



# New Mexico Water Dialogue

## Introduction to MRGCD'S Conservation Program

January 14, 2021







# What is the MRGCD

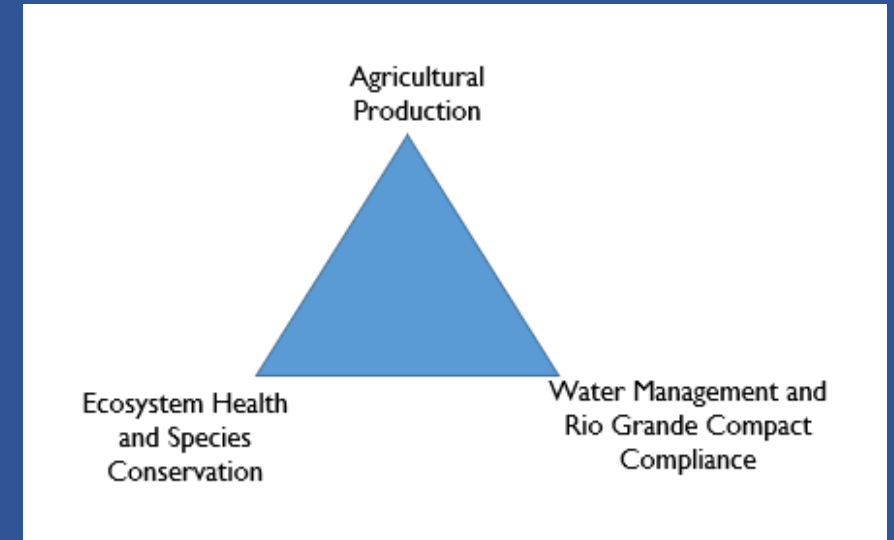
- Created in 1923 to provide
  - Flood protection.
  - Drain inundated lands.
  - Provide irrigation water to farmland.
- Today the MRGCD
  - Continues to provide these mission critical services to the Middle Valley.
  - Owns & manages ~ 30,000 acres of bosque.
  - Maintains 1,200 miles of district waterways (from Cochiti Dam to Bosque del Apache.
  - 414 of the 1,200 miles are classified as recreational use areas.
  - Supports agricultural production estimated at \$35-\$70 million annually.
  - Due to urbanization, total acreage served has been reduced from 90,000 to ~ 60,000.

The Conservation Program is a key aspect with the District's broader efforts to improve water management and conservation, i.e. the Basin Study, the Drought Contingency Plan.



# CONSERVATION PROGRAM

- Increasing the District's resiliency in response to increasingly variable water supply.
- Improving water delivery efficiency and on-farm infrastructure.
- Encouraging sustainable agriculture in the Middle Rio Grande Valley.
- Supporting our riparian habitat, and species conservation.
- Maintaining our obligations to the Rio Grande Compact and 2016 Biological Opinion.
- Initial funding provided by a grant through Bureau of Reclamation, administered by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF).



**A guiding principle for the Conservation Program is that sustaining healthy agriculture in the Middle Rio Grande Valley is crucial to maintaining a healthy Rio Grande ecosystem.**



## 2020 Pilot Projects

- Irrigation Delivery Projects (IDPs) - Efficient water delivery and measurement.
- Outfall Control Structures (OCSs) - Accurate low flow control & delivery to strategic habitat sites.
- Partial Season Leasing Program (PSLP) - Reducing Demand / Increasing Operational Flexibility / Supporting ESA Obligations

# Irrigation Delivery Projects (IDPs)

- Five initial project locations along the Durand, Gallegos, Gabaldon, and San Francisco Lateral, as well as the Pueblo Acequia.
- Improve irrigation delivery and efficiency within these canals by stabilizing water elevation and pooling.
- Inflow and outflow measurement enables more precise accounting of the water that is diverted, consumed on-farm, and/or returned to the irrigation system. These readings will help locate inefficiencies within the system.
- In 2020, the main objectives were to collect data, secure environmental compliance, and begin design & construction of IDPs.





# Partial Season Leasing Program (PSLP)

- Voluntary opportunity for certain irrigators to cease irrigation of forage crops in the last three months of the growing season in exchange for monetary compensation.
  - 2020 Lease offer was \$150/enrolled acre.
  - Limited to Valencia County as a pilot program.
- No harm done to non-participating irrigators and their water deliveries.
- Helping reduce overall demand on the District during a time of the year when water supply can be especially limited.

