



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
Upper Colorado Region  
Albuquerque Area Office  
555 Broadway NE, Suite 100  
Albuquerque, NM 87102-2352

IN REPLY REFER TO:

ALB-184  
ENV-7.00

**AUG 08 2013**

## MEMORANDUM

To: Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office  
2105 Osuna Road NE, Albuquerque, NM 87113  
Attn: Mr. Wally Murphy

From: Mike A. Hamman  
Area Manager

Subject: Submission of Revision to the Biological Assessment for Middle Rio Grande Water Operations and Maintenance (Cons. #02ENNM00-2012-F-0006)

The Bureau of Reclamation submits this revision to its July 31, 2012, Biological Assessment (BA) submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and amended on January 15, 2013. Through this memorandum and attachments, Reclamation removes all references in the BA to the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program (Collaborative Program) and in their place adds the Middle Rio Grande Recovery Implementation Program (RIP). As stated in the January 15, 2013 cover memo, Reclamation anticipated making this revision once the Collaborative Program, which includes the non-federal agencies whose actions are included in the BA, the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, the State of New Mexico, and the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (collectively, Non-Federal BA Partners), endorsed the governing documents for the RIP (Program Document, Action Plan and Long Term Plan).

On July 18, 2013, the Collaborative Program's Executive Committee (EC) endorsed the governing documents for the RIP, and thereby each participating agency has taken a substantial step toward committing to participate in the RIP. Formal commitment to participate in the RIP occurs once an agency executes the RIP Cooperative Agreement, which is expected to occur mid-February 2014, after the Service issues the final Biological Opinion (BO).

As a condition for inclusion in the BA and coverage under the new BO, Reclamation will require that the non-Federal BA Partners execute the Cooperative Agreement. While Reclamation fully anticipates that the non-Federal BA Partners will formally commit to participate in the RIP, if any one of them should choose not to do so, Reclamation intends that the remaining agencies that execute the Cooperative Agreement will receive coverage for their proposed actions under the new BO.

Furthermore, Reclamation is adding the proposed maintenance of the San Marcial Delta Water Conveyance Channel (Delta Channel, formerly known as Temporary Channel) to the BA in Part II – Maintenance. The Delta Channel is located within the boundaries of the Elephant Butte Reservoir between 2002 River Mile 57.8 and the current active reservoir pool. Reclamation, in cooperation with the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, currently maintains the existing Delta Channel to facilitate delivery of water and sediment to the active reservoir pool. Maintenance activities primarily consist of maintaining existing berms, management of sediment accumulation, and management of vegetation growth within the channel. Reclamation evaluates the Delta Channel after the runoff period and monsoon season to determine what work will be needed. If any maintenance is required, work occurs between September 1 and March 30 of each year.

The revision consists of the following attachments: 1) Part IV of the BA, which includes the EC endorsed RIP Program Document, Action Plan, and Long Term Plan; 2) revised Executive Summary, and 3) a description of the proposed action for maintenance of the Delta Channel and analysis of effects. This revision adding the RIP and proposed maintenance of the Delta Channel does not change the final determinations regarding the four listed species made in the January 15, 2013 amended BA. This memo and attachments can be found on the Reclamation website at <http://www.usbr.gov/uc/albuq/envdocs/ba/MRG/index.html>.

We look forward to continuing to work cooperatively with the Service through this Endangered Species Act consultation process. Please direct any questions to Mr. Jim Wilber of my staff at 505-462-3548.

#### Attachments – 3

cc: Mr. Estevan López  
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cc: Mr. John Stomp Albuquerque-Bernalillo Water Utility Authority PO Box 1293 Albuquerque, NM 87103-1293	Governor Ernesto C. Lujan PUEBLO OF TAOS P.O. Box 1846 Taos, NM 87571
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(w/o att to each)