

# **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 28, 2024  
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm**

## **Meeting Locations**

County of San Diego Administration Center 1600 Pacific Highway, Room 302 San Diego, CA 92101	Natural Resources Agency HQ 715 P Street 20-103 (Serpentine Room) Sacramento, CA, 95814	Manzanita Reservation 6 Old Mine Road Boulevard, CA 91905
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**Teleconference Line  
877-411-9748, Code 3906093**

For Questions Contact:  
Wendell Taper at [wendell.taper@sdrc.ca.gov](mailto:wendell.taper@sdrc.ca.gov) or (619) 390-0568

## **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 February 7, 2024 meeting.

### **3. Public Comment (*INFORMATIONAL*)**

Any person may address the Governing Board at this time regarding any matter within the Board's authority and jurisdiction. 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 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/ACTION)**

**5. Deputy Attorney General Report (INFORMATIONAL/ACTION)**

**6. Health and Safety Report (INFORMATIONAL)**

**7. San Diego County Parks – Lindo Lake West Basin (ACTION)**

County Parks is requesting funding to improve Lindo Lake for recreation and to restore habitat in the west basin. County Parks is requesting funding for tree removal and relocation and to install native landscape. The proposed project would provide healthy habitat for multiple wildlife species along this migration corridor and also improve trail access and install fishing piers, bird watching stations, and site hardscapes. Conservancy staff recommends funding up to the amount of \$2,000,000 from the Budget Act of 2022.

**Available for Q and A:**

**Emily Hubbard, Chief, CIP/Development Division North, County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation**

**Recommendation: Approve Resolution 24-10**

**8. Barona Band of Mission Indians Proposal to Remove Hazardous Trees on the Reservation (ACTION)**

The Barona Group of Mission Indians is requesting funding to remove approximately 40 large mature eucalyptus trees, plant native willow trees and install one greenhouse for native plant propagation at the Barona Indian Charter School's native garden in partnership with the Barona Cultural Center and Museum. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$129,016 from the Budget Act of 2023.

**Available for Q and A:**

**Laurie Egan Hedley, Museum Director, Barona Cultural Center and Museum**

**Recommendation: Approve Resolution 24-11**

**9. Campo Band of Mission Indians Proposal for Improvements to Ralph Goff Community Park (ACTION)**

Campo Band of Mission Indians requests funding to install a new 2-unit prefabricated vault restroom with solar power, parking spaces, erosion control including site preparation, and one shade structure for the playground at Ralph Goff Community Park on the Campo Reservation. The restroom would provide two unisex toilets and would be constructed to provide accessibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Additionally, the Campo Reservation Fire Protection District has committed to providing and maintaining potable water to the facility, as required, and providing vegetation, grounds maintenance and minor repairs as required throughout the facility's service life. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$950,000 from the Budget Act of 2022.

**Available for Q and A:**

**Scott Timbs, Fire Chief, Campo Reservation**

**Recommendation: Approve Resolution 24-12**

**10. Santee Fire Department's Proposal for Wildfire Supplies, Equipment and Training (ACTION)**

The Santee Fire Department is requesting funding to procure equipment for a fire engine, firefighter personal protective equipment, and delivery of wildland firefighting training for fire personnel from the Santee Fire Department. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$210,000 from the Budget Act of 2023.

**Available for Q and A:**

**Justin Matsushita, Fire Chief, City of Santee**

**Recommendation: Approve Resolution 24-13**

**11. Fire Risk Reduction Through Vegetation Management in the San Diego River Watershed (ACTION)**

Lakeside's River Park Conservancy seeks funding to carry out fuel reduction activities on approximately 150 acres of land in the Wildland Urban Interface area that runs along the San Diego River and its tributaries, including Los Coches Creek. These activities are aimed at preventing the outbreak of fires, which in turn will safeguard human life and property, and protect public lands. Additionally, these activities will also have a positive impact on local wildlife and their natural habitat. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$649,000 from the Budget Act of 2023.

**Available for Q and A:**

**Julie Turko, Executive Director, Lakeside's River Park Conservancy**

**Recommendation: Approve Resolution 24-14**

**12. City of El Cajon's Proposal for Improvements for Broadway Creek - Phase B (ACTION)**

El Cajon requests funding to implement Phase B of the Broadway Creek Restoration Project to restore the stream's functionality and address erosion in its 1,771 linear foot reach. The proposed Phase B will restore approximately 400 feet of earthen channel that runs through a County Flood Control easement between residential developments. The creek restoration process will remove non-native plant material, trash and debris, and rock gabions. The goal is to stabilize the creek's contours and prevent flooding and future erosion, mainly by installing an engineered solution. This stabilization will help increase the capacity of Broadway Creek to handle storms and reduce the frequency of flooding beyond the creek. Conservancy staff recommends funding up to the amount of \$2,000,000 from the Budget Act of 2022.

**Available for Q and A:**

**Olga Reyes, P.E., Principal Civil Engineer, Public Works, City of El Cajon**

**Recommendation: Approve Resolution 24-15**

**13.San Diego Regional Fire Foundation 2024 Proposal for Fire Reduction and Suppression Activities in San Diego River Watershed (ACTION)**

The San Diego Regional Fire Foundation in partnership with the Wynola Fire Safe Council and Santee Fire Department propose to purchase a fire apparatus and conduct fuel reduction activities. They request partial funding to procure a Type 3 Brush Fire Engine, which would be utilized by the Santee Fire Department for fire suppression activities. In partnership with the Wynola Estates Fire Safe Council, they would also reduce flammable fuels loads on approximately 40 acres in Julian that are surrounded by the Cleveland National Forest, open space and forested lands. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$650,000 from the Budget Act of 2023.

**Available for Q and A:**

**Joan Jones, Executive Director, San Diego Regional Fire Foundation**

**Recommendation: Approve Resolution 24-16**

**14.Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation’s Proposal for East Elliott Land Acquisition (ACTION)**

The Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation requests funds to acquire approximately 55 acres of land in the East Elliott area. This land will be conserved in perpetuity and will offer several benefits such as preserving the habitats and protecting the wildlife corridors, maintaining public access, and safeguarding the watershed. Additionally, acquiring this land will establish access to outdoor recreation, connections to the existing trails at Mission Trails Regional Park, the San Diego River Trail, and other nearby trail networks. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$2,000,000 through the Budget Act 2022.

**Available for Q and A:**

**Jennifer Morrissey, Executive Director, Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation**

**Lane Mackenzie, Board President, Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation**

**Recommendation: Approve Resolution 24-17**

**15.Fire Mitigation in Santee’s Wildland Urban Interface Area (ACTION)**

The City of Santee has applied for a grant through the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services to conduct fuel reduction activities across 415 acres of land and along 3.26 miles of the San Diego River and its tributaries (the Project). The total estimated cost of the Project is \$7,623,567. The City of Santee is requesting funding in the amount of \$907,568 from the Conservancy for the Project. The primary objective of the Project is to reduce the amount of invasive non-native plants, dead and dying trees. The fuel reduction activities will help to decrease the likelihood of property damage, loss of life, and enhance firefighter safety and effectiveness during wildfires. The Conservancy staff has recommended partially

funding this Project in the amount of \$907,568 from the Budget Acts of 2021 and 2023.

**Available for Q and A:**

**Justin Matsushita, Fire Chief, City of Santee**

**Recommendation: Approve Resolution 24-18**

**16. San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation Proposal for Procurement of a Vehicle, Chipper, Trailer, Tools and Supplies, to Carry Out Fuel Reduction Activities (*ACTION*)**

The San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation seeks funding to reduce fuel loads and maintain and create firebreaks to help safeguard and protect vulnerable, at-risk, and underserved communities in the San Diego River watershed. The Foundation will use the funding to procure one Pierce Mini Pumper (Ford F-550 vehicle), one tow behind chipper, one portable restroom trailer, and firefighting equipment, tools, and PPE. The San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation and the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department will partner to implement fuel reduction activities in the City of San Diego within the San Diego River watershed. The Conservancy staff recommends funding up to \$622,000 from the Budget Acts of 2021 and 2023.

**Presentation:**

**Wendy Robinson, Executive Director, San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation**

**Anthony Tosca, Deputy Chief/Fire Marshall, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department**

**Recommendation: Approval of Resolution 24-19**

**17. 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:

**Conservancy staff attended the follow events:**

Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team Steering Committee Meeting All State

Conservancy 2024 Spring Meeting

California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force Meeting

Fire Safe Council of San Diego County

San Diego Canyonlands Advisory Committee

San Diego Biodiversity Summit (San Diego Natural History Museum/SANDAG)

County Parks Trans County Trail Meeting

SDSU Mission Valley Park event

San Diego Fire-Rescue demonstration

**18. Next Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting is anticipated to be held in person on Wednesday, July 17, 2024, from 10:00 am to noon.

## 19. Adjournment

### **Accessibility**

If you require a disability related modification or accommodation to participate in this meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please call Wendell Taper at 619-390-0568 or [Wendell.Taper@sdrc.ca.gov](mailto:Wendell.Taper@sdrc.ca.gov).

State of California  
San Diego River Conservancy

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: 1

SUBJECT: **ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS**

State of California  
San Diego River Conservancy

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: **2**

SUBJECT: **APPROVAL OF MINUTES (*ACTION*)**

The Board will consider adoption of the **February 7, 2024** Board Meeting.

PURPOSE: The minutes of the Board Meeting are attached for review.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve minutes



## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

Minutes of February 7, 2024 Public Meeting  
(Draft Minutes for Approval on March 28, 2024)

CONSERVANCY Board Member, Ben Clay called the February 7, 2024 meeting of the San Diego River Conservancy to order at approximately 10:00 p.m.

### Item 1. Roll Call

#### Members Present

Stephen Benson	Department of Finance
Richard Burg	Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jennifer Campbell	Mayor, City of San Diego, Designee
Raul Campillo	Councilmember, City of San Diego, District 7 (Arrive 10:30am)
Ben Clay, Chair	Public at Large
John Elliott	Kumeyaay Diegueño Land Conservancy (Called in without listing address)
Ruth Hayward	Public at Large
Ray Lennox	Department of Parks and Recreation (Called in without listing address)
Phil Ortiz	City of El Cajon
Cody Petterson	Speaker of the Assembly
Elsa Saxod	Public at Large
Andrea Scharffer	Natural Resources Agency
Gary Strawn	San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
Dustin Trotter	City of Santee (Called in without listing address)
Nicole Van Doren	Department of Parks and Recreation (Left at 10:35am)

#### Absent

Joel Anderson	Supervisor, County of San Diego, Second District
Jennifer Norris	Wildlife Conservation Board

#### Staff Members Present

Julia Richards	Executive Officer
Wendell Taper	Associate Governmental Program Analyst
Dustin Harrison	Environmental Scientist
Hayley Peterson	Deputy Attorney General

### Item 2. Approval of Minutes

Elsa Saxod moved for approval of the July 13, 2023, and November 9, 2023 minutes and Cody Petterson seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ben Clay, Ruth Hayward, Andrea Scharffer, Stephen Benson, Richard Burg, Cody Petterson, Dr. Jennifer Campbell, Raul Campillo, Phil Ortiz, Elsa Saxod (10-0-0).

### Item 3. Public Comment (*INFORMATIONAL*)

No report.

#### **Item 4. Chairperson's and Governing Board Members' Report (INFORMATIONAL)**

**Ben Clay** welcomed the Board. He mentioned the San Diego River Conservancy's Board Meeting is in a new room today because the original room was reserved for overflow from the County Supervisors' Board Meeting. And, since the Governor's Executive Order expired which allowed the Conservancy to hold meetings using Zoom, meetings are now held in person because of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act. Zoom made it accessible and convenient for the public to attend meetings, but now, Board Members must list their address of where they are calling in from.

This meeting will cover 9 proposed projects for \$10.5M that were previously scheduled for the Conservancy's September and January meetings. In the interest of time, Conservancy staff will provide an overview of each proposed project and the applicants are available to answer any questions. Only one video from the San Diego Girl Scout's proposal and one brief presentation by San Diego State University Professors will be presented.

**Gary Strawn** announced January 25<sup>th</sup> was the annual point in time count of homeless individuals living along the San Diego River. He's been doing that for the last 10 years with the San Diego River Park Foundation. This year was right after a rainstorm. The preliminary count was 264 individuals. 112 were in Santee and the remaining in San Diego. They didn't go to Lakeside. That is within one or two from last year. They estimate how many people are there.

He recollects that is what they have seen for the last 5 or 10 years. They move back and forth from Santee and San Diego. The official results will come out soon, but that's a significant number.

**Ben Clay** went out to the San Diego River to see SDSU projects. In the old days the river surrounded the stadium. He took pictures and suspects lifeguards will be busy because of all the rains.

#### **Item 5. Deputy Attorney General Report (INFORMATIONAL/ACTION)**

**Hayley Peterson** reminded the Board about the annual Form 700 submission which is due to the Conservancy by March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The Executive Office will send an email with instructions to the Board Members. There are changes with electronic signatures. Also, the Bagley-Keene Act had changes and she will provide a memo to explain the current state of the law.

#### **Item 6. Health and Safety Report (INFORMATIONAL/ACTION)**

No report.

#### **Item 7. San Diego River Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update (ACTION/INFORMATION)**

**Julia Richards** The San Diego River Conservancy partnered with San Diego Canyonlands, a community-based non-profit organization, to conduct outreach and help prepare the Conservancy's next 5-year strategic plan. This Plan was presented at the November 2023 Board Meeting, but we did not have a quorum to act on this item. The Plan was included in the board materials for today's meeting.

Conservancy staff recommends approval of the plan. The Board may discuss, comment, or adopt the plan.

**Cody Petterson** complimented the report stating it was well written. Now it's time to implement with fidelity.

**Cody Petterson** moved for approval of San Diego River Conservancy's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan Update and Dr. Jennifer Campbell seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ben Clay, Ruth Hayward, Andrea Scharffer, Stephen Benson, Nicole Van Doren, Richard Burg, Cody Petterson, Dr. Jennifer Campbell, Phil Ortiz,

Elsa Saxod (10-0-0).

**Item 8. Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation's Proposal for Fire Resiliency and Invasive Control in Mission Trails Regional Park (ACTION)**

**Dustin Harrison** thanked Ben Clay. Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation (MTRPF) applied to the San Diego River Conservancy for a grant to reduce the risk and intensity of fire by implementing fuel reduction activities on target trails and grasslands totaling 270 acres: 70 acres of public parkland, including trails and staging areas and 200 acres of grassland which borders State Route 52.

The proposed Project will provide volunteer training to manage ongoing maintenance and control of invasive plants, purchase one electric utility terrain vehicle and 2 walk-behind mowers, with an educational outreach and engagement component.

The City of San Diego's Department of Parks and Recreation supports this proposed Project and will partner with the Foundation to implement the proposed Project. The proposed Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, Program 2 Support and Encourage Recreation and Education, Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, Program 5 Enhance Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance and Program 6, Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach. The proposed Project is consistent with the San Diego River Conservancy Act and is aligned with 6 State plans and priorities.

The MTRPF has a dedicated volunteer group who will donate time for follow up invasive plant control after the initial biomass removal is completed. The City of San Diego will also provide administrative service hours to manage the Project as in-kind services.

Additional information on the proposal is in the staff report, and if approved, funding would be provided through the Budget Act 2023. Conservancy staff recommend funding in the amount of \$1.8M. Dustin introduced Jennifer Morrissey, Executive Director of MTRPF, to answer any questions.

**Dr. Jennifer Campbell** moved for approval of Resolution 24-01 and **Phil Ortiz** seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ben Clay, Ruth Hayward, Andrea Scharffer, Stephen Benson, Nicole Van Doren, Richard Burg, Cody Petterson, Dr. Jennifer Campbell, Phil Ortiz, Elsa Saxod (10-0-0).

**Item 9. San Diego Girl Scouts Proposal to Conduct Fuel Reduction Activities and Build a Tree Nursery at Camp Winacka/Camp Whispering Oaks (ACTION)**

**Julia Richards** thanked Chair Clay. The Conservancy played a brief video presented by the Girls Scouts San Diego. The Girl Scouts San Diego's Camp Winacka/Camp Whispering Oaks in Julian consists of 672 acres. The proposed Project for hazardous fuel reduction activities will target 144 acres and includes the removal of flammable fuel loads, including dead, dying, and diseased trees by mechanical and manual methods to lessen the potential of destructive wildfire impacts and increase wildfire resiliency. Biomass will be treated on site by chipping, mastication or by using an air curtain burner incinerator.

Girls Scouts already reduced 200 acres of flammable fuel loads on their property. Permits were approved in October 2023 through the California Vegetation Treatment Program.

The proposed Project also includes construction of a nursery with two greenhouses, and a nursery manager for two years. This nursery will offer hands-on learning experience for Girl scouts to propagate and plant native oak and conifer trees, study the forest ecosystem, and explore careers in the natural sciences. More than 10,000 Girl Scouts and adult volunteers use this property annually.

The proposed Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, Program 1 Land Conservation, Program 2 Support and Encourage Recreation and Education, Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, and Program 6, Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach.

Proposed Project is consistent with the San Diego River Conservancy Act and is aligned with 6 State plans and priorities. The Girl Scouts have matching funds totaling \$186,000 or approximately 25% of the project cost.

Support letters were provided by CALFIRE, Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County and Natural Resource Conservation Service (US Dept of Agriculture). The U.S. Forest Service and the National Resource Conservation Service have expressed interest and support these efforts.

Additional information on the proposal is located in the staff report, and if approved, funding would be provided through the Budget Act 2023. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$759,158.

Julia introduced Eric Williams, Director of Property, Girl Scouts San Diego to answer any questions.

**Cody Petterson** commented that fuels need to be burned because selling them would spread gold spotted oak borer. US Forest Service land has a lot of conifers. Oak trees are in decline so those should be enhanced.

**Elsa Saxod** moved for approval of Resolution 24-02 and Dr. Jennifer Campbell seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ben Clay, Ruth Hayward, Andrea Scharffer, Stephen Benson, Nicole Van Doren, Richard Burg, Cody Petterson, Dr. Jennifer Campbell, Phil Ortiz, Elsa Saxod (10-0-0).

#### **Item 10. San Diego Audubon Society Silverwood Wildlife Sanctuary Proposal to Mitigate Fire Risk (ACTION)**

**Dustin Harrison** thanked Chair Clay. San Diego Audubon Society requests funding to remove flammable fuel loads/invasive non-native plants on 65 acres and to create 8 acres of defensible space at the Silverwood Wildlife Sanctuary in the Lakeside community. Its proposal also includes updating the map to a digital format, installing a new kiosk, and hiring a part-time coordinator to develop a fire education curriculum, attend Fire Safe Council meetings and events, develop, and utilize outreach materials, and engage the community.

The Silverwood Wildlife Sanctuary is in the Wildland-Urban Interface area in San Diego's rural east county, supported by the Barona Band of Mission Indians, and surrounded by open space identified as CAL FIRE's High and Very High risk in the Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

The proposed Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, Program 2 Support and Encourage Recreation and Education, Program 3, Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, and Program 6, Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach. The proposed Project is consistent with the San Diego River Conservancy Act and is aligned with 7 State plans and priorities.

San Diego Audubon Society has received \$38,050 in matching funds from the State Coastal Conservancy for fire clearance work. In addition, approximately 252 hours of volunteer time or \$9,405 is anticipated to be donated for this Project. Additional information on the proposal is located in the staff report, and if approved, funding would be provided through the Budget Act 2023.

Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$188,510.30. Dustin introduced Nick Thorpe, Philanthropy Coordinator, San Diego Audubon Society who is here to answer any questions.

**Dr. Jennifer Campbell** moved for approval of Resolution 24-03 and Ruth Hayward seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ben Clay, Ruth Hayward, Andrea Scharffer, Stephen Benson, Nicole Van Doren, Richard Burg,

**Cody Petterson, Dr. Jennifer Campbell, Phil Ortiz, Elsa Saxod (10-0-0).**

**Item 11. Cleveland National Forest's 2023-2024 Wildfire Proposal (ACTION)**

**Julia Richards** thanked Chair Clay. The Cleveland National Forest's (CNF) proposed project includes multiple components for fire prevention and safety through fuel reduction treatments, prescribed fire activities, and 32 miles of road brushing. If approved, the project will fund the hiring of surge staffing and purchase of personal protective equipment, fire hose appliances and hose tools, fuels reduction equipment, including two utility task vehicles and one tracked chipper.

In addition, the proposed Project will upgrade internet connections; procure 5 generators and 12 transfer switches, procure one modular command center which will allow CNF to serve as Incident Command Post(s) during emergencies in San Diego's rural and forested areas.

CNF's Project locations were identified as a High and Very High risk in the Fire Hazard Severity Zones (CAL FIRE). The proposed Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, Program 3, Preserve and Restore Natural Resources; Program 4, Protect and Preserve Cultural and Historical Resources; and Program 6, Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach.

The proposed Project is consistent with the San Diego River Conservancy Act and is aligned with 10 State and federal plans. Leverage funding from the United States Forest Service (USFS) includes a \$10M investment in a Southern California Fire Risk Reduction Strategy. This strategy will implement fuel reduction activities in southern California forests, including the Cleveland National Forest.

Additional information on the proposal is in the staff report, and if approved, funding would be provided through the Budget Act 2021. Conservancy staff recommend funding in the amount of \$1,200,000. Scott Tangenberg, Forest Supervisor, is here to answer any questions the Board may have.

**Cody Petterson** understands the need for fuel reduction. With all the rain more fuel will accumulate. CNF is predominately native habitat. He wants to emphasize keeping the disruption to native habitat to a minimum.

**Ben Clay** is proud to work together with the CNF. The teamwork is appreciated.

**Raul Campillo** moved for approval of Resolution 24-04 and Dr. Jennifer Campbell seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ben Clay, Ruth Hayward, Andrea Scharffer, Stephen Benson, Nicole Van Doren, Richard Burg, Cody Petterson, Raul Campillo, Dr. Jennifer Campbell, Phil Ortiz, Elsa Saxod (11-0-0).

**Item 12. San Diego Regional Fire Foundation Proposal for Wildfire Mitigation and Suppression (ACTION)**

**Dustin Harrison** thanked Chair Clay. The San Diego Regional Fire Foundation requests funding to procure three fire engines, and various types of equipment that will be used to help mitigate and suppress fires for ten fire departments in the County of San Diego.

The proposed Project includes the procurement of one Type 3 brush fire engine; two Type 6 "Quick Attack" fire engines; one commercial hand-fed chipper, one skid steer chipper with attachments and one trailer.

In additional, the procurement includes: 308 very high-frequency (VHF) mobile and hand-held radios; 16 sets of firefighter PPE; 20 fire shelters; and replace aging fire hose and nozzles, hose clamps, hose packs, and hand tools to help respond to wildfire events in the Wildland Urban Interface and rural areas in the County of San Diego.

The proposed Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach. The proposed Project is consistent with the San Diego River Conservancy Act and is aligned with 6 State plans and priorities.

Support letters were provided by Fire Chiefs at Chula Vista Fire Department, Lakeside Fire Protection District, San Miguel Fire Protection District, and the Central Zone.

Matching Funds are in the amount of \$1,104,880 or 36% of the total project. Additional information on the proposal is located in the staff report, and if approved, funding would be provided through the Budget Act 2023.

Conservancy staff recommend funding in the amount of \$2,000,000. Dustin introduced Joan Jones, Executive Director for San Diego Regional Fire Foundation who is available for questions and answers.

**Ben Clay** discussed the Conservancy has provided funding for the lifeguards and personal protective equipment in the past, and that this work is very important.

**Richard Burg** asked about radios. Is Very High Frequency (VHF) and VHF p25 the same radios so they can communicate across agencies?

