

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

Tuesday, November 7, 2023, at 1pm  
301 Caspian Way, Imperial Beach CA, 91932  
Meeting held in-person and 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 II  
619-688-3356, nicole.vandoren@parks.ca.gov

**Lisa Tomas – California State Parks – District Superintendent I**  
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**Andy Yuen – USFWS – SDNWRC Project Leader**  
(760) 535-7065, andy\_yuen@fws.gov

**Jill Terp – USFWS – Acting Refuge Manager**  
619-221-3473, jill\_terp@fws.gov

**Mike McCoy – SWIA – President**  
619-423-0495, mccoy4ib@aol.com

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**  
858-541-4366, afunk@sandiego.gov

**Doug Liden – USEPA – Environmental Engineer**  
619-235-4763, liden.douglas@epa.gov

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**  
619-417-4613, morgan.rogers@ibwc.gov

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**  
760-832-7365, sjenniches@scc.ca.gov

**Ashley Reineman – California Coastal Commission – Federal Programs Manager**  
805-585-1800, ashley.reineman@coastal.ca.gov

**Chelsea Jander – California Coastal Commission – Coastal Program Analyst**  
Chelsea.Jander@coastal.ca.gov

**Gemma Waaland – NOAA's Office for Coastal Management – NERR Liaison**  
707-495-2623, gemma.waaland@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**

619-575-3615 ext. 314, kgoodrich@trnerr.org

**Jeff Crooks – TRNERR – Research Coordinator**

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**Anne Marie Tipton – TRNERR – Education Coordinator**

619-575-3615 ext. 304, annemarie.tipton@parks.ca.gov

**Members of the Public**

Empress Holiday, TRNERR

Kellie Uyeda, TRNERR

Ana Eguiarte, TRNERR

Lynn Reizer-Heftmann, TRVEA

Alberto Pomba, Public

Kiran Seibel, SD County Parks

Joe Ellis, Public

Megan Spitzer TRNERR

Christina Rayburn, TRNERR

Marya Ahmad, CA State Parks

John Zarem, Public

Tara Flint Silva, USEPA

Mary Powell, TRVEA

1. **1:05 pm Meeting was called to order.**
2. **AGENDA** – November 7, 2023 agenda was adopted.
3. **LAST MEETING MINUTES** – August 8, 2023 minutes were adopted.
4. **Member Comments**

Sam Jenniches – State Coastal Conservancy – Project Manager

- a. Sentinel Landscapes meeting this Thursday, the group was asked to submit a full proposal. There has been one meeting thus far.
- b. The Conservancy just announced its 2024 Explore the Coast Grant. This is a great program that helps get folks of all ages to the coast. \$800k is available this year, approximately \$650k for outer coast (remainder for SF Bay). Up to \$100k can be requested. Applications are due late January:

<https://scc.ca.gov/2023/11/06/explore-the-coast-2024-rfp-now-open/>

Morgan Rogers – USIBWC – Area Operations Manager

- a. Status of the plant - Over the past few months has had about 25 million gallons per day (mgd). This is in line with the permits and design which has allowed the IBWC to catch up on maintenance and repairs. The downside of regulating these flows to 25 mgd by restricting the pumps at PB CILA is that there are still transboundary flows and flow in the river. Averaging 13 mgd so far for November and 29 mgd in October. There haven't been any transboundary flows at any of the five canyon collectors.
- b. The broken pipeline in Mexico, that is the 42" line in Matadero Canyon which is just upstream of Smuggler's, is scheduled to be repaired this month. The repair is a ten-day process which will begin by next week and is being done by the military. Pipelines will be back in service by the end of the month which means the plant can start pumping out of the river again and into the system. Hoping it will significantly reduce fluids in the river, hopefully will stop and then the IBWC can get the sediment berm back up like is usually done during dry weather.
- c. A week after Hurricane Hilary, sediment from the rainwater clogged up the Hollister Pump Station and so the 4 pumps were out of commission. The pumps divert flows from the Goat Canyon and Smuggler's Gulch canyon collectors. Since the flows weren't being contained, they flowed into the basins of the Reserve. The initial spill of 20,000 gallons was cleaned up. The continued flows, mostly through Goat Canyon resulted in 34 million gallons of transboundary flows. Pump station presentation link: [https://trnerr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/IBWCreport\\_TRNERR-11.7.2023.pdf](https://trnerr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/IBWCreport_TRNERR-11.7.2023.pdf)
- d. Hollister Station brought back online September 19, the IBWC was able to restore one pump and also installed one new pump and brought Hollister back online. The IBWC has another pump that is brand new which they tried to install but had problems and had to stop while the downstream Goat Canyon sediment basin is being cleaned out. Once that is completed, they will finish installation, in the meantime they have two pumps online which is sufficient to operate. The IBWC has 4 and a few extra so in the future they don't have to wait to order if there is a problem.

