

Exhibit 3: Project Letters (Addendum)



Gavin Newsom
Governor

Jared Blumenfeld
Secretary for Environmental Protection

State Coastal Conservancy
1515 Clay Street, 10th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Board of Directors:

As the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) continues to work towards solutions to address transboundary sewage, sedimentation and trash in the cross-border region of the Tijuana River Valley, we write this letter in support of the County of San Diego's Smuggler's Gulch Improvements Project (Project) application for funding to the State Coastal Conservancy, submitted pursuant to Senate Bill 74 (Statutes of 2019) and Senate Bill 690 (Statutes of 2019). The County's proposed project would implement Projects 10 and 11 identified in the Tijuana River Valley Needs and Opportunities Assessment and involve the planning, environmental analysis, design, and construction of a sedimentation basin and trash booms within the Smuggler's Gulch drainage channel as well as improvements to a culvert under Monument Road within the County's Tijuana River Valley Regional Park. The goal of the Project is to provide permanent, effective infrastructure in Smuggler's Gulch to capture sediment and trash that enter County property from Mexico which create adverse effects to wildlife habitat, recreational uses, and public health downstream.

This infrastructure has the potential to provide multiple benefits and needed protection to our unique Tijuana River Estuary. As we look upstream at the hillside and Matadero Canyon in Tijuana, Mexico that flows into Smuggler's Gulch, we see roads, graded and eroding hillsides, trash, and unincorporated housing, causing trash and unnatural amounts of sediment to flow across the border into Smuggler's Gulch. With such unnatural processes impacting the gulch, projects like these are needed to protect downstream habitat. Similar to Goat Canyon's basins, these projects improve habitat health, and the health and survival of plants and animals downstream. Although sediment in general is natural, because of the unnatural erosion upstream, the gulch and estuary face an unnatural and damaging amount of sedimentation. Further, reducing sedimentation that is currently smothering the estuary will protect tidal pools and channels. By reducing trash and the unnatural amount of sediment impairing the gulch and valley in a managed upstream structure, riparian habitat and forest downstream will be protected. As demonstrated in nearby Goat Canyon, capturing sediment and trash in the basins reduces invasive annual clean ups (i.e. excavation with heavy equipment) otherwise required in sensitive nesting habitats for threatened and endangered species. This Project aligns with the State Coastal Conservancy's mission and goals to enhance wildlife habitat and protect our coastal zones.

Thank you for the consideration of this proposal, and this letter of support. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

/s/ Yana Garcia

Yana Garcia
Deputy Secretary for Environmental Justice, Border Affairs and Tribal Relations
California Environmental Protection Agency

Air Resources Board • Department of Pesticide Regulation • Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery • Department of Toxic Substances Control • Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment • State Water Resources Control Board • Regional Water Quality Control Boards

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State of California • Natural Resources Agency

Gavin Newsom, *Governor*

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
TIJUANA ESTUARY, BORDER FIELD STATE PARK
301 CASPIAN WAY, IMPERIAL BEACH, CA 91932

Amando Quintero, *Director*

May 25, 2021

State Coastal Conservancy
1515 Clay Street, 10th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

State Coastal Conservancy Board of Directors,

We write this letter in support of the County of San Diego's Smuggler's Gulch Improvements Project (Project) application for funding to the State Coastal Conservancy, submitted pursuant to Senate Bill 74 (Statutes of 2019) and Senate Bill 690 (Statutes of 2019). The Project will involve the planning, environmental analysis, design, and construction of a sedimentation basin and trash booms within the Smuggler's Gulch drainage channel as well as improvements to a culvert under Monument Road within the County's Tijuana River Valley Regional Park. The goal of the Project is to provide permanent, effective infrastructure in Smuggler's Gulch to capture sediment and trash that enter County property from Mexico.

Matadero Canyon, the sub-watershed in Mexico that delivers flows to the Tijuana River Valley via Smugglers Gulch, has been heavily degraded and modified by decades of irregular and unstable development activities. This condition results in significant and un-natural downstream sedimentation and solid waste pollution. This sediment fills and covers sensitive downstream habitat, including salt marsh and tidal channels, converting these rare wetlands into lower-quality upland habitats; the solid waste becomes distributed in high value habitats throughout the river valley, and into the ocean environment, ultimately leaving a legacy of pollution for generations to come. The sediment and solid waste also pose issues for downstream infrastructure and public health, compromising safe public access in the Tijuana River Valley. This Project proposes infrastructure that would capture and consolidate these pollutants before the downstream habitats, facilities, and public access areas could be impacted.

The County's proposed project has been a high priority for land managers in the Tijuana River Valley for many years. It was identified in the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team Recovery Strategy- Living With The Water (2012); would implement Projects 10 and 11 identified in the Tijuana River Valley Needs and Opportunities Assessment (County of San Diego, SB507), and has been identified by the USEPA as a potential priority projects in the US, Mexico and Canada Trade Agreement process to address transboundary flows.

CA State Parks has managed a facility similar to the Project (the Goat Canyon Sediment Basins) since 2005. During this time we have captured over 500,000 cubic yards of sediment and solid waste. We believe this history of stewardship has significantly contributed to improved ecosystem health and public safety in the lower Tijuana River Valley and nearshore environment. We also understand the cost associated with operations and maintenance of such a facility and encourage the CA Coastal Conservancy to continue collaboration with local, state, and federal partners to identify long-term sustainable funding to support this important work.

Thank you for considering the Project,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Peregrin".

Chris Peregrin
Manager, Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve
Border Field State Park, Silver Strand State Beach

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Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve

“A Wetland of International Importance” *International Ramsar Convention, 2005*

301 Caspian Way
Imperial Beach, CA 91932
Office (619) 575 3613 x.333
jcrooks@tmerr.org

26 May 2021

State Coastal Conservancy
1515 Clay Street, 10th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

State Coastal Conservancy Board of Directors,

As Lead Scientist and Research Coordinator of the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve, I write this letter in support of the Tijuana River Valley – Smuggler’s Gulch Improvements Project (No. 21-010-01). The Tijuana River Reserve is a federal-state-NGO partnership, which focuses on using sound science to increase our ability to understand and successfully manage the Coastal Zone. I lead the Reserve’s Research and Monitoring Program, and one of my primary activities is working to improve the functioning and resilience of the Tijuana River Valley’s ecosystems. A primary threat to the valley is sediment loading that overwhelms natural processes, as evidenced by burial of many acres of coastal wetland in sediment and greatly altered hydrodynamic functioning.

