

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

Tuesday, May 2, 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**

**Nicole Van Doren – California State Parks – Acting District Superintendent**

619-688-3356, nicole.vandoren@parks.ca.gov

**Andy Yuen – USFWS – SDNWRC Project Leader**

(760) 535-7065, andy\_yuen@fws.gov

**Jill Terp – USFWS – Acting 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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**Sean Ford – USBP – Border Patrol, Public Lands Liaison**

SEAN.A.FORD@cbp.dhs.gov

**Larry Borden – USBP – Border Patrol, Special Operations Supervisor**

LARRY.BORDEN@cbp.dhs.gov

**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**

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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  
510-637-3841, melis.okter@noaa.gov

**Program Managers Present:**

**Chris Peregrin – TRNERR – Reserve Manager**

619-575-3615 ext. 303, chris.peregrin@parks.ca.gov

**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**

Yash Solanki, Scripps

Joe Ellis, Public

Kimberly Allan, Public

Lynn Reizer-Heftmann, TRVEA

John Zarem, Public

Ransses Lopez, TRNERR

Marya Ahmad, CA State Parks

Christina Rayburn, TRNERR

1. **1:05 pm Meeting was called to order.**
2. **AGENDA** – adoption of February 7, 2023, agenda.
3. **LAST MEETING MINUTES** – meeting minutes were adopted.
4. **Member Comments**

Nicole Van Doren – California State Parks – Acting District Superintendent

- a. Nicole introduced herself. Nicole is the Chief Ranger for the San Diego Coast District and more recently the Acting District Superintendent. Nicole has been with the District since 2017 and is familiar with, and developing a greater awareness of the issues in the area.

Andy Yuen – USFWS – SDNWRC Project Leader

- a. The TETRP II Phase I Final EIR/EIS was published with a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register. The FWS is now working on the Record of Decision.
- b. The Refuge Manager position for both the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge and the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge closed on Monday. The list of candidates will be reviewed to begin the interview process to fill that position.

Sam Jenniches – State Coastal Conservancy – Project Manager

- a. On June 1<sup>st</sup> the State Coastal Conservancy is going to submit the TETRP II Phase I project to their board for a \$3.2-million planning project for preliminary monitoring, final design and permitting. Also submitted was a proposal to NFWF for a coastal resilience grant for implementation funding in amount of \$10 million. They are also considering submitting an application later in the summer to NOAA for a \$6-million coastal zone management grant for implementation.

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

- a. Regarding the new business item, the Navy Region Southwest was approached by the Office of the Secretary of Defense with a request of participating in the Sentinel Landscape Program. The program is a coalition of the DOD, the DOI, the USDA, as well as state and local governments and non-governmental organizations that work with willing landowners and land managers to advance sustainable land use practices around military installations and ranges. An application is required to apply for designation. Designations include areas where military installations overlap with natural resources and coastal resilience issues, and involve local governments land use goals. If designated, a staff person is assigned, and funding support is available. There is not a definite date when applications are due, but it could be this summer. Anna will proceed to set up a meeting in anticipation of the summer application window with anyone that is interested.

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

- a. The new City Manager of Imperial Beach is Tyler Foltz, been with the city for 15 years.
- b. Update on SANDAG's next Regional Beach Sand (Replenishment) Project #3. Like the last one, it takes about 5 years to plan. It is in the works, and he will keep the group updated.

Andrew Funk – City of San Diego – Stormwater Department

- a. The City of San Diego has been talking to with Chris Peregrin offline on organizing a tour and the improvements to the road infrastructure. A.Funk will reconnect with C.Peregrin on that.
- b. Regarding the Water Quality Improvement Plans, the MS4 permit was submitted in January 2023. There is no news from the board regarding approval status yet but will likely know by the next meeting.

Doug Liden – USEPA – Environmental Engineer

- a. It is getting closer to the Record of Decision for the USMCA project for the expansion of the international treatment plant as well as some other projects in Mexico. On Thursday, there will be an eligible public entities consultation group, it will be followed by a trip to Tijuana to recognize some EPA & Mexico funded infrastructure projects, that are in their initial planning stages, and a completed project.

- b. A model for the Border Barrier was recently completed. The findings of that are available online but they are being slightly revised. The link to the revised information is here: <https://www.nadb.org/knowledge-resources/studies-publications/technical-report-tijuana-river-border-barrier-flood-hazard-analysis>. (Tijuana River Border Barrier Flood Hazard Analysis Technical Report)

Ashley Reineman – California Coastal Commission – Federal Programs Manager

- a. No updates.

Mike Verderber – SD County Parks – Supervising Park Ranger

- a. County Parks hosted a successful “I Love a Clean San Diego” event on Earth Day with the Resource Conservation District at the TRV Community Garden along Hollister Street. Sixty people helped fill two 40-yard dumpsters with trash and green waste.
- b. They are working on a project to create a more esthetically pleasing environment and providing some privacy around the Yurt Village by planting some native species and providing irrigation.
- c. The Tijuana River Valley Regional Park Campground just had its two-year anniversary.

Sean Ford – USBP – Border Patrol Agent

- a. No updates.

