

The Escondido Creek Conservancy



The Watershed Voice

Protecting The Escondido Creek Watershed Since 1991



Kevin Barnard | President of TECC

“Choosing to save a river is more often an act of passion than of careful calculation. You make the choice because the river has touched your life in an intimate and irreversible way, because you are unwilling to accept its loss.”

– David Bolling – *How to Save a River: Handbook for Citizen Action*

The Escondido Creek Conservancy – Vision:

Through TECC's leadership, the Escondido Creek Watershed is a model of vibrant urban communities and viable natural ecosystems thriving together.

The Escondido Creek Conservancy – Mission:

The mission of [The Escondido Creek](#)

[Conservancy](#) is to preserve and restore a natural Escondido Creek watershed.

Last month the TECC board and staff conducted a day long strategic planning day. Questhaven Retreat graciously offered its Friendship Hall for the meeting and its beautiful grounds and 650 acres of precious chaparral as a reflective background. The day was gracefully moderated by Dan Beintema.

I have been through numerous strategic planning days as a TECC Board Member. Never have we accomplished so much and come away with such a clear, concise, and integrated view of what we have done and where it must lead us into the future.

We have long had an over-arching vision of someday creating a regional park for North County, using the approximate 2,500 acres of preserved open space in the Harmony Grove/Elfin Forest Core Habitat Area as the basis for linking a system of preserved lands. Yet somehow this thought seemed incomplete, lacking something soulful and connected.

It was at this most recent planning day, in a magical setting, with a group of inspired and dedicated people, that this hole in our soul was finally filled. We have always understood that a creek, a stream, a river, connects us all, recognizes no man-made boundaries, doesn't understand what is county or city, what is rich or poor, what is urban, suburban, or rural, who is conservative, liberal or apolitical, and is indiscriminant with her gift of life to all living things.

The clarity that occurred was matching our vision and mission to the reality of the Escondido Creek and how she inevitably weds us all. Our regional park concept grew to include connecting the thousands of acres in and around Daley Ranch and the northeastern reaches of the creek, with the Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Core Habitat Area via a linear park through urban Escondido. No pun intended, but this was a "watershed moment."

It heightens the importance of [Reveal Escondido Creek](#), the effort to create that linear park through Escondido by rehabilitating the seven mile concrete stretch of the creek in Escondido and revitalizing the bike/pedestrian trail that currently exists along the channel in the city. Connecting that urban park to the thousands of acres of open space that surround Escondido serves to create a much healthier urban environment and increased respect and value for the rare and diverse habitat that surrounds Escondido.

Like the creek that binds us to each other and to nature herself, the clarity of this vision and mission gives us a direction that is as simple and pure as the creek itself.

2014 Spring Issue



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Upcoming Events for Your Calendar!

2nd, 3rd and 4th Sunday of Every Month

10:00 - 11:00 am | Nature Walk

1st Sunday of Every Month | 8:30 - 11:30 am

Walk with a Tracker

April 19, May 24 and June 21, 2014 | 10:00 am - Noon

Bill the Bug Guy

April 27, 2014 | 1:30 - 5:00 pm | Photocreations Workshop
Numbers Limited | \$35

RSVP information@escondidocreek.com

May 7, 2014 | 6:00 - 7:30 pm | New Docent Orientation

May 15, 2014 | 5:00 - 7:00 pm | Native Talk Story Telling

June 26, 2014 | 6:00 - 7:15 pm | Bobcat Lecture

Creek Walk Events

April 12, 2014 | 10:00 - 11:00 am | Audubon Walk

Meet at the entrance of the Escondido Animal Shelter

The Interpretive Center is located at:

8833 Harmony Grove Road • Escondido, CA 92029

Help Escondido Creek Bobcats Live Happily Ever After

by Ann Van Leer | Executive Director



Meet Your Neighbors

Those who live in the Escondido Creek Watershed may have been lucky enough to catch a glimpse of a local neighborhood bobcat as it went about its daily business of caring for its family and securing a meal. It is a special experience to see such a beautiful wild animal still surviving in this semi-urban place.

