

**Call for Projects for the Tenth Cycle of the
TransNet Environmental Mitigation Program Land Management Grant Program**

Threat Reduction Stewardship Grant Application

Grant application form and required supplementary materials (hereafter referred to as “application”) cannot exceed eight pages.

Applicant Name: ¹ City of San Diego, Parks and Recreation Department, Open Space Division

Address: 202 C Street, 5th Floor, San Diego, CA 92101

Phone: 619-534-3673

Email: jwallen@sandiego.gov

Name of Property: Otay Mesa Open Space

General Location²: Otay Mesa; East of Cactus Road, North of Calle de Linea, South of 905

Jurisdiction³: City of San Diego

Total Acres: 280

Estimated Acres Requiring Management: Up to 42

Owner(s) of Property: City of San Diego

Land manager(s) of property (include name[s]): Jason W. Allen, Vernal Pool Biologist

Brief project summary that includes your primary goal and objectives. (200-word maximum)

The primary goal is to expand on previous grant projects to protect, and enhance vernal pool ecosystems, maritime succulent scrub (MSS) and Western burrowing owl habitats in the Goat Mesa and Wruck Canyon vernal pool complexes to create a buffer from invasive weed species and reduce sediment erosion. The main objectives to reach these goals are 1) perform brush/thatch removal and weed control within enhancement areas, 2) collect and broadcast vernal pool species seed within pools and install MSS habitat plants and seed in the upland enhancement areas and 3) install fence around Wruck Canyon vernal pools to protect them from illegal off-road activity. Contracted crews will be hired to perform brush/weed control, herbicide application and be used to collect, grow and bulk vernal pool species seed from nearby pools to seed the vernal pools and install MSS container plants/cuttings/seeds in the habitat enhancement areas. Contracted crews will also be used to install fence, erosion control materials and perform access road repairs as needed to safely access the areas. Container plants, seeds, plant protectors, fence materials and erosion control materials will be purchased directly by City staff or supplied by the contractors. City staff will perform project management.

¹ While collaboration is encouraged in the development of the grant application, the application must identify one organization as the lead entity that will enter into the grant agreement with SANDAG.

² Physical address, or closest cross streets or property boundary.

³ Name of city where the project is located. County of San Diego can be listed for the unincorporated areas of the region.

⁴ If the applicant is not the landowner, please submit a letter or right-of-entry permit from the landowner granting permission to perform the land management duties as outlined in the application. Failure to provide the letter or right-of-entry permit will lead to disqualification of the application. *Attached letter or right-of-entry permit (if applicable) does not count toward eight-page maximum.*

Quantify expected results (add bullets as necessary)

- Vernal pools and maritime succulent scrub habitats will be enhanced and expanded in and around the vernal pool/western burrowing owl habitat and will allow for further foraging areas for the Western burrowing owls and act as an invasive weed and sediment buffer for the vernal pools.
- Disturbed habitat that is currently dominated by nonnative forbs and grasses will be converted to high quality maritime succulent scrub.
- Wildfire impacts will be reduced by replacing flashy annual fuels with over 100 perennial cactus propagules and 2000 MSS container plants and seeds.
- Illegal off-road activity will be reduced by installing signage and fence around Wruck Canyon vernal pools.
- Intensive dethatching treatments will reduce thatch and thick nonnative brush cover by 95%.
- As needed herbicide treatments will reduce annual weed cover by 75%.

Brief description of dedicated staff and/or consultants/contractors that would work on the Project. (200-word maximum)

The City of San Diego, Parks and Recreation Open Space Division, Natural Resource Management Team has a full time Vernal Pool Biologist, MSCP Biologist, Senior Planner and three part time Management Interns with over 50 years of combined natural resource management experience. These positions along with 30+ Park Ranger and maintenance staff manage the vernal pools and the sensitive biological resources of over 27,000 acres of open space areas throughout the City of San Diego geographical boundaries. The Natural Resource Management staff will coordinate with the contractors to implement the project. Contracted crews such as Alpha Project, Habitat West, Helix Environmental, American Conservation Experience, California Conservation Corps, Native West Nursery or other for profit or non-profit contractors will be used as available to complete these tasks as they all have experience working with City of San Diego, Parks and Recreation Department on similar grant and non-grant projects.

Funding Needs Summary

Please indicate how much funding is being requested from SANDAG.

