

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

Tuesday, August 3, at 1pm
301 Caspian Way, Imperial Beach CA, 91932
Meeting held virtually via *Zoom* platform

ADOPTED meeting minutes

Advisory Council Members

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

Gina Moran – California State Parks – District Superintendent

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Chris Peregrin – TRNERR – Reserve Manager

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Andy Yuen – USFWS – SDNWRC Project Leader

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Brian Collins – USFWS – Refuge Manager

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Mike McCoy – SWIA – President

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

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

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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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Doug Liden – USEPA – Environmental Engineer

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Amber Craig – USBP – Public Lands Liaison Agent

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Morgan Rogers – USIBWC – Area Operations Manager

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Mike Verderber – SD County Parks – Supervising Park Ranger

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Sam Jenniches – State Coastal Conservancy – Project Manager

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Toni Ross – California Coastal Commission – Coastal Program Analyst

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

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Program Managers Present:

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

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Kristen Goodrich – TRNERR – Coastal Training Program Coordinator

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Jeff Crooks – TRNERR – Research Coordinator

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Anne Marie Tipton – TRNERR – Education Coordinator

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Members of the Public

Andrew Funk, City of San Diego

Joe Ellis, Public

Nancy Fernandez, USFWS

Marya Ahmad, TRNERR

Viviane Marquez-Waller, Resident

Leon Benham, C4CC, Resident

Bryn Evans, Dudek (presenter)

1. 1:03 Meeting was called to order

2. **AGENDA** – Agenda item F was corrected to say City of Imperial Beach not San Diego and was then adopted.

3. **LAST MEETING MINUTES** – meeting minutes were adopted from the last two meetings.

4. Member Comments

Gina Moran - California State Parks – District Superintendent

- a. The California State Parks Director, Armando Quintero, visited the San Diego Coast District for 2½ days. He spent a full day in the south sector visiting the Tijuana River Valley, including Border Field State Park, Monument Mesa, Spooner’s Mesa overlook, and the new Tijuana River Valley Campground. He finished the day at the Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center and was fortunate to see a Ridgway’s Rail.
- b. The state budget was passed on time, but because it is a place holder budget and it is not known what is allocated for State Parks, the ability to spend at this time is suspended. The budget is stable, so instead of a 10% cut there will be a 1% cut.
- c. On June 5th Border Field State Park opened to vehicles on the weekends, and the Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center opened its doors to visitors on June 23rd.

Andy Yuen – USFWS – SDNWRC Project Leader

- a. Yuen expressed thanks to California State Parks, the Reserve and SWIA for their support in the scoping meeting and extended thanks to everyone on the Advisory Council Meeting who participated in the scoping meeting for the Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program II Phase I.
- b. Refuge Manager B.Collins and Deputy Project Leader J.Terp are working on a new interpretive kiosk for the location at 5th and Grove.

Sam Jenniches – State Coastal Conservancy – Project Manager

- a. The Conservancy has a new agreement with the county on the Smuggler’s Gulch Improvement Project, which is part of the Tijuana River Valley Border Pollution Control Project.
- b. Since the last meeting Executive Officer Sam Schuchat has retired after a long tenure with the Conservancy. A search is on to fill the position and that will happen, hopefully, by the end of the year.

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

- a. It was a good year for the nesting of the Least Terns and the Snowy Plovers. There were 1141 Least Tern’s nests throughout the beaches, an amount that is much higher than recent years. Most activity was on the ocean side, not the delta side, probably due to weeds. The Snowy Plovers also had a good year with 161 nests total and 49 of those on the Navy’s Coastal Campus’ Beach.

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

- a. There was a change of command at the Naval Base Coronado. Captain DuPree has been relieved of duty by the new commanding officer, Captain Dwight Clemons.

Chris Helmer – City of Imperial Beach – Environmental and Natural Resources Director

- a. The City of Imperial Beach is starting a new Parks and Recreation Program and just hired a new Parks and Recreation director named Shannon Bullock.
- b. The City of Imperial Beach has started reaching out to various communities every Tuesday to deal with and communicate about the homeless and illegal dumping. They plan to start cleaning up where needed once a week and possibly more often as necessary. They intend to keep other agencies aware of what they are doing.

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

- a. Update: Some revisions were made to the Tijuana River Valley Watershed Phase 2 Hydrologic and Hydraulic Study due to errors found. Redistribution will be delayed because there are additional comments and questions that need to be considered.

Doug Liden – USEPA – Environmental Engineer

- a. The USMCA’s alternative plans on how to spend the 300 million dollars will be presented at the stakeholders’ group meeting on August 4, 2021 and an identical meeting, for the public, on August 6, 2021. There will be a preferred alternative and two reasonable alternatives presented for consideration. A link to the public meeting is in the chat: <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-water-infrastructure/usmca-tijuana-river-watershed>.
- b. There have been no transboundary flows since May, partly due to work upgrades to the PB CILA pump station. Collector repairs have reduced the amount of sewage in the river and the quantity of the flow, so that the flows may be diverted for treatment at the plant.

Amber Craig – USBP – Public Lands Liaison Agent

- a. The Tijuana River Valley Border Patrol agents are overwhelmed due to increased activity at the border. At the same time staff is being diverted to assist in other problem areas as well as giving assistance at the San Diego processing center for migrants seeking asylum.

Mike McCoy – SWIA – President

- a. McCoy thanked responsible entities for the work on TETRP II Phase I.
- b. SWIA is in the process of finding a new office to move into.

