

ANNUAL REPORT

2022



*Bottle Peak, protected in 2010 by The Escondido Creek Conservancy,
The California Wildlife Conservation Board and San Diego County Parks and Recreation.
Photo: Richard Murphy*

During Adventure Camp, summer campers explore and learn about the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve and the Interpretive Center — a place designed to instill an appreciation for nature through interactive exhibits about the Escondido Creek watershed.



REBUILDING TOGETHER

As we prepared this 2022 report, we made sure to reflect. The last few years have been challenging for everyone on the planet, The Escondido Creek Conservancy is no exception. During the pandemic, we had to cut back, put things on pause and make difficult choices. But over time we learned from our experiences, adapted and grew stronger in so many ways. We learned to pivot to short-term survival while implementing steps to enhance long-term resilience. The Board also adopted a new strategic plan to help further our evolution.


We survived this turbulent time because of our wonderful supporters, partners, board members and staff. This support system is why we're able to look ahead to the future with great hope.

Thanks to board member Kevin Barnard, the Parker Foundation and hundreds of supporters who donated, in 2022, we made tremendous progress on our new office building, the Boulder Outlook, that will soon be home to North County conservation and outdoor education for decades to come.

While the remodel was challenging, it didn't keep the Conservancy from advancing conservation in other areas. Last month, we closed escrow on a 49-acre property at the base of Paint Mountain to be added to the Leomar Preserve! Additionally, our outdoor education programs continue to blossom.

This work happens because you help make it happen. Thank you for your support. We hope to see you at a Conservancy activity very soon.

Sincerely,



Richard Murphy
President



Ann Van Leer
Executive Director



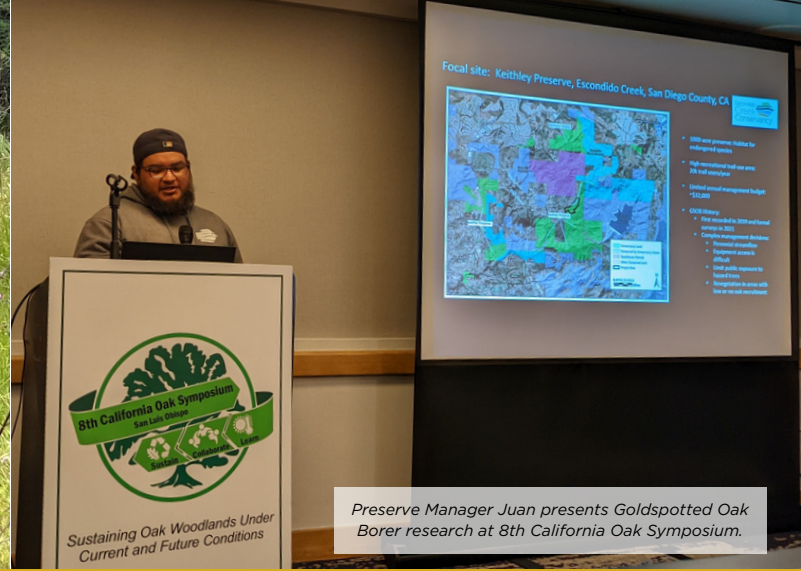
The Conservancy maintains and cares for Harmony Grove Road via Adopt-a-Road program.



San Diego Tracking Team leads a multi-agency wildlife tracking training at Sardina Preserve.




Preserve Manager Donna monitors and documents plant and animal species.





Preserve Manager Juan presents Goldspotted Oak Borer research at 8th California Oak Symposium.

LAND TEAM ACHIEVEMENTS 2022


Our Land Team works to preserve and restore the Escondido Creek watershed.


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Planted more than 100 native plants at the Mountain Meadow Preserve. These plants were grown in our native plant nursery funded by Patagonia.
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Removed more than 500 invasive and highly flammable Eucalyptus Trees from the Sardina Preserve with the help of CalFire and volunteers.
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Continued Goldspotted Oak Borer research at the Keithley Preserve.

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Presented this work at the 8th California Oak Symposium: Sustaining Oak Woodlands Under Current and Future Conditions.
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Published a paper to help conservationists fight this aggressive non-native beetle decimating oaks.
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Continued to support the next generation of conservation stewards by providing internship opportunities with local universities and high schools.
- 

Began our Adopt-A-Road Program commitment to pick up litter along Harmony Grove Road for the next two years.

2023 LAND TEAM GOALS

- 🍃 Continue to add acres of conserved land to our portfolio.
- 🍃 Carry on efforts to remove invasive non-native weeds from all preserves.
- 🍃 Maintain and manage lands at the highest standards per Land Trust Alliance accreditation.
- 🍃 Provide internship opportunities to local university and high school students.
- 🍃 Conduct surveys of rare plants like Orcutt's brodiaea and Encinitas baccharis.
- 🍃 Seek grants that further our mission to preserve and restore the watershed.
- 🍃 Collaborate with neighboring land managers and private property landowners to elevate the biological value of the watershed.



