Merkel & Associates, Inc.
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July 21, 2014
M&A #09-048-01

Ms. Cheryl Goddard
Department of Parks and Recreation
County of San Diego
9150 Chesapeake Drive, Suite 200
San Diego, CA 92123

Re: Year 5, 2nd Quarterly Progress Report for the Salt Creek Coastal Cactus Wren Habitat Enhancement/Restoration Project

Dear Cheryl:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a progress report of the Salt Creek Coastal Cactus Wren Habitat Enhancement/Restoration Project. Merkel & Associates (M&A) visited the site on July 9, 2014. Both the 1.0-acre and 0.4-acre areas continue to thrive. Most of the cacti looked healthy, and there appears to be several new plants that have originated from detached stem segments (i.e., joints) from planted cacti. Native plants continue to fill in the space between cacti at both sites. Coastal sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*) ranges from 2 to 14 inches in height, and flat-top buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum* var. *fasciculatum*) ranges from 3 to 6 inches in height. Other native species occurring between cacti included San Diego viguiera (*Bahiopsis laciniata*), matchweed (*Guiterrezia sarothrae*), and broom baccharis (*Baccharis sarothroides*). Weed coverage was minimal and included tocalote (*Centaurea melitensis*) and short-pod mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*).

Two additional cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) nests were observed at the 1.0-acre site since our last visit. A total of four nests have been recorded at the site. Three of the four nests are presumed to be roosting nests, while the fourth nest may have been used for breeding. Cactus wren typically breed from mid-March through early June. Other sensitive species observed within the restoration effort include San Diego desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida intermedia*) and orangethroat whiptail (*Aspidoscelis hyperythra beldingi*). The whiptail was observed for the first time during this quarterly site visit.

Photos of the restoration areas area attached for your review. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at Kince@merkelinc.com or (858) 560-5465.

Sincerely,

Kyle L. Ince
Project Biologist

PHOTO PAGES

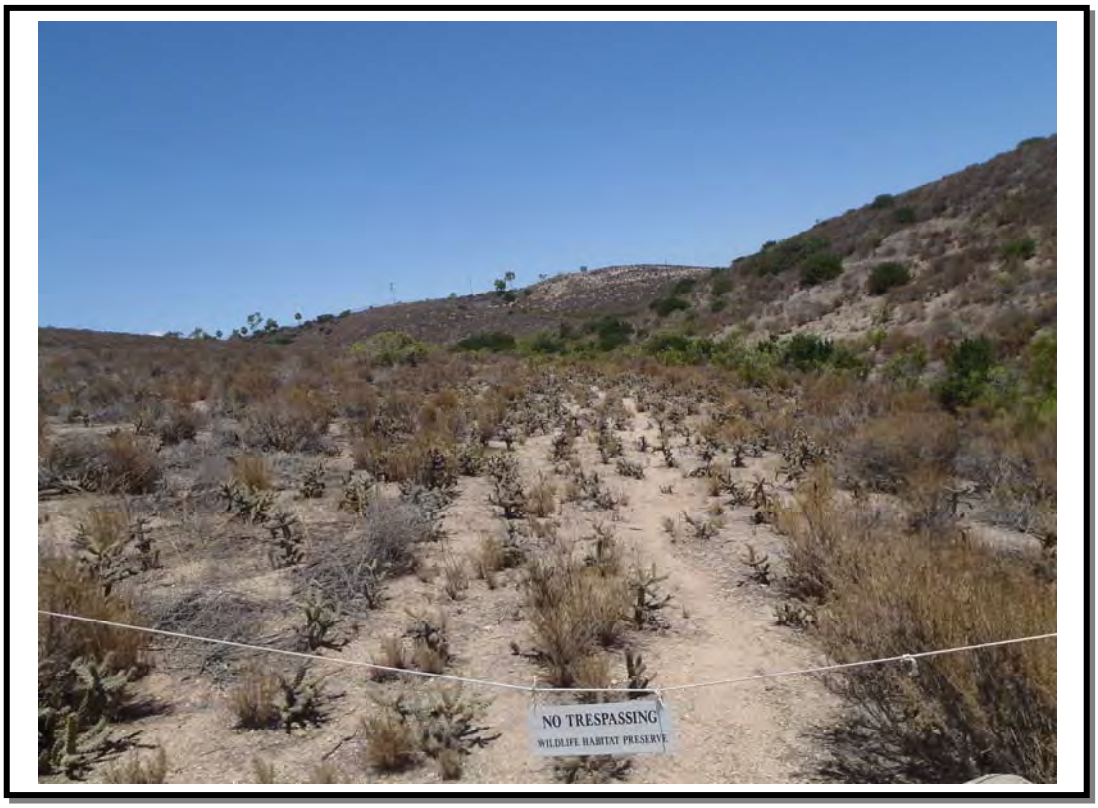

Photo Point 1. Viewing east at 0.4-acre site.

