



RIVERSIDE-CORONA RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

# Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2012  
June 30, 2011 to July 1, 2012

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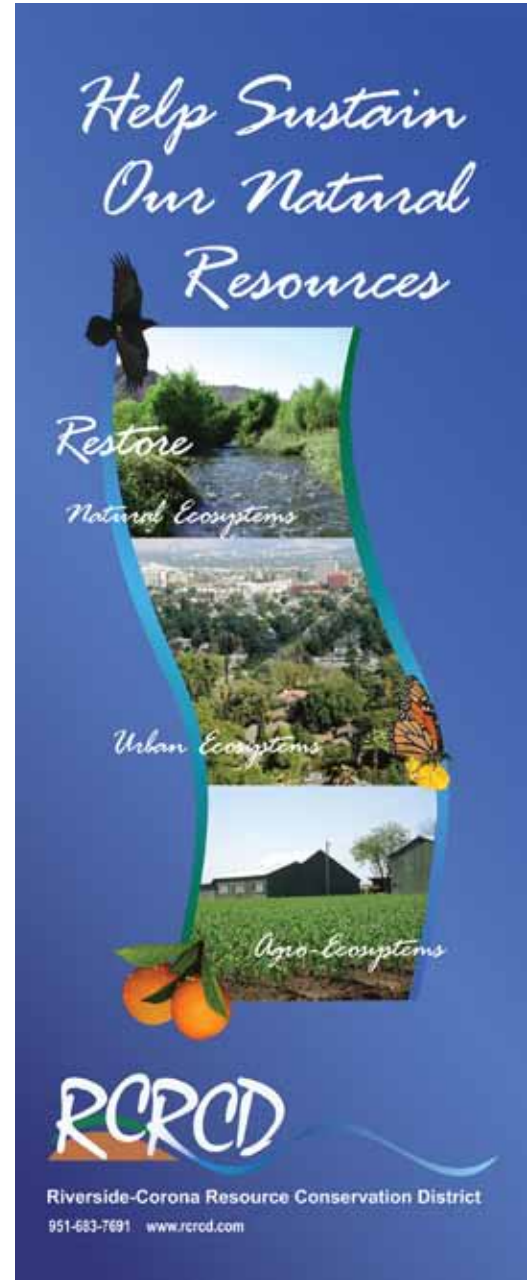
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## About the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District

The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD) is a local government agency that works to conserve the natural resources (soil, water, native plants and wildlife) of areas within western Riverside and San Bernardino Counties in southern California.

The District advocates that each acre of land be managed according to its needs and promotes the sustainable use of natural resources for each land-use, including native habitats, urban/suburban areas, and agriculture.

RCRCD provides resource management assistance to private and public land users and conducts land treatment, education, and volunteer programs. The District works to sustain natural resources in a variety of ways, including:

- providing on site technical assistance, such as irrigation system evaluation,
- restoring habitat through the removal of invasive species, and reestablishment of native species, and
- providing stewardship information and educating broad audiences about natural, urban and agricultural ecosystems.

RCRCD is non-regulatory and self-governing with a five member Board of Directors. The Board retains local administration and direction over programs. The District achieves its conservation goals by coordinating public and private resources and by partnering with “cooperators”, land owners who are interested in conserving natural resources while using or developing property. A cooperator may be an individual land owner, a group, such as Home Owner Association, a business and/or agency. The District enters into Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with cooperating agencies, which spell out working relationships.

Development encroaches upon arroyo.  
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# Annual Report

## Fiscal Year 2012

This report of accomplishments for the period from June 30, 2011 through July 1, 2012 (Fiscal Year 2012) is organized to follow the three main RCRCDC program areas:

### **Assisting Land Users with Resource Management**

### **Habitat Land Management and Preservation**

### **Education, Volunteer and Outreach Programs**

Looking east over the city of Riverside from the top of Mt. Rubidoux.

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## Assisting Land Users with Resource Management

RCRCD provides technical assistance to land users, “cooperators”, who are interested in conserving natural resources while using or developing property.

Services provided to cooperators might include:

- on-site evaluation of a problem, such as an inefficient irrigation system;
- conservation planning based on resource data such as soil type and crop water needs; and
- specifications for the installation of conservation practices, such as erosion control structures.

The RCRCD office provides resource data and planning tools, including soil and water testing, soil survey maps, and other technical information.

Some natural resource management and conservation planning information is provided to RCRCD cooperators from our technical partner the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

### Water Conservation

RCRCD’s Irrigation Water Management (IWM) Mobile Lab evaluates irrigation systems for efficiency and uniformity in applying water. The Mobile Lab auditor travels to cropland, homes, and large turf areas at parks, schools, and golf courses to test irrigation systems. The auditor then develops a report with recommendations for system improvements to help irrigators conserve water and save money. During Fiscal Year 2012, the IWM mobile lab performed a total of 35 evaluations on 125 acres, which included 12 agricultural evaluations on 60 acres and 23 turf evaluations on 65 acres.



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A timer/controller is checked by Shani Pynn as part of an irrigation water management evaluation.

## Soil and Water Testing

RCRCD continued providing low-cost soil and water testing for private landowners and home owners. The lab completed ten soil tests and one irrigation water test during fiscal year 2012. Soil tests evaluate macronutrients, soil texture, conductivity, and pH level. Water tests evaluate nitrate-nitrogen, phosphorus, pH level and conductivity.

## Technical Advice and Organizational Support

RCRCD staff works on committees and provides information about sustaining natural resources in cooperation with a variety of entities including:

- Santa Ana Sucker Recovery Team
- Native Freshwater Fauna Working Group
- Alluvial Fan Task Force
- Riverside Green Action Plan (GAP)
- Santa Ana River Task Force
- Inland Urban Forestry Council (IUFC)
- Santa Ana River and Orange County Weed Management Area
- Riverside County-City Arroyo Watershed Committee (CCAC)
- California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC)
- Irvine Ranch Conservancy

Vegetation Workshop

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# Habitat Land Management and Preservation

## Conserving Critical Habitat

The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD) is a non-regulatory local agency that works to permanently protect land that has habitat, scenic, and/or agricultural values. RCRCD works to connect blocks of habitat by preserving and restoring corridors or linkages for wildlife movement and migration.

