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San Diego River Conservancy is Allocated \$12 Million for Regional Wildfire Prevention, Protection and Forest Health Projects

San Diego (April 14, 2021) – The San Diego River Conservancy announced today that Senate Bill 85 was signed by the Governor that allocates \$12 million to the Conservancy under the Wildfire Early Action Program. These funds will be used to strengthen fire resiliency including creating fire breaks, fuel reduction, the removal of dead, diseased and dying trees, the removal of invasive non-native vegetation, reforestation projects, repairing fire access roads, monitoring and assessing forest health, and public outreach to support and encourage home hardening in the wildland urban interface zone.

The fire season is actually a year-round reality due ongoing drought conditions. The Wildfire Early Action Plan provides immediate opportunities to implement wildfire protection and prevention measures for local forests, rural communities, urban areas and tribal reservations.

“The Conservancy appreciates the trust placed in us by the Legislature and the Governor,” said Ben Clay, Chairman of the San Diego River Conservancy. “We thank Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins for her diligent work with the Senate’s Wildfire Working Group to make these early investments possible for projects to promote wildfire resilience and mitigation, protect watersheds, and prevent future fires at every level.” The coordinated efforts of Governor Newsom, Senate President pro Tempore Atkins and Assembly Speaker Rendon resulted in SB 85 that will provide a total of \$536 million to immediately take actions to prepare for wind driven wildfires throughout the state that are fed by drought and pest induced dead and dying trees and overgrown vegetation.

The Conservancy has partnerships with city, county, state, federal and tribal governments, landowners, and non-profit organizations. Through our partners the Conservancy has a proven track record of developing and implementing multiyear, multi-benefit projects that align with the Conservancy’s mission, goals and adopted strategic plan. Every 2 years the Conservancy is required to submit a

report to legislature (Legislative Report [[pdf](#)] [[doc](#)]) describing its programs and how its funds have been implemented.

The San Diego River Conservancy is a state agency established by the Legislature in 2002 (AB 2156) by former Senator and Assembly Member Christine Kehoe. In 2015, Senator Atkins repealed the sunset clause (SB 214) and the Conservancy became a permanent state agency. In 2019, the Legislature passed Senator Atkins' SB 1367 that created the San Diego Rivers Watershed Consortium Program which includes the authority to work in the watersheds of the Otay River, Sweetwater River and Tijuana River.

The Conservancy's mission is to conserve land and to protect or provide recreational opportunities, open space, wildlife species and habitat, wetlands, water quality, natural flood conveyance, historical and cultural resources, and enable educational opportunities. One important Conservancy goal is to build, in conjunction with our partners, a park and hiking trail stretching 52 miles from the San Diego River's headwaters near Julian to the Pacific Ocean (Dog Beach in Ocean Beach).