Budget Item	Requested Funding Amount	Description
Personnel Expenses Staff	\$0	Includes staff time for non-administrative work on the project
Personnel Administrative Expenses	\$0	Includes all staff time to administer the contract
Consultant/Contractor Expenses	\$60,000	Includes all costs for consultant/contractor services
Other Direct Expenses	\$20,000	Includes all equipment, supplies, mileage, etc.
Totals	\$80,000	

**if applicable*

Project Application

The application will include: (a) the purpose of the project; (b) the scope of work by tasks; (c) the proposed budget by task; and (d) a schedule for each task. Applicants must clearly identify their proposed tasks in the scope of work, funding requested for each task (please identify staff hours and cost separately from consultant/contractor costs), start and end dates of the tasks, and deliverables.

Project Purpose

Please describe how the proposed project meets the following criteria:

1. The proposed project specifically addresses relevant high-priority Management Strategic Plan (MSP) species and their habitats. Refer to the [MSP](#) for Conserved Lands in Western San Diego County.

The Goat Mesa/Wruck Canyon vernal pool complexes (J16-18) were identified by the *Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Plan* (VPHCP) (City of San Diego 2017) and the adopted *Recovery Plan for Vernal Pools of Southern California* (USFWS 1998) as necessary to stabilize populations of the following endangered and threatened species: San Diego button celery (*Eryngium. aristulatum var. parishii*), Otay mesa mint (*PogogyneNudiuscula*), Spreading navarretia (*Navarretia fossalis*), California orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californica*), San Diego fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta sandiegonensis*), and Riverside fairy shrimp (*Streptocephalus woottoni*). The MSP also lists other sensitive species that have been observed onsite at Goat Mesa/Wruck Canyon including Variegated dudleya (*Dudleya variegata*), Little mouse tail (*Myosurus minimus*), Western spadefoot (*Spea hammondii*), and Western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*). A recent discovery of Orcutt's birds-beak (*Dicranostegia orcuttiana*) was also found just below the Wruck Canyon vernal pool complex. Goat Mesa Open Space has also had recent recorded occurrences of Western burrowing owl, including owls observed using artificial burrows as recently as 2021.

2. The proposed project will address an urgent need and includes actions that will reduce or manage an **identified threat. (Access control, erosion control, control of invasive plants, wildfire prevention and linkage improvement)**

The vernal pools at the Goat Mesa/Wruck Canyon complex (J16-18) and surrounding open space have suffered considerable off-road vehicle damage over the years and this damage has resulted in changes in hydrologic, flow patterns, and inundation characteristics that are threatening current populations of endangered and threatened species. Off-road vehicle activity in the Goat Mesa/Wruck Canyon area has also contributed to the spread of invasive plants and severely impacted existing vernal pool and burrowing owl habitat. While off-road activity has been significantly reduced in recent years through frequent patrols and installation of fence in and around some of the Goat Mesa/Wruck Canyon parcels, the Wruck Canyon vernal pools are not fully fenced and are frequently driven on by Border Patrol agents. New fence and gates need to be installed around the outer perimeter to restrict and control access and protect vernal pools as off-road activity has been documented in and around the vernal pools themselves.

A fast-moving human caused wildfire in Summer of 2019 fueled by invasive weeds tore through the Goat Mesa/Wruck Canyon area and burned mature cactus and native shrubs. The impacted areas have been slow to recover and invasive weed species that were already present in some areas have moved in quickly. This proposed project will enhance and expand existing vernal pool and Western burrowing owl habitat and reduce the threat of wildfire and invasive plant conversion by replacing areas of invasive flashy fuels with native MSS species. Contracted crews will be hired to continue to perform ongoing brush/thatch removal, weed control, herbicide application as needed in the continued enhancement areas from previous projects and start brush/thatch removal, weed control and herbicide application as needed in the new expanded enhancement areas. City staff will assist where needed to supplement the weed control efforts and container plant maintenance. Contractors will be used to collect, grow and bulk vernal pool plant species seed from nearby vernal pool complexes to seed the vernal pools. Contracted crews will install MSS container plants/cuttings and seeds in the habitat enhancement areas that are most

accessible and where needed most to protect and enhance vernal pool ecosystems and link together fragmented MSS habitats that surround the vernal pools. Contracted crews will also be used to install fence, gate, erosion control materials, trash removal and perform access road repairs as needed to safely access the site.

This project will continue to build on two past grant funded projects performed by City of San Diego, Parks and Recreation staff that installed over 6,000 feet of fence, performed brush/thatch removal, weed control and installed 100+ cactus cuttings, 2,433 container plants and 100 pounds of seed to enhance and protect sensitive MSS and vernal pool habitats.

