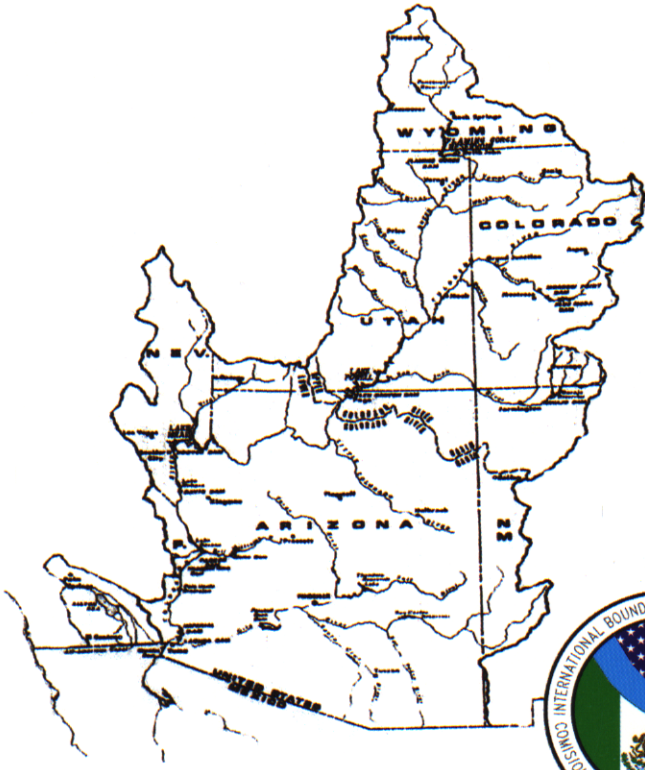
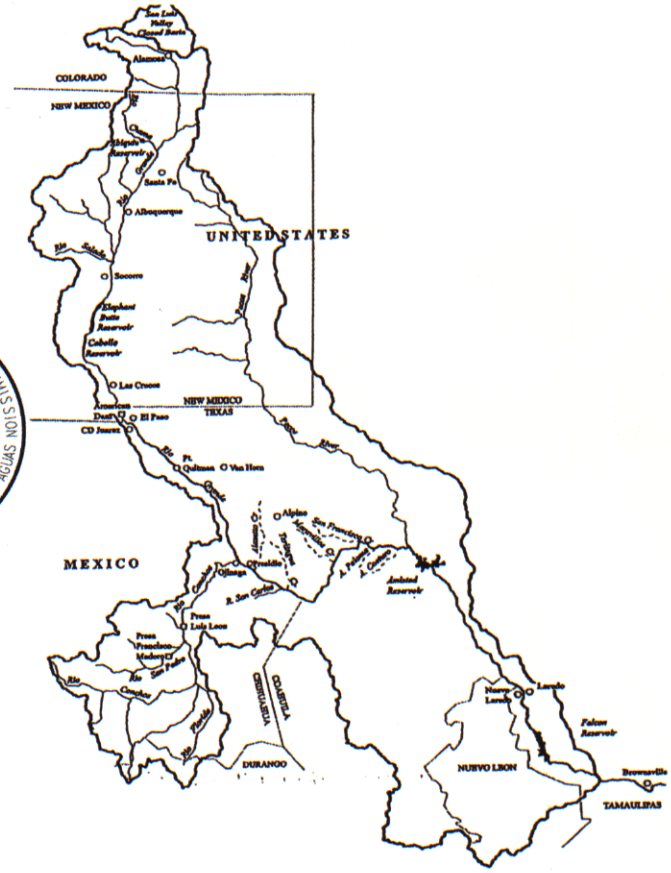
Annual Report 2000





Two Basins ...

two Countries ...

International Boundary and Water Commission
United States and Mexico

"The jurisdiction of the Commission shall extend to the limitrophe parts of the Rio Grande (Rio Bravo) and the Colorado River, to the land boundary between the two countries, and to works located upon their common boundary, each Section of the Commission retaining jurisdiction over that part of the works located within the limits of its own country ..."

