

Water Quality Report Card		Sedimentation/Siltation in Tijuana River	
Regional Water Board:	San Diego, Region 9	STATUS	<input type="checkbox"/> Conditions Improving
Beneficial Uses Affected:	WARM		<input type="checkbox"/> Data Inconclusive
Implemented Through:	N/A		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improvement Needed
Effective Date:	N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Targets Achieved/Water Body Delisted
Attainment Date:	N/A	Pollutant Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Point Source <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nonpoint Source <input type="checkbox"/> Legacy

Water Quality Improvement Strategy

The Tijuana River originates in the Juarez Mountains, located on the northwestern portion of the Baja California Peninsula. From there, it flows through Mexico for most of its course then crosses the United States (U.S.) border into the San Diego Region, where it drains into the Tijuana River Estuary before reaching the Pacific Ocean. Over two-thirds of the 1,730-square-mile Tijuana River Watershed lies in Mexico. Although the River and Estuary, combined, are listed for 37 impairments on the 303(d) list, this information specifically addresses the Tijuana River's listing for sedimentation/siltation. Land development in Mexico has been identified as the primary source of the sediment/siltation impairment. Best Management Practices (BMPs) are not a standard requirement for construction projects in Mexico and many roads within the watershed are not paved. During wet weather, this results in significant transport of sediment into the River, and ultimately into the U.S.

Because TMDLs and other traditional regulatory tools cannot be enforced in Mexico, the San Diego Regional Water Board established the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team (TRVRT) as an alternative approach to controlling pollutants, including sediment, in the watershed. The TRVRT is a consensus-based collaboration of more than 30 federal, State, and local government agencies, and other Tijuana River Watershed stakeholders. In March 2015, the TRVRT developed a [Five-Year Action Plan](#), which includes specific projects aimed to alleviate the economical and beneficial use impacts from cross-border pollutants, including sediment. Binational efforts, such as the USEPA's [Border 2020 Program](#) and the International Boundary and Water Commission's (IBWC's) soon to be signed [Treaty Minute 320](#) will offer opportunities for source control in Mexico.

Photo Documentation of Sediment Impairment in the Tijuana River



Based on photo documentation, the Tijuana River was placed on the 2010 section 303(d) list for sedimentation/siltation (see photo above). Lower watershed conditions have been judged to cause sediment impairment, and therefore exceed the sediment water quality objective.

Tijuana River Watershed



Water Quality Outcomes

- Records for sediment excavation indicate that conditions are not improving in the Tijuana River main channel or its cross-border tributaries discharging into the U.S.
- Source control is a challenge because sediment sources are located in Mexico, where the San Diego Regional Water Board has no regulatory authority.
- Source control measures to reduce cross-border sediment volumes may be achieved through: 1) the TRVRT Five-Year Action Plan, 2) Border 2020 Program projects, and 3) the IBWC projects that will be defined by a Binational Core Group as described in Treaty Minute 320.
- Until source control measures are implemented to eliminate sediment impairments, the IBWC, California State Parks, the County of San Diego, and the City of San Diego will continue to excavate sediment from the main Tijuana River channel and its cross-border tributaries.

Sediment Excavation During Recent Wet Weather Seasons

