

USIBWC Citizens Forum Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2011 6:00-8:30 pm
Imperial Beach - Tijuana Estuary National Estuarine Research Reserve
Tentative Meeting Notes*

There were approximately 30 members of the public present.

Oscar Romo (Chair) kicked off the meeting and asked board members to self introduce. All board members were present. Unfortunately, one of the presenters was unable to attend - Gretel Roberts of Weston Solutions, and she would be invited to present at the next Citizens Forum in April 2011. Oscar mentioned that there were many people present who wished to discuss the recent spill at Playas de Tijuana, recently discovered by NGOs and reported to the media. He stated we would adhere to the agenda and provide time at the end of the meeting to discuss the spill.

Steve Smullen then gave a brief presentation on the summary of December 2010 flooding in the Tijuana River Valley and the status of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant secondary treatment plant construction. While the late December 2010 event in California was an extreme event, total rainfall in south San Diego and Tijuana was a fraction of the precipitation received further north and did not manifest itself in severe flooding. The peak flow in the Tijuana River was similar to that seen in recent years, and the entire event duration on December 21 was only 8-10 hours. Information was provided on spills from Barrett Reservoir during the period. Spills had ended within the past couple days due to drafting of the Barrett pool and conveyance to Lower Otay Reservoir through the Dulzura Conduit. This drafting is expected to continue until 2012, when the reservoir pool will be significantly lowered.

The treatment plant construction is 98 per cent complete. The plant appears to be meeting permit requirements. There were no failures of acute and chronic toxicity for December, an unprecedented occurrence.

Questions answered by Mr. Smullen included the following: What is the location of the secondary treatment plant? Is secondary effluent drinking water quality? Where is the concrete channel of the river? Will SCADA be integrated with both plants? What percentage of the river flow is comprised of releases from Barrett ? What was 1993 flood flow?

Bruce Shaffer of the Navy gave a presentation of the Navy presence in the Valley, specifically the Navy Outlying Landing Field (NOLF). This is a strategic location for the Navy, as it is the helicopter training center of the US. He gave a brief history of both the NOLF and North Island Naval Air Station, and discussed compatibility of land uses

surrounding the base. There are opportunities for joint land use agreements between the Navy and neighboring landowners, with consideration for restoration/wetland banking and economic adjustment. Questions answered by Bruce included the following - Is the airfield in the 100 year floodplain? Is there unexploded ordnance in the Navy property? What are the height or altitude restrictions for the helicopters and other aircraft?

Gabe Duran gave a brief presentation on the role of the IBWC in defining the International Boundary in California, specifically the role of early Commissioners, how the line was set in California, and the actual construction of Monument 258, including historical photos.

The discussion then turned to the spill in Playas de Tijuana. According to some accounts, the spill had begun after the December 21 storm event but had only recently come to light when a story was published in the *San Diego Union Tribune*, based on information provided by Wildcoast. The U.S. Section of the IBWC did not have knowledge of the spill until the newspaper story was released, and the information was soon corroborated by the Mexican Section of the Commission after discussions with CESPTT, the Tijuana utility. Steve Smullen provided the update information received from the Mexican Section. The deep (6m) conveyance line to the Playas Pump Station had apparently collapsed and required replacement – the problem was technically difficult and the fix was costly. Repairs were underway and were expected by the end of the upcoming weekend. An update was also provided by Margarita Diaz of Proyecto Fronterizo de Educacion Ambiental, a Tijuana resident and environmentalist. She stated that this spill had continued over a long period with no information or fix provided by CESPTT. She stated it is imperative to keep communications open on any public health issue. USIBWC informally agreed to provide surf reports to City of Imperial Beach, Coastkeeper, County Health Dept and Wildcoast in the future.

For the board discussion, Oscar Romo kicked off with some slides of the IBWC Minutes which concern the San Diego area. Steve Smullen stated that all Minutes are available on the USIWBC website.

