



## International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release  
February 4, 2019

### **ARROYO COLORADO HYDRAULIC STUDY, FLOOD OPERATIONS, AND HIKE AND BIKE PATHS IN THE VALLEY TO BE DISCUSSED AT FEBRUARY 13 MEETING IN MERCEDES**

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) has scheduled a public meeting of the Lower Rio Grande Citizens Forum (LRGCF) for **Wednesday, February 13, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the USIBWC office at 325 Golf Course Road in Mercedes, Texas.** The purpose of the forum is to promote the exchange of information between the USIBWC and the community regarding Commission projects and related activities.

Apurba Borah, Ph.D., P.E., CFM, Lead Hydraulic Engineer, USIBWC, will give an overview of the hydraulic study done on the Arroyo Colorado after the June 2018 rain event drenched the Valley with more than 18 inches of rain in four days. The Arroyo Colorado has historically served as a natural floodway. Although the design capacity of the Arroyo Colorado is 21,000 cubic feet per second, high flood stages were observed during storm event with a flow about one-fourth of the design capacity. In the City of Harlingen during the June 2018 rain event, the USIBWC gaging station at US 77 recorded maximum water surface elevation of 23.98 feet with a corresponding flow of 5,509 cubic feet per second.

The hydraulic modeling was done to simulate the June 2018 flood event and to identify an alternative to provide full design capacity of Arroyo Colorado. Dr. Borah will provide the results of the study.

The Citizens Forum will also hear from Ron Garza, Executive Director, Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, who is working with stakeholders and partners to realize a regional vision of a Valley-wide, linear “hike & bike” trail. Many different municipal and county jurisdictions have already begun planning or constructing segments of individual trails. LRGVDC has acquired funds to continue a “master plan” to fill remaining gaps. As this system would most likely include an east-west corridor, the Arroyo Colorado should be explored as an option. While many logistics related to this option would have to be assessed, completing this vision along the Arroyo Colorado could have millions of dollars of future economic impact for the region.

Joel Saldivar, Engineering Technician, USIBWC, will discuss the 10 floodgates along the Rio Grande Field Office. In 2012, a contractor designed, fabricated, and installed 10 floodgates in the area of responsibility of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Field Office. The floodgates were constructed on roadways that are traversing the levees to meet the 3-foot freeboard required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These floodgates self-deploy when water elevation rises within the floodways to provide flood protection to residents of the Rio Grande Valley. The IBWC-Lower Rio Grande Field Office is in charge of the operation and maintenance of all gates. Prior to flood season IBWC inspects, deploys and cleans each of these floodgates to ensure the gates function properly.

A complete agenda follows. Members of the public who would like more information about the meeting may call 956-565-3150 or e-mail [lori.kuczanski@ibwc.gov](mailto:lori.kuczanski@ibwc.gov).

News media may contact:

Lori Kuczanski  
Office: (915) 832-4106  
Cell: (915) 494-6027  
[Lori.kuczanski@ibwc.gov](mailto:Lori.kuczanski@ibwc.gov)

**LOWER RIO GRANDE CITIZENS FORUM**  
**Wednesday, February 13, 2019**  
**3:00 – 5:00 p.m.**  
**USIBWC Conference Room**  
**325 Golf Course Road\***  
**Mercedes, TX 78570**

**Agenda**

- **Welcome and Introductions** – Melisa Gonzales, Citizens Forum Co-Chair
- **Arroyo Colorado Hydraulic Analysis for Reestablishing Design Capacity** – Apurba Borah, Ph.D., P.E., CFM, Lead Hydraulic Engineer, USIBWC
- **Bike Paths** – Ron Garza, Executive Director, Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
- **Operations and Maintenance of Floodgates**—Joel Saldivar, Engineering Technician, USIBWC
- **Public Comment**
- Board Discussions/Suggested Future Agenda Items

\*Directions: From Expressway 83, exit Mile 2 W. Travel south for approx. 1.5 miles to Golf Course Rd. Turn left. The USIBWC is the first building on your left.

*If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time. For information, call 956-565-3150 or e-mail [lori.kuczanski@ibwc.gov](mailto:lori.kuczanski@ibwc.gov)*