



Addendum to the San Diego River Conservancy Five-Year Strategic and Infrastructure Plan, 2006-2011

Preface

The San Diego River Conservancy's Five-Year Strategic and Infrastructure Plan ("Plan"), 2006-2011 was adopted by The San Diego River Conservancy Governing Board on March 24, 2006. When the Plan was developed, it was anticipated that it would be periodically updated and refined.

In the ensuing years, the San Diego River Conservancy ("Conservancy") has engaged with cities, agencies, non-profit groups, community-based organizations, and private landowners to prioritize and accomplish the major program goals set forth in the Plan. At the same time, financial resource allocations have fallen short of what the Plan anticipated. Actual funding received by the Conservancy between 2006 and now has been approximately \$21.0 million, rather than \$164.5 million (see Plan p. 46).

Consequently, this Addendum clarifies priorities related to the four major programs described in the Plan. The Addendum identifies areas where there is a shared vision for the San Diego River watershed (see Appendix A for a chart illustrating the intersection of priorities and goals from previous planning documents as well as a memo on the topic). To accomplish this, each of the partners' related planning documents has been carefully reviewed to identify where there is overlap with Conservancy

goals. Appendix A graphically illustrates the intersection of shared goals. The Conservancy intends to remain focused on these shared goals.

This Addendum establishes project priorities based on the shared goals, as well as anticipation of available financial resources. The focus will be on the Conservancy's strength, which is providing a regional, collaborative project focus and framework for the jurisdictions.

To that end, this Addendum includes maps that provide geographic specificity to existing, proposed, and recommended projects and activities of the Conservancy and partnering organizations that advance the four program areas identified in the Plan. The Conservancy has placed particular emphasis on projects that occur west of El Capitan Dam and encourage or require regional collaboration between jurisdictions and non-profit partners. These maps and the Plan revisions described throughout this Addendum provide a roadmap and context for the Conservancy's efforts going forward.

This Addendum follows the Plan's format with one new section titled, "Examples of Recent Successes and Current Projects." In brief, the Conservancy has focused investments on developing the San Diego River Park: from trail acquisition and trail building,

to habitat restoration along the corridor. Because of the ambitious scale of this project, there has been an emphasis on creating a framework for local governments and other partners to collaborate in this endeavor.

The modified format is (1) the Introduction, (2) Programs and Projects, (3) Examples of Recent Successes and Current Projects, (4) San Diego River Conservancy Five Year Infrastructure Plan, and (5) Appendices. Only those subsections of the Plan that are being revised (changed or deleted) via this Addendum are mentioned herein.

The Conservancy intends to utilize this Addendum as a supplement to the Plan, and to consider it as guidance for the revised next Five-Year Strategic and Infrastructure Plan 2012-2017 because it frames the topics, priorities, goals, and anticipated resource investments and partnership opportunities.

Introduction

Assumptions

When the Plan was adopted in 2006, the Conservancy was scheduled to sunset on January 1, 2010. In 2008, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed Senate Bill No. 1428, extending the life of the Conservancy until January 1, 2020.

Though the Conservancy may pursue projects throughout the San Diego River watershed, its principal jurisdiction and the focus of this Addendum is one half mile on either side of the centerline of the San Diego River from the headwaters to the ocean (52 miles). Several tributaries flow into the main stem of the river. There are seven river reaches that distinguish the corridor's geography and development: Headwaters, Reservoir to 67 Freeway, Lakeside, Santee, Mission Trails, Mission Valley, and Estuary. This Addendum assigns high, medium, and low priority designations to distinct river reaches for the purpose of identifying focus areas for project work.

Reach Prioritization

(This is a new subsection after the "Business Principles" subsection of the introduction)

The reaches from the estuary -- which commences at the Pacific Ocean -- to Lakeside are designated as the highest priority areas. Moving from east to west along the river, the reach from the reservoir to the 67 Freeway is designated as medium level priority. The Headwaters reach is the lowest priority area. This prioritization scheme assigns the highest priority to regions within the watershed that are under the greatest development threat. West of El Capitan

Dam existing development and growth stress the San Diego River resources and water quality. Projects occurring west of El Capitan Dam also generally provide more connections to existing nodes of activity.

Priority will be given to projects in high priority reaches that implement multiple programs or meet multiple project criteria (Plan, p. 7). These recommended priority areas do not suggest that the Conservancy will ignore opportunities that arise in recommended second- and third-tier priority areas. Yet, funding to implement projects throughout the entire watershed is limited. By implementing projects primarily in medium and high priority river reaches, the Conservancy has the greatest potential to advance its mission with limited funds.

This prioritization scheme is consistent with the Board-approved 2011 Conservancy Workplan, which focuses activities primarily between Lakeside and Mission Trails Regional Park in the high priority river reach. See Appendix B for a map of the strategic focus area. Some partners also agreed in principle to the concept of prioritizing reaches during a series of interviews held in January of 2010 (by telephone and in person). See Appendix C for a list of stakeholders who were interviewed.

Programs and Projects

The four major programs identified in the Plan remain unchanged. They are 1) land conservation, 2) recreation and education, 3) natural and cultural resources preservation and restoration, and 4) water quality and natural flood conveyance. Specific goals and projects are modified as summarized in the following subsections and described in Table 1 below.

Table 1:

Summary of changes to program implementation projects

Program	Status
Program 1: Land Conservation	
1. Secure Key River Properties	On-going
2. Develop and Implement Land Management Protocols	Delayed (Lower Priority)
Program 2: Recreation and Education	
1. Complete the San Diego River Park Trail	On-going
2. Make the River Park Real	Delayed (Lower Priority)
3. Make it Safe and Make it Visible	Delayed (Lower Priority)
4. Ask the Public to Help and Help them Help	Delayed (Lower Priority)
Program 3: Natural and Cultural Resources Preservation and Restoration	
1. Remove Invasive Non-Native Plants and Restore the Land	On-going
2. Cultural and Historic Resources	On-going
Program 4: Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance	
1. Complete Hydrology Assessment of the San Diego River	Delayed (Lower Priority)
2. Data and Watershed Information System	New
3. River Blitz and Clean-up	New
4. San Diego RiverNet: Watershed Data Collection and Restoration Program	New

Program 1: Land Conservation

Program Goal

Original goal: The original program goal was to secure the preservation of 1,450 acres of land within the San Diego River Area (Plan, p. 10). The Conservancy has secured, or is in the process of securing, key river properties protecting approximately 720 acres of land within the San Diego River Area.

Revised goal: The revised goal is to secure additional dollars to help fund land acquisition (by easement or fee simple) in the reaches below El Capitan Dam and transfer acquired lands to local government and/or responsible private property stewards. Funding should be secured through aggressive examination and application of state and local grant programs as well as outreach for charitable giving.

Project 1: Secure Key River Properties

Projects 1.1 – 1.5 are modified to reflect prioritization of reaches. The Eagle Peak Preserve, Hanson Pond, and CALMAT projects have been completed representing over 500 acres of conserved land in the Headwaters, El Monte Valley, and in Lakeside (Projects 1.1 – 1.3). The Walker Properties and Carlton Oaks Golf Course conservation projects are in progress. Once finalized, these two projects will encompass an additional 185 acres dedicated to conservation in the cities of San Diego and Santee in the high priority reach (Projects 1.4 – 1.5).

Project 2: Develop and Implement Land Management Protocols

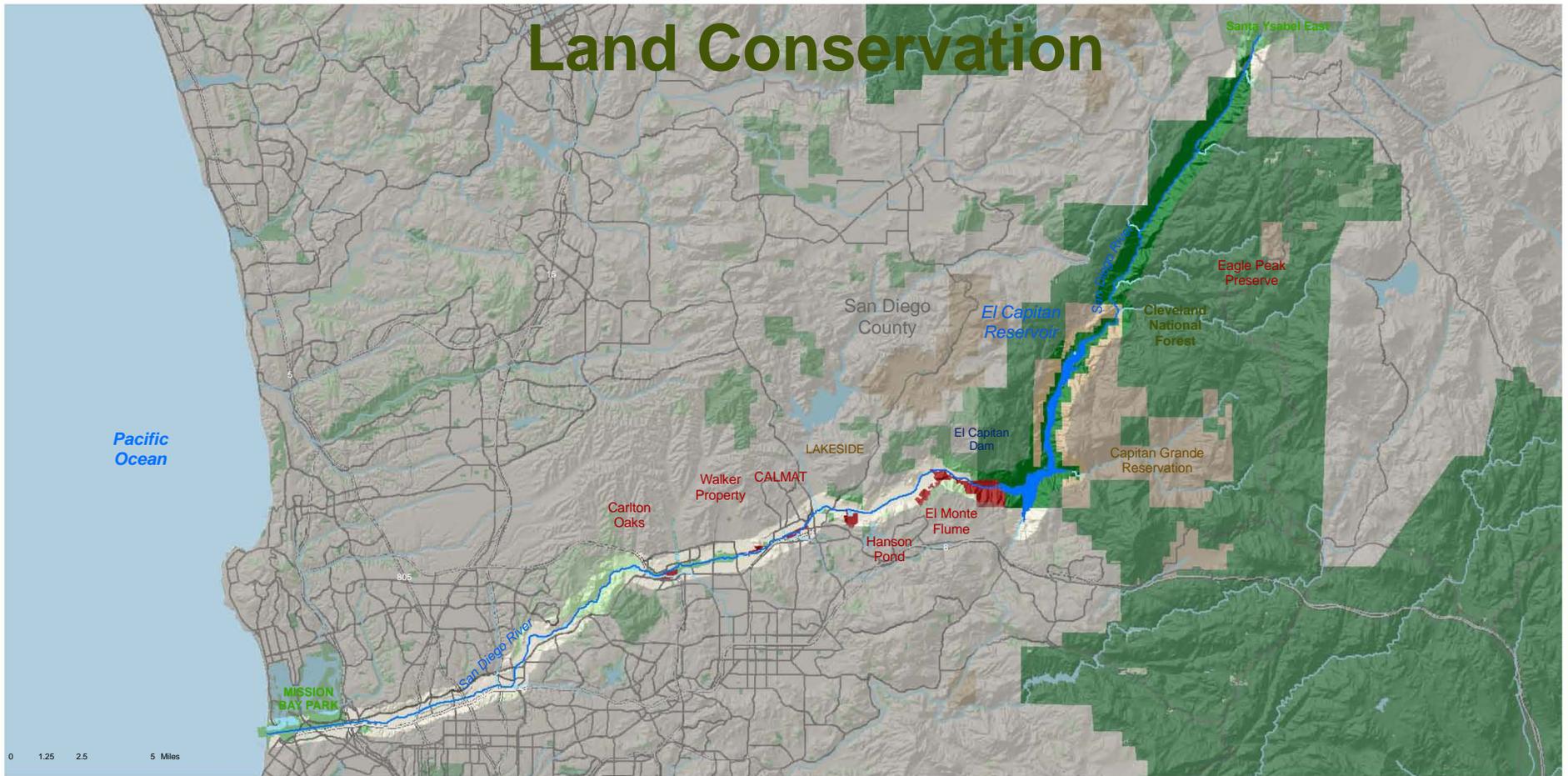
This project is a lower priority and not currently being pursued.

