



## International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release  
7:00 p.m. CDT, July 5, 2010

### **RIO GRANDE RISES AT RIO GRANDE CITY; DIVERSIONS INTO THE U.S. INTERIOR FLOODWAY ARE POSSIBLE**

The Rio Grande at Rio Grande City, Texas is rising due to inflows from the San Juan River, a Mexican tributary affected by heavy precipitation from Hurricane Alex and the spill of floodwaters from Marte R. Gomez Dam in Mexico. According to National Weather Service forecasts on July 5, Rio Grande flow at Rio Grande City is expected to peak on July 8. In accordance with flood operations guidelines of the International Boundary and Water Commission, if flow exceeds 20,000 cubic feet per second (570 cubic meters per second), then diversion of floodwaters will be made into the interior floodway of the United States. The possible need to use the U.S. interior floodway is diminishing as new information becomes available. **Residents in the Lower Rio Grande Valley should continue to monitor National Weather Service warnings and forecasts for any updated information about conditions in the Rio Grande Basin.**

The U.S. interior floodway includes channels known as the Banker Floodway, Main Floodway, North Floodway, and Arroyo Colorado through portions of Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties. The last time the International Boundary and Water Commission diverted water into the U.S. floodway was in 1988 due to the effects of Hurricane Gilbert. Current forecasts indicate that the volume of water expected in the Rio Grande and interior floodway is well within the capacity of the U.S. levees. Rio Grande flow at Brownsville, Texas-Matamoros, Tamaulipas is expected to be limited to 7062 cubic feet per second (200 cubic meters per second); U.S. levees in that reach are designed to contain a flow of 20,000 cubic feet per second (570 cubic meters per second).

To prepare for flood conditions, crews from the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) on July 3 began closing all drainage and irrigation structures that pass

through USIBWC levees in order to prevent floodwaters from the Rio Grande and interior floodway from flowing into adjacent communities. Once the structures are closed, drainage from the land side of the levee that would normally flow into the river or floodways will be blocked so any local storm water flows will need to be pumped over the levee by the community or drainage district responsible for local storm water management. As conditions warrant, USIBWC staff will move into Flood Fight Operations. During this phase of response, crews work 24 hours per day to patrol flood control levees to identify and respond to any problems that could arise such as erosion along the levees, freeboard encroachment, or seepage on the land side of the levees.

Upstream at Amistad Dam on the Rio Grande at Del Rio, Texas-Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila, the Commission began flood releases on July 5. Flow downstream from Amistad Dam is entering Falcon Reservoir, located at Falcon Heights, Texas-Nueva Ciudad Guerrero, Tamaulipas. As conditions warrant, release of floodwaters from Falcon Dam could become necessary in the coming days.

The Commission is managing its flood control infrastructure taking into account prudent operation of the reservoirs, existing flood conditions in parts of the Rio Grande and its tributaries in the United States and Mexico, impact to property, and forecasts for additional rainfall in the basin, including the potential for additional tropical weather impacts in the coming week.

As part of its flood operations, the USIBWC exchanges information with the Mexican Section of the Commission regarding flood conditions. The USIBWC provides data about Mexico's Rio Grande tributaries to the National Weather Service, which uses this and U.S. data to formulate flood forecasts. In May, the U.S. and Mexican Sections of the Commission conducted their annual flood workshop in preparation for the hurricane season.

Information about Rio Grande flow as well as storage and release data from U.S. and Mexican reservoirs in the Rio Grande basin is available on the USIBWC web page at:

[http://www.ibwc.gov/Water\\_Data/Reports/RG\\_Flow\\_data.html](http://www.ibwc.gov/Water_Data/Reports/RG_Flow_data.html)

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