



# FY2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT



# LETTER FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Dear San Diego County Residents,

It is my privilege to present the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2024–25. This report reflects our unwavering commitment to enhancing the quality of life in our region through exceptional parks and recreation experiences, while preserving the natural resources that make San Diego County such a special place to live, work, and play.

Over the past year, we continued to advance the priorities outlined in our 2024–2029 Strategic Plan—Inclusion, Sustainability, Empowerment, Safety, and Community. These guiding principles shape how we design parks, deliver programs, steward the environment, and engage with the diverse communities we serve.

We are proud to manage more than 59,000 acres of parkland and more than 390 miles of trails, offering residents and visitors opportunities to connect with nature, history, and each other. Our award winning park system now includes 159 facilities, ranging from local and regional parks to campgrounds, historic sites, fishing lakes, ecological preserves, and a botanic garden. These spaces are more than amenities—they are vital to community well being and reflect our commitment to building an accessible, inclusive, and welcoming parks system for all.

This year, we celebrated significant accomplishments:

**Expanded Conservation Efforts:** Added 997 acres of conserved land through the Multiple Species Conservation Program, protecting sensitive habitats and species for future generations—supporting long term sustainability goals.

**Improved Access and Recreation:** Completed numerous park improvements and launched new projects, including the Bonsall Community Park groundbreaking and enhancements at Waterfront Park, Sweetwater Summit Campground, and Guajome Regional Park—reflecting our commitment to designing with inclusivity in mind.

**Restoration and Sustainability:** Advanced habitat restoration projects in Kumeyaay Valley Park and the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park, planted 4,657 trees in alignment with the County's Climate Action Plan, and continued efforts to eradicate invasive species—strengthening the resilience of our landscapes.

**Community Engagement:** Connected thousands of youth and families to nature through programs like SD Nights, Women in the Wild, First Time Camping, and Nature Explorers, while welcoming over 223,000 attendees at community events—empowering people to explore, learn, and feel a sense of belonging in our parks.

**Innovation and Access:** Launched new digital tools, including the interactive trail mapping application and Pay by Phone app, and continued improving communication accessibility—part of our effort to modernize systems and ensure information is easy to understand and available to all.

These achievements are a testament to the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and community partners. Their commitment ensures that our parks remain safe, clean, welcoming places where people can gather, learn, heal, and thrive.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on expanding recreational opportunities, conserving natural resources, and fostering inclusive programs that serve every member of our community. Guided by our Strategic Plan, we will continue to listen, learn, and collaborate—ensuring our parks system remains a source of pride for San Diego County. Thank you for your continued support and partnership in making San Diego County a place where parks and people thrive.

Sincerely,



Jason Hemmens

Director, Department of Parks and Recreation

# BY THE NUMBERS



**59,000**

acres of  
parkland managed



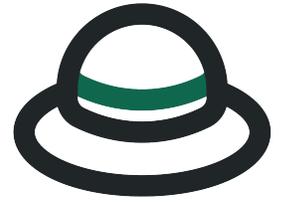
**393**

miles of  
trails managed



**159**

number of  
facilities managed



**233,000**

attendees at  
7,000 events



**997**

acres of conserved  
land added to MSCP



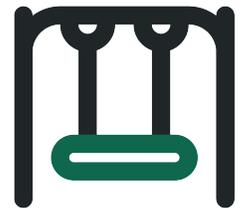
**4,657**

trees planted to  
support CAP



**25**

completed  
development projects



**3**

number of  
new parks opened



**40,663**

camping  
reservations



**128,344**

camping nights  
booked



**117,566**

campers  
served



**1,865,330**

website  
page views

## VISION:

Be a parks and recreation system that is the pride of San Diego County.

## MISSION:

We enhance the quality of life in San Diego County by providing exceptional parks and recreation experiences and preserving significant natural resources.

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The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) builds better health for individuals and families, enhances safety in communities, and preserves the environment so that people can enjoy clean air and water, rich biodiversity, and access to open space.

