

Creating Self-Guided Interpretive Walks

Presented by:

Bryan Ward, Park Ranger

**San Dieguito
River Park**



So You Want to Create One?

- Location
- Theme
- Audience
- Method Used to Convey Information
- Research and Collaboration
- Funding
- Maintenance

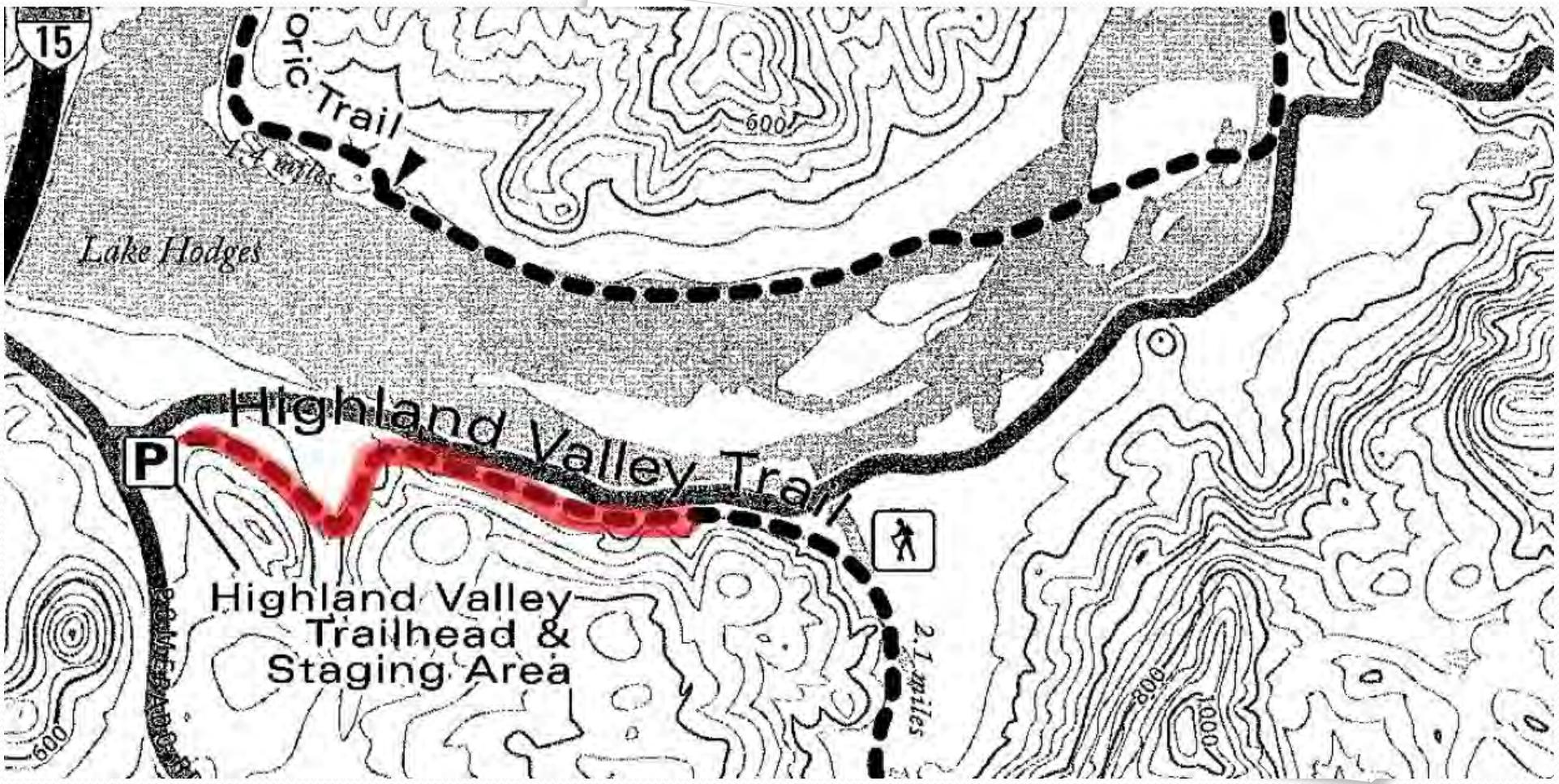
Examples from the San Dieguito River Park

- Ruth Merrill Children's Interpretive Walk
- Piedras Pintadas Interpretive Trail
- San Dieguito Lagoon Interpretive Walk

Ruth Merrill Children's Interpretive Walk

LOCATION

- On the Highland Valley Trail
 - easy terrain
 - shaded by oak trees
 - 2.1 mile long linear trail
- 2 options for interpretive walk
 - 1.5 miles round trip
 - 2.0 miles round trip (includes 2 more stops)



15

Oric Trail
1.4 miles

Lake Hodges

600

P

Highland Valley Trail

Highland Valley
Trailhead &
Staging Area



2.1 miles

800

1000

600

Parker Meadows

SA

Ruth Merrill Children's Interpretive Walk

THEME

- The importance of the San Dieguito River to the plants, animals, and people that live in the area.



