



July 20, 2020

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SUBJECT: 2019 MULTIPLE SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Mr. Zoutendyk and Mr. Mayer:

MULTIPLE SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM 2019 ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

Enclosed is the City of San Diego's (City's) 2019 Multiple Species Conservation Program (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 utilized Habitrak, the Geographic Information Systems (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 are entered as habitat losses while mitigation such as dedication in fee title and covenant of easement (COE) areas are entered as habitat gains. In 2019, the City recorded a total habitat gain of 34.41 acres (17.24 acres inside the MHPA and 17.17 acres outside the MHPA). The total habitat loss for 2019 was 14.52 acres (1.41 acres inside the MHPA and 13.12 acres outside the MHPA). In addition, the City completed required MSCP monitoring and land management activities on over 53,000 acres of conserved open space and continued nature education programs for children throughout the city. 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 2019 reporting year (January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019). After receiving the 2019 report generated by CDFW, the City discovered an issue with the Habitrak total project acreages depicted in the report. The total area of the projects (both gain and loss) from the data that was provided by the City is inconsistent with the Habitrak report generated by CDFW. The City appreciates continued coordination with CDFW staff to address issues that have been identified and rectify acreage discrepancies in the 2020 reporting year.

TABLE 1 – 2019 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
52,727 acres	36,002 acres (68%)	2,994 acres	14,932 acres	1,793 acres

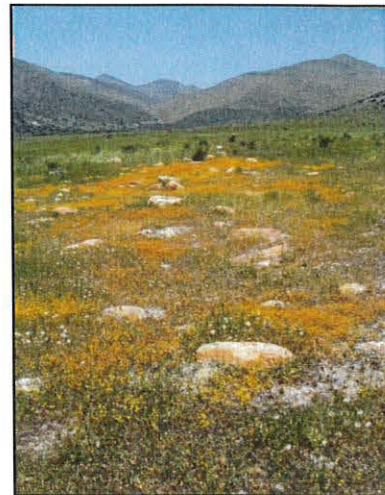
HABITAT ACQUISITION FUND CONTRIBUTIONS/CONSERVATION ACQUISITIONS

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 2019, four approved discretionary projects paid into the HAF for a total of \$87,896 (Attachment 2). As of December 31, 2019, the HAF balance was \$722,928, of which \$584,366 has been allocated for future acquisition and \$72,466 allocated for administration.

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 2019, no habitat credit sales took place for public projects, so the total bank balance remained the same as the 2018 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 2019, the current land value was \$2,019,354, the total endowment amount was \$315,570, and current burrowing owls total was \$4,504 for an overall account total of \$2,339,428 (Attachment 3b). Note that land management activities are funded by the Public Utilities Department (PUD) budget and therefore do not reduce revenue for this account.



Marron Valley

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 the PUD, Transportation & Storm Water (TSW), and Public Works Department (PWD). Project accounting for each of these departments for the 2019 calendar year are as follows:

Public Utilities Department

In 2019, there were a total of nine projects reported with impacts to the MHPA. Of those, four were associated with the Canyon Sewer Cleaning Program and Long-Term Sewer Maintenance Program. The 2019 Canyon Sewer Program Progress Report provides the status of PUD's twelve mitigation sites for the Canyon Sewer Program located throughout the City (Attachment 4a). A comprehensive list of all projects mitigated within these bank areas up to year 2019 is provided in Attachment B of the Canyon Sewer Program Progress Report.

The nine projects listed in Attachment 4b impacted sensitive habitat; however, only six required mitigation. The total impact for these projects was 10.4 acres, of which only 8.6 acres required mitigation. Based upon the habitat type impacted, the total mitigation required for these projects was 8.7 acres (Attachment 4c).

Transportation & Storm Water Department

TSW implemented two routine channel maintenance projects in 2019 under the Master Storm Water System Maintenance Program (MSWSMP): the Auburn Creek Channel and South Chollas Creek Channel maintenance projects. The Auburn Creek Channel impacts that required mitigation were met at the Stadium Wetland Mitigation Bank and the Marron Valley Cornerstone Lands Bank. Note, the Auburn Creek Channel

maintenance project began in 2018 and was completed in 2019. Since the project spans two years, it has been included in both the 2018 and 2019 MSCP Annual Reports. The South Chollas Creek Channel maintenance impacts that required mitigation were met at the Stadium Wetland Mitigation Bank. The total impact acreage that occurred in 2019 from these two projects was 5.54 acres. However, these impacts did not impact any sensitive habitat within the MHPA.

