



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
March 30, 2017

2017 RIO GRANDE WATER DELIVERIES FOR IRRIGATION SEASON, DE-SILTING PROJECTS ON AGENDA FOR APRIL 13 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 Rio Grande water deliveries for the 2017 irrigation season. The season will begin March 31 with releases out of Elephant Butte and Caballo Reservoirs for El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1, with Elephant Butte Irrigation District and Mexico to start receiving water towards the middle of April. The meeting will take place on **Thursday, April 13, 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.

Bert Cortez, Special Assistant to the Area Manager, U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, will discuss the Rio Grande water supply forecast for the year. Reservoir levels are about 100,000 acre-feet below where they were at this same time last year, and based on the current reservoir storage, the project allocation is almost 33 percent of a full supply. The final allocation for the 2016 irrigation season was 77 percent of a full allocation. It is too early to tell what the total allocation will be for the 2017 irrigation season, although the soil moisture conditions are favorable for a good runoff into the reservoirs. The most recent runoff forecast is for 131 percent of average.

Water for Southern New Mexico, the El Paso area, and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico originates as snow in the mountains of Colorado and New Mexico, and the snowmelt runoff flows to the reservoirs that store water for subsequent releases to downstream users. Mr. Cortez will present data on this year's conditions and plans for operations at Elephant Butte and Caballo Dams.

Antonio Solo, Upper Rio Grande Field Office Area Operations Manager, USIBWC, will give a presentation on the river channel maintenance that began in January 2017 and will continue through May. To date, USIBWC has removed silt from the Rio Grande at various arroyo confluences in New Mexico, at Canutillo Bridge in El Paso County, at American and International Dams in El Paso, and at the Guayuco Arroyo downstream from El Paso. The total amount of sediment removed to date throughout all the projects is 144,750 cubic yards.

Silt from the river is removed to assure water released upstream from reservoirs is delivered efficiently to the stakeholders, which are: Elephant Butte Irrigation District, El Paso Water County Water Improvement District #1, and Mexico. Silt is also removed to assure flood capacity of the floodway is not impacted, to minimize water log on farmland near the river, and to alleviate the silting of irrigation canals. The presentation will provide an update of other projects that will continue after the 2017 irrigation season.

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.

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RIO GRANDE CITIZENS FORUM

Thursday, April 13, 2017

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**Las Cruces City Hall
700 North Main Street *
Las Cruces, NM 88001**

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions – Jose Nuñez, Citizens Forum Co-Chair and Principal Engineer, USIBWC
- Reclamation Rio Grande Project 2017 Water Conditions and Operations — Bert Cortez, Special Assistant to the Area Manager, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- River Channel Maintenance Update — Antonio Solo, Upper Rio Grande Field Office, Area Operations Manager, USIBWC
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion
- Suggested Future Agenda Items

***Directions: *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.Kuczanski@ibwc.gov