COVER SHEET

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

AND

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FORT HANCOCK-EL PORVENIR INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE

RIO GRANDE RECTIFICATION PROJECT

HUDSPETH COUNTY, TEXAS

LEAD AGENCY: United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC)

PROPOSED ACTION: The Action Alternative – U.S. Side Rebuild to Same Profile would construct a new bridge section on the U.S. side that would tie-in to the Mexican section of the bridge, in order to address structural and safety issues with the bridge.

REPORT DESIGNATION: Draft Environmental Assessment and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact

ABSTRACT: The International Boundary and Water Commission (Commission), both United States (U.S.) and Mexican Sections owns, operates and maintains the Fort Hancock – El Porvenir International Bridge as part of the Rio Grande Rectification Project in compliance with the Convention of February 1, 1933, and Commission Minute No. 129. The U.S. Section (USIBWC) needs to address safety and structural issues on the U.S. side of the bridge, including the deck, steel girders, and substructure of timber piles, as identified over the years through several bridge inspections from the Texas Department of Transportation. The Mexican side of the bridge has been rehabilitated in the past and does not exhibit the same safety issues.

The USIBWC proposes to implement the Action Alternative – U.S. Side Rebuild to Same Profile, which would construct a new bridge section on the U.S. side that would tie-in to the Mexican section of the bridge, which is in good condition. The new bridge section would generally match the existing bridge with regard to having the same height and width, similar roadway and sidewalk, but with an improved floodgate.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluates the potential impacts of the Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative. Potential impacts on natural, cultural, and other resources were evaluated. A Finding of No Significant Impact was issued for the Proposed Action based on a review of the facts and analyses contained in the EA.

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FORT HANCOCK-EL PORVENIR INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE

RIO GRANDE RECTIFICATION PROJECT

HUDSPETH COUNTY, TEXAS

LEAD AGENCY: United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC)

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, Public Law 91-190, 42 U.S. Code §4321 et seq and USIBWC's *Operational Procedures for Implementing Section 102 of the NEPA, Other Laws Pertaining to Specifics Aspects of the Environment and Applicable Executive Orders* (46 Federal Register 44083, September 2, 1981). The FONSI is the decision document for the attached Environmental Assessment (EA) for Reconstruction of the Fort Hancock-El Porvenir International Bridge, Rio Grande Rectification Project, Hudspeth County, Texas.

BACKGROUND

The International Boundary and Water Commission (Commission), both United States (U.S.) and Mexican Sections, constructed the Fort Hancock – El Porvenir International Bridge from 1936 to 1937 as part of the Rio Grande Rectification Project, in compliance with the Convention of February 1, 1933 and Commission Minute No. 129.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) performs annual bridge inspections on the U.S. side of the bridge, with both U.S. and Mexican representatives present. While the Mexican side has had previous repairs and is in good condition, various TXDOT inspections of the U.S. side of the bridge have encountered safety issues with the structural integrity of the bridge deck and substructure. The USIBWC completed emergency temporary repairs of bridge piles in 2022, and the bridge was subsequently reopened to vehicular traffic. Despite those repairs, the bridge piles remain in place and are deteriorating.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The Purpose and Need of the project is to improve the structural integrity of the Fort Hancock – El Porvenir International Bridge to address safety concerns on the U.S. side. Safety issues outlined in TXDOT bridge inspections include the deck, steel girders, and substructure of timber piles The Action Alternative – U.S. Side Rebuild to Same Profile is the Preferred Alternative. The Action Alternative would construct a new bridge section on the U.S. side that would tie-in to the Mexican section of the bridge. Because it would tie-in to the existing bridge, it would have the same profile (same height and approximately same width) as the existing U.S. side.

For this Alternative, the bridge rebuild is not anticipated to hydraulically impact the flood control system adversely as it will be to the same profile, and the design contractors would be required to keep design flood water surface elevation increases and flow deflections within the threshold limits established by USIBWC. This alternative would also remove the existing floodgate and replace it with stoplogs meeting requirements under Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 44 CFR 65.10. The completed bridge would have a roadway and sidewalk that are similar to the existing bridge section and would meet specifications from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

No work on the Action Alternative could be implemented until funding is authorized and appropriated.

Under the No Action Alternative, the bridge would not be rebuilt and would remain as is. The No Action Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need as it does not address the safety issues with the deteriorating conditions of the bridge.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The Proposed Action would cause short-term impacts during construction activities to water quality and noise. Best management practices (BMPs) identified in the EA and described below would be implemented to minimize short-term impacts. Beneficial impacts to flood control would be realized by improving the floodgate. There would be adverse impacts on cultural resources anticipated due to the demolition of the historic bridge. There would also be temporary impacts to community resources during construction as bridge and border Port of Entry access would be limited or stopped during most of construction.

MITIGATION AND BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Adverse impacts to the historic bridge would be mitigated through documentation of the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) as required under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), following all regulations and requirements.

BMPs will be implemented as part of the Action Alternative to minimize the potential for impacts on natural resources. Standard BMPs during construction will include implementation of stormwater plans and spill plans, erosion control, dust abatement, conducting construction work only during dry or low flow conditions, servicing heavy machinery outside of the floodplain, inspecting work site to ensure that construction equipment is properly maintained at all times, and reporting unearthed cultural resources and other natural resources during construction. Construction activities will be scheduled, to the extent possible, outside the breeding season of migratory birds; otherwise, crews will survey the area for active nests prior to ground disturbing work during nesting season. These BMPs will reduce the potential for impacts to water quality and other resources because of construction of the Action Alternative.

USIBWC will also obtain any necessary permits for channel work from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and any related state water quality certifications to ensure that impacts to water quality do not occur.

DECISION

Based on my review of the facts and analyses contained in the EA, I conclude that implementation of the Proposed Action to rebuild the bridge on the U.S. side will not have any significant impacts on the human environment. Accordingly, requirements of NEPA are fulfilled and an environmental impact statement is not required.

_____ _____ _____

W.C. McIntosh, P.E. Date
Commissioner
International Boundary and Water Commission,
United States Section

DRAFT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FORT HANCOCK-EL PORVENIR INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE RIO GRANDE RECTIFICATION PROJECT HUDSPETH COUNTY, TEXAS

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October 27, 2026

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Appendix A. Agency Correspondence

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
APE	Area of Potential Effect
BMP	Best Management Practices
CBP	Customs and Border Protection
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EA	Environmental Assessment
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FR	Federal Register
GSA	General Services Administration
HABS/HAER	Historic American Buildings Survey and Historic American Engineering Record
HCHC	Hudspeth County Historical Commission
IBC	International Boundary Commission
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NPS	National Park Service
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
POE	Port of Entry
RGRP	Rio Grande Rectification Project
SPCCP	Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan
SWFL	Southwestern Willow Flycatcher
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
T&E	Threatened and Endangered
TCEQ	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
THC	Texas Historical Commission
TXDOT	Texas Department of Transportation
TXSHPO	Texas State Historic Preservation Officer
U.S.	United States
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USIBWC	U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission

1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

1.1 Introduction

The Fort Hancock – El Porvenir International Bridge (hereafter referred to as Fort Hancock Bridge) was constructed from 1936 to 1937 by the International Boundary Commission (IBC) (Brown 1952). The IBC became the International Boundary and Water Commission (Commission) in the 1944 Water Treaty. The bridge was constructed as part of the Commission's Rio Grande Rectification Project, in compliance with the Convention of February 1, 1933 and Commission Minute No. 129. The bridge is owned, operated, and maintained by both United States (U.S.) and Mexican Sections of the Commission.

The bridge is a narrow, single-lane bridge (Figures 1 and 2) that is 510 feet in length, with a timber pile substructure and a relatively thin concrete deck, designed with 1930's specifications for loading. The bridge is currently open to vehicular and pedestrian traffic, but not for freight.

The bridge crosses the Rio Grande, connecting the State Highway 20 via FM 1088 in Fort Hancock, Hudspeth County Texas to MEX 2 Highway in El Porvenir, Chihuahua, Mexico (See Figure 3 and Figure 4). The bridge facilitates the nearby Fort Hancock Port of Entry (POE), owned by the General Services Administration (GSA) and operated by United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The bridge is currently within a National Defense Area assigned to U.S. Army Garrison Fort Bliss.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) performs annual bridge inspections on the U.S. side of the bridge, with both U.S. and Mexican representatives present. In 2016, TXDOT bridge inspection gave the first rating of "Poor condition - deterioration significantly affects structural integrity" for the deck and substructure, and a rating of "Fair condition – minor deterioration of structural elements (extensive)" for the superstructure. TXDOT has also identified the Fort Hancock Bridge as a high-priority replacement project. Due to continued deterioration of the bridge piles, in 2018, TXDOT recommended weight restrictions on vehicles, reducing truckload from 21,000 pounds gross weight to 12,000 pounds axle/tandem and 17,000 gross weight. In 2020, TXDOT recommended closure of the bridge due to compromised structural stability, and in early 2021 both the U.S. and Mexican Sections of the IBWC agreed to close the bridge to vehicular traffic. The USIBWC completed emergency temporary repairs of Bent 5 in February 2022 and follow up repairs in August 2022. The bridge was reopened to pedestrian and vehicular traffic in 2022. Subsequent inspections show that the temporary stabilization system is operating as intended. Despite those repairs, the remaining bridge piles are deteriorating.

In 2007, Mexico replaced the total deck of the bridge with new reinforcement and concrete from the Mexican abutment to the international boundary. A 2018 bridge inspection by Mexican agencies determined that the Mexican portion of the bridge is in good condition, only requiring routine maintenance.



