



**4. Describe the stressors and/or threats to the MSP species and their habitats in the project area that will be addressed through implementation of this project proposal.**

Currently, only a single BUOW breeding population in San Diego County remains, in an area on Otay Mesa that is slated for future development. In addition, the available habitat in Otay Mesa is only moderately suitable, due to heavy clay soils, habitat fragmentation, limited squirrel presence, and heavy reliance on artificial burrows. Ongoing development pressure and land use changes in the area also threaten this single remaining breeding population. While a plan to establish a network of Conserved Lands with connectivity and appropriate habitat for BUOW is in process on the Mesa, the need for additional breeding populations in other locations has been recognized and included in conservation planning.

One of the most significant obstacles to conducting translocations successfully is post-translocation dispersal away from the release site (Stamps and Swaisgood 2007; Batson et al. 2015). Long-distance movements following release have been shown to increase risk exposure and mortality rates (Stamps and Swaisgood 2007; Le Gouar et al. 2011; Shier and Swaisgood 2012). Temporarily holding relocated animals in acclimation enclosures at the release site may encourage individuals to remain in the vicinity upon release (Bright and Morris 1994; Batson et al. 2015), but this method alone does not always yield success (Shier and Swaisgood 2012). Thus, a major consideration is to find mechanisms to retain or “anchor” animals in suitable habitat at the release site.