



Annual Report 2014

Fiscal Year 2014 July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014



RIVERSIDE-CORONA RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

About the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District

The *Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District* (RCRCD) is a local government agency that works to conserve the natural resources (soil, water, native plants and wildlife) of areas within western Riverside and San Bernardino Counties in southern California.

The District advocates that each acre of land be managed according to its needs and promotes the sustainable use of natural resources for each land-use, including native habitats, urban/suburban areas, and agriculture.

RCRCD provides resource management assistance to private and public land users and conducts land treatment, education, and volunteer programs. The District works to sustain natural resources in a variety of ways:

- providing onsite technical assistance, such as irrigation system evaluations;
- restoring habitat through the removal of invasive species and reestablishment of native species; and
- educating broad audiences about stewardship of resources in natural, urban and agricultural ecosystems.

RCRCD is non-regulatory and self-governing with a five member Board of Directors. The Board retains local administration and direction over programs. The District achieves its conservation goals by coordinating public and private resources and by partnering with “cooperators”, land owners who are interested in conserving natural resources while using or developing property. A cooperator may be an individual land owner, a group, such as an Home Owner Association, agency and/or a business. The District enters into Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with cooperating agencies, which spell out working relationships.



RIVERSIDE-CORONA RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Santa Ana river in fall at RCRC D Atfilish property.

During the first half of Fiscal Year 2014, the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD) continued the celebration of its 60th anniversary.



This report of accomplishments for the period from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014 (Fiscal Year 2014) is organized to follow the three main RCRCD program areas:

Assisting Land Users with Resource Management **Habitat Land Management and Preservation** **Education, Outreach and Citizen Science**



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Assisting Land Users with Resource Management

RCRCD provides technical assistance to land users, “cooperators”, who are interested in conserving natural resources while using or developing property.

Services provided to cooperators include:

- onsite evaluation of a problem, such as an inefficient irrigation system;
- conservation planning based on resource data, such as soil type and crop water needs; and
- specifications for the installation of conservation practices, such as erosion control structures.

The RCRCD office provides resource data and planning tools, including soil and water testing, soil survey maps, and other technical information.

Some natural resource management and conservation planning information is provided to RCRCD cooperators from our technical partner the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Water Conservation

RCRCD’s Irrigation Water Management (IWM) Mobile Lab evaluates irrigation systems for efficiency and uniformity in applying water. The Mobile Lab auditor travels to cropland, homes, and large turf areas at parks, schools, and golf courses to test irrigation systems. The auditor then develops a report with recommendations for system improvements to help irrigators conserve water and save money. During Fiscal Year 2014, the IWM mobile lab performed a total of 26 evaluations on 272 acres, which included 3 agricultural evaluations on 23 acres and 23 turf evaluations on 249 acres.



RCRCD staff conducts water test.

Soil and Water Testing

RCRCO continued providing low-cost soil and water testing for private landowners and home owners. The lab completed eighteen soil tests and six irrigation water tests during Fiscal Year 2014. Soil tests evaluate macronutrients, soil texture, conductivity, and pH level. Water tests evaluate nitrate-nitrogen, phosphorus, pH level and conductivity



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Using a soil auger to determine if water is reaching the root zone.

Technical Advice and Organizational Support

RCRCO staff works on committees and provides information about sustaining natural resources in cooperation with a variety of entities including:

- Native Freshwater Fauna Working Group
- Riverside Green Action Plan (GAP)
- Santa Ana River Task Force
- Inland Urban Forestry Council (IUFC)
- Santa Ana River and Orange County Weed Management Area
- Riverside County-City Arroyo Watershed Committee (CCAC)
- California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC)
- Irvine Ranch Conservancy
- Upper Santa Ana River Habitat Conservation Planning Group



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Habitat Land Management and Preservation

Conserving Critical Habitat

The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD) is a non-regulatory local agency that works to permanently protect land that has habitat, scenic, and/or agricultural values. RCRCD works to connect blocks of habitat by preserving and restoring corridors or linkages for wildlife movement and migration. These lands are in addition to lands managed by other agencies.