RCRCD conserves open space through habitat restoration, management, and land preservation:

**Restoration:** The District improves degraded habitat by removing invasive species and trash, replanting native plants, restocking native animals, protecting soil from erosion, protecting water from pollutants, and more.

**Management:** RCRCD continues to maintain and monitor restored habitat for water quality, critical wildlife species, invasion of exotic weeds, trash dumping, Off Road Vehicle (ORV) intrusion, noise, and other impacts.

**Preservation:** The District protects important areas from future development by accepting donations of land (fee title) and conservation easements.

Temescal Creek flows through Dos Lagos Golf Course.

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## Habitat Restoration

Restoration projects may be cooperative efforts between RCRC, private landowners and other agencies on private and/or public lands, including the District's conservation easements. The amount of restoration is determined by permit requirements (by regulatory agencies) and other field assessments.

RCRC restores habitat in natural areas by re-establishing local native plant species for a variety of plant communities: riparian, upland, wetland, grassland, oak woodland and more. Restoration efforts provide habitat for sensitive species including the California Gnatcatcher, Stephen's Kangaroo Rat, Horned Lizard, Red-sided Garter Snake, Least Bell's Vireo, Willow Flycatcher and other birds, mammals, and amphibians.

## Conservation Easements

During Fiscal Year 2012, the District continued to work to obtain land and conservation easements. RCRC has accepted 16 easements and is in the process of acquiring more. Restoration work on four easements has been completed: two in Temescal Wash, one in the Alessandro Arroyo and one in Highgrove. Agencies, individual landowners, and Home Owners Associations have given conservation easements to RCRC. Most of the conservation lands have required extensive restoration, including removal of exotic weeds and replanting with native species.

Temescal Open Space Reserve

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Easement Name	Acreage
Temescal Wash	13.0
Lee Lake Water District	30.0
Chandler	7.8
Tagorada	0.3
Mission Ranch	3.0
Alicante	3.0
Munaretto	1.5
McBride (proposed)	19.0
Boulder Basins & Drainages (in progress)	8.7
DWR Bedford Basin (in progress)	15.0
DWR Slope	4.9
Shinkle - Highgrove	.6
Cajalco Wetlands (in progress)	10.2
Sycamore Creek Preserve	72.66



## Wildlife Corridors

RCRCD manages many valuable conservation lands that are important to the region's plants and animals. The habitat lands provide corridors which link larger blocks of habitat for wildlife movement and migration. They also help improve water quality, provide beautiful vistas, and stabilize eroding waterways. Many of these conservation lands have required extensive restoration.



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Riparian (waterway) habitat along Temescal wash provides for wildlife movement.

Most of RCRCD's conserved and managed lands are located within three main areas: Temescal Corridor, Cajalco Corridor, and Riverside Area Arroyos.

## Temescal Corridor

One of the RCRCD's long-term goals is to preserve habitat lands that extend from the Cleveland National Forest through Temescal Canyon to the Gavilan Plateau and Lake Mathews. The District has obtained the following land and conservation easements in Temescal Canyon:

- Temescal Wash Conservation Easement
- Chandler Conservation Easement
- Department of Water Resources (DWR) Easement
- Lee Lake Conservation Easement
- Temescal Open Space Conservation Area
- Deleo Conservation Area
- Sycamore Creek Preserve Conservation Easement.

RCRCD also owns natural lands (fee title) in the Temescal Open Space Conservation Area, (135 acres of upland habitat) and the Deleo Conservation Area, which includes 26 acres of riparian, alluvial, and upland habitat.

## Cajalco Corridor

The Temescal Corridor connects to the Cajalco Corridor. The Cajalco floodplain and adjacent Gavilan Hills support a variety of important habitats, including: wetlands, waterways, Oak woodlands, Juniper woodlands, and alkali plant communities. The District is in the process of gaining and restoring conservation lands at:

- Boulder Heights water quality basins and wetland
- Wood and Cajalco Roads wetlands creation
- Alexander St
- Dailey Ranch.



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Re-planting native vegetation along Springbrook Wash.

## Riverside Arroyos

Many of RCRCO'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. RCRCO has worked to help educate homeowners, land users and local groups about stewardship at the wildland-urban interface. RCRCO has projects in the following waterways:

- Mission Ranch Development in Woodcrest
- Tagorda, a tributary to Mockingbird Canyon
- Munaretto Easement, a tributary to Alessandro Arroyo
- Shinkle Easement at Springbrook Wash
- Spring Mountain Ranch Easement in Springbrook Wash
- Hole Creek, a tributary to the Santa Ana River
- Lower Tequesquite, a tributary to the Santa Ana River
- Anza Creek, a tributary to the Santa Ana River
- Alicante Easement, a tributary to Mockingbird Canyon.

## Monitoring of Habitat Restoration Projects

RCRCD staff conducted monthly monitoring of ten restoration projects during FY 2012. Staff measured vegetation cover and species diversity within seeded sites of shrubland as part of the annual monitoring program within the Temescal Open Space.

As part of ongoing stewardship, RCRCD coordinates the cleanup of trash and debris and conducts water quality testing and wildlife monitoring on easements. RCRCD blocks illegal Off Road Vehicle (ORV) routes and replants disturbed soil with native vegetation.

## Mitigation Projects for Loss of Habitat

RCRCD continued to work with over 23 developers to actively restore and monitor habitat to compensate for development impacts and land use changes. The California Department of Fish and Game, Army Corps of Engineers and Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board allow RCRCD to work in waterways through Permits 1601, 1603, 404 and 401.

## Santa Ana Watershed Association (SAWA)

RCRCD is a member of SAWA, the Santa Ana Watershed Association. SAWA is a nonprofit organization that works to restore native habitat in the Santa Ana River watershed by removing invasive plants and animals from waterways.

With SAWA, RCRCD monitors invasive plants at Sycamore Canyon, Castleview Creek, Alessandro Arroyo, La Sierra Creek, Mockingbird Canyon, Woodcrest Arroyo, Temescal Canyon, and the main stem of the Santa Ana River.



