



A Green(er) City: Environmental Activism in a Biodiversity Hotspot, San Diego, California, since 1970



Cover by Theodore Geisel, 1972

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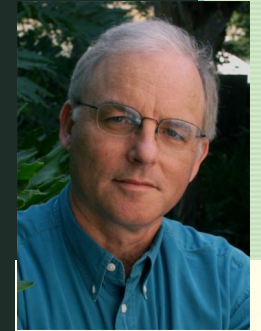
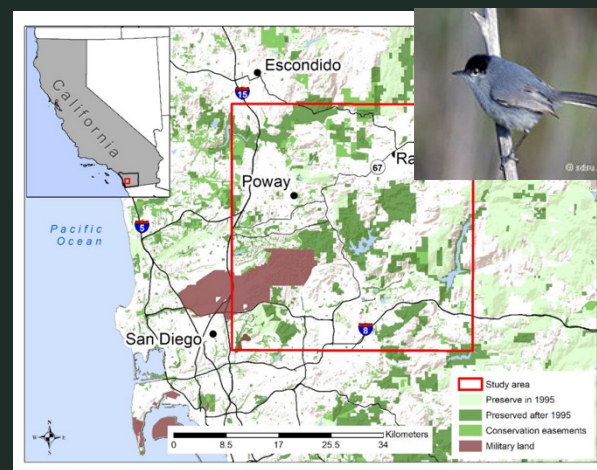

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Environmental Proving Ground

After 1970, San Diego was an incubator for green activism and a proving ground for modern environmental policy

SD passed the first metro scale habitat conservation plan in the US, 1997



Richard Louv

DAS LETZTE KIND IM WALD?
 Geben wir unseren Kindern die Natur zurück!



BELTZ

SD writer Richard Louv helped spark an international movement for children in nature, 2000s

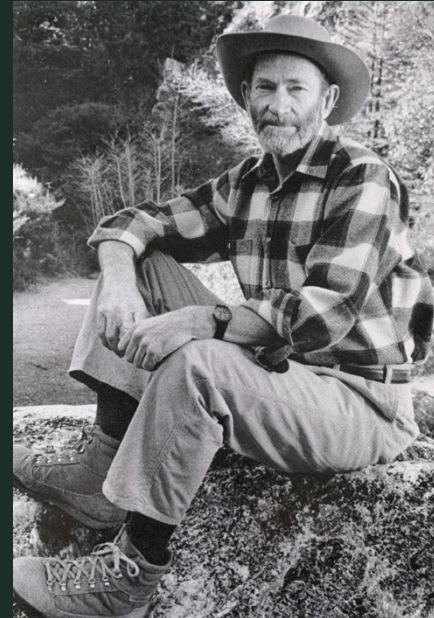
The World Is Full of Toxic Waste. Your Home Shouldn't Be.

Safely Dispose of Toxic Household Products, Protect Your Home and Family and Help Keep San Diego Safe and Beautiful.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COALITION
 HOUSEHOLD TOXICS DISPOSAL PROJECT



Environmental Health Coalition, founded in 1980, pioneered Environmental Justice organizing in CA



Michael Soule's work on San Diego was key to the new field of Conservation Biology, 1970s-80s.

TEMPORARY PARADISE?

