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Issue 1



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Welcome to IBWC Newsline

Welcome to the first edition of the IBWC Newsline!

In an effort to keep federal, state, local partners, as well as other stakeholders, informed on our agency's activities, I have asked the Foreign Affairs Office to compile and distribute a quarterly electronic newsletter that shares events. I hope that you will find this e-newsletter informative and that it will provide you with an insight into the many activities and accomplishments of the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC). Please feel free to forward this e-newsletter to your colleagues and co-workers. We would appreciate your feedback.

Sincerely,



Edward Drusina, PE
Commissioner

2011 Binational Border Sanitation and Water Quality Summit



Both Sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission organized the 2011 Binational Border Sanitation and Water Quality Summit held earlier this year in San Antonio, Texas. The Grand Hyatt San Antonio-Riverwalk Hotel hosted this important event which included a historical exhibit of the IBWC which was on display at the Instituto Cultural de Mexico, entitled *Maps, Minutes, and Monuments: History of the Boundary Line, 1848-2011*.

Topics covered during the Summit included: Current State of Border Sanitation and Border Water Quality; State of the Art Sanitation Technology; State of Financing for Border Sanitation and Water Quality; as well as sixteen breakout sessions on these topics. Experts from the private and public sectors spoke on important Sanitation and Water Quality issues and participated in drafting recommendations and conclusions.

5 Year Inspections carried out between March 23 and April 1, 2011

5-Year Safety of Dams Inspections

As per federal guidelines for dam safety, it is a requirement that the agency's dam structures be inspected and evaluated every 5 years. This year, a team of technical advisors from both Sections of the IBWC performed the joint 5-year inspection for the following structures: 1) Morelos Dam, 2) Anzalduas Dam, and 3) Retamal Dam. The technical advisors from CONAGUA, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provided mechanical, electrical, geotechnical, and structural engineers for the inspection. Engineers Luis Hernandez and Aldo Garcia from the U.S. and Mexican Sections, respectively, orchestrated the planning and guided the 5-year inspections for each dam.



The technical advisors applied a risk-based Dam Safety Action Classification (DSAC) rating that is currently being used by the USACE in their dam safety program. The joint Technical Advisors placed each dam into a DSAC, based on their individual dam safety risk considered as probability of failure and potential consequences. These ratings allow for the Agency to focus, address, and fund the most important dam safety issues. In general, the inspections revealed that all the dams are being well maintained and are able to function during flood operations. The DSAC ratings for the dams did not change from the previous ratings.



Amistad, Falcon, and International Dams are scheduled to be inspected in 2012.

All-American Canal

Proposed AAC Turnout Project

A binational site visit was held on April 12 at the terminus of the All-American Canal (AAC). Participants included both sections of IBWC (Yuma/Mexicali offices), U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Yuma office, Imperial Irrigation District, Comisión Estatal del Agua and CONAGUA. The group reviewed project maps provided by Mexico and confirmed the location of a proposed turnout project at the end of the AAC, where Mexico could potentially take water deliveries on an emergency basis.



Site Visit to Morelos Dam

Mexican Section Engineer Francisco Bernal provided a tour of Morelos Dam to Cocopah Indian Tribes' Director of Environmental Protection Office (EPO), Kevin Conrad and Kendra Morton, EPO Tech on April 14. Engineer Bernal provided an overview of how Morelos Dam operates and when/how the water will flow into the Colorado River Limitrophe when the gates are opened.



A Binational Review of Wellton-Mohawk Bypass Drain



A Binational Review of Operation and Maintenance of the 34.7 miles of bypass drain in Mexico was carried out on April 13. Participants included engineers and technical staff from both sections of the IBWC, CONAGUA and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The drain is operated and maintained by Mexico and funded by the Department of Interior, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation under a Memorandum of Understanding dated Aug 6, 1975. Engineer and technical staff conduct this review every 5 to 6 years.

