



*Improving Our Way of Life*

## New River 2011: A year of great progress

The Calexico New River Committee identifies the accomplishments from 2011 as contributions to the growth in momentum to remediate one of the historically impaired waterways in our nation. An example of this is the implementation of Assembly Bill 1079 (Chapter 382, Statutes of 2009) authored by Assemblyman Manuel Perez and co-sponsored by the Calexico New River Committee which required the California Mexico Border Relations Council to specifically develop a plan to guide implementation of the New River Improvement Project. The Strategic Plan was completed in time and provides remediation recommendations for each particular reach of the New River.

Through a consensus vote each recommendation was adopted by the Technical Advisory Committee designated to steer the realization of this important Plan. Most importantly the specific needs for the Calexico portion of the New River were addressed in this Plan, garnering full support from the community in Calexico and the rest of the Valley. The specific needs identified in the Plan for the Calexico reach include: a) urban revitalization and increased public recreational amenities, b) removal of potential or perceived health hazards as a result of exposure to polluted New River water, c) remediation of pathogens, low dissolved oxygen, trash, toxicity and selenium, and d) creation of the New River Parkway as an attractive amenity and recreational and open space resource for the city.

## Calexico New River Committee Priorities for 2012

For the year 2012 the Calexico New River Committee anticipates to see substantial work accomplished in the Calexico River Parkway Project identified in Assembly Bill 1079 and in the New River Improvement Strategic Plan; other priorities to be addressed include:

- ⇒ An urgent necessity to seek core operating funds for day-to-day office operations of the Calexico New River Committee.
- ⇒ Continue work with California Assemblyman Manuel Perez and the other elected officials representing the County of Imperial for adoption of follow up New River legislation to Assembly Bill 1079.
- ⇒ Continue seeking funds to fund community health impact assessments as part of the Calexico River Parkway Project
- ⇒ Continue advocacy for environmental/social justice through State and Federal funded programs through partnerships with the City of Calexico and other entities.

It is also imperative for the Calexico New River Committee to seek solutions for the following acknowledgments recognized by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board:

- ⇒ “Despite the substantial water quality improvements that have been accomplished thanks to the joint efforts of the State of California, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the State of Baja California, the Comision Estatal de Servicios Publicos de Mexicali, the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission, U.S. EPA, and the North American Development Bank, the New River will continue to be impaired in the U.S. because Mexico has a less stringent water quality law.”
- ⇒ “Bacteria remains and will continue to be in the foreseeable future a serious problem in part because of raw sewage and trash.”
- ⇒ “Trash remains a significant problem that must be addressed; it adds to the New River bacteria and other pollutants, as well as the dumping of toxicants.”
- ⇒ “Industrial discharges must be addressed through regulation in Mexico, and the ongoing discharges from slaughterhouses too.”

**November  
December  
2011**

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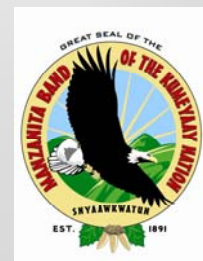
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**Miguel Figueroa**  
*Executive Director*

**MORE NEWS...**

The CNRC will seek interested individuals to fill two (2) vacancies on the CNRC Board of Directors starting January 2012. For more information please contact the CNRC through the contact information available at the top of Page 2.

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### “Snow” in New River? — Calexico, CA 12/20/2011



On December 20, 2011 the CNRC reported an abnormal load of detergent foam on the New River coming from Mexico at the International Border. Observing detergent foam is a normal occurrence on any given day, but the vast amount from this day was disproportionate to all normality.

The Imperial Valley Press picked up the story and reached out to Jose L. Angel, California Regional Water Quality Control Board Executive Assistant Office for Region 7 for his thoughts. Jose L. Angel provided the following quotes on this matter, “we get foam periodically,” “the discharge comes from the Zaragoza wastewater treatment lagoons, it’s soap, basically,” and probably the most important “the foam does carry some bacteria, so people need to stay away from it, it’s a nuisance, it’s a concern (for people.”

Jose L. Angel was correct to state that it is a nuisance and people should stay away from the foam, the CNRC has stated on repeated occasions that the non-biodegradable detergents coming from the Zaragoza Treatment Plant in Mexico are a threat to public health given that they come in contact with the already polluted New River. On days that carry wind in our Valley, which are not uncommon, the contaminated foam becomes airborne becoming an impact to residents throughout the Valley.