Article 2, 1944 Water Treaty.

ANNUAL REPORT
2000

During 2000, the International Boundary and Water Commission continued to ensure application of the terms of the various boundary and water treaties between the United States and Mexico, in particular the 1944 Water Treaty and the 1970 Boundary Treaty, along with Commission Minutes concluded under the terms of these agreements. The Commission faced great water resource, and sanitation infrastructure needs challenges in the border brought about by the demographic growth of this area.

The Commission achieved important binational cooperation in signing four Minutes. These cooperative agreements covered Lower Rio Grande salinity control, drinking water infrastructure studies, international boundary demarcation and monumentation, and riparian and estuarine ecology. These represented the Commission's interest in continuing with joint efforts in furtherance of its boundary and international waters responsibilities and in improvement of conditions on both sides of the border for the benefit of the border population.

The Commission improved the demarcation at 16 international crossings and bridges with the goal of preventing unauthorized crossings by authorities of one country into the other. Also, the Commission discussed proposals for further enhancing of the demarcation of the land boundary.

Concerning border sanitation, the Commission developed an integrated sanitation project in Mexicali. Further, the Commission defined the technical elements for handling sewage in excess of the Nogales International Plant's capacity, and advanced planning for sanitation projects at Matamoros and Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas. The Commission also signed a Minute recognizing the understandings of United States and Mexico funding agencies concerning capital cost funding for drinking and waste water infrastructure in Mexican border communities.

This report complies with Article 24, paragraph D, of the United States - Mexico Treaty for Utilization of the Waters of the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers and of the Rio Grande, signed on February 3, 1944. Highlights of the Commission's activities are summarized in the following pages.

Carlos M. Ramirez
United States Commissioner

J. Arturo Herrera Solís
Mexican Commissioner

DEMARCATION

MINUTE 305 SIGNING

On December 4, 2000, the Commission signed Minute No. 305, "Demarcation and Monumentation of the International Boundary on the Bridges over the Rio Grande at Eagle Pass, Texas – Piedras Negras, Coahuila II; Laredo, Texas – Colombia, Nuevo Leon; Laredo, Texas IV – Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas III; Pharr, Texas – Reynosa, Tamaulipas; Los Indios, Texas – Lucio Blanco, Tamaulipas; and Veterans, Brownsville, Texas – Matamoros, Tamaulipas III

COORDINATION

The Commission actively participated with the United States – Mexico Binational Group on International Bridges and Border Crossings, especially at meetings of this group April 25 – 27, 2000 in San Carlos, Sonora and September 18 – 21, 2001 in Scottsdale, Arizona.

The Commission approved the following utility crossings over the international boundary: Coral - Texas Energy & PEMEX natural gas line near Peñitas, TX. Argüelles, Tamps.; Cox Communications – Telecable de Juárez fiber optic cable at San Diego, CA – Tijuana, B.C.; and TELNOR fiber optic cable at Calexico, CA – Mexicali, B.C. The two Sections of the Commission coordinated the disposal of trash accumulated along the boundary at San Diego – Tijuana and made a reconnaissance of human settlement along the border in the San Diego – Tijuana and Tecate – Tecate areas.

Pavement markers installed at the Ysleta – Zaragoza International Bridge at El Paso, TX – Ciudad Juárez, Chih.

DEMARCATION AND MONUMENTATION

The Commission improved the demarcation through placement of 15 plaques and 10,831 associated pavement markers at land boundary ports of entry at: San Ysidro – Tijuana, Calexico – Mexicali, Lukeville – Sonoita, Sasabe – Sasabe, Columbus – Palomas, and Santa Teresa – San Geronimo and at Paso del Norte (Santa Fe – Juarez), Cordova – Americas, and Ysleta – Zaragoza bridges at El Paso – Juarez, along with the international bridges as Presido – Ojinaga, Eagle Pass – Piedras Negras, Rio Grande City – Camargo, and Hidalgo – Reynosa and the crossings over the Amistad and Falcon International Dams.

