

Notice of Public Meeting San Diego River Conservancy

A public meeting of the Governing Board of
The San Diego River Conservancy
will be held Thursday,
March 13, 2014
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Meeting Location

County of San Diego Administration Center (CAC)
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 302
San Diego, California 92101

Tele-Conference Locations

Natural Resources Agency 1416 Ninth Street, Room #1311 Sacramento, CA 95814	Department of Finance State Capitol, Room 1145 Sacramento, CA 95814
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Contact: Kevin McKernan
(619) 645-3183

Meeting Agenda

The Board may take agenda items out of order to accommodate speakers and to maintain a quorum, unless noted as time specific.

1. Roll Call

2. Approval of Minutes (*ACTION*)

Consider approval of minutes for the January 9, 2013 meeting.

3. Public Comment

Any person may address the Governing Board at this time regarding any matter within the Board's authority. Presentations will be limited to three minutes for individuals and five minutes for representatives of organizations. Submission of information in writing is encouraged. The Board is prohibited by law from taking any action on matters that are discussed that are not on

the agenda; no adverse conclusions should be drawn by the Board's not responding to such matters or public comments.

4. Chairperson's and Governing Board Members' Report (*INFORMATIONAL*)
5. Deputy Attorney's General Report (*INFORMATIONAL*)
6. San Diego River Trail in the City of San Diego: Update on SANDAG Grant for Preliminary Trail Plans for Carlton Oaks Golf Course and Qualcomm/Fenton Parkway I-15 segments (*INFORMATIONAL / ACTION*) SDRG Gaps Analysis, gaps 45 & 19.

Presentation:

Stephan Vance, Senior Regional Planner
SANDAG

7. San Diego River Trail: Historical Flume Connection to El Monte Road in Lakeside, California - (*ACTION*) The Board will consider authorizing the Executive Officer to enter into a grant agreement with California Natural Resources Agency to access Proposition 40 funds for the permitting and construction of a trail segment to connect the western terminus of the historic Flume trail through Helix Water District's (HWD) property and include trail extensions and connections to the San Diego River Trail. SDRG Gaps Analysis, gaps 59 & 60.

Presentation:

Kevin McKernan, Executive Officer
San Diego River Conservancy

Recommendation to Approve SDRG Resolution 14-01

8. Executive Officer's Report (*INFORMATIONAL / ACTION*)

The following topics may be included in the Executive Officer's Report. The Board may take action regarding any of them:

Form 700 (due to SDRG by March 21, 2014)
State Ethics (biennial)
Invasives Removal – Sycamore Creek (next to Santee Lakes)
Support for Hanson Pond restoration – El Monte Valley
Legislative Update
 Water Bond
 Park Bond

9. Next Meeting

The next scheduled board meeting will be held Thursday, May 8, 2014, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

10. Adjournment

Accessibility

If you require a disability related modification or accommodation to attend or participate in this meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please call Kevin McKernan at 619-645-3183.

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of March 13, 2014

ITEM: 1

SUBJECT: ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of March 13, 2014

ITEM: **2**

SUBJECT: **APPROVAL OF MINUTES (ACTION)**
The Board will consider adoption of the **January 9, 2014** public meeting minutes.

PURPOSE: The minutes of the **January 9, 2014** Board Meeting are attached for your review.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve minutes

SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY (SDRC)

Minutes of January 9, 2014 Public Meeting

(Draft Minutes for Approval on March 13, 2014)

SDRC Board Chair, Ben Clay called the January 9, 2014, meeting of the San Diego River Conservancy to order at approximately 2:02 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members Present

Bryan Cash	Natural Resources Agency, Alternate Designee
Clay Phillips	Department of Parks and Recreation, Designee (arrived 2:04 pm)
Dianne Jacob	Supervisor, County of San Diego, Second District
Brent Eidson	Mayor, City of San Diego, Designee
Ben Clay, Chair	Public at Large
Ruth Hayward	Public at Large
Lorie Zapf	Councilmember, City of San Diego, District 6
Todd Gloria	Councilmember, City of San Diego, District 3
Ann Haddad	Public at Large
Andrew Poat	Public at Large
John Donnelly	Wildlife Conservation Board
Gary Strawn	San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board

Absent

Karen Finn	Department of Finance, Alternate Designee (via phone)
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Staff Members Present

Kevin McKernan	Executive Officer
Julia Richards	Administrative Services Manager
Hayley Peterson	Deputy Attorney General

2. Approval of Minutes

Lorie Zapf made a motion to approve the minutes for the San Diego River Conservancy's November 7, 2013, public meeting, which was seconded by **Ann Haddad** and approved **9-0**.

3. Public Comment

Any person may address the Governing Board at this time regarding any matter within the Board's authority. Presentations will be limited to three minutes for individuals and five minutes for representatives of organizations. Submission of information in writing is encouraged. The Board is prohibited by law from taking any action on matters that are discussed that are not on the agenda; no adverse conclusions should be drawn by the Board's not responding to such matters or public comments.

Rob Hutsel announced the San Diego River Park Foundation's Annual Kayak clean up in Mission Valley estuary on February 1, 2014.

4. Chairperson's and Governing Board Members' Report

Chairman Ben Clay welcomed Bryan Cash to San Diego and San Diego River Conservancy's (SDRC) Board Meeting. In addition, Mr. Clay attended Assembly Member Toni Atkins summit to talk about various organizations like the Conservancy and things on the horizon, and he updated the group on the San Diego River Conservancy's current projects.

Governing Board Member John Donnelly from the Wildlife Conservation Board announced they have completed a draft strategic plan and asked for input from any Board Members. He encouraged folks to take time and provide feedback.

Governing Board Member Clay Phillips wanted to announce how pleased he is at the former addition of the Old CalTrans building on Taylor Street to the San Diego's Old Town State Historic Park. He would like to acknowledge deep gratitude to Senator Block and Resource Agency's John Laird and many others who made this possible. He said next step is to demolish building and to prepare the Environmental Impact Report in the next 1-2 years.

