



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section



For immediate release
October 4, 2012

RIO GRANDE WATER BUDGET STUDY AND FLOOD CONTROL LEVEE CONSTRUCTION ON AGENDA FOR OCTOBER 16 PUBLIC MEETING IN EL PASO

The Rio Grande Canalization Project Water Budget Study and Rio Grande levee construction projects will be discussed at the next public meeting of the Rio Grande Citizens Forum, an outreach program of the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC). The meeting will take place Tuesday, October 16, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at USIBWC Headquarters, 4171 N. Mesa Street, Building C, El Paso, Texas.

USIBWC Hydraulic Engineer Padinare Unnikrishna will discuss a study that is currently underway to evaluate the water budget along the Rio Grande Canalization Project, the USIBWC's water delivery and flood control project in southern New Mexico and western El Paso County, Texas. The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding on how water inflows, such as precipitation and upstream irrigation inflows, are partitioned between the various components of the water budget such as channel seepage and aquifer recharge, evapotranspiration, and pumping. The study is intended to help stakeholders manage single or multiple water release timings and volumes during years of water scarcity. Results of the study will include recommendations on best water management practice to be followed for Rio Grande water releases from upstream dams, suggested water management investments (water pump monitoring), and recommendations and suggestions for further study.

USIBWC Civil Engineers Andrea Glover and Guillermo Martinez will give presentations about Rio Grande levee rehabilitation projects in El Paso County, Texas and in Hatch, the Mesilla Valley, and Sunland Park, New Mexico. The presentations will give the current status of the construction projects as well as the status of USIBWC efforts to certify the levees to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Communities protected by levee systems accredited by FEMA benefit not only from the enhanced flood protection but from better rates on flood insurance. Property owners with federally-backed mortgages in areas not protected by accredited levees could face a mandate to purchase flood insurance. The levee construction is being carried out with funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The purpose of the Recovery Act is to create and save jobs, promote economic recovery, and invest in infrastructure that will provide long-term economic benefits. USIBWC Recovery Act expenditures in New Mexico and Texas have already created or preserved an estimated 2918 jobs.

The Rio Grande Citizens Forum was established by the USIBWC in 1999 to facilitate the exchange of information regarding USIBWC activities on the Rio Grande between Percha Dam, New Mexico and Fort Quitman, Texas. It is designed to bring together community members, enabling the early and continued two-way flow of information, concerns, values, and needs between USIBWC and the general public, environmentalists, irrigation districts, municipalities, and others interested in the river. A complete meeting agenda follows.

For more information:

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RIO GRANDE CITIZENS FORUM
Tuesday, October 16, 2012
6:30 - 8:30 P.M.
USIBWC Headquarters
4171 N. Mesa St., The Commons, Building C*
El Paso, TX 79902

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions – Carlos Peña, Citizens Forum Co-Chair
- Rio Grande Canalization Project Water Budget Study – Dr. Padinare Unnikrishna, Hydraulic Engineer, USIBWC
- Construction Update of Levee Projects in Doña Ana County and El Paso County - Andrea Glover, PE, Civil Engineer, USIBWC
- Update on the USIBWC's Levee Certification Efforts in El Paso County and Doña Ana County - Guillermo Martinez, PE, Civil Engineer, USIBWC
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion
- Suggested Future Agenda Items

***Directions:** From I-10, exit Executive Center Blvd. Go east to Mesa Street. Turn right on Mesa. The Commons office buildings are on the right.

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