



**For Immediate Release**

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# **USIBWC to Solicit Public Comments in Harlingen on Alternatives to Improve Arroyo Colorado Flood Capacity**

**HARLINGEN, TEXAS**– The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) will hold an Open House at the Harlingen Community Center on December 12.

The purpose of the public meeting is to explain alternative methods being considered to restore the capacity of the Arroyo Colorado in Harlingen and gather public input.

The area in Harlingen covers a 6.3-mile segment of the Arroyo from Business 77 Sunshine Strip to Highway 574 (Cemetery Road).

USIBWC is considering additional maintenance activities that are intended to restore the Arroyo's flood conveyance capabilities. The Arroyo Colorado is an important part of the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project (LRGFCP) that protects residents, businesses, and farmland from flooding in the lower Rio Grande Valley.

USIBWC estimates the Arroyo Colorado has lost more than 50 percent of its capacity to carry floodwaters over time due to increases in vegetation and sediment.

In October, the federal agency removed 25 cubic yards of sediment at the Business 77, Ed Carey Drive, and FM 509 bridge crossings to restore some of the lost flood conveyance capacity but more still needs to be done.

According to a press release by the USIBWC the following alternatives are being considered.

## News From The City of Harlingen

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First is the No Action Alternative that would allow current vegetation and sediment maintenance operations to continue. Between US 77 and FM 509, USIBWC maintains vegetation on 53 acres of floodplain and conducts minor sediment removal near bridges and other structures. This alternative would not restore the Arroyo's flood conveyance capacity and the flood risk would remain high.

The Off-Channel Storage Alternative calls for temporarily storing floodwater in a new detention basin that may require up to 2, 204 acres to construct. This would not restore the flood conveyance capacity either however; the USIBWC expects this would reduce the flood risk.

Next is the Expanded Vegetation Removal Alternative that according to USIBWC would restore some of the flood conveyance capacity by expanding vegetation removal all the way to Cemetery Road but some flooding could still occur.

The fourth and final alternative is the Expanded Vegetation and Sediment Removal Alternative which calls for dredging and expanded vegetation management between US 77 and Cemetery Road. This alternative would provide properties in Harlingen with the greatest decrease in flood risk according to the USIBWC.

The public meeting in Harlingen is intended to explain the alternatives and how the arroyo works. USIBWC representatives will be on hand to discuss the alternatives and what if any impacts may occur particularly to those whose properties border the arroyo.

The meeting on December 12 will be an open house style setup meaning you'll be able to walk around and visit different stations and ask one-on-one questions. It's scheduled for 5 to 7 p.m. at the Harlingen Community Center located at 201 East Madison Avenue.

Public comments received will be used to refine the alternatives and prepare an Environmental Assessment.

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