



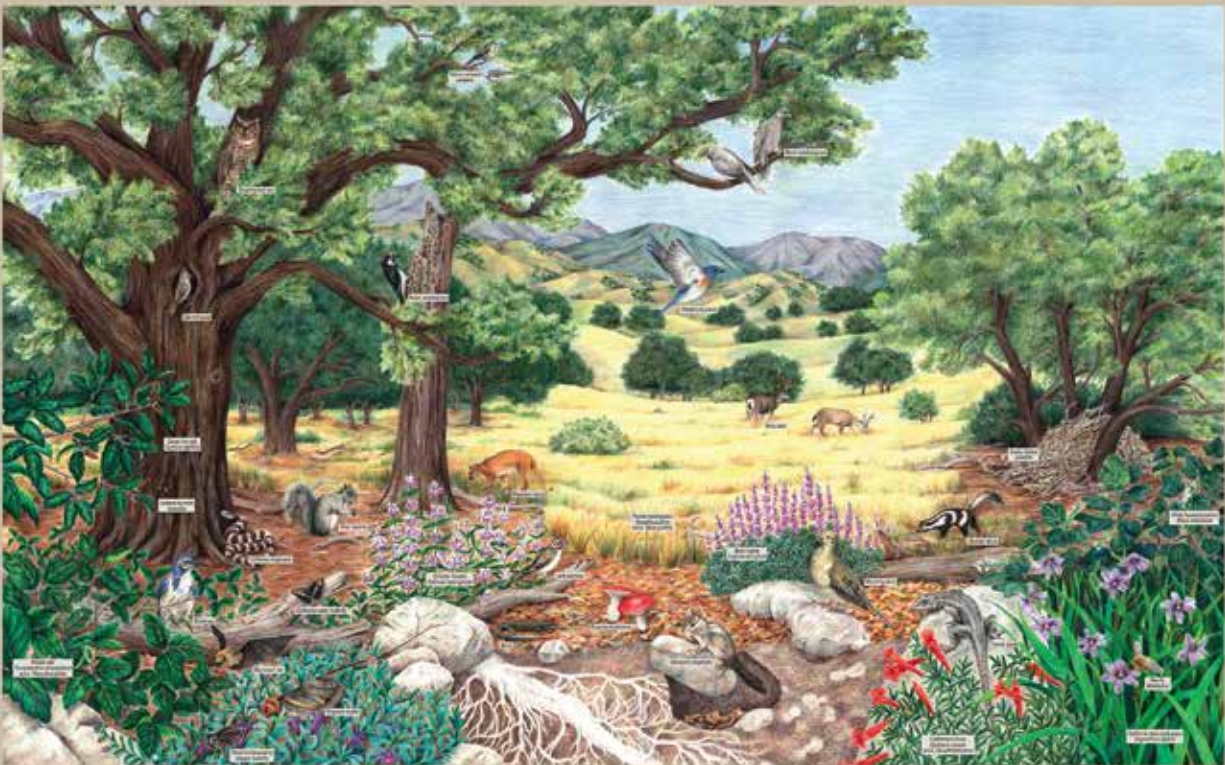
Education Programs Summary

Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District

2023

The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District's (RCRCD) mission is to conserve natural resources, working with private landowners, organizations, businesses, and agencies. RCRCD conserves habitat, provides technical assistance, and conducts environmental education programs.

RCRCD's early board members, some of whom were displaced farmers from Orange County, recognized the importance of conservation education for a rapidly urbanizing region. Nearly 40 years ago, the board of directors had the foresight to hire the District's first education employee to create programs about local natural resources and their conservation. At the time, there were no personal computers and few resources about local species. Staff drew upon the expertise of UC Riverside biologists, botanists, entomologists, as well as natural resource professionals to identify local species and develop programs and materials about the inland region's plants and animals.



Inland Southern California Oak Woodland

The District has been a champion of environmental education for the socio-economically depressed inland region of southern California and has a long history of providing equitable and free access to learning opportunities. Today, a highly diverse staff educates and engages students and residents with a variety of tools and programs.



Three RCRC Educational Sites

RCRCD conducts programs at its three educational sites: the LandUse Learning Center (LLC), the Sycamore Creek Interpretive Center (SCIC), and the Greenbelt Monarch Habitat. Staff conduct interactive programs, field trips, stewardship projects, and tours of the sites.

