

Preserve Management and the Urban Corps Team

Presented at the Annual Public Meeting
March 6, 2025

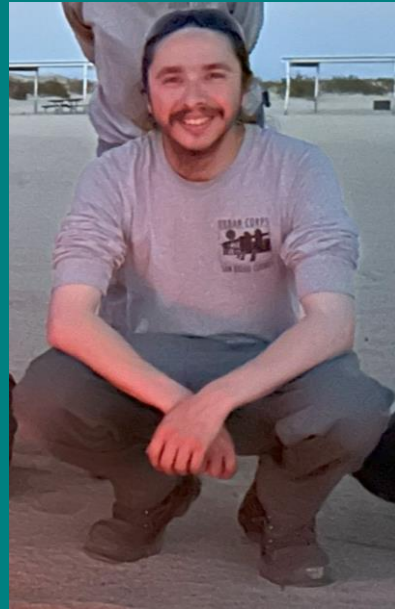
By Gretchen Cummings, Colin Casey, Darren Whittaker, and Jorge Sanchez



Meet the Members of the Preserve Management Team Presenting Today



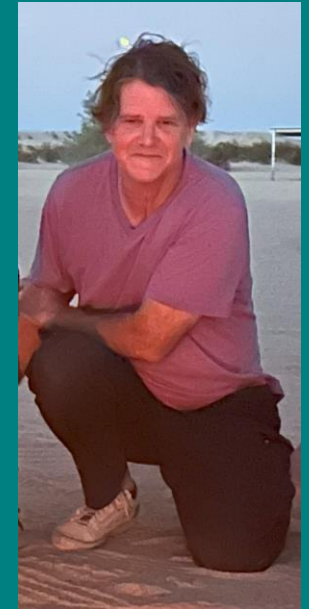
Gretchen Cummings
Preserve Manager/
Biologist



Jorge Sanchez
Preserve
Corpsmember



Colin Casey
Preserve Supervisor



Darren Whittaker
Preserve Supervisor

Urban Corps of San Diego County

“Learning. Earning. Conserving.”

Learning – Corpsmembers attend the Urban Corps Charter School 1 day per week to earn a high school diploma. They also learn job skills and receive training while working on projects. This on-the-job training assists them with job placement and career development.

Earning – Corpsmembers work the other 4 days of the week to earn a paycheck.

Conserving – Corpsmembers give back to the community by maintaining and enhancing preserves, cleaning up trash and homeless encampments, planting trees, removing graffiti, recycling, and trimming vegetation to aid in fire prevention.



The Preserve Management Team – How Does It Work?

- Stewardship of preserves by the Urban Corps is carried out by a team of stewards consisting of a Preserve Manager/Biologist, Preserve Supervisors, and Corpsmembers.
- The Preserve Manager/Biologist's duties include conducting biological surveys, training the Preserve Supervisors and Corpsmembers, scheduling the tasks to be carried out by the Preserve Supervisors and Corpsmembers, managing the budget, and report writing.
- The Preserve Supervisors' duties include overseeing the accuracy and safety of the Corpsmembers work at the preserves, ensuring that sensitive plant and wildlife species are protected, documenting/mapping any issues noted in the field to the Preserve Manager, and establishing goals for maintaining and enhancing the habitats at the preserves.
- The Corpsmembers responsibilities are to attend school 1 day a week and work on projects during the other 4 days. Given this work-school schedule, Corpsmembers assigned to each Preserve Supervisor work at the preserves on a rotating basis depending upon their academic schedule. So, the Preserve Management Team is often made up of different Corpsmembers depending upon the day.

Preserve Manager + Preserve Supervisor + Corpsmembers = Preserve Management Team

Co-occurrence of the Del Mar Mesa Sand Aster and Fountain Grass - An Example of How Our Team Gets the Job Done

- In the field training of the Supervisors and Corpsmembers by the Biologist on the identification of the Del Mar Mesa Sand Aster which is a sensitive plant species
- Supervisors and Corpsmembers work side by side to identify specific paths to walk and where to lay equipment and garbage bags that will not lead to damaging the delicate Del Mar Sand Aster
- In the field training of the Supervisors and Corpsmembers by the Biologist on the identification of Fountain Grass which is an invasive plant species
- In the field training of the Corpsmembers by the Supervisors on the techniques to be used to cut and remove the Fountain Grass
- Supervisors and Corpsmembers work side by side to extract the Fountain Grass without damaging the Del Mar Mesa Sand Aster



Before Fountain Grass Removal



After Fountain Grass Removal



Thank you!

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