

USIBWC CITIZENS FORUM
Thursday, July 1, 2021
Teams Webinar Meeting
Tentative Meeting Notes

Board Members in Attendance:

Jill Galvez
Robert Karl Bradley
Jon Jacobson
Thomas McAndrews
Mitchell McKay

Dante Pamintuan
Mary Powell
Matt Rich
Alex Yakutis

USIBWC Staff in Attendance:

Daniel Avila, Acting Commissioner
Ramon Macias, Supervisory Civil Engineer
Xochitl Aranda, Acting Principal Engineer
of Operations
Morgan Rogers, Area Operations Manager

Sally Spener, U.S. Secretary
Zenon Mora, Supervisory IT Specialist
Jennifer Peña, Chief Legal Counsel
Lori Kuczanski, Public Affairs Officer

Members of the Public in Attendance:

There were approximately 39 members of the public in attendance.

Welcoming Remarks:

At 5:30 pm, Jill Galvez convened the Citizens Forum meeting and called the meeting to order.

Introduction and Meeting Synopsis presented by Jill Galvez:

Jill introduced Morgan Rogers and provided background on Morgan's experience and tonight's meeting. Morgan joins IBWC with over 20 years of government experience and 4 years as a Naval Officer. He is motivated and ready to tackle the issues. Feel free to ask any questions. Morgan spent the last 15 years with Navy housing projects.

Personnel Status San Diego Field Office

The San Diego Field Office is now fully staffed to include Area Operations Manager Morgan Rogers, a Civil Engineer, Dr. Yasser Fahmy, Civil Engineering Technician Scott Melvin, and Secretary Tania Velazquez.

Recruitment Actions:

Human Resources will be announcing a second Civil Engineering Technician for the San Diego office in the coming weeks. The announcement will be posted on www.usajobs.gov

Equipment Status:

All equipment has been delivered to the San Diego Field Office as follows: Sandbags, 4 Chute Sandbag Filler Machine, 6" Trash Pumps, Phaser V1000 Velocity Meter, Portable Generators, 289D3 Caterpillar Compact Track Loader, VACTOR Truck Sewer Cleaner, JCB 457 ZX Wheel Loader T4F, and Catch Basins. Equipment information was provided:

- 6" Trash Pumps are trailer mounted for easy transport.

- Sandbags and Filling Machine will be used to mitigate trans-boundary flows which will be used by Mexico to convey river flows into the intake of the pump station known as PB-CILA. Sandbags will be used to build temporary retention areas at the canyon collectors during the dry season.
- Equipment Training: USIBWC contractor regularly trains the Mexican operators. They also operate the equipment to ensure it is being used correctly and is operational.

CILA Pump Station

- Commissioned 1991
- Initially operated by the State Public Utility Commission of Tijuana (CESPT), currently operated by the Mexican Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission since 2020, with 24-hour operations and improved coordination with USIBWC.
- Modification 2012 to increase capacity from 10 million gallons per day (MGD) to 20 MGD
- Diverts Tijuana River flow to the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant and San Antonio de los Buenos Treatment Plant.
- Recent upgrades to include trash and grit removal processing and secondary inlet
- Pump Station capacity 30 MGD and capable of handling low-volume Tijuana River flows
- All pumps operational including backup pumps

South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant Operations:

IBWC purchased \$1M of equipment. Since the last update in March 2021, we received delivery of loaders and Vactor truck sewer cleaner to complete all deliveries. This equipment will be used by the U.S. and Mexican Sections of the IBWC and CESPT as beneficial to prevent and/or respond to transboundary flows.

Note: we are already putting equipment to use, sandbags at all collectors, portable pump supplementing Stewart's Drain flow to the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP), and available to construct berms with heavy equipment on either side of the border.

Portable generators will be used to provide supplementary power to portable pumps. Velocity meter will be used to measure the velocity of flows to determine flow volumes at the canyon collectors and Tijuana River. Catch basins will be installed at the collectors to facilitate collection of flow samples after transboundary flows. All equipment has undergone regular testing and staff has been trained on its use.

Training was provided for the U.S. and Mexican Sections of the IBWC, Veolia (contracted operator of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant) and CESPT operators.

He provided a schematic of the Tijuana collection system, identified and described the main components of the system, including the PBCILA pump station, the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant in the US, the collectors and how they all interact. The plant is meeting the NPDES permit limit of 25 MGD monthly average.

Over the month of June 2021, of the monthly average of 24.9 MGD, less than .9 MGD (3.6%) came from the canyon collectors. Note light flow today, but also note impact of rain last week with blown out sandbags and sediment piled to the side for drying.

Note daily inspections of all canyon collectors, the collectors are closed upon rain events, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) opens gratings during rain flow, reopens collectors within 48 hours of rain stopping. It takes 7 days to clean away trash and sediment. These pictures from today are in response to the rain last week of .12 inches.

