



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## **WATER DEPARTMENT PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 3, 2007

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### **CITY OF SAN DIEGO INTENSIFIES EFFORTS TO PREVENT TRESPASSERS IN PROCTOR VALLEY**

SAN DIEGO, CA - Due to the increased development that the San Diego region has experienced in recent years, the Water Department has stepped up its efforts to effectively manage its land holdings which primarily serve to protect the water quality of its reservoirs. In an effort to prevent erosion and protect sensitive habitats in Proctor Valley, the City of San Diego has installed a fence along Proctor Valley Road and assigned staff to issue citations to trespassers. The goal of the increased vigilance is to minimize the impact on the generally undeveloped area between Indian Springs and the Upper Otay Reservoir. Unauthorized off-road motor vehicle (ORV) activity is a major cause of erosion and threatens endangered species and plant life protected under federal, state, and local law.

The City has joined efforts with the San Diego County Sheriff, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and California Department of Fish & Game to increase enforcement activities. Wardens from both Wildlife Agencies and Ranger Divers with the City of San Diego Water Department began issuing citations for trespassing in April. The Sheriff's ASTREA helicopters also pass over the site and issue verbal warnings to people in unauthorized off-road vehicles. The City and the County Sheriff are coordinating to periodically utilize the San Diego Sheriff Reserve Off-Road Enforcement Team for intense enforcement details. Additionally, new signage has been installed to clearly inform the public about the sensitivity of this area and the fact that ORV activity is not permitted.

Due to the valley's proximity to Upper and Lower Otay Reservoir, the illegal dumping of trash and petroleum products, abandonment of vehicles, and erosion caused by unauthorized off-roading have serious implications relative to water quality. Proctor Valley is also designated as a "core biological area" by the City's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). The endangered and threatened plants and species in the area are regularly monitored by MSCP staff. Additional management is provided by biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which owns land adjacent to the City property.

Proctor Valley is typical of remaining wild lands on the fringe of urban San Diego in that it hosts many endangered, threatened or otherwise sensitive species. The valley is home to some of San Diego's last vernal pools, an extremely scarce wetland habitat type occurring only where certain soil conditions are present. In late summer, fall and early winter, vernal pools appear as dry, dusty indentations mostly devoid of vegetation but in late winter, a spectacular transformation occurs. As these depressions fill with water, high numbers of endangered, rare and sensitive species of plants and animals appear in and around the pools, many of which can only exist in vernal pools. These ancient pools have survived for at least 125,000 years, and perhaps as long as 400,000 years. It was only in the 1980s that their number drastically diminished. Today 3% of the region's vernal pools remain. Vernal pools, and the endangered species that inhabit them, are at risk as a result of off road activity.

The noise from unauthorized ORV activities has also caused biologically sensitive species, like the Golden Eagle, to abandon a preferred nesting territory on the southeast side of the San Miguel Mountain. ORV activities can jeopardize and even destroy the nests of ground-nesting species like the Northern Harrier, Southern California Rufous-crowned Sparrow and the Grasshopper Sparrow.

For more information about the Water Department, visit [www.sandiego.gov/water](http://www.sandiego.gov/water) or contact the 24-hour Public Information Line at **619-533-4679**.

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