

**Colorado River Citizens Forum**  
**El Centro, CA**  
**December 7, 2011**  
**\*Tentative Meeting Notes**

Board Members in attendance:

Kevin Eatherly, Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area  
Stella Mendoza, Imperial Irrigation District  
Elston Grubaugh, Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation District  
Jim Cherry, Cherry Water Management  
Chuck Cullom, Central Arizona Project  
Karl Enockson, Yuma AZ  
Mark McBroom, Imperial County Farm Bureau  
Roberta McDermott, US Natural Resources Conservation Service, Retired

Board Members Absent:

Bill Plummer, Water Resources Consulting  
Tom Davis, Yuma County Water Users Association

USIBWC Staff in attendance:

Anna Morales, Yuma Office  
Diane Hinkle, Yuma Office  
Sally Spener, El Paso Office

MXIBWC Staff in attendance:

Francisco Bernal, Mexicali office

3 Members of the public in attendance:

Welcome and Introductions

Anna Morales welcomed the attendees and asked the Board to introduce themselves and tell us a little about themselves and their reasons for wanting to serve on the CRCF Board.

Overview of IBWC Mission, History, and Projects, Sally Spener, Public Affairs Officer, USIBWC, El Paso

Sally gave a PowerPoint presentation on the following:

IBWC Mission: The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, is responsible for applying the boundary and water treaties between the two countries and settling differences that arise in their application.

USIBWC Mission Statement: Provide bi-national solutions to issues that arise during the application of United States-Mexico treaties regarding boundary demarcation, national ownership of waters, sanitation, water quality, and flood control in the border region.

## History of the IBWC:

- 19<sup>th</sup> Century treaties:
  - Focused on establishing and demarcating the international boundary
  - Established rules for resolving boundary disputes due to shifting boundary rivers.
  - Established temporary commissions to demarcate and resolve boundary disputes.
  - Permanent commission was established in 1889
- Convention of 1906 provides for the distribution between Mexico and the United States of the waters of the Rio Grande in the El Paso-Juárez region and to deliver 60,000 acre-feet per year with proportional reduction in deliveries in case of extraordinary drought. The water is stored in Elephant Butte Dam in NM. Water is diverted by Mexico at International Dam.
- Convention of 1933/Rio Grande Rectification Project – Stabilized the international boundary in the El Paso- Juarez Valley, straightening the river channel along with flood control levees in both countries.

## Structure of the 1944 Treaty:

- Established the modern-day International Boundary and Water Commission and shifted the focus of the old International Boundary Commission to water issues.
- The Commission has two sections, each one representing its respective federal government.
- By treaty, each Section is headed by an Engineer Commissioner assisted by a Secretary, two Principal Engineers, and a Legal Advisor, all of whom have a diplomatic status.

## 1944 Water Treaty - Rio Grande:

- Allots the waters of the Rio Grande from Ft. Quitman (downstream of El Paso) to the Gulf of Mexico.
- Mexico delivers water to the United States from six of its Rio Grande tributaries in cycles of five years a minimum annual average of 350,000 acre-feet.
- Mexico's deficit in deliveries in the 1990s was resolved several years ago.

## 1944 Water Treaty – Colorado River:

- U.S. delivers to Mexico a volume of 1.5 million acre-feet per year
- When there are surplus waters, U.S. delivers to Mexico a total volume of up to 1.7 maf per year
- In extraordinary drought, Mexico reduced in proportion to U.S.

Chamizal Convention (1963) – Relocated the Rio Grande in a new concrete lined channel in El Paso-Juarez. The Convention resolved the 100 year old boundary problems at El Paso, Texas/Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, known as the Chamizal Dispute.

1970 Boundary Treaty: resolved all pending boundary differences between the two countries, and provided for maintaining the Rio Grande and the Colorado River as the international boundary.

- IBWC to maintain the Rio Grande and Colorado River as the international boundary
- Boundary is middle of the channel occupied by normal flow or middle of the channel which in normal flows has the greatest average width over its length
- IBWC to delineate the international boundary on maps
- IBWC may stabilize or rectify the channel
- Prohibits construction of works that would obstruct or deflect normal or flood flows.

