



SAN DIEGUITO RIVER VALLEY CONSERVANCY | SAN DIEGUITO RIVER PARK JPA

Happy New Year!



As we look ahead to 2025, I'm filled with excitement and gratitude for all we've achieved together in recent years. We've expanded our

programming to go beyond hiking, offering free yoga now three times a month, nature-inspired art, and hands-on educational programs like Creekside Critters and watershed field trips for students. Our adult speaker series continues to Connect Creatures, Climate, and Communities, fostering a deeper relationship with the outdoors for people of all ages.

None of this would be possible without our incredible Board and Advisory Board members, dedicated staff, enthusiastic volunteers, and you—our loyal and new members alike. Your support is driving our efforts to help complete the Coast to Crest Trail, enhance habitats, and bring San Diego's diverse community closer to the beauty and wonder of the San Dieguito River Valley.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we're creating a lasting legacy of conservation, connection, and care for the environment we all cherish.

Warm regards,

Cheryl Goddard
Executive Director, San Dieguito
River Valley Conservancy



It's always amazing to look back at the accomplishments our small organization achieves in one short year and 2024 is no exception!

Some of the highlights are hosting the California Native Plant Sale at Sikes Adobe, providing new equipment for our park rangers including a new truck, ATV, and radios, and opening the new San Dieguito Lagoon Tidal Trail adjacent to 84 acres of newly restored tidal wetlands! We also replaced directional signage throughout the trail system thanks to a donation from Del Mar's The Red Nose Run!

Our partnership with the Conservancy reached a new milestone in 2024 with an agreement to contribute annually to the JPA's operating budget. The JPA is responsible for maintaining and managing the SDRP's trail system and other Park assets as well as administering many Park programs including the Watershed Explorers Program. The support from the Conservancy and the JPA's member agencies helps ensure the future of the San Dieguito River Park for the next generation.

We look forward to greater successes in 2025 including continuing our work to close the gaps in the Coast to Crest Trail and breaking ground on the Osuna trail segment! A Sikes Pavillion is also in the works thanks to a grant from the Escondido Community Foundation, and an Outdoor Equity Vehicle to improve accessibility for all program



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participants.

With many troubles around the world, it is gratifying to count the San Dieguito River Park as a local San Diego treasure, thanks to you all for making it so. Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Shawna Anderson
Executive Director, San Dieguito
River Park Joint Powers Authority

Top Stories



Conservation Through the Eyes of a Resource Ecologist

What does conservation look like for Jonathan Appelbaum?

With a glance, the resource ecologist takes in conservation at the Arroyo Preserve in Rancho Santa Fe, where crews are removing invasive trees as part of a 12.5-acre restoration project.

Looking right, Appelbaum identifies a restored stretch of the San Dieguito River, where sycamores and cottonwoods stand tall and the shimmering, yellow leaves of willows signal fall in San Diego County. As the river wanders through this tableau of native, riparian trees, an endangered bird—as if on cue—lets out its mewling call.

“That’s a California gnatcatcher,” Appelbaum said.

Looking left, the picture darkens. A dense grove of red gum eucalyptus has crowded out the natives. So have unwelcome fan palms, tamarisk trees, reeds and pampas grass. There isn’t any birdsong, but from this particular eucalyptus forest, on this day, a chorus of chainsaws emits its cacophony.

“That’s the sound of hard work,” Appelbaum said.

He should know. As a consultant for the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy, Appelbaum is managing the \$1.5 million restoration of riparian habitat funded by the state’s Wildlife Conservation Board. In February, the WCB announced its approval of the Conservancy’s

application for funding.

[Open Full Story](#)



Upstream



Jan. 5, 11, 19: Yoga at the Birdwing

Yoga at the Birdwing sessions for January are set for 10 a.m. Jan. 5, 11 and 19. Come flow with us!

[Register](#)



Natural Impressions **ART IN NATURE**

Intro to Crocheting

10:00am - 12:00pm

**Birdwing Open Air Classroom
at the San Dieguito Lagoon**

Jan. 18: Intro to Crocheting

A beginner-friendly session to learn how to crochet nature-inspired designs is set for 10 a.m. to noon Jan. 18 at the Birdwing Open Air Classroom. An instructor from Ocean Connectors will lead the class and all materials will be provided.

[Register](#)



Jan. 25: Habitat Restoration at Gonzales Canyon

Dig in to habitat restoration 9 to 11 a.m. Jan 25 at Gonzales Canyon. Meet at 13655 Sword Way, San Diego.

[Register](#)

Downstream



Creating Coastal Cactus Wren Habitat

Pacific Crest Academy students joined forces with San Dieguito River Park rangers Dec. 11 near Lake Hodges to create habitat for the coastal cactus wren, a bird that relies upon the prickly plants for nesting.



Conservation on Display

Thanks so much to state Sen. Brian Jones for inviting us to attend his open house Dec. 14 in Scripps Ranch. Our exhibitors—from Friends of Sikes Adobe, the Conservancy and San Dieguito River Park—were among dozens of others who shared information with hundreds of attendees.



Inspired by Nature

Nature inspired the artwork of some 75 High Tech High North County ninth graders, who displayed their pieces Dec. 17 during an exhibition at the Coastal Ranger Station.

Coast to Crest Trail Challenge



Christina Fink and Nancy Preston



On the Books: Eight Years of Challenges

We were delighted to hear from Christina Fink and Nancy Preston this month about a great accomplishment.

"We have now completed all eight years of challenges and have loved every step of the way!" Christina told us in a message. "This is a fantastic program in our community!"

We agree! Great job, Christina and Nancy!

Year 8 Details



Linda Miller and Zarin Azar



Jose Nuncio Linda Culp Elisa Arias



Oksana Glukhikh and friends



Monthly Trail Maintenance

Work with rangers to improve trails and restore habitat from 9 a.m. to noon Jan. 12 in Escondido. Meet at the staging area at 16414 Ysabel Creek Rd, Escondido.

We'll provide tools, training and work gloves. Please bring drinking water, sun protection and wear sturdy, closed-toed shoes. We can't wait to see you!

Contact: calei@sdrp.org



Weekly Gardening at Sikes Adobe

The Friends of Sikes Gardeners meet every month from 9 to 11 a.m. on the 1st and 3rd Sunday and 2nd and 4th Monday to work in the gardens at the historic Sikes Adobe.

Contact: calei@sdrp.org

Sikes Adobe Historic Farmstead



Festive Farmhouse

Festive food and decor made for a fun-filled Festive Farmhouse event Dec. 8 at the Sikes Adobe Historic Farmstead. The annual event included tours, creative crafts, cookie decorating, tasty treats and Christmas music.



Sikes Adobe Historic Farmstead Valentines Tea

FEBRUARY 15 & 16, 2025



Join us for a delightful Valentine's Tea at the enchanting Sikes Adobe Historic Farmstead. Savor an afternoon of teas brewed from the Sikes gardens, delectable treats including mini charcuterie, heart-shaped sandwiches, lemon curd, and more, all in the company of wonderful guests amidst a beautiful historic setting for \$35 per guest.

Saturday and Sunday at 12pm and 3pm

Seating is extremely limited, reserve your spot today!

Scan QR code or email Leana@sdrp.org



Donate



Your generosity is our lifeblood. Thank you! Photo: John Weare

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