

# OPENING THE OUTDOORS

## IMPACT REPORT



The San Diego  
Foundation  
Growing a Vibrant Region



# PARKS FOR EVERYONE

GREEN ACCESS FOR SAN DIEGO COUNTY



**Parks for Everyone report released in 2010**

**T**he San Diego Foundation (TSDF) improves the quality of life in all of our communities by providing leadership for effective philanthropy that builds enduring assets by promoting community solutions through research, convenings and actions that advance the common good. From the beaches and bays, to the mountains and desert, the quality of life our region offers is widely defined by its natural beauty and interconnected system of parks and natural areas. **Yet not all San Diegans can access our great outdoors and the many benefits nature has to offer.**

In 2010, TSDF partnered with The City Project, REI, GreenInfo Network and donors to develop the *Parks for Everyone* report to better understand gaps in access to green space in the San Diego region. The report found that while more than 45% of San Diego County's total land area is green space, many low-income, ethnically diverse communities have limited access. In fact, the report found the most park-poor areas of the region are also the areas with the highest concentrations of low-income households and people of color.

The report findings were the catalyst for the creation of the TSDF Opening the Outdoors Program to **protect, connect** and **increase access** to the outdoors for all San Diegans across the region.

## Parks for Everyone Report Goals & Outcomes



**Increase natural amenities** such as parks and walking trails in communities where they do not exist



**Promote volunteer opportunities** to help restore and improve parks and outdoor spaces



**Inspire the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts** and future stewards of the land



Support nonprofits inspiring **people of all ages** to get involved in protecting our region's green spaces



**Catalyze new partnerships** among organizations working to increase access to the outdoors



Provide an **evidence-based framework** to leverage additional philanthropic funding into our region for an interconnected system of parks and natural areas throughout San Diego County

The Opening the Outdoors Program uses strategic and competitive grantmaking, research, and convenings to collaborate with nonprofits, donors, government and corporate partners to create sustained change in the community. Through strategic grantmaking totaling more than \$3.9 million we have supported community-driven efforts to increase accessible outdoor space in park-poor communities and encourage youth to learn more through hands-on education.

The success of the Opening the Outdoors Program builds upon nearly 20 years of impact from The San Diego Foundation Environment Program. Since 2000, the work of The San Diego Foundation and its partners has resulted in:



**80+ local nonprofit organizations** supported through **33 partnerships**



**30,000+ youth & families** accessing the outdoors



**35,000+ volunteers & residents** engaged in community outreach, education & nonprofit programs



**\$170 million** invested for land acquisition and stewardship



**47,000 acres** of green space protected or improved



**1,100+ parks** mapped in a new online park-finder tool, Get Outside San Diego



**10 miles** of trails created or restored



**5,500** native plants installed





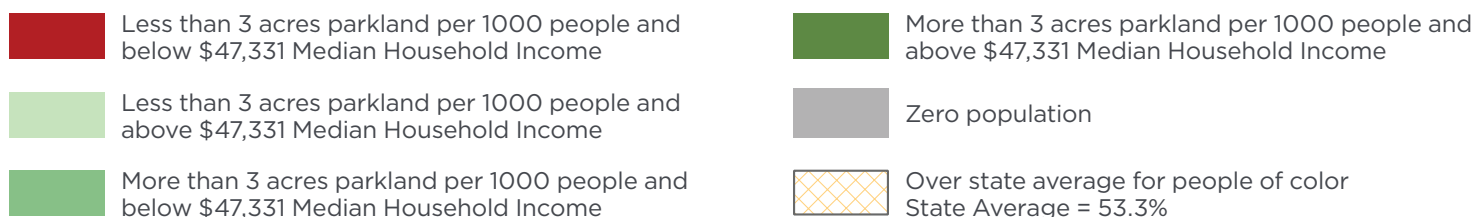
# PARK-POOR AREAS MAP: 2010

Impressively, 45 percent of the total land area of the San Diego county is green space. However, many communities are park-poor even though the region as a whole is park-rich.

