

Goal 2: Improve Access to Clean and Safe Water

Watersheds in the U.S.-Mexico border region are shared bi-nationally, with rivers flowing from one country to the other or forming the international boundary. Protecting and restoring watersheds and water quality in these rivers and providing adequate drinking water and basic sanitation services requires collaborative bi-national, multi-jurisdictional planning efforts. The border region faces significant challenges in shared watersheds that are exacerbated by high population growth rates and impacts from climate change.

The Border 2020 Water Goal builds upon the successes and lessons learned from the Border 2012 Program. Under the Water Goal, the United States and Mexico will work together to address the following challenges:

- Lack of access to safe drinking water, which poses a significant threat to public health in border communities.
- Inadequate collection and treatment of wastewater, which contaminates surface waters and aquifers and threatens public health and the environment.
- Inadequate management of stormwater pollution that contributes significantly to water pollution problems and the potential for floods.
- Inadequate public access to water quality data, which decreases the public's ability to know whether a waterbody is safe for recreational use.
- Impacts of climate change that affect precipitation patterns and duration of droughts, making water availability even more challenging in an already arid region, and making wastewater infrastructure more vulnerable to damage from floods.

Objective 1: Promote the increase in the number of homes connected to safe drinking water and adequate wastewater treatment.

- **Objective 1a:** By 2015, promote access to safe drinking water to at least 5,000 households. Revise target every two years.
- **Objective 1b:** By 2015, promote access to adequate wastewater sanitation to 42,000 households.. Revise target every two years.

Objective 2: Help drinking water and wastewater service providers in the border region to implement sustainable infrastructure practices to reduce operating costs, improve energy efficiency, use water efficiently and adapt to climate change .

- **Objective 2a:** Incorporate sustainable infrastructure elements, as feasible and appropriate, into U.S.-Mexico Border Water Infrastructure Program-supported BECC-certified projects, which are implemented the U.S., and in Mexico through the EPA-CONAGUA *Memorandum of Understanding Concerning the Joint Grant Contributions for Drinking Water Supply and Wastewater Infrastructure Projects for Communities in the United States – Mexico Border Area* .

- **Objective 2b:** Improve energy efficiency and efficient water use provided by drinking water and wastewater service providers in the border region.
- **Objective 2c:** Build operational, managerial and financial capacity through training of drinking water and wastewater service providers in the border region.

Objective 3: Work bi-nationally to identify and reduce surface water contamination in transboundary waterbodies and watersheds.

- **Objective 3a:** Develop a binational watershed protection plan in the Lower Rio Grande below Falcon International Dam.
- **Objective 3b:** Every two years, identify and implement at least one project to reduce the level of heavy metals, sediment, and/or bacteria entering the Santa Cruz River and/or the Nogales Creek.
- **Objective 3c:** Every two years, identify and implement at least one project to reduce the levels of bacteria, biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), trash, and/or phosphates entering the New River.
- **Objective 3d:** Every two years, identify and implement at least one project to reduce the level of bacteria, sediment, and/or trash that enters the Tijuana River.

Objective 4: Provide the public with timely access to water quality data in binational waterbodies and watersheds in a readily understandable, web-based format.

- **Objective 4a:** Develop a binational website that displays timely information on beach advisories on both sides of the border in the Brownsville/Matamoros area, and ensure its operation through 2020.
- **Objective 4b:** Develop a binational website that displays timely information on beach advisories on both sides of the border in the San Diego/Tijuana area, and ensure its operation through 2020.
- **Objective 4c:** Develop a binational website that displays timely information on water quality in high-priority watersheds including the Lower Rio Grande, the New River, and the Tijuana River and ensure its operation through 2020.