Ruth Merrill Children's Interpretive Walk

AUDIENCE

- Children!
- English and Spanish language learners



Ruth Merrill Children's Interpretive Walk

METHOD USED TO CONVEY INFORMATION



WELCOME!

You are about to begin the Ruth Merrill Children's Interpretive Walk, which travels along the Highland Valley Trail. On this walk, you will discover the importance of the San Dieguito River to the plants, animals, and people that live here. You will also explore the habitats found along the way. Habitats are local natural areas where specific plants and animals are found. San Diego County has a remarkable variety of habitats to explore. Just a few of these are found along the Highland Valley Trail.

This interpretive walk is 1.5 miles round trip, with a 2-mile option for those who want to learn more about the area. This is not a loop trail. You will travel out and back on the same path. As you begin the walk, look for numbered posts along the trail. These are Discovery Points. At each of these Discovery Points, which are described in this pamphlet, you will learn how a river influences the land, and about the plants, animals, and people that share the environment.

THE SAN DIEGUITO RIVER

The San Dieguito River begins as a small stream up on Volcan Mountain near Julian. As the stream flows down the mountain, it is joined by many other streams and soon is large enough to be called a creek. This creek, called the Santa Ysabel Creek, continues to flow down into the San Pasqual Valley. Just to the east of this trail, Santa Ysabel Creek and the Santa Maria Creek merge to form the San Dieguito River. The San Dieguito River continues to travel west until it meets the Pacific Ocean, just south of the Del Mar Fairgrounds.

The Highland Valley Trail is located within the San Dieguito River Park. The River Park gets its name from the San Dieguito River, which flows in the valley below the trail. Even though you can't see the river from the trail, you will see evidence of how the river benefits and influences this area. A river plays many roles.

DISCOVERY POINT 1

As you begin to walk the trail, stop here for a moment to take a quick look at the surrounding area. Look to the north, south, east, and west. Look up in the sky and down on the ground. What do you see?

Do you hear any animal sounds? Can you identify any of those sounds? Could they be birds calling? Many different birds can be heard here. Insects and small reptiles can often be seen or heard in the grasses near the trail. Do you hear any human created sounds? You may hear sounds of the roads or homes nearby.

This area has a great variety of activity and most of it is because of the San Dieguito River. You won't see the river from this trail, but you will see the effects of the river. Can you pick out where the San Dieguito River travels through the valley below? The river is found where you see the thickest growth of trees and plants. This trail guide will help you read the signs of the river.

The habitat created by the trees and plants that grow along a water course is called **riparian habitat**. Riparian habitat is very important to wildlife. It provides a source of water and shelter particularly during our warm, dry summer season when permanent water sources may be hard to find.

Nature Scout

Some of the trees you can see growing along the river are the same trees that are growing in the drainage that separates the trail from the lot. Most of the trees you see in this small drainage are arroyo willow. These trees are easily identified by their long, narrow leaves. However, if you visit in late winter, you may find few if any leaves on the willows because they are **deciduous**. They lose their leaves in winter and grow new leaves in the spring. Trees that don't lose their leaves are called evergreens.

Willows need a constant source of water to survive. They have adapted to California's dry summers by developing long taproots that grow deep into the soil in search of water. Here is a picture of an arroyo willow branch. Can you find this tree along the trail?

