

Interviews of Community and Environment Leaders Conducted by the Environment Discovery Team San Diego Women's Foundation October to November, 2008

Summary Report, March 9, 2009

SUMMARY

The Environment Discovery Team, of the San Diego Women's Foundation (SDWF) Grants Committee, completed interviews to assist the SDWF in identifying a meaningful focus for environmental grants awarded in 2010. Interviewees were selected as a cross-section of community and environmental leaders in San Diego, and the interview questions were written to invite the greatest personal insights on current conditions, future directions and threats, and ways to focus local efforts. Team members met with 54 interviewees in October and November 2008, and documented answers to each question; and these were compiled and summarized in this report.

Community and environment leaders described San Diego as a "perfect place," with open spaces, year-round recreational activities, places for children to play outdoors, sunshine, clean air, clean water, wildfire, natural beauty, and vistas. The greatest threats to quality of life and sustainability were identified as land use and energy, current environmental conditions, urbanization and sprawl, lack of mass transit, water supplies, climate change, and lack of political leadership. Recent positive trends included greater public awareness, "green" businesses, environmental groups, funding levels, and emphasis on structures to reduce wildfire risks.

Community and environment leaders were asked to identify factors that characterize local work on environmental issues, and mentioned such success factors as staying committed and sustaining efforts; collaborating with non-environmental groups and between development and environmental interests; and cooperating among "green technology" groups, coastal and ocean organizations, and children's interests. Interviewees identified detracting factors as starting new entities, overlap in missions, lack of leadership, too few leaders and trained professionals, desire for power, conflicts among agencies, and lack of citizen activism at the community-wide level. When asked what focused local effort would improve quality of life and sustainability, interviewees mostly cited environmental education, land acquisition, restoration, renewable energy technologies, water conservation, leadership, and protection of canyons and watersheds.

Further information about the SDWF is available at www.sdwomensfoundation.org; about the Environment Discovery Team from Leigh Hartman, Chair, leighr@cox.net; and about the interview results from Anne S. Fege, Ph.D., afege@sdnhm.org.

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INTRODUCTION

The Environment Discovery Team (Team) is an advance planning team of the San Diego Women’s Foundation (SDWF) Grants Committee, chartered to learn more about the environmental issues, threats, and opportunities in San Diego. The team’s goal is to understand local environmental realities in order to identify a meaningful focus for grants awarded in 2010 in the environmental field. Team members interviewed 54 environmental and community members, and their answers to twelve questions are compiled in this report. In addition, these interviews offer a “snapshot” of environmental issues and leadership, that will be shared with colleagues in the environmental community.

Started in 2000, the SDWF has already granted \$1.5 million in the San Diego region and has built an endowment of \$1.3 million. The SDWF rotates grant-making through six broad areas, and in 2009-2010 will be granting about \$200,000 to support local environmental programs. Once the focus is defined and the grant guidelines written, local non-profit organizations will be invited to submit proposals in fall of 2009. The SDWF Grants Committee will review the proposals, conduct site visits for highest-ranked proposals, and identify final candidates. The entire SDWF membership chooses which projects to fund, from this final list. These projects are then awarded in June 2010 and tracked throughout the grant duration, and the funded organizations are designated as “community partners” to maintain relationships with the SDWF.

METHODS

The interviewees were selected to represent a cross-section of community and environmental leaders in San Diego. The initial list was drawn up by team members, including environmental professionals that are colleagues and acquaintances of team member Anne Fege and suggestions by Team members at the September 24, 2008 meeting. The list was shortened to 60 interviewees representing a broad range of geographic interests, subject areas, and affiliations. Team members were able to schedule and meet with 54 interviewees.

Table 1 summarizes the affiliations of interviewees.

| Table 1. Affiliation of Interviewees | Number |
|--|---------------|
| Elected official | 4 |
| Agency, land management mission | 6 |
| Agency, regulatory mission | 3 |
| Non-profit organization, membership-based | 8 |
| Non-profit organization, mostly grant-funded | 19 |
| Educational organization | 4 |
| Business | 7 |
| Other, including retired | 3 |
| Total interviewees | 54 |

The questions were written to get a sense of current environmental issues, in open-ended format to invite the greatest personal insights from interviewees. Twelve questions were written in four areas: introductions and personal insights, “how are we doing,” “where are we going and why?” “how do we go there?” and “where can we learn more?” Questions were reviewed and refined by a research social scientist, and are provided in Appendix A.

Most interviews were conducted in person by Team members, and lasted about 45 minutes. All were assured that their cooperation was not related to any future funding, and all comments remain anonymous as they were tabulated. Interviewers wrote up their notes, and all were transferred into an Excel spreadsheet. Anne Fege reviewed the unattributed answers to each question and provided the content analysis that is summarized in this report. Direct quotes are provided in each section. Initial impressions were shared with the Team on December 10, 2008 and the Team’s discussion is summarized in Appendix B. The draft report was discussed at the January 14 meeting of the Team, and revised after Team members provide comments.

RESULTS

Motivations for environmental work.

When asked, “What motivates you to work or volunteer in the environmental field in San Diego?” most interviewers drew on stories about why they chose their profession, why they volunteered, or what values they currently follow. The predominance of answers (15 of 36) were about childhood experiences that built a connection and an appreciation for what we now refer to as “the environment.”

The following are some of the most interesting accounts in response to the question, “**What motivates you to work or volunteer in the environmental field in San Diego?**”

There are literally hundreds of individuals in this community that work countless hours on a wide variety of environmental issues and policies. For me, I do it because I believe our society and generation has pushed the globe to a tipping point of sustainability of quality

human life. Can we pull it back? No one knows. But we have a duty and moral responsibility to try.

For me, it's the RIGHT thing to do. We are all environmentalists.

Deep sense of responsibility for participating in my community, and an understanding that the health of our human community is dependent upon the health of our ecosystem.

Far more than we realize. What else is there, to keep us in San Diego? I personally would not live here, if I could not hike year 'round, go to the ocean and mountains and desert, fish, go to Baja California, and more. They outweigh the political climate, the freeways, the ATM-mentality that are all drawbacks to the quality of life here.

Every time I look at the majestic East County landscape, I feel inspired. I love Mount Laguna and the beautiful Cuyamacas. I love driving along the 94. East County is home to many picture-perfect areas.

Mom was an artist, gardener, and nature lover. Dad was a scientist and professor, a Boy Scout leader, a hiker and a camper.

I grew up mostly outside, in a then-rural San Diego coastal city. My grandpa was an avid gardener, composting, planting during the right moon, carefully observing nature.

I was introduced to birdwatching by family friend, growing up in the East. Learned the intrinsic value of nature in Peace Corps assignment. I believe that everything comes from nature, and we need to protect our capital.

