



International Boundary and Water Commission United States and Mexico

For immediate release
May 13, 2021

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTS PROJECTS FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico (IBWC) continues to implement projects for the sustainable management of the Colorado River Basin under the terms of an IBWC agreement known as Minute 323. In 2021, these efforts include water conservation and delivery of water to native habitat restoration sites in Mexico.

Minute 323, “Extension of Cooperative Measures and Adoption of a Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan in the Colorado River Basin,” dated September 21, 2017, includes a variety of measures to promote the sustainable management of the Colorado River Basin through cooperative efforts between the United States and Mexico. These measures include investment in water conservation projects, water scarcity management strategies, salinity management, and restoration and maintenance of riparian habitat, among others.

In 2021, under the terms of the Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan in the Colorado River basin, both the United States and Mexico are generating water savings by reducing deliveries in response to drought conditions (see details at https://www.ibwc.gov/Files/Press_Release_081420.pdf). Water saved in 2021 will be available for future delivery when reservoir conditions improve.

This year also marks the first time the U.S. government share of environmental water will be delivered under the Minute, in the amount of 35,000 acre-feet (43 million cubic meters [mcm]), over the period between May and October. As part of the sustainable management of the basin, the environmental water derives from investment in water conservation projects in Mexico. Environmental water deliveries in 2021 aim to: support vegetation and wildlife at native habitat restoration sites, enhance

dispersion and germination of cottonwood and willow seeds at these sites, improve salinity conditions in soils at the restoration sites, and increase freshwater flows in the Colorado River delta.

Acting U.S. Commissioner Daniel Avila said, “The United States is committed to meeting its environmental commitments to Mexico under Minute 323. I’m pleased to see the environmental water deliveries this year as part of our effort to improve wildlife habitat in the region.”

Mexican Commissioner Humberto Marengo indicated that the efforts for environmental cooperation on the Colorado River in Mexico are very important for both countries, as reflected again this year with the first delivery of water for environmental purposes in the central part of the riparian corridor, triggering various benefits for the fauna and native vegetation in the region, among other important aspects.

Mexicali Valley Irrigation District 014 leaders Fabian Alvarez Castro, President of Module 8, and Rogelio Silva Jaime, President of Module 22, noted that the additional flow of water for the environment that was scheduled will help them better manage the deliveries of irrigation water to each parcel of land because the canals will be fuller and, during the additional water flows, they have seen that salinity on the parcels is reduced, which improves productivity.

During the term of the Minute, which expires December 31, 2026, the governments of the United States and Mexico and a coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) each agreed to provide one-third of 210,000 acre-feet (259 mcm) of water for environmental purposes. The NGOs have already provided approximately 26,369 acre-feet (32.5 mcm) of water over the 2018-2020 period to benefit habitat restoration sites in Mexico and anticipate delivery of an additional volume of 9,545 acre-feet (11.8 mcm) in 2021. The remaining volumes of water for the three parties will be delivered in subsequent years.

For more information:

Sally Spener
(915) 832-4175
sally.spener@ibwc.gov