Figure 1. Fort Hancock - El Porvenir International Bridge, December 2024

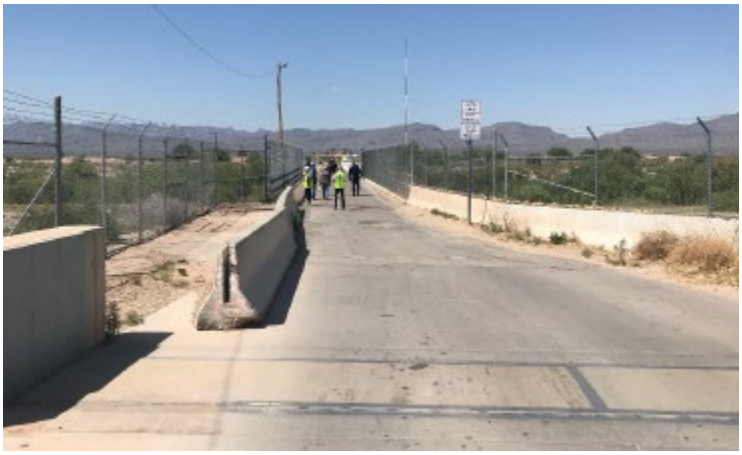


Figure 2 Fort Hancock Bridge, Bridge Flood gate looking south

1.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to improve the structural integrity of the Fort Hancock – El Porvenir Bridge to address safety concerns on the U.S. side. Safety issues outlined in TXDOT bridge inspections (including the 2025 inspection) include:

- The substructure made of timber piles with concrete and steel caps exhibits weathering, decay and portions with significant section loss. Timber elements exhibit weathering, splitting, and heavy decay (Figure 3). In various inspections, the substructure has been rated in "poor" and in "critical" condition, with advanced deterioration of primary elements.
- The deck is less than 6 inches thick and is in "serious" condition with widespread wear, failing joints, cracking and spalling. The deck has been rated in "poor" and in "serious" condition with deterioration seriously affecting structural capacity.
- The concrete sidewalk has cracking with exposed steel.
- The superstructure made up of steel girders rusting; end of beams have corrosion and section loss.



Figure 3 Fort Hancock Bridge timber pile deterioration

1.3 Scope of the Environmental Review

Federal agencies are required to take into consideration the environmental consequences of proposed and alternative actions in the decision-making process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. The USIBWC procedures for implementing NEPA are specified in USIBWC's *Operational Procedures for Implementing Section 102 of the NEPA, Other Laws Pertaining to Specifics Aspects of the Environment and Applicable Executive Orders* (46 Federal Register [FR] 44083, September 2, 1981, with updates underway). These procedures establish both the administrative process and substantive scope of the environmental impact evaluation designed to ensure that regulatory authorities and the public have a proper understanding of the potential environmental consequences of a contemplated course of action.

This EA identifies and evaluates the potential environmental consequences that may result from implementation of two alternatives: the No Action and the Action Alternative (See Section 2).

The following resource areas were analyzed for potential environmental consequences:

- biological resources (vegetation, wildlife, and threatened and endangered species),
- water resources (food control, water quality, and waters of the U.S.),
- cultural resources,
- soil resources, and
- community resources (traffic/access).

USIBWC determined that the following resources areas did not require analysis: 1) land use. The land use would not change. 2) air quality and noise. The construction could cause temporary but negligible environmental health issues such as air quality and noise pollution. 3) hazardous materials. Lead paint and asbestos are likely not present as the construction pre-dates the use of these materials, and similar re-construction of the nearby Fabens-Caseta Bridge showed no presence of hazardous materials. Pursuant to Executive Orders 14148 and 14173, this EA does not analyze environmental justice.

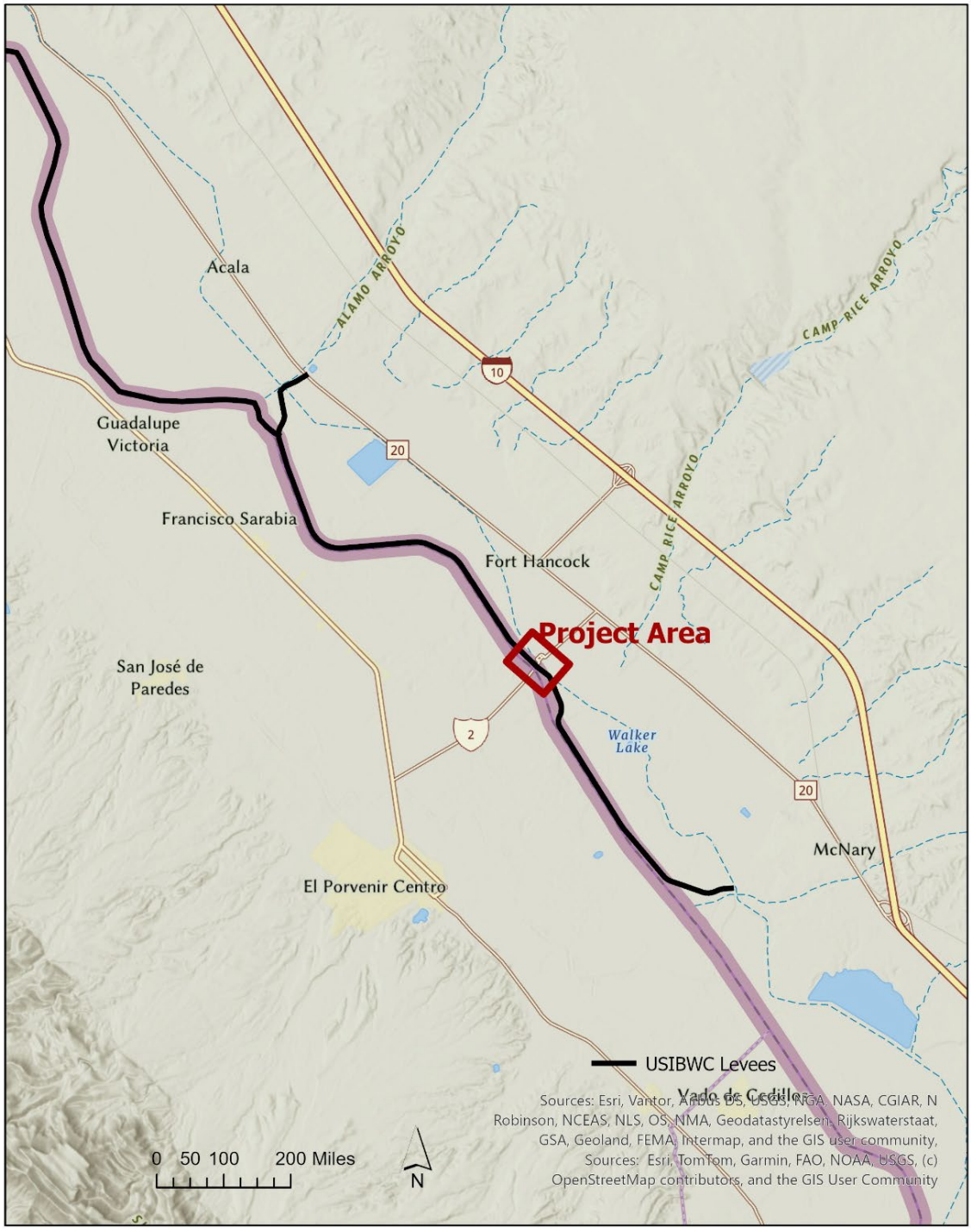


Figure 4. Vicinity Map

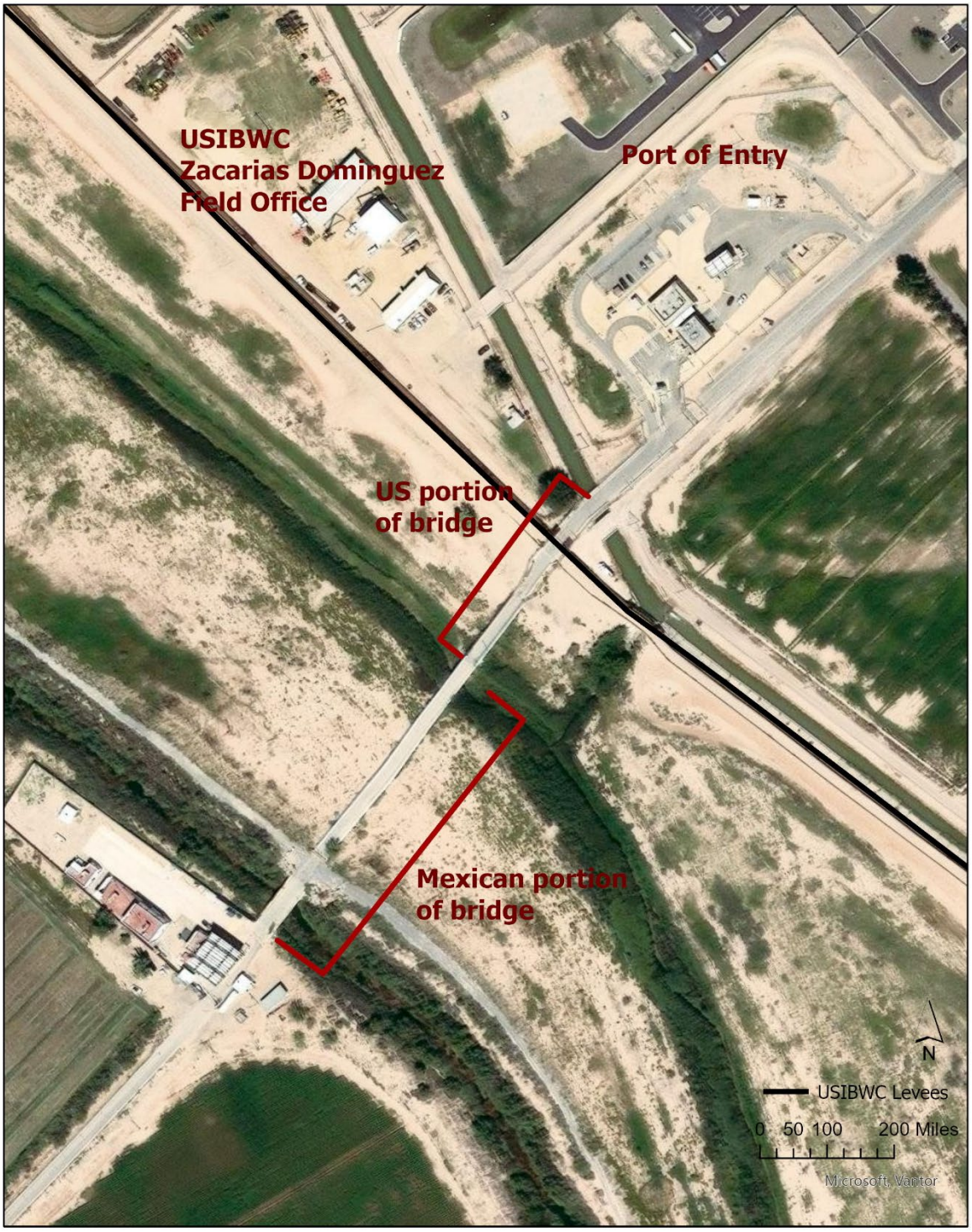


Figure 5 Fort Hancock Bridge Project Area

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Summary of Alternatives Evaluated

USIBWC has identified the following alternatives:

1. No Action Alternative
2. Action Alternative – U.S.-Side Rebuild to Same Profile (Preferred Alternative)

These alternatives are summarized in Table 2-1 and discussed below.