Supporting Maps: **Land Conservation**

The “Land Conservation” map displays six of the Conservancy’s land conservation projects as well as the boundaries of the river reaches (see Appendix D for mapping methodology). While this map represents the existing land conservation program, it also illustrates that the Conservancy has already been acting in accordance with the prioritization by reach described above.

The Conservancy has focused conservation efforts below El Capitan Dam, while some supporting partners have been more active above the dam, including the San Diego River Park Foundation and the Endangered Habitats Conservancy.

For a closer look at the Conservancy’s work in the high and medium priority reaches, please see Appendix E1.



Reach Delineation Estuary Mission Valley Mission Trails Regional Park City of San Diego City of Santee City of San Diego Lakeside Reservoir to 67 Freeway Headwaters

Legend

- San Diego River Conservancy Project
- San Diego River Primary Jurisdiction
- City and County Park
- City and County Easements and Open Space
- Indian Reservation
- National Forest
- Interstate
- US and State Highways
- Secondary State and County Highway
- Local or Rural Road
- Water Feature
- San Diego River Watershed
- Outside Primary Jurisdiction

Special thanks to the following data providers: SanGIS

Map created by the Trust for Public Land on October 10, 2010

Created in ArcMap 9.3®
Map Projection: NAD 1983 State Plane California VI FIPS 0406 Feet

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Program 2: Recreation and Education

Program Goal

Original goal: The original program goal was to complete or significantly advance 32 miles of San Diego River Park Trail, to focus on making it safe, and to encourage public involvement in making the river healthier.

Revised goal: Though this goal remains, the focus or refined objective is to close critical gaps along the San Diego River Park Trail in the high and medium priority reaches. This goal will be achieved by providing financial assistance to jurisdictions to the extent that funding is available and The Conservancy can leverage investments by jurisdictions and project inclusion in their Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs). Related safety and public involvement projects will not be pursued by the Conservancy until critical gaps in the trail have been addressed.

Project 1: Complete the San Diego River Park Trail

When the original Plan was adopted in 2006, there were eight and a half miles of San Diego River Park Trail adjacent and parallel to the river available for public use. Since the adoption of the Plan, the Conservancy has acquired nearly eight more linear miles along the San Diego River Park Trail, making progress toward Projects 1.5– 1.7 and 1.9.

Completion of the San Diego River Trail is one of the Conservancy's greatest priorities. The Conservancy's governing board has taken formal action to establish an Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG), establishing regional collaboration among elected officials to address trail development and management. The Conservancy, State Coastal Conservancy, and its IWG commissioned a gap analysis of the San Diego River Trail. The final San Diego River Gap Analysis identifies 74 planned

and proposed trail segments to improve the San Diego River Parks Trail. The study ranks these trail segments not only by reach, but also by project status, ease of implementation, and the ability of segments to extend the functionality of the Conservancy. The Conservancy and jurisdictions will pursue trail design and development of a capital strategy to complete critical trail segments.

Project 2: Make the San Diego River Park Real

The San Diego River Park is still being developed. As a result, this is currently a lower priority project for the Conservancy.

Project 3: Make it Safe and Make it Visible

This project is currently a lower priority project for the Conservancy. Note that the San Diego River Park Foundation has already initiated an active signage program which is improving San Diego River Park visibility.

Project 4: Ask the Public to Help and Help them Help

This project is currently a lower priority project for the Conservancy due to a lack of staffing. Other organizations including the SDRPark Foundation undertake volunteer activities. The Conservancy supports efforts like Project 4 under Program 4, providing some overlap.

Supporting Maps: **Recreation and Education**

The “Recreation and Education” map reflects San Diego River Park Trail projects that relate to Project 1 as well as existing, proposed, or planned trails that extend beyond the San Diego River Park Trail. There are also 42.5 miles of existing trails identified on this map, which includes existing segments of the San Diego River Park Trail. Projects are classified on the map as planned trail connections, proposed trail connections, trail access or educational opportunity, or recreation and educational opportunity area. The classifications are defined below.

Planned and Proposed Trail Connections: Planned Trail Connections on the attached map are trail segments that are included in one of the jurisdiction’s Capital Improvement Projects lists or trail segments that have been designed or permitted by a third party. There are 13.42 miles of trails planned, as indicated on this map. Proposed Trail Connections on the attached map are any trail segments that are not on the Capital Improvement Projects list or have not been fully permitted. These include a wide range of segments, from those that have only had a cursory review to those that have had preliminary designs completed but are not yet permitted. Overall, there are 69 miles of trails proposed, as indicated on this map.

The proposed connections pictured on this map represent a synthesis of potential connections identified in partner planning documents. The vision laid out in the San Diego River Parks Foundation Conceptual Plan (Conceptual Plan) includes unifying “existing isolated trails in Santee, Mission Trails Regional Park, Mission Valley, and the estuary” to provide a “continuous connection from El Capitan Reservoir to the Pacific Ocean.”¹ In the San Diego River Park Draft Master Plan (Master Plan), the City of San Diego similarly recommends the building of city-wide connection by “establish[ing] a continuous trail system from the ocean to Mission Trails Regional Park and from canyon to canyon with frequent access to transit, canyons, and neighborhoods.”² The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has designated the development of a multi-use trail within El Monte County Park a high priority.³ The City of Santee has established policies to specifically encourage trail connections “with planned trails on the Santee Lakes property and future development of Fanita Ranch” and “to the Trans-County trail system, the Upper San Diego River Improvement

Plan, the Mission Trails Regional Park trail system, and trails leading to Goodan Ranch and Sycamore Canyon Open Space Preserve.⁴

Trail Access or Educational Opportunity: These represent priority public access points to recreational trails identified by several local area plans. The access imperative is to facilitate activities like walking and fishing, and provide interpretative and educational opportunities as mandated by the enabling legislation.

Included in the Conceptual Plan are design renditions “to provide convenient access to the trails and facilities of the river park.”⁵ The Conceptual Plan endorses the improvement of current access spots as well as the development of new ones. On the regional level, the City of Santee is undertaking efforts to secure direct access from Santee to the Goodan Ranch Regional Park.⁶ On the local level in the northeast quadrant of Santee, the City plans to create access points to planned trails in Fanita Ranch and within the City’s planned Multiple Species Conservation Program Sub Area Plan.⁷

Recreation and Educational Opportunity Area: These areas highlight where there are recreation and education recommendations of partner entities. This information draws heavily from the Master Plan. For example, the Master Plan recommends places for educational kiosk locations. While not specifically called out, these kiosks are represented more broadly in the Recreation and Education Opportunity Areas.

For a closer look at the Conservancy’s work in the high and medium priority reaches, please see Appendix E2.

1 *San Diego River Park Foundation Conceptual Plan*, Prepared for San Diego River Park Foundation, June 2002, p. 68-9, 90-2.

2 *San Diego River Park Draft Master Plan*, Prepared for the City of San Diego, California, August 2010, p. 44.

3 *El Monte County Park Resource Management Plan*, Prepared for the County of San Diego, California, June 2009, p. 15.

4 *City of Santee General Plan*, Prepared for the City of Santee, California, August 2003, p. 5-9, 5-10.

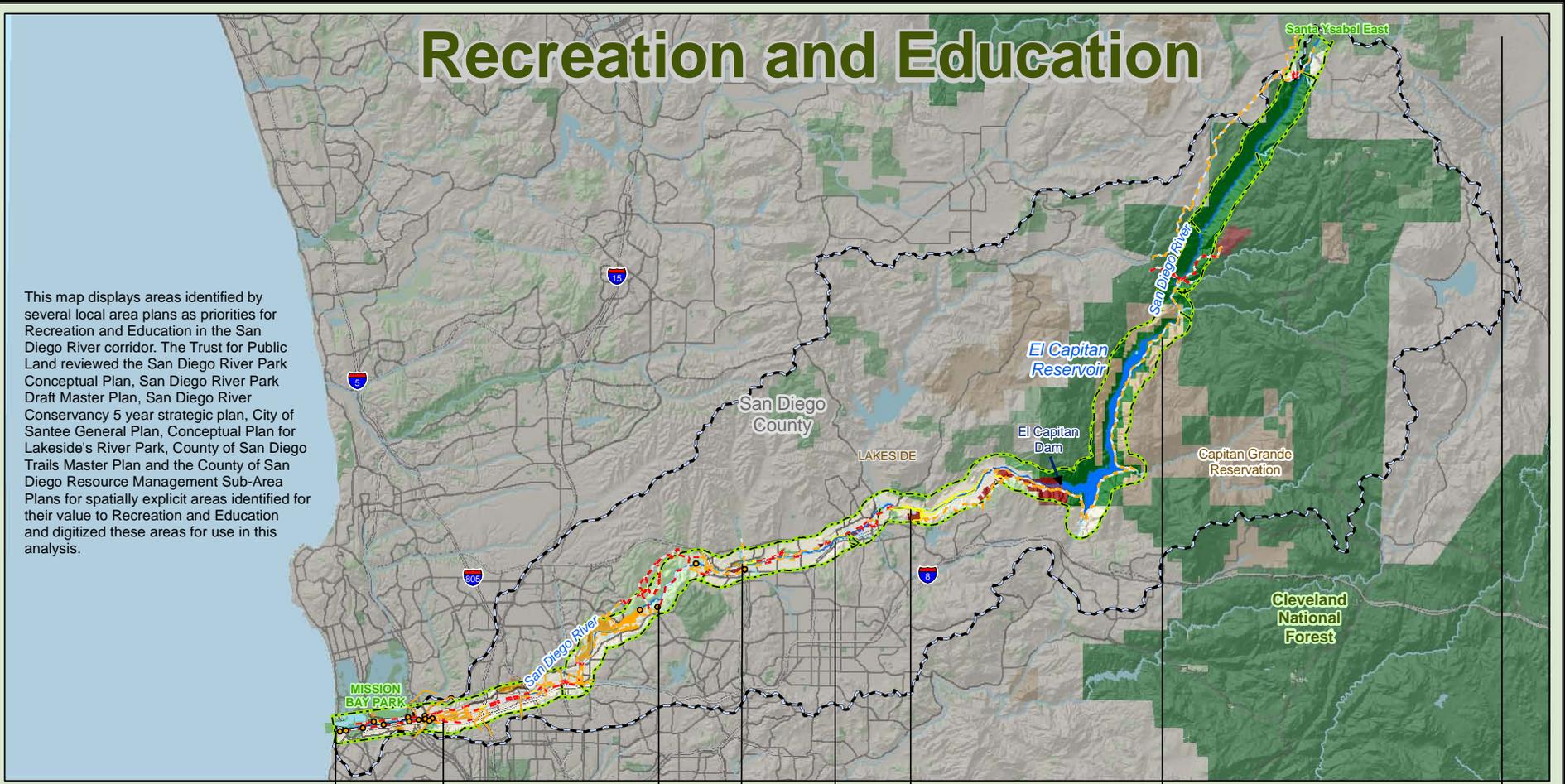
5 *San Diego River Parks Foundation Conceptual Plan*, Prepared for San Diego River Park Foundation, June 2002, p. 85.

