

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

Wednesday, November 1, 2022, at 1pm
301 Caspian Way, Imperial Beach CA, 91932
Meeting held virtually via the *Zoom* 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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Andy Yuen – USFWS – SDNWRC Project Leader

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Vacant – 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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Loni Beyer Wilson – US Naval Base Coronado – Natural Resources Manager

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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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Justin De la Torre – USBP – Border Patrol Agent in Charge

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Kurtis Kantura – USBP – Supervisory Border Patrol 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:

Chris Peregrin – TRNERR – Reserve Manager

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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

Ian Tedeschi, Public/TRNERR Volunteer

1. **1:30 pm Meeting was called to order.**
2. **AGENDA** – agenda was adopted with correction that Dr. Jeff Crooks would give the new business item as Natalie Grayson could not attend.
3. **LAST MEETING MINUTES** – meeting minutes just went out, so they will be on the website for the next two weeks and then they can be voted on.
4. **Member Comments**

Gina Moran – California State Parks – District Superintendent

- a. Gina Moran is retiring at the end of 2022, and this is her last official meeting with the Reserve.

Andy Yuen – USFWS – SDNWRC Project Leader

- a. At this time the USFWS HR, has not yet found a replacement for Brian Collins who retired in September, so will defer to C.Peregrin on the updates for the TETRP II Phase I EIS & EIR.

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

- a. There will be a change of command on December 2, 2022. Captain Dwight Clemmons relieved of command by Captain Charles N. McKissick.
- b. The Navy just finished the nesting season with good outcomes for the Western Snowy Plover. The outcomes for the California least tern were not as successful, and the Navy is exploring a creative and collaborative solution for the impact of the trespassing public and dogs, on the Navy's beach.

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

- a. There will be upcoming projects in the next year at 9th Street, 13th Street, and Seacoast Drive.
- b. An update on The Tijuana River Valley Sediment Management plan will be provided at the next Advisory Council Meeting. The plan should be finished by the end of this year.
- c. C.Helmer recently toured the San Dieguito Lagoon restoration project (~125 acres) and encourages others to do the same.

Mike Verderber – SD County Parks – Supervising Park Ranger

- a. The County is working on a feasibility study in the river valley for four potential crossing locations for the California Coastal Trail.
- b. The County is starting a program for First Time Campers Program on Fridays. A ranger will help participants set up their campsite and they can then camp for up to two nights.

Andrew Funk – City of San Diego – Stormwater Department

- a. The Water Quality Improvement Plan for the Tijuana River Watershed Management Area is being updated and will be released for public review soon. There is no expectation of additional class 303(d) water bodies on the updated document.
- b. Regarding the question of possible excavation in the river valley, A.Funk will confirm with the team to determine by the next meeting in February 2023.

Doug Liden – USEPA – Environmental Engineer

- a. SDSU Contractors installed a sonde at the International Water Treatment Plant's flow gauge to monitor for turbidity and tryptophan. Tryptophan is a good surrogate for sewage.
- b. Flow monitors that will provide information about hydrologic connections between the border flows and the downstream flows will be installed when San Diego City permits are completed.
- c. There are plans to publish the Final EIS in November and for a record of decision by early next year, to enable work on the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant. The USEPA and IBWC just awarded a contract to Arcadis, to begin a diagnostic of the plant, and to look at the preliminary designs for the expansion and some contracting mechanisms.
- d. There are \$15 million set aside for the expansion of the San Antonio de los Buenos plant. Mexico is still in a decision-making process, and it is going out for bid in early 2023 with estimated completion to be in 2025.

Ashley Reineman – California Coastal Commission – Federal Programs Manager

- a. The executive director of the California Coastal Commission, Jack Ainsworth and other staff members are coming to the TRNERR on Tuesday. They will be joined by 2 NOAA partners and will spend the day conferring and talking about upcoming projects at the reserve.

- b. The executive director, Jack Ainsworth is retiring, and the position is posted on the California Coastal Commission website.
<https://www.calcareers.ca.gov/CalHrPublic/Jobs/JobPosting.aspx?JobControlId=334211>

5. Program Manager Reports

Andy Yuen for Brian Collins – USFWS – Refuge Manager Report

- a. Two interpretive kiosks were completed and installed at 5th & Grove and at 5th and Iris, with the help of the Friends of San Diego Wildlife Refuges and a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Chris Peregrin – TRNERR – Reserve Manager Report

- a. Staff updates: Gina Moran is retiring from California State Parks and Christina Rayburn was recently hired as the Staff Services Analyst for Tijuana Estuary, Border Field State Park, and Silver Strand State Beach.
- b. Goat Canyon Sediment Basins update: ERRG has finished the excavation for the year and approximately 22,000 cubic yards of material have been excavated and placed on the processing pad. The analysis of that material is underway, and the trash booms have been realigned and the basins are ready for the rainy season.
- c. A grant application has been submitted to NOAA'S Marine Debris Program for funds to upgrade the Goat Canyon trash booms.
- d. Update on the Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program II, Phase I; the public review period has been completed for the Draft EIR/EIS. The response to comments is being prepared and as well any adjustments to the EIR/EIS.
- e. Thanks were extended to the County for housing the workers from the American Conservation Experience who were helping with arundo removal in Border Field State Park.

5. Anne Marie Tipton – TRNERR – Education Report

- a. A.M.Tipton will have 20 years at the TRNERR on January 13th, 2023.
- b. San Diego Coast District interpretation update: there are new people in interpretation at Old Town and there will be a new person at Torrey Pines.
- c. November is Native American Heritage Month and the *Our Divided Together Podcasts* can be accessed at the bottom of the TRNERR webpage.
<https://trnerr.org/library/divided-together-podcast/>
- d. The TRNERR education staff are preparing for on-site school programs to restart and will be having the *Teachers on the Estuary* training sessions in November with 19 teachers enrolled from surrounding schools. Anne Marie Tipton, TRNERR education coordinator; Empress Holliday, TRNERR education specialist; Jeff Crooks, TRNERR research coordinator; and Crystal Howe, who is with the San Diego County Office of Education and is the California Regional Environmental Education Community Coordinator, will be collaborating to lead the teacher trainings.

