

Meeting Notes

U.S.-Mexico Border Field Coordinating Committee (FCC) Meeting, Imperial County II Complex, Classrooms D&E, 2895 South 4th Street, El Centro, California, May 3-5, 2006

Summary of speaker presentations – Day 1

“Borders” Relationships Between San Diego and Imperial Counties and Baja California, Victor Carrillo, Co-Chair, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Border Committee. SANDAG is San Diego’s regional planning agency. It was established under California statutory law. The SANDAG Borders Committee brings together elected officials and representatives from San Diego, Imperial, Riverside, and Orange Counties, and Baja California/Mexico with the goal to create a regional community where San Diego, its neighboring counties, tribal governments, and northern Baja California mutually benefit from the varied resources and international location. The Borders Committee provides policy direction to the SANDAG Board regarding issues or activities related to planning and coordination between the San Diego region and its surrounding neighbors.

The Borders Committee is involved in binational planning through consolidation of the responsibility of the transport of goods and people. It is composed of 19 local governments, 18 tribes in San Diego County, 2 tribal governments in Imperial County, and tribal governments in Baja California. (Coachella valley, Mexicali valley and Imperial Valley already have an economic association partly through SCAG (Southern California Association of Governments)). Members are elected to participate. This binational group is tasked with the political, social, and cultural aspects of binational planning. Orange, Riverside, and Imperial Counties and Baja California are growing at a faster rate than San Diego. Imperial is the last stronghold due to land availability - housing prices there have nearly doubled in the last few years. It is recognized that the growth will place demands on local and imported resources. 70 -130 thousand people cross back and forth just at Calexico. Many people (~70%) living in Mexicali are actually US citizens. Tijuana, has Mexico’s highest concentration of maquilas from the US and Pacific Asia. The hope is to create a regional community, where San Diego, its neighbor county governments, tribal governments, and northern Baja California mutually benefit from the area’s varied resources and international location while being mindful of differences between countries as well as differences among local governments - cultural as well as political. Asked what the geographical limits to SANDAG were, Mr. Carrillo replied that they are trying to direct thinking towards the concept of a networked economic system on the model of the EU with nodes north and south, even as far as South America.

Borderland Mangement Task Force, Brian Martin, US Border Patrol: San Diego Sector Border Infrastructure System (BIS), Gail Acheson, BLM Palm Springs/South Coast Field Manager (CA), Shela McFarlin, BLM Special Assistant for International Programs.

As of 1991 the infrastructure at Otay Mesa was minimal consisting of a primitive border road next to the highway, and rundown barbed wire fence. The National Guard came in and constructed a primary fence of leftover steel landing mats from the Vietnam war that was built to stop vehicular traffic, not pedestrian traffic. Spring Canyon was another area cited that was reconstructed for border security. It is a 14-mile reach. Through work at these sites they have reduced crossings from 500,000 to 2,400 (based on apprehensions). Also did some environmental improvement to deal with crossing related damage. At the W-8 location, they put in a patrol road to keep crossers from congregating. This resulted in a drop in the crime rate in the area. At E-4 they fortified the area by adding a secondary fence to the primary fence, stadium lighting, all weather road, and put in cameras. This is considered 'optimum border infrastructure' and it is claimed will reduce crime and enhance property values. East San Diego County is still a problem. There is a vehicle barrier but smugglers use monster carriers to get over barriers. The road is primitive, and the mountain ridges around the area (under private and BLM control) are used by smugglers to coordinate activities and watch Border Patrol activities facilitating their movements. Asked how many tunnels exist in the area, Brian answered that there are lots of small ones, 8 have been found this year since the big one. They are cutting into storm drains, and sewer systems near San Ysidro they are tunneling under a fence near parking lots.

BLM coordination with Borderlands Management Task Force is modeled after the one in AZ. Over the years there has been an increase in balancing adherence to environmental laws and providing access to Border Patrol. An MOU was recently signed between Border Patrol, DOI, and the Dept. of Agriculture. Border Patrol has waiver authority to do what they need to do on federal lands but are trying to prevent that through the task force recognizing the need for saving lives, safety, and resource protection.

