

Executive Committee Meeting

January 18, 2024

Meeting Materials:

[Agenda](#)

[Minutes](#)

[Draft 2023 FPC Summary Report \[read-ahead, draft\]](#)

[Draft 2023 SAMC Summary Report \[read-ahead, draft\]](#)

[2024 SAMC Membership \[read-ahead\]](#)

[2023 MRGESCP Work Plan Summary of Accomplishments \[read-ahead\]](#)

[2023 MRGESCP Work Plan \[read-ahead, spreadsheet\]](#)

[Draft 2024 MRGESCP Work Plan \[read-ahead, spreadsheet, draft\]](#)

[Draft Funding Approach Schematic \[read-ahead, draft\]](#)

[Draft Multi-Year Plan \[read-ahead, draft\]](#)

[Long-Term Plan for Science and Adaptive Management Project List \[read-ahead, not included\]](#)

[VSWCD Membership Request Letter \[read-ahead\]](#)

[VSWCD Application Questions \[read-ahead\]](#)

[Hydrology Update for the MRG ESA Collaborative Program EC \[presentation\]](#)

[Link to full Meeting Materials List](#)

Executive Committee Meeting
January 18, 2024

See the following meeting material on the page below:

Agenda



Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program

Est. 2000

Executive Committee (EC) Meeting Agenda

January 18, 2024, 1:00 – 4:00 PM MST

Location: Surface Water Treatment Plant
6000 Alexander Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87107

Microsoft Teams Log-In:

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 217 521 593 723

Passcode: DAEXL9

Meeting Objectives:

- Updates on 2023 hydrology and listed species
- Updates from the Program Support Team (PST)
- Updates on Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program (MRGESCP) 2023 committee activities
- Review 2023 MRGESCP Work Plan accomplishments and approve draft 2024 MRGESCP Work Plan
- Discuss project prioritization and funding approach
- Update on February 2024 Science Symposium
- Update on March 2024 Climate Futures Planning Workshop
- Announce the proposed winners of the 2023 Rick Billings Award
- Vote on VSWCD membership

1:00 – 1:10	Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting ground rules <p>✓ Decision: Approval of January 18, 2024 EC meeting agenda</p>	EC Co-chairs
1:10 – 1:15	September 2023 Meeting Summary <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Action items review <p>✓ Decision: Approval of September 28, 2023 EC meeting minutes</p> <p>Read-ahead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Draft September 28, 2023 EC Meeting Minutes	EC Co-chairs
1:15 – 1:25	2023 Hydrology Review <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review 2023 hydrology• Newsletter write-up	Lucas Barrett, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
1:25 – 1:45	2023 Species Update <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review 2023 species activities• Newsletter write-ups	Jennifer Davis, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Eric Gonzales, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
1:45 – 2:05	Program Support Team (PST) Update <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program and Science Support (PASS) Contract• Staffing update• Program Portal interface• Outreach events	PST

2:05 – 2:15	Fiscal Planning Committee (FPC) Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023 FPC Summary Report • Program Portal funding update Read-ahead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Draft 2023 FPC Summary Report 	<i>Anne Marken, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, Ryan Gronewold, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and PST</i>
2:15 – 2:35	Science and Adaptive Management Committee (SAMC) Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023 SAMC summary report • Ad Hoc Group updates • SAMC membership update Read-ahead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Draft 2023 SAMC Summary Report <input type="checkbox"/> 2024 SAMC Membership 	<i>Ara Winter, Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program, and PST</i>
2:35 – 3:05	2023 Work Plan Accomplishments and Draft 2024 Work Plan Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023 MRGESCP Work Plan Summary of Accomplishments • Draft 2024 MRGESCP Work Plan review ✓ Decision: Approval of draft 2024 MRGESCP Work Plan Read-ahead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 2023 MRGESCP Work Plan Summary of Accomplishments <input type="checkbox"/> 2023 MRGESCP Work Plan (<i>for reference only</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Draft 2024 MRGESCP Work Plan 	<i>PST</i>
3:05 – 3:15	Break	
3:15 – 3:35	Collaborative Project Prioritization and Funding Approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for Proposal (RFP) process • Incorporation of Multi-Year Plan (MYP) into the Long-Term Plan for Science and Adaptive Management (LTP) Project List ✓ Decision: Approval for the SAMC and FPC to develop the collaborative project prioritization and funding approach further ✓ Decision: Approval for the SAMC and FPC to incorporate the MYP into the LTP Project List ➤ Action Item: SAMC and FPC will develop the collaborative project prioritization and funding approach ➤ Action Item: SAMC and FPC will incorporate the MYP into the LTP Project List Read-ahead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Funding Approach Schematic <input type="checkbox"/> Draft Multi-Year Plan (<i>for reference only</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Long-Term Plan for Science and Adaptive Management Project List (<i>for reference only</i>) 	<i>PST and Aubrey Harris, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</i>
3:35 – 3:45	2024 Event Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science Symposium planning update (February 13-14, 2024) • Climate Futures Planning Workshop planning update (March 2024) ➤ Action Item: Register for the Science Symposium ➤ Action Item: Encourage submittal of abstracts ➤ Action Item: Register for the Climate Futures Planning Workshop 	<i>PST</i>
3:45 – 3:55	Public Comment and Announcements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open for public comment • Rick Billings Award winner 	

- 3:55 – 4:00 **Meeting Summary and Action Items Review** *EC Co-chairs & PST*
- Next EC Meeting: March 28, 2024
- 4:00 **Adjourn Public EC Meeting**
- 4:00 – 4:30 **Closed EC Session** *EC Signatories*
- Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District (VSWCD) membership vote
 - WEST evaluation discussion
- Read-aheads:
- VSWCD Membership Request Letter
 - VSWCD Application Questions

[Link to full Meeting Materials List](#)

Executive Committee Meeting
January 18, 2024

See the following meeting material on the page below:

Minutes



Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program

Est. 2000

Executive Committee (EC) Meeting Minutes

January 18, 2024; 1:00 PM–4:00 PM

Location: Surface Water Treatment Plant
6000 Alexander Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87107

Decisions:

- ✓ Approval of the January 18, 2024 EC meeting agenda
- ✓ Approval of the September 28, 2023 EC meeting minutes
- ✓ Approval of the draft 2024 Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program (MRGESCP) Work Plan
- ✓ Approval of the Science and Adaptive Management Committee (SAMC) and Fiscal Planning Committee (FPC) developing the collaborative project prioritization and funding approach further
- ✓ Approval of the SAMC and FPC incorporating the Multi-Year Plan (MYP) into the Long-Term Plan for Science and Adaptive Management (LTP) Project List
- ✓ Approval of Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District (VSWCD) joining the MRGESCP

Announcements:

- ❖ Jim Wilber, alternate EC representative for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), is retiring in February 2024.
- ❖ Matt Wunder, EC representative for the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish (NMDGF), is retiring in February 2024.
- ❖ Alan Hatch, former Director of Natural Resources at the Pueblo of Santa Ana and EC representative, passed away on December 14, 2023. His obituary is available online at <https://www.frenchfunerals.com/obituaries/alan-hatch>. In lieu of flowers, Alan's family has asked folks to donate to his favorite charities on his behalf.
- ❖ The EC awarded the 2023 Rick Billings Award posthumously to Alan Hatch, the former EC representative for the Pueblo of Santa Ana, as well as to Debbie Lee and Catherine Murphy, former members of the Program Support Team.

Action Items:

WHO	ACTION ITEM	BY WHEN
Program Support Team (PST)	Send out the 2023 hydrology presentation in the EC meeting follow-up	1/22/2024
EC Co-Chairs and PST	Draft words on behalf of the EC to post with Alan Hatch's obituary on the Program Portal	1/26/2024

EC Co-Chairs and PST	Send formal letter to Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District (VSWCD) regarding the EC's decision on membership to the MRGESCP	1/26/2024
PST	Send call to signatories for job opportunities, funding opportunities, etc. to provide on the Opportunity Board at the 2024 Science Symposium	January 2024
PST	Send out final Climate Futures Planning Workshop date and registration link	January 2024
All	Register for the 2024 Science Symposium	2/1/2024
EC representatives	Encourage the submittal of abstracts for the 2024 Science Symposium	2/1/2024
Jim Wilber	Provide input on continuing the work of the Strategic Plan for Potential Drying Ad Hoc Work Group	February 2024
PST	Develop a charge for a hybrid ad hoc group made up of FPC and SAMC members to develop the collaborative project prioritization and funding approach and present to the FPC and SAMC for review	February 2024
All	Register for the Climate Futures Planning Workshop	February 2024
EC representatives	Bring outreach materials to the March EC meeting	3/28/2024
SAMC and FPC	Develop the collaborative project prioritization and funding approach	March 2024
SAMC and FPC	Incorporate the MYP into the LTP project list and provide the EC for approval	March 2024
PST	Coordinate with Reclamation to award the 2023 Rick Billings Award to the winners	March 2024
PST	Provide a draft 2023 Annual Report for EC review and approval	March 2024
SAMC	Provide input on areas of expertise needed from new SAMC members for EC discussion	March 2024
Reclamation	Provide the final population monitoring report and PST will post it to the Program Portal and announce it to the MRGESCP	TBD
USACE and FPC	Coordinate with PST and signatories on Program Portal funding as needed after receiving the 2025 President's Budget	TBD

Next Meeting: March 28, 2024; 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review

The Non-Federal Co-Chair, Mark Kelly, Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA), opened the meeting, led introductions, and reviewed the January 18, 2024 meeting agenda.

- ✓ **Decision:** Approval of the January 18, 2024 EC meeting agenda

September 2023 Meeting Summary

The PST reviewed the September 28, 2023 meeting minutes and action items. Summary updates for action items are below:

- Calls for volunteers to participate in outreach events were included in weekly announcements.
- Signatory members were asked to bring outreach materials to the March EC meeting.
- Folks from non-federal signatories volunteered for the Habitat Restoration Compendium Ad Hoc Group. Membership is final and the group will convene in 2024.
- Signatory members provided feedback on the Program Portal redesign.
- A new date for the postponed Climate Futures Planning Workshop must be finalized.
- The Science Symposium will take place at the University of New Mexico (UNM) Rotunda on February 13-14, 2024.
- EC representatives were asked to continue encouraging folks to submit abstracts for the Science Symposium by February 1, 2024.
- The MRGESCP will utilize signatory public affairs experts as needed for future efforts.
- The field trip to the Plant Materials Center was held on November 9, 2023. Topics of interest were provided to Rick Strait, Plant Materials Center, and discussed on the field trip.
- The PST will continue working with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to provide cost information for the Program Portal to the EC.
- Ryan Gronewold, USACE, gave an update on the feasibility of USACE accepting pass-through funding to fund the Program Portal contract. USACE was not able to identify a mechanism to accept non-federal sponsor funds.
- The December 2023 EC meeting was rescheduled to January 2024.
- EC representatives were asked to continue registering for the Science Symposium.
- There will be a vote on Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District (VSWCD) membership during the closed EC session.

The EC approved the September 28, 2023 EC meeting minutes.

- ✓ **Decision:** Approval of the September 28, 2023 EC meeting minutes
- **Action Item:** EC representatives will bring outreach materials to the March EC meeting

Hydrology Update

Lucas Barrett, Reclamation, provided a hydrology presentation with a 2023 review and 2024 forecast. Summary updates are below:

- 2023 Review:
 - Great snowpack with even higher than predicted runoff in some areas.
 - No drying in Angostura Reach thanks to coordination by management agencies.
 - Supplemental water use was 15,000 acre-feet (ac-ft) between July 13 and October 30. This is 2.5x more than in 2022.

- There was essentially no monsoon season.
- There were struggles with El Vado Reservoir due to high runoff and construction, along with significant locked-in flood storage.
- Coordination currently occurs and is ongoing:
 - Middle Rio Grande coordination calls during irrigation season
 - Frequent communication between USACE, Reclamation, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD), New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC), and others
 - Frequent discussions with biologists
- 2024 Forecast:
 - The National Weather Service (NWS) has predicted normal temperatures for most of 2024.
 - Above average summer temperatures are predicted for most of the state.
 - New Mexico is currently in an El Niño cycle, with the possibility of La Niña by fall 2024.
 - Snowpack is low but it's too early to tell final snowpack with seasonal forecasts predicting above average precipitation in northern New Mexico.
 - New Mexico is currently out of Rio Grande Compact Article VII restrictions, although there is possibility of going back under depending on snowpack and Caballo Reservoir demand.
 - Reclamation has ~1,450 ac-ft of supplemental water carried over from 2023. There is currently ~5,000 ac-ft in place for 2024, although there could be up to ~12,000 ac-ft.
 - Communication and coordination between water managers will continue.
- Questions:
 - Lucas B. was asked about the San Juan Chama allocation and stated a full allocation was expected unless snowpack disappears.
 - Grace Haggerty, NMISC, received a preliminary estimate of 120,000 ac-ft of debit for New Mexico in 2024, which is about the same as 2023. The number indicates how important monsoons are for catching up on Compact deliveries.

➤ **Action Item:** PST will send out the 2023 hydrology presentation in the EC meeting follow-up

2023 Species Update

Jennifer Davis, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), provided 2023 updates for the Pecos sunflower, New Mexico meadow jumping mouse, southwestern willow flycatcher, and yellow-billed cuckoo. Eric Gonzales, Reclamation, provided a 2023 update for the Rio Grande silvery minnow (RGSM). Summary updates are below:

- **Pecos Sunflower** – The 5-year review came out in September 2023 and there was no change in status; it continues to be listed as threatened. The recovery unit for New Mexico is the West Central Recovery Unit, which boasted two new populations in the 5-year review, one at Bernardo and one near Grants, New Mexico.
- **New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse** – The recovery plan was finalized in January 2023. There are six recovery units in New Mexico. Bosque del Apache and Middle Rio Grande (MRG) are in one unit. The recovery implementation strategy, which remains in progress, will have more of the specific recovery actions and projects.
- **Southwestern Willow Flycatcher** – There was another partial survey in 2023 due to personnel restraints. The survey focused on areas that contribute to baseline data, project planning, and trends over time. In 2023, there were 467 territories in the MRG, compared to last year's 607

territories. The 2023 number is still among the highest recorded. There was a continued increase of birds in Isleta Reach. As typical, sixty-nine percent of the birds were in San Marcial, New Mexico. High water levels made surveys difficult, and many observations were made later in the season as water levels dropped. Multiple territories were found throughout the Albuquerque Reach, which is not typical. The birds were present all season and would be considered territorial rather than migratory. Planning has started for the 5-year review, which will be completed out of Arizona. Jennifer D. may be reaching out to folks for any data needed.

- **Yellow-Billed Cuckoo** – USFWS is still working on the Species Status Assessment (SSA) and hopes to finish in 2024. After completing the SSA, USFWS will begin working on the recovery plan. Partial surveys were completed again due to personnel restraints. There were 145 territories with 550 detections, which is an increase from last year (120 territories). Fifty percent of the birds were in San Marcial, New Mexico. There were 2 territories in the Albuquerque Reach.
 - **Rio Grande Silvery Minnow** – The data presented is preliminary as the modeled outputs are not yet available. In 2023, 20, 30, and 40 sites were sampled. Given the high spring runoff, the number of fish was high, well above the 0.30 fish/100 m² threshold in the 2016 BO. Catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) was 3.86 fish/100 m² for 20 sites, 5.00 fish/100 m² for 30 sites, and 5.68 fish/100 m² for 40 sites. The numbers are expected to change slightly for the annual report. The annual report is expected in early February and will be posted to the Program Portal.
 - Questions:
 - An EC member asked if there would be full or partial surveys for the avian species in 2024. Jennifer Faler, Reclamation, stated the plan was to complete full surveys. The surveys will be completed by Reclamation staff and contracted out. There seems to be enough volunteers interested to complete full surveys.
 - An EC member asked for any feedback on whether the 40-site sampling was beneficial compared to the 30-site sampling.
 - Eric G. stated that the sampling model was based on previous studies by Thomas Archdeacon, USFWS, which indicated increased benefit up to 40 sites. After 40 sites, there wasn't much benefit to improving precision relative to cost.
 - An EC member asked how the RGSM annual report will be announced.
 - The PST will post the RGSM annual report to the Program Portal and send out an email announcement.
 - An EC member commented that sampling site number has changed over time and suggested peer review be done within the MRGESCP to determine the best sampling model.
 - Eric G. stated Thomas A.'s work was done in response to an initial peer review suggestion. This resulted in sampling sites increasing from 20 to 30 to 40.
- **Action Item:** Reclamation will provide the final population monitoring report and PST will post it to the Program Portal and announce it to the MRGESCP

Program Support Team Update

The PST presented updates. Summary updates are below:

PASS Contract

- There have been questions about the role of the PST in the Program and Science Support (PASS) contract. To help provide clarity, the PST will provide regular PASS contract updates to the EC. The biggest difference between the previous PASS contract and the current version is that the

new scope is primarily limited to administration and coordination. The previous contract had less specific language and therefore, supported the PST completing tasks on behalf of the MRGESCP. Current language defines the role of the PST in tasks and deliverables as fully administrative.

- The draft 2024 Work Plan identifies lead and support roles for each task. The PST takes lead on primarily administrative tasks. This new work plan format highlights how the PST should support work products under its current scope.
- The PST engages in regular calls with Lynette Giesen, the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) for the PASS contract, to discuss deliverables, reporting, deadlines, staffing, and other contract-related issues.
- Given the transition period following personnel changes, the PST is reviewing the work to be carried out and the staff needed to support it. The PST will provide the support staff needed to carry out the 2024 Work Plan, which reflects the deliverables in the PASS contract.

Staffing Update

- Angela Medina-Garcia, previous Science Coordinator on the PST, has moved on from Western EcoSystems Technology, Inc. (WEST). Dr. Cait Rottler, Assistant Science Coordinator, will assist the PST with science support. Science-related issues can be directed to Cait Rottler (crottlert@west-inc.com) and Zoë Rossman (zrossman@west-inc.com).
- Kevin Shelley continues to serve as the Interim Program Coordinator. The search for a permanent Program Coordinator is underway, and WEST will keep the EC informed as they work through the selection process.

Program Portal Interface

- Development of a new Program Portal interface is in progress, and a second preliminary walkthrough will occur in a couple weeks. Folks interested in attending the walkthrough and providing comments can contact Michelle Tuineau, PST, at mtuineau@west-inc.com.