Yuma Field Office

Yuma Desalting Plant

On March 26, 2011, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation achieved another milestone for the Pilot Run of the Yuma Desalting Plant. As scheduled they stopped operating the reverse osmosis portion of the plant and commenced shut down activities. Production water discharged into the Colorado River was 30,495 AF (22,685 AF of product water and 7,830 AF of blend water).



Binational Technical Data Exchange Meeting in Mercedes, Texas

A long term solution discussed was the development of a data warehouse hosted by IBWC



Personnel from the National Weather Service (NWS) West Gulf River Forecast Center (RFC) and Brownsville Weather Forecast Office met with staff from both Sections of the IBWC, CONAGUA, and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality on Friday, April 15, 2011 to discuss ways to improve data exchange between the agencies in both countries. The NWS and IBWC have been pursuing an initiative to improve data exchange for some time now which previously led to an automation and conversion to Standard Hydrological Exchange Format of the IBWC daily hydromet reports. The focus of the meeting was to discuss ways to automate the reservoir and precipitation information gathered and distributed by CONAGUA. During the meeting, CONAGUA displayed the daily bulletins, containing precipitation observations and reservoir levels and discharges, which are published on their web pages.

In the short term, West Gulf RFC can access these published bulletins to gather data. A longer term solution discussed at the meeting was the development of a data warehouse hosted by IBWC. Agencies in both countries could both place and retrieve data through this warehouse. The idea of using a common format for data was discussed and agreed upon, with SHEF format being a likely common format, as CONAGUA already publishes some of its information in SHEF format. CONAGUA requested that the NWS place precipitation and river data for U.S. tributaries of the Rio Grande in this data warehouse for use in their developing river forecast services for the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo. A follow up meeting was tentatively planned for the week of June 13. At this meeting, reservoir operations and coordination between CONAGUA and IBWC will be discussed in addition to the development of the data warehouse at USIBWC Headquarters.

Binational Technical Group Salinity Meeting

A technical group salinity meeting was held at the Bureau of Reclamation Yuma Area Office. Participants included, from the IBWC: Gilbert Anaya, Anna Morales; Adriana Resendez, Francisco Bernal, Juan Riosmoreno; from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation: Ed Virden, Hong DeCorse, Wayne Johnson; and from CONAGUA: Carlos Van Dyck, Jorge Soto, Yissel Gerardo, Antonio Espinoza, and Jose Telles.

The group finalized the conclusions and recommendations from a binational study conducted in 2006-2007. The next actions for the group were discussed, such as lab site visits for both countries and continued third party independent lab analysis.



New Equipment on the Colorado River



Robert Cardenas, U.S. Section Hydrologic Technician, provided assistance to Alenzue Angulo, of the Mexican Section’s Mexicali Office on the use of their new Rio Grande Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP) method for measuring discharge on the Colorado River. The ADCP is a system designed to operate from a moving boat and is considered more productive, diverse and cost effective with high-quality data measurements. The orange floating device seen in the photo is the Rio Grande-ADCP.

Elevation Surveys in Yuma

On May 4, 2011 both Sections of the IBWC coordinated with the Imperial Irrigation District and the Comisión Estatal del Agua, Mexicali, BC to conduct elevation surveys at the tentative site for the proposed Mexican All-American Canal Turnout structure.



U.S. Commissioner Edward Drusina gives Keynote Address

Commissioner Drusina was invited to give the keynote address at the *Sustainability on the Border: Water, Climate, and Social Change in a Fragile Landscape* conference on May 17, 2011 at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). The conference was organized by UTEP’s Center for Environmental Resource Management and funded in part by a grant from the National Science Foundation. The purpose of the conference was to summarize science related to water sustainability under climate and social change on the U.S.-Mexico border along the lower New Mexico-West Texas segment of the Rio Grande. In his address, Commissioner Drusina spoke about the challenges of water sustainability on the border and the role, responsibilities and current projects and accomplishments of the Commission. Mexican Commissioner Robert F. Salmon was also invited to speak however he was not able to attend. In attendance were UTEP faculty, researchers, and students. The conference began with Welcome Remarks by Dr. Diana Natalicio, President of UTEP, and William Hargrove, Director of UTEP’s Center for Environmental Resource Management.