Larry Borden – USBP – Border Patrol, Special Operations Supervisor

- a. The USBP was scheduled to have construction on the primary fence on the western corner finished by the end of year, but protests on the south side are slowing down the construction.

Tara Flint Silva – US Environmental Protection Agency, Project Manager

- a. Is the new Biologist at EPA Region 9 and has been working with EPA for a while with the regional office. She will be working out in San Diego County up in Oceanside, and on Doug Liden's team. She will be on maternity leave at the beginning of next year. Looks forward to future meetings.

Doug Liden – US Environmental Protection Agency, Environmental Engineer

- a. The EPA made a couple of presentations on the October 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. The presentations gave an update of the USMCA activities by both the IBWC and EPA.

Link: [https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-11/epecg\\_oct\\_30\\_2023.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-11/epecg_oct_30_2023.pdf)

- i. IBWC expects to go out for a bid for design and construction of the expansion of the plant by the end of November.
  - ii. Waiting to hear if IBWC will get an extra \$310 million currently in the emergency supplemental that needs to be approved by both the House and the Senate.
- b. Regarding the big pipe that carries flow from PB1 to the coast, the Mexican army expects to have those lines in place by end of November which would relieve a lot of the flow at the international treatment plant and going into the river. That should help significantly reduce if not eliminate transboundary flows, especially during the summer months.
  - c. There is a project in solicitation by Los Laureles, the pump station closest to the border. This is a \$4 million dollar project being constructed entirely by Mexico. This is supposed to go out for bid in December-January timeframe and should be completed by August or September which should significantly reduce flows in Goat Canyon.

Andy Yuen – USFWS – SDNWRC Project Leader

- a. Jill Terp is coming down once a week to work with Robin Echols-Booth and the TRNERR Stewardship volunteer crew. They are grateful for the volunteers' help in clearing out the brush by the amphitheater and Zedler's Channel.
- b. The Refuge Manager position remains open and has been re-advertised. They hope to get the list of candidates by this week and will soon make a selection. Position has been vacant for over a year now due to Brian's retirement.
- c. The FWS was awarded the contract to redesign the deck at the end of Seacoast Drive as it routinely gets damaged during high surf and flooding. Looking at finding an alternative location for that deck.
- d. Scheduled to install feathered friendly dots on the windows of the Visitor Center and the Training Center (Tijuana Estuary). These dots are to reduce bird strikes. They installed them at their Sweetwater Marsh facility at the end of November.
- e. No budget yet for fiscal year 2024, they are still on a continuing resolution and hope to get an extension or a budget before November 18.

Gemma Waaland – NOAA – NERR Site Liaison

- a. Newly appointed as the site liaison and is based in Oakland, California. She is an affiliate of NOAA working for Lynker, and is excited to be here and to get to the know the Reserve program better and getting to know AC members. Her contact information is above.

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

- a. The City is starting a new project, to develop a community resilience plan to look at sea level rise and what they do along the coast and estuary. Project kicked off 3 months ago, a lot of work underway so would like to provide an update at the next meeting because it does have impacts adjacent to the Reserve. It is a long-term

vision of how does the City of Imperial Beach adapt to sea level rise, so that includes all the Advisory Council member partners.

Andrew Funk – City of San Diego – Stormwater Department

- a. The Regional Water Board is working on a TMDL for the Tijuana River to be released for the public review in December; link: [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/water\\_issues/programs/tmdls/tijuanarivervalley.html](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/water_issues/programs/tmdls/tijuanarivervalley.html). The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) will be focusing on bacteria and trash from a stormwater co-permittee. Per the initial drafts the Regional Board has allocated 99% of the bacteria and trash contributions to the cross-boundary flows and less than 1% to our stormwater co-permittees. First draft in December for the 30-day public review period. There will be meeting with the waterboard later this week and public workshops in the month of November.
- b. Regarding vegetation management, he will follow-up with State Parks for the overgrowth along Monument Road and some of the other roads in the area. If there is concern, please continue to submit those "Get it Done" requests via the app or website and coordinate with him directly as there is a lot of vegetation overgrowth across the city. This is a priority as the El Niño year approaches, and will see even more growth down the road.
- c. For mitigation, the City of San Diego continues to do mitigation in the river valley and will be initiating a new mitigation project for Smith and Dola. That project will not have any impact to the trail system during construction but A.Funk will make sure the City's mitigation planners coordinate accordingly.
- d. The City and the County are coordinating a maintenance operation and management plan for the River Valley and just an MOU for determining ownership as well as overall maintenance. This is ongoing and in the next couple of weeks upper management will continue discussing this process. The County has been doing a great job maintaining the Disney culvert which is a vulnerable spot. During the next quarterly meeting, he will hopefully have a good TMDL draft to provide, as well as more context.

