



Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County
11769 Waterhill Rd., Lakeside, CA 92040
Phone: (619) 562-0096 🌟 Fax: (619) 562-4799
Website: www.rcdsandiego.org

June 15, 2018

Mary Nichols, Chair
Air Resources Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

John Laird, Secretary
Natural Resources Agency
1416 9th Street, #1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Secretary Karen Ross
California Department of Food & Agriculture
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Matthew Rodriguez, Secretary for Environmental Protection
California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)
1101 I Street
P.O. Box 2815
Sacramento, CA 95812

**Re: California 2030 Natural and Working Lands Climate Change Implementation Plan –
Concept Paper**

On behalf of the Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County (RCDGSDC), I am writing to offer support and make recommendations to the *California 2030 Natural and Working Lands Climate Change Implementation Plan – Concept Paper*. We appreciate the ongoing work of the staff at the Air Resources Board, Natural Resources Agency, California Department of Food & Agriculture, and California Environmental Protection Agency to refine the NWL Implementation Plan's ecological strategies to achieve the State's vision and framework on climate change mitigation and land resilience. This letter highlights a few considerations where we believe our key partner, the San Diego River Conservancy (Conservancy), should be included within the Implementation Plan to provide multiple benefits to the climate-beneficial lands within San Diego County.

The mission of the RCDGSDC is to protect, conserve, and restore our County's natural resources through educational and technical assistance in all areas of natural resource management on private and public lands. Our management capabilities span soil health, water quality and restoration, plant growth and forest expansion, wildlife habitats, and fire safety. Within these sectors, our programs include:

1. Fire Safe Council of San Diego County (FSCSDC) – whose prevention and safety programs and funding have been managed since 1996 to provide development and support of local fire safe councils, defensible space assistance for elderly and financially-stressed, fire

Conserving Our Natural Resources

prevention education, private and community chipping, community wildfire protection plans, and risk assessment programs and education.

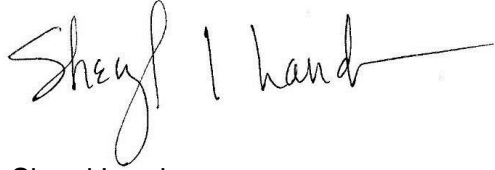
2. Tijuana River Valley Community Garden (TRV) – which has been managed since 2002 to provide gardener assistance, composting, planting and harvesting trainings, coordinated clean-up days, and educational workshops.
3. Watershed education and grants – which focus on water transport, pollution reduction, and environmental stewardship and have been provided since 2009 to over 2000 2nd to 6th grade students through grants from the Port of San Diego County. We also perform invasive species removal partnering with the Conservancy and a local water district.
4. Carbon farming – which has been significantly boosted in the last year as an effective solution to climate changes on local, state, national, and global scales, as though education and technical assistance for producers and ranchers interested in improving farm resilience. The RCDGSDC has also implemented hedgerows, mulch, and compost within the TRV to boost soil health and providing multiple co-benefits to the environment.
5. Development of school gardens – which has been achieved since 2013 in under-served schools to grow vegetables and pollinator habitats within greater San Diego County.
6. RCD scholarships and sponsorships – which, through the Conservation Scholarship of \$1000 per student, has been annually awarded to graduating high school seniors since 1989 to supplement their college attendance to major in conservation or related fields. The RCDGSDC also sponsors a high school student to attend Range Camp every summer.
7. Monarch butterfly protection and habitat – a partnership program called Milkweed for Monarch geared to expand the pollinator habitat across San Diego County through plant distribution in schools, at the San Diego County Fair and to scout and community groups.
8. Invasive non-native plant species removal and native habitat restoration – a newer program that is imperative to the health of San Diego watersheds. Invasive non-native species are excessive users of our scarce water supplies and alter hydrologic functions in the riparian habitat. When the plants die off, they create a highly-combustible fuel load. Infestations of invasive non-native plants and dense vegetation also attract homeless camps, which are a source of water and soil pollution. Multiple brush fires have been caused by the illegal encampments along the San Diego River.

While this Implementation Plan is dynamic and incorporates long-term positive impacts, it is largely absent of Southern California conservancies. Southern California represents 51% of the California population and is a critical region where climate change is already affecting natural resource supplies and critical species habitats. As a vital, productive partner working to mitigate the effects of climate change, the Conservancy is involved in multiple conservation, restoration, and management activities concerning riparian areas, vibrant green spaces, fresh water, and healthier ecosystems. To expand their management activities, they would be largely viable within the following categories:

- A. Ecological Restoration: Mountain Meadow Restoration
- B. Management Practices on Forest Lands: Partial Cut
- C. Management Practices on Forest Lands: Less Intensive Forest Management
- D. Management Practices on Forest Lands: Forest Area Expansion/Reforestation
- E. Management Practices in Coastal Areas: Coastal Marsh Restoration
- F. Management Practices on Forest Lands: Understory Clearing
- G. Management Practices on all Land Types: Invasive Species Removal

I strongly urge you to consider addition of the San Diego River Conservancy as a key partner within the above proposed management activities. I am looking forward to the broader climate efforts and policy changes that target carbon sequestration as a long-term objective on natural and working lands. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheryl Landrum". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Sheryl Landrum
Executive Director