

San Diego River Coalition 2009 Work Plan

Adopted
November 21, 2008



*Working together to improve the San Diego River
and to advance the vision of a river-long park system
for all to enjoy*

I. Introduction

The San Diego River Coalition was formed to bring together the numerous non-governmental organizations interested in the future of the San Diego River. The Coalition serves as a community forum to advance the vision of a river-long park system which connects the communities along the river while protecting and improving the river's natural and cultural resources.

Each year, the Coalition comes together to establish a list of priority projects to serve as a roadmap to achieve this vision. This list is developed through a series of public meetings and workshops and is known as the Work Plan. The 2009 Work Plan was unanimously adopted by the River Coalition on November 21, 2008.

The Work Plan is divided into 5 categories

- River Trail
- Acquisitions
- Park Improvements
- Water Quality and Hydrology
- Habitat Restoration



Categories are divided into three priorities. Projects are placed into these priorities through an analysis of several factors. Sequencing is an important part of this analysis. As an example, a feasibility study for a trail would come in advance of the construction of the trail. A habitat restoration project might come before another based upon how invasive plants spread. Each project also requires a champion on the Coalition who wants to work to advance the project. Other factors include capacity of lead organization, cost and available funding, regional importance, and project readiness.

The Coalition works with many partners to accomplish these priority projects. The State of California's San Diego River Conservancy, County of San Diego, City of Santee, City of San Diego, Water Agencies and other federal, state and local agencies are just a few of these partners which also include landowners, businesses, funders and individuals.

II. Work Plan Categories

River Trail – Areas along the river are rich with recreational opportunities. There are trails in close proximity to natural areas, urban centers and active recreation fields. Trails from the mountains to the sea provide people with opportunities for walking, hiking, biking, and at times, horseback riding. In addition to the trails provided within the parks and recreational facilities along the river, a number of trails are proposed to connect communities and existing regional trails to the River Trail. Existing trails in Lakeside, Santee, Mission Trails Regional Park, Mission Valley and the estuary need to be connected. A high priority is completing the River Trail from Eagle Peak Preserve to the Ocean.



Acquisitions – Much of the San Diego River is privately owned. Creating a continuous river parkway will require working with landowners for trail and open space easements. In some cases land acquisitions and donations of land will be required to complete the river parkway. Acquisitions are made with willing sellers. Acquisitions can also play an important role in watershed protection. The following factors are considered in determining acquisition priorities:



- Water Quality
- Viewshed Protection
- Trail Connectivity
- Wildlife and habitat
- Cultural Resource Protection
- Recreational Experience and Public Access

Park Improvements – Connecting people with the river is essential for its long-term stewardship. Park improvements include



management of existing park user facilities as well as the creation of new ones. The River Park anticipates a series of interpretive and community facilities which are connected by the River Trail. Active and passive parks will complement this “string of pearls” along with wildlife preserves.

Park Improvements also include enhancing the park user experience with informational signs, seating areas and other amenities.

Water Quality & Hydrology - A healthy San Diego River is essential to a successful River Park. This requires a watershed level approach and understanding of these processes.

Sediment transport has been altered throughout the watershed by dam construction, roadways, extensive sand and gravel mining, and other hydromodifications. Changes in water volume have affected flood, surface, and groundwater levels. The River and its tributaries have been channelized in several places to help control flooding. This process can eliminate the natural regeneration of native habitats. Loss of riparian habitat along the River has decreased the natural ability of wetlands to filter contaminants and impacted the health of the ecosystem. Water quality issues make the River water unhealthy resulting in it being placed on the federal list of impaired water bodies. Trash and debris are a significant problem exasperated by encampments and urban runoff.

Habitat Restoration – The San Diego region has been classified as a global conservation hotspot and is home to more species at risk of going extinct than any other county in the continental United States.



The San Diego River plays an important role in ensuring the viability of these and other species of plants and animals. The removal of non-native vegetation is essential. Where necessary, areas will need to be “re-engineered” to provide for the health of the ecosystem. Habitat restoration requires strategic planning as invasive plants can move through floods and seeds can be transferred by wind and other means. Habitat restoration requires a sustained management effort and coordination.

