

**TIJUANA RIVER NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE  
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Tuesday, May 4, at 1pm  
301 Caspian Way, Imperial Beach CA, 91932  
Meeting held virtually via *Webex* platform

**ADOPTED meeting minutes**

**Advisory Council Members**

Present: at this meeting in **BOLD PRINT**

**Gina Moran – California State Parks – District Superintendent**

619-688-3356, gina.moran@parks.ca.gov

**Chris Peregrin – TRNERR – Reserve Manager**

619-575-3615 ext. 303, chris.peregrin@parks.ca.gov

**Andy Yuen – USFWS – SDNWRC Project Leader**

619-476-9150, andy\_yuen@fws.gov

**Brian Collins – USFWS – Refuge Manager**

619-575-3613 ext. 302, brian\_collins@fws.gov

**Mike McCoy – SWIA – President**

619-423-0495, mccoy4ib@aol.com

**Anna Shepherd – US Naval Base Coronado – Community Plans and Liaison Officer**

619-545-4134, anna.shepherd@navy.mil

**Joyce Sisson – US Naval Base Coronado – Planning and Conservation Branch Head**

619-545-4134, joyce.sisson@navy.mil

**Meagan Openshaw – City of Imperial Beach – Associate Planner**

619-628-0858, mopenshaw@imperialbeachca.gov

**Brianna Menke – City of San Diego – Transportation & Storm Water Division**

858-541-4314, bmenke@sandiego.gov

**Doug Liden – USEPA – Environmental Engineer**

619-235-4763, liden.douglas@epa.gov

**Amber Craig – USBP – Public Lands Liaison Agent**

619-942-1780, amber.l.craig@cbp.dhs.gov

**Morgan Rogers – USIBWC – Area Operations Manager**

619-417-4613, morgan.rogers@ibwc.gov

**Mike Verderber – SD County Parks – Supervising Park Ranger**

619-428-2946, mike.verderber@sdcounty.ca.gov

**Emily Hubbard – SD County Parks – Project Manager**

emily.hubbard@sdcounty.ca.gov

**Sam Jenniches – State Coastal Conservancy – Project Manager**

760-832-7365, sjenniches@scc.ca.gov

Michelle Jespersion – California Coastal Commission representative

619-767-2380, mjespersion@coastal.ca.gov

Melis Okter – NOAA's Office for Coastal Management – NERR Liaison

510-637-3841, melis.okter@noaa.gov

**Program Managers Present:**

**Lorena Warner-Lara – TRNERR – Assistant Reserve Manager (Stewardship)**

619-575-3615 ext. 312, lorena.warner-lara@parks.ca.gov

**Kristen Goodrich – TRNERR – Coastal Training Program Coordinator**

619-575-3615 ext. 314, kgoodrich@trnerr.org

**Jeff Crooks – TRNERR – Research Coordinator**

619-575-3615 ext. 333, jcrooks@trnerr.org

**Anne Marie Tipton – TRNERR – Education Coordinator**

619-575-3615 ext. 304, annemarie.tipton@parks.ca.gov

**Members of the Public**

Andrew Funk, City of San Diego

Joe Ellis, Public

John Zarem, Volunteer

Josh Bugiel, SD County Parks

Crystal Benham, SD County Parks

Jill Terp, USFWS

Dan Watman, Friends of Friendship Park

Robin Echols-Booth, TRNERR

Tracey Ekker, TRNERR

Marya Ahmad, TRNERR

Viviane Marquez-Waller, Resident

Dick Pilgrim, Friends of SD Refuges

Jim Peugh, SD Audubon, Friends of Famosa Slough

2 unknown called in.

**1. 1:03 Meeting was called to order**

2. **AGENDA** – Agenda was adopted.

3. **LAST MEETING MINUTES** – *Last meeting minutes were not adopted, as members did not have enough time to review them.*

**4. Member Comments**

Gina Moran - California State Parks – District Superintendent

- a. Border Field State Park was opened to pedestrian and equestrian access but remains closed to vehicles due to the flooding from Yogurt Canyon. CA State Parks (CSP) will be monitoring the area so that if it dries up enough the Park can be opened to vehicles, hopefully by June barring any other weather events that cause the area to stay wet and flooded.
- b. CSP updates on Corona Virus: San Diego County is still in orange tier. On April 15<sup>th</sup> CSP gathering guidance limited outdoor gatherings to 50 people and indoors to 25% of maximum capacity. The Silver Strand group campground is closed due to these guidelines and the limits will remain in place until the county is downgraded to the yellow tier or until there is different guidance from California Department of Public Health. The Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center will be opening in June with the limit of 25% capacity.

