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 Supporter 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 Support Has Contributed
In the past 25 years, over 3,000 acres of wild lands have been preserved in the Escondido Creek watershed. TECC has been involved in over 80% of those acquisitions. Additionally, over the years, TECC's environmental education program has grown such that now over 2,000 young people per year have the opportunity to participate in discovery-based programs, making memories that will stay with them forever.

Donate Online At: www.escondidocreek.org

The Watershed Voice
To Preserve and Restore the Escondido Creek Watershed

Richard Murphy
President of TECC

To Donate or for More Information go to www.save1000acres.org - call 760-471-8354

Become a Supporter!
Join Our Conservation Efforts by Becoming a Supporter or Renewing Your Support

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2017 Spring Issue

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Looking For Office Space In Downtown Escondido?
Introducing Environment, a place for your business to thrive and support TECC!
The TECC office recently relocated to 120 West Grand. The new suite is larger than we currently need but includes room for future growth. In the interim, we are creating a shared workspace, for a fee and on a month-to-month basis, for small businesses. Interested? Please contact information@escondidocreek.org for more details.
In today's classroom, a teacher's greatest challenge is to create experiences that have a lasting impact on kids. Children want to feel a sense of purpose in their learning. If a lesson has engagement and relevance, they are all in. If it doesn't, they don't care -- and really, why should they? The Trout in the Classroom program is one of those experiences that has the secret ingredients of engagement and relevance. And let me tell you: my kids have been all in.

I teach 5th graders at Quantum Academy in Escondido. We took an inquiry approach to learning about the trout. The students looked into why these fish are not in our watershed anymore and if it is possible to bring them back to Escondido Creek.

The students have been doing all the research on their own. Yes, when given something with relevance, they actually enjoy doing the work of asking questions and seeking answers. For them, this project isn't just about raising trout, learning about them, and then releasing them. They want to do something that will make an impact. They want to be the ones who will stand up for the voiceless fish.

Even after raising the trout from eggs and successfully releasing them at Miramar Lake on March 8th, the project doesn't end. Their final project will be to create a narrative stop motion animation video to try to help solve the problem of bringing back trout to our creeks. Their goal is to raise awareness by "humanizing" the problem and doing it in a creative way so the message will be received.

I want to thank The Escondido Creek Conservancy for sponsoring us and allowing our kids to have an experience of a lifetime. You have inspired these kids to be part of the solution. With them on board, I know we will see trout return to our creeks in their lifetime.

Read more about this program on our website at: http://escondidocreek.org/current-projects/trout-classroom-program/
Youth Conservation Hero Nominations
by Richard Murphy | Board President

In past TECC newsletters we’ve spotlighted two local conservation heroes selflessly doing good for the environment. In the fall 2015 edition, our first was Frank McCullough, who, with his lovely wife Pat, had volunteered for 17 years to pick up trash along Harmony Grove Road as part of TECC’s participation in the “Adopt-A-Road” program. Next, in the spring 2016 edition, we highlighted the important work of our local game warden, Mike McCain, who protects wildlife by fighting urban poaching through science, sleuthing, and his knowledge of local canyons gained from a childhood of San Diego County outdoor adventures.

We would like to try a little different approach this time, seeking nominations from our supporters of outstanding young people making a difference for our local environment. Our Youth Conservation Hero should be 18 or younger, perhaps someone that started a conservation club at their school, who is working on an innovation that will help fight climate change, or...you tell us.

Please send nominations describing your nominee and why you think they should be acknowledged by TECC as a Youth Conservation Hero to information@escondidocreek.org by August 1, 2017. We will profile the winner(s) in our fall newsletter.

Homeless Census Along Escondido Creek
by Ann Van Leer | Executive Director

Intrepid Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve (EFRR) docent Su Scott joined TECC staff, board members and Escondido police officers in the still-dark hours of early o’clock to participate in the Interfaith Shelter Network’s recent annual count of the homeless. TECC takes a census along Escondido Creek from Harmony Grove to the Escondido city boundary. This site is just upstream from the EFRR. TECC is working in partnership with the city and other stakeholders to help address issues in the creek, including trash and homelessness. It is neither in the best interests of the people living in the creek bed area, nor the creek itself, for people to live in Escondido Creek. The purpose of the count is to collect data about homelessness that can be used to leverage funds, including mental health services, to help people make sustainable changes in their lives.

Mobility Study
by Ann Van Leer | Executive Director

Map shows origination zip codes for EFRR survey participants

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) has projected that the county’s population will grow by nearly one million people by 2050. As the owner of conservation lands that we will protect in perpetuity, TECC must develop and implement strategies that guarantee wildlife will survive amidst a growing population.

The Los Cielos Preserve in Elfin Forest is home to some of the most threatened wildlife habitat in southern California and is located adjacent to one of the most popular recreation spots in the county, the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve (EFRR). Fortunately, we have a strong partnership with Olivenhain Municipal Water District (OMWD), that oversees the EFRR. We all realize that as the EFRR becomes more popular, the quality of the recreational experience may decline with a commensurate adverse effect on the area’s natural resources.

