



The Watershed Voice Protecting The Escondido Creek Watershed Since 1991



Kevin Barnard | President of TECC

Fall 2013 Accomplishments

“Here is your country. Cherish these natural wonders, cherish the natural resources, cherish the history and romance as a sacred heritage, for your children and your children’s children. Do not let selfish men or greedy interests skin your country of its beauty, its riches or its romance.”

– Theodore Roosevelt

As our hemisphere retreats into Winter, bringing to a close another full cycle of seasons, as has ensued for eons in this watershed, the shadows advance across our valley floors. The expanded hours of darkness brings on a time of contemplation, an accounting if you will. What have we done? What will we do?

The same goes for [TECC](#), and if you are reading this, you are a part of the team who constructs our total effort. So what have we done in the past year?

As a member of TECC, here are but a few of our accomplishments:

- On November 1st, TECC welcomed Ann Van Leer as our new Executive Director. Ann has served TECC as our real estate broker in several significant open space acquisitions, including Family Stations and University Heights. Her extensive experience in habitat preservation with The Nature Conservancy, her own firm, Land Conservation Brokerage, and her years of experience in all levels of politics, make her a perfect fit for TECC as we move forward with our vision of how the watershed should be protected and transformed into a dynamic asset for North County.
- Ann Hough, our Managing Director, continues to focus on the day to day machinations of TECC and has done so much to make TECC such a stable and sustainable organization. Without Ann’s hard work and determination, TECC could not be involved in near as many acquisitions and advocacy projects.
- Took title to 240 acres west of the [Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve](#) (EFRR) known as Cielo del Norte, which was entitled for housing. Now it will serve as a permanent home to several federally endangered species.
- Identified all the funding to complete the purchase of the 500 acre University Heights properties (Sleeping Lady Ridge), north of the reserve between Elfin Forest to the west, Harmony Grove to the east, and San Marcos to the north. TECC anticipates this acquisition to be completed by mid-February to early March. Your part was helping TECC raise a record amount of funds in a very short period of time to continue to service the option costs on this property. Your contribution was leveraged at 800 to 1, meaning for every dollar you contributed, we secured eight hundred dollars toward the purchase price. Congratulations!!

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Free Upcoming Events

November 17, 2013 | 2:00 pm
Wren Box Workshop, cost of box is \$20.00

November 17, 24, 2013/ December 8, 15, 22, 2013 | 10:00 am
Interpretive Nature Walk with Donna Walker | The Interpretive Center

November 23, 2013 | 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
Archaeology Walk along the Escondido Creek bike trail with Donna Walker. Meet at Beech St. cul de sac in Escondido.

November 23 & December 21, 2013 | 10:00 am - Noon
Bill The Bug Guy | The Interpretive Center

December 1, 2013 | 8:30 am
Walk With A Tracker | The Interpretive Center

December 28, 2013 | 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
Geology Walk along the Escondido Creek bike trail with Dr. Norri Robbins. Meet at Beech St. cul de sac in Escondido.

The Interpretive Center is located at:
8833 Harmony Grove Road • Escondido, CA 92029

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- The completion of the acquisition of University Heights also ensures the continued mission, and presence of Quest Haven Retreat, 650 acres of prime habitat with a very small development footprint.
- On the north side of Harmony Grove Rd. between Harmony Grove and Elfin Forest, County Park & Rec acquired three properties additional parcels totaling 25 acres on the north side of Harmony Grove Rd. which preserves most of the scenic value of the unique drive between Harmony Grove and Elfin Forest.
- In late October, in partnership with The Conservation Fund, an option was secured on another entitled property known as Cielo Estates. This is approximately 255 acres of critical habitat that is adjacent and to the west of the EFRR.
- In total, the area you have moved into, or toward, the permanently preserved column in the Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Core Habitat Area in the past year is 1,750 acres, more than three times the size of the EFRR.

Your TECC staff and board members continue to advocate for acquisitions of habitat and open space in the watershed with other agencies, such as the Department of Defense, U.S., and California Fish & Wildlife, County Park & Rec. Many of TECC's acquisitions have then triggered other organizations and agencies to acquire adjacent properties in recognition that contiguous habitat is critical for the sustainability and diversity of species on those lands.

