

## **IBWC Press Release – July 29, 2010**

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### **COMMISSION CONTINUES TO REDUCE RELEASE OF FLOODWATERS FROM FALCON DAM; DIVERSIONS CONTINUE INTO U.S. INTERIOR FLOODWAY IN THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY**

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, continues to reduce the release of floodwaters from Falcon Dam, located at Falcon Heights, Texas-Nueva Ciudad Guerrero, Tamaulipas. On the afternoon of July 29, releases will be reduced to 49,000 cubic feet per second (1400 cubic meters per second), followed by a reduction to 46,000 cubic feet per second (1300 cubic meters per Second) on July 30, and 42,000 cubic feet per second (1200 cubic meters per second) on August 3. The Commission has been reducing releases gradually since July 27, down from a peak rate of 60,000 cubic feet per second (1700 cubic meters per second). A reduction in inflows to the reservoir and gradually declining reservoir levels have allowed the Commission to reduce the releases. At the same time, Mexico is scheduled to release additional floodwaters from its dams on the San Juan River, a Mexican tributary to the Rio Grande located downstream from Falcon Dam. This means that the amount of water in the Rio Grande and interior floodways from Rio Grande City downstream to the Gulf of Mexico will remain at similar levels as seen for the last week despite the reduction in releases from Falcon Dam.

In the Lower Rio Grande Valley, the Commission has a system of flood control levees, diversion dams, and floodways that extends from Peñitas to the Gulf of Mexico. Diversion of floodwaters continues into the U.S. interior floodway at Anzalduas Dam, located near Mission, Texas-Reynosa, Tamaulipas, and into the Mexican interior floodway at Retamal Dam, located near Donna, Texas-Rio Bravo, Tamaulipas. Because of these upstream diversions, the Commission will continue to control floodwaters in the Rio Grande downstream from Retamal Dam to approximately the same levels seen for the past two weeks.

Residents in the Rio Grande Basin should continue to monitor National Weather Service warnings and forecasts for updated information and river forecasts concerning flood conditions; they should also heed any guidance from local emergency management officials.

The U.S. interior floodway includes channels known as the Banker Floodway, Main Floodway, North Floodway, and Arroyo Colorado through portions of Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties. Staff from the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission's Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project remain in Flood Fight Operations. During this phase of response, crews patrol flood control levees 24 hours per day to identify and respond to any problems that arise such as erosion along the levees, freeboard encroachment, or seepage on the land side of the levees. All drainage and irrigation structures that pass through USIBWC levees have been closed to prevent floodwaters from the Rio Grande and interior floodways from flowing into adjacent communities.

Because the structures are closed, drainage from the land side of the levee that would normally flow into the river or floodways will be blocked so any local storm water flows will need to be pumped over the levee by the community or drainage district responsible for local storm water management.

Residents who tamper with drainage structures during flood operations could be subject to criminal prosecution.

The Commission manages its flood control infrastructure taking into account safe operation of the reservoirs, existing flood conditions in parts of the Rio Grande and its tributaries in the United States and Mexico, impact to property, and forecasts for additional rainfall in the basin.

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