A LOOK AT THE SPECIAL LANDSCAPE OF THE SAN DIEGO REGION



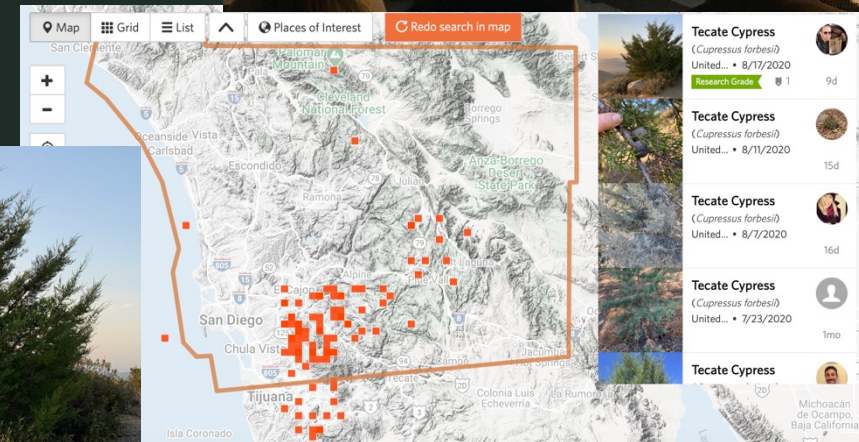
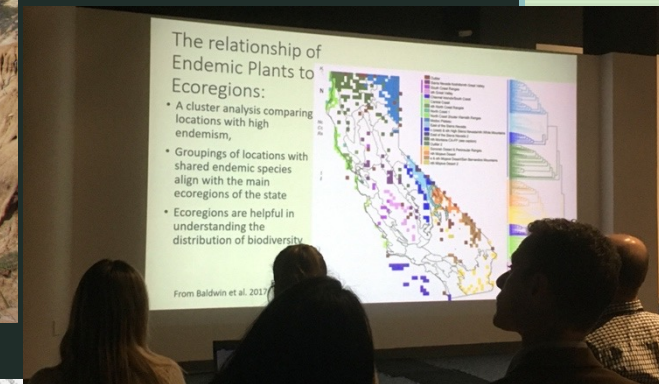
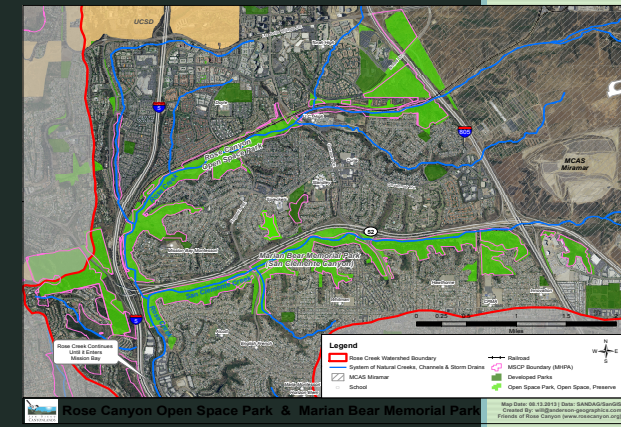
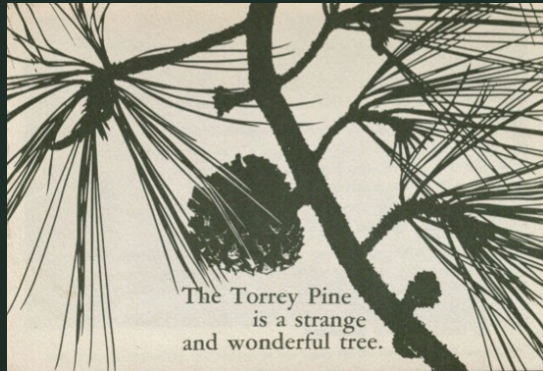
Kevin Lynch's 1974 "Temporary Paradise?" envisioned San Diego as a city uniquely integrated with nature.



Protests against toxic dumping by a US firm in Tijuana's Colonia Chilpancingo, led to a landmark trans-border cleanup and mobilization in the 1990s – 2000s

San Diego: Bio-Diversity Hotspot

Soil, slope, elevation, moisture, micro-climate... shape diverse ecological landscapes, interwoven with the urban fabric creating the most bio-diverse metro area in North America.




Observations of Tecate Cypress tree (on earth)



Torrey Pines State Reserve overlooking Los Peñasquitos Lagoon, ground zero for the new environmentalism.