Table 2-1. Summary of Alternatives

Alternative	Notable Elements					
	Cost	**Pedestrian Lane**	**Preserves Historic Bridge**	**Resolves Safety Issues**	**Floodgate Meetings FEMA requirements**	**Bridge Closure**
No Action Alternative	None	✓	✓			No, but Potential for Long term
Action Alternative – U.S.-Side Rebuild to Same Profile (Preferred Alternative)	Millions of Dollars	✓		✓	✓	Short term during construction

2.2 Alternative A – No Action

Under Alternative A, the bridge would not be rebuilt and would remain in place as is. No Action is considered for a baseline; however, this alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need, as it does not address the safety issues with the deteriorating conditions of the bridge. If conditions get worse, the bridge may have to be closed.

2.3 Action Alternative – U.S. Side Rebuild to Same Profile (Preferred Alternative)

The Action Alternative – U.S. Side Rebuild to Same Profile is the Preferred Alternative. The Action Alternative would construct a new bridge section on the U.S. side that would tie-in to the Mexican section of the bridge (Figure 6). Because it would tie-in to the existing bridge, it would have the same profile (same height and approximately same width) as the existing U.S. side.

For this Alternative, the bridge rebuild is not anticipated to hydraulically impact the flood control system adversely. However, the design contractors would be required to keep design flood water surface elevation increases and flow deflections within the threshold limits established by USIBWC. This alternative would also remove the existing floodgate and replace it with stoplogs meeting requirements under Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 44 CFR 65.10. The completed bridge would have a roadway and sidewalk that are similar to or match the exiting

bridge section and would meet specifications from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

USIBWC would require that construction contractors maintain pedestrian access during design and construction, to the extent possible, and allow for access from the existing Mexican Section of the bridge to the U.S. Port of Entry. The construction contractor would determine whether one lane stays open for vehicular traffic during construction. The current bridge section on the U.S. side will be demolished, and it could be all at once or one lane at a time.

This alternative would address the safety issues which are the main purpose of this action; however, this alternative would not improve the current narrow lanes and low profile of the bridge.

USIBWC's execution of the Preferred Alternative would be subject to availability of funding; no work could be implemented until funding is authorized and appropriated.

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Figure 6 Action Alternative - U.S. Side Rebuild, Same Profile

2.4 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Consideration

Four potential alternatives were considered but eliminated from further consideration, for the reasons outlined below.

2.4.1 Rehabilitation of Bridge

The USIBWC considered an alternative to rehabilitate the existing bridge but determined this was not feasible due to the extensive deterioration of the timber pilings. In 2019, TXDOT Sufficiency Rating analysis determined that with rehabilitation of various bridge elements, the bridge would remain structurally deficient with a sufficiency rating below the threshold of recommending replacement (TXDOT 2019). Based on this information, rehabilitation costs or methods have not been further investigated by USIBWC or TXDOT. This alternative was eliminated because it did not meet the purpose and need of addressing safety hazards.

2.4.2 Rebuild Entire Bridge Alternatives

USIBWC also considered three potential alternatives for rebuilding the entire bridge. These alternatives were developed with input from TXDOT and GSA.

2.4.2.1 Rebuild Entire Bridge, Same Location

The first would be to demolish the entire existing bridge and rebuild a new one in the same location. This alternative would expand the lane sizes, add a pedestrian lane, and provide opportunity for the bridge to be built to a higher profile. This alternative would utilize the existing bridge alignment; therefore, the existing bridge would be shut down to traffic for the duration of construction. Traffic would need to be detoured to the Tornillo – Guadalupe border crossing approximately 25 miles north. This alternative could save costs by preserving the existing canal bridges (outside of the levees), as the canal bridges are in good condition.

2.4.2.2 Rebuild Entire Bridge, Downstream Location, Demo Bridge

The second would be to rebuild the entire bridge in a downstream location and then demolish the original bridge. This would be the most complex and costly alternative, and the entire bridge would have a new alignment. This alternative would require new canal bridges and approach roadways to be constructed in both the U.S. and Mexico. This alternative would expand the lane sizes, add a pedestrian lane, and provide opportunity for the bridge to be built to a higher profile. Traffic would be maintained on the existing bridge for much of the duration of construction and therefore would have less impact on existing traffic during construction. This alternative would change the footprint of the bridge and would require acquisition of easement outside of the USIBWC right of way and adjacent to the Port of Entry for new approach roadways. In this alternative, the existing bridge would be demolished after the new bridge is complete and traffic moved to the new bridge. It is possible that construction with a new footprint for this alternative would cause some environmental impacts.

2.4.2.3 Rebuild Entire Bridge, Downstream Location, No Demo

A third alternative would be similar to the rebuild in a downstream location except for leaving the existing bridge in place, rather than demolishing the historic bridge. While this variation of the downstream rebuild would cut costs for demolition, leaving the existing bridge could

impact flood capacity and potentially cause safety and hazardous flood issues if the old bridge further deteriorates and creates floating debris during a flood.

All three of these alternatives are functions of the Commission in its capacity as an international organization because each alternative requires agreement and/or action in and with Mexico. Accordingly, USIBWC has determined that all three of these entire rebuild alternatives would be excluded from consideration under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 by virtue of the International Organizations Immunity Act and Executive Order 12467 of March 2, 1984. The proposed alternatives would also be exempt from provisions of Executive Order 12114 of January 4, 1979, regarding environmental effects abroad of major federal actions since the Commission jointly develops and carries out projects with the Government of Mexico.

2.5 Summary of Environmental Consequences Anaylzed

Table 2-2 below summarizes the environmental consequences of each resource analyzed in Section 3 for both alternatives.

Table 2-2. Summary of Environmental consequences for each Alternative

		Summary of Impacts	
Resource		**No Action Alternative**	**Action Alternative**
Biological Resources	Vegetation	None	Minor, temporary
	Wildlife	None	Minor, temporary
	Threatened and Endangered Species	None	None
Water Resources	Flood Control	None	Beneficial, long-term
	Water Quality	None	Minor, temporary
	Waters of the U.S.	None	Minor, Permitted
Cultural Resources		None	Adverse, Major, Mitigated
Soils		None	Negligable
Community Resources/ Traffic and Access		Short term none Long term potentially Adverse Major	Adverse, Moderate, temporary

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND CONSEQUENCES

3.1 Biological Resources

3.1.1 Vegetation

Vegetation in the floodplain is primarily mowed grass and invasive forbs, see Figure 7. Additionally, the banks of the river at the bridge are also mowed regularly. Invasive species, including woody species such as saltcedar, rapidly re-grow or re-establish. There are a few willows on the Mexican bank.

Detailed description of regional vegetation is provided in previous EAs for the Rio Grande Rectification Project (USIBWC 2008, USIBWC 2009).



Figure 7 Existing conditions at Fort Hancock Bridge and floodplain, April 29, 2026 after routine mowing



Figure 8 Vegetation under the bridge, April 23, 2026 before routine mowing

3.1.1.1 Vegetation – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no construction would occur. There would be no vegetation disturbance other than routine maintenance.

3.1.1.2 Vegetation –Action Alternative

The action alternative would disturb existing vegetation on the banks and in the floodplain, due to site preparation activities, including clearing and grubbing existing vegetation. However, as the area is routinely mowed, there is very little vegetation to impact. Most impacts would be from actions such as construction of temporary ramps on the bank for equipment access and temporary access paths for equipment in the floodplain, but the vegetation in these areas is limited to Bermuda grass and other mowed grasses and weeds. Based on site visits from April 2026, there are no wetlands in the project area. Figure 7 and Figure 8 shows that there is very little existing riparian vegetation in the project area, and any vegetation that was in Figure 8 was mowed during routine maintenance activities for flood control; therefore, any additional impacts would be minor and temporary.

There may be minor impacts to vegetation within the channel during construction of bridge piers. Currently, the design is only conceptual, it is not possible to quantify impacts to any existing or future vegetation without a final design. USIBWC would apply for a USACE permit for any wetlands in the U.S. that may be impacted, although currently there are no wetlands identified.

3.1.2 Wildlife

Typical wildlife that could inhabit the project area include black-tailed jackrabbit, desert cottontail, cotton rat, ground squirrels, mourning dove, meadowlark, kestrel, red-tail hawk, burrowing owl and other non-game animals and birds (USIBWC 2007; USIBWC 2008).

3.1.2.1 Wildlife – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the vegetation would remain the same and there would be no impact to wildlife. USIBWC Zac Dominguez Fort Hancock office would continue to conduct routine maintenance of the banks, floodplain, and channel.

3.1.2.1 Wildlife – Action Alternative

There may be minor temporary impacts during construction to wildlife present. However, there is existing noise and lights from vehicles crossing the bridge. Additionally, the area is highly disturbed with substantial vehicular activity, as federal and state law enforcement and military personnel are present and conducting patrols. The area is now part of the West Texas National Defense Area managed by Fort Bliss.

To protect migratory birds, construction activities would be scheduled to occur, to the extent possible, outside the March 1 through August 31 breeding season of migratory birds; otherwise, construction contractors would be required to survey the area for active nests for ground disturbing work during nesting season.

3.1.3 Threatened and Endangered Species

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) was enacted to provide a program for the preservation of threatened and endangered (T&E) species and to provide protection for the ecosystems upon which these species depend on for their survival. All Federal agencies are required to implement protective measures for designated species and to use their authorities to further the purposes of ESA (USFWS 2026b). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) officially lists endangered species in the Federal Register as being in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. A threatened species is a species likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range. USFWS also identifies species that are candidates for listing because of identified threats to their continued existence. The ESA also calls for the conservation of what is termed critical habitat, the areas of land, water, and air space that an endangered species needs for survival.

There are a total of 5 federally listed species in the project area, and one candidate species proposed for listing threatened (Monarch) (USFWS 2026a); these are listed in Table 3-1 along with a brief description of their habitat. Of these, none have been documented in the project area. There is no designated critical habitat for any federally protected species within the project area.

