



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
May 27, 2008

COLORADO RIVER WATER SUPPLY, THE INVASIVE QUAGGA MUSSEL, AND WETLANDS RESTORATION ON AGENDA FOR JUNE 9 PUBLIC MEETING IN YUMA

The impact of eight years of drought in the Colorado River Basin will be discussed at the June 9 public meeting of the Colorado River Citizens' Forum. The Forum was established by the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) to facilitate the exchange of information with the public about Commission activities and related matters in the region. The meeting is scheduled for 4:00 – 6:00 (MST/PDT) at Yuma Palms Regional Center Community Room, 1305 S. Yuma Palms Parkway, Yuma, Arizona.

Doug Blatchford, a manager with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in Boulder City, Nevada, will present a hydrologic update of the Colorado River. The Colorado River Basin has been in a drought situation since the fall of 1999. As a result of this drought, which may not be over yet, the years 2000-2007 were the driest 8-year period in the 100-year written record on the Colorado River. This water year (October 1, 2007-September 30, 2008), the projected runoff is higher than normal. The presentation will cover the drought, its impacts on the Colorado River water supply, particularly Lake Powell and Lake Mead storage, and how this year's projected inflow will affect the water supply in these two large reservoirs as we go into the 2009 water year.

Another challenge facing the Colorado River, the invasive quagga mussel, will be discussed by Leonard Willett, Hoover Dam Water Treatment Group Manager for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Quagga mussels were discovered in Lake Mead on January 6, 2007. Since then, they have been found throughout the lower Colorado River as well as in water bodies in California, Arizona, Nevada, and

Colorado. Quagga mussels can affect water bodies by disrupting their ecological balance. Because they also often settle in massive colonies, they can block water intakes, adversely affecting the operation of municipal water supply, irrigation, power plants, and other facilities. Congressional researchers have estimated that, in the U.S., quagga mussels and their cousin, the zebra mussel, cost the power industry \$3.1 billion in the 1993-1999 period, with their impact on industries, businesses, and communities over \$5 billion. The presentation will cover the potential impacts of this invasive species on the Colorado River, on the water storage, diversion, and delivery infrastructure along the river, and what Reclamation and other key water management agencies are doing to address the threat the mussels present.

The Forum will also hear about wetland restoration efforts in the region from Mark Winterowd, Ecological Coordinator for the Yuma East Wetlands Project, a habitat restoration project. The Yuma East Wetlands are located along the Colorado River east of downtown Yuma. Phase I of the restoration project, covering nearly 400 acres, is about 70% complete. The project includes removal of non-native tamarisk and re-vegetation using a variety of irrigation methods. Winterowd will also discuss the Hunter's Hole project, a restoration effort along the international boundary segment of the Colorado River. A well has just been installed to provide water to the site to restore native vegetation. A conceptual design has been completed and a more detailed design is now being developed.

The Colorado River Citizens' Forum Board is comprised of 11 residents of Southern Arizona and Imperial County, California who represent diverse interests in the region. The board conducts quarterly public meetings in the area.

A complete meeting agenda is attached. Members of the public who would like more information about the meeting can contact the USIBWC's Yuma Office at 928-782-1598 or Public Affairs Officer Sally Spener at 915-832-4175 or via email at sallyspener@ibwc.gov.

For more information:

Sally Spener
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COLORADO RIVER CITIZENS' FORUM
Monday, June 9, 4:00 - 6:00 P.M.
Yuma Palms Regional Center Community Room
1305 S. Yuma Palms Parkway
Yuma, Arizona

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions – Bill Plummer, Citizens' Forum Co-Chair
- The Colorado River: A Hydrologic Update – Doug Blatchford, Manager, River Operations Group, Boulder Canyon Operations Office, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Boulder City, NV
- The Quagga Mussel: Dealing with an Invasive Species – Leonard Willett, Hoover Dam Water Treatment Group Manager, Lower Colorado Dams Office, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, at Hoover Dam
- Wetland Restoration on the Lower Colorado River – Mark Winterowd, Ecological Coordinator, Yuma East Wetlands Project
- Updates
All-American Canal Tour – Bill Plummer
Morelos Dam Sediment Removal – Sally Spener, Public Affairs Officer, USIBWC
- Public Comment
- Suggested Future Agenda Items/Board Discussion

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time.

For more information, call 928-782-1598 or e-mail sallyspener@ibwc.gov