

January 2013

A Message from U.S. Commissioner Drusina

Issue 6



The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, just completed an incredible year in 2012, thanks to the hard work of the men and women of the U.S. and Mexican Sections of the Commission.

We culminated the year with the signing on November 20 of Minute 319, a five-year agreement related to Colorado River management that touches on issues of shortage, surplus, salinity, water conservation, water for the environment, and opportunities for future joint cooperative actions, among other provisions. At the Colorado River Water Users Association Meeting in Las Vegas in December, attendees had nothing but positive things to say about this achievement. We all look forward to embarking on our next challenge in implementing the Minute's many provisions.

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Earlier in the fall, the Commission organized the Binational Border Water Resources Summit, which brought together water experts from both countries for two days of meetings in El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua. It was exciting to see so many water managers, government officials, and academics come together to share their research, planning efforts, and commitment to work cooperatively on both sides of the border to address water issues.

Ongoing drought in the border region continues to pose a challenge for the IBWC and other water managers. In the Upper Rio Grande, we have been working on a water budget study to help inform future decision-making regarding deliveries under the Convention of 1906. Drought in this region is expected to continue or even worsen in 2013, meaning farmers are likely to experience another difficult year as reservoir elevations continue to decline.

We also continued to progress on our many Rio Grande flood control levee rehabilitation projects, with many construction contracts complete or nearly so. Other projects are in the design phase and we expect to continue our levee construction work for a number of years into the future as we construct levees where none existed before or upgrade existing levees to standards established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The IBWC also advanced during the year on studies and planning for actions to be undertaken at Amistad and Falcon Dams to mitigate dam safety concerns. There are particular concerns at Amistad where naturally-occurring sinkholes could pose a serious problem for dam safety if adequate mitigation actions are not taken. Our planning efforts are designed to ensure that we implement the most cost-effective solutions with the greatest likelihood of success.

I look forward to addressing the many challenges we face, in partnership with the Mexican Section of the Commission, in 2013 and beyond.

International Boundary and Water Commission signs Minute 319

On November 20, 2012, after several years of discussions that included the participation of federal and state authorities and nongovernmental organizations from both countries, officials with the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, signed Minute 319, entitled, "Interim International Cooperative Measures in the Colorado River Basin through 2017 and Extension of Minute 318 Cooperative Measures to Address the Continued Effects of the April 2010 Earthquake in the Mexicali Valley, Baja California." The agreement, which will remain in effect for five years, provides for a series of joint cooperative actions between the two countries, including:

- Extends humanitarian measures from a 2010 agreement, Minute 318, to allow Mexico to defer delivery of a portion of its Colorado River allotment while it continues to make repairs to earthquake-damaged infrastructure.

- Provides additional Colorado River water to Mexico during certain high elevation reservoir conditions at Lake Mead when additional water is available to users in the United States, providing benefits to both countries.

- Establishes proactive basin operations during certain low elevation reservoir conditions at Lake Mead by applying water delivery reductions in order to deter more severe reductions in the future.

- Establishes a program of Intentionally Created Mexican Allocation (ICMA) whereby Mexican water resulting from conservation and new water sources projects could essentially be held in the United States for subsequent delivery to Mexico as determined by it through its planning processes.

- Implements measures to address salinity impacts stemming from the joint cooperative actions, in conformance with the provisions of Minute 242, entitled, "Permanent and Definitive Solution to the International Problem of the Salinity of the Colorado River," dated August 30, 1973.

- Through conservation projects, generates water for the environment of the Colorado River limitrophe and delta.

- Provides for U.S. investment in water infrastructure and environmental projects in Mexico. These investments provide water benefits to the U.S. agencies in exchange for their funding and generate water for Mexico over the long term.

- Outlines potential opportunities for future cooperation between the United States and Mexico on topics such as environmental restoration, water conservation, system operations, and new water sources projects.

Secretary Ken Salazar, U.S. Department of the Interior.

Mexican Secretary Jesus Luevano and Commissioner Roberto Salmon and U.S. Commissioner Edward Drusina and Secretary Sally Spener of the International Boundary and Water Commission (l to r) sign copies the Minute, far right.



Photos on pages 2-3 courtesy of the Bureau of Reclamation.

International Boundary and Water Commission signs Minute 319

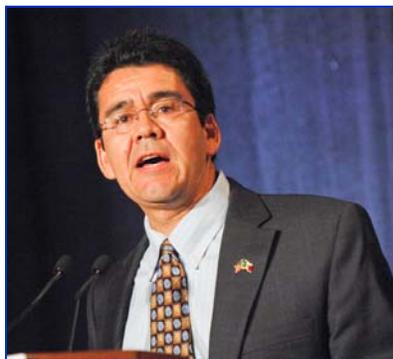
-Establishes the expectation that the Commission will conclude another agreement in the future to extend or replace the substantive provisions of Minute 319.

-Commits both countries to give expedited consideration to applicable issues that must be addressed for the potential construction of a connection between the All-American Canal in the United States and Mexico's Colorado River-Tijuana Aqueduct, as a backup in case of emergencies or failures in the Mexican aqueduct.

"The United States and Mexico have been working closely for several years to see how we could improve management of the Colorado River to benefit both countries. Minute 319 gives us new tools to address the impacts of drought and climate change. It also sets the stage for cooperation between our two countries for many years to come," said U.S. Commissioner Edward Drusina of the International Boundary and Water Commission.

