

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

Tuesday, February 8, 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 – Stormwater Department

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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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Ana Eguiarte for 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

Dan Watman, Friends of Friendship Park

Trisha Mejia, SD Surfrider

Viviane Marquez-Waller, Resident

Joe Ellis, Public

Mona Kuczenski, Public

Ron Kuczenski, Public

Josh Bugiel, County Parks

Angel Marquez, Public

Carol Clary, Public

John Fanestil, Friends of Friendship Park

Dr. Luke Miller, SDSU (presenter)

Yousef Sangsefidi, SDSU (presenter)

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1. 1:02 Meeting was called to order

2. **AGENDA** – agenda was adopted.

3. **LAST MEETING MINUTES** – meeting minutes were adopted.

4. Member Comments

Gina Moran – California State Parks – District Superintendent

a. Some funding from the governor’s budget has been approved for the next fiscal year for arundo removal in the Tijuana River Valley and there is funding for trail work at Border Field State Park.

b. The two environmental impact report projects, TETRP (Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program) and the Nelson Sloan Quarry are progressing.

Andy Yuen – USFWS – SDNWRC Project Leader

a. Refuges is waiting for a new budget to be approved.

b. Refer to Brian Collins report for other details.

Sam Jenniches – State Coastal Conservancy – Project Manager

a. The Conservancy has been allocated funds to deal with climate change and sea level rise. They will be updating their strategic plan and will soon have some virtual meetings on the topic. There will be invitations to participate in those discussions coming soon.

- b. The Conservancy has an active grant round open now for the coast grants that are due March 11th. Reach out to him with any questions. Link shared in chat: <https://scc.ca.gov/grants/>
- c. The Conservancy has a few open positions, including one additional staff for the south coast program. Link shared in chat: <https://scc.ca.gov/about/coastal-conservancy-jobs/>

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

- a. In preparation for the upcoming nesting season of snowy plovers and least terns, the Navy has begun base wide beach clean-ups. Work is in progress or is scheduled for this annual event and will be done at the following bases: the Amphibious Base in Oceanside, the Silver Strand Training Complex, the bay side of the delta beaches, and the beaches at North Island. Details will be provided later regarding how much trash was removed and other pertinent information.
- b. The Zuniga Jetty Shole is an area near North Island of no cost offshore anchorage that until recently was unregulated and no permits or reservations were required. The submerged land is owned by the state and is under the jurisdiction of the City of San Diego. Under current law abandoned boats can't be removed for 45 days, and exhaustive efforts are made to locate the owners. During the waiting period many of the vessels which sink and disintegrate become environmental hazards. Clean up which often requires HAZMAT level removal, costs the Navy an average of \$20,000 per boat. In 2019, the City of San Diego updated the ordinance overseeing the jetty restricting the time a boat can be unattended at Zuniga. The Navy, the City of San Diego and the Port are working with the state for a long-term funding source for enforcement of the ordinance and to fund a study to identify a sustainable solution.

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

- a. The Coastal Conservancy funded project, to develop a sediment management plan for the Tijuana River Valley, is still going forward. The draft plan should be available in the next 2 months. In addition to the agencies and stakeholders involved, there will be outreach to the community for input on the project.
- b. Regarding the Bayshore Bikeway Resiliency Project, the community will also be invited to give input of ideas on how to adapt the bikeway for sea level rise and protect the recreation aspect and access to the bikeway.

Brianna Menke – City of San Diego – Stormwater Department

- a. No updates.

Mike Verderber – SD County Parks – Supervising Park Ranger

- a. Getting close to the new campground's one-year anniversary and it is running smoothly. The yurts are frequently sold out and there are a lot of repeat campers and people from surrounding communities are using the campground. Visitors are enjoying the area and are happy customers.

Morgan Rogers – USIBWC – Area Operations Manager

- a. Recent unexplained transboundary flows coming through Stewart’s Drain prompted an investigation into the cause. To determine what the problem was, PB CILA was shut down and the flows were adjusted. Possible explanations for this failure could be a confirmed deteriorated section of pipe in Mexico or an unknown possible obstruction in the system. The USIBWC, working closely with their partners in Mexico, have also had offers of help from the EPA, the Waterboard and the City of San Diego. On February 9th, they are going to raise a previously frozen gate valve to see if it helps the situation. The results of this action will help determine possible next solutions.

Mike McCoy – SWIA – President

- a. SWIA continues work on TETRP with anticipated Environmental Review to be public by the end of May or beginning of June.
- b. SWIA is still 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 Report

- a. The Refuge has been impacted by an increase in homeless encampments, informal camping and other acts that are unauthorized on the wildlands. Brian encouraged the public to reach out to him or the Reserve staff regarding those types of conditions and situations so they may compassionately intervene.
- b. The Refuge has developed an overall concept to improve interpretation and informational elements at 5th & Grove, at 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 San Diego Wildlife Refuges for alternative funds.
- c. For other information on the Reserve refer to written Program Manager reports.

Chris Peregrin – TRNERR – Reserve Manager Report (*not present*)

- a. Refer to written report.

Anne Marie Tipton – TRNERR – Education Report

- a. No in-person, student-centered programs were held July-December. 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 2,630 students were reached through these programs.
- b. Our first in-person school program will be on February 25th with 100 tenth graders from HTH Chula Vista at Border Field SP. HTH Chula Vista used the Divided Together podcast as their homework.

- c. Lunchtime Live, Facebook Livestream, has moved from weekly to every other week on Tuesdays at noon. that began in April 2020, continued during this period. There were 3,583 views in the second half of 2021 for the program.
- d. Fourteen educators attended the fall 2021 hybrid *Teachers on the Estuary* training, mostly high school teachers. One of these teachers already has a field trip scheduled for March (9th graders from Granger Junior High).
- e. Stay tuned for two more Divided Together podcast episodes coming out in late winter on border history and biocultural ecosystem services.