As a child, I was smitten by zoos, watched "zoo parade" TV program on Sunday afternoons and nature-wildlife Disney programs. I realize that there has to be a connection and concern for nature and habitat, or we may someday be content with the "virtual" or "zoo" Bengal tiger instead of the wild.

Lifelong access to and familiarity with the outdoors: swimming in lakes, ocean, hiking, skating, sledding, exploring rivers and wetlands as a child. This built my desire to make sure those areas and species survive. Have you ever picked wild strawberries in the woods, and looked up to see a white-tailed deer looking straight at you?

I grew up in [southern California place]. I used to play and hang out in the mountains and foothills. It is a classic story of a pristine area developed without thought for preservation. My experiences led me to focus on biodiversity, the preservation of plants and animals in perpetuity, and the environment they depend upon.

Contributions of the environment to San Diego's quality of life

Interviewees were asked about the importance of natural environments to quality of life, and the most numerous responses are summarized in Table 2. Interviewees also described San Diego as a "perfect place," place for respite and recharge, open spaces, year-round outdoor activities, places for children to play outdoors, sunshine, clean air, clean water, wildfire, natural beauty, and vistas.

Outdoor activities included bicycling, boating, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, kayaking, looking at views, and surfing. They listed cultural, intellectual, physical, psychological, and spiritual values that contribute to well-being. Interviewees specifically mentioned that they take nature for granted, and that there are intrinsic values of nature.

| Table 2. Responses to question, "How does San Diego County's natural environment contribute to San Diego's quality of life?" | Number of Comments |
|---|---------------------------|
| Variety of environments: beaches, mountains, desert, | 14 |
| Biodiversity, habitats for rare and endemic species | 9 |
| Mild climate and weather | 9 |
| Ocean, coast, and beaches | 9 |
| Places for outdoor activities, year-round | 9 |
| Natural environments essential | 5 |
| Clean air | 5 |
| Geology, topography | 4 |

These are some of the most interesting responses to the question, "**How does San Diego County's natural environment contribute to San Diego's quality of life?**"

Much more than most realize; we take this quality of life for granted. San Diego is a "perfect" place, with oceans, foothills, mountains, desert. We have vegetation-covered hills, nature around our concrete, clean air and water. Businesses depend on clean beaches, places for outdoor activities.

San Diego's weather is the key to its quality of life. The San Diego area is blessed with good ventilation, with sea breezes and open areas which allow the breezes to flow and not be trapped. Our blue skies and beautiful beaches are definitely an attraction. Air pollution could, however, become a problem as there are no controls on pollutants.

Our open spaces, our canyons, are like our lungs. Everywhere I go, when I ask people what makes San Diego special, they say things like "the light", "the canyons", "the beach" and "the weather". And the diversity. Every direction you go, the environment changes.

San Diego provides active and passive outdoor experiences for everyone, in every type of habitat, from deserts, to mountains, to ocean. Passively watching a sunset over the mountains or desert or over the ocean can lessen stress and provide a quiet interval in which to recharge, sit quietly and think – a necessary respite for today's busyness. And of course, for swimmers, boaters, hikers, hunters, fisherfolk, etc., it's a wonderland.

It is particularly important for young people to be able to play outside safely, to ride their bikes through fields and walk in canyons, without being exposed to toxic elements.

Nature has an intrinsic value and it doesn't need us. Its existence alone can contribute to our lives with spiritual, intellectual and cultural value if you know it's there. San Diegans love

the great outdoors. That's why many people choose to live here. Outdoor activities like hiking, biking and horse riding are great for our physical and mental well-being. Few areas have the wide array of activities offered in San Diego County.

Natural habitats add value to developments (hiking trails, views that are featured in marketing ads). Naysayers need to look at the quality of life, and measure economic value through economic values.

It is so easy to enjoy, beauty is so readily available—from a walk on the beach, by the lakes, in the desert, on a trail....we have it all. But let's not forget that this is our greater asset: it attracts tourism and business. Do we need to say more?

This region's natural environment defines our quality of life. In so many ways we take for granted the open vistas, climate and topographical diversity, benign climate. Ironically, the natural beauty and relative ease of living make it somewhat harder to build consensus around threats and solutions.

Working together to improve the environment

Interviewees were asked, "Remember a time when people came together and created the capacity to inspire improvement or actually impact the environment and ecology of the region. Tell us the story. Now tell us, why did you pick THAT story? What was so special about that experience?" Twenty-four of the stories are shared in Appendix C, for these efforts or organizations.

- 32nd St Canyon
- Canyons Coalition
- Conservation Resources Network
- Earth Fair
- Mission Bay
- Multiple Species Conservation Program
- OutdoorExplore!
- Pampas grass
- Quail Botanical "Garden of Lights"
- Quarry Falls
- Regional energy strategy
- Rose Canyon
- Rural Heritage and Watershed Initiative
- San Diego Bay Council
- San Diego Fire Recovery Network
- San Diego Partners for Biodiversity
- San Diego Tracking Team
- SD Humane Society
- Sorrento Valley Road
- Swan Canyon
- *Temporary Paradise?*
- Tijuana Estuary Preserve
- Torrey Pines Road
- Wildcoast

Threats to quality of life and sustainability

Among the comments from 54 interviewees, 82 focused on land use and energy, 62 on current environmental conditions, and 48 on political and public support. Urbanization and sprawl, lack of mass transit, water supplies, climate change, and lack of political leadership were mentioned by 10 or more of the interviewees, as summarized in Table 3.

| Table 3: Answers to question, “What do you see as the biggest threats to our quality of life and sustainability in San Diego?” | Number of comments |
|---|---------------------------|
| Land use and energy | |
| Urbanization, sprawl, development, uncontrolled growth | 22 |
| Lack of urban planning, lack of vision for growth | 7 |
| Lack of open space | 6 |
| Lack of mass transit | 10 |
| Traffic, congestion | 3 |
| Lifestyles with high energy demands, large homes, fuel-inefficient vehicles, etc. | 3 |
| Increasing population | 7 |
| Energy supplies, use, sustainability, conservation | 8 |
| Lack of renewable energy, conservation | 6 |
| Sub-total | 72 |
| Environmental conditions | |
| Water supplies | 23 |
| Water quality | 7 |
| Climate change, global warming | 16 |
| Air quality | 5 |
| Habitat degradation, fragmentation, and loss of biodiversity | 7 |
| Beaches, coast, ocean, marine life | 4 |
| Sub-total | 62 |
| Political and public support | |
| Lack of political leadership | 13 |
| Lack of vision, short-term decisions | 5 |
| Regulatory indifference, inattention | 5 |
| Funding for parks, recreation, public lands | 5 |
| People not visiting nature, children staying inside | 5 |
| Lack of public education and knowledge | 5 |
| Lack of public support and participation | 4 |
| Unwillingness to put nature before people | 6 |
| Sub-total | 48 |

The following are selected quotes in response to the question, “**What do you see as the biggest threats to our quality of life in San Diego?**”

People don't know the value of our environment. We're “penny wise and pound foolish,” not investing in the future. We have polarized and extreme views of nature—preservation, and destruction—and that is counter-productive. Humans have always interacted with nature, and we will continue to use and enjoy nature.

