

**San Diego Association of Governments  
Otay Water District San Miguel Habitat Management  
Area Perimeter Fencing Restoration and Threat  
Reduction Project  
Otay Water District  
Quarterly Progress Report  
Reporting Period: April 1, 2024 – June 30, 2024  
Submission Date: July 22, 2024  
SANDAG Contract Number: S1125497**

## **Quarterly Status Report Overview**

**PLEASE DO NOT CHANGE OR ALTER THE FORMATTING OF THIS DOCUMENT!**

SANDAG has developed a standardized grant monitoring and tracking program for the Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP) Land Management Grant Program. The purpose is to collect information on individual projects and the grant program as a whole for reporting to the Regional Habitat Conservation Taskforce, SANDAG Policy Advisory Committees, and the SANDAG Board of Directors. SANDAG monitors grantees through invoices, progress reports, performance measures, and designated photograph points. These standardized reporting templates and instructions for submittal are included below.

**Work Performed this Period:**

**1. Task 1 - Public Outreach & Education Campaign**

Task 1 was initiated on May 2, 2023 and is considered to be complete as of this quarter.

Activity A. Agency Coordination. The District informed the Preserve Manager of the adjacent U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), San Diego National Wildlife Refuge (SDNWR) that the previously approved “No Trespassing” signs were installed on April 12. This activity is considered to be complete.

Activity B. Trail App Coordination. This activity was considered to be complete as of Quarter 4, Reporting Period January 1, 2024 thru March 31, 2024.

Activity C. Flyer Reproduction and Community Outreach. The District previously received approval from SANDAG for the community outreach flyer. The flyer was printed in January 2024 and is currently displayed at the District’s Headquarters at 2554 Sweetwater Springs Blvd, Spring Valley. It has also been distributed at the Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce. The following events were completed this quarter as part of the community outreach: South Bay Earth Day (April 2024), Spring Garden and Butterfly Festival (April 2024), and San Diego Mountain Biking Association (SDMBA) Board Meeting (May 2024). This activity is considered to be complete.

Included as Attachment 1 is a copy of the PowerPoint presentation prepared by M&A and the District for the in-person meeting with the SDMBA Board members on May 15, 2024. A summary of the questions and/or comments raised by SDMBA Board members and the District’s response is provided below:

Comment 1: What is the status of the vacant golf course?

Response to Comment 1: The southwestern portion of the vacant golf course is in escrow for sale by the District to a private developer who intends to convert the land to residential development.

Comment 2: Cutting of fences and/or trespassing is not approved or condoned by the SDMBA. People who engage in this activity are typically not associated with SDMBA. SDMBA partners with other landowners who have granted trail access to the public and they too have experienced an increase in unauthorized trail use, particularly since COVID-19. People want to be outside and that requires trail access. The HMA is no longer surrounded by undeveloped lands, rather residential development is everywhere and conversion of a portion of the vacant golf course to more residential development will only increase the pressures of trespassing and trail use by the public. The District should consider formalizing

**EMP Land Management Grants**  
*Quarterly Progress Report Template*

trails on this site, in particular along the SDG&E easements in the west and east as well as the access road at the northern and southern boundary.

Response to Comment 2: The District lands are private property and not open to the public. Establishment of public trails through District lands would have to be considered and approved by the District Board of Directors. In addition, if the trails are proposed to encroach into the HMA, the District would have to obtain approvals from the USFWS and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) since the HMA is a mitigation bank guided by the 1996 San Miguel HMA Mitigation Bank Establishment and Operating Procedures. Further, the District would have to discuss the formalization of the trails with the adjacent landowners including USFWS SDNWR and SDG&E. The results of this Grant program will be evaluated by District staff and provided to the District Board of Directors for review.

Comment 3: What is the cost of this grant? SDMBA recommends that the District look at other sites dealing with trespassing including Crestridge Ecological Reserve and Carlsbad Highlands Ecological Reserve. These landowners have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to prevent trespassing. Based on SDMBAs experience, people will go where they want regardless of fences, signs, and other deterrence efforts. In particular, it is difficult to close "legacy trails". SDMBA does partner with landowners who have authorized trail systems to help educate trail users and help maintain trails. SDMBA would be open to working with the District, as feasible if the District were to consider formalizing a trail system onsite.

Response to Comment 3: The grant amount awarded to the District is approximately \$78,000. In addition, as part of the operating requirements of the HMA, the District management obligations include perimeter fence and weed management. These costs have increased in recent years due to trespassing. The results of this Grant program will be evaluated by District staff and provided to the District Board of Directors for review. If the District Board of Directors want staff to evaluate trail options, staff will be sure to contact SDMBA, if needed.

Activity E. Retired Volunteer Service Patrol. M&A researched alternative options for additional patrol (since Volunteer Patrol is not available). In this effort, M&A, on behalf of the District formally submitted a Trespass Authorization Letter to the Chula Vista Police Department on April 18 requesting patrol and use so the Police Department can enforce trespassing violations. Absent acknowledgement of the request from the Police Department, no follow-up contact has occurred. This activity is considered complete.