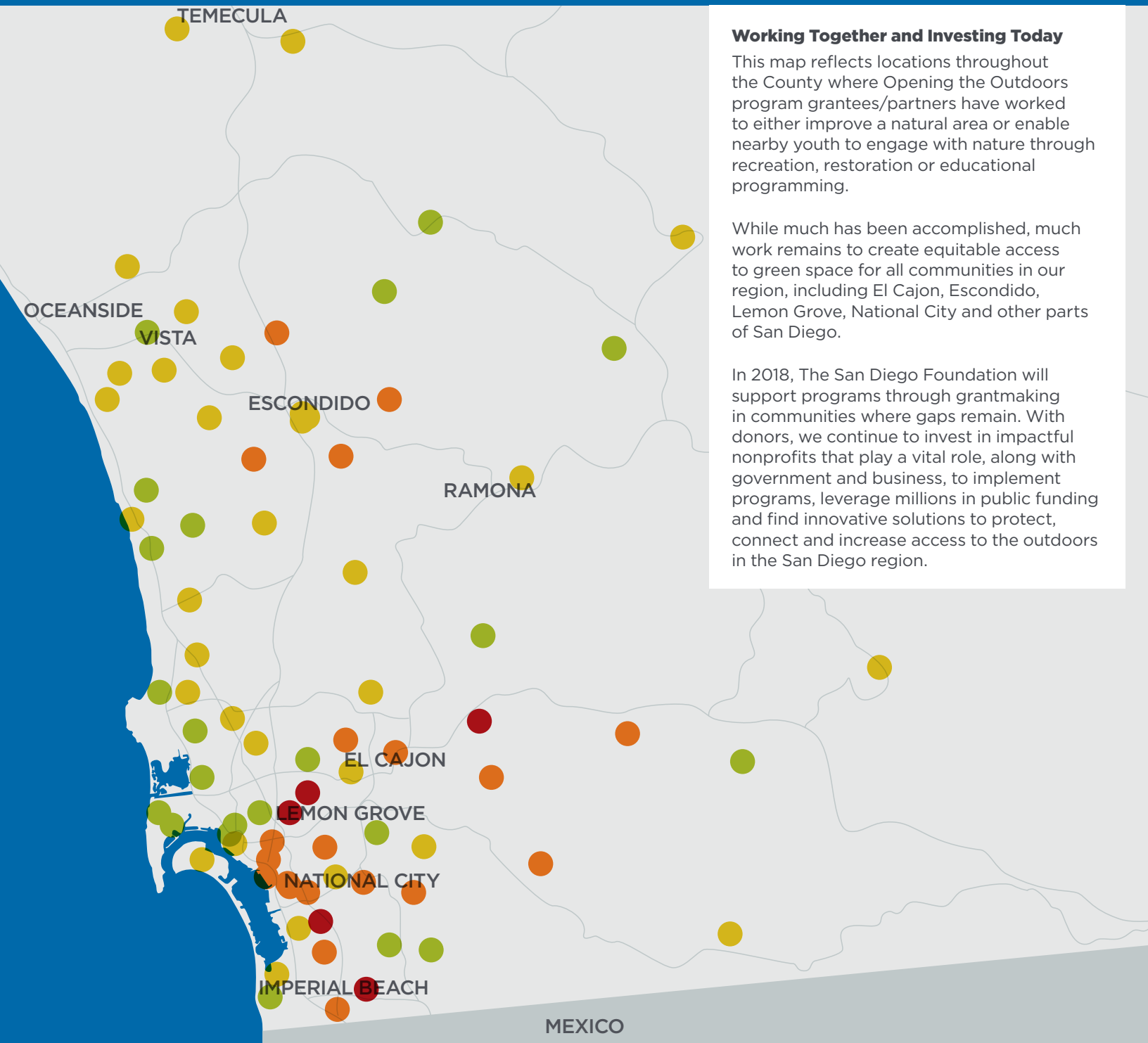
The majority of residents live within the western portion of the county. In general, there are far fewer acres of green space and far more people in this area than elsewhere in the county. Not all San Diegans have equal access to green space.

As this map shows, the most park-poor areas of the region are also the areas with the highest concentrations of low-income households and people of color. In fact, there are few areas in the region with high concentrations of low-income households and people of color that are not park-poor.

Map from *Parks for Everyone* report



# OPENING THE OUTDOORS IMPACT MAP: 2010-2017



Access to green space is shown to have a positive impact on quality of life. However, the 2010 *Parks for Everyone* report revealed that many underserved communities in San Diego have limited or no access to local parks. In response to these findings, The San Diego Foundation strategically shifted its grantmaking priorities to better connect, protect and increase access to nature across the county, especially for San Diegans in underserved and park-poor communities.

# STORIES OF IMPACT

## Protect



### Protecting Our Canyons

San Diego has a unique patchwork of more than 150 canyons that stretch out into diverse urban communities, for some offering the only opportunity to experience nature. Recognizing the importance of these open spaces, The San Diego Foundation worked with **San Diego Canyonlands** to create a 7-mile canyon trail loop system in City Heights, one of the region's most ethnically diverse, low-income communities. Today, thanks to the grant project, more than 65,000 City Heights residents and visitors have access to the outdoors right from their front door.



### Catalyzing Conservation

As the San Diego population grows and development increases, protection of the region's natural spaces is critical to maintain an environment and climate we can cherish for future generations. Through \$59,000 in Conservation Catalyst Fund loans to **Endangered Habitats Conservancy** and **San Diego River Park Foundation**, The San Diego Foundation and its partners helped preserve 850 acres of land in the El Cajon, Lakeside and Julian communities. Without the loans, these wild lands, endangered plants and threatened animals would still be at risk.

## Connect



### Partnering for Impact - Watershed Explorers

Proximity to green space and limited access to transportation often prevents students from visiting San Diego's most treasured natural areas. **San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy, San Dieguito River Park, San Diego Archaeological Center** and **Volcan Mountain Foundation** came together through an Opening the Outdoors grant to purchase a passenger van for educational trips. To date, the "Watershed Explorers" program has provided more than 25 trips to over 250 students from schools such as Springall Academy in La Mesa, Monroe Clark Middle School and Hoover High School in City Heights.



