



2025 PROGRAM IMPACT



We take action to improve the condition of the 52 mile long San Diego River by actively engaging people and working toward the vision of it as a natural, cultural and recreational treasure for the San Diego Region.

A report on program impact, innovation and rising to challenges in 2025.

Prepared by:
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2025

PROGRAM IMPACT at-a-glance

PLANNING

We continue to champion a better future for the San Diego River and its ecosystem, pursue conservation projects, and partner to explore needed policies and improved strategies. Often this work is behind the scenes and without much fanfare.



SAVE THE SOURCE

- Completed 2 separate acquisitions of strategically important privately opened properties to advance our landscape level vision of a healthy headwaters
- Acquired a 58-acre property containing the largest waterfall in the County, Mildred Falls



ADVANCING THE SAN DIEGO RIVER PARK

- Worked with Riverwalk SD on their development plans for Mission Valley
- Gained momentum to complete a major gap in the River Trail, the West Valley Crossing



POLICY EFFORTS

- Supported efforts to designate mountain lion populations, including those in the San Diego River Watershed, as threatened
- Participated as part of a landmark multi-year effort to study the sources of human fecal pollution in the river
- Continue to work to reduce homelessness in the riverbed

TRASH-FREE RIVER PROGRAM

PROGRAM IMPACT

221,330 lbs. of trash removed

95 clean-ups

6,376.5 volunteer hours

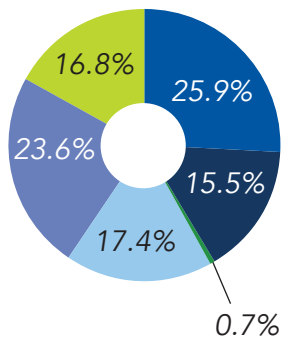
97 assessments

TRASH VOLUME BY SOURCE IN 2025

Source:

October RiverBlitz survey

- encampments (active)
- encampments (inactive)
- stormwater debris
- dumping
- special removal
- litter



Our trash data has proven to be valuable in multiple ways, used by partners at local and State agencies, regulatory agencies, homeless outreach organizations, first responders and more.

This data collection would be impossible without our incredible 2025 data team!

15

RAFT interns

17

Career Training Program participants

3,575

hours of data collection and management



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

Supporting and empowering volunteers to take meaningful action!



Our digital community grew to more than 66,000!



@sandiegoriver

community
engagement

BY THE NUMBERS:



YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAM



PROGRAM IMPACT

- 4,886 total number served
- 525 family event attendees
- 4,361 student experiences
- 12 family education events
- 96 total education events

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



- 94% Title 1 students (students from socioeconomically disadvantaged schools)
- 100% teachers recommended

“The students loved the outdoor activities planned for them during their field trip. I can see some of our students desiring to work as scientists following this educational outdoor experience. One of the students thanked me for planning such a special fieldtrip. This came from a student that doesn't go out of his way to say thank you often. It was great! We loved every minute of it! The SD River Park Foundation employees were so professional, friendly and organized!! I would give it a 10 out of 5!”

- Ms. Iacono, Elementary School Teacher

2025

PROGRAM IMPACT at-a-glance

RESEARCH

Understanding the complex San Diego River ecosystems is critical for managing the land and enhancing its health. A few highlights from 2025:

- Continued the **21st year** of water quality monitoring on the lower river with the River Watch program.
- With technical advisors from the US Bureau of Reclamation, we installed a wireless river monitoring station in Mission Valley.
- Assessed **4 remote tributary creeks**, and incorporated eDNA sample collection in **7 creeks** for ddPCR amplification and metabarcoding analysis
- Through above data collection and other surveys, we documented rare species like:



HIGHLIGHT: CRITTER CAM MONITORING

- Volunteers helped us monitor **16** cameras, processing tens of thousands of photos.
- Completed project to upload all historical images from Critter Cam program to Wildlife Insights platform for more data analysis capability. View data by scanning this QR code!



Our favorite photos from 2025:



LAND MANAGEMENT



- Completed **7.9 mile** trail connecting Eagle Peak Ranch to South Rim and Bathtub Creek Preserve.
- Supported **3,821.5** hours of volunteer service in the upper watershed.
- Deployed survey and restoration teams to document damage from the Monte Fire on our El Cajon Mountain preserve, and began fire recovery: erosion control, replacing signs, and establishing photomonitoring in burned area.
- Managed **2,845 acres** of open space

WATERSHED PROJECTS

Each year, we take on special grant-funded projects and contracts that allow us to advance critical investments in restoration, healing essential habitats, protecting recreational access, and more.



PROGRAM IMPACT

430+ acres of projects to protect and enhance open space

84 volunteer events

3,138 volunteer hours

Projects include activities like:



GRANT PARK

- May 2014: Submitted First Permit Application to City of San Diego
- Oct 2019: Groundbreaking for Phase 1
- Sept 2024: Phase 2 Construction Completed
- June 2025: River Studio Dedication
- ★ Soon: Phase 1 will be completed

WHAT A YEAR!

On October 15th, the first student group arrived at the newly completed \$1.3M River Studio. It was a major milestone in this decade-plus journey to create Grant Park. Our construction contractor continued to work with the City of San Diego to secure permission to complete Phase

1. Completing this early phase has been delayed more than 2 ½ years. We can't wait to complete this work and fully open Grant Park.



LEARN MORE: (619) 297-7380 or www.sandiegoriver.org