United States Section
International Boundary and
Water Commission

Report of Accomplishments for 2004

UNITED STATES SECTION
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
4171 North Mesa Street C-100
El Paso, Texas 79902
915-832-4100
www.ibwc.state.gov

Commissioner
Arturo Duran

A Message to Stakeholders from U.S. Commissioner Arturo Duran:

The United States Section, International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) is now poised to assume its rightful role as the premiere federal entity on the United States - Mexico border, responsible for diplomatically resolving transboundary resource management and related issues. Upon my appointment by President George W. Bush to the position of United States Commissioner at the dawn of 2004, I assumed ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the USIBWC transform itself into a high-performing organization equipped with the ability to achieve the following new and ambitious vision:

Trust, unity, and progress toward enhancing
United States-Mexico border conditions and quality of life.

The transformation process has been both challenging and fruitful. It required me to make difficult leadership decisions, including a strategic reallocation of human, financial, and physical resources along with the implementation of high standards of organizational performance and accountability to you, our stakeholders. The USIBWC now is in a better position to achieve its vision through the accomplishment of the following new mission statement that is focused on serving our stakeholders:

Our mission is to provide boundary, water, and environmental solutions along the United States-Mexico border region through leadership, binational cooperation, and future sustainability in a manner that is responsive to stakeholders.

I am pleased to share with you the attached report documenting the accomplishments of the USIBWC during 2004, our first year of the transformation process. Upon reviewing the report, you will find it quite informative, and I trust you will agree the USIBWC is well on its way to becoming a more transparent, stakeholder-sensitive agency. Your comments and suggestions regarding the report are most welcome as well as suggestions on how we can serve you, our stakeholder.

While our accomplishments in 2004 were numerous and admirable, they merely serve as a precursor to greater achievements in 2005 and beyond. On behalf of the dedicated and empowered employees of the USIBWC, I pledge to you an unwavering commitment to enhancing border conditions and improving the quality of life of border residents. We are committed to doing so in an environment of trust, unity, and progress.

Arturo Q. Duran
United States Commissioner

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I. OVERVIEW

A. Introduction. Under a series of treaties between the United States and Mexico, the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) is charged with the resolution of water and boundary problems arising along the 1,952 mile long border between the U.S. and Mexico. The border region encompasses the U.S. states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California and the Mexican states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Sonora, and Baja California. The United States Section has 11 offices on the border and a liaison office at the U.S. Department of State in Washington, DC.

Appointed U.S. Commissioner by President George W. Bush, Arturo Q. Duran assumed his duties in January 2004. Commissioner Duran previously served as General Manager of the Lower Valley Water District located in El Paso County, an organization that is responsible for providing potable water, sewer, solid waste, parks and recreation, and flood control services to several communities. He brings over 15 years of environmental management experience at the federal, state, local and international levels.

B. Executive Summary of Major Accomplishments in 2004. The Report of Accomplishments for 2004 of the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) reflects a commitment by the agency to become an organization with a new culture of high performance -- an organization committed to carrying out its critical mission while, at the same time, being responsive to its stakeholders. These accomplishments reflect significant progress in advancing the five broad goals outlined in the agency's strategic plan.

Water Quantity Operations

- Led bilateral negotiations with Mexico regarding Mexico's Rio Grande water debt to the United States, resulting in a water debt reduction plan that eliminates the water debt entirely by September 2005. As of April 2005, the United States has received payment for approximately 80% of the original water debt amount.

- Established a binational planning committee for a 2005 summit on sustainable management of the Rio Grande basin.

- Advanced studies to rehabilitate flood control levees and improve management of flood control projects.

- Established a work group to advance the lining of the All-American Canal in California to conserve water while taking into consideration measures to reduce the project's impact on Mexico.

- Completed upgrade of river gaging stations, making near real-time flow data available to the public online.

Water Quality Improvement

- Concluded IBWC Minute No. 311, a framework for constructing a public-private wastewater treatment plant in Tijuana, Mexico to provide secondary treatment of effluent from the USIBWC's South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant in San Diego, California.

- Settled long-standing litigation with the State of California regarding the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant.

- Coordinated a program to improve sanitation of Nogales Wash in Arizona, reducing public health risk from contaminated water in the Wash.

- Published Rio Grande Toxic Substances Study Phase III.

- Performed regular monitoring of water quality in the Rio Grande basin through the Texas Clean Rivers Program for the Rio Grande. Completed regular exchange with the Mexican Section of water quality data for the Rio Grande, Colorado River, New River, and the Pacific Ocean along the international boundary.

Boundary Preservation

- Undertook aerial photography for major IBWC boundary mapping project.

- Installed boundary demarcation plaques at ports of entry on the land boundary.

Diplomacy, Outreach, and Partnering

- Improved U.S.-Mexico relations through fair and balanced negotiations between the two nations, with neither neighbor assuming a greater responsibility or burden in resolving critical diplomatic issues.

- Established cooperative relations with leaders in the border states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Established the position of State Affairs Officer as a key advisor on issues most important to each of the border states.

- Improved collaboration with the U.S. Department of State, including the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.

