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23 October 2023

Michael Porter
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE)
Albuquerque District
Environmental Resources Section
4101 Jefferson Plaza NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109-3435

RE: Draft Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Water Control Plan for Operation of Abiquiu Dam, Rio Arriba County, NM. NMDGF Project No. NMERT-2933.

Dear Mr. Porter,

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) has reviewed the above referenced Draft Environmental Assessment and FONSI for the Water Control Plan for Operation of Abiquiu Dam (Draft EA) prepared by ACOE.

Department staff entered the project into the New Mexico Environmental Review Tool (NMERT), and the auto-generated report is attached for your review.

In addition to any relevant recommendations in the attached NMERT-generated report, our Fisheries Management Division noted that the Draft EA did not evaluate or make projections of impacts of increased water storage at Abiquiu Reservoir on upstream reservoirs (e.g., El Vado and Heron). Presumably, as more water is held in the Abiquiu reservoir, less will be held in El Vado and Heron reservoirs, which may impact fish species and habitat. The Department recommends evaluating the potential impact this water loss in upstream reservoirs will have on aquatic species and habitats.

Overall, the Department does not anticipate any adverse impacts to fish, wildlife, or habitat in Abiquiu Reservoir from the proposed project.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft EA. If you have any questions, please contact Jack Marchetti, Aquatic/Riparian Habitat Specialist, at (505) 479-1269 or jack.marchetti@dgf.nm.gov.

Sincerely,

Matt Wunder, Ph.D.
Chief, Ecological and Environmental Planning Division

cc: USFWS NMES Field Office
Eric Frey, Sportfish Program Manager, NMDGF
Grace Haggerty, Program Manager, NMISC
Page Pegram, Rio Grande Bureau Chief, NMISC