All channel maintenance conducted under the MSWSMP has been completed. The City's new Municipal Waterways Maintenance Plan was approved by the San Diego City Council on June 9, 2020 and will replace the MSWSMP. All TSW project impacts are summarized in Attachments 4d and 4e.

Public Works Department

The Public Works Department reported eight projects within the 2019 reporting period which included impacts to upland and wetland habitat; however, only three exceeded impact acreage thresholds and required mitigation. Projects with mitigable impacts in 2019 included storm water and park projects with a total impact acreage of 0.8 acre and total mitigation acreage of 0.8 acre. Please refer to Attachment 4f for project specific details such as impact types, amounts, and mitigation sites.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS

Natural Resource Management Plans (NRMPs) 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 Regional Park NRMP and MPU was approved by the San Diego City Council on May 21, 2019.

Tecolote Canyon Natural Park NRMP and MPU: The NRMP and MPU 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 2020.

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 2020, and for public review in spring 2021.

Otay Valley Regional Park NRMP: Biological survey updates were completed in spring/summer 2019 and document revisions are scheduled for fall 2020.

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 2020, and for public review in spring 2021. 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 winter 2020 or spring 2021.

MHPA LAND MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

Management in support of the City's MSCP Subarea Plan is performed by the 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 2019 report has been provided as Attachment 5. A summary of management activities performed by each department are as follows:

Public Utilities Department Lands

In 2019, 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 6). Activities included, but were not limited to field inspections, trash and debris removal, fence repair, invasive species detection and removal, infrastructure installation or repair (boulder barriers), sign installation, weed abatement, maintenance and monitoring of restoration sites such as artificial burrowing owl burrows and vernal pool areas, procurement of two TransNet grants for cactus wren habitat restoration and enhancement, and coordination with U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to decommission approximately 2,000 linear feet of a USFS road on City land.

In addition, PUD manages the Canyon Sewer Cleaning Program and Long-Term Sewer Maintenance Program. The objectives of these programs 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 programs also provide 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 details are available in the 2019 Program Progress Report cited above.

Parks and 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.

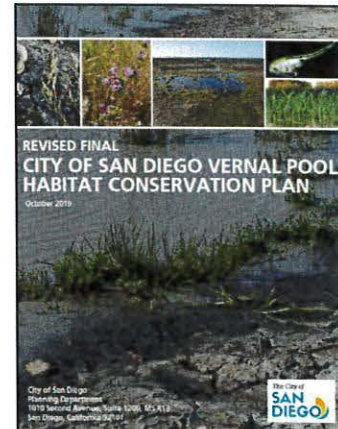
The PRD Open Space Division also conducts annual MSCP rare plant monitoring and has prepared "The City of San Diego 2019 MSCP Rare Plant Monitoring Report" which was previously submitted under separate cover to the Wildlife Agencies and provided to the San Diego Management and Monitoring Program (Attachment 7).

VERNAL POOL HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN

The City's [Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Plan \(VPHCP\)](#) was adopted by the San Diego City Council on January 22, 2018, and the federal take permit was received in August 2018. The VPHCP provides an effective framework to protect, enhance, and restore vernal pool resources within the City while improving and

streamlining the environmental permitting process for impacts to threatened and endangered species associated with vernal pools. The VPHCP covers approximately 275 acres and 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)



Implementation of the [Vernal Pool Mitigation and Monitoring Plan \(VPMMP\)](#) component of the VPHCP requires all conserved vernal pool complexes shall be monitored where legal access is available.

In 2019, the City and Wildlife Agencies worked together to revise the VPHCP and VPMMP addressing consistency with Intra-Service Formal Section 7 Consultation for Issuance of an Endangered Species Act Section 10(a)(1)(B) Permit (TE 97791C) issued on June 25, 2018. The revised Final VPHCP and VPMMP are available on the City's [VPHCP website](#).

The City conducted quantitative covered plant monitoring in 2019 for 30 vernal pool complexes on lands owned and managed by the City's PRD Open Space Division, PUD, Real Estate Assets Department (READ), and ESD in accordance with the Final VPHCP (2018) and VPMMP (2018). All departments utilized the City's standardized data collection application called Survey 123.

