



MSCP Management Actions Report



January 1, 2013 —December 31, 2013

*City of San Diego
Park and Recreation Department, Public Utilities
Department, Environmental Services Department*





Introduction

MSCP Management

The Multiple Species Conservation Program can only be successful through informed management of conserved lands. City of San Diego staff who participate in open space management include rangers, biologists, natural resource planners, reservoir managers, a code compliance investigator and pesticide applicator.

Summary

This report will provide a summary of the management projects undertaken in 2013 including mitigation, enhancement and restoration, invasive species removal, access control, trash and debris removal, enforcement, abatement of homeless encampments, and volunteer training. Environmental education is a vital part of our natural resource stewardship. Thousands of people visit our two nature centers each year, and hundreds of children participate in environmental education through partnerships with local schools, nature programs, guided walks, and interpretive signs and kiosks.

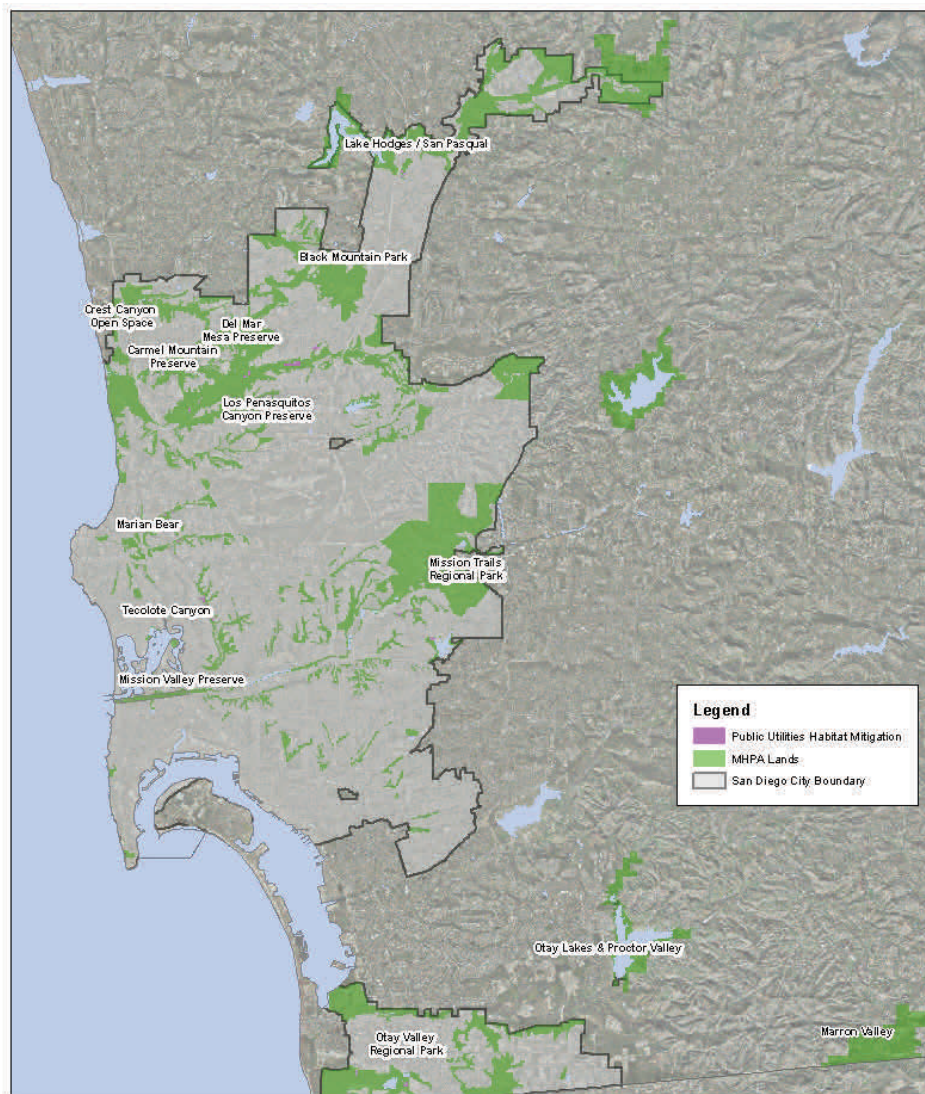


Visitor Center at
Mission Trails Regional Park

Five new Ranger positions were added to the Park and Recreation Open Space Division in December 2013, partly in response to the increased acreage at Mission Trails Regional Park from the addition of West Sycamore and East Elliott.

