



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section



For immediate release
April 3, 2012

EL PASO FLOOD CONTROL AND WATERLINE PROJECTS ON AGENDA FOR APRIL 19 PUBLIC MEETING IN EL PASO

Rio Grande flood control levee construction, the status of flood maps for El Paso, and replacement of a major waterline by the El Paso Water Utilities will be discussed at a public meeting of the Rio Grande Citizens Forum, an outreach program of the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC). The meeting will take place Thursday, April 19, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at USIBWC Headquarters, 4171 N. Mesa Street, Building C, El Paso, Texas.

USIBWC Civil Engineer Andrea Glover will give an update on Rio Grande levee construction in El Paso County, Texas and in Hatch, the Mesilla Valley, and Sunland Park, New Mexico. The work is intended to comply with levee standards established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Communities protected by levee systems accredited by FEMA benefit not only from the enhanced flood protection but from better rates on flood insurance. Property owners with federally-backed mortgages in areas not protected by accredited levees could face a mandate to purchase flood insurance. The work is being carried out with funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The purpose of the Recovery Act is to create and save jobs, promote economic recovery, and invest in infrastructure that will provide long-term economic benefits. USIBWC Recovery Act expenditures in Texas and New Mexico have already created or preserved an estimated 2500+ jobs.

The Citizens Forum will also hear from Alan Shubert, City Engineer and Floodplain Administrator for the City of El Paso, who will provide an overview of current FEMA efforts to assess the approach used to analyze communities impacted by flood control levees that are not FEMA accredited. As of May 2011, FEMA officially put on hold the project to develop new flood maps for the

El Paso community to allow for completion of this new modeling approach. The presentation will provide brief background information and the current status of this initiative as it relates to local floodplain activities.

In other business, Gilbert Trejo, Project Manager for Malcolm Pirnie, the Water Division of ARCADIS-US, Inc., will discuss a waterline replacement project being undertaken by El Paso Water Utilities (EPWU). Over the past 31 years, EPWU has operated an existing 36-inch transmission waterline along Paisano Drive. The transmission line serves as a bi-directional waterline, which allows the EPWU to transfer water from the west side to the east side of El Paso in the winter months and from the east side to the west side in the summer months. This waterline is a critical component of the EPWU system. Installed in 1955, this transmission line has failed 15 times, including 7 times in the last 7 years. After detailed investigation, it was determined the waterline has exceeded its useful life. The Paisano Valley Transmission Line Project will replace the existing 36-inch waterline with a new 48-inch waterline. The larger transmission line will allow for additional capacity during drought conditions. The presentation will provide an update of the design of the new waterline, including alignment, schedule, and stakeholder involvement.

The Rio Grande Citizens Forum was established by the USIBWC in 1999 to facilitate the exchange of information regarding USIBWC activities on the Rio Grande between Percha Dam, New Mexico and Fort Quitman, Texas. It is designed to bring together community members, enabling the early and continued two-way flow of information, concerns, values, and needs between USIBWC and the general public, environmentalists, irrigation districts, municipalities, and others interested in the river. A complete meeting agenda follows.

For more information:

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RIO GRANDE CITIZENS FORUM
Thursday, April 19, 2012
6:30 - 8:30 P.M.
USIBWC Headquarters
4171 N. Mesa St., The Commons, Building C
El Paso, TX 79902

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions – Carlos Peña, Citizens Forum Co-Chair, USIBWC
- Paisano Valley 48-inch Transmission Line Project – Gilbert Trejo, Project Manager, Malcolm Pirnie, the Water Division of ARCADIS-US, Inc.
- Floodplain Activities Update – R. Alan Shubert, P.E., C.F.M., City Engineer (Floodplain Administrator), City of El Paso
- Update on Rio Grande Levee Construction – Andrea Glover, Civil Engineer, 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 915-832-4175 or e-mail sally.spener@ibwc.gov