An access database was developed to translate the Survey 123 data into the [VPHCP Management and Monitoring Report \(Summary Report\)](#), a user-friendly document which was posted to the City's VPHCP



Wruck Canyon - Vegetation in vernal pool



Wruck Canyon - Vegetation cleared by weed whacking

website in December 2019. The VPHCP Summary Report was developed by the PRD Open Space Division in coordination the Planning Department's GIS team. The VPHCP Summary Report prepared in 2019 informed the Vernal Pool Summary Report meeting conducted on February 7, 2020.

In addition to reporting VPMMP efforts, City will expand VPHCP reporting to include components such as private project VPMMP implementation, vernal pool "take" reporting, Citywide changes in vernal pool management levels, and funding mechanisms. Overall VPHCP reporting is currently in process and

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



Boundary Line Adjustments

**TABLE 2 - MHPA BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENTS
CALENDAR YEAR 2019**

Boundary Line Corrections

The City and Wildlife Agencies have a mutual understanding that BLCs 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

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by City staff, it must be clearly demonstrated that: 1) the proposed area to be corrected out was legally permitted prior to the MSCP Subarea 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 no corrections that took place in 2019.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The City provides numerous environmental education opportunities on approximately 27,000 acres of open space managed by the PRD. In 2019, approximately 110,000 people visited the Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor & Interpretative Center and the Tecolote Nature Center. The Tecolote Family Day event was a huge success with almost 700 visitors in attendance. At Mission Trails Regional Park, an estimated 3,714 adults and 2,640 children participated in ranger-led walks and hikes. Additionally, over 6,473 students participated in curriculum based school programs at Mission Trails Regional Park.

CONCLUSION

The City continues to demonstrate its commitment to the MSCP through comprehensive and innovative implementation, while also finalizing the VPHCP in 2018. From project review and development permitting, through land acquisition and management, City staff work side by side with our partner agencies, non-profits, and the public to keep the MSCP 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 2019
 3. Marron Valley Cornerstone Lands Conservation Bank
 - a. Summary of Marron Valley Cornerstone Lands Conservation Bank Debits
 - b. Cornerstone Land Mitigation Fund 700021

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4. City of San Diego Department Project Accounting
 - a. 2019 Canyon Sewer Program Progress Report
 - b. 2019 PUD Project Impacts by Habitat
 - c. 2019 PUD Mitigation Assignments
 - d. 2019 TSW Impact Totals by Project and Habitat
 - e. 2019 TSW Impact Totals by Year and Habitat
 - f. 2019 PWD Project Impacts and Mitigation
5. MSCP Management Actions Report: 2019
6. PUD Resource Management Activities: 2019
7. City of San Diego 2019 MSCP Rare Plant Monitoring Report

cc: Honorable Mayor Kevin Faulconer
David Zoutendyk, Division Chief, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
David Mayer, Environmental Program Manager, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Janet Struckroth, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Pat Gower, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jennifer Turner, Senior Environmental Scientist, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Alyssa Muto, Deputy Director, Planning Department
Heidi Vonblum, Program Manager, Planning Department
Kristen Forburger, Development Project Manager III, Planning Department
Paul Kilburg, Acting Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation Department
Mark Berninger, Natural Resources Manager, Parks and Recreation Department
Nicole McGinnis, Project Officer II, Public Utilities Department
Kim Wehinger, Associate Planner, Public Utilities Department
John Barone, Senior Planner, Public Utilities Department
Keli Balo, Program Manager III, Public Utilities Department
Cheryl Jenkins, Biologist III, Public Utilities Department
Christine Rothman, Development Project Manager III, Transportation & Storm Water Department
Cherlyn Cac, Senior Planner, Transportation & Storm Water Department
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Jane-Marie Fajardo, Senior Planner, Environmental Services Department
Carrie Purcell, Assistant Deputy Director, Public Works Department
Juan Baligad, Senior Planner, Public Works Department
Sean Paver, Senior Planner, Public Works Department
Maya Mazon, Biologist III, Public Works Department
Anita Eng, Biologist III, Development Services Department
Sara Solomon, Property Manager, Real Estates Assets Department