This report contains projects by City of San Diego's Park and Recreation Department, Public Utilities Department, and Environmental Services Department. Many of our projects were completed in partnership with other public agencies, schools, environmental consultants, and non-profit groups. Please review our incredible list of partners on the last page.

We thank you for your interest in San Diego's conserved lands, and invite you to take a look at the projects that we worked on in 2013.



Sources: City of San Diego, SanGIS
 Created by: Kim Roehrd, Feb 2014



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Black Mountain Park

Black Mountain Park is west of I-15 and harbors habitat for California Gnatcatcher as well as other species. Black Mountain also provides a natural experience for nearby residents.

Stewardship Management Actions

- Park-wide trail monitoring and maintenance—Monthly
- Removed invasive plants and planted native plants along the Lusardi Loop Trail—January
- Planted native garden at Gonzales Canyon—January
- Posted property boundary on north side of Black Mountain to close illegal trails



Trail at Black Mountain Park



Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve

Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve is an urban resource-based park that functions as an east-west corridor through the heart of San Diego. This area is visited frequently by recreationalists and makes nature accessible to local residents. Citizen interest in the preserve led to the development of the well-known Friends of Los Penasquitos Preserve and the San Diego Tracking Team.

Stewardship Management Actions

- Park-wide trail monitoring and maintenance—Monthly
- Partnered with SDPD to post two illegal encampments behind Camino Ruiz Neighborhood Park. Cleaned up both encampments—March
- Hosted Qualcomm Cares event with 28 people to pull invasive species near the El Cuervo Adobe Ruins—May
- Coordinated with Pardee Construction to repair trail damage due to storm water outfall—May
- Coordinated with Eagle Scout Candidates on projects to install signage and to add QR codes to trail markers—May and June
- Removed invasive species (thistles and mustard) and trimmed invasive pepper trees—March
- Weeded an area that had been illegally mulched; met with subcontractor for estimate on fencing options to prevent future dumping—March

Management Actions Related to MSCP-Covered Species

- Repaired vandalized fence to protect vernal pool species and populations of short-leaved dudleya—May
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Del Mar Mesa and Carmel Mountain

Del Mar Mesa and Carmel Mountain are core biological areas north of Los Penasquitos Preserve. Known for their vernal pool habitat, the areas also supports migratory birds and large mammals such a mule deer.

Del Mar Mesa Stewardship Management Actions

- Park-wide trail monitoring and maintenance—Monthly
- Ranger and volunteer staff replaced fence and signage for off-limits areas—Monthly
- Installed and operated wildlife cameras for Use Study —May to September
- Partnered with landowners at Del Mar Mesa and California Department of Fish and Wildlife Wardens to patrol and enforce closed trails—July

Carmel Mountain Stewardship Management Actions

- Volunteers from Del Mar Hilton removed illegally dumped debris and fixed trails—March

Management Actions Related to MSCP-Covered Species

- Instructed 4th grade class at Ocean Air Elementary to survey for *Dudleya brevifolia* at Carmel Mountain—March
- Installed fencing as part of the Vernal Pool Restoration Project by Chaparral Lands Conservancy at Carmel Mountain—August



Dudleya brevifolia at Carmel Mountain





Mission Trails Regional Park

Mission Trails Regional Park is the largest and most well-known open space park in San Diego. The park provides ample space for wildlife, including large mammals, and also harbors a diverse cultural history.