6 *City of Santee General Plan*, Prepared for the City of Santee, California, August 2003, p. 4-6, 4-7, 5-1.

7 *Ibid*, p. 5-6

Recreation and Education

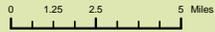
This map displays areas identified by several local area plans as priorities for Recreation and Education in the San Diego River corridor. The Trust for Public Land reviewed the San Diego River Park Conceptual Plan, San Diego River Park Draft Master Plan, San Diego River Conservancy 5 year strategic plan, City of Santee General Plan, Conceptual Plan for Lakeside's River Park, County of San Diego Trails Master Plan and the County of San Diego Resource Management Sub-Area Plans for spatially explicit areas identified for their value to Recreation and Education and digitized these areas for use in this analysis.



Reach Delineation: Estuary, Mission Valley, Mission Trails Regional Park, City of Santee, Lakeside, Reservoir to 67 Freeway, Headwaters

City of San Diego, City of Santee, County of San Diego

<p>Recreation and Education Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trail Access or Educational Opportunity ■ Recreation or Educational Opportunity Area <p>San Diego River Trail Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - Existing Trail - - Planned Trail Connection - - Proposed Trail Connection ■ San Diego River Conservancy Project 	<p>Contextual Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ San Diego River Primary Jurisdiction ■ City and County Park ■ City/County Easements and Open Space ■ Indian Reservation ■ National Forest ■ San Diego River Watershed ■ Outside Primary Jurisdiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Interstate — US and State Highways — Secondary State and County Highway — Local or Rural Road — Water Feature
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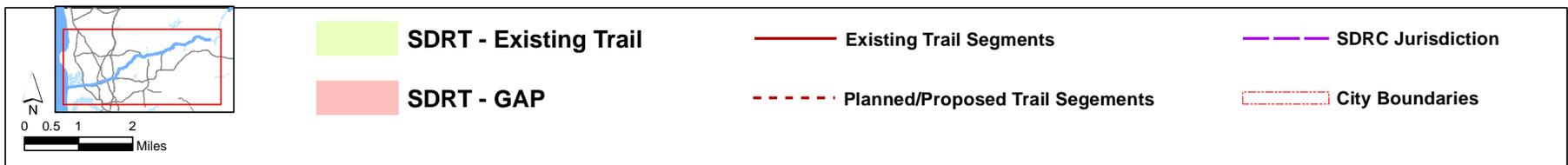
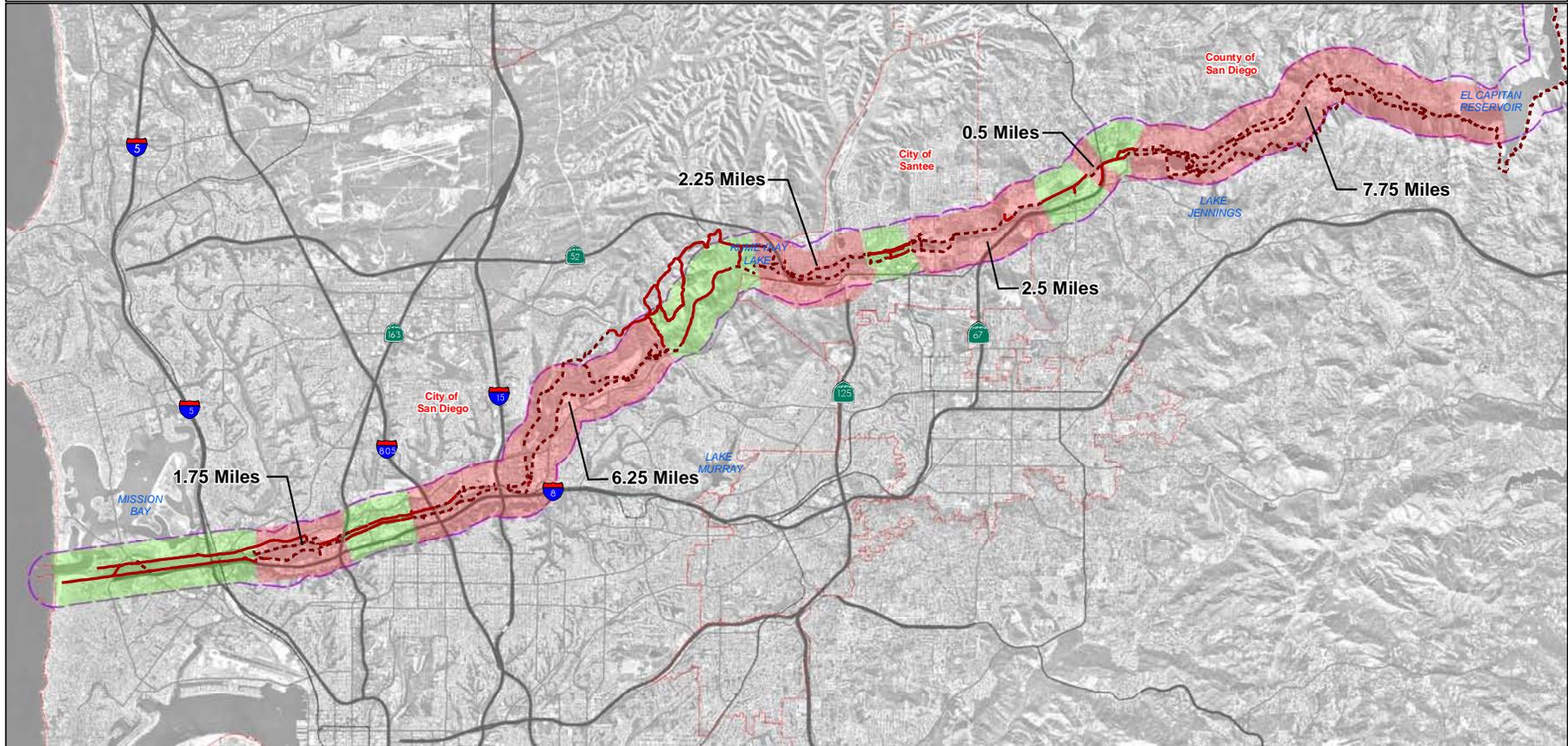
Created in ArcMap 9.3.9
Map Projection: NAD 1983 State Plane
California VI FIPS 0406 Feet

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SDRT GAPs Analysis: Ocean to the El Capitan Reservoir



Supporting Maps: San Diego River Trail Gap Analysis

The “San Diego River Trail Gap Analysis” map highlights existing critical gaps in the San Diego River Trail in the high and medium priority reaches. Unlike the Recreation and Education map, this map focuses exclusively on the San Diego River Trail and does not include trails proposed by partners. The Conservancy is committed to developing and connecting trails in the red priority segments identified on this map. This map was developed by KTU+A.

Program 3: Natural and Cultural Resources Preservation and Restoration

Program Goal

Original goal: The original program goal was to preserve key cultural and historic sites and to restore 900 acres to native function by reducing, controlling, and where feasible, eradicating invasive non-native species.

Revised goal: The revised program goal is to implement natural and cultural resource projects in high and medium priority reaches, rather than to simply have an overall acreage goal. The new goal recognizes the location of non-native infestations for which The Conservancy has obtained a regional permit from the Army Corps of Engineers for restoration activities.

Project 1: Remove Invasive Non-Native Plants and Restore the Land

The Conservancy has obtained a Regional General Permit 41 from the Army Corps of Engineers for the removal of invasive and exotic plants over 354 acres throughout the watershed. Currently, the Conservancy is controlling invasive non-native plant species over approximately 50 acres in the high priority reach that are covered under the permit (Project 1.5). The Conservancy is pursuing additional funds to extend invasive species control and restoration program to other areas covered under the permit. They may also extend the use of the permit to project partners who will conduct invasive species control programs in permitted areas. The permit allows for the removal of Arundo, Palms, Pampas grass, Tamarisk, and other non-native trees, shrubs and forbs. Current efforts have been focused on the eradication of Arundo.

Project 2: Protect and Preserve Cultural and Historic Resources

The San Diego River is a physical, living link to California history. The Conservancy shares a vision with partnering agencies to protect and preserve cultural and historic resources identified in the San Diego River watershed (see Supporting Maps). While the Conservancy has not yet devoted funds to the preservation of the sites identified in partner plans, it would like to do so in the future and has expanded the scope of this project to include cultural resource planning projects that enhance education and historical interpretation on public lands. Funding approval has been received for The San Diego History Center, in partnership with the Conservancy, to create a new interpretive plan for the Museum that frames the ecological history of the San Diego River, its natural resources, and its people within a larger cultural and biological context.

Supporting Maps: **Natural Resources**

The “Natural Resources” map reflects current or proposed projects that relate to Project 1 of the original Plan. Projects are classified on the map as natural resource preservation priorities (covering 150 acres), natural resource restoration priorities, and control of invasive non-native plants and native plant restoration sites. These classifications are defined below.

Natural Resource Preservation Priorities:

Priority areas have been identified by several local plans as valuable for natural resource preservation in the San Diego River corridor. The Conceptual Plan provides design patterns for a habitat corridor in order “[t]o maintain habitat connectivity for wildlife and plant species throughout the entire river park in order to help maintain overall community health and vigor.”¹ There are 151 priority acres identified on this map.

