

FINAL REPORT SANDAG GRANT AGREEMENT 5001769

SAN DIEGO BAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

CALIFORNIA LEAST TERN AND WESTERN SNOWY PLOVER RECOVERY AT D-STREET NESTING SITE

November 2015

From September 2013 to September 2015 SANDAG has provided funding to assist in the management and recovery of two federally listed species. Both the California Least Tern and Western Snowy Plover are listed species of birds who reside at D-Street during the breeding season of every year. While these species are primarily present only during the breeding season, managing the site is a year-round effort. USFWS and SDUPD manage the site in a somewhat artificial manner keying on the needs of these two species. The site itself is an artificial area created many years ago from the dredge spoils of the Sweetwater River as well as excess soil from Interstate 5 and State Route 54 construction activities. Funding provided allows us to continue managing the site.

The scope of the grant received is broken into three tasks: 1). Site Preparation, 2). Predator Control and 3). Administration.

Task 1: Site Preparation

As proposed in the grant we planned to “Annually prepare (e.g., site grading, debris removal from potential plover foraging areas, vegetation control, tile grid set-up, fence maintenance) 25 acres of the D Street Fill for least tern nesting and conduct an annual volunteer event to assist in site preparation and promote support for the protection of the Bay’s natural resources”. Additionally, USFWS and SDUPD provided matching in the form of staff time and materials by organizing and supervising volunteer events, operating heavy equipment, and treating exotic and nuisance species.

USFWS and SDUPD completed the proposed tasks each year. While we did not fully spend down the provided amount, Task 1 was thoroughly completed.

Volunteer Events

USFWS and SDUPD hosted numerous volunteer events during this grant period. The requirement was to host one annual event, however, we hosted five (5) events. A total 205 volunteers participated removing 2.2 tons (4,832 pounds) of trash and debris from saltmarsh and upland habitats. Volunteers not only were able to experience an area generally closed to the public but they learned from staff the value of removing debris from the ecosystem and how

their efforts also benefit endangered species. They also learned about the how both USFWS and SDUPD work as stewards of the Bay and how they too can be stewards themselves.

Date	Activity	USFWS (reimbursement)	SDUPD (reimbursement)	Match
Sept 20, 2013	Coastal Clean Up		\$ 597.11	\$ 1,950
March 15, 2014	Clean Up Event	\$ 104		\$ 1,000
Sept 20, 2014	Coastal Clean Up	\$ 1,382.97		\$ 2,838
August 29, 2015	Operation Clean Sweep			\$ 1,518
Sept 19, 2015	Coastal Clean Up			\$ 3,745
Totals		\$ 1,486.97	\$ 597.11	\$ 11,051



Invasive Species Control

Managing the 60-acre D-street fill requires the control of invasive and nuisance species to maintain a diverse and healthy ecosystem. Managing these species is also done to reduce the amount of perches avian predators utilize to find their prey. Staff and contractors routinely perform surveys to direct where species control activities are necessary. With the aid of backpack and ATV mounted herbicide sprayers, as well as pruning shears, staff and contractors are able to reduce the presence of these species. The majority of this task was implemented by staff therefore providing the necessary matching, however on one occasion we did utilize a contractor to perform the work.

Date	Activity	USFWS (reimbursement)	SDUPD (reimbursement)	Contractor (reimbursement)	Match
Nov 11-15, 2013	Applicator	X			\$ 2,500
	Herbicide	X			\$ 500
Dec 9-10, 2013			X		\$ 2,300
			X		\$ 100
January 5- 7, 2015	Applicator	X			\$ 1,485
	Herbicide	X			\$ 250
February 1, 2015	Applicator		X		\$ 1,066
	Herbicide		X		\$ 600
March 18, 2015	Applicator			\$ 900	
Totals				\$ 900	\$ 8,801

Site Scraping

Another necessary means of managing the D-Street Site is to reduce the amount vegetation growth within approximately 25 acre of the site. USFWS and SDUPD have been scraping the site for many years with use of tractor and a pull behind gannon box (scraper). This effort takes place on a yearly basis just before nesting begins.

Date	Activity	USFWS (reimbursement)	SDUPD (reimbursement)	Match
March 17-21, 2014	Tractor Rental	\$ 956.39		
	Gas	\$ 166.36		
	Operator Time			\$ 2,550
March 16-20, 2015	Tractor Rental	\$ 1,424.00		
	Gas	\$ 28.00		
	Operator Time			\$ 2,000
Totals		\$ 2,574.75		\$ 4,550.00

Before and After Scraping



Matching

Matching for the Task 1 was provided by staff time and some supplies (herbicide). Prior to volunteer events, staff garnered public interest, organized the delivery of dumpsters and supplies delivered and surveyed the site to focus efforts where clean-up activities would provide the largest benefit. During the events staff welcomed volunteers, provided safety talks and directed volunteers to the primary locations of trash deposition. At the conclusion of the events staff organized the pick-up of the dumpsters and tallied the clean-up event data.

In relation to invasive species control, staff conducted the majority of field work themselves. All herbicide was previously purchased by USFWS and SDUPD and “donated” as part of the matching. During one occasion a contractor was hired whereas staff completed contractual documents and directed the work of the contractor.

Site scraping was completed by USFWS staff operating the dozer and supervising the work.

In total staff provided \$24,402 of work well in excess of the proposed \$21,700.

Task 2: Predator Management

Predator management at the D-Street Nesting Site is a very selective effort accomplished by staff from the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Wildlife Services Program. The variety of predators at the site include small mammals (raccoons, coyotes, opossums) and avian predators (falcons, hawks, owls). All predation was first monitored by biologists and USDA staff to discern current and future impacts from their presence. Once predation was documented staff implemented means of control appropriate for the situation. Different types of traps and hazing techniques were used and when necessary relocation of the predator occurred.

Date	Activity	USFWS (reimbursement)	SDUPD (reimbursement)	Contractor (reimbursement)	Match
Sept 2013 - June 2014	Predator Control			\$ 10,908.13	\$ 8,840
July 2014 - Sept 2014	Predator Control			\$ 13,111.74	\$ 440
January 2015 - March 2015	Predator Control			\$ 989.73	
April 2015 - Sept 2015	Predator Control			\$ 27,946.35	\$ 4,859
Totals				\$ 52,955.95	\$ 14,139

Matching

Matching was primarily provided SDUPD staff administering contractual documents with USDA Wildlife Services. Staff also coordinated with Wildlife Services during predator control activities providing guidance on steps to take with documented predators. A total of \$14,139 of staff time was provided for this task which exceeds the originally proposed \$8,700 amount.

Task 3: Administration

Administration of the grant was accomplished by USFWS and SDUPD staff. We did not bill for this activity as the majority of administration was related to Tasks 1 and 2 however, USFWS Financial Staff in Denver required a 6% overhead/indirect cost which will be billed at the conclusion of this grant.

We all appreciate the time and funding SANDAG afforded us to complete activities which benefited federally listed species, the environment as a whole, and the public.