

SAN DIEGUITO  
RIVER VALLEY



CONSERVANCY

The San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy preserves, protects and shares the natural and cultural resources of the San Dieguito River Valley through collaborative efforts to acquire lands, complete trails, restore habitats, establish educational programs, create interpretive centers, encourage recreation, and mobilize public support.

# 2020-21 annual report



## ► Building Bridges

### Del Mar

We're building bridges to nature. On the south shore of the San Dieguito Lagoon, plans for a third phase of River Path Del Mar are taking shape. The **2,200-foot-long** trail extension will connect the Grand Avenue Overlook to the trail network in Crest Canyon providing expansive views of the wetlands.

**Estimated Completion: 2024**

**Cost: \$1.6 million**

**Malk Nature Fund: \$60,000**

**City of Del Mar: \$50,000**

**Del Mar Foundation: \$50,000**

**REI: \$15,000**

**SDRVC: \$10,000**

Fundraising campaign to start soon to raise funds for construction.



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(1931-2021)

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**Copy 2 Copy**

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Graphic Designer

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



What a year it has been. Our hearts go out to all of those who have suffered through the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope we've been able to help by encouraging folks to enjoy the San Dieguito River Valley. Getting some exercise outside is good for the mind and body.

As an added plus, exploring the outdoors lets you learn about the biodiverse region that we call home.

That biodiversity is thriving on 117 acres overlooking Lake Hodges that we purchased this year. Acquiring the pristine coastal sage scrub habitat was made possible with state and federal grants and, most importantly, by \$367,000 contributed by more than 2,000 generous donors.

On the restoration front, this year we have ripped out invasive species and planted native plants with the help of the Urban Corps of San Diego County, California Native Plant Society and other volunteers. Despite the pandemic, we organized restoration projects in Gonzalez Canyon, River Path Del Mar, San Pasqual Valley, Rancho Santa Fe and elsewhere.

The education component of our mission continues to reach people of all ages. Pollinator's Paradise, Next to Nature, Exploring our Sense of Place and Watershed Explorers combine varying degrees of experiences in the field with classroom or online elements. Many of our Watershed Explorers are kids from the inner city. All of our education programs share a common goal – connecting people with nature.

One of the best ways to make that connection is by having fun. Our recreation program is stronger than ever and is anchored by the ever-popular Coast to Crest Trail Challenge. This year, more than 400 people completed the five-hike challenge to earn their prize.

Also this year, the Coast to Crest Trail itself grew one mile closer to completion, with 49 of 71 miles now open. Thanks to a \$1.5 million grant secured by the River Park, plans are progressing to build a critical trail connection and bridge over the river in Fairbanks Ranch. Within the next few years, we will be able to hike uninterrupted from the coast to the San Pasqual Valley.

None of our programming would be possible without our great partnerships, starting with that of the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority. New collaborations include working with the Green Infrastructure Consortium and Lumercycle to develop an inventory of nature-based solution projects within the San Dieguito watershed. A \$50,000 grant from the San Diego Foundation is funding those initiatives.

On the Conservancy's Board of Directors, it is my great pleasure to serve with such talented, experienced, and hardworking colleagues. I'm honored to be chosen by them to represent the Conservancy.

What are your ideas? How can we continue to serve you better? Just let us know.

Sincerely,

*Jim Smith*

**Jim Smith, President**

## ► Building Bridges



### Osuna Valley

With your help, our partners at the River Park are laying plans for another bridge to nature – this one to span the river in Osuna Valley. A feasibility study presents three possible bridge types: Prefabricated steel truss, precast concrete bulb-tee girder and recycled railcar. The bridge will provide a final linkage to complete **31** contiguous miles of the Coast to Crest Trail from Del Mar all the way to San Pasqual Valley.



