

Colorado River Citizens Forum
Yuma County Development Services, Aldrich Hall
Yuma, Arizona
July 25, 2018
***Tentative Meeting Notes**

Board Members in attendance:

Roberta (Bobbi) Stevenson-McDermott, Yuma Natural Resource Conservation District Member, Arizona Association of Conservation Districts Board Member
Juan Leal-Rubio, Senior Planner, Yuma County Department of Development Services
Jim Buster, Southwest Resource Strategies
Bruce Kuhn, Imperial Irrigation District
Jay Simonton, Director of Utilities, City of Yuma, Arizona
Matt Dessert, Imperial County Air Pollution Control District
Phil Rosentrater, Salton Sea Authority
Frank Ruiz, Audubon Society
Meghan Scott, Yuma County Agriculture Water Coalition
Mark William White, Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe

USIBWC Staff in attendance:

Anna Morales, Area Operations Manager, USIBWC, Yuma, AZ
Lori Kuczanski, Public Affairs Officer, USIBWC El Paso, TX

9 Members of the public in attendance:

Welcoming and Introduction Remarks:

At 4:00PM Citizens Forum Co-Chair Anna Morales convened the meeting by welcoming the group and provided a brief description of the meeting agenda items.

New Board members were introduced, and each presented with a certificate.

Audience attendees were asked to introduce themselves.

Presentation One: Overview of the History, Mission, and Projects of the International Boundary and Water Commission by Lori Kuczanski, Public Affairs Officer, USIBWC

Lori Kuczanski presented an overview of the early history, Conventions, the 1944 Water Treaty, mission and projects of the IBWC. The mission is to apply the boundary and water treaties between the United States and Mexico. Commission responsibilities include boundary demarcation, operation of international wastewater treatment plants, operation of international dams, flood control, and water delivery.

Ms. Kuczanski briefly described the IBWC structure which consists of Treaty Officers for both countries: Commissioner, Secretary, two Principal Engineers and Legal Advisor.

An IBWC Minute is a decision of the Commission recorded in the form of a binding agreement intended to implement the Treaty. The Minute takes effect once approved by the U.S. Department of State and Mexico's Foreign Affairs Ministry.

A map was shown of the IBWC field offices along the U.S. and Mexico border, from South Texas to San Diego, California.

Presentation Two: An Overview of Commission Activities in the Colorado River Area by Anna Morales, Yuma Field Office USIBWC

Ms. Morales began with the 1944 Treaty, which authorized the construction of Morelos Dam to divert the Colorado River water for Mexico's use. Constructed in 1950, Morelos Dam spans 1400 feet across the Colorado River; it has 20 river gates. 12 of the intake gates divert the water into Mexico for their use through the Reforma Canal (capacity 170 cubic meters per second (cms) or 8000 cubic feet per second (cfs)). The Dam is designed to convey a maximum flow of 140,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). The dam is operated and maintained by Mexico under IBWC supervision. The Morelos Diversion Dam is located within the limitrophe section of the lower Colorado River (LCR), approximately 1.1 miles downstream from the California-Arizona land boundary.

The limitrophe is the segment of the lower Colorado River that serves as the international boundary between the U.S and Mexico above and below Morelos Dam and is approximately 24 miles long. Approximately 1.36 million acre-feet (maf) of Colorado River water is delivered to Mexico at the Northerly International Boundary (NIB) and diverted at Morelos Dam. This water serves the states/cities of Baja California and Sonora (Cities: San Luis, Sonora and Mexicali, Tecate, Tijuana, and Ensenada BC). Water is used for agriculture and municipal use. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is the water master of the Colorado River tasked with delivering these waters.

The remaining 140,000 acre-feet of Mexico's 1.5 maf annual allotment, is delivered at the Southerly International Boundary (SIB) at the San Luis, AZ/Sonora boundary. SIB flows are a combination of groundwater wells and run-off from Yuma valley fields. Water is delivered into the Sanchez Mejrada Canal in Sonora Mexico.