5. Deputy Attorney's General Report

No report.

6. San Diego River Park Master Plan - City of San Diego

Presentation:

Bill Fulton, Director

Planning, Neighborhoods and Economic Development Department

City of San Diego

Bill Fulton introduced himself as Planning Director for the City of San Diego. He has been in this position for 6 months. He updated SDRC's Governing Board as to what the City is doing in support of the San Diego River Park Master Plan. He explained the permit process occurs in Development Services Department (Robert Vacchi). Parks Planning is in the Planning Department and most of CEQA. He said the main reason he was hired is to get 11 community plans updated.

Currently, in the Planning Department they are doing a specialized planning around Grantville Trolley stop and clean up the local flooding problems. After that he plans to turn his attention to the Mission Valley Community plan update and build out the San Diego River Park Master Plan. There are development projects pending on the river which will contain segments of the San Diego River Trail. He discussed population based park

standard used in the City of San Diego. He mentioned there is a tremendous opportunity to use the trolley and trail as an east-west access for people in Mission Valley to travel to other areas and recreational facilities. He thinks the river is a central component of that. Mission Valley Community plan update will move forward in 2014.

Todd Gloria thanked the board for having the City of San Diego's Planning Director speak today. Bill has done a great job pulling things together in the short time he has been with the city. He mentioned the city's efforts to complete the Grantville Community Plan update and initiate the Mission Valley Community Plan in 2014. He and Lorie Zapf will keep the board informed of the city's progress. He asked Mr. Fulton if there were any limitations on implementation of the San Diego River Park Master Plan.

Bill Fulton articulated how they are able to implement the master plan now in the development review but there is no plan for long term maintenance. He mentioned possibly creating more maintenance assessment districts to help maintain parks and public spaces. Those are successful methods to maintain parks, business districts and open space areas.

Ben Clay thanked Bill for coming today and sharing this information.

7. San Diego River Coalition Work Plan for 2014 (*INFORMATIONAL / ACTION*)

Rob Hutsel said there is a lot happening on the San Diego River these days! And the San Diego River Conservancy is involved in a lot of that. It is an exciting time. The Coalition applauded the San Diego River Conservancy for its efforts. He shared the history of the San Diego River Coalition which was founded in September of 2001. It is an organization with over 70 member groups, chaired by The San Diego River Park Foundation. Each year the San Diego River Coalition adopts a work plan through a consensus approach.

Rob Hutsel explained that 66 tons of trash is removed from the San Diego River each year. It is an on-going effort between public agencies, private land owners and volunteers and on-going funding need. Approximately 75% is related to homelessness. HE began his presentation.

San Diego River Coalition - Work Program Goals

- Identify important projects which need to be completed to advance the vision of the San Diego River Park and to improve watershed health
- Identify regionally significant projects
- Promote collaboration and cohesion
- Raise awareness and attract funding

Current Projects

- River Trail -- Under 163 Gap - construction
- River Trail – Stadium Section - planning
- River Trail – MTRP to Santee – planning
- River Trail – Walker Preserve
- River Trail – Lakeside at the Ballfield - construction
- River Trail – Flume Trail – construction
- Discovery Center at Grant Park – planning/permitting

San Diego River Coalition Work Plan's project categories were divided among 5 areas: Land acquisition, parks, centers and other improvements, San Diego River Trail system, habitat restoration and enhancement, and water quality.

San Diego River Coalition's Work Program Tiers

Tier 1

- Ready to proceed within approximately one year
- Funding amount identified or can be determined in a relatively short period of time
- Have an identified Coalition champion or agency lead
- If given a limited amount of funding these projects are the ones we would fund

Tier 2

- Ready to proceed within 2-3 years
- Some projects will proceed sooner if funding identified
- Funding level can be "TBD"
- Champion not needed to be identified

Tier 3

- Important project not ready to proceed

Tier 1- Parks, Centers and other Improvements

Title	Cost (est.)
Discovery Center at Grant Park	\$7,300,000
Old Mission Dam Maintenance	\$1,577,336
Estuary Trail Enhancement Plan	\$125,000
TOTAL	\$9,002,336

Tier 1 – River Trail

Title	Cost (est.)
El Capitan Reservoir (planning)	\$100,000
Hanson Pond	\$2,000,000
Stadium to Fenton Parkway	-0-
Mission Valley Greenway Crossing – Qualcomm Way	\$1,754,000
Rim to Rim Trail (2 segments)	-0-
Discovery Center River Trail	\$545,000
Mid-Block Crossing – Camino del Este	-0-
West Valley Crossing	\$1,000,000
TOTAL	\$5,399,000

Rob Hutsel testified the River Crossing at Qualcomm Way is good way to connect the south route of the San Diego River Trail with north route of the San Diego River Trail without going up to a traffic signal. A crossing would allow Mission Valley YMCA to connect to the little league baseball fields on the south side of the park, adjacent to the San Diego River Trail. He stated without a crossing, there is no easy way to extend trail to the east.

Ben Clay inquired into the Stadium to Fenton Parkway trail segment. He wanted to let the Mayor and Councilwoman Zapf know he invited Kevin McKernan, The San Diego River Park Foundation, SANDAG, City of San Diego to brief the Qualcomm Advisory Board about the potential trail alignment near the stadium, as close to the river as possible. He noted the Rim to Rim trail alignment is really contentious. It is a City of San Diego issue and SDRC will take our guidance from the city. Also he would like to find a way to work with Levi-Cushman Group to install a temporary trail. This will help the Conservancy to close some gaps along the San Diego River Trail.

Andrew Poat said there will be a lot of changes in Mission Valley in the next 10 years. He inquired as to how to leverage and invest in that process. He asked for a better understand of the City of San Diego's plans moving forward.

Robin Shifflet, City of San Diego, Planning Department discussed with private property owners in Mission Valley about putting in the trail ahead of time. The land owners responded building a trail in requires environmental impact and a site development permit which is a costly procedure. If the property owners are planning additional development in the future obtaining only a trail permit now could prohibit future development. They did not want to construct a trail until they redeveloped the land and at that time included all the changes in the site development permit package.