## **2. Task 2 - HMA Illegal Entry Deterrence Efforts**

Task 2 was initiated on May 2, 2023 and is ongoing. Approximately 50% of the task is complete.

The District maintained contact with the private security company tentatively scheduled to patrol District property; however, due to contracting requirements, the private security company did not initiate patrol this quarter.

M&A initiated the first of three project monitoring events this quarter. In this effort, M&A staff installed 5 cell-enabled cameras enclosed within protective cases and mounted onto t-posts. This effort occurred on April 8 and April 12. The cameras were placed at West 1b, West 1a, North 2b, North 2a, and East 3b (see the attached Figure); they were activated on April 12. The camera at West 1a was vandalized near the end of the monitoring event; the t-post was bent and duct tape was placed over the camera lens. M&A revisited the site in June 2024 to fix the camera.

In addition, M&A restoration staff installed 100's of cactus cuttings at West 1b, West 1a, North 2b, and North 2a. Installation occurred on April 12 concurrent with the activation of the cell-enabled cameras. The cuttings were harvested from the HMA; they were either harvested the same day or previously collected in Quarter 3 and stored onsite. M&A restoration staff revisited the site in June 2024 and conducted site maintenance due to damage from trespassing.

Site photos during installation are included as an attachment.

## **3. Task 3 - Enhanced Site Signage**

Task 3 was initiated on May 2, 2023 and is considered to be complete as of this quarter.

SANDAG approved the offsite enhanced site signage with one minor modification on April 4, 2024. The onsite signage was previously approved by SANDAG in Quarter 2.

M&A initiated the first of three project monitoring events this quarter. The onsite and offsite signs (7 total) were produced by Sign It and installed by M&A on April 12. Photos are included as an attachment.

## **4. Task 4 - Camera Trap Monitoring**

Task 4 was initiated on May 2, 2023 and is ongoing. Approximately 50% of the task is complete.

M&A initiated the first of three project monitoring events on April 12, the 4-week period extended from April 12 to May 10. M&A has initiated review of the photo data. Photos of trespassers captured on camera during this first monitoring event are

## EMP Land Management Grants

### Quarterly Progress Report Template

included as an attachment; however, the full analysis of the data is expected to be included within the next quarterly report.

### Work Anticipated Next Period

This does not need to be task specific but should include a short paragraph or bullet point list of activities anticipated for next quarter.

- Complete data analysis of the first project monitoring event. The results are expected to be included within the next quarterly report.
- Initiate the second and third project monitoring events. These are expected to be complete by the end of the next quarter.
- Coordinate with District's private security company for patrols of HMA at times of maximum illegal entry based on results of baseline camera trap monitoring. Patrol is expected to begin concurrent with the start of the second monitoring event.
- Maintain deterrence efforts (e.g., cell-enabled cameras, cacti, signs) through completion of the project monitoring effort.

### Issues to Note

Please provide a brief description of any issue(s) encountered during the reporting period and any steps taken to address the issue(s).

- The cell-enabled camera at West 1a was vandalized during this quarter and stopped collecting data. The t-post was bent and duct tape was placed over the lens. M&A conducted maintenance in June. This is the same location where the baseline monitoring camera was stolen.

### Photographs & Figures

**Photographs and figures are invaluable!** Please include photos in the Quarterly Progress Reports and any figures (if applicable). Both photos and figures may be included throughout the document under corresponding tasks or at the end following the Issues to Note section. Photographs taken at the same place or photographic points (photo-points) can assist SANDAG staff in tracking the project's progress over time.

It is required that **Photographs include:**

- A before and after comparison sequence from the start to the completion of the project for photo points.
- A brief description of the corresponding tasks, date, and activity in the photograph.
- **A copy of each photograph included in the report submitted in a .jpeg or .png file format.**

It is required that **Figures include:**

- A caption with a brief description.

### SDMMP Project Page

To receive reimbursement for work conducted within the quarter, submission of Quarterly Progress, Annual, and Final Reports must be added to your project's Project

## EMP Land Management Grants

### Quarterly Progress Report Template

Page on the SDMMMP website. Add any necessary photographs to the photo carousel and fill out the photograph information. *Please contact Sarah McCutcheon ([smccutcheon@usgs.gov](mailto:smccutcheon@usgs.gov)) or Emily Perkins ([eperkins@usgs.gov](mailto:eperkins@usgs.gov)) if you are having trouble accessing or editing your project page.*

## Project Performance Measures Instructions

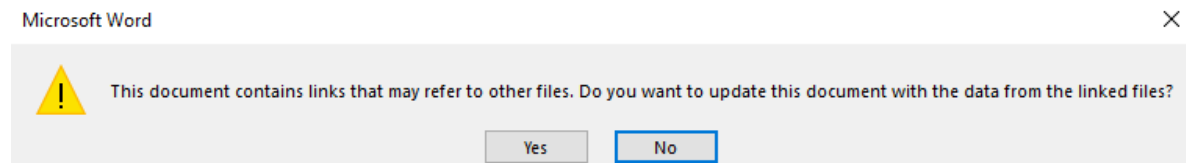
SANDAG will utilize the SANDAG Performance Measures to document compliance with the Project. Grantee's performance will be measured against the Performance Measures (Exhibit D) during the term of the project. More details on Performance Measures and Grant Recovery Plans are outlined in the Grant Agreements.

