



CALL FOR PROJECTS FOR THE NINTH CYCLE OF THE
TransNet ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION PROGRAM
LAND MANAGEMENT GRANT PROGRAM
THREAT REDUCTION STEWARDSHIP GRANT APPLICATION FORM

Grant Application Form and required supplementary materials (hereafter referred to as "proposal") cannot exceed eight pages.

Applicant Name¹: River Parnters

Address: 580 Vallombrosa Ave

Phone and Email Address: (530) 894-5401

Name of Property: Upper Otay Lakes Cornerstone Lands, City of San Diego

General Location: Site located adjacent to the Upper Otay Reservoir

Jurisdiction: City of San Diego

Total Acres: 2609

Estimated Acres Requiring Management: 71

Owner(s) of Property²: City of San Diego

Land manager(s) of property (include name[s]): Niki McGinnis, Natural Resources Manager, City of San Diego, Public Utilities Department

Brief Project Summary that includes your primary goal and objectives (200-word maximum)

This effort builds on River Partners' previous work in the Otay River Watershed which began in 2012 with an assessment of restoration opportunities in the watershed followed by the implementation of high priority restoration projects on five (5) sites over 384 acres. The Upper Otay Restoration Project, located adjacent to the Upper Otay Reservoir on land owned by the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department (PUD), is one restoration project that was part of this effort. This restoration project is now 90% complete and at a critical juncture. Heavy floods during the winter of 2017 covered much of the site for four weeks killing many of the plants. Much has been done prior to the expiration of the previous DWR grant and the site now only requires a modest amount of funding to ensure that the project and the habitat it provides are successful. River Partner requests \$79,065 to cover costs for irrigation and planting materials, field equipment, and salaries for River Partners' staff and San Diego Urban Corps members needed to carry out weed management, remove tamarisk, and plant willow and mulefat cuttings to expand the riparian corridors in the 71-acre project site over the next 18 months.

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

² If the applicant is not the landowner, please submit a letter or right-of-entry permit from the land owner granting permission to perform the land management duties as outlined in the proposal. Failure to provide the letter or right-of-entry permit will lead to disqualification of the proposal. Attached letter or right-of-entry permit (if applicable) does not count toward eight-page maximum.

Quantify Expected Results (add bullets as necessary)

- Complete tamarisk removal along 6,900 linear feet of streambed
- Replant 5,000 willow and mulefat cuttings to replace tamarisk and expand the riparian corridors
- Control invasive non-native plant species across the entire 71-acre restoration site to support the establishment of coastal sage scrub and riparian plant communities

Brief Description of dedicated staff and/or consultants that would work on Project (200-word maximum)

Stephen Shepard, Director of Field Operations. Stephen has over 17 years' experience restoring and managing riparian habitat in the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California. This work includes the restoration of over 3,000 acres on the USFWS San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge and Dos Rios Ranch. He holds a B.S. in Agricultural Science from Fresno State University with a minor in Plant Science.

Ezra Neale, Restoration Ecologist. Ezra has over 15 years' experience working on the conservation and restoration of critical habitats in California. His background is in natural resources management and landscape ecology with an emphasis on restoration ecology and forest protection/management. He holds a BS in Environmental Science from the University of Vermont and an MA in Geography and Natural Resource Planning from the University of California, Davis.

Jorge Robles-Romo, Restoration Field Manager. Jorge has over 30 years' experience in agricultural and land management pursuits in California and Mexico. His experience includes managing field crews, designing drip irrigation systems, and maintaining soil balance for large-scale organic agriculture systems. Mr. Robles obtained a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Engineering from Escuela Superior De Ciencias Agrícolas U.A.B.C. in Mexicali, Baja Ca. Mexico.

