



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
June 9, 2009

USIBWC APPOINTS BOARD MEMBERS; PUBLIC MEETING SET FOR JUNE 22 TO DISCUSS RIO GRANDE RIVER ACCESS AND LEVEE IMPROVEMENTS

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) has announced the appointment of new board members to the Rio Grande Citizens' Forum. The purpose of the forum is to promote the exchange of information between the USIBWC and the community about the Commission's projects and related issues between Percha Dam, New Mexico and Fort Quitman, Texas. A public meeting with the new board will be held at 6:30 p.m. on June 22 in the Student Senate Chambers at the Corbett Center Student Union on the campus of New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. All board terms had expired and the USIBWC opened up applications to the general public. Board members serve as volunteers for a two-year term. The USIBWC selected the following board members:

- John Balliew, El Paso Water Utilities
- Doug Echlin, Coronado Neighborhood Association
- John Hernandez, Elephant Butte Irrigation District
- Louis Neal Irwin, retired UTEP biology professor, community activist
- Mary Frances Keisling, Save the Valley Neighborhood/Civic Association
- Conrad G. Keyes, Jr., Paso del Norte Watershed Council
- Sal Masoud, El Paso Association of Builders
- Philip Partridge, Individual Owners of the Rio Grande
- Heidi McIntyre-Wilkinson, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

USIBWC Principal Engineer Al Riera will serve as the agency's representative on the board.

During the meeting, USIBWC Public Affairs Officer Sally Spener will present an overview of the Commission's mission and projects, with an emphasis on activities in the region, as part of an orientation for the new board.

The meeting will also include a presentation about river access by Philip Partridge of Individual Owners of the Rio Grande. The group is interested in expanding recreational opportunities along the Rio Grande.

USIBWC Operations Support Specialist Gabriel Duran will provide general information on Rio Grande levee construction, including a report on lengths of levee that are being enhanced to improve flood protection. The presentation will include an update on the ongoing levee raising efforts by USIBWC crews in the Mesilla Valley and near Country Club Bridge, including slides illustrating the areas that will be completed. He will also report on levee rehabilitation that will be undertaken in the Mesilla and Rincon Valleys with funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The Rio Grande Citizens' Forum was established by the USIBWC in 1999. It is designed to bring together community members, enabling the early and continued two-way flow of information, concerns, values, and needs between USIBWC and the general public, environmentalists, irrigation districts, municipalities, and others interested in the river. Scroll down to view the complete meeting agenda.

For more information:

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RIO GRANDE CITIZENS' FORUM
Monday, June 22, 2009
6:30 - 8:30 P.M.
Student Senate Chambers
Corbett Center Student Union
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, NM

AGENDA

6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

- Welcome and Introductions
- Introduction of New Board Members
- Board Member Orientation – Sally Spener, Public Affairs Officer, USIBWC
 - Overview of IBWC Mission and Projects
 - Activities in New Mexico and West Texas
 - Board Member Roles and Responsibilities

7:30 – 8:30 p.m.

- Rio Grande Public Access Issues – Philip Partridge, Individual Owners of the Rio Grande
- Rio Grande Flood Control Levee Construction – Gabriel Duran, Operations Support Specialist, USIBWC
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion, Suggested Future Agenda Items

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 915-832-4175 or e-mail sallyspener@ibwc.gov