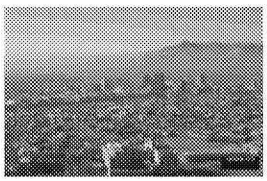
EPA Region 6: Border Program News

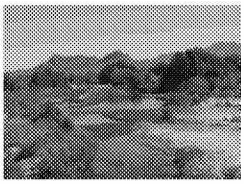
November 2016 – March 2017

www.epa.gov/border2020

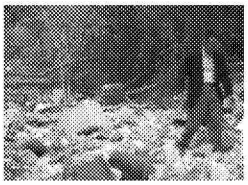
EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency



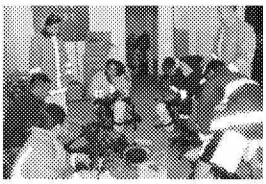
Reduce Air Pollution



Improve Access to Clean & Safe Water



Promote Materials Management & Clean Sites



Joint Preparedness & Emergency Response

Compliance Assurance & Environmental Stewardship

Table of Contents:

Border 2020 Highlight Report 1

State of the Border: Indicators Interim Report (2016) 2

Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) 3

New arsenic treatment facility begins operating in Tornillo, Texas 4

Waste Taskforce Public Meeting 5

Waste Taskforce Meeting: Tire Advisory Committee (TAC) 5

Environmental Education Taskforce Public Meeting 6

Environmental Health Taskforce Public Meeting 7

Junta de Los Rios Taskforce Public Meetings 8

New Mexico-Chihuahua Rural Taskforce Public Meeting 9

Amistad Taskforce Public Meetings 10

Falcon Taskforce Public Meetings 11

Gulf Taskforce Public Meetings 12

Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua Regional Workgroup Public Meeting 13

Texas-Coahuila-Tamaulipas-Nuevo León Regional Workgroup Public Meeting 14

EPA Initiatives in Brownsville, Texas 14

EPA at Work in the Community 15

Border Office Presentation on "International Air Pollution and International Law" 15

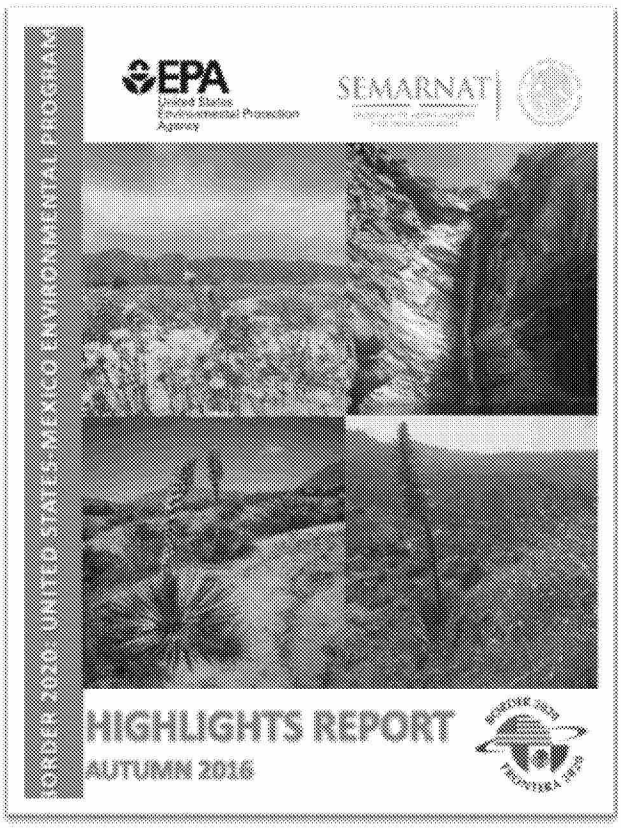
Texas Parks & Wildlife 16th year Anniversary Celebration of Aerial Tramway 16

Region 6 Environmental Protection Agency Border Team Members 17

Texas-Coahuila-Nuevo Leon-Tamaulipas Regional Workgroup Co-Chairs & Staff 18

Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua Regional Workgroup 20

Border 2020 Highlight Report



The report contains highlights of the achievements and efforts of the Border 2020 Program during 2015-2016. During this time thirty-five projects were concluded to improve conditions facing border communities and an additional eleven in the implementation phase. These projects have addressed challenges of clean water, air quality, proper management of solid waste, environmental emergency response and

environmental stewardship. Sixteen (16) Region 6 projects were highlighted in this report.

Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua Regional Workgroup:

- Improving air quality monitoring in Ojinaga (Goal 1: Air)
- New Mexico-Chihuahua border study on air quality (Goal 1: Air)
- Urban keyhole gardens rainwater-harvesting techniques (El Paso Water Utilities) (Goal 2: Water)
- Bio solids recycling agriculture at Juárez valley (Goal 3: Waste)
- Tire amnesty collection events in El Paso County (Goal 3: Waste)
- Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Community Collection Center (Goal 3: Waste)
- Regional plan for waste management in Ascension and Janos (Goal 3: Waste)
- Hazardous railcar leak mitigation preparedness in the Paso del Norte region. (City of El Paso) (Goal 4: Emergency Response)

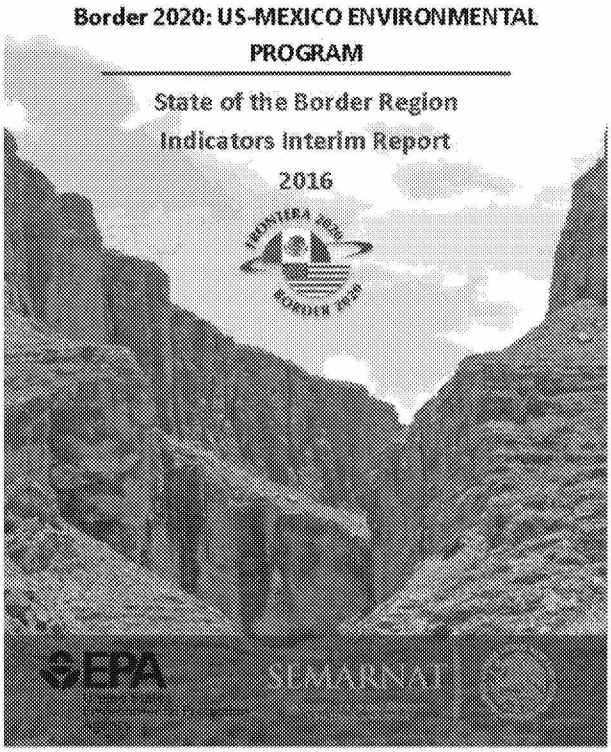
Texas-Coahuila-Nuevo Leon-Tamaulipas Regional Workgroup:

- Characterization of drayage vehicle activities and emissions in the Laredo air shed (Goal 1: Air)
- Management of fat, oil and grease in Nuevo Laredo (Goal 3: Waste)
- Conservation of the Arroyo Las Vacas in Acuña (Goal 3: Waste)
- Waste generation diagnostic for the Northeast Border Region (Goal 3: Waste)
- Alamo Recycling Team Includes Everyone (ARTIE) Program (Goal 3: Waste)
- Supporting Pharr efforts to maintain a clean community (Goal 3: Waste)
- Bi-national exercises at the cities of Harlingen and Matamoros (Goal 4: Emergency Response)
- Promotoras-led environmental health education to children in Eagle Pass (Environmental Education & Environmental Health)

Both Regions / Borderwide:

- COOPERATION TO IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – US/MX Border Health Commission Collaborative Agreement)
    - Children's Symposium (El Paso September 2015)
    - Promotora Trainings
- Enhance joint preparedness for environmental emergencies
- End-of-life Vehicles Guide
- U.S.-Mexico Border Water Infrastructure Program.

State of the Border: Indicators Interim Report (2016)



The State of the Border Region 2016 Interim Report provides information on the status and trends of environmental quality in the U.S.-Mexico border region. In doing so, it also illustrates progress made under the U.S.-Mexico Border 2020 program. This report builds on the flagship 2005 State of the Border Region report and the 2010 State of the Border Region report. It refreshes and updates key indicators from 2010 and adds new indicators to reflect new areas of Border 2020 focus and activity. As with previous reports, this report is structured around the goals of Border 2020 with chapters on air, water, land, environmental readiness and response, and enforcement and compliance.

Indicators are presented with brief data source information below each indicator. Complete underlying data and details on indicator data sources are available in a companion document, State of the Border Region 2016 Interim Update: Indicator Metadata and Data Tables.

Types of Indicators:

- ***Pressure:*** Indicators that describe human activities that place stresses on the environment.
- ***Need:*** Indicators that inform our understanding of the magnitude or type of need for a programmatic response.
- ***Output:*** Indicators that measure activities, products, or services resulting from a project or program.
- ***Outcome:*** Indicators that measure changes in the state of the environment or the effects of environmental conditions on human and/or ecological health

REPORT INDICATORS

Goal 1: Air

- Number of Days Exceeding Air Quality Standards in Border Monitoring Areas

Goal 2: Water

- Number of Unserved Homes Connected to Safe Drinking Water through the Border Water Infrastructure Program
- Number of Unserved Homes Connected Wastewater Collection and Treatment Services through the Border Water Infrastructure Program

Goal 3: Waste

- Per-Capita Municipal Solid Waste Disposal in U.S. Border States and Counties
- Per-Capita Municipal Solid Waste Generated in Mexican Border States
- Number of Electronics Refurbishers and Recyclers in the Border Region Certified to R2 or e-Stewards

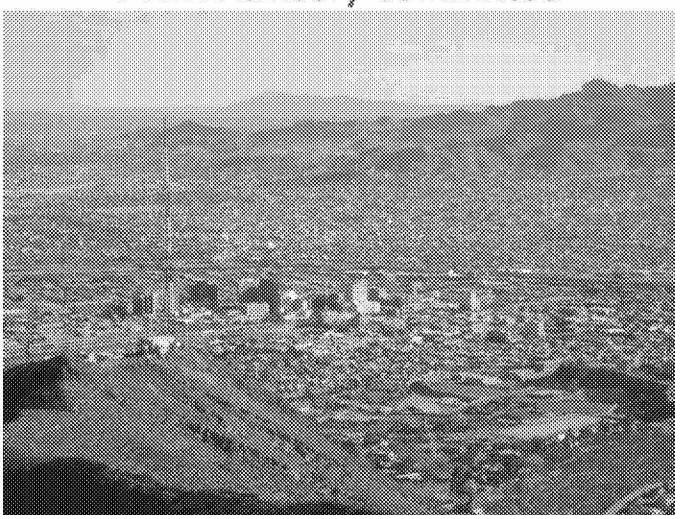
Goal 4: Emergency Response & Preparedness

- Number of Incident Notifications in the Border Region Received by the National Response Center (NRC)
- Number of Incident Notifications in the Border Region Received by the Centro de Orientación para la Atención de Emergencias Ambientales (COATEA) or Centro Nacional de Comunicaciones / Sistema Nacional de Protección Civil (CENACOM)
- Binational Capacity Building and Training Events

Goal 5: Compliance Assistance

- Regulated U.S. and Mexican facilities in the border region
- Number of State and Federal Inspections for Federal Programs in the U.S. Border Region
- Number of Federal Inspections in the Mexican Border Region
- Pollution Reduction from Federal Enforcement Actions in the U.S. Border Region

Joint Advisory Committee



El Paso, Texas - Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua

On January 19, 2017 the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) held its 68th Meeting in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. A total of 62 people participated, including 6 through Go-To-Meeting. Mayor Armando Cabada, of Ciudad Juárez, welcomed the members of the JAC and public. Arturo Blanco from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Environmental Justice, Tribal and International Affairs (OEJTIA) served as the U.S. Co-Chair, as Guy Doñaldson was not able to attend the meeting, along with Ana Patricia Martinez from Mexico's Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT), who serves as the Mexican Co-Chair. During the meeting three new JAC

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members were introduced: Dra. Cecilia O. Olague from the Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano y Ecología (SDUE) of the state of Chihuahua; Psic. Jesús D. Cárdenas from Comisión Estatal para la Protección contra Riesgos Sanitarios (COEPRIS); and Jürgen Ganser, director for the Department of Ecology for the Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua.

