

## MSCP South County Subarea Plan Highlights



Peutz Valley Preserve

### Preserve Acquisitions

In 2018, the County acquired three properties within the South County MSCP Preserve, including the 255-acre Peutz Valley Preserve. Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch Preserve increased in size with a 19-acre addition, while Lakeside Linkage Preserve grew with a 75-acre addition. Coastal sage scrub habitat makes up the majority of the Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch and Lakeside Linkage Preserve additions, while Peutz Valley Preserve is comprised of chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and oak riparian forest habitats.

### Land Stewardship

Comprehensive management and stewardship activities take place on all County land. In 2018, activities included invasive plant species treatment, unauthorized access control, trail rehabilitation, erosion control, replacement of dead trees, and fuel-load management activities. Educational outreach is also a critical component of land stewardship as visitors are made aware of the incredible diversity of San Diego County's plant and animal species and how to protect them for future generations via actions that can take place both on conserved lands and at home.

## Biological Monitoring

Biological monitoring is a critical element in properly managing the County's open space lands. Threat assessments, habitat conditions and the presence of sensitive species are all identified during these surveys. Monitoring results help DPR respond quickly to threats that may be affecting sensitive species, in addition to identifying when site conditions have changed, and management methods should be modified.



Arroyo Toad

In 2018, five County Preserves were monitored including Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch, Boulder Oaks, Lusardi Creek, Lakeside Linkage, and Ramona Grasslands. The County performed rare plant, raptor foraging, tricolored blackbird, burrowing owl, arroyo toad, Stephens' kangaroo rat, coastal cactus wren, and vernal pool/alkali playa monitoring.

## Habitat Restoration and Enhancement

Restoration efforts on-going in 2018 from grants awarded during previous years and included a Tijuana River Valley Regional Park habitat restoration project along the Tijuana River, Quino checkerspot butterfly habitat restoration in Otay, and a coastal cactus



Coastal Cactus Wren

wren habitat restoration in the Otay River Valley. Restoration efforts, funded by the California River Parkways Grant Program, to treat invasive, non-native tamarisk and ice plant species, plant native plant species, and install a temporary irrigation system were completed. A Natural Community Conservation Planning Local Assistant Grant continued to expand on current Quino checkerspot butterfly habitat restoration efforts in Otay. A California Department of Fish and Wildlife Watershed Restoration Grant Program Proposition 1 grant will help complete critical planning efforts to restore the hydrology of the Tijuana River and habitat functions. Additionally, coastal cactus wren habitat restoration efforts continued in 2018, in the Otay River Valley, and were funded through a San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) *Transnet EMP* grant.

## Partnerships and Research

We grow our knowledge of diverse biological habitats, plants and animals each year by encouraging research and partnering with universities, agencies, organizations, and other entities. Findings assist the County in identifying new biological threats that have the potential to impact sensitive on-site resources, as well as determine which management methods are appropriate for each preserve.

In 2018, the County partnered with a few of the partners conducting research on multiple County properties included USGS monitoring the presence of coastal California gnatcatcher, the Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association examining the spread of the Kuroshio shot hole borer and best management practices for its prevention and eradication, and USGS evaluating the current state of cactus wrens and cactus wren habitat in southern San Diego County.

## North County and East County MSCP Plan Areas

County Owned Open Space Land in all 3 MSCP Plan Areas, as of Dec. 31, 2018	
South County	12,500
North County	12,500
East County	15,400
Total	40,400