Andy Yuen – USFWS – SDNWRC Project Leader

- a. The USFWS attended the EPA’s Virtual Public Scoping Meeting for the Draft EIS for the Contaminated Transboundary Flows project.
- b. Continuing to work on Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program II Phase I. A Notice of Intent is being prepared and virtual public scoping meetings will be scheduled for the preparation of the draft of the Environmental Impact Report and the Environmental Impact Statement.
- c. On Friday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, the Coastal Commission issued the Coastal Development permit for the work on the Otay River Estuary Restoration Project in South San Diego Bay.

Sam Jenniches – State Coastal Conservancy – Project Manager

- a. The Smuggler’s Gulch Improvement Project, which is part of the Tijuana River Border Pollution Project, will be discussed at the board meeting on May 27<sup>th</sup>. If anyone has questions or would like to join the meeting, contact Sam.

Anna Shepherd – US Naval Base Coronado – Community Plans and Liaison Officer

- a. The base moved to what they call Health Protection Condition Bravo, so some activities are starting up. Some workers are gradually returning to work, but a large portion are still teleworking.
- b. Regarding San Clemente Island: Due to forty years of their environmental management, they will soon be able to de-list multiple species. The EPA will be announcing this soon.

Meagan Openshaw – City of Imperial Beach – Associate Planner

- a. There are two large projects that the City has been focusing on. One is the Sediment Management Plan, the steering committee met on that last week. The other project is the Bayshore Bikeway Resiliency Project, which involves the creation of a coastal resilience corridor in Imperial Beach. Funding has been received for the project planning. The first meeting is next week.

Brianna Menke – City of San Diego – Transportation & Storm Water Division

- a. Update: The Phase 2 Hydrologic and Hydraulic Study was completed and distributed but the Army Corps decided to update some of the graphs and figures. This updated information will be included in the final draft coming out next month.

Doug Liden – USEPA – Environmental Engineer

- a. Go to the link in the chat box (<https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-water-infrastructure/tijuana-river-watershed-nepa-public-scoping>) to submit comments on the 10 projects that were described in the NEPA meeting. Comments can be submitted before May 20<sup>th</sup>. There will be a public meeting on May 24<sup>th</sup>. There will be an Eligible Public Entities Consultation Group meeting on May 19<sup>th</sup>. The NEPA process must be complete by April 2023.

Crystal Benham – SD County Parks

- a. Regarding the Coastal Conservancy funding, the County is asking for funding for design and construction of the Smuggler's Gulch Improvement Project. The potential project would be to make more efficient the dredging that they already do in the gulch and to reduce some of the sediment loading downstream. C.Benham is available for questions and comments.

Amber Craig – USBP – Public Lands Liaison Agent

- a. The sector had to draw staff from all around to come and assist with processing caravan folks.
- b. The agents are busier in the Tijuana River Valley due to more undocumented migrants crossing the border into the United States.
- c. Agent Craig heard a rumor for funding of erosion control possibly linked to the portion of unfinished border fence.
- d. A few of the new congressional people who have been checking on the situation with the unaccompanied minor migrants' situation, have also visited the Tijuana River Valley and discussed the wastewater issues.

Morgan Rogers – USIBWC – Area Operations Manager

- a. M.Rogers introduced himself as the new Area Operations Manager for the USIBWC and looks forward to working with everyone.

Tony Ross – California Coastal Commission (sent in a question)

- a. She met with EPA to discuss improvements; Monument Road was discussed. T.Ross is wondering if the two projects would work together.  
A: C.Peregrin - One projects in the USMCA process is the repair to Monument Road and the restoration of the salt marsh in that region, specifically the flooding caused by Yogurt Canyon. There have been discussions of linking the effort with the USMCA's process.  
A: D.Liden – There are some modifications specifically related to the Yogurt Canyon area. See section on Yogurt Canyon here: <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-water-infrastructure/tijuana-river-watershed-nepa-public-scoping>

Mike McCoy – SWIA – President

- a. SWIA is considering a letter of support for the Smuggler's Gulch project.
- b. Regarding the County Board of Supervisors upcoming meeting: There is a willingness for the County to address climate change and biodiversity. They are going to direct all departments to create the concept of sustainability in all aspects of how they work and they're going to launch a program for native plant, landscaping, and biodiversity throughout the county. That is going to come before the Board for a vote tomorrow.

## 5. Program Manager Reports

Brian Collins – USFWS – Refuge Manager

- a. Nesting season has begun so the Refuge has started their weekly monitoring of the Snowy Plover and will start monitoring the California Least Tern. There have been incursions in the nesting areas, so they have signs posted near the nesting areas to reach out to the public on the importance of respecting the area.
- b. USFWS have been visually checking the rivermouth for signs of closure. The telemetry that has been down for a while; it has not been replaced due to water contamination and health concerns.
- c. Regarding water quality, the USFWS have been part of a technical advisory group, with the City of Imperial Beach, on their sediment management planning process.
- d. USFWS received funds from the Department of Homeland Security for the Southern Border Fuels Initiative to do vegetation control near the border; first year is complete. USFWS plans to again deploy the California Conservation Corps after the nesting season to reduce the non-native vegetation fuel.
- e. USFWS are working with the CA State Parks to determine how to restart the volunteer program.
- f. USFWS have received funding through the Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program for replanting native vegetation work at the San Diego Bay at the Coronado Cays, and just south at Emory Cove, and at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Imperial Beach Blvd.

