

**Colorado River Citizens' Forum**  
**Yuma, Arizona**  
**September 1, 2009**  
**\*Tentative Meeting Notes**

Board Members in attendance:

Wade Noble, Irrigation District Attorney  
Kevin Eatherly, Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area  
Stella Mendoza, Imperial Irrigation District  
Bill Plummer, Water Resources Consultant  
Nancy Wright, California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Elston Grubaugh, Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation District  
Sam Spiller, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Miguel Figueroa, Calexico New River Committee, Inc (CNRC)  
Marcos Moore, Jr., Moore AG Logistics LLC

USIBWC Staff in attendance:

Anna Morales, Yuma Office  
Diane Hinkle, Yuma Office  
Sally Spener, El Paso Office

MXIBWC Staff in attendance:

Francisco Bernal, Mexicali office

15 Members of the public in attendance

Welcome and Introductions

Anna Morales welcomed the attendees and asked the Board to introduce themselves and tell us a little about themselves and their reasons for wanting to serve on the CRCF Board.

Overview of IBWC Projects and Citizen's Forum Board Responsibilities, Sally Spener, Public Affairs Officer, USIBWC, El Paso

Sally gave a PowerPoint presentation on the following:

IBWC Mission: The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, is responsible for applying the boundary and water treaties between the two countries and settling differences that arise in their application.

USIBWC Mission Statement: Provide bi-national solutions to issues that arise during the application of United States-Mexico treaties regarding boundary demarcation, national ownership of waters, sanitation, water quality, and flood control in the border region.

History of the IBWC:

- Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) was the Peace Treaty that ended the U.S. Mexican War. It provided for the appointment by each Government of a Commissioner and a Surveyor to demarcate the new boundary.
- Treaty of December 30, 1853 re-established the southern boundary of New Mexico and Arizona.

- Convention of 1882 established the International Boundary Commission as a temporary Commission to resurvey the land boundary and place additional monuments.
- Convention of 1884 adopted rules to address questions that arose about the location of the boundary when the rivers changed course
- Convention of 1889 established the International Boundary Commission to apply the rules of the 1884 Convention.
- Banco Convention 1905 modified the 1889 treaty to retain the Rio Grande and the Colorado River as the boundary.
- Convention of 1906 provides for the distribution between Mexico and the United States of the waters of the Rio Grande in the El Paso-Juárez region and to deliver 60,000 acre-feet per year with proportional reduction in deliveries in case of extraordinary drought. The water is stored in Elephant Butte Dam in NM.
- Convention of 1933/Rio Grande Rectification Project – Stabilize the international boundary in the El Paso- Juarez Valley

#### Structure of the 1944 Treaty:

- Established the modern day International Boundary and Water Commission and shifted the focus of the old International Boundary Commission to water issues.
- The Commission has two sections, each one representing its respective federal government.
- By treaty, each Section is headed by an Engineer Commissioner assisted by a Secretary, two Principal Engineers, and a Legal Advisor, all of whom have a diplomatic status.

#### 1944 Water Treaty - Rio Grande:

- Allots the waters of the Rio Grande from Ft. Quitman (downstream of El Paso) to the Gulf of Mexico.
- Mexico delivers water to the United States from six of its Rio Grande tributaries in cycles of five years a minimum annual average of 350,000 acre-feet.
- Mexico's deficit in deliveries in the 1990s was resolved several years ago.

#### 1944 Water Treaty – Colorado River:

- U.S. delivers to Mexico a volume of 1.5 million acre-feet per year
- When there are surplus waters, U.S. delivers to Mexico a total volume of up to 1.7 million acre-feet per year
- In extraordinary drought, Mexico reduced in proportion to U.S.

#### IBWC Minutes:

- Decisions of the Commission are recorded in the form of Minutes.
- Minutes are binding agreements of the IBWC intended to implement treaty.
- They take effect once approved by the U.S. Department of State and Mexico's Foreign Affairs Ministry.
- There are over 300 minutes.

Chamizal Convention (1963) – Relocated the Rio Grande in a new concrete lined channel in El Paso-Juarez. The Convention resolved the 100 year old boundary problems at El Paso, Texas/Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, known as the Chamizal Dispute.

1970 Boundary Treaty: resolved all pending boundary differences between the two countries, and provided for maintaining the Rio Grande and the Colorado River as the international boundary.

- IBWC to maintain the Rio Grande and Colorado River as the international boundary
- Boundary is middle of the channel occupied by normal flow or middle of the channel which in normal flows has the greatest average width over its length
- IBWC to delineate the international boundary on maps
- IBWC may stabilize or rectify the channel
- Prohibits construction of works that would obstruct or deflect normal or flood flows.