1. The LandUse Learning Center (LLC)

The LLC is a tool for educating about sustainable practices for the three main land uses of Southern California: native habitats, urban areas, and agriculture. The 3-acre demonstration garden includes handicap accessible trails with interpretive signs, fun plant and animal treasure hunts, citizen science backpacks, plant IDs with plant lists, and more: <https://www.rcrcd.org/files/cda7d2597/LLCflyer.pdf> . Schools are provided **free** field trips with hands-on, inquiry-based activities and materials that have been created to reinforce learning about local plants, animals and sustainable practices. Introductory video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNjFD2e0GM4&t=2s> .



The **Native Habitat** area depicts four dwindling, local plant communities of inland western Riverside and San Bernardino Counties: riparian, coastal-sage-scrub, chaparral, and oak woodland. The riparian plant community includes a recycling stream for the study of native fish, including the threatened Santa Ana Sucker.

Visitors can also learn more from RCRCD publications *Conserving Critical Habitat* at <https://www.rcrcd.org/files/e51e3855c/ConservingCriticalHabitat.pdf> and *Protecting our Native Fish* at <https://www.rcrcd.org/files/2fd782352/ProtectingOurNativeFish.pdf>

Visitors to the LLC learn about specific actions they can take to reduce their impacts on habitat and wildlife, such as by eliminating invasive plant species from landscaping and creating habitat for urban-adapted wildlife in yards. Learn more in *Living on the Edge of the Urban-Wildlands Interface* at <https://www.rcrcd.org/files/45b80a884/LivingOnTheEdge.pdf> .



The **Urban Area** demonstrates ways to steward resources in urban or suburban eco-systems with four styles of water-wise yards, lawn alternatives, and an Arbor Trail with tree species that are suitable for urban areas of inland southern California. Signs about urban forestry explain the value of trees, how trees mitigate for air pollution, the urban heat island effect, and climate change. Visitors learn about proper tree care and planting, placement of trees to reduce energy use, and more. Tree publications that were developed collaboratively with partners include:

- *Tree Care* at <https://www.rcrcd.org/files/d49cf6036/TreeCare.pdf>
- *Waterwise Tree Care* at <https://www.rcrcd.org/files/ff1ba974d/WaterwiseTreeCare.pdf> .
- *Wild about Natives* is an introduction to the use native plants in landscaping: <https://www.rcrcd.org/files/da6576344/wildaboutNativesweb.pdf> .



The **Agricultural Area** demonstrates crops that thrive in our local climate. Demonstrations and interpretive signs depict sustainable agricultural practices; integrated pest management using a variety of biological controls; and other methods that farmers use to build soil health, capture carbon, control erosion, and prevent sediment in water. Signs encourage consumers to support sustainable agriculture and thus benefit from a high quality, safe, local food supply, while reducing pollution from transportation. Visitors are also offered the award-winning *Fresh and Local* food and ag guide that was developed by RCRC: <https://rcrcd.specialdistrict.org/files/3ab208586/2019freshlocalguideweb.pdf>





2. Sycamore Creek Interpretive Center (SCIC)

The purpose of the SCIC is to interpret the importance of the Sycamore Creek Preserve's natural resources that provide high quality habitat for native plants and animals, including some threatened and endangered species like Munz's Onion and the California Gnatcatcher. Indian Canyon waterway runs through the preserve providing a wildlife corridor with water, the limiting resource in dry Southern California. Intro video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1vyiY9f75Q&t=48s> .

SCIC is a small nature center where RCRCD provides free programs, field trips, and children's activities. The Interpretive Center staff cultivates environmental understanding and stewardship by providing engaging experiences that empower visitors to:

- protect waterways from pollutants and encroachment
- create defensible space around their homes
- guard oak woodlands and their unique functions.



Kids made fun crafts at RCRCD's Nature Fest in 2013. Shani McCullough (on left) began her career at RCRCD as a high school intern. Shani completed her plant science degree at UC Davis and is currently our Senior Plant Restoration Ecologist.



