New Mexico Office of the State Engineer and Interstate Stream Commission

Building a Resilient Water Future for the Rio Grande

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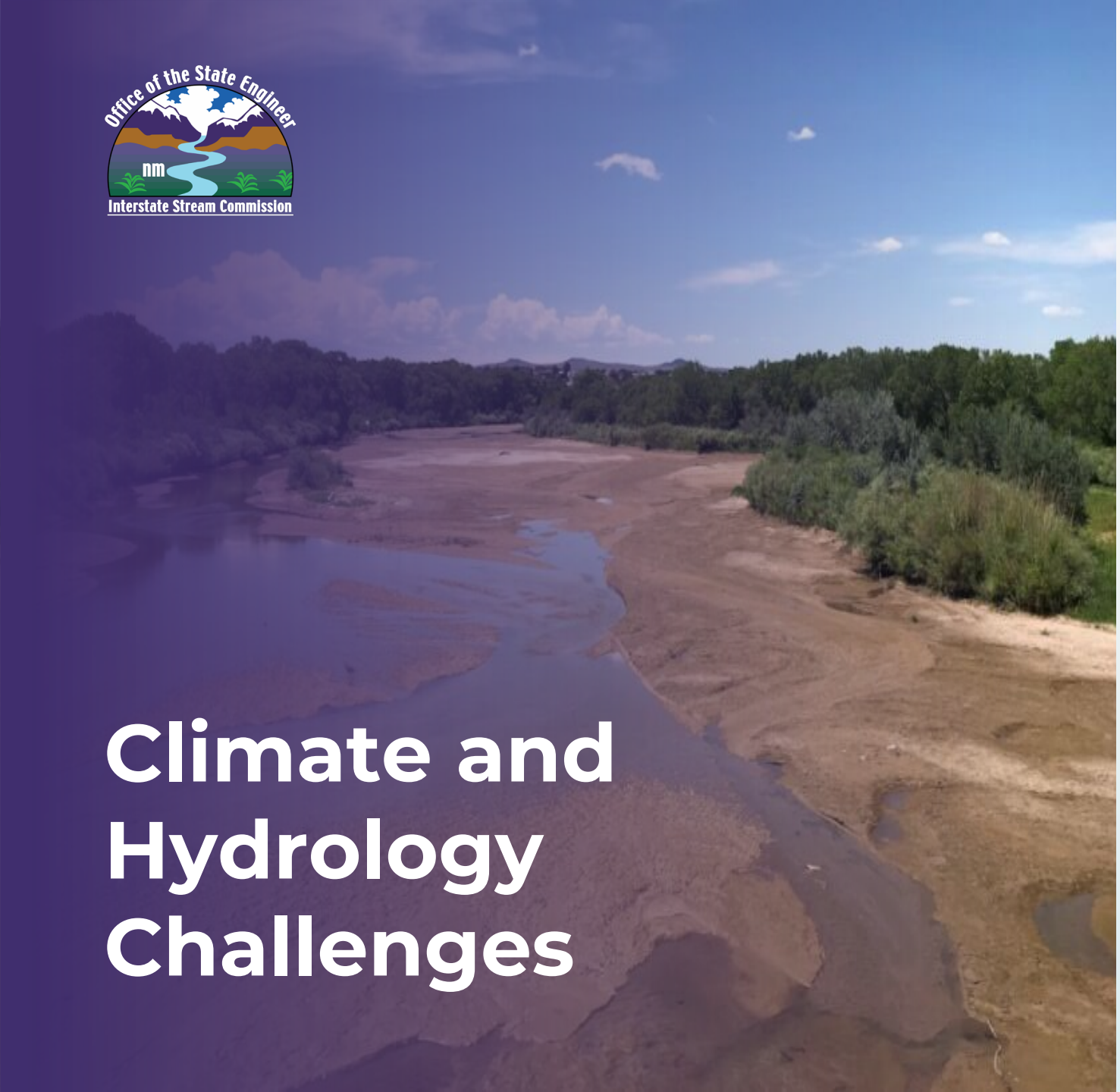
March 19, 2026



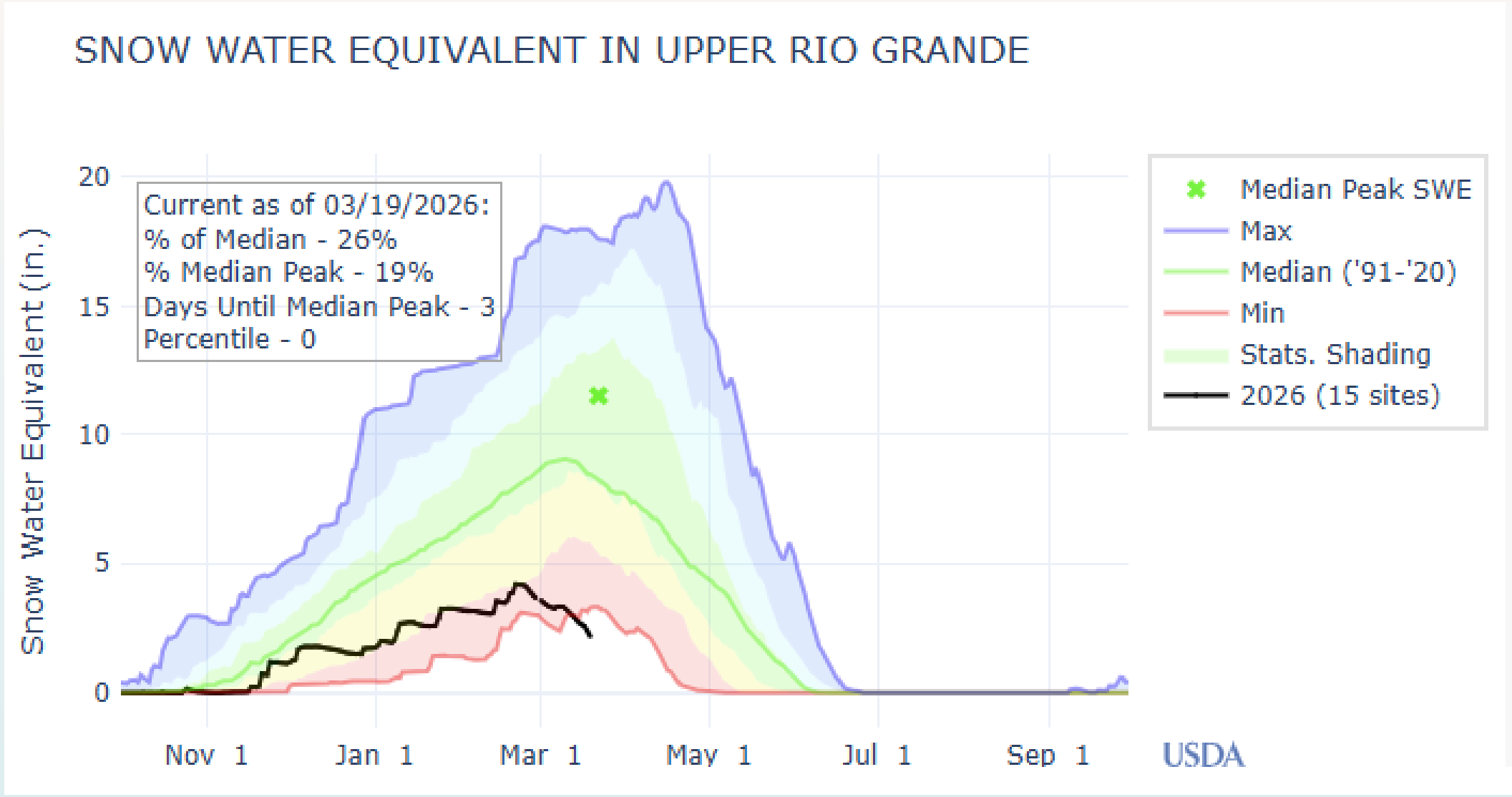
Climate and Hydrology Challenges

CLIMATE CHANGE TRENDS:

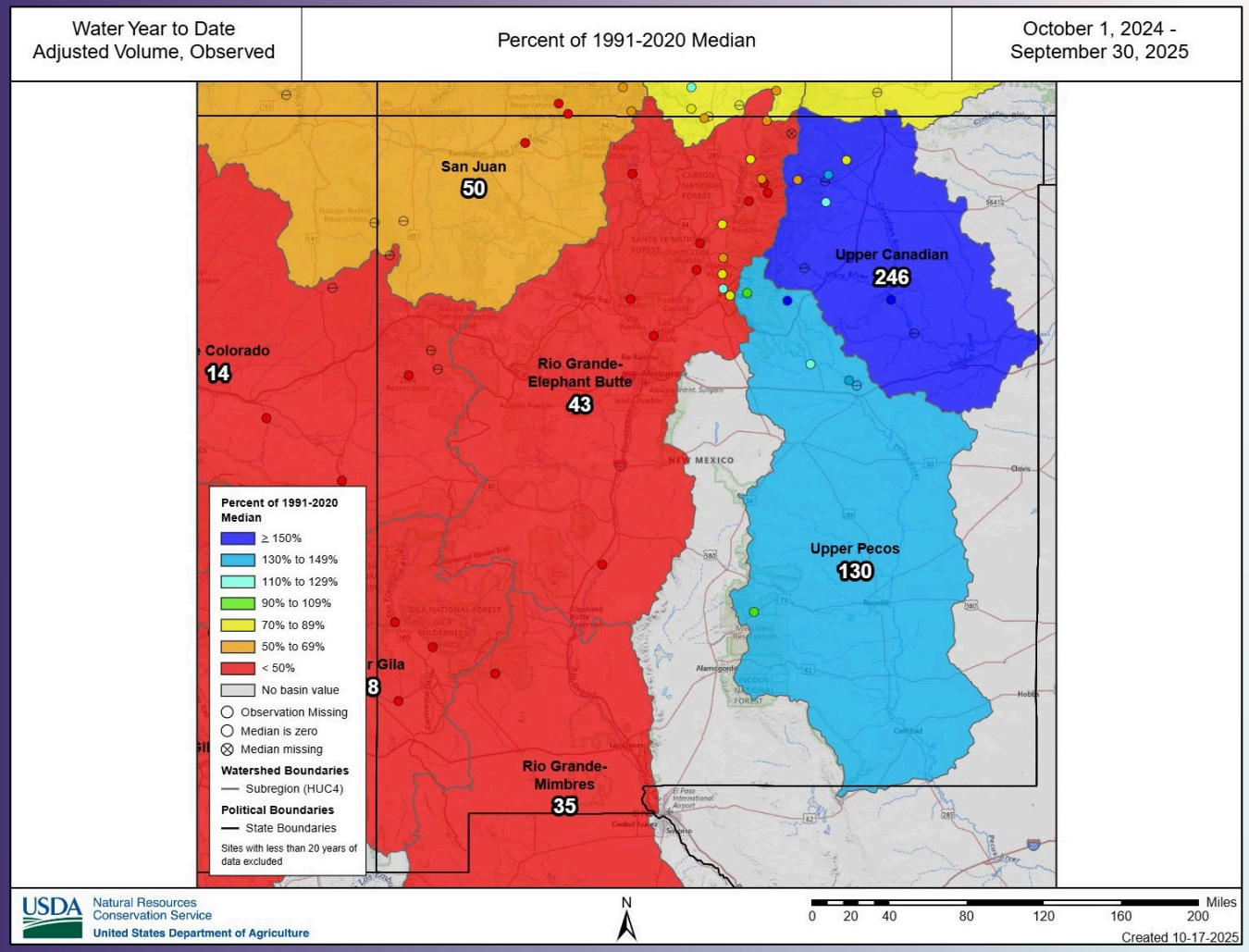
- Lower snowpack
- Higher temperatures
- Increased aridification
- More variable rain/monsoons
- Lower stream flows
- Lower reservoir levels