**Joan Jones** responded they are the same. The p25 is a standard of communication that the State and national require for 400 channels. Older radios only communicate on about 24 channels.

**Phil Ortiz** moved for approval of Resolution 24-05 and **Cody Petterson** seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: **Ben Clay, Ruth Hayward, Andrea Scharffer, Stephen Benson, Richard Burg, Cody Petterson, Raul Campillo, Dr. Jennifer Campbell, Phil Ortiz, Elsa Saxod (10-0-0).**

#### **Item 13. Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation's Proposal for Fifty Interpretive and Educational Signs (ACTION)**

**Julia Richards** thanked Chairman Clay. MTRPF requests funding to design, fabricate, and install 50 bilingual interpretive panels throughout Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP). The proposed project aims to educate and interpret the park's resources.

The panels will engage visitors by creating meaningful encounters with the natural, cultural, and historical resources. Educating people about conservation and the dynamics of the natural environment will help increase stewardship to protect these valuable resources in MTRP.

The proposed Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, and Program 6, Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach.

The proposed Project is consistent with the San Diego River Conservancy Act and is aligned with 6 State and local plans and priorities. MTRPF will provide \$50,000 in matching funds for the interpretive master plan and assessment.

Additional information on the proposal is in the staff report, and if approved, funding would be provided through the Budget Act 2022. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$150,000. Julia introduced Jennifer Morrissey, Executive Director of the MTRPF, who is available for questions.

**Raul Campillo** thanked MTRPF. He knows how valuable these interpretive panels will be to the public. MTRP is amazing and learning about the park makes it even more meaningful.

Raul Campillo moved for approval of Resolution 24-06 and Elsa Saxod seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ben Clay, Ruth Hayward, Andrea Scharffer, Stephen Benson, Richard Burg, Cody Petterson, Raul Campillo, Dr. Jennifer Campbell, Phil Ortiz, Elsa Saxod (10-0-0).

**Item 14. San Diego County Parks Proposal for Improvements to the Historic Flume Segment of the San Diego River Trail (ACTION)**

**Dustin Harrison** thanked Chair Clay. The County of San Diego's Department of Parks and Recreation seeks funding to remediate seven asbestos pipes (used as fence posts), remove approximately 1,200 feet of rusty barbed wire fencing, and add erosion control measures on the Historic Flume Trail segment of the San Diego River Trail. Removing the hazardous material and implementing trail restoration on this San Diego River Trail segment will increase public safety and promote outdoor recreation and resource protection in El Monte Valley. This trail is within the low-income community of Lakeside.

The proposed Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, Program 2 Support and Encourage Recreation and Education Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, Program 4 Protect and Preserve Cultural and Historical Resources, and Program 6, Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach.

The proposed Project is consistent with the San Diego River Conservancy Act and is aligned with 4 State plans and priorities. Additional information on the proposal is in the staff report, and if approved, funding would be provided through the Budget Act 2022. Conservancy staff recommend funding in the amount of \$500,000.

Dustin introduced Moises Pinedo, Chief, Departmental Operations for the County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation who is available for questions.

**Ruth Hayward** commented about asbestos pipes needing to be disposed of at an approved site. Ruth asked where the site located?

**Moises Pinedo** the contract to remove those pipes will require the disposal according to California State law. They do not have a location at this time but will inform the Conservancy once they know.

**Cody Petterson** commented this trail section is a tribute to the Conservancy Board and County of San Diego for putting together this investment. It is a success story about improving recreation.

**Dr. Jennifer Campbell** moved for approval of Resolution 24-07 and Cody Petterson seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ben Clay, Ruth Hayward, Andrea Scharffer, Stephen Benson, Richard Burg, Cody Petterson, Raul Campillo, Dr. Jennifer Campbell, Phil Ortiz, Elsa Saxod (10-0-0).

**Item 15. San Diego State University Research Foundation's Proposal for One Water Center Living Learning Laboratory (ACTION)**

**Julia Richards** thanked Chair Clay. The San Diego State University Research Foundation, in partnership with the Department of Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering, proposed a Project that includes the construction of a laboratory where students and the public can learn about challenges concerning the quality, supply, management, and administration of water resources.

The facility will include two modular buildings fitted with laboratory equipment and supplies, a deck, a ramp, and a security system. The lab will be located at SDSU Mission Valley River Park within walking distance of the San Diego River, a bioretention basin for collecting stormwater and access to sewer infrastructure. The strategic location allows faculty and students to utilize the lab for water testing, monitoring, research, and training.

The proposed Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, Program 2 Support and Encourage Recreation and Education, Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, Program 5 Enhance Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance, and Program 6, Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach.

Proposed project is consistent with the San Diego River Conservancy ACT and is aligned with 4 State plans and priorities. SDSU and San Diego State University Research Foundation will provide matching funds of approximately \$343,500, approximately 15% of project cost.

Additional information on the proposal is in the staff report, and if approved, funding would be provided through the Budget Act 2022 or Proposition 68. Conservancy staff recommend funding in the amount of \$2,000,000.

Julia introduced Natalie Mladenov, PhD., San Diego State University Professor, from the Department of Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering to provide a brief presentation of the proposed Project and to answer any questions.

**Natalie Mladenov:** Thanked the Board for allowing her the time to provide the presentation. She is accompanied by her colleagues Dr. Alicia Kinoshita and Dr. Matthew Verbyla as well. They represent many faculty at SDSU who share a passion for water. More than 15 faculty from 4 different colleges on campus. They have been working together since 2015 in the Blue Gold area of excellence where they collaborate on water and watershed related issues from hydrology, flood, and disturbance in watersheds all the way to water reuse and water treatment.

Through their research endeavors, they have supported over 100 students for years from their different efforts combined. From kindergarten through 12th grade and community college outreach, they collaborate with federal agencies in the region such as USGS and EPA, various nonprofits, and other universities as well as faculty across the border through the Water Across Borders Initiative to work with colleagues in Mexico on transboundary water issues.

Through the One Water Living Learning Laboratory, it gives a chance to share the vision that all water has value and is critical to sustainability especially in this water scarce region. They want to share the multi-benefits of water, healthy rivers, treating stormwater and wastewater to keep rivers clean.

This is an opportunity for something not yet developed at San Diego State University or in the region. They have a lot of coastal research and outreach, but for urban rivers which are vital for freshwater systems, this is a great opportunity to have a hands-on education experience combined with research, workforce training and outreach to communities.

The future One Water Living Learning Laboratory would be located on the western-most end of Mission Valley Campus in the River Park. There is a red rectangle in the middle panel about 4,000 square feet on a raised pad. It is adjacent to a stormwater bioretention basin which is a great opportunity for demonstrating the value of the stormwater green infrastructure. It is also very close to the San Diego River.

In the red-dashed line, there is a sanitary sewer that will be intercepted with the water brought to the facility for research, training, and outreach, and then returned to the sewer. On the right side is their concept/vision of what it might look like – nothing has been built yet.

The idea is to have a laboratory building with an indoor space for the opportunity to conduct training on water testing, water quality analysis, staging for their research on the San Diego River and tributaries, and an outdoor area where they could have something like a rainwater harvesting system to show the students and community what that looks like.



They are promoting research and training in different areas of watershed hydrology, disturbance studies, water monitoring and analysis, water treatment and reuse technology. The faculty already has a lot of these treatment systems and other experimental systems in their lab which they could bring to the site to clean water and demonstrate to the public.

They also want to promote educational outreach. There will be an outdoor area for demonstrations and hands-on activities. There are several groups who strongly support this. At San Diego State University, there are a number of groups like the Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA), Center for the Advancement of Students in Academia (CASA), and the Maximizing Access to Research Careers (MARCS) Programs that try to provide additional educational opportunities outside of the classroom to promote students.

The MARCS Program stated in a support letter: "The lab would be a place that we can amplify our shared goals of providing top notch research experiences to our students that we train for tomorrow STEM leaders." There will also be signage and opportunities for tours and events for people of all ages.

In their budget, they are requesting funds for the feasibility study, permitting, construction of the ADA compliant deck and driveway, installation of the building, interior equipment, and signage and for project management, tech support and educational outreach coordination.

They are providing matching funds for construction of below ground infrastructure and in-kind support from their 200 hours of volunteer time. Together, that brings the project total to \$2,372,242.

**Ben Clay:** Gave some background history: President Steve Weber, he forgot the year, and this Conservancy formed a MOU to talk about working with SDSU. Along comes Natalie and her group discussing the things they would like to do out there.

President De La Torre – President of the University now is very excited. He has been keeping her posted on what the Conservancy is doing. Having this facility adjacent to the City of San Diego's sewer and the San Diego River, the River Park and University Campus is quite something. If one would say I had a dream, there's going to be an urban river center there someday. He hopes cities and communities come to grips with how to deal with an urban river in the middle of SDSU's facility.

The San Diego River starts out in east county and comes all the way through [to the Pacific Ocean] affecting all types of people. The City of San Diego – recent [flood] action over the last couple of weeks. There is also a water quality problem to the south, called the Tijuana River with all sorts of problems of bad water quality coming across the border. This is just the first step, and he is so proud to see this happening.

**Ruth Hayward:** Was happy to hear how Chair Clay was in the area yesterday to see how the water impacted the area and that it seemed to be just fine. She remembers seeing water from bank to bank. She is happy that the water is able to flow downstream rather than collect where the old stadium used to be.

**Dr. Jennifer Campbell:** Stated water research was the thing that got her interested in this position. She asked about the Pure Water Project in the City of San Diego. One of the things they are trying to do is figure out how to get stormwater cleaned up enough to be added to the sewer water to come out with the Pure Water at the end. Stormwater is harder than sewer water to clean, surprisingly. She asked if that could be part of the research. She requested to connect Public Utilities Division (PUD) and engineers who are working on this. She also asked if students would learn how to delineate diseases from the water such as what has been done for COVID.

**Natalie Mladenov:** Treating stormwater is part of the portfolio that San Diego needs to consider. It is a big issue, and they have faculty who work on stormwater. Matthew Verbyla has been doing wastewater surveillance similar to UCSB. It is another part of their research and training opportunity that enters the sanitary sewer and returns.

**Raul Campillo:** Looking at the classes that are going to be supported by this laboratory facility makes SDSU even more competitive than it already is to attract scientifically minded students. Understanding issues from the local river is going to be big. He noticed this was on City of San Diego Land so stated if you run into issues with permits, he will be supportive in anyway.

**John Elliott:** commented water is life. He asked if they would look at traditional ecological knowledge at the facility. He also wanted to say the degraded chaparral ecosystem has not been this bad. He would like them to look at this issue further.

**Natalie Mladenov** responded for the signage proposal, they would work with Kumeyaay Diegueño Land Conservancy. On the research side as well they would like to work together.

**Cody Petterson** asked about the timeline. He wants to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony.

**Natalie Mladenov** they are working with Mission Valley development. The 2-year project timeline requires amending the existing permits.

**Ben Clay** moved for approval of Resolution 24-08 and **Dr. Jennifer Campbell** seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ben Clay, Ruth Hayward, Andrea Scharffer, Stephen Benson, Richard Burg, Cody Petterson, Raul Campillo, Dr. Jennifer Campbell, Phil Ortiz, Elsa Saxod (10-0-0).

#### **Item 16. San Diego County Parks Improvements to Cactus County Park (ACTION)**

**Dustin Harrison** thanked Chair Clay. The County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation (County Parks) requests funding to improve public facilities at Cactus County Park by replacing the existing restroom with an ADA-compliant prefabricated restroom and installing new LED lighting and poles for three ballfields to enhance energy efficiency and meet California Building Code standards.

This park is within the low-income community of Lakeside behind El Capitan High School near State Route 67.

The proposed Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, Program 2 Support and Encourage Recreation and Education, Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, Program 5 Enhance Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance, and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach.

The proposed Project is consistent with the San Diego River Conservancy Act and is aligned with 5 State plans and priorities. County Parks will provide \$3.5M in matching funds from the County of San Diego's General Fund for this Project. Additional information on the proposal is in the staff report, and if approved, funding would be provided through the Budget Act 2022. Conservancy staff recommend funding in the amount of \$2,000,000.

Dustin introduced Moises Pinedo, Chief, Departmental Operations for the County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation available for questions.

**Richard Burg** asked what the \$2 million would be for since this seems like a high price considering he has experience with a project like this. They installed single vault comfort stations. For example, recently California Department of Fish and Wildlife installed two restrooms at Hollenbeck Canyon Wildlife Area, granted it was a vault toilet which may be a little cheaper, but he is assuming utilities are already in place. They simply just have to tie in build a pad and install it.

**Moises Pinedo** the estimate is on probably cost. They are also considering researching the septic tank that is there. They want to ensure the infrastructure going to the restroom is up to code. This is why the estimate is

higher. They have installed other prefabricated restrooms that were a lot loss. They are on the high side because they do not know what they're getting into. These restrooms were built in 1978 and they anticipate finding unforeseen issues.

**Cody Petterson** presumably, per Rich's comment, excess funds would revert to the Conservancy.

**Dr. Jennifer Campbell** clarified it is more than one restroom within one building.

**Phil Ortiz** moved for approval of Resolution 24-09 and **Elsa Saxod** seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ben Clay, Ruth Hayward, Andrea Scharffer, Stephen Benson, Richard Burg, Cody Petterson, Raul Campillo, Dr. Jennifer Campbell, Phil Ortiz, Elsa Saxod (10-0-0).

#### **Item 17. Executive Officer's Report (*INFORMATIONAL/ACTION*)**

**Julia Richards** thanked Chair Clay. She listed various meetings the Conservancy staff attended in December and January. Also included is the Governor's budget for FY 24-25 and proposed budget solution reduction of \$9.4M from the Conservancy's 2023-24 allocation from the wildfire package.

#### **Item 18. Next Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be held Thursday, March 28, 2024, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

#### **Item 19. Adjournment**

**Ben Clay** adjourned the meeting at 11:14 pm

State of California  
San Diego River Conservancy

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: 3

SUBJECT: **PUBLIC COMMENT (*INFORMATIONAL*)**

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 28, 2024**

ITEM: 4

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

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 28, 2024**

ITEM: 5

SUBJECT: DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL REPORT  
(*INFORMATIONAL/ACTION*)

State of California  
San Diego River Conservancy

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: 6

SUBJECT: HEALTH AND SAFETY (*INFORMATIONAL*)

State of California  
San Diego River Conservancy

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: 7

SUBJECT: **SAN DIEGO COUNTY PARKS – LINDO LAKE  
WEST BASIN (*ACTION*)**

County Parks is requesting funding to improve Lindo Lake for recreation and to restore habitat in the west basin. County Parks is requesting funding for tree removal and relocation and to install native landscape. The proposed project would provide healthy habitat for multiple wildlife species along this migration corridor and also improve trail access and install fishing piers, bird watching stations, and site hardscapes. Conservancy staff recommends funding up to the amount of \$2,000,000 from the Budget Act of 2022.

**Overview:**

Emily Hubbard, Chief, CIP/Development Division North, County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation

Recommendation: Approve Resolution 24-10



**Resolution No: 24-10**

**RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF  
THE SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

**AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO GRANT \$2,000,000 FROM THE BUDGET  
ACT OF 2022 TO COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
TO ASSIST IN RESTORATION OF NATIVE HABITAT, INSTALL HARDSCAPE, AND  
PROVIDE RECREATIONAL AND TRAIL AMENITIES AT LINDO LAKE COUNTY PARK'S  
WEST BASIN (PHASE 2)**

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WHEREAS, the mission of the San Diego River Conservancy is to further the goals of its enabling legislation by conserving and restoring the lands and waters of the San Diego River watershed,

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of California created the San Diego River Conservancy for the purposes of acquiring, conserving, restoring and managing public lands,

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of California has provided funds under the Budget Act of 2022 to fund programs and activities that advance multibenefit projects and nature-based solutions including but not limited to climate resilience, natural and cultural resource protection, wildfire resilience, and community access projects,

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of this grant program, establishing necessary procedures and guidelines in accordance with statewide priorities and plans,

WHEREAS, the San Diego County Department of Parks and Recreation applied to the San Diego River Conservancy for funds to help restore Lindo Lake County Park's west basin and provide public access to recreational amenities, including the following: remove and relocate native trees, install native vegetation, site hardscapes and furnishings, construct fishing piers and bird viewing stations, and provide accessible trails around Lindo Lake (Project); and,

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy and staff have reviewed and evaluated the grant application conducted a site visit and recommend funding the Project for approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board, based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits:

1. The proposed Project is consistent with the Conservancy's statute, mission and strategic plan.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, Division 22.9, [Sections 32630-32659.9])
3. The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of up to \$2,000,000.00 (Two-Million Thousand Dollars) from the Budget Act of 2022 to the County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation for the Project.

4. Appoints the Executive Officer, or her designee, as an agent to execute all agreements, grants, sub-contracts and other documents needed for the completion of the Project.
5. Prior to the disbursement of funds, the County shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget and schedule.

Approved and adopted the 28<sup>th</sup> day of March 2024. I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution Number 24-10 was duly adopted by the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: \_\_\_\_\_

Nays: \_\_\_\_\_

Absent: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julia L. Richards  
Executive Officer

#### San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board Members Roll Call Vote

Name	Ayes	Noes	Abstained
CNRA: Andrea Scharffer			
DOF: Stephen Benson			
CADFW: Richard Burg			
Dr. Jennifer Campbell, SD Mayor Designee			
Joel Anderson, County Supervisor			
Raul Campillo			
Ben Clay, Chair			
Ruth Hayward, Vice Chair			
J. Cody Petterson			
Emily Burgueno			
Elsa Saxod			
DPR Ray Lennox, Designee			
DPR Nicole Van Doren, Designee			
Dustin Trotter			
Phill Ortiz			

# **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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## **Staff Recommendation SDRC Resolution 24-10**

March 28, 2024

### **DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to provide up to \$2,000,000.00 to the County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation (County Parks) for tree removal and relocation; installation of native landscape and cobble, fishing piers, bird watching stations, site hardscapes and furnishings; and to improve trail accessibility in Lindo Lake County Park, in the community of Lakeside.

**LOCATION:** Lindo Lake County Park is located in the unincorporated community of Lakeside on Assessor's Parcel Number 394-180-03-00 in San Diego, California. County Parks owns and operates the park.

**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:** Staff recommends that the San Diego River Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, § 32630 et seq.):

The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of funding for projects focused on enhancing river parkways, protecting resources, restoring native habitat and fire protection and suppression, specifically as follows:

**To the County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation, the sum of \$2,000,000.00 (Two Million Dollars and Zero cents) to use as follows:**

- For tree removal and relocation, to install native landscape and cobble, fishing piers, bird watching stations, site hardscapes and furnishings installation, and to improve trail accessibility in Lindo Lake County Park in the San Diego River watershed (Project).

Before the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget and schedule, and the names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed in carrying out the Project.

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

Based on the staff report and attached exhibits, the San Diego River Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act, including Section 32649.
2. The proposed Project is consistent with the Guidelines for the Conservancy's

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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Directed Grant program.

3. The proposed Project is consistent with the Budget Act of 2022.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The County Parks' mission is to enhance the quality of life in San Diego County by providing exceptional parks and recreation experiences and preserving significant natural resources. Through the promotion of health and wellness, their park systems feature 154 facilities across 56,000 acres of land, including parks, campgrounds, community centers, open space preserves and historic sites.

County Parks operates the 55-acre Lindo Lake County Park located in the community of Lakeside. The park features the Lakeside Community Center and Teen Center, active and passive recreation, and a historic boat house, all of which surround Lindo Lake. This park also provides 1.5 miles of American with Disabilities Act (ADA)-friendly multi-use trails, picnic areas, a dance ramada, a skate park, a children's playground, a softball field, a butterfly garden, horseshoe pits, and tennis courts. The Community Center and Teen Center hosts activities and events for all ages.

The lake is divided into two basins. The east basin was recently restored to improve the health and quality of Lindo Lake, the only natural lake in San Diego County.

Lindo Lake was originally fed by Quail Creek; however, in the 1960's, creation of Lake Jennings severed its natural water source. Stormwater and urban runoff from the hillsides surrounding Lindo Lake became its primary source of water as well as groundwater wells to supplement water levels.

After Lindo Lake lost its natural water source, disturbance to the natural water flow contributed to sedimentation and water quality deterioration over the years. In response to the concern that existing groundwater wells may not be adequate to maintain water levels, the decision was made to bifurcate the lake into two basins to allow for the water level to be maintained in each basin individually.

Lakeside community's nature and recreation opportunities and the local and migratory wildlife depend on the health of Lindo Lake. For these reasons, the restoration of Lindo Lake and the surrounding habitat is critical for the community and the natural ecosystems of the region.

### **OVERVIEW:**

The total cost of the Phase 2 project is estimated to be \$17.5 million. The County of San Diego will spend \$15.5 million to fund the majority of Phase 2 of the Lindo Lake improvements, including to remove years of sediment accumulation, increase the depth of the basin to 10 feet, install a stormwater filtration basin and storm drain filtration improvements.

The County of San Diego will fund improvements, including grading to re-contour and deepen the basin. Some excavated lake material will stabilize the banks, fill in low-

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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elevation areas, and create low-profile mounds surrounding the basin to support new vegetation and habitat. The lake basin will be completed with a water depth of 10ft. Native trees, low-level shrubs, and landscape will stabilize the shoreline banks. The park's irrigation system will be modified to provide temporary irrigation of restoration areas and permanent irrigation for ornamental vegetation. In addition, County Parks will directly fund a stormwater filtration basin and storm drain filtration improvements, which will be installed to prevent sediment from entering the restored basin. Proposed drainage improvements include the extension of existing storm drains, adding storm drain outlet protection, creating sediment basins, and adding gravel, cobble, and large boulders and sunken tree branch bundles to create aquatic fish habitat. To inhibit sedimentation in the newly deepened lake, stormwater best management practices (BMPs), including sediment basins and stormwater treatment/filtration systems, will be constructed at all inlet locations for erosion control and stormwater management.

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The Lindo Lake Improvements project, constructed in two phases, is restoring Lindo Lake by deepening the basins, restoring habitat, and installing site improvements to support the community's needs and natural ecosystems that depend on the lake. Phase 1 restored the east basin and was completed in August 2022.

The portion of the proposed Project for the West Basin (Phase 2), for which funding was requested from the Conservancy, will also improve public amenities and access to Lindo Lake County Park. It includes tree relocation, native plant installation, trail improvements (around the west basin), a fishing pier, a bird-watching station, and cobble and hardscape installation. Many community members and park visitors regularly enjoy observing and admiring the lake's wildlife.

The addition of accessible pedestrian trails and pathways will improve public access. Additional amenities, including expanded accessible trails, viewing platforms along the lake perimeter, and benches and trash receptacles throughout the site, will provide additional public benefit by providing desired amenities to support community interests.

#### Fishing pier

A fishing pier will extend into the lake. It will be equipped with railings and benches to provide a new public amenity at the lake to support the community's recreation interests. Fishing at Lindo Lake has long been a favorite community activity, including annual fishing tournaments, but has been suspended due to poor water quality.

#### Bird watching station

Two bird-watching stations, constructed of lumber slats, will be located to allow park visitors to observe waterfowl and other wildlife. The stations will allow wildlife to be observed in closer proximity than was previously available while minimizing disturbance of natural behaviors. Lindo Lake has historically provided important habitat for native and migratory birds. The improvements of this project will restore this habitat to a healthy condition.

# SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

## Site hardscape & furnishings

Lindo Lake County Park provides the public much needed access to nature and recreation. Hardscaping includes a decorative or practical structure in a landscape. Hardscape is a critical part of landscape design, providing definition and a sense of organization to the natural areas and features. Hardscape elements can define the use of a space and lead visitors through different zones of soft scaping, such as a trail or pathway that winds through a park area and into an open space or viewing station. Many members of the community enjoy walking the park's existing trails daily.