This has resulted in County Park & Rec acquiring the remaining 380 acres of Bottle Peak, just south of Lake Wohlford, now a contiguous preserved habitat of over 800 acres, half of which is owned and managed by TECC.

For the past five years TECC has been involved in the effort to rehabilitate and restore the channelized seven mile stretch of the creek that runs through the City of Escondido. The Reveal Escondido Creek Committee (REC), a committee of several Escondido residents representing many Escondido organizations, has been organizing and conducting numerous creek clean-ups and educational events for the past few years, as a way to bring attention to this gem that meanders the entire length and width of the city. In late October REC requested to become a member committee of TECC, uniting the efforts of REC and TECC in the quest to create a seven mile long linear park/trail/development on the creek in the city limits of Escondido.

REC has successfully advocated for funding and grants to create pilot projects along the creek. Some of these projects include a \$500,000 lighting project that is currently being installed to increase night time safety of the trail, the construction of a pocket park and trail entrance at the Evans Tire property on Broadway, and several other projects designed to enhance the trail that connects thousands of Escondido residents from one end of the city to the other. The long range plan is to connect Escondido, via the creek trail, to thousands of acres of preserved habitat that surrounds Escondido at Daley Ranch, Bottle Peak, and the Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Core Habitat Area. All of this has led TECC to launch a campaign to advocate to the North County region's municipalities and business community to move toward adding a recreation/eco-tourism component to the local economy as a way to capitalize on our area's year-round temperate weather, unique eco-systems, and preserved open spaces. We hope this will attract a demographic, and create opportunities for our current residents, that value open spaces, critical habitat, vibrant urban and related rural neighborhoods, and local foods, art and culture. We have been fortunate enough to have had tens of millions of dollars of public funding committed to our little piece of paradise. We should find a way to share it with those who revere and respect it.

Being a member of TECC affords you the opportunity to put into action the philosophy of, "Think globally, act locally", whether it is through financial support, or volunteering your valuable time. TECC, as much as any non-profit, has a long history of leveraging your donations into public funding and public benefit.

Be sure to renew your membership for the coming year, and consider giving the gift of membership of TECC for the coming holidays.



TECC Appoints Ann Van Leer As Executive Director



TECC has appointed Ann Van Leer as executive director. Van Leer is the founder and president of Land Conservation Brokerage, a real estate brokerage with a focus on land conservation. Van Leer has over thirty years of conservation and public policy experience at the federal, state and local levels. Van Leer will serve as TECC's ED as a part-time consultant, also maintaining her brokerage.

Van Leer has worked with many conservation non-profits in San Diego County and elsewhere in California, helping them to preserve land through real estate transactions and other conservation strategies. She is working as TECC's broker on University Heights and was TECC's broker for the Family Stations' transaction.

"TECC's commitment to long-term conservation is what appealed most to me about taking this role," said Van Leer. "The conservation community throughout California has spent a successful decade buying land but it hasn't put as much time into making certain that land will be cared for in the future. TECC has made a commit to sustainability and I look forward to helping them achieve their goals."

Van Leer is a licensed real estate broker and a member of the California Association of Realtors and the San Diego Association of Realtors. Van Leer has a master's degree in public administration and public policy from the London School of Economics and a bachelor's degree in environmental studies from the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Van Leer can be reached at ann@landconserve.com or 858-442-0937.

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Here Comes The Rain Again!

by Alden Hough, Sky Mountain Institute



With the rainy season upon us, the Escondido Creek watershed can look forward to an average of 14 inches of rain in the next 12 months. That doesn't sound like a lot, but did you know that in one inch of rain, 27,000 gallons of water fall on one acre of land? Now that's a lot of water! Water conservation is becoming one of the most important environmental issues of the 21st century. In San Diego, we import 80–90% of our water from the Colorado River and northern California. An estimated 19% of California's energy use relates to water collection, transportation, and treatment. While San Diego residents use around 140 gallons per person per day - the average annual rainfall in San Diego is 137 gallons per person per day - almost enough to meet our daily needs! While it is unrealistic to expect that we can collect all the rainwater that falls in our region, we can make a big difference by harvesting the rain that falls on our properties, one of the purest sources of water available.

