

September 10, 2021

David Zoutendyk, Division Manager
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David Mayer, Environmental Program Manager
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SUBJECT: 2020 MULTIPLE SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Mr. Zoutendyk and Mr. Mayer:

MSCP 2020 ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

Enclosed is the City of San Diego's 2020 MSCP Annual Report. The Annual report details progress towards the original conservation goal of 52,727 acres to be preserved within the Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) prior to expiration of the City's MSCP permit in 2047. In developing this report, the City of San Diego utilized HabiTrak, the GIS extension developed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for tracking loss and gain of habitat from private and public development. In HabiTrak, impacts as a result of entitled development are entered as habitat losses while mitigation such as dedication in fee title and covenant of easement (COE) areas and property acquisitions for conservation purposes are entered as habitat gains. In 2020, the City recorded a total Habitat Gain of 279 acres (257 acres inside the MHPA and 22 acres outside the MHPA). The total Habitat Loss for 2020 was 498 acres (24 acres were lost inside the MHPA and 474 acres outside the MHPA). In the 2020 reporting year, it was discovered that two properties had been inadvertently accounted for as habitat gains in additional reporting years. Therefore, the City eliminated the projects' subsequent HabiTrak accounting to reflect accurate acreages of overall habitat gains. Please see Attachments 1a through 1d for summary tables which detail habitat conservation by habitat type, conservation gain, and habitat loss generated by HabiTrak for the 2020 reporting year (January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020).

TABLE 1 – 2020 CITY OF SAN DIEGO CONSERVATION ACCOUNTING				
MHPA conservation requirement	Conserved acreage within the MHPA	Conserved acreage outside the MHPA	Lands obligated for future MHPA conservation	Remaining MHPA conservation requirement
(2019) 52,727 acres	36,002 acres	2,994 acres	14,932 acres	1,793 acres
(2020) 52,727 acres	36,259 acres	3,015 acres	14,932 acres	1,536 acres

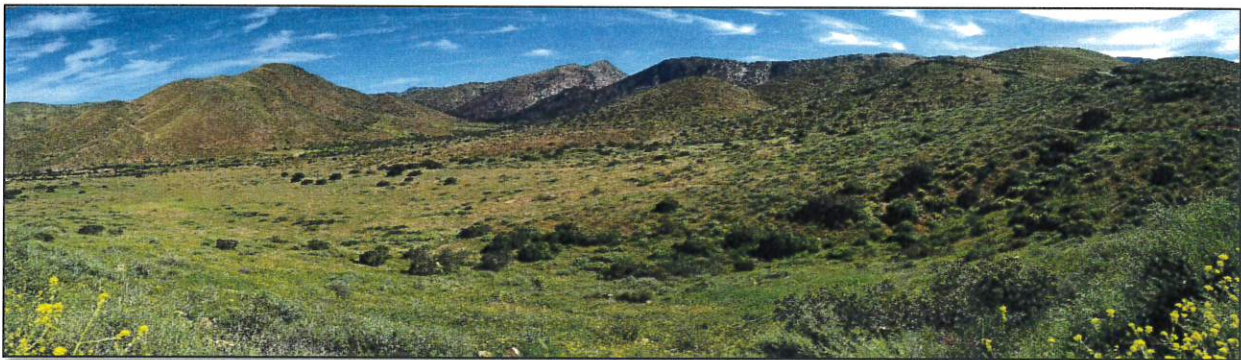
In addition, the City completed required MSCP monitoring and land management activities on over 53,000 acres of conserved open space including mitigation, habitat enhancement and restoration, invasive species removal, access control, trash and debris removal, enforcement, abatement of homeless encampments and volunteer events. Environmental education is also a vital part of our natural resource stewardship and is included as management because positive experiences in nature encourage the local communities to protect and care for their local natural parks. Unfortunately, in-person outreach and volunteer events in 2020 were limited due to the COVID-19 public health crisis.

HABITAT ACQUISITION FUND CONTRIBUTIONS/CONSERVATION ACQUISITIONS

Payment into the Habitat Acquisition Fund (HAF) is a mitigation method for small projects meeting specific requirements, such as projects less than five acres in size or small, isolated locations that permit in lieu fees to be paid and pooled by the City to acquire habitat within the MHPA. In 2020, four approved discretionary projects paid into the HAF for a total of \$123,445.00 (Attachment 2). As of December 31, 2020, the HAF balance was \$836,503.

