

Notice of Public Meeting San Diego River Conservancy

A public meeting of the Governing Board of
The San Diego River Conservancy
will be held

**Friday, May 22, 2026
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 715 P Street, 20-103 (Serpentine Room) Sacramento, CA, 95814	South Carlsbad State Beach Campground 7201 Carlsbad Boulevard, Carlsbad, CA 92008
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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 18, 2026, 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. City of San Diego Lifeguard Services Update (INFORMATIONAL)

The City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department’s Lifeguard Services Division responds to emergencies caused by flooding during periods of heavy rain. The division’s Swiftwater Rescue Team (SRT) utilizes specialized equipment to conduct water rescues, implements road closures to prevent vehicles from entering flooded areas, and assists individuals trapped by rising water. The SRT also participates in cleanup operations along the San Diego River valleys. The Lifeguard Services Division will provide an update on storm activity and flood response efforts during the 2025–26 winter season.

Presentation:

Maureen Hodges, Marine Safety Captain, City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, Lifeguard Services Division

Jacob Magness, Marine Safety Lieutenant, City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, Lifeguard Services Division

**8. Science Field Station at Lakeside’s River Park Conservancy
(INFORMATIONAL)**

Lakeside’s River Park Conservancy has opened the new San Diego River Science Field Station, with two laboratory classrooms situated on 100 acres of the “living lab” of the river park. Students have access to ponds, trails, native plants, and sightings of birds and wildlife on the San Diego River. The Field Station is designed to expand hands-on science learning for K-12 and beyond, giving students, teachers, and scientists a vital opportunity to study restored riparian habitat and engage in real-world scientific inquiry. Unique in East County, the facility supports environmental education, workforce development, and the engagement and training of future stewards of the San Diego River.

Presentation:

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

**9. The 23rd Annual River Days 2026 – San Diego River Park
Foundation (INFORMATIONAL)**

Each year, the San Diego River Park Foundation partners with a variety of organizations to host engaging nature and art activities for all ages. These events celebrate the San Diego River as a cultural, ecological, and recreational treasure—stretching from Julian to Ocean Beach—and help raise awareness and support for ongoing conservation efforts.

Presentation:

Rob Hutsel, President & CEO, San Diego River Park Foundation

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:

- Proposition 4 – Nature Based Solutions Update
Dustin Harrison, Senior Environmental Scientist, San Diego River Conservancy

Conservancy staff attended the following events & meetings:

Proposition 4 meetings
Climate Bond Program Coordination Team meeting
California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force meeting
Dept. of General Services meeting
San Diego State University, San Diego State University Research Foundation,
and Soil and Ecology Group meeting
Access Working Group - Natural Resources Agency meeting
Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team Steering Committee meeting
Fire Safe Council of Greater San Diego meeting
Lakeside’s Fire Protection District - Push in ceremony
City of San Diego Lifeguards – DIBs media event
San Diego Regional Fire Foundation meeting
San Diego County Parks, TCT meeting

11. Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting is anticipated to be held in person on September 17, 2026, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm.

12. Adjournment

Accessibility

If you require a disability related modification or accommodation to participate in this meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please call Dustin Harrison at 619-390-0571 or Dustin.Harrison@sdrc.ca.gov.

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2026

ITEM: 1

SUBJECT: ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2026

ITEM: **2**

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

The Board will consider adoption of the **March 18, 2026,**
Board Meeting.

