

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

Tuesday, May 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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Andrew Funk – 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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Ashley Reineman – California Coastal Commission – Federal Programs 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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***Empress Holliday* for Anne Marie Tipton – TRNERR – Education Coordinator**

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Members of the Public

Dan Watman, Friends of Friendship Park

Don Winslow, Public

Mitch Silverstein, SD Surfrider

John Fanestil, Friends of Friendship Park

Joe Ellis, Public

Helena Sullivan (presenter), CA State Parks

Mona Kuczynski, Friends of Friendship Park

Jeff Brown, CA State Parks

Charles Gailsband, SD County Parks

Jill Terp, USFWS

Ellen Freitas, TRNERR

1. **1:03 Meeting was called to order** (Note: recording shows time error start at 06:45)
2. **AGENDA** – agenda was adopted.
3. **LAST MEETING MINUTES** – meeting minutes were adopted with one correction, Brianna Menke is listed as City Transportation Department, update to Stormwater Department.
4. **Member Comments**

Gina Moran – California State Parks – District Superintendent

- a. On Earth Day the State of California launched two initiatives that are nature-based strategies to combat climate change and protect biodiversity.
 - i. *Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy* is an initiative that provides a guide to improve land management across the state to combat climate change, buffer climate impact and protect vulnerable communities. https://resources.ca.gov/-/media/CNRA-Website/Files/Initiatives/Expanding-Nature-Based-Solutions/CNRA-Report-2022---Final_Accessible_Compressed.pdf
 - ii. The *Pathways to 30x30: Accelerating Conservation of California’s Nature* initiative gets California on the path to conserve 30% of its land and coastal waters by 2030. <https://www.californianature.ca.gov/pages/30x30>
- b. There are more initiatives by California State Parks related to access for all.
 - i. California State Park free parking day use passes for over 200 parks, are available at libraries. https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30806

- ii. The Fourth Graders Adventure Pass program provides free day use to all California fourth graders in 19 of California's State Park units, including Silver Strand State Beach. <https://www.parks.ca.gov/AdventurePass>
- c. State Parks Week is a new statewide initiative focusing on a different topic every day. The estuary will be featured for an event titled "Rockin' Restoration" on June 17th, which is also Friday Stewardship. <https://www.parks.ca.gov/NewsRelease/1069#:~:text=SACRAMENTO%2C%20Calif.,the%20California%20State%20Parks%20Foundation.>

Andy Yuen – USFWS – SDNWRC Project Leader

- a. The Refuge is still waiting for a new budget to be approved by June. Based on funding from last year, the Refuge is working on interpretive projects at 5th & Grove and at 5th & Iris.
- b. The Refuge is still working on scheduling the NEPA review team for the TERTP II Phase I project.

Sam Jenniches – State Coastal Conservancy – Project Manager

- a. The State Coastal Conservancy has developed a new strategic plan to address coastal resilience and 500 million dollars have been committed to facilitate related projects. There have been meetings scheduled, one which is pertinent the southern coast, The Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project.
 - i. May 25, 2022. SCC Strategic Planning: Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtdughpjwuGdWZ9yqz4z-Nxm-l3iVfEFCC>

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

- a. Zuniga Jetty Shore update: The collaborative effort of the Navy, the cities of San Diego and Coronado, and the Port of SD has resulted in a state budget request for 1.5 million dollars. The money would fund five years of enforcement and with developing a permanent and sustainable solution to be led by the Port. North Island Navy officials, Captain Clemmons and Officer Shepherd met with Assemblymember Chris Ward, and State Senator Ben Hueso in Sacramento to advance the proposal. There was support from both Hueso and Ward who indicated that he would move the request forward. Capt. Clemmons and Officer Shepherd also met with the State Parks Director for a briefing on the issue as it is a multijurisdictional problem.

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

- a. The City is continuing work on the Tijuana River Sediment Management Plan and will be reconvening stakeholder advisory committee group before the next Advisory Council meeting.
- b. Projects in the City include a redevelopment of 9th street for safety and bike lanes.

Andrew Funk – City of San Diego – Stormwater Department

- a. Andrew will be replacing Brianna Menke as the City's lead for the Advisory Council. He has been with the City of San Diego for seven years working in the public utilities dept, looking at upstream source protection of the drinking reservoirs and in the last two years focusing on storm water.
- b. On April 23 the Creek to Bay Clean-up, a regional effort brought over 5000 volunteers. The Tijuana River Valley was one of the included sites.
- c. The IBWC settlement agreement was concluded and there was a news release in April.
- d. Regarding the Regional MS4 Permit, work on drafting the Tijuana River Valley TMDL (total maximum daily loads), is ongoing and a draft will be released this summer.

Doug Liden – USEPA – Environmental Engineer

- a. Work on the USMCA NEPA Review is still ongoing. The EIR will facilitate moving forward with a potential expansion of the International Treatment Plant. Public meetings will be in the June to July timeframe. A record of decision should be available by December.
- b. EPA Deputy Administrator Janet McCabe will be visiting the area and will travel to Tijuana. The focus of the visit is for Air Quality Awareness Week, but McCabe will also be shown some of the water issues.
- c. The EPA has a Research grant underway with San Diego State University who will be installing a flow gauge that will monitor tryptophan, a surrogate for sewage, and sediment and cameras downstream to get an idea if there is a hydrologic connection in the flows.