Tier 1 – Enhancement

Title	Cost (est.)
El Capitan Reservoir	\$75,000
Estuary	\$50,000
TOTAL	\$125,000

Tier 1 – Water Quality

Title	Cost (est.)
Remove Trash and Debris – Urban Area	\$75,000
TOTAL	\$75,000

San Diego River Coalition Work Plan Totals for Tier 1

Title	Cost (est.)
Acquisition	-0-
Parks, Centers and Other Improvements	\$9,002,336
San Diego River Trail System	\$5,399,000
Habitat Restoration and Enhancement	\$125,000
Water Quality	\$75,000
TOTAL	\$14,601,336

Status update

Cedar Creek Section
 Alpine / Conejos Creek to Reservoir – feasibility and cost
 Reservoir to Ashwood Street & connection to Flume trail
 Ashwood Street to Mission Trails, 1 gap remains
 Mission Trails to Mission/Stadium triggered by development
 Stadium to Fashion Valley Road
 Fashion Valley Road to West Valley Crossing
 West Valley Crossing to Beach is completed

Upcoming Challenges

El Monte Valley Trail Planning
 Riverwalk Golf Course to West Valley Crossing
 Temporary Trails until Development Triggers Trail Construction
 Above Cedar Creek Falls new trail section to the north to Thornbush to Santa Ysabel and Saddleback to Lake Cuyamaca / Heise County Park

Rob Hutsel discussed temporary alignment along sidewalks with signage until the permanent trail alignment is in place. As the gaps are starting to get filled we need to raise awareness of the San Diego River Trail. As we move forward we will need to find creative solutions to fill the gaps along the trail.

Lorie Zapf asked if The San Diego River Park Foundation needs money for signs.

Rob Hutsel mentioned recent meetings with the San Diego Foundation in support of the “Opening the Outdoors” initiative. San Diego Foundation has offered to help in fund raising for the 52-mile trail. They are looking to fund signage along the trail. The San Diego River Park Foundation is looking to the San Diego Foundation to fund up to \$100,000 to give to the City of San Diego to start implementing the signage program along the river.

Kevin McKernan advised the board that the San Diego Foundation is putting together a trail map that shows current gaps, dead-ends and informs users there is more trail stretching from the beaches to the mountains. This will raise public awareness and bring voices to this cause in support of completing the gaps along the San Diego River Trail.

Lorie Zapf said when she formerly lived in Colorado they had a trail with gaps. The path went out on the streets and sidewalks, and signs directed users how to hop back on the trail. She was able to follow the temporary

signs and did not get lost. It was a great temporary solution. She said now the gaps are filled in and the trail is completed.

Rob Hutsel said this is where he could get help from the City of San Diego, to get this done.

Ben Clay thanked Rob for his presentation.

8. Executive Officer's Report (*INFORMATIONAL / ACTION*)

The following topics may be included in the Executive Officer's Report. The Board may take action regarding any of them:

San Diego River Conservancy's 2014 Work Plan

San Diego River Conservancy 2014 Program Plan and Budget

Budget: Operations - \$352,000 (per fiscal year)
Capital Outlay - \$843,157 (multi-year approp.)

Administration:
Staff: Executive Officer; Administrative Services Manager

Full-time equivalent (FTE) = 2.0

San Diego River Conservancy 2014 Program Plan and Budget

- Strategic Plan Program 1
Conserve Land Along the San Diego River

Track and pursue opportunities based on recently adopted capital outlay plan for properties along the river corridor and respond accordingly, identify potential funding sources, work with partners

San Diego River Conservancy 2014 Program Plan and Budget

- Strategic Plan Program 2
Emphasize Recreation and Education – Complete the San Diego River Trail and Parkway

- River Gorge Trail finalization
- Riverford Road segment finalization
- Discovery Center at Grant Park trail segment
- Carlton Oaks and Qualcomm segments
- Historic Flume trail, in progress

San Diego River Conservancy 2014 Program Plan and Budget

- River Gorge Trail – Prop 40, SDRC to USFS



Bryan Cash said one thing is true the San Diego River Conservancy is ready. If and when and future funds become available from the State of California or any source, the Conservancy is ready more than other organizations to show a report of projects that are ready to go. Whenever he talks about the San Diego River Conservancy that is what he says, "they are ready to go." The Conservancy's report on the San Diego River Trail shows gaps from the beaches to the mountains. The SDRC Gap Analysis shows what exists, what is planned and what is needed to complete the gaps, and that is huge.

Ben Clay thanked Bryan Cash, our partners and member agencies. He also wanted to thank the owners of the Midwest Television, Inc., for allowing the San Diego River Conservancy access to their land to improve habitat and water quality around the San Diego River.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:12 p.m.

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of March 13, 2014

ITEM: **3**

SUBJECT: **PUBLIC COMMENT**

PURPOSE: Any person may address the Governing Board at this time regarding any matter within the Board's authority. Presentations will be limited to three minutes for individuals and five minutes for representatives of organizations. Submission of information in writing is encouraged. The Board is prohibited by law from taking any action on matters that are discussed that are not on the agenda; no adverse conclusions should be drawn by the Board's not responding to such matters or public comments.

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of March 13, 2014

ITEM: 4

SUBJECT: **CHAIRPERSON'S AND GOVERNING BOARD
MEMBERS' REPORTS (*INFORMATIONAL*)**

PURPOSE: These items are for Board discussion only and the Board will take no formal action.

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of March 13, 2014

ITEM: 5

SUBJECT: **DEPUTY ATTORNEY'S GENERAL REPORT
(INFORMATIONAL)**

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of March 13, 2014

ITEM: **6**

SUBJECT: **SAN DIEGO RIVER TRAIL IN THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO:
UPDATE ON SANDAG GRANT FOR PRELIMINARY
TRAIL PLANS FOR CARLTON OAKS GOLF COURSE
AND QUALCOMM/FENTON PARKWAY I-15 SEGMENTS
(*INFORMATIONAL / ACTION*)**

SDRC Gaps Analysis, gaps 45 & 19.

