News from the San Diego Children and Nature Collaborative, December 2014

Richard Louv Urges San Diego to become the Best City to Connect Children and Nature

At the San Diego Audubon Society gala in October, author and Children & Nature Network founder Richard Louv challenged San Diego to become the best city to connect children and nature. More about Louv’s idea. Funds were raised at the Audubon event to support children and nature programs such as Outdoor Explore and Silverwood Science Discovery. Pedro Villegas from SGG&E and Jasmine Tillman were honored at the event, held at the San Diego Natural History Museum.

Taking FOSS Outdoors: New Guide for Managing Outdoor Learning

Taking FOSS Outdoors is a great new 28-page guide to outdoor learning. This guide features ways to manage space, time, materials and students to meet three objectives: continue and extend the learning that starts in the classroom; provide opportunities for students to discover applications and examples of classroom content and concepts; and connect students with nature. FOSS is a research-based science curriculum for grades K-8 developed at UC-Berkeley.

Girl Scouts to Resume Outdoor Badges

The Girl Scouts are adding outdoor activity badges, as part of an effort to address changing needs and after years of focusing on 21st century topics, social issues and high-tech skills. A survey in 2012 showed that more than half of the Girl Scouts wanted more outdoor badges. Girl Scouts can vote for...
specific badges on the topic of Outdoor Recreation until December 31.

"Track Trails"
Resources for Nature Activities

Check out these two brochures for nature activities: The brochures are part of the Track Trails program that is offered at Lindo Lake, San Elijo Lagoon, and Steltzer county parks. Track Trails was featured at a panel organized by SDCaN at the annual California Park and Recreation Professionals conference on November 13 (thanks to Alex Gilbert-Stelzer County Park and Rebekah Angona-SD Audubon Society).

- Animal Athletics, a tri-fold with rabbit dash, spider crawl, lizard push-ups, hawk stance, and four more exercises
- Nature's Hide and Seek (a scavenger hunt) brochure.
- Five-minute video about preparing for and hiking with kids

Workshops to Learn About Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)

We’re taking bold steps to position nature-based learning in the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) with local school districts, teachers, and field trip providers. Workshops will be held on January 23, February 13, March 13, April 17 and May 15, all 8:30-12:00, all at the SDSU Center for Research on Math and Science Education (CRMSE), 6475 Alvarado Road. Co-sponsors are the SD County Office of Education-SDCOE, SDCaN, and SDSU. For information, contact Anne Fege, afege@sdchildrenandnature.org.

Lessons about Urban Trees Now Online for Free

Teachers and students can explore the nature right in their schoolyards, with science lessons that provided progressive and integrated lessons about urban trees. Three lessons for each grade (K-5) feature observation skills, leaves and tree identification, seeds, soil, tree products, oak communities, goldspotted oak borer, planting acorns, and food webs (access lessons and videos). Project was funded by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire), and implemented by SDCaN and SDSU.

Adventures with Arthropods and Middle School Students

San Diego U-T Reporter Gary Warth met teacher Su Scott and ten of her sixth grade students at the High Tech Fair on October 22 (sponsored by SD Science
Alliance), the "staff" on the exhibit about nature and technology. He returned to Rincon Middle School to meet, learn from, photograph the students, and wrote an article, Escondido Students Getting Bugs Out of Nature. Here is a short video about these nature- and technology-based science lessons (and the wonders of dissecting scopes), produced by videographer Jim Karnik. Funding was provided by USDA Forest Service to SDCaN for this project.

"Gardening with Class Conference" drew Educators and Gardeners

The Gardening with Class Conference brought 117 educators and 25 Master Gardener School Garden Consultants together on Saturday October 18 at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. Fifteen workshop topics included design of outdoor learning environments, wildlife gardens, community support, ethnobotany, gardening themes for Common Core, “from bug rugs to tree hugs,” schoolyard-based lessons, project-based learning, adventures with arthropods, citizen science, and nature illustration. Master Gardeners provided the planning and volunteers for the event, which was co-chaired by Leta Bender and Charlotte Getz and co-sponsored by SDCaN.

