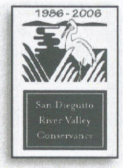
20 Years of CONSERVANCY Results

Protecting the San Dieguito River Valley, Creating the River Park, and Moving the Park to Full Reality

1986 Conservancy formed by group of 10 around kitchen tables in Del Mar and Solana Beach; sister organization, Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley, formed as an advocacy organization to protect the western river valley.



1987 Conservancy successful in push for San Diego Association of Governments committee to explore creation of San Dieguito River Park; Citizen Advisory Committee, with Conservancy representatives, established; structure of strong citizen advisory involvement in River Park continues; Conservancy participates in Santa Fe Valley Working group reviewing proposed development that has become the Crosby Estates; begin mapping of "potential acquisition areas."

1988 Conservancy participates, with Del Mar Lagoon Committee, in developing Plan for Expanded San Dieguito Lagoon Resources Enhancement Program – becomes the basis for the Lagoon Restoration Program presently under construction.

1989 Conservancy successfully pushes for establishment of formal River Park Joint Powers Authority (JPA), representing the six jurisdiction along the river corridor.

1990 Conservancy Board and members active in development and adoption of San Dieguito River Park Concept Plan; Conservancy identified as public fundraising organization for the River Park.

1991 Conservancy members reach out to community and media to develop support for River Park; push City of San Diego to acquire key parcel in Lagoon; today, all but 3 parcels in the Lagoon are in protected, public ownership; leadership to protect 9,000-year-old Harris Archeological site.

1992 Conservancy opposition to housing development in Lagoon leads to purchase of lands forestalling development; opposed premature development of Future Urbanizing Area that would impact River Park.

1993 Highland Valley Trail opens with heavy involvement by Conservancy members in planning and trail construction.

1994 First issue of CURRENTS newsletter published; Conservancy launches Water Education Program working with teaches to involve students in hands-on learning in River Park; Conservancy releases 'Walk Along the Ocean" publication.

1995 Conservancy takes the lead in successfully resisting organized, vigorous effort to limit the Park to the river corridor west of I-15. With the League of Women Voters, collects thousands of signatures to oppose commercial development in San Pasqual Valley. Conservancy, members participate in development of Multiple Species Conservation Pan, which has been adopted and includes the River Park.

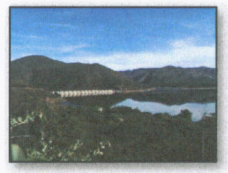
1996 Conservancy membership at 350; supports County in purchase of portion of Rutherford Ranch on Volcan Mountain (now Volcan Mountain Preserve); partner in defeat of ballot initiative to open Lagoon and Gonzalez Canyon areas within the River Park planning area to inappropriate development.

1997 Conservancy members active in development of Lagoon Wetlands Restoration Plan approved by the JPA (and later by the Coastal Conservancy); participates with County in purchase of 390-acre Arkansas Canyon purchase on eastern slopes of Volcan Mountain.

1998 Conservancy produces Exploring San Diego's Natural Diversity appearing on KPBS and County TV Channels; raised $200,000 in matching grants for purchases on Volcan Mountain; launches mini-grant program for environmental programs in schools.

1999 Conservancy members active in development of Lagoon Wetlands Restoration Plan approved by the JPA – and later by the Coastal Conservancy; supports County in purchase of 390-acre Arkansas Canyon purchase on eastern slopes of Volcan Mountain.

2000 Working with The Nature Conservancy, San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy launches $500,000 fundraising campaign for Santa Ysabel Ranch (leading to purchase of Ranch with State funds); begins on-going collaboration with Kids Korps removing invasive plants in Crest Canyon; Conservancy members lead in development and publishing of Wetland Resource Guide for teachers; Conservancy membership reaches beyond 1,000.



2001 Conservancy hires full-time Executive Director hired; receives grant for development of prototype GIS resource mapping program; in partnership with the Volcan Mountain Preserve Foundation, Conservancy purchases 27-acre Rutherford C parcel on west slopes of Volcan Mountain forestalling pending ranchette development; purchases 240 acres on south-facing slopes of Corral Mountain overlooking Lake Sutherland.

2002 Raises $650,000 in local contributions and in cooperation with the River Park and with state grants, purchases 232 acres on Bernardo Mountain, some of which were subdivided and ready for development; assists River Park in purchase of stunning Helms Ranch extending along the granite forged Santa Ysabel Creek Gorge; establishes "River Park as a Learning Laboratory" program with the County's San Pasqual Academy.

2003 With the Escondido Creek Conservancy and County of San Diego participates in purchase of 350-acre Derbas property, providing a trail and habitat link between the San Dieguito River and Escondido Creek watersheds; assists County in purchase of Polo property adjoining Derbas; launches "River Park Speakers Bureau"; first Conservancy Lifetime Appreciation Award to Bob Sensibaugh – subsequent Awards to Lynn Benn and Ramona Salisbury.

2004 Conservancy negotiates the purchase of 75-acre Crowder property at eastern entrance to the San Pasqual Valley – property purchased by River Park with state grant; funds development of restoration plan for 75-acre Boudreau parcel in the Lagoon area, which was essential to state grant permitting purchase by River Park; purchased 2 parcels on Lagoon along San Dieguito Drive adjacent to the Grand Avenue Bridge.

2005 Conservancy leads negotiation resulting in River Park purchase of 95-acre parcel along Farmer Road across from Volcan Mountain and adjoining Santa Ysabel Ranch East; Conservancy purchases third parcel along Lagoon on San Dieguito Road near the Grand Avenue Bridge.

2006 Conservancy raises $340,00 in public donations and generates $800,000 state grant supporting River Park purchase of 352-acre Lake Sutherland East property.