

Healthy Water for Forester Creek DACs

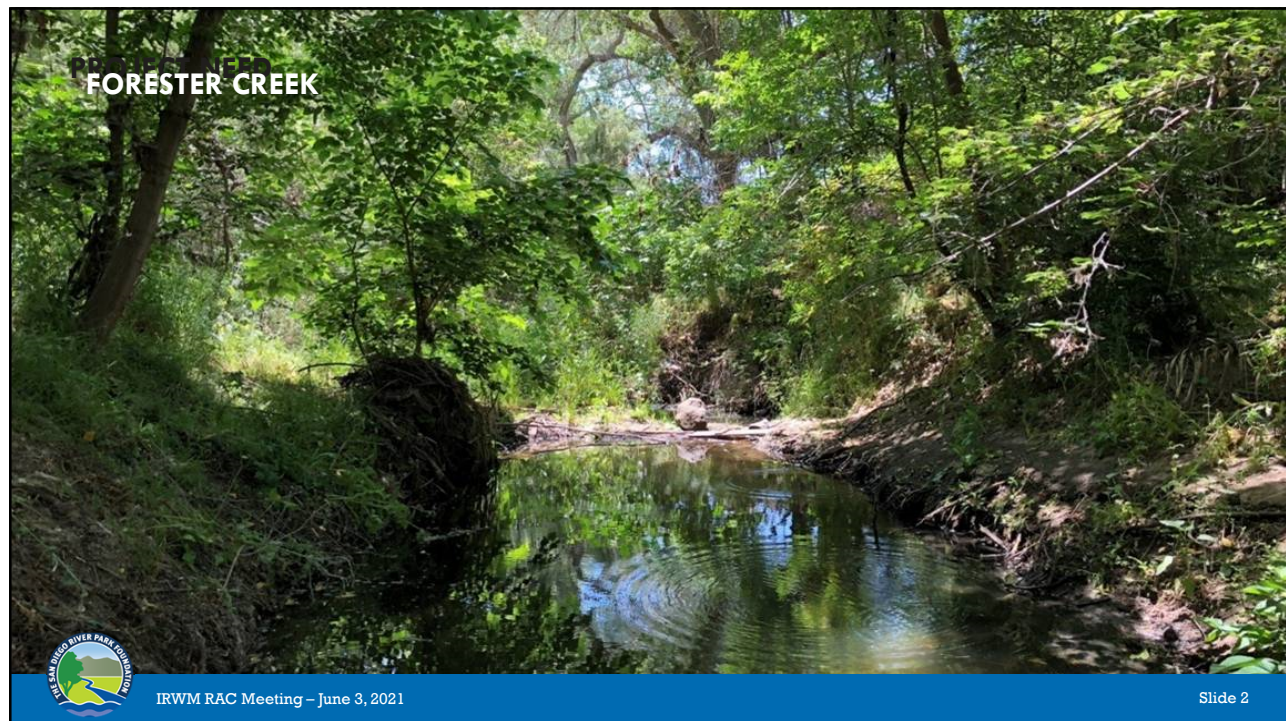
March 21, 2018 – December 30, 2019

Grant award: \$320,000



THE SAN DIEGO RIVER PARK FOUNDATION
Sarah Hutmacher, Chief Associate Director
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FORESTER CREEK