2023 Annual Report

- The PST asked the EC how much input they'd like to have in the 2023 Annual Report. In the past, the EC has provided accomplishment write-ups, photos, and quotes. For the 2022 Annual Report, the EC provided activity photos and quotes.
 - EC members liked the way the 2022 Annual Report was done and favored providing photos and quotes again for the 2023 Annual Report.
- Jim Wilber, Reclamation, stated the newsletters and annual reports have become very professional public-facing products thanks to WEST. He thinks they showcase the work of the MRGESCP very well.

➤ **Action Item:** PST will provide a draft 2023 Annual Report for EC review and approval

FPC Update

Anne Marken, MRGCD, and the PST presented the FPC update. Summary updates are below:

- Program Portal
 - Ryan Gronewold, USACE, stated USACE cannot take funds from non-federal organizations to fund the Portal contract with USGS.

- Other Portal funding options for consideration were rotating the USGS contract between signatories and having another signatory (with fewer limitations on accepting funds) hold the USGS contract.
 - USGS can accept funds from federal and non-federal organizations. It is easiest for USGS to receive funds from an organization they have an existing contract with.
 - USACE will fund the Program Portal through March 2025. Future funding of the Program Portal is not certain. USACE is in the Fiscal Year 2024 President’s Budget for \$625,000 but will need to wait for Congress to pass a budget to know the final amount. USACE will know the final amount around early February 2024. In March/April 2024, USACE will receive the Fiscal Year 2025 President’s Budget and will have a better idea of whether it can fund the Program Portal past March 2025.
 - MRGCD and NMISC representatives indicated they may be able to provide funds for the USGS contract depending on the cost.
 - USGS will be providing more information on future costs of the Portal.
 - USACE stated they would reach out to interested funding parties once they received the 2025 President’s Budget.
 - 2023 FPC Summary Report
 - All 2023 FPC tasks were completed except for two. The first is the Funding Matrix, which is a living document that will continue to be updated. The second is the 2024 Work Plan, which will be discussed and up for approval later in the meeting.
- **Action Item:** USACE and FPC will coordinate with PST and signatories on Program Portal funding as needed after receiving the 2025 President’s Budget

Science and Adaptive Management Committee (SAMC) Update

Ara Winter, Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program (BEMP), and the PST presented the SAMC update. Summary updates are below:

- 2023 SAMC Summary Report
 - All the SAMC’s administrative tasks were completed, except for the 2024 Work Plan, which will be discussed and up for approval later in the meeting.
 - Ongoing Science & Technical (S&T) Ad Hoc Groups will be continued into 2024.
 - The Information and Data Quality Standards Ad Hoc Group is preparing to sunset by March 2024.
 - Ongoing development of resources and tools include items related to vegetated islands and bank-attached bars as well as conceptual models for the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse and Pecos sunflower.
 - The Science Symposium and Climate Futures Planning Workshop will be held in February and March 2024, respectively.
- Ad Hoc Group Updates
 - **Drying in Angostura Reach Ad Hoc Group** – The draft report was sent to Reclamation for review. The group will sunset once the report is finalized.
 - Jim W. discussed the option of adding to the charge of the ad hoc group. He views the draft report as a first step with the next step being the development of strategic drying recommendations for management agencies across the reaches of the MRG. He noted the original charge was more geared towards the development of these recommendations.

- The PST stated the topic would be brought up at the next SAMC meeting and a new charge may be developed.
 - The PST asked for Jim W.'s input on a potential charge that continues the work of the ad hoc group ahead of the next SAMC meeting.
- **Information & Data Quality Standards Ad Hoc Group** – A draft summary template is being reviewed by group leads. This template will provide basic information on data quality management protocols and methods and will also facilitate the vetting of projects entered into the Science and Adaptive Management Information System (SAMIS). The group opted to adopt the USGS data disclaimer. After group leads review the disclaimer, it will be posted to the Program Portal. This will fulfill the group's charge and the group will be sunset.
- **RGSM Hypotheses Development Ad Hoc Group and RGSM CEM/Genetics Ad Hoc Group** – Both are ongoing.
- **Restoration and Compendium Ad Hoc Group and SER Recovery Wheel Ad Hoc Group** – Both have members lined up and will be convened in early 2024.
- SAMC Membership Update
 - Five SAMC member terms are ending in 2024 and new members will need to be recruited.
 - An EC member asked whether SAMC members could extend their terms.
 - The PST noted the SAMC Charter states member terms are four years and it has historically been a good idea to bring in new members to reinvigorate the group. Former SAMC members are free to apply to join the group at a later time. Former SAMC members can also participate in ad hoc groups.
 - SAMC members may extend their terms with EC permission.
 - The EC was supportive of bringing in new SAMC members.
 - SAMC positions up for replacement include 2 standing and 3 flexible positions. Standing positions need to be replaced with the same area of expertise. Flexible positions may be switched out for different areas of expertise. The SAMC will recommend areas of expertise to seek in new SAMC candidates and the EC will finalize the list at the March EC meeting.
 - The timing for recruiting new SAMC members is not set in the SAMC Charter. It could occur at any time in 2024.
- **Action Item:** Jim Wilber will provide input on continuing the work of the Strategic Plan for Potential Drying Ad Hoc Work Group
- **Action Item:** SAMC will provide input on areas of expertise needed from new SAMC members for EC discussion

2023 Work Plan Accomplishments and Draft 2024 Work Plan Review

The PST presented 2023 Work Plan accomplishments and reviewed the draft 2024 Work Plan. Summary updates are below:

- 2023 Work Plan Accomplishments
 - 2022 cost share was not received from signatories.
 - PST maintained documents and content on the Program Portal.
 - PST will work with USGS to update existing datasets and develop a plan for future data hosted on the Program Portal.
 - SAMIS has been maintained and continues to be updated.
 - The first round of SAMIS training sessions was completed in March 2023.

- The Annual Program Evaluation was conducted January-February 2023. Results were presented at the March 2023 EC meeting. There were no resulting updates to the Long-Term Plan or By-Laws.
 - The 2023 Work Plan was revised at the March, June, and September EC meetings.
 - The 2022 Annual Report was approved by the EC in March 2023 with the pending addition of photos and testimonials from signatories. An electronic copy was made available on the Program Portal. Hard copies were provided in September 2023.
 - The draft 2023 Annual Report will be provided at the March 2023 EC meeting.
 - Newsletters were provided during the months of February, April, June, August, and November. The December newsletter was delayed to January 2024.
 - Draft 2024 Work Plan Review
 - The FPC and SAMC meetings were moved to occurring on a quarterly basis rather than in specific months.
 - Tasks, deliverables, and SAMC leads were included for all ad hoc groups. These were pulled from the ad hoc group charges.
 - To help clarify the roles of the PST and MRGESCP members, lead and support roles were identified for all tasks. The PST continues to support all tasks but identifying committees and MRGESCP members as task leads emphasizes them taking a more active role.
 - There are three main categories: General Administration, Communication & Coordination, and Science Support.
 - There was some feedback that an adaptive management section should be included. This section can be added as committees identify specific adaptive management tasks they would like to include on the work plan.
 - Tasks 3.1a and 3.1b were pulled directly from SAMC charter language. These can be developed into more specific tasks with further SAMC discussion.
 - The FPC will also review their tasks and update them as needed.
 - As a living document, the work plan is regularly updated to fit the needs of the MRGESCP and approved by the EC.
- ✓ **Decision:** Approval of draft 2024 Work Plan

Collaborative Project Prioritization and Funding Approach

Aubrey Harris, USACE, and the PST presented on the collaborative project prioritization and funding approach. Summary updates are below:

- Signatories need ways to prioritize potential projects and link them to funding opportunities.
- Signatories with available funding have requested a way to select priority projects and many signatories would also like a structure to efficiently and collaboratively pursue funding for priority projects.
- With input from Aubrey H., the PST drafted a schematic with an example of what this process could look like for the MRGESCP for both internal and external funding opportunities. This schematic needs to be further developed into a process that works well for the MRGESCP.
- Aubrey Harris provided background and further justification for the need for this approach from the USACE perspective:
 - Many critical uncertainties require an interdisciplinary perspective.
 - Currently, much of the work on projects in the MRG is siloed.

- Signatories with funding could find some type of Request for Proposals (RFP) process useful where they could leverage interdisciplinary expertise to address critical uncertainties.
- The MRGESCP has a lot of tools coming into play such as project prioritization and the Funding Matrix that could support this.
- Multiple signatories working together on projects also looks good and can help with pursuing external funding opportunities.
- The PST walked the group through the example schematic, including both internal and external funding pathways and clarified potential roles for the EC, SAMC, and FPC throughout the process.
- An EC member commented that this would be a more focused way to be ready when internal and external funding opportunities become available.
- The SAMC will identify priority projects and send a list to the FPC, who will assist in coordinating partnerships and funding opportunities around specific projects. This process should work for all signatories in a way that makes sense for them.
- EC members expressed the need for this process to be flexible enough to work with the needs of different signatories. What are federal, non-federal, Tribal, etc. entities getting from participating in this process?
- EC members proposed a Hybrid Ad Hoc Group with input from the SAMC and FPC to help develop this process.
- The incorporation of the structure of the Multi-Year Plan into the Long-Term Plan can help projects build off each other and fuel priority lists.
- ✓ **Decision:** Approval of the SAMC and FPC developing the collaborative project prioritization and funding approach further
- ✓ **Decision:** Approval of the SAMC and FPC incorporating the MYP into the LTP Project List
- **Action Item:** PST will develop a charge for a hybrid ad hoc group made up of FPC and SAMC members to develop the collaborative project prioritization and funding approach and present to the FPC and SAMC for review
- **Action Item:** SAMC and FPC will develop the collaborative project prioritization and funding approach
- **Action Item:** SAMC and FPC will incorporate the MYP into the LTP Project List

2024 Event Updates

The PST presented 2024 event updates. Summary updates are below:

- The Science Symposium will be held at the UNM Rotunda on February 13-14, 2024. There will be student prizes, opportunities for networking, and a Networking Board for job/internship/research/etc. opportunities available. Abstracts will be accepted through February 1, 2024.
 - Mark K. asked to provide an opportunity for the Networking Board ahead of the symposium. The PST announced it would send out a call for opportunities to all signatories.
- The PST requested EC feedback on which week in March to hold the Climate Futures Planning Workshop. There were issues with the weeks of March 11th and March 18th but the PST planned to finalize a date based on the given feedback.
- **Action Item:** PST will send call to signatories for job opportunities, funding opportunities, etc. to provide on the Opportunity Board at the 2024 Science Symposium

- **Action Item:** All will register for the 2024 Science Symposium
- **Action Item:** EC representatives will encourage the submittal of abstracts for the 2024 Science Symposium
- **Action Item:** PST will send out final Climate Futures Planning Workshop date and registration link
- **Action Item:** All will register for the Climate Futures Planning Workshop

Public Comment and Announcements

- ❖ Jim Wilber, alternate EC representative for Reclamation, is retiring in February 2024.
- ❖ Matt Wunder, EC representative for the NMDGF, is retiring in February 2024.
- ❖ Alan Hatch, former Director of Natural Resources at the Pueblo of Santa Ana and EC representative, passed away on December 14, 2023. His obituary is available online at <https://www.frenchfunerals.com/obituaries/alan-hatch>. In lieu of flowers, Alan’s family has asked folks to donate to his favorite charities on his behalf.
- ❖ The EC awarded the 2023 Rick Billings Award posthumously to Alan Hatch, the former EC representative for the Pueblo of Santa Ana, as well as to Debbie Lee and Catherine Murphy, former members of the Program Support Team.
- **Action Item:** EC Co-Chairs and PST will draft words on behalf of the EC to post with Alan Hatch’s obituary on the Program Portal
- **Action Item:** PST will coordinate with Reclamation to award the 2023 Rick Billings Award to the winners

Closed EC Session

The EC held a closed session to vote on VSWCD’s application request to join the MRGESCP. The EC voted to approve VSWCD’s request.

- ✓ **Decision:** Approval of VSWCD joining the MRGESCP
- **Action Item:** PST will send formal letter to VSWCD regarding the EC’s decision on membership to the MRGESCP

Meeting Participants

EC Representative	Organization
Mark Kelly, Non-Federal Co-Chair	Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority
Wayne Pullan, Federal Co-Chair	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Paul Tashjian	Audubon Southwest
Kim Eichhorst	Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program
Kyle Harwood (alternate representative)	Buckman Direct Diversion
Colleen McRoberts	City of Albuquerque, Open Space Division
Anne Marken	Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District
Matthew Wunder	New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Grace Haggerty	New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission
Bill Grantham	New Mexico Office of the Attorney General
Michael Scialdone	Pueblo of Sandia
Nathan Schroeder (alternate representative)	Pueblo of Santa Ana
Thomas Turner	University of New Mexico
Lt Commander Jerre Hansbrough	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jennifer Faler	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Debra Hill	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Participant	Organization
Alison Hutson	New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission
Andy Dean	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ara Winter	Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program
Aubrey Harris	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Cetan Christensen	Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority
Chandler Farnworth	U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of the Solicitor
Danielle Galloway	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Doug McKenna	Pueblo of Santa Ana
Dustin Chavez-Davis	City of Albuquerque, Open Space Division
Eric Gonzales	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Hira Walker	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jennifer Davis	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jim Wilber	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Katherine Tara	Utton Transboundary Resources Center, University of New Mexico School of Law
Lucas Barrett	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Lynette Giesen	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Megan Osborne	University of New Mexico
Ryan Gronewold	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Shannon Weld	New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission
Trevor Stevens	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Yasmeen Najmi	Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District

Support	Organization
Julie Dickey	Program Support Team
Cait Rottler	Program Support Team

[Link to full Meeting Materials List](#)

Executive Committee Meeting
January 18, 2024

See the following meeting material on the page below:

Draft 2023 FPC Summary Report [read-ahead, draft]

**MIDDLE RIO GRAND ENDANGERED SPECIES COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM
2023 FPC Summary Report**

The following are status updates and notes for 2023 Fiscal Planning Committee (FPC) activities, prepared for the January 18, 2024 EC meeting.

Task #	Item	Status	Notes
1.1c	Develop a plan for continued Program Portal funding	ONGOING	FPC memo on Program Portal funding options sent to the Executive Committee for September 2023 meeting.
1.6b	2024 Work Plan	IN PROGRESS (January 2024)	To be reviewed and approved by the EC at the January 2024 EC meeting. FPC will provide additional input on FPC-related items.
✓ 5.1	Habitat Restoration (HR) Coordination Group meetings	COMPLETE (2023)	One virtual meeting was held in April 2023. Three field trips were held in February 2023 (HR areas on or near Pueblo of Sandia), August 2023 (Candelaria Nature Preserve), and November 2023 (Plant Materials Center).
✓ 5.4	Provide updates on implementation of signatory activities from the Long-Term Plan	COMPLETE (2023)	Updates were provided as necessary at the FPC meetings.
	Funding Opportunities Matrix	ONGOING	Developed the Funding Opportunities Matrix in January 2023. Revised the matrix for review at multiple 2023 FPC meetings. Added the matrix to the Program Portal for FPC review in December 2023.
	Cross-coordination between SAMC and FPC	ONGOING	Cross-coordination between the SAMC and FPC began with the establishment of liaisons from each committee in August 2023 and is ongoing.
✓	Biennial Schedule	COMPLETE (2023)	Added FPC tasks to the Biennial Schedule in January 2023. Revised the Biennial Schedule in April 2023. Revision approved by the EC in June 2023.

[Link to full Meeting Materials List](#)

Executive Committee Meeting
January 18, 2024

See the following meeting material on the page below:

Draft 2023 SAMC Summary Report [read-ahead, draft]

**MIDDLE RIO GRAND ENDANGERED SPECIES COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM
2023 SAMC Summary Report**

The following are status updates and notes for 2023 Science and Adaptive Management Committee (SAMC) activities, prepared for the January 18, 2024 EC meeting.

Task #	Item	Status*	SAMC Lead(s)	Notes
Administrative Tasks				
✓ 1.2b	Module I of signatory SAMIS trainings	COMPLETE (March 2023)	N/A	Module I of SAMIS trainings completed. 19 attendees across 12 signatory organizations
1.6	2024 Work Plan	IN PROGRESS (2024)	N/A	The SAMC had input in development. To be reviewed and approved by the EC at the January 2024 meeting.
✓ 1.3	2023 SAMC appointments	COMPLETE (March 2023)	N/A	Four new SAMC members were appointed from applicant pool to fill open areas of expertise.
✓	Update to SAMC Charter	COMPLETE (March 2023)	N/A	SAMC Charter was updated to increase the membership limit for the SAMC from 8 members to 10 members
✓ 1.4	2023 Science Evaluation	COMPLETE (February 2023)	N/A	The 2023 Science Evaluation was completed November 2022 - February 2023. 2 participants from 2 signatory organizations
	Cross-coordination between SAMC and FPC	ONGOING	Aubrey Harris	Cross-coordination between the SAMC and FPC began with the establishment of liaisons from each committee in August 2023 and is ongoing
✓	2021-2022 Program Bibliography	COMPLETE (May 2023)	N/A	The 2021-2022 Program Bibliography was completed in May 2023 and posted to the Program Portal.
Science & Technical (S&T) Ad Hoc Groups and Administrative Ad Hoc Groups				
3.1	Information and Data Quality Standards Hybrid Ad Hoc Group	IN PROGRESS (Quarter 1 2024)	Ara Winter	Draft template completed and USGS disclaimer language adopted. Products will be reviewed and group completed by first quarter of 2024.

