Colorado River Citizens' Forum
Imperial, California
February 20, 2007

***Tentative Meeting Notes**

Board Members in attendance:

Brian McNeece	Wade Noble
Marie Barrett	James Davey
Roger Gingrich	Paul McAleese

Board Members absent:
Eric Reyes
Pablo Orozco

USIBWC Staff in attendance:
Commissioner Carlos Marin
John Turner
Anna Morales
Hayley Goodstein

MXIBWC Staff in attendance:
Juan Riosmoreno

Members of the public in attendance:
Mike Kincaid, EDAW
Greg Ferguson, Yuma County Board of Supervisors
Cesar Neyoy, Bajo El Sol Newspaper
Miguel Figueroa, Calexico New River Committee
Nathan Starr, AMEC
Michelle Stevens, IVC
Doug Liden, USEPA
Carol Hann, Citizen
Carlos De La Parra, Citizen
Jack Simes, USBR
Cindy Hoeft, USBR
Juanita Salas, Citizen
Jose Aguilar, CESPM
Paul Peschel, IID

Welcome and Introductions
Brian McNeece welcomed the attendees and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Projects and Challenges of the International Boundary and Water Commission in the Colorado River Region – Commissioner Carlos Marin, USIBWC, El Paso, Texas

Commissioner Marin gave a PowerPoint presentation on the following:
1944 Water Treaty: In coordination with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), U.S. is to deliver to Mexico a volume of 1.5 million acre-feet (maf) a year of Colorado River water. In years of surplus waters, U.S. to deliver to Mexico a total volume of up to 1.7 maf a year. Mexico provides IBWC with a monthly order and we provide the monthly order to USBR. Mexico can change their deliveries with a 30 day notice prior to the change, as long as it's within the 1.5 or 1.7 maf that is allotted to Mexico that year.

In the event of extraordinary drought, deliveries to Mexico will be reduced in the same proportion as consumptive uses in the U.S. are reduced. The years of 2000-2006 were the driest 7-year period in historical record. USBR is developing guidelines for managing Lower Basin shortage in the U.S. IBWC consultations are underway with Mexico

1970 Boundary Treaty: IBWC to maintain the Rio Grande and Colorado River as the international boundary. Treaty states that the boundary is the 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.
The boundary at the Colorado River has not been reestablished since the 1982 and 1993 floods which caused the river to shift so the line on the river channel is not where it is located on the 1972 boundary map. Mexico does not want to lose any territory and they can't based on their constitution give up any land. There has not been any agreement with Mexico as to where the new location of the boundary is.
The 1970 Treaty states that maps need to be done every 10 years; the Colorado River has not been done since 1972. Rio Grande had one done in 1982. Funding has not been available to conduct the mapping every 10 years. Currently working with the Mexican Section to draw maps and get Commission approval. Delineation of boundary must be in accordance with the treaty and agreed to by both Sections. We are working on trying to get the new mapping done by the end of 2007. This is a very important issue with Homeland Security especially in the limitrophe section of the Colorado River.

IBWC may stabilize or rectify the channel – IBWC took on the Carrying Capacity project, we were doing an EIS on project and hired the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to do work. Unfortunately, the issue with the capacity upstream of the international boundary has stalled the project. We are currently working with USBR and Brown & Caldwell to determine flood frequency and current capacity. To establish the river channel, we would have to do some dredging, levee work and river realignment. Project has been suspended so that flood frequency analysis could be undertaken.

Flood Frequency Study is being conducted by Brown & Caldwell who are under contract with USBR with whom we are jointly working with the capacity project. We will use the study to:

- review the flood control objectives for the limitrophe reach.
- determine combined flood flows from the Gila River and Colorado River
- determine existing conveyance capacity (levee to levee) between Imperial Dam and SIB
- develop recommendations for flood protection and boundary delineation in the limitrophe
- study to be completed by June 2007

Sediment: The 1982 & 1993 floods caused the river to carry a lot of sediment. Approximately 10 million cubic yards (mcy) above Morelos Dam and 10 mcy of sediment below Morelos Dam was accumulated by the floods. USBR has removed 2 mcy of material upstream of Morelos Dam and continues to conduct dredging operations to maintain the channel.
Our concern is Morelos Dam; it's more of a safety of dams issue. Half the gates are blocked by sediment and we cannot acquire necessary permits in order to remove the sediment in the area. We have had consultations with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; of course mitigation needs to take place. Tentative plans have included contracting USBR to remove the material and deposit material in Mexico as their part of contribution to the dam issue. Projects with Mexico are a 50/50 project contribution. Habitat restoration plans are being developed. Construction likely to begin in FY 2008.

