

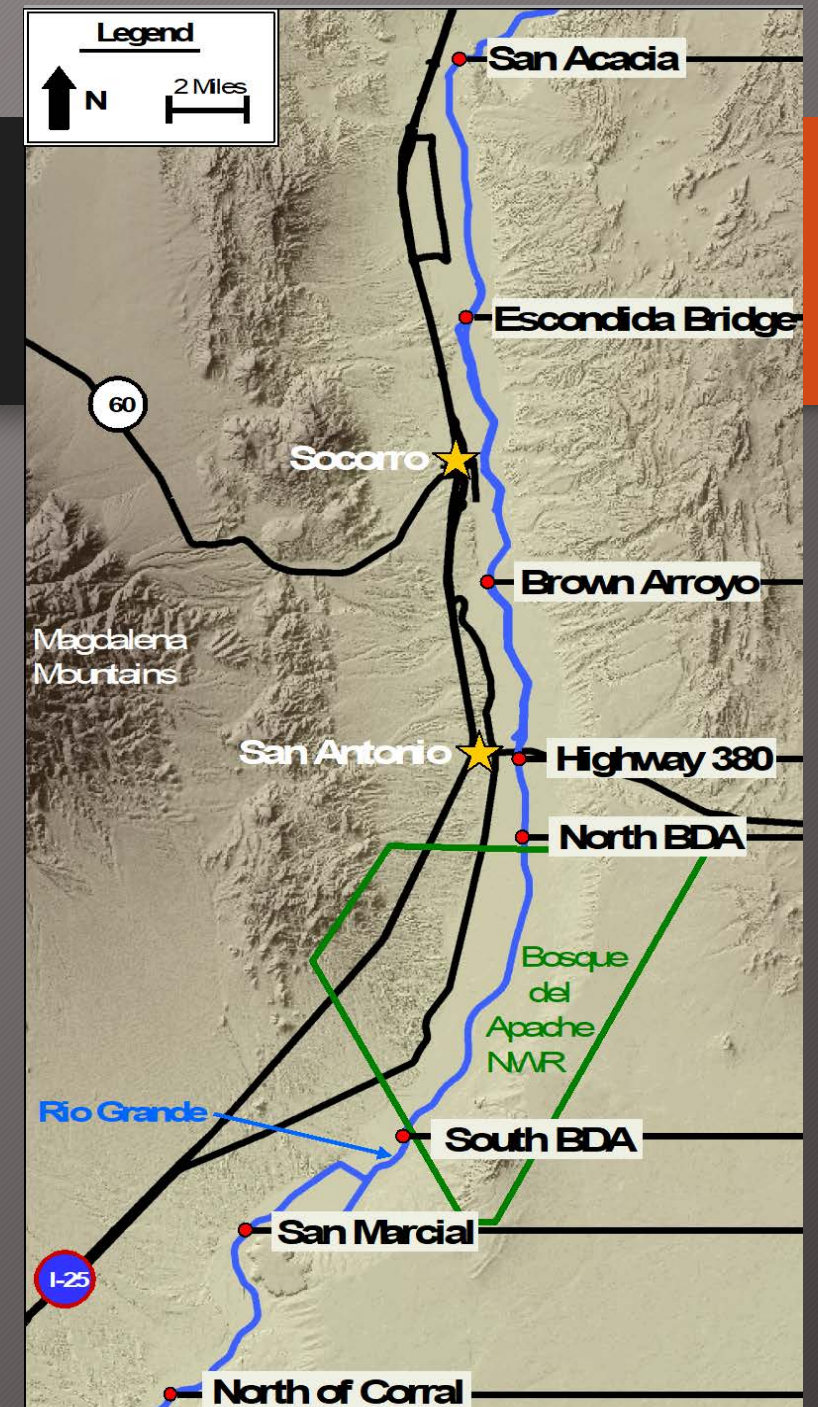


## **Low Flow Conveyance Channel Collaborative Solutions Needed**

Gina Dello Russo  
Escondida, New Mexico

# San Acacia Reach of the Rio Grande

- A complex reach of the river due to its multitude of tributary inputs of water and sediment into a narrow and perched floodplain, its complex infrastructure and diverse landownership on that floodplain, and past and current dynamic ecosystem processes.



