



Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team

The River Team Update

June 5, 2009

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Lots of good work is underway as we move into June. First, our ability to provide you with information about the work of the River Team is evolving as evidenced by this newsletter and the growth of information on the web site, now including a photo gallery at www.tjriverteam.org,

Second, we really gathered together as a team to meet an April 6 deadline to submit two grant applications to NOAA. We are hopeful that our applications will be perceived as strong ones. The first is a \$9.5 million proposal will help put shovels to work removing existing trash and stopping trash from entering the valley. If that work is funded, we can move forward with plans to do the same for unwanted sediment. Another grant called for the removal of non-native vegetation. The efforts of the City, County, SIO, SDSU, and SWIA to submit these grants was phenomenal, and the support letters that were generated in a matter of days was even more phenomenal. We now have on record letters from 15 different agencies, including those from federal, state and local elected officials, various agencies, and the Governor's California/Mexico Border Relations Council,

Much more work needs to be done. One of the topics that was discussed at the recent River Team Policy Committee meeting was how our collaboration should be structured. Concepts from conservancies, to JPAs, to just doing what we are doing were discussed. The consensus seemed to be that simply letters from various agencies formalizing their participation in the River Team collaboration might be the best strategy, so as not to distract from the real work we are doing and need to do. What do you think? Please let us know!

*John Robertus and Carl Nettleton
Co-Chairs, The River Team*

Governor's California/Mexico Border Relations Council Tours Valley; River Team Presents the Plan

On April 14, 2009, the River Team was invited to make a presentation to the Governor's California/Mexico Border Relations Council.

The Council consists of six of the Governor's Cabinet members: Linda Adams, Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Council Chair), Mike Chrisman, Secretary of the Resources Agency; Kim Belshe, Secretary of the Health and Human Services Agency; Dale Bonner, Secretary of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency; A.G. Kawamura, Secretary of the Department of Food and Agriculture, and Matthew Bettenhausen, Secretary, California Emergency Management Agency.

As part of the day's activities, the Council toured the valley to see conditions first-hand and, following a presentation by Co-Chairs John Robertus and Carl Nettleton, unanimously offered to send a letter supporting the River Team's application for a NOAA Coastal Habitat Restoration Grant. The Council asked to be kept apprised of the River Team's work and to report back at future meetings.

Of interest, each of the members of the Council have an important perspective that can contribute to the River Team's efforts. Whether it is agriculture, homeland security, transportation, human health, solid waste, water quality, or natural resources, all of these considerations are present in or adjacent to the valley.

www.tjriverteam.org



River Team member Clay Phillips led the Governor's California/Mexico Border Relations Council on a tour of the Tijuana River Valley.

River Team Gains \$700,000 Water Resources Board Grant

A \$700,000 application for a State Water Resources Board cleanup and abatement grant was approved by the State Board on June 2. The grant for the Tijuana River Valley Trash/Sediment Transport and Deposition Study was awarded to the County of San Diego to expand the \$100,000 characterization study funded by the California Integrated Waste Management Board (see page 2). Additional work will include mapping the valley and providing a baseline for integrating cleanup up work with ultimate restoration.