Nature Play Activities for School, After-school, and Community Programs

Schedule "Nature Play” activities to engage children (pre-school to elementary) in unstructured play and discovery. Bamboo poles, sticks, tree cookies, palm fronds, pine cones, nets, and other "loose parts" natural materials are brought by a trained nature play facilitator to your site. The San Diego Children and Nature website has more information: http://sdchildrenandnature.org/wp/nature-play/school-and-education-programs.

Save the Date:
Science Teachers Conference Feb. 28

Science teachers conference with 20 presentations on nature-based learning! Hold the date of Saturday, February 28, 2015, for the San Diego Science Educators Association conference. Registration now open.
News from the San Diego Children and Nature Collaborative

October 2014

Thursday, October 16, Celebrate Audubon Society's Children and Nature Efforts with Guest Speaker Richard Louv

Join the San Diego Audubon Society and supporters for its annual banquet on October 16, this year focusing on its work providing children with nature experiences. The event starts with drinks and dinner atop the El Mirador Rooftop Terrace at the San Diego Natural History Museum, followed by presentations and an award ceremony in the museum’s Kaplan Theatre. San Diego author Richard Louv will be speaking. Louv wrote the seminal book "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder". Tickets $75.

October 16 speaker: Author Richard Louv

Gardening with Class Conference For Educators and Gardeners

Educators, gardeners, naturalists, and parents! Join us for the popular Gardening with Class Conference from 8 am to 4 pm on Saturday, October 18 at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. More information and registration information at http://www.mastergardenerssandiego.org/seminar/index.php. The conference fee is $50 (with breakfast, lunch, exhibits, and free plants). Additional $10 parking fee on the day of event (free parking permit is mailed to those who register before October 10).

Conference sessions are targeted for preschool through high school educators, administrators, school garden coordinators, and naturalists who work with children. Session topics include Creating Your School Garden, Eating Healthy - Farm to Fork, Utilizing Citizen Science for Students, Worm Composting, Schoolyard Habitats, and Ethnobotany for San Diego Teachers. For further information, contact Leta Bender, benders2@cox.net.
Kaiser Permanente Creates "Nature Play in San Diego" Flyer for Families

A year after SDCaN presented to Kaiser Permanente pediatricians about the health benefits of children and nature, Kaiser has produced an educational flyer "Nature Play in San Diego" for patient families. It is being given to families in Kaiser's pediatric outpatient offices. Kudos to nature champion Dr. Larry Levy for shepherding the flyer through the approval process at Kaiser, where he works.

Kaiser Flyer Excerpt: "Go outside and play each day. Take a walk, toss pebbles in the water, collect fallen leaves, look for evidence of animals, gaze at the sky from under a tree..." The flyer also suggests limiting screen time to 1 - 2 hours daily.

Local nature locations are listed, such as Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve, Tijuana Estuary, Elfin Forest, Tecolote Canyon, Mission Trails and Miramar Lake. Washington, D.C. is forging ahead with the idea, launching a project called DC Park Rx, where doctors prescribe nature to "inner-city kids living with obesity, asthma, anxiety and depression"

Increasing Nature-based Learning to meet Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)

The SDCaN-San Diego County Office of Education Coordinating / Working Group for the NGSS Nature-based Learning Project met September 26 in four work groups:

1. Life Sciences: INTERDEPENDENT RELATIONSHIPS IN ECOSYSTEMS
2. Life Sciences: BIODIVERSITY AND HUMANS
3. Earth and Space Science: WEATHER AND CLIMATE
4. Earth and Science: HUMAN IMPACTS ON EARTH SYSTEMS

To inquire about joining a work group or attending the 6 upcoming classes on NGSS contact Anne Fege, afege@sdchildrenandnature.org.

