

Binational Rio Grande Summit



Cooperation for a Better Future

Cooperación para un Futuro Mejor

Cumbre Binacional del Río Bravo

RECOMMENDATIONS

WORK GROUP ON ENVIRONMENT AND WATER QUALITY

BINATIONAL RIO GRANDE SUMMIT

NOV. 17-18, 2005

Topic: Water Quality, Water for the Environment, Climate Change

Recommendations from the breakout session:

- Continue with the binational water quality monitoring program.
- Strengthen water quality monitoring, both financially and technically.
- Adopt in Mexico a program like the Clean Rivers Program that is currently undertaken in the United States.
- Achieve certification of the Mexican laboratories
- Develop binational water quality databases
- Reduce sources of contamination such as dumps that are found along the river. IBWC should advance recommendations on landfill and borrow pit siting near the river. This is consistent with a binational buffer whereby the potentially polluting activities would be restricted or regulated along the river.
- Calculate the amount of water needed for ecosystems. Incorporate this into planning for water uses. Recognize ecosystems as a water user by means of an IBWC minute. Review the laws that favor protection of the aquatic biota as a water user.
- Advise the Commission about impacts of climate change on the legal framework
- Protect wetlands (very important areas.) Binational agreement for protection of wetlands. Establish areas of work.
- C N A should develop studies on aquifers in the basin and share the results with IBWC.
- Open a discussion forum to evaluate the possible future scenarios for water scarcity.

Topic: Forest Management

Recommendations from the breakout session:

- Explore the possibility of applying the programs developed by CONAFOR on the border.
- Establish as an important strategy the creation of an environmental services market.
- Create a program of environmental services payments by the border cities.
- Undertake a diagnosis of the health of the ecosystems of the basin and of their impact in the recovery of water as well as soil stabilization.

Topic: Invasive species**Recommendations from the breakout session:**

- The clean-up effort should extend to all parts of the river where invasive species exist.
- Work on the causes of invasive species, particularly the excess nutrients that are dumped into the river by treatment plants and the application of fertilizers.
- Recognize the ecological use of the river as an additional measure for the control of invasive species.
- Give continuity to the existing binational technical committee for the control of invasive species where diverse methods of control determined by common agreement are used.
- Advance a binational science advisory committee as a tool to research invasive species and water quality problems. This cuts across several themes and was VERY STRONGLY supported by the breakout group participants.
- Work to develop uniform wastewater and water quality treatment standards to prevent cross contamination of the river by treatment plants on one side versus the other side.

Topic: Biodiversity**Recommendations from the breakout session:**

- Add a citizen and NGO component to the idea of binational science advisory boards. One idea on how to do this is to expand the existing IBWC Citizens' Fora to be binational in nature with formal MxIBWC participation. Suggest that Acting Commissioner Marin and Acting Secretary Spener open a dialogue with Commissioner Herrera and Secretary Luevano on this topic. The Citizens' Forum Co-Chair of the Lower Rio Grande Citizens' Forum was very supportive of this idea and Mexican participants were very supportive of increasing Mexican citizen input through the emerging idea of a Binational Citizen Science Advisory Board. Create an ecology group that advises IBWC and make a work plan for short, medium, and long term for the knowledge of flora and fauna.
- Give relevance to the theme of biodiversity—stop the speed of degradation, develop recovery strategies in sites of biological importance. IBWC should support large-scale reforestation efforts to restore biological diversity to portions of the watershed that have seen dramatic losses of native forest and bosque species. Initiate actions to recover the health of the ecosystems of the basin and re-establish biological diversity.
- Undertake dissemination of information generated at the summit.