Table 3-1. Federally Listed Species with the Potential to Occur in the Project Area			
Common Name	**Federal Status**	**Habitat**	**Potential to Occur**
Northern aplomado falcon (*Falco femoralis septentrionalis*)	E	Open country, especially savannah and open woodlands, sometimes barren areas; grassy plains and valleys with scattered mesquite, yucca, or cactus.	Year-round potential; not documented in the area.
Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*)	E	Inhabits dense riparian habitats along streams containing tree and shrub species such as willow, cottonwood, arrowweed, saltcedar.	Limited potential; could use riparian vegetation along the Rio Grande for foraging in spring/fall; however, not documented in the area. Nesting habitat not present.
Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)	T	Flat sparsely vegetated sandy beaches; unconsolidated shore/sandbars	No potential; no suitable habitat present
Rufa Red Knot (*Calidris canatus rufa*)	T	The species is a winter resident and migrant in Texas, found in marine habitats such as sandy beaches, saltmarshes, lagoons, mudflats of estuaries and bays, tidal flats, and mangrove swamps.	No potential; no suitable habitat present
Yellow-billed cuckoo, western distinct population segment (*Coccyzus americanus*)	T	Associated with large tracts of deciduous, broad-leafed woodland with thick, scrubby undergrowth usually along water courses, as well as dense riparian thickets, marshes, and stands of successional hardwood forest. In the west, this species will also utilize mesquite scrubland adjacent to riparian woodlands.	Potential in spring, summer, and fall. Could use riparian vegetation along the Rio Grande foraging; however, not documented in the area.

Sources: USFWS 2026a; USFWS 2014a; USFWS 2014b; USFWS 2013; USIBWC 2009
E – endangered, T – threatened

3.1.3.1 T&E Species – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the vegetation along the Rio Grande would remain unchanged; therefore, there would be no impact to any species.

3.1.3.2 T&E Species –Action Alternative

Suitable habitat is not present for Rufa Red Know and Piping Plover. There is no effect on these birds.

Suitable breeding habitat is not present for southwestern willow flycatcher and yellow-billed cuckoo. It is possible that both birds use the area for foraging; however, there is very little foraging habitat present, and USIBWC is not aware of documented presence of either species in the project area or nearby. If the birds were to use the limited habitat in the area, the flycatcher foraging would only be during migration in fall or spring, as they have a smaller

kernel and generally do not forage in open areas. The yellow-billed cuckoo could potentially use this area for foraging during spring, summer and fall. However, it may be likely that regular noise, motion and lights from the bridge would keep these birds away. Any construction work would likely be limited to non-breeding season and not peak foraging hours (early morning/dusk); therefore, there would be no effect on these species.

The aplomado falcon is potentially present; however, any nest would likely be in trees or mesquite, which are not present. It is very unlikely due to the noise, light, activity at the bridge and nearby areas, as well as lack of woody vegetation, that the falcon would not be nesting near the site. There would be no effect on these species.

The USIBWC made a No Effects determination in compliance with Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA and sent the notification to USFWS in March 2026. USFWS does not provide a concurrence for no effects determinations.

3.2 Water Resources

3.2.1 Flood Control

A total of 91 miles of flood control levee is installed along the Rio Grande Rectification Project (RGRP) to protect against a 100-year storm event. Most of the floodplain is occupied by low vegetation, including grasses and shrubs, with the occasional tree. For over a decade, the USIBWC has been completing construction of levee rehabilitation throughout the RGRP. Levees in this area are complete.

3.2.1.1 Flood Control – No Action Alternative

No impacts are anticipated because the integrity of the levee system would be maintained. Under the No Action Alternative, none of the action alternatives would be implemented and conditions within the floodway would remain *status quo*.

The No Action Alternative would have no impact on flood control.

3.2.1.2 Flood Control – Action Alternative

Because the bridge would be constructed to the same profile, the action alternative is not anticipated to hydraulically impact the flood control system adversely from the existing condition. The design contractor will be required to demonstrate through hydraulic modeling that water surface elevation increases and flow deflections from the design flood are within USIBWC's established threshold limits. This alternative would also remove the existing floodgate and replace it with stoplogs meeting FEMA 44 CFR 65.10. Therefore, there should be beneficial impacts to flood control as the floodgate would be improved.

3.2.2 Water Quality

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) reports the status of surface water quality annually to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as required by Section 303(b) of the Clean Water Act. Reports summarize the water quality for each individual river reach sampled, the use attainment, and address any concerns with the quality of the water sampled.

The Rio Grande in the project area falls within Segment 2307 of the Rio Grande Basin, the "Rio Grande Below Riverside Diversion Dam," which extends "from the confluence of the Rio Conchos (Mexico) in Presidio County upstream to Riverside Diversion Dam in El Paso County." Specifically, this is Assessment Unit 2307_03 "From Little Box Canyon upstream to the Alamo Grade Structure." Designated uses for this stretch of the RGCP include contact recreation, fish consumption, public water supply, general use, and high aquatic life.

In 2024, Assessment Unit 2307_03 was listed as impaired for bacteria (Recreational Use), chloride, sulfate, and total dissolved solids (TCEQ 2024).

3.2.2.1 Water Quality – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, none of the action alternatives would be implemented and water quality would remain *status quo*. This alternative would have no impact on water quality.

3.2.2.2 Water Quality – Action Alternative

Construction in the floodplain and in the channel would increase the potential for erosion and sedimentation in the Rio Grande. However, contractors would be required to develop a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan (SPCCP) as well as acquiring all the necessary permits to comply with state and Federal regulations. Specific permits would include, but are not limited to, a stormwater protection permit and a water quality certification, which is issued by TCEQ. Sedimentation and introduction of contaminants would be reduced or eliminated by using BMPs, a SWPPP, and SPCCP measures. Work would be conducted during low flow, and any flows present during construction would be required to be diverted around active construction in the channel, using approve TCEQ diversion methods.

Under the action alternative, there may be short-term minor adverse impacts during and shortly following construction.

3.2.3 Waters of the U.S.

The USACE and EPA require mitigation for impacts on waters of the U.S., pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 404 and Rivers and Harbors Act, including wetlands, under 33 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and 40 CFR 230.

3.2.3.1 Waters of the U.S. – No Action Alternative

No impacts are anticipated from the No Action Alternative because there would be no development on or near waters of the U.S., including wetlands.

3.2.3.2 Waters of the U.S. – Action Alternative

The USIBWC would submit an application/Pre-Construction Notification (ENG Form 6082) to the USACE for fill of waters of the United States for bridge piles. However, the amount of fill will likely not change substantially from existing fill. USIBWC anticipates that this can be done under a Nationwide Permit 15. Additionally, USIBWC would apply for permits from U.S. Coast Guard for bridges in a navigable waterway; because the waterway here does not transport interstate or foreign commerce, the USIBWC would request that this action be exempted from a Coast Guard permit, pursuant to 23 CFR 650.805. As there are no wetlands

identified in the area, USIBWC does not anticipate adverse effects on Waters of the U.S for wetlands.

3.3 Cultural Resources

Cultural resources can include prehistoric or historic buildings, sites, districts, objects, or structures evaluated as significant (36 CFR 60; see also National Park Service [NPS] 1990:53). Also included in the definition are significant properties of traditional religious and cultural importance to an Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization (36 CFR 800 16[l][1]). This section describes the state of knowledge pertaining to cultural resources, including previously reported archaeological sites and historic resources, as well as previously conducted research in the Area of Potential Effect (APE) of the proposed alternatives.

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (Public Law 89-665; 54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq) establishes the Federal government's policy to administer federally owned or controlled historic properties in a spirit of stewardship. The NHPA Section 106 requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of their undertakings on historic properties, including National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and consult with State Historic Preservation Offices and tribes. Even though the code has changed, it is common terminology to use Section 106 for historical continuation. Requests for tribal comments were sent to tribes in January 2020 (Appendix A).

3.3.1 Previous Investigations

Records of previous investigations in the proximity are on file with the USIBWC and at the State of Texas Archeological Sites Atlas (Atlas) and can be accessed via the Texas Historical Commission, Texas Historic Sites Atlas. One previous investigation has been conducted within 1.0 mile of the proposed project alternatives. None of the project alternatives overlap the boundaries of this survey.

In 2004, Michael Baker Jr. Inc., under contract to the Department of Homeland Security, conducted an archaeological survey of 5.01 acres for the proposed location of a new Port of Entry (POE) (Atlas Number 8500015183). This consisted of a pedestrian survey for cultural resources, and no cultural resources were recorded (Matthews and Mooney 2005). The previous POE archeological survey area does not overlap the proposed Project location.

3.3.2 HABS/HAER

Historic American Buildings Survey and Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) documentation is through the Heritage Documentation Programs managed by the National Park Service, as authorized under the NHPA. HAER, a joint program of the National Park Service, Library of Congress, and engineering societies, documents America's engineering heritage, including bridges. Heritage records are archived in the Library of Congress and are completed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards & Guidelines for Architectural and Engineering Documentation (NPS 2026a). HAER documentation typically includes (NPS 2026b):

Level I: Outline report, large-format photos, measured/interpretive drawings.

Level II: Outline report, large-format photos, reproductions of existing plans.

Level III: Short report, large-format photos.

HAER documentation is critical because it provides the archival record of a bridge's design, construction, and historical context. Even if a bridge is demolished, HAER records ensure its engineering and historical significance is preserved for research, education, and future generations.

3.3.3 Cultural Resources – No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, no construction would occur and as a result, there would be no adverse impact on cultural resources.

3.3.4 Cultural Resources – Action Alternative

There is a low potential for archaeological sites to occur within the floodplain. The Action alternative likely will not have an adverse effect on archaeological sites.

The Action alternatives would have adverse impacts to architectural resources because it requires demolition of the U.S. portion of the bridge, which is eligible for listing in the NRHP. The existing historic boundary monument on the south side of the roadway (Figure 9) will be protected.

Demolition would have to be consulted with Texas Historical Commission (THC) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) as part of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). USIBWC is currently coordinating with these entities. USIBWC will ensure compliance with HABS/HAER to document the historic bridge, in compliance with the regulations noted in Section 3.3.1.2.

USIBWC's construction specifications include BMPs for procedures upon discovery of cultural resources during ground disturbing activities. The USIBWC Cultural Resources Specialist would consult with Texas State Historic Preservation Officer (TXSHPO) at THC, as determined necessary for each action. Before ground-disturbing maintenance work, a conference would be held with maintenance crews to inform them of the potential for disturbing subsurface cultural resources, and the procedures involved in the event that disturbance occurs. Precautions would be taken to ensure that archaeological assistance is promptly available in case of a discovery. In addition, at all spoil sites, crews would be on the lookout for possible cultural resources, they would stop work immediately if any cultural resource is found and would notify the USIBWC Environmental Management Division promptly. The USIBWC Cultural Resources Specialist would conduct surveys of any incompletely surveyed areas.