While restoration of habitats and functions (including the ability of the river and estuary to transport sediment to the nearshore) is a critical part of a comprehensive approach to many transboundary issues, this remains a challenge in the face of this continued, excessive sedimentation. Capturing sediment in basins before it impacts our natural systems is an important management approach, and it certainly aligns with decades-old strategies we have been implementing in the adjacent sub-watershed. It is also called for in the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Strategy, an effort in which I was very involved.

I will note that our approaches to sediment management might need to shift in future decades as conditions in the valley and surrounding watershed change, such as through management practices that decrease sediment input or rising seas that will accommodate elevation increases due to sedimentation. We at the Reserve are working with our many partners to develop and track indicators that can anticipate when such management shifts might need to begin, but even in cases where we might wish to allow more sediment delivery, having a structure such as the Smuggler’s Gulch basin would help regulate these flows. As such, I view projects such as that in Smuggler’s Gulch as essential to continued efforts to protect and restore the valley.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Crooks'.

Jeffrey Crooks, Ph.D.

Research Coordinator & Lead Scientist - Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve

Exhibit 3: Project Letters (Addendum)



May 24, 2021

Sam Schuchat, Executive Officer
State Coastal Conservancy
1515 Clay Street, 10th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: County of San Diego Smuggler's Gulch Improvements Project and Grant Application

Dear Mr. Schuchat,

Surfrider Foundation, San Diego County ("Surfrider San Diego") has been an integral stakeholder in the border region for over 15 years, addressing the transboundary pollution issue that plagues the Tijuana River Valley. We are therefore pleased to write to you today in support of the County of San Diego's Smuggler's Gulch Improvements Project grant application for funding through the Proposition 68 Tijuana River Border Pollution Control Program.

The Country of San Diego, especially in the last 3 years has made a concerted effort to collaborate on long-term projects in the Tijuana River Valley. In 2020 it completed a Tijuana River Valley Needs and Opportunities Assessment that identified a few dozen projects in the Tijuana River Watershed to address the sewage, trash and sediment. Projects 10 and 11 of the aforementioned assessment were the Smugglers Gulch Improvement Project. Surfrider San Diego understands the need for a trash boom (trash capture) and sediment basin in this area. The trash and sediment cause flooding, system breakdowns and can potentially clog the Tijuana River Valley. Further, Surfrider is a member of the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team (TRVRT) and as an integral member of the TRVRT we support this project.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment here today. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gabriela M. Torres".

Sincerely,
Gabriela M. Torres,
Policy Coordinator, Clean Border Water Now
gabriela@surfridersd.org

Exhibit 3: Project Letters (Addendum)

RE: Agenda Item #7 for May 27, 2021 Meeting
Tijuana River Valley Smuggler's Gulch Improvement Project, SGIP
May 25, 2021
From: Mary Johnson Powell, President, Tijuana River Valley Equestrian Assoc., TRVEA

Dear Mr. Schuchat,

I write on behalf of the Tijuana River Valley Equestrian Association, TRVEA. We are a 501(c)(3) active in the TRV since 1986. Many of our 100 plus members live in or visit the Tijuana River Valley (TRV) daily. Our members participate in TRAN, TRAM, other TRV clean ups, TRNERR Advisory meetings, TRNERR Trails, US-IBWC Citizens Forum, TRVRT, All Trails Alliance, County Parks Trail Maintenance, Mounted Assistance Unit, South County Environmental Justice Task Force and more.

We thank you for this opportunity to express our thoughts about the proposed Smugglers Gulch Improvement Project (SGIP), agenda item #7.

A version of the proposed **SGIP will have our support IF** it can be:

SCENIC for park attendees and good for WILDLIFE: We support a sediment basin that looks natural and is essentially invisible to passersby like the Rancho Penasquitos sediment basin. That basin incorporates stand pipes and native vegetation. It functions well. A basin of that type is essentially invisible to passersby and won't smell or look bad to neighbors! We do **not** want another Goat Canyon style sediment basin: wide open, trash visible and huge plastic covered sediment piles in close proximity to our homes, ranches and popular trails.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION! We request that SCC, County and SD City consider the north side of Monument Rd for placement of this natural version of SGIP. Former Supervisor Greg Cox told staff to look for a solution without regard to land jurisdiction. This parcel is controlled by San Diego City and is **ALREADY DISTURBED**. It has an operations pad and a channel that collects sediment and trash very well now, even without proper trash booms!

IT IS NOT CORRECT WHAT YOUR REPORT SAYS that the City regularly maintains this Gulch area north of Monument Rd. They have not been! They sometimes go years without removing sediment due to budget restraints. The ranch owner immediately next door complains the City usually has not been responsive to her requests to keep up maintenance on their property. Perhaps County can lease/buy/manage or trade City

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for this parcel? **If County controlled this, then the whole length of Smugglers Gulch would be managed by County.** It is contiguous to other County property. Both politics and water would flow better!

PLEASE PROTECT Natural Canyon; Artesian Well Site; Historical Site

The site currently proposed for SGIP is a wildlife corridor and an inviting, enjoyable natural space. I hear more birdsong when visiting this canyon area than anywhere in the flat valley below or even in the tree canopy along our sadly polluted Tijuana River.

Proposed SGIP site south of Monument Rd. is an ARTESIAN WELL site used within lifetime of neighbors and our members (S.D. Historical society records and neighbors conversations). **THIS ARTESIAN SPRING IS MISSED ON CURRENT REPORTS.** A local resident has pictures of this spring surfacing during summer providing water for wildlife including frogs, birds, etc. The rock entrance gateposts are still here, buried in wild vegetation. Locating a natural looking sediment basin to the north of Monument Rd in the already disturbed area instead of in this more natural, unique canyon space is win-win solution to a pollution problem!

Smugglers Gulch south of Monument Road is an historical location: Father Junipero Serra and Spanish Explorers came through this canyon into what is now the State of California. Why does El Camino Real only get noticed north of Fwy 8? We want this place in history preserved and noticed, TOO! Al Capone smuggled through this canyon during prohibition. Although many would cancel those fellows now, they are nevertheless historically interesting and important. Noting this (and more) on an educational trail sign as part of a mesa-to-mesa trail link would give Park visitors a sense of visiting a part of history!