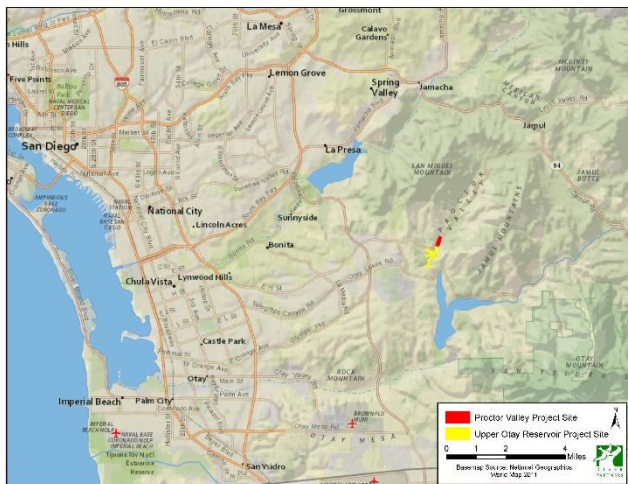


Figure 1. Location Map, Upper Otay Reservoir and Proctor Valley Project Sites, San Diego County, CA.



Funding Needs Summary

Please indicate how much funding is being requested from SANDAG.

Budget Item	Requested Funding Amount	Description
Personnel Expenses Staff	\$35,000	Includes staff time for non-administrative work on the project
Personnel Administrative Expenses	\$5,000	Includes all staff time to administer the contract
Consultant Expenses	\$20,000	Includes all costs for consultant services
Other Direct Expenses	\$10,000	Includes all equipment, supplies, mileage, etc.
Indirect Costs	\$9,065	All indirect charges (e.g., overhead) on the project, if any.
Totals	\$79,065	

*if applicable

PROJECT PROPOSAL

A. Project Purpose

1. The proposed project addresses a high-priority Management Strategic Plan (MSP) species and their habitats. Refer to the MSP for Conserved Lands in Western San Diego County.
 YES - The property is within the City of San Diego MSCP designated as the Otay Lakes Cornerstone Lands in the Multiple Habitat Planning Area (MHPA). The project area sits adjacent to the Upper Otay Reservoir and per the MSCP Habitat Evaluation Model, the habitat onsite is considered high and very high in value. The project area is mapped as primarily consisting of riparian forest, freshwater marsh, and coastal sage scrub. Multiple breeding pairs of coastal California gnatcatchers, a federally threatened and MSCP covered species have been detected in the immediate area, and the least Bell's vireo, a federally and state endangered and MSCP covered species has been detected breeding in and using the habitat contained in the riparian channels. The Quino checkerspot butterfly, a federally endangered and MSCP covered species, has been detected on site and is expected to occur in all suitable habitat. Arroyo toad, a federally endangered and MSPC covered species, is known to occur in areas downstream of the project site and have a high potential to occur on site.

2. The proposed project will address an urgent need and includes actions that will reduce or manage an identified threat.
 YES – The restoration project is now 90% complete and at a critical juncture. Currently the irrigation system has been installed and plant communities are becoming established but it requires additional weed management, irrigation, and replanting activities to be successful in the long-term. If left untreated, it is foreseeable that many of the young plantings will be overcome with weeds and tamarisk with recolonize the areas that were previously cleared, significantly impacting the quality of the habitat provided by the project.

Prior to the restoration effort at the Upper Otay Restoration Project most of the habitat in the project area was a mixture of thin, non-contiguous riparian strips heavily affected by invasive species (primarily tamarisk) transitioning to upland ecosystems also significantly affected by non-native invasive plant species.

River Partners in partnership with PUD completed active restoration on the 71-acre site to remove and treat non-native invasive plants, install an irrigation system and plant coastal sage scrub communities combined with riparian plantings along the stream channels. During the winter of 2017, heavy surface flows and flooding which covered much of the site for more than four weeks killed many of the established plants and left much of the irrigation system in disrepair. River Partners has repaired the irrigation system and completed replanting prior to the completion of the grant in December 2017. Due to the severity of the damage replanting is necessary, and the project requires continued weed management and irrigation to become established. In addition, there is an opportunity to replant areas where tamarisk has been removed to support the restoration of the riparian corridors.

3. Success criteria have been identified and will be monitored and reported.
YES - To assess the effectiveness of restoration projects, River Partners uses a comprehensive, rigorous, and scientifically validated monitoring program. Annual plant survival is monitored after the first growing season using a complete plant census, and this data is used to determine which species, if any, need supplemental re-plantings. In subsequent years, permanent plots are monitored to determine annual survival, growth and foliage volume. Photo-points are established at the beginning of every project and monitored on an annual basis to provide descriptive analysis of vegetative changes over the course of a project. Herbaceous plants and native grasses are monitored using line transects measuring percent cover and species composition in 1m² plots. And finally, biologists are on site weekly strategizing with field staff on irrigation needs, non-native control, and other day-to-day operational procedures.

