

# Riverside Citizen Science

People in partnership with scientists, to study the planet, its plants and animals



## Mission/Vision

The mission of Riverside Citizen Science is to engage our community in observing and documenting Riverside's natural environment. This program fosters appreciation and stewardship by staging and supporting nature-centered activities. Science, through community participation and collaboration, becomes a permanent part of our city's culture and identity.

## History

- Since 2004, a local coalition of stakeholders has held several Citizen Science Week workshops and public programs in the Riverside area.
  - These events received an enthusiastic response from the community and around the nation.
  - In-kind assistance was generated through collaborations with the University of California, the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District, and the National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian Institution).
- The City of Riverside has received the following grants to help move the citizen science program forward, beyond the previous formats:
  - National Park Service Grant - technical assistance from the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program.
  - Two Proposition 84-supported grants from California State Parks - \$780,000 in Nature Education Facilities funding to create a nature center at Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park; and \$158,000 from the Habitat Conservation Fund to support nature center education operating expenses.

## Currently:

- The National Park Service RTCA technical assistance grant has brought together the collaborating agencies into a working group: the Riverside Metropolitan Museum, the University of California at Riverside, the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District, the City of Riverside Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, the USDA Forest Service, and the National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian Institution).
- Together we will:
  - Create a vision and mission for a citizen science program, for Riverside and its sphere of influence.
  - Work together to share resources and identify all the needs of the program.
  - Work on strategic plan and implementation plans for the program.
  - Identify a partnership model that builds on the strengths of all the partners, and builds the capacity for the expansion of our mission.



The National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and

Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects. RTCA staff provides technical assistance grants to communities so they can conserve rivers, preserve open space and develop trails and greenways. For this project RTCA was asked to help plan and design the citizen science program so that it provides the most benefit for the ecosystem and the community. For more information, please go to: [www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca](http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca).





For more information about the Riverside Citizen Science program:

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[www.riversideca.gov/museum/citizen-science](http://www.riversideca.gov/museum/citizen-science)

## Meet the Riverside Citizen Science Partners!



### Riverside Metropolitan Museum

The Museum will be the headquarters for Riverside's Citizen Science program. It holds large natural history and cultural collections, including live animals, which will be used to supplement citizen science activities. The Museum will contribute expertise and experience in running citizen science and other outreach and public events.



Smithsonian Institution  
Affiliations Program

### Smithsonian Institution: The Department of Botany at the National Museum of Natural History

The Department of Botany at the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) will be a distance learning partner, accentuating collections-based lesson modules or open question-and-answer sessions, offering students – whether visiting Sycamore Canyon, other sites, or in classrooms - a unique perspective on national and international environmental concerns. Special events (such as BioBlitz) will receive technical assistance from Smithsonian scientists. Other Smithsonian resources with potential applications for program development and evaluation include the Environmental Research Center (SERC), the NMNH Education Office and its new Learning Center, and the Office of Exhibits Central.



### University of California, Riverside

UCR will provide access to scholars and experts to serve as the research arm of the citizen science efforts, and for special events, such as BioBlitz. UCR will advise on the selection and development of a data collection methodology, as well as help extract useful patterns and conclusions from data collected through citizen science activities. Connections through UCR can also provide undergraduate and graduate level students to serve as citizen science activity leaders.



### Riverside Corona Resource Conservation District

RCRCD has expertise in coordinating, organizing, and implementing field projects and working with community and student groups. Extensive experience in working with local and regional natural resources (soil, water, plants and wildlife) equips the RCRCD to provide guidance and advice in developing and implementing effective citizen science programming.



### City of Riverside Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department

The mission of the PRCSD is to provide innovative recreational experiences and social enrichment opportunities for people of all ages and cultures, in a variety of safe and attractive parks, trails, landscapes, and facilities. Sycamore Canyon Park, a 1,500 acre natural park and reserve for the endangered Stephens kangaroo rat, will be one of the primary outdoor venues for Citizen Science activities as participants observe and document flora and fauna found within this island of native habitat. Citizen Science activities will also introduce participants to urban wildlife found in local parks and other urban habitats. Having experience with contract classes, day camps, special events, volunteer programs, senior citizen programs, and other recreational and community service programs enables the PRCSD to assist with the administration and operational needs of the RCS program.



### US Forest Service Department of Agriculture

The Forest Service's Research and Development laboratory in Riverside will provide expertise in land conservation issues such as fire prevention and utilization, habitat conservation, and human interactions with natural ecosystems. The Riverside lab has a rich history in cross disciplinary research, linking air pollution to plant community structure, or human activity to water quality, for example. Providing technical and practical assistance to the Citizen Science Program is a natural fit to the goals of Forest Service Research.