Stewardship Management Actions

- Park-wide enforcement—Daily
 - Park-wide trail monitoring and maintenance—Weekly
 - Performed intensive invasive plant removal from various locations in the park targeting the following species: tree tobacco, thistles, fennel, pampas grass, Mexican fan palms, stinkwort, bottlebrush, spotted spurge, pigweed, and castor bean—Monthly
 - Partnered with many groups for volunteer work days, pulling weeds, removing trash, fixing trails, and planting native plants at various locations within the park—Monthly
 - Installed 6-pack rules and regulations signs around West Sycamore trailheads and installed trash and recycling cans around West Sycamore. Measured trail distances and created trail maps for West Sycamore —January and February
 - Cleaned up two campfires near Kumeyaay Lake and notified Camp Hosts to increase patrols—January
 - Held Explore Mission Trails Day in May, attracting 1,140 visitors at the Visitor’s Center and 2,098 at the Equestrian Staging Area
 - Contracted with South Bay Fence to install barriers to off road vehicles at the Equestrian Staging Area—June
 - Partnered with City of Santee Sheriffs to remove homeless encampment near Mesa Trail—June
 - Following a fire in June, mapped the perimeter of the fire using GPS and temporary fencing and fiber rolls were installed to stabilize the area—July
 - Posted many signs regarding unauthorized trails in East Elliott—Nov
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Mission Trails Regional Park

Stewardship Management Actions, continued

- Performed major repair of Cowles Mountain Trail using helicopters, several Urban Corps crews, and many volunteers. City staff monitored the work for biological constraints—May



Photos from Cowles Mountain Trail
Repair work



Mission Trails Regional Park

Management Actions Related to MSCP-Covered Species

- Worked with volunteer Habitat Crew to perform maintenance and treat invasive species in least Bell's vireo habitat— March
- Worked with Nature Club volunteers (children) to weed near San Diego Thornmint population—January and February
- Worked with volunteer Habitat Crew to perform maintenance in the San Diego Ambrosia Site—January to August
- Began effort to restore an unauthorized trail near San Diego Ambrosia transplant Site in Grasslands Area—October

Mission Trails Visitor and Volunteer Totals for 2013

Visitor Center Attendance = 84,436

Volunteer Hours = 10,302



*San Diego Thornmint
Population at Mis-
sion Trails Regional
Park*



Tri-Canyon Parks and Mission Valley

The Tri-Canyon area includes Tecolote Canyon Natural Park, Marian Bear Open Space Park and Rose Canyon Open Space Park. All are large, urban canyons that function as wildlife movement corridors as well as habitat. The Mission Valley Preserve is within the San Diego River and provides habitat for the endangered Least Bell's Vireo. The Tecolote Nature Center received 16,000 visitors in 2013.

Tecolote Canyon Natural Park Stewardship Management Actions

- Park-wide patrols and trash collection—Weekly
- Hosted various educational and outreach programs through the Nature Center, including a Baskets and Botany cultural experience, Summer Kid Club, and Nature Night.
- Performed numerous clean-up and homeless encampment enforcement in partnership with volunteers, the Police Department, and the Homeless Task Force—Monthly
- Public Utilities Department continued maintenance of the wetland mitigation sites at Central Tecolote Canyon, and received agency sign-off for the mitigation site at Balboa and Groves —Monthly
- Met with Calfire and UFSF to confirm report of gold-spotted oak borer in Canyon. Added management actions to Natural Resources Management Plan Updated Draft. Installed purple sticky traps to detect adult flying GSOB in Tecolote Canyon. Began effort to survey and inventory oak trees in Tecolote Canyon—March to December
- Hosted over 200 volunteers for Mesa College Canyon Day—April
- Mapped 24.5 miles of trails as part of updates to the Natural Resources Management Plan for Tecolote Canyon—July



Public Utilities Mitigation site on left, showing successful coastal sage scrub restoration



Tri-Canyon Parks

Marian Bear and Rose Canyon Stewardship Management Actions

- Public Utilities completed maintenance for the San Clemente Canyon Wetland and Uplands Mitigation Site, and the Rose Canyon Wetland and Upland Mitigation Site—Monthly
- Removal of numerous illegal dumps of trash and brush—Monthly
- Worked with volunteers to remove 50 palm trees—January
- Mapped and planned restoration for illegal construction of BMX area in Rose Canyon; monitored during restoration of this area.—Feb
- Coordinated with the Alpha Project and Tri-Canyon Volunteers to remove 9 transient encampments from Marian Bear and Tecolote Canyon—February
- Installed 6 new benches in Marian Bear Canyon—August
- Supervised the Alpha Project in repair of Rose Canyon Service Road—February

