

Santa Cruz, Sonora, Mexico. Photograph taken by Emmanuel Honaw (2008)

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Up and Running!

Up and running! Yes, this is the second edition of our Shared Waters Newsletter and we are definitely up and running, we are extremely busy and very enthusiastic to continue working with you all!

During this period, we hosted our first and second coffee breaks where we discussed challenges and solutions related to water deliveries from Mexico to the United States from the Rio Grande/Bravo according to the 1944 treaty. In the second coffee break, we discussed the US-Mexico transboundary groundwater resources issues and the way forward. As it was discussed in the first coffee break, Mexico could not deliver the water commitments to the United States from the six Mexican tributaries and ended up paying water from the international reservoirs. Something to highlight was the signature of Minute 325 and its spirit of collaboration and willingness of both countries to meet their commitments while accommodate the water needs for municipalities along the border, and the recognition of the need for an improved basin management and coordination between both countries. Kudos to IBWC- CILA, the commissioners and every person and institution involved in this effort. In parallel, in October 14 and 15th, we hosted the U.S. – Mexico transboundary groundwater conference, which was a total success in so many fronts. We had a huge attendance (>250 participants), we had experts from almost every continent, and more importantly, it was a two-way communication from the presenters to the audience.

In addition, we had a very important event to build community called “Calaveritas” which was a poem contest in relation to the Day of the Death celebration. I felt very moved by the enthusiasm of our colleagues. Here, at the Permanent Forum of Binational Waters, we are committed to activities that foster understanding from our shared resources, but also our cultural differences, as well as community-building. Water unites us!

We are launching a couple of new events this month. Science Talks will focus on current research of our young professionals in the border with more technical and scientific discussions, and Open Mic, a more collegial conversation about specific topics. For the first edition of Science Talks we invited four brilliant women scientists, Dr. Elia Tapia Villaseñor, Dr. Sophie Plassin, Dr. Eliana Rodriguez Burgueño and M.S. Laura Elisa Garza Diaz, who bring a fresh perspective on water research along the border. Our first Open Mic features Dr. Luzma Nava Jimenez and myself talking about the treaty and cycle 35. As we continue developing the Permanent Forum of Binational Waters, we are generating new ideas permanently to have a vibrant forum. Please remember that we welcome feedback, and we are also looking for ideas to improve, do not hesitate to contact us. Saludos, nos vemos pronto!

Samuel Sandoval
Associate Director

BINATIONAL WATER LEADERS

By Elia M. Tapia Villaseñor



Roberto Salmón (left) and Edward Drusina (right) signing Minute 318.

Groundwater and surface-water collaboration between the United States and Mexico is made possible thanks to the endeavors of our binational water leaders and committed stakeholders. This issue of our Shared Waters Newsletter features the work of Edward Drusina and Roberto Salmón, former commissioners of the U.S. and Mexican Sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC). In an interview, Drusina and Salmón discussed the major challenges and contributions they encountered as acting commissioners of the IBWC and sent us a message of collaboration regarding our shared water resources and the role of our forum.

Due to the complexities of the many issues they dealt with, the former commissioners were unable to speak in depth about specific situations, Salmón expressed that the complexity and dynamic behavior of the border region creates dynamic challenges and concerns: “You can have a major challenge, problem, or concern one day, and the next week you will be dealing with something completely different,” he said.

The economic asymmetries, as well as the institutional, cultural, and linguistic differences between the United States and Mexico represent challenges that both sections of the IBWC must address on a daily basis. For Drusina, the most significant obstacles revolved around the drought impact on the Colorado River and analyzing the 1944 Treaty to find a way to better serve both countries during drought conditions. The commissioners also contended with issues such as hurricanes hitting the Gulf Coast, flooding, and sanitary and sewer problems in the region.

Together, Drusina and Salmón planned, negotiated, and successfully approved nine Treaty interpretation agreements, or Minutes, involving water management improvements and environmental protections. These Treaty actions gained binational approval for the conservation, storage, and management of water during drought conditions in the Colorado River and Tijuana River Basins. Both commissioners agreed that these Minutes represent the collaborative efforts of the entire IBWC team and engaged stakeholders. Though Drusina does not have a favorite Minute, he said all of them were carefully discussed with the Mexican Section of the IBWC and that each agreement was integral to the development of successful solutions for managing the boundary waters along the U.S.-Mexico border. Salmón highlighted the importance of Minute 319 and 323 for U.S.-Mexico relations regarding the Colorado River. However, both Minutes originated in Minute 318, which provided the support for later agreements.