MESA-TO-MESA TRAIL LINK. The narrow gulch south of Monument Road **COULD/SHOULD become the replacement mesa-to-mesa link trail.** Greg Cox promised this when DHS took away our former trail to construct the new border fence. Restoring this mesa-to-mesa link in the trail system enables park visitors to hike, bike or ride all the way between the beach to the wonderful pond near freeway 5, possibly enjoying a little picnic along the way under the trees in beautiful, restful Smuggler's Gulch south of Monument Rd. The importance of this potential long border parallel trail for understanding California's connection to Mexico cannot be overstated. (Please see John Gabaldon's commentary for more good reasons why this idea works.)

Your support is needed to improve the Monument Road "Arizona crossing" over Smugglers Gulch both for pollution control and public safety: This Arizona

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Crossing at Smugglers Gulch is prone to localized flooding during heavy rain, but it is *designed* to have rainwater flow over it! However, with only a single culvert underneath and *difficult or inadequate maintenance*, it is now easily blocked by sediment and trash causing turbulent water above and making the road impassable even for emergency vehicles. A larger culvert (or several) underneath a new crossing or bridge would handle trash and sediment better. (Please Refer to C4CC's letter by Mitch McKay for more details on this topic as he has studied this and offered some ideas.)

Future accidents and possible loss of life may be avoided by building a new Gulch crossing with a safe side path. Monument Road currently has NO safe passage path for pedestrians, bikes and equestrians at this narrow, curving, blind-corner gulch crossing. Increasing numbers of visitors to the new Regional Campground makes a protected pathway here imperative. See the beautifully made side paths on Dairymart's 'Marshall' Bridge and on the northern Hollister St. bridge.

In conclusion, we ask that a Rancho los Penasquitos style natural (non cemented bottom) sediment basin be chosen if a sediment basin is essential. We hope you will locate it north of Monument Rd.

We ask for a new SAFER Monument Rd. crossing at Smugglers Gulch with a pedestrian/bike/equestrian pathway.

We ask that the Mesa-to-Mesa Trail Link be restored through the historical canyon south of Monument Rd. A destination hike here (unlike any other in the USA) would give hikers, bikers, equestrians a unique long view of our neighbor Mexico to the south, vast ocean to the west, San Diego City skyscrapers to the north and California mountains to the east. People will support and care for places they can enjoy! South County needs ALL these improvements.

THANK YOU for your time and consideration of our requests.

Sincerely,
Mary Johnson Powell
President
Tijuana River Valley Equestrian Association, TRVEA
TRVEAnews@cox.net

Exhibit 3: Project Letters (Addendum)

Project Name and Application Number: Tijuana River Valley Smuggler's Gulch Improvement Project B507
Agenda Item #7 Coastal Conservancy Commission Meeting May 27, 2021
From: Amy Wandel MD FACS
Email: agwandel57@icloud.com
For Coastal Conservancy Public Zoom Meeting – May 27, 2021

Dear Sam Scuchat,

I am writing to you regarding the upcoming decision that the State Coastal Conservancy Commission is making regarding granting the County of San Diego monies for the Smuggler's Gulch Improvement Project. I utilize the trails in the valley and have also become very active in maintaining these trails and the natural resources of the valley. As the commission well knows, Tijuana River Valley has had significant problems with cross border flows of trash and waste water. There is also an increasing problem of sediment created by upstream disturbance of the canyon walls by Mexican citizens building unauthorized houses. This sediment is costly to remove from the water ways and can create obstruction to water flow which results in flooding. These are the issues San Diego County wants to address. One project that the County is pursuing is the Smuggler's Gulch Improvement Plan.

The Smuggler's Gulch improvement Plan has three elements. The first is a proposed concrete sediment pond in the gulch. The second is to improve the Arizona crossing on Monument Road just north of the gulch and the final element is to place trash booms in the waterway to reduce trash. I fully support the proposed plan to improve the road and perhaps place larger culverts to handle the water flow during rain events. I also support the placement of trash booms as I have personally seen how the trash boom that is in the gulch has reduced trash downstream. My reason for writing this letter is because of the concerns I have over the possible concrete sediment pond.

The proposed plan to create a concrete sediment pond is very similar to the sediment pond already placed in Goat Canyon. This pond was very successful in reducing downstream sediment which was destroying the marshlands north and west of the canyon. But the amount of sediment and the level of contamination in the sediment have significantly changed over the past 5 years. Now, Goat Canyon is more of an eye sore with contaminated sediment that has to be removed and "stored". The area has a stench that never goes away. I do not want to see this same result in Smuggler's Gulch.

Smuggler's Gulch is ecologically unique and has historical importance. It is the last natural canyon in this area of San Diego. It is home to an artesian spring which was used by the valley residents for many years. It is a very beautiful canyon that could be linked to the surrounding mesas with hiking/horseback trails, creating a safe and environmentally favorable path for people to enjoy the local nature. It is the port of entry for Father Junipero Serra when he first came to California. It also was used by Al Capone to smuggle alcohol during Prohibition. So left in its present natural state the canyon could be a destination for our residents and visitors.

However, the problems created by the sediment, its build up and resultant obstruction of water flows must be addressed. It has been a very costly and complicated management issue to dredge the channels and remove the sediment. I agree with the County that a sediment pond would solve many of these issues at a much more affordable cost. I would prefer that the sediment pond be created on the north side of Monument Road where the land has already been disturbed and where there is already a widened area of the channel that collects trash and sediment. This area would be ideal for a side pond that could be made to look more natural. This has been done in the Los Penasquitos lagoon.

I am in full support of the County's desire to manage the sediment more effectively and prevent flooding and improve downstream water flow. I believe the proposed plan would successfully address these issues without using a concrete sediment pond. This would maintain the canyon's ecosystem and its beauty, drawing people to the area to enjoy the unique nature found in Smuggler's Gulch.

Respectfully,
Amy Wandel MD FACS

From: [Jean Hirst](#)
To: [Samuelson, Taylor@SCC](mailto:Samuelson_Taylor@SCC)
Subject: Agenda item #7
Date: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 10:54:27 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Please please vote NO on agenda item #7 on May 27. We citizens of Imperial Beach need help! Sewage from Mexico is a long-term problem for our city and has to be fixed correctly. You can help us, please!

Thank you,
Jean Hirst
1277 5th Street
Imperial Beach, CA 91932

Sent from my iPad

Dear California State Coastal Conservancy:

24May2021

I believe the Smuggler's Gulch Sediment Pond alternatives as proposed by San Diego County is the wrong approach for clean water along the channel, nor for sediment and trash control for the downstream river.