Natural Resource Restoration Priorities: Priority areas have been identified by several local plans as valuable for natural resource restoration in the San Diego River corridor. The Master Plan

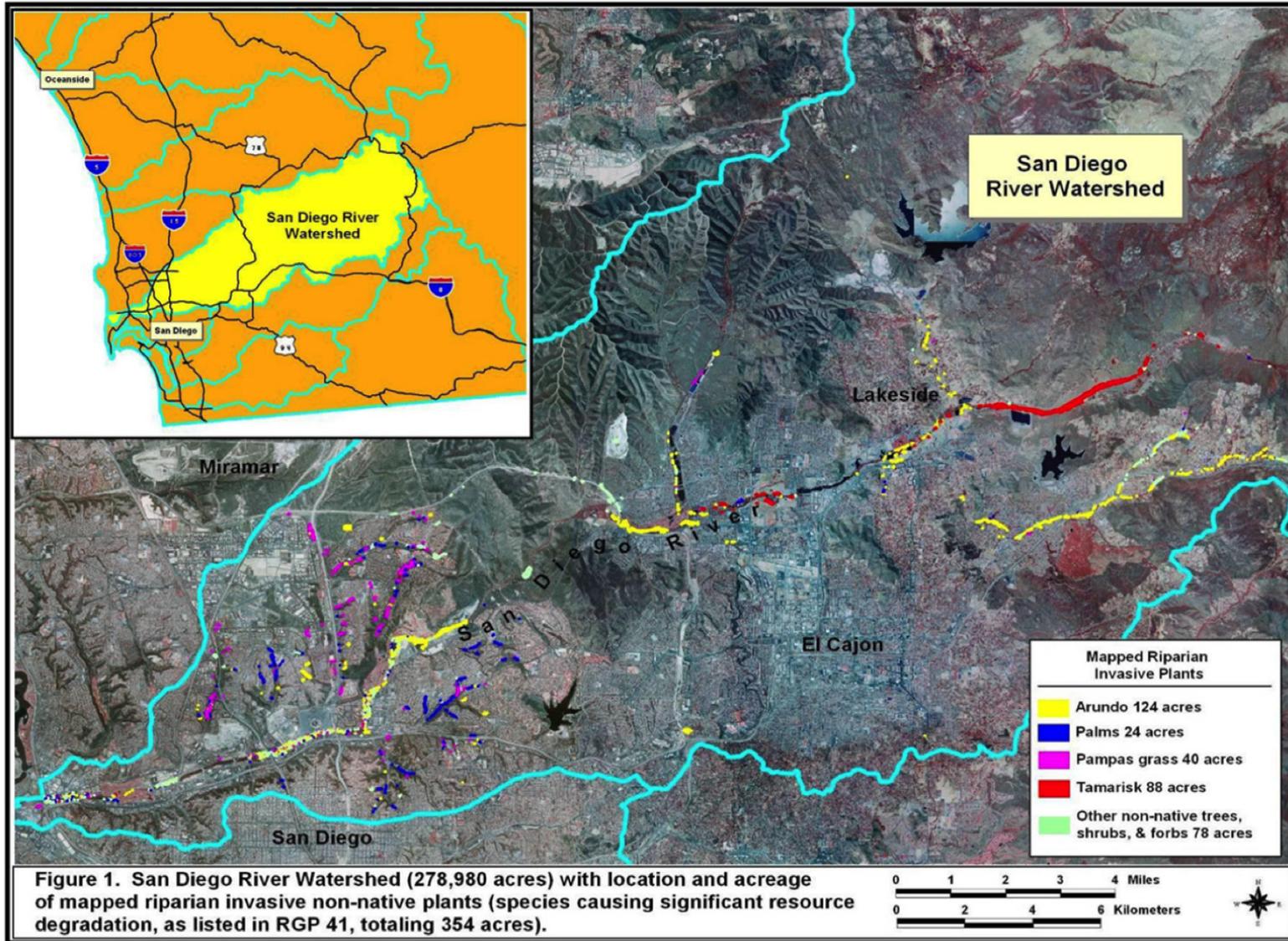
recommends restoring riparian and sage scrub habitat in the San Diego River Park and trail.² San Diego County engaged in a large-scale native habitat restoration at Stelzer County Park and in the El Monte Valley Nature Park Restoration Project. There are 3,000 priority acres identified on this map.

Control of Invasive Non-Native Plants and Native Plant Restoration Site: There are 4 priority restoration sites highlighted on this map.

For a closer look at the Conservancy’s work in the high and medium priority reaches, please see Appendix E3.

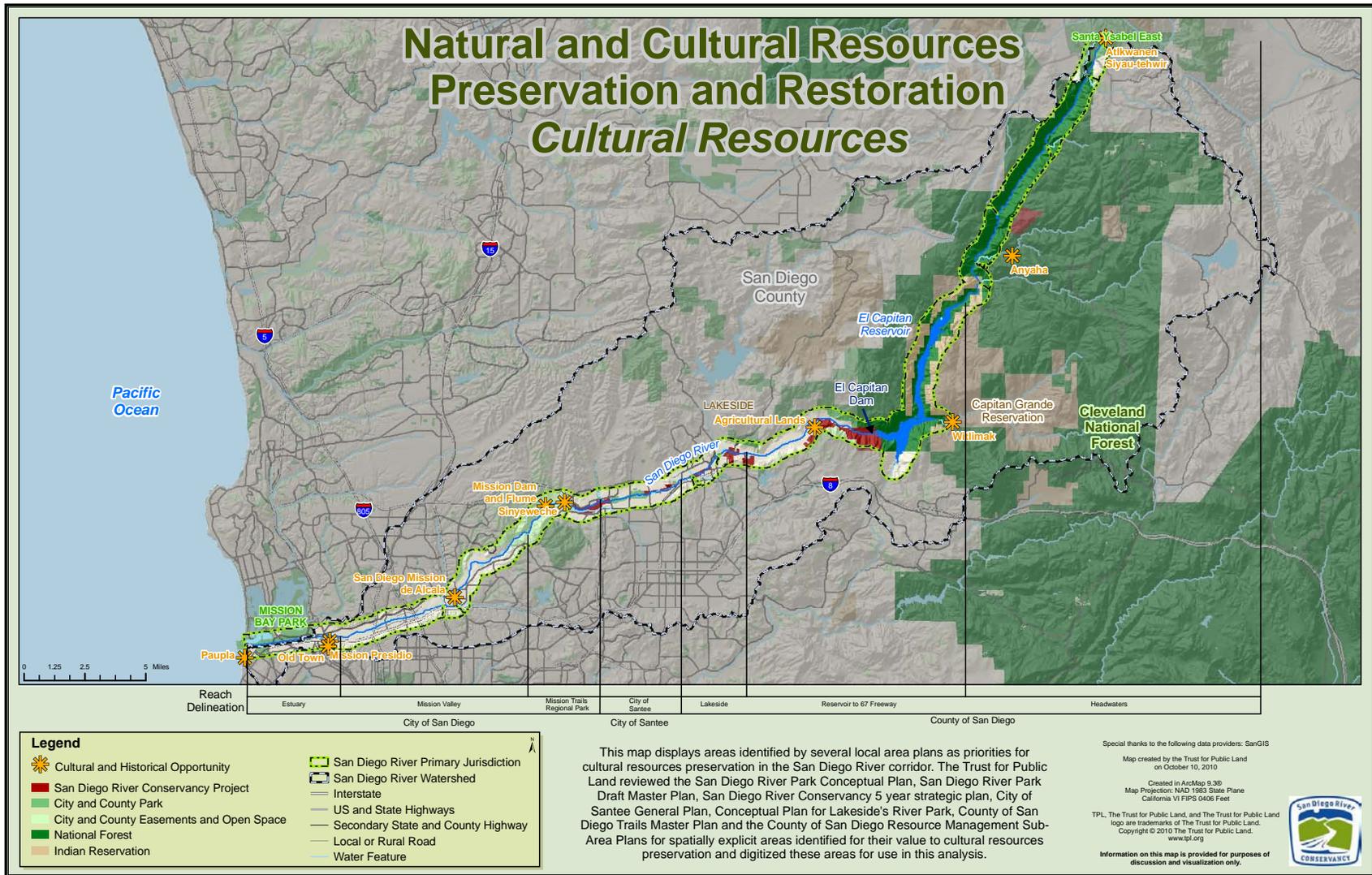
¹ *San Diego River Park Foundation Conceptual Plan*, Prepared for San Diego River Park Foundation, June 2002, p. 80.

² *San Diego River Park Draft Master Plan*, Prepared for the City of San Diego, California, August 2010, p. 76, 77.



Supporting Maps: **Regional General Permit 41**

The “Regional General Permit 41” map shows the 354 acres of invasive, non-native plant species in the San Diego River watershed where the Conservancy is permitted to conduct invasive species removal. The Conservancy is permitted to control Arundo over 124 acres, Palms over 24 acres, Pampas grass over 40 acres, Tamarisk over 88 acres, and other non-native trees, shrubs and forbs over an additional 78 acres.



Supporting Maps: Cultural Resources

The “Cultural Resources” map identifies 10 cultural and historical opportunities that relate to Project 2. These include places identified by several local area plans as priorities for cultural resource preservation in the San Diego River corridor. Sites include Paupla, Old Town, Mission Presidio, San Diego Mission de Alcalá, Mission Dam and Flume, Sinyeweche, Lakeside Agricultural Lands, Witlimak, Anyaha, Atkwaneh Siyau-tehwir, and specific agricultural lands in Lakeside. Together, these sites represent a shared vision for cultural resource protection and preservation in the San Diego River watershed. For a closer look at the Conservancy’s work in the high and medium priority reaches, please see Appendix E4.

Program 4: Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance

Program Goal

Original goal: The original program goal was to promote and implement projects that maintain and improve the water quality and natural flood conveyance of the San Diego River. The program goal remains the same. The Conservancy has actively pursued funding from diverse sources, including Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs), to support three new projects to augment this program. These are new projects that focus on education, volunteer efforts, river long collaboration with San Diego State University students and faculty, and financing has been provided through the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Project 4 (NEW): San Diego RiverNet: Watershed Data Collection and Restoration Program

The Conservancy, in partnership with San Diego State University, has installed a network of remote sensors dedicated to monitoring water quality and water supply. With more funding (the project would require approximately \$1.5 million), this data stream will be shared with San Diego State University, the San Diego History Center, and local sewage treatment operators.

Project 1: Complete Hydrology Assessment for the San Diego River

The Conservancy has completed phase one of a hydrology study that includes an analysis of river park reclamation plans to help identify places where floodplain restoration can occur. This project has since become inactive and is currently a lower priority for the Conservancy.

Project 2 (NEW): Data and Watershed Information System

In conjunction with the San Diego River Park Foundation and the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Conservancy has established a digital portal that provides citizens and stakeholders with water quality information and project status.

Project 3 (NEW): River Blitz and Clean-ups

The Conservancy funded a San Diego River Park Foundation volunteer and community outreach program to conduct two field surveys and manage 12 river clean ups. The Conservancy is committed to fostering relationships with grassroots partner organizations, such as the San Diego River Park Foundation, to clean up and restore the River.

Supporting Maps: **Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance Map**

The “Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance Map” map reflects priority areas that relate to the water quality and natural flood conveyance program goal. Priorities are classified on the map as flood conveyance priorities, wetland priorities, or water quality priorities. These classifications are defined below.

Flood Conveyance Priorities: Priority areas have been identified by several local plans as valuable for natural flood conveyance. These 1011 acres, if preserved (and in some cases restored), will most benefit natural river function attributes in the San Diego River corridor. The Conceptual Plan presents multiple design patterns for water management improvements.¹ Key recommendations in the Master Plan include separating stream flow from ponds and looking for opportunities to create a wider riparian corridor.² Also, the Master Plan highlights the need to foster the growth of native riparian vegetation in order to benefit both hydrology and water quality.³ The County has followed a similar strategy to combat problems associated with river functions. For example, amongst the El Monte Valley Nature Park Restoration Project’s objectives is the improvement of the hydrologic functions of the project area via “reducing the net depth to groundwater in the project area.” Key recommendations by the County and the Master Plan include separating stream flow from ponds and looking for opportunities to create a wider riparian corridor.