Mexican Commissioner Roberto Salmon highlighted the importance of this agreement by emphasizing that it constitutes a historic event, which, by using the 1944 Water Treaty as its basis, enables work to build toward the future in order to guarantee sustainability in the region and in particular future water supply for Mexican communities. He highlighted that this agreement provides the foundation for future unprecedented negotiations to benefit Colorado River basin residents in both countries.

The signing ceremony held in Coronado, California included the participation of Ken Salazar, U.S. Secretary of the Interior; Michael Connor, Commissioner of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation; Ambassador Julian Ventura Valero, Undersecretary for North America, Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Relations; and Engineer Jose Luis Luege Tamargo, General Director of Mexico's National Water Commission.



Commissioner Michael Connor, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation



Site of the Minute signing: Del Coronado Hotel

IBWC hosts the 2012 Binational Border Water Resources Summit

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico (IBWC), with support from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), the El Paso Water Utilities, the Southwest Consortium for Environmental Research & Policy, the North American Development Bank, the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juarez (UACJ), and the Municipal Water and Sanitation Board of Ciudad Juarez (JMAS), hosted the Binational Border Water Resources Summit on September 27 at the UACJ and on September 28 at UTEP.

A total of 160 water managers, scientists, government officials, academics, and representatives from nongovernmental organizations in the United States and Mexico gathered to share information and enhance U.S.-Mexico cooperation on border water issues.

The theme of the Summit was *Border Water Resources: Past, Present, and Future*. Panelists addressed issues in four different work groups: Water Supply, Innovation and Water Technology, Water Quality and the Environment, and Watershed Planning.



U.S. Section
Commissioner Edward
Drusina (left) and
Mexican Section
Commissioner
Roberto Salmon at the
Opening Ceremony at
UACJ

IBWC hosts the 2012 Binational Border Water Resources Summit

At the conclusion of the Summit, each of the four work groups presented the principal recommendations. Some of the recommendations were:

- With rapid population growth, climate change, and scarce water resources, the U.S.-Mexico border region needs to look to alternative water strategies such as conservation, reuse, and desalination.
- The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, should be proactive in working along the border to develop strategies to cope with the impacts of climate change.
- A clearinghouse to facilitate the creation and exchange of binational watershed data should be established.
- Harmonizing and sharing of U.S. and Mexican water data should be a priority.
- Encourage infrastructure investment.
- The Transboundary Aquifer Assessment Program needs to have other local partners to share in the funding.
- IBWC should consider increasing the reuse of effluent from its binational plants.
- There is concern over the availability of resources to continue environmental monitoring and education programs, as well as to continue with environmental education programs and economic benefits associated with environmental values.

The Opening
Ceremony at the
Autonomous
University of Ciudad
Juarez



U.S. Commissioner Edward Drusina stated at the closing ceremony, "The Summit brought together water leaders from both countries to discuss what border water managers have done in the past, what they are currently doing, and how we can all work together in the future to address challenges such as climate change, drought, and population growth. The International Boundary and Water Commission looks forward to fostering ongoing dialogue and cooperation to address these challenges."

Summit presentations and recommendations are available online through the International Boundary and Water Commission's [website](#).

IBWC hosts the 2012 Binational Border Water Resources Summit

Work Group Co-Chairs present their recommendations during the Closing Ceremony at UTEP.



The Summit included a tour of the El Paso Water Utilities Kay Bailey Hutchison Desalination Plant; and Breakout Sessions.



REGIONAL COMMISSION MEETINGS

Tijuana, BC, February 28, 2012

The Commission met in Tijuana, Baja California to discuss many regional issues, chief among them, the signing of the Bailment Agreement delivering a fleet of three sludge transport trucks to CESPT, the Tijuana local utilities operator, to haul sludge from the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant for disposal in Mexico. Other topics discussed included the proposed demarcation of the international boundary at the San Ysidro Port of Entry, a review of the proposed San Ysidro-Otay Airport Pedestrian Bridge, a discussion of a sediment removal strategy for the Tijuana River; and water quality monitoring.



Commissioners Edward Drusina (left) and Roberto Salmon of the International Boundary and Water Commission

Mercedes, TX, June 5, 2012

The IBWC held a regional meeting on June 5, in Mercedes, Texas. The Commissioners, Secretaries, Principal Engineers and other Commission staff reviewed dam safety at Falcon and Amistad Dams, and a 10-year capital improvement plan and operations and maintenance plan for the U.S. Power Plant at Amistad to be implemented subject to funding. Another important topic reviewed was suggested improvements in the accuracy of water accounting. The U.S. Section is currently deploying new equipment to assist in this effort.



The Commission Meeting also discussed improving El Morillo Drain, Rio Grande Water Deliveries under the 1944 Water Treaty, Projects in the Rio Grande Floodplain, Rio Grande Water Quality Projects (Falcon Dam to the Gulf), and Systematic Water Quality Monitoring.

International Boundary and Water Commission Staff at Anzalduas Dam

Amistad Dam, October 10-11, 2012

The most recent Regional Commission Meeting held was in Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila/Amistad Dam on October 10-11, 2012. The purpose of this meeting was to review regional issues in the areas of Presidio, Texas-Ojinaga, Chihuahua; Del Rio, Texas-Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila; Amistad Dam; Eagle Pass, Texas-Piedras Negras, Coahuila; and Laredo, Texas-Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas.



Commission Staff at the Regional Commission Meeting at the Mexican Section offices in Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila, at left; and at Amistad Dam below.



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