



Celebrating 20 Years of the MSCP

What is the MSCP?

The Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) is a historic agreement to preserve, protect and connect the most valuable biological habitats for threatened plant and animal species while allowing development to occur in less sensitive areas. The MSCP provides certainty to the development community, and streamlines permitting requirements.

The MSCP was envisioned to create the largest urban preserve in the country. In 1997, the County of San Diego, along with 11 other jurisdictions, developed the MSCP together with community stakeholders and the Wildlife Agencies: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The U.S. Secretary of the Interior called it a “model for the country... that truly demonstrates that the preservation of ecosystems and the unique plants and wildlife they support is compatible with growth and development.”

As part of the MSCP, the County and Wildlife Agencies established the MSCP South County Subarea Plan in 1997 to provide wildlife corridors and connections for 85 native plants and animals – many of them threatened and endangered species. While protecting the plan’s species and habitat, the South County Subarea Plan also allows for passive recreational/trail opportunities in select areas. Visitors learn about the vital role of conservation through a variety of environmental education activities that foster connections with nature.

Acquisitions

- The baseline Preserve – open space acreage that was already conserved at the time of the MSCP South County Subarea Plan adoption – totaled nearly 46,000 acres.
- As of December 31, 2017, more than 32,000 additional acres have been added to the MSCP South County Subarea Plan Preserve through private mitigation or public and local/non-profit acquisitions.
- To date, the County and its Wildlife Agency and private conservation partners have assembled 77,862 acres (79%) of the proposed 98,379-acre MSCP South County Subarea Plan Preserve.
- Approximately 3,700 development permits have been processed since the MSCP South County Subarea Plan was implemented, saving applicants time and money.

PRESERVES CREATED OR EXPANDED SINCE 1998

- Tijuana River Valley Regional Park
- Lakeside Linkage
- Lusardi Creek
- Otay Valley Regional Park
- Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch
- Stoneridge
- Dictionary Hill
- Barnett Ranch
- Potrero Park/Mason Wildlife
- Del Dios Highlands
- Ramona Grasslands
- Santa Ysabel
- Volcan Mountain
- San Luis Rey
- Mount Olympus
- Lawrence & Barbara Daley
- Escondido Creek
- Sage Hill
- Oakoasis
- Old Springs Road
- Santa Margarita
- Stelzer Park
- William Heise Park
- Wilderness Gardens
- Flinn Springs
- Luef Pond
- Hellhole Canyon
- San Vicente Connection
- Keys Creek





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Ambassadorship

In 2000, the County and Wildlife Agencies agreed to proceed with a draft North County MSCP Plan and future East County MSCP Plan by tracking County acquisitions in those areas. Thus, open space preservation occurs in the entire County, not just South County. The draft North County Plan is under development and the East County Plan will be developed in the future.

This section highlights all three plan areas, and County efforts to create MSCP stewards for the next 30+ years:

- The County invests \$16 million, annually, for acquisitions and related stewardship and management of open space. Grant funds, partner contributions and volunteer commitment add invaluable to this budgeted amount.
- Resource Management Plans have been completed for a total of 24 County Preserves.
- The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) hosts an average of 1,500 environmental education programs each year, serving over 18,000 youth (including 1,935 teens) at 28 parks, preserves and campgrounds.
- More than 6,500 young hikers participate in TRACK Trails adventures each year; scavenger hunt-like programs that educate, entertains and reward kids for learning about nature at seven County parks.
- DPR volunteers provide more than \$750,000 annually in service patrolling parks, managing access, assisting rangers, removing invasive species, and planting trees/native vegetation.



BY THE NUMBERS

- The County and its partners have collectively conserved **157,000** acres
- The County has acquired **20K** acres in all **3** MSCP Plan Areas:
7,300 acres in South County
6,100 in North County
6,700 in East County
- Since 1998, the County and its partners have spent **\$186M** on acquisitions

Monitoring and Management



The overall management and monitoring goal of the MSCP South County Subarea Plan is to ensure the biological values of natural resources are maintained or improved over time where land is preserved as part of the MSCP through acquisition, regulation (the discretionary permit process), mitigation or other means. Monitoring is a vital part of the MSCP success.

Monitoring of MSCP-covered habitat and species helps guide management decisions and help staff assess the success of habitat restoration and threat reduction efforts. Monitoring also helps to locate passive recreation opportunities in areas where there will be minimal impact to sensitive habitat and covered species.

Adaptive management strategies are dynamic and implemented based on MSCP-covered habitat and species-monitoring results. The strategies include habitat restoration, invasive plant and animal species treatment, and public access control to protect MSCP-covered habitat and species. Management also includes ensuring the current and next generation of MSCP stewards are educated through a variety of formal outreach activities and informal, self-guided trails that individuals and families can enjoy. The goal is to enhance visitors' appreciation for conservation and the outdoors.

For more information, visit sdparks.org > Plans > MSCP.