

For Immediate Release

The San Diego Foundation Connects, Protects and Increases Access to Nature with \$558,000 in Grants

July 11, 2018 – San Diego, CA – The San Diego Foundation announced \$558,000 in grants for 12 programs that will connect, protect and increase access to nature, especially for San Diegans in underserved and park-poor communities.

The 2018 [Opening the Outdoors](#) grants emphasize collaboration among local nonprofits working together to grow a more vibrant region by increasing and enhancing natural space, promoting youth engagement in the environment and engaging communities in the protection and revitalization of outdoors areas.

According to The San Diego Foundation [Parks for Everyone](#) report, 45 percent of San Diego County's total land area is green space but many low-income, ethnically diverse communities have limited access to parks and open spaces. As reflected in the [2018 Impact Report](#), the Opening the Outdoors Program closes this gap by providing children and families in these San Diego communities with equitable access to nature.

The 2018 Opening the Outdoors grant programs will support more than 20 nonprofit organizations working to engage over 10,000 youth and 2,200 volunteers to improve various parks and natural amenities, including 10 miles of trails in the region.

“As the [Our Greater San Diego Vision](#) report revealed, access to and appreciation of the outdoors is a core value shared among San Diegans,” noted Nicola Hedge, Director of Environmental Programs at The San Diego Foundation. “The San Diego Foundation is thrilled to support these timely community projects through our Opening the Outdoors Program that will promote equity across the region by ensuring thousands of San Diegans who may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience the outdoors are now able to explore nature and improve access to green space in their communities.”

The 2018 grants from the Opening the Outdoors Program are made possible thanks to funding from the Satterberg Foundation in partnership with San Diego Grantmakers, as well as donors and other environmental endowment funds at The San Diego Foundation.

For more information about the Opening the Outdoors program, visit SDFoundation.org/Outdoors.

The 2018 grants were awarded to:

[Back Country Land Trust](#) - \$34,000

The grant will expand the Back Country Land Trust (BCLT) Living Classroom program to reach 1,000 students across East County San Diego. Despite a closer proximity to natural parks, many youth living in more rural settings like East County lack access to the outdoors due to factors in the human environment, such as poverty, transportation or safety concerns. BCLT will work with the Alpine Education Foundation to empower youth from East County through its environmental education curriculum.

[Casa Familiar](#) - \$38,000

The grant will help Casa Familiar working with Bayside Community Center to empower young residents in San Ysidro to actively engage in creating a more vibrant, healthy neighborhood through the development of a new Beyer Community Park. Development of Beyer Park would be a significant natural resource for San Ysidro residents as the neighborhood only has 10 percent of the recommended acres of open park space per resident.

Earth Discovery Institute - \$72,000

The grant will allow Earth Discovery Institute, in partnership with Endangered Habitats Conservancy, to bring a comprehensive conservation effort that includes education, outreach, acquisition and sustainability strategies to one of San Diego's most park-poor communities near El Cajon. The program will incorporate both land acquisition to grow the Crestridge Ecological Reserve and environmental education for local youth and their families.

Indigenous Regeneration - \$38,000

The grant will support the restoration and stewardship of six acres of green space, Mata'Yuum, which when complete will include walking trails, an edible food garden, 3,300 native plants, a Kumeyaay food forest and a constructed wetlands project. Built in partnership with the Ecology Center and Rob Machado Foundation, this outdoor space will ultimately serve as a platform to reconnect youth on the San Pasqual Indian Reservation with their native land and develop techniques that will improve their overall health and lifestyle.

Ocean Connectors - \$29,000

The grant will enable Ocean Connectors, in partnership with National Elementary School District and Living Coast Discovery Center, to provide environmental programming to every fourth-grade student at National City public elementary schools. The grant support will also help restore habitats at Paradise Creek and the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

Outdoor Outreach - \$71,000

The grant will support the *Outdoor Voices Youth Leadership Initiative* and will allow Outdoor Outreach to train and employ 10 at-risk youth as guides and mentors to lead programs for 1,700 youth throughout the year. In partnership with City Heights CDC, Outdoor Outreach will also build community support for timely public policy decisions that expand access to local natural spaces, such as the new Chollas Triangle Park in the City Heights area.

San Diego Canyonlands - \$35,000

The grant will help San Diego Canyonlands establish a revolving project fund and a Canyon Enhancement Master Permit to cut time and cost for permitting in half, saving potentially tens of thousands in each canyon/trail project and greatly speeding up the opportunity for neighborhoods across San Diego to have safe and healthy access to canyons.

San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy - \$55,000

The grant will allow San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy (SELC) to work with Escondido Unified School District (EUSD), San Diego Zoo Global, and Friends of Cardiff and Carlsbad State Beaches to expand their signature school-based *Our Living Watershed* program to all fourth and fifth-graders in the entire Escondido school district. The grant program will engage more than 13,000 youth in science-based education at local ecosystems and hands-on restoration activities.

The Escondido Creek Conservancy - \$25,000

Building the base of a multi-partner, multi-year environmental education program in the Escondido Unified School District, the grant will support The Escondido Creek Conservancy Habitats program, which will introduce third-grade students to the concept of ecosystems by exploring and investigating local habitats in the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve. The program will foster environmental stewardship and will culminate in students being empowered to become environmental leaders in their homes, their classrooms and their communities.

WILD Coast - \$47,000

The grant will allow WILD Coast to develop a new environmental program curriculum that will be implemented in more than 90 classrooms. Through its *Explore My MPA (Marine Protected Areas)* project, WILD Coast will work

with Native Like Water and Outdoor Outreach to provide science-based engagement opportunities for youth while also creating opportunities for students to help enhance and grow Marine Protected Areas through near-term policy change.

[Zoological Society of San Diego](#) - \$54,000

The grant will support the *Save Our Species San Diego!* Program, which is a multi-touch, extended student engagement program designed to introduce underserved students to the incredible plants and animals they share San Diego County with, and empower them to explore the natural spaces in their own communities. The grant will enable the San Diego Zoo to engage 950 sixth grade students at three schools in Escondido.

In addition, the [Zoological Society of San Diego](#) is receiving a matching grant (\$60,000) to help support the San Diego End Extinction project with a goal to prevent species extinction in San Diego County by working together with regional public, private and community organizations.

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About The San Diego Foundation

The San Diego Foundation maximizes the impact of your charitable giving. We mobilize philanthropic resources to advance quality of life, increase social impact and champion civic engagement. For more than 40 years, The Foundation and our donors have granted more than \$1 billion to grow a vibrant San Diego region. Learn more on our [website](#), and consider a donation to the [Fund for the Future Endowment](#) which supports San Diego community needs now and forever.

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