



Good Neighbor Environmental Board Virtual Public Meeting
Microsoft Teams Virtual Platform
April 27, 2023; 2:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m. EDT

MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome and Member Roll Call

Eugene Green, Good Neighbor Environmental Board (GNEB) Designated Federal Officer, Federal Advisory Committee Management Division (FACMD), Office of Resources and Business Operations (ORBO), Office of Mission Support (OMS), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Robbie Young-Mackall, Director, FACMD, ORBO, OMS, EPA; Paul Ganster, Chair, GNEB; and Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB

Mr. Eugene Green welcomed the participants and conducted the roll call. A list of meeting participants is included as Appendix A. The meeting agenda is included as Appendix B. The official certification of the minutes by the Chair is included as Appendix C.

Mr. Green acknowledged the two new GNEB members, Ms. Paloma Aguirre and Ms. Kathryn Becker. He also recognized Dr. Rebecca Beavers of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). He finished by thanking the GNEB members for their hard work on the advice letter and Drs. Paul Ganster and Irasema Coronado for their leadership.

Ms. Robbie Young-Mackall also thanked the Board members for their dedication in developing and transmitting the GNEB advice letter to the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), and she recognized CEQ for its timely response to the letter. Federal Advisory Committees help the White House and EPA Administrator advance their priorities by providing advice through a transparent, public process. This process could not be effective without the members' participation and hard work. She also thanked FACMD staff for organizing and supporting the meeting, with special thanks to Mr. Green.

Overview of Agenda and Meeting Goals/Objectives

Paul Ganster, Chair, GNEB, and Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB

Dr. Ganster provided an overview of the agenda and meeting goals. The Board will hear information relevant to the latest report, review the report and determine additional writing assignments. The annual report is written entirely by GNEB members and their colleagues. The members will need to be cognizant of the length of the report because of the page limit.

Dr. Coronado thanked Dr. Ganster for his leadership, Ms. Young-Mackall for attending the meeting and Mr. Green for his continued support for GNEB and its work.

CEQ's Response to the GNEB Advice Letter and Agency Priorities Update

Kimberly Tenggardjaja, Deputy Director for Nature Conservation, CEQ, and Liaison to GNEB

Dr. Kimberly Tenggardjaja noted that the Board's 2022 advice letter is relevant to many ongoing priorities of CEQ and the Biden administration, including the Justice40 Initiative and the effort to elevate Indigenous knowledge in federal scientific and policy practices. GNEB's advice to streamline delivery of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act funding is timely, as the Biden administration is working to increase accessibility to these and other funding sources through creation of the America the

Beautiful Challenge, requirements for matching funds for grant programs, and specific funding streams to benefit underserved communities.

CEQ priorities include environmental justice, Indigenous knowledge, nature-based solutions, ecological connectivity and wildlife corridors, and nature-deprived communities. The president recently signed an executive order on environmental justice, noting that it is the duty of all executive branch agencies to address environmental justice issues and include environmental justice in their missions. The executive order also highlights the importance of tribal consultation and establishes the White House Office of Environmental Justice within CEQ. The Biden administration recently released guidance for federal agencies to recognize and include Indigenous knowledge in decision-making. The administration also recently released a roadmap for using nature-based solutions to address climate change and other environmental challenges to improve community resiliency. The America the Beautiful initiative is a locally led effort to conserve and restore America's lands, waters and wildlife. As part of this initiative, CEQ recently released guidance on including ecological connectivity and wildlife corridors in federal planning and decision-making. This topic is particularly relevant to the border region because wildlife does not recognize political boundaries. To address nature-deprived communities, CEQ leads the interagency Nature in Communities Committee, which focuses on strengthening investments in communities that do not have access to the benefits of nature.

Dr. Teresa Pohlman noted the importance of environmental justice efforts and suggested it as a topic for the Board's next report. Dr. Coronado agreed that it is important to improve the life of border residents through environmental justice initiatives.

Overview of the Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Community Initiative

Zachary Lowenstein, Program Manager, Water Infrastructure Division, Office of Wastewater Management, Office of Water, EPA

Mr. Zachary Lowenstein described the poor and rural Lowndes County in Alabama. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law presents a historical opportunity to invest in communities—such as those in Lowndes County—to address wastewater infrastructure needs. Through the Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Community Initiative, which was announced in August 2022, EPA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will help disadvantaged communities with technical assistance to allow these communities to identify and pursue federal funding opportunities, in collaboration with states and tribes. The goal is to help communities develop applications for planning and/or construction funding before the end of the calendar year. The initiative will focus on 11 pilot communities in Alabama, Arizona, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, and West Virginia.

Participating communities will receive a community wastewater assessment and community solutions plan. The assessment includes an engagement plan, built and natural environment assessments, an engineering analysis, and regulatory and funding information. Each community has a project team that includes representatives from EPA headquarters and regions, USDA Rural Development national and state offices, and state and tribal governments, as well as technical assistance providers, contractor support and community leaders.

The project team kickoff meetings were completed during fall 2022, and wastewater assessments currently are being conducted. Community listening sessions will continue through summer 2023, and solutions plans will be finalized by early fall 2023. The goal is for these communities to identify and begin developing funding applications by fall 2023. A lessons-learned document will be released by the end of the calendar year.

The intended benefits of the community wastewater assessment are to identify challenges and opportunities, as well as to collect data and information. The intended benefits of the community solutions plan are to identify funding options and provide preliminary wastewater infrastructure and cost options. Community evaluations are intended to allow local officials and community members to evaluate and select solutions and for technical assistance providers to support the communities in developing funding applications. EPA and USDA have engaged the communities through listening sessions and town hall meetings to ensure that community members feel included and empowered to make decisions.

After the assessments are completed, solutions plans will be developed, and community visits will be scheduled to present the solution design, cost options and funding mechanisms to the community members. After the process has been completed, EPA and USDA will begin to consider the future of this program.

Dr. Pohlman commented that wastewater issues are complicated further by emerging contaminants, such as PFAS and PFOA.

Ms. Becker reported that New Mexico was consulted on potential communities for this initiative, and the two communities selected are in need of and benefiting from the program. It is difficult to engage with some of the communities, and she was happy to see a photo in the presentation from the kickoff meeting in Chapparral, New Mexico. She may follow up with Mr. Lowenstein regarding successful engagement practices.