There is great hope in working with the next generation. For example, today's recycling successes go back to school children recycling 20 years ago. Now the challenge is, How do children now learn about nature? What does it mean to them, in their daily lives? How can they experience nature with all of their senses, so they learn quicker and retain it longer?

Access to wild places for young people. As our neighborhoods become more urbanized, there are fewer opportunities to explore open spaces, rivers, meadows, etc. in the course of each day's activities. These days, it is incumbent on our communities to build that into the infrastructure – or most often, leave it there.

Public health is a big concern. Asthma -- 20 - 30 % of children in some areas of San Diego have asthma; the national average is 7 to 10 %. Lead poisoning -- not until this year did the local government say lead needs to be remediated in rental properties. There's no remediation requirement for home sales. Diesel emissions -- There are 250 cancers/million population within a mile of the 10th Avenue Terminal due to diesel emissions.

Traffic impacts all of us. It robs San Diegans of time spent with family. It's time-consuming, noisy, loud, polluting and inconvenient.

Sprawl. We have built everything around automobile travel. This life pattern was designed by another (past) generation that thought it would give a better life, and didn't see the unintended consequences. Now we need to decide what parts succeeded and what failed, and what we will keep. How can we get the schools of Poway with the walkability of Hillcrest? Many people don't benefit from sprawl, including youth, aged, those with disabilities.

Overdevelopment and lots of false beliefs in "smart growth", "transit-centered development", etc. People need to see and understand clearly the effects of continued growth - we have plans but we don't adhere to them, we tell people we're creating a "City of Villages" and "walkable communities" but the communities that are truly walkable already exist (such as Ocean Beach) and the new developments only pay lip service. For example, they say Mission Valley is walkable but in fact you have to cross eight lanes of traffic and few people walk.

We have a shortage of water and a failure to recognize ecological limitations of water. We are importing tremendous quantities. We are trying to create a non-desert landscape out of desert. That is non-sustainable.

These are selected quotes in response to the question, **“What do you see as the biggest threats to our sustainability in San Diego?”**

We are in danger of losing the “natural soul” of San Diego

Political climate insulates us from core environmental challenges (energy, climate change, water availability), masking the true threat these challenges pose. Public needs to be educated that our current growth is unsustainable, and that our personal choices (“carbon footprint”) are also unsustainable.

Lack of vision and leadership regarding establishing priorities that will preserve what is left of our natural and cultural heritage for future generations.

Public policy and public awareness of the environmental crises we face. We (the environmental action groups) have to stop being so combative/confrontational with business/developers and city planners and work together to create a brighter environmental future for our region.

Anything that is good for the natural environment is good for humans. Encroachment into and disturbance of natural habitat and natural processes is the threat. That can mean anything from residential development, to off road use, trails, etc. Our expected standard of living (consumption) is too high. Our consumption of natural resources--In San Diego, using up the land, in renovations or demolishments.

Overpopulation, unwillingness of local government to control growth, loss of resources through habitat destruction. Underfunding of schools means less well-educated citizens who are less knowledgeable about science and natural history, the need for habitat conservation, the role of the citizen in the wider world.

“Tragedy of the Commons” and lack of widespread conservation of energy and resources, A lifestyle with high energy demands, including gas and diesel. Dependence on fuel-inefficient vehicles and homes. Dependence on products and produce from distant locations, which demand maximum fuel consumption, use of preservatives, and higher prices. Knee-jerk solutions to the energy crisis, such as wind farms and solar collectors distributed across the very natural habitats that we’re trying to save for future generations without adequate consideration to the impacts, alternatives, and possible mitigation, of these solutions.

Water, how we use it and think about it. Use water more in keeping with Mediterranean and desert environments (not as if we get 30-40" precipitation a year). Low-water landscapes can be as attractive as other garden types. Water also has a high energy cost for transport or desalinization, and there are opportunities to reduce waste and runoff. And conservation is always vulnerable to a "higher good" (use of the land), but once it's gone, you don't get nature back.

“Good” and “bad” trends

Among the comments from 54 interviewees, five “good” trends and four “bad” trends were identified by five or more, as summarized in Table 4. “Good” trends focus on greater public awareness, “green” businesses, environmental groups, local funding levels, and emphasis on structures to reduce wildfire risks. “Bad” trends focus on loss of open space and habitats, lack of leadership, insufficient funding, and overemphasis on brush management.

In addition to those trends, many trends were mentioned by only one or two interviewees. These “good” trends included cleaner beaches, improved air quality, land acquisition and conservation of open space, more focus on local food, water-thrifty gardens, ban on plastic bags in the City of Encinitas, environmental education including children and families, restoration projects, and local science institutions. The “bad” trends included the Border fence, overfishing, inadequate water conservation, pharmaceutical wastes in water supplies, invasive species, inadvertent impacts of “green” energy technologies, congestion, expansion of I-5 to 22 lanes at the “merge,” lack of contact with nature, too much attention to “voices of negativity,” lack of collaboration, and complacency.

| Table 4. Environmental trends in San Diego | Number of comments |
|--|---------------------------|
| What "good" trends or changes have you observed in the local environmental scene in recent years? | |
| Public more aware, especially of climate change impacts | 10 |
| Focus on "green" businesses, including building, technologies and energies | 7 |
| More environmental groups | 6 |
| More local funding, including philanthropy and TransNet | 5 |
| Revised fire building codes and emphasis on retrofits to reduce wildfire property risks | 5 |
| What "bad" trends or changes have you observed in the local environmental scene in recent years? | Number of comments |
| Loss of open space, habitats, and species | 10 |
| Lack of leadership and "voice" for the environment | 10 |
| Insufficient funding and capacity for environmental groups | 9 |
| Emphasis on and poor quality of brush management | 5 |

The following are some of the most interesting responses to the question, **“What "good" and “bad” trends or changes have you observed in the local environmental scene in recent years?”**

Good trend: more of the population becoming aware of global warming. Bad trend: continued promotion of growth and living beyond our ecosystem's means to support us.

Good trend: “green” has moved to Main Street, and financial incentives to “go green” have resulted in better buildings/residences. Bad trend: taking advantage of the consumer's ignorance and selling "green" when it's not really authentic green.

