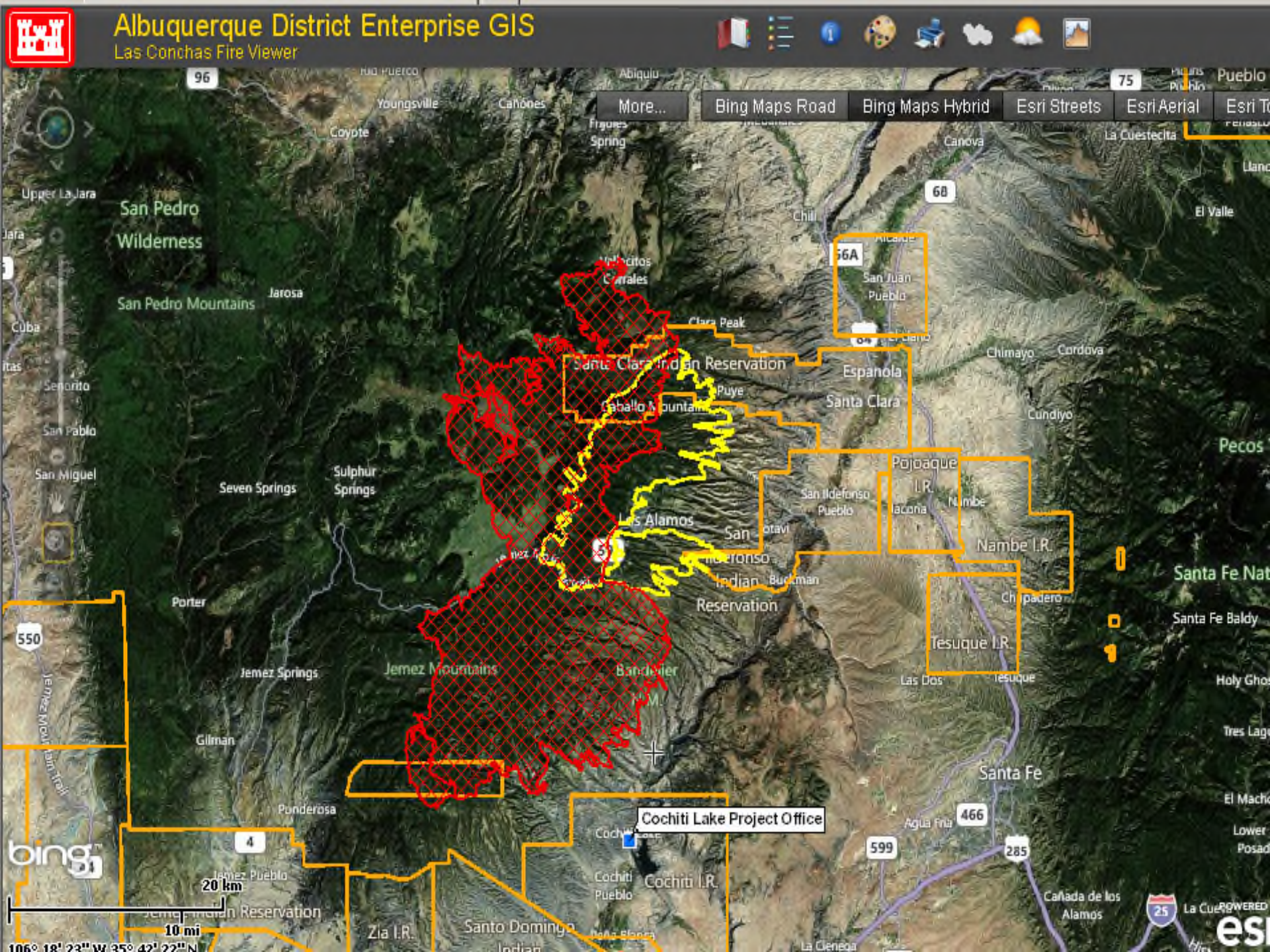
Cochiti Lake Project Office

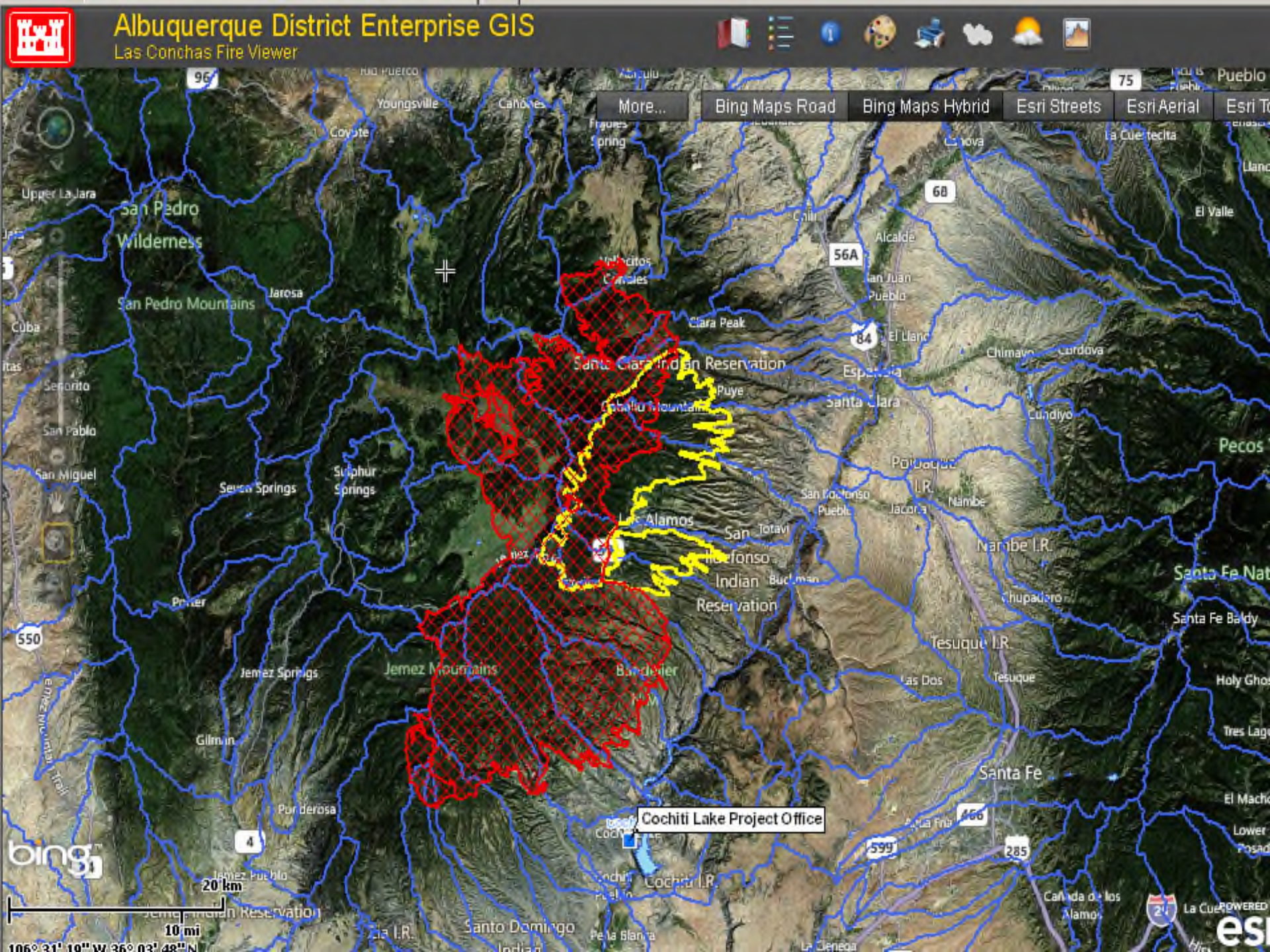


20 km
10 mi
106° 04' 22" W 35° 55' 56" N



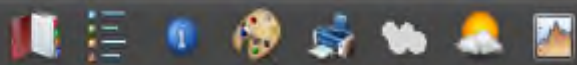






Albuquerque District Enterprise GIS

Las Conchas Fire Viewer



More...

