

May 19, 2022

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David Mayer, Environmental Program Manager
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SUBJECT: 2021 MULTIPLE SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Mr. Zoutendyk and Mr. Mayer:

MSCP 2021 ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

Enclosed is the City of San Diego's 2021 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 2021, the City recorded a total Habitat Gain of 238 acres (145 acres inside the MHPA and 93 acres outside the MHPA). The total Habitat Loss for 2021 was 212 acres (23 acres were lost inside the MHPA and 189 acres outside the MHPA). 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 2021 reporting year (January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021).

TABLE 1 – 2021 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
(2020) 52,727 acres	36,259 acres	3,015 acres	14,932 acres	1,536 acres
(2021) 52,727 acres	36,404 acres	3,108 acres	14,932 acres	1,391 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.

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 2021, three approved discretionary projects paid into the HAF for a total of \$231,140 (Attachment 2). As of December 31, 2021, the HAF balance was \$433,245 of which, \$408,673 has been allocated for future acquisition and \$24,572 allocated for administration.

HABITAT ACQUISITIONS

The Planning Department in coordination with the Department of Real Estate and Airport Management and Parks and Recreation Departments utilizes grants, HAF, and other means to purchase land for MSCP conservation. In 2020, the Planning Department utilized funds awarded through the Section 6 Recovery Land Acquisition Grant to successfully acquire property located in Otay Mesa for the purposes of vernal pool habitat conservation (Table 2).

Property acquired with this funding would be managed by Park and Recreation Open Space Division for the long-term biological integrity of the land.

TABLE 2 – 2021 CITY OF SAN DIEGO CONSERVATION ACQUISITIONS						
Parcel Name	APN	Acreage	Purchase Price	Location	Deed Recorded	Funding Source
San Ysidro Trust	645-076-09	0.91	\$70,000	Otay Mesa	7/28/2020	Section 6 Recovery Land Acquisition Grant

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 2021, no habitat credit sales took place for public projects, so the total bank balance remained the same as the 2021 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 2021, the current land value was \$2,094,415, the total endowment amount was \$327,300 and current burrowing owls total was \$4,672 for an overall account total of \$2,426,387 (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), Engineering & Capital Projects (ECP) and Storm Water Department (SW). There were no projects which impacted MHPA for SW in 2021. Project accounting for PUD and ECP for the 2021 calendar year are as follows:

Public Utilities Department

In 2021, there were two projects reported with impacts to the MHPA. Of those, one was associated with the Canyon Sewer Cleaning Program and Long-Term Sewer Maintenance Program (Bounty & Waring – Navajo Canyon LTA). The 2021 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 2021 is provided in Attachment B of the Canyon Sewer Program Progress Report.

The two projects listed in Attachment 4b impacted sensitive habitat including Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub and Non-Native Grassland. The total impact for these projects was 0.191 acres which required 0.158 acres of mitigation. More detail is provided in Attachment 4c.

Engineering & Capital Improvements Department

As noted in the 2020 MSCP Annual Report, 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.

ECP did not report any channel maintenance projects in 2021 under the MWMP. Other division efforts to conduct minor maintenance and pipe repairs did not affect the MHPA. As such, there were no impacts within or outside the MHPA.

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.

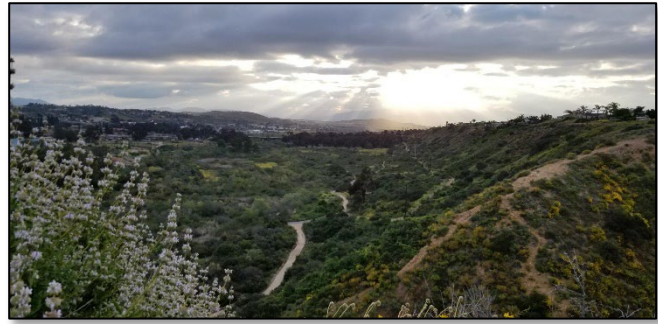
MWMP hyperlink: <https://www.sandiego.gov/stormwater/services/wmp>

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

The Engineering & Capital Projects Department reported two sewer projects within the 2021 reporting period which included impacts to upland habitat. However, neither project 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.



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 alignments of trail, bridges and location of mitigation areas are pending due to the Tecolote Trunk Sewer Project that will be implemented in 2022. The NRMP is expected to be complete in late 2022.

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 2023.

Otay Valley Regional Park NRMP – Biological survey updates were completed in Spring/Summer 2020 and document revisions are scheduled for fall 2022, or spring 2023.

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 Summer 2022, and for public review in Fall 2023. 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 2022 or spring 2023.

MHPA LAND MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

Management in support of the City's MSCP Subarea Plan is performed by the Public Utilities Department (PUD) and Parks and Recreation Department (PRD). 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 was reformatted as an online storybook for a more interactive user experience, detailing management activities for the City's conserved lands. The 2020 format was well received by the Wildlife Agencies and the 2021 report follows the same format. A summary of management activities performed by each department are as follows:



Public Utilities Department Lands

In 2021, 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, Lake Murray and Chaparral Canyon, Marron Valley, Upper and Lower Otay Reservoirs, Pamo Valley, Proctor Valley, San Diego River and Lakeside, San Pasqual Valley and Sutherland Reservoir. 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, vernal pool monitoring, vernal pool maintenance and restoration, and cactus wren habitat restoration (Attachment 5).