3. Greenbelt Monarch Habitat

In 2020, RCRCDC received a \$60,000 grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) that provided funding for creating a 2-acre Monarch habitat at our Greenbelt facility. The District's native plant nursery propagated 2,000 native milkweeds plus 1,600 nectar plants. Volunteers helped plant, weed and monitor the 2-acres.

The grant provided for farmer training programs about practices that support pollinators, as well as the creation of Monarch interpretive signs for public demonstration plantings at five key sites within the District, including the planting at Riverside's City Hall.



Volunteers looked for tiny Monarch eggs, then provided data for iNaturalist, the Monarch Larval Monitoring Project, and the Western Monarch Milkweed Mapper.

Volunteers planted native milkweed and nectar plants at the Greenbelt Monarch butterfly habitat in 2022.



The *Pollinator Paradise* garden planning publication and Monarch interpretive signs at the LandUse Learning Center's pollinator garden.

In 2023, the District received a grant to propagate pollinator plants for habitat kits that will be developed in English and Spanish. This grant is also from WCB and the California Resource Conservation District (CARCD). A Spanish speaking employee will deliver kits to local households, libraries and schools, especially where car ownership is low. The effort will help serve those who lack environmental education opportunities and will increase habitat for urban-adapted wildlife.



Educational Programs

RCRCD works to empower people to be stewards (caretakers) of natural resources. The District fosters stewardship by providing free environmental education, volunteer opportunities, community science, tours /field trips and community engagement for all ages.

Early Childhood Programs

RCRCD's preschool programs were created to include songs, crafts and hands-on activities. Today, our Sycamore Creek Interpretive Center hosts a monthly preschool program with activities called *Story Time among the Sycamores*.



In 1986, then Education Development Coordinator Diana Ruiz launched soils education programs including the Soil Saver Club and early childhood, hands-on activities like Earthworm Alley.



Story Time among the Sycamores events include crafts for the preschool children.

Elementary School Programs

RCRCD conducts a variety of programs and field trips for elementary level learners.

- ▶ For more than 30 years, the District has provided schools information, materials, and mini-grants that fund tree plantings, composting, and school gardens.



NRCS Soil Conservationist Nghi Deip (on left) compared erosion between soils with vegetative cover, mulch cover, and no cover at a local elementary school. (Circa 1995)



Young learners looked for Monarch eggs and caterpillars on native milkweed at Sycamore Creek Interpretive Center in 2016.



Victoria Elementary students converted a small patch of unused schoolyard into a native plant garden during the spring of 2010. They also learned about making their own compost. RCRCD provided mini-grants.

- ▶ In years past, staff coordinated school tree plantings and tree education programs at schools, funded by grants from Cal Fire and the Small Business Administration.



The District began the Growing Together tree education program in 1997 with support from National Tree Trust. Each child got a chance to help plant a tree. RCRCD commissioned children's songwriter Sara Badera to compose "My Gift to the World" for classroom programs, Arbor Day, and for *Riverside Celebrates Trees!*



Resource Educator Erin Snyder (left), with help from a translator, taught a predominantly Spanish speaking summer camp group about natural resource stewardship in 2018.

- ▶ RCRCD conducts free interactive water education programs for classes and youth groups on behalf of the City of Corona's Public Utilities Department. Prior to that, staff provided hands-on programs for the Cities and County of Riverside's *Storm Water-Clean Water Protection Program* for 15 years. The teachers are offered educational materials to reinforce learning, including the appropriate grade-level student booklets, teacher guides, Santa Ana River Watershed posters, and more. RCRCD created the Pollution Patrol Club as a supplement to this program.



Resource Educator Kirstyn Kay had students help with a story about Fancy Fin the fish and her need for clean water in her stream. Children add "pollutants" to the water that Fancy Fin lives in.



High School Programs

- ▶ For over 20 years staff coordinated FFA Land Judging contests and Student Speak Off competitions for high school students.



Future Farmers of America (FFA) students from local high schools competed in Land Judging at the Norte Vista-La Sierra Field Day hosted by Loma Linda University (now La Sierra University). (Circa 1990)



- ▶ Each year RCRCDC sponsors high school environmental teams to compete in the California Envirothon. Staff coordinate training sessions with resource professionals during the school year and help conduct the competition each spring. Students learn about soils, aquatics, forestry, wildlife, and a special environmental topic that is different each year.



