

U.S. buys water to protect minnow

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The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is buying water from Santa Fe, N.M., to protect the endangered silvery minnow swimming in the Rio Grande.

The agency, a division of the U.S. Department of the Interior, agreed to purchase the water to meet requirements set by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on how much water must flow in the river to ensure the tiny minnow's survival, the Santa Fe New Mexican newspaper reports.

Flows in the Rio Grande are about 35 percent of normal due to a drought.

The bureau purchased 2,500 acre-feet of Santa Fe's water and will release it in the next few months, the newspaper said. An acre-foot is the volume of water needed to cover 1 acre of surface area to a depth of 1 foot. It is equal to about 326,000 gallons. Purchasing 2,500 acre-feet means purchasing more than 8 million gallons of water.

The Rio Grande silvery minnow needs a certain flow for spawning, larvae dispersal and migration, biologists told the newspaper.

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