

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN
for the
2003 WATER CONSERVATION PROJECT
HIDALGO COUNTY IRRIGATION DISTRICT NO. 6



Prepared by the
Project Steering Committee
Submitted to
**BORDER ENVIRONMENTAL
COOPERATIVE COMMISSION**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION..... 1

1.1 Project Summary 1

1.2 Public Participation 1

2 FORMATION OF THE LOCAL COMMITTEES..... 1

2.1 Steering Committee 1

2.2 Technical Work Group..... 1

3 LOCAL STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES AND DUTIES 2

4 MEETINGS WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS 2

5 PUBLIC ACCESS TO PROJECT INFORMATION..... 2

5.1 Outreach Activities 3

5.2 Fact Sheet..... 3

6 PUBLIC MEETINGS..... 3

6.1 First BECC Public Meeting 3

6.2 Second BECC Public Meeting 4

7 FINAL REPORT DOCUMENTATION OF PUBLIC SUPPORT..... 4

APPENDICES

Attachment A Schedule of Public Participation Activities

Attachment B Schedule of Presentation of Project Information

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Summary

Hidalgo County Irrigation District No. 6 proposes a project to renovate existing concrete lining of approximately 10.2 miles of the Irrigation District's Mission Main Canal between Re-lift Pump Station No. 2 and Re-lift Pump Station No. 4. The current lining was installed in 1930 and has significantly deteriorated in some segments. The rehabilitation will be done with either a urethane liner or a concrete with fiberglass add mixture. The project will also involve replacement of the existing slide gate structure on the main canal with radial gate bays and remote reporting of the gate settings and water levels in the canal. The proposed canal-lining project is expected to salvage approximately 3,500 acre-feet per year of seepage, helping to ensure the availability of adequate water supplies for municipal, industrial and agricultural users.

1.2 Public Participation

Required for the Border Environmental Conservation Commission (BECC) certification is the fulfillment of a public participation process to promote community understanding of and support for the proposed project. In order to fulfill this requirement, the Project Steering Committee (Committee) proposes to carry out the following public participation plan.

The Public Participation Plan (Plan) is developed per certification requirements and is designed to provide a framework for the sponsor and steering committee to conduct public participation in Mission Texas, and intends to include all sectors of the community in carrying out project public participation to comply with the BECC Step II application for certification. The Plan elements include the formation of a steering committee, contacting local organizations, public access to project information and holding at least two (2) public meetings. Additionally, the Hidalgo County Irrigation District No. 6 will submit a Final Public Participation Report with all of the supporting documentation that demonstrates the scope and success of the Plan as well as community support for this project.

2 FORMATION OF THE LOCAL COMMITTEES

2.1 Steering Committee

The following is a list of names of individuals that have been invited to serve on the Steering Committee:

Thomas Thompson	HCID#6 Board President
Norberto Salinas	Mayor, City of Mission
Cornelio Morales	Manager, HCID#6
Joe Guerra	Manager, AEP Bates Power Plant

Other local residents will be added as needed. The Committee formation meeting was held on April 29, 2003.

2.2 Technical Work Group

A technical support group, as described in the public participation guidelines, will provide assistance, prepare minutes for all meetings and presentations, and advise the Committee. The group is made of the

consulting engineers, county and state officials. The following is a list of names that have been invited to serve on the Technical Committee:

Al Blair, P.E.	Civil Engineer
Joe Date, P.E.	Engineer
Deborah Schaefer	Project Support/BECC Compliance
Cornelio Morales	Manager, HCID#6

Cornelio Morales of Hidalgo Irrigation District No. 6 will act as the technical secretary and keep all meeting minutes.

3 LOCAL STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES AND DUTIES

The Committee will assist in the development and implementation of the Plan in the following areas:

- Identify outreach activities to contact groups within the community
- Dissemination of information to the community
- Conduct/participate the Public Hearings
- Solicit Public input

The Committee will meet on an as needed basis to facilitate the completion of the BECC Step II application.

4 MEETINGS WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Per BECC requirements, local organizations will be presented with the Project Proposal and other pertinent project information. The Committee will identify local organizations that will be impacted by the project, request their support, assist in developing community understanding for the project by disseminating project information and solicit public support. Presentations will be scheduled before the Boards of Directors and/or Management of American Electric Power, La Joya Real Estate, USDA-Moore Air Field and a group of local farmers. Presentations will also be offered to the governing bodies of City of Mission, LaJoya Water Supply Corporation and Frontera Power Generation Plant.

5 PUBLIC ACCESS TO PROJECT INFORMATION

The Project Proposal, Step I Application and draft Project Strategic Plan will be available at the public viewing locations designated below beginning thirty-days prior to the first BECC public meeting. The documents will be available for viewing during normal working hours. Accommodations will be made for viewing documents during normal business hours by phoning 956/585-8389.

<u>Viewing Locations</u>	<u>Contact Name/Phone</u>	<u>Location</u>
HCID #6 Office	Cornelio Morales, 956/585-8389	101 E. 14 th Street, Mission, TX

In addition, notices of availability of project information will be included in public meeting notices to be published in the *Monitor* and mailed to landowners in the district. The public meeting notice will be published in the *Monitor* a minimum of thirty-days prior to the meetings.

5.1 Outreach Activities

The Committee and project sponsor envision carrying out several activities to inform the Irrigation District members about the project and solicit their support. The Committee will make individual contact with District members to inform them about the project and solicit their support. A petition will be available at the District offices for walk-in District members to sign in support of the project.

5.2 Fact Sheet

Fact sheets will be developed that will include basic information on the project such as technical, environmental, financial and public participation components of the project. Fact sheets will be utilized by the Committee in educating the community about the proposed project. Copies of the fact sheets will be mailed to landowners and producers in the District, provided to local organizations and will be available at the District offices.

