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Dear ,

Great numbers of hikers are conquering the Coast to Crest Trail Challenge.



The Mayer family, from left: Jann; Luna; Sheri; Bryan, and Emily.

## Challengers aplenty



Regina Nooraga

To complete the Coast to Crest Trail Challenge for 2019-20, participants hike in Pamo Valley, Highland Valley, Del Dios Highlands Preserve and Santa Ysabel.

We ask hikers to record their accomplishments with selfies.

The selfie packages have been pouring in.

We're seeing solo hikers, couples, families, daddy-daughter pairings and dogs.

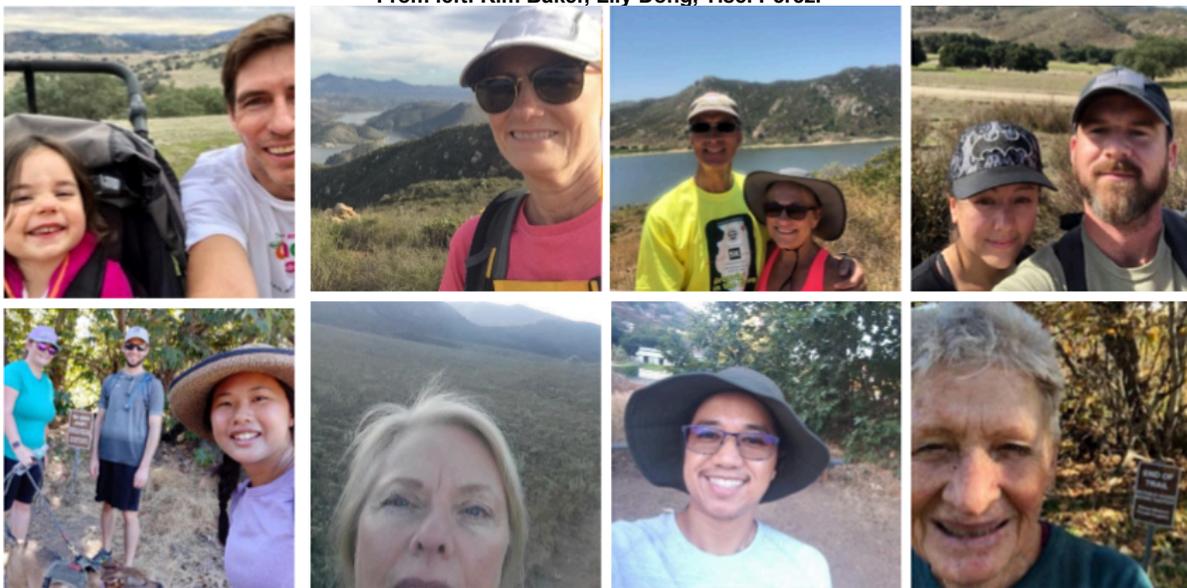


Anna Tink and Trish Johnson

The photos are replete with smiling faces and heads held high against backdrops of trees, scrub, lakes and the wide-open vistas of our river park.



From left: Kim Baker, Lily Dong, Yisel Perez.



Clockwise from upper left: Matt and Sydney Bentley; Dawn Cody; John and Lynn O'Halloran; Justin Penn and Angel Castillo; Nancy Thweatt; Karl Peralta; Diane Lech; Patsilla Li.

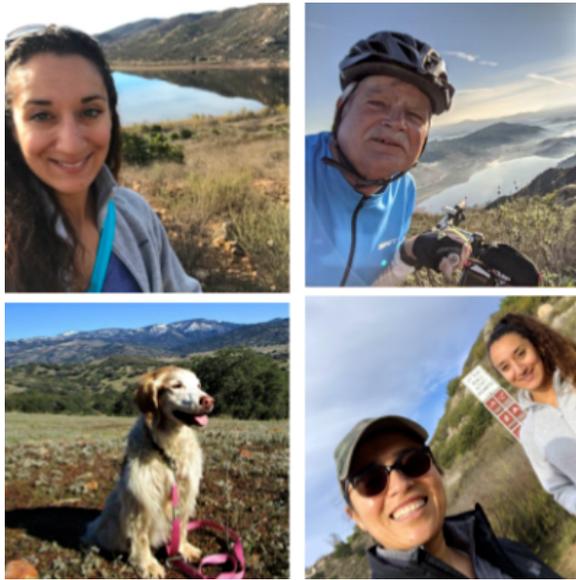
In one long day, Charlie Kahle rode the entire trail on his bike.

How many more selfies will we see before the challenge ends June 30? Many, many, we hope!