When thinking about how to harvest rainwater, most people automatically think of gutters and tanks to collect the rain that falls on their roofs. While this is an important source, most of the rain that falls on our properties actually falls on the earth around our homes. This is an incredibly important element of the water cycle, as rain that falls on the ground can be encouraged to absorb and slowly spread down gradient, creating a natural sponge that will provide water for our gardens and eventually recharge the aquifers.

At [Sky Mountain Institute](#), a local seven acre rainwater harvesting demonstration site in Harmony Grove, Escondido, I have been teaching hundreds of people every year how to create 'rain gardens' by using earthworks as a simple and inexpensive way to capture the storm water that would normally run off their properties, and instead, to store it in the soil. The earthworks provide passive and low maintenance irrigation, filter pollutants and can add beauty, interest and resilience to any landscape. They can contribute to a reduction of flooding and erosion on your property as well as downstream. A variety of techniques and shapes can be used, depending on the specific needs and topography of a given landscape. These rain gardens then fill up and accumulate water every time it rains. In this way you can double or even triple the amount of water that your plants would naturally receive! By combining seasonal rainwater harvesting with year round perennial household greywater you can ensure that your gardens and landscapes are hydrated and water abundant.

Happy Harvesting!

Alden Hough, Garden Manager at Sky Mountain Institute permaculture@skymountain.org
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sky-Mountain-Institute/179999305352524>

Plaza del Arroyo –

A Gathering Place and Gateway to Escondido Creek

by Katie Ragazzi

Chair of the Reveal Escondido Creek Committee



[Reveal Escondido Creek \(REC\)](#),

a coalition of Escondido residents and non-profits including The Escondido Creek Conservancy, has been working for several years to "reveal" one of our community's most unknown and neglected assets – the seven-mile Class

A pedestrian and bike trail that

runs along the channelized section of the creek through the City of Escondido.

A year ago, REC won a prestigious grant from the Escondido Charitable Foundation to create the second in series of public/private partnership-based "pocket parks" along the creek. The first is located at the Juniper Village senior residences, and reflects pioneering cooperation between the City of Escondido, the developer of the housing project, and local landscape company El Plantio. REC's project proposed a pocket park located along the creek behind the Fresh & Easy Grocery store. However, in a way REC members could never have predicted, corporate changes within Fresh & Easy and decisions within the City of Escondido changed the composition and location of the original partnership. Ultimately, REC forged a new partnership with the owners and management of Evans Tire business on Broadway and Woodward. The private property in front of and beside their building will become a welcoming gathering place and gateway to the Escondido Creek path. Landscape designer Nathan Stout is volunteering his services. REC was honored to partner recently with Habitat for Humanity, Home Depot, and the Home Depot Foundation on the preparation of the job site, and the Kiwanis Club of Escondido is also providing a grant towards the project.

In addition to the design and construction of the pocket park, the Plaza del Arroyo project includes a series of guided interpretive walks along the creek. The next walk is on Saturday, November 23rd when local artist Donna Walker will lead a walk and talk about the local archaeology and history of the creek trail. On Saturday, December 28th, Dr. Norri Robbins will lead a creek walk focussing on the geology of the area. For both walks the meeting place will be at the Beech Street Cul de Sac at 11 am. For more information on the steady progress of "revealing the creek," visit REC on Facebook and at www.revealthecreek.com.

Elfin Forest Interpretive Center Welcomes 25,000th Visitor

by Jeff Swenerton



On Friday, October 11th, The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) and Olivenhain Municipal Water District (OMWD) held a ceremony honoring Dale Johnson, who was the 25,000th visitor to the Elfin Forest Interpretive Center Honoring Susan J. Varty since its doors opened in June of 2009.

This was the first visit to the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve (EFRR) for Mr. Johnson, a resident of Lubbock, Texas. Mr. Johnson was presented with a package that included hiking poles, a 2014 calendar featuring EFRR, Interpretive Center and TECC gear, and a ranger-guided hike to commemorate the occasion.

Jeff Swenerton, TECC's Vice President, stated: "What a pleasure it has been to be a part of this successful partnership with Olivenhain Municipal Water District. For all of us that work at the Interpretive Center, our greatest pleasure comes with exploring our natural environment with all our many visitors including over 1,000 school children and our many family groups each year. We appreciate the generosity of our many donors that have made this possible."

