

Meet Us at the River Park

EVENTS & PROGRAMS

- **Historic Orchard Workdays**
1st Saturdays, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays/
month, 9-11:30am
- **Trail Clean Ups**
1st and 3rd Wednesday, 9-11am
- **Nature Trail Tours**
2nd Saturday/month, 10:30-11:30am
- **Heritage Rose Garden Workdays**
Every Saturday, 8:30-11:30am
- **Trail Ambassador and Tag Team**
Recruitment (ongoing)
- **CHIRP Homeschool Program**
(ongoing until May 2023)



Adopt a rose to honor a loved one and support the stewardship of our publicly-accessible botanical treasure.

More at grpg.org.

This newsletter is generously supported by



The Guadalupe River Park Conservancy provides community leadership for the development and active use of the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens through education, advocacy and stewardship.



THE GUADALUPE GAZETTE

FALL/WINTER 2022

THE GUADALUPE GAZETTE

Restore & Reconnect

Your commitment towards the vision of the Guadalupe River Park empowers us to adapt to change, grow our impact, and ensure our community enjoys and benefits from our treasured greenway. With that, we commit to restoring the Guadalupe River Park and reconnecting people to nature and each other. We accomplished much together in 2022, and we know with you, we will travel far.

- The Conservancy Team

Stewardship Metrics	Q1 2022	Q2 2022	Q3 2022
Number of volunteers	603	542	301
Acres maintained	55	51	56
Volunteer hours	1,616	1,556	1,183
Trail patrols	14	24	24
Trash bags filled	169	310	144
Pounds of trash removed	5,070	9,300	4,320
Park features restored	1	9	13

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Support Parks
Support Democracy

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Meet our New Board Members and Staff!

The Guadalupe River Park Conservancy is thrilled to welcome new Board Members and Staff to our leadership and impact team. We look forward to sharing their talents and passion to help connect communities to nature and each other.



Reena Brilliot
City of Santa Clara

Every great city has its body of water that anchors it and the Guadalupe River is that for San Jose. Let's cherish, program it, and actualize its potential!



Shanna Goodell
Cohesity

I joined the board to be a part of a team of passionate individuals who are driven to preserve the natural ecology and spaces in an urban setting to create community, connection and belonging.



Lydon George
SF Municipal Transportation Agency

As a Board Member, I am excited to help the park see its full potential as an iconic civic space that embodies all that makes San José special.



Cassandra Staff
Cassport LLC

I'm excited to be a part of the work at GRPC because the spaces that we share inform, energize, and cultivate our community, and community is a critical part of our humanity.



Nathan Ulsh
Community Strong Strategies

I joined the board because I would like to contribute to continuing to make this a great place as I bring my family to the Rotary Playground and walk the trail frequently.



Nicole Leoparte
Development & Administrative Coordinator

I am looking forward to collaborating with like-minded individuals with similar interests and goals for the Conservancy to be advocates for and of the park. I find that I can be the bridge to help foster growth and development.

Editor's Note: In our Summer 2022 Newsletter, we misspelled the name of one Guadalupe River Art Walk muralist. The correct name is Horitomo of State of Grace Tattoo.



Katrina Semene
Education Program Administrator

I am interested in furthering my experience with environmental and outdoor education because it's a method of engagement that encourages land stewardship and allows park visitors to make their own connections to the area.

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Education Program Administrator

River Park Round Up

Spend a Night at the Insect Hotel

Our new insect hotel in the Historic Orchard was recently installed by Boy Scout Troop 408 out of Cupertino. They crafted a beautiful structure that is already attracting many native insects such as carpenter bees, lady bugs, and lacewings. This space will be a fabulous tool for both increasing habitat for our native insects and teaching the community about them.



Books & Bubbles in the Rotary PlayGarden

The last few weeks in the Rotary PlayGarden we have introduced a free drop-in program, Books & Bubbles, where children can enjoy being read to by Guadalupe Guides on books about the environment while playing with bubbles. It has shown to be quite a popular program and we hope you and your little one can join us in the RPG for a storytime soon.