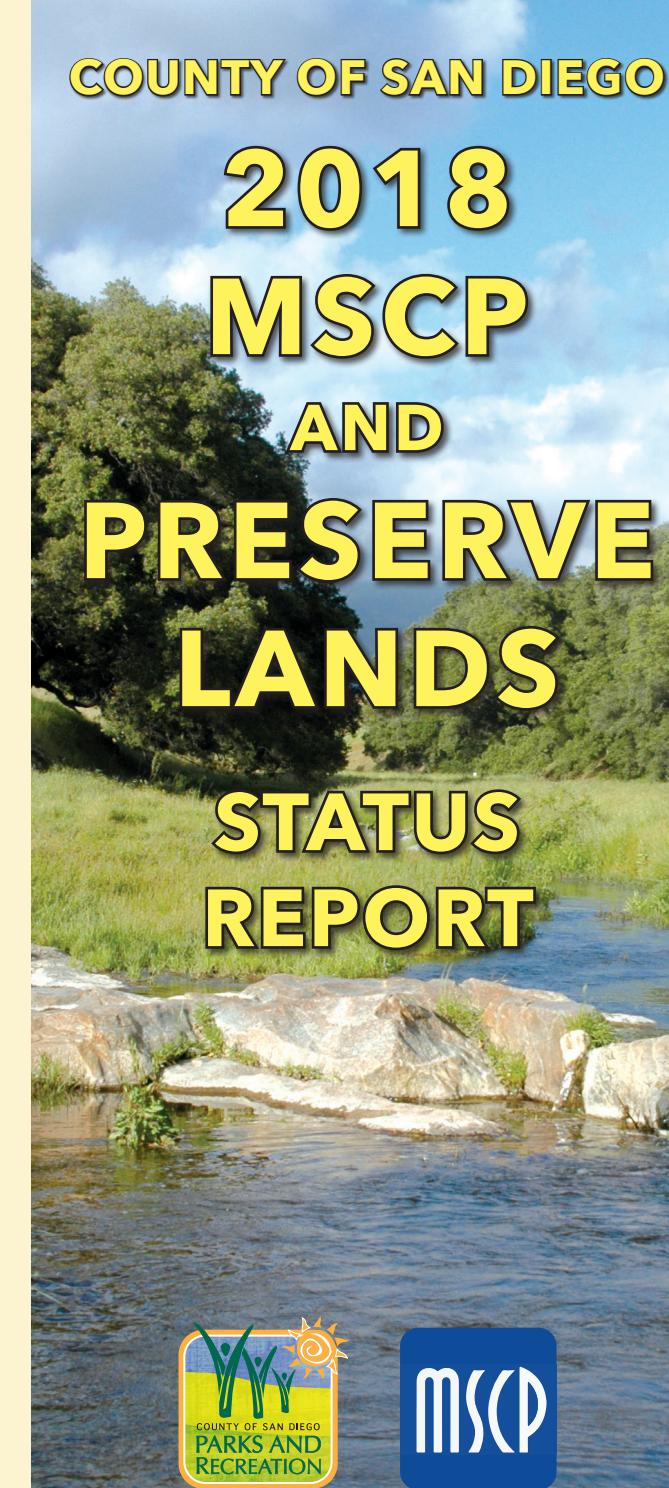
The County continues its efforts with open space preservation in the entire County, not just within the South County MSCP Subarea Plan. In 2000, the County and Wildlife Agencies agreed to proceed with a draft North County MSCP Plan and future East County MSCP Plan. The draft North County Plan is currently under development, and the East County Plan will be developed in the future.

## INFORMATION

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## MSCP History

The Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) is a regional conservation planning program whose goal is to balance protection of habitat and species with recreation, development, and agricultural activities within the San Diego region. In 1997, the County of San Diego (County), along with 11 other jurisdictions, developed the MSCP together with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Wildlife Agencies), and community stakeholders. That effort resulted in several subarea plans, including the 50-year South County MSCP, established in 1997, between the County and Wildlife Agencies.

## Benefits

This 50-year agreement preserves, protects and connects the most valuable biological habitats while allowing development to occur in less sensitive areas. The South County MSCP also allows for passive recreation/trail opportunities in select areas and enables visitors to learn about the vital role of conservation through a variety of environmental education activities that foster connections with nature.

## 2018 Key Accomplishments

## Land Acquisition Highlights

- As of Dec. 31, 2018, the County, Wildlife Agencies, and private conservation partners have assembled 78,565 acres (80%) of the proposed 98,379-acre South County MSCP Preserve.
- Three properties, totaling 349 acres, were acquired within the South County MSCP to protect coastal sage scrub, oak woodland and chaparral habitats.

## Habitat Restoration Highlights

- Otay River Valley: Coastal cactus wren habitat restoration and protection efforts included treatment of invasive, non-native plant species and native plant species seed redistribution.



## Quino Checkerspot Butterfly

- Otay Valley Regional Park: Threat reduction efforts to protect a Quino checkerspot butterfly population at the park included invasive, non-native plant species removal, preventing unauthorized off-road activity with fencing and signage, and biological monitoring.
- Ramona Grasslands Preserve: Received a grant to enhance the existing arroyo toad population and increase the potential for a southwestern pond turtle population by eradicating the invasive, non-native bullfrogs on the Preserve which eat arroyo toads and pond turtles.
- Tijuana River Valley Regional Park: Habitat restoration efforts along the Tijuana River included treating and removing invasive, non-native plant species and planting native plant species to improve the riparian corridor habitat.

## Research

- County partnered with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to survey in the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park for Blainsville's horned lizard, Pacific pocket mouse, and invasive, non-native Argentine ant to determine the overall population conditions for the three species.
- County partnered with USGS to conclude a 2-year study to determine the activity of local American badgers and help identify priority areas on multiple open space properties owned and managed by the County.

## Education and Outreach

- The Department of Parks and Recreation's (DPR) Discovery Program, which enables hundreds of children from over 40 elementary schools to learn about cultural and natural history at local parks and in their own backyards, was expanded to include eight County parks.



## *Lakeside Linkage County Preserve*

County of San Diego Open Spaces

DPR owns approximately 52,000 acres of land, 40,400 of which are open space. These properties are regularly maintained, managed and monitored, and habitat restoration and enhancement projects are continually implemented and completed by the County. Conservation research is also conducted on open space lands by County partners.