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

Climate and Hydrology Challenges



Climate and Hydrology Challenges

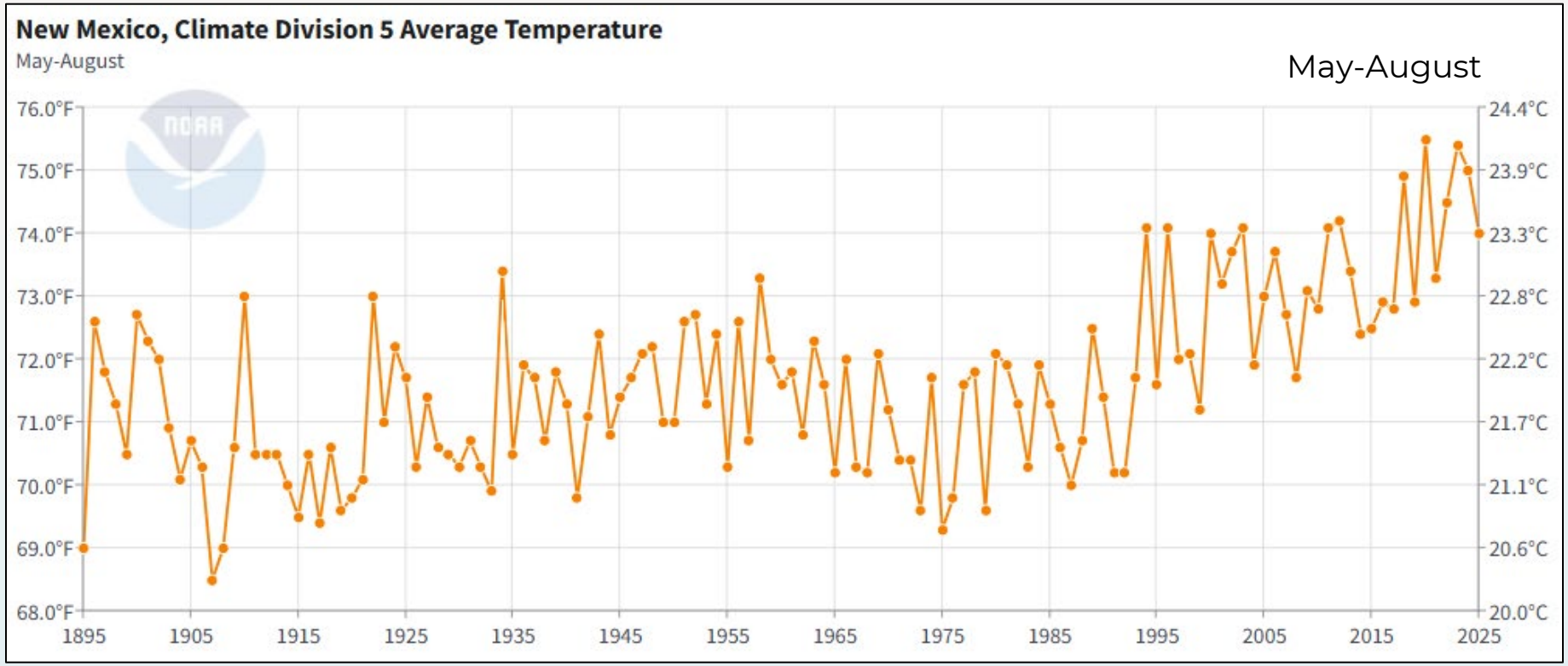


STREAMFLOW (WATER YEAR 2025)

