

DOI U.S./Mexico Border
Field Coordinating Committee
Meeting

October 21, 2008
Yuma, AZ

Representatives – 32 people

BLM, USGS, BOR, BIA, USFWS, DOI-OEPC, City of Yuma, NPS,
Mexican Institute of Water Technology (IMTA), Border Patrol, Senator Jon Kyl's office,
Arizona Zoological Society, BOR-MSCP, and SEMARNAT (Mexico's Environmental Agency)

1. Welcome and Introductions: Lorenzo Arrigeo, Chair of DOI-FCC

2. Opening Remarks: Mayor of Yuma, Mr. Larry Nelson – formerly worked for the Arizona Public Service (APS) 42 years

- A lot of new development in Yuma – dynamic things happening
- 25% Govt (Yuma Proving Ground, Border Patrol)
- Large industry would like to move to Yuma
- Unique community – all work together (policing)
- Wetlands East/West
- Outside partners
- Can see the Colorado River now / after floods and wetlands development
- Secure the border
 - 1,000 apprehensions now compared to 8,000 before the border fence was installed
- Indian Nations are great partners
- Impacts to economy without Mexicans - \$500 mil
- San Luis Port (crossing issues the Mexico side = 300,000 pop vs AZ side = 30,000 pop)
- Mayor's Coalition

3. Co-Chair of DOI-FCC: Eddie Guerrero, BLM

Provided Background on DOI FCC and membership

A. BLM – Yuma Area Field Manager, Todd Shoaff

Language of partnerships --- everyone is important

Building working partnerships and network in building bridges across state/border/city/county line (examples include the Yuma East Wetlands and Limitrophe Area projects).

Agencies are seeing static or decreasing budgets

Restoration projects - learning about a piece of the border vs learning about the whole border (Yuma area)

**4. Yuma Crossing Riverfront Project: Kevin Eatherly, Project Manager,
Private non-profit organization**

- Designated in 2000 (Yuma Crossing Heritage Area)
- Leveraging federal dollars - - > work w/state & others
- Management Plan & Standards– approved by DOI Secretary
- 7 districts
 - Wetlands – Yuma West, Yuma East (Fred Phillips, Manager)
 - Riverfront – 6 miles
 - Downtown area
- Restoration can be combined with Border security (mix of uses/visual corridors vs use of specific vegetation)
- 400 acres in US & 600 acres in Mexico
- Workshop at Hunters Hole - restoration partnerships with others (BLM, BOR, Mexico, etc.)
- New Conference Center & Hotel on riverfront – working w/them for design
- Reconnect the community w/the river
- Report completed as to what has been done/completed so far
- Extending partnership w/Quechan Tribe
- Newsletter – River Currents (which is a part of public outreach)
- Management plan
- Report
- www.Yumaheritage.com

Power Point Presentation by Fred Phillips, consultant

Morelos Dam

Water diverted upstream / downstream is the Bi-National Restoration Limitrophe (water needs and Home Land Security ---> \$680,000 grant from State of AZ for Phase I & a grant from BOR for well development

Hunters Hole

50 acre area / cottonwood and willow pole plantings and proposed levee

- Get rid of exotic species/create natural diversity
- Proposed canal through Hunters Hole w/groundwater pumps
- East Wetlands – channel exists to flood area
- Bird pop increase (Yuma clapper rail now after 5 years)
- Clean-up trash, clear exotics, pole plantings, irrigation drops (1 gal plants) – Mexico jobs in planting & nursery

5. BOR Yuma Area Office/Groundwater Management: Ed Virden, Assistant Area Manager, BOR

Diverse issues --- Diverse Solution
(Challenges)

Lines of business – Colorado River Water Delivery

- Groundwater management
- Desalting Services
- Resource management ---Right-of-Way & environmental issues
- Design, construction and maintenance services

Parker Dam – Imperial Dam (small reservoirs)

Flows 50% Cochella/Imperial in CA and 50% Mexico & Yuma Area

Loss to seepage/evaporation

Yuma Desalter Plant:

- 90-day demonstration run in 2007 – 10% capacity – daily testing of river water
- Second largest facility in the world / completed in 1992, was constructed to remove salt from agriculture return flow then discharged into Colorado River and included in water deliveries to Mexico

Drop 2 Reservoir / 30 miles west of Yuma / south of I-8 along All American Canal

- BOR to develop an inlet canal from Drop 1 to Brock Ranch (for a storage facility) Opening Ceremony - October 2008. The reservoir will be 20 ft. deep, 1 square mile and some evaporation will occur.