- ▶ RCRCDC has provided training for Sherman Indian Institute and the California School for the Deaf (CSDR). CSDR students helped at the LandUse Learning Center creating compost, working the garden plots, and collecting data for community science.

Adult Programs

- ▶ During the 1990s, RCRCDC conducted the *Protector del Aqua* program in English and Spanish, which included a mobile lab to teach about converting to water-saving irrigation systems.
- ▶ In 2002, RCRCDC created the *Help Create a Sustainable Community* program that explains simple ways to create communities that conserve natural resources for future generations. The project includes:
 - a program presented for organizations and staff meetings that explores ways to conserve resources in three land use areas: native habitats, urban areas, and agriculture.
 - a companion booklet with information about creating more sustainable communities, in Spanish and English.
 - a tour of the LandUse Learning Center, with publications and plant lists that empower residents to conserve resources at home, at work, and in the community. Find our virtual tour here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyT_Lfbkuh8&t=6s. This program was recognized with an award from the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD).



- ▶ The District conducts two college level courses: the UC California Naturalist and UC Climate Stewards trainings. After completion, graduates join a Community of Practice coordinated by RCRC. The program is conducted through the University of California's Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Learn about our local program and see some of our diverse graduates here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcLm8dnpCj4&t=6s>. More recently, staff conducted the Cal Nat training for 20 nearby California Conservation Corps members, most of whom come from underserved and low-income communities. The certification may help them find jobs after their CCC commitment is completed.



Guest speaker Bonnie Corcoran of the US Forest Service (on left) led the California Naturalist field trip to the Wildlands Conservancy at Oak Glen Preserve in 2022.



During 2016, teachers were trying out the fun lessons from Project Learning Tree at RCRC.

- ▶ Staff conduct educator training in Project Wet, Project Wild, Project Learning Tree, Population Education, and for docents and Cal Nat students. Free educational materials are offered annually to all elementary, middle, and high school teachers who work or reside within the RCRC's boundaries. Free posters, student booklets, etc. highlight local species and raise awareness about local resource issues.

- ▶ RCRC frequently provides tours and training for individuals, groups, and college classes. In partnership with the California Conservation Corps (CCC), we are currently building a small community garden with handicap accessibility for Riverside City College students.
- ▶ Staff provide training to a variety of groups, including the Riverside Parks Department's landscape crew.





The Inland Urban Forest Council instructed on the structural pruning of young shade trees at the LandUse Learning Center in 2014.



RCRCD hosted local avocado grower Linda Mullins who instructed about avocado tree care during a First Saturday program, which was followed by a scion exchange by the California Rare Fruit Growers.

- ▶ During 2022-2023, RCRCD provided training to seven diverse UC Riverside interns and three CCC Corp members.
- ▶ RCRCD hosts a variety of educational events, including First Saturday speakers, “Ask a Master Gardener” tabling, Monarch planting and monitoring events, and farmer training programs.



Ask a Master Gardener is at the LandUse Learning Center each First Saturday.

Virtual Programs

The District utilizes a YouTube channel for posting education videos:
<https://www.youtube.com/@riverside-coronaresourceco4750/videos>

- ▶ During the pandemic, staff created a virtual water education program for the elementary level: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwZvfl9M3og&t=7s> . The Alliance for Water Efficiency (AWE) and the Scotts Miracle Grow Foundation funded the development.
- ▶ RCRCD partnered with the Southwest Resource Management Association (SRMA) to create the *Power of Pollinators* virtual curriculum during 2021: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OI4OKwIMOIw&t=15s>
- ▶ Staff provide presentations at various functions and on a variety of topics, including Monarch and habitat gardening. As part of the Mayor’s Monarch Challenge, RCRCD created a video about propagating milkweed for the Western Monarch butterfly: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcl6mL-vUw&t=41s> .





Publications

The District creates localized educational materials (posters, publications, games, etc.) about stewardship and resource management and provides them for schools and at events, workshops, and at partners' programs: <https://www.rcrcd.org/publications-and-brochures> .

