



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
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RIO GRANDE LEVEES AT RISK IN PRESIDIO, TEXAS

The U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) advises that Rio Grande flood control levees in Presidio County, Texas could fail or be overtopped as flooding worsens in the region. Based on this information, Presidio County officials on September 14 ordered the evacuation of U.S. residents who could be affected. The U.S. levee system is designed to provide protection against a 25-year frequency flood and expected flood flows could exceed this capacity.

The USIBWC operates and maintains 15 miles of Rio Grande flood control levees in the Presidio area, providing protection to 5403 acres of land on the United States side of the Presidio-Ojinaga Valley. Companion levees provide protection to the Mexican side. The U.S. levees range in height from 6 to 14 feet and protect the river reach between Haciendita and Alamito Creek.

Since late August, flood conditions have existed on the Conchos River, a Mexican tributary that flows into the Rio Grande at Presidio, Texas-Ojinaga, Chihuahua. Mexican dams on the Conchos River are full and spilling floodwaters. These flows have created flood conditions in the Rio Grande. USIBWC crews have been in active flood fight operations since September 5, conducting regular levee patrols, using heavy equipment and sandbags to repair levee seepage as needed. An additional crew of 14 was deployed from other USIBWC offices to assist. The USIBWC has also been coordinating closely with Mexican officials regarding flows and dam releases on the Conchos River.

Based on information received from Mexico on September 14 regarding increased discharge from Luis Leon Dam on the Conchos River, the dam closest to the Rio Grande, the USIBWC determined that the resulting flows could cause a failure of the U.S. levee. Luis Leon Dam is experiencing heavy inflow and storage is rapidly approaching the top of flood control capacity. The USIBWC will continue to monitor the levees and conduct any flood fighting operations that can be accomplished without jeopardizing safety.

Residents concerned about Rio Grande conditions should continue to monitor National Weather Service forecasts and any announcements from local emergency managers.

For more information:

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