



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
February 22, 2011

PUBLIC MEETING IN YUMA TO DISCUSS COLORADO RIVER ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS, U.S.-MEXICO COOPERATION, WATERSHED PLANNING

Environmental restoration and U.S.-Mexico cooperation along the lower Colorado River will be discussed at the March 7 public meeting of the Colorado River Citizens Forum. The Forum was established by the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) to facilitate the exchange of information with the public about Commission activities and related matters in the region. The meeting is scheduled for 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. (MST) at the Yuma Palms Regional Center Community Room, 1305 S. Yuma Palms Parkway in Yuma, Arizona.

Karl W. Flessa with the University of Arizona will present information about environmental monitoring of the Cienega de Santa Clara, a Sonoran wetland ecosystem sustained by water from U.S. and Mexican agricultural return flow. The Cienega de Santa Clara is the largest wetland on the Colorado River Delta and forms part of a protected area in Mexico. The Cienega is habitat for several endangered species, a critical rest area along the Pacific flyway for migratory birds, and the basis of a small ecotourism enterprise. The University of Arizona was part of a group that monitored water flow, water quality, vegetation, and bird populations during the recent pilot run of the Yuma Desalting Plant, the operation of which affects the quantity and quality of water discharged to the Cienega.

Environmental issues will also be covered by William Singleton of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, who will discuss the Laguna Division Conservation Area Project of the Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP). The MSCP was created to balance the use of Colorado River water resources with the conservation of native species and their habitats. The Laguna Division Conservation

Area, which is scheduled for restoration over the next few years, is located in California and Arizona between Imperial Dam and Laguna Dam.

In other business, USIBWC Public Affairs Officer Sally Spener will give an update on the U.S.-Mexico Colorado River Joint Cooperative Process, an effort to enhance cooperation with Mexico in such areas as shortage management, environmental restoration, water conservation, and development of new water sources. The International Boundary and Water Commission has been spearheading technical work and stakeholder involvement to help identify initiatives in the lower Colorado River to improve water resources management to the benefit of both countries.

USIBWC Civil Engineer Planner Gabriel Duran from the Master Planning Division will discuss an international watershed initiative. The USIBWC wishes to discuss the possibility of addressing localized concerns along the common border between the United States and Mexico in a forum based on watersheds. This approach is not novel and is being used successfully on the northern border of the United States with Canada. This initiative seeks to promote an integrated ecosystem approach to transboundary issues through enhanced local participation and strengthened local capacity.

The initiative was conceived to facilitate the development of watershed-specific responses to emerging challenges. The underlying premise is that local people, given appropriate assistance, are those best positioned to resolve many local transboundary problems. This initiative is not intended to circumvent the International Boundary and Water Commission's current process for resolving differences that arise in the application of the boundary and water treaties between the United States and Mexico, but rather to enhance the process.

A complete meeting agenda follows. Members of the public who would like more information about the meeting may contact the USIBWC's Yuma Office at 928-782-1598 or Public Affairs Officer Sally Spener at 915-832-4175 or via email at sally.spener@ibwc.gov.

For more information:

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COLORADO RIVER CITIZENS FORUM
Wednesday, March 7, 4:00 - 6:00 P.M. MST
Yuma Palms Regional Center Community Room*
1305 S. Yuma Palms Parkway
Yuma, Arizona

AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions – Elston Grubaugh, Citizens Forum Co-Chair, USIBWC

- Multi-Species Conservation Program, Laguna Division Conservation Area Project – William Singleton, Reclamation

- Transboundary Water, the Yuma Desalting Plant and the Cienega de Santa Clara – Karl Flessa, University of Arizona

- Update on the U.S.-Mexico Colorado River Joint Cooperative Process – Sally Spener, Public Affairs Officer, USIBWC

- Master Planning - International Watershed Initiative – Gabriel Duran, P.E., Civil Engineer Planner, USIBWC

- Public Comment

- Suggested Future Agenda Items

- Board Discussion

***Directions:** From Imperial County, I-8 east to Yuma. Exit 2, 16th St./US-95. Turn left onto 16th/US-95. Turn left onto Yuma Palms Pkwy. Turn right onto Castle Dome. Drive to the stop sign and make a left. Continue to the back of the Sprint building. The Community Room is located directly behind the Sprint building west of Sam's Club truck parking. Parking is available in the back.

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 928-782-1598 or e-mail sally.spener@ibwc.gov.