Environmental politics in San Diego emerged along two tracks in the 1970s.

1) Concerns over sprawl, endangered species, and the costs of growth coalesced in a right-leaning conservation movement fitting the conservative city.



"The phrase 'home rule and local control' has actually been used in many instances to subvert the kind of control that local governments really need."

Controlled development as a way to improve environmental quality is a sharply drawn issue in the city of San Diego. Mayor Pete Wilson, elected to office last November on a platform which included stronger control of developers, is the central figure in this continuing debate.

In the following interview with California Tomorrow, Mayor Wilson states his views on this and a broad range of interrelated concerns.

San Diego: Battleground for Development Control

Pro-environmental Republican, Pete Wilson, elected Mayor, 1971

California HOMEOWNER

September, 1969 twenty cents



San Diego pioneers Open Space law

See story on page 3

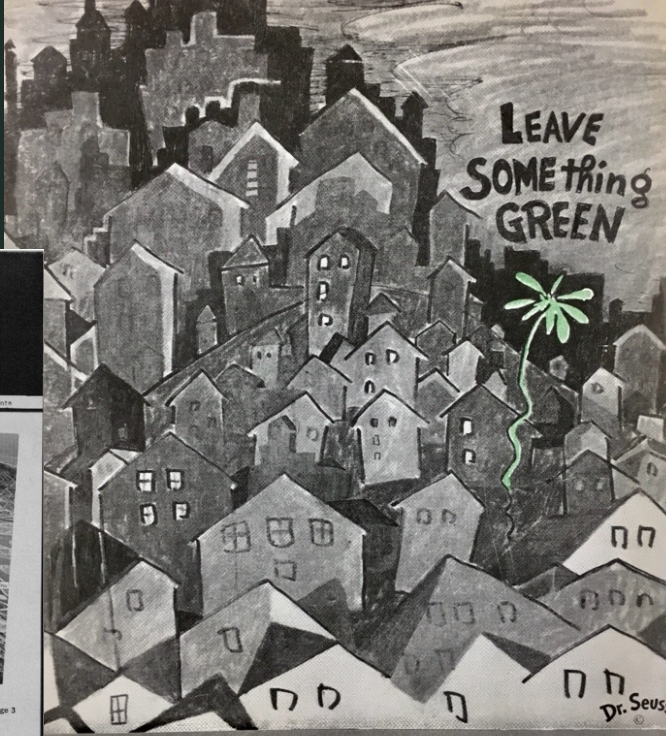
● SAVE SAN DIEGO

- THE SAN DIEGO ENVIRONMENT FACES TOTAL DESTRUCTION...
- OUR WAY OF LIFE IS AT STAKE...
- SAN DIEGO IS RAPIDLY BECOMING ANOTHER LOS ANGELES...
- VALUABLE CANYONS AND FUTURE PARK LANDS ARE BEING DESTROYED...
- OTHER CANYONS ARE THREATENED BY DEVELOPMENT...
- TECOLOTE CANYON FACES THE BULLDOZERS...OTHERS WILL FOLLOW
- UNLESS WE ACT NOW...
- WE FACE AN UNTHINKABLE FUTURE...

HELP SAVE SAN DIEGO

SAVE SAN DIEGO IS A MOVEMENT TO UNITE ALL CONCERNED GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS FOR EFFECTIVE ACTION...NOW