Wetland Priorities: Priority areas have been identified by several local plans as valuable for wetlands. These 244 acres, if preserved (and in some cases restored), will provide the most beneficial wetlands in the San Diego River corridor. The Master Plan asserts that wetlands

“contribute to improving water quality by filtering pollutants and will serve as a refuge for native flora and fauna, allowing them to re-establish after flood events.”⁴ Pursuant to that rationale, several recommendations are made, including: the improvement of open space connections between Murray Creek and the river valley by daylighting Murray Creek, creating wetlands and a natural filtration zone, and the development of city owned property as wetland habitat.⁵ The City of Santee identifies over 300 acres of wetland vegetation communities, primarily along the San Diego River and Sycamore Creek.

Water Quality Priorities: Priority areas have been identified by several local plans as valuable for water quality. These 669 acres, if preserved (and in some cases restored), will most benefit water quality in the San Diego River corridor. The City of Santee completed an Urban Runoff Management Plan in 2002 to address local water quality issues in the primary water basins in Santee.⁶ The Plan seeks “to reduce or eliminate the contaminants that are transported in stormwater and ultimately delivered to the rivers and creeks in the City and downstream.”⁷

For a closer look at the Conservancy’s work in the high and medium priority reaches, please see Appendix E5.

1 *San Diego River Park Foundation Conceptual Plan*, Prepared for San Diego River Park Foundation, June 2002, p. 71-8.

2 *San Diego River Park Draft Master Plan*, Prepared for the City of San Diego, California, August 2010, p. 44.

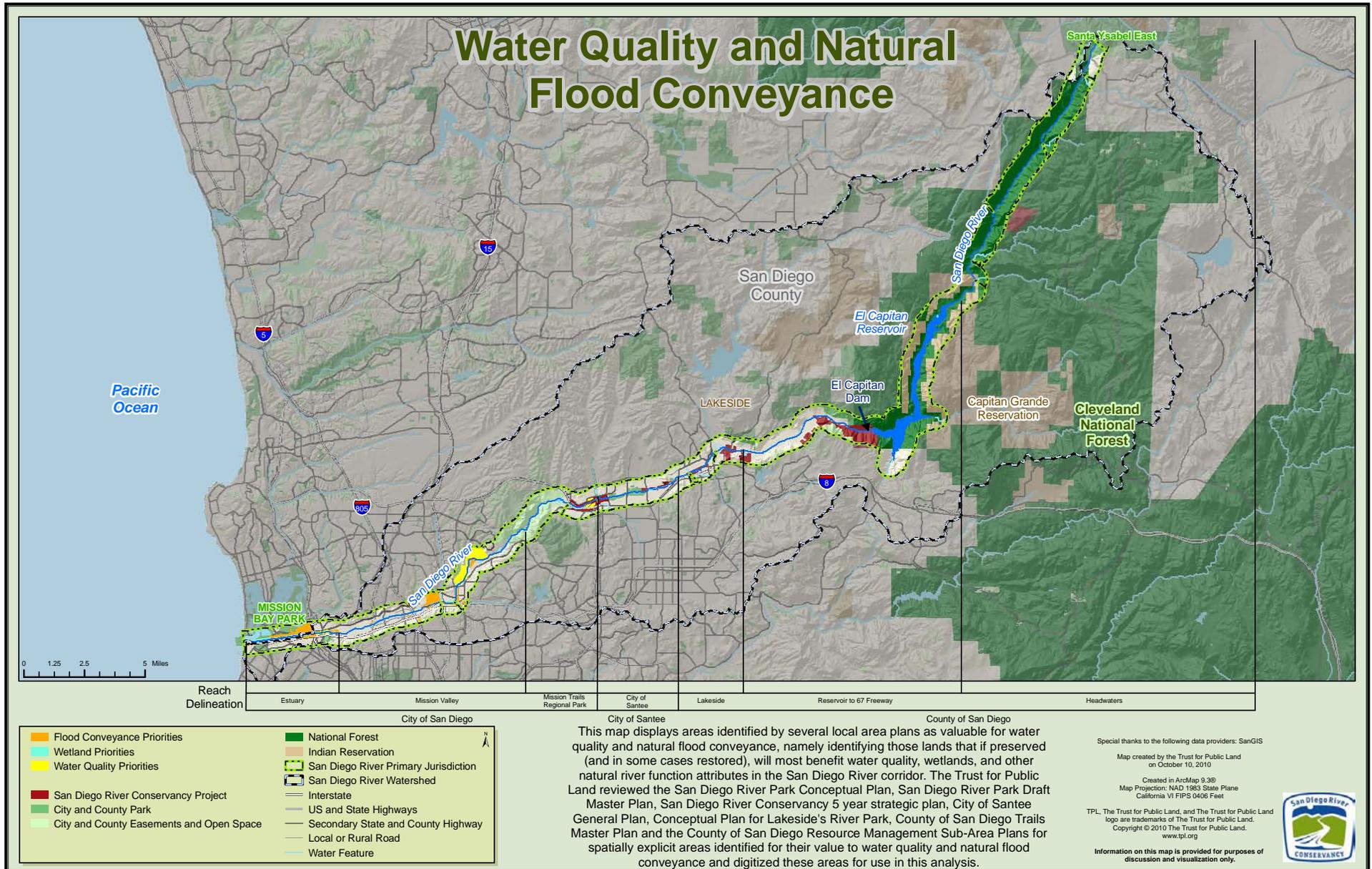
3 *Ibid*, p. 46.

4 *Ibid*, p. 47.

5 *Ibid*, p. 74, 75, 84, 85.

6 *City of Santee General Plan*, Prepared for the City of Santee, California, August 2003, p. 6-3.

7 *Ibid*.



Examples Of Recent Successes And Current Projects

The projects highlighted in this section not only demonstrate the Conservancy's commitment to achieving the four program goals in priority river reaches, but also demonstrate the Conservancy's strategic approach to leveraging limited funds. The Conservancy has, and will continue to pursue funding from local, regional, and federal sources beyond the state general obligation funds. By actively pursuing diverse funding sources and working with a coalition of more than 70 partner organizations, the Conservancy has been able to maximize its impact in the San Diego River watershed and leverage its initial allocation of Proposition 40 and Proposition 84 bond funds (\$10,000,000 and \$5,985,000, respectively). Going forward, the Conservancy will continue supporting and seeking support from partners and jurisdictions that share a common vision for improving the San Diego River and its watershed.

Land Conservation

Two recent examples of land conservation projects are located below the El Capitan Dam in the urbanized reaches of the river:

Walker Property Acquisition

The Conservancy established a partnership to acquire, manage, and restore more than 2 and ½ miles of riparian frontage in Santee. This acquisition is one of the largest and most significant public access and conservation projects on the San Diego River to date. It preserves critical habitat, allows completion of a key segment in the San Diego River Park Trail, promotes restoration of the river's natural hydrology, and supports the continued recovery of the endangered least Bell's vireo *Vireo bellii pusillus* and the USFWS threatened California gnatcatcher *Poliioptila californica*, which occupy the property. This project was made possible through a collaboration of the City of Santee, The Trust for Public Land, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Coastal Conservancy, California Department of Fish and Game, Lakeside's River Park Conservancy, the San Diego River Coalition, and the San Diego River Conservancy.

Carlton Oaks Golf Course

Conservancy representatives successfully negotiated a conservation easement on 68 riverfront acres; more than one mile of trail easement for the San Diego River Trail; and a right of first refusal on the entire 170-acre Carlton Oaks Golf Course in Santee. This property, which lies entirely within the floodplain and floodway of the San Diego River, is identified as important by numerous plans, including the San Diego River Park Master Plan and the Multiple Species Conservation Plan. It is also the location of a major invasive control and habitat restoration project involving San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego County Water Authority, San Diego State University, City of San Diego Public Utilities' Department, and the California Natural Resources Agency.

Watershed Invasives Control and Restoration

Invasive non-native plants often threaten water quality, destroy habitat, and pose serious public safety problems by contributing to flood and fire conditions throughout the San Diego River Watershed. The Conservancy has established a watershed program that has accomplished the following:

- Secured regional permits from federal, state, and local regulatory authorities including U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Department of Fish and Game.
- Procured funding from multiple sources such as State of California General Obligation Bonds; TransNet Environmental Mitigation Program (TransNet derives funding from a local transportation sales tax); and Supplemental Environmental Project dollars awarded by San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board.
- Launched comprehensive regional habitat enhancements to restore and improve habitat along the San Diego River with local jurisdiction and non profit partners at targeted locations:
 - San Diego River Ecological Preserve*, California Department of Fish and Game
 - Interstate 15*, Caltrans
 - Carlton Oaks Course*, City of San Diego
 - Lakeside's River Park*, Lakeside's River Park Conservancy
 - Cactus and El Monte Valley Parks*, County of San Diego
 - Mast Park*, City of Santee
 - Mission Valley Reserve*, City of San Diego, San Diego River Park Foundation
 - Shepherd Canyon*, Tierrasanta, San Diego Canyonlands

San Diego River Trail

Recognizing that completion of the San Diego River Trail was one of its greatest priorities, the governing board of the Conservancy took formal action to establish the San Diego River Trail as a civic imperative and a regional collaboration. As such, the Conservancy undertook the following steps:

- Created an Intergovernmental Working Group comprising key staff for each jurisdiction to address technical issues; funding and construction priorities; and construction and management coordination for the trail.
- Completed a trail gap analysis, which identified functional and physical barriers to completing the trail.
- Began funding and completing priority projects to close the most critical gaps and linkages, including trails at:

Mast Park West - added a half-mile to the San Diego River Trail in Santee to connect a 4,400-foot pedestrian/bicycle path between Carlton Oaks Boulevard and Cuyamaca Street, and added an additional 1,500 feet of paved path from Cuyamaca to Park Center Drive.

Ocean Beach Bike Path – completed a 3,900 feet extension of a coastal pedestrian and bike path that connects three communities: Ocean Beach, Mission Bay, and Mission Valley.

Appendix A. Intersecting Regional Plan Goals and Objectives

The goals identified and agreed upon by the Conservancy were evaluated in the context of planning documents listed in this matrix.