Chris Peregrin – TRNERR – All Program Reports

Education Report

- a. During the Covid-19 outbreak, A.M.Tipton was very valuable in her service as a Covid-19 contact tracer. For about 4 months last year, she stepped out of her role here at the Reserve to help with that effort. M.Ahmad enabled this absence at the Reserve by taking up some of those responsibilities in addition to her own job.
- b. The Reserve Educators have given over 100 classes and reached nearly 4000 students through the California State Parks PORTS (Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students) Program. This program enables Reserve Educators to share the educational content of the Parks and Reserves with students and teachers in their classroom through an online platform. The Education Department is fully booked through the middle of June because of the high demand for this program by elementary, middle, and high schools.
- c. The Reserve Educators were a part of the team that developed an online Dual Language Junior Ranger Program that won a State Parks Director's Special Commendation award. The project was created to better connect with all Junior Rangers during the Covid-19 pandemic and break down barriers to access, connecting kids from both English and Spanish linguistic backgrounds to the wonders of California State Parks.

### Coastal Training Program Report

- a. In late March, supported by NOAA's Marine Debris grant, CTP hosted a binational workshop that focused on the relationship between solid waste management and flooding, and emergency preparedness and response in the region. It was well attended by stakeholders in the U.S. and Mexico. There was strong interest in continuing to coordinate and collaborate on this issue.
- b. CTP is hosting a webinar series *The Changing Sediment Landscape & Future of California's Shores and Beaches* through the California Shore and Beach Preservation Association (CSBPA). All webinars are from noon to 1:15 pm PST. On March 11, the webinar topic is 'Climate and our coastal future.' The next webinar is on May 20 and the topic is 'Economics and the value of our coasts.' More information can be found on <https://asbpa.org/california/> under 'events.'

### Stewardship Report

- a. Goat Canyon update: the management of the sediment basin continues. CSP has been using the same contractor, ERRG, for 2 years and will amend the contract for another 2 years.
- b. The Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration and Beneficial Reuse of Sediment Project update: the proposed project would take the sediment from the Goat Canyon Sediment Basin and partner with others managing sediment in the valley to restore the landform and native habitat in the uplands.
  - i. Nelson Sloan Draft EIR anticipated summer 2021
- c. Regarding TETRP II Phase I EIR/EIS; working with the design team on the 80-acre restoration project.
  - i. Look for NOP/NOI and Scoping Meeting - May 2021, information will be on <https://trnerr.org/about/public-notices/> (and on homepage)
- d. It is nesting season and the annual vireo and gnatcatcher surveys are underway. The least Bell's vireos are in the riparian areas and the California gnatcatchers are in the coastal sage scrub.

### Research Report

- a. The Davidson Fellow, Nancy Torres, presented at the SoCal Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry, and won a best student talk award. She was also featured in the NERRA (National Estuarine Research Reserve Association) newsletter.
- b. Water quality appears to be improving, and that should enable researchers to get out and service the dataloggers and restore telemetry for real-time data delivery (<https://tijuana.river.trnerr.org/>).

**6. New Business**

Emily Hubbard with the County of San Diego showed photos of the newly opened campground in the Tijuana River Valley. The campground has a ranger building which also houses the ADA accessible restrooms and showers. Of the 51 campsites, 5 have corrals for equestrian camping, and the other campsites are tent sites only or multi-use sites which accommodate tents, RVs, and pop-up tent trailers. Other features include 10 yurts for overnight stays and a nature-based play area that includes an amphitheater for nature presentations. On opening day, April 28<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Dale gave a talk and did a nature walk.

Josh Bugiel with the County of San Diego covered some operations details. The campground is fully reservable online except the yurts, which should be reservable by the weekend. He also said that the County has been coordinating with State Parks and will continue to do so.

Presentation was followed by a couple questions from public about additional information and access constraints.

**7. General Public Comment:**

None.

**8. Future Agenda Considerations**

None were given. Please email Lorena Warner-Lara, [lorena.warner-lara@parks.ca.gov](mailto:lorena.warner-lara@parks.ca.gov), with any future agenda items.

**9. Adjourned at 2:09pm**

The meeting was adjourned.

**10. TRNERR MEETINGS for Advisory Council – Virtually @1pm**

Future TRNERR Advisory Council dates:

August 3, 2021

November 2, 2021