



**International Boundary and Water Commission
United States Section**



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For immediate release
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**RIO GRANDE LEVEE CONSTRUCTION,
USIBWC PLANS FOR ASARCO REMEDIATION ON AGENDA
FOR MARCH 23 PUBLIC MEETING IN EL PASO**

Rio Grande levee construction and aspects of the Asarco settlement will be discussed at the next public meeting of the Rio Grande Citizens Forum, an outreach program of the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC). The meeting will take place Tuesday, March 23, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at USIBWC Headquarters, 4171 N. Mesa Street, Building C, El Paso, Texas.

Gabriel Duran, an Engineer Planner with the Commission, will give an update on Rio Grande levee construction being undertaken in Doña Ana County, New Mexico and El Paso County, Texas with funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act). The USIBWC recently awarded three contracts for levee construction in the areas of Hatch, the Mesilla Valley, and between Vado Bridge and Borderland Bridge. The levees are being raised and rehabilitated to reduce flood risk and to comply with criteria established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The purpose of the Recovery Act is to create and save jobs, promote economic recovery, and invest in infrastructure that will provide long-term economic benefits.

In other business, Eric Meza, Paralegal Specialist, and Daniel Borunda, Acting Chief of the Environmental Management Division, will discuss the recent legal settlement of USIBWC's

claim against El Paso smelter Asarco. In the Asarco bankruptcy case, USIBWC was a creditor based on its claim of soil and groundwater contamination at the American Dam, American Canal, and American Dam/Carlos Marin Field Office in El Paso. Asarco reached a settlement agreement with the Government for payment of the USIBWC claim, which was finalized in December 2009 in the amount of \$19 million. The funds will be used for soil removal at the American Dam/Carlos Marin Field Office and removal and replacement of three segments of the American Canal.

The Rio Grande Citizens Forum was established by the USIBWC in 1999 to facilitate the exchange of information regarding USIBWC activities on the Rio Grande between Percha Dam, New Mexico and Fort Quitman, Texas. It is designed to bring together community members, enabling the early and continued two-way flow of information, concerns, values, and needs between USIBWC and the general public, environmentalists, irrigation districts, municipalities, and others interested in the river. A complete meeting agenda is enclosed.

For more information:

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RIO GRANDE CITIZENS FORUM
Tuesday, March 23, 2010
6:30 - 8:30 P.M.
USIBWC Headquarters
4171 N. Mesa St., The Commons, Building C
El Paso, TX 79902

AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions – Louis Irwin, Citizens Forum Co-Chair
- Recovery Act Levee Construction Projects in El Paso and Doña Ana Counties – Gabriel Duran, Engineer Planner, USIBWC
- A Brief History and Update on the USIBWC’s Claim against Asarco – Eric Meza, Paralegal Specialist, Legal Affairs Office, USIBWC
- USIBWC Plans for the Asarco Remediation – Daniel Borunda, Acting Chief, Environmental Management Division, USIBWC
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion
- Suggested Future Agenda Items

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time. For more information, call 915-832-4175 or e-mail sallyspener@ibwc.gov