

[www.TheLivingCoast.org](http://www.TheLivingCoast.org)



# Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2014-2015







## **The Mission of the Living Coast Discovery Center is to:**

- Partner in collaborative research and restoration of coastal wetlands and bays.
- Provide student-focused education through STEaM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics.
- Increase knowledge of coastal environments, climate change adaptation, and human coexistence with the natural resources of San Diego Bay.

**The Living Coast Discovery Center is uniquely located on the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Sweetwater Marsh Unit.**



**Dear Friends and Supporters,**

Thank you for your loyal support and commitment to the Living Coast Discovery Center. I am pleased to share with you the highlights from fiscal year 2014-2015. I am proud to report we've made tremendous progress over the past year. With a focus on STEaM education, our standards-based Living Lab field trip program has sparked the interest of teachers throughout San Diego County. Feedback results showed students were not only enjoying the fun activities and getting up close with the animals, but learning important lessons about their role and impact on the environment.

I first came to the Living Coast as a volunteer aquarist in the 1990's while studying Marine Biology at San Diego State University. I never imagined it would have led to a thirteen-year career resulting in my being the Executive Director. During that time, my passion for the Living Coast and its impact on local students, families, and our environment has grown and I am still humbled by the tremendous outpouring of support from the community.

We are grateful for the support of our corporate sponsors, foundations, and longtime friends of the Living Coast. I am especially grateful for the support of the City of Chula Vista for continuing to provide the Living Coast with the facility in which we provide educational programs and a place for visitors to enjoy the outdoors and the natural surroundings of the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Sweetwater Marsh Unit.

The Living Coast is also honored to be designated the beneficiary of a \$2 million endowment from San Diego Gas and Electric. The SDG&E Living Coast Discovery Center South Bay Enhancement Fund will support the continued operation of the Living Coast environmental education programs and public's access and enjoyment of San Diego Bay for years to come.

Through our special events, general admissions, and educational programs, 67,371 guests visited the Living Coast this year to learn about our native wildlife in San Diego and the importance of wildlife habitats in our ecosystem. With the expansion of our educational programs, 25,223 school children had an opportunity to participate in hands-on interactive learning experiences either at the Living Coast or through Our Wild San Diego outreach programs at their schools.

I am excited for the upcoming year as we plan for our first capital improvement in ten years – the Turtle Lagoon exhibit enhancement project – which will begin this winter. The renovated enclosure will provide the Eastern Pacific green sea turtles with more space in which to swim and provide guests with a more interactive way to learn about sea turtles in the wild.

Thank you for supporting our vision to inspire care and exploration of the living Earth by connecting people with coastal animals, plants and habitats. Together, we are making a difference.

Sincerely,

Ben Vallejos  
Executive Director



# The Living Coast Experience



*After being injured by a boat in the Florida Keys and rehabilitated at the Turtle Hospital in Florida, Sapphire was in need of a forever home in a safe environment. The wonderful medical team at the Turtle Hospital escorted Sapphire to San Diego by chartered flight compliments of FedEx. Today, Sapphire helps us educate students and families about loggerhead sea turtles in the wild and responsible outdoor recreation.*



# The Living Coast Experience



SuperWild, the family-friendly seasonal exhibit, celebrated the amazing world of animal super-

heroes combined with original local artwork. SuperWild animals included ribbon snakes that fish with lightning fast speed, Hulk-sized insects, and reptiles that stretch to the extreme – all natural adaptations that help them survive in the wild.

**67,000**  
total visitors



**5,601** Living  
Coast members

# The Living Coast Experience



**Farm to Bay** had its most successful year yet, raising over \$85,000 in net proceeds. San Diego's only tasting event held within a national wildlife refuge sold out at 500 tickets. The event supports coastal wildlife, conservation, and education programs at the Living Coast throughout the year.