A Bobcat's Life in North County is Not Without Risk

The life of a bobcat in urbanizing North County is not without risk, many are killed by cars, and as development and even recreation increases, their free movement is restricted. More recently scientists have identified parasitic mange as a new severe threat which kills the animals slowly from emaciation or secondary infections. Research on the prevalence of mange in bobcats has detected a correlation between incidences of mange and bobcat exposure to anticoagulant rodenticides. (Jennings, Lewison, SDSU, 2013)

Why You Shouldn't Use Rat Poisons

You may have purchased rodenticides (aka, rat poison) at your local home store without realizing the consequences. You've likely seen the black plastic rodent boxes in the parking lots near restaurants or tucked away behind the bushes at shopping centers. The theory is that when a bobcat eats a rat or squirrel that has eaten a rodenticide, it compromises the bobcat's immune system in a way that makes them more likely to get mange (Moriarty, U.S. NPS, 2013). Of course, bobcats aren't the only animals that might eat a poisoned rodent; hawks and other predators are also threatened as the chemical that kills the rodents builds up (bioaccumulates) in their bodies with varied consequences. Chemical alternatives exist, and live traps are a much better alternative.

What Can Bobcats Teach Us?

San Diego County and its cities have approved a program that requires developers to set aside natural lands as "mitigation" when other areas are developed. Additionally, with the generous support of our members and our governmental, private and non-profit partners, conservation groups like [The Escondido Creek Conservancy](#) have been purchasing land and setting it aside as protected. TECC now owns and manages over 1,000 acres. These lands are now being knitted together in a system of preserved lands throughout the region.

While that all sounds good, for land preservation programs to be successful in perpetuity, we have to be able to measure that success and answer these simple key questions: How is it working? Are the animals merely surviving, or are they thriving? And, what must we be doing now to improve the likelihood the preserve system will be healthy and successful into the next century? For TECC, this is not an academic question: we need to know that the land we own, manage, or care for is thriving, and that the greater system of preserved lands in the watershed, county, and southern California will also thrive into the future. Protecting the natural resources of this watershed is the primary purpose for which our donors and members have supported TECC for over two decades.

Of course, our bobcats don't know which land is preserved and which is not, or to what degree land is protected; they just make their daily rounds dodging cars and trying to stay out

of trouble. But because they do move around, San Diego State University researchers Megan Jennings and Rebecca Lewison are studying them using GPS radio tracking and other means to see how they move and using that evidence as an indicator of how other animals might also travel. If our bobcats can move between preserved areas and their DNA can mix with other that of other bobcats, we know from previous studies that the animal populations will be stronger and more likely to succeed over time (Riley et al. 2006).

How Can You Help?

Unfortunately Jennings and Lewison's study area did not cover the Escondido Creek Watershed. We'd like to extend their research into our watershed as a way to measure the success of our growing land preserve system in North County. The scientists have provided us with a proposal that would directly address goals from their previous work but also answer additional questions that will help TECC answer the question is it working? If funded, the scientists will do GPS tracking of bobcats in our watershed but also incorporate camera and wildlife crossing data from other area mammal species including ringtail, mule deer, gray fox, and coyote into their analysis. If you would like to contribute towards this important study, please contact me at ann@landconserve.com.

TECC Wins Conservation Catalyst Grant

The San Diego Foundation recently announced a \$29,756 grant award to TECC from its Conservation Catalyst program to support land management of two critical properties in Elfin Forest.

During the last year TECC, in partnership with The Conservation Fund (TCF), was successful in acquiring for preservation two large tracts of land known as Cielo del Norte Phase A and Cielo Estates, totaling nearly 500 acres. While TCF holds fee title to Cielo Estates, and TECC holds fee title to Cielo Del Norte Phase A, TECC is now funding the entirety of the holding and management costs associated with both of these properties in anticipation of becoming the eventual fee title owner of both properties.