Nature Play activities for Schools, Community Fairs, and Birthday Parties!

The Nature Play program has arrived! Children are invited to engage in unstructured outdoor play, with a collection of nature materials that include bamboo poles, sticks, tree cookies, pine cones, shells, and palm fronds. Loose Parts, Nature Play encourages children to build anything—teepees, tunnels, fairy houses, art sculptures and other play structures. The only limit is the imagination! Click here NaturePlay_Flyer for a detailed description of our Nature Play Program for San Diego schools, after-school programs, community events, fundraisers, birthday parties, and the like. More information from Susan Matthews, smatthews@sdchildrenandnature.org.

Nature Educators Mingle and Motivate

Dozens of teachers and other educators mingled on September 17 at the Balboa Park-Casa Del Prado.
Room in San Diego to network and discuss hot topics such as implementing science lessons in schoolyards. Participants were able to visit exhibits from more than 20 nature education organizations.

The event was co-sponsored by the San Diego Children and Nature Collaborative (a Program of the the San Diego Science Alliance) and Master Gardeners.

Sept. 17 Nature Mingle Event: Pam Thomas (left); Ellen Shively. Photo credit: Pam Thomas.

Local Resources for Educators

LESSONS and other resources developed by and for San Diego nature-based learning are posted at [http://sdchildrenandnature.org/wp/education/resources-for-teachers/](http://sdchildrenandnature.org/wp/education/resources-for-teachers/).

The RESOURCE CATALOG at CREEC – California Regional Environmental Education Council has listings of nature programs, field trips, environmental education lessons, and online resources. Search at [http://creec.org/programs](http://creec.org/programs). For local nature-based learning, select the topic “Ecology” and Region 9A (for San Diego). Look at the target grade level and a grade below and above.

Apple Watch, myWatch and the Future of Children and Nature, by Richard Louv

In a [recent blog post](http://sdchildrenandnature.org/wp/education/resources-for-teachers/), author Richard Louv wonders about the effect of the Apple watch on the nature of life: "Best case scenario: We’ll find a sense of balance. Worst case scenario: The flood will carry us away, not only from nature but from ourselves."

Children playing in Scripps Ranch. Photo Credit: Jennifer Douglas
**SDCaN General Meeting on Friday morning, May 16**

Nature invites inquiry, exploration, and engagement! These are key elements of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which we featured at the January 31 meeting of the San Diego Children and Nature Collaborative (SDCaN), and will again at this month’s meeting. Please join us on **Friday morning, May 16 at 8:30** for coffee and bagels, a short general meeting, and then a workshop on Earth and Human Activity, offered by the SD County Office of Education (SDCOE). **Feel free to attend just the first hour, if you can’t stay until noon.** Workshop at Girl Scout program center, 1231 Upas Street (north edge of Balboa Park, map at Directions Girl Scouts). No fee, no RSVP.

*Take time to browse the local and national NGSS resources posted on webpage NGSS nature resources*. We’ll discuss educator David Sobel’s advice, “If we want children to flourish, we need to give them time to connect with nature and love the Earth before we ask them to save it.” from Beyond Ecophobia, posted at [http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/education-for-life/803](http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/education-for-life/803).

**Happy Nature Hour held on March 27**

Fifty-five nature educators, teachers, and friends joined us for the second annual Happy Nature Hour (and general meeting of SDCaN) on March 27 at the Mission Trails Visitor Center. They explored 20 exhibits, mapped their “networks” in a short activity and enjoyed a glass of wine on the patio. Thanks to all for coming!

*[Photo: SDCaN's Anne Fege and Judie Lincer, along with Brian Moehl and another attendee at Happy Nature Hour]*

**Loose Parts Nature Play -- Wows at Earth Day!**

At Earth Day in Balboa Park on April 27, dozens of children and adults built forts and played with natural materials such as bamboo poles, palm fronds, shells, pine cones and tree cookies. This Loose Parts Nature Play activity was co-sponsored by SDCaN and the City of San Diego's Civic Innovation Lab. SDCaN Board Member Ilisa Goldman, a landscape architect and Lab staffer, is pioneering Loose Parts...
Nature Play in San Diego to inspire children to engage in unstructured outdoor play, more information at LoosePartsNaturePlay_2p_2013.