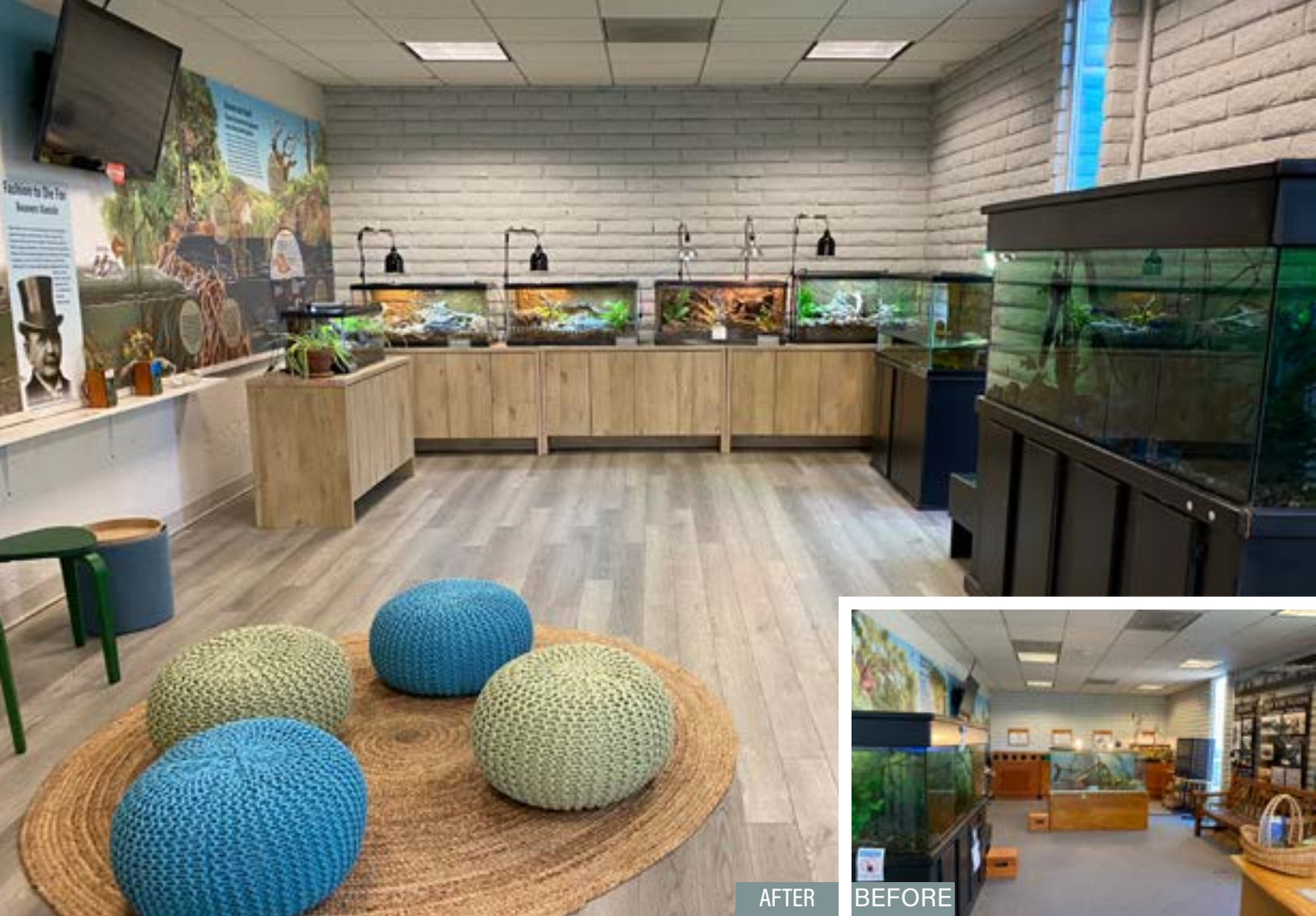
Trellises at the Heritage Rose Garden

With support by the County of Santa Clara, we recently added new trellises in the Heritage Rose Garden (HRG), with the goal of trellises lining the HRG's main pathways. Trellises allow for rose varieties that climb to have support and thrive to the best of their ability. Come visit the Heritage Rose Garden to see our new trellises and all the beautiful roses that bloom year round!

