



## Border 2012 U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program

# Reducing Land Contamination in Arizona-Sonora

August 2008

**THE PURPOSE OF THIS INFORMATION BULLETIN** is to provide residents of the Arizona-Sonora border region with news and updates on the Border 2012 U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program. This edition focuses on projects of the Arizona-Sonora Waste and Enforcement Task Force, which is part of the Arizona-Sonora Regional Workgroup. Activities under this workgroup strive to accomplish Border 2012's mission of protecting the environment and public health in the U.S.-Mexico border region, consistent with the principles of sustainable development. For more information on the Border 2012 Program please visit [www.epa.gov/Border2012](http://www.epa.gov/Border2012).

## Binational Inspector Workshop in Sonora Shares Experiences on Respective Countries' Laws and Practices

**ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ARIZONA AND SONORA** Waste and Enforcement Task Force efforts in the past year was their role in developing a four-day binational workshop in October 2007 in Hermosillo, Sonora focused on learning the U.S. and Mexico's respective laws and practices for conducting environmental compliance inspections—and various tools to facilitate the work. The workshop, proposed by the task force members, was carried out through the leadership of several binational partners (see above right). The workshop was a resounding success given the 45 participants from Mexico's local, state, and federal government agencies, and three industry representatives. Most came from Sonora, though a few were from Baja California.



Participants at the Inspector Training Workshop

## Binational Partners

- Western States Project (WSP)
- Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC)
- Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ)
- Commission for Ecology and Sustainable Development (CEDES)
- Mexico's Secretariat for Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT)
- Mexico's Federal Enforcement Agency (PROFEPA)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)

The workshop began with an opening ceremony on October 22nd attended by CEDES's Directors, the respective State of Sonora Delegates for PROFEPA and SEMARNAT, as well as representatives from U.S. EPA and ADEQ who led the training.

The workshop was designed on the premise that each country would benefit from learning the basic laws and procedures for conducting environmental inspections, sharing experiences and challenges amongst the participants, and have the training conducted by U.S. and Mexican practitioners. The attendees included a variety of professionals including: engineers, scientists, a chemist, lawyers, inspectors, and enforcement officials. The training included three days of classroom lectures, various exercises, and a field trip on the fourth day to have workshop participants simulate an inspection at a Maquiladora (industrial facility) in Hermosillo.

The content for the Sonora workshop was adapted by EPA Region 9 from an existing international training module, "Environmental Compliance Inspection Training," developed by Davis Jones of EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA). The content was enhanced by having practitioners adapt their presentations based on their own experiences. The U.S. training team included Davis Jones (OECA), Roberto Gutierrez (EPA Richmond Lab), Bill Keener (EPA Office of Regional Counsel), Emily Pimentel (EPA Waste Management Division) and Veronica Garcia (ADEQ). EPA worked with CEDES to adapt the course outline and consequently, experts from CEDES and PROFEPA gave presentations addressing their respective laws and administrative procedures involved in conducting inspections.

This diversity generated valuable and enthusiastic dialogue which contributed to the workshop's overall success. For example, a difference is that Mexican administrative procedures require inspectors to notify industry prior to conducting an inspection. Inspectors must also identify pertinent compliance requirements

and have them approved by an attorney prior to conducting the inspections. The participants encouraged the workshop hosts to consider giving similar workshops in other border states and to build on the success of this workshop by giving others on more focused topics. A proposal is currently under consideration to host a similar event in the next year.

A key factor in the task force's ability to host this workshop was the tremendous in-kind support leveraged from the various partners. For example, the idea began with a \$6,000 Border 2012 Grant to WSP. Cristina Iglesias and others from BECC contributed support by arranging the meeting space, facilitating hotel and travel, local transportation, translation, and other logistical support. Saul Ruiz Fernandez, the CEDES Sub-Director and Rocio B. Ricon, an environmental inspector at CEDES, arranged for sending out invitations to 50 participants, secured the workshop meeting room at the beautiful grounds of the Centro Ecologico in Hermosillo, arranged for transportation to the industry "inspection" training, and arranged for certificates of completion for all participants. The training was provided by experts from various institutions who donated their time and made their own travel arrangements. Finally, CEDES served as host to the binational participants and shared the hospitality of Sonorans. ■

### International Partners Clean Up Tire Piles, Promote Sustainable Scrap Tire Solutions

**BORDER 2012 PROGRAM PARTNERS** are effectively working together to create solutions to the U.S.-Mexico scrap tire problem. Tires not only create a visual blight but also contribute to disease from mosquitoes, rodents, and other known disease vectors, and pose threats of toxic fires that frequently burn for weeks or months causing severe air quality problems. Furthermore, tire pile fires generate sludges that contaminate soil and ground and surface water.

One of Border 2012's priorities has been cleaning up legacy tire piles and thus far, program partners have collaborated in cleaning up 4 million scrap tires in our border communities. In most cleanups, these tires were processed as a tire-derived fuel in Mexican cement plants.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Mexico's Secretariat for Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) have jointly worked on scrap tire cleanup for a number of years and in 2006 developed and adopted a scrap tire pile preventative framework, the U.S.-Mexico Border Scrap Tire Integrated Management Initiative. The framework was developed in response to issues expressed by state and municipal partners that were burdened with tire issues. The ten Border States signed the Tire Initiative at the Border Governors Conference in Hollywood, California in August 2008. Outreach efforts are underway to encourage border municipalities to sign as well.

Many of the Tire Initiative's principles and actions are already being implemented. In March 2008, San Diego State University convened the Used and Waste Tire Flow in the California-Mexico Border Region conference which created dialogue on economic, social, regulatory, and other issues that contribute to the legal



Cleaning up tires in San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora

and illegal flow of tires and inadequate disposal or dumping. Understanding the sources of tire piles and organizing cleanup of the largest tires piles, such as Centinela and INNOR, has been a priority of the Border 2012 program. In Sonora, municipalities such as Agua Prieta have taken initiative to remove tires by working with local partners. Last year, San Luis Rio Colorado worked with several Border 2012 partners to remove 80,000 tires from an existing tire pile.

Preventing tire piles and other impacts of scrap tires requires a broader understanding of the issues before appropriate solutions can be proposed. Success in addressing scrap tire issues will continue to rely upon partnerships and collaboration to promote cost-effective short and long-term solutions. For more information, see [www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder/fora/forum-waste.html](http://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder/fora/forum-waste.html). ■

#### Contacts

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#### Websites

**U.S. EPA Border 2012 Program**  
*www.epa.gov/Border2012*

**Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ)**  
*www.azdeq.gov*

**Secretariat For Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT)**  
*www.semarnat.gob.mx*

**Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC)**  
*www.cocof.org*

**Commission Of Ecology And Sustainable Development (CEDES)**  
*www.cedes.gob.mx*