



**Summary/Minutes of the Arizona-Sonora Regional Workgroup & Task Forces'
Meetings
March 26, 2014 - Hotel Plaza
Nogales, Sonora**

The Co-Chairs of the Arizona/Sonora Regional Workgroup and leaders of the community based regional Task Forces, held a binational plenary meeting and breakout sessions, in the community of Nogales, Sonora, on March 26th. The binational meetings brought representatives from Ambos Nogales and nearby communities to discuss the Border 2020: U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program (Border 2020) being implemented borderwide including the Arizona/Sonora border region. Border 2020 identifies goals and objectives guiding the work of U.S. and Mexican Border states, U.S. Border Tribes, EPA SEMARNAT, and other key border partners.

The meetings provided the opportunity to discuss newly selected environmental projects, on-going activities, as well as, beginning the process to identify priorities for the 2015-2016 Action Plan for the Arizona/Sonora Region.

Please see below for a summary of the discussion and proposed action items.

Air Task Force (Goal 1):

Air Task Force members participated in the meeting held in the afternoon of March 26th. Presentations were given about two recently awarded BECC/EPA projects (i.e. Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions Inventory for Nogales, Sonora and Prioritizing Emissions Mitigation Strategies at the Mariposa Point of Entry).

Tijuana Calidad de Vida A.C. will lead the effort to develop an emissions inventory for Nogales, Sonora. Researchers will estimate the emissions of air pollutants released by different sources in the municipality of Nogales Sonora, based on guidelines, procedures and methodologies established by SEMARNAT. The final product will be used to establish regulatory actions to help reduce air pollutant emissions. The project objectives are as follows:

- Develop a criteria air pollutant emissions inventory for each of the following emission sources: stationary, on-road mobile, off-road mobile and natural (erosive and biogenic) sources
 - Create a database of pollutant emissions by source type
 - Perform an analysis of specific pollutant emission sources
- Make available an inventory to compare pollutant emissions generated by various sectors with those generated by cities in other Mexican states and those generated in the U.S. and Canada.

ADEQ will provide the consultant an electronic copy of the emissions inventory that was developed by ENSR in the late 1990s, as background information.

The second BECC/EPA-funded project consists of prioritizing emissions mitigation strategies at the Mariposa Port of Entry (POE) to estimate PM and NO_x emissions from northbound idling vehicles and to identify emissions reduction strategies that could be implemented by U.S. and Mexico officials. This effort is being led by Arizona State University (ASU) researchers Mikhail Chester and Yingyan Lou.

Furthermore, Peter Hyde (ASU) gave a presentation on the newly developed “Archive of Border Air Quality Studies”, which currently has 238 air quality related studies conducted along the U.S.-Mexico border since the mid-1970s by state and federal governments, academics, and non-government organizations.

Finally, ADEQ, SEMARNAT, CEDES and EPA staff reviewed and provided an update about each item in the Border 2020 Arizona-Sonora Air Quality Action Plan. Some highlights from this discussion included:

As part of Objective 2 (i.e. “By 2020, reduce pollutant emissions in order to approach attainment of respective national ambient air quality standards in the following air-sheds: Ambos Nogales”), ADEQ has completed a non-attainment area plan for PM₁₀, which was approved by EPA last year. EPA granted 179b status (special provisions for nonattainment areas affected by emissions from outside the United States). ADEQ completed a nonattainment area plan for PM_{2.5}, which is currently under review by EPA.

Also as part Objective 2, SEMARNAT mentioned that they are planning on developing Pro-Aire Plans (similar to State/Federal Implementation Plans) for the different Sonora border cities. SEMARNAT is aware of the air quality monitoring issues facing the State of Sonora and they must resolve funding issues. The air emissions inventory for Nogales, Sonora will serve as input for a Pro-Aire Plan for the city.

Under Objective 3 (i.e. “By 2018, maintain effective air monitoring networks and provide real-time access to air quality data in Arizona-Sonora”), ADEQ has installed continuous air quality monitors for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} in Douglas, as well as a PM_{2.5} continuous air quality monitor in Yuma. These monitors replaced the Partisol samplers, previously used to collect air samples every sixth day.

The proposal to promote and disseminate the use of handbooks and guidelines for the sustainable development of housing and rehabilitation of schools and hospital infrastructure, which was part of Objective 5 (i.e. By 2020, reduce emissions and associated impacts through energy efficiency and/or alternative/renewable energy projects”) was deleted from the Action Plan.

A 16 MW Solar Park at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (also part of Objective 5) became operational on February 13, 2014.

Additionally, a large part of the meeting focused on the air monitoring network in Sonora. Key issues are:

- CEDES does not have, funding to continue the operation and maintenance of the Nogales, Sonora monitor once STI’s contract (with EPA) is completed in September.
- A representative from SEMARNAT headquarters (Mexico City) was also at the meeting. She clarified that, although SEMARNAT provides financial support to Mexican states for the purchase of monitors, it does not provide support to the states for operation and maintenance costs.

CEDES also noted that the Nogales Technical Institute was still working on getting the monitor parts that need to be refurbished ready for shipment to STI (EPA contractor).

Participants were asked for ideas on potential future projects to address needs to forward to EPA.

Water Task Force (Goal 2):

The EPA Border 2020 Arizona-Sonora Water Task Force met on March 26, 2014 in Nogales, Sonora. The session was moderated by EPA with Co-Chair representation by ADEQ's Office of Border Environmental Protection (Arizona) and the State of Sonora Water Commission (Sonora). The meeting was well attended with representation by the International Boundary and Water Commission, Mexican and U.S. Sections (CILA, IBWC), the Nogales, Sonora Chapter of the Association of Maquiladoras of Sonora (AMS), the Nogales, Sonora Chapter of Environmental Health Specialists (APSA), Nogales, Sonora Drinking Water and Wastewater Utility (OOMAPAS-NS), Borderlands Restoration (BR), and representatives from a technical college out of Puerto Peñasco.

