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Dear ,

Happy New Year! We are reflecting upon great accomplishments during 2019 and excitement for 2020.



In the closing weeks of 2019, the County of San Diego opened its Santa Ysabel Nature Center. We were delighted to share our goodwill and congratulations during a Dec. 16 ribbon-cutting that included tribal representatives, environmental groups and elected officials. The [6,000-square-foot nature center](#) brings a valuable, brick-and-mortar asset to the eastern reaches of the river park corridor.

To the west, the Conservancy continues to negotiate a property acquisition near Lake Hodges. Further downstream, near Fairbanks Ranch, we are working to complete a one-mile trail connection to close the final gap in 30 contiguous miles of Coast to Crest Trail between Del Mar and the east end of San Pasqual Valley.



Elsewhere, we continue to restore habitat at Lusardi Creek and to collaborate with the City of Del Mar to complete the final phase of River Path Del Mar. Once that path is finished, hikers can skirt the southern boundary of the San Dieguito Lagoon before connecting to the Crest Canyon trail system and - after a few blocks of pavement - the Torrey Pines State Reserve Extension.

Also in 2020, the San Dieguito River Park JPA is expected to open a ranger station near our trail head at San Andres Drive.

We can't wait until the facilities and the trails that connect people with nature are accessible. Our calendar of events and hikes gets people of all ages excited about the outdoors. We love our work and we thank you for the support that makes all of it possible.

Have a great 2020!

Clevenger cleanup with San Diego Hikers



Thanks so much to the San Diego Hikers who joined us to gather trash and maintain trails at Clevenger Canyon. We removed invasive tree tobacco and rubbish that included a tire, water heater and an old door.



Thanks also to Rangers J.J. and Rob from the City of San Diego's Black Mountain Ranger District for their help with the trash disposal.

Great work, everyone!

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Northern Harrier

By Ranger Dave Hekel



The Northern Harrier is a medium-sized raptor that breeds on wetlands, bogs, prairies, farmland, marshes, grasslands, swamps and other open areas. The raptor frequents the San Dieguito River Park corridor from the coastal areas up into the foothills.

Northern Harriers are one of the few raptorial birds known to practice polygyny. That's where one male mates with several females. Up to five females have been known to mate with one male in a season. Northern Harriers are sexually dimorphic, meaning the males look different than the females. The males are gray in color with a distinctive white band above the tail while the females show varying shades of brown with the same distinctive white band. Northern Harriers build their nests on the ground or on a mound of dirt or vegetation. Nests are made of sticks and are lined inside with grass and leaves.

A typical harrier hunts on long wings held in a shallow V in its low flight during which the bird closely hugs the contours of the land below it. Most harriers hunt primarily



small mammals. Preferred prey species include voles, rats and ground squirrels. Up to 95 percent of the harrier's diet comprises small mammals.

Harriers hunt by surprising prey while flying low to the ground in open areas, as they drift low over fields and moors. The harriers circle an area several times listening and looking for prey. Harriers use hearing regularly to find prey, as they have exceptionally good hearing for diurnal raptors, this being a function of their owl-like facial ruff that can reflect sound.

Scan the open fields and low lands next time you're out in the park and you are sure to find the Harrier gliding with ease.

Wildlife cam captures



You never know who'll come pawing or hoofing up to a wildlife camera.

These captures from the Conservancy's Rutherford C property on Volcan Mountain come courtesy of the USGS Western Ecological Research Center.



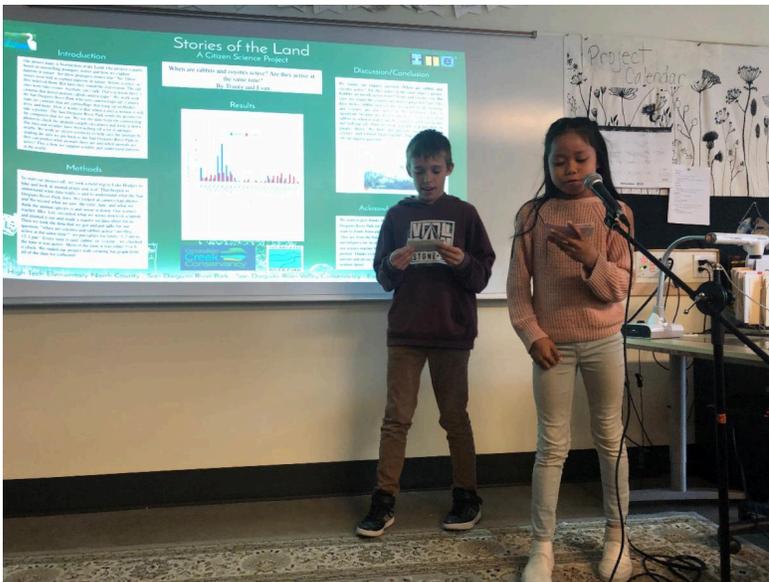
COMMUNITY PROGRAM SURVEY Talk to us!



We want to hear from you! Please tell us your thoughts about our programs by completing our brief and anonymous survey .

[Open the Community Program Survey.](#)

Citizen scientists present findings



Fifth-graders from High Tech Middle School North County present findings of their camera trap research projects to members of the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy, San Dieguito River Park and Escondido Creek Conservancy.

Working indoors to enhance the outdoors



Working to enhance the outdoors brought us indoors to participate in a design charrette for the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy Opportunity Wetlands Feasibility Study.

