



INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION

UNITED STATES SECTION

*Mexico's Rio Grande Water Deliveries
to the United States*

Sally Spener, U.S. Secretary
International Boundary and Water Commission
November 18, 2020

1944 WATER TREATY



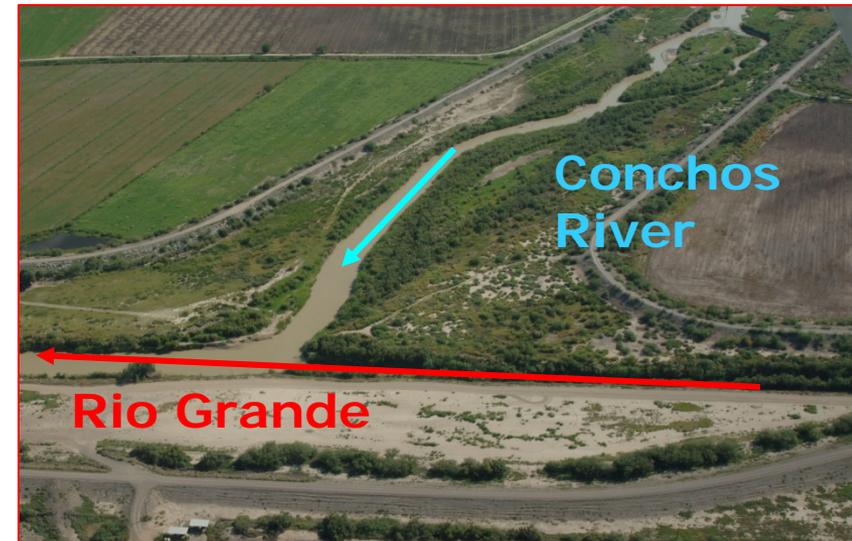
Rio Grande near Mission

- ◆ Covers Rio Grande from Ft. Quitman to the Gulf
- ◆ Mexico delivers water to US from 6 tributaries
- ◆ US receives 1/3 of flow arriving in the Rio Grande from the 6 tributaries
- ◆ 1/3 shall not be less, as an average amount in cycles of 5 years, than 350,000 acre-feet annually (1.75 maf in 5 yrs.)



1944 WATER TREATY

- ◆ Mexican tributaries allotted 1/3 to US, 2/3 to Mx:
 - ▶ Conchos, Arroyo las Vacas, San Rodrigo, Escondido, Salado, San Diego
- ◆ Mexican tributaries allotted 100% to Mx
 - ▶ Alamo, San Juan
- ◆ All major US tributaries allotted 100% to US
- ◆ Historically 70% of water originates in Mexico but 50% allotted to US

