



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
April 11, 2018

ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF AGRICULTURE IN IMPERIAL COUNTY AND BREEDING FISH TO CONTROL INVASIVE SPECIES TO BE DISCUSSED AT APRIL 25 PUBLIC MEETING IN EL CENTRO, CA

Imperial Irrigation District's Grass Carp Hatchery Program and the economic effects of agriculture in the county will be the focus of an upcoming public meeting of the Colorado River Citizens Forum of the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC). The meeting will take place on **Wednesday, April 25, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. at the Imperial Irrigation District Board Room, 1285 Broadway, El Centro, CA.** The Colorado River Citizens Forum was established to facilitate the exchange of information with the public about Commission activities and related matters.

Carlos Ortiz, Imperial County Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures, will give a presentation on agriculture's direct and indirect economic impacts. The 2016 Imperial County Agricultural Crop and Livestock Report summarizes the estimated acreage, yield, and gross value of Imperial County's agricultural production for the 2016 calendar year. The data served as the initial step in producing for the first time in Imperial County the "Crop Report Plus" Series report, a comprehensive economic analysis of the county's agriculture industry. The new report goes beyond the annual Crop Report by assessing local food processing, multiplier effects, and employment. The report also includes a first-ever assessment of economic diversity within agriculture.

The Colorado River Citizens Forum will also hear about the Imperial Irrigation District's (IID) Grass Carp Hatchery Program from Pablo Cortez, IID's Hatchery Operations Coordinator. The Grass Carp Program started in the late 1980s to control invasive Hydrilla, an aquatic plant, when grass carp were initially purchased from Arkansas for introduction into IID's system. Prior to the introduction of grass carp, IID chemically and mechanically maintained the canals with little success over the invasive species. Some of the fish coming out of Arkansas had diseases, leading the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to stop the importation of grass carp into the Imperial Valley and state. This prompted the IID to start its own fish facility to breed sterile grass carp that could be introduced into IID's system with no problems. Today, the Biological Control Facility annually spawns triploid (sterile) grass carp to grow within the facility until they are transferred to canals within the IID system or sold to various golf courses and other ponds throughout the Southwest.

A complete meeting agenda follows. Members of the public who would like more information about the meeting may contact 928-782-1598 or the Public Affairs Office at

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COLORADO RIVER CITIZENS FORUM
Wednesday, April 25, 2018
4:00 – 6:00 p.m. PDT/MST
Imperial Irrigation District Board Room
1285 Broadway
El Centro, California

Agenda

- **Welcome and Introductions** – Roberta (Bobbi) McDermott, Citizens Forum Co-Chair
- **Economic Contributions of Imperial County Agriculture to the Local Economy** – Carlos Ortiz, Imperial County Agricultural Commissioner/ Sealer of Weights and Measures
- **Imperial Irrigation District’s Grass Carp Hatchery Program** – Pablo Cortez, Hatchery Operations Coordinator, Imperial Irrigation District
- **Public Comment**
- **Board Discussion**
- **Suggested Future Agenda Items**

***Directions:** From Yuma, I-8 west to Imperial Ave. exit (exit # 114) north past 5 stoplights to Broadway, turn right, park at lot at end of the block. They are located east of the Bank of America.

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time. For more information, call 928-782-1598 or e-mail lori.kuczanski@ibwc.gov