However, I believe San Diego County Parks SGSP has significant political momentum, so much so that a sediment basin will be placed into Smuggler's Canyon.

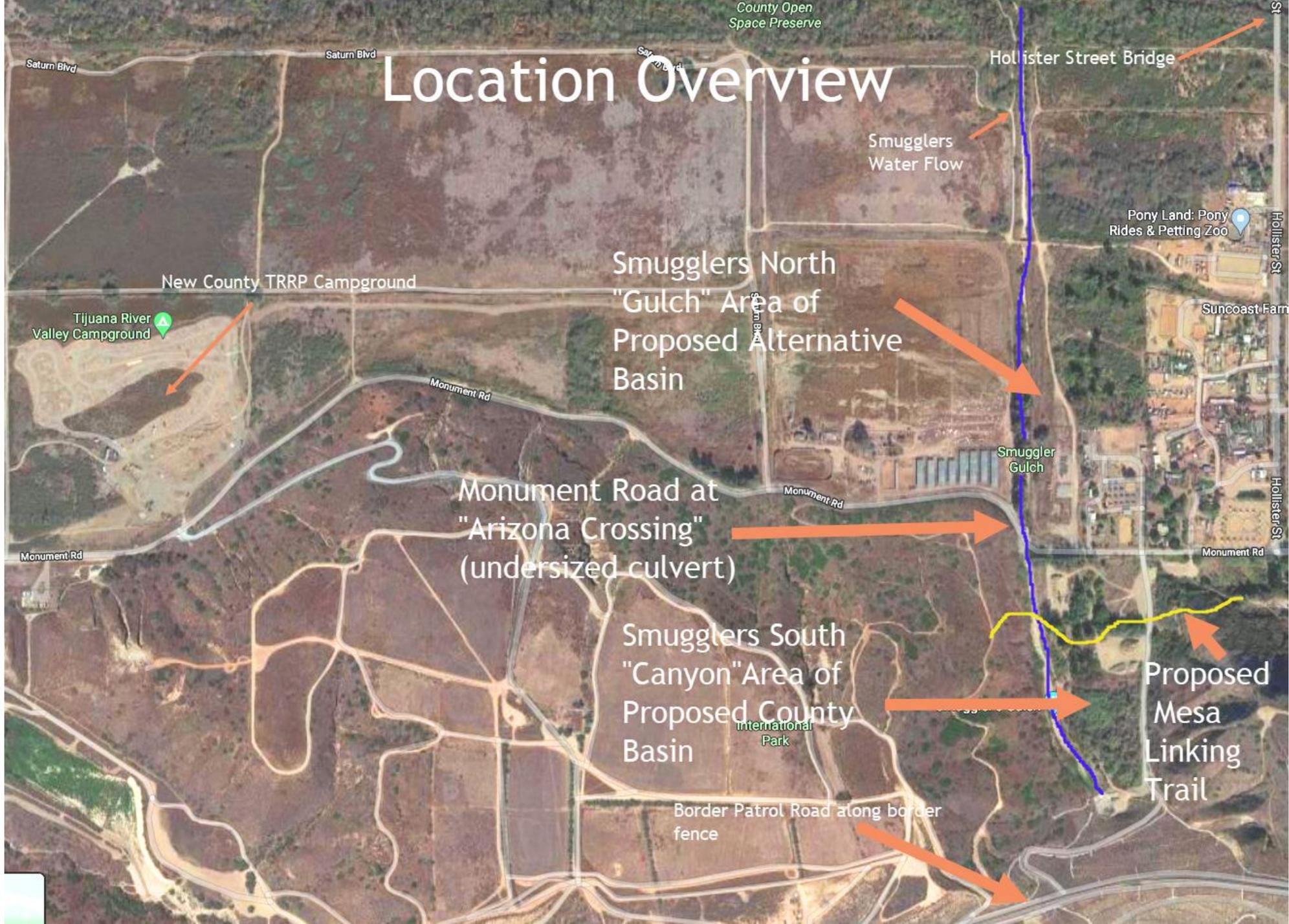
I propose that *if* a sediment basin is inevitable in Smugglers Gulch, that this basin be constructed literally across the street (Monument Road) from the County's SGSP location. I have included diagrams for this and a comparison of pros and cons of this alternative site.

I have crisscrossed this entire Tijuana River Valley for 25 years while involved in stewardship, recreation, and in park planning activities. I know the valley's heartbeat and rhythms. Here's what I know, in support of either no sediment basin, or a location a couple of hundred yards North of the County's proposed location.

- Major water events are seldom. Likely, this gulch is dry 330 days a year. Smugglers Gulch is a minor source of pollution, trash, and sediment. A sediment basin is overkill for such a minor part of the massive Tijuana River problem.
- Trash booms placed upstream in Tijuana for evaluation are so highly effective that the relatively small amounts of trash getting into Smugglers is easily removed by volunteers or by low-cost mechanical means.
- Placement of the basin into the North location preserves dozens of mature trees that provide a natural park setting already located in the County's proposed South location. This type of tree setting is unique in the entire valley's public-accessible locations.
- The North location is already a City sediment management area that is rarely used but is completely disturbed land for use by heavy equipment. Placing another sediment management project slightly south of this City field would double the size of disturbed land and heavy equipment activity in a small area. This is a burden on wildlife corridors and for the residents and recreational users and simply is unfair.
- The County's proposed South location will likely eliminate any chance of replacing the mesa-to-mesa linking trail that was destroyed when DHS seized the land where the original linking trails were located. Without restoration of linking trails, recreational users who "hike the three mesas" will have to either walk along the fast and curving Monument Road in order to enter each mesa's trail system, or drive to park along the road. This trail is a critical issue for future park users' safety and quality of enjoyment of this highly unique border area. *With the linking trails restored a person could traverse from the ocean to the Monument Road ranger station over three mesas and along an international border without getting into automobile traffic. This border trail is a profound experience.*
- Nearly all the public land in this part of the valley is owned by the County. The City owns this tiny North location of land in the valley. If the City ceded the ownership of their small North location to the County, the basin SGSP project could proceed in the North location and the City could be relieved of a large annual financial burden that maintains such a small section of land. This is a win for City and County.

