

RIO GRANDE CITIZENS FORUM
USIBWC Headquarters
El Paso, Texas
October 12, 2017
*** Tentative Meeting Notes**

Board Members in attendance:

John Balliew, President/CEO, El Paso Water
Yvonne Curry, American Society of Civil Engineers
Conrad Keyes, Jr. Chair, Paso del Norte Watershed Council, New Mexico State University Emeritus
Gill Sorg, City of Las Cruces, Council
Francine Jefferson, Community Volunteer
Danny Chavez, Hudspeth County Conservation and Reclamation

U.S. Section, International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) staff in attendance:

Carlos Peña, Principal Engineer
Sally Spener, Foreign Affairs Officer
Lori Kuczmanski, Public Affairs Officer

Members of the public in attendance:

Carol Sutherland, New Mexico State University
Zhupin Sheng, Texas A&M Agriculture Research
Delbert Humberson, U.S. Geological Survey
Woody Irving, Bureau of Reclamation
Hilary Brinegar, Marron and Associates
J.J. Armendariz, Citizen
Evaristo Giron, New Mexico State Parks
Christopher Brown, New Mexico Dept. of Geography
Donald Leslie, HTC
Zack Libbin, Elephant Butte Irrigation District
Kamal Mahmood, Citizen
Earl F. Burkholder, retired teacher New Mexico State University, and Global Cogo, Inc.
Steven Hernandez, Law Office of Steven L. Hernandez P.C. (LOSLHPC)
John Douglas, Citizen and Elephant Butte Irrigation District
Brad Kirksey, Freese and Nichols, Inc.
Matt Gloudemans
Joel Mora, Arcadis
Robert Kimpel, Hudspeth Country Farmers

Welcoming Remarks:

At 6:30 PM, the Citizens Forum Co-Chair Carlos Peña convened the meeting. He welcomed the group and asked the Board Members to introduce themselves. Afterwards, Mr. Peña asked the audience to introduce themselves and their affiliation

Mr. Peña introduced the first speaker, Ms. Sally Spener.

Presentation One –Minute Signing with the U.S. and Mexico—Sally Spener, U.S. Secretary, USIBWC

Decisions of the Commission are recorded in the form of Minutes. Minutes are binding agreements of the IBWC to implement the treaty. They take effect once approved by both nations' foreign affairs ministries. This year, the Commission has signed three minutes.

The three Minutes signed this year are:

1. Minute 321—Vehicle Decals
2. Minute 322—Emergency Delivery of Water to Tijuana
3. Minute 323 Colorado River Cooperation

Recent Minutes for the Rio Grande also include Minute 315 in 2009—Rio Grande Boundary Map and Minute 313 in 2008—Rio Grande Channel Maintenance

She then discussed Minute 323 on Colorado River cooperation. The 1944 Water Treaty states the U.S. will deliver to Mexico a volume of 1.5 million acre feet per year. When there are surplus waters, Mexico may receive an additional 200,000 acre feet (kaf).

In an extraordinary drought, Mexico's water is reduced in proportion to the U.S. The Colorado River involves seven U.S. States and 2 Mexican States. The U.S. has always met its delivery obligation to Mexico on the Colorado River.

She presented photographs of Lake Mead in 1999 and in 2006. The water was declining significantly, so, to address the drought conditions, Mexico agreed to reduce water when the U.S. reduces its water deliveries from Lake Mead.

The Colorado River Joint Cooperative Process began after the seven U.S. Basin States and two federal governments asked IBWC to convene stakeholders. In 2008, four work groups were established. Minute 319 was signed in 2012 as a 5-year pilot project on Colorado River Cooperation. Minute 323 extends or replaces Minute 319 actions through 2026.

On April 4, 2010, Easter day, there was a 7.1 magnitude earthquake in Mexicali, and under the 1944 Water Treaty we had an obligation to deliver 1.5 maf to Mexico. We agreed to defer the delivery that was entitled so that Mexico could make the necessary repairs to its damaged water infrastructure.

