

San Diego Association of Governments
Proctor Valley OHV Barrier Project (2017)
Final Report
Project Period: August 1, 2017 – March 31, 2018
SANDAG Contract Number: 5004941

Executive Summary

Steel barrier fencing, intended to prevent impacts related to unauthorized motor vehicle activities on conserved lands, were installed along Proctor Valley Road between the City of Chula Vista and the town of Jamul. The original installation of off-highway vehicle (OHV) barrier segments began in 2009 in the southwest portion of the valley on conserved lands owned and managed by City of San Diego. The OHV barriers have proven relatively successful in preventing vehicle trespass and thus, the avoiding further impacts related off-road activities. Since then, habitat areas in the southwest portion of the valley, previously damaged by off-road activities, have seen substantial recovery. Illegal off-road activity continues; however, in the northeast area of the valley. Unlawful entry through gaps in the barrier continues to damage sensitive habitats, and threaten priority species identified in the San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan.

The intention of this project was specifically to close one of these last remaining gaps in the Proctor Valley OHV barrier, thus increase protection of species and habitats from impacts related to unauthorized off-road vehicle activities. California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) property, known as Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve (RJER), Proctor Valley East Unit, had been partially protected from unauthorized entry from Proctor Valley Road by an aging post and wire fence. In order to gain unlawful entry to the property, the old wire fence on both CDFW and adjacent private property has been frequently vandalized, resulting in continuing degradation of portions of the properties. Replacement of the old fencing with OHV barrier on CDFW property was essential to provide the level of protection needed to prevent unlawful entry of motorized vehicles originating directly from Proctor Valley Road.

Eliminating the ability of unauthorized motor vehicles to enter CDFW's lands directly from the public road was a significant step in reducing the number of unsanctioned routes into and through the property. Preliminary observations suggest closing this gap (alone) is working to prevent and/or discouraging unauthorized off-road activities on CDFW's RJER Proctor Valley East unit. A network of historic and user created trails connect privately owned lands to CDFW's RJER Proctor Valley units. At a minimum, installation of the new OHV barrier segment has enabled staff to focus limited resources on preventing unauthorized intrusion via internal routes of entry in order to protect sensitive wildland resources and their habitats.

Contents

| | |
|------------------------|----------|
| Executive Summary | <u>1</u> |
| Project Background | <u>3</u> |
| Project Goals | <u>3</u> |
| Work Performed by Task | <u>4</u> |
| Images | <u>5</u> |
| Conclusions | <u>5</u> |
| Exhibits | <u>6</u> |

Project Background

Proctor Valley is located in MSPA Management Unit 3. A significant portion of the valley is owned and managed by a handful of federal, state and local government and non-government organizations for conservation of wildland resources, working in partnership under the umbrella of San Diego County's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). Prior to the MSCP, Proctor Valley had a long history as a focal area for unsanctioned off-road vehicle activities. Attempts to manage and protect the area for conservation of wildland resources had previously presented a particular challenge, due mainly to a lack of adequate funding sources. Establishment of the TransNet Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP) was a major step forward in providing a means of meeting such challenges. The OHV barrier installation efforts were necessary to prevent further damage to conserved lands, and facilitate sensitive habitat recovery.

Installation of the original Proctor Valley off-road barrier segments began in the southwest section of the valley in 2009 on City of San Diego, Public Utilities' property. Subsequent project proposals submitted to SANDAG EMP, as well as other funding sources, resulted in additional OHV barrier sections installed on CDFW property (2010-2011), followed in 2014, via a submission by Chaparral Lands Conservancy (and partners) for a project intended to complete the barrier along the remaining open-space stretches of Proctor Valley Road. This last section included privately owned lands and CDFW's RJER Proctor Valley East unit. The section of barrier fence included in this project was originally planned for installation in 2014, as part of the EMP funded 'Proctor Valley Vehicle Barriers Project' (Chaparral Lands Conservancy). However, that project ran out of funds following unexpected steep increases in the price of steel.