#### IBWC Minutes:

- Decisions of the Commission are recorded in the form of Minutes.
- Minutes are binding agreements of the IBWC intended to implement treaty.
- They take effect once approved by the U.S. Department of State and Mexico's Foreign Affairs Ministry.
- There are over 300 minutes.

#### Boundary Demarcation:

- U.S. and Mexican Sections of IBWC jointly determine location of the boundary and demarcate the boundary.
- There are 258 principal monuments between El Paso, TX – Cd. Juarez, Chih. and the Pacific Ocean.
- Hundreds of intermediate boundary markers
- Boundary demarcation plaques at ports of entry/international bridges.
- IBWC is responsible for maintaining the monuments and preparing boundary maps.

#### International Bridges: IBWC maintains 3 international bridges

- Cordova International Bridge of the Americas (El Paso-Juarez)
- Tornillo, TX-Guadalupe, Chih. "Fabens Bridge"
- Ft. Hancock, TX-El Porvenir, Chih.

Projects: The commission maintains offices at sister cities throughout the border region where we have projects from San Diego – Tijuana to the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Our Headquarters offices are based in El Paso, TX and Ciudad Juarez.

#### Water Delivery – Colorado River

- U.S. delivers water to Mexico on the Colorado River near Yuma-Mexicali
- Deliveries effected through Reclamation – IBWC cooperation
- Mexico diverts most of its allotment at Morelos Dam
- U.S. must comply with Minute 242 salinity differential

#### Colorado River Cooperative Process

- IBWC has convened stakeholders to address the means to enhance U.S. – Mexico cooperation on the Colorado River
- Key fundamental issues identified for 2011
  - Shortage management
  - Surplus sharing
  - Intentionally Created Mexican Allocation – a means for Mexico to adjust its annual delivery schedule so water can be delivered in a subsequent year
  - Exchange of water
  - Water for the environment
  - Salinity

## Sanitation:

1944 Treaty authorizes the Commission to give “preferential attention to the solution of all border sanitation problems.”

There are 3 International wastewater treatment plants

- South Bay, CA which treats wastewater from Tijuana
- Nogales, AZ which treats wastewater from Nogales, AZ and Nogales, Sonora MX
- Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas which treats wastewater from Mexico.

## Water Quality:

- Treaties do not regulate water quality
- IBWC has conducted bi-national water quality studies with partners from both countries
- Water quality data is routinely exchanged
- Working on bi-national water quality database
- Texas Clean Rivers Program for the Rio Grande conducts regular monitoring and publishes reports.

## Reservoirs

- Two International storage dams on the Rio Grande hav a combined conservation capacity of over 5 maf. The purposes are flood control, recreation, hydroelectric power and water supply
- Amistad Dam (Del Rio, TX) built in 1969.
- Falcon Dam (Falcon Heights, TX) built in 1954.

## USIBWC has 4 Flood Control Projects

- Tijuana River – San Diego, CA
- Upper Rio Grande – Southern New Mexico and West Texas
- Presidio – Big Bend area of Texas
- Lower Rio Grande – near McAllen, Harlingen, Brownsville  
Covers 180 river miles from Penitas to the Gulf of Mexico  
2 Diversion dams
  - Anzalduas Dam which diverts water into the U.S. interior floodway
  - Retamal Dam which diverts water into Mexico’s interior floodway
 Hundreds of miles of levees on the Rio Grande and interior floodways

Overview of Yuma Project Office Responsibilities, Anna Morales, Yuma Area Operations Manager, USIBWC, Yuma, AZ

1944 Water Treaty:

- The key responsibility for the Yuma Project office is the water accounting of the 1.5 million acre-feet of water from the Colorado River delivered to Mexico under the 1944 Treaty every year.
- The Colorado River, which runs from north to south, forms the international boundary between the United States and Mexico for 24 miles in the vicinity of Yuma, Arizona and San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora.
- When there are surplus waters, U.S. is to deliver to Mexico a total volume of up to 1.7 million acre-feet per year
- In extraordinary drought, Mexico would be reduced in proportion to U.S.
- 1.36 million acre-feet is delivered and diverted at Morelos Dam and enters into the Reforma Canal a in Mexico which serves San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora and Mexicali, Tecate, Ensenada and Tijuana, Baja California
- The main accounting station for this delivery is at the Northerly International Boundary (NIB) gaging station located 512 meters upstream of the dam.

