

**City of San Diego Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)
Community Workshop**

January 14, 2011 4 – 6 P.M.
Balboa Park Club, Santa Fe Room

SUMMARY

Staff and Consultant Team present:

David, Zoutendyk, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Patrick Gower, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
David Mayer, California Department of Fish and Game
Libby Lucas, California Department of Fish and Game
Bill Anderson, City of San Diego
Jeanne Krosch, City of San Diego
Craig Hooker, City of San Diego
Kristen Forburger, City of San Diego
Keith Greer, SANDAG Service Bureau (Consultant)
Cheryl Mason, SANDAG Service Bureau (Consultant)
Katie Levy, SANDAG Service Bureau (Consultant)

BACKGROUND

The Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is envisioned as a comprehensive planning approach to preserve vernal pool species and their habitat within the City of San Diego's jurisdiction. The HCP will create a new preserve boundary and updated conditions of coverage for San Diego and Riverside fairy shrimp, San Diego button celery, spreading navarretia, California orcutt grass, San Diego mesa mint and Otay mesa mint, and little mousetail. The workshop provided an opportunity for the public to inform the HCP planning process as well as provide important input on locations and quality of vernal pool resources. Conservation policies in the City's General Plan recognize the importance of facilitating public-private partnerships for effective wetland management.

AGENDA ITEMS

Welcome and Introductions

Jeanne Krosch, Project Manager for the City of San Diego Vernal Pool HCP welcomed the public to the first community workshop and gave a PowerPoint presentation that outlined the purpose of the Vernal Pool HCP. The PowerPoint will be available on the Web site. Highlights are as follows:

Funding for the project has been provided through a grant by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administered through the California Department of Fish and Game. The San Diego Association of

Governments (SANDAG) Service Bureau is providing consulting expertise in the creation of the document. Individuals from these agencies were introduced during the meeting.

The public participation process includes all inclusive public meetings and community workshops and email and letter communication. In addition, the City has developed a Web site for sharing information and obtaining feedback and comments from the public. Additional comments and correspondence will be considered for incorporation into the plan as appropriate. Draft documents and maps will be posted to the site for public review and comment. Workshop participants were encouraged to visit the Web site at www.sandiego.gov/planning/mscp to obtain additional information. The City's goal is to generate a broad base of local interest and involvement in the HCP planning process while in the early stages of its preparation.

Information about potential conservation areas has not been developed at this stage and will be the subject of future meetings.

Question from a participant:

Q: Is the goal of the HCP for mitigation?

A: Keith Greer of the SANDAG Service Bureau explained that the HCP is a comprehensive plan for vernal pools in the City of San Diego. One use of the plan could be to assist in mitigation for unavoidable impacts that occur to vernal pools. Long-term goals include long-term management, monitoring, and funding.

Public Input Activity: Vernal Pool Mapping and HCP Expectations

Keith Greer, SANDAG Service Bureau explained the public input activity. The audience spent approximately 45 minutes on the exercise. The exercise included three questions:

1. Where are vernal pool resources within the City?
2. Which areas are most important for the conservation of targeted species? What factors should be considered in evaluating the importance of preserving vernal pools (e.g., size of vernal pool, number of vernal pool species, located on conserved land, connectivity to other pools, etc.)
3. What expectations do you have regarding the proposed HCP?

For Question 1, six geographic maps covering known vernal pools as of 2008 within the City of San Diego were distributed among the tables. The six geographies were North, Central North, Central East, Central, South, Proctor Valley/Otay Lakes, and Marron Valley. Accompanying the maps was a matrix that showed known vernal pool locations and species population as of 2008. Participants were asked to provide feedback by writing comments on the maps about areas with vernal pools that were not shown on the map.

For Questions 2 and 3, the participants were asked to list factors that they felt should be covered in evaluating the importance of preserving vernal pools and to list expectations regarding the proposed HCP.

Report Out Summaries

The SANDAG Service Bureau facilitated the report out session and recorded individuals' comments for each of the three questions. Some individuals answered the questions directly on the handout materials. The summary of the verbal and written input received during workshop is included in Attachment A. The input written on the maps is provided in Attachment B.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Jeanne Krosch, Project Manager for the City of San Diego Vernal Pool HCP stated that staff will summarize the comments received and post the summaries to the Web page. Staff will post the vernal pool maps used in the exercise to the Web site within two to three weeks.

In addition to the input received during the community workshops, the project will use technical experts to provide independent scientific review of specific aspects of the HCP.

Staff will develop an email list so that the individuals who attended tonight and others who request information can be notified when new information is posted to the Web page and other announcements. This is an important part of the public input process so that staff can continue share information with the public and the public can continue to share feedback and provide input. A comment box will also be included on the Web site for public to comment on different aspects of the project.

For additional information or to speak to the project manager, please contact Jeanne Krosch at (619) 236-7225 or jkrosch@sandiego.gov.