On a local level, environmental education is being provided by public and private agencies that teaches children – and by extension – the family why conserving, protecting and restoring habitats is important to everyone’s quality of life. Those programs that involve students, teachers, and families are the most successful at sustaining both the programs themselves and what they intend to conserve.

I’m more optimistic than a few years back. The biggest change has been the degree of awareness among young people, who are starting to “get it” when it comes to sustainability. Kids in elementary school are learning about sustainability. Doing what’s best and minimizing use of resources is now in the forefront. There’s more public awareness.

Bad: Societal separation of children from their natural environment, by their parents, school districts, and an intensified dependence on such indoor activities as computer use.

Bad: Elected leaders don't identify themselves as environmentalists, not much political power for environmental issues. Everyone votes "environmental" a few times, but only a few make no apologies.

I have seen an awareness that we are at a critical point of necessary change in our environmental and sustainability policies and that many of the great minds of the world live right here in San Diego and are actively working on strategies. Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the University of California turn out many new thinkers and doers.

People are responding to the awareness of climate change and the impacts. We still give too much attention to the "voices of negativity," which I define as the vocal minority that is against everything that happens or might happen. But beyond them a lot of people are trying to do really good work.

More environmental groups have more specialized missions. There seem to be more groups that are really localized, rather than part of a larger national group. This is good because local groups can become part of the fabric of the community with local knowledge and expertise.

The organizations involved in environmental advocacy tend to operate in silos. There are the water environmentalists; the environmental policy and land-use folks; and the land trusts and conservancies.

There was not a mature environmental community in San Diego ten years ago. It is starting to change but ever so slowly. If you look at the percent of philanthropic funds given to environmental causes, it is 8% nationally, 6% in California, and 2% in San Diego, with about half of that donated to the Zoological Society.

Working together on environmental issues

Interviewees were asked, "How are different interests working or not working together on local environmental improvements? Cooperation, collaboration, competition, conflict?" The answers ranged widely—as if interviewees have differing perceptions of the same issues or trends. Some cited networks or coalitions they participated in or have observed. Five interviewees mentioned formal and informal cooperation, and four cited cooperation with and among government agencies. Three said they observed little cooperation and cooperation, and four cited lack of resources and funds. Regarding cooperation among groups, each of these groups was mentioned by three or four interviewees: "green technology" groups, coastal and ocean organizations, and children's interests.

Interviewees were asked, "**How are different interests working or not working together on local environmental improvements?**" Some mentioned success factors that included staying committed and sustaining efforts, collaborating with non-environmental groups, and increased cooperation between development and environmental interests. Selected specific comments were:

Conservation is a long, sustained and constant effort. Victories don't happen overnight. I can tell you that successful projects have something in common: people stay committed and are patient in the face of setbacks.

Canyonlands Inc. is one example of working together. People are coming together over that, realizing that our canyonlands are our version of Central Park. We need to take advantage of

the bits of nature in our neighborhoods.... Local schools participate in kids in canyons programs; California Native Plant Society has presence in canyons; Coastkeeper does watershed monitoring with monthly water samples; Aquatic Adventures has programs.

I've seen a lot of people coming together on that particular concern (why we're seeing more content in a sterile, technology-based environment). Even REI brought together local environmental groups and leaders to discuss this. I do see people coming together, especially in San Diego (it's a pretty small city) those of us involved in the environment know each other and work together. I can't think of any instances of non-cooperation. When it comes to the welfare of kids, people want to come together and share.

Environmentalists are dealing with the regulators and building industry. At least they are talking. We are all getting much more sophisticated about planning for land use.

The MSCP was a collaboration of many agencies. It brought together many agencies and has given us a better preserve design--by this I mean preserves throughout the area. Mission Trails is an example of this. There are attempts at connectivity between different preserved areas. This is a good cooperative approach.

What I have noticed is that water people work fairly well together. We do cooperate a lot but we are also aware of each organization's core competencies as well as their Achilles' tendons. Although we are in competition for dollars, water people work very well together. One thing that makes a big difference in our work together is the "Bay Council," with monthly round tables with many stakeholders. We partner for programs and join for litigation.

There's a need to bring social change to environmental issues, to get much more than the current level of cooperation. The "first ring" consists of programs such as parks, environmental education, etc. Generally limited by budgets, competitiveness with other programs, proprietary ideas, less sharing and connectedness. The "second ring" consists of volunteers. Generally limited by organizing, training, and unstated ambivalence of paid staff toward volunteers. The "third ring" builds social and political constituency, and is yet to be developed. The focus is on the family, on neighborhoods, on community. A new structure and paradigm is needed to set up web connections for arranging local "nature play-dates" among families (share expertise, sense of security), doesn't have to wait for funding, could spread like Neighborhood Watch.

Some interviewees mentioned detracting factors that included starting new entities, overlap in missions, lack of leadership, too few leaders and trained professionals, desire for power, conflicts among agencies, and lack of citizen activism at the community-wide level. Selected specific comments were:

Mostly lack of cooperation among environmental groups. Most have specific missions and issues, and are place-based (more local). There is constant competition for \$ in priorities and grants, rather than teamwork and trust. A lot of power—wanting to be in charge. Most have narrow missions and geographical base. Even if groups have common goals, they are so competitive in seeking funds, establishing power, being “in charge.”

Local environmental and community groups have too few "leaders" and trained professionals. Too many organizations with one strong leader or staffperson, and a weak

board. Too many sit, and let others do the work. In general, groups limited by short resources, then fight for "small bits," and don't trust each other.

In general, the "water people" tend to keep to themselves and their attorneys. The environmental justice people have to focus on their communities. The Conservancy people have their own pieces of land they each want to get grants for. The reality is that most groups are too small to carry the additional overhead of participating in a bigger regional effort unless they clearly see something big at stake - either \$ or power.

Some cooperation but mostly competition for funds and attention, a sense of turf and a lot of overlap. For example, a number of groups are now focused on clean/alternative energy.

In this county we have various organizations interested in specific areas. Many separate organizations exist which are funded from different sources. In some of these groups, people are focused on their own local area and not the area next door. Often, it is not a coordinated effort or approach to what they are doing. People keep on starting new entities—no one seems to know what is out there.

I like to believe that a "rising tide raises all boats," but there's always some competition for money, and we put cooperation aside to reach our missions. Communication is the starting point for cooperation and cooperation.

Collaboration does not happen as much as would be desirable because there are not enough \$\$s and volunteers are stretched too thin. Groups need to pick their battles very carefully and not try to do too much. Need to be very outcome-oriented and don't get distracted.