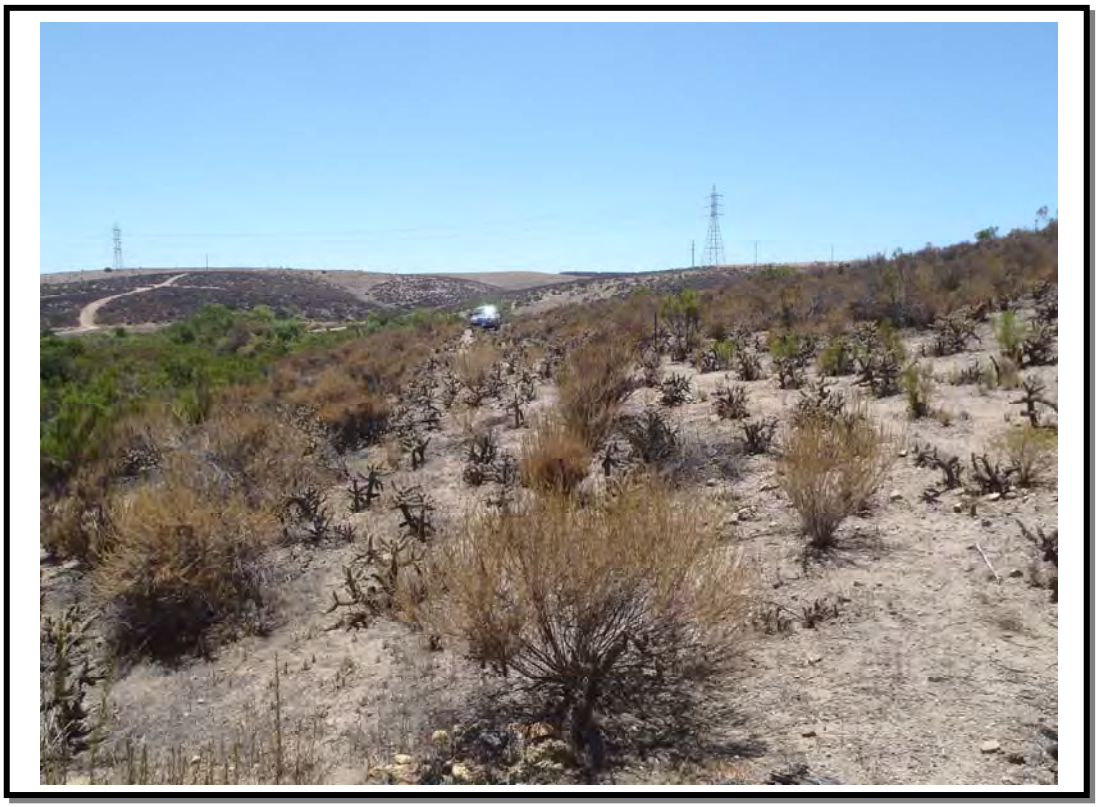

Photo Point 2. Viewing west at 0.4-acre site.

Photo Point 3. New cactus originating from detached stem segment from planted cactus at 0.4-acre site.

Photo Point 4. Flat-top buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum* var. *fasciculatum*) in flower at 0.4-acre site. Plant presumed to have originated from introduced seed mix.

