

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, May 22, 2025
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm**

Meeting Locations

San Diego County Administration Center 1600 Pacific Highway, Room 302 San Diego, CA 92101	Natural Resources Agency HQ 715 P Street 20-105 (Farallon Room) Sacramento, CA, 95814
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Teleconference Line
877-336-1831, Code 2199399

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 March 21, 2025, 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. The Biodiversity Initiative from the Natural Resources Agency
(INFORMATIONAL)**

In October 2020, Governor Newsom issued [Executive Order N-82-20](#) which establishes a state goal of conserving 30% of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030 – known as 30x30. The 30x30 goal is intended to help accelerate conservation of our lands and coastal waters through voluntary, collaborative action with partners across the state to meet three objectives: conserve and restore biodiversity, expand access to nature, and mitigate and build resilience to climate change. Conservancies, including San Diego River Conservancy, are essential partners in realizing the 30x30 vision. To view the 2024 Annual Report go to [2024 30x30 Pathways Progress Report](#)

Presentation:

Meghan Hertel, Deputy Secretary, Biodiversity & Habitat, Natural Resources Agency

8. Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation Proposal to Improve Parking, Trails, and Access (ACTION)

The Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation is proposing a project in partnership with the City of San Diego's Open space division to improve public access and user experience. The proposal includes parking lot enhancements with additional parking spaces, a better accessibility route from the parking lot to the Visitor Center, a new trailhead and loop trail, and planting native trees. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$2,000,000 from Proposition 68 and the General Fund.

Presentation:

Jennifer Morrissey, Executive Director, Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation
Leigh Kyle, Principal, Spurlock Landscape Architects

Recommendation: Approve Resolution No. 25-04

9. San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation Proposal for Swiftwater Rescue Team Equipment (ACTION)

San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation, in partnership with the City of San Diego's Fire-Rescue Departments, is proposing to procure updated personal protective equipment (helmets, boots, drysuits), rescue equipment, and Demaree Inflatable Boats. The San Diego Lifeguards use specialized rescue equipment for the Swiftwater Rescue Team (SRT). These resources are essential to carry out their

mission. The SRT manages water and floods through various methods. During rain/flood events, the SRT prevents vehicles from submerging in water through road closures and rescues people trapped by water. Outside of rain/flood events, the SRT participates in river cleanup efforts in the San Diego River valleys. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$69,550.00 from Proposition 68 and the General Fund.

Presentation:

Wendy Moore, Executive Director, San Diego Fire-Rescue

Recommendation: Approve Resolution No. 25-05

10. 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:

- Governor's Proclamation State of Emergency (March 1, 2025)
- 2024 Climate Bond updates
 - Proposition 4 - Wildfire Early Action
 - [Public Resources Code division-50 chapter-3 section-91520 \(m\)](#)

Conservancy staff attended the following events & meetings:

Proposition 4 (2024 Climate Bond) meetings
Climate Bond Program Coordination Team meeting
Department of General Services
Cleveland National Forest
Lakeside's River Park Conservancy
City of Santee
San Diego Canyonlands
San Diego Regional Fire Foundation
San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation
San Diego Natural History Museum
County of San Diego, Sheriff's Re-entry program
Trans County Trail meeting (County of San Diego)
California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force
Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team Steering Committee
Fire Safe Council of San Diego County
California Natural Resources Agency Speaker Series

11. Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting is anticipated to be held in person on Wednesday, September 17, 2025, from 10:00 am to noon.

12. Adjournment

Accessibility

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

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2025

ITEM: 1

SUBJECT: ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2025

ITEM: **2**

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

The Board will consider adoption of the March 21, 2025, Board Meeting.

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

RECOMMENDATION: Approve minutes

SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

Minutes of March 21, 2025, Public Meeting
(Draft Minutes for Approval on May 22, 2025)

CONSERVANCY Board Member, Ben Clay called the March 21, 2025, meeting of the San Diego River Conservancy to order at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Item 1. Roll Call

Members Present

Lisa Adams	Department of Parks and Recreation
Stephen Benson	Department of Finance
Emily Burgueno	Kumeyaay Diegueño Land Conservancy
Jennifer Campbell	Mayor, City of San Diego, Designee
Raul Campillo	Councilmember, City of San Diego, District 7
Ben Clay, Chair	Public at Large
Rebecca Fris	Wildlife Conservation Board
Phil Ortiz	City of El Cajon
Cody Petterson	Speaker of the Assembly
Elsa Saxod	Public at Large (arrive 1:36 pm)
Gary Strawn	San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
Dustin Trotter	City of Santee

Absent

Joel Anderson	Supervisor, County of San Diego, Second District
Ruth Hayward	Public at Large
Ray Lennox	Department of Parks and Recreation
Glen Lubcke	Department of Fish and Wildlife
Andrea Scharffer	Natural Resources Agency

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

Raul Campillo moved for approval of **January 22, 2025**, minutes and Dustin Trotter seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ben Clay, Raul Campillo, Stephen Benson, Lisa Adams, Cody Petterson, Dr. Jennifer Campbell, Phil Ortiz, Dustin Trotter, Elsa Saxod (9-0-1) Abstain: Emily Burgueno.

Item 3. Public Comment (*INFORMATIONAL*)

Ben Clay welcomed everyone and acknowledged the proclamation the Conservancy received from the City of Chula Vista. Chula Vista recognized the contributions of the San Diego Regional Fire Foundation and Conservancy to the Chula Vista Fire Department. Ben Clay thanked them and appreciated all the various partnerships including cities, Native Americans and fire safe councils (FSCs). Ben especially thanks all of those who do the very important, but hard fire prevention work.

Ben Clay mentioned he took a tour of the Las Colinas jail. He had the chance to meet the commander of the prison where they discussed growing food for the County of San Diego's Sheriff's Re-entry program. Commander Rand, who oversees the program liked the idea.

On another note, while in Sacramento, Ben discussed with Supervisor Anderson to have one of his staff members attend the Conservancy meetings. Andrew Hayes does Supervisor Anderson's field work and is familiar with San Diego's east county. The Conservancy's statute specifically specifies who can sit on the Board. Ben asked for Hayley's input about the rules of how this might work.

Hayley Peterson clarified that the San Diego River Conservancy Act provides certain positions to have a designee. In the past the Act has been amended to provide for a designee when one is not able to attend. For the position that Supervisor Anderson holds, it does not provide for a designee. While Mr. Hayes will be sitting at the dais, he will not be included for attendance purposes, will not count towards quorum, make or vote on motions nor participate in closed sessions. The Chair has invited Andrew Hayes and allowed for the County of San Diego to provide and receive input.

Emily Burgueno asked about the non-voting designee position. Is it more in lieu of or alongside?

Hayley Peterson responded it is not a position on the Board, but essentially a member of the public who has been elevated to serve as a representative of Supervisor Anderson. This is a courtesy of the office to have a seat at the table. As it relates to the Kumeyaay Diegueño Land Conservancy, it does provide for a designee.

