



THE BOUNDARY MARKER

Summer 2004

COMMISSIONER WELCOMES NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM

U.S. Section Commissioner Arturo Q. Duran welcomed his new leadership team this summer, reflecting his commitment to enhance communication with stakeholders, improve agency efficiency, and bolster Commission effectiveness.

"I am confident that this team will provide the leadership needed to take the Commission to the next level," Duran said.

Carlos Rivera is the new Secretary, a diplomatic position defined by treaty. He previously worked as EPA Border Office Director in El Paso and served the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for 20 years. He looks forward to collaborating with Mexico "to help both sides of the Commission realize we have common challenges on the border."

Duran tapped a life-long border resident, Bernardino Olague, for another treaty position, Principal Engineer of the Engineering Department. As a former Project Manager for the Border Environment Cooperation Commission, Olague worked on sanitation projects initially developed through the IBWC's Facility Planning Program. Most recently he worked at CDM, an engineering and construction firm, where he continued his involvement in border water and

wastewater projects.

Patricia Dominguez is the new Director of Commissioner's Affairs. In this position she represents the Commissioner at functions and serves as Congressional liaison.

"I am looking forward to working hand in hand with the Commissioner to accomplish agency goals," she said.

Dominguez previously worked in Las Cruces as District Representative for Congressman Steve Pearce and his predecessor, Joe Skeen.

El Paso attorney Rick Porras has been tapped as State Affairs Officer to work as a liaison with local and state government officials. He will also be the Commissioner's Office Legal Advisor. He has broad experience as an attorney in private practice and public service. His background includes stints as a prosecutor, federal public defender, and municipal court judge.



R. Porras, C. Rivera, B. Olague, P. Dominguez, S. Rosales (clockwise from top left)

Another member of the team, Sylvia Rosales, brings over 15 years of experience in administrative support services. At the USIBWC, she is the Support Services Manager where she oversees administrative/clerical support work and the General Services Division.



U.S. AND MEXICO RELEASE RIO GRANDE POLLUTION STUDY

The United States and Mexico announced on June 30 the publication of the third and final phase of a multi-year binational study on toxic substances along the international boundary portion of the Rio Grande. Phase III covered the reach of the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas-Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua to the area of Big Bend National Park in Texas and adjacent areas in Mexico. The study concludes that chemicals found in the river's water, sediment, and fish do not pose an immediate threat to human or aquatic life.

The study was coordinated by the United States and Mexican Sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) and funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Mexico's national water agency, Comisión Nacional del Agua (CNA). The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and CNA conducted field data collection for this project in late 1998.

United States Commissioner Arturo Q. Duran and Mexican Commissioner J. Arturo Herrera Solis of the IBWC were pleased to coordinate this important binational study. The two countries have demonstrated great cooperation in the collection and reporting of water quality data which will be used by decision makers and stakeholders on both sides of the border to improve water quality in the Rio Grande/Río Bravo.

The study completes a series of three bi-

national studies of pollution and includes special emphasis on biological community assessments of aquatic organisms. It considered factors such as habitat alteration, land use, water/sediment quality and flow variations.

The results indicate that salinity (chlorides, sulfates, and dissolved solids) and metals in sediment are aspects of concern, but they do not present immediate risks to human health and aquatic life in the reach of the Rio Grande studied. The concentrations and types of pollutants found are consistent with the population, land



The Rio Grande at El Paso-Ciudad Juarez was evaluated for toxic substances, such as heavy metals.

use and industrial activities along the border. Nevertheless, additional studies are recommended.

The report is available on the USIBWC web page at www.ibwc.state.gov.



COMMISSION REACHES AGREEMENT ON RIO GRANDE WATER ACCOUNTING PROCEDURE

The International Boundary and Water Commission has reached agreement on a water accounting procedure related to water transfers from Mexico.

“I am pleased that we were able to reach this agreement with Mexico,” said U.S. Commissioner Arturo Q. Duran. “This should make it easier to for the Commission to handle water transfers in the future.”

The agreement addresses water accounting procedures for transfers of water from Mexican ownership to U.S. ownership at Amistad and Falcon International Reservoirs; Minute No. 234, signed in 1969, provides for such transfers when Mexico has a deficit in Rio Grande deliveries to the United States.

The new agreement, “Joint Report of the Principal Engineers Concerning the Adoption of a Criteria for the Calculation of Conveyance Losses Associated with Transfers to the United States of Mexican Waters Stored at Amistad and Falcon International Dams,” spells out how conveyance losses will be handled, taking into consideration the Mexican tributaries that are the source of the water, the

distance the water must travel to the reservoirs, and climatic conditions during the months preceding a reservoir transfer. In the past, the lack of established criteria for determining these losses caused controversy since climatic conditions and other factors can

greatly affect conveyance losses; for example, losses are greater during hot dry periods.

In addition, difficulty in reaching consensus on conveyance losses has sometimes delayed water transfers by Mexico. Depending on the criteria applied, conveyance losses can range from 2% to well over 30%, sometimes reaching tens of thousands of acre-feet. Whether those volumes are credited to Mexico or the

United States has complicated negotiations for previous water transfers.

Under the 1944 Water Treaty, Mexico is required to deliver to the United States an annual average of 350,000 acre-feet from six of its Rio Grande tributaries. Due to a deficit in deliveries from the tributaries, Mexico has transferred 807,060 acre-feet to U.S. ownership at the international reservoirs over the past four years, consistent with Minute No. 234.



Staff undergo routine training in water measurement techniques at San Felipe Creek

PROMOTIONS AND NEW HIRES

The USIBWC welcomed the following new employees:

Moises Bujanda.....Consultant
Roberto Carrera.....Falcon
Sergio Del Carmen.....HQ Consultant
Patricia Dominguez.....HQ Commissioner’s Office
William Fraser.....HQ Consultant
Amy Hardberger.....HQ Legal
Bernardino Olague.....HQ Engineering
Richard Porras.....HQ Legal
Carlos Rivera.....HQ Foreign Affairs

Sylvia Rosales.....HQ Commissioner’s Office
Roberto Sanchez.....Falcon

Congratulations to recently-promoted USIBWC staff:

Jose Bazaldua.....Mercedes
Susan Daniel.....HQ Legal
Ismael Guerra III.....Falcon
Francisco Martinez.....Mercedes
Nathan McSloy.....Amistad
Richard Rivers.....American Dam

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Secretary.....Jesús Luévano



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