

Water Conservation in the Middle Rio Grande – Strategies for Reducing New Mexico’s Rio Grande Compact Debit

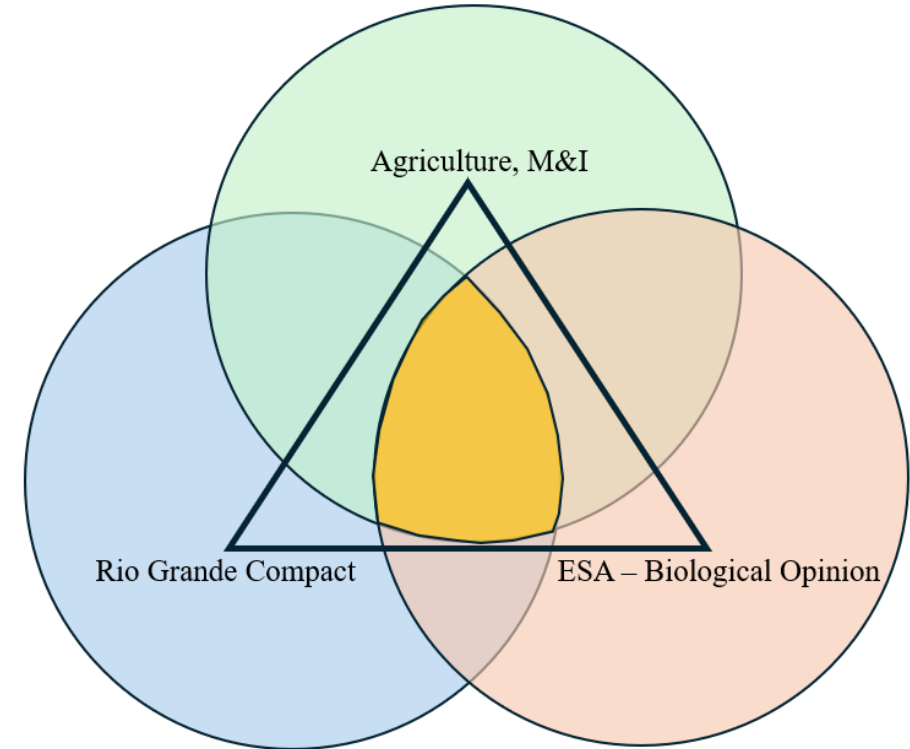
**New Mexico Water Advocates
- June 2026**

Casey Ish
Director of Lands & Conservation



Balanced Approach to Water Conservation

- ❖ Improve On-Farm Efficiency
- ❖ Improve Macro Water Conveyance Efficiency
- ❖ Remove Invasive Vegetation from the Bosque
- ❖ Restore Bosque Fire Scars to “patchwork mosaic”
- ❖ Optimize Monsoon Rain Below Otowi Gauge for Compact Delivery
- ❖ Strategic Use of the Low Flow Conveyance Channel During Low Flow