The Commission, in a pilot program, placed three international boundary demarcation signs west of Monument No. 3 at Sunland Park, N.M. and Anapra, Chih. This was with the purpose of avoiding confusion over the location of the boundary following questions of incursions by authorities of one country into the other, and of encroachments of structures into the other country. The Commission is evaluating the pilot section to extend it to other parts of the land boundary or to propose a new design to the two Governments.

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BORDER SANITATION

MINUTE 304 SIGNING

On October 26, 2000, the Commission concluded Minute No. 304, "Joint Grant Contribution Program for Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Projects for Communities in the United States – Mexico Border Area". The program involves capital cost funding for border drinking and wastewater infrastructure that require multi-annual funding.

BORDER ENVIRONMENT COOPERATION COMMISSION COORDINATION

The Commissioners, in their role of ex-officio directors, participated with the eight other directors from the United States and Mexico, at the public meetings of the Border Environment Cooperation Commission, as well as at other meetings related to that international organization.

The two Sections provided the international coordination for the development of an integrated water and wastewater infrastructure plan to manage future flows in Ciudad Acuña, and Piedras Negras, Coahuila, and at Nuevo Laredo and Matamoros,

Tamaulipas. The effort is designed to bring the planning to a level that would enhance Border Environment Cooperation Commission certification. The latter commission certified the Ciudad Acuña and Piedras Negras projects on March 24, 2000.

At right, engineers of the Commission are at work in managing transboundary pollution at Naco, Sonora, pending completing of the wastewater project which was certified by the Border Environment Cooperation Commission and financed by the North American Development Bank.

SAN DIEGO, CA – TIJUANA, BC

The Commission coordinated the annual payments from Mexico for the construction of the International Wastewater Treatment Plant and the quarterly payments, also by México, for its operation and maintenance. The Commission's engineers carried out a water quality monitoring program for system water conveyed, treated and disposed in the ocean. A review continues on plans for achieving secondary treatment. The Commission also monitored the construction of works parallel to the existing disposal system which include rehabilitation of the wastewater treatment plant in Tijuana.

International Wastewater Treatment Plant in the San Diego, CA – Tijuana, B.C. area.

CALEXICO, CA – MEXICALI, B.C.

There was coordination, with the National Water Commission and State Public Services Commission of Mexicali under Minute No. 288, for the conceptual plan for solution of the New River problem, in the construction of Pumping Plant No. 4 as well as the design of the pressure line and treatment plant components of the Mexicali II system.

NOGALES, ARIZONA – NOGALES, SONORA

The Commission, under Minute 294, completed the binational technical aspects of planning for the management of future waste waters in the Nogales, Arizona – Nogales, Sonora area. The facility plan has components in the United States and Mexico. This facilitated certification by the Border Environment Cooperation Commission on June 22, 2000 of the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant project for Nogales, AZ sewage. The design and funding components of the part in Mexico are being further defined concurrently with the construction of the drinking water system project for Nogales, Sonora.