Ashley Reineman – California Coastal Commission – Federal Programs Manager

- a. Introduction of Ashley Reineman.

Mike Verderber – SD County Parks – Supervising Park Ranger

- a. April 28th was the one-year anniversary date of the new campground in the Tijuana River Valley.
- b. The regional park had a successful 'I Love a Clean San Diego' event. 117 volunteers from the Resource Conservation District, Wildcoast and the National City CCC helped fill two 40-yard dumpsters at the Community Gardens and at the Effie May Crossing.

Charles Gailband – SD County Parks – Region Manager

- a. Self-introduction.

Amber Craig – USBP – Public Lands Liaison Agent

- a. At the coast an increase of people trying to cross the border by watercraft drop offs or by trying to swim around the border. There were also numerous apprehensions in the Yogurt and Goat Canyon areas and many people are turning themselves in for asylum.
- b. Agent Craig is retiring June 30th. This is her last meeting.

- c. Michelle Brown will take Jill Riley's position and someone from the local IB station will be attending the Advisory Council meetings.

Mike McCoy – SWIA – President

- a. SWIA continues to work on TETRP and with Kristen Goodrich on the NOAA Marine Debris Project.
- b. SWIA's administrative activities have been good because of its indirect cost rate. This has allowed SWIA to better support the grants that the Reserve's Research and CTP programs get.

Morgan Rogers – USIBWC – Area Operations Manager

- a. Except for rain events there have been no transboundary flows for three months. The sediment berm on the Mexican side of the border has been restored and is containing any dry weather flows.
- b. The wastewater treatment plant is treating an average of 25 million gallons per day.
- c. They are waiting for the award of the contract that will facilitate the assessment needed to proceed with the design for the expansion work that will begin at the end of the year.
- d. The IBWC worked with the Border Patrol to have mowing done in the river valley and with the Urban Corps on the removal of tires.
- e. Catch basins were installed last week at 3 of the 5 canyon collectors.

5. Program Manager Reports

Andy Yuen for Brian Collins – USFWS – Refuge Manager Report

- a. The terns and plovers have returned to the Refuge and the FWS is continuing with its biological programs.

Chris Peregrin – TRNERR – Reserve Manager Report

- a. Goat Canyon update: Engineering/Environmental Resources Group Inc. is getting ready to export last year's material (about 20 thousand cubic yards) from the processing pad that is going to a concrete and asphalt recycling company in Alpine and a portion going to a local nursery.
- b. NOAA's Office for Coastal Management will be conducting a five-year review of the reserve in July. The review, called the 312 Review, provides a periodic overview of how coastal programs are managed. In advance of the review, Advisory Council Members will receive an email with a survey from the Office of Coastal Management. The survey results help NOAA determine a focus for the review topics. There will also be a public meeting on Wednesday, July 27, 2022, at approximately 1:00 PM, and will overlap with the next Advisory Council Meeting. Check the TRNERR website for details.

Empress Holliday – TRNERR – Education Report

- a. Reserve Educators continued with their virtual programs through California State Parks, *Parks Online Resources for Teachers, and Students* (PORTS). The Reserve delivered 2 high school level programs, 5 middle school level programs and 57 elementary level programs since February 9th. The programs reached a total of 2,630 students.
The Reserve's virtual programs developed for PORTS are available on the PORTS website: <https://www.ports-ca.us/PORTSon-demand/tijuana-estuary-natural-preserve>
- b. The first in-person education programs for 2022 include,
 - i. High Tech High with 100 students at Border Field State Park using The Divided Together Podcast as part of the curriculum.
 - ii. Twenty-nine 4th graders from the Cajon Valley School District in March was also a blended in person and virtual learning program.
 - iii. Twenty-four students and chaperones from the City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department participated in a guided walk and talk.
- c. Lunchtime Live, now every other week, received 3,583 views over 24 ten-to-fifteen-minute programs. The series still has a regular following, and all videos are captioned later and made available on the [Reserve's YouTube page](#).
- d. Education staff launched two Agents of Discovery augmented reality Apps for Border Field and marshes near the Visitor Center. They were advertised on social media thanks to a grant from Parks California and the Friends.
- e. Stay tuned for two more Divided Together episodes coming out in June/July on border history and biocultural ecosystem services.
- f. Education Coordinator Tipton hosted a San Diego Exhibit Experience Group meeting at the *Land of the First People* in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park in March.

Jeff Crooks – TRNERR – Research Report

- a. The Reserve Research Program continues to track conditions in the estuary with deployed dataloggers and a web camera. The mouth has remained open, but data showed some low oxygen events during neap tides (relative tidal action), perhaps associated with transboundary flows. Conditions are improving, and data is showing very high levels of oxygen during the daytime, probably related to a spring bloom of phytoplankton. There is also a red tide offshore that the Research Program is paying attention to.
- b. The Director of Environmental Policy at the Pentagon reached out to the Reserve and is interested in seeing which reserves have overlapping jurisdiction with Navy property specifically in relation to the Navy's efforts around blue carbon and coastal resilience.
- c. Question/Note- Morgan Rogers, IBWC, mentioned work with vegetation management under Hollister/Dairy Mart. In the past SWIA has had recommendations about invasive species plant control in response to concerns about downstream impacts. Dr. Crooks asks if those recommendations are still around, would like to continue the conversation, and offers to meet with the IBWC.