RCRCD conserves open space through habitat restoration, management, and land preservation:

Restoration: The Conservation District improves degraded habitat by removing invasive species and trash, replanting native plants, restocking native animals, protecting soil from erosion, protecting water from pollutants, and more.

Management: RCRCD maintains and monitors restored habitat for water quality, critical wildlife species, invasion of exotic weeds, trash dumping, off-road vehicle (ORV) intrusion, noise, and other impacts.

Preservation: The District protects important areas from future development by accepting donations of land (fee title) and conservation easements.



RCRCD staff provided invasive fish removal during the Fiscal Year 2014.

Habitat Restoration

Restoration projects may be cooperative efforts between RCRCD, private landowners and other agencies on private and/or public lands, including the District's conservation easements. The amount of restoration is determined by permit requirements (by regulatory agencies) and other field assessments.

RCRCD restores habitat in natural areas by re-establishing local native plant species for a variety of plant communities: riparian, shrubland, wetland, grassland, oak woodland and more. Restoration efforts provide habitat for sensitive species including the Santa Ana Sucker, Western pond turtle, California Gnatcatcher, Stephen's Kangaroo Rat, Horned Lizard, Red-sided Garter Snake, Least Bell's Vireo, Willow Flycatcher and other birds, mammals, and amphibians.



Alkali chalice at Tequesquite Arroyo alkali meadow

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Conservation Easements

During Fiscal Year 2014, the District continued to work to obtain land and conservation easements. Most of the conservation lands require extensive restoration, including removal of exotic weeds and replanting with native species.

Conservation Easements	Acreage
Cajalco Wetlands (in progress)	10.2
City of Riverside – Lower Tequesquite	2.71
Department of Water Resources Slope	4.9
Department of Water Resources Slope	30
McBride (in progress)	19
Mission Ranch	3
Munaretto	1.5
Riverside County Park and OSP - Lower Tequesquite	4.30
Shinkle - Highgrove	0.6
Sycamore Creek Preserve	72.66
Tagorda	0.3
Temescal Wash	13

RCRCD Owned	Acreage
Bedford-Temescal Parcel – DWR (in progress)	15
Boulder Basins & Drainages (in progress)	28.7
Chandler	7.8
Deleo	26.49
Dos Lagos Open Space – Temescal	135
Goldenstar	8.21

Wildlife Corridors

RCRCD manages many valuable conservation lands that are important to the region's plants and animals. The habitat lands provide corridors which link larger blocks of habitat for wildlife movement and migration. They also help improve water quality, provide beautiful vistas, and stabilize eroding waterways. Many of these conservation lands have required extensive restoration.

Most, but not all of the District's conserved and managed lands are located within three main areas: the Temescal Corridor, Cajalco Corridor, Springbrook Corridor, and Riverside Area Arroyos.

Temescal Corridor: One of the District's long-term goals is to preserve habitat lands that extend from the Cleveland National Forest through Temescal Canyon to the Gavilan Plateau and Lake Mathews. Besides multiple easements, RCRCD owns natural lands (fee title) in the Dos Lagos - Temescal Open Space Conservation Area, (135 acres of upland habitat) and the Deleo Conservation Area, which includes 26 acres of riparian, alluvial, and upland habitat.

Cajalco Corridor: The Temescal Corridor connects to the Cajalco Corridor. The Cajalco floodplain and adjacent Gavilan Hills support a variety of important habitats, including: wetlands, waterways, oak woodlands, juniper woodlands, and alkali plant communities.

Springbrook Corridor: The Springbrook Wash includes the Shinkle conservation easement. During the year, the District worked to acquire additional properties, including Spring Mountain Ranch and others. The corridor connects the river to the Box Springs Mountains. There has also been a movement to create a park at Blue Mountain in the hills above Grand Terrace, so that area will also benefit from the corridor.