77%

46%

## ZERO WASTE INITIATIVE

77% of collected waste was diverted from the landfill, **up from 60% the previous year**

46% reduction in waste from previous year



# The Living Coast Experience



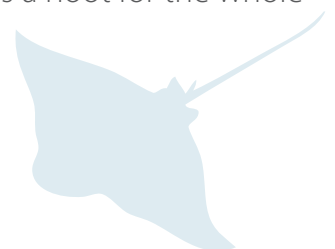
The annual **Wine on the Waterfront** maritime industry fundraiser raised \$11,849 for the Living Coast. We'd like to give special thanks to hosts Bob Kilpatrick, BAE Systems, Huntington Ingalls, Marine Group Boat Works, and General Dynamics NASSCO.

**\$11,849**

Raised!

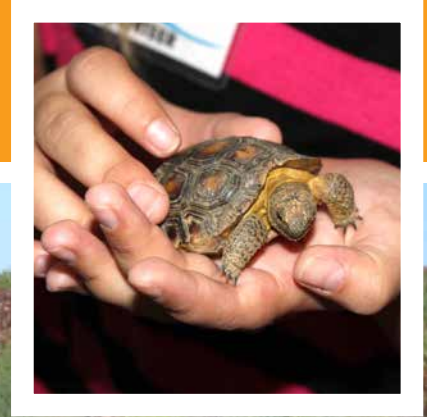


140 guests in all varieties of fun costumes came out to celebrate **Owl-O-Ween**, a spooktacular event that provided a safe and educational night for families to enjoy wildlife after dark! From live encounters with nocturnal species to gross science experiments, Owl-O-Ween was a hoot for the whole community.





# Educational Programs



*The SoCal Urban Wildlife Refuge Project provided an opportunity for us to partner with the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Sweetwater Marsh Unit to engage urban communities and youth in outdoor recreation and conservation. Funding from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided 443 local youth the opportunity to participate in the Student Scientist Series and Wild WISE programs.*

- STEaM curriculum training for **16** teachers
- **138** students, grades 6-12, participated in the Student Scientist Series to build and launch remotely operated vehicles in the 21,000 gallon shark and ray exhibit at the Living Coast
- **305** youth from MANA of San Diego, Wilson Middle School, SD Science Alliance BeWISE, and Girl Scouts of San Diego participated in the Wild WISE workshops focused on environmental activities in San Diego County.



# Educational Programs



13,890  
students



2,692  
adult  
chaperones

participated in field  
trips at the  
Living Coast

2,735 kids



attended  
Day Camps

Special thanks to the Port of San Diego and Sprouts Farmer's Market – Chula Vista and Eastlake for sponsoring 81 field trips. With their support, 2,454 students were able to participate in the interactive **Living Lab** field trip program for free.



Reached 3,880 students through **Our Wild San Diego School Outreach Program** where we bring science to classrooms throughout San Diego County, including 3 homeschool sites.





# Educational Programs



  
**228**

## Compost Workshops

**228** guests attended compost workshops

  
**35**

## Master Composter Program

**35** master composters trained

*"The Living Coast Discovery Center and the Port of San Diego share a mutual interest in the health and sustainability of San Diego Bay. We are proud to support their environmental education efforts each year, reaching thousands of students and ensuring a new generation learns the importance of everything from coastal resource conservation to watershed protection, from pollution protection to recognizing native plants and animals, to active participation in endangered species propagation. Discovery is just the beginning."*

– Randa Coniglio, President & CEO,  
Port of San Diego



# Research

## Collaboration



### **Burrowing Owl Study**

In collaboration with San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research, burrowing owls at the Living Coast participated in a research study testing the feasibility of using solar-powered satellite transmitters. The transmitters help to document foraging movements during breeding season to learn more about the owl's life history and habitat needs as they apply to conservation of the species.



### **Oystercatcher and Limpet Study**

An independent study was conducted by a Master's student to examine the effects of low tide temperature on the susceptibility of a prey to its predators. In order to truly understand how climate change might affect our intertidal systems in the future, we must understand how temperature affects not only the physiology of organisms, but also the interaction between different species.



