BORDER 2012: U.S.- MEXICO ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM

REGIONAL WORKGROUP NEWSLETTER

ARIZONA - SONORA Spring 2007

Arizona/Sonora Regional Workgroup

By Editing Committee

As part of the Border 2012 Program's commitment to provide information to border stakeholders, the Arizona/Sonora Regional Workgroup Newsletter aims to keep border residents, legislators, and partners informed on the program's progress. This annual newsletter looks back at the accomplishments and issues of the past year and gives the reader a background on several topics as well as a source for more information. In addition, there's an updated contact list of the five regional task force leaders and Regional Work Group chairs, to give readers an opportunity to actively participate in the Border 2012 program. This issue marks the program's mid-point and highlights several new accomplishments and partnerships that directly affect Arizona's and Sonora's border communities. As the Border 2012 program continues to benefit local populations in this border region, readers can access news and updates at the program Web site, http://www.epa.gov/border2012. Readers with any questions, comments, and/or suggestions regarding this newsletter are encouraged to contact us by phone at 619-235-4765 (EPA San Diego Border Office) or 1-888-271-9302 (ADEQ Tucson Office). ■

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ARIZONA SONORA Spring 2007

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Border People: Co-Chairs of the Arizona/Sonora Regional Workgroup

In the previous Arizona/Sonora Regional Workgroup Newsletter we highlighted the work and perspectives of two Co-Chairs that administer the workgroup within the Border 2012 program, Steve Owens, Director of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and Florencio Díaz Armenta, former Delegate of Sonora Secretariat for Environment and Natural Resources. In this edition we are highlighting and welcoming a new member and Co-Chair of the Regional Workgroup and his representative partner organization. This will give readers a personal look inside the people who are working to solve environmental challenges that border communities face in the Arizona/Sonora region. We plan on continuing these profiles and updates in future newsletters. ■

César Alejandro Salazar Platt

General Director of Sonora's Commission of Ecology and Sustainable Development

César Alejandro Salazar Platt assumed the position of General Director of Sonora's Commission of Ecology and Sustainable Development, which is the State Environmental Authority that formulates and conducts the environmental policy in the state of Sonora.

Previously Mr. Salazar Platt was Sub-Secretary of Agriculture Secretariat (SAGARHPA).

César Alejandro Salazar Platt, has a Bachelor in Marketing from the Tecnológico de Monterrey, with Qualifications in Planning and Coordination, and is a person committed to the protection of the Environment and to the advancement of Sustainable Development.

CEDES is a public agency with its own judicial personality and its own resources that has a commitment to do and promote investigative studies of scientific and technological character that contribute to promote the knowledge of ecosystems and regional environments.

At the same time it seeks to coordinate the results of its work with the productive sector, by means of living services in accord with its purpose of promoting culture and ecological values with the establishment of the center for exhibition of native species and other ecosystems of the planet. ■

cedes
COMISION DE ECOLOGIA Y DESARROLLO SUSTENTABLE DEL ESTADO DE SONORA

TASK FORCE UPDATES

Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Response Task Force Update

By Barbara Maco, EPA Region 9

Chlorine Release Training

In February 2006, the Douglas Fire Department used Border 2012 funding to organize the Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Response Task Force. Drill scenarios and tasks included:

- a reconnaissance mission
- donning Level-A protective gear and applying a pipe clamp
- estimating "Course and Harm"
- proper "Plug and Patch" tactics
- product monitoring
- application of A-, B- and C-kits
- assessing and containing leaks in a pressurized cylinder and a one-ton container ■

Nogales Sister City Binational Emergency Response Plan Signed

On April 25, 2006, the mayors of Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora signed the updated Sister City Emergency Preparedness Plan in a ceremony at the Nogales Port of Entry. Using a Border 2012 grant, the cities updated binational notification procedures, expanded the plan's scope to include all hazards, and made commitments to cross-border emergency response.

For more information, contact Barbara Maco at EPA (415) 972-3794 or by email at maco.barbara@epa.gov ■

Children's Environmental Health Task Force Update

By Norman Calero, EPA Region 9

The AZ/SN Children's Environmental Health Task Force conducted a train-the-trainer workshop to establish a corps of trainers in Sonora that will teach Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in Sonoran border schools. The first IPM Train-the-Trainer workshop was held in Fiscal Year 2006 and additional workshops will be held in FY07. Given the established role of pests and pesticides in triggering asthma attacks, the workshop will ensure that the Sonoran trainers make IPM part of the routine in schools throughout Sonora.

The task force will also conduct outreach aimed at reducing asthma triggers in the border region. Outreach materials will include bilingual information on reducing outdoor air pollution and pesticide use in the home. This effort will benefit Arizona schools, state agencies, and other organizations that serve Spanish-speaking people along the border.

