

Merkel & Associates, Inc.

5434 Ruffin Road, San Diego, CA 92123

Tel: 858/560-5465 • Fax: 858/560-7779

e-mail: associates@merkeline.com

June 11, 2010
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: 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 to document enhancement/restoration activities at the Salt Creek Coastal Cactus Wren Habitat Enhancement/Restoration Project.

Merkel & Associates restoration crews salvaged cactus cuttings/plants from November 30, 2009 through December 11, 2009. Cuttings and plants were obtained throughout the POM managed salt creek area within locations that were known to be outside occupied cactus wren habitat. The cactus cuttings/plants were stock piled in small groupings throughout an approximately 1.0-acre planting area and were left to callous from December 12, 2009 to January 6, 2010. Planting occurred from January 6 through January 14, 2010. Plantings were installed on 2- to 3-foot centers throughout the restoration site. An estimated seven to ten thousand cactus plantings were installed. Native seed collected from the nearby area (i.e., southeast Chula Vista) was hand broadcasted over the site on January 14, 2010, just prior to a significant rainstorm event. Seed included approximately 15.0 lbs. of flat-top buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) and 10.0 lbs. of a mixture of California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), San Diego County viguiera (*Viguiera laciniata*), coastal deerweed (*Lotus scoparius*), and San Diego bursage (*Ambrosia chenopodiifolia*).

Following approval from the City of Chula Vista and the County, planting at an adjacent 0.4-acre disturbed area commenced on April 29, 2010. Approximately 500 cuttings were obtained from unoccupied habitat within the area. Cuttings were allowed to callous for a period of two weeks and were then planted in mid-May. All planting (and salvaging) ceased when a cactus wren established a nest immediately adjacent to this planting area. Cactus wren chicks were observed in this nest during a recent monitoring visit.

Periodic hand weeding has occurred at the 1.0-acre site since its installation. Weeds have included mostly tocalote (*Centaurea melitensis*) and short-pod mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*). Species that were introduced from the seed mix, including California sagebrush and San Diego bursage, were observed within the restoration area. Other native species such as fascicled tarplant (*Deinandra fasciculata*) and laciniate spineflower (*Chorizanthe fimbriata* ssp. *laciniata*) have naturally recruited

to the site. Most all the plantings look healthy and many have new vegetative growth. Hand weeding will continue to occur as needed to establish the cactus. Additional salvage and planting within the 0.4-acre area will occur during the Fall following the breeding season.

I have attached photos of the restoration sites for your review. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kyle L. Ince', followed by a stylized flourish.

Kyle L. Ince
Project Biologist

PHOTO PAGES



Photo Point 1. Viewing north from the southern end of the 1.0-acre restoration site prior to planting.



Photo Point 2. Viewing south at the southern half of the 1.0-acre restoration site prior to planting.



Photo Point 3. Viewing south at the southern portion of the 1.0-acre restoration site following planting.



Photo Point 4. Viewing south at the northern half of the 1.0-acre restoration site following planting.



Photo Point 5. Habitat restoration crews planting cactus at the 1.0-acre restoration site.

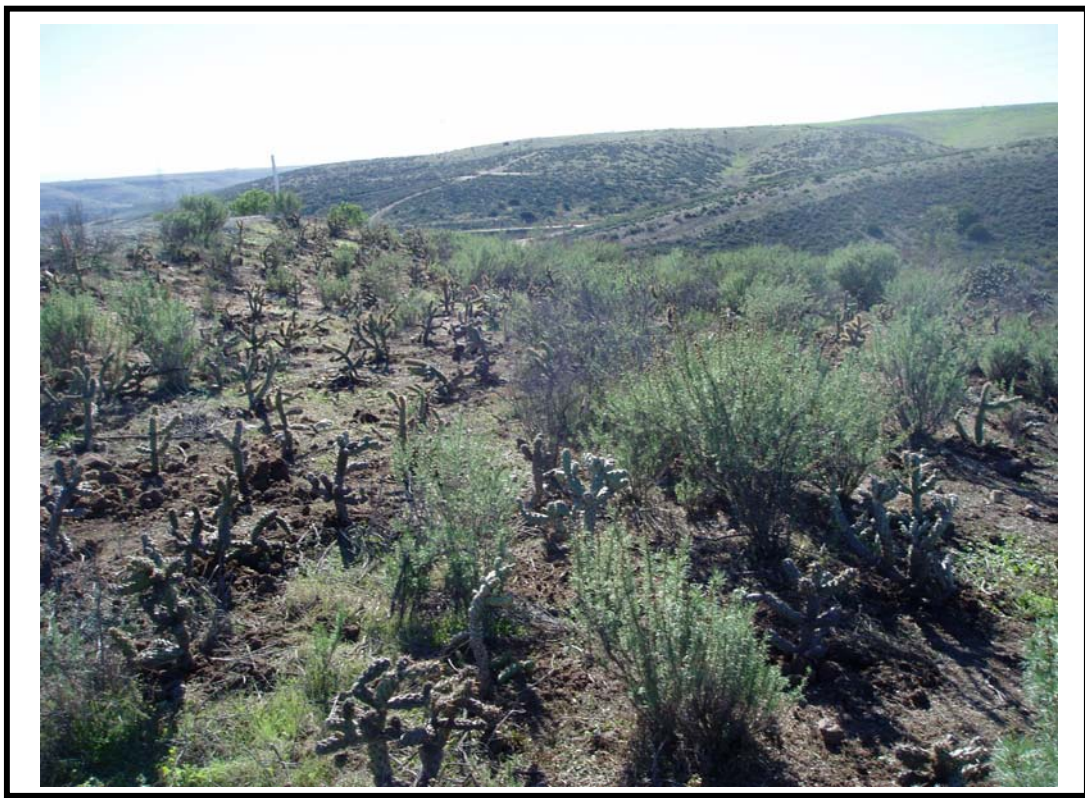


Photo Point 6. Viewing southwest at the northern portion of the 1.0-acre restoration site.



Photo Point 7. Viewing south from the northern end of the 1.0-acre restoration site.
Photo taken on May 24, 2010.



Photo Point 8. Viewing northeast at the eastern portion of the 0.4-acre restoration site following initial planting.