### To access the **Project Performance Measures Excel Spreadsheet:**

- Simply double-click on the Excel icon located under the *Project Performance Measures* section.
  - An excel sheet will open, please fill out and then click save.
- Once the Excel spreadsheet is saved, please exit Excel and the spreadsheet will automatically update the icon in the Quarterly Progress Report Word document.

### When opening the document with the **Project Performance Measures Excel Spreadsheet:**

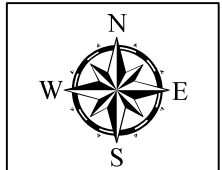
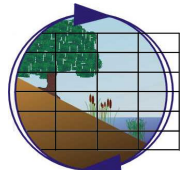
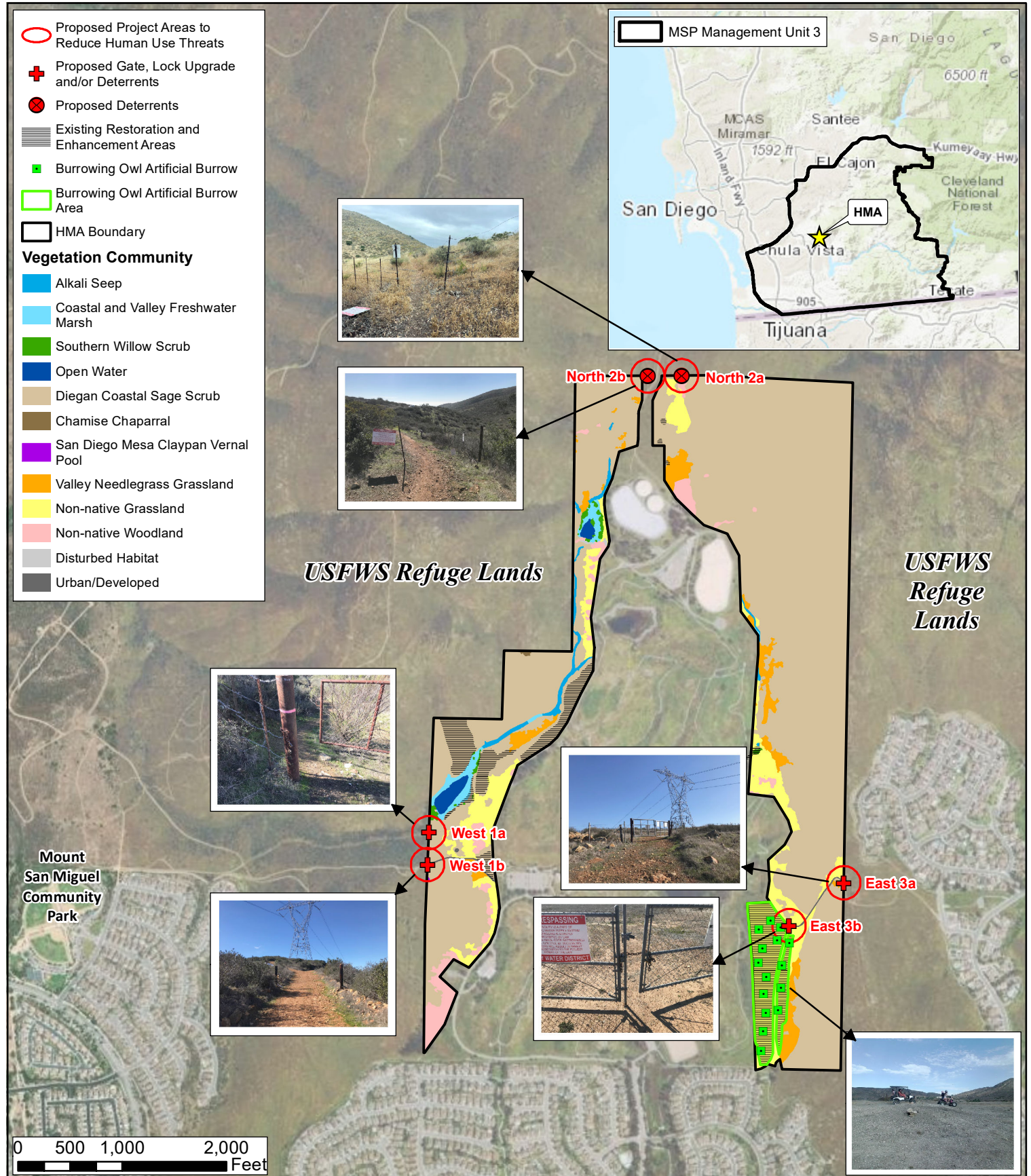
- When you first open the Quarterly Progress Report Template, a warning message will open (image of the warning message below)
  - Click Yes to update the links in the document.



## Performance Measures

Please include the Project's Performance Measures for each Quarterly Invoice and Progress Report in order to receive reimbursement.





