



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FURTHER INFORMATION:

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Newly Established Preserve Permanently Protects 120 Acres in San Marcos

San Diego Habitat Conservancy to manage Rancho Coronado Open Space Preserve

San Marcos — After many years of planning, conservation easements have been recorded over Rancho Coronado Open Space Preserve, permanently protecting 120.5 acres of high quality native habitat. The preserve was set aside as mitigation for impacts from the Rancho Coronado Project, a residential and mixed-use development project in the City of San Marcos. The preserved area will now be off-limits to development, and the land will be managed in perpetuity by San Diego Habitat Conservancy (SDHC).

The preserve encompasses a wide variety of habitat types, including coastal sage scrub, chaparral, oak woodlands, southern willow scrub, and riparian communities. Due to this variety, a high diversity of animal species is likely to occur on-site including such sensitive bird species as the federally threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, the yellow warbler, and the yellow-breasted chat. Sensitive plant species found on-site include wart-stemmed ceanothus and summer holly. SDHC will manage the site to ensure the best conditions for these and other species.

The preserved vegetation is recovering after the May 2014 Cocos Fire and much of the riparian area is undergoing restoration efforts for five years to create and enhance wetland areas which will be included in the preserve once completed. The stream channel running through the property was graded to reduce flow velocities, drop structures were installed, and native vegetation was planted along the channel. Riparian areas such as these are important for water quality both on-site and downstream.

SDHC's management duties include five monitoring visits per year to observe the condition of flora, fauna, signage and fencing, and the removal of trash and weeds. Because of the sensitive nature of the preserve's ecology, human intrusion will be limited and public access will not be allowed. SDHC will also keep track of vegetation and wildlife communities and will send biologists to the site to perform sensitive species surveys, including surveys for the coastal California gnatcatcher every five years.

SDHC was established in 2000 and manages a number of open space easements throughout the San Diego region, preserving and managing sensitive habitat and species that are unique to our southern California environment. SDHC strives to share our knowledge and appreciation of our natural environment with the San Diego community, encouraging participation in the stewardship of our region's precious open space. The mission of SDHC is *to conserve and manage sensitive habitats and species while inspiring land stewardship through education and outreach.*

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