Andrew Hayes introduced himself to the Board. He was born and raised in the second district of San Diego County. He currently lives in Lakeside and serves on the Lakeside school board. He is excited to be here and represent Supervisor Anderson. He wants to make sure to opine of the important issues the Conservancy works on.

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

No Report

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

Hayley Peterson stated the final reminder for the statement of economic interests Form 700 is due April 1, 2025. The Fair Political Practices Commission will impose late fees if they are not received in a timely manner.

Item 6. Health and Safety Report (INFORMATIONAL)

No Report

Item 7. San Diego Regional Fire Foundation's Proposal for Community Based Fire Preparedness and Prevention for 2025 (ACTION)

Julia Richards noted, as indicated in the agenda, if approved, this project will support 19 FSCs in the Conservancy's service area and may also aid additional FSCs if and when they are established.

The proposed project from the San Diego Regional Fire Foundation for fire preparedness and prevention aims to support local FSCs, carry out essential fuel mitigation work targeting 161 acres in San Diego County, specifically the Julian/Wynola area and the City of Chula Vista. Additionally, the project includes the development of a new evacuation route for Wynola Estates.

The Conservancy Board previously approved a grant for Wynola Estates Phase 1 for project design, permit review and implementation across 36 acres on residential property. Before the Board today is a request to fund Phase 2 for hazardous fuels reduction targeting 144 acres.

The majority of the targeted areas fall within CAL FIRE's high to very high-risk areas. Conservancy staff met with the executive director and Chair of the San Diego Regional Fire Foundation to review the proposal.

The proposed project is consistent with San Diego River Conservancy's enabling legislation, and the Directed Grant Program. The proposed project is supported by 2 Conservancy program areas: Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach. The proposed project is also aligned with 6 state and other local plans. The proposed project also supports California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan.

Additional information is located in the staff report, and if approved, funding would be provided through Proposition 68. Conservancy staff recommends approval of Resolution 25-01 to San Diego Regional Fire Foundation in the amount of \$877,807.

Julia introduced the San Diego Regional Fire Foundation, Executive Director Joan Jones and Board Chairman Frank Ault. They will provide a presentation on the proposed project and answer any questions.

Joan Jones thanked Julia and the Board for the comprehensive preparation of the staff report. The recent fires in Los Angeles, as well as the Montezuma and Border 2 Fire here in the Conservancy areas have galvanized the communities. FSCs are made up of volunteers within a community. People are hyperaware of fire risk and are mobilizing to become educated and prepared for wildfire. The fire risk to rural, wildland urban interface (WUI) and urban is very real.

The proposed project has three components, all aimed at creating defensible space and increasing wildfire preparedness education. The proposal includes funding FSCs for 2025, and two fuels reduction projects. Hazardous fuels will be addressed on 144 acres at Wynola Estates and 17 acres in the City of Chula Vista.

There is plenty to do to support these communities and that's where the FSCs come in. San Diego is unique for the number of FSCs which are grassroots volunteer organizations that play a critical role in reducing both the number and severity of fires. They have deep local networks and are the boots on the ground that roll up their sleeves to do the hard work and keep communities safe. Funding from grants provides the major source, and in many cases, the only source of funding these organizations receive. FSCs do the following: they provide education to residents on important wildfire preparedness topics, such as defensible space, home hardening, and evacuation planning. They also provide vegetation management services including dumpsters for residents to dispose of vegetation and they conduct chipping events. They also hold community cleanup events. Other than causing an eye sore, left debris poses a fire hazard. Last year there were 13 FSCs. Now there are 19 and counting. This shows the action people are taking to combat wildfire risk.

FSCs provide services to disadvantaged residents – those that are low income, elderly, veterans and disabled. People who are unable or can't afford to do the work to keep their homes and properties fire safe. Joan showed a video of a chipping event last weekend at Potrero. There were 17 truckloads that came through and over 1,000 cubic feet of vegetation was chipping that day.

So, what do FSCs accomplish? In 2023, they removed 900,000 cubic feet of vegetation, collected 162 tons of metal, trash and electronics at community cleanup events and held events attended by 8,000 people, serving 1,000 residents with chipping and dumpster events and these FSCs volunteers have spent 14,000 hours doing this work valued at half a million dollars. 2025 results will be more substantial as the number of FSCs are higher.

These organizations have a very effective way of keeping communities focused on wildfire prevention and preparedness. Turning to the second project, fuels mitigation in Wynola Estates, four major fires have impacted the Wynola Estates area in the last 70 years. She commented on two of them.

The first was the Inaja Fire, very near Wynola, 11 firefighters lost their lives. The cedar fire burned over 273,000 acres decimating 75% of the San Diego River Watershed. At the time in 2003, the damage was estimated at \$1.3 billion dollars. Catastrophic fires are a real fire threat to these communities and the San Diego River watershed. She showed photos representing the vegetation mitigation needed at Wynola Estates. The area is full of dense dried out vegetation which increases the intensity and speed of fire spread. The area has deep canyons and drainages that connect fire corridors funneling flames and intensifying fire behavior.

Approximately 200 residents live in Wynola Estates, most of them elderly on fixed incomes. The Wynola Water District donated \$16,000 to develop a comprehensive defensible space plan for Wynola Estates. The defensible space is not clear cutting, but will remove dead trees, limb up trees, and remove overgrown vegetation, all according to CAL FIRE standards. Nearly all of the Wynola Estates residents support the project. It is also supported by their Homeowners Association, the water district, FSC and CAL FIRE.

Highway 78 borders the northwest and east side of Wynola Estates. Sparks from vehicles traveling on Highway 78 poses significant fire threat. Treacherous Santa Ana winds blowing in from the east are another major danger. At the northern tip of the project is Santa Ysabel East Preserve. The land is owned by San Diego County.

Wynola Estates currently only has two narrow roads exiting the community. If these roads became engulfed in flames or blocked some way, people will be trapped like the Palisades Fire. To avoid this, their proposal includes the construction of a 24-foot-wide evacuation road in the southeast portion of the community.

The third component of the proposal is hazardous fuel reduction in Rice Canyon, one of the largest canyons in Chula Vista. The Chula Vista Fire Department has identified the area as its top priority for mitigation work and has a fuels crew available to do the work. They are contributing 2/3 of the total project cost. Rice Canyon is located in a densely populated area surrounded by 8,400 homes. A map of Rice Canyon was shown targeting 17 acres on the north facing slope. The areas will be treated within 100 feet of the homes. The health and resilience of Rice Canyon can greatly impact the Sweetwater River. Seasonal creeks in Rice Canyon contribute to Sweetwater River.

