

# The San Diego Foundation Grants \$400,300 to Increase Access to the Outdoors - The San Diego Foundation

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**July 14, 2016 – San Diego, CA** – The San Diego Foundation announced \$400,300 in grants for 10 local programs that will connect, protect and increase access to green space and nature throughout the region. In total, 27 organizations will join together to help more than 5,000 youth from park-poor and low-income communities experience the outdoors.

The 2016 Opening the Outdoors Program grants will support education and environmental efforts across San Diego, focusing on cross-organization collaboration among regional partners.

“The abundance of outdoor space and access to nature are reasons why residents and visitors alike cherish our region for its stunning natural beauty,” explained Emily Young, Vice President of Community Impact at The San Diego Foundation. “These projects reflect a commitment by The San Diego Foundation and our donors to maintain and enhance our cherished resources, and create opportunities for all youth and families to experience the outdoors.”

The Opening the Outdoors Program was established in 2012 in response to key findings in [Parks for Everyone](#), a 2010 report commissioned by The San Diego Foundation that found while 45 percent of San Diego County’s total land area is green space, many low-income, ethnically diverse communities have limited access to parks and open spaces. The Opening the Outdoors program closes this gap by providing more equitable opportunities for San Diego youth to grow up with access to nature and similar, shared experiences outside.

The Opening the Outdoors Program is supported by a collaboration of funders that include The San Diego Foundation, Satterberg Foundation (in partnership with San Diego Grantmakers), Hattie Ettinger Conservation Fund at The San Diego Foundation, Willis and Jane Fletcher Family Fund I at The San Diego Foundation and other generous Foundation donors.

The 2016 grants include:

### **Outdoor Outreach**

*Outdoors Voices Youth Leadership Initiative – \$58,757*

The project will teach diverse young adults to become outdoor instructors, role models and advocates for increased outdoor access in underserved San Diego communities. In partnership with Center on Policy Initiatives, the organization will host after-school and weekend skill-building programs for more than 1,000 low-income youth. The project will also include 10 pilot environmental programs that partner with schools, social service agencies and healthcare providers to specifically target and support at-risk youth.

### **Environmental Health Coalition**

*Expanding Outdoor Opportunities in National City and Barrio Logan – \$54,000*

The project will increase outdoor recreational and educational opportunities for youth by informing expansion of two National City parks, Paradise Creek and Pepper Park, and advancing plans for a new park in Barrio Logan. Working with Paradise Creek Education Park Inc. and Barrio Logan College Institute, the organization will engage with residents throughout the park development process to prioritize community involvement and safety.

### **Endangered Habitats Conservancy**

*Crestridge Ecological Reserve/Conserved Open Space Engagement and Expansion – \$50,957*

Through a partnership with Earth Discovery Institute, the project will engage with more than 330 students in environmental education, habitat restoration and open space interpretive activities. Endangered Habitats Conservancy will also focus on new land preservation and policy initiatives that enhance local conservation and outdoor access.

### **4Walls International**

*Imperial Beach People's Parks Project – \$50,000*

In partnership with Wild Willow Farm and Border Education Program, the project will transform a blighted urban lot in Imperial Beach into accessible gathering places through youth activation, community engagement and public programming. During the process, the project will engage more than 100 youth, 80 volunteers and 150 residents through community meetings and build workshops.

### **San Diego Canyonlands**

*Chollas Creek Trails & Restoration Project – \$47,951*

The project will restore the habitat around Chollas Creek to create safe, sustainable access for community members. By teaching at-risk youth the techniques of conservation and restoration, San Diego

Canyonlands, in partnership with Urban Corps and San Diego Mountain Biking Association, will inspire youth and help shape their career paths in environmental stewardship.

### **Casa Familiar**

*Opening the Outdoors to Border Youth and Families – \$43,061*

The project will connect border youth and families to open spaces and engage them with nature through physical and educational activities. In collaboration with San Diego Girl Scouts and the Sierra Club, the organization will offer bilingual classes and family outings, 10 beginner-level weekend park outings for residents, and one five-day camp for 100 students.

### **San Diego Zoo**

*Backyard Biodiversity Hotspot – \$35,577*

In collaboration with the The Escondido Creek Conservancy and Escondido Union School District, the project will create a three-part program for 800 underserved students. The program will include one environmental education classroom session, a trip to the Outdoor Learning Lab, and a field trip to the Elfin Forest Reserve for hands-on experience. Students will learn environmental techniques such as water testing, data collection, and plant and animal identification. The partnership will also develop a new online curriculum available to all teachers online.

### **San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy**

*San Dieguito Watershed Explorers Program – \$25,000*

The project will expand nature education programs to the San Dieguito watershed by taking students to different areas along the 55-mile stretch of land. Instructors will help students recognize the role they play in keeping the natural community a thriving ecosystem, and new training resources for volunteers and docents will enhance the quality of the outdoor experiences. San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy will work with the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority, San Diego Archaeological Center and Volcan Mountain Foundation.

### **Back Country Land Trust**

*Living Classroom Program – \$20,000*

The project will provide 500 elementary and middle school students in East County with knowledge and understanding of nature through environmental education curriculum and hands-on service learning projects. Back Country Land Trust will partner with Alpine Education Foundation to host field trips and in-classroom visits.

### **Ocean Connectors**

*Ocean Connectors Education Program – \$15,000*

Through a partnership with Living Coast Discovery Center, the project will educate, inspire and connect every child in grades 4-6 in National City with ocean science and conservation using migratory marine life. Students will plant 650 native plants and clear local outdoor space of invasive vegetation and litter to improve habitats for wildlife.

## **About The San Diego Foundation**

The San Diego Foundation promotes and increases effective and responsible charitable giving to grow a more vibrant region. The Foundation manages more than \$658 million in assets, more than half of which reside in permanent endowment funds that extend the impact of today's gifts to future generations. Since 1975, The Foundation has granted more than \$984 million to the nonprofit community. For more information, visit our [website](#) and consider a donation to the [Fund for the Future Endowment](#) which supports San Diego now and forever.

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