Mr. John McNeece noted that he often is approached by local communities that do not have the staff capability to draft applications for funding, so the technical assistance aspect is encouraging. He asked who will provide the technical assistance to communities. Mr. Lowenstein responded that existing technical assistance providers—such as the Southwest Environmental Finance Center, Rural Community Assistance Partnership and Natural Rural Water Association—will be employed to assist communities.

Mr. McNeece asked who will manage project implementation after funding is received. Mr. Lowenstein replied that the team is trying to address proper management in its solutions plans. Projects with existing sewers are easier to manage, whereas decentralized systems are more difficult. The process is meant to recommend or identify which entity will manage the system (e.g., utilities with a licensed decentralized-system operator).

Mr. McNeece asked how the program will create an application process that is inclusive of colonias after the pilot project has finished. Mr. Lowenstein responded that the team does not have an answer to this question yet and is exploring many options. The program recently launched a [technical assistance request form](#) for communities, and all requests are forwarded to appropriate EPA staff for action.

Mr. Eddie Moderow suggested the North American Development Bank (NADBank) as a resource. Also, the U.S.-Mexico Border Environmental Program: Border 2025 (Border 2025 Program) incorporates community engagement. Partnering with this program could help with the engagement aspect, which he acknowledged can be a challenge. The Texas Water Development Board and Communities Unlimited have been helpful partners in Texas, working with communities with failing or no wastewater service.

Dr. Ganster asked whether EPA is examining new models for small remote systems and aggregating the management of these systems to increase efficiencies and reduce costs per unit served. Mr. Lowenstein is not aware of such an effort within EPA, but this is a strong focus of the Water Environment Federation. Within EPA, the Office of Research and Development would be more likely to explore such an initiative. His program works with a group of 20 partners that have a stake in decentralized wastewater management to “push the needle” in areas similar to this.

Report Out on the 2023 Association for Borderland Studies Roundtable Discussions

Paul Ganster, Chair, GNEB, and Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB

Dr. Ganster reported that a roundtable was held at the recent annual meeting of the Association of Borderlands Studies to discuss the past, present and future of GNEB. Several border experts who are invested in GNEB's work were present, including current and past Board members and Dr. Stephen Mumme, a leading authority on border water issues. The roundtable participants discussed priorities and suggested ways that the Board might improve its effectiveness and impact on the environmental quality of the binational border region.

The group agreed that returning to face-to-face meetings, which generally are held in border cities and Washington, D.C., is important. The field trips in border cities allow Board members to view and understand the various issues and perspectives along the border and bring this information back to their agencies. The Washington, D.C., meetings allow outreach to Congress and federal agency administrative offices. Other panelist recommendations are to upgrade the Board's videoconference tools, improve American and Mexican public participation, review past GNEB reports to evaluate progress on the Board's recommendations, continue to highlight chronic environmental problems that affect underserved communities (e.g., the repeated flooding in Nogales, Sonora), review federal agency membership, incorporate a concise summary of Board activities in the annual report, and improve the annual report by including a 1-page executive summary.

The roundtable emphasized the distinct role of GNEB, including its unique borderwide perspective, lack of administrative silos, ability to improve binational cooperation and react to immediate environmental challenges, and interaction with all three levels of government and diverse community stakeholders.

Dr. Kimberly Collins, who had been present at the roundtable, commented that a low percentage of border experts who were present reported knowledge of and access to GNEB and its reports. The Board must improve its outreach and publicize its work so that border stakeholders realize that the report is not just for Congress but also has a public purview. She asked members to consider how to conduct an outreach campaign to engage with border residents and disseminate information about GNEB's work.

Review and Discuss the Latest Draft Report on Water and Wastewater Infrastructure

GNEB Members

Dr. Ganster explained that annual reports include text boxes that call out important issues. The Board discussed callout topics suggested by GNEB members for the 2023 report.

Callout topic #1 (The installation of thousands of rock detention structures in the Turkey Pen Watershed.

Callout topic #2: A green/gray infrastructure strategy for the long-term reduction and control of transboundary stormwater flows in the Ambos Nogales Watershed on the Arizona–Sonora border.

Mr. Joaquin Marruffo volunteered to work on developing each of the above callout topics, noting that Dr. Laura Norman of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is a potential resource who may have case studies. Dr. Joaquin Murrieta-Saldivar and Mr. Alejandro Barcenas volunteered to work with Mr. Marruffo.

Callout topic #3: Environmental justice and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law environmental justice analysis requirement. The EPA Administrator is required to perform an analysis and submit a report to U.S. House and Senate committees by November 15.

Dr. Pohlman suggested that the importance of environmental justice be noted in the callout box. Depending on the topic of next year's report, more or less detail could be added to the box.

Mr. Moderow suggested including a callout box on a specific environmental justice topic to highlight the story of a local environmental justice issue and what environmental justice looks like in a border community.

Mr. McNeece noted that, because the reporting deadline occurs just before the release of the Board's report, referring to the congressionally mandated analysis in a callout box would be useful. He suggested that EPA provide an update on the current timeline of the analysis to determine whether it will be completed in time to add information about it to the GNEB report. Mr. Rafael DeLeon explained that EPA has [released some reporting](#), but he is unsure about including it in the Board's 2023 report because EPA cannot provide full reporting until it has released the analysis to Congress. Dr. Ganster agreed that the timing would be tight, but if Mr. McNeece works with Mr. DeLeon, Dr. Ganster is willing to review any text that is developed.

Callout topic #4: EPA Environmental Finance Centers.

Callout topic #6: Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law detailed discussion.

Dr. Ganster explained that callout topic #4 would explore multiagency efforts to make federal funding available to communities that lack the ability to access these funds. Dr. Collins noted the similarity of callout topics #3, #4 and #6. Callout topics #4 and #6 could be combined into one box and should consider callout topic #3, as well as the priorities being established by the Biden administration and states and show how the goals of GNEB align with these priorities. GNEB can include information on CEQ's response, as well as information from this meeting's presentations. Dr. Collins will take the lead on developing these topics with assistance from Mr. McNeece. Ms. Becker also volunteered to articulate the GNEB perspective on the federal priorities on which the Board is making further implementation recommendations.

Callout topic #5: Native American traditional ecological knowledge (TEK).

