

URBAN CORPS OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY

REPORT: SAN DIEGO UNIFIED PORT DISTRICT

Chollas Creek Restoration-PORT (SSRT)

First Report May 30, 2008

Submitted by Sam Lopez Director of Environmental Services UCO

The Urban Corps of San Diego County, in collaboration with the Groundwork San Diego Chollas Creek and the Sierra Club is in the first initial stage of the “Chollas Creek Student Stream Restoration Team”(SSRT) and has involved local students and residents in environmental education as well as the Sierra Club of San Diego “Friends of Chollas Creek” community group. .

Funding sources for project: San Diego Unified Port District \$82,640.00

Urban Corps of San Diego County:

As of April 2008, the Urban Corps of San Diego County (UCO) has removed a total of **22 cubic yards** of Non-native vegetation, i.e. Arundo, Caster Bean, Tamarisk, Salt Cedar and other invasive plants as well as **40-cubic yards** of debris i.e. styrofoam, shopping carts, appliances, and mattresses, **5-gallon** container of oil, which was taken to Auto Zone for recycling and **1486 sq feet of graffiti**. UCO also assisted the Cesar Chavez SSRT plant over 200-native plants.

UCO focused on the sections of Chollas Creek known as the Main Branch-specifically on sections of National Avenue to the East and Harbor Drive to the West. Sections of Chollas Creek Main Branch also included the intersection of the South Branch, located West of Interstate 5-and 15. The intersection of these two branches of the creek is a major point of urban debris accumulation, and if not cleared and maintained on a regular basis, flows into San Diego Bay during storm events.

Groundwork San Diego-Chollas Creek Student Stream Restoration Team:

Groundwork San Diego – Chollas Creek (GWSDCC) has been extremely busy over the past 3 months preparing for the introduction of the SSRT to our environmental science standards-based educational program. We have been talking with the principals at two elementary schools near our restoration open space along Chollas Creek. Approximately 200 Rodriguez and Burbank Elementary Schools’ 4th & 5th graders will participate in our SSRT model project beginning in the fall of 08. We offer three in-class and three field trip learning experiences for students. We have created curriculum specific to the state science standards but also specific to this habitat, emphasizing the need for watershed stewardship from these students. Currently, we are busy scheduling and preparing the site for the beginning of their rotations.

We have been working with the SDUC and other contractors to restore the 38th & Alpha Street Park into an open space that students can walk to and participate in the following activities: planting of native plants, watershed activities, Kumeyaay history, and hikes that include

identification of plants and animals in this coastal native habitat and an herpetologist that brings living native snakes and bugs. Building on a grant GWSDCC received from the City of San Diego, property improvements have included installation of a solar powered irrigation system, fencing, non-native plant and debris removal and tree planting.

The residents have embraced the notion of the children walking to their open space and learning about the environment. In an effort to authentically and effectively engage stakeholders into the planning process for the restoration and educational activities slated for the 38th and Alpha Street Park, Groundwork San Diego-Chollas Creek utilized a multi-pronged approach. The stakeholder groups included residents, government officials, educators, students, community organizations, local businesses, churches and other interest groups. **Report submitted to UCO by Liz Faddis Director of Groundwork San Diego-Chollas Creek**

Sierra Club San Diego "Friends of Chollas Creek" Community Involvement:

One goal is to develop a local "Friends Group" of on-going volunteers to provide stewardship of Chollas Creek from National Avenue in Logan Heights to San Diego Bay. During the first quarter we canvassed the community to find interested residents, businesses, and business owners in taking on this stewardship roll. We successfully developed collaboration with BAE Systems, Inc. and several small businesses immediately adjacent to the creek at 33rd St. and National Ave. One resident, Javier Hernandez, with a view of this location from his home, has taken on a leadership roll to organize his community to participate in the new "Friends Group", Chollas Creek - 33rd and National. We have 10 members of this friends group thus far.

With Javier's help, as well as Alicia G. Ortiz, BAE Systems Environmental Services department, we successfully conducted outreach for a cleanup event on April 26, 2008 at 33rd and National Ave. We had 22 adult and 8 youth participants at this highly successful event for a total of 120 volunteer hours including travel time.

We removed a 40 cubic yard dumpster of trash and another 40 cubic yard dumpster of invasive weeds, (green waste) at this event. Hazard waste that we removed included about 4 gallons of motor oil (left at the creek in both sealed and open containers), electronic equipment, and 10 tires.

Next quarter we will facilitate an organizational meeting of the new Friends Group and plan further stewardship events. **Report Submitted to UCO by Eric Bowlby Sierra Club San Diego "Friends of Chollas Creek"**

Ecological Benefit:

The primary ecological benefit from this project will be the reduction of non-point source pollution through the following activities:

- Reduction of volume and velocity of runoff in Chollas Creek to San Diego Bay
- Reduction of oil and auto-related pollutants in the runoff to San Diego Bay
- Increase of biodiversity

Pictures:



Sierra Club San Diego “Friends of Chollas Creek” Community Service Event.



Chollas Creek Student Stream restoration Team “SSRT” Cesar Chavez Elementary School.



Urban Corps of San Diego Planting Native Plants with Cesar Chavez Elementary SSRT as well the removal of debris and non-native vegetation.