OMWD Park Supervisor Jeff Anderson stated: "We are very pleased to see our 25,000th visitor come through the doors of the Interpretive Center in just over four years of being open to the public. We would not be celebrating this milestone today if it were not for the extraordinary partnership we have with The Escondido Creek Conservancy, the enthusiastic support we receive from OMWD's Board of Directors, and our incredibly dedicated and talented docents who have volunteered over 3,700 hours since our first visitor walked through the door in 2009."

The center resulted from a unique public/non-profit partnership between Olivenhain Municipal Water District and The Escondido Creek Conservancy. Its construction was funded by a \$68,000 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant to OMWD and over \$565,000 in private donations raised by TECC. Cooperation between the two entities continues today in joint operation of the center and its educational programs.

Grant Funding Awarded to Interpretive Center

Over 1,000 school children were a part of Interpretive Center school program last year. This program is a part of a partnership with the San Diego Zoo Watershed Program and San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy. Our program was honored last year with a nomination for the SDG&E 2013 Eco Ambassador Award. We just recently received a \$7,500 grant from SDG&E and a \$10,000 grant from The Charles H. Stout Foundation.

This will provide vital funding to further develop our program and support for the training of our 40 docents.

The Interpretive Center Exhibit Receives Rave Review



Many of our visitors have commented on our most recent exhibit at the Elfin Forest Interpretive Center on The Native American Cultural Revitalization Project, sponsored by California State University, San Marcos. The exhibit features stunning pictures of Native American youth learning from their elders about the skills of their ancestors, particularly in the use of native plants and materials. The center was honored to welcome over 20 of the participating youth and many representatives of our local Native American community to the Center in a reception held in October. The exhibit runs through the end of December.

Beginning in January, we will again display the winners of the 2014 Annual Interpretive Center Amateur Photo Contest. This year there were 248 entries, far more than ever before. The winning photos will be enlarged and displayed at the Center through April. The above photo is a sneak preview of one the photographs.



Go Native this Fall!

by Greg Ruben founder of California's Own Native Design, Inc.



You can only plant natives in fall, right? Surprisingly, we are finding this to be an old legend unsupported by facts. Here at [California's Own Native Landscape Design, Inc.](#), we tend to plant all year long. After all, why give up potential growing time waiting for that one season per year to plant? We even install natives in summer! Just water more frequently through the first summer, as you would do with any other garden planted at that time of year.

Having said all this, fall (and winter) still have a lot to be recommended. The soils are cooler, for one thing. Transpiration (loss of moisture through the leaves) is reduced, and hopefully there is lots of rainfall to water your plants for free. So yes, while you don't have to plant natives this time of year, it sure is a lot easier (on us as well as the plants!).

Because we have become so accustomed to fall planting, usually you can find the best plant sales this time of year. The San Diego chapter of the California Native Plant Society has its sale in mid-October, but just about every other botanical society is selling plants as well, with a least some portion being native. It's probably better if you go in with a little idea of what you want to buy, rather than shopping on impulse. Sometimes organizations will publish a plant list prior to the event, which helps in planning, and if you miss the plant sales, we have some great native nurseries in our area, like Las Pilitas in Escondido ([www.laspilitas.com](#)), Moosa Creek Nursery (which sells through distributors - see [www.moosacreeknursery.com](#) for a list of outlets), and of course, the venerable Tree of Life nursery in San Juan Capistrano ([www.californianativeplants.com](#)). You can use websites like [www.laspilitas.com](#) and [www.mynativeplants.com](#) to research great plants for your area and soil, with information as to final size, watering needs, etc.

I would recommend that you at least measure your garden area to get an idea of what the square footage is. You might even want to sketch it out on graph paper, using a circle template to draw individual plants. An important consideration is to make sure you create a strong foundation or backbone to your garden. We recommend about 75% evergreen plants, with the remaining 25% being perennials along the edges and specimen trees/shrubs. Examples of evergreen plants include manzanita, ceanothus, coffee berry, toyon, and lemonade berry. Perennials might include penstemon 'Margarita BOP' or *Erigeron glaucus*.

When you get your plants home and are ready to plant, dig the holes about twice as wide as the rootball but about 1/2 to 1" shallow, so that the root crown is above the surrounding soil for better drainage. Do not add fertilizer or soil amendments. Backfill and compact the soil around the rootball, then water, water, WATER! 5-10 gallon per plant in well draining soil, 1-5 gallons in clay. This is the most important watering the plants will ever get, and it is designed to remove air pockets from around the rootball - very important (try to float it out of the hole).