Boundary Demarcation:

- U.S. and Mexican Sections of IBWC jointly determine location of the boundary and demarcate the boundary.
- There are 258 principal monuments between El Paso, TX – Cd. Juarez, Chih. and the Pacific Ocean.
- Hundreds of intermediate boundary markers
- Boundary demarcation plaques at ports of entry/international bridges.
- IBWC is responsible for maintaining the monuments and preparing boundary maps.

Projects: The commission maintains offices at sister cities throughout the border region where we have projects from San Diego – Tijuana to the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Our Headquarters offices are based in El Paso, TX and Ciudad Juarez.

Sanitation Projects: There are 3 international wastewater treatment plants

- San Diego, CA which treats wastewater from Tijuana
- Nogales, AZ which treats wastewater from Nogales, AZ and Nogales, Sonora MX
- Nuevo Laredo, Tamps which treats wastewater from Mexico.

Water Quality:

- Treaties do not regulate water quality
- IBWC has conducted bi-national water quality studies with partners from both countries
- Water quality data is routinely exchanged
- Working on bi-national water quality database
- Texas Clean Rivers Program for the Rio Grande conducts regular monitoring and publishes reports.

Flood Control Projects:

- Canalization Project - 106 river miles in New Mexico and Texas
- Rectification Project – 84 river miles near El Paso, TX
- Presidio Flood Control Project – 13 river miles near Presidio TX
- Lower Rio Grande – 186 River miles in south Texas to Gulf of Mexico
- Tijuana River Flood Control Project – small project at San Diego – Tijuana
- Levee rehabilitation program underway to meet FEMA standards
- \$220 million in Recovery Act funding for levee rehab.
- Presidio Project – smallest flood control project on the Rio Grande. In September 2008, floodwaters inundated Ojinaga, Mexico and rural area in the U.S. after levees were overtopped or failed. The Commission is currently working on emergency repairs and on developing long term plan to rehabilitate the flood control project in both countries.

International Storage dams:

- Amistad Dam (Del Rio, TX)
- Falcon Dam (Falcon Heights, TX)
- Purposes:
  - Flood Control
  - Recreation
  - Hydroelectric Power
  - Water Supply

#### International Bridges and Border Crossings:

- International bridges (34+)
- Border Crossings/Ports on the land boundary (23+)
- Crossing of utility/service lines (43+)
- Review border infrastructure projects to ensure no deflection of surface water

#### Citizens' Forum Program:

- Purpose of the forum is to facilitate the exchange of information between the USIBWC and the local community regarding ongoing and future USIBWC projects in the area.
- The Citizens' Forum is intended to bring together community members enabling the early and continued two-way flow of information, concerns, values, and needs between the USIBWC and the general public, environmentalists, government agencies, irrigation districts, municipalities, etc.

#### Board member duties:

- Attend public meetings approximately four times per year alternating in Yuma and Imperial Counties
- Board term is for two years
- Board members are expected to be available to the public to facilitate the exchange of information
- Review and comment on technical documents and activities associated with USIBWC projects in the area
- Discuss plans and issues related to ongoing and future USIBWC projects
- CRCF is not a federal advisory board; goal is to exchange information and to receive feedback from a diversity of viewpoints
- Members serve as volunteers. There is no reimbursement for expenses.

#### Leadership: Two Co-Chairs

- USIBWC Co-Chair
  - Area Operations Manager Anna Morales
- Community Co-Chair
  - Selected by the board.
- Co-chair will chair every other meeting. Rely on Co-chair on administrative issues to provide guidance, agenda item prioritizing, meeting preparations and location.

Board members recommended a brief background on each person interested in this position. Selection to be determined prior to next meeting.

#### Citizens Forum Information:

- All meetings are open to the public.
- Regular communication with the board via e-mail.
- Minutes and presentations are available on the USIBWC website

[http://www.ibwc.gov/Citizens\\_Forums/CF\\_Colorado.html](http://www.ibwc.gov/Citizens_Forums/CF_Colorado.html)

Overview of Yuma Project Office Responsibilities, Anna Morales, Yuma Area Operations Manager, USIBWC, Yuma, AZ

The Colorado River, which runs from north to south, forms the international boundary between the United States and Mexico for 24 miles in the vicinity of Yuma, Arizona and San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora.

The key responsibility of the Yuma office is to ensure delivery of water to Mexico from the Colorado River per the 1944 Water Treaty between Mexico and the United States which includes a requirement of 1.5 million acre-feet of water.

1944 Water Treaty:

- The treaty also authorized the construction of Morelos Dam to divert the Colorado River water for Mexico's use.
- The Morelos Dam has 20 river gates. These gates are always closed but exercised at least once a year. Most The 12 intake gates divert the water into Mexico for their use through the Reforma Canal. The remaining 140,000 AF is delivered at SIB at the San Luis, AZ/Sonora boundary. SIB flows are a combination of the Main Drain (combination of groundwater wells and run-off from valley fields), East Main Canal, West Main Canal and the 242 Lateral groundwater wells. Water is delivered into the Sanchez Mejorada Canal in Mexico.
- The Yuma Project Office also manages, plans and administers the operations and maintenance of an extensive system of river gages and facilities in the Colorado River from NIB to SIB for the purpose of securing water accounting, water quality and salinity data required to meet Treaty and domestic requirements. Under a Memorandum of Understanding, Reclamation does all the programming/upgrading of the telemetry system.

