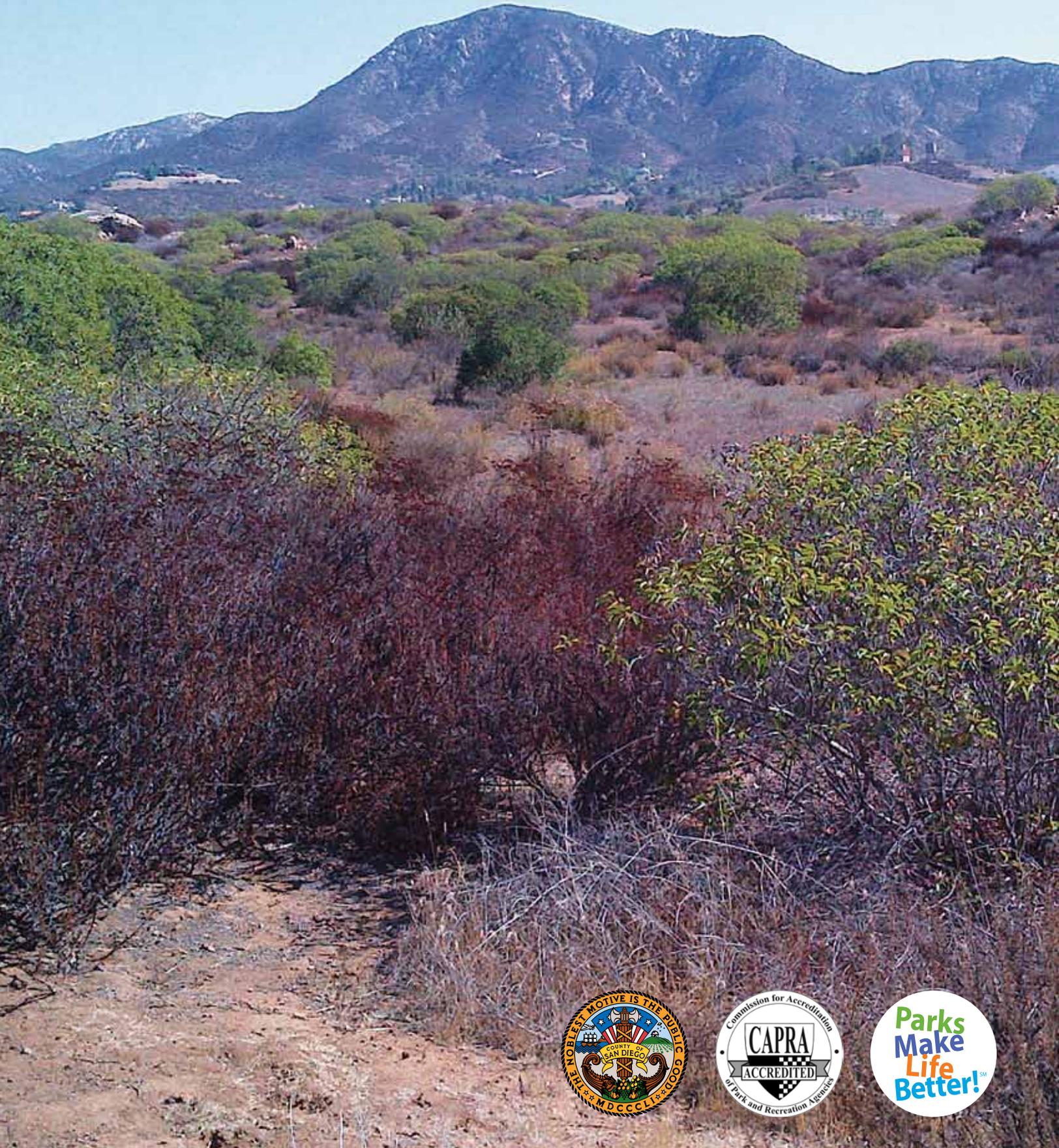


2015 MSCP & PRESERVE LANDS STATUS REPORT

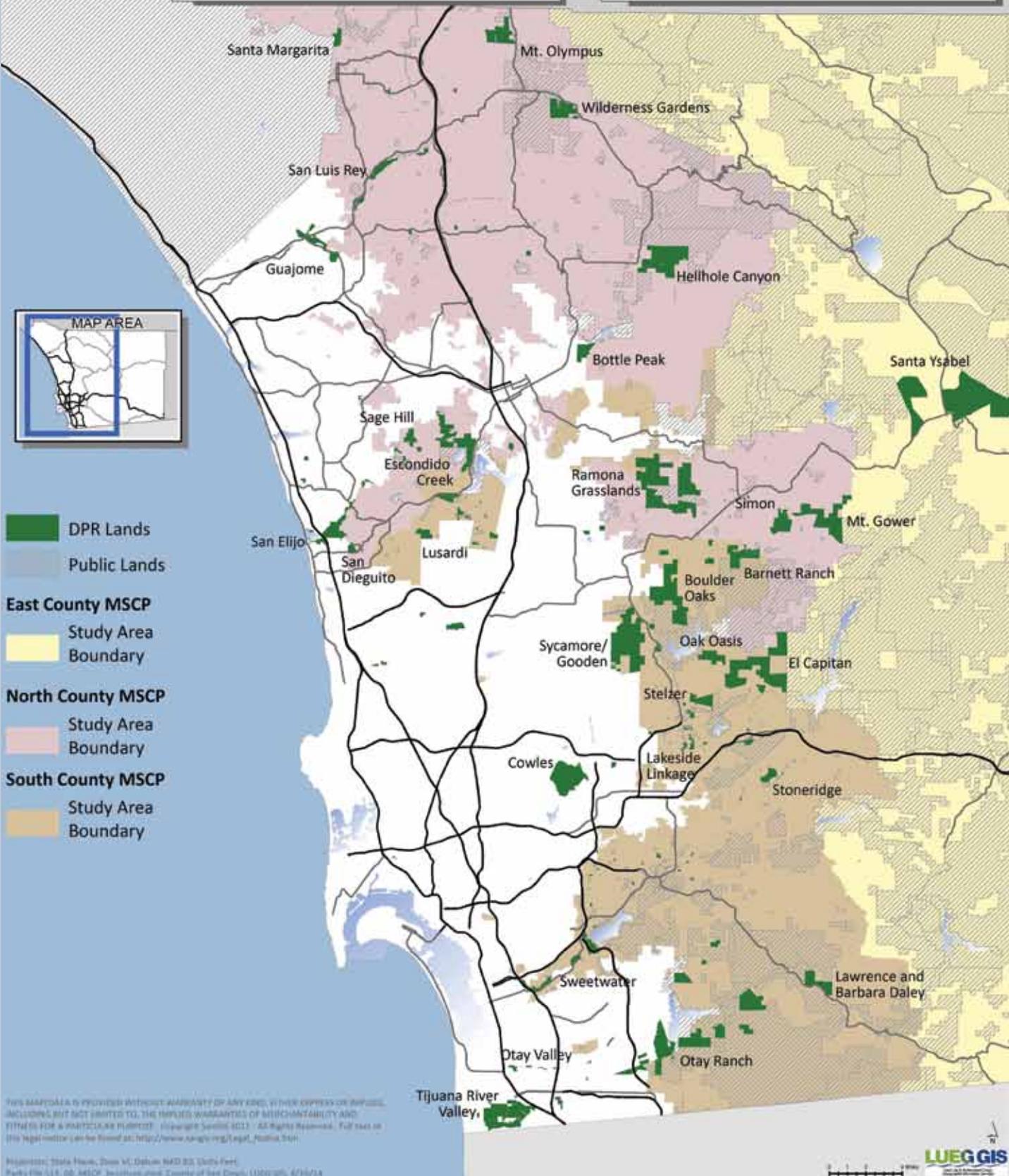


**Department of Parks and Recreation
Preserve Lands**

1998 Baseline: 28,000 acres
As of December 2014: 46,900 acres

Acquisition Funding

County Contribution: \$ 73 million
Partners Contribution: \$ 87 million
Total Acquisition Cost: \$ 160 million



- DPR Lands
- Public Lands
- East County MSCP**
- Study Area Boundary
- North County MSCP**
- Study Area Boundary
- South County MSCP**
- Study Area Boundary

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Project: State Parks, Data: V. DeLeon, NAD 83, State Plane
Parks File: L14_00_MSCP_Justification.pxd, County of San Diego, 1/20/14, 6/16/14



Restoration Highlights



The Department of Parks and Recreation restored nearly 60 acres in the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park in the past year via four separate projects:

- Removal of arundo, tamarisk, garland chrysanthemum and crystalline ice plant on 33 acres of wetland habitat, west of Dairy Mart Ponds Ecological Preserve.
- Planting of more than 12 acres of riparian and upland habitat near the park's baseball fields.
- Restoration and elimination of a redundant trail by planting 11 acres of riparian scrub habitat.
- Establishment and restoration of 3 acres of riparian/wetland habitat in and around the park's bird and butterfly garden.