Note the ongoing coordination with CBP, such as facilitation of debris removal on the Mexican side of the fence and trash removal at border gratings.

If you have any questions or concerns my contact information is available.

Contact Information Area Operations Manager San Diego Field Office:

Morgan Rogers, Area Operations Manager, San Diego Field Office: (619) 662-7601
morgan.rogers@ibwc.gov

Presentation – Update on the Evaluation of Possible USMCA-Funded Projects to Address Waterborne Pollution from Tijuana

Guest Speaker: Doug Liden, Environmental Engineer, USEAP Region 9

He presented the goals for United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) project investments. Public Health & Community Livability, Stewardship of Public Resources, Ecological Protection and System Resiliency. By starting with goals, we're able to clearly articulate what the investments hope to achieve. The evaluation gives us a systematic and replicable way to evaluate how much each alternative contributes towards getting us to those goals. Front and center in all conversations was the need to Protect Public Health & Community Livability. The EPA team has understood that this is the most important goal for USMCA investments to try and achieve. Next, EPA and its broader team heard an emphasis on the stewardship of public resources as a key priority and finally, Ecological Protection and System resiliency were also key themes during discussions and were seen as similarly important in relation to one another. He noted the importance or prioritization of these goals. This will be measured by assessing the project alternatives' potential to reduce the percentage of transboundary river flows days annually.

Each goal may have multiple objectives, criteria, and metrics. In the example that we used, one of the ways EPA is measuring public health & community livability is to analyze the change in conditions along the Tijuana River. However, that's only aspect of public health that is important for these investments to seek to achieve. For example, the EPA also wants to analyze each alternative's ability to improve water quality at US beaches. The EPA is anticipating that each of the four goals will have multiple objectives, criteria, and metrics.

As of today, EPA is still in the process of developing the full set of objectives, criteria, and metrics that will be used to evaluate the performance of each of the alternatives.

The metric here is % change in days of transboundary river flows. The 0 represents the current status or “baseline” condition. Any alternative that does not reduce river flows by over 20% would receive a zero. The highest possible performance would be an alternative that reduces days of transboundary river flows by 80-100%. Now we can take an alternative and score it based on its estimated performance. Once the team creates the full suite of objectives, criteria, and metrics for all 4 goals they will build out performance ranges for all of the metrics. For example, if an alternative is estimated to have the potential to reduce transboundary river flows days annually by 36%, it would receive a score of 2.

He presented an example of how alternatives will receive different scores based on their estimated performance. Note this is an example and these scores do not represent any analysis that has been done. This is an example of one score for one metric, but as mentioned the team will be identifying a full suite of metrics and each alternative will be scored across all metrics.

Those scores will create a composite score for each alternative so EPA will be able to evaluate how each alternative performs relative to all 4 of the goals.

So, that was an overview of the method using an example. As I mentioned, EPA is still developing the objectives, criteria and metrics. Once those are complete EPA will build out performance ranges for all metrics. Then, the evaluation method will be finalized. Once the alternatives are finalized, EPA will be able to: Score alternatives AND Incorporate Cost Considerations

Questions/Answers for Doug Liden:

Eric Syverson – private citizen stakeholder

Q: For Doug Liden – Any coordination at the Federal level with the EPA on who is going to clean the Tijuana River Valley? We are having difficulty persuading the San Diego City, San Diego County, the State of California or anyone else to clean. I see Mary Powell on the screen. I was in Mary’s backyard today and nothing has changed in 4 years. The pilot channel is full, Smugglers Gulch is full of trash. IBWC maintains its portion East of Dairy Mart Rd correctly by keeping the brush down. But the rest there is an incredible amount of stagnant water near Hollister bridge today.

It was noted that for projects on the Mexican side of the border a 50% match from Mexico is assumed, consistent with the policy for border water infrastructure money. For the U.S. side projects, such as expansion of the International Wastewater Treatment Plant, we are expecting the entire capital budget would certainly be U.S. Operations and maintenance costs would have to be negotiated and some contribution from Mexico would be expected.

Karl Bradley

Q: Previously, I was unaware of the 50% match from Mexico. I am much more comfortable that we can properly fund these projects now! At one point, I believe there was some uncertainty regarding how much of the \$300M allocation would be used for Tijuana River Valley projects as it was for the entire border.

A: Most, if not all, the \$300M will go to this region.

Eric Syverson

Q: Doug- Is there any coordination with local jurisdictions on cleaning the Tijuana River Valley?

A: The USMCA funds are not being contemplated to be used on cleanup/restoration projects although mitigation projects may be required under NEPA.

Mark Stephens

Q: Thanks! Has Notice of Intent been issued yet for an Environmental Impact Statement?

A: Yes, in April

Q: For Mr. Liden: Has Mexico actually agreed to cost sharing? If they are not going to contribute funds, would that influence the EPA's decision on the preferred alternative?