Sincerely,
John Gabaldon (619-920-1282)

Location Overview



Saturn Blvd

Saturn Blvd

Saturn Blvd

Hollister Street Bridge

County Open Space Preserve

Smugglers Water Flow

Pony Land: Pony Rides & Petting Zoo

New County TRRP Campground

Smugglers North "Gulch" Area of Proposed Alternative Basin

Tijuana River Valley Campground

Suncoast Farm

Monument Rd

Monument Rd

Monument Road at "Arizona Crossing" (undersized culvert)

Smuggler Gulch

Monument Rd

Monument Rd

Smugglers South "Canyon" Area of Proposed County Basin

International Park

Proposed Mesa Linking Trail

Border Patrol Road along border fence

Smugglers "Canyon" Sediment Basin Sketch By County Parks

Location is south of Monument Road and against the border (County land). These are the County's proposals (2 alternatives) for a sediment basin



- Legend**
- Culvert and Road Improvements
 - Smuggler's Gulch Channel
 - Proposed Trash Boom Location
 - Inline Weir
 - Side Weir
 - Basin: Alternative 1
 - Basin: Alternative 2



Proposed Alternative "3" Smugglers "Gulch" Sediment Basin Sketch

Location is north of Monument Road and placed in City's maintenance undeveloped field (City land).

Smugglers "Canyon" Area
remains park area

Proposed Basin Location South "Canyon" Alternative 2

Pros:

1. County owned land (no jurisdictional issues)
2. Loaded trucks make right hand turns

Cons:

1. Removes mature forested park area and wildlife habitat
2. Eliminates the last canyon-habitat along the border
3. Blocks E - W wildlife natural corridor
4. Obliterates historical references & artesian wells
5. Large water events could plug /overwhelm collectors and basin causing road and private property flooding
6. Blocks future mesa-to-mesa linking trails. Forces hikers, cyclists and equestrians onto narrow, dangerous Monument Rd.
7. Can't comply to NRCS Code 350 width/length of 2/1 (National Resources Conservation Service Jan 2010)
8. Doubles the disturbed denuded area for sediment control and places an unfair quality-of-life burden on residents, wildlife, and users

Alternative "3" Location Basin North "Gulch"

Pros:

1. Preserves the south "Canyon" forest setting for many park and ecological uses
2. This area already used for City's sediment control staging
3. Largest area for optimized basin design
4. Major water events have designated overflow areas
5. Allows future mesa-to-mesa linking trail (original trails lost to DHS seizure of land without promised alternate route restoration)
- 5a: Keeps recreational users off Monument Rd
6. Side slopes of basin can be planted to add vegetation & habitat for this now denuded and disturbed area

Cons:

1. Requires collaboration with City land use (G Cox said to "forget" possible political and funding barriers)
2. Loaded trucks make left hand turns

From: [Loren Beekun](#)
To: [Loren Beekun](#)
Subject: Best #7 May 25th Meeting: Best Singapore Gash Settlement Points as Environmental Disaster in the making - Nocturne
Date: Tuesday, May 25, 2010 11:10:09 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Please ask the commission to stop this project.
<https://www.malaysia.compendex.com/doi/10.1080/1040191.2010.500000>
<http://www.malaysia.compendex.com/doi/10.1080/1040191.2010.500000>

Loren Beekun
619-964-9113



Project Name and Application Number: Tijuana River Valley Smuggler's Gulch Improvement Project B507
Agenda Item #7 Coastal Conservancy Commission Meeting May 27, 2021
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Email: agwandel57@icloud.com
For Coastal Conservancy Public Zoom Meeting – May 27, 2021

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Respectfully,
Amy Wandel MD FACS

From: [G. Harris Hartman](#)
To: [SCC Public Comment](#)
Subject: May 27 meeting public comments
Date: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 7:20:35 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Please take the following as my public comment on agenda item#7. Thank you

Project Name and Application Number: Tijuana River Valley Smuggler's Gulch Improvement ProjectB507

Agenda Item #7 Coastal Conservancy Commission Meeting May 27.2021

From: Amy Wandel MD FACS

Email: agwandel57@icloud.com

For Coastal Conservancy Public Zoom Meeting –May 27, 2021

Dear Sirs and Madams,

I am writing to you regarding the upcoming decision that the State Coastal Conservancy Commission is making regarding granting the County of San Diego monies for the Smuggler's Gulch Improvement Project. I utilize the trails in the valley and have also become very active in maintaining these trails and the natural resources of the valley. As the commission well knows, Tijuana River Valley has had significant problems with cross border flows of trash and waste water. There is also an increasing problem of sediment created by upstream disturbance of the canyon walls by Mexican citizens building unauthorized houses. This sediment is costly to remove from the water ways and can create obstruction to water flow which results in flooding. These are the issues San Diego County wants to address. One project that the County is pursuing is the Smuggler's Gulch Improvement Plan.

The Smuggler's Gulch improvement Plan has three elements. The first is a proposed concrete sediment pond in the gulch. The second is to improve the Arizona crossing on Monument Road just north of the gulch and the final element is to place trash booms in the waterway to reduce trash. I fully support the proposed plan to improve the road and perhaps place larger culverts to handle the water flow during rain events. I also support the placement of trash booms as I have personally seen how the trash boom that is in the gulch has reduced trash downstream. My reason for writing this letter is because of the concerns I have over the possible concrete sediment pond.

The proposed plan to create a concrete sediment pond is very similar to the sediment pond already placed in Goat Canyon. This pond was very successful in reducing downstream sediment which was destroying the marshlands north and west of the canyon. But the amount of sediment and the level of contamination in the sediment have significantly changed over the past 5 years. Now, Goat Canyon is more of an eye sore with contaminated sediment that has to be removed and "stored". The area has a stench that never goes away. I do not want to see this same result in Smuggler's Gulch.

Smuggler's Gulch is ecologically unique and has historical importance. It is the last natural canyon in this area of San Diego. It is home to an artesian spring which was used by the valley residents for many years. It is a very beautiful canyon that could be linked to the surrounding mesas with hiking/horseback trails, creating a safe and environmentally favorable path for people to enjoy the local nature. It is the port of entry for Father Junipero Serra when he first came to California. It also was used by Al Capone to smuggle alcohol during Prohibition. So left in its present natural state the canyon could be a destination for our residents and visitors.

However, the problems created by the sediment, its build up and resultant obstruction of water flows must be addressed. It has been a very costly and complicated management issue to dredge the channels and remove the sediment. I agree with the County that a sediment pond would solve many of these issues at a much more affordable cost. I would prefer that the sediment pond be created on the north side of Monument Road where the land has already been disturbed and where there is already a widened area of the channel that collects trash and sediment. This area would be ideal for a side pond that could be made to look more natural. This has been done in the Los Penasquitos lagoon.