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

RECOMMENDATION: Approve minutes

SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

Minutes of March 18, 2026, Public Meeting
(Draft Minutes for Approval on May 22, 2026)

CONSERVANCY Board Member, Ben Clay called the March 18, 2026, 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
Raul Campillo	Councilmember, City of San Diego, District 7
Bryan Cash	Natural Resources Agency
Ruth Hayward	Public at Large
Laura Koval	City of Santee
Jamie LaBrake	Kumeyaay Diegueño Land Conservancy
Ray Lennox	Department of Parks and Recreation
Glen Lubcke	Department of Fish and Wildlife
Phil Ortiz	City of El Cajon
Cody Petterson	Speaker of the Assembly
Elsa Saxod	Public at Large

Absent

Joel Anderson	Supervisor, County of San Diego, Second District
Jennifer Campbell	Mayor, City of San Diego, Designee
Ben Clay, Chair	Public at Large
Rebecca Fris	Wildlife Conservation Board
Gary Strawn	San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board

Staff Members Present

Julia Richards	Executive Officer
Dustin Harrison	Environmental Scientist
Hayley Peterson	Deputy Attorney General

Item 2. Approval of Minutes

Elsa Saxod moved for approval of January 21, 2025, minutes, and Phil Ortiz seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ruth Hayward, Bryan Cash, Stephen Benson, Lisa Adams, Ray Lennox, Glen Lubcke, Cody Petterson, Raul Campillo, Jamie LaBrake, Phil Ortiz, Laura Koval, Elsa Saxod (12-0-0)

Item 3. Public Comment (*INFORMATIONAL*)

Raul Campillo welcomed everyone to the Board Meeting. Raul announced Wendell Thompson's passing earlier in February. Wendell was committed to the mission of the San Diego River Conservancy. He is survived by his mother, son, daughter, granddaughter and extended family. He was

a big fan of the Chicago Bears and loved traveling to see them. He worked for the State of California and the people of California for over 16 years. He began his career at the Department of Motor Vehicles. In 2015, he joined the Conservancy as a Staff Services Analyst and was promoted to Associate Governmental Program Analyst in 2019. He was known as the money man because he processed payables and made money appear. And of course, protecting the environment, species water quality, property and lives through the mission of the Conservancy.

Wendell was known for his excellent customer service and friendly manner. There was not a time Raul interacted with him, that was unpleasant. His graciousness shown through and his positive attitude helped make the workplace welcoming. Raul held a moment of silence on behalf of Chair Clay and the Conservancy.

Julia Richards noted that no written comments were received in advance of the meeting today.

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

Raul Campillo nothing to report.

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

Hayley Peterson reminded the Board Members to file Form 700 before the April 1 deadline. The fine is \$10 a day up to \$100.

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

Raul Campillo no report.

Item 7. Tavern Road Evacuation Route Hazardous Fuels Reduction (*ACTION*)

Julia Richards the Alpine/Viejas Fire Safe Council (FSC) proposal includes conducting critical fuels reduction on approximately 11 acres along Tavern Road to protect the primary evacuation route for residents living in Alpine, and the surrounding Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas in San Diego County. The primary goals are to reduce wildfire risk by removing hazardous fuels and increasing community defensible space.

Alpine Fire Protection District also has the only Certified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist recognized through the National Fire Protection Association in southern California and is recognized as a Firewise community. Under the state of California's Wildfire Preparedness Strategy, Firewise communities are supported by CAL FIRE's Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division.

The Conservancy staff met with the applicant, reviewed the proposal and conducted a site visit. The proposed project is supported by the San Diego River Conservancy's enabling legislation and is consistent with the intent of Proposition 4. It is also supported by two Conservancy program areas:

Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, and Program 5 Enhance Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance. The proposed project is also aligned with California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan and 6 approved state and local plans.

Additional information is located in the staff report, and if approved, funding would be provided through Proposition 4. Conservancy staff recommends approval of Resolution 26-05 to the Alpine/Viejas Fire Safe Council in the amount of \$85,000.

Today we have Jason McBroom, Program Facilitator, with Alpine/Viejas FSC and Steven Taylor, Executive Director, Alpine/Viejas FSC.

Jason McBroom introduced himself as Alpine Fire Protection District Fire Marshal and the program facilitator for Alpine/Viejas FSC. He was accompanied by Steve Taylor, Executive Board Member for Alpine/Viejas FSC.