Morelos Dam:

- The Treaty also authorized the construction of Morelos Dam to divert the Colorado River water for Mexico's use.
- Morelos Dam has 20 river gates. These gates are always closed but exercised at least once a year. The 12 intake gates divert the water into Mexico for their use through the Reforma Canal.

Southerly International Boundary (SIB):

- The remaining 140,000 acre-feet (AF) is delivered at the Southerly International Boundary (SIB) at the San Luis, AZ/Sonora boundary. SIB flows are a combination of the Main Drain which is a combination of groundwater wells and run-off from valley fields, East Main Canal, West Main Canal and the Minute 242 Lateral groundwater wells. Water is delivered into the Sanchez Mejorada Canal in Mexico.
- The Yuma Project Office also manages, plans and administers the operations and maintenance of an extensive system of 14 river gages and facilities in the Colorado River from NIB to SIB for the purpose of securing water accounting, water quality and salinity data required under Minute 242 to meet Treaty and domestic requirements. Under a Memorandum of Understanding, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation does all the programming/upgrading of the telemetry system.

#### River Gages:

- The office manages, plans, and administers the operation and maintenance of 14 river gages and facilities in the Colorado River from NIB to SIB for the purpose of securing water accounting, water quality, and salinity data (under Minute 242) required to meet Treaty and Minute requirements.

#### Minute 242:

- Water samples are collected daily at NIB to calculate monthly and annual salinity differential between Imperial Dam in the U.S. and Morelos Dam in Mexico to assure compliance with Treaty and Minute requirements.
- Minute 242 sets forth the measure to assure the Colorado River waters delivered to Mexico are of similar salinity to those delivered to the United States at Imperial Dam. It requires that the waters delivered to Mexico above Morelos Dam have a flow-weighted average annual salinity of no more than 115 ppm +/- 30 ppm (145ppm) U.S. count (121 ppm +/- 30 ppm Mexico count or 151ppm) greater than that of waters at Imperial Dam.

#### Western Boundary Water Bulletin:

- Our office is also responsible for the accumulation and computation of data in preparation for publication in the Western Boundary Water Bulletin

#### Colorado River Flood Control:

- In coordination with Mexico and Reclamation, we assure the safe and proper operation and maintenance of a flood control system on the Colorado River and of the Morelos Diversion Dam in Mexico such as dredging to maintain the river's conveyance capacity.
- In 2009, the Morelos Dam Vegetation and Sedimentation project was conducted where approximately 40 acres of brush was cleared and 260,000 cubic yards of sediment was removed above and below the Morelos Dam. All the material was transported and deposited in Mexico.
- With the removal activities at Morelos Dam, a mitigation project on the limitrophe (international boundary segment of the river) was required to restore riparian habitat. The project is being conducted in Mexico at a site known as Laguna Grande. Project includes restoration of 40 acres, where cottonwood, honey mesquite and willows will be planted. Approximately 32 acres has been planted to date with a 93% survival rate of the planted trees. Pronatura has reported many different bird species sighted including the Yuma Clapper rail.

#### New River at the International Boundary:

- Yuma Project Office in conjunction with the State of California, the Mexican Section of the IBWC (CILA) and representatives of the Mexican government monitor the water quality in the New River in Calexico, CA/Mexicali, BC, through observations and the collection of samples. Observations are conducted bi-monthly and samples taken twice a month at several locations on the New River in the US and Mexico.