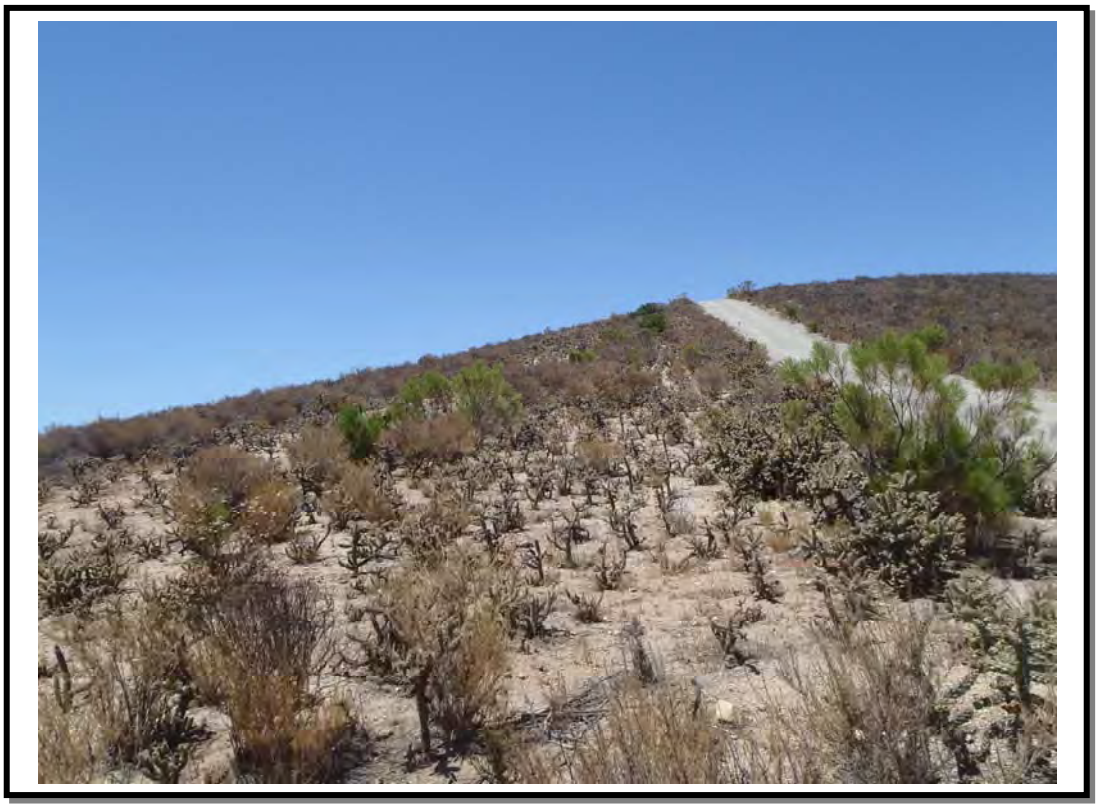

Photo Point 5. Viewing north at 1.0-acre site.

Photo Point 6. Viewing south at 1.0-acre site.

Photo Point 7. Coastal cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) nest at 1.0-acre site.

Photo Point 8. Coastal cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) nest at 1.0-acre site.

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October 14, 2014
M&A #09-048-01

Ms. Cheryl Goddard
Department of Parks and Recreation
County of San Diego
9150 Chesapeake Drive, Suite 200
San Diego, CA 92123

Re: Year 5, 3rd Quarterly Progress Report for the Salt Creek Coastal Cactus Wren Habitat Enhancement/Restoration Project

Dear Cheryl:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a progress report of the Salt Creek Coastal Cactus Wren Habitat Enhancement/Restoration Project. Merkel & Associates (M&A) visited the site on October 9, 2014. Despite the lack of rainfall and unseasonably warm temperatures, most of the vegetation within the 1.0-acre and 0.4-acre restoration sites appeared to be healthy. This includes most of the small, young coastal sage scrub plants that have grown between the planted cacti at the 0.4-acre site. Winter rains should promote their growth and further blend this area with the adjacent native habitat. It has become difficult to distinguish between the 1.0-acre restoration site and the adjacent native habitat.

No weeds were observed within the restoration areas. Quantitative data obtained during the annual monitoring survey conducted in September revealed that native vegetative cover has increased from 62.0 percent in 2013 to 66.0 percent in 2014. In addition, the average height of cacti in the restored areas has also increased from 16.3 inches in 2013 to 19.5 inches in 2014. Both the increase in native vegetative cover and cacti height is somewhat surprising given the lack of rainfall in the area. More detailed information will be provided in the forthcoming 5th annual monitoring report.

Native seed (primarily flat-top buckwheat) was collected by the maintenance crew from areas within and adjacent to the restoration sites. This seed will be sown in bare areas of the restoration sites just prior to a predicted rainfall event.

No additional cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) nests were observed at the 1.0-acre site since the last monitoring visit. A total of four nests have been recorded at this site. The scat of black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*) was observed during this site visit. Other sensitive species previously observed within the restoration areas include San Diego desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida intermedia*) and orangethroat whiptail (*Aspidoscelis hyperythra beldingi*).

Photos of the restoration areas are attached for your review. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at Kince@merkelinc.com or (858) 560-5465.