Coast to Crest Challengers



Challenge accepted and completed -- with selfies to prove it! Congrats to (clockwise from left): Estefania Lara, Gail Welch and Jose Toscano.

Are you ready to log the miles and earn the bragging rights that come with the Coast to Crest Challenge?

[Open the Coast to Crest Challenge webpage.](#)

Yes on safeguarding our countryside



The Conservancy's Board of Directors is endorsing Safeguard Our San Diego Countryside (SOS), a ballot initiative to give residents an important voice in how and where housing is built.

SOS requires voter approval for any County of San Diego General Plan amendment that would bring significant housing increases to rural and semi-rural areas.

The measure has qualified for the March 3, 2020, ballot.

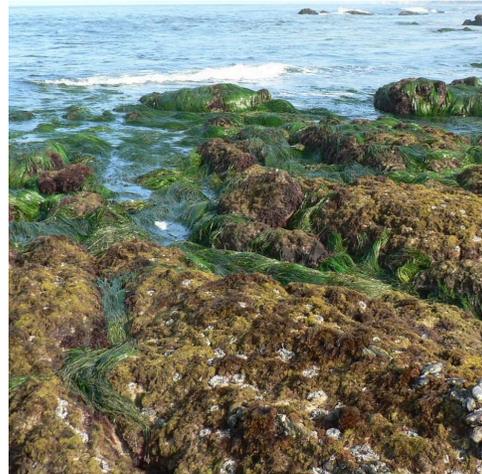
[Visit the SOS website.](#)

UPSTREAM

Jan. 11: Totally Tide Pools!

Families can dive into the exotic world of tide pools during our "Totally Tide Pools!" educational event from 10 to 11 a.m. Jan. 11 at La Colonia Community Center, 715 Valley Ave., Solana Beach.

Life is tough in the tide pools, as children will discover during our latest collaboration with the Living Coast Discovery Center and City of Solana Beach. We'll strap on our claws and suction cups to experience the amazing ways marine creatures survive.



[Register for "Totally Tide Pools!"](#)

Jan. 11: Full Moon Hike

For our first full moon hike of 2020, we'll enjoy the sights and sounds of the San Dieguito Lagoon by the light of the moon. This 1.7-mile loop trail is short and flat. Leased dogs are welcome.

Meet at 7 p.m. Jan. 11 at the Dust Devil Trail Staging Area on El Camino Real.

[Open for directions and to register for the Full Moon Hike.](#)



Jan. 25: Watershed Explorers hike at Pamo Valley

Calling all young explorers: Join us on the new segment of the Coast to Crest Trail in Pamo Valley for a free, fun hike that's designed for school-aged children. Bring your entire family!

[Register for the Watershed Explorers hike.](#)



Feb. 8: Valentines on Volcan

You and your sweetie will love Valentines on Volcan, which includes a four-mile hike, refreshments, treats and a picnic.

In addition to gazing into your sweetheart's eyes, you can gaze across scenic views from the mountain trail.

The event runs from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Feb. 8. We'll meet at the Volcan Mountain Foundation Nature Center, 22850 Volcan Road, Julian.



[Register for Valentines on Volcan.](#)

Feb. 8-9: Valentine Teas at Sikes Adobe

The Friends of Sikes Adobe are hosting Valentine's Teas at 1 or 3 p.m. Feb. 8 and Feb. 9 at the restored Victorian farmstead, 12655 Sunset Drive, Escondido. The tea service includes sandwiches and sweets.

[Visit the Valentine Teas Ticket Sales webpage.](#)



DOWNSTREAM



We held our "Hooterific!" educational event on Dec. 14 in cooperation with Living Coast Discovery Center and the City of Solana Beach.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

JANUARY 2020

<p>Sundays, 1/5, 1/12, 1/19, 1/26 Sikes Adobe Historic Farmstead Open for Public Tours</p>		<p>Wednesday, Jan. 1 Volcan Mountain New Year's Day Hike</p>	<p>Saturday, 1/4 San Dieguito Monthly Bird Count and Rancho Santa Fe Christmas Bird Count Nature Touch Table</p>
<p>Sundays, 1/5, 1/12, 1/19, 1/26 North San Diego Certified Farmers Market</p>			<p>Saturday, 1/11 Mountain Biking San Diego Totally Tide Pools Full Moon Hike - San Dieguito Lagoon</p>
<p>Sunday, 1/12 Volunteer Trail</p>			<p>Saturday 1/18 San Diego 50mi &</p>

Maintenance Mtb Patrol Training			Trail Marathon Mountain Biking San Diego Volunteer Habitat Restoration San Dieguito Lagoon Bird Walk Gonzales Canyon Cleanup Nature Touch Table
Sunday, 12/15 Grasslands Trek			Saturday, 1/25 Watershed Explorers Experience - Interpretive Hike at Pamo Valley Acorns 101

[Open Full River Park Calendar](#)

Make a donation



Aaron Chang photo

Your donations translate directly into habitat preservation and programs that connect people to nature. Thanks so much for your support.

[**MAKE A DONATION**](#)

Write a review



Please help boost our visibility and outstanding reputation by sharing a brief story about an experience you've had with us.

[WRITE A REVIEW FOR GREATNONPROFITS.](#)

Thank you!



Get in touch with the Conservancy: sdrvc@sdrvc.org | sdrvc.org



Get in touch with the River Park: sdrp@sdrp.org | www.sdrp.org