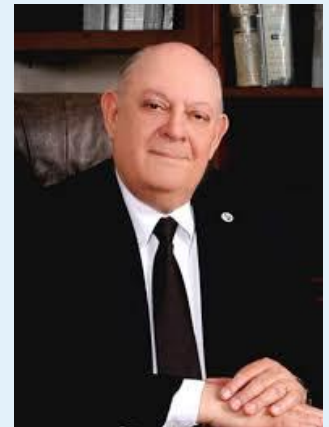
Edward Drusina (P.E.)

Drusina emphasized the role of open communication and transparency in U.S.– Mexico interactions in promoting cultural understanding and effective collaboration. A piece of advice he provided was to always place ourselves in the shoes of our partners and try to better understand their perspective, something that he is confident his neighbors in Mexico are constantly doing. According to Salmón, the creation of the Permanent Forum of Binational Waters is an important effort for studying and discussing topics that are related to our shared waters. He reminds us that it takes time to negotiate binational water agreements. “It is important to consider the complexity of the U.S.–Mexico binational relation,” Salmón said.

Salmón also mentioned that “the administrative changes in the three levels of Mexican government and the addition and removal of stakeholders can sometimes interfere with the timing and development of new agreements. It took almost a century to negotiate the 1944 Treaty. There were water availability problems between El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, which started in 1880 and worsened in 1888, but it was not until 1906 that an agreement for the distribution of water from the Rio Bravo/Rio Grande was signed. The case of the Chamizal agreement was similar: it took almost 100 years to solve the issues within that region. On average, the approval of IBWC Minutes take at least two years, from the negotiation to the final approval.”

Drusina explained that water deliveries from Mexico to the United States, as described in the 1944 Treaty for the Utilization of Waters of the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers and of the Rio Grande, have been disputed for a long time and that he and Salmón have always focused on finding a scientific way to address the issues and minimize conflict.

“The 1944 Treaty took into consideration water conditions at that time, but as the environment has changed, we need to try to develop a scientific approach to determine the amounts of water generated today and into the future,” said Drusina. “Then we need to look at how water can be equitably distributed between the countries according to the framework of the 1944 Treaty.”



Roberto Salmón (M.S.)

Regarding the Colorado River and the water deliveries that have been made from the United States to Mexico, the former commissioners think that both countries have developed a solid framework on how to deliver their water and how to manage the resource if drought conditions continue. According to Salmón, there has been improvements in the way the Commission approaches borderland problems, which include the strengthening of environmental activities and the use of science as a tool to support hydro-diplomacy. Minutes 319 and 323 have made great strides forward in considering drought conditions in water deliveries.

Drusina and Salmón left a legacy of collaboration on water resources that will be remembered for years to come. Let’s not forget the lessons they have taught us through their hard work, which is reflected in the agreements they have signed and also in the relation of friendship that knows no borders. Who knows, perhaps future decision-makers could apply some of their lessons and recommendations in finding solutions to current water delivery issues, particularly those arising in the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo region.