- Conducted 20 public meetings through the agency's Citizens' Forum program to enhance communication with border communities and leaders about IBWC projects and related issues.

Strategic Management

- Implemented strategic management reforms in line with President Bush's management agenda to improve human capital, competitive sourcing, financial management, and electronic government.

- Transformed agency culture to increase transparency, accountability, and efficiency.

- Achieved significant cost savings by reducing expenditures on low-priority items, freeing up funds for priority projects.

- Established the position of Chief Executive Officer to improve day-to-day management of the United States Section.

II. THE COMMISSION AND THE COMMISSIONER

A. The Commission. The International Boundary and Water Commission is comprised of the United States Section, headquartered in El Paso, Texas, and the Mexican Section (MxIBWC), headquartered in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua. Both Sections have field offices along the boundary. In accomplishing the IBWC's mission, the U.S. and Mexican Sections jointly exercise the provisions of existing treaties to equitably distribute the water of the Rio Grande, Colorado, and Tijuana Rivers to both countries and to operate the international flood control projects along the boundary rivers, the international reservoirs for conservation of Rio Grande water and for hydroelectric generation, and the international wastewater treatment plants. The IBWC also has the responsibility to establish and maintain the boundary in the limitrophe section of the international rivers and demarcate the land boundary. Most projects are developed jointly by the USIBWC and MxIBWC, requiring interdependence for full implementation of those projects.

B. The Commissioner. Commissioner Arturo Q. Duran brings over 15 years of executive management experience. He worked for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for over 9 years, managing environmental restoration and waste management programs where he was instrumental in advancing national environmental policies relevant to federal facilities across the nation. The Commissioner also worked as a private environmental consultant along the U.S. and Mexico border region where he assisted clients in the private and governmental sectors. More recently, the Commissioner served as the General Manager of the Lower Valley Water District in El Paso, Texas for over 3 years. He has participated in the following leadership positions: U.S. Co-Chair for Health, Environment, and Urban Development between the United States and Mexico;

Health and Environmental Advisor for 23 Governors of the West; and Advisor and Facilitator for the Interagency Task Force for Economic Development for the Southwest Border.

In 2003, he was appointed by the U.S. President to the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) of North America and to the Selection Committee of the North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation (NAFEC) of the CEC. He was elected Chairman of the JPAC for 2005.

Commissioner Duran holds Bachelor of Science and Master of Science Degrees in Chemical Engineering from the New Mexico State University located in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Born in the State of Chihuahua, Mexico and raised in Ciudad Juarez just across the border from El Paso, Texas, Commissioner Duran immigrated to the United States after graduating from high school. He is fully bicultural and understands the unique challenges that border communities face on a daily basis.

III. STRATEGIC PLAN

The USIBWC's Strategic Plan is the agency's blueprint in achieving its ambitious mission and, ultimately, the vision. The Strategic Plan also represents the agency's effort to comply with guidelines set forth in the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, and Office of Management and Budget Circular No. A-11, Part 2 (July 1999).

An accomplishment under Commissioner Duran in 2004 was the development of a new mission statement and strategic goals that will enable the USIBWC to achieve the ambitious vision he has established for the agency. The following are the new strategic goals for 2005 and beyond:

Strategic Goal 1. Boundary Preservation

Preserve through binational cooperation the international land and river boundary in a manner that resolves environmental and sovereignty issues.

Strategic Goal 2. Water Quantity Operations

Through binational cooperation, carry out conservation projects, flood control operations, determination of national ownership, and use of international waters in a manner that protects lives, property, and natural resources and promotes regional sustainable development.

Strategic Goal 3. Water Quality Improvement

Through binational cooperation, improve border sanitation conditions and enhance the quality and use of international waters in a manner that supports ecological needs and regional sustainable development.

Strategic Goal 4. Diplomacy, Outreach, and Partnering

Establish the USIBWC as the premiere organization for identifying, facilitating, and sharing of resources to resolve transboundary issues.

Strategic Goal 5. Strategic Management

Maximize organizational effectiveness through innovative management of the agency's human, financial, and physical resources to ensure that the USIBWC is stakeholder centered, accountable, and results oriented.

IV. BOUNDARY PRESERVATION - 2004 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Boundary demarcation plaques were installed

A. Boundary Demarcation. The International Boundary and Water Commission is responsible for demarcating the border between the United States and Mexico. This includes installing and maintaining boundary monuments and markers on the land boundary between the two countries and placing appropriate plaques demarcating the boundary on international bridges and at ports of entry. The IBWC has 258 principal monuments on the land boundary and more than 400 intermediate markers.

During 2004, the Commission efficiently addressed boundary monument and demarcation issues at numerous locations on the 1,952 mile long U.S.-Mexico border. The USIBWC installed boundary demarcation plaques at the following ports of entry on the western land boundary: Otay Mesa-Mesa de Otay, Tecate-Tecate, Andrade-Algodones, and San Luis-San Luis. Under the terms of Minute No. 244, "Maintenance of the international land boundary monuments," the Commission conducted an aerial inspection by helicopter to photograph the monuments and note what repairs are required. This information will be used in order to develop a maintenance plan.