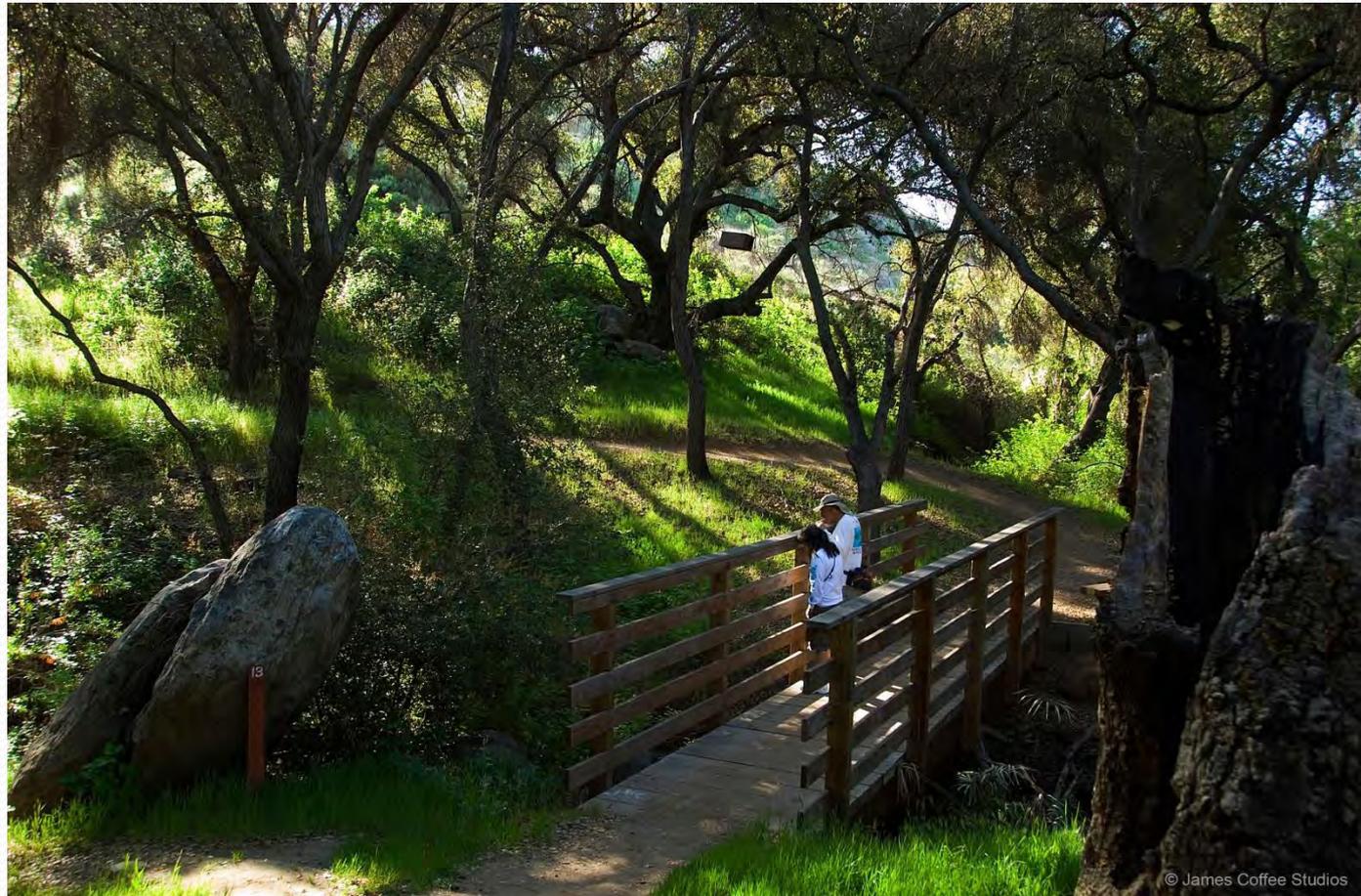


Arroyo Willow

Ruth Merrill Children's Interpretive Walk

RESEARCH AND COLLABORATION

- SDRP Staff
- Boy Scouts
- SDRP Intern



Ruth Merrill Children's Interpretive Walk

FUNDING

- Numbered posts created and installed by a Boy Scout
- Booklet printing
 - City of Poway
 - County of San Diego
 - Community Enhancement Program Funds
 - Private Donations

Ruth Merrill Children's Interpretive Walk

MAINTENANCE

- General Upkeep
- Relocate 4 posts due to trail realignment
- Update booklet to reflect changing conditions
- Reinstall loose wooden posts
- Stock booklets in the brochure box at the staging area
- Future
 - paint or replace faded or rotten posts
 - print new booklets when run out

