

Lieutenant Colonel Raymond G. Midkiff assumed command of the US Army Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque District in July 2000. He was commissioned as an Engineer Officer upon graduation from Texas A&M University in December 1981. His command and staff assignments include positions in Germany, South Korea, Kentucky, Saudi Arabia, Fort Worth, Texas and Fort Riley, Kansas. Midkiff's civilian education includes a B.S. in agricultural engineering from Texas A&M and an M.S. in environmental management from Murray State University. He was born in Dayton, Ohio and raised in San Antonio, Texas.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Current Projects

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Good morning, It is a special privilege for me to be here today. I've been in my current position since early July and this past summer's activities have helped me quickly gain a great appreciation for the complexity and criticality of water issues in this beautiful state.

This past June, the United States Army celebrated its 225th birthday. For most of that time, the Corps of Engineers has dedicated itself to solving many of our nation's toughest challenges: mapping our frontiers, building our harbors and coastal defenses, and building locks and dams to help control our largest and mightiest rivers. During these exciting times, the Albuquerque District continues this proud tradition in support of the people of New Mexico.

As all of you well know, the theme of this week's conference is "Water, Growth and Sustainability: Planning for the 21st Century." Today, my presentation is designed to provide you an update on our water operations and some of the programs and projects the Albuquerque District is currently working that support the goals of Growth and Sustainability of this critical resource.

Water Operations in 2000

Very simply, this year's severe drought precluded flood control operations...flooding was not an issue with which we had to deal. However, we were still heavily involved with water operations and

releases due to the Silvery Minnow Endangered Species mediation. This involved many of us in this room and resulted in close and extensive inter-agency coordination. Low-flow releases were made this summer from two of our reservoirs; Abiquiu and Jemez were part of the court ordered mediation from the silvery minnow litigation. The bottom line is this: We ended this past summer with extremely low reservoir storage in Santa Rosa on the Pecos, and Abiquiu and Jemez Canyon. At Santa Rosa and Abiquiu we had to close or alter boat ramps during the summer recreation period.

Mediation - Water Operations on the Rio Grande

Due to the early release of 11,000 acre-feet at Jemez Canyon, we initiated an extensive mitigation program this fall. Initial work included temporary fencing, alternate water sources, seeding, and a grade control structure at the upper end of the reservoir. Also, this Spring we will start a Silvery Minnow demonstration project as part of our Middle Rio Grande Flood Control Project. Current alternatives being looked at are side channels for slack water areas where the minnow can breed and multiply.

ESA Workgroup

We are actively participating with other federal, state, and local groups in the Endangered Species Workgroup looking at alternatives for the silvery minnow. We will continue with this effort this year and our FY 01 program currently includes funding under the Continuing Authorities Program to initiate studies for silvery minnow habitat and fish passage studies. There is, of course, potential for additional future involvement under our restoration authorities.

URGWOM

As presented during last year's conference, there is the Upper Rio Grande Water Operations Model. This joint effort with the State, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Geological Survey, Corps of Engineers and others is an excellent example of interagency coordination and partnership and gives us a powerful tool for Rio Grande water operations short and long-term planning. The work started in

1997 and the backbone is completed down to El Paso and is currently undergoing validation testing.

URGWOR and EIS (Gail Stockton, 505-342-3348)

Another outstanding on-going effort is the comprehensive, systemwide Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review and EIS. This is a joint effort among three lead agencies, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, and the Corps of Engineers, and is not just an H&H review, but a complete study of ecosystems, socioeconomics, cultural resources, and aquatic systems as well. Initial scoping meetings are complete and we are currently working on developing alternatives. The EIS is scheduled for completion in 2004. Public involvement and comment is the key and there will be several forums such as web sites, newsletters, and public meetings for doing this as well as involvement through the proposed steering committee.

Middle Rio Grande Regional Water Supply Study

This effort was completed under the Corps' Section 22 authority for planning assistance to states and was cost shared with the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission. The end product provides data on water coming in and going out of the region and is an excellent tool for regional water planning.

Habitat Restoration

Three local restoration projects being studied under the Continuing Authorities Program are the Riparian and Wetland Restoration at the Santa Ana Pueblo, channel and riparian restoration on the Jemez River on the Zia Pueblo, and the Albuquerque Bio Park Tingley Beach marsh and meadow restoration. **Santa Ana Pueblo:** Sect 206, Grade control structures to increase channel width, removal of non-native trees (salt cedar and Russian Olive), establishment of wetlands.

Jemez/Zia Pueblo: Increase channel width, remove non-native trees replace with cottonwoods and willows.

Albuquerque Biopark: Pond reconstruction 18 acres, wetlands restoration 13 acres, Bosque restoration 25 acres.

Middle Rio Grande Flood Control Study

This is an on going Construction General project that involves the raising and rehabilitation of levees from Corrales and Belen to provide 270-year level of protection. The Corrales Section was completed in July 1997 and reevaluation of the Mountainview, Isleta, and Belen units are underway and scheduled for completion in July 2002. Construction of the Belen unit is scheduled to start in 2004 and the rest in 2006.

San Acacia Levee

Another Construction General flood control project is the Rio Grande Floodway from San Acacia to Bosque del Apache. The original project scope consisted of the reconstruction of 43.5 miles of existing west side spoilbank levee. The feasibility report is scheduled for completion by April 2001.