

Colorado River Citizens' Forum  
Yuma, AZ  
September 1, 2010  
\*Tentative Meeting Notes

Board Members in attendance:

|                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Elston Grubaugh | Kevin Eatherly |
| Wade Noble      | Marcos Moore   |
| Bill Plummer    | Sam Spiller    |

Board Members absent:

Stella Mendoza  
Miguel Figueroa  
Nancy Wright

USIBWC Staff in attendance:

Anna Morales  
Diane Hinkle  
Anthony Espino  
Al Goff - Retired

MXIBWC Staff in attendance:

Francisco Bernal

❖ 32 Members of the public in attendance.

➤ Status of Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Power Point Presentation: John Swett, Program Manger, Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, Bureau of Reclamation

The purpose of the program is to respond to the need to balance the use of the lower Colorado River water resources and conserve native species and their habitats in compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Goals:

- To conserve the habitats and work toward recovery of Threatened and Endangered species and hopefully reduce the likelihood of additional species being listed.
- And accommodate present water diversions and power production to optimize opportunities for future water and power development.

The MSCP Steering Committee:

- Membership (funding agencies) includes Federal, Arizona, California, Nevada, Native American, Conservation and other interested parties which hold 2 committee meetings per year.
- Responsibilities are
  - decision making
    - consensus based
    - dispute process
  - provide input on implementation on
    - Annual work plan, budget and reports
- Total cost of \$626 million
  - California 25%
  - Arizona and Nevada 12.5%

- Reclamation 50%

Program components:

- Fish augmentation
  - Goal 660,000 Razorback Suckers (accomplishments from FY05 to FY09 110,925)
  - 620,000 Bonytail (accomplishments from FY05 to FY09 35,957)
- Species research
- System wide monitoring
- Existing habitat maintenance
- Conservation area development and management.
  - Cottonwood-Willow - 5,940 Ac (2,400 ha)
  - Mesquite - 1,320 Ac (535 ha)
  - Marsh – 512 Ac (207 ha)
  - Backwaters – 360 Ac (145 ha)
  - Have secured 3,669 acres of land and 17,573 af/yr water through FY09 and managed 956 acres.

Yuma Area projects:

- Imperial ponds (razorback and bonytail)
- Laguna Division conservation area (1,154 acres) which is still in the planning stages
- Yuma East Wetlands (potential) which partners with the City of Yuma, Quechan Tribe, Arizona Department of Game and Fish and Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area. 350 acres have been cleared, MSCP to maintain existing habitats.
- Hunter's Hole (potential) 35 acres which will complement Colonia Miguel Aleman with construction of a nursery to produce native plants.

You may go to [www.lcrmscp.gov](http://www.lcrmscp.gov) for more information.

Questions/Answers (Q & A):

Q: Where did you get the 17,000 acre-feet from?

A: Whenever we acquire land, we also acquire the water rights.

Q: With the dense planting, what happens during a flood and how will it slow the flow in the channel?

A: Most of our projects are outside of the channel, with the exception of Laguna Project which is in the old river channel, not the sluiceway.

Q: Having toured MSCP, the water levels are low and endangered birds are nesting. How are you avoiding losses when the elevation rises? How do you prevent lawsuits?

A: The program itself prevents losses and we also are covered by ESA.

Q: Do fluctuations have an effect on the population?

A: Most of the birds are riparian which are used to changes.

Q: How about killing trout?

A: There have been no discussions regarding removal of non-native fish other than those in the habitats we are creating.

Q: Was Bill Williams Planet ranch acquired?

A: Still in negotiations, hopefully will occur in FY2011.

➤ Pilot Run of the Yuma Desalting Plant, Status Update: Jennifer McCloskey, Yuma Area Office, Area Manager, Bureau of Reclamation

The plant is on a pilot run that began May 3, 2010 for 365 days at 1/3 capacity during an 18-month period. The run so far is running smoothly, ahead of schedule, under budget and performing better than design specifications

The Colorado River is at its 11-year drought. Lake Mead is at about 44% of capacity; at elevation 1,087; 4' more and will reach lowest level since 1937. Lake began filling in 1935. So there has been lots of interest to operate the plant.

The plant was constructed in 1992 but has not been operated recently other than a trial run a few years ago for 90 days at 10% capacity. The purpose of the plant is to extract water from a bypass canal that runs from the Wellton Mohawk Irrigation District and put back the product water into the Colorado River.

Each gallon recovered by the plant makes a gallon available in system storage in the U.S.

72 Million Gallon per Day (MGD) plant as currently configured

Conventional pretreatment and cellulose acetate RO membranes

Three funding partners for this run: Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Southern Nevada Water Authority, and Central Arizona Project; funding \$12.8 million of the \$16.6 million project. The Bureau of Reclamation funds the remaining portion, Bureau support staff.

Operators are exceeding their original goal of producing 70 percent reusable water and 30 percent calcium carbonate by-product.

One challenge the operators face is transporting the byproduct. The calcium carbonate is transferred through a 22-mile long pipeline that stretches from Yuma to Somerton into dry bed ponds. Since the trial run began, they've experienced about three or four breaks in the line. Each one takes about two days to repair.

The 7.2 magnitude Easter Day earthquake could be to blame, but they're not sure.

The plant maintains requirements set by and has permits issued from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ).

Have produced 9,000 acre-feet of product water to date (29,000 acre-feet is the goal of the project)

Implementation of international agreement with Mexico is underway, Minute 316

Questions/Answers (Q&A):

Q: How does the water treatment plant affect the riparian area in the Santa Clara?

A: There is a monitoring program headed by the University of Arizona and Pronatura.

Q: What about the amount of chlorine use and safety?

A: There is an alternative pre-treatment plan under study to reduce the chlorine. We take that matter very seriously and continue to work on it. We are working with local city, fire and rural metro with regard to chlorine incidents.

Q: What about bio-salts?

A: We have requirements set and permits from ADEQ.

Q: Will the facility stay open for the planned 365 days, or will it stop operating once the goals have been met?

A: Discussing with funding partners.

Public Comment/Suggested Future Agenda Items

- Agreement signed on New River improvement project.
- IID awarded \$900,000 for water quality monitoring.
- Cienega monitoring program and results (recommended for next Yuma meeting)
- Update/status on Bi-national discussions with Mexico on banking water in U.S. (recommended for next Yuma meeting)

Next meeting to be held in Imperial County, tentatively for December 2, 2010. Location TBD

Thank you to all the presenters for their presentations.

\*Meeting notes are tentative and summarize in draft the contents and discussion of Citizens Forum Meetings. While these notes are intended to provide a general overview of Citizens Forum Meetings, they may not necessarily be accurate or complete, and may not be representative of USIBWC policy or positions.