

**Southeast Arizona Citizens Forum
Pima County Water and Energy Sustainability Center
Radon Conference Room
Tucson, Arizona
March 15, 2018
*Tentative Meeting Notes**

Board Members in Attendance:

John Light – USIBWC Nogales Area Operations Manager and Citizens Forum Co-Chair
Rosanna Gabaldon – Arizona State Rep – LD2
Ben Lomeli – Friends of the Santa Cruz River, Board Member
Barbara Escobar -- Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department
Charles (Chuck) Graf -- Tucson Resident
John Lynch - Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Advisory Committee Member
James Meza- Arizona State Parks and Trails, Water Resource Specialist
Jenny Neeley – Program Manager, Conservation Science, Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation
Raleigh Ormerod – Green Valley and Sahuarita Chamber of Commerce, Toastmasters International
Jacob Petersen-Perlman - University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center, Research Analyst
Firat Sever – Quake Wrap, Inc., Environmental Engineer
Yolanda Soto – Santa Cruz County Resident
Mark Taylor – Vice President, Westland Resources, Inc.

USIBWC Staff in Attendance:

Lori Kuczanski, Public Affairs Officer, El Paso
Lorenzo Ortiz, Assistant Area Operations Manager, Nogales
Alison Lamb, Administrative Assistant, Nogales

Members of the Public in Attendance:

There were five members of the public in attendance.

Welcoming Remarks:

At 3:00 pm Mr. John Light, Co-Chair, convened the Citizens Forum meeting and called it to order. Mr. Light went over the purpose of the board, which is to promote the exchange of information between the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) and the community regarding Commission projects and related activities in Pima, Cochise and Santa Cruz Counties. Mr. Light gave a brief history on his background and the work he does for the agency. Since this is the first meeting with all new board members, he asked that they introduce themselves and provide a brief background, he then asked the audience members to introduce themselves.

The way the board works is that we have two chair persons, one is elected by the board and John Light is the other co-chair. Public Affairs Officer Lori Kuczanski will coordinate later electing the other co-chair. We will have three presentations for you this evening, one will be about the Nogales Field Office, one will be the board orientation and the other one will be about the IBWC. We will then have public comment section, any future agenda items, and then board discussion. We will be presenting some awards for the new board members, which we will do right before the board orientation. The public is welcome to stay for this portion of the meeting. He thanked Pima County for the use of their facilities for this meeting.

Presentation One: Overview of Commission Activities in Southeast Arizona – John Light Area Operations Manager, Nogales Field Office.

We have field offices from Brownsville, Texas all the way to San Diego, CA. The Nogales Field Office jurisdiction runs along the U.S./Mexico Boundary from the New Mexico border to Lukeville, AZ, which is approximately 229 miles of boundary jurisdiction. At Lukeville, Arizona, our Yuma Field Office takes over. He explained the organization of the agency, and that the field office falls under the Operations Department. The responsibilities of the Nogales Field Office are to successfully manage Operations Department programs within the Field Office area of responsibility. We provide initial assessments to other Departments and Divisions of issues and/or situations that may arise. Mr. Light then went on to explain the Nogales Field Office history which has been involved in the Nogales area since the establishment of boundary monuments in the 1880's, and in 1990 a field office was established at the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant (NIWTP) to oversee the plant upgrade and perform other field office functions. The original treatment plant was built in the 1950's in downtown Nogales. In 1972, the plant was relocated to its current location in Rio Rico and the capacity was increased. In 1992, the capacity was increased, again and the technology was upgraded. In 2009, the technology was upgraded, and the capacity was reduced.

The Nogales Field Office scope is: To operate and maintain the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant, demarcation of the U.S./Mexico border. Coordinate with the Mexican Section on projects/issues. Hydrographic monitoring and reporting of international wastewater flows. We inspect and resolve border encroachment issues, where a structure from one country extends over the border into the other without authorization. Coordinate with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on the border fence. Determine the financial reimbursements for the cost of operating the treatment plant, hold the Citizens Forum meetings and provide coordination with stakeholders.

It was then discussed what some of the latest treatment plant upgrades were along with some of the challenges. The treatment plant is operated by the USIBWC and receives reimbursement costs from the City of Nogales Arizona and Mexico. The USIBWC does not own the influent, effluent or the biosolids that are generated.

