



Analyzing the forests surrounding the Tijuana Estuary was quite the task. My group and I hiked along trails near Old Dairy Road and captured photos. We travelled through the protected (by the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve) Tijuana River Valley.

The condition of the riparian forest seemed to be healthy and dense, but some spots were questionable. For instance, we passed over a small outlet of the Tijuana

river that was dried out. Trash was piled high in the rut and included a shopping cart. This was worrisome, but did not represent the overall condition of the forest. Lots of trash, such as plastic bags and containers, was scattered about the trails but did not seem to be greatly affecting the growth of the forest. However, we saw some invasive species such as a large patch of ice plant that was hindering the growth of some native plants which is especially alarming since lots of the flora in the forest are sensitive. We thought we had found bamboo, but upon further investigation, it turned out to be Japanese Knotweed. Japanese Knotweed is an invasive species, so there was more damage to the forest than we previously expected. Most of the plant life was deciduous and green when we visited. There was also a lot of ground cover. There were no clear signs of logging which makes sense because the forest is protected. According to GFW, there were no signs of tree cover gain or loss in the area that we were in, but nearby to the North, there was tree cover gain.

We saw how the forest has been affected over the years due to its close proximity to the border too. Throughout the trip, we saw border patrol numerous times. We also found abandoned housing that looked like it was used by temporary inhabitants. While this didn't affect the forest's health, it definitely added a unique feeling to the area.

In conclusion, although the forests surrounding the Tijuana Estuary were well kept, they were more damaged than met the eye. Problems included litter, invasive species, and some patches that were not as healthy as others, but the forest was generally healthy.

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works cited (links)

[http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=669](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=669)

[http://trnerr.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/trv\\_existing\\_conditions.pdf](http://trnerr.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/trv_existing_conditions.pdf)

<http://www.globalforestwatch.org/map>

<http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/parks/openspace/tjrv.html>

<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/knotweed.shtml>