

2019-2020

MISSION TRAILS REGIONAL PARK FISCAL YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

Since its incorporation in 1988, the Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) Foundation has enriched the lives of San Diego County residents and visitors and has advocated for and helped to steward Mission Trails, one of the largest urban parks in the United States.

During the fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2020, Mission Trails welcomed more than 2 million visitors who hiked, walked, mountain biked, enjoyed the Visitor & Interpretive Center, and participated in educational public programs.

As reflected in the MTRP Foundation's mission statement, the nonprofit organization works in collaboration with the City of San Diego to preserve and protect the park and provide and promote educational and recreational opportunities.



🌿 The MTRP Foundation supports major park initiatives which, during the 2019-2020 fiscal year, included the **opening of the new 5,000-square-foot ranger station in the East Fortuna Staging Area**. A major entry to the Fortuna area of the park, the completion of this long-awaited facility was a 21-year process of planning and park development funded by the City of San Diego and the MTRP Foundation. This important park investment gives rangers improved resources and a state-of-the-art facility to better protect the park and engage with park visitors.

AT LEFT AND ABOVE: The new ranger station in the East Fortuna Staging Area opened in February 2020.



🌿 One of the many ways the park benefits from the involvement of the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation is the organization's funding for support of habitat and restoration projects. An example of this is a multi-year collaboration with the City of San Diego to **improve habitat and increase the populations of San Diego Thornmint in Mission Trails Regional Park**. Funded by the San Diego Associations of Governments (SANDAG), the grant allowed the MTRP Foundation to engage RECON Environmental to expand San Diego Thornmint populations in Mission Trails. Habitat maintenance and development projects are ongoing at the park, and most involve MTRP rangers working with volunteers. Funds from the MTRP Foundation are used to purchase plants and tools for such projects, as well as materials used for trail maintenance.



🌿 In 2019, the MTRP Foundation began coordinating the volunteers who staff the Visitor Center. All other park volunteers continue to be managed by MTRP rangers and other City staff. One highlight from 2020 was the park's **Trail Guide Program** having more interest than ever before, with 56 nature-loving individuals signing on to become a trained guide to lead the park's trail walks. Alas, those who completed training and passed the exam have yet to guide any groups, but they will add to the corps of volunteers who lead the free walks in the park when the program resumes.

🌿 Before COVID-19 caused Mission Trails to be fully closed for several weeks and has resulted in the continued temporary closure of the Visitor Center and Kumeyaay Lake Campground, the MTRP Foundation was experiencing a banner year. The activities included many sold-out public lectures, field trips for thousands of school children, the launch of a new Day Camp, and a collaboration with the Girl Scouts on two badge programs at the park. In addition, the MTRP Foundation supported the creation and completion of the new "Birds of Mission Trails" exhibit, educational panels along the trails, and produced ***The Rise and the Fall of the Mountains at Mission Trails Regional Park*, a 20-minute film about the geology of Mission Trails featuring Pat Abbott, Ph.D.** The film was set to debut in the Visitor Center theater but instead premiered online due to the pandemic. This outcome was fortuitous as the film has been used in educators' distance learning curricula to benefit youth near and far, from elementary school to college students.

BELOW: Though the program is currently suspended due to the pandemic, the park's volunteer Trail Guides provide educational walks to groups.



