

Southeast Arizona Citizens Forum  
Nogales, Arizona

June 20, 2013

\*Tentative Meeting Notes\*

Board Members in Attendance

Amanda Stone  
Ben Lomeli  
Jackson Jenkins  
John Kozma  
Jonathon Shacat  
Luis Greer

Board Members Not in Attendance

Lisa Reed  
Rosanna Gabaldon  
Jenny Neely

USIBWC Staff in Attendance

John Light  
Alison Lamb  
Eric Herrera

Roughly 15 persons from the public in attendance.

Ben Lomeli, Co-Chair for the Citizens Forum Board, provided the introductions. The Board Members were then asked to introduce themselves and provide a brief description of who they are.

**Status of the International Outfall Interceptor (IOI) Sewer Pipe in Nogales, Arizona**

Gabriel Duran, Engineer Planner for the USIBWC, Headquarters, gave a presentation on this topic. Mr. Duran is also the unofficial historian for the Commission and invited anyone with any questions regarding the history of the agency to please contact him.

The presentation included the following topics:

- Recent Emergency Repairs
- Description of Exposed Section of the International Outfall Interceptor (IOI)
- Area Map of Nogales and Rio Rico
- Location Map of the Exposed IOI

- Existing Conditions
- Proposed Mitigation Efforts for Exposed IOI
- Open Discussion and Questions

Part of the IOI, a sewer pipe that conveys wastewater from both Nogales, Sonora and Nogales, Arizona to the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant in Rio Rico, AZ, is located underneath the Nogales Wash so that when the Nogales Wash is damaged, there is the potential to damage the IOI. If the IOI were to become damaged then there is a risk of a sewage spill.

Mr. Duran discussed IOI Emergency Repairs(to protect the IOI) with the first one being in August 2007 in which the USIBWC provided technical assistance, oversight and funds to repair a failed portion of the concrete lining of the Nogales Wash. This repair was located near East Frederick Street in Nogales, Arizona.

Then again in August of 2010 the USIBWC provided technical assistance, oversight and funds for a repair of the bank of the Nogales Wash near Baffert St.

In October of 2010, the USIBWC provided technical assistance, oversight and funds to repair a worn section of the IOI at the International Boundary.

The current exposed section of the IOI is located just north of the intersection of Grand Ave and West Mesa Verde Dr. near the AZDOT building. The exposed section is inside the Nogales Wash and due to effects from various rainfall events, erosion has occurred in the Wash's streambed and banks. Because of the erosion, the IOI and a potable water line beside the IOI are susceptible to substantial damage. Gabe then showed a photo of the exposed 30" pipe stating that this carries 11.5 million gallons per day. Due to the eroded bank of the Nogales Wash, the stream is actually flowing underneath the IOI. Mitigation efforts are being developed to avoid a hazardous environmental situation. USIBWC is currently trying to produce a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Nogales. The USIBWC has drafted and submitted to the City a draft MOU which outlines the responsibilities and contributions each agency must provide to mitigate this issue. Coordination is still ongoing. The USIBWC has already developed plans and specifications for the proposed mitigation efforts and are currently attempting to bid the project. The USIBWC has requested an Emergency 404 Nation Wide Permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers. As of right now, all permits have been secured. Some of the costs for this project are being paid by the City of Nogales.

Mr. Duran then explained the proposed repair of the exposed section of the IOI. The plan is to encase the exposed 30' of pipe with reinforced case in place concrete case and keep the hydraulic profile as it is. They will continue the encasement all the way to the bank and backfill and reinforce it with riprap in order to prevent further erosion.

Question: Are you only encasing the exposed pipe?

Answer: Yes. We will do 70' upstream and 70' downstream with riprap.

Question: Does the material vary in the pipe?

Answer: All encased in concrete, only the slope varies.

As a precautionary measure, we will be bypassing this section by pumping from Manhole 57 to manhole 60.

Question: How do you protect the bypass?

Answer: By excavating a little below the stream

Question: How far between the two manholes?

Answer: I believe it is less than 600 feet.

Question: Are you taking into account scour depth?

Answer: It is pretty much scoured out.

Question: What is the timeframe and cost estimate?

Answer: Cannot provide cost information as it is not finalized yet. Once the project starts it should take about two weeks.

Question: Don't you think that this is a dangerous time to be doing this, during monsoon season?

Answer: We feel we are prepared.

There have been numerous incidents, but only one incident of an IOI failure that was located at the border. There have also been threats within the Nogales Wash itself. It was installed in 1933. Our agency cannot lobby Congress for money.

Comment: The local community takes this very seriously; we need to get this funded. Everyone likes to debate the money game. There are 20,800 people living within the City of Nogales, it is unacceptable for them to live like this. If you think the cost is high to fix, wait until there is a break and see what the cost will be.

Question: Is there a possibility of removing the IOI from the Wash as a permanent solution?

Answer: Always a possibility.

Question: Can we have access to this PowerPoint.

Answer: Yes, the PowerPoint presentations will be available on the IBWC's website. [www.ibwc.gov](http://www.ibwc.gov)

Question: From the City of Nogales' perspective in regards to replacing the IOI, for years there has been budget available; however it is not enough to cover the costs and every year the cost is increasing. The funding is not there and the City cannot afford to replace it. Also, the United States only uses 20 – 30% of the IOI, so they shouldn't be responsible for the entire cost. Another issue is that when the IOI was constructed, there was no thought about replacing or repairing it.

