

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

Tuesday, February 7, 2023, at 1pm
301 Caspian Way, Imperial Beach CA, 91932
Meeting held virtually via the *Zoom* platform.

***ADOPTED* meeting minutes**

Advisory Council Members

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

Vacant – California State Parks – District Superintendent

619-688-3356, first.last@parks.ca.gov

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

619-628-1370, chelmer@imperialbeachca.gov

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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Charles Gailband – SD County Parks – Region 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

805-585-1800, ashley.reineman@coastal.ca.gov

Toni Ross – California Coastal Commission – Coastal Program Analyst

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Melis Okter – NOAA's Office for Coastal Management – NERR Liaison
510-637-3841, melis.okter@noaa.gov

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

Bryn Evans, Dudek (presenter)

Alexi de Bram, Public

Carol Clary, Public

Chris Jonsmyr, Assemblymember Alvarez

Janice Deaton, Public

Joe Ellis, Public

John Fanestil, Friends of Friendship Park

Kimberly Allan, Public

Lynn Reizer-Heftmann, TRVEA

Megan Spitzer, TRNERR Sea Grant fellow

Mona Kuczenski, Friends of Friendship Park

Nanzi, Public

Pedro Rios, Public

Seth David Clark, Public

Christina Rayburn, TRNERR

Kiran Kaur, County of San Diego

Tania Mendoza, Friends of Friendship Park

Zoe Luiz, Public

Maria Teresa Fernandez, Friends of Friendship Park

1. 1:04 pm Meeting was called to order.

2. AGENDA – agenda was adopted.

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

4. Member Comments

Vacant – California State Parks – District Superintendent (not present)

- a. No report given. C.Peregrin noted that Division Chief Brian Ketterer is 'Acting Superintendent' during the vacancy.

Sam Jenniches – State Coastal Conservancy – Project Manager

- a. Thank you for a successful Conservancy Board tour and meeting the previous week and there has been a lot of incredible feedback from staff on the success of the tour.
- b. South coast workgroup is trying to sign the existing California Coastal Trail with 4-inch emblems. Would like to place emblems within NERR, BFSP and City of Imperial Beach.

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

- a. Ceremony with USFWS to delist 5 endangered species (4 plants and 1 bird) on San Clemente Island.
- b. On the Facebook page is the beach cleanup schedule to prepare for the beginning of nesting season which starts February 15th.
- c. February 16th Office of Local Defense Communities hosting a webinar on infrastructure for military installations for more information contact Anna Shepard.
- d. Starting to plan FY24 Readiness Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program that the county, trust for public land and back country land are current partners. Hope that in a few months the Navy will announce upcoming work in the Tijuana River Valley and in Campo.

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

- a. The City has a new mayor, and 3 new city council members that started in 2023, and soon there will be an announcement going out for a new city manager.
- b. January storms affected Seacoast Drive – lots of sand, clean up completed but deck might be damaged beyond repair, talking closely with USFSW for next steps. Summer meetings will be on strategies on what to do next in these areas, Seacoast Drive.

Andrew Funk – City of San Diego – Stormwater Department

- a. The Water Quality Improvement Plan successfully submitted for the Tijuana River Watershed Management Area, no new updates.
<https://projectcleanwater.org/watersheds/tijuana-wma/>
- b. No substantial dredging this wet season by the city, nor any maintenance projects scoped out for this fiscal year. There was a minor maintenance project at three of the culverts at the Disney crossing to remove debris/trash from late November 2022. Coordinating with the County of San Diego on a plan for dredging within the pilot channel, more to come at our next meeting as well as an overview of all the wet season maintenance that occurs.

Doug Liden – USEPA – Environmental Engineer

- a. Working with the US Fish & Wildlife Service on issues with the consultation on endangered species to get a Record of the Decision signed for the project. That will allow the EPA to move forward on design and ultimately construction of the expansion of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- b. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is concerned that projects in Mexico to fix wastewater or broken wastewater pipes can potentially reduce the amount of transboundary flow and could impact the habitat for least Bell's vireo and some other riparian habitat.
- c. Received word that Mexico is moving forward with San Antonio de Los Buenos under a partnership to build a new 18 million gallon a day plant. That combined with the expansion of the international plan should result in significant improvements in

treating wastewater in Tijuana, improving water quality in both the river valley and the beaches.

Ashley Reineman – California Coastal Commission – Federal Programs Manager (not present)

- a. The executive director, Jack Ainsworth, officially retired as of last week, and Dr. Kate Huckelbridge has now moved into our Executive Director role. Attached is the press release on her appointment. <https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/assets/press-releases/award/Kate-Press-Release.pdf>

Charles Gailband – SD County Parks – Region Manager

- a. First time at this meeting since taking over as regional manager for County Parks.
- b. Great job to the California Coastal Conservancy who facilitated the tour last week on telling the collective stories and goals for all of us.
- c. County Parks has an active contractor to do dredging in their portion of the Smuggler’s Gulch Channel. The County will be removing quite a bit of sediment and fixing the trash booms that are in place that were damaged by the last two storm events.
- d. Kiran Kaur, SD County Parks, added that another County project is the Coastal Trail Feasibility Study through a grant funded by the Coastal Conservancy, currently working on concept plans for finding and filling gaps in the trail and the feasibility of those options within the TRV. Would like to present an update at the next meeting.

