



May – June 2010

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New River “Technical Advisory Committee” to meet in Calexico

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) referenced in AB 1079 will meet for the first time in Calexico after completing a selection process that included over 60 agencies. California Environmental Protection Agency Secretary Linda Adams sent invitation letters to those that were picked in the selection process and welcomed them to this important endeavor. Those that have been selected to be in the TAC will help develop a plan that will guide implementation of the New River Improvement Project which is intended to “study, monitor, remediate and enhance the New River water quality in the County of Imperial to protect human health, and develop a river parkway suitable for public use and enjoyment.” The strategic plan will be supervised by the TAC, but will consist of the input, in-kind contributions and expertise of a broad range of international, national, state, regional, and local agencies.

As stated in AB 1079, the strategic plan must contain the following elements:

(1) Identification of the appropriate federal, state, and local agencies with a role implementing and achieving the New River Improvement Project.

(2) Quantification of current and projected New River water quality impairments and their threat to public health.

(3) Prioritization of the actions necessary to protect public health and to meet New River water quality objectives and other environmental goals, such as improving the quality of water flows into the Salton Sea.

(4) Identification of potential funds for the implementation of the project, and potential lead agencies that would be responsible for environmental review of activities related to the cleanup and restoration of the New River.

IBWC’s Colorado River Citizens Forum Meeting in El Centro, CA

On June 7, 2010 the International Boundary and Water Commission’s (IBWC) Colorado River Citizens Forum (CRCF) met at the IID headquarters in El Centro, CA. The CRCF was established in 2003 to facilitate the exchange of information between the U.S. IBWC and members of the public about Commission activities in Yuma County, Arizona and Imperial County, California. The meeting agenda included presentations by the Regional Water Quality Control Board and Cal/EPA on the New River. The focus of these presentations was water quality analysis of the New River and binational efforts that have been in place for several years with Mexico. The public questioned the presenters on two issues: water quality parameters and dollars that have been spent in Mexico to improve water quality.

As member of the CRCF, Miguel Figueroa ,

Executive Director of the Calexico New River Committee (CNRC) highlighted the New River accomplishments achieved in recent years as a result of the efforts of elected officials and the work of the CNRC. Mexican authorities provided presentations of the water drain damages observed in Mexicali, Mexico caused by the 7.2 magnitude earthquake that struck Mexicali and Imperial Valley last April.

The meeting concluded with the participation of Juanita Salas who read a statement on behalf of Congressman Bob Filner. This statement reminded how federal, state and local agencies need to identify means to support and work on remediating the negative impacts posed by the New River in Imperial County, but most importantly highlighted the need for IBWC to play a bigger role in the remediation of the New River.

New River discussed at Environmental Health Leadership Summit

The 2010 Environmental Health Leadership Summit sponsored by the National Latino Research Center at Cal State San Marcos and Comite Civico del Valle was a success. The CNRC conducted a presentation that outlined the status of funding and legislative progress secured over the past year for the New River Improvement Project. The group "Vecinos del Rio Nuevo" read a statement summarizing their perspective on what is happening with the legislative work in Sacramento and community empowerment in the Valley to remediate the New River problem. Miguel Figueroa, Executive Director of the Calexico New River Committee, and Luis Olmedo, Executive Director of Comite Civico del Valle presented on behalf of the 2010 EHLS Planning Committee an award to Assemblyman Victor Manuel Perez recognizing him for his leadership in authoring AB 1079 which begins the cleanup and restoration efforts for the New River. Miguel Figueroa acknowledged that Assemblyman Perez has championed this effort since his first day in office and has opened the doors of Sacramento for his constituents. This year Assemblyman Perez will set in motion new legislation for the New River that will complement current efforts.



Above: Group of summit attendees that participated in a bus tour that visited environmental injustice sites throughout Imperial County. This portrait was taken in the proximities of the Salton Sea on May 21, 2010 a day before the 3rd Environmental Health Leadership Summit took place in El Centro, CA.

CNRC Board of Directors introduce new board member

At the June 16th board meeting, CNRC Chairman Jose Carrillo, welcomed Congressman Filner's pronouncement to serve as an "ex officio" member of the CNRC Board of Directors. Chairman Carrillo acknowledged the work performed by Congressman Bob Filner throughout the past years by being an advocate of remediating the negative impacts of the New River in our Valley. On behalf of Congressman Filner, Juanita Salas will be attending CNRC board meetings as board director. The rest of the CNRC directors extended their respect and appreciation for the work Congressman Bob Filner and his district staff have performed in helping find new sources of funding for the New River Improvement Project and advocating for this matter in Washington D.C.

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