Restoration Planned

Portions of the Lusardi Creek Preserve burned during wildfires in 2007 and 2014. As a result, conversion to a different type of habitat is occurring inside the preserve.

Areas previously populated by coastal sage scrub and chaparral have been converting to non-native grasslands – or have not recovered at all and remain in a disturbed state, with many invasive species. The Department of Parks and Recreation will be initiating restoration in some of these fire-affected areas, beginning in the fall of 2015.



Acquisition Highlight



In 2014, the Escondido Creek Preserve grew by an additional 244 acres when the Department of Parks and Recreation acquired a property known as “University Heights.” Escondido Creek Preserve now measures approximately 640 acres, part of 1,300 acres in the Escondido Creek watershed. The University Heights property is covered with southern mixed chaparral, and preserves a valuable wildlife corridor in the watershed. It is located within the draft North County MSCP Pre-Approved Mitigation Area.

Partnerships — Research

The San Diego Association of Governments funded a Department of Parks and Recreation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Raptor Foraging Monitoring Study in the Ramona Grasslands Preserve. The goal of the study was to collect baseline information on eagle/raptor foraging in order to provide a better understanding of species abundance and distribution within the preserve, along with a wealth of information on raptor behavior.



Golden eagles use the grasslands for foraging and have established nesting territories in the area. A pair of bald eagles established the first nest on the preserve in 2013, with success at fledging their young. Other breeding raptor species on the preserve include white-tail kite and Northern harrier, among many others.

Raptor surveys will continue through August 2016. Data will continue to be collected on a monthly basis.

Summary of Results in 2014

Bald eagles are using a majority of Ramona Grasslands Preserve for foraging. The pair nesting at Ramona Grasslands Preserve appears to have acclimated to surrounding disturbances such as cattle grazing and adjacent airport operations.

Golden eagles are impacted by urban development/encroachment and hunting. Their territories in San Diego County are declining, and they are especially sensitive to disturbances during periods of courtship, nest construction and egg incubation.

Environmental Stewardship

The Department of Parks and Recreation maintains more than 48,000 acres of County-owned land, nearly 47,000 of it open space/preserve lands. On-going stewardship and adaptive management activities include access control, park ranger patrol, fence and gate installation and repair, trash pick-up and removal, non-native and invasive species removal, erosion control, trail rehabilitation, fuel management, stream corridor improvements, vector control, and general habitat restoration.

Additionally, the Department of Parks and Recreation provides 20 to 40 right-of-entry permits per year, most for scientific studies in our preserves. Some of the scientific studies in 2014 included a badger occupancy study, a population and genetic variability study on Stephens' kangaroo rat and USFWS bald eagle banding.



TransNet Environmental Mitigation Program Grants

The Department of Parks and Recreation has been awarded San Diego Association of Governments Environmental Mitigation grants to help fund stewardship activities. Multiple restoration projects are underway, countywide, at various stages of completion.

2012

Sycamore Canyon and Goodan Ranch Preserve Invasive Removal and Habitat Restoration Project

- DPR treated and removed invasive non-native plant species and restored 4.8 acres of coastal sage scrub and coastal sage scrub/scrub oak chaparral habitats.
- Ongoing monitoring included surveying restoration sites for overall habitat status. Variegated dudleya – a plant species covered by the Multiple Species Conservation Plan and considered imperiled by the State of California – was observed at one restoration site.

2010

Lakeside Linkage Preserve Cactus Wren Restoration Project

- DPR restored cactus wren habitat at Lakeside Linkage Preserve by removing weeds and planting coast prickly pear cactus and cholla cactus thickets within 5 acres of coastal sage scrub habitat.
- Maintenance in 2014 included inspecting all cactus groups, watering when needed, manually weeding planting areas, removing debris and documenting the process with photos. Jojoba soap was applied to all cacti to control white larvae.

2008

Salt Creek Coastal Cactus Wren Habitat Enhancement/Restoration Project

- DPR planted 7,000 to 10,000 cactus cuttings to enhance and improve existing coastal cactus wren habitat on 1.4 acres within the Otay Ranch Preserve in the Salt Creek area. The area is jointly managed by the County and City of Chula Vista.
- The 5-year management and monitoring period ended in December. Future monitoring of the site is expected to reveal greater use of the restoration areas by cactus wren.