Mr. Light also presented various slides of some of the 96 boundary demarcation monuments that fall within the jurisdiction of the Nogales Field Office, and of some of the demarcation projects that were done at various Ports of Entry.

Questions and Answers:

Q) Why do the plant flows fluctuate?

A) Mostly due to dry weather flows and wet weather flows.

Q) Where does the Los Alisos, Mexico treatment plant discharge?

A) The Los Alisos aquifer

Q) Who owns the effluent of the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant?

A) The City of Nogales, Arizona retains their right to their share of the flow as does Mexico.

Q) Where do the biosolids from the Nogales treatment plant go?

A) They are sent to the Rio Rico landfill.

Q) I heard that there is going to be another (border) wall going up west of Nogales, is that true?

A) I've not heard anything regarding that. Lori Kuczanski also responded that she hasn't heard anything, that in fact, they were still looking at prototypes.

Someone mentioned that there is a podcast called 99% invisible – episode 294 – touts the border wall and talks of issues with construction as well as diversions of water along the Rio Grande, if anyone is interested in checking it out.

Q) What is the status of the border in southeastern Arizona, is it almost all fenced, partially fenced or has a wall?

A) Most of it is fenced, there are three areas that are not fenced, and they are areas where the terrain just won't allow it.

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

Ms. Kuczanski began her presentation by going over the agency's mission, which is to apply the boundary and water treaties between the United States and Mexico. She provided a brief overview of some of the boundary Treaties and the structure of the IBWC per the 1944 Water Treaty. The International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) has a U.S. Section and a Mexican Section, each headed by a Commissioner. IBWC Minutes were discussed, which are binding Commission agreements intended to implement treaty. There are currently 324 Minutes approved. Ms. Kuczanski then discussed the USIBWC field offices along the border from South Texas to San Diego, CA and what their mission is in relation to the agency's mission. Commission responsibilities include boundary demarcation, operation of international wastewater treatment plants, operation of international dams, flood control, and water delivery.

Before beginning her presentation on the orientation for new board members, Ms. Kuczanski handed out IBWC commemorative coins and Certificates of Appreciation for each of the Board members.

Presentation Three: Orientation for New Citizens Forum Board Members – Lori Kuczanski, Public Affairs Officer, USIBWC

The purpose of the Citizens Forum is to facilitate the exchange of information between the USIBWC and the local community regarding any projects (current and future) that the USIBWC may be involved in or related issues.

The Board member duties are to attend the public meetings four times per year and the term for the members is two years.

The Citizens Forum is not a federal advisory board; the goal is to exchange information and receive feedback from a variety of viewpoints.

Board members will not be disruptive during the meetings and will not serve as a spokesperson for the IBWC. Serving on the Board is voluntary and there are no reimbursements for expenses. It is requested that Board members send requests to the Public Affairs Officer on any suggestions for future topics.

There are two co-chairs for the Board, with one being the USIBWC and one being a community co-chair who is elected by the Board members, and they will alternate chairing the meetings.

Public Comment:

None

Board Discussion

The Board decided on two co-chairs – Rosanna Gabaldon will co-chair the first year and then Ben Lomeli will co-chair the second year.

The board decided to meet quarterly on the second Thursday of the month, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. Meeting locations will rotate among the three counties – Cochise, Pima, and Santa Cruz.

Next meeting is scheduled for June 14 and will be held in Cochise County. Rosanna Gabaldon will chair this meeting. It was suggested to hold it at the University of Arizona South campus.

Suggested Future Agenda Items:

The Border 2020 sample study of metals in Nogales wastewater – perhaps Hans Huth of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality can do a presentation?

History of the IBWC in this region, how the minutes and treaties work.

Possible tour of the NIWTP

Status of the International Outfall Interceptor (IOI)

Presentation of the treatment plant in Los Alisos.

Environmental Impact study on the wall or fence

Cross-border air quality concerns

Joint meeting with the Mexican Section – present what they do

Naco sanitation issues

Minute 323, IBWC agreement on the Colorado River - mostly affects Yuma, but it does affect Arizona. – can we get an update on that?

History of the monuments – how the border was set-how the monuments are set.

Update from Amanda Stone’s presentation on lead in the water at Arizona schools.

Meeting adjourned.

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