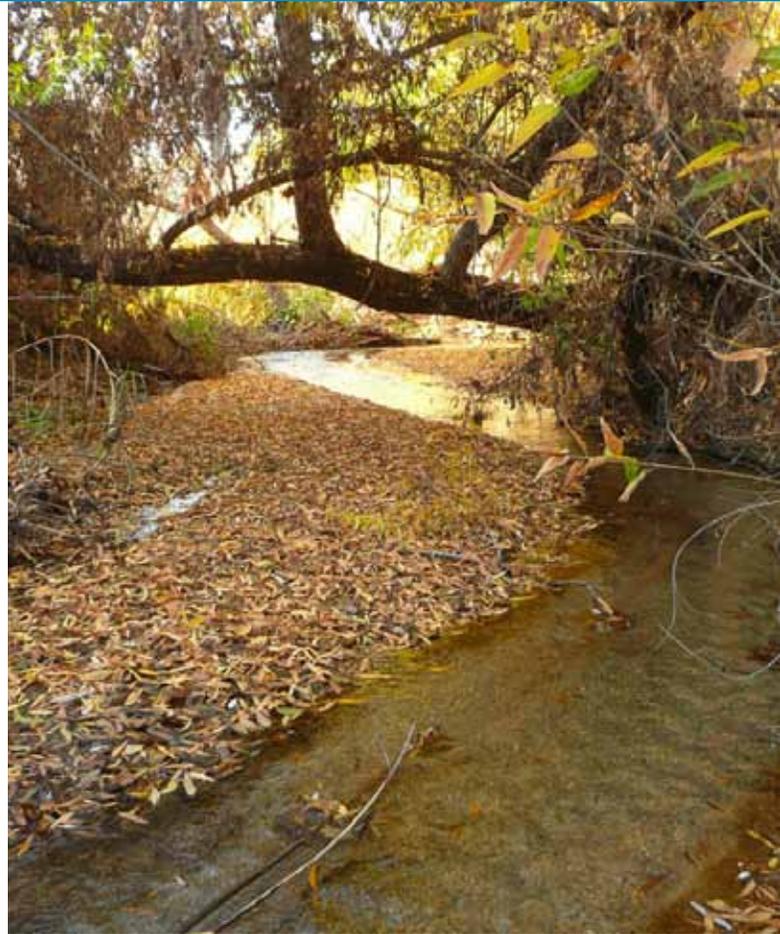
Riverside Arroyos: Many of RCRCD's conservation easements are along beautiful and important arroyos (waterways) that flow through unincorporated parts of Riverside County and across adjoining portions of the City of Riverside. The District worked to help educate homeowners, land users and local groups about stewardship at the wildland-urban interface. Staff presented for the Lake Mathews Homeowners Association. Residents learned about specific actions that they could take to reduce their impacts on habitat and wildlife, such as by eliminating invasive plant species from landscaping and using integrated pest management techniques in their yards.

The following publications were distributed in neighborhoods:

Living on the Edge of the Urban-Wildland Interface www.rcrcd.org/uploads/files/LivingOnTheEdge.pdf

Conserving Critical Habitat www.rcrcd.org/uploads/files/ConservingCriticalHabitat.pdf

Protecting our Native Fish www.rcrcd.org/uploads/files/ProtectingOurNativeFish_6-10-10.pdf .



Allessandro arroyo.

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Monitoring of Habitat Restoration Projects

RCRCO staff conducted periodic monitoring of 18 restoration projects during FY 2014. Staff conducted annual, quantitative monitoring for nine restoration projects. Quantitative monitoring included measurements of survival, vegetation cover, and species diversity. For all other planting projects, qualitative monitoring was conducted, including taking photos from fixed photo points and recording notes on general condition of the vegetation.

As part of ongoing stewardship, RCRCO coordinates the cleanup of trash and debris and conducts water quality testing and wildlife monitoring on easements. RCRCO blocks illegal Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) routes and replants disturbed soil with native vegetation.

Mitigation Projects for Loss of Habitat

RCRCO continued to work with over 23 developers and the Cities of Riverside and Corona to actively restore and monitor habitat to compensate for development impacts and land use changes. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Army Corps of Engineers and Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board allow RCRCO to work in waterways through Permits 1601, 1603, 404 and 401. Mitigation restoration was conducted at three new project sites during FY 2014. This included restoration of alluvial scrub and riparian habitat in Temescal Wash. Restoration of more alluvial scrub and riparian habitat was planned for areas along Temescal Wash as well as riparian habitat in the lower Tequesquite Arroyo.

