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Engineering New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Hosts “State of the Science on the Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Workshop”

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) – In November of 2008, as a participant of the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaboration Program (Program) and as the State agency primarily responsible for the protection and investigation of the State’s water resources, the Interstate Stream Commission hosted the Program’s “State of the Science” workshop on the most recent biological information on the Rio Grande Silvery Minnow, a state and federally listed endangered fish.

The Rio Grande Silvery Minnow currently exists in about 5% of its previous range, which consisted of the Rio Grande and its tributaries, including the Pecos River. Once the most populous fish in the Rio Grande system, a number of factors have been cited as reasons for the silvery minnow’s reduction in numbers and range, including loss of habitat, loss of river connectivity due to construction of flood and irrigation diversion dams, water quality degradation, and water management practices.

The U.S Fish and Wildlife issued a biological opinion in 2001 and again in 2003 that included providing fish passage at the San Acacia and Isleta diversion dams. This facilitated workshop provided scientists and resource managers with an opportunity to discuss recent findings on the behavior and biology of this endangered fish. Scientists from a number of federal, state, and local government agencies as well as contractors presented on topics including movement patterns, swimming behavior, results of population surveys by reach, genetics, effective population size, and habitat availability and fragmentation as it relates to fish passage needs.

Available data and current knowledge about silvery minnow life history and behavior that was developed during the workshop will be available via the Program website. For proceedings of

this workshop and other information on the activities of the Program, go to www.mrgesa.com. Information regarding the Interstate Stream Commission is located at www.ose.state.nm.us.

For more information, please contact Grace Haggerty, at (505) 765-2053.

The Interstate Stream Commission has broad powers to investigate, protect, conserve and develop New Mexico's water including both interstate and intrastate stream systems.

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Participants of the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program's "State of the Science" workshop listen as biological information on the Rio Grande Silvery Minnow is presented.