



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
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US LAB RESULTS NORMAL, MEXICAN RESULTS PENDING AFTER MEXICAN MINE SPILL IN SAN PEDRO RIVER WATERSHED

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) reported today that laboratory results from sampling last week in the San Pedro River in the United States are normal.

Laboratory results from water quality sampling that was performed last week in the San Pedro River Watershed in Mexico have not yet been received by the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico.

Personnel from the Mexican Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission and Mexico's National Water Commission (Conagua) made a site visit to the San Pedro River basin in Sonora, Mexico on September 23 following reports of a release of potentially contaminated water into the San Pedro River watershed. The Mexican Section reported that a small overflow of a detention pond at the Buenavista mine in Cananea, Sonora occurred, affecting a tributary to the San Pedro River, causing some discoloration in the tributary. The team observed no visual abnormalities in the San Pedro River and took water quality samples from the detention pond, the river, and two tributaries -- the Barrilito and Riito Arroyos. The Barrilito Arroyo, located near the detention pond, flows into the Riito Arroyo, which flows to the river itself. Mexican officials are taking additional samples from these locations on October 3.

In the United States, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality undertook sampling of the San Pedro River near the international border.

The Mexican Section reports that the overflow from the detention pond ended September 22. Officials do not know how long the pond had been overflowing into the arroyo but suspect the overflow began as a result of a September 18 rain storm. Mexico's lab results are being reviewed for quality control purposes by Conagua before being provided to the International Boundary and Water Commission.

Results of field pH test results conducted on September 23 indicate acidic water in the detention pond and Barrilito Arroyo and neutral conditions in the Riito Arroyo and San Pedro River. However, laboratory results are needed to determine whether there is any contamination in the river and arroyos.

Following the September 23 site visit, the mine began pumping water out of the detention pond to the southeastern part of the mine in an effort to prevent any further overflows to the north into the San Pedro River watershed.

The San Pedro River flows north from Mexico, entering the United States to the west of Naco, Arizona. The mine is located approximately 30 miles upstream from the U.S.-Mexico border.

For information about the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) results, please contact Mark Shaffer, ADEQ Media Relations Director, ms15@azdeq.gov, 602-771-2215.

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