

BACKGROUND

The Colorado River, which runs from north to south, forms the international boundary between the United States and Mexico for 24 miles in the vicinity of Yuma, Arizona and San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora. The 1944 Water Treaty between the two countries includes a requirement that the U.S. deliver to Mexico a specified quantity of water from the Colorado River every year. Ensuring delivery of this water is a key responsibility of the Yuma office.

The treaty also provided for construction of dams and flood control works – structures maintained by the Commission to this day. Other responsibilities of the Yuma office include implementing programs to reduce the salinity of water delivered to Mexico and undertaking efforts, such as dredging, to maintain the river's conveyance capacity.

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION

In 1889, the U.S. and Mexican governments signed a convention agreeing to establish the International Boundary Commission. Under the 1944 Water Treaty, the Commission was reconstituted and designated the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC). The IBWC is responsible for applying the boundary and water treaties between the United States and Mexico.

The IBWC consists of a United States Section (USIBWC) and a Mexican Section. The USIBWC receives foreign policy guidance from the U.S. Department of State.

The IBWC works on many issues including flood control, boundary demarcation, sanitation, operation of dams, and the division and use of international waters.

CONTACT US

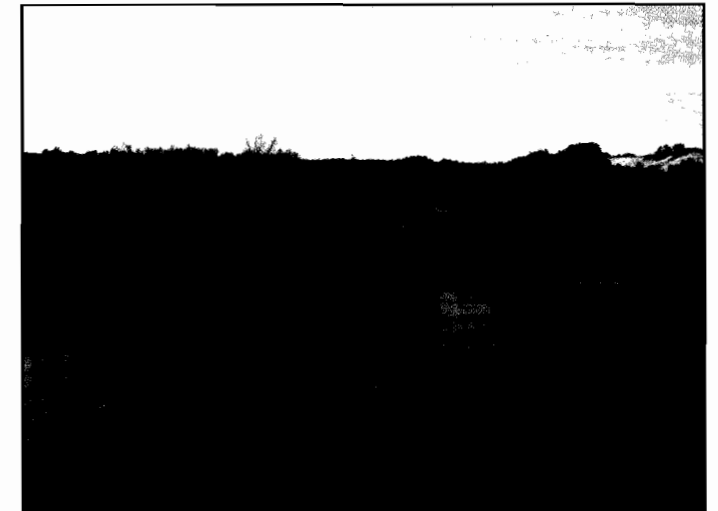
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COLORADO RIVER PROJECTS Yuma, Arizona



INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION

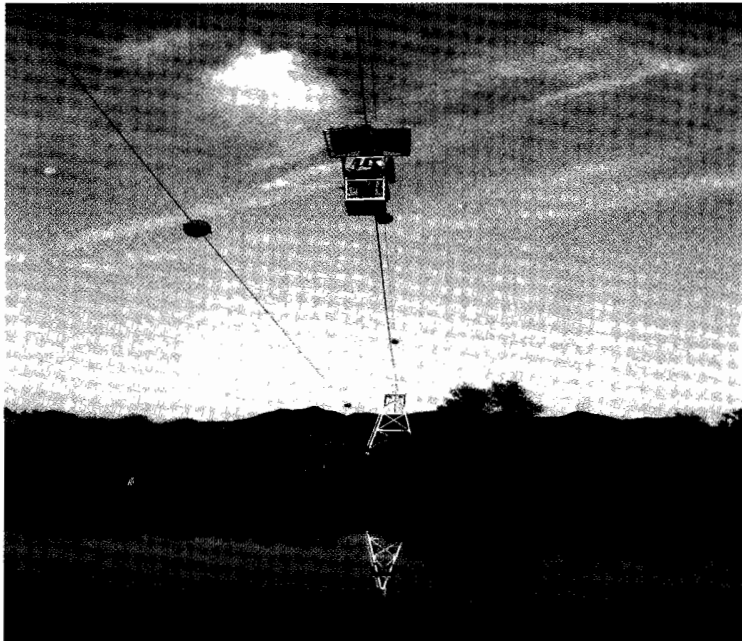
United States Section



THE COLORADO RIVER PROJECTS

1944 WATER TREATY COLORADO RIVER PROVISIONS

- 1.5 million acre-feet of Colorado River water allotted to Mexico annually with an additional 200,000 allotted during years of surplus. Water allotment reduced in the event of extraordinary drought or serious accident to the U.S. irrigation system.



Cableway used for taking flow measurements

- Authorizes construction of Morelos Dam to divert water for Mexican use as well as Davis Dam to assist the U.S. in delivering waters to Mexico.
- Gaging stations to keep a record of flows in the river. Data to be exchanged between the U.S. and Mexico.
- Authorizes construction of flood control works.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN SALINITY CONTROL PROJECT

LOCATION: In the vicinity of the Colorado River from near Yuma downstream to the Gulf of California in Mexico.

PURPOSE: To reduce the salinity of Colorado River waters delivered to Mexico.

FACILITIES: A 50-mile long bypass drain extension from near Yuma downstream to the Santa Clara Slough in Mexico was constructed from 1975-1977 to prevent highly-saline irrigation drainage waters from being discharged to the Colorado River. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation constructed other related facilities including a desalting plant.

COLORADO RIVER LEVEES

LOCATION: Levees along the Colorado River upstream of Morelos Diversion Dam and along the Gila River (a tributary to the Colorado River) near Yuma.

PURPOSE: Flood control and to reduce the possibility of changes in the course of the river and international boundary.

FACILITIES: 25 miles of levee constructed along the Colorado River in 1951-1952. 17 miles of levee were built along the Gila River in 1964.

COLORADO RIVER DELTA

In accordance with IBWC Minute No. 306, "Conceptual framework for United States - Mexico studies for future recommendations concerning the riparian and estuarine ecology of the limitrophe section of the Colorado River and its associated delta," the Commission has established a binational group that is examining the needs of the delta.

MORELOS DAM

LOCATION: West of Yuma near Algodones, Mexico in the international reach of the Colorado River.



Morelos Dam

PURPOSE: To divert Colorado River water for Mexico's use.

FACILITIES: Completed in 1950, the dam spans 1400 feet and has 20 gates. An adjoining structure has 12 gates that control diversions into Mexico's canal system.

LOWER COLORADO RIVER BOUNDARY AND CHANNEL CAPACITY PRESERVATION PROJECT

LOCATION: The international boundary segment (limitrophe) of the Lower Colorado River.

PURPOSE: To preserve the international boundary and to improve the river's capacity to convey flood flows safely.

FACILITIES: Environmental studies analyze various river channel alignments. Work could include excavation, dredging, and improvements to the levees.