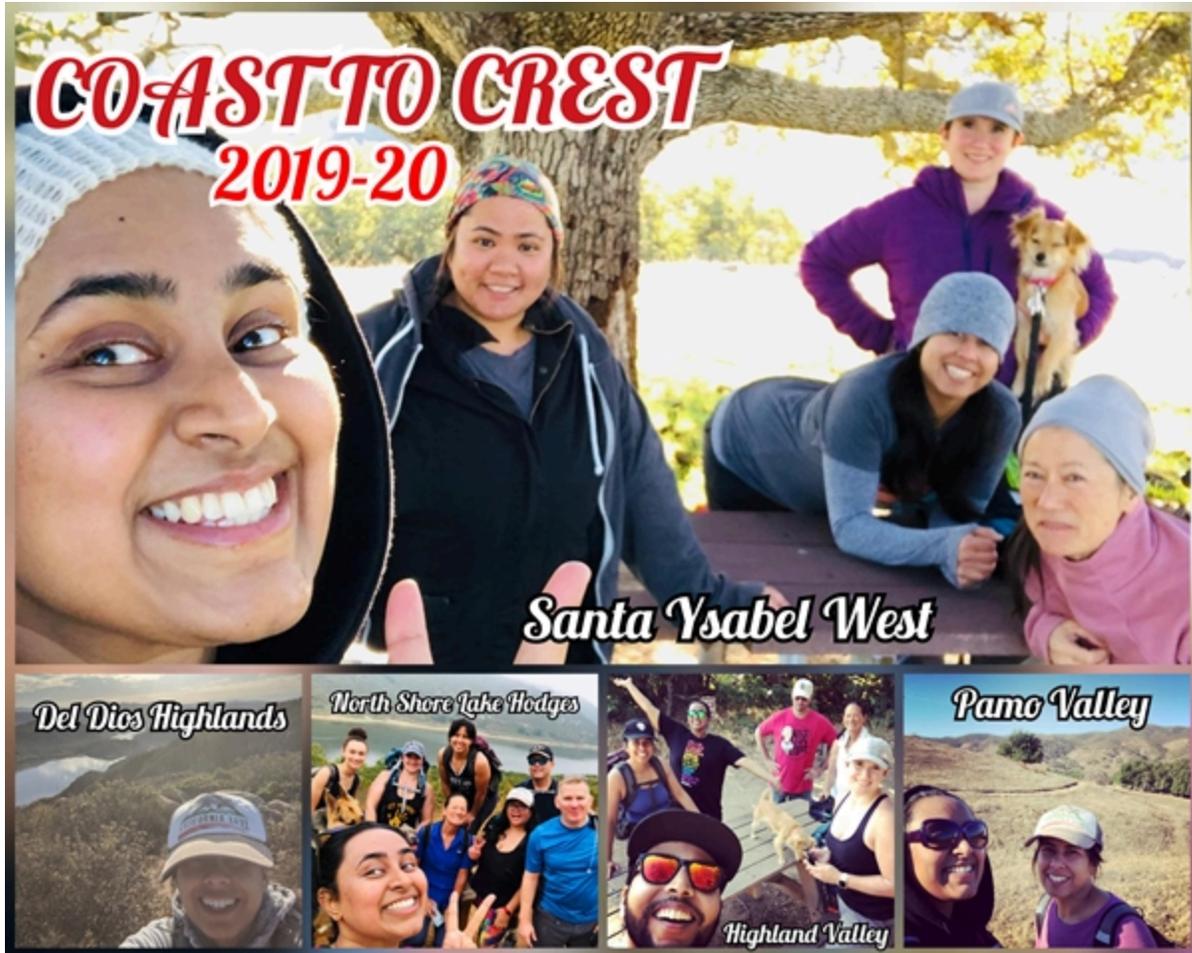
To feel rejuvenating embrace of nature make us better people.

In the words of Henry David Thoreau, "A ll good things are wild and free."

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



Clockwise from upper left: Marina Daniels; Charlie Kahle; Rita May Kelly; Laura Castro and friend.



Michele Johnson and friends.

## Watershed Explorers



We a great hike and learned so much during our Watershed Explorers hike in Pamo Valley.

Thanks so much to Stephanie from San Diego Archaeological Center and Ranger Bryan from the San Dieguito River Park.



**BIRD OF THE MONTH**  
**Cedar Waxwing**  
By Ranger Dave Hekel



The Cedar Waxwing has a pale yellow to lemon-colored belly with a matching band of yellow at the tip of its square tail. A black mask edged in white extends from its beak and surrounds its eyes. The rest of the bird's plumage is gray to brown.

Cedar Waxwings are migratory visitors to the San Dieguito River Park and can sometimes be found around Lake Hodges feeding on Toyon berries or fruit trees in gardens on the edge of the park.