- e. The TRNERR distance learning programs, PORTS (*Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students*) are getting booked up. There are a few openings for middle and high school. The PORTS program serves students from all over the country and reach far more students than the on-site visits. <https://www.ports-ca.us/PORTSon-demand/tijuana-estuary-natural-preserve>.
- f. A new PORTS program on eel grass is being offered on Thursdays at the Silver Strand State Beach. <https://www.ports-ca.us/PORTSon-demand/browse-by-park/silver-strand-state-beach>
- g. The panels at the corner of 5th Street and Grove Avenue will be featured in TRNERR social media and the monthly newsletter.
- h. Update on the Visitor Center attendance, the attendance is down but the sales in the gift shop are up per person compared to previous years. The profits benefit the education programs. Promoting the Visitor Center will be a continued effort with help from the State Parks district social media manager.
- i. The TRNERR Interpretive Master Plan should be signed and approved by the end of the year.

Jeff Crooks – TRNERR – Research Report

- a. The Research program is back to doing some of the fieldwork that was put on hold because of the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on vegetation monitoring and some fish monitoring with minnow traps.
- b. The Research program did not perform any fish seining or core sampling in the reserve this year because of the persistent water quality issues.
- c. TRNERR continues to monitor with data loggers at the Oneonta Slough and at the Boca Rio sites. San Diego State University has an array of monitoring instruments at the Boca Rio site also that collects information that will be compared to the monitoring information from the IBWC area.
Link to the IBWC river flow gauge and water parameters in Oneonta Slough, <https://tijuana-river.trnerr.org/>
Link to the TRNERR data loggers at the Oneonta Slough, <https://tijuana-river.trnerr.org/BocaRio/>
- d. Attendees, just got back from the NERR annual meeting in Seattle. It was the first time there has been an in-person meeting for a few years.

Lorena Warner-Lara – TRNERR – Stewardship Report

- a. The following is the link to the public notices page, <https://trnerr.org/about/public-notices>, which has project information for the Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Project (TETRP) II Phase I and the Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration and Beneficial Reuse of Sediment project. Update on the Nelson Sloan project: The consultant, Dudek, finished up some technical analyses to align the project better with the information from the TETRP document and they are currently formatting that to be recirculated out for public review in the beginning of December.

- b. American Conservation Experience crew workers were in the Tijuana River Valley working on arundo removal for 6 consecutive 10-hour days. This is a five-year project that is part of the California State Parks Wildfire and Forest Resilience Program. The project is headed by Cara Stafford at our district office. The new stewardship employee Ransses Lopez, who was hired a few months ago thanks to funds from the program, as well as the Marine Debris project, worked with the crew in the river valley. This initial stage of the project will be followed up with stewardship staff and natural resources staff to continue the arundo control.
- c. Tijuana River Action Month (TRAM) update: activities ran from September 17th to October 15th and were mostly in-person events. Some events were canceled due to rain events. One of the new tours that didn't happen because of the rain was a combination bike and van tour that was being coordinated with the County of San Diego and Surfrider. That tour may be rescheduled in the spring. Reserve staff from the Stewardship, Education, and Coastal Training Programs were all involved with TRAM with CTP heading up the work in Tijuana and Tecate.
- d. NERR Annual Meeting update. Staff from all the TRNERR programs attended the meeting. There was a lot of focus at the meeting on engaging tribal communities and at looking into co-management agreements.

Kristen Goodrich – TRNERR – Coastal Training Program Report

- a. Update on the NOAA Marine Debris Program, U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement grant: The project now has a new name, and is now RESIDUOS, DUOS for short. The project involves some different components.
 - 1. Work done with the community in Los Laureles Canyon on creating a circular economy through upcycling waste, in partnership with USD.
 - 2. Facilitating development of an emergency preparation and response guide for the binational region.
 - 3. Creation of the Marine Debris Leadership Academy (MDLA). Planned for early 2023, MDLA will involve those who are in leadership roles on both sides of the border in addressing the issues of land-based debris that becomes marine debris and solid waste management issues.
 - 4. Trash characterization in the Goat Canyon Sediment Basins, and
 - 5. Tijuana River Action Month.
- b. CTP will be hosting a California Sea Grant Fellow who will start in early January working on marine debris issues at the reserve and the national system.
- c. At the NERRS/NERRA Annual Meeting, K.Goodrich was nominated to serve as vice president for NERRA, which is the non-profit arm of the NERR, and will be starting in the role today, November 1st. Some priorities will be to look at ways to think collectively about a growing system of research reserves and the role in community engagement, research, training and education and to explore ways to leverage relationships with stakeholders.

6. New Business

Jeff Crooks, TRNERR Research Coordinator introduced Natalie Grayson (not present), a third-year student at SCRIPPS, as the new TRNERR Margaret A. Davidson Fellow and gave a summary of her new project looking at microbiota as indicators of environmental quality.

7. Future Agenda Considerations

Chris Helmer offered to give overview of Tijuana River Valley Sediment Management Plan. Possible presentation and or self-introduction from Fellow Natalie Grayson.

8. Adjourned at 2:09pm

The meeting was adjourned.

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

The following dates were adopted for the 2023 TRNERR Advisory Council meetings:

- Tuesday, February 7, 2023
- Tuesday, May 2, 2023
- Tuesday, August 8, 2023
- Tuesday, November 7, 2023