Guadalupe River Trail Tours

Knowledgeable Guadalupe Guides led the public on multiple trail tours around the River Park to learn more about the plants, animals, and natural amenities that call the River Park home. Guides stopped along the trail for observations according to what piqued the group's interest, making it a unique experience each time.

Join us for upcoming Trail Tours in the coming year to see what flora and fauna each season brings!



Excuse Our Dust - Visitor Center Renovation

You may have seen the progress (and the dust) of the renovation of our Visitor Center in-person or on social media, and we are happy to share that the wait is over. Through the support of the Lowe's Hometown Grant and Points of Light, we have renovated the Visitor Center lobby, added new features to our backyard learning space, and refreshed the trailhead and planting areas around the building.



Our renovated Visitor Center opens the space to guests, with new furniture and opportunities for dynamic education displays. The most visible transformation in our Visitor Center is the installation of new waterproof vinyl flooring to brighten the space and replace the worn-in carpet. Our animal ambassadors, vital to our environmental education programs, all received new homes in the form of bioactive enclosures, which includes live plants, natural climbing branches and hiding spaces, and a natural "clean-up crew" (bugs) whom coexist with our ambassadors and create a living space that simulates natural processes. Native plants and fresh mulch lead visitors to the Visitor Center from the adjacent trail.

Our backyard learning space is used regularly for school field trips, homeschool programs, summer camps, and special community celebrations. For the renovation, we installed heavy duty, retractable awnings and will add mountable benches in each outdoor classroom. A new park-inspired mural along the Visitor Center's backyard wall

echos the colors and wildlife of the existing mural facing the public. This artwork aims to create a more inviting space for learning and discovery, with colors that enhance learning and creativity.

This renovation is a community effort. Along with the support by Lowe's, many others helped bring this effort to fruition. The team at our local Lowe's store completed major clean up, painting, and site preparation work. Our long time "dream team" volunteers managed the removal and installation of the flooring. The Gensler San Jose office designed and painted the mural, with support by the National Charity League, AREA Chapter, and three of our homeschool families. Many other volunteers and partners helped with a variety of work: native plant selection, learning space treatments, furniture and bioactive enclosure assembly, and more.

Stop by in 2023 to enjoy the refreshed space and follow us on our social media for more updates.



Pumpkins Return to Discovery Meadow



This October we once again held downtown's only pumpkin patch and harvest festival, Pumpkins in the Park, at Discovery Meadow by the Children's Discovery Museum. This year's festival saw over 6,000 attendees enjoy free pumpkins, local community booths, and various environmental activities and entertainment throughout the day.

We hosted trail tours along the Guadalupe River, with participants learning about local flora, fauna, and the ecology and history of the waterway. We were happy to see people come away with a better understanding of the local natural environment and ways to encourage environmental restoration. A park scavenger hunt also helped for our littlest parkgoers to learn more about the plants and animals surrounding the River Park.

There were fun performances starting with San Jose Junior Taiko who worked the crowd up in an excitement with their impressive drumming skills. Later on was the world-renowned musical group ZunZun, who celebrate the power of environment and culture through music. Plenty of entertainment was provided with play-blocks, lawn games, inflatable play structures, and the Maker[Space]Ship provided by the San Jose Public Library. This year also marked the return of the costume parade, with children proudly strutting their Halloween costumes for all to see.

Visitors also had the opportunity to provide feedback on a number of community engagement booths hosted by the Conservancy and San Jose State University's Urban & Regional Planning Department. Your feedback supports our future programs, and guides future park development opportunities.

Thank you to everyone who participated, sponsored, and supported this year's Pumpkins in the Park - we couldn't have done it without you!

Pumpkins in the Park Event & Media Sponsors



Enhancing Latine Health through Parks



Defining health extends far beyond physical activity. Conditions impacting mental, emotional, environmental health further inform the definition of "healthy" and require addressing a broad range of challenges to improve community wellness. These issues need to look at social indicators of health to achieve improved health equity.