Mr. DeLeon had provided Dr. Ganster with several links, including on TEK and activities that the White House is undertaking to train federal agencies. EPA is working on TEK training for its staff as well. Dr. Ganster noted that the callout box could include a brief explanation of why TEK is important to the Board. Mr. William Micklin can contribute information on Indigenous knowledge, hydrological changes, and restoration of Indigenous ground water and watershed environments. The links Mr. DeLeon sent will be provided to the Board members.

Mr. Moderow provided the three callout topics proposed by the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ):

1. Infrastructure investments to improve the reliability of U.S. water deliveries from Mexico.
2. Urgency of structural repairs to the Amistad Dam.
3. The Lower Rio Grande Water Quality Initiative.

TCEQ has drafted text on these topics and has accompanying photos; Mr. Moderow will send the text and photos to Dr. Ganster. Mr. José Hinojosa can explore additional photos as well.

The Board discussed suggested illustrations for the report, including a diagram of border water administration in the United States and Mexico and a border map. Ms. Becker will contact the Region 6 Border Office to determine what current illustrations are available, and Mr. Moderow will assist. Dr. Ganster has colleagues in Mexico who are water scholars and could help review the illustration for

accuracy. Mr. Marruffo also volunteered. Dr. Coronado will ask Dr. Mumme and Dr. Christopher Brown for assistance. Dr. Murrieta-Saldivar will contact a Sonora organization that conducted a recent analysis of border water issues and cross-border water-smart cities. Dr. Ganster added that U.S. states may differ significantly from one another in how they manage water.

The Board next discussed the general notes about the current draft of the report that members had provided prior to the meeting. Dr. Ganster noted that the 1944 Water Treaty does not include an agreement for ground water. With increasing demands for and reduction of water supplies along the border, more border communities are exploring ground water options, which could damage existing aquifers. GNEB should consider offering specific recommendations to facilitate binational, transborder ground water management. U.S. states differ in their control of ground water, so transborder management must occur within this context. Dr. Ganster will organize text on this topic, and Dr. Josiah Heyman volunteered to assist.

Dr. Ganster noted that the report does not contain a discussion of how water is used (e.g., urban, industrial, agricultural), but the page limit of the report may constrain this discussion. The Board members did not object to including a very brief discussion of this issue or even tabling the issue.

All of the data and descriptions of conditions in colonias that appear in the report need to be reviewed for consistency, and GNEB must ensure that the data are up to date. The report also needs to include data on how much water and wastewater infrastructure has been funded for colonias, as well as on the deficit. The Board members discussed colonias, including the fact that not all colonias are disadvantaged. Dr. Maria-Elena Giner may have information about colonias, but the Texas Secretary of State is no longer performing work related to colonias. Ms. Becker commented that the Texas Attorney General manages a website on colonias that includes a database. Entities in the United States generally refer to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition, but Texas has created its own geospatial database, and the University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research created a database for New Mexico. Each border state approaches colonias differently, but the definition for federal services was established in 1990. Ms. Becker will send information about colonias to Dr. Coronado, who will collate this information with the information from the Texas A&M University Colonias Program. Mr. Moderow commented that "colonias" is a loaded and awkward term. He does not like the term personally, but it lives on with traditional, historic meaning. Dr. Heyman has not seen new data or information about colonias unserved or underserved in regard to water and wastewater services since a [2016 border needs report by the Rural Community Assistance Partnership](#).

Dr. Ganster noted that GNEB should follow up on its recurring recommendations about better transborder cooperation on transborder environmental issues, particularly water and wastewater infrastructure. Transborder government cooperation has been a frequent recommendation of GNEB reports, and perhaps the Board should be more specific, which may prompt more action. The border area is dynamic on both sides, and any solutions developed now will not be effective in a decade. The difficulty and length of the current process results in solutions that are outdated before they have even begun to be implemented. Perhaps a border sanitation authority could be established to evaluate, plan and attract funding to avoid delays while border residents suffer negative consequences. This recommendation may involve NADBank, the International Boundary Water Commission (IBWC), EPA and Mexico's Comisión Nacional del Agua (National Water Commission, commonly called CONAGUA). Dr. Ganster volunteered to develop recommendations.

Dr. Collins asked whether such a recommendation would involve a community advisory group or local water system administrators, similar to the community advisory group that was part of the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC). Dr. Ganster had been considering a federal-to-federal relationship that is inclusive of local agencies and community participation. Federal cooperation is

necessary for implementation and action. The current paradigm is a case-by-case reactive approach, but a proactive approach is needed. Mr. Barcenas noted that BECC was created to coordinate binational action around border issues related to water, wastewater and sanitation. He suggested that the recommendations be framed from the point of view of the role BECC used to play. Dr. Ganster cited USDOT and its ability to plan for border transportation infrastructure; that agency develops medium- to long-term plans with the cooperation of multiple federal agencies and significant local collaboration. This is a potential model to emulate. Mr. Moderow thought that this type of effort falls under IBWC mandates. BECC invests in projects but is not tasked with long-term planning and operation. Dr. Ganster did not think that this falls under IBWC's mandates. Dr. Collins agreed that replicating the border master plan employed by USDOT for transportation issues and implementing something similar with water using a watershed perspective is a constructive and interesting idea.

Dr. Heyman commented that the Board had previously discussed including desalination in the report, but nothing on this topic has been included. The GNEB members discussed whether it is needed in the report. Dr. Ganster noted that because of water insecurity along the U.S.–Mexico border, the area is going to see more proposals for desalination. Dr. Heyman will draft text about desalination.

The Board members discussed the current draft of the report by section, and Dr. Ganster reminded the Board members that they must submit all appropriate citations when they submit their additional text.

Dr. Ganster thought that more specific data about underserved communities could be added to Section 1, depending on the source and its reliability. CEQ's response to GNEB's 2022 advice letter mentioned a new geospatial mapping tool, the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. Mr. Moderow shared a [recent white paper from IBWC](#) as a potential resource. Mr. McNeece will try to find data on the Mexico manufacturing industry. Dr. Heyman also volunteered to submit data.

Dr. Ganster will add text to Section 2 to expand the asymmetry and priorities discussion and add recommendations on a structure to institutionalize cross-border cooperation on water issues.

Mr. McNeece volunteered to add a discussion of recommendations from prior GNEB reports to Section 3. Dr. Coronado added that Dr. Mumme had mentioned that he is interested in summarizing these and may be able to assign one of his graduate students to this task. She will follow up with him.

