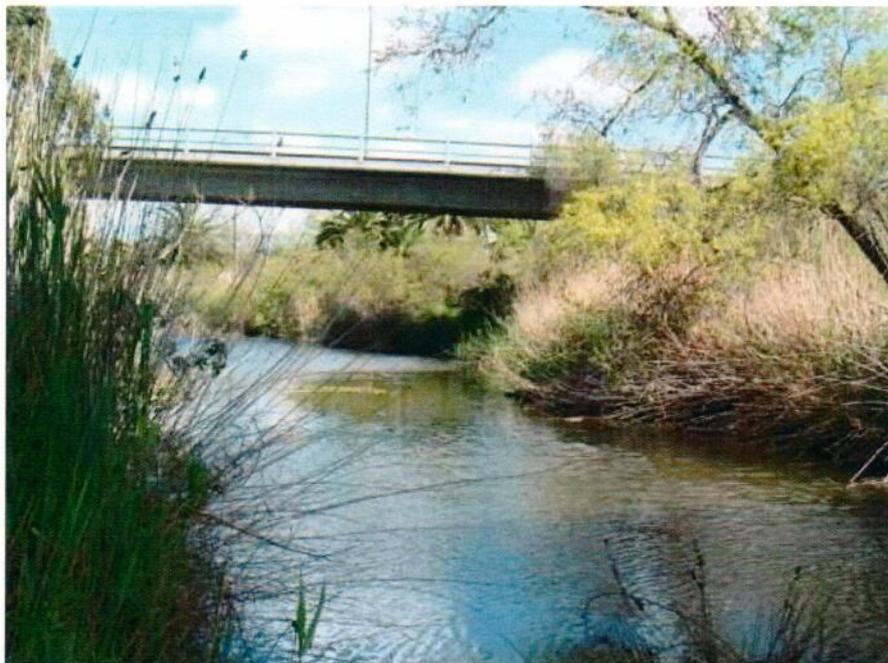




Final Report for the TransNet Environmental Mitigation Program Mission Valley Preserve Project

(Project No. 1200372)



Final Report

**Report prepared for the San Diego Association of Governments TransNet Environmental Mitigation
Program**

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I. Project Overview

The yearlong Mission Valley Preserve grant (project number 1200372) was given notice to proceed on April 16, 2012 and concluded April 15, 2013. The grant scope included invasive non-native plant removal of Brazilian pepper trees (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) and Mexican fan palm trees (*Washingtonia robusta*) and access control through patrols, re-vegetation, fencing and signage within the 51-acre preserve. Community engagement was an intrinsic element of the project implemented through stewardship projects such as clean-ups and invasive plant removal events as well as the Park Watch park patrol program. Maintenance and monitoring was performed through the San Diego River Park Foundation's (SDRPF) RiverBlitz surveys in April and October as well as weekly patrols by volunteers and site visits by project staff. Further invasive monitoring occurred in conjunction and coordination with City staff.

This is the final report and includes summaries of task results.