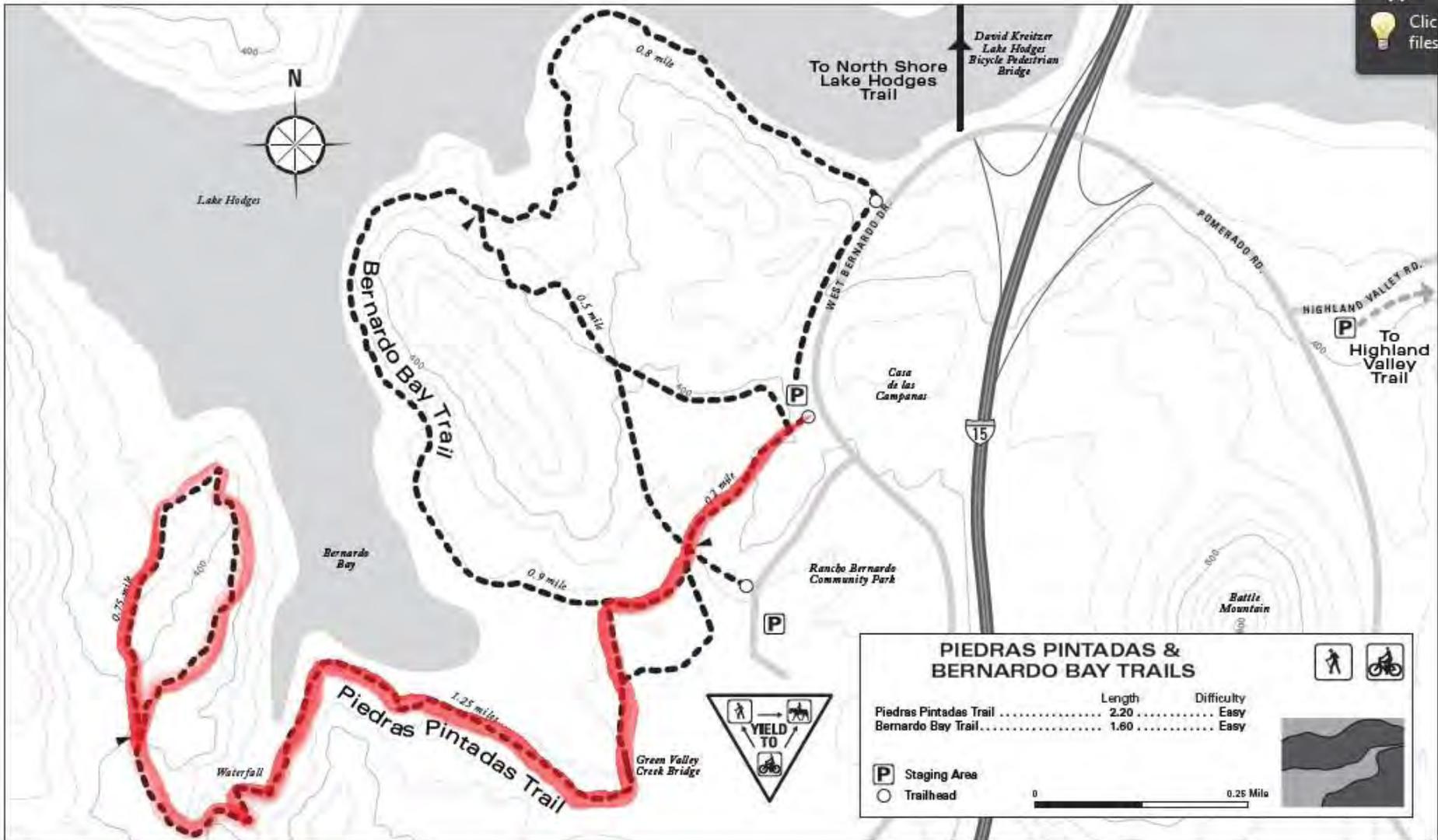




Piedras Pintadas Interpretive Trail

LOCATION

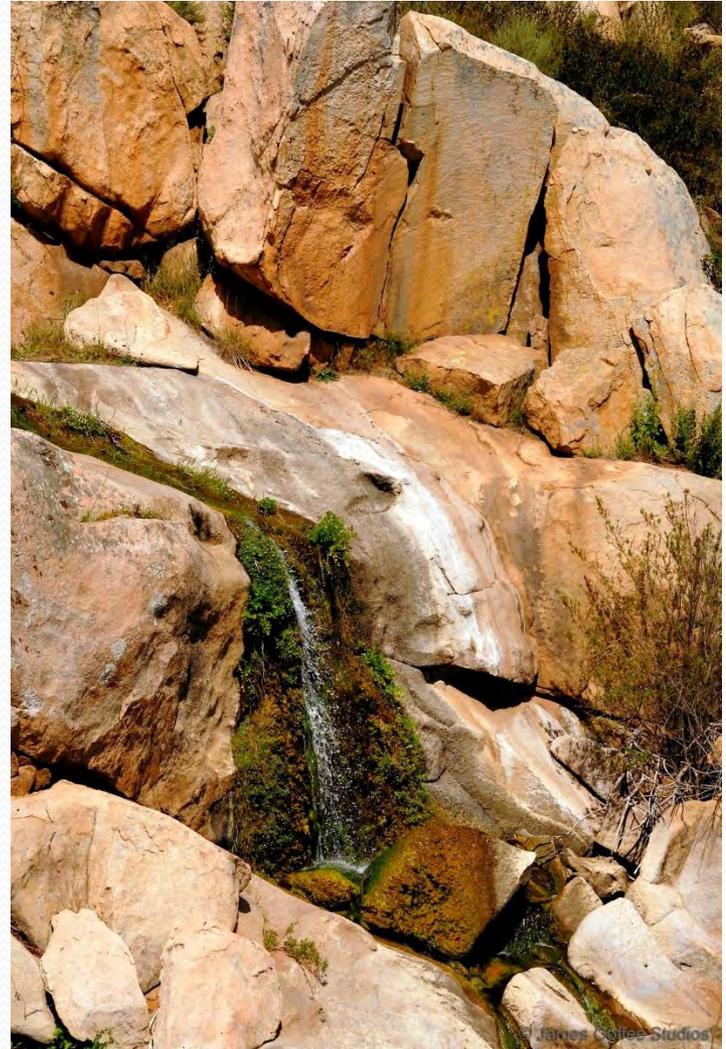
- On the Piedras Pintadas Trail
 - easy terrain
 - year-round waterfall
 - 2.2 mile long interpretive trail (3.65 miles round trip)



Piedras Pintadas Interpretive Trail

THEME

- How the Kumeyaay of the past used and managed the resources of the area.