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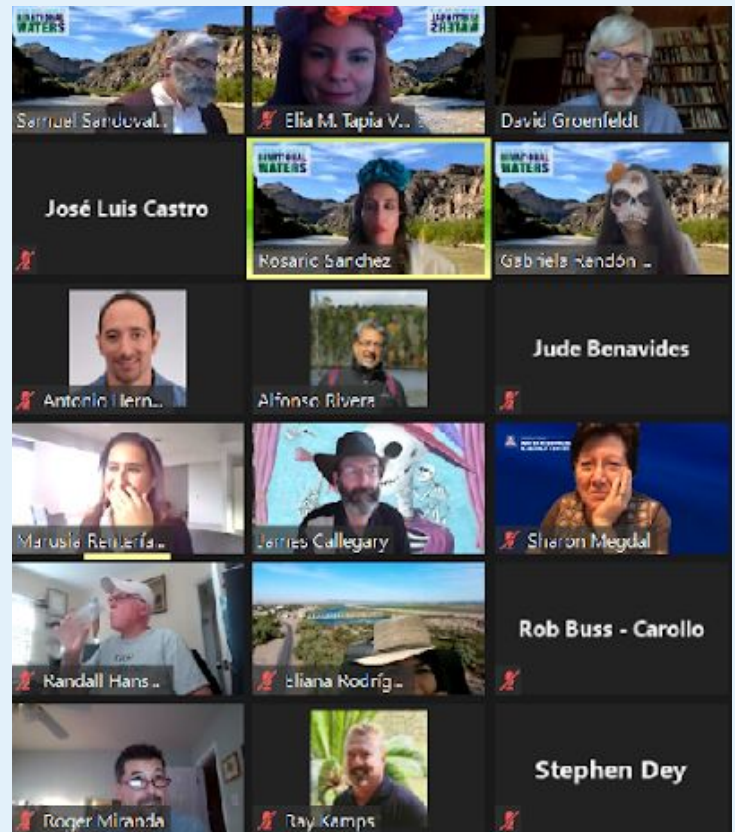
FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

US-MX TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS CONFERENCE

We hosted the US – MX Transboundary Groundwater Conference: Strategies for Unprecedented Challenges on October 14-15, 2020. This event was binationally organized by the Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI) and the Instituto Mexicano de Tecnología del Agua (IMTA) and it was attended by approximately 250 people representing every continent.

The objective of the Conference was to explore and analyze innovative perspectives of transboundary groundwater resources management between the United States and Mexico, to identify strategies to assess current and future transboundary conditions from a legal, technical, environmental and managerial perspective.

Participants were able to learn about climate change and transboundary groundwater systems, groundwater and surface water interactions, potential models of transboundary groundwater management, and the state of current numerical models. The Forum also featured a *Calaveritas* contest during the Happy Hour with some water related poetry to honor the Mexican tradition that is part of the Día de los Muertos Celebration (Day of Death Celebration). We want to thank everyone that participated in this Conference which was truly binational and even, international!. More will come as a follow up of the results of the Conference. Stay tuned.



Check out the Final Reports and Conference Materials [HERE](#). A Task Force of Binational Groundwater is also under development and also a peer review publication co-authored by speakers and moderators.

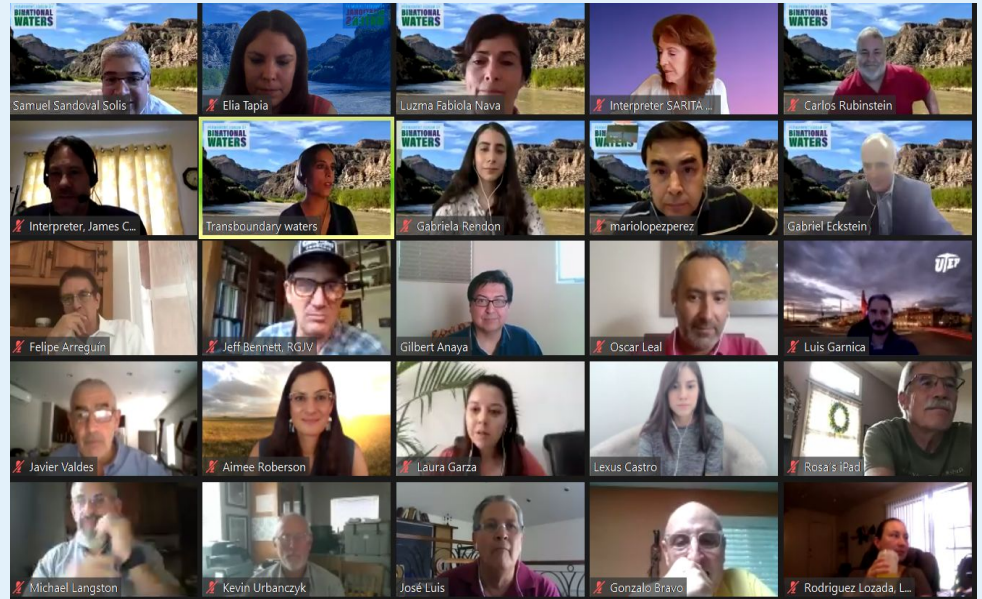
You can see the winners of the Calaveritas Contest – [HERE](#)

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FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

COFFEE BREAKS

The Permanent Forum of Binational Waters hosted its first Coffee Break on August 26, 2020. Participants discussed the past and current situation regarding water deliveries as described in the 1944 Treaty between the United States and Mexico for the Utilization of Waters of the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers and of the Rio Grande/Bravo.



