

For immediate release
June 2, 2004

RIO GRANDE FLOOD CONTROL ISSUES ON AGENDA FOR JUNE 15 PUBLIC MEETING

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) has scheduled a public meeting of its Lower Rio Grande Citizens' Forum (LRGCF) on June 15 at 4:00 p.m. in the Hoblitzelle Auditorium of the Texas A & M Agricultural Research and Extension Center, 2415 E. Highway 83 in Weslaco, Texas. The purpose of the LRGCF is to facilitate the exchange of information between the USIBWC and members of the public about Commission activities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

USIBWC Chief of Engineering Services, Jim Robinson, will give a presentation about the assessment of US levees in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The Commission's 2003 Flood Study identified levees that need to be raised in order to safely pass the 100-year flood. The USIBWC has contracted with the US Army Corps of Engineers to conduct extensive geotechnical analyses to evaluate the integrity of the levees using the latest airborne technology. A preliminary report has identified possible remediation efforts for some levee segments. The USIBWC has prepared a plan of action to raise and rehabilitate the levees to assure full protection in the event of a 100-year flood on the Rio Grande.

In a separate effort, the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) is seeking federal appropriations for levee rehabilitation. The LRGVDC is a voluntary association of local

governments created to deal with the regional needs that cross the boundaries of individual local governments. The LRGVDC is also seeking funds for improvements to Morillo Drain, a binational project located in Mexico that benefits Rio Grande water quality by conveying saline irrigation return flows directly to the Gulf of Mexico. LRGVDC Deputy Executive Director Richard M. Hinojosa will discuss his group's efforts to obtain federal funds to support these regional projects.

With the approach of hurricane season, USIBWC Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project Manager Rick Reyes will give a presentation about flood control operations. Should high water levels require the Commission to go into Rio Grande flood operations, water will be diverted into off-river floodways that have not been used since 1988. Reyes will discuss the actions his staff will take should flooding occur.

A complete meeting agenda is attached. Members of the public who would like more information can contact the USIBWC's Lower Rio Grande Project Office at (956) 565-3150 or Public Affairs Officer Sally Spener at (915) 832-4175 or sallyspener@ibwc.state.gov.

For more information:

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LOWER RIO GRANDE CITIZENS' FORUM

Tuesday, June 15, 2004

4:00 - 6:00 P.M.

Hoblitzelle Auditorium

Texas A & M Agricultural Research and Extension Center

2415 E. Highway 83

Weslaco, Texas

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Progress in Assessing the US Earthen Embankment Levees in the Lower Rio Grande Valley - Jim Robinson, Chief of the Engineering Services Division, USIBWC
- Status Report on Appropriations Request for Levee Rehabilitation and the Morillo Drain Project - Richard Hinojosa, Deputy Executive Director, Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
- Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Operations - Rick Reyes, Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project Manager, USIBWC
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion, 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 or e-mail sallyspener@ibwc.state.gov.