



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
3:00 p.m. CDT, July 21, 2010

RELEASE OF FLOODWATERS FROM FALCON DAM CONTINUES; DIVERSIONS CONTINUE INTO U.S. INTERIOR FLOODWAY IN THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, continues to release floodwaters from Falcon Dam, located at Falcon Heights, Texas-Nueva Ciudad Guerrero, Tamaulipas at the rate of 60,000 cubic feet per second (1700 cubic meters per second); releases were increased to this rate on July 14. According to provisional data from the U.S. Section of the Commission, Falcon Reservoir reached a record elevation on July 17 of 309.3 feet (94.277 meters), more than a foot greater than the previous record of 308.1 feet (93.91 meters) set in 1958. The reservoir elevation is currently declining slowly.

Downstream in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, the Commission has a system of flood control levees, diversion dams, and floodways that extends from Peñitas to the Gulf of Mexico. Diversion of floodwaters continues into the U.S. interior floodway at Anzalduas Dam, located near Mission, Texas-Reynosa, Tamaulipas, and into the Mexican interior floodway at Retamal Dam, located near Donna, Texas-Rio Bravo, Tamaulipas. Because of these upstream diversions, the Commission will continue to control floodwaters in the Rio Grande downstream from Retamal Dam to approximately the same levels seen for the past several days.

Residents in the Rio Grande Basin should continue to monitor National Weather Service warnings and forecasts for updated information and river forecasts concerning flood conditions; they should also heed any guidance from local emergency management officials.

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.

Staff from the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission's Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project remain in Flood Fight Operations. During this phase of response, crews patrol flood control levees 24 hours per day to identify and respond to any problems that arise such as erosion along the levees, freeboard encroachment, or seepage on the land side of the levees. All drainage and irrigation structures that pass through USIBWC levees have been closed to prevent floodwaters from the Rio Grande and interior floodways from flowing into adjacent communities. Because 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. Residents who tamper with drainage structures during flood operations could be subject to criminal prosecution.

The Commission manages its flood control infrastructure taking into account safe 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.

For more information:

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