

December 23, 2025

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary
California Natural Resources Agency
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Wade Crowfoot,

In accordance with the State Leadership Accountability Act (Leadership Accountability), the San Diego River Conservancy submits this report on the review of our internal control and monitoring systems for the biennial period ending December 31, 2025.

Should you have any questions please contact Dustin Harrison, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist), at (619) 390-0571, dustin.harrison@sdrc.ca.gov.

GOVERNANCE

Mission and Strategic Plan

The San Diego River Conservancy is an independent, non-regulatory state agency established to preserve, restore and enhance the San Diego River Area. The Conservancy's mission is accomplished by conserving land, and protecting or providing recreational opportunities, open space, wildlife species and habitat, wetlands, water quality, natural flood conveyance, historical, cultural, and tribal resources, and educational opportunities within the watershed of the San Diego River. For example, one important Conservancy goal is to build, in conjunction with our partners, a River-long park and hiking trail stretching fifty-two miles from its headwaters near Julian to the Pacific Ocean at Dog Beach in San Diego (Division 22.9. San Diego River Conservancy 32630 - 32659.9).

Control Environment

The Conservancy's 18 member Governing Board consists of both state and local representatives, creating a diverse partnership dedicated to conserving this highly valued resource of statewide significance. The Board meets every other month and is updated periodically when pertinent information is released. The Strategic Plan was developed to help guide the Conservancy's operations while the Procurement Policy and Procedures Manual is continually updated to describe steps of purchasing and limitations of authority. This document outlines the Conservancy's organizational structure and who is authorized to make purchases. California Natural Resources helps guide meaningful engagement with California

Native American Tribes through the Tribal Consultation Policy. To maintain a competent workforce, Conservancy staff receive training in the areas of cyber security (KnowBe4), document creation and editing (Microsoft Word and Adobe PDF), Tribal Stewardship, Critical Thinking and Writing for Analysts. Furthermore, the Conservancy's interagency agreements with California Department of General Services, Contracted Fiscal Services for human resources and accounting. The Department of Water Resources IT shared services and virtual compute resources help maintain a functioning work environment.

Information and Communication

Information from reliable sources are communicated directly to Conservancy staff and external stakeholders. Staff maintains open communication with Board members during and outside of meetings as well as other state agencies. Prior to meetings, Board Members are encouraged to review information in the Board Book and ask questions. Written policies are approved by the Board. Some examples of information sharing include reports and databases from Fair Political Practices Commission Form 700, California Natural Resources Agency treatment tracker, Agency Bonds Consolidated Reporting System to review project invoices and progress reports and coming soon, Resources Agency Project Tracking and Reporting. Entity-wide open communication informs external partners allowing them to express concerns with budget constraints or deliverable timeline.

MONITORING

The information included here discusses the entity-wide, continuous process to ensure internal control systems are working as intended. The role of the executive monitoring sponsor includes facilitating and verifying that the San Diego River Conservancy monitoring practices are implemented and functioning. The responsibilities as the executive monitoring sponsor(s) have been given to: Dustin Harrison, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist); Julia Richards, Executive Officer.

Continuous monitoring helps the Conservancy identify control system issues. Staff thoroughly review content for completeness, timeliness and accuracy. A master project spreadsheet is updated continuously to monitor progress and release funding. These routine activities involve matching invoices to reimbursement requests, updating grant agreement scope of work through amendments and adhering to schedules. If a grantee does not provide timely reports, meetings are held to rectify concerns.

RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The following personnel were involved in the San Diego River Conservancy risk assessment process: executive management, and staff.

The following methods were used to identify risks: ongoing monitoring activities, audit/review results, and other/prior risk assessments.

The following criteria were used to rank risks: likelihood of occurrence, and potential impact to mission/goals/objectives.

The Risk Register and Plan of Action and Milestones is submitted annually to the California Department of Technology through Secure Automated File Exchange (SAFE) and SharePoint. This assessment lays out security controls that are planned for the future or already in place. Additionally, staff contact Board Members for Fair Political Practices Commission Form 700 and ethics training to help ensure integrity and ethical values are followed.

RISKS AND CONTROLS

Risk: Risk 1. Information Technology Compliance

Windows 10 ended support and old computer hardware was replaced to meet new Windows 11 requirement for modern security standards. With help from the California Department of Technology, State Information Management Manual and State Administrative Manual is followed and policies updated accordingly. Also, staff ensure posted documents on the Conservancy's website are compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act for statewide accessibility and reasonable accommodation policies and procedures.

Control: Control 1

Updated computer hardware, installed computer software, backed up data and migrated files with the assistance of Information Technology Specialist.

CONCLUSION

The San Diego River Conservancy strives to reduce the risks inherent in our work and accepts the responsibility to continuously improve by addressing newly recognized risks and revising risk mitigation strategies as appropriate. I certify our internal control and monitoring systems are adequate to identify and address current and potential risks facing the organization.

Julia Richards, Executive Officer

CC: California Legislature [Senate, Assembly]
California State Auditor
California State Library
California State Controller
Director of California Department of Finance
Secretary of California Government Operations Agency