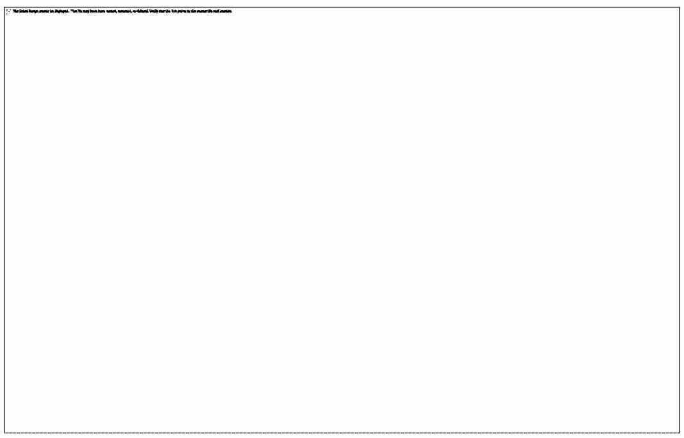
Highlights from the meeting included presentations on the:

- PROAIRE – The program focuses on reversing air quality deterioration of the main cities or areas in the State of Chihuahua through the implementation of measures and actions carried out by the public and private sectors and with participation of citizens, for the protection of public health and the environment.
- Update from Ciudad Juárez Ecology Department on its state vehicle programs, the importation of vehicles, wait times at Port of Entries and air quality associated with POEs, and a health awareness campaign "For Better Air Quality" launched in December 2016 focused to increase citizen awareness on the importance of vehicle inspection program and maintenance.
- Project "Space-time Variation of Heavy Metals in Particulate Material less than 10 micrometers in Ciudad Juárez" by Dr. Alba Corral from the Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juárez (UACJ). The study is focusing on 4-years' worth of data to carry out an air quality space-time analysis based on the quantification of PM10 and heavy metals in air filters of the monitoring network and eventually evaluate the presence of heavy metals in biological samples in children in Ciudad Juárez.
- A regional initiative to address public health risks associated with extreme heat by Gregg Garfin from the University of Arizona.
- Cattle Ranching: Building or Destroying the Environment? By Alejandro Carillo from the Fundación Pasticultores del Desierto.

The next meeting for the JAC is set for May 25th in El Paso, Texas at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). For more information on the meeting please visit the Border 2020 website.

The JAC serves as the air taskforce for the Border 2020 Program for the Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua Regional Workgroup (3-State RWG). More information regarding the JAC can be found at: www.cccjac.org

New arsenic treatment facility begins operating in Tornillo, Texas



Ribbon cutting ceremony for the Tornillo Facility (photo courtesy of BECC)

On March 23, 2017 the El Paso County Tornillo Water Improvement District (EPCTWID) held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its new Wastewater Collection and Arsenic Treatment Plant which began construction in June 2016. Gilbert Tellez, from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6's Water Division - Border Environmental Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) Program was in attendance at the event. The EPA Region 6 BEIF Program provided $3.75 million in grant money for the construction of the project. The project also received $100,000 in technical assistance through EPA Region 6's Program Development Assistance Program (PDAP) that assisted with the preparation of environmental documents and perform a water audit of EPCTWID.

The facility will have the capacity to treat 600 gallons per minute (gmp) to help reduce naturally-occurring arsenic concentration levels, as well as, remove iron and manganese ions. The project also provided first-

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time access to sewer connections to 19 households who were using substandard on-site wastewater disposal systems, eliminating approximately 5,600 gpm of inadequately treated and untreated wastewater.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development program also provided funding for additional projects in the community, bringing the total investment of projects to $6.75 million USD, benefitting approximately 1,560 residents.

For more information, visit the North American Development Bank (NADB) website: http://www.nadb.org/pdfs/state_projects/Arsenic%20Treatment%20and%20Wastewater%20Collection%20Project.pdf

Waste Taskforce Public Meeting

(Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua Regional Workgroup)

On February 7, the Texas-Chihuahua- New Mexico B2020 Task Force Goal 3 for the Promotion of Materials Management, Recycling, Waste Management and Clean Sites held a public meeting, attended by over 35 Taskforce Co-leader's, MC. Rene Franco Ruiz (MX) and Cristina Viesca – Santos (US) , welcomed participants representing from the Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente (PROFEPA), the Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano y Ecología (SDUE) Gobierno, Municipalities of Ciudad Juárez and Ascención, Chihuahua Public Works and Ecology department, as well as, private partner, s, Cementos de Chihuahua, the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), Ciudad Juárez Autonomous University (UACJ) faculty and students and concern citizens along with the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission (BECC). and general public.

The meeting included a brain-storming-session on input on priorities to be included in the Two-Year Action Plan (2017-2018) for the Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua RWG. Ing. Gustavo Nunez, of Cementos de Chihuahua, presented on how the reutilizes used tires and solid waste in their process to produce co-generation for their pant. The reutilization of the tires is part of a private – public partnership that has existed over several years and has served as a model that highlights how using used tires can become an economic driver for other business. From the partnership, over 6 million tires were eliminated from Ciudad Juárez's landfill by 2015. In 2016, 1.5 million tires were eliminated from the landfill.

COLUSOL presented on a project has been reutilizing waste water sludge in generation of clean energy. Ing. Francisco Sanchez, from Ecorecikla, presented on the events they have partnered with the Municipality of Ciudad Juárez, on recycling and e-waste collection events. Last, Pam Aguirre, who leads the Tire Advisory Committee gave a presentation on private sector participation on scrap tire management in the Paso del Norte Region. Mrs. Aguirre presented on how some local businesses have been reutilizing scrap tires in pavers and tiles. In addition, the City of El Paso has done several paving projects using crumb rubber. Mrs. Aguirre presented on Tire Amnesty Days that three local communities (Lower Valley of El Paso, City of San Elizario and Village of Vinton) have been having on a regular basis. Last, two new tire bills were proposed by Senator Rodriguez to address the issue of scrap tires in Texas.