For more information, contact Norman Calero at EPA (415) 972-3793 or by email at calero.norman@epa.gov ■

New Release of Border 2012 Implementation and Mid-Term Report

By Nick Martorano, EPA Region 9 ECO Intern

2006 was the mid-point of the 10-year U.S.-Mexico binational environmental agreement, Border 2012. This progressive and ambitious agreement set forth six goals and twenty-three objectives to be completed by 2012.

Border 2012 Goals:

1. Reduce Water Contamination
2. Reduce Air Pollution
3. Reduce Land Contamination
4. Improve Environmental Health
5. Reduce Exposure to Chemicals (from accidental releases and/or acts of terrorism)
6. Improve Environmental Performance through Compliance, Enforcement, Pollution Prevention, and Environmental Stewardship

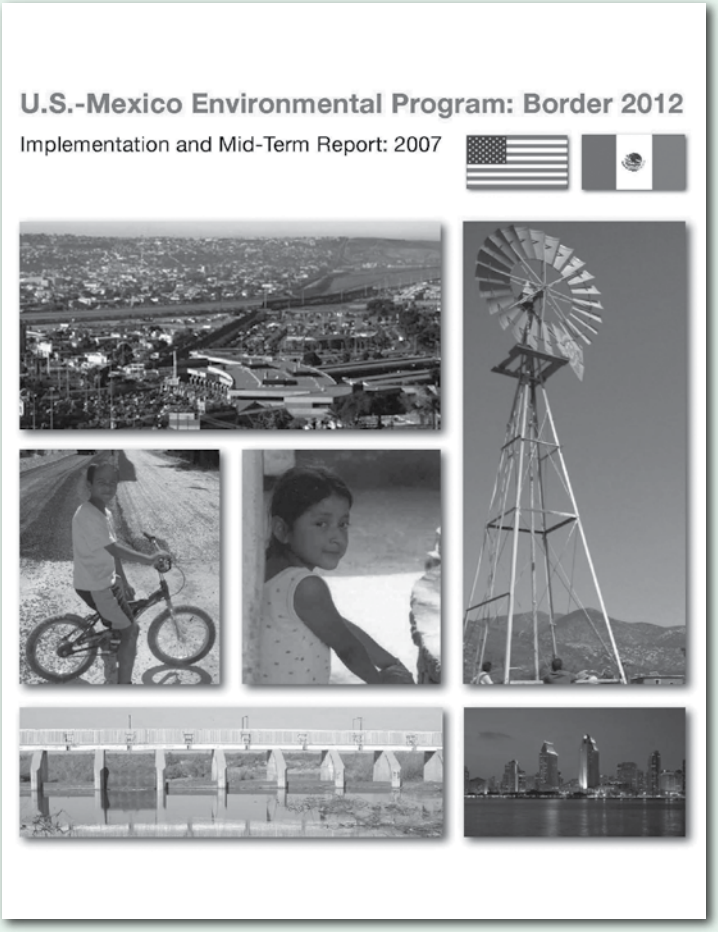
The midterm of the agreement provides an opportunity for both countries to look back at the progress and accomplishments achieved thus far, as well as look at lessons learned with an eye toward making amendments and improvements to the original agreement.

The recently released U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program: Border 2012 Implementation and Mid-Term Report looks at some of the many accomplishments achieved along the border, organized by the goals listed above. Each section details two to three projects and the progress made toward achieving Border 2012 goals and objectives. For example, Goal 3, Objective 3, states

"By 2010, clean up three of the largest sites that contain abandoned waste tires in the U.S.-Mexico border region, based on policies and programs developed in partnership with local governments."

So far, two of the three largest tire piles, INNOR and Centinela, have been cleaned up, with more than 1.6 million tires removed. The cleanup of the largest pile located in Ciudad Juarez is currently underway. Other key project accomplishments include site stabilization of the hazardous waste site Metales y Derivados, the creation of drinking water and wastewater infrastructure for several indigenous communities in Baja California, development of the binational ambient air monitoring network, and the signing of Emergency Contingency plans by all 14 sister cities. In addition to project results, the report illustrates challenges along the border, past investments, and continued needs for additional resources.