Sincerely,

Kyle L. Ince
Project Biologist

PHOTO PAGES

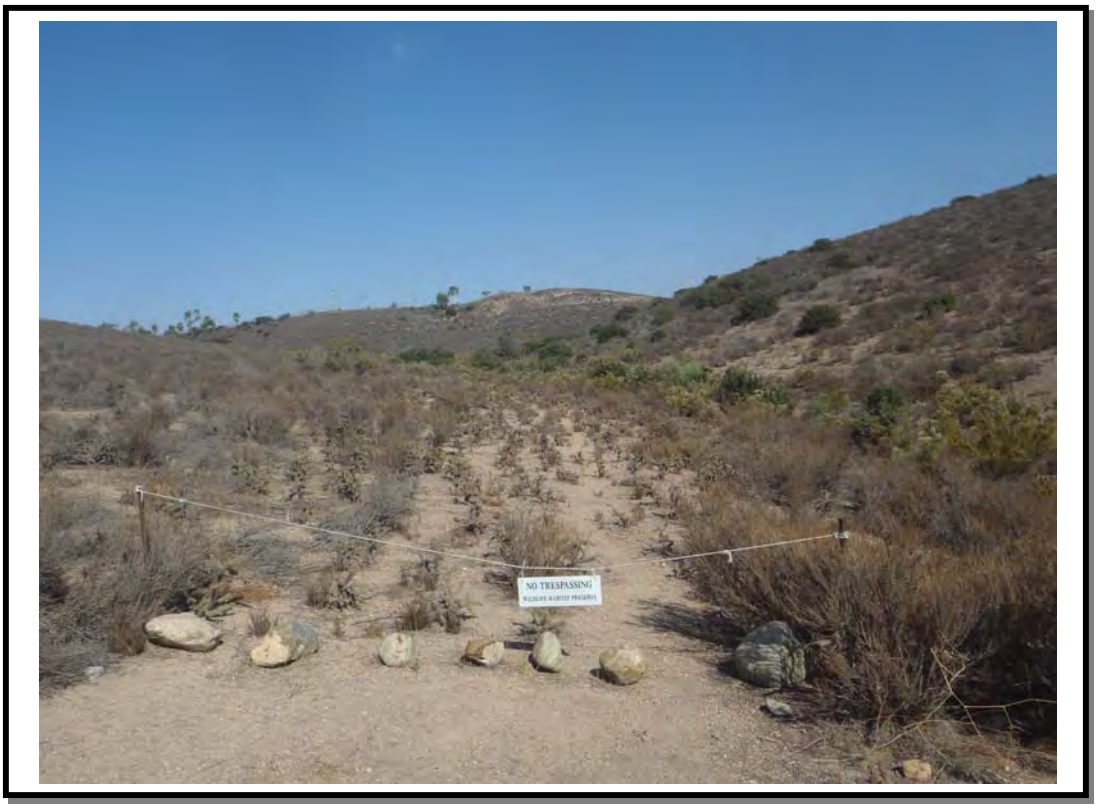

Photo Point 1. Viewing east at 0.4-acre restoration site.

Photo Point 2. Planted coast cholla (*Cylindropuntia prolifera*) surrounded by coastal sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*) seedlings at the 0.4-acre site.

Photo Point 3. Viewing east at the 0.4-acre restoration site. Note coastal sage scrub plants occurring between planted cacti.

