



The Tracker

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Aerial Ride-Alongs Bolster Partnerships, Help Get the Job Done



Aerial view of Lion's Head Mountain in Idaho's Selkirk Mountain Range, looking north into Canada. (Photo by Dave Parker)

This stunning photograph of Lion's Head Mountain was taken during a wildlife survey flight conducted for the U.S. Forest Service and the Idaho Department of Fish & Game. From time to time, Border Patrol agents from the Spokane Sector (Washington, Idaho, and

Montana) also are onboard these flights as part of the agencies' ongoing efforts to work together to accomplish their missions. The Public Lands Liaison Agent (PLLA) for the sector, who often is onboard himself, arranges for Border Patrol presence on these flights by taking part in a monthly

interagency Caribou Conference Call. Participants in the call include Federal and state land managers, Federal and state wildlife biologists, a conservation group, and a recreation group.

Lion's Head is part of the Priest Lake State Forest, Idaho state land that is nestled within the Idaho

Panhandle National Forest, located between the Priest Lake Forest Ranger District, and the Bonners Ferry Ranger District. This land is home range to the following protected and endangered species: Selkirk Mountain woodland caribou, grizzly bear, Canada lynx, wolverine, wolf, fisher, and bull trout.

Access to this region is difficult in and of itself. Managed access restrictions compound the challenge of carrying out national security work. The joint flights, therefore, provide an extremely valuable tool. Agents can look for cross-border tracks in the snow from the air, enabling them to mitigate their snowmobile patrol impact on the habitat. And wildlife biologists can track the region's endangered Selkirk Mountain woodland caribou. It's a win-win.

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CBP and DOI Agree on Species Studies, Land Acquisition Under Mitigation Agreement

Restoration of habitat for lesser long-nosed bats in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Arizona has been given a boost via funding provided by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to the Department of the Interior (DOI). The project is one of several mitigation commitments that are



Northern Aplomado Falcon

beginning to be realized under a 2009 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed between DOI and CBP. Under the MOA, CBP agreed to fund DOI a total of up to \$50 million over the next few years for mitigation of unavoidable impacts to natural and cultural resources due to construction of border

security infrastructure.

"CBP is committed to collaborating with the Department of Interior to find workable solutions on special status lands," CBP Deputy Commissioner David Aguilar said in September 2010 when the first interagency agreement under the MOA was signed. "These projects demonstrate

CBP's commitment to fulfill its enforcement responsibilities while respecting the environment."

Several additional species will benefit from the CBP funding. For example, the money also will be directed toward re-establishment of the northern aplomado

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CBP mitigation funds will help enable monitoring of lesser long-nosed bat habitats. Activities will include checking caves and mine adits, tunnels, and shafts for the presence of this species. Movement patterns also will be monitored.

falcon in New Mexico; installing a fish barrier at San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge in Arizona to preclude competition with invasive species; studying movement of bighorn sheep in California; and surveying and monitoring jaguars and their habitat in Arizona. In total, \$6.8 million of funding is involved and has been codified in an interagency agreement.

The second interagency agreement under the MOA will enable DOI to acquire land with CBP funds as mitigation for lost habitat for certain species. DOI has provided CBP a list of tracts of land it wants to acquire via purchase or easement in Texas and California, and CBP has reviewed the list to screen out any tracts that may present impacts on operations. Discussions are continuing on the specific acreage involved. CBP funding for this second set of actions could total up to \$20 million.

BMTF of a Coastal Stripe: Miami Sector

While all Borderland Management Task Forces (BMTF) operate under the same three-pronged mission – border security, natural resources protection, and safety – the mix of participant organizations and issues may differ across different BMTFs. And the Miami Sector BMTF illustrates the point well.

Miami Sector is one of three coastal Border Patrol sectors. (The other two are New Orleans and Ramey in Puerto Rico.) Being a coastal sector, Border Patrol stations there rely on close working relationships with organizations such as U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Office of Air and Marine (OAM) and its Office of Field Operations (OFO), the U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). When it comes time to put together

invitations and agendas for upcoming BMTF meetings, these organizations figure prominently on the list alongside land-management agency officials.