# 2020-2021 AT A GLANCE

## IN TOTAL, THE CONSERVANCY...



**\$2,604,118** Grant Funding Received



Total Donations **\$246,874**



**740** Individual Donors



Received Platinum recognition from GuideStar

## WE'D LIKE TO THANK OUR FINANCIAL PARTNERS, CONSERVATION PARTNERS, AND CORPORATE SPONSORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT:

### Financial Partners

Coastal Community Foundation  
Rancho Santa Fe Foundation  
The San Diego Foundation  
Union Banc Investment Services  
Union Bank

### Conservation Partners

22<sup>nd</sup> District Agricultural Association  
Allied Climbers of San Diego  
California Fire Safe Council  
California Native Plant Society - San Diego Chapter  
California Marine Protected Areas  
City of Del Mar  
City of Escondido  
City of Poway  
City of San Diego  
City of Solana Beach  
Climate Science Alliance South Coast  
Conrad Prebys Foundation  
County of San Diego  
Del Mar Foundation  
Fairbanks Ranch Association  
Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley  
Green Infrastructure Consortium  
Helen Woodward Animal Center  
High Tech Elementary North County  
High Tech High North County  
High Tech Middle North County  
Hike San Diego  
I Love a Clean San Diego  
Living Coast Discovery Center  
Mission Resource Conservation District  
National Charity League, San Dieguito Chapter  
National Resources Conservation Service  
Nature Collective  
Outdoor Outreach  
Palomar Audubon Society  
Rancho Santa Fe Association  
Rancho Santa Fe / Fairbanks Ranch Fire Safe Council  
Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District  
San Diego Archaeological Center  
San Diego Audubon Society  
San Diego Coastkeeper  
San Diego Canyonlands  
San Diego Mountain Biking Association  
San Diego Natural History Museum  
San Diego Tracking Team  
San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research  
San Dieguito River Park JPA  
Sierra Club San Diego - North County Group  
Southwestern Field Herping Associates  
State Coastal Conservancy  
The Escondido Creek Conservancy  
Urban Corps of San Diego  
United States Fish & Wildlife Service Partners for Fish & Wildlife  
United States Geological Survey  
Urban Corps of San Diego  
Volcan Mountain Foundation  
WILDCOAST  
Zable Foundation

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Genentech  
REI  
SDG&E  
Second Chance Beer Company  
Target  
Viasat  
Viewpoint Brewing Co.

# CONSERVATION

## Del Dios Land Acquisitions

With your help, the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy now holds title to 117 acres of habitat overlooking Lake Hodges. Escrow closed in early 2021. Supporters were generous and swift, donating nearly **\$347,000** in just three months to retire the Conservancy's share of the purchase price. Special thanks go to sellers Stuart and Jeanie Donelson for making a \$50,000 price reduction.



## Restoration Projects

This year, we have fought the battle against invasive plant species on three fronts. We are revegetating riparian corridors after hauling out great volumes of giant reeds and salt cedar at Lusardi Creek, Rancho Santa Fe, Fairbanks Ranch and San Pasqual Valley. As camera-trap photos have shown, restoration projects improve habitat function. They also improve the hydrology of rivers and creeks and reduce wildfire risks.



### Lusardi County Preserve

- **Completed:** Spring 2021
- **Funding:** **\$18,664** from the California Fire Safe Council
- **Partners:** California Native Plant Society, Urban Corps of San Diego County, County of San Diego

### Rancho Santa Fe and Fairbanks Ranch

- **Project status:** Ongoing
- **Funding:** **\$72,000** from a California Coastal Conservancy Proposition 1 grant; **\$16,000** from United States Fish & Wildlife
- **Partners:** Urban Corps of San Diego County, Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District, Rancho Santa Fe Association, Fairbanks Ranch Association

### San Pasqual Valley

- **Completed:** Fall 2020
- **Funding:** **\$104,000** to Urban Corps of San Diego County from a California Proposition 68 grant
- **Partner:** Urban Corps of San Diego County

# EDUCATION



## WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT



The pandemic has made online learning part of our daily lives. The Conservancy is keeping pace by

upgrading the webpages of our educational programs to make them more interactive and user friendly. Funded by grants of **\$10,000** from the Conrad Prebys Foundation and **\$5,000** from the Walter J. & Betty C. Zable Foundation, the upgrades improve users' online experience with videos, photos, text and game-like interaction.



## WATERSHED EXPLORERS



Watershed Explorers dive into the watershed from the San Dieguito River's headwaters on Volcan Mountain

all the way to the Birdwing Open Air Classroom at San Dieguito Lagoon. Along the way, Watershed Explorers visit the San Diego Archaeological Center, Sikes Adobe Historic Farmstead and Lake Hodges. Each visit focuses on different aspects of the watershed's natural history and cultural significance. **Partners:** San Dieguito River Park JPA, Volcan Mountain Foundation, San Diego Archaeological Center.