Task #	Item	Status*	SAMC Lead(s)	Notes
	Charge:	The Information and Data Quality Standards Hybrid Ad Hoc Group will develop a form template that summarizes data QA/QC and management practices for each signatory project entered into the Science and Adaptive Management Information System (SAMIS), and will develop language for a data disclaimer for the Program Portal.		
	Deliverables:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Template with fields and associated document with definitions and justifications for each field (IN PROGRESS) ii. Revised template (PLANNED) iii. Draft disclaimer language for SAMC and EC review to put on the Program Portal (COMPLETE) 		
4.1	RGSM Hypotheses Development S&T Ad Hoc Group	IN PROGRESS (2024)	Mick Porter, Alison Hutson, Ara Winter	Group leads are currently discussing RGSM population model parameter validation and population model comparison.
	Charge:	Review, translate and refine recommendations from the RGSM Population Monitoring Work Group (PMWG) status report (Valdez 2021) into specific questions with clear and testable hypotheses. If a hypothesis cannot be generated, provide an explanation and cite relevant literature.		
	Deliverables:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. List of research hypotheses generated from the recommendation statements (COMPLETE) ii. Completed review comment matrix (COMPLETE) iii. Presentation to the SAMC (PLANNED) 		
4.3a,b	SER Recovery Wheel S&T Ad Hoc Group	PLANNED (2024)	Ondrea Hummel	SAMC approved charge in August 2023. Group member list has been compiled, and group will convene in the first half of 2024.
	Charge:	Develop an ecosystem-level restoration assessment tool based on the Society for Ecological Restoration's (SER) Ecological Recovery Wheel, which visually represents recovery of a target ecosystem compared to a selected reference ecosystem using a 5-star rating scale across a set of attributes. The Recovery Wheel should be customized to the Middle Rio Grande (MRG) river-floodplain ecosystem. The process used to develop this tool should be fully documented to facilitate use and future updates to the wheel.		
	Deliverables:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A summary of the reference ecosystem constructed (PLANNED) ii. A recovery wheel customized to the structure and function of the MRG (PLANNED) iii. A recovery wheel for the MRG, including sub-attribute levels that inform decisions about site condition and maintenance (PLANNED) 		

Task #	Item	Status*	SAMC Lead(s)	Notes
		iv. An outline documenting the process used to develop a Recovery Wheel customized to the MRG and identifying any lessons learned (PLANNED) v. Collaborative Program seminar (PLANNED)		
4.3c	Restoration Resources Compendium S&T Ad Hoc Group	PLANNED (2024)	Meaghan Conway	Draft compendium completed in August 2023. SAMC approved charge in August 2023. Group member list has been compiled, and group will convene in the first half of 2024.
	Charge:	Create a compendium of habitat/ecosystem restoration projects and resources within the Middle Rio Grande (MRG) Basin. The compendium should include project metadata (e.g., project location, lead agency, date range), as well as objectives, target species, monitoring plans, adaptive management plans, and reports associated with each project, when available. In addition, the compendium should also contain a list of resources that can inform restoration planning, adaptive management, and monitoring in the MRG.		
	Deliverables:	i. Suggestions for improving the structure of the compendium (PLANNED) ii. A complete list of completed and active restoration projects in the MRG (PLANNED) iii. A complete list of goals and targets for common restoration practices in the MRG (PLANNED) iv. A list of restoration resources customized to the MRG (PLANNED) v. An outline documenting the process used to complete the compendium, lessons learned, and recommendations for future groups (PLANNED) vi. Collaborative Program seminar (PLANNED)		
4.2	Drying in Angostura Reach S&T Ad Hoc Group	IN PROGRESS (2024)	N/A	Drying report draft is complete and has been delivered to Reclamation. Report will be finalized in 2024 and next steps taken.
	Charge:	Develop recommendations for management actions to deploy in preparation for, or in response to, a potential drying event in the Angostura Reach near Albuquerque, New Mexico. Recommendations should include descriptions of each management action, scientific justification, anticipated responses, and considerations for deployment, including the consequences and tradeoffs for each alternative. Each alternative for the Angostura Reach should be considered in the context of other reach drying response actions or strategies (if in existence), and include recommendations for related data collection efforts, use of water infrastructure, and endangered species management actions for the Rio Grande silvery minnow (<i>Hybognathus amarus</i> ; RGSM).		

Task #	Item	Status*	SAMC Lead(s)	Notes
	Deliverables:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Expert opinion on past actions (COMPLETE) ii. Comparison of management actions, consequences, and tradeoffs (COMPLETE) iii. Prioritized list of management actions based on benefit & scientific defensibility (COMPLETE) iv. Monitoring plan (COMPLETE) v. Draft strategic framework (COMPLETE) 		
3.4a,b	RGSM CEM/Genetics S&T Ad Hoc Group	IN PROGRESS (2024)	N/A	The RGSM CEM was revised with genetics elements in 2022. The revised RGSM CEM will be reviewed and finalized in 2024.
	Charge:	Identify a series of genetics-related components that inform, and are informed by, the life history characteristics of the Rio Grande silvery minnow (RGSM), propagation and augmentation of the species, and environmental influences in the Middle Rio Grande (MRG). Incorporate these components into the conceptual ecological model (CEM) for the RGSM, found in Appendix B of the MRGSCP 2020 Science and Adaptive Management Plan (WEST 2020).		
	Deliverables:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Modified schematic of RGSM CEM (COMPLETE) ii. Presentation to SAMC (COMPLETE) iii. Modified table “RGSM_CEM_relationships” (IN PROGRESS) iv. Modified tables “Table B3_descriptions” and “Table B2_categories” (IN PROGRESS) 		
Science Decision Support Planning and Tools Development				
4.4a	Vegetated Islands and Bars glossary	IN PROGRESS (2024)	Ari Posner and Dave Moore	Glossary has been drafted. SAMC leads have reviewed the first draft. The PST is updating the Glossary. An ad hoc group will be developed in 2024 to complete the glossary and conceptual model.
4.4b	Vegetated Islands and Bars conceptual model	IN PROGRESS (2024)	Ari Posner and Dave Moore	An ad hoc group will be developed in 2024 to complete the glossary and conceptual model.
3.3	Project Evaluation Criteria	IN PROGRESS (March 2024)	Aubrey Harris	Elements of the Project Evaluation Criteria will inform revision of the Long-Term Plan Project List formatting.
3.4c	NMMJM Conceptual Model	IN PROGRESS (2024)	N/A	Model has been drafted (September 2023) and will be completed, revised, and reviewed in 2024.

Task #	Item	Status*	SAMC Lead(s)	Notes
3.4d	PESU Conceptual Model	IN PROGRESS (2024)	N/A	Model has been drafted (September 2023) and will be completed, revised, and reviewed in 2024.
Communication and Information Sharing				
3.5	Climate Futures Planning Workshop	PLANNED (October 2023)	N/A	The workshop planning is complete. Due to personnel changes, the workshop was postponed and will take place in March 2024.
2.3	Science Symposium	PLANNED (December 2023)	N/A	The Symposium was postponed due to personnel changes and will take place in February 2024.
✓ 2.2	Collaborative Seminars	COMPLETE (2023)	N/A	9 Collaborative Seminars were held in 2023.

* "In Progress" and "Planned" task dates are estimated end dates according to the most recent version of the 2023 Work Plan (September 2023). N/A signifies that this task either was not in the Work Plan. For tasks that extend past the 2023 Work Plan, 2024 is listed as date.

** Work Plan # is from most recent version of the 2023 Work Plan (September 2023).

[Link to full Meeting Materials List](#)

Executive Committee Meeting
January 18, 2024

See the following meeting material on the page below:

2024 SAMC Membership [read-ahead]

2024 Science and Adaptive Management Committee Membership

SAMC Member	Area of Expertise (AOE)	AOE Type ²	Starting Year	Retention Status ³
Alison Hutson	Aquatic Ecology	Flexible	2023	
Michael Porter	Aquatic Ecology	Standing	2023	
Megan Friggens	Climate Science	Flexible	2020	Term up in 2024
Ryan Gronewold	EC <i>ex-officio</i> ¹	N/A	2020	
Meaghan Conway	Ecosystem Function	Standing	2020	Term up in 2024
Ari Posner	Geomorphology	Flexible	2020	Term up in 2024
Aubrey Harris	Hydrology	Standing	2023	
Ara Winter	Statistics/Modeling	Flexible	2020	Term up in 2024
S. David Moore	Terrestrial Ecology	Standing	2020	Term up in 2024
Ondrea Hummel	Watershed Resource Planning/Regulatory	Flexible	2023	

¹The EC *ex-officio* is a member of the EC who serves to represent the EC's perspective on the SAMC. The EC fills the position of EC *ex-officio* through a vote. The position is not subject to term limits.

²The four (4) standing SAMC AOE are as follows: Aquatic ecology, terrestrial ecology, ecosystem function, and hydrology. Four to six (4-6) flexible subject matter experts may also be included on the SAMC, with their AOE determined by the Executive Committee.

³The SAMC charter states that no individuals may serve on the SAMC for more than four (4) consecutive years, except as authorized by the EC.

[Link to full Meeting Materials List](#)

Executive Committee Meeting
January 18, 2024

See the following meeting material on the page below:

2023 MRGESCP Work Plan Summary of Accomplishments [read-ahead]

**MIDDLE RIO GRAND ENDANGERED SPECIES COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM
2023 WORK PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The following are status updates and notes for each of the 2023 Work Plan items, prepared for the January 18, 2024, Executive Committee (EC) meeting.

Task #	Item	Status	Notes
Administrative Tasks			
1.1a	Maintain and update Program Portal	ONGOING	PST maintained documents and content on the Program Portal
1.1b	Update existing datasets on the Program Portal	IN PROGRESS (March 2023)	PST will work with USGS to update existing datasets and develop a plan for future data hosted on the Program Portal.
1.1c	Develop a plan for continued Program Portal funding	ONGOING	FPC memo on Program Portal funding options sent to the Executive Committee for September 2023 meeting.
1.2a	Maintain and update SAMIS	ONGOING	SAMIS development resumed in November 2023 following completion of other priority tasks. The SAMIS development team is in the process of integrating the SAMIS Data Entry and Data Viewer applications and developing QA/QC alerts.
✓ 1.2b	Module I of signatory SAMIS trainings	COMPLETE (March 2023)	Module I of SAMIS training sessions completed: 19 attendees across 12 signatory organizations.
✓ 1.3	2023 SAMC appointments	COMPLETE (March 2023)	SAMC Charter was updated to increase the membership limit for the SAMC from 8 members to 10 members. Four new SAMC members were appointed from applicant pool to fill open areas of expertise.
✓ 1.4	2023 Science Evaluation	COMPLETE (February 2023)	The 2023 Science Evaluation was completed November 2022 - February 2023. 2 participants from 2 signatory organizations took part.

Task #	Item	Status	Notes
✓ 1.5	Annual Program Evaluation	COMPLETE (March 2023)	Annual Program Evaluation was conducted January-February 2023. Results presented at the March 2023 EC meeting. There were no resulting updates to the Long-Term Plan or By-Laws.
✓ 1.6a	Revise 2023 Work Plan as needed	COMPLETE (2023)	The 2023 Work Plan was revised at the March, June, and September EC meetings.
1.6b	2024 Work Plan	IN PROGRESS (January 2024)	To be reviewed and approved by the EC at the January 2024 EC meeting.
✓ 1.7a	2022 Annual Report	COMPLETE (March 2023)	2022 Annual Report was approved by the EC in March 2023 with the pending addition of photos and testimonials from signatories. An electronic copy was made available on the Program Portal. Hard copies were provided in September 2023.
1.7b 1.7c	2022 Signatory Contributions Report and Cost Share Report	INCOMPLETE	
1.7d	Draft 2023 Annual Report	IN PROGRESS (March 2024)	Draft 2023 Annual Report will be provided at the March 2023 EC meeting.
1.7e	SAMC annual summary report	IN PROGRESS (January 2024)	To be presented at the January 2024 EC meeting.
Communication and Information Sharing			
2.1	Newsletters	IN PROGRESS (January 2024)	Newsletters were provided during the months of February, April, June, August, and November. The December newsletter was delayed to January 2024.
✓ 2.2	Collaborative Seminars	COMPLETE (2023)	9 Collaborative Seminars were held in 2023.
2.3	2023 Science Symposium	IN PROGRESS (February 2024)	Due to location delays, the Science Symposium will be held on February 13-14, 2024.
Science Decision Support Planning and Tools Development			
3.1	Information and Data Quality Standards Hybrid Ad Hoc Group	IN PROGRESS (Quarter 1 2024)	Draft template completed and USGS disclaimer language adopted. Products will be reviewed and group completed by first quarter of 2024.

Task #	Item	Status	Notes
✓ 3.2	Survey of Manager Confidence in MRGESCP Science Support	COMPLETE (March 2023)	Results of the 2022 survey were presented at the March 2023 EC meeting.
3.3	Project Evaluation Criteria	IN PROGRESS (March 2024)	Elements of the Project Evaluation Criteria will inform revision of the Long-Term Plan Project List formatting.
3.4a,b	RGSM CEM/Genetics S&T Ad Hoc Group	IN PROGRESS (2024)	The RGSM CEM was revised with genetics elements in 2022. The revised RGSM CEM will be reviewed and finalized in 2024.
3.4c	NMMJM Conceptual Model (DRAFT)	IN PROGRESS (2024)	Model has been drafted (September 2023) and will be completed, revised, and reviewed in 2024.
3.4d	PESU Conceptual Model (DRAFT)	IN PROGRESS (2024)	Model has been drafted (September 2023) and will be completed, revised, and reviewed in 2024.
3.5	Climate Futures Planning Workshop	PLANNED (March 2024)	The workshop was planned for October 2023planning is complete. A field trip to Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area was held in September 2023. Due to personnel changes, the workshop was postponed and will take place in March 2024.
Implementing Adaptive Management Activities			
4.1	RGSM Hypotheses Development S&T Ad Hoc Group	IN PROGRESS (2024)	Group leads are currently discussing RGSM population model parameter validation and population model comparison.
4.2	Drying in Angostura Reach S&T Ad Hoc Group	IN PROGRESS (2024)	Drying report draft is complete and has been delivered to Reclamation. Report will be finalized in 2024 and next steps taken.
4.3a,b	SER Recovery Wheel S&T Ad Hoc Group	PLANNED (2024)	SAMC approved charge in August 2023. Group member list has been compiled, and group will convene in the first half of 2024.

Task #	Item	Status	Notes
4.3c,d	Restoration Resources Compendium S&T Ad Hoc Group	PLANNED (2024)	Draft compendium completed in August 2023. SAMC approved charge in August 2023. Group member list has been compiled, and group will convene in the first half of 2024.
4.4a	Vegetated Islands and Bars glossary	IN PROGRESS (2024)	Glossary has been drafted and SAMC leads have reviewed the first draft. The PST is updating the Glossary. An ad hoc group will be developed in 2024 to complete the glossary and conceptual model.
4.4b	Vegetated Islands and Bars conceptual model	IN PROGRESS (2024)	An ad hoc group will be developed in 2024 to complete the glossary and conceptual model.
Coordination of Signatory Activities			
✓ 5.1	Habitat Restoration (HR) Coordination meetings	COMPLETE (2023)	One virtual meeting was held in April 2023. Three field trips were held in February 2023 (HR areas on or near Pueblo of Sandia), August 2023 (Candelaria Nature Preserve), and November 2023 (Plant Materials Center).
✓ 5.2	Identify coordination opportunities related to the spring/summer hydrology	COMPLETE (March 2023)	The PST and several signatories attended the March 2023 MAT meeting for coordination opportunities.
✓ 5.3	Provide updates on coordination activities related to the spring/summer hydrology, and lessons learned	COMPLETE (June 2023)	Updates on coordination activities were presented during the MAT update at the June 2023 EC meeting.
✓ 5.4	Provide updates on the implementation of signatory activities from the Long-Term Plan	COMPLETE (2023)	Updates were provided as necessary at the FPC meetings.

[Link to full Meeting Materials List](#)

Executive Committee Meeting
January 18, 2024

See the following meeting material on the page below:

2023 MRGESCP Work Plan [read-ahead, spreadsheet]

Science Decision Support Planning and Tools Development	3.2b	Incorporate the objective of the survey of manager confidence into the Annual Program Evaluation for 2023																		X	X	
	3.3	Evaluate and refine project evaluation criteria to align with management needs			X						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	3.4	Conceptual Ecological Models																				
	3.4a	Complete the revisions to the Rio Grande Silvery Minnow (RGSM) Conceptual Ecological Model to incorporate genetics considerations and the augmentation program			X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
	3.4b	Initiate an Internal Science Review of the draft revised Rio Grande Silvery Minnow (RGSM) Conceptual Ecological Model			X	X				X											X	X
	3.4c	Draft a conceptual ecological model for the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse			X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
	3.4d	Draft a conceptual ecological model for the Pecos sunflower			X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X							
	3.5	Climate Futures Planning Workshop																				
	3.5a	Plan Climate Futures Planning Workshop for the Middle Rio Grande to develop strategies for managing listed species in the future			X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
	3.5b	Link climate forecast models with projected on-the-ground impacts to species and habitat			X					X	X	X										
	3.5c	Host a field trip to the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area																		X		
3.5d	Host a Climate Futures Planning Workshop	X		X					X											X		
3.5e	Compile and present results from Climate Futures Planning Workshop			X					X											X	X	
Implementing Adaptive Management Activities	4.1	Continue RGSM Hypothesis Development S&T Ad Hoc Group				X						X	X	X						X	X	X
	4.1a	Explore research hypotheses regarding the influence of mesohabitat on fish distribution (Rec #4)				X					X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X
	4.1b	Compare and contrast various RGSM population models, and determine most appropriate uses for each (Rec #7)				X					X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X
	4.2	Provide Recommendations for Drying in the Angostura Reach																				
	4.2a	Survey of water managers regarding roles and flexibility in planning for and controlling drying				X			X	X	X	X										
	4.2b	Provide recommendations for management actions and data collection in response to potential drying in the Angostura reach in 2023	X		X	X							X	X								
	4.2c	Develop public messaging strategies in concert with recommendations for drying in 2023	X	X					X													
	4.2e	Evaluate effectiveness of the drying response plan, and refine recommendations for 2024 (contingent on drying in Angostura Reach)	X		X	X			X													
	4.3	Convene Restoration Guidance S&T Ad Hoc Groups to define restoration goals, monitoring/maintenance considerations, and metrics to document success																				
	4.3a	Research Society of Ecological Restoration (SER) Recovery Wheel and prepare ad hoc group charge			X				X					X	X	X	X					
	4.3b	Evaluate use of the Society of Ecological Restoration (SER) Recovery Wheel's applicability and usefulness to plan and evaluate ecosystem restoration in the MRG			X	X													X	X	X	X
	4.3c	Compile a compendium of restoration resources for the MRG			X				X					X	X	X	X					
	4.3d	Review the draft compendium of restoration resources for the MRG and provide additional resources for inclusion			X	X			X										X	X	X	X
4.4	Vegetated Islands and Bank-Attached Bars in the MRG																					
4.4a	Develop a glossary of technical terms related to management of vegetated islands/bars			X				X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
4.4b	Develop conceptual model representing the vegetated islands/bars phenomenon			X				X										X	X	X	X	
f	5.1	Host quarterly HR coordination meetings					X		X	X			X			X				X		

