



Pollution Prevention

US/Mexico Waste Tire Coordination

Border Challenge:

Together, Texas and Mexican border communities have generated about 6 million tires that are currently in storage, waiting to be recycled or used in some other “end-use”. Unfortunately, there are not enough end-uses for scrap tires in the region, which leads to their unauthorized and unsafe storage.

Scrap-tire fires produce an oily, highly flammable, runoff that contains lead and arsenic, contaminates soil and can poison nearby water supplies. In addition rodents and mosquitoes breed in tire piles, increasing the transmission of encephalitis and dengue fever to humans on the border.

EPA Accepts the Challenge:

In 2002, EPA Region conducted three workshops in major cities in the border region. Mexican and U.S. stakeholders from the public, academic, and business sectors attended to discuss the challenge of scrap tires and develop a plan of action. What they developed was the U.S./Mexico Waste Tire Coordination Grant, funded by Headquarters and monitored by EPA Region 6 in conjunction with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

The grant afforded the ability to address the dearth of end-uses for scrap tires in the region, and educate the public on the risk to human health posed by dengue carrying mosquitoes and rodents that breed in scrap tire piles. The Rubber Manufacturers Association developed a document for small entrepreneurs on how to profit from scrap-tires by creating more end-uses. On a larger scale, the Lower Rio Grande Development Council assessed the pros and cons of establishing an asphalt rubber production facility in the Rio Grande Valley, and conducted a seminar to promote the recycled commodities market and expand local recycling efforts.