Mission Valley Preserve Stewardship Management Actions

- Surveyed for new and returned homeless encampments with SDPD—Weekly
 - Partnered with the San Diego River Foundation, the Alpha Crew, and volunteers for large clean-up events, which had an average of 100 volunteers each day and removed between 2.5 tons to 6 tons of trash and debris each event.
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Urban Canyons

The urban canyons of the MHPA are scattered throughout the City of San Diego. Although small and subject to intense pressures, many continue to support native plants and wildlife. In fact, many of the large canyons are habitat for the sensitive California Gnatcatcher and Cactus Wren. Management actions can counteract the effects of isolation and edge effects to maintain the habitat provided by these canyons.

Stewardship Management Actions

- Patrols of canyons and trails—Monthly
 - Removed and cleaned numerous homeless encampment and illegal dump sites, including those in Swan, Kensington/College, University Heights Open Space, Chollas Radio Canyon, and San Diego River Open Space.— Monthly
 - Partnered with San Diego Canyonlands to remove invasives in Swan and Manzanita Canyons—January
 - Oversaw Alpha Project removal of invasives in Navajo Canyon—January
 - Supervised group of 20 volunteers in invasive plant removal in 32nd St Canyon—January
 - Assisted San Diego Audubon with the Habitat Helper Program to plant native plants with Horton Elementary School students at two after-school events in Guymon Canyon—February
 - Hosted student volunteers during “Week of Hope” for mulching of trail in Chollas Radio Canyon—July
 - Partnered with 30 U.S. Navy Petty Officers to pick up trash along Market St in Chollas Radio Canyon Open Space—August
 - Worked with Groundwrk Chollas volunteers and Open Space pesticide applicators to remove invasive trees in Chollas Radio Canyon—December
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Urban Canyons

Management Actions, Continued

Monthly coordination with volunteers and Alpha Project Crews on invasive removal and native plant restoration projects with:

- Friends of Ruffin Canyon
- Friends of University Heights Open Space
- Friends of Gonzalez Canyon
- Friends of Navajo Canyon
- Friends of Chollas Creek
- Friends of Juniper Canyon
- Friends of 47th St Canyon
- Friends of Switzer Canyon
- San Diego Canyonlands



Restoration project in 32nd Street Canyon



Otay Valley Regional Park

Otay Valley Regional Park is an east-west corridor surrounding the Otay River in southern San Diego. The park supports Least Bell's Vireo and rare native plants, such as *Dicranostegia orcuttianus*.

Management Actions

- Park-wide enforcement—Daily
 - Frequently coordinated with WildCoast to welcome volunteer groups such as the Girl Scouts, Easter Seals, Advancing Compassion Project, YMCA, Outdoor Outreach, and local schools and churches on volunteer projects including picking up trash and planting native plants. - Monthly
 - Led groups of 20-100 students from various local schools on educational nature walks in the Park.—Monthly
 - Removed metal fence poles posing a safety hazard near the Rios staging area—March
 - Hosted over 50 volunteers for the annual Creek to Bay I Love A Clean San Diego event in which volunteers cleaned up just over 2 tons of large trash, debris, and recyclables and planted over 70 native plants—April
 - Held the Annual Otay Valley Regional Park Day which attracted over 350 visitors and included live reptile display from the Bureau of Land Management and raffle prizes donated by local vendors.—June
 - Partnered with WildCoast and I Love A Clean San Diego for clean-up event in which 250 pounds of trash and 50 pounds of recyclables were removed from the Park.
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Other Open Space Areas

Crest Canyon

- Updated trails mapping and cataloged fencing, signs, kiosks, and management needs with GPS—May
- Completed vegetation mapping for Natural Resources Management Plan—July
- Dismantled a substantial structure built in a torrey pine and removed materials from Park—August