Speakers included Luzma Fabiola Nava (Research Scientist, CONACYT), Samuel Sandoval Solís (Associate Professor, UC Davis), Mario López (Senior Water Resources Consultant), and Carlos Rubinstein (Principal member of RSAH2O, LLC). Rosario Sanchez (Senior Research Scientist, TWRI) and Gabriel Eckstein (professor of Law, TAMU), served as moderators to the event.

A second coffee break was held on September 29, 2020, regarding the “U.S.-Mexico Transboundary Groundwater: Withdrawals and Binational Implications”. Speakers included Mario López, Carlos Rubinstein and our Special Guest, Sharon B. Megdal, director of The University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center.

Link to Coffee Breaks [HERE](#)

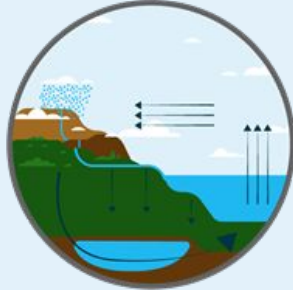
OUR WORKING GROUPS

Our Network has developed 17 [Working Groups](#) so far. Once you register for a working group, you will receive an invitation to join [Slack](#). From there, you can start communicating instantly with your working group. If you have not registered into a Working Group, you can do it [HERE](#). These are some of the working groups you will find in the Forum:

Groundwater



Surface-Groundwater Interactions



Water Management



Transboundary Issues



Modeling and Spatial Analysis or Remote Sensing



Water Quality



Climate Change



Social and Economic Systems



Surface Water



Geology and Hydro-geology



Urban Development



Laws and Public Policy

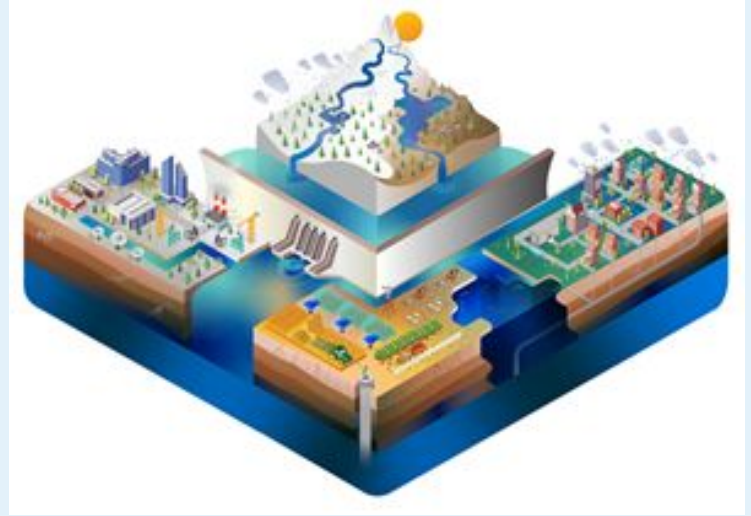


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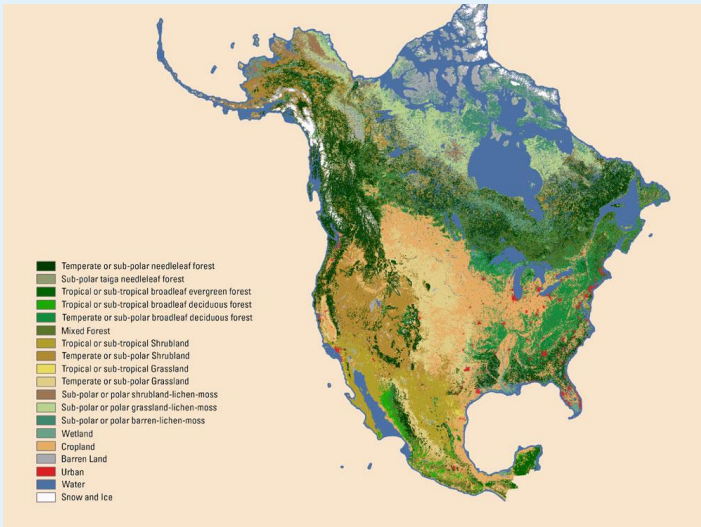
RESOURCES

Models and Tools

Click [HERE](#) to check our surface –groundwater interaction tools, surface and groundwater models..