**Map 1. Lindo Lake County Park West Basin (Phase 2)**



## **MEASURABLE RESULTS:**

- Quantifiable water depth and health, visitor use of the park; evidence of native and local wildlife; tree and plant health.
- Baseline monitoring will include comparison photographs and narratives of the existing condition prior to construction compared to the implemented Project, illustrating the tangible improvements made to the site.
- After initial restoration, the site will be monitored by County Parks biological staff quarterly for the first year, bi-annually for the second year, and then annually for the third year (three years total). Qualitative monitoring will

## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

involve the County Parks biological staff reviewing the restoration area to examine container tree and plant health, seed germination, and invasive non-native plant encroachment, as well as any other issues that may arise. Invasive non-native plant treatment will occur as necessary. Photo documentation will occur throughout the restoration area. County Parks will implement corrective actions in a timely manner.

### DELIVERABLES:

- Quarterly request for disbursements, progress reports with photo documentation of before and after construction.
- County Parks staff will perform regularly scheduled specific monitoring and assessment activities including, but not limited to:
  - Qualitative monitoring of restoration areas, site walk observations, stormwater system evaluation and maintenance, and water quality testing, observation, and reporting.
- Final Report

**Table 1. Estimated Budget and Anticipated Schedule**

Task #	Description	Amount	Schedule
1. Project Design and Management	Staff labor and reporting	\$112,500.00	Quarterly throughout 2-year grant period
2. Landscaping	Tree removal, relocation, landscape planting and cobble installation	\$619,250.00	First year
3. Construction Implementation	Fishing pier, bird watching stations, site hardscapes and furnishings and improve trail accessibility	\$1,268,250.00	Second year
<b>Tasks 1-3</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,000,000.00</b>	<b>2024-2026</b>

**PROJECT FINANCING:** The total cost of Phase 2 is \$17,500,000.00; the Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$2,000,000.00 for the implementation of the proposed Project. The anticipated source of Conservancy funds for this Project is the Budget Act of 2022.

**LEVERAGED FUNDING:** County of San Diego Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Operational Plan has set aside \$15,500,000.00 for the entire Phase 2 project. In-kind services consist of significant hours of San Diego County Department of Parks and Recreation staff time.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:** This Project would be undertaken consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation (Public Resources Code, §§ 32630-32659.9).

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):** The Project is consistent with Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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Resources, Program 5 Enhance Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance, and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update 2024-2028.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE PURPOSES OF THE FUNDING SOURCE:** Budget Act 2022 is for nature-based solutions including wildfire and climate resilience, watershed protection, natural and cultural resource protection, and community access projects. The funding is immediately available for shovel-ready projects.

**CONSISTENCY WITH the CONSERVANCY's DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM:**

This Project achieves one or more of the purposes:

- Located in the San Diego River watershed;
- Resource protection;
- Reducing flood and fire risk;
- Removing invasive plant species from the watershed;
- Protecting the natural and scenic beauty of the San Diego River watershed.

**ALIGNMENT WITH PLANS AND PRIORITIES:**

**A. Outdoors for All: Providing equitable access to Parks and Nature**

Everyone can regularly access and experience the outdoors while feeling a sense of belonging, and that they are safe and welcome.

**B. California Water Action Plan Update (2023 Draft)**

- Recommendation 3.1. Expand and Accelerate Ecosystem Restoration.
- Recommendation 3.2. Improve Resilience of Major Natural Systems.

**C. State Wildlife Action Plan**

- Goals 1.3 and 1.4 – Enhancing native species abundance and diversity as well as ecosystem diversity;
- Goal 2.3 – Maintaining and improving water quality and quantity;
- Goals 3.3 and 3.4 – Improvements to hydrological and sediment deposition regimes for sustaining ecosystems.

**D. California Wetland Program Plan (2017-2022)**

- Core Element 3 – Voluntary Restoration and Protection.

**E. Safeguarding California Plan: 2018 Update**

- Goal 4: Promote holistic approaches to climate adaptation that maximize co-benefits and economic development;
- W-10: Protect and restore water resources for important ecosystems.

**F. 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality**

Increase public awareness of urban forest benefits and, where appropriate, prioritizing irrigation of trees over lawns.



## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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### **G. California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment**

Supports local adaptation strategy and resilience, and protection of the state's most vulnerable populations and communities.

### **H. California Climate Adaptation Strategy**

- Partner and collaborate to leverage resources, Goal A: collaborate to build climate resilience across sectors and regions.
- Accelerate nature-based climate solution and strengthen climate resilience of natural systems, Goal C: integrate nature-based climate solutions into relevant infrastructure and investments.

### **I. State Wildlife Action Plan**

Goal 3 - Enhance Ecosystem Functions and Processes: Maintain and improve ecosystem functions and processes vital for sustaining ecosystems in California.

### **J. San Diego River Conservancy's Climate Change Policy**

- Acquire, preserve, or restore natural areas or ecological reserves at risk due to development patterns in order to improve the long-term health of the region and avoid emissions associated with development; Develop parks and greenways in urban areas to mitigate climate change effects and promote public health and recreation; and protect, enhance, or restore water resources including wetlands and urban riparian areas;

### **K. California Natural Resources Agency's Initiatives.**

This project advances:

- Protecting Biodiversity
- Access for All
- Nature Based Solutions

Enhancing the state's most valuable natural resources, including working landscapes such as farm, range, and forest lands, natural lands such as wetlands, watersheds, wildlife habitats, and other wildlands, recreation lands such as parks, trails, greenbelts, and other open space.

### **L. Multiple Species Conservation Program**

- Establish and maintain a workable balance between preservation of natural resources and regional growth and economic prosperity.

### **M. San Diego County General Plan – Conservation and Open Space Element**

- Goals COS-3 Protection and Enhancement of Wetlands; COS-5 Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources; COS-21 Park and Recreational Facilities, and COS-22 Park and Recreational Services.

## **BENEFITS**

The Lindo Lake Improvements Project proposes to achieve multiple benefits that align with the goals of the San Diego River Conservancy, such as conserving resources, improving water quality, providing public access for the enjoyment of open space and

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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park facilities, removing invasive species from the watershed, enhancing native wildlife habitats, and protecting the natural and scenic beauty of the San Diego River watershed. The native and drought tolerant planting and water-conserving irrigation system will stabilize soils to prevent erosion, provide habitat for local and migrating wildlife, and conserve water supplies.

The Project provides significant positive social impacts demonstrated by community support and collaboration during active public outreach. The Project improves existing urban recreation facilities at Lindo Lake County Park and increases public access to these outdoor improvements. Public visitors will benefit from the improved amenities, access, safety, and beauty of the site.

### **PROJECT READINESS**

Project readiness is demonstrated by the completion of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) and associated environmental analysis, substantial completion of design, County Parks ownership of the Project site, approval of the project by the County Board of Supervisors, progress of attaining required permits through the Resource Agencies, and the expectation to begin construction in Winter 2024.

Multiple years of public outreach and collaboration with community members and groups have made this Project possible, resulting in the publicly approved concept upon which the Project is founded. Through many outreach events and meetings, the Project concept plan was publicly approved in 2016. The completed design received support from both the Lakeside Community Planning Group and the Lindo Lake Subcommittee in April 2019, and was presented to and approved by the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors on May 1, 2019.

Construction costs are estimated at \$17,500,000 including contingency. The funding source for \$15.5M is from the County of San Diego's General Fund. Ongoing long-term maintenance will be performed by County Parks staff, some of whom are full-time employees dedicated to Lindo Lake County Park.

### **PERMIT COMPLIANCE**

The SEIR was completed and certified by the County Board of Supervisors in 2019. Clean Water Act Section 401 and 404 permit applications have been obtained from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement application has been provided by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Project advertisement and award of bid is expected Fall 2024. Construction is expected to begin Winter 2024 and be completed by Spring 2026.

State of California  
San Diego River Conservancy

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: 8

SUBJECT: **BARONA BAND OF MISSION INDIANS  
PROPOSAL TO REMOVE HAZARDOUS TREES  
ON THE RESERVATION (*ACTION*)**

The Barona Group of Mission Indians is requesting funding to remove approximately 40 large mature eucalyptus trees, plant native willow trees and install one greenhouse for native plant propagation at the Barona Indian Charter School's native garden in partnership with the Barona Cultural Center and Museum. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$129,016 from the Budget Act of 2023.

**Available for Q and A:**

Laurie Egan Hedley, Museum Director and Curator, Barona Cultural Center and Museum

Recommendation: Approval of Resolution 24-11

**Resolution No: 24-11**

**RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF  
THE SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

**AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO GRANT \$129,016.00 FROM  
THE BUDGET ACT OF 2023 TO BARONA BAND OF MISSION INDIANS TO REMOVE  
SEVERAL LARGE EUCALYPTUS TREES, PLANT NATIVE WILLOW TREES, AND INSTALL  
A GREENHOUSE TO PROPOGATE NATIVE PLANT SPECIES IN THE SAN DIEGO RIVER  
WATERSHED**

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WHEREAS, the mission of the San Diego River Conservancy is to further the goals of its enabling legislation by conserving and restoring the lands and waters of the San Diego River watershed; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of California has provided funds under the Budget Act of 2023 to fund programs and activities that advance climate, wildfire and forest resilience projects; and

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of this grant program, establishing necessary procedures and guidelines in accordance with statewide priorities and plans; and

WHEREAS, Barona Band of Mission Indians applied to the San Diego River Conservancy for a grant requesting funding for the following:

- To remove at least 40 large Eucalyptus trees and grind down stumps, install a greenhouse and propagate native plants in partnership with the Barona Cultural Center and Museum the Barona Indian Charter School, which is located in the upper watershed of the San Diego River (the Project); and

WHEREAS, San Diego River Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$129,016.00 to implement the Project; and

WHEREAS, this Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, Program 2 Support and Encourage Recreation and Education, Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, Program 4 Protect and Preserve Cultural and Historical Resources, and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach.

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy staff have reviewed the grant application, met with the applicant, attended a site visit and recommends the Project for approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board, based on the accompanying staff report:

1. The proposed Project is consistent with the purposes and intent of the Budget Act of 2023.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River

Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, Sections 32630-32659.9).

3. The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of up to \$129,016.00 (One Hundred Twenty-Nine Thousand and Sixteen Dollars) to implement the Project.
4. Appoints the Executive Officer, or her designee, as an agent to execute all agreements, grants, sub-contracts, and other documents needed for the completion of the Project.
5. Prior to the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review and approval of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget, and schedule.

Approved and adopted on March 28, 2024. I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution Number 24-11 was duly adopted by the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: \_\_\_\_\_

Nays: \_\_\_\_\_

Absent: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julia L. Richards  
Executive Officer

San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board Members Roll Call Vote

Name	Ayes	Noes	Abstained
CNRA: Andrea Scharffer			
DOF: Stephen Benson			
CADFW: Richard Burg			
Dr. Jennifer Campbell, SD Mayor Designee			
Joel Anderson, County Supervisor			
Raul Campillo			
Ben Clay, Chair			
Ruth Hayward, Vice Chair			
J. Cody Petterson			
John Elliott			
Elsa Saxod			
DPR Designee, Ray Lennox			
DPR Designee, Nicole Van Doren			
Dustin Trotter			
Phil Ortiz			

# SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

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## Staff Recommendation SDRC Resolution 24-11 March 28, 2024

### DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to provide up to \$129,016.00 to the Barona Band of Mission Indians (Barona) to remove approximately 40 large mature eucalyptus trees, install native willow trees, and construct a greenhouse in the Barona Indian Charter School's native garden.

**LOCATION:** The Barona Indian Charter School is located at 1095 Barona Road on the Barona Reservation in east San Diego County, in the unincorporated community of Lakeside, California.

**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:** Staff recommends that the San Diego River Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, § 32630 et seq.):

The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of funding for projects focused on enhancing river parkways, protecting resources, restoring native habitat and fire protection and suppression, specifically as follows:

**To the Barona Band of Mission Indians, the sum of \$129,016.00 (One Hundred Twenty-Nine Thousand Sixteen Dollars and Zero cents) to use as follows:**

- To remove approximately 40 large eucalyptus trees, install native willows and construct a greenhouse to expand the Barona Indian Charter School's native garden in the San Diego River watershed (Project).

Before the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget and schedule, and the names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed in carrying out the project.

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

Based on the staff report and attached exhibits, the San Diego River Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act, including Section 32649.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the Guidelines for the Conservancy's Directed Grant program.

## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

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3. The proposed Project is consistent with the Budget Act of 2023.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Located in the mountain foothills of San Diego County, approximately 30 miles east of the coast, the Barona Reservation spans 5,900 acres of flat and rocky terrain.

Established in 1932, the Barona Indian Reservation is recognized by the United States government as a sovereign nation. A seven-member elected tribal council, including a chairman and vice-chairperson, currently governs it.

Barona's Tribal Council conducts all business for the band, including activities related to planning and economic development. Decisions on land or other tribal resources are referred to the general council, composed of tribal members.

The Reservation has a museum, school, fire station, gas station, church, museum, and community center. In the Tribe's continual efforts to preserve its culture, the Reservation is also home to the Barona Cultural Center and Museum, a unique hands-on educational museum. Displays of handmade pottery, reed baskets, paintings, arrowheads, and other artifacts date back thousands of years and are a few examples of the rich culture and history of San Diego's Native American community.

The Barona Indian Charter School is a free, publicly funded, fully credentialed faculty pre-kindergarten through eighth grade (PK-8) charter school located on the Reservation. Since 2002, they have served Native American students and non-Tribal students from the surrounding communities of Lakeside, El Cajon, Poway, San Diego Country Estates, Ramona, and Santee.

### **PROJECT NEED:**

The Barona Band of Mission Indians seeks to remove Eucalyptus trees that pose a threat to life and property. These invasive non-native trees are growing on the playground and garden area of the Barona Indian Charter School, around two propane tanks, and surround three other vital structures on the Reservation. Eucalyptus tree bark and oils are flammable, and their proximity to habitable structures makes this request even more urgent.

The threat of wildfire is taken very seriously on the Reservation, so improving human safety, reducing the threat of fire to tribal communities and neighbors, and increasing native habitat for cultural uses on the Barona Indian Reservation is a priority. Teaching charter school students the ways of Kumeyaay Ancestors will allow them to be involved with seed collection, tending to native plants, and thatching traditional structures.

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Barona Band of Mission Indians will use the funds to remove eucalyptus trees growing on the playground and garden area of the Barona Indian Charter School. These trees threaten life and property.

There are over 40 trees and old and new growth suckers to be removed by a contractor.

## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

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Tree stumps will be ground, and all wood will be cut and moved to a designated drying place to be used as firewood on the Reservation. School personnel will remove fencing and replace it as needed for access to the trees, and firewood will be accessible to all community members.

Upon removing the eucalyptus trees, Barona Indian Charter School would like to expand its native garden and add a greenhouse for students to propagate native plants, collect seeds, and become more involved with native plants traditionally used by the Kumeyaay's ancestors.

Willow trees will be planted throughout the school grounds to provide shade in the future. All charter school students will be taught about the Project's importance and willows to Kumeyaay People. The school will erect temporary shade structures for the students until the willow trees are mature enough to provide shade.

Once the trees are removed and a greenhouse is built, seventh graders will be able to plant more native plants in the garden. These plants will include native soap gourd, lemonade berry, and yerba mansa.

### **BENEFITS:**

The proposed Project will primarily reduce fire risk but also provide educational opportunities. Removing invasive non-native species will increase native habitat by promoting native species, such as black willow and other plants, in the native plant garden. The expanded native plant garden will enable the Museum to interpret ethnobotany for the public and the Kumeyaay community. Preserving cultural knowledge is paramount. The charter school's seventh graders study ethnobotany and maintain the garden and native seed library. The greenhouse and their work cultivating native species from seed will enhance the curriculum.

The willow trees will provide shade for the students on the playground and will be maintained by Barona staff and community members through annual trimmings. These trimmings are a part of their culture, where branches are used to thatch shade structures and dance houses at the annual gathering.

### **MEASURABLE RESULTS:**

- Removal of approximately 40 large mature eucalyptus trees across 1 acre
- Plant fifteen 15-gallon willow trees on the school campus
- Involve 25 students in 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade

### **DELIVERABLES:**

- Quarterly request for disbursements, progress reports with photo documentation of before and after implementation
- Final Report



## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

**Table 1. Estimated Budget and Anticipated Schedule**

Task #	Description	Amount	Schedule
1. Phase 1	Removing 7 old-growth eucalyptus from within the space known as the Native Plant Garden	\$10,500.00	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarters
2. Phase 2	Removing the eucalyptus from around the propane tanks, and all those located outside the schoolyard fence.	\$46,000.00	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarters
3. Phase 3	Removing the eucalyptus from the playground area of Barona Indian Charter School. Plant 15 15-gallon black willow trees ( <i>Salix gooddingii</i> ) at or near where the eucalyptus currently stand	\$30,000.00	5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> Quarters
4. Phase 4	Removing eucalyptus trees from Ball Park Creek, stage firewood at specified location	\$28,000.00	7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> Quarters
5. Phase 5	Procure and install greenhouse	\$14,516.00	Within 2-year grant period
<b>Phases 1-5</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$129,016.00</b>	<b>2024-2026</b>

**PROJECT FINANCING:** The total Project amount is \$129,016.00; the Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$129,016.00 for the implementation of the proposed Project. The anticipated source of Conservancy funds for this Project is the Budget Act of 2023.

**LEVERAGED FUNDING:** The Barona Band of Mission Indians' Tribal Government is committed to seeing this project through by dedicated staff time worth approximately \$15,000 to include support from the Barona Casino Landscaping Department, Barona Maintenance Crew and Barona Fire Department.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:** This Project would be undertaken consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation (Public Resources Code, §§ 32630-32659.9).

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):** The Project is consistent with Program 2 Support and Encourage Recreation and Education, Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, Program 4 Protect and Preserve Cultural and Historical Resources, and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach from the Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update 2024-2028.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE PURPOSES OF THE FUNDING SOURCE:** Budget Act 2023 is for wildfire and climate resilience, watershed protection, natural and cultural resource

## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

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protection, and community access projects. The funding is immediately available for shovel-ready projects.

### **CONSISTENCY WITH THE CONSERVANCY'S DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM:**

This Project achieves one or more of the purposes:

- Located in the San Diego River watershed;
- Reducing flood and fire risk;
- Removing invasive plant species from the watershed;
- Increasing native habitat and promoting the re-establishment of native species;
- Promoting cultural and tribal preservation, and historical interpretation of the San Diego River and its people;
- Protecting the natural and scenic beauty of the San Diego River watershed.

### **ALIGNMENT WITH PLANS AND PRIORITIES:**

#### **A. California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment**

Supports local adaptation strategy and resilience, fuels reduction to mitigate risk of fire and improve forest health, and protection of the state's most vulnerable populations and communities.

#### **B. California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan**

Supports restoration of natural fire regime and forest composition through a multitude of approaches including thinning, prescribed burns, invasive vegetation management, and shaded fuel breaks.

#### **C. Safeguarding California – California's Climate Adaptation Strategy**

Promotes management activities to reduce the risk of fire.

#### **D. San Diego River Conservancy's Climate Change Policy**

Management of invasive species, especially projects which prevent introduction or spread of invasive species, to reduce the impacts of this major stressor on biodiversity.

#### **E. California Water Supply Strategy**

Supports increased water conservation.

#### **F. California Natural Resources Agency's Initiatives.**

This project advances the following initiatives:

- Building Climate Resilience
- Protecting Biodiversity
- Strengthening Tribal Partnerships

### **PROJECT READINESS:**

This project was designed in consultation with San Diego River Conservancy, supported by costs estimates from discussions with arborists, and supported by Barona Cultural Bearers.

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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Barona Casino's landscape crew, Barona Maintenance Department, Barona Cultural Center and Museum and Barona Indian Charter School are committed to work with the BICS students to plant and maintain native pollinator species and plants that were and continue to be traditionally used.

Due to the large number of eucalyptus trees, removal has been divided into 4 phases and are planned around times of year that will minimally impact students on campus.

Deliverables are ambitious, driven by the need to remove eucalyptus trees to protect the health and safety of community members. Funding for the ongoing maintenance and operation will come from the Barona Band of Mission Indians' general fund.

### **PERMIT COMPLIANCE:**

No permits/CEQA are needed to implement this Project.

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: 9

SUBJECT: **CAMPO BAND OF MISSION INDIANS'  
PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO RALPH  
GOFF COMMUNITY PARK (*ACTION*)**

Campo Band of Mission Indians requests funding to install a new 2-unit prefabricated vault restroom with solar power, parking spaces, erosion control including site preparation, and one shade structure for the playground at Ralph Goff Community Park on the Campo Reservation. The restroom would provide two unisex toilets and would be constructed to provide accessibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Additionally, the Campo Reservation Fire Protection District has committed to providing and maintaining potable water to the facility, as required, and providing vegetation, grounds maintenance and minor repairs as required throughout the facility's service life. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$950,000 from the Budget Act of 2022.

**Available for Q and A:**  
**Scott Timbs, Fire Chief, Campo Reservation**

**Recommendation: Approval of Resolution 24-12**

**Resolution No: 24-12**

**RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF  
THE SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

**AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO GRANT \$950,000.00 FROM THE BUDGET  
ACT OF 2022 TO CAMPO BAND OF MISSION INDIANS TO INSTALL A RESTROOM  
FACILITY, SHADE STRUCTURE FOR THE PLAYGROUND, AND PROVIDE POTABLE  
WATER AT THE RALPH GOFF COMMUNITY PARK**

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WHEREAS, the mission of the San Diego River Conservancy is to further the goals of its enabling legislation by conserving and restoring the lands and waters of the San Diego River watershed and the Consortium Program area; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of California has provided funds under the Budget Act of 2022 to fund programs and activities that advance multibenefit and nature-based solutions including but not limited to climate resilience, natural and cultural resource protection, wildfire resilience, and community access projects; and

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of these grant programs and establishing necessary procedures and guidelines in accordance with statewide priorities and plans; and

WHEREAS, Campo Band of Mission Indians applied to the San Diego River Conservancy for funding to install a new 2-unit prefabricated Americans with Disabilities Act accessible vault restroom with potable water, solar power, fencing, parking, erosion control measures and one shade structure for the playground at Ralph Goff Community Park on the Campo Reservation (Project); and

WHEREAS, San Diego River Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$950,000.00 to implement the Project; and

WHEREAS, this Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, including with Program 2 Support and Encourage Recreation and Education, Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, Program 4 Protect and Preserve Cultural and Historical Resources, Program 5 Enhance Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach.

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy staff have reviewed the grant application, met with applicant and recommends the Project for approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board, based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, Sections 32630-32659.9).
2. The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of up to \$950,000.00 (Nine

Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents) to implement the Project.

3. The proposed Project is consistent with the purposes and intent of the Budget Act of 2022.
4. Appoints the Executive Officer, or her designee, as an agent to execute all agreements, grants, sub-contracts, and other documents needed for the completion of the Project.
5. Prior to the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review and approval of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget, and schedule.