MSCP Cornerstone Lands

- The Public Utilities Department's Division of Long-Range Planning and Water Resources performed various maintenance and habitat enhancement actions including routine patrols, trash removal, signs and general enforcement, weed management, installation and maintenance of artificial burrowing owl habitat, vernal pool monitoring, protection, and enhancement. - Monthly
- Several ongoing projects on Cornerstone lands that directly benefit MSCP covered species include a cactus wren habitat restoration project in San Pasqual partnering with the Institute for Conservation Research at the San Diego Zoo, and vernal pool restoration in Proctor Valley, a SANDAG TransNet-funded project led by the Chaparral Lands Conservancy —Ongoing



Dudleya variegata
in Marron Valley





Citywide Projects

City-wide Projects

- Public Utilities Department managed 26 small habitat restoration and Erosion Control Sites in 2013—Monthly
- Park and Recreation biologists completed MSCP Compliance Monitoring for 17 rare plants at 75 sites—March—July
- Park and Recreation Brush Management completed 221.74 of brush management along urban—wildland interface. January—December
- Open Space-funded Code Compliance Investigator workload ended the year with 673 cases, of which 303 have been closed, and 17 are active — December
- Open Space Pesticide Applicator conducted invasive plant control in 32nd St Canyon, Zanja Canyon Open Space, Navajo Canyon Open Space, Paradise Canyon Open Space, Rancho Mission Canyon Open Space, Maple Canyon, and Tecolote Canyon. The Pesticide Applicator position was vacant for a few months following a promotion, and two new Pesticide Applicator positions were filled in October. The new applicators finished the year by working at Carmel Valley, Chollas Creek, Navajo Canyon, McGonigle Canyon, Del Mar Mesa, Switzer Canyon, Battle Mountain, Serra Mesa, San Diego River, Ruffin, Mission Trails Regional Park, Pacific Beach, Carroll Canyon, Ruffin Canyon, and Otay Valley Regional Park.



Open Space Pesticide Applicator



Thanks to our Partners

- Advancing Compassion Project
- Alpha Project
- Aztec Landscaping
- Back County Land Trust
- Bay Park Elementary
- Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts of America
- Bureau of Land Management
- Cabrillo Day Camp
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- CalFire
- Caltrans
- Chaparral Lands Conservancy
- Chula Vista Learning Center Charter School
- City of Chula Vista
- City of Santee Sheriffs
- County of San Diego
- Del Mar Hilton
- Donovan Crew
- Groundworks Chollas
- First Unitarian Universalist Church
- Francis Parker Schools
- Friends of 32nd Street Canyon
- Friends of 47th Street Canyon
- Friends of Chollas Creek
- Friends of Gonzalez Canyon
- Friends of Juniper Canyon
- Friends of Los Penasquitos Canyon
- Friends of Mission Valley Preserve
- Friends of Navajo Canyon
- Friends of Rose Canyon
- Friends of Ruffin Canyon
- Friends of Switzer Canyon
- Friends of Tierrasanta Canyons
- Friends of University Heights Open Space
- Homeless Partners
- I Love a Clean San Diego
- Groundworks Chollas
- Helix Environmental
- Homeless Task Force
- Hoover High School
- Horizon School
- Horton Elementary School
- I Love A Clean San Diego
- Institute for Conservation Research—San Diego Zoo
- IRC Youth Program
- KTU+A Landscape
- La Mesa Police
- Mike Kelly and Associates
- Mesa College
- Ocean Air Elementary School
- Ocean Discovery Institute
- Outdoor Outreach
- Pardee
- Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity at San Diego State University
- Qualcomm
- REI
- San Carlos Methodist Church
- San Diego Associate of Governments (SANDAG)
- San Diego Audubon
- San Diego Canyonlands
- San Diego Mountain Bike Association
- San Diego River Foundation
- San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy
- San Diego Fire Department
- San Diego Police Division
- San Diego State University
- South Bay Fence
- South San Diego Boys and Girls Club
- Terra Bella Nursery
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Navy
- Urban Corps
- WildCoast
- YMCA



Thank you for your support
of natural open space within the City of San Diego!

For questions or to volunteer, please contact:

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