The Alpine/Viejas FSC is a nonprofit formed in 2023 serving a population of 18,000 residents. They cover 37 square miles and have 5 board members. Mr. Ernest Pingleton is a Board Member as well as a member of the Viejas Tribal Reservation who helps with archeological and culture review.

They have homeowners association representatives that sit on advisory committee who share information directly with residents. Alpine's ongoing problem is overgrown hazardous fuels. The photo showed large stands of eucalyptus groves intermixed with Mexican fan palms along Tavern Road which is a major evacuation route according to the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Alpine seems to coagulate fires over the last 50 years.

They are located in the WUI with many residents only having one way in and one way out. The hazardous fuels would be limbed up ladder fuels along the surface of the ground going vertically up 6-10ft depending on the slope. They want to lower the surface fuels in the creek area. There are beautiful native trees they want to keep and protect and remove hazardous fuels in the area.

The concept proposal starts at the intersection of south grade road at Tavern extending 1 mile south. It is a 100 ft wide shaded fuel break. The project is consistent on both sides for the evacuation route. The project would increase evacuation for residents during a wildland fire event.

Overgrown vegetation will be targeted to bring hazards down. The sign in the photo states the community of Alpine is a very high fire hazard severity zone. Alpine has two recognized Fire Wise Communities. They will conduct post monitoring through partners and contractors routinely maintaining the area.

The request is \$85,000 to accomplish this goal and reduce hazardous fuels in the stream area. The report of post monitoring completion will be provided to the Conservancy. Anticipated goals and outcomes were shown as visualizations from previous work done in the vicinity. Jason opened the floor to questions.

Ruth Hayward asked if this project is in the Sweetwater River Watershed.

Laura Koval commented that she used to work for Padre Dam which provided water to Alpine. The water has to go through 5 pump stations to get to Alpine. This is very important not only for fire prevention but also for protecting the water resources as well.

Jamie LaBrake is a resident of the area, and he knows how important this is. The winding roads make access difficult. He is also good friends with Ernest Pingleton. People, animals, farms and properties need to be protected in the event of wildfire. The more brush that is removed, the better protected the community will be.

Laura Koval moved for approval of Resolution 26-05, and Jamie LaBrake seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ruth Hayward, Bryan Cash, Stephen Benson, Lisa Adams, Ray Lennox, Glen Lubcke, Cody Petterson, Raul Campillo, Jamie LaBrake, Phil Ortiz, Laura Koval, Elsa Saxod (12-0-0)

Item 8. Reducing Fire Fuel on the San Diego River (ACTION)

Julia Richards thanked Vice Chair Campillo. Lakeside's River Park Conservancy proposes a project to conduct fuel reduction on approximately 145 acres in the riparian areas of the San Diego River and its tributaries. This work will decrease risk and improve wildfire prevention by removing hazardous fuel loads and ladder fuels caused by overgrown vegetation to protect lives and property, safeguard public lands, and benefit local wildlife and native habitats. This project will also improve ecosystem services and the health of open space and natural areas in the San Diego River watershed.

Conservancy staff met with the applicant and reviewed the proposal. The proposed project is supported by the San Diego River Conservancy's enabling legislation and is consistent with the intent of Proposition 4. The project is supported by two Conservancy program areas; Program 3 Preserve and Restore Natural Resources and Program 5 Enhance Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance. The proposed project is aligned with California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan and 6 approved state and local plans.

Additional information is located in the staff report, and if approved, funding would be provided through Proposition 4. Conservancy staff recommends approval of Resolution 26-06 to Lakeside's River Park Conservancy in the amount of \$650,000.

Today, Julie Turko, Chief Executive Director will provide a presentation on the proposal and answer any questions.

Julie Turko introduced herself as Executive Director of Lakeside's River Park Conservancy and thanked the Board for their support. LRPC owns 100 acres of San Diego River Property in Lakeside, and their field crew has been doing fire risk reduction work for over 12 years. This work is also very personal because they are the clients they serve.