Under Minute 323, Mexico's Water Reserve allows Mexico to defer water delivery due to earthquakes, emergencies, or conservation. Water is available for subsequent delivery to Mexico. This also gives Mexico flexibility in water management (Mexico does not have reservoir storage). And lastly, this boosts the level at Lake Mead for the benefit of all users.

Minute 323 provides additional Colorado River water to Mexico during high elevation reservoir conditions. It applies delivery reductions to Mexico during low reservoir conditions. And lastly, it establishes a water scarcity plan. Shown in the picture on slide eight is what is known as the bathtub ring at Lake Mead, exposed shoreline due to reduced water levels.

Minute 242 (1973) requires salinity of deliveries to Mexico to be similar to quality of water delivered to U.S. users. Minute 323 indicates the U.S. and Mexico will operate the system to minimize salinity impacts of Minute 323 actions. Improved salinity monitoring will take place, and the Minute identifies measures to address daily flow variability in deliveries to Mexico.

The Minute also generates water for the environment. 210,000 acre-feet or more of water is for the environment. The U.S. investment in Mexico to cover 1/3 of this volume (the U.S. contribution), Mexico and non-governmental organizations cover the rest, and the focus is on habitat restoration sites.

Minute 319 got international attention when the IBWC did a Pulse Flow of environmental water in the river. It was the first time the river connected with the sea in many years. We researched the impact and benefits of the pulse flow. In Minute 323, the environmental water will be targeted to active restoration sites.

Minute 323 allows for \$31.5 million from the U.S. to fund projects in Mexico. Mexico derives long-term benefits from waters conserved from the U.S. investment in projects such as canal lining, fallowing programs and other improvements. This investment will provide 229,000 acre-feet of water that will go for the U.S. share of environmental water, system storage, and to the funding agencies.

Minute 322 is titled, "Extension of the Temporary Emergency Delivery of Colorado River Water for use in Tijuana, Baja California." It allows Mexico to use the U.S. aqueduct to supply Mexico's water to Tijuana in the event of emergencies over a 5-year period, with Mexico covering all costs. This extends a long-time practice permitting emergency deliveries in this fashion. Minute 322 was signed in El Paso, Texas on January 19, 2017 and entered into force upon approval by the Foreign Affairs Ministries of both countries.

Minute 321 is titled, "Official Means of Identification of Vehicles and other Equipment Crossing the International Boundary on Official Business of the Commission or of either Section." The Minute adopts a new seal to readily identify Commission vehicles and equipment. It keeps everyone safe by making our vehicles and equipment more readily identifiable.

Minute 315, "Adoption of the Delineation of the International Boundary on the 2008 Aerial Photographic Mosaic of the Rio Grande," was signed November 5, 2009. It adopts new Rio Grande boundary maps. Floods can change the course of the river, so we do surveys of the river and updated the boundary maps accordingly.

She showed a photograph with the old and new river boundary marked on it.

The 1970 Boundary Treaty states the border is the middle of the river channel of greatest average width over its length. This Minute tasks the IBWC with preparing boundary maps. IBWC obtains aerial photos and marks the boundary on the photo maps. The new maps are adopted by the Minute. The Commission makes the official determination of the location of the international boundary.

Minute 313, "Maintenance in the Rectified Channel of the Rio Grande," was signed February 5, 2008. 1933 and 1970 Treaties provide for the IBWC to maintain the Rio Grande channel.

Minute 313 also references sediment build-up in the Rio Grande in the greater El Paso-Cd. Juarez area. It clarifies responsibilities for channel maintenance. The way we do sediment clean-up is by mile; the U.S. Section of the Commission is responsible for certain segments of the river, covering the entire river channel, while the Mexican Section is responsible for others. That way, we don't have each Section maintaining only the part of the river channel in its territory as it's not practical to remove sediment from

only one side. Minute 313 adopts the “Joint Report of the Principal Engineers Regarding the Division of Maintenance Work in the Rio Grande from the Point Closest to Monument No. 1 to the End of the Rectification Reach in the El-Paso-Juarez Valley,” dated September 25, 2007.