OMWD Ranger Jonathan shows volunteer Mark and Conservancy staff how to use an auger to create holes for fence posts.



The Conservancy's 2022 Education Team.



Students test the water quality of the Escondido Creek.



Students make observations about the Escondido Creek.



Students use their senses to compare native plants on a hike.

EDUCATION TEAM ACHIEVEMENTS 2022

Our Education Team works to introduce local youth and adults to nature.

- Welcomed Ariel Reed as our new Education Manager!
- Resumed in-person classroom lessons alongside field trips that serve third graders from 18 schools in the Escondido Union School District thanks to funding from the Malk Nature Fund, SDG&E and California State Parks.
- Implemented Trout In The Classroom program in eight classrooms.
- Awarded full scholarships to 24 Adventure Camp summer campers thanks to funding from the San Diego Foundation.
- Continued the California Statewide Outdoor Learning (CalSOL) Initiative to advocate for outdoor education opportunities for 6.2 million California public school students.
- Resumed in-person Conservation Conversations at the Elfin Forest Interpretive Center.
- Partnered with Patio Playhouse during their "A Year with Frog and Toad" production.

2023 EDUCATION TEAM GOALS

Continue "Seed the Future" campaign, with the goal of raising \$2 million to be used to:

- Sustain existing programs for the next several years.
- Continue providing and improving the high quality of our program.
- Establish new outdoor field trip locations that serve more children in the watershed.
- Create a spectacular field station where students can conduct conservation research.
- Grow CalSOL coalition so more students have equitable access to outdoor education programs.

Create a Conservancy Education Blueprint, implementing the 2021-2022 strategic plan, with meaningful input from stakeholders that elevates our efforts to new heights.

Provide professional development opportunities to part-time employees to increase engagement and retention rates.

Increase connections within the community by providing summer programming for indigenous tribes.

Collaborate with the Escondido Union School District during summer 2023 to provide more outdoor educational opportunities.



School groups learn all about local nature on a hike.



Adventure Camp summer campers explore the Interpretive Center at the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve.



School groups come to the Elfin Forest for hands-on outdoor education.



Campers test which substrate is best for Steelhead Trout to lay eggs.




Campers explore the Escondido Creek.





While the Boulder Outlook office is not quite finished, it's already shown success as a place that introduces and connects people to conservation.


ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS ACHIEVEMENTS 2022


Our Administration and Operations Team works to build and maintain a steady foundation in all aspects of the Conservancy.

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Despite pandemic-related delays, significant progress occurred in the remodel of Boulder Outlook, the Conservancy's new office at the Mountain Meadow Preserve.
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Secured funding approvals to purchase a 49-acre property at the base of Paint Mountain to be added to the LeoMar Preserve.
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In 2022, raised \$103,003 from 150 donations through a matching campaign with the Parker Foundation for Boulder Outlook to help stabilize the Conservancy's budget.
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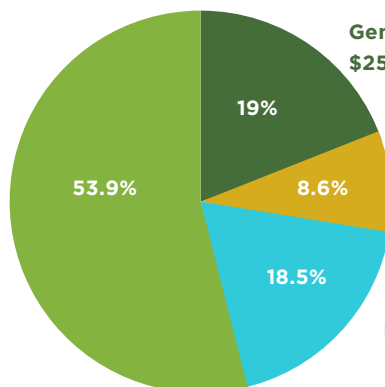
In 2022, raised \$191,207 from 258 donations for the All Hands In campaign.
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Secured The Gnatcatcher Fund, a new \$1 million endowment from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the San Diego Foundation that will protect Conservancy lands to support the endangered California songbird.

SNAPSHOT OF EXPENSES 2022

Total
\$1,361,040

Land Stewardship
\$734,111



General Operations & Administration
\$258,552

Fundraising, Marketing,
Communications & Volunteering
\$116,409

Education
\$251,968



On June 27, 2023, the Conservancy closed escrow on this beautiful 49-acre property at the base of Paint Mountain, saving another critical wildlife linkage between Elfin Forest and Olivenhain. The Conservancy will manage the property as part of the Leomar Preserve.



2023 ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS GOALS

- 🍃 Complete Boulder Outlook and move staff operations into the building.
- 🍃 Complete the purchase of a 49-acre property at the base of Paint Mountain and successfully “onboard” it into the management program for the LeoMar Preserve.
- 🍃 Continue to standardize Conservancy operations consistent with Land Trust Alliance standards and practices, setting the Conservancy up for decades of success.
- 🍃 Grow the Conservancy’s volunteer base and create new opportunities for engagement within the Conservancy.
- 🍃 Begin preservation of at least one new significant conservation property, while assisting partners with preservation of other key properties.