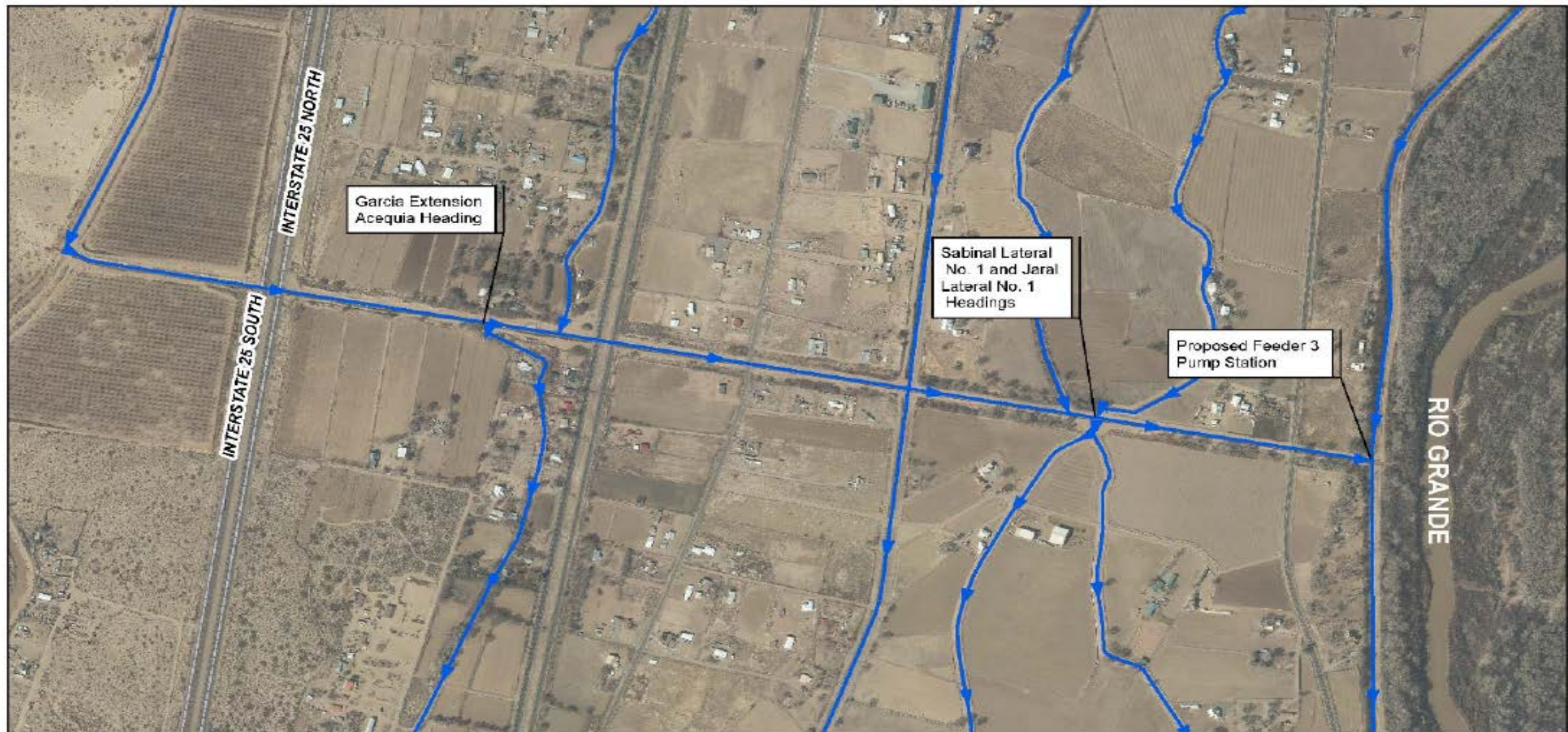
On-Farm & Canal Conservation Efforts

[illegible]

Feeder 3 Pump Station – Project Scope

- ❖ Project contemplates supplementing water supply for three canals in southern Valencia County with up to 60 cfs of drain water to optimize channel conveyance efficiency.
- ❖ Provide reliable water supply to ~2,370 acres of farmland (Primary Objective)
- ❖ Provide MRGCD with a new “strategic outfall” for ESA Compliance (Secondary Objective)
- ❖ Estimated to conserve up to 6,500 acre-feet, or 28% of the current water supply sent to the three canals annually by reducing overall time to irrigate and optimizing conveyance efficiency. This is **System Conservation**
- ❖ MRGCD received \$2,500,000 from the WaterSMART Program for this project and is leveraging that for an additional \$5,400,000 in New Mexico State Water Trust Board Funds. Project will be completed in 2027





Feeder #3



Exhibit B -Site Map of Feeder No.3 Canal and laterals served.

FY 2027 Bosque Work Plan & Budget Est.

- ❖ Retreatment of FY 2026 project areas with resprout treatment, grazing, and seeding in 338 acres
- ❖ New treatment of 722 acres focused on fire scar restoration including Desert Willow Complex in Los Lunas, Rio Grande in Bosque Farms, Unified and Cemetery in Belen. ~500 acres treated in FY26
- ❖ New Mexico State Forestry Division is using our NMISC grant work as match for providing just over \$1 million in invasive removal and retreatment of 624 acres (305 acres in shared treatment).