TECC sought funds from the San Diego Foundation's "Conservation Catalyst" program to pay the cost of initial preserve set up for both properties (access control, signage, clean up), and the cost of partial restoration of the associated section of Escondido Creek (removal of Arundo, Cape Ivy, and other invasive exotic species). As a match, TECC is funding the base costs of holding the properties such as non-property taxes and insurance, and our conservation partner the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy (SELCO) will provide funds to increase the area of creek restoration.

We are greatly appreciative of the support of the Foundation and our partners TCF and the SELCO in this critical work.

go green!

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The ESCONDIDO CREEK Conservancy

2013 Donors

We are grateful for the support of the new and returning members of the Conservancy.

This list includes all new members, membership renewals, donations and sponsorships received last year.

If you feel that your name has been inadvertently omitted, please contact Ann Hough at information@escondidocreek.org or phone (760) 471-9354.

The Watershed Voice

Protecting The Escondido Creek Watershed Since 1991

Guardians of the Creek

(\$10,000 plus)

The San Diego Foundation -
Hattie Ettinger Conservation Fund
Leonard Wittwer and Martha Blane
Stone Brewing Company
San Diego Gas & Electric
Elfin Forest Community Foundation
The Charles Stout Foundation
The San Diego Foundation TCJ Fund

Defenders of the Creek

(\$5,000 to \$9,999)

Elfin Forest Harmony Grove Town Council
The San Diego Foundation Orca Fund
Habitat West
Steve and Nona Barker
Danny and Nancy Goodrich

Advocates of the Creek

(\$1000 to \$4,999)

Palomar Audubon Society
R & F Products
James Ellerbrock
Jason Spurgeon
Lucille Khoury
Olivenhain Municipal Water District
Jean-Francois Erforth
San Diego Mountain Bike Association
Richard Murphy
Dennis Kibler
Jon Dummer and Debbie O'Neil
Bruce and Linda Hamilton
Scott Sutherland
Kiwans Club of Escondido
Tom and Cheryl Munnecke
Kai Johnson
Michael and Juanita Moe
Kenneth and Bonita Baumgartner
Szekely Family Foundation
The Webb Foundation
Elizabeth Keithley and John Olsen
Walmart
Eagle Creek
Interpretive Center Donation Box
Albert St George
Qualcomm

Protectors of the Creek

(\$500 to \$999)

Gerald Varty
Pamela Gray
David and Marcia Radel
Jeffrey and Sarah Witt
Jeff and Shannon Anderson
Paul McClellan
JP Theberge
Richard Barron and Janathan Allen
Gregory McBain
Russ McLee

David and Edith Felker
Gloria Murphy
Pamela Stahl
Timothy and Gudrun Ulman
David and Amita Bardwick
Manu and Minoo Sohaey
Thomas and Donna Golich
Millicent Froehlich
Kevin Barnard
Frederick Wollman
Jeff and Carolyn Swenerton
Kick Bike America

Benefactors of the Creek

(\$100 to \$499)

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Anthony and Carolyn Kurtz
Tom Leech
Tanya Golz Ingorvate
Daryl and Anne Carlson
Lucy Berk
Janie DeCelles
Everett and Dare Delano
San Dieguito Equine Group
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Margaret McCown Liles
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John Mead
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Patricia Benson
Andrew Palmer
Howard Magoon
Wendy Barker
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Jason Zilka
Heidi Marc-Aurele
Lita Bowles
Alden and Ann Hough
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Hajime and Janice Ohno
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Stacy Halboth
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Michael and Nancy Sampson
Roy and Mary Garrett
Frank and Gail Twohy
Kimberly Dresser
Tony De Bellis and Melanie Fallon

Friends of the Creek

(Up to \$99)

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Christopher Dye
Dorothy Kline
David and Joan Herskowitz

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Diana Towne
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Linda Roppe
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Richard Paul
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Erik Van Joosten
Drew Hubbell
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Elizabeth Gilpin
Douglas and Susan Nail
Loretta and Deborah Brown
Don Wilber
Joan Perron
William and Marilyn Morgan

News from the Elfin Forest Interpretive Center

The Importance of Giving Children Experiences in Nature

by Jeff Swenerton | Vice President of TECC



As one of over 40 docents at the Interpretive Center, I was guiding a group of eight inquisitive third grade students, part of our program that brings over 500 low-income students to the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve annually. One boy in my group was not focused and was a student that was a real challenge for his teacher. In our program our goal is not to “tell our students about nature” but instead put

them in the role of a young scientist and through careful observation and thoughtful questioning “have them tell us about nature.”

