



## International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

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### **USIBWC PARTNERS WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT TO ADDRESS PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES ALONG THE RIO GRANDE LEVEES**

The United States Section of the [International Boundary and Water Commission](#) (USIBWC) is partnering with the Doña Ana County, New Mexico Sheriff's Office to educate the public about prohibited activities along the Rio Grande. The USIBWC has installed 186 signs which are a combination of directions and prohibitions: no motorized vehicles, no trespassing, off-trail activity prohibited, etc. These newly installed signs are posted from Vinton, Texas to Percha Dam, New Mexico. The signs are posted at all access points to the Rio Grande. The USIBWC allows walkers, joggers, bicyclists, and other similar activities on the levees. The partnership responds to complaints of ATVs, late-night parties, discharge of firearms, and other prohibited activities.

The river levees, floodplain, and riverbed in these areas are Federal property and are controlled and managed by the USIBWC. The river levees and slopes are specially designed flood control structures. Any damage or degradation as a result of unauthorized motor vehicle traffic, could compromise the levees, ultimately causing excess flooding in the surrounding inhabited areas. The roads on top of the levees are intended for low-volume use for authorized users only, primarily for the purpose of maintaining the surrounding area and structures along the river. Vehicular traffic traversing the banks of the main river channel, on the slopes of the levees, or on the levee roads can cause damage and erosion to those areas. In addition, the USIBWC has invested funds in 20 habitat restoration sites along the river required by the USIBWC's 2009 Record of Decision.

“Levees are engineered structures to protect property and life, and the damage to the levees cost taxpayers money to repair,” said Daniel Avila, Acting Commissioner, USIBWC. “The USIBWC's mission is very important and we ask the public to abide by the posted signs for various uses on the levee and floodplain.”

By agreement with USIBWC, the Doña Ana County Sheriff's Office (DASO) has jurisdiction to cite and/or arrest violators. Those who live along the river are aware of these restrictions and alert DASO to potential violations with regularity. Both USIBWC and DASO prefer public cooperation and compliance. **For violations, please call the Mesilla Valley Regional Dispatch Authority, 24 hours a day at (575) 526-0795 and enter #6 for dispatch.**

“We understand this is a departure from past public use of these areas. Given the importance of the river, and the control of potential floodwaters, in our collective lives, we ask the public to respect these prohibitions,” said Kim Stewart, Sheriff, Doña Ana County Sheriff's Department.

The USIBWC has also entered into agreements with law enforcement agencies in El Paso County, Texas to enforce restrictions there.

The Commission is responsible for applying the boundary and water treaties between the United States and Mexico and settling differences that may arise in the application of the treaties. The USIBWC maintains the Rio Grande in this region to meet its flood control and water delivery mission.



**For more information:**  
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