Bosque FY2027 Projection									
Project	Start date	End date	Funding	Grant #	Contractor	Acreage	Treatment	Treatment	Cost
Big Hole East foliar spray			NMISC		Forrester & Assoc	17.2	Manual spray (\$450/acre)		8,000.00
Big Hole Grazing			NMISC		Galloping Goats	15	Prescribed grazing (\$1900/acre)		32,000.00
New Belen Outfall			NMISC		Forrester & Assoc	65	Manual spray (\$450/acre)		35,000.00
San Francisco Outfall			NMISC		Forrester & Assoc	140	Manual spray (\$450/acre)		68,000.00
Goats						100	Prescribed grazing (\$1900/acre)		200,000.00
						337.2			343,000.00
RMYC			NMISC		RMYC		Field crew		500,000.00
Corrales			NMISC		Forrester & Assoc	107	Dead and Down (\$3,000/acre)		340,000
Desert Willow SW			NMISC		Forrester & Assoc	100	Snag removal/dead and down(\$4,000/acres)	Foliar spray (\$450/acre)	460,000.00
Desert Willow NE			NMISC		Rio Responsible	80	Snag removal/dead and down(\$4,000/acres)		400,000.00
Rio Grande			NMISC		Summit	60	Snag removal/dead and down(\$4,000/acres)	Foliar spray (\$450/acre)	267,000.00
Cemetery Fire			NMISC		Forrester & Assoc	115	Snag removal/dead and down(\$4,000/acres)	Foliar spray (\$450/acre)	\$475,000.00
Socorro River Parks			NMISC		Lanford	30	Snag removal/dead and down(\$4,000/acres)	Foliar spray (\$450/acre)	\$140,000.00
Drains			NMISC		Summit	30	Snag removal/dead and down(\$4,000/acres)		135,000.00
Unified Fire			NMISC		Lanford	200	Snag removal/dead and down(\$4,000/acres)		800,000.00
						722			3,517,000.00
								NMISC FY 27 BUDGET EST.	3,860,000.00
Vecinos			ICIP		Forrester & Assoc	70	Cut stump (\$425/acre)	Mechanical Slash (\$1,500/acre)	\$140,000.00
Season Totals						1129.2			4,000,000



San Francisco Outfall Invasive Removal (107 acres)



Big Hole Year 3 Restoration Progress





Nov. 2025



May 2026

**New Belen Outfall – Invasive Vegetation
Removal (65 acres)**

2026 Middle Rio Grande Pilot Compact Operations

Working with New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission on delivering a constant supply of water to Elephant Butte during the irrigation season using irrigation infrastructure to convey water through San Acacia Reach.

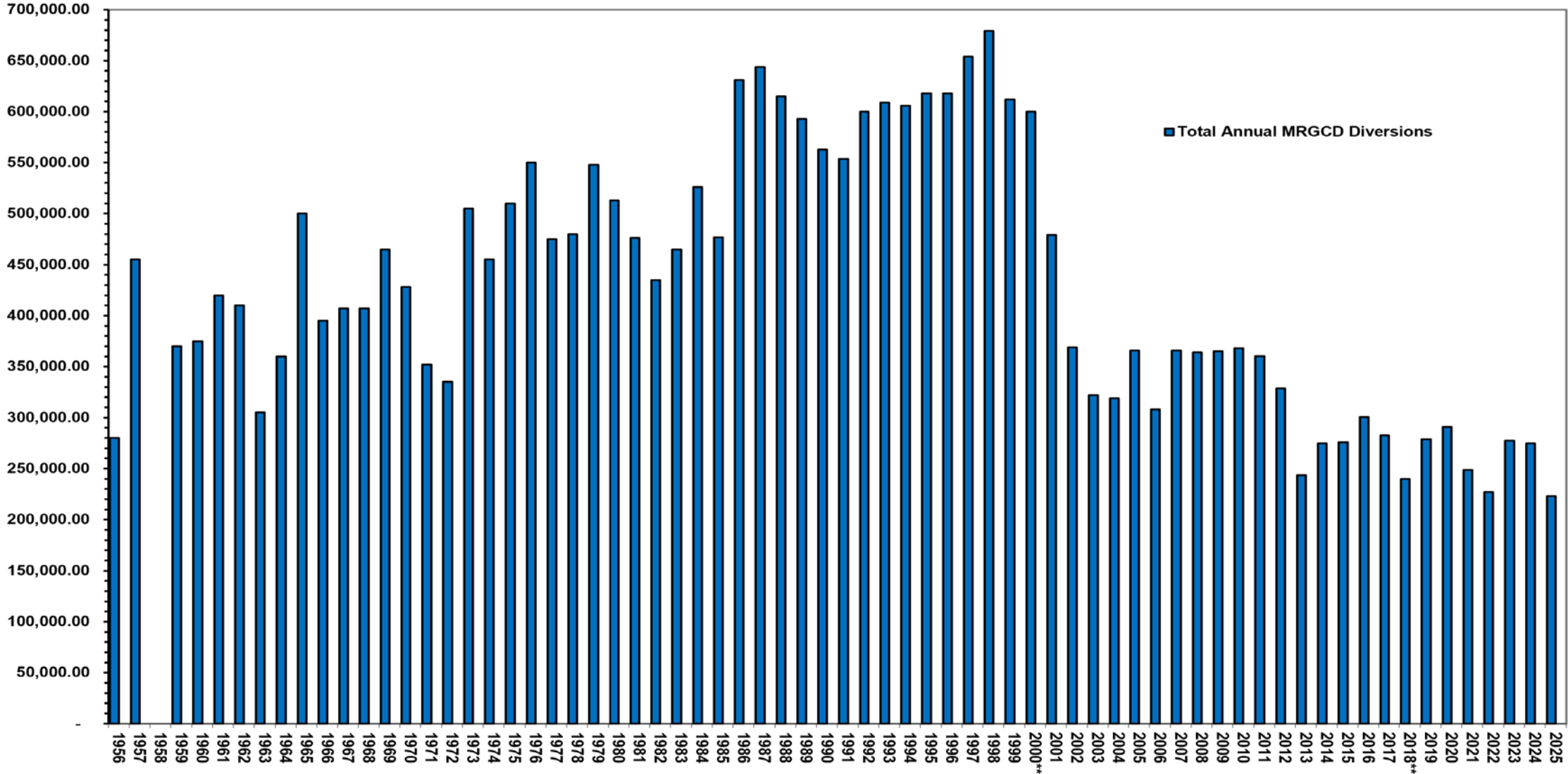
2026 Low Flow Conveyance Channel Monsoon Operations Project