- WE INVITE YOU TO OUR FIRST MEETING
- WE NEED YOU...SAN DIEGO NEEDS YOU



LEAVE SOMETHING GREEN

Dr. Seuss

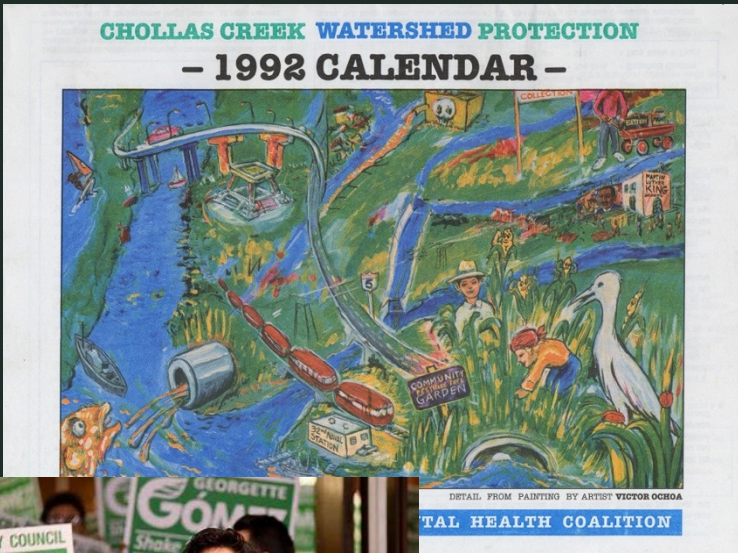
YES ON "B"



2) Organizing for Environmental Justice

The unequal landscapes of Southeast San Diego sparked new movements for environmental justice.

Earth Day, 1970, Chicano activists seized land beneath the newly constructed Coronado Bay Bridge in Barrio Logan for a Chicano Park.

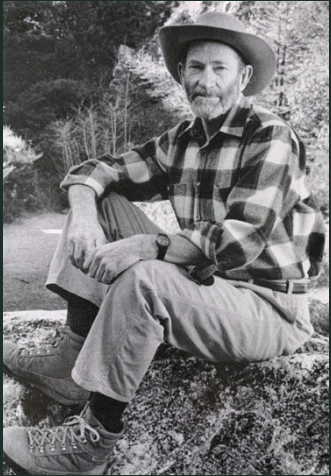


Environmental Health Coalition, founded in 1981 in response to illegal dumping in Southcrest and Barrio Logan, became a leader in Environmental Justice organizing in California.



Conservation Biology – Science-Based Conservation

San Diego's diverse ecology attracted scientists and biodiversity activists who would push the boundaries of environmental science, policy, and planning in the 1980s-90s.



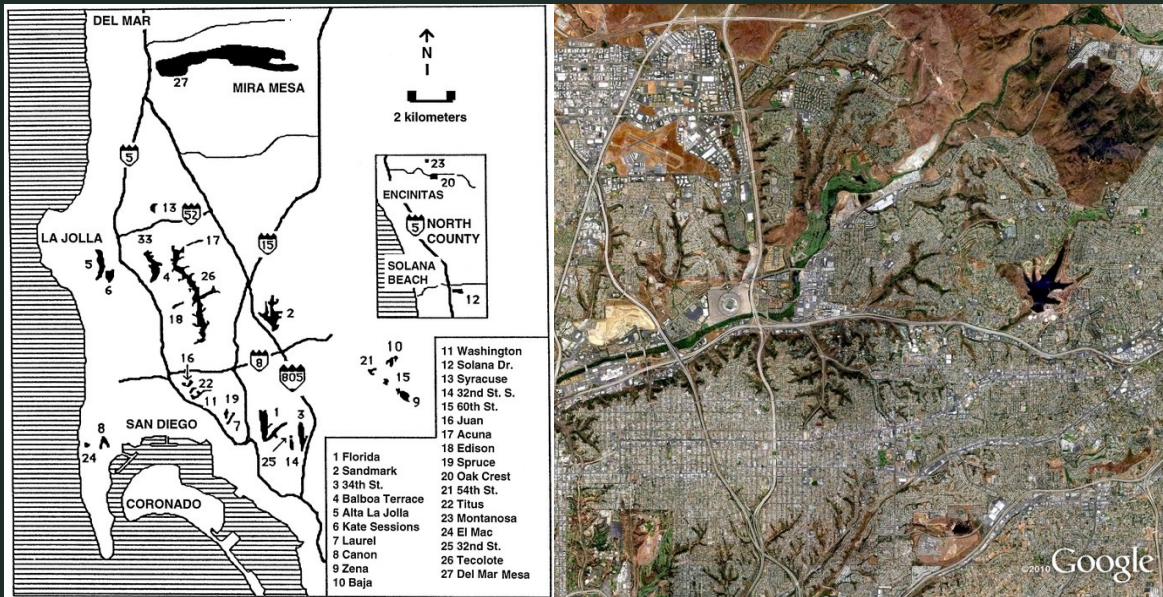
Michael Soulé's research on San Diego's urban canyons was foundational to the new field of Conservation Biology.