Questions and Answers:

Q: Does IBWC or the Bureau of Reclamation do any releases?

A: The Bureau of Reclamation owns and operates the infrastructure on the Colorado River and they operate the dams.

Q: How long do Minutes last?

A: It depends on the Minute. Minute 319 was a 5-year Minute. Other Minutes are permanent.

Q: Who initiates Minute change?

A: The Commission will talk about topics and the Principal Engineers will usually draft a document and we'll talk about it to develop the final terms of the Minute.

Q: How many Minutes have no engineers' reports attached to them?

A: Three of the five I talked about tonight do have engineers' reports.

**Presentation Two: Orange Trees in Summer? What's Happening? Saltcedar & Diorhabda in NM—
Dr. Carol Sutherland, Extension Entomologist, NMSU & State Entomologist, NM Dept.
Agriculture**

She showed a photo at Sevilleta Exit #169 on Interstate 25 during July 2016 and the area around Caballo Reservoir in May 2016. The photos showed orange or yellow trees and vegetation. This has raised questions about the cause. Is it disease? Climate Change? Bark Beetles, Drought, Chemical Spill? She explained it is the result of Saltcedar Beetle, which intensifies in July and August. It causes the leaves to fall off of saltcedar. Before you spray for what you think are diseases, call someone to come look at your trees to identify the foliage and bugs, she advised.

For saltcedar under biological control by Diorhabda Beetles, you can tell by the orange color that it's saltcedar. Larvae do the majority of the work chomping on the leaves.

Saltcedar was introduced into U.S. in 1800s, 1900s in arid West, it's a 'noxious weed.' The non-native weed was brought to the United States from Eurasia as a nursery plant in the middle of the 1800s and was moved into the Western part of the country in the early 1900s. Saltcedar spreads quickly, and after years of research, it was found that this weed was not of much use and competed for water with native vegetation. The non-native weed was introduced in this part of the country for its benefit in protecting erosion in stream banks. It has since formed dense stands, dominating riparian areas, especially along the Rio Grande.

Saltcedar is also known as Tamarisk or Tamarix

Saltcedar is on the noxious weed list in 14 states: Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Texas, and 2 Canadian Provinces: Alberta and Saskatchewan. Saltcedar homelands include North Africa, Mediterranean Region, South & East Asia.

Until Recently, land managers used these options for managing saltcedar: fire, drowning, heavy equipment, goats, herbicides, or a combination. Land managers used these methods to rip it out by the roots. You can spray the foliage or stump. You can use herbicides. Goats were introduced to eat the foliage then cut down the stumps. But it didn't really work. It's very tough foliage.

Biological Control: Another Tool?

- Premise for Biological Control---An organism removed from its native habitat and natural enemies may become an exotic, invasive, economically significant pest in a new environment.
- Advantages: host specific, no residues in the environment, self-sustaining, mobile, cheap (after its release), may find & control hosts in difficult environments. We found this method to be cheap after research and the upfront costs are done. After 25 years of history, we came up with the Saltcedar Beetle.

Are there any insects damaging saltcedar in New Mexico?

She showed photos of various insects that feed on saltcedar but usually to little damage to it, including: *Opius stactogalus*/SC Leafhopper. They suck sap and does nothing to saltcedar.

Coniatus splendidulus/SC Bud Weevil doesn't do anything. It'll turn the plant brown but that's about it.

Chionaspis etrusca/SC Armored Scale blows away and doesn't do enough damage to pests.

Icerya purchasi/ Cottony Cushion Scale doesn't hurt the plant. All four are exotic insects.