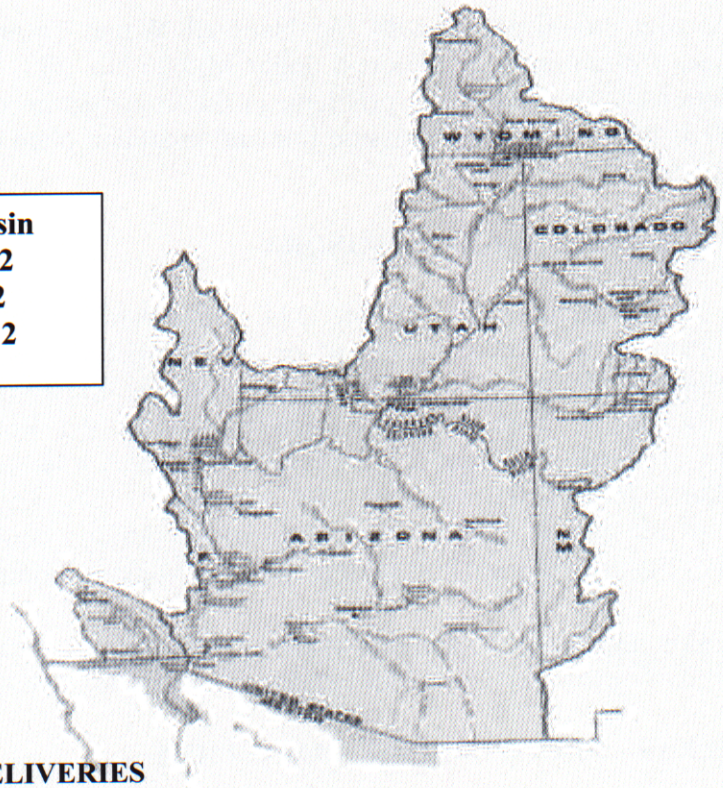
The Commission transacted the annual payments from Mexico for the construction of the International Wastewater Treatment Plant for its operation and maintenance.

LAREDO, TEXAS - NUEVO LAREDO, TAMAULIPAS

The Commission provided oversight of the international operations of the Nuevo Laredo Wastewater Treatment Plant, including transaction of the United States payment for its share of the operation and maintenance costs. At photo below, the Commission's engineers carried out an intensive water quality monitoring of the Rio Grande in order to verify the improvment of the same as a result of the operation of the plant.

COLORADO RIVER WATERS

Colorado River Basin
Total – 634,840 km2
U.S. – 631,000 km2
Mexico – 3,840 km 2



1944 TREATY DELIVERIES

The availability of 1,~~700,000~~ acre-feet (2,097 million cubic meters) of Colorado River waters was declared for Mexico. The Commission assured the delivery of this volume under the terms of the 1944 Water Treaty with a salinity within the limits established in Commission Minute No. 242. The deliveries included the additional 200,000 acre feet (247,000,000 cubic meters) in scheduled deliveries upon declaration by the United States of a surplus to U.S. consumptive uses.

SILT REMOVAL

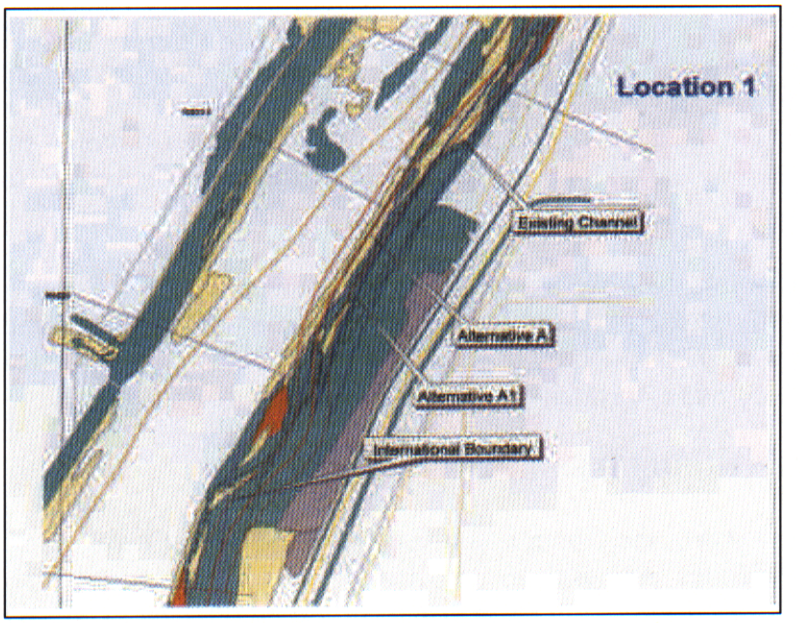
The Commission's field personnel at Yuma, AZ and Mexicali, BC, provided the day-to-day supervision of the international aspects for the removal of some 500,000 cubic meters of sediment by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in the Colorado River reach between the northerly international boundary and Morelos Dam. The purpose is to improve the channel capacity and deliveries of water to Mexico.