The Colorado River situation is complex and evolving rapidly, so although the Board will need to address it in Section 3.ii of the report, the text should be developed closer to the deadline. The report can mention that the process probably will result in reduced allocations to the lower basin states and more tribal access to Colorado River water.

Mr. McNeece thought that Section 3.iii currently describes only the legal difference of different types of water rights, a topic that is not critical and does not add much to the discussion; identifying the water sources is more important. The report may need to discuss reliance on surface water flows other than the Colorado and Rio Grande systems. It also would be helpful to obtain information from each U.S border state on how much water is acquired from the Colorado and Rio Grande rivers, ground water, and other sources. The section should more deeply explore water sources. Mr. McNeece is willing to write this, but he needs data from the other border states (i.e., Arizona, New Mexico and Texas). Dr. Ganster agreed with this observation but noted that it is not useful to look at whole-state data. The border region of each state is the relevant area, and obtaining specific data about the border region may be challenging. Dr. Murrieta-Saldivar described the Sky Island region between Sonora and Arizona, in which water flows downhill. The water's origins create linkages between the higher elevation of the Sky Islands and how the water flows. Six border watersheds originate in this area and affect water management, recharge and allocation between cities and rural areas. These data also are important to understand aquifer recharge.

Mr. McNeece will rewrite the section with any data that he can find. Mr. Barcenas noted the importance of considering water supply quality and aquifer recharge.

TCEQ and New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) staff will review Section 3.iv to ensure that it is adequate.

Dr. Ganster noted the following sentence in Section 3.iv: “To improve reliability and ensure treaty compliance Mexico should recognize the United States as a water user, but this may require revision of Mexico’s national water law.” Dr. Ganster spoke to Dr. Mumme about IBWC’s vague definition of “drought,” and Dr. Mumme explained that the lack of a very specific definition means that diplomatic parties must collaborate to develop a mutually acceptable solution instead of doggedly clinging to a very technical definition that could hinder collaboration. Dr. Ganster will adjust this sentence.

For Section 3.v, Dr. Ganster and Dr. Heyman will work together to organize text on transborder ground water management and how ground water can be managed in U.S. states within a transborder context. Dr. Coronado noted that Dr. Gonzalo Hatch Kuri of the Mexican Institute of Water Technology writes extensively on ground water issues.

Ms. Aguirre will add language to Section 3.vi about the recognition of Imperial Beach, California, as an environmental justice community, with a reference to Dr. Prather’s article on the effects of air transmission of pollutants on impacted waters.

The suggestion was made to add a discussion to Section 3.viii of the multiple benefits of developed wetlands, including stormwater control, filtration, habitat creation and protection, and recreation. Dr. Ganster commented that that a discussion of wetlands and “low-tech” solutions leads to the question of whether Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds may be used to support these types of solutions for wastewater or whether the funds support engineering solutions only. Dr. Heyman noted that one of this meeting’s presentations included nature-based solutions. This topic will be included in callout boxes 1 and 2.

Dr. Coronado will take the lead in ensuring that the discussion of colonias in Section 4.iii is accurate.

Dr. Ganster will connect with U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) staff about potential issues with Mexico not signing off on construction on the U.S. side of the border, as required by the Boundary Treaty of 1970 (Article IV), which could be discussed in Section 4.

The Board agreed that Section 5’s current focus on success stories and best practices is sufficient and does not need to be revised. DHS added a discussion of stormwater to Section 5, and after the callout boxes are developed, this discussion should be reviewed to ensure consistency with the callout boxes.

Text in Section 6 may need to be revised depending on the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding discussions that will be developed. The new EPA Environmental Finance Centers should be emphasized in this section, and information from Mr. Lowenstein’s presentation should be added.

Public Comments

Mr. Green called for public comments. Prior to the meeting, Ms. Sara Kitts submitted a written comment, which FACMD will retain for its records; the comment is included in Appendix D.

Process and Timing for Completing the Report

Paul Ganster, Chair, GNEB, and Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB

The deadline for GNEB members and colleagues to submit their text is June 15. Dr. Ganster will collate the text and send the revised report to the Board by June 30. A small editorial group is needed to review the report. Mr. McNeece and Mr. DeLeon volunteered, and Dr. Ganster noted that Dr. Pohlman, who had to leave the meeting early, also could serve as an editor.

A hybrid Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 3, during which the GNEB members will provide their final input on the report. Based on an August 3 meeting date, the deadline for additional comments would be August 17. The final draft will be sent to the Board by September 20. The teleconference to approve the report is scheduled for November 1. Following approval, the contractor will perform final edits and desktop publishing so that the final report is ready for transmittal by December 1.

Dr. Ganster presented the following proposed report timeline:

April 27	Review draft <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine sections to be adjusted and authors• Determine deadlines
June 15	Deadline for submission of edits
June 30	Send out revised report to Board
August 3	Hybrid Board meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review report and provide final input• Agenda for Board meeting to include presentations, public comments, etc.
August 17	Deadline for submission of edits for final report
September 20	Final draft text sent to Board for review
November 1	Board call to approve report
November 2	Contractor undertakes final edits, graphic layout and production of final report
December 1	Final report ready

Discuss Outreach Strategy for Distributing Report

GNEB Members

Dr. Ganster explained that he generally creates a PowerPoint presentation with an overall summary of the report and presents to local organizations in the San Diego region (e.g., San Diego Association of Governments, Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities), which appreciate hearing about the report.

Dr. Collins asked whether it is possible to use agencies' or members' social media feeds to publicize the report. Mr. Green explained that these messages generally need to be reviewed through a public affairs office, but he could investigate EPA's process. Dr. Collins thought that a joint distribution with all of the member agencies would highlight the multi-agency nature of the report, which is developed by agencies at all levels. Dr. Ganster asked those who are adept at social media to consider the best plan. He also suggested developing a short press release that each Board member's agency could publish.

Ms. Becker thought that is important to provide a physical copy of the report to local leadership if there is a printing budget. Dr. Ganster agreed, but Mr. Green has explained to him that a printing budget is not available. He noted that many individuals on both sides of the border do not like reading from a screen and prefer hard copies.

Mr. Marruffo suggested using the Border 2025 Program to assist with outreach. Mr. Moderow agreed that many institutions could be partners in publicizing the report, including a coordinated social media release, and suggested that the Board make a list of such institutions (e.g., sister cities).