Diorhabda became the top biocontrol candidate.

For years, each *Diorhabda* species was given multiple host specificity tests. They tested and studied them for 20-25 years and determined they only feed on saltcedar. There are four *Diorhabda* species that were released: *Crete-elongata*, *Tunisian-sublineata*, *Larger-carinata*, *Fukang/Northern carinulata*. This was researched by Dr. Jack DeLoach (USDA-ARS, Temple, TX)

Diorhabda Life Cycle—Very similar for all 4 *Diorhabda* Species. 10-20 eggs/day 300-500/lifetime → 3 larval instars, 12-14 days of feeding → Life cycle in summer about 4-weeks 5-7 generations/year in NM → Adults live 2-4 weeks Disperses, reproduces. Pupae may be 'bare' or inside a litter covered "cocoons"

They winter in the debris on the ground so, therefore, they survive the winter. The first large-scale release was in 2005 in Utah. The Tamarisk Coalition started mapping in 2007. The establishment, reproduction, dispersal began. The population started in Dinosaur National Monument in Utah. They moved around the reservoir and in a limited resource area.

But there's a problem: The Southwest Willow Flycatcher, an endangered species, nests along several rivers in the Southwest, including New Mexico. The concern is the beetle defoliates saltcedar during nesting season. If the beetle defoliates salt cedars while the birds are nesting and raising their offspring, the birds could be exposed to higher temperatures, bright light and predators resulting in higher mortality. For this reason, the beetles are not released into New Mexico. But they migrated from the Utah release. By 2014, all *Diorhabda* species were found in New Mexico, having migrated from other states where they were released. They are now widely dispersed throughout New Mexico. The Beetles are coming from Texas, Colorado, and Arizona. United States Fish & Wildlife Service denied release permits for New Mexico. The beetles kept coming by themselves. New Mexico is the first state to have all four saltcedar beetles.

She showed photographs of the beetles' impact at Caballo Dam area. Every saltcedar bush seemed to be affected in 2015.

The saltcedar beetles forages repeatedly, weakening saltcedar, allowing more desirable (with luck & planning) plants to re-establish. You can see the tree looks orange and dead but it's not. It doesn't kill saltcedar. It stresses it and over time saltcedar is less competitive.

The beetles are moving west and finding scattered stands of saltcedar. She showed a map of the beetles' range in New Mexico. In Albuquerque by July there were too many to count.

There are still issues that remain for discussion and resolution including protecting critical habitat for the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, fire danger since the vegetation becomes conducive to burn and revegetation projects in riparian areas.

Other serious, even toxic noxious weeds are 'waiting in the wings' (halogeton, Russian Olive, Various Knapweeds, African Rue, Tree of Heaven, Others. It'd be great to get Willows and Cottonwoods planted ASAP.

Questions and Answers:

Q: Once Saltcedar is gone, what happens to the beetle?

A: It should die.

Gill Sorg said willows should be planted to replace the saltcedar.

A member of the public expressed concern about scientists introducing species without knowing what they are doing.

Q: The revegetation by Elephant Butte has been slow. Other areas like Doña Ana County are faster. Why?

A. Local weather can affect it.

Q: Have you seen it die?

A: Haven't seen a stand of saltcedar die yet but maybe it would after eight years.

Q: Can you do pre-emptive planting of native vegetation?

A: Yes, that's been done in some areas. That's the hope – plant willows or grasses and keep out other weeds.

Public Comment

Mr. Earl Burkholder made the announcement that High Tech Consortium will be having a monthly meeting Oct. 25. All are invited to attend.

Board Discussion/Suggested Future Agenda Items

The next meeting will be in January 11, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. in El Paso.

Suggested topics for the next meeting:

River management plan, channel maintenance, and habitat restoration by USIBWC's
Environmental Management Division.
Bureau of Reclamation forecast for Rio Grande Project water deliveries

7:45 meeting adjourned.

*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.