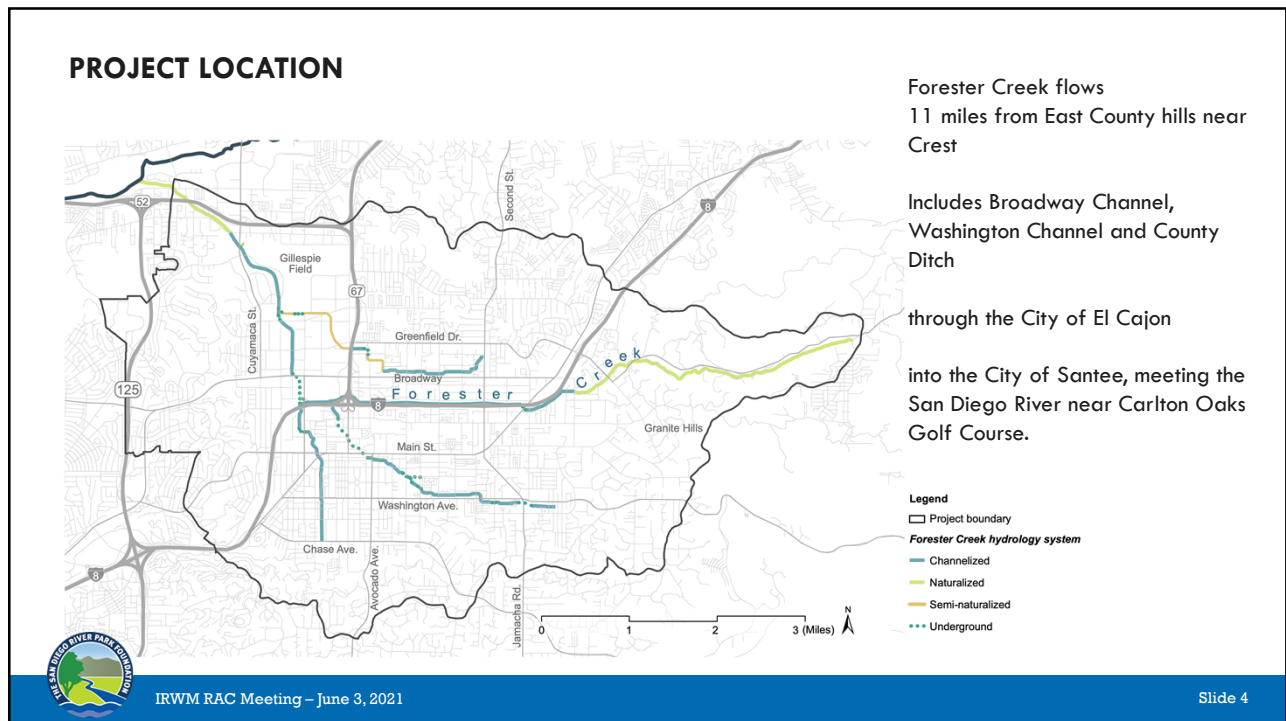
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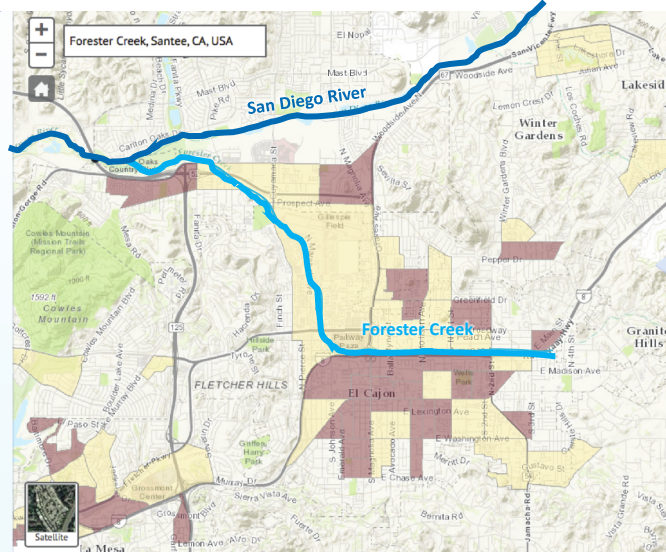
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PROJECT LOCATION

Within El Cajon, Forester Creek runs through mostly Disadvantaged or Severely Disadvantaged communities.

