

# Tijuana River Valley Regional Park Campground Reopening

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **Tijuana River Valley Regional Park**

The [Tijuana River Valley Regional Park](#) (TRVRP) encompasses approximately 1,800 acres of land in south San Diego County. The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) owns and manages the TRVRP, which includes a Bird and Butterfly Garden, a campground, a community garden, ballfields, multiple habitat restoration sites, and a 22.5-mile multi-use network of trails that provide connections to state and regional trails like the Bayshore Bikeway, California Coastal Trail, and trails at the [Border Field State Park](#). Regular programs highlight local wildlife, sustainability, preservation efforts and recreation opportunities. Recreational activities range from passive activities like hiking, biking, bird watching, and horseback riding to more active activities like organized sports and community gardens.

The Tijuana River Valley is one of the only remaining areas in San Diego County with connected beach, dune, salt marsh, riparian, and upland ecosystems. The area contains several historic sites and viewpoints – providing cultural, aesthetic and recreational value. The valley is rich in diverse natural resources and is home to dozens of sensitive species, along with more than 340 bird species as part of the Pacific Flyway.

#### **TRVRP Campground**

The TRVRP campground is located in the southwest portion of the park north of Monument Road and allows visitors to extend their park experience overnight by providing low-cost [camping](#) accommodations. The campground includes tent, RV, and the County's first yurt campsites, along with public restrooms. Since opening in 2021, the TRVRP Campground has served thousands of visitors annually. It is also part of the County's [First Time Camping Program](#) which provides an opportunity for residents, visitors, and future generations to spend quality time outdoors.

### **TRVRP Campground Reopening April 1, 2025**

#### **What can you expect now that the TRVRP Campground is now open?**

A phased reopening of the TRVRP campground will begin starting on April 1, 2025. Our ten yurts and campsites 1-13 (back in sites for RVs or tents) will be the first reservable spaces to open for overnight stays. Some amenities like the bocce ball court, cornhole and horseshoe pits will remain closed for repairs along with the remaining campsites, including equestrian campsites. Visitors may experience some noise and dust while this work is being completed. For the latest available campsites, please visit our [online reservation system](#).

#### **Why was the TRVRP Campground closed?**

San Diego County experienced historic storm events in January 2024, resulting in widespread flooding, sedimentation, and debris flows throughout the county. Consequently, the State of California issued a [Proclamation of a State of Emergency](#) on January 23, 2024. These winter storms also damaged stormwater infrastructure in the Tijuana River Valley which carries local and cross-border runoff from Mexico to the Pacific Ocean. The damaged infrastructure, specifically a portion of the Smuggler's Gulch berm located just north of Monument Road on City of San Diego property, led to flooding of the TRVRP Campground. DPR immediately closed the TRVRP Campground to the public for safety purposes.

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### **What steps have been taken to repair the stormwater infrastructure after the flooding?**

Following the storm, the County worked collaboratively with the City of San Diego to complete sediment and trash removal efforts throughout Smuggler's Gulch and repair the damage to the berm to restabilize the channel. Berm repair work was completed by the City of San Diego in Winter 2024.

### **What steps have been taken to clean and repair the campground after the flooding?**

DPR has implemented a comprehensive reopening plan that includes sanitization and repairs of campground amenities that were damaged by the flooding, removal of overgrown vegetation, trail repairs, and trash and debris removal. These activities are ongoing and will continue throughout the phased reopening of the campground.

### **Is it safe to visit the TRVRP Campground?**

Yes. DPR worked closely with experts in the County Departments of Public Health Services (PHS) and Environmental Health and Quality (DEHQ), and the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) to evaluate conditions at the campground.

In addition to monitoring completed by the departments and SDAPCD, DPR conducted soil testing at the TRVRP Campground. Specifically, DPR tested for biological factors (microbes such as bacteria) as well as chemical factors (including pollutants such as heavy metals and volatile organic compounds). The results of these tests found that bacterial and chemical levels at the campground are either at non-detectable levels or at levels similar to those naturally occurring in soils throughout the county.

2025 TRVRP Campground Soil Testing Reports:

- [Bacterial Testing](#)
- [Chemical Testing](#)

DPR reviewed the most recent monitoring data from the above sources and found the campground to be safe for public use. DPR compared the results of the soil testing to standard thresholds for bacterial and chemical levels in soils and determined that visiting and working at the campground does not pose safety risks that would be different than visiting other campgrounds in San Diego County. Visitors are encouraged to follow common procedures to protect themselves from illness, such as avoiding standing water, washing hands thoroughly with soap and water, and talking to your healthcare provider about any specific concerns or questions.

**To find up-to-date information on public health data, beach water quality monitoring, air quality, odors, and general information about overall conditions in the Tijuana River Valley, please visit the [County's South Region Health Concerns webpage](#).**

### **What additional steps can I take to ensure my pets and I are safe?**

Park visitors are advised to look for signage sharing information on current site conditions or area closures to minimize exposure to potentially contaminated areas. Visitors are encouraged to follow common procedures to protect themselves from illness, such as washing your hands well with soap and water and avoid touching your nose, mouth, eyes, or ears with your hands unless your hands have been washed. Pet owners are advised to keep their pets on a leash. Do not allow pets to drink standing water

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in the park. For more information on protective measures or if you think you've accidentally exposed yourself to contaminated water, visit the [County of San Diego South Region Health Concerns Website](#) for additional guidance.