Photo: Richard Murphy



Shrub Club volunteers hard at work at Sardina Preserve.



Local school group proudly displays their conservation-based artwork.

**“STUDY NATURE, LOVE NATURE, STAY CLOSE TO NATURE.
IT WILL NEVER FAIL YOU.”
— FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT**



Hidden Meadows Wednesday Group hard at work at Boulder Outlook.



Students take time to enjoy nature and make observations about the creek.



Photo: Richard Murphy

Leonard Wittwer, a co-founder of the Conservancy, enjoys a hike.



DONOR HIGHLIGHT: LINDA COLLINS



Linda in action caring for her own garden.



Linda and friends on a "Welcome to the Watershed Hike" on Harmony Heights.

Linda Collins is the type of person who is not afraid to get their hands dirty. She entered the Conservancy's orbit in 2022 and hit the ground running, making an immediate impact in every project she's been part of.

Linda started as a volunteer for the Seed the Future campaign to help raise funds for our outdoor education programs. Over time, her passion for this campaign quickly drew in others, and soon, the Seed committee grew with new faces and new ideas. In addition to being a volunteer, Linda has become a donor.

An avid home gardener and member of the Hidden Meadows Garden Club, Linda strives to make her surroundings better than she found them. The Boulder Outlook yard was once a weed-infested mess. However, that quickly changed once Linda and her team of volunteers took action to help begin the transformation to a fire-safe native landscape.

She also loves getting others into nature! Thanks to Linda, the number of volunteers at our monthly Shrub Club have grown and she's also introduced several new volunteers to our native plant nursery.

"It has been fulfilling to work with others who care about nature and want to help to preserve this wonderful area where we live. I've learned a lot and met wonderful, like-minded, hard-working people who love playing in the dirt ... like me!" - Linda Collins

Linda and the wonderful residents of the Hidden Meadows community have embraced the Conservancy's mission with a passion and zeal that inspires our staff. We are appreciative and thankful for her commitment to the Conservancy and the planet.



WHEN YOU DONATE TO OUR ALL HANDS IN CAMPAIGN, YOUR GIFT SUPPORTS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION TO MAKE CERTAIN DONATIONS ARE USED PROPERLY, ACQUISITIONS ARE SUCCESSFUL AND NATIONAL LAND TRUST ALLIANCE STANDARDS AND PRACTICES ARE INTEGRATED INTO CONSERVANCY OPERATIONS.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT



WHEN YOU DONATE TO OUR EDUCATION FUND, SEED THE FUTURE CAMPAIGN, YOUR GIFT SUPPORTS HIGH-QUALITY OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR THOUSANDS OF YOUTH AND ADULTS IN NORTH COUNTY AND BEYOND.



THE BOULDER OUTLOOK



WHEN YOU DONATE TO OUR BOULDER OUTLOOK CAMPAIGN, YOUR GIFT SUPPORTS CREATING A SPACE FOR THE CONSERVANCY AND OUR PARTNERS TO LEARN, GROW AND ADDRESS THE CONSERVATION CHALLENGES OF TODAY AND THE FUTURE.

HELP US PRESERVE AND RESTORE THE ESCONDIDO CREEK WATERSHED



THE MISSING LYNX



WHEN YOU DONATE TO OUR LAND FUND, MISSING LYNX CAMPAIGN, YOUR GIFT SUPPORTS EFFECTIVE SCIENCE-BASED CONSERVATION PRACTICES, COLLABORATIVE WORK WITH CONSERVATION PARTNERS, AND TARGETED LAND ACQUISITION CAMPAIGNS THAT PAY SELLERS FAIR MARKET VALUE FOR THEIR LAND.

PLANNING FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

Endowments provide security and allow for creativity. Endowment funds are invested so the Conservancy can run its programs and operations from the earnings. Your major gift to an endowment helps the Conservancy become more sustainable and grow into the future.

ENDOWMENT GOALS

OPERATIONS FUND - \$8 MILLION

To support highly effective professional management and administration to make certain acquisitions are successful because the land can't save itself.

EDUCATION FUND - \$2 MILLION

To seed the future so we can always deliver outdoor education opportunities to local youth and adults.

LAND FUND - \$4 MILLION

To strategically target lands needing protection and care for lands we manage.

BOULDER OUTLOOK - \$350,000

To erase the debt on our office while creating a fund for maintenance.



ADDITIONAL WAYS TO SUPPORT

VOLUNTEER

BECOME A KEEPER OF THE CREEK MONTHLY DONOR

JOIN THE LAND LEGACY SOCIETY AND REMEMBER THE CONSERVANCY IN YOUR ESTATE

Contact executive@escondidocreek.org for more information on how to donate to an endowment or to answer any additional questions about supporting the Conservancy.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

SCAN TO DONATE



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