The total project cost is \$1.9 million, and the request for funding from the Conservancy is \$877,807. Leveraged funding totals \$1.1 million. The Conservancy would fund 45% of the total cost and 55% would come from other sources. Their request to the Conservancy includes \$237,000 for the 19 FSCs at an average of \$12,500 each. \$481,310 to conduct hazardous fuels reduction on 144 acres in Wynola Estates. The Wynola Water District Board will contribute over \$24,000 to the project, \$45,000 is requested to conduct hazardous fuel reduction on 17 acres in the City of Chula Vista. Lastly, they are requesting \$114,497 for program management. This includes oversight of the FSC program and managing all aspects of the Wynola Estates and Rice Canyon projects. In addition, \$472,00 was provided from the Sunrise Powerlink for qualified FSCs and \$445,000 representing 11,400 hours of volunteer FSCs labor.

She thanked the Conservancy Board for this opportunity.

Phil Ortiz asked about the Sunrise Powerlink.

Joan Jones responded that the San Diego Regional Fire Foundation was set up by SDG&E when the Southwest Powerlink transmission lines were put in place. Every year they have a budget to support different projects for areas within that corridor.

Ben Clay asked about evacuation routes. He remembers Elsa discussing the Kensington area and their issues with evacuation routes. Ben asked if Conservancy Board members who represent cities, county, special districts, or Native Americans, can avail themselves of her services.

Joan Jones responded there are similar situations in Alvarado Estates and Crest community. Folks are working with their fire departments.

Emily Burgueno introduced herself as Chairwoman for the Kumeyaay Diegueño Land Conservancy which is a consortium of 10 of the 12 Kumeyaay Bands which are sovereign tribal nations here in San Diego. Kumeyaay have always been here and will always be here. She would like to take this opportunity to build upon each other's priorities and support each other. Out of the 19 FSCs, how many have tribal participation? She is talking specifically about tribal government officials.

Catastrophic fires are a direct repercussion of colonial settlement violence because of the displacement of the original people and the traditional land stewardship they had in those areas that are no longer. Wynola being one and Chula Vista being another and Los Angeles being a major one with the Tongva. When talking about wildfire prevention, it starts with why wildfires are there because they haven't always been here. They have been a contemporary issue in the last 250 years. Fire management didn't start with CAL FIRE, any government official or Board. It started with the traditional land stewardship. She added, the County of San Diego Parks and Recreation's Santa Ysabel Nature Center does not align with tribal priorities since they went against recommendations and desecrated a village site.

Joan Jones responded, to her knowledge, that they all work with their tribes within areas of their FSCs. Campo has been working on community cleanup projects. Contractors they are engaged with are aware of what they should look for. Before work is done, they do a detailed review and map anything sensitive. The acreage is on private property and a biologist conducts a survey.

Emily Burgueno said no one can speak for this land except for the people who came from the land. Ultimately this is on Kumeyaay land no matter whose jurisdiction it is on. They should include the tribal monitors because we have our experts as well.

Raul Campillo moved for approval of Resolution 25-01, and **Dr. Jennifer Campbell** seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ben Clay, Raul Campillo, Stephen Benson, Lisa Adams, Cody Petterson, Dr. Jennifer Campbell, Emily Burgueno, Phil Ortiz, Dustin Trotter, Elsa Saxod (10-0-0)

Item 8. San Diego State University's One Water Living Learning Laboratory Quest for Funding (ACTION)

Julia Richards thanked Chair Clay.

Previously in February 2024, the Conservancy Board approved \$2,000,000 for design construction and installation of a modular laboratory: One Water Living Learning Laboratory (OWLLL). Today, San Diego State University (SDSU) is seeking funding for the OWLLL to tackle unforeseen increases in construction costs. In addition, this proposed project includes requests to establish an outdoor demonstration area, acquire essential laboratory equipment, and install a security system. If approved, this project will enhance SDSU's ability to innovate and educate in sustainable water management practices in the San Diego region. The OWLLL is in the River Park at SDSU Mission Valley.

The Conservancy staff met with representatives from SDSU to review the proposal. The proposed project is consistent with the San Diego River Conservancy enabling legislation, and the Directed Grant Program. It is supported by three Conservancy program areas; 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 aligned with 5 state and other local plans.

Additional information is located in the staff report, and if approved, funding will be provided through Proposition 68. Conservancy staff recommends approval of Resolution 25-02 for SDSU in the amount of \$600,292.

Today representing SDSU we have Paul Jackson, Program Manager for the Mission Valley Development and Professor Dr. Natalie Mladenov. They will provide a presentation on the proposed project.

Natalie Mladenov thanked the Board for this opportunity to present this request for funding additional programmatic infrastructure. She gave a brief Kumeyaay land acknowledgement.

Just over a year ago they shared their vision for the OWLLL encompassing a shared vision for a number of faculty. She read from the US Water Alliance Vision for One Water Future. It values water in every stage and form, focuses on achieving multi-benefits to use watershed-scale thinking and action and accounts for climate action urgency and opportunities. These are the major goals of the OWLLL. Over 15 faculty in different departments across SDSU Campus are involved. Over 10 years ago, they formed a group called Blue Gold to focus on mitigating the effects of water scarcity. Some of the projects they work on include Tijuana River, pollution, microplastics and their goals are to have an indoor lab and outdoor education area in Mission Valley for watershed science and water technologies.

The type of research encompasses watershed hydrology, disturbance studies including flooding and fire and how that effects watersheds, water monitoring and sensors and now using artificial intelligence and machine learning. Other water technologies are for re-use as well. It's not just about research but also education and training.

The Silver Tsunami in the water industry will be seeing a lot of people retiring. Training the next generation on leading edge innovative technologies is promoted at SDSU. The OWLLL is located at the southwest corner of Mission Valley in the River Park. Important features use native plantings, outreach and education panels across the park that make for a great tour that can start at the OWLLL. The bio infiltration basin adjacent to the site and storm drain is not just for research but to showcase different water treatment technologies.

They would like to bring in expertise in traditional knowledge for land management and reach out to colleagues who just got funding to have a small workshop to bring in experts who have indigenous knowledge on watershed management practices.

A sewer line from Snapdragon Stadium will bring wastewater to the OWLLL site for access and use for research. This is not something SDSU has on the main campus. Wastewater is then safely returned to the sewer line known as sewer mining and no wastewater permits are needed.

Paul Jackson stated his role is to support Natalie and the other professors' vision to make the OWLLL a reality. Natalie mentioned last year SDSU received a grant from the Conservancy. They brought on a design build contractor to understand the complete vision of the OWLLL with schematic options and conceptual plans. The facility for this research needs to have new equipment so modifications can be made. They explored crawl spaces, building options and came up with some solutions.

They are working with the City of San Diego for an easement amendment agreement to be presented to City Council next month for continued use of the Mission Valley River Park property. A conceptual design of the building was shown. Doors on both sides allow plumbing, wet utilities to stay on the north wall and into tanks and previously installed services. Educational opportunities will be presented at the building.

Included is a roof canopy, security system and interior equipment to enhance educational opportunities.

Natalie Mladenov showed the design and layout of interior lab equipment. This includes an incubator, biosafety equipment, training, sampling and analysis, drying oven, muffle furnace, refrigeration and freezer space, pumps

to bring the water to and back out of the building. Everything from wastewater surveillance and tracking in wastewater, river water quality, hydrology and hydraulics would be supported by this project.