These networks or groups were mentioned in the role of "coordinating" issues and/or networking:

- Bay Council
- California Invasive Plant Council
- Canyonlands and Canyon "Friends" groups
- Citizens for Responsible Wildfire Risk Reduction
- Coastkeeper and Surfrider
- Community Forestry Advisory Board
- Community planning groups
- Conservation Resources Network
- Desert Managers group
- Environmental Health Coalition
- I Love a Clean San Diego
- Military bases cooperating on land acquisition
- Mountain Managers group
- SANDAG Energy Program
- SANDAG Environmental Working Group
- San Diego Nature Education Network
- San Diego Regional Sustainability Partnership
- Southern California Coastal Water Research Project.
- Standard Urban Storm Water Mitigation Plan
- The San Diego Foundation, Environment Working Group

- University of California at San Diego, Environmental Sustainability group
- University of San Diego School of Law, Energy Policy Initiatives Center
- Wetlands Recovery Project

Focused local effort to contribute to sustainability or quality of life.

Interviewees identified many topics as worthy of a focused effort in San Diego. The most frequently mentioned issues are listed in Table 5. Other areas were mentioned: hiking trails, native plants, local gardens, stormwater runoff, planting trees, Border water quality, and coast and beach quality.

| Table 5. Responses to question, "One or two local (San Diego County) topics/areas/issues where a focused local effort could have a significant impact on sustainability or quality of life?" | Number of Comments |
|---|---------------------------|
| Environmental education, children getting out into nature, involving children in projects | 9 |
| Land acquisition, escrow funds, management, and monitoring | 9 |
| Restoration, including native plants, wetlands, weed abatement | 8 |
| Renewable and alternative energy technologies | 6 |
| Water conservation | 6 |
| Marketing and outreach, visibility, cohesive messages | 5 |
| Local canyons | 4 |
| Foster improved and more efficient leaders | 3 |
| Public transportation | 3 |
| Watershed and water quality improvement | 3 |

The following were among the responses to the question, **“One or two local (San Diego County) topics/areas/issues where a focused local effort could have a significant impact on sustainability or quality of life?”**

The whole connectivity of neighborhoods, community and open space. These lands should be linked and used as ways of going to and from home to school, work and the store. The outdoors could be part of your life -- a 20-minute walk.

More focus on environmental education, "wander and discover," get outdoors. Kids are getting ripped off without nature experiences; they are unimpressed by nature and their environmental challenges will be huge.

Household investments in sustainability, such as cisterns to capture winter storms and then use water to irrigate later in year. Can only change best management practices by regulation (such as banning driveway car washing,) rather than just education. Maybe "block captains" for water quality and other values.

Cohesive messages about climate change. Greater role/responsibilities of local elected officials and of businesses in improving the environment. We have to get people together;

that takes leadership and a change in how we do things. Too many working groups and meetings, too few cooperative projects and accomplishments.

Technologies for making changes (and meet 2020 greenhouse gas emission reductions) in next 10 years already exist; need to make evidence-based case for SD to make changes. Don't need another report or more research. Need to reach people w/ their interests (i.e., what are the "levers" for water conservation?).

Advocacy and direct conservation are doing pretty well (we have a committed group of advocate organizations that are acting as watchdogs); we need more people out in nature, which means we need more support and marketing exposure for nature-based recreation and informal education opportunities. (KPBS "get outside" calendar, for example, or centralized website with listings of all nature-based recreation and education opportunities). Environmental organizations are too white, upper middle class, and aging. We need to embrace diversity and bring young people into our organizations.

Need leadership in San Diego—who can reach and move leaders of other sectors in San Diego?

Invest in developing more environmental leaders. There are people with passion, smart, well-educated, and don't know how to apply these. People are not writing checks because there are not compelling cases for change (either the need, or the organization/solution to address need).

Focus for San Diego Women's Foundation grant-making

Many of the topics, identified by interviewees in response to this question, were the same as those for the previous question. Interviewees offered a number of interesting "pieces of advice" about what types of programs to fund, with the following suggestions in response to the question, **"For SDWF, what would you recommend that we focus on for maximum environmental impact, given that we have about \$200,000 to grant to a small number of non-profit organizations?"**

New ideas.

- Give grants to people rather than programs, like McArthur Foundation.
- Require multiple options for leveraging our funding for growth and sustainability.
- Focus on projects that can reach large groups of people, adults and children and youth
- Projects that use communication networks like the Internet and iPhones to link people to causes.
- Fund the addition of paid staff, even part-time, to enable organizations to expand their work.
- Support political feedback from the public to the various agencies responsible for environmental quality.
- Fund programs that implement one or more initiatives at The San Diego Foundation, such as Climate Change.

- Collaborate with other environmental grant-making organizations to create an on-going fund for an issue.
- Raise matching funds for the SDWF environmental grants, before they are announced.

Attributes of successful projects.

- Successful results and sustainability most often occur when grant seekers design programs/projects/outreach that involve students, teachers, volunteers, and others on hands-on projects for which they are also receive information/formal environmental education and/or training.
- When you have to decide among programs, always support something that has symbolic power, with cultural benefits that go beyond the program itself.
- Collaboration with others, freely sharing materials and strategies, involving volunteers and/or students and teachers or others with projects on the land, most often result in the ability to sustain a program after its inception.
- Pick a small project and showcase it.
- Make your grants large enough to make a significant impact (this could be different amounts for different organizations). Don't be afraid to fund infrastructure/capacity/staff (vs. only programs).
- I think that "challenge grants" which match what an organization can raise can be highly effective.
- I feel strongly that it's best to pick three or four and give them bigger pieces of the pie, rather than trying to feed 10 mouths.
- The best way to have impact is to continue to feed programs that educate people and link them to some action.

What projects not to fund.

- There are lots of groups working on energy already and they have money; it will not make such a big difference. Land use groups do not work well together, so you won't get much collaboration from your funds.
- We need to build visibility; don't focus on non-profit organizations (NPOs) that are already successful and well-funded. Don't focus on issue areas already being addressed by other funding organizations. Find NPOs that have great programs that just need a leg up, fund capacity-building.
- There are certainly a number of usual things that I would NOT like to see you do - such as fund groups that already really do have a sustainable base of funding. I would like to you see you make strategic grants to some of the smaller groups that have some sustainability but need more.

San Diego Women's Foundation grant-making process.

- Complimented SDWF on "evidence-based grant-making." Cultivate leadership.
- A thorough study/analysis like this demonstrates that the organization cares enough about the issue to write a well-founded plan, with realistic expectations and solutions that are implemented.

Other suggestions and comments

Additional contacts (for interviews), websites, books, and other resources were also provided. Interestingly, seven interviewees mentioned local author Richard Louv's book, *Last Child in the Woods*, and the national movement, Children's Nature Network.

In closing, some of the interviewees provided these additional comments:

Make environmentalism stylish - right now it's easy to marginalize environmentalists because they're seen as a stereotype, "losers."

Public outreach is key because we are all environmentalists. A lot of groups have the passion and the knowledge, but not the ability to enroll people that could make the model sustainable.

