

**For Immediate Release: June 30, 2004**

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## **SAN DIEGO CONSERVATION GROUPS LAUNCH NETWORK, HIRE MIKE KELLY TO LEAD**

Mike Kelly, one of San Diego's leading conservationists for nearly two decades, has been selected to lead the San Diego Conservation Resources Network (CRN), a consortium of local land conservancies and 'friends' groups dedicated to preserving San Diego's quality of life.

The CRN Manager position was filled through a competitive selection process. Kelly was chosen from more than 40 candidates, many with excellent qualifications. Kelly's 18 years of experience with the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, years of collaboration with multiple agencies and conservation groups, and comprehensive knowledge of the activities and needs of conservation groups here in San Diego County lifted him above the rest.

When asked what his biggest challenge will be as the first Manager of the new network, Kelly stated, "Our challenge is not simply to save a collection of plants, wildlife, artifacts, or habitats, we're saving something bigger, the natural soul of San Diego, its natural identity, the mesas, valleys, mountains, and waters that give San Diego its unique character." Kelly's position as Manager begins July 1, 2004.

The Conservation Resources Network has received start-up funding from The San Diego Foundation and a few private donors. Dr. Emily Young, Director of the Foundation's Environment Working Group says, "Our parks and wildlands in San Diego County are unparalleled nationwide in both their beauty and diversity of life that they support. With only a 5-10 year window of time to protect some of our region's last remaining wild places for generations to come, the Conservation Resources Network will enable local groups to coordinate their efforts and pool their resources to broaden their impact on a regional SCA CRN's goals for the first year include creating an interactive web clearinghouse for the general public and its members, developing on-line Geographic Information Services (GIS) for members, and providing cross-training opportunities for local land trusts and "friends" groups.

Members of the CRN are nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) status with the Internal Revenue Service and own or manage land for conservation purposes here in San Diego County. Member organizations include Anza-Borrego Foundation, Back Country Land Trust, Batiquitos Lagoon Foundation, Endangered Habitats League, Escondido Creek Conservancy, Fallbrook Land Conservancy, Friends of Daley Ranch, Friends of Hellhole Canyon, Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Preserve Calavera, San Diego Archaeological Center, San Diego River Park Foundation, San Diego Tracking Team, San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy, San Diego River Park—Lakeside Conservancy, San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy, Tierra Miguel Foundation, and Volcan Mountain Preserve Foundation.

For more information about San Diego's Conservation Resources Network, visit <http://www.sdcrn.org/>.