



**International Boundary and Water Commission
United States and Mexico**

For immediate release
December 10, 2014

**REPORT DOCUMENTS INITIAL RESULTS OF
ENVIRONMENTAL WATER RELEASE
ON THE COLORADO RIVER**

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico (IBWC) today released the Initial Progress Report for the Minute 319 Colorado River Delta Environmental Flows Monitoring. The report documents initial success in delivering water to key areas in order to promote habitat restoration in the Colorado River riparian corridor.

Minute 319 is a 2012 IBWC agreement on U.S.-Mexico cooperation on a variety of Colorado River issues, including the environment. The Minute provides for a pulse flow -- a one-time event to deliver water to the environment in the Colorado River Delta in Mexico. The pulse flow release, totaling approximately 105,392 acre-feet (130 million cubic meters) began March 23, 2014 and ended May 18, 2014. The water was intended to help restore native vegetation and wildlife habitat in parts of the Colorado River and its Delta that usually have little to no water.

A team of scientists, environmental experts, and technical personnel from universities, non-governmental organizations, and federal agencies from the United States and Mexico closely monitored the pulse flow under the Commission's coordination. Their Initial Progress Report documents the inundation of 4,522 acres (1,830 hectares) of river channel and floodplain, including key habitat restoration sites. The report confirms the river's temporary reconnection with the sea. Scientists also observed that a significant amount of water infiltrated to groundwater. Another key finding is the pulse flow's effect in dispersing seeds and germinating both non-native and native vegetation, including cottonwood and willow, two species important to ongoing habitat restoration efforts. Preliminary observations further indicate an increase of migratory bird species along open water areas and at the active restoration sites.

“The report shows we were successful in delivering environmental water to key areas. I look forward to hearing from our team of scientists as they continue to study the pulse flow’s impact on our habitat restoration efforts,” said U.S. Commissioner Edward Drusina of the IBWC.

Mexican Commissioner Roberto F. Salmon Castelo indicated that these preliminary results confirm that nature always reacts positively even to small efforts like this one that was included in Minute 319, and that this will certainly prompt continued consideration of this type of action in subsequent agreements that could be generated with respect to Colorado River cooperation between both countries.

A mid-term report on the pulse flow is expected in 2016 and the final comprehensive report is expected in 2018.

The Environmental Pulse Flow Initial Progress Report is available on the website of the U.S. Section of the IBWC at: <http://www.ibwc.gov/EMD/Min319Monitoring.pdf>

A summary of Minute 319 is available at: http://www.ibwc.gov/Files/Press_Release_112012.pdf

Interviews with scientists who worked on the report can be arranged upon request.

For more information:

Sally Spener
915-832-4175/915-503-5542
sally.spener@ibwc.gov

Gilbert Anaya
915-832-4702
gilbert.anaya@ibwc.gov