



# News Release



The Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District

Contact: Tom Thorpe at (505) 382-9306

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## **Storage Water Nears Depletion *Water Releases from El Vado Reservoir to Stop in Mid-August***

**Albuquerque** – The Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District will not continue any releases of stored water on, or about, August 16<sup>th</sup>. Based on current storage numbers, this is the approximate date the district will exhaust its stored water to supplement irrigation flows to middle valley farmers.

From that date forward only the *natural* flow of the Rio Grande will be available for diversion by the district.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation will release some water from its storage into the Rio Grande to ensure survival of the endangered Rio Grande Silvery Minnow.

And farmers should note: **The irrigation ditches will not be totally dry but water flow will be at a reduced rate.**

“Water is in short supply right now, and we have to start planning so that they can make it through to the end of the season.” says MRGCD Chief Engineer, Subhas Shah. “With reduced late season irrigation demand and continued rotation and scheduling, the natural flow of the river should be able to provide intermittent irrigation to valley farmers.” Shah adds.

Recent rains have helped with a little added irrigation water and each storm is pushing the cut-off date back, one day at a time.

The MRGCD Board of Directors will get the latest water availability report at its regular meeting, Monday, August 13<sup>th</sup> and related water issues will be addressed.

The MRGCD began the irrigation season, March 1, with roughly 120,000 acre feet of supplemental water in storage. As of today that supplemental water stands at about 17,000 acre feet.

MRGCD Hydrologist David Gensler reports storage water is being released at a rate of about 1300-1400 acre feet per day.

Farmers are encouraged to cooperate and use the limited water supply wisely.

**About the MRGCD:** The Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District has been promoting sustainable agriculture for the past 85 years. The District delivers water to about 70,000 acres of cropland in the Middle Rio Grande Valley. That water is reused time and time again to irrigate crops, sustains the cottonwood bosque along the Rio Grande, helps create and maintain habitat for the endangered Rio Grande silvery minnow and recharges the aquifer. The District owns 30,000 acres of bosque in the valley, the largest continuous cottonwood forest in the world, and a stretch of land that provides unprecedented recreational opportunities and an irreplaceable swath of greenbelt in New Mexico's largest metropolitan area. The District was formed in 1925 to alleviate flooding and to reclaim farmland in the valley. Its boundaries stretch 150 miles from Cochiti on the north to the boundary of the Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge on the south, running through Sandoval, Bernalillo, Valencia and Socorro Counties. It operates more than 1,200 miles of canals, laterals and drains, which are used to convey water to and from cropland. The District is funded by water service charges and property assessments on the benefited lands within its boundaries.

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