### **Is it safe to drink the potable water provided at the campground?**

The water delivered to the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park campground is safe to drink. Potable water at the campground is provided by the [City of San Diego Public Utilities Department](#) who conducts regular water sampling and water quality testing throughout the distribution system on a weekly basis. This ensures that the water that is delivered to the campground meets or exceeds all water quality requirements established by state and federal regulations. Should the City of San Diego detect any safety issues, DPR would be notified and would immediately implement safety protocols until the issues are resolved. If you have additional questions or concerns about the quality of your water, please contact the City of San Diego Water Quality Lab at 619-668-3232 or [DrinkingWaterQuality@sandiego.gov](mailto:DrinkingWaterQuality@sandiego.gov).

### **Why is the County campground open but not Border Field State Park?**

Border Field State Park is managed by California State Parks. Since August 2023, the park has been closed to the public due to storm damage from Hurricane Hillary. For more information, visit: [trnerr.org/visit/border-field-state-park](https://trnerr.org/visit/border-field-state-park)

### **Will the campground flood again?**

In general, Tijuana River flows rarely reach the campground, even during the rainy season, as the campground is located about one mile south of the main Tijuana River channel. The flooding that occurred in early 2024 was the first since 1993 to reach the campground. Following the storms in 1993, the City of San Diego constructed an additional stormwater channel in the area to quickly divert runoff to the main Tijuana River channel. It is possible that during an extraordinary rain event, such as those that occurred in 1993 and 2024, Tijuana River flows may again reach the campground.

### **What is the County doing to prevent future flooding?**

Following the storm, the County worked collaboratively with the City of San Diego to complete sediment and trash removal throughout Smuggler's Gulch and repair the damage to the berm to restabilize the channel. Berm repair work was completed by the City of San Diego in Winter 2024.

The County has historically removed sediment and debris (known as "dredging") south of Monument Road within the Smuggler's Gulch channel through funding received by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. In 2024, DPR received a grant from the State Water Resources Control Board to complete dredging activities throughout the entirety of Smuggler's Gulch and within the Pilot Channel of the Tijuana River, including areas historically maintained by the City of San Diego. This larger dredging effort was completed in Fall 2024 to remove sediment, trash, and debris from the channels and increase the flood conveyance capacity of the channels. The County received an additional grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to complete another round of sediment and debris removal in Smuggler's Gulch which is anticipated to begin in 2025.

In addition to immediate efforts to maintain existing stormwater channels, DPR is also working on long-term efforts to plan for and minimize the potential for flooding events to occur again. Specifically, DPR is

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working on a geotechnical analysis of the Smuggler's Gulch channel to identify strengths and weaknesses of the earthen berms that keep the channel in place. This will help us understand areas of the channel where additional support may be needed.

Additionally, DPR is working closely with the City of San Diego to complete the [Smuggler's Gulch Improvements Project](#) which will include a sediment basin and trash capture infrastructure in Smuggler's Gulch south of Monument Road. Implementation of this project will help to capture sediment, trash, and debris within the channel and prevent those materials from going downstream and impacting the river valley.

DPR is also working with California State Parks on the [Nelson Sloan Quarry Restoration and Beneficial Reuse of Sediment Project](#). The Nelson Sloan site was previously a mining site, and our goal is to beneficially reuse the sediment collected throughout the Tijuana River Valley, including within Smuggler's Gulch, to restore this quarry. The relocation of the sediment also helps to increase the flood conveyance capacity of the channels.

To learn more about additional DPR projects in the Tijuana River Valley, please visit our [Tijuana River Valley Improvements webpage](#).

### **What else is the County doing to address public health and safety in the Tijuana River Valley?**

Much of the Tijuana River watershed lies within Mexico. The Tijuana River Valley in the United States is at the end of this watershed, meaning that it receives cross-border flows from Mexico. These cross-border flows often include stormwater, and may also include sewage, trash, sediment, and other debris. Pollution coming from Mexico and entering the United States is a regional and international concern. Short and long-term fixes depend on major infrastructure repair on both sides of the border.

To address these concerns, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors issued a Proclamation of Local Emergency for environmental and economic impacts due to the U.S-Mexico transboundary pollution crisis. The Board has continued to renew the local emergency every 60 days.

The County continues to advocate to the state and federal government for additional funding to implement the [Environmental Protection Agency's Comprehensive Infrastructure Solution](#), while also identifying projects that can be implemented by the County to minimize the impacts from this pollution.

County officials are working with partners and other agencies to assess concerns and impacts from sewage and pollution in the Tijuana River Valley and surrounding communities. This is a multi-agency effort with the County providing support from the Departments of Public Health Services and Environmental Health and Quality, and the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District, in concert with state and federal agencies. PHS regularly reviews [San Diego County and regional data](#) for trends in gastrointestinal illnesses (GI). DEHQ [monitors recreational beach and bay water quality](#) daily and issues water contact closures and advisories to inform, educate, and protect the public. SDAPCD [monitors air quality in San Diego County](#), including near the Tijuana River Valley and ensures air quality meets federal and state standards. They issue public advisories in the event of significant impacts.

To keep the public informed, the County created a [South Region Health Concerns webpage](#) to provide up-to-date comprehensive information on public health data, beach water quality monitoring, air quality, environmental odors, and general information for members of the public or schools in the area.