3. Success criteria have been identified and will be monitored and reported. Success of the proposed project is likely with clear, measurable, proven results that will promote conservation.

The proposed habitat enhancement areas will be monitored by City Biologist staff quarterly to evaluate project progress and determine maintenance needs. This includes one pre-project monitoring visit to document baseline conditions. Photo monitoring points will be established at a minimum of five representative locations within the habitat enhancement areas and photos will be taken quarterly to visually determine the changes. A monitoring form will be completed at each photo point to record a visual estimate of percent cover for native and nonnative vegetation. In addition, the monitor will visually estimate percent survival of container plants from each photo point location.

Success criteria include:

- 1) Percent cover of thatch and dead standing biomass will be reduced by 95% within the enhancement areas.
- 2) Percent cover of weed species will be reduced by 75% within in the enhancement areas.
- 3) Collect and install up to 100 cactus cuttings, 2,000 MSS container plants and seeds in enhancement areas.
- 4) At least 60% survival of container plants over 18 months.

Maintenance activities will be scheduled and performed as needed based on monitoring results.

Progress reports will be prepared quarterly following each monitoring visit. These quarterly reports will detail enhancement and/or maintenance activities performed during the reporting period as well as monitoring results, challenges or issues encountered, and recommendations for maintenance activities to be performed in the upcoming quarter. One final report will be prepared 18 months after the Notice to Proceed. The final report will summarize all enhancement, maintenance and monitoring activities performed over the course of the project and will include the results of the final monitoring visit.

Short-term (18 months) success of this project will be determined based on achievement of the measurable success criteria noted above. These criteria are proven to be achievable as they are based the results and successes of past grant and non-grant projects implemented by City of San Diego, Parks and Recreation staff that also focused on creating and enhancing MSS and CSS habitat in this same location and multiple open space sites throughout the City of San Diego.

Installation of cactus, container plants and seed and implementation of weed management activities at these locations and at other City of San Diego conserved lands has proven to be successful in reducing flashy fuels and improving overall habitat quality. Furthermore, information provided in the Status Assessment and Conservation Plan for the Western Burrowing Owl in the United States (2003) by USFWS suggests that the best strategy for conservation of Western burrowing owl is to enhance and expand habitat by reducing habitat loss and fragmentation. Western burrowing owls were observed using artificial burrows at Goat Mesa in 2021; therefore, habitat enhancement and expansion in these areas is likely to contribute to successful conservation of this species.

4. Any activities necessary to maintain the proposed project after the 18-month grant period have been identified and funding for those activities has been secured. Please explain what source of funding (if any) has been used to fund this activity in the past and what kind of funding is available to support

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this work in the future (if needed).

The Goat Mesa/Wruck Canyon area is managed by the City of San Diego as is part of the MSCP Preserve and the management of the vernal pools fall under the Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Plan. The City of San Diego, Park and Recreation Open Space Division, Natural Resource Management Team has a full time Vernal Pool Biologist, MSCP Biologist, Senior Planner and three part time Management Interns positions with over 50 years of combined natural resource management experience. These positions along with 30+ Park Ranger and maintenance staff manage the vernal pools and the sensitive biological resources of over 27,000 acres of open space areas throughout the City of San Diego geographical boundaries. To ensure long term success, routine patrols and monitoring will be conducted by City staff indefinitely to evaluate the success of the project, monitor weeds and any other maintenance issues, and to perform maintenance as needed.

In the time since the previous grant funded projects ended City staff and contracted crews have performed fence maintenance, weed control visits, seeding and installation of 400 additional native plants to the site and continued monitoring of the site.

5. To be eligible for funding, the proposed project must be on lands conserved for native habitat within the MSP area. Where is the project located and where work will be conducted? (*Attach a map*)

The proposed habitat enhancement areas are located on City of San Diego owned conserved lands in the Goat Mesa/Wruck Canyon areas of Otay Mesa. They are within the City of San Diego's Multi-Habitat Planning Area of the City's MSCP or within conserved City land and will not be developed. The enhancement areas are within the MSP Management Unit 3. See attached map.

