

USIBWC Citizens Forum Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2014 6:30-8:30 pm
Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve
Imperial Beach, California.

Board Members in Attendance

Paloma Aguirre – Wildcoast

Paul Ganster – San Diego State University

Vivienne Bennett – California State University San Marcos

Jo Brooks – California Coastkeeper

Edward Spriggs - Councilman, City of Imperial Beach

Robert Scott – URS

See attached agenda and sign in sheet. There were approximately 10 members of the public present. Board members not present were Patrick McDonough, Fred Threats, and Mark West. Steve Smullen kicked off the meeting by stating the mission of the CF and then asked the new board members to self introduce.

Steve then introduced Alex Tardy of the National Weather Service Office, San Diego who provided a Winter Weather update, including the status of El Nino. Alex started off the presentation discussing the current drought, which is unprecedented historically. 2014 has been the hottest year ever recorded in California. While not the driest season on record it is in the top ten, and when you consider two and three year consecutive rainfall years it is one of the driest. It is basically a drought that has been ongoing since 2011. Lake Shasta and Lake Oroville in northern California are at their lowest levels for this time of year, and they represent the largest reservoirs for southern California imported water. It has been a weak to moderate El Nino year based on ocean water temperatures in the tropics, however there has been an unusual amount of warm water in the Northern Pacific and this has resulted in a long duration of warm ocean water, especially in Baja California. No one knows the impact of this unusual occurrence. The weak to moderate El Nino can cause variable rainfall patterns, and is not well correlated with high winter rainfall. National Weather Service projections are for above average rainfall for southern California and average rainfall for northern California. Alex believes this will result in only slightly higher than average rainfall for San Diego and slightly lower than average rainfall for the northern part of the state. Overall the state is seasons behind – on average 1- 2 years' worth of annual rainfall at many locations in California.

Questions:

Q. Mike McCoy asked if marshes such as the Tijuana Estuary could be considered successful as carbon sequesters in combating global warming? Alex stated that this was a little outside his area of expertise. Global warming is a reality that is resulting in unusual and severe weather events and really marshes are small advantages when compared to tropical deforestation.

Q. When will ocean temperatures be warm enough for swimming? Certainly ocean temps this summer were high enough to enable swimming into October, and if the pattern of current global warm temperatures continue, it would indicate that warm ocean waters will continue to be the norm.

Q. Steve Smullen asked how is Northern California faring so far this year? Up to date has been horrible; but early storms may change that. It is still projected to be an average year in the north.

Steve then introduced Roberto Espinosa of the MXIBWVC who gave a brief presentation on the new Citizen's Forum (CF) recently inaugurated in Tijuana. Roberto stated that the CF has been under development for some time and they are using the US model. There will be seven MX CFs border wide and Tijuana is the first, followed by Nuevo Laredo, which held a kick off meeting recently. MXIBWVC is planning on at least one meeting each year for each of the CFs, but that Tijuana is planning on two annually. The forum is comprised of five members from academia, colegios and non government organizations. In the case of the Tijuana CF the five members are:

Carlos de la Parra Rentería - Presidente Investigador del COLEF
Gabriela Caloca Michel - Secretaria Ambientalista PRONATURA
Rubén García Fons - Vocal Constructor y Asesor
Gastón Luken Aguilar - Vocal Empresario
José Manuel Jasso Peña - Vocal Preside Pueblo Mágico TKT 2014-15

Topics for the first meeting to be held in the next two weeks include:
Introduction of members
Current projects for MXIBWVC in Tijuana/Tecate
New Minute for the Tijuana River watershed
Topics for the next meeting.

Roberto invited all of the CF board to attend the first CF meeting in Tijuana, which is proposed from 5-7pm at the CARTE in central Tijuana, date to be announced.

Questions:

Q. Paul Ganster suggested that a member from the US CF attend the first meeting and report back. Roberto agreed.

Q. When can we have the first binational CF? Roberto thought this would be on the order of 2-5 years out.

Q. How are members chosen? MXIBWVC researched potential members and sent out invitations.

Steve then introduced Shannon Tunks, Volunteer Coordinator for the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR). Shannon gave an overview of Tijuana River Action Month (TRAM) and a summary of activities both in Mexico and the United States. TRAM is celebrating its 5th year - the cleanups have been well attended and are improving each year. Four core events were held this year:

- International Coastal Cleanup Day
- National Public Lands Day
- Tijuana River Valley Cleanup
- Goat Canyon Cleanup

The cleanups were sponsored by various NGOs, including Wildcoast, Surfrider San Diego, TRNERR, Proyecto de Fronteriza, and some were attended by elected officials – Speaker of the Assembly Toni Atkins and Senator Ben Hueso. In addition, TRAM included a ½ acre site

restoration, a butterfly release, and unveiling of the new Communitree mosaic interpretive feature at the entrance to Border Field State Park. For all the core events the work included:

- Participation of 2,181 volunteers
- Removal of 76,738 lbs. of trash and recycle
- Removal of 106 waste tires
- Installation of 190 native plants

Questions:

Q. How many butterflies were released? 50-100

Q. How does this year compare to previous years? Shannon shared data which indicates similar quantities and numbers of volunteers; however core events have become more focused in specific locations.

Q. Is the number of waste tires declining and do waste tires correspond to number of powerful storms. It appears that they are declining probably due to low rainfall in recent years.

Q. Have all 5 years had a Tijuana component? Yes

Q. What native plants are planted? Can provide a list.

Q. How are plants obtained? 150 were purchased with grant funding, the remainder came from the TRNERR native plant nursery.

Public Comment:

None

Topics for next meeting included:

Paloma suggested Denise Ducheny who could discuss BECC/NADBank merger. Paloma to inquire as to her availability.

Mark West suggested Commissioner Drusina to discuss the new Minute.

Dates for the next meetings are

March 12, 2015

June 18, 2015

September 17, 2015

December 3, 2015

Meeting was adjourned at 830 pm.