Biodiversity activist Dave Hogan flooded wildlife agencies with Endangered Species petitions

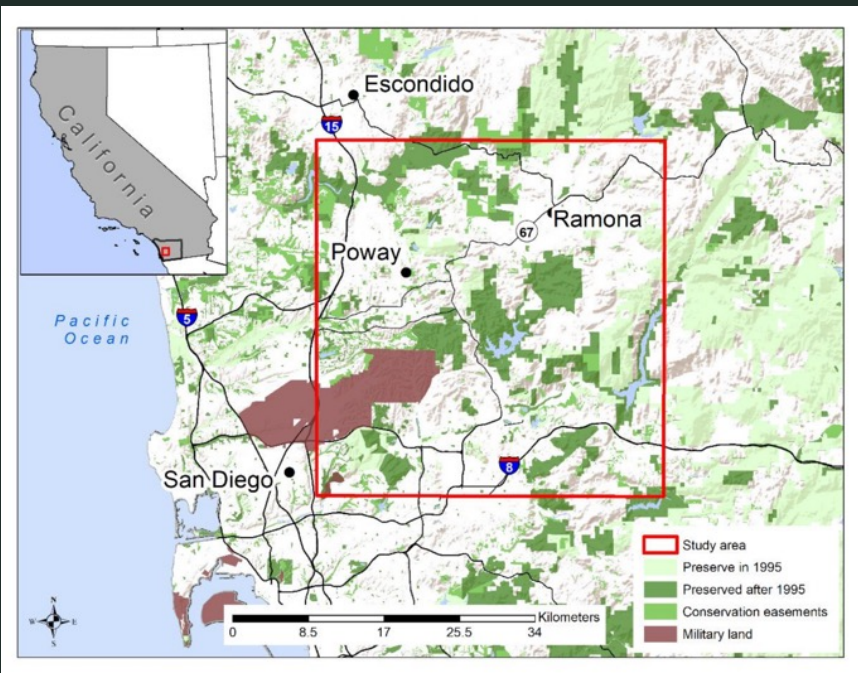


Biodiversity Activism – Monkey-Wrenchers meet Science





SD passed the first metro scale habitat conservation plan in the US, 1997



170,000 acres set aside to prevent extinction of 85 species...
... in exchange development on everything else.

Habitat Conservation Planning – the MSCP

- Endangered Species Act, 1973
- San Bruno Mountain, Habitat Conservation Plan, 1982
- Natural Community Conservation Planning Act, 1993
- Multiple Species Conservation Program, (San Diego) 1997