Disadvantaged Communities Map

- ☐ County Boundaries
 - ① County Boundary
- ☒ Prop 1 Funding Areas
 - ① Prop 1 Funding Areas
- ☐ Prop 84 Funding Areas
 - ① Prop 84 Funding Areas
- ☐ IRWM Regions
 - ① IRWM Regions
- ☒ Disadvantaged Community Block Groups
 - ① Severely Disadvantaged Community
 - ② Disadvantaged Community
- ☐ Disadvantaged Community Tracts
 - ① Severely Disadvantaged Community
 - ② Disadvantaged Community
- ☐ Disadvantaged Community Places
 - ① Severely Disadvantaged Community
 - ② Disadvantaged Community



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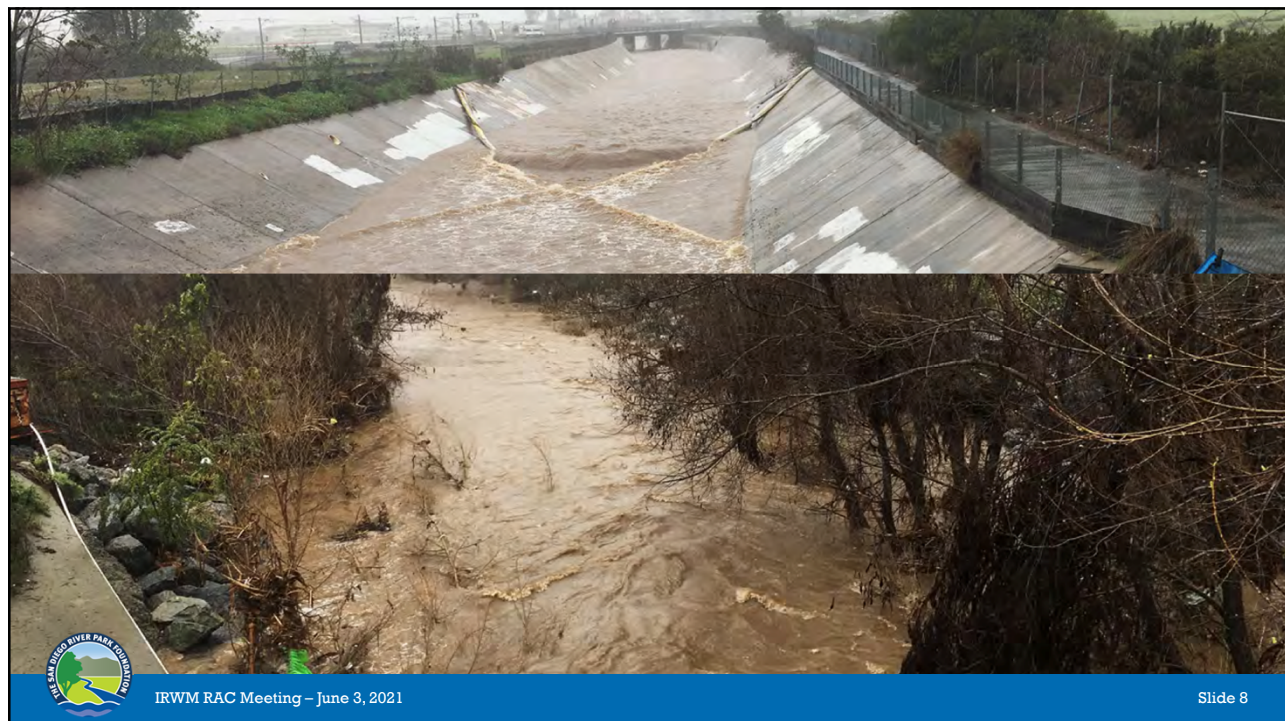
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PROJECT NEED # 1: ILLEGAL DUMPING AND TRASH