## **Overview of USIBWC Activities and Emergency Response Coordination in Southeast Arizona**

Ben Lomeli then introduced John Light, Area Operations Manager for the Nogales Field Office of the USIBWC, for a presentation that will go over the USIBWC role and protocols for emergencies concerning the International Outfall Interceptor and the Nogales Wash.

Mr. Light explained that when emergencies occur regarding the IOI, the USIBWC role is first to determine if the event is located in the United States or Mexico. If it is located within the United States, the USIBWC role is to provide technical support to emergency responders and possible financial resources for repairs if it is determined by the Commissioner. If the event is in Mexico, we work with the Mexican Section of the Commission (CILA) to determine the cause, location, repair status, etc. As an example, it was reported that the IOI was exposed; we did a field investigation and sent the information to Headquarters. Gabe Duran then began working with the City of Nogales and others to repair the IOI. The IOI is in Mexico as well as the United States. It is nine (9) miles long, from the border to the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant. There are no blanket agreements for every type of incident – they are based upon individual need.

In regards to the Nogales Wash, USIBWC provides technical support to emergency responders as per the Nogales Wash Emergency Plan. The technical support that we provide consists of water quality monitoring, engineering support and possibly financial support. We work with the City of Nogales, Santa Cruz County Emergency Management and the US Army Corp of Engineers. Santa Cruz County has a new Director of Emergency Management and he would like to rework the Nogales Wash Emergency Plan.

Some of the aid that we provide to emergency responders is a gauging station that is operated by USGS. The O&M for this station is paid for by the USIBWC. It is installed in the Nogales Wash to monitor flow levels. There are also flood warning stations installed in Mexico. These were installed by USGS and they are to warn of impending flooding events.

Another great concern I am hearing from residents is that the Santa Cruz River is running dry. This is directly related to the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant in Rio Rico because it is receiving less wastewater from Mexico than in the past. The new Los Alisos wastewater treatment plant is already online in Nogales, Sonora. Mexico is currently sending 9.9 million gallons per day (mgd) to the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant as per international agreement. The average flow at the plant is down about 2.35 mgd. It is also the dry season so what you are seeing today is most likely what you would see in the future.

Question: How long is the IOI in Mexico?

Answer: About the same as it is here, 9 miles.

Question: Will Mexico be supplying themselves with more sewer plants?

Answer: They have small package plants for new communities that treat and discharge into the river, not into the IOI.

Question/Comment: De Anza is a beautiful and nice plant - the watershed runs into the Santa Cruz River, if that plant fails will it contaminate the watershed?

Answer: We have sampled the water and it has chlorine - the potential for failure is there, so if more are constructed there is more potential for failure.

Question: Are the funding mechanisms there in a similar way as ours?

Answer: At this time we don't know.

Question: When was the exposed pipeline first discovered?

Answer: About six months ago.

Question: Are the pumps sitting in the wash?

Answer: No, above.

Question: Have the landowners been notified:

Answer: No, the land is not private property.

Question: If there is a storm event, will it allow water to flow?

Answer: Yes

Mr. Lomeli emphasized that it is imperative to enlist the support of downstream communities to do something about this very soon (replace IOI). We need to work together as a regional community.

### **Public Comments**

Marshall Magruder, a resident of Tubac, Arizona wanted to speak regarding the Natural Gas Line through Sasabe. He provided a brief background of the project. He proceeded to explain how, in his view, it would be more beneficial to run the line through Nogales, Arizona into Nogales, Sonora. The Tohono Indian Nation is extremely upset regarding the project, he said; they have to dig up cultural resources. It would be more beneficial for the project to go through Nogales as currently we cannot have any industries that use natural gas as there is no supply, according to Mr. Magruder. He is requesting help in getting this through as it currently is in the scoping phase where you develop alternatives. He has already written a letter showing the benefits of going through Nogales but they act like it's already a done deal to go through Sasabe. It would also be beneficial for air quality on both sides of the border. He is requesting assistance, possibly draft a letter saying to consider Nogales.

There was no other public comment.

### **Board Discussion**

At this time Amanda Stone asked if this forum has previously issued any letters or proclamations, or if this is something that we can do?

Answer: Not sure, would need to confirm with USIBWC Headquarters.

Ms. Stone – Would like to possibly write a letter to support Mr. Magruder -

### **Suggested Future Agenda Items**

Next meeting to be held in Cochise County. Mr. Greer offered a location to have the meeting in Douglas.

Possible topics include: Flooding on the east side of Douglas.

Review the mine in Nogales, Sonora. We need to be more aggressive in getting information so we are aware of what the impacts would be.

Question: Do you know who USIBWC contacted to request a presentation about the mine?

Answer: She went thru CILA.

Question/Comment: Could someone from EPA possibly be contacted?

National Water Commission in Mexico is in the process of bidding out. Need to be pro-active as the plans are beautiful but who knows. Thinking of spill containment issues.

Would like to look over the notes for the past two years for hanging agenda items.

Possibly the gas line at a later date.

**Meeting adjourned.**

\*\*Meeting notes are tentative and summarize in draft the contents and discussions of Citizen Forum Meetings. While these notes are intended to provide a general overview of Citizen Forum meetings, they may not necessarily be accurate or complete and may not be representative of USIBWC policy or position\*\*

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