

Winter RTOC Border Program Session

Syndi Smallwood & Marisol Anaya

February 5, 2026



A program of U.S. EPA and Mexico's SEMARNAT

Tribes within the border area in EPA Region 9 24 (**27***) U.S. Federally Recognized Tribes



Border Program History



La Paz Agreement

IBEP

BXXI

B2012

B2020

Border 2025



1983

1992-2020

Present

Border 2035

- *North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and [North American Development Bank \(NADB\)](#) established*
- *[Border Water Infrastructure Program \(BWIP\)](#) formed*
- *USEPA opens El Paso and San Diego border offices*
- *[Good Neighbor Environmental Board \(GNEB\)](#)*
- *[United States – Mexico-Canada Agreement \(USMCA\)](#) signed into law*

Engagement with US-MX Border Program



Arizona-Sonora Regional Meeting
November 2025, Cocopah Indian Tribe

Ongoing/Current

- Community Outreach, Border office requests at Events like environmental fairs
- Environmental and public health grants
- Border Program funding, GAP, and other EPA leveraging
- Regional Tribal Operations Committee – Border Workgroup
- **Tribal Consultation Process on Border 2035 Phase I (Pending Phase II)**

Past

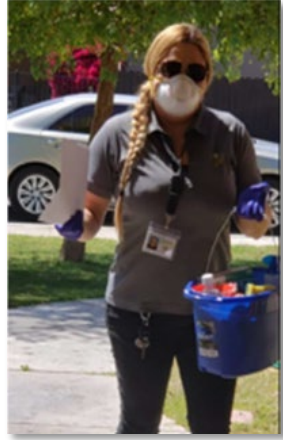
- Border XXI and 2012 Tribal Reports
- Meetings and workshops (Border 2012, '20, '25)
- Environmental issue letters to EPA
- Border 2020 signing as witness
- Tribal Consultation Process on Border 2025 phase I and II



Border 2025 Projects

Regional Asthma Management and Prevention (RAMP)

- Asthma Home Visiting Services for Tribal Communities Along the Region 9 Border



Cocopah Wastewater Reuse Planning and Design

- Water quality assessment and developing plans for beneficial reuse of the effluent including a riparian/wetland restoration
- The project led to further investment from other sources to implement the reuse plan that was designed.



Border 2025 Goals and Task Forces

GOAL 1: Improve AIR Quality



GOAL 2: Improve WATER Quality



GOAL 3: Promote Sustainable Materials and WASTE Management



GOAL 4: Improve Joint PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE to hazardous environmental emergencies



Partners and Participants



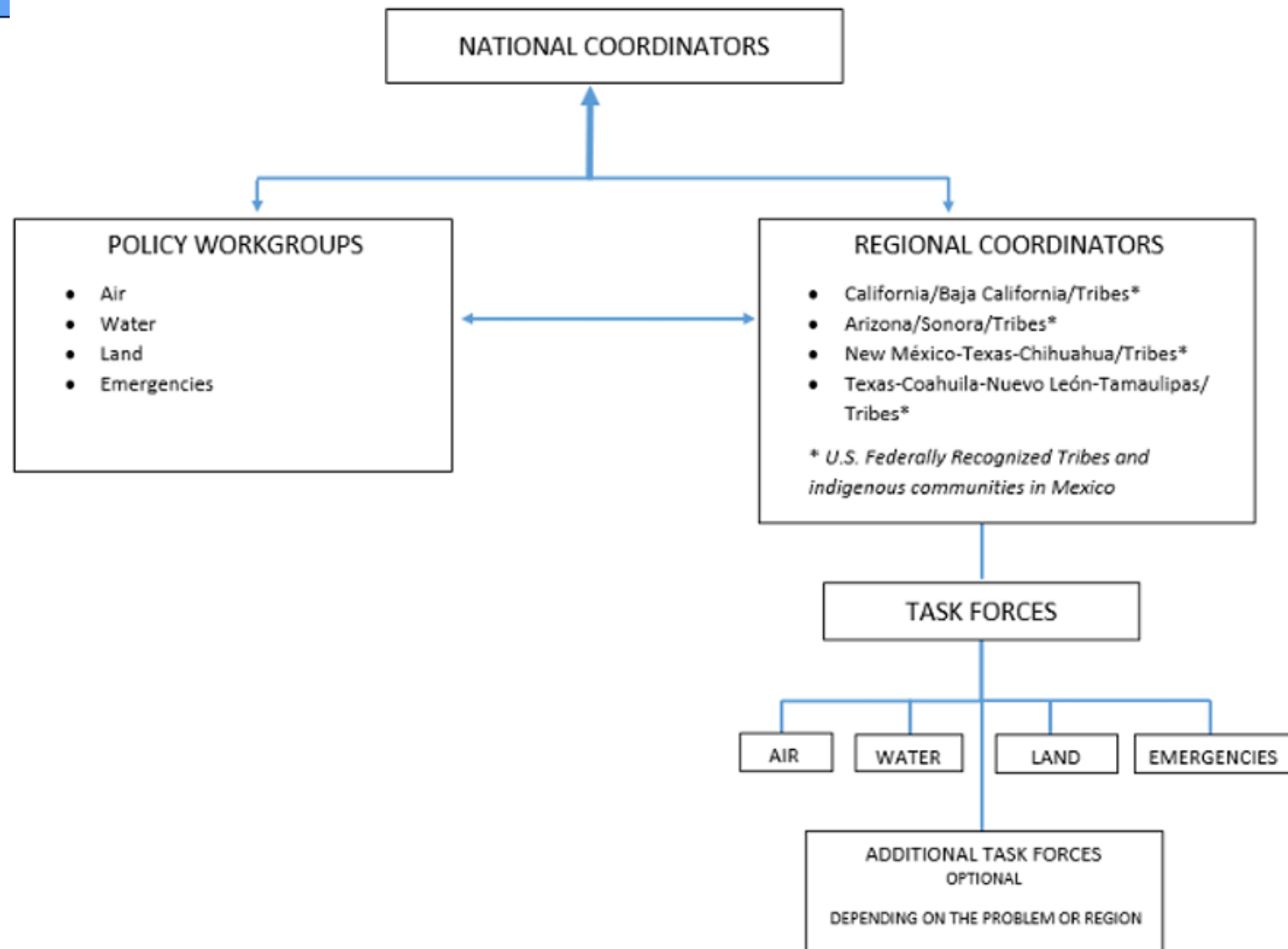
- Government agencies – federal, state, local
 - 15 sister-city pairs
- 27 U.S. Tribal governments
- Mexican indigenous communities
- County and City governments
- Community based organizations
- Academic organizations
- Community members