Lorena Warner-Lara – TRNERR – Stewardship Report

- a. Environmental Compliance updates – Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program (TETRP) II Phase I is waiting for approval from NEPA and will then move on to put the Draft EIR/EIS out for public review and hold public meetings.
The Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration and Beneficial Reuse of Sediment Project – working towards the Final EIR. Quino checkerspot butterfly protocol surveys underway in the Nelson Sloan area and greater mesa top. None sighted so far. [Note: The butterfly was discovered during the 2019 biological surveys.]
Details on both projects can be found at: <https://trnerr.org/about/public-notice/>
- b. Nesting Season – In addition to the Least Terns and the Snowy Plovers there are also surveys going on for the California gnatcatcher and upcoming for the Least Bell's Vireo in the river valley.
- c. Volunteer/Staff Stewardship Events – In addition to the work done by State Park maintenance crew to prepare Border Field State Park for opening, there are staff and volunteer clean up events scheduled on Monument Mesa, including one with California State Parks Foundation.
- d. Volunteer events and long-term stewardship around the Visitor Center are ongoing. Volunteer Coordinator, Robin Echols-Booth, and FWS ranger, Debby Good led Audubon volunteers to plant 200 native plants over two days. Some other groups that helped were the Mission Praying Pelicans and the SDSU Environmental Justice Committee.
- e. The Wednesday Beach Stewards at Border Field State Park, through our NOAA Marine Debris Program grant, have removed 1,570 pounds of marine debris to date.
- f. The Reserve posted a Maintenance Aide position that will be joint funded by the NOAA Marine Debris Program, SWIA and CA State Parks. The job will carry the responsibilities of assisting with sediment and marine debris control, habitat enhancement, and invasive plant removal projects (Arundo). <https://trnerr.org/job-opportunities/>

Kristen Goodrich – TRNERR – Coastal Training Program Report

- a. In March the Coastal Training Program launched the first virtual California's Social Coast Forum (<https://sfbaynerr.sfsu.edu/dive-social-science>) in collaboration with NOAA's Office for Coastal Management and the Elkhorn Slough and SF Bay NERRs. Participants explored examples of human-dimensions approaches in coastal management, gained skills in social science techniques, and connected with other professionals interested in the application of social science.

- b. Welcome to our new CTP team member, Ellen Frietas, who will be focusing on implementing the projects under the NOAA Marine Debris Program/US-Mexico-Canada Agreement grant.

6. **New Business**

- a. Chris Peregrin, CSP, TRNERR Reserve Manager; and Helena Sullivan, CSP, Project Manager gave a presentation on the Border Field State Park Interpretation, Resilience, and Access Improvements Project – including the Monument Road Realignment.

Presentation link: <https://trnerr.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/BorderField-SP-Interpretation-Resilience-Access-Presentation-20220503.pdf>

7. **General Public Comment**

Mona Kuczenski, Friends of Friendship Park

C: She would love to have “History of Friendship Park” added to the list of interpretive elements to include in Border Education Plaza

Q: Is there a possibility of short-term access considered?

A: Chris – Efforts, such as spreading class 2 road base and large rock on the road and pumping off water have been used in the past but have not been very successful. Any substantial rain or a flow can erase all the work. CA State Parks staff tries to be at the Park daily and evaluate the conditions to mitigate any flooding if it is thought to be effective at the time.

John Fanestil, Friends of Friendship Park

C: Something to consider as a possible solution, could there be a perpetual shuttle from the parking lot to Monument Mesa?

C: Shared a link for the video ONE FAMILY'S STORY that is representative of why the group is passionate about access to Monument Mesa and Friendship Park:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eOAXO7NeLzKE2beGiJmhUA5jzjo2V7E4/view?usp=sharing> (4 minutes)

A: Chris Peregrin – Thanks John.

Dan Watman, Friends of Friendship Park

Q: At the section of the road at Yogurt Canyon, is the flooding coming from Yogurt Canyon or just from rain events?

A: Helena Sullivan – Yogurt Canyon takes in all the runoff from Mexico and directs it into the state park. The flooding on the road is sheet flow and it will be addressed with box culverts and elevating the road.

8. **Future Agenda Considerations**

Doug Liden suggested that SDSU presents on the research project they are doing at the International Treatment Facility.

Please email Chris Peregrin and Lorena Warner-Lara with any future agenda items (*see emails at top of minutes*).

9. Adjourned at 2:35pm

The meeting was adjourned.

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

Future TRNERR Advisory Council dates:

- *Wednesday, July 27, 2022 – NOAA's 312 Evaluation public meeting for TRNERR*
- *Tuesday, November 1, 2022*