CORNERSTONE LANDS AND CONSERVATION SUMMARY

In accordance with the Cornerstone Lands Conservation Bank Agreement, the City has 1,000 acres of upland mitigation credit associated with the Marron Valley Cornerstone Lands Conservation Bank. Credits are sold in acres (i.e. 1 credit = 1 acre). In 2020, no habitat credit sales took place for public projects, so the total bank balance remained the same as the 2019 calendar year at 900.795 acres of remaining credits of Tier II and III habitat (Attachment 3a).



Revenue collected from credit sales is placed in an interest-bearing account. Although no credit sales took place in 2020, the current land value was \$2,065,495, the total endowment amount was \$322,780 and current burrowing owls total was \$4,607 for an overall account total of \$2,392,883 (Attachment 3b). Note that land management activities are funded by the Public Utilities Department budget and therefore do not reduce revenue for this account.

CITY DEPARTMENT CONSERVATION SUMMARY AND PROJECT ACCOUNTING

In addition to HABITRAK, this report also includes annual data from City Departments on small public projects covered by programmatic permits that have a cumulative effect on the MHPA. These City departments include Public Utilities Department (PUD), Transportation & Storm Water (TSW), and Engineering & Capital Projects (ECP). Project accounting for each of these departments for the 2020 calendar year are as follows:

Public Utilities Department

In 2020, there were a total of four projects reported with impacts to the MHPA. Of those, one was associated with the Canyon Sewer Cleaning Program and Long-Term Sewer Maintenance Program. The 2020 Canyon Sewer Program Progress Report provides the status of PUD's mitigation sites for the Canyon Sewer Program located throughout the City of San Diego (Attachment 4a). A comprehensive list of all projects mitigated within these bank areas up to year 2020 is provided in Attachment B of the Canyon Sewer Program Progress Report.

The four projects listed in Attachment 4b impacted sensitive habitat, however, only two required mitigation. The total impact for these projects was 0.022 acres which required 0.043 acres of mitigation. (Attachment 4c).

Transportation & Storm Water Department

The Municipal Waterways Maintenance Plan (MWMP) (Project No. 616992) and its associated Final Environmental Impact Report (Project No. 616992/SCH No. 2017071022) was adopted and certified by the San Diego City Council in June 2020. This project replaces the former Master Storm Water System Maintenance Program to permit and mitigate for potential environmental impacts associated with the maintenance and repair activities conducted in storm water facilities throughout the City.

TSW did not implement routine channel maintenance projects in 2020 under the MWMP. Other division efforts to conduct minor maintenance and pipe repairs did not affect the MHPA. The total impact acreage that occurred in 2020 was zero (0.00) acres. There were no impacts within the MHPA or outside the MHPA.

The Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Wetland Enhancement Project (Los Peñasquitos Enhancement Project) completed Year 5 of the maintenance and monitoring period. During maintenance early this year, one willow monardella was accidentally sprayed and the contractor is replacing the loss by planting five (5) willow monardella plants. The Los Peñasquitos Enhancement Project is in the process of being reviewed for final sign-off by the resource agencies. The Los Peñasquitos Enhancement Project is providing a total of 7.30 acres of wetland enhancement mitigation. Of the total 7.30 acres, 6.64 acres were used to satisfy the mitigation requirements for the Sorrento Valley, Mission Bay High School, and Tripp and Industrial Court Channel Maintenance projects. The remaining 0.66 acre of excess enhancement credits will be used for future TSW wetland impacts.

Information on the MWMP and Final EIR can be accessed by the public online on the City of San Diego's web page and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) web page. Links to the MWMP and Final EIR documents are listed below.

MWMP hyperlink: <https://www.sandiego.gov/stormwater/services/wmp>

Final EIR hyperlink: <https://www.sandiego.gov/ceqa/final>

Engineering & Capital Projects Department

The Engineering & Capital Projects Department reported 4 projects within the 2020 reporting period which included impacts to upland habitat; however, none of the projects exceeded impact acreage thresholds which required mitigation. Please refer to Attachment 4d for project specific details.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS

Natural Resource Management Plans (NRMP) fulfill the MSCP Implementing Agreement requirement to prepare area specific management directives consistent with MSCP directives for MHPA preserve lands. See below for a status update of NRMPs currently in process.

Mission Trails Regional Park NRMP and Master Plan Update (MPU) - The Mission Trails NRMP and Master Plan Update was approved by City Council on May 21, 2020.

Tecolote Canyon Natural Park NRMP - The NRMP and Master Plan Update have been approved by the wildlife agencies, the public, and are being reviewed by the Development Services Department for necessary permits to implement the revised trail system. Final recommendation from The Tecolote Canyon Citizens Advisory Committee has been delayed due to Covid-19. Final approval of the NRMP is anticipated in 2021.