FLOOD CONTROL

The Commission's personnel, convened periodic meetings with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and Mexico's National Water Commission concerning U.S. river operations and Mexico's Morelos Dam operations.

COLORADO RIVER CHANNEL RECTIFICATION STUDIES

There was coordination of development of Commission alternatives and United States Section environmental review studies for an international project concerning the restoration and maintenance of the river channel as the international boundary and improvement of its carrying capacity under the 1944 and 1970 treaties. Coordination involved exchange of information concerning environmental laws and regulations and land use questions in each country. A schematic of river alignment alternatives under study is shown below:



DELTA RESTORATION STUDIES

The Commission's Engineers coordinated binational task force efforts to develop an ecological - scientific studies database, a water flow inundation model and a pilot restoration project for the Colorado River Delta.

In this context, the Commission facilitated the exchange of information including joint field observations, convened technical meetings and conducted of aerial surveys concerning the Colorado River Delta and the Santa Clara Slough.

MINUTE 306 SIGNING

The Commission, on December 12, 2000, signed Minute 306 "Conceptual Framework for United States - Mexico Studies for Future Recommendations Concerning the Riparian and Estuarine Ecology of the Limitrophe Section of the Colorado River and its Associated Delta," which established the interest of both governments in protecting the Colorado River Delta.

EMERGENCY DELIVERIES TO TIJUANA

The Commission also began coordinating arrangements upon request by Mexico for emergency delivery in 2001 of a part of Mexico's Colorado River water through the Southern California aqueducts to alleviate a possible water shortage in Tijuana, Baja California.

SALINITY

The Commission received a report from its task force, that included the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and Mexico's National Water Commission, to analyze a problem of salinity in the waters delivered to Mexico at the Southerly International Boundary. The report included consideration of variable speed motor – pumps to reduce peaks in flows and salinity in waters delivered to Mexico at Southerly International Boundary.

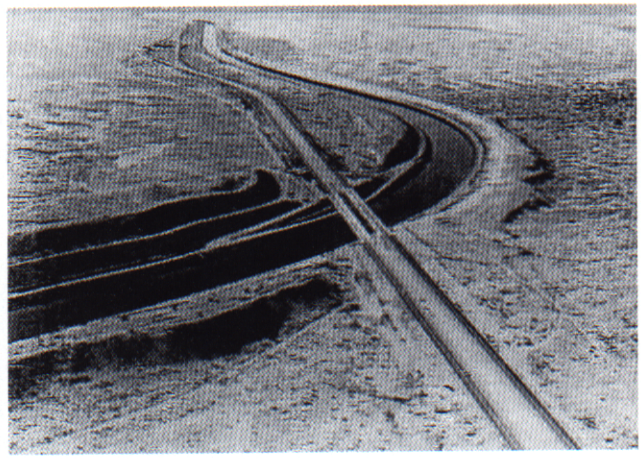
The Commission oversaw the annual maintenance of the Wellton-Mohawk Bypass Extension in Mexico from the international boundary to the Santa Clara Slough. This work was performed by Mexico's National Water Commission at a cost covered by the United States through by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

INTERIM SURPLUS GUIDELINES

Beginning in April, the Commission carried out technical level consultations on an interim guidelines proposal by the United States Bureau to arrive at a determination of excess flows in the upper basin for use by the lower Colorado River basin in the United States. Mexico declared to the IBWC its concerns with the implementation of the criteria.