B. Boundary Mapping. In accordance with Article II of the 1970 Boundary Treaty, the IBWC initiated aerial photography for boundary mapping and demarcation along the Rio Grande. The treaty requires that the IBWC delineate the international boundary on maps or aerial photographic mosaics at least every ten years.

C. Mouth of the Rio Grande. The United States Section also continued to pursue a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to maintain the mouth of the Rio Grande. During portions of 2001 and 2002, a sand bar plugged the river's mouth. As part of its responsibility to maintain the Rio Grande as the international boundary and in response to stakeholder concerns over the failure of the river to reach the Gulf of Mexico, the USIBWC is seeking a permit to conduct maintenance as needed to remove any future plugs.

V. WATER QUANTITY OPERATIONS - 2004 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The IBWC operates and maintains reservoir and river structures, including dams, levees, floodways, and hydroelectric power plants. The U.S. Section coordinates closely with the Mexican Section on international water accounting, ensuring delivery of waters in accordance with applicable treaties. The Commission also conducts studies related to border water issues.

A. Water Debt. Significant progress was made in 2004 toward resolving Mexico's long-standing deficit in water deliveries to the United States in the Rio Grande basin. During 2004, the deficit was reduced nearly by half – from 1.3 million acre-feet to just over 700,000 acre-feet by year's end. Various factors contributed to this reduction, including strong diplomatic support from the U.S. Department of State, increased precipitation in the basin, and application of innovative technical solutions by the IBWC.

One such technical solution was an agreement with Mexico for determining water conveyance losses. The agreement addresses water accounting procedures for transfers of water from Mexican ownership to U.S. ownership at Amistad and Falcon International Reservoirs on the Rio Grande in accordance with Minute No. 234, a 1969 Commission agreement that provides for these transfers when Mexico has a deficit in Rio Grande deliveries to the United States. The 2004 Joint Report of the Principal Engineers spells out how conveyance losses will be handled, taking into consideration the Mexican tributaries that are the source of the water, the distance the water must travel to the reservoirs, and the actual climatic conditions during the months preceding a reservoir transfer. In the past, the lack of established criteria for determining these conveyance losses has caused controversy since varying climatic conditions and other factors can greatly affect conveyance losses; for example, losses are much greater during hot, dry periods.

The IBWC also established new water accounting procedures at Anzalduas Diversion Dam that allowed the Texas Rio Grande Watermaster to divert additional volumes downstream of the Amistad and Falcon International Dams when demand exists. This arrangement allowed the United States to divert nearly 240,000 acre-feet of water from Mexican sources, water previously unavailable to the United States.

Another significant factor was the transfer by Mexico of 250,000 acre-feet from Mexican ownership to U.S. ownership at Amistad Dam in January 2004. This transfer was concluded following high-level diplomatic meetings in late 2003.

Technical meetings and diplomatic discussions over means for Mexico to pay off its remaining water debt intensified during 2004. Meetings were held starting in the spring at which the U.S. Section developed several proposals for discussion and consideration with Mexico. Teleconferences were conducted with Lower Rio Grande water users, State of Texas officials, and State Department officials to ensure buy-in and concurrence with procedures to follow in resolving

the water debt. By year's end, the two countries were close to reaching an understanding for Mexico to pay off the remaining debt by September 2005.

Under the terms of Minute No. 308, the IBWC established a planning committee for a binational Rio Grande Summit to be held in 2005. The summit will seek to develop recommendations for the sustainable management of the Rio Grande basin.

B. Hydrologic Monitoring. Another significant accomplishment during 2004 was completion of a major project to upgrade 57 Hydrologic Monitoring Stations along the Rio Grande. This upgrade, which involved conversion of river gaging stations to satellite telemetry, allows the USIBWC to access real-time data on precipitation and flow volume, data used to determine the ownership of water between the United States and Mexico and to make decisions regarding flood control project operations. The USIBWC has shared the benefits of this project with the public by making the information immediately available on the agency's web page.

C. All-American Canal. Commissioner Duran has also advanced discussions on the All-American Canal lining project after several years of delay. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in conjunction with the major water agencies in Southern California has proposed to line a portion of the All-American Canal near the border with Mexico with the intent of recovering seepage from the canal. During 2004, the USIBWC revived a task force on the All-American Canal, working closely with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Department of the Interior, and State of California to ensure that the project moves forward while addressing concerns raised by Mexico over the impact of the canal lining south of the border.

D. Flood Control. The United States Section made considerable progress in 2004 on efforts to improve agency flood control projects. The IBWC maintains reservoirs, diversion dams, floodways, and more than 500 miles of flood control levees to protect residents living along the Rio Grande, Colorado, and Tijuana Rivers. In 2004, the USIBWC maintained the U.S. levees in a safe and fully-prepared condition. Maintenance included mowing the floodway and levee slide slopes and grading the levee surface.