Plans Reviewed	River Reaches						
	Estuary	Mission Valley	Mission Trails/ Regional Park	City of Santee	Lakeside	Reservoir to 67 Freeway	Headwaters
	City of San Diego				County of San Diego		
Program 1: Land Conservation							
San Diego River Park Conceptual Plan	[REDACTED]						
San Diego River Conservancy Strategic Plan	[REDACTED]						
San Diego River Park Draft Master Plan	[REDACTED]						
San Diego County Multiple Species Conservation Program (Sub Areas)	[REDACTED]						
San Diego River Coalition Annual Work Plan	[REDACTED]						
City of Santee General Plan				[REDACTED]			
Lakeside River Park Conservancy Master Plan					[REDACTED]		
Helix Water District/Endangered Habitats Conservancy - El Monte Valley Nature Park					[REDACTED]		
San Diego County Community Trails Plan	[REDACTED]						

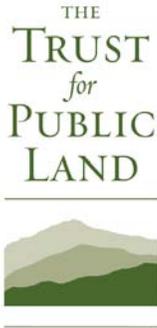
Plans Reviewed	River Reaches						
	Estuary	Mission Valley	Mission Trails/ Regional Park	City of Santee	Lakeside	Reservoir to 67 Freeway	Headwaters
	City of San Diego				County of San Diego		
Program Area 2: Recreation And Education							
San Diego River Park Conceptual Plan	[REDACTED]						
San Diego River Conservancy Strategic Plan	[REDACTED]						
San Diego River Park Draft Master Plan	[REDACTED]						
San Diego County Multiple Species Conservation Program (Sub Areas)	[REDACTED]						
San Diego River Coalition Annual Work Plan	[REDACTED]						
City of Santee General Plan				[REDACTED]			
Lakeside River Park Conservancy Master Plan					[REDACTED]		
Helix Water District/Endangered Habitats Conservancy - El Monte Valley Nature Park					[REDACTED]		
San Diego County Community Trails Plan	[REDACTED]						
Program Area 3. Natural And Cultural Resources Preservation And Restoration							
San Diego River Park Conceptual Plan	[REDACTED]						

Exhibit 2: Addendum to the San Diego River Conservancy Five-Year Strategic and Infrastructure Plan, 2006-2011

Plans Reviewed	River Reaches						
	Estuary	Mission Valley	Mission Trails/ Regional Park	City of Santee	Lakeside	Reservoir to 67 Freeway	Headwaters
	City of San Diego				County of San Diego		
San Diego River Conservancy Strategic Plan	[REDACTED]						
San Diego River Park Draft Master Plan	[REDACTED]						
San Diego County Multiple Species Conservation Program (Sub Areas)	[REDACTED]						
San Diego River Coalition Annual Work Plan	[REDACTED]					[REDACTED]	
City of Santee General Plan				[REDACTED]			
Lakeside River Park Conservancy Master Plan					[REDACTED]		
Helix Water District/Endangered Habitats Conservancy - El Monte Valley Nature Park					[REDACTED]		
San Diego County Community Trails Plan							
Program Area 4. Water Quality And Natural Flood Conveyance							
San Diego River Park Conceptual Plan	[REDACTED]						
San Diego River Conservancy Strategic Plan	[REDACTED]						
San Diego River Park Draft Master Plan	[REDACTED]						

Exhibit 2: Addendum to the San Diego River Conservancy Five-Year
Strategic and Infrastructure Plan, 2006-2011

Plans Reviewed	River Reaches						
	Estuary	Mission Valley	Mission Trails/ Regional Park	City of Santee	Lakeside	Reservoir to 67 Freeway	Headwaters
	City of San Diego				County of San Diego		
San Diego County Multiple Species Conservation Program (Sub Areas)							
San Diego River Coalition Annual Work Plan	■				■	■	
City of Santee General Plan				■			
Lakeside River Park Conservancy Master Plan					■		
Helix Water District/Endangered Habitats Conservancy - El Monte Valley Nature Park					■	■	
San Diego County Community Trails Plan							



San Diego River Conservancy Greenprint Draft Memorandum of Opportunities

Document Review and Analysis
January 7, 2010

INTRODUCTION

Through the heart of California's San Diego County winds the 52-mile river that shares the same name. Its headwaters sit northwest of the town of Julian in the Cuyamaca Mountains and flows southwesterly to the El Capitan Reservoir and Dam. From here, the San Diego River makes its way through Lakeside and Santee, until it reaches the City of San Diego and its destination at the estuary of Mission Bay and the Pacific Ocean.

Several tributaries flow into the main stem of the river, and form seven river reaches that distinguish the corridor's geography and development: Headwaters, Reservoir to 67 Freeway, Lakeside, Santee, Mission Trails, Mission Valley, and Estuary. The Mission Trails Reach is home to Mission Trails Regional Park, which, at 5,800 acres, is one of the largest urban parks in the country.¹

San Diego County covers more than 4.3 thousand square miles in the southernmost portion of the state. Of its 3.17 million residents, more than 40 percent live within the City of San Diego. According to U.S. Census data, the population of the city is expected to grow another 42 percent by 2030.²

Natural and man-made events have altered the course of the river over time and affected the water quality. Because of the river's importance to the health of the San Diego Region's drinking water, wildlife, and tourist economy, the State of California established the San Diego River Conservancy (SDRC). The SDRC serves as a non-regulatory agency responsible for acquiring, managing, and conserving lands within a ½-mile border on either side of the river's main stem to provide recreational and educational opportunities, preserve wildlife habitat, protect water quality, manage the impacts of floods, and preserve historical/cultural sites. One of the key projects of the SDRC is to work with stakeholders and partners to develop a river-long park of hiking/biking trails, nature preserves, active parks, and water recharge areas.

1 San Diego River, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Diego_River. According to TPL's Center for City Park Excellence, Mission Trails Regional Park is the 16th largest urban park in the nation and the largest in San Diego, <http://www.tpl.org/cityparkfacts>.

2 "Fast Facts: San Diego Region," SANDAG, San Diego's Regional Planning Agency, <http://www.sandag.org>.

In 2006, the SDRC released a *Five Year Strategic and Infrastructure Plan* (Five Year Plan) that outlined its four program areas:

- Land Conservation
- Recreation and Education
- Natural and Cultural Resources Preservation and Restoration
- Water Quality and Natural Flood Conveyance

Within these four program areas, the Five Year Plan outlines an ambitious set of goals and objectives to achieve the overall mission of the SDRC, and projects a funding need of \$41.5 million annually for five years to implement these strategies.³

With state and municipal budgets being what they are, however, it is necessary to prioritize among these strategies to most effectively direct human and financial resources within the next five years. This memorandum seeks to help outline opportunities to prioritize the SDRC's activities and offers an amendment to its current Five Year Plan that establishes these priorities and next steps.

The methodology for determining these priorities involves:

- 1) Creating a comprehensive baseline map, showing the following features to visually illustrate opportunity areas across the landscape: (See *San Diego River Conservancy Greenprint Map*, separate handout.)
- 2) Reviewing relevant plans and documents⁴ to identify cross-organizational synergies and overlapping priorities. The document review was organized according to the SDRC's program areas and within the reaches of the river to focus opportunities within the SDRC's legislative mandate as well as to prioritize specific geographies.

The findings from these two tasks will provide the basis for a recommended addendum to the Five Year Plan for consideration by the SDRC's Board of Directors at its regularly scheduled January 7, 2010 meeting.

FINDINGS

Shared Goals

The overarching theme among the majority of the plans reviewed was that the San Diego River is a key community asset, both physically and emotionally. All of the plans reviewed evolved from, referenced, or complemented the San Diego River Park Conceptual Plan⁵ and its broad goals:

- Celebrating Historic and Natural Resources
- Supporting Natural Stream Functions
- Preserving and Restoring Riparian Habitats
- Providing Recreational Access

3 "Five Year Strategic and Infrastructure Plan: 2006-2011," San Diego River Conservancy, adopted March 24, 2006.

4 The plans and documents reviewed include San Diego River Park Conceptual Plan, San Diego River Park Draft Master Plan, San Diego River Coalition 2009 Work Plan, San Diego River Conservancy Five Year Strategic and Infrastructure Plan, the City of Santee General Plan, Conceptual Plan for Lakeside's River Park, County of San Diego Trails Master Plan, and the County of San Diego Resource Management Sub-area Plans. The agencies and organizations responsible for the plans' developments are listed in *Appendix C. Partial List of Agencies and Organizations*.

5 The San Diego River Park Conceptual Plan was developed for the San Diego River Park Foundation.

While the Conceptual Plan lays out the vision of a seamless river-long system of parks, open spaces, trails, and wilderness areas, the San Diego River Park Draft Master Plan focuses on the City of San Diego's portion of fulfilling that dream. The Draft Master Plan identifies specific projects within the Estuary, Mission Valley, and Mission Trail reaches within the river corridor, such as wetland creation, trail development, and regional park expansion. The San Diego River Coalition's Annual Work Plans⁶ prioritize feasibility studies and construction projects that further the development of the River Park.

The City of Santee and a non-profit group in the unincorporated neighborhood of Lakeside have developed plans for riverfront parks that provide community connectivity to the waterfront for recreation, habitat restoration, and improved hydrologic function.

The county's Trails Master Plan and Multiple Species Conservation Program Sub-area plans do not specifically point to the preservation of the San Diego River or the creation of the River Park. However, the Sub-area plans do target conservation sites along the river because of their importance to habitat protection, and the Trails Plan does include links to the San Diego River.

The SDRC's Five Year Plan acts as an implementation plan, to some extent, for the documents reviewed. The plans' priorities converge on the development of a river-long system of trails, parks, and natural areas. This system will provide connectivity from where people live to the river shoreline while also creating wildlife habitat corridors, expressing unique community identities, and restoring natural functions of the river to minimize flooding and to improve water quality.

Through its program areas, the SDRC shares with the Conceptual Plan the broad concepts of natural resources preservation and restoration, and recreation and education. However, the Conceptual Plan focuses much more heavily on historic and cultural resources preservation than the SDRC's Five Year Plan. *Appendix A. Summary of Plans Reviewed* and *Appendix B. Intersecting Regional Plan Goals and Objectives* provide more details.

Landscapes of Opportunity

TPL's overall recommendation is that the SDRC focus on acquiring land. Without assembling the land through acquisition, rights-of-way dedications, and developer agreements, the vision of a River Park will remain just that – a vision. TPL suggests that the SDRC concentrate in areas where there are already nodes of activity and where the public sector can help with funding acquisitions, as well as where the public sector has capacity to maintain the amenities and to program the space once it becomes part of the park system. These same areas most often are under the most residential and commercial development threat.

With a half-mile area jurisdiction on both sides of the 52-mile long river as its focus in its four programmatic areas, the SDRC would prove most effective by prioritizing its immediate work on land conservation in those reaches that offer partnerships for connectivity, funding, acquisition, facility development, and long-term land management. This strategy will also provide context to the recently formed San Diego River Trail Intergovernmental Working Group, which creates collaborative energy at the staff level among governmental agencies and organizations at work within the river corridor.

⁶ The San Diego River Coalition represents the non-governmental groups with a shared interest in the San Diego River, and serves as the Citizens Advisory Committee for River Park planning efforts.

The success of the San Diego River Park depends upon cooperation between both the public and private sectors. A fragmented trail and park system that bypasses or disconnects from nodes of activity can become a security and maintenance hazard – not the longed-for amenity that improves quality of life and beautifies a city.

Success invites success. Riverfront landowners will be looking to the public sector to provide funding for acquisition or meaningful incentives to develop walks, outdoor bistros, and other features that connect into and complement the overall River Park system. By creating an active and appreciated river park in the areas of highest population concentrations, momentum toward the full system can be achieved and will encourage private investment.

The following discussion organizes priorities into three tiers; however, these recommended priorities do not suggest that the SDRC should ignore opportunities that arise among willing landowners and funding availability in recommended second- and third-tier priority areas or according to its other legislative mandates. To meet its goal of natural resources restoration, for example, the SDRC has identified key areas within the watershed to eradicate invasive exotic and pest plants, and this work should continue as funding is made available to accomplish this task.