Mr. Moderow asked whether members of Congress who represent the border region personally receive the report. Dr. Ganster explained that the Board has provided the report to members of congressional border caucuses, and Board members have made appointments with their senators and House representatives to provide them with the report. GNEB also has held press conferences in the Wilson Center or other venues in Washington, D.C., as well as visited other federal agencies (e.g., USGS) to present the report. Visiting Washington, D.C., provides a great opportunity to present the report and interact with the staff of the ambassador of Mexico; these staff are invited to GNEB's events in Washington, D.C., to maintain these ties. The GNEB does not have a budget to translate the report into Spanish, but a concise 1-page summary translated by the Board would be beneficial. Mr. Marruffo agreed that a 1-page summary is needed, and he volunteered to perform the translation. He noted that border mayors frequently visit Washington, D.C., and being able to offer a concise 1-page summary in English and Spanish is essential.

Dr. Coronado suggested that GNEB develop an op-ed piece and submit it to border community newspapers. Mr. Moderow suggested distributing the report to the state houses, congresses and assemblies.

Discuss Potential Topics for Next Report

GNEB Members

Dr. Collins liked the idea of developing a report about environmental justice and the Justice40 Initiative to show communities how they can better organize themselves to be a part of the overall conversation. The report also could discuss the Build America, Buy America Act and how it affects border communities. Dr. Coronado and Ms. Aguirre support the topic of environmental justice.

Mr. Moderow thought a description of specific environmental justice issues for border communities would be useful. He thought that Lowndes County in Alabama, as described by Mr. Lowenstein, is a reasonable comparison, in that it has been underserved and isolated for centuries—although it is a fraction of the population of Cameron County in Texas. All states do not embrace environmental justice concepts similarly, and Mr. Moderow is focused on what phrasing would be effective for Texas elected officials. Perhaps the topic of environmental justice could be introduced in the current report. Dr. Ganster noted that agencies have different criteria for identifying environmental justice communities, which could be a way to address the different perspectives.

Ms. Becker has looked at the [Executive Order on Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All](#), as well as policies and definitions. It is necessary to examine the executive order for authority, and she has found nothing but executive orders in this arena. If the goal is to create tangible next steps for the United States to implement, the commonality of climate effects resulting from a warming climate also must be considered. The climate topic includes economic and migration pieces; communities in the future are more likely to be aligned by highway, trade and heat zones than by environmental justice. The next steps would be to identify federal funds and funding needs and determine what that looks like in a binational area. GNEB must take advantage of its unique role and highlight the

environmental justice perspective from a meaningful standpoint. A report on this topic could explore how well U.S. communities are planning for change and sharing these plans. The report could examine provisions to help the young and old, who will be hit the hardest by lack of infrastructure access in the heat. A heat projection would be helpful.

Dr. Ganster noted that GNEB produced a climate report recently, and it would be worthwhile to repeat such a focus through an environmental justice lens. Climate change has disproportionate effects on people with inferior housing (e.g., lack of air conditioning), and the mortality and morbidity from changing climates is much higher in environmental justice communities than in others. The Board is not limited to addressing one issue, so it could develop a follow-up report on (1) border environmental infrastructure and (2) climate by reviewing GNEB's previous recommendations and identifying long-term successes and failures. The Board's efforts to encourage government agencies to cooperate closely have not been successful. Recent funding and executive orders, however, have brought forth interesting cross-agency collaborations. The Board could examine how effective these approaches have been.

Dr. Alan Sweedler supports climate as a topic, especially as the effects on economics and security already are being seen. No one is focusing on border communities. Models have improved since GNEB's climate report was released, and the Board will have better data to draw on. This topic easily can include environmental justice issues.

Mr. Green cautioned the Board to be mindful that two other EPA federal advisory committees focus on environmental justice: the White House Council on Environmental Justice and the National Environmental Justice Advisory Committee. GNEB could collaborate with one or both of them or contribute to their efforts. The Board should determine what these two groups are working on.

Dr. Collins thought a climate report could have a resiliency focus that includes recommendations on what investments and actions need to be taken to increase resiliency on the U.S.–Mexico border. Such a focus overlaps with environmental justice and infrastructure. Mr. Barcenas noted the need for funding to develop infrastructure in communities that cannot afford it, as well as the need to determine how to provide maintenance for infrastructure. Dr. Ganster agreed that operation and maintenance has not been considered in the past, but NADBank has begun to consider this component.

Dr. Ganster requested that the Board members continue to think about potential topics because the group will discuss this during the next GNEB meeting in August.

Next Steps and Wrap-Up

Paul Ganster, Chair, GNEB, and Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB

Dr. Ganster recapped the next steps discussed during the call, as well as the proposed timeline.

The following links may be of interest to the Board members in preparing the report:

- White House Environmental Justice: www.whitehouse.gov/environmentaljustice
- White House Indigenous Knowledge: www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/news-updates/2022/12/01/white-house-releases-first-of-a-kind-indigenous-knowledge-guidance-for-federal-agencies
- White House Nature-Based Solutions: www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Nature-Based-Solutions-Roadmap.pdf

- White House Connectivity and Corridors Guidance: www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/230318-Corridors-connectivity-guidance-memo-final-draft-formatted.pdf
- White House Nature-Deprived Communities: www.whitehouse.gov/ceq/news-updates/2022/09/23/fact-sheet-biden-%e2%81%a0harris-administration-advances-commitment-to-create-more-equitable-access-to-parks-and-nature-in-communities
- White House Inflation Reduction Act (April 2023): www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Inflation-Reduction-Act-Tribal-Guidebook.pdf
- EPA Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Year One Anniversary Report (November 2022): https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-11/BIL_Anniversary_Report_11142022.pdf
- EPA Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Tribal Accomplishments Report (March 2023): www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-03/March.2023.Accomplishments.Report.BIL_Tribal.3.6.2023.pdf
- White House Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Tribal Playbook (May 2022): www.whitehouse.gov/build/resources/bipartisan-infrastructure-law-tribal-playbook
- White House Indigenous Knowledge Guidance (see also attachment): www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/news-updates/2022/12/01/white-house-releases-first-of-a-kind-indigenous-knowledge-guidance-for-federal-agencies
- EPA Environmental Finance Centers: www.epa.gov/waterfinancecenter/efcn
- EPA Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act Funding Opportunities: www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-thriving-communities-technical-assistance-centers
- EPA Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers Fact Sheet: www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-04/EJ%20TCTAC%20Selection%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf

Adjournment

Drs. Ganster and Coronado and Mr. Green thanked the Board members for their efforts. Dr. Ganster adjourned the meeting at 5:53 p.m. EDT.