The USIBWC made progress in its multi-year effort to design and construct Rio Grande levee improvements. In 2004, the USIBWC funded $1 million for U.S. levee raising downstream of the Hidalgo-Reynosa Bridges through a cooperative effort with the City of Hidalgo, Texas. The USIBWC also developed a capital improvements plan for Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project levees and initiated preparation of an environmental assessment for raising another 4.5 miles of U.S. levees in the Hidalgo area. In the Upper Rio Grande in New Mexico and Texas, the agency completed geophysical studies and reconnaissance-level geotechnical analysis of 230 miles of river levee. This study will help to determine the structural integrity of the levees and identify segments that should be rehabilitated. In compliance with federal environmental law, the USIBWC completed Environmental Impact Statements related to vegetation maintenance on the Lower Rio Grande

Flood Control Project and management of the Rio Grande Canalization Project in New Mexico and Texas. Along the Arizona-Mexico border, the Commission completed a flood control planning study at Nogales, Sonora, which should also benefit residents of Nogales, Arizona.

E. Rio Grande Channel Maintenance. Sediment control was a focus of Rio Grande channel maintenance in 2004, improving the river's capacity to handle flood flows and irrigation deliveries to the United States and Mexico. The Operations Department removed sediment from the Chamizal Project channel of the Rio Grande at El Paso, Texas-Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua. Downstream of El Paso, staff coordinated with the Hudspeth County Conservation and Reclamation District No.1 to remove sediment in the Rio Grande channel that had affected drainage of farmland. In the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project, the Engineering Department conducted an Environmental Assessment for sediment removal downstream of Retamal Diversion Dam. The USIBWC also completed erosion protection works at the Hatch Siphon, which conveys irrigation water across the Rio Grande in the Canalization Project. The work will protect the siphon from being undermined by erosion in the river channel.

F. Water Deliveries. In accordance with the Convention of 1906, the United States delivered Rio Grande water to Mexico at the Acequia Madre at Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua. Due to low storage conditions at Elephant Butte and Caballo Dams in New Mexico, Rio Grande allotments to all users in the region were reduced in 2004. The United States delivered 27,000 acre-feet to Mexico, 45% of a full allotment. To maximize the efficiency of deliveries by coordinating water delivery schedules among different users, the IBWC facilitated meetings between the United States Bureau of Reclamation and irrigation district representatives from the United States and Mexico.

The United States also completed delivery of 1.5 million acre-feet of Colorado River water to Mexico pursuant to the 1944 Water Treaty. Under the terms of Minute No. 310, the two Sections of the IBWC coordinated emergency deliveries of Colorado River water to Mexico at Tijuana, Baja California via a special connection at Otay, California. This emergency connection permits Mexico to convey a portion of its allotment of Colorado River water via the U.S. conveyance system in order to meet drinking water needs in Tijuana. The emergency connection was activated in July and November for a total delivery of 349 acre-feet.

G. Groundwater. In November, the IBWC, an internationally recognized leader in managing transboundary waters, hosted the Transboundary Aquifers of the Americas Workshop in El Paso. This international scientific workshop was sponsored by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Organization of American States (OAS) Internationally Shared Aquifer Resources Management Americas Programme. Representatives of more than a dozen countries of the Americas participated. At the workshop, U.S. and Mexican representatives of the IBWC presented the case study for the Hueco Bolson, the transboundary aquifer of El Paso, Texas-Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua.

H. International Storage Dams. The IBWC operated and maintained its two international storage reservoirs and hydroelectric power plants on the Rio Grande – Amistad Dam at Del Rio, Texas - Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila and Falcon Dam at Falcon Heights, Texas - Nueva Ciudad Guerrero, Tamaulipas. The Commission continued its work to upgrade the operating mechanisms at the international dams to assure power generation and dam operations.

On October 20, 2004, the Commission marked the 50th anniversary of commercial power generation at the Falcon Dam Power Plant with a ceremony attended by local, state, and federal government officials and representatives from the U.S. electric co-operatives that purchase power generated at the U.S. plant. The USIBWC also continued its inventory of cultural resources and the associated management plan for Falcon Dam where over 800 archaeological sites have been located, including pre-historic and Spanish colonial ranch sites.

50th anniversary celebration at Falcon Dam

VI. WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT - 2004 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 1944 Water Treaty directs the IBWC "to give preferential attention to the solution of all border sanitation problems" and to conduct various studies and investigations related to border water projects. Subsequent agreements of the Commission, known as minutes, provided for specific sanitation projects, including construction of wastewater treatment plants. Other minutes outlined programs for joint observation by the two Sections of the Commission of the quality of waters in transboundary streams. The IBWC made significant progress in these water quality projects in 2004.

The USIBWC operates and maintains two international wastewater treatment plants: 1) the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) in San Diego, California, which treats wastewater emanating from Tijuana, Baja California; and 2) the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant (NIWTP) in Rio Rico, Arizona, which treats sewage from the sister cities of Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora. Recent efforts have focused on upgrading the plants to bring them into compliance with current federal and/or state discharge standards.

Com. Duran and Com. Herrera (*r*) sign Minute No. 311

A. San Diego-Tijuana Sanitation. On February 20, 2004, the IBWC Commissioners signed Minute No. 311, "Recommendations for Secondary Treatment in Mexico of the Sewage Emanating from the Tijuana River Area in Baja California, Mexico." This minute provides a framework for construction in Mexico, via a public-private partnership, of a plant to provide secondary treatment of effluent from the SBIWTP. The project would also allow for treatment of additional sewage at the Mexican plant, benefitting public health and the environment on both sides of the border. In December, the USIBWC released for public comment the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Clean Water Act Compliance at the SBIWTP, the environmental documentation required for the project.

