

San Diego Association of Governments
West Bernardo Mountain HMA
Enhancement & Restoration
San Dieguito River Park, JPA.
Quarterly Progress Report
Reporting Period: October 1 – December 31, 2023
Submission Date: January 2024
SANDAG Contract Number: S1125508

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 SPECIES CONTROL: 10% done year 1**
 - a. Dethatch – 2 acres were weed whipped – targets were mustard and tocalote thistle. See map below.
 - b. Site Visits. Mapping. Photo documentation. Planning.
 - i. Flagged site
 - ii. Monitored for weed growth. No herbicide applications occurred.
2. **Task 2- HARVEST, GROW, DELIVER CACTI: 50% done year 1**
 - a. Ordered 1000 for delivery in 2024 and 1500 for delivery in 2025. SDRP to grow 275 in house.
 - b. Collected and delivered replacement cacti to nursery. Some of the original cuttings did not take and needed to be replaced
3. **Task 3 – INSTALL ROOTED CACTUS. 5% done year 1**
 - a. Identified strategies for moving cactus up slope.
 - i. This is a major obstacle to planting the cactus in the most beneficial location (Site A) which is at the highest point within the restoration site. See map below.
 - ii. Special Note: with many previous projects on Bernardo Mountain, CalFire inmate crews, from Puerta La Cruz, delivered containers to planting sites where volunteers or staff installed the plants. Unfortunately, these crews are no longer available for this type of work which is a setback for entities doing conservation work in the region.
 - iii. Options to move rooted cactus:
 1. Helicopter
 - a. Containers would be built with 2x4 lumber, filled with potted cacti, then moved to planting site.
 - b. No volunteer service identified. Potential assistance possible from:
 - i. Military
 - ii. San Diego City Fire Department
 - iii. SDGE
 2. Cactus gurney
 - a. 2x4 lumber handles supporting a large plastic bin. Carried by two people.
 - b. Experimenting with other similar designs.
 - c. Cactus spines are formidable obstacles to moving plants.
 3. Volunteer groups
 - a. SDRP Dust Devils – weekly volunteers.

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- b. Chalice Unitarian Universalist Church – February 24.
 - c. SDRP monthly habitat restoration volunteers.
 - d. SDRP Interpretive staff – recruit groups help.
- 4. SDRP staff
- b. Identified criteria for planting.
 - i. 4 feet from existing CSS plants.
 - ii. 2 feet from existing cactus.
 - iii. Save all excavated soil.
 - iv. Install potted plant vertically.
 - v. Install flush or slightly above grade.
 - vi. Salvage excavated rock to be used as mulch.
 - vii. Dig separate adjacent hole if soil is needed to back fill.
 - viii. No vegetation in planting basin other than potted plant.
 - ix. Compact soil around installed potted plant.
- c. Identified exact planting areas – SEE MAP BELOW.
 - i. Priority areas A and B
 - 1. A – Most beneficial location. Here the habitat is not recovering well and so there a numerous locations for rooted cacti and the site is facing directly south and protected from human use of the area.
 - 2. B – More accessible area with numerous locations.
 - ii. Other white polygons – disturbed areas that are accessible.
 - iii. Cactus enhancement – Cactus can be added to these locations.

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.

- **Deliver cacti – February 2024**
- **Install rooted cacti – February 2024**
- **Apply herbicide to invasive plants over entire site 12.5 acres with focus on worst areas. February 2024. Follow up March – June.**

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).

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Heavy winter rains have been predicted for 2023/24 winter and spring. On Bernado Mountain, there can be high volumes of sheet flow drainage because of steep slopes and sparse vegetative cover. Invasive species are one form of erosion control here so this needs to be considered when removing invasives especially near drainages. Growth has been slow to date. Invasive species may not be controlled initially in areas with high potential for erosion. One area identified is the edges of the large drain on the east side of the project site.

Photographs & Figures

[SEE BELOW](#)

SDMMP Project Page

NOT COMPLETED. Information compiled and will be presented in January.

Performance Measures

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



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October 2023- Some of the cuttings from July did not take so additional cuttings harvested from adjacent cactus were delivered to the nursery in October 13th, 2023.

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December 1 , 2023 - Dethatch Area. Before. Goal is to remove thatch to allow for the effective application of herbicide, reduce the amount herbicide used, and to free up native plants.



Native species recruitment - It is expected that plants like the coastal sage (*artemisia californica*) and black sage (*salvia mellifera*), seen here, will flourish with the dethatch work and that the follow up herbicide application will reduce most of the invasive species' pressure. This should allow for more recruitment of native species.



Site A (see map below): Best and most difficult location to plant.

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