Recommended Tier I Priority Focus – Lakeside Reach to Estuary

The cities of San Diego, Santee, and Lakeside have developed master plans for river parks and trails, and San Diego County's Community Trails Plan incorporates existing and planned linkages from its communities to the river. The cities completed their plans between 2004 and 2005, and they are in various stages of approval and implementation. It is not clear to what extent the cities have been successful in acquiring lands and developing facilities to support the River Park.

The City of San Diego identifies a number of communities in its Draft Master Plan where additional acreage needs to be acquired within the corridor's first 20 miles for trails and parks to meet existing and future level of service standards.⁷ The Navajo Community will require 40 acres along the river to meet its projected 2020 deficiency of 66 acres.⁸ The SDRC's own Five Year Plan identifies a target of 300 unspecified acres for conservation for the River Park. The cities of Santee and Lakeside target 100 and 300 acres, respectively.

These broad conservation targets need to be further clarified through a land acquisition strategy that highlights and ranks parcel attributes – size, vegetation, hydrology, habitat, and connectivity, among them – to determine which lands are most suitable for the River Park development.

A trails gaps analysis, underway now for the SDRC and not available for review at the time of this study, will likely reveal key segments to acquire to fulfill the vision of a continuous river trail as well as links into neighborhoods and communities. Following the conservation of the riparian corridor, the

7 Level of Service (LOS) is a standard measure of effectiveness of how well a city is meeting the recreational needs of its residents. According to the National Recreation and Park Association, 2.7 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents is the minimum LOS standard, although each community adopts its own LOS goal through its master planning process. The City of San Diego's is _____ acres/1,000 residents.

8 San Diego River Park, City of San Diego Draft Master Plan.

development of recreational and educational facilities should remain a high priority for the SDRC.

Recommended Second Tier Priority Focus – Reservoir to 67 Reach

The Reservoir to 67 Reach proves a critical nexus in connecting the urban/suburban areas with the natural wilderness of the Headwaters Reach. The El Monte Valley presents opportunities for trail development, historic resources preservation, and natural systems restoration, especially with the El Monte Valley Nature Park Restoration Project. The Endangered Habitats Conservancy serves as a collaborator in natural resources restoration. Because the Helix Water District owns and maintains key lakes/reservoirs within the San Diego River Well Basin, and provides recreational access to its property, it can serve as a key recreation, conservation, and management partner.

Recommended Third Tier Priority Focus – Headwaters

The headwaters are important to the health of the river system. The presence of the Cleveland National Forest and tribal lands provides a high level of resource protection. The important focus in this third tier should be to fill gaps in a continuous River Park system and to buffer protected areas from encroaching development. Because the San Diego River Park Foundation will focus its land acquisition efforts in this reach, the SDRC can provide support to the Foundation without having to take the lead in this area.

NEXT STEPS

With such a large focus area, it is tempting to remain opportunistic and pursue simply what lands become available; however, a more effective and targeted strategy will position the SDRC to approach landowners proactively, target and leverage public and private funding sources, develop partnerships, create a suite of landowner incentives, and build momentum toward the fulfillment of the River Park vision.

Step 1: Land Acquisition Strategy

TPL recommends that the SDRC take the next step of developing a geographic information system (GIS) model analysis – or *Greenprint* – to map conservation priorities at the parcel level based upon its already identified goals and criteria.⁹ TPL took into account the SDRC’s four program areas as well as the overlapping priorities among the other plans reviewed, and suggests the following conservation goals for discussion at the January 7, 2010 board meeting:

- **Improve Recreational Access to River**
 - New and expanded parks
 - Park Equity Analysis
- **Create Trail Connections**
- **Restore Native Habitats**
 - Consistent with MSCP and CAPP
- **Improve Natural River Functions**
 - Restore wetlands
 - Preserve riparian corridors

9 “Five Year Strategic and Infrastructure Plan,” San Diego River Conservancy (2006): 7.

This model analysis could look across jurisdictions at park connectivity, habitat fragmentation, park equity, and water quality to identify lands that meet multiple plan goals. These models can be further refined to rank properties with historic significance and wildlife habitat features.

Step 2: Strategy Exchange

The Plan and Document Review revealed a number of issues that cannot be addressed through mapping or land acquisition but are integral to the success of an integrated San Diego River Park. The Five Year Plan and the San Diego River Park Draft Master Plan, especially, touched on similar issues, among them:

- Cohesive management and governance of the River Park;
- Safety and security;
- Wayfinding and signage;
- Developer/landowner incentives; and,
- Invasive and pest plant control and management.

These issues could be explored further through focused discussions around the topics listed with both local and national representatives to create effective programs as well as to develop key strategies to address concerns.

Appendices Omitted

APPENDIX B: Strategic Focus Area Connectivity Opportunities



APPENDIX C: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW LIST

Brian Albright, Director
County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation

Michael Beck, San Diego Director
Endangered Habitats League

Joan Friedlander, District Ranger
Cleveland National Forest, Palomar Ranger District

Robert Hutsel, Executive Director
San Diego River Park Foundation

Sue Richardson and Melanie Kush, Community Services
Kevin Mallory, Principal Planner
City of Santee

Robin Rierdan, Executive Director
Lakeside's River Park Conservancy

Robin Shifflet, Senior Park Planner
City of San Diego, Department of Planning and Community Investment

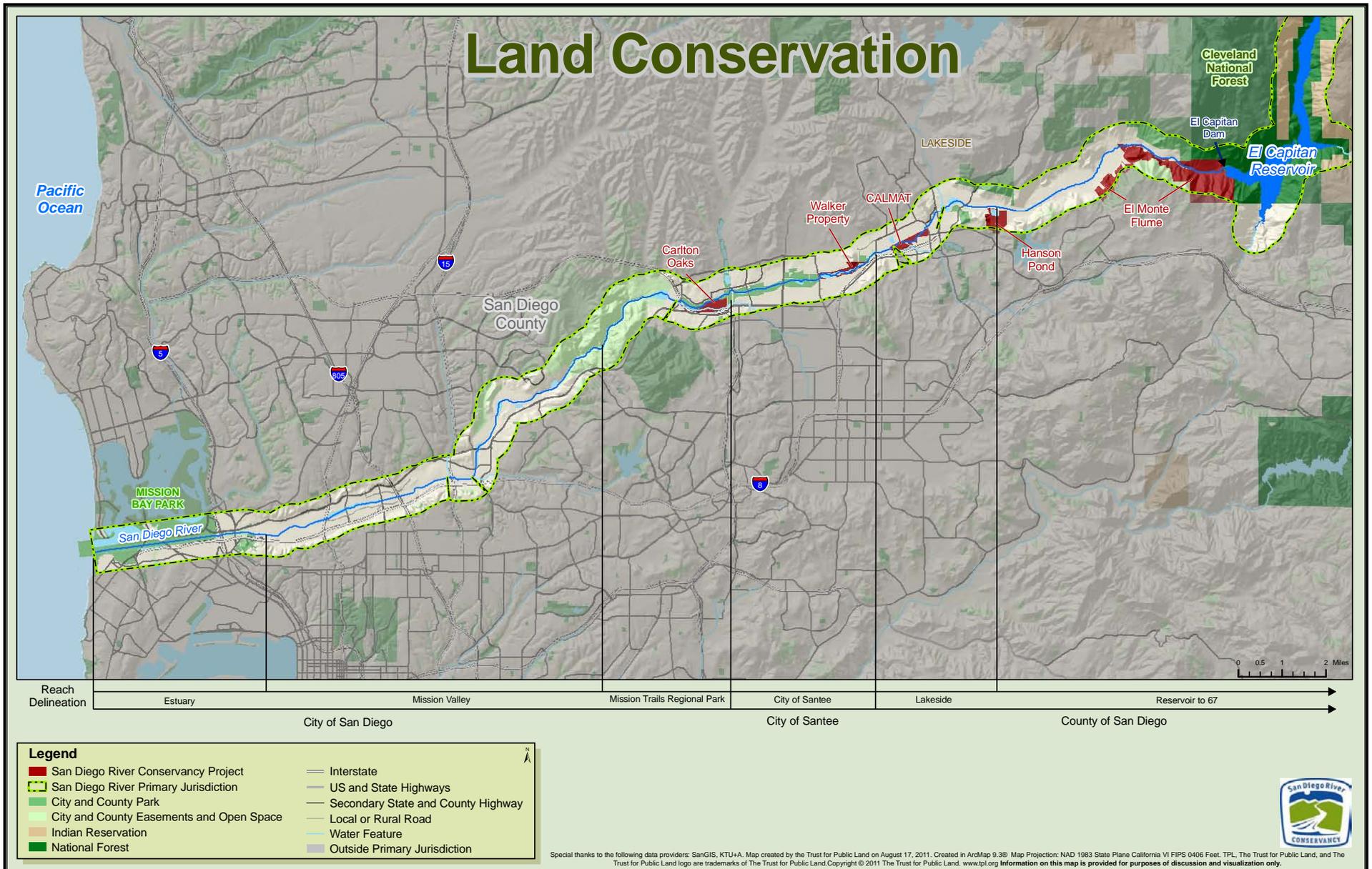
Mark Weston, General Manager
Helix Water District

