



New Mexico Office of the State Engineer and Interstate Stream Commission

Building a Resilient Water
Future for the Rio Grande

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Water and Natural Resources Committee - August 31, 2026



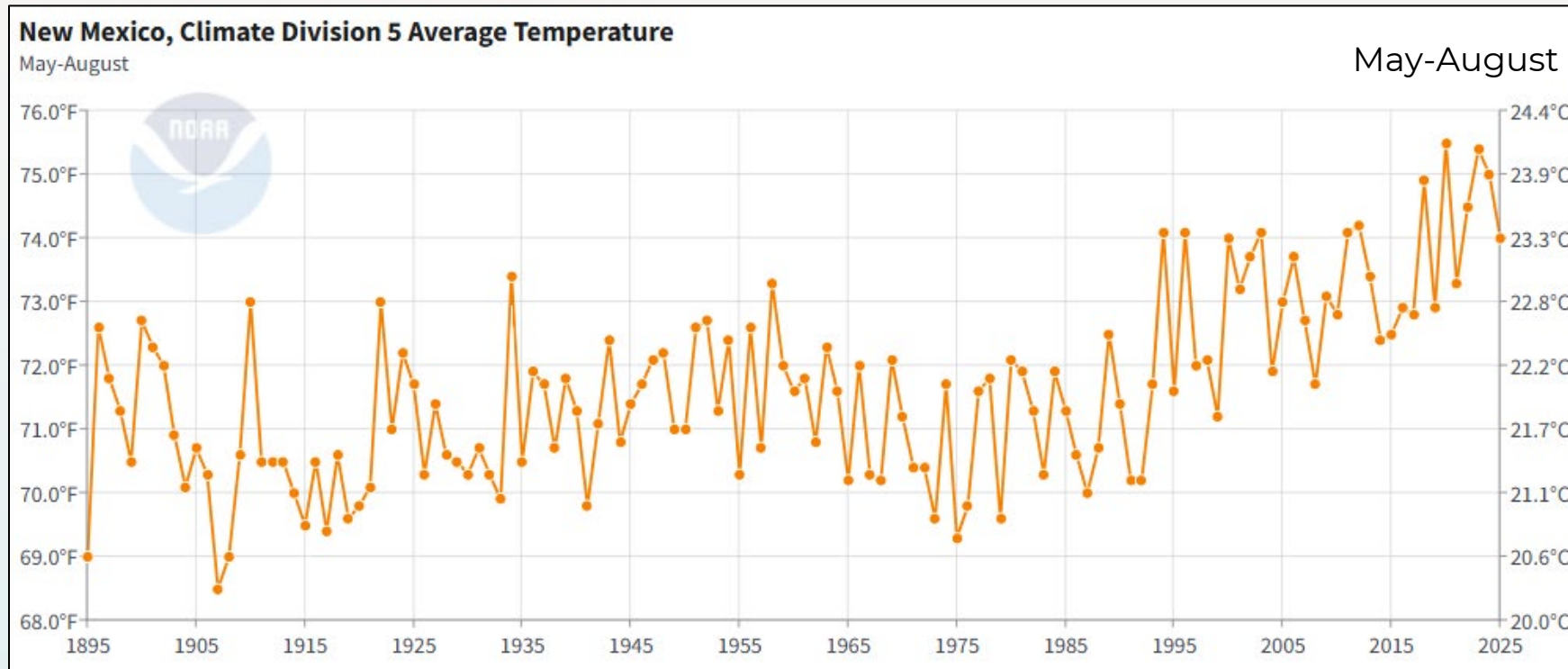
Climate and Hydrology Challenges

CLIMATE CHANGE TRENDS:

- Lower snowpack
- Higher temperatures
- Increased aridification
- More variable rain/monsoons
- Lower stream flows
- Lower reservoir levels