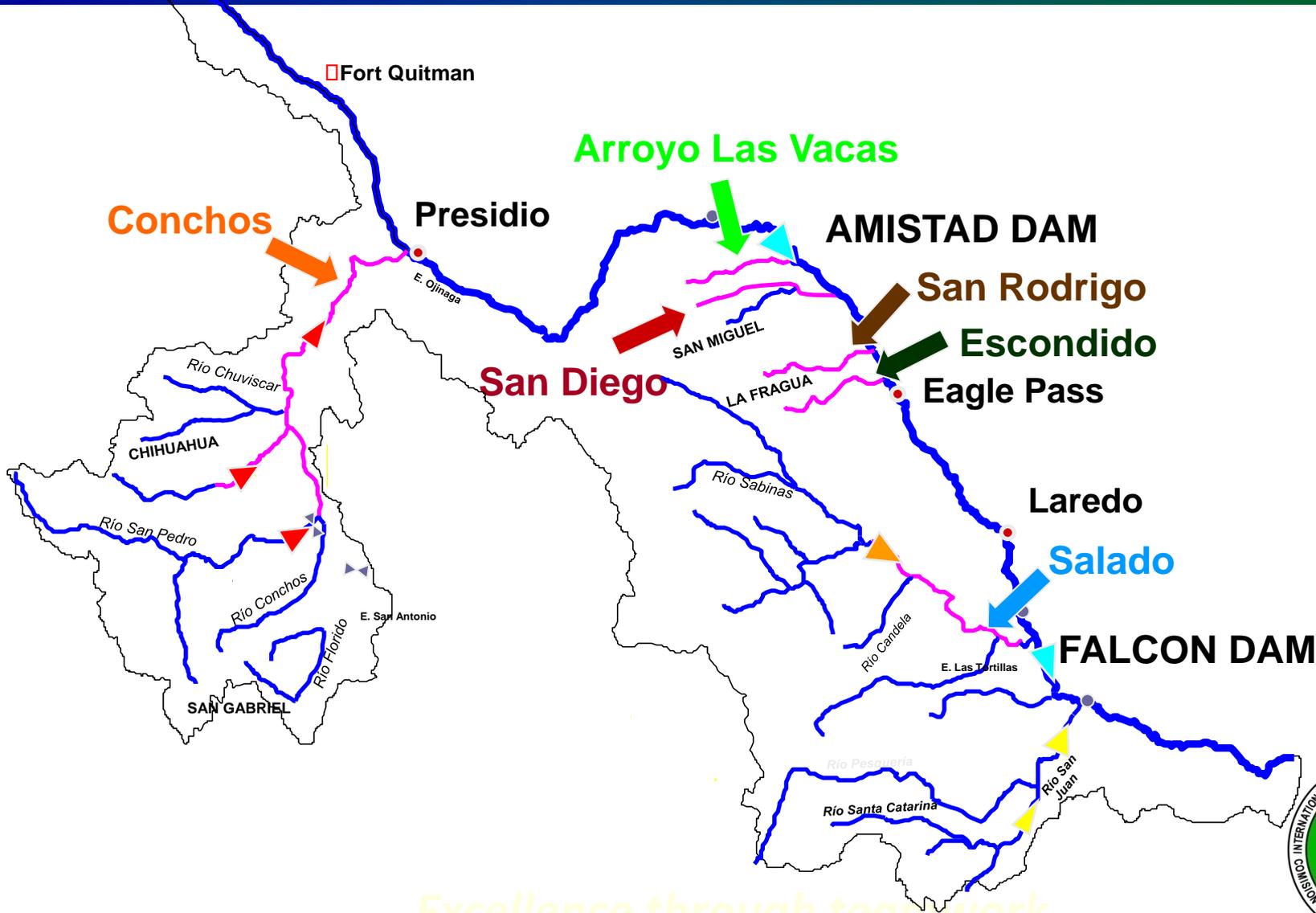


Conchos-Rio Grande confluence



1944 WATER TREATY

MEXICO'S TREATY TRIBUTARIES



Excellence through teamwork.



1944 WATER TREATY



Amistad Dam

- ◆ Waters for both countries are stored at the 2 international reservoirs
 - ▶ Falcon Dam near Falcon Hts, TX – Nva. Cd. Guerrero, Tamaulipas
 - ▶ Amistad Dam near Del Rio, TX- Cd. Acuña, Coahuila

Official data on national ownership:

www.ibwcc.gov/wad/storage.htm



Falcon Dam



1944 WATER TREATY



Rio Grande near Brownsville

- ◆ If a 5-year cycle ends in deficit, Mexico repays in next cycle
- ◆ Cannot end 2 consecutive cycles in debt
- ◆ 2010-2015 cycle's debt of 263,250 af was paid in early 2016
- ◆ 10/25/15-10/24/20 cycle just ended