## Get Outside San Diego

The San Diego Foundation works with many visionary donors who want to leave a legacy and invest in innovative projects that will help San Diegans across the region. The Brutten family is a fitting example. These philanthropists helped create a new online tool, **GetOutsideSanDiego.org**, to connect our community to the more than 1,100 parks in San Diego with the click of a button. The mobile-friendly website can help find a local park, a new outdoor adventure, or a nearby park with a choice of 16 outdoor activities from hiking and kayaking to taking a dog for a walk.



## Access



### HACER - Helping Achieve Community Empowerment through Revitalization

The *Parks for Everyone* report listed Logan Heights as one of the many communities in San Diego with limited access to green space. In 2015, through a grant from The San Diego Foundation, **Logan Heights CDC** and **Space4Art** worked with more than 400 residents to transform a trash-filled, vacant lot on Imperial Avenue into a 5,000 square-foot park and garden. The Gilliam Family Community Garden and Park now serves as a central gathering place and economic driver for Logan Heights by hosting community events and educational trainings on site.



### Imperial Beach People's Park Project

Pocket parks, or small community parks set within urban areas, provide unique opportunities for residents to gather together, engage with their neighbors and experience the outdoors. Thanks to a grant from The San Diego Foundation, **4Walls International**, **Wild Willow Farm** and **Border Education Program**, launched a community-driven effort to turn a once trash-filled lot enclosed by a chain link fence into the "Imperial Beach People's Park". The project engaged 380 youth and more than 350 volunteers to install 350 native plants, six sculptures, and community art for all to experience.

While much has been accomplished, much remains to be done to create equitable access to green space in San Diego County. Join us today by giving with The San Diego Foundation and other donors through the Opening the Outdoors program so all San Diegans can enjoy a clean and healthy environment. **Visit [SDFoundation.org/OpeningtheOutdoors](https://SDFoundation.org/OpeningtheOutdoors) or contact [info@SDFoundation.org](mailto:info@SDFoundation.org) to learn more.**

# Opening the Outdoors Partners

Grantees and their project partners working to protect, connect and increase access to the outdoors with support of \$3.9 million in grants between 2010 and 2017.

4Walls International	Ocean Discovery Institute
AjA Project	Ocean Connectors
Alpine Education Foundation	Olivenhain Municipal Water District
Anza-Borrego Foundation	Olivewood Gardens and Learning Center
ARTS - A Reason To Survive	Outdoor Foundation
Back Country Land Trust of San Diego County	Outdoor Outreach
Barrio Logan College Institute	Paradise Creek Educational Park Inc.
Bayside Community Center	Preserve Calavera
Bike/Walk Escondido	River Partners
Border Education Program	San Diego Archaeological Center
California State Parks	San Diego Audubon Society
Cajon Valley Union School District	San Diego Canyonlands, Inc.
California Trout	San Diego Coastkeeper
CALPIRG Education Fund	San Diego Mountain Biking Association
Casa Familiar	San Diego Natural History Museum
Center on Policy Initiatives	San Diego River Conservancy
Circulate San Diego	Second Chance
Conservation Biology Institute	San Diego Unified School District Office of Children and Youth in Transition
Earth Discovery Institute	San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority
Endangered Habitats Conservancy	San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy
Endangered Habitats League	San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy
Environmental Health Coalition	San Pasqual Tribal Environmental Protection Office
The Escondido Creek Conservancy	SAY San Diego
Escondido Education COMPACT	Sierra Club, San Diego Chapter
Escondido Unified School District	The Chaparral Lands Conservancy
Friends of Famosa Slough	The Conservation Fund
Girl Scouts San Diego	The San Diego River Park Foundation
GreenInfo Network	Transforming Youth Outdoors
Groundwork San Diego - Chollas Creek	San Diego Fly Fishers
Healthy Planet USA	Tree San Diego
I Love a Clean San Diego County, Inc.	The Trust for Public Land
International Rescue Committee	Urban Corps of San Diego County
King-Chavez Academy of Excellence	USFWS/San Diego National Wildlife Refuge
La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians	Volcan Mountain Foundation
Lakeside's River Park Conservancy	Walking Shield, Inc.
Living Coast Discovery Center	Wild Willow Farm and Education Center
Logan Heights CDC	WILDCOAST
Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation	Wildlife Research Institute
Movement BE	YALLA San Diego, Inc. – Youth and Leaders Living Actively
Native American Environmental Protection Coalition	Zoological Society of San Diego
The Nature Conservancy	

Grants from the Opening the Outdoors Program since 2010 have been made possible thanks to donations to our environmental initiatives and the Environment Endowment Fund, including those from the Satterberg Foundation in partnership with San Diego Grantmakers, Brutton Family Fund, Colwell Family Fund, the Engel Family, Eugene M. and Joan F. Foster Family Charitable Fund, Foster Family Fund, the Hervey Family Fund, Hattie Ettinger Conservation Fund, J.F. Beyster Fund, Nancy Olmstead Kaehr and Michael G. Kaehr Fund, Willis & Jane Fletcher Family Fund I, and other generous donors and volunteers at The San Diego Foundation.



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