A: Mexico has always matched US investment in Mexico (via EPA's Border Water Infrastructure Program) with at least equal funds. We will be negotiating with Mexico on specific projects.

Questions/Answers for Morgan Rogers

Eric Syverson

Q: How far did the Goat Canyon flows travel?

A: It closed the park, so it traveled a bit. Site visit done the following day and the park was closed very quickly.

Mary Powell

Q: Are there any plans to recycle water with the mega drought we are experiencing?

A: Our treated water currently goes to the ocean outfall.

Q: Thank you for the presentation. Have there been any spills at the canyon collector since you have added sandbags to the top of the weirs? Do you plan to keep sandbags on top of each collector during the dry season?

A: While we continue to experience occasional transboundary flows from the collectors, the actual flow volumes are much less with the sandbags reinforcing the collector weirs. The sandbags will be used during both wet and dry seasons.

Karl Bradley

Q: Please define how you are using the term Transborder flows. Does it include natural Tijuana River Valley flows as well as stormwater or just sewer spills? The reason I ask is because we still had beach closures/advisories in June although we heard there were no transborder flows. Was it all due to Punta Bandera?

A: Morgan Rogers' definition of transboundary flow is referring to non-storm water and that is the accepted definition. Rainwater is not a concern -- the concern is non-storm water. Since there were no transboundary flows in June, the suspected source of beach closures would be Punta Bandera or other sources in Mexico.

Karl Bradley

Q: The equipment is used on both sides of the border?

A: Yes, is the equipment will also be used by both CILA (the Mexican Section of the IBWC) or CESPT.

Q: Are there any strategies of how to deal with stormwater for the future?

A: There are discussions about this to address this in the future. We are working with EPA on projects to catch the stormwater.

Karl Bradley

Q: Regarding the permitting process if we increase treatment plant capacity. The current permit is for 25MGD. I assume this is based on design capacity. What other factors are considered?

A: The main factor is design capacity of the plant. Secondary factor includes the capacity of the South Bay Ocean Outfall which accepts the treated wastewater from the plant.

Sally Spener, USIBWC

In response to inquiries about when we will resume face-to-face meetings, the federal government is in the process of developing its "re-entry" plans. Not sure yet when we can resume face-to-face meetings.

EPA Links and Information:

<https://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder/apply-today-border-2025-request-proposals>

Border 2025 Program Virtual Meeting July 14, 2021 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. (PST)The U.S. EPA Region 9 Office will be hosting a brief informational meeting - This session will provide an update on EPA's border efforts to include the closing of the Border 2020 Program and celebrate the signing of new binational environmental plan: Border 2025.For more information on the new binational plan, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder/border-2025-framework> If you need additional information or registration link, please contact Lorena Lopez-Powers at lopez-powers.lorena@epa.gov

Border 2025 Framework | US EPA

English Framework Document of Border 2025 Program

<https://www.nadb.org/news/border-2025-program-request-for-proposals-solta-c-21-003>

<https://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder/region-9-calendar>

Region 9 Calendar | US EPA

Meetings and events for the California-Baja/California, Arizona/Sonora areas of the Border 2020 program.

Public Comment:

Eric Syverson – Thank, Lori Kuczanski, first and foremost, as she's been the constant presence. We have new contacts, including new mayor, city council, Mr. Avila and Mr. Rogers. I've seen the presentation several times and there is no better investment than the money spent at PB-CILA. I am thrilled that for the first time in a long time there will not be a posted sign on our beaches this July 4th weekend.

Mary Powell – Is it possible for IBWC to get funding from Congress to clean the River Valley up to where it meets the county line?

A: Acting Commissioner Avila – that is a complicated question. I am not sure we can as a federal government provide funding. As you had the discussion on the cleanup, there has to be some grant funding to complete the cleanup. I will reach out to Legal and see what assistance IBWC can provide in terms of funding for the cleanup.

Doug Liden – is not aware of any cleanup funding available for this specific purpose of cleaning the River Valley.

Mary Powell – As a private citizen if I cause damage to public property I am charged for those damages. There has to be a process for agencies to be held responsible for cleanup.

Board Discussion/Suggested Future Agenda Items:

The next USIBWC Citizens Forum is scheduled on Thursday, November 4, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. Per Lori, the next meeting will have to be held virtually via Teams until further notice.

Suggested Future Agenda Items: Board members should email suggested agenda items to lori.kuczanski@ibwc.gov

Meeting adjourned at 7:32 pm by Jill Galvez, Citizens Forum Co-Chair

**** Meeting notes are tentative and summarize in draft the contents and discussion of Citizens Forum meetings. While these notes are intended to provide a general overview of Citizens Forum Meetings, they may not necessarily be accurate or complete, and may not be representative of USIBWC policy or positions.**