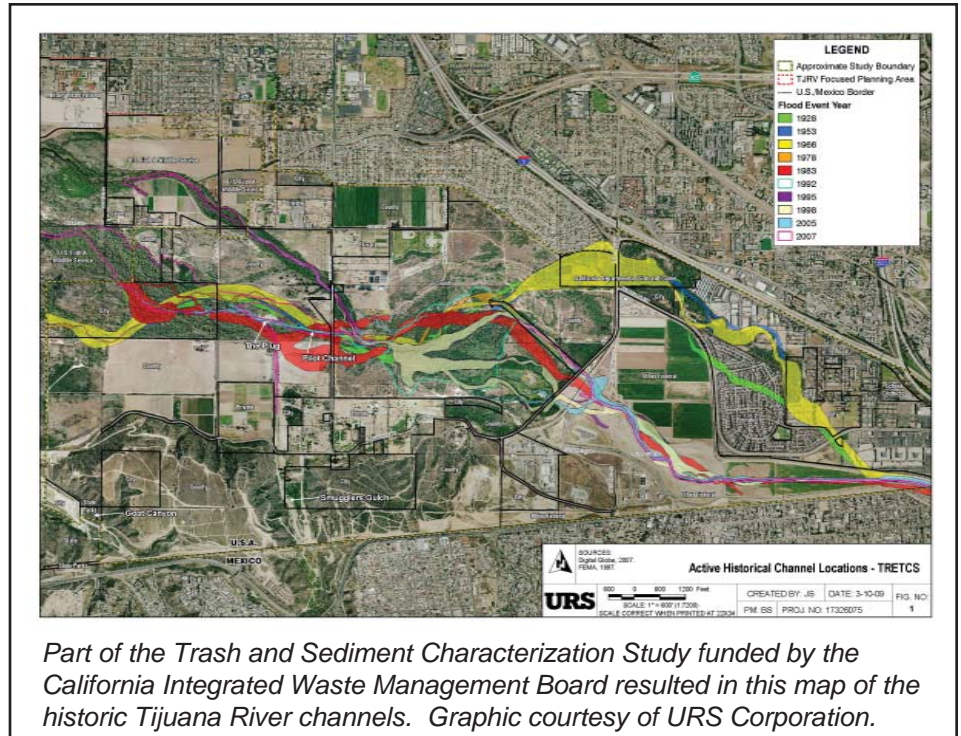
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Grants Update

NOAA Grant Applications

After being alerted to a NOAA Coastal Habitat and Restoration Grant, the River Team moved into action. Tony Heinrichs, chair of the Border Action Team, took the lead in a multi-agency \$9.5 million grant coordination effort that included trash capturing devices in Goat Canyon and Smugglers Gulch, a County-led effort to sweep the valley and remove all surface trash, a trash collection and sorting center, and a science monitoring component managed by SDSU and Scripps Institution of Oceanography. City of San Diego Stormwater Department Director Heinrichs utilized a URS Corporation contract with the City that allowed the grant application to be completed by the April 6 deadline. The Southwest Wetland Interpretive Association also submitted a compatible grant to restore portions of the Tijuana River Estuary Research Reserve. Grant awardees are expected to be announced in mid-to-late June



Part of the Trash and Sediment Characterization Study funded by the California Integrated Waste Management Board resulted in this map of the historic Tijuana River channels. Graphic courtesy of URS Corporation.

CIWMB Characterization Study

Work on a \$100,000 trash and sediment characterization study, funded by the California Integrated Waste Management Board, is scheduled to be completed in June. A URS Corporation team is working in cooperation with the County to assess and estimate the location and amount of trash and anthropogenic sediment in the valley. Part of the work includes mapping the historic river channels in the valley (see photo above).

Goat Canyon Sediment Basin and Trash Nets

Implementation of a \$250,000 California Integrated Waste Management Board grant to pilot trash nets in the Goat Canyon sedimentation basin and to clear the sediment out of the basin in time for the rainy season is waiting for final permitting. (See drawings of the proposed boom installations at bottom right.)

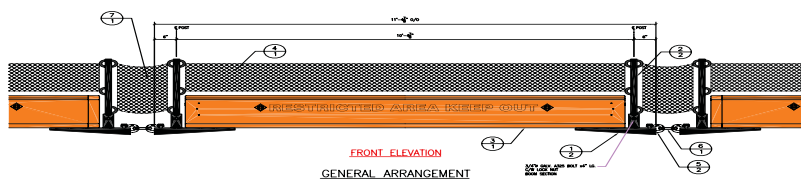
Sediment Fate and Transport Study

The Sediment Fate and Transport Study which intends to determine if sand from the Goat Canyon sedimentation basins can be safely placed on Border Field State Park beaches has been delayed by the state bond freeze. Because baseline work had been started, was stopped, and now must be started again, an additional \$500,000 must be found for the project to move forward. The California Coastal Conservancy funded both the Goat Canyon sedimentation basin and the Fate and Sediment Study. Karen Bane, the Coastal Conservancy's coordinator for the Southern California Coastal Wetlands Project, made a presentation of the issue to the San Diego Association

of Government's Shoreline Preservation Group on June 4.

BECC Grant Opportunity

Another grant opportunity has been announced by the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission. The grants are offered in cooperation with the U.S. EPA Border 2012 program, and priorities include pilot projects that reduce trash and sediment loading in rivers, improving environmental health, and improving monitoring of flow and pollution in the Tijuana River. The Bi-National Action Team is working on an RFP to meet the June 30 deadline.



