

# The Wetlands Ponds



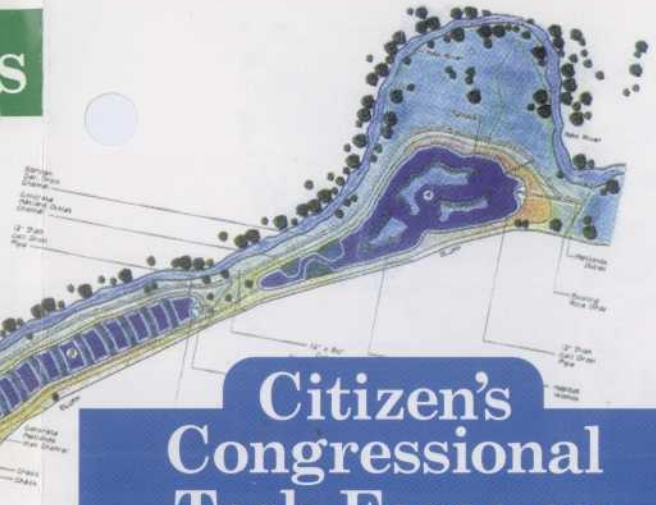
PROJECT SITE MAP



SETTLING PONDS

SITE: RICE DRAIN  
VEGETATIVE PONDS

Citizen's Congressional Task Force  
4151 Highway 86, Building 4  
Brawley, CA 92227  
The New River



## Citizen's Congressional Task Force on The New River

# NEW RIVER WETLANDS PROJECT



A Grassroots Project to Improve the Quality of Water Flowing into the Salton Sea

### BE A PART OF THIS SOLUTION!

we are actively seeking volunteers.

call (760) 351-2679

to sign up for activities.

Desert Wildlife Unlimited (760) 344-1151

### PARTICIPANTS IN PROJECT:

- Desert Wildlife Unlimited
- Imperial Irrigation District
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- Imperial County - Properties Service
- California Dept. Fish & Game
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- University of California
- County Agencies
- Imperial County Board of Supervisors
- Ducks Unlimited
- U.S. Geological Survey
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

For information email us at: [newriver@quix.net](mailto:newriver@quix.net)

# Wetlands Project



**BRAWLEY SITE**

## HISTORY

The New River was formed in the early 1900s when the Colorado River flooded. An international river, it originates 20 miles south of the border. It travels through the City of Mexicali across the International Border into the Imperial Valley at Calexico, California, meandering through agricultural fields, the city of Brawley and reaching its destination into the Salton Sea an important fishery and wildlife refuge.



## PROBLEM

As the New River flows from Mexicali to the Salton Sea, from both sides of the border the river acquires nutrients and heavy metals from sewage; nutrients, silt, selenium and pesticides from agricultural drainage. The concern is that the nutrient load carried by the New River is increasing the degradation of the Salton Sea.

## GRASSROOTS ACTION

In early 1997, a concerned local organization, Desert Wildlife Unlimited, lead by Leon Lesicka, worked with U.S. Representative, Duncan Hunter to propose an economical, common sense solution to the pollution of the New River. As a result of this collaboration, the Citizen's Congressional Task Force on the New River was formed. This grassroots group has worked with several local, state and federal agencies to obtain grant monies, permits and to get construction plans in place.



## PILOT PROJECT

The purpose of the Project is to construct a pilot Wetlands system to implement pollution control to reduce agricultural pollutants and improve quality of water discharged from the New River into Salton Sea.

The first pilot project will consist of 68 acres on the Rice Drain (see site map). Agricultural drain water will be diverted from Rice Drain into a series of wetland ponds (see Ponds - outside of brochure). The first pond will be a settling pond for silt removal. The water will then proceed through a series of four wetlands populated with vegetation



that filter pollutants such as sewage, nitrogen, phosphates and heavy metals. A second pilot project, 7 acres near Brawley, will use water from New River and utilize the same ponding techniques.



## MONITORING

To determine the success of the pilot program, extensive water quality monitoring will be conducted for three years. Monitoring will include: •General Water Chemistry •Selenium •Pesticides •Nutrients •Silt •Water Quality. When monitoring proves the project successful, wetlands will be constructed in other selected sites, including the Alamo River.



## BENEFITS

The Rice Drain Brawley site wetlands can provide the following benefits:

- **Reduction of pollutants**
- **Habitat for a wealth of plants, fish, wildlife and migrating waterfowl**
- **Recreational benefits such as**
  - **hunting / fishing**
  - **bird watching**
  - **hiking / family outings**