Border-wide partnerships and binational collaborations have been instrumental in the Border 2012 Program and are highlighted throughout the report. Additionally, throughout the report, a detailed timeline featuring important milestones, events, meetings and accomplishments allows the reader to recognize the program's overall accomplishments in the past five years. The report is also filled with colorful photos and reader-friendly language aimed at reaching a wide audience. For additional information



on the Border 2012 Program and to obtain a copy of the Implementation and Mid-Term Report, please go to the EPA Web site at www.epa.gov/border2012 ■

Outreach to Arizona Congressional and State Legislative Offices

By Brent Maier, EPA Congressional Liaison, EPA

In October 2006, EPA and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality conducted a series of briefings with Congressional and state legislative offices and staff on the Border 2012 Program. These briefings provided an overview of the Border 2012 Program for elected officials whose districts lie within the border region, highlighted how EPA and ADEQ have partnered to achieve environmental results on the ground in the border region, and discussed environmental challenges unique to the border community.

We met with the Arizona House and State Senate legislative committee staff whose primary responsibility is working on environmental issues. We also met with the Phoenix-based staff of U.S. Senators John McCain and Jon Kyl, State Representative Ray Barnes, Chairman of the House Environment Committee, State Senator Tim Bee, Majority Leader, and the Tucson-based staff of Senators McCain and Kyl, and U.S. Representative Raul Grijalva.

A Power Point presentation entitled, "Border 2012 – Partnering to Achieve Environmental Results: A Focus on Arizona" was developed and used at each of these briefings. In addition, a folder of materials was provided at each briefing that included the following materials: Border 2012 - U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program Document; Regional Workgroup Newsletter for Arizona-Sonora; "Draft" Border 2012 Implementation Report; EPA Progress Report 2006; and fact sheets which highlighted selected Border projects, activities, and accomplishments for Arizona.

The Arizona briefings were the first in a series of briefings we plan to schedule in the coming months with Congressional and state legislative offices. We are planning to do briefings in California in the early part of 2007, and will follow that up with a series of joint Capitol Hill briefings in Washington, D.C. with our EPA Region 6 and EPA headquarters Office of International Affairs colleagues.

In addition to the outreach to elected officials and their staff in Arizona described above, I also make it a standard practice to provide outreach to members of Congress in the border region by using:

- Border Region Congressional Directory: Maintain a current directory of staff contact information and e-mail lists for Region IX Members of Congress in the U.S./Mexico Border Region as well as the U.S.-Mexico Congressional Caucus Members that is used for outreach of announcements and other electronic information.
- Press Releases: Send all Border 2012-related press releases to program staff of Members of Congress in the border region for events, activities or announcements. Follow up calls to program staff is done on high-profile events or actions.
- Border 2012 Website Postings: Provide notification to program staff of Members of Congress in the border region of Border 2012-related postings or feature stories.
- Border Environmental News Articles: Share selected border environmental news articles that result from the issuance of an EPA press release or coverage of an environmental issue of interest to a Congressional office.
- Border 2012 Grant Opportunities: Provide notification to program staff of Members of Congress in the border region of Border 2012-related grant opportunities.
- Border 2012 Events/ Meetings: Increase invitations of Federal/State/Local elected officials to Border 2012 events/meetings as well as offer field visits to staff of Members of Congress who are interested in a particular environmental issue.

Through all of these combined efforts, we are doing our best to both improve stakeholder participation and foster transparency, public participation, and open dialogue with elected officials in the border region.

For more information, contact Brent Maier at EPA (415) 972-4256 or by email at maier.brent@epa.gov ■

Using Indicators to Track Environmental Conditions and Trends and Program Progress

By Sandra Duque, EPA, and Vance Fong, EPA

The recently released State of the Border Region 2005 is the first of a series of environmental indicator reports produced by the U.S.-Mexico Border 2012 program. These indicators track environmental conditions and trends for water, air, land, public health, emergency preparedness and response, and enforcement and compliance in the U.S.-Mexico border region.

What role do indicators play in Border 2012?

Indicators are an integral and fundamental component of Border 2012. When the United States and Mexico established concrete goals for improving environmental quality and health along the border, they also committed to using sound indicators to accurately measure progress. The indicators focus attention on the key environmental issues that the program is seeking to address, including goals, objectives, and results of the many Border 2012 activities.

The process of developing the indicators involved a collaborative effort between the United States and Mexico, engaging federal, regional, state, and local governments as well as academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and others in planning and implementing activities to improve border environmental quality.

Key Messages in the Report

- In 2000, the percentage of households with access to piped drinking water indoors was 93% or higher in the U.S. Access in Mexican communities ranged from 61% to 84%.
- The number of days in 2005 in which air quality exceeded particulate matter (PM10) standards ranged from none in the Lower Rio Grande Valley to 43 days in the Mexicali/Imperial Valley region.
- As of December 2005, over two million tires had been removed from five border region waste sites. This includes the complete clean-up of the INNOR tire pile, resulting in the removal of 425,000 tires. Removed tires were used in cement kilns as tire-derived fuel, in asphalt as crumb rubber, and in erosion control embankments, among other creative uses.
- Fourteen out of fifteen sister city pairs along the border have established Sister

City Binational Emergency Response Plans. The plans provide local emergency response teams with a mechanism for cooperatively addressing issues and concerns, and recommending emergency response planning, exercises, and training.