With that in mind, TECC and OMWD, working with the traffic engineering firm Urban Systems Associates, have initiated a Mobility Study at the EFRR. The purpose of the study is to help us better understand where visitors originate and how they’ve heard about the EFRR. With a better understanding of from where and how the visitors arrive, we can better plan for habitat protection.

This phase of the study includes data collection implemented by our hardworking docents. Visitors are being asked a short series of questions, including the zip code from which their trip originated. We are also doing visual and electronic car counts at a variety of locations in and near the EFRR.

We will provide updates as the study progresses on our website at http://escondidocreek.org/news/mobility-study/.

Welcome to Harmony Heights!

Thanks to voting from readers of our monthly online newsletter, we have a new name for our newly-acquired University Heights West property: Harmony Heights! A perfect name for the coastal sage scrub habitat and the gnatcatchers it supports. If you would like to be added to our monthly online mailing list, please go to our website at http://escondidocreek.org and click on the ‘Sign Up’ button.
The Escondido Creek Watershed will become a model of vibrant urban communities and viable natural ecosystems thriving together.

Escondido Creek Restoration Pilot Project At Grape Day Park

by Ann Van Leer | Executive Director

TECC has been recommended to receive a grant of $355,000 to develop preliminary designs (30% design level) to restore Escondido Creek through Grape Day Park. This project will illustrate how the 7-mile concrete flood control channel could look and function if restored. The 30% design level is considered a significant engineering milestone, as it enables the larger project costs to be estimated once a design is rendered to 30%. The project will be conducted in partnership with Encuentros Leadership Academy and the City of Escondido.

Ultimate project outcomes could include increased parkland, recreational opportunities, economic opportunities, and real estate values. Similar projects elsewhere have improved the quality of life and provided economic opportunities for residents, and one key component of this project is an analysis to evaluate the economic benefit of a restored Escondido Creek in its natural state. The project will begin in the summer of 2017 and extend over two years. Much of the work is technical in nature, as we must first fully understand how a restored channel will function (convey flow, water quality, ecological processes, etc.) within a watershed context. Consultants will review currently available studies and data, filling data gaps as needed with additional research, mapping, and data collection. Engineers and hydrologists will then develop hydrologic, hydraulic, sediment transport, and geomorphic models or analytic tools, which will be used to assess different design scenarios. Alternate scenarios will be refined through a public process in coordination with the City of Escondido’s Neighborhood Services program to tap its network of residents participating in neighborhood groups.

Unique to this project, TECC has partnered with the Encuentros Leadership Academy to implement a program of Conservation Fellowships where young people from central Escondido will shadow the project from start to finish to learn STEM education methodologies from professionals working in the real world. Fellows will attend technical meetings, accompany professionals in fieldwork, and participate in project activities.

More information about this project can be found on our website at https://escondidocreek.org/current-projects/pilot-project-grape-day-creek-restoration/.

SAVE 1000 Acres Update

by Ann Van Leer | Executive Director

Since we began the campaign to Save 1,000 Acres through the purchase and preservation of the John H. Henry and Mountain Gate properties, 174 people have donated. To those that have already donated, Thank you! For those that have not yet donated, we welcome contributions of any size. To date, donations have ranged from as little as $3 to as much as $25,000, and all are important.

We are thrilled to see the wide range of support and are especially thankful that two of our key conservation partners, the friends of Daley Ranch and the Palomar Audubon Society, have stepped up and will be running their own campaigns to their supporters starting later this year.

While we achieved our preliminary fund raising targets, which resulted in matching contributions, we still haven’t accomplished our larger goals including covering the cost of escrow payments, which are currently $300,000. Additionally, at the end of 2017, TECC will owe an additional $55,000 payment on each property ($100,000 total), which will give us one more year (through the end of 2018) to complete the acquisitions. We can do it with your help!

More about the campaign is at www.SAVE1000acres.com.

A Month In The Life Of TECC

Legislative aide Laithar Cote, Chris Redfern of SD Audubon, and Ann Van Leer outside the office of CA Assemblymember Shirley Weber. TECC and SD Audubon met with Assembly member Weber about providing outdoor education for all children in California.

Education Manager Simon relating the importance of recycling at a school field trip to EFRR.

Board member Jeff at a Watersheds’ field trip at EFRR | Photo: Nancy Samp

Board member Kevin at Miramar Lake trout release.

Paul Curtis, principal of Aquasolver and AquaFinn, has volunteered his expertise to assist TECC and teachers with the Trout in the Classroom program.

TECC Land Steward volunteer, Matthew Leonard, on his first shift in the great TECC classroom program.

AquaFinn, has volunteered his expertise to assist TECC and teachers with the Trout in the Classroom program.

Board member, education manager, and field trip tour guide, Simon, explains his concept of the ‘Smell-i-verse’

Paul Curtis, principal of AquaSolver and Aquafinn, has volunteered his expertise to assist TECC and teachers with the Trout in the Classroom program.