Figure 9 Existing historical monument at the international boundary

3.4 Soils

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey, one soil type is found at the project location: Belen, Glendale and Popotosa soils, 0 to 1 percent slopes, occasionally flooded (USDA 2025).

3.4.1 Soils – No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not impact soils at the project location.

3.4.2 Soils - Action Alternative

The Action Alternative would experience minor short-term impacts to soil resources. Short-term impacts are temporary adverse impacts resulting from soil disturbances due to site preparation and equipment usage. Soil disturbance could increase soil erosion during construction; however, USIBWC requires BMPs (see Section 4.0 *Mitigation Measures*) under all construction contracts to eliminate or reduce impacts from soil disturbance. A SWPPP would be prepared prior to construction, and BMPs (e.g., silt fence) outlined in the SWPPP would be implemented during construction. Implementation of BMPs would minimize adverse short-term impacts for the action alternative. Soil disturbances would recover due to the revegetation activities that are generally required in USIBWC construction contracts.

3.5 Community Resources/ Traffic and Access

Per TXDOT, in 2023 there were 92,488 vehicles and 1,940 pedestrians crossing northbound (TXDOT 2024). The report notes that vehicle crossings increased 25% between 2013 and 2023, while pedestrian crossings decreased 45% between 2013 and 2023. In 2015, there were 68,039 vehicles and 2,709 pedestrians that crossed in a northbound direction (TXDOT 2019). There are no tolls in either direction.

3.5.1 Traffic and Access – No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not impact community resources or affect traffic at the project location for the short term. However, if the bridge would have to eventually be shut down for safety reasons, traffic would be impacted by having to be diverted to the nearby bridge.

3.5.2 Traffic and Access – Action Alternative

Under the Action Alternative, community resources for traffic and access would be impacted. The exact impact and duration of bridge closure is currently not known. The USIBWC design contractor would be required to prepare a traffic control plan, and the contractor would determine whether the bridge can remain open during any portion of construction. Vehicular traffic would be impacted as construction would likely require a complete stoppage of vehicular traffic during most of the construction. USIBWC would prefer to keep pedestrian traffic during at least a portion of the construction for the longest duration feasible; however, pedestrian access for the bridge would likely also be adversely impacted for a portion of time, if not the entire time. This would have socioeconomic impacts to the local residents who depend on the bridge for daily movement across the border. The closest bridge for a detour is the Fabens-Tornillo bridge, approximately 25 miles north.

3.6 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts, and Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

A commitment of resources is irreversible when its direct or indirect impacts limit the future availability of a resource. The demolition of the historic bridge is irreversible; however, USIBWC would document the historic bridge via photo documentation as required by the National Park Service under HABS/HAER.

An irretrievable commitment refers to the use or consumption of resources that is neither renewable nor recoverable for later use by future generations. The commitment of resources refers primarily to the use of nonrenewable resources such as fossil fuels, water, labor, and electricity. The Action Alternative would use fuels, materials (concrete, rebar, steel), and water during construction. The Contractor would not be allowed to use water directly from the Rio Grande.

Unavoidable adverse impacts include minor short-term noise and air quality pollution that would be generated during the construction. The Action Alternatives does not pose substantial unavoidable adverse impacts or irretrievable commitments of resources.

4.0 MITIGATION MEASURES

While USIBWC does not anticipate significant impacts as a result of the Action Alternative, USIBWC has identified common measures that would be implemented to reduce any impacts and ensure that no resources are adversely harmed, including the following, which have been discussed in the previous sections.

USIBWC would require that construction contractors implement BMPs that are standard for USIBWC construction projects to minimize impacts to soil, water quality, wildlife, and other resources. BMPs include but are not limited to: erosion protection, avoidance measures, spill protection, dust abatement during construction, work during daytime hours, conducting construction work only during dry or low flow conditions (or, if necessary, diverting running water in the channel), servicing heavy machinery outside of the floodplain, and reporting unearthed cultural resources and other natural resources during construction. A SWPPP would be prepared prior to construction. USIBWC construction contracts, as a standard practice, require revegetation using certified weed free native seeds for disturbed areas. Additionally, for protection of birds, construction contractors will have timing restrictions to avoid impacts to nesting birds, and if ground disturbance must be conducted during breeding season, contractors would be required to survey for migratory birds.

Construction within the channel such as new bridge piers will have protection measures and appropriate permits such as Clean Water Act permits from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and state water quality certification. Additionally, the waterway would be required to be protected from debris during demolition and construction.

Archaeological surveys would be conducted at the preferred alternative sites if 100 percent of the site has not been surveyed. If not completed to date, USIBWC would complete Section 106 consultation for the preferred alternatives. USIBWC would consult with TXSHPO respectively, prior to implementation of the alternatives. HABS/HAER would be completed for the bridge demolition. USIBWC is working on a memorandum of agreement with historical regulatory entities.

5.0 STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

5.1 Cooperating Agencies

USIBWC invited the participation of Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT), General Services Administration (GSA), Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), and Department of the Army Fort Bliss, via formal letters dated February 17, 2026. TXDOT conducts bridge inspections, GSA owns the adjacent property for the Port of Entry, CBP operates the Port of Entry, and Fort Bliss manages the National Defense Area. GSA and TXDOT expressed informal interest in cooperating, and Fort Bliss acknowledged the request. GSA and TXDOT provided input on alternatives development. USIBWC provided GSA and TXDOT the internal draft for review.

5.2 Public involvement

The USIBWC anticipates publishing the Notice of Availability of this Draft Environmental Assessment in the Federal Register and making the EA available on the USIBWC website.

6.0 LIST OF PREPARERS AND REVIEWERS

Name	Title	Degree	Years' Experience	Contribution
Elizabeth Verdecchia	USIBWC, Natural Resources Specialist	M.A.G., Applied Geography, B.A., Environmental Science & Engineering; Geology	26	Principal Author
Mark Howe	USIBWC, Cultural Resources Specialist	M.A., History ALM, Anthropology B.A., History and Anthropology	30	Principal Author Cultural Resources; Review
Tamara Cortez	USIBWC, Civil Engineer	B.S. Civil Engineering M.S. Civil Engineering	10	Review
K.M. Dent	USIBWC, Legal Counsel	J.D., Law B.A. History	18	Review

7.0 LIST OF AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND PERSONS ON DISTRIBUTION LIST

List of Key Stakeholders	
Organizations & Other Entities	Local Congressional representatives USIBWC Upper Rio Grande Citizens Forum Board
Federal Government	General Services Administration (GSA) Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) U.S. Army Garrison Fort Bliss U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Albuquerque District U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
State/Local Government	Local municipalities Hudspeth County, Texas Texas Historical Commission Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept Texas Department of Transportation

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APPENDIX A
AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
UNITED STATES SECTION

April 1, 2026

Michael Warriner
Supervisory Fish & Wildlife Biologist
Listing and Recovery Branch Supervisor
Austin Ecological Services Field Office
1505 Ferguson Ln
Austin, TX 78711-2276
esaustininfo@fws.gov

Subject: Reconstruction of the Fort Hancock – El Porvenir International Bridge, Hudspeth County Texas

Dear Mr. Warriner:

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) is conducting an environmental assessment for the reconstruction of the Fort Hancock – El Porvenir International Bridge in Hudspeth County, Texas to address safety concerns for the existing timber bridge constructed in the 1930s. As Mexico has previously made major repairs on the Mexican side of the bridge, USIBWC's preferred alternative will re-construct the U.S. side only, in the same location (no new footprint) and to the same profile. The new U.S. side segment will tie-in to the Mexican deck of the bridge. Another alternative could have construction of the entire bridge in a slightly downstream location and reconnect to the port of entry on both sides of the border. The timeline for design and construction is unknown and will be subject to availability of funds. Figure 1 shows the vicinity area, and Figure 2 shows the bridge area and port of entry.

Attached is the official species list for the area from March 31, 2026 (Project Code: 2026-0069936), attached. USIBWC regularly mows the floodplain in this area to maintain flood capacity of the Rio Grande Rectification Project. The area is now part of a National Defense Area managed by Fort Bliss. The area is highly disturbed with substantial vehicular activity, as federal and state law enforcement and military personnel are present and conducting patrols. Most of this stretch includes the presence of non-USIBWC border security structures such as CBP lights, signage, and a border barrier built nearly two decades ago. Because of the ongoing activity, much of this area is currently devoid of habitat (Figure 3).

Construction within the channel such as new bridge piers will have protection measures and appropriate permits such as Clean Water Act permits from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and state water quality certification. Construction contractors will be required to perform standard best management practices for water quality, wetlands, and wildlife protection. Standard measures will include erosion protection, diverting running water, avoidance measures, spill protection, and surveying for migratory birds if ground disturbance is conducted during breeding season. Contractor will also be required to reseed any disturbed areas with certified weed free native seeds. Additionally, the waterway would be required to be protected from debris during demolition and construction.

The USIBWC has made a No Effects determination for all species listed in the IPaC: Northern Aplomado Falcon, Piping Plover, Rufa Red Knot, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Yellow-billed cuckoo, and Monarch butterfly.

USIBWC believes that this No Effect determination complies with Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. USIBWC would appreciate your acknowledgement of and concurrence with this No Effects determination. The USIBWC also invites your comments on the project scope for inclusion in the environmental assessment.

If you have questions, please contact Ms. Elizabeth Verdecchia, Natural Resources Specialist, at (915) 832-4701 or by email at Elizabeth.Verdecchia@ibwc.gov.