Presentation:

**Stephan Vance, Senior Regional Planner
SANDAG**

Meeting of March 13, 2014

ITEM: 7

SUBJECT: **SAN DIEGO RIVER TRAIL: HISTORICAL FLUME CONNECTION TO EL MONTE ROAD IN LAKESIDE, CALIFORNIA - (ACTION)** The Board will consider authorizing the Executive Officer to enter into a grant agreement with California Natural Resources Agency to access Proposition 40 funds for the permitting and construction of a trail segment to connect the western terminus of the historic Flume trail through Helix Water District's (HWD) property and include trail extensions and connections to the San Diego River Trail. SDRG Gaps Analysis, gaps 59 & 60.

Presentation:

Kevin McKernan, Executive Officer
San Diego River Conservancy

Recommendation: Approve SDRG Resolution 14-01

Consistency with the San Diego River Conservancy Act and Strategic Plan, and Work Plans

Public Resources Code Division 22.9, Chapter 2, Section 32633 (a) and (b);

The San Diego River Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update (2012-2017), Program 2: Emphasize Recreation and Education;

The San Diego River Conservancy's Work Plan 2014 Program 2: Emphasize Recreation and Education; and

Partners: Natural Resources Agency and County of San Diego

Exhibits and Documents:

SDRG Resolution 14-01

SDRG Gaps Analysis (2010): Gaps 59 & 60

Resolution No: 14-01
RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

APPROVAL OF USE OF FUNDS FROM
RIVER PARKWAYS PROGRAM UNDER THE CALIFORNIA CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR, SAFE
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, AND COASTAL PROTECTION ACT OF 2002
(Proposition 40)

WHEREAS, the Legislature and Governor of the State of California have provided funds for the program shown above to the Natural Resources Agency for projects approved by the San Diego River Conservancy; and

WHEREAS, the California Natural Resources Agency has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of this grant program, establishing necessary procedures; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Board of the San Diego River Conservancy finds the expenditure of funds for developing the San Diego River Trail consistent with its enabling statute, which directs the Conservancy: "to provide recreation opportunities, open space, . . . and lands for educational uses within the area" ; and

WHEREAS, this project is Consistent with Program 2: Recreation & Education Program of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update (2012-2017), San Diego River Conservancy's Annual Work Plans and 2010 Gaps Analysis; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Board of the San Diego River Conservancy has reviewed the San Diego River Trail Gaps Analysis and approved as capital priorities, trail segments and gaps recommended by the jurisdictions to further the completion of the San Diego River Trail; and

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy submitted a grant application to the Natural Resources Agency to fund property appraisals, property acquisition, trail alignment and feasibility, CEQA review, site control agreements, project administration and partial construction of a segment of the San Diego River Trail known as Gap 60: Western Flume and Gap 59: El Monte Road to Flume.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Diego River Conservancy Governing Board:

1. Approves the California Natural Resources grant application for purposes stated above for a segment of the San Diego River Trail from the western terminus of the Historic Flume trail to El Monte Road, and connections to surrounding park and open space lands.
2. Authorizes the Executive Officer to request from the California Natural Resources Agency Proposition 40 funds appropriated for projects approved by the San Diego River Conservancy to provide up to a \$200,000.00 grant to the San Diego River Conservancy.
3. Funds authorized are to provide for property appraisals, property acquisition, trail alignment and feasibility, CEQA review, site control agreements, project administration and partial construction for these segments of the San Diego River Trail.
4. Appoints the Executive Officer, or designee, as agent to conduct all negotiations, execute and submit all documents including, but not limited to applications, agreements, contracts, sub-grants and payment requests, which may be necessary for the completion of the aforementioned Project(s).

Approved and adopted the 13th day of March 2014. I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution Number 14-01 was duly adopted by the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: _____

Nos: _____

Absent _____

Kevin McKernan, Executive Officer
San Diego River Conservancy

059: EL MONTE ROAD TO FLUME

LAND USE JURISDICTION:

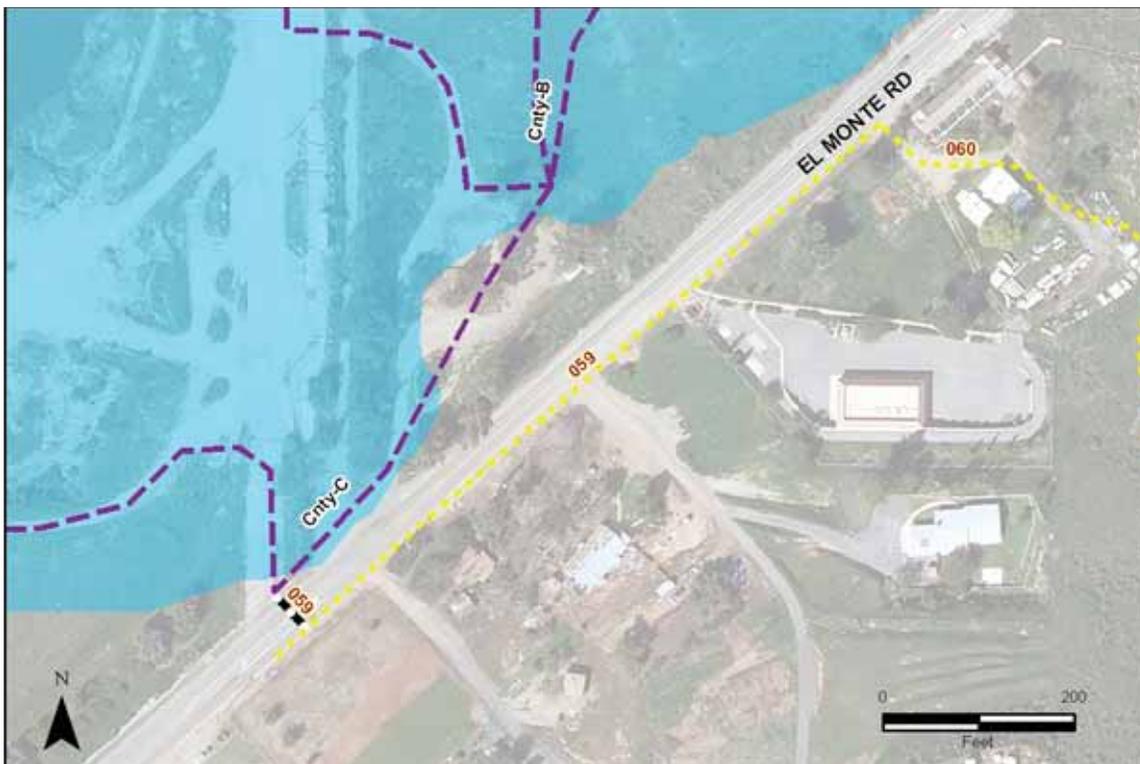
PROJECT PROPONENT:

PROJECT STATUS:

FUNDING NEEDS:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

An opportunity may exist to create a multi-use trail from the Hanson Pond proposed path across El Monte Valley Road via a pedestrian signal and through the Helix Water District historic pump house facilities and up the ridgeline to connect to the bench cut for the historic flume. Preliminary discussions with Helix Water District have occurred and the feasibility for an alignment up the slope has been assessed. However, additional coordination with Helix Water District is required to determine how the trail would route through or around the historic pump station facilities. Additionally, discussions with the County of San Diego will be required to determine if a road crossing is feasible.





060: WESTERN FLUME

LAND USE JURISDICTION:

County of San Diego

PROJECT PROPONENT:

County of San Diego, Helix Water District, SDRC

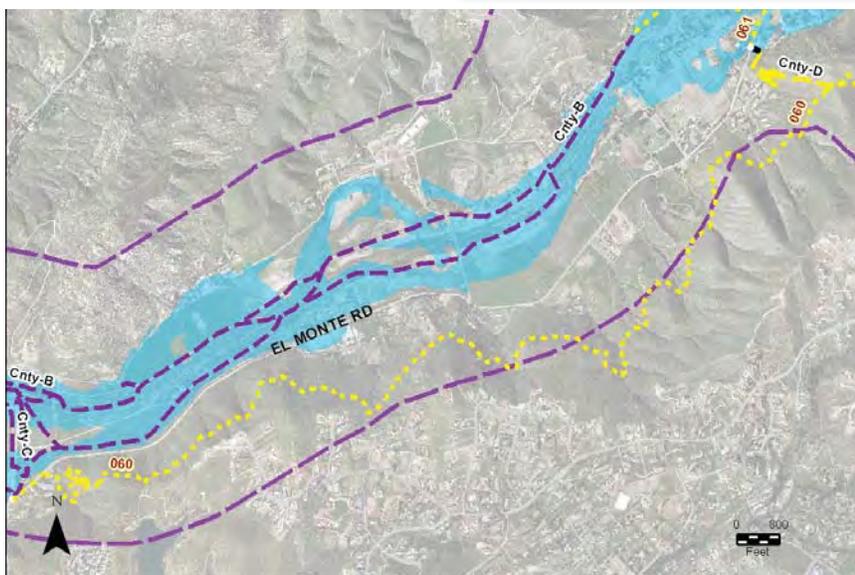
PROJECT STATUS:

FUNDING NEEDS:

Unknown

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

An opportunity may exist to convert the historic flume alignment into a multi-use trail. The western portion of the Flume Trail would run from the top of the ridge overlooking the historic pump station westward to the tunnel near El Monte County Park. The Helix Water District, County of San Diego, and San Diego River Conservancy have been coordinating on various aspects of this project for the last several years. Additional XXXX is still required in order to move this project forward.



State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT
Meeting of March 13, 2014

ITEM: **8**

SUBJECT: **EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT
(INFORMATIONAL/ACTION)**

The following topics may be included in the Executive Officer's Report. The Board may take action regarding any of them:

Form 700 (due to SDRC by March 21, 2014)

State Ethics (biennial)

Invasives Removal – Sycamore Creek (next to Santee Lakes)

Support for Hanson Pond restoration – El Monte Valley

Legislative Update
Water Bond
Park Bond

News Articles:

Homeless camp cleared due to fire danger, Fox 5 San Diego, Thursday, January 16, 2014.

San Diego River Restoration Involves Clearing Homeless, And Their Trash, By [Susan Murphy](#), KPBS, Thursday, January 16, 2014.

San Diego Fire-Rescue Nips 2 Small Fires in Homeless Encampment, Quick action and an upgraded response helped contain the fires, By [Bob Graham](#), FirefighterNation, Monday, January 20, 2014.

2,000 Trees Planted Along San Diego River Trail in Santee, By [R. Stickney](#), 7 San Diego, Monday, January 20, 2014.

February flowerings flavor your visit to Mission Trails Regional Park, By Audrey F. Baker Trail Guide, Friday, January 31, 2014.

http://scoopsandiego.com/parks_recreation/mission_trails_regional_park/february-flowerings-flavor-your-visit-to-mission-trails-regional-park/article_1ec9e036-89dd-11e3-a84c-0017a43b2370.html

Update: Control over public access paths on San Diego River questioned

Friday, February 14, 2014.

http://scoopsandiego.com/mission_valley_news/local_news/update-control-over-public-access-paths-on-san-diego-river/article_4dd09ce2-94bb-11e3-965e-001a4bcf6878.html

SANDAG pushes forward on two Mission Valley bike path projects

Friday, February 14, 2014.

http://scoopsandiego.com/mission_valley_news/local_news/sandag-pushes-forward-on-two-mission-valley-bike-path-projects/article_2ef39d26-94be-11e3-9bdd-001a4bcf6878.html

Plan for Admin Building at Mission Trails Park Advances, Fox 5 San Diego, March 5, 2014. <http://fox5sandiego.com/2014/03/05/plan-for-admin-building-at-mission-trails-park-advances/#fOGWwQMFidqIPvqp.03>



Homeless camp cleared due to fire danger

Thursday, January 16, 2014

SAN DIEGO — San Diego police officers and Park Ranger Andy Quinn hiked into a part of San Diego most people rarely get to see – the San Diego River bed.