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Wildlife biologists seine the stream for the Santa Ana sucker, a threatened fish.

## Santa Ana River and Orange County Weed Management Area

RCRCD continued as a partner with the Santa Ana River and Orange County Weed Management Area (SAROCWMA), which works to eradicate non-native weeds on both private and public lands in portions of Riverside, San Bernardino and Orange Counties. The Weed Management coalition has been successful in controlling common invasive weeds, especially *Arundo donax* (giant reed), perennial pepperweed, Tamarisk (salt cedar) and castor bean. The group works to control populations of invasive plants but also targets smaller populations of weeds and removes them before they become a problem.

Infestation of *Salsola tragus* (tumbleweed).  
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## Fish and Amphibian Programs

RCRCD conducted a variety of restoration and research projects in an effort to increase fish and amphibian populations in their native ranges of the Santa Ana Watershed.

Native fish and amphibian species are impacted by loss or degradation of stream habitat, water pollution, drought, non-native fish and aquatic animals, flood control dams, water diversion, sand and gravel mining, and changes in the watershed that result in erosion, sediment and debris.

### Native Fish Rescues, Reintroductions and Studies

Over the past nine years, more than 5,200 fish have been reared in the RCRCD's fish stream and returned to the Santa Ana and San Jacinto Rivers and other tributaries.

During FY 2012, the RCRCD's 300-foot long "built" stream supported a native fish population of 250 Speckled dace, 1,200 Arroyo Chub and 25 Santa Ana sucker. The number of fish varies from year to year, depending on natural reproduction.



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Santa Ana sucker

### Indian Creek Dace and Chub Project

RCRCD relocated native fish populations to the North Fork of the San Jacinto River after the end of the rainy season in April, 2012 with assistance from the California Department of Fish and Game and US Forest Service. The Speckled dace and Arroyo chub had been rescued from the Indian Creek waterway following the Esperanza fire of 2008. RCRCD maintained the fish populations in tanks at it's facility until the burned area was stabilized with regrowth of native plants.

## Tequesquite Arroyo

RCRCD is working with local water districts, US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and the City of Riverside on the restoration of the lower Tequesquite Arroyo for the benefit of the Santa Ana sucker. The creek has been degraded due to trash, exotic plants and lack of connectivity to the river. The five-year project will involve removing exotic species, controlling erosion on channel banks, placing substrate onto the channel bottoms for spawning habitat, and planting of native vegetation. Benthic, periphyton and fish sampling protocols will be used during annual monitoring.

## Native Fish Studies

The Santa Ana Sucker Research Program continued in cooperation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game-Region 6. The project compares the fish's tolerance to different levels of water pollution.



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A larval Santa Ana sucker used in toxicology sensitivity studies.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service used the Santa Ana sucker offspring in a toxicology study to determine the effects of endocrine disruptors (in water) on the growth and development of young fish. Over the project period, 500 larval Santa Ana suckers were hatched from 100 adult suckers living in four raceways.

## Water Quality Testing

During Fiscal Year 2012 staff monitored water quality monthly at the Lee Lake Conservation Easement pond and at RCRCD's native fish stream and raceways; periodically in Coldwater Canyon; and occasionally at other sites. The testing provides RCRCD and the Regional Water Quality Control Board with data to track water quality fluctuation and trends.

## Amphibian Restoration

As part of RCRC's Amphibian Restoration Program, staff completed the development of an on-site habitat area for Western pond turtles. The District fostered a population of young Western pond turtles that was released back to the wild by RCRC, Santa Ana Watershed Association, and Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority personnel. The rescue, maintenance, and relocation were conducted in cooperation with the Western Riverside County Resource Conservation Agency and Elsinore-Murrieta-Anza RCD. RCRC plans to reintroduce amphibian species into its restored conservation areas, including the Western pond turtle, California salamander, West coast newt and California tree frog.



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These western pond turtles were returned to Warm Springs Creek during 2012.

## Plant Programs and Projects

The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD) provides native plants for habitat restoration, landscaping and other types of planting projects. RCRCD propagates plants at its native plant nursery and holds locally collected seed in refrigerated seed storage facilities. RCRCD also helps train others in production and use of native plants in ways that are beneficial to the natural biological diversity of the southern California region.

### Native Plant Nursery

At the native plant nursery staff continued to propagate plants from the local watershed and eco-region for current and future revegetation projects. RCRCD grew 70 native species with an inventory of about 7,800 container plants at the end of the fiscal year. In addition, RCRCD maintains a cutting nursery of mule fat and five species of willow. Many plants were started from seeds, including a number of plants for the restoration of alkali wetland habitats to be planted in the next fiscal year. From 2005-2012, the nursery supplied over 18,940 local native plants for restoration, erosion control, water quality projects, and more than 814 native plants for landscaping. During FY 2012, RCRCD supplied 640 plants for planting into restoration projects and 83 plants for landscaping.

RCRCD nursery

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## Seed Collections

RCRCD renovated two seed processing rooms and one walk-in cold room at the Resource Conservation Center.

Staff collected and propagated seed for future restoration, water quality, and bank stabilization projects. RCRCD worked with S & S Seeds to collect seed from local native populations to maintain the genetic diversity of our area.

RCRCD stored seeds for the Irvine Ranch Conservancy in refrigerated storage rooms. The native plant seeds will be used for the Conservancy's future restoration projects.

## Native Seed Production for Restoration, Hedgerows, & Cover Crops within California Ecoregions

A two-day workshop about farm production of native seeds for use in southern California ecoregions was held September 20-21, 2011. Eighty-five participants learned about seed certification, standards for collection of wild seed, field cultivation and harvesting techniques, seed processing and storage, and more. Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District, Irvine Ranch Conservancy, Bureau of Land Management, and USDA Forest Service sponsored and assisted with the workshop. Dr. Arlee Montalvo, RCRCD restoration ecologist was the primary organizer of this event.



