



International Boundary and Water Commission
United States Section

USIBWC Citizens Forum Orientation



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International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

IBWC Mission

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, is responsible for applying the boundary and water treaties between the two countries and settling differences that arise in their application.

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International Boundary and Water Commission
United States Section

USIBWC Mission Statement

Provide binational solutions to issues that arise during the application of United States-Mexico treaties regarding boundary demarcation, national ownership of waters, sanitation, water quality, and flood control in the border region.

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Early History of the IBWC

- **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848)** – Established the international boundary
- **Treaty of December 30, 1853** – Gadsden Purchase expanded U.S. territory
- **Convention of July 29, 1882** – Established a temporary commission to survey and monument the land boundary



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Early History of the IBWC

- **Convention of Nov. 12, 1884** –
Adopted rules about the location of the boundary when the rivers changed course
- **Convention of March 1, 1889** –
Established the International Boundary Commission
- Focus on maintaining the boundary



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Convention of 1906

- Distribution between Mexico and the U.S. of the waters of the Rio Grande in El Paso-Juarez
- U.S. to deliver 60 kaf/yr
- Proportional reduction in deliveries in case of extraordinary drought
- Water stored in Elephant Butte Dam, NM
- Water diverted by Mexico at International Dam



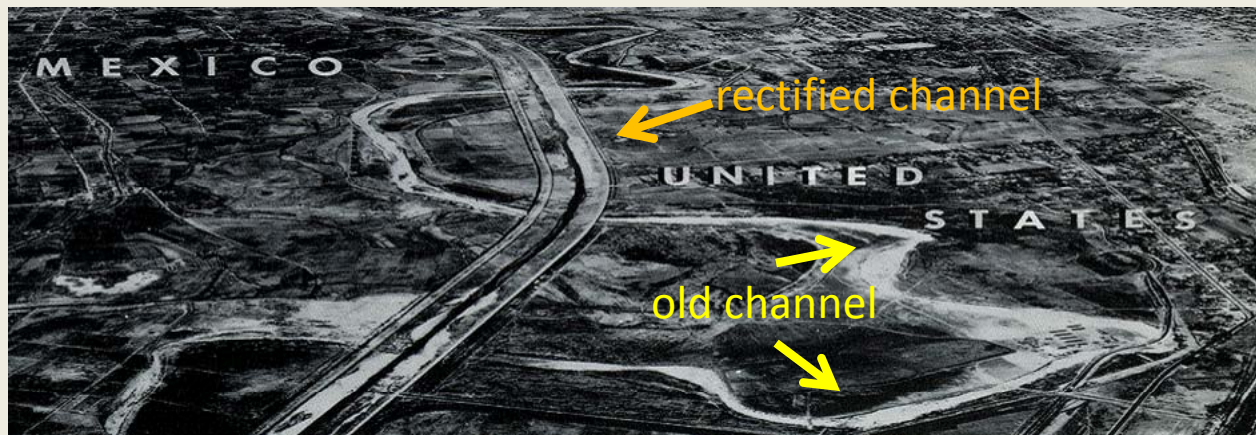
International Dam

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Convention of 1933

- Stabilized the boundary in the El Paso-Juarez Valley
- Straightened the river channel
- Flood control levees in both countries
- Rio Grande Rectification Project



The meandering river channel was straightened.

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IBWC Minutes

- Decisions of the Commission are recorded in the form of Minutes
- Minutes are binding agreements of the IBWC intended to implement treaty.
- They take effect once approved by the U.S. Department of State and Mexico's Foreign Affairs Ministry



IBWC Minute

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1944 Water Treaty – Rio Grande

- Mexico delivers water to the U.S., Ft. Quitman to Gulf
- U.S. receives 1/3 of the waters arriving in the Rio Grande from 6 Mexican tributaries
- Minimum annual average of 350 kaf in cycles of 5 yrs
- Mexico incurred a deficit in deliveries in the 1990s
- Treaty authorized construction of up to three storage dams on Rio Grande; only 2 were built

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1944 Water Treaty – Colorado River

- U.S. to deliver to Mexico a volume of 1.5 maf/yr
- When there are surplus waters, U.S. to deliver to Mexico a total volume of up to 1.7 maf/yr
- In extraordinary drought, Mexico reduced in proportion to U.S.