## THROUGH THE LENS



Through the Lens explores wildlife behavior captured by our camera-traps. By analyzing the images, students become citizen

scientists and gain an appreciation of the land. The data they gather contributes to land-management plans designed to increase wildlife connectivity and adapt to climate change. **Partner:** Climate Science Alliance, SDG&E



## POLLINATOR'S PARADISE



Pollinator's Paradise gets kids excited about one of our most dynamic pollinators – the Painted Lady butterfly. Kids

witness the caterpillar's metamorphosis in class before releasing butterflies in the field. The program explains the pressures pollinators face and how students can become stewards of the natural environment. **Partner:** Climate Science Alliance, SDG&E



## NEXT TO NATURE



In **6**, live stream episodes, we get Next to Nature. Hosted by Executive Director Trish Boaz, the YouTube videos include live

conversations with experts to explore what all of us can do to create eco-beneficial landscapes in our own back yards. **Partners:** Green Infrastructure Consortium, REI Co-op, Condor Visual Media



## EXPLORING OUR SENSE OF PLACE



The Exploring Our Sense of Place program brings adult participants to the San Dieguito River Valley during all seasons to encounter

plant, animal and human inhabitants and to connect to nature with their hearts and minds. The sold-out, eight-session program includes a reception, excursions with lectures by experts and special "reflection times."

## RECREATION

### COAST TO CREST TRAIL CHALLENGE



The Coast to Crest Trail Challenge continues to draw hundreds of hikers to the river valley's trail network. We love the smiling selfies sent by our superstar hikers. The Coast to Crest Challenge turns five this year and we're marking the milestone with five new hikes: Santa Fe Valley, Black Mountain Summit, Dust Devil Trail, Gonzalez Loop Trail, and Blue Sky Preserve and Lake Poway Trail. We can't wait to see your selfies!



Jill Flyckt & Patti McCord



Joel Gaspar



Lorenzo & Janita Lewis



Susie Kara



Vy Tran



### YOGA AT THE BIRDWING

Yoga at the Birdwing is another one of our recreation mainstays. The soothing setting and gentle breezes of the river valley add to the enjoyment of the monthly sessions. We meet in the open air classroom at 10 a.m. on the third Sunday of the month. Susan McCrea is our instructor. Join us!



### NEW TRAIL AT SANTA FE VALLEY



Have you explored the newly-opened Santa Fe Valley Trail Extension? The hike is one of the five in this year's Coast to Crest Trail Challenge series. You'll love arriving at Lusardi Creek and finding the shade of the willow, cottonwood and sycamore trees. The hike includes the newest segment of the Coast to Crest Trail and, as it follows Lusardi Creek, challenges hikers with a moderate climb.

# OUTREACH, AWARENESS, AND FINANCIALS

409

Twitter Followers

1,604

Instagram Followers

5,486

Facebook Followers

## GRANT FUNDING

### CONSERVATION

\$2,490,000

in grants for Acquisition of 117 Acres at Del Dios Hwy



### EDUCATION

\$41,000

in grants for our Education Programs



THE CONRAD PREBYS FOUNDATION



### RECREATION

\$73,118

in grants for Restoration Projects



Summer 2021



NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
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San Diego, CA 92109  
858.866.6956

[www.sdrvc.org](http://www.sdrvc.org)

Your support provides for

- Conservation
- Education
- Recreation

in the San Dieguito River Park

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*The San Dieguito River Valley Land Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to accelerating the development of recreational multi-use trails in the 92,000-acre San Dieguito River Park, preserving and restoring native ecosystems, and educating the public about our precious natural resources.*

*Save the Date!*

**NOVEMBER 7, 2021**

**4 - 7:00 PM**

San Diego/Del Mar Hilton

15575 Jimmy Durante Blvd • Del Mar, CA 92014

*Entertainment by*  
Hot Rocks San Diego

Cocktail Hour • Silent Auction  
Dinner • Special Program  
and Announcements



**Building Bridges!**

2021 RIVER VALLEY FEST  
- A hybrid event -



**IN-PERSON  
EVENT  
RESERVATIONS**



**VIRTUAL  
EVENT  
RESERVATIONS**