Questions were asked by the public included:

- Q: Will the Otay Mesa Community Plan be integrated with the HCP?
- A: Jeanne Krosch responded that the timeline for the Otay Mesa Community Plan is ahead of the timeline for the HCP, but that the Community Plan will have land use and open space policies that address the conservation of vernal pools. Staff plans to coordinate and integrate information on both efforts as much as possible. Bill Anderson added that the Draft Otay Mesa Community Plan will be available for public review within a few months as part of the California Environment Quality Act (CEQA) process, and that the vernal pools are identified as part of the open space conservation element in that plan.
- Q: Will more information be provided and will there be another workshop between now and when the HCP environmental CEQA document is prepared?
- A: Jeanne Krosch and Keith Greer said the schedule for the next meeting was not determined yet. It is anticipated that there will be a workshop to share technical white papers that are prepared as part of this effort and another for the draft HCP. The public will be notified through email, written communication and the Web site.

ATTACHMENT A
SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT ACTIVITY

1) Question: Where are vernal pool resources within the City?

- Brown Field has pools that are not recorded on the maps. There are reports from 1998 time frame (Bauder Report) for some not on your maps.
- There are pools on Miramar College in the North Central map (across from Mira Mesa Market Center).
- Confirm that the open space on undeveloped mesa tops is on private lands.
- Eastside of the East Elliot Community (adjacent to Santee) has vernal pools resources.
- The west end of Carroll Canyon Vernal Pool Preserve has more vernal pools than shown.
- Work done in Proctor Valley (City water department lands) found there are additional vernal pools in that location.
- Del Mar Mesa, ridge north of Deer Canyon that may or may not be part of the Mesa Preserve contains vernal pools.
- Pueblo Lands south of Mira Mesa Boulevard contain vernal pool.
- Information regarding species locations is available from various existing database: USFWS, CNDDDB data, CDFG BIOS; scientific collection permits.
- Montgomery Field area near Tierra Santa across from Miramar Mounds National Monument.
- Unclear if you interested in historic location of vernal pools or just currently existing pools.

- 2) **Question: Which areas are most important for the conservation of targeted species? What factors should be considered in evaluating the importance of preserving vernal pools (e.g., size of vernal pool, number of vernal pool species, located on conserved land, connectivity to other pools, etc.)**
- Any areas with existing populations of target species and any pools that could be restored to support target species. Upland buffers and other important historic pool areas with suitable soils needed for restoration to contribute to recovery.
 - Should look at drainage patterns of vernal pools themselves and associated upland watershed habitats. The study also should look at suitable soils for restoration of historic pools.
 - Provide upland buffers adjacent to pools.
 - The vernal pools that are in the most need of our help – the ones declining rapidly – should be at the top of our priorities as well as the most bio-diverse in order to keep the populations from declining more. With this in mind, the south area of the City should be the most important area for conservation.
 - The areas with a heavy amount of targeted species should be conserved first. The people who want to use the area with targeted species for human purposes can use the areas with lower amounts of targeted species. The areas that have heavy amounts should be preserved.
 - With less than 5 percent of historical vernal pools remaining, all remaining pools are a high priority for protection. If monetary constraints demand prioritization then endangered species presence should be used to prioritize.
 - Conservation should be located within preserved lands.
 - Multiple desires on vernal pool lands (recreation). Include public access in open space – hikers, bikers, passive activities as a consideration for vernal pool conservation.
 - Do not include pools on artificial lands, or figure out how to create vernal pools on artificial lands. Vernal pools occurring on a site in Mira Mesa that was degraded and the community is being asked to move (restore) the pools elsewhere.
 - Use a 25 percent development area as starting point to allow any unavoidable impacts.
 - Establish a hardline preserve.
 - Define vernal pool conservation. HCP should include definitions about vernal pools, what a hardline preserve means, what vernal pool conservation means, and what conservation means regarding management.
 - Establish functional criteria (what are the functions of the vernal pool). This goes beyond just counts of species in the pools.

- The criteria should be the minimum conservation to get the HCP approved and have it be litigation proof.
- Use Hydrogeomorphic (HGM) approach for vernal pools for evaluation of existing vernal pool functions
- Integrate with management plans. Instead of having two (or multiple) separate management plans, ensure that all coordinate with each other
- Use a risk assessment approach in the HCP. Risk equals what is the viability of the vernal pools proposed for conservation in the HCP. HCP to determine how preserve functions as a whole. Determine what is sufficient margin of error
- Include signage, fencing, and keep people away from vernal pools.
- Include educational component.
- So many people have zero appreciation for vernal pools and once the pools are identified, people are witness to fencing and restricted access to what was once open space.
- Pools nearest urban/residential areas should be utilized to educate the public. Exclusion does not equal preservation. Conservation comes about when the public learns to appreciate the sensitivity of flora and fauna. Plan education and interpretive trails near homes. More remote pools with higher percentage of endangered species should be a priority for stricter protection. Vernal pools in disturbed areas and in dirt roadways with easement right of ways should be given less priority.
- In evaluating the importance of preserving vernal pools, some factors that should be considered are pools that contain different species and also ones with good diversity of vernal pool species.
- Connectivity to meaningful open space and manageability of these area key is critical. Connectivity measured by pollinator dispersal, distance, watershed, land use/edge effects, size of complex/watershed (look at historical aerials). Plan connectivity with vernal pools in mind; connectivity with other pools and uplands for pollinators.
- Pollinators are important too. Should identify, address and include them – nesting habitat – ground nesters, roosting habitat, potential host plants, i.e. beetles.
- Consider vernal pool communities – area versus just number of species, full range of vernal pool communities and not just single species. It is important to conserve pools that have the most density/diversity of species. Factors for consideration - Number of species in pools, size of pools, viable pool populations, and non-listed vernal pool species.
- Use population viability analysis. Criteria should be to look at community functions. Evaluate quality of vernal pool species diversity not just presence of list of species. HCP should contribute to recovery, and each pool should contribute to species restoration; consider degraded pools.
- Consider genetic diversity and uniqueness of pools and species based on current knowledge. Consider invasion and hybridization (of fairy shrimp) in development HCP.