Working with New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation on a project to deliver portions of monsoon events arriving at San Acacia Dam to Elephant Butte via the LFCC. **Pending Environmental Compliance from USBR.**



MRGCD DIVERSIONS 1956-2025

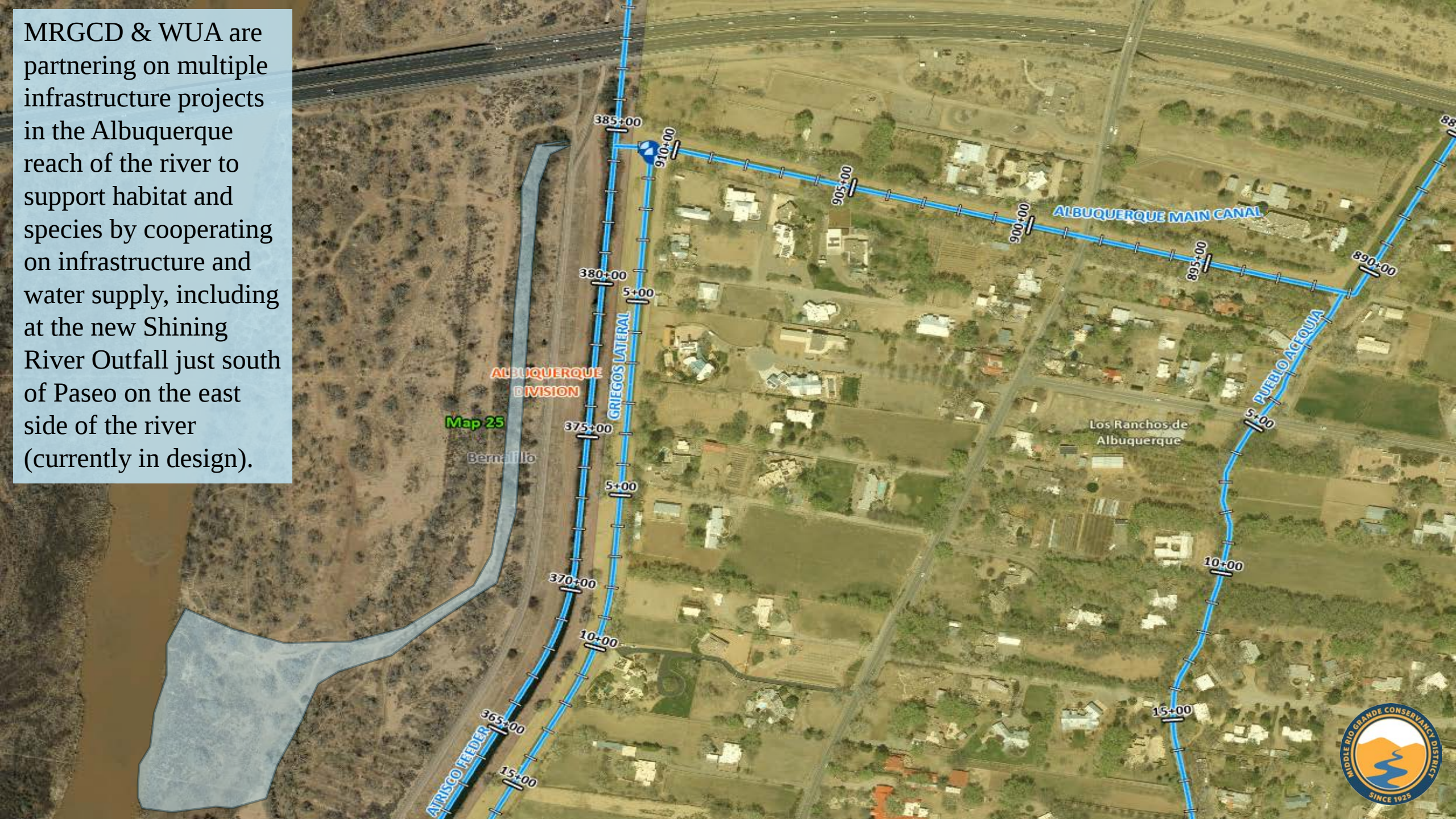
ACRE FEET



YEAR