Emphasize telling the truth about the impact of development on the San Diego environment and the future health of the region.

We are so wasteful-we throw everything away we used to darn socks!

There are dedicated people behind each of these projects, many are volunteers. I'd say that partnering with the people behind these projects is the very best part of the experience.

"In the end we will conserve only what we love. We love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught." Attributed to Baba Dioum, Senegalese environmentalist, 1997 speech.

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APPENDIX A. Environmental Discovery Team interview questions

Introduction and personal insights

1. What motivates you to work or volunteer in the environmental field in San Diego?
2. How does San Diego County's natural environment contribute to San Diego's quality of life?
3. Remember a time when people came together and created the capacity to inspire improvement or actually impact the environment and ecology of the region. Tell us the story. Now tell us, why did you pick THAT story? What was special about that experience?

Where are we going and why?

4. What do you see as the biggest threats to our quality of life in San Diego?
5. What do you see as the biggest threats to local sustainability? (sustainability = meeting present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs)
6. What trends or changes, good or bad, have you observed in the local environmental scene in recent years?

How do we go there?

7. How are different interests working or not working together on local environmental improvements? Cooperation, collaboration, competition, conflict?
8. One or two local (San Diego County) topics/areas/issues where a focused local effort could have a significant impact on sustainability or quality of life?
9. For SDWF, what would you recommend that we focus on for maximum environmental impact, given that we have ~\$200,000 to grant to a small number of non-profit organizations?

How can we learn more?

10. Who is doing outstanding work locally? Who else should we be talking to (wise thinkers, practical leaders)?
11. What books, web sites, research reports, or other sources will help give us the big picture we need?
12. Other suggestions or comments?

APPENDIX B. Environment Discovery Team meeting notes

On December 10, 2008, the Environment Discovery Team summarized their learnings about San Diego's environmental issues, drawing on the interviews of 54 local environment and community leaders, and their own perspectives.

Overall impressions, from team members and community members they interviewed:

Talked with fascinating people; each had their interests and favored projects, dedicating their lives to the environment of San Diego. Sense of urgency and also "the long view." Environmental groups have strong ownership over their issues, interests, and geography. Lack of leadership. Lack of collaboration. Politics within environmental issues.

San Diegans have been poor stewards of the environment over the decades. Lack of overall plan for the county of San Diego. San Diego is a very special place; we need to be better caretakers. More competition for nature as fewer places remain; future concerns about overcrowding.

We are disconnected from the environment in San Diego, and that makes it difficult to support it. Everyone is an environmentalist, because we depend on nature for our lives. Passion for the environment has many sources. Public seems to be more optimistic than experts. Need to enhance the general public consciousness about the environment. This is an opportunity for SDWF to raise consciousness about the environment.

Every person needs to be more personally aware of resource needs and impacts, and of government's role in the big issues (water quality, development, ocean fishing). Individual efforts support the public and global good. "It's unconscious;" mostly people are misinformed not malicious. Individuals need to let their voice be heard, i.e. insist that homeowners associations allow solar panels to be installed even if they aren't consistent with "aesthetics."

Educate the public. Start with children—otherwise it's "too little, too late." Educate politicians and leaders. Add regulation ("the stick") to education ("the carrot").

Local issues. Water will be major impact of climate change impacts in San Diego in opposite ways—diminishing freshwater and rising seawater. Global climate change has made us aware of how we have polluted the environment. San Diego is well-suited for solar, wind, wave energy.

Threats to San Diego's sustainability and quality of life

Water. Consumption increases and supplies decrease. Water sustains our gardens and homes. We don't consider recycled water as a resource.

Urban sprawl. Unplanned and uncontrolled growth. Concessions for developers, just "build and sell" for decades. Now scarcity of land and water resources. Landfill capacity, waste disposal.

Climate change. Air quality. Affects health of many people. Mass transit would greatly reduce fossil fuel consumption and air pollution. Transportation. Congestion. Design of neighborhoods don't favor mass transit.

Habitats disappearing. San Diego is losing its "natural soul." Public spaces and natural areas not managed well. Children don't learn about and appreciate nature. Natural places are disappearing,

for both wildlife and humans. Invasive plants and animals. Pollution of ocean and surf. Overfishing. Wildfires. Brush management.

Border fence. Illegal immigration effects on lands along the border. Energy. One big power company. Need alternative and distributive energy sources.

Excessive consumption. Our transportation and homes are inefficient. We don't darn socks or repair anything anymore. We're not used to making sacrifices. Our quality of life will be better, when we don't "want" so much anymore.

Population is increasing. Population is aging; more sensitive to temperature changes and increased demand for compact living.

Lack reliable funding sources. Infrastructure crumbling. Lack pricing and economic incentives for the environment. Smart education, for the actions that will change behavior and impacts. Education of businesses.

Too many want to "check the box," say they did something. It's always someone else's job, or the government's job. MSCP was a story of people working together; others mentioned that the MSCP is not working, inadequate management and monitoring, indifferent regulatory oversight.

"Good" trends

Green is "in." Composting green waste. Fire building codes to assess wildfire risks. Restoration projects. Lynn's public transit experiment.

Special events. Earth Day. Incubated many small groups and businesses. Bike to work day should be monthly or weekly, not annually.

Collaboration. Focused on goals. Ocean-focused environmental groups work well together. Neighborhoods working together. Friends' groups, planning associations. Cities working more together. Voters support funds for environmental improvements/issues (state level).

Outstanding academic institutions, Scripps Institute of Oceanography, UCSD, SDSU, USD.

"Bad" trends

Environmental groups and volunteers overwhelmed. Resources declining. Collaboration doesn't work when organizations are stretched too thin, when they focus on individual missions, when there are internal politics, when they compete with each other

Biodiversity is disappearing; we are losing species. Funds for management and maintenance of acquired lands. Border fence.

Governments are part of the problem. State throws its weight around. Focus on "immediate" fixes, not on sources of problems, planning, and policies.

Increase in emissions, higher volume of cars even if emissions/car are lower than 30 years ago.

More wildfires! Fire risk reduction practices, removing vegetation with few safety benefits.

APPENDIX C: Working together to improve the environment

Interviewees were asked, "Remember a time when people came together and created the capacity to inspire improvement or actually impact the environment and ecology of the region. Tell us the story. Now tell us, why did you pick THAT story? What was so special about that experience?" Twenty-four of these stories are shared in this Appendix C.

32nd St Canyon. Seven of the 10 acres were going to become a(n unneeded) school. Used "unrelenting advocacy" to continually say, "If you can do it this way, then why not that other way?" Created community, friendships, actually saved the canyon.