There are mounds of trash, bags, old shoes and discarded clothing all over the place. It's a wasteland of debris left behind by squatters. Police officers said there are about 100 people who live there.



Sasha has been living in the riverbed area for two and a half years.

“It’s hell, I hate it, rather be somewhere else,” said Sasha.

People live under overpasses, trees and even inside bushes. Trees have been scorched by flames from campfires.

In recent days, there have been several fires reported at homeless camps throughout San Diego County. Two fires ignited in the riverbed last week, within minutes of one another.

Police said the fires are started by people cooking or trying to stay warm, arson is also a problem – especially dangerous right now with the ongoing dry weather conditions.

“In these conditions, it’s extremely hazardous to start a fire whether cooking or camping, because those fires can spread and get extremely large like we’ve seen in the past,” said Lt. Kevin Mayer of the San Diego Police Department, one of the officers involved in clearing the camps.

That’s why people like Sasha are being cleared out to keep the fire danger down. It’s also illegal to live on public property.



San Diego River Restoration Involves Clearing Homeless, And Their Trash

Thursday, January 16, 2014

By [Susan Murphy](#)

It's warm and dry, the middle of a mid-week morning, as Richie Aguilera looks for all the world like a fishing guide leading his band to the banks of the San Diego River.

But they're not carrying poles and bait boxes. Instead they've got black garbage bags and sharp, metal sticks ideal for snatching up trash.

"We're going to be in this area; and then if I can get a person or two, maybe you and Alex to help me scout out the other side," he says.

They're not here to pull fish from the historic waterway; they're harvesting trash, hoping to restore the river to its once-scenic splendor.



By Katie Schoolov

River Rescue volunteers with the San Diego River Park Foundation clean up trash along the riverbanks in Santee on January 8, 2014.

"I'm willing to have a hand on this tarp here if anyone is willing to come over here with me," calls out one volunteer, balancing on a log as she retrieves debris from the river-bottom.

This small group is among thousands of volunteers credited with pulling 1.6 million pounds of trash from the river over the past six years.

Their main challenge? The refuse (and worse) left behind by homeless souls drawn to the river's edge by its seclusion and promise of a respite from hard times, however brief.

Nearly 100 homeless people call the San Diego riverbanks "home." Some live alone in single tents, while others have built make-shift communities, living in groups of 10 or more.

"When we got here and got started, we literally found the equivalent of rooms full of trash," said Rob Hutsel, executive director of the [San Diego River Park Foundation](#).

"And that was left over from decades of neglect," he added.

The nonprofit is striving to enhance the 52-mile-long waterway, which stretches from the Cuyamaca Mountains to the Pacific Ocean.

Hutsel envisions a [river-long system](#) of parks, trails and open space.

"And celebrate this incredible place," said Hutsel. "I mean, this is the birthplace of California and it's so significant. It's a cultural treasure."

Clearing a path through the trash is the first step. Hutsel acknowledged it's frustrating when they clean up one area and river dwellers migrate and trash another.

The Foundation's October 2013 survey found nearly 120 active and inactive homeless encampments along a 30-mile river segment; many had been cleared away just months prior.

"So if we work, let's say in the western part of Mission Valley, which is very clean right now, then they'll move to let's say under 805 or by the stadium," explained Hutsel.

The unending cycle of trash has substantial impacts on people and the environment. Hutsel said homeless people drink from the river and they use it as a toilet and a bathtub.

It's also home to some very unique animals and plants, such as cottonwood and willow trees.

"The river runs through public parks, kids are out here fishing, enjoying the river and downstream, there's dog beach, Ocean Beach — some really popular swimming beaches as well and surfing places."

Hutsel said progress *is* being made on the trash, but more needs to be done for the people.

"The reality is these people are the people that aren't being served by the system today. And new solutions need to be found, and we're willing to be a partner in that and figure it out," Hutsel said.

Ten miles upstream near Qualcomm Stadium, Bob McElroy, president and CEO of the [Alpha Project](#), is scouring the riverbanks for people in need.

"We've got some outreach stuff — anybody home?" McElroy calls out.

Reaching the destitute population takes a devotion of time, McElroy says, because most river dwellers are suffering mental illness, they self medicate with drugs and alcohol and they want to be left alone.

"Developing relationships with men and women who are disenfranchised, getting them to trust you, and then starting the recovery process," McElroy explains. "It's not a real complex thing to do, but it takes time."



By Katie Schoolov

Bob McElroy, president and CEO of the Alpha Project, searches for homeless people in need along the San Diego River in Mission Valley on January 8, 2014.

McElroy and his team regularly search homeless camps for signs of trouble. On this day, they find a ragged blue tent filled with inhalers and bottles of medications amid the squalor, but nobody's home.

"Yeah, we've got to come back here," he says. "I can tell this is a lady by the clothes. In fact, I know it's a lady. Wow, that's sad."

When he finds a person, he offers them supplies, shelter and health treatments. Recently, he found a mom and a dad with their 2-year-old baby.

“And they were afraid that if they were seen downtown that Child Protective Services would take the child,” McElroy says. “So we worked with them, got them into a motel, got the dad working again, and so far they’re moving the right direction.”

McElroy said another part of the solution is tough love.

“We need to have the stick too. We need to have the cops saying, ‘You can’t be down here. These guys are offering you a place to stay, they’re offering you all these services...you need to get up out of here.’”



By Katie Schoolov

An abandoned homeless encampment litters the San Diego Riverbanks near Cuyamaca in Santee.

Back in Santee, River Rescue volunteers continue their crusade for a clean river, picking up one piece of trash at a time — the same way it was brought in.