- The number of enforcement actions on the U.S. side of the border region declined to 85 in 2004 from 110 in 2003. However, the total dollar value of penalties increased to over $3 million in 2004 compared to less than $1.5 million in 2003. Between 2001 and 2004, Mexico's Annual Environmental Program of Inspection found 1,077 serious violations among the 11,059 inspected border facilities.

Next Steps

The next State of the Border Region report is expected to be released in 2008. The Border Indicators Task Force wants to develop additional environmental and health indicators and sharpen existing ones based on sound data. Expanding the current set of indicators will allow for more comprehensive communication on how the border region is responding to environmental pressures. The Border 2012 program is committed to continuously improving the quality, timeliness, and comprehensiveness of the indicators so that improvements in public health and environmental conditions along the border can be better understood. For this effort to be successful, on the ground expertise from border states, tribes, and partner organizations is important.

Further Information

Further information on State of the Border Region 2005 and the Border 2012 program can be found at the Border 2012 web site: http://www.epa.gov/border2012 ■

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Biodiesel Project Benefits Water and Air Quality

By Doug Liden, EPA Region 9

The municipality of Nogales, Sonora is served by a binational sewer system that feeds wastewater to the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant in Rio Rico, Arizona. Water sampling at both the primary binational outfall as well as within the Nogales (Sonora) collection system indicates waste vegetable oil and grease is a maintenance problem and leads to sewer clogs and overflows. At times, the overflows have contributed to raw sweage flows within Nogales Wash – a perennial stream running through both communities and easily accessible to the public. Past studies conducted by the Instituto Tecnológico de Nogales (ITN) and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) suggest that improper disposal of waste vegetable oil and grease by businesses contributes to the problem. Proper maintenance and disposal of oil and grease would lessen the frequency of overflows that contaminate the wash.

Ambos Nogales is also plagued by poor air quality. Both Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora regularly violate the national clean air standards of their respective countries. Particulate matter is the primary cause of those violations, and diesel vehicle emissions are a major source in the region. Particulates have been identified as a key factor in respiratory illness and an asthma trigger in both communities.

In order to address both of these environmental issues, the Border 2012 Arizona/Sonora Air and Water Task Forces agreed to provide $90,000 to the Rio Rico Fire District to develop capacity for the production and use of biodiesel in these border communities. This project is designed to reclaim waste vegetable-oil and grease, convert it into biodiesel, and demonstrate the use of the fuel in School and Public Sector Safety Vehicles. Biodiesel is an EPA-approved alternative fuel, which may be blended with petroleum-based diesels and used directly in diesel engines. By creating a market for used vegetable oil, less oil and grease will be disposed of through the sewer system. There will also be benefits to air quality because burning biodiesel releases less particulate matter, carbon monoxide, and hydrocarbons than regular diesel.

The project will establish facilities for small-scale biodiesel production and will create a map of local producers of waste vegetable oil and grease linked to data about the quality and quantity of the waste. It will demonstrate successful use of biodiesel in vehicles operated by the fire departments, and will ultimately result in a strategy for expanding production and use of biodiesel within Ambos Nogales.

"The Fire Service usage of diesel fuel could well be supplanted by a dependable source of biodiesel. If we can demonstrate that this can be produced locally, using waste vegetable oil and grease that is currently a problem in the local sewer system, our community wins on many fronts," said Mike Foster, Fire Chief of the Rio Rico Fire District. "The fact that diesel emissions would be reduced by the use of biodiesel in our trucks, ambulances and buses is another great benefit."

This project is a binational, collaborative effort of public and private institutions in northern Sonora (municipality of Nogales) and southern Arizona (Santa Cruz and Pima counties). Project partners include the Rio Rico Fire District (RRFD), Bomberos de Nogales, Privados Portatiles S.A. de C.V., Rio Rico Rentals (RRRI), the Southeast Arizona Area Health Education Center (SEAHEC), Instituto Tecnológico de Nogales (ITN), and the University of Arizona (UA), with support from the ADEQ, Public Safety Association of Santa Cruz County (PSA-SCC), Pima County Associations of Government Clean Cities Coalition (PAG-CCC), and Asociación de Profesionales en Seguridad y Ambiente (APSA). In addition to Border 2012 funds, Rio Rico Fire District, the University of Arizona, and a private donor will contribute a total of $15,000.