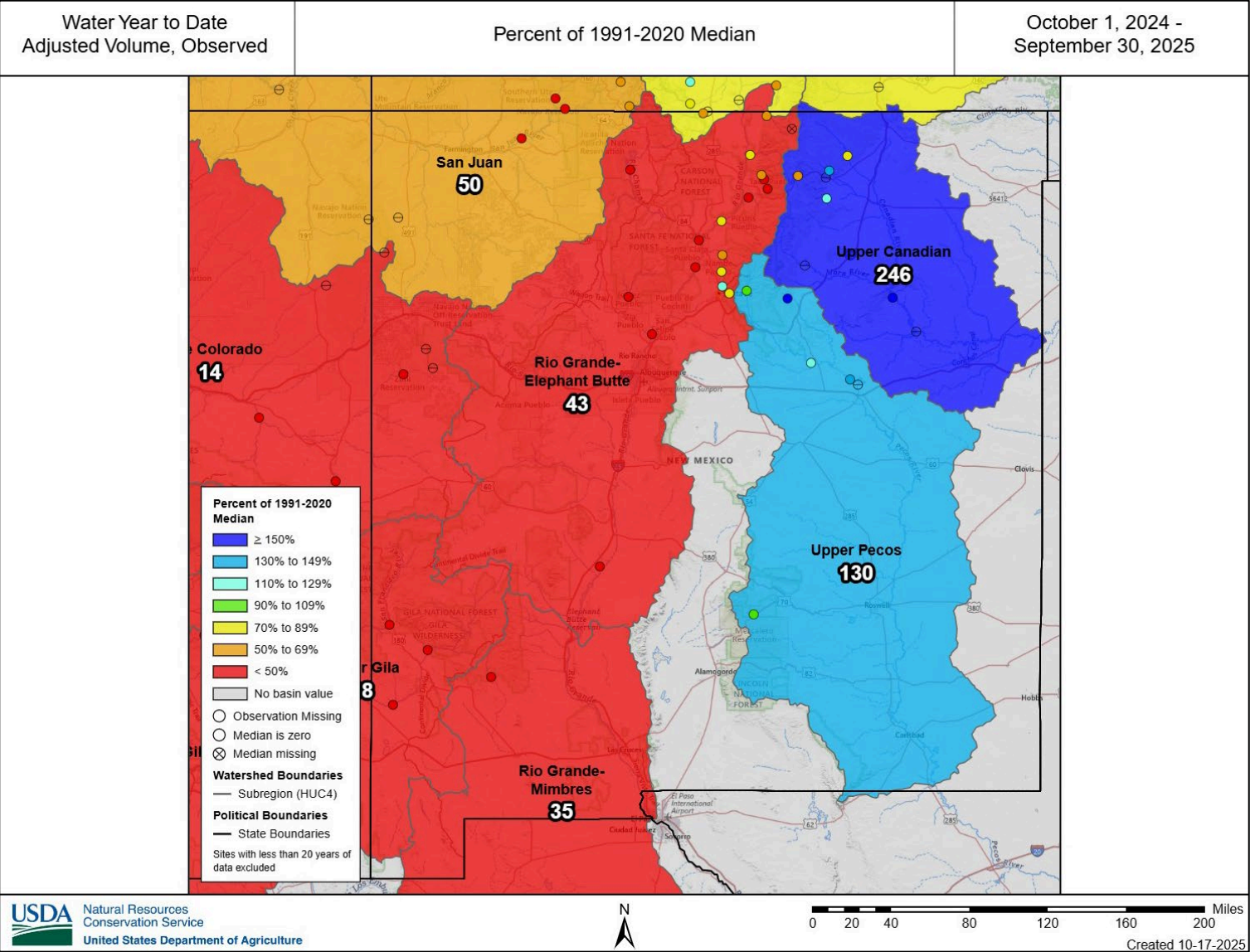
We need to prepare for 25-30% less water by 2070

AVERAGE SUMMER TEMPERATURE MIDDLE RIO GRANDE VALLEY



- 2025 was the 11th warmest May-August since 1895 .
- Top 5 warmest summers on record have occurred in last 8 years.
- Warmer temperatures = greater water lost to evaporation and transpiration.