The USIBWC surpassed another hurdle in the project when the U.S. District Court in San Diego issued an order on December 6 that resolved litigation brought by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region against the USIBWC in 2001. The order, based on a joint submission by the parties, sets forth a schedule for the USIBWC to come into compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit issued by the Regional Board. Under the terms of the court's order, the USIBWC must come into compliance with the effluent limitations contained in its NPDES permit not later than September 30, 2008.

B. Nogales Sanitation. The IBWC undertook various activities in 2004 to improve sanitation in Nogales. One concern is untreated sewage in Nogales Wash, which flows north from Nogales, Sonora through central Nogales, Arizona. To address this problem, the IBWC, in coordination with local and state government agencies in both countries, established an improved program for chlorination of the Nogales Wash. A new standard operating procedure and incident response matrix were developed. These two documents will assist all agencies in responding to incidents in an informed and consistent manner. The USIBWC also rehabilitated and put into operation a pumping station to divert flows from the Wash for treatment at the NIWTP when there are significant sewage flows in the Wash such as when a sewer line ruptures. Other improvements initiated in 2004 include installation of a modern monitoring system to track wastewater flows to the NIWTP, including flows originating in Mexico, and installation of a SCADA system to automate some functions of the NIWTP to reduce electrical consumption and improve plant performance.

Multi-agency technical and policy committees met throughout 2004 to plan for the upgrade of the NIWTP. By year's end, work had begun on two studies to assist in planning: 1) an evaluation of the condition of the International Outfall Interceptor, the pipe that conveys wastewater from the border to the NIWTP, to determine whether it needs to be replaced or can instead be rehabilitated at lower cost; and 2) an analysis of alternatives for upgrading the treatment provided at the NIWTP

to determine the efficacy and cost of different treatment options. Completion of these studies in 2005 will enable the committees to identify the best strategies for meeting wastewater conveyance and treatment needs for the community.

C. Wastewater Pretreatment. The IBWC also participated in pretreatment programs intended to benefit both plants. Pretreatment is the effort to keep wastewater free of harmful compounds such as pesticides, gasolines, oils, or metals that can disrupt the growth of beneficial microorganisms or pollute the downstream environment. The first step is to identify the problem compounds; next, industrial and commercial facilities are encouraged to reduce discharges of problem compounds by adopting facility-specific pretreatment strategies. The NIWTP pretreatment program includes a multi-agency binational committee, which provides information to the public and works with industrial and commercial operations to reduce discharges. A similar pretreatment effort in the City of Tijuana came to an end in the fall of 2004 due to funding constraints experienced by the State of California. The USIBWC is seeking EPA grant funding to continue the program.

D. Naco Sanitation. Sanitation work was undertaken in Naco, Sonora where the IBWC continued to perform repairs and maintenance to that city's wastewater infrastructure to prevent sewage flows from entering the United States. The United States Section also donated a surplus bulldozer to Naco, Sonora to allow that city to maintain its sanitary landfill by burying the trash. In the past, fires erupted at the open air dump, blanketing the region in smoke and posing a health risk on both sides of the border. The bulldozer will allow the landfill to be maintained to reduce fire risk until construction is completed on the community's new landfill.

E. Rio Grande Toxic Substances Study. In June, the IBWC published the third and final phase of a multi-year binational study on toxic substances along the international boundary portion of the Rio Grande. The study concludes that chemicals found in the river's water, sediment, and fish do not pose an immediate threat to human or aquatic life. The study was coordinated by the two Sections of the IBWC under Minute No. 289, and funded by the Environmental Protection Agency and Mexico's national water agency, Comisión Nacional del Agua (CNA), with field work by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and CNA.

F. Clean Rivers Program. The USIBWC continued to operate the Texas Clean Rivers Program for the Rio Grande Basin under contract with the State of Texas. Through the program, USIBWC staff and partners in the Texas portion of the basin collect and analyze data from 80 monitoring stations, covering such parameters as salinity, metals, and bacteria. Data are available on the agency web page and are summarized in annual reports.

G. Data Exchange. Both Sections of the IBWC continue to exchange water quality data to keep abreast of current conditions along the border. Reports for the Rio Grande, Colorado River, New River, and the Pacific Ocean along the boundary line are prepared and exchanged on a routine

basis. Both Sections utilize the data to monitor the status of projects, address issues that can affect water quality, and determine compliance with IBWC minutes on water quality. A related effort involves the exchange of data from wastewater treatment plants in El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua.

The USIBWC also participated in the development of a binational water quality database project spearheaded by EPA. The goal is to develop a data repository of water quality for the United States-Mexico border. Water quality, flow, and other indicators were provided by U.S. and Mexican agencies throughout the border for inclusion in this project. The final database and report will be completed in August 2005.