Coordination o Signatory Activiti	5.2	Identify coordination opportunities related to the spring/summer hydrology	X					X				X									
	5.3	Provide updates on coordination activities related to the spring/summer hydrology, and lessons learned	X					X													X
	5.4	Provide updates on the implementation of signatory activities from the Long-Term Plan					X	X		X			X			X			X		

[Link to full Meeting Materials List](#)

Executive Committee Meeting January 18, 2024

See the following meeting material on the page below:

Draft 2024 MRGESCP Work Plan [read-ahead, spreadsheet, draft]

2.9a	Non-federal lobbying on behalf of relevant project funding	L				L	S		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.9b	Coordinate signatory funding capabilities and opportunities					L	S	S	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.9c	Maintain the Funding Opportunities Matrix					L	S	S	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.1	SAMC Activities																		
3.1a	Review results from MRGESCP-related studies, models, and monitoring activities			L				S	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.1b	Translate findings from MRGESCP-related studies, models, and monitoring activities into management recommendations			L	S			S	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.2	Rio Grande Silvery Minnow (RGSM) Activities																		
3.2a	RGSM Conceptual Ecological Model(CEM)/Genetics Science & Technical (S&T) Ad Hoc Group			L	L			S	X	X	X	X	X						
	Task: Incorporate genetic components into the RGSM CEM SAMC Lead: N/A Deliverables: i. Modified schematic of RGSM CEM - <i>Complete</i> ii. Presentation to SAMC - <i>Planned</i> iii. Modified table "RGSM_CEM_relationships" - <i>In Progress</i> iv. Modified tables "Table B3_descriptions" and "Table B2_categories" - <i>In Progress</i>																		
3.2b	RGSM Hypotheses Development S&T Ad Hoc Group			L	L			S	X	X	X	X	X						
	Task: Turn existing recommendations into clear and testable hypotheses SAMC Leads: Mick Porter, Alison Hutson, Ara Winter Deliverables: i. List of research hypotheses generated from the recommendation statements - <i>Complete</i> ii. Completed review comment matrix - <i>In Progress</i> iii. Presentation to the SAMC - <i>Planned</i>																		
3.3	New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse Activities																		
3.3a	Complete, revise, and review the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse conceptual model			L				S				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.4	Pecos Sunflower Activities																		
3.4a	Complete, revise, and review the Pecos sunflower conceptual model			L				S				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.5	Ecosystem & Other Activities																		
3.5a	Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) Recovery Wheel S&T Ad Hoc Group			L	L			S				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Task: Develop a recovery wheel customized to the MRG SAMC Lead: Ondrea Hummel Deliverables: i. A summary of the reference ecosystem constructed - <i>Planned</i> ii. A recovery wheel customized to the structure and function of the MRG - <i>Planned</i> iii. A recovery wheel for the MRG, including sub-attribute levels that inform decisions about site condition and maintenance/intervention - <i>Planned</i> iv. An outline documenting the process used to develop a Recovery Wheel customized to the MRG and identifying any lessons learned - <i>Planned</i> v. Collaborative Program seminar - <i>Planned</i>																		
3.5b	Restoration Resources Compendium S&T Ad Hoc Group			L	L			S				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Task: Create a list of restoration projects and resources within the MRG SAMC Lead: Meaghan Conway Deliverables: i. Suggestions for improving the structure of the compendium - <i>Planned</i> ii. A complete list of completed and active restoration projects in the MRG - <i>Planned</i> iii. A complete list of goals and targets for common restoration practices in the MRG - <i>Planned</i> iv. A list of restoration resources customized to the MRG - <i>Planned</i> v. An outline documenting the process used to complete the compendium, lessons learned, and recommendations for future groups - <i>Planned</i> vi. Collaborative Program seminar - <i>Planned</i>																		
3.5c	Vegetated Islands and Bank-Attached Bars in the MRG			L	L			S	X	X	X	X	X						
	Task: Develop a charge for a vegetated islands and bank-attached bars ad hoc group SAMC Leads: Ari Posner, Dave Moore																		
3.5d	Information and Data Quality Standards Hybrid Ad Hoc Group			L	L			S	X	X	X								

Science Support

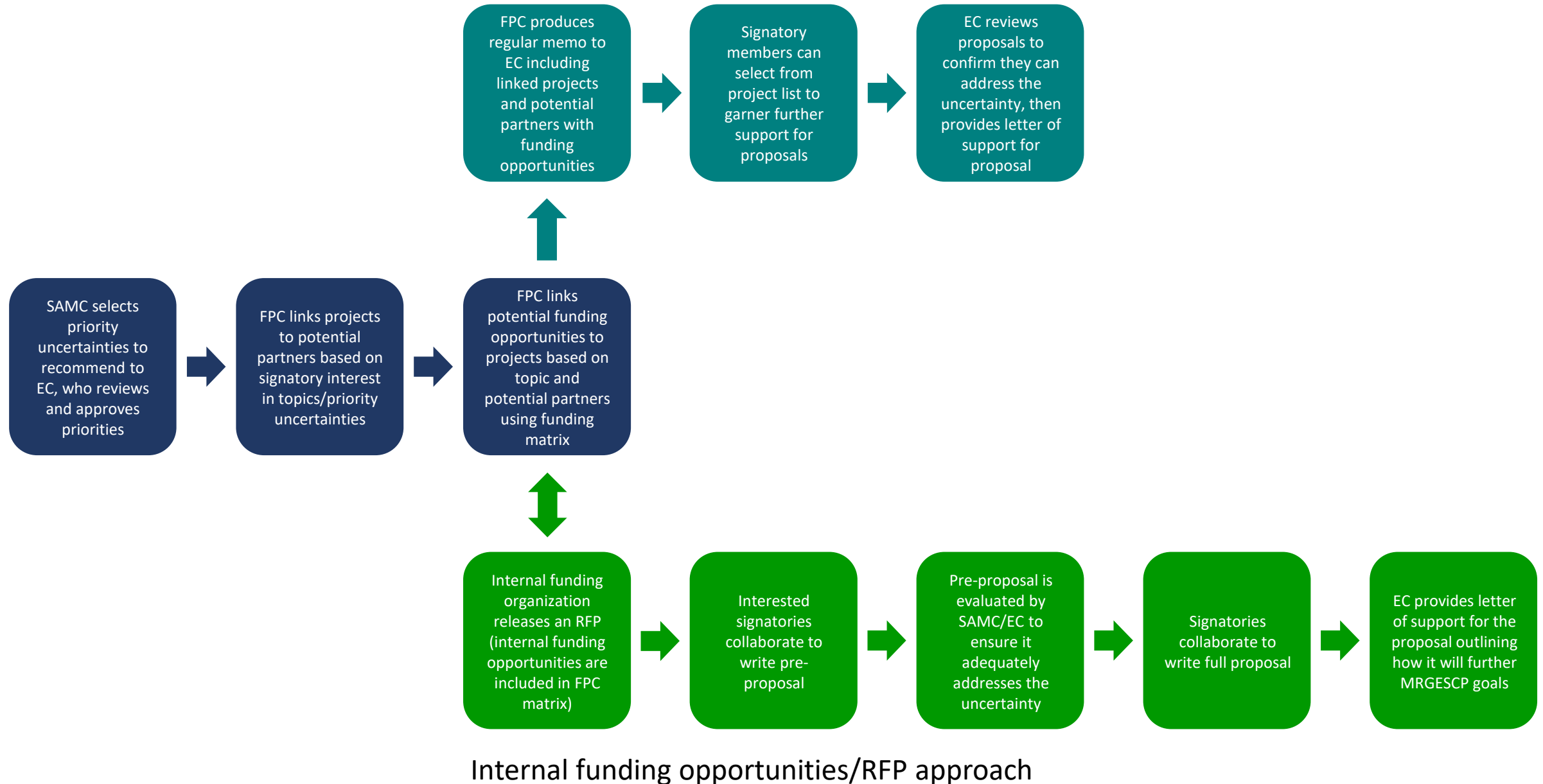
[Link to full Meeting Materials List](#)

Executive Committee Meeting
January 18, 2024

See the following meeting material on the page below:

Draft Funding Approach Schematic [read-ahead, draft]

External funding opportunities



Internal funding opportunities/RFP approach

[Link to full Meeting Materials List](#)

Executive Committee Meeting
January 18, 2024

See the following meeting material on the page below:

Draft Multi-Year Plan [read-ahead, draft]

MRGESCP Multi-Year Plan (2023-2027)

On December 6-7, 2022, the Collaborative Program hosted its first biennial Collaboratory. Over the course of the two days, participants identified priority issues to inform a multi-year planning effort in service of the Collaborative Program's mission. Two overarching themes emerged from these priority issues:

1. A need for climate scenario planning to manage adaptively in the face of increasing uncertainty; and
2. A need to organize endangered species management under an ecosystem approach within the Middle Rio Grande (MRG) Basin.

These two themes provide a framework for all of the topical areas that are included in the multi-year plan. Careful consideration of both themes will ensure the continued relevance of Collaborative Program initiatives and activities to the management priorities of its signatories.

Five critical focus areas identified from Collaboratory conversations were:

- Habitat restoration planning and assessment
- Management of vegetated islands and bank-attached bars
- Rio Grande silvery minnow (RGSM) management and science
- Water operations and flexibility
- Strategic planning for river drying in the MRG

These focus areas, in addition to climate scenario planning, organized and pursued under the ecosystem approach, inform the Collaborative Program's planned direction for the next five years and beyond. Climate scenario planning, while an overarching theme that addresses each of the critical focus areas, will require significant effort from the Collaborative Program to undertake. The multi-year planning approach seeks to forecast the priority management issues and critical scientific questions that have the potential to support future management decisions.

The multi-year plan is organized into: 1) immediate priorities (to be addressed in 2023), 2) short-term priorities (to be addressed over the next 2-4 years), and 3) long-term priorities (to be addressed over five or more years). The levels of certainty and detail for the immediate and short-term priorities are greater than those for the long-term priorities. The end goal(s) of each focus area are stated in the sections below. Details for each focus area, as well as priorities regarding climate scenario planning, are organized in the tables below.

Each item in the tables is assigned an identification code. The first part of the code indicates to which focus area the item belongs. The second part of the code indicates whether the priority is immediate (I), short-term (ST), or long-term (LT). The codes are as follows:

- Focus area
 - CS: Climate Scenario Planning
 - HR: Habitat Restoration Planning, Design, and Assessment
 - SM: Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Management and Science
 - WO: Water Operations and Flexibility
 - RD: Strategic Planning for River Drying in the Middle Rio Grande
- Timing
 - I: Immediate (2023)
 - ST: Short-Term (2024-2026)
 - LT: Long-Term (2027 and beyond)

The multi-year plan is a means to organize complex initiatives that require longer implementation times and are interrelated. The multi-year plan will be supplemented by the Biennial Administrative Schedule and each year's Annual Work Plan. The multi-year plan will be revisited after each biennial Collaboratory and revised, as needed, to ensure the Collaborative Program remains responsive to the signatories' evolving needs and management priorities. The multi-year plan items will be linked to existing guiding principles (i.e., mission, goals, objectives, and strategies) and subsequently incorporated in the SAMIS following a scientific review. This review will assess the feasibility of each item and the linkages to existing Program efforts in order to inform new project development.

Climate Scenario Planning

As the climate continues to change in New Mexico, impacts to the ecosystems in which listed species exist are apparent and likely to cascade and intensify over time. To that end, the Collaborative Program, in order to recommend management actions that will protect listed species and their habitats under this new paradigm, must cope with the uncertainty of climate change by exploring potential future conditions in the MRG Basin. The main 2023 effort related to this focus area will be a Climate Scenario Planning Workshop, which will inform many of the other activities in the multi-year work plan.

End Goal: Enable the Collaborative Program signatories and other resource managers to deal collectively with uncertainty of future conditions within the basin.

Program Goals Addressed: A-G

ID	Priority	Informed By	Informs	Related Objectives
Immediate (2023):				
CS-I-1	Develop likely future scenarios by applying current climate data and models to the MRG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harness the expertise of regional climate scientists with experience in developing appropriate scenarios 		CS-I-2 CS-ST-2 HR-ST-2 HR-LT-3 WO-I-2	A-4, A-5.1, B-2, B-3.1, B-3.2, B-3.3, C-1.1, D-1.2, E-1.2, F-1
CS-I-2	Host a Climate Scenario Planning Workshop designed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine which key ecosystem functions are threatened by climate change Identify scientific uncertainties that influence management decisions Begin developing strategies to mitigate impacts of future changes in the system by targeting key ecosystem functions 	CS-I-1	CS-ST-2 HR-ST-2 HR-ST-4 HR-LT-3 WO-I-2 RD-ST-1	A-4, A-5.1, B-2, B-3.1, B-3.2, B-3.3, C-1.1, D-1.2, E-1.2, F-1
Short-Term (2024-2026):				
CS-ST-1	Continue developing strategies to maintain ecosystem functions under different climate scenarios	CS-I-1 CS-I-2		F-1
CS-ST-2	Consider potential changes in hydrology and geomorphology, and associated impacts to the ecosystem and listed species	CS-I-1 CS-I-2	RD-ST-1	A-3, A-4, A-5.1, B-2, C-1.1, D-1.2, E-1.2
CS-ST-3	Investigate the cultural and socio-economic impacts of the changing ecosystem		CS-ST-4 WO-ST-5	
CS-ST-4	Engage the public through outreach and education regarding climate trends and changes in the bosque	CS-I-2 CS-ST-3 RD-I-3	WO-ST-5	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify actions that can be carried out by members of the public to help mitigate impacts 			
Long-Term (2027 and beyond):				
CS-LT-1	Continue to update ecological forecasts with latest climate models and data	CS-I-1 CS-ST-2		F-1, A-5.1
CS-LT-2	Refresh recommendations for management strategies to protect and maintain important ecosystem functions	CS-I-1 CS-I-2 CS-ST-1 CS-ST-2	HR-LT-1 VI-LT-2	F-1, A-5.1
CS-LT-3	Develop water conservation strategies		CS-LT-4	G-1
CS-LT-4	Carry out public outreach and education around water conservation strategies	CS-ST-4 CS-LT-3 RD-I-3	RD-I-3	G-1
CS-LT-4	Explore the role of agricultural practices and irrigation returns in implementing strategies to protect MRG ecosystem functions	DR-ST-4		Unsure

Habitat Restoration Planning and Assessment

Habitat restoration is an important conservation action for many Collaborative Program signatories, and will likely increase in importance in the future. Given the forecasted changes to the ecosystem, habitat restoration practices that were effective in the past need to be tested and refined, or replaced in order to preserve key ecosystem functions necessary to support the listed species. The priorities listed below relate to on-going habitat restoration efforts, including outcomes from the 2021 Habitat Restoration Workshop, and also items that address additional Collaborative Program planning and management requests.

End Goals:

- Develop restoration strategies that can provide habitat for listed species, maintain vital ecosystem functions, and contribute to ecosystem recovery.
- Recommend best practices for successful restoration planning, implementation, and monitoring (e.g., proper response metrics, maintenance thresholds, and assessment tools) for the MRG.

Program Goals Addressed: A-F

ID	Priority	Informed By	Informs	Related Objectives
Immediate (2023):				
HR-I-1	Develop a standardized framework to guide restoration planning that includes identification of response metrics to measure and track progress/success	HR-I-3	HR-ST-5 HR-ST-7	A-5.2, B-3.1, B-3.3, C-1.1, D-1.2, E-1.2
HR-I-2	Recommend updates to the habitat restoration geospatial database, "RioRestore"		HR-ST-1	A-5.2, B-3.1, B-3.3, C-1.1, D-1.2, E-1.2
HR-I-3	Organize habitat restoration monitoring plans and protocols into a compendium for MRG restoration practitioners		HR-ST-5 HR-ST-7 HR-I-1	F-1, E-1.1, D-1.1, C-1.3, B-1, A-1
HR-I-4	Investigate potential funding opportunities (especially long-term) and partnerships in support of habitat restoration projects			A-5.2, B-3.1, B-3.3, C-1.1, D-1.2, E-1.2
Short-Term (2024-2026):				

HR-ST-1	Update RioRestore	HR-I-2		A-5.2, B-3.1, B-3.3, C-1.1, D-1.2, E-1.2
HR-ST-2	Forecast expected changes to vegetative communities based on the climate scenarios	CS-I-1 CS-I-2	HR-ST-3	F-1, F-2
HR-ST-3	Develop restoration strategies to maintain ecosystem functions, exploring the roles of both native and non-native species	HR-ST-2	HR-ST-7 VI-LT-2	F-2
HR-ST-4	Recommend modifications to habitat restoration practices to incorporate climate scenarios, targeting vital ecosystem functions	CS-I-2 HR-ST-3 VI-ST-3	HR-ST-7	F-1
HR-ST-5	Integrate signatories' wildfire prevention, mitigation and restoration best practices		HR-LT-1	Unsure
HR-ST-6	Investigate feasibility and value of disposing or repurposing of post-construction materials, such as vegetation and sediment		HR-LT-1	New obj?
HR-ST-7	Develop strategies to adaptively manage habitat restoration	HR-I-1 HR-I-3 HR-ST-3 HR-ST-4 VI-LT-2		B-3.1, B-3.3, C-1.1, D-1.2, E-1.2
Long-Term (2027 and beyond):				
HR-LT-1	Continue to update recommendations for habitat restoration best practices based on learning from project implementation and refined future scenario predictions	HR-ST-4 HR-ST-5 HR-ST-6 HR-ST-7 CS-LT-2		A-5.2, B-3.1, B-3.3, C-1.1, D-1.2, E-1.2
HR-LT-2	Explore the value of applying an "integrated vegetation management plan" for the MRG	HR-ST-3 HR-ST-4		F-2, B-3.2, B-3.3, C-1.2, D-1.2, E-1.2
HR-LT-3	Apply the ecosystem approach to habitat restoration projects throughout the MRG	CS-I-2 CS-ST-1 HR-ST-2 HR-ST-3		F-1

Management of Vegetated Islands and Bank-Attached Bars

In 2022, the Collaborative Program hosted the Workshop on Management of Vegetated Islands and Bank-Attached Bars. While vegetated islands have always been a feature of the MRG ecosystem, changes in hydrology and geomorphology are contributing to changes in their number and permanence. Workshop participants raised questions about the effects these vegetated islands and bars are having on water conveyance and sediment transport processes, as well as the tradeoffs to consider regarding their value to species habitat. At the workshop, participants identified the need for better understanding of where vegetated islands and bars are (or are likely to occur) in the MRG. They also articulated a need for more clarity regarding the relationships between hydrology, ecological functions, and species' responses in order to support management decisions related to island and bar management.