Colorado River at NIB

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Chamizal Convention (1963)

- Relocated the Rio Grande in a concrete-lined channel through central El Paso-Juarez
- Resolved a century-long boundary dispute



*President Adolfo Lopez
Mateos Channel*

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1970 Boundary Treaty

- IBWC to maintain the Rio Grande and Colorado River as the international boundary
- Boundary is middle of the channel occupied by normal flow or middle of the channel which in normal flows has the greatest average width over its length
- IBWC to delineate the boundary on maps
- IBWC may stabilize or rectify the channel (numerous rectifications carried out)
- Prohibits construction of works that would obstruct or deflect normal or flood flows

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IBWC Structure

- Two Sections of the IBWC
 - Mexican Section – part of Ministry of Foreign Relations
 - U.S. Section – independent federal commission that receives budget and foreign policy guidance from State Department
 - Each Section headed by a Commissioner appointed by his president
- USIBWC has 4 main organizational units
 - Office of the Commissioner
 - Operations Department (includes field offices)
 - Engineering Department
 - Administration Department

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Field Offices

San Diego Yuma Nogales Up. Rio Grande Presidio Amistad Falcon L. Rio Grande





Boundary Demarcation

- U.S. and Mexican Sections of IBWC jointly determine location of the boundary and demarcate the boundary
- 258 principal monuments between El Paso, TX-Cd. Juarez, Chih. and the Pacific Ocean
- Hundreds of intermediate boundary markers
- Boundary demarcation plaques at ports of entry/international bridges
- IBWC responsible for maintaining the monuments

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Boundary Demarcation



Monument No. 123, Nogales



*Boundary demarcation at
Tecate Port of Entry*

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International Bridges

- IBWC maintains 3 international bridges
 - Cordova International-Bridge of the Americas (El Paso-Juarez)
 - Tornillo, TX-Guadalupe, Chih. “Fabens Bridge”
 - Ft. Hancock, TX-El Porvenir, Chih.



Fabens Bridge

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Sanitation

- 1944 Treaty authorizes Commission to give “preferential attention to the solution of all border sanitation problems”
- 3 international wastewater treatment plants
 - Nogales
 - South Bay
 - Nuevo Laredo



Nogales IWTP

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Sanitation



Nuevo Laredo effluent



South Bay IWTP

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Water Quality

- Treaties do not regulate water quality
- IBWC has conducted binational water quality studies with partners from both countries
- Working on binational water quality database
- Texas Clean Rivers Program for the Rio Grande conducts regular monitoring and publishes reports



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Reservoirs

- Two international storage dams on the Rio Grande
- Reservoirs store water for use by both countries and provide flood control
- Each country has hydroelectric power plants
- Power is generated equally regardless of national ownership of water releases



Falcon Dam Powerplant

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Amistad Dam

- Located at Del Rio, TX-Cd. Acuña, Coahuila
- Built in 1969
- Impounded Rio Grande extends for 75 miles, covers 65,000 acres
- Normal conservation capacity of over 3 million acre-feet



Amistad Dam

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Falcon Dam

- Located at Falcon Heights, TX-Nva. Cd. Guerrero, Coah.
- Built in 1954
- Reservoir covers 78,300 acres at conservation capacity
- Normal conservation capacity of 2.6 million acre-feet



Falcon Dam

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Water Delivery – Colorado River

- U.S. delivers water to Mexico on the Colorado River near Yuma-Mexicali
- Deliveries effected through Reclamation-IBWC cooperation
- Mexico diverts most of its allotment at Morelos Dam
- U.S. must comply with Minute 242 salinity differential



Morelos Dam

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Water Delivery – Rio Grande

- U.S. delivers Rio Grande water to Mexico at El Paso-Juarez
- Water is released through American Dam and diverted at International Dam
- USIBWC Canalization Project is a water delivery and flood control project



American Dam

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Flood Control

- 4 USIBWC Flood Control Projects
 - **Tijuana River** – San Diego, CA
 - **Upper Rio Grande** – Southern New Mexico and West Texas
 - **Presidio** – Big Bend area of Texas
 - **Lower Rio Grande** – near McAllen, Harlingen, Brownsville
- USIBWC maintains flood control levees, tracks flow, operates diversion dams in coordination with Mexico

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Upper Rio Grande Flood Control

- Canalization, Chamizal, and Rectification Projects
 - 200 river miles from Percha Dam, NM to Ft. Quitman, TX
- Levees and floodway maintained by staff in 3 offices:
 - Las Cruces, NM
 - El Paso, TX (American Dam/Carlos Marin Field Office)
 - Ft. Hancock, TX (Zacarias Dominguez Field Office)



Canalization levee

Excellence through teamwork.