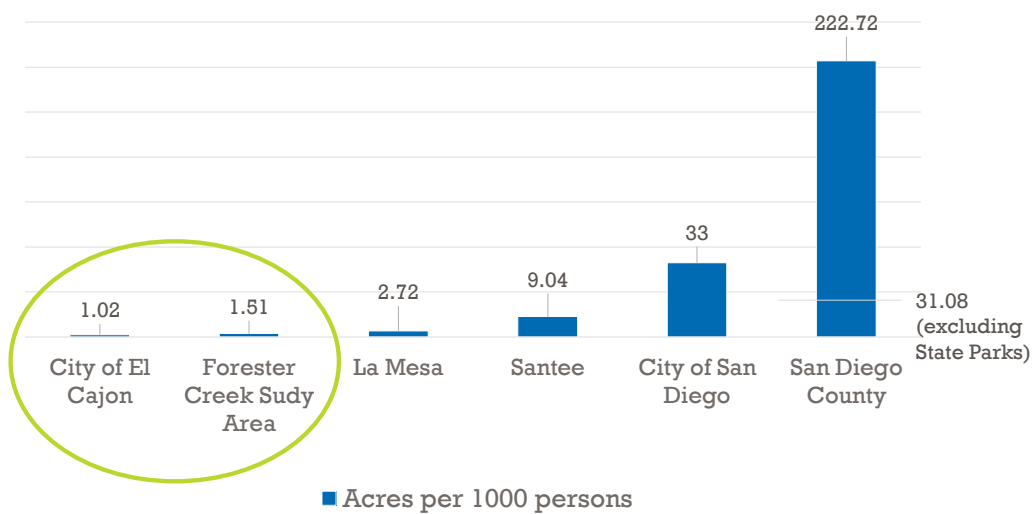


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PROJECT NEED # 2: LACK OF RECREATIONAL SPACE

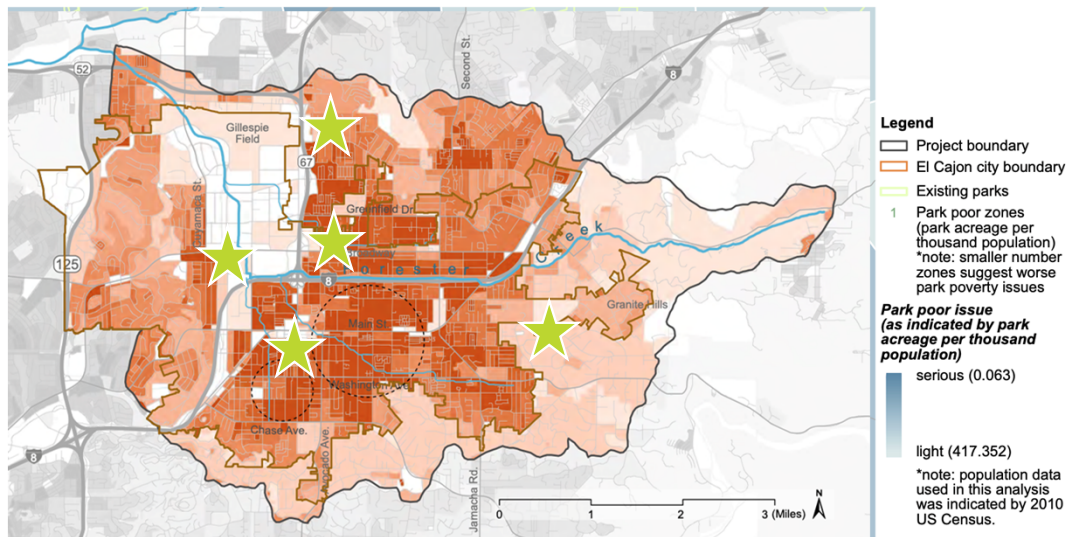


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PROJECT NEED # 2: LACK OF RECREATIONAL SPACE (continued)



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PROJECT GOAL:

to empower the diverse community in El Cajon to provide input and guidance in the development of two plans: a Trash Capture and Reduction Plan and a Recreation Access Plan, both focused on the Forester Creek system in the Cajon Valley.



Task 5.1 PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

Invoicing, permitting, coordination and reporting



Task 5.2a STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE AND OUTREACH

Mobilize a community stakeholder group to support all other DAC outreach



Task 5.2b VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT – TRASH DATA

Engage community volunteers in collecting, sorting and categorizing trash



Task 5.2c YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

Work with Earth Discovery Institute to provide educational experiences



Task 5.3a TRASH CAPTURE AND REDUCTION PLAN

Contract D-Max to develop plan for reducing trash loading in the creek system



Task 5.3b RECREATION ACCESS PLAN

Contract Cal Poly Pomona Studio 606 to facilitate engagement for RAP



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TASK
5.2a
STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE AND DAC OUTREACH