VII. DIPLOMACY, OUTREACH, AND PARTNERING - 2004 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A. Refocusing of Foreign Relations. Efforts were initiated in 2004 to improve U.S. - Mexico relations through fair and balanced negotiations between the two nations, with neither neighbor assuming a greater responsibility or burden in resolving critical diplomatic issues. As a result of effective negotiations, great progress was made in several areas, including Mexico's deficit in Rio Grande water deliveries.

Another diplomatic achievement was the February signing of Minute No. 311, a formal diplomatic agreement to provide for secondary treatment in Mexico of effluent from the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant in San Diego. The project offers a comprehensive solution to a serious border sanitation problem.

Improving relations with the U.S. Department of State has been another key area of focus, with the Commissioner and other USIBWC policy-level officials initiating and nurturing constructive links. One such initiative took place when Commissioner Duran met with U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Tony Garza and his staff; as a result, the USIBWC's presence in Mexico City has been strengthened by identifying a U.S. Embassy staff member to serve as an onsite liaison for the agency. The USIBWC's relationship with the Department of State thus is maturing to a new level of cooperation and collaboration.

Ambassador Tony Garza (*l*) and Commissioner Duran

In another positive development, Commissioner Duran and Mexican Section Commissioner Arturo Herrera agreed to conduct a joint meeting to review each Section's strategic plan and vision with a goal of developing a joint strategic plan for the Commission.

B. Improving Relations with Key Stakeholders. Commissioner Duran moved assertively to establish cooperative relations with the border states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. In doing so, he recognized their status as key stakeholders and strategic partners in improving the quality of life along the 1,952 mile international border. The Commissioner and other key USIBWC policy officials engaged in numerous discussions with local, regional, and state officials to establish meaningful partnerships. The Commissioner also established the policy-level position of State Affairs Officer to serve as a member of his personal staff and key advisor on issues most important to each of the border states.

The USIBWC conducted 20 public meetings in key U.S. border communities through its Citizens' Forum program. The USIBWC has 5 Citizens' Forum Boards whose members are appointed by the U.S. Commissioner to assist the USIBWC in promoting the exchange of information between the Commission and the public about agency projects and related issues. The Citizens' Forum program is a key component of stakeholder outreach by the U.S. Section.

To further enhance interaction with local stakeholders, staff members were reassigned to the field offices with the intent of better utilizing their skills in order to have a greater effect on local issues impacting on the mission of the USIBWC. Additionally, the USIBWC web page was updated with a new design to help stakeholders easily retrieve needed information and understand the agency's mission, projects/programs, and activities.

C. Partnerships. To enhance its effectiveness, the USIBWC works in partnership with numerous entities throughout the border, compounding efforts to improve quality of life in the region.

In support of El Paso County, Texas, the USIBWC completed National Environmental Policy Act review of the proposed Tornillo-Guadalupe International Bridge to replace the old bridge across the Rio Grande at Fabens, Texas. The USIBWC continued to document the historical features of the existing bridge that will be demolished.

The IBWC continued binational coordination on solutions to the transboundary odor problem caused by the wastewater treatment plant at Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) in coordination with the IBWC arranged for a tour of the north wastewater treatment plant in Juarez attended by representatives from U.S. and Mexican local, state, and federal agencies, including the City of El Paso, El Paso City-County Health and Environment District, Office of U.S. Congressman Silvestre Reyes, EPA, U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission, and El Paso community residents. The USIBWC provided a van for some of the El Pasoans interested in attending.

A work group of the U.S. and Mexican Sections of the IBWC, Texas Commission on Environmental

Quality, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, local irrigation districts, Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and other interested parties was assembled to develop a solution for the invasive aquatic weed problem in the Rio Grande, especially hydrilla downstream from Falcon Dam. Late in the year, the group recommended releasing grass carp to control the infestation.

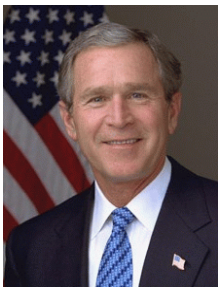
During the year, the USIBWC accepted an invitation from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to be a cooperator in the development of the Environmental Impact Statement for possible reintroduction of the Rio Grande silvery minnow to the Big Bend area of the Rio Grande.

Commissioner Duran worked hand-in-hand with the Border Governors in setting a coordination path for effective watershed management. This coordination was established through the IBWC's participation in the Border Governors Association Annual Meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico in August.

Commissioner Duran also developed and implemented strategies to resolve long-standing conflicts and litigation, including litigation involving the City of Nogales, Arizona over operation and maintenance costs for the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant, and a lawsuit over Clean Water Act compliance for the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant.

VIII. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT - 2004 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The USIBWC has authority to perform its own administrative activities, including human resources management, budget, procurement, finance and accounting, payroll, and property. These are performed using established internal control procedures within federal laws and regulations for which the USIBWC develops its own policies and procedures. The USIBWC has advanced information management capabilities and also contracts with other agencies for data processing of the financial, payroll, property and acquisition functions.



The USIBWC is committed to optimizing the Commission's performance by working to achieve the five government-wide initiatives of the President's Management Agenda: Strategic Management of Human Capital, Competitive Sourcing, Improved Financial Performance, Expanded Electronic Government, and Budget and Performance Integration. Within this framework, the USIBWC is prepared to support and achieve presidential commitments.