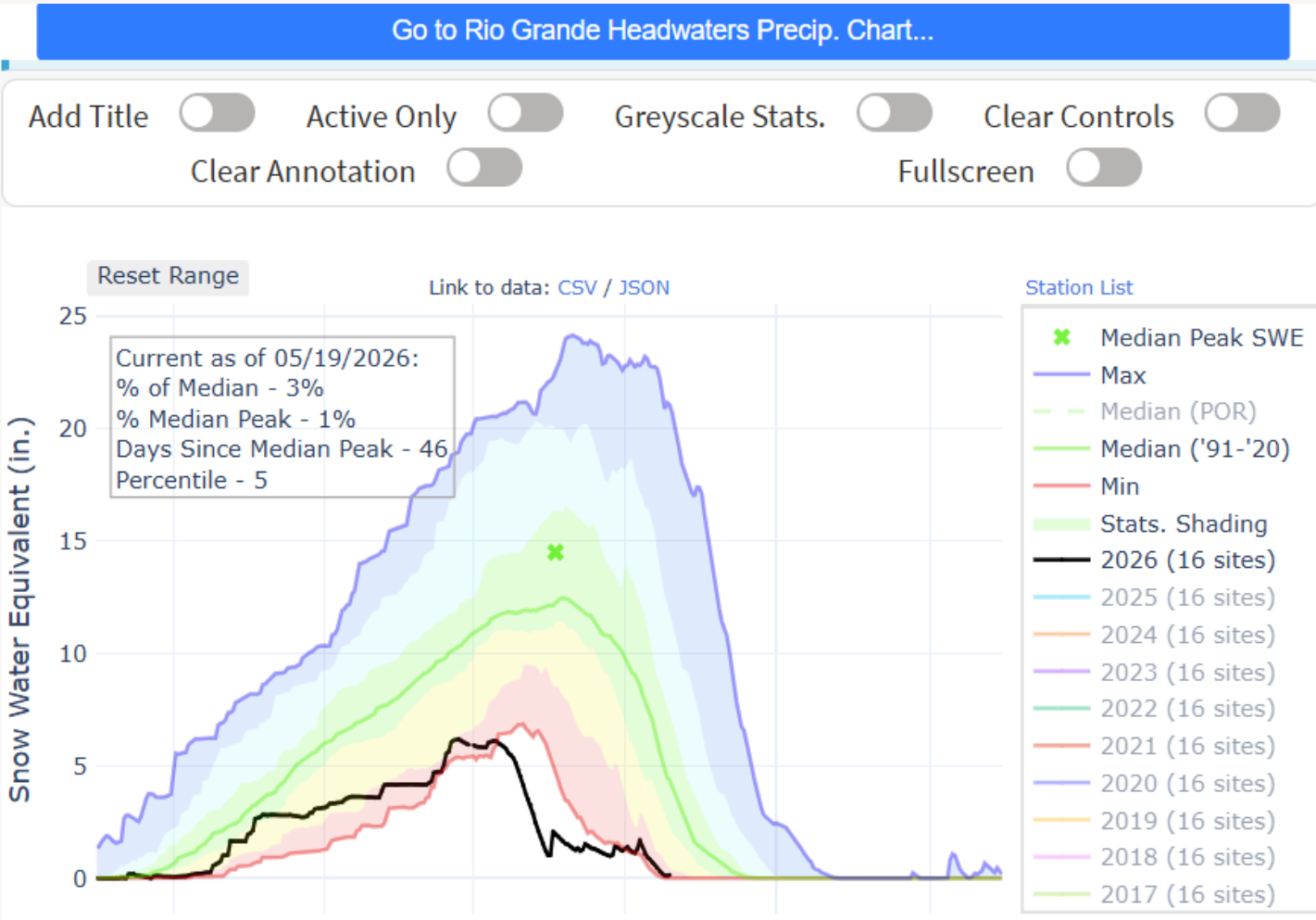
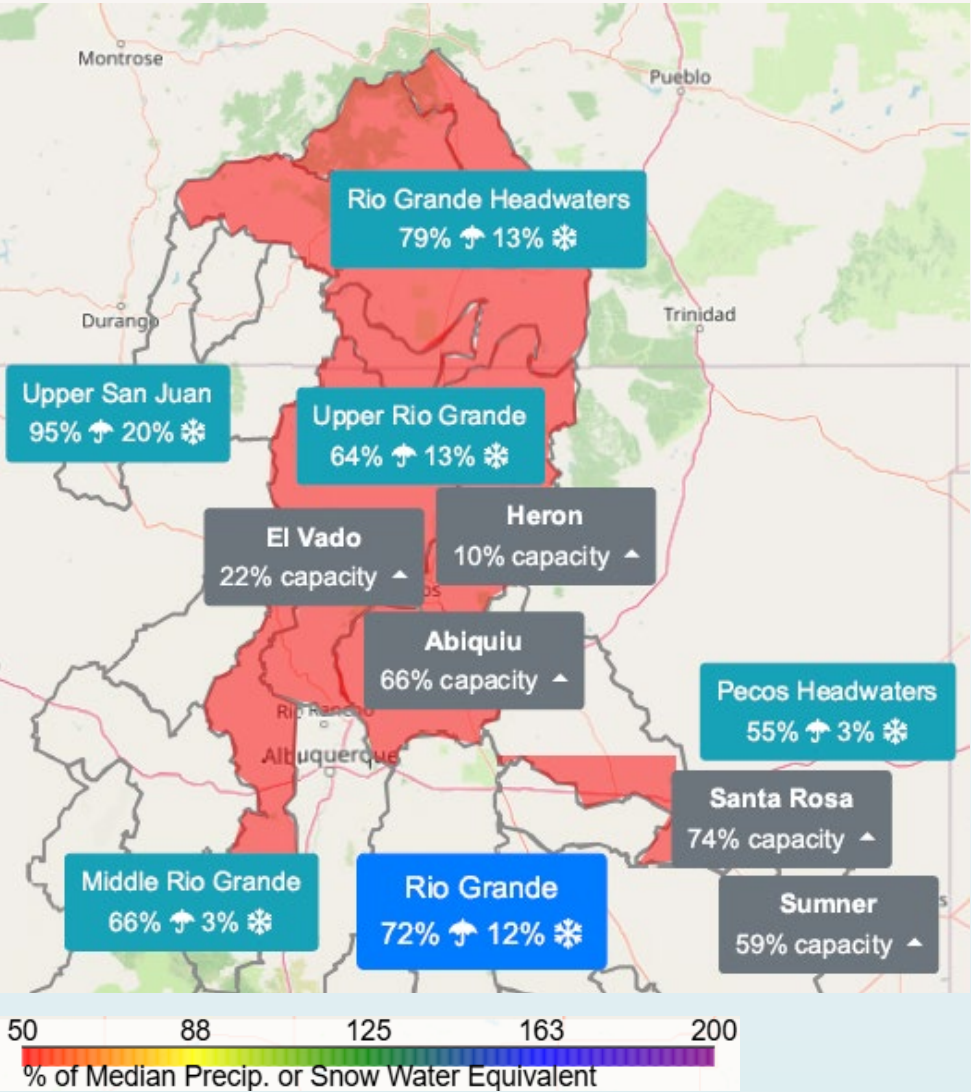
Climate and Hydrology Challenges – Dry Conditions in 2025