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Seed Workshop

## Alluvial Scrub Native Plant Materials Project

RCRCD worked on three phases of a collaborative project for the USDA Forest Service Native Plant Materials Program. Montalvo worked on the final data input and quality control with the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) vegetation ecologists for the analysis phase of the project. The CNPS partners ran the data analysis and Montalvo collaborated on the final report that was submitted to the Forest Service. The results of the analysis are being used to guide the development of restoration plant palettes and seed production for different types of alluvial scrub vegetation. Dr. Montalvo presented the project results at a vegetation science symposium held at the 2012 CNPS Conservation Conference in San Diego.

Dr. Montalvo helped the collaborating farmers at Three Sisters Farm learn about planting and cultivation practices appropriate for production of native seeds. Together, they established a seed increase field of yellow pincushion (*Chaenactis glabriuscula*) at the farm in late November 2011. Seed harvest occurred over two months. RCRCD supplied the organic farm with seeds of local native plants to add to their hedgerow. Greater plant diversity in the hedgerow will increase visitation by beneficial and pollinating insects, including native bees.

Boy scouts collecting seed at Three Sisters Farm.  
PHOTO BY ABBY HARNED



## Education and Outreach Programs

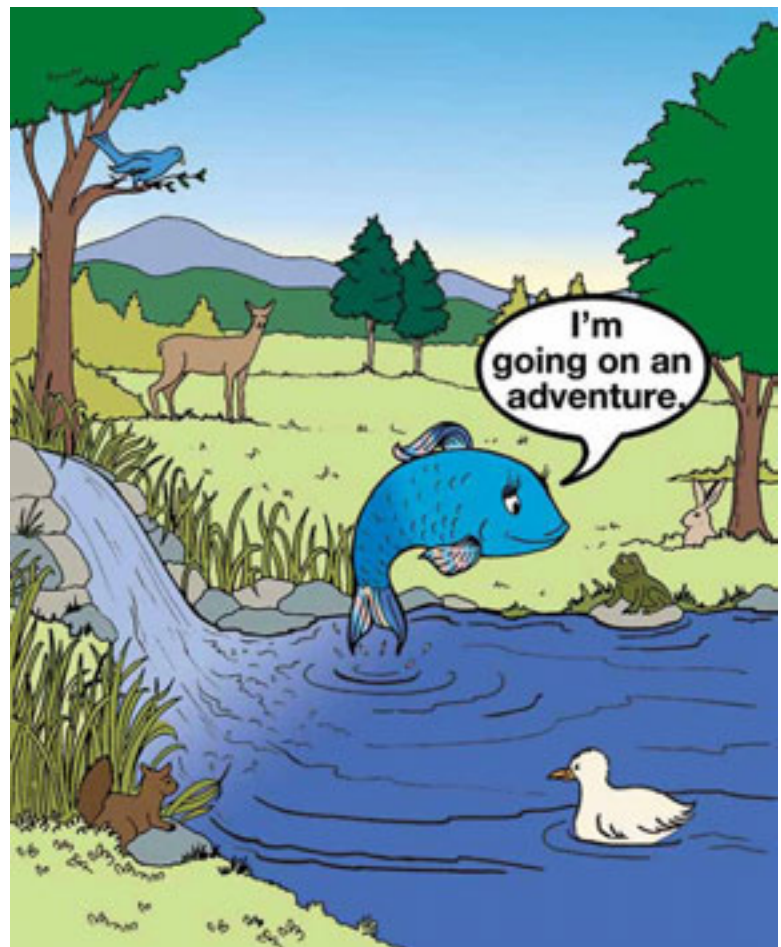
The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD) provides a variety of educational and public relations programs and services concerning natural resources and their stewardship. This section details some of our accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2011-2012 with information about education programs, materials, outreach, volunteer efforts and collaboration with other organizations.

### Youth Education Programs

#### Corona Water Education

RCRCD conducts water education programs for schools and youth groups on behalf of the City of Corona's Department of Water and Power. The presentations include information about Corona's water supply and include hands-on activities about keeping storm water clean. RCRCD's Resource Educator conducted 64 classroom presentations for 2,058 elementary school students from January through June, 2012. The presentations were supplemented with educational materials including the booklet *Water Is Life* and "Santa Ana River Steward" bookmarks. Teachers were provided the Educator's Guide for *Water Is Life* and posters of the Santa Ana River Watershed.

RCRCD completed eleven posters that illustrate a story that is told during the classroom presentations and staff began development of a localized booklet which will be used to reinforce learning about the classroom program. Topics covered include water conservation, source of supply, protecting water quality, and more.



## Stokoe Elementary School Museum

*Waterways: We're All Connected* was the theme of the educational exhibit that RCRCD and partners created for the Stokoe Elementary School museum space. 1500 students visited the exhibit, which ran October 6 - December 16, 2011. Native plants and animal specimens were on display with hands-on exhibits and interpretation about habitat restoration. A trail ran through the exhibit with a bridge crossing the "waterway". Fifteen trail signs taught about outdoor etiquette and waterway stewardship. RCRCD collaborated on the development of the exhibit with the Santa Ana Watershed Association (SAWA), Inland Empire Water Keeper (IEWK), and the Stokoe School museum committee.

## School Gardens

RCRCD awarded three mini-grants for school garden projects and provided gardening and educational materials to Monroe Elementary, River Springs Academy and Corona Montessori School. Students at Monroe Elementary School also began a new Bluebird Nestbox Trail on their school campus.



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Students observe an exhibit at the Stokoe Elementary School.



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Students at Monroe Elementary School grew loofa.

## Educational Material Distribution

Free educational materials are offered annually to all elementary, middle and high school teachers, who work or reside within the RCRC, via a "Materials Order Form". This year our offerings included the 2011 NACD stewardship education materials: *Forests for People: More than You Can Imagine!* For the 2011-2012 school year we distributed more than 23,000 publications for 6,500 students in six school districts. Materials were provided for:

- 117 elementary teachers/classes
- 28 middle school teachers/classes
- 12 high school teachers/classes

Twenty-five students completed the Soil Saver Club.

RCRC provided resource information to the MLK High Science Olympiad students.

## Envirothon

RCRC sponsored two Envirothon teams during FY 2012. The Arlington High School teams placed third and fifth at the California Envirothon.