6. Does the proposed project provide a co-benefit to CBO Network Communities and foster social equity? Please describe. *Additional Points can be awarded if this is relevant to the project and is appropriately described to meet the qualifications listed in the Call for Projects.*

The proposed project site is located within preserved MHPA open space of a CBO Network Community. The percentile ranking for the communities surrounding the proposed project area are as follows:

- CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Percentile – 55 to 60%
- Pollution Burden Percentile – 86%
- Population Characteristics Percentile – 36%

Benefits to the community, as a result of this project, would include improved passive recreational opportunities, clean-up of trash and debris, improved aesthetics, reduction of biomass, flash-fuel loads, and fire hazards, and enhancement of valuable sensitive species resources.

Scope of Work by Task

Please break down the application into discrete tasks and include a task name, description of each task, quantifiable expected results, and discrete deliverables for each task.

Note: make sure to list tasks for quarterly reporting on the status of the grant project and a final report on the outcome of the grant project. You may add or subtract rows as needed.

Exhibit A – Proposed Project Scope of Work

Task No.	Task Name	Task Description	Quantifiable Results/Deliverables
1.	Implementation	Thatch/brush removal, trash removal, install fence, initial weed control treatments, vernal pool seed collection, bulking and seeding and cactus, MSS container planting and MSS seed broadcasting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent cover of thatch and dead standing biomass will be reduced by 95% within the enhancement areas. Percent cover of weed species will be reduced by 75% within the enhancement areas. Install up to 100 cactus cuttings, 2000 MSS container plants and seed in enhancement areas. At least 60% survival of container plants is expected over 18 months.
2.	Monitoring	Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six quarterly monitoring visits will be conducted throughout the 18-month project timeline to evaluate project progress and determine maintenance needs. This includes one pre-project monitoring visit to document baseline conditions.
3.	Maintenance	As-needed maintenance (includes follow up weed control, supplemental irrigation, trash removal, fence/sign repair and trail access maintenance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance activities will be scheduled as needed based on qualitative monitoring results. A minimum of three maintenance visits will be conducted.
4.	Quarterly Reports	Prepare quarterly reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five progress reports will be prepared quarterly following each monitoring visit. The quarterly reports will detail enhancement and/or maintenance activities performed during the reporting period as well as monitoring results.
5.	Final Report	Prepare final report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One final report will be prepared 18 months after the Notice to Proceed. The final report will summarize all enhancement, maintenance and monitoring activities performed over the course of the project and will include the results of the final monitoring visit.
6.	Administrative	Project management, consultant coordination and invoice preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invoices will be submitted quarterly along with quarterly and final reports.

Budget by Task

Please include a specific budget for each task described in the Scope of Work (Section B above).

This funding category is intended to fund short-term threat reduction projects in need of one-time funding necessary to fill existing funding gaps for specific tasks and will not cover on-going annual costs within applicant's organization.

Exhibit B – Proposed Project Budget

Task No.	Task Name	Grant Request
1.	Implementation	\$50,000
2.	Maintenance	\$30,000
3.	Monitoring	\$0
4.	Quarterly Reports	\$0
5.	Final Report	\$0
6.	Administrative	\$0
Subtotal		\$80,000
Total		\$80,000

Project Schedule

Please include start and end dates relative to the anticipated Notice to Proceed (NTP) (assumes fall 2022) for each task described in the Scope of Work (Section B above). Please list tasks for quarterly reporting on the status of the grant project and a final report on the outcome of the grant project. You may add or subtract rows as needed. *All tasks must be completed within 18 months of the NTP.*

Exhibit C – Proposed Project Schedule (Assumes fall 2022 NTP)

Task No.	Task Name	Proposed Start Date	Months Needed to Complete Task	Task End Date
1.	Implementation	"3" Months from NTP	"18" Months	06/30/2024
2.	Maintenance	"3" Months from NTP	"18" Months	06/30/2024
3.	Monitoring	"3" Months from NTP	"18" Months	06/30/2024
4.	Quarterly Reports	"3" Months from NTP	"18" Months	06/30/2024
5.	Final Report	"17" Months from NTP	"1" Months	06/30/2024
6.	Administrative	"1" Months from NTP	"18" Months	06/30/2024

Please explain why and how much additional time would be needed in the event of any delays due to NTP being provided beyond fall 2022 and/or unexpected weather conditions such as drought that could occur during the proposed project implementation.

We do not anticipate any problems unless the City's Purchasing and Contracting Department is held up approving the Purchase Order for contracted crews to begin work or to purchase any of the supplies. During years of high precipitation, the site can be difficult to access because of wet and muddy road conditions. If this was to occur a 6-month extension would be needed.