3) Question: What expectations do you have regarding the proposed HCP?

- The HCP should contribute to recovery of listed species and vernal pool type, not just survival/persistence. Recovery contribution should be determined according to importance of particular pools to target species and pool type.
- Consider importance of pools to genetic variations of San Diego Fairy Shrimp.
- The HCP should distinguish between road ruts with fairy shrimp and vernal pools.
- The HCP should contribute to recovery and restoration of vernal pools. Identify and include dedicated funding sources and an education component – due to lack of understanding of what a vernal pool environment is and entails, and an oversight function. Go to the Community Planning Groups.
- No regional funding source likely to occur so dedicated funding needed for preservation, restoration and stewardship. A Community Facility District (CFD) is probably the best option.
- Identify dedicated funding sources for the HCP as we don't have regional funding source for vernal pools.
- Hardline preserve is crucial and realistic/practical while still leaving reasonable property use. Use 25 percent development footprint per existing Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) for any vernal pool properties. Include properties in hardline preserve with no pools when additional land needed for pool buffer or pool restoration needed for recovery.
- Use 25 percent development area starting point to establish hard line preserves.
- Create a comprehensive conservation and planning tool, with recovery as the goal; include opportunities for mitigation banking, and identification of areas for restoration of vernal pool function as part of overall conservation strategy.
- Please include adjacency guidelines that will address indirect effects to vernal pools, recovery of listed species, active restoration.
- Include degraded/lost pools in recovery plan and restoration of pools assisting recovery of endangered species. Expectation side for HCP that hope to contribute to recovery
- Look at connectivity – how important is it (buffers, adjacent pools).
- Contribute to recover species (Natural Communities Conservation Planning Program Standard) should be used instead not hinder recovery (Federal Section 10a HCP standard).
- Hope that it doesn't take forever to finish this project. Be different! Complete this important resource planning project promptly. Publish a schedule and stick to it!
- Expect that it gets done somewhat consistent with the schedule that the City Council was told.

