



RIO GRANDE BASIN

ROUNDTABLE

RIO GRANDE HEADWATERS

Originates at Stony Pass, Colorado

RIVER LENGTH

About 1,900 miles

STATES INVOLVED

Colorado, New Mexico, Texas

RATIFICATION

May 31, 1939

MAP



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 New Mexico, and New Mexico to Texas. It uses a system of debits and credits to provide flexibility for wet and dry years, with each state being able to accrue both debits and credits.

HISTORY

The Rio Grande Compact was first signed in 1938, and then signed into law on May 31, 1939. For a period of time, from its ratification to around 1966, Colorado did not honor its obligations to the Compact. They accrued nearly 1 million acre feet of debt to New Mexico and Texas, but when Elephant Butte Reservoir filled in 1985, Colorado's debt was cleared according to the Compact's terms.

MEXICO

The Rio Grande also reaches Mexico. The Rio Grande Compact, however, has very little to do with the country itself. Mexico and the United States entered into an agreement before the compact was created to deliver 60,000 acre feet to Mexico. These deliveries are between the two countries themselves, meaning the interstate Rio Grande Compact does not, in most cases, pertain to this agreement.

DELIVERIES

Colorado is required to make deliveries to New Mexico each year. These deliveries are administered on a daily basis and are measured at the Rio Grande at Lobatos Bridge stream gage near the state line. Required deliveries are calculated on a sliding scale depending on current river flows. A certain percentage is taken from the daily flows as curtailment, and that water is delivered to New Mexico and Texas.

HOW IT AFFECTS US

The Compact requires that we ensure accurate, differing deliveries. This creates a great deal of work and can be complicated. It also means that there is always a given percentage of water that water users on the Rio Grande and Conejos River Systems do not get to use. Despite these challenges, the Compact provides benefits as well. The combination of Compact requirements and water use from water rights holders means that all the water in these systems is spoken for, giving us a clear idea of how much water is available to use and how much needs to be delivered to meet Compact obligations. This would make an export of this water difficult and allows for efficient and precise water use here in the Valley.