Notice Regarding Prevailing Wages

California law requires that public works projects pay prevailing wages for workers.

Applicant acknowledges that any work that qualifies as a "public work" within the meaning of California Labor Code Section 1720 shall cause Applicant and its subcontractors to comply with the provisions of California Labor Code Sections 1775 et seq, which includes the payment of prevailing wages to all workers performing prevailing wage work.

Yes No

Applicant acknowledges that if Applicant or its subcontractors will engage in the performance of a public work as defined by California Labor Code Sections 1720 et seq. and will utilize persons who are not employees of a public entity, registration and payment of an annual registration fee to the California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) shall be required of each entity performing the work. This requirement applies to anyone affected by the public works statutes found in the California Labor Code, including but not limited to landscapers, fencers, surveyors, soil testers, dredgers, heavy equipment operators, and inspectors.

Yes No

Applicant acknowledges that if Applicant will award any subcontracts for the performance of a public work:

- Applicant shall notify SANDAG 30 calendar days prior to the award of each subcontract so SANDAG can create a Project Registration Form (aka PWC-100 form) for each subcontract using the DIR online database. Applicant will provide to SANDAG the name, DIR registration number, and contractor's license numbers of each subcontractor so SANDAG can verify, prior to Applicant's award of the subcontract for a public work, that the selected subcontractor is currently licensed and registered with the DIR. If SANDAG finds that the selected subcontractor is not licensed and registered with the DIR, SANDAG will promptly notify Applicant and Applicant will not be permitted to award the subcontract to the selected subcontractor.

Yes No

- Applicant shall notify SANDAG ten business days prior to the subcontractor performing the prevailing wage work so SANDAG can prepare for labor compliance monitoring.

Yes No

- If there are any changes to a subcontractor or lower-tier subcontractor, Applicant will advise SANDAG of these changes as soon as those changes are known to the Applicant.

Yes N

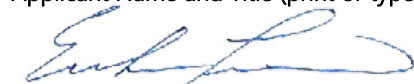
Required Statements from Applicant

- | Yes | No | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The applicant has read and understands the Sample Grant Agreement (Agreement) and Invoice Template (Attachment 4). |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | If the Board of Directors approves the proposed project application, the applicant agrees to sign and return the Agreement to SANDAG, without exceptions or amendments, within 45 days of receipt. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The applicant agrees to comply with SANDAG's Board Policy No. 035, Competitive Grant Program Procedures, which outlines "Use-it-or-lose-it" project milestone and completion deadlines. Board Policy No. 035 is included in the Agreement, and also is on SANDAG's website at: sandag.org/organization/about/pubs/policy_035.pdf |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The applicant understands that 10% of all invoiced amounts will be retained until the completion of the proposed project. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The applicant understands that for proposed projects with matching funds, retention will be withheld beyond the 10% retention for each invoice submittal that does not meet the proportionate matching funds requirement. These additional matching funds will not be released until proportionate matching funds are reached for the project to-date. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The applicant understands that all invoices must be accompanied by written, documented support of the charges for requested reimbursement of grant funds and payment will not be made by SANDAG until all documents are satisfactorily submitted. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The applicant understands that invoices and reports must be submitted on a quarterly basis within three weeks after each period close covering January 1 to March 31; April 1 to June 30; July 1 to September 30; and October 1 to December 31. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The applicant understands that the EMP quarterly report template (to be sent to the grantee after NTP is issued and can be found at sandag.org/index.asp?classid=17&projectid=447&fuseaction=projects.detail) must be used to document quarterly progress and that invoices with errors will be returned to the grantee for correction prior to being processed by SANDAG staff. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The applicant understands that the final invoice must be accompanied by written, documented support of the charges for requested reimbursement of grant funds; a final report (prepared in accordance with the final report template to be sent to grantee after NTP is issued and can be found at sandag.org/index.asp?classid=17&projectid=447&fuseaction=projects.detail); and all outstanding deliverables in order to receive final payment and have retained funds released. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The applicant understands that to be considered eligible for funding, a resolution complying with the requirements of Board Policy No. 035, Section 4.1, must be submitted to SANDAG at least two weeks prior to the recommendation by the Regional Planning Committee of the list of prioritized project applications. SANDAG will provide applicants with advance notice of the Regional Planning Committee's anticipated meeting date. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The applicant agrees to submit all project data/information to SANDAG and to upload data and reports to a project page created by the applicant on the SDMMP web portal in a format consistent with regional management databases. |

I have the authorization to submit this application (Grant Application and required supplementary materials) on behalf of my organization.