Arlington Envirothon Teams: MacKenzie Hays, Diana Alatorre, Alysha Scoggins, MaryJo DeSilva, Cassidy Rungo, Carol Gomez, Maria Perez, Morgan Parker, Jackie Duenas, Christian Farmer, Areya Taheri and Olivia Wilbur. Advisors; Sheri Harris and Diane Stephens.

## California School for the Deaf Service Learning

Throughout the academic year, California School for the Deaf students completed a variety of service-learning activities. They delivered publications door-to-door; helped maintain the LandUse Learning Center by composting, spreading mulch, and gardening; and monitored bluebird nest boxes at their school site and at Olivewood Memorial Park.

## Internships

RCRCD employed two part time high school and three college interns at various times during the fiscal year.

## Outreach Efforts

### Events

RCRCD helped promote community sustainability events and provided materials at events. Cumulatively, thousands of people attended the events and were offered educational materials. 2011-2012 events included:

- Family Village Festival
- Temescal Wash Corona Cleanup
- Wood Streets/RCC Earth Day
- Duck Days
- Butterfly Day
- Highgrove Day
- Grand Terrace Day
- Temescal Valley Fair
- Boy Scout Roundtable
- Earth Day at Arlanza Garden
- Queen of the Sun Bee Event
- Riverside Green Summit
- Walk Up Blue Mountain
- Earth Night in the Garden
- Riverside Neighborhood Conference
- Corona Water Conservation Pledge Event
- Santa Ana River Trust Community Workshop
- Santa Ana Watershed Association Bird Festival
- Gavilan Hills Ranchos Gathering



PHOTO BY MELISSA BADALIAN

## Presentations

RCRCD's Public Affairs Manager Diana Ruiz presented natural resource information for the following programs:

- City of Riverside's TV show "Riverside Today" regarding urban-adapted wildlife, stewardship and citizen science monitoring. It aired and can also be seen online at: <http://www.riversideca.gov/video/riversidetoday.asp>
- The Santa Ana River Trust's public meeting
- "Wheel-a-bration" a local event for a national movement which celebrates walking, biking, and the use of mass transit.
- Introduced *Making Waves in Inlandia: Inland Empire Women's Oral History Project*, which tells the story of nine activist women who worked to preserve the health of people and the local environment during the 1960s and '70s.
- The Gavilan-Lake Mathews Homeowners meeting.

RCRCD's Outreach Coordinator Erin Snyder presented the *Help Create A Sustainable Community* slide program for Corona High School Environmental Science students.

## Tours

Several groups toured the Land Use Learning Center including the Inland Urban Forest Council and Riverside's Walk with the Mayor.

## Publications

### Website and Social Media

RCRCD maintains a website at: [www.rcrcd.com](http://www.rcrcd.com) and used its Facebook page to promote environmental events in the community.



## Educational Publications

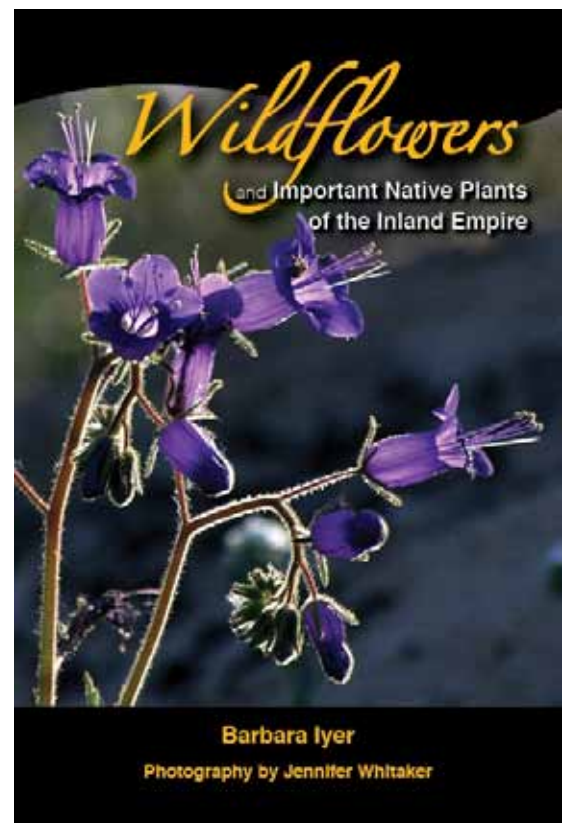
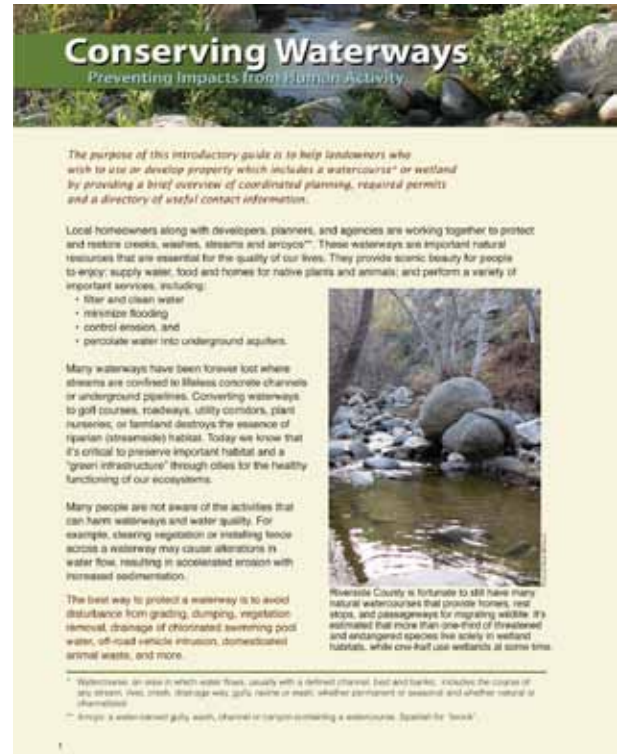
RCRCD creates localized educational publications about stewardship and resource management and often inserts those publications into newsletter mailings. We also distribute the newsletter and publications at outreach events, workshops, and at partners' programs. The newsletter is mailed or emailed to around 2,500 people, including cooperators, teachers, and local elected officials.