Approved and adopted on March 28, 2024. I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution Number 24-12 was duly adopted by the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: \_\_\_\_\_

Nays: \_\_\_\_\_

Absent: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julia L. Richards  
Executive Officer

#### San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board Members Roll Call Vote

Name	Ayes	Noes	Abstained
CNRA: Andrea Scharffer			
DOF: Stephen Benson			
CADFW: Richard Burg			
Dr. Jennifer Campbell, SD Mayor Designee			
Joel Anderson, County Supervisor			
Raul Campillo			
Ben Clay, Chair			
Ruth Hayward, Vice Chair			
J. Cody Petterson			
John Elliott			
Elsa Saxod			
DPR Designee, Ray Lennox			
DPR Designee, Nicole Van Doren			
Dustin Trotter			
Phil Ortiz			

# **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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## **Staff Recommendation SDRC Resolution 24-12**

March 28, 2024

### **DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to provide up to \$950,000.00 to the Campo Band of Mission Indians to install a new self-contained vault restroom, parking area, erosion control measures and one shade structure for the playground at Ralph Goff Community Park on the Campo Reservation.

**LOCATION:** The Ralph Goff Community Park is located on the Campo Band of Mission Indians Reservation, off Church Road behind the Campo Education Center in the County of San Diego.

**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:** Staff recommends that the San Diego River Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, § 32630 et seq.):

The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of funding for projects focused on enhancing river parkways, protecting resources, restoring native habitat and fire protection and suppression, specifically as follows:

**To the Campo Band of Mission Indians, the sum of \$950,000.00 (Nine Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars and Zero cents) to use as follows:**

- To install a new 2-unit prefabricated Americans with Disabilities accessible vault restroom with potable water, solar power, fencing, parking, erosion control measures and one shade structure for the playground at Ralph Goff Community Park on the Campo Reservation (Project).

Before the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review approval of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget and schedule, and the names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed in carrying out the project.

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:  
Based on the staff report and attached exhibits, the San Diego River Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act, including Section 32649.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the Guidelines for the Conservancy's Directed Grant program.
3. The proposed Project is consistent with the Budget Act of 2022.

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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### **BACKGROUND:**

The Campo Indian Reservation was established on February 10, 1893, in southeastern San Diego County atop the Laguna Mountains. Through a series of land acquisitions, the reservation currently consists of 14,400 acres.

The Campo Band of Mission Indians (Campo) is organized under a non-Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) Constitution that established a legislative, executive, and judicial branch. The seven-member elected executive committee also serves as the overall economic development plan committee.

Historically, Campo set aside areas of land dedicated to recreation, education, and cultural continuity for the general well-being of all residents. For example, the community park dedicated to Ralph Goff, former long-time Tribal Chairman, is within Campo's designated recreational zone; however, no restroom facilities are on site.

### **PROJECT NEED:**

The Campo has determined, through discussions with General Council, that a secure restroom facility adjacent to the children's playground is a priority for Ralph Goff Community Park.

The members of Campo reside in a low-income underserved community with limited fiscal resources. The proposed Project will help provide additional amenities for children, families and Tribal Elders by providing a restroom facility, accessible potable water and a shade structure for the playground. A sustainable prefabricated restroom structure was determined to be the most environmentally safe option to fulfill the community's basic sanitation needs while recreating at Ralph Goff Community Park.

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The goal of the Project is to increase activity, community engagement and enjoyment by children and elders and contribute to the overall well-being for everyone. The proposed Project will provide a secure sanitation facility that encourages and caters to multi-generational and culturally inclusive environments for Tribal Families and visitors. The restroom facility would be located adjacent to a playground, ballfield, and half-court basketball within the Tribe's recreational zone.

Improvements to the Ralph Goff Community Park will enhance cultural dialogue, community pride, exposure to the natural environment through historical discussion, and family cohesiveness. The proposed Project includes a new prefabricated 2-unit unisex vault toilet with solar power, fencing, parking, and a shade structure.

The prefabricated self-contained restroom is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It is complete with a mechanical room, solar power battery systems, metal roof, split-faced blocks, stainless steel toilets, waterless urinals, touchless sinks, changing tables. The Project also includes procurement of a shade structure for the adjacent playground. Site preparation includes grading and construction of minor retaining walls to ensure site drainage and erosion control, concrete block construction, a parking area, and concrete flatwork congruent with ADA



## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

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standards.

Campo will be responsible for the operation, maintenance, and repairs to the proposed restroom facility (via a commercial contract), including timely pumping of the septic systems when required, overall routine maintenance of the restrooms and security throughout the facility's service life. In addition, the Campo Reservation Fire Protection District has committed to maintaining the facility's potable water supply. It is dedicated to providing vegetation, ground maintenance, and minor repairs as required throughout the facility's service life.

### **BENEFITS:**

Campo is committed to providing a safe and secure recreational environment for Tribal Members and visitors to the Reservation. One of the critical aspects of this goal is to encourage a multi-generational atmosphere where youths, parents, and Tribal Elders can bond, play, and discuss topics that are not typically covered in traditional learning environments. The proposed Project is designed to foster such dialogues and promote generational interaction while significantly improving the Ralph Goff Community Park and enhancing the surrounding public facilities.

The proposed Project will feature a new restroom that will provide a self-contained repository for human waste, ensuring that harmful pollutants do not enter the ecosystem. This will offer the public access to fundamental needs that improve sanitation practices. The park restrooms will also be unisex to reflect a commitment to inclusivity. Additionally, a new shade structure will be erected over the children's playground to mitigate the effects of the scorching summer temperatures which often exceed 100 degrees in Campo.

### **DELIVERABLES:**

- Quarterly request for disbursements, progress reports with photo documentation of before and after implementation
- Regular maintenance will include infrastructure maintenance and repair, site patrolling, observation, and reporting
- Final Report

**Table 1. Estimated Budget and Anticipated Schedule**

<b>Task #</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
1. Procure Prefabricated restroom	Prefabricated 2-unit unisex restroom system	\$300,000.00	Quarterly throughout 2-year grant period
2. Site design, preparation, and installation	Planning and design, grading, erosion control, retaining wall, fencing, parking area, concrete, shade structure and signage.	\$650,000.00	Quarterly throughout 2-year grant period
<b>Tasks 1-2</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$950,000.00</b>	<b>2024-2026</b>

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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**PROJECT FINANCING:** The total Project amount is \$1,002,000.00; the Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$950,000.00 for the implementation of the proposed Project. The anticipated source of Conservancy funds for this Project is the Budget Act of 2022.

**LEVERAGED FUNDING:** In-kind funds amount to \$50,000 and will help finance the long-term maintenance of this Project. Additionally, \$2,000 in matching funds will contribute towards Project planning and design. Campo personnel will research, analyze and procure all items proposed, including meetings with the selected vendor (pre-construction and final inspections) and training. In-kind contributions by the Campo Band would include site preparation, installing erosion control measures and fencing. Campo estimates a total of 80 man-hours to address these and other issues.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:** This Project would be undertaken consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation (Public Resources Code, §§ 32630-32659.9).

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):** The Project is consistent with Program 2 Support and Encourage Recreation and Education, Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, Program 4 Protect and Preserve Cultural and Historical Resources, Program 5 Enhance Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach from the Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update 2024-2028.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE PURPOSES OF THE FUNDING SOURCE:** Budget Act 2022 is for climate resilience, watershed protection, natural and cultural resource protection, and community access projects. The funding is immediately available for shovel-ready projects.

**CONSISTENCY WITH the CONSERVANCY's DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM:**

This Project achieves one or more of the purposes:

- Promoting cultural and tribal preservation, and historical interpretation of people;
- Providing public access for the enjoyment of parks, open space, trails, campgrounds and park facilities;
- Supporting disadvantaged and low-income communities

**ALIGNMENT WITH PLANS AND PRIORITIES**

**A. Outdoors for All: Providing equitable access to Parks and Nature**

1.1.2 Develop, improve, and maintain local and regional outdoor spaces, and prioritize park poor communities.

1.4. Support multi-benefit solutions for access and environmental priorities.

**B. California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment**

Supports local adaptation strategy and resilience, and protection of the state's most vulnerable populations and communities.

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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### **C. Climate Change Scoping Plan**

The playground and associated restroom improvements will make it easier to enjoy outdoor recreation and improve the health of the community.

### **D. San Diego River Conservancy's Climate Change Policy**

Develop parks and greenways in urban areas to mitigate climate change effects and promote public health and recreation; Include non-climate related co-benefits, such as public access, education, job creation, youth employment and job training, recreation, and public health benefits;

### **E. San Diego River Conservancy Tribal Consultation Policy**

Kumeyaay representatives led and provided for the development of the park design.

### **F. California Water Action Plan**

Make conservation of water a way of life, protect ecosystems, provide assistance to disadvantaged communities.

### **G. California Green Building Standards Code Title 24, Part 11**

Supports regulations for energy efficiency, water efficiency and conservation, material conservation and resource efficiency, environmental quality, and more.

### **H. California Natural Resources Agency's Initiatives.**

This project advances the following initiatives:

- Access for All
- Building Water Resilience
- Strengthening Tribal Partnerships
- Equity and Environmental Justice

### **I. Executive Orders B-52-18, N-05-19**

## **PROJECT READINESS**

The Tribal Executive Committee and communities have invested many hours into researching and discussing the proposed Project, which is now ready for implementation.

The Campo Band of Mission Indians conducted a survey amongst its members to identify key recreational improvements for their community. The survey revealed that the residents consider a new restroom facility and a shade structure within the Ralph Goff Community Park as crucial, particularly for children who use the playground.

The restroom facility's technology will utilize solar arrays with battery backup electrical systems, a self-contained septic system, and water supplies in an underground vault configuration.

## **PERMIT COMPLIANCE**

The applicant anticipates no CEQA/NEPA process as the proposed Project is located on the Campo Reservation.

State of California  
San Diego River Conservancy

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: **10**

SUBJECT: **SANTEE FIRE DEPARTMENT'S PROPOSAL FOR  
WILDFIRE SUPPLIES, EQUIPMENT AND  
TRAINING (*ACTION*)**

The Santee Fire Department is requesting funding to procure equipment for a fire engine, firefighter personal protective equipment, and delivery of wildland firefighting training for fire personnel from the Santee Fire Department. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$210,000 from the Budget Act of 2023.

**Available for Q and A:**

Justin Matsushita, Fire Chief, City of Santee

**Recommendation: Approval of Resolution 24-13**

**Resolution No: 24-13**

**RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF  
THE SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

**AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO GRANT \$210,000.00 FROM  
THE BUDGET ACT OF 2023 TO THE CITY OF SANTEE TO PROCURE ESSENTIAL  
EQUIPMENT TO OUTFIT A TYPE 6 FIRE ENGINE AND FIREFIGHTER PERSONAL  
PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) AND TO PROVIDE WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING TRAINING  
FOR ALL SANTEE FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE PERSONNEL**

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WHEREAS, the mission of the San Diego River Conservancy is to further the goals of its enabling legislation by conserving and restoring the lands and waters of the San Diego River watershed; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of California has provided funds under the Budget Act of 2023 to fund programs and activities that advance climate resilience, natural and cultural resource protection, wildfire resilience, and community access projects; and

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of this grant program, establishing necessary procedures and guidelines in accordance with statewide priorities and plans; and

WHEREAS, the City of Santee's Fire Department applied to the San Diego River Conservancy for a grant to procure essential equipment to outfit one Type 6 Fire Engine and firefighter PPE and also to provide wildland firefighting training for all fire personnel from the Santee's Fire Department, which is in the San Diego River watershed (Project); and

WHEREAS, San Diego River Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$210,000.00 to implement the Project; and

WHEREAS, this Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, with Program 2 Support and Encourage Recreation and Education Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources and Program 6, Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach.

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy staff have reviewed the grant application, met with applicant and recommends the Project for approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board, based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits:

1. The proposed Project is consistent with the purposes and intent of the Budget Act of 2023.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, Sections 32630-32659.9).

3. The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of up to \$210,000.00 (Two Hundred and Ten Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents) to implement the Project.
4. Appoints the Executive Officer, or her designee, as an agent to execute all agreements, grants, sub-contracts, and other documents needed for the completion of the Project.
5. Prior to the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget, and schedule.

Approved and adopted on March 28, 2024. I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution Number 24-13 was duly adopted by the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: \_\_\_\_\_

Nays: \_\_\_\_\_

Absent: \_\_\_\_\_

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Julia L. Richards  
Executive Officer

#### San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board Members Roll Call Vote

Name	Ayes	Noes	Abstained
CNRA: Andrea Scharffer			
DOF: Stephen Benson			
CADFW: Richard Burg			
Dr. Jennifer Campbell, SD Mayor Designee			
Joel Anderson, County Supervisor			
Raul Campillo			
Ben Clay, Chair			
Ruth Hayward, Vice Chair			
J. Cody Petterson			
John Elliott			
Elsa Saxod			
DPR Designee, Ray Lennox			
DPR Designee, Nicole Van Doren			
Dustin Trotter			
Phil Ortiz			

# **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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## **Staff Recommendation SDRC Resolution 24-13**

March 28, 2024

### **DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to provide up to \$210,000.00 to the City of Santee to outfit a Type 6 Fire Engine, procure firefighter personal protective equipment (PPE) and provide wildland firefighting training for all Santee Fire Department (Fire Department) fire personnel.

**LOCATION:** The Santee Fire Department covers an area of 16.5 square miles and is located at 10601 Magnolia Avenue, Santee, in the County of San Diego.

**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:** Staff recommends that the San Diego River Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, § 32630 et seq.):

The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of funding for projects focused on enhancing river parkways, protecting resources, restoring native habitat and fire protection and suppression, specifically as follows:

**To the City of Santee, the sum of \$210,000.00 (Two Hundred Thousand Dollars and Zero cents) to use as follows:**

- To procure essential equipment for a Type 6 Fire Engine and firefighter PPE and to provide wildland firefighting training for all fire personnel from the Santee Fire Department in the San Diego River watershed (Project).

Before the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget and schedule, and the names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed in carrying out the project.

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

Based on the staff report and attached exhibits, the San Diego River Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act, including Section 32649.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the Guidelines for the Conservancy's Directed Grant program.
3. The proposed Project is consistent with the Budget Act of 2023.

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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### **BACKGROUND:**

The City of Santee (Santee) has grown since its incorporation in 1980 to feature major commercial centers and a business community and various recreational opportunities. The Fire Department was established in 1956 prior to the City's incorporation as a County Fire Protection District. Today, the Department serves a population of 60,000 and covers an area of 16.5 square miles with an expansive Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) area.

The Fire Department offers fire suppression and prevention services such as plan reviews, business inspections, public education, vegetation management, fire investigation, community programs, water supply, and pre-fire planning. The Fire Department protects a diverse community consisting of large residential development areas, commercial/retail centers, office buildings, industrial parks, open space, and conserved lands. The Department protects and manages several thousand acres in the WUI.

The Fire Department's February 2024 Incident Report included 1,248 total incidents as follows:

Medical	1,013
Fire/Hazmat	35
Traffic/Rescue	73
Public service	90
Ring alarm	27

The Fire Department faces financial challenges. Personal protective equipment, training, and supplies for a Type 6 Engine are not fully budgeted in this year's fiscal cycle. The Department also anticipates hiring six firefighters to fill vacancies.

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The proposed project aims to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), firefighting equipment for a Type 6 Engine, and training for fire personnel on firefighting tactics and strategy. Santee plans to hire six new firefighters to fill current and future vacancies in 2024. Additionally, they will deploy a new Type 6 Engine that will significantly improve responses in Santee's Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) area.

By providing firefighting equipment to outfit the Type 6 Engine, PPE, and training for firefighters, the Fire Department will be able to enhance their response capabilities and improve personnel safety. The new hires will also receive regular training, which the Fire Department provides annually.

If approved, the funds will be utilized to acquire new equipment for a Type 6 Fire Engine including but not limited to fire hoses, nozzles, chainsaws, and other essential tools and equipment to aid the Fire Department in fire prevention and suppression activities.

The San Diego River area near Santee is challenging for the current fire apparatus to access due to low clearance and narrow trails. A fully manned and equipped Type 6 Fire Engine is a smaller vehicle that can reach areas larger fire engines are unable to access. The smaller fire engine will enhance response time and assist in extinguishing fires in the



## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

San Diego River region before they become established and cause significant harm to wildlife, native habitats, historical and archeological resources, human life, and property. By providing quick access to fires in the initial stages, the Type 6 Fire Engine can help reduce the fire size and the risk to homes and structures located in the WUI areas. Coupled with enhanced firefighter training, the Type 6 Fire Engine will help decrease the fire hazard for Santee residents who live and recreate along the San Diego River Trail and other outdoor facilities adjacent to the river.

### DELIVERABLES:

- Quarterly request for disbursements, progress reports with photo documentation of training activities and delivered equipment.
- Final Report
  - Number and size of fires recorded in the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)
  - Response time, fire extinguishment time and number of properties saved adjacent to fire locations.

**Table 1. Estimated Budget and Anticipated Schedule**

Task #	Description	Amount	Schedule
1. Tools and Equipment	Fire engine equipment including but not limited to fire hoses, nozzles, chainsaws, tools, and PPE Boots, gloves, helmets, shrouds	\$138,00.00	Quarterly throughout 2-year grant period
2. Training	Enhanced firefighter training for Fire Department staff and Type 6 operations	\$72,000.00	Within 2-year grant period
<b>Tasks 1-2</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$210,000.00</b>	<b>2024-2026</b>

**PROJECT FINANCING:** The total Project amount is \$260,000.00; the Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$210,000.00 for the implementation of the proposed Project. The anticipated source of Conservancy funds for this Project is the Budget Act of 2023.

**LEVERAGED FUNDING:** The City of Santee would provide approximately \$50,000 in matching funds through in-kind services (staff hours) needed for planning, procuring the Type 6 Fire Engine equipment, PPE, and training. Training would be a collaboration with other Central Zone fire agencies that would assist in keeping the overall training costs lower for each participating agency. Any Central Zone agency that participates in training would also provide in-kind services for staff hours. The City of Santee will provide necessary funds for training cadre, training supplies, training exercises and any unanticipated additional costs.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:** This Project would be undertaken consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation (Public Resources Code, §§ 32630-32659.9).

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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### **CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

The Project is consistent with Program 2 Support and Encourage Recreation and Education, Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update 2024-2028.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE PURPOSES OF THE FUNDING SOURCE:** Budget Act 2023 is for wildfire and climate resilience, watershed protection, natural and cultural resource protection, and community access projects. The funding is immediately available for shovel-ready projects.

### **CONSISTENCY WITH THE CONSERVANCY'S DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM:**

This Project achieves one or more of the purposes:

- Located in the San Diego River watershed;
- Protecting resources;
- Reducing fire risk;
- Protecting the natural and scenic beauty of the San Diego River watershed.

### **ALIGNMENT WITH PLANS AND PRIORITIES:**

#### **A. California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan**

Supports the goal of protecting wildfire-prone homes and neighborhoods.

#### **B. Fire Hazard Planning Technical Advisory**

Strengthening protection of communities and creating fire-adapted communities.

#### **C. California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment**

Supports local adaptation strategy and resilience, and protection of the state's most vulnerable populations and communities.

#### **D. San Diego River Conservancy's Climate Change Policy**

Recognize that wildland fires may be a major contributor to atmospheric carbon dioxide, and implement fire safety mitigation projects where appropriate; and leverage partnerships and resources with local communities, including government entities and non-profits;

#### **A. California Natural Resources Agency's Initiatives.**

This project advances the following initiatives:

- Climate Resilience
- Conserve Biodiversity

### **PROJECT READINESS:**

The proposed Project would start Spring 2024 and be completed Spring 2025. The Project would include procurement of firefighting equipment to outfit a Type 6 Engine, PPE and training fire personnel on wildland firefighting tactics and strategy. The Santee Fire Department coordinates hiring and training firefighters every year and has an established process that the Fire Department would utilize to complete this Project.

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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### **PERMIT COMPLIANCE:**

The applicant anticipates no CEQA review process as the proposed Project identifies procuring supplies and equipment and conducting training.

State of California  
San Diego River Conservancy

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: 11

SUBJECT: **FIRE RISK REDUCTION THROUGH VEGETATION  
MANAGEMENT IN THE SAN DIEGO RIVER  
WATERSHED (*ACTION*)**

Lakeside's River Park Conservancy seeks funding to carry out fuel reduction activities on approximately 150 acres of land in the Wildland Urban Interface area that runs along the San Diego River and its tributaries, including Los Coches Creek. These activities are aimed at preventing the outbreak of fires, which in turn will safeguard human life and property, and protect public lands. Additionally, these activities will also have a positive impact on local wildlife and their natural habitat. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$649,000 from the Budget Act of 2023.

**Available for Q and A:**

Julie Turko, Executive Director, Lakeside's River Park  
Conservancy

Recommendation: Approval of Resolution 24-14

**Resolution No: 24-14**

**RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF  
THE SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

**AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO GRANT \$649,000.00 FROM  
THE BUDGET ACT OF 2023 TO LAKESIDE'S RIVER PARK CONSERVANCY  
TO IMPLEMENT FUEL REDUCTION ACTIVITIES ON 150 ACRES  
WITHIN THE SAN DIEGO RIVER WATERSHED**

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WHEREAS, the mission of the San Diego River Conservancy is to further the goals of its enabling legislation by conserving and restoring the lands and waters of the San Diego River watershed; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of California has provided funds under the Budget Act of 2023 to fund programs and activities that advance climate resilience, natural and cultural resource protection, and wildfire resilience; and

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of this grant program, establishing necessary procedures and guidelines in accordance with statewide priorities and plans; and

WHEREAS, Lakeside's River Park Conservancy applied to the San Diego River Conservancy for a grant to reduce the risk and intensity of fire by implementing fuel reduction activities on 150 acres, secure and update right of entry agreements and, in various communities and neighborhoods of East County San Diego including but not limited to Lakeside (Project); and

WHEREAS, San Diego River Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$649,000.00 to implement the Project; and

WHEREAS, this Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, with Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, Program 5 Enhance Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance and Program 6, Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach.

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy staff have reviewed the grant application, met with applicant and recommends the Project for approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board, based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits:

1. The proposed Project is consistent with the purposes and intent of the Budget Act of 2023.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, Sections 32630-32659.9).
3. The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of up to \$649,000.00 (Six Hundred Forty-Nine Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents) to implement the Project.

4. Appoints the Executive Officer, or her designee, as an agent to execute all agreements, grants, sub-contracts, and other documents needed for the completion of the Project.
5. Prior to the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget, and schedule.

Approved and adopted on March 28, 2024. I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution Number 24-14 was duly adopted by the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: \_\_\_\_\_

Nays: \_\_\_\_\_

Absent: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julia L. Richards  
Executive Officer

#### San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board Members Roll Call Vote

Name	Ayes	Noes	Abstained
CNRA: Andrea Scharffer			
DOF: Stephen Benson			
CADFW: Richard Burg			
Dr. Jennifer Campbell, SD Mayor Designee			
Joel Anderson, County Supervisor			
Raul Campillo			
Ben Clay, Chair			
Ruth Hayward, Vice Chair			
J. Cody Petterson			
John Elliott			
Elsa Saxod			
DPR Designee, Ray Lennox			
DPR Designee, Nicole Van Doren			
Dustin Trotter			
Phil Ortiz			

# **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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## **Staff Recommendation SDRC Resolution 24-14**

March 28, 2024

### **DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to provide up to \$649,000.00 to Lakeside's River Park Conservancy (LRPC) to reduce fuel loads by removing invasive non-native vegetation across 150 acres in several communities in eastern San Diego County.

**LOCATION:** Lakeside's River Park Conservancy is located at 12108 Industry Road in Lakeside, California. Targeted work areas include public and private properties in Lakeside, focusing on Eucalyptus Hills, Blossom Valley, El Monte Valley, Lakeview and Flinn Springs, and in other areas in the County of San Diego.

**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:** Staff recommends that the San Diego River Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, § 32630 et seq.):

The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of funding for projects focused on enhancing river parkways, protecting resources, restoring native habitat and fire protection and suppression, specifically as follows:

**To Lakeside's River Park Conservancy, the sum of \$649,000.00 (Six Hundred Forty-Nine Thousand Dollars and Zero cents) to use as follows:**

- To remove flammable fuel loads including invasive non-native vegetation across 150 acres in Lakeside and in other communities located in East County San Diego within the San Diego River watershed (Project).