Canyons Coalition. About 3 years ago, many worked together on a "white paper" about the value of canyons in San Diego. They need to be connected to each other and to communities. They are essential parts of watersheds, and contribute greatly to air and water quality. Friends groups have been established and serve to energize citizens; two of the stars are Rose Canyon and 32nd Street. The Canyonlands group has great potential, can be umbrella group for many activities, including restoration, trails, feedback to City about policies, and expand to canyons outside City of SD boundaries. The group was founded by the Sierra Club, was supported by SD Social Ventures Partners, and now has independent status and broader roles.

Conservation Resources Network. In 2002 a group of us got together to coordinate resources to preserve and protect our natural heritage. It took eight years to get to that first meeting and finally in 2004, the Conservation Resources Network was formed and established as a non-profit organization. It was funded by the San Diego Foundation and an anonymous donor. It started with 14 organizations and now are up to 25 organizations.

Earth Fair. Ever been to the EarthFair in Balboa Park??? At the volunteer training meetings each year, our team leaders introduce themselves and we ask them to include what they do in real life. Every time I hear them report on their "real jobs" I'm completely inspired since they come from every walk of life. Why this story? Every year San Diego EarthWorks recruits 300+ NEW VOLUNTEERS - the vast majority of which have never volunteered before for anything. This alone is inspiring. Looking back at photos of Earth Day volunteers, over the years, is completely inspiring.

Mission Bay was once a big swamp and people came together to turn it into an urban playground.. Are we really better off? There have been major effects, ramifications on the ecological system ... changes in runoff, erosion. With Mission Bay, people began to change, acting like people had domain. So now we picnic there and play there. Who's to say what's more important, an intact environment or a place for people to play?

Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). Accounts from five interviewees. (1) In the mid-nineties in San Diego County, federal agencies, state and local government agencies, environmental community groups, BIA and other stake holders sat at the table for years negotiating the MSCP. The fundamental purpose was to conserve sufficiently large areas of habitat to support in perpetuity many of the regions sensitive species, while at the same time allowing development to proceed. (2) During the '80's the Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt under President Clinton and Governor Wilson of CA convened a seminar at UCSD on habitat conservation. Attendees included mayors or representatives of all the 18 cities in San Diego County. This meeting resulted in a paradigm shift in that the various cities began to recognize the

necessity of working across city lines to save endangered natural species (both plants and animals) for future generations. (3) The notion of changing policy to raise the bar re: the structure of land use and policy tied at the state and local level. Such change has to be structured in a policy, with program changes in government and regulatory agencies. Everybody has to think out of the box. It takes total commitment. (4) The development of the MSCP about 13 or 14 years ago, as the result of a large sewage/clean water lawsuit brought against the entire region. It brought people together for a common cause, identifying remaining areas to conserve. It created discussion on areas of highest priority and required rationale for choosing those areas.

(5) the City Council of San Diego had their final public hearing on the Multiple Species Conservation Plan during the tenure of Mayor Susan Golding. People were filling the Chambers. Waiting at the Council Chambers door was a Community College biology teach with a clipboard and a check-in list. She was giving credit to students to come to the hearing. Why this story? It's one of the only times I can remember environmentalists did fill the Chamber and win something important - and the area of biggest need IS organizing members of the public to engage in the public hearing process on behalf of environmental issues. There is almost no area of environmental work that isn't directly impacted by the action - or lack of action by governmental agencies, local, state and federal. And there are many ways that non-profits can be involved that don't violate their tax status. Writing letters and testifying at public hearings educating our elected officials is not a violation of a 501(c)3 tax status and it can make a huge difference. In recent years this kind of participation has really waned and we suffer because of that.

(6) In the mid-nineties in San Diego County, federal agencies, state and local government agencies, environmental community groups, BIA and other stake holders sat at the table for years negotiating the MSCP. The fundamental purpose was to conserve sufficiently large areas of habitat to support in perpetuity many of the regions sensitive species, while at the same time allowing development to proceed. Why this story? I was not involved in the negotiations but my job entails implementing the MSCP and working on similar plans. I chose it because while many people have concerns about the effectiveness of the program (MSCP) no one can question that its fundamental premise is biologically valid in the context of conservation biology or the fact that all the land that has been acquired for habitat conservation since the adoption of the MSCP in 1997 would not have been acquired and protected in perpetuity absent the MSCP.

OutdoorExplore! an after school outdoor nature education program. Inspired by Richard Louv, first came out of larger collaboration group the SD Nature Education Network, a collaboration between San Diego Audubon, San Diego Canyonlands, and the San Diego Natural History Museum. Goal is to connect elementary school children to “nearby nature”, taking them into urban canyons to learn about local plants, animals, and the environment. Program is growing, high demand, will serve about 1,000 kids at 15 schools this year.

Pampas grass. Carolyn Martus a biologist living in Carlsbad who has worked hard to control exotic plants over the last 10 years decided to contact WalMart to ask them to stop selling Pampas grass, one of our major problem species. WalMart was very open to her request and after having her provide additional information agreed to stop selling Pampas grass. I like this story because it involves engaging an organization outside the environmental movement that didn't have a good reputation for community impacts. It gave WalMart a chance to demonstrate a willingness to do good works and it shows that a single individual with a small amount of work can have a big impact in spreading environmental awareness.

Quail Botanical “Garden of Lights,” one of the most popular events. Observing children-parents-grandparents roasting marshmallows around a "primordial" fire, with warm-fuzzy feelings, stories about their childhood, powerful social and nature connections at the same time. Why these stories? These are social experiences, and nature experiences with the family are one of the best ways to start connections with the real world. We're desparately social beings, yet there are few opportunities to connect across generations and professions, in this virtual world.

Quarry Falls, a recent development in mission valley just got approval from City planning. This is a good thing, an entire "green" community LEED certified. We need more of these types of developments.

Regional energy strategy, involving a broad range of interests/stakeholders. An 18-month effort included analysis, presentations, positions, and a plan that was adopted by SANDAG in 2003, which gave legitimacy ("legs") through inclusion and a thorough process.

Rose Canyon. They are constantly fighting to keep the bridge from bisecting Rose Canyon. They have filed suit, gone to court and won two times against the illegal bridge. Why this story? The mayor, most council members, and lot's of moneyed people are for the bridge so being able to win against those odds was special.

Rural Heritage and Watershed Initiative. On the ballot in the late 90s, it was intended to save our forests and ranchlands. It was going to protect our backcountry. It went down in defeat. What was special about that experience was that it brought up the awareness--that when people over develop, and subdivide the land, it erodes the quality of life. For example, if a developer wants to put up 400 houses, that also invites infrastructure and people pay for that.

