TIJUANA RIVER NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE
ADVISORY COUNCIL
Tuesday August 4, at 1pm
301 Caspian Way, Imperial Beach CA, 91932
Meeting held virtually via GoToWebinar platform
DRAFT meeting minutes

Advisory Council Members
Present: at this meeting in BOLD PRINT

Gina Moran – California State Parks – District Superintendent
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Bill Tippets – SWIA Board Member
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Anna Shepherd – US Naval Base Coronado – Community Plans and Liaison Officer
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Chris Helmer – City of Imperial Beach – Environmental and Natural Resources Director
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Brianna Menke – City of San Diego – Transportation & Storm Water Division
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Andrew Funk – City of San Diego – Transportation & Storm Water Division
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Doug Liden – USEPA – Environmental Engineer
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Amber Craig – USBP – Public Lands Liaison Agent
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Nicolas Chapa – USIBWC – Project Manager
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Mike Verderber – SD County Parks – Supervising Park Ranger
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Emily Hubbard – SD County Parks – Project Manager
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Sam Jenniches – State Coastal Conservancy – Project Manager
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Michelle Jespersion – California Coastal Commission representative
A. **1:05 Meeting was called to order**

B. **AGENDA** – Agenda was adopted; however, Chris Peregrin will give new business update for Gina Moran (CSP) who is not present.

C. **LAST MEETING MINUTES** – Last meeting minutes were adopted.

D. **Member Comments**

Andy Yuen – USFWS – SDNWRC Project Leader
  i. Refer to Brian Collins Refuge Manager’s report. It highlights the EPA interagency consultation meeting discussions.

Anna Shepherd – US Naval Base Coronado – Community Plans and Liaison Officer
  i. San Diego County joined the Naval Base Coronado’s Encroachment Protection Agreement and is now eligible for funding through the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program. That funding can be used at Camp Michael Monsoor and Camp Moreno, near Campo and at the Naval Outlying Landing Field in Imperial Beach and the surrounding area. Brainstorming ways to put together the FY21 REPI funding request.
Brianna Menke – City of San Diego – Transportation & Storm Water Division
i. Update on the phase 2 Hydrologic and Hydraulic, the hydraulic analysis has been completed and the Army Corps of Engineers will be completing the sediment transport modeling sometime this month. The final report is expected to be completed by the end of September to coincide with the end of the federal fiscal year. These reports will be made available to any interested stakeholders.
ii. Brianna introduced Andrew Funk, a senior planner taking over for Catherine Rom, who will be working on issues in the Tijuana River Valley.

Doug Liden – USEPA – Environmental Engineer
i. This month the EPA is certifying the Oriente Collector repair project. It will repair 1,400 meters of a large potentially failing wastewater collector and could prevent 7 mgd of sewage flows into the river.
ii. The Poniente Collector project is just being completed now and will remove 5 mgd of sewage from flowing into the river.
iii. From the North American Development Bank, CESPT is installing a third chopper pump. Once it is online, there will be a significant reduction of transboundary flows into the river. CESPT will be handing over operations and maintenance of the facility to a well-known private firm called Ingeniería de Bomberos.

Nicolas Chapa – USIBWC – Interim Area Operations Manager
i. All canyon collectors are fully functional but there are some unusual flows for this dry season, and the IBWC needs to check with CILA and CESPT.
ii. Operations and maintenance of PB CILA will be taken over from CESPT, the water utility in Tijuana, by a private operator starting next week.

Amber Craig – USBP – Public Lands Liaison Agent
i. The wall construction in parts of the county should be finished this year and there might be another project for next year, but not much to report for the Tijuana River Valley.

Bill Tippets – SWIA – Board Member
i. SWIA has a new board member, Gary Brown, the former city manager of Imperial Beach.
ii. SWIA is working with the TRNERR staff on improving efficiency in communications and budget planning.
iii. Due to Debi Carey’s retirement, SWIA is revising the duty statements of the Projects Director and the Administrative Director.
iv. SWIA is working on ideas to improve its financial status to better serve the Reserve.

Mike Verderber – SD County Parks Supervising Ranger
i. The County has been working with the CCC on trails maintenance and fire breaks.
ii. They have had good attendance at the sports complex and trails with a mindfulness to mask compliance.
Emily Hubbard – SD County Parks Project Manager
   i. Construction on the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park campground project began in March.
   ii. Overnight camping for tents, yurts, and RVs without hookups will be allowed. The campground will include restrooms, and an interactive nature education center with an amphitheater, interpretive signs and trail connections to existing trails. The west side should be completed by the end of the year.
   iii. Site grading and installation of campsites on the north side of the hub is nearly complete.

Chris Peregrin for Chris Helmer – City of Imperial Beach – Environmental and Natural Resources Director
   i. The City of Imperial Beach received a $500,000 grant from the Coastal Conservancy to complete the Tijuana River Valley Sediment Management Work Plan and Monitoring Plan. The funding will support the long-term operation and maintenance of sediment material from the Tijuana River Valley, as well as a monitoring program for the characterization of sediment and the implementation of the trash and bacteria total maximum daily load.