They're hopeful when they find an abandoned camp that it's a sign someone else has been helped, and there will be one less camp to clean up in the future.



San Diego Fire-Rescue Nips 2 Small Fires in Homeless Encampment

Quick action and an upgraded response helped contain the fires

By [Bob Graham](#) *Published Monday, January 20, 2014*

January 15, 2014—The western end of the San Diego River is usually calm as it heads toward the Pacific Ocean, and with an ever-growing collection of trees and thick brush, it makes a great location for an unknown number of homeless citizens in San Diego to live. The area is also known for a fair number of small brush fires.

It was just such a fire that erupted east of the Morena Boulevard Bridge just after 8 pm on Wednesday evening. The fire was described by callers as about the size of a house. San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) Engines 20 and 25 were first on scene; while the fire was readily visible and less than 75 feet away from the road way, it could not be reached without a long hike. Firefighters on scene quickly asked for an additional engine for more water, and shortly thereafter, incident command requested dispatch to assign Copter 1 and Water Tender 28 to the fire, along with upgrading the incident to a Vegetation Special Response. With Engines 8 and 23 and Brush Rigs 12 and 14 inbound, firefighters began to get control of the fire.

Shortly before 9 pm, a second fire broke out in the riverbed, less than a mile to the west from the first fire. Incident command requested Type 1 and Type 3 engines be added to the incident, along with an additional water tender and arson investigators. Dispatch assigned Engines 3, 15 and 45; Brush Rig 35; Marine Corps Brush Rig 62; and Water Tender 14. Arriving units to the second fire staged on the side of Interstate 8, but found that accessibility from that location was even worse than the Morena Boulevard location. A brush rig ultimately reached the burning palm tree and extinguished the flames before they could spread.

While the fires created a spectacular vision from surrounding roads, the size of the first fire was held to under a quarter-acre, and the second was limited to a palm tree. Fire investigators ruled the cause of both fires as arson.



2,000 Trees Planted Along San Diego River Trail in Santee

By [R. Stickney](#) | Monday, Jan 20, 2014 | Updated 12:35 PM PST



Two thousand trees were planted along The San Diego River Trail in Santee early Monday.

The San Diego River Park Foundation worked in partnership with the City of Santee to plan the marathon planting event. The elderberry, lemonade berry and oak trees planted by volunteers at the Walker Preserve will be part of a trail system to be used by hikers, walkers, joggers and mountain bikers.

Keith Wilson, President and Chief Scientist of Takeda California, said the company was inspired by a desire to do good and decided to donate employees' time for the project.

“We all live in this area and we want it to be beautiful not only for ourselves but for future generations,” Wilson said.

The bio-tech company executive said the number of trees planted was 20 times more than Takeda used in paper the previous work year.

February flowerings flavor your visit to Mission Trails Regional Park

http://scoopsandiego.com/parks_recreation/mission_trails_regional_park/february-flowerings-flavor-your-visit-to-mission-trails-regional-park/article_1ec9e036-89dd-11e3-a84c-0017a43b2370.html Posted: Friday, January 31, 2014 8:00 am

By Audrey F. Baker Trail Guide

(Mission Times Courier, San Diego, CA) - This month MTRP foothills are enlivened with the white and pink blooms of Early Onion (*Allium praecox*) standing ready to compete with the matching colors of Lemonadeberry (*Rhus integrifolia*) that embellish our sage slopes. Trailing vines of Wild Cucumber (*Marah macrocarpus*) decorate shrubs with creamy blooms that mature into porcupine-like fruits. Peppering shady pathways are minute white corsages of Miner's Lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*) pinned onto their heart-shaped leaves.

The grasslands begin their show of Baby Blue Eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), while blushing Milkmaids (*Cardamine californica*) hide among distant chaparral. Amid openings in sage and chaparral, the California Sunflower (*Encelia californica*) displays a wealth of miniature suns.

The riparian areas of Kumeyaay Lake and the San Diego River awaken to white disc florets of Mule-Fat, a.k.a. Seep Willow (*Baccharis salicifolia*) and beckon visiting Mule Deer. The large and buttery flourishings of Hooker's Evening Primrose (*Oenothera elata* Kunth) are but another gem inhabiting the mystical setting of Old Mission Dam.

These and other untold discoveries await your visit to Mission Trails.

MTRP Trail Guide walks are an opportunity to learn more about natural Southern California, with its unique landscapes, habitats, local history, plant and animal life. The walks are free, interesting, fact-filled and geared to all ages and interests. Grab sturdy shoes, that comfortable hat, water bottle and sunscreen, and hit the trail!

Morning walks are offered every Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday, from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. You'll start from the park's Visitor and Interpretive Center, One Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Carlos. The walk beginning from the Kumeyaay Lake Campground Entry Station, Two Father Junipero Serra Trail, at the San Carlos-Santee border, gives a different perspective of the park and its diverse habitats. These walks are offered from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. on the second and fourth Saturdays of the month, and take in historic Old Mission Dam.

Wildlife Tracking reveals the secret lives of animals and brings insight into their survival techniques and habits. Tracking Team members assist in identifying and interpreting tracks, scat and habitats. Join us at 8:30 a.m., Saturday, February 1 in front of the Visitor Center, One Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Carlos, for a two-hour tracking adventure.

Discovery Table: Owl Pellets! is this month's hands-on/for-all-ages science activity. In dissecting owl pellets, participants discover what scientists learn from this important tool used to study the fascinating night-time aerial hunters. See you inside the Visitor Center on Saturday, February 8 from 10:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m.

Star Party Shines On under Jupiter and the moon rising in the east. Join MTRP Guide George Varga and enjoy night sky viewing as our resident star gazer scopes the Orion Nebula, Little Bee Hive in Canis Major, Open Clusters M36, 37 and 38 in Auriga and more! From 5:30-8:30 p.m. on Saturday, February 8, meet us at the far end of the Kumeyaay Day Use Parking Lot, Mission Trails Regional Park, Two Father Junipero Serra Trail, Santee.