The Borderlands Management Task Force was initiated when illegal immigration began moving to AZ and began to have a number of increased issues in part due to the high percent of federal lands. Projects as a result of the Task Force include a published safety assessment for folks working along the border (hope to have available as a link from FCC website), improved communication with the public through signage, fact sheets, etc. The focus is letting people know about the dangers and how to deal with them.

Border Institute VIII Conference and Its Relevance to FCC, Rick Van Schoik, Managing Director - SCERP (Southwest Consortium for Environmental Research & Policy). SCERP is a consortium of 10 universities, 5 on each side of the border. It is funded by congress, being established in 1990. They produce programs, monographs, conferences. SCERP has had a watershed focus for over a decade, producing research, an atlas, providing vision, and developing vulnerability indicators. One of the conferences they hold is the Border Institute Series: these are science-based think tank style events for invited participants, taking a regional and long term view. The forum includes papers, presentations, and breakout sessions and provides feedback in the form of policy recommendations. The 8th conference will be held June 2006. The theme focuses on the means and mechanisms for collaborative planning and operation of transboundary watersheds. There will be plenary sessions featuring cases studies, tools,

and mechanisms; and a tour of Santa Cruz and Nogales washes. They hope to discuss models, explore options, and institutionalize agreements.

INAH's (Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia) Role in Conserving Heritage Sites in the Face of Urban Development. Julia Bendimez Patterson, Directora, INAH, Mexicali.

INAH was established in 1939 by Lazaro Cardenas under the organic law of anthropology. Julia has sent FCC a translation of the law (and it is also in the Pacific Coast Archeologist). INAH is under the Secretariat of Education. INAH established in 1986 offices in Tijuana, Mexicali, Rosarito, Ensenada. They have 12 programs, 3 special projects, and 2 centers of interpretation. Through these efforts they are trying to increase centers of interpretation to educate public. They only have about 5 archeologists in the state of Baja California Norte. Work includes research on rock paintings, restoring mission sites, implementation of an historic corridor concept to tie together all missions of the Californias, among other things. The archeologists provide technical protection of historical monuments and INAH creates, helps promote, and support community museums (i.e., the old Ensenada jail) and assists with historic renovations. They have libraries (2) that specialize in anthropology and history (in Mexicali and Ensenada). Another part of their program is to have about 5 exhibitions in various municipalities on the different work (research) of INAH. They conduct paleontological research since there are a number of mastadons and mammoths in the area. They hold academic events such as the annual 'Balances y Perspectivas de la Antropología e Historia de Baja California'. This year they are taking the event to Mexico City to educate the folks there about this northern region of Mexico. The Camino Real and Juan Bautiza routes are part of INAH's responsibilities, as are the approximately 1000 archeological sites registered in Baja California. Archeological research partners include the University Autonoma de Baja California, UC Berkley, UC Riverside, San Diego State University, the University of Alberta, Canada, and the UC Dominguez Hills. Ejidos have a lot of archeological sites on their lands. There are 227 ejidos in Baja Cal., 77% of which are trying to declare archeological sites. INAH wants to keep the important sites (burial sites, arrowheads, metate, and shell midden sites) in the ejido system, but is concerned about how the change in the law concerning sale of ejido lands will affect protection of these sites. They also worry about the growth of energy plants, tourism, maquilas, residential areas, and road infrastructure, especially between Ensenada and Mexicali. Therefore INAH has begun a program called PROCEDE. This is a program to certify ejidos and sign agreements with the ejidatarios to enhance protection and stewardship of the sites with the hopes that by having a voluntary program to encourage ejidos to be custodians of these sites, they may be able to thwart destruction and looting of sites. INAH is also working with state governments to coordinate and enforce the Baja California law that requires that INAH be consulted before construction licenses are given. The law says that if the artifacts in the area where construction is occurring cannot be moved then you cannot build and destroy the site. If the artifacts can be moved, then a certain percent of them must be excavated and removed before construction can continue. Additional note: Julia mentioned that there is a sea corridor for tourism being developed for the Baja.

