



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# **‘San Diego River Days’ to Kick Off Week of Free Activities for All Ages**

**CITY OF SAN DIEGO’S THINK BLUE SPONSORS SD RIVER PARK FOUNDATION’S 18<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL EVENT WITH INTERACTIVE EXHIBITS, HIKES & VOLUNTEER CLEANUPS**

SAN DIEGO – The 18<sup>th</sup> annual San Diego River Days kicks off Saturday, May 8, with nine days of free events and interactive activities for all ages to celebrate the City’s namesake river, learn about its rich history and help preserve it for future generations.

[San Diego River Days](#), sponsored by the City of San Diego’s Think Blue program, culminates with an in-person cleanup event on Friday, May 14, to remove tons of trash and debris from the riverbed. Several events will be held virtually for those who can’t attend in person.

**“The San Diego River is one of our most precious natural resources and we must continue to give it the care and attention it deserves,”** said Kris McFadden, the City’s Transportation & Stormwater Department Director. **“We’ve taken significant steps in recent years to protect the water quality and environmental health of the watershed under San Diego’s control. There’s still a lot of work to do, and events like this help draw attention, build partnerships and educate everyone about how important it is to preserve this river.”**

The [San Diego River Park Foundation](#) (SDRPF) has organized San Diego River Days for nearly two decades with several partner organizations. Now the weeklong event includes more than 15 interactive activities including hikes, open houses, volunteer projects, virtual workshops, self-guided tours and more. Activities are located along the entire 52-mile river, from Ocean Beach to Julian and everywhere in between.

**“This past year has highlighted the need for safe, high-quality open spaces in our neighborhoods that are accessible to all,”** said Sarah Hutmacher, Chief Associate Director of the San Diego River Park Foundation. **“San Diego River Days is all about stewardship and exploration of our region’s most important river, and we couldn’t be prouder of our partnership with the City of San Diego as we work together to preserve this treasure for future generations.”**

This year’s events are once again free to the public thanks to the sponsorship of [Think Blue](#), the Transportation & Stormwater Department’s clean waterways, flood-safe program. The City has taken

several actions to protect and enhance water quality by removing and preventing pollutants such as trash and bacteria from entering waterways, and to restore the San Diego River, including:

- Twice weekly cleanups in the San Diego River that removed over 98 tons of trash and debris this fiscal year so far.
- Successful outreach to dozens of property owners along the river to assist with additional cleanups on non-City property.
- Partnering with the SDRPF to significantly reduce trash from homeless encampments.
- Enhanced street sweeping.
- Enhanced catch basin cleaning.
- Bacteria Source Investigation teams to detect, locate and eliminate harmful sources of bacteria, such as trash and human waste, in watershed areas.
- Enhanced monitoring.
- Partnership cleanups with nonprofits.
- Installation of full trash capture devices.

For this year's San Diego River Days events, COVID-19 health and safety protocols will be in place for all in-person events. To accommodate those who can't attend in person, there will be several virtual events to celebrate San Diego River Days, including a crafting session, a clean water activism workshop and a virtual field trip featuring river bugs.

The full list of daily events can be found [here](#). Highlights include:

- May 8: Open house for the Point Loma Native Plant Garden (hosted by SDRPF).
- May 9: Open house for San Diego River Garden (hosted by SDRPF).
- May 11: Nature story time and crafting with a City librarian.
- May 13: Introduction to clean water activism workshop (hosted by San Diego Coastkeeper).
- May 14: Clean and green river cleanup event (hosted by SDRPF).
- May 15: Family field trip at Crestridge Ecological Reserve (hosted by the Earth Discovery Institute).
- May 15: Virtual educational field trip for kids "River Bugs are Cool!" (hosted by SDRPF).

For the past two decades, Think Blue has been the education and outreach arm of the City's Transportation & Stormwater Department, which is charged with protecting and improving water quality and reducing flood risk through efficient stormwater management. Think Blue helps educate residents, businesses and industry leaders about the effects of stormwater pollution and how to prevent pollution.

Founded in 2001, the San Diego River Park Foundation's mission is to engage people to work toward a better future for the historic San Diego River and the creation of a 52-mile river parkway from the mountains to the ocean.

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