Mike Verderber – SD County Parks – Supervising Park Ranger

- a. Regarding trail maintenance in the valley in response to all the growth over the past year, the County has been fortunate to work with the CCC recently and opened up the Cathedral Trail, one of the more popular trails which is about a mile east of West Trail. Hopefully horseback riders and hikers are enjoying that again.
- b. County Parks is also teaming up with the CCC in the next week to work on fire breaks in the park.

Kiran Seibel – SD County Parks - Land Use/Environmental Planner

- a. To add to the City of San Diego update, the County is working with the city on the larger effort and longer-term plan for Smuggler's Gulch.
- b. In the interim, the County has a grant from the State Water Board and will be conducting dredging in the Smuggler's Gulch and Pilot Channel in the next couple of months, probably at the beginning of the new year.

Mike McCoy – SWIA – President

- a. SWIA added a new member to our board of directors, Clay Phillips (former TRNERR Manager and SD Coast District Superintendent). He will be a great asset as SWIA moves into implementation of the TETRP program.

Ashley Reineman – California Coastal Commission – Federal Programs Manager

- a. A huge thank you to so many of you that helped with the Coastal Commission hearing last month. The October hearing was in Imperial Beach and as part of that hearing the commission, the staff and a bunch of members of the public went out on a tour of the Tijuana River Valley hosted by the TRNERR crew here and also had an informational briefing at the hearing on the status/impacts of the transboundary pollutions.
- b. Since the hearing, the commission staff have been working on a handful of letters based on what was discussed at the hearing amongst the commissioners, to Congress, the President, the Governor, to the State Department all by way of follow-up. If you want any more specifics of any of the letters, or the hearing itself, the October hearing briefing is available online. This includes the recent letter to Congress urging for the \$310 million in supplemental spending mentioned by Doug Liden earlier. Our November hearing page, you can find draft letters to the President and the Governor that will be in front of the commissioners for consideration at the November hearings. Links below.

[October Hearing: https://www.coastal.ca.gov/meetings/agenda/#/2023/10](https://www.coastal.ca.gov/meetings/agenda/#/2023/10)

[Video: https://cal-span.org/meeting/ccc\\_20231011/](https://cal-span.org/meeting/ccc_20231011/)

[November Hearing: https://www.coastal.ca.gov/meetings/agenda/#/2023/11](https://www.coastal.ca.gov/meetings/agenda/#/2023/11)

Chelsea Jander – California Coastal Commission – Local Coastal Planner

- a. Introduced herself. The Advisory Council has been without a local coastal planner for a while now, so she has been assigned to represent the more local issues for the Coastal Commission. She looks forward to getting to know everyone.

Lisa Tomas – California State Parks – District Superintendent I

- a. Happy to be here, glad to see the participation for this month and look forward to continued collaboration.

## **5. Program Manager Reports**

Jill Terp – USFWS – Acting Refuge Manager

- a. USFWS is continuing to work with Artefact Design, the Friends of the San Diego Wildlife Refuges and California State Parks on a project to install new interpretive signs on the South McCoy trail. The preliminary texts have been sent for review and then graphics will be decided on. The Friends are committed to helping with the costs of fabrication and the volunteers will be handling the installation of the signs.

- b. USFWS is working with the Army Corps of Engineers to get a renewal of the permit to open the river mouth in the event of a closure so that the health and oxygenation of the estuary will be maintained.

Chris Peregrin – TRNERR – Reserve Manager Report

- a. Goat Canyon sediment basins annual maintenance is underway. Excavation of the basins is about 75% complete. The basins are full to the capacity of 60,000 cubic yards and the amount to be removed is 20,000 cy, which unfortunately is not the total amount, but the sediment and trash removed will be kept out of the estuary. Thanks go out to M.Rogers for collaboration on the scheduling of the excavation while also involved in the Hollister St. pump station project.
- b. Update to Hurricane Hilary's impact: About one month before Hilary, work had been done that cost \$10,000, to repair the damage from the previous season's rain and flooding. This allowed the park to be reopened to all visitors including vehicles. The hurricane caused damage to the roads, trails, trash booms and sediment basins. There were also flows of contaminated water. These conditions caused the park to be closed again and it will probably not open again until spring of next year.
- c. Welcome to the new park maintenance supervisor Alex Bok. He has experience with maintenance crews in the San Diego area.