Waste Taskforce Meeting: Tire Advisory Committee (TAC)

(Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua Regional Workgroup)

On March 7 the TAC met to discuss ongoing activities from committee members. Topics on the agenda included discussion of the Texas House Bill 490, introduced by State Rep. Mary Gonzalez, regarding "Tire Dumping Enforcement Grant Program", and Senate Bill 570, introduced by State Senator Rodriguez, Status of Tire Haulers in New Mexico. The three other committees: Enforcement Working Group, Ends Markets Working Group and Securing Funding Working Group did not have any updates to present. Participants included representatives from EPA El Paso Border Office, City of Vinton, San Elizario, private

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companies – 3 Pesetas, Michelin Tires, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and others.

The TAC was formed from a Border 2020 Goal 3 workshop held in 2014 that focused on rethinking scrap tires as a resource – not a waste. The TAC was one of four actions from the workshop, with the goal of establishing a permanent scrap tire advisory committee in the Paso del Norte Region that meets regularly to address the topic of scrap tires. The next TAC meeting is expected to take place in September 2017.

Environmental Education Taskforce Public Meeting

(Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua Regional Workgroup)

The Border 2020 Environmental Education Taskforce held a public meeting, attended by over 60 stakeholders, on February 1, 2017 in El Paso, Texas. Participants included University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) faculty and students, US-Mexico Border Health Commission (BHC or Commission), Mexican Consulate, City of El Paso representatives, Ciudad Juárez City Staff, Mexican university faculty, U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission, Border Environmental Cooperation Commission (BECC), NGOs, private business and general public.

Participants at the Environmental Education Taskforce meeting on February 1, 2017.

The meeting included five presenters: Dr. Bruce San Filippo (Border 2020 Environmental Health TF Co-leader); Dra. Verónica González Sepúlveda (Ciudad Juárez Office of Sustainability); Patricia Juárez-Carillo (UTEP); Esmeralda Cervantes Rendón (El Colegio de Chihuahua) and Maria Sisneros (Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Border Office).

Dr. Filippo, who also represents the BHC in New Mexico, presented on the Commission's initiatives along the border which includes a strong push on training and empowering promotoras. The Commission has been a partner with EPA on their children's health symposium and promotora trainings that took place in 2015-2016 throughout several cities along the Texas border. Dr. Filippo also highlighted several local projects focused on Education on Heat Resiliency and air quality.

Dr. González who was hired as the Chief Resiliency Officer for Ciudad Juárez under the Rockefeller Foundation Grant, presented on Ciudad Juárez's sustainability initiatives. Through several public forums five initiatives were identified under the program. In addition, the office has already begun to undertake several projects focuses on bringing health awareness on extreme heat events, green infrastructure and a woman's program on "Safe Perimeter/Environment"

Dr. Juárez-Carillo presented on several activities that took place in 2016 with UTEP. UTEP in April 2016 held a public forum focused on "Environment, Social Justice & Sustainable Development".

Participants on April 2 Public Forum on "Environmental, Social Justice & Sustainable Development"

During the forum participants stated that there needs to be more actions towards addressing basic needs

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(i.e. housing, energy, water, food, etc.); more empowerment of a broader range of stakeholders on the issues through education, communication, risk awareness and knowledge transfer; promotion of a cohesive and engaged community through social connectivity and community participation; and also learn what local government is doing (i.e. projects and policy).

Esmeralda Cervantes presented on a 3-day conference focused on "Renewable energy and Sustainability" that took place in October 2016 in Ciudad Juárez attended by over 353 participants. The conference focused on renewable energy and sustainability and how to address social problems. The conference highlighted the continued need to educate the public on the issue and ensuring they are involved in various forums and activities.

Maria Sisneros presented on the 3-State RWG priorities under the Two-Year Action plan (2016-2017) and a summary of the previous Action Plan.

The final portion of the meeting included conducting a "World Café" where participants broke up into five groups to discuss what should be the priorities for the taskforce, what are the challenges and how to address them. The results of the activity were presented at the February 14 Regional Workgroup meeting.

World Cafe activity with participants at the EETF mtg.

Environmental Health Taskforce Public Meeting

(Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua Regional Workgroup)

The Environmental Health Taskforce public meeting took place on March 30, 2017. Participants included representatives from U.S.-MX Border Health Commission (BHC or Commission), Las Cruces City, New Mexico Department of Health, Border Environmental Cooperation Commission (BECC), Doña Ana County, University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

The meeting had six presenters. A brief summary of each is presented below.

Lisa LaRoque from the City of Las Cruces highlighted some of the city's ongoing efforts to address heat resiliency. Projects currently ongoing include a green infrastructure project focused on creating a "green Corridor" to connect two large major streets with a walking and cycling pathway. A second project will focus on capturing stormwater and using it to irrigate public spaces. A third project is a partnership with utilities where people can be given a tree to plant in front of their home to create more shade. A fourth project is a collaboration with City of El Paso and Juárez on a health assessment survey on extreme heat. During the month of May, the City of LC along with El Paso Juárez will have several extreme heat outreach events to the public.

Jose Velasquez from the Commission provided a presentation on the Commission's efforts to enrich and build capacity with promotoras. These efforts are also part of a collaboration with EPA. During June, the US-MX BHC along with the 10 border states will host a binational "Vector-borne Diseases" conference in El Paso.