Like some Border Patrol sectors along the Southwest and Northern borders, relatively large tracts of public lands are located within Miami Sector's area of responsibility. Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, the J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Everglades National Park, Dry Tortugas National Park, and Big Cypress National Preserve are a few examples. However, unlike the others, the Miami Sector's patrol activities primarily focus elsewhere rather than directly on these lands.

As a result, PLLA-led discussions at Miami Sector BMTF meetings are focused not so much on

the Border Patrol footprint on area public lands, as on sharing intelligence information, interoperability of communication systems, and education about each other's missions and priorities. Also, given the inevitable turnover of personnel everywhere, a portion of the meetings are devoted to introducing new officials and exchanging contact information.

Recent BMTF meetings have taken place at the Loxahatchee National Wildlife and the Hobe Sound Wildlife Refuge. Topics have been wide-ranging. For example, one of the land managers voiced concern that the public land he manages has older routes that were utilized by drug smugglers in the past and have a potential to be used again. He also expressed concern about grass airstrips being used by

smugglers. OAM representatives attending the meeting agreed to continue the discussion post-meeting. Another issue that has come up is the transportation of apprehended subjects by ferry from the Dry Tortugas Islands to Florida. Discussion also has included development of a flow chart that shows which agency to call about different issues that arise on public lands, and the possibility of risk assessment training for those who work on remote areas of the beach to monitor sea turtle nesting.

Additional Miami Sector BMTF meetings already have been scheduled for spring and summer, when discussions will continue on some of the same topics, and other new topics undoubtedly will arise.

Department of Interior Appoints New Liaison to Border Patrol

Jon Andrew has been appointed as the new Department of the Interior (DOI) liaison to the Border Patrol. He began work in September and has been traveling out to numerous field locations to better understand the issues facing both Border Patrol agents and officials within his Department's eight bureaus.

Mr. Andrew brings extensive experience to the job, having spent the last 26 years working in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), primarily as a land manager. He has held positions in Alaska, South Texas and the Florida Keys, as well as in the FWS Regional Office in Atlanta and the Washington Office headquarters. His most

recent position was Regional Chief of Refuge Lands in 10 southeastern states and the Caribbean. While in that capacity, he supervised the largest regional law enforcement program in the refuge system. He is a graduate of Unity College in Unity, Maine, and Frostburg State College in Maryland, with degrees in environmental science and wildlife management.

"My time in South Texas and in the Florida Keys gave me a tremendous appreciation for the work of Border Patrol agents. I graduated from Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in 1990 and held a federal commission while in Florida and Texas, so I had a chance to interact

with other law enforcement agencies. It's important but dangerous work, and vital to the security of our country."

Mr. Andrew sees his primary job as understanding the Border Patrol's mission and needs, and explaining the concerns of DOI agencies. He will act as the primary source of contact for questions and issues that arise with regard to working together to accomplish the mission of the Border Patrol and DOI.

"Some of the issues are very challenging, but there is common ground, and I don't believe we need to choose between a secure border and a healthy border environment. With some hard work, trust and

cooperation, we can achieve both."

Mr. Andrew plans to attend as many Borderland Management Task Force meetings as possible in the coming months, and is looking forward to meeting Public Lands Liaison Agents in each sector.



Jon Andrew, DOI liaison to the U.S. Border Patrol.

Guest Article:**On Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge,
Coordination and Cooperation Stay Strong***By Sally Gall**Refuge Manager, Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge*

We all face challenges in our jobs. We all approach those challenges with the best of intentions, a commitment to our mission and sincere professionalism. Some of these challenges we face are specific to our mission – like for me, overcoming decades of habitat loss to restore the endangered masked bobwhite quail. However, as we have seen along our southern border, sometimes these challenges arise when two different agencies, both committed to serving the people of the United States, are tasked with executing seemingly conflicting missions on the same land.

Along our southern border in Arizona, the National Wildlife Refuge System works to manage, protect and conserve wildlife and habitat. On those same lands along the southern border, U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Border Patrol agents work to provide a secure international boundary. To some, these missions may seem mutually exclusive. Fortunately, there are many of us who feel that by working cooperatively and in close coordination, we can both achieve our mission objectives.

For over 15 years, the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and the Border Patrol's Tucson Sector have managed to do just that. To be fair, this relationship did not come without growing

pains, and there will always be conflicts that we will need to sort out. But we have all come a long way since the first complaint that a Border Patrol agent was driving off road on the refuge.

