



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
November 20, 2007

COLORADO RIVER ISSUES ON AGENDA FOR DECEMBER 3 PUBLIC MEETING IN YUMA, ARIZONA

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) will conduct its fourth Colorado River Citizens' Forum (CRCF) meeting for 2007 on Monday, December 3. The USIBWC established the CRCF in 2003 as a means of elevating the community's awareness concerning Commission issues and plans. The public meeting is scheduled for 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. (MST) at the Yuma Palms Regional Center Community Room, 1305 S. Yuma Palms Parkway, Yuma, Arizona.

On the agenda for the meeting, Francisco Zamora of the Sonoran Institute will discuss restoration activities for the Colorado River Delta in Mexico. Protection and restoration of the Colorado River Delta has reached a critical juncture. The Delta acts as a vital habitat for over 400,000 migratory birds and delivers freshwater to near-shore marine environments in the Upper Gulf of California. Zamora will discuss the results of community-based restoration efforts implemented in the last five years and elaborate on the general goals and initiatives to expand restoration actions in the next five years.

A project to improve the operation of the Morelos Diversion Dam and the conveyance of flood flows through the international boundary segment of the Colorado River is under USIBWC consideration and will be discussed at the meeting. The dam has lost functionality through sediment build-up and requires sediment removal around the spillway. The loss of vegetation as part of the clearing would be mitigated through re-vegetation of native species, both on and offsite. The USIBWC is in the process of applying for permits to carry out the project.

An update on the Hunter's Hole Pilot Restoration Project will also be made during the CRCF. The plan, which has received widespread support from governmental agencies, local law enforcement, and environmental groups, addresses border security and environmental issues through a pilot project in the Colorado River

boundary segment. The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area has secured a grant from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to install two groundwater pumps to irrigate the project and has applied for a grant from the Walton Family Foundation to proceed with full design, permitting, and collaboration with a group planning companion restoration efforts on the Mexican side of the border. Due to concerns that the proposed border fence would cut off Hunter's Hole from the U.S. side, local officials have requested that the fence be delayed so that these concerns can be addressed.

In other business, the Imperial Irrigation District will give a status report on the All-American Canal lining, a water conservation project currently being constructed. Cindy Hoeft of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation will present an update on the Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lakes Powell and Mead; the Bureau has been analyzing alternatives to manage shortage conditions due to drought in the Colorado River basin. Bill Plummer of the Yuma Mesa Irrigation and Drainage District will provide an update on planned transboundary utility and infrastructure crossings in the Yuma area.

The Colorado River Citizens' Forum Board is comprised of 11 residents of Yuma County, Arizona and Imperial County, California who represent diverse interests in the region. The board conducts quarterly public meetings in the area.

A complete meeting agenda is attached. Members of the public who would like more information about the meeting can contact the USIBWC's Yuma Office at (928) 782-1598 or Public Affairs Officer Sally Spener at (915) 832-4175 or via email at sallyspener@ibwc.state.gov.

For more information:

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COLORADO RIVER CITIZENS' FORUM
Monday, December 3, 2007
4:00 – 6:00 P.M. MST
Yuma Palms Regional Center Community Room
1305 S. Yuma Palms Parkway
Yuma, Arizona

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions – Al Goff, USIBWC, Citizens' Forum Co-Chair
- Restoration Activities in the Colorado River in Mexico – Francisco Zamora, Director Legacy Program, Colorado River Delta and Upper Gulf of California, Sonoran Institute
- Morelos Dam Sediment Removal Project – Sally Spener, Public Affairs Officer, USIBWC
- Project Updates and Status Reports
 - Hunter's Hole Pilot Restoration Project – Kevin Eatherly, Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area
 - All-American Canal Lining Project – Imperial Irrigation District
 - Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lakes Powell and Mead – Cindy Hoeft, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Yuma Area Office
 - Proliferation of Utilities in the Yuma Area – Bill Plummer, Manager, Yuma Mesa Irrigation and Drainage District
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion
- Suggested Future Agenda Items

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time.

For more information, call 928-782-1598 or e-mail sallyspener@ibwc.state.gov.