



## International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release  
7:30 p.m. CDT, July 3, 2010

### **USIBWC PREPARES TO DIVERT WATER INTO THE INTERIOR FLOODWAY AS SOON AS JULY 6**

National Weather Service forecasts as of 7:00 p.m. CDT on July 3 based on information provided by the Mexican government indicate that diversion of floodwaters from the Rio Grande into the U.S. interior floodway at Anzalduas Dam in Hidalgo County, Texas could begin as soon as July 6. **Residents in the Lower Rio Grande Valley should continue to monitor National Weather Service warnings and forecasts for any updated information about conditions in the Rio Grande Basin.** The interior floodway includes channels known as the Banker Floodway, Main Floodway, North Floodway, and Arroyo Colorado through portions of Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties. The last time the International Boundary and Water Commission diverted water into the U.S. floodway was in 1988 due to the effects of Hurricane Gilbert. Current forecasts indicate that the volume of water expected in the Rio Grande and interior floodway is well within the capacity of the U.S. levees.

Forecasts indicate that Marte R. Gomez Dam, the downstream reservoir on the San Juan River, a Mexican tributary to the Rio Grande, will spill floodwaters from Hurricane Alex beginning July 4, which would increase flow in the Rio Grande downstream of Falcon Dam. This water is expected to arrive in the Rio Grande at Rio Grande City, TX-Ciudad Camargo, Tamaulipas beginning late on July 4. As these flows move downstream, the International Boundary and Water Commission expects to operate Anzalduas Diversion Dam and Retamal Diversion Dam to divert waters into the interior floodways of the United States and Mexico, thereby minimizing flows downstream in the main channel of the Rio Grande.

To prepare for flood conditions, crews from the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) on July 3 began closing all drainage and irrigation structures that pass through USIBWC levees in order to prevent floodwaters from the Rio Grande and interior floodway from flowing into adjacent communities. Once the structures are closed, drainage from the land side of the levee that would normally flow into the river or floodways will be blocked so any local storm water flows will need to be pumped over the levee by the community or drainage district responsible for local storm water management. As conditions warrant, USIBWC staff will move into Flood Fight Operations. During this phase of response, crews work 24 hours per day to patrol flood control levees to identify and respond to any problems that could arise such as erosion along the levees, freeboard encroachment, or seepage on the land side of the levees. Sand bagging operations will be established if needed. Crews also take more frequent flow measurements to track and document the flood.

As part of its flood operations, the USIBWC exchanges information with the Mexican Section of the Commission regarding flood conditions. The USIBWC provides data about Mexico's Rio Grande tributaries to the National Weather Service, which uses this and U.S. data to formulate flood forecasts. In May, the U.S. and Mexican Sections of the Commission conducted their annual flood workshop in preparation for the hurricane season.

Information about Rio Grande flow as well as storage and release data from U.S. and Mexican reservoirs in the Rio Grande basin is available on the USIBWC web page at:

[http://www.ibwc.gov/Water\\_Data/Reports/RG\\_Flow\\_data.html](http://www.ibwc.gov/Water_Data/Reports/RG_Flow_data.html)

For more information:

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