



**Lower Rio Grande Citizens Forum Meeting
USIBWC Office
325 Golf Course Road
Mercedes, Texas
March 3, 2010
Tentative Meeting Notes***

Board Members in Attendance

Carl A. Boyd
Godfrey Garza, Jr.
Jerry Freeman
William R. Lewis
Bradly Nibert
Patty Alexander

Board Members Absent

Sofia Benavides
Darla Jones
Eddie Lucio, III
Philip Waldron

USIBWC Staff in Attendance

Rodolfo Montero
Francisco Martinez
Roderick Dunlap
Joel Saldivar
Belinda Ibarra

Members of the Public in Attendance

Felipe Chalons J., Mexican Section, IBWC
Laura De La Garza, Comile Resources
Ben Patterson, HDR
Mario A. Cruz, City of McAllen
Jose De Leon, Hidalgo County Water Improvement District #3
Antonio Barco, Hidalgo Co.
Michael Euler, Texas Dept. Of Agriculture
Morgan Greenfield, HDR
Joe Tucker, retired USIBWC
Brian Langham, USBP
Pamela Taylor
Ernesto Reyes, USFWS
Aurelio Cortes, Half Associates
Michelle Moncimz

- I. Citizens Forum Co-Chair, Bill Lewis began the meeting by announcing that a board member has elected to leave the committee for personal reasons. Also, Mrs. Darla Jones has accepted a managerial position in South Padre Island and will continue to be a board member. Commissioner Edward Drusina visited the Mercedes Office February 19th and the meeting had a very good attendance. Mr. Lewis looks forward to working with Commissioner Drusina. Commissioner Drusina has appointed Mr. Carlos Peña as Principal Engineer for the I.B.W.C. Mr. Pena was not able to make it for the March 3rd Citizens Forum but will be available for future meetings. Mr. Bill Lewis then initiated self-introductions from all meeting attendants.

- II. Roderick Dunlap, Civil Engineer for the I.B.W.C., presented an update on the Recovery Act:
 - A. Summary Briefing
 - FEMA is updating flood insurance rate maps and requires levees to contain the 100-year flood with 3 ft. freeboard.
 - \$120 million of the \$220 million appropriated to the USIBWC by Congress is being spent on Flood Control Projects in Hidalgo and Cameron Counties.

 - B. American Recovery and Reinvestment (ARRA) Act Projects:

Proposed Lower Rio Grande Valley Levee Enhancement Projects

 - North Banker Floodway – 3 Miles
 - Main Floodway – 43 Miles
 - North Floodway and Arroyo Colorado – 48 Miles
 - Hidalgo Loop Levee, Phases 1 & 2 – 1 Mile
 - Lateral A – 13 Miles
 - Edinburg Pump Levee Relocation and Channel Crossing - 0.2 Miles

 - C. Levee Rehabilitation Projects
 - Banker Floodway North Levee (Granjeno to 23rd Street), 85% complete, construction scheduled for completion March 2010
 - Main Floodway Levees, North and South (23rd St. to FM 1015), 20% complete, construction scheduled for completion September 2010
 - North Floodway & Arroyo Colorado North (FM 1015 to Hidalgo/Cameron County Line), broke ground February 15, 2010; construction scheduled for completion November 2010
 - Hidalgo Loop Levee – Phases 1 & 2 (Hidalgo Levee Tie-Ins & Common Levee), broke ground January 11, 2010; construction scheduled for completion October 2010
 - Lateral A to Retamal Dam (+ Dike), construction scheduled March 2010 – October 2010
 - Edinburg Pump Channel (Levee Relocation & Channel Crossing), construction contract to be awarded by summer 2010 with construction through March 2011

Question: Are we going to have wildlife environmental monitors?

Response: Yes. We have field environmental monitors.

Question: In reference to benching, proofing, filling and compacting, how do you solve the weakest/critical points on the levee? What is the most critical issue in making the levees withstand a flood?