Sincerely,



Gilbert G. Anaya, Ph.D.
Division Chief
Environmental Management Division

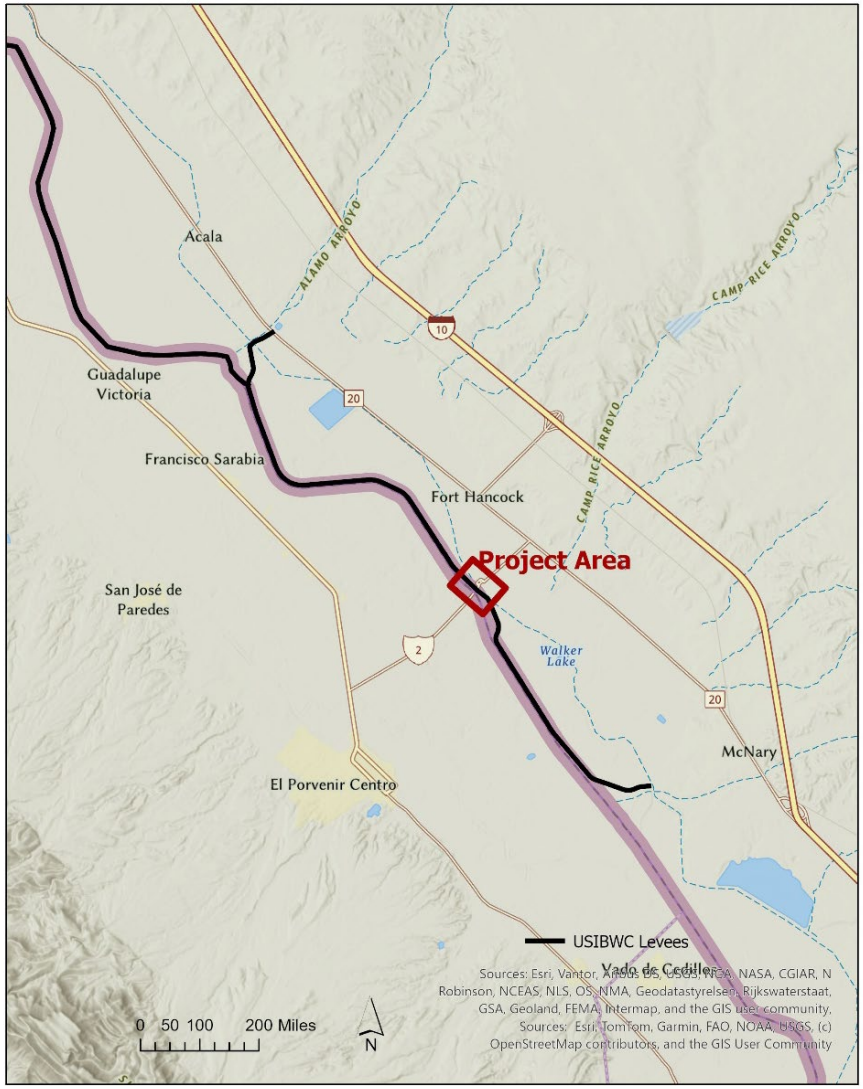


Figure 1. Vicinity Map

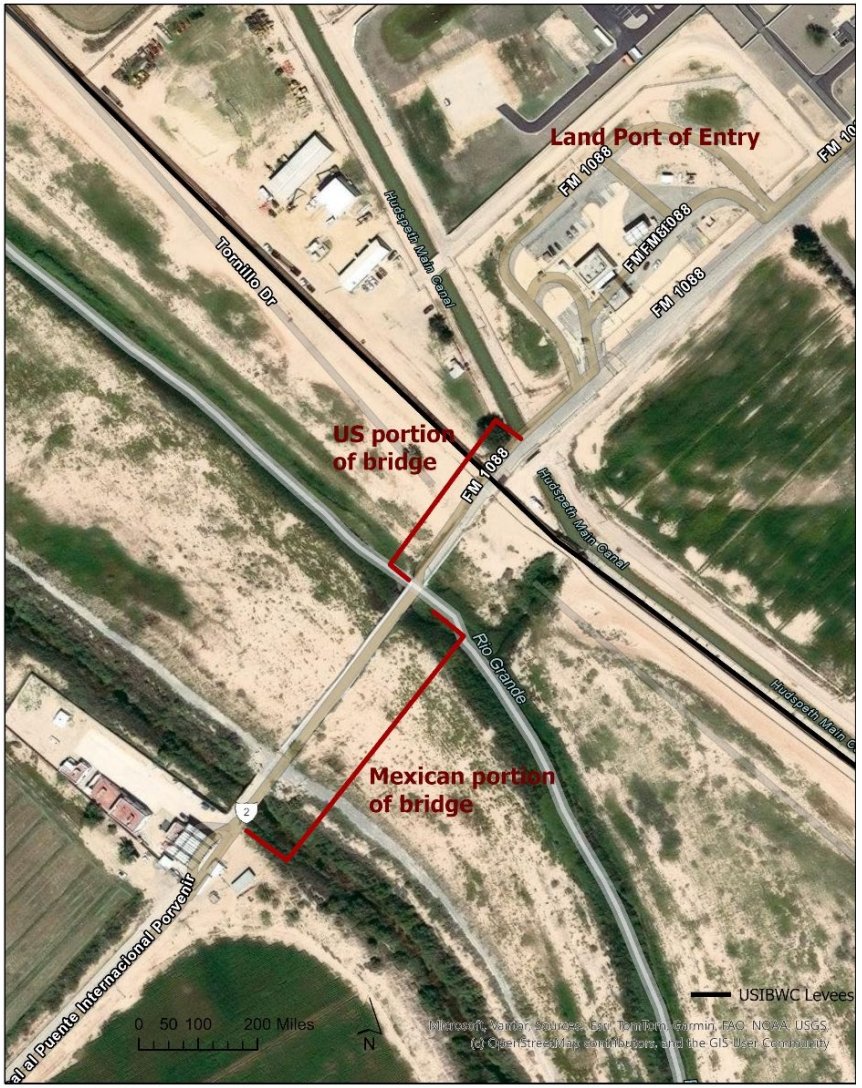


Figure 2. For Hancock – El Porvenir Bridge Project area



Figure 3. U.S. floodplain at Fort Hancock Bridge, Dember 2023

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Austin Ecological Services Field Office
1505 Ferguson Lane
Austin, TX 78754-4501
Phone: (512) 937-7371

In Reply Refer To: 03/31/2026 15:04:27 UTC
Project Code: 2026-0069936
Project Name: Fort Hancock Bridge Reconstruction

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat, that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and/or may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Please feel free to contact us if you need more current information or assistance regarding the potential impacts to federally proposed, listed, and candidate species and federally designated and proposed critical habitat. Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. This verification can be completed formally or informally as desired. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through the IPaC system by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend may be conserved. Under sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 *et seq.*), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat.

A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological

evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.

If a Federal agency determines, based on the Biological Assessment or biological evaluation, that listed species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed project, the agency is required to consult with the Service pursuant to 50 CFR 402. In addition, the Service recommends that candidate species, proposed species and proposed critical habitat be addressed within the consultation. More information on the regulations and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in the "Endangered Species Consultation Handbook" at: https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/endangered-species-consultation-handbook.pdf

Migratory Birds: In addition to responsibilities to protect threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), there are additional responsibilities under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) to protect native birds from project-related impacts. Any activity resulting in take of migratory birds, including eagles, is prohibited unless otherwise permitted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)). For more information regarding these Acts see https://www.fws.gov/program/migratory-bird-permit/what-we-do.

It is the responsibility of the project proponent to comply with these Acts by identifying potential impacts to migratory birds and eagles within applicable NEPA documents (when there is a federal nexus) or a Bird/Eagle Conservation Plan (when there is no federal nexus). Proponents should implement conservation measures to avoid or minimize the production of project-related stressors or minimize the exposure of birds and their resources to the project-related stressors. For more information on avian stressors and recommended conservation measures see https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/threats-birds.

In addition to MBTA and BGEPA, Executive Order 13186: *Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds*, obligates all Federal agencies that engage in or authorize activities that might affect migratory birds, to minimize those effects and encourage conservation measures that will improve bird populations. Executive Order 13186 provides for the protection of both migratory birds and migratory bird habitat. For information regarding the implementation of Executive Order 13186, please visit https://www.fws.gov/partner/council-conservation-migratory-birds.

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. The Service encourages Federal agencies to include conservation of threatened and endangered species into their project planning to further the purposes of the Act. Please include the Consultation Code in the header of this letter with any request for consultation or correspondence about your project that you submit to our office.

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List

OFFICIAL SPECIES LIST

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

Austin Ecological Services Field Office
1505 Ferguson Lane
Austin, TX 78754-4501
(512) 937-7371

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Code: 2026-0069936
Project Name: Fort Hancock Bridge Reconstruction
Project Type: Bridge - Replacement
Project Description: USIBWC is conducting an environmental assessment for reconstruction of the Fort Hancock- El Porvenir International Bridge in Hudspeth County, Texas to address safety concerns for the existing timber bridge constructed in the 1930s. The preferred alternative will re-construct the U.S. side only and will be in the same location with no new footprint and will be constructed to the same profile. Another alternative could have construction in a slightly downstream location and reconnect to the port of entry. USIBWC will obtain required permits from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Construction contractors will be required to perform standard best management practices for water quality and wildlife protection, including surveying for migratory birds if ground disturbance is conducted during breeding season. Construction timeline is unknown.

Project Location:

The approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: https://www.google.com/maps/@31.27275795,-105.85493504706585,14z



Counties: Hudspeth County, Texas

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT SPECIES

There is a total of 6 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species. Note that 2 of these species should be considered only under certain conditions.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries[1], as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

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1. NOAA Fisheries, also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

BIRDS

NAME	STATUS
Northern Aplomado Falcon *Falco femoralis septentrionalis* Population: Wherever found, except where listed as an experimental population No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1923	Endangered
Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus* Population: [Atlantic Coast and Northern Great Plains populations] - Wherever found, except those areas where listed as endangered. There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. This species only needs to be considered under the following conditions: ▪ Wind Energy Projects Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6039	Threatened
Rufa Red Knot *Calidris canutus rufa* There is **proposed** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. This species only needs to be considered under the following conditions: ▪ Wind Energy Projects Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1864	Threatened
Southwestern Willow Flycatcher *Empidonax traillii extimus* There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6749	Endangered
Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus* Population: Western U.S. DPS There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3911	Threatened

INSECTS

NAME	STATUS
Monarch Butterfly *Danaus plexippus* There is **proposed** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743	Proposed Threatened

CRITICAL HABITATS

THERE ARE NO CRITICAL HABITATS WITHIN YOUR PROJECT AREA UNDER THIS OFFICE'S JURISDICTION.

YOU ARE STILL REQUIRED TO DETERMINE IF YOUR PROJECT(S) MAY HAVE EFFECTS ON ALL ABOVE LISTED SPECIES.

IPAC USER CONTACT INFORMATION

Agency: International Boundary and Water Commission
Name: Elizabeth Verdecchia
Address: 4191 N Mesa
City: El Paso
State: TX
Zip: 79902
Email elizabeth.verdecchia@ibwc.gov
Phone: 9158324701

From: Williams, Christina
To: Elizabeth Verdecchia
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] FW: EMD Letter USFWS No Effects Fort Hancock Bridge reconstruction
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2026 7:40:16 AM

Elizabeth,

The Service does not provide concurrences for no effect determinations. We recommend you keep the documentation with your records in case of inquiry.