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

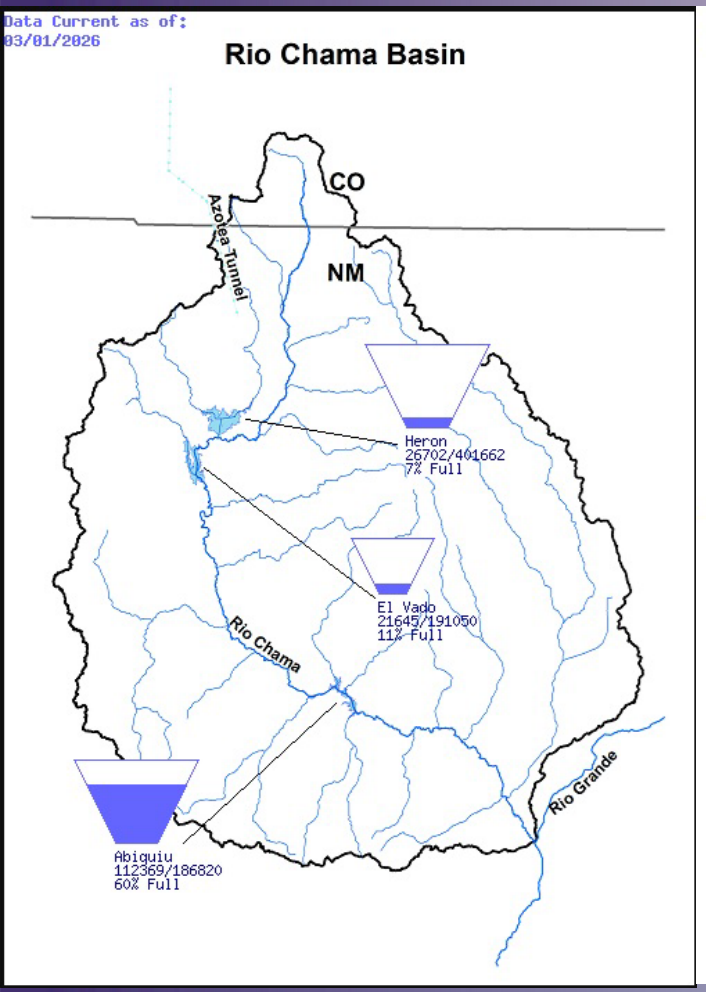
Climate and Hydrology Challenges

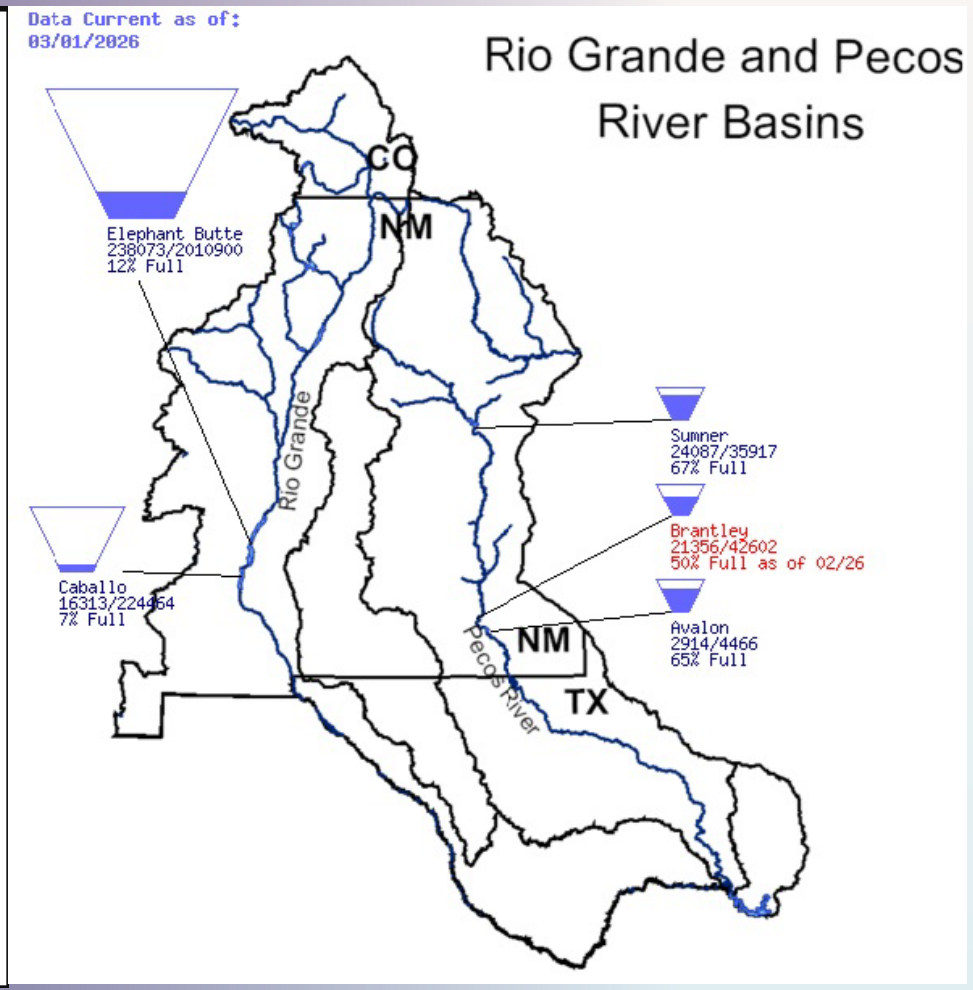
AVERAGE SUMMER TEMPERATURE MIDDLE RIO GRANDE VALLEY



- 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

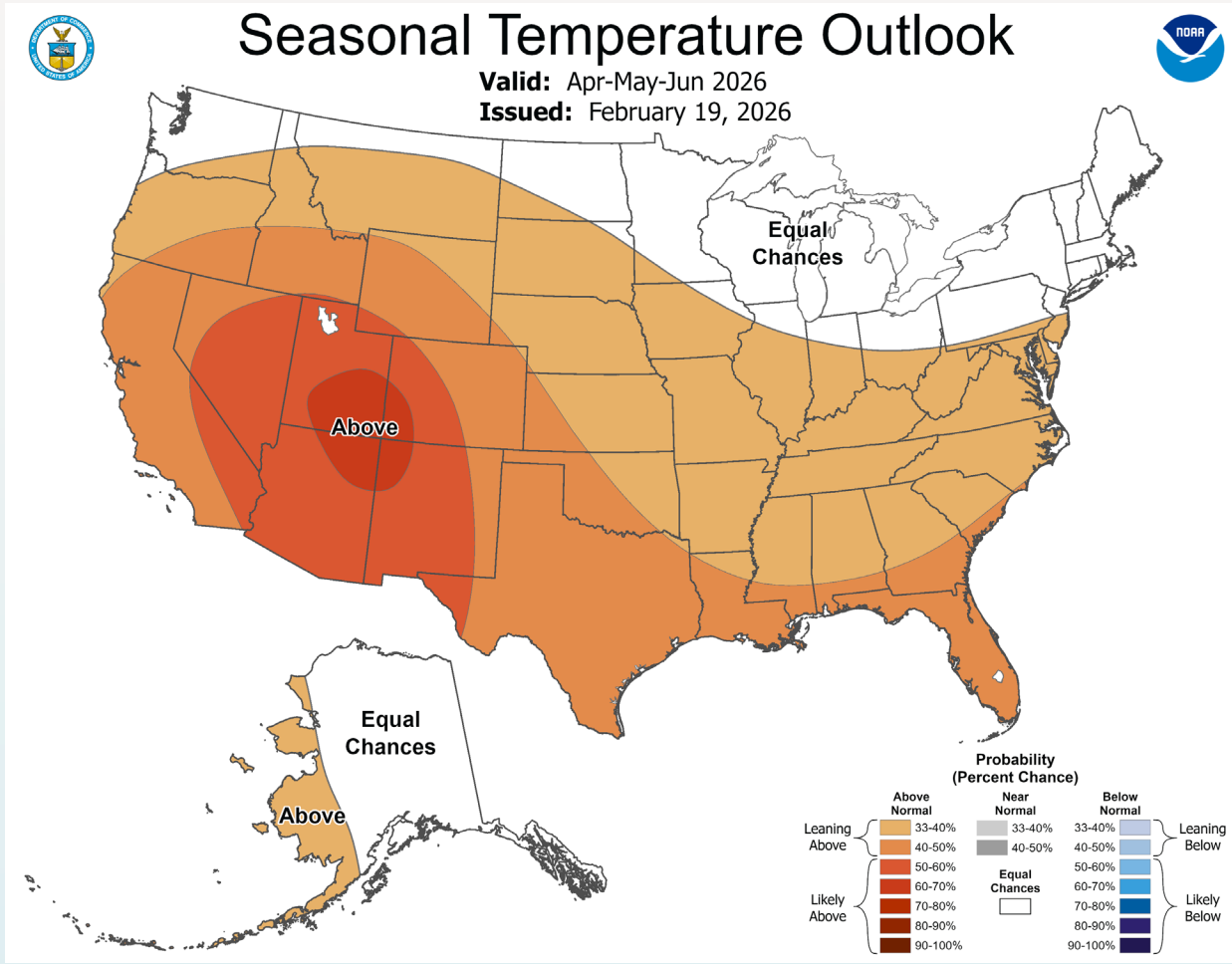


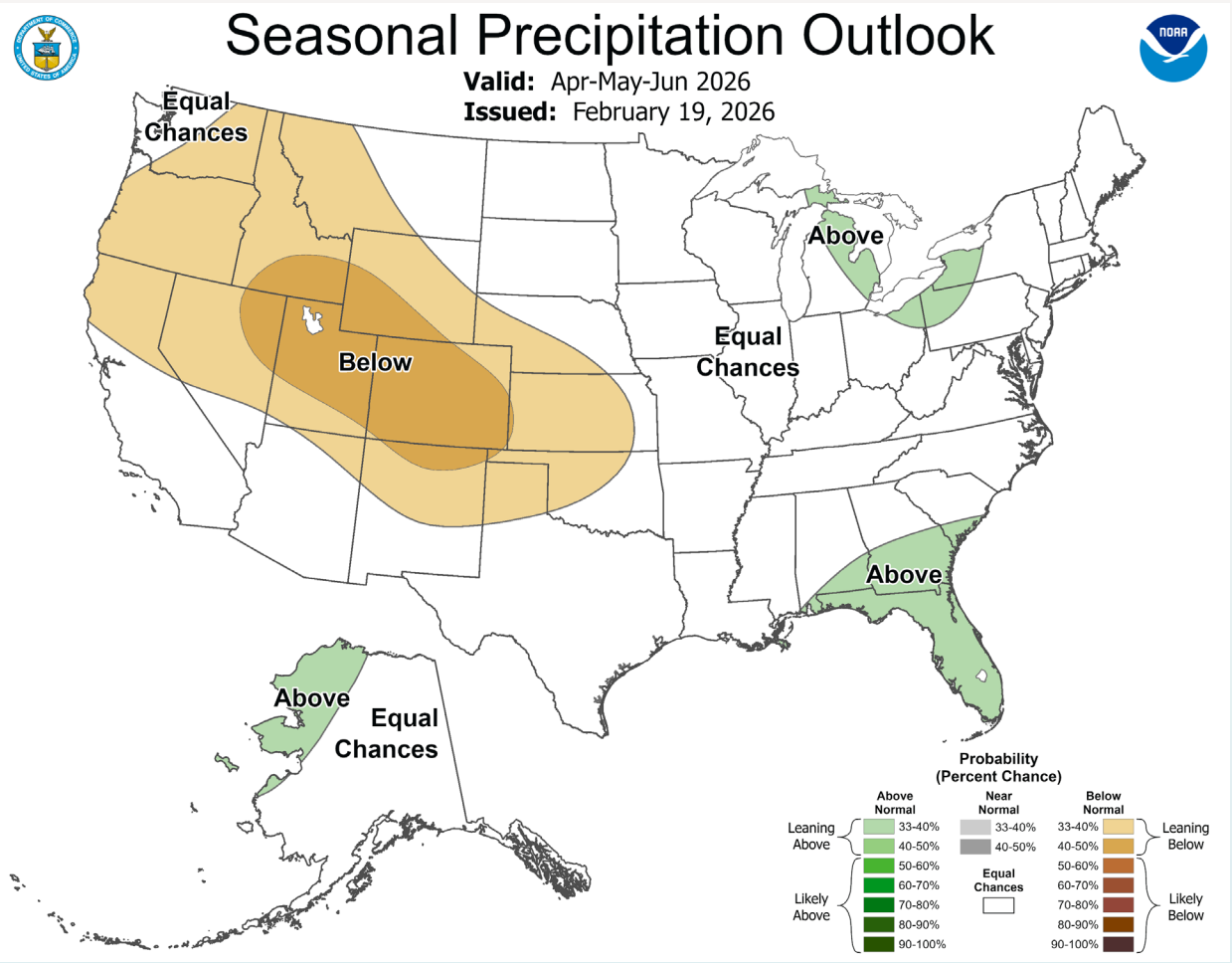


RESERVOIR LEVELS THROUGHOUT THE RIO GRANDE ARE AMONG LOWEST ON RECORD

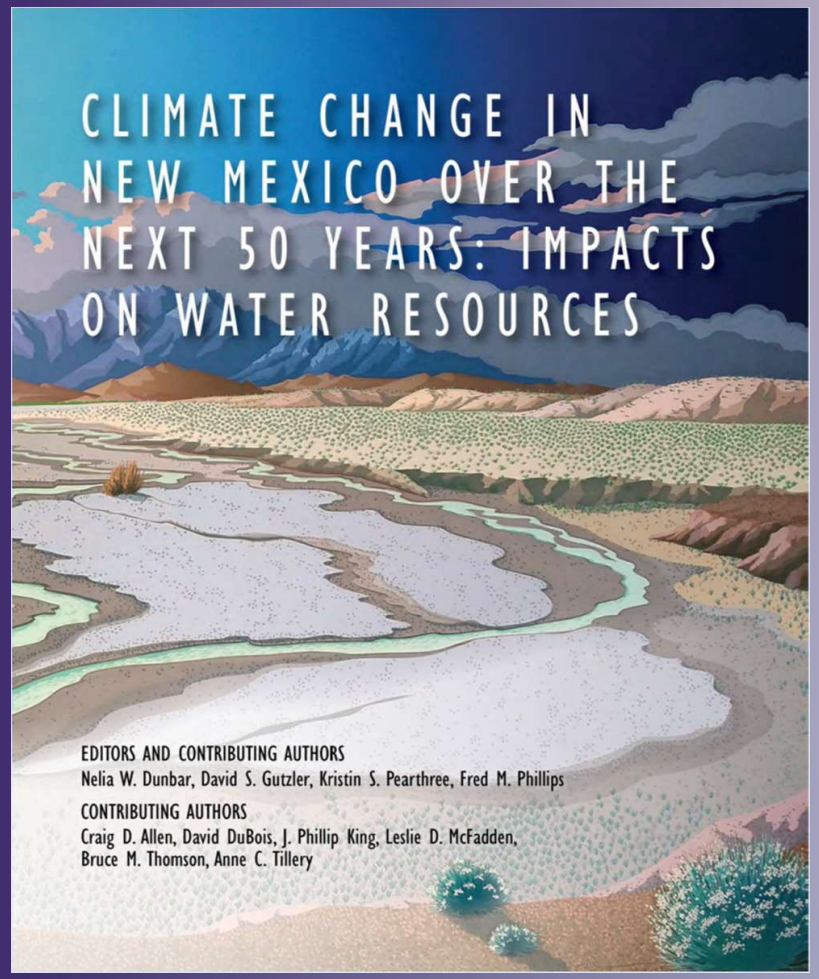
