

A Day on the San Pedro River: Cleaning up Border Trash

By Maya Tainatongo



Photo by Maya Tainatongo

Thank you all that were able to join us down at the San Pedro for a beautiful cleanup day! We picked up over 500 lbs of trash in ONE DAY with the help of around 30 volunteers. Your hard work and dedication helped improve the habitat for many thankful organisms.



Photo by Maya Tainatongo

While it's important to celebrate these victories, it's also important to remember that habitats such as the San Pedro River are still in danger of being destroyed by border construction and border politics. Efforts to push migrants to cross in dangerous wilderness areas is not only detrimental to them, but also the wildlife that has also been pushed deeper and deeper into wilderness. Cattle grazing has also destroyed the undergrowth at the river, Sierra Club also does water quality studies with the [water sentinels](#) program. Check out our event calendar [here](#) for other volunteer opportunities where you can help protect and nurture the borderlands.

A Reflection on the Jamboard Activity

Hi everyone, Maya here. During the January Borderlands Team meeting, we used a Jamboard activity to set goals and get perspectives for the New Year! Below are some of the projects that team members would like to see SC Borderlands pursue in 2023.

What projects would you like us to join or start this upcoming 2023?



Wildlife corridors established

art projects & do a new round of showing the borderlands art gallery

learn and practice deep canvassing techniques to improve dialogue

tear down the wall

Find ways to support the remediation efforts at the border wall in the Coronado National Forest.

work on counter recruitment away from the border patrol and carceral industry so that working class brown borderlands people don't have to join

Second more outing to the border

Anything that can be done with enviro groups in Mexico?

San Pedro River border wall removal

more outings to the border

Restoration projects when the containers come down

Restoration efforts on the border

I would like to see a series of border outings that highlight the value of the borderlands and perhaps we could include some kind of service project.

More excursions with local Tucson groups and communities

work with migrant and refugee rights movement. link the social impacts on people that live by the wall. further develop youth and young adult engagement from the border

second wildlife corridors

For me, it was interesting to see that many members really focused on two distinct project types: community outreach and land restoration. This makes me very excited to focus more energy on creating outreach materials for broader communities both around the border and farther away from the border. We also definitely plan on implementing and advocating for land and wildlife restoration projects in the Border region.

For the Borderlands program the voice of its team members, volunteers and community in general is extremely important, please email me or Erick Meza if you have any project suggestions or if you have a group that would like to collaborate with the SC Borderlands Program!

mayatainatongo@arizona.edu

erick.meza@sierraclub.org

A Trip to the Border With SEEDS

Hola Everyone, Maya here! Last weekend, Erick and I took the [SEEDS](#) group from both Nogales on a field trip to the Border. The intention was to experience its beauty and complexity.

Nogales is a border town as well, but the dynamics are very different. We stopped at a birding trail near Arivaca in Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge and explored some trails.



Photos: Entrance sign and Old Adobe Ranch ruins, photo by Erick Meza.

We drove along the border wall for a while to see some of the impacts on the environment and the last of the remaining gaps that serve as wildlife and human migration, erosion from last monsoon season has clearly done a lot of damage to the wall and to the new roads creating a safety hazard for humans and wildlife.



Erosion at foundation of the recently built Borderwall, photo by Erick Meza

We ended the trip on a very positive note at Casa de la Esperanza where we ate delicious food and visited with 15 students from Sasabe Sonora middle school. The youth had an amazing time visiting with each other and reflecting on daily lives challenges and dreaming how to make their communities a better place.



Photos by Maya Tainatongo

A Visit to the Border

Hi everyone,

On Thursday, November 10th we took a trip down to the border in Sasabe, AZ with a high school group from Camp Verde. Once we got to Sasabe, we stopped in the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge for lunch and enjoyed the beautiful grassland hills. Our next stop was the US-Mexico border wall; while there we saw the damages the border wall can cause, including halting water flow and clearing native vegetation. We even saw a large truck spraying huge amounts of water on the road running along the wall to prevent dust clouds for other heavy machinery. While this was disheartening to see, we also got to teach the highschool group a lot about the history, beauty, and culture of the border area.

By Maya Tainatongo



Photo by: Maya Tainatongo

The desert is beautiful and complex, but the border wall leaves a damaging scar across the landscape. Check out the video below to see a piece of our trip:



Link to Youtube video:

[▶ Cerro " El Fresnal" in Buenos Aires National Refuge under more destruction for bo...](#)

A Day With SEEDS

Hi everyone Maya here,

On October 1st I had the opportunity to go down to Nogales to work with an amazing local community agricultural project called SEEDS. While at the community garden, I was able to help build an adobe grill! We made our own adobe mixtures and started constructing the grill from the ground up. Here are some photos of us mixing the adobe and then an image of the completed grill:



Photos by Maya Tainatongo

Besides getting my hands dirty, I was also able to see a lot of beautiful pollinators like this butterfly, and meet some amazing people! I have included more information about the program and upcoming volunteer events below!



Photos by Maya Tainatongo

SEEDS works to help young adults gain leadership and agricultural skills through hands-on education, training, and experiences. The organization specifically touches on topics such as migration and the border, food, and climate justice. All kinds of different activities are happening at their garden at Las Lagunas de Anza (966 W Country Club Dr Nogales, AZ):

They are doing adobe building, planting winter crops, harvesting, path building, composting toilets, and much more.

Activities usually happen on Fridays and Saturdays from 9 am to 12 noon.

For more information of volunteer opportunities, contact seedsyac@gmail.com

Maya Tainatongo: Borderlands Program Intern



Hello readers, my name is Maya Tainatongo and I will be interning at the Borderlands Program for the next year! I'm a senior at the University of Arizona and I'm studying wildlife conservation and anthropology.

I was born and raised in Tucson, Arizona and grew up hearing about border issues near my home. I wanted to become involved in an organization that supports human rights and environmental protections because every person, plant, and animal is essential to the health and strength of the planet.

While working at the Borderlands Program I will be coming to events, joining meetings, leading presentations, creating social media posts, and of course writing up these newsletters! If you have any news or events you would like to include, please email me at mayatainatongo@arizona.edu.

