



# **Colorado River Citizens Forum**

**December 2, 2010**

**Status Report: New River Improvement Efforts**

# Recap...New River Presentation 12/14/2009

## History

In 1905-07 the Colorado River washed out diversionary works, and the entire Colorado River flow coursed into the Salton basin creating the New and Alamo River channels

## Contamination

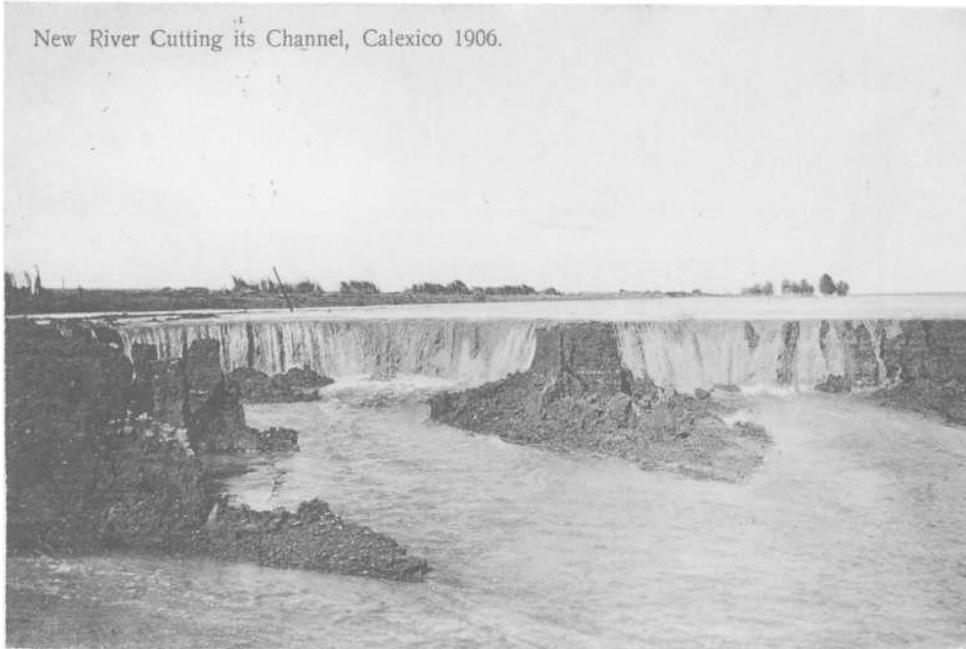
- The flows in the New River channel at the border have been primarily agricultural, municipal and industrial sources of wastewater from Mexico
- The New River is an “Impaired Water Body” under the Clean Water Act and violates public health standards for every pollutant that is measured under the law
- 2010 water samples continue to document fecal coliform, arsenic, ammonia, dissolved solids and selenium levels in excess of reporting thresholds and public health standards.

# Recap continued...

**New River cutting its channel  
Calexico 1906**



New River Cutting its Channel, Calexico 1906.



**The present day channel of the New River was created in 1905-07 when the Colorado River washed out diversionary works, and the entire Colorado River flow coursed into the Salton basin creating the New and Alamo River channels and the present Salton Sea, thus the name “new” river.**

# Recap...New River Presentation 12/14/2009

## Unknown Health and Environmental Risks

- Non-reportable and under-reported disease risks
- Due to the intense desert heat and evaporation levels, water-borne chemicals
- and toxins may actually become airborne in and around the New River
- Comprehensive health assessment linking water pollution and threats to residents not yet performed

## New River Water Quality Improvements – RWQCB

- Las Arenitas, Mexicali II Waste Water Treatment Plant
- Binational Cooperation at all levels of government: technical and financial assistance

# Recap...New River Presentation 12/14/2009

## Calexico New River Committee

- First organized community grassroots effort for New River cleanup
- **Priorities**  
Public health, economic development, environmental and social justice
- **Drawing attention to the New River**  
Media, community organizing, webpage, newsletter and dvd
- **Activities**  
Advocacy for policy change, community education/ awareness meetings, development of community-generated policy documents, among other activities.

# Advocacy trip to Washington D.C. March 2010

The CNRC presented and discussed to the following distinguished agencies and elected officials the inhumane predicament that the New River poses to Imperial Valley: Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Barbara Boxer, Congressman Bob Filner, the Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, United States Border Patrol and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.



# Summary of appropriations and funding opportunities for New River Improvement Project

## **Federal Funding 2005 - H.R. 3 (TEA-LU)**

In 2005, the President signed H.R. 3 (The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) otherwise known as TEA-LU. In this legislation, Congress authorized \$4 million to “Develop bicycle paths and public park space adjacent to the New River in Calexico.” The funding required a 20% local/state match (\$800,000).

**Outcome:** *Appropriation of \$4 million, only if local 20% match was attained.*

## **State Funding 2009 – CA State Budget Act**

The \$800,000 State Budget appropriation from the Resource Agency’s River Parkway Program served as a required 20 % match for the \$4 million federal funds that were appropriated through H.R.3 in 2005.

**Outcome:** *Appropriation of \$800,000 to trigger an additional \$3.2 million.*

# Summary of appropriations and funding opportunities for New River Improvement Project

## 2010 - State Water Resources Control Board

On April 20, 2010 the SWRCB approved a \$400,000 grant proposal from the City of Calexico and Cal EPA to begin implementation of AB 1079.