The Latine community in particular, who make up approximately 31% of the San Jose population, face health issues disproportionate to other minority groups in the United States. For example, Latines are at a higher risk of hospitalization or death from COVID-19 than some other racial and ethnic groups in the United States according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The "Healthy Parks: Healthy Latinos" report by the Hispanic Federation highlights the disproportionate rates of hypertension, heart disease, and other chronic illnesses experienced by the Latine community.

Considering that a person's life expectancy varies greatly based on the zip code they live in, community health partners are increasingly engaging with the connection between access to nature and public health. We asked two community members involved in health and public spaces about where they see the two overlap.

Maria Garcia with The Health Trust, a nonprofit focused on our region's health equity, notes that "removing financial barriers to park access is critical, especially for low-income communities. As such, we found it imperative to take a 'social determinants of health' approach to our work, and this included investing in organizations like GRPC." Research has shown that there is a direct connection between public parks and health equity, such as providing mental health benefits, reducing stress, and open space for physical activity.

The intersection between public spaces, health, and the Latine community is personal to Ciana Moreno, the Conservancy's Communications and Administrative Coordinator. She sees her Mexican-American identity as being intertwined with the environment and health, stating, "green communities improve public health. It would be difficult to improve community wellbeing without a healthy planet for us and future generations to reside on. Some of the most vulnerable within our community, farmworkers immediately come to mind, are definitely affected by environmental health when it comes to pesticides, land use, and climate change."

Parks also provide a myriad of environmental and health benefits. Trees and open spaces help cool neighborhoods and reduce flooding impacts. A robust canopy filters air and mitigates excessive sound. "In East San Jose, home to many of San Jose's immigrant population, there is the issue of the Reid-Hillview Airport and lead levels found nearby. These sort of vulnerabilities make it harder for my community and other marginalized groups to achieve health equity in our neighborhoods," said Moreno. The City of San Jose's Community Urban Forest Management Plan shows Council District 5 has less tree canopy at 12.6% to the city average at 13.5%. Between 2012-2018, every Council District in San Jose saw their tree canopy reduced.

At the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy we are interested in bridging the health equity gap through the power of parks. By providing fun nature-centered activities and murals painted by diverse local artists, we promote environmental awareness and connection. Through bilingual education programs for children, we aim to reduce barriers to accessing nature. By partnering with health equity groups such as The Health Trust and Santa Clara County's Binational Health Week initiative, we aim to leverage our River Park to make more available resources that improve health outcomes for the Latine community and everyone in the region.

"The GRPC is playing an important role in leveling the playing field and ensuring that all communities regardless of socioeconomic status have a fair opportunity to access beautiful open space."
- Maria Garcia
The Health Trust



Bright Glimpse of Our Window on the River Park

We asked our Development & Administrative Coordinator, Nicole Leoparte, what she thought about her first ever Window on the River Park. Nicole oversaw much of the coordination, set up, and preparation with a fresh set of eyes.

What is there to say about my first Windows on the River Park with the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy? A few words come to mind like awkward, uncomfortable, insightful, and, maybe the thing that struck me most, unforgettable. I don't think I'll be able to forget the amount of stress and excitement I had to help support WORP for my first time this year. I was brought into the position knowing I'd grow into having the responsibility of leading this event in time and yet I had no idea where to start. Nevertheless, my new team showed no lack of enthusiasm and support to help each other out in order to deliver this yearly event.

When it was decided that the theme for this year was going to be **Restore and Reconnect**, I still had passing thoughts on why they decided on these words. As the new person it almost eluded me how much the past turbulent few years had affected GRPC. As downtown San Jose's premier river park, it must have been a challenge to consider all the necessary restrictions and regulations for the past two years. Now, it was GRPC's time to shine once again.

When I first started my position I thought to myself how I hit the ground running; and I really was running but it felt good to know I wasn't running by myself. It felt like the GRPC team had been running for the past two years so being able to be a part of their hard work was truly memorable.

Organizing this year's Windows on the River Park was nothing short of an experience. I had sort of an idea how much time, work, and effort it would take, but nothing beats being thrown into the action. The constant back-to-back email confirmations and follow-ups were something I grew familiar with over the next few weeks of supporting WORP. And when it was finally time for the event, it was pretty cool to see how everything just fell into place. After the past few years' circumstances, it was nice to witness the reconnecting of like-minded community members once again celebrating.