Colorado River Salinity Control: In the past few years it has been very controversial as to the way the lab work has been conducted by both countries. Based on U.S. records we have complied with the Minute 242 requirement by 1 part per million (PPM) in 2004.

Minute 242 (1973) regulates the salinity of water. Water delivered to Mexico must be similar in quality to water delivered to U.S. users. Mexico is receiving good quality water; it's within 800-900 ppm and would not affect the plants. We are working with Mexico on this issue. Different laboratories have been contracted to verify both countries' testing. There is a difference of 27-30 PPM in the analysis part. We are trying to resolve the issue.

Public question (Q): Is Mexico sampling simultaneously or is it the same sample?
Answer (A): It's a split sample that is provided by the U.S.

Q: Usually Mexico's PPM is higher by 27?
A: Yes, 27-30 PPM. USBR has done a lot to comply by adding fresh water. We are basing our results on U.S. lab results. With this variation we are in continuous discussion with Mexico trying to get both labs to equalize themselves.

Q: 1 PPM away from violation by whose standards?
A: U.S. analysis

Q: So that would imply that U.S. is in violation by Mexico standards.
A: The Minute has the criteria; quality of the water is good. The problem with meeting the requirement is when the Minute was established, Mexico was receiving 1200-1500 ppm, now they receive 800-900 ppm. The better the quality of water, the harder to meet the minute requirement. Mexico agrees they are getting good quality water. Discussions are in process with Mexico to develop different criteria.

Wellton Mohawk Bypass Drain in Mexico – This drain goes through Mexico to the Santa Clara Slough. USBR provides $70,000 to $90,000 a year to do the maintenance. A joint inspection by both sections is conducted, recommendations are made, Mexico issues the contracts and USIBWC administers the contract.

Q: What is salinity in the Wellton Mohawk?
A: It's about 3500 ppm

Farmers in Mexico had a big concern with the deliveries 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 to divert high saline flow
- Installation of a variable speed pump and automatic controllers for remote operation of the system.
- USBR does the construction work; USIBWC funds the work and maintenance.
- Purchase of equipment for continuous monitoring of salinity.
- A siphon was also constructed under the Wellton Mohawk that diverts water into the river itself.
- Test operation of Yuma Desalting Plant is scheduled for spring 2007

Minute 306 on the Colorado River Delta: This minute will establish a framework for binational cooperation in the development of studies and recommendations in recognition of the interest of both governments in the preservation of the riparian and estuarine ecology of the delta region. This group is a real success story to be proud of. A meeting tomorrow for the next step.

- Binational Advisory Committee established:
  - Participation of non-governmental organizations

- Mexican federal and state agencies
- U.S. federal agencies

- Restoration and conservation projects
  - Advisory Committee has proposed various restoration and conservation projects
  - Projects relate to improving flow regimes to benefit ecosystems, habitat improvement, native plants, and hydraulic modeling

New River:

- Mexicali II Project complete
- Ongoing water quality monitoring
- USIBWC willing to collaborate with Calexico/Calexico New River Committee to participate with the cost of the trash rack
  - Located in U.S.
  - To collect solid waste
  - Engineered to consider human safety

Colorado River Water Shortage Criteria: Working with USBR, Department of Interior, and the State Department on this issue. Had consultations with Mexico informing them what the actions are and the EIS. We are actively involved on the political side with the All American Canal situation. We haven't had meetings within the Commission for several months now due to the lawsuits filed by Mexican NGO's.
Drop 2 structure we are also having consultations with Mexico and hearing them out on what their position would be.

