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News from the Rose Creek Watershed Coordinator

A Project of San Diego EarthWorks

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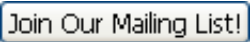
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Thanks for your interest in the Rose Creek Watershed. Please read on to learn about the projects taking place to improve our watershed's beautiful environmental and recreational attributes.

Kelly Makley
Rose Creek Watershed Coordinator
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A Project of San Diego EarthWorks



Invasive Plant Project Kicks Off

One of the primary threats to keeping parks and natural areas beautiful is infestations of weeds. Within our watershed, parts of Rose Canyon, Marian Bear Memorial Park and nearby private lands are infested with these problem plants. According to the organization [PlantRight](#), the control of non-native, invasive species costs California \$85 million every year. These plants have "escaped" from landscaped areas over many years and invaded our parks and natural spaces, causing a variety of problems. Pampas grass is a prime example of a plant that has invaded many of San Diego's natural areas.



Some parts of Rose Canyon are overrun with pampas grass.

Invasive plants create serious fire hazards and crowd out the native plants that provide homes for wildlife. They also lead to flooding, landslides and poor water quality of our creeks, rivers and bays. Rats are known to favor some invasive plants. In some areas, invasive plants are so densely grown that they have created places in which people engaged in illegal activities can hide. The invasive plants' seeds move in the wind and water, making it difficult to control them unless a comprehensive approach is taken.

Fortunately, a local organization, [The Chaparral Lands Conservancy](#) (Conservancy), has received a \$330,000 grant from [California's Wildlife Conservation Board](#) to fund the Rose Creek Watershed Invasives Control Project. An additional \$50,000 is being provided by [Friends of Rose Canyon](#) to remove invasive trees such as eucalyptus. The Conservancy hired [Recon Environmental](#), an environmental services firm, to conduct the restoration work. The methods and products used have been approved by the wildlife agencies tasked with protecting California's natural heritage.

The project is taking place primarily on public lands within the canyons and some private lands that border natural areas. Work began on November 5 in the eastern areas of the watershed and will continue throughout the next two years. Additional grants are being identified to fund three more years of work through 2017. The project was identified as an Action Item in [The Rose Creek Watershed Opportunities Assessment](#), the long-term planning document that identifies ways to improve the watershed.

If you live in the watershed, you can help support our efforts by removing any invasive plants from your property. A landscaper can help you, or [project staff](#) may be able to provide volunteers to assist you. The [Don't Plant a Pest!](#) brochure recommends many beautiful alternatives. Native alternatives can even save you money, because they require less water and fertilizer. Visit the [California Invasive Plant Council](#) or [PlantRight](#) to learn more about invasive plants.

Special Project at University City High School

Please attend the 12/12 University City Community Association Meeting for more details.

As part of the Rose Creek Watershed Invasives Control Project, a special project is taking place at [University City High School](#) (UCHS) because it is located in Rose Canyon. A partnership is currently forming between the [The Chaparral Lands Conservancy](#), [Friends of Rose Canyon](#) and the [San Diego Unified School District](#). Once this partnership is finalized, a grove of diseased, invasive eucalyptus trees along the north-facing hillside below the access road which extends into Rose Canyon will be removed in order to provide room for native plants to reclaim this natural area.



Eucalyptus trees behind UCHS are stressed from disease and create a fire hazard.

UCHS science students will help restore the site by planting native oak trees and shrubs, assisting in watering, and studying the rate of regrowth. [Recon Environmental](#) has graciously agreed to donate technical services and native plants to the project. The project presents a unique opportunity for the UCHS science teachers to connect classroom-based science with hands-on, real-world research experience. Once complete, this restoration site on the UCHS campus can serve as a unique outdoor "living laboratory" for future generations of science students.

A presentation on this Special Project will be made at the next University City Community Association meeting on 12/12 at the University City Library at 6:00 PM. Please attend the meeting to learn more about this project and provide your ideas.

Marsh Restoration Creates Habitat for Endangered Birds

The [University of California Natural Reserve System](#) has received \$10,130 from the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' Coastal Program](#) to conduct a small-scale restoration project at the [Kendall Frost Mission Bay Marsh Reserve](#). This Reserve, located at the mouth of the Rose Creek Watershed, is the last remaining salt marsh in Mission Bay. Endangered birds, including a community of Light-footed clapper rails, make their homes, search for food, and raise their chicks in this marsh.



The Light-footed clapper rail makes its home in Mission Bay's last remaining salt marsh.

Photo by Roy Little.

The Reserve Manager secured this funding to improve the "upper transition zone" of the marsh through a partnership with [San Diego EarthWorks](#). Their goal is to provide more habitat for wildlife such as the clapper rails during high tides. The area serving as the interface between dry land and the marsh will be improved as a result of the project. Restoration plans include re-contouring the slope to increase the area, removing invasive plants, and planting native plants such as cordgrass to attract wildlife. Volunteers from [Friends of Mission Bay Marshes](#) and students from [UC San Diego](#) and [Mission Bay High School](#) will be involved throughout the process to help grow and plant the native plants. The project is expected to be complete in Spring 2013.

Coming Soon: First Annual Rose Creek Fest

Extensive planning efforts are underway to develop the first-ever Rose Creek Fest which will take place on **February 9, 2013**. [San Diego EarthWorks](#), the creators of San Diego EarthFair, are producing the event in partnership with [Friends of Rose Creek](#) and [Campland on the Bay](#). This idea was initiated to build awareness and stewardship for Lower Rose Creek and the watershed. Expected to attract 1,000 local residents of all ages, the free event will involve activities that educate and engage its audience about issues concerning the creek and its watershed.