STREAMFLOW (WATER YEAR 2025)

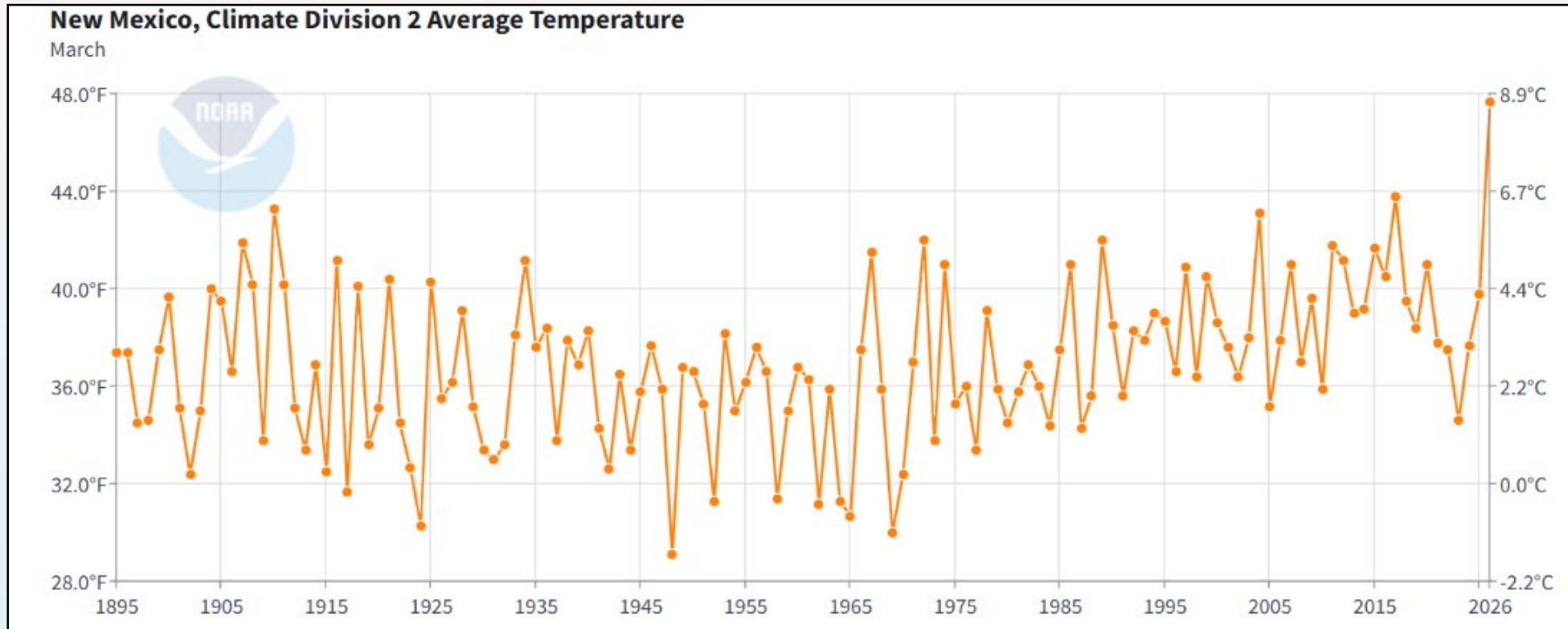
- Rio Grande streamflow was 43% of the historical median (1991 - 2020).
- San Juan streamflow was 50% of the historical median (1991 – 2020).

Climate and Hydrology Challenges – Record Breaking Low Snowpack



usbr.gov/uc/water/hydrodata/status_maps/rg_status.html

AVERAGE MARCH TEMPERATURES IN THE NORTHERN NM MOUNTAINS



- Average March temperature in 2026 was over 4 degrees higher than the highest average March temperature on record.
- Significant water (snowpack) lost to early runoff, evaporation, and transpiration.