In-Lieu Fee Program

During the prior year, RCRCO worked with Army Corps of Engineers developing an “In Lieu Fee” program to provide for increased demand of mitigation opportunities that offset impacts due to urban development. During its first full operational year, the District’s In Lieu Fee Program sold 3.43 rehabilitation credits and 11.75 enhancement credits for the Santa Ana Watershed.

In Lieu Fee (ILF) is an approach to habitat mitigation in which a “permittee” (i.e.: land developer or public agency project proponent) pays a fee to a third party “in lieu of” conducting project-specific mitigation. ILF mitigation is used to compensate for unavoidable impacts to wetlands or other waters when it is in the best interest of the environment, and when other approaches to compensation are not available or practical.

Monitoring of an alkali meadow

Santa Ana Watershed Association (SAWA)

RCRCD is a member of the Santa Ana Watershed Association. SAWA is a nonprofit organization that works to restore native habitats within the Santa Ana River watershed by removing invasive plants and animals from waterways and monitoring wildlife populations

Santa Ana River and Orange County Weed Management Area

RCRCD continued as a partner with the Santa Ana River and Orange County Weed Management Area (SAROCWMA), which works to eradicate non-native weeds on both private and public lands in portions of Riverside, San Bernardino and Orange Counties. The Weed Management Area has been successful in controlling common invasive weeds, especially *Arundo donax* (giant reed), perennial pepperweed, Tamarisk (salt cedar) and castor bean. The group works to control populations of invasive plants but also targets smaller populations of weeds and removes them before they become a problem. Funding was not received for 2014, which reduced accomplishments.

Fish and Amphibian Programs

RCRCD conducted a variety of restoration and research projects in an effort to increase fish and amphibian populations in their native ranges of the Santa Ana Watershed.

Native fish and amphibian species are impacted by loss or degradation of stream habitat, water pollution, drought, non-native fish and aquatic animals, flood control structures, water diversion, sand and gravel mining, and changes in the watershed that result in erosion, sediment and debris flows.

Greenbelt Aquatic Facility

RCRCD purchased 10.85 acres in the greenbelt area of Riverside for an offsite aquatic facility that will be used to propagate and reintroduce native fish into the Upper Santa Ana River Watershed. This will be a cooperative effort between the RCRCD, regulatory agencies and local water districts. Funding will come from Prop 84 and other funding mechanisms.

Native Fish Rescues, Reintroductions and Studies

During FY 2014, RCRCD's stream supported a native fish population of Speckled Dace, Arroyo Chub, and Santa Ana Sucker, a threatened species. The number of fish varies from year to year, depending on natural reproduction. The recirculating, 300-foot long stream was constructed to support and propagate native fish.

Staff provided assistance to local water districts, flood control districts, cities and regulatory agencies by monitoring native fish in the Santa Ana River and its tributaries. Monitoring is needed when maintenance activities are conducted at various locations.



Sampling for fish.

Riverside Waterways

RCRCO continued to work with local water districts, US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the City of Riverside on the restoration of the lower Tequesquite Arroyo for the benefit of the Santa Ana sucker. The creek was degraded due to trash, exotic plants and lack of connectivity to the river. The five-year project involves removing exotic species, controlling erosion on channel banks, placing substrate onto the channel bottoms for spawning habitat, and planting of native vegetation.

RCRCO also restored riparian areas adjacent to Anza Drain and Hole Creek in collaboration with the County and City of Riverside. The District received \$125,000 from the Santa Ana River Restoration/Recovery Trust Fund held by San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District to restore native fish habitat in the lower Tequesquite Arroyo.



RCRCO staff conducts water test.

Water Quality Testing

During Fiscal Year 2014 staff monitored water quality quarterly to semimonthly at Lee Lake Conservation Easement pond, other sites in Temescal Canyon, RCRCO's native fish stream and raceways, and lower Tequesquite Creek. Staff monitored periodically in Coldwater Canyon and occasionally at other sites. The testing provides data for RCRCO and the Regional Water Quality Control Board to help track water quality fluctuation and trends.