Avian point-count surveys are conducted during the breeding season within the project area and within nearby reference (control) habitat.

River Partners will report on all monitoring activities of non-native removal success and restoration establishment in quarterly and year-end reports, as well as provide a detailed analysis and discussion, and adaptive management recommendations in the end-of-project report.

4. Success of the proposed project is likely with clear, measurable, proven results that will promote conservation.
YES - River Partners will use adaptive management protocols and technologies that it has developed on over 12,000 acres of habitat restoration. The methodology will include initial control of invasive species, and creation of a planting plan that optimizes physical site conditions to restoration species selection and location. The project utilizes drip irrigation allowing the stand to establish during the project period and ensuring long-term sustainability by allowing plants to tap into the water table before the drip irrigation system is removed at the end of the project.

River Partners uses an adaptive management protocol that allows them to monitor and adjust implementation methods for each restoration site. This flexibility allows River Partners to maximize plant survivorship and maximize benefits to wildlife. At the Upper Otay site, River Partners employs the following strategies:

- Employ active restoration techniques to establish riparian vegetation. Active restoration employs modern farming techniques to efficiently and rapidly establish riparian vegetation. Tasks include site preparation, native plant species propagation and planting, weed control, and supplemental irrigation.
 - Recognize current site conditions. Based on site conditions, River Partners estimated the acreage of the site that is well suited for the rapid establishment of native riparian woody species and herbaceous understory species through active restoration.
 - Develop a plant design based on multiple management objectives. Planting associations and layout are intended to provide a diversity of high quality habitat for targeted wildlife and reduce competition from invasive non-native species.
 - Consider multiple time frames. The restoration planting can have long- and short-term successional endpoints. For example, in the long run (greater than 30-80 years) some areas planted with Fremont cottonwood or western sycamore will convert to oak woodland or be supplanted by meander dynamics of the stream channel. In the meantime, the fast growing, but relatively short-lived plants (e.g., willows, coyote brush) will provide important habitat to threatened and endangered species (i.e., structure, large woody debris, etc.), as the more shade-tolerant oaks replace them.
 - Use an adaptive management approach to the project. River Partners recommends the use of an adaptive management approach to provide a framework to evaluate project progress and respond to new information.
5. 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 this work in the future (if needed).

In 2012 the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department working in partnership with River Partners received \$909,700 from the Prop 84 Urban Streams Restoration Program to prevent erosion and restore habitat in the Upper Otay watershed east of the City of Chula Vista. The funds requested from the SANDAG TransNet Environmental Mitigation Program will help leverage additional funds needed to implement the larger restoration program in the Otay Valley Regional Park (OVRP) and more broadly the ORW. River Partners has been preliminarily approved to receive \$75K from the County of San Diego District 1 Neighborhood Reinvestment Program to compliment this effort and will provide its own funds to support the work. In addition, River Partners will be submitting a proposal to the Coastal Conservancy Proposition 1 Program (~\$650,000) for additional weed eradication and active restoration initiatives in the Otay River Watershed.

6. 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? (*Attach a map*)
- The Upper Otay Restoration project site is located on the north side of Otay Lakes Road, approximately 12 miles inland from the coast, east of the City of Chula Vista (Figure 1). The project site occupies 71 acres surrounding the north, west, and southern sides of the reservoir. The area includes five drainages which run approximately west to east from the neighboring East Lake community to the reservoir.

B. Scope of Work by Task

Exhibit A – Proposed Project Scope of Work

Task No.	Task Name	Task Description	Quantifiable Results/Deliverables
1	Tamarisk Removal	Using field crews to mechanically remove tamarisk along 6,900 feet of stream channel	6,900 linear feet of stream channel free of tamarisk
2	Cutting Establishment	Using field crews collect and plant approximately 5,000 willow and mulefat cuttings along 6,900 linear feet of stream channel to expand riparian habitat for least Bell's vireo and other riparian dependent species	6,900 linear feet of established riparian forest
3	Weed Management	Using field crews carry out mowing and spraying activities as necessary to eliminate the pressure from non-native invasive plant species on coastal sage scrub communities allowing plantings to become established	Coastal sage scrub communities established across the 71-acre project site
4	Maintenance	Maintaining irrigation system to ensure plant establishment over the next 18 months	Coastal sage scrub communities established across the 71-acre project site
....	Administrative	Quarterly reporting on the status of the grant project and a final report on the outcome of the grant project	Quarter and final project reports