**Threats Reduction TransNet EMP Land Management Grant**  
 Otay Water District San Miguel Habitat Management Area

Attachment - Photo Page



Photo 1 – Illegal Entry Point West 1b. Prior to installation of new gate and other site deterrents. Date: 6/15/2023 and directed west.



Photo 2 – After installation of all site deterrents: new gate, cell-enabled project monitoring camera (along the edge of the trail), new signage, and cactus cuttings. Date: 4/12/2024.



Photo 3 – Illegal Entry Point West 1b. Installation of deterrents. Date: 4/12/2024 and directed north.



Photo 4 – Illegal Entry Point West 1b. After installation of all site deterrents, similar to Photo Point 2 but directed east. Date: 4/12/2024.



Photo 5 – Illegal Entry Point West 1a. Prior to installation of new gate and other site deterrents. Date: 6/15/2023 and directed west.



Photo 6 – After installation of all site deterrents: new gate, cell-enabled project monitoring camera (along the edge of the trail), new signage, and cactus cuttings. Other perimeter repairs were completed as part of the regular HMA responsibilities (not funded by the Grant). Date: 4/12/2024.

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Photo 7 – Illegal Entry Point North 2b. Photo taken prior to installation of deterrents. Photo taken from USFWS lands and directed into the HMA. Date: 9/10/2021 and directed south.



Photo 8 – After installation of all site deterrents: cell-enabled project monitoring camera (in the HMA along the edge of the trail), new signage, and cactus cuttings. Fencing repaired as part of the regular responsibilities of the Otay Water District Lands (not funded by the SANDAG grant). Date: 4/12/2024.



Photo 9 – Illegal Entry Point North 2b. After installation of cactus within the illegally created trail. Photo taken from Otay Water District lands and directed north. Date: 4/12/2024.



Photo 10 – Illegal Entry Point North 2a. Prior to installation of site deterrents. Date: 6/15/2023 and directed north.



Photo 11 – Illegal Entry Point North 2a. After installation of deterrents: new signage and cactus. Fencing repaired as part of the regular responsibilities of the HMA (not funded by the SANDAG grant). Date: 4/12/2024.



Photo 12 – Same as Photo 11 but taken from USFWS lands and directed south into the HMA.

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Photo 13 – Illegal Entry Point East 3b. Prior to installation of site deterrents. Date: 4/12/2024 and directed west.



Photo 14 – Illegal Entry Point East 3b. After installation of site deterrents: new signage on perimeter fence and cell-enabled camera in background at Burrowing Owl burrow (see Photo 15)). Date: 4/12/2024 and directed west.



Photo 15 – Illegal Entry Point East 3b. During installation of cell-enabled camera. Date: 4/12/2024 and directed east.



Photo 16 – New Offsite signage installed near Illegal Entry Point West 1a. Date: 4/12/2024 and directed east.



Photo 17 – Close up view of Photo Point 16. New Offsite signage.



Photo 18 – New Offsite signage installed north of Illegal Entry Point North 2a. Date: 4/12/2024 and directed south.

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Yellowstone.ai N32° 40' 24" W116° 57' 43" 64F 18C 04/13/2024 08:29:07

Photo 19 – Illegal Entry Point West 1a. Date: 4/13/2024. Time: 8:29am.  
 Trespasser: Biker



Yellowstone.ai N32° 40' 24" W116° 57' 43" 77F 25C 04/13/2024 16:21:54

Photo 20 – Illegal Entry Point West 1a. Date: 4/13/2024. Time: 4:21pm.  
 Trespasser: Biker



Yellowstone.ai N32° 40' 21" W116° 57' 44" 71F 22C 04/13/2024 09:55:11

Photo 21 – Illegal Entry Point West 1b. Date: 4/13/2024. Time: 9:55am.  
 Trespasser: Hiker



Yellowstone.ai N32° 41' 07" W116° 57' 20" 77F 25C 04/13/2024 12:27:46

Photo 22 – Illegal Entry Point North 2b. Date: 4/13/2024. Time: 12:27pm.  
 Trespasser: User appears to scan the QR code but user not detected entering the HMA via this point. User ultimately detected leaving the HMA on the same day via West 1b.



Yellowstone.ai N32° 41' 07" W116° 57' 20" 60F 16C 04/27/2024 07:17:54

Photo 23 – Illegal Entry Point North 2b. Date: 4/27/2024. Time: 7:17am.  
 Trespasser: Hiker



Yellowstone.ai N32° 41' 06" W116° 57' 16" 64F 18C 04/13/2024 09:26:24

Photo 24 – Illegal Entry Point North 2a. Date: 4/13/2024. Time: 9:26am.  
 Trespasser: Biker

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Photo 25 – Illegal Entry Point North 2a. Date: 4/14/2024. Time: 12:50pm. Trespasser: Biker. Observed at the perimeter fence but not in the HMA.