Committee Member	Affiliation and/or Expertise
Ally Welborn, Laurel Kelly	(Co-Chairs) The San Diego River Park Foundation
Afrah Abdulkader	Survivor Advocate, International Rescue Committee (IRC); San Diego Refugee Forum
Carol Lewis	Coordinator, El Cajon Collaborative
Cindy Knight	Director of EL Services and Innovation, Cajon Valley Union School District (CVUSD)
Cristina Aguirre	Senior Director, Youth and Leaders Living Actively (YALLA) San Diego
Crystal Lawrence	Engineering Project Manager / Green Team; Taylor Guitars
David Raponi	El Cajon Community Cleanup Group
Dennis Selder	English Professor, Southwestern College
Dean Bacon West	Outdoor Outreach / Cajon Valley High School
Dina Polus	Newcomers in Action
Eldonna Lay	Curator & Historian, Knox House Museum; El Cajon Historical Society
Eric Lund	CEO, East County Chamber of Commerce
Eva Pacheco	Executive Director, Excellence and Justice in Education (EJE) Academies Charter School
Gabriel Baquien	Director of Facilities / Green Team; Taylor Guitars
Hector Valtierra	Professor, Cuyamaca College
John Allen	Founder, Friends of Forester Creek
John Phillips	Stormwater Manager, City of El Cajon
Kathy Pillman	Founder, El Cajon Community Cleanup Group
Lakeisha Sowunmi	Program Coordinator, Safe Routes to School; Rady Children's Hospital
Michael Golden	Biology Professor, Grossmont College
Mohammed Tuama	Director, Newcomers Support and Development

Phil Ortiz	East County Chamber of Commerce; Board Member, El Cajon Community Cleanup Group
Rafal Albayati	Resident Leadership Academy, International Rescue Committee (IRC), El Cajon
Rosa Alcaraz	Community Advocate
Samarah Abdulkadhim	Resident Leadership Academy, International Rescue Committee (IRC), El Cajon
Shannon Bullock	Recreation Services Manager, City of El Cajon
Steve Richardson	Environmental Health and Safety Specialist, Toro Micro-Irrigation
Taryn Mani	Science Facilitator, Cajon Valley Union School District (CVUSD)
Tim Williams	GIS Analyst, City of El Cajon
Zachary Hansen	Community Health Promo Specialist, Health and Human Services Agency (HHSa)
Stakeholder Committee – Junior Members (Under 18 Years of Age)	
Alamir	Student
Asonta	Student, Meridian Elementary
Ernest	Student, Meridian Elementary
Ibrahim	Student
Kara	Earth Club President / International Baccalaureate (IB) Program, Granite Hills High School

36 members (including 5 junior members) representing more than 25 community organizations



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TASK
5.2a
STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE AND DAC OUTREACH:
PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

- With help from network of stakeholders, conducted outreach at 67 separate events, attended by 48,072 community members
- Directly engaged with 4,550 people
- Collected 1,064 survey responses (in 4 languages)
- Hosted public workshop for 150 attendees (in 6 languages)
- Presented twice to City Council
- Media coverage
- Social media, direct mail, e-newsletter and more

424,048 impressions



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TASK
5.2a

SURVEYS:
Notable results

Exceeded target for surveying representative community sample size (+/- 3% confidence)

- Less than 1/3 of respondents knew that Forester Creek connected to the ocean.
- 72% of respondents reported having seen areas like this picture at right, but little awareness of connection to natural systems.

