



TRANSBOUNDARY GROUNDWATER BETWEEN UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

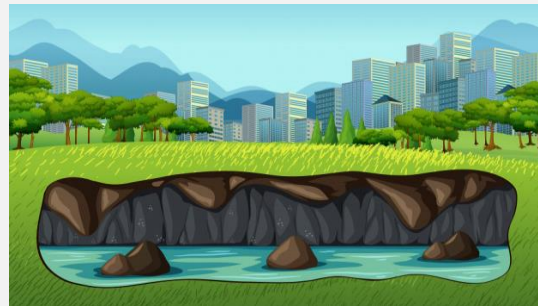
5 things we all should know

PERMANENT FORUM OF
**BINATIONAL
WATERS**

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1. What are transboundary groundwater?

Also known as aquifers are water-bearing geological formations that are located between two or more countries, and that are recharged via infiltration of the soil, precipitation, snowmelt and also, water returns from agricultural irrigation.



2. Why are they important?

Groundwater at the border is used mainly in agriculture and for domestic consumption, proving an important source for social and economic development of the region. At the same time, this resource is vital for the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity.

On the border between the US and Mexico, where the arid climate prevails within a length greater than 3,000 km, there are more than 11 million people who depend to a great extent on the transboundary aquifers.

3. Who is in charge of its management?

In the US each state manages its water resources within their territories, while in Mexico, water is responsibility of the National Water Commission (**CONAGUA**) and water belongs to the nation. In theory, the aquifers shared between the United States and Mexico would be jurisdiction of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC).

But to date, there is no binational agreement or regulation that governs transboundary groundwater at binational level.



4. What are the problems they face?

The main challenges of transboundary aquifers are:

- **Greater demand for social and economic activities**
- **Overexploitation**
- **Lack of information and funding for research**
- **Impacts of climate change (prolonged droughts, increased temperature and decreased rainfall)**
- **Regulatory differences between both nations**
- **Lack of a binational regulatory framework**
- **Lack of political action to promote the necessary changes**

5. What do we propose?

1. **Greater investment for research and local initiatives**
2. **Government decisions based on science**
3. **Define priority/urgent projects in the area**
4. **Include all stakeholders in decision-making, which implies education/awareness and new participatory mechanisms**
5. **Incorporate climate change variables into binational management**
6. **Give new attributions to IBCW (and necessary resources)**
7. **Promote efficiency in the use of groundwater in the region and find synergies between the water-energy-food sectors**
8. **Incorporate the Human Right to Water and Sanitation as a criterion to achieve binational water justice**
9. **Allocate volumes of transboundary water for ecological use**
10. **Stop deforestation and land use change**
11. **Generate new Minutes within the 1944 Treaty**
12. **Promote holistic transboundary water management within binational regulations**

ABOUT US

The Permanent Forum of Binational Waters is a network of scientists, government officials, non-government organization members, and citizens interested in the sustainability of cross-border waters, as well as in the resilience of the socioeconomic systems that depend upon them.

We are actively involved in environmental restoration and conservation, interdisciplinary research, institutional engagement, and sustainable use of water resources shared by the United States and Mexico.

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