RCRCD's Winter newsletter focused on raising awareness about impacts to local waterways and included the new publication *Conserving Waterways: Preventing Impacts from Human Activity* (<http://www.rcrcd.com/Publications/ConservingWaterways.pdf>).

The insert was developed by RCRCD for the Riverside County/City Arroyo-Watershed Committee (CCAC). (The CCAC worked from 2003-2011 to protect local waterways, adjoining wildlife habitat and water quality.) Supervisor Bob Buster contributed \$1200 for printing of the publication, which has been distributed to agencies, city and county officials and departments.

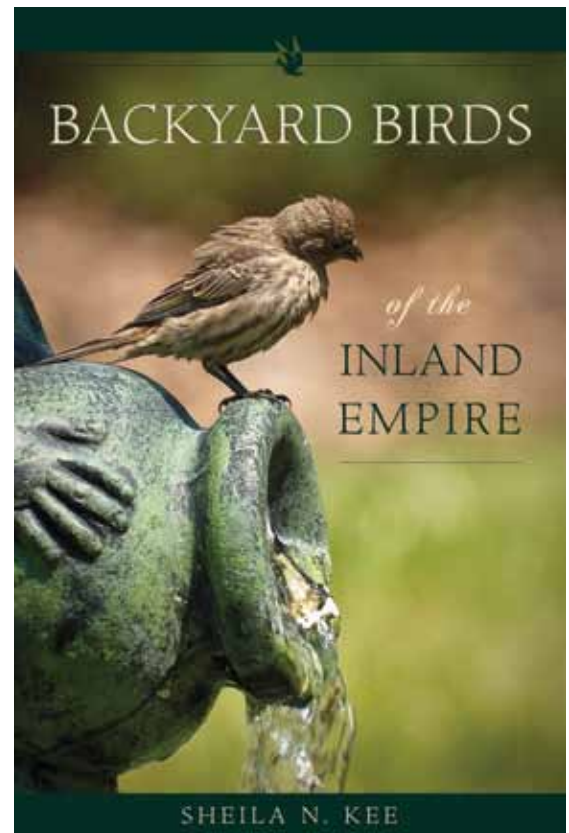
## Regional Books

RCRCD worked with three writers on the development of guides for local natural resources, including *Wildflowers and Important Native Plants of the Inland Empire* and *Butterflies, Pollinators and other Beneficial Yard Insects of the IE*.





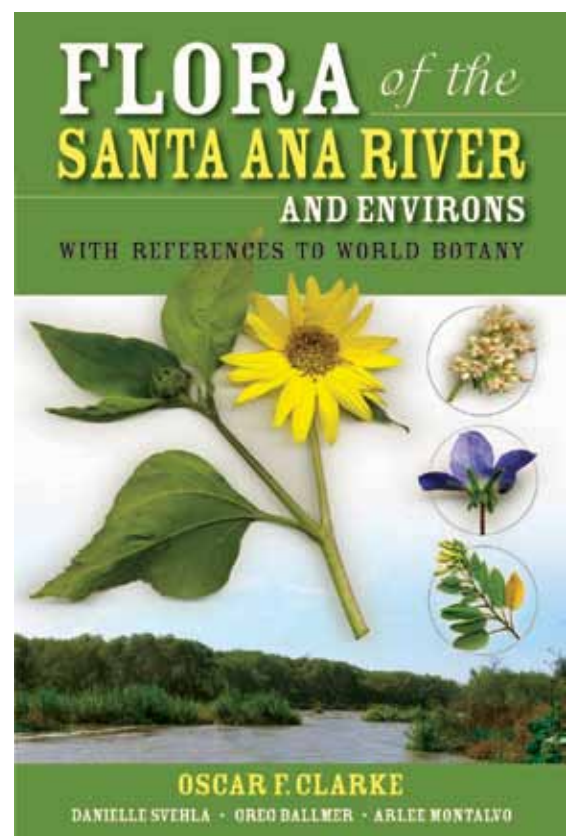
We continue to sell the enhanced, second edition of *Backyard Birds of the Inland Empire* by Sheila Kee, which was developed by the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District and published by Heyday Books in collaboration with Inlandia Institute. Interested RCDs and groups may purchase the book wholesale from Heyday Books for resale to the public. The book provides descriptions and tips for identifying over fifty 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 guide sells for \$16.26 at bookstores, local museums, and RCRC. The first edition, published in 2004, won the National Association of Conservation Districts' Outreach Award.



We also continue to sell the reprinted book *Flora of the Santa Ana River and Environs* by Oscar Clarke, Greg Ballmer, Danielle Svela and Dr. Arlee Montalvo (our plant restoration ecologist). RCRCD helped sponsor the first edition, and sells copies for \$25.25. The book is used as a reference for training workshops.

## Volunteer Projects

On occasion, individuals or groups assist RCRCD with specific projects. During 2012, Kiwanis and University of Redlands students helped plant trees in the demonstration garden. The students also helped with a variety of projects on-site and distributed educational materials door to door.