These results were shared with Stakeholder Committee and Cal Poly Pomona to inform Recreation Access Plan (Task 5.3b)



Option	% of Responses
A storm drain	38.5%
A creek/stream	15.3%
An irrigation canal	13.5%
A sewer	12.6%
I have no idea	14.3%



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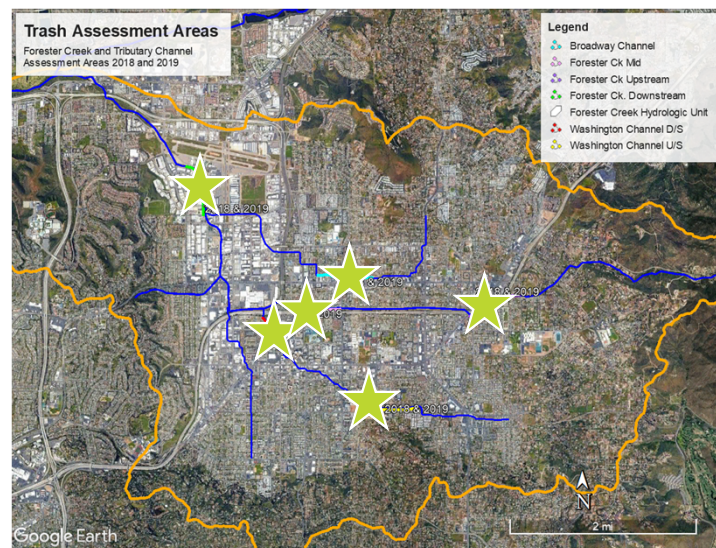
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TASK
5.2b

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT – TRASH DATA

TRASH ASSESSMENTS:

12 assessments completed at six different 1,000 meter sections on Forester Creek, Broadway Channel, and Washington Channel and conducted in both pre- “first flush” and post-flush conditions.



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TASK 5.2b

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT – TRASH DATA

TRASH ASSESSMENTS

- Engaged 104 volunteers in 232.5 hours of service in 12 sorting events



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TASK 5.2b

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT – TRASH DATA

TRASH ASSESSMENTS – Notable Results

- 7,533 pieces of trash were collected, sorted, weighed and categorized into 41 categories.
- 57% of the items collected contained plastic.
- 38% of the items collected were related to food and drink consumption.
- The number of plastic bags found during the assessments decreased 40% between Fall 2018 and Spring 2019.

This data was provided to the City of El Cajon Public Works Department and to D-MAX Engineering for their Trash Capture and Reduction recommendations (Task 5.3a).



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TASK
5.2c
**YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
AND EDUCATION**

In partnership with Earth Discovery Institute, hosted free field trips for 291 third and fourth graders from El Cajon. These students also completed youth surveys.

YOUTH SURVEYS – Notable Results

- Only 22% of students reported having ever heard of Forester Creek
- 43% reported going into nature as little as once a month or never
- 75% of students expressed that they would like to spend more time in nature



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TASK
5.3a
TRASH CAPTURE AND REDUCTION PLAN


The City of El Cajon manages trash in Forester Creek and its tributaries within the city as an MS4 permittee, and as a result of the Trash Amendments and Trash Order, have selected the "Track 1" option to install and maintain full capture devices at storm drains in El Cajon.

To inform this effort, this plan:

- proposes 14 types of structural and non-structural BMPs.
- evaluated 211 possible BMP locations and based on field observations, trash data assessment and desktop analysis, selected 133 for inclusion in the plan.
- Sites selected prioritize trash from the two main pathways: trash transported by people experiencing homelessness and trash transported by the City's storm drain system.



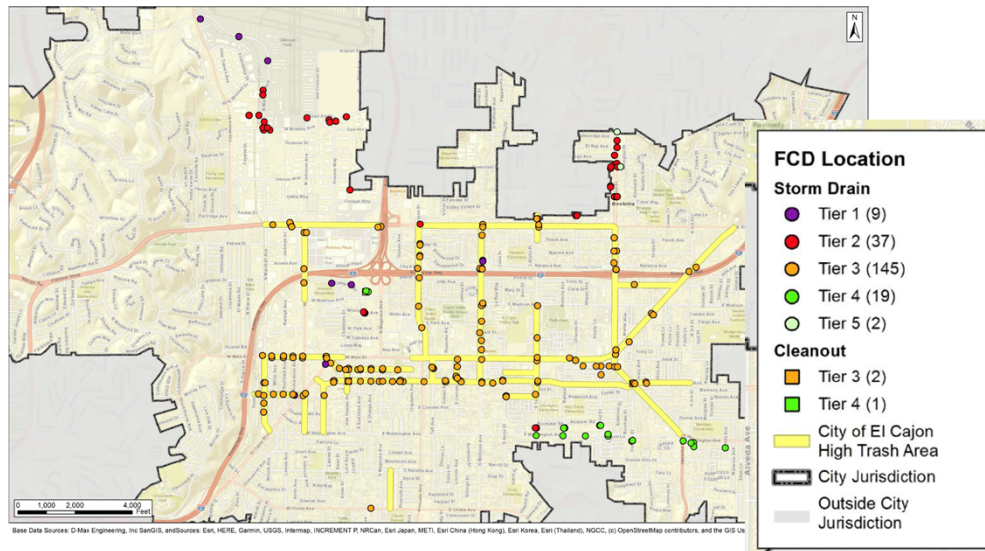
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TASK
5.3a