I am in full support of the County's desire to manage the sediment more effectively and prevent flooding and improve downstream water flow. I believe the proposed plan would successfully address these issues without using a concrete sediment pond. This would maintain the canyon's ecosystem and its beauty, drawing people to the area to enjoy the unique nature found in Smuggler's Gulch.

Respectfully,
Amy Wandel MD FACS

Amy G. Wandel MD



Virus-free. www.avast.com

From: [Leon Benham](#)
To: [JEDI group](#)
Subject: May 27th Meeting Item # 7 Public Access to meeting denied/Private Citizens Threatened by Surfrider
Date: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 3:56:09 PM
Attachments: [Sheri Pemberton letter.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mr. Schuchat and Respected Board Members:

I know you are very concerned with Environmental Justice. Attached is documentation which shows how the public was denied access to public meeting and input into the basis of design in State Bill 507. The public was threatened and denied access to the very meetings which formed the basic public needs assessment. This type of harassment should not be allowed or rewarded.

<https://www.sandiegoreader.com/news/2019/dec/03/stringers-surfrider-ib-residents-shut-or-get-sued/>

<https://www.sandiegoreader.com/news/2019/apr/23/stringers-sewage-imperial-beach-wants-san-ysidro/>

I ask for the Coastal Commission to postpone a vote on this item until it can be vetted more thoroughly and a more transparent view of the Smugglers Gulch project can be made.

It is clear from the documentation that I do not think the board understood how harmful this project would be to our environment and to the people who live in and near the Tijuana River Valley.

When local citizens are shown plans of **Smugglers Gulch Sediment Ponds** and understand how it will be implemented, they unanimously feel this plan goes against common sense and river Best Management Practices (BMP's) used throughout the State of California. This plan would stop the natural processes which cleans the stream bed each year, pollute the aquifer, cause unhealthy airborne dust contamination, and is a waste of government funds which could be used elsewhere that would exponentially increase a better river ecology at a much lower cost.

SGSP would stop the Natural Ecological and Geological processes which clean up the river.

The sand, gravel and cobble stones that are naturally moved by fast moving water (up to 60 mph) provide a vital component to river ecology which is

called **scour** or **scouring**. As the water moves through Smugglers Gulch this critical scouring action cleans out and keeps the "Suspendable Solids" in the water column as it races to the ocean. The attached photo of clean sands and cobbles which remain after the rains provide the example of what the scouring accomplished after the rains of the last two years 2018-19 and the 2019 -2020 wet seasons. These conditions are identical to the historical ecologic condition of the riverbed that was seen in the Tijuana river from recorded history until the end of the 1970's. So, one would have to question why the County of San Diego is considering spending millions of dollars of taxpayer's money to replace a natural self-cleaning river system that works and replace it with a manmade system that has proven to be ineffective and costs millions of dollars in maintenance per year.

Polluting the Aquifer – Right at the location of proposed sewage pond there are two well heads (from the 1930's). The ground water approximately is 3 feet from the surface and in many areas this aquifer surfaces from below the ground and feeds small ponds that team with frogs and pollywogs. By installing the **SGSP** sewage pond directly in contact with the aquifer, the standing sewage water would contaminate the aquifer and surface water. This aquifer which surfaces at several points along the Smugglers Gulch drainage basin is available year-round and may be the only source of clean water on the south side of the valley. With the main channel of the Tijuana River being maintained as a sewage collection pond and its water being unsuitable for wildlife this natural aquifer is critical for local support wildlife in the area.

Degrading Surface Water Quality – Installing the SGSP would severely degrade the quality of surface water and is a threat to public health. By allowing the sewage water to sit in static open ponds not only does this go against best practices for mosquito control but it allows the sewage water to ferment in the direct sun creating an extremely unpleasant smell. These proposed ponds are within 100 yards of the border with Mexico and even closer to the Martin Ranch and other homes in the area. By creating mosquito infested ponds with a potential of cross border infection this idea is poor planning and should not be allowed to be constructed.

Unhealthy Airborne Dust – If allowed to operate the SGSP would create a cloud of dust just like what is happening at the Goat Canyon sediment ponds. Currently anyone that walks through or around the Goat Canyon Sediment basin can see the results of its operation. Everything is covered in large amounts of fine dust. Whereas Goat Canyon is one mile away from homes Smugglers Gulch is directly next to homes and ranches which would be extremely susceptible to these increased airborne contaminants. The residential homes which are right across the road have no idea of this project and they are being ignored by San Diego County Agencies who promoted this plan.

Conclusion and Questions

We ask the California Coastal Commission meeting on May 27th that the board to postpone a vote on funding so this project so it can be properly vetted or to reject this project and propose a better plan.

A project like the SGSP should be able to pass the test of common sense, basic engineering, and long-term efficacy. We have asked the California State Coastal Conservancy to justify this project and prove it is better than what is currently in place.

Additionally, there are numerous other projects which are better for the health and safety of local citizens, ecology of the river, and would be lower in cost.

Some of these projects could include:

1. Install permanent Static Pumps and replace Smugglers Gulch/Monument bridge.
2. Install temporary pumps that would remove the standing water under Hollister Road.
3. Plan and implement a 1–2-year plan for the removal of non-native plants that stop the water, sand, cobblestones from flowing to the Pacific Ocean.

The attached photo shows the current Smugglers Gulch River.....why would the State of California ruin this with a man-made system.

The plan proposed by the County of San Diego would replace the natural ecology of the Tijuana River Valley (TRV) and install a man-made system called **Smugglers Gulch Sediment Ponds** (SGSP) is a bad idea and should be rejected.

Leon Benham
619-964-9153

Sheri Pemberton, *Chief & Legislative Liaison*
California State Lands Commission
100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100 South
Sacramento CA 95825

August 14, 2019

Email: Sheri.Pemberton@slc.ca.gov

Phone 916.574.1992

Subject: Local Citizens Reject the Surfrider/Wildcoast TRV Stakeholders plan
Keeping the public from speaking at Imperial Beach meeting
California State Lands Commission meeting in March 2019

Ms. Pemberton:

Many home owners have read through the transcript minutes of December 3, 2018 meeting held in San Diego. We very much appreciate and agree with the straight forward comments and policies of the California State Lands Commission regarding public involvement and outreach in the formulation of land use policies that you cited at this meeting.