GIS Mapping Along the North Baja/Southern California Border, Jean Parcher, Research Geographer, USGS, Richard Wright, Professor Emeritus, San Diego State University, and Gerardo Chaves, Archaeologist, Institute of Native Cultures. Jean described imagery available: includes USDA national agriculture inventory 1 meter digital orthophotos (USDA partnered with IBWC and USGS to fund to extend the contract across the border in TX and CA); base imagery for IBWC border image maps; INEGI aerial photos and maps (note: every year more INEGI maps are publicly available and their website has an orthophoto viewer, they also have satellite imagery which then go down into orthophotos, in black and white at 2-meter resolution). INEGI has their own fleet of aircraft and will regularly update the images. They also have a web service to incorporate orthophoto data into your own GIS so you do not have to purchase their data any more. Elevation models and watershed delineation: INEGI has digital elevation models for public download. There is a technology exchange among USGS, IMTA, INEGI, CNA and INE to improve data exchange using the same standards. INEGI has 30m resolution elevation data available. The US has national elevation data at 30m from a shuttle radar topography mission (SRTM) from an 11-day mission flown in February 2000. The USGS will create Elevation Derivatives for National Applications (EDNA) from both the SRTM and INEGI Dem data and compare the results. The SRTM data may improve INEGI's Dems in flat terrain. Jean also talked about USGS's Border Environmental Health Initiative (BEHI) which has as one of its objectives to bring these geographical datasets and imagery into an Internet Map Service for use in evaluating links between environmental and public health. For more information visit the BEHI at : <http://tx.usgs.gov/borderhealth/BEHI/index.html>.

Richard Wright talked about the Tijuana River watershed GIS project that has enabled binational decision-making. The problems in this area of southern California are scarce water resources, solutions require a watershed approach for planning. The Tijuana watershed is the western most watershed. It is 1/3 in the US and 2/3 in Mexico. The section in the US (upper) drains into Mexico and ultimately it all drains back into the US at the Tijuana estuary. The watershed is coastal and extends to about 6,000 feet in interior. The population located in the lower section is about 2 million people; almost no part of the watershed is untouched by anthropogenic stressors: i.e., flooding, water pollution, erosion, sedimentation, fence development, hillside development, trash, feedlot operations, overgrazing, sand mining (especially in the upper aquifers), channelization and effects on stream hydrograph, urban growth, industrial development, etc. The TJ watershed GIS project came from a workshop held in San Diego in 1993, GIS for Mexico-US Border Environmental Research Management (proceedings available) that identified the TJ watershed as being in need of a GIS. An MOU was developed with COLEF to cooperate and coordinate in the development of the TR watershed GIS. Other partners included NOAA, USGS, SCERP, regional governments, the SDSU geography dept., and the Municipio de Tijuana. Early in the process a user needs assessment was conducted to guide the project. The major part of the work involves integrating data from many sources – this has not been without difficulties. But the result has been many projects and products as a result of having the GIS database in place. Products include the modeling of housing quality, risk assessment of flood vulnerability, a state-of-the-environment assessment for the TJ River basin, development of a flood warning system,

an Atlas, and assistance with Las Californias binational initiative. Current work includes: the Ambos Tecates project to look at issues relative to integrating geospatial data in some of the small to mid-size city pairs; work with EPA's Border 2012 to have a TJ River watershed water task force; work with Tres Californias to increase university and stakeholder cooperation, technology transfer and enhancement of local and regional planning.

Gerardo Chavez spoke about a GIS application in the TJ water shed. He is working on a project dealing with the cultural ecology and the indigenous landscape of the TJ River Watershed (TRW) in collaboration with Lyn Gamble at SDSU, Michael Wilken-R at UNAM, and others. The project focuses on the relationship between the indigenous community and the environment of the TRW within the larger context of the ethnographic ethnohistoric, and prehistoric cultural patterns. They began the project by registering the GIS data about the archaeological sites. They found lots of inconsistencies among researchers to precisely define site locations. On public maps sites are just generally recorded so as to protect the location. There also exist other more confidential maps with details about the types of sites that are found. Another GIS layer that they have is geomorphology at the sites. They are working with tribal communities to identify contemporary and past villages on these maps and then hope to provide the communities with the legal boundaries of their villages. The final part of the project is to create the database structure compatible with the national registry and California archaeology database so as to connect GIS with archaeology.