Thank you,

Christina

Christina Williams
Supervisor Consultations and HCPs
Austin Ecological Services Field Office
1505 Ferguson Lane
Austin, Texas 78754
512-850-0980

Mission: Work with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

From: Elizabeth Verdecchia <elizabeth.verdecchia@ibwc.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2026 1:47 PM
To: Williams, Christina <christina_williams@fws.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: EMD Letter USFWS No Effects Fort Hancock Bridge reconstruction

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hello Christina,
Attached is a letter on a No Effects determination, for which we received no response, so I found your email address on the website for Section 7 consultations. Is the Austin Ecological Services providing acknowledgement letters for No Effects determinations?

Thank you
Liz

Elizabeth Verdecchia

Natural Resources Specialist
U.S. Section, International Boundary and Water Commission
915-832-4701

From: Jessica Rodriguez <jessica.rodriguez@ibwc.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, April 1, 2026 3:39 PM
To: esaustininfo@fws.gov
Cc: Gilbert Anaya <gilbert.anaya@ibwc.gov>; Mark Howe <mark.howe@ibwc.gov>; Elizabeth Verdecchia <elizabeth.verdecchia@ibwc.gov>
Subject: EMD Letter USFWS No Effects Fort Hancock Bridge reconstruction

Good Afternoon Mr. Warriner,
Attached is a letter for you on the Reconstruction of the Fort Hancock – El Porvenir International Bridge, Hudspeth County Texas.

Thanks

V/R,
Jessica Rodriguez
Secretary
Environmental Management Division
IBWC, U.S. Section Headquarters
(915) 832-4152

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
The information contained in this electronic message and any attachment(s) to this message are intended for the exclusive use of the addressee(s) and may contain confidential or privileged information. You are hereby notified that any unauthorized use, disclosure, and/or distribution of the information is strictly prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient of this e-mail, you are prohibited from sharing, copying, or otherwise using or disclosing its contents. If you receive this email in error, please notify the sender immediately by reply email and permanently destroy along with any attachments without reading, forwarding, saving or disclosing them.

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
UNITED STATES SECTION

April 7, 2026

Mr. Joseph Bell, Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer
Texas Historical Commission
C/O Drew Sitters
Project Review Archeologist
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, TX 78711-2276

Subject: IBWC Fort Hancock Bridge near Fort Hancock, Hudspeth County, Texas for a new bridge / rebuild or demolition.

Dear Mr. Bell:

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) is evaluating several alternatives regarding the IBWC Fort Hancock Bridge in Hudspeth County, Texas. These alternatives include an in-place rebuild, construction of a new bridge, and/or demolition and removal of the existing structure.

The bridge extends 510 feet (.1 mile) across and along the international border with Mexico southwest of Fort Hancock, Texas and west of Highway 20 on Farm to Market Road (FM) 1088 **(Figure 1)**. Plans are for either a new bridge to the south of the old one, rebuilding in place or abandonment. This is to be constructed before the closure and possible demolition of this original Rectification Project, "New Deal" 1930s bridge. The Area of Potential Effects (APE) includes the bridge and portion of the levee east of the footprint on the United States side of the border.

The IBWC Rectification Project (U.S. and Mexico) was completed from 1934 to 1938 and straightened the U.S. – Mexico Rio Grande border to its present location. This project involved constructing a rectified channel, new levees, and several international bridges. The Fort Hancock Bridge crosses the Rio Grande and the international border within this rectified channel, as shown in Figure 1.

Fort Hancock Bridge was completed from late 1936 to 1937 as one of three toll-free bridges across the Rio Grande. Known historically as the Fort Hancock – El Porvenir bridge, it was the first of the three to be constructed and is the last "New Deal" bridge of Rectification Project remaining.

No archeological sites are located within the location of the bridge APE **(Figure 2)**. Although the bridge is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), it is not currently listed and has not been architecturally recorded in the Texas Site Atlas of the Texas Historical Commission (THC). IBWC will start the Historic American Buildings Survey / Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) paperwork for this project in-house. A Memorandum of Agreement

(MOA) will be written as to what is required for HABS/HAER and an historical study is to be completed before a new bridge, rebuild or demolition is finalized. This MOA will be with THC and under consultation advisement of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) since this will be an Adverse Effect (AE) for this undertaking on a historic structure. This AE will require ACHP consultation under 36 CFR 800.6(a)(1) with documentation outlined in 36 CFR 800.11(e).

The Fort Hancock bridge is past its life expectancy and has been previously closed by TXDOT until structural issues on the U.S. side of the bridge were addressed **(Figure 3)**. Structural issues to the bridge on the U.S. side have occurred over the past several years and were repaired before reopening. Mexico has previously refurbished its portion of the bridge to meet Mexican safety standards.

USIBWC is only responsible for the U.S. portion of the Fort Hancock bridge. USIBWC is currently preparing an Environmental Analysis (EA) for this project and has identified five (5) alternatives.

1. Alternative A – No Action.
2. Alternative B – U.S. Side Rebuild to Same Profile (Preferred Alternative).
3. Alternative C – Rebuild Entire Bridge Same Location.
4. Alternative D – Rebuild Entire Bridge Downstream and Demo Original Bridge.
5. Alternative E – Rebuild Entire Bridge Downstream and leave original bridge in place (no demo).

Currently, Alternative B is the preferred course for the USIBWC, pending available funding and concurrence from the Mexican Section of the IBWC.

The USIBWC requests your concurrence for this adverse effect determination to begin the process necessary for HABS/HAER documentation, historical report and possible MOA. If you have questions, please contact Mr. Mark Howe, Cultural Resources Specialist, at (915) 832-4767 or by email at mark.howe@ibwc.gov.

Sincerely,

Gilbert G. Anaya, Ph.D.
Division Chief
Environmental Management Division

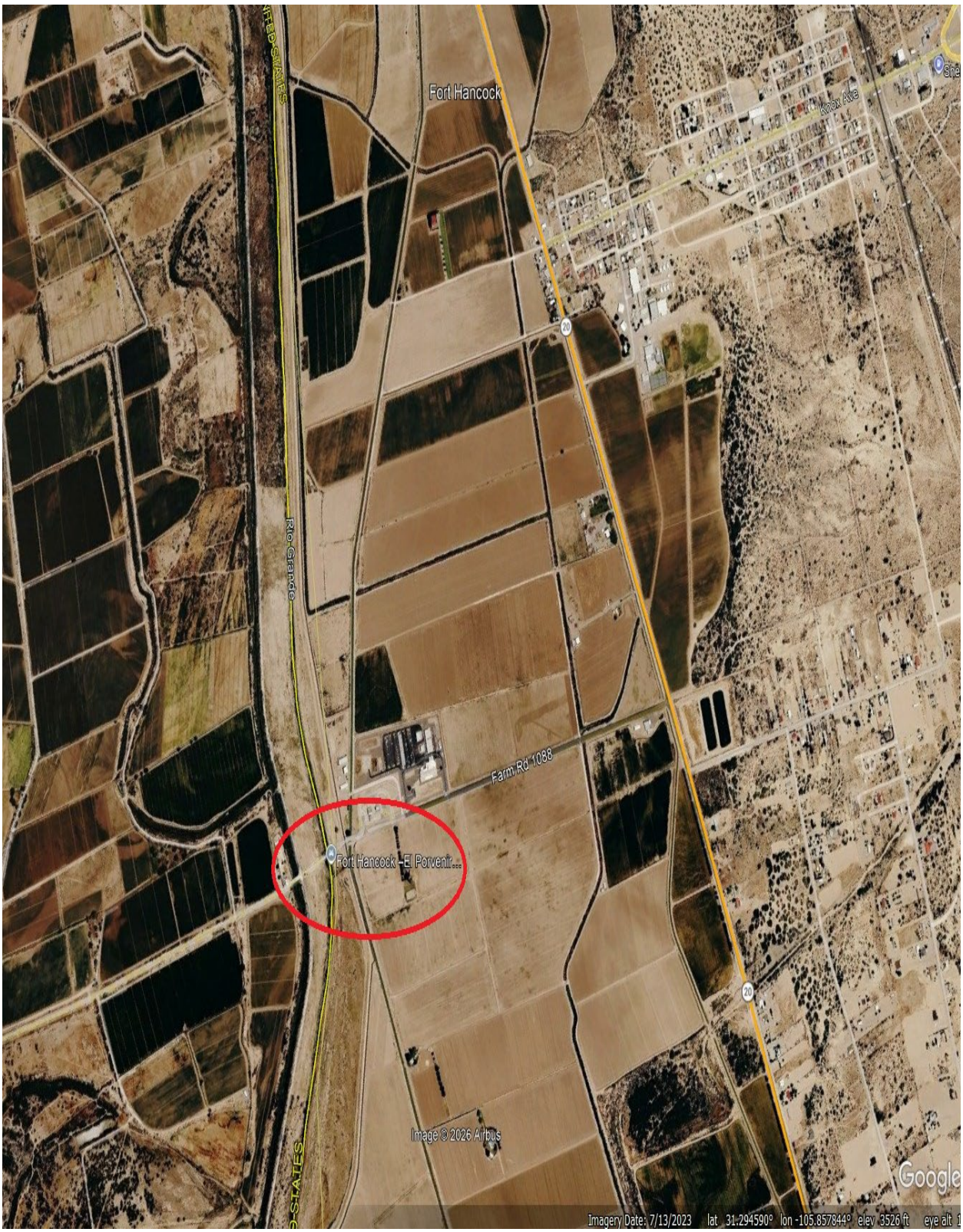


Figure 1: Red circle is location of Fort Hancock Bridge.

Fort Hancock Bridge



Figure 2: THC Map of Sites in Vicinity of Fort Hancock Bridge.



Figure 3 – Fort Hancock Bridge

Mark Howe

From: noreply@thc.state.tx.us
Sent: Thursday, May 7, 2026 9:22 AM
To: Mark Howe; reviews@thc.state.tx.us; Mark Howe
Subject: Fort Hancock Bridge Demo

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories

Re: Project Review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act
THC Tracking #202608746
Date: 05/07/2026
Fort Hancock Bridge Demo
Fort Hancock / Rio Grande
Fort Hancock,TX 79839

Description: Initial Consultation on alternatives for replacement of Fort Hancock Bridge.