Unfortunately what I and other citizens of Imperial Beach, San Ysidro and South San Diego experienced at the March 2019 meeting in Imperial Beach was something altogether different. After several requests by Leon Benham to allow local home owners to attend this meeting the Surfrider Foundation representative Gabriel Torres said the meeting was closed and only "Select Stakeholders" could attend. This meeting, which was held with State Lands Commissioner Yee and other top public servants of the California State Lands Commission should have been open to the public. This type of self-serving omission of the local public from attendance by the Surfrider Foundation and Wildcoast should be a violation of the California State Lands Commission policy.

The result of not having this meeting open to the public is that The Surfrider Foundation and Wildcoast presented their Tijuana River Stakeholder Plan without public comment. This plan calls out for the capture of sewage containing water crossing the International Border to be held in large 82 acre capture ponds located directly next to homes in San Ysidro, specifically the Coral Gate Community. You should note that a few days later over 120 people of the Imperial Beach, San Ysidro and South San Diego communities met and voiced their outrage at this plan and the way it was held from public scrutiny. Ms. Gabriel Torres, the representative of the Surfrider Foundation, put out an email message the day after the March 2019 meeting with the California State Lands Commission and stated the public only had 10 days to respond. This short time frame for response did not allow proper public dialog of this issue and shows that both the Surfrider Foundation and Wildcoast did not want public scrutiny of their plan for the Tijuana River Valley. I very much doubt that our emails of the public's objection to the TRV Stakeholder Solution were part of the documentation when they submitted the TRV Stakeholder plan to the California State Lands commission.

Our community may not have the highest income in the state but our citizens are made up of Architects, Civil Engineers, Project Manager, property owners and other design professionals who experience in the Tijuana River Valley far exceeds that of the Surfrider Foundation and Wildcoast. I ask you read our opinions which are attached to the public response to San Diego

County's research project call SB 507 which is trying to assess the problems faced in the Tijuana River Valley.

The local public should get the same opportunity to present our plan of restoring the Tijuana River Valley as Surfrider and Wildcoast. Several members of our local community would like the opportunity to meet with you in your Sacramento office. We would like to present to Commissioner Yee and your staff a **better alternative** to the Surfrider Foundation and Wildcoast Plan.

We would also invite the representatives of Surfrider and Wildcoast to this meeting so they can comment.

Thank you for your continued diligence in allowing the public to comment on the future of our State Lands.

Thank you,

Leon Benham

1410 5th Street

San Diego, CA 91932

Phone 619-964-9153

LeonBenham@cox.net

Attachments: Assessing Projects to Improve Water Quality in the Tijuana River Valley –Public Response August 8, 2019

From: [Skiddy~](#)
To: [Samuelson, Taylor@SCC](mailto:Samuelson.Taylor@SCC); Padilla, Stephen@Coastal
Cc: VivianMoreno@sandiego.gov
Subject: May 27th Meeting of the California Coastal Commission - South Coast Agenda - Item #7 Smuggler's Gulch Improvement Plan (SGIP)
Date: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 12:24:52 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Sir or Madame,

I would like to go on the Record as in OPPOSITION to the current Smuggler's Gulch Improvement Plan (SGIP) as being proposed by the County of San Diego in today's California Coastal Commission meeting - South Coast Agenda Item #7.

It has been proven beyond debate that these Sediment capture basins and trash booms do not significantly reduce the health hazards of toxic sewage and trash entering the US from Mexico. Furthermore, such man-made structures interfere with the natural cleaning and scouring processes that are synonymous with the local canyons of this type.

In an area of San Diego County that is already highly impacted with standing sewage water, these projects would permanently place more treatment/sediment ponds on US soil. So instead of controlling and managing sewage within piping as is currently being accomplished by the Canyon Collectors operated by the IBWC - the acrid sewage would instead be contained in open-air treatment ponds.

These same lands are currently being used by the public (Border Field State Park, Tijuana River Valley San Diego Regional Park). The direct, on-ground impacts of this County of San Diego "improvement" project would be detrimental to the environment by replacing existing natural ecosystems (that work at no cost) with man-made structures that cost \$10 Million to build and almost a million a year to maintain (O&M). These projects would situate sewage ponds next to this ranching and farming community to collect toxic Mexican sewage/trash and sediment on a permanent basis.

You must ask yourself, "If these projects were proposed in more affluent areas of San Diego County would they be even considered?" Once again, "Environmental and Social Justice" take a back seat to Expedience and Convenience!!

Respectfully,

Mitch McKay - trustee of
2172 Hemlock Avenue
San Diego, CA 92154
(the Community of Nestor)
(619) 395-6395
<!--[if !supportLineBreakNewLine]-->
<!--[endif]-->

RE: Agenda Item #7 for May 27, 2021 Meeting

Tijuana River Valley Smuggler's Gulch Improvement Project, SGIP

May 25, 2021

From: Mary Johnson Powell, President, Tijuana River Valley Equestrian Assoc., TRVEA

Dear Mr. Schuchat,

I write on behalf of the Tijuana River Valley Equestrian Association, TRVEA. We are a 501(c)(3) active in the TRV since 1986. Many of our 100 plus members live in or visit the Tijuana River Valley (TRV) daily. Our members participate in TRAN, TRAM, other TRV clean ups, TRNERR Advisory meetings, TRNERR Trails, US-IBWC Citizens Forum, TRVRT, All Trails Alliance, County Parks Trail Maintenance, Mounted Assistance Unit, South County Environmental Justice Task Force and more.

We thank you for this opportunity to express our thoughts about the proposed Smugglers Gulch Improvement Project (SGIP), agenda item #7.

A version of the proposed **SGIP will have our support IF** it can be:

SCENIC for park attendees and good for WILDLIFE: We support a sediment basin that looks natural and is essentially invisible to passersby like the Rancho Penasquitos sediment basin. That basin incorporates stand pipes and native vegetation. It functions well. A basin of that type is essentially invisible to passersby and won't smell or look bad to neighbors! We do **not** want another Goat Canyon style sediment basin: wide open, trash visible and huge plastic covered sediment piles in close proximity to our homes, ranches and popular trails.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION! We request that SCC, County and SD City consider the north side of Monument Rd for placement of this natural version of SGIP. Former Supervisor Greg Cox told staff to look for a solution without regard to land jurisdiction. This parcel is controlled by San Diego City and is ALREADY DISTURBED. It has an operations pad and a channel that collects sediment and trash very well now, even without proper trash booms!