New Mexico can Meet the Challenges

MULTI-PRONGED APPROACH With SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENTS NEEDED

Holistic management throughout the Rio Grande Basin to:

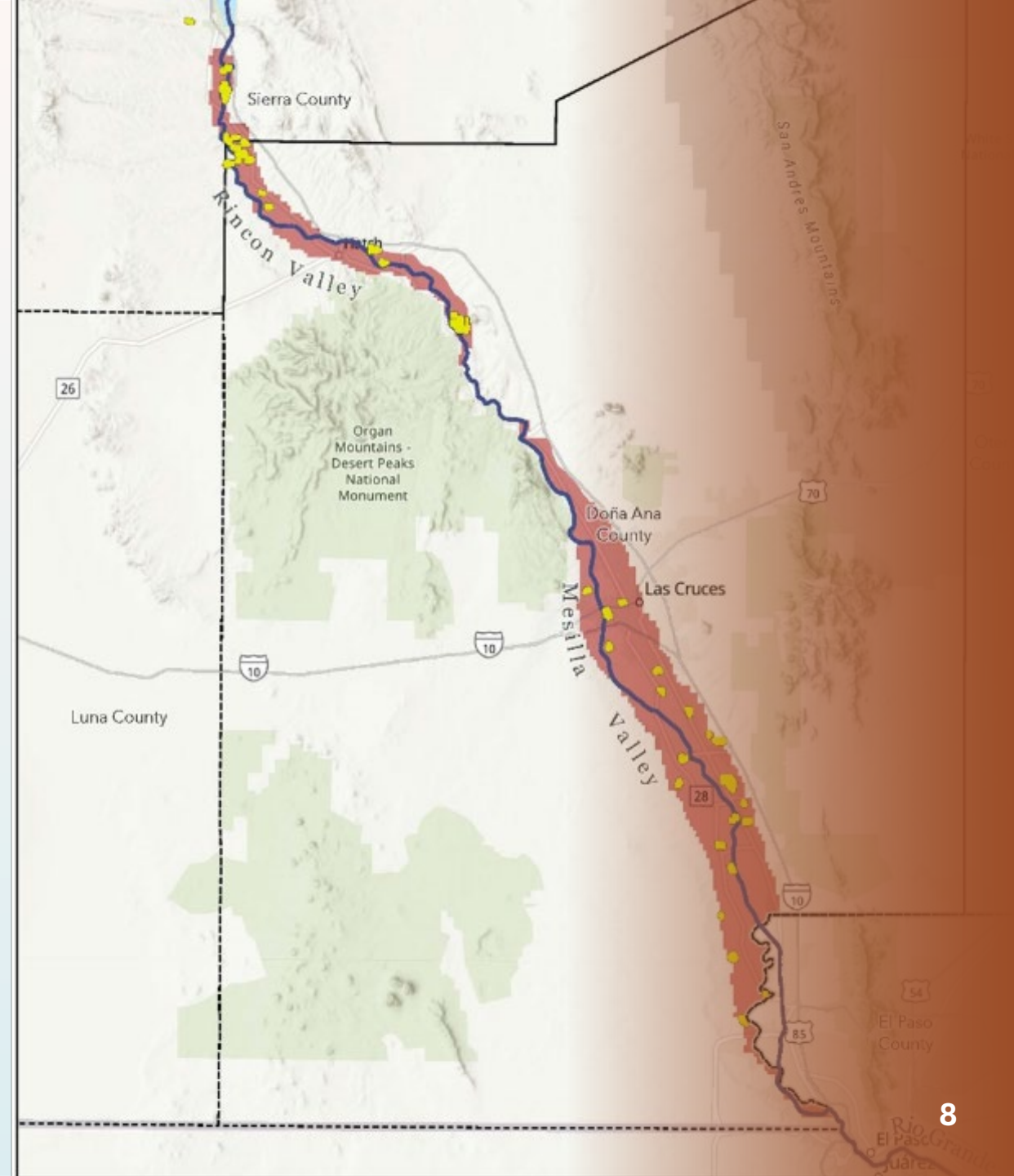
- Increase efficiencies
- Reduce depletions

Investments needed for:

- Water rights enforcement and administration.
- On-the-ground projects, including partnerships with major water users and federal agencies.
- Operational flexibilities and innovation.
- Regional water planning.
- Education and engagement with stakeholders.

