



## Good Neighbor Environmental Board

Meeting Presenters:

### Panel 1 – Ecoregions – Standards, metrics, and measures

#### **Kevin Bixby, Executive Director, Southwest Environmental Center**

As the son of a naval officer, Kevin grew up all over the world, but the American West has always been home. While attending high school in Oakland, he began his activist career by volunteering at the Berkeley Ecology Center. After graduating with a B.A. in biology from Dartmouth College in 1978, he returned to the San Francisco Bay Area and began volunteering at Friends of the Earth where he rubbed elbows with the late, great David Brower. Working to save condors and whales by day, he made a living by driving a San Francisco taxicab at night. Realizing that more education might be useful, Kevin set off to the School of Natural Resources at the University of Michigan in 1985, where he earned a Master's degree in Natural Resources Policy. But the West beckoned, and in 1988 Kevin moved to New Mexico with his future wife, Lisa LaRocque, and started the Southwest Environmental Center in 1991.

#### **Keith Pezzoli, Director of Field Research, University of California, San Diego**

Keith Pezzoli is the Director of Field Research and a Lecturer in the Urban Studies and Planning Program at the University of California, San Diego. He also leads the Research Translation and Community Outreach cores of UCSD's Superfund Research Program which is funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). Pezzoli's teaching and research concentrate on regional ecology and globalism, new biology and environmental health, sustainability science and information technology. Currently he is conducting action research at the water/climate/poverty nexus in low-income human settlements of the U.S.-Mexico border region.

#### **Greg Eckert, Restoration Ecologist, National Park Service**

Greg is responsible for several terrestrial ecosystem-related program areas serving National Park Units across the country. Greg has over 20 years experience in scientific land management through work experiences with the US EPA and The Nature Conservancy and his doctoral program at the University of Georgia, where he focused on mycorrhizal and soil ecology applications to forest restoration. Greg's NPS duties, since 2000, include

- Technical assistance to parks for degraded resource assessment, vegetation management and ecosystem restoration projects
- Native plant materials coordination
- Integration of ecosystem ecology and soil ecology into technical assessments and guidelines
- Landscape partnering and assessment

- Development of guidelines on ecological integrity and desired future conditions
- Livestock management
- Development of ecosystem management tools

Greg also works with the NPS Fire Management Program to integrate natural resource goals and objectives into fire related projects. Greg has represented the Department of Interior on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and has represented the Department on the GNEB since 2011.

## **Panel 2 – Waterways**

### **John Sproul, Park Manager, Rio Bosque Wetlands Park**

John Sproul has been with CERM since December 1998 and oversees management of Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, a 372-acre City of El Paso park next to the Rio Grande in El Paso's Mission Valley. UTEP assumed management responsibility for this site in November 1996 under a long-term agreement with the City. At the park, UTEP and its partners are working to restore, over time, a meaningful example of the mix of native plant and animal communities historically found in the river valley. John's training is in biochemistry (A.B., U. California-Berkeley, 1972) and wildlife ecology (M.S., U. Wisconsin-Madison, 1975). He is a Certified Wildlife Biologist with particular interests in restoration ecology, conservation biology and avian ecology.

### **Francisco Zamora, Director, Sonoran Institute**

Francisco Zamora Arroyo joined the Sonoran Institute in April 2002 to manage activities in the Delta of the Colorado River. Dr. Zamora has more than fourteen years experience working in the Delta as a researcher and project manager. As the Director of the Colorado River Delta Legacy program, he is responsible for integrating community stewardship, applied science, and local values in an alliance to reform water policy, conserve and restore priority areas, and build knowledge and capacity for collaboration between water managers and local leaders. Over the past fourteen years Dr. Zamora has developed close relationships with Mexican and U.S. agencies involved in water and land management, and communicates frequently with regional or national officials dealing with issues in the Colorado River Delta. He spends a good portion of his time in the field working with communities, visiting potential restoration areas, and doing field research and restoration work. He obtained his Ph.D. in Resource Geography from Oregon State University in October 2002, with a minor in natural resource economics. He also holds a master's degree in Marine Resource Management from Oregon State University and a BS degree in Oceanography from Autonomous University of Baja California. He has published his work on ecological restoration, policy, and bi-national collaboration issues in the Delta.

### **Elizabeth Verdecchia, Natural Resource Specialist, IBWC, U.S. Section**

Elizabeth Verdecchia is currently a natural resources specialist in the Environmental Management Division at the International Boundary and Water Commission, U.S. Section (USIBWC), in El Paso, Texas. During her tenure at USIBWC, managed water quality reports and data for the international boundary before serving as the Program Manager of the USIBWC Texas Clean Rivers Program for the Rio Grande Basin for four years. She received a Bachelor's degree in Geology and Environmental Science and Engineering from Rice University in 2000, and

obtained a Masters in Applied Geography from New Mexico State University in 2008. Ms. Verdecchia worked in several National Parks in resource management and cartography, including George Washington Memorial Parkway, the Everglades (through the U.S. Geological Survey's Biological Resources Division), and Mammoth Cave National Park (through the Student Conservation Association and the Geological Society of America). She also served four years in Paraguay, South America, as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the fields of environmental education and information technology.

### **Panel 3 – Partnerships and Coordination with Federal Agencies**

#### **Genevieve Johnson, Desert LCC Coordinator, Bureau of Reclamation**

Genevieve Johnson is the Coordinator for the Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC). She provides ongoing facilitation and operational leadership to the Desert LCC and is a Bureau of Reclamation employee based in Phoenix. She has worked in the field of conservation and planning at the U.S. Forest Service, Arizona State Parks, and the Bureau of Land Management. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Conservation Biology and a Master of Science in Urban and Environmental Planning, both from Arizona State University.

#### **Robert Jess, Refuge Manager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Rob is the Project Leader of the South Texas Refuge Complex (3/12-present), stationed in Alamo, Texas. The Complex is comprised of three refuges: Santa Ana, Laguna Atascosa and Lower Rio Grande refuges. Prior to that he was refuge manager of Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge (10/07-3/12), the third largest refuge in the system at 10 million acres where he resided in Fairbanks Alaska. Preceding his time in Alaska, Rob was Project Leader of the J.N. “Ding” Darling, Island Bay, Matlacha, Caloosahatchee and Pine Island National Wildlife Refuges Complex (1/02-10/07) on Sanibel Island, Florida. Before leaving Sanibel, he was recognized by the Sanibel & Captiva Chamber of Commerce as the “2006 Citizen of the Year”. This was for his efforts to educate the citizens of Lee County Florida on the importance of coastal water quality and future impacts from pollutants along the Caloosahatchee River and west coast of Florida.

#### **Sherry Barrett, Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Sherry Barrett spent 9 years working as a Biologist for the Bureau of Reclamation in Phoenix, Arizona, before joining the Fish and Wildlife Service in 1990. Sherry subsequently worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service in Reno, Nevada; Carlsbad, California; and Tucson, Arizona. Her work has focused on endangered species conservation issues including multi-species, landscape-level habitat conservation plans focused on the desert tortoise in Clark County, Nevada; the California gnatcatcher in San Diego County, California; and the cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl in Pima County, Arizona. In December 2010, Sherry moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where she is now the Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator. Sherry received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology at Northern Arizona University and her Master of Science degree in Zoology at Arizona State University.