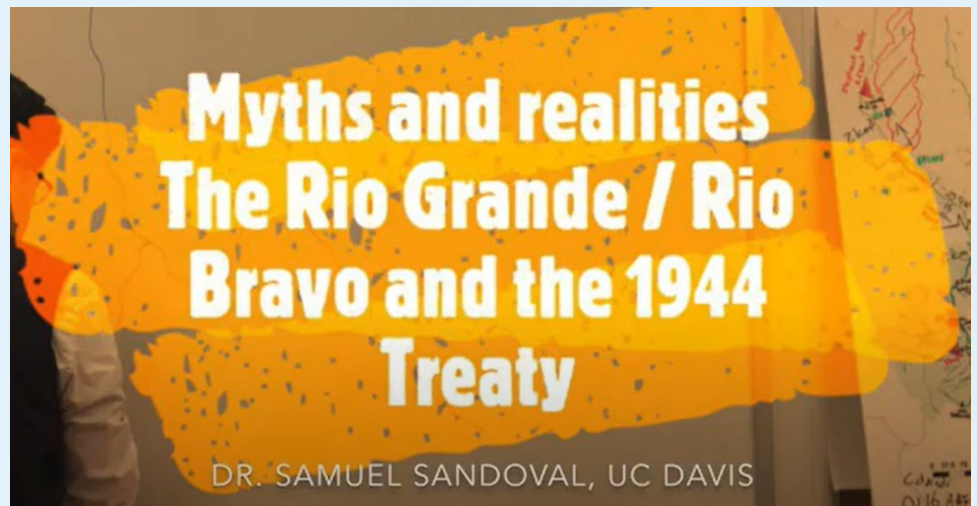
CWATM



Databases

Click [HERE](#) to check our Clearing House of Databases if you are in need of GIS Data, timeseries, and spreadsheets

Check out our **Mythbusters Series** and our **Open Mic Sessions!**



Upcoming Events

We are launching the first edition of **Science Talks** program to promote current water research in the U.S.-Mexico border. This new program has the purpose to give opportunities to young professionals that are taking the lead on current research trends. Our first panel is integrated by four brilliant women: Elia M. Tapia Villaseñor (Research Professor, Universidad de Sonora), Laura E. Garza Díaz (Researcher, UC Davis), Jesus Eliana Rodriguez Burgueño (Researcher, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California), and Sophie S. Plassin (Research Professor, University of Oklahoma). The event will take place on November 16, 2020 from 4:30 pm to 5:45 pm (CT) via Zoom.

Click [HERE](#) to join the Science Talk.

Calls for Action

[Binational Groundwater Task Force](#)

[Call for abstracts Water Security and Climate Change Conference](#)

[Charting a Climate-smart future for the Rio Grande](#)



Science Talks
Women, Science and Water in the US-MX border

Speakers

Elia Tapia Villaseñor Professor and Researcher at Universidad de Sonora	Laura E. Garza Díaz Researcher at UC Davis Communications Coordinator of PFBW	Jesus Eliana Rodriguez Burgueño Researcher at Universidad Autónoma de Baja California	Sophie S. Plassin Professor and Researcher University at Oklahoma
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Moderators

- **Elia Tapia Villaseñor**
Media support of PFBW
- **Gabriela Rendón Herrera**
Communication Strategic Planning of PFBW

November 16, 2020
4:30 pm to 5:45 pm (CT)

PERMANENT FORUM OF **BINATIONAL WATERS**

Our Blog is now live and running. You are invited to participate and follow up the discussions!

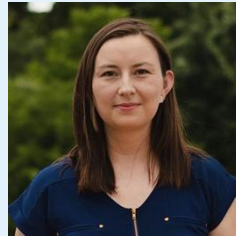
OUR TEAM



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News and Community
Manager



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OUR MEMBERS

Over 150 members and more than 60 binational institutions

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