In the mid- to late '90s, it was uncommon to see an illegal immigrant on the refuge, and then it all changed. Around 2000,

“During the height of immigrant traffic, we were experiencing up to 4,000 per day traveling through the Refuge. Now it is under 100.”

we saw an increase in immigrant traffic through the refuge. Following this increase came a boost in the number of Border Patrol agents in the area. Slowly, we began seeing foot trails, ATV trails, and illegal roads being created through the grasslands. Along with the illegal immigrants also came trash being deposited all along their routes. During the height of immigrant traffic, we were experiencing up to 4,000 per day traveling through the refuge. (Now it is less than 100.)

This sudden impact to the refuge land was a shock for land managers. As a result, our contact with the Border Patrol became much more frequent. Together, we identified measures to manage conflict and reduce impacts to natural resources.

In 2003 the Buenos Aires NWR and the Tucson Sector Border Patrol entered into a pilot Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) intending to explore

methods of patrolling refuge lands in a manner that minimized damage to the refuge from illegal immigrants and Border Patrol activities.

The Buenos Aires NWR seems to be the place for pilot projects that emphasize the cooperative nature of the relationship between the National Park Service and the Border Patrol. To date, we have authorized a

long-term equestrian facility, a helipad and fueling station, and several rescue beacons. We had one of the first vehicle barriers installed, which later became the 7-mile long pedestrian fence on the border. This fence served host to some of the first surveillance towers (P28), which were later replaced with permanent SBI^{net} towers. With SBI^{net} also came the roads maintenance program, Tactical Infrastructure Maintenance

and Repair (TIMR).

A key facet to all of these projects has been very close coordination. Refuge management and biologists were often contacted ahead of time to plan the projects and reduce environmental impacts. We have permitted these activities via a Special Use Permit. For the larger projects (ie. SBI^{net}), compatibility determinations with stipulations have been put into place to minimize impacts to the refuge lands.

The Refuge has also benefited by the presence of Border Patrol. Being such a large, remote area, it is not always feasible to have Refuge Officers responding to incidents, especially in the middle of the night. Border Patrol agents have assisted the Refuge in responding to our alarms going off in our buildings and when illegal immigrants are hanging around Refuge residences. Knowing agents are around 24/7 and that we can count on them, makes the Refuge a safer place for our staff and the public.

We have been amazed and impressed with the improved relations and the close coordination that has evolved over the years between the Refuge and Border Patrol. There was once tension between the two, but now there is a better understanding of each other's mission. By working together, we keep the balance in achieving our goals more effectively. We have learned that close coordination, good communication, and that speaking up early and often is critical to properly managing a wildlife refuge on the border, and this is also true for the Border Patrol in achieving its mission. In the ever changing dynamic of both border security and natural resource conservation, there will likely be new opportunities for continued growth and cooperation. More growing pains may need to be dealt with, but I am confident that the decades-long foundation of partnership between our two agencies will hold strong.



BANWR provides approximately 118,000 acres of habitat for threatened and endangered plants and animals.

Collaboration Round-Up: A Sector-by-Sector Snapshot

Southwest Border

San Diego (Calif.)

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) briefed Sector agents on newly established Quino Checkerspot butterfly habitat and requested continued awareness as agents patrolled the nearby area.

El Centro (Calif.)

Both El Centro and Yuma Sectors participate in the All American Canal Safety Consortium. Hundreds of people have lost their lives trying to cross the border by swimming across the canal. The Bureau of Reclamation and BLM are among the other members.

Yuma (Calif./Ariz.)

Sector leaders met with the Bureau of Reclamation to discuss how to stabilize and improve the flow of three areas where the All American Canal is seeping with the potential to erode the foundation of the fence in that area; agreement was reached to install drainage pipes. In addition, PLLA continues to attend quarterly meetings of the Sonoran Pronghorn Recovery Team, whose members include the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, the BLM, the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Marine Corps, and the University of Arizona.

El Paso (Tex./N. Mex.)

The Sector took part in a Border Security Task Force Meeting (BSTF) at the Mimbres Valley Learning Center in Deming, New Mexico. This quarterly meeting involves Border Patrol, public lands

managers, local law enforcement officials, ranchers and citizens.