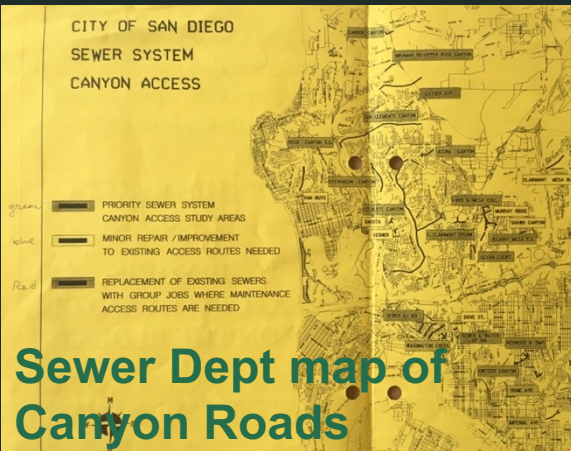
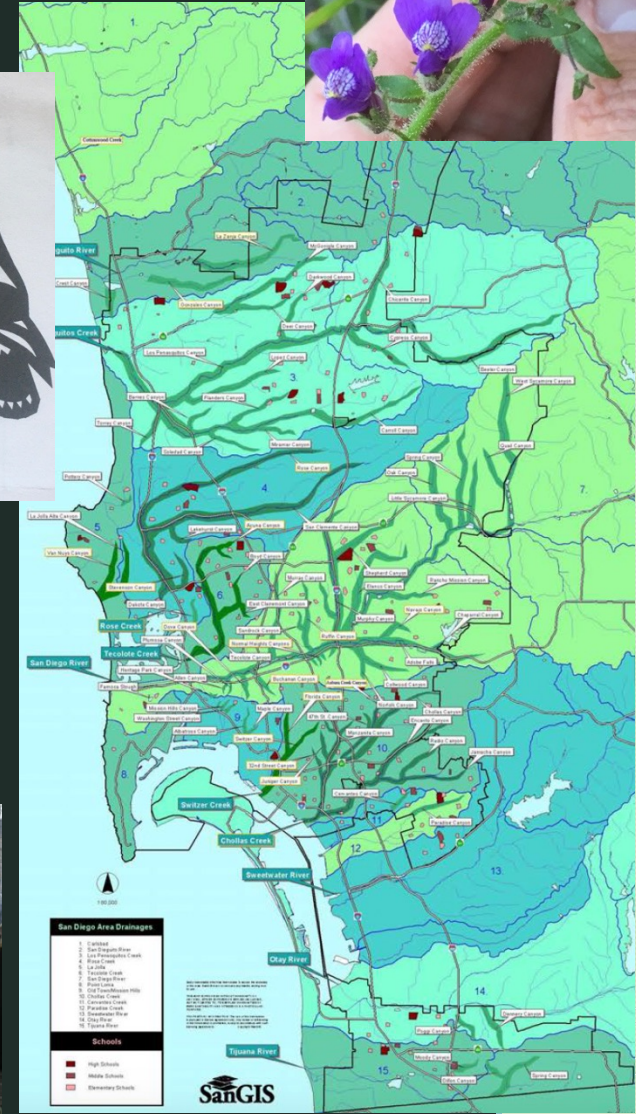
© Gary Nafis



Sierra Club's Eric Bowlby, "the Paul Revere of San Diego's canyons"

Nature for All - Friends of the Canyons

New movements for "urban nature" blossomed in the 2000s, bringing together the separate poles of 20th century environmentalism - aligned around conservation and justice



Sewer Dept map of Canyon Roads



Youth weeding at Swan Canyon in City Heights

San Diego Canyons and "Friends" Groups

City Heights Canyons Loop Trail



Navigating Nature and Justice

“Canyons bisect almost every urban neighborhood in San Diego County. Because of that, they are a great opportunity that everybody can access. There’s no cost, and they are usually in walking distance from everyone’s homes.” (Shara Fisler, Ocean Discovery Institute)



Canyonlands - City Heights habitat restoration



ODI “Living Lab” - Manzanita Cyn



Groundwork San Diego-Chollas Creek strives to bring about the sustained regeneration, improvement and management of the physical environment through the development of community-based partnerships which empower people, businesses and organizations to promote environmental, economic and social well-being

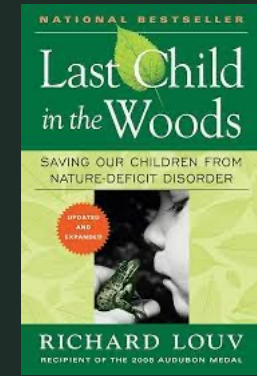
“We can't expect kids to take buses to Nature.” Richard Louv, 2020