As the event went on, it was humbling to see new (to me) and different faces interact and take part in having a good night together to celebrate a common vision. It's funny how even though this was my first time at WORP, I found myself making friends to share the event with but also restoring that sense of camaraderie for me that had to be put on the back burner because of the pandemic.

Overall, WORP was definitely a fun and enriching experience. Of course doing the work to fundraise for a nonprofit is not always going to be easy nor perfect. However, I find that similar to the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy's vision and mission, it is worth it. To be given the opportunity to provide a space to celebrate the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy's accomplishments and future endeavors with our supporters is a responsibility I'm honored to take on and look forward to again.

Thank you to our event sponsors and supporters

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Restore Our Parks to Reconnect Our Civics

Jason Su, Executive Director

“Why do you support parks?” — “Democracy.”

I remember being greeted by a curious smile with that response. We were eating lunch in downtown San Jose a few weeks after I started as Executive Director for the Conservancy in the summer of 2019. She was a (now retired) city official who was aware of my work around public spaces, and I imagine she likely wanted to know how I connected my interests to the Guadalupe River Park.

Over the course of the meal, I remember talking about the opportunities of social cohesion in parks, the unique way parks can bring people from different backgrounds to share in a common experience, and how democracy is not just an abstract idea, but a value that needs institutions and social infrastructure like parks for it to prosper.

Following the recent midterm election, it may seem that the democratic progress has completed its cycle: we debated, we campaigned, we voted. However, those processes are held up by institutions and social infrastructure framing what we debate, why we campaign, and where we vote. The condition of public and shared places influences how we participate in the democratic process - through trust building, mixing diverse people, and creating space for civic participation.

A year ago, I gave a tour of the Guadalupe River Park to a project partner. He shared that while walking over, a large (and well-fed) hawk landed on top of a split-rail fence near him. His surprise of the proximity of the raptor was further amplified when another park user struck up a conversation with him, talking about how he has been watching the hawk for a while and sharing photos he took on his phone. In that moment, two strangers shared a common experience, centered on the uniqueness of place and nature.

Parks also nurture opportunities for civic engagement, which is another essential ingredient for a healthy democracy. The initial COVID 19 shelter-in-place orders in 2020 meant pausing volunteer workdays, resulting in the overgrowth of weeds in the Heritage Rose Garden. Seeing this, a few park users took the initiative to remove the weeds, first independently and then with the Conservancy. It was a pleasure to reconnect with them again three years later as some of our most passionate volunteers.

Our recent initiatives aim to restore and reconnect; by restoring the Guadalupe River Park, we can reconnect people to nature and each other. Why I believe parks are a necessity rather than a luxury stretches beyond the environmental, health, and social benefits of open space.

High-quality, welcoming, and connecting spaces such as the Guadalupe River Park follow traditions stretching millennia where the public commons frames the values of democracy and civic participation.

By supporting the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy, you enable our community to enjoy all the benefits parks provide. I hope you consider a gift to strengthen our impact. I look forward to uplifting neighborhoods through parks with you.



Progress on the Rotary PlayGarden Expansion



Seven years after the completion of the Rotary PlayGarden, San Jose's first all-inclusive play space, construction is underway on its expansion. The original PlayGarden was a \$6 million centennial initiative led by the Rotary Club of San Jose, with an additional \$2 million secured through Santa Clara County and the City of San Jose for the Expansion. To date, over 890,000 have visited the Rotary PlayGarden.

The expansion is already bringing fresh bright color to the Guadalupe Gardens. Blue pavement treatments pull the existing pathways into the expansion. Yellow canopies dot the space, offering places for rest and gathering. The outline of the tree labyrinth is forming and the post and frame for the zip line play structure is installed.

Construction of the Expansion is managed by the City of San Jose and is scheduled from May to October 2022. The Guadalupe River Park Conservancy actively manages the PlayGarden in partnership with the Rotary Club of San Jose, City of San Jose, County of Santa Clara, Hope Services, and community volunteers and members to support maintenance, programs, and staffing of the play space.

Visit the Rotary PlayGarden now to watch the progress, and join us for its grand opening in Spring of 2023.

