Upper Rio Grande Citizens Forum
Introduction to the Mission

Rosalba Montes, AOM - Upper Rio Grande Projects
International Boundary and Water Commission
October 22, 2020
The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, is responsible for applying the boundary and water treaties between the two countries and settling differences that arise in their application.
The Upper Rio Grande Field Office (URGFO) reports directly to the USIBWC Headquarters in El Paso, Texas.

The URGFO oversees three facilities: Las Cruces (LCF), Carlos Marin/American Dam in El Paso, Tx (ADF), and Zacarias Dominguez/Fort Hancock in Hudspeth County (ZDF).

Facilities: Staffed with a field supervisor, administrative assistant, heavy equipment operators, tractor operators (mowers), mechanics, and motor vehicle operators (servicer).

URGFO: Area Operation Manager and assistant, administrative assistant, supply tech, and office manager.
Mission Responsibilities

- Flood Control.
- Water deliveries to Mexico and El Paso County Water Improvement District #1.
- Operation & maintenance of American Dam, American Canal, American Canal Weir, International Dam, levee gates, and related flood control structures.
- Maintenance of American Canal Extension, channels, arroyos, seven sediment basins in NM, Ft Hancock International Bridge, the Bridge of the Americas (Cordova International Bridge), and the river and land boundary. Mowing of levee slopes and floodplains.
- Inspection of all facilities and structures. Bird nesting surveys.
- Coordination with affected agencies and stakeholders.
URGFO Projects

- Canalization
- Chamizal
- Rectification
- Boundary Preservation

Overall approximately:
- 220 miles of river and levees along the river,
- 4,500 acres of river floodplains,
- 18.5 miles of canals,
- 210 drainage and irrigation structures.
Estimated 450,000 – 490,000 cubic yards of silt enters the Canalization reach annually.

Resulting In:
- Sediment Plugs
- Island Formations
- Raising of River Beds
- Increases in Water Surface Elevations
- Increased Flooding Risk to Adjoining Communities
- Sediment Accumulation Prevents Draining of Irrigation Return Flows

Upper Rio Grande System Sediment Problem

Rio Grande Canalization Project
Channel Maintenance Alternative and Sediment Transport Study identified nine problem locations.
In FY18 two pilot sediment basins were awarded. Construction was completed in FY19:

- Thurman Arroyo 1 Sediment Basin
- Thurman Arroyo 2 Sediment Basin
Upper Rio Grande
Desilting Efforts for Canalization & Rectification

- **FY18** – Removed approx. 502,000 cubic yards (cy) from river channel.
  - Canalization 182,521 cy (13 Bridge Crossings and Montana Drain intersection)
  - Rectification 320,111 cy (Alamo & Guayuco Arroyos, Ft. Quitman and downstream)
- **FY19** – Removed approx. 372,000 cy from river channel. Government shut down affected progress.
- **FY20** – Removed approx. 20,000 cy from river channel. Transported over 260,000 cy from flood plains.
- Annually maintained 5 New Mexico sediment control dam/basins.
  - Green Arroyo
  - Crow Canyon
  - Broad Canyon
  - Jalarosa Arroyo 1 & 2
  - Berrenda Dam

Berrenda Dam
Canalization Sediment Removal by IBWC Workforce 2018/2019

Canutillo before and after silt removal

Shalem before and after silt removal
Chamizal Sediment Removal by IBWC Workforce
2018/2019/2020

Chamizal – Chihuahuita Area

Guayuco Arroyo
Contracted Sediment Removal

- 5 contracts awarded at end of FY19. Option years available for award for following years.
- Combined award= approximately $5.3 million
- Total volume, base year= 1,188,000 cy
- Canalization volume, base year= 788,000 cy
- Rectification volume, base year = 400,000 cy
- Focus was on areas from the River Management Plan
- All five projects are now completed.
- URGFO disposed of sediment that contractors excavated from the river channels.
- Sediment continues to be deposited on private properties with “No Cost Agreements” in place and sediment is still available with an approved application.
Contracted Sediment Removal