#### Wellton Mohawk Bypass extension at SIB:

- Monitor conditions of the bypass drain in Mexico. Minute 248, dated June 10, 1975, extended the bypass drain, which terminated below Morelos Dam, to the Santa Clara Slough upstream from the Gulf of California. The drain diverts saline irrigation return flows so they don't affect the waters of the Colorado River. This bypass drain extension is 50.4 miles in length of which 16.04 miles is in the U.S. and 34.36 miles in Mexico territory. Minute 284 ensures the integrity and capacity of the drain. The Minute also provides the process of joint operation and maintenance inspections & recommendations for the 34.36 miles in Mexico and secures funds from Reclamation for this operation and maintenance activity.

#### Other responsibilities:

- Maintenance of Rockwood Weir at NIB by manually removing debris/vegetation that gets stuck between the rocks (mattresses, palm trees, hay bales etc..) Major repairs or maintenance are usually coordinated with Reclamation or contracted out.
- Under the 1970 Boundary Treaty IBWC is to maintain the Colorado River as the international boundary
  - ❖ IBWC is to delineate the international boundary on maps.
  - ❖ Delineation of boundary must be in accordance with treaty and agreed to by both Sections
- Maintain the boundary buttons and plaques at the San Luis, AZ and Andrade, CA Ports of Entry (POE). Yuma's area of responsibility is from Monument 168, which starts south of of the Lukeville, AZ POE to Monument 204 in San Luis, AZ POE.

#### Board Discussion

- Overview of Citizen's Forum Board Responsibilities, Sally Spener, Public Affairs Officer, USIBWC, El Paso

Citizens Forum Program: The program was established in 1999

- USIBWC has 5 Citizens Forum Boards:
  - San Diego, CA
  - Colorado River (Yuma and Imperial Counties)
  - Southeast Arizona (Cochise and Santa Cruz Counties)
  - Upper Rio Grande (El Paso and Las Cruces area)
  - Lower Rio Grande (Hidalgo and Cameron Counties, Texas)
- Purpose of the forum is to facilitate the exchange of information between the USIBWC and the local community regarding ongoing and future USIBWC projects in the area.
- The Citizens Forum is intended to bring together community members enabling the early and continued two-way flow of information, concerns, values, and needs between the USIBWC and the general public, environmentalists, government agencies, irrigation districts, municipalities, etc.

Board member duties:

- Attend public meetings approximately four times per year alternating in Yuma and Imperial Counties
- Board term is for two years
- Board members are expected to be available to the public to facilitate the exchange of information
- Review and comment on technical documents and activities associated with USIBWC projects in the area
- Discuss plans and issues related to ongoing and future USIBWC projects
- CRCF is not a federal advisory board; goal is to exchange information and to receive feedback from a diversity of viewpoints
- Members serve as volunteers. There is no reimbursement for expenses.

Leadership: Two Co-Chairs

- USIBWC Co-Chair
  - Area Operations Manager Anna Morales
- Community Co-Chair
  - Selected by the board.
- Co-chair will chair every other meeting. Rely on Co-chair on administrative issues to provide guidance, agenda item prioritizing, meeting preparations and locations.

Mr. Elston Grubaugh was unanimously elected by the Board to serve as Co-Chair.

Citizens Forum Information:

- All meetings are open to the public.
- Regular communication with the board via e-mail.
- Minutes and presentations are available on the USIBWC website  
[http://www.ibwc.gov/Citizens\\_Forums/CF\\_Colorado.html](http://www.ibwc.gov/Citizens_Forums/CF_Colorado.html)

Suggested Future Agenda Items

1. Quantification Settlement Agreement update
2. Status of Minute 316, Santa Clara Wetlands
3. Update on Minute 318
4. Bi National Cooperative Process update.
5. Multi Species Conservation Program update
6. Board requests field trip to SIB, Hunters Hole and Brock Reservoir for next meeting

If there are other issues/projects you would like to hear, please email the Yuma IBWC office at [anna.morales@ibwc.gov](mailto:anna.morales@ibwc.gov) or [sally.spener@ibwc.gov](mailto:sally.spener@ibwc.gov)

Sally Spener presented the new Board with Certificates of Appreciation from Commissioner Drusina.

Next meeting tentatively scheduled for March 7, 2012 from 4-6pm in Yuma, location TBD.

\*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.