Action Items

By Report Topic

- All GNEB members will—
 - Submit their text to Dr. Ganster no later than June 15, ensuring that all appropriate citations are included.
 - Consider what types of outreach and materials (e.g., agency social media accounts, press releases, local news media, other border programs, mayors, congressional staff and members, a 1-page summary of the report) can be used to distribute and publicize the annual report.

- Consider topics (e.g., environmental justice, climate issues, climate resiliency) for the next report and be prepared to discuss them during the Board’s August hybrid meeting.
- Mr. Marruffo, Dr. Murrieta-Saldivar and Mr. Barcenas will work together to develop separate text boxes on callout topic #1 (the installation of thousands of rock detention structures in the Turkey Pen Watershed) and callout topic #2 (a green/gray infrastructure strategy for the long-term reduction and control of transboundary stormwater flows in the Ambos Nogales Watershed on the Arizona–Sonora border).
- Mr. McNeece will coordinate with Mr. DeLeon on the ability to include text on callout topic #3 (EPA’s environmental justice analysis on distribution of water, wastewater and pollution control funding under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law), and Dr. Ganster will review any text that is developed.
- Dr. Collins, Mr. McNeece and Ms. Becker will work together to develop a text box combining callout topics #4 (EPA Environmental Finance Centers) and #6 (Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding). They will take into account callout topic #3, as well as other sources of wastewater funding.
- Mr. Micklin and Mr. DeLeon will work together on text for callout topic #5 (Native American TEK).
- Mr. Moderow will provide Dr. Ganster with the text and accompanying photos for the three callout boxes proposed by the TCEQ:
 1. Infrastructure investments to improve the reliability of U.S. water deliveries from Mexico.
 2. Urgency of structural repairs to the Amistad Dam.
 3. The Lower Rio Grande/Rio Bravo Water Quality Initiative.
- The following GNEB members will investigate how to develop an accurate diagram of border water administration in the United States and Mexico in the context of a border map.
 - Ms. Becker and Mr. Moderow will work with the EPA Region 6 Border Office to determine what existing diagrams are available.
 - Dr. Ganster will work with water scholars in Mexico to review any illustrations for accuracy.
 - Mr. Marruffo will assist Ms. Becker in ensuring a complete picture on both sides of the border.
 - Dr. Coronado will contact Dr. Mumme and Dr. Brown to determine whether they know of any existing diagrams.
 - Dr. Murrieta-Saldivar will contact a Sonora organization that conducted a recent analysis of border water issues and cross-border water-smart cities.
- Dr. Ganster and Dr. Heyman will work together to organize text on transborder ground water management and how ground water can be managed in U.S. states within a transborder context.
- Ms. Becker will send information about colonias to Dr. Coronado, who will collate this information with the information from the Texas A&M University Colonias Program.

- Dr. Ganster will develop specific recommendations about federal transborder cooperation on transborder environmental issues while also including local agencies and communities. USDOT management of transborder transportation issues, combined with a watershed perspective, could serve as a model.
- Dr. Heyman, Mr. McNeece and Mr. Moderow will provide data related to underserved communities for Section 1.
- Dr. Ganster will add text to Section 2 to expand the asymmetry and priorities discussion and add recommendations on a structure to institutionalize cross-border cooperation on water issues.
- Mr. McNeece will add a discussion of recommendations from prior GNEB reports to the Section 3 introduction, and Dr. Coronado will contact Dr. Mumme about having a graduate student summarize GNEB's previous recommendations.
- Dr. Heyman will draft text about desalination for Section 3.i.
- Mr. McNeece will revise Section 3.iii.
- TCEQ and NMED staff will review Section 3.iv to ensure that the text is adequate.
- Dr. Ganster will adjust the following sentence in Section 3.iv: "To improve reliability and ensure treaty compliance Mexico should recognize the United States as a water user."
- Drs. Ganster and Heyman will work together to develop specific recommendations for binational ground water regulation and management for Section 3.v.
- Ms. Aguirre will add language to Section 3.vi about the recognition of Imperial Beach, California, as an environmental justice community, with a reference to Dr. Prather's article on the effects of air transmission of pollutants on impacted waters.
- Dr. Coronado will take the lead in ensuring that the discussion of colonias in Section 4.iii is accurate.
- The Board will need to ensure that the callout boxes, once they are developed, are consistent with the discussion of stormwater in Section 5 added by DHS.
- Dr. Ganster will explore how information from Mr. Lowenstein's presentation can be incorporated into Section 6.
- Dr. Ganster will connect with DHS staff about potential issues with Mexico not signing off on construction on the U.S. side of the border, as required by Article IV of the Boundary Treaty of 1970.
- Dr. Ganster will collate all of the new and revised text and send the collated, revised report to the Board members by June 30.
- Dr. Ganster, Dr. Coronado, Dr. Pohlman, Mr. McNeece and Mr. DeLeon will serve on the editorial committee to review the collated, revised report.

By Member/Individual Assigned

- All GNEB members will—
 - Submit their text to Dr. Ganster no later than June 15, ensuring that all appropriate citations are included.
 - Consider what types of outreach and materials (e.g., agency social media accounts, press releases, local news media, other border programs, mayors, congressional staff and members, a 1-page summary of the report) can be used to distribute and publicize the annual report.
 - Consider topics (e.g., environmental justice, climate issues, climate resiliency) for the next report and be prepared to discuss them during the Board’s August hybrid meeting.
- Ms. Aguirre will add language to Section 3.vi about the recognition of Imperial Beach, California, as an environmental justice community, with a reference to Dr. Prather’s article on the effects of air transmission of pollutants on impacted waters.
- Mr. Barcenas will work with Mr. Marruffo and Dr. Murrieta-Saldivar to develop text boxes on callout topic #1 and callout topic #2.
- Ms. Becker will—
 - Work with Mr. Moderow and the EPA Region 6 Border Office to determine what existing diagrams of border water administration are available.
 - Work with Dr. Collins and Mr. McNeece to develop a text box combining callout topics #4 and #6, taking into account callout topic #3, as well as other sources of wastewater funding.
 - Ensure that any diagram developed provides a complete picture of border water administration on both sides of the border, with the assistance of Mr. Marruffo.
 - Send information about colonias to Dr. Coronado.
 - Review Section 3.iv with NMED staff to ensure that the text is adequate.
- Dr. Collins will work with Ms. Becker and Mr. McNeece to develop a text box combining callout topics #4 and #6, taking into account callout topic #3, as well as other sources of wastewater funding.
- Dr. Coronado will—
 - Contact Dr. Mumme and Dr. Brown to determine whether they know of any existing border water administration diagrams.
 - Collate colonias information from Ms. Becker with the information from the Texas A&M University Colonias Program.
 - Contact Mr. Mumme about having a graduate student summarize GNEB’s previous recommendations.
 - Take the lead in ensuring that the discussion of colonias in Section 4.iii is accurate.