Las Californias Binational Conservation Initiative, Kathy Viatella, Project Director, The Nature Conservancy, Jerre Ann Stallcup, Conservation Biologist, Conservation Biology Institute. Las Californias Binational Conservation Initiative is a vision for habitat conservation in the border region (a copy of the report can be obtained from The Nature Conservancy) Jerre Stallcup told us that there are over 400 rare or endemic species in the South Coast Ecoregion, whose boundaries are defined by the Transverse and Peninsular mountain ranges. The high biodiversity in this region is due to dramatic physical and ecological gradients. In this area, ecosystems converge from north and south and from east and west, and the elevation ranges from sea level to over 6,000 feet. Here the vegetation communities are defined by a Mediterranean climate and geological processes: Examples: coastal sage scrub in Spring Canyon is one of the most endangered Mediterranean-type scrub communities in the world; maritime succulent scrub at Salsipuedes); endemic manzanitas of the chaparral on Cerro Bola; Tecate cypress on Tecate Peak; knobcone pines in the Sierra Blanca; the Jeffrey pine forest in the Sierra Juarez; desert succulent scrub at Jacumba, an area of volcanic cinder cones; and the eastern escarpment, the Sawtooth Mountains-is critical habitat for bighorn sheep. Past conservation investments in the area include over 400,000 acres already preserved in the US and 21,400 ac in Mexico. To maintain the high value of these existing conservation investments, natural ecological processes must be sustained. For this they need landscape linkages between and among the often separated areas. Urban development is severing the connectivity between the US and Mexican landscapes – it is not just about conservation of habitat, but the need for connections for biological

processes to continue, and conserving open space to maintain the quality of life for border communities. The threat is the growing population of >5million people in the San Diego, Tijuana, and Tecate area. The vision for the Initiative is to maintain and conserve intact wildlands in the coast, mountains, and desert regions of this area that can sustain ecological processes, are representative of biodiversity across the full range of biophysical gradients, and that support the irreplaceable resources that occur no where else on earth. They envision a binational park system North from Parque Nacional e Constitucion in Baja California to the federal lands and state parks in California.

The planning tool they used is called SPOT (Spatial Portfolio Optimization Tool). It is a science-based planning tool used to help identify (1) core areas of ecological integrity that have not been fragmented by roads, agriculture, and development.; and (2) patterns of biodiversity. From these, we can develop land use and conservation strategies. Where necessary they can go back and refine with more detailed data. They used watershed boundaries to define the study area. The conservation vision is for nodes of biodiversity interconnected by intact land, embedded in a matrix of human land uses. They identified 3 critical opportunity areas along the border. These are locations where conservation values are imminently threatened if conservation actions are not initiated immediately, e.g., in the coastal, intermountain, and desert regions. Right now they are targeting 21,700 acres of which they have conserved 2,500 acres (in US only).

Kathy Viatella showed a map of the different categories of general land use areas. TNC is developing strategies for native community conservation planning/land use. Their planning goal is to work to protect land surrounding already protected areas by making sure activities on those lands are not incompatible with the already protected areas. Projections are for growth increases along the border to the east. She sees opportunities for collaboration between the Initiative's partners and all levels of government, local, state and federal, on both sides of the border to conserve the natural landscapes and unique biological resources of the region.

Binational Collaboration on Creating Parcel to Parcel Linkage for Threatened and Endangered Species a Case study: Cerro Cuchuma/Tecate Peak, Janaye Byergo, BLM South Coast Project Manager, Miguel Vargas/Fernando Ochoa, Private Conservation, PRONATURA Noroeste. The Cerro Cuchuma/Tecate Peak area is between Tijuana and Tecate, right next to San Diego. The area is located west and northwest of Tecate, Mexico. It encompasses lands in the USA and Mexico under shared ownership with Fundacion La Puerta, BLM, and Cal. Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection. Tecate Peak is a sacred site to Kumeyaay Indians; used by Native Americans from both southern California and northern Baja California. It is on the national register of historical places for Native American religious values. Partners in this effort include the non-profit Fundacion La Puerta based in Tecate whose focus is environmental protection of the region's valuable and unique resources, and environmental education,; Pronatura a non-profit NGO dedicated to land and natural resource conservation; BLM (who manages about 501 ac of Tecate Peak); Cal. Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) who is responsible for fire suppression and manages 2,254 acres of donated land known as the Cuchuma experimental forest, which is managed for conservation,

archaeological and native American values. An MOU has been established between Fundacion La Puerta and Pronatura and BLM and CDF to establish a formal partnership to share in planning and managing these lands for bio-diversity and cultural resources. Provides for a proactive, coordinated approach for assessing biological and cultural values on the Tecate lands.