Loose Parts Nature Play is bringing nature to K-1 students at Imperial Beach Charter School on May 23. If you are interested in having Loose Parts at your event or organization, contact Ilisa at igoldman@sdchildrenandnature.org to inquire about availability and rates.

Environmental Sustainability in SD Unified School District

San Diego Unified School District -- Environmental Sustainability Committee: Educators and design professionals from SDCaN gave a presentation on April 17 to the committee, which will provide recommendations this spring on ways to enhance school programs and facilities in the district.

- SDCaN answered the Committees’ call to Dream Big with: All schools have places and curricula to learn in nature and play outdoors.
- And the challenge to Be Realist with: Nature is accessible, affordable and awe-inspiring! Teachers, schools, and non-profit organizations can take collective action to establish and use outdoor learning environments.

Marten and Beiser dedication to school gardens: San Diego Unified School District superintendent Cindy Marten and school board president Kevin Beiser, along with the Rotary Club of Mission Bay, helped out in the organic garden at Pacific Beach Middle School this spring and later, Beiser was on-hand to dedicate a Peace Pole there. The school is one of several to spearhead the district’s Garden to Café program, where produce from school gardens will be used in school lunches and to provide hands-on learning about gardening and nutrition.

[Photo: San Diego Unified School District Cindy Marten and school board president Kevin Beiser with students at Pacific Beach Middle School and the Rotary Club of Mission Bay]
Highlights from Richard Louv and Children & Nature Network

National Initiative Launched for Youth and Nature: The Interior Department, National League of Cities and YMCA are joining forces to connect young people to the outdoors. The initiative goals have 4 pillars: Play, Learn, Serve and Work.

_Sitting is the New Smoking: What We Can Do About Killer Couches, Sedentary Schools and the Pandemic of Inactivity._ Richard Louv: "If technology is going to create a better future, its leaders should devote at least a modicum of energy to getting kids moving again (sorry, Wii Golf just won't do), preferably outside in nature."

News and Upcoming Events

San Diego River Days May 10-18. Events held along the San Diego River, from Santa Ysabel to Ocean Beach, including hikes, nature walks, bike rides, trail building projects, gardening, and community service projects, kicking off with the 4th Annual Youth Day of Service on May 10.

Grand Opening of the Birdwing Open Air Classroom at San Dieguito Lagoon, May 13, 10 a.m. County Supervisor Dave Roberts, chair of the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority, will cut the ribbon to welcome the facility to the community.

Explore Mission Trails Day, May 17, 9-2 p.m. at Mission Trails Regional Park. An amazing yearly event with free guided nature walks and programs throughout the park, including live animals, pony rides, climbing wall, crafts for children, and Discovery Stations.

City Farmer’s Nursery: May 17, 2 p.m. Natives for Novices: Learn about the benefits of planting California natives and stop by Nate’s Garden Grill and Sunflower Coffee Company, located right at the nursery; June 8, 1-4 p.m. Free Pumpkin Contest Seeds. Kids can get free seeds and advice for City Farmer's pumpkin growing contest, and check out the animals, play area and gardening tools for kids.

Meet the Farmhands at Good Neighbor Gardens (GNG):, May 24, 4-7 p.m., Encinitas. Hear nutritionist Torie Borrelli and master gardener hostess Robin Colovey talk about using balanced pH water on vegetables. GNG runs a home-based Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, where backyards are the "farms" growing crops to create produce packages for CSA members each week On June 7, 10 a.m., GNG holds a Hillcrest Garden Tour.