Piedras Pintadas Interpretive Trail

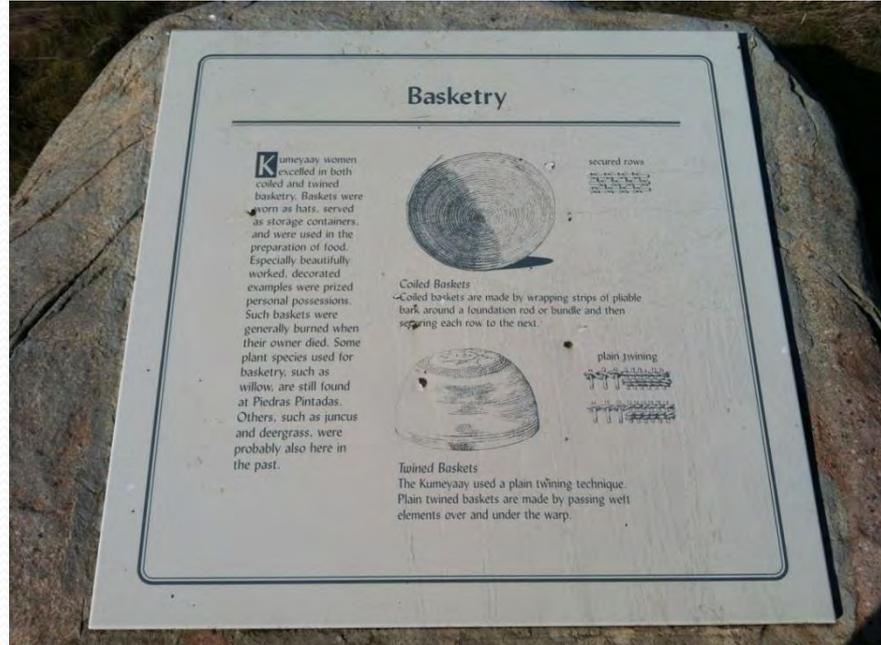
AUDIENCE

- All Ages



Piedras Pintadas Interpretive Trail

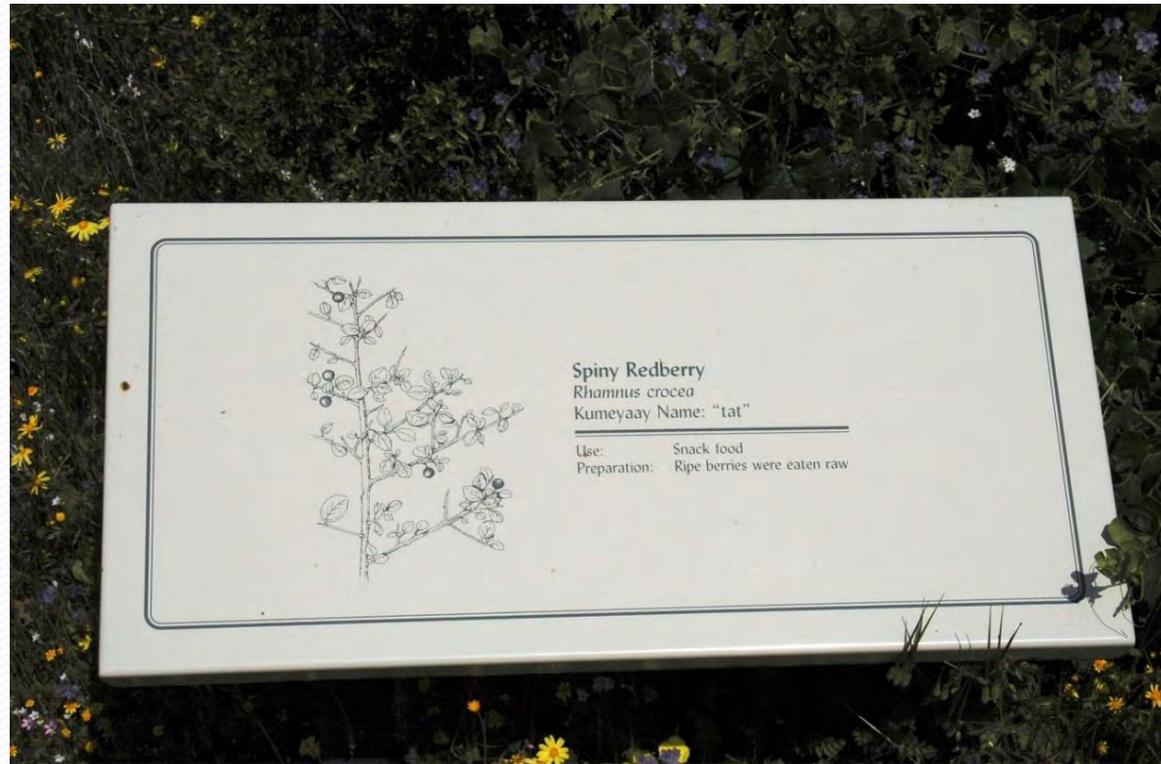
METHOD USED TO CONVEY INFORMATION



Piedras Pintadas Interpretive Trail

RESEARCH AND COLLABORATION

- SDRP Staff
- San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians
- Design Consultant



Piedras Pintadas Interpretive Trail

FUNDING

- \$496,250 in State and City of San Diego grants for Piedras Pintadas Cultural Resource Management Plan (at least \$30,000 of which was for the panels and fake boulders)
- San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians

Piedras Pintadas Interpretive Trail

MAINTENANCE

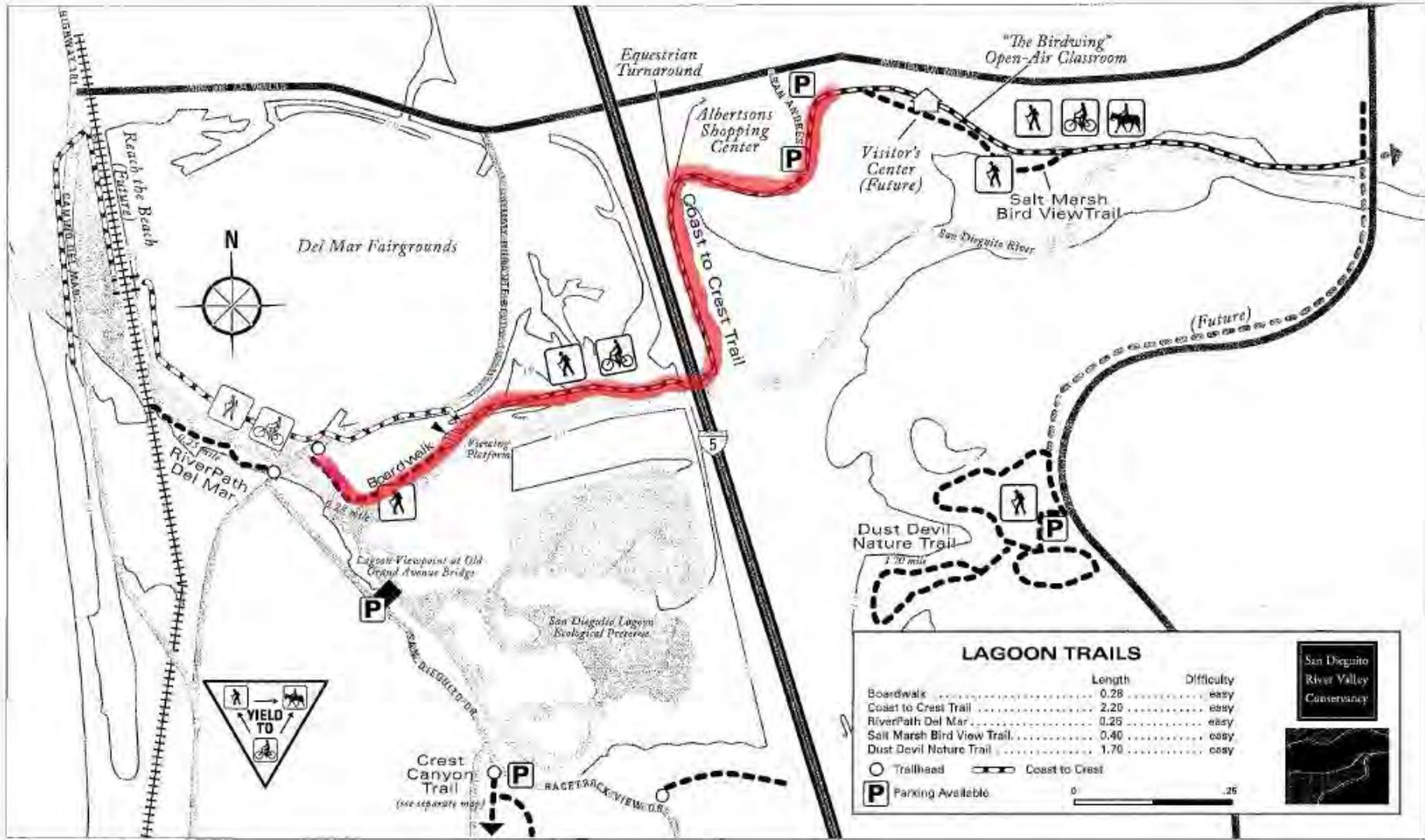
- General Upkeep
- Reattach loose panels
- Replace stolen panel
- Recolor faded fake boulders
- Make sure the correct plants are growing next to the corresponding ethnobotany signs



San Dieguito Lagoon Interpretive Walk

LOCATION

- On the Coast to Crest Trail
 - easy terrain
 - restored wetlands
 - 2.5 mile long linear trail at the San Dieguito Lagoon
- Interpretive Walk is 1.5 miles one way



San Dieguito Lagoon Interpretive Walk

THEMES

- How plants, animals, and humans can share and interact in the same environment.
- The importance of preserving and restoring wetlands.



San Dieguito Lagoon Interpretive Walk

AUDIENCE

- Smartphone Users
- All Ages and Abilities
- English and Spanish language learners



San Dieguito Lagoon Interpretive Walk

METHOD USED TO CONVEY INFORMATION



San Dieguito Lagoon Interpretive Walk



San Dieguito River Park Lagoon Trail



To enhance our conservation efforts, please return any gently used booklets back to the trailhead kiosk for other trail users to enjoy. Thank you for your cooperation.

San Dieguito River Park

- 19 -

Did you know over 200 bird species have been observed at this lagoon?

[\(Leer en Español\)](#)

The lagoon's specialized habitats provide bird species with many different resources including shelter, food and reproductive opportunities. Due to multiple habitat types at the lagoon, this allows for a large diversity of bird species.

Several bird species live in and around the lagoon year-round, while others use it only during certain seasons or months. Some birds only spend winter here, others come to breed and raise young in spring and summer, while still others only stop over to rest and refuel during migration along the Pacific Flyway. With over 200 different bird species that can be found at the lagoon, the assortment changes from month to month so there will always be new birds to discover.

There are four endangered bird species that can be

found at this lagoon. They are endangered due to their requirements of specialized habitats that are becoming rarer. The four species are the belding's subspecies of savannah sparrow, the clapper rail, the California gnatcatcher, and the least tern.