Bing Maps Road

Bing Maps Hybrid

Esri Streets

Esri Aerial

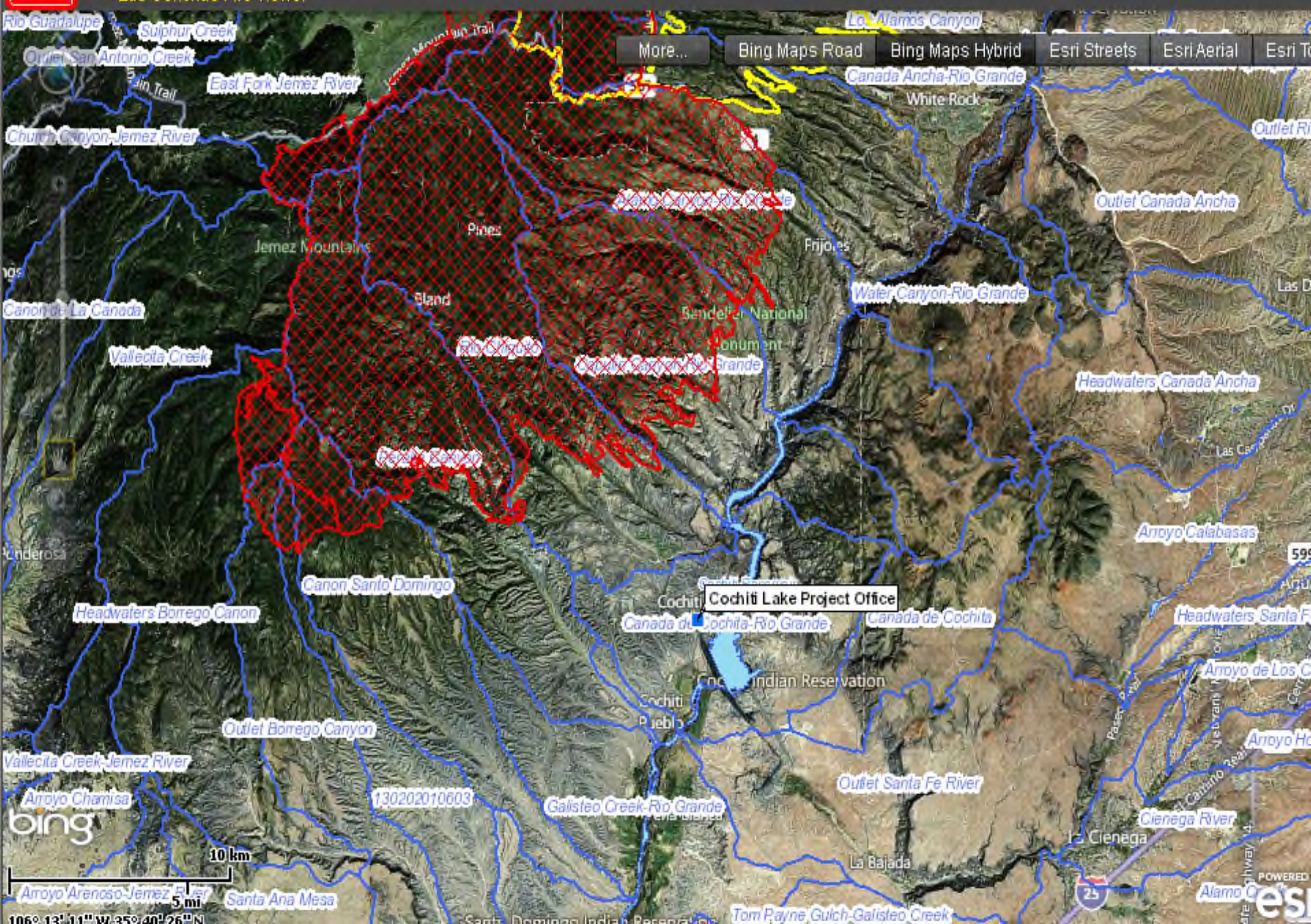
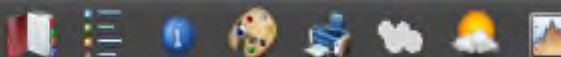
Esri Topographic

