



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
January 2013

RIO GRANDE DROUGHT MANAGEMENT AND SALINITY CONTROL ON AGENDA FOR JANUARY 30 PUBLIC MEETING IN MERCEDES

The Lower Rio Grande Citizens Forum (LRGCF) of the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) will discuss Rio Grande management during times of drought and recent upgrades to the Morillo Drain salinity control system during its January public meeting. The LRGCF was established to facilitate the exchange of information between the USIBWC and members of the public about Commission activities and related issues in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The meeting will be held Wednesday, January 30, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. at the USIBWC office at 325 Golf Course Road in Mercedes, Texas.

Erasmio Yarrito, Jr., Rio Grande Watermaster for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, will discuss the Rio Grande Watermaster Program and how it manages the river's water supply during times of drought. The Rio Grande Watermaster program was established by the courts in 1956 to manage the water rights issued by the State of Texas along the Rio Grande and its tributaries. All diversions from the Rio Grande or its tributaries must be authorized in advance. The Watermaster Program seeks to manage the system with the least amount of losses, a goal that becomes particularly important during drought years.

Rodolfo Montero, Area Operations Manager for the USIBWC, will give an update on recent developments involving the Morillo Drain, a project in Mexico that diverts saline irrigation return flows in order to improve Rio Grande water quality. Recent improvements and

upgrades have included the replacement of pumping equipment, sediment removal, encasement of parts of the drain, and construction of a security wall around the pumping plant. Funding for operation and maintenance of the Morillo Drain is shared between Mexico and the United States, including a contribution from Lower Rio Grande Valley water users in Texas.

A complete meeting agenda follows. Members of the public who would like more information about the meeting may contact the USIBWC's Lower Rio Grande Project Office at 956-565-3150 or sally.spener@ibwc.gov.

For more information:

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LOWER RIO GRANDE CITIZENS FORUM

Wednesday, January 30, 2013

3:00 - 5:00 P.M.

USIBWC Conference Room

325 Golf Course Road*

Mercedes, TX 78570

AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions – Rodolfo Montero, Area Operations Manager and Lower Rio Grande Citizens Forum Co-Chair, USIBWC
- Managing the Rio Grande in Times of Drought – Erasmo Yarrito, Jr., Rio Grande Watermaster, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Improvements to the Morillo Drain Salinity Control System – Rodolfo Montero, Area Operations Manager, USIBWC
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion, Election of Co-Chair
- Suggested Future Agenda Items

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time. For more information, call 956-565-3150.

***Directions:** From Expressway 83, exit Mile 2 W. Travel south for approximately 1.5 miles to Golf Course Road. Turn left. The USIBWC is the first building on your left.