Bird Oak Grove with MTRP Birder Jeanne Raimond and benefit from winter birding at its best along the Oak Grove Loop Trail. Jean recommends binoculars and bird book. We meet Saturday, February 15, 8:00-10:00 a.m. in front of the Visitor Center, Mission Trails Regional Park, One Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Carlos.

Murray Walk and Talk is an informative amble amid Lake Murray's scenic shores and thriving environments. Today's topic is Animals of the Lake. "While we may not see 'em; we'll talk 'em up!" See you on Tuesday, February 18, 9:00-10:30 a.m. at the boat docks, Lake Murray, 5540 Kiowa Drive, San Carlos.

Birding Basics can help you identify birds "at a glance!" MTRP Bird Guide Winona Sollock's class explains the five simple ways and gives tips on field guide use. Bring along your bird book if you'd like. Class meets inside the Visitor Center, Saturday, February 22, 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Meanwhile, come on out and enjoy the park!



Update: Control over public access paths on San Diego River questioned

http://scoopsandiego.com/mission_valley_news/local_news/update-control-over-public-access-paths-on-san-diego-river/article_4dd09ce2-94bb-11e3-965e-001a4bcf6878.html Posted: Friday, February 14, 2014 8:00 am

(Mission Valley News, San Diego, CA) – Late last year the city removed three benches and a picnic table from the river path behind the Union Square at Hazard Center condominium complex and replaced them with kiosks with interpretive information.

The change had some members of the Mission Valley Planning Group questioning who had the right to make changes to amenities along the path, so the group's Public Health, Safety and Welfare Committee convened a meeting to learn more last month.

The path is a public easement on the private property of Union Square, which means the homeowner's association has some authority to demand changes to the path, according to information presented at the meeting.

Because the benches had become a magnet for loitering homeless people, the homeowner's association voted to pay the city \$10,000 to remove the benches and replace them with signs, said Marla Bell, a planning group board member who lives at Union Square. The change was approved by the First San Diego River Improvement Project advisory committee, over which the Mission Valley Planning Group has no jurisdiction, Bell said.

"It's not like there's just some rogue organization out there where nobody knows what's going on," Bell said.

The private property owners' original agreement with the city allowed them to remove the benches as long as they replaced it with some other amenity, said Senior City Planner Brian Schoenfisch.

A series of meetings took place to ensure both the city and the homeowner's associations were abiding by their contractual obligations, Schoenfisch said.

There are plenty of other benches and tables elsewhere along the river, and if other property owners want to add amenities to the portions of the path that pass through their property, they can take the initiative to do that, Bell said.

SANDAG pushes forward on two Mission Valley bike path projects

http://scoopsandiego.com/mission_valley_news/local_news/sandag-pushes-forward-on-two-mission-valley-bike-path-projects/article_2ef39d26-94be-11e3-9bdd-001a4bcf6878.html Posted: Friday, February 14, 2014 8:00 am

(Mission Valley News, San Diego, CA) – Two bicycle infrastructure projects got an injection of cash last month from SANDAG, the regional transportation and land-use agency.

The SANDAG Board of Directors voted to approve an additional \$561,000 for a one-mile bike path along Highway 15 that will connect Camino del Rio South to Adams Avenue in Kensington.

The bike path along Hwy. 15 will be completely segregated with an exclusive right-of-way for bicycles east of the existing freeway lanes. State design standards require the path to be at least eight feet wide.

Planning for this bike path began about four years ago with a grant from SANDAG of \$350,000 to design the path. The design is now 75 percent complete. The board in January approved an additional \$561,000 to finish the final design of the bike path and to prepare the documents necessary to hire a construction contractor sometime in late 2014 or early 2015.

The board also approved an extra \$98,000 for a 0.8-mile segment of bike path on the San Diego River Trail near Qualcomm Stadium.

This segment of dedicated bike path will stretch between the Fenton Parkway trolley station and Rancho Mission Road just east of Interstate 15, along the northern banks of the river. The \$98,000 will fund management costs and provide for any unforeseen contingencies, in addition to the \$168,000 approved for initial engineering and environmental work last summer.

SANDAG expects to have a draft environmental document for the project by October and a final environmental document by December 2014.

Ultimately, the segment will become part of a larger 17-mile network of bike path along the San Diego River Trail, stretching from Ocean Beach through Mission Valley and on through Grantville to Mission Trails Regional Park, Santee and Lakeside.

SANDAG approved the overall plan for a series of bicycle facilities throughout the county in September 2013.





Plan for Equestrian Center Administrative Building at Mission Trails Park Advances

March 5, 2014



SAN DIEGO — A plan to build a 5,000-square-foot administration building at the Mission Trails Regional Park Equestrian Center was advanced Wednesday by the San Diego City Council's Infrastructure Committee.

The committee approved spending \$500,000 for final planning for the structure that would house park ranger offices, a kitchen, showers, a conference room and storage space. A shade structure is planned for the exterior.

The building, which still has to be approved by the full City Council, is the final phase of an improvement project that has included parking, a picnic area and restrooms.

The equestrian area is located on the east side of Fortuna Mountain in the 5,800-acre park, near Mast Boulevard and state Route 52. It includes four 12- by 12-foot horse corrals for public use, trails and room for 47 cars and 15 vehicles with horse trailers.

Councilman Scott Sherman, who represents the area, said the project is needed because the Visitors Center — on the opposite side of the park — has reached capacity.

“The equestrian center is getting used more and more,” Sherman said. “You go by there on a weekend and the parking lots are packed and people are all over the place — and there’s no shade and no real facilities, per se, for the people out there.”

The estimated time of completion is not set, and depends on when actual construction is funded.

Read more: <http://fox5sandiego.com/2014/03/05/plan-for-admin-building-at-mission-trails-park-advances/#ixzz2va15dF20>

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of March 13, 2014

ITEM: **9**

SUBJECT: **NEXT MEETING**

The next regularly scheduled board meeting is scheduled for
May 8, 2014, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of March 13, 2014

ITEM: **10**

SUBJECT: **ADJOURNMENT**