San Diego Audubon Society: The organization is searching for a new Communications and Development Staffer: Job Notice; Executive Director Chris Redfern appeared on KPBS radio and TV about a new outdoors program for school kids called Share Our Shores.

This and archived newsletters at [SDCaN newsletters](#).

[Photo: Kids in nature -- Scripps Ranch Library Pond and Los Penasquitos Canyon]
Happy Nature Hour, Thursday March 27!

Join us for the second annual Happy Nature Hour on Thursday, March 27, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Mission Trails Visitor Center. Chat, eat and drink with nature educators, teachers, and nature-friends at this casual event! Register at Eventbrite Link, and then pay $5 at the event or online, and to sign up to bring an exhibit about your nature education programs. Directions at http://mtrp.org/vc_directions.asp. Contact Judie Lincer for more info: judielincer@gmail.com. This Happy Nature Hour is the bi-monthly meeting of the San Diego Children and Nature Collaborative (SDCaN), and follows the January 31 meeting that featured Next Generation Science Standards.

Recent Events Show the Power of Nature & Education

The SD County Office of Education and the San Diego Children and Nature Collaborative (SDCaN) are hosting seven workshops in 2013-14 to assist nature educators to better meet Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The next workshops are Fridays, March 14, April 18 and May 16, all from 8:30 to 12:00 at the Girl Scout program center, 1231 Upas Street (no RSVP or fee). The March 14 workshop will feature Cross-cutting Concepts within NGSS. More information about NGSS at SDCaN_NGSS_webpage

STEM for Afterschool Programs: Conference -- SDCaN hosted an exhibit table and two workshops at the STEMpower Conference, held by the San Diego County Office of Education on Feb. 27. Dozens of afterschool programs from the YMCA to Boys and Girls Clubs in communities from Fallbrook to Chula Vista learned how nearby nature and school gardens can offer new, fun ways for children to learn and grow.

The San Diego Science Educators Association conference was attended by 500 teachers and focused on the Next Generation Science Standards, held March 1 at Grossmont College. SDCaN helped with the program, and ten presentations featured nature-based learning such as using picture books in schoolyard science, watershed-based science, coastal field studies with middle and high school studies, water-based activities, citizen science, planning schoolyard habitats, nature-based lessons in schoolyards.

San Diego Unified School District forums were held in February and March (SDUSD Vision 2020 Forums, and SDCaN board members and supporters provided input to the school board, parents and community members. They urged the district to embrace the Outdoor Learning Environment Initiative (OLE!) including Green Schoolyard Habitats as components of its long-term priorities and STEM education (more information at SDUSD_SDCaN_Handout). Actions suggested include: Provide workshops for teachers, gardeners and parents. Landscape architects and others help schools design Outdoor Play and Learning Environments. Nature educators offer field trips and schoolyard visits to introduce students to coast, nearby shrublands, canyons, mountains, desert, and nature centers.
Camp Fire San Diego Restarts Club Program

Those of us over a certain age may remember when the Camp Fire Girls (now, Camp Fire) had a club program similar to the scouts. That parent-led program has re-launched at Camp Fire San Diego. The clubs have inclusive policies, can be co-ed or single sex with age groupings from age 3 to 12th grade. They often meet at the Camp CaHiTo facility in Balboa Park for nature/science- and craft-oriented activities like hiking, tree-swinging, playing in forts, archery, outdoor games, making sit-upons, and hands-on learning about rocks and soil. The clubs stress values, community service, leadership and recognition. To join an existing club or inquire about starting a new one, contact info@campfiresdi.org or call 619-291-8985.

Garden to Café School Program

School gardens will soon provide produce for students to eat in their own cafeterias, under the Garden to Café program in the San Diego Unified School District. Participating schools include: Central, Lindbergh Schweitzer, Pacific Beach, Jerabek Elementary, Walker and Grant elementary schools; Pacific Beach and Montgomery middle school, and, Crawford and Hoover high schools. Jerabek ES students will also attend presentations on healthy food from representatives from the Culinary Institute of America and Cornell University. The district is providing trainings for interested schools, including Wednesday, March 19, 2014 from 3-5:30 p.m. at Pacific Beach Middle School, more info.

