

# UNITED STATES SECTION INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION PROJECT PAPER

## El Paso-Las Cruces Regional Sustainable Water Project

### DESCRIPTION

The New Mexico-Texas Water Commission (Commission) created in 1991 in response to concerns regarding water supply in the region, proposed the El Paso-Las Cruces Regional Sustainable Water Project (Project) with objectives to: 1) improve and protect surface and ground water quality; 2) preserve the Hueco and Mesilla ground water basins; 3) implement year-round delivery of surface water which will enhance agricultural and municipal water supplies and the riverine ecosystem; 4) increase supplies through more efficient delivery, water conservation, and water treatment means; and 5) continue to meet treaty, compact, and contract requirements for water deliveries of Rio Grande Project waters.

The proposed project would provide a year-round potable water supply from the Rio Grande to communities and other water users in southern New Mexico and the El Paso, Texas area. This reach of the river is managed by the United States Section, International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) to facilitate deliveries of water to Mexico pursuant to the [1906 Convention](#) and to control Rio Grande floods through [The Rio Grande Canalization Project](#). The communities expected to benefit from the proposed project would include, but are not limited to Hatch, Las Cruces, and Anthony, New Mexico and Anthony, Canutillo, and El Paso, Texas. The proposed project includes acquisition, conveyance, treatment, and distribution of a drinking water supply, and upgrading or constructing facilities for water conveyance, treatment, distribution, and aquifer storage and recovery .

### BACKGROUND

The USIBWC serves as the Federal Lead Agency and the EPWU/PSB serves as the Joint Lead Agency for implementation of the NEPA process for the Project. Cooperating agencies are the United States Bureau of Reclamation, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and United States Bureau of Land Management. The environmental impact statement analyzed the no action alternative and the impacts of five action alternatives from construction and operation of the proposed project.

The Record of Decision (ROD) for the project enumerates many environmental commitments to be implemented for the enhancement of fish and wildlife within the project area. The utilities and other project sponsors that will build project features have agreed that these fish and wildlife enhancements will be part of the project, and have committed to a binding 2 percent of project construction costs for funding the construction, operation, and maintenance of selected and approved enhancement actions.

### STATUS

[The Final Environmental Impact Statement \(FEIS\)](#) was made available to the public on November 27, 2000. The Environmental Protection Agency published its notice of availability in the *Federal Register* on December 15, 2000. [The Record of Decision](#) was executed on January 16, 2001.

## **GOALS**

The Project purpose is to provide a year-round drinking water supply from the Rio Grande to meet anticipated municipal needs of Hatch, Las Cruces, northern and southern Doña Ana County, and El Paso; to protect and maintain sustainability of the Mesilla Bolson; and to extend the longevity of the Hueco Bolson.