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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **CITIZENS CELEBRATE SAN DIEGO'S 94,000-ACRE RECREATIONAL PARK Celebrating 25 Years of Progress & Preservation in the River Valley**

For 25 years the non-profit citizen-based Conservancy has worked with state and local government, nonprofit and community partners to implement and sustain the vision of the 94,000-acre San Dieguito River Park and its 55-mile Coast-to-Crest Trail through land acquisition and stewardship, citizen involvement, education and public outreach. Started in 1986 around kitchen tables in Solana Beach in 1986, today, the Conservancy is proud to announce that a stunning **65% of the San Dieguito River Park is in protected public ownership, more than 70 miles of trails are open for the enjoyment of hikers, bikers, equestrians and nature enthusiasts**, and invasives plant species are being treated on 1,000 acres to preserve habitat and precious water resources.

Spanning 94,000 acres, the planned San Dieguito River Park, begins at the crest of Volcan Mountain in Julian, the start of the San Dieguito River, to the beach in Del Mar, where the river meets the ocean. The River Park encompasses the cities of San Diego, Del Mar, Escondido, Solana Beach, and Poway, and the County of San Diego, and each government agency contributes to the River Park's ongoing management and viability.

***There is a lot to celebrate!*** The San Dieguito River Park not only provides a vast array of recreational opportunities for San Diego County residents and visitors, but it protects one of the world's global biodiversity hotspots. The San Dieguito River Valley is one of the most significant, intact systems of ecological communities in the United States; boasting four distinct vegetation communities (salt march, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and oak woodland) and exhibiting a spectacularly diverse palette of colors, terrain and plant and animal species.

***Many thought the idea of having a watershed-wide River Park was an impossible pipe dream***, and would never be the reality it is today. San Diego Union-Tribune columnist Logan Jenkins echoes the sentiments of thousands of River Park supporters when he says, "The San Dieguito River Park, an ambitious conservation project stretching from Del Mar to Volcan Mountain, is considered one of San Diego region's most noble achievements. Our grandchildren will judge us not by what we well, but by what we save."

And long-time River Park board member, County Board **Supervisor Pam Slater-Price explains**, **"In the world of policy-making, nothing compares to acquiring, preserving and restoring open space. That's why the rewards of serving on the San Dieguito River Park's board have been so great. Thanks to our efforts -- and those of many, many supporters -- the river valley will remain as a safe haven for plants, animals and people in perpetuity."**

Fellow River Park Board member, Deputy Major Jim Cunningham of Poway says, "The 25th anniversary of the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy presents a great opportunity to acknowledge and thank the dedicated volunteers and contributors who have ensured through their efforts that our natural legacy in San Diego is truly secured. The San Dieguito River Park is an amazing example of how, against all odds, the dreams of a few has become a reality for millions.

Join the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy for a fun-filled afternoon of great food and wine, lively music and tennis at the beautiful Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa in Rancho Santa Fe this September! The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual River Valley Fest on September 25, 2011 celebrates 25 years of progress implementing and preserving the expansive San Dieguito River Park, and protecting San Diego's natural legacy.

Event Details

Date: September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Time: 3:30pm – Sunset

Tennis Round Robin: 2:00pm – 4:15pm

Location: Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa, Rancho Santa Fe

Tickets: \$100 per person, and \$135 per person for tennis round robin participants

Purchase tickets at [sdrvc.org/rivervalleyfest](http://sdrvc.org/rivervalleyfest)

Rancho Valencia is offering guests of the event a 15% discount on Luxury Suites for the night of September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011 (based on availability).

The afternoon will feature delectable dishes from San Diego Paella, wine and sangria, desserts by Claire's on Cedros, music by local guitarist Bill Fleming, tennis round robin, and irresistible auction items. The event is made possible in partnership with Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa, one of Southern California's premier luxury resorts and a member of the Green Hotel Association.

*The River Valley Fest is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the Conservancy's great progress over the past twenty-five years and to renew our commitment so that the next twenty-five years will be even more successful. The San Dieguito River Park has become a gleaming natural jewel in San Diego County but faces many challenges. The River Valley Fest helps assure that we have the necessary support and resources to counter those challenges, especially in completing the 55-mile Coast-to-Crest trail. And besides, it's a lot of fun!*

- Rand Newman  
President, San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy

If you would like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview, please contact Sarah Hurd at (858)755-6956 or [sarah@sdrvc.org](mailto:sarah@sdrvc.org).

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