## 2020 Water Leasing Results

10 enrolled irrigators



~260 acres



~ 126 AF reduction in Consumptive Use





# Outfall Control Structures (OCSs)

- Six strategic outfall locations between Isleta Diversion and the Rio Puerco –Rio Grande confluence.
- Take full advantage of federally leased, supplemental water, to be control-released from District return flow sites to support endangered species.
- Automated water control structures will maintain a consistent, low-flow discharge into these important habitats.
- 2020 – RGSM sampling at all sites and begin design/compliance/construction of OCSs.
- Habitat enhancement will follow in 2021 where applicable presuming that leased water is available.







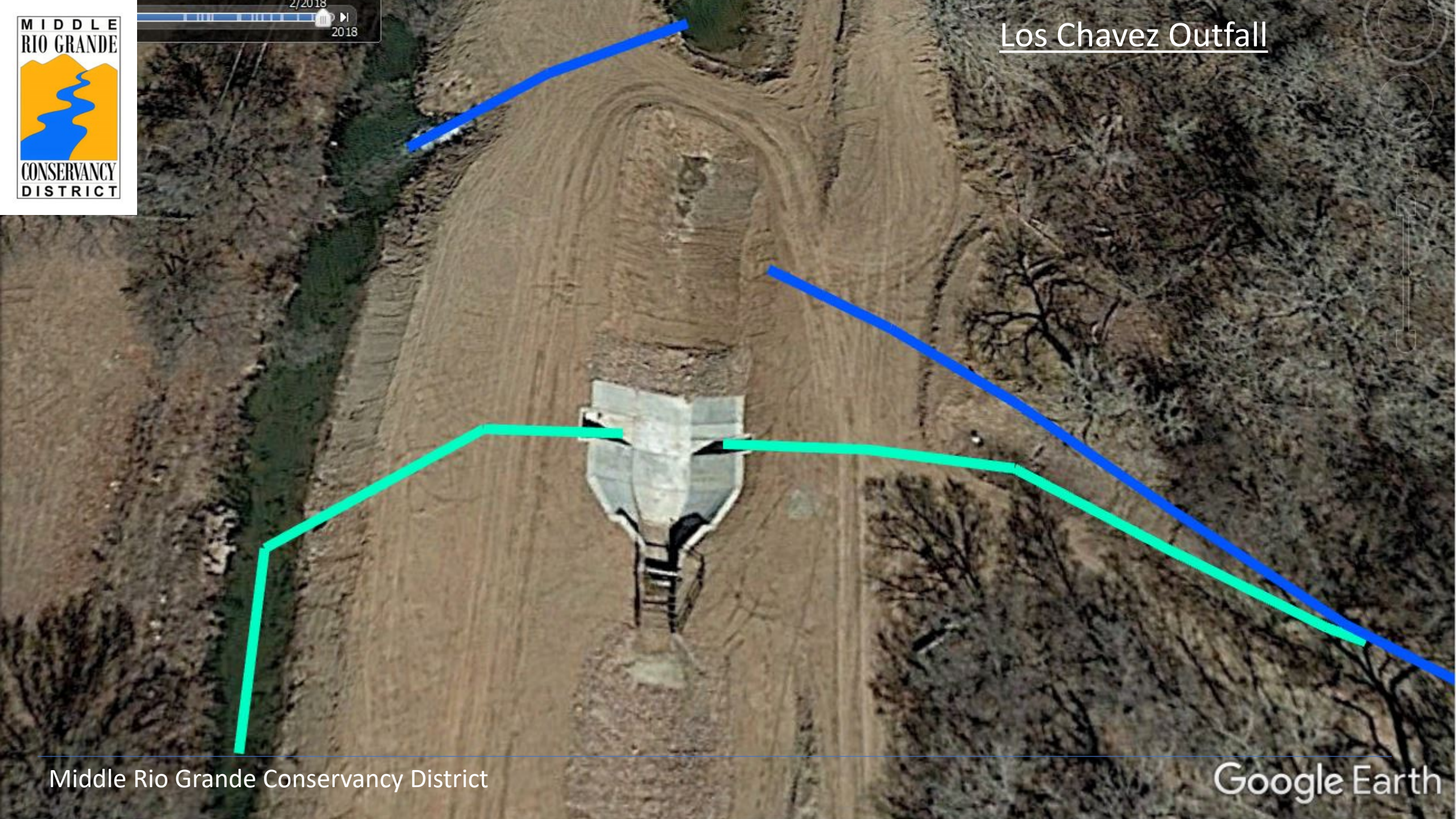
Los Chavez Outfall







Los Chavez Outfall







## Los Chavez Outfall







# Thank You

Please visit [mrgcd.com](http://mrgcd.com) and click on the Conservation Program tab to learn more.

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