



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
March 29, 2018

HABITAT RESTORATION ACTIVITIES ALONG THE RIO GRANDE, DE-SILTING PROJECTS ON AGENDA FOR APRIL 12 PUBLIC MEETING IN LAS CRUCES

The Rio Grande Citizens Forum (RGCF) of the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) will discuss the habitat restoration activities along the Rio Grande and the de-silting projects completed during the non-irrigation season. The meeting will take place on **Thursday, April 12, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. at Las Cruces City Hall, 700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico, 88001**. The Rio Grande Citizens Forum was established to facilitate the exchange of information with the public about Commission activities and related matters.

Elizabeth Verdecchia, Natural Resources Specialist, USIBWC, will discuss the progress of river habitat restoration activities along the Rio Grande in Southern New Mexico and West Texas. Under USIBWC's 2009 Record of Decision for the Rio Grande Canalization Project, the agency committed to restore native habitat on more than 550 acres and to develop and manage grasslands on another 1,900 acres.

From 2011 to 2018, USIBWC, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and USIBWC contractors planted more than 78,000 native trees and shrubs and cleared approximately 400 acres of nonnative saltcedar. Restoration activities also included transplanting vegetation from excavated islands in the Rio Grande.

Ms. Verdecchia will show photographs of the progress of habitat over the years and provide an update of restoration activities including USIBWC's efforts to obtain environmental water to irrigate restoration sites.

Jose Luis Sierra, Assistant Area Operations Manager, Upper Rio Grande Field Office, USIBWC, will give a presentation on the river channel maintenance that began in late-October 2017 and concluded in mid-March 2018. During this time, USIBWC removed silt from the Rio Grande at various bridge crossings in southern New Mexico and West Texas to include islands upstream and downstream of the bridges. The total amount of sediment removed at 12 project sites was 178,973 cubic yards.

Silt from the river is removed to assure water released from Caballo Dam is delivered efficiently downstream to Elephant Butte Irrigation District, El Paso County Water Improvement District #1, and Mexico. Silt is also removed to assure the flood conveyance capacity of the floodway is not impacted and to alleviate backwater conditions at drainage structures which outfall into the river. The presentation will provide an update of the 12 project sites.

A complete meeting agenda follows. Members of the public who would like more information about the meeting may contact 915-832-4106 or the Public Affairs Office at lori.kuczanski@ibwc.gov.

Lori Kuczanski
(915) 832-4106
Lori.Kuczanski@ibwc.gov

RIO GRANDE CITIZENS FORUM

Thursday, April 12, 2018

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Las Cruces City Hall

700 North Main Street *

Las Cruces, NM 88001

Agenda

- **Welcome and Introductions** – Walton Low, Citizens Forum Co-Chair
- **Habitat Restoration Activities Along the Rio Grande** – Elizabeth Verdecchia, Natural Resources Specialist, USIBWC
- **2018 Upper Rio Grande Channel Maintenance Completed Projects** – Jose Luis Sierra, Assistant Area Operations Manager, Upper Rio Grande Field Office, USIBWC
- **Public Comment**
- **Board Discussion**
- **Suggested Future Agenda Items**

***Directions:** From El Paso, take I-10 west. Take exit 142 Valley Drive. Keep left at the fork in the ramp and continue onto Valley Drive. Travel about ¼ of a mile and veer right onto Main Street. Continue on Main about 2.4 miles to City Hall.

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 915-832-4106 or email Lori.Kuczmanski@ibwc.gov