Claudia Macias from NM Dept. of Health gave an overview of New Mexico's Promotora history and Certification Volunteer Program (CVP). Currently there are 120 certified promotoras in the state of NM. The certification program consists of 100 hours focused on developing 10 core promotora competencies. The

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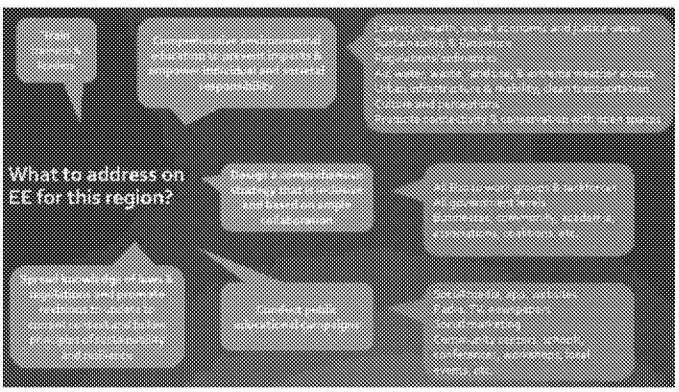
health department looking into growing the promotora network. The state of NM is the second state in the US to have legislation recognize utilizing Medicaid funds to be used to reimburse the work promotoras do.

Patricia Juárez, US Coleader of Environmental Education and Sustainability Taskforce (EESTF) of Border 2020, presented over overview of the EESTF public meeting held February 1. During the public meeting the following were stressed as priorities on environment and environmental health: train the trainers; comprehensive environmental education; increase literacy - education empowers your community to make decision (geared towards promotoras, leaders, etc.); conduct public education campaigns in a language and medium they can understand; strategy that includes various sectors; spread the knowledge of laws and regulations to promote environmental literacy.



EETF Public Input Priorities & Needs

Jagan Butler from the Border Environmental Health Coalition (BEHC) presented on Environmental Literacy. Overall it was an overview on how the public doesn't really understand the environment and its effects on human health and vice versa, people and their effect on the environment. Environmental Literacy is needed in the community to understand this relationship. Environmental Health doesn't have to be a negative thing but if we have clean air, water and good food source then that promotes good environmental Health.

Ken Scholar from Doña Ana County Vector Control Program, presented on some of the Counties activities the county is taking to combat vector borne-illnesses. The County has focused not so much on enforcement but collaborations and partnerships and good environmental Stewardship and compliance to address mosquitos' issues. They have worked with farmers to address standing water and have also focused on environment outreach with kids to help bring the word to parents in the home.

Vector Control Staff obtaining samples

Junta de Los Rios Taskforce Public Meetings

(Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua Regional Workgroup)

The Junta de Los Rios Taskforce which address border environmental issues in the Presidio, Texas – Ojinaga, Chihuahua are held two task forces meetings: 1) November 3-4, 2016 in Ojinaga and 2) March 23, 2017 in Presidio.

View of the Municipal Building in Ojinaga, Chihuahua

The November 3-4 meetings were held at the City of Ojinaga City Council Chambers. Environmental

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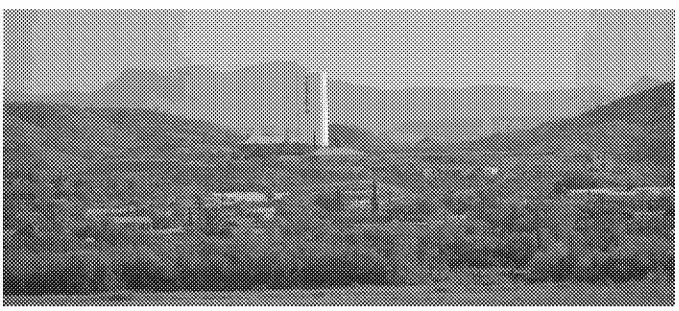
Protection Agency (EPA) staff, Carlos Rincon, met with Martin Sanchez, the mayor of Ojinaga, along with the City of Ojinaga Ecology Department's Director and those of the Office of City Manager, Public Works and Chief Advisor to the Mayor for a day and a half work program to discuss ongoing priorities regarding air quality and city trash collection and landfill infrastructure needs. Technical staff from the City of Juárez Air Quality Monitoring Program worked with the City of Ojinaga Monitoring technical personnel preparing the three PM10 units the city has to begin running in the near future. so that the air quality monitoring network will start running as per the stations' schedule. A Border 2020 Grant assisted with the bringing the monitors back to operational function and also training three Ecology Department Ojinaga technicians on topics such as: units operational procedure systems, filter change-handling and shipment to Centro de Investigación en Materiales Avanzados (CIMAV) laboratory in Chihuahua City. Once the monitors are running, Dr. Alfredo Campos Trujillo from CIMAV will analyze the filters and will have the data ready for publication, at City of Ojinaga and at other Task Force partners' web page for public viewing.



Overlooking Presidio, Texas

On March 23, 2017, the Junta de los Rios had their first public for the year. During the meeting, Ojinaga city officials presented on the city's 2-year government planned priorities. Secretary Cecilia Olague from the Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano y Ecología (SDUE) Gobierno (SDUE) presented the Governor's 5-year program on the Environment and Environmental Health Plan. Last, the taskforce members and stakeholders present provided input on priorities for the Two-year Workplan (2017-2018) for the Regional Workgroup.

New Mexico-Chihuahua Rural Taskforce Public Meeting

(Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua Regional Workgroup – 3State RWG)

El Paso Border Office Director, Dr. Carlos Rincon, attended the public meeting of the New – Chihuahua Rural Taskforce on March 30, 2017 held at the Palomas's Public library in Palomas, Chihuahua. Dr. Rincon was accompanied by Gerardo Tarin, representing Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT), to discuss environmental education and environmental health priorities and projects in the New Mexico – Chihuahua rural area. Approximately 22 stakeholders attended the public meeting. Attendees included Local government officials including the Mayor of Ascención, Chihuahua and Palomas, Chihuahua, Ascención, Chihuahua and Columbus, New Mexico City Council members, New Mexico State University (NMSU) staff and State of Chihuahua Health Science, Health Secretariat in Chihuahua, the Village of Columbus Economic Development, NGO (Border Partners), Rural Chihuahua's Agriculture University, Chihuahua Cattle Ranchers Association and Border Environmental Cooperation Commission (BECC).