A community mural depicting the watershed will be hung on this wall and will be visible from the new Mike Gotch Bridge spanning lower Rose Creek.

The event will take place during the day at Campland on the Bay, where Rose Creek meets Mission Bay. Highlights include a Rubber Duck Derby, a community mural-painting project (which will feature artwork depicting the watershed), and guided creek tours with Friends of Rose Creek. The annual service event "Love Your Wetlands Day" will take place next to Campland on the

Bay to clean up the Kendall Frost Marsh. Family-friendly entertainment will include performances by [Dr. Wilderness](#) and the [Mission Bay High School Preservationists](#). Community partners will help us provide outreach to the public about water pollution, local wildlife, and the watershed.

Mark your calendars now for this fun, free, family-friendly event on February 9th and stay tuned for further information! Visit [San Diego EarthWorks](#) for event updates.

"Sense of Wonder" Project Continues with Support from SDG&E

[Friends of Rose Canyon](#) has been conducting outreach to the schools in University City about Rose Canyon and the Rose Creek Watershed for several years. Their Sense of Wonder Project is designed to provide experiences for schoolchildren that inspire a lifelong sense of wonder through guided nature walks in nearby canyons. Last year, they partnered with the Rose Creek Watershed Alliance to increase their scope of work throughout the watershed and received a \$20,000 [SDG&E](#) Environmental Champions Grant. With this funding, Friends of Rose Canyon was able to provide guided canyon walks to over 1,000 students from seven schools within the watershed.



From left to right: Kelly Makley (Rose Creek Watershed Coordinator), Clare Makley, Debby Knight (Friends of Rose Canyon), Rosie the Bobcat, and Lucia Stone (SDG&E)

Friends of Rose Canyon recently applied for an additional year of funding from the Environmental Champions Grant Program in order to continue the Sense of Wonder Project. We are pleased to report that they received an even larger grant of \$25,000 to support this project throughout the 2012-2013 school year. A big thank you goes out to SDG&E for funding this effort to build environmental stewardship throughout the watershed's schools. Work is already well underway to get even more students out in the canyons.

Planning Underway for New Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge

The [San Diego County Bicycle Coalition](#) (Coalition) has received a grant to improve San Diego's Regional Trail Network. They are working to build a bicycle and pedestrian bridge under Highways 5 and 52 that would connect riders and walkers in Rose Canyon and San Clemente Canyon to the Rose Canyon Bicycle Trail. Currently, users are forced to detour or cross the railroad tracks illegally. Ultimately, this bridge would enhance the ability for riders and walkers from University City and Clairemont to reach Mission Bay.



The new bridge would cross the railroad tracks under the 5/52 interchange.

The Coalition has hired [Wilson & Company](#) to prepare preliminary engineering

plans, specifications and an estimate to complete this bridge. As part of this process, the Coalition recently held two open house meetings to collect ideas and gather support from the community that uses the trails. Over 120 signatures were collected from people in support of this critical project. Many were enthusiastic upon learning about our efforts to enhance the area's recreational opportunities through a safe trail connection. The Coalition is awaiting the release of the Environmental Impact Report for the [Mid Coast Corridor Transit Project](#), which will operate in the same corridor, before proceeding to a more detailed design. This report is expected to be complete by early 2013.

Coastal Cleanup Day at Rose Creek a Huge (and Hot) Success

Over one hundred dedicated volunteers turned out to support [Friends of Rose Creek](#) at [Coastal Cleanup Day](#) at Rose Creek on Saturday, September 15 despite the record-breaking 95-degree weather. They filled three dumpsters with trash and invasive plants. Some of the groups represented were University of San Diego students, employees and their families from Helix Water District, the Kiwanis Club of Clairemont, and Francis Parker School. A huge thank you to everyone for helping improve Rose Creek, and to [Campland on the Bay](#) for provided free ice cream to all our helpers.



Volunteers taking a break in the shade.

Become a Facebook Fan of the Rose Creek Watershed

Please become a fan today to receive watershed news, updates, and nature photography by Roy Little.

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Rose Creek Watershed Alliance Convener: [San Diego EarthWorks](#)

San Diego EarthWorks convened the Rose Creek Watershed Alliance in 2004 as an informal organization of stakeholders to help plan the future of the 23,000-acre Rose Creek Watershed. They developed a planning document to encourage watershed improvements called [The Rose Creek Watershed Opportunities Assessment](#). The Assessment includes recommendations to improve the watershed's biological, cultural and recreational attributes and was accepted by the San Diego City Council in 2008.

Members:

Clairemont Mesa Planning Group
[Clairemont Town Council](#)
[Friends of Mission Bay Marshes](#)
[Friends of Rose Canyon](#)
[Friends of Rose Creek](#)
 Friends of Stevenson Canyon
 Marian Bear Natural Park Committee
[Mission Bay Park Committee](#)

Nobel Recreation Council
Pacific Beach Business Improvement District
Pacific Beach Planning Group
Rose Canyon Recreation Council
San Diego Audubon Society
San Diego Canyonlands
San Diego County Bicycle Coalition

Partners:

City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department
Campland on the Bay



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