



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
March 31, 2010

DECISION ANNOUNCED FOR LONG-TERM REHABILITATION OF PRESIDIO LEVEES

U.S. Commissioner Edward Drusina of the International Boundary and Water Commission has signed a Record of Decision for rehabilitation of Rio Grande flood control levees at Presidio, Texas. After studying seven alternatives, the U.S. Section of the Commission (USIBWC) has selected Alternative 2 to restore damaged and eroded levee segments to the project's original 25-year design flood. Alternative 2 is the environmentally preferred alternative and will provide flood protection to the City of Presidio and nearby agricultural lands from a 25-year flood event.

The USIBWC operates and maintains 15 miles of Rio Grande flood control levees in the Presidio area between Haciendita and Brito Creek. The levees were damaged during a Rio Grande flood in 2008.

"The Commission is committed to restoring the levee system to its original capacity as soon as possible," said Commissioner Drusina. "I am pleased that we were able to select the environmentally preferred alternative for accomplishing this work."

Alternative 2 is environmentally preferred because it minimizes negative impacts to native flora and fauna; cultural resources, such as archaeological sites; and existing land uses, while restoring flood protection to areas where levees were damaged in 2008. The alternative is also preferred from an engineering standpoint. Under the alternative, structural repairs will be made to damaged levee segments and levee height will be increased as needed to provide 25-year protection plus four feet of freeboard. In areas of the lower reach where the levee foundation may

have been compromised due to under-seepage, a slurry trench or sheet piles may be required at the toe of the levee. Alternative 2 maintains the existing levee alignment throughout the project area.

The Record of Decision was signed following completion of an Environmental Impact Statement that identified potential impacts to biological resources, cultural resources, water resources, land use, socioeconomic resources, transportation, and environmental health for each of the seven alternatives.

The Commission expects to complete the design for the improvements by the end of summer and initiate construction shortly thereafter. The work is expected to be completed by May 2011.

Previous to this Record of Decision, the USIBWC completed emergency repairs on damaged levee segments near the City of Presidio last year. Emergency repairs farther downstream for a levee segment that breached in 2008 next to agricultural land were completed in 2010.

The Record of Decision is available on the USIBWC web page at:
http://www.ibwc.gov/Files/Presidio_ROD.pdf and the Environmental Impact Statement is available at: http://www.ibwc.gov/Files/Final_EIS_Presido_FCP_022210.pdf

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