Pilot Project – Summer 2009

- Year-long test run (possible EA) ---29,000 acre ft. at 1/3 of full capacity with 8.2 million gallons per day

Cienega de Santa Clara in Mexico impacts (40,000 acre wetland) – Bio-Preserve / Desert Pup fish, Yuma Clapper Rail

- Loss of water ---BOR is doing some research on whether there is more salt/selenium
- Brine water ---removed salts (reject stream) ---sludge
- Mexico is very concerned
- Recommend a working group to look at this issue
- BOR is consulting w/IBWC
- Public scoping meeting conducted

BOR Operations & Maintenance:

Good water – sweetwater

Senator Wash
Imperial Dam
Laguna Dam
Drop 2
97 monitoring wells

Nuisance Water (salty water, parts per million – not more than 120 ppm can be discharged into the river to go to Mexico Wellton Mohawk Drainage Canal (Bypass Dam) – some water goes to Cienega de Santa Clara in Mexico

Salinity (ppm)

Imperial (675 – 735 ppm)

Morelos (830 ppm)

Ocean (35,000 ppm)

Annual Operating Plan

7 Basin States

6. **Lower Colorado River MSCP & Limitrophe:** Terry Murphy, BOR (contact him for plantings)
Restoration Group Manager, Boulder City, NV
Sam Spiller, USFWS

Multi-Species Conservation Plan – Habitat-based program – mitigation

7 reaches (Lake Mead to Mexico border – 276 river miles)

Steering Committee meets twice a year

(26 stakeholders) – NV, CA & AZ

Purpose:

50 yrs. of ESA & CESA

Covered Actions (Non-Federal & Federal)

Delivery & Diversion of 9 MAF

26 Covered Species

6 T&E species – 2 birds

Annual Contributions = \$626.2 mil total program

50% - Fed

25% - AZ

25% - N

50% - CA

\$25 mil in an interest bearing account for 10 years (for habitat restoration)

- Grant like process

Program Components:

- Fish Augmentation

- Species Research

- System-wide monitoring

- Existing Habitat Maintenance

- Conservation Area (development management, backwater marsh, and cottonwood/willow/mesquite)

Groups:

Administration

Wildlife

Fish

Various Projects – mid 1990's and recent

- Imperial Ponds/Imperial Refuge – BOR & USFWS partnership (separate area from Colorado River and screen & isolation of fish or Zebra mussels)
- Cibola NWR – Hart Mine Marsh – 175 acre block – recontouring it & use drain and/or pump water or combination of both
- Hand planting (couple thousand trees per acre for SWWF)
- Tree planters – 1 gal plants/to increase productivity
- Cibola Valley Conservation Area (306 acres purchased & turned over to AGFD) 1352 acres in CA
Converting Ag lands to habitat & claim with a water right
- Green House – mass transplanting/blocks
- Planet Ranch – Bill Williams River – 3500 ac of land/5000 acf of water only convert several hundred acres in river corridor/active channel

Restoration R&D Projects:

- CRIT – Tribal Preserve
- Havasu NWR – Beal Lake (Fish & Riparian)
- Cibola NWR – Mass transplanting, Seed Feasibility Study

Ag conversions (use of alfalfa as cover plant trees --- > no real exotic species issues (like salt cedar) but morning glory.

