

# San Diego County



THE BEACH AT LA JOLLA COVE

*The State Coastal Conservancy is working for a beautiful, healthy, and productive California coast and San Francisco Bay Area, accessible to everyone.*

*Over the last 35 years the Conservancy has provided more than \$120 million for 180+ projects in San Diego County that have protected extensive areas of natural lands, restored fish and wildlife habitats, and helped people get to and enjoy the coast.*

**POPULATION:** 3.1 million (2010)

**COASTLINE:** 76 miles

**CONSERVANCY PROJECTS:** > 180

**CONSERVANCY FUNDING:** >\$120 million

San Diego County was the site of the first permanent European settlement on the Pacific Coast and the base of operations for Spanish colonization of California. Today, visitors from around the globe flock here to experience glorious sunshine, beautiful beaches, and a majestic coastline. The County's extensive natural lands support the local economy, protect against the effects of climate change, and provide a safe haven for wildlife.

There are more than a dozen lagoons and estuaries along the San Diego County coast and many marshlands, all of which support a staggering variety of fish, birds, and other wildlife. Several coastal rivers have their headwaters in the mountains and forests of East County and link those environments to the coast, adding to the diversity of the County's wildlife. People can quickly escape the urban environment, leave their cars behind, and meet nature up close along many local and regional trails, most notably the California Coastal Trail, the Bayshore Bikeway around San Diego Bay, and the Coast to Crest Trail along the San Dieguito River.

# Public Trails

The Conservancy has worked with local communities to plan for and construct many miles of trails for hikers, bikers, wheelchair riders, and equestrians along the coast, around San Diego Bay, and along rivers and creeks leading to the coast.

- The Conservancy is working with SANDAG and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to complete the **Bayshore Bikeway**, which will one day encircle San Diego Bay. Current projects include construction of three miles of the Bikeway in National City along the working waterfront and a connected half-mile walking trail in Imperial Beach overlooking the South San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge.
- The **San Diego River Trail** is envisioned to run for 52 miles from the river's headwaters to the ocean, connecting inland communities to major commercial centers, transit hubs, and the beach. The Conservancy is helping to plan and design the **San Diego River Tributary Canyons Project**, which aims to develop pedestrian and bicycle trail connections to the river in the City of San Diego. The Conservancy is also working with SANDAG to design trail segments at **Qualcomm Stadium** and at the **Carlton Oaks golf course** in Santee, and with the County to construct the three-mile **Flume Trail** along the historic cut of the San Diego Flume in Lakeside.
- The Conservancy has teamed up with The County of San Diego, the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority, and the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition to build trails along some of San Diego's many rivers and streams. A few of the projects include: a 1½-mile section of the **Sweetwater River Trail** in Bonita's Sweetwater Valley Regional Park; the 1.7-mile **Mesa Loop Trail** overlooking **San Dieguito Lagoon**; segments of the **Coast to Crest Trail**, a multi-use trail system that will connect inland areas in north San Diego County to the coast near Del Mar; and about three miles of the **Rose Creek Watershed Trail** in the City of San Diego.

# Beaches

The Conservancy has worked with communities from Imperial Beach to Oceanside to help people get to and enjoy the world-reknoned beaches along the San Diego County coast. That work has included installation of stairways and restrooms, repairs of public piers, and purchasing wheelchairs that can travel over sand. Conservancy-supported projects include:

- Construction of a pathway to **Del Mar Beach** and replacement of dilapidated public restrooms.
- Replacement of the deteriorating stairways to **La Jolla Cove** beach, possibly the most popular small beach in California.
- Providing equipment and training to improve beach access for persons with disabilities at **Silver Strand State Beach**, **Coronado City Beach**, and **Oceanside City Beach**.
- **Beach accessibility improvements** in the City of San Diego including the Power Beach Chairs program and expanded use of portable beach wheelchair ramps.
- Planning for trail construction and repair; restoration of native plant communities, and control of water runoff that is severely eroding bluff terraces at **Sunset Cliffs Natural Park** on the western edge of Point Loma.



BATIQUITOS LAGOON NATURE CENTER



AN EGRET HUNTS IN THE SOUTH SAN DIEGO BAY WETLANDS



ENJOYING THE VIEW AT SAN ELIJO LAGOON



COMMUNITY WORK DAY IN SWAN CANYON



A BIRD'S VIEW FROM THE SAN DIEGO RIVER



Alejandro Santos

Tijuana River  
VISITOR CENTER

TIJUANA RIVER VISITOR CENTER



Kon Gomes

DRISCOLL'S WHARF



Alissa Passera

TRACKING MISSION BEACH



NESTING LEAST TERN



PATHWAY ALONG THE SAN DIEGO RIVER

# Wildlife Habitat and Water Quality

The Conservancy has long supported work to improve the County's coastal wetlands and waterways for wildlife and the people who visit and live near these areas.

- The Conservancy has been a leader in acquiring natural lands, improving water quality, restoring wildlife habitat, managing floodwaters, and building trails in the **Tijuana Estuary National Estuarine Research Reserve**. The Conservancy's ongoing work is protecting 400 acres of habitat, restoring 520 acres of wetlands, and building 22 miles of trails.
- The **South San Diego Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project** is restoring over 1,000 acres of salt ponds to a mosaic of habitat for birds, fish, and other wildlife while improving the health of San Diego Bay and providing flood protection for Chula Vista and Imperial Beach.
- The Conservancy provided much of the funding for the purchase of several hundred acres of **Otay Valley Regional Park**, which extends for 13 miles from south San Diego Bay to the Lower and Upper Otay Lakes area. Still in development, the park offers wide-ranging opportunities for recreation while protecting an extensive area of wildlife habitat, farmland, and archaeological sites.
- The series of lagoons along the North County coast is unique to California and invaluable to resident and migrating wildlife. The Conservancy's current work in this area includes planning for the restoration of **San Elijo Lagoon** and **Buena Vista Lagoon** to improve water quality and adapt to sea level rise.

# San Diego Bay Waterfront

The Conservancy is helping to revitalize the Bay waterfront and integrate it into the life of the community.

- The Conservancy is working with the San Diego Unified Port District to improve commercial fishing facilities at **Driscoll's Wharf** and **Tuna Harbor** and make them more accessible to visitors.
- The Conservancy has long supported popular **tall ships festivals** to highlight the history and importance of the waterfront and is helping to fund the Maritime Museum Association of San Diego's construction of a replica of the **historic ship San Salvador**, which will provide a waterfront attraction and sailing classroom.

*“Our collaboration with the Coastal Conservancy is expanding the network of regional parks, open-space preserves, and inland trails that connect to the San Diego coast. The projects supported by the Conservancy help sustain our wetlands and strengthen the important connection between people and the outdoors.”*

Brian Albright  
Director, San Diego County Parks and Recreation Department



TIJUANA ESTUARY MODEL MARSH

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 habitats
- 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.

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