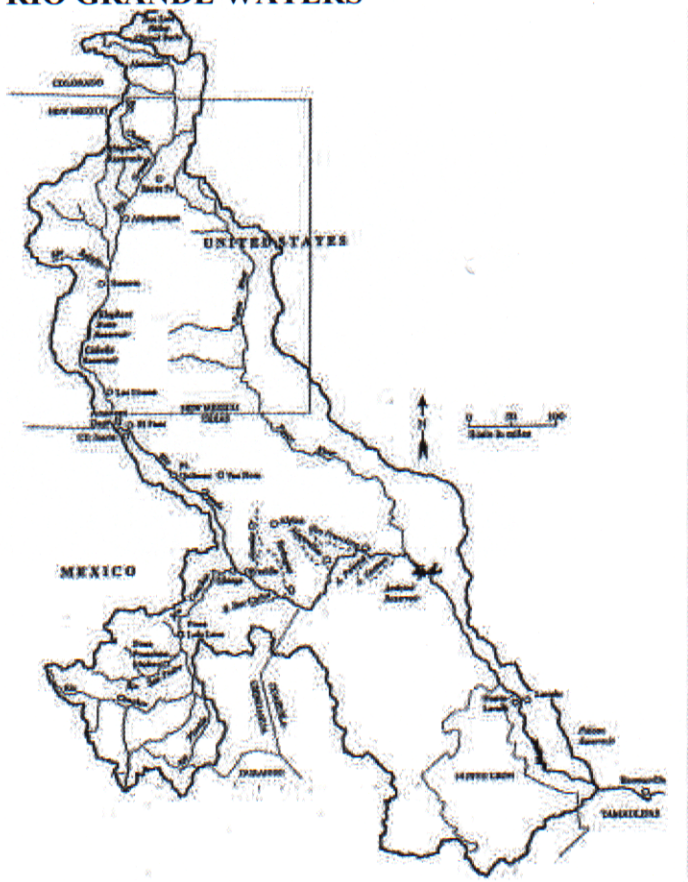
ALL AMERICAN CANAL LINING

The Mexican Section presented impacts of concern to Mexico in the Colorado River delta in the context of the Commission's consultations over the proposed lining of the All American Canal, location shown, at right, in the United States near Mexico's Mexicali Valley. The Commission agreed to convene a technical group to review details of potential joint cooperation activities concerning this proposal, noting Mexico's objection regarding the proposed project.



RIO GRANDE WATERS

Rio Grande Basin
Total – 444,560 km2
U.S. – 229,798 km
Mexico – 214,762 km 2



1906 CONVENTION

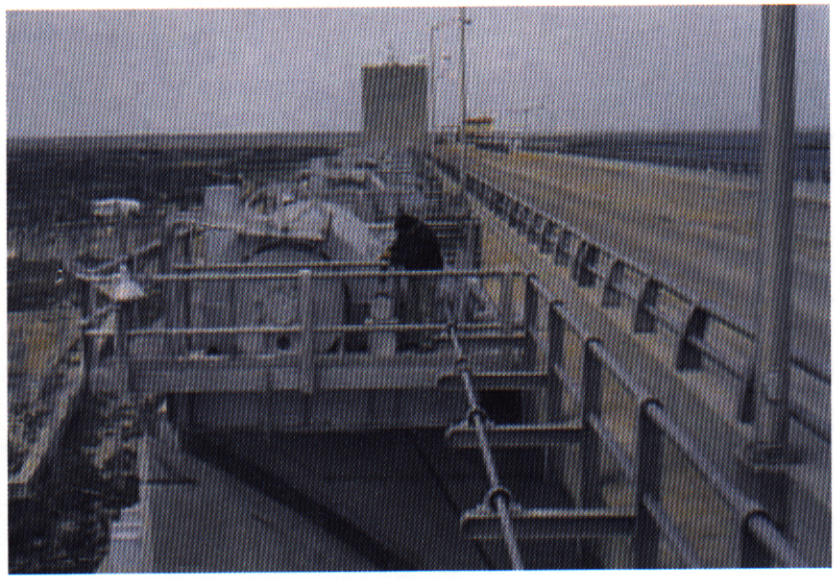
The Commission agreed on a schedule for delivery of the 60,000 acre feet (74 million cubic meters) of Rio Grande waters to Mexico under the 1906 Convention, in the El Paso - Juarez to Fort Quitman, TX - Cajoncitos, Chih. river segment.