# Bosque del Apache NWR

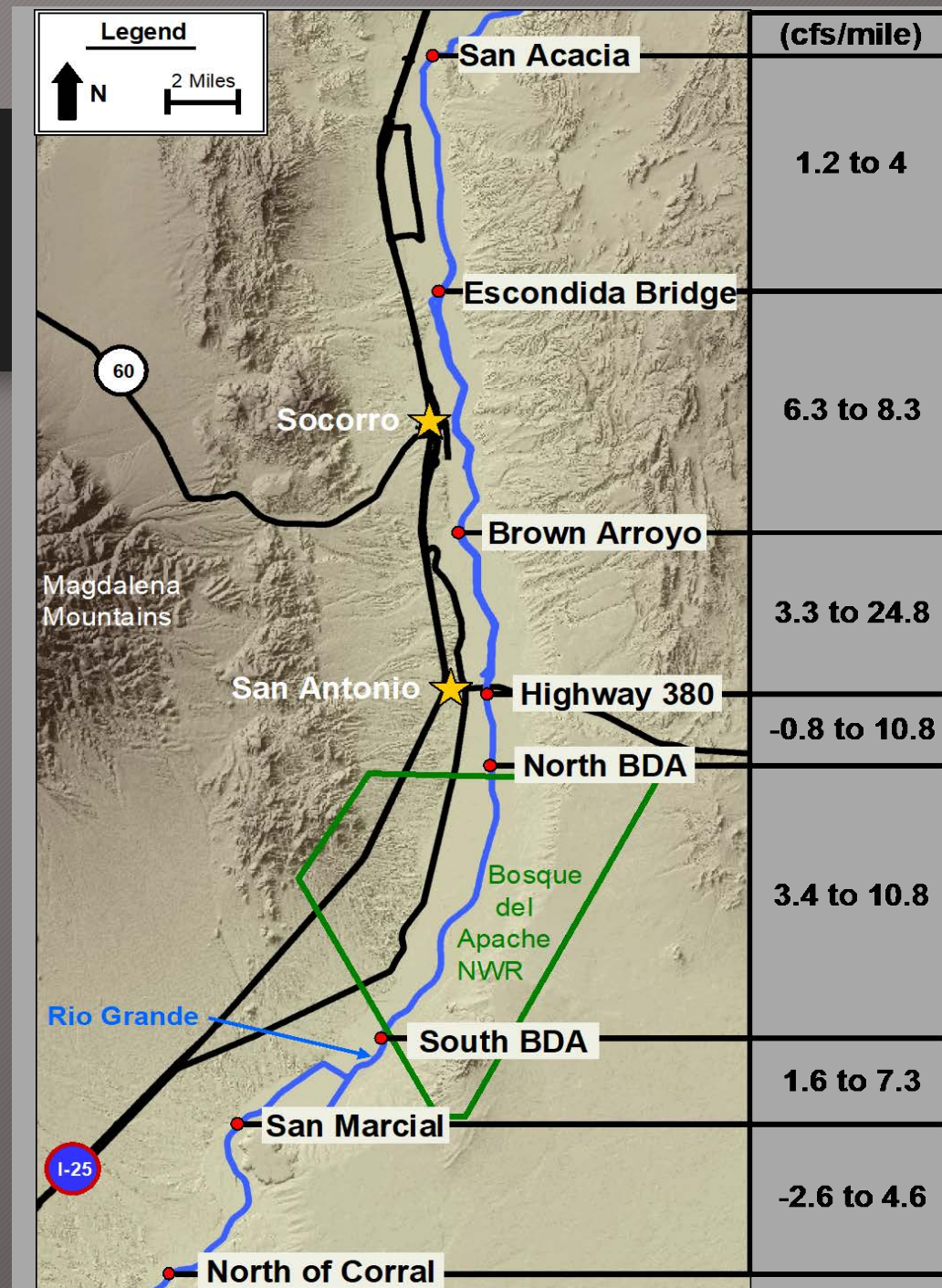
- Managed for the Benefit of Wildlife:
  - 12,000 acres of riparian wetlands, meadows, forests, ponds.
  - Part of the Rio Grande wildlife corridor.
  - Over 400 species of birds that use this area.
  - 4 Federally listed species present.
- Managed For People:
  - Recreation
  - Solace
  - Education



#2 in Top 10 Best Places to Birdwatch (Country Living, April 2024)

Voted #4 out of 570 NWRs (List of Top 10 Best Refuges by USA Today)

# LFCC's Relationship to the Refuge



# A Request

**Please direct state agencies to work with the refuge to develop and commit to strategies to better manage surface water deliveries to all water users in the Socorro valley, including the refuge.**



## The LFCC's Relationship to the Rio Grande Ecosystem

- The refuge is a part of the larger Middle Rio Grande ecosystem.
- The LFCC, acting as a drain and the lowest point in the valley, makes it difficult to provide low water flows to the perched Rio Grande through the valley and maintain a shallow groundwater table.
- Extended river drying periods will stress native plants and will most likely impact the many wildlife species that depend on the currently diverse and viable river corridor habitats.
- More research is needed to understand the thresholds where negative impacts to riparian habitats and species are irreversible.
- The refuge is working with New Mexico Tech and others to better understand its present and potential future water budget. However, we need a better understanding of the entire system to protect the river and bosque and manage water and sediment.

# Water as a Catalyst for Better Understanding, Engagement, & Solutions

- We have come along way in our understanding of this river system.
- Scientists, advocates, and agencies, I believe, stand ready to address complex river issues more comprehensively.
- Stakeholders acknowledge the importance of addressing water issues. Four out of five people surveyed believed the we should address the health of our state's rivers (The Thornburg Foundation).



# Because the San Acacia Reach is of Special Concern to Many Stakeholders –

**Please appoint a diverse task force to work with state and federal agencies to 1) develop research to better understand the San Acacia Reach Rio Grande Ecosystem water needs into the future and 2) design projects to meet those water needs while addressing our shared water obligations under state and federal law.**