6 PUBLIC MEETINGS

There will be a minimum of two (2) public meetings to discuss the project per BECC requirements. The proposed dates of these meetings are June 2nd and 3rd, 2003. The first meeting will be a general information meeting to provide the general public with an update of the proposed project and what the BECC Step II application is designed to accomplish. The second meeting will focus on the financial aspects of the project, such as the NADB financial analysis and rate study. The project sponsor and Committee recognize that the possibility exists that more than two (2) public meetings may be necessary for this project. There will be one 30-day public meeting notice posted for both public meetings. The published notice will appear in the *Monitor* on May 3 and 4, 2003.

An exit survey will be prepared for distribution and collection at the end of each BECC public meeting. The exit survey inquires whether the project, its purpose, its necessity, the costs involved and the funding sources have all been adequately explained. Additionally, it will ask whether the public supports the project and the rate increase, and will provide extra space for any comment that participants wish to express. The completed surveys will be included in the Final Comprehensive Public Participation Report.

6.1 First BECC Public Meeting

The first BECC public meeting will be a general information meeting to provide the public with an update of the proposed project and to explain what the BECC Step II application is designed to accomplish. The proposed date of the first meeting is June 2nd, 2003, at Hidalgo County Irrigation District No. 6 office, 101 E. 14th Street, Mission, Texas.

A copy of the public meeting notice and the fact sheet will be mailed to District members and interested parties. The notice will indicate that copies of the Proposal and draft Project Certification Document are available for review at the location identified in Section 5 of this Public Participation Plan. The project fact sheets described in the previous section will be distributed at the public meetings and made available at the District office.

At the opening of the meeting, a sign-in sheet will be distributed to all attendees. Meeting minutes will be taken for later transcription into typewritten minutes. At the conclusion of the meeting, the exit survey will be distributed and completed surveys collected.

The meeting notice, proof of publication, list of individual notice recipients, sign-in sheets, project fact sheets and meeting minutes will be provided in the first BECC Public Meeting section of the Final Public

Participation Report. The completed exit surveys will be provided in the Supporting Documentation section.

6.2 Second BECC Public Meeting

The second BECC public meeting will focus on the financial aspects of the project, such as NADB financial analysis and financial impact to the customers. The meeting notice will be advertised in *the Monitor* a minimum of thirty-days prior to the meeting. The proposed date of the second meeting is June 3rd, 2003 at Hidalgo County Irrigation District No. 6 offices, 101 E. 14th Street, Mission, Texas. The notice will indicate that copies of the Proposal and draft Project Certification Document are available for review at the location identified on Section 5 of this Public Participation Plan.

At the opening of the meeting, a sign-in sheet will be distributed to all attendees. Meeting minutes will be taken for later transcription into typewritten minutes. At the conclusion of the meeting, the exit survey will be distributed and completed surveys collected.

The meeting notice, proof of publication, list of individual notice recipients, sign-in sheets, project fact sheets, meeting minutes and completed exit surveys will be provided in the Second BECC Public Meeting Section of the Final Comprehensive Public Participation Report.

7 FINAL REPORT DOCUMENTATION OF PUBLIC SUPPORT

The Final Comprehensive Public Participation Report will be delivered to the BECC upon completion of the public participation project. The final report will include the following documents:

- List of Steering Committee members and Committee meeting minutes
- List of participating local organizations and support letters
- Information presented at public meeting
- Names of participants and comments made at public meetings
- Name, date, location and type of meeting held
- Public meeting minutes, which includes names of participants and comments made
- Public notice for the meeting
- Copy of the Project Fact Sheet given to the public
- Other pertinent documentation showing public support for the project such as:
 - Results of organizational meetings
 - Press articles
 - Public meeting exit surveys

Canal Renovation and Gate Replacement Project

Schedule of Public Participation Activities -

Attachment A

Activity	Responsible	April, 2003	May, 2003	June, 2003	July, 2003	August, 2003
Recruit Steering Committee Members	Sponsor	4/22				
Steering Committee Formation Meeting	Sponsor, Steering Committee	4/29				
Development of Public Participation Plan	Steering Committee	4/29				
Development of Fact Sheet	Sponsor, Steering Com, Consultant	4/29				
Approval of Public Participation Plan	BECC Public Participation Office	4/30				
30-day Notice for BECC Public Meetings	Sponsor, Steering Committee		5/3			
Begin Contact of Local Organizations	Sponsor, Steering Committee		5/5			
Provide Public Access To Project Information	Sponsor, Steering Committee		5/5			
First BECC Public Participation Meeting	Sponsor, Steering Comm, Consultant			6/2		
Second BECC Public Participation Meeting	Sponsor, Steering Comm, Consultant			6/3		
Public Notice for Third BECC Public Meeting	Sponsor, Steering Comm, Consultant					8/1
Submission of Public Participation Report (*)	Sponsor, Steering Comm, Consultant					8/13
Third BECC Public Participation Meeting	Sponsor, Steering Comm, Consultant					8/21
Submission of Final Participation Report	Sponsor, Steering Comm, Consultant					8/22
Review and Approval of Final PP Report	BECC Public Participation Officer					8/25

Canal Renovation and Gate Replacement Project

Schedule of Presentation of Project Information

Attachment B

DATE	PROJECT INFORMATION PRESENTED TO	PRESENTED BY
6/23/2003	USDA-Moore Air Field	Cornelio Morales
7/8/2003	La Joya Real Estate	Cornelio Morales
7/8/2003	American Electric Power	Joe Guerra
7/15/2003	City of Mission	Norberto Salinas
7/15/2003	La Joya Water Supply	Cornelio Morales
7/16/2003	Frontera Power Plant	Cornelio Morales