As the morning progressed, this challenging student became increasingly engaged. There was something about being outside. In our last station of the morning we were investigating very small black fly larvae on a video microscope in our Children’s Lab in the Interpretive Center. Our young scientists were trying to figure out how this small creature was able to attach itself to rocks with the strong river currents. For only a split second, the black fly exposed claws at the base of its body that most students did not see. My now engaged student hypothesized that these claws and suction enabled the black fly to stick to the rock. I handed him a large toilet plunger to demonstrate his idea. He proceeded to push it to the floor and in great detail explain his idea. Later he also correctly identified what the larva ate based on the color of the digestive track, at which point the boy next to him said, “Why don’t you answer questions like this in class?”

Every time a bus of third graders pulls up to drop off its inquiring minds, I wonder who’s on that bus? A future research scientist or wildlife biologist? Or perhaps a future president of [The Escondido Creek Conservancy](#)? We are proud that TECC’s donors continue to step forward to help us fund educational programs at the Interpretive Center and the Reserve that will help us model a vision of what the region can be in the future. If we can continue to help these kids see and learn from this wonderful place, I am optimistic these lessons will serve them and the region well into the future.



Comings

TECC is pleased to welcome new EFRR Park Ranger Jonathan Zeller. Jonathan worked as a Park Attendant for the County of SD for the past six years, primarily in the Escondido area including Felicita Park and Del Dios Highlands. Jonathan has also volunteered as a Firefighter at the Elfin Forest Fire Department.

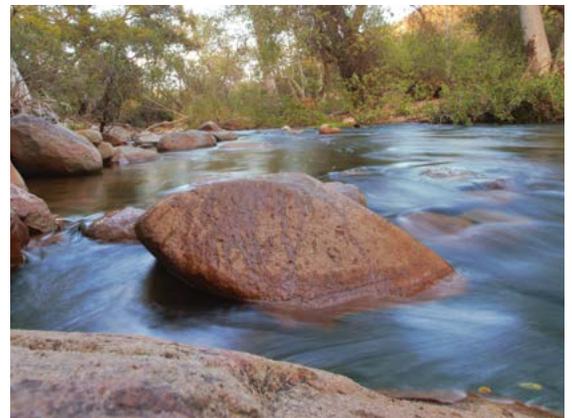
And Goings

The environmental community lost two great advocates recently. Jack Pomeroy, a retired geologist was a TECC supporter and member of the Escondido Citizens Ecology committee. Jack was a passionate outdoorsman and naturalist who loved leading hikes at Daley Ranch. He had a passion for the TECC owned property Bottle Peak and many of us have happy memories of being guided by Jack to the breath taking summit overlooking the City of Escondido. He will be missed.

Yolanda Fleet was the most delightful person who was involved in many environmental, animal rights, and civic groups throughout Escondido, including The League of Women Voters, Women’s Club of Escondido, The Humane Society, PETA, The Nature Conservancy, Audubon, America Association of University Women, Wilderness Gardens, The Escondido Creek Conservancy, Friends of Daley Ranch, and the Escondido Citizens Ecology Committee.

What’s New at the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve?