Amphibian Restoration

RCRCO and partners work to foster and reintroduce amphibian populations into conservation areas. Some species include the Western pond turtle, California salamander, West coast newt and California tree frog.

Plant Programs and Projects

The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD) provides native plants for habitat restoration, landscaping and other types of planting projects. RCRCD propagates plants at its native plant nursery for a variety of re-vegetation projects. Refrigerated seed storage facilities are used to store locally-collected seed. Staff helps train others in production and use of native plants in ways that are beneficial to the natural biological diversity of southern California.

Native Plant Nursery

At the native plant nursery, staff continued to propagate plants from the local watershed and eco-region for current and future planting projects. RCRCD grew 70 native species with an inventory ranging from about 7,000 to 10,000 container plants during the Fiscal Year. In addition, staff maintains a “cutting” nursery of mule fat and five species of willow. The plants were started from wild-collected seeds and rhizomes. 3,364 plants were added to two alkali wetland restoration projects and one alluvial scrub/riparian restoration project during 2014. In addition, staff propagated plants for another alluvial scrub restoration project and took care of plants for the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS). RCRCD also hosted a “leftover” plant sale for the local CNPS chapter in November 2013.

During Fiscal Year 2014, RCRCD supplied approximately 100 plants for landscaping projects, including at RCRCD facilities. From FY 2005-2014, the nursery has supplied more than 26,700 local native plants for restoration, erosion control, and water quality projects and about 4,500 for landscaping.

Seed Collections

Staff continued to store special collections of seeds in temperature-and-humidity-controlled rooms and to propagate plants from seed for future restoration, water quality, and bank stabilization projects. The severe drought hindered seed production in wild populations of plants, so seed collecting was minimal. Fortunately, staff were able to utilize stored seed to produce plants for local restoration projects. All stored seeds were collected from local, native populations of plants to maintain the genetic diversity of our area.

RCRCD partnered with the Irvine Ranch Conservancy to store its seed in refrigerated storage rooms. The native plant seeds will be used for the Conservancy’s future restoration projects.

Alluvial Scrub Native Plant Materials Project

Plant Restoration Ecologist Dr. Arlee Montalvo continued work on a collaborative project which was funded by the USDA Forest Service Native Plant Materials Program. Montalvo continued to collect information about native plants that will be used to prepare plant profiles that focus on use of plants for habitat restoration. Additional funding was received to carry this project through to Fall 2015, so that Dr. Montalvo can add recommendations for seed transfer to the native plant profiles. An annual report on the project was provided to the Forest Service in August.



Collecting cuttings for restoration projects



A cover crop of native plants provides habitat for pollinators and beneficial insects.

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Education, Outreach, Citizen Science and Partnerships

Education Projects

Corona Water Education Program

RCRCD conducts water education programs for schools and youth groups on behalf of the City of Corona's Department of Water and Power. The presentations include information about Corona's water supply and hands-on activities about keeping storm water clean. Resource Educator Erin Snyder conducted 64 presentations for 2,033 elementary school students from July, 2013 through June, 2014. The presentations were supplemented with educational materials including the booklets *Water Is Life*, *Where Does your Watershed?*, and "Santa Ana River Steward" bookmarks. Teachers were provided the Educators' Guide and posters of the Santa Ana River Watershed.



Girl Scouts learned about underground water basins and made "edible aquifers".

California School for the Deaf Service Learning

Throughout the academic year, California School for the Deaf (CSDR) students completed a variety of projects. The students helped in the Land Use Learning Center creating compost, working the garden plots, spreading mulch, and restoring the amphitheater colored rock designs. At their school site, and at Olivewood Memorial Park, the students monitored bluebird nest boxes.

Volunteer Projects

On occasion, individuals or groups assist with specific projects. During FY 2014, Sigma Chi from Cal State San Bernardino, representatives of Phi Sigma Pi from a variety of colleges, and Riverside Community College students volunteered to work on improvements at the LandUse Learning Center and on habitat restoration at Tequesquite Park.



Volunteers planted native plants at the LandUse Learning Center.

