

**Colorado River Citizens' Forum**  
**El Centro, CA**  
**May 11, 2009**  
**\*Tentative Meeting Notes**

Board Members in attendance:

Tom Davis	Richard Ryan
Bill Plummer	Nancy Wright
Brian McNeece	Stella Mendoza
Francisco Zamora	Wade Noble

Board Members absent:

Kevin Eatherly	
Mark Watson	Cary Meister

USIBWC Staff in attendance:

Anna Morales  
Diane Hinkle  
Billy Finn, El Paso

MXIBWC Staff in attendance:

Francisco Bernal

❖ 31 Members of the public in attendance

Environmental Aspects and Operational Issues related to the All American Canal Lining, Dee Bradshaw, Assistant Supervisor, Environmental Management, and Todd Shields, Project Manager, Imperial Irrigation District: (Power Point)

A Power Point presentation was given on this subject. See the complete presentation at:  
[http://www.ibwc.gov/Files/CF\\_CR\\_AACL\\_P\\_VDB\\_051109.pdf](http://www.ibwc.gov/Files/CF_CR_AACL_P_VDB_051109.pdf)

- Congressional authorization of the Project in 1988
- Approved Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) signed March 1994
- US Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion (BO)/CO issued February 8, 1996
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) 404 Exemption Letter dated June 2, 2006
- EIR/EIR Addendum and Amendment to ECP completed July 2006
- CDFG 2081 Incidental Take Permit issued August 14, 2006
- Construction started June 2006 then stopped by court ordered injunction based on environmental compliance litigation
- Court injunction lifted in early 2007. Notice to proceed issued to both contractors by early June 2007. Cost of injunction: at least \$30 million.

All-American Canal Lining Project (AACL P)

- A core component of the Quantification Settlement Agreement limiting California's Colorado River allotment to 4.4 million acre-feet.
- Construct a 23 - mile long concrete canal parallel to the existing All-American Canal (AAC)
- Conserve up to 67,700 acre/feet of Colorado River Water (enough water for 500,000 people)
- Mitigate for all environmental impacts of the Project

Environmental Issues:

- Yuma Clapper Rail
- Colorado Fringed Toed Lizard
- Peirson's Milk-Vetch

#### Environmental Impact – Wetland Habitat

- Loss of 99 acres of scattered riparian vegetation
- Loss of 1 acre of marsh vegetation
- Loss of 24 acres of canal bank vegetation

#### Environmental Mitigation – Wetland

- Wetland Habitat
- Creation of 44-acre wetland restoration site between Drop 3 and Drop 4
- Off site of AACLP
- Named for Chanan Remington, Supervisor Michel Remington's 14-year-old daughter who passed away in 2000 and who loved wildlife

#### Environmental Impact – Dune Habitat

- Plants
- Peirson's Milk-Vetch
- Algodones Dune Sunflower
- Giant Spanish Needle
- Wiggin's Croton
- Sand Food

#### Environmental Mitigation – Dune Habitat

- Dune Habitat Restoration Area within 45 acres of old portion of abandoned All-American Canal
- Seed collection and storage for future distribution within spoil area and Dune Habitat Restoration Area

#### Environmental Impact and Mitigation – flat tailed horned lizard

- Purchase 1,114 acres of habitat in the Borrego Badlands Management Area as off-site compensation
- Anza-Borrego State Park will be the owner and manager of the properties acquired at fair market value

#### Environmental Impact and Mitigation – Fisheries Habitat

- Estimated loss of 96,000 fish due to loss of approximately 356 acres of fish habitat
- Negotiating a monetary endowment (\$300,000) for California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) purchase of irrigation water for a new fish pond being constructed as mitigation for the Coachella Canal Lining Project at the CDFG Wister Unit

#### Reach 2 Fish Recovery. Two tons of fish recovered from the old canal, including:

- Large mouth bass
- Small mouth bass
- Striped bass
- Channel catfish
- Flathead catfish
- Blue gill
- IID's Triploid grass carp. . . and a bunch of common carp

Reaches 1A and 1B Fish Recovery using Reclamation's e-shocking boats March 2009. Relocated the sport fish to Sunbeam Lake.