End Goal: Balance the primary management priorities within the MRG (e.g., water delivery, flood control, and ecosystem management) while managing vegetated islands and bank-attached bars in a dynamic river system.

Program Goals Addressed: A-G

ID	Priority	Informed By	Informs	Related Objectives
Immediate (2023):				
VI-I-1	Develop a glossary for terminology related to vegetated islands and bars, to improve communication and collaboration among stakeholders		VI-I-3	A-3, A-5.1, A-5.2, B-2, B-3.3, C-1.1, C-1.2
VI-I-2	Clarify authorities and management roles related to vegetated islands and bank-attached bars		VI-LT-3	A-3, A-5.1, A-5.2, B-2, B-3.3, C-1.1, C-1.2
VI-I-3	Begin developing a conceptual model representing ecosystem functions and physical river conditions related to vegetated islands/bars in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Account for spatial and temporal successional changes • Explore trade-offs regarding habitat formation/loss for different species • Characterize trends and conditions • Assess management alternatives 	VI-I-1		A-3, A-5.1, A-5.2, B-2, B-3.3, C-1.1, C-1.2
VI-I-4	Determine feasibility of developing a map of locations of vegetated islands and bank-attached bars in the MRG, with a plan for regular updates		VI-ST-2	A-3, A-5.1, A-5.2, B-2, B-3.3, C-1.1, C-1.2
Short-Term (2024-2026):				
VI-ST-1	Fill in critical data gaps for maps and models, where possible			A-3, A-5.1, A-5.2, B-2, B-3.3, C-1.1, C-1.2
VI-ST-2	Update map of locations of vegetated islands and bank-attached bars in the MRG	VI-I-4	SM-ST-3	A-3, A-5.1, A-5.2, B-2, B-3.3, C-1.1, C-1.2
VI-ST-3	Refine conceptual model of ecosystem functions and physical river conditions related to vegetated islands/bars in the MRG to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform further scientific research • Recommend adaptive management strategies 	HR-ST-9 VI-ST-2	HR-ST-4 VI-ST-4 VI-LT-1 SM-ST-4 SM-LT-2	A-3, A-5.1, A-5.2, B-2, B-3.3, C-1.1, C-1.2
VI-ST-4	Investigate the effects of vegetated islands and bank-attached bars on water conveyance and sediment transport processes	VI-ST-3		A-3, A-5.1, A-5.2, B-2, B-3.3, C-1.1, C-1.2
Long-Term (2027 and beyond):				
VI-LT-1	Regularly update and revise the ecosystem-level conceptual model	VI-ST-3	VI-LT-2	A-3, A-5.1, A-5.2, B-2, B-3.3, C-1.1, C-1.2

VI-LT-2	Revise and update recommendations for management strategies related to vegetated islands and bank-attached bars	CS-LT-2 HR-ST-4 HR-ST-7 VI-LT-1		A-3, A-5.1, A-5.2, B-2, B-3.3, C-1.1, C-1.2
VI-LT-3	Develop recommendations for potential changes to authorities regarding wetlands within the MRG	VI-I-2		A-3, A-5.1, A-5.2, B-2, B-3.3, C-1.1, C-1.2

RGSM Management and Science

RGSM science and management has always been a focus of the Collaborative Program, and will continue to be a priority in the multi-year plan. With climate change creating more variability in the system and uncertainty in the future, the Collaborative Program’s work will focus on tracking RGSM population trends under different climate scenarios, and evaluating and improving the efficacy of management actions into the future.

End Goal: Develop collaborative, multi-year adaptive management strategies for RGSM.

Program Goals Addressed: A-G

ID	Priority	Informed By	Informs	Related Objectives
Immediate (2023):				
SM-I-1	Finalize the revisions to the RGSM conceptual ecological model to include the genetics and propagation/augmentation programs, and undertake a peer review of the revised model		SM-ST-1 SM-ST-3	A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5.1, A-5.2, A-6.1, A-6.2
SM-I-2	Provide guidance on recently published RGSM population models, including data inputs, model assumptions, and appropriate application of each model		SM-I-3 SM-ST-1	A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5.1, A-5.2, A-6.1, A-6.2
SM-I-3	Develop a plan to update and refine the RGSM integrated population model based on new data	SM-I-2	SM-ST-1	A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5.1, A-5.2, A-6.1, A-6.2
SM-I-4	Incorporate the following questions into the climate scenario planning effort: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will RGSM habitat availability be affected by climate change? How will forecasted shifts in the hydrograph impact RGSM population trends? 		CS-I-1	A-3, A-4, A-5.1, A-5.2, G-1
Short-Term (2024-2026):				
SM-ST-1	Use the RGSM population models to evaluate RGSM management actions under different conditions projected for climate scenarios, if feasible	SM-I-1 SM-I-2 SM-I-3	SM-LT-1 SM-ST-4	A-6.1, A-6.2, A-2s

SM-ST-2	Consider RGSM management in the development of the ecosystem-level conceptual model for the MRG		SM-ST-4	A-1, A-3, A-4, A-6.1, A-6.2
SM-ST-3	Identify the sites in the MRG to target with habitat restoration for RGSM	VI-ST-2 SM-I-1		A-5.2
SM-ST-4	Identify vital ecosystem functions related to RGSM life history and management strategies	SM-ST-1 SM-ST-2 VI-ST-3		A-3, A-4, A-5.1, A-5.2
SM-ST-5	Investigate the feasibility of a 10(j) population outside the current RGSM range		SM-LT-4	A-6.1, A-6.2
Long-Term (2027 and beyond):				
SM-LT-1	Continue to evaluate RGSM management actions as future scenarios and models are updated	SM-ST-1		A-2, A-6.1, A-6.2
SM-LT-2	Recommend adaptive management actions for RGSM, taking into consideration effects of climate change and maintenance of ecosystem functions important to RGSM survival and recovery	VI-ST-3		A-2, A-6.1, A-6.2
SM-LT-3	Investigate the need for a new RGSM propagation facility and, if supported, provide recommendations for design and construction			A-6.1, A-6.2
SM-LT-4	Provide recommendations for implementing a potential 10(j) RGSM population, if determined to be feasible	SM-ST-5		A-6.1, A-6.2

Water Operations and Flexibility

Given that the Collaborative Program focuses on listed species that utilize the riparian zone, adjacent wetlands, floodplain and mainstem of the Rio Grande, water operations are integral to management of the species and their habitats. With changes in the hydrograph due to increasing variability and uncertainty in snowpack runoff and monsoon precipitation, water operations are already impacted by climate change. The Collaborative Program's focus will be to assess the effects of climate change on water operations and identify opportunities for flexibility.

End Goal: Plan for a water future that balances the needs of all users, including humans and listed species, and maintains ecosystem functions. [Addresses Program Goal G]

Program Goals Addressed: A-G

ID	Priority	Informed By	Informs	Related Objectives
Immediate (2023):				
WO-I-1	Using the responses from the survey of water managers on their roles in managing drying in Angostura Reach and additional signatory input, document the roles, responsibility, and available flexibility in water operations in the MRG	RD-I-1	WO-ST-1	G-1
WO-I-2	Based on likely climate scenarios, project potential effects on water operations related to changes in the hydrograph	CS-I-1 CS-I-2		G-1
Short-Term (2024-2026):				
WO-ST-1	Identify opportunities for coordination and flexibility regarding water operations	WO-I-1 RD-I-1	WO-ST-2 WO-ST-3	G-1

WO-ST-2	Identify flexibilities and multiple-use benefits of any changes to water operations	WO-ST-1		G-1
WO-ST-3	Identify research needs regarding conservation improvement to water operations	WO-ST-1	WO-LT-1	G-1
WO-ST-4	Tie Collaborative Program planning efforts into external planning efforts (e.g., 50-Year Water Plan, Rio Grande Basin Study, ABCWUA's 100-Year Plan, NM Water Resources Research Institute)		WO-ST-5 WO-LT-1	G-1
WO-ST-5	Stakeholder and public outreach and education on conservation strategies and benefits of changes to water operations	CS-ST-3 CS-ST-4 WO-ST-4		
Long-Term (2027 and beyond):				
WO-LT-1	Revise and update recommendations for changes to water operations regarding conservation needs	WO-ST-3 WO-ST-4 RD-ST-3 RD-ST-4 RD-ST-5		G-1

[Strategic Planning for River Drying in the Middle Rio Grande](#)

This focus first emerged in response to drying in the Angostura Reach, which occurred for the first time in nearly 40 years in 2022. Drying has been a regular and common occurrence south of Angostura and the Collaborative Program is working to develop a strategic plan for management of drying in the Angostura, Isleta, and San Acacia Reaches.

End Goal: Develop a multi-reach decision support tool to inform adaptive management related to drying in the MRG.

Program Goals Addressed: A-G

ID	Priority	Informed By	Informs	Related Objectives
Immediate (2023):				
RD-I-1	Describe the decision environment for management of drying in the MRG using the ad hoc group's survey and summary report		WO-I-1 WO-ST-1	G-1
RD-I-2	Identify research questions related to drying in the MRG			Unsure
RD-I-3	Develop public messaging strategies related to conservation actions and monitoring during river drying		CS-ST-4 CS-LT-4	
Short-Term (2024-2026):				
RD-ST-1	Where appropriate, include and update river drying considerations in ecosystem-level and species-level conceptual models	CS-I-2 CS-ST-2	RD-ST-5	A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5.1, G-1
RD-ST-2	Create a decision tool to assess management alternatives regarding drying in the MRG	RD-ST-3	RD-ST-5	A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5.1, G-1
RD-ST-3	Document lessons learned regarding management response to drying, in years when the opportunity arises		RD-ST-2 WO-LT-1	A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5.1, G-1

RD-ST-4	Incorporate findings from studies of the use of outfalls and irrigation infrastructure to affect the rate, duration and extent of drying, into recommendations		WO-LT-1	A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5.1, G-1
RD-ST-5	Continue to refine the strategic plan for management of drying	RD-ST-1 RD-ST-2	RD-LT-1 WO-LT-1	A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5.1, G-1
<i>Long-Term (2027 and beyond):</i>				
RD-LT-1	Continue to refine the strategic plan for management of drying	RD-ST-5		A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5.1, G-1

[Link to full Meeting Materials List](#)

Executive Committee Meeting
January 18, 2024

See the following meeting material on the page below:

Long-Term Plan for Science and Adaptive Management Project List [read-ahead, not included]

[Link to full Meeting Materials List](#)

Executive Committee Meeting
January 18, 2024

See the following meeting material on the page below:

VSWCD Membership Request Letter [read-ahead]



Providing resource conservation for a quality environment demonstrated through active leadership, cooperation, and partnership

Wayne Pullan, Federal Co-Chair
Mark Kelly, Non-Federal Co-Chair
Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program
c/o Western EcoSystems Technology, Inc.
901 Lambertson Pl NE, South Suite
Albuquerque, NM 87107

Dear Mr. Pullan and Mr. Kelly,


This letter of interest is being submitted by the Valencia Soil & Water Conservation District (VSWCD) to your organization in order to be considered for membership in the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program (MRGESCP/Collaborative Program). After meeting with some of your staff and learning more about your initiatives, we believe there would be mutual benefit in VSWCD becoming a member of the MRGESCP. This letter will outline who we are, how our goals align with those of the MRGESCP, and what our organization has to offer in advancement of the goals of the Collaborative Program.

Many people are unfamiliar with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs). These are political subdivisions governed by the state within which they exist. The template for this type of conservation entity was created in the 1930s after the Dust Bowl era in the United States. SWCDs were designed to help local farmers, ranchers, and other citizens of an area institute sound practices for land and water usage. All fifty states in the United States have some form of SWCDs and New Mexico currently has forty-seven of these Districts. While their goals are similar, each SWCD is adapted to fit the needs of the community and the particulars of the geography within their borders. Established in 1947, the VSWCD mission and vision are focused on our geographic region in central New Mexico which includes several ecosystems and habitat types, including the Bosque along the Rio Grande, which winds through our District. We also serve a range of peoples and cultures, including the Pueblo of Isleta and the Pueblo of Laguna. Since we now manage close to 300 acres of conservation lands adjacent to the Rio Grande Bosque, the work in our District includes habitat conservation and restoration in a way unique among SWCDs in New Mexico. The three properties we currently manage are: Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area (WWCA) which contains 97 acres, Rio Abajo Conservation Area (RACA) which contains 139 acres, and the Stacy Unit which contains 43 acres. Our Vision at VSWCD is to provide resource conservation for a quality environment demonstrated through active leadership, cooperation, and partnership. Our Mission is to provide education, technical assistance, and recognition to current and future stewards of the land in natural resource conservation. Our operations are overseen by a Board of seven Supervisors; five are elected, and two are appointed with guidance from the Pueblos of Isleta and Laguna.

We feel VSWCD is a good fit for membership in the Collaborative Program in relation to MRGESCP's goal "to establish a framework for collaborative adaptive management to increase climate resilience in support of listed species and their habitats in the Middle Rio Grande." This goal aligns with our VSWCD vision of resource conservation for a quality environment. Much of the land in our District lies within the Collaborative Program area. Being a member of the MRGESCP would be a symbiotic relationship in respect to our parallel goals.

VSWCD is in a position to enhance the work of the Collaborative Program. We regularly collaborate with local agricultural, conservation, and tribal agencies. As noted above, since our origin the local agricultural sector has been a core constituency for our district, one that can bring unique perspectives and experiences to the Collaborative Program. Therefore, we bring already established relationships with agencies and peoples who are stakeholders in our District and are in the Collaborative Program's area. We also partner with several existing Collaborative Program signatories, including Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program, Audubon Southwest, and the Pueblo of Isleta. Also, in alignment with Collaborative Program goals, we recently hosted a workshop in April 2023 which focused on a climate adaptive approach to replanting at WWCA after the Big Hole Fire of 2022. This work is ongoing and will provide useful data as the project progresses. In addition to this project, the 280 acres of conservation land managed by VSWCD are possible habitat sites for listed species, some of which may already be present at these sites. Thus, VSWCD can offer land use for study, research, habitat restoration, and planning for climate resilience. In turn, the work done by the MRGESCP in our District, and elsewhere in the Collaborative Program area, can help inform us as we continually work to better fulfill our mission to assist current and future stewards of the land in the area of natural resource conservation. Over time, we believe VSWCD membership will afford many benefits to meet Collaborative Program goals.

In closing, we at VSWCD appreciate the opportunity to join your Collaborative Program as a member organization. The work of conserving our environment and protecting listed species cannot be done alone. Through collaboration we can not only do more for our respective stakeholders, but also help all citizens in our state learn more and work together toward a common goal of a better tomorrow for all. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter of interest from the Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District in application for membership with the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program.


Abel M Camarena (Aug 28, 2023 20:30 MDT)

Aug 28, 2023

Abel Camarena
Chair, Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District

MRGESCP Application VSWCD 28AUG23 fin

Final Audit Report

2023-08-29

Created:	2023-08-29
By:	Andrew Hautzinger (AndrewHautzinger@valenciaswcd.org)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAGfIKfISi3WbzIQ_KZsnvukX7KsK6b-nZ

"MRGESCP Application VSWCD 28AUG23 fin" History

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-  Agreement completed.
2023-08-29 - 2:30:31 AM GMT

[Link to full Meeting Materials List](#)

Executive Committee Meeting
January 18, 2024

See the following meeting material on the page below:

VSWCD Application Questions [read-ahead]

MRGESCP Application Questions

Applying Organization: VALENCIA SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Point of Contact: Andrew Hautzinger (District Director)

Date: January 8th, 2024



Please respond to the following questions on behalf of your organization. Include these responses with your letter of interest to apply for membership in the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program (MRGESCP/Collaborative Program).



1) Briefly describe your organization (i.e., goals, mission, work, primary clients or partners, etc.).

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are political subdivisions governed by the state within which they exist. Established in 1947, the Valencia SWCD's mission and vision are focused on our geographic region in central New Mexico which includes several ecosystems and habitat types, including the Bosque along the Rio Grande, which winds through our District. We also serve a range of peoples and cultures, including the Pueblo of Isleta and the Pueblo of Laguna. Since we own and manage close to 300 acres of conservation lands adjacent to the Rio Grande Bosque, the work in our District includes habitat conservation, on-ground environmental education and restoration in a way unique among SWCDs in New Mexico. The three properties we currently manage are: Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area (WWCA) which contains 97 acres, Rio Abajo Conservation Area (RACA) which contains 139 acres, and the Stacy Unit which contains 43 acres. Our Vision at VSWCD is to provide resource conservation for a quality environment demonstrated through active leadership, cooperation, and partnership. Our Mission is to provide education, technical assistance, and recognition to current and future stewards of the land in natural resource conservation. Our operations are overseen by a Board of seven Supervisors; five are elected, and two are appointed with guidance from the Pueblos of Isleta and Laguna.

VSWCD has developed a robust network of partners, from large federal agencies (e.g., USDA-NRCS, USBR, USFWS), to various state agencies (e.g., EMNRD, NMISC, NMOSE, NMYCC). We also partner with local sovereign tribal nations, including Isleta Pueblo and Laguna Pueblo (both of these pueblos reside within our 1.4 million acre boundary), and others including the Pueblo of Santa Ana. VSWCD has a long-term and significant partnership with the Middle Rio Grande Conservation District (MRGCD), working on many water conservation and land management over the years. We are proud to say we are the only source of science-based outdoor and environmental education in our served areas, which has generated an excellent network of support with the 26 public schools in our district, along with a long history of partnering with both the Los Lunas and Belen school districts (Whitfield is the only outdoor classroom in the district). Finally, we are grateful to have many other partner organizations in our network, with a special acknowledgment of the Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program. BEMP and VSWCD have collaborated for several decades on actualizing community science to not only tell the story of our bosque in transition, but also to make the bosque more accessible and meaningful to the public (young and old).