Response: The lifts are mandated to be no more than 6 inches and they have been compacted. The elevation has been calculated to withstand the 100-year flood. All soils are tested before and after it's put in place to make sure all requirements have been met.

Question: Where will the new levee in Brownsville be built?

Response: The city of Brownsville has made an agreement with the IBWC and I'm not familiar where the footprint of the new levee is going to be at this time. The IBWC Mercedes Office will assist you in contacting the El Paso Office to answer your questions.

Question: The new levee that will be built in Brownsville, Texas, will consequently block Monsees Road and there will no longer be vehicle access to my home. I want to know what will happen to that road and my home.

Response: The city of Brownsville is in charge of that project and the IBWC can get information for you tomorrow.

Question: In the last meeting someone asked why does the IBWC only get 10 million dollars for the Hidalgo County project? Is this true?

Response: Actually, 120 million dollars has been designated for the Lower Rio Grande project.

III. Rodolfo A. Montero, Area Operations Manager for the I.B.W.C., presented an update on the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project (LRGFCP):

A. Summary Briefing:

- 270 Miles of Levees
- 30,000 acres of interior floodway
- 300 drain structures
- 279 irrigation structures
- Provides flood protection for hundreds of thousands of U.S. Residents

B. LRGFCP Conveyance Capacity

Three Components:

- In the Rio Grande from Penitas at river mile 186 to downstream of Brownsville at river mile 28.

- In the U.S., the Main Floodway, which branches off into the North Floodway and the Arroyo Colorado.
- In Mexico, the Mexican floodway.

C. LRGFCP Conveyance Capacity

Design Flood Flows in Minute No. 238

• Rio Grande at Rio Grande City	250,000 cubic feet per second (cfs)
• Rio Grande at Penitas	235,000 cfs
• U.S. Main Floodway diversion	105,000 cfs
• Rio Grande at Hidalgo/Reynosa	130,000 cfs
• Mexican floodway diversion	105,000 cfs
• Rio Grande at Brownsville/Matamoros	20,000 cfs

D. Anzalduas Dam

- Joint U.S.-Mexico operations and maintenance (O & M)
- Assure diversion of the U.S. share of floodwater to the interior floodway.
- Diversion of water to Mexico's irrigation canal
- Effect release for downstream water users in both countries.
- 24 Hour Operation.
- Perform Maintenance to 2 Gates Per Year.

E. Banker Weir/Inlet

- Inlet to U.S. Interior Floodway
- Crest Elevation of 106.50'

F. Retamal Dam

- Began Operation May 1975
- Joint U.S.-Mexico O&M
- To enable Mexico to divert to its interior floodway its share of Rio Grande floodwaters.
- To limit flood flows at Brownsville-Matamoros.

G. Levee Rehabilitation – Cameron County

- 18 miles of Levee
- Lower Rio Grande Valley Levee Raising Project

H. Rehabilitation of Structures

- Structure No. 14A
- Structure No. 48

I. Morillo Drain Project

- Extends for 75 miles through Tamaulipas from 8 miles above Anzalduas Dam to Gulf of Mexico.
- Conveys highly saline return flows from a Mexican irrigation district to the Gulf of Mexico.
- Costs shared by both countries and Lower Rio Grande Valley water users.

J. Hydrographic Operations

Rio Grande Stream Flow Measurements at:

- Los Ebanos
- Downstream of Anzalduas Dam
- Progreso
- San Benito
- Lower Brownsville

Floodway Stream Flow Measurements at:

- Banker Weir
- El Fuste – South of Mercedes
- Harlingen

IV. Future Meeting topics:

- IBWC-related Environmental Issues

After the question and answer session, Citizens Forum Co-Chair Rodolfo Montero stated that if there were no other questions or comments, he then redirected the forum to a proposed date for the next meeting. A Citizens Forum member suggested the 1st or 2nd week of June 2010.

With no further questions or comments, Citizens Forum Co-Chair Rodolfo Montero thanked the forum and concluded the meeting.

*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.