C. Budget by Task

Exhibit B – Proposed Project Budget

Task No.	Task Name	Grant Request
1	Tamarisk Removal	\$15,000
2	Cutting Establishment	\$15,000
3	Weed Management	\$20,000
4	Maintenance	\$15,000
....	Administrative	\$5,000
Subtotal		\$70,000
Indirect Cost (12.95%)		\$9,065
TOTAL		\$79,065

D. Project Schedule

Exhibit C – Proposed Project Schedule
(Assumes Fall 2018 Notice to Proceed [NTP])

Task No.	Task Name	Proposed Start Date	Months Needed to Complete Task	Task End Date
1	Tamarisk Removal	10/01/2018	2	12/31/2018
2	Cutting Establishment	01/01/2019	2	03/01/2019
3	Weed Management	09/01/2018	18	03/01/2019
4	Maintenance	09/01/2018	18	03/01/2019
5	Administration	09/01/2018	18	03/01/2019

Unexpected weather events would not substantially impact the schedule for the proposed weed management and maintenance activities because these activities are not continuous and can be scheduled to work around rain events and wet weather. A delayed Notice to Proceed (NTP) would simply push back the overall project schedule for these activities while allowing River Partners to carry out weed management activities during critical periods such as the spring of 2018 and 2019 when voracious weed growth is expected. The tamarisk removal and willow cutting planting are more time sensitive and may be affected by a delayed NTP. Ideally tamarisk removal will occur after least Bell’s vireo nesting season (March 15 to September 15) and willows cuttings must be collected and planted when they are dormant (usually by January) and prior to the beginning of least Bell’s vireo nesting season. A delay in NTP of a month or two could be accommodated but longer than this would require pushing back these activities until the following year. Still this it is expected that this would not require additional time.

NOTICE REGARDING PREVAILING WAGES

SANDAG’s Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP) Land Management Grant Program projects are funded with *TransNet* revenues consistent with the *TransNet* Extension Ordinance adopted by the voters in November 2004 (SANDAG Ordinance 04-01). Although SANDAG Ordinance 04-01 does not require payment of prevailing wages, California law may require that public works projects pay prevailing wages for workers.

Applicant acknowledges that SANDAG has strongly encouraged Applicant to seek legal counsel regarding whether the Proposed Project will require applicant to pay prevailing wages and agrees that SANDAG will have no liability for conducting this analysis. Yes No

Applicant acknowledges that if awarded an EMP Land Management Grant, the grant agreement between SANDAG and the grantee requires grantee’s compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and ordinances applicable to the Agreement. Yes No

REQUIRED STATEMENTS FROM APPLICANT

- Yes No The applicant has read and understands the Sample Grant Agreement (Agreement) and Invoice Template (Attachment 4).
- Yes No If the SANDAG Board of Directors approves the proposed project proposal, the proposed applicant agrees to sign and return the Agreement to SANDAG, without exceptions or amendments, within 45 days of receipt.
- Yes No 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 the following link: sandag.org/organization/about/pubs/policy_035.pdf
- Yes No The applicant understands that 10 percent of all invoices will be retained until the completion of the proposed project.
- Yes No 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.
- Yes No The applicant understands that invoices and reports must be submitted on a quarterly basis within three weeks after the period covering January 1 to March 31; within three weeks after the period covering April 1 to June 30; within three weeks after the period covering July 1 to September 30; and within three weeks after the period covering October 1 to December 31.
- Yes No The applicant understands that the EMP quarterly report template (to be sent to the grantee after NTP is issued) 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.
- Yes No 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 all outstanding deliverables in order to receive final payment and have retained funds released.
- Yes No 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 proposals. SANDAG will provide applicants with advance notice of the Regional Planning Committee’s anticipated meeting date.
- Yes No The applicant agrees to submit all project data/information to SANDAG in a format compatible with the regional management database.

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

John Carlon, President

Applicant Name/Title (print or type)



Applicant Signature January 12, 2018
Date