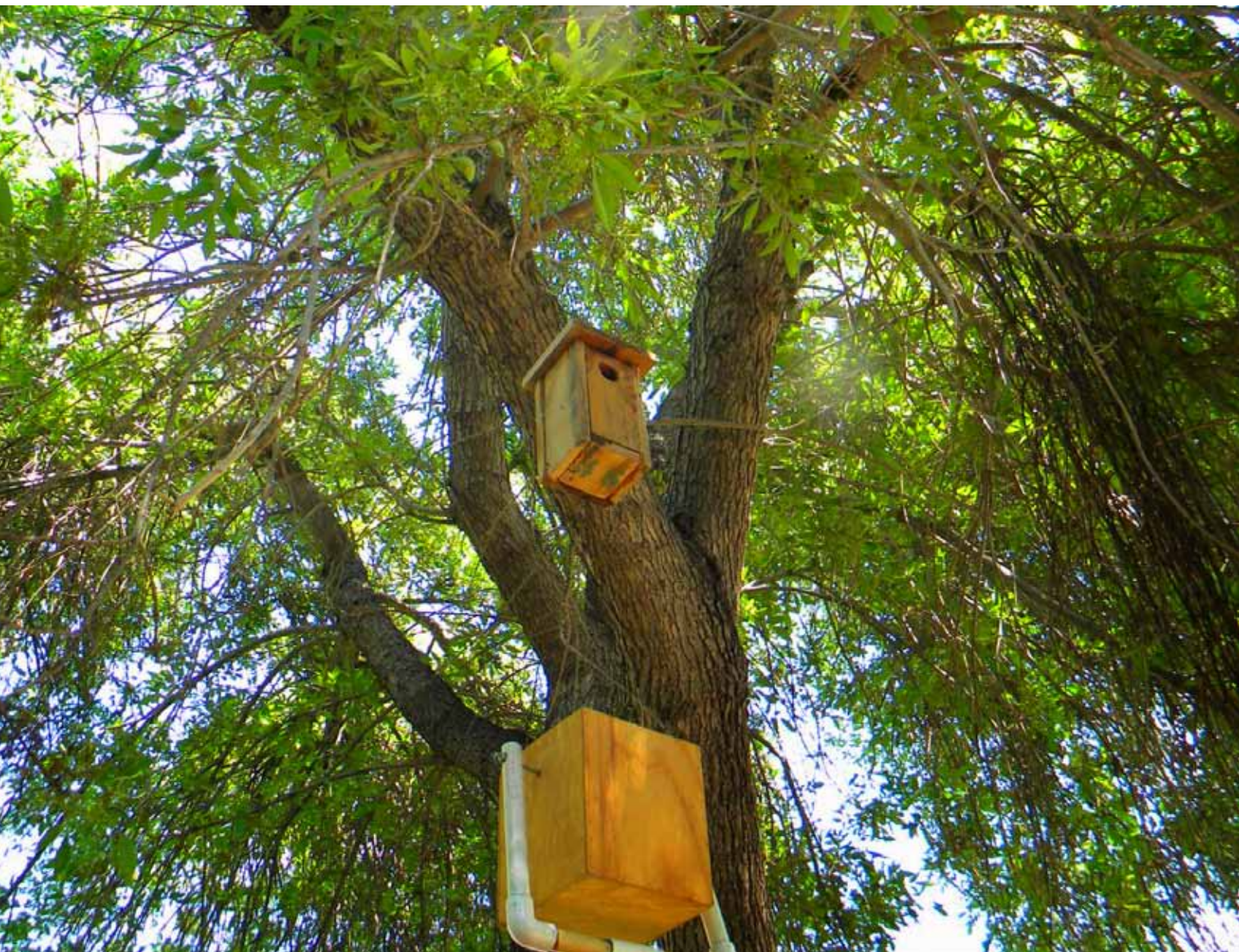


## Bluebird Nestbox Monitoring

RCRCD volunteers have managed the longest running, most prolific Bluebird Trail in Riverside County. Over the past twelve years, they have fledged over 2000 baby bluebirds. During the 2012 nesting season (February through July), 20 volunteer citizen-scientists hung and monitored 50 nest boxes that yielded 81 nests and over 300-baby birds; including Western Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, Bewick's Wrens and Ash-throated Flycatchers. The results were submitted to:

- Cornell University Birdhouse Network
- California Bluebird Recovery Program
- North American Bluebird Society
- Southern California Bluebird Club.

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## Collaboration with Other Groups

RCRCD partners with numerous organizations to provide education and outreach programs. Through these synergistic partnerships we are able to reach broader audiences. Some of our educational partners include the Inland Urban Forest Council, Riverside Municipal Museum, California Native Plant Society (CNPS), Inlandia Institute, California Urban Forest Council, California ReLeaf, UC Riverside, and Preserve the Plateau.

### Urban Forest Council

Staff assisted the Inland Urban Forest Council (IUFC) with the planning of their educational programs, newsletter and website. During the 2012 fiscal year RCRCD hosted several IUFC meetings and workshops, including *Managing Trees on the Golf Course* presented by Dr. Bill Baker

IUFC used our facility to conduct training for the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) Toolkit for 20+ groups or municipalities in southern California. The toolkit is an online system that guides decision makers in developing a plan that is unique to each location. Typical users might include urban foresters, environmental planners, and managers of large landscapes such as golf courses. RCRCD is developing a plan for our Resource Conservation Center facility. The training is supported by a Prop 84 educational grant through the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).



PHOTO BY DIANA RUIZ

Dave Roger introduced the online UFM toolkit to southern California workshop participants.

## California Native Plant Society

RCRCD continued to collaborate with the Riverside-San Bernardino Chapter of the California Native Plant Society on several projects. RCRCD staff regularly hosts meetings and helped organize and promote the following lectures:



- *Native Plants and Sustainable Practices for Residential Gardens* by Bob Perry, author and Professor Emeritus of Landscape Architecture, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
- *Climate Change Sensitivity of Joshua Trees at the Mojave-Sonoran Desert Interface* by Dr. Cameron Barrows
- *From Coastal Scrub to Desert Islands: A Botanical Tour of Baja California* with Sula Vanderplank and Ben Wilder of UC Riverside – Dept. of Botany and Plant Science
- *Harvesting Seed and Propagating Natives from the Riverside and San Bernardino Regions: the "Wild California" Experience* by Jackie Lasater and Ben White of Wild California Native Plant Nursery.

RCRCD coordinated with CNPS on a plant sale that was held at Western Municipal Water District's garden.

RCRCD continued to collaborate with CNPS on research about alluvial scrub vegetation and presented findings at its State Conservation Conference.

## Riverside Green Action Plan

As an outgrowth of Riverside's Green Action Plan committee RCRCD participated in Riverside's Green Leadership Summit. The City of Riverside has received numerous awards for sustainable efforts and has been designated as California's first Emerald City.

## Riverside Citizen Science

RCRCD worked to develop a strategic plan and partnership model for a Citizen Science program with the Riverside's Metropolitan Museum and Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services; University of California – Riverside; US Forest Service - Fire Lab; and the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

## Resource Conservation Center

RCRCD manages the Resource Conservation Center, a 9-acre facility that includes the LandUse Learning Center demonstration garden and native plant nursery.