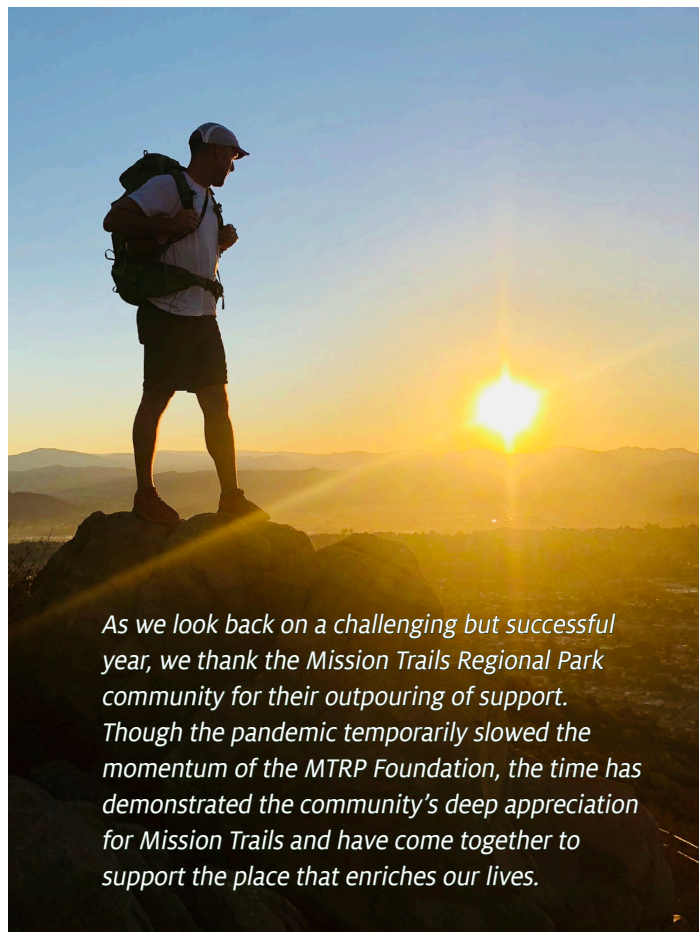


🌿 Mission Trails Regional Park is a wonderful place for children to explore the outdoors and learn to appreciate nature. Thanks to generous support from San Diego Gas & Electric and other donors to the MTRP Foundation, the organization has, over the years, welcomed tens of thousands of school children to the park on field trips, and has **hosted thousands on overnight campouts at Kumeyaay Lake Campground**. Though many months of field trips scheduled for the 2019-2020 academic year were canceled due to the pandemic, the **MTRP Foundation welcomed nearly 2,000 children to the park from 37 different schools**. Our on-site educators provided an enriching experience that included engaging with the Visitor Center's exhibits, learning about local indigenous peoples from a storyteller, and taking a guided walk through the park. The Foundation provides bus transportation for groups coming to the park for field trips with both Foundation educators and MTRP rangers.



🌿 Before the Visitor Center closed in March due to the pandemic, the City and MTRP Foundation staged the **24th annual Volunteer Awards Celebration**, an opportunity to acknowledge the service of the 829 individuals who volunteered at Mission Trails in 2019. Collectively, the volunteers worked a total of 11,991 hours of service, the equivalent of an estimated \$360,000 according to www.independentsector.org. Due to the pandemic, the park's volunteer programs have been suspended since spring 2020, and we look forward to welcoming everyone back to the park when it's safe to do so.

🌿 **After processing 15,000 finishers, the immensely popular 5-Peak Challenge came to an end in June 2020.** Conceived and managed by MTRP rangers, the Challenge brought many more hikers to the park and provided the opportunity for families, friends, and colleagues to push themselves to summit all of Mission Trails' five peaks. To receive a certificate of completion and a 5-Peak lapel pin—provided by the Foundation—hikers took selfies at the summits. Though Mission Trails' program has ended, it has inspired the creation of many similar promotions, locally and outside of San Diego County.



As we look back on a challenging but successful year, we thank the Mission Trails Regional Park community for their outpouring of support. Though the pandemic temporarily slowed the momentum of the MTRP Foundation, the time has demonstrated the community's deep appreciation for Mission Trails and have come together to support the place that enriches our lives.

FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020

Public Programs and Events



Creating Habitat with California Native Plants

Mike Evans,
Tree of Life Nursery

Mission Trails Regional Park Bird Identification Workshops

Millie Basden



Mystery Cat: Southern California's Elusive Mountain Lion

Don Endicott



Family Program: Mission Trails' Creatures of the Night

Two Who Survived

Rose Schindler, Holocaust survivor and author



Holiday Marketplace at the MTRP Visitor Center which featured local artisans and others to support MTRP

Fundraiser for MTRP at Blind Lady Ale House

MTRP Foundation Donor Event

What a Difference a Year Makes: Tracking the Rare Plant Super Bloom

Mark Berninger,
City of San Diego



ONGOING

MTRP Foundation Programs and Projects in Cooperation with the City of San Diego

- Oversight and management of the MTRP Gift Shop
- Coordination of the Visitor Center volunteers
- Support of City of San Diego volunteer program including volunteer recognition
- Maintenance and replacement of furnishings and equipment at park facilities
- Development, funding, and maintenance of educational exhibits
- Support of the City of San Diego-operated Kumeyaay Lake Campground
- Stewardship and cultivation of donors
- Management of the Mission Trails Regional Park website
- Electronic communications and social media content development
- MTRP newsletters, brochures, and promotion of the park and campground
- Educational field trips and support of City staff and volunteer education programs
- Art exhibitions at the Visitor Center