Dr. Dave Dubois presenting to taskforce meeting attendees

Dr. Dave Dubois (NMSU) presented an update on a Border 2020 Project funded that looks like the public

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health risk of exposure to dust from bare cattle ranchers and unpaved streets and preventative measures that can be taken. In addition, Roberto Nunez, of the Village of Columbus, presented an overview of Columbus's drinking water reserves osmosis system, which helps to meet the water quality standard for fluoride and arsenic. The meeting concluded with attendees providing input on the rural taskforce's priorities for 2017 – 2018. Comments regarding the priorities included water quality and safe drinking water access to residents of the rural area, as well as, addressing issues with waste management for the region.

(left to right) Carlos Rincon (EPA), Gerardo Tarin (SEMARNAT), Noel Dolores Loya Lozano (Mayor of Ascención), Briselda Duarte (BECC), Ramon Rodriguez Prieto (Mayor of Palomas)

Amistad Taskforce Public Meetings

(Texas-Coahuila-Tamaulipas-Nuevo Leon Regional Workgroup – 4State RWG)

The Amistad TF held its 2016 public meeting on December 6 in Eagle Pass, Texas. About 40 persons attended the meeting that included attendees from city of Eagle Pass, Maverick County, Departamento de Ecología de Piedras Negras, Departamento de Ecología de Ciudad Acuña, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 El Paso office, Secretariat of Environment in Coahuila (SEMA), Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources in Tamaulipas (SEMARNAT) –by Go to Meeting, Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC), Mexican Consulate in Eagle Pass, non-profit organizations and academic institutions.

There were four presentations during the meeting. Dr. Carlos Rincon shared updates on the projects under the 2015-2016 Border 2020 Action Plan for the Amistad Task Force. There are 15 projects in the Action Plan, one is from the U.S. side and 14 are being developed on the Mexican side.

Amistad TF Meeting December 2016

Oscar Flores, Secretariat of Environment in Coahuila (SEMA), provided an update on a Border 2020 funded project focused on a used electronics program the Secretariat is developing. The objectives of the project are to develop storage capacity of used electronics, prevent the unauthorized disposal of this type of waste in landfills, lots and near water bodies, educate the general population on used electronics recycling, and strengthen recycling methods for specific electronic materials.

Victor Ibarra of the Technological Institute of Piedras Negras reported on the status of the used electronics awareness project in Eagle Pass and Piedras Negras that was funded under the Border 2020 Program. The objective of the project is to promote the integrated management of used electronics and identify waste flows. More than 80% of the project has been completed.

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Vanessa Rosales-Herrera of the City of Eagle Pass presented on the plastic bag ordinance passed by the Eagle Pass City Council in February 2017. The objectives of the ordinance are to protect the environment from the adverse effects of plastic bags, protect life and property from flooding, protect fish and rivers, and promote the overall beautification of the city of Eagle Pass.

The final portion of the meeting had attendees conduct a working session where they split into groups by goal (air, water, waste, emergency response, compliance & enforcement, and environmental health/education) to get any input from stakeholders on environmental priorities and projects sent to EPA for consideration for the next Border 2020 Request for Proposals and the Two-Year Action Plan (2017-2018).

Falcon Taskforce Public Meetings

(Texas-Coahuila-Tamaulipas-Nuevo Leon Regional Workgroup – 4State RWG)

The Falcon TF held its 2016 annual public meeting on December 7, 2016 in Laredo, Texas. The meeting was attended by 42 people that included officials from the city of Laredo, Municipio de Nuevo Laredo, Municipio de Anáhuac, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 El Paso office, Secretariat of Environment in Tamaulipas (SEDUMA)—through Go To Meeting, Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources in Tamaulipas (SEMARNAT) –through Go to Meeting, Secretariat of Sustainable Development in Nuevo Leon—through Go To Meeting, PROFEPA Tamaulipas—through Go To Meeting, Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC), Mexican Consulate in Laredo, non-profit organizations and academic institutions.

Dr. Carlos Rincon represented EPA at the meeting. Dr. Carlos Rincon shared updates on the projects under the 2015-2016 Border 2020 Action Plan for the Falcon Task Force. There are 16 projects in the Action Plan.

Dr. Juan Antonio Herrera of the Autonomous University of Tamaulipas (UAT) discussed the status of a legislative reform and environmental education project that was funded by the Border 2020 Program. The objectives of the project are to propose reforms to environmental regulations in Nuevo Laredo, train inspectors, and measure the level of environmental awareness through surveys. Mr. Herrera reported on several activities under the project that included:

- Educating 250 people through interviews with local authorities about regulations to lay the ground for legislative proposals. The results of the surveys showed that there is a lack of or we needed to strengthen recycling and water conservation programs.
- Staff of UAT collaborated with the Nuevo Laredo ecology staff and Comisión Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado (COMAPA - Nuevo Laredo's water system) to train schools on recycling and water conservation. The original goal was to train 150 people but the project has trained over 750 people on these topics.
- Steve Landin, Fire Chief of the Laredo Fire Department discussed the Laredo and Nuevo Laredo Joint Emergency Response Contingency Plan updated in July 2016. The plan doesn't allow staff of the Laredo Fire Department to cross equipment or to physically respond to contingencies, but it identifies communication and training as important components. Chief Landin stressed the importance of organizing a tabletop and contingency exercise with Nuevo Laredo officials in one of the crossing points.
- Marco Garza of the Technological University of Nuevo Laredo provided a status on a wastewater treatment project. The university is partnering with Caterpillar (a global equipment services company) to design a project to extend the connection of their sewer lines on campus to the municipality's sewer system.

The final portion of the meeting included a working session where attendees grouped by goal come up

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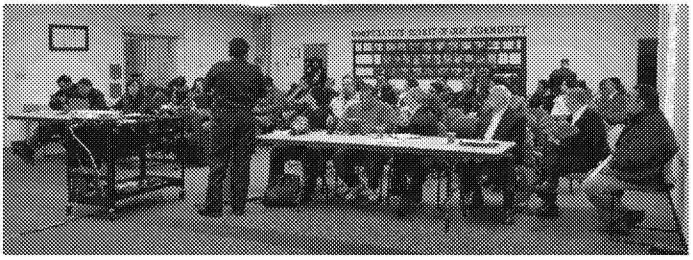
with environmental priorities and projects for the next Border 2020 Request for Proposals, sent to EPA Border Program staff, and the Two-Year Action Plan (2017-2018).