They will reduce the risk of wildfire through vegetation management. From the photos, a brush fire was adjacent to their property. They work in the WUI to reduce the risk of human activity that can easily ignite fires. They are interested in clearing roadsides adjacent to river property, places of ingress/egress, evacuations routes and roads that allow for emergency access.

In east county, properties often have only one way in and one way out. An image of the El Monte Fire was shown, which was 6 miles upstream from their property. All of the wildfire risk they combat are close to home.

Project scope is 145 acres of vegetation management to reduce fire fuels. They work from El Capitan reservoir to the eastern edge of Santee. Targeted areas were shown in yellow. Their strategy is to work from upstream to downstream. Heavy rains in January and warm temperatures create high hazard conditions. They intend to prune, thin, apply herbicide and retreatment to maintain routes. Chipping material as mulch and removing excess material to be hauled to green landfill.

Grant funding allows property owners to receive free treatment. In the past, they have secured and worked with over 300 property owners. The most rewarding aspect of this work is increasing fire safety for those who lack resources. They also feel better knowing they are helping geographically vulnerable populations in the hills and valleys of east county. Julie read a testimonial from a customer.

Part of their work is educating property owners and whenever possible, developing a plan for ongoing maintenance by the owners themselves. The needs of each property are different. The crew talks with property owners about fire safe best practices, buffer zones and planting fire resistance native species that might be substituted for more hazardous plants and trees. They work with biological monitors to protect native species where they work. For this proposal and given the crews experience, they applied for the Secretarial determination for Suspension of State Statutes for critical fuels reduction projects.

Fire prevention is a powerful protector since the effects of fire include pollution of waterways, destruction of habitat and increase of erosion and flooding in areas devoid of plants. Majority of funds are dedicated to project implementation by their field crew. They work with a flexible crew that has experience as well as a separate tree specialist as needed.

Photos of crew members demonstrating the difficult work were shown.

Ruth Hayward complimented Lakeside's River Park Conservancy's work. Whenever Ruth sees Flynn Springs, she remembers living out there.

Ruth Hayward moved for approval of Resolution 26-06, and Laura Koval seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ruth Hayward, Bryan Cash, Stephen Benson, Lisa Adams, Ray Lennox, Glen Lubcke, Cody Petterson, Raul Campillo, Jamie LaBrake, Phil Ortiz, Laura Koval, Elsa Saxod (12-0-0)

Item 9. Proposition 4 Guidelines and Other Updates (ACTION)

Julia Richards Thank you, Vice Chair Campillo. Proposition 4 was passed by voters on November 5, 2024. It made \$48,000,000 available to the San Diego River Conservancy to reduce the risks of climate change impacts on communities, fish and wildlife, and natural resources, and increase public access subject to appropriation by the Legislature.

The Legislature appropriated \$8 million of the funds to the Conservancy in budget year 2025-2026.

This proposed action item is to consider and adopt guidelines to implement San Diego River Conservancy's Proposition 4 (Prop 4) Nature-Based Solutions grant program. The guidelines, which

are similar to previous Conservancy grant guidelines were posted on the Conservancy's website on October 3, 2025, for a 30-day public comment period. The approval is for new guidelines regarding a new process via the state. The guidelines were over 90% of the previous guidelines. The only thing swapped out was new definitions and new terminology used and requirements. Julia turned it over to Hayley Peterson.

Hayley Peterson stated if anyone has been following the adoption by the legislature, this was as cleanup to Prop 4. Originally, legislature staff prepared regulations for guidelines because Prop 4 omitted an exemption from the Administrative Procedures Act. The legislature created a fix for the current fiscal year, so these guidelines do not have to be adopted as regulations. We can adopt the guidelines as the Conservancy has done in the past.

Cody Petterson stated the first item on the list is acquisitions. He wanted to emphasize the importance of acquisitions which are forever, whereas vegetation management is temporary.