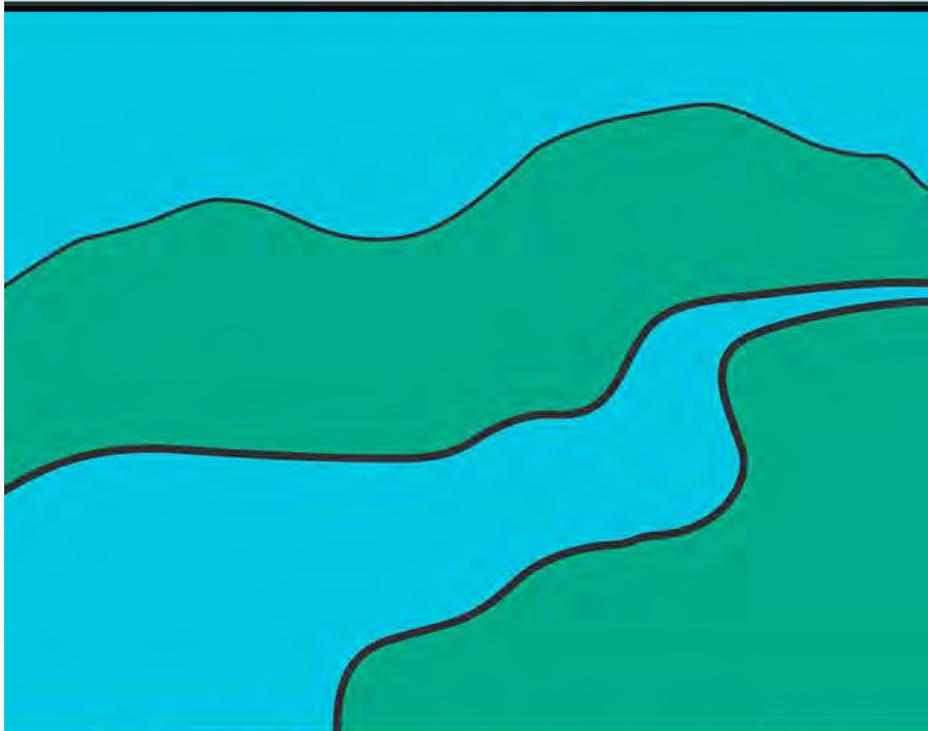
For information on our upcoming monthly bird counts please visit our website at www.scripps.org.



Clapper Rail



"Beldings" Savannah Sparrow



San Dieguito River Park

Swipe for More

Wildlife

Plants

Explore



Explore

Wildlife

Plants

Explore



San Dieguito River Park

Maps

Get Trail Directions

Current Location

Trail Maps

Explore

Lagoon Interpretive Walk

History & Geography

San Dieguito River Park

- Index -

Interpretive Walk

[\(Leer en Español\)](#)

1. Welcome to the San Dieguito Lagoon!

2. Important Goals of the Park

3. Lagoon Boardwalk

4. Lagoon Restoration Project

5. Grand Avenue Bridge History

6. History of the Del Mar Fairgrounds

San Dieguito Lagoon Interpretive Walk

RESEARCH AND COLLABORATION

- SDRP Staff
- Two SDRP Interns
- Spanish Translator
- Mobile Web App Designer
- Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley
- San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy

San Dieguito Lagoon Interpretive Walk

FUNDING

- Grants totaling \$10,000 awarded by SDG&E and REI.



San Dieguito Lagoon Interpretive Walk

MAINTENANCE

- General Upkeep
- Stock booklets at the brochure boxes
- Renew domain for mobile web app (about \$60/year)
- Make sure trail users know the difference between the QR Codes and Mile Markers
- Future
 - Update content to reflect changing conditions.



Comparisons

Post and Booklet

- Easiest to create
- Lowest initial cost
- Medium maintenance cost

Big Panels

- Harder to create
- Highest initial cost
- Lower maintenance cost (but highest replacement cost)

QR Codes

- Harder to create
- Medium initial cost
- Lowest maintenance cost

Comparisons

Post and Booklet

- Harder to update and maintain
- More convenient to average trail user
- Smaller footprint

Big Panels

- Harder to update and maintain
- Most convenient to average trail user
- Largest footprint

QR Codes

- Easiest to update and maintain
- Least convenient to average trail user
- Smallest footprint



Contact Info

bryan@sdrp.org

858-674-2275 x18

Leana Bulay

Interpretive Ranger

leana@sdrp.org

858-674-2275 x14

www.sdrp.org

sdrpmobile.org