Latest Writings about the Children & Nature Movement

"Father" of the children and nature movement, San Diego's own Richard Louv (author of the seminal book, "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder") has new essays, with provocative comments by readers: "How Do We Fight Nature Blindness", which explores the tension between nature and technology, and "Hummingbird Parents: Seven Steps Parents Can Take to Reduce Risk and Still Get Their Kids Outside".

Louv influenced arts educator/advocate Aimee Bergamy Ph.D. to bring nature into her work via "365" projects -- read her post on the National Art Education Association (NAEA) website. She also writes about teacher programs in Costa Rica, Japan and Turkey, where she used her Louv-inspired Eco-creativity approach linking the environment and creative development.

Upcoming Events from SDCaN Partners

Mission Valley River Cleanup: Meet at Mission Valley Library, March 29, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., sponsored by The San Diego River Park Foundation. The Clean and Green Team will be cleaning up a section of the river that is normally off-limits. RSVP required: (619) 297-7380 or check the website. The SDRPF website maintains a calendar of its own events and also events for its partners.
State Parks - South: Junior Ranger program: Students ages 7 - 12 can participate in the free Junior Ranger program at the Tijuana River Estuary, Thursdays, 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Children earn patches, buttons and more as they learn about the ecology of wetlands.

Free Hikes from the Canyoneers of The San Diego Natural History Museum: Check the calendar for hikes that are appropriate for your family or group. The museum has family-centered activities from camps to monthly family days (11 a.m. to 3 p.m., March 16 and April 19) to Ms. Frizzle of Magic School Bus fame leads presentations on Sundays at 12:15 p.m. and 2:15 p.m., free with admission. First Tuesdays are free admission for local residents and active duty military.

San Diego Festival of Science and Engineering: March 15-21 with family expo day on March 22, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (free) at Petco Park, 100 Park Blvd, San Diego, 92101. At the Expo, kids can do experiential activities, meet real scientists and engineers and learn how their discoveries and research affect our daily lives. The Festival is organized by University of California, San Diego with collaboration from science and engineering organizations as well as community members. The Festival's STEAM Family Day at Balboa Park is March 15, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at many museums and institutions there.

The Greater San Diego Science & Engineering Fair is March 25-30 with free Family Day on March 24 at the Balboa Park Activity Center. The fair showcases STEAM projects by students in grades 7-12 from San Diego and Imperial counties.

Nature Preschool & Wild Willow Farm: SDCaN member Patti Shields runs the At Home in Nature outdoor preschool and invites families to try it for a day, April 12, 9:30 a.m. to noon, $20 with the cost applied to registration. Patti has free grandparent/grandchild hikes as well as programs with the Wild Willow Farm and Education Center located in the City of San Diego, close to the Tijuana River and the Mexican border. Wild Willow offers a CSA program, organic farming classes, school field trips, and monthly potlucks coming up March 15 and April 19 including volunteering, tour, bonfire and drum circle.

Photos: Feb. 27 STEMPower conference, SDCaN's Jennifer Douglas, Judie Lincer, Anne Fege; SDCaN exhibit.
February 2014 E-Newsletter

- **San Diego Children and Nature Collaborative (SDCaN)** is now a project of the San Diego Science Alliance, a non-profit leader in education and advocacy, focused on learning in Science Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Nature-based programs provide fun, hands-on STEM opportunities for students. Many thanks to Anne Fege and Nancy Taylor, chairs of SDCaN and SDSA respectively, along with others who made this partnership a reality.

