

Orange County

Doug Zwick



HEISLER PARK, LAGUNA BEACH

More than three million people call Orange County home, and more are continually lured by the California dream of balmy weather, abundant surf and sand, and a vibrant economy. Another 40 million people annually flock to the County's sandy shores, Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, and other attractions. Although much of the County's land is densely developed, residents and visitors alike enjoy access to more than 60,000 acres of parks and scenic natural lands linked by many miles of trails.

POPULATION: >3 million

COASTLINE: 44 miles

CONSERVANCY PROJECTS: >110

CONSERVANCY FUNDING: >\$62 million

The County's natural lands protect water quality, offer outdoor recreational opportunities for families and individuals, and provide a home for birds, fish, and other wildlife. They support the County's economy and the health of residents. They have survived because of the work and investments of many public and private organizations and foresighted individuals.

The Coastal Conservancy has worked for more than 35 years with the people of Orange County to sustain the area's quality of life and economic viability, and intends to build on that work to:

- Restore and improve the health of rivers, streams, marshes, and beaches
- Provide outdoor recreational opportunities for a growing and diverse population
- Meet the challenges posed by a rising sea and a changing climate.

Wetlands and Wildlands

The Conservancy has helped expand the wild and scenic hills and canyons that add so much to Orange County's beauty. Along the coast, the Conservancy has long worked to restore the County's remaining marshlands. These coastal marshes help protect urban areas from destructive storms and waves and will play an increasingly important role in buffering coastal communities from the effects of sea level rise and climate change.

- Restoration of the **Bolsa Chica and Huntington Beach wetlands** has greatly improved degraded habitat for fish, birds, and other wildlife. Trails, boardwalks, and other visitor-support facilities in these areas give people opportunities to enjoy and learn about the natural lands that co-exist with developed areas.
- The health of **Upper Newport Bay** in Newport Beach, the largest fully tidal wetland in Southern California, was restored through the dredging of more than two million cubic yards of accumulated sediment. Continued dredging will ensure that the bay remains a good home for endangered birds and other wildlife and an attractive destination for the many people who come to hike, run, bike, kayak, boat, fish, and watch those remarkable birds.
- Conservancy funding enabled UC-Irvine to restore degraded ponds, marshes, and natural lands of the **San Joaquin Marsh Reserve**, greatly improving water quality and habitats for a wide variety of wildlife.
- The Conservancy joined with the City of Laguna Niguel and many homeowners to restore 1 ½ miles of **Upper Sulphur Creek**, removing concrete and creating a wider, soft-bottom stream channel. The project improved flood protection, water quality, and native habitats along the creek.
- The Conservancy funded several acquisitions in Laguna Beach that added nearly 300 acres and many miles of trails to the Laguna Coast and Aliso and Wood Canyons wilderness parks. The parks are part of the **South Coast Wilderness**, 22,000 acres of scenic natural lands that extend from the Cleveland National Forest to the ocean.

Parks, Trails, and Piers

The Conservancy has long worked with local communities to build trails, viewing areas, and other visitor facilities for parks and beaches in many parts of the County.

- The Conservancy is helping to build the **Santa Ana River Parkway**, which will be one of the longest river parkways in the United States. It will connect 14 cities in Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties and link the San Bernardino National Forest and other wilderness areas to the California Coastal Trail near Huntington Beach.
- Conservancy support helped to leverage almost \$4 million of federal funding for construction of the **San Clemente Rail Trail**, a popular three-mile section of the **California Coastal Trail** along the railroad tracks between North Beach and Calafia State Beach.
- The Conservancy helped pay for refurbishment of historical guest cottages, utilities upgrades, stream bank restoration, and construction



TALL SHIP SPIRIT OF DANA POINT

RESTORATION OF THE HUNTINGTON BEACH WETLANDS



CRYSTAL COVE STATE BEACH



SEAL BEACH PIER



SEEING THE WORLD FROM THE NIX NATURE CENTER



NIX NATURE CENTER AT LAGUNA COAST WILDERNESS PARK



A GOOD DAY'S WORK FOR STUDENTS AT SAN JOAQUIN MARSH



SAN CLEMENTE RAIL TRAIL

Trails and Recreation *continued*

- of pathways, restrooms, a new lifeguard tower, and other visitor amenities at **Crystal Cove State Park**.
- The Conservancy assisted the City of Laguna Beach in its construction of **Brown's Park**, located along the coast just one block from downtown, and its restoration of the popular **Heisler Park** on a blufftop just north of Main Beach.
- Conservancy support enabled the City of Fullerton to improve the water quality and native habitats of **Laguna Lake**, the centerpiece of Laguna Lake Park.
- The Conservancy provided funding for the replacement of the **Huntington Beach Municipal Pier** and storm-damage repairs to the **Seal Beach Pier**.

Environmental Education

The Conservancy has long supported educational programs for students, construction of visitor/nature centers, installation of exhibit displays, and hands-on volunteer restoration projects coordinated with K-12 education..

- The Conservancy helped with construction of the **Back Bay Science Center**, the core location for management, education, research, and restoration of the **Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve**. The Center includes a teaching laboratory and classrooms that overlook the Bay.
- Conservancy-funded pathways and landscaping link the **Ocean Education Center** with the adjacent **Dana Point Marine Life Refuge**, tying the Center's many educational programs to the living environment along the shore.
- The Conservancy funded the design and installation of interpretive exhibits for the 2006 opening of the **Nix Nature Center** in **Laguna Coast Wilderness Park**.
- With annual support from the Conservancy, popular **Tall Ships Festivals** at Dana Point Harbor have made thousands of visitors aware of the heritage and importance of our working waterfronts.

“Orange County residents and visitors alike enjoy our preserved natural resources as a result of our nonprofit and government agency relationship. The insights and experience of the Coastal Conservancy have guided the meaningful use of State park bond funds to benefit our 22,000-acre regional system of wilderness parks and preserves.”

Mary Fegraus, retired Executive Director
Laguna Canyon Foundation



BROWN'S PARK, LAGUNA BEACH

The Coastal Conservancy is a State agency, established in 1976, that protects and improves natural lands and waterways, helps people get to and enjoy coastal areas, and sustains local economies along California's coast. The Conservancy works along the entire length of the coast, within the watersheds of rivers and streams that extend inland from the coast, and throughout the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The Conservancy is non-regulatory and achieves its goals by joining forces with local communities, nonprofit organizations, other government agencies, businesses, and private landowners.

CONSERVANCY PROJECTS :

- Protect, restore, and improve natural areas and wildlife habitat
- Help people get to and enjoy the outdoors by building hiking and biking trails, acquiring and improving parks and beaches, and creating campgrounds and hostels
- Keep our waterways clean and healthy for people and wildlife
- Help communities revitalize their waterfronts
- Support floodwater management and integrate flood-control projects into the life of a community
- Conserve commercial fisheries, working farmland, and forests.

CONTACTS :

Sam Schuchat, Executive Officer
(510) 286-0523 sam.schuchat@scc.ca.gov

Joan Cardellino, South Coast Regional Manager
(510) 286-4093 joan.cardellino@scc.ca.gov

Deborah Ruddock, Legislative Liaison
(510) 286-4168 deborah.ruddock@scc.ca.gov

Dick Wayman, Communications Director
(510) 286-4182 dick.wayman@scc.ca.gov



1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, California 94612-2530
(510) 286-1015

Visit our website: <http://scc.ca.gov>