



International Boundary and Water Commission
United States Section

IBWC HISTORY, MISSION, PROJECTS



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International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

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.

Excellence through teamwork.



Early History of the IBWC

- **19th century treaties**
 - Focused on establishing and demarcating the international boundary
 - Established rules for resolving boundary disputes due to shifting boundary rivers
 - Established temporary commissions to demarcate and resolve boundary disputes
 - Permanent commission established in 1889



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Convention of 1906

- Distribution between Mexico and the U.S. of the waters of the Rio Grande in El Paso-Juarez
- U.S. to deliver 60 kaf/yr
- Proportional reduction in deliveries in case of extraordinary drought
- Water stored in Elephant Butte Dam, NM
- Water diverted by Mexico at International Dam



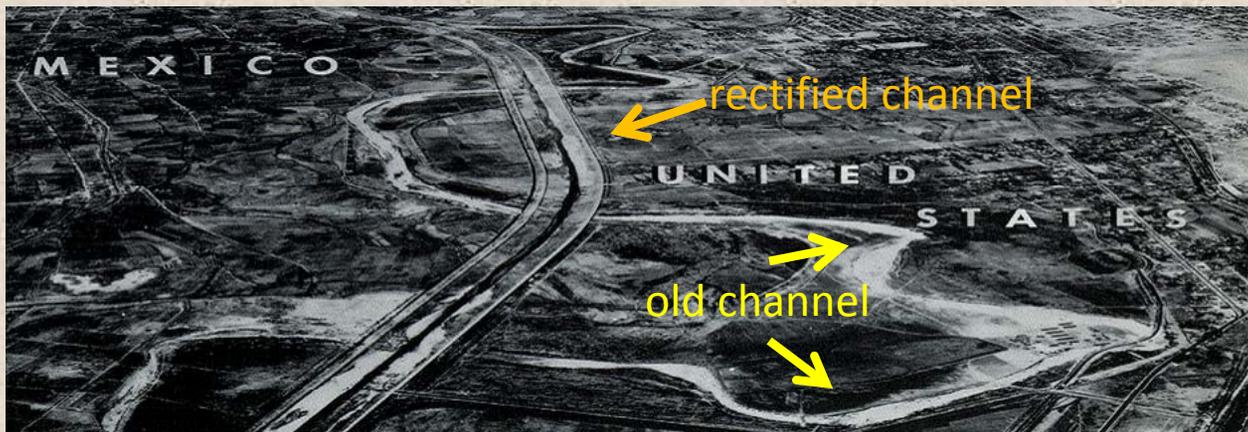
International Dam

Excellence through teamwork.



Convention of 1933

- Stabilized the boundary in the El Paso-Juarez Valley
- Straightened the river channel
- Flood control levees in both countries
- Rio Grande Rectification Project



The meandering river channel was straightened.

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1944 Water Treaty – Rio Grande