- Serve on the editorial committee to review the collated, revised report.
- Mr. DeLeon will—
 - Coordinate with Mr. McNeece on the ability to include text on callout topic #3.
 - Work with Mr. Micklin to develop text for callout topic #5.
 - Serve on the editorial committee to review the collated, revised report.
- Dr. Ganster will—
 - Review any text that is developed for callout topic #3.
 - Work with water scholars in Mexico to review any border water administration illustrations for accuracy.
 - Work with Dr. Heyman to organize text on transborder ground water management and how ground water can be managed in U.S. states within a transborder context.
 - Develop specific recommendations about federal transborder cooperation on transborder environmental issues while also including local agencies and communities. USDOT management of transborder transportation issues, combined with a watershed perspective, could serve as a model.
 - Add text to Section 2 to expand the asymmetry and priorities discussion and add recommendations on a structure to institutionalize cross-border cooperation on water issues.
 - Adjust the following sentence in Section 3.iv: “To improve reliability and ensure treaty compliance Mexico should recognize the United States as a water user.”
 - Work with Dr. Heyman to develop specific recommendations for binational ground water regulation and management for Section 3.v.
 - Explore how information from Mr. Lowenstein’s presentation can be incorporated into Section 6.
 - Connect with DHS staff about potential issues with Mexico not signing off on construction on the U.S. side of the border, as required by Article IV of the Boundary Treaty of 1970.
 - Collate all the new and revised text and send the collated, revised report to the Board members by June 30.
 - Serve on the editorial committee to review the collated, revised report.
- Dr. Heyman will—
 - Work with Dr. Ganster to organize text on transborder ground water management and how ground water can be managed in U.S. states within a transborder context.
 - Provide data related to underserved communities for Section 1.
 - Draft text about desalination for Section 3.i.

- Work with Dr. Ganster to develop specific recommendations for binational ground water regulation and management to Section 3.v.
- Mr. Marruffo will—
 - Work with Mr. Barcnas and Dr. Murrieta-Saldivar to develop separate text boxes on callout topic #1 and callout topic #2.
 - Assist Ms. Becker in ensuring a complete picture of border water administration on both sides of the border.
- Mr. McNeece will—
 - Coordinate with Mr. DeLeon on the ability to include text on callout topic #3.
 - Work with Ms. Becker and Dr. Collins to develop a text box combining callout topics #4 and #6, taking into account callout topic #3, as well as other sources of wastewater funding.
 - Provide data related to underserved communities for Section 1.
 - Add a discussion of recommendations from prior GNEB reports to the Section 3 introduction.
 - Revise Section 3.iii.
 - Serve on the editorial committee to review the collated, revised report.
- Mr. Micklin will work with Mr. DeLeon to develop text for callout topic #5.
- Mr. Moderow will—
 - Provide Dr. Ganster with the text and accompanying photos for the three callout boxes proposed by TCEQ.
 - Work with Ms. Becker and the EPA Region 6 Border Office to determine what existing diagrams of border water administration are available.
 - Provide data related to underserved communities for Section 1.
 - Review Section 3.iv with TCEQ staff to ensure that the text is adequate.
- Dr. Murrieta-Saldivar will—
 - Work with Mr. Barcnas and Dr. Murrieta-Saldivar to develop text boxes on callout topics #1 and #2.
 - Contact a Sonora organization that conducted a recent analysis of border water issues and cross-border water-smart cities about border water administration diagrams.
- Dr. Pohlman will serve on the editorial committee to review the collated, revised report.
- The Board will need to ensure that the callout boxes, once they are developed, are consistent with the discussion of stormwater in Section 5 added by DHS.

Appendix A: Meeting Participants

Chair

Paul Ganster, Ph.D.

Director
Institute for Regional Studies of the Californias
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA

Vice Chair

Irasema Coronado, Ph.D.

Director and Professor
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Arizona State University
Tempe, AZ

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Paloma Aguirre

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City of Imperial Beach
Imperial Beach, CA

Alejandro R. Barcenas

Community Services/Public Works Director
City of Nogales
Nogales, AZ

Kathryn Becker, J.D.

Assistant General Counsel and Tribal Liaison
Office of General Counsel
New Mexico Environment Department
Santa Fe, NM

Kimberly Collins, Ph.D.

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Leonard Transportation Center
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San Bernardino, CA

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LRGV TPDES Stormwater Taskforce
Partnership, Inc.
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Mignonne D. Hollis

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Erik Lee

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Mario Lopez

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Joaquin Marruffo

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William Micklin

Chief Executive Officer, Leaning Rock
Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians
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Cultural Ecologist
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Alan Sweedler, Ph.D.

Community Advisor
Clean Energy Alliance
San Diego, CA

Prescott Vandervoet
Co-Owner and Operator
Vandervoet and Associates Inc.
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Federal Members

U.S. Department of Agriculture
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U.S. Department of Agriculture
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Designated Federal Official

Eugene Green
Designated Federal Official
Good Neighbor Environmental Board
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Region 6
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Region 9
Alhelí Baños
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Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
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Kimberly Tengggardjaja, Ph.D.