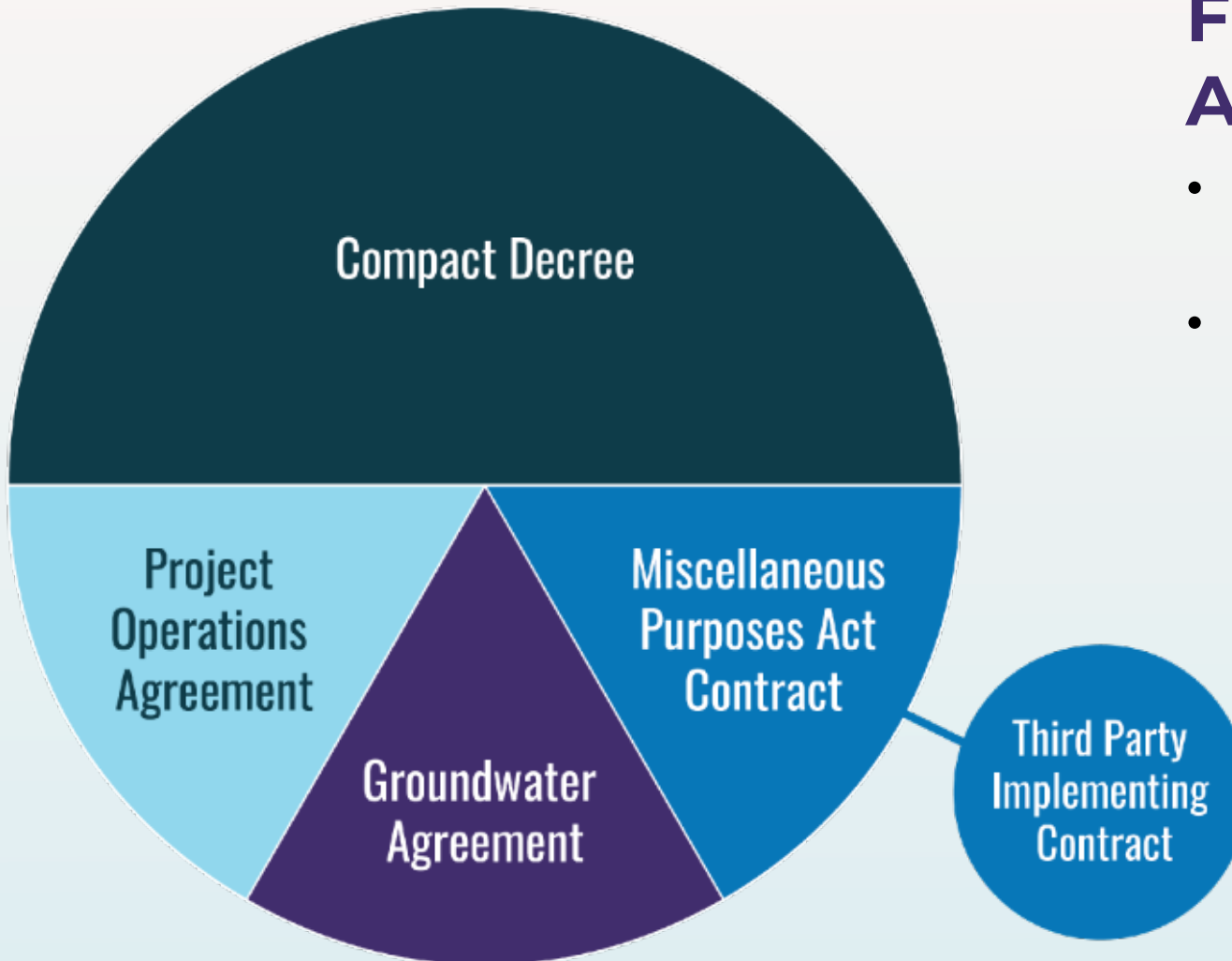
TEXAS v. NEW MEXICO SETTLEMENT

- Accepted by the US Supreme Court in June 2026.
- New **measuring index provides certainty** about how water is distributed below Elephant Butte.
- **Protects significant groundwater pumping** in NM while requiring NM to reduce depletions.
- Requires development of a **long-term water management plan** to be crafted with stakeholders.
- **NM retains discretion** to administer.
- Adjusts Rio Grande Project operations to provide **more surface water to NM** (consistent with the original 57/43 allocation split in the Compact).
- Includes a **transition period** and **operational tools** to support compliance.
- Related Court cases will be dismissed.
- **STATE INVESTMENT = Protects long-term economic viability of the region**