Project Goals

This project is consistent with the implementation of the Fire and Wildlife Action Plan (FWA) assigned to golden eagle, Quino checkerspot butterfly and Hermes copper butterfly via the limitation of access to OHV activities, thus reducing wildfire risk (and preventing other impacts) to their habitats. This action will also serve to meet MSP priority objectives pending availability, such as maintaining large (>300 acres) open areas within golden eagle territories to meet foraging habitat conditions preferred by eagles. Implementing this project will also provide additional protection to other SL and SO species.

This action is/was intended to reduce/prevent wildfires and other impacts from unauthorized activities on conserved lands in Proctor Valley. With the expectation of additional traffic on the roads associated with the 2016 opening of the 'Hollywood Casino', as well as the planned development of hundreds of acres in the surrounding area, public pressure on these conserved lands is expected to increase dramatically in the immediate future. There is an urgent need to control access and prevent impacts before such pressures lead to increased unauthorized access.

Work Performed by Task

Task 1- Develop and secure Contract Agreement

Budget: \$0.00 (from grant agreement)

Spent: \$NA

Match for Task: \$NA

In order to fit project costs to \$50,000 or less, CDFW committed to absorbing administrative and management costs. Therefore, these costs were not calculated.

Task 2-Visit Site with Barrier Fabricator (Contractor)

Budget: \$0.00 (from grant agreement)

Spent: \$NA

Match for Task: \$NA

Task 3- Remove Existing Fence

Budget: \$0.00 (from grant)

Spent: \$NA

Match for Task: \$NA

Task 4- Barrier Fabrication & Installation

Budget: up to \$50,000 (from grant)

Spent: \$48,000

Match for Task: \$0.00

Task 5- Project Report

Budget: \$0.00 (from grant)

Spent: \$NA

Match for Task: \$NA

Project Images attached as Exhibits (from Quarterly Report October 1-December 31, 2017) and Exhibit A