Cochiti Lake Project Office



10 mi
20 km
106° 31' 10" W 36° 03' 48" N





Bland Canyon



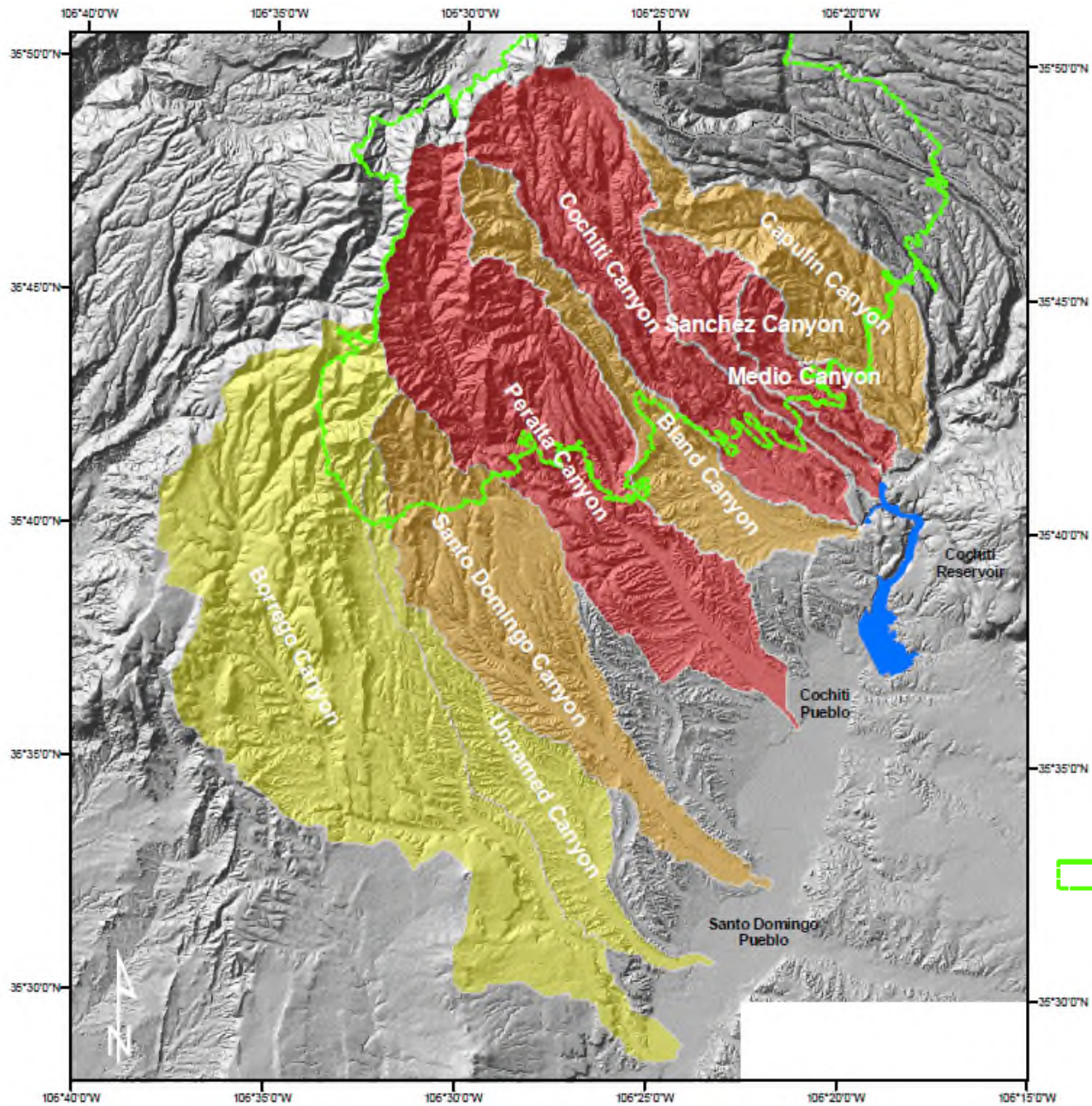
Dixon-Cochiti Canyon




2011 / 7 / 8
W: 106° 22' 28.75"
N: 035° 41' 46.69"




Low/moderate intensity
burn in Santa Clara
Creek (ash is 3" deep)

2011 / 7 / 8
W: 106° 18' 47.62"
N: 043° 59' 35.55"



 Las Conchas Burn Boundary
as of July 17 2011

Watershed Risk

-  Low
-  Moderate
-  High

Potential Impacts to Operations

What if...

- Debris plug forms upstream of the reservoir (inflow gets cutoff).
 - Provide water from the Rec Pool for ESA, MRGCD (?) – Borrow payback
 - At current release rates, we could only sustain for 7 to 10 days
 - Upstream water management to assist with mechanical removal of plug
- Massive debris inflow into Cochiti Lake
 - Determine how much is wet water, how much is sediment, and then make decisions on volume and release rates (resurvey range lines).
 - Timely release of flood water to be prepared for the next event.
- Debris plug forms downstream from Cochiti Lake, along with flash flooding.
 - Adjusting Cochiti Release to assist with mechanical removal of plug.
- Water Quality...
- Scenarios will require coordination with multiple agencies, including RGCC.
- We will likely be operating under an emergency deviation at Cochiti & Abiquiu.



Questions?



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