- Heron, **7% Capacity** (SJCP water; no authorization to store native Rio Grande water)
- El Vado, **11% Capacity** (30% P&P, 70% SJCP; safety of dam operations restrict storage to 25KAF)
- Abiquiu, **60% Capacity** (1% P&P, 99% SJCP)
- Elephant Butte, **12% Capacity**

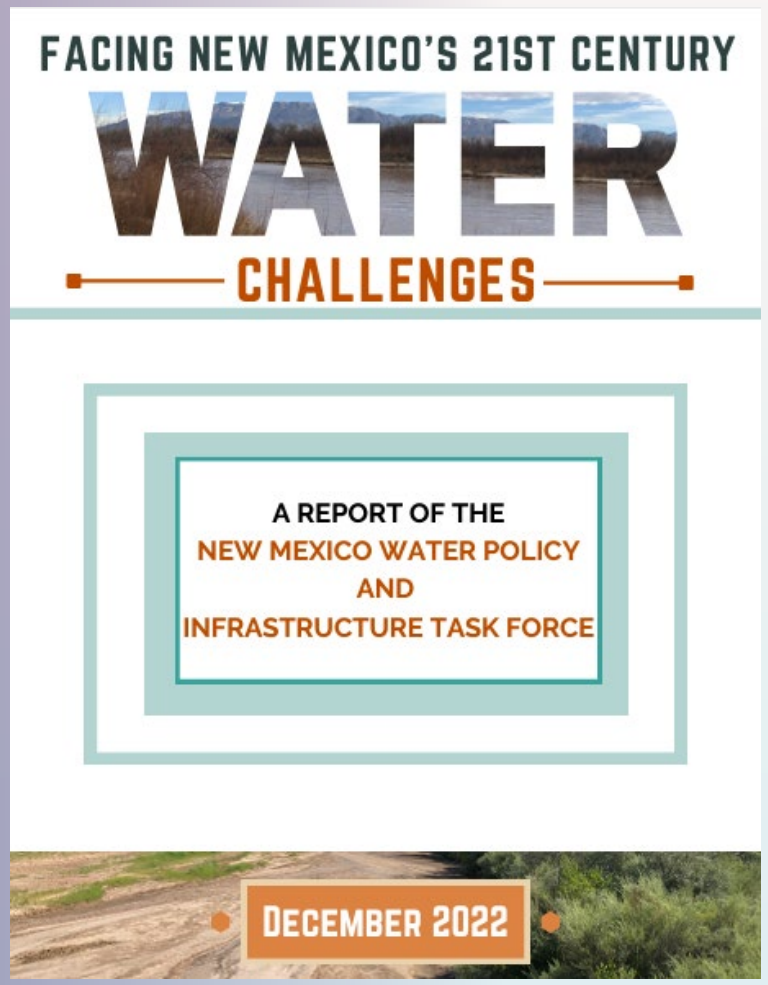
Climate and Hydrology Challenges

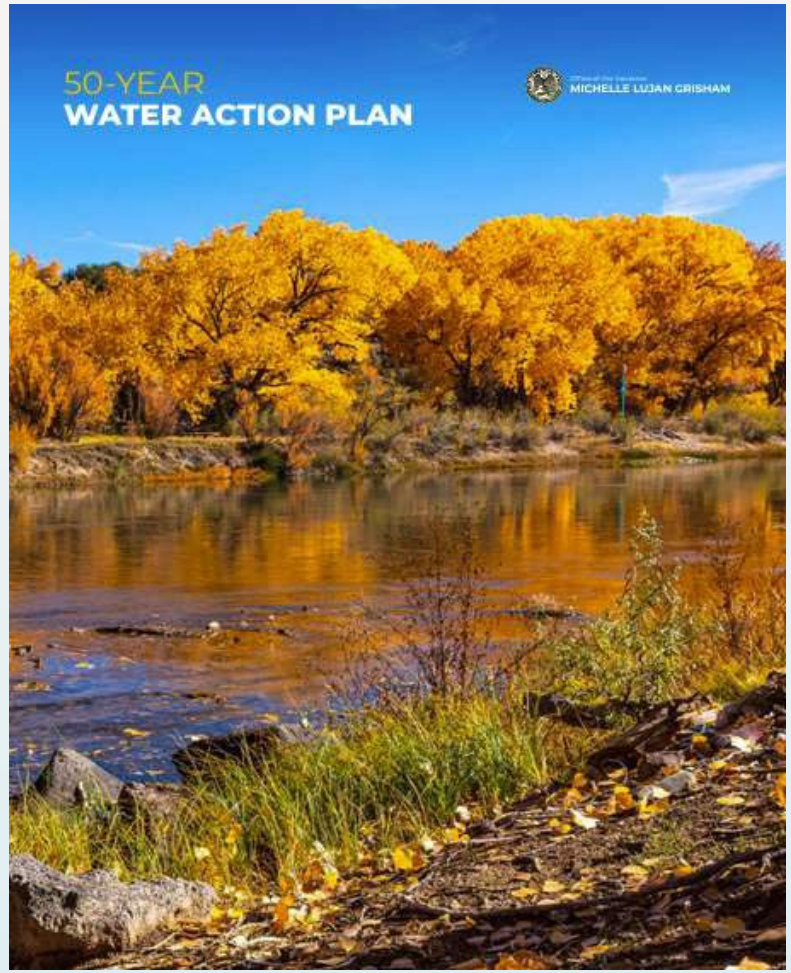


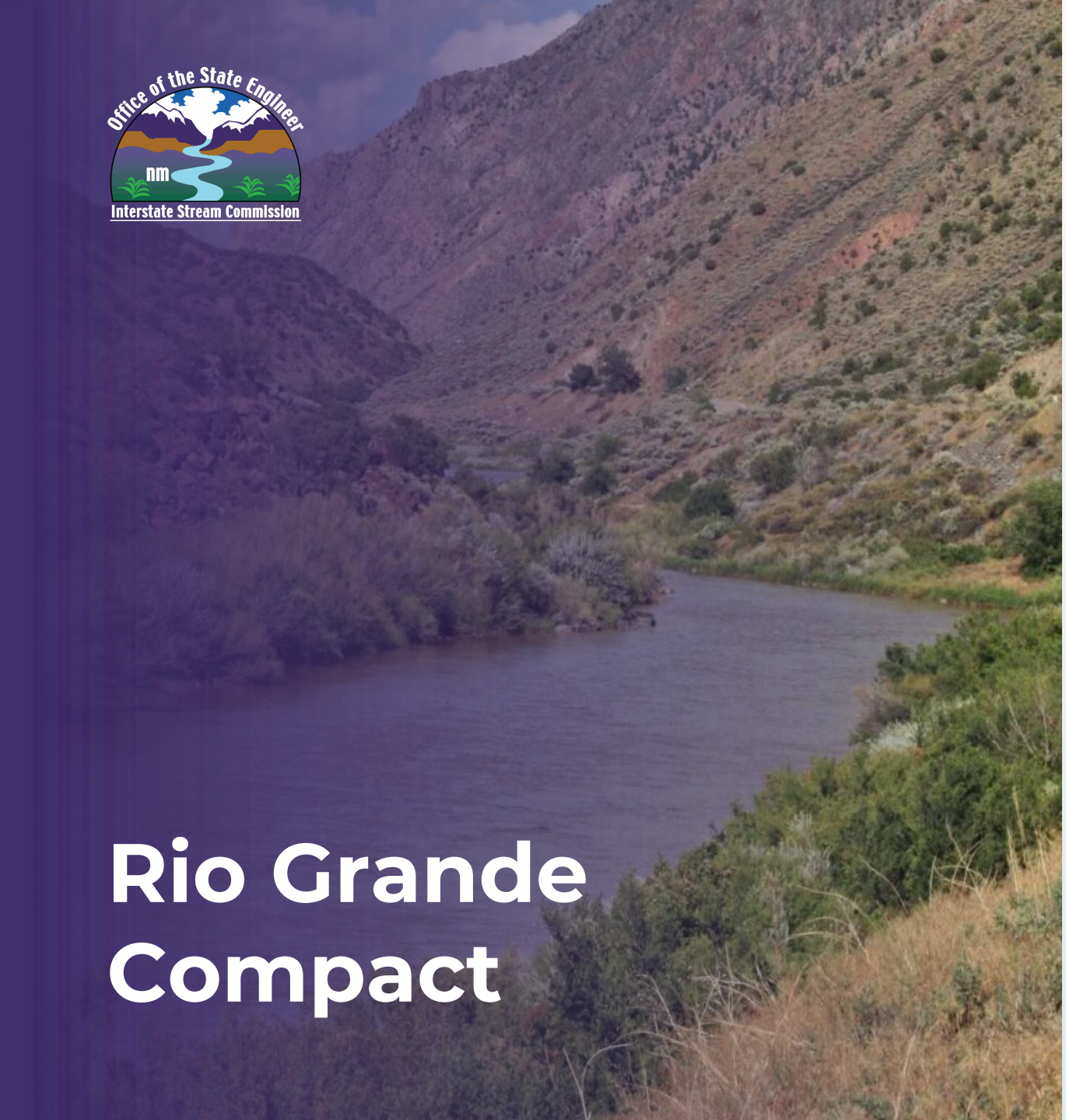


Leadership to Confront NM's Water Challenges









Rio Grande Compact

WHY IS NM'S COMPACT STATUS IMPORTANT?