Raul Campillo moved for approval of Resolution 26-07, and Phil Ortiz seconded. Roll Call: Ayes: Ruth Hayward, Bryan Cash, Stephen Benson, Lisa Adams, Ray Lennox, Glen Lubcke, Cody Petterson, Raul Campillo, Jamie LaBrake, Phil Ortiz, Laura Koval, Elsa Saxod (12-0-0)

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

Julia Richards thanked Vice Chair Campillo. The Conservancy continues to meet with applicants to the Prop 4 Nature-Based Solutions grant program to advise on project scopes and answer any questions they have. Full applications are due June 1. As a reminder, the Conservancy received 39 concept proposals requesting \$51 million with \$79 million in matching funds. There is \$8 million available for this round.

Over 40% of proposals submitted directly benefit disadvantaged/severely disadvantaged communities (DAC/SDAC) and vulnerable populations which are required under the text of Proposition 4. Julia asked if the Board has any questions.

Raul Campillo asked if recommended projects are prioritized depending on leveraged funds.

Julia Richards confirmed scoring criteria issues 10 points for leveraged funds.

Item 11. Next Meeting

Raul Campillo thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be held in person on Friday, May 22, 2026, at 1:00 pm at the County Administrative Building.

Item 12. Adjournment

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2026

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, 2026

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, 2026

ITEM: 5

SUBJECT: DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL REPORT
(INFORMATIONAL/ACTION)

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2026

ITEM: 6

SUBJECT: HEALTH AND SAFETY (*INFORMATIONAL*)

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2026

ITEM: 7

SUBJECT: CITY OF SAN DIEGO LIFEGUARD SERVICES
UPDATE (*INFORMATIONAL*)

The City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department's Lifeguard Services Division responds to emergencies caused by flooding during periods of heavy rain. The division's Swiftwater Rescue Team (SRT) utilizes specialized equipment to conduct water rescues, implements road closures to prevent vehicles from entering flooded areas, and assists individuals trapped by rising water. The SRT also participates in cleanup operations along the San Diego River valleys. The Lifeguard Services Division will provide an update on storm activity and flood response efforts during the 2025–26 winter season.

Presentation:

Maureen Hodges, Marine Safety Captain, City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, Lifeguard Services Division

Jacob Magness, Marine Safety Lieutenant, City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, Lifeguard Services Division

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2026

ITEM: 8

SUBJECT: **SCIENCE FIELD STATION AT LAKESIDE'S
RIVER PARK CONSERVANCY (*INFORMATIONAL*)**

Lakeside's River Park Conservancy has opened the new San Diego River Science Field Station, with two laboratory classrooms situated on 100 acres of the "living lab" of the river park. Students have access to ponds, trails, native plants, and sightings of birds and wildlife on the San Diego River. The Field Station is designed to expand hands-on science learning for K-12 and beyond, giving students, teachers, and scientists a vital opportunity to study restored riparian habitat and engage in real-world scientific inquiry. Unique in East County, the facility supports environmental education, workforce development, and the engagement and training of future stewards of the San Diego River.

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

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2026

ITEM: 9

SUBJECT: THE 23rd ANNUAL RIVER DAYS 2026 – SAN
DIEGO RIVER PARK FOUNDATION
(INFORMATIONAL)

Each year, the San Diego River Park Foundation partners with a variety of organizations to host engaging nature and art activities for all ages. These events celebrate the San Diego River as a cultural, ecological, and recreational treasure—stretching from Julian to Ocean Beach—and help raise awareness and support for ongoing conservation efforts.

Presentation:
**Rob Hutsel, President & CEO, San Diego River Park
Foundation**

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2026

ITEM: 10

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

Proposition 4 – Nature Based Solutions Update

Presentation:

**Dustin Harrison, Senior Environmental Scientist, San
Diego River Conservancy**

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2026

ITEM: 11

SUBJECT: **NEXT MEETING**

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting is anticipated to be held in person on Thursday, September 17, 2026, from 1:00 pm to 3:00pm.

State of California
San Diego River Conservancy

Meeting of May 22, 2026

ITEM: 12

SUBJECT: ADJOURNMENT