

Colorado River Citizens Forum  
YUMA, ARIZONA  
September 7, 2011  
Tentative Meeting Notes\*

Board Members in attendance:

Kevin Eatherly	Marcos Moore
Wade Noble	Bill Plummer
Stella Mendoza	Miguel Figueroa

Board Members absent:

Elston Grubaugh  
Nancy Wright  
Sam Spiller

USIBWC Staff in attendance:

Anna Morales  
Diane Hinkle  
Sheryl Franklin

❖ 11 Members of the public in attendance.

❖ Yuma East Wetlands Update - Kevin Eatherly, City of Yuma/Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area

- 350 acres of historic channel, wetland, riparian and upland habitat restoration completed to date.
- Two agricultural cells on each side (67 acres on one side and 35 acres on other side), 21 acre bypass canal and levee were completed in partnership with Arizona Game and Fish.

Q: Are agricultural drains producing?

A: These were not agricultural drain areas before. This area was infested with salt cedar, so a canal system to irrigate was installed. Used modern cultural techniques to do restoration, gained efficiency to do larger scale projects.

- Two (2) mile backwater channel was constructed to help with the ebb and flow of the river during excessive rain periods.
- Twenty-one (21) acres of rail habitat allows flow from the bypass thru the spillway in East Wetlands when the bypass is non-operational.

➤ Guenther Overlook Opening

- Dedicated to Herb Guenther, former state legislator and Director of the Arizona Department of Water Resources, an advocate of the project to reconnect the Yuma community and the Colorado River.
- Located west of the South channel with striking views of the Colorado River, Ocean to Ocean bridge and the St. Thomas Indian mission along with the whole sweep of the restored East Wetlands area.

- Colorado River Bank Line Restoration and Stabilization
  - Staked willow poles are used in replanting native habitat which helps in eliminating the wall of phragmites, an invasive plant also known as common reed. Spray and cut method is employed using a chipper shredder.
  - Volunteers from workshops, scout troops, and many college students from local and various other countries help with this restoration.
- Southwestern Willow Flycatcher
  - The Southwestern Willow Flycatcher is an endangered bird that has been detected in the lower Colorado River region
  - Migrating detections were highest in 2011
  - Highest detections were in restored riparian sites.
- Yuma Clapper Rail
  - Another endangered bird species in the area is the Yuma Clapper Rail
  - Highest number of detections in 2010-2011 since habitat was restored
  - Majority of the Clapper Rail using restored wetlands
  - Pairs clattering (the species' rattling call) in 2010 indicate possible breeding.
  - Individuals are present throughout the winter.
- ❖ Hunter's Hole Riparian & Wetland Restoration Project – Kevin Eatherly
  - Hunter's Hole is a wetland restoration site along the Colorado River
  - 35 acres irrigated by existing well at the site.
  - Marsh habitat has been cleared and re-vegetated with native cattail and bulrush species.
  - Maintenance is done on an as-needed basis to facilitate irrigation throughout the area. In addition, access points and roads are maintained in support of monitoring activities and for supporting Border Patrol access security points.
- ❖ Update of Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR-MSCP): Terry Murphy, Restoration Group Manager, Bureau of Reclamation, Boulder, CO.

The purpose of this program is to respond to the need to balance the use of the lower Colorado River water resources and conserve native species and their habitats in compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

- Goals are to conserve the habitats and work toward recovery of threatened and endangered species and reduce the likelihood of additional species being listed.
- Accommodate present water diversions and power production to optimize opportunities for future water and power development

The MSCP steering committee membership includes Federal, Arizona, California, Nevada, Native American, and other interested parties which hold 2 meetings per year.

- Program components
  - Fish augmentation
  - Existing habitat monitoring
  - Conservation area development and management

❖ Bi National Pilot Project Miguel Aleman Site(PPT Miguel Aleman) : Osvel Hinojosa, Pro-Natura

The Miguel Aleman site is in the Colorado River limitrophe zone in Baja California. It is part of a binational restoration initiative with Hunter's Hole in Arizona, working on concepts related to water rights and habitat restoration.

Selection criteria for this project were proposed by the United States delegation that is partnering with Mexico on the limitrophe restoration activities. Criteria included that it would be consistent with the Multi-Species Conservation Program in the United States, that it was appropriate for restoration of cottonwood-willow and mesquite habitat, and the group was also looking for a 25-50-acre pilot restoration site in the river floodplain. Other criteria included consideration of existing site characteristics such as soils and existing vegetation, the ability to obtain a 30-year concession for the land needed for the restoration, access to surface water, and other considerations.

Next steps being undertaken for the Miguel Aleman pilot restoration project are to finalize design and budget, considering 50% cottonwood-willow habitat and 50% mesquite. They are also continuing the process of tree production. Another aspect is finalizing the schedule of the binational process to complete the agreements for implementation and construction of hydraulic infrastructure.

**Public Comment/Suggested Future Agenda Items**

New River Strategic Plan Update

All-American Canal Consortiums

Multi-Species Conservation Program – Laguna Dam Conservation Area

Next meeting to be held in El Centro tentatively for December 7, 2011. Location TBD

Thank you to all the presenters for their presentations.

\*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.