MRGCD & WUA are partnering on multiple infrastructure projects in the Albuquerque reach of the river to support habitat and species by cooperating on infrastructure and water supply, including at the new Shining River Outfall just south of Paseo on the east side of the river (currently in design).



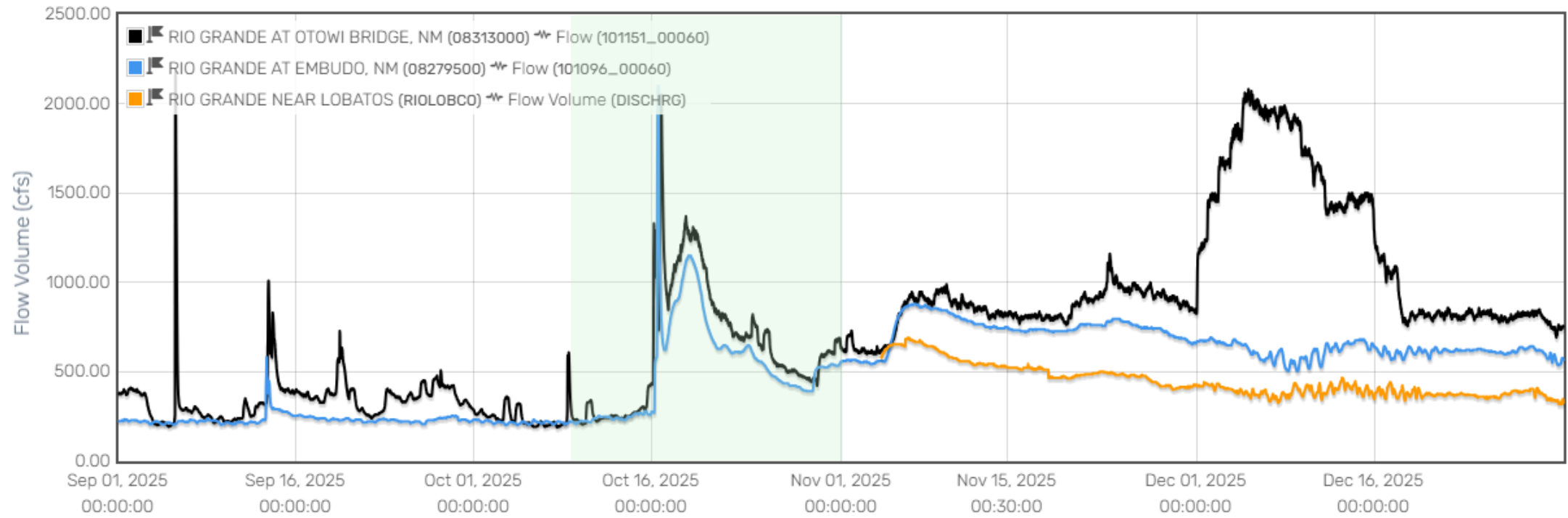


QUESTIONS?