Mike McCoy – SWIA – President

- a. Gotten feedback from groups, organizations, and individuals regarding the use of electric bicycles being problematic in some of the Reserve and Tijuana River Valley trail systems. There needs to be discussion with the state and county since they have input on the trail systems and the environmental impact from this new technology.

Morgan Rogers – USIBWC – Area Operations Manager

- a. Continuous transboundary flow down the Tijuana River since latest rains starting end of December, with four significant rain events. As of today, over 12 billion gallons of flow. Yesterday flow rate was 48 million gallons per day (mgd), 43 mgd today and once the flow rate goes below 30 mgd start making preparation to bring pump station PB CILA back online sometime next week and should see a stoppage in the transboundary flows in the river.
- b. Comparison of the years according to flows in the Tijuana River, 2021 - 6 billion gallons, 2022 - 11 billion gallons, and 2023 has already hit 10 billion gallons.

5. Program Manager Reports - [Refer to written program manager reports](#)

Vacant – USFWS – Refuge Manager Report

- a. Not present.

Chris Peregrin – TRNERR – Reserve Manager Report

- a. Staff updates: Gina Moran is retired from California State Parks as of December 31st, 2022. TRNERR has support from our Southern Division Chief Brian Ketterer who is filling in until the superintendent position is refilled, open for applications and the out of class applications closes tomorrow so we are moving quickly towards getting the position filled.
- b. Working on an update to the comprehensive management plan for the management of the research reserve, last plan dated 2010 and it is anticipated that this update will be completed in 2023 which will cover operations for a five-year period.
- c. State of Emergency by Governor Gavin Newsom for January storms caused damage to park units within San Diego Coast District. At Border Field State Park there has been damage to the symbolic fencing for the nesting area and research projects in the dunes, and the roadways have been significantly impacted, particularly the parking lot down below Monument Mesa.
- d. Goat Canyon Sediment Basins heavily inundated with trash booms being comprised as the booms are vulnerable to high velocity flows.
- e. A grant application has been submitted to NOAA'S Marine Debris Program for funds to upgrade the Goat Canyon trash booms. Consulting with specialists to update the infrastructure.
- f. Update on Monument Road, Moffatt & Nichol are the consultants and the project is being managed by the State Parks Southern Service Center. The contract is in the process of being extended/amended for additional time with extension submitted in December. Design is at 30%.

5. Anne Marie Tipton – TRNERR – Education Report

- a. Report from July through December haven't had a lot of in-person field trips, last fall 4 elementary and 1 middle school but TRNERR did have 1741 students in the Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students (PORTS) distance learning program, lower than 2021.
- b. Blended learning program with the YMCA and Reserve educators are going to be training the YMCA Camp Surf staff this month. Last summer the Education Program did 30-minute virtual introductions to groups of middle school students and were told they benefited a lot from it.
- c. Pleased to announce the Interpretive Master Plan and Action Plan was completed in December and is approved. It is a 10-year plan that includes the County, US Fish & Wildlife Service and all the partners in the Reserve. The annual planning session will be on February 24th and include the main stakeholders.
- d. TRNERR now has a 2nd Sunday bird walk with Ares, a youth docent from Coronado. He also joined the Reserve to volunteer at Love Your Wetlands Day last Saturday.
- e. January 2023, 2nd season of the *Divided Together* podcasts began. A total of 1770 downloads, episode 1 called *Line in the Sand* had 67 downloads, episode 2 called *The Tale of Two Livelihoods* had 66 downloads just in the last couple of weeks.
<https://trnerr.org/library/divided-together-podcast/>

Jeff Crooks – TRNERR – Research Report

- a. The Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program II Phase I EIR/EIS completed public comment period and is now filtering its way through the state and federal government for certification and then for record of decision. In the meantime, the project team is thinking about the next steps; final design, engineering, permitting, and preparing bid documents to submit a grant to the Coastal Conservancy.
- b. Last Saturday was the Love Your Wetlands Day event in Mission Bay. The Reserve was represented by Kellie Uyeda in our research department and was an overall well attended event for trash pickup and for talking science.
- c. The Reserve Research Program continues tracking with the System-wide Monitoring Program (SWMP) data loggers. The storms have been moving a lot of sand around and there has been a lot of riverine flow, but the rivermouth seems to be in good shape.