Site Selection Process

- Draft guidelines posted on website
- Allows for consistent screening & evaluation
- Steering Committee input

FY2008 Proposals

Cibola – 800 acs of land
SNWA

Adaptive Management

Program Level
Project Level

FY2009 Proposals – online process (1 page) (RFP)

CRIT – 3 projects
Yuma East Wetlands
Imperial NWR
Laguna Division
Laguna Fire
Hunters Hole

<http://lcrmscp.gov/>

Limitrophe Division from Morelos Dam to Southerly International Boundary

“The water” – 23 river miles

Normal low flow periods (ag return water)

Minute 306 - U.S./Mexico Water Treaty – Effective December 12, 2000

Joint studies for future recommendations concerning riparian & estuarine ecology of the Colorado River in limitrophe section & its associated delta (Sea of Cortez). Possible approaches to ensure use of water. Flow provides values for maintenance of migratory birds (need functional habitat)

Proposed – Opportunity to meet bi-nationally & discuss how U.S. & Mexico can share this water.

Sources of Water – protecting the water

- Potentially from return flow & high groundwater from U.S. & Mexico
- Leakage from Morelos Dam
- Occasional Gila River Flood flows
- Releases above Morelos Dam

Conservation priorities in the Colorado River Delta, Mexico & U.S. (2005)

- Limitrophe Vegetation – wetland
- Salt cedar
- Cattail marsh w/open water

BLM Limitrophe coordinated Mgmt area (2008)

Yuma Co. Sheriff (2005) – safety & law enforcement concerns

- 7. Climate Change U.S./Mexico: **Jean Parcher, USGS**
Martin Montero, Instituto Mexicano de Tecnologia del Agua
(IMTA)
Since this is a Bi-National meeting, he decided to speak in Spanish**

www.imta.gob.mx ----- (for documents)

Martin Montero:

- Climate change has become a national priority
- Mexico's Third National Communication to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (October 2007) – National Greenhouse Gas Inventory & Measures to Mitigate Climate Change.
- Relevant Projects
- Climate change effects on water resources in Mexico
- National strategy on climate change (May 2007)
- Inter-Ministerial Commission on Climate Change (CICC)
 - SCT = Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes (Communications and Transportation Ministry)
 - SE = Secretaria de Economia (Economic Ministry)
 - SEMARNAT = Secretaria de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Environment and Natural Resources Ministry)
 - SRE = Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores (Foreign Affairs Ministry)

Institutes & Universities Research on CC in Mexico

International Coordination/Regional Pilot Projects

- Special Program on Climate Change 2008 – 2012
- World emissions – carbon output --- population growth
- Soils/Ag/Energy (carbon dioxide & methane)
- Vehicles
- Major emitting Countries – 7 (US, China, Russia, Iran, Mexico, etc.)

Mexico

- Water availability and water development/Population growth – lack of water urban pop & health
- Use of water – 78% Agriculture
- Impacts to ag, urban pop, ecosystems, forests --- mitigation projects (2007-2010 AZ)
- Soil degradation – deforestation/forest fires
- Increase in temperature, rain changes (models)
- Contamination – air and water pollution, soils
- Natural risks – storms, hurricanes, cyclones, droughts, floods, extreme temps, earthquakes, landslides, forest fires, volcanoes
- Technology being managed in a better way / mass media to inform citizens

U.S.-Mexico Border Climate Change – Jean Parcher, USGS

Possible future symposium between US/Mexico Researchers

Climate change challenges

Increased temp
Decrease precipitation
Pop growth

Impacts

Decreased water supply
Increased surface evaporation
Increased water & energy demands
Stress on ecosystems – fire, erosion, decreased water quality, longer heat waves
Changing demographics (13 to 24 mil pop along the border)

Major Water Sources & tributaries

Colorado River
Rio Grande

Climate Assessment for the Southwest

Gregg Garfin
Climate Assessment for the Southwest
Institute for the Study of Planet Earth
gmgarfin@email.arizona.edu
(520) 622-9016
www.ispe.arizona.edu/climas

- Enhanced Bi-National climate monitoring
- Capacity building initiatives
- Drought Preparedness
- Cooperation
- Assess catchment mgmt practices to meet seasonal river flows (TX)

Other Climate Science Researchers focused on the U.S. – Mexico Border

Rosario Sanchez, Texas A&M – Texas-Mexico Border

Alexander Gershunov, Climate, Atmospheric Science and Physical Oceanography (CASPO)
Scripps Institution of Oceanography