Markers Legend

Sensor Type Units + Add



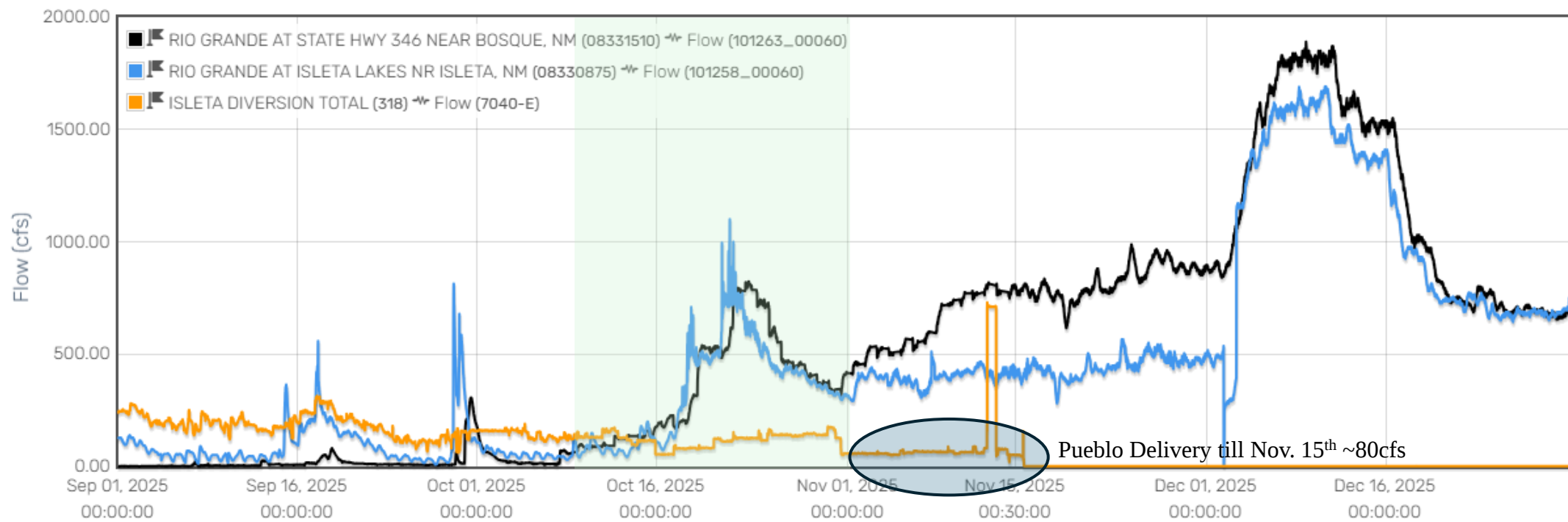


MRGCD Water Managers made the decision not to turn on the Corrales Pumps during this event, instead prioritizing Compact delivery for the Valley as a whole.