ADEQ has recruited private entities within the Tucson biodiesel community to provide expertise for capacity building, and has provided training to students at ITN on waste vegetable oil characterization, biodiesel manufacturing, and finished fuel quality evaluation. Additionally, the ADEQ Border Hydrologist Hans Huth has shared information on this project at public venues such as the Southern Arizona Environmental Management Society Pollution Prevention Seminar, Friends of the Santa Cruz River Annual Meeting, and a Conference on Sustainability at the Instituto Tecnologico de Nogales.

Meanwhile, faculty and two research assistants from the University of Arizona have been working with faculty and students from ITN and the Nogales High School and Rio Rico High School Health Careers Clubs. Their work to date has focused on introducing the students to biodiesel and on designing and pilot-testing the questionnaires that the students will administer to restaurants on both sides of the Arizona-Sonora border and maquiladoras in Nogales, Sonora. The UA Chemistry Department has also donated laboratory safety equipment. ITN has provided space for the facility, as well as faculty and student time. SEAHEC has dedicated staff time and use of their site and simultaneous translation equipment for meetings.

The project has also received technical support from other partners and private companies. Colleen Crowninshield of the Pima County Clean Cities Coalition gave a workshop on biodiesel and alternative fuels to UA and Nogales High School students, faculty, and the SEAHEC project coordinator. Michael Guymon of Arizona BioFuels and Michael Kazz of Grecycle, Inc. presented workshops to students and teachers in the SEAHEC Health Careers Clubs at Nogales and Rio Rico High Schools and have provided more information to students working on biodiesel projects. Tucson resident Steve Fischer, a member of a biodiesel co-op, gave a workshop for UA and ITN students on the dual-stage process he developed for converting waste vegetable oil and grease to biodiesel. The Friends of the Santa Cruz River have agreed to donate equipment and materials to biodiesel production facilities on both sides of the border, and over $3,000 in laboratory equipment has been donated to date by two Tucson companies, Turner Laboratories and Alcoa Fastening Systems. "The Rio Rico Fire District is proud and thrilled to be collaborating with so many partners who are working at making this project the success we are certain it will be. I feel we are on the cusp of something very important to the Ambos Nogales region," Foster said.

For more information, contact Doug Liden at EPA, (619) 235-4763 or by email at liden.douglas@epa.gov ■

Ensuring Collection and Disposal of Unwanted Pesticide Stocks

By Mary Grisier, EPA Region 9

To address one objective of EPA's Strategic Plan that aims to reduce the worldwide inventory of Persistent Organic Pollutants (such as, DDT, Endrin, Toxaphene), EPA's Pacific Southwest Pesticides Office and Waste Program sponsored two pesticide collection/disposal events for growers in the Arizona-Sonora Border region. The event in San Luis, Sonora was attended by representatives of SAGARHPA and SEMARNAT (Mexico's State of Sonora Department of Agriculture and their Federal Environmental Agency). Approximately 85,000 lbs. and 300 gallons of waste pesticides were collected.

These pesticides included Toxaphene and DDT, both of which have been banned for over 10 years. Other waste pesticides included approximately 30,000 pounds of methyl parathion, and 52 liters of Azinphos Methyl, a pesticide currently being proposed for a complete phase-out in the U.S. Many of the waste pesticides collected had not been stored properly. To make matters worse, packaging had degraded, and children were playing in or near some of the waste piles.

The Yuma, Arizona event brought in approximately 5,600 lbs. and 180 gallons of waste pesticides, including Endrin, Diazinon, and 2,4-D. All of these pesticides have been either banned or severely restricted in approved uses. Representatives from the Arizona Departments of Agriculture and Environmental Quality assisted in ensuring that growers' pesticide materials matched with registration forms.

Building on the success of these two projects, EPA plans to conduct a similar collection event in FY07 in the Imperial Valley/Mexicali border region.

For more information, contact Mary Grisier at EPA, (415) 972-4213 or by email at grisier.mary@epa.gov ■

Cocopah's Efforts to Restore the Lower Colorado River Limitrophe

By Linda Reeves, EPA Region 9

For many centuries, the Cocopah, known as the River People, lived in harmony with the mighty Lower Colorado River Delta region, one of the largest tidal wetlands in the world. Today, the river is among North America's top ten most endangered rivers (American Rivers organization, 1998), and the Cocopah Indian Nation is leading efforts to restore the highest conservation priority area in the delta region: the Lower Colorado River Limitrophe.