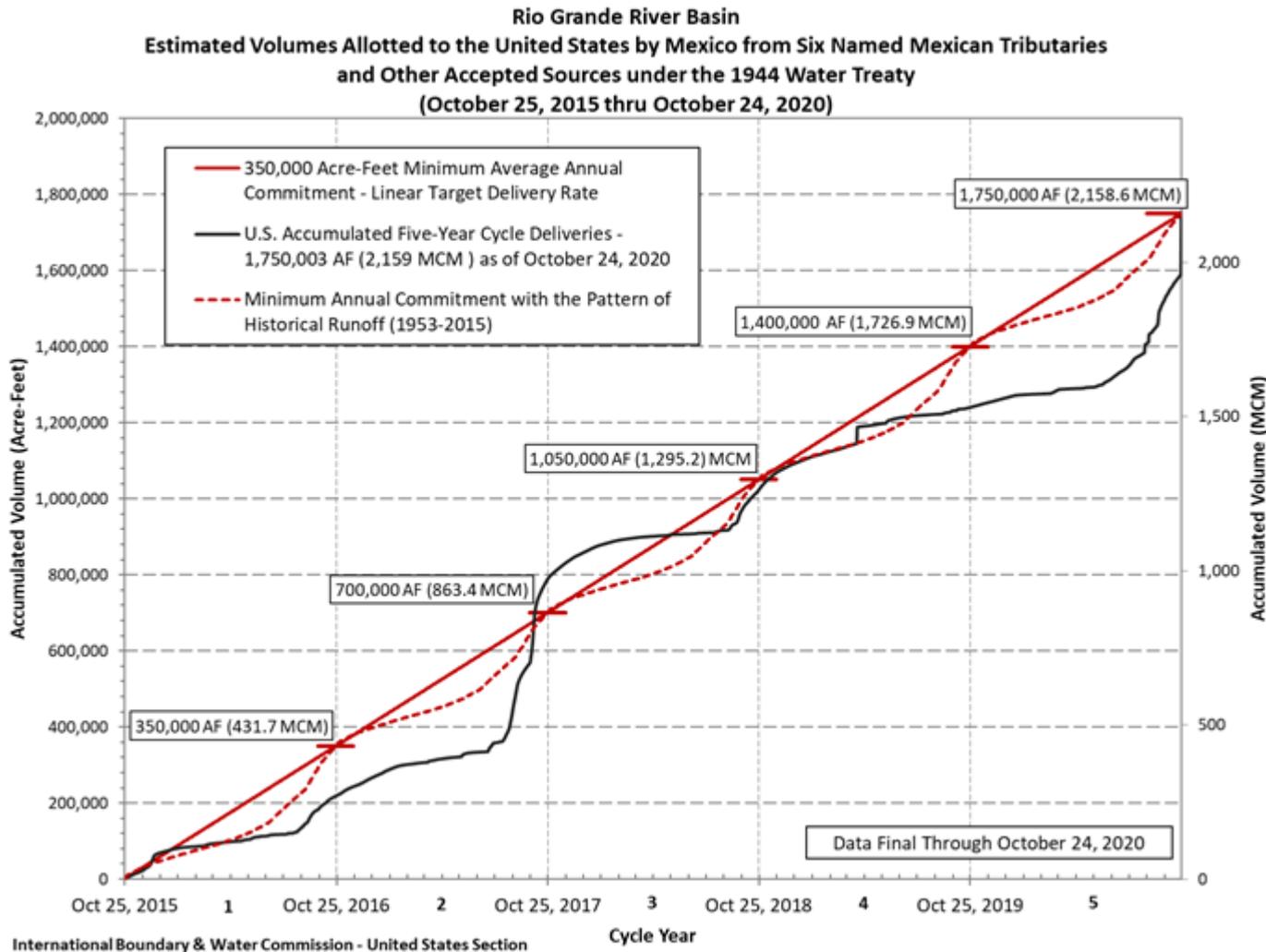
MINUTE 234 (1969)

“In the event of a deficiency in a cycle of five consecutive years in the minimum amount of water allotted to the United States from the said tributaries, the deficiency shall be made up in the following five-year cycle, together with any quantity of water which is needed to avoid a deficiency in the aforesaid following cycle, by one or a combination of the following means:”

- a. Deliver more water from the 6 tributaries
- b. Deliver to US some of Mexico's share of water from 6 tributaries
- c. Transfer of Mx water at the international reservoirs



2015-2020 CYCLE



2015-2020 CYCLE



Rio Grande gaging station

- ◆ Deliveries got behind in 2nd half of 2019
- ◆ IBWC and technical advisors met to discuss strategies to assure compliance
- ◆ In December 2019, Mexico presented a plan
 - ▶ Endorsed by Mexico's President
 - ▶ Endorsed by Mexico's Governors in the Rio Grande Basin



2015-2020 CYCLE

- ◆ December 2019 plan to address a shortfall of approx. 177,000 af by releasing water from Mx dams Dec.2019 – Feb. 2020
 - ▶ Boquilla and Luis Leon Dams on the Conchos River
 - ▶ Venustiano Carranza Dam on the Salado River
 - ▶ 1/3 U.S. share from these releases est. 180,000 af



