



Educational event at Oakoasis County Preserve

## Land Stewardship and Environmental Education

Management and stewardship activities took place on all DPR properties in 2022, with the ultimate goal of protecting MSCP-covered habitats and species. The Strategies are dynamic and implemented based on the results. In 2022, 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 as thousands of park visitors to DPR properties were made aware of the incredible diversity of San Diego County's plant and animal species. The visitors learned how to protect native plants and animals for future generations through actions that can take place both on conserved lands and at home.

## Biological Monitoring

Biological monitoring is a critical element in properly managing DPR's preserves. The County's monitoring program includes the Targeted Monitoring Program (including baseline inventory surveys), research partnerships and private mitigation lands monitoring. A total of 47 MSCP-covered species have been observed on County preserves through biological monitoring efforts.

Threat assessments, habitat conditions and the presence of sensitive species are all identified during monitoring surveys. Monitoring results helps 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 restoration activities.

In 2022, grant-funded projects occurred at Dictionary Hill County Preserve, Sweetwater Regional Park, Lakeside Linkage County Preserve, Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch County Preserve, Tijuana River Valley Regional Park, and Otay Ranch County Preserve.

Grant funds were provided by four Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) Proposition 68 grants, one State Coastal Conservancy Proposition 68 grant, two CDFW Proposition 1 grants, one San Diego River Conservancy (SDRC) Proposition 1 grant, and one California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) Proposition 84 River Parkways grant.

At Dictionary Hill County Preserve, habitat restoration and enhancement for coastal California gnatcatcher habitat included treatment of invasive, non-native plant species and installation of 1,750 coastal sage scrub (CSS) plant species. It also entailed dispersal of 25 pounds of Quino checkerspot butterfly host plant/nectar species seed mix, 25 pounds of monarch butterfly host plant/nectar species seed mix, and 175 pounds of CSS seed mix over 4 acres of disturbed CSS.



California Coast Gnatcatcher

At Sweetwater Regional Park, restoration and enhancement of the riparian and adjacent upland habitat of Morrison Pond included treatment and removal of invasive, non-native plant species, the planting of native trees, and habitat restoration including the installation of cactus, 3,450 CSS species and approximately 135 pounds of CSS seed mix over approximately 3.45 acres, which benefit several MSCP-covered species including coastal California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo and coastal cactus wren.

## 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 14 research projects were conducted across 25 DPR preserves in 2022. Monitoring and research topics included arroyo toad, southwestern pond turtle, coastal California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo, borrowing owl, rare plants, and a variety of other MSCP-covered species and habitats.

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

## North County and East County MSCP Plan Areas

The adopted South County, draft North County and future East County MSCP Plan Areas cover the unincorporated county. The County continues its efforts with preserve land conservation in all three Plan Areas.

### County Owned Open Space Land in all 3 MSCP Plan Areas, as of Dec. 31, 2022

MSCP Plan Area	Acreage acquired since 1998	Total acquired by County in Plan Area
South County	8,480	13,946
North County	15,370	24,598
East County	2,820	7,246
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,670</b>	<b>45,790</b>

### INFORMATION



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## Multiple Species Conservation Program

# 2022 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 streamlining development to occur in less sensitive areas. The MSCP also allows for passive recreational and trail opportunities in less sensitive areas. Visitors learn about the vital role of conservation through a variety of environmental education activities that encourage connections with nature.

## 2022 Key Accomplishments

At the close of 2022, the County celebrated 25 years of implementing the MSCP.

## LAND ACQUISITION HIGHLIGHTS

- As of December 31, 2022, County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) owns and/or manages approximately 45,000 acres within all three MSCP Plan areas.
- In 2022, 1,020 acres were acquired by DPR across all three MSCP Plan areas.
- The MSCP South County Subarea Plan Preserve has assembled 80,108 acres (81%) of the proposed 98,379-acre Preserve, all through County, Wildlife Agency and private conservation partner acquisitions.
- County preserve lands contribute 13,380 acres to the MSCP South County Subarea Plan Preserve.



Coastal Cactus Wren

- As of December 31, 2022, 6,562 acres have been preserved as Private Mitigation Lands in the MSCP South County Subarea Plan, including 48 acres preserved in 2022.

## HABITAT RESTORATION HIGHLIGHTS

- A total of nine grant-funded restoration projects, benefited MSCP covered species, such as coastal California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo, coastal cactus wren, orange-throated whiptail, northern harrier, Cooper's hawk, arroyo toad, southwestern pond turtle, and San Diego fairy shrimp.
- Restoration projects included habitat restoration, access control, invasive non-native plant control, and trail alignment.
- Adaptive management performed through implementation of the Targeted Monitoring Plan included invasive non-native plant treatment to benefit MSCP covered species, including Otay tarplant, San Miguel savory, and variegated dudleya.

## MONITORING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

- DPR has a robust monitoring program and has observed 46 MSCP covered species in County preserves.
- In 2022, DPR hosted approximately 670 programs with 21,000 people in attendance.

- In 2022, DPR offered a wide range of popular educational programs again and included Hawktober and Hawk Talk, Park-ology, 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 45,000 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 Ramona Grasslands

## MSCP South County Subarea Plan Highlights

### LAND ACQUISITIONS

DPR grew the MSCP South County Preserve by 227 acres, as well as expanded Ramona Grasslands County Preserve, and conserved Diegan coastal sage scrub, chaparral and riparian habitats in XX. Since 1998, DPR preserves that were acquired or expanded have conserved a total of 46 MSCP covered species.