Gulf Taskforce Public Meetings

(Texas-Coahuila-Tamaulipas-Nuevo Leon Regional Workgroup – 4State RWG)

On December 9 ,2016, the Gulf Taskforce held its annual public meeting in Harlingen, Texas. Approximately 50 people attended including officials from the cities of Reynosa, Valle Hermoso, Matamoros, Pharr, San Juan, Brownsville, Harlingen, as well as representatives from Matamoros and Valle Hermoso water and wastewater utilities, Matamoros commissioner and Matamoros local state representative, Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano y Medio Ambiente (SEDUMA), Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT), Secretary of State Colonias staff and Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) Development council staff. Maria Sisneros, from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) El Paso Border Office attended the meeting representing EPA Sam Coleman who serves as the 4-State RWG Federal Co-Chair. Opening remarks for the meeting included: Lic. Jesus Gonzales Macias, SEMARNAT- Tamaulipas Delegado, Border 2020's federal Co-chair, Claudia Lozano of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ - representing Chairman Bryan Shaw Border 2020's State co-chair) John Wood, Brownsville Navigation District Commissioner and Gulf Task Force US Coleader, Jesus de la Garza, Matamoros Mayor and Gulf Task Force Mexican Co-facilitator, Jim Darling, McAllen Mayor and Delfino Ramirez, representing Reynosa's Mayor.



Cirilo Rodriguez, McAllen Fire Department, addresses participants at the December 9 meeting

Six presentations were conducted during the meeting:

- Gulf Task Force' Two-year Action Plan (2015-2016) (Maria Sisneros, EPA). Ms. Sisneros provided updated information on the 2015-2016 Action Plan for the Gulf TF, which included 24 projects.
- Binational Tabletop and Functional Exercises between the cities of Harlingen and Matamoros, City of Harlingen (Cirilo Rodriguez, McAllen Fire Department). Mr. Rodriguez presented on a Border 2020 funded project that provided 40 HR-HAZMAT training to Matamoros, Tamaulipas responders. The grant also included a binational tabletop and function exercise.
- Let's Clean it Up and Green it Up, City of Pharr (Maya Acosta, City of Pharr). Ms. Acosta presented on a Border 2020 funded project whose objectives were to: conduct solid waste disposal events; increase recycling efforts by offering drop off areas around the city; education on recycling; provide curbside recycling to residents, schools and small business; increase electronic waste efforts.
- Strengthen Solid Waste Programs in Rio Bravo and Valle Hermoso, Tamaulipas (Francisco Guerra, SEDUMA Tamaulipas). Mr. Guerra presented on a Border 2020 funded project that focuses on assisting the municipalities of Rio Bravo and Valle Hermoso, Tamaulipas to conduct a diagnosis to develop a comprehensive management workplan on municipal solid waste
- Emergency Preparedness in Colonias (Josue Ramirez, Texas Housing, and Ramona Casas, ARISE). Both speakers provided an overview of the conference held in August 2016. Both these two organizations along with EPA's Border

Program, EPA's Environmental Justice Program and other stakeholders hosted a conference in August 2016 to provide information to Colonia Residents on Emergency Preparedness efforts, before, during and after an emergency event.

- Matamoros' Clean Beach Certification (Eduardo Castilla, City of Matamoros). Mr. Castilla provided information on Matamoros' clean beach certification whose objectives are to: promote the sanitation of the beach, the watershed and water bodies associated with associated with the beach; prevent pollution in order to protect and preserve beaches, respecting native flora and fauna; improve the quality of life by protecting the health of users; and raise the competitiveness levels of tourist destinations with coordinated actions of the various orders of Government and private, social and academic sectors.

Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua Regional Workgroup Public Meeting

Regional Workgroup Leadership & Co-Chairs. (left to right) Arturo Blanco (EPA), Dra. Cecilia Olague Caballero (SDUE), Sam Coleman (EPA), Juan Carlos Borrego (NMED), Steve Niemeyer (TCEQ), and Evaristo Cruz (Ysleta del Sur Pueblo)

Sam Coleman, US Co-Chair for the Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua Regional Workgroup (3-State RWG), participated on February 14, 2017, in the regional workgroup's 2017 public meeting held at the Ysleta del Sur Tribal Court in El Paso, Texas. The meeting was also chaired by the 3state RWG State (Dra. Cecilia Olague Caballero – Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano y Ecología (SDUE); Steve Niemeyer represented Chairman Bryan Shaw – Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Juan Carlos Borrego, Deputy Secretary for New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and Tribal Co-Chair (Evaristo Cruz representing Pueblo Governor Carlos Hisa, from Ysleta del Sur Tribe). Mexican Co-Chair Brenda Rios was unable to attend the 3state RWG meeting but briefly addressed participants via phone at the beginning of the meeting. Each of the federal, state and tribal co-chairs provided input of their respective agency work and priorities along the border. The public meeting was attended by 51 stakeholders from government, academia and private sectors, as well as, NGOs.

The meeting was comprised of ten presentations, a presentation on an overview of the Border 2020 Indicators Report published in December 2016 and each of the nine Taskforces within the 3-State RWG. The taskforce co-leaders each presented an overview of priorities and ongoing projects to be included in the Two-year Workplan (2017-2018) for the regional workgroup. In addition, each highlighted recently completed projects and their impact within the community. Presentations and minutes from the meeting are available on the Border 2020 Program website.

Attendees at 3-State RWG Meeting on February 14, 2017

Other notable news from the meeting included the announcement of U.S. Co-Chair for the Water Taskforce, Lorenzo Arriaga, stating that he would be retiring from the taskforce as co-chair. The U.S. – MX Border Program would like to thank Mr. Arriaga for his service. Mr. Arriaga served as the Water Co-Chair during the Border 2012 and Border 2020 Program.

