

# RESIDENTS HELP DESIGN ENTRANCE TO BORDER FIELD STATE PARK

## Public asked to comment on plans that include artistic use of Tijuana River trash

By [Allison Sampite-Montecalvo \(/staff/allison-sampite-montecalvo/\)](#) 12:01 a.m. May 30, 2013 Updated 4:29 p.m. May 28, 2013

IMPERIAL BEACH — Members of the public got a chance to weigh in on improvements to the entrance of Border Field State Park on May 22.

During the three-hour open house at the Tijuana Estuary Training Center in Imperial Beach, people gave their input on concept designs for the main access point for the southern portion of the Tijuana River Valley.

Border Field State Park is within the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve, a wildlife habitat that preserves, protects and manages natural and cultural resources of the Tijuana River Estuary.

The reserve encompasses beach, dune, mud flat, salt marsh, riparian, coastal sage scrub and upland habitats surrounded by Tijuana, Imperial Beach and San Diego. It is severely underutilized by the public.

4 Walls International is organizing a way to use the trash that flows across the border in the Tijuana River to redesign the entrance to Border Field State Park. The idea, said 4 Walls co-founder Steven Wright, is to call attention to the trash to show it's a viable building option.

Using artistic flair, Wright said Styrofoam, bottles and other trash will be used to create benches, signage and other things to enliven the gateway to the natural open space.

"These are historically significant places and important to our binational region," Wright said. "We want to see it become an educational center for the whole community."

State Parks works in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association to conduct research, habitat restoration and education programs at the reserve.

Children were asked to illustrate their impressions of the park, how trash can be reused and what activities they'd like to see there, ideas that could ultimately be incorporated into the design.

"The whole point is this is visionary," Wright said. "We want ideas."

Anne Marie Tipton, the educational coordinator with California State Parks, talked to residents about access and connectivity to the park.

"State Parks is here for recreation and to protect resources," Tipton said, adding the trails are a huge point of interest.

Equestrian Gale Moriarity, 70, has three horses and became a member of the Tijuana Estuary Association in 2000.

"I'm here to ensure there's access to trails and vehicles," she said. "We've had people from all across America come here because they know they can ride on the beach. They need to have the gate open."

While the park remains accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians to picnic, barbecue, and bird watch, the entrance is closed Monday through Friday to vehicles because of state park budget cuts.

In addition, winter rains that cause flooding of park roads often shuts off the park to vehicles, which restricts access to Monument Mesa and other park amenities.

"It's great to see focus being put on Border Field State Park," said county Supervisor Greg Cox, who also attended the workshop. "I think it's been one of those forgotten amenities ... and I think it has tremendous potential."

Future workshops will be held to finalize designs.

"So far we've gotten a lot of feedback from the equestrian group," Wright said.

“We’ll take the information back and incorporate their feedback into the designs.”

The \$20,000 first phase of the project will be funded by The San Diego Foundation and is expected to begin Sept. 1 with completion sometime in November.

*allison.sampite-montecalvo@utsandiego.com • (619) 293-1394*

© Copyright 2013 The San Diego Union-Tribune, LLC. An MLIM LLC Company. All rights reserved.