A net like the one above would be stretched across the Goat Canyon sediment basin to test the ability to capture trash and to assess the amount and type of trash entering the valley via the canyon. Graphic courtesy of California State Parks.

So What's News in the Valley?

Pete Silva Named to Top U.S. Water Post

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California Senior Advisor Pete Silva has been named Assistant Administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Water Office. Mr. Silva is very familiar with border water and wastewater issues. He is a civil engineer who has served as the vice-chair of the California Water Resources Control Board, as a member of the Board of the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC), and as the BECC Deputy General Manager in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Mr. Silva also spent four years in charge of the IBWC San Diego Office and served on the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board. He began his career with the City of San Diego and was the Deputy Director for the City's Water Utilities Department and also was the City's Technical Border Affairs Liaison.

Channel 10 Story Focused on Ducheny Tire Legislation

SB 167, legislation by Senator Denise Ducheny, was the focus of an April 17, 2009, story on Channel 10. SB 167 requires the Integrated Waste Management Board to adopt a five-year plan, which is to be updated biennially, to establish goals and priorities for waste tire programs that include, among other things, specified border region activities, conducted in coordination with the California Environmental Protection Agency, related to waste tires in the California-Mexico border region. The bill was approved by the Senate 25 to 9 and now awaits hearings in the Assembly. Ben McCue of Wildcoast and Clay Phillips from California State Parks were both interviewed. A link to the Channel 10 story can be found at www.tjriverteam.org in the media section, along with other news about work in the valley.

CIWMB Agenda Included Waste Tire Study for the Border Region

Several items on the April 21 agenda for the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) meeting addressed tire issues. The items included

a presentation of the "Final Report on the Waste Tire Study for The California Mexico Border Region."

The Life Cycle of a Tire

River Team member Christina Buchanon of the City of San Diego's Local Enforcement Agency has provided the River Team with a PowerPoint that describes the life cycle of a tire purchased in San Diego, sold to Mexico and abandoned and returned across the border into places like the Tijuana River Valley. The presentation is now available on the River Team web site.

Assemblymember Salas Introduces Conservancy Legislation

Assemblymember Mary Salas has introduced legislation that could be used to create a Tijuana River Valley Conservancy. AB 687 is a two-year spot bill intended to be helpful to the River Team as the collaboration considers whether and how to more formally organize the multiple agencies currently working together. Assembly member Salas' office is more than happy to meet with anyone who has questions or concerns regarding the bill. The Policy Committee discussed organizational structure issues at its April 24 meeting. A key focus of the discussion was a reminder not to let a focus on organization take away energy from the work currently moving forward.

Tijuana River Valley Cleanup Set for Saturday, June 6

The Tijuana River Citizens' Council is hosting the Second Tijuana River Valley Cleanup on June 6 from 9 a.m. until noon. The event begins at the Tijuana River Valley County Regional Park-Equestrian Staging Area. The event is also supported by Wildcoast, Surfrider San Diego, Tijuana River Valley Equestrian Association, REI, Patagonia, and Allied Waste. If the work of the River Team goes as hoped, these annual events will become a thing of the past. For now, they have become a primary way to remove trash from the valley, and the participating organizations and volunteers are to be

commended. Contact Kelly Keniston from the TRCC Steering Committee for information about how to participate in the cleanup: k.keniston@trcc-action.org.

River Team to Present at Good Neighbor Environmental Board

The River Team has been invited to make a presentation before the Good Neighbor Environmental Board on June 10 at the Sycuan Resort. The River Team presentation will be part of the panel titled "Water Issues in the California-Baja California Border Region." The panel will also include presentations on the City of Tijuana's wastewater system and Colorado River projects. The Good Neighbor Environmental Board is an independent federal advisory committee. Its mission is to advise the President and Congress of the United States on good neighbor practices along the U.S. border with Mexico. Its recommendations are focused on environmental infrastructure needs within the U.S. states contiguous to Mexico.