Emily Young, PhD
The San Diego Foundation

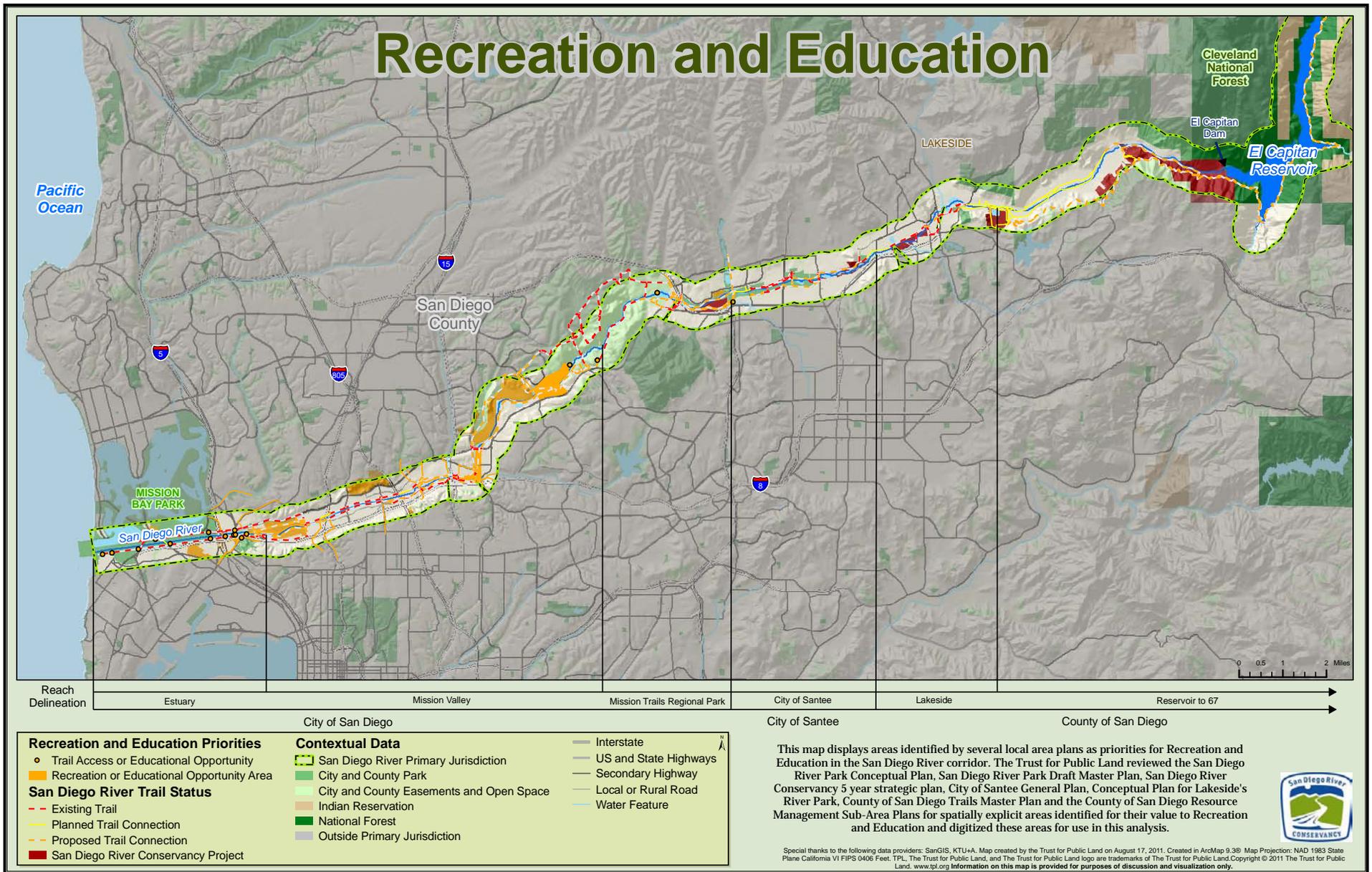
APPENDIX D: MAPPING METHODOLOGY

The Trust for Public Land acquired shapefiles associated with the plans described in Appendix A that indicate priority lands for each of the four major goals (land conservation, recreation and education, natural and cultural resources, and water quality and natural flood conveyance). Project areas were digitized as needed. Where no spatially explicit information was provided in the plan, the technical team could not precisely map parcel boundaries but sought to roughly translate priorities onto the map. Finally, the technical team determined if any additional shapefiles existed that reflected the four major goals and incorporated them into the priority maps. For example, priority habitat maps for the Southwest flycatcher and Least Bell's vireo, the two endangered species in the area, were obtained from the US Fish and Wildlife Service in support of the natural and cultural resources program. The resulting basemap was vetted with an internal project team consisting of TPL and Conservancy staff. High, medium, and low priority areas were demarcated on the basemap once it was finalized.

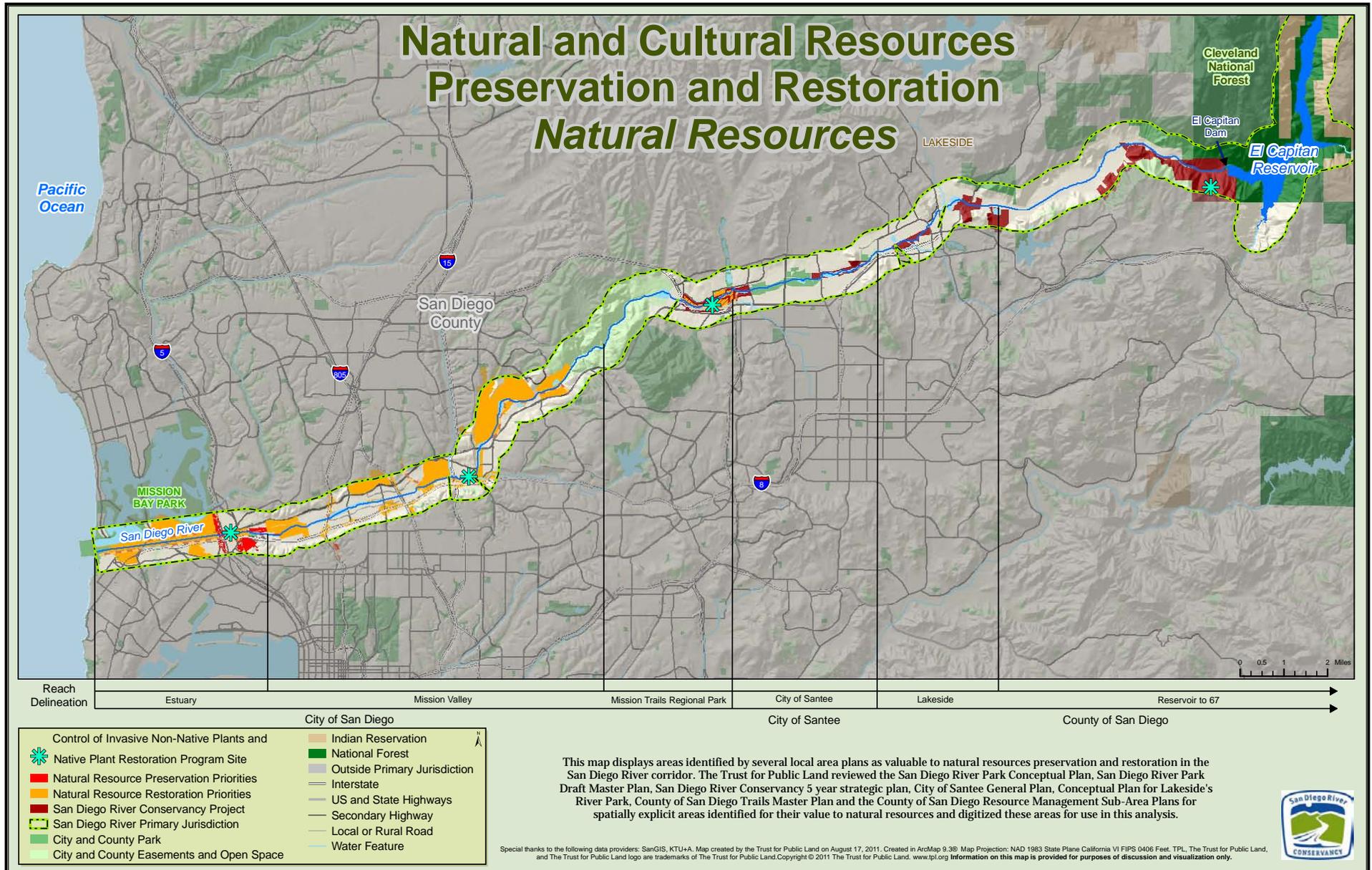
APPENDIX E1: LAND CONSERVATION MAP



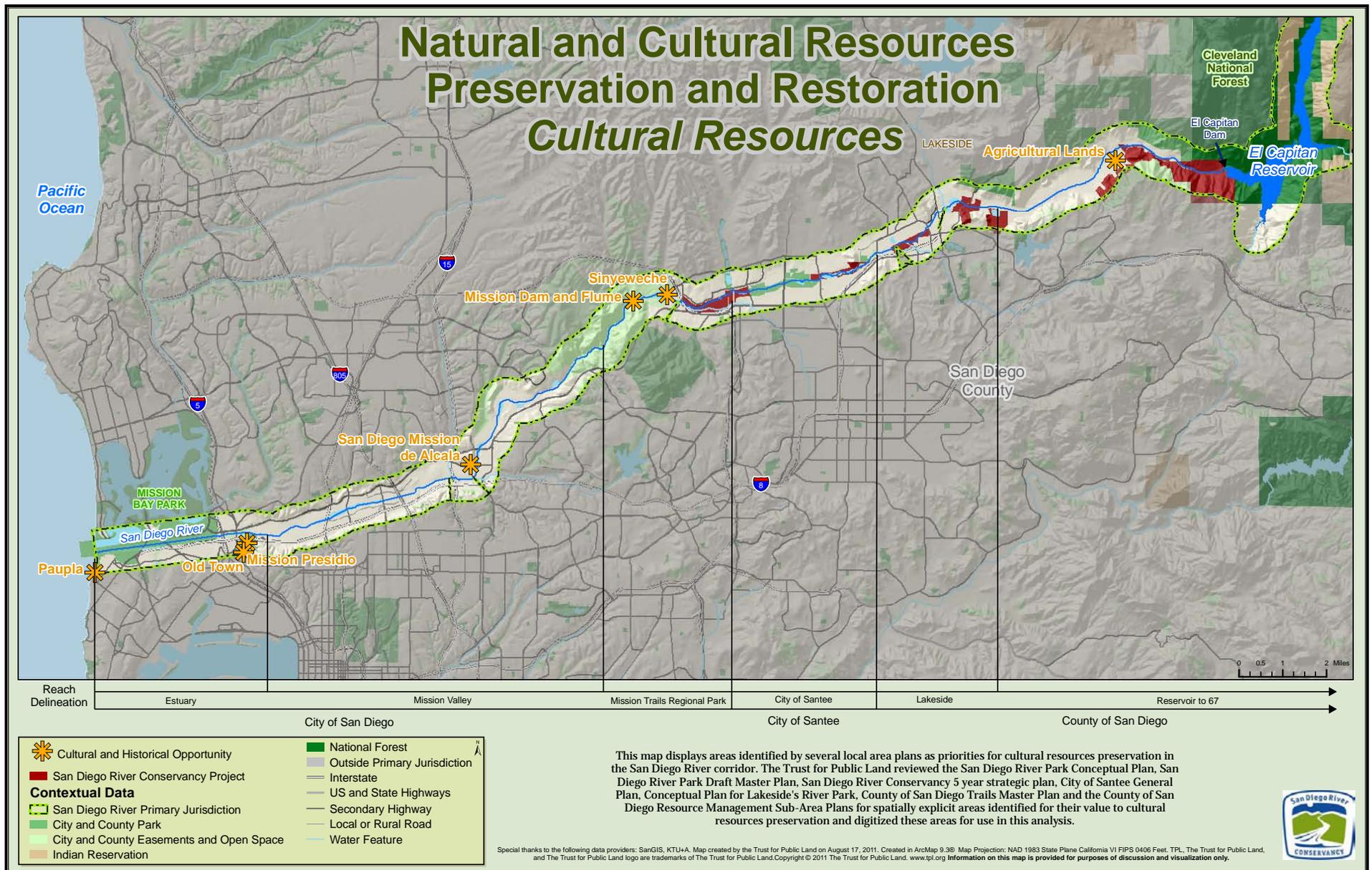
APPENDIX E2: RECREATION AND EDUCATION MAP



APPENDIX E3: NATURAL RESOURCES MAP



APPENDIX E4: CULTURAL RESOURCES MAP



APPENDIX E5: WATER QUALITY AND NATURAL FLOOD CONVEYANCE