The waxwing name came from the tip of the bird's secondary flight feathers looking as if they were dipped in red wax. The number and sizes of red tips increase as the bird gets older. The cedar part of the name comes from their fondness for cedar berries. Sometimes this fondness for red berries can stain their tail feathers from yellow to orange from the rich pigment.



The Cedar Waxwing is a highly social bird and is one of the last species of North American birds to nest each year, delaying its breeding until an abundance of insects and summer-ripened fruits are available to feed their young. Cedar Waxwings have been known to nest together in loose clusters and fledglings from neighboring nests may flock together within a few days of leaving the nest. They are gregarious and it is unusual to find Cedar Waxwings on their own. A large flock of these birds is known as an "ear-full" or "museum."

Cedar Waxwings are predominantly fruit eaters, especially from fall through spring. Sometimes people come across a seemingly sick and docile waxwings in the spring. The birds, in fact, are often drunk from eating fermented berries. Insects are added as a large part of their diet in summer. Waxwings can be seen flying out

from an exposed perch to catch insects on the wing. They also like to feed on emerging aquatic insects. Unlike most birds, Cedar Waxwings eat in shifts. As as one group arrives, the other departs to give everyone in the flock an opportunity to feed.

## Invasive species removal



Our state Coastal Conservancy, Prop. 1-funded Fairbanks Ranch Riparian Restoration Project is underway, with the big job of non-native plant removal falling upon crews from the Urban Corps of San Diego and volunteers from the California Native Plant Society San Diego Chapter's Habitat Restoration Committee.

## Gonzales Canyon planting



We had a terrific planting day in Gonzales Canyon with Canyon Crest Academy High School students, some parents and a teacher.

We planted 165 new native plants near the west end of the canyon.

Students got extra credit and Gonzales Canyon got some extra love from the students and their chaperones.

**VOLUNTEER SUBMISSION**  
**Delightful Dust Devils**  
 By Steve Scarano



I've been an active volunteer since retiring as a police captain in 2002.

Today, my work partners -- the Dust Devils -- are a delightful array of colorful human beings: A university English professor who crafts delightful word plays and knows exactly when to unleash them, a Sierra Club hike and bike leader whose reports are almost like having gone with her, a big-hearted fixer who can repair any small engine and hone our tools to razor sharpness, a woman whose DNA prohibits her from passing an invasive weed without pulling it up, a Trail Angel for the Pacific Crest Trail, a woman who rescues rabbits, a Brit who trades cross-word puzzle challenges, and an accomplished baker, who even when he was on a long term medical absence fortified us with his warm treats.

We've lost a couple of decent people to terrible illness. I've named a tool after Jim and sit on the memorial bench dedicated to Westley.

As much as I try to honor the mission of SDRP with my work, it occurs to me that my aches and sweat are really for the pleasure and simple joy of being with like-minded volunteers who also sweat and ache. They are my reason for coming back each week.

## Podcast covers River Park

It was great to record a podcast with Drew Schlosberg of the San Diego Union-Tribune.

[Check it out!](#)



## Calling all citizen scientists



We love our citizen scientists.

As we lay plans for 2020, we are determined to limit group sizes and provide the best possible experience for participants. To get involved, get with our Conservation Manager, Jonathan Applebaum: [jonathan@sdrvc.org](mailto:jonathan@sdrvc.org)

[Visit our Citizen Science 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.](#)

## 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.](#)

## Intern spotlight: Rachna Halker



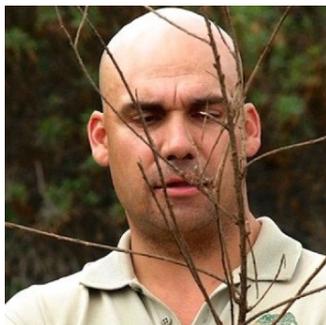
Rachna Halker

Introducing Rachna Halker, a High Tech High North County senior and San Dieguito River Park intern. As part of her internship, Rachna is exploring how humans and their actions impact the natural environment -- especially that of San Diego County. In combination with her volunteer work for EarthLab, Rachna is excited to strengthen her understanding of biodiversity in San Diego County, to help maintain the park and to further her learning. Great to have you, Rachna!

## Please support John Barone

One of San Dieguito River Park's first park rangers and our present-day liaison to the City of San Diego is fighting for his life.

Our dear friend John Barone is suffering from heart failure combined with a diagnosis of multiple myeloma, an aggressive cancer of white blood cells that accumulate in the



John Barone and family

bone marrow. He is in the midst of chemotherapy in hopes of reducing the cancer enough to qualify for heart and bone marrow transplants.

John and his family need our support. Please consider a donation to his [GoFundMe page](#) to offset the loss of income and cost of medical bills not covered by insurance.

Thank you for your support and for keeping John in your prayers.

