



THE BOUNDARY MARKER

Summer/Fall 2009

MAJOR UPGRADE OF NOGALES PLANT COMPLETED

The \$65 million upgrade to the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant (NIWTP) in Arizona, the only plant that treats wastewater from both the United States and Mexico, was completed three months ahead of schedule. A grand opening was held June 23.

The upgrade is designed to enable the plant to meet current environmental standards.

Originally constructed in the 1940s and expanded twice to handle more capacity, the plant was upgraded to meet federal clean water standards for the treated effluent it releases into the Santa Cruz River north of Nogales. Marked improvements in the river's water quality and fish populations have already been observed.

The upgrade was a collaborative effort involving the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC), City of Nogales, Arizona, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, the City of Nogales, Sonora and others.

The NIWTP is operated by the USIBWC and is co-owned by the City of Nogales and USIBWC.

U.S. Commissioner C.W. "Bill" Ruth congratulated the project's partners in remarks at the grand opening. "The International Boundary and Water Commission looks forward to many more years of binational cooperation to address the water and wastewater needs of the region," he said.

Construction for the upgrade began in 2007 with funding through a grant by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and contributions from the City of Nogales amounting to \$65 million. The grant was issued through the North American Development Bank. The USIBWC and the City of Nogales provided further funds amounting to \$1.9 million for additional works at the plant.

The upgrade will treat an average of 9.9

million gallons per day of wastewater from the City of Nogales, Sonora, which is transported to the plant through a pipeline that winds through Nogales, Arizona called the International Outfall Interceptor. Nogales, Arizona will have an average contribution of about 2.2 million gallons per day and Rio Rico Utilities (serving the Rio Rico area north of Nogales) will account for about 0.55 million gallons per day.



View of the new clarifiers at the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant.



USIBWC ADOPTS NEW PLAN FOR RIO GRANDE MANAGEMENT

The U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) has announced its decision for long-term management of the Rio Grande Canalization Project (RGCP). The RGCP covers 105 river miles from Percha Dam, New Mexico to American Dam in El Paso, Texas. The Record of Decision, signed by U.S. Commissioner C.W. “Bill” Ruth, selects the Integrated USIBWC Land Management Alternative, one of several that were studied.

The selected alternative includes construction and maintenance of river levees to provide enhanced flood protection as well as measures to improve environmental conditions, such as erosion control, restoration of native vegetation, and reconfiguration of the river channel at arroyo mouths to enhance aquatic habitat.

To ensure efficient water delivery, the selected alternative allows for maintenance of the river channel and dredging when necessary. There will be no impacts on prime farmland.

“We have already begun levee construction in the area. This decision now allows us to move forward with the environmental component of our management strategy,” said Commissioner Ruth.

Key features of the plan include establishing restoration sites to promote native riparian

vegetation and ecological improvements along the river. Floodway vegetation that is currently mowed will be managed and modified to promote native grass development in combination with efforts to control salt cedar, a non-native species. The existing grazing lease program will be phased

out to improve erosion control and water quality. Recreational use of some sections of the floodway will be continued or expanded.

The USIBWC intends to implement the project with the continued involvement of a stakeholder work group. Since 2006, the USIBWC has partnered with the Elephant Butte Irrigation District, World Wildlife Fund, and other stakeholders as part of an effort to identify management strategies that meet the needs of irrigators and environmentalists.

“We worked very hard to find common ground among various interest groups,”

Commissioner Ruth added. “This decision shows that the Rio Grande can be managed in a way that benefits both farming and wildlife. At the same time, we are able to provide enhanced flood protection and deliver water to Mexico in accordance with the treaty.”

During the first five years of environmental enhancements, efforts will focus on studies and pilot projects. Full-scale implementation of environmental projects will be undertaken in the subsequent five years.



Rio Grande Canalization Project in New Mexico.



RECOVERY ACT LEVEE CONSTRUCTION BEGINS

Construction has begun on a levee rehabilitation project being undertaken by the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) with funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Two USIBWC contractors began work on levees in the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project in Hidalgo County, Texas in September.

Longhorn Excavators, Inc. of Richmond, Texas was contracted to construct levee improvements along a 43-mile reach of the Main Floodway. In accordance with the contract, the company will furnish all labor, materials, and equipment for levee construction. The USIBWC is raising levee height to bring the levee into compliance with standards established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the 100-year flood. The project will provide enhanced flood protection for the communities of McAllen, Hidalgo, Pharr, San Juan, Alamo, Donna, and Weslaco. Construction is expected to be completed by September 2010.

The USIBWC also awarded a contract in the amount of \$950,997 to Inuit Services, Inc. of Anchorage, Alaska for work along 3 miles of the Banker Floodway North Levee in Hidalgo County, Texas between Granjeno and 23rd Street. The contract was awarded in accordance with a federal program targeting qualified small businesses located in distressed areas. Construction is scheduled to be completed in February 2010.

At press time, the USIBWC was about to award another construction contract for levee rehabilitation along the North Floodway and Arroyo Colorado North levee in the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project. Several more construction contracts will be awarded in the coming months for levee work in the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project and the Upper Rio Grande Flood Control Project in West Texas and Southern New Mexico. The USIBWC was appropriated \$220 million in Recovery Act funding for its levee rehabilitation program.

The Recovery Act enables the USIBWC to accelerate work on its aging Rio Grande flood control system in Texas and New Mexico to provide adequate flood protection for over three million U.S. residents. The purpose of the Recovery Act is to create and save jobs, jumpstart the economy, and build

the foundation for long-term economic growth. The Act includes measures to modernize the nation's infrastructure, enhance America's energy independence, expand educational opportunities, increase access to health care, provide tax relief, and protect those in greatest need.

The USIBWC provides regular public updates on its planning and spending of Recovery Act funds at www.recovery.gov and www.state.gov/recovery. An updated project schedule is available at www.ibwc.gov/Recovery/RGF.html.



Construction has begun along the Main Floodway.

International Boundary and Water Commission United States and Mexico

United States Section

4171 N. Mesa Street
Suite C-100
El Paso, TX 79902-1441
Phone: (915) 832-4100
Fax: (915) 832-4190
<http://www.ibwc.gov>

- Commissioner**.....C.W. “Bill” Ruth
- Principal Engineer**Al Riera
- Principal Engineer**.....John Merino
- Secretary**.....Adolfo Mata

Mexican Section

Av. Universidad No. 2180
Zona de El Chamizal
A.P. 1612-D C.P. 32310
Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua
Phone: (011-52-656) 613-7363
Fax: (011-52-656) 613-9943
<http://www.sre.gob.mx/cila/>

- Commissioner**.....Roberto F. Salmon
- Principal Engineer**.....Gilberto Elizalde
- Principal Engineer**.....L. Antonio Rascon
- Secretary**Jesus Luevano



International Boundary and Water Commission
United States Section
4171 N. Mesa Street, Suite C-100
El Paso, TX 79902-1441