San Diego Bay Council, a collaboration of about seven organizations originally. Very effective - they'd meet monthly (or more) and divide up tasks according to people's skills and workloads. Another pretty good example is the San Diego River Coalition. Why this story? They were able to accomplish a great deal because (1) they trusted one another's good judgment so they could move quickly where needed. One person/group could speak for all with minimal review and signoff needed BECAUSE the basic trust was there. (2) Also, even though everyone was overworked, they were careful to spread the load evenly so no one felt unduly burdened. (3) They were results-oriented and didn't care who got the credit.

San Diego Fire Recovery Network was formed after the 2003 wildfires, with the mission of fostering the recovery of our human and natural environment through sound science, public education, land and community restoration. Why this story? Because it pulled together people and organizations of varied interests and professed goals in a way that I had not seen before. What was special? It challenged the status quo in a positive and professional way. [another interviewee] **After the 2003 wildfires,** the San Diego Natural History Museum hosted many programs for professionals and public about wildfire concerns. This issue will remain a concern, and probably worsen, as more homes are built in what was once wilderness areas and as more natural habitat is destroyed. This natural disaster brought people together for the common good, which is all too rare. [another interviewee] Amazing reaction, common goals, grass roots, improved policy. It was not institutionalized, not sustainable. Why this story? It was spontaneous and inspiring.

San Diego Partners for Biodiversity. I have long been impressed by the opportunities to learn about many local topics and stay connected to a variety of programs and people in San Diego, a project that is unsupported by a lofty institution.

San Diego Tracking Team was formed in the early 1990s. A few people were doing surveys of Penasquitos Reserve and realized how much time it took, a plan was developed for people to help track and do surveys. 50 people showed up in response to an ad in the "Friends of Penasquitos" newsletter. They now track all over San Diego County. It all works because it captures the imagination of the volunteers. They feel it has an impact and they tell their friends about it. Things work when you engage people and show that they can have an impact.

SD Humane Society fundraising event. A small environmental fund agreed to decorate one adoption room for the San Diego Human Society (SDHS). After a glass of wine at a celebratory SDHS event, the fund's representative and the decorator had the idea of doing a decorators' open house fundraiser at SDHS by having decorators each do one adoption room. Forty decorators signed up, the rooms were decorated, and the event raised \$250k, one of SDHS's biggest fundraisers ever. Why? Story demonstrates leverage (small beginnings, large gains) and also synergies from thinking outside of usual channels.

Sorrento Valley Road. This was a successful push to keep the last connection to Penasquitos open. Sorrento Valley Rd was closed to automobiles. Citizens came together to keep it closed so animals could still use the area and be protected. Businesses and developers had wanted the road opened. I like this story because it became an issue and the people were successful and the road is still closed to automobile

Swan Canyon. We work with Aquatic Adventures and they conducted an event at Hamilton Elementary School, on Swan Canyon in City Heights. It brought the entire community together in a way we don't normally see. There was a huge turnout with more than 950 volunteers. I've never seen such a turnout in 17 years. People came into the canyon and removed weeds and trash. There were activities involved with environmental issues. They built a garden on an asphalt school lot. There was support from a lot of different folks in the community, across many lines. That made it special, and gave birth to a Canyon support group. It worked because: It was highly organized, with a clear focus on environmental education. They chose a particular location and school, which had a principal who got behind the idea and supported it. It tapped into other partnerships, proven community organizations and groups, that were open to banding together.

Temporary Paradise? In the 1970s two planners (Lynch and Appleby) were hired to do a study of the same basic questions that you're asking. This was one of the big moments when San Diego came together. People were starting to see Mission Valley get concreted in, where once there were cows and buffalo. It was a community effort, with public and private donations. City planners, the public and politicians came together. Today, it's imprinted in every plan of the city. It's the most influential document.

Tijuana Estuary Preserve was formed to protect an area with highly productive ecosystems. Their net primary productivity--taking carbon out of the atmosphere--is greater than a redwood forest. The Tijuana Estuary was going to be dredged out and turned into a condo site. It was our last large estuary in Southern California. Many animals use estuaries as food sources. These animals include hundreds of bird species. The Southwest Interpretive Association were the leaders who appealed to regulatory agencies not to allow the estuary to turn into a condo site. Because

there was a common objective, this effort succeeded. Many agencies were involved. Why this story? This is important because of what people were able to save and accomplish there. They have been able to continue forward--creating a model marsh and the means for intercepting sedimentation.

Torrey Pines Road Improvement. In 1997 a mayoral task force was set up to find parking and traffic solutions for La Jolla. After 11 years of volunteer work with the community a plan has come forward that will improve and beautify 3/4 of a mile of Torrey Pines Road, the entrance to the village from the north. The plan will slow traffic, increase safety and improve walkability of this 60,000 car per day corridor and walking connection to La Jolla's north shoreline. This plan was inspired by the community, and everyone felt ownership. The community has overwhelmingly approved the plan and it goes before the City Council on December 4, 2008. Why this story? I think we are going to take a break in our development mentality and as a result the economic engine of the local economy will continue to slow because we overbuilt and overextended ourselves because we all wanted to make money. It will be an opportunity to regroup, rethink our local sustainable strategies including water reuse, solar and other renewable energies and density in the urban core with new green technologies and strategies.

Various. A number of notable conservation efforts have made significant strides in the last few years. We added significant new acreage to the Ramona Grasslands. The preservation of Volcan Mountain near Julian continues. An extremely important piece of the historic Stowe Trail from Santee to Poway is closer to falling into place. The last home of the famed Buffalo Soldiers, Camp Lockett in Campo, is a long-term and important historic preservation project that's gaining ground. The San Dieguito River Park project is moving forward. Why these stories? There are dedicated people behind each of these projects, many are volunteers. I'd say that partnering with the people behind these projects is the very best part of the experience. The effort to heal Otay Mountain is certainly one I will remember. The mountain had been trashed, trampled and burned by immigrant traffic. Low-impact roads helped bring the situation under control and repair the habitat on the mountain..

Wildcoast was created to protect the beaches from Southern California to Baja California. They have been successful in conserving approximately 120 miles of beach including 140,000 acres, also creating a natural park. Big scale projects are involved, with grassroots involvement. The second part of his effort has been to preserve endangered marine animals. They launched a campaign to encourage people to not eat turtle eggs or slaughter sharks. These have been high profile campaigns, in Mexico and the US. On the border they have worked on other projects such as stopping the construction of gas terminals. In 2004, 100-year floods resulted in the pollution of beaches by sewage run-off. The pollution was going all the way to Coronado Island. People were getting sick. They worked with the Department of Environmental Health. Wildcoast conducted a media campaign to teach people not to go into the water after a rain. They worked with the community, with the county of SD and the media. They realized the need for a comprehensive community-based, bottom-up effort to solve the problem. Their motto is, "Clean water now." They have formed a citizen council with "cowboy" surfers, skateboard kids, latino families, border patrol, involving 300 people.