



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section



For immediate release
July 11, 2013

RIO GRANDE ISSUES AND AGENCY HUNTING POLICY ON AGENDA FOR JULY 17 PUBLIC MEETING IN LAS CRUCES

Rio Grande water supply, operations, and flood control issues as well as a proposed hunting policy along the Rio Grande in southern New Mexico will be discussed at the next public meeting of the Rio Grande Citizens Forum, an outreach program of the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC). The meeting will take place Wednesday, July 17, 6:30-8:30 p.m., at the Elephant Butte Irrigation District Board Room, 530 S. Melendres Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Representatives from the Bureau of Reclamation will present Rio Grande Project storage conditions and will cover 2013 irrigation season statistics, including water deliveries to the Elephant Butte Irrigation District, El Paso County Water Improvement District #1, and Mexico, which were significantly reduced due to the drought. They will also present the outlook for the Rio Grande Basin.

Reclamation will also discuss the Rio Grande Project Operating Agreement Environmental Assessment, a study undertaken in conformance with federal environmental law. The presentation will cover the operating agreement's history and operations, which affect water storage and release from Elephant Butte and Caballo Dams.

USIBWC Operations and Maintenance Division Chief Sheryl Franklin will discuss a proposal to allow bird hunting on rural segments of USIBWC land along the Rio Grande in New Mexico. In response to various hunting organizations as well as the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, the USIBWC is examining its current "No Hunting" policy on its property in New Mexico. A draft Environmental Assessment of the proposed hunting policy is expected to be released for public comment later this month. The document discusses areas under consideration for bird hunting as well as the conditions and impacts if hunting were

allowed. Any hunting would be subject to all federal, state, and local laws so that even in areas that may be designated for bird hunting, hunters would be required to follow laws regarding licenses, bag limits, restrictions preventing hunting within a certain distance from residences, no trespassing on private property, etc. Hunters would also be subject to USIBWC regulations such as cleaning up all trash and no driving on levee slopes.

In other business, USIBWC Civil Engineer Andrea Glover will give an update on the agency's Rio Grande levee rehabilitation projects in El Paso County, Texas and in Hatch, the Mesilla Valley, and Sunland Park, New Mexico. The USIBWC is rehabilitating its levees to meet standards established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The presentation will provide an update on the status of levees under construction, projects planned for the future, and current FEMA certification progress. Communities protected by certified levee systems accredited by FEMA benefit from both enhanced flood protection and better rates on flood insurance. The levee construction is being carried out, in part, with funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The Recovery Act's purpose is to create and save jobs, promote economic recovery, and invest in infrastructure that will provide long-term economic benefits. USIBWC Recovery Act expenditures in New Mexico and Texas have already created or preserved an estimated 3,145 jobs.

The Rio Grande Citizens Forum was established by the USIBWC in 1999 to facilitate the exchange of information regarding USIBWC activities on the Rio Grande between Percha Dam, New Mexico and Fort Quitman, Texas. It is designed to bring together community members, enabling the early and continued two-way flow of information, concerns, values, and needs between the USIBWC and the general public, environmentalists, irrigation districts, municipalities, and others interested in the river. A complete meeting agenda follows.

For more information:

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RIO GRANDE CITIZENS FORUM
Wednesday, July 17, 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.
Elephant Butte Irrigation District Board Room
530 S. Melendres Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions – Conrad Keyes, Jr., Citizens Forum Co-Chair
- Rio Grande Project 2013 Conditions and Rio Grande Project Operating Agreement Environmental Assessment – Presenters from the Bureau of Reclamation:
Jim Wilber, Environment and Lands Division Manager
Dagmar Llewellyn, Hydrologist, Albuquerque Area Office
Bert Cortez, Manager, El Paso Field Division
- Proposal to Allow Bird Hunting on Certain USIBWC Property in New Mexico – Sheryl Franklin, Operations and Maintenance Division Chief, USIBWC
- Construction and FEMA Certification Update of Rio Grande Flood Control Levee Projects in Doña Ana County, NM and El Paso County, TX – Andrea Glover, Civil Engineer, USIBWC
- 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 more information, call 915-832-4175 or e-mail sally.spener@ibwc.gov