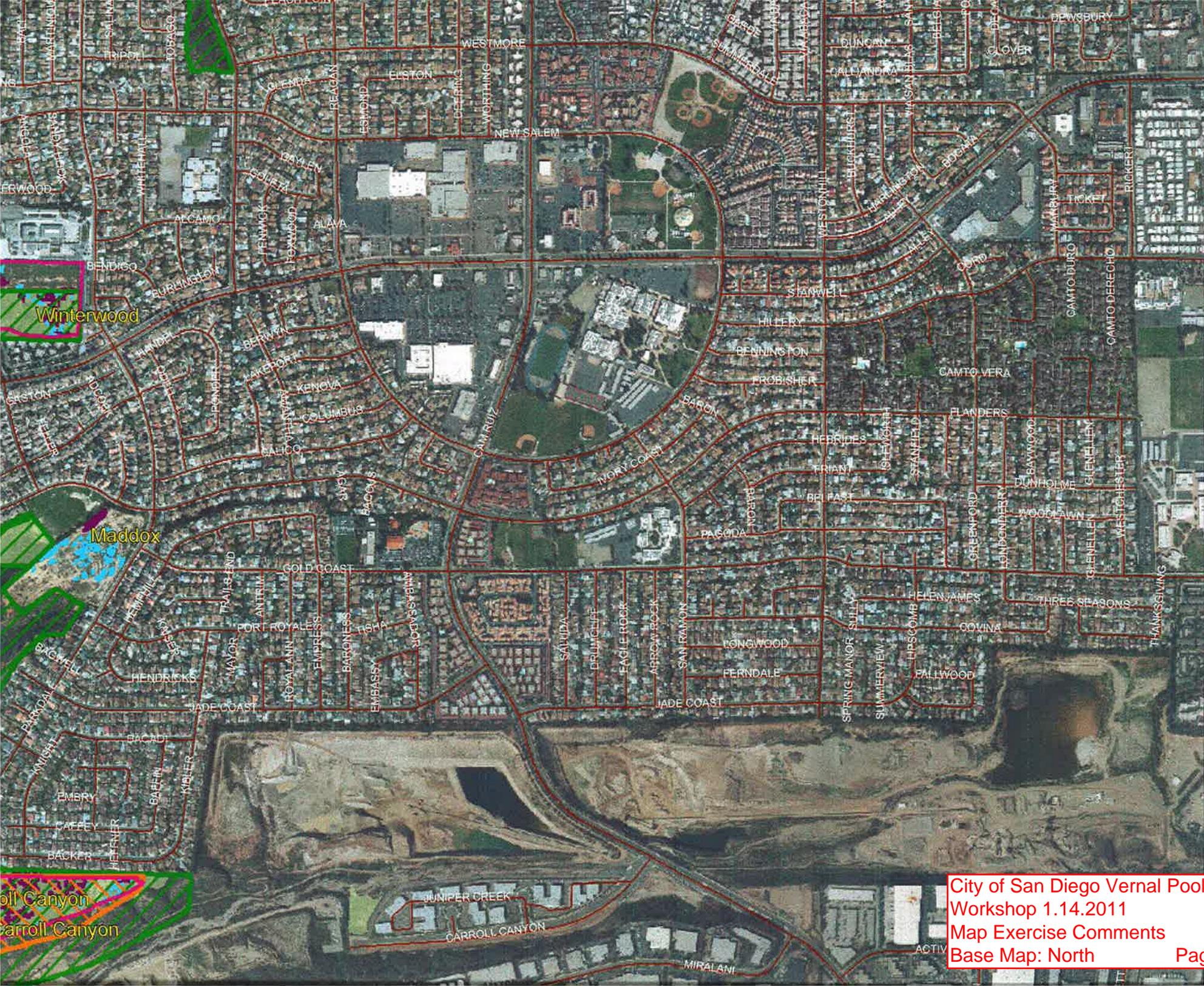
- There should be universal, routinely updated vernal pool inventory database with annual reports.
- Concerned about implementation and disconnect between a plan that will be put together and what actually happens after plan is approved. Suggest then to include great detail within HCP to better ensure implementations of regulations such as an oversight function with specificity of partnerships with volunteers, staff members and number of hours needed for management.
- Include consideration of partnerships with non-profits for all HCP conservation activities: acquisitions, preservation, restoration, stewardship, etc., but provide central oversight of various managers and projects.
- Should get out to community planning groups and professional organizations within HCP planning process and involve professional organizations throughout the planning process.
- Expect that an educational component to be included and tie in with public access.
- Include clear definition of vernal pool conservation and conservation management.
- Include monitoring and comparisons between remote vernal pools and vernal pools in close proximity to residential areas.
- Make sure each community with vernal pools has one pool for community observation/education. Most people have never seen a vernal pool.
- Promote public awareness about local vernal pools in order to help preserve the habitats. Education can occur through simple signs/plaque. Repairing broken fences around these areas.
- Make sure all vernal pools have been identified. Public education must be done in key locations and increase knowledge and build support for the protection of vernal pools. For example, Serra Mesa/Kearny Mesa library pools should have at minimum, interpretive panels and at best, a raised viewing platform. No further taking allowed, about 5 percent remain, can't afford to lose even one more.
- Expect that the HCP will not hinder public access and or trails, especially in existing parks and open spaces. Use a variety of methods for educating the public as to why it's important to preserve vernal pools. Involve a minimum footprint necessary for conservation. Staff to reach out to local users (especially of open space areas) for input of expectations. Know exactly what vernal pool conservation means.
- Include negotiations between companies and preservationists on this issue. People should make every possible effort to get along in their plans for the future.
- Build people into the management plan rather than building people out of the plan.
- These meetings are typically dominated by conservationists. Developers need a good forum to provide input. The fear is speaking at one of these forums will only increase the concerns of developing a site with vernal pools. Unless the response to these pools is balanced, nobody outside the conservationists will take these seriously.

ATTACHMENT B WRITTEN INPUT ON MAPPING EXERCISE

Six geographic maps covering known vernal pools as of 2008 within the City of San Diego were distributed among the tables. The six geographies were North, Central North, Central East, Central, South, Proctor Valley/Otay Lakes, and Marron Valley. Participants were asked to provide feedback by writing comments on the maps about areas with vernal pools that were not shown on the map. Comments noted on the maps were scanned and are presented in Attachment B.

(Full versions of the six maps are available on the City's Web site. For convenience purposes, the map legend is below as it may be useful when reviewing the scanned maps in the attachment.)