The Limitrophe is the segment of the Lower Colorado River that serves as the international boundary between the U.S. and Mexico, and divides the Cocopah from their Cucapá relatives in the Baja California delta region. On the U.S. side, 12 miles of the 23 mile Limitrophe are on the Cocopah Indian Reservation, and 10 miles are on Bureau of Reclamation land. In a 2005 report, the Limitrophe was identified as the top conservation priority in the delta by the Sonoran

Institute, Environmental Defense, University of Arizona, Centro de Investigacion en Alimentacion y Desarrollo, Pronatura Sonora and World Wildlife Fund.

With funds from EPA, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Land Management Reclamation (BORLM), the Cocopah Indian Nation restored over 200 acres of riparian habitat in the Limitrophe by removing stands of invasive salt cedar and restoring native cottonwood, willow and mesquite. The tribe is also restoring another 150 acres, with funds from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. DHS supports salt cedar removal because it opens up corridors which enhance security operations along the border.

These restoration efforts coincide with other efforts in the area, most notably the City of Yuma's East and West Wetlands Project conducted in partnership with the Quechan Indian Nation. That project restored 1,500 acres upstream of the Limitrophe, with nearly half of the restored acres on the Quechan Indian Nation's reservation.

Opportunities exist to expand restoration of the Limitrophe. In December 2006, the BLM issued a draft Environmental Impact Statement proposing creation of a Limitrophe Coordinated Management Area (CMA) for BOR's 4500 acres along the Limitrophe. The proposed Limitrophe CMA would protect and maintain riparian habitat and marsh vegetation, as well as enhance the characteristics of the Limitrophe area identified by the Cocopah and other tribes as important for traditional uses.

Together, the Cocopah Indian Nation and the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) formed the Colorado River International Conservation Area (CRICA) steering committee to secure permanent cultural and biological resource protection for the Limitrophe area in the U.S. and Mexico and to secure adequate water flows for wildlife and habitat protection. The CRICA unites diverse stakeholders from over 20 non-governmental organizations and local, state, and federal agencies from the U.S. and Mexico.

Restoring the Limitrophe is part of a much larger binational effort to protect the lower Colorado River and Delta region. In 1993, the Mexican government designated 2.3 million acres of the upper Gulf of California and the Colorado River Delta as a Biosphere Reserve. The goal of some organizations is to create a binational conservation area, extending from the Limitrophe to the biosphere preserve. With the aid of current and future projects, the Colorado River can be restored and protected for generations to come.

For more information, contact Linda Reeves at EPA, (415) 927-3445 or by email at reeves.linda@epa.gov ■

Assessment of Potential Impacts to the United States from the Proposed CEGIR Hazardous Waste Landfill in Sonora, Mexico

By Emily Pimentel, EPA Region 9

The CEGIR project is a private sector initiative for the construction, operation, maintenance, and closure of a hazardous waste treatment and disposal facility in the state of Sonora, Mexico. The proposed CEGIR Hazardous Waste Landfill would operate under a license issued by Mexico's Secretariat for the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT). The proposed site is approximately 25 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border in the state of Sonora.

International treaties and the Consultative Mechanism recognize the sovereignty of nations to make their own siting and permitting decisions on proposed hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facilities. However, since the proposed landfill is within the border region, EPA conducted an assessment of the project's potential impacts to the United States. In preparing the assessment, EPA took into consideration written and verbal comments provided by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), the Tohono O'odham Nation, and SEMARNAT, which is the Mexican agency responsible for permitting the proposed facility. EPA released the findings of the CEGIR assessment in November 2006 (go to http://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder for the full report).

EPA's assessment found that for several aspects of the project there is insufficient information to confidently assess impacts to the U.S. The assessment also concluded that:

- Impacts to surface water are unlikely.
- Impacts to groundwater are unlikely, but it would be prudent to modify the leachate collection and leak detection design.
- Impacts to air pose a potential risk that should be mitigated by preparing an emergency response plan.
- SEMARNAT should further assess and mitigate impacts to migratory birds.
- SEMARNAT should directly consult with the Tohono O'odham Nation to determine and mitigate the tribe's concerns.

The assessment highlights several areas where additional information would be required to reduce the uncertainty of the findings. EPA has asked for SEMARNAT's continued cooperation to respond to the concerns identified in the assessment and in letters from ADEQ and the Tohono O'odham Nation. EPA has also asked to be kept informed on the construction status of the proposed project.

EPA understands that SEMARNAT issued a permit to operate, but the municipality of Sonoyta must approve the construction and land use permits before the project can proceed. As of January 2007, the CEGIR Project had not received these permits.

