



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
August 27, 2014

WATER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND A PILOT WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM ON AGENDA FOR SEPTEMBER 10 PUBLIC MEETING IN YUMA, ARIZONA

Water for the environment and a pilot irrigation fallowing program to conserve water will be discussed at the September 10 public meeting of the Colorado River Citizens Forum, sponsored by the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC). The meeting will take place at 4:00 p.m. MST/PDT at the Yuma County Development Services Building, 2351 West 26th Street, Yuma, Arizona 85364.

Kelly Lacroix, Research Analyst from the University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center (WRRC), will discuss the difficult issue of water governance in relationship to Arizona's riparian and aquatic ecosystems. The WRRC has been working to examine how, if, and where water for ecosystems should be considered in statewide water management and planning decisions. The emphasis of this project has been on exploring voluntary, stakeholder-driven options within the context of limited water supplies and existing water rights. The EnWaP (Future of Water for Arizona's Natural Areas) project consists of two phases. The first phase provided information on the water needs of riparian and aquatic ecosystems to stakeholders across Arizona through presentations, bulletins, and the development of a database of riparian and aquatic species flow needs and flow responses. The second phase consists of engagement to create a stakeholder driven "Roadmap" for considering the environment in Arizona water planning and management. The Roadmap includes: (1) concerns and ideas from a diverse array of Arizonans on water for natural resources; (2) lessons learned from previous efforts to consider water for natural resources in management, ranging from an entire river to an individual ranch; and (3) recommendations and tools for how Arizonans might consider water for natural resources in their management and planning. The presentation will summarize water requirements for riparian and aquatic

species in Arizona, perspectives from a diverse set of water users, and recommendations and tools for considering water for natural resources in our management and planning.

Dr. Francisco Zamora, Director of the Sonoran Institute's Colorado River Delta Legacy Program, will provide a summary of the Minute 319 Colorado River Environmental Pulse Flow and Ecological Restoration Activities. Minute 319 is a 2012 agreement of the International Boundary and Water Commission to enhance U.S.-Mexico cooperation on a variety of Colorado River issues, including water for the environment. Dr. Zamora's presentation will summarize the design, implementation, and preliminary results of the 2014 release of Colorado River water for the environment, known as the pulse flow, and on-the-ground restoration activities. A series of aerial images will show how the water traveled from Morelos Dam, located on the Colorado River near Yuma, AZ-Los Algodones, BC, downstream to the lower portion of the river where it reached the sea. Images will also show how passive and active restoration actions complemented the pulse flow to open new restoration areas where new habitat is currently developing.

Finally, a Pilot Fallowing Program developed by the Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment District (CAGR) and the Yuma Mesa Irrigation and Drainage District (YMIDD), which began in January 2014, will be discussed by Perri Benemelis, Senior Analyst with CAGR. This voluntary program allows landowners within YMIDD to fallow (not irrigate) "Qualified Land" in order to conserve Colorado River water. This will allow water to remain in Lake Mead to help minimize or avoid future shortages to water users in the Lower Basin of the Colorado River, including Arizona. The Pilot Program provides many benefits including: (1) providing a stable revenue stream for YMIDD farmers with limited impact on current farming operations; (2) avoids permanent loss of productive agricultural land and minimizes any adverse local economic impact; (3) enhances existing rotational farming practices; and (4) serves an agronomic benefit by allowing a longer rest-rotation for some lands. The Pilot Program will generate data and help to answer a number of questions regarding the methodology, quantification, and the verification of water savings and will help to decide whether a longer-term rotational fallowing program is needed.

The USIBWC established the Colorado River Citizens Forum in 2003 to facilitate the exchange of information between the USIBWC and members of the public about Commission projects and related activities in Yuma County, Arizona and Imperial County, California. A complete meeting agenda follows. Members of the public who would like more information about the meeting may contact 928-782-1598 or sally.spener@ibwc.gov.

Media inquiries are directed to:

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COLORADO RIVER CITIZENS FORUM
Wednesday, September 10, 2014
4:00-6:00 p.m. MST/PDT
Yuma County Development Services Building
2351 West 26th Street*
Yuma, Arizona 85364

AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions – Anna Morales, Citizens Forum Co-Chair, USIBWC
- Considering Water for the Environment in Arizona through Understanding Science, Policy and Water-User Perspectives – Kelly Mott Lacroix, Research Analyst, University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center
- Minute 319 Colorado River Environmental Pulse Flow and Ecological Restoration Activities – Dr. Francisco Zamora, Director at Sonoran Institute, Colorado River Delta Legacy Program
- Update on Implementation of the Yuma Mesa Irrigation and Drainage District Pilot Fallowing Program – Perri Benemelis, Senior Analyst, Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment District (CAGRDR)
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion
- Suggested Future Agenda Items

***Directions:** From I-8, exit 2 US-95/16th Street. Go west on 16th Street for approximately 2 1/2 miles. Turn left on Avenue B to 26th Street. Turn left on 26th Street. Building is on your right (south side of Walmart).

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 928-782-1598 or e-mail sally.spener@ibwc.gov.