



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

For immediate release
December 14, 2018

**REPORT RELEASED ON IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL
FLOWS ON LOWER COLORADO RIVER AND DELTA**

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico (IBWC), has released the *Minute 319 Colorado River Limitrophe and Delta Environmental Flows Monitoring Final Report*. The report documents the impact of environmental water delivery to the riparian corridor of the Colorado River along the U.S.-Mexico border and Delta from 2012 through 2017. The environmental deliveries were carried out as part of a U.S.-Mexico agreement known as Minute 319 of the IBWC.

“This report provides solid scientific information about our restoration efforts. The findings will help us apply environmental water more effectively in the future,” said U.S. Commissioner Jayne Harkins.

Mexican Commissioner Roberto Salmon stated that this report was preceded by a great effort by specialists and scientists from both countries who sought to document the manner in which the environment of the Colorado River Riparian Corridor and Delta had benefitted from the water for the environment, as stipulated in Minute 319.

Thirty-nine scientists from the United States and Mexico participated in the monitoring program and/or contributed to the report. They studied the impact of the delivery of 105,392 acre-feet (130 million cubic meters [mcm]) of water from March 23, 2014 - May 18, 2014, known as the pulse flow, and 57,621 acre-feet (71 mcm) of base flow during the five-year term of the Minute, ending December 31, 2017.

Some of the key findings of the monitoring are:

- The 2014 pulse flow temporarily achieved connectivity of the Colorado River from Morelos Dam to the Sea of Cortez.

- The pulse flow resulted in a 17% increase in greenness throughout the riparian corridor in 2014 but then decreased steadily.
- Three active habitat restoration sites were established or expanded, totaling 915 acres (371 hectares); in addition, 145 acres (59 hectares) were passively restored.
- Restored habitat types included open water/marsh, cottonwood-willow, mesquite bosque, and upland.
- More than 275,000 trees were planted, and year-to-year survival rates ranged from 75% to 95%.
- The abundance and diversity of birds in the riparian corridor increased in 2014 after the pulse flow but declined thereafter. The abundance and diversity of birds continue to be greater in restoration sites than in non-restored areas of the riparian corridor and remain higher than before the pulse flow.

The monitoring also resulted in findings related to water delivery methods, infiltration, irrigation techniques, and groundwater – information that is useful for ongoing environmental water delivery and restoration work.

The IBWC and its partners continue with their restoration efforts under Minute 323, an agreement covering a nine-year period through 2026. Minute 323 provides for at least 210,000 acre-feet (259 mcm) of water for environmental purposes, \$9 million dollars for scientific research and monitoring, and \$9 million dollars for restoration projects.

The *Minute 319 Colorado River Limitrophe and Delta Environmental Flows Monitoring Final Report* is available online at: [Monitoring Report](#)

For more information:

Lori Kuczmanski, USIBWC
915-832-4106
Lori.Kuczmanski@ibwc.gov