Erika Ferreira , Deputy Director, Open Space Division: City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department

Applicant Name and Title (print or type)

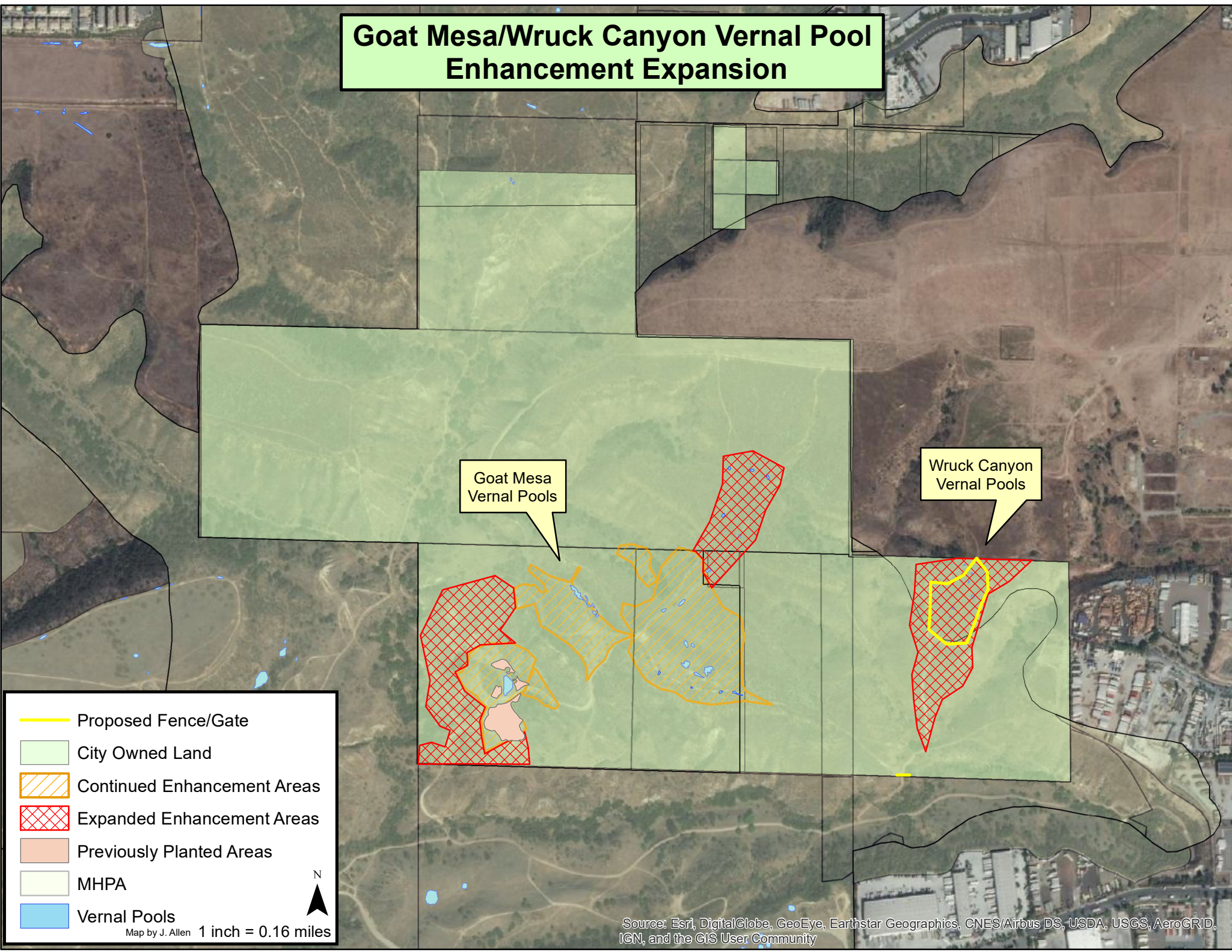


Applicant Signature

1-28-2022

Date

Goat Mesa/Wruck Canyon Vernal Pool Enhancement Expansion



Goat Mesa Vernal Pools

Wruck Canyon Vernal Pools

- Proposed Fence/Gate
- City Owned Land
- Continued Enhancement Areas
- Expanded Enhancement Areas
- Previously Planted Areas
- MHPA
- Vernal Pools

Map by J. Allen 1 inch = 0.16 miles



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community