### **Ridgway's Rail Captive Breeding Program**

The Living Coast Discovery Center is the only location in the world where the light-footed Ridgway's rail species can be viewed by the public. Due to the efforts of Team Clapper Rail, over 400 rails have been released into the wild since 2000.



# Volunteers



*Boy Scout Troop 801 with Eagle Scout Jacob Blauser, removed and replanted flora around the perimeter to better showcase the endangered Shaw's agave, which is likely to become extinct in our lifetime.*





# Volunteers



*"Without a doubt I do not know where I would be in my life right now if it wasn't for this center; I am now a sophomore in college majoring in Sustainability. This center opened my eyes to a different world, in high school they encourage students to aim high by choosing engineering, medicine, or business as a major, but Living Coast opened my eyes to the importance of conservation, sustainability, and agriculture. My time is tight with school, work, and sports, but I will always have time to go back and visit the Living Coast Discovery Center, my second home. This center has a special place in my heart and without it, I wouldn't be the person I am today."*

– Alejandra Lozano Estrada, teen volunteer

Volunteers cleaned up the bay on kayaks near J Street Marina Park. In just one cleanup, volunteers collected:

- 855** cigarette butts
- 450** pieces of styrofoam
- 360** pieces of plastic
- 250** cigar tips
- 130** food wrappers
- 45** pounds of trash



# Volunteers



**19,800**

volunteer hours equating to  
**\$532,026** in value of donated  
volunteer time



**248**

active volunteers  
(ages 16 to 89)



**48**

outreach events throughout  
San Diego County



**950**

docent-led  
tours providing  
guided nature  
walks, bird  
watching tours,  
and school field  
trips



**26**

college and high  
school student  
internships



# Honor Roll

Thank you to all of our generous donors for their loyal support of the Living Coast Discovery Center.

## Fiscal Year 2014-2015

### \$100,000 and above

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

### \$50,000 - \$99,999

County of San Diego Board of Supervisors

The Nelson Foundation

Orca Fund at The San Diego Foundation

The San Diego Foundation

Unified Port of San Diego

Walton Family Foundation

### \$25,000 - \$49,999

Anonymous Donor

Goodrich Foundation

Marine Group Boat Works

The Parker Foundation

San Diego Gas and Electric®

### \$10,000 - \$24,999

Hervey Family Fund at The San Diego Foundation

Mission Federal Credit Union Foundation

SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund

Sprouts Farmers Market – Chula Vista and Eastlake

Walter J. and Betty C. Zable Foundation

### \$5,000 - \$9,999

BAE Systems

Daphne Seybolt Culpeper Memorial Foundation, Inc.

Friends of San Diego Wildlife Refuges

Susan Fuller

Hattie Ettinger Conservation Fund at The San Diego Foundation

J.F. Beyster Fund at The San Diego Foundation

Mitzi Swift

### \$1,000 - \$4,999

American Scaffold

AT&T California

Baldwin & Sons

Barbara and Allen Bellini

Gary Bryant

Mary Lu and Thomas Bucknell

Lori and Phil Coons

Pattie Frazer\*

Jeff and Sylvia Gaffney

John and Jane Harriman

Hoffman Hanono Insurance Services

Kristi McClure Huckaby

Kohl's Cares

Las Primeras

Larry Lewis

Loews Coronado Bay Resort

Mater Dei Catholic High School

Ann and David Mears

Miller Marine

General Dynamics NASSCO

NSC Technologies Worldwide

Pacific Yacht Refitters

Pacifica Companies

PCE San Diego

Nancy and Tom Pilcher

Pratt Memorial Fund

R.E. Staite Engineering, Inc.

La Bella Pizza Garden

Sharon Jasek Reid

Republic Services

Jane and Arthur Riggs

Rita's Water Ice Franchise Co., LLC

Joan and Frank Roseman

Aquatica, SeaWorld's Waterpark

The Securities Center, Inc.

