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1. Introduction

The Middle Rio Grande Water Planning Region is one of 16 water planning regions in the State of New Mexico. The region includes most of Sandoval and Bernalillo Counties, all of Valencia County, and a very small portion of Torrance County. Because there was no significant use in the part of the Region located in Torrance County, the original plan focused just on the other three counties. Regional water planning was initiated in New Mexico in 1987, its primary purpose being to protect New Mexico water resources and to ensure that each region is prepared to meet future water demands. Between 1987 and 2008, each of the 16 planning regions, under funding and oversight from the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC), developed a plan to meet regional water needs over the ensuing 40 years. The *Middle Rio Grande Regional Water Plan, 2000-2050* (RWP) was completed and accepted by NMISC in 2004 (MRCOG and MRGWA, 2004).

The purpose of this document is to update the 2004 RWP to reflect new and changed information related to water planning in the Middle Rio Grande region, as listed in the bullets below, and to evaluate projections of future water supply and demand for the region using a common technical approach applied to all 16 planning regions statewide.. Accordingly, the following sections summarize key information in the 2004 plan and provide updated information regarding changed conditions and additional data that have become available. Specifically, this update:

- Identifies significant new research or data that provide a better understanding of current water supplies and demands in the Middle Rio Grande region.
- Presents recent water use information and develops updated projections of future water use using the common technical approach developed by the NMISC, in order to facilitate incorporation into the New Mexico State Water Plan.
- Identifies strategies, including infrastructure projects, conservation programs, watershed management policies, or other types of strategies that will help to balance supplies and projected demands and address the Middle Rio Grande region's future water management needs and goals.
- Discusses other goals or priorities as identified by stakeholders in the region.

The water supply and demand information in this RWP update is based on current published studies and data and information supplied by water stakeholders in the region.

The organization of this update follows the template provided in the *Updated Regional Water Planning Handbook: Guidelines to Preparing Updates to New Mexico Regional Water Plans* (NMISC, 2013):

- Information regarding the public involvement process followed during development of this RWP update and entities involved in the planning process is provided in Section 2.
- Section 3 provides background information regarding the characteristics of the Middle Rio Grande planning region, including an overview of updated population and economic data.
- The legal framework and constraints that affect the availability of water are briefly summarized in Section 4, with recent developments and any new issues discussed in more detail.

- A water budget that included surface and groundwater terms, along with general information on water quality issues, was included in the 2004 RWP; key information from that plan is summarized in Section 5, with new information that has become available since 2004 incorporated as applicable. In addition, Section 5 presents updated monitoring data for temperature, precipitation, drought indices, streamflow, groundwater levels, and water quality, and an estimate of the administrative water supply including an estimate of drought supply.

- The information regarding historical water demand in the planning region, projected population and economic growth, and projected future water demand was discussed in detail in the 2004 RWP. Section 6 provides updated population and water use data, which are then used to develop updated projections of future water use.

Common Technical Approach

To prepare both the regional water plans and the state water plan, the state has developed a set of methods for assessing the available supply and projected demand that can be used consistently in all 16 planning regions in New Mexico. This *common technical approach* outlines the basis for defining the available water supply and specifies methods for estimating future demand in all categories of water use:

- The method to estimate supply is based on recent diversions, which provide a measure of supply that considers both physical supply and legal restrictions (i.e., the diversion is physically available, permitted, and in compliance with water rights policies) and thus reflects the amount of water that can actually be used by a region. An estimate of supply during future droughts is also developed by adjusting the recent diversion data based on physical supplies available during historical droughts.
- Projections of future demands in nine categories of water use are based on demographic and economic trends and population projections using methods for each category that are applied consistently across all planning regions.

The objective of applying this common technical approach is to be able to efficiently develop a statewide overview of the balance between supply and demand in both normal and drought conditions, so that the state can move forward with planning and funding water projects and programs that will address the state's pressing water issues.

- Based on the current water supply and demand information discussed in Sections 5 and 6, Section 7 updates the projected gap between supply and demand of the planning region.

- Section 8 outlines new strategies (water programs, projects, or policies) identified by the region as part of this update, including additional water conservation measures.

Water supply and demand information (Sections 5 through 7) is assessed in accordance with a common technical approach, as identified in the Handbook (NMISC, 2013) (where it is referred to as a common technical *platform*). This common technical approach is a simple methodology that can be used consistently across all regions to assess supply and demand, with the objective of efficiently developing a statewide overview of the balance between supply and demand for planning purposes.

2. Public Involvement in the Planning Process (Prepared by the Region)