**Rio Grande in Big Bend region,
downstream from
Conchos River confluence**



2015-2020 CYCLE

- ◆ Plan faced months of protests in Chihuahua
 - ▶ Conagua vehicles burned and toppled
 - ▶ Arson at government offices
 - ▶ Railroads, highways, international bridge blocked
 - ▶ Toll booths occupied
 - ▶ 1 person died
- ◆ National Guard sent in to guard the dams
- ◆ After confrontation with the guard, protesters seized control of Boquilla Dam in September, preventing releases



2015-2020 CYCLE

◆ Alternate U.S. proposals

- ▶ Allot greater than 1/3 share to US from 6 Mx tributaries
- ▶ Release water from other interior reservoirs in Mexico
- ▶ Allot some of Mexico's unmeasured tributary flow to US
- ▶ Transfers at Amistad and Falcon Reservoirs



Amistad Dam



2015-2020 CYCLE

◆ Alternate Mexican proposals



**San Juan River water
could be delivered to
US at Anzalduas Dam**

- ▶ Allot greater than 1/3 share to US from 6 Mx tributaries
- ▶ Starting in July, deliver San Juan River water to US for beneficial use:
 - US & State of Texas have previously embraced this source
 - More wet water to US. Mexico receives credit for 1/2 of the water delivered, providing water in excess of treaty minimum with no conveyance losses
- ▶ Unwavering commitment to end without a debt



2015-2020 CYCLE

◆ Key parties in negotiations:

- ▶ USIBWC
- ▶ MxIBWC
- ▶ U.S. Department of State
- ▶ Mexico's Secretariat of Foreign Relations (SRE)
- ▶ State of Texas as technical advisor (TCEQ lead)
- ▶ Mexico's National Water Commission (CONAGUA)



SRE
SECRETARÍA DE
RELACIONES
EXTERIORES



CONAGUA
COMISIÓN NACIONAL DEL AGUA



2015-2020 CYCLE

- ◆ Mexican Actions Jan. – Sept. 2020
 - ▶ Releases from V. Carranza Dam (Salado River)
 - ▶ Releases from Madero and Luis Leon Dams (Conchos River)
 - ▶ Increased share to US starting 5/28/20:
 - 100% of Conchos River flows
 - 2/3 of other tributaries
 - ▶ 100% of all Mx tributary flow to US starting 9/1/20
 - ▶ Small transfers at Falcon and Amistad



Madero Dam in Chih.



MINUTE 325

- ◆ Signed 10/21/20
- ◆ Binding US-Mexico agreement
- ◆ Transfer of Mexican water to US at Amistad and Falcon Reservoirs at end of cycle
- ◆ Assures cycle ends with no debt



Minute 325 Signing



MINUTE 325

- ◆ Establishes technical and policy work groups to develop tools to improve predictability and reliability of Rio Grande deliveries
- ◆ Sets expectation of a new Minute by December 2023 to adopt work group recommendations

Min. 325 assures continued US-Mx water talks, like this 2019 policy meeting in Mexico City



MINUTE 325



- ◆ Potential temporary use of U.S. water to meet Mexico's drinking water needs; no water loan is expected
- ◆ Enhanced data exchange
- ◆ Affirms 2 back-to-back cycles cannot end in debt

**Commissioners Marengo
and Harkins at Min. 325
ceremony at Monument # 1
at Sunland Park, NM-Cd.
Juarez, Chih.**



2015-2020 CYCLE

◆ Annual Deliveries

- ▶ **Year 1:** 219,077 af (+263,250 af for previous cycle's debt)
- ▶ **Year 2:** 567,238 af
- ▶ **Year 3:** 235,097 af
- ▶ **Year 4:** 218,097 af
- ▶ **Year 5:** 510,494 af

◆ **Cycle Total:** 1,750,003 af



**Rio Grande water
sampling at Presidio, TX**



CURRENT RESERVOIR STATUS

◆ Storage in International Reservoirs (11/07/20)

▶ Amistad

■ Mexico: 32,000 af

■ US: 1.189 million af

▶ Falcon

■ Mexico: 52,000 af

■ US: 494,000 af

◆ National Ownership in International Reservoirs

▶ Mexico: 3% of Mx Conservation Capacity

▶ US: 50 % of US Conservation Capacity



Falcon Dam, 2010 flood





INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION

UNITED STATES SECTION