Educational Material Distribution

Free educational materials are offered annually to all elementary, middle and high school teachers who work or reside within the RCRC D's boundaries, via a "Materials Order Form". Offerings included the 2013 NACD stewardship education materials: *Where Does your Water Shed?*. For the 2013-2014 school year, staff distributed more than 18,700 publications for nearly 4,000 students in five school districts (Riverside, Corona, Colton, Grand Terrace and Lake Elsinore). Materials were provided to 115 teachers at 47 schools. Educational materials included: *Soil to Spoon*, *Forests for People*, *Dig It! The Secrets of Soil*, *Soil Saver Club*, and *Kids CAN*.

An additional 1,318 educational handouts were provided to local partners such as Riverside Metropolitan Museum, Riverside County Flood Control, California Native Plant Society, Grand Terrace Environmental Club, California Naturalist, Santa Ana Watershed Association and Colton Wildlands Conservancy.

Staff assisted the National Association of Conservation Districts by reviewing stewardship booklets: *Local Heroes-Your Hard Working Pollinators*.

Outreach Efforts

Events

RCRC D helped promote community sustainability events. Cumulatively, thousands of people attended the events and were provided nearly 5,000 educational materials. More than 500 children participated in hands-on learning activities at the events.

2013-2014 events included:

- Riverside Boy Scout Roundtable
- Riverside Neighborhood Conference
- Temescal Wash Cleanup
- Hike Up Blue Mountain
- Earth Night in the Garden
- Duck Daze
- Corona Garden Festival

New events for FY 2014:

- California Inland Empire Naturalist Training
- UCR Botanic Garden - Garden Festival
- Santa Ana River Trust Fall Fest
- Neighbors of Mt. Rubidoux Area
- Grow Riverside Conference
- Corona-Norco Day of the Child
- Master Gardeners' "Ask the Experts"



Earth Night in the Garden event 2014

Publications

The history: *Celebrate 60 Years of Resource Conservation 1953-2013* was developed to commemorate the RCRCDD's 60th anniversary.

Educational Publications

RCRCDD creates localized educational publications about stewardship and resource management and distributes them at outreach events, workshops, and at partners' programs.

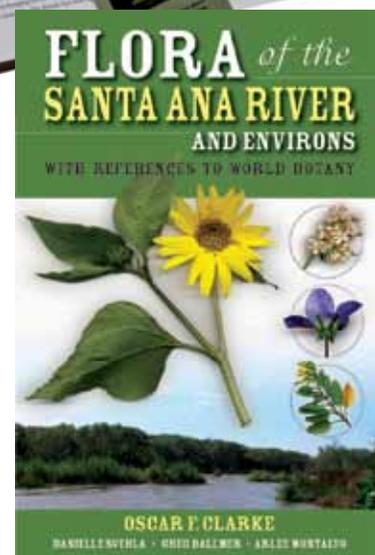
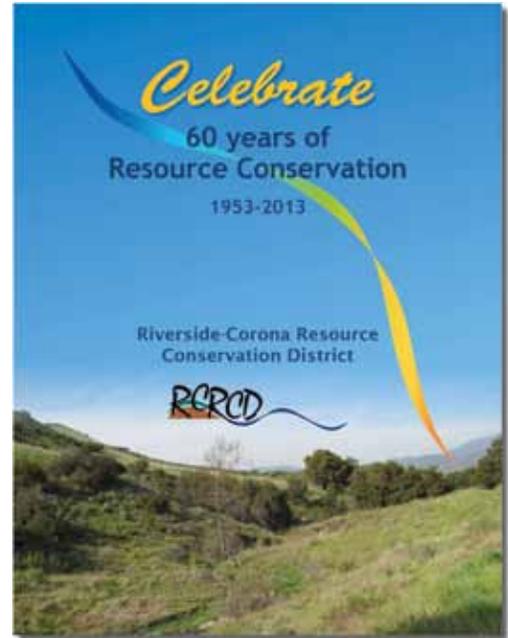
Regional Books

Staff continues to promote and sell the enhanced, second edition of *Backyard Birds of the Inland Empire* by Sheila Kee, which was developed by the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District and published by Heyday Books in collaboration with Inlandia Institute. Interested businesses may purchase the book wholesale from Heyday Books for resale to the public. The book provides descriptions and tips for identifying over 50 of the most common birds that visit yards in Southern California's inland region. Each bird is identified by color, then described by its behavioral traits, calls, food preferences, and nesting patterns. The guide sells for \$14.95 at bookstores, local museums, and at RCRCDD. The first edition, published in 2004, won the National Association of Conservation Districts' Outreach Award.