TRASH CAPTURE AND REDUCTION PLAN



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TASK
5.3b

RECREATION ACCESS PLAN

Partnership with Cal Poly Pomona Studio 606 Landscape Architecture Masters Program



- Engage Stakeholders in developing Recreation Access Plan for Forester Creek
- Convene stakeholder committee and facilitate community input
- Facilitate community workshop for members of the public
- Develop Recreation Access Plan that synthesizes community input, research and professional recommendations.

Cal Poly Research Topics:

- Character of Forester Creek
- Hydrology
- Flora
- Fauna
- History of El Cajon
- Demographics
- Land Use
- School and Education Facilities
- Existing Recreational Opportunities
- Economics
- Transportation
- Walkability
- Homelessness
- Pollution Burden



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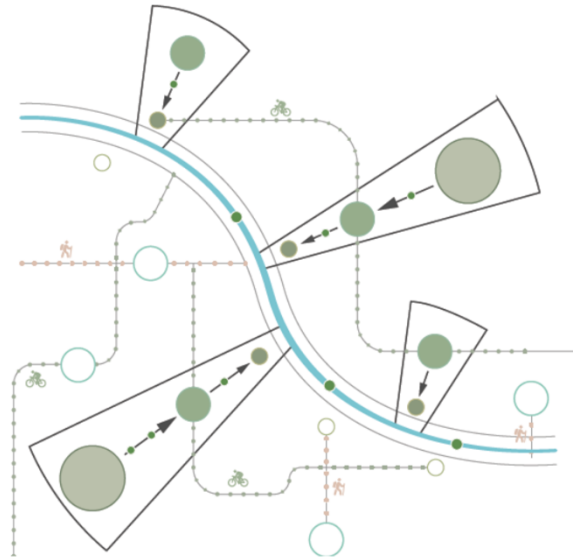
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TASK
5.3b

RECREATION ACCESS PLAN

Overall concepts of Recreation Access Plan:

1. Plan Parks and pedestrian/ cycling routes near schools
2. Place parks and pedestrian/ cycling routes near creeks
3. Develop an interlocking system of recreational resources at a range of scales
4. Create "Human Flow to the Creeks" drawing people's lives closer to the creek and rendering a stronger connection between the people of El Cajon and the Forester Creek system.



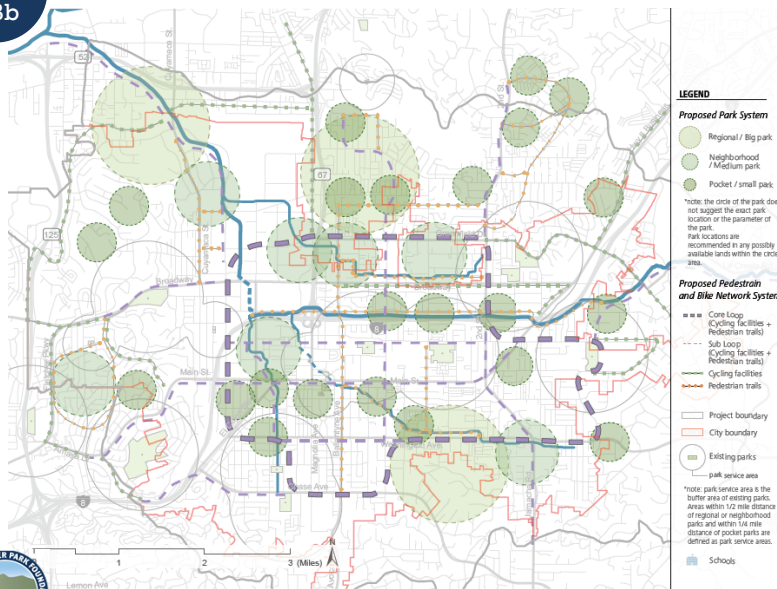
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TASK
5.3b