Paul Jackson the request today is for \$600,292 which will include the equipment mentioned, outdoor canopy, security system and project management. As far as the schedule goes, their target to open is spring of next year. This summer they plan to get the modular building approved. Fabrication time is probably the longest. The modular building is anticipated to be onsite in fall and operation starting in the Spring of 2026.

Phil Ortiz asked about the research whether it is current or future. Is there an advantage or need for the facility to be located there?

Natalie Mladenov responded this facility will consolidate the research since currently they are distributed between different buildings on SDSU campus. Also, it provides an outdoor area whereas on campus there is no outdoor facility to conduct this type of research.

Ben Clay reminded the Board about the caffeine and sucralose study SDSU presented a few years back. He asked if this facility will help with studying the Tijuana River.

Natalie Mladenov said currently they are unable to sewer mine on the main campus. Her colleague Matthew Verbyla works on wastewater-based epidemiology and tracking what is in the wastewater. This would not be possible without a connection to the sewer line. They currently applied for a grant to study the Tijuana River collaborating with University of California San Diego scientists to share their knowledge.

Emily Burgueno added SDSU has an MOU with the Kumeyaay Nation through the Kumeyaay Community College. The partnership is on paper and she hopes to align priorities of both entities. The area proposed for building upon is a documented village site. It is a special place, and she looks forward to seeing how the research can enhance water health. There are burials in the area, so she asked to be mindful. Within the design process of the park, the Kumeyaay Heritage Preservation Committee worked with SDSU to create education panels and other design elements.

Paul Jackson clarified earth disturbing activities to construct the park included Kumeyaay monitors. SDSU is locating the lab on previously disturbed areas surveyed with cultural monitors.

Natalies Mladenov thanked Emily for her comments and suggested through education they can get the message out.

Elsa Saxod moved for approval of Resolution 25-02, and Phil Ortiz seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ben Clay, Raul Campillo, Stephen Benson, Lisa Adams, Cody Petterson, Dr. Jennifer Campbell, Emily Burgueno, Phil Ortiz, Dustin Trotter, Elsa Saxod (10-0-0)

Item 9. Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation's Proposal to Remove Invasive Plants from Kumeyaay Lakes (ACTION)

Julia Richards thanked Chair Clay. The proposed project from the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation (Foundation) request funding to remove and treat invasive plant removal at Kumeyaay Lake.

The project aims to improve water quality and restore native habitat to increase biodiversity for native and endangered plant and animal species in the San Diego River watershed. The floating water primrose (*Ludwigia peploides*) is a highly invasive aquatic weed, which outcompetes native aquatic plants and degrades habitats for birds and wildlife altering the physical properties of the lake. The primrose also provides a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

The Conservancy staff met with the applicant's executive director, visited the site and reviewed the proposal.

The proposed project is consistent with San Diego River Conservancy enabling legislation, and the Directed Grant Program, supported by three Conservancy program areas: Program 2 Support and Encourage Recreation and Education, Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, and Program 5 Enhance Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance. The proposed project is aligned with four state and other local plans.

Additional information is located in the staff report, and if approved, funding would be provided through Proposition 68. Conservancy staff recommends approval of Resolution 25-03 to the Foundation in the amount of \$175,503.

Julia introduced the Foundation's Executive Director, Jennifer Morrissey.

Jennifer Morrissey thanked the Board for their previous grant awards to the Foundation. Just this week, San Diego City Council accepted the donation from the Foundation with funding from a Conservancy grant. The Foundation donated 108 acres to add to Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP).

Kumeyaay Lake is within the campground at MTRP. The targeted species is invasive primrose. The Foundation intends to engage a contractor to manage the invasive species. It has spread throughout the lake and is choking out habitat. A map of the area was shown, and she stated it has gotten worse since the making of the map.

Contractors will help to control growth. City Rangers will then conduct maintenance and monitoring once the areas have been initially cleared. While it looks pretty, it does a lot of damage. It restricted fishing access and makes it difficult for fish to swim. Birds lack access to the lake and then the lake becomes a major breeding ground for mosquitoes.

The need is great for this project because it impacts the ecosystem's health. The invasive plant can float downstream; it hinders community access and negatively impacts native flora and fauna. Once removed, improvements include enhanced water quality, preventing the spread of these plants and improving access to a freshwater source for birds and wildlife.

Raul Campillo thanked Jennifer for the presentation. Kumeyaay Lake is frequented by his residents. He asked what will be done to combat its return once this is removed? Would this be funding the project, has a request for proposals been sent out and selected? Emily Burgueno has mentioned this throughout the meeting; in terms of relationship with Kumeyaay peoples, can we look towards including Kumeyaay methods for fire prevention, and trail maintenance?

Jennifer Morrissey stated City Staff Ranger have a boat to continue removal if it grows back. Rangers can follow up to help prevent the spread. The Foundation will make sure the agreed upon maintenance continues. They have not selected a contractor, but the proposal includes the quote. She will reach out to the Kumeyaay.

Gary Strawn asked what will be done after the removal of the floating water primrose. He was out with the volunteer crew Sampling water in the San Diego River and noted dissolved oxygen was higher than normal. However, wherever he sees floating primrose grow, dissolved oxygen nears zero. He has had luck removing it by cutting it from the bottom.

Jennifer Morrissey responded once the invasive plant is removed, they will let it dry then dispose of it. She added that floating water primrose grows from the bottom of the lake then makes its way up.

Emily Burgueno added when thinking of restoration work with traditional ecological knowledge, something will need to replace what was removed. For example, the tule and willow grow well there and could enhance the native species.

Dustin Trotter moved for approval of Resolution 25-03 and **Cody Petterson** seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ben Clay, Raul Campillo, Stephen Benson, Lisa Adams, Cody Petterson, Dr. Jennifer Campbell, Emily

Burgueno, Phil Ortiz, Dustin Trotter, Elsa Saxod (10-0-0)

Item 10. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL/ACTION)

Julia Richards thanked Chair Clay.

The Conservancy continues to attend various meetings as listed on the agenda under the EO report.

She provided an update on the 2024 Climate Bond (Proposition 4) and processes. The Conservancy has held two workshops for the 2024 Climate Bond with non-profit organizations, local, state, federal and tribal governments. In addition, Conservancy staff attended over 10 follow up meetings regarding the grant program, processes and discussed project ideas.

Staff also attended the monthly meetings held by the Natural Resources Agency regarding bond oversight, management and technical issues. Staff is currently updating grant program guidelines and will post updates on the Conservancy's website by the end of March. Concept proposals are due by July 11, 2025.

If you know of any organization planning to submit concept proposals, please encourage them to submit in advance of the deadline so the Conservancy is able to provide timely feedback.

Emily Burgueno asked about future workshops. She recommended including the Kumeyaay Nation's subcommittee Chairs.