After introductions, ADEQ presented ongoing wastewater-quality challenges associated with binational influent treated by the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant (NIWWTP) in Rio Rico, Arizona. ADEQ also summarized modifications to IBWC's new AZPDES permit for the plant focused on improving communication with Sonora. APSA followed with a presentation on the Border 2020 project focused on providing training workshops focused on pretreatment for metals and cyanide. APSA took this opportunity to announce that its contract with the BECC had just been signed. The workshops will take place in early November and December, 2014.

Next, EPA reviewed the Border 2020 action plan for Goal 2 focused on improving access to safe potable water. Progress on existing items was shared, and new action items were solicited.

- AMS and APSA recommended a new action item focused on transferring the donation of a flame-AA spectrometer from Alcoa Fastening Systems in Tucson to a receiving institution in Nogales, Sonora. The equipment will be used to facilitate local, qualitative and low-cost characterization of wastewater by individual industrial facilities in Nogales. AMS and ADEQ are contacts for the action item.
- The State of Sonora Water Commission (CEA) committed to funding a bypass to the Ruiz Cortinez collector so that more industrial wastewater can be captured by Los Alisos rather than flowing into Arizona. (Once the diversion is completed, Arizona can still expect to receive 8.1 MGD of wastewater from Sonora, or 1.8 MGD less than the maximum allowed under Minute 276.) Associated activities may help improve wastewater quality being delivered to Arizona since more of the industrial sector in Sonora will be captured by the Los Alisos Wastewater Treatment Plant. CEA is the contact for that action item.

- A representative from Borderlands Restoration noted that the NGO has received a multi-year grant from the Walton Family Foundation for restoration work in the Arizona-border region and would like to extend that work into Mexico through the Border 2020 program. BR is particularly interested in water harvesting projects for sediment control and ecological restoration in binational watersheds.

EPA will update the Border 2020 action with new contributions and then circulate among stakeholders for review. Revisions will be addressed based on stakeholder input.

Waste and Enforcement Task Force (Goals 3 and 5):

This task force was co-chaired by EPA; ADEQ; PROFEPA (Mexico’s environmental enforcement agency), and PROAES (State of Sonora’s environmental enforcement agency). After welcome and introductions, the following items were discussed:

- Arizona border E-waste project: ADEQ’s Border 2020 grant project, “Tools for Arizona Border to Reclaim Resources”, will develop a toolkit for cities to promote and hold electronic waste collection events and recycling working with certified e-waste recyclers. The tool-kit will include: contact list, marketing e-waste materials, interactive area, educational resources and best practices. The project will also sponsor e-waste collection events in the Arizona border communities of San Luis, Sahuarita, Nogales and Douglas. One main monitor goal is to divert 100, 000 lbs. of electronics from the landfills. The project is scheduled to be completed by July 2105.
- Sonora border E-waste project: EPA shared information about a Border 2020 grant being developed that would serve to complement efforts in Arizona by developing public outreach materials on e-waste best management practices in Spanish and holding collection events in San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora to divert e-waste from landfills. Details are pending.
- Used Oil Recycling in Nogales, Sonora: Sonora reported on a new Border 2020 grant project to build capacity for small business to deposit used oil in a used oil collection centers to facilitate recycling small quantities being generated. Nogales representatives reported a private firm, Eagle Oil, would be subcontracted for recycling and final disposal of the collected used oil. There will be 16 gas stations in Nogales, Sonora participating as collection centers. Also, the municipal fire department will have collection centers.

For the compliance assurance topic, ADEQ provided a summary of hazardous waste inspections in the Arizona border area. Companies in Yuma, AZ that collect cathode ray tubes (CRTs) are currently being reviewed for compliance conditions. In Sonora, PROFEPA reported performing environmental audits targeted to increase the number of industries participating in the voluntary “Programa Nacional de Auditoria Ambiental” (National Environmental Audits Program). There exist 1,200 industries in Sonora, but only 101 industries have a valid “Industria Limpia” certificate. Finally, EPA will schedule quarterly conference calls for arising issues on regulatory matters.

Enhance Joint Preparedness for Environmental Response (Goal 4)

The Emergency Preparedness and Response Task Force was represented by several key joint response team and community representatives from several U.S. and Mexican federal agencies, including state, and local offices. The workgroup discussed and identified next steps in terms of upcoming activities, specifically as it relates to joint efforts of future training and table top exercises.

General items reported include: Border 2020 Goal #4 Two Year Action Plan Update (Due by September 1, 2014)

Objective 1: Joint Contingency Plan Exercises

Training on cyanide management (Santa Ana)

Web EOC training (provided by AZ)

Two Table Top Exercises:

- 2015: Yuma/Mexicali, earthquake
- 2016: Flooding, place TBD

Objective 2: Sister City Plan Updates

Nogales/Nogales Sister City Plan update (2015)

Training on cyanide management (Santa Ana)

Fire Quadrants by Frank Granados of San Cruz County Emergency Management

FRO and FRA by Nogales SN Fire Department

ICS

Objective 3: Training: Provide Spanish Emergency Pocket Guides (EPA and AZ)

AZ/SN Task Force Meetings 2014- 2015

March 26, 2014 - Nogales. SN

May 22, 2014 - San Luis Rio Colorado, SN

September 9, 2014 - Rocky Point, SN

December 12, 2014- Agua Pieta

NorthCom Collaboration:

- a. 2015 funding
- b. 2016 – 2020 Five Year Plan