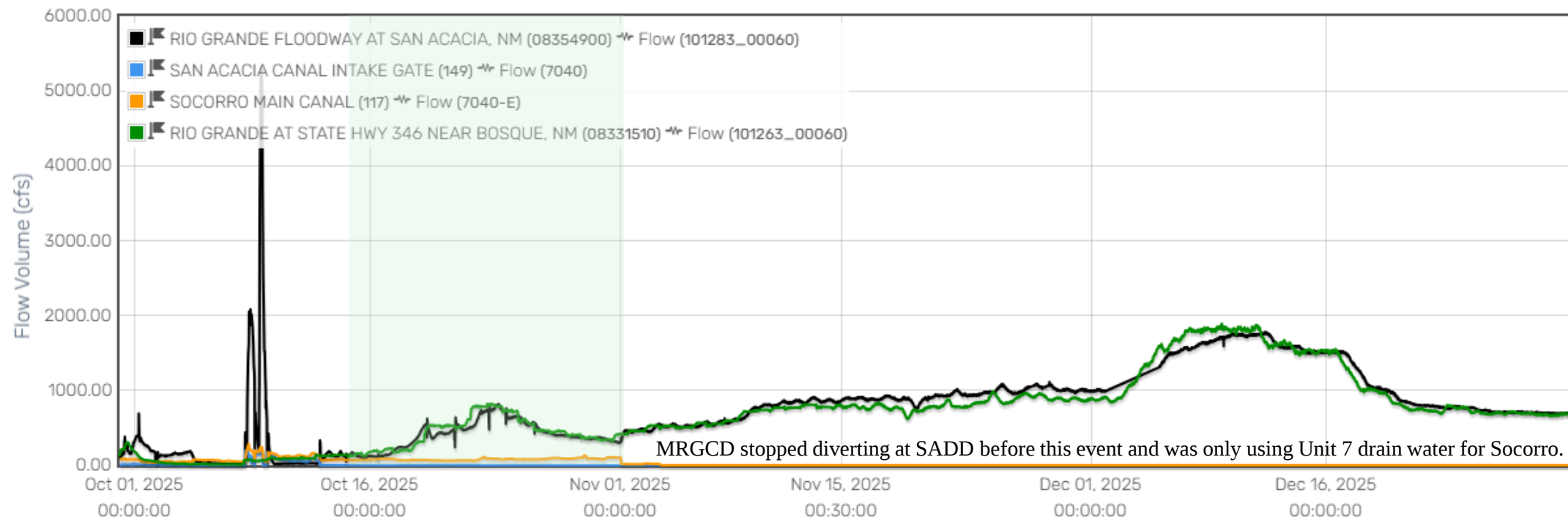
Markers Legend

Sensor Type Units + Add



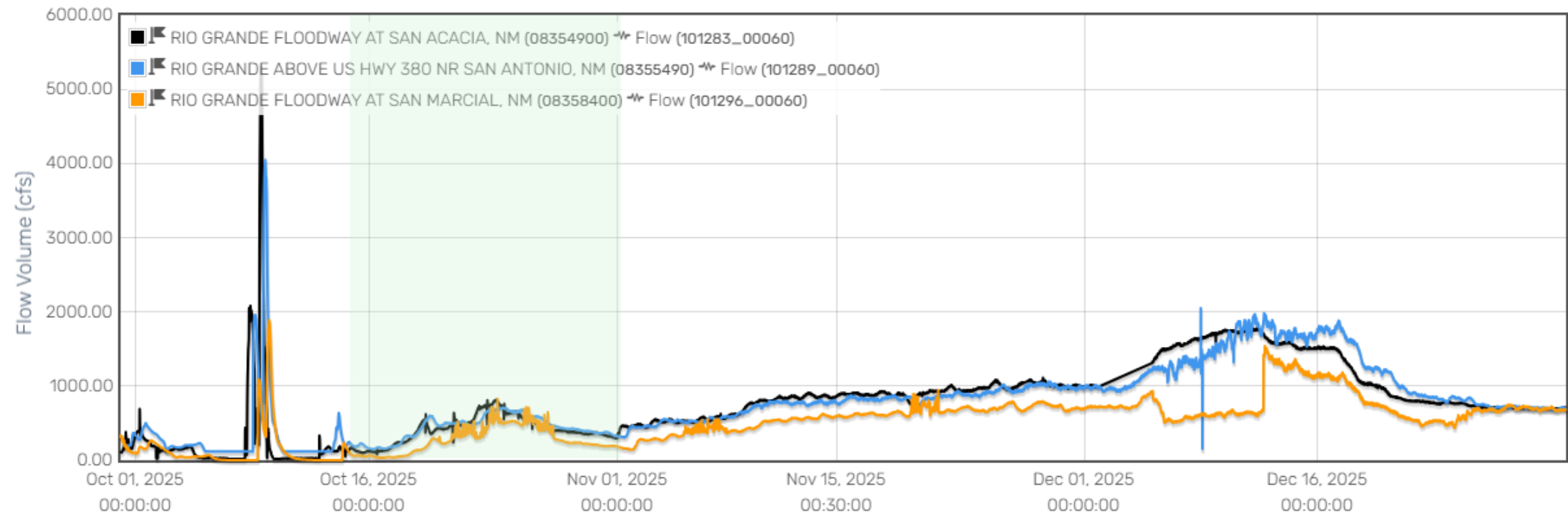
Markers Legend

Sensor Type Units Add



● Markers Legend

Sensor Type Units + Add



Summary: MRGCD did not attempt to capture the entirety of this rain pulse. Rather, publicly available gage data shows that we took steps to either hold constant or actually reduce diversions in the last 15 days of October to shepherd this rain south for Compact delivery. MRGCD has received vocal criticism from some farmers, state representatives, and others who wanted MRGCD to divert more of this rain event than we did. MRGCD's river operations during this rain pulse show a steadfast commitment to Compact compliance while still providing water to our farmers.