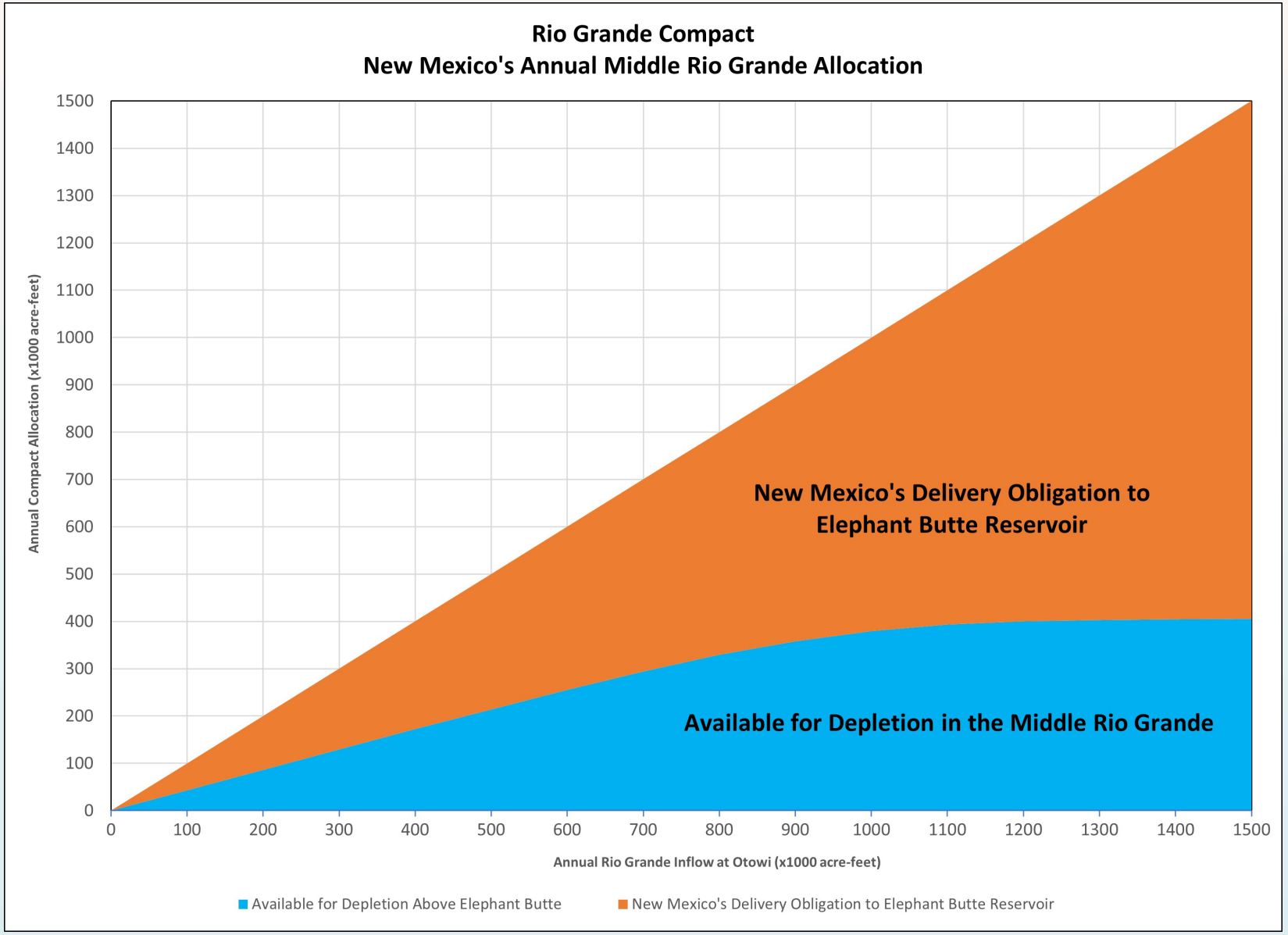
State water law is subordinate to a state's obligations under an interstate compact

- *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 valley water users, and overall water management options, depend on Compact status

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

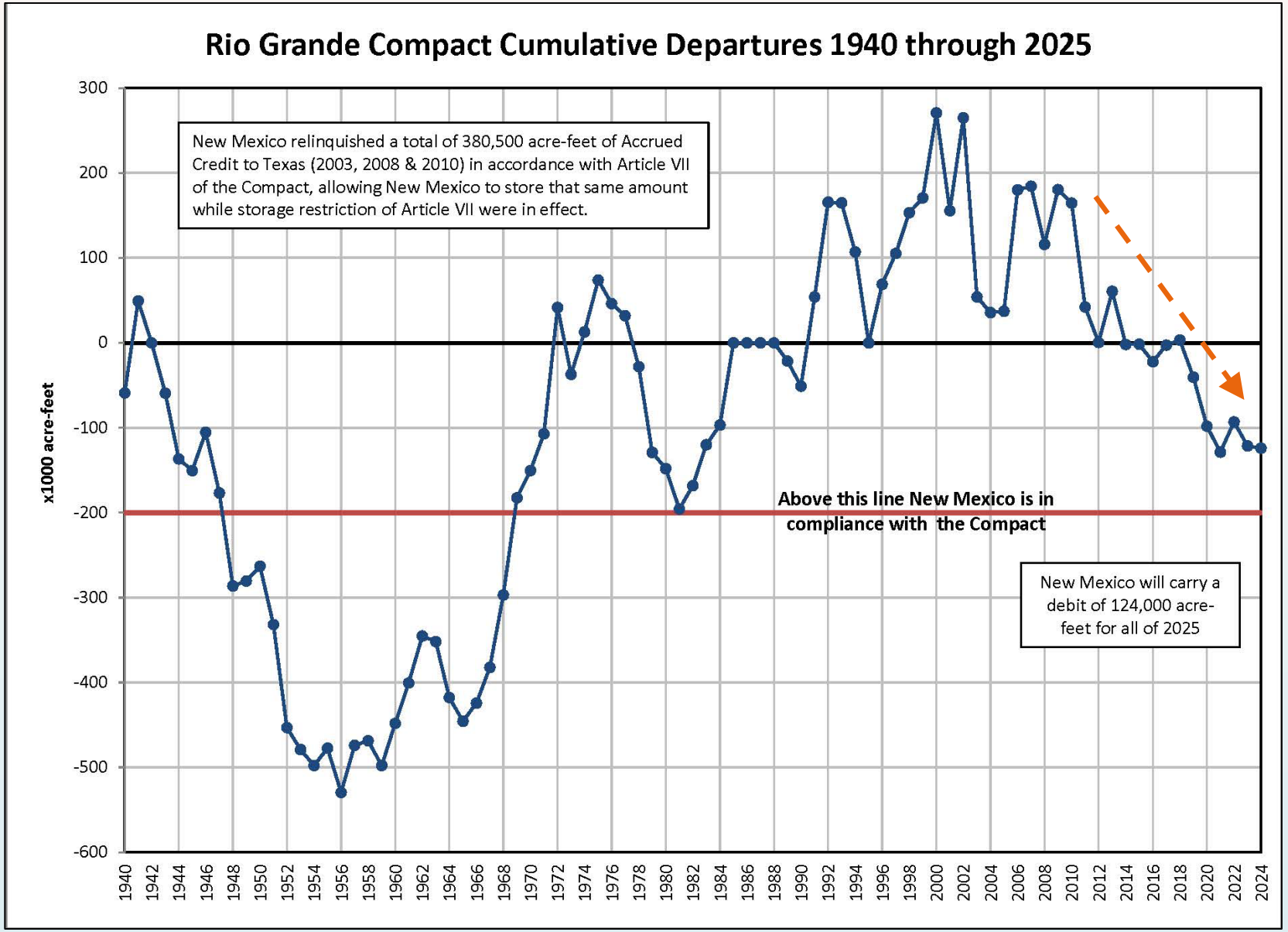
Rio Grande Compact Obligation



Higher river flows result in higher delivery obligations to Elephant Butte Reservoir.