Winterwood

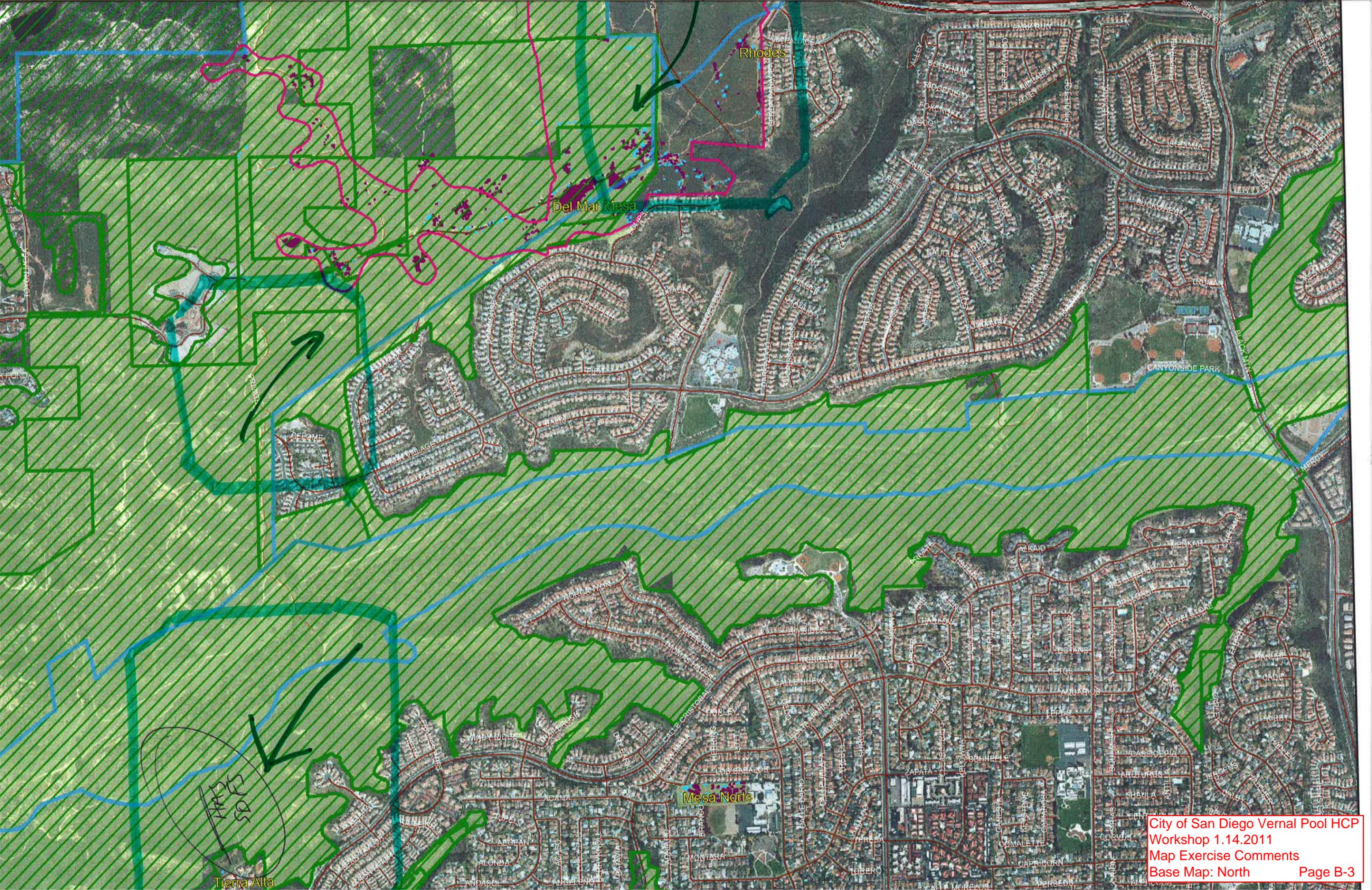
Maddox

Roll Canyon
Carroll Canyon



VERNAL
POOLS
NORTH
WEST
OF
MIRALANI
COLLEGE
BY
PARK &
RIDE
ON
HILLCRY
&
BLACK
MTN.

City of San Diego Vernal Pool HCP
Workshop 1.14.2011
Map Exercise Comments
Base Map: North Page B-2