1944 WATER TREATY

The Commission carried out an accounting of the ownership of the waters of the Rio Grande from Fort Quitman, Texas – Cajoncitos, Chihuahua to the Gulf of Mexico under the terms of the 1944 Water Treaty and published an annual water bulletin in English and Spanish. In October, the Commission made an evaluation of the runoff and precipitation conditions in the Mexican part of the Rio Grande basin in order to propose actions to reduce a treaty water delivery deficit.

INTERNATIONAL DAMS OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The Commission's engineers carried out a joint operation and maintenance of the international Amistad and Falcon Dams for control and utilization of waters allotted to each country under the 1944 Treaty. At the end of 2000, combined total storage was at 1,997 million cubic meters.



Amistad International Dam Maintenance

The Commission, in a safety of dams program measure, carried out the second phase of filling and treating reservoir sinkholes that have developed at the international Amistad Dam.

WATER DEFICIT

The Commission assigned water volumes in partial coverage of a water deficit from six Mexican tributaries to the Rio Grande to the United States under the 1944 Treaty and advanced talks for programs to avoid a deficit in the current accounting cycle and in future years, and intensified talks for a partial coverage plan for 2001.

RIO GRANDE HABITAT ASSESSMENT

The Commission joined with the United States Department of the Interior and Mexico's Secretariat of Ecology and Natural Resources in convening the Rio Grande / Rio Bravo Binational Symposium: Fort Quitman to Amistad Reservoir, on June 14, 2000 in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. The symposium explored ecological issues concerning changes in the quantity and quality of stream flows in this reach of the river.

LOWER RIO GRANDE NOXIOUS WEED PROBLEM

There was coordination between United States, Texas and Mexican agencies for binational efforts to control the spread of hydrilla in the channel of the Rio Grande, in the Brownsville – Matamoros reach. The goal is to arrive at joint actions in 2001.

LOWER RIO GRANDE SALINITY

The Commission, on May 15, 2000, signed Minute No. 305, "Operation and Maintenance of the Jointly - Financed Works for Solution of the Lower Rio Grande Salinity Problem," for the purpose of restoring the conveyance capacity of Morillo Drain.

Morillo Drain

FLOOD CONTROL

The Commission's engineers maintained, for readiness in case of a flood, river and off river levees and diversion structures in the 170 miles (273 kilometers) of the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project and in the 10 miles (16 kilometers) of levees at Presidio, Texas - Ojinaga, Chihuahua under the 1944 Treaty, along with levees and control structures in the 88 miles (141 kilometers) of the El Paso - Juarez Valley Rectification project under the 1933 Convention.

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OTHER COMMISSION MATTERS

EL PASO – JUAREZ AREA WATER SUPPLY

The Commission continued coordinating the development of a hydraulic model for the Hueco Bolson in the El Paso, Texas – Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua area in support of the El Paso Water Utilities and the Ciudad Juárez Municipal Sanitation Board. The utilities presented their water supply master plans. The Commission, in coordination with the Border Environment Cooperation Commission also advanced meetings with these authorities on their respective regional planning efforts, focused on a feasibility study of potential international drinking water supply projects in July 2000.

SAN DIEGO – TIJUANA AQUEDUCT STUDY

The Commission coordinated the start of binational efforts for planning level studies concerning conveyance of Colorado River waters to the San Diego, California and Tijuana, Baja California area. This study is authorized under Commission Minute No. 301 signed in 1999. The study is to be completed at the end of 2001.

TIJUANA RIVER FLOOD CONTROL

The Commission also began coordinating efforts with authorities in the San Diego – Tijuana area for the installation of an automated gaging station at Mexico's Abelardo L. Rodriguez Dam. The proposal is to provide a more timely exchange of information for the use by authorities in both countries in taking actions to prevent the loss of life and property in the Tijuana River Valley in this region during flood emergencies.

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