*River flows available for depletion in the Middle Rio Grande are capped at **405,000 acre-feet**, including riparian depletions.*

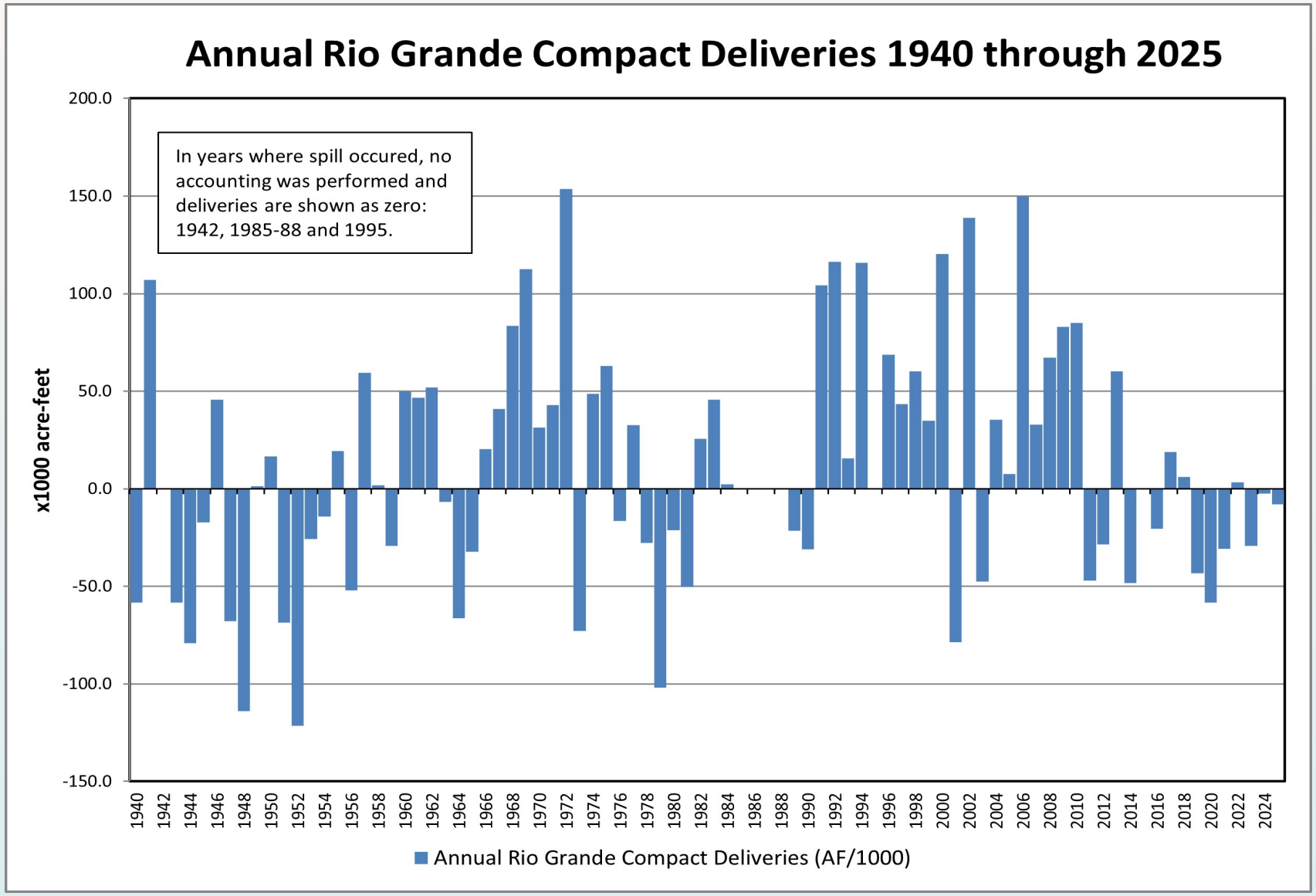
Rio Grande Compact Obligation



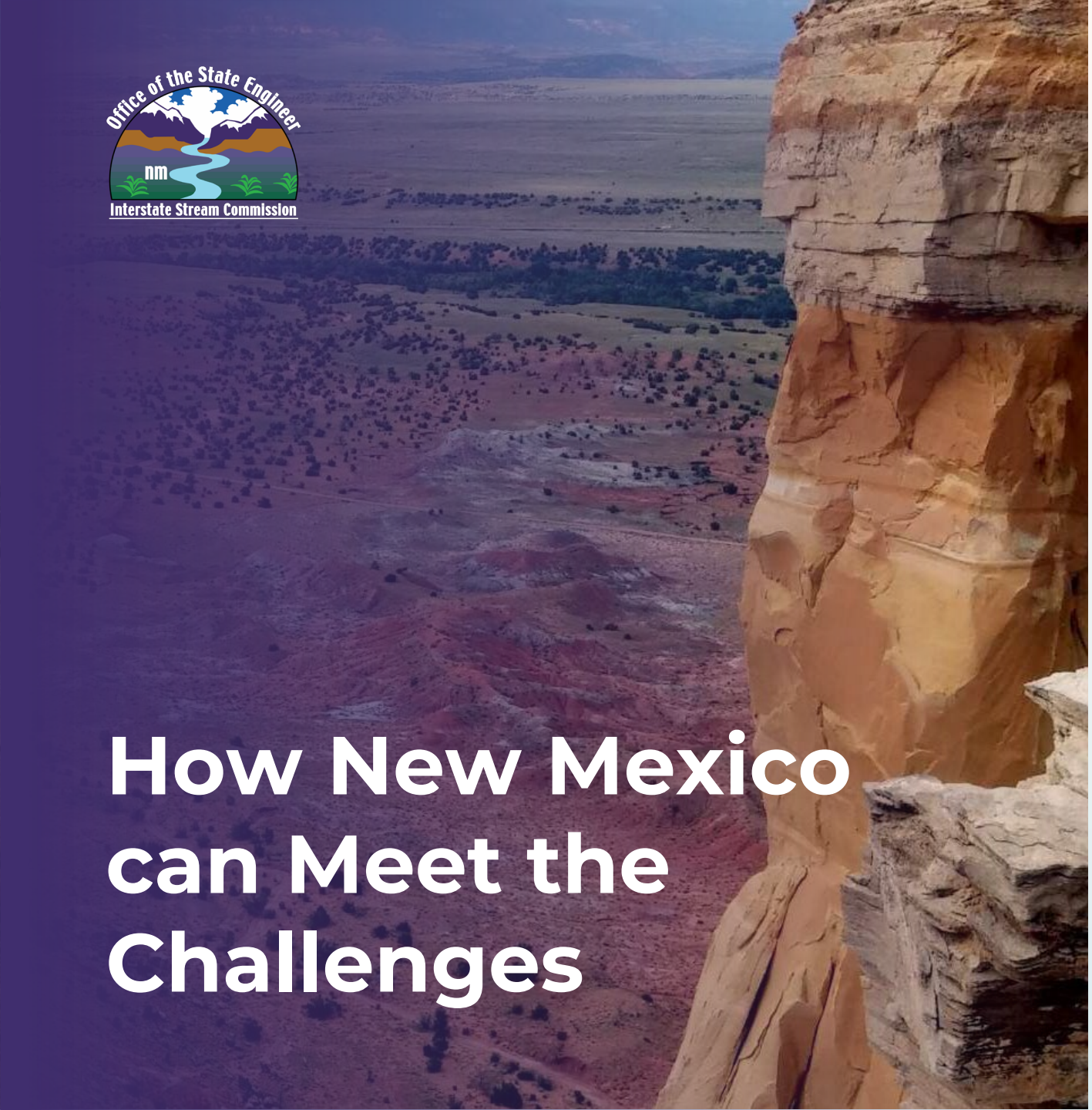
*New Mexico will increase our debit by about **8,000 acre-feet** in 2025, bringing our **current compact status to around -132,000 acre-feet.***

*A compact violation occurs at **-200,000 acre-feet.***

Rio Grande Compact Obligation



Over the last decade we have underdelivered to Elephant Butte Reservoir by on average ***~ 19,800 acre-feet*** *per year.*



How New Mexico can Meet the Challenges

MULTI-PRONGED APPROACH

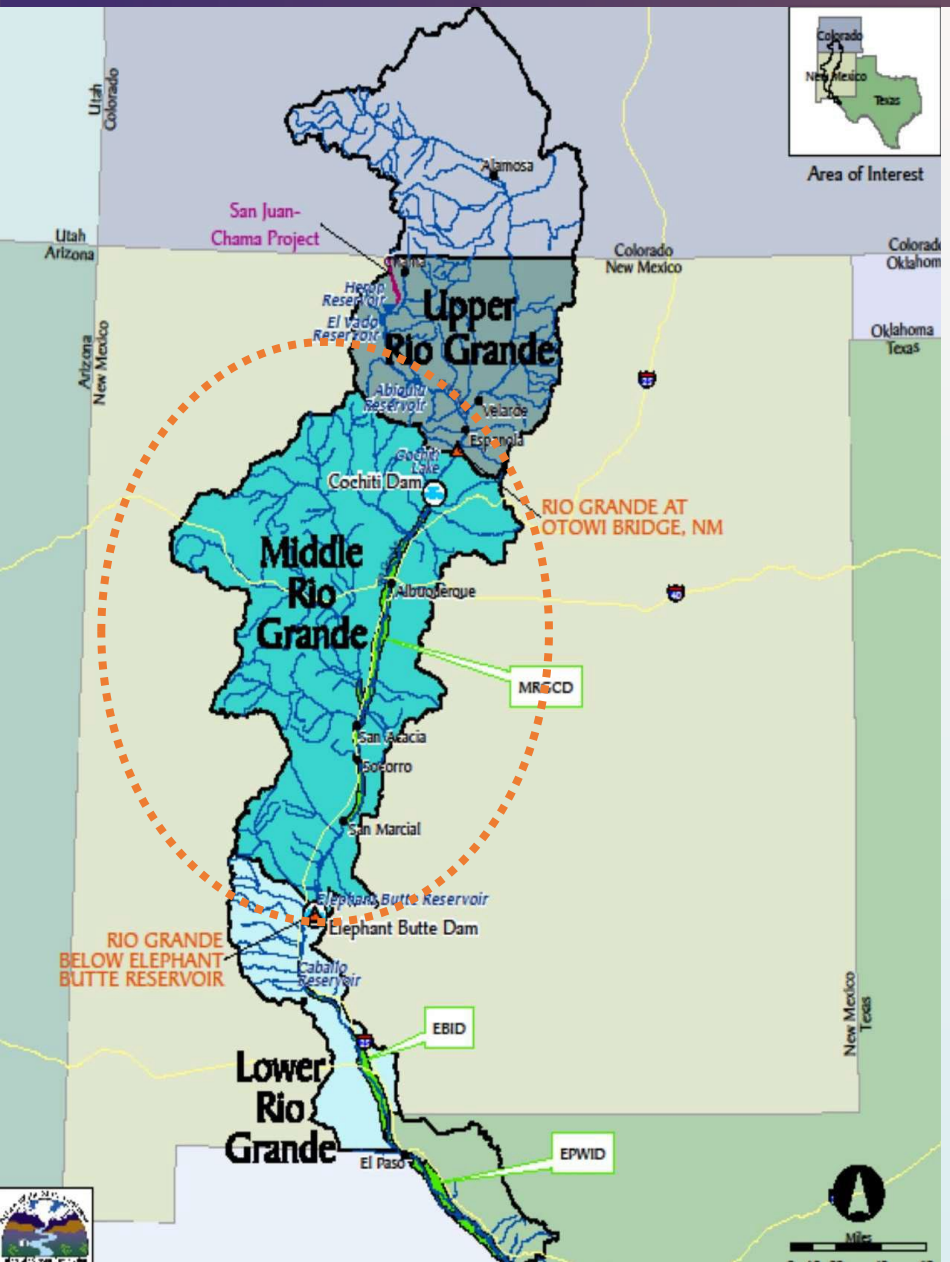
Holistic Management Investments throughout the Rio Grande Basin to:

- Increase efficiencies
- Reduce depletions

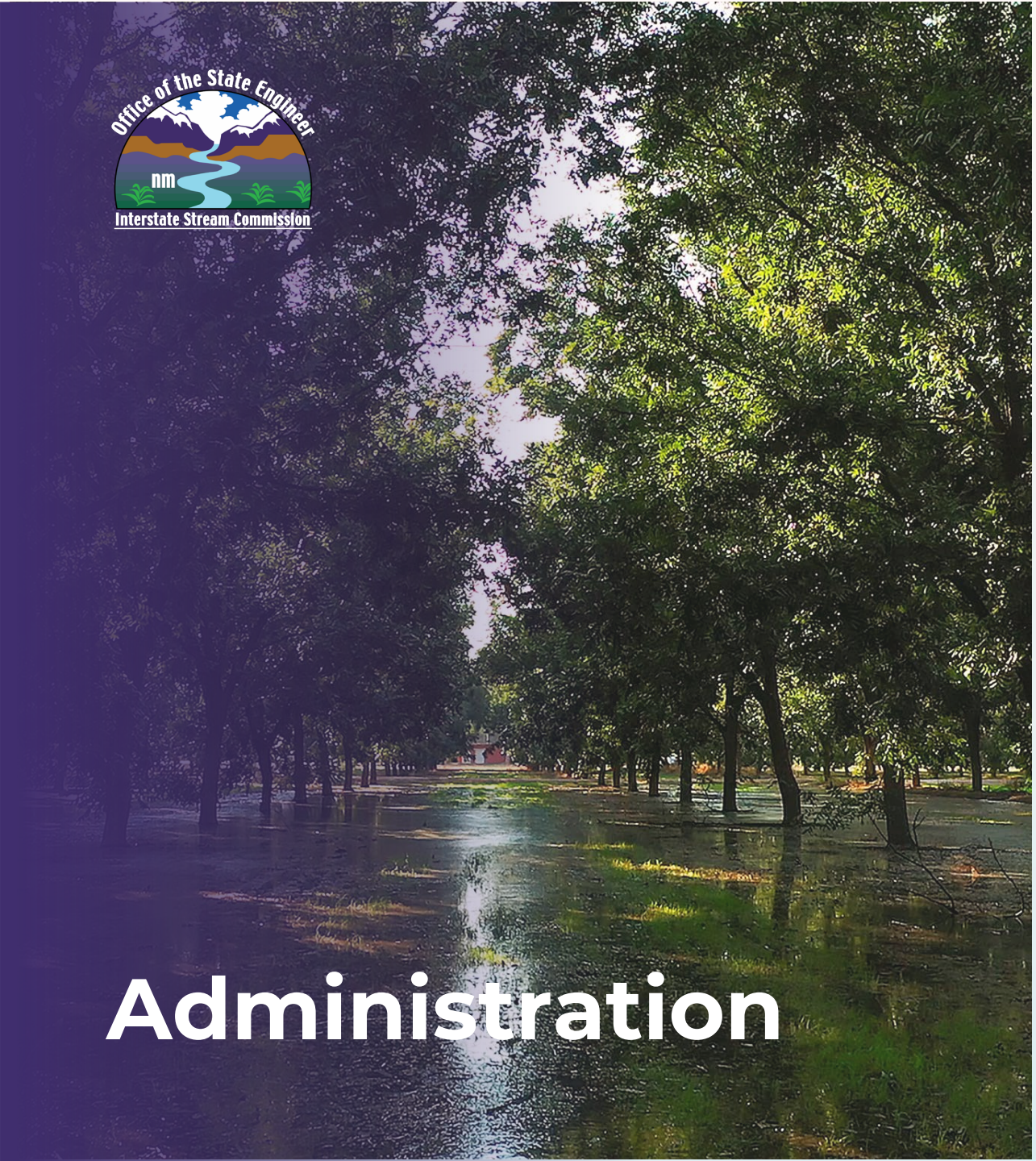
This will require concerted efforts in:

- Water rights administration
- On-the-ground projects
- Operational flexibilities and innovation
- Regional water planning
- Education and engagement with stakeholders

Advancements in Water Rights Administration



- Middle Rio Grande Administrative Area (MRGAA) Guidelines based on Conjunctive Use Management
- MRGCD: Fallowing and Shortage Sharing Programs
- Enforcement & Compliance (addressing illegal use of groundwater & surface water)
  - Ongoing litigation and enforcement activities
- Planned Metering Order in MRG – allows us to quantify pumping from pre-basin, unpermitted wells
  - Lays the groundwork for further administration if necessary
- Curtailment is already effectively occurring within MRGCD
  - Without storage, MRGCD can only divert when surface water is present
  - Must deliver water to Prior & Paramount Pueblo lands first
- AWRM allows for alternative administration – voluntary reductions from users.
- State-led priority administration results in uncompensated losses and litigation, and is resource intensive. We would prefer to find the water through other means. But we will do it if necessary to ensure compact compliance.

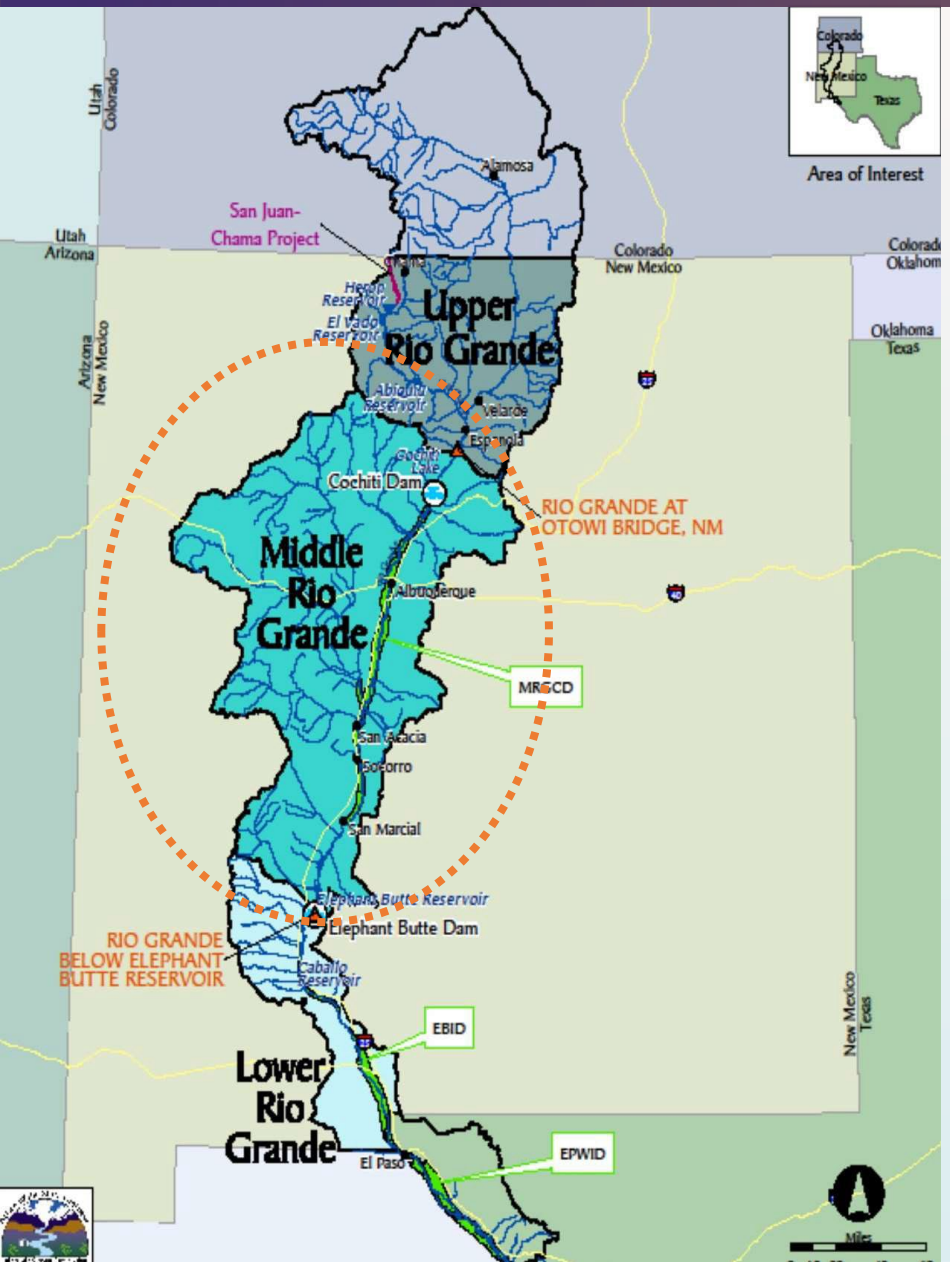


Administration

MADE POSSIBLE BY NM'S REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- Conjunctive management of surface and groundwater to protect Compact deliveries
- Active Water Resource Management (AWRM): Enforceable water sharing and administration by the State Engineer
- Strategic Water Reserve: acquisition of water rights to support Compact compliance and environmental needs