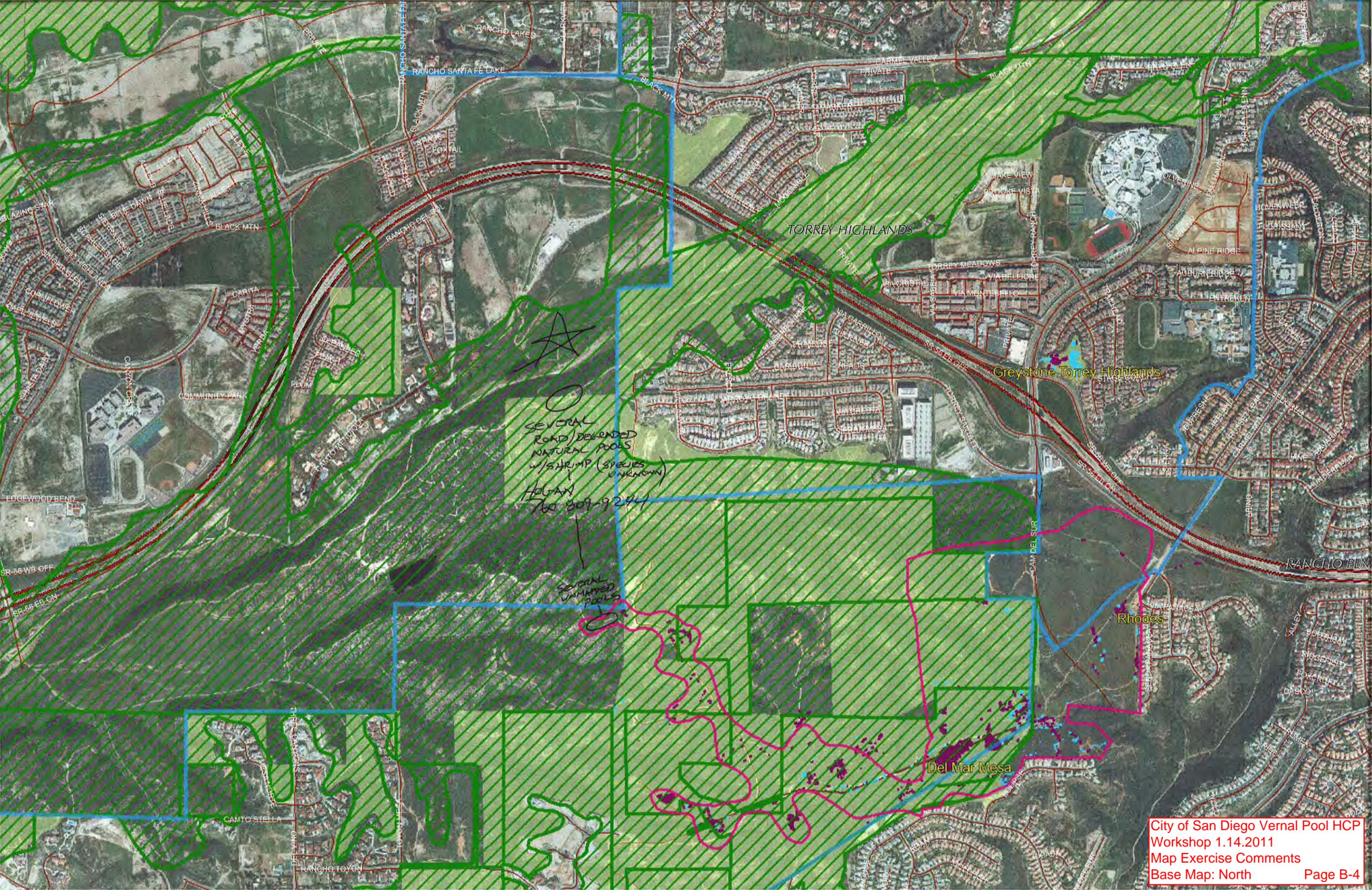
Rhodes

Del Mar Mesa

Mesa Norte

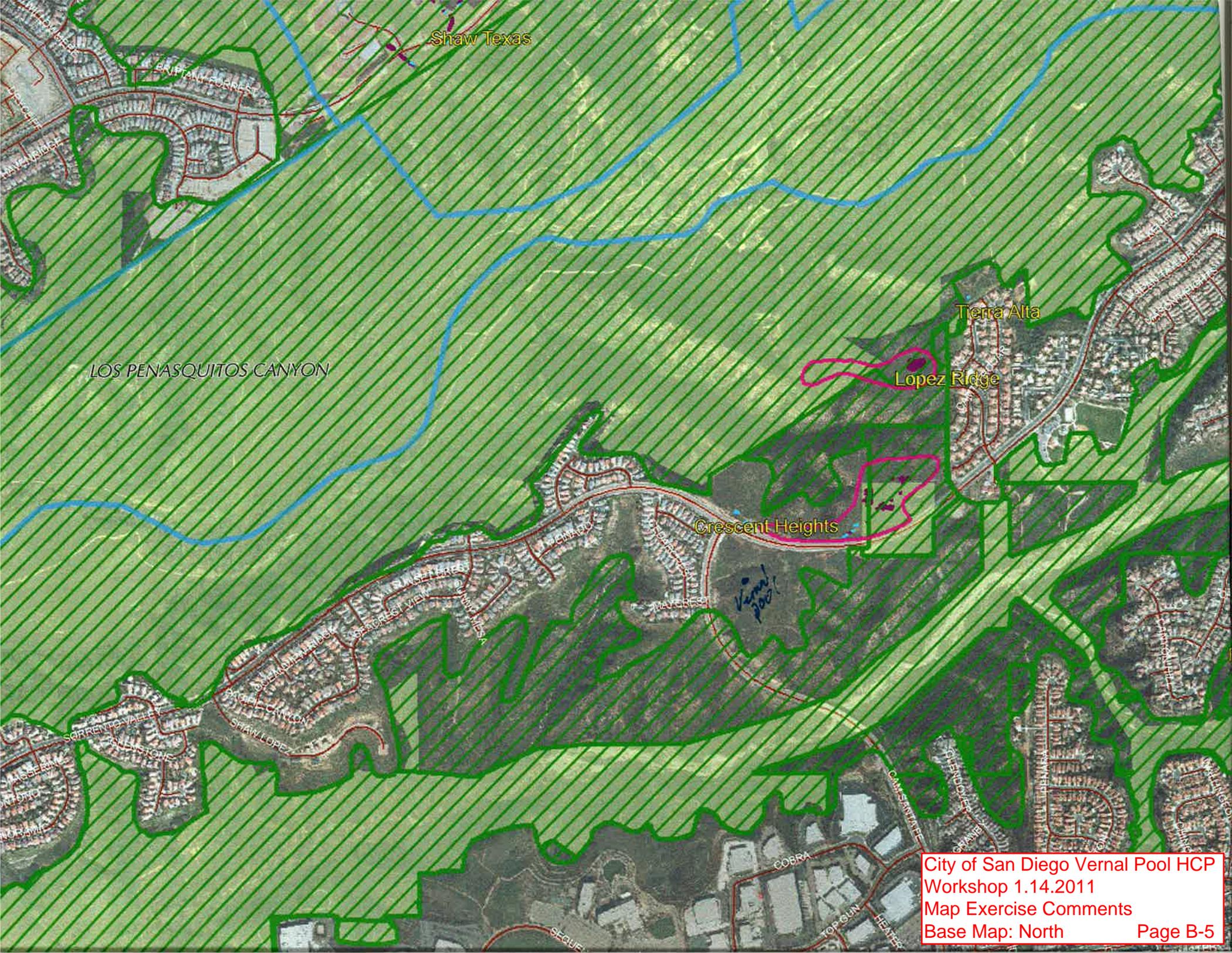
MMS SDFs

Tierra Alta



SEVERAL ROAD/DEGRADED NATURAL POOLS w/SHRIMP (SPECIES UNKNOWN)
HOLLAN
760 309-9244

SEVERAL UNMAPPED POOLS



Shaw Texas

LOS PENASQUITOS CANYON

Terra Alta

Lopez Ridge

Crescent Heights

Vernal Pool

City of San Diego Vernal Pool HCP
Workshop 1.14.2011
Map Exercise Comments
Base Map: North
Page B-5



