



## International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release  
2:00 p.m. CDT, July 8, 2010

### **RELEASES FROM FALCON DAM TO INCREASE; DIVERSION OF WATER INTO THE FLOODWAY BEGINS; AMISTAD DAM RELEASES CONTINUE**

Due to upstream flood conditions and rising reservoir levels, the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, will increase the release of floodwaters from Falcon Dam, located at Falcon Heights, Texas-Nueva Ciudad Guerrero, Tamaulipas on July 8. Releases into the Rio Grande will be increased to the rate of 39,700 cubic feet per second (1125 cubic meters per second). Releases were initiated July 7 at the rate of 15,000 cubic feet per second (425 cubic meters per second) -- the first time flood releases have been made from the dam since 1992. This water will flow downstream into the Lower Rio Grande Valley where the Commission has a system of flood control levees, diversion dams, and floodways. Releases at this rate are well within the capacity of the U.S. portion of the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project that extends from Peñitas to the Gulf of Mexico. **Residents in the Rio Grande Basin should continue to monitor National Weather Service warnings and forecasts for any updated information about flood conditions.**

The International Boundary and Water Commission began diverting floodwaters at Anzalduas Diversion Dam in Hidalgo County, Texas into the U.S. interior floodway early on July 8. The volume of water diverted into the interior floodway will continue to rise throughout the day. Diversions into Mexico's interior floodway at Retamal Dam have also begun. 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.

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. The USIBWC has moved 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.

At the Commission's uppermost reservoir, Amistad Dam, located at Del Rio, Texas-Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila, flood releases continue at the rate of 35,000 cubic feet per second (1000 cubic meters per second). Releases were initiated July 5 and were increased to the current rate on July 6. This is the greatest release of water from Amistad Dam since 1974.

Emergency Operations Centers at USIBWC Headquarters in El Paso, Texas and the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project Office in Mercedes, Texas were established last week to provide round-the-clock response and coordination with the Mexican Section of the Commission.

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 additional tropical weather impacts.

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)

For more information:

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