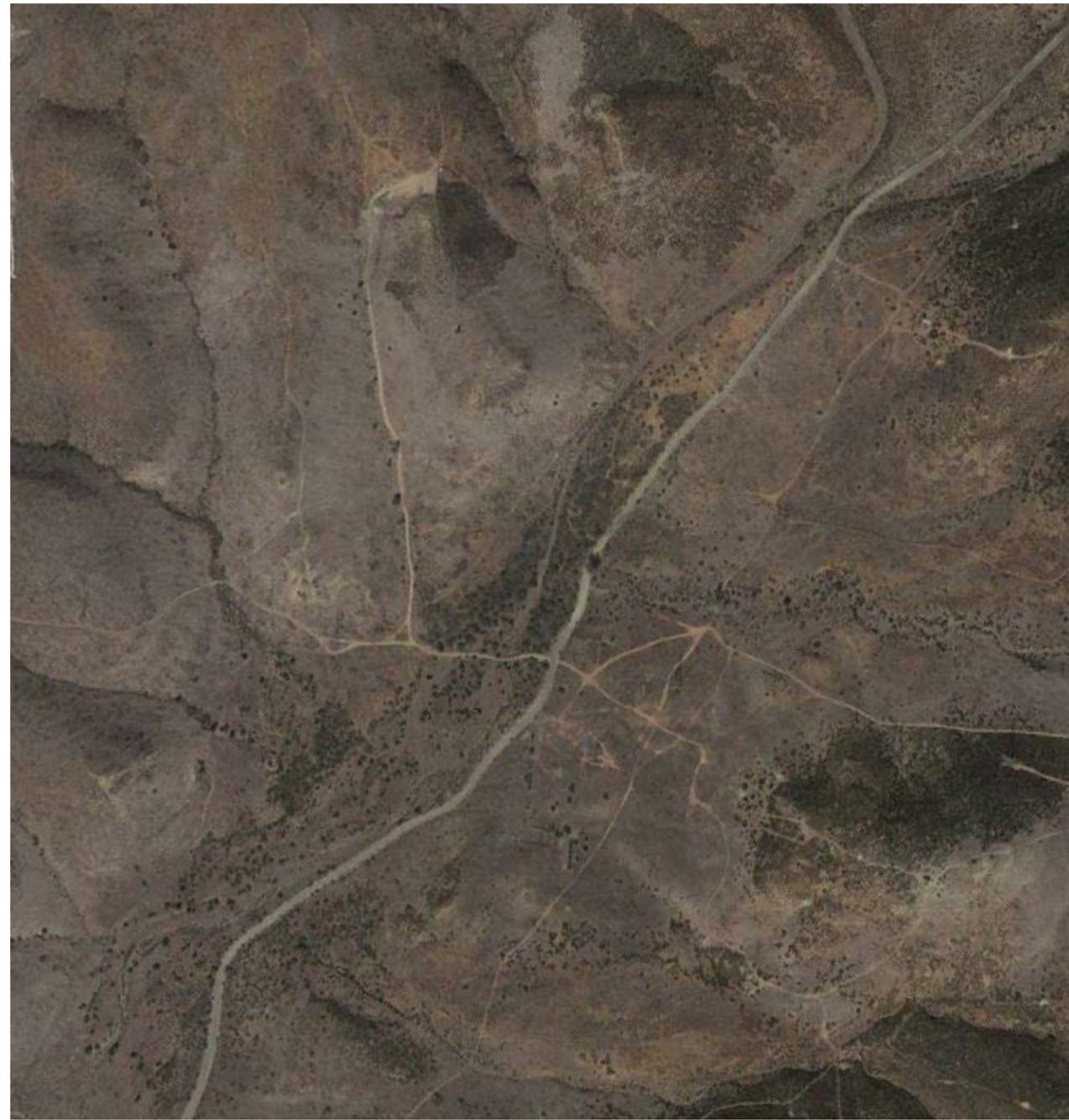
Conclusions

Eliminating the ability of unauthorized motor vehicles to enter CDFW's lands directly from the public road is a significant step in reducing the number of unsanctioned routes into and through the property. While it is still too early to determine if closing this gap (alone) will result in substantial long-term curtailing of unauthorized off-road vehicle activities on CDFW's and partner owned and managed conserved lands, CDFW has found initial encouraging evidence the new section of ORV barrier fencing is working to prevent/discourage motorized vehicle intrusion. Private lands located between CDFW's RJER Proctor Valley East Unit and West Unit remain partially fenced with posts and barbed wire. Several gaps in the fencing leave the adjacent private property unprotected from vehicle intrusion originating from Proctor Valley Road. These private lands are connected to CDFW properties by a network of historic and user-created trails. Staff visited the RJER Proctor Valley East and West units in January and March, 2018, for the purpose of surveying the areas for signs of recent intrusion and/or recovery. The dry early winter conditions in January made it difficult to determine if traffic on the exposed surfaces of the unauthorized roads/trails was occurring. There appeared to be some recent tracks on one trail segment, although it was difficult to distinguish the tracks as originating from small motorcycles or bicycles. No recent full sized vehicle tracks were observed in January. In March, staff visited Proctor Valley East unit within three days following receipt of rain. Signs of pedestrian, horse, dog and bicycle traffic were readily apparent. Motorized vehicle traffic was not evident at the time, although staff received reports of motorcycle activity in the general area. Preliminary evidence of vegetation/habitat recovery was also not readily apparent in the months following barrier installation. Overall lack of rainfall this year (~6") was not particularly conducive to natural re-vegetation of heavily disturbed areas. Significant visual evidence of recovery, such as can be viewed via satellite imagery in the central and southwestern portions of Proctor Valley, could be expected to take a few years. See Exhibit A, imagery provided by staff of City of San Diego, Public Utilities Department, depicting the recovery of habitats damaged from off-road vehicle activities following the installation of ORV barrier along Proctor Valley Road. With the installation of the new OHV barrier section, CDFW staff can focus limited resources on management actions necessary to prevent unauthorized vehicle intrusion from adjacent private lands, now that direct access from Proctor Valley Road has been eliminated.

Exhibit A