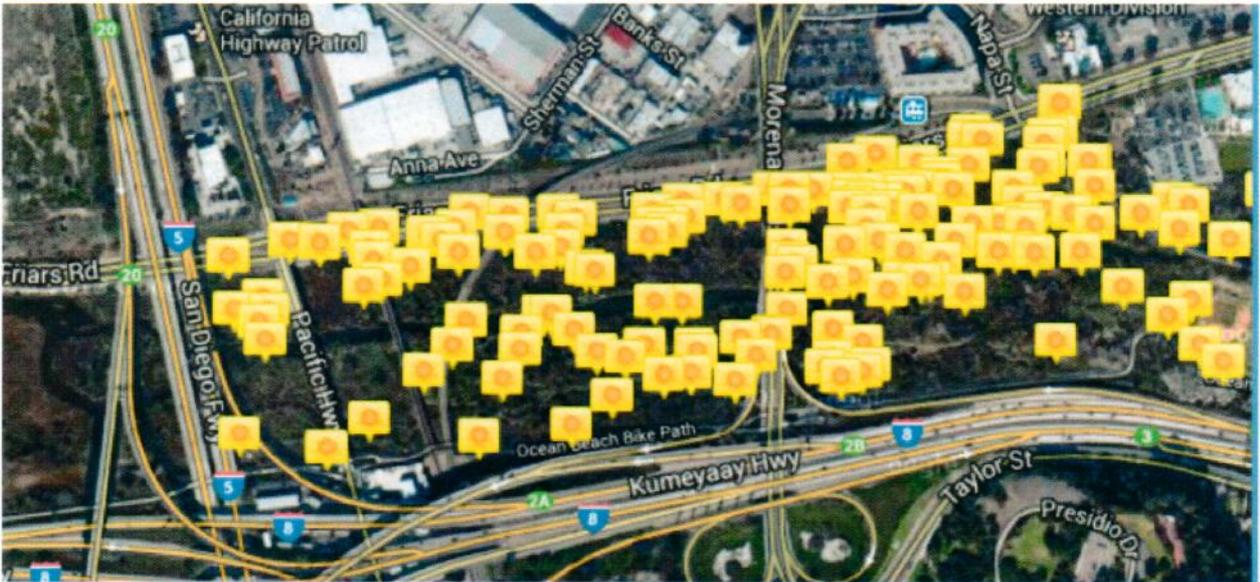
II. Project Update by Task

Task 1. Project Coordination, Invoicing and Reporting

The final quarter included invoice revisions, preparation of the final report and invoice. With Senior Ranger Tracey Walker returning to duty, a Stakeholder Task Force meeting was held for Mission Valley Preserve on March 21, 2013 and led to update and finalization of a responsible party map with contact information. The meeting sign in sheet is included in deliverables documentation. The Foundation continued its coordination with Ranger Quinn in regard to communications, regulation enforcement and patrols with the Police Department and Homeless Outreach Team (HOT). Coordination with the Friends of Mission Valley Preserve group continued through informal on-site meetings and electronic communications.

Task 2. Debris Removal

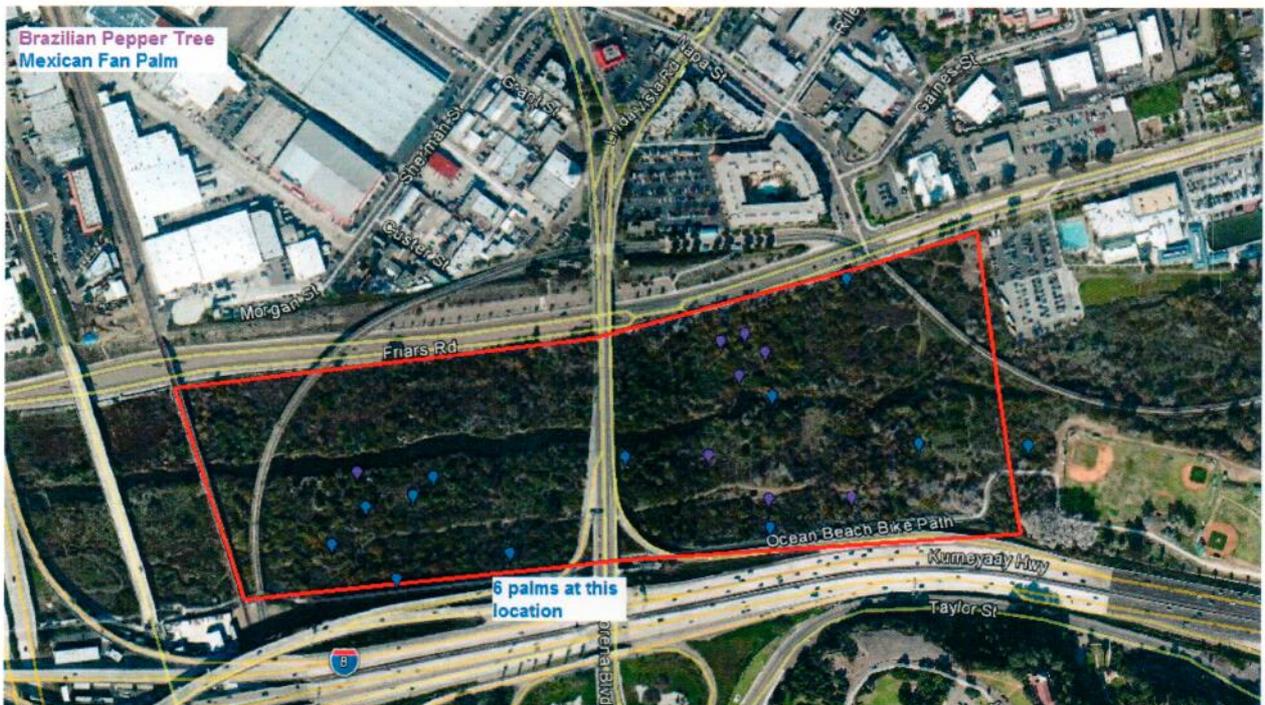
The 4 community clean-ups and 3 follow-up clean-ups funded through this project removed 32,540 lbs. of trash, recyclable material and e-waste from within Mission Valley Preserve Boundaries. The removal of on average more than 1 ton of trash per month demonstrates the level of waste and the necessity of clean-ups on a regular, consistent and coordinated basis within the preserve. All sites initially identified during April 2012 and October 2012 surveys were cleaned up. Please see following page for map of removed sites.