III. 2009 Work Plan Projects

RIVER TRAIL

Priority 1

- El Capitan Reservoir Trail
- Hanson Pond
- Mast Park to Santee/San Diego Border
- Santee/San Diego Border to MTRP/W. Hills Parkway
- Stadium to Fenton Parkway
- West River Crossing
- Feasibility
- Construction
- Construction
- Feasibility
- Construction
- Construction

Priority 2

- Cedar Falls to El Capitan Reservoir
- Channel Road Gap
- City Border to MTRP/W. Hills Parkway
- Mission Valley Crossing
- Forrester Creek Connection
- Sefton Park to AAA Trail
- Feasibility
- Construction
- Construction
- Construction
- Construction
- Feasibility
- Construction

Priority 3

- Cedar Falls to El Capitan Reservoir
- El Monte Valley
- Grantville Corridor
- Rim to Rim Trail
- 805 Gap
- Mission Valley Greenway Crossing
- West Mission Valley Trail
- Pacific Highway Connection
- El Monte Valley Trail Plan
- Construction
- Construction
- Construction
- Construction
- Construction
- Construction
- Construction
- Construction
- Construction
- Study

ACQUISITIONS

Acquisitions as they become available either through donations or purchase should be pursued. There are two program priorities.

- 1. River Parkway** This is to acquire public access for a continuous river park from the mountains to the ocean through agreement, easement, fee title acquisition or other means. The priority should be given to provide this continuous parkway. The benefits of this including flood protection, groundwater recharge, ecosystem health, trails, public experience, and public water supply protection. Secondary priority should be given to provide public amenities and to expand existing river parkway elements.
- 2. Watershed** This is to benefit the health of the river system and provide for an enjoyable public experience of the River Parkway. Benefits of these acquisitions can include watershed protection, public enjoyment, recreational opportunities, ecosystem health and wildlife linkages, water quality and public drinking water protection.

HABITAT RESTORATION

Priority 1

- Mission Valley Preserve
- Stadium Segment
- City of San Diego at Carlton Hills GC
- Mast Park West
- El Capitan Reservoir
- Complete Removal
- Remove Invasives
- Remove Invasives
- Remove Invasives
- Remove Arrundo from Buffer Area around Reservoir

Priority 2

- Sefton River Park
- Cedar Falls to El Capitan Reservoir
- Caltrans at I15
- Estuary
- County of San Diego Property in Santee
- Remove Invasives. Complete work after Mission Valley West River Crossing Feasibility Study completed
- Remove Invasives
- Remove Invasives
- Remove Invasives
- Remove Invasives

Priority 3

- RCP Property
- El Monte Valley - Upper
- El Monte Valley - Middle
- Chocolate Creek
- MidWest TV Riparian
- Superior Riparian
- Private Property east of 805
- 805 to Qualcomm Way
- Major Tributaries
- Crowne Plaza Riparian Area
- Remove Invasives
- Remove Invasives
- Remove Invasives
- Remove Invasives
- Remove Invasives
- Remove Invasives
- Remove Invasives
- Work with property owners to remove invasives
- Remove Invasives
- Map major tributaries and develop action plan as needed
- Remove Invasives

WATER QUALITY & HYDROLOGY

Priority 1

- Remove Trash and Debris
- Map Hydromodifications
- El Monte Valley Restoration
- Estuary Model
- Tributary Pre-Treatment
- Monitoring Program Expansion
- Determine Watershed Effective Boundaries
- Construction
- Study
- Study
- Study
- Study
- Program
- Study

Priority 2

- Estuary Cobble Project
- Hanson Pond
- Develop Action Plan to Remove Hydromodifications
- SD Mission Road Bridge
- Construction
- Study
- Study
- Study

Priority 3

- El Monte Valley Restoration
- Hanson Pond
- Kumeyaay Lake Berm Restoration and Dredging
- Implement Hydromodification Removal Strategy
- Mission Valley Aquifer Study
- Construction
- Construction
- Construction
- Construction
- Study

PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Priority 1

- Discovery Center
- Old Town Center
- Estuary Center
- Estuary Signage Program
- Camping Facilities Assessment
- Planning
- Planning
- Planning
- Construction
- Planning

Priority 2

- Eagle Peak Preserve Facility
- Hanson Pond Facility
- Discovery Center
- Planning
- Planning
- Construction

Priority 3

- Heritage Museum
- Estuary Center
- Lakeside Nature and Culture Center
- Eagle Peak Preserve Facility
- Stadium River Park
- Hanson Pond Facility
- Tierrasanta Blvd. Overlook
- Mission Dam Flume Protection (outside of MTRP)
- Old Mission Dam Maintenance Project
- Lakeside Science Field Station
- Planning
- Construction
- Construction
- Construction
- Construction
- Construction
- Construction
- Construction
- Planning
- Permitting
- Construction

This is a summary of the projects included in the Work Plan. Additional details about these projects are maintained by the San Diego River Coalition Project Committee. The public is invited to join this work group which meets monthly.

As projects advance, additional information will be posted at www.sandiegoriver.org including status reports, maps, costs and other details.

ABOUT THE SAN DIEGO RIVER COALITION

The San Diego River Coalition is comprised of more than 60 groups and organizations with a common interest in the San Diego River. The Coalition's adopted mission is to "preserve and enhance the San Diego River, its watershed, and its natural, cultural, and recreational resources."

San Diego River Coalition Member Organizations

San Diego River Park Foundation (Chair)	Mission Trails Regional Park CAC
Aquatic Adventures	Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation
Audubon Society, San Diego Chapter	Mission Valley Community Council
Back Country Coalition	Mission Valley Planning Group
Back Country Land Trust	Navajo Community Planners, Inc.
California History and Culture Conservancy	National Wildlife Federation
California Native Plant Society, San Diego Chapter	Ocean Beach Community Planning Board
California Wild Heritage Campaign	Ocean Beach Town Council
Canyons Coalition	Preserve Wild Santee
Citizens Coordinate for Century 3	Project Pacific
City Beautiful of San Diego	Project Wildlife
Cuyamaca Rancho Foundation	Ramona Trails Council
Endangered Habitats Conservancy	San Diego Archaeological Center
Endangered Habitats League	San Diego Coastkeeper
Founders' Trail Associates	San Diego County Bicycle Coalition
Friends of Adobe Falls	San Diego County Trails Council
Friends of Buchanan Canyon	San Diego Fly Fishers
Friends of Dog Beach	San Diego Mountain Bike Association
Friends of Dove Canyon	San Diego Presidio Park Council
Friends of Famosa Slough	San Diego Stream Team
Friends of Mission Valley Preserve	Santee Historical Society
Friends of Normal Heights Canyons	San Diego Tracking Team
Friends of Ruffin Canyon	Serra Mesa Community Council
Friends of the San Diego River Mouth	Serra Mesa Planning Group
Friends of Tierrasanta Canyons	Sierra Club, San Diego Chapter
Friends of University Heights Canyons	Surfrider Foundation, San Diego Chapter
I Love a Clean San Diego	Tecolote Canyon CAC
Julian Community Planning Group	The Nature Conservancy
Lakeside Community Planning Group	Tierrasanta Community Council
Lakeside Historical Society	Tierrasanta Fire Safe Council
Lakeside's River Park Conservancy	Trust for Public Lands
Maine Avenue Revitalization Association	Urban Corps of San Diego
Mission Bay Park Committee	Wilderness 4 All

ABOUT THE SAN DIEGO RIVER PARK FOUNDATION

The San Diego River Park Foundation serves as chair of San Diego River Coalition. The River Park Foundation is dedicated to engaging people in creating a better future for the San Diego River. Through advocacy, volunteer programs, education and special projects, the River Park Foundation is a regional voice for the San Diego River.

www.sandiegoriver.org