## UPSTREAM

### **Feb. 1: Volunteer event at Brigantine Basin**

We're looking for a few good volunteers to pull weeds and trash from the San Dieguito Lagoon basin beneath the Brigantine restaurant in Del Mar.

Our work party from 9 a.m. to noon coincides with International Wetlands Day.

[Register for the Brigantine Basin cleanup.](#)



### **Feb. 4: Public forum on climate change, wildfires and flooding**

STAY COOL for Grandkids is hosting a public forum, "Planning for Climate Resilience: Wildfires and Flooding," from 7 to 9 p.m. Feb 4 at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 16725 Pomerado Road, Poway.

The program will examine the latest research on how climate change influences the severity and frequency of wildfires and flooding in Southern California.

[Register for the forum.](#)



### **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.](#)



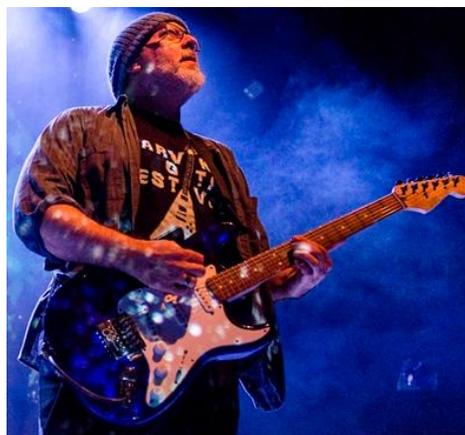
### **Feb. 16: Rock for the Environment**

Are you ready to rock for the environment?

Stop All Sprawl is hosting a concert with the Spin Doctors, Tim Flannery with Jeff Berkley, Miles Keneally and Back to the Garden starting at 6 p.m. Feb. 16 at California Center for the Arts Escondido.

Stop All Sprawl is supporting Measure A and opposing Measure B. The countywide land use initiatives are set to appear on the March 3 ballot.

[Visit the Stop All Sprawl website.](#)



## DOWNSTREAM

### **Totally Tide Pools!**

Life is tough in tide pools, but marine creatures find unique ways to adapt and thrive. That was the takeaway from our "Totally Tide Pools!" educational event at La Colonia Community Center.

We strapped on claws and suction cups during the get-together, the latest in an ongoing collaboration with the Living Coast Discovery Center and City of Solana



Beach.



**Full Moon Hike**

Our group had so much fun hiking the Dust Devil Trail by the light of the first full moon of 2020.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**FEBRUARY 2020**

<p><b>Sundays, 2/2, 2/16</b> Sikes Adobe Historic Farmstead Open for Public Tours</p>			<p><b>Saturday, 2/1</b> Nature Photography Workshop</p> <p>S i kes Adobe Historic Farmstead Tours 9am</p> <p>International Wetlands Day Volunteer Event at Brigantine Basin</p> <p>Nature Touch Table</p>
<p><b>Sundays, 2/2, 2/23</b> North San Diego Certified Farmers Market</p>			<p><b>Saturday, 2/8</b> Valentine's on Volcan</p> <p>Sikes Adobe Historic Farmstead Tours</p>

			<p>Shrouded Heritage: Island of the Blue Dolphins</p> <p>North San Diego Certified Farmers Market</p> <p>Valentine Teas</p>
<p><b>Sunday, 2/9</b> Volunteer Trail Maintenance</p> <p>Sunday morning hike</p> <p>Valentine Teas</p>			<p><b>Saturday 2/15</b> San Pasqual Valley Half Marathon and 10k</p> <p>Volunteer Habitat Restoration</p> <p>San Dieguito Lagoon Bird Walk</p> <p>Gonzales Canyon Cleanup</p> <p>Nature Touch Table</p>
<p><b>Sunday, 2/23</b> Mardi Gras 10k</p> <p>Mountain biking beginner ride</p> <p>Canyoneers hike</p>			<p><b>Saturday, 2/22</b> Nature Photography Workshop</p> <p>Crest Canyon Cleanup</p> <p>Volcan Mountain Summit Hike</p>
			<p><b>Saturday, 2/29</b> HandsOn San Diego Day of Service</p>

[Open Full River Park Calendar](#)

**Make a donation**

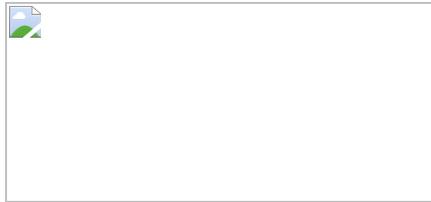


Aaron Chang photo

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](mailto:sdrvc@sdrvc.org) | [sdrvc.org](http://sdrvc.org)



Get in touch with the River Park: [sdrp@sdrp.org](mailto:sdrp@sdrp.org) | [www.sdrp.org](http://www.sdrp.org)

