

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CANYONEERS KICK OFF A NEW SEASON OF FREE GUIDED HIKES IN SAN DIEGO**

*Museum-trained naturalists announce new season of nature walks and have partnered with Subaru of America to offer free hikes to students*

**SAN DIEGO**—Beginning Sunday, September 10, San Diegans can experience local hiking trails like never before when the new Canyoneer hiking season kicks off. More than 75 free hikes will be offered from September 2017 through June 2018. Hikes are offered on weekends—with a few midday hikes being offered on select dates—and cover diverse terrain, ranging from the coast to the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, and from the Tijuana Estuary to Palomar Mountain.

Canyoneers are citizen scientists and volunteers who have had comprehensive training by Museum scientists and local experts on the natural history of the region. One of the few trail-guide groups nationwide affiliated with a natural history museum rather than a park or reserve, Canyoneers have provided free guided tours in San Diego County since 1973.

The hike schedule and [interactive map](http://sdnat.org/canyoneers) are available online at [sdnat.org/canyoneers](http://sdnat.org/canyoneers), and printed brochures are available at local outdoor retailers such as REI and Adventure 16 as well as at local Subaru dealerships.

This school year, San Diego students will be able to get outside the classroom and onto the hiking trails too, through Canyoneer-led hikes offered to local schools at no cost. It's an opportunity for students to learn about habitats and ecosystems in their own backyards. The guided nature hikes are available for school-aged children in grades 2-12, and are one of the many environmental education programs offered by The Nat.

"Kids are most inspired by nature when they get outside and experience it for themselves—seeing a Monarch butterfly or a coast live oak in person helps bring to life what they're learning in the classroom," said Judy Gradwohl, president and CEO of the San Diego Natural History Museum.

The program is made possible with support from Subaru of America, who is generously supporting the Canyoneer hiking program for the second year in a row. The Canyoneers also contribute to the program by selling naturally harvested mistletoe at December Nights.

"We're continuing to support the Canyoneer hiking program and have expanded our partnership to include funding that gets local students out into nature," said Eric Park, zone retail marketing manager at Subaru of America. "The Nat's Canyoneer program inspires people to get outside and explore, and that's a cause we and our drivers are passionate about."

The Museum aims to serve approximately 1,000 students this year through the program. Space is limited on the hikes. For more information or to book a hike, visit [sdnat.org/schoolnaturehikes](http://sdnat.org/schoolnaturehikes) or call 619.255.0349.

Hikers are encouraged to bring their copy of [\*Coast to Cactus: The Canyoneer Trail Guide to San Diego Outdoors\*](#), a hiking guide written, edited, and published by the Canyoneers and Sunbelt Publications. The book can be purchased [online](#) or in the Museum store for \$29.95.

Subaru of America, the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, and the Canyoneers themselves generously provided funding for the programs listed above.

### **About the San Diego Natural History Museum**

The San Diego Natural History Museum (theNAT) is the second oldest scientific institution in California and the third oldest west of the Mississippi. Founded in 1874 by a small group of citizen scientists, the Museum's mission is to interpret the natural world through research, education, and exhibits; to promote understanding of the evolution and diversity of Southern California and the peninsula of Baja California, Mexico; and to inspire in all people respect for the environment. The Museum is located at 1788 El Prado, San Diego, CA 92101 in Balboa Park. For more information, call 877.946.7797 or visit [sdnat.org](http://sdnat.org). Follow theNAT on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) and join the discussion on [Facebook](#).

### **MEDIA CONTACT**

April Tellez  
Public Relations and Social Media Manager  
619.255.0189 | [atellez@sdnhm.org](mailto:atellez@sdnhm.org)

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