Marfa (Tex.)

A remote border crossing by boat will connect Boquillas Canyon within Big Bend National Park and neighboring Mexican protected lands. Construction of the



Many hands make for lighter work. Weslaco Explorers, Post 964, plant seedlings in the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge to help restore habitat during a local volunteer event called Rio Reforestation XIX. Post 964 is sponsored by the Weslaco Border Patrol Station in the Rio Grande Valley Sector. Young people learn about law enforcement careers and also participate in community service projects.

necessary infrastructure, including a boat dock and visitor's center, is scheduled for July 2011, and a boat should be running by April 2012. On another front, pending construction of housing for Border Patrol agents, the National Park Service continues to enable several Sector agents to temporarily live in Park Service housing within the park to expedite patrol responsibilities within this vast and remote area.

Tucson (Ariz.)

Tucson Sector rolled out Operation Trident, a multi-agency effort based on joint patrols that will promote cross-education, as well as more effective patrols of the border. In another project, sector provided one-mile of vehicle barrier fence to BLM to install between the Sonoran Desert National

Monument and the Tohono O'odham Nation. The barrier is intended to prevent vehicle incursions into BLM's Tabletop Wilderness Area. Also, Sector has reached an agreement with Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge on the

relocation of the Bates Well Camp. The location reflects sensitivity to Sonoran pronghorn antelope habitat as well as the Border Patrol mission.

Del Rio (Tex.)

The Del Rio PLLA and the Seminole Canyon State Park and Historic Site finalized the installation of the Comstock Border Patrol Station frequencies on their police officer radios. It allows for greater tactical intercommunication between the two agencies.

Laredo (Tex.)

Sector met with USDA officials regarding the Carrizo cane eradication process. Officials conveyed that they were granted permission to release snails near Del Rio to help eradicate the invasive cane.

Rio Grande Valley (Tex.)

Sector PLLA met with Fish and Wildlife Service manager of the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge to discuss maintenance and vegetation removal along a portion of the border fence. In another project, sector officials met with USIBWC personnel regarding IBWC's plan to survey portions of the Rio Grande River.

Northern and Coastal Borders

Blaine (Wash.)

At a recent Borderlands Management Taskforce meeting, the sector offered to loan out radios to Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service law enforcement counterparts to increase interoperability, and also offered assistance with GIS data analysis. In another project, sector officials met with U.S. Forest Service officials to discuss how to address theft of forest products and other environmental concerns.

Spokane (Wash./Idaho/Mont.)

Sector continues discussions with the Forest Service on access alternatives that best meet the border security mission and also minimize impacts to the endangered grizzly bear.

Grand Forks (N. Dak./Minn.)

Sector agents and their Forest Service counterparts are discussing carrying out joint snowmobile patrols in northeastern Minnesota. Also, discussions continue with the Forest Service related to effectively patrolling the Boundary

Waters Canoe Area Wilderness within the Superior National Forest while also complying with wilderness law.

Havre (Mont.)

Sector agents worked together with National Park Service to rescue a lost hiker on Chief Mountain on the eastern border of Glacier National Park and the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. Also, sector agents met with Blackfeet officials to discuss both identifying areas of religious and historical significance, and homeland-security issues.

Swanton (N.Y./Vt.)

Agents met with Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service Officers to discuss better intelligence sharing practices.

Houlton (Maine)

Sector PLLA met with officials from the Aroostook National Wildlife Refuge to discuss storage of emergency supplies at the Refuge in the event of a local disaster. Also, sector officials met with the Northern Maine Woods (NMW) Industrial Road Safety Committee at Portage, Maine, to discuss Border Patrol operations and travel and communication on logging roads in the NMW area.

Miami (Fla.)

The Sector PLLA set up a Borderlands Management Taskforce Meeting (BMTF) during which land managers from Key West National Wildlife Refuge, Big Cypress National Park, and other public lands provided status reports. In addition, BMTF members are discussing potential response protocols in the event of foreign landings on Federal lands in the area.

Re-Vegetation - A Multi-Step, Multi-Stakeholder Process

During construction and installation of the border fence and other infrastructure, re-vegetation of the surrounding area was carried out as a standard operating protocol. Now that the infrastructure is in place and the initial re-vegetation completed, scientists are circling back to ensure that it has been successful and that invasive species have not entered the mix.