- **Second Annual SDCaN Nature Happy Hour**: Thursday, March 27, 5 - 7p.m. Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor Center, One Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Diego, 92119. Eat, Drink & Be Outside! SD-CaN general meeting -- all welcome to attend! A small donation will be collected at the door to cover the cost of refreshments. RSVP not required. For more information contact Judie Lincer at judielincer@gmail.com.

- **San Diego Science Educators Association** conference, Saturday, March 1, “Science Trek: The Next Generation” at Grossmont College. SDCaN partners will present ten workshops about their programs on nature-based programs grounded in NGSS.

- Nature invites inquiry, exploration, and engagement! These key NGSS elements were outlined at the **January 31 meeting** of SDCaN by the San Diego County Office of Education science education folks. The workshop featured the cross-cutting concepts, and scientific and engineering principles and practices, which are critical to understand before fully before delving into the performance standards and content. Four other workshops in the series for Nature-based Learning in Common Core and NGSS will be held on February 28, March 14, April 18, and May 16, Friday mornings from 9:00 to 12:00 (location to be determined). They will focus on Common Core, cross-cutting concepts, and life and earth/space science Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCIs). More information from afege@sdchildrenandnature.org.

- A new report from the Park and Recreation Association features San Diego County (Lakeside/Spring Valley) -- “Prescribing Parks for Better Health” shows how doctors across the country have prescribed visits to parks and nature to advocate healthier lifestyles for patient families. SDCaN has piloted similar projects.

- **Chaparral Demystified** -- the chaparral habitat in the San Diego area is showcased on the program, “A Growing Passion,” on KPBS-TV hosted by Nan Sterman. Rick Halsey of
the California Chaparral Institute explains why chaparral has an identify crisis and why it is essential to the environment. Watch episode #202: Chaparral, the Elfin Forest online.

Upcoming from SDCaN PARTNERS

- **San Diego Audubon brings children into nature** -- Elementary students hike in nearby canyons and lakes with naturalists in Outdoor Explore! and go to Audubon's Silverwood Sanctuary (Lakeside) in programs overseen by new education manager Rebekah Angona. Contact Rebekah to learn more about these afterschool-based programs, angona@sandiegoaudubon.org.

- **San Diego Master Gardeners** -- "Come Grow With Us," gardening and water conservation workshop on Saturday, March 22, 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at San Diego County Operations Center, Kearny Mesa. Register. SDMG also offers school and community garden programs, and more.

- **Birch Aquarium** -- Learning adventures, research and conservation; February is Museum Month -- 1/2 price admission with a pass from Macy’s. SEA Days for families, Feb. 15 -- Listening to Whales; Feb. 10 lecture, 6:30 p.m. -- Ocean Sounds.

- **Olivewood Gardens and Learning Center** in National City -- GENE: Garden-enhanced Nutrition Education workshop for parents and teachers, Feb. 8, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., $20. Register. Open House on Feb. 22, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Olivewood has free Kids in the Kitchen events on March 8 and May 17, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., organized by the Junior League, RSVP required. Kids make healthy recipes, help to compost, make crafts and may even get the chance to pull a carrot out of the ground and eat it.

- **San Elijo Lagoon** -- Offers Saturday, 10 a.m. naturalist-led walks and quarterly Family Discovery Days with crafts, discovery tables, nature scavenger hunts, live raptor presentations and bird-house making at the lagoon's eco-friendly LEED-certified visitor center in Cardiff-by-the-Sea. On Feb.15, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. -- Lagoon Platoon habitat restoration needs volunteers..

- **Family Nature Meet-up Groups** -- Sierra Club & Family Adventures in Nature are free, local clubs on meetup.com with regular hikes and nature activities for families. Each group was founded by a member of the SDCaN board -- Jennifer Douglas/Sierra Club and Janice
Swaisgood/Family Adventures in Nature.

- **New Community Garden in Downtown San Diego** -- The [Smarts Farm](#) has transformed an unsightly lot into a green oasis of growing, learning and photograph for kids and adults. Contact the garden to learn how to join or buy a hand-made wood garden box for your own garden.