Photo 26 – Same bikers as seen in Photo 25. Observed on the HMA. Date: 4/14/2024. Time: 12:52pm. Trespasser: Biker

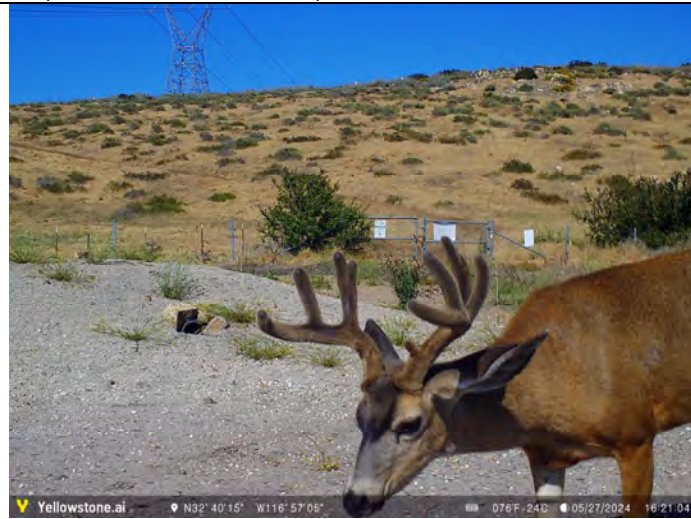


Photo 27 – Illegal Entry Point East 3b. No trespassers were detected on camera during the first project monitoring timeframe. However, wildlife was commonly detected. Date: 5/27/2024. Time: 4:21pm. Wildlife: Mule deer



Photo 28 – Illegal Entry Point East 3b. No trespassers were detected on camera during the first project monitoring timeframe. However, wildlife was commonly detected. Date: 6/19/2024. Time: 7:10am. Wildlife: Coyote