Task 2. Map of debris sites removed through community clean-ups as part of this project.

Task 3. Invasive Removal

This project targeted 17 Mexican fan palms and 8 Brazilian pepper trees. In fact, 11 Brazilian pepper trees were removed and treated through the project due to efficiency and time available. A total of 13,374 square feet of invasive non-native cover was removed from the preserve, predominantly from the Brazilian pepper trees.



Task 3. Map of invasive plants removed through this project.

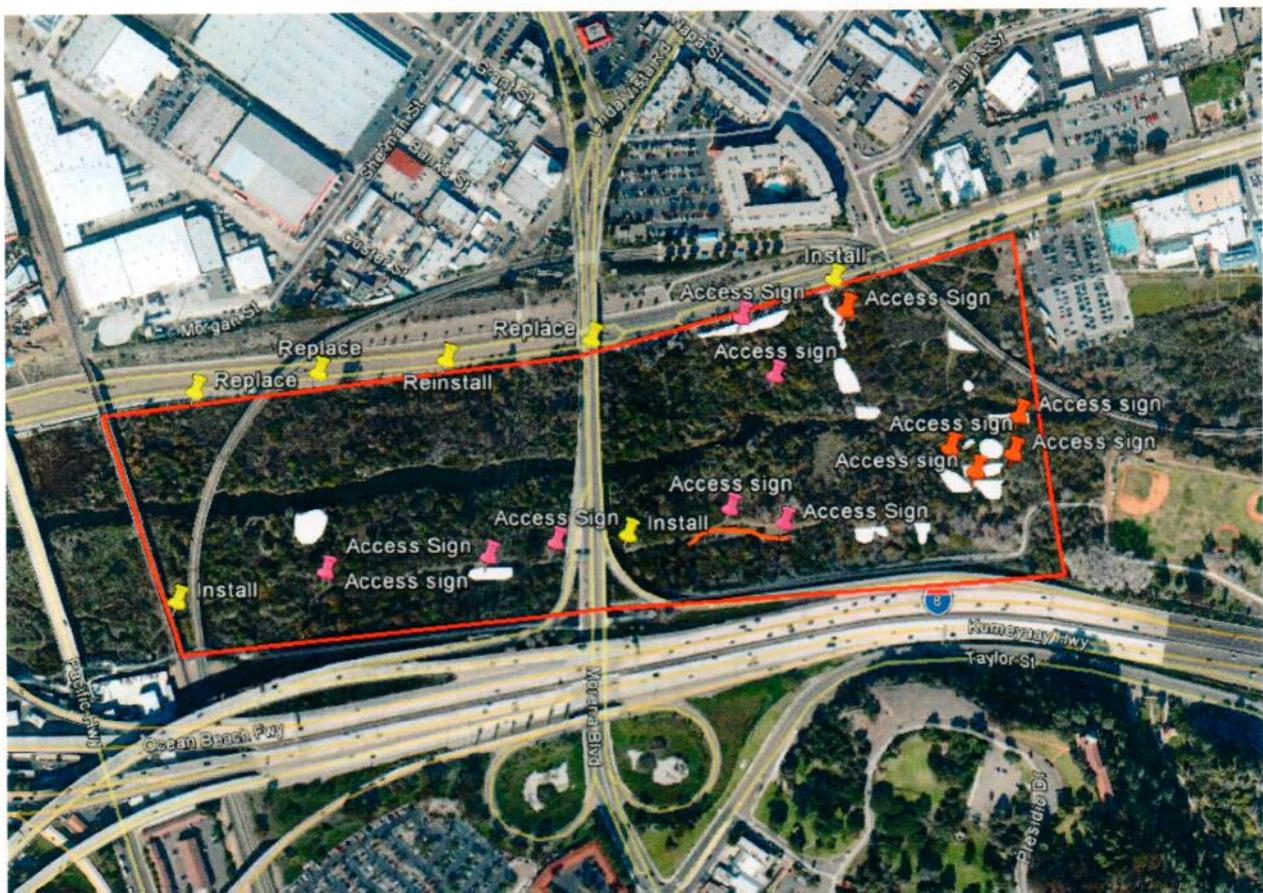
All Mexican Fan Palms targeted were removed or treated based on initial treatment plan, 4 Mexican Fan Palms not indicated on map above at 3 locations were left in place as part of the treatment efficacy monitoring effort to determine whether they remained co-located with camps in comparison to treated Mexican Fan Palms. The monitoring results are discussed in Task 6.