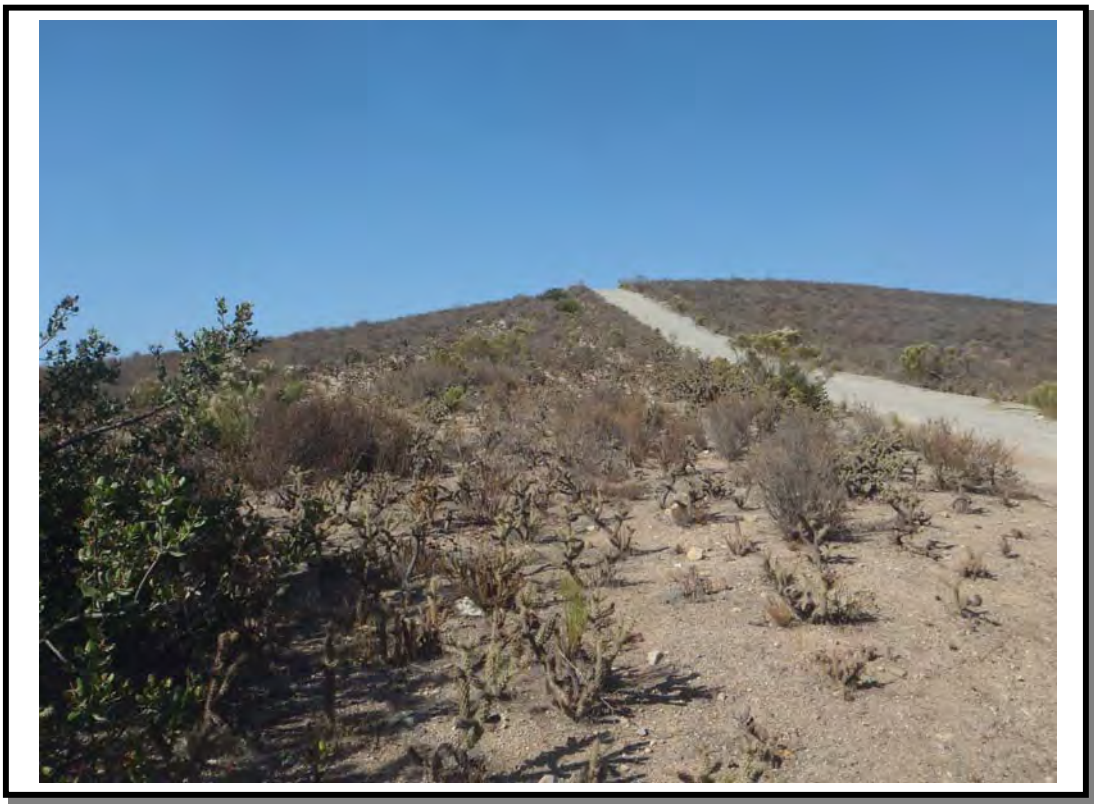

Photo Point 4. Viewing north at the 1.0-acre restoration site. The planted vegetation appears to visually blend in with the adjacent native habitat.

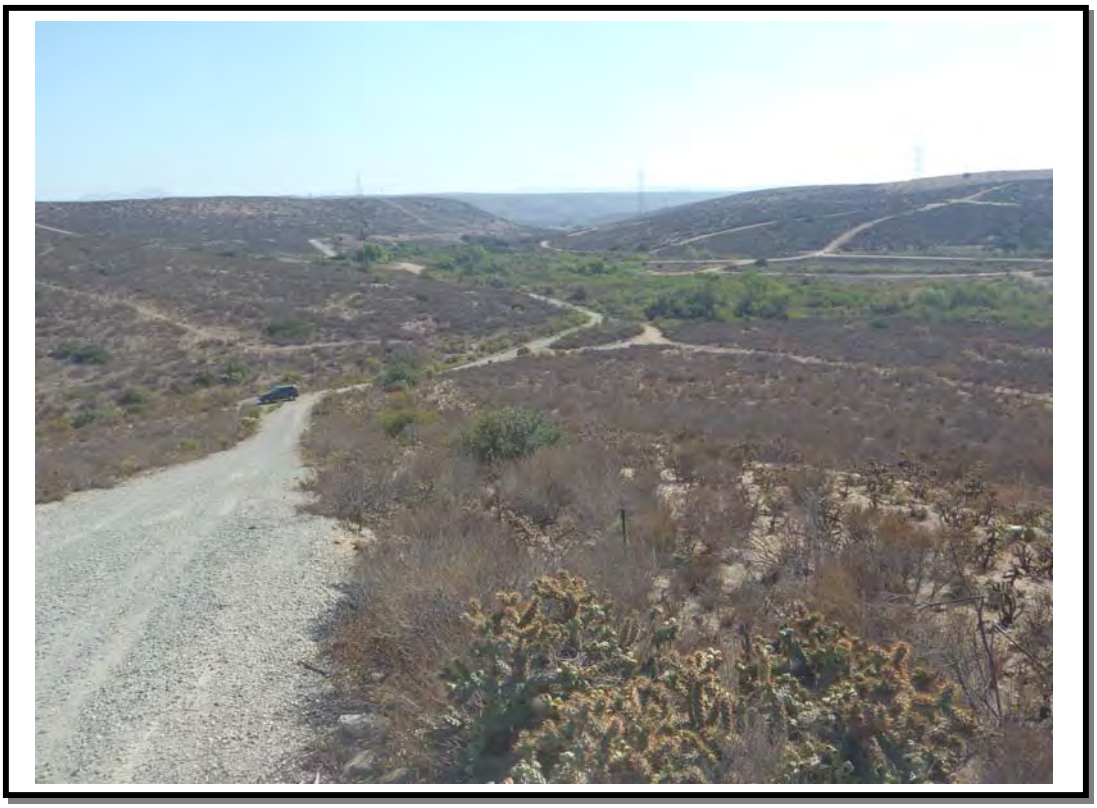

Photo Point 5. Viewing south at the 1.0-acre restoration site.

Photo Point 6. Coastal cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) nest at the 1.0-acre restoration site.