



Tree planting hosted by County Park Rangers at Sycamore Canyon and Goodan Ranch Preserve

Land Stewardship and Environmental Education

Land management and stewardship activities took place on all DPR properties in 2024. The County protects preserve land through habitat restoration, invasive plant and animal control, replacement tree planting and inventory, access control, fire management, and environmental education. In 2024, adaptive management strategies included habitat restoration, invasive plant and animal species treatment, and public access control.

Environmental education is a critical component of land stewardship. Thousands of visitors learn about the incredible diversity of San Diego County's plant and animal species through presentations and programs, available at schools, parks, campgrounds, interpretive centers, camps, scout groups, and churches. These programs connect people to nature, thereby allowing residents and visitors to understand the importance of conserving natural resources, which helps to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards.

Biological Monitoring

Biological monitoring is a critical element in properly managing DPR's preserves. The County's monitoring program includes the Targeted Monitoring Plan (including baseline inventory surveys), research partnerships, and private mitigation lands monitoring. A total of 49 MSCP covered species have been observed on County Preserves through the monitoring efforts.

Threat assessments, habitat conditions and the presence of sensitive species are all identified during monitoring surveys. Monitoring results help DPR respond quickly to any threats that may be affecting sensitive species, in addition to identifying when site conditions have changed, and management methods should be modified.

Habitat Restoration and Enhancement

DPR actively seeks grants to assist with preserve management and habitat restoration activities.

In 2024, grant-funded projects occurred at Dictionary Hill County Preserve, Otay Ranch County Preserve, Ramona Grasslands Preserve, Boulder Oaks Preserve, Sweetwater Regional Park, Sycamore Canyon and Goodan Ranch Preserve and Tijuana River Valley Regional Park.

Grant funding was provided by three Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) Proposition 68 grants, one State Coastal Conservancy Proposition 68 grant, two California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Proposition 1 grants, two TransNet Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP) grants, one U.S Navy Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program grant, two State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Border Water Quality Infrastructure grants, one California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) Proposition 84 River Parkways grant and one CDFW Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) 30x30 grant.

The Project at Dictionary Hill County Preserve funded through the Wildlife Conservation Board Proposition 68 Grant will restore and enhance habitat on Dictionary Hill Preserve to benefit coastal California gnatcatcher and other coastal sage scrub dependent species. The Project's four-year goal is the treatment and removal of large stands of



Least Bell's Vireo

invasive non-native plants as well as the installation of 1,750 coastal sage scrub plants and native plant seed mix to expand existing nesting and foraging habitat for coastal California gnatcatcher, Quino checkerspot butterfly and monarch butterfly species.

The Project at Sycamore Canyon and Goodan Ranch Preserve funded through the California Department of Fish and Wildlife 30X30 Grant Program will implement invasive non-native plant species removal and habitat restoration within Sycamore Canyon and Goodan Ranch Preserve. The project objectives include the removal of invasive non-native plants within approximately 290 acres of the Preserve, restoration and enhancement of chaparral and coastal sage scrub habitats, maintenance of San Diego thornmint, variegated dudleya, and willowy monardella populations, fire risk reduction and resiliency, and promotion of native plant recruitment within the Preserve.

Partnerships and Research

Monitoring and research partnership projects assist DPR with stewardship and adaptive management strategies by identifying new biological threats as well as determining which management methods are appropriate for various habitats and situations.

A total of 19 research projects were conducted across 32 DPR Preserves in 2024. Monitoring and research topics included Harbison's dun skipper, arroyo toad, western spadefoot toad, southwestern pond turtle, coastal California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo, burrowing owl, coastal cactus wren, southwestern willow flycatcher, tricolored blackbird,

American badger, mountain lion, Englemann oak and Orcutt's brodiaea.

Research occurred on DPR preserves through the DPR's right of entry (ROE) permit process. ROE's were granted to federal and state agencies, local universities, museums, and environmental organizations.

North County and East County MSCP Plan Areas

The County continues its efforts with preserve land conservation in the entire County, not just within the MSCP South County Subarea Plan. The draft North County MSCP is currently under development and the East County MSCP will be developed in the future.

County Owned Preserve Land in all 3 MSCP Plan Areas, as of Dec. 31, 2024		
MSCP Plan Area	Acreage acquired since 1998*	Total acquired by County in Plan Area*
South County	8,830	14,297
North County	16,580	25,828
East County	2,820	7,243
Total	28,230	47,368
*Assessor Acreage		

INFORMATION

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Visit us at sdparks.org

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

San Diego County MSCP History

The Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) is a regional conservation program that balances the protection of preserve habitat and sensitive species with recreation, development, and agricultural activities within San Diego County. The MSCP protects habitats and species through acquisition, management, and monitoring of dedicated preserves.

The County, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Wildlife Agencies), established the MSCP South County Subarea Plan in 1997 to provide habitat and wildlife corridors for 85 native plants and animals – many of them threatened and endangered species.

Benefits

This 50-year agreement preserves, protects, and connects the most valuable biological habitats while allowing development to occur in less sensitive areas. The MSCP safeguards sensitive biological habitats and allows for passive recreational and trail opportunities in areas that would have less impact on native ecosystems. Visitors learn about the vital role of conservation through a variety of environmental education activities that encourage connections with nature.

2024 Key Accomplishments

At the close of 2024, the County celebrated 27 years of implementing the MSCP.

LAND ACQUISITION

- As of December 31, 2024, County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) owns and/or manages approximately 47,370 acres within all three MSCP Plan areas.
- In 2024, 1,130 acres were acquired by DPR across all three MSCP Plan areas.
- The MSCP South County Subarea Plan Preserve has assembled 81,566 acres (83%) of the proposed 98,379-acre Preserve, all through County, State and Federal agencies, and private conservation partner acquisitions.
- County preserve lands contribute 13,729 acres to the MSCP South County Subarea Plan Preserve.
- Another 6,783 acres were preserved as Private Mitigation Lands.

*Assessor Acreage



San Miguel Savory

HABITAT RESTORATION AND PROTECTION

- A total of 13 grant-funded restoration projects, totaling \$23.6M, across 7 County preserve lands benefited MSCP covered species including San Diego thornmint, variegated dudleya, willowy monardella, coastal California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo, coastal cactus wren, northern harrier, Cooper's hawk, golden eagle, light-footed Ridgway's rail, arroyo toad, southwestern pond turtle, southern mule deer, and mountain lion.
- Restoration projects included habitat restoration, access control, invasive non-native plant control, and trail alignment.
- Targeted Monitoring Plan habitat restoration in MSCP.

MONITORING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

- DPR has a robust monitoring program with 49 MSCP covered species in County preserves.
- In 2024, DPR hosted approximately 750 programs with 21,000 people in attendance.
- In 2024, the County offered a wide range of educational programs including Hawktober and Hawk Talk, Hike-a-Thon, Discovery Program, Story Trails for Green Friday, TRACK Trails Program, Astronomy Programs, San Diego Festival of Science & Engineering, and Nature Explorers Program.

County of San Diego Preserved Land

DPR manages, maintains, and monitors approximately 47,370 acres of preserve lands. DPR continually implements habitat restoration and enhancement projects, along with environmental educational outreach efforts. In addition, conservation research is performed on preserve lands by County partners.



New land acquisition at Sweetwater Regional County Park

MSCP South County Subarea Plan Highlights LAND ACQUISITION

Since 1998, DPR preserve lands that were acquired or expanded have conserved 49 MSCP covered species. The County has acquired (through acquisitions, management agreements, or leveraged funding) a total of 13,729 acres of preserve lands in the MSCP Subarea Plan.