If readers would like to offer additional information regarding potential impacts to the United States, please contact Emily Pimetel at pimentel.emily@epa.gov or call (415) 972-3785. EPA will facilitate communications and transmit comment to SEMARNAT on behalf of interested parties in the U.S. To provide information directly to SEMARNAT, contact the Director of Hazardous Waste and Materials, M. en C. Alfonso Flores Ramirez, SEMARNAT aflores@semarnat.gob.mx ■

Protecting Border Communities through Sustainable Emergency Preparedness

By Barbara Maco, EPA Region 9

On November 15, history was made in the coastal city of Puerto Peñasco when three binational border emergency management entities met for the first time to share program successes and plan future collaborations to prepare, respond and reduce the risk of environmental emergencies.

Seventy attendees from six Border States representing local, state, and federal stakeholders discussed initiatives such as Resolute Response: Preparedness Through Binational Training, using the sister city plans and adequate equipment.

The first border governors subcommittee on emergency management focused on establishing protocols, training opportunities, standardization of procedures, information sharing, alert notification, pandemic influenza issues and coordination with U.S. agencies along the border such as EPA and FEMA. The emergency managers for the States of Arizona and Sonora recommended that they co-chair the subcommittee for the first year and then rotate among other states.

To strengthen self-sustaining response capacity, the groups addressed the Incident Command System, acquiring sorely needed personal protection equipment, expanding inter-operable communications, resolving liability, insurance for cross border response, and establishing a Regional Joint Training Facility in Rio Rico. The groups also agreed to leverage the resources of key meeting participants including State Department of Public Safety, the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Department of Defense NORTHCOM

- Border 2012 projects highlighted during the Puerto Penasco meeting were the signing of updated sister emergency contingency plan for the cities of Nogales, Sonora and Nogales, Arizona, and capacity building for the Douglas Fire Department to respond to chorine releases (see article on page 2.) A key 2007 initiative is the Pilot Project On High Risk Sources, led by the State Civil Protection Agency.
- The Border 2012 Task Force Co-Chairs are Lic. Willebaldo Alatriste, Director, Protección Civil, Sonora and Mr. Louis Chaboya, Director, Office of Emergency Management, Santa Cruz County. During the past year the Task Force also met in Agua Prieta, Sells, and Tucson.

For more information, contact Barbara Maco at EPA, (415) 972-3794 or by email at maco.barbara@epa.gov ■

Update on Diesel School Bus Retrofits at the Santa Cruz Valley Unified School District

By Emmanuelle Rapicavoli, EPA Region 9

In October 2006, The Santa Cruz Valley Unified School District completed the installation of 31 diesel oxidation catalysts (DOCs) on school buses operated by the district. The catalysts are expected to reduce particulate matter emissions by 20% to 30% and to reduce carbon monoxide and volatile organic compounds by 50%. During the month of December, the district was installing diesel particulate filters (DPFs) on an additional three buses. These filters are expected to reduce particulate matter by 90% and nitrogen oxide emissions by 5% to 10%. To better accommodate the new emission controls, the district will begin using a 20% blend of biodiesel fuel (B20) in its vehicles in early 2007. Once the project is complete, the district will have retrofitted 74% of their fleet with either DOCs or DPFs.

In 2007, EPA will fund a similar project in the Nogales Unified School District to retrofit their diesel school bus fleet. EPA's Office of International Affairs recently committed to provide $50,000 to expand the project to the Nogales District. Once completed, these projects will help reduce particulate emissions in this PM10 non-attainment area and will also reduce school children's exposure to diesel emissions.

For more information regarding this project, please contact José Rodriguez at (520) 628-6952 or jr2@azdeq.gov at ADEQ. ■

EPA/BECC Team up for Border 2012 Results

By Lorena Lopez-Powers, EPA Region 9

The new EPA Partnership with the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) to further the goals and of the Border 2012 Program is getting results. The EPA/BECC- partnership is implementing more than 30 environmental projects and disbursing over $1.6 million for these projects in the Arizona/Sonora and the California/Baja California border region. The funded projects will accelerate environmental results in an area with a combined population of almost 7.4 million people. The projects are focused on addressing community needs along both sides of the border, including testing of brick kiln emissions around local schools in San Luis Rio Colorado, training to better respond to rail car spills, collection and disposal of obsolete pesticides, and removal of waste tire piles.

The BECC's expertise as a binational organization, together with its existing institutional strengths, further strengthen the partnership, since the BECC has a long history of promoting and implementing important environmental projects that improve border communities' living standards.

Here is a listing of some of the projects in the Arizona/Sonora Border Region:

Border 2012 Goal 1: Water

- The Municipal Utility of Potable Water and Sewage of Nogales, Sonora (OOMAPASNS) is constructing a new laboratory, which will allow the utility to monitor, and thereby better regulate, the quality of the waste streams from industrial and commercial sources that flow into to the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant (NIWTP) in Rio Rico, Arizona. The effectiveness of this laboratory will be enhanced through the purchase of an atomic absorption spectrometer for metals analyses, funded through Border 2012. With this equipment, OOMAPASNS will provide highly accurate water quality analyses that are legally defensible in a court of law. Kino Labs has committed to provide funding for training in the use of the purchased equipment as well as training for the implementation of quality assurance and control procedures required for Mexican certification.