RECREATION ACCESS PLAN



Featured Recommendations:

1. Implement mini-projects.
2. Collaborate with local grassroots organizations.
3. Support 2-3 more easily implementable pocket parks.
4. Identify roles for community members in planning.
5. Integrate health and environmental quality benefits into planning.
6. Integrate the Forester Creek System into K-12 curriculum.
7. Create a connected pedestrian and cycling loop system.



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CONCLUSIONS

BENEFITS:

- Increased awareness of Forester Creek system among key stakeholders, elected officials, children and community members.
- Developed outreach and education materials to continue outreach.
- Planning documents produced by this project lay the groundwork for future investment in recreation and interpretive resources and water quality improvement.

FINDINGS:

High community interest in improving recreation access and in reducing trash in waterways. However, community engagement in El Cajon must address barriers:

- Language
- Immigration Status
- Refugee population
- Charisma of the creek system itself
- Communications strategy



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TOP FIVE WAYS TO GET OUTSIDE ALONG EL CAJON WATERWAYS

LAS CINCO MEJORES MANERAS DE PASEAR ALREDEDOR DE VIAS DE AGUA EN EL CAJON

أفضل خمس طرق للتجول على امتداد مجرى الكاهون المائي

ENJOY A WALK OUTDOORS

DISFRUTE UNA CAMINATA AL AIRE LIBRE

الاستمتاع بالتجول في الهواء الطلق



HAVE A PICNIC

HAGA UN PICNIC

التنزه



GO FOR A RIDE

SALGA A MONTAR BICICLETA

ركوب الدراجة



PLAY BALL

JUEGUE PELOTA AFUERA

لعب الكرة



LOOK FOR WILDLIFE

OBSERVE A LA VIDA SILVESTRE

البحث عن الحياة البرية



GET INVOLVED!

San Diego River Park Foundation volunteers are working to envision new recreation

¡INVOLÚCRESE!

Los voluntarios del San Diego River Park Foundation están trabajando para crear nuevas instalaciones

شارك في الأمر!

يعمل متطوعو مؤسسة سان دييغو ريفر بارك على إنشاء مرافق ترفيهية جديدة على

RECOMMENDATIONS



ADDITIONAL CREEK MONITORING

Develop and support a Creek Blitz citizen science program to continue to engage community volunteers in monitoring condition of the waterways in the Forester Creek system, including water quality and trash entering the channels.



IMPLEMENT PLANS

Implementation of the Recreation Access Plan recommendations and Trash Capture and Reduction Plan BMPs, including larger infrastructure projects and smaller interpretative projects, education/outreach, wayfinding, public art projects and more to increase awareness of the waterways.



CREEK HABITAT RESTORATION

Naturalizing the creek channels where possible to increase aesthetic quality and improve opportunities for community connections to the creeks.



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RECOMMENDATIONS (continued)**STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

Trash documented through trash surveys in the channel accounted for less than 1% of the trash collected when added to encampment-related debris removed by the City of El Cajon in the same period. Trash BMPs and community stewardship to reduce input of litter and community-sourced debris remain important, but continued work to advance solutions, partnerships and advocacy to address the impacts of homeless encampments within the waterways is essential for water quality improvement, flood prevention environmental protection.

**YOUTH CREEK EDUCATION**

Youth education efforts to engage young people from an early age in more comprehensive understanding of the watershed, water resource needs, and stewardship.



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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT
OF THIS PROJECT!**



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