



**International Boundary and Water Commission
United States Section**



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For immediate release
April 9, 2009

**LEVEE IMPROVEMENTS FUNDED BY THE RECOVERY ACT
TO BE DISCUSSED AT APRIL 22 PUBLIC MEETING**

Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project improvements funded through the Recovery Act will be discussed at the April meeting of the Lower Rio Grande Citizens' Forum (LRGCF). The LRGCF was established by the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) to facilitate the exchange of information between the USIBWC and members of the public about Commission activities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The meeting will be held Wednesday, April 22, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at the Commission office at 325 Golf Course Road in Mercedes, Texas.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 was signed into law by President Barack Obama on February 17, 2009. It is an unprecedented effort to jumpstart the economy, provide or save millions of jobs, and put a down payment on long-neglected challenges. The Recovery Act includes \$220 million in funding for the USIBWC. The USIBWC will invest a significant portion of this funding in improvements to the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project (see attached list of USIBWC's Recovery Act projects). USIBWC Operations Support Specialist Gabriel Duran will give a presentation about the levee improvements that are planned to be accomplished with Recovery Act funds.

In other business, USIBWC Area Operations Manager Patrick Daize will discuss the work plan for maintenance and repair of El Morillo Drain. The drain, located in Tamaulipas, Mexico, is an international project to improve Rio Grande water quality by diverting saline irrigation return flows from Mexico that would otherwise flow into the river. Operation and maintenance costs are divided between the United States and Mexico; the U.S. share includes a contribution from Lower Rio Grande Valley water users through the Rio Grande Regional Water Authority.

A binational inspection of El Morillo Drain and related infrastructure, such as pumps, was accomplished on March 5 and a work plan was developed for maintenance and repair of the project in 2009 and 2010. The work plan includes repair of two pumps and maintenance of structural, electrical, and mechanical components of the pump-house building, maintenance of the various gates that control the flow of water, and removal of silt and debris within the drain canal. Mexico is also planning to encase 170 meters of the drain to reduce maintenance problems.

A complete meeting agenda follows. Members of the public who would like more information about the meeting may contact the USIBWC's Lower Rio Grande Project Office at 956-565-3150 or the Public Affairs Office at sallyspener@ibwc.gov. For additional information about the Recovery Act, go to www.recovery.gov.

For more information:

Sally Spener
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LOWER RIO GRANDE CITIZENS' FORUM

Wednesday, April 22, 2009

4:00 - 6:00 P.M.

USIBWC Conference Room

325 Golf Course Road

Mercedes, TX 78570

AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions – Bill Lewis, Lower Rio Grande Citizens' Forum Co-Chair
- Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Levee Rehabilitation Using Recovery Act Funds – Gabriel Duran, Operations Support Specialist, USIBWC
- Planned Maintenance and Repair of El Morillo Drain – Patrick Daize, Area Operations Manager, USIBWC
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion
- Suggested Future Agenda Items

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time. For more information, call 956-565-3150.



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**PLANNED RECOVERY ACT PROJECTS FOR
RIO GRANDE LEVEE REHABILITATION**

UPPER RIO GRANDE*

- West Levee – Hatch Siphon to Bignell Arroyo
- West Levee – Shalem Bridge in Doña Ana County to near Country Club Bridge in El Paso County (area at Mesilla Valley Bosque Park and immediately upstream and downstream from Country Club Bridge is being rehabilitated using non-Recovery Act funds)
- West Levee – at Anapra
- East Levee – Mesilla Dam to Vinton Bridge (area from near Fort Selden to Mesilla Dam is currently being rehabilitated using non-Recovery Act funds)
- East Levee/Canutillo Floodwall – Vinton Bridge to Borderland Bridge (design only)
- East Levee – Borderland Bridge to near Country Club Bridge (area immediately upstream from Country Club Bridge and downstream to Sunland Park Bridge is currently being rehabilitated using non-Recovery Act funds)
- East Levee – Rio Grande Power Plant to American Dam (design and planning only)
- U.S. Levee – Fabens area
- U.S. Levee – Fort Hancock area
- U.S. Levee – downstream from Ysleta-Zaragoza Port of Entry to Fort Quitman (geotechnical studies)

LOWER RIO GRANDE**

- U.S. Rio Grande Levee - Hidalgo Loop Levee Phase I and II
- U.S. Rio Grande Levee - Mission Levee and Culverts at Edinburg Pump
- U.S. Rio Grande Levee - Lateral A to Retamal Dam
- North Levee of the Main and North Floodways – Granjeño to Hidalgo-Cameron County line (design only from Baseline Road to county line)
- South Levee of the Main and North Floodways – start of floodway to Baseline Road
- Arroyo Colorado – Divisor Dike to Hidalgo-Cameron County line (design and potential construction)

* Deficient Rio Grande levees in El Paso County from International Dam to near the Ysleta-Zaragoza Port of Entry were raised by USIBWC in 2007.

**Deficient Rio Grande levees in Cameron County were raised by USIBWC in 2008. Other Rio Grande levee segments in Hidalgo County were addressed in 2008-2009 as part of the levee-wall project between Hidalgo County Drainage District #1, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the USIBWC.