We recommend shredded redwood mulch at 3-4" deep as the best organic top dressing for native plants (sand, rocks, and gravel for desert plants) and pull the organic mulch a few inches back from the base so as not to smother the plants. Water 2-3 times per week

for a summer planting (until the weather cools), once per week for fall or winter, until the plants begin pushing out new growth. Gradually wean them off the water, with the ultimate goal being 2-3 times per month during the warm weather. I try to put down the equivalent of 1/4" to 1/2" of precipitation per watering.

So now that you are prepared, take advantage of the cooler weather and rainfall to get up and get planting! Enjoy your native landscape - nothing compares for birds, butterflies, fragrance, low-maintenance, low-water usage, seasonal flower color, and above all, a sense of what California really used to look like!

"Greg Ruben, founder and principal at California's Own Native Landscape Design, Inc., has designed and installed over 700 native landscapes in Southern California over the last 20+ years. He is co-author of the new book "The California Native Landscape: the Homeowner's Design Guide to Restoring its Beauty and Balance", with Lucy Warren. Learn more at [www.calown.com](#) or visit him on facebook."



TECC Weighs In On Land Use Issues

by Richard Murphy | Chair, Land Use Committee

With the strengthening housing market, development pressure on the watershed is also increasing, too often in ways that do not value the wonderful resource in its own right. The creek, if managed properly, offers one of the last opportunities to protect the coastal scrub habitat, its wildlife, and its importance to California's history for future generations so that they may experience them in person. Not only for residents within the watershed, but those in the surrounding communities and visitors to our region. To this end, [TECC](#) is actively involved in land use issues as they impact the watershed. As new development projects are proposed or adverse changes of existing projects are put forward, TECC is weighing in to make sure that conservation issues are given voice. Most recently, TECC has submitted comments to the Notice of Preparation on the Eden Hills project and the proposed school at Twin Oaks. Your contributions enable TECC to do the needed groundwork to make informed responses to environmental impact reports. This work, along with that of neighborhood community groups and your direct engagement with our elected officials, can help build on the success we have had to date. Its important that we all work together make sure that "property rights" is not code for "developer rights" that ignores residents and the beauty and enormous potential that the Escondido Creek offers the region.

Become a Member!

Join Our Conservation Efforts by Becoming a Member or Renewing Your Membership

The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) is a non-profit public benefit corporation dedicated to the preservation, enhancement, and protection of the natural open space within the Escondido Creek watershed. We support educational programs and compatible outdoor recreation within the watershed.

Not a Member of The Escondido Creek Conservancy?

Join today and add your voice to the hundreds of local people who already look to the Conservancy to protect and preserve the natural open space within the Escondido Creek watershed!

Here's How Your Membership Contributed Last Year

- We continued our advocacy for the growing regional open space park now totaling over 2,000 contiguous acres in the Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove area alone. We hosted numerous watershed tours for Federal, State, and County Land Agencies, showcasing available tracts of land for possible future purchase as open space native habitat.
- We provided continued stewardship of over 800 acres of valuable coastal sage scrub and chaparral habitat in the Escondido Creek watershed. This includes controlling exotic plants, installing fences to protect sensitive areas from off road vehicle traffic, and planting many native oaks, toyon, and sumac to further restoration efforts on the preserved lands.
- At the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve Interpretive Center we hosted 6,500 visitors, sponsored educational programs for 1000 children and presented three art exhibits.

**Donate Online At: www.escondidocreek.org
or Detach & Mail the Form on the Right to:
TECC | PO Box 460791 | Escondido, CA 92046**

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YES! I want to support TECC's mission of watershed protection. Here's my gift!

Thank you for your gift. Donations are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. TECC's tax identification is 33-0497525.

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Mail This Form To: TECC PO Box 460791, Escondido, CA 92046

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Annual Membership Options:

Student | \$10

Creek Protector | \$500

Limited Income | \$25

Creek Advocate | \$1,000

Individual | \$35

Creek Defender | \$5,000

Joint/Family | \$50

Creek Guardian | \$10,000

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For gifts of stock or land, please contact Ann Hough, Managing Director at (760) 471-9354 or information@escondidocreek.org.

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