The County continues to expand its award-winning parks system, which features 159 facilities including local and regional parks, campgrounds, historic sites, fishing lakes, ecological preserves and a botanic garden. DPR operates and manages more than 59,000 acres of parkland and more than 390 miles of trails that foster an appreciation of nature and history. DPR implements the Multiple Species Conservation Program that acquires hundreds of acres for conservation annually, protecting species and habitat in the region.

DPR is the first county parks and recreation department in California to receive accreditation by the National Recreation and Park Association for achieving high standards of operational excellence. DPR is committed to its workforce and recognizes how vital they are to achieving these goals. We empower staff by creating opportunities for engagement, training and development, and professional growth.



*Department Staff at 2025 Awards Ceremony*

**\$77.2M**  
**BUDGET**

We promote environmental ambassadorship, health and wellness, safe communities and civic pride through thousands of programs including interpretive hikes and bike rides, educational workshops, nature discovery tables, classes, camps, volunteer activities, community festivals and more.

**304**  
**STAFF**

**\$36.1M**

## Supporting how you live, work, recreate

Park and trails operations; Recreational and Interpretive programming; Special events; homeless encampment cleanup; Tree maintenance.

**\$30.6M**

## Capital projects

MSCP land acquisition; Trail improvements; New parks and facilities; Redevelopment

**\$15.8M**

## Protecting the climate and natural resources

Multiple Species Conservation Plan land acquisition and planning; Biological and cultural monitoring; Land stewardship; Improving conditions in Tijuana River Valley; Planting Trees

**\$7.8M**

## Infrastructure safety

Major maintenance, replacements, and upgrades, including dredging, drainage and facility improvements, drinking water, sewer and restroom improvements, ADA and playground upgrades.

**\$3M**

## Empowering the community

Youth programming, ADA-compliant enhancements; assessing community needs; inclusive communications

**\$250K**

## Protecting health

Water systems

# ADMINISTRATION

The Administration Division encompasses finance, marketing, information technology, customer service, and human resources. It provides essential support services that enable the department's Operations, Resource Management, and Development divisions to function efficiently. Through effective administrative oversight, the division ensures strong fiscal stewardship, promotes organizational effectiveness, and maintains the systems and services that sustain the department's overall performance.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Managed the department's website and reservations system while implementing digital improvements to streamline workflows, enhance user experience, and ensure accessibility. Supported key initiatives, including expanding campground reservations to 137,870 nights booked annually, deploying a network of 35 trail counters that recorded 1.28 million trail visits, and launching a new Pay by Phone application to provide visitors with a convenient parking payment solution through use of smartphones.

## MARKETING

Ensured all public-facing materials and signage followed the department brand standards. Completed 282 graphic design projects that include multiple individual graphics. Supported department initiatives through website, email marketing, social media, and media relations. Increased social media followers by 5% on Facebook and 34% on Instagram. Promoted [sdparks.org](http://sdparks.org) to garner 1,865,330 page views (651,473 unique visitors). Supported public meetings and development project promotion, including ribbon cuttings and groundbreakings.

## VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Organized approximately 200 volunteer events and projects with the community and local schools that focused on invasive species removal, park cleanup and beautification, and tree planting. Launched the innovative Volunteer Vacations Program at Agua Caliente and Vallecito County Parks combining cultural preservation, volunteerism, and camping to restore the historic stagecoach station. Partnered with St. Augustine Catholic Boys High School bringing over 540 volunteers to participate in a single-day, multiple location event resulting in over 2,000 hours of service. Engaged over 3,000 volunteers contributing nearly 90,000 service hours, resulting in an estimated cost avoidance of \$3.58 million.



Visitor using Pay By Phone app



Media at Village View Opening



Student volunteers remove invasives



Volunteer Vacation participants assist with historic restoration of Vallecito Stagecoach Station

# RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

The Resource Management Division protects and enhances natural resources through land conservation, species monitoring, and science-based planning. The division completes environmental review and permitting for all department projects, expands and manages trail access, completes resource and public access plans, and restores habitats by removing invasive plants to improve ecosystem health, reduce fire risk, and support long-term sustainability.