Julia Richards responded the Conservancy has engaged with local Kumeyaay bands. Conservancy staff reached out to nine bands from the Kumeyaay Nation through emails, phone calls and letters. We've received responses from five of the bands of the Kumeyaay Nation and met with them individually to share information about this funding opportunity. Over 30 people attended the workshops, and the Conservancy would be happy to brief you or other Kumeyaay people about the 2024 Climate Bond funding opportunities through the Conservancy.

Item 11. Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be held Wednesday, May 22, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Item 12. Adjournment

Ben Clay adjourned the meeting at 2:33 pm

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2025

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 May 22, 2025

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 May 22, 2025

ITEM: 5

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

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2025

ITEM: 6

SUBJECT: HEALTH AND SAFETY (*INFORMATIONAL*)

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2025

ITEM: 7

SUBJECT: **BIODIVERSITY INITIATIVE FROM THE NATURAL
RESOURCES AGENCY *(INFORMATIONAL)***

In October 2020, Governor Newsom issued [Executive Order N-82-20](#) which establishes a state goal of conserving 30% of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030 – known as 30x30. The 30x30 goal is intended to help accelerate conservation of our lands and coastal waters through voluntary, collaborative action with partners across the state to meet three objectives: conserve and restore biodiversity, expand access to nature, and mitigate and build resilience to climate change. Conservancies, including San Diego River Conservancy, are essential partners in realizing the 30x30 vision. To view the 2024 Annual Report go to [2024 30x30 Pathways Progress Report](#).

Presentation:

Meghan Hertel, Deputy Secretary, Biodiversity & Habitat, Natural Resources Agency

Meeting of May 22, 2025

ITEM: 8

SUBJECT: **MISSION TRAILS REGIONAL PARK
FOUNDATION PROPOSAL TO IMPROVE
PARKING, TRAILS, AND ACCESS (*ACTION*)**

The Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation is proposing a project in partnership with the City of San Diego's Open space division to improve public access and user experience. The proposal includes parking lot enhancements with additional parking spaces, a better accessibility route from the parking lot to the Visitor Center, a new trailhead and loop trail, and planting native trees. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$2,000,000 from Proposition 68 and the General Fund.

Presentation:

Jennifer Morrissey, Executive Director, Mission Trails Regional
Park Foundation

Leigh Kyle, Principal, Spurlock Landscape Architects

Recommendation: Approve Resolution No. 25-04

Resolution No: 25-04

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

**AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO GRANT \$2,000,000.00 FROM
PROPOSITION 68 AND THE GENERAL FUND TO IMPROVE PUBLIC ACCESS AT MISSION
TRAILS REGIONAL PARK, INCLUDING UPGRADES FOR TRAILS, TRAILHEAD AND
ENTRY PLAZA, IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY TO THE PARKING LOT AND THE VISITOR
CENTER, AND PLANTING NATIVE TREES**

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 allocated General Funds under Budget Act 2021 and 2022 to fund climate resilience, wildfire, community access, and resource protection projects; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 68 was approved by voters on June 5, 2018, for the purposes of creation and rehabilitation of state and local parks, natural resources protection projects, climate adaptation projects, water quality and supply projects, and flood protection projects,

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy was allocated \$12,000,000 under Proposition 68, "the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018," (Public Resources Code section 80000 et seq.) with funds made available by Public Resources Code section 80110, subdivisions (b) (5),

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, Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation applied to the San Diego River Conservancy for grant funding to upgrade the area around the Visitor Center to better accommodate individuals with disabilities, increase pedestrian safety, and improve trails, trailhead and entrance plaza, and plant native trees at Mission Trails Regional Park Mission Trails Regional Park (Project); and

WHEREAS, San Diego River Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$2,000,000.00 to implement the Project; and

WHEREAS, this Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, including Program 2 Support and Encourage Recreation and Education, 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 \$2,000,000.00 (Two Million Dollars and Zero Cents) to implement the Project.
3. The proposed Project is consistent with the purposes and intent of Proposition 68 and General Fund.
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 May 22, 2025. I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution Number 25-04 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: Glen Lubcke			
Dr. Jennifer Campbell, SD Mayor Designee			
Joel Anderson, County Supervisor			
Raul Campillo, Vice Chair			
Ben Clay, Chair			
Ruth Hayward			
J. Cody Petterson			
Emily Burgueno			
Elsa Saxod			
DPR Designee, Ray Lennox			
DPR Designee, Lisa Adams			
Dustin Trotter			
Phil Ortiz			

SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
SDRC Resolution 25-04
May 22, 2025

DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to provide up to \$2,000,000.00 to Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation (MTRP Foundation) to upgrade the Visitor and Interpretive Center for improvements to accommodate individuals with disabilities, adding new parking lot spaces, increase pedestrian safety, and improve native habitat and a temporary shade structure to assist with the establishment of native trees at Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP).

LOCATION: MTRP is located at One Father Junípero Serra Trail and is owned by the City of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation, Open Space Division, in the San Diego River watershed.

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) as follows:

- To improve public access at MTRP, including upgrades for trails, trailhead and entry plaza, improved accessibility to the parking lot and the Visitor Center, and planting native trees. (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

Directed Grant program.

3. The proposed Project is consistent with Proposition 68 and the General Fund.

BACKGROUND

MTRP was established in 1974 to preserve the wilderness character and visual integrity of the land. The objectives, goals, and priorities of the park were later established by the Master Development Plan in 1976, which was subsequently revised in 1985. The MTRP Foundation was established in 1988 to help preserve, protect, improve and maintain the park. To date, they have fundraised and provided more than \$15M to support this goal.

The Master Plan Update called for establishing a visitor center. In 1995 that vision became a reality. The MTRP Foundation is committed to maintaining the Visitor Center and adjacent parking lot so that visitors have access to the resources MTRP offers. MTRP offers free public access to open space, recreational amenities and scenic views of the San Diego region throughout the year. For example, a bridge over the San Diego River near Old Mission Dam was built so visitors could safely cross, and a staging area on the southwestern side of Cowles Mountain was constructed for hikers. The Visitor Center is the gateway to the park, serving as a place to learn about the area's natural, cultural and historical significance.

PROJECT NEED

Over the years, it has become clear that certain aspects of the Visitor Center need updating to make the space more accessible year-round and safer for large groups, including the 7,000+ schoolchildren who visit the park on field trips each year.

In the fall of 2022, the MTRP Foundation conducted a community survey to gather input on desired improvements for the Visitor Center. Among the most frequent requests was the addition of more outdoor areas with shade and an increase in the size of gathering spaces. Currently, the spacious terrace, arrival plaza, and amphitheater lack shade and become too hot for programming, gatherings, or relaxation. With over 85,000 visitors each year, there are few shaded spots, limiting outdoor day use during the hot months from June to September.

This Project aims to plant several native trees in and around the arrival plaza and amphitheater, along with constructing a temporary, unobtrusive shade structure until the trees become established.