On ideas for new topics, Mike Williams again requested a presentation on Orange County groundwater recharge. One individual asked if water from the international wastewater treatment plant could be further purified and used in San Diego. The reply was that it is Mexico's water. Steve Smullen proposed having a presentation by Helix Water of a similar project in the Lakeside area, which is closer to San Diego. Scott Huth proposed that we have a review of the San Diego Metro system and how the South Bay plant ties into it. Jack Bransford mentioned that he is still interested in going on a tour of the Mexican wastewater facilities. Oscar invited the board members to a February 17 tour of the South Bay Water Reclamation Plant (SBWRP).

Next Meeting:

April 14, 2011 at the TRNERR

*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.



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
January 6, 2011

JANUARY 20 PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AFFECTING THE TIJUANA RIVER VALLEY

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) has scheduled a public meeting of the USIBWC Citizens Forum on Thursday, January 20, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the Tijuana Estuary Meeting Room, 301 Caspian Way, Imperial Beach, CA 91932. The meeting will focus on water quality issues and regional history affecting the Tijuana River Valley near the U.S.-Mexico border. The purpose of the Citizens Forum is to promote the exchange of information between the USIBWC and the community about Commission projects and related activities.

Steve Smullen, USIBWC Area Operations Manager, will discuss recent flood conditions in the Tijuana River Basin. The Commission's Tijuana River Flood Control Project, a concrete-lined portion of the river near the international border, experienced high flow for a brief period in late December. Commission personnel in the United States also coordinated closely with their Mexican counterparts regarding reservoir levels in both countries.

Mr. Smullen will also give an update on construction of the technology upgrade of the Commission's South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant in San Diego. The plant treats wastewater originating in Tijuana, Mexico. With construction of the upgrade, the plant began providing secondary treatment in late 2010 to meet applicable U.S. water quality standards. The treated effluent is discharged 3.5 miles offshore into the Pacific Ocean. Remaining construction items, such as landscaping and paving, are scheduled to be completed in April 2011.

In other business, Dr. Gretel Roberts of Weston Solutions will give a presentation about microbial source tracking in the Tijuana River Estuary. In 2008, the City of Imperial Beach was awarded Clean

Beach Initiative funding to undertake a microbial source tracking study in the U.S. portion of the Tijuana River watershed. The presentation will summarize key findings to date.

Bruce Shaffer, Community Plans Liaison at Naval Base Coronado, will present an overview of military history in the Tijuana River Valley. The focus will be on the Naval Outlying Field (Ream Field) Imperial Beach, the only training center for Navy helicopter aviation on the West Coast. The presentation will also include brief summaries of supporting and parent Navy installations such as the Silver Strand, Naval Air Station North Island, and Naval Amphibious Base. The final part of the presentation will focus on funding programs to assist local agencies in compatibility land use planning.

Finally, USIBWC Engineer Planner Gabriel Duran will discuss how the southern boundary of California was established. The presentation will cover the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848 and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo -- the peace treaty that ended the war and established the boundary between the United States and Mexico. He will also discuss Monument 258, which was erected at the westernmost point of the land boundary, and the surveyors' difficulty in establishing the line connecting Monument 258 to the confluence of the Gila and Colorado Rivers. Additionally, he will explain the role of the early Boundary Commissioners in the establishment of the border line. Boundary demarcation remains an important responsibility of the International Boundary and Water Commission to this day.

A complete agenda follows. Members of the public who would like more information about the meeting may call 619-662-7600 or e-mail sally.spener@ibwc.gov.

For more information:

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USIBWC CITIZENS FORUM
Thursday, January 20, 2011
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Tijuana Estuary Meeting Room
301 Caspian Way
Imperial Beach, CA 91932

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions – Oscar Romo, Citizens Forum Co-Chair
- Recap of Recent Flood Conditions in the Tijuana River Basin – Steve Smullen, Area Operations Manager, USIBWC
- Update on Construction of the Secondary South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant – Steve Smullen, Area Operations Manager, USIBWC
- Microbial Source Tracking in the Tijuana River Estuary – Gretel Roberts, Project Manager – Water Resources, Weston Solutions
- Military History in the Tijuana River Valley - Bruce Shaffer, Community Plans Liaison, Naval Base Coronado
- How the Southern Boundary of California Was Established - Gabriel Duran, P.E., Engineer Planner, USIBWC
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion
- Suggested Future Agenda Items

The next meeting will be held April 13, 2011.