Pacific Highlands Ranch NRMP -The climate adaptation and invasive species sections are being prepared for this NRMP which is expected to be submitted to the wildlife agencies in fall 2021, and for public review in spring 2022.



Otay Valley Regional Park NRMP – Biological survey updates were completed in Spring/Summer 2020 and document revisions are scheduled for fall 2021.

Crest Canyon Open Space Park NRMP - The climate adaptation and invasive species sections are being prepared for this NRMP which is expected to be submitted to the wildlife agencies in Fall 2021, and for public review in Spring 2022. A large sinkhole and subsequent emergency project in the canyon have added some additional time and information to the NRMP. A large-scale mitigation project and restoration project will be implemented in the canyon upon completion of the emergency project. Restoration is expected to be on-going for the next 5 years.

Lusardi and La Zanja Canyons NRMP - Biological surveys are complete and the document is scheduled to be drafted in the winter 2021 or spring 2022.

MHPA LAND MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

Management in support of the City's MSCP Subarea Plan is performed by the Public Utilities Department (PUD), Parks and Recreation Department (PRD), and Environmental Services Department (ESD). Although not required by the MSCP Implementing Agreement, PRD has voluntarily compiled an annual [MSCP Management Actions Report](#) for distribution to the public and Wildlife Agencies for the last several years. The 2020 report has been reformatted as an online storybook for a more interactive user experience, detailing management activities for the City's conserved lands. A summary of management activities performed by each department are as follows:



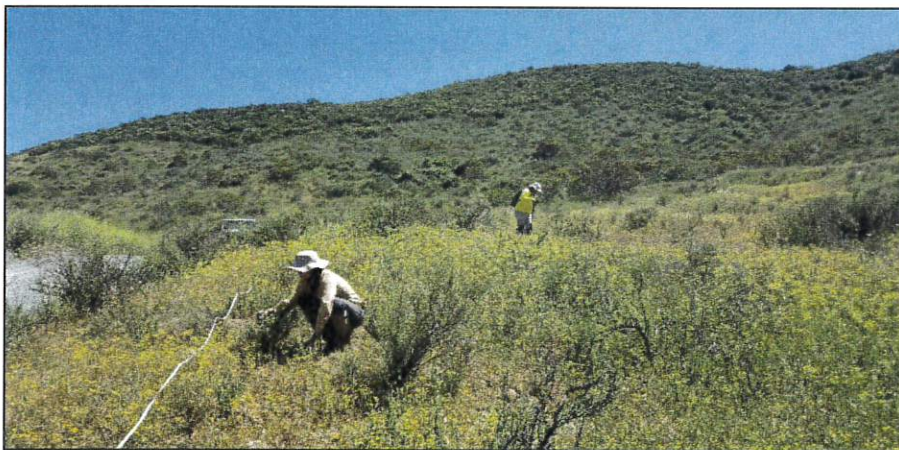
Public Utilities Department Lands

In 2020, management activities were conducted by PUD staff and consultants within Cornerstone and PUD-owned lands including Barrett Reservoir, Eichenlaub Ranch, El Capitan Reservoir, Hodges Reservoir, Marron Valley, Miramar Reservoir, Morena Reservoir, Murray Reservoir, Upper and Lower Otay Reservoirs, Pamo Valley, Proctor Valley, San Pasqual Valley and Sutherland Reservoir (Attachment 5). Activities included but were not limited to field inspections; trash and debris removal; fence repair; invasive species detection and removal; sign installation; weed abatement; maintenance and monitoring of restoration sites; and, cactus wren habitat restoration and enhancement.

In addition, PUD manages the Canyon Sewer Cleaning Program and Long-Term Sewer Maintenance Program. The objectives of the program are to complete the inspection and cleaning of the City's sewer infrastructure located in canyons and other environmentally sensitive areas, and identify and implement efficient, effective, and environmentally sensitive means to accomplish the necessary canyon sewer cleaning activities. The program also provides opportunities to evaluate and pursue sewage flow redirection by removing sewer lines from canyons and relocating them within streets or other accessible, less biologically sensitive areas. More detail is available in the 2020 Program Progress Report cited above.

Parks & Recreation Department Lands

Management of MHPA lands within the City's conserved open space areas is performed by PRD's Open Space Division and is the responsibility of an interdisciplinary team of Biologists, Park Rangers, Pesticide Applicators, Ground Maintenance Managers and Workers, Planners and Nature Center Directors. In addition to protecting the native species and habitats within each preserve, these staff provide excellent educational opportunities for all Park visitors. Each year, thousands of people visit the nature centers at Tecolote Canyon Natural Park and Mission Trails Regional Park, and hundreds of children participate in environmental education through partnerships with local schools, nature programs, guided walks, and interpretive signs and kiosks. As mentioned previously, in-person outreach and volunteer events in 2020 were limited due to the COVID-19 public health crisis.