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Sacramento, CA

Appendix B: Video/Teleconference Agenda



Good Neighbor Environmental Board (GNEB)

Virtual Meeting: Microsoft Teams

April 27, 2023, 2:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m. EDT

AGENDA

- 2:00–2:20 p.m.** Welcome and Member Roll Call
- Eugene Green, GNEB Designated Federal Officer, Federal Advisory Committee Management Division (FACMD)
 - Robbie Young-Mackall, Director, FACMD
 - Dr. Paul Ganster, Chair, GNEB
 - Dr. Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB
- 2:20–2:25 p.m.** Overview of Agenda and Meeting Goals/Objectives
- Dr. Paul Ganster, Chair, GNEB
 - Dr. Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB
- 2:25–2:40 p.m.** Council on Environmental Quality’s Response to the GNEB Advice Letter and Agency Priorities Update
- Dr. Kimberly Tenggardjaja, Deputy Director for Nature Conservation, CEQ, and Liaison to GNEB
- 2:40–3:10 p.m.** Overview of the Closing America’s Wastewater Access Gap Community Initiative
- Zachary Lowenstein, Program Manager, Water Infrastructure Division, Office of Wastewater Management, Office of Water, EPA
- 3:10–3:40 p.m.** Report Out on the 2023 Association for Borderlands Studies Roundtable Discussions
- Dr. Paul Ganster, Chair, GNEB
 - Dr. Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB
- 3:40–4:50 p.m.** Review and Discuss Latest Draft of Report on Water and Wastewater Infrastructure
- GNEB Members
- 4:50–5:00 p.m.** Public Comments
- 5:00–5:15 p.m.** Process and Timing for Completing the Report
- Dr. Paul Ganster, Chair, GNEB
 - Dr. Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB

AGENDA (continued)

- 5:15–5:30 p.m.** Discuss Outreach Strategy for Distributing Report
- GNEB Members
- 5:30–5:50 p.m.** Discuss Potential Topics for Next Report
- GNEB Members
- 5:50–6:00 p.m.** Next Steps and Wrap-Up
- Dr. Paul Ganster, Chair, GNEB
 - Dr. Irasema Coronado, Vice Chair, GNEB
- 6:00 p.m.** Adjournment

Appendix C: Chair Certification of Minutes

I, Paul Ganster, Chair of the Good Neighbor Environmental Board (GNEB), certify that this is the final version of the complete minutes for the video/teleconference held on April 27, 2023, and that the minutes accurately reflect the discussions and decisions of the meeting.



Paul Ganster, GNEB Chair

June 8, 2023

Date

Appendix D: Written Public Comment

From: [WhoPoo App](#)
To: [Green, Eugene](#)
Subject: Good Neighbor Environmental Board
Date: Thursday, April 6, 2023 10:32:03 AM

Good morning,

I would like to submit comments and attend the following April 27 meeting on the Federal Register: [Federal Register :: Good Neighbor Environmental Board](#)

My organization studies North American wildlife in-depth. The impact of unrestricted immigration at the southern border has had enormous impact on at risk vegetation and animal species, including the ocelot. There are only 60 ocelots left in the United States.

Litter is one of the biggest environmental consequences of border activity at Organ Pipe. There are abandoned camps everywhere, and the park service cannot keep up with cleaning due to the constant influx of new migrants. They have become a normal part of life at this park. Some are in the most remote areas, where visitors don't usually venture, while others are very close to pickup spots like trailhead parking lots. Food, plastic waste, feces, bracelets distributed by human traffickers, diapers, are all part of what the NPS and DHS encounter every day at Organ Pipe.

Matt Stoffolano, chief ranger at Coronado, speaks of a "cottage industry" that produces the gear that coyotes—as human traffickers on the Southern border are commonly called—distribute to migrants, their paying clients. This includes backpacks, camo clothing, the blackened water bottles, and carpet-soled coverings to be worn over one's shoes in order to keep from leaving footprints in the dirt. This gear is difficult to find and clean up and contributes to water pollution of the Rio Grande.

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) estimates that over 2,000 tons of trash are discarded at the Arizona border every year. As a consequence, the department established a website entitled "[Arizona Border Trash](#)" in 2012 to coordinate and keep track of the state's trash cleanup operations. According to ADEQ, each ton of trash requires landfill fees of \$37 to \$49, which are footed by Arizona taxpayers. That does not include fees for materials, transportation, or labor. ADEQ further estimates that each border-crosser leaves an average of six to eight pounds of trash behind.

According to the ADEQ website, border trash "has been shown to affect human health, the environment and economic wellbeing." Included among the specific impacts are watershed degradation, soil erosion, damage to infrastructure, loss of vegetation and wildlife, and escaped campfires.

Using the list of collections from the same website, it is possible to analyze total amounts of trash collected by fiscal year, and compare those figures to the U.S. Border Patrol's monthly data on [total illegal aliens apprehended by sector](#).

Arizona border apprehensions include data from two sectors: Tucson and Yuma, with the large majority of apprehensions (ranging from 80 percent to 95 percent) coming from Tucson.

The correlation is clear. In fiscal years 2011 and 2012, when Arizona was experiencing over 120,000 border apprehensions, over 65,000 pounds of border trash was being collected annually. In the following years, as apprehensions fell as low as 70,000, border trash

collections dropped, too — reaching a low of just 19,000 pounds in fiscal year 2015 before jumping back up in 2016.

According to an official at the Bureau of Land Management's Arizona State Office, these pickups were previously part of a larger state-funded project called the Southern Arizona Project, which was started by BLM 13 years ago. The project's stated goals were "to provide a safe and secure environment for the public, employees, and users of public lands, to protect public land resources and values from the effects of smuggling, and to coordinate and collaborate with others working on border safety, security, and environmental protection." To achieve these goals, the project took a number of pro-environmental steps, including:

- Building physical barriers to prevent smuggling in Arizona's national monuments such as the Sonoran Desert National Monument and Ironwood Forest National Monument;
- Strengthening partnerships with local law enforcement agencies to protect public safety along the monuments;
- Restoring the desert land from soil erosion as a result of smugglers crossing;
- Converting windmill-powered watering sites for endangered animals, which are often vandalized by smugglers and illegal entrants, into sunken troughs that are more accessible to animals than humans, also decreasing competition for water; and
- Collecting trash along the border.

The final Southern Arizona Project annual report — from 2016 — is still available [online](#).

While the broader program has ended, trash collections have continued into 2018. Through June of this year, over 15,000 pounds of trash have been removed. Further, BLM continues to conduct other operations that were part of the project, such as desert soil restoration.

Every illegal alien prevented from crossing our southern border represents about seven pounds of garbage that will no longer be left behind to potentially damage water systems, wildlife, and soil. As such, lawmakers ought to consider that securing the border is not just a matter of national security, but environmental security too. See [Trash at the Border Highlights the Environmental Cost of Illegal Immigration \(cis.org\)](#)

Please let me know how I can enter these comments and attend the meeting.

Thank you,

WHP

whopooapp.com

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.