University of California, San Diego
sasha@ucsd.edu

Michael Cimmins

- Climate Science Extension Specialist/Assistant Professor
- Department of Soil, Water, and Environmental Science
- The University of Arizona
- Current projects
- <http://cals.arizona.edu/climate>

Robert Varady

- Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy
- rvarady@email.arizona.edu

D. Rick Van Schoik

North American Center for Transborder Studies and Southwest Consortium for Environmental Research and Policy
nacts@asu.edu

Julio Betancourt

Desert Workshop, U.S. Geological Survey
http://www.pazten.wr.usgs.gov/julio_cv.html

Upcoming Workshops:

- Borders Governors Conference, March 26-27, 2009 in San Diego
- Adaptation to Climate Change in Desert SW – January 22-23, 2009 in Tucson

Newsletters:

- University of Arizona – Experimental quarterly climate information bulletin for the U.S. – Mexico border region
- <http://www.climas.arizona.edu/forecasts.html>
- Mexico Climate Change Network
- <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/geography/network-mexico>

Tri-Lateral Committee Meeting in Florida in May (Wildlife)

8. DOI-SEMARNAT Partnership: **Alejandra Posadas, Environment Attache, Embassy of Mexico, Washington, DC**

Cooperation & Political Process between high level positions:

- June 2007 – Mexican Ambassador & Sec. Kempthorne – First meeting
- August 2007 – Joint Statement on Collaboration on Colorado River Under IBWC
- July 2008 – First meeting between Sec. Elvira & Sec. Kempthorne in DC
- August 2008 – Follow-up Meeting between the Sec's with the Border States Governors mtg in CA

Colorado River Process:

- 4 Working groups
 - Water Conservation
 - Operation of the water system
 - New sources of water
 - Environment

Environment Sector – Mexico - CONAGUA (Water Commission); CONANP (Nat'l Parks); INE, IMTA (Water Institute)

Recognize & confirm on-going collaboration

Natural protected areas:

- 14 sister parks - \$300,000 budget
- Wildlife without Borders Program (15 yrs, \$500,000 budget)
- Tri-Lateral Meetings
- Migratory Birds
 - Bi-Lateral & Regional treaties
 - US Migratory Birds Conservation Commission
- Fire fighting Cooperation
- Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary

Steering Committee – 8 seats for each country (IBWC, State Dept. Sec. Foreign Affairs, SEMARNAT)

Potential Environmental Impact of Border Fence:

- Workshops in Mexico
- Book – 83 experts from both countries
- Potential damages to flora & fauna (Jaguar, Ocelot, Mexican Gray Wolf, Black bear, Desert Pronghorn Antelope)
- Flooding problems from fence installation

Working on Joint Declaration:

- Water resource management, conservation, efficiency & storage
- Migratory & shared species
- Protected areas – capacity building, staff exchanges, planning, inventory, monitoring ecological restoration
- Invasive Species Management
- Wildlife disease monitoring
- Climate change research monitoring
- Wildlife force research & management

Dept. of State Office of Mexican Affairs – Rachel Poynter

- Environmental Health, Technology
- Bi-Lateral Affairs/relationship
- Good relationship/strong cooperation ---environmental conservation with Mexico

- Border fence issues
 - DHS has the lead & mandate to build it
- IBWC – based in El Paso/liaison in DC (Mary Bard)
- EPA – Border 2012 Initiative (water, emergency management)
- Sits on the board of NADBANK which has tripled its lending portfolio over the last two years – ports of entry & border crossings, water – infrastructure/environment
- Good Neighbor Environmental Board – innovative strategies along the border
- Disaster Management – wildfires, hurricanes, flooding, emergencies
- Agreement between US/Mexico – Cooperation during Emergency Disasters possible future compacts (Regional)

* Important for DOI employees considering international travel to get a government passport. To facilitate response across the border by emergency workers. May establish a database of emergency responders. Approval can be quick, e.g. for July 2008 wildfire 100 Mexican firefighters received approval from the U.S, Customs and Border Patrol in two hours.

