



## **International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section**

For immediate release  
June 3, 2015

### **U.S. COMMISSIONER TO ATTEND JUNE 18 PUBLIC MEETING IN IMPERIAL BEACH, CA; HISTORY OF TIJUANA RIVER VALLEY AND EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SAN DIEGO WATER QUALITY ALSO ON AGENDA**

Commissioner Edward Drusina of the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) will attend the next public meeting of the USIBWC Citizens Forum. The meeting will take place June 18, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., at the Tijuana Estuary Meeting Room, 301 Caspian Way, Imperial Beach, CA. Commissioner Drusina will discuss Colorado River joint cooperative actions with Mexico and the Commission's work on a new international agreement to improve conditions in the Tijuana River Basin. Drusina was appointed to his post by President Barack Obama in 2010.

Other speakers will cover the transformation of the Tijuana River Valley from agricultural to urban and Coastkeeper's efforts to restore water quality in San Diego County.

Steven Schoenherr and Barbara Zaragoza with the South Bay Historical Society will present the history of the Tijuana River in maps and photos. In 1851, on a mesa overlooking the Pacific Ocean, surveyors erected a marble obelisk to demarcate the United States-Mexico boundary line. Tourists flocked to the region along with land speculators who envisioned upscale hotels, resorts, and spas. A decade later, their visions went bust. Dairy and vegetable farmers moved in, taking advantage of the mild year-round weather. Ranchers also bred horses for the racetracks in Tijuana, Mexico. The famous racehorse Seabiscuit was once boarded in the

Tijuana River Valley. Over the years the valley has changed dramatically, from a sleepy agricultural outlier to an urban park with a heavily-patrolled boundary fence. The presentation will include a historical map of the region and 30 old photos.

In other business, Taya Lazootin with San Diego Coastkeeper will discuss the group's efforts to improve water quality. Since 1995, San Diego Coastkeeper has worked with local government, businesses, residents, and the nonprofit community to protect and restore fishable, swimmable, and drinkable water throughout San Diego County. Water quality and water quantity present challenges to ensuring healthy people, a healthy economy, and a healthy environment. The presentation will provide an overview of Coastkeeper's most pressing environmental challenges and solutions on the horizon.

The purpose of the Citizens Forum is to promote the exchange of information between the USIBWC and the community about Commission projects and related activities. The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, is responsible for applying the boundary and water treaties between the two countries. In the San Diego-Tijuana area, the Commission is involved with boundary demarcation, Tijuana River flood control, and operation of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant, among other responsibilities.

A complete meeting agenda follows.

For more information:

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**USIBWC CITIZENS FORUM**  
**Thursday, June 18, 2015**  
**6:30 – 8:30 p.m.**  
**Tijuana Estuary Meeting Room**  
**301 Caspian Way**  
**Imperial Beach, CA 91932**

**Agenda**

- Welcome and Introductions – Steve Smullen, Citizens Forum Co-Chair
- USIBWC Initiatives Affecting the San Diego Region – Edward Drusina, Commissioner, USIBWC
- A History of the Tijuana River Valley in Maps and Pictures – Professor Emeritus Steven Schoenherr, President of the South Bay Historical Society, and Author Barbara Zaragoza, South Bay Historical Society Member
- Fishable, Swimmable, Drinkable Water in San Diego County – Taya Lazootin, Board of Directors, San Diego Coastkeeper
- 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 information, call 619-662-7600 or e-mail [sally.spener@ibwc.gov](mailto:sally.spener@ibwc.gov)