The facility and buildings house the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Area Office, the California Department of Fish and Game's monitoring unit for the Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), and the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA's) facility for research and control of the Glassy-winged Sharpshooter. CDFA rears a parasitic wasp to help control the sharpshooter, which spreads Pierce's Disease to crops and ornamental plants.

### Land-Use Learning Center

The LandUse Learning Center (LLC) is a 3-acre demonstration of sustainable practices for the three main land uses of southern California: native habitats, urban areas, and agriculture. To date, the Native Habitat and Urban Areas have been developed with trails, plantings and some interpretive signs. During FY 2012, the development of the LLC progressed and included completion of the handicap-accessible trail. Agricultural plantings were begun. New entry, directional and parking signs were also installed.



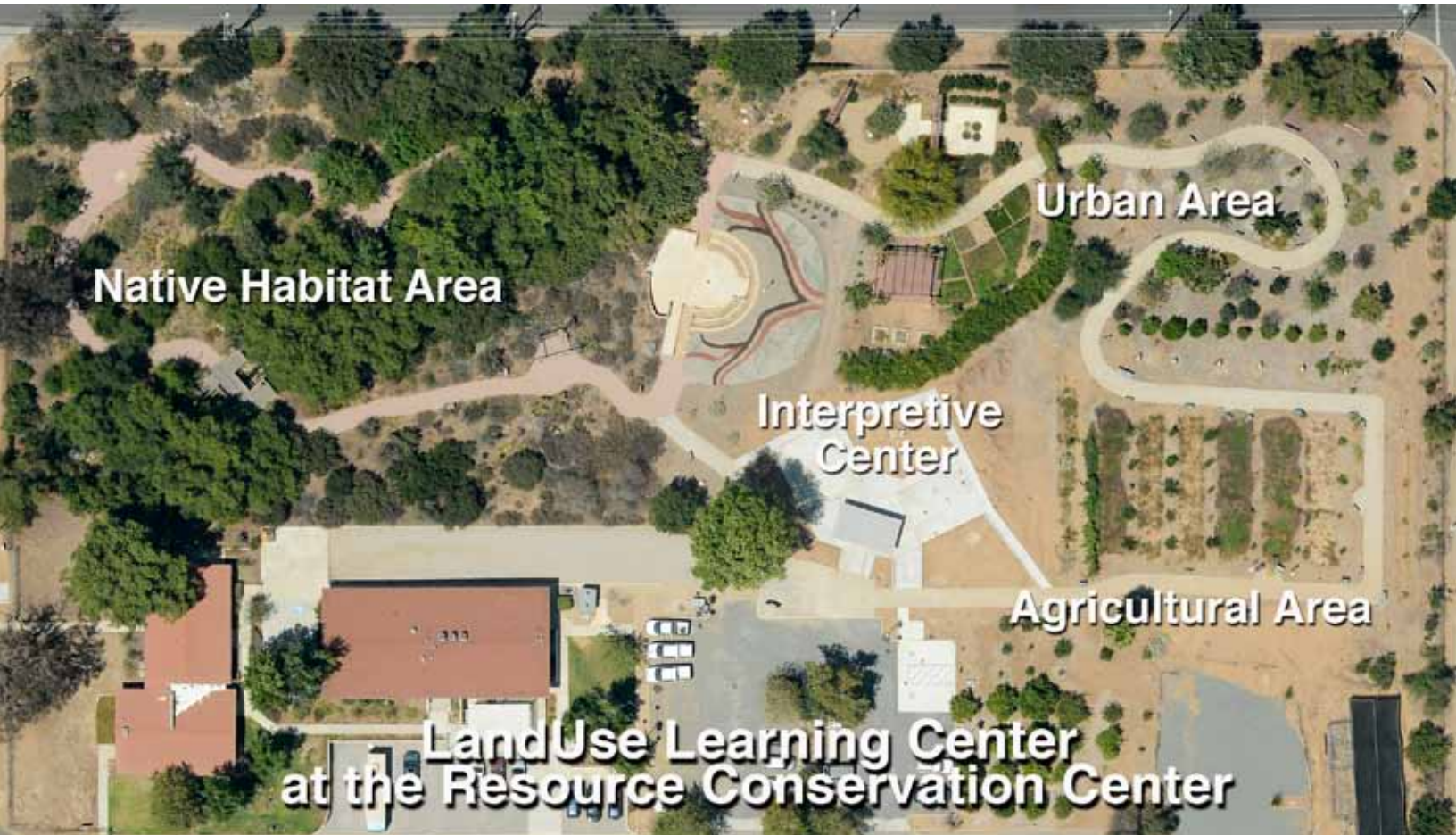
In the Native Habitat Area, a created stream is used to study and raise Arroyo Chub, Speckled Dace and the Santa Ana Sucker, a threatened fish. The fish reproduce in the stream, are tagged, counted, measured and released into the Santa Ana River or watershed streams as conditions permit.

Four locally important plant communities are depicted with plantings and interpretive signs.

The Urban Area includes an Arbor Trail and four styles of backyards from natural to formal: a habitat garden, native landscape, Mediterranean-courtyard garden, and a sustainable backyard. Together, the Urban Area showcases plants suited to the local climate and soils that are used to attract wildlife, provide food, and replace high-water use plants. During fiscal year 2012, several groups toured the Arbor Trail to see 19 new signs. The signs interpret urban forestry, tree care, and appropriate trees for the inland region.

## Administration

Although restricted by budget cutbacks, RCRCDD was able to continue its programming with a small staff of seven full time and five part time employees. During FY 2012, the District continued to seek funding sources, create partnerships, and manage the Resource Conservation Center at 4500 Glenwood Dr., Riverside.



The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCDD) is an independent, special district enabled under Division 9 of the California Public Resources Code. As defined in Division 9, Resource Conservation Districts are given broad abilities to help sustain natural resources and to protect resources from preventable damage and waste. The scope of work at RCRCDD reflects local issues and focuses on sustainable ecosystem management. RCRCDD programs specifically address water conservation, soil erosion, storm water quality, habitat restoration, conservation education, and more. RCRCDD was created by a vote of the people in 1953.

For more information about RCRCDD, please contact Public Affairs Manager Diana Ruiz at (909) 238-8338.