9. US/Mexico Partnerships for the Conservation of Species: Erin Fernandez, USFWS, Tucson Mexico Program Coord.

(Cross Border Species) 40 species in AZ & Sonora

Various partners – Federal, State, NGO's, Universities, Private

Alto Golfo Bio-sphere Reserve – Flat-tailed horned lizard, Management & Conservation – NW Sonora (Habitats, information sharing, environmental & educational outreach program, training on field skills such as monitoring and surveys, U.S. Interagency Management Oversight Group provided funds for similar effort in Mexico)

- Genetics of the Lowland Leopard Frog – collected tissues
- Re-establishment of the Tarahumana Frogs in AZ – collection of tadpoles from Mexico
- Conservation of the Imperiled Species of the Rio Sonoyta
 - Sonoyta Mud Turtle, Quitobaquito pupfish, Longfin Dace - the headwaters at the Tohono O'odam Nation's reservation
 - Quitobaquito pup fish = 3 refuge ponds established in Mexico (provides backup population)
- New wastewater treatment facility in Sonoyta – providing input into design of it
- 37 amphibian species documented in Sonoyta
 - 3-day pilot workshop done in 2008 in Mexico – Rancho Los Fresnos (San Pedro watershed east of Nogales)
- Additional workshops planned in 2009
- Recovery of the Chiricahua Leopard Frog in NW Mexico
 - Establish additional populations
 - Train Sonoran biologists
- Ranch El Arbabi – 30 miles south of Nogales
 - Private Ranch
 - Conduct biological inventories
 - Eco-tourism programs at the ranch
- Santa Cruz River
 - Conduct surveys for Gila topminnow, Sonora tiger salamanders, Mexican garter snakes
- Bat Inventory & training at Jaguar Reserve

- Lesser Long-Nosed Bat – monitor roost sites
- Recovery of Sonoran Pronghorn – monitoring population in Sonora & AZ – using GPS collars and captive breeding program in AZ
- Jaguar Conservation – monitoring, habitat acquisition & management, landowner incentives
- Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy Owl – assists w/surveys, genetics study, nest boxes
- Mask Bobwhite – continue surveys, develop conservation & recovery strategy, secure landowner agreements to conserve habitat (remove cattle), establish a captive breeding facilities – one in Mexico and another in U.S.

Questions:

- Border Fence – wildlife mitigation/fence panels and openings
- Bald Eagles in Mexico – Rio Yaqui
- Tribal partnerships
- Water – drug compounds in the water/contaminants

10. Border Crossing Issues for Native Americans: Dale Phillips, Vice-Chairman, Cocopah

- Explained the way the Tribe feels – tribal elders, leaders, members
- Not the best journey
- Cocopah people came from water – ant – dirt / land / vegetation / people
- 35 miles south of Mexicali --- the tribe migrated up & down the river to Yuma
 - Live off the land / no more & no less / respect the land & heavens
- This is North wall – Eagle Mtn – creator rested
- in the East wall – Mohawk Mtns – spiritual lady
- Cocopah’s South wall – Sea of Cortez / Sacred Mtn / Salt Flats
- House West Wall – San Diego / Pilot Knob (Cocopah go there to get a vision)
- No specific history of Cocopah people / Priests’ journal – 7000 Cocopah
- Spaniards boat journey – north – Cocopah fed them
- Catholics – kill w/a cross / beat them if they spoke their native language
- Hair is very sacred to Cocopah
- Strong with their culture and very traditional
- Ft. Yuma established – Calvary support
- Disease in the blankets – Cocopah died (pox)
- Colorado River called the “Red River”
- Sacred sites along river bank / ceremonies
- River dried up – dams
- Border here – cannot cross anymore
- Sacred ceremonies, visiting relatives and friends
- Started working w/Border Patrol – but those from Mexico became afraid so they stopped coming
- Cocopah in Mexico – no water, fight for fishing rights at Sea of Cortez
- US Cocopah – Send food & supplies to Mexico Cocopah
- Lack of Trust
- Do not forget where you came from – weakness, failure could occur
- Never sleep late – travel with the sun / destiny
- Border fence – to keep criminals, drugs, illegals out.... kill by the cross

- Sacred & traditional
- Commended the Border Patrol – Tribal Liaison – Carlos Domingus

The DOI/FCC U.S.-Mexico Border Meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m. on October 21, 2008