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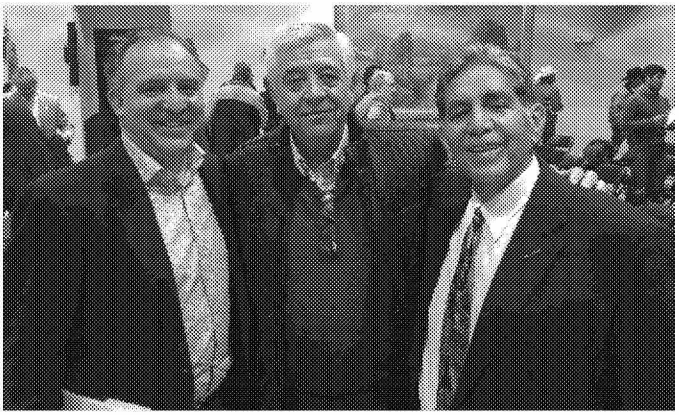

(Left to Right) Rene Franco Ruiz(Waste TF MX Co-chair), Rene Franco Barreno (Water TF MX Co-Chair) and Lorenzo Arriaga (former Water TF US Co-Chair)

Texas-Coahuila-Tamaulipas-Nuevo León Regional Workgroup Public Meeting

On February 14, 2017, the Texas-Coahuila-Nuevo Leon Regional Workgroup (4-State RWG) conducted their annual 2017 Public meeting. The binational meeting was attended by approximately 79 stakeholders from government, academia, non-governmental organizations, private industry and general public. The purpose of the RWG Annual Meeting was to present the progress of binational projects in the two-year Action Plan (2015-2016) and to agree on and identify priorities that can be included in the two-year Action Plan (2017-2018).

Leadership panel at the 4-State RWG meeting on February 16, 2017

The City of Laredo Mayor, Hon. Pete Saenz, and Council Member, Lic. Carmen Canturosas Vilarreal, representing Mayor Enrique Rivas of Nuevo Laredo, welcome the meeting participants. Sam Coleman, U.S. Federal Co-chair for the regional workgroup, along with Lic. Jesús González Macías, Mexican Federal Co-Chair who joined via Go-to-Meeting, presided over the meeting, along with the other US and Mexican State Co-Chairs. Each of the leadership partners provided a message regarding their Agency participation in the Border 2020 program, their objectives and strategies in their Focused Entities and they generally discussed the commitment of their States to the efforts for follow-up of this Binational Program.

Thirteen speakers presented on the progress of each of the Taskforces (Amistad, Falcon, Gulf), as well as, regional points of interest. The Taskforce Co-leaders presented the Progress Report of each of the subcommittees, the objectives achieved and the projects still in progress, as well as, the priorities and strategies in these regions. The final session of the meeting concluded with a public comment period where attendees presented their concerns and proposals to the RWG leadership.

Public comment session during RWG meeting.

Participants from both the US and Mexico at the end of the RWG meeting

EPA Initiatives in Brownsville, Texas

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In December 2016, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) selected the community of Brownsville to receive technical assistance for Creating Equitable Development under Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program. The technical assistance provided will help evaluate their priorities to work toward equitable development and support community goals for housing, local businesses, jobs, transportation, and preserving opportunities for residents. Technical assistance is delivered by EPA staff and EPA-hired consultant teams. Each technical assistance project includes:

Public engagement through a one- to two-day workshop; Direct consultation with relevant decision-makers and; A memo outlining specific steps the community could take to implement the ideas generated during the workshop.

The City of Brownsville, Texas has been working with EPA on a Sustainability Initiative. In June 2016, EPA announced it is providing the city with technical assistance with sustainable design strategies under its Greening America's Communities (GAC) program.

Under the GAC Program, Brownsville will add green infrastructure to the International Greenway along the U.S.-Mexico border to manage stormwater, create a more walkable street, and add shade and plants to cool an area experiencing higher temperatures due to climate variability. A design team funded through the program has been working with the city to implement the project. EPA funds a team of designers to visit each community to produce schematic designs and exciting illustrations intended to catalyze or complement a larger planning process for the pilot neighborhood. Additionally, these pilots are often the testing ground for citywide actions, such as changes to local codes and ordinances to better support environmentally sustainable growth and green infrastructure. The design team and EPA, along with partners from other federal agencies, also help city staff develop specific implementation strategies.

EPA at Work in the Community

Border Office Presentation on "International Air Pollution and International Law"

View of El Paso, Texas -Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua from Ranger Peak in Franklin Mountains

On March 14, 2017, Dr. Carlos Rincon of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Border office presented to approximately 30 high school students a 35 min presentation on "International Air Pollution" at the Chamizal Theatre in El Paso, Texas. The presentation is part of a week long program a University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) student, in their Environmental Justice Club helped to organize. The high school students were part of a Magnet Program, in the Socorro Independent School District, called Libertad which focuses on preparing students to pursue careers in Environmental Law and Environmental Policy Making. The Magnet Program received a grant from the Hatton W. Sumners foundation whose mission is "For the Study and Teaching of the Science of Self-Government".

Dr. Rincon presented on air quality issues in the Paso del Norte and its relationships with the Border 2020 Program. The presentation highlighted the work of the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC): Projects from the JAC worked, how partners interacted, what it took to achieve the international projects and the challenges that exist. The presentation highlighted the bottom up approach of the Border Program, how the JAC is a model for other groups where, local stakeholders sometimes drive the solutions to the challenges that exist.

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Activities such as this gives EPA Border Program staff the opportunity to engage and expand public awareness in the education community on the environmental issues the Border Program helps to address.

Texas Parks & Wildlife 16th year Anniversary Celebration of Aerial Tramway

On Saturday, March 28, 2017, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Border Staff, Maria Sisneros, participated in the Texas Parks & Wildlife 16th Anniversary Celebration of Aerial Tramway state park. Over 1,036 attended the event. EPA hosted a booth at the event that distributed EPA publications for adults and children on clean air, clean water, waste management and recycling and environmental health. EPA is committed to engaging the public and bringing awareness to environment issues in the Paso del Norte Region.

General public at Texas Parks & Wildlife outreach event on March 18

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