Along with the NIB gauging station, there are 12 other gauging stations for water accounting and water quality for the 24-mile stretch of the river to the SIB. Stations are established and measured per U.S. Geological Survey standards (USGS). A Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation establishes collaboration in the operation, maintenance and data sharing of these stations. The shared data on the flow of the river and canals is vital to ensure water deliveries are delivered to Mexico per the 1944 Treaty and to safeguard lives and protect property for the two countries.

Ms. Morales also presented on Colorado River Salinity Control: The 1944 Treaty guaranteed Mexico the 1.5 maf of Colorado River water annually but it does not contain specific provisions regarding the quality of the water to be delivered. Minute 242 (1973) regulates the salinity of water delivered to Mexico. Water delivered to Mexico must be similar in quality to water delivered to U.S. users at Imperial Dam.

Collected water samples are calculated monthly with annual salinity differential between Imperial Dam in the U.S. and Morelos Dam in Mexico, assuring compliance with Treaty and Minute requirements.

Under Minute 248, the Wellton Mohawk bypass drain, which terminated below Morelos Dam, was extended to the Santa Clara Slough upstream from the Gulf of California. This bypass drain extension is 50.4 miles in length in which 16.04 miles is in the U.S. and 34.36 miles in Mexico territory. Minute 284 ensures the integrity and capacity of the drain.

The Minute provides the process for joint operation and maintenance inspections/recommendations for the 34.36 miles in Mexico and secures the funds from the U.S. for the operations and maintenance activity.

In coordination with the Mexican Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission and representatives of the Mexican government, the USIBWC Yuma field office monitors the water quality in the New River in Calexico, CA/Mexicali, BC, through observations and the collection of samples. Mexicali Sanitation observations are conducted bi-monthly and samples collected twice a month at several locations on the New River in the U.S. and Mexico.

The USIBWC Yuma Office area of responsibility for boundary demarcation is San Luis, Arizona and the Andrade, California Ports of Entry. For this, the personnel maintain the boundary buttons and plaques.

Presentation Three: Colorado River Citizens Forum New Board Orientation- Lori Kuczanski, Public Affairs, USIBWC

Ms. Kuczanski presented the background on the Citizens Forum and expectations of board members.

The purpose of the Citizens Forum is to promote the exchange of information between the USIBWC and the community about Commission activities and related projects in Yuma and Imperial Counties. The meetings offer a means to share information with the board and hear about what is happening in different areas. The Citizens Forum is intended to bring together community members, enabling the early and continued 2-way flow of information, concerns, values, and needs between the USIBWC and the general public, water managers, irrigators, neighborhoods, environmentalists, recreational interests, government agencies, etc.

Meetings are open to public. There are emails sent out for reminders and information is posted on the Citizens Forum webpage: http://www.ibwc.gov/Citizens_Forums/CF_Colorado.html.

All Board members are volunteers and receive no payment. Board members are expected to attend all meetings. Members are encouraged to help share what is happening with their organizations. Wide ranges of issues are discussed.

Board Member duties were reviewed and discussed.

Meghan Scott will be the co-chair alternating with Anna Morales and first year, and Phil Rosentrater will be the co-chair the second year alternating with Anna Morales.

Public Comments:

None

Board Discussion and Future Agenda Items:

1. California's position on the Drought Contingency Plan from Imperial Irrigation District and Colorado River Commission of California.
2. California Regional Water Quality Control Board update of the New River strategic plan
3. Imperial Irrigation District's water allocation to farmers, equitable distribution plan and legal challenges
4. Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program update
5. Results of Bard Fallowing project

Next meeting October 24, 2018 in Imperial County, location to be determined. The meeting adjourned at 5:55pm.

*Meeting notes are tentative and summarize in draft the contents and discussion of Citizens Forum Meetings. While these notes are intended to provide a general overview of Citizens Forum Meetings, they may not necessarily be accurate or complete, and may not be representative of USIBWC policy or positions.