Regional Books

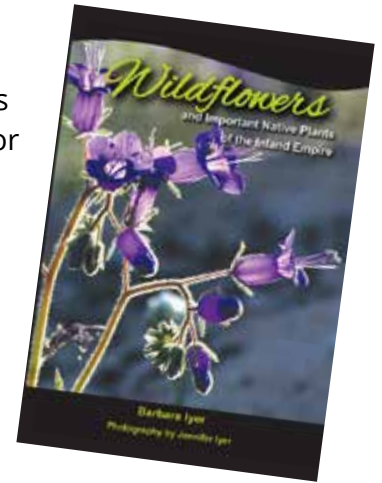
RCRCD developed and sells two local books.

Wildflowers and Important Native Plants of the Inland Empire by Barbara Iyer was published by RCRCD in 2020. The book helps people identify plants by the color and size of their flowers.

The book provides easy to use features:

- full color photos of each unique plant
- park locations for seeking wildflowers
- a comprehensive glossary and drawings to help with unfamiliar terms.

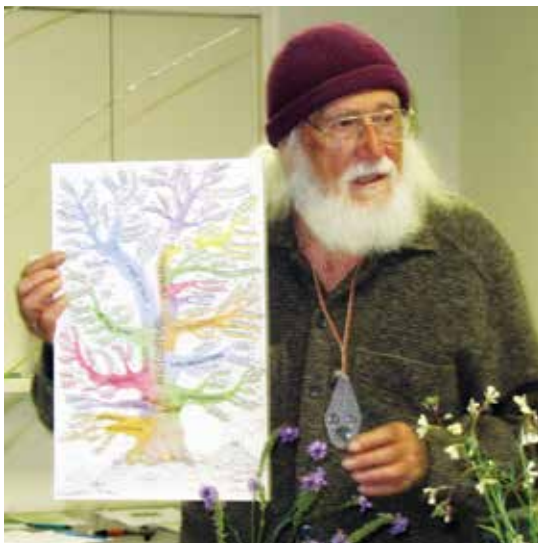
The book has more than 80 species descriptions covering the plants that community members are most likely to see in southern California's inland valleys and foothills of western San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. Plant descriptions include information about Native American, landscape, and wildlife uses of plants. Chapters include information about dangerous plants, plant communities, and plant conservation.



RCRCD is in the process of revising its *Backyard Birds of the Inland Empire* by Sheila Kee. The second edition was published by Heyday Books in 2010. The guide provides descriptions and tips for identifying over 50 of the most common birds that visit yards in Southern California's inland region. Each bird is identified by color, then described by its behavioral traits, calls, food preferences, and nesting patterns. The first edition won a National Association of Conservation Districts' Outreach Award.



Sheila Kee (then of U.C. Cooperative Extension) promoted creating backyard habitat during the "Living on the Edge" Field Day at Mt. Rubidoux in 1994.



RCRCD also sells *Flora of the Santa Ana River and Environs* by Oscar Clarke, Greg Ballmer, Danielle Svela, and Dr. Arlee Montalvo. The District helped sponsor the first edition. The book is used as a reference for training workshops, such as for the California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM).



Community Science and Volunteer Programs

- ▶ RCRC lead the way with community science, beginning in 2002 with a bluebird nest box monitoring program. Volunteers manage the longest running, most prolific Bluebird Trail in Riverside County. Each spring during nesting season, volunteers have monitored bluebird nest boxes that have fledged over 2,873 Western Bluebirds and more than 418 other cavity nesting birds including Ash-throated Flycatchers, Tree Swallows, Bewick's Wrens, Acorn Woodpeckers and Mountain Chickadees. The data are submitted online to the Cornell University Nestwatch, the California Bluebird Recovery Program, the North American Bluebird Society, and Southern California Bluebird Club.



Kelli Ong built bluebird nest boxes as a scouting project during 2020.

OPERATION RESILIENT TREES
Data Collection Event
 Help scientists study the cooling benefits of urban trees in Riverside.
 Citizen Scientists (volunteers) will collect data about tree condition, size, and location.
Saturday, October 22, 2016
9:30 AM - 12:30 PM
at Fairmount Park
 Bardshill
 2601 Fairmount Blvd.
 Riverside, CA 92501
 Training and tools will be provided.