Following the survey, the MTRP Foundation enlisted Spurlock Landscape Architecture to assess the outdoor area surrounding the Visitor Center. During this assessment, it was found that the facility and parking lot needed better accommodations for individuals with disabilities. Given that the park's trails could be challenging for many visitors, the Visitor Center has the potential to be a more welcoming environment for those with physical limitations.

SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

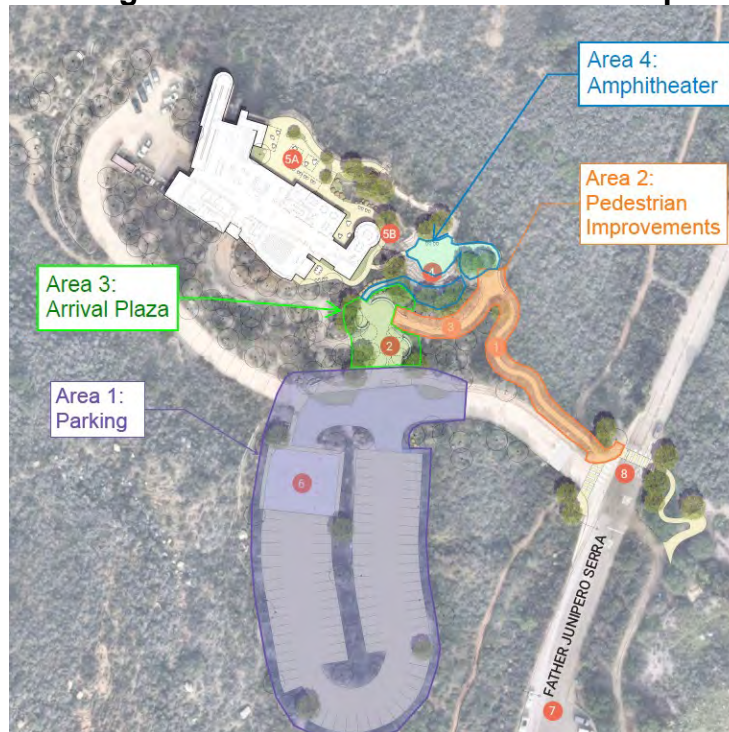
With these insights and the survey findings, the MTRP Foundation, along with leadership from the City of San Diego's Parks and Recreation Department, collaborated with Spurlock to develop a concept plan aimed at making the Visitor Center, parking lot, arrival plaza, and amphitheater ADA compliant. The objective of this project is to enhance access at the Visitor Center and to create a new trail that connects the Visitor Center to the popular Visitor Center Loop Trail. This new path will bypass the current narrow sidewalk, which runs alongside oncoming traffic just a few feet away from passing cars and increase user safety.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The areas proposed for improvements include:

- Area 1: Parking Lot. Expand and resurface with permeable paving the Visitor Center parking lot to add 13 new spaces. Reconfiguring ADA parking spaces will provide a safer direct route of travel to the Visitor Center.
- Area 2: Pedestrian Improvements. Creation of a trail from the Visitor Center directly onto the Visitor Center Loop Trail to increase safety for children and trail users and allow visitors to go directly from the Visitor Center instead of walking the narrow path just feet from passing cars down to the trailhead. This also includes relocation of the kiosk.

Map 1. Mission Trails Regional Park's Visitor Center Area Improvements



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- Area 3 Arrival Plaza. For much of the year, the terrace and arrival plaza are unshaded and too hot to be used for programming, gathering, or relaxation. The Project would provide shade structures at gathering areas, plant native trees to create additional shade, include the installation of a bottle refilling station, and relocate information kiosk, improve visibility and wayfinding, regrading and artificial rock removal while maintaining required fire access.
- Area 4 Amphitheater. The amphitheater currently has little shade and many dying trees. The cutout in ground near the bottom would be filled in to allow for better accessibility, more safety, and to create a flat area to accommodate a “stage” for different kinds of events.

Table 1. Estimated Budget and Anticipated Schedule

Task	Description	Amount	Schedule
1.	Parking Lot Updates	\$1,064,367	Quarterly throughout 2-year grant period
2.	Pedestrian Improvements/ trail	\$101,793	
3.	Arrival Plaza	\$344,149	
4.	Amphitheater	\$39,691	
5.	Project Management and design	\$250,000	Quarterly throughout 2-year grant period
6.	Contingency	\$200,000	Quarterly throughout 2-year grant period
	TOTAL	\$2,000,000.00	

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MEASURABLE RESULTS:

Measurable results of this Project include modernizing the parking area (?) and area around the Visitor Center to be ADA compliant, an increase in visitors by those with disabilities, an increase in the number of people gathering outdoors in the newly shaded areas, and the number of park users utilizing the trail from the Visitor Center to the Visitor Center Loop Trail. Also, with the planned 13 additional parking spaces in the Visitor Center lot, it would result in at least 4,745 additional parking spaces over the course of each year. The parking lot exceeds capacity on weekends so these new spaces would accommodate more park users per day.

DELIVERABLES:

- Quarterly request for disbursements, progress reports with photo documentation of before and after implementation
- Maps, design and construction plans
- List of native trees to be planted
- An assessment and monitoring plan
- Final Report

PROJECT FINANCING: The total Project amount is \$2,039,037.63; 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 Proposition 68 and the General Fund.

LEVERAGED FUNDING: The MTRP Foundation has invested nearly \$200,000 in the proposed updates to the Visitor Center. This work has included considerable surveying work to assess the environment for ADA compliance. In Fall 2024, the MRP Foundation received a \$25,000 grant from the Hervey Family Fund to support work related to this project. To date, City of San Diego staff time has been donated, and it is expected that Parks and Recreation Department staff time will continue to be available at no cost. The anticipated staff time during this project would be \$39,037.00.

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 and Program 6 Expand the Organization's Capacity and Public Outreach of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE PURPOSES OF THE FUNDING SOURCE: Proposition 68 and the General Fund are available to support 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

CONSISTENCY WITH THE CONSERVANCY'S DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM:

This Project achieves one or more of the purposes:

- Located in the San Diego River watershed;
- Public access; and
- Outdoor recreation.

ALIGNMENT WITH PLANS AND PRIORITIES

A. California Natural Resources Agency's Initiatives

This Project supports Outdoors for All, Protecting Biodiversity and it advances Equity and Environmental Justice.

B. Outdoors for All

Outdoors for All, an initiative that is expanding parks and outdoor spaces, supporting programs to connect with people who lack access, fostering a sense of belonging for all Californians outdoors. Access to outdoor spaces also enables exercise, which improves long-term physical health. The outdoors also provides spiritual and cultural connections for many.

C. Safeguarding California Plan: 2018 Update California's Climate Adaptation Strategy

PC-3.5. Provide large trees to shade existing park recreation areas and trails in urban areas.

T-4.7. Educate those who use active transportation (bicycle and pedestrian) about heat illness prevention and treatment. Along pedestrian facilities with high-heat days, provide shade sidewalks/paths, and public water fountains to prevent heat illness.

D. Mission Trails Regional Park Master Plan Update (2019)

Increased public safety and public use.