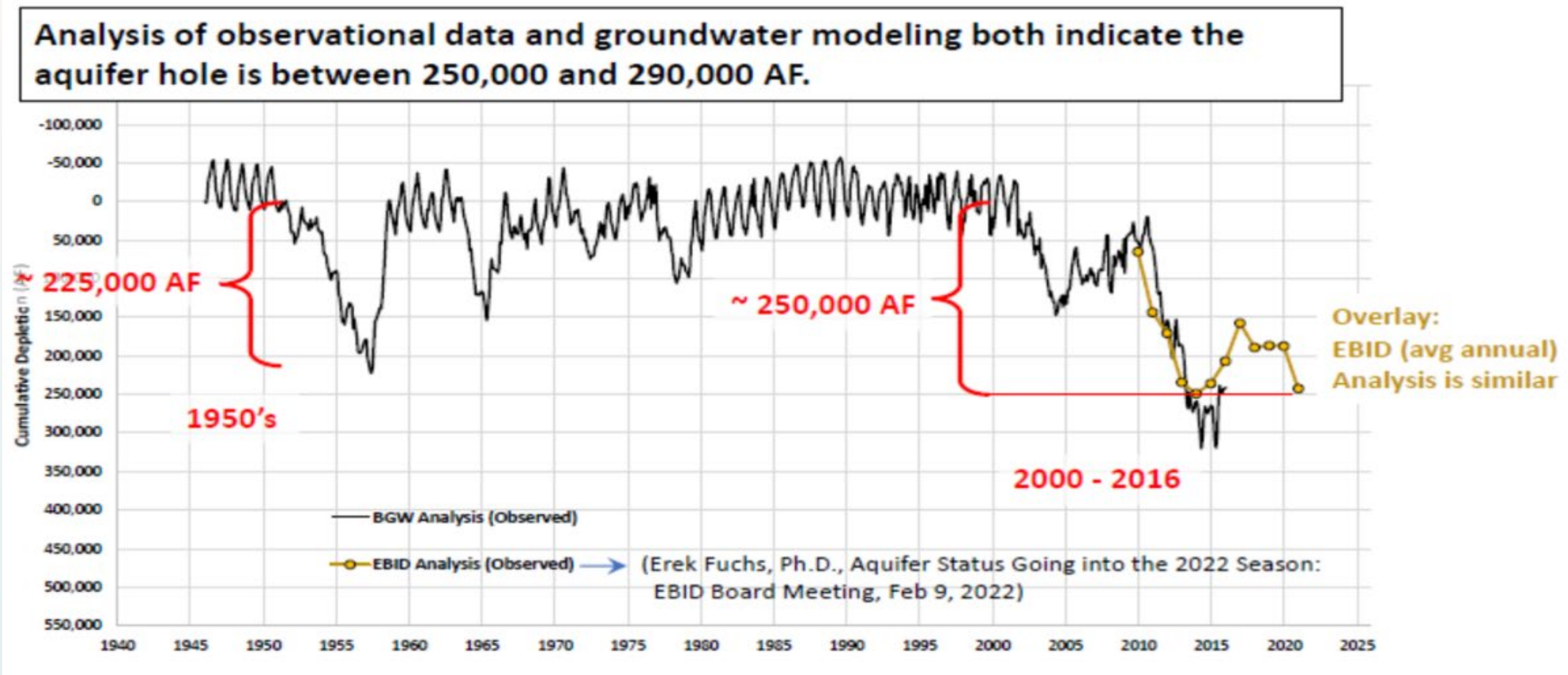


Five Inter-Related Agreements and Contracts

- Compact Decree in U.S. Supreme Court.
- Other agreements:
 - Involve distinct parties and forums
 - Resolve all associated disputes
 - Provide operational tools to support compliance