Before the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget and schedule, and the names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed in carrying out the Project.

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

Based on the staff report and attached exhibits, the San Diego River Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act, including Section 32649.
2. The proposed Project is consistent with the Guidelines for the Conservancy's Directed Grant program.
3. The proposed Project is consistent with the Budget Act of 2023.

# **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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## **BACKGROUND:**

Lakeside's River Park Conservancy (LRPC) is a non-profit organization that aims to preserve the ecological integrity of the San Diego River while providing recreational, educational, and cultural opportunities for the community. The focus of this initiative is to protect water quality, native wildlife habitat, and human property from the threats of wildfire and habitat degradation.

This Project is specifically designed to assist those living in the eastern region of San Diego County and to public agencies in the San Diego River watershed. Its primary objectives are to reduce the risks and intensity of wildfires, safeguard the natural environment, and preserve life, health, and property. Additionally, the Project will build on LRPC's previous efforts in the region by implementing measures to reduce flammable fuel on parcels in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) interface areas.

## **PROJECT NEED:**

The frequency and severity of wildfires in the State are increasing due to extreme weather events and rising temperatures. To reduce the risk, the State has allocated significant resources. In East San Diego County's unincorporated areas, specifically Lakeside, numerous ephemeral tributaries are overgrown with invasive vegetation such as Arundo, pepper trees, mustard, castor bean, pampas grass, tamarisk, and palm trees. The Project aims to work with public and private property owners to remove invasive non-native plants in the tributaries and the main channel of the San Diego River.

The Project will start with an initial assessment of the targeted areas to determine the extent of vegetation growth. LRPC's field crew has observed growth patterns in the listed communities, and the field superintendent has identified Eucalyptus Hills as a priority for vegetation management. The crew will also look for dead and dying trees, dense, dry, and brushy areas, highly flammable plant species, and overgrown vegetation near homes and other habitable structures. Additionally, residents of vulnerable areas such as mountaintops or valleys will be contacted.

## **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

This proposed Project aims to reduce fire hazards, enhance emergency access, and provide defensible space for property owners by removing and controlling vegetation through various activities. LRPC has already conducted invasive non-native plant removal and secured right of entry (ROE) agreements with private property owners along the San Diego River and its tributaries, including Los Coches Creek. For this project, LRPC proposes to evaluate properties for additional fire risk reduction services, secure ROE and implement fuel reduction activities.

All activities will occur within the San Diego River watershed, starting with maintenance in El Monte Valley west of El Capitan Reservoir. Fire risk reduction activities would include removing invasive non-native species, limbing up trees by removing low branches, creating fire breaks, removing dead vegetation and debris, chipping material in place to mulch and capture moisture, and ensuring access to evacuation routes for property owners and emergency service vehicles.



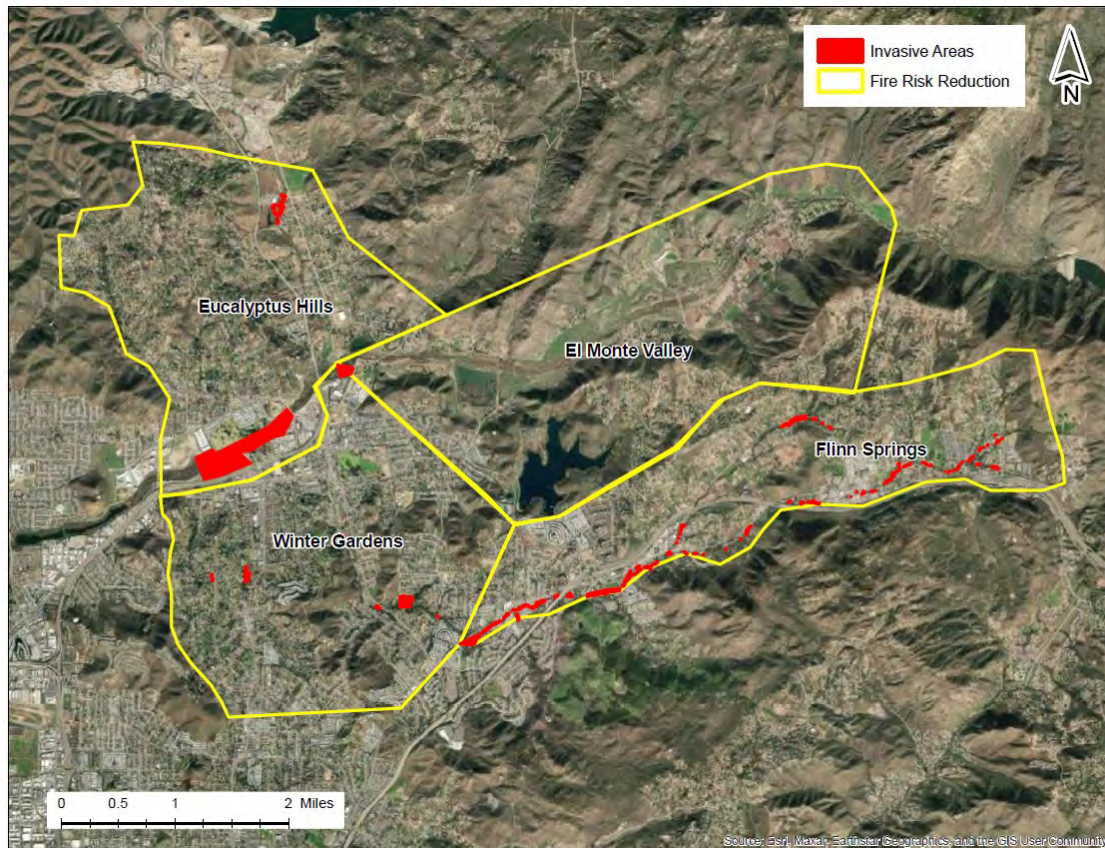
## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

Through these risk reduction methods, each property's defensible space will be increased, and wildfire risk for East County residents in the San Diego River watershed will be mitigated. The vegetation management services will include educating property owners, increasing public awareness regarding native plant choices, maintenance techniques, referral to ongoing resources, and best practices in reducing fire risk.

LRPC's services will particularly benefit private property owners who are vulnerable and for whom this work would be a severe financial or physical burden. LRPC will work with disadvantaged communities to clean up properties and mitigate the risk of fire to the broader community. Private property owners will be responsible for long-term maintenance.

Wildfire risk reduction also benefits native habitat areas. Wildfires degrade water quality, deplete native vegetation, and cause erosion in areas where vegetation has burned. Regardless of where fires start, human and environmental factors influence their intensity and movement across the landscape and can put entire East San Diego County communities at risk.

**Map 1. Project Areas**



### DELIVERABLES:

- Monthly request for disbursements, progress reports with photo documentation of before, during and after implementation.

## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

- MS Excel spreadsheet listing Right-of-Entry agreements (ROEs). Spreadsheet must include physical address, APN, landowner name and ROE start and end dates.
- Amount of fuel loads removed (weight and/or volume of biomass).
- Provide shape files for biomass work sites, follow up vegetation maintenance and herbicide application.
- Final Report.

**Table 1. Estimated Budget and Anticipated Schedule**

Task #	Description	Amount	Schedule
1. Project Administration	Project management, invoices and reports, procurement	\$159,000.00	Monthly billing and progress reports
2. Implementation	Staff and temporary labor, procurement of equipment, supplies, chainsaws, hand tools, dumpster and portable restroom rentals, fuel, and herbicide	\$490,000.00	Throughout 2-year grant period
<b>Tasks 1-2</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$649,000.00</b>	<b>2024-2026</b>

**PROJECT FINANCING:** The total Project amount is \$649,000.00; the Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$649,000.00 for the implementation of the proposed Project. The anticipated source of Conservancy funds for this Project is the Budget Act of 2023.

**LEVERAGED FUNDING:** While there is no leveraged funding, LRPC has volunteers ready to assist with the ongoing and long-term maintenance and implementation of this Project.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:** This Project would be undertaken consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation (Public Resources Code, §§ 32630-32659.9).

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):** The Project is consistent with Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, Program 5 Enhance Water Quality and Flood Conveyance and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update 2024-2028.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE PURPOSES OF THE FUNDING SOURCE:** Budget Act 2023 is for wildfire and climate resilience, watershed protection, natural and cultural resource protection, and community access projects. The funding is immediately available for shovel-ready projects.

**CONSISTENCY WITH the CONSERVANCY's DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM:**  
This Project achieves one or more of the purposes:

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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- Located in the San Diego River watershed
- Protecting Resources
- Improving Water Quality
- Removing invasive plant species from the watershed
- Protecting the natural and scenic beauty of the San Diego River watershed.

### **ALIGNMENT WITH PLANS AND PRIORITIES**

#### **A. California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment**

Supports local adaptation strategy and resilience, and protection of the state's most vulnerable populations and communities.

#### **B. San Diego River Conservancy's Climate Change Policy**

Develop parks and greenways in urban areas to mitigate climate change effects and promote public health and recreation; Include non-climate related co-benefits, such as public access, education, job creation, youth employment and job training, recreation, and public health benefits;

#### **C. 2018 Strategic Fire Plan for California**

Goal 1: Identify and evaluate wildland fire hazards and recognize life, property and natural resource assets at risk, including watershed, habitat, social and other values of functioning ecosystems.

#### **D. Safeguarding California – California's Climate Adaption Strategy**

Promotes reducing risks of wildfire through increased use of fuel breaks and fuels reduction.

#### **E. California's 2030 Natural and Working Lands Climate Change Implementation Plan**

Supports forest fuels reduction, understory clearing, restoration and activities to improve forest health.

#### **F. San Diego River Conservancy's Climate Change Policy**

Supports management of Invasive Species to reduce the impacts on biodiversity.

#### **G. California Natural Resources Agency's Initiatives.**

This project advances the following initiatives:

- Building Climate Resilience
- Expanding Nature-Based Solutions
- Measuring Progress: Monitoring and Stewardship Unit
- Supporting Health Rivers and Landscapes

### **PROJECT READINESS**

This proposed Project would be a continuation of existing work supported by the San Diego River Conservancy. Preliminary assessments are underway in the normal course of LRPC's invasive removal projects. Taking advantage of this synergy between projects taps into existing knowledge and represents an efficient use of funds.

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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### **PERMIT COMPLIANCE**

LRPC will be working under the suite of permits held by the San Diego River Conservancy issued by the State Water Resources Control Board, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Access to private properties will be through ROE Agreements authorized by property owners before commencing work.

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: 12

SUBJECT: **CITY OF EL CAJON'S PROPOSAL FOR  
IMPROVEMENTS FOR BROADWAY CREEK –  
PHASE B (*ACTION*)**

El Cajon requests funding to implement Phase B of the Broadway Creek Restoration Project to restore the stream's functionality and address erosion in its 1,771 linear foot reach. The proposed Phase B will restore approximately 400 feet of earthen channel that runs through a County Flood Control easement between residential developments. The creek restoration process will remove non-native plant material, trash and debris, and rock gabions. The goal is to stabilize the creek's contours and prevent flooding and future erosion, mainly by installing an engineered solution. This stabilization will help increase the capacity of Broadway Creek to handle storms and reduce the frequency of flooding beyond the creek. Conservancy staff recommends funding up to the amount of \$2,000,000 from the Budget Act of 2022.

**Available for Q and A:**

Olga Reyes, P.E., Principal Civil Engineer, Public Works, City of El Cajon

Recommendation: Approval of Resolution 24-15

**Resolution No: 24-15**

**RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF  
THE SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

**AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO GRANT UP TO \$2,000,000  
FROM THE BUDGET ACT OF 2022 TO THE CITY OF EL CAJON  
FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO BROADWAY CREEK (PHASE B), A  
TRIBUTARY TO THE SAN DIEGO RIVER**

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WHEREAS, the mission of the San Diego River Conservancy is to further the goals of its enabling legislation by conserving and restoring the lands and waters of the San Diego River watershed; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of California has provided funds under the Budget Act of 2022 to wildfire and climate resilience, watershed protection, natural and cultural resource protection, and community access projects; and

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of this grant program, establishing necessary procedures and guidelines in accordance with statewide priorities and plans; and

WHEREAS, the City of El Cajon applied to the San Diego River Conservancy for funding to implement Phase B of its Broadway Creek Restoration Project, which includes restoring approximately 400 feet of earthen channel to stabilize the creek's contours and prevent flooding and erosion; and

WHEREAS, San Diego River Conservancy staff is recommending \$2,000,000 to implement the Project which is located in the City of El Cajon's disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged areas; and

WHEREAS, this Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, Program 5 Enhance Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance, and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach, and

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy staff have reviewed the grant application, met with applicant and recommends the Project for approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board, based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits:

1. The proposed Project is consistent with the purposes and intent of the Budget Act of 2022.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, Sections 32630-32659.9).
3. The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of up to \$2,000,000 (Two Million Dollars) for the Project.

4. Appoints the Executive Officer, or her designee, as an agent to execute all agreements, grants, sub-contracts, and other documents needed for the completion of the Project.
5. Prior to the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget, and schedule.

Approved and adopted on March 28, 2024. I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution Number 24-15 was duly adopted by the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: \_\_\_\_\_

Nays: \_\_\_\_\_

Absent: \_\_\_\_\_

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Julia L. Richards  
Executive Officer

San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board Members Roll Call Vote

Name	Ayes	Noes	Abstained
CNRA: Andrea Scharffer			
DOF: Sally Lukenbill			
CADFW: Richard Burg			
Dr. Jennifer Campbell, SD Mayor Designee			
Joel Anderson, County Supervisor			
Raul Campillo			
Ben Clay, Chair			
Ruth Hayward, Vice Chair			
J. Cody Petterson			
John Elliott			
Elsa Saxod			
DPR Designee, Ray Lennox			
DPR Designee, Gina Moran			
Phil Ortiz			
Dustin Trotter			

# **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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## **Staff Recommendation SDRC Resolution 24-15**

March 28, 2024

### **DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to provide up to \$2,000,000.00 to the City of El Cajon for Phase B of its Broadway Creek Restoration Project, which includes restoring and engineering approximately 400 feet of earthen channel that runs through a County flood control easement to allow for increased flood capacity and help ensure flood protection for nearby properties in El Cajon.

**LOCATION:** This section of Broadway Creek is located between Hart Drive to the north and Ballantyne Road to the east. It flows through a highly urbanized, disadvantaged community (DAC) identified by [California Department of Water Resources](#) and drains to Forester Creek, a tributary to the San Diego River in San Diego County.

**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:** Staff recommends that the San Diego River Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, § 32630 et seq.):

The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of funding for projects focused on protecting resources, restoring native habitat, improving water quality, water supply, and watershed protection, specifically as follows:

**To the City of El Cajon, the sum of \$2,000,000.00 (Two Million Dollars and Zero cents) to use as follows:**

- To restore and stabilize 400 linear feet for phase Ba section of Broadway Creek to reduce flooding, property damage, control erosion by installation of native vegetation, naturally filter storm water run-off and provide educational and interpretative opportunities (Project).

Before the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget and schedule, and the names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed in carrying out the project.

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

Based on the staff report and attached exhibits, the San Diego River Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act, including Section 32649.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the Guidelines for the Conservancy's



## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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Directed Grant program.

3. The proposed Project is consistent with the Budget Act of 2022.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Broadway Creek is a waterway located in the City of El Cajon that flows from east to west along Broadway before turning north near Ballantyne Street and flowing into Forester Creek near Gillespie Field. Some of it is concrete-lined, and some has natural bottom. Eventually, water in the channel makes its way to the San Diego River before entering the Pacific Ocean.

The Storm Water Protection Program, regulated by the Storm Water Permit, is part of a statewide effort to protect creeks, lagoons, the ocean, and other natural water bodies from polluted urban runoff. This Program supports the reduction of paved areas to allow for natural drainage of urban runoff into the City's storm drain system. It was issued by the State Water Resources Control Board in 2013.

In 2019, the City of El Cajon received a \$1 million grant from the Conservancy under Proposition 1 and Proposition 68 grant programs to restore a section of Broadway Creek (Phase A). This multi-phase project for Broadway Creek is a collaboration between the City of El Cajon and the County of San Diego, which share property boundaries and jurisdiction, to improve flood conveyance within a highly dense urban area of the City.

### **PROJECT NEED:**

Prior to 2019, Broadway Creek at the Hunter's Run Apartments between Ballantyne Street on the West, Broadway to the South, and North Mollison Avenue to the east experienced flooding, erosion, trash, and debris accumulation affecting assessor's parcel numbers (APNs) 48309028, 48310313, 48310328, 48310329 and 48309031. Broadway Creek is in poor condition due to heavy erosion, overgrowth of invasive plants, trash, and other pollution. This degraded habitat has poor water quality, putting people and property at increased flood risk. Therefore, restoration of the creek will help reduce flooding and pollution and improve native habitat for plants and animals along the creek.

Broadway Creek Phase B is experiencing ponding at various locations along its course. Rock gabions were installed to protect the slopes adjoining properties and prevent damage. Phase B runs through double box culverts at Hart Drive and Ballantyne Street. The creek accumulates sediment and debris, and the ponding confirms that the creek needs to be recontoured to manage storm events better. In addition, debris collected at the upstream end shows heavy flooding with high velocities.

To minimize creek overtopping, gravel bags have been placed at the channel's sharp curve from Ballantyne Street toward Hart Drive. Previously, storm events have caused water to overtop the channel and affect the adjoining properties.

There is a continued need to expand the restoration of the entire Broadway Creek to include downstream segments to increase flood capacity and mitigate impacts on adjacent residential housing.

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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This proposed project will improve water quality by restoring floodplains, stabilizing channel banks, and capturing stormwater to reduce water pollution. It will also implement the actions of the California Water Action Plan by increasing flood protection, expanding water storage capacity, and improving groundwater management. The project will reinforce and reconfigure creek banks to prevent flood and property damage and divert stormwater into the channel rather than flooding adjacent streets and neighborhoods.

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The entire Project aims to rehabilitate stream functions and address erosion within a 1,771-linear-foot stretch of Broadway Creek. It is a dual-phase approach, and the scope of this second phase (Phase B) focuses on approximately 400 feet of earthen channel that runs through a County Flood Control easement between residential developments. To restore the creek, the project involves removing trash and debris, installing rock gabions, removing exotic and invasive non-native plants, and restoring the creek's embankment contours.

To stabilize the channel banks, articulated concrete blocks (ACBs) and/or vertical walls will be installed to prevent future erosion. This will improve the creek's flood capacity to 100 units volume per time (flow or Q) from the City of El Cajon Master Plan and help ensure flood protection for nearby properties, including residences that abut the creek edge.

The proposed project will require clearing and grubbing earthwork, revegetation and reforestation, installation of Turf Reinforcing Mats and riprap for erosion control, and construction of a box culvert and headwalls to improve the channel's capacity and reduce long-term maintenance by the City of El Cajon in collaboration with the County of San Diego.

The project's benefits include increasing flood protection, expanding water storage capacity, and improving groundwater management. The proposed project will also reinforce and reconfigure the creek banks to prevent flood and property damage and divert stormwater into the channel rather than flooding the adjacent streets.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**

1. Better protect life and property from flooding and its impacts.
2. Increase recreational value and beautification of the watershed.
3. Decrease pollution and contamination of the watershed.
4. Provide urban reforestation and improve air quality by carbon sequestration.
5. Increase the capacity of Broadway Creek to handle storms and reduce the frequency of flooding beyond the extent of the creek.
6. Stabilize the slopes of Broadway Creek and create a widened path for storm water by maximizing the use of the right-of-way, re-grading the channel, and using slope stabilization material.
7. Revegetate the channel with a mixture of California native plant species.
8. Plant new trees to provide shading and carbon sequestration.
9. Create an education opportunity on Broadway Creek with educational signage, including facts about the local habitat and wildlife and the interrelation

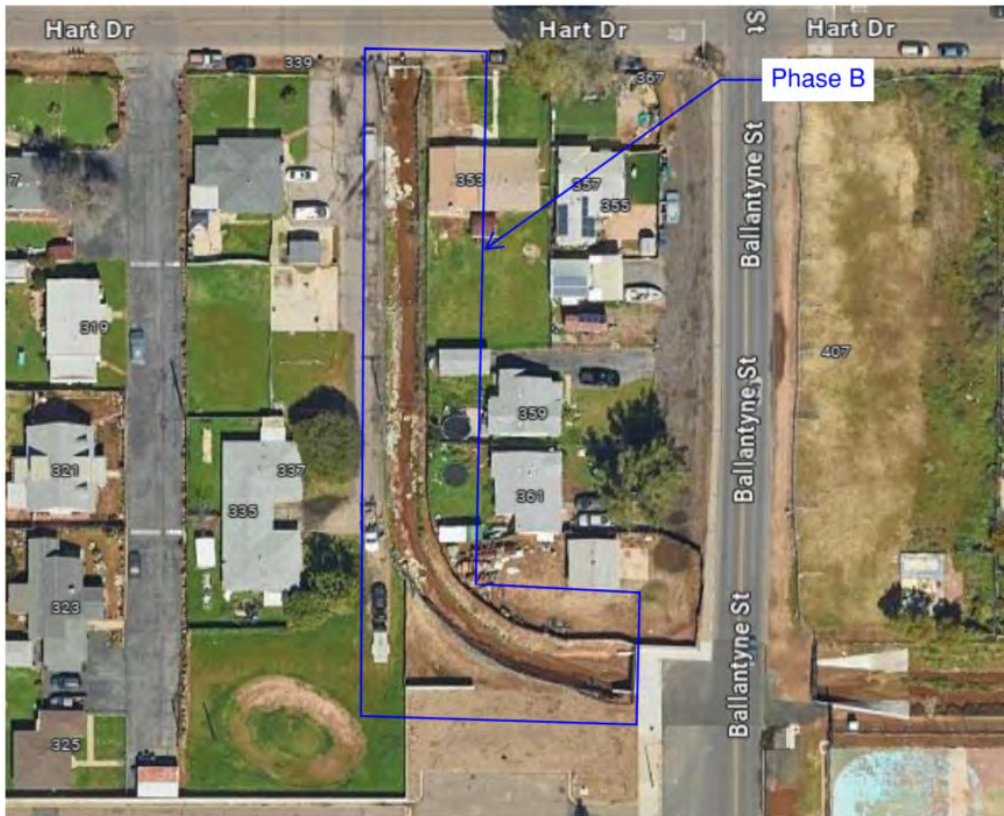
## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

between water quality, surface water, and groundwater.



The City of El Cajon completed construction of Phase A. Phase B (the proposed Project) will be a collaboration between the City of El Cajon and the County of San Diego.

## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY



### DELIVERABLES:

- Quarterly request for disbursements, progress reports with photo documentation of before, during, and after implementation
- Copy of environmental documentation and all permits
- Final Report

**Table 1. Estimated Budget and Anticipated Schedule**

Task #	Description	Amount	Schedule
1. Project Management & Permitting	Technical services as needed, supervise and review work performed, manage contractor, document control, CEQA compliance, coordination with regulatory agencies.	\$400,000.00	Throughout 2-year grant period
2. Construction	Clearing and grubbing, earthwork, revegetation, installation erosion control measures, construction of one box culvert and head walls	\$1,500,000.00	Quarterly
3. Monitoring	Monitor and measure water and air quality improvements	\$100,000.00	Quarterly
<b>Tasks 1-4</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,000,000.00</b>	<b>2024-2026</b>

**PROJECT FINANCING:** The total Project amount is \$2,200,000.00; the Conservancy



## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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staff recommends funding in the amount of \$2,000,000.00 for the implementation of the proposed Project. The anticipated source of Conservancy funds for this Project is the Budget Act of 2022.

