



# Torres Martinez Solid Waste Collaborative

*A Partnership of Tribal, Federal, State and Local Agencies  
to Stop Illegal Dumping on the Reservation*



*The Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indian Community encompasses approximately 24,000 acres of the Coachella Valley, in eastern Riverside County and northern Imperial County. The current population on the reservation is approximately 12,000 residents, including approximately 250 tribal members.*



The Torres Martinez Tribal Government, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and local, state, and other federal agencies formed the Solid Waste Collaborative in Spring of 2006. The mission of the collaborative is to develop and implement a multi-jurisdictional plan to clean up and prevent illegal dumping on the Torres Martinez Reservation.

The Coachella Valley, where the Torres Martinez Reservation is located, is growing rapidly. There are many new housing and other developments under construction to accommodate the expanding population. With this increased development, the volume of solid waste illegally dumped on the reservation has been growing, particularly construction and demolition debris and green waste from off-reservation sources.

***The Torres Martinez Tribe, U.S. EPA and the Bureau of Indian Affairs convened a meeting of the collaborative on April 24-25, 2006 in response to the growing need to prevent further illegal dumping. The collaborative identified approximately 20 illegal dump sites and developed an action plan to address the issue. Several sub-committees were formed as a result of the action plan. These include: community outreach, monitoring compliance, dump cleanup and access control, and infrastructure development.***

## **COLLABORATIVE MEMBERS**

### **TRIBE**

Torres Martinez Band of Desert Cahuilla Indians Tribal Council, Tribal Manager, Tribal Administrator, Tribal Resource Manager, and Environmental Department.

### **FEDERAL**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Indian Health Service (IHS), U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA), Office of Native American Programs at U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

### **STATE**

California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB), South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) and California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC).

### **LOCAL**

City of Coachella, City of Indio, Coachella Valley Association of Governments, Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment, Desert Mirage High School, Mecca Community Council, Oasis Community Council, Riverside County, Riverside County Code Enforcement & Community Improvement Division, Riverside County Department of Waste Management, Riverside County Fire Department, Riverside County Sheriff, and Southern Coachella Valley Service District.

## **PROGRESS TO DATE**

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

In June 2006 the tribe sent a letter to all landowners and residents on the reservation reminding them about the tribe's Land Use Ordinance. The tribe is currently designing billboards to advertise anti-dumping efforts and warn waste transporters of the consequences of illegal dumping.



The Outreach Taskforce published a Spanish/English bilingual dumping alert in local Coachella Valley newspapers and cities within the Coachella Valley in August 2006. (Please refer to the illegal dumping alert insert.) U.S. EPA will work with the Outreach Taskforce to distribute the alert to builders, waste haulers, tire haulers and golf courses in the area.

U.S. EPA is working with California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) to develop a guide for picking up waste tires at a community clean-up event. For more information contact Caleb Shaffer of U.S. EPA at (415) 972-3336.

The Outreach Taskforce holds bi-weekly conference calls to update members of current events and opportunities for outreach. Members of the Outreach Taskforce include the Torres Martinez Tribe, Riverside County, Riverside County Fire Department, and U.S. EPA.



## MONITORING COMPLIANCE

Members of the collaborative formed a smaller working group to monitor and reduce illegal dumping on the reservation. As part of this effort U.S. EPA issued four notices of potential violation in response to the illegal dumping of grape stakes and other waste on the reservation. In July 2006, U.S. EPA inspected eight facilities suspected of disposing of solid and hazardous waste on the reservation and assisted four reservation landowners with proper management of waste tires and used oil.



On August 7, 2006, in the ongoing federal enforcement action against the Lawson Dump, the U.S. District Court Judge ordered Kim Lawson and Lawson Enterprises to immediately stop all activities at the Lawson Dump and vacate the site. On August 9, 2006, BIA padlocked the site to prevent any additional dumping.

Members of the Monitoring Compliance Taskforce include U.S. EPA, the Torres Martinez Tribe, and the Riverside County Sheriff's Office.

## DUMP CLEANUP AND ACCESS CONTROL

The Dump Cleanup and Access Control taskforce met on May 23, 2006 to develop a clean-up plan for the dump sites. The group agreed to an action plan addressing the 20 dumps on the reservation. U.S. EPA and BIA have provided funding for dump closures, and CIWMB will consider further funding at its August board meeting.



The Torres Martinez Tribe has completed cleanup and is installing a fence to restrict access to a site near Martinez Road. In August, the tribe will begin cleaning up a site on Avenue 70 between Highway 195 and Expressway 86.

Members of the Dump Cleanup and Access Control Taskforce include the Torres Martinez Tribe, U.S. EPA, BIA, Indian Health Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development and the California Integrated Waste Management Board.

## INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

The Torres Martinez Tribe is completing an analysis of the waste generated on the reservation and is revising its waste disposal ordinance. The USDA and the tribe are discussing funding opportunities through a USDA Community Facility Grant to pay for surveillance cameras and access control gates.

Members participating in the Infrastructure Development Taskforce include the Torres Martinez Tribe, USDA and U.S. EPA.

*The purpose of this status report is to update all stakeholders and community members on the progress of the multi-agency effort to deal with illegal dumping issues on the Torres Martinez Band of Desert Cahuilla Indian Reservation. If you are interested in becoming involved in the collaborative, contributing to the next status report, or would like additional copies of this one, please contact Willard Chin of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9 at [chin.willard@epa.gov](mailto:chin.willard@epa.gov); Tel: (415) 972-3797; Fax: (415) 947-3562.*







*Salton Sea Wetlands*



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