Debra and Donald W. Smith

Southcoast Welding & Mfg, LLC

Stanley/Stearns Fund at The San Diego Foundation

Ann and Robert Steiner

Tecnico Corporation

John Thomas

United Way of San Diego County

Kathleen and Ben Vallejos

Waitt Foundation

Dina and Ken Weimer

Leslie and Thomas Woodward

### \$500 - \$999

Susan Bigelow

Robyn Bottomley

Judy and George Cave

Continental Maritime of San Diego

Frances and Alan Cornell

Denise and Gary David

David DiDonato

Christine and Douglas Evans

Fiddler's Green Restaurant

Susan and Mike Hein

Judy and George Hopwood

Patti and Wylie Huffman

Michele Mangan and Robert Kilpatrick

Cheryl Lawrence

Margaret and Jerome McSwain

Kathleen L. Morgan

David Noji

North Island Credit Union

Pacific Realty Sales & Management, Inc.

Brenda Pearson

Karen and Cesar Quiros

Sara and Gerald Ramirez

Sean Ramirez

Kimberly Schanz

Jan and Leland Sebring

Sandra and Todd Sgoutas-Emch

Eldbjorg and Bjorn Syversen

Darlene Whorley

Ella Wilson

*\*deceased*

The Living Coast Discovery Center is grateful for the loyal commitment and support of the City of Chula Vista!

# Board of Directors and Leadership Staff



## Executive Committee

**Susan Fuller**, Chairperson  
Retired, Fuller's Plumbing

**Sylvia Gaffney**, Vice Chairperson  
Associate General Counsel,  
General Dynamics NASSCO

**Bob Kilpatrick**, Treasurer  
Maritime Consultant

**Dr. Larry Wergeland**, Secretary  
Retired Colonel of the U.S. Army Medical;  
Retired Corps Ophthalmologist

**Andrew Yuen**, Executive Committee  
Project Leader, San Diego National  
Wildlife Refuge Complex, U.S. Fish &  
Wildlife Service

## Directors

**Ron Cohn**, Owner, Sprouts Farmer's Market  
Chula Vista and Eastlake

**Herb Engel**, President, Marine Group  
Boat Works

**Bob Koerber**, Vice President/General  
Manager, BAE Systems San Diego Ship  
Repair

**Steven Miesen**, Division Manager,  
Republic Services; Councilmember,  
City of Chula Vista

**Frank Roseman\***, Retired, Rohr Aircraft  
Corporation

**Donald Smith**, Vice President, Merrill  
Lynch

**Robert Steiner**, Retired, McKenna,  
Long & Aldridge, LLP

**Kyle Strong**, Associate General Counsel,  
UTC Aerospace Systems - Aerostructures

**Ken Weimer**, Retired, Insurance Broker

\*Honorary Member

## Leadership Staff

**Ben Vallejos**, Executive Director

**Sherry Lankston**, Director of  
Communications and Guest Experience

**Lori Coons**, Director of Development

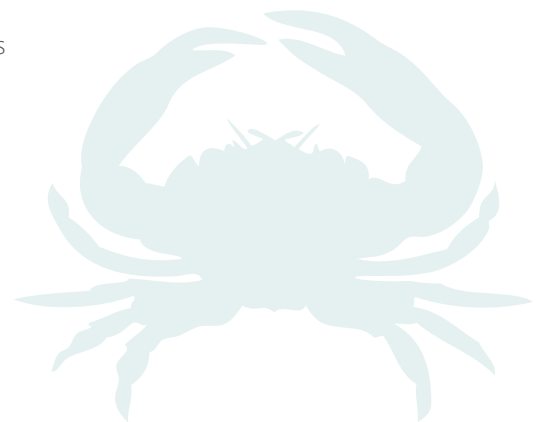
**Tina Matthias**, Volunteer and Programs  
Manager

