



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
September 7, 2012

PUBLIC MEETING IN YUMA TO DISCUSS COLORADO RIVER ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

Environmental projects associated with the lower Colorado River will be discussed at the September 12 public meeting of the Colorado River Citizens Forum. The Forum was established by the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) to facilitate the exchange of information with the public about Commission activities and related matters in the region. The meeting is scheduled for 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. (MST/PDT) at the Yuma County Development Services Aldrich Hall, 2351 West 26th Street in Yuma, Arizona.

Russell Engel with the Arizona Game and Fish Department will discuss the history, management, and water flow through Mittry Lake Wildlife Area. The Mittry Lake Wildlife Area was created in 1951 through the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act when the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) leased the area from the United States Department of the Interior for the benefit of fish and wildlife. The area encompasses approximately 3,500 acres, of which about 440 acres is open water. The primary purpose of the area is to benefit fish and wildlife and provide compatible recreational opportunities. The area is currently managed jointly by AGFD, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Reclamation for fish and wildlife, recreation and resources, and water control. Approximately 12 cubic feet per second of water continually flows through the area via an inlet channel from the Colorado River and an outlet weir back to the Colorado River.

In other business, John Swett with the Bureau of Reclamation will give an update on the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP), a multi-stakeholder partnership which seeks to balance the use of Colorado River water resources with the conservation of native species and their habitats in compliance with the Endangered Species Act. The project area extends over 400 miles of the lower Colorado River from the Grand Canyon to the southerly international boundary with Mexico.

The goals of the LCR MSCP are to conserve habitat and work towards the recovery of currently listed threatened and endangered species while reducing the likelihood of additional listings; accommodate current water diversions and power production and optimize future water and power development; and provide the basis of incidental take authorizations through the implementation of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The HCP lists conservation measures for 26 covered species and 5 evaluation species. This 50-year program is currently in its 7th year of implementation. To date, over 2,200 acres of new habitat has been established and over 200,000 native fish have been raised and stocked.

Three Conservation Areas are located within 30 miles of Yuma, including the Hunters Hole Conservation Area, Laguna Division Conservation Area, and Imperial Ponds Conservation Area. These Conservation Areas range in size from 36 acres to approximately 1200 acres and have been designed to provide a variety of habitat for native fish and wildlife. Mr. Swett will provide updates on each of these Conservation Areas.

A complete meeting agenda follows. Members of the public who would like more information about the meeting may contact 928-782-1598 or e-mail sandra.camacho@ibwc.gov.

Media inquiries are directed to:

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COLORADO RIVER CITIZENS FORUM
Wednesday, September 12, 2012
4:00-6:00 P.M. MST/PDT
Yuma County Development Services Aldrich Hall
2351 West 26th Street
Yuma, Arizona 85364

AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions – Anna Morales, Citizens Forum Co-Chair, USIBWC
- Management of, and Water Flow through Mittry Lake Wildlife Area - Russell Engel, Fish Program Supervisor, Arizona Game and Fish Department
- Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Update - John Swett, Multi-Species Conservation Program Manager, Bureau of Reclamation
- Public Comment
- Suggested Future Agenda Items
- Board Discussion

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 sandra.camacho@ibwc.gov.