Web Site Update

The River Team web site has now been updated. New features include a photo gallery (still needs some work), updated presentations and calendars, the current list of Action Team action items, a map of historical Tijuana River channels, a presentation on the life cycle of a tire, updated action team rosters, current grant applications, meeting agendas, and stories in the media. We are still looking for links to and/or pdfs of historical studies, maps, etc. Thoughts on the web site are welcomed! Go to www.tjriverteam.org.

Pending Meetings

Quarterly Meeting of the River Team
Friday, June 26, 2009, 10 a.m. - noon
SDRWQCB

9174 Sky Park Court, Suite 100
San Diego, CA 92101

River Team People . . .

IBWC Names River Team Participants to Citizens Forum

The U.S. section of the IBWC has appointed ten new members to its Citizens' Forum, including three who have been active participants with the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team. The purpose of the forum is to promote the exchange of information between the USIBWC and the community about the Commission's projects and related issues in San Diego County. A public meeting with the new board was held on April 16 at the Imperial Beach Community Room. The new members include Ben McCue, Coastal Conservation Program Manager for Wildcoast; Carolyn Powers, Chair of C.A.R.E; and Oscar Romo, from the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve. All three have been active in helping to shape the work of the River Team, and Oscar chairs the Bi-National Action Team and sits on our Policy Committee. Congratulations to all!

Emerson to Seek Master's Degree

As some of you know, team member Sarah Emerson will be leaving The Tijuana River Estuary Research Reserve to obtain a Master's degree in International Environmental Policy at U.C. San Diego's School of International Relations and Pacific Studies. Sarah has been a great member of the River Team in her position of Community Outreach Coordinator of the Reserve and we wish her well! An active recruitment is underway to fill her position.

More Agency Representatives Join the River Team

Interest continues to build in the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team as more agencies are represented. The initial fact sheet said that "more than 20" agencies are involved. The number of organizations who have participated or want to become part of the team now exceeds 30.

Mexican Agencies Join In

After the Border 2012 presentation in March three Mexican agencies raised

their hands to be part of the effort. They included Marcos Sarabia Rodelo, director of the City of Tijuana's Urban Planning Department, Sigfrido Pineda Popoca from the same department, Toribio Cuevas, director of the Comisión Estatal de Servicios Públicos de Tijuana (CESPT), and Robert Spinosa Mora from the Mexican Section of the IBWC.

More Federal, State and Local Agencies

Also joining the team were representatives from several federal, state and local agencies. They include Karen Bane from the California Coastal Conservancy who has a wealth of experience in Tijuana River Valley issues and joined in the Policy Committee meeting in April to provide input on conservancies. Amy Campbell from the Bureau of Reclamation has joined, in part to provide expertise on groundwater, as did Greg Cross from the City of San Diego's Water Department for the same reason.

Also joining the River Team are Ed de Mesa and Dan Sulzer from the Planning Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Cesar Lopez from the San Diego County Water Authority.

Regulatory Representation

Prior to determining the scope of the April 6 NOAA grant application, a conference call was convened with several regulatory agencies to gain a sense of the permitting requirements. As a result of that meeting and other communications, relationships are developing with a number of representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, including Betty Grizzle, Don Brubaker, Slader Buck, Brian Collins, David Zoutendyk and Pat Gower. That same meeting included Lee McEachern from the California Coastal Commission. Also joining the team are Paul Schlitt, assigned from the California Department of Fish and Game.

More representatives are joining regularly, so please contact us if we have missed welcoming you!



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A publication of the
Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team

Our Vision:

A Tijuana River Valley free of historical trash and sediment, protected from future deposits of trash and sediment, restored to a sustained physical, chemical and biological integrity, and performing its hydrologic functions, while respecting the rights of current and future landowners and users.

Our Mission:

To bring together the governmental administrative, regulatory, and funding agencies in tandem with advice from the scientific community, the environmental community, and affected stakeholders to protect the Tijuana River Valley from future accumulations of trash and sediment, identify, remove, recycle or dispose of To existing trash and sediment, and restore the Tijuana River floodplain to a balanced wetland ecosystem.

Our Action Teams:

Border Action Team

Capturing and diverting cross-border trash and sediment.

Clean-up Action Team

Cleaning up trash and sediment in the river channel.

Restoration Action Team

Planning and implementing restoration of the river ecosystem.

Bi-National Action Team

Abating pollution at sources in the U.S. and Mexico.

For more information:

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