

**San Diego Association of Governments
Ocean Beach Estuary Enhancement Project
The San Diego River Park Foundation (SDRPF)
Quarterly Progress Report
Reporting Period: 07/01/24 – 09/30/24
Submission Date: 10/23/24
SANDAG Contract Number: S1125510**

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 - Invasive Removal and Habitat Restoration

This quarter, staff supported City of San Diego staff in responding to the remaining questions for the Coastal Development Permit from the Coastal Commission. In mid-September, this project received the long-awaited approval from the Coastal Commission to begin work! We expect to have much to report in our next quarterly report!

Prior to this approval, all invasive removal was completed by small groups in cooperation with the City Ranger focused on the buffer areas along existing trails and paths. SDRPF staff hosted three invasive removal events in Q3, held on the second Tuesdays of the month. These events still helped remove dozens of cubic yards of biomass and reduced seed bank of invasive plants, even while limited in scope. Staff also planned for additional events to remove invasive plants from an expanded area, now that the Coastal Commission has approved the project.

Non-native weeds removed primarily included crown daisy (*Chrysanthemum coronarium*), white sweet clover (*Melilotus albus*), Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), and devil's thorn (*Tribulus terrestris*). During these events, 21 volunteers participated, contributing a total of 40 hours, including on 7/9/24, 8/13/24, and on 9/10/24.

In addition, SDRPF staff and project partners planned for events scheduled for Q4, including a larger community volunteer event on Oct. 5, and invasive removal events to occur following permission from the Coastal Commission.

18% complete.

2. Task 2 - Access Control

Field work remained on hold for most of this quarter while project partners awaited permits to begin installing the access control fencing. With that approval in mid-September, project partners began meeting to plan for the start of construction early in Q4. Dilapidated fencing is expected to be removed in October and new fencing installation completed within a month.

Project partner San Diego Birding Alliance (formerly known as San Diego Audubon Society) attended a dog walking/litter clean up event with a local group and gave them the update about the fencing project, and also got on the agenda for the Ocean Beach Planning Group meeting in early October to give an update on the project. A portion of their work on the fencing effort is included in their invoice, but the majority is funded through a separate grant

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they have that is, in part, providing match for the TransNet EMP-funded project.

6% complete.

3. Task 3 - Community Engagement, Education and Outreach

Community engagement this quarter included promotion of our monthly habitat restoration events in the local Ocean Beach and Point Loma areas. Staff posted and updated fliers twice a month at locations including the River Mouth Dog Paw sign board, coffee shops, parks, the Point Loma Native Plant Garden, Point Loma Nazarene University, laundromats, and other communal posting boards.

In addition, the SDRPF education team hosted 7 educational activities for 366 local students onsite during the quarter (see Photo 1). These students were local but not from the neighboring Ocean Beach schools, so these activities helped us to meet our deliverable of connecting with more than 10,000 community members to raise awareness in the larger community about the importance of this habitat. Events were enabled by 4 volunteer docents who filled 9 shifts, contributing 44 hours of service.

Photo 1. Student learning circle



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During these programs, students take nature walks to see first-hand the importance of this diverse habitat. They get the opportunity to observe the endangered birds and plant species. As the program wraps-up, the students are asked to share what they have learned and how they can make changes to their own behavior to positively impact this delicate ecosystem.

Project partners from San Diego Birding Alliance held one docent program per week at the River Mouth between July and September. These events had been hosted these activities funded by other grants last quarter, but are now funded through this TransNet funding. They also held 4 Speak For the Mouth/Bark Ranger programs this quarter, with 4 individual volunteers working 5 volunteer shifts (logging 17.5 hours total).

This quarter's accompanying invoice packet also includes documentation of hours logged in Q1 and Q2 of 2024, but not previously reported. This includes hours logged by an intern working on an educational brochure and by education docents helping to host educational experiences, totaling 68 hours of service.

43% complete.

4. Task 4 – Monitoring

This quarter, SDRPF conducted a bioblitz starting at the project area for California Biodiversity Week, which spanned this year from September 7-15. California Biodiversity Week is dedicated to raising awareness about the rich diversity of plant and animal life in California and encouraging public participation in conservation efforts.

