



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
June 8, 2011

RIO GRANDE WATER QUALITY AND ARROYO COLORADO FLOOD CONTROL ON AGENDA FOR JUNE 22 PUBLIC MEETING IN WESLACO

Rio Grande water quality and efforts to maintain flood capacity of the Arroyo Colorado will be discussed at the June 22 public meeting of the Lower Rio Grande Citizens Forum (LRGCF). The LRGCF was established by the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) to facilitate the exchange of information between the USIBWC and members of the public about Commission activities and related issues in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The meeting will be held Wednesday, June 22, 3:00-5:00 p.m. at the Hoblitzelle Auditorium of the Texas A & M Agricultural Research and Extension Center, 2415 E. Highway 83 in Weslaco, Texas.

Elizabeth Verdecchia, Environmental Protection Specialist with the USIBWC, will give a presentation about bacteria levels and water quality monitoring in the Lower Rio Grande. She will focus on the completed bacteria study in Brownsville, the improvements in water quality due to the Matamoros, Tamaulipas wastewater treatment plant, areas of increasing bacteria in the Rio Grande such as at the City of Hidalgo and Rio Grande City, and a possible binational water quality project in the Lower Rio Grande involving the International Boundary and Water Commission, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

In other business, USIBWC Principal Engineer Carlos Peña will give an update on efforts to maintain the flood conveyance capacity of the Arroyo Colorado, an important flood control channel

through the Valley. An analysis of water surface elevations in the Arroyo Colorado during last year's flood coupled with additional studies by the USIBWC indicate that plants and debris in the Arroyo Colorado have restricted the flow of water, leading to higher water levels when the stream is in flood conditions. Because this increases the risk of flood control levees failing or being overtopped, potentially flooding the City of Harlingen, the USIBWC has begun cleaning out debris from the Arroyo where it poses increased flood risk, including at bottlenecks in the channel. The presentation will include before and after photos of areas where dead trees and other debris have been removed and will discuss plans for studies to determine long-term maintenance practices for the Arroyo Colorado.

A complete meeting agenda follows. Members of the public who would like more information about the meeting may contact the USIBWC's Lower Rio Grande Project Office at 956-565-3150 or the Public Affairs Office at sally.spener@ibwc.gov.

For more information:

Sally Spener
915-832-4175
sally.spener@ibwc.gov

LOWER RIO GRANDE CITIZENS FORUM
Wednesday, June 22, 2011
3:00 - 5:00 P.M.
Hoblitzelle Auditorium
Texas A & M Agricultural Research and Extension Center
2415 E. Highway 83*
Weslaco, Texas 78596

AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions – Rodolfo Montero, Lower Rio Grande Citizens Forum Co-Chair, USIBWC
- Bacteria Levels in the Lower Rio Grande, Clean Rivers Program Annual Water Quality Update and Rio Grande Basin Advisory Meeting – Elizabeth Verdecchia, Environmental Protection Specialist, USIBWC
- Update on Vegetation Management in the Arroyo Colorado to Reduce Flood Risk – Carlos Peña, Principal Engineer, 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 956-565-3150.

***Directions:** US-83 to exit Mile 2 W Rd. South on 2 Mile Rd. W for 0.2 mile. Turn right onto W 2nd Street/W. Business 83 for 1.5 miles.