Ceremony Marks Completion of International Treatment Plant Upgrade



Officials from the United States and Mexico held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 13, at the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) in San Diego, California to mark the recent upgrade of the plant to secondary treatment standards. The SBIWTP, owned and operated by the U.S. Section of the IBWC, treats wastewater originating in Tijuana, Mexico.

Construction of the upgrade began in January 2009. The contract, totaling \$92.7 million, covered construction of an activated sludge secondary treatment process at the SBIWTP to improve effluent quality. The plant had been providing advanced primary treatment since that phase of the construction was completed in 1997. The treated effluent is discharged 3.5 miles offshore into the Pacific Ocean.

The wastewater treatment plant upgrade, which doubles the original plant footprint, was constructed in accordance with agreements with Mexico that call for activated sludge secondary treatment facilities in the U.S. to treat up to 25 million gallons per day of sewage from Tijuana, BC. In accordance with those agreements, Mexico paid for a portion of the plant's original construction cost and contributes to ongoing operation and maintenance costs.

“The plant we are celebrating today provides a higher level of treatment than the original plant. For those of us who care about the environment and the quality of our coastal waters, we have reason to celebrate this milestone,” said U.S. Commissioner Edward Drusina of the IBWC.

Mexican Commissioner Roberto Salmon indicated that this upgrade fully complies with the agreements established in IBWC Minute No. 283 by achieving secondary treatment as originally planned, providing water treated to a higher quality with a great potential for reuse in Mexico when needed. The upgrade is designed to comply with water quality standards applicable in the U.S. for total suspended solids, biochemical oxygen demand, and impacts on certain microorganisms. Governor of Baja California, Guadalupe Osuna Millan also attended the ceremony and made remarks.



SBIWTP upgrades
completed to meet secondary
treatment standards



FAO International Visitors



The IBWC Foreign Affairs Office periodically receives visitors who are invited to the United States under the auspices of the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program. Their program is arranged by the Institute of International Education (IIE). Locally these groups are coordinated by the El Paso Council for International Visitors.

Central Asia

On January 21, 2011, IBWC's Foreign Affairs Office received a group with participants from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan focused on water resources management. This group was interested in examining water resources management at the federal, state and local levels; international, trans-boundary and interstate water management; national and international water conventions, land reclamations and laws; best practices in water conservation; control, purification and distribution of drinking water; the role of public-private partnerships and grassroots groups in addressing water issues; irrigation technologies; methods to address water scarcity, especially for agricultural use; and financial aspects of water use and management.

North Africa and the Middle East



Yemen.

On March 28, 2011 USIBWC received a Conflict Resolution Group focused on a Regional Project for North Africa and the Middle East. Participants were from Algeria, Iraq, Morocco, Palestinian Territories and

Pakistan

On March 10, 2011 a Pakistani Group focused on Water Supply and Management visited IBWC Headquarters. This groups was interested in examining water resources management at the federal, state and local levels; discussing best practices in water conservation, flood management and methods to address water scarcity; exploring irrigation technologies and management of ground water usage for agriculture and its financial aspects; learning about Native American water rights, environmental education and communication; analyzing the role of public-private partnerships and grassroots groups in addressing water issues; and looking at water disputes and their adjudication.

Multiregional Environmental Group

A Multi-Regional Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Group visited IBWC on April 13, 2011 with participants from Afghanistan, Bolivia, Burma, Eritrea, Germany, and Israel.



IBWC Newsline



www.ibwc.gov

International Boundary and Water Commission
United States and Mexico
United States Section

4171 North Mesa
Bldg C-100
El Paso, Texas
79902

Phone: 915-832-4100
Fax: 915-832-4190
E-mail: adolfo.mata@ibwc.gov