



## International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release  
July 27, 2018

### **RIO GRANDE WATER QUALITY AND WATERMASTER PROGRAM TO BE DISCUSSED AT AUGUST 8 MEETING IN MERCEDES**

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) has scheduled a public meeting of the Lower Rio Grande Citizens Forum (LRGCF) for **Wednesday, August 8, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the USIBWC office at 325 Golf Course Road in Mercedes, Texas.** The purpose of the forum is to promote the exchange of information between the USIBWC and the community regarding Commission projects and related activities.

Leslie Grijalva, Environmental Projection Specialist, USIBWC, will discuss the water quality of the Rio Grande in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The USIBWC Texas Clean Rivers program collects water quality information throughout the basin. Ms. Grijalva will discuss bacteria and salinity, monitoring activities, outreach activities, and both ongoing and future projects in the Lower Rio Grande Valley affecting water quality.

The Lower Rio Grande Citizens Forum will also hear from Jose Davila, Assistant Rio Grande Watermaster, on the Rio Grande Watermaster Program.

In the Rio Grande basin above Lake Amistad (the Upper Rio Grande), water rights are managed using a “first in time, first in right” priority system, as they are in other parts of Texas. Water rights in the Middle and Lower Rio Grande are served by the Falcon-Amistad reservoir system. Water below Lake Amistad is allocated on an account basis, much like having a bank account with a constantly changing balance. Priority is given to all municipal accounts, which

means that at the beginning of each year the storage balance for each municipal account resets to its full authorized water-right amount. The municipal priority is guaranteed by the monthly reestablishment of a municipal reserve in the system of 225,000 acre-feet.

Irrigation accounts, on the other hand, must rely on balances that are carried forward, as irrigation accounts are not reset at the beginning of the year. Each month the watermaster determines how much unallocated water assigned to the United States is contained in the Falcon-Amistad system. If surplus water is identified in a given month, it is allocated to the irrigation accounts. When water is used, it is subtracted from the respective account by type of use from the account's usable balance. This system of accounting for water usage was put in place after an international treaty with Mexico was established, and in accordance with a 1969 District Court ruling.

A complete agenda follows. Members of the public who would like more information about the meeting may call 956-565-3150 or e-mail [lori.kuczanski@ibwc.gov](mailto:lori.kuczanski@ibwc.gov).

News media may contact:

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**USIBWC CITIZENS FORUM**  
**Wednesday, August 8, 2018**  
**3:00 – 5:00 p.m.**  
**USIBWC Conference Room**  
**325 Golf Course Road\***  
**Mercedes, TX 78570**

**Agenda**

- **Welcome and Introductions** – Omar Rios, Citizens Forum Co-Chair
- **Water Quality in the Lower Rio Grande: Annual Water Quality Update**– Leslie Grijalva, Environmental Protection Specialist, USIBWC
- **Rio Grande Watermaster Program**– Jose Davila, Assistant Rio Grande Watermaster, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- **Public Comment**
- **Board Discussion/Suggested Future Agenda Items**

\*Directions: From Expressway 83, exit Mile 2 W. Travel south for approx. 1.5 miles to Golf Course Rd. Turn left. The USIBWC is the first building on your left.

*If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time. For information, call 956-565-3150 or e-mail [lori.kuczanski@ibwc.gov](mailto:lori.kuczanski@ibwc.gov)*