AB 1079 calls for a strategic plan to be created that must contain the following elements:

1. Quantification of current and projected New River water quality impairments and their threat to public health.
2. Prioritization of the actions necessary to protect public health and to meet New River water quality objectives and other environmental goals, such as improving the quality of water flows into the Salton Sea.
3. Identification of potential funds for the implementation of the project, and potential lead agencies that would be responsible for environmental review of activities related to the cleanup and restoration of the New River.
4. Identification of the appropriate federal, state, and local agencies with a role implementing and achieving the New River Improvement Project.

**Outcome:** Appropriation of \$400,000.

# New River Improvement Project Strategic Plan

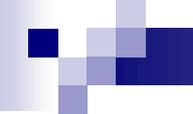
## **Technical Advisory Committee:**

The Technical Advisory Committee is comprised of impacted cities and counties, relevant local, regional and state agencies and departments, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders dedicated to achieving the goals of AB 1079 and restoring the New River.

## **Steering Committee:**

To advise the Technical Advisory Committee and facilitate efficient and effective use of time and resources in implementing the New River Improvement Project, a Steering Committee will be formed. The Steering Committee consists of representatives of the agencies within the TAC that approve funding:

- City of Calexico
- California Environmental Protection Agency
- Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board



# **New River Improvement Project Strategic Plan**

## **Impairments and Remediation Work Group**

Mission: To quantify current and projected New River water quality impairments and their threat to public health and to prioritize the actions necessary to protect public health and meet New River water quality objectives and other environmental goals, such as improving the quality of water flows into the Salton Sea.

## **New River Visioning Work Group**

Mission: To imagine and develop a plan for a river parkway that is consistent with water quality objectives and flood control features of the New River.

## **Funding and Background Work Group**

Mission: To identify potential funds for the implementation of the project, to identify the lead agencies that would be responsible for environmental review of activities related to the cleanup and restoration of the New River, and to provide background and legal information about the New River.

# New River Improvement Project Strategic Plan

## Technical Advisory Committee Deliverables

- \* Input into process and findings
- \* Advise on who to include on workgroups
- \* Draft Strategic Plan
- \* In-kind staff contributions
- \* Advise on who should be kept informed
- \* Final Strategic Plan

## Constraints and Assumptions:

- The majority of technical analysis will be provided through in-kind contributions of staff from agencies with appropriate expertise, particularly those on the Technical Advisory Committee.
- Analysis will be based on readily available information and data, not additional survey work.
- Data and information can be acquired promptly, to ensure the tight schedule can be met.



Technical Advisory Committee

Date: November 18, 2010

Venue: Carnegie Technology Center

# **CNRC and City of Calexico adopt Memorandum of Understanding**

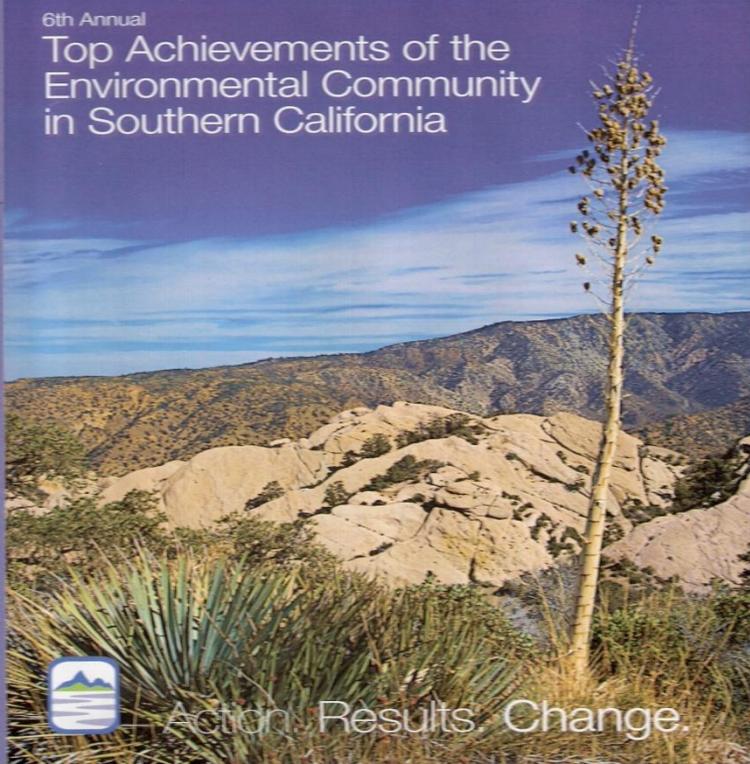
- On August 31, 2010 an MOU between the CNRC and City of Calexico was approved by the Calexico City Council
- The purpose of this agreement is to coordinate the cleanup, regulation, administration, improvement, restoration and management of the New River as it passes through Calexico
- The City and the CNRC recognize that this agreement is intended by both parties to define an administrative process and facilitate cooperation among them to the greatest extent possible
- The Calexico City Council designated Councilmember to be the administrative representative that will work on all matters related to the MOU with the CNRC

6<sup>th</sup> Annual FRESHWATER PROTECTION  
and RESTORATION ACHIEVEMENT

*!Apesta! New River Cleanup  
Tackles Environmental Injustice*

City of Calexico New River Committee

6th Annual  
Top Achievements of the  
Environmental Community  
in Southern California



Environment Now recognized the CNRC in its “6<sup>th</sup> Annual Top Achievements of the Environmental Community in Southern California.” The CNRC was recognized under the *freshwater protection and restoration achievement* category for the work performed on remediating the current state of the New River.

# Community working with Government



# **SUPPORT OUR PROJECT!**

**Calexico New River Committee**

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**Sign up for the CNRC Newsletter at**

**[www.CalexicoNewRiver.org](http://www.CalexicoNewRiver.org)**