# Otay Water District

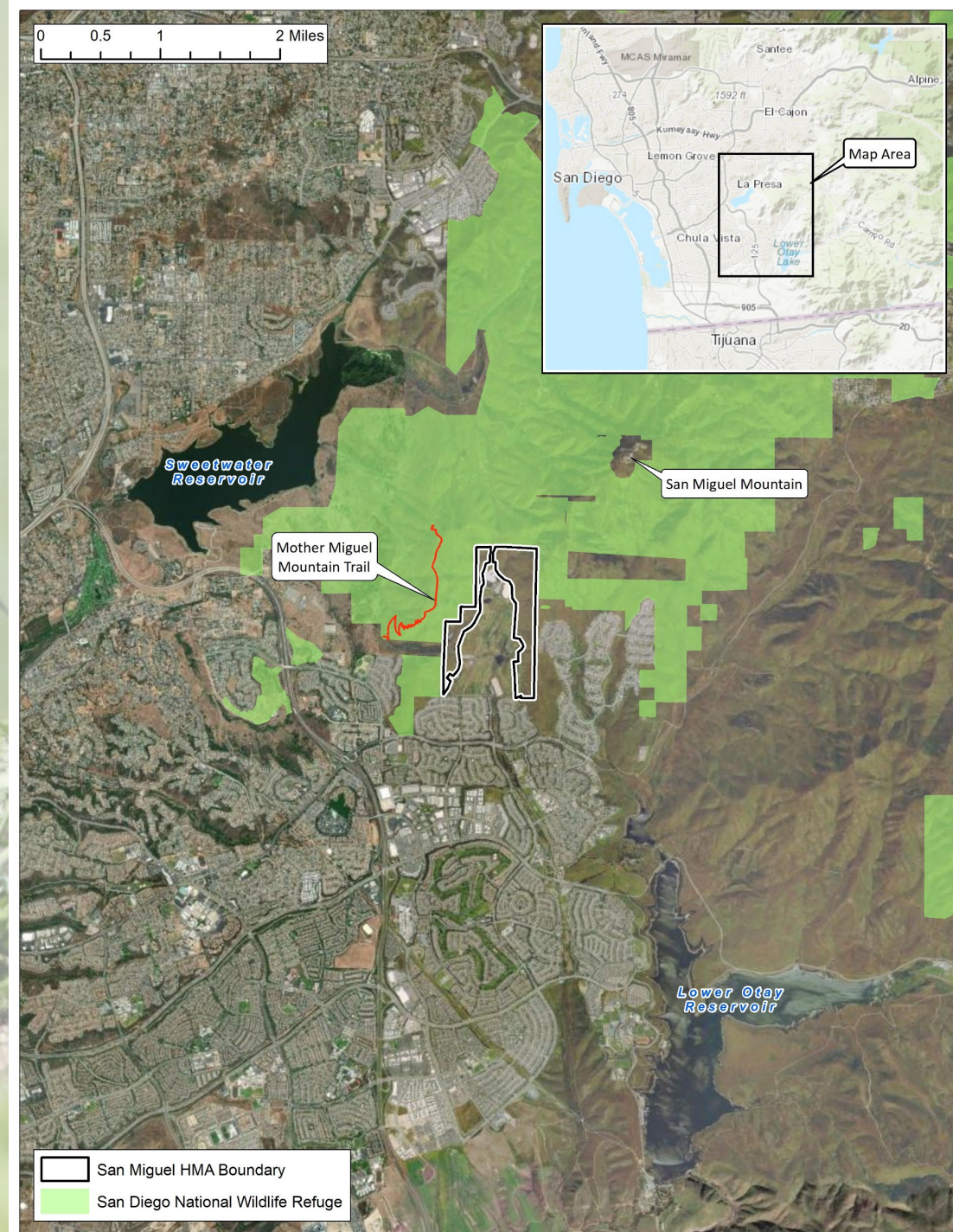
## San Miguel Habitat Management Area