Lower Rio Grande Flood Control

- Covers 180 river miles from Peñitas to the Gulf of Mexico
- 2 diversion dams
 - Anzalduas Dam – diverts water into U.S. interior floodway
 - Retamal Dam – diverts water into Mexico's interior floodway
- Hundreds of miles of levees on Rio Grande and interior floodways



North Floodway (2010)

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Lower Rio Grande Flood Control



Anzalduas Dam in 2007



Retamal Dam on July 18, 2010

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Lower Rio Grande Flood Control



Banker Weir before diversion



Banker Weir on July 8, 2010

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Current Issues

- Dam Safety – studies underway to mitigate dam safety concerns identified at Amistad and Falcon Dams
- Colorado River Cooperative Process – Working with Mexico and stakeholders to improve management of Colorado River
- Levee construction – Completing \$220 M in Recovery Act projects

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Levee Construction



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Citizens Forum



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Citizens Forum History

- Program started in 1999 in Upper Rio Grande
- Expanded to other regions in 2000s
- Citizens Forum Boards
 - Upper Rio Grande (TX & NM)
 - Lower Rio Grande (TX)
 - Colorado River (CA & AZ)
 - Southeast Arizona
 - San Diego, CA



Colorado River Citizens Forum Meeting

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Citizens Forum Purpose

- To facilitate the exchange of information between the USIBWC and the local community regarding ongoing and future USIBWC projects and related issues in the area (San Diego County).

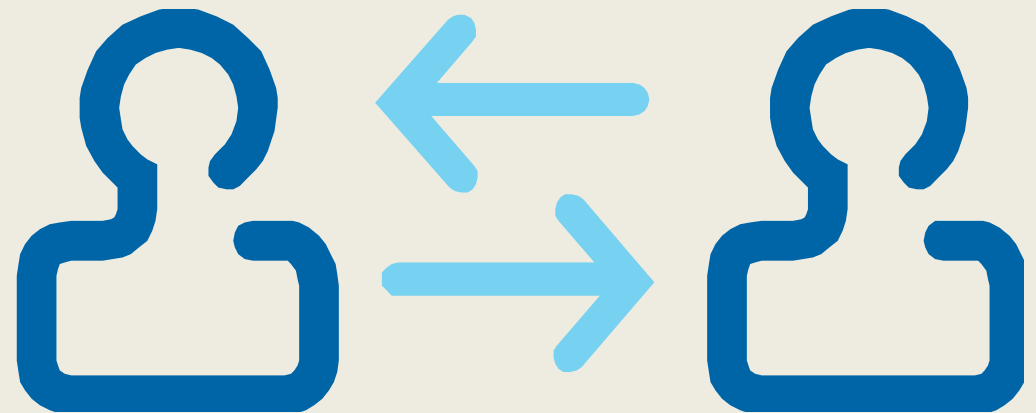


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Citizens Forum Purpose

- The Citizens Forum is intended to bring together community members, enabling the early and continued two-way flow of information, concerns, values, and needs between the USIBWC and the general public, environmentalists, water managers, irrigators, government agencies, etc.

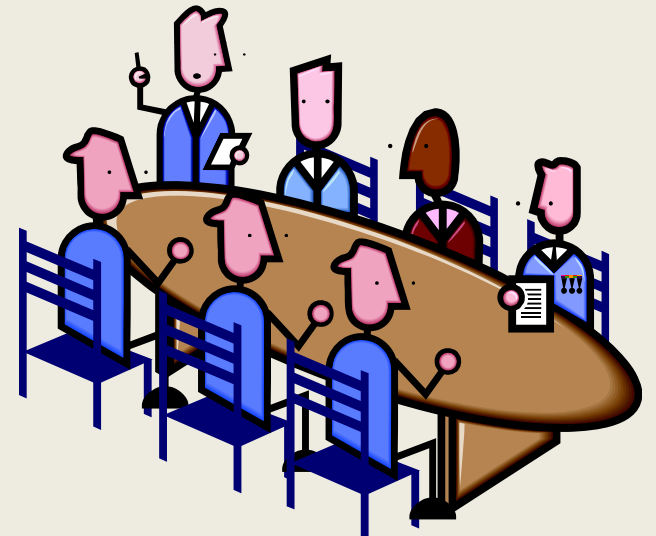


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Board Member Duties

- Attend public meetings four times per year
- Meetings to be held in San Diego County
- Board term is for two years
- Board members are expected to be available to the public to facilitate the exchange of information



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Board Member Duties

- Review and comment on documents and activities
- Discuss plans and issues related to ongoing and future USIBWC projects
- The Citizens Forum is not a federal advisory committee; goal is to exchange information and to include a diversity of viewpoints
- Members serve as volunteers with no reimbursement for expenses





Citizens Forum Information

- All meetings are open to the public
- Regular communication with board via e-mail
- Meeting notices, notes/minutes, and presentations are available online at:

http://www.ibwc.state.gov/Citizens_Forums/CF_SBIWTP.html



Citizens Forum Leadership

- Two Co-Chairs
- USIBWC Co-Chair
 - Area Operations Manager Steve Smullen
- Community Co-Chair
 - Selected by the board



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Citizens Forum Discussion Items

- Selection of a co-chair
- Meeting Logistics
 - Days of the week
 - Time of day
 - Locations
- Tours or field trips

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