

# DIVIDED TOGETHER

Case study

Border Field State Park, Kumeyaay land

Image By Coast View



## Background

Divided Together is a podcast series produced by Border Field State Park. The podcast reveals topics that involve separation and unification related to the border featuring speakers with direct experience and knowledge. Divided Together features several episodes focusing on the Kumeyaay, the first people whose ancestral lands include Border Field State Park. Topics for episodes include Kumeyaay land-use practices and the impact the

border has on them; the history and impact of border enforcement; and scientists and geographers collaborating across the border. The goal of Divided Together is to share stories that communities want to hear. This project aligns with the state's reexamining our past initiative by conveying more comprehensive stories of our parks' history.

## Community Engagement

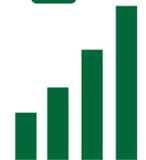
Divided Together tells stories that are important to the communities surrounding the park. Public meetings held by the park and Southern Service Center staff, years prior to the development of the podcast collected priority community interests that were used as podcast topics. During these meetings, they utilized the Pomegranate Center method for community collaboration, which is consensus-based and builds a space for multicultural collaboration. After convening with various community groups, the Kumeyaay asked to have additional consultations. Effective public meetings and tribal consultations created a wealth of untold stories to share during future interpretive programs and eventually, Divided Together.



**4 Episodes**



**8 Guests**



**470+**

**Downloads**

First two months live



Interviewee Ana Gloria "Martha"  
Rodriguez, San Jose de la Zorra

## Digital Exhibit

Divided Together is integrated into a digital exhibit using the STQRY app. Due to the environment of the park, physical interpretive structures are not viable options. Instead, visitors are prompted to download the STQRY app through a QR code at the park's entrance. The app's geo positioning software is utilized to guide visitors through different locations. At each location, visitors can listen to a snippet of the podcast, see photos of speakers, and read text. These snippets will pique visitor interest and encourage further engagement with the podcast.

## Communicating Complex Topics

The untold stories behind parks are complex topics. Sharing these stories requires balancing personal opinions, the views of the state, and the perspectives of speakers. It's important to consider that any interpretive materials represent the state, so all podcast questions should be reviewed by district superintendents. Such review requires time; in this case the review period took 2-3 months. More controversial topics may require approval from State Park headquarters. Storytelling is difficult and emotional work, but the genuine interests and opinions of a community should be told in utmost respectful way. The History and Relevancy division is very supportive in sharing untold stories and may be a great resource.

## Lessons in Podcasting

- Conduct initial interviews to find speaker interests, let this guide the question writing process
- Be an active listener. Additional questions during the interview and extra content can be very valuable
- Podcasting is a detailed process, allow several months for the project
- Find a great podcast writer and editor
- Have internal and external support in creating a strong promotional plan
- Allocate funds for interviewee stipends



Interviewee Pedro Rios, Director of the U.S. Border Program, American Friends Service Committee

## Finding Success

When in need of support, partners are an excellent sounding board to gather input from perspectives outside the park. Utilize available connections and relationships to overcome challenges and strengthen overall storytelling. The goal of Divided Together was to share stories that communities wanted to hear, and that goal was met. Podcast guests shared the podcast broadly with their communities, garnering hundreds of downloads, even some from Mexico. For project leader Anne Marie Tipton, one measure of success came from knowing that the podcast guests loved the podcast.

## Moving Forward

With many more stories to tell, a second season of Divided Together is planned. Possible topics include the history of the border and Tijuana River Action Month. There are many untold stories surrounding the border, Divided Together reached out to the Department of Homeland Security to include the perspective of a Border Patrol but they declined to participate.

To further share the stories and impact of Divided Together, Education Coordinator Anne Marie Tipton has begun speaking at conferences. In October 2021, she presented at the Computer Using Educators (CUE) conference. She hopes to present alongside podcast producer and guests at the 2022 California Association of Museums conference.

*"I'm proud that I represented the speaker's stories in a way that moved them"*

*- Education Coordinator Anne Marie Tipton*



Parks California is illuminating success stories from our grantee community to inspire creativity. These case studies highlight innovative community engagement, education, and access programs.