Regional Coordinators Roles and Expectations

Regional Coordinators

Border 2025 Organization Structure



Regional Coordinators

Focus on **regional environment priorities** and **recommend** to other coordinating bodies on issues beyond regional scope that need to be addressed by **Border 2025 Policy Workgroups**.



How to do this:

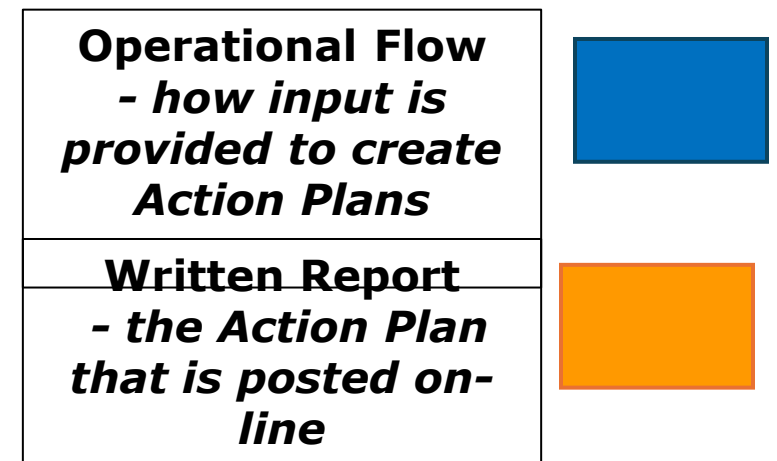
Participate in meetings where environment priorities can be elevated as well as provide input for Action Plans.

1. National Coordinator's (NCM)
2. Regional Coordinators' (RCM)
3. **RTOC Border Workgroup**

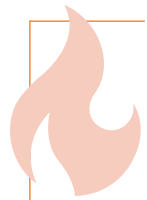
Ensure that Task Forces include:

- Appropriate state environmental cabinet officials from the U.S. and Mexico
- A representative of federally recognized Tribes as selected by participating Tribes in the area

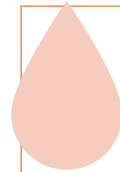
Border 2025 Workflow



Top Priorities Identified by Tribal Representatives (2023)



Wildfires



Water resources,
groundwater, drinking
water, wastewater



Climate Crisis



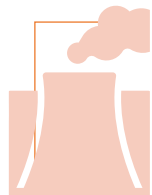
Air Quality



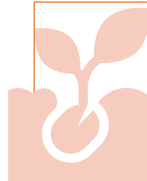
Regulatory Programs



Drought



Brownfields



Community/Ecological
Development



Encroaching Urban
development



Participate in Border Meetings



Hold your own public meetings to discuss needs and to educate communities



Research and apply for other environmental grants



Build your own capacity—take training, do research, participate in webinars and conferences



Identify environmental and public health needs—present information to Tribal Leaders and other Tribal Offices/Departments to get input and identify priorities

Guidance Shared

Leveraging Resources: Using GAP(P1)

When GAP efforts support the planning, developing, and establishing of capacity to implement environmental programs administered by the EPA

Coordinate and leverage	Coordinate and leverage funds with other Tribal Government Offices/Departments (Environmental Health, Public Works, Housing, etc).
Collaborate	Collaborate with other governments, non-profits, colleagues, etc. for regional/coordinated work [Example this group!!!!]
Request	Request technical assistance, guidance with EPA on ideas for GAP workplans (air, water, children's health, radon, asthma, lead and indoor air, etc.)
Use	Use Border Office meeting spaces or meet via video with EPA staff

Guidance Shared

Leveraging Resources: Using GAP(P2)

When GAP efforts support the planning, developing, and establishing of capacity to implement environmental programs administered by the EPA

Border Program 2035 Timeline



Draft Program: Border 2035



Ten-Year Vision

up from five years



Four Goals

Updated to meet current needs



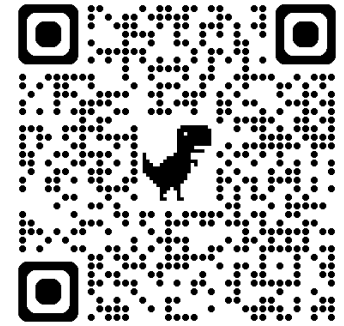
Revised Structure

to be determined

Opportunities to Engage with the Border Program

Bilingual Program website

<https://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder>



Sign up for the listserv & newsletter