The threats and impacts include the fences and roads that prevent movement of fauna. This area is the most threatened and impacted of the border region, determined based on land cover change analyses using 1953 maps of the vegetation in the area. Between 2002-06 urban growth had spread in an unplanned fashion to the east and the projection for 2020 is that Tijuana will nearly connect to Tecate, destroying the existing corridor. What they are trying to do in this project is at a minimum maintain land uses which are semi-compatible with the corridor. The project is now in the third phase and the current initiative is to create a biological corridor that connects ecological communities on both sides of the border.

Part of the problem the project is facing is a lack of protected areas within these areas in Mexico. There are differences with respect to land protection in the US and Mexico. The major difference is that in the US when an area is legally declared protected the lands are set aside for this purpose only, in Mexico in 99 % of the cases the land stays in private or communal hands although the activities may change some within the declared protected area. In the US we have the legal conservation tool known as conservation easements which allows landowners to voluntarily restrict the type and amount of development so as to protect natural resources. In Mexico, the conservation easement, known as Servidumbre Ecologica, is a relatively new concept. Rancho Cuchuma is a conservation reserve covering 2,026 privately owned acres in Mexico. This is one of the first private and binational easements in Mexico. (BLM couldn't be part of the easement so did an MOU to participate with the group). The group's mission is to develop management plans, perform biological and cultural needs analysis, survey, identify and coordinate efforts with agency biologists, archeologists and historians, and identify funding sources that could benefit binational efforts. Eventually, they would like to expand the conservation area and they are looking to find other private landowners as potential future partners in land protection.

Cooperative activities are to maintain and manage the area's unique bio-diversity and cultural values. Partners will share maps and information regarding plant and animal species, coordinate approaches in conducting surveys to insure consistency across borders, coordinate identification and maintenance of migration corridors and linkages for species, and identify issues and needs. Fire management and uncontrolled wildfire effects are of primary concern. Together CDF, CONAFOR, BLM, and bomberos de Tecate will research overall fire management issues and identify possible actions to minimize wildfire impacts, concentrate on public education and cross-border cooperation and communication, prevent fires from spreading with projects such as fuel breaks and controlled burns. Recently, there was a major fire that burned > 4K acres that started in Tecate and burned up to the peak and west into most of the CDF lands.

Fernando Ochoa explained that a national private lands conservation program is important for Mexico because 80% of the national territory is private, and 64% of the land within a national protected area (NPA) is private. Most landowners within an NPA have had limitations put on them regarding land uses and have not been compensated for these limitations nor have they been consulted before the decree of the NPA. Thus, there has been little incentive for landowners to conserve lands. Furthermore, for NPAs created at the local level, there is often no legal guarantee that land use policies won't change since the mayorship changes every 3 years and areas set aside for conservation could be changed easily for development use. Ochoa argues that legal protection tools for private lands could provide empowerment for a legal defense. As for legal instruments, 14 'tools' have been identified so far. These have largely been developed under civil laws which mostly have a better legal standing. They include: *servidumbres ecologicas* (or conservation easements); land trusts, and direct land purchase. The conservation easement is the most important under Mexican law. Establishment of a conservation easement requires at least two properties: a 'servant' or eased property and a dominant property which is the one that receives the ecological benefits. In the case of Tecate Peak, the partners are actively involved in the conservation actions, although this is not necessary. Key factors for conserving land in Mexico include: identifying the socioeconomic situation; identifying the key landowners, public agencies, private entities, and NGOs that are supportive or oppose the project; and applying resources not in litigation but rather for securing property for conservation. In the case of Ejido lands, a trust fund can be established into which funds are paid by some conservation entity and as long as the Ejido landowners abide by the agreements of the trust they receive a yearly payment.

Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, Stan Bond, National Park Service (NPS) Superintendent-de Anza Trail, Elinora Topete Rocha Special Events Coordinator – INAH.