Ana Eguiarte – TRNERR – Coastal Training Program Report

- a. For the last decade, every two years in February, coastal practitioners have been gathering in Charleston, South Carolina at the Social Coast Forum to highlight the importance of social sciences in coastal management. This year, instead of an in-person event in Charleston, the Social Coast Forum will be locally hosted across the country, offering opportunities for participants to connect on relevant coastal issues and the application of social science. In coordination with NOAA and the National Estuarine Research Reserve Association (NERRA), the three California NERR Coastal Training Programs (San Francisco Bay, Elkhorn Slough, and Tijuana River) are hosting the virtual California Social Coast Forum on March 10th.

Lorena Warner-Lara – TRNERR – Stewardship Report

- a. Goat Canyon update: Engineering/Environmental Resources Group Inc. exported approximately 20,000 cubic yards of sediment from the processing pad and excavated approximately 20,000 cubic yards of deposition material from the Goat Canyon Sediment Basin in Fall 2021.
- b. The Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration and Beneficial Reuse of Sediment Project – working towards the Final EIR <https://trnerr.org/about/public-notice/>. Additional Quino checkerspot butterfly protocol surveys are coming up this spring in the Nelson Sloan area and greater mesa top. The butterfly was discovered during the 2019 biological surveys.
- c. The Reserve has hosted two in-person Volunteer Stewardship Events over the last two weekends! The Reserve partnered with I Love a Clean San Diego for the event at Silver Strand SB and with the CA State Parks Foundation for the event at Border Field SP. At SSSB the event consisted of a cleanup along the bay and removal of ice plant and European sea lavender with about 59 volunteers. The removal estimates were 1100 lbs. green waste, 125 lbs. litter and 25 lbs. recycling. At BFSP, 21 volunteers (15 Parks Foundation and 6 TRNERR long-term volunteers) worked at Border Gateway to Nature area near the park entrance. Mainly removed garland chrysanthemum and crystalline ice plant along the edges of the restoration site prior to CA gnatcatcher nesting season. Nearly filled up a 30-yard dumpster.

- d. NOAA Marine Debris grant: Debby Good and Robin Echols-Booth started a Wednesday Beach Stewards at BFSP last week with 2 volunteers. They (4 people) gathered 340 lb. trash out of the Western snowy plover and CA least tern nesting areas and the beach.

Jeff Crooks – TRNERR – Research Report

- a. The new more streamlined website is up and running and will have a few more improvements for example, more easily accessible research data.
- b. An ongoing project that recently wrapped up is the ecological effects of sea level rise program called “Marshes on the Margins.” There is data that shows the longevity of the proposed restoration (TETRP).
- c. Not as much fishing (minnow trapping) was done this season due to Covid restrictions. Most of the vegetation work was accomplished and is now winding down before the nesting season.
- d. Dr. Luke Miller from San Diego State University is going to talk about a new project that is a spin off from an existing project, CHRP, Coastal Hypoxia Research Program, that looks at the effects of oxygen, especially low oxygen content in estuarine systems and looks at the use of living organisms as biological sentinels.
- e. There is a new NERRS Science Collaborative grant.
- f. The selection process of a new Margaret A. Davidson fellow has begun. The existing fellow will remain until August and the new fellow will begin in September.

6. **New Business**

- a. Yousef Sangsefidi, PhD Researcher, SDSU gave a presentation on the Vulnerability of Coastal Storm drain System to Compound Seawater, Groundwater, and Stormwater Flooding under Climate Change study.
Presentation link: https://trnerr.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Sangsefidi_presentation_TRNERR_AC_02.2022.pdf
- b. Dr. Luke Miller, SDSU gave a presentation on the NERRS Science Collaborative Project – Habitat heartbeats: Incorporating bivalve biosensors in estuary monitoring.
Presentation link: https://trnerr.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Miller_presentation_TRNERR_AC_02.2022.pdf

7. **General Public Comment:**

Mona Kuczenski, member of public

Q: Regarding the allocation of state funds for the Monument Road Project, and request for status update.

A: Gina Moran - Please provide your e-mail address to receive a follow-up to the question.

Dan Watman, Friends of Friendship Park

Q: Friends of Friendship Park was wondering when the vehicle road to Friendship Park will open.

A: Gina Moran – State Parks monitors the road regularly and makes a determination on whether it is safe for vehicle access. When it is passable it will open. It is dependent on rain events and the drying out of the road.

A: Lorena Warner-Lara – Usually there is also road maintenance needed after every rainy season. State Parks has to survey the road to see if any maintenance is needed after it dries up.

Dan Watman, Friends of Friendship Park

Q: a follow-up to Mona's question, several years ago, six million dollars were allocated to improve the road and Monument Mesa. Is this new funding on top of the original six million dollars, or did that six million get redirected to something else?

A: Gina Moran – State Parks needs to get back to him on an answer.

Viviane Marquez-Waller, member of the public

C: directed to Yousef Sangsefidi, Thanks for the presentation! It would be great to have enlarged maps next time as the maps used this time were too small to see any detail. Thanks.

8. Future Agenda Considerations

No future agenda items were given. Please email Chris Peregrin and Lorena Warner-Lara with any future agenda items (*see emails at top of minutes*).

9. Adjourned at 2:36pm

The meeting was adjourned.

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

Future TRNERR Advisory Council dates:

- Tuesday, May 3, 2022
- Tuesday, August 2, 2022
- Tuesday, November 1, 2022