

Lower Colorado River Boundary And Capacity Preservation Project

July 2003

Description

A binational plan to preserve the boundary, channel and carrying capacity of the Lower Colorado River between the Northerly International Boundary (NIB) and the Southerly International Boundary (SIB) is under development.

Background

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is presently underway which will identify various alternatives and their related impacts for this project. The framework of this study is based on international agreements in the form of minutes drawn up by the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico. These minutes detail the delineation of the international boundary and the carrying capacity of the Lower Colorado River. Ongoing discussions with Mexico are an integral component of the preservation of the 23.7 mile (38.2 kilometer) boundary segment of the Colorado River the international boundary and the design which will accomplish the required carrying capacity (140,000 cubic feet per second) in the floodway bound by levees in the United States and Mexico. Channel excavation and brush clearing as well as other activities are being evaluated.

Status

Based on the selected alternative from the EIS process, the IBWC may recommend to the two Governments, boundary preservation, by joint works to protect banks, rectify the channel, clear vegetation, and remove sediment, among others, to restore and maintain the river channel. At this point in time, it has been decided to evaluate alignments which will include a pilot channel with a minimum carrying capacity of 15,000 cubic feet per second. Included, on behalf of the two Governments, may be restoration of the international boundary river channel and transfer of lands from one country to the other in the event that the river is required to change its course.

Progress

The United States Section of the IBWC (USIBWC) has contracted with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to prepare the Environmental Impact Statement for the Lower Colorado River Boundary and Capacity Preservation Project. Baseline environmental and hydraulic reports have been completed. The USIBWC is working cooperatively with the local federal, state, local agencies and the general public in scoping and addressing the concerns of these participants as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

Goals

Distribution of the final EIS and the subsequent Record of Decision is planned for early 2005.