RCRCDD also sells *Flora of the Santa Ana River and Environs* by Oscar Clarke, Greg Ballmer, Danielle Sveta and Dr. Arlee Montalvo (our plant restoration ecologist). RCRCDD helped sponsor the first edition, and sells copies for \$25.00. The book is used as a reference for training workshops, such as for the California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM).

Website and Social Media

RCRCDD uses its web site: www.RCRCDD.org, to raise awareness and promote sustainable practices. Staff maintains a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/RCRCDD to help publicize upcoming events.



Citizen Science

Bluebird Nestbox Monitoring

During the 2014 nesting season, February through July, 238 baby bluebirds fledged. Twenty volunteer citizen-scientists hung and monitored 30 nest boxes for native birds including Western Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, Bewick's Wrens and Ash-throated Flycatchers. There were 53 nesting attempts, 273 eggs, 256 hatchlings and 238 fledglings at three sites. The results were submitted to Cornell University's Birdhouse Network, the California Bluebird Recovery Program, the North American Bluebird Society, and Southern California Bluebird Club.

Resource Educator Erin Snyder provided training for *Project NestWatch*, and as a result, some volunteers are now directly submitting their data online.

RCRCO volunteers manage the longest running, most prolific Bluebird Trail in Riverside County.



Bluebird nest box monitoring

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Riverside Citizen Science

RCRCO worked with the Riverside Metropolitan Museum and partners to develop a strategic plan for a Citizen Science program for Riverside. Additional partners include:

- University of California, Riverside
- City of Riverside's Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services
- US Forest Service-Fire Lab
- Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of Natural History

As a result, grants have been obtained to build a citizen science nature center at Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park, and staff naturalists were hired. A dedication for the building was held, and it was named the Ameal Moore Nature Center for a former city council member.

Riverside Citizen Science launched the Riverside Nature Spotter app that helps people share their observations of insects, plants, animals, or other living things. Spotters can send a photo with questions about what they've seen and a naturalist will reply with feedback. Observations are collected and used to create an online database located at iNaturalist.org. For those who don't have an Android or an iPhone for the app, photos can be taken with any camera and uploaded through a computer. See uploads at: www.inaturalist.org/projects/riverside-citizen-science



Riverside Citizen Science
Strategic Plan



Partnerships and Collaboration

RCRCD partners with numerous organizations to provide education and outreach programs. Through these synergistic partnerships we are able to reach broader audiences. Some of our educational partners include the Inland Urban Forest Council, California Native Plant Society (CNPS), California Urban Forest Council, California ReLeaf, UC Riverside, Preserve the Plateau, Friends of the Entomology Museum at UCR (FERM), and the Riverside Municipal Museum.

NACD Annual Meeting 2014

RCRCD was very involved in helping to plan and host the National Association of Conservation Districts' Annual Conference "Conservation: Locally Grown-Nationally Known", which was held in Anaheim in February, 2014. During the annual meeting, staff hosted a tour, the RCRCD booth, and provided a resource table for the Share Fair which was about conservation education. Resource Educator Erin Snyder presented a session on the new *Dig Deeper* educational materials during the conference.

Staff hosted a tour of the Resource Conservation Center and an alkali meadow restoration site for NACD visitors from other states.

Inland Urban Forest Council

RCRCD's Public Affairs Manager Diana Ruiz helped the Inland Urban Forest Council (IUFC) with their educational programs, newsletter and website. RCRCD hosted the second part of a plant appraisal workshop called: "Trees Make Dollars and \$ence". IUFC also conducted two pruning workshops: one for Master Gardeners and one for professional arborists. The workshops included hands-on training. The demonstrations benefitted tree development in the parking lot and in the LandUse Learning Center.



The Inland Urban Forest Council conducted tree pruning workshops at the LandUse Learning Center..