A. Strategic Management of Human Capital. In 2004, the USIBWC underwent a comprehensive organizational assessment to determine areas for improving the utilization of human

resources. Information obtained from the assessment laid the groundwork for agency management to develop a Most Efficient Organization (MEO), which is a precursor to the preparation of employee development plans and recruitment strategies. In 2005 and 2006, the USIBWC will continue to implement the Commission's workforce plan and restructuring efforts by advancing human capital planning, which will contribute directly to the development of highly qualified candidates for key positions projected to be vacated and filled within the next decade; it also will enhance human resources staffing to provide for the timely, efficient, and innovative recruitment and placement of personnel who will ensure achievement of the agency mission.

B. Competitive Sourcing. The President's Management Agenda calls for government agencies to compete with the private sector for providing certain services. The effort to streamline staffing and operations to create a Most Efficient Organization (MEO), noted above in the discussion of Strategic Management of Human Capital, will help the agency prepare for competition. To be fully implemented by FY 2006, the MEO is a critical management tool for the Commission; close assessment on performance will be conducted to ensure that anticipated efficiencies are being achieved. In 2004, the Commission completed a comprehensive staffing inventory under the Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act, identifying each funded position as either commercial or inherently governmental. The Voluntary Separation Incentives Program and the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority were reviewed. The agency will request authorization to offer these incentive programs in 2005 in accordance with recommendations for competitive sourcing of certain positions.

C. Improved Financial Performance. Actions were undertaken to increase responsibility and accountability throughout the agency for expenditures for travel, training, and overtime. Contracting officer's representative training was provided to designated staff in order to ensure the proper administration of contracts in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Accurate, timely, and relevant financial data were provided to program managers to support them in executing agency-wide long-term planning of projects.

D. Expanded Electronic Government. The USIBWC's new Information Technology (IT) plan provides for the full review of all IT procurement in order to obtain standardization of all IT equipment and maximization of resources. The USIBWC implemented several e-government programs in 2004, including establishing debit bank cards for small businesses doing work for the USIBWC. This initiative allows small business ventures to receive payment for services rendered on a more timely basis. Additionally, the debit cards are being used to provide travel advances to field office personnel who do not have a government travel card. With the debit cards, the agency can provide advances to the employees in one day rather than the three days required to deposit funds to the employee's bank account. Another project, Paper Check Conversion, enhanced the Commission's ability to access funds. Checks are scanned upon receipt and funds become available to the Commission the following day. Preparations were completed for the January 1, 2005 launch of eTravel, with full

implementation scheduled for late July 2005. eTravel is a collaborative, interagency initiative to realize operational efficiencies, cost savings, and increased service to the federal traveler through a common, automated, and integrated approach to managing federal government travel functions. Another program to train users how to scan documents and invoices to send via e-mail has improved readability of documents and reduced expenditures for long-distance faxes and delivery service. Planning is also underway for a variety of e-government initiatives to be implemented as funding becomes available. These include increasing the bandwidth between Headquarters and the field offices to better facilitate electronic communication and data transfer, an intranet database application that will streamline field office reporting obligations related to fleet vehicle management, and conversion of all paper documents to electronic format.

The agency also completed the enterprise GIS planning process and initiated the implementation phase in May 2004, with the acquisition of additional hardware and software to complete the configuration. The GIS currently being implemented will allow all organizational elements to access information in a centralized database, allowing for the creation of maps, reports, tables, and the manipulation of data in the form of queries and selectable features by project or location. The data sets would be stored in a centralized GIS server, allowing for the quick retrieval of documents. The information in this format can also be served through the USIBWC web site to make certain map products and data sets available to the public as well as other federal, state, and local agencies. The overall configuration of the GIS will become operational by August 2005.

E. Budget and Performance Integration. The agency developed performance measures, which were approved and accepted by the Office of Management and Budget, and introduced development of annual work plans at all levels within the agency. This will allow the agency to meet budget and performance goals by efficiently allocating resources to priority programs based on program managers' work plans. This process of resource allocation will encourage USIBWC's on-the-ground managers to develop annual field office goals more efficiently and link requirements to funding based on historical needs. Work plans must demonstrate support for agency-wide priorities. Managers will better understand actual costs required to perform their specific activities and will be able to link requirements ➜ funds ➜ accomplishing measurable goals, thereby achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness. By integrating mission objectives and performance measures, the USIBWC also improved the content and format of its annual budget submission.

F. Internal Management. Commissioner Duran moved quickly after his appointment by President Bush to implement significant organizational and philosophical changes within the USIBWC. Efforts were spurred by his observation that a fundamental change in the USIBWC organizational culture was necessary in order to accomplish his ambitious vision for the agency. He established a leadership goal of creating a culture of transparency, accountability, and efficient management of limited human, financial, and physical resources. The Commissioner made substantive strides in streamlining the USIBWC in conjunction with a comprehensive organizational assessment conducted for the agency in 2004 by a private consulting firm. The result is a much less bureaucratic/hierarchical structure, with significantly fewer supervisors. The flattened organization now enables policy-level officials to promote effective cross-functional communication and coordination, be more responsive to stakeholders' needs, and maintain closer contact with

frontline staff while ensuring accountability and results.

