

For immediate release
March 23, 2007

FEDERAL AGENCY HEAD TO DISCUSS RIO GRANDE PROJECTS AT APRIL 4 PUBLIC MEETING

Commissioner Carlos Marin of the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) will discuss the agency's Rio Grande projects at the next public meeting of the Lower Rio Grande Citizens' Forum (LRGCF). The meeting will take place April 4, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at the USIBWC office, 325 Golf Course Road in Mercedes, 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.

Marin, who was appointed Commissioner by President Bush in December 2006, will discuss recent developments in Commission activities affecting the region. Among those projects is the Morillo Drain, a binational water quality project located in Mexico that conveys saline irrigation return flows to the Gulf of Mexico, thereby reducing saline discharges to the Rio Grande. The U.S. and Mexican Sections of the Commission recently developed a plan to encase a portion of the drain near Anzalduas Dam to reduce maintenance and increase reliability. The U.S. government is contributing more than \$600,000 for the work. The project is currently out to bid in Mexico and construction is scheduled for April-June 2007.

The Commissioner will also provide an update on Mexico's Rio Grande water deliveries to the United States pursuant to the 1944 Water Treaty. In accordance with the treaty, Mexico is required to deliver a minimum volume of 1,750,000 acre-feet of water to the United States from six Mexican tributaries during the course of a five-year cycle. To avoid a deficit in its treaty obligation, Mexico must deliver more than 400,000 acre-feet to the United States between now and the end of the current cycle in October 2007.

The effort to increase the height of Rio Grande flood control levees in the region is also on the

agenda. In partnership with the City of Hidalgo, the USIBWC recently completed work to raise the levee for over one mile as part of the Hidalgo Hike and Bike Trail. The USIBWC is currently working on the design to increase the height of another 3.3-mile long levee segment, known as the Hidalgo Loop Levee, with construction scheduled to begin next year, subject to federal appropriations. This levee provides flood protection for the Cities of Hidalgo and Pharr. The work is part of a multi-year plan to raise and rehabilitate Rio Grande flood control levees. USIBWC studies have shown that some levee segments are not high enough to safely contain the 100-year flood. Based on these studies, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is working to revise its flood insurance rate maps, which could require more property owners to purchase flood insurance.

A complete meeting agenda follows. Members of the public who would like more information can contact the USIBWC's Lower Rio Grande Project Office at 956-565-3150 or the Public Affairs Office at sallyspener@ibwc.state.gov.

For more information:

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LOWER RIO GRANDE CITIZENS' FORUM

Wednesday, April 4, 2007

4:00 - 6:00 P.M.

USIBWC Conference Room

325 Golf Course Road*

Mercedes, TX 78570

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions - Rick Reyes, Citizens' Forum Co-Chair, USIBWC
- Project Updates - Carlos Marin, Commissioner, USIBWC
 - Mexican Water Deliveries under the 1944 Water Treaty
 - Morillo Drain Project
 - Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project Levee Rehabilitation
- Public Comment
- Recognition of Board Members - Carlos Marin, Commissioner, USIBWC
- 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.

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