Based on results from a recent Southwest border-wide study, re-vegetation has been deemed a success in many areas. But it has not been universally successful. In several specific locations, due to factors such as climate and harsh terrain, it has become apparent that additional efforts are required. Additional re-vegetation work already has begun in several of these locations, and more is scheduled in the coming months.

Focus on San Diego Area

Re-vegetation efforts in the San Diego border area demonstrate the benefits of instituting a multi-step, multi-stakeholder process. Over the past few years, several large, complex, and controversial border security infrastructure projects were carried out along this portion of the border. One of these areas is called Smuggler's Gulch. Infrastructure work in Smuggler's Gulch

literally involved moving mountains.

The construction and installation processes created large areas requiring extensive re-vegetation and erosion controls. Initial hydro-seeding efforts with native seed mixes to re-vegetate these areas were not very successful. In many areas, the grasses did not germinate properly due to lack of irrigation. As a result, non-native grasses invaded the areas. By early 2010, resource agencies and public interest groups had become vocal in their criticism, calling for improving the re-vegetation and erosion control efforts.

In response, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), decided to develop a long-term plan, called the Re-vegetation Management Plan. A critical component of the plan was to seek stakeholder input into the process. The Border Patrol Public Lands Liaison Agent played a pivotal role in this outreach work. Stakeholder groups became actively engaged in helping the agency evaluate options and develop a new plan that everyone supported. One important component of the plan was to determine the proper mix of native plants that would provide adequate erosion control and also not inhibit border security operations. Stakeholders provided

valuable advice to meet these objectives.

The plan is being reviewed by Federal, state, and local stakeholders and public interest groups, including the city of San Diego and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It includes critical lessons learned, sophisticated mapping using geospatial information systems (GIS), and an analysis of the areas requiring re-vegetation, while also considering limits in resources and budget. The goal is to implement the plan in time for 2011's rainy season next fall. It also likely will be used as a template for other environmental planning initiatives across the Southwest Border.

Another area near San Diego being further re-vegetated is Otay Mountain Wilderness, managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). For this location, it was determined that the standard seed mixes being applied in other areas were insufficient for guaranteeing success in that they did not reflect the unique genetic make-up of the plants in this ecosystem. Instead, native plant seeds are being collected carefully from the wilderness area itself in coordination with BLM. The seeds are being stockpiled until there is enough to carry out the additional re-vegetation.

Other Projects

Further east along the border, several additional projects are under way: Within the Coronado National Forest west of

native plants is moving forward under a collaborative initiative involving state authorities and FWS. These native plants will replace an invasive species named Car-



Re-Vegetation is not always a case of mitigation. In the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, Customs and Border Protection removed sections of Carrizo cane lining the banks of the Rio Grande River. Carrizo cane is an invasive species that has invaded native ecosystems and whose height and density presents challenges to the Border Patrol as it carries out its security work. Shown is a section that has been replanted with native vegetation and mulched to promote native plant growth.

Nogales, Arizona, re-vegetation work is moving forward with the goal of completing the reseeding prior to monsoon season. In El Paso, Texas, after concerns were raised about lack of vegetation and potential erosion from roads in the floodplain along the Rio Grande River, CBP responded by working closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the International Boundary and Water Commission to address these concerns. In the lower Rio Grande Valley around Laredo Texas, re-vegetation using Texas

rizo cane that had gained a strong foothold in the area, both disrupting the native ecosystem and also inhibiting the Border Patrol from carrying out its work.

Common to all these efforts is a commitment to stakeholder outreach and working hand in hand with the PLLA in the affected Sector. These partnerships have become instrumental in gaining a better understanding of issues specific to each region.

Report on Interagency Cooperation Cites PLLAs, BMTFs as Key Interface

“Cooperation among Federal departments and agencies charged with protection of the border and wilderness areas has been improving in recent years after a slow start and much trial and error,” according to Dr. Kirk Emerson in her

September 2010 report, “Interagency Cooperation on U.S.-Mexico Border Wilderness Issues.” The report provides initial findings from independent research instigated by a request from the New Mexico Wildlife Federation and the

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance.