#### Environmental Impact and Mitigation – Razorback Sucker

- Entrained individuals found during fish recovery operations would have been pit tagged and transported back to the Colorado River under the direction of a qualified fishery biologist

#### Environmental Impacts and Mitigation – Large Mammals

- Negotiating with CDFG to construct DWU Wildlife Guzzlers, and possibly installing deer fencing to protect large mammals.

#### Environmental Impact & Mitigation – Cultural Resources

- Conducted Class III Cultural Resource surveys of full right-of-way and submitted results to the State Historic Preservation Office
- Reclamation consulted with local Native American tribes
- Developed and implemented Recovery and Discovery Plans
- Had a Cultural Resource and tribal monitor on site during implementation of the plan

#### Environmental Impact & Mitigation – Recreation, Transportation and Public Safety

- Developed Recreation and Transportation Plan to ensure public and construction crew safety during construction within the project site

#### Environmental Impact and Mitigation - Grubbing and Vegetation Removal

- Migratory Bird Treaty Act

#### Improving the Quality of Mexicali Effluent: Design and Implementation Plan for a Treatment Wetland – Francisco Zamora-Arroyo, Director, Upper Gulf of California Legacy Program, Sonoran Institute: (Power Point)

Dr. Zamora gave a presentation on this topic, available at:

[http://www.ibwc.gov/Files/CF\\_CR\\_Mexicali\\_Effluent\\_Treatment\\_Wetland\\_051109.pdf](http://www.ibwc.gov/Files/CF_CR_Mexicali_Effluent_Treatment_Wetland_051109.pdf)

Current Status of the Plant:

- Treats 880 liters/second and discharges into four artificial lakes before reaching the Hardy River
- Effluent meets the Mexican standard known as NOM-001-SEMARNAT 96 but the effluent has high concentration of micro-algae that is impacting recreational activities in the Hardy River, and fish die offs have been associated with high concentrations of ammoniac nitrogen.

Objectives of the Treatment Wetland:

1. To improve the quality of the effluent from the wastewater treatment plant so it meets the NOM-003-SEMARNAT-97 standards before it is discharged to the Hardy River
2. To generate ecological and social benefits for the region through the creation of wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities.

Design agreements with State Public Services Commission of Mexicali (CESPM):

- a. Wetland is to be located in the Las Arenitas Wastewater Treatment Plant complex.
- b. Use of existing infrastructure (lakes) is desirable.
- c. Quality of the effluent to be treated by the wetland meets NOM-001-SEMARNAT-1996 standards (for reuse in agriculture).

- d. Quality of the wetland effluent meets the (for direct human contact).

#### Conceptual Design:

- System of four cells
- Total area 99 hectares (245 acres): 70% open water, 30% vegetation.

#### Wetland Components:

- Treatment
- Ecological
- Recreation

Required Wetland area: 81 hectares (200 acres); 97 hectares considering 20% more in area as a safety criteria

#### Construction Plan:

He discussed the construction plan which includes construction of levees to divide the cells, establishment of cattails, and construction of channels and structures that connect the cells.

#### Implementation Plan:

Levee rehabilitation and construction of new water connection structures, filling to decrease water depth of existing lakes and construction of discharge outflow channels.

Summary of Costs: \$29,304,036 pesos (about 2.2 million U.S. dollars).

#### Ongoing implementation efforts:

Sonoran Institute and Pronatura are currently planting 1 hectare (2.47 ac) of cattail in Las Arenitas wetland as a part of an ongoing project funded through North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). CESPM is also contributing to this effort by facilitating the use of machinery.