This a congressionally authorized trail from Nogales, AZ to the Bay area and includes a segment in Baja and another in Sinaloa. In 2001, the idea to connect the Trail areas in Mexico with those in the US was launched. The US NPS does not own any of the land, it just administers the Trail cooperatively. The Trail goes through urban and rural areas. 27 million people live in the areas the trail passes through. Although the landscapes that de Anza passed through have been changed significantly, the folks living in the urban areas the Trail passes through are a prime target of the message the Trail wants to deliver. One of the objectives of the Trail is to commemorate the de Anza trip, and also the diversity of settlers that came with de Anza. Many of the people that traveled with de Anza were mestizo of mixed heritage and even descendants of African slaves in Mexico. The NPS also emphasizes the role of Native Americans in the success of the expedition. They highlight the consequences to the native peoples: ie., establishment of missions, loss of culture, that Native Americans were forced to live and work on the missions to enrich the missions, and that many natives died due to introduction of diseases. NPS explains the environmental consequences resulting from the northward expansion: cattle grazing, farming, introduction of exotic species, the loss of Native American's use of fire on grasslands that produced the landscape that native Americans used. Anza's father was originally the one that had a vision of establishing an overland route to California. But it was the son that actually made it come true. The

expedition began at Culiacan, Mexico (there is a statue of Anza in Hermosillo) and ended in the establishment of San Francisco. The purpose of the route was to block expansion of the British and Russian down from the northern California coast. There were two trips. The first began in 1774-1776, but was just a preliminary reconnaissance. The second and main expedition began in 1775 and continued through 1848. The trip commenced in Culiacan, Mexico crossed the Mexicali valley from Algodones (formerly Cerro San Pablo) then passed through the Alamo slough (Rancheria Cojat Indians), through Ejido Tabasco (Santa Olaya) then Rio Alamo at Poso de las Angustias, finally crossing the Rio Nuevo (now Boulevard Hector Teran). Most of Anza's cattle and horses came from the Sonora river valley, near Tubac, AZ where he was presidio captain for a time. Anza went up the Santa Cruz River, crossed the Colorado River, went south to avoid the desert sands, then went north. Additional objectives of the Trail are to provide information about the role of Spain in North America, to educate about the role of the Russians in North America (there is a Russian fort just north of San Francisco), and to examine how socio-economic advances came with the movement out of Mexico to the north. California has a seamless system of parks, so links are made with the Juan Bautista de Anza trail to many other park resources. Likewise, there are many partnerships: with regional and local parks and landowners, lots of volunteers build trails, design and make sure the trails are included in local planning documents, and patrol in the areas. The de Anza Trail began as a driving route which is currently signed through CA whereas signing is in progress in AZ and Mexico. The Trail is also a recreational route for biking, walking, and equestrian activities. There are educational and interpretative panels in several locations with general information about the Anza expedition and specific site information. Information resources include tourist maps, a web-based guide to the Trail, a couple of books on some of the sections. Some of the older information resources have been transcribed and translated see <http://anza.uoregon.edu> . Upcoming projects include trying to identify the Anza campsites.

Field Trip – Day 2 (stops are underlined)

First stop was the Yuha Desert at a BLM site that is being rehabbed after damage from Off Highway Vehicles (OHV). There are many OHV issues in this area. There are famous dune buggy races in Mexico where both the courses and the spectators are problematic destroying important habitat and scarring the landscape. The more we limit it in the US, the more they tend to go down to Mexico. In the U.S., BLM tries to manage the use by restricting OHV activity to specific areas and designated roads, but the demand is great. Management of vehicles and the desert landscape has improved in the U.S., though some folks don't respect the signs. BLM and INAH are working together on these binational problems. One of the big concerns are the 500 geoglyphs in the area in Mexico that are easily destroyed. Restoration is being done in the U.S. by the Student Conservation Association (SCA). These students stay out in the desert for weeks at a time. The work involves erasing the tracks by decompacting the soil, camouflaging with rocks, and vertical mulching (involves "planting" dead and downed plant materials into the ground, this helps "camouflage" closed roads, which is especially important at road take-offs to prevent access. It reduces wind speed, facilitates deposition of blowing soil and organic litter, and creates safe sites for plant establishment. Some "planted" individuals survive, providing an additional benefit of vertical mulching. http://www.wildlandscpr.org/databases/bibliionotes/Desert_Road_Removal.html) The work is all done by hand with hand tools. The students are integrating science with sociology to do the restoration.