## MULTIPLE SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Increased conserved land by 997 acres through property acquisitions in all areas of the County that provide the most conservation value for sensitive species and habitats, recreational opportunities, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving air and water quality.

Continued monitoring of our region's most vulnerable species through the Targeted Monitoring Program. Monitoring efforts track species trends and allow DPR to modify management actions as needed to ensure long-term species viability and sustainability.

## TRAILS PROGRAM

Increased the trail inventory to a total of 393 miles of trails managed in the County Trails Program. Expanding the trail inventory provides additional opportunities for residents and visitors to connect with nature, which further supports DPR's conservation initiatives.

Completed the Resource Management Plan Update and Public Access Plan for the Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch Preserve. This multi-year planning effort and environmental analysis will allow DPR to expand access at the Preserve in an environmentally sustainable manner that ensures there will not be impacts to onsite natural resources.

## RESTORATION WORK

Continued implementation of a 90-acre restoration plan to eradicate invasive plants in Kumeyaay Valley County Park as part of a \$3.8 million San Diego River Conservancy Grant; restoration work is anticipated to be completed in Fiscal Year 2026–27. This project will support fire suppression activities through vegetation management activities in Lakeside.

Initiated implementation of a habitat restoration plan to eradicate invasive plants in the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park as part of a \$2.35 million grant from the U.S. Navy. This project enhances habitat for native species and improves hydrology by removing invasive plants that have invaded riparian areas and altered the natural hydrology.



*Coastal California Gnatcatcher*



*Oakoasis sunset hike*



*View of Tijuana River Valley*

# OPERATIONS

The Operations Division is committed to delivering safe, clean, inclusive, and sustainable parks that serve as welcoming community hubs. Through high-quality maintenance, proactive safety practices, environmental stewardship, accessible design, and modernized systems, the Division supports long-term resilience and operational efficiency. By fostering strong partnerships, expanding outreach, reducing barriers to access, and encouraging meaningful public engagement, Operations helps ensure parks reflect community pride, promote belonging, and enhance quality of life for all residents.

## SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

### Summer Movies in the Park

Hosted Summer Movies in the Park, the largest free outdoor movie community event in San Diego County, in partnership with the cities of Carlsbad, Poway, San Diego, Santee, and Vista. In 2025, there were 127 events across 95 locations with over 18,000 attendees.

### Pages in the Park

Hosted first Pages in the Park at Waterfront Park, a free, all-ages event in partnership with the San Diego County Library and Reading Rhythms San Diego. Designed to foster social connection and a love of reading and nature by blending books and music, creating an inviting atmosphere for those who might not typically attend outdoor activities. The event offered a unique venue for encouraging interaction among book lovers.

### Warrior Hike Challenge

Hosted two Warrior Hike Challenge events for the 10th Anniversary year with approximately 450 hikers for Memorial Day weekend and another 400 hikers for Veterans Day weekend. This is the largest turnout yet for the event, which averages about 225 hikers, reflecting its growing appeal.

### Hawktober

Hosted 42 programs for 6,385 participants during the month of October 2025 that celebrated the raptors that live and migrate through the San Diego region (namely hawks). The annual celebration highlights these majestic species at parks, campgrounds and wilderness preserves in north, east and south county.

### Hike-A-Thon

Partnered with *Live Well San Diego* and Nature Unplugged to host 335 participants or five Saturday ranger-led hikes during the 2025 October Hike-A-Thon.

### Green Friday

Hosted 15 volunteer beautification and tree-planting events, along with 3 workshops and hikes for Green Friday, encouraging San Diegans to swap shopping plans for outdoor experiences over Thanksgiving weekend. Partnered with San Diego County Library to place 16 story trails at parks across county.