Groundwork SD-Chollas Creek Coalition - Earthlab



Children in Nature: Connecting with the Outdoors



Richard Louv:
*Last Child in the
Woods (2005)*

CITIES CONNECTING CHILDREN TO NATURE

Initiatives supporting Children in Nature

Children and Nature Network (2006), #Nature for All

San Diego Canyonlands –
City Heights Canyon Enhancement and Loop Trail

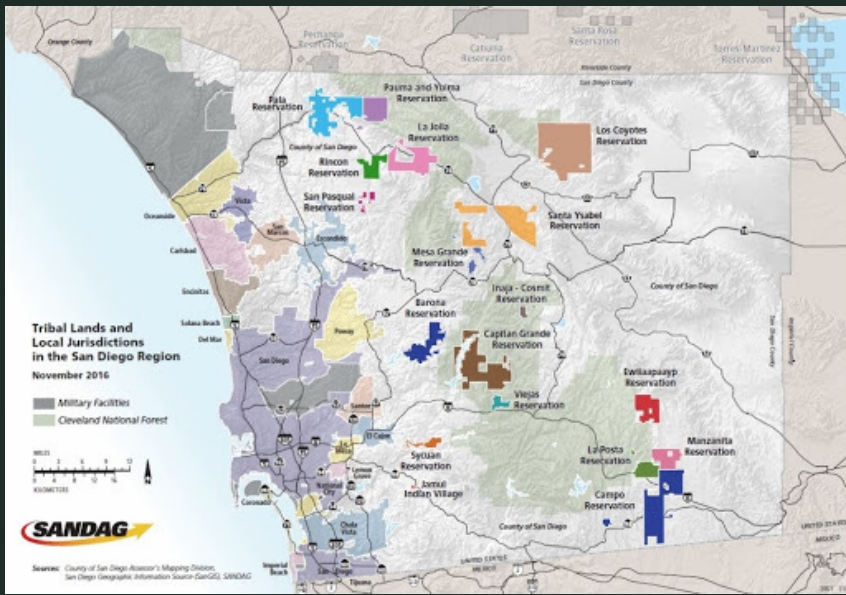
Groundwork San Diego - Chollas Creek Restoration, Earthlab.

- San Diego River Park Foundation
- Friends of Rose Canyon – 'Sense of Wonder' Project
- Intl Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN): **children have a human right** to experience the natural world. 2012



Native Lands

In the early 2000s, San Diego's tribal communities were leaders in movements for Native sovereignty, gaming rights, AND traditional environmental stewardship and protection



San Diego: 18 Reservations and 17 Tribal Governments, most in any U.S. county



"Rock drop" structure on Diebold Creek, Campo Nation, before and after.

The Campo Kumeyaay Nation fused "traditional knowledge with modern methodologies" to enhance the environment, cultural heritage and economic development .



Greening with Justice: Community Equity and Engagement



Installing mailbox pollinator gardens, Atlanta, GA. @ Aubrey/Melina Williams



Woodlawn High School students design vacant lot, Birmingham, AL. © Francesca Gross/The Nature Conservancy



Community-wide planting event, Louisville, KY. © Devan King/The Nature Conservancy



JOIN THE BUYERS CLUB
Weekly produce pick up on the SDSU campus

Community Planning – local community organizations take the lead

Community Gardens, fresh food – eg, **Brightside**

Support for urban agriculture in conjunction with affordable housing construction

Volunteer work projects – vacant lot restoration as ‘model landscapes’ for study

- San Diego – **Environmental Health Coalition,**
- **San Diego 350-Climate Action**
- **Climate Action Campaign – Climate Action Plan 2015**
- **Chollas Creek Coalition – Chollas Creek Regional Park**





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