Discussion of de Anza National Historic Trail. The original expedition passed nearby this site. Stan Bond, Dallas Meeks of BLM, and Margaret Hangan (USFS) led the discussion. Stan talked about the international scope of the trail, following up on his presentation the day before. The trail is being managed through local partnerships. Dallas explained that BLM had installed trail markers on the section through the Yuha Desert and is providing trail information to the public. Margaret described the de Anza party's travels through this arid region.

At Pinto Wash BLM's Daniel Steward demonstrated flat-tailed horned lizard (FTHL) habitat and discussed its conservation. The Flat-tailed Horned Lizard Rangewide Management Strategy has been prepared to provide guidance for the conservation and management of sufficient habitat to maintain viable populations of flat-tailed horned lizards (*Phrynosoma mcallii*). The species is found only in southwestern Arizona, southeastern California, and adjacent portions of Sonora and Baja California Norte, Mexico. The species was proposed for listing as a threatened species by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on November 29, 1993. Human activities have resulted in the conversion of roughly 34 percent of the historic habitat of the flat-tailed horned lizard to other uses, such as agriculture and urban development. Evidence suggests that populations of this species have declined in some of the remaining habitat areas. The Rangewide Management Strategy calls for the establishment of five flat-tailed horned lizard management areas - four in California and one in Arizona. Surface disturbing activities would be limited in these areas. Land alterations outside of these management areas would not be restricted, but special mitigation and compensation measures would

be applied. In addition, one research area is proposed, where research is encouraged. Local agencies and private landowners are encouraged to establish one additional management area in the Coachella Valley in California. The Rangewide Management Strategy was prepared by representatives from Federal, state, and local governments. It is designed to be used as the basis for a conservation agreement among the agencies. Signatory agencies will incorporate measures in the Rangewide Strategy into their land management plans. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and state counterparts will be achieved through these management plans or revisions. The planned actions in the Rangewide Management Strategy are organized in a step-down format used by the USFWS in recovery plans. The signatory agencies have produced an educational DVD on the FTHL for other agencies such as the border patrol and for the general public.

Pat Whipple of the Border Patrol highlighted Border Patrol activities in the area. The tour group saw drag roads where BP smooths down a dirt road so they can see foot prints. The group also saw the water caches that humanitarians have put out in the desert marked by tall blue flags for immigrants. BP has a liason with BLM in this sector and this has allowed better use of their (BP's) resources. They will now have a liason in every sector of BP and are working on a National MOU. By working with BLM, BP learned for themselves that every 6 steps one takes in this desert area in any direction, one can cross a car track. There has been a decrease of deaths in the area from 28 in 2002 to 9 in 2005 due to BORSTAR (BP's search and rescue team). Horse patrol is used heavily in this area resulting in less damage to landscape and easier access. Pat noted that the All American Canal is a hazard, many immigrants drown trying to cross due to the current.

The next stop was at the electrical transmission lines where Daniel Steward and others discussed energy development in the area. There are issues about use of public lands for development of energy, especially power plants, but also natural gas pipelines, and liquefied natural gas terminals. There are discussions how to allow impacts in some areas and having energy companies pay to enhance or create habitat in other areas. There was a dialogue on a controversial sand/gravel issue in Mexicali. An American investor/businessman set up a sand and gravel company in Mexico with the intention of buying sand and gravel in the Baja and shipping it to the US via a conveyor belt that crosses the border. There is a great demand for sand and gravel in San Diego and LA for construction. The wait times at the border for trucks crossing is long and cumbersome, thus the company thought that they could convey the material across the border and dump it directly into waiting trucks and avoid the normal border check point. According to Baja's environmental regulators they have not obtained all of the proper permits. As a result the plant has not opened yet. The US consul is supportive of the company's efforts saying that it will reduce pollution by not having these trucks idling and emitting exhaust. This is a complex issue.

The group ate lunch at Table Mountain, where we talked about resource protection, wildlife corridors and Las Californias Binational Conservation Initiative.

At Desert Tower, we discussed Bighorn Sheep with Esther Rubin of the Conservation Biology Institute.