*A packed Summer Movies event*



*Hikers show off Warrior Hike coins*



*Hikers atop Dictionary Hill*

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

### Nature Explorers

Conducted 68 field trips and connected 681 youth from the Lakeside and Spring Valley Teen Centers to visit open-space preserves and natural spaces to receive the mental and physical benefit from those experiences. The Lakeside and Spring Valley Teen Centers, through the Nature Explorers Program, DPR This grant funded program brought young adults to National, State, and County parks.

### Discovery Program

Brought 2,868 students from urban schools to regional parks for onsite environmental education and immersive nature-related activities through the Discovery Kit Program. The program was designed to educate about scientific phenomenon and history of the local environment.

### Travelling Miss T

Launched a multisubject, educational Math Map curriculum that pairs short lessons in geography, biology, history, and mathematics with nine of our County Parks. The new partnership, supported by the San Diego County Parks Society, is implemented by educator and social media influencer Travelling Miss T who produced 9 initial collaborative videos garnering nearly 18,000 views on social media.

## EQUITY PROGRAMMING

### First Time Camping Program

Facilitated 137 first time, no cost camping experiences at five DPR campgrounds through the First Time Camping Program. First time campers receive two nights of free camping that includes assistance from park rangers on how to set up a tent, build a campfire, and implement leave-no-trace principles, as well as outdoor safety tip instruction.

### Women in the Wild

Hosted 16 Women in the Wild events at 13 different county parks with over 300 participants. Women in the Wild programs are designed to teach outdoor skills in a fun, nurturing and non-competitive environment. Program experiences are educational and interactive and build confidence and a sense of community while fostering new appreciation for county parks, preserves and diverse recreational opportunities.

### Gramping - Kinship Camping

Hosted 67 participants at Dos Picos County Park for the 2025 Kinship Camping weekend, also called Gramping, in partnership with Health and Human Services Agency and the County Library. This two-day, one-night camping event is for grandparents and other related caregivers involved in raising a child.

## COMMUNITY CENTERS

Provided programs and services at DPR community centers and sports facilities to over 2,700 registered participants. Offered day camp programs during out of school periods through the summer, winter, and fall seasons. Provided full day supervision and activity facilitation for more than 600 youth day camp participants.



Discovery Program student field trip



School program at Los Penasquitos



Women in the Wild backpacking trip



Gramping tree planting project

# OPERATIONS

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

### SD Nights

The Safe Destination (SD) Nights program provides a valuable service for youth in traditionally underserved communities. The program targets participants ages 10-18 years old and provides a safe and positive environment for them to gather and growth in their neighborhood. In addition to providing participants enjoyable experiences, the program also expands the social capital of youth participants by introducing them to educational and career pathways through a variety of guest speakers and program activities that will broaden their opportunities as they grow into young adults.

Teens are engaged through presentations on relevant topics such as bullying prevention, college and career planning, gang prevention, drug and alcohol awareness, building positive relationships and civic engagement. We connect youth with law enforcement, providing teens with a positive experience with public safety officials.

SD Nights events include food, mentorship, and enrichment activities, they are designed to improve quality of life for youth participants.

- 25 locations (4 DPR locations and 21 partner locations)
- 340 events
- 12 outdoor trips
- 70 youth jobs
- Over 13,500 youth served
- Over 47,000 hours that youth will be off the street after-school and evenings

### Comprehensive Tree Program

Continued to support the County's Climate Action Plan by planting more trees to reduce greenhouse gases and lower temperatures. Expanded to include residential education and tree planting programs to preserve and grow our tree canopy, which will help lower temperatures and reduce greenhouse gases for County residents.

Planted 4,657 trees throughout the County. Used data from the California Healthy Places Index and CalEnviroScreen 4.0. to plant trees in communities in need of access to healthy tree canopies.



Oceanside SD Nights Staff



SD Nights & SV REC Club prep event



St. Augustine students plant trees at Stelzer



Families plant trees at Stelzer



Flinn Springs Arbor Day Event

The Development Division manages park projects from concept to completion, planning, designing, and constructing high-quality park and recreation facilities that serve communities across the region. The Division leads the delivery of new parks, recreation centers, and amenities—from skate and bike parks to archery and equestrian facilities—while also maintaining and improving existing park assets.