2) What are examples of the work you have done in the Middle Rio Grande?

Over its more than 75 years of existence, VSWCD has engaged in countless projects in alignment with our conservation and education mission. These projects have included several dozen bosque thinning projects done in cooperation with MRGCD and others (e.g., EMNRD, NRCS, Isleta Reach Stewardship Association). VSWCD's efforts to show leadership in the testing and application of climate science tenets is another area where the District is focused. After the catastrophic Big Hole Fire of 4/11/2022, VSWCD has re-doubled its efforts to restore the 75% of Whitfield that burned with a climate- and fire-adapted planting and management regime. This has entailed partnering with the USGS Fort Collins Science Center (science leaders in riparian ecology) and others (e.g., USDA SW Climate Hub).

In addition, VSWCD has a robust set of programs focused on conserving water and soil resources, including a financial assistance program where the district provides partial reimbursement to members of the public who contribute to our ¼ point mil levy. VSWCD helps fund things like: soil tests, rain barrels, bioreactor compost kits, pollinator plantings, mulch projects. As mentioned prior, VSWCD is firmly committed to providing environmental and conservation-focus education. One outstanding aspect of our education program includes the Master Naturalist Program, a 9-week long annual program that caters to adults and uses (after-work) lectures and weekend field tours provided by local subject-matter experts to provide a wholistic and multi-disciplinary education, covering fields including biology, wildlife management, soil science of healthy soils, geology, geomorphology and ecology.

3) How would membership in the Collaborative Program benefit your organization?

VSWCD believes it is a good fit for membership in the Collaborative Program in relation to the MRGESCP's goal "to establish a framework for collaborative adaptive management to increase climate resilience in support of listed species and their habitats in the Middle Rio Grande." This goal aligns with our VSWCD vision of resource conservation for a quality environment. As noted, much of the land in our District lies within the Collaborative Program area. Being a member of the MRGESCP would be a symbiotic relationship in respect to our parallel goals.

VSWCD is in a position to enhance the work of the Collaborative Program. As referenced above, we regularly collaborate with local agricultural, conservation, and tribal agencies. Since our origin, the local agricultural sector has been a core constituency for our district, one that can bring unique perspectives and experiences to the Collaborative Program. Therefore, we bring already established relationships with agencies and peoples who are stakeholders in our District and are in the Collaborative Program's area (see text on partnerships above). Also, in alignment with Collaborative Program goals, VSWCD and the USDA SW Climate Hub recently co-hosted a workshop in April 2023 which focused on a climate adaptive approach to replanting at WWCA after the Big Hole Fire. This work is ongoing and will provide useful data as the project progresses.

In addition to this project, the 278 acres of conservation land managed by VSWCD are possible habitat sites for listed species. Thus, VSWCD can offer land use for study, research, habitat restoration, experimentation and planning for climate resilience. In turn, the work done by the MRGESCP in our District, and elsewhere in the Collaborative Program area, can help inform us as we continually work to better fulfill our mission to assist current and future stewards of the land in the area of natural resource conservation, and to use our lands as demonstration sites .

4) How did you hear about the Collaborative Program?
VSWCD staff have a history of experience with the Collaborative Program, including District Director Andrew Hautzinger's time as Chief of Water Resources for the USFWS National Wildlife Refuge System (Southwest Region)—Andrew worked closely with the program in the 2009-2012 years. VSWCD was re-acquainted with the Collaborative Program through participation of WEST staffers leading up to our April 2023 Restoring Whitfield Workshop---the WEST attendees made a huge contribution to the workshop and the follow-up work that it generated (e.g., development of a fire- and climate-adapted native plant list for the work on the MRG).

5) The mission of the Collaborative Program is as follows:
The MRGESCP provides a collaborative forum to support scientific analysis and implementation of adaptive management to the benefit and recovery of the listed species pursuant to the Endangered Species Act within the Program Area, and to protect existing and future water uses while complying with applicable state, federal and tribal laws, rules and regulations.

As a member of the Collaborative Program, how would your organization contribute to its mission? If possible, specifically address how your organization benefits (or has the potential to benefit) the Rio Grande silvery minnow, yellow-billed cuckoo, Southwestern willow flycatcher, New Mexico meadow jumping mouse, and/or Pecos sunflower.

Over time, we believe VSWCD membership will afford many benefits to meet the Collaborative Program goals. As noted previously, VSWCD embraces the need for experimentation to occur as we collectively look to find the right balance between human impacts to the MRG and the protection and enhancement of the local ecological system and its non-human denizens. VSWCD uniquely has public land, that is either in the MRG floodplain or directly adjacent, that represents many of the habitat types thought to be needed by the five-target species of special interest in the MRG. VSWCD accrues direct benefits for any reduction in the pronounced level of uncertainties that inform how species and their habitats will respond to human-induced changes to the flood plain, be they from land uses, water management choices or other. As a land manager and holder and user of senior water rights, VSWCD requires more clarity on how to best develop its programs to optimize ecological function while meeting continued human needs of the land and water resources. While VSWCD is aware of no current T&E occupation on the Whitfield Complex, it is open to the possibility of entering into a Safe Harbor Agreement with the government if that were to change.

6) What is your organization's capability for committing time and staff members to Collaborative Program activities (e.g., meetings, field trips, coordination efforts, etc.)?

While the VSWCD organization has a small staff (of four), it is confident that it has the capacity to be a fully-engaged member of the MRGESCP and will meet the expected standard of membership involvement.

7) Who would be your organization's points of contact for the Collaborative Program? Who would be the primary representative on the Executive Committee (EC)? Please name any alternate representatives -- individuals able to perform the duties of the EC representative as needed.

Here are the expected VSWCD representatives that will be directly involved with the MRGESCP if membership was granted:

- VSWCD's primary point of contact for the MRGESCP will be District Director Andrew Hautzinger. It is expected that Mr. Hautzinger would also be the primary VSWCD representative for the MRGESCP's Executive Committee, with expected involvement of VSWCD Board leadership throughout, especially at important decision junctures.
 - The second POC for the MRGESCP would be VSWCD Conservation Program Manager Johnny Chavez, as he is tasked with many of the day to day operational aspects of managing the preserve and her habitats.
- 8) What opportunities for engagement with the Collaborative Program are you most interested in (e.g., Executive Committee, Fiscal Planning Committee, Science and Adaptive Management Committee, ad hoc groups, events, etc.)?
- We enter this new collaboration with open minds, respectful of the need to observe and participate in the program as we determine where our input and energies are best suited. That said, we would anticipate that our largest contribution will likely be in topics covered by the Science and Adaptive Management Committee.
 - More generally, VSWCD is excited to learn more about the MRGESCP and its member organizations, and would be surprised if new and novel ways for us to contribute, and benefit, don't occur with some frequency.
- 9) Are there any opportunities for collaboration with your organization you would like to highlight?
- As noted above, we think a science-led effort to re-imagine land management in the MRG, with a special focus on managing the threatened cottonwood-willow bosque, is a collaboration opportunity of the highest order. VSWCD is fully committed to try and be an active leader re: questions of riparian forest protection, strategic thinning of non-native vegetation, and as relates to the growing urgency associated with reduction of wildfire severity and frequency to protect habitat, species and property. We think our experience in the Big Hoile Fire opens up opportunities that could have positive impacts well beyond our almost 300 acres of land in the Whitfield Complex.
- 10) How would your organization communicate Collaborative Program activities and Executive Committee decisions to the larger environmental and agricultural community?
- Of course, depending of the specifics at hand, VSWCD would look for opportunities to use our communication platforms (for example via website postings, meeting presentations, articles to the local paper (VSWWCD has a monthly Soil and Water Conservation column, with the Valencia County News-Bulletin) to tell the story of our collective activities focused on improving the recovery of our native species. VSWCD has a robust partnership network, and would be excited by the chance to report out progress being made on any number of related and supporting fronts.
- 11) The Collaborative Program has a 75/25 percent Federal/Non-federal cost share match. Would your organization be willing to report time spent (e.g., volunteers, staff) on Collaborative Program activities, as well as time and dollars spent on your organization's projects that contribute to listed species work in the Middle Rio Grande?
- Yes, VSWCD would support and believes it makes sense for our non-federal entity to track and record time and resources spent on activities that relate to the work MRGESCP is interested in (covering VSWCD staff, Board and other volunteer time).

[Link to full Meeting Materials List](#)

Executive Committee Meeting
January 18, 2024

See the following meeting material on the page below:

Hydrology Update for the MRG ESA Collaborative Program EC [presentation]



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

MRG ESA Collaborative Program Executive Committee

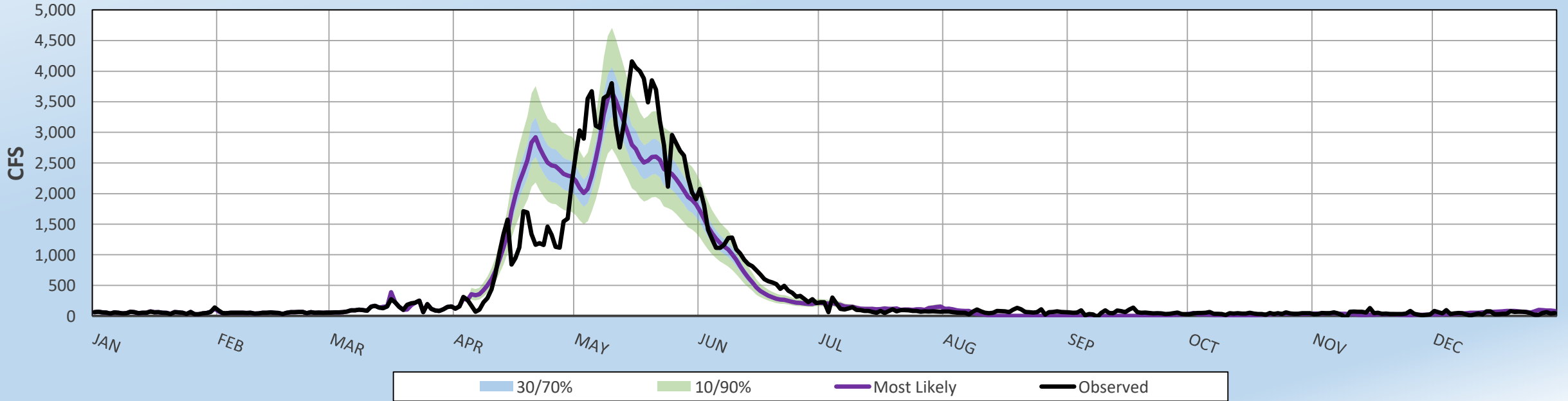
Hydrology Update
Lucas Barrett - USBR
January 18, 2024

2023 Summary

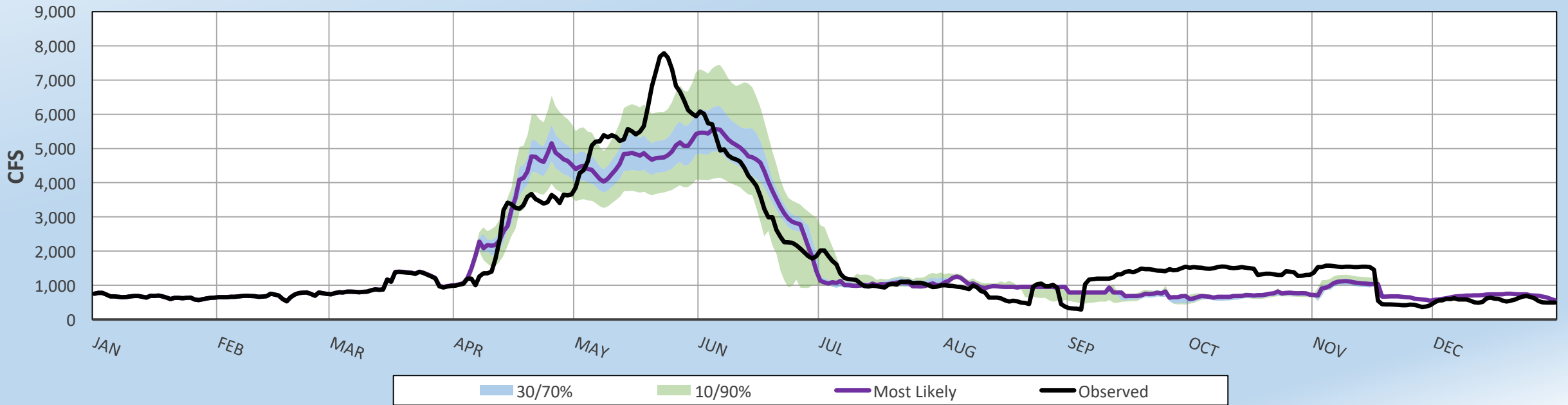
- Reverse of 2022!
- Great snowpack with even higher than predicted runoff in some areas
- River drying:
 - Angostura: No Drying!
 - Isleta: Aug 4 to Oct 31, max 6.61 RM on Sep 23
 - San Acacia: Jul 21 to Nov 5, max 30.66 RM on Sep 1
 - Maximum Extent: Sep 11, 36.57 RM
- Supplemental water use
 - 15,364 acre-ft released from Jul 13 to Oct 30
- Extremely poor monsoon season



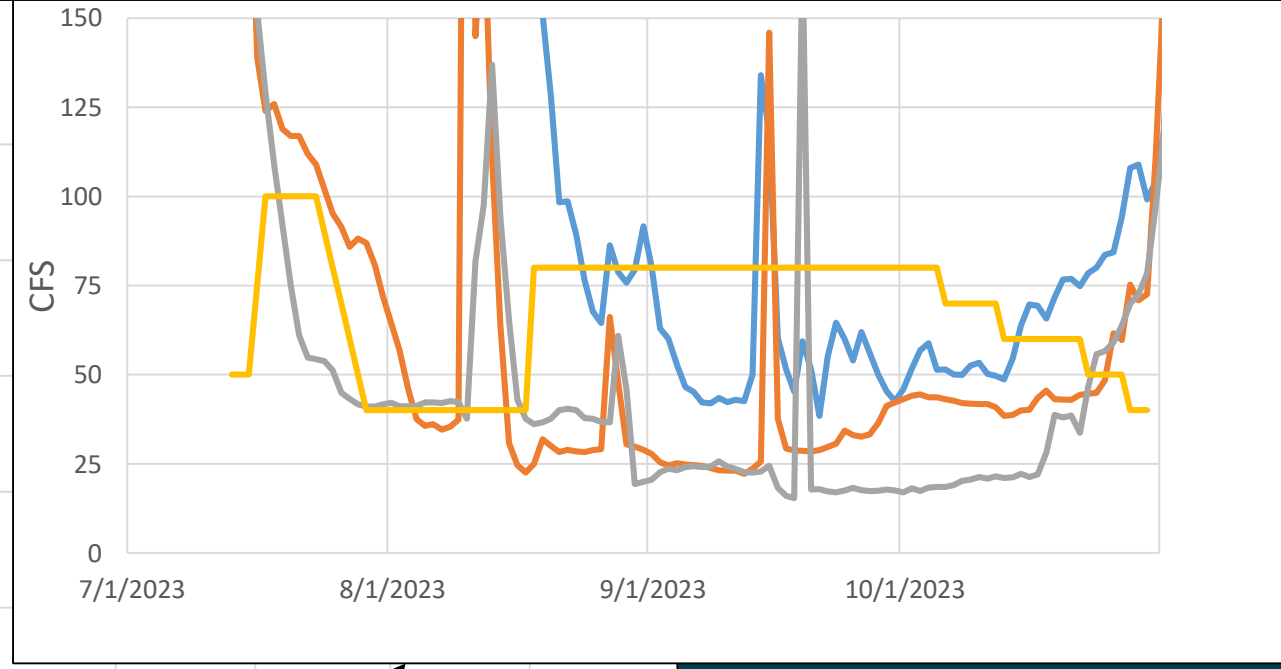
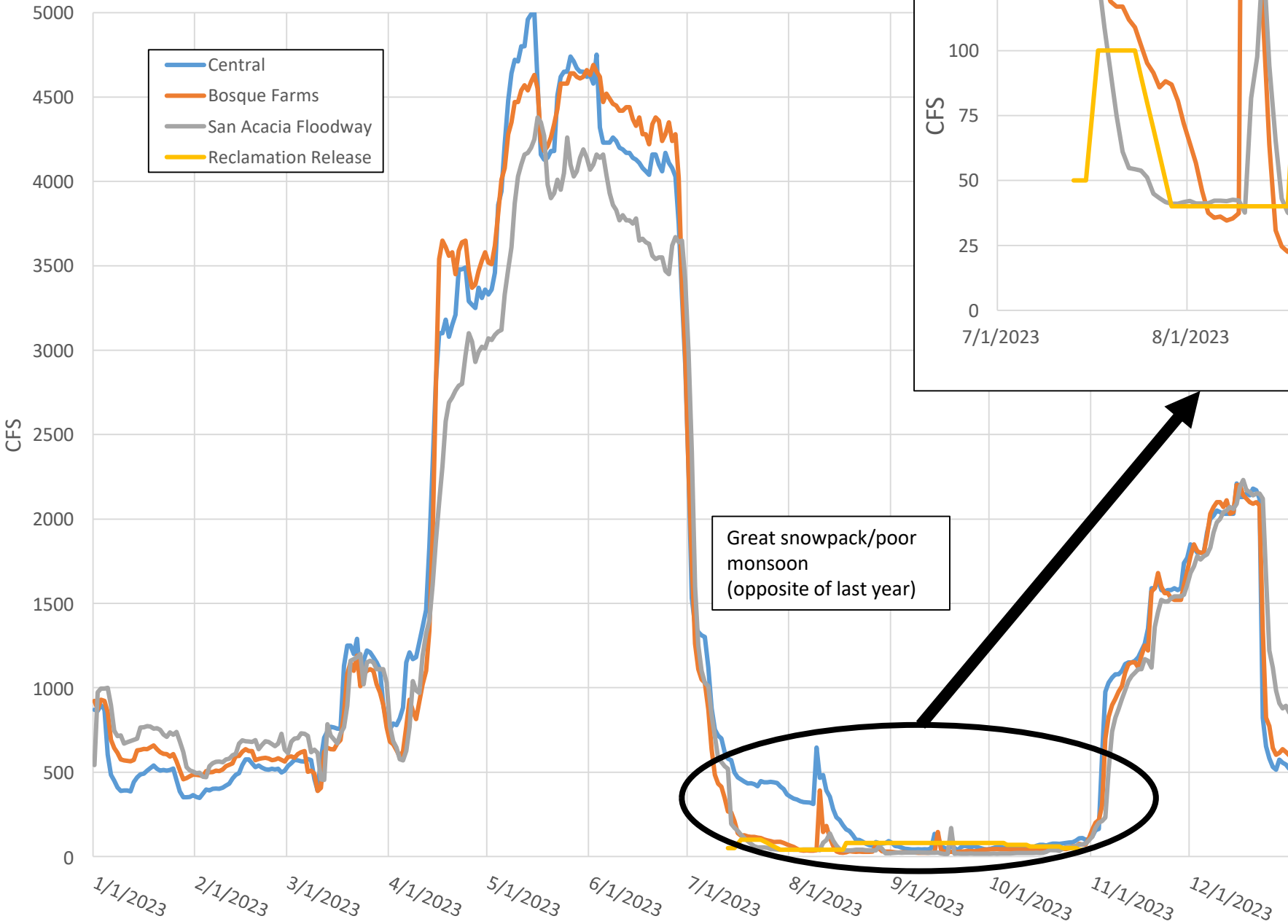
El Vado Local Inflow