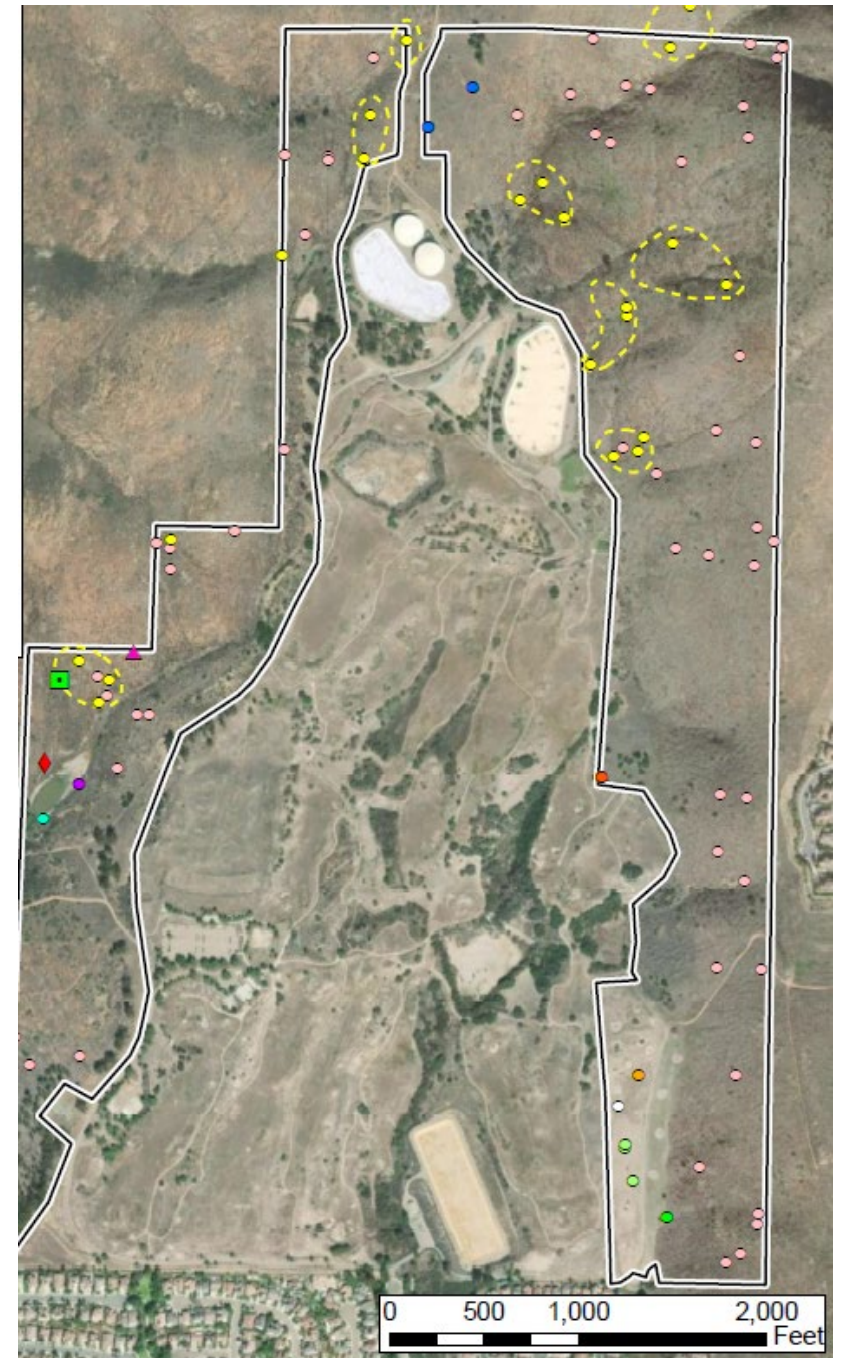
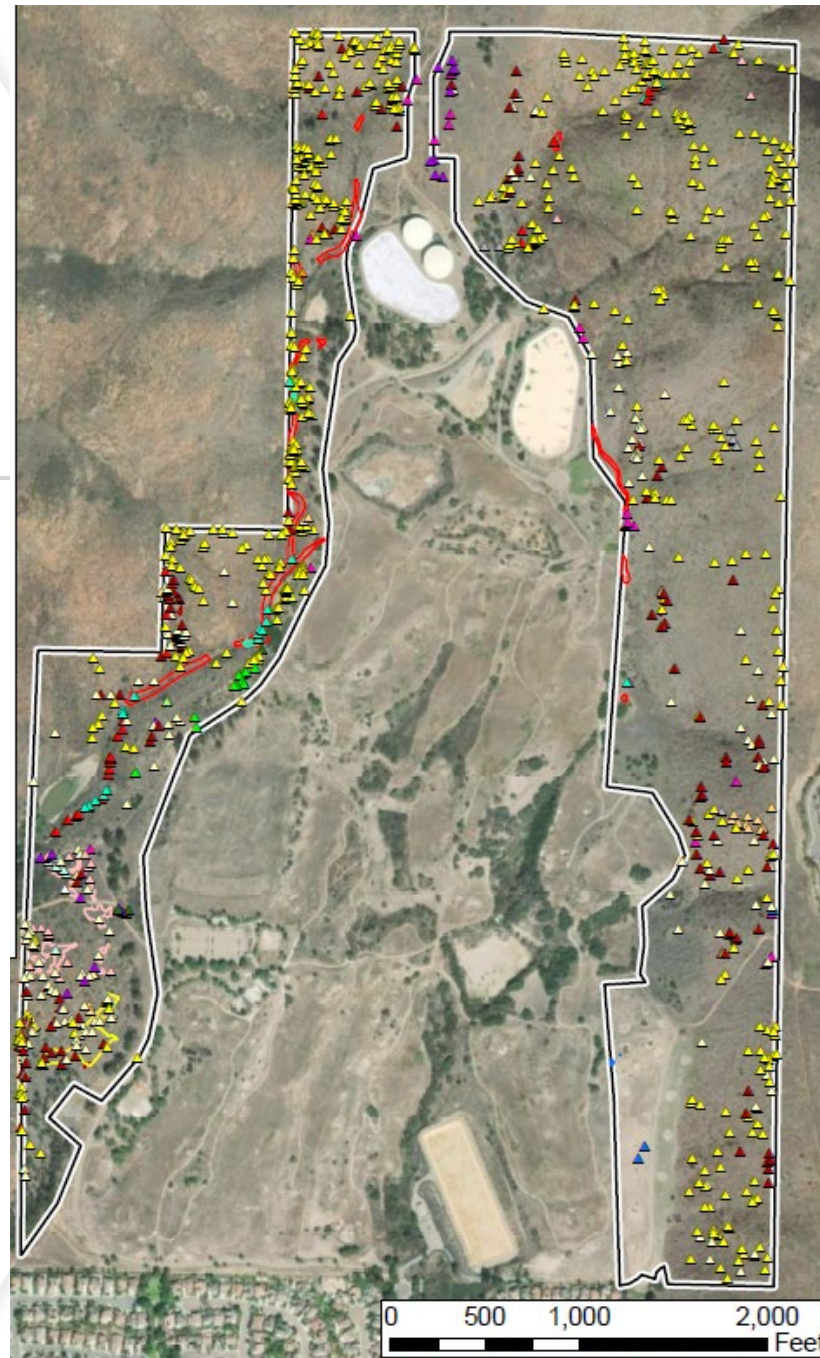
**SANDAG**  
TransNet program

