



SAN DIEGO HABITAT CONSERVANCY (SDHC)
MANAGES THE BRIDGES & SANTA FE CREEK PRESERVE



BRIDGES & SANTA FE CREEK PRESERVE
RANCHO SANTA FE

Please contact SDHC if you have any questions about the purpose and restrictions associated with the preserve, or if you would like to report any illegal activity within the preserve. We appreciate your willingness to support our stewardship activities and to help protect the natural resources and beauty that surround your home.

Contact:
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LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

As the managers of the Preserve, it is SDHC's responsibility to ensure that the habitat is healthy and free of disturbances for the plant and animal species that rely on these natural resources.

SDHC's management duties include:

- Monthly Monitoring & Reporting
- Vegetation Mapping
- Special Species Surveys
- Invasive Plant Control
- Trash Removal
- Sign Inspection
- General Coordination
- Public Outreach



Coastal CA Gnatcatcher
 Photo by Mark A. Chappell

SENSITIVE BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Habitat and Plant Communities

The majority of the preserve consists of Diegan coastalsage scrub (DCSS), riparian wood-land, southern mixed chaparral, coastal and valley freshwater marsh, eucalyptus woodland, and southern cottonwood-willow riparian forest. Over 85 acres of DCSS is protected within the Preserve, helping to provide the interconnected habitat that is vital to supporting endangered species like the California gnatcatcher. The preserve also protects 13.1 acres of riparian woodland along Escondido Creek, helping to support some of the most diverse ecological communities of plants and animals. We respectfully request your cooperation and assistance in preserving these wonderful resources.



Orcutt's Brodiaea
 Photo by Vince Rivas

Sensitive Species

A number of sensitive species occupy or forage over the preserve, including species considered to be threatened or endangered by state and federal wildlife agencies, such as summer holly, sticky dudleya, Orcutt's brodiaea, coastal whiptail, monarch butterfly, coastal California gnatcatcher, rufous-crowned sparrow, yellow warbler, and yellow-breasted chat.

Development of the Santa Fe Creek project and the Bridges at Rancho Santa Fe Driving Range Reconfiguration resulted in the loss of sensitive habitat and species, natural resources that are considered important to our local ecosystem. As a result, a total of 112.09 acres of habitat along Escondido Creek were dedicated as a Biological Open Space easement. This habitat forms a contiguous corridor with neighboring preserves up- and downstream. The natural resources that are being preserved are important to our local ecosystem and regulated by the California Department of Fish & Game, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.



CONNECTION TO SAN DIEGO ECOSYSTEMS

The preserve is part of a larger system of preserved natural habitat in Rancho Santa Fe and locally, serves as part of a natural upland buffer to Escondido Creek. The preserve is part of a regional vision to link open space preserves throughout the area

and is within the County's Multiple Habitat Conservation Program (MHCP). The MHCP sets the goal of establishing a preserve system of over 20,000 acres throughout the Cities of Carlsbad, Encinitas, Escondido, Oceanside, San Marcos, Solana Beach, and Vista.



Cedar Waxwing
 Photo by Evan Lipton

2024 PRESERVE UPDATE

This year we conducted protocol surveys for the sensitive coastal California gnatcatcher. Numerous individuals were detected throughout the preserve, including a nesting pair with nestlings. SDHC will continue to monitor for this sensitive bird species and ensure that the habitat is healthy to ensure its existence.



Our efforts this year have also focused on assessing the health of the coast live oak trees for signs of pests, such as the invasive Goldspotted Oak Borer beetle, or potential diseases. No signs of pests have been detected, but SDHC is working with San Diego State University to test plant tissue and soil samples for signs of pathogens.



RATTLESNAKE INFORMATION AND SAFETY

The preserve is home to many species that are part of our local ecosystem. It is possible that some of the animals living in the preserve will make their way into the developed area surrounding your residence. The southern Pacific rattlesnake, red diamond rattlesnake, and speckled rattlesnake are the only local snakes in the San Diego region that are venomous to humans. An average adult rattlesnake is about 2½ feet long, but can grow to as large as 4 to 5 feet in length. These rattlesnakes are light gray or brown and shed their skin about 3 to 4 times a year, usually getting a new rattle segment each time. Rattlesnakes eat rodents such as mice but also forage on birds, reptiles, and amphibians. The benefit they provide in rodent control far outweighs their potential danger to humans. Please respect them from a safe distance and let them do their job.



WATCH OUT FOR RATTLESNAKES

In case of emergency, call 911 or go directly to a hospital.



PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

Access and Pets

Access to the preserve is prohibited due to the sensitive nature of the habitat and the species that dwell and forage there. Hiking, biking, camping or any human recreational activity is strictly prohibited. Dogs and cats are prohibited in the preserve. Please respect the natural condition of the open space ecosystem and enjoy it from afar to ensure that these resources are around for all time. Be sure to stay on the designated walking trail found along the eastern preserve parcel.