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California Native Plant Society

RCRC D continued to support and collaborate with the California Native Plant Society's (CNPS) local Riverside-San Bernardino chapter. Staff provided plants for the CNPS plant sale and held a second sale at the RCRC D's nursery.

Green Accountability and Performance Committee

Public Affairs Manager Diana Ruiz served on Riverside's Green Accountability and Performance Committee, an outgrowth of the Green Action Plan. The committee meets quarterly to review the City's progress toward sustainability. Riverside was designated as California's first Emerald City for its efforts.

California Naturalist

RCRC D worked with the Santa Ana Watershed Association (SAWA) and partners to bring the CA Naturalist program to the Inland Empire. Staff conducted training and a tour for the first class of Inland Empire Naturalists. The new state program, through the University of California Cooperative Extension, is conducted similarly to Master Gardeners. Volunteers participate in a 40-hour course to become certified naturalists. Learn more at: www.facebook.com/InlandEmpireNaturalist.



Staff provided training for the first class of the California Naturalists and a tour of the LandUse Learning Center.

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Resource Conservation Center

RCRCD manages the Resource Conservation Center, a 9-acre facility that includes the Land-Use Learning Center demonstration garden and a native plant nursery.

The facility and buildings house the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Area Office, the California Department of Fish and Game's monitoring unit for the Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), and the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA's) facility for research and control of the Asian Citrus Psyllid and the Glassy-winged Sharpshooter, a vector of Pierce's Disease.

Land-Use Learning Center

The LandUse Learning Center (LLC) is a 3-acre demonstration of sustainable practices for the three main land uses of southern California: native habitats, urban areas, and agriculture. During Fiscal Year 2014, the Ag area was planted, concrete building pads and trails were poured, and an entry building was installed. Each land use has been developed with trails, plantings, interpretive signs, and appropriate plant list.



Signa Chi volunteers worked at the LandUse Learning Center

The **Urban Area** includes an Arbor Trail and four styles of water-wise backyards from natural to formal: a habitat garden, native landscape, Mediterranean-courtyard garden, and a sustainable backyard. Together, the Urban Area showcases plants that are suited to the local climate and soils. The plantings attract wildlife, provide food, and demonstrate substitutes for high-water use plants. The Arbor Trail has interpretive signs about urban forestry. The Urban Area also includes native hedge and alternative lawn demonstrations. Native grasses were donated by Delta Bluegrass through distributor S & S Seeds. The plantings were designed and installed by RCRC D staff.



Alternative lawn demonstrations with visitors.

In the **Native Habitat**, a created stream is used to study and raise Arroyo Chub, Speckled Dace and the Santa Ana Sucker, a threatened fish. The fish reproduce in the stream, are tagged, counted, measured and released into the Santa Ana River or tributaries as conditions permit. Four locally important plant communities are depicted with plantings. An artist has created posters and interpretive signs which include the plant and animal species that are found in chaparral, oak woodland, and riparian plant communities.



Cover crop in the sustainable agriculture area.



A raceway for the study of red algae and native fish.

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The **Agricultural Area** was planted with a variety of citrus and deciduous fruit trees and vines. A native cover crop and hedgerow demonstration were developed to support beneficial insects.

Administration

During FY 2014, staff continued to seek funding sources, create partnerships, and sub-lease portions of the Resource Conservation Center at 4500 Glenwood Dr., Riverside.

Sycamore Creek Preserve and Field Office

During Fiscal Year 2014, RCRCO's sub-office at Indian Truck Trail in Temescal Canyon was leased to a local builder to generate funds. However, staff continued to manage the conservation easement at Sycamore Creek.



Temescal Open Space during drought.

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The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCO) is an independent, special district, enabled under Division 9 of the California Public Resources Code. As defined in Division 9, Resource Conservation Districts are given broad abilities to help sustain natural resources and to protect resources from preventable damage and waste. The scope of work at RCRCO reflects local issues and focuses on sustainable ecosystem management. RCRCO programs specifically address water conservation, soil erosion, storm water quality, habitat restoration, conservation education, and more. RCRCO was created by a vote of the people in 1953.



For more information about RCRCO, please contact
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