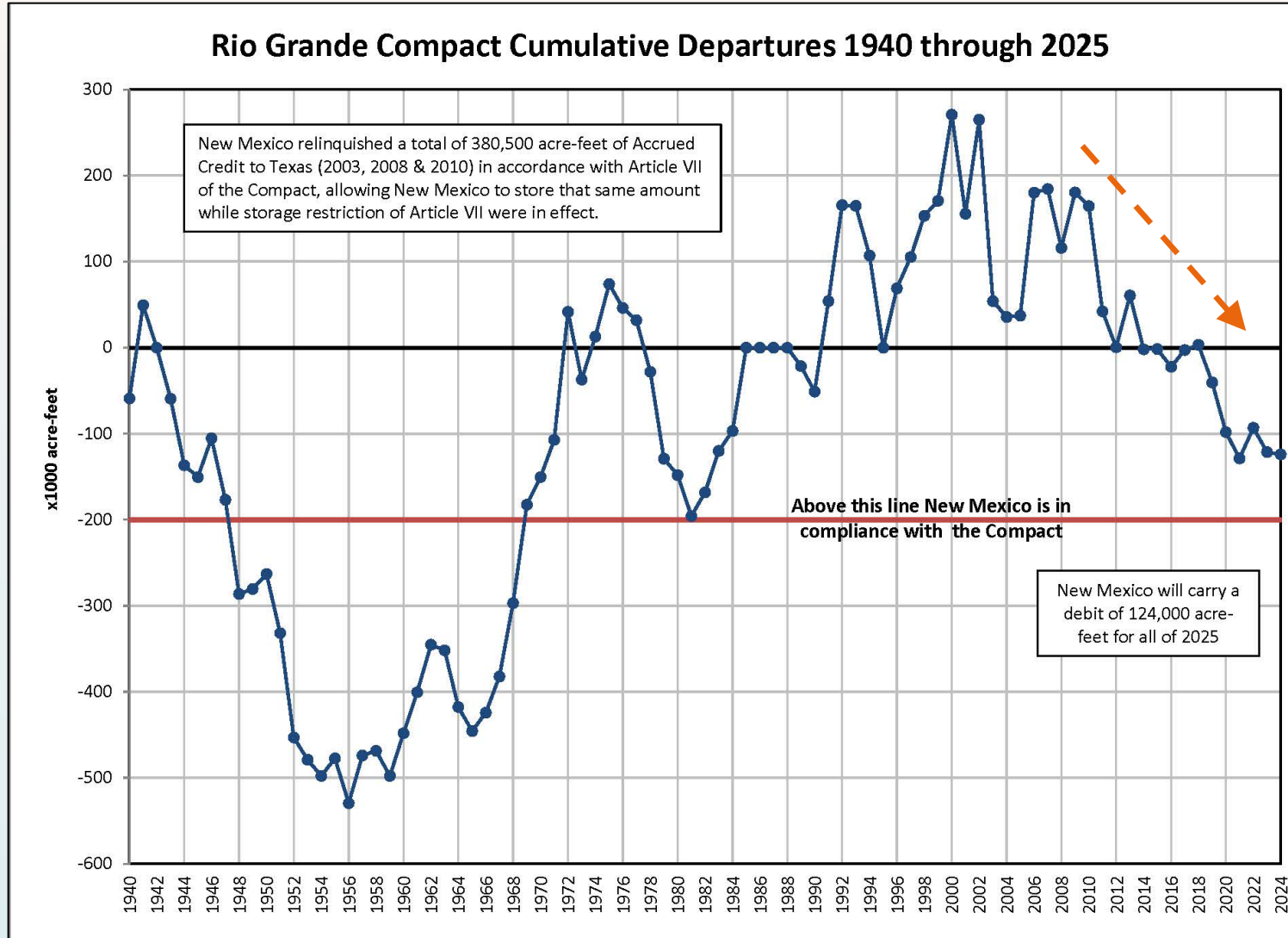


Hydrologic Context of the Settlement



Addressing aquifer decline is essential to support future generations and meet new state line delivery obligation – state investments will be necessary to support community driven solutions.

Rio Grande Compact Status – Deliveries to Elephant Butte Reservoir



*TX v NM Settlement **does not change NM's obligation to deliver to Elephant Butte Reservoir.***

*In 2025 we increased our debit by **8,000 acre-feet.***

Current compact status is - 132,000 acre-feet.

*New Mexico is in compliance. A compact violation occurs at **-200,000 acre-feet.***



Rio Grande Compact

WHY IS NM'S COMPACT STATUS IMPORTANT?

State water law is subordinate to a state's obligations under an interstate compact.

- *Hinderlider v. La Plata Riv. & Cherry Creek Ditch Co.*, 304 U.S. 92 (U.S. 1938)

Upstream storage of native Rio Grande water for Middle Rio Grande water users, and overall water management options, depends on Compact status.

- *Rio Grande Compact Articles VI, VII and VIII*

Major Efforts Underway - Middle Rio Grande



Work at OSE includes:

- Upcoming Water Master District and Metering Orders
- Chama shortage sharing and P&P operations
- Enhanced enforcement
- Indian Water Rights Settlements

Work at ISC includes:

- Enhanced channel management for multiple purposes:
 - Improved conveyance, sediment transport, bosque and habitat management
 - *Goals* = increase deliveries to Elephant Butte; decrease depletions
- Cooperative Agreement with the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD)
- Critical partnerships with federal agencies: Reclamation and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Enhanced data collection, modeling and assessments to support decision-making



Major Efforts Underway - Lower Rio Grande



Work at OSE includes:

- Active Water Resource Management: administration, Water Master measuring/metering, and enforcement
- Adaptive Metering for Informed Groundwater Operations (AMIGO) metering program
- Lower Rio Grande Purchase Program and Groundwater Conservation Program Support

Work at ISC includes:

- Temporary leasing program = over 7,500 acres enrolled thru 2028
- Water rights acquisition program required by Settlement = 18,200 AF of current groundwater use.
 - Roll-out this year
- Range of complementary solutions = brackish water exploration and development, stormwater management, conservation and efficiency efforts
- Cooperative Agreement with Elephant Butte Irrigation District and local Soil & Water Conservation Districts
- Lower Rio Grande Water Alliance participation and collaboration



Water Security Planning Act (WSPA)

ISC plans to begin standing up new regional planning councils in January 2027.

Ensures Regional Water Planning:

- Includes robust public involvement
- Is grounded in the best available data, science and models
- Supports implementation through prioritization of projects for funding
- Builds local capacity

WSPA will transform and reinvigorate regional water planning in New Mexico and play a major role on the Rio Grande.

MainStreamNM.org

Time to Work Together!