**LEVERAGED FUNDING:** The City of El Cajon engineering staff will review and manage the Project, with in-kind contributions estimated at \$200,000.00 from the Wastewater Enterprise Fund.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:** This Project would be undertaken consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation (Public Resources Code, §§ 32630-32659.9).

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):** The Project is consistent with Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, Program 5 Enhance Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance, and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach from the Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update 2024-2028.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE PURPOSES OF THE FUNDING SOURCE:** Budget Act 2022 is for wildfire and climate resilience, watershed protection, natural and cultural resource protection, and community access projects. The funding is immediately available for shovel-ready projects.

**CONSISTENCY WITH the CONSERVANCY's DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM:**

This Project achieves one or more of the purposes:

- Located in the San Diego River watershed;
- Protecting resources;
- Reducing flood and fire risk;
- Improving water quality;
- Protecting and enhancing wildlife habitats;
- Removing invasive plant species from the watershed;
- Increasing native habitat and promoting the re-establishment of native species;
- Protecting the natural and scenic beauty of the San Diego River watershed.

**ALIGNMENT WITH PLANS AND PRIORITIES:**

**A. California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment**

Supports local adaptation strategy and resilience, and protection of the state's most vulnerable populations and communities.

**B. California Natural Resources Agency's Initiatives**

This project advances the following initiatives:

- Building Climate & Water Resilience
- Protecting Biodiversity
- Expanding Nature-Based Solutions
- Supporting Health Rivers and Landscapes

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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### **C. California Water Action Plan**

By increasing flood protection, expanding water storage capacity, and improving groundwater management

### **D. San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (2019 Update)**

Goal 2 – Protect and enhance water quality

Goal 3 – Protect and enhance our watershed and natural resources

Goal 4 – Enhance resiliency to climate change for local water resources

Goal 5 – Promote and support sustainable integrated water resources management.

### **E. Safeguarding California Plan – California’s Climate Adaptation Strategy**

Principle 5 – Prioritize natural infrastructure solutions that build climate preparedness, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and produce other multiple benefits.

### **F. San Diego River Conservancy’s Climate Change Policy**

Develop parks and greenways in urban areas to mitigate climate change effects and promote public health and recreation; Include non-climate related co-benefits, such as public access, education, job creation, youth employment and job training, recreation, and public health benefits;

### **G. City of El Cajon Jurisdictional Runoff Management Program**

Stream Rehabilitation Program – projects may be utilized to address storm water runoff flows rehabilitate channelized or hydro-modified streams, restore wetland and riparian habitat, restore watershed functions, and/ or restore beneficial uses of receiving waters.

### **H. Floodplain Management Plan County of San Diego, California (2007)**

Goal 9 – Reduce the possibility of damage and losses to existing assets, including people, critical facilities/ infrastructure, and public facilities due to floods.

### **I. Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan – City of El Cajon**

Goal 5 – Reduce the possibility of damage and losses to existing assets, particularly people, critical facilities/ infrastructure, and City-owned facilities, due to floods.

Actions 5.B.2 & 3 – Continue to identify and prioritize flood control projects and continue to pursue available grant funds for flood control projects.

### **BENEFITS:**

This project offers the opportunity to educate the local public in disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities about Broadway Creek through educational signage, including facts about native local habitat and wildlife and the interrelation between water quality, surface water and groundwater.

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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Implementing this Project will better protect life and property from flooding and its impacts on nearby residences. Flood conveyance and capacity will also be increased to handle storm events, and the frequency of flooding will be reduced beyond the extent of the creek. A widened path for stormwater will be maximized using the right of way.

Lastly, native habitat is anticipated to increase shade cover and carbon storage through sequestration. Through riparian restoration, recreational values and beautification of the watershed will increase, pollution will decrease, and contamination of the watershed is expected to decrease because of bank stabilization to reduce erosion, increased infiltration, and enhanced native riparian habitat.

### **PROJECT READINESS:**

The City of El Cajon designed and constructed Phase A, while Phase B will be completed as a collaboration between the City of El Cajon and the County of San Diego. The Environmental review for the project was completed for the entirety of the project and a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was filed on March 2021, serving as the appropriate level of CEQA documentation.

El Cajon will provide copies of the Environmental documents and permits as deliverables for the project.

### **PERMIT COMPLIANCE:**

In May 2021, a Notice of Determination was filed with the County Clerk, indicating that the Project complies with Section 21108 of the Public Resources Code and that it has no significant impact on the environment. Subsequently, a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was approved under CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act). The MND documentation identified the creek as a non-wetland Water of the United States and a Wetland Water of the State. Any dredging or filling in Waters of the U.S. requires a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers according to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, as well as a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Regional Water Quality Control Board. The proposed channel improvement work also falls under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, which oversees the alteration of the streambed, disturbance, and mitigation of wetland and riparian habitat. The Environmental documents and permits will be provided by El Cajon as deliverables for the Project.

The City of El Cajon's team will coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to obtain the necessary permits for the Project, which include the California Fish and Game Code, Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement; Clean Water Act, Section 401, Water Quality Certification; and Clean Water Action Section 404, Nationwide Permit.

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: 13

SUBJECT: **SAN DIEGO REGIONAL FIRE FOUNDATION 2024  
PROPOSAL FOR FIRE REDUCTION AND  
SUPPRESSION ACTIVITIES IN SAN DIEGO  
RIVER WATERSHED (*ACTION*)**

The San Diego Regional Fire Foundation in partnership with the Wynola Fire Safe Council and Santee Fire Department propose to purchase a fire apparatus and conduct fuel reduction activities. They request partial funding to procure a Type 3 Brush Fire Engine, which would be utilized by the Santee Fire Department for fire suppression activities. In partnership with the Wynola Estates Fire Safe Council, they would also reduce flammable fuels loads on approximately 40 acres in Julian that are surrounded by the Cleveland National Forest, open space and forested lands. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$650,000 from the Budget Act of 2023.

**Available for Q and A:**

**Joan Jones, Executive Director, San Diego Regional Fire  
Foundation**

**Recommendation: Approval of Resolution 24-16**



**Resolution No: 24-16**

**RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF  
THE SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

**AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO GRANT \$650,000 FROM  
THE BUDGET ACT OF 2023 TO PARTIALLY FUND PROCUREMENT OF  
ONE FIRE ENGINE, AND REDUCE FLAMMABLE FUEL LOADS ON 40 ACRES IN  
JULIAN IN THE UPPER WATERSHED OF THE SAN DIEGO RIVER**

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WHEREAS, the mission of the San Diego River Conservancy is to further the goals of its enabling legislation by conserving and restoring the lands and waters of the San Diego River watershed; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of California has provided funds under the Budget Act of 2023 to fund programs and activities that advance climate, wildfire and forest resilience projects; and

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of this grant program, establishing necessary procedures and guidelines in accordance with statewide priorities and plans; and

WHEREAS, San Diego Regional Fire Foundation applied to the San Diego River Conservancy for a grant requesting funding for the following:

- Partial funding for one Type 3 Brush Fire Engine for the City of Santee and to implement fuel reduction activities on 40 acres in Wynola Estates which is located in the upper watershed of the San Diego River (the Project); and

WHEREAS, San Diego River Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$650,000 to implement the Project; and

WHEREAS, this Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach.

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy staff have reviewed the grant application, met with the applicant and recommends the Project for approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board, based on the accompanying staff report:

1. The proposed Project is consistent with the purposes and intent of the Budget Act of 2023.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, Sections 32630-32659.9).
3. The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of up to \$650,000.00 (Six Hundred Fifty Thousand and 00/100 dollars) to implement the Project.

4. Appoints the Executive Officer, or her designee, as an agent to execute all agreements, grants, sub-contracts, and other documents needed for the completion of the Project.
5. Prior to the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review and approval of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget, and schedule.

Approved and adopted on March 28, 2024. I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution Number 24-16 was duly adopted by the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: \_\_\_\_\_

Nays: \_\_\_\_\_

Absent: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julia L. Richards  
Executive Officer

San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board Members Roll Call Vote

Name	Ayes	Noes	Abstained
CNRA: Andrea Scharffer			
DOF: Stephen Benson			
CADFW: Richard Burg			
Dr. Jennifer Campbell, SD Mayor Designee			
Joel Anderson, County Supervisor			
Raul Campillo			
Ben Clay, Chair			
Ruth Hayward, Vice Chair			
J. Cody Petterson			
John Elliott			
Elsa Saxod			
DPR Designee, Ray Lennox			
DPR Designee, Nicole Van Doren			
Dustin Trotter			
Phil Ortiz			

# **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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## **Staff Recommendation SDRC Resolution 24-16**

March 28, 2024

### **DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to provide up to \$650,000.00 to the San Diego Regional Fire Foundation (SDRFF) to partially fund the procurement of a Type 3 Brush Fire Engine, which will be utilized by the Santee Fire Department (SFD). In addition, the SDRFF will partner with the Wynola Estates Fire Safe Council (WEFSC) to conduct critical fuels mitigation work on approximately 40 acres in the headwaters of the San Diego River.

**LOCATION:** Wynola Estates is a residential neighborhood located near Julian at the headwaters of the San Diego River in the County of San Diego. The targeted neighborhood is surrounded by the Cleveland National Forest, Santa Ysabel's East County Preserve (San Diego County Parks' open space), and other forested areas. SFD's Fire Station 5 is located at 9130 Carlton Oaks Drive adjacent to Sycamore Creek, the San Diego River Corridor, and Santee Lakes Recreation Preserve.

**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:** Staff recommends that the San Diego River Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, § 32630 et seq.):

The San Diego River Conservancy (Conservancy) hereby authorizes the disbursement of funding for projects focused on enhancing river parkways, protecting resources, restoring native habitat and fire protection and suppression, specifically as follows:

**To the San Diego Regional Fire Foundation, the sum of \$650,000.00 (Six Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars) to use as follows:**

- To procure one (1) Type 3 Brush Fire Engine for use by the Santee Fire Department and to implement vegetation treatments on approximately 40 acres through fuel reduction activities targeting lots and open space in Wynola Estates (Project).

The grantee shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget and schedule. The names and qualifications of any contractors retained in carrying out the project will be provided.

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

Based on the staff report and attached exhibits, the San Diego River Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act, including Section 32649.

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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2. The proposed project is consistent with the Guidelines for the Conservancy's Directed Grant program.
3. The proposed Project is consistent with the Budget Act of 2023.

### **BACKGROUND:**

SDRFF is a non-profit organization that aims to strengthen the fire and emergency services system in San Diego County and protect lives, property, and the environment. For over 30 years, it has provided resources through its grant programs to over 40 fire departments, including about 250 fire stations and 40 fire safe councils. Both the SFD and WEFSC applied to SDRFF for additional support to carry out their mission and protect lives and property from devastating wildfires.

San Diego's populated urban areas and the wildland urban interface (WUI) are most at risk for loss of property from major wildfires, which typically ignite in rural portions of the County. The WUI areas are where wildfires first reach urban areas, making fire departments the first line of defense against encroaching wildfires to prevent mass destruction to communities including loss of life and property.

San Diego County's non-coastal areas have rough terrain, steep canyons, mountains, and overgrown low-moisture content vegetation. These conditions, combined with low annual rainfall, hot temperatures, and strong Santa Ana winds, put the County at risk of experiencing significant wildfires. History proves this to be the case, as shown by the four examples listed below of major fires based on the loss of property, lives, and environmental damage.

- 1956 – the Inaja Fire burned 60,000 acres and resulted in 11 firefighters losing their lives.  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RAJnLITqw3Y>)
- 1970 – the Laguna Fire ravaged 175,425 acres and 1,382 structures. The fire burned from Mt. Laguna to Otay Lakes on the outskirts of Chula Vista and resulted in severe damage in Harbison Canyon and Crest.
- 2003 – the Cedar Fire (the largest fire in California history at that time) burned 273,246 acres and 2,820 buildings, and caused 15 deaths, including one firefighter.
- 2007 – the Witch Creek Fire destroyed 198,000 acres, 1,852 structures, and resulted in two fatalities.

The Wynola Estates Fire Safe Council, located in rural east San Diego County, completed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan in 2015. They received guidance and support from the County of San Diego, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the United States Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management.

The area has a high fire risk due to vegetation on steep slopes. The Wynola Estates Hazardous Fuels Reduction project will help protect the headwaters of the San Diego River and help prevent wildfire ignitions and spreading.

## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

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**Photo 1: The Wynola Estates Neighborhood**



The SFD was established in 1956, before the City's incorporation in 1980. It now serves a population of 60,000 and covers 16.5 square miles. Due to the dense, dry vegetation in this area, coupled with the very close proximity to residential and commercial structures, the San Diego River Corridor has been identified as a high fire threat area. *"The WUI along this Corridor poses the most critical vulnerability to loss of life and property within the City of Santee,"* SFD Fire Chief Justin Matsushita. SFD participates in the California Mutual Aid System by offering their only Type 3 apparatus for coordinated response to large-scale fires in California and neighboring states. The request for one additional fire engine will improve fire suppression and public safety in this WUI area of San Diego County.

### **PROJECT NEED:**

Many areas in the watershed of the Conservancy are at high risk of fire, as per CAL FIRE's fire threat severity map. To prevent wildfires from spreading in rural areas, it is essential to equip fire departments in the WUI with the necessary vehicles and equipment.

The SFD Fire Chief has identified the need for a Type 3 Brush Fire Engine to combat wildfires and protect the City of Santee, City of San Diego, Mission Trails Regional Park, the County of San Diego's Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch, and other areas in the San Diego River watershed. Similarly, the WEFSC acknowledges the importance of reducing overgrown vegetation and dead, dying, and diseased trees, especially near steep terrain in this rural area of San Diego's east county. The residents in that area are mostly elderly and cannot perform vegetation work or are on fixed incomes.

It is crucial to contain wildfires when they are small and create fire-safe and firewise communities that actively treat flammable fuel loads, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Communities that adapt to higher risk standards with stricter building codes and stage-controlled burns or activities to reduce vegetation and fuel



## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

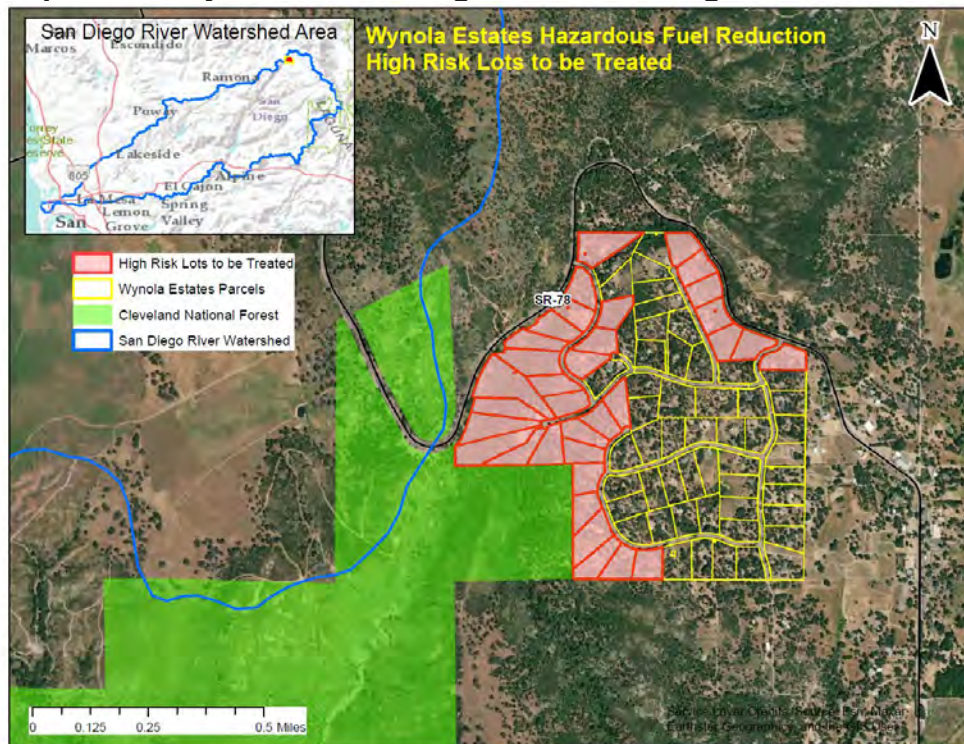
sources can limit damage. The proposed Project is a critical measure in establishing defensible space around residential homes in this vulnerable neighborhood.

### PROJECT SUMMARY:

The proposed project consists of two components. First, the Wynola Estates Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program is a vegetation management project aimed at protecting the headwaters of the San Diego River and preventing wildfires from causing damage to life, property and other resources. Second, a Type 3 Brush Fire Engine will be procured for SFD to facilitate fire suppression and public safety. The proposed project will increase wildfire preparedness and prevention in communities within the San Diego River watershed.

In the past, areas near Wynola Estates have experienced devastating wildfires and extensive damage. Recognizing the grave wildfire threat, residents of Wynola Estates have shown a high level of participation in vegetation cleanup programs. Over the past few years, the WEFSC has implemented fire prevention activities, with 70% of lots participating in creating 100' defensible space around their homes. The proposed project aims to extend vegetation removal activities to 300' along canyon slopes, creating a fuel break to help reduce wildfire risk and mitigate the impact of wildfires.

**Map 1: The Wynola Estates High Risk Lots Target for Treatment**



As of February 1, 2024, 27 out of the 34 lots (79%) designated as high risk have property owners who have already authorized the mitigation work. Initial cost estimates range from \$5,000 to \$13,000 per lot, depending on the prescribed treatment. The authorization level received so far is more than sufficient to utilize all the funding provided in this grant.

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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The City of Santee is located in the Conservancy's WUI area. The proposed project requests \$408,315 to fund 65% of the cost for one (1) Type 3 Brush Fire Engine. In addition to its 35% match for the engine, SFD will fund the entire cost of \$174,919 to outfit the new fire engine. SFD will contribute 49% (\$394,781) of the total cost (\$803,096) to acquire and outfit this new engine.

**Photo 2: Type 3 Brush Fire Engine**



The new engine will be housed at Santee Station 5, adjacent to the San Diego River Corridor. The SFD responded to over 80 fire incidents along the River Corridor in 2023. Although Mission Trails Regional Park is in the City of San Diego, Station 5 units are geographically closer to this high-fire threat area and typically the first on the scene for fire emergencies along the eastern perimeter of the 7,200-acre park.

Four support letters were received from Santee City Manager, Wynola Estates Fire Safe Council, Wynola Water District, and the Wynola Estates Homeowners Association HOA.

### **DELIVERABLES:**

- Semi-annual progress reports with photo documentation of before, during and after implementation;
- Procuring a Type 3 Brush Fire Engine;
- Completing an environmental assessment for Wynola Estates;
- Accounting of vegetation treatment: Quantity of vegetation removed such as volume (cubic feet) of chipped vegetation, fuel/brush cleared, and weight (tons) of vegetation removed, or other measures agreed upon.
- Final Report.

## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

**Table 1. Estimated Budget and Anticipated Schedule**

Task #	Description	Amount	Schedule
1. Program Administration and Management	Oversight, management and administration of project including reporting	\$84,780	Semi Annual Progress Reports
2. Type 3 fire engine	Procurement of Type 3 Fire Engine for the City of Santee	\$408,315	Within the 2-year grant period
3. Hazardous Fuels Reduction	Removal of flammable fuel loads at Wynola Estates	\$156,905	Throughout the Grant period
<b>Tasks 1-3</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$650,000.00</b>	<b>2024-2026</b>

**PROJECT FINANCING:** The total Project amount is \$1,130,471.00; the Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$650,000.00 for the implementation of the proposed Project. The anticipated source of Conservancy funds for this Project is the Budget Act of 2023.

**Table 2. Leveraged Funds**

Task/Description	Funding Request to the Conservancy	Matching and In-Kind Contributions	Total Project Cost
1. Program Administration and Management	\$84,780	\$0	\$84,780
2. Type 3 Brush Fire Engine and Vehicle Accessories	\$408,315	\$394,781	\$803,096
3. Wynola Estates Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project	\$156,905	\$85,690	\$242,595
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$650,000</b>	<b>\$480,471</b>	<b>\$1,130,471</b>

**LEVERAGED FUNDING:** The City of Santee will contribute \$394,781 toward the purchase and outfitting of the Type 3 Brush Fire Engine. The Wynola Water District will provide \$15,690 for hazardous fuels reduction. Wynola Estates FSC will invest 2,000 hours of volunteer labor valued at \$70,000 (\$35/hour) over the grant period to conduct project communication, obtain project authorizations, participate in meetings with environmental experts and contractors, and oversee the vegetation work.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:** This Project would be undertaken consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation (Public



## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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Resources Code, §§ 32630-32659.9).

### **CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) &**

**OBJECTIVE(S):** The Project is consistent with Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update 2024-2028.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE PURPOSES OF THE FUNDING SOURCE:** Budget Act 2023 is for wildfire and climate resilience, watershed protection, natural and cultural resource protection, and community access projects. The funding is immediately available for shovel-ready projects.

### **CONSISTENCY WITH THE CONSERVANCY'S DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM:**

This Project achieves one or more of the purposes:

- Located in the San Diego River watershed;
- Protecting resources
- Reducing flood and fire risk
- Protecting and enhancing wildlife habitats
- Protecting the natural and scenic beauty of the San Diego River watershed.

### **ALIGNMENT WITH PLANS AND PRIORITIES:**

#### **A. California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan**

Supports the goals of fuel reduction, vegetation management, defensible space, and fuel breaks to reduce fire risk.

#### **B. California Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP)**

The Healthy Forests Restoration Act and the Community Wildfire Protection Plan emphasize the need for federal, state, and local agencies to work collaboratively with communities in developing hazardous fuel reduction projects and place priority on treatment areas identified by the communities themselves.

#### **C. Safeguarding California Plan–2018 Update California's Climate Adaptation Strategy**

Supports work with local fire agencies to clear vegetation and help people protect their properties.

#### **D. California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment**

Supports local adaptation strategy and resilience, and protection of the state's most vulnerable populations and communities.

#### **E. State Wildlife Action Plan**

Preventing wildfires is important in protecting the habitats of wildlife.

#### **F. Strategic Fire Plan for California**

Goal 5: Integrate fire and fuels management practices with landowner/land manager priorities across all ownerships and jurisdictions.

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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### **G. California Natural Resources Agency's Initiatives.**

This project advances the following initiatives:

- Building Climate Resilience
- Expanding Nature-Based Solutions
- Restoring Forest Health for Wildfire and Climate Resilience

### **H. Conservancy's Climate Change Policy**

Recognize that wildland fires may be a major contributor to atmospheric carbon dioxide and implement fire safety mitigation projects where appropriate; Leverage partnerships and resources with local communities, including government entities and non-profits; Engage local communities through outreach, education, and interpretation, particularly as it relates to long-term stewardship and climate change awareness.

### **I. Governor's Executive Orders B-52-18, N-05-19**

#### **BENEFITS:**

These investments will make San Diego County residents and the San Diego River watershed area safer from the impact of catastrophic wildfires like those experienced in the past. For example, the Cedar Fire burned 273,246 acres in 2003, destroying 2,820 buildings, killing 15 people, and decimating approximately 209,118 acres (75%) of the San Diego River Watershed, which resulted in \$1.3 billion in damages.

Any fire in the rural areas has the potential to burn into urban areas destroying habitats, killing wildlife, causing soil erosion, and impacting air and water quality. By reducing the number and size of fires, the natural and scenic beauty of the San Diego River watershed area will be maintained, wildlife habits and biodiversity will be protected, and the public will continue to visit the parks, open spaces, trails, and campgrounds that millions enjoy on an annual basis.