E. San Diego River Recreational Trail Plan (2020)

Section 35: Father Junipero Serra Trails to Old Mission Dam

F. San Diego River Conservancy's Climate Change Policy

Development of Multi-use Trails that connect communities, provide access to and along the coast and help reduce vehicle miles travelled.

G. City of San Diego Parks Master Plan

Well-maintained and accessible regional parks that protect and showcase unique scenic, natural, historical or cultural resources, while offering everyday recreation throughout the City of San Diego.

SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

H. City of San Diego Recreational Element

A park and recreation system that provides an equitable distribution of park and recreation facilities that are designed to accommodate the needs of a diverse population, age, ability, or place of residence.

RE-B.4 In planning, with respect to existing parks, give consideration to preserving the existing uses, while simultaneously identify opportunities to upgrade and improve the parks.

I. Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II

Requires State and local governments to give people with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from all of their programs, services and activities.

BENEFITS

This project aligns with the goal of providing public access for the enjoyment of the San Diego River Park and open space, trails, campgrounds and park facilities. The Visitor Center is a community gathering place that needs updates to ensure it is ADA compliant and to increase accessibility and comfort for all. Not only will this project make access to the popular Visitor Center Loop Trail safer, but it will also ensure that the restrooms, water stations, and interpretive exhibits within the Visitor Center are more accessible. Also, the project will include planting native trees therefore enhancing wildlife habitat and protecting the natural and scenic beauty of the San Diego River Watershed.

PROJECT READINESS

Given that considerable planning has taken place over the last 18 months and surveying studies have been done, this project can be completed within two years. Since there will be environmental impacts, coordination with the City's Natural Resource Manager, appropriate resource agencies and an environmental analysis will ensure the proper permits and approvals are secured.

The following is the anticipated schedule: final plans and permit application by Fall 2025; Visitor Center parking lot improvements completed by Fall 2026; Arrival Plaza updates for accessibility and shade ready by Summer 2026; and the new trail and amphitheater available to the public Spring 2027.

PERMIT COMPLIANCE

MTRP sits on land owned by the City of San Diego. The MTRP Foundation will work with the City of San Diego to complete any required permits to implement this project.

Meeting of May 22, 2025

ITEM: 10

SUBJECT: **SAN DIEGO FIRE-RESCUE FOUNDATION
PROPOSAL FOR SWIFTWATER RESCUE TEAM
EQUIPMENT (*ACTION*)**

San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation, in partnership with the City of San Diego's Fire-Rescue Departments, is proposing to procure updated personal protective equipment (helmets, boots, drysuits), rescue equipment, and Demaree Inflatable Boats. The San Diego Lifeguards use specialized rescue equipment for the Swiftwater Rescue Team (SRT). These resources are essential to carry out their mission. The SRT manages water and floods through various methods. During rain/flood events, the SRT prevents vehicles from submerging in water through road closures and rescues people trapped by water. Outside of rain/flood events, the SRT participates in river cleanup efforts in the San Diego River valleys. Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$69,550.00 from Proposition 68 and the General Fund.

Presentation:

Wendy Moore, Executive Director, San Diego Fire-Rescue

Recommendation: Approve Resolution No. 25-05

Resolution No: 25-05

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

**AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO GRANT \$69,550.00 FROM
PROPOSITION 68 AND THE GENERAL FUND TO PROCURE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE
EQUIPMENT, THREE DEMAREE INFLATABLE BOATS, AND RESCUE EQUIPMENT FOR
THE SAN DIEGO FIRE-RESCUE DEPARTMENT'S SWIFTWATER/FLOOD RESCUE TEAM
AND LIFEGUARD SERVICES DIVISION WHEN CONDUCTING WATER RESCUE
OPERATIONS IN THE SAN DIEGO RIVER WATERSHED**

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 allocated General Funds under Budget Act 2021 and 2022 to fund climate resilience, wildfire, community access, and resource protection projects; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 68 was approved by voters on June 5, 2018, for the purposes of creation and rehabilitation of state and local parks, natural resources protection projects, climate adaptation projects, water quality and supply projects, and flood protection projects,

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy was allocated \$12,000,000 under Proposition 68, "the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018," (Public Resources Code section 80000 et seq.) with funds made available by Public Resources Code section 80110, subdivisions (b) (5),

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, San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation applied to the San Diego River Conservancy for grant funding to procure 17 new drysuits, 25 pairs of boots, helmets, three Demaree inflatable boats, and other equipment used by City of San Diego Lifeguards and Swiftwater/Flood Rescue Team members during water rescues in the San Diego River watershed and other areas in San Diego (Project); and

WHEREAS, San Diego River Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$69,550.00 to implement the Project; and

WHEREAS, this Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, including 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 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 \$69,550.00 (Sixty-Nine Thousand Five Hundred Fifty Dollars and Zero Cents) to implement the Project.
3. The proposed Project is consistent with the purposes and intent of Proposition 68 and General Fund.
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 May 22, 2025. I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution Number 25-05 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: Glen Lubcke			
Dr. Jennifer Campbell, SD Mayor Designee			
Joel Anderson, County Supervisor			
Raul Campillo, Vice Chair			
Ben Clay, Chair			
Ruth Hayward			
J. Cody Petterson			
Emily Burgueno			
Elsa Saxod			
DPR Designee, Ray Lennox			
DPR Designee, Lisa Adams			
Dustin Trotter			
Phil Ortiz			

SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation SDRC Resolution 25-05 May 22, 2025

DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to provide up to \$69,550.00 to the San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE), three (3) Demaree inflatable boats, and rescue equipment for the Swiftwater/Flood Rescue Team (SRT) and Lifeguard Services Division of the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department when conducting emergency rescue operations in the San Diego River watershed.

LOCATION: The focus area is the San Diego River valley during flood events when Swiftwater/Flood Rescue Team and Lifeguard Services are needed in emergency situations but may also be used in other areas of San Diego under mutual aid agreements.

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 \$69,550.00 (Sixty-Nine Thousand Five Hundred Fifty Dollars and Zero cents) to use as follows:

- To purchase PPE including but not limited to 17 new drysuits, 25 pairs of boots, helmets, three Demaree inflatable boats, and rescue equipment for use by City of San Diego Lifeguards and SRT members during emergency rescues 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 recommend 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

3. The proposed Project is consistent with Proposition 68 and General Fund.

BACKGROUND:

The San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation (Foundation) is a non-profit organization with a mission to protect life, property, and the environment by providing the highest quality emergency and rescue services to over 1.4 million San Diegans. They work in partnership with the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) to provide emergency rescue services for the City of San Diego.

The Foundation is seeking funds to replace and supplement critical rescue equipment that has reached or exceeded its service life. Some of the equipment needing replacement includes PPE such as drysuits, boots, helmets, rescue equipment such as carabiners and pulleys and Demaree Inflatable Boats (DIBs).