Dr. Emerson points out that interagency cooperation is not new to the Federal government, but the fact that it now is being practiced in “such a difficult setting along our Southwest

Border is encouraging and praiseworthy.” She traces the recent history of increased interagency cooperation, prompted, in part, by a 2004 General Accounting Office report that described coordination across the Departments

of Homeland Security, Interior, and Agriculture as “minimal.”

Since that time, the report says, a number of organizational mechanisms have been created that

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have promoted coordination at the national, state and field levels. Included among those cited are the Borderland Management Task Forces (BMTFs) and the Public Lands Liaison Agent (PLLA) Program. By 2008, the report says, in spite of the conflicts over the border fence construction and the use

by DHS of its controversial waiver authority in specific instances along the border, the institutional framework and expectations for interagency cooperation had been put into place and were beginning to yield improved cooperation, conflict resolution, and joint problem solving. Six cases are presented in the report

that describe, in detail, how interagency cooperation is being manifested in wilderness and other protected areas along the Southwest Border.

The report concludes that the twin goals of national security and public lands stewardship can be simultaneously filled, but it will take continued interagency cooperation to assure this happens.

Dr. Emerson recently was contacted by *The PLLA Tracker* for her perspective on how PLLAs can continue to play a vital role in promoting this interagency cooperation. She replied:

“PLLAs are in a unique position to assure continued improvement in interagency cooperation on the U.S.-Mexico border, as called for in my report and two GAO reports released in the fall of 2010 (GAO-11-38 and GAO-11-177). The second GAO report found that critical gaps still remain in information sharing and communication among DHS, DOI and USDA agencies.”

“PLLAs can assist in assuring the full implementation of existing interagency agreements. They can facilitate more regular access to threat information for

public land managers and make sure that secure radio communications are fully compatible to aid daily operations. PLLAs can also help anticipate and coordinate interagency responses to shared intelligence assessments of border security threats. Finally, PLLAs can advocate for and coordinate more frequent, area-specific training by land managers, whether at musters or on ride-alongs during routine surveillance.”

The full report can be found at http://kirk_emerson.home.mindspring.com/Interagency_Border_Cooperation.pdf.

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What is the PLLA Program?
A significant portion of the land along U.S. borders is public land. The Border Patrol created the Public Lands Liaison Agent (PLLA) Program in 2005 to foster collaboration between Border Patrol agents who patrol these public lands and those who manage them. In each of the Border Patrol's 20 sectors, PLLAs take the lead in building partnerships with land managers, leveraging resources, and solving any issues on a local level.

The PLLA Tracker is available on-line at:
www.cbp.gov/xpl/cgov/about/sr/es/sustain/tracker.

Joint Patrols Under Operation Trident Benefit Security, Environment

Routine joint patrols are becoming a regular occurrence along the Arizona-Sonora border under a nine-month targeted collaboration initiative named Operation Trident. Participating organizations include the Tucson Sector of the U.S. Border Patrol as well as law enforcement officials from the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Specific DOI agencies include the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Within USDA, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is the participating agency.

Joint patrols yield especially strong benefits within the Tucson Sector because approximately 85 percent of its area of responsibility is composed of public lands managed by either DOI or USDA. In a typical Operation Trident joint patrol, law enforcement officials from

several of the participating agencies attend musters and ride together in the same patrol unit, often a Border Patrol vehicle. Emphasis during the joint patrol is on detecting and identifying principal smugglers and gathering intelligence on their smuggling networks. In addition, the operation focuses on protecting cultural, wildlife and natural resources on public lands as well as ensuring the safety of employees and the public on those lands.

Benefits are numerous. Besides resulting in more effective enforcement within an assigned area, the joint patrols also provide a useful opportunity for cross education of both Border Patrol agents and their counterpart land management agency law enforcement officers. In addition, the strengthened partnerships can be leveraged across other areas of coordination.

Operation Trident began in January 2011 and is scheduled to continue

through September 2011. It supports the 2006 tri-departmental Memorandum of Understanding between DHS, DOI, and USDA. It falls within a broader initiative called the Alliance to Combat Transnational Threats (ACTT), which was initiated by the DHS to confront individuals and organizations involved in transnational criminal activity along the Arizona/Sonora border.



Benefits of joint patrols under Operation Trident are numerous.