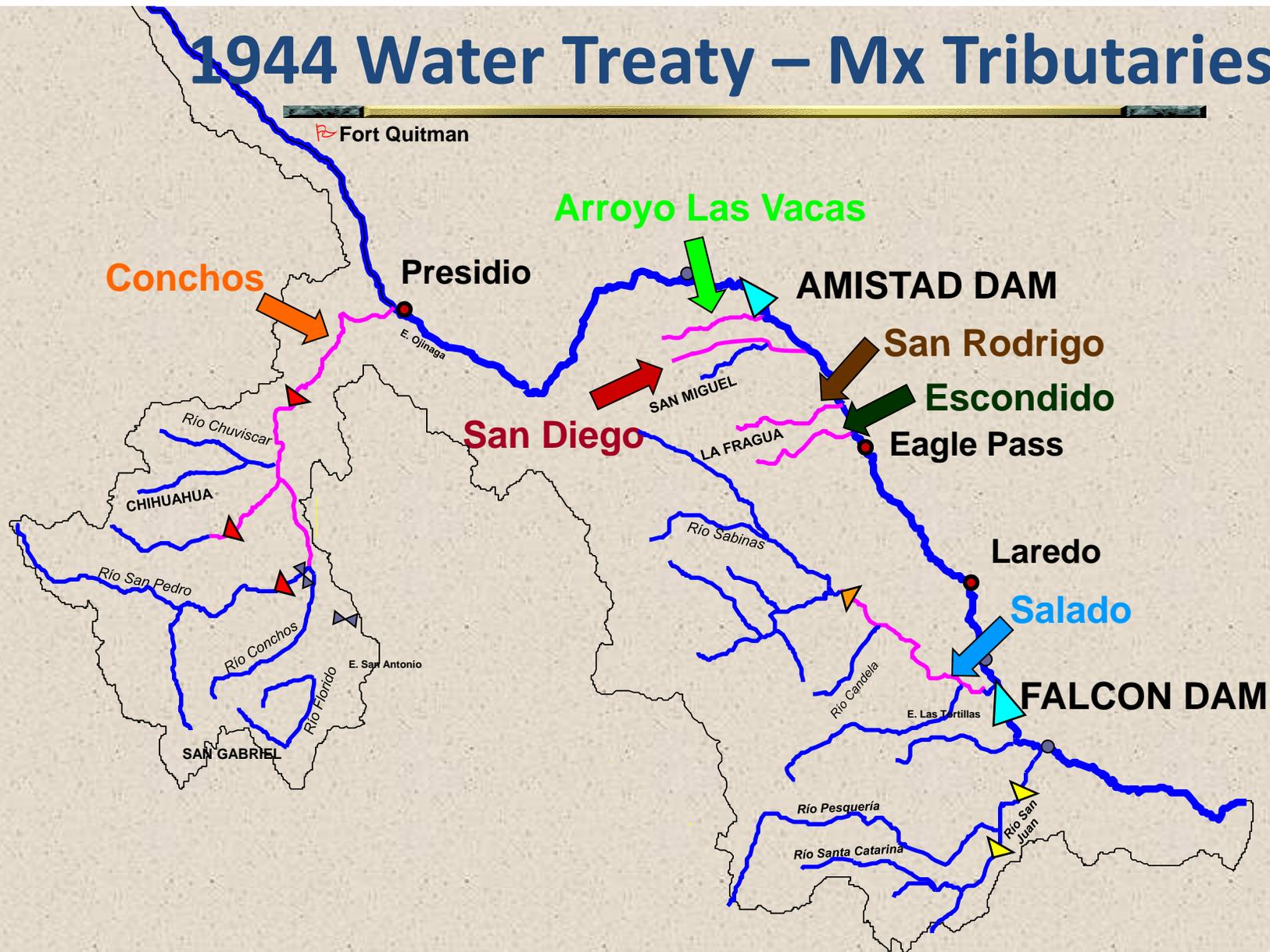
- Mexico delivers water to the U.S., Ft. Quitman to Gulf
- U.S. receives 1/3 of the waters arriving in the Rio Grande from 6 Mexican tributaries
- Minimum annual average of 350 kaf in cycles of 5 yrs
- Mexico incurred a deficit in deliveries in the 1990s
- Treaty authorized construction of up to three storage dams on Rio Grande; only 2 were built

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1944 Water Treaty – Mx Tributaries





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1944 Water Treaty – Colorado River

- U.S. to deliver to Mexico a volume of 1.5 maf/yr
- When there are surplus waters, U.S. to deliver to Mexico a total volume of up to 1.7 maf/yr
- In extraordinary drought, Mexico reduced in proportion to U.S.



Colorado River at NIB

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Chamizal Convention (1963)

- Relocated the Rio Grande in a concrete-lined channel through central El Paso-Juarez
- Resolved a century-long boundary dispute



*President Adolfo Lopez
Mateos Channel*

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1970 Boundary Treaty

- 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 boundary on maps
- IBWC may stabilize or rectify the channel (numerous rectifications carried out)
- Prohibits construction of works that would obstruct or deflect normal or flood flows

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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



IBWC Commissioners and Secretaries sign Min. 318

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STRUCTURE PER 1944 TREATY

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION (IBWC)

MEXICAN SECTION

- Mexican Commissioner
- Secretary
- Two Principal Engineers
- Legal Adviser

US SECTION

- US Commissioner
- Secretary
- Two Principal Engineers
- Legal Adviser



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

Field Offices

San Diego Yuma Nogales Up. Rio Grande Presidio Amistad Falcon L. Rio Grande





Boundary Demarcation

- U.S. and Mexican Sections of IBWC jointly determine location of the boundary and demarcate the boundary
- 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 responsible for maintaining the monuments

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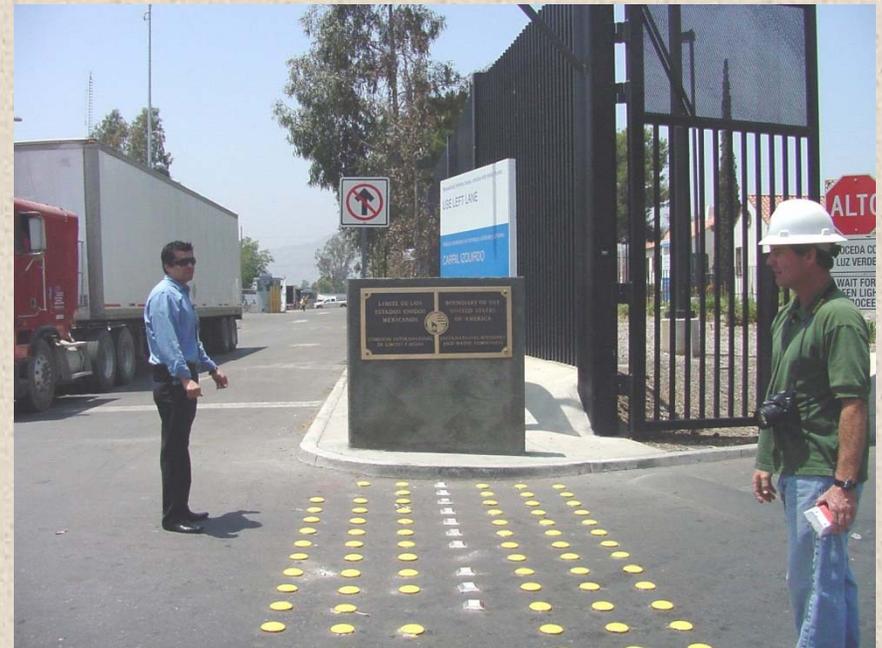


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Boundary Demarcation



Monument No. 123, Nogales



*Boundary demarcation at
Tecate Port of Entry*

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International Bridges

- IBWC maintains 3 international bridges
 - Cordova International-Bridge of the Americas (El Paso-Juarez)
 - Tornillo, TX-Guadalupe, Chih. “Fabens Bridge”
 - Ft. Hancock, TX-El Porvenir, Chih.



Fabens Bridge

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Sanitation

- 1944 Treaty authorizes Commission to give “preferential attention to the solution of all border sanitation problems”
- 3 international wastewater treatment plants
 - Nogales (Arizona)
 - South Bay (California)
 - Nuevo Laredo (Tamaulipas)



Nogales IWTP

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Water Quality

- Treaties do not regulate water quality
- IBWC has conducted binational water quality studies with partners from both countries
- Working on binational water quality database
- Texas Clean Rivers Program for the Rio Grande conducts regular monitoring and publishes reports



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Reservoirs

- Two international storage dams on the Rio Grande
- Reservoirs store water for use by both countries and provide flood control
- Each country has hydroelectric power plants
- Power is generated equally regardless of national ownership of water releases



Falcon Dam Powerplant

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Reservoirs

- Amistad Dam
 - Built in 1969
 - Located at Del Rio, TX-
Cd. Acuña, Coahuila
- Falcon Dam
 - Built in 1954
 - Located at Falcon Heights, TX-
Nva. Cd. Guerrero, Coah.
- Combined conservation capacity of over 5 maf



Amistad Dam



Falcon Dam

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Flood Control

- 4 USIBWC Flood Control Projects
 - Tijuana River – San Diego, CA
 - Upper Rio Grande – Southern New Mexico and West Texas
 - Presidio – Big Bend area of Texas
 - Lower Rio Grande – near McAllen, Harlingen, Brownsville

Rio Grande flood at El Paso-Cd. Juarez
9/4/2006



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INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION,
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO
UNITED STATES SECTION



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