The Resident Tree data collection is one of many events as part of **Living With Resilience**, which is being held all **throughout Make a Difference Day**. An optional Live Riverside only will be held at the Sherman Indian High School football field (Maple Ave. and Avenue 51) from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM on a **Monday** and from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM on a **Tuesday**. For more information and to register, please see the event listed at www.LiveRiverside.org or show up at Fairmount Park at 9:30 AM.

For questions, please contact
 Erica Presley at Presley@rcrcd.org or (951) 225-7461

Logos for RCRC, Riverside County, and EarthWatch Institute.

- ▶ Over the years, RCRCD has worked on various community science programs including coordinating an EarthWatch tree study and air quality studies and an early EPA Water Quality Monitoring program. Phenology and iNaturalist are important components of the UC Cal Nat and Climate Stewards programs that are taught by staff.
- ▶ The District introduces Community Science projects at both the LLC and SCIC sites, where backpacks with data collection materials are available for check out.
- ▶ In 2017, staff began a regional Santa Ana Watershed Community Science Network and shares opportunities through its Facebook page and to the Riverside Citizen Science page.



Red backpacks can be checked out for community science projects at RCRCD's sites



During the 1990s to 2000s, staff coordinated volunteer tree planting events (*Riverside Celebrates Trees!*), the first local waterway cleanups, and the first storm drain inlet labeling. The District offers a variety of ways that individuals and groups can learn through volunteering, such as:

- propagating native plants in the nursery
- collecting native seeds
- planting and caring for Monarch habitat at our Greenbelt facility
- conducting educational programs at the three educational sites
- monitoring bluebird nest boxes in spring.



Kiwanis, Master Gardeners, and students helped plant the LandUse Learning Center demonstration gardens during the 2000s.



RCRCD was a founding partner with the city creating *Riverside Celebrates Trees!*, an annual event that eventually grew to host 800 volunteers in its final year.



In 1995, RCRCD started the storm drain labeling program with volunteers from the Cities and County of Riverside.



Volunteers from Inland Empire Health helped weed and spread compost at the Ag Area in the LandUse Learning Center during 2017.



Collaboration with Partners

The District works to conserve natural resources, largely through synergistic partnerships with those who have complementary goals. The staff works with a myriad of agencies, organizations and individual landowners, often collaborating on educational projects. Almost all of RCRC D’s programs and sites have been developed through grants, contracts, and collaboration with partners.

In turn, RCRC D has helped build the capacity of groups including the Riverside Food Systems Alliance, Riverside Garden Council, Inland Urban Forest Council, Riverside Neighborhood Partnership, and Environmental Education Collaborative. Please see numerous partners on pages 46-47 of the *Long Range Objectives*: <https://www.rcrcd.org/files/8ec6d7acc/LongRangeObjectives2022-2027+web.pdf> .

- ▶ RCRC D has been a leading partner with the Environmental Education Collaborative (EEC) of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties helping to build a network of non-formal educators. Staff conducted fundraising and received a grant for the development of EEC’s

Environmental Learning Resources, a guide to sites and environmental programs throughout the two counties: <https://rcrcd.specialdistrict.org/files/451a832b1/EnvironmentalLearningResources.pdf>.

The 32-page guide is now online with an interactive map: <https://enviroedcollaborative.com/> , and the District continues to help build EEC’s capacity and programming. The GIS map was developed in partnership with the Claremont Graduate Colleges. Video about the Resource guide:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQVh2W_fb5M&t=1s .



University of California Cooperative Extension Specialist Dr. Jeff Mitchell demonstrated soil performance with and without plant residues for emerging farmers at a Growers’ Forum in Riverside, CA.