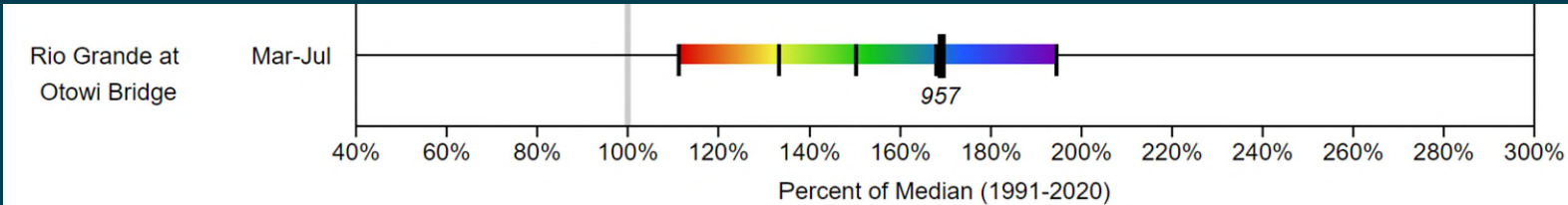
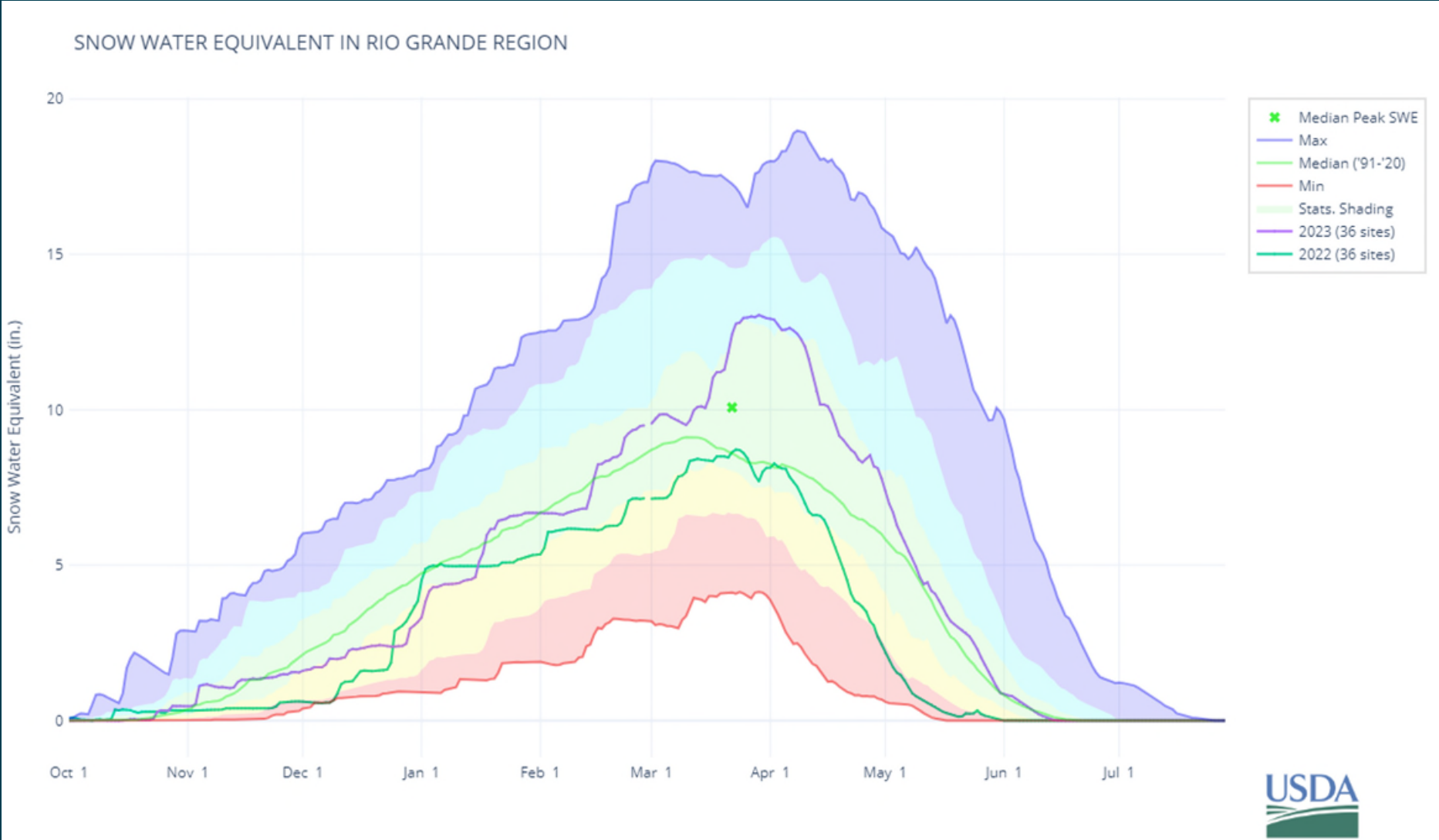
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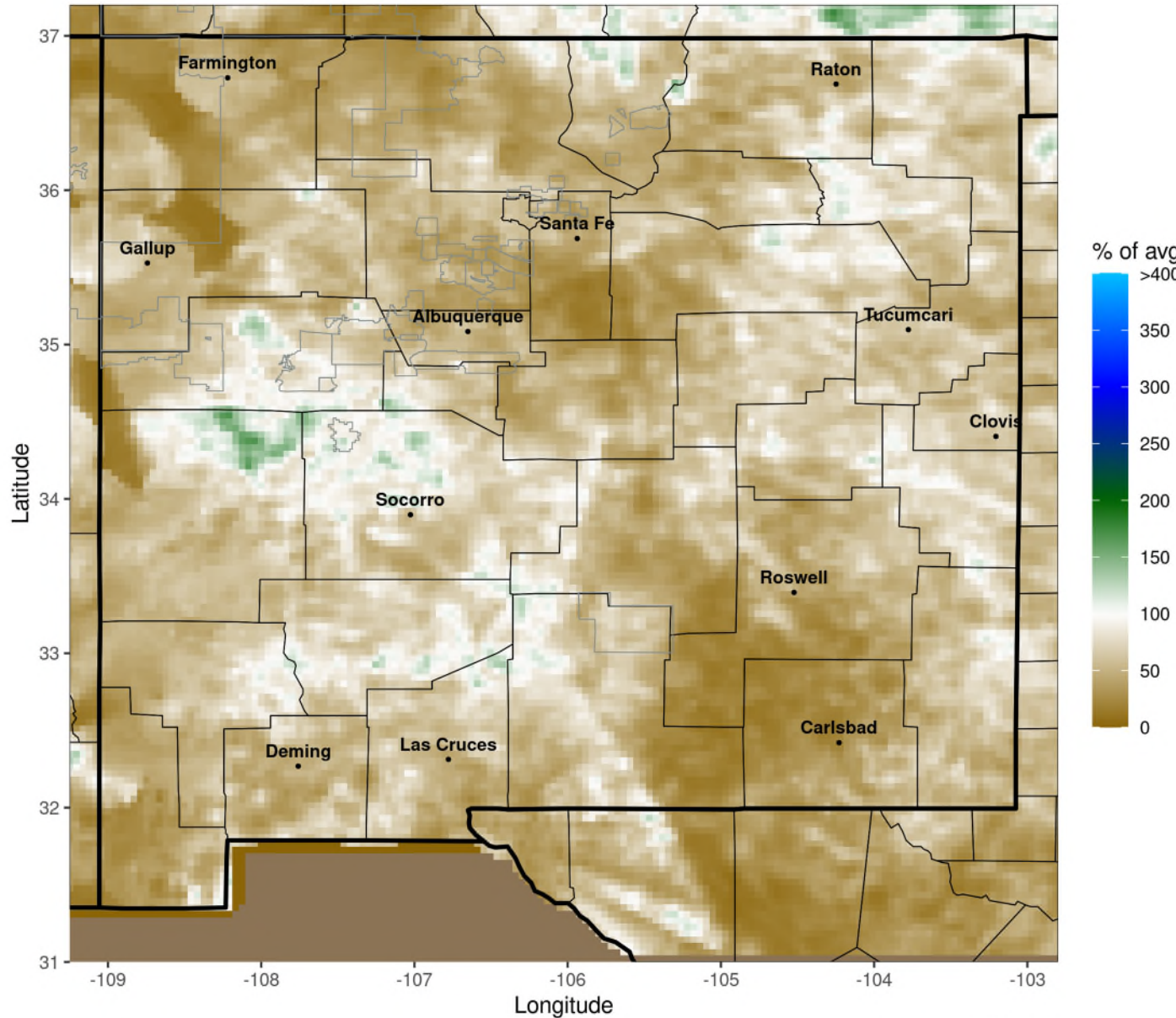
Middle Valley



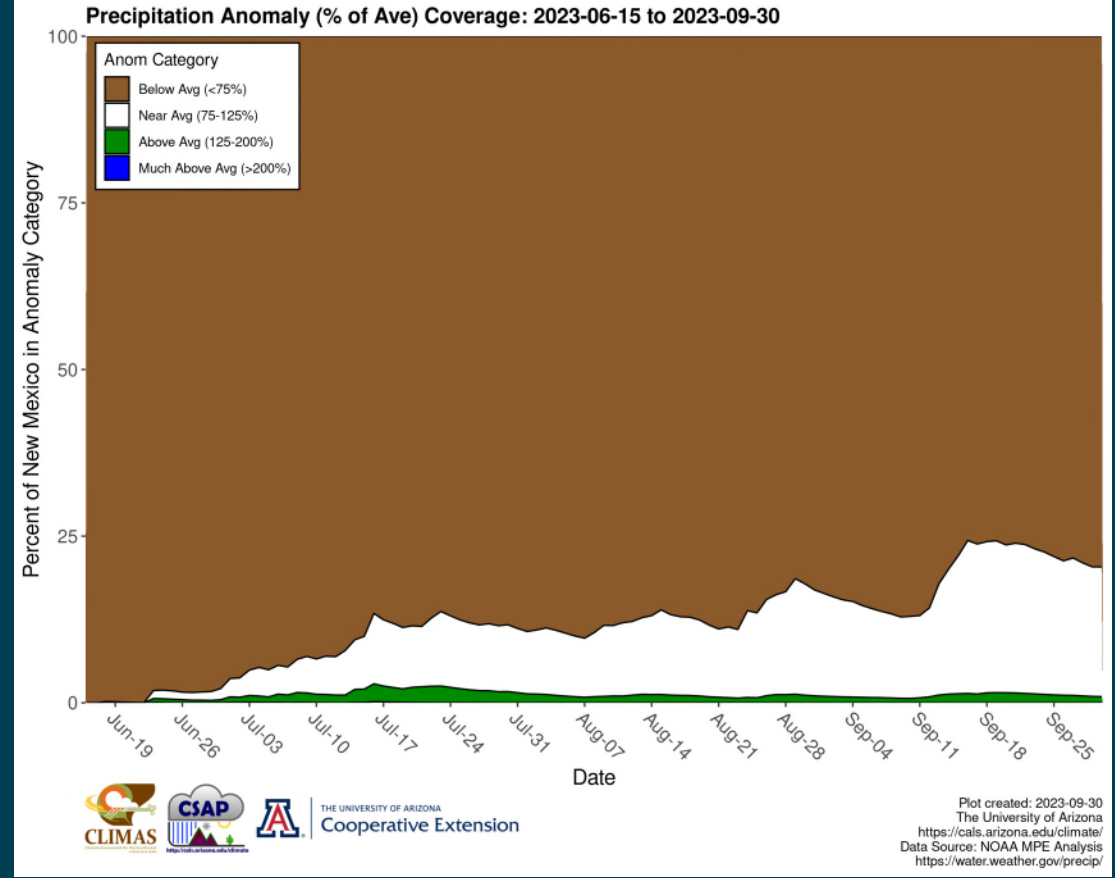
2023 Runoff



Percent of Average Precipitation (%): 2023-06-15 to 2023-09-30



2023 Monsoon



2023 Observations

- Although it wasn't until July when supplemental water needed to be used, the non-existent monsoon resulted in 2.5x more supplemental water released in 2023 than 2022
- Struggles with El Vado due to high runoff and construction, along with significant locked-in flood storage in Abiquiu
- Close coordination between agencies, a little help from sparse rain events, and strategic release from MRGCD's wasteways resulted in no drying in Angostura Reach
- Coordination currently occurs and is ongoing
 - MRG coordination calls during irrigation season
 - USACE, Reclamation, MRGCD, NM, others talk often
 - Discussion with biologists is also frequent