5. Program Manager Reports – Refer to written program manager reports

Brian Collins – USFWS – Refuge Manager

- a. USFWS has developed an overall concept to improve interpretation and informational elements at 5th & Grove, 5th & Iris and possibly around the Visitor Center. There is an expectation of internal funding for the project as well as help from the Friends of the San Diego Wildlife Refuges for alternative funds.
- b. Collins reported that there were 183 least tern nests and 33 snowy plover nests established but the fledgling production at the time is poor. The yearly total estimates are not yet available. Human associated disturbance is evidenced in the nesting areas.
- c. On the San Diego Bay in the mixed seabird colonies there are about twenty-nine thousand nesting pairs of elegant terns. This indicates a robust fish resource at this latitude this year.

Chris Peregrin – TRNERR – All Program Reports

Reserve Manager Report

- a. Refer to written report.

Education Report

- a. No in-person, student-centered programs were held during this time. Reserve Educators instead continued carrying out their 3 virtual programs through California State Parks, Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students (PORTS). A total of 5,215 students were reached through these programs.
- b. Lunchtime Live, a weekly Facebook Livestream that began in April 2020, continued during this period. There were 24 programs delivered with a typical length of 20-30 minutes each and totaling 7642 views.
- c. Border Field State Park's 50th anniversary is August 21, 2021. Planning for an in-person event is underway. The Reserve will launch a podcast and a digital Story App to be used by visitors when they visit Border Field State Park.

Coastal Training Program Report

- a. After six months of intensive work via the [Scripps Ocean Plastic Pollution Challenge](#), participants conducted team-based research and pitched solutions in a final two-day

challenge to an expert panel. In addition to moderating the first course of the effort, CTP also evaluated the proposals that would make a significant impact in curbing the flow of plastic in the region.

- b. CTP co-developed and facilitated the first California Shore & Beach Preservation Association [webinar series](#) “The Changing Landscape & Future of California’s Shores and Beaches.” Three were hosted since the last Advisory Council meeting: (1) Climate and our coastal future; (2) Economics and the value of our coast; and (3) Lessons learned on resilience and considerations for future sediment solutions. The next webinar continues to discuss sediment solutions and will be held Aug 26. More information can be found on <http://asbpa.org/california> under ‘events’ and we will put the link in the chat.

Stewardship Report

- a. Goat Canyon maintenance continues and there is an existing contract with ERRG and work has begun to screen sediment, an approximately 20,000 cubic yards, haul-off will follow. Excavation of 20,000 cy to occur in September. This material will be hauled to an asphalt and concrete recycling facility.
- b. The Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration and Beneficial Reuse of Sediment Project. They want to connect the management of the Goat Canyon Sediment Basin and other flood control channels in the river valley and restoration projects, with the restoration of an abandoned quarry, the Nelson Sloan Quarry. Draft EIR (anticipated early September 2021), per CEQA, there will be a 45-day comment period.
- c. Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program II Phase I EIR/EIS. Comment period ended for the NOP/NOI on July 12th and Scoping Meeting was held on June 16, 2021. As part of the CEQA and NEPA process there is another opportunity to provide comments when the Draft EIR/EIS is released, <https://trnerr.org/about/public-notices/>
- d. TRAM update: The twelfth annual Tijuana River Action Month is kicking off in September and the planning has begun. It will run Sept. 18th through Oct. 16th. There will be different types of events held with Covid-19 in mind.

Research Report

- a. The dataloggers are up and running in the estuary, and real-time telemetry has been re-established. Information is being displayed on our website: <https://tijuana.river.trnerr.org/>.
- b. On that note, we are planning on a website re-design by the end of the year, so stay tuned for that (funding provided by the County of San Diego).
- c. Two of the Research crew, R.Echols-Booth and A.Thygersen, caught a very rare [tropical shrimp](#) in their minnow trapping in the South San Diego Bay restoration site. This is the first time this shrimp has been seen here since the late 1800’s and is likely

another sign of “tropicalization” - warm water species becoming more common in our area.

- d. Our Davidson Fellow, N.Torres, is working on assessing contaminant levels in resident animals in the estuary. Her first collection occurred at the end of the wet season, and those samples have been sent to a lab for analysis. The next sampling will occur in the fall. Torres has also been elected to serve as the student Board Member of the Southern California Chapter of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry.

6. New Business

- a. Chris Helmer (City of Imperial Beach) and Bryn Evans (Dudek) gave a presentation and led a discussion on the Tijuana River Valley Sediment Management Work Plan
- b. Presentation link: https://trnerr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/08.03.21_Sediment-Plan.pdf

7. General Public Comment:

Viviane Marquez-Waller (Resident) asks about transboundary flows and beach closures. Doug Liden possible inputs from south swells and tidal flushing.

Leon Benham (C4CC, Resident) asks about sediment and river functions in 1980’s. Chris Helmer discusses river valley restoration and interest to stop urban inputs.

Leon Benham (C4CC, Resident) asks about Smuggler’s Gulch sediment and monument road crossing. Chris Helmer notes Monument Road as a focus of County effort with sediment basin planning.

Leon Benham (C4CC, Resident) asks about quantification of transborder trash amount of trash. Jeff Crooks discusses URS trash study . Jeff Crooks discusses sediment transport and the restoration of tidal prism.

Leon Benham (C4CC, Resident) Discusses Tijuana River function in 1940’s, sediment dynamics, and comparison of Tijuana River to other river systems.

8. Future Agenda Considerations

None were given. Please email Chris Peregrin and Lorena Warner-Lara with any future agenda items (see emails at top of minutes).

9. Adjourned at 2:38pm

The meeting was adjourned.

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

Future TRNERR Advisory Council dates:

November 2, 2021