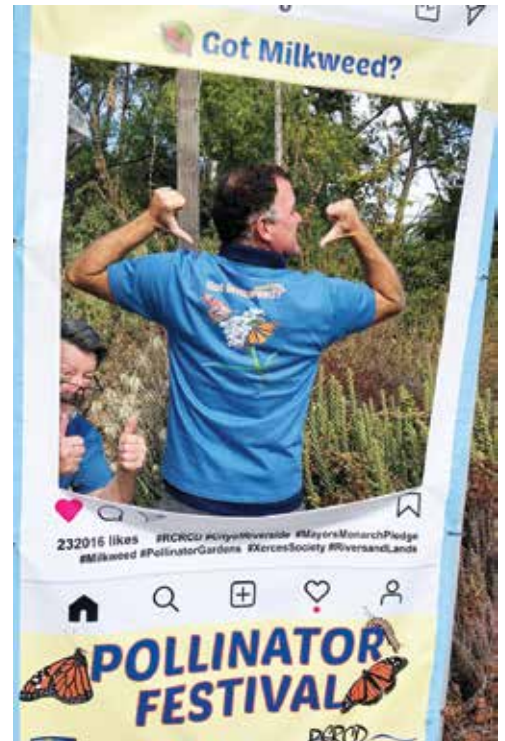
The Environmental Learning Resources guide was recognized by the California Association of Public Information Officers with an EPIC Award and by the Public Relation Society of America’s Inland Empire Chapter with a Polaris Award.



► During 2019, the District conducted an award winning Pollinator Festival, habitat plantings, and hosted a California Native Plant Society's plant sale to support Western Monarch butterflies. The efforts were coordinated with Riverside's Mayor's office for the Mayor's Monarch Challenge through National Wildlife Federation. One outgrowth of the initiative was the planting of a pollinator garden at city hall. Summary report: <https://www.rcrcd.org/files/cc88913ce/City+Council+Mayor%27s+Monarch+Challenge+Implementation+Report.pdf>.



Over 30 volunteers helped install pollinator plants at Ryan Bonaminio Park in 2019.



The Pollinator Festival included photo banners and costume dress-up for young visitors.



RCRCDC provided plants and a set of Monarch interpretive signs for the Mayor's demonstration site at city hall, as well as for Bonaminio Park, and for the Northside's Urban Greening project.



- ▶ During 2016, staff coordinated a city wide Green Festival and Summit with 29 presentations, 30 booths, a local food lunch, and a community engagement with the then mayor.



- ▶ Many of RCRC's conservation easements are along beautiful and important arroyos (waterways) that flow through unincorporated parts of Riverside County and across adjoining portions of the City of Riverside. Staff provided support to the Riverside County/City Arroyo-Watershed Committee (CCAC) and developed the publication *Conserving Waterways: Preventing Impacts from Human Activity*: <https://www.rcrcd.org/files/5f43d25b4/Conserving-Waterways2018web.pdf> . The CCAC worked from 2003-2011 to protect local waterways, adjoining wildlife habitat and water quality. The unique committee, comprised of city and county staff, RCRC and community volunteers, sought to improve coordination between the City and County, reviewed development standards, and worked to educate the community about the value and care of watercourses.



The Chicano Indigenous Community for Culturally Conscious Advocacy & Action (CHICCCAA) and Environmental Education Collaborative were a few of the many organizations that “tabled” at the 2022 climate group meetup at RCRC.

- ▶ In early 2022, RCRC hosted the first gathering of local climate groups for the Inland Empire region. Those groups, with some agencies, are joining forces to help communities become more climate aware and resilient.



The District partners with the Inland Urban Forest Council (IUFC) to bring education programs to local tree-care professionals and awareness to residents.



- ▶ Community forests are fundamental components of urban ecosystems, and their management is essential for creating sustainable communities. RCRCD works to increase canopy cover and promotes best practices and urban forest management planning. See the IUFC website for RCRCD created videos and publications (in Spanish and English) about tree care, proper pruning, and more at <https://inlandurbanforestcouncil.org/> .
- ▶ Another essential component of a sustainable community is a food system that provides for access to locally produced foods, protected prime farmlands, community gardens, and urban agriculture. The District has helped the Riverside Food Systems Alliance (RFSA) with building the local farm to fork network. RCRCD worked to raise awareness about the benefits of purchasing locally produced foods. Staff created the first and second editions of *Fresh and Local*, an award-winning, 48-page guide that connects consumers to local foods and educates about components of the local food system: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3C0mRdloFg> . RCRCD updated the listings and created an online version for the Riverside Food Systems Alliance’s website: <https://riversidefoods.org/> during 2020 .
- ▶ In 2021, RCRCD convened the first community open house for the Northside Heritage Meadows project. Staff made sure that deaf and Spanish translators were onsite for the community engagement event. One outgrowth of that neighborhood event was the formation of a garden planning committee that helped plan “Nick’s Garden” with and for the underserved Northside community.