- **TECC to hire an Environmental Education Director:** With the increasing demands of our very successful education program and of the increasing number of programs at the Reserve, the Conservancy will be hiring a full-time education director to work at the Reserve at the Interpretive Center. The education director will lead the multi-faceted education program including the docent program, school programs, family lecture series, and a new Trail Docent Patrol. The position will be posted in March. Thank you to all our donors for making this possible.
- **New Signage at the Reserve:** Have you noticed our new signs? Thanks to TECC Board Member Tim Costanzo and graphic designs by Parks Department Supervisor Jeff Anderson, we have five new heavy metal signs to promote programs at the Reserve. Four small signs point directions to the Interpretive Center with pictorial graphics of the Reserve in the background. The largest sign has several changeable panels so that information is always current.
- **New Teaching Guides for Docents:** Docent and Temporary Ranger Debbie Walden developed a unique guide for our docents in our school program. Based on teaching units developed by the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy, Debbie edited and formatted the units into a small “flip-book” format so that they can be easily carried by the docent through the six learning stations. Thanks also to Advisory Committee Member Tanya Ingorvate and Jeff Anderson for their help in final editing.
- **Coming Soon:** As you enter the Interpretive Center you pass a beautiful column designed and built by renowned local artist James Hubbell. The middle of the column features a 150 pound bronze sculpture depicting the Kumeyaay Creation Story. As part of our program at the Reserve we feature the history of the region including Native Americans. Both the Kumeyaay and Luiseño tribes shared the Reserve and surrounding area. The multi-talented docent Donna Walker has designed a new sign to guide visitors through the story.
- **New Computer and Plexiglass Cases:** Special thanks to The Webb Foundation for funding the purchase for the new Plexiglass cases that will protect our beautiful animal displays and a computer for our Education Director.
- **Save the Date:** Earth Day at the Reserve, April 26. Make a difference! Signups for this event can be made at: <http://creektobay.org/index.php> (limited to the first 50 volunteers)



Indigenous Plants and Native Uses

by Su Kraus | Moosa Creek Nursery



As owner of Moosa Creek Nursery, a nursery exclusively devoted to growing California's native plants, I have had the opportunity to learn a great deal more than just horticulture. One of the benefits of working with native plants has been the way it connects us to the earth and to the history of our area. My learning curve has included meeting fascinating experts, especially in the field of ethnobotany, and I'm deeply appreciative of the knowledge they have shared.

The Native American population traditionally used all the native plants at their disposal and had a use for everything. But their usage was sustainable, always taking into consideration the continued health of their habitat. Take a look at Our Lord's Candle, *Hesperoyucca whipplei* for instance. This is a plant you will see distributed throughout the [Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve](#). Native Americans used Our Lord's Candle leaves, fruit, flowers, stems, and hearts. Here are some examples:

- The fibrous leaves can be used for cordage.
- It takes some knowledge, but you can select a big yucca and very carefully twist the heart out. This leaves the plant to continue growing and provides you with the most tender part of the plant. Steam or slow-roast it. Please do not harvest these from the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve or other public lands however!
- Yucca flowers in April and May. Gather the flowers just when the buds are opening up. Remove the stamen and boil the petals. Use as a side dish, mix with scrambled eggs, or put them in stews. You can eat them fresh also.
- Harvest the fruit of the yucca as soon as the fruit forms but before the seeds develop. Cut them into pieces, and boil them twice. After cooking them for 1 hour, add them to a mix of corn, onion, and zucchini. Sprinkle cheese on top if you like.
- Harvest the stalk before it flowers. Wrap in foil and bake overnight at a very low temperature for about 10 hours. Remove the foil and you will find a very sweet treat waiting for you.

Another of my favorites is Woolly Blue Curls, *Trichostema lanatum*. This was such a valuable plant for Native Americans that it was once traded as a currency. Stories from Native American records list multiple uses:

- Using the flowers, stems, and leaves you can make a delicious and healthful tea. Pinch off a few stems and boil for 5 or 6 minutes. It is good hot, or cold over ice.
- Use the tea to relieve stuffed up noses during colds or flu. Once the hot tea is made, inhale the vapors, and you will soon have a clear head.
- Woolly Blue Curls, also known as "Romero," were also used for a wide variety of medicinal uses, including kidney infections and stomach pain, as an aid for women to remain youthful, and to revitalize older men!