The Swiftwater/Flood Rescue Team (SRT) assists with water and flood management by participating in and providing safety services to organizations that perform river cleanups. These cleanups help to restore the natural flow of water, mitigate flooding, and improve water quality. Removing debris prevents trash and other pollutants from entering the river. Additionally, the SRT assists San Diego Metropolitan Transportation System and San Diego Police Department with homeless encampment cleanups within the San Diego River valley.



PROJECT NEED:

The SRT manages water and floods through various methods. The San Diego Lifeguards use PPE, specialized rescue equipment, and DIBs while performing their duties within the San Diego River. During extreme rain events, SRT rescues people when trapped in moving and rising water. In addition, SRT also participates in river cleanup efforts in the San Diego River valleys with other local organizations to remove trash and debris. Currently, the SRT is in need of updated PPE (helmets, boots, drysuits), rescue equipment and boats. PPE protects lifeguards and the SDFD Air Operations Team from potentially contaminated waters.

Air Ops provide critical rescue support from the air when water rescues are not feasible or when a victim requires more immediate, urgent care.

SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

Currently, the Air Ops team is using drysuits past nearly double their recommended lifespan. SRT is using PPE and equipment nearing or exceeding its useful life. Of the team's eight DIBs, four are over 10 years old and require replacement. DIBs are an essential tool for flood and swift water rescues, allowing rescuers to remain out of the water while maneuvering victims to safety. Sixty percent of the SRT helmets are over 10 years old.

The new gear will keep both teams compliant with national standards and streamline rescue equipment to be the same in every river rescue unit. Additionally, these items ensure safety and efficiency during complex rescue operations by providing the appropriate equipment for lifeguards to safely perform their job duties.

Map 1. San Diego River rescue locations and 100-year Floodplain



PROJECT SUMMARY:

Rescue devices and PPE need urgent replacement for the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department. Specifically, five (5) new drysuits are requested by the SRT and Lifeguard Services Division and twelve (12) new drysuits are requested by the SDFD Air Operations team.

SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

Three new DIB units are requested to maintain operational readiness. Additionally, a request is made for 25 pairs of Swiftwater rescue boots designed to protect against puncture wounds in contaminated water, ensuring first responders are equipped for emergencies. Replacement helmets are also requested to comply with mountaineering, whitewater, and blunt impact standards, including mounts for lights and reflectors that are crucial for night operations. Lastly, the SDFD seeks to replace worn carabiners and pulleys, which are essential components of the rope rescue systems.

Project Goals:

There are three goals associated with this Project:

1. Protecting life and property by conducting water rescues during extreme rain events.
2. Conserving and preserving natural resources during flooding events, which prevents vehicles from entering and polluting the river water.
3. Conducting public outreach, disseminating educational information through river and homeless encampment clean ups, and reducing floods by eliminating trash and debris during river clean ups.

The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department records actions performed by the SRT, including but not limited to:

- Number, types and locations of emergency responses
- Monitoring flood-prone areas to ensure public safety
- Closures and warnings during flooding
- Number of rescued victims caught by flooded waters
- Annual river clean-ups after seasonal rains

DELIVERABLES:

- Quarterly request for disbursements
- Progress reports with photo documentation of equipment in use
- Emergency response to major rain events
- Final Report

SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

Table 1. Estimated Budget and Anticipated Schedule

Task #	Description	Amount	Schedule
1. Project Management/ Financial Administration	Quarterly reports, invoices, communication, ordering supplies and equipment	\$1,500.00	Quarterly throughout grant period
2. Project Implementation	Ordering of PPE, DIBs, and gear	\$68,050.00	Quarterly throughout grant period
	TOTAL	\$69,550.00	

PROJECT FINANCING: The total Project amount is \$69,550.00; the Conservancy staff recommends funding in the amount of \$69,550.00 for the implementation of the proposed Project. The anticipated source of Conservancy funds for this Project is Proposition 68 and the General Fund.

LEVERAGED FUNDING: None.

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 of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update 2024-2028.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE PURPOSES OF THE FUNDING SOURCE: Proposition 68 and the General Fund 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.

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

a. Adaptive Management and Monitoring of ecosystem and physical processes to support implementation of management actions to achieve project objectives under

SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

rapidly changing climatic conditions.

b. Leverages partnerships and resources with local communities.

C. San Diego Region Basin Plan

Nonhazardous solid waste means all putrescible and non-putrescible solid, semisolid, and liquid wastes, including garbage, trash, refuse, paper, rubbish, ashes, industrial wastes, demolition, and construction wastes, abandoned vehicles and parts thereof.

D. California's Flood Future Recommendations for Managing the State's Flood Risk

2.3.4 Flood Emergency Management:

Emergency Response - Emergency response is the aggregate of all those actions taken by responsible parties at the time of a flood emergency.

E. 2024 Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning Report (CalOES)

- a. Goal 1: Significantly reduce risk to life, community lifelines, the environment, property, and infrastructure by planning and implementing whole community risk reduction and resilience strategies.

BENEFITS:

This proposed Project would provide numerous benefits to vulnerable populations and disadvantaged communities including public outreach and education through river and homeless encampment clean ups, protection of resources and improving water quality reducing flooding by removing debris from the river valley. In addition, SDFD keeps people out of hazardous areas during extreme weather events by providing warning signs and initiating road closures during flooding events.

PROJECT READINESS:

Proper PPE, DIBs, and up-to-date rescue equipment enable rescue crews to perform tasks within the San Diego River Watershed. Lifeguard and Air Ops crew members are required to perform maintenance on their PPE by addressing any maintenance needs through the crew member(s) assigned to oversee PPE, and repairs are made with the appropriate vendor. Lifeguards have a full-time marine mechanic to perform regular maintenance on all vessels, including the DIBs. Each Lifeguard is also in charge of maintaining team equipment. The Lifeguard assigned to oversee and ensure the upkeep of team equipment.

PERMIT COMPLIANCE:

No permits are needed for the purchase of PPE or other related rescue equipment.

Meeting of May 22, 2025

ITEM: 10

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:

- Governor's Proclamation State of Emergency (March 1, 2025)
- 2024 Climate Bond updates
- Proposition 4 - Wildfire Early Action
 - [Public Resources Code division-50 chapter-3 section-91520 \(m\)](#)

Conservancy staff attended the following events & meetings:

Proposition 4 (2024 Climate Bond) meetings
Climate Bond Program Coordination Team meeting
Department of General Services
Cleveland National Forest
Lakeside's River Park Conservancy
City of Santee
San Diego Canyonlands
San Diego Regional Fire Foundation
San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation
San Diego Natural History Museum
County of San Diego, Sheriff's Re-entry program
Trans County Trail meeting (County of San Diego)
California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force
Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team Steering Committee
Fire Safe Council of San Diego County
California Natural Resources Agency Speaker Series

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2025

ITEM: 11

SUBJECT: **NEXT MEETING**

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting is anticipated to be held in person on Wednesday, September 17, 2025, from 10:00 am to noon.

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2025

ITEM: 12

SUBJECT: ADJOURNMENT