The Commission's new approach is to focus on high-priority programs/projects by ensuring execution of top agency priorities and minimizing and/or eliminating low-priority projects. Cost savings from this approach have enabled the agency to execute projects that would have otherwise been deferred to the next year. In FY 2004, the USIBWC experienced significant decreases in both travel and training. All travel and training were restricted to mission essential, thereby decreasing costs that otherwise would have been incurred without directly benefitting the agency's goals. These savings allowed high-priority projects to be funded, furthering the objectives of the agency mission. While Commissioner Duran personally devoted significant attention to internal management issues during 2004 to ensure their resolution, he recognized the need to turn his full attention to broader political and mission-critical challenges. With this in mind, the Commissioner directed the establishment of a Chief Executive Officer position to serve as the overall day-to-day manager of the USIBWC; the position is expected to be filled by April 2005.

IX. 2005 PROJECTED PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

A. Rio Grande Water Deliveries. To minimize the margin of interpretation of the 1944 Water Treaty, the IBWC will work to clarify those aspects that are not clearly defined in the treaty or in IBWC minutes. Accordingly, both IBWC Sections will continue to work in support of both federal governments to implement understandings to eliminate by September 2005 the deficit in Mexican water deliveries to the United States.

B. San Diego – Tijuana Sanitation. During 2005, the USIBWC will complete the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) and will issue a Record of Decision selecting an alternative. This environmental documentation is needed so that the agency can implement Public Law 106-457, which calls for a public-private partnership to provide secondary treatment in Mexico of effluent from the SBIWTP. The agency will also issue a task order to a consultant to design a monitoring program to determine the effect, if any, of discharge of SBIWTP effluent on bacteria levels at ocean monitoring stations. The agency will also work with a consultant to identify interim measures that would optimize the SBIWTP's current treatment process to improve the quality of the effluent discharged through the ocean outfall.

C. Nogales Sanitation. During 2005, the IBWC will continue negotiations related to future management of wastewater originating in Nogales, Sonora that exceeds the treatment capacity allotted to Mexico in the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant (NIWTP). Consideration will be given to constructing treatment facilities in Mexico. Efforts will also advance to upgrade the NIWTP.

D. New River Sanitation. The IBWC will continue to monitor progress of the sanitation works under construction in Mexicali, Baja California, which are scheduled to be operational by December

2005; this infrastructure will be conducive to advancing solutions to the pollution of the New River. In addition, the Commission will work on developing a strategy to improve water quality for the flows that are discharged into the International Drain and downstream from the treatment works.

E. Lining of the All-American Canal. The IBWC will work with its technical consultants from both countries to develop joint recommendations regarding measures to reduce the project's impact on Mexico and will present those for the approval of both governments.

F. Control of Invasive Species in the Rio Grande and Colorado Rivers. The IBWC, in conjunction with participating institutions from both countries, will investigate the application of mechanical, chemical, and biological methods to combat hydrilla in the waters below Falcon Dam in the Rio Grande and giant salvinia in the Colorado River, and will jointly determine the most appropriate control method for each case.

G. Rio Grande Basin Binational Summit. Both IBWC Sections continue working under a cooperative plan to organize the Rio Grande Basin Binational Summit in accordance with IBWC Minute No. 308, with a goal of developing recommendations for both governments on sustainable management of the Rio Grande Basin. A coordinating committee consisting of basin experts and users was formed to support planning of the summit. The summit is projected to take place in the sister cities of McAllen, Texas – Reynosa, Tamaulipas in September 2005.

H. International Bridges. The IBWC is in the process of approving plans for construction of a new bridge at the Fabens, Texas Port of Entry.

UNITED STATES SECTION
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
OFFICES

Headquarters
4171 North Mesa Street C-100
El Paso, TX 79902
915-832-4100

American Dam
2616 W. Paisano Drive
El Paso, TX 79922
915-351-1030

Amistad Dam
HCR#3, Box 37
Highway 90 West
Del Rio, TX 78840
830-775-2437

Falcon Dam
PO Box 1
(FM 2098, Reservoir Road)
Falcon Heights, TX 78545
956-848-5211

Las Cruces
504 S. Miranda
Las Cruces, NM 88001
505-541-7050

Lower Rio Grande
325 Golf Course Road
Mercedes, TX 78570
956-565-3150

Nogales
865 Rio Rico Industrial Park
Rio Rico, AZ 85648
520-281-1832

Presidio
PO Box 848
Presidio, TX 79845
432-229-3751

San Diego
2225 Dairy Mart Road
San Ysidro, CA 92173-2840
619-662-7600

Washington, DC
Office of Mexican Affairs - WHA/MEX
Department of State
Washington, DC 20520
202-647-8529

Yuma
1940 S. 3rd Avenue, Suite A
Yuma, AZ 85364
928-782-1598

Zacarias Dominguez
PO Box 8
Fort Hancock, TX 79839
915-769-3817

United States Section
International Boundary and
Water Commission

4171 North Mesa Street, C-100
El Paso, Texas 79902
915-832-4100
www.ibwc.state.gov