Anne Marie Tipton – TRNERR – Education Report

- a. Looking forward to hiring an Interpreter I. State Parks has received 20 applications and will be doing interviews next month. The Reserve has never in its 40-year history had 2 full-time education staff. Right now, with only one person, the Education department is extremely challenged to do its job; but trying to accommodate PORTS programs (distance learning), on-site school programs and any other supplemental educational groups, for example Scout groups.
- b. Reiterating what Jill Terp said, the Education department is collaborating on the South McCoy trail interpretive sign project.
- c. The Education department is also working in collaboration with the City of Imperial Beach and the Southern Service Center on the design of a banner holder that will enable the Reserve to promote events.

Kellie Uyeda for Jeff Crooks – TRNERR – Research Report

- a. The Research department has been busy doing fish and vegetation monitoring and is now pressing forward to wrap up the field work for the year.

Lorena Warner-Lara – TRNERR – Stewardship Report

- a. The Reserve held its annual event, Tijuana River Action Month, (TRAM) in September and October with some adaptations made due to the previously mentioned tropical storm. The Reserve's Binational Liaison coordinated events in Tijuana and Tecate which were the bulk of TRAM's eighteen events. The results to date are, 1157 volunteers, over 120,000 pounds of trash, 821 pounds of recyclables, 91 tires, and 9 acres were cleaned. An electronics collection in Mexico yielded 0.7 tons. The cleanup activities were in Mexico and only educational activities were held in the

river valley because of contamination. There were fourteen partners in the United States and twenty-three in Mexico. Surfrider headed off the event by giving a van tour of the river valley, presenters included County Parks, Camp Surf, and the Spirit Runners from Barona Tribe. The Jamul Indian Village and the I.B. Arts Bureau helped with the Watershed Youth Art Build.

- b. Also in September, the Reserve through State Parks hosted an American Conservation Experience Crew for six days. They had planned to do Arundo removal in the river valley but due to the contamination they worked around the Visitor Center removing salt bush, trail trimming, fuel reduction and creating fire breaks. 212 cubic yds of vegetation were removed, 600 feet of fire break line and 400 feet of trimmed trails was done.
- c. The long-term stewardship volunteer day has moved to Monday with the Volunteer coordinator, R.Echols-Booth leading the crew with help from J.Terp. They will be working on a native plant demonstration garden in the amphitheater area behind the Visitor Center.
- d. On Wednesday, a small crew of volunteers was able to get into Border Field S.P. to do marine debris cleanup, which is very important and good because it was not possible to have a cleanup effort during TRAM.

Empress Holiday for Kristen Goodrich – TRNERR – Coastal Training Program Report

- a. Our site is the only site in the United States that is part of the National Geographic's Preserving Legacies Project. As site custodians, Dr. Goodrich and E. Holliday, were in the Philippines for 10 days for workshops, site visits and storytelling training given by National Geographic. The project is composed of 10 world heritage sites, and TRNERR is the only site that is not a world heritage site. The project focuses on how cultural heritage can be used as a form of climate action by developing climate literacy through culture. The goal is to develop climate models that are community based to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

## 6. **New Business**

E.Holliday (TRNERR) provided an update on the ResiDUOS Project - from the Marine Debris Leadership Academy (MDLA) to the Binational Emergency Response Guide. Presentation link: [https://trnerr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/MDLA\\_Recap\\_BERG\\_web.pdf](https://trnerr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/MDLA_Recap_BERG_web.pdf)

The eight-weeklong Academy is part of the larger ResiDUOS project. The title ResiDUOS refers to residual waste and the dual partnership. The MDLA and the project itself were funded through the USMCA through the NOAA's Marine Debris Program. The project started in October 2021 and has 5 pillars.

1. Scale up the circular economy for solid waste through reuse and income generation at pilot sites.
2. Establish and implement a cross-border Marine Debris Leadership Academy.
3. Provide an exemplary model of land-based marine debris capture and characterization.
4. Improve binational flood emergency response and resilience.
5. Protect and enhance beach, dune, high-marsh, and riverine environments.



**7. Public Comment**

Mary Powell, TRVEA

Question: Was the flooding backed up along the border wall in 2019 a tree stump or a mattress?

C.Peregrin answer: It was debris and was hard to tell because there was so much water.

**8. Future Agenda Considerations**

- C.Helmer suggested the Community Resilience plan.
- L.Warner-Lara mentioned the SDSU water quality monitoring that was previously suggested by D.Liden.

**9. TRNERR MEETINGS for Advisory Council – In-person and Virtual @1pm**

The following dates were adopted for the 2024 TRNERR Advisory Council meetings:

- Tuesday, February 6, 2024
- Tuesday, May 7, 2024
- Tuesday, August 6, 2024
- Tuesday, November 5, 2024

**10. Adjourned at 2:27PM**

The meeting was adjourned.