1970 Boundary Treaty:

- IBWC to maintain the Rio Grande and Colorado River as the international boundary
- IBWC is to delineate the international boundary on maps.
- An aerial flight was conducted July 2009, currently processing data.
- Delineation of boundary must be in accordance with Treaty and agreed to by both Sections

Morelos Dam Vegetation and Sedimentation Project:

- In coordination with Mexico, the Yuma Project Office assures the safe and proper operation and maintenance of a flood control system on the Colorado River and of the Morelos Diversion Dam in Mexico such as dredging to maintain the river's conveyance capacity.
- One project this year, the Morelos Dam Vegetation and Sedimentation project, began January 23<sup>rd</sup> and was completed April 18<sup>th</sup> by a contractor in Mexico. Approximately 40 acres of brush was cleared and 260,000 cubic yards of sediment above and below the Morelos Dam was removed. All the material was transported and deposited in Mexico.
- Funding for the environmental restoration/mitigation on the Morelos Dam project, which is our final phase, will be initiated possibly October 1st. We have 4 years to complete the restoration and

mitigation. Restoration will include planting native grass in an area above the Morelos Dam, cottonwood willows, and honey mesquite depending on the area.

- Currently addressing the annual O&M with Mexico which will require a Binational meeting to insure that the area is maintained and kept from building up in the future.

#### Water Quality:

- Yuma Project Office in conjunction with CILA (the Mexican Section of the Commission) and representatives of the Mexican government, monitor the water quality in the New River in Calexico, CA/Mexicali, BC, through observations and the collection of samples. Observations are conducted bi-monthly and samples taken twice a month at several locations on the New River in the US and Mexico.
- Monitor conditions of the Wellton-Mohawk bypass drain in Mexico. Minute 248 dated June 10, 1975 extended the bypass drain which terminated below Morelos Dam to the Santa Clara Slough upstream from the Gulf of California. This bypass drain extension is 50.4 miles in length of which 16.04 miles is in the U.S. and 34.36 miles in Mexican territory. Minute 284 ensures the integrity and capacity of the drain. The Minute also provides the process of joint operation and maintenance inspections & recommendations for the 34.36 miles in Mexico and secures funds from Reclamation for the O&M activity.
- Minute 242 (1973) regulates the salinity of water delivered to Mexico. USIBWC collects daily samples at NIB and Reclamation collects daily samples at Imperial Dam. Calculate monthly and annual salinity differentials between Imperial Dam in the U.S. and Morelos Dam in Mexico to assure compliance with Treaty and Minute requirements. Minute 242 sets forth the measure to assure the Colorado River water delivered to Mexico upstream from Morelos Dam has a flow-weighted average annual salinity of no more than 115ppm +/- 30ppm US count (121 +/- 30ppm Mexico count). The data is exchanged with Reclamation and Mexico and a Joint Salinity report is signed by both Sections of IBWC.
- Additional measures were undertaken to reduce salinity or even out salinity spikes at the Southerly International Boundary:
  - ❖ Construction of a diversion canal into the Wellton-Mohawk Drain.
  - ❖ Installation of a variable speed pump and automatic controllers for remote operation of the system
  - ❖ Purchase of equipment for continuous monitoring of salinity. Reclamation has installed the SCADA system
  - ❖ SIB meters have been installed and currently in the process of being upgraded to work with the SCADA system

#### Other responsibilities:

- Maintain the O&M of Rockwood Weir at NIB
- Maintain monuments 168-204 which start south of Lukeville, AZ POE to San Luis, AZ POE
- Maintain the boundary buttons and plaques at the San Luis, AZ and Andrade, CA POE.

#### Board Discussion

No other discussions

#### Suggested Future Agenda Items

1. Quantification Settlement Agreement overview and update

2. Colorado River Protection Act
3. Final Briefing on All American Canal
4. Brief overview of Drop 2 Reservoir and its purpose
5. New River water quality from the Calexico New River Committee and California Regional Water Quality Control Board.

If there are other issues/projects you would like to hear, please email the Yuma IBWC office at [annamorales@ibwc.gov](mailto:annamorales@ibwc.gov) or [sallyspener@ibwc.gov](mailto:sallyspener@ibwc.gov)

Next meeting tentatively scheduled for December 14, 2009 from 4-6pm at the Imperial Irrigation District office El Centro, CA.

\*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.