Lorena Warner-Lara – TRNERR – Stewardship Report

- a. Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program (TETRP) II Phase I update: AECOM is now working towards the Final EIR/EIS with release expected in March with a Notice of Determination from Parks and a Record of Decision from the FWS 30 days following. Details on that project can be found at: <https://trnerr.org/about/public-notices/>
- b. Update on the Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration and Beneficial Reuse of Sediment Project: The Recirculated DEIR was released on January 25. Public comment will go through Mar 13, 2023. An in-person public meeting will be held on Thursday, February 16th at 6:00 p.m. in the Training Center. The CA State Parks decided to recirculate the Draft EIR to align the existing document with new information from the TETRP II Phase I document. Sections that were reanalyzed were - Noise, Air Quality + Greenhouse Gases, and Traffic. No significance findings were triggered. Details can be found at <https://trnerr.org/about/public-notices/>
- c. Upcoming Volunteer Events in partnership with the CA State Parks Foundation: February 25th, March 17th, May 20th - see reserve website calendar to sign up on the CSPF website:
<https://volunteer.calparks.org/opportunity/a3t4p000004jeVPAAy/border-field-state-park>
- d. Tijuana River Action Month (TRAM) ran from September 17th to October 15th and was mostly in-person. TRAM 2022 featured 24 partner organizations in both the US & Mexico, 20 events and included clean-ups, environmental workshops, habitat restoration and tree planting. A total of 864 people participated and cleared over 70,000 pounds of debris (some by heavy equipment).

Kristen Goodrich – TRNERR – Coastal Training Program Report

- a. CTP's California Sea Grant Fellow Megan Spitzer has joined the team and will be with us for a year, and this is the Reserve's first opportunity to host a California Sea Grant Fellow.
- b. Update on the NOAA Marine Debris Program, U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement grant: renamed the DUOS project for short. It is a multicomponent project looking at prevention and removal of marine debris in the border region.
 - i. Marine Debris Leadership Academy (MDLA) now planned for summer 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.
- c. CTP and partners developed and delivered the San Diego Estuary Research Symposium with about 100 participants, 150 registered. It was an amazing collaboration with J.Crooks and the research crew to discuss the various research efforts the Reserve has ongoing.
- d. Melis is our liaison for the research reserve with NOAA's Office for Coastal Management and has been instrumental in helping think about developing a needs assessment and taking the results from the assessment to better meet the needs of the coastal decision makers. CTP is getting results analyzed and will develop a portfolio of training to meet those needs.
- e. CTP is among the inaugural recipients of the San Diego Foundation's Binational Resilience Initiative grant to advance California-Baja (CA) coastal preservation and will be working on a pilot infrastructure project in Tijuana over the next year. Thank you to A.Eguiarte who helps span the Coastal Training Program cross border.

6. **New Business**

Chris Helmer (City of Imperial Beach) and Bryn Evans (Dudek) presented a summary of the final report for the Tijuana River Valley Sediment Management Work Plan. Presentation link: https://trnerr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/IB_Sediment-Management-Work-Plan_TRNERRAC_2023.02.07_v1.pdf

7. **Public Comment**

Doug Liden, USEPA

Doug provides an overview of an EPA study that will examine various flooding scenarios associated with the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) project to build a border fence through the Tijuana River main channel.

John Fanestil, Friends of Friendship Park

John requests access to the Divided Together podcast. Location shared in chat:

Divided Together podcast: <https://trnerr.org/library/divided-together-podcast/>

Pedro Rios (Public), Maria Teresa Fernandez (FOFP), Seth David Clark (Public), Mona Kuczenski (FOFP)

All ask related questions about the status of communication between CBP and CSP around proposed border wall construction at Friendship Park.

Chris Peregrin provides a general overview of meetings and information shared by CBP on the project. CSP provided a comment letter to CBP on the Project. CBP has shared a link (below) that summarizes public comments and their response to those comments on the project. <https://www.cbp.gov/document/environmental-assessments/border-barrier-yogurt-canyon-imperial-beach-friendship-circle>

John Fanestil, Friends of Friendship Park

John provides link to a presentation that FOFP shared with Senator Feinstein and local members of Congress describing FOFP perspective in opposition to the CBP project at Friendship Park.

Kimberly Allen, Public

Kimberly asks Anna Shepherd about monitoring the vernal pools at the south coast, coastal campus on the strand.

Anna will connect with her via Kimberly's email.

Chris Jonsmyr, Assemblymember Alvarez

Chris asks Morgan Rogers about the location of the flow meter.

Morgan Rogers notes the main channel south of the border.

Chris Jonsmyr, Assemblymember Alvarez

Chris requests update on the return of the TRNERR Trails Committee?

Chris Peregrin notes interest in re-establishing these meetings.

John Fanestil, Friends of Friendship Park

John asks about CBP attendance at TRNERR AC.

Lorena Warner-Lara provides a brief overview of attendance.

Maria Teresa Fernandez, Friends of Friendship Park

Maria asks about opening BFSP to pedestrians.

Question was in the chat but not seen until after the meeting was adjourned.

8. Future Agenda Considerations

Kiran Kaur would like to present on the TRV California Coastal Trail Feasibility Study

9. Adjourned at 2:32pm

The meeting was adjourned.

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

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

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