



The purpose of this memo is to provide background information and a status update on acequia recovery efforts in the State of New Mexico, addressing cascading flood impacts resulting from the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire and the South Fork Fire.

Acequia Recovery Task Force

DHSEM facilitates a monthly multi-agency task force to coordinate acequia recovery support, with targeted efforts focused on Mora County, San Miguel County, Lincoln County, and Rio Arriba County. The task force includes representatives from:

- New Mexico Acequia Association (NMAA),
- New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT),
- State of New Mexico Disaster Case Management (DCM),
- Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) State Forestry Division,
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA),
- Hermit's Peak Calf Canyon Claims Office (Claims Office),
- U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS),
- Interstate Steam Commission (ISC), and
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs).

The Task Force assists in coordinating support for 100+ acequias through several available programs, including the FEMA Public Assistance Program (providing reimbursement for post-disaster damages), the NMDOT Acequia Debris Clearance program (providing direct debris clearance services), the NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program (providing direct debris removal and repair services), and the Claims Office (providing compensation to parties injured as a result of the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire). Focus areas include:

- Monitoring assistance for all acequias through a consolidated project tracker that prevents duplication of benefits, informs funding opportunities, and provides detailed,

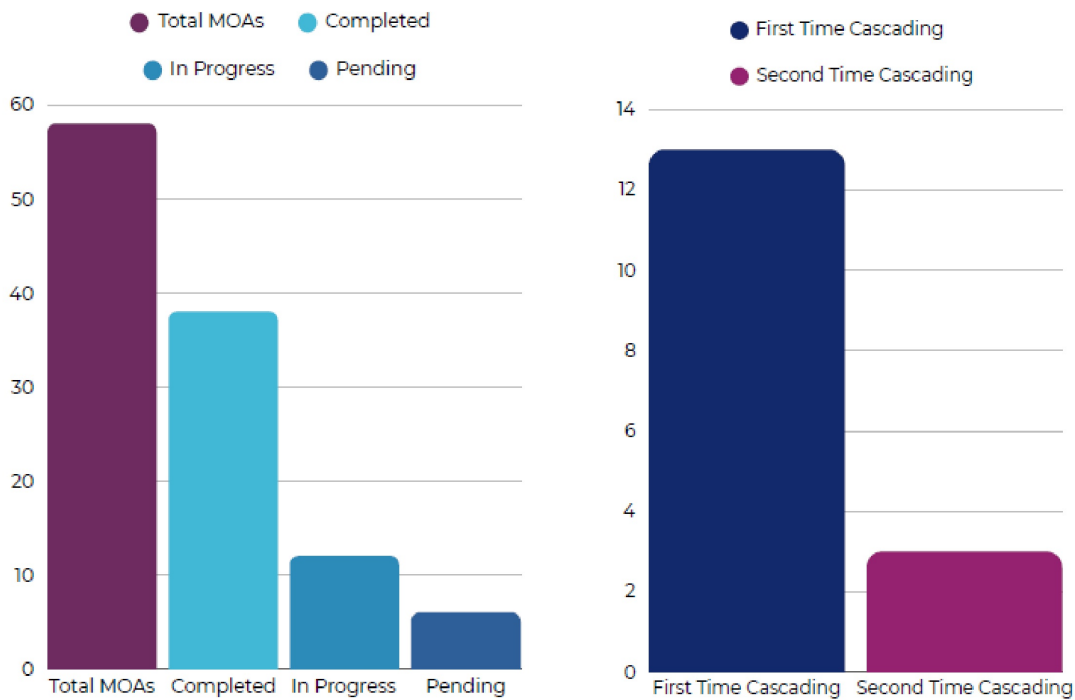


context-specific updates (there are currently over 3,000 status updates and recovery data points).

- Supporting 60 acequias with Hydrologic and Hydraulic (H&H) studies, which are necessary to support both Public Assistance and Claims Office funding requests. To date, 18 are in the final reporting phase.

The State of New Mexico is currently coordinating direct services to acequias impacted by the Hermit’s Peak Calf Canyon Fire through the NMDOT Acequia Debris Removal operation, which is funded through FEMA Public Assistance reimbursement directly to the State of New Mexico. More than 55+ acequias signed up to receive services. A breakdown of operations in progress is provided in *Figure 1* below.

Figure 1: Status of NMDOT Debris Clearance





DSHEM Active Support for Acequia Recovery Efforts
Legislative Panel on Acequia Disaster Recovery
Updated as of July 13, 2025

While the NMAA and DHSEM representatives continue to mobilize assistance, acequia recovery is shaped by unique legal, historical, and geographic contexts that often don't align with traditional federal disaster recovery models. Specifically, acequias face challenges determining whether FEMA or NRCS should be the lead agency for certain types of damage, as mixed impacts from fire, flood, and erosion often require coordination across both programs, resulting in delayed assistance and overlapping requirements.

Many acequias are managed by volunteer commissioners with limited access to engineering, legal, or grant-writing support. This leads to difficulty completing damage assessments, eligibility documentation, and environmental compliance, which are all central to effectively moving through the federal program processes. Establishing the pre-disaster condition of centuries-old infrastructure has also proven challenging under FEMA's documentation requirements, resulting in scope reductions or project denials due to perceived deferred maintenance.