The Inland Urban Forest Council has partnered with RCRCD on education, publications, and outreach for nearly 20 years.



RCRCD created eleven interpretive signs for the Northside urban greening project with funding from an NACD Urban Ag Conservation grant.



In 2021, the Northside Heritage Meadows event brought more than 200 visitors who were welcomed by 27 volunteers at neighborhood and agency tables and photo booths.



- ▶ RCRCO collaborates with the California Native Plant Society's (CNPS) Riverside-San Bernardino chapter to educate people about the importance of local native plants and the creation of urban landscapes that support local native habitats.
- ▶ Staff work with community gardens and assisted the Riverside Garden Council with building its capacity and website. Creating handicap accessibility remains a priority for garden planning and funding.



The California Native Plant Society's plant sale sold out of the Monarch's host plant and other nectar-source plants during the 2019 Pollinator Festival. Over 400 people attended and "cross-pollinated" the adjoining events.

Outreach

- ▶ RCRCO participates with tables/booths at 10-20 community events each year including Fiesta de La Familia, Juneteenth, Native American Day, Duck Days, and Earthnight in the Garden. Cumulatively, hundreds of thousands of people have attended the events and are offered educational materials in English and Spanish.



Resource Educators Erin Snyder and Kirstyn Kay promoted the Santa Ana Watershed Community Science Network and RCRCO's programs at the Environmental Education Collaborative's symposium in 2018.



"Soils Experience" at Riverside Community College (RCC) in 1986, as part of the first Environmental Expo before it found a home at Cal State, San Bernardino and became NEST, the Network for Environmental Science Teaching (NEST). Diana Ruiz (on right).



- ▶ The education staff creates *Resources Update* as a print and electronic newsletter. Social media and the website www.RCRC.org, are tools used to increase the delivery of information and the promotion of programming. RCRC uses a variety of social media tools, including Facebook, NextDoor.com, partnering organizations' electronic newsletters, and YouTube for informational and educational videos: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZ9qcZKB2xePvErzAbsCZuQ/videos> .
- ▶ Staff continue to administer and/or contribute to the social media pages of partners, including California Naturalists and Climate Stewards Community of Practice, Northside Heritage Meadows project, RFSA, EEC, Greater Riverside Environmental Engagement Network (GREEN), Riverside Neighborhood Partnership, Riverside Food Co-op, Riverside Garden Council, and more.



Education Staff

RCRC has a small but dedicated education staff that wears many hats and works together creatively to accomplish a lot with very little funding. Much of the programming and site development has been possible thanks to funding received through partnerships, contracts, and grants gained through staff effort. The education staff does it all: writing, implementing, and reporting on grants and contracts that are used to conduct educational programs, develop and distribute materials, and create interpretive sites and signs. The staff is purpose-driven and promotes natural resource concerns in their professional and personal endeavors.

- ▶ Staff continue to improve their skills by receiving training and certifications, including from Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education (AEOE), the National Association for Interpretation (NAI), and the Environmental Education Collaborative (EEC).
- ▶ During 2023, RCRC hosted an AEOE meetup in coordination with the local EEC and Region 8 of the National Association for Interpretation.



2018 EEC symposium training.



In 2019, RCRC hosted NAI for Certified Interpretive Guide training.

Summary

It would be impossible to cover all the educational programs that RCRC D has conducted over the past 70 years, but we can thank those early board members who recognized the need of environmental and stewardship education for conserving natural resources.



RCRC D's first UC Climate Steward graduates, 2021.

To learn more about the District's current educational programs, please see <https://www.rcrcd.org/educational-programs>.

For more information, see the Long Range Objectives: <https://www.rcrcd.org/files/8ec6d7acc/LongRangeObjectives2022-2027+web.pdf>. Find prior awards on pages 77-79.



About 1,500 students visited the Stokoe Elementary School museum in 2011. RCRC D created much of the exhibit with native plants and animals, interpretation about habitat restoration, and a "trail" that ran through the exhibit with a bridge crossing a "waterway". Fifteen trail signs taught about outdoor etiquette and waterway stewardship.