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 2021 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.

PRD management activities included trails management, habitat restoration and enhancement, trash removal and illegal camp abatement, and brush management and fire protection. Highlights include nearly 110,000 linear feet of trails maintenance and repairs, weed control and installation of nearly 2,900 native plants, removal of over 1.1 million pounds of trash and litter from Open Space parks, and abatement of approximately 160 illegal encampments. Full details of management and monitoring activities can be found in the MSCP Management Actions Report link above.



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](#).

Heritage Brodiaea Preserve

The Heritage Brodiaea Preserve (HBP) is an approximately 14-acre biological open space area that was dedicated as part of the Heritage Bluffs II development project. The HBP is located in the northern part of San Diego County and it occurs to the south of Carmel Valley Road and to the east of the Black Mountain Open Space Preserve.

The City of San Diego has now included the HBP area into its Multiple Species Conservation Program Subarea Plan's Multi-Habitat Planning Area. The goal of the HBP is to facilitate the conservation, preservation, and enhancement of biological resources as part of mitigation for impacts associated with development of the Heritage Bluffs II and East Clusters development project sites. The HBP has preserved a regionally significant population of thread-leaved brodiaea in a Conservation Easement (CE) dedicated for that purpose.

The 2021 summary monitoring report (Year 5) presents the results of activities conducted within the Heritage Brodiaea Preserve (HBP) during the time period of January 1 to December 31, 2021. Activities discussed in this report include site maintenance activities, thread-leaved brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*) 2021 population (vegetative) counts and flowering data, and native grassland mitigation implementation. The full 2021 HBP 2021 Summary Monitoring Report has been provided as Attachment 6.

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 an 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 2021, 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 lands owned and managed by City of San Diego (City), Park and Recreation Department Open Space Division, Public



Utilities Department (PUD), and the Department of Real Estate and Airport Management (DREAM in accordance with the Final City VPHCP (2018) and VPMMP (2018). All departments utilized the City's standardized data collection application called Survey 123.

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

The 2020 Summary Report also includes 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 includes total 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 was conducted in fall 2021 to discuss the results of the year 2020 monitoring and analysis and 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 five BLA meetings in 2021. 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 2021.

Boundary Line Adjustments

There were no BLA's approved in 2021. However, there was one MHPA BLA approved in 2020 which was inadvertently omitted from the 2020 reporting period which is included in Table 2 below.

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 four corrections that took place in 2021 as listed in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3 - MHPA BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENTS & CORRECTIONS CALENDAR YEAR 2021				
Project Name	Project Number	Project Submittal Date	BLA/BLC Approval Date	Project Description
3 Roots	587128	March 26, 2018	February 25, 2020	MHPA BLA net increase was reduced by 0.08 acre, reducing the MHPA net increase from 6.68 acres to 6.6 acres; total MHPA now is 150.02 acres
Stomberger Pool & Spa	656232	January 14, 2020	September 1, 2021	The project resulted in a MHPA BLC that removed approximately 300 square feet of disturbed habitat.
Scripps Ranch Library Parking Lot Expansion	665541	May 21, 2020	September 14, 2021	The project resulted in a MHPA BLC to remove an area of existing legal development for library parking.
Rice New Residence	680012	November 30, 2020	December 21, 2021	The project resulted in a MHPA BLC to be consistent with construction of Sanitary Sewers in Alvarado Unit No. 2 per drawings 1901-D and 1903-D in 1952.
Gejimo Addition & Remodel	683644	February 16, 2021	June 30, 2021	The project resulted in a MHPA BLC that removed an existing residence, pool and deck permitted in 1979.

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, educational opportunities began to reestablish in 2021 as facilities reopened and park rangers and non-profit groups provide hundreds of hours educational talks and interpretive hikes to park visitors and local school children throughout the City’s eleven Park Ranger Districts. Numerous special events also took place during 2021 such as Clairemont Family Day, Park de La Cruz grand opening, Day of the Dead themed planting day, Bird and Bike day in celebration of Latino Conservation Week, as well as many other events hosted by San Diego Canyonlands where volunteers had opportunities to help clean up our canyons and open space parks while learning about San Diego’s unique habitats and animals.

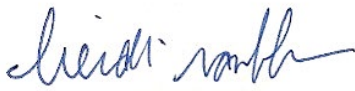
The Planning Department continues to explore opportunities to provide more, easily accessible information related to the MSCP and the VPHCP. The [VPHCP Interactive Mapping Tool](#) and [MHPA interactive map](#) are available through the Planning department’s website, to provide easy access to detailed 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. 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,



Heidi Vonblum
Planning Director
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 2021
 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. 2021 Canyon Sewer Program Progress Report
 - b. 2021 PUD Project Impacts by Habitat
 - c. 2021 PUD Mitigation Assignments
 - d. 2021 ECP MSCP Project Summary
 5. 2021 PUD Resource Management Activities
 6. Heritage Brodiaea Preserve 2021 Annual Report

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