**Amanda Grant-Stout**, Education Manager

**Lindsay Bradshaw**, Animal Care Manager

**Jessica LaFave**, Development Manager

**Mark Valen**, Facilities and Horticulture  
Manager

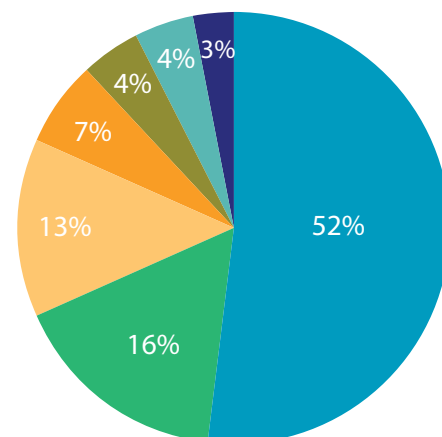






## Revenue and Support

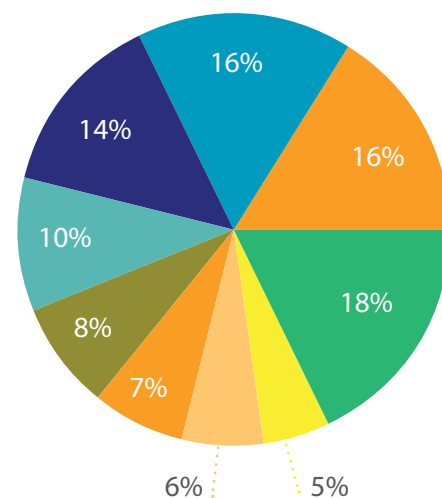
Fundraising	\$1,025,064
Program Services	\$322,714
Admission	\$263,156
Farm to Bay and Special Events	\$131,994
Membership	\$86,881
Gift Shop	\$84,007
Interest	\$54,829
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$1,968,645</b>



\*due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%

## Expenses

Facilities	\$281,129
Animal Care	\$263,858
Program Services	\$257,785
Fundraising and Farm to Bay	\$226,501
Management and Administration	\$155,146
Marketing and Communication	\$134,246
General Supplies and Services	\$116,374
Shuttle Service	\$91,816
Gift Shop	\$77,565
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,604,420</b>









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*Thank you to San Diego Gas and Electric for establishing the \$2 million endowment fund, SDG&E Living Coast Discovery Center South Bay Enhancement Fund, which supports the continued operations of the Living Coast Discovery Center, including environmental education programs and public access and enjoyment of San Diego Bay.*

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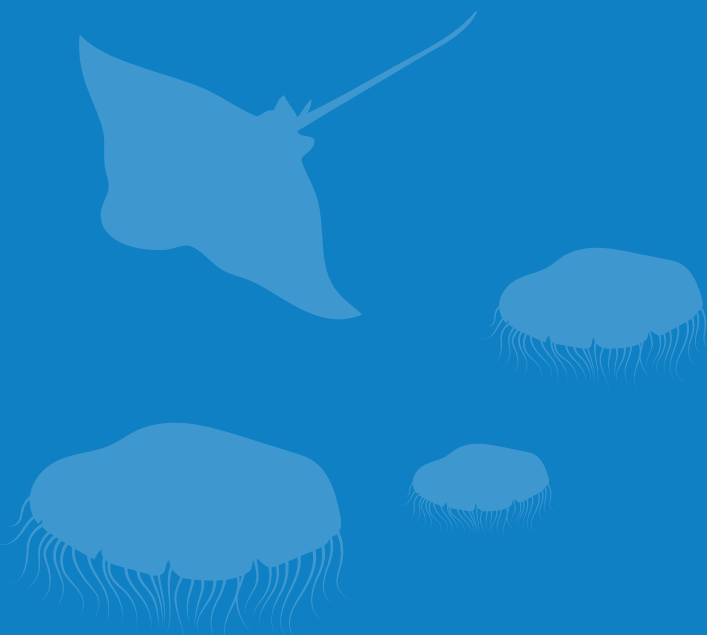


To learn more about ways to support the Living Coast, please visit:  
[www.TheLivingCoast.org/donate](http://www.TheLivingCoast.org/donate)

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