Here at [Moosa Creek](#) we tried making the tea and liked it so much we developed a packaged tea to make it more widely available. You can find out more at [Wildchaparral.com](#).

My next project in the works is the creation of a native edibles garden. I hope you will try some natives too. Our nursery grows a wide selection of plants native to Southern California, both straight species or native cultivars that have been selected or bred to provide a native plant that is more garden tolerant than some of the species. These plants are more easily available than you think. We partner with independent retail nurseries around the county. If you don't see what you want at your local nursery you can order online and we'll deliver it your favorite nursery for you.

Contact Moosa Creek at:
28435 Wilkes Rd, Valley Center · (760) 749-3216



giveBig is Back!

The [Escondido Creek Conservancy](#) (TECC) is pleased to announce its participation in giveBIG, a 24-hour event to increase philanthropy in San Diego through online giving.

Presented by The San Diego Foundation and its media partners, San Diego Magazine and San Diego 6 television, giveBIG will take place on Tuesday, May 6, 2014 from midnight - 11:59 p.m. PST. During this time, we encourage you to visit www.giveBIGsandiego.org and donate to TECC.

Every dollar donated to TECC through giveBIG on May 6 will go further because of the incentive pool that has been created by The San Diego Foundation and its sponsors. In conjunction with US Bank and The Waitt Foundation. The San Diego Foundation has pooled \$150,000 to incentivize giving during this event, so that we receive a proportion of this pool based on how much money we raise. For example, if TECC raises 5% of the total amount raised during the event, we will receive 5% of the incentive pool.

There is no limit to how much a donor may give, however, only donations between \$25 and \$1,000 will be eligible for incentive pool funds. We suggest that checks over \$1,000 are sent directly to TECC at P.O. Box 460791, Escondido, CA 92046 to avoid credit card processing fees.

"We are excited to participate in giveBIG because this event will help raise awareness of the work TECC does for the community to preserve and restore a natural Escondido Creek Watershed," said Kevin Barnard, President. "We hope people will join us to create an Escondido Creek Watershed where vibrant urban communities and viable natural ecosystems can thrive together."

For more information about giveBIG, visit www.giveBIGsandiego.org.

TECC survey!

We will soon be sending a survey to TECC members to learn how we can better serve you. If you have questions or suggestions for the survey, please contact me at ann@landconserve.com.

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

- Secured preliminary funding for the 501-acre University Heights property. A former owner had previously proposed to build over 1,000 houses on this property. We will complete the preservation of the property in 2014.
- In partnership with the Olivenhain Municipal Water District and the San Diego Zoo, sent 800 grade school children from urban north San Diego County to the Elfin Forest Interpretive Center for hands-on learning and discovery about local wildlife and natural history. For every \$30 we raise, another grade school child can have a life-changing experience in the outdoors.
- In partnership with the Conservation Fund, secured an agreement to purchase 256 acres known as Cielo Estates. The County had previously approved the construction of 79 houses on this property. You will be hearing more from us about this property in 2014.

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

The Escondido Creek Conservancy Board of Directors & Staff

Kevin Barnard President	Brent Alspach Director
Jon Dummer Vice President	Tim Costanzo Director
Ron Forester Secretary	Jerry Harmon Director
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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.

Please Make Checks Payable To: The Escondido Creek Conservancy

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () _____

Email: _____

Monthly Membership Options:

I (we) authorize The Escondido Creek Conservancy to initiate debit entries to my (our) Checking Account/Savings Account (select one) indicated below and debit the same to their account.

Date: _____

Bank Name: _____

Branch: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip: _____

Account Number: _____

Routing Number: _____

Amount (Minimum \$10): _____

Start Date: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

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

Creek Benefactor | \$100

Please Charge My Credit Card:

One time Monthly Other Amount _____

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Credit Card #: _____

Exp Date: _____ Sec. Code on Back of Card: _____

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____

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

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