# San Miguel Habitat Management Area

- 240-acre Biological Reserve & Mitigation Bank
- Agreements with USFWS & CDFW
- Not Open to the Public
- Supports Sensitive Species including:
  - Otay Tarplant
  - San Diego Goldenstar
  - Coastal California Gnatcatcher
  - Least Bell's Vireo
  - Burrowing Owl
  - Coastal Cactus Wren



# Sensitive Species



# Trespassing & Vandalism

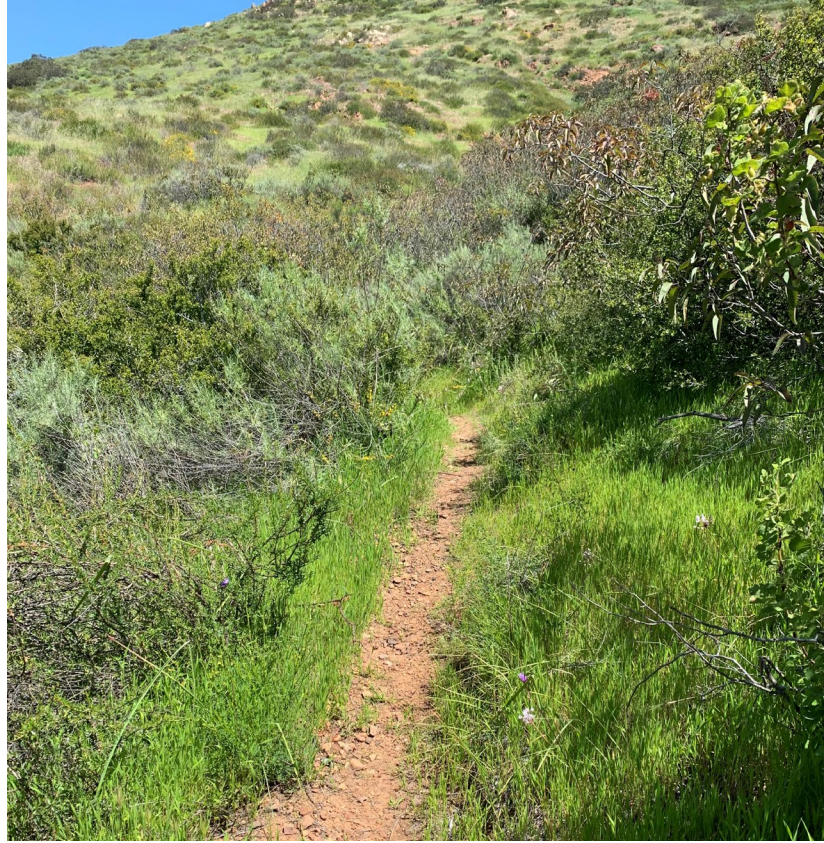
Perimeter Fencing Damaged

Illegal Trails Cut

Fire Concerns

Invasive Plants



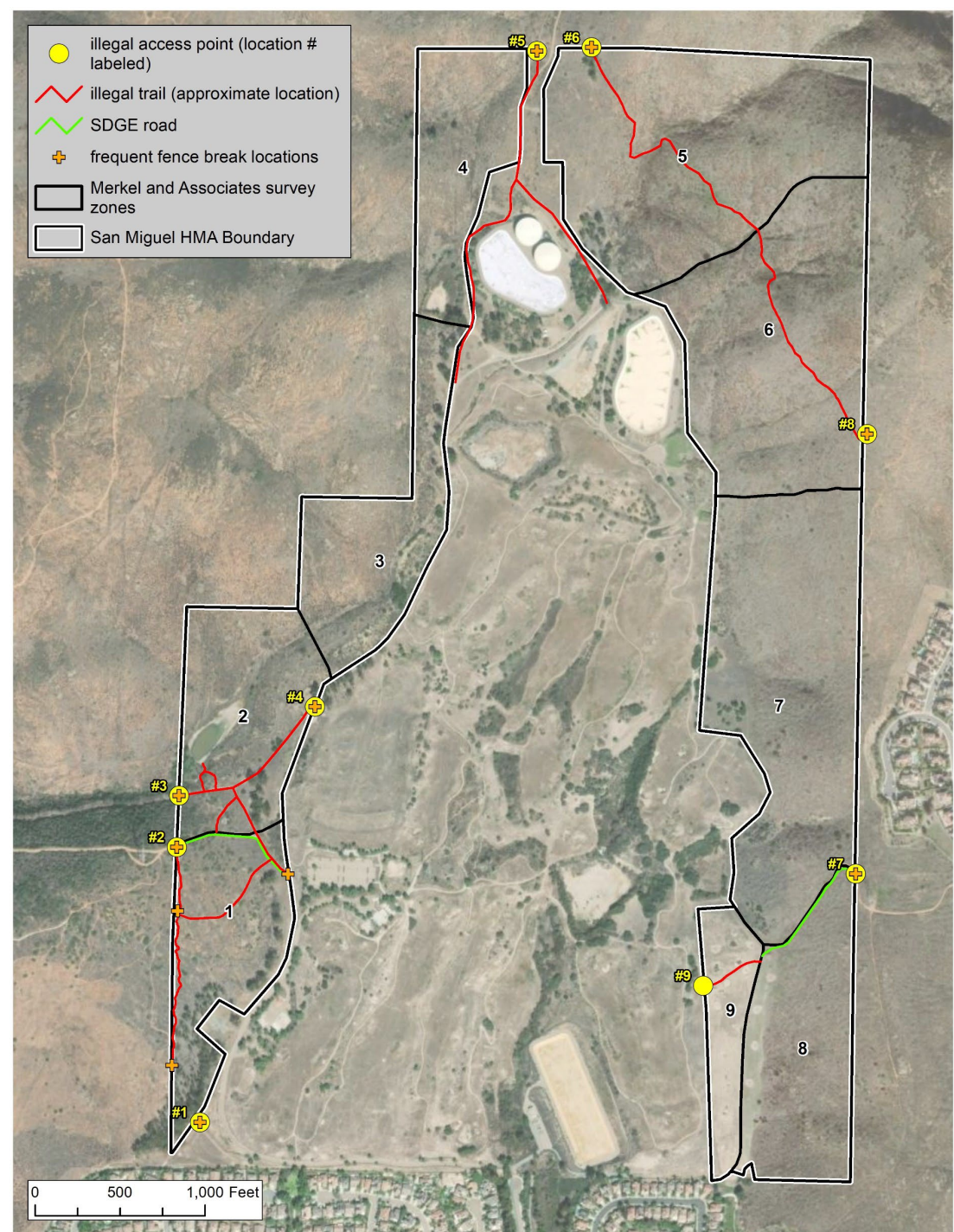


## Trespassing & Vandalism

Perimeter Fencing Damaged | Illegal Trails Cut | Fire Concerns | Invasive Plants

# Trespassing & Vandalism

## Primary Points of Illegal Entry



# Trespassing & Vandalism

## Type of User

- Hikers
- Equestrian
- Bikers - Bicycle & Motorized Bike

## SANDAG TransNet Land Management Grant

- Community Outreach
  - USFWS
  - SDMBA
  - Community Events
  - All Trails & TrailForks App
- Monitoring Program
- Enhanced Security



# Discussion



**SANDAG**  
TransNet program