Sierra County, NM:
- Sierra Valley Contractors, LLC
- Excavated Quantity: 176,000 cy
- Tipton Arroyo
- Trujillo Arroyo
- Montoya Arroyo
- Holguin Arroyo
- Tierra Blanca Creek to Sibley Arroyo

Doña Ana County – North:
- Smithco Construction, Inc.
- Excavated Quantity: 100,000 cy
- Hatch Siphon
- Salem Bridge to Highway 187 Bridge
- Rincon Siphon
Contracted Sediment Removal

Doña Ana County Middle:
- Smithco Construction, Inc.
- Excavated Quantity: 268,000 cy
- Rincon Arroyo to Bignell Arroyo
- Hersey Arroyo
- Rock Canyon to Rincon/Tonuco Drain
- Mesilla Bridge to Mesilla Dam

Doña Ana and El Paso County:
- Smithco Construction, Inc.
- Excavated Quantity: 244,000 cy
- East Drain to Vinton Bridge
- Canutillo Area
- Country Club Bridge
- Sunland Park Bridge to Montoya Drain
Hudspeth County:
• Smithco Construction, Inc.
• Excavated Quantity: 400,000 cy
• McClintock Arroyo to Little Box Canyon (approximately 10 miles)

New Contracted Work from the Option Years
Awarded September 2020 - Pending Notice to Proceed

- Sierra County: Sierra Valley Contractors, LLC, 100,000 cy
- Doña Ana County (North): Smithco Construction, 100,000 cy
- Doña Ana & El Paso Counties: Smithco Construction, 100,000 cy
- Hudspeth County: Smithco Construction, 100,000 cy

IBWC workforce will dispose of sediment removed and deliver to the public under an approved “No Cost Agreement”.
Water Delivery Mission
Convention of 1906

- Distribution between Mexico and the United States (U.S.) of the waters of the Rio Grande in El Paso-Juarez
- U.S. to deliver 60,000 acre-feet/year.
- 2020 irrigation season
  - Release date from Caballo Dam—March 13, 2020. Delivery to Mexico commenced on March 17\textsuperscript{th} and ended on September 10, 2020. The 2020 computed delivery was approximately 50,340 acre-feet.
  - EPCWID#1 ended September 25\textsuperscript{th}
  - EBID ended August 29\textsuperscript{th}. 

United States

American Dam

Mexico

American Canal
Canalization
River Management Plan

- RMP was updated in Nov 2018 and distributed for stakeholder review.
- RMP was used in the 2019 Environmental Assessment.
- Final RMP is pending completion of a hydraulic modeling that is in progress.
- RMP covers:
  - Floodplain Management
  - Endangered Species Management
  - Channel Maintenance
  - USIBWC’s 2009 Record of Decision (ROD) expired in June 2019. Comments incorporated in RMP.
  - Environmental Assessments (EA).
  - RMP and EA superseded the ROD.
  - O&M and EMD working closely on environmental issues during the sediment removal process.
Other Contracted Construction Projects

- American Canal Upper Reach - Contract completion this year.
  - Replaced old concrete with new in entire upper reach.
  - Replaced wooden catwalk with steel. Replaced old metal structure with new.
- Sunland Park West Levee - Construction end date June 2021.
  - Repair levee on west side of river.
  - Rehabilitation of structure.
- Thurman I and II Sediment Basins - Construction completed 2019.
  - Two new sediment catch basins.
- Canalization Signs – In progress.
  - Install warning signs throughout Canalization (i.e. No Trespassing)
Challenges

- Lack of funds and resources: personnel and equipment.
- Lack of funds for more sediment removal (channel maintenance) alternatives, structure repairs, and equipment repairs/replacement
- Accumulation of sediment.
- The current pandemic has increased illegal activities and destruction of levee system and structures.
Challenges
THANK YOU!

Rosalba Montes, Area Operations Manager
Upper Rio Grande Field Office

2616 W. Paisano Drive
El Paso, Texas 79922
(915) 260-6225 office
Rosalba.Montes@ibwc.gov
Agency website: www.ibwc.gov