#### **PROJECT READINESS:**

There is a quote for the Type 3 Brush Fire Engine and it is ready to be placed immediately upon approval of the Conservancy Board. SFD will be responsible for the maintenance and housing of the Type 3 Brush Fire Engine from Santee's operating budget.

Regarding the hazardous fuel reductions, funds would first be used to hire a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) or other environmental expert to conduct an environmental assessment which is estimated to cost \$20,000 - \$30,000. Upon completion of the assessment, lots will be prioritized for vegetation treatment. WEFSC will work with residents to maintain the cleared properties in the future. Lot owners may be asked to share costs to maintain properties upon completion of the proposed project. Fundraising will be pursued to complete unfinished work.

#### **PERMIT COMPLIANCE:**

WEFSC intends to retain an RPF to conduct an environmental assessment to determine if CEQA and /or other permits are required. Work along State Highway 78 will require coordination with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Since the roads

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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in Wynola Estates are privately held, any vegetation removal activity must be coordinated with the Wynola Estates HOA. Any necessary permits identified for fuels reduction activities will be acquired before fuels reduction work begins.

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: 14

SUBJECT: **MISSION TRAILS REGIONAL PARK  
FOUNDATION'S PROPOSAL FOR EAST ELLIOTT  
LAND ACQUISITION (*ACTION*)**

The Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation requests funds to acquire approximately 55 acres of land in the East Elliott area. This land will be conserved in perpetuity and will offer several benefits such as preserving the habitats and protecting the wildlife corridors, maintaining public access, and safeguarding the watershed. Additionally, acquiring this land will establish access to outdoor recreation, connections to the existing trails at Mission Trails Regional Park, the San Diego River Trail, and other nearby trail networks. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$2,000,000 through the Budget Act 2022.

**Available for Q and A:**

Jennifer Morrissey, Executive Director, Mission Trails Regional  
Park Foundation

Lane MacKenzie, Board President, Mission Trails Regional Park  
Foundation

Recommendation: Approval of Resolution 24-17

**Resolution No: 24-17**

**RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF  
THE SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

**AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO GRANT \$2,000,000 FROM  
THE BUDGET ACT OF 2022 TO THE MISSION TRAILS REGIONAL PARK FOUNDATION  
FOR ACQUISITION AND CONSERVATION OF APPROXIMATELY 55 ACRES IN THE EAST  
ELLIOTT AREA IN THE SAN DIEGO RIVER WATERSHED**

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WHEREAS, the mission of the San Diego River Conservancy is to further the goals of its enabling legislation by protecting, conserving and restoring the San Diego River area; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of California has provided funds under the Budget Act of 2022 to fund programs and activities that advance multibenefit projects and nature-based solutions including but not limited to climate resilience, natural and cultural resource protection, wildfire resilience, and community access projects; and

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of these funds, establishing necessary procedures; and

WHEREAS, the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation applied to the San Diego River Conservancy for funds to purchase approximately 55 acres for conservation purposes in East Elliot area of Mission Trails Regional Park (the Project); and

WHEREAS, Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation requests \$2,000,000.00, and staff is recommending, \$2,000,000.00 for this Project; and

WHEREAS, this Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, Program 1, Conserve Land within the San Diego River Watershed, Program 2, Support and Encourage Recreation and Education, and Program 3, Preserve and Restore Natural Resources and Program 6, Expand the Organizations Capacity and Public Outreach; and

WHEREAS, this Project is in support of the California Natural Resources Agency initiative to conserve 30% of California's land and coastal waters by 2030 (known as "30x30"); and

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy staff have reviewed the grant application, visited some of the parcels, and met with the applicant, and recommends fully funding the Project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board, based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, Division 22.9, Sections 32630-32659.9).
2. The proposed Project is consistent with the purposes and intent of the Budget Act 2022.

3. The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of up to \$2,000,000.00 (Two Million Dollars) to Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation for the Project from the Budget Act of 2022.
4. The Board appoints the Executive Officer, or her designee, as an agent to negotiate and execute all agreements, grants, sub-contracts and other documents needed for the completion of the Project.

Approved and adopted March 28, 2024. I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution Number 24-17 was duly adopted by the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: \_\_\_\_\_

Nays: \_\_\_\_\_

Absent: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julia L. Richards  
Executive Officer

San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board Members Roll Call Vote

Name	Ayes	Noes	Abstained
CNRA: Andrea Scharffer			
DOF: Stephen Benson			
CADFW: Richard Burg			
Dr. Jennifer Campbell, SD Mayor Designee			
Joel Anderson, County Supervisor			
Raul Campillo			
Ben Clay, Chair			
Ruth Hayward, Vice Chair			
J. Cody Petterson			
John Elliott			
Elsa Saxod			
DPR Ray Lennox, Designee			
DPR Gina Moran, Designee			
Dustin Trotter			
Vacant			

# **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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## **Staff Recommendation SDRC Resolution 24-17**

March 28, 2024

### **DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to provide up to \$2,000,000.00 to the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation to acquire approximately 55 acres in East Elliott in the City of San Diego to preserve native habitat, protect open space and outdoor recreation, and conserve land.

**LOCATION:** Mission Trails Regional Park is one of the largest urban parks in the country at approximately 8,000 acres. Although largely surrounded by residential development, this Regional Park contains mountains, valleys, two lakes, historical landmarks, wildlife habitats, cultural resources, and the San Diego River.

**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:** Staff recommends that the San Diego River Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, § 32630 et seq.):

The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of funding for projects focused on enhancing river parkways, protecting resources, restoring native habitat and fire protection and suppression, specifically as follows:

**To Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, the sum of \$2,000,000.00 (Two Million Dollars and Zero cents) to use as follows:**

- To acquire approximately 55 acres in East Elliott area of Mission Trails Regional Park to conserve as native habitat and open space in perpetuity (Project).

Before the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget and schedule, and the names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed in carrying out the project.

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

Based on the staff report and attached exhibits, the San Diego River Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act, including Section 32649.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the Guidelines for the Conservancy's Directed Grant program.

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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3. The proposed Project is consistent with the Budget Act of 2022.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation (Foundation) is a non-profit organization established in 1988 to protect, preserve, and enhance the Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP). MTRP can be divided into five regions: East Elliott, East and West Fortuna, Mission Gorge, and Cowles Mountain. East Elliott is a part of the former Camp Elliott, which was purchased by the US government in 1941 for use as a Marine Corps training camp.

In 2019, MTRP adopted and published a Master Plan Update that outlines a vision for the park's future. The plan prioritizes the acquisition of land in the East Elliott Community Planning Area (East Elliott), which is within the park's boundaries but has more than 700 acres of private ownership. The objective is to purchase land parcels that are currently under private ownership and fall within the boundaries of Mission Trails Regional Park.

The Park's estimated 2.2 million visitors enjoy more than 65 miles of trails, boating on Lake Murray, camping at Kumeyaay Lake, and educational and interpretive offerings both within the park and at the award-winning Visitor Center.

MTRP is operated and maintained by the City of San Diego in close partnership with the Foundation. As outlined in the Master Plan Update and determined by the Mission Trails Regional Park Task Force and Citizen's Advisory Committee, acquiring private parcels in East Elliott is a priority for Mission Trails Regional Park. The vast majority of East Elliott is within the jurisdiction of the City of San Diego and is designated Multi-Habitat Planning Area as part of the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP).

### **PROJECT NEED:**

Wildlife and plant populations are declining worldwide. A report by Audubon's Survival by Degrees shows that California has more species of plants and animals than any other state in the US. Conserving natural habitats here will benefit many bird species that migrate on the Pacific Flyway.

East Elliott is a biodiverse open space area in San Diego. The East Elliott Community Plan and Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) identify most of East Elliott as a Multiple Habitat Planning Area (MHPA), where natural habitats are a top priority. The City of San Diego is implementing the MSCP in East Elliott, which is dominated by three vegetation communities: coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and grasslands. There are some areas of oak woodland, sycamore, and willow riparian to support endangered and threatened species. The acquisition of land in this area aims to conserve habitats, protect watersheds, and develop approved trail linkages for public use permanently.

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The purpose of the proposed project is to purchase four privately owned land parcels in the East Elliott area of MTRP that lie within the park's boundaries. This grant request is for the acquisition of 54.5 acres of land, which was identified as a priority in the 2019 MTRP Master Plan Update.



## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

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If the project is approved, the East Elliott acreage will not only protect the habitat but also provide more contiguous land ownership for the MTRP and their trail linkages. It will also promote better environmental stewardship and an increased appreciation for nature and the outdoors among the public, which will enhance their current and future use and enjoyment of the park.

The proposed Project aligns with the 2019 MTRP Master Plan Update and reflects the park's priorities determined by the MTRP Task Force and Citizens Advisory Committee, adopted by the MTRP Foundation Board. The tasks, milestones, and timeline have been reviewed by the MTRP Foundation Board President, who has extensive experience in land acquisition from working for the City of San Diego.

The project supports California's 30 x 30 Plan and may lead to the development of recreational trails in the future. This will boost public knowledge of natural spaces and encourage better environmental stewardship.

**Table 1. Target Parcels**

APN#	Acreage
366-031-17	20.5
366-030-47	15.99
366-031-16	8.09
366-031-12	9.92
<b>Totals</b>	<b>54.5</b>

The proposed Project supports several of the San Diego River Conservancy's goals, including land conservation, recreation, and habitat protection. In addition, the Project supports the Foundation's mission, which is to preserve and protect Mission Trails Regional Park and provide educational and recreational opportunities.

Conserving, protecting, and making this land available for responsible recreation is at the core of the grant request. The purchase of parcels in the East Elliott areas of MTRP is aligned with many of the outlined funding and program goals and priorities, including protecting and enhancing wildlife habitats, providing public access for the enjoyment of the San Diego River Park and open space, trails, campgrounds, and park facilities; increasing native habitat and promoting the re-establishment of native species; and protecting the natural and scenic beauty of the San Diego River watershed.

The parcels proposed for acquisition are within the San Diego River watershed and would be protected and conserved in perpetuity. In addition, the land would offer linkages to existing trails at MTRP thereby making the property accessible for public recreation as well as wildlife migratory corridors.

The proposed Project's positive impacts would include the possibility of expanding rare and endangered native plant populations, of which there are a few at Mission Trails Regional Park, including San Diego Thornmint and San Diego Ambrosia. Mule deer frequent this area and mountain lion have been seen with some frequency and the California gnatcatcher utilizes coastal sage scrub habitat. Additionally, Park rangers and

## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

volunteers report and track wildlife sightings, to improve understanding of wildlife corridors and populations in the area.

### DELIVERABLES:

- Request for disbursements (RFDs), progress reports with photo documentation of existing conditions;
- Regular maintenance, site patrolling, observation, and reporting.
- Final Report to include:
  - Total number of acres conserved
  - List additional trails and number of new trail linkage
  - Number of annual visitors
  - Report and track wildlife sightings
  - Discuss any expansion of rare and endangered native plant populations

**Table 1. Estimated Budget and Anticipated Schedule**

Task #	Description	Amount	Schedule
1. Acquisition	Acquire 54.5 acres in the East Elliott area of Mission Trails Regional Park	\$2,000,000.00	Quarterly throughout 2-year grant period
<b>Task 1</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,000,000.00</b>	<b>2024-2026</b>

**PROJECT FINANCING:** The total Project amount is \$2,025,000.00; the Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$2,000,000.00 for the implementation of the proposed project. The anticipated source of Conservancy funds for this Project is the Budget Act of 2022.

**LEVERAGED FUNDING:** The Foundation has \$25,000 in reserves that it will use toward the purchase of these parcels. News of the acquisitions would be widely shared, and additionally donors' gifts would help advance this project and help cultivate new contributors.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:** This Project would be undertaken consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation (Public Resources Code, §§ 32630-32659.9).

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):** The Project is consistent with Program 1 Conserve Land Within the San Diego River Watershed, Program 2 Support and Encourage Recreation and Education, Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update 2024-2028.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE PURPOSES OF THE FUNDING SOURCE:** Budget Act 2023 is for wildfire and climate resilience, watershed protection, natural and cultural resource protection, and community access projects. The funding is immediately available for shovel-ready projects.

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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### **CONSISTENCY WITH the CONSERVANCY's DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM:**

This Project achieves one or more of the purposes:

- Conserving land
- Protecting resources
- Located in the San Diego River watershed;
- Providing public access for the enjoyment of the San Diego River Park and open space, trails, campgrounds, and park facilities
- Protecting the natural and scenic beauty of the San Diego River watershed.

### **ALIGNMENT WITH PLANS AND PRIORITIES:**

#### **A. Outdoors for All: Providing equitable access to Parks and Nature**

Everyone can regularly access and experience the outdoors while feeling a sense of belonging, and that they are safe and welcome.

#### **B. Safeguarding California Plan: 2018 Update California's Climate Adaptation Strategy**

Supports Principle 2, Principle 5, and Principle 6 for various public benefits, creation of jobs and mitigation and adaptation strategies to increase equity and resilience through investments, planning, research, and education.

#### **C. California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment**

Supports local adaptation strategy and resilience, and protection of the state's most vulnerable populations and communities.

#### **D. Wildlife Action Plan**

Supports partnerships with other agencies, governments, organizations, and private landowners. Target: California Grassland and Flowerfields - Conservation Strategy 1 Acquire and conserve high-value grassland habitats. Coordinate with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as regional land trusts, to develop regional conservation strategies.

#### **E. Natural and Working Lands 2030**

Supports land conservation: Preserving land in the South Coast ecoregion will help increase access to parklands and open space for recreation, provide connectivity for wildlife, and encourage infill development. Reduced conversion of natural and working lands to urbanized land. An ecosystem services approach to chaparral management that balances restoration, protection, and fuel management is needed to protect the benefits these ecosystems provide including biodiversity, carbon sequestration, soil retention, and water provision.

#### **F. San Diego River Conservancy's Climate Change Policy**

Acquire, preserve, or restore natural areas or ecological reserves at risk due to development patterns in order to improve the long-term health of the region and avoid emissions associated with development; Acquire and maintain wildlife corridors and linkages to provide connections between areas of undeveloped lands, particularly significant public lands and key habitat ecosystems; Develop

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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parks and greenways in urban areas to mitigate climate change effects and promote public health and recreation; Include non-climate related co-benefits, such as public access, education, job creation, youth employment and job training, recreation, and public health benefits;

### **G. California Natural Resources Agency's Initiatives**

This project advances the following initiatives:

- Protecting Biodiversity,
- Expanding Nature-Based Solutions
- Supporting Healthy Rivers and Landscapes

### **H. Infrastructure Planning: Priorities and Funding**

Enhancing the state's most valuable natural resources, including working landscapes such as farm, range, and forest lands, natural lands such as wetlands, watersheds, wildlife habitats, and other wildlands, recreation lands such as parks, trails, greenbelts, and other open spaces.

### **I. Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP)**

The MSCP Plan targets 171,917 acres of vacant land within the MHPA for conservation, including over half of all natural lands in the MSCP study area (167,667 acres) and 4,250 acres of other vacant lands that contribute to preserve design.

### **J. Multiple Habitat Planning Area (MHPA)**

The MHPA conserves 62% of all coastal sage scrub and important portions of all vegetation communities in the study area.

### **K. Governor's Executive Orders**

October 2020, Governor Newsom signed his Nature Based Solutions Executive Order N-82-20, elevating the role of natural and working lands in the fight against climate change and advancing biodiversity conservation as a priority through land acquisition.

### **PROJECT READINESS:**

Purchase of these parcels is a priority for the Foundation and the City of San Diego's Open Space Division. There are willing seller letters and an Option has been secured for the parcels that are currently on the market. Following transfer of the property from the Foundation to the City of San Diego, both entities will fund and support long-term maintenance.

### **PERMIT COMPLIANCE:**

The proposed Project is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA guidelines Section 15313. Acquisition of Lands for Wildlife Conservation Purposes. Class 13 consists of the acquisition of lands for fish and wildlife conservation purposes including (a) preservation of fish and wildlife habitat, (b) establishing ecological reserves under Fish and Game Code Section 1580, and (c) preserving access to public lands and waters where the purpose of the acquisition is to preserve the land in its natural condition.

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: 15

SUBJECT: **FIRE MITIGATION IN SANTEE'S WILDLAND  
URBAN INTERFACE AREA (*ACTION*)**

The City of Santee has applied for a grant through the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services to conduct fuel reduction activities across 415 acres of land and along 3.26 miles of the San Diego River and its tributaries (the Project). The total estimated cost of the Project is \$7,623,567. The City of Santee is requesting funding in the amount of \$907,568 from the Conservancy for the Project. The primary objective of the Project is to reduce the amount of invasive non-native plants, dead and dying trees. The fuel reduction activities will help to decrease the likelihood of property damage, loss of life, and enhance firefighter safety and effectiveness during wildfires. The Conservancy staff has recommended partially funding this Project in the amount of \$907,568 from the Budget Acts of 2021 and 2023.

**Available for Q and A:**

Justin Matsushita, Fire Chief, City of Santee

Recommendation: Approval of Resolution 24-18

**Resolution No: 24-18**

**RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF  
THE SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

**AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO GRANT UP TO \$907,568.00 FROM  
THE BUDGET ACT OF 2021 AND/OR 2023 TO THE CITY OF SANTEE TO REMOVE  
FLAMMABLE FUEL LOADS ACROSS 415 ACRES IN THE WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE  
AREA INCLUDING BRUSH THINNING, REDUCTION OF NON-NATIVE VEGETATION AND  
TREES, AND DEBRIS REMOVAL IN THE SAN DIEGO RIVER WATERSHED**

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WHEREAS, the mission of the San Diego River Conservancy is to further the goals of its enabling legislation by conserving and restoring the lands and waters of the San Diego River watershed; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of California has provided funds under the Budget Act of 2023 to fund programs and activities that advance climate resilience, natural and cultural resource protection, wildfire resilience, and community access projects; and

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of this grant program, establishing necessary procedures and guidelines in accordance with statewide priorities and plans; and

WHEREAS, City of Santee's Fire Department applied for grant funding to the San Diego River Conservancy in the amount of \$907,568, to remove flammable fuel loads within city boundaries across 415 acres in the Wildland Urban Interface area including brush thinning, reduction of non-native vegetation and trees, and debris removal in the San Diego River watershed (Project). The Conservancy funding will be used as matching funds for a larger grant applied for from California Governor's Office of Emergency Services for funding to implement a Fire Hazard Mitigation Project; and

WHEREAS, San Diego River Conservancy staff recommends funding up to the amount of \$907,568.00 to implement the Project; and

WHEREAS, this Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, with Program 2 Support and Encourage Recreation and Education Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources and Program 6, Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach.

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy staff have reviewed the grant application, met with applicant and recommends the Project for approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board, based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits:

1. The proposed Project is consistent with the purposes and intent of the Budget Act of 2021 and/or 2023.

2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, Sections 32630-32659.9).
3. The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of up to \$210,000.00 (Two Hundred and Ten Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents) to implement the Project.
4. Appoints the Executive Officer, or her designee, as an agent to execute all agreements, grants, sub-contracts, and other documents needed for the completion of the Project.
5. Prior to the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget, and schedule.

Approved and adopted on March 28, 2024. I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution Number 24-18 was duly adopted by the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: \_\_\_\_\_

Nays: \_\_\_\_\_

Absent: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julia L. Richards  
Executive Officer

#### San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board Members Roll Call Vote

Name	Ayes	Noes	Abstained
CNRA: Andrea Scharffer			
DOF: Stephen Benson			
CADFW: Richard Burg			
Dr. Jennifer Campbell, SD Mayor Designee			
Joel Anderson, County Supervisor			
Raul Campillo			
Ben Clay, Chair			
Ruth Hayward, Vice Chair			
J. Cody Petterson			
John Elliott			
Elsa Saxod			
DPR Designee, Ray Lennox			
DPR Designee, Nicole Van Doren			
Dustin Trotter			
Phil Ortiz			

# **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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## **Staff Recommendation SDRC Resolution 24-18**

March 28, 2024

### **DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to provide up to \$907,568.00 to the City of Santee for fire mitigation across 415 acres in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), including brush thinning, reduction of non-native vegetation and trees, and debris removal in the San Diego River watershed. Funding from this grant will be used as partial matching funds for the City's proposal to the FEMA Hazardous Mitigation Grant Program administered by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services Hazard Mitigation Branch. The City of Santee will provide an additional \$907,568 in matching funds.

**LOCATION:** Project locations include the WUI from the western limits at Forester Creek to the Lakeside Boundary on the east at the fringe of habitable structures in the County of San Diego. Target locations including Mast Park West, Lowes Preserve, Mast Park Wetland Restoration Area, Mast Park East Mission Creek, Ryan Preserve, Walker Trails Open Space, and Walker Preserve.

**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:** Staff recommends that the San Diego River Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, § 32630 et seq.):

The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of funding for projects focused on enhancing river parkways, protecting resources, restoring native habitat and fire protection and suppression, specifically as follows:

**To the City of Santee, the sum of \$907,568.00 (Nine Hundred Seven Thousand Five Hundred Sixty-Eight Dollars and Zero cents) to use as follows:**

- To manage vegetation within city boundaries across 415 acres in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) including brush thinning, removal of non-native vegetation, palm tree removals, and encampment debris removal in the San Diego River watershed (Project) and serve as matching funds for the City's application to the FEMA Hazardous Mitigation Grant Program.

Before the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit a copy of the approved grant from the FEMA Hazardous Mitigation Grant Program administered by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services Hazard Mitigation Branch. Grantee shall also provide the Conservancy a scope of work, budget and schedule, and the names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed in carrying out the project.

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

Based on the staff report and attached exhibits, the San Diego River Conservancy hereby



## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act, including Section 32649.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the Guidelines for the Conservancy's Directed Grant program.
3. The proposed Project is consistent with the Budget Acts of 2021 and 2023.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Santee Fire Department (Fire Department) is a full-service fire department that serves approximately 60,000 residents. The Fire Department protects and manages several thousand acres of Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) lands while offering fire suppression and prevention services such as vegetation management, fire investigation, community programs, and pre-fire planning.

The proposed Project area has large quantities of non-native plant species that, through increased biomass, flammability, and altered distribution, have significantly increased the risk and severity of fire occurrence. Several non-native weeds and grasses tend to thrive within the WUI adjacent to neighboring homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure. The invasive annual grasses that colonize this area dry out in the spring, and, with their high surface area to volume ratio, these non-native plants are more prone to ignition than native vegetation.

Along with these non-native grasses and weeds, the WUI also has many non-native palm species that are highly flammable, largely due to dead leaves. All such hazardous non-native plant species put multiple homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure at severe risk of being damaged or destroyed because of potential fire.

Several recent wildfires have resulted in the evacuation of hundreds of residents and caused significant fire damage to private property. Large fires in April 2014, September 2020 and November 2021 overwhelmed local firefighting resources and as a result, rotary winged aircraft, fixed wing tankers, and strike teams of engines and hand crews were requested from neighboring agencies to help prevent the loss of threatened structures. A wildland fire can cast embers over 1 mile from an adjacent fire potentially igniting the vegetation in this WUI area, impacting 11,938 residences and numerous large commercial buildings.

From September 2020 through December 2023, approximately 309 fires have occurred in the targeted work area and surrounding waterways. Historical data demonstrates the success of vegetation management. The cumulative home values that were saved because of a newly constructed defensible space corridor exceed \$5,000,000.00.

The proposed Project achieves the goals laid out by the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force. A key part of the Task Force's mission is to develop and maintain fuel reduction and management projects. Reduction of fuels within the City of Santee's

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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WUI will help to achieve the State's mission as well as achieve the goals of the San Diego River Conservancy.

