San Diego Lifeguard River Rescue Team

SERGEANT TROY KEACH

WELCOME TO THE
TIJUANA RIVER VALLEY
WHERE BIRDS FLY AND PEOPLE DIE

Season

- November 15 through April 15
- Rainy Months, Usually January/February
- Average 9-11” of rain Per Year
- Miracle March

FLOOD YEARS

- 1978
- 1983 El Nino
- 1984
- 1987
- 1993
- 1994
- 1997
- 2002
- 2007/8
- 2009/2010
- 2010/2011

1993/1994

- Tijuana River Valley
- Dairy Mart Road
- Hollister Street
- Monument Road
- Smuggler’s Canyon
- Border Field state Park
- Rheem Field
- Tocayo

DISASTER

- Many Days
- Multi Agency Response including Federal Government and Republic of Mexico
- 270+ Rescues of People
- Several Animals Rescued and Fed

1997

Marysville/Yuba City Floods

USAR Swiftwater task Force Eight

Lifeguards/Firefighters from many task forces

First out of County deployment

Hurricane Katrina

GEAR REQUIRED FOR TJ RIVER

floods

Rescue in Rural Area

HAZARDS

Environmental Hazards

Along the Border Fence

Under Dairy Mart Bridge

CHALLENGES

Rural Area

Farms

Geography

Access

Communications

Multiple Agencies

Victims “hiding”

Language

Danger

Environmental

CHANGES

Fence

Treatment Plants

Roads

Increased Resources

Communications

Awareness

Multi agency

Construction

Equipment

Training

Sewage Treatment

Dairy Mart Bridge

Assist

The neighborhoods flood in the vicinty of the Tijuana River valley

This requires evacuations, rescues , assists etc…

The health, wefare and safety of the community is threatened by the flood waters

Causes vary from environmental to ??

Suburban Flooding

Tijuana River Watershed

SanBernadino Neighborhood

RESCUE AT THE GORILLA CAGE

Storm water flowing from TJ

Top view of the cage

Water flow into Drain Pipe

Decontamination

- Required after every call
- All Lifeguards involved must get a “rinse off’ from an Engine
- All exposed gear must be thoroughly scrubbed
- All team members receive vaccinations and other treatment as required
- Attempts are made to limit the exposure but follow up treatment is required in submersions etc…
- Team members have been very sick with a variety of ailments after rescues in TJ River area

Alert stages

- ONE
- TWO
- THREE
- Determines level of response and/or deployment of resources
- Entire county responds as ALERT stages

River Team Staged in TJ River Valley

- One emergency vehicle
- Three team members
- Specialized gear
- Contact with BORSTAR
- Housed in vehicle or at Fire station
- First Unit Deployed and last Unit released

Wrap up

- River Rescues are the most dangerous types that public safety workers encounter
- It is a very specialized skill that is perishable
- Requires special gear
- Requires frequent Area Familiarization to identify hazards and plan for emergencies
- Tijuana River valley is dangerous
- Rural
- Environmental
- Trash
- Sewage
- Number of victims
- Constant development challenges
- Access

Final Thoughts

- The new fence that extends out into the Pacific Ocean brings challenges to the people attempting to cross as well as to the Rescuers.
- Many drownings over the years in that area due to Rip Currents, structures and treacherous conditions
- The Dairy Mart Bridge has improved access to the people on the south side of the river and west of Smuggler's canyon etc…
- With new facilities and increased Federal workers there is a chance that they could get trapped during a flood event
- Disaster plans if not already in place would be highly recommended

QUESTIONS???

Thank you for the opportunity to speak and all of the improvements that you have been involved with!

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City of San Diego Lifeguards on duty 24 hrs per day 365 days per year Emergency #911 or VHF 16. Non emergency 221-8800