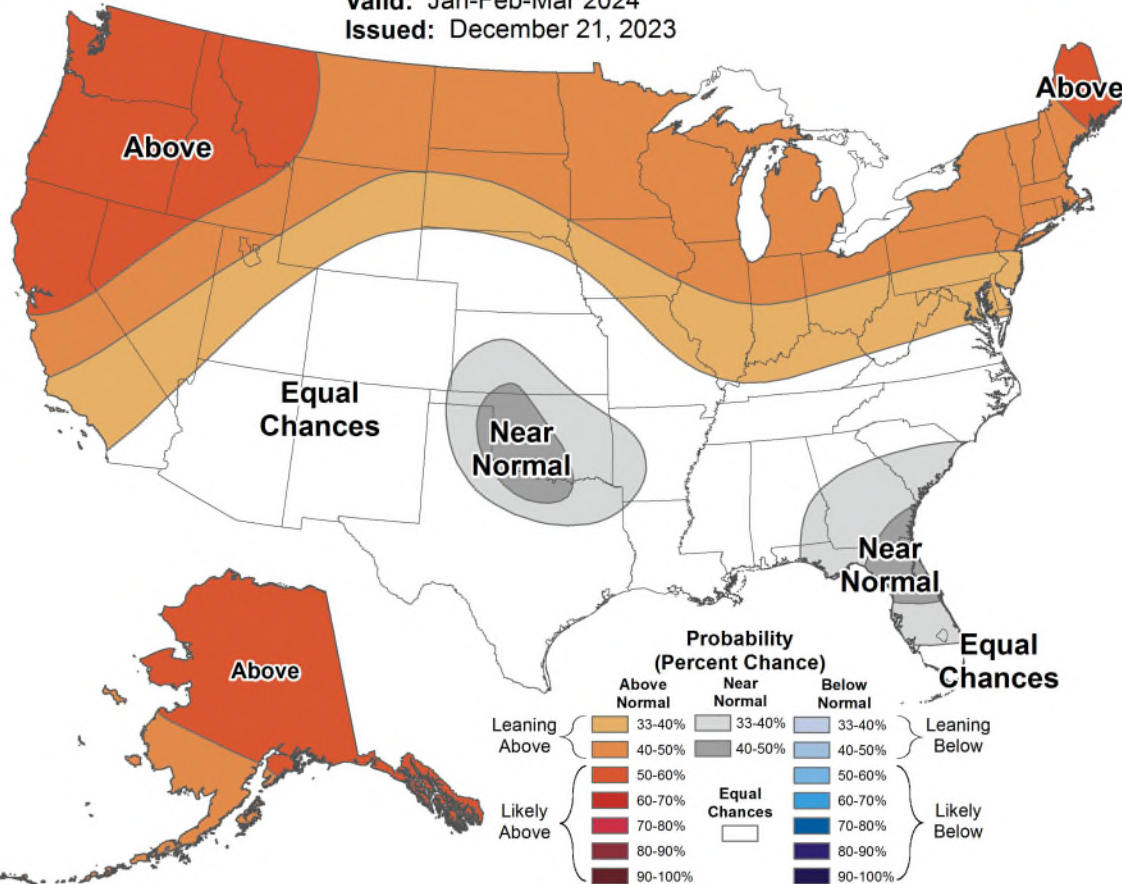
Projected Winter Conditions



Seasonal Temperature Outlook



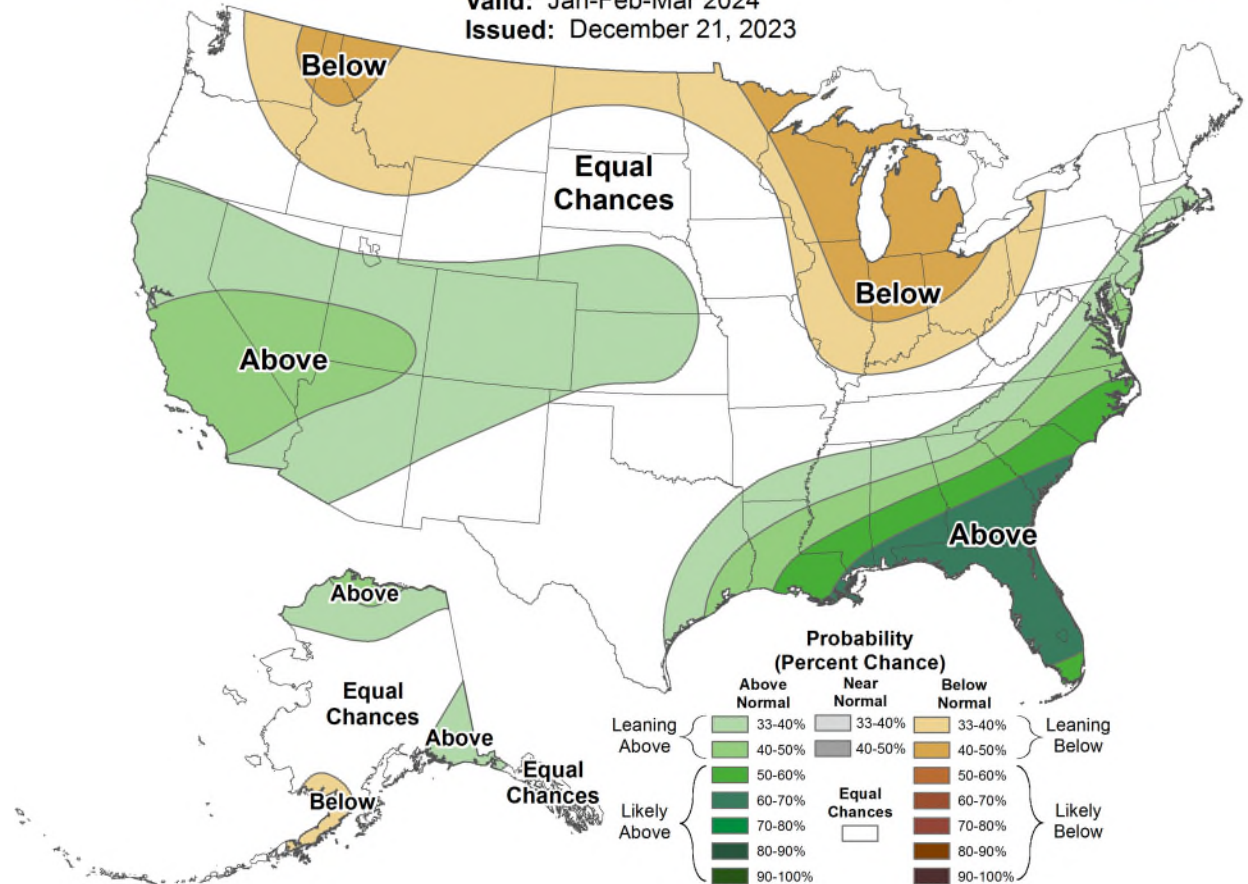
Valid: Jan-Feb-Mar 2024
 Issued: December 21, 2023



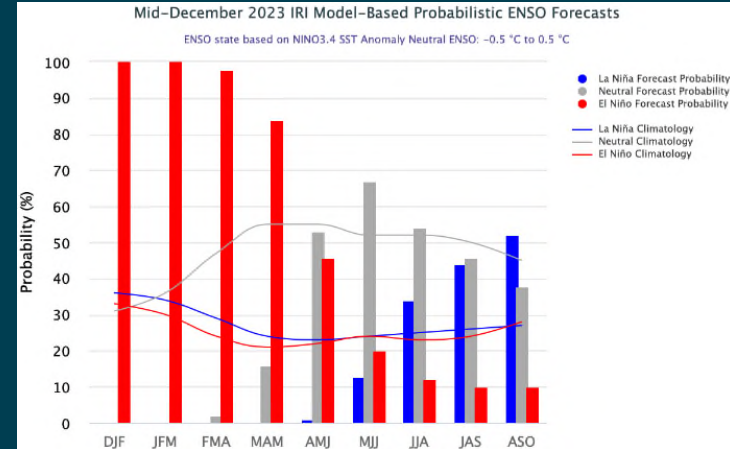
Seasonal Precipitation Outlook



Valid: Jan-Feb-Mar 2024
 Issued: December 21, 2023



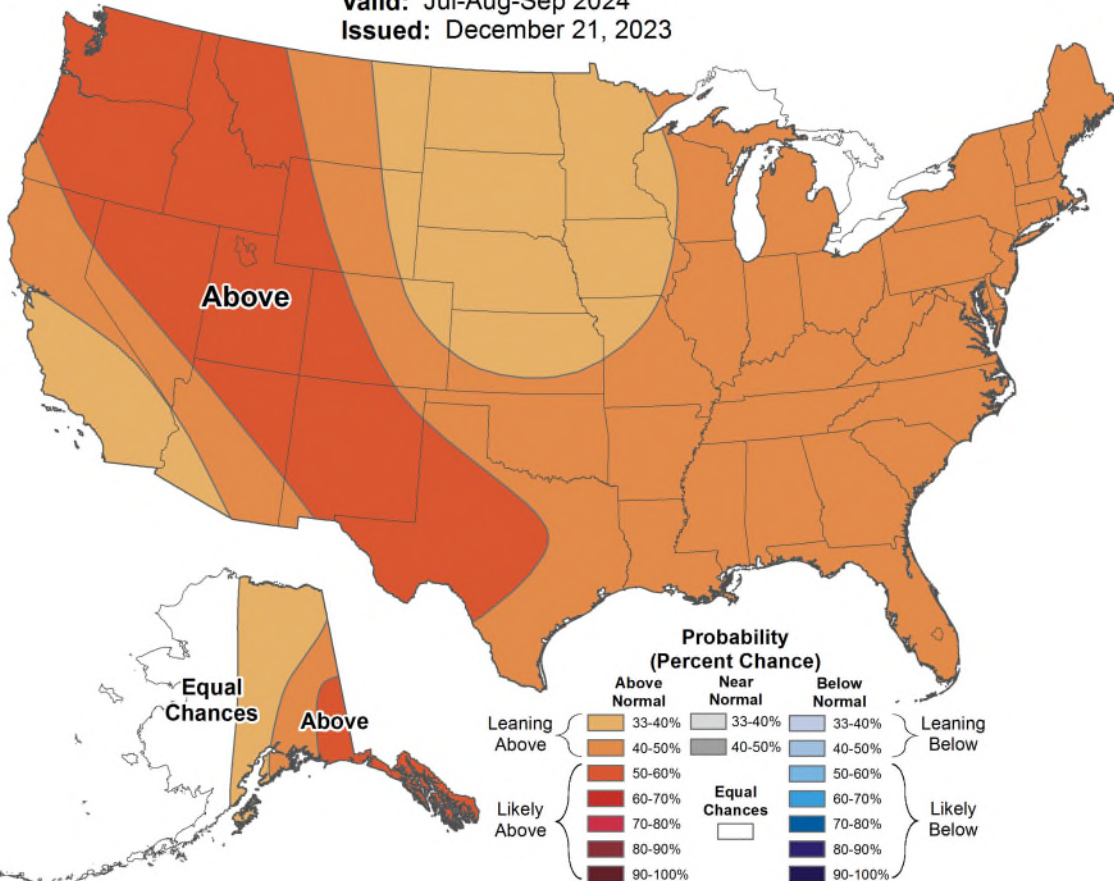
Projected Monsoon Conditions



Seasonal Temperature Outlook



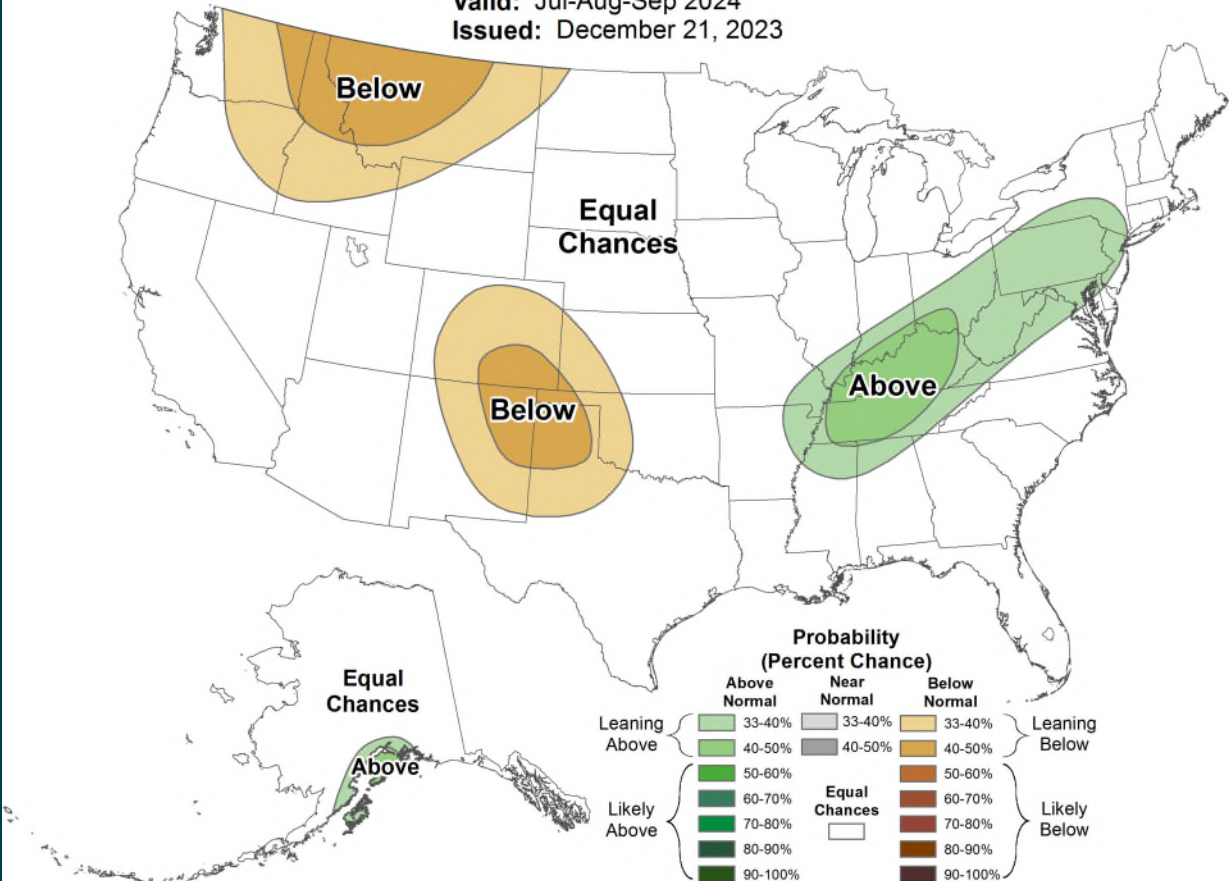
Valid: Jul-Aug-Sep 2024
 Issued: December 21, 2023



Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

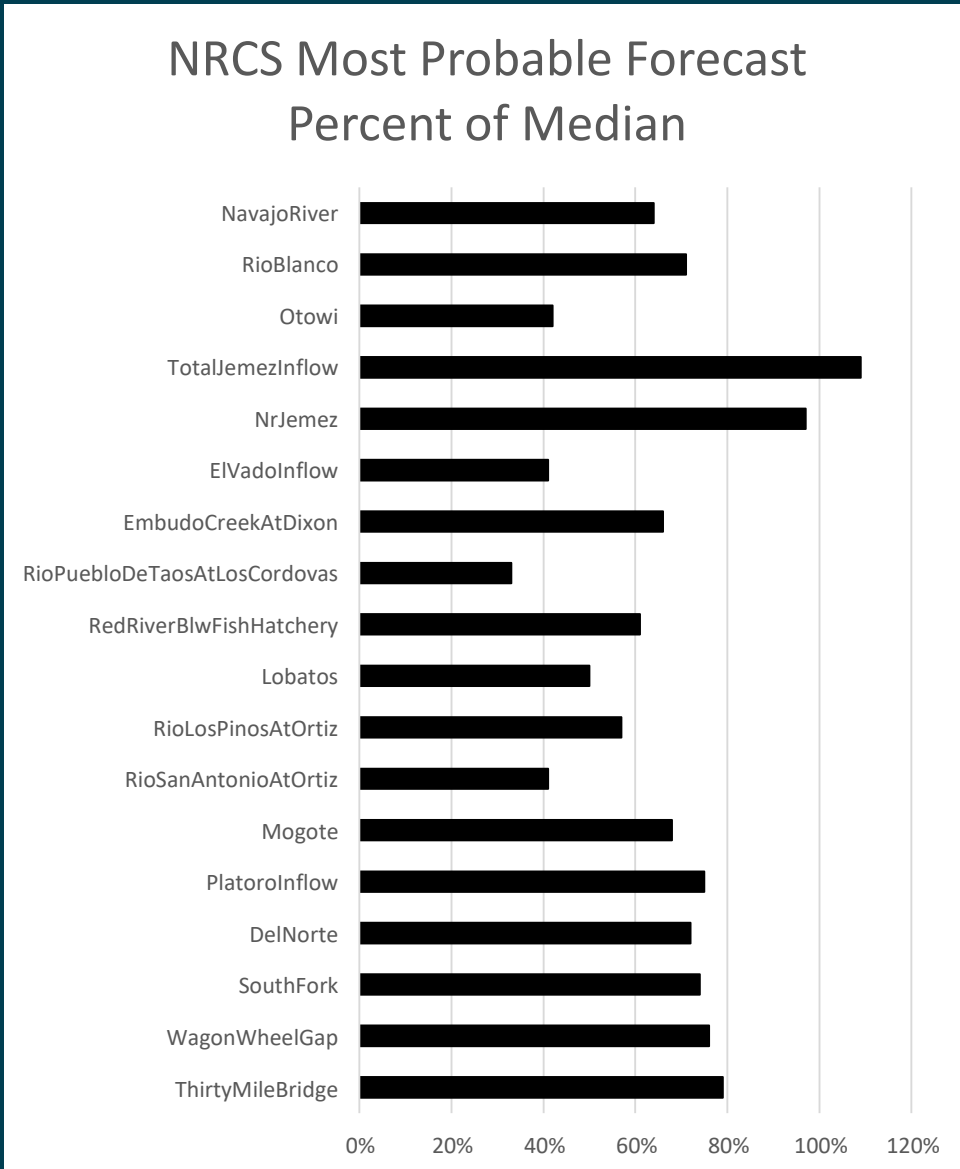
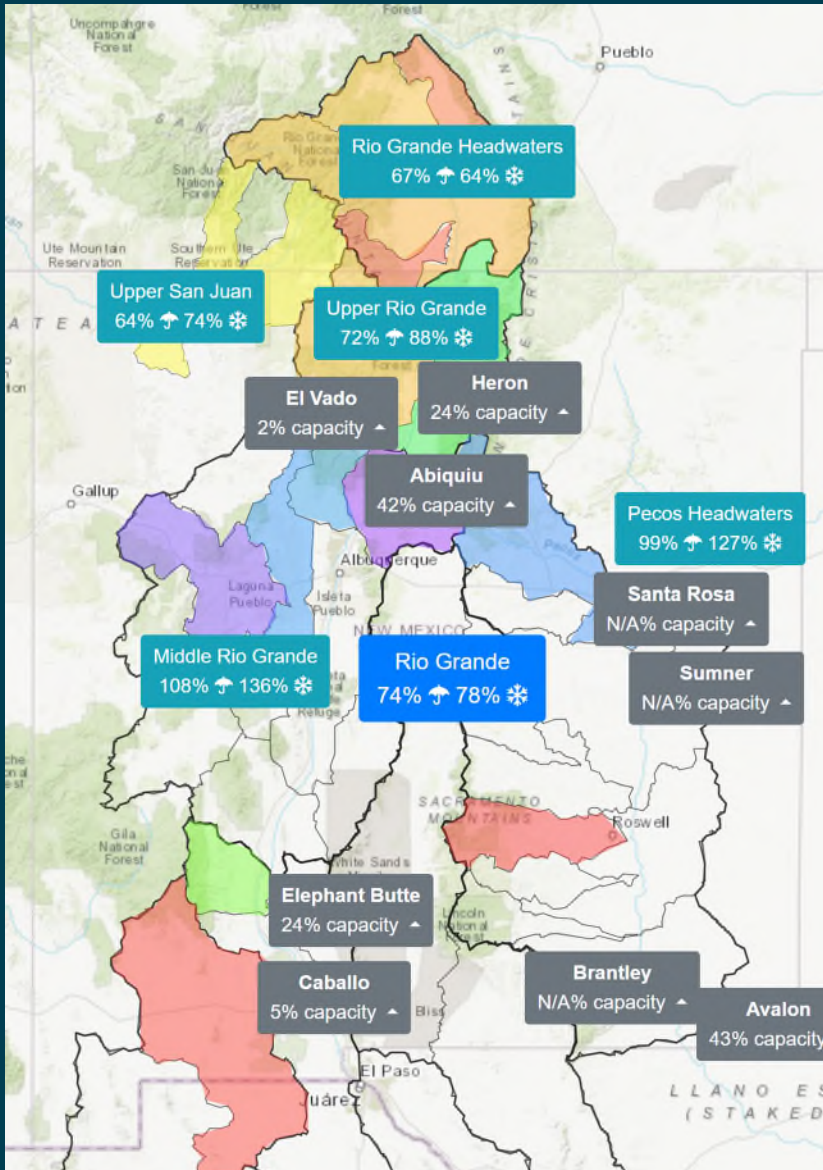


Valid: Jul-Aug-Sep 2024
 Issued: December 21, 2023



Current Conditions

Snowmelt Projections



2024 Expectations

- Snowpack is low but too early to tell with seasonal forecasts predicting above average precip for Northern NM and into CO
 - Last year started off similar to this year but still ended up above average
- Currently out of Article VII restrictions although always the possibility to go back into Article VII depending on the snowpack and Caballo demand
- Reclamation Supplemental Water
 - ~1,450 ac-ft carried over from 2023
 - Currently have ~5,000 ac-ft in place for 2024, although likely could get up to ~12,000 acre-ft (also depends on allocation)
- Continued communication and coordination with water managers

