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HABITAT HAPPENINGS

The newsletter of the San Diego Habitat Conservancy (SDHC)
Our vision is a healthy natural environment that engages the commitment of people and communities, creates a legacy, and improves the quality of life for all living things.

Staff

Don Scoles, Executive Director
Kathleen Pollett, Senior Conservation Habitat Manager
Vince Rivas, Conservation Habitat Manager
Connie Winterstein, Acquisition Program Manager
Connie Koros, Accountant
Mary Applon, Bookkeeper

Volunteer

Join us! SDHC has a volunteer opportunities in a variety of areas!
[See our website for details.](#)

A note from the Executive Director.

I hope this finds you well. It is time to reconnect more proactively with our constituents as we emerge from the pandemic fog. Like most, we at SDHC have done quite a bit of reflection, review, and analysis as to what is the new normal. Like you, we have been reacting to the rapid influx of new and changing information and trying to anticipate upcoming challenges as well as opportunities, all while trying to stay focused on our Mission to conserve and manage sensitive habitats and species while inspiring land stewardship through education and outreach. We were fortunate that we are able to perform much of our field activities without disruption, albeit a little further apart from one another. We found that efforts to maintain personal and professional relationships included more conscious collaboration with other land managers, organizations, agencies, and municipalities to address site-specific issues, obtaining new lands to manage, or in pursuing grants to allow us to do more for the habitats and species that inhabit our preserves. So in the spirit of learning to do things in a new way, read on, as we have lots of "news" to announce, including new surroundings, new projects, and new staff.

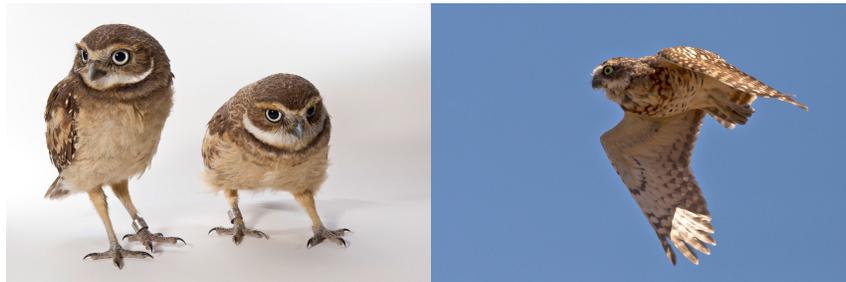
Thank you for your support.

Award of Renewed Accreditation

We're excited to share with you that our accreditation has been renewed! After a rigorous verification process by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, the national accrediting body for land trusts, San Diego Habitat Conservancy has proven that we continue to operate at the highest ethical, legal, financial, conservation, and stewardship standards to ensure lasting stewardship. There are over 450 accredited land trusts across the country, and we are proud to work with San Diego communities to protect the natural habitats we love.



New Western Burrowing Owl Colony



In southern California, western burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*, BUOW) were once widespread and abundant. However, over the last several decades the BUOW has experienced declining populations due to habitat loss. In 2021, after more than 10 years of planning and collaboration by The San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance (SDZWA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the SDHC-managed Ramona Grasslands Conservation Bank received 24 BUOW. In preparation for their arrival 26 artificial burrows were installed and brush piles were located across the preserve to encourage California ground squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*). California ground squirrels create natural burrows that BUOW can modify for their nests. To date five nests fledged 30 chicks and we are hopeful the colony will return on its own to breed in 2022. These are the first documented nesting BUOW in the Ramona area in more than 40 years. Check our webpage to see updated activities of this project as they evolve.

Student Interns

SDHC has continued its work with students

from high schools and universities in an effort to provide hands on education in conservation managements and to directly benefit the habitat preserves. Interns assist habitat managers with habitat management activities in the field and performing administrative tasks, such as research and report preparation, as needed. In the past year, we have had a number of incredible interns that we want to recognize for their dedication and passion for habitat conservation!



Students that have recently completed an academic internship include **Nathan Lu**, a recent graduate from Carlsbad High School and soon to be Environmental Science major at Pitzer College, **Maile Villablanca**, a Sustainability major at San Diego State University (SDSU), **Henry SanTiago**, an Environmental Systems and Earth Science major at University of California, San Diego (UCSD), **Elena Ohlin**, an Environmental Studies major at San Francisco State University, **Ava Haddock**, an Environmental Science major at University of California, Berkeley, and **Joshua Ferry**, an Environmental Engineering major at University of Colorado. Each intern completed a conservation project, including cryptogram growth research and trials, preserve research and website development, and monitoring vegetation recovery following wild fires. We are grateful for all of their assistance with our management activities and we wish them all the best in their pursuits!