Mike McCoy – SWIA – President

- a. SWIA is planning a retreat to bring staff at the Reserve and at the office together to work strategically on items and issues that need to be discussed.

Morgan Rogers – USIBWC – Area Operations Manager

- a. The transboundary flows continue to decrease and should continue to decrease except for a slight increase due to an upcoming predicted rain event.
- b. This year is possibly a record setting year for transboundary flows. The first four months of 2023 had 35 billion gallons of flow across the border, compared to 10.5 in 2022, 9.3 in 2021, 19.7 in 2020, and 30.9 billion gallons of flow in 2019. That flow is 90% stormwater with 10% being the typical dry weather flow, the 90% still carries a lot of contaminants that it picks up along the way.
- c. PBCILA is being prepared to come back online this week. They are cleaning out the channel and the intakes to the pump station, so there will be a reduction of flows coming down the river. Also, the dry season sediment berm will be rebuilt in a week or so when it is somewhat drier.
- d. Primary sedimentation tanks are still down. One is emptied, cleaned, and being inspected and the others will follow. They should be online in the next couple of months.

## 5. Program Manager Reports

### Jill Terp – USFWS – Acting Refuge Manager Report

- a. It will take several weeks for a review of the applications for the Refuge Manager position.
- b. Biological monitoring is ongoing with Robert Patton and his crew. To date no least terns, but snowy plovers have been in full swing in the estuary for some time.
- c. Work on new interpretation elements and way finding elements to the Visitor Center is ongoing in collaboration with Anne Marie Tipton.
- d. The NWR is working with the Friends of SD Wildlife Refuges on ideas for interpretive elements at the North and South McCoy Trails.
- e. Debby Good is working with the CCC next week along Seacoast Drive.
- f. Debby Good is retiring on July 1<sup>st</sup> and a retirement party is being planned.
- g. Posted in the chat, that the light-footed Ridgway's rails in the Living Coast's captive breeding program have chicks.

### Chris Peregrin – TRNERR – Reserve Manager Report

- a. Regarding the return of the least terns to the nesting site and the existing snowy plover nesting sites in the Reserve, Chris Peregrin will reach out to the Border Patrol to coordinate a meeting with the Navy, California State Parks, and the FWS to share some maps and discuss the terns and plovers.
- b. The amount of damage to Border Field State Park from the season's storms is unprecedented. The heavy flows deposited huge quantities of sediment and the trash booms were also compromised. Monument Road was heavily impacted by the sedimentation. CSP is working on clearing trails and has retained a contractor to repair the road and restore access to the park. Two thousand cubic yards of sediment and trash have so far been removed and stockpiled for future haul-off.
- c. The Reserve received a grant from NOAA's Marine Debris Program to repair and upgrade the Goat Canyon trash booms, and to produce an educational video on the international border trash issue and what is being done to resolve that. An additional \$100,000 investment from the NERRs was also awarded for the improvement of the trash booms. The trash booms in the Goat Canyon Sediment Basins were heavily inundated and subjected to high velocity flows, that caused them to rotate and flip over which reduces their effectiveness. The Reserve has analyzed the fix and will start to purchase supplies needed to make repairs this year.
- d. The Reserve just finished 90 to 95% of the sediment material export for the year. So far this year, 22,000 cubic yards have been exported from the site. The project has been put out to bid on the upcoming year's maintenance.
- e. The Trails Committee, which was suspended during the pandemic, is a sub-committee of the Advisory Council. C.Peregrin will be reaching out to other land managers to restart the Trails Committee meetings on an in-person basis, hopefully within the next month or so. The meetings will be held on site to look at the issues and opportunities which will advance the goal of improved and enhanced public

access in the Tijuana River Valley. Anyone who is interested should put their contact information in the chat to be contacted.

5. Anne Marie Tipton – TRNERR – Education Report

- a. The Long-Term Volunteer Training (Information Ambassadors) classes are on April 1<sup>st</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> with 22 people in the class.
- b. The upcoming Docent Training class on May 13<sup>th</sup> has sixteen people signed up for it, this includes for the first time, some of the ranger staff from the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park.
- c. The Reserve Staff is going to participate at the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park's interpretation program at the campground by doing a program there one Saturday a month, June through September.
- d. Ron Peterson, a long-term volunteer at the Reserve, will be leading a new docent led interpretative walk, called *An Eye-Opening Experience Without Sight* on the first Saturdays of the month, hopefully starting this June. This walk will focus on ways to experience the Reserve using sensory information other than sight.
- e. The Reserve is in the process of interviewing candidates for the Environmental Services Intern position, which is a seasonal education specialist, in a few months will be able to hire an Interpreter I level staff person.

Jeff Crooks – TRNERR – Research Report

- a. This is a quiet time for fieldwork monitoring due to nesting season, but the Research staff is gearing up TETRP monitoring in the fall.
- b. Potential monitoring at the Otay River Project.
- c. In reference to the transboundary flows, the flows and the spring bloom do affect the estuary. Last week when the oxygen levels were very low there was a neap tide, so, not bringing in much oxygen, but now that there are higher tides, there is more oxygenated ocean water brought in.