Border 2012 Goal 2: Air

- Arizona State University and ADEQ will partner with San Luis Rio Colorado schools in this project to sample particulate air pollution around local schools, and to investigate the extent to which nearby brick kiln emissions are triggers for childhood asthma. The data will support possible local government efforts to relocate brick kilns to places outside the city limits where the impacts on local residents will be greatly reduced.

Border 2012 Goal 3: Waste

- In partnership with SEMARNAT, ADEQ, Sonora, and Sonora municipalities, funds will be invested in the cleanup and removal of up to 300,000 abandoned tires from communities in Sonora, to reduce potential sources of land contamination. The tires will be processed as tire-derived fuel at a cement plant in Hermosillo.
- The Tohono O'dham Nation will remove vehicles and trash abandoned by undocumented migrants and drug smugglers on the Nation's land. The vehicles will be inventoried and removed for asset recovery and recycling, while the waste cleanup will clear several washes and watersheds.

Border 2012 Goal 4: Environmental Health

- The ADEQ and the University of Arizona have been funded to develop an integrated pest management strategy in schools along the Arizona/Sonora Border Region, to achieve healthier indoor air and reduce environmental asthma triggers through significant reductions in pesticide use and pest-generated allergens.

Border 2012 Goal 5: Emergency Preparedness and Response

- A pilot project in Ambos Nogales will identify and address potentially harmful rail car spills. The project will help quantify rail car problem areas to reduce chemical releases and develop preparedness and response capability.

Border 2012 Goal 6: Environmental Performance

- To accelerate progress on increasing industry participation in EMS (Environmental Management Systems) and ISO (International Organization for Standardization) certification, the Association of Environmental and Health Professionals (APSA) has received funds for an EMS implementation and verification project. The group will work with industry on EMS development and implementation, and ISO certification.

For more information on the Border 2012 U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program, go to: http://www.epa.gov/Border2012 or please contact Lorena Lopez-Powers at lopez-powers.lorena@epa.gov or at 619-235-4768. ■

Border 2012 Collaboration with the Arizona-Mexico Commission

By Edna Mendoza, ADEQ

Environmental projects in the Arizona-Sonora border region have the good fortune of receiving an added level of support. The long history of state-to-state cooperation through the Arizona-Mexico Commission (AMC) often strengthens mutual efforts and helps ensure their success.

The Arizona-Mexico Commission and its counterpart in Sonora, Comisión Sonora-Arizona, are branches of the governors' office of each respective state and have been in existence since 1959. The AMC is a membership-based nonprofit corporation consisting of several committees that formulate programs and action items relating to issues that impact the Arizona-Mexico relationship. Its mission is to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for residents of Arizona by promoting a strong cooperative relationship with Mexico and Latin America through advocacy, trade, networking and information.

The first Arizona-Sonora Border 2012 Regional Workgroup (ASRWG) meeting was held in conjunction with an AMC conference during June of 2003 in Tucson, Arizona. Subsequent collaborative events have drawn hundreds of interested participants and stakeholders.

The AMC, particularly through its Environment and Emergency Management Committees, has provided strategic support to projects implemented by the ASRWG's five task forces by executing action items. The action items include an outline of tasks to be completed and a time line for each. A few examples of successful mutual efforts are – the completion of the "Plan of Action for Improving Air Quality in Ambos Nogales"; integrated pest management training of personnel in Sonora schools; development of an industrial pretreatment program in Nogales, Sonora; implementation of an environmental management system training program; and development of sister-city contingency plans in the Arizona-Sonora border region.

Border region focus by the AMC Environment and Emergency Management Committees for 2007 will address waste tires in the border region and developing a trinational emergency response and contingency plan with the Tohono O'odham Nation for the Lukeville, Arizona and Sonoyta, Sonora area. Both of these are also priorities of the Arizona-Sonora Regional Workgroup.

For additional information on the AMC and the work of its various committees, please visit www.azmc.org ■

If you have any comments or questions about the Border 2012 Program of the Arizona/Sonora Regional Workgroup, please contact Lorena Lopez-Powers at lopez-powers.lorena@epa.gov or Edna Mendoza at mendoza.edna@azdeq.gov

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Websites

US.EPA Border 2012 www.epa.gov/border2012	**SEMARNAT** www.semarnat.gob.mx	**ADEQ** www.azdeq.gov	**CEDES** www.cedes.gob.mx