During this event and throughout the week, volunteers and iNaturalist participants recorded 204 observations totaling 87 different species, which were contributed by 19 observers and 73 species reviewers/identifiers. Some notable species observed included the white-faced ibis (*Plegadis chihi*), marbled godwit (*Limosa fedoa*), little blue heron (*Egretta caerulea*), tricolored heron (*Egretta tricolor*), coastal woolly-heads (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*), European sea lavender (*Limonium vulgare*, an invasive threat), and fiery skipper (*Hylephila phyleus*).

In addition to these bioblitz events to document the species located at the project site and to engage people in learning about and documenting the biodiversity in the project area and its surroundings, SDRPF also began establishing 16 photo-monitoring stations across the project area (see Figure 1). These stations will document changes over time as the project gradually

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ramps up, with many components changing, including non-native weed removal, the updated fence, and reduced instances of off-trail trampling and side trails.

Figure 1. Map documenting 16 photo monitoring locations across the entire project area to record changes over time.



In addition, San Diego Birding Alliance organized one railwatching/docent program per week to record rail sightings and calls. This quarter, they recorded Ridgway's Rail back in the Smiley Lagoon area, after being further upriver for the breeding/nesting season. They engaged volunteers in filling 11 volunteer shifts in total and 33 hours of time for this monitoring in Q3 of 2024.

This quarter's accompanying invoice packet also includes documentation of hours logged in Q2 of 2024, but not previously reported. This includes hours logged through the 4/26 BioBlitz and 5/20 rare plant monitoring, which were described in the last progress report, but related hours were not previously included in the match documentation.

41% complete.

5. Task 5 - Administration

Project administration this quarter included submitting our fifth invoice and progress report, and working with SANDAG and the San Diego Audubon Society to ensure compliance with various project requirements. Staff coordinated with the City of San Diego to document and report on their in-kind matching funds. Project admin also included other correspondence with partners and SANDAG, updating budgets and coordinating timesheets and reports both internally and from partner organizations.

In addition, staff continued to meet with the City of San Diego and San Diego Birding Alliance at least monthly about the permits and other logistics to enable this project. With the project receiving Coastal Commission approval in September, project partners also began meeting to plan construction activities.

32% complete.

Provide the exact work start date, a description of the work completed under each task, and percent complete. Add additional tasks as necessary

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.

This coming quarter will be an important milestone for the project, as project partners will begin overseeing construction of the access control fence, as well as removal of invasive plants in earnest from the targeted habitat areas not just limited to the existing pathways. We will install a mason bee “hotel” to encourage more habitat and interpretation of mason bees as pollinators for rare species. We will also complete photomonitoring, and install signage to encourage use of newly re-established trails and discourage off-trail access within the habitat areas.

Community outreach and volunteer will continue with the monitoring and educational events planned, especially to coincide with increased activity on the project site as construction begins.

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).

Now that we have finally received approval from the Coastal Commission to work on the fencing and invasive plant removal, project partners will endeavor to ramp up hosting of larger volunteer activities to catch up on our volunteer engagement and logging of in-kind match.

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.

Photos are in document above and also submitted as separate files.

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

Project Performance Measures Instructions

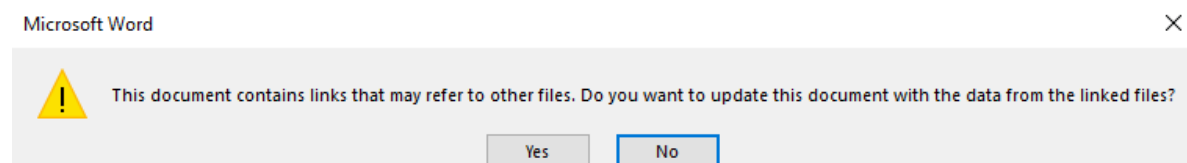
SANDAG will utilize the SANDAG Performance Measures to document compliance with the Project. Grantee's performance will be measured against the Performance Measures (Exhibit D) during the term of the project. More details on Performance Measures and Grant Recovery Plans are outlined in the Grant Agreements.

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.