Lorena Warner-Lara – TRNERR – Stewardship Report

- a. Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program (TETRP) II Phase I update: the final document was released with a Notice of Availability on the NEPA side and on the CEQA side, CA State Parks certified the document on March 24<sup>th</sup> and a Notice of Determination is posted on the State Clearinghouse.
- b. Update on the Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration and Beneficial Reuse of Sediment Project: The Reserve is moving forward on project working with DUDEK on the EIR and the final Notice of Determination should be out in June.
- c. Upcoming Volunteer Events in partnership with the CA State Parks Foundation: May 20th on Monument Mesa - see Reserve website calendar to sign up on the CSPF website: <https://volunteer.calparks.org/opportunity/a3t4p000004jeVPAAY/border-field-state-park>

- d. Nesting season is underway, and surveys have started for the California Gnatcatcher and Least Bell's Vireo in and around the Goat Canyon sediment basins, on Bunker Hill and on Spooner's Mesa.
- e. As part of the NOAA Marine Debris grant the Reserve will be having a small group of volunteers working with Robin Echols-Booth and Ransses Lopez doing debris removal at the beach.
- f. This is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tijuana River Estuary National Natural Landmark, a this is a designation given by the National Park Service for outstanding biological and or geological features.

Kristen Goodrich – TRNERR – Coastal Training Program Report

- a. As part of the DUOS project which is funded by the NOAA's Marine Debris Program and the USMCA, one of the components of that grant is the Marine Debris Leadership Academy which is being launched in July. It is an eight-week course which is designed to bring together cohorts from both sides of the border to address issues on marine debris management and the relationship between marine debris and flooding.
- b. Ana Eguiarte (CTP) is implementing a project through the San Diego Foundation's Binational Resilience Initiative and in May will be delivering training on nature-based solutions in Tijuana in collaboration with NOAA's Digital Coast program.
- c. The CTP went to Washington D.C. as part of the Capitol Hill's Oceans Week. The National Estuarine Research Reserve Association (NERRA) brings together the reserves and other coastal zone management agencies partners to do coastal decision maker education and to talk about the impact of the reserves and the coastal managers partnership.

**6. New Business**

*Mike Verderber for Kiran Kaur* (County Department of Parks and Recreation) provided an update on the Tijuana River Valley California Coastal Trail Feasibility Study and the Valley-wide Restoration Plan.

- a. The County has a grant from the State Coastal Conservancy to analyze a location for the California Coastal Trail to cross the Tijuana River. The grant includes a geo-technical analysis, as well as biological and cultural resources constraints reports and concept plans for locations. Possible crossing locations are Effie May, Hollister Street and Saturn Boulevard. Hope to have a public meeting within the next few months.
- b. The County has a grant from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, for a habitat restoration plan that would include restoration activities in the Tijuana River Valley on parcels owned by the county. The Mitigated Negative Declaration document and the Environmental Review document will be available to the public in the next couple of months.

Proposed Sentinel Landscape Designation, Anna Shepherd (U.S. Navy)

- a. See above under the Navy report.

## 7. Public Comment

### Q. Kimberly Allan, Public

Regarding a program that Audubon is doing called Tern Watchers at Mission Bay, are there any plans for something like Tern Watchers in the south bay?

She also acknowledged Anne Marie Tipton and Debby Good for providing native plant samples for the Coronado Flower Show.

Andy Yuen is not familiar with the program; he says that Robert Patton is monitoring terns and plovers and other migratory birds in the south bay and at TRNERR. He asked her to send a link for Tern Watchers.

### Q. Yash Solanki, Scripps

Is a Master student at Scripps Institute of Oceanography and is looking to install a [Coastsnap](#) station on Monument Mesa at BFSP. Coastsnap is a worldwide coastal monitoring and community science program that is designed for public use. The objective is to gather data for the program to analyze and to educate the community about sea level rise and coastline changes that occur over time. I have been in contact with Chris Helmer to find a location that would best serve the Imperial Beach area. Monument Mesa at Border Field State Park would be an effective location to monitor coastal erosion and recovery in the region and to educate visitors how sea level and coastal changes can affect this area and San Diego as a whole.

Jeff Crooks, says that TRNERR and CA State Parks are supportive. Cara Stafford (CSP) would be the one to permit the project.

### C. John Zarem, TRNERR Volunteer

Would like to participate in the Trails Committee meetings. Would like to resume these.

### Q. Kimberly Allan, Public

Asks if any Migratory Bird Conservation Funds are coming to San Diego? They just gave out \$146 million for wetlands.

Andy Yuen is not aware that Refuges are receiving any Migratory Bird funds for San Diego. He thinks the funds are for land acquisition.

Chris Peregrin is not aware of any funds coming to CSP, and the Research Reserve hasn't put in any application specific to for that. He will check to see if there is a statewide program for CSP for that.

An overview of the program and funded projects can be found here:

<https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-department-announces-more-146-million-wetland-conservation-projects-and#:~:text=WASHINGTON%20%E2%80%94%20The%20Department%20of%20the,of%20wetland%20and%20associated%20upland>



**8. Future Agenda Considerations**

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

**9. Adjourned at 2:15PM**

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