Over the years, the City of San Diego has worked in partnership with the San Diego Management and Monitoring Program (SDMMP), participating jurisdictions and other stakeholders to develop a regional protocol that ensures consistency in data collection and provides a standardized basis for documenting

occurrence status and assessing habitat and threats for the various rare plant species. Since 2014, the City of San Diego has submitted rare plant monitoring data to SDMMP for inclusion in a regional database and is available at the following link: [2020 MSCP Rare Plant Monitoring Report](#).

VERNAL POOL HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN

The [City of San Diego Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Plan](#) (VPHCP) and Vernal Pool Management and Monitoring Plan (VPMMP) were adopted by the San Diego City Council on January 22, 2018, and the federal take permit was received in August 2018. The VPHCP and VPMMP are available on the City's VPHCP website. The VPHCP added and additional 275 acres into the City's MHPA and provided additional conserved habitat for the following seven threatened and endangered species:

- Otay Mesa mint (*Pogogyne nudiuscula*, PONU)
- San Diego Mesa mint (*Pogogyne abramsii*, POAB)
- Spreading navarretia (*Navarretia fossalis*, NAFO)
- San Diego button-celery (*Eryngium aristulatum* var. *parishii*, ERAR)
- California Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californica*, ORCA)
- Riverside fairy shrimp (*Streptocephalus woottoni*, RFS)
- San Diego fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta sandiegonensis*, SDFS)



In 2020, the City of San Diego continued to implement both VPHCP and VPMMP. Implementation of the Vernal Pool Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (VPMMP) component of the VPHCP requires all conserved vernal pool complexes were monitored where legal access is available. The City conducted quantitative covered plant monitoring in 2020 for on lands owned and managed by City of San Diego (City), Park and Recreation Department Open Space Division, Public Utilities Department (PUD), Real Estate Assets Department (READ), and Environmental Services Department (ESD) in accordance with the Final City VPHCP (2018) and VPMMP (2018). All departments utilized the City's standardized data collection application called Survey 123.

City of San Diego staff in conjunction with vernal pool qualified Biological Consultants conducted vernal pool management and monitoring activities as resources became limited in 2020 due to the COVID-19 public health crisis.

The resulting [VPHCP Management and Monitoring Report](#) (2020 Summary Report) is currently in process and expected for public release Mid-October 2021. The 2020 Summary Report utilizes an access database to translate Survey 123 data into a user-friendly document. The VPHCP Summary Report will include data analysis of qualitative and covered species monitoring data collected in several complexes throughout the City.



The 2020 Summary Report will also include components such as private project VPMMP implementation, vernal pool "take" reporting, Citywide changes in vernal pool management levels, and funding mechanisms. The 2020 Summary Report will include funds expended for implementation of the VPMMP as well as identification of the amount and source of funding necessary for the following year based on the results of the annual

management and monitoring. A subsequent meeting with the Wildlife Agencies will be conducted fall 2021 to discuss the results of the year 2020 monitoring and analysis and any necessary adaptations to ongoing vernal pool management and monitoring. Continued coordination with the Wildlife Agencies is an important component to preparing VPHCP reporting and fulfill the requirements of the VPHCP and VPMMP.

MHPA BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENTS (BLA) AND BOUNDARY LINE CORRECTIONS (BLC)

The City tracks all individual project and community plan BLA and BLC additions and subtractions to the MHPA and maintains a comprehensive in-house GIS database. BLA and BLC addition areas that have been formally conserved do not show up as HABITRAK gain due to the use of the original 1997 MHPA boundary for HABITRAK functions. The City is evaluating alternatives for incorporating BLA, BLC and VPHCP additions to the MHPA into HABITRAK. The City and Wildlife Agencies conducted six BLA meetings in 2020. During these meetings, proposed BLA's and BLCs are discussed as well as other project-based or informational items. Table 2 below presents the status of BLAs and BLCs discussed in 2020.

Boundary Line Adjustments

There was only one site specific BLA approved in 2020, the College View Apartments project. The project resulted in an on-site MHPA BLA that removed 0.1 acre of Southern Mixed Chaparral (SMC) and added 0.4 acre of SMC for a net gain of 0.3 acre of MHPA land containing SMC habitat.

