

## At a Glance



**Rio Grande Originates**  
Stony Pass, CO and flows about 1,900 miles to the Gulf of Mexico



**Compact Reach**  
The Rio Grande Compact governs the portion of river from its headwaters in Colorado to Fort Quitman near El Paso, Texas



**States Involved**  
Colorado, New Mexico, Texas



**Ratification of the Compact**  
Signed by all three states in 1938, ratified by Congress in 1939

## Deliveries

Colorado is required to deliver a certain amount of water via the Rio Grande to the Colorado/New Mexico state line each year, measured at the gaging station on the Rio Grande at Lobatos Bridge. Daily deliveries are calculated on a sliding scale depending on river flows. A portion of water, which varies based on the total annual flows measured upstream at the Del Norte gage and three gages on the Conejos River system, is set aside, or **curtailed**, and not available to be used in Colorado. That water is delivered to the Colorado/New Mexico state line. New Mexico then delivers water to Elephant Butte Reservoir, which in turn supplies Texas. Colorado has no water delivery obligations to Texas.



Rio Grande gage at Del Norte. PC: Heather Dutton

## Compact 101

### What is the Compact?

The Rio Grande Compact is an interstate agreement between Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas to administer the water in the Rio Grande between the three states. Under the Compact, Colorado has obligations to deliver water to the Colorado/New Mexico state line, and New Mexico to Elephant Butte Reservoir. It uses a system of debits and credits to provide flexibility for wet and dry years.



## How It Affects Us

The Compact requires accurate, dynamic water deliveries, creating a great deal of complex water accounting and periodic curtailment of water use on the Rio Grande and Conejos River systems in Colorado. The Compact provides key benefits across the states, including certainty, equitable sharing of scarcity, and resilience to changing hydrologic conditions. Compact requirements and Colorado water rights are quantified, providing a clear picture of water availability. This structure supports long-term, predictable water management.

## History

The Compact was signed by CO, NM, and TX in 1938. From 1938 to 1966, Colorado did not always meet its delivery obligations, accruing nearly 1 million acre-feet of debt to New Mexico. That debt was cleared in 1985 when Elephant Butte Reservoir spilled, in accordance with the Compact's terms. Colorado has been in compliance since 1968.

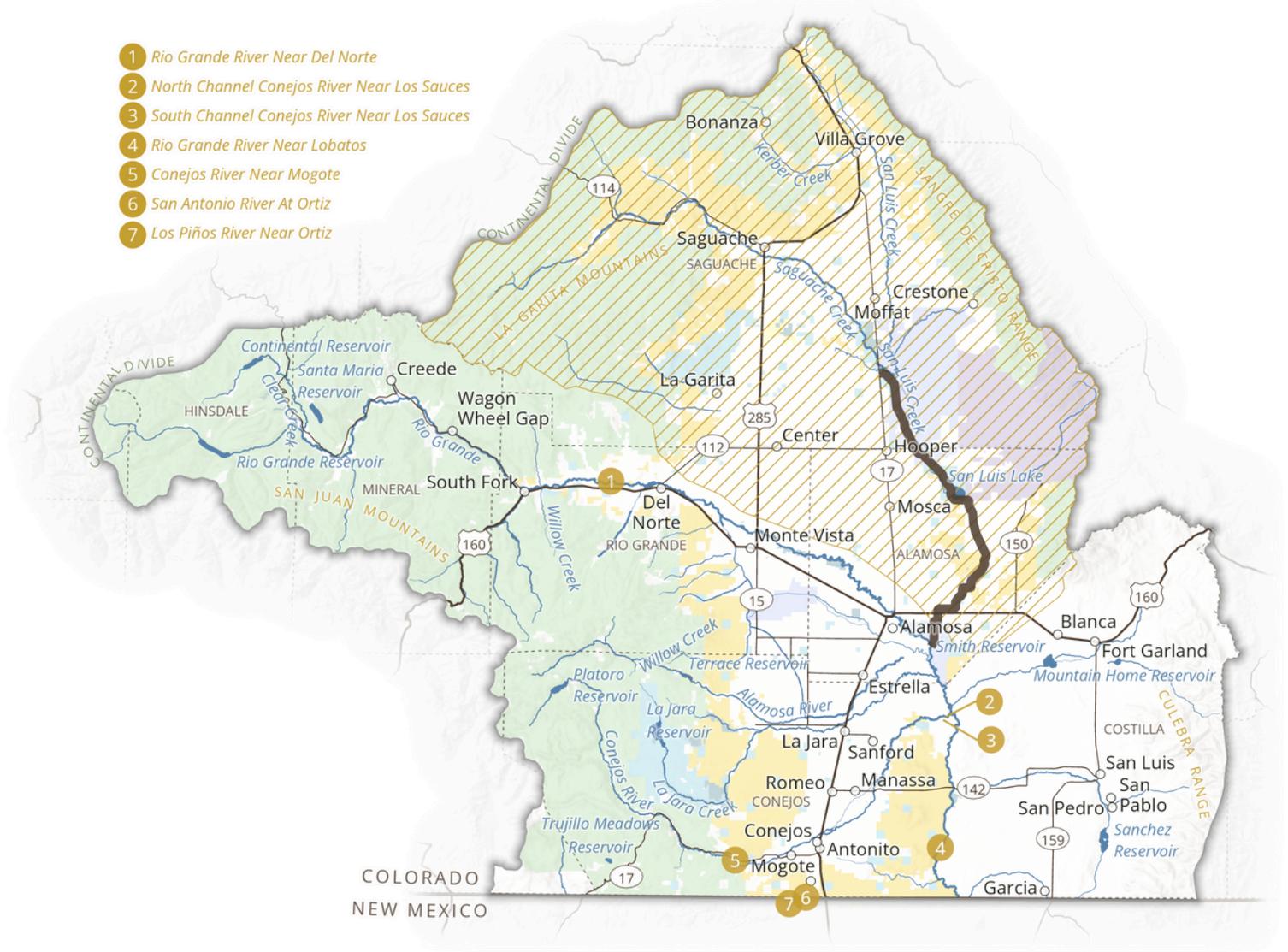
## Mexico

Although the Rio Grande forms the boundary with Mexico, the Compact does not address deliveries to Mexico. An international agreement between the United States and Mexico, established prior to the Compact, requires delivery of 60,000 acre-feet to Mexico. As an interstate agreement, the Compact does not govern water management with Mexico.

PC: Geraint Smith



- 1 Rio Grande River Near Del Norte
- 2 North Channel Conejos River Near Los Sauces
- 3 South Channel Conejos River Near Los Sauces
- 4 Rio Grande River Near Lobatos
- 5 Conejos River Near Mogote
- 6 San Antonio River At Ortiz
- 7 Los Piños River Near Ortiz



- 2 Compact Stream Gage
- Canal Project
- Closed Basin Boundary
- US Forest Service
- State
- County, City, Local
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Bureau of Land Management
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Park Service
- Undetermined or Private



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