E. Program Manager Reports – refer to written Program Managers report

Brian Collins – USFWS – Refuge Manager
   i. San Diego NWR personnel have been able to telework during the pandemic. Field work has been approved for some employees to catch up on backlog of field tasks. CalFire have helped with vegetation clearing on trails around the Visitor Center.
   ii. They have two new permanent staff members. Julie Gonzalez, Park Ranger working on the Urban Wildlife Refuge program and Nancy Fernandez, Park Ranger working on public communications via social media and other forms.
   iii. Nesting season for Western snowy plovers and California least terns is still in process. Productivity estimates are not yet available.
   iv. Conditions for the light-footed Ridgway’s rails have improved. The vegetation in the marsh is very robust and this is good for the rails.
   v. In addition to working with many partners on the propagation program for the rails, the USFWS now has a collaboration with a team of biological researchers from USGS, the University of Idaho and Idaho State University on the development of standardized monitoring protocols of and genomic analysis of the species, and a habitat usage model using satellite telemetry data of bird movements.
   vi. Continued monitoring of the river mouth, it looks pretty good now.
   vii. The USFWS is working with their Biological Inventory and Monitoring Staff in the collection and archiving of relevant biological data about the Refuge.
   viii. The City of Imperial Beach has been doing a great job on the improvement project along Imperial Beach Blvd. The corner of I.B. Blvd. and 3rd will soon be getting a replacement deck for the entry to the Tijuana Estuary trails.
ix. There will also be new accessible benches, interpretive signs and telescopes on Seacoast Drive.

x. USFWS received funding from DHS for reduction of vegetation to reduce the risk of wildfires, improve patrol conditions for USBP, and improve habitat conditions by removal of invasive plants. Work will be done by the CCC.

xi. The Refuge continues collaborative work with the County of San Diego Vector Control on surveillance in the Tijuana Estuary.

xii. On Sunday July 12, USFWS staff were part of the unified regional response team to assist in mitigation measures in response to the fire on the ship “Bonhomme Richard” in the San Diego Bay.

Chris Peregrin – TRNERR – All Program Reports
Reserve Manager Report
i. Refer to written report.

Education Report
i. Reserve educations attended professional development training of the PORTS program (Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students) this past fall which enabled them to develop and implement many virtual educational and nature experiences for students and the public that align with the COVID-19 stay at home orders.

ii. Detecting a Changing Climate is one of the main school programs, it is targeted at middle and high school students. Since March, Reserve educators have provided seven high school and five middle school Detecting a Changing Climate, three middle school Salt Marshes and Climate Change, and eight elementary Salt Marsh Secrets programs. A total of 1,073 students were reached with these programs.

Stewardship Report
i. The Reserve and its partners are currently planning for TRAM, Tijuana River Action Month, which is typically held every September and October. Because of Coronavirus the group is trying to keep the connection alive with the community and the organizing agencies, so mostly virtual elements have been added this year. In addition to bi-national and local neighborhood cleanups, there will be a virtual tour of the Tijuana River Valley and more. Look on the Tijuana River Action Network’s Facebook Page to see a schedule of events.

ii. The Reserve continues to push on the Goat Canyon Sediment Basin management project and is trying to successfully link it to the Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration Project.

Coastal Training Program Report
i. The CTP has been able to modify its previously scheduled meetings, conferences, and workshops to a virtual platform. It has developed and delivered trainings for the Reserve’s coastal decision makers and for the national system. Three primary trainings of note are: How to Plan and Facilitate an Engaging Virtual Meeting, Excelling in a
Virtual World through Effective Communication, and Collaborative Science in a Virtual World: Recognizing Limits and Leveraging Opportunities.

ii. CTP is evaluating options to host “classroom” based trainings if they become available for virtual delivery.

Research Report
i. The Research team has continued doing field work in a limited capacity and has mostly been focusing on data management and analysis. This has been a great opportunity to dig into our 20 plus years of data.

ii. Refer to the written report by Jeff Crooks about water quality to understand what is happening in the estuary and in the ocean.

F. New Business
Chris Peregrin for Gina Moran, CA State Parks, San Diego Coast District Superintendent
i. Update on California State Parks Coronavirus response. Gina Moran has done a great job keeping the Reserve staff connected with the State parks leadership in Sacramento and our parent agency the California Resources Agency and the California Governor’s Office.

ii. The District has had daily managers calls to align the agency with the San Diego Department of Public Health and the California Department of Public Health in the reopening of all the beaches.

iii. The Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center has not been able to reopen, but the trails are open, and the parking lot and restrooms just recently reopened.

iv. The Reserve staff has been working on the logistics of reopening the Visitor Center.

v. Border Field State Park remains closed due to the level of maintenance needed to open the park in response to the Coronavirus.

G. General Public Comment:
Vivian Marquez-Waller, member of public
C: Vivian Marquez Waller congratulated Border Patrol’s Amber Craig on the 60 Minutes interview.

H. Future Agenda Considerations
Doug Liden suggested a presentation on the Sediment Monitoring meeting by Chris Helmer as a topic for next Council Meeting.

I. Adjourned at 2:57pm
The meeting was adjourned. Chris thanked everyone who attended, as well as Lorena and Kristen for their technical expertise.

TRNERR MEETINGS for Advisory Council – Virtually @1pm
Future TRNERR Advisory Council dates:
• November 3, 2020