Through a collaborative approach, the team works closely with community members, partners, and stakeholders, meeting people where they are to ensure public needs are reflected in each project. All work is guided by a commitment to thoughtful design, regulatory compliance, and long-term sustainability, ensuring parks that are safe, inclusive, and built to serve generations to come.

## COMPLETED PROJECTS

### Sports, Fitness and Active Recreation

- 4S Ranch Sport Field Best MGMT Landscaping
- 4S Ranch Sport Field LED Lighting Upgrade
- Kumeyaay Valley County Park Archery Range
- Spring Valley County Park Fitness Stations Upgrade
- Waterfront Park – Active Recreation Improvements

### Parks, Gardens and Community Spaces

- Collier Community Garden
- Heritage Park Upper Garden Improvement
- Valley Center Park Improvements

### Accessibility (ADA) and Inclusive Improvements

- Guajome Regional Park ADA Cabin
- Guajome Regional Park Gate & Sidewalks
- San Diego Botanic Garden ADA Walkway

### New Parks & Major Park Development

- Four Gee Park
- Construction: Mira Mesa Epicentre, Village View Park
- Groundbreaking – Bonsall Community Park
- Open house kick-off: Butterfield County Park



Teens show their support at the Mira Mesa Epicentre Groundbreaking

### Trails, Staging Areas and Access Improvements

- Construction started on Mt. Woodson Staging Area
- Lakeside Staging Area
- Whitaker House Road Improvement – Phase 1

### Facilities, Buildings & Park Infrastructure

- Stelzer Ranger Station
- Borrego Springs Shadeway
- Sweetwater Parking Lot Repair
- Waterfront Info Booth, Security System Enhancement & Lawn Upgrade

### Park Amenities and Visitor Services

- Lonny Brewer Dog Park
- Sweetwater Summit Regional Park Campground Expansion

### Restoration and Maintenance Projects

- Smuggler's Gulch Dredging



Development Team at Bonsall Groundbreaking

# LOOKING AHEAD

County of San Diego Parks and Recreation works every day to preserve our significant natural resources and enhance the quality of life for visitors and residents in San Diego County by providing exceptional outdoor and recreation experiences for all to enjoy.

At County Parks, staff are committed to listening, learning, and planning with purpose. Every survey, every conversation, and every new idea helps shape parks that reflect the needs of the people who use them. From upgrading park amenities to new programs and safer, accessible spaces, we're building a County Parks where every resident can connect, play, and thrive.

In the years ahead, we'll deliver essential improvements like sports field upgrades, infrastructure repairs, and habitat restoration; while also bringing to life community-requested amenities, like new sports fields and courts, multi-use trails, community gardens, and programming for seniors and teens.

We are currently working to expand our Multiple Species Conservation Program by creating a new plan that will cover North County. This effort, anticipated for completion in 2026-2027, will increase preservation of the area's rich biodiversity while expanding recreation and streamlining development in less sensitive areas. We will continue working across jurisdictional boundaries to implement solutions to address longstanding pollution issues in the Tijuana River Valley.

In 2025-2026, we will be opening two new, major parks in the communities of Bonsall and Spring Valley, and a new, highly anticipated teen center in Mira Mesa that will be the future hub of our SD Nights teen program.

We are currently working on feasibility studies for future ball fields, off-highway vehicle areas, and intergenerational centers.

Each year, we continue to expand our regional footprint – acquiring more land to protect more habitats and species, and to serve a growing population.

We promote public engagement, partnerships and collaborative programs to provide safe, accessible, equitable and inclusive park and recreation facilities.

We are grateful to the staff, volunteers, partners, and local and small businesses that make possible our efforts to be the parks and recreation system that is the pride of San Diego County.



County of San Diego  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
5510 Overland Avenue, Ste. 270  
San Diego, Ca 92123

[SDPARKS.ORG](http://SDPARKS.ORG)