Needs Surpluses

Cubic

Sander

Magnitron

General Dynamics

7CA 5 parcels - many pools - Mesa unit

interpretation of portion here

FRONT OF
DIVERSITY
STREET
PROJECT
FOR
MILITARY FACILITIES

THOMAS
POWERS

Homeless
Problem

ENTRY FOR PEOPLE
10-15

Owned by
MAYOR
CITY

50
fairly
messy
things
with
presets



EDWARDS RES

EAST ELLIOTT

V.P.
↑

fairing shrimp
32° 55' 0" N
117° 10' 33.6" W

Conserve these
Vernal pools

Mission Trails Regional Park

Smith SVE - County owned

Johnson Cyn,
Caltrans Mit for SR125

SR-125
Caltrans

J-29-30

SR-125 NB ON
SR-125 SB OFF
125
SR-125 NB OFF
SR-125 SB ON

AVIATOR

DEAD STICK

WINDSOCK

AIRWING

APPROACH

MESA POINT

SHERWOOD

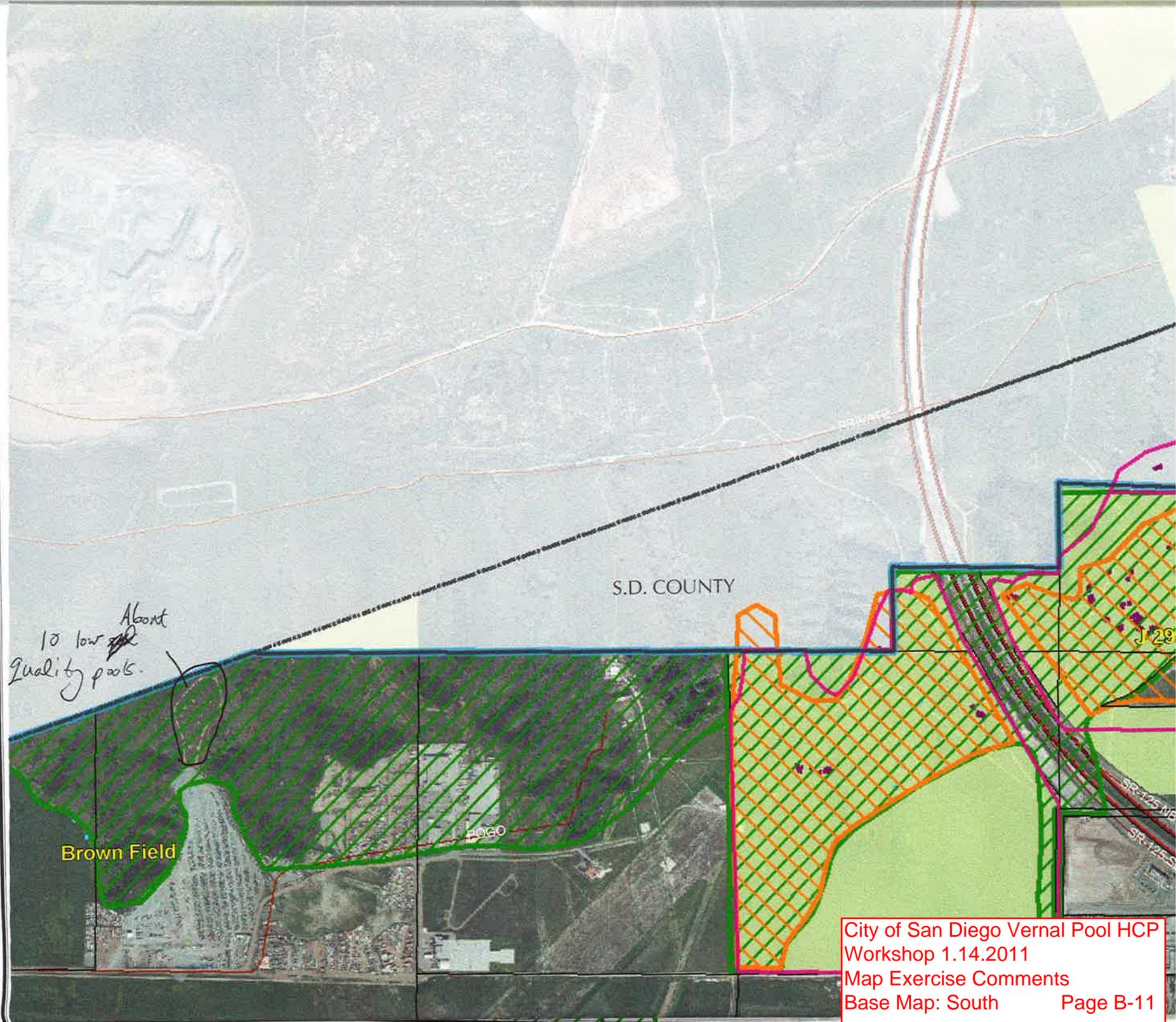
LONESTAR

DOBEYAN STATE PRISON

SUNROAD

DAVID RIDGE

YANN CENTRE



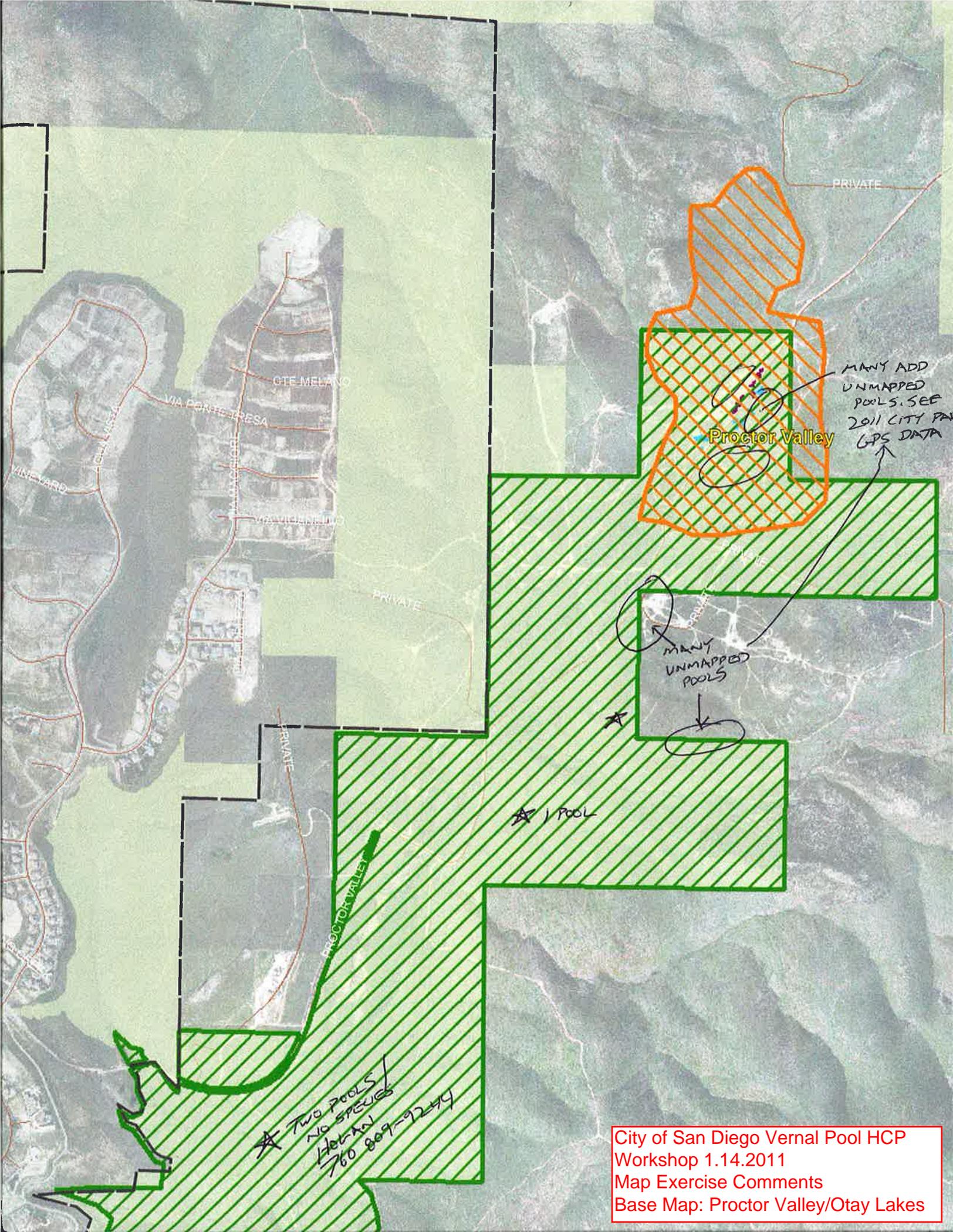
S.D. COUNTY

About
10 low
quality pools.

Brown Field

San Diego

City of San Diego Vernal Pool HCP
Workshop 1.14.2011
Map Exercise Comments
Base Map: South Page B-11



PRIVATE

GTE MELANO

VIA PORTO PRESA

VINEYARD

CLAY CURVE

MALIBU

WAZVIER

PRIVATE

PRIVATE

PROCTOR VALLEY

Proctor Valley

MANY ADD UNMAPPED POOLS. SEE 2011 CITY PLAN GPS DATA

MANY UNMAPPED POOLS

★ 1 POOL

★ Two POOLS / NO SPECIES / Helix / 760 809-9244

City of San Diego Vernal Pool HCP Workshop 1.14.2011
Map Exercise Comments
Base Map: Proctor Valley/Otay Lakes