



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

For immediate release  
December 2, 2009

### **RIO GRANDE LEVEE IMPROVEMENTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION ON AGENDA FOR DECEMBER 15 PUBLIC MEETING IN LAS CRUCES**

The U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) will discuss its current Rio Grande projects in Doña Ana and El Paso Counties at the next public meeting of the Rio Grande Citizens Forum. The meeting will take place Tuesday, December 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Doña Ana County Government Center, Rooms 113/117 (Multipurpose Room), 845 N. Motel Blvd., Las Cruces, New Mexico.

USIBWC Engineer Planner Gabriel Duran will give an update on planned Rio Grande levee improvements in Hatch, Mesilla, and Canutillo, including a proposed Canutillo floodwall in an area not currently protected by a river levee. He will also discuss levee construction that has already been completed in the region. The USIBWC received \$220 million in Recovery Act funds for rehabilitation of Rio Grande flood control levees in the greater Las Cruces-El Paso region and in South Texas. The work is intended to bring the levees into compliance with standards established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

USIBWC Environmental Protection Specialist Daniel Borunda will discuss work underway to select priority sites for environmental restoration along the Rio Grande between El Paso and Percha Dam, NM. The USIBWC has been consulting with stakeholders this fall regarding a conceptual restoration plan that identifies 30 potential restoration sites. Of the potential sites, several will be selected for environmental enhancements over the next five years. Environmental improvements at these sites could include erosion control, restoration of native vegetation, control of salt cedar, and reconfiguration of the

river channel at arroyo mouths to enhance aquatic habitat. Some Recovery Act funding is already available for environmental improvements that will be undertaken as mitigation for levee construction.

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, NM and Fort Quitman, TX. 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 follows.

For more information:

Sally Spener  
915-832-4175  
sallyspener@ibwc.gov

**RIO GRANDE CITIZENS FORUM**  
**Tuesday, December 15, 2009, 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.**  
**Doña Ana County Government Center**  
**Rooms 113/117 (Multipurpose Room)**  
**845 N. Motel Blvd.**  
**Las Cruces, NM**

**AGENDA**

- Welcome and Introductions – John Merino, Principal Engineer, USIBWC, Citizens Forum Co-Chair
- Rio Grande Flood Control Levee Construction and FEMA Certification– Gabriel Duran, Engineer Planner, USIBWC
- Rio Grande Canalization Project Environmental Enhancements – Daniel Borunda, Environmental Protection Specialist, 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](mailto:sallyspener@ibwc.gov)