IT IS NOT CORRECT WHAT YOUR REPORT SAYS that the City regularly maintains this Gulch area north of Monument Rd. They have not been! They sometimes go years without removing sediment due to budget restraints. The ranch owner immediately next door complains the City usually has not been responsive to her requests to keep up maintenance on their property. Perhaps County can lease/buy/manage or trade City

for this parcel? **If County controlled this, then the whole length of Smugglers Gulch would be managed by County.** It is contiguous to other County property. Both politics and water would flow better!

PLEASE PROTECT Natural Canyon; Artesian Well Site; Historical Site

The site currently proposed for SGIP is a wildlife corridor and an inviting, enjoyable natural space. I hear more birdsong when visiting this canyon area than anywhere in the flat valley below or even in the tree canopy along our sadly polluted Tijuana River.

Proposed SGIP site south of Monument Rd. is an ARTESIAN WELL site used within lifetime of neighbors and our members (S.D. Historical society records and neighbors conversations). **THIS ARTESIAN SPRING IS MISSED ON CURRENT REPORTS.** A local resident has pictures of this spring surfacing during summer providing water for wildlife including frogs, birds, etc. The rock entrance gateposts are still here, buried in wild vegetation. Locating a natural looking sediment basin to the north of Monument Rd in the already disturbed area instead of in this more natural, unique canyon space is win-win solution to a pollution problem!

Smugglers Gulch south of Monument Road is an historical location: Father Junipero Serra and Spanish Explorers came through this canyon into what is now the State of California. Why does El Camino Real only get noticed north of Fwy 8? We want this place in history preserved and noticed, TOO! Al Capone smuggled through this canyon during prohibition. Although many would cancel those fellows now, they are nevertheless historically interesting and important. Noting this (and more) on an educational trail sign as part of a mesa-to-mesa trail link would give Park visitors a sense of visiting a part of history!

MESA-TO-MESA TRAIL LINK. The narrow gulch south of Monument Road **COULD/SHOULD become the replacement mesa-to-mesa link trail.** Greg Cox promised this when DHS took away our former trail to construct the new border fence. Restoring this mesa-to-mesa link in the trail system enables park visitors to hike, bike or ride all the way between the beach to the wonderful pond near freeway 5, possibly enjoying a little picnic along the way under the trees in beautiful, restful Smuggler's Gulch south of Monument Rd. The importance of this potential long border parallel trail for understanding California's connection to Mexico cannot be overstated. (Please see John Gabaldon's commentary for more good reasons why this idea works.)

Your support is needed to improve the Monument Road "Arizona crossing" over Smugglers Gulch both for pollution control and public safety: This Arizona

Crossing at Smugglers Gulch is prone to localized flooding during heavy rain, but it is *designed* to have rainwater flow over it! However, with only a single culvert underneath and *difficult or inadequate maintenance*, it is now easily blocked by sediment and trash causing turbulent water above and making the road impassable even for emergency vehicles. A larger culvert (or several) underneath a new crossing or bridge would handle trash and sediment better. (Please Refer to C4CC's letter by Mitch McKay for more details on this topic as he has studied this and offered some ideas.)

Future accidents and possible loss of life may be avoided by building a new Gulch crossing with a safe side path. Monument Road currently has NO safe passage path for pedestrians, bikes and equestrians at this narrow, curving, blind-corner gulch crossing. Increasing numbers of visitors to the new Regional Campground makes a protected pathway here imperative. See the beautifully made side paths on DairyMart's 'Marshall' Bridge and on the northern Hollister St. bridge.

In conclusion, we ask that a Rancho los Penasquitos style natural (non cemented bottom) sediment basin be chosen if a sediment basin is essential. We hope you will locate it north of Monument Rd.

We ask for a new SAFER Monument Rd. crossing at Smugglers Gulch with a pedestrian/bike/equestrian pathway.

We ask that the Mesa-to-Mesa Trail Link be restored through the historical canyon south of Monument Rd. A destination hike here (unlike any other in the USA) would give hikers, bikers, equestrians a unique long view of our neighbor Mexico to the south, vast ocean to the west, San Diego City skyscrapers to the north and California mountains to the east. People will support and care for places they can enjoy! South County needs ALL these improvements.

THANK YOU for your time and consideration of our requests.

Sincerely,
Mary Johnson Powell
President
Tijuana River Valley Equestrian Association, TRVEA
TRVEAnews@cox.net

From: [Mary Johnson Powell](#)
To: [SCC Public Comment](#)
Subject: TRVEA comments for Agenda #7 May 27 meeting
Date: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 12:27:20 PM
Attachments: [SCC agenda #7 May 27 meeting-TRVEA.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

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May 25, 2021

by Mary Johnson Powell, President, Tijuana River Valley Equestrian Assoc., TRVEA trveanews@cox.net

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President

Tijuana River Valley Equestrian Association, TRVEA TRVEAnews@cox.net

From: [Leon Benham](#)
To: [Samuelson, Taylor@SCC](mailto:Samuelson.Taylor@SCC)
Subject: Vote Against Item #7 May 27th Meeting- Please stop the Smugglers Gulch Sediment Ponds
Date: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 3:05:26 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Taylor:

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1. Install permanent Static Pumps and replace Smugglers Gulch/Monument bridge.
2. Install temporary pumps that would remove the standing water under Hollister Road.
3. Plan and implement a 1–2-year plan for the removal of non-native plants that stop the water, sand, cobblestones from flowing to the Pacific Ocean.

The plan proposed by the County of San Diego would replace the natural ecology of the Tijuana River Valley (TRV) and install a man-made system called **Smugglers Gulch Sediment Ponds** (SGSP) is a bad idea and should be

rejected.

The attached photo shows the current Smugglers Gulch River.....why would the State of California ruin this with a man-made system.

Leon Benham
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From: [Farmer Leon](#)
To: [Samuelson, Taylor@SCC](mailto:Samuelson.Taylor@SCC)
Subject: Why we are against Item 7 of the CCC May 27 agenda
Date: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 9:29:23 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Taylor:

This video is taken at the location of the proposed Smugglers Gulch Improvement Project.

As you can see the river is cleaning itself and there is no standing sewage.

We do not want this area changed into a sewage retention pond. This area is one of the very few areas in the Tijuana River Valley that has frogs and ponds with tadpoles. The Smugglers Gulch area is also of high historical importance as this is the point where Spanish explorers first crossed into California.

https://nextdoor.com/p/Kws5RWX4x9cc?utm_source=share&extras=MjEyMjU2OTQ%3D

Leon Benham