Task 4. Volunteer Coordination

Volunteer coordination including recruitment, training and volunteer follow-up was an important component to success of the overall project. Over 700 volunteers participated in one or more events during the course of the project assisting with Park Watch patrols, RiverBlitz surveys, invasive non-native plant removal and clean-up events. All ten volunteer site captains trained through this project continue their involvement in leading events within the preserve.

Task 5. Access Control

The access control signage along with planting of native species helped to restore eight degraded camp sites totaling restoration of 1.13 acres within the preserve to natural habitat. 500 feet of temporary access control fencing was installed through the project and helped to protect these restoration areas from reestablishment of camps and kept foot traffic off the paths. An additional 400 feet of permanent peeler log fencing was planned at the southeastern boundary of the preserve to close illegal trails and camp access, but due to adjacent property manager



Task 5. Map of access control efforts.

staff changes after our Right of Entry request submission, processing of the request took in excess of the three projected months and was not approved during the project timeline. Even with the fencing setback, one mile of illegal trails were closed off during the project.



Task 5. Volunteers installing native plants in degraded former campsite.

Task 6. Maintenance and Monitoring

Park Watch continued outings on a regular schedule throughout the project documenting use, graffiti, and vandalism and camp sites. Park Watch proved helpful in reporting information to River Park Foundation staff for action on items including scheduling clean-ups and informing Park Rangers of new camps.

The initial camp and Mexican fan palm co-location monitoring documented 7 camp sites active or inactive in close proximity to 7 Mexican fan palm trees. Palm and camp co-location monitoring at the end of the project indicated that none of the treated trees had any camp co-locations and 2 of the 3 sites with remaining Mexican fan palms did have camps co-located.

The final RiverBlitz of Mission Valley Preserve as part of the project indicated a 25% reduction in trash volume over the initial survey (from all new sites, since every site had been cleaned between surveys) and verified that sites where Mexican fan palms or Brazilian pepper trees

were treated and or removed had no camp or litter co-located. It also documented a 60% reduction in total campsites within Mission Valley Preserve over the project period (22 compared to 56) and a 44% reduction in 6 months (22 compared to 33). Canary Island date palms were the predominate locations for current camps along with Brazilian pepper trees that were not part of the scope of this project.

The final RiverBlitz survey was initially planned for the end of March, but due to staffing and volunteer scheduling, this was rescheduled for the first weekend in April.

III. Summary

Project showed success in coordination of resources, targeted invasive non-native removal and Park patrols are effective to produce more effective result of cleaning up river habitat and reducing the number of unauthorized camp sites 60%, restoring over an acre of habitat and closing a mile of unauthorized trails within the preserve. This restoration effort made progress, but the site still requires additional time and funding for removal of Canary Island date palm and additional Brazilian pepper trees along with other invasive non-native plants within the preserve. Because of City policy changes following the November elections, a letter for Right of Entry was not available and prevented submission of a follow-up project under SANDAG EMP this year. In a future round of funding, we hope to submit a project to continue and expand this effective program to include Canary Island date palms, Brazilian pepper trees and other invasives on a 2 year program. This project was initially proposed as a two year project, which would have allowed continuing Park Watch. We believe we would need additional funding to go after other camp associated invasive non-native species.