HOW YOU CAN HELP THE PRESERVE

Trash & Hazardous Materials

Please help keep the preserve healthy by disposing of trash in receptacles. If you see trash along or in the preserve, help us out by disposing of it or calling SDHC to address it. Hazardous materials, including vehicle fuel and oil, household cleaning products, paints, and solvents are extremely detrimental to the health of the preserve. Please call SDHC if you observe illegal dumping or signs of hazardous materials in the preserve.

Use Humane Pest Control

Poisonous chemicals such as rodenticides used at your home can have an indirect harmful effect to wildlife that live in the area. Whether consumed by target pests or other native mammals, such as squirrels or skunks, these poisons can cause secondary poisoning when the poisoned animal is consumed by predatory species, such as coyotes or owls. In an effort to protect wildlife within the preserve, please consider more humane forms of pest control.



Volunteer Today!

Help protect the preserve by joining us in the field to remove non-native plants and trash, and learn about the sensitive resources in your community.



BIOLOGICAL THREATS

Invasive Plants

Native plants in the preserve are sensitive to invasive species. Invasive species are not native to the San Diego area and if left unchecked will choke out native species, drastically decreasing the biodiversity and health of the ecosystem we are trying to preserve. A large part of our role is to control and remove the invasive plant species that continue to invade the native habitat. SDHC requests your assistance in making sure that ornamental plants or exotic species are not discarded into the native habitat, and that any houseplants are kept within your property to avoid introducing new invasive species. To the right are some of the common invasive plant species within the preserve and their impacts.

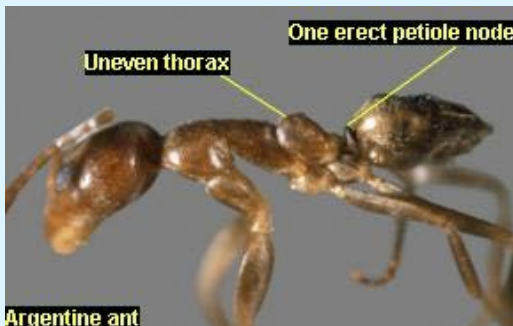
Invasive Pests

In addition to the invasion of nonnative plant species, invasive animal species can cause harm to our native flora and fauna as well. Some of the pests found within the region include; brown-headed cowbird, which uses nest parasitism to outcompete and reduce native bird species; shot hole borer beetle; which can decimate mature forests by farming fungi within trees; and the Argentine ant; which you can help us to control!



Brown-headed cowbird (male and female)
Photo by Patricia Pierce

A small but detrimental pest, the invasive Argentine ant (*Linepithema humile*) is known to eat the young of various species including birds, rabbits and snakes. They alter entire insect communities and spread bacteria and viruses through their waste. Argentine ants range from light to dark brown, they measure about 2.2 to 2.8 mm long, and their antennae have 12 segments. We are monitoring the infestation in the preserve and will be installing control measures. Neighboring residents can help by controlling ants inside your buildings with a commercially available boric acid solution (see <http://www.kmantpro.com>). Please feel free to contact us with any questions regarding pest management.



Argentine ant
Photo from University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources

Below are the common invasive plants found within the preserve that we are working to remove. Control of each species requires a unique treatment method, such as hand removal or treatment with a specific herbicide. For additional information please visit Cal-IPC.

MUSTARD



PHOTO BY ZOYA AKULOVA

Annual herb that grows and spreads quickly. Uses allelopathic chemicals that prevent germination of native plants. Widespread populations can increase the frequency of fires in chaparral and coastal sage scrub.

GIANT REED



PHOTO BY AMADEJ TRNKOCZY

Tall perennial grass that forms dense stands in riparian areas, and wetlands. Threatens riparian ecosystems by outcompeting native species, such as willows, for water.

CAPE IVY



PHOTO BY VINCE RIVAS

Perennial vine known to form dense mats of vegetation over trees and shrubs, killing plants underneath. Toxic to animals and can kill fish when plant material is soaked in waterways.

POISON HEMLOCK



PHOTO BY KEIR MORSE

Biennial forb toxic to humans and animals when ingested; handling plants can cause contact dermatitis in some people. Outcompetes native plants by over-shading.

FENNEL



PHOTO BY NEAL KRAMER

Perennial herb that can exclude or prevent native plant establishment and can alter the composition and structure of many plant communities. Outcompetes native species for light, nutrients, and water

CASTOR BEAN



PHOTO BY TOUTCHA LEBGUE-RELENG

Herbaceous plant or semi-woody large shrub or small tree. Grows quickly in mild climates. Contains ricin, an extremely toxic chemical that can kill an adult when small amounts are ingested. Handling foliage and seeds can cause severe dermatitis.