TABLE 2 - MHPA BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENTS CALENDAR YEAR 2020				
Project Name	Project Number	Project Submittal Date	BLA/BLC Approval Date	Project Description
College View Apartments	646497	November 6, 2019	November 20, 2020	The project resulted in an on-site MHPA BLA that removed 0.1 acre of Southern Mixed Chaparral (SMC) and added 0.4 acre of SMC for a net gain of 0.3 acre of MHPA land containing SMC habitat.
Crown Castle Yolanda (telecom)	582367	October 10, 2017	October 5, 2020	The project resulted in an MHPA BLC to remove an area of existing legal development footprint for CUP #95-0350-79.
Elaine Way	636883	May 8, 2019	March 18, 2020	The project resulted in and MHPA BLC to be consistent with the limits of the existing Open Space Easement as depicted on Parcel Map 18641.

Boundary Line Corrections

The City and Wildlife Agencies have a mutual understanding that BLC's are allowed under the City's MSCP Subarea Plan to rectify minor mapping inaccuracies at the project level. For a MHPA BLC to be supported by City staff, it must be clearly demonstrated that: 1) the proposed area to be corrected out was legally permitted prior to plan adoption in 1997; 2) no habitat, including wetlands, would be removed; 3) no buffer area (e.g., wetland buffer, wildlife corridor) would be impacted; and, 4) removing the area from the MHPA would not avert the applicant from having to otherwise comply with the City's MSCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines. There were two corrections that took place in 2020 as listed in Table 2 above.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The City of San Diego provides numerous environmental education opportunities on approximately 27,000 acres of open space managed by the Parks and Recreation Department. Although limited by the COVID 19 pandemic, in 2020 there were six curriculum-based education programs with 196 children participating, 57 school field trips (1,284 children), 66 trail guide led walks (514 participants), Nature Story & Craft program (21 participants), Annual River Kids Discovery Day (12 large bags of trash removed), Trail Guide 2020 annual training (42 participants / 36 graduating), and Navy Volunteers who removed Fountain Grass, installed plants, performed litter abatement and removed weeds from the Sycamore Staging Area.

The Planning Department continues to explore opportunities to provide more, easily accessible information related to the MSCP and the VPHCP. The [VPHCP Interactive Mapping Tool](#) was launched in 2018 to provide interested parties the ability to obtain detailed information about vernal pools and the preservation areas through the use of a GIS web map. Previously, in order to view and obtain information regarding the MHPA, a link to the SanGIS interactive map was included on the department's webpage. This year (2021) the Planning Department launched our own [MHPA interactive map](#), available through the department's website, to provide easy access to detailed information regarding the MHPA, vegetation mapping and conservation status. The Planning Department recently filled a new Public Engagement Program Manager position, and is eager to continue to develop innovative ways to equitably engage with the community.

CONCLUSION

The City of San Diego continues to demonstrate commitment to the MSCP through comprehensive and innovative implementation, while also initiating the VPHCP in 2018. From project review and development permitting, through land acquisition and management, City staff works side by side with our partner agencies, non-profits and the public to keep the Multiple Species Conservation Program at the forefront of regional habitat conservation. We look forward to continuing collaboration well into the future, thus ensuring the success of HCPs critical role in California's conservation.

Please contact Kristy Forburger at (619) 236-6583 or Dan Monroe at (619) 236-5529 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



MIKE HANSEN, Director
Planning Department
City of San Diego

KF/dmm

- Attachments:
1. City of San Diego Habitrak Summary Tables
 - a. Habitat Conservation Accounting Model
 - b. Summary of Habitat Losses and Gains
 - c. Summary of Project Gains
 - d. Summary of Project Losses
 2. HAF Deposit Schedule for Calendar Year 2020
 3. Marron Valley Cornerstone Lands Conservation Bank
 - a. Summary of Marron Valley Cornerstone Lands Conservation Bank Debits
 - b. Cornerstone Land Mitigation Fund 700021
 4. City of San Diego Department Project Accounting
 - a. 2020 Canyon Sewer Program Progress Report
 - b. 2020 PUD Project Impacts by Habitat
 - c. 2020 PUD Mitigation Assignments
 - d. 2020 TSW Impact Totals by Project and Habitat
 - e. 2020 TSW Impact Totals by Year and Habitat
 - f. 2020 PWD Project Impacts and Mitigation
 5. PUD Resource Management Activities: 2020

cc: David Zoutendyk, Division Manager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Janet Struckroth, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Pat Gower, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, US Fish and Wildlife Service
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Karen Dennison, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation Department
Erika Ferreira, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation Department
Shauna Lawrence, Director, Public Utilities Department
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James Nagelvoort, Director, Engineering and Capital Projects Department
Elyse Lowe, Director, Development Services Department
Carrie Purcell, Assistant Deputy Director, Public Works Department
Penny Maus, Director, Department of Real Estate Assets and Airport Management