



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
April 24, 2019

CONTROLLING CARRIZO CANE ALONG THE RIO GRANDE AND REAL-TIME WATER SENSORS TO BE DISCUSSED AT MAY 8 MEETING IN MERCEDES

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) has scheduled a public meeting of the Lower Rio Grande Citizens Forum (LRGCF) for **Wednesday, May 8, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the USIBWC office at 325 Golf Course Road in Mercedes, Texas.** The purpose of the forum is to promote the exchange of information between the USIBWC and the community regarding Commission projects and related activities.

Dr. John Goolsby, Research Entomologist, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS), and Maricela Martinez Jimenez, Research Entomologist, Mexican Institute of Water Technology, will give an update on the *Arundo donax* biological control program on the Rio Grande. *Arundo donax*, also known as giant reed or carrizo cane, is an invasive weed of the Rio Grande Basin, infesting hundreds of thousands of acres of riverine habitat. Giant reed causes a multitude of societal impacts including reduced water conservation, displacement of critical native vegetation, reduced access and visibility of the international border for law enforcement, and spread of cattle fever ticks. USDA-ARS, Customs and Border Protection and binational cooperators in Mexico developed and implemented a biological control program using specialist insects from the native range of *Arundo donax* in Spain. The program has been successful in reducing above-ground biomass of *Arundo donax* over a vast area of the Rio Grande Basin which has resulted in water savings, regrowth of native plants, mitigation of

tick habitat, and increased visibility of the international border. This program is an example of a successful federal interagency and binational research effort.

Doug Schnoebelen, PhD., Branch Chief, South Texas, U.S. Geological Survey, will discuss how new technologies using real-time sensors for water flow and water quality are providing a better understanding of our water resources. Data can be transmitted to the internet in increments of 15 minutes or less. Special cameras and drones are providing data that has not been possible in the past for measuring discharge and velocities. Special water quality sensors are providing real-time data for dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, nitrate, salinity and turbidity. All of this data will provide new insights for water managers, planners, and stakeholders.

A complete agenda follows. Members of the public who would like more information about the meeting may call 956-565-3150 or e-mail lori.kuczanski@ibwc.gov.

News media may contact:

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LOWER RIO GRANDE CITIZENS FORUM

Wednesday, May 8, 2019

3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

USIBWC Conference Room

325 Golf Course Road*

Mercedes, TX 78570

Agenda

- **Welcome and Introductions** – Omar Rios, Citizens Forum Co-Chair
- **Update on the Binational Control Program for the Invasive Weed *Arundo donax* in the Rio Grande** – John Goolsby, Research Entomologist, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, and Maricela Martinez Jimenez, Research Entomologist, Mexican Institute of Water Technology
- **Real-Time Sensors and Cameras—New Tools for Understanding Water Quality Flow, and Flood Inundation** – Doug Schnoebelen, PhD., Branch Chief, South Texas, U.S. Geological Survey
- **Public Comment**
- **Board Discussion**
- **Suggested Future Agenda Items**

*Directions: From Expressway 83, exit Mile 2 W. Travel south for approx. 1.5 miles to Golf Course Rd. Turn left. The USIBWC is the first building on your left.

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time. For information, call 956-565-3150 or e-mail lori.kuczanski@ibwc.gov