Dear Mark Howe:
Thank you for your submittal regarding the above-referenced project. This response represents the comments of the State Historic Preservation Officer, the Executive Director of the Texas Historical Commission (THC), pursuant to review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The review staff, led by Amy Borgens, Caitlin Brashear, Drew Sitters and Patrick Bassett, has completed its review and has made the following determinations based on the information submitted for review:

Above-Ground Resources

- Property/properties are eligible for listing or already listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Adverse effects on historic properties.
- THC/SHPO concurs with information provided.

We have the following comments: Should the undertaking involve ground disturbances extending below and beyond previously disturbed soils, an archaeological survey will be required. Regarding above-ground resources, the History Programs Division review staff led by Caitlin Brashear concurs that the Fort Hancock Bridge is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Texas Historical Commission Division of Architecture review staff, led by Patrick Bassett, concurs that this will be an adverse effect. We look forward to continuing consultation on this project as it progresses, as described in this submission.

We look forward to further consultation with your office and hope to maintain a partnership that will foster effective historic preservation. Thank you for your cooperation in this review process, and for your efforts to preserve the irreplaceable heritage of Texas. If the project changes, or if new historic properties are found, please contact the review staff. If you have any questions concerning our review or if we can be of further assistance, please email the following reviewers: amy.borgens@thc.texas.gov, caitlin.brashear@thc.texas.gov, drew.sitters@thc.texas.gov, patrick.bassett@thc.texas.gov.

This response has been sent through the electronic THC review and compliance system (eTRAC). Submitting your project via eTRAC eliminates mailing delays and allows you to check the status of the review, receive an electronic response, and generate reports on your submissions. For more information, visit http://thc.texas.gov/etrac-system.

Sincerely,

Patrick Bassett

for Joseph Bell, State Historic Preservation Officer
Executive Director, Texas Historical Commission

Please do not respond to this email.

cc: mark.howe@ibwc.gov

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
UNITED STATES SECTION

February 17, 2026

Paul Enriquez
Director, Infrastructure Portfolio
United States Border Patrol Headquarters
Program Management Office Directorate
c/o ERICA.D.STEWART@cbp.dhs.gov

Re: Invitation to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the Fort Hancock-El Porvenir International Bridge Reconstruction Environmental Assessment

Dear Mr. Enriquez:

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States Section (USIBWC) invites U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) to participate as a cooperating agency in USIBWC's preparation of the Fort Hancock-El Porvenir International Bridge Reconstruction Environmental Assessment (EA). Pursuant to Section 107 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), cooperating agencies have jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposal. The EA will evaluate environmental effects for the proposed action to reconstruct the Fort Hancock-El Porvenir International Bridge in Hudspeth County, Texas.

The Fort Hancock-El Porvenir International Bridge, constructed in 1937, is a narrow two-lane bridge that crosses the Rio Grande and connects Fort Hancock, Texas to El Porvenir, Mexico. The bridge with a timber pile substructure and thin concrete deck is rapidly deteriorating. Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) conducts annual inspections of the bridge and has rated the timber substructure condition as "critical." USIBWC implemented a closure of the bridge to vehicular traffic from February 2021 to February 2022 to facilitate temporary stabilization measures on the U.S. side Bent 5 and reopened the bridge to vehicular traffic in February 2022; USIBWC also replaced timber posts in August 2022 to address 2022 inspections concerns. The bridge remains open to vehicular and pedestrian traffic but recent inspections still rate the bridge in critical condition.

In 2007, Mexico reinforced the bridge and replaced the bridge deck on the Mexican side. Therefore, the USIBWC proposes to reconstruct the U.S. side of the bridge. The Environmental Assessment will consider the No Action Alternative and the Preferred Alternative to reconstruct the U.S. side within the existing alignment that will tie into the reconstructed deck of the Mexican side. The EA may also consider a third alternative to reconstruct the entire bridge under a new alignment under cooperation with Mexico.

The USIBWC is also inviting TXDOT, Department of the Army – Fort Bliss, and General Services Administration (GSA) to be cooperating agencies. CBP operates the Port of Entry in Fort Hancock, with buildings owned by GSA. The bridge is located within the National Defense Area operated by Fort Bliss.

To meet NEPA statutory deadlines, USIBWC proposes to conduct the EA with in-house staff, with a target completion of a preliminary draft by the end of May 2026. Please respond to this invitation to participate as a cooperating agency by March 1, 2026. Our point of contact for this effort will be Mrs. Elizabeth Verdecchia. She can be reached at (915) 832-4701 or Elizabeth.verdecchia@ibwc.gov.

Sincerely,



Gilbert G. Anaya, Ph.D.
Division Chief
Environmental Management Division

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
UNITED STATES SECTION

February 17, 2026

Mr. Shane P. Offutt
Environmental Division Chief
Directorate of Public Works
Environmental Division
Building 624, Taylor Rd.
USAG Fort Bliss TX 79916
shane.p.offutt2.civ@army.mil

Re: Invitation to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the Fort Hancock-El Porvenir International Bridge Reconstruction Environmental Assessment

Dear Mr. Offutt:

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States Section (USIBWC) invites The Department of the Army – Fort Bliss to participate as a cooperating agency in USIBWC's preparation of the Fort Hancock-El Porvenir International Bridge Reconstruction Environmental Assessment (EA). Pursuant to Section 107 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), cooperating agencies have jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposal. The EA will evaluate environmental effects for the proposed action to reconstruct the Fort Hancock-El Porvenir International Bridge in Hudspeth County, Texas. The bridge is located within the National Defense Area operated by Fort Bliss.

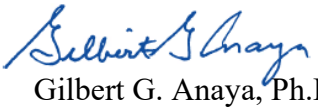
The Fort Hancock-El Porvenir International Bridge, constructed in 1937, is a narrow two-lane bridge that crosses the Rio Grande and connects Fort Hancock, Texas to El Porvenir, Mexico. The bridge with a timber pile substructure and thin concrete deck is rapidly deteriorating. Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) conducts annual inspections of the bridge and has rated the timber substructure condition as "critical." USIBWC implemented a closure of the bridge to vehicular traffic from February 2021 to February 2022 to facilitate temporary stabilization measures on the U.S. side Bent 5 and reopened the bridge to vehicular traffic in February 2022; USIBWC also replaced timber posts in August 2022 to address 2022 inspections concerns. The bridge remains open to vehicular and pedestrian traffic but recent inspections still rate the bridge in critical condition.

In 2007, Mexico reinforced the bridge and replaced the bridge deck on the Mexican side. Therefore, the USIBWC proposes to reconstruct the U.S. side of the bridge. The Environmental Assessment will consider the No Action Alternative and the Preferred Alternative to reconstruct the U.S. side within the existing alignment that will tie into the reconstructed deck of the Mexican side. The EA may also consider a third alternative to reconstruct the entire bridge under a new alignment under cooperation with Mexico.

The USIBWC is also inviting TXDOT U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and General Services Administration (GSA) to be cooperating agencies. CBP operates the Port of Entry in Fort Hancock, with buildings owned by GSA.

To meet NEPA statutory deadlines, USIBWC proposes to conduct the EA with in-house staff, with a target completion of a preliminary draft by the end of May 2026. Please respond to this invitation to participate as a cooperating agency by March 1, 2026. Our point of contact for this effort will be Mrs. Elizabeth Verdecchia. She can be reached at (915) 832-4701 or Elizabeth.verdecchia@ibwc.gov.

Sincerely,



Gilbert G. Anaya, Ph.D.
Division Chief
Environmental Management Division

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
UNITED STATES SECTION

February 17, 2026

Karla Carmichael
NEPA Program Manager (7PMC)
GSA Region 7
Public Buildings Service
karla.carmichael@gsa.gov

Re: Invitation to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the Fort Hancock-El Porvenir International Bridge Reconstruction Environmental Assessment

Dear Ms. Carmichael:

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States Section (USIBWC) invites General Services Administration (GSA) to participate as a cooperating agency in USIBWC's preparation of the Fort Hancock-El Porvenir International Bridge Reconstruction Environmental Assessment (EA). Pursuant to Section 107 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), cooperating agencies have jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposal. The EA will evaluate environmental effects for the proposed action to reconstruct the Fort Hancock-El Porvenir International Bridge in Hudspeth County, Texas.

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The USIBWC is also inviting TXDOT, Department of the Army – Fort Bliss, and U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) to be cooperating agencies. CBP operates the Port of Entry in Fort Hancock, with buildings owned by GSA. The bridge is located within the National Defense Area operated by Fort Bliss.

To meet NEPA statutory deadlines, USIBWC proposes to conduct the EA with in-house staff, with a target completion of a preliminary draft by the end of May 2026. Please respond to this invitation to participate as a cooperating agency by March 1, 2026. Our point of contact for this effort will be Mrs. Elizabeth Verdecchia. She can be reached at (915) 832-4701 or Elizabeth.verdecchia@ibwc.gov.

Sincerely,



Gilbert G. Anaya, Ph.D.
Division Chief
Environmental Management Division

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
UNITED STATES SECTION

February 17, 2026

Zilthai O. Soto, P.E.
El Paso District
Texas Department of Transportation
Bridge & Survey Office Supervisor
13301 Gateway Blvd. West, El Paso TX 79928
Zilthai.Soto@txdot.gov

Re: Invitation to participate as a Cooperating Agency in the Fort Hancock-El Porvenir International Bridge Reconstruction Environmental Assessment

Dear TXDOT:

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States Section (USIBWC) invites your agency the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) to participate as a cooperating agency in USIBWC's preparation of the Fort Hancock-El Porvenir International Bridge Reconstruction Environmental Assessment (EA). Pursuant to Section 107 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), cooperating agencies have jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposal. The EA will evaluate environmental effects for the proposed action to reconstruct the Fort Hancock-El Porvenir International Bridge in Hudspeth County, Texas.

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The USIBWC is also inviting U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Fort Bliss, and General Services Administration (GSA) to be cooperating agencies. CBP operates the Port of Entry in Fort Hancock, with buildings owned by GSA. The bridge is located within the National Defense Area operated by Department of the Army-Fort Bliss.

To meet NEPA statutory deadlines, USIBWC proposes to conduct the EA with in-house staff, with a target completion of a preliminary draft by the end of May 2026. Please respond on this invitation to participate as a cooperating agency by March 1, 2026. Our point of contact for this effort will be Mrs. Elizabeth Verdecchia. She can be reached at (915) 832-4701 or Elizabeth.verdecchia@ibwc.gov.

Sincerely,



Gilbert G. Anaya, Ph.D.
Division Chief
Environmental Management Division