Sonoran Institute has submitted a proposal to CESPM for expanding this effort to establish an additional 5 hectares (12.355 acres) of emergent vegetation.

#### Drop II Storage Reservoir Construction Project

Michael Vandeveld, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, gave a Power Point presentation on this topic, available at: [http://www.ibwc.gov/Files/CF\\_CR\\_Recl\\_Drop2\\_Const\\_Proj\\_051109.pdf](http://www.ibwc.gov/Files/CF_CR_Recl_Drop2_Const_Proj_051109.pdf)

##### ➤ Coachella Canal Turnout:

- Coachella Turnout will be modified to continue to provide flows into Coachella Canal and also divert flows into the new Drop 2 Storage Reservoir Inlet Canal. It will have 2 gates dedicated for each canal with a 5th gate able to allow flows into either canal at will.
- Inlet Canal 6.5 miles, 1,800 cubic feet per second capacity
- ACJV was required to modify this structure into a bifurcation structure, a structure that allows the water to flow into 2 different directions.
- The deadline for completing the first phase of this work and returning the Coachella flows back into the canal was February 28, 2008.
- They started work on November 24, 2008. Total excavation requirement of 7,000,000 cubic yards (cy) for the reservoir and canal facilities.

##### ➤ Reservoir Embankment:

- AJCV has excavated 1,000,000 cy of soil out of a total excavation requirement of 7,000,000 cy for the reservoir and canal facilities
- Reservoir width and length .8 mile, depth 28 ft, 3:1 side slope.

- Geo-membrane ACJV has over 1,700 rolls of geo-membrane stored onsite, with installation scheduled to start in the reservoir in mid-May.
- 108-inch Pipe Placement:
- Installation of the 9ft diameter steel pipe started in late March and will continue of the next few months until it crosses Interstate 8.
  - Construction contracts, quality assurance, utility relocations, mitigation, project management, and contingencies cost \$172,000,000
  - Inlet/Outlet Structure 1: This reservoir inlet/outlet structure is one of seven structures on this project and one of five currently under construction.

#### Questions & Answers (Q&A):

Q: Does the geo-membrane overlap?

A: Yes, they are bonded.

Q: What do they do if it fails? How do they find the leak?

A: They usually try to find it by listening. They take a knife and divide the seam and test each section that way. They seem to be pretty successful this way.

Q: What is the life of this membrane?

A: 50 years with the ultraviolet shining on it. They have 2 feet of soil below and 9 in. on the slopes, we expect it to last longer than anyone here will ever see.

Q: How would the water be measured going into this structure?

A: We have devices in the pipeline and in the inlet canal before it goes to the reservoir. SCADA System.

Q: Any pumping required?

A: No pumping at all; everything is gravity flow.

Q: Any anticipated issues with silt?

A: Yes, we expect to go to the reservoir every 4 or 5 years to remove silt and sand.

#### **Public Comment/Suggested Future Agenda Items**

Q: Is IBWC stimulus money going to be used in the Yuma Area?

A: No, visit [http://www.ibwc.gov/Files/PressRelease\\_030909.pdf](http://www.ibwc.gov/Files/PressRelease_030909.pdf) for the agency's Recovery Act projects.

Next meeting to be held September 1<sup>st</sup> in Yuma (location TBA)

- Update on the environmental mitigation of the All-American Canal
- Reclamation's Stimulus monies - Funding
- Update activity Multi-Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) along the river
- Quagga Mussel
- Yuma Mesa Conduit
- Mexico water rights

Certificates of appreciation were then presented to the Citizens' Forum Board Members who have completed their two-year terms as volunteers on the board. Application forms are available for those interested in serving on the board.

Thank you to all the presenters for their presentations.

\*Meeting notes are tentative and summarize in draft the contents and discussion of Citizens' Forum meetings. While these notes are intended to provide a general overview of Citizens' Forum meetings, they may not necessarily be accurate or complete, and may not be representative of USIBWC policy or positions.