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The proposed Project will reduce the threat of property loss and civilian casualties on 415 acres within the fire prone WUI areas of Santee. Mitigation of fire threats will be achieved through the reduction of non-native, invasive fuels that exacerbate fire intensity in an area of high fire susceptibility. Additionally, Santee will complete the creation of defensible space around adjacent structures through the thinning of vegetation, and the removal of fire hazard debris, which will enhance community resiliency in the Project area and increase the scenic beauty of the San Diego River watershed.

The City will establish three defensible Space Zones based on the distance from existing structures, and mitigation efforts will vary depending on the zone and individual vegetation, debris, and other types of combustible fuels located within those zones. "Zone 1" will have all combustible material removed within 30 feet of existing structures. "Zone 2" will have all non-native and dead vegetation removed as well as dead and dying branches removed from trees and shrubs. "Zone 3" will have all non-native and dead vegetation removed as well as vegetation pruned horizontally and vertically to reduce potential fuel.

The City will conduct fuel modification, including creation of defensible space and hazardous fuel reduction, in the following areas:

- a. Mast Park West
- b. Lowes Preserve
- c. Mast Park Wetland Restoration Area
- d. Mast Park East Mission Creek
- e. Ryan Preserve
- f. County of San Diego
- g. Walker Trails Open Space
- h. Walker Preserve

The reduction of invasive non-native and dead vegetation fire load will decrease the potential of extreme fire behavior adjacent to civilian properties and critical infrastructure. Defensible space will allow greater resiliency within the surrounding communities and less susceptibility to fire damage. The reduction of hazardous fuel loading, including the removal of dead litter fuels, will allow for enhanced access for fire suppression personnel during natural vegetation fire events, as well as decreased vulnerability to extreme fire behavior. Removal of non-native vegetation will allow the opportunity for native vegetation to recover. Native vegetation is less prone to extreme fire behavior and will reduce wildfire threats in the city. The reduction of non-native and dead vegetation will provide additional open space, wildlife habitat and species restoration. Enhancing access will also provide improved recreational opportunities for the public's enjoyment.

### **DELIVERABLES:**

- Quarterly request for disbursements, progress reports with photo documentation of before, during and after implementation
- Final Report

## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

**Table 1. Estimated Budget and Anticipated Schedule**

Task #	Description	Amount	Schedule
1. Project Management	CEQA permitting, ROEs, target vegetation and treatment methods	\$253,500.00	Quarterly
2. Project Implementation	Fuel modification including creation of defensible space and hazardous fuel reduction	\$654,068.00	Throughout 2-year grant period
<b>Tasks 1-2</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$907,568.00</b>	<b>2024-2026</b>

**PROJECT FINANCING:** The total amount of the larger project proposed by Santee is \$7,260,540.00. \$5,445,404 of the anticipated funding will come from the FEMA Hazardous Mitigation Grant Program administered by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services Hazard Mitigation Branch. The City will provide half of the matching funds for the FEMA grant in the amount of \$907,568 and seeks the remaining matching funds in the amount of \$907,568 from the Conservancy. The Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$907,568.00 for the proposed Project. The anticipated source of Conservancy funds for this Project is the Budget Act of 2021 and/or 2023.

**LEVERAGED FUNDING:** The City of Santee will be providing equal matching funds of \$907,568 to implement the proposed Project.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:** This Project would be undertaken consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation (Public Resources Code, §§ 32630-32659.9).

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):** The Project is consistent with Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update 2024-2028.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE PURPOSES OF THE FUNDING SOURCE:** Budget Acts 2021 and 2023 provide funding for wildfire and climate resilience, watershed protection, natural and cultural resource protection, and community access projects. The funding is immediately available for shovel-ready projects.

**CONSISTENCY WITH the CONSERVANCY's DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM:**

This Project achieves one or more of the purposes:

- Located in the San Diego River watershed;
- Protecting Resources
- Reducing Flood and Fire Risk
- Protecting and enhancing wildlife habitats
- Removing invasive plant species from the watershed
- Increasing native habitat and promoting the re-establishment of native species
- Protecting the natural and scenic beauty of the San Diego River watershed.

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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### **ALIGNMENT WITH PLANS AND PRIORITIES:**

#### **A. California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan**

Supports the goal of protecting wildfire-prone homes and neighborhoods.

#### **B. Fire Hazard Planning Technical Advisory**

Strengthening protection of communities and creating fire-adapted communities.

#### **C. San Diego River Conservancy's Climate Change Policy**

Management of Invasive Species, especially projects which prevent introduction or spread of invasive species, in order to reduce the impacts of this major stressor on biodiversity; Recognize that wildland fires may be a major contributor to atmospheric carbon dioxide, and implement fire safety mitigation projects where appropriate; Leverage partnerships and resources with local communities, including government entities and non-profits;

#### **D. California Natural Resources Agency's Initiatives.**

This project advances the following initiatives:

- Building Climate Resilience
- Protecting Biodiversity
- Expanding Nature-Based Solutions
- Measuring Progress: Monitoring and Stewardship Unit

#### **E. City of Santee Hazard Mitigation Plan**

**Action 1.A.1** Partner with County State and Federal agencies to fund wildfire mitigation efforts.

**Action 1.A.2** Create defensible space through hazardous vegetation fuel reduction.

**Action 1.A.3** Maintain, improve and/or create emergency access in WEUI areas that is adequate to allow entry as well as maneuvering of emergency vehicles.

### **BENEFITS:**

Thinning the vegetation within the Project area and removing dead and highly flammable fuels will lessen the intensity of wildfires. This mitigation effort will decrease the potential for structural damage and loss due to wildfire, reduce the risk to human life in neighborhoods and within the WUI areas, and enhance firefighter safety and effectiveness when wildfires occur.

The reduction in natural vegetation fire load will decrease the potential of extreme fire behavior adjacent to civilian properties and critical infrastructure. Defensible space will allow for greater resilience within the surrounding communities and less susceptibility to fire damage. The reduction of hazardous fuel loading, including the removal of dead litter fuels, will allow for enhanced access for fire suppression personnel during fire events.

Additionally, removal of non-native vegetation will allow the opportunity for native vegetation to recover. Native vegetation is less prone to extreme fire behavior and will

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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reduce the threat of wildfire in Santee and increase the natural resiliency of the San Diego River ecosystem.

### **PROJECT READINESS:**

The City of Santee applied for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Grant Program under an estimated three-year timeline for Project completion. A one-year extension beyond the 2-year timeframe will be needed to complete this Project. The Best Management Practices will be based on FEMA guidelines referenced in the FEMA HMA guidance Addendum B.4.1 and grant application.

Santee's Emergency Manager, Department of Development Services, and Community Services Department will identify areas highly-flammable, non-native vegetation areas where existing defensible spaces are insufficient to protect habitable structures. Defensible space will be designed and created to enhance the resiliency of these structures.

The City of Santee is committed to perform the necessary maintenance for the entire useful life of the Project, once completed. Santee will be responsible for maintenance and is allocating the annual budget amount that will allow maintenance to occur as needed to ensure the Project area remains in good repair.

Future maintenance tasks include coordination of future non-native vegetation removal of and removal of litter fuels, including trash and debris, and continued maintenance of defensible space areas. Areas will be managed on a rotating basis with one quarter of the improved area addressed annually. The future cost of maintenance is estimated at \$446,000 and funds will be allocated from the City of Santee's General Fund.

### **PERMIT COMPLIANCE:**

The City of Santee will acquire all permits necessary to implement the Project.

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: 16

SUBJECT: **SAN DIEGO FIRE-RESCUE FOUNDATION  
PROPOSAL FOR PROCUREMENT OF A  
VEHICLE, CHIPPER, TRAILER, TOOLS AND  
SUPPLIES, TO CARRY OUT FUEL REDUCTION  
ACTIVITIES *(ACTION)***

The San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation seeks funding to reduce fuel loads and maintain and create firebreaks to help safeguard and protect vulnerable, at-risk, and underserved communities in the San Diego River watershed. The Foundation will use the funding to procure one Pierce Mini Pumper (Ford F-550 vehicle), one tow behind chipper, one portable restroom trailer, and firefighting equipment, tools, and PPE. The San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation and the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department will partner to implement fuel reduction activities in the City of San Diego within the San Diego River watershed. The Conservancy staff recommends funding up to \$622,000 from the Budget Acts of 2021 and 2023.

**Available for Q and A:**

Wendy Robinson, Executive Director, San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation

Anthony Tosca, Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal San Diego Fire-Rescue Department

Recommendation: Approval of Resolution 24-19

**Resolution No: 24-19**

**RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF  
THE SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

**AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO GRANT \$622,000.00 FROM  
THE BUDGET ACT OF 2021 AND 2023 TO SAN DIEGO FIRE-RESCUE FOUNDATION  
TO PROCURE ONE PIERCE MINI PUMPER (F-550 VEHICLE OR SIMILAR TYPE), ONE  
TOW BEHIND CHIPPER, AND OTHER EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES TO  
IMPLEMENT FUEL REDUCTION ACTIVITIES ON 526 ACRES IN THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO**

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WHEREAS, the mission of the San Diego River Conservancy is to further the goals of its enabling legislation by conserving and restoring the lands and waters of the San Diego River watershed; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of California has provided funds under the Budget Act of 2023 to fund climate resilience, natural and cultural resource protection, wildfire resilience, and community access projects; and

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of this grant program, establishing necessary procedures and guidelines in accordance with statewide priorities and plans; and

WHEREAS, the San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation applied to the San Diego River Conservancy for a grant to procure one Pierce Mini Pumper (F-550 Vehicle or similar type), one tow behind chipper, and other fire related equipment and supplies, and to reduce the risk and intensity of fire by implementing fuel reduction activities within parts of the City of San Diego (Project); and

WHEREAS, San Diego River Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$622,000.00 to implement the Project; and

WHEREAS, this Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, and Program 6, Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach.

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy staff have reviewed the grant application, met with applicant and recommends the Project for approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board, based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits:

1. The proposed Project is consistent with the purposes and intent of the Budget Act of 2021 and/or 2023.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, Sections 32630-32659.9).

3. The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of up to \$622,000.00 (Six Hundred Twenty-Two Thousand Dollars) to implement the Project.
4. Appoints the Executive Officer, or her designee, as an agent to execute all agreements, grants, sub-contracts, and other documents needed for the completion of the Project.
5. Prior to the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review and approval of the of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget, and schedule.

Approved and adopted on March 28, 2024. I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution Number 24-19 was duly adopted by the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: \_\_\_\_\_

Nays: \_\_\_\_\_

Absent: \_\_\_\_\_

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Julia L. Richards  
Executive Officer

#### San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board Members Roll Call Vote

Name	Ayes	Noes	Abstained
CNRA: Andrea Scharffer			
DOF: Stephen Benson			
CADFW: Richard Burg			
Dr. Jennifer Campbell, SD Mayor Designee			
Joel Anderson, County Supervisor			
Raul Campillo			
Ben Clay, Chair			
Ruth Hayward, Vice Chair			
J. Cody Petterson			
John Elliott			
Elsa Saxod			
DPR Designee, Ray Lennox			
DPR Designee, Gina Moran			
Dustin Trotter			
Phil Ortiz			



# **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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## **Staff Recommendation SDRC Resolution 24-19**

March 28, 2024

### **DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to provide up to \$622,000.00 to the San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation to purchase one Pierce Mini Pumper (Ford F-550 or equivalent) including lighting package, one tow behind chipper, personal protective equipment and supplies to implement fuel reduction activities and improve fire resiliency on 526 acres in the City of San Diego.

**LOCATION:** The focus areas are land owned by the City of San Diego's Parks and Recreation/Open Space Division and other areas in the city including but not limited to Old Town San Diego, Mission Valley, and Kensington/Talmadge.

**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:** Staff recommends that the San Diego River Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to the San Diego River Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code, § 32630 et seq.):

The San Diego River Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of funding for projects focused on enhancing river parkways, protecting resources, restoring native habitat and fire protection and suppression, specifically as follows:

**To San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation, the sum of \$622,000.00 (Six Hundred Twenty-Two Thousand Dollars and Zero cents) to use as follows:**

- To purchase one Pierce Mini Pumper (Ford F-550 or equivalent) with lighting package, one tow behind chipper, hand tools, chainsaws, and personal protective equipment and to perform brush management activities, maintain fire breaks, and improve fire resiliency for the City of San Diego lands in the San Diego River watershed (Project).

Before the disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review approval of the Conservancy a scope of work, budget and schedule, and the names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed in carrying out the project.

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

Based on the staff report and attached exhibits, the San Diego River Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the San Diego River Conservancy Act, including Section 32649.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the Guidelines for the Conservancy's

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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Directed Grant program.

3. The proposed Project is consistent with the Budget Act of 2023.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation (Foundation) is a non-profit organization that works in partnership with the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) to provide fire prevention and suppression services for the City of San Diego. Their mission is to protect life, property, and the environment by providing the highest quality emergency and rescue services to over 1.4 million San Diegans.

The City of San Diego has 52 fire stations and covers an area of 343 square miles. It is responsible for over 500 linear miles of wildland-urban interface (WUI), where homes' backyards meet dense vegetation. The City's program priorities include brush management, weed reduction, and fuel management within the San Diego River watershed and surrounding regions. This helps protect resources, native habitats, and disadvantaged populations and communities from the threat of wildfire.

In 2023, there were more than 6,000 fire incidents in the City of San Diego. It has become clear that vegetation management is necessary to reduce fire hazards around structures, and fire access on public roadways is required to help firefighters protect life and property during fires. Moreover, reducing the use of heavy fire apparatus driving through protected areas will help keep native habitats intact following a response to fire suppression. Since many parts of San Diego are in high fire hazard severity zones, there is an urgent need to manage vegetation, maintain fire breaks, and allow for emergency access.

[A map of fire threat severity zones](https://www.sandiego.gov/fire/services/brush/severityzones) can be found at:  
[https://www.sandiego.gov/fire/services/brush/severityzones.](https://www.sandiego.gov/fire/services/brush/severityzones)

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) will be leading the brush management and providing fire suppression response, while the Foundation will take care of administrative and financial management. The main objective of the Project is to protect resources and reduce fire risk in the San Diego watershed by managing 526 acres of vegetation and enhancing wildfire defensibility. A specialized team of tree-fallers equipped with a fire apparatus will be deployed to support the fire suppression efforts.

The Project includes purchase of a smaller off-road fire apparatus and a Pierce Mini Pumper (or equivalent) to support deploying specialized firefighters and access incipient fires. A mini pumper is a fire apparatus with a fire pump of at least 250 gallons per minute (1000 L/min) capacity, water tank, and hose body whose primary purpose is to initiate a fire suppression attack on structural, vehicular, or vegetation fires, and to support associated fire department operations.

The Project team will use chainsaws and tree-felling equipment, along with a woodchipper. The SDFD will provide specialized training to firefighters, and the essential equipment will help the department achieve its goal of making San Diego's communities

## SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

more resilient and defensible against wildfires while preserving natural resources.

Fire prevention is especially critical for evacuation routes and difficult-to-access river bottom locations. The fire code official may require establishing an access roadway if there is a distinct hazard to life or property. The requested vehicle will have a vehicle wrap with community education and outreach information to promote the creation of new Fire-Safe Councils and Community Wildfire Protection Plans. The new apparatus will tow the woodchipper to encourage community involvement in removing and reducing dead, dying, and invasive vegetation within and bordering the watershed. Additionally, GPS tracking will monitor progress.

This Project aims to provide safe, sustainable services that will reduce fire risk through brush management, weed reduction, and fuel management while protecting the San Diego River watershed, native habitats, natural resources, and disadvantaged communities. The Pierce Mini Pumper will support firefighters in a smaller vehicle, preventing damage to the native vegetation from heavier fire apparatus loads and reducing destructive overhaul efforts.

### DELIVERABLES:

- Quarterly request for disbursements, progress reports with photo documentation of before, during and after implementation
- Provide GPS data or shapefiles of treatment areas
- Education Outreach
- Create/maintain of fire breaks and evacuation routes
- Final Report
  - Number of acres of fuel reduction and treatments
  - Length of created/maintained fire breaks and trails

**Table 1. Estimated Budget and Anticipated Schedule**

Task #	Description	Amount	Schedule
1. Project Administration/ Management	Quarterly reports, financial planning	\$18,000.00	Quarterly throughout 2-year grant period
2. Project Implementation	One Pierce Mini Pumper (or equivalent), one tow behind chipper (Wallenstein BXTR5224 or equivalent), chainsaws, hand tools, helmets, boots, eye protection, wildland shirt/pants, gear bags, portable restroom trailer	\$604,000.00	Quarter 1
<b>Task 1-2</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$622,000.00</b>	<b>2024-2026</b>

**PROJECT FINANCING:** The total Project amount is \$622,000.00; the Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$622,000.00 for the implementation of the proposed Project. The anticipated source of Conservancy funds for this Project is the

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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Budget Act of 2021 and/or 2023.

**LEVERAGED FUNDING:** The City of San Diego has resources for labor, time and material maintenance. “In-kind” contributions will be in the form of staff time, field labor, and equipment maintenance over an extended period. The estimated in-kind contribution will be included in final report, based upon grant award and work required for fulfillment.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:** This Project would be undertaken consistent with the Conservancy’s enabling legislation (Public Resources Code, §§ 32630-32659.9).

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):** The Project is consistent with Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, and Program 6 Expand the Organization’s Capacity and Public Outreach of the Conservancy’s Strategic Plan Update 2024-2028.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE PURPOSES OF THE FUNDING SOURCE:** Budget Act 2023 is for wildfire and climate resilience, watershed protection, natural and cultural resource protection, and community access projects. The funding is immediately available for shovel-ready projects.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE CONSERVANCY’S DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM:**

This Project achieves one or more of the purposes:

- Located in the San Diego River watershed;
- Protecting Resources
- Protecting and Enhancing Wildlife habitats
- Removing invasive plant species from the watershed
- Protecting the natural and scenic beauty of the San Diego River watershed.

**ALIGNMENT WITH PLANS AND PRIORITIES:**

**A. California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan**

Supports activities such as fuels reduction, forest thinning, vegetation management, prescribed fire, shaded fuel breaks, defensible space, and enhancement of fire-prone habitats to reduce fire risk.

**B. Safeguarding California Plan: 2018 Update California’s Climate Adaptation Strategy**

Supports Principle 2, Principle 5, and Principle 6 for various public benefits, creation of jobs and mitigation and adaptation strategies to increase equity and resilience through investments, planning, research, and education.

**C. California’s Fourth Climate Change Assessment**

Supports local adaptation strategy and resilience, and protection of the state’s most vulnerable populations and communities.

**D. State Wildlife Action Plan**

Goal 3 - Enhance Ecosystem Functions and Processes: Maintain and improve

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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ecosystem functions and processes vital for sustaining ecosystems in California.

### **E. Strategic Fire Plan for California**

Goal 5: Integrate fire and fuels management practices with landowner/land manager priorities across all ownerships and jurisdictions.

### **F. San Diego River Conservancy's Climate Change Policy**

Provide climate-related mitigation or improvements within disadvantaged communities; Recognize that wildland fires may be a major contributor to atmospheric carbon dioxide, and implement fire safety mitigation projects where appropriate; Leverage partnerships and resources with local communities, including government entities and non-profits; Engage local communities through outreach, education, and interpretation, particularly as it relates to long-term stewardship and climate change awareness.

### **G. California Natural Resources Agency's Initiatives.**

This project advances the following initiatives:

- Climate Resilience
- Protecting Biodiversity
- Nature-Based Solutions
- Supporting Healthy River and Landscapes

### **H. City of San Diego Ordinance Fire Prevention Bureau (FPB) Policy B-18-01**

Mitigation for reduced brush management zones

### **I. San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) Section 142.0412 - Brush Management Zone**

#### **BENEFITS:**

Anticipated benefits include protecting resources, reducing fire risk, enhancing wildlife habitats, removing invasive plants, promoting the re-establishment of native species, and protecting the natural and scenic beauty of the San Diego River Watershed.

Keeping fire out of the San Diego River watershed by creating defensible space from abutting properties and extinguishing fires from within the watershed help protect vulnerable populations (assisted living, canyon rim homes, schools, low-income, historically disadvantaged, historic fire areas, and wildland habitats).

The equipment will support tactical patrol monitoring and fire suppression efforts to enhance, create, and maintain fuel breaks. Using a smaller fire apparatus with off-road capabilities allows access to areas that will disrupt the continuity of fuel and aid firefighters if a fire emerges. These activities will reduce the impact of heavier engines driving through protected areas and allow for the support of fire suppression that may be delayed when aerial firefighting resources are unavailable.

Activities will help protect vulnerable populations and treated areas will be recorded via GPS tracking to show progress. The grant-acquired vehicles will help reduce fire risk and

## **SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY**

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the woodchipper will be available during projects to maintain trails and public accessways.

Vehicles acquired through the grant will increase education, outreach, and community awareness through vehicle wraps and signage promoting the San Diego River Conservancy's investments.

### **PROJECT READINESS:**

The SDFD is well positioned to complete the project within a 2-year timeframe. The Foundation does not anticipate any potential delays for Right of Entry or Encroachment Permits. SDFD Fall team will evaluate and determine defensible space requirements for City of San Diego property within the San Diego River watershed.

City staff biologists operate under local Landscape Regulations, which are in place to comply with the City's California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document and thresholds. The use of requested equipment will decrease negative impacts on environmentally sensitive lands, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and global warming.

All work currently conducted to use equipment undergoes a review with city staff for substantial adverse impacts, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in the City's Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) or other local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The work SDFD will do through the Conservancy's grant Project will have a net positive impact to preserve and protect surrounding areas.

This grant will expand and support other Projects SDFD is working on. SDFD is working with the SD County Fire Protection District on fuels reduction for evacuation corridors. The SDFD will clear 10 feet along both sides of roadways.

There have been increases in insurance rates, uninsurable homes, and a retreat of insurance companies due to the extra hazardous fire conditions in the San Diego region, which are additional reasons this Project is beneficial.

The City of San Diego fleet mechanics will provide ongoing maintenance and replacement support for the vehicle(s) and equipment over the long-term. This grant proposal incorporates usage fees to address both routine and significant mechanical issues. In addition to the existing 2 Pierce Mini Pumpers and parts in the fleet, the City of San Diego can supply backup/reserve units while a vehicle is undergoing maintenance. The Fire Department also benefits from specialized personnel dedicated to maintaining equipment.

### **PERMIT COMPLIANCE:**

Areas owned or leased by the City of San Diego are exempt from permits under categorical exemptions. A significant portion of the city is in the WUI as defined by California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) in the High or Very High Hazard Severity Zones. SDFD is the public agency having responsibility for 100ft of fuel clearance. Any areas not owned by the City would require a Right of Entry Permit, which will be approved prior to any activity.

State of California  
San Diego River Conservancy

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: 17

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:

Conservancy staff attended the follow events:

Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team Steering Committee Meeting All  
State Conservancy 2024 Spring Meeting  
California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force Meeting  
Fire Safe Council of San Diego County  
San Diego Canyonlands Advisory Committee  
San Diego Biodiversity Summit (San Diego Natural History Museum/  
SANDAG)  
County Parks Trans County Trail Meeting  
SDSU Mission Valley Park event  
San Diego Fire-Rescue demonstration

State of California  
San Diego River Conservancy

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: 18

SUBJECT: **NEXT MEETING**

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting is anticipated to be held in person on Wednesday, July 17, 2024, from 10:00 am to noon.



State of California  
San Diego River Conservancy

**Meeting of March 28, 2024**

ITEM: 19

SUBJECT: ADJOURNMENT