Middle/Upper Rio Grande Investments



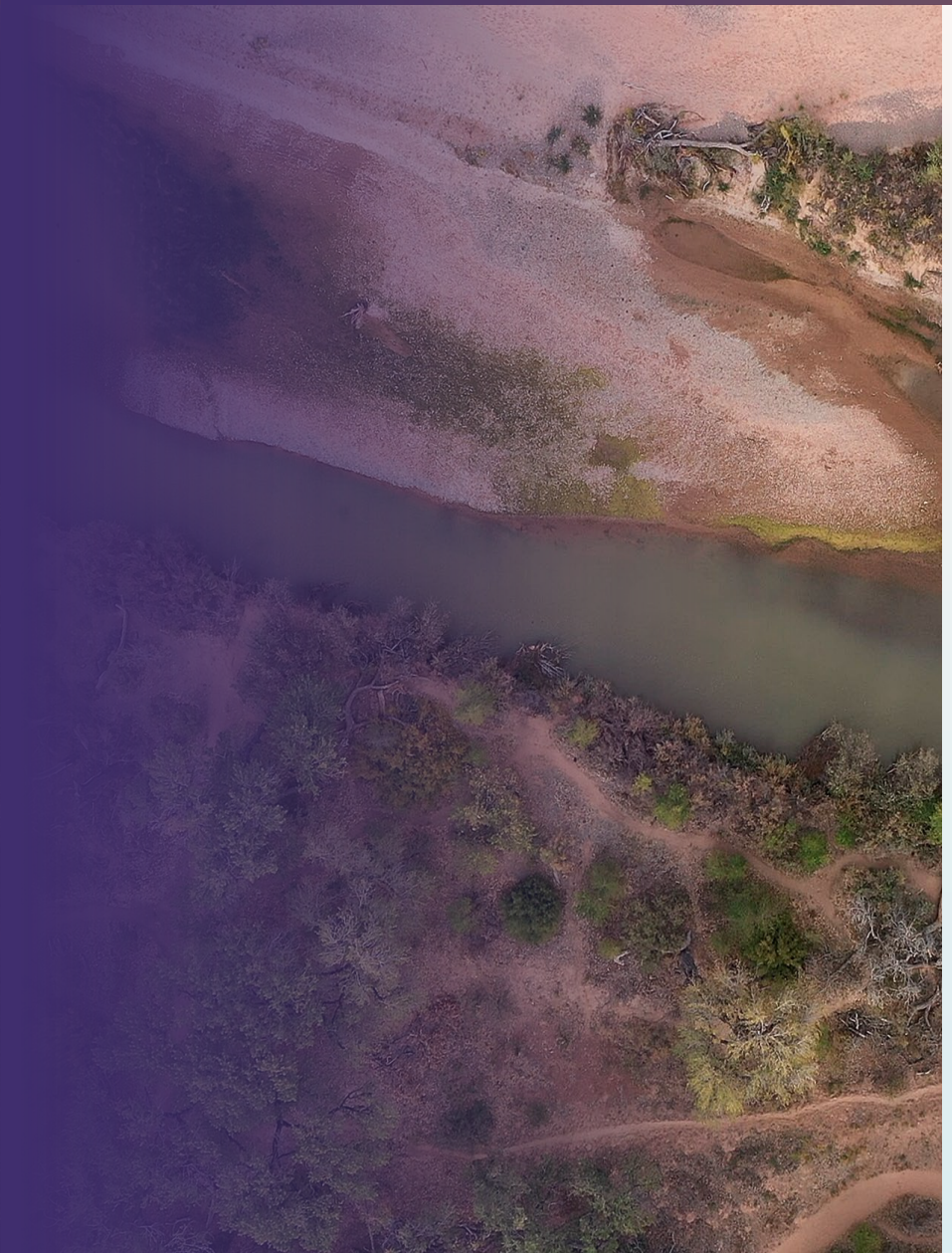
$55M in 2023-2026 Legislative Sessions for:

- Active Channel Management for Multiple Purposes:
  - Improved River Conveyance
  - Sediment Management
  - Bosque and Habitat Management
    - including $9M in 2026 legislative session
  - Low Flow Conveyance Channel Maintenance
- Critical Partnerships with Federal Agencies: Reclamation and Army Corps of Engineers
- Cooperative Agreement with Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD)

Rio Chama Work

- Removal of major sediment plug in 2024
- Continued work with federal partners
  - US Army Corps of Engineers Planning Assistance to the States Grant
- Engaging in state-federal-local workgroup to identify and implement solutions

Specific Middle Rio Grande Channel Improvements: 2026 Updates



Enhanced Partner Coordination in MRG

Project planning and coordination on projects with Reclamation and MRGCD, including:

- **Delta Channel Realignment** - up to 10 miles of river realignment for improved sediment and water conveyance ($1M in 2026 legislative session)
- **Lower San Acacia Reach Improvement (LSARI)** - ISC is a cooperating partner on a major Reclamation realignment project between Bosque del Apache Wildlife Refuge and Elephant Butte (over $140M in federal funding committed)
- **Isleta Reach** - Developing a comprehensive reach management plan with MRGCD to support water conservation, habitat and improve conveyance
- **Albuquerque Reach** - Working to address sediment management and removal of islands and bars. Construction is expected to begin in the fall.

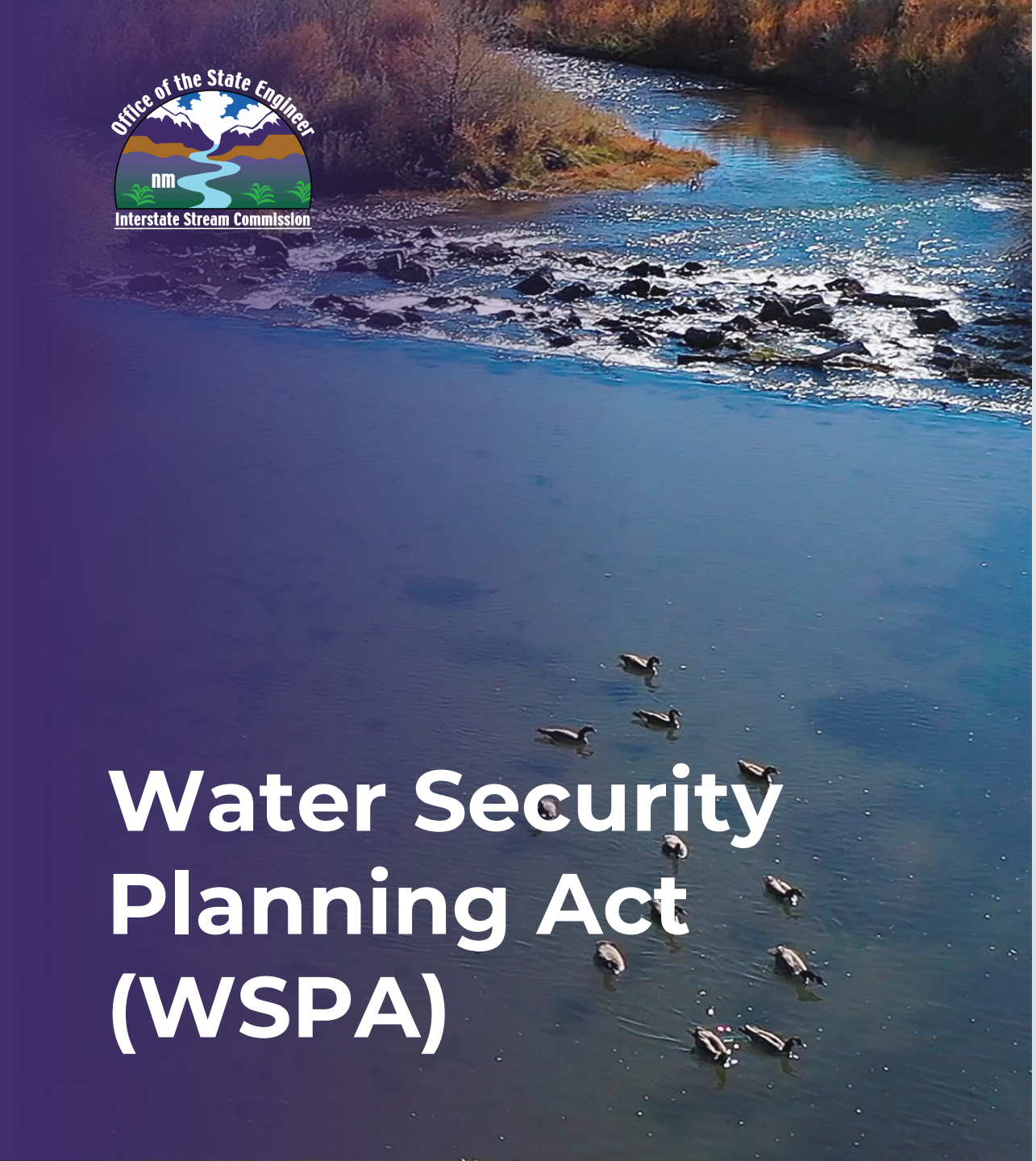
Engagement with Major Water Users

Discussions Underway with Water Users

- Working to develop short and long-term solutions to increase deliveries to Elephant Butte Reservoir
- Supporting continued conservation efforts

Planning for Improved Water Management

- Data, Modeling, and Development of Various Management Tools
- Basin-Wide Planning for More Flexible Operations, e.g., Rio Grande Basin Study



Water Security Planning Act (WSPA)

Water Security Planning Act (WSPA) – SB 377
Passed unanimously in 2023

New rule promulgated in early 2026. ISC is working to finalize the guidelines called for by WSPA and begin standing up regional planning councils later this year.

WSPA Ensures Regional Water Planning:

- Involves robust public involvement
- Is grounded in the best available data, science and models
- Ties to 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 in the Middle Rio Grande.

Rio Grande Compact Education Tool

State Water Planning - Focus on Rio Grande Compact

- State water planning efforts are focusing on statutory mandates in areas where the State, as opposed to regional planning councils, is the primary actor.
- Basin-specific educational tools are being designed to teach about the principles, mechanisms, and importance of interstate compacts. Work is underway for the Rio Grande Compact portion of this work.
- Topics will include hydrology, technology, history, and water use in each basin presented for a lay audience.

Time to Work Together!

Office of the State Engineer
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Interstate Stream Commission