SDHC currently has seven interns: **Hannah Samy**, working on her Master's degree in Ecology from SDSU; our continuing intern, **Desi Klaar**, seeking her Master's degree in Conservation Land Management; **Timothy Rothwein**, an Environmental Systems major at UCSD; **Elizabeth Dolan**, an Ecology, Behavior and Evolution major at UCSD; **Flora Fuentes Solano**, an Environmental Policy major at UCSD, **Rebecca Dayton**, majoring in Marine Biology and Ecology at UCSD, and **Haider Rangwalla**, a Biochemistry major at UCSD.



New Preserves

In December 2020, SDHC began long term management of the 173.8-acre **Bressi Ranch Open Space Preserve**. Comprised of five parcels, this preserve is located along Poinsettia Lane and El Fuerte Drive, and south of Town Garden Road in the City of Carlsbad.

This Preserve contains a variety of vegetation communities, including southern mixed chaparral, coastal sage scrub, southern willow scrub, and freshwater marsh. This habitat is home to a

diversity of plant and wildlife species, including the following sensitive species: California adolphia, Nuttal's scrub oak, California gnatcatcher, and Cooper's hawk.

SDHC management duties include patrols every other month, with a focus on controlling invasive plant species, preventing trespassing, and conducting outreach with neighboring residents.



SDHC began long-term management of the **Glen Park Preserve** in January 2021. This 13.27-acre Preserve is in close proximity to two other of our preserves and made up of two parcels surrounded by residential homes north of Mission Road and west of Twin Oaks Valley Road in the City of San Marcos.

The primary habitat type within the Preserve area is coastal sage scrub, with disturbed coastal sage scrub and a portion of Eucalyptus grove. This Preserve was set aside to provide habitat for three sensitive species: San Diego pocket mouse, Dulzura California pocket mouse, and San Diego desert woodrat.

As the long-term manager, SDHC will perform biannual patrols to inspect for threats, conduct as needed invasive plant control, and outreach with the adjacent HOA to educate residents on the importance of the Preserve and prevent human encroachment.



This past June, SDHC initiated long-term management for the **Daybreak Preserve** in the City of Carlsbad. This 3.9-acre Preserve was set aside as mitigation for the Daybreak Community Church Project and is located immediately south of the church, south of Poinsettia Lane and west of Ambrosia Lane.

The Preserve area is made up of coastal sage scrub and chaparral habitats that recovered from the 2014 Poinsettia fire. This unique habitat has the supports a variety of sensitive animal species, including rufous-crowned sparrow and California gnatcatcher.

SDHC will work with the church to for additional monitoring and volunteer cleanups and weeding events as needed.



SDHC acquired the 32-acre **Trust Property in Descanso** in July 2021, made possible by a generous donation from a trust. This acquisition is the first of its kind for SDHC. Typically, SDHC acquires land via mitigation requirements for development projects that have specific restrictions on the land. The Trust Property in Descanso is land donated to SDHC for the sole use of fulfilling SDHC's mission, opening up opportunities beyond land management, such as research, outreach and educational activities,



restoration, and collecting native seeds for outplantings.

The Preserve boasts breathtaking views of rolling foothills, encompassed by coast live oak woodland and southern mixed chaparral habitat. Native plant species observed on site include ceanothus, wild cucumber, chaparral yucca, manzanita, paintbrush flower, chaparral beardtongue. The Preserve abuts the Cleveland National Forest and is in close vicinity to Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. We look forward to what is next with this exciting new Preserve!

Welcome Connie Winterstein



As the Acquisition Program Manager, Connie oversees the acquisition of new preserves and manages all stages of the acquisitions process, ensuring projects adhere to organizational policies and procedures. She researches and implements new acquisition opportunities, assesses whether projects align with the organization's mission and goals, conducts in depth due diligence on potential acquisition projects, drafts key project documents, and facilitates the closing process. Connie has over 15 years of experience, managing large-scale and complex natural resource projects from the ground up. Her diverse background includes working with the private sector, U.S. government, and international and domestic nonprofits in Washington, DC, Hawaii, and California. She has an M.S. in Natural Resources Management from the University of Hawaii, Manoa and received her undergraduate degree from the University of California, San Diego. Connie is originally from California and calls Carlsbad, California home. In her free time, she loves gardening, surfing, and wandering around local trails.

Donate to SDHC Today!

Our efforts to preserve native habitat and biodiversity in southern California can only be accomplished with the support of donations. As a dedicated supporter, you are helping to preserve those spaces that are unique to our region and you are helping to ensure that future generations may enjoy the same beauty that never ceases to astound and inspire us.

Please make your voice heard by donating today!

Go to www.sdhabitat.org to donate. Make a minimum \$35 donation and receive a SDHC t-shirt with our newly designed logo.





Support SDHC when shopping at Rite Aid

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Now your sales on eBay (and other websites) can help support SDHC. Just click on the "eBay for Charity" logo above to start donating a percentage of your sales directly to SDHC.



We are now enrolled in the Paypal Giving Fund! Donate through the link above and 100% of your donation will go directly to SDHC!

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