Other IBWC Major Project: We are currently working with Congress in getting funding to upgrade levee systems in the Rio Grande on the southern part of Texas and El Paso. A major flood in El Paso in August of last year caused a lot of concern. Cost estimates in the Lower Rio Grande are $125 million, in the El Paso/New Mexico area it would cost $200 million to upgrade.

In the San Diego area we are working with Mexico on the Bajagua Project. This is the expansion of the wastewater treatment plant in the City of Tijuana paid by U.S. tax money. This project will collect 59 mgd of raw sewage and treat it in Tijuana then discharge into the ocean outfall that belongs to the U.S. Section or use that water as reclaimed water and provide it for the industry there. Working on the issues to see which way this project will go.

Q: Your discussion of the 1970 Boundary Treaty, when you calculate normal flow, are you calculating projected climate change, lower rainfall and less water?
A: We will use historical records of normal flow.

Q: The Delta ecology, there is a need for additional water for the Delta. Where is the water going to come from? What is the perspective of the U.S. Section?
A: Group is working on how to get a constant or dedicated flow to go down through the limitrophe to the Delta.

Q: Will that require another minute?
A: If there is a formal agreement, it could go into a Commission minute. Under Minute 306, it could be amended or establish something to help comply with it.

Q: With the operation of the plant in Mexicali, is there monitoring of the water quality and volume of the New River and how to protect the river channel and Salton Sea?
A: Not done by USIBWC, possibly EPA.

A: (by Doug Linden, U.S. EPS) State of California is monitoring for water quality. Has noticed a significant decrease in bacteria. As for the effect on the Salton Sea, not sure.

Mexicali Sanitation Project – Jose Aguilar, Project Development Chief, State Public Services Commission of Mexicali (CESPM)

Mr. Aguilar gave a presentation of the following:
Mexicali II started developing in 1998. The first initial work began 3 years ago. Las Arenitas is located 26 kilometers south from Mexicali city at Cerro Prieto.

Pumping Plant #4 (PP#4) initially was going to send the flow 9 kilometers to Choropo but was extended 17 kilometers farther to the current location. Modification of the pumping plant system was needed with the relocation. Modifications included the controls and connections (force main). Currently PP#4 is functioning. Pumping Plant #4 construction, force main installations are complete and flow is sent to Las Arenitas. Force main has been tested and passed.

Las Arenitas is at 99% complete. The lagoons are currently being filled and are in a testing period where we are filling each train to where it would reach the chlorination point.

Slide was shown of Las Arenitas layout of the lagoons, administration building, storage building and chlorination building.

Aerators are installed and are operational. All lagoons have liners, four trains with four lagoons in each train.
Slide was shown of the outlet to the chlorination tank and the chlorination/laboratory building.
Currently, treated water is sent to a manmade lake that is under construction.

System component advances are currently as follows: Pumping Plant #4 100% complete; Forcemain 100%, Las Arenitas 99%, total project is 99% complete.

Once plant is at 100% complete, CESPM has three months to establish the plant and then the contractor will operate the plant for one year.

Current system sewage discharges for the city of Mexicali are: Mexicali I 1,100 liters per second (lps), Mexicali III 140 lps. These two areas discharge into the Zaragoza lagoons. Mexicali II is at 600 lps, and the last of our design is Mexicali IV, currently getting certified by the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC). Area is getting ready for when service will be needed. Currently the population in this area is very minimal. City is growing rapidly and projections are that by 2045 the area will be fully populated.

Q: Is the Pumping Plant #4 pumping its capacity?
A: Yes, is currently pumping to Las Arenitas. All lagoons are full and are in a testing period. Aerators are also on and are being tested. Plant will be 100% complete within three months and then the contractor will operate for one year.

Q: Where is the water going to be used?
A: Currently we are managing a residual area inside Las Arenitas. Previously we demonstrated the plan for the area. We are proposing to construct five to six lakes. Las Arenitas is 603 hectares, the treatment plant occupies 70 hectares and the second planned module will occupy 180 hectares. That will leave approximately 400 hectares to reuse the water. Two years ago the University of Mexicali developed a plan on ways to reuse the water on the 400 hectares. The plan consists of parks, camping ground, golf course and gardens.

Calexico New River Committee updates – Miguel Figueroa, Executive Director, Calexico New River Committee

The committee conducted a Health Survey investigation and will receive final analysis in early March that was conducted on the west side residents of Calexico. The data received from this survey will be very important in providing the economic impact of the people along the river and with health issues they deal with on a daily basis.

With this analysis it will enable us to educate the community, policy makers and political officials to pursue in getting more support on the various aspects in the improvement project the committee has established.

Q: How do you intend to distinguish health impacts of the air versus New River?
A: That is why we targeted the west side residents living along the New River. We will not be able to specify what diseases or illnesses they have but we will have a number to show that people have high rate of illnesses in that part along with showing the valley has a high rate of asthma. The main purpose is to have data that has not been collected before and along with that we are conducting a community outreach program that was established in November.

Q: Have you assessed the health effects on the illegal immigrants or their children born that had direct contact while crossing the New River?
A: Unfortunately there is no follow up on the people once they have been deported into Mexico.

Q: Are you planning to conduct a survey annually or periodically to compare your data?
A: Definitely we are looking forward to continue it.

Q: Are you planning on engaging the two schools that serve the children that live in that area and what information is collected by the school nurses in helping you with your analysis?
A: This was planned two years ago and implemented last year. We are still waiting for results. Once the analysis is received we will go out to different agencies and collect information at that time.

Q: EPA does risk assessments for human health for sites of contamination, has anyone tried that with the New River?
A: (Doug Liden, U.S. EPA) The California Regional Water Quality Control Board has conducted a study.

Q: Do you have records of all diseases, bacteria and viruses?
A: Yes, that is public information.

Q: Once the Mexicali II project is complete, this is going to lower the flow rate and raise the quality of water. This undermines your case for encasing the river, doesn't it?
A: Encasing the river has been put on hold, waiting to see how Las Arenitas works once the water has settled.

All American Canal Lining Project – Paul Peschel, Assistant Water Manager, Engineering Services, Imperial Irrigation District.

Mr. Peschel provided a PowerPoint presentation.

The canal lining project is a component of the Colorado River Quantification Settlement Agreement in conjunction with lining of a portion of the Coachella Canal to settle water right disputes and litigation dating to the 1960's. This will provide 67,700 acre feet of conserved water a year. The San Diego County Water

Authority will receive 56,200 acre-feet annually and the San Luis Rey (SLR) Indian Tribe will receive 11,500 acre-feet annually.

Congress authorized the project under PL 100-675, Title II and signed into law by the President November 17, 1988. The Lining will begin downstream of Pilot Knob to Drop 4, a total of about 29 miles.
The project was modified to 23 miles due to major environmental issues and tribal sacred land.

Completing 78% of the project will result in recovering 97% of seepage water.

Design is complete but lawsuits are currently preventing construction to begin. August 25, 2006 the plaintiff appealed to the 9th Circuit which resulted in an injunction. Some type of court action will occur tomorrow. Tentatively scheduled to begin construction June 2007 and complete spring of 2010.

Q: Are you paying for the equipment to just sit there?
A: There is a monthly holding fee to keep the contract but not the equipment there.

Q: What is San Diego's financial responsibility for the project?
A: San Diego pays above any amount not funded.

Q: How about the San Luis Rey Indians?
A: Has no financial cost, just water rights.

Board Discussion

Commissioner Marin made closing remarks and thanked the audience for their attendance.

Outgoing Citizens' Forum Board members were presented with certificates of appreciation by Commissioner Carlos Marin to thank them for completing their service on the board.

Audience was provided application information to apply for the next term of Board Members.

Suggested Future Agenda Items
USBR Desalting Plant
Coachella Lining
Hunters Hole Project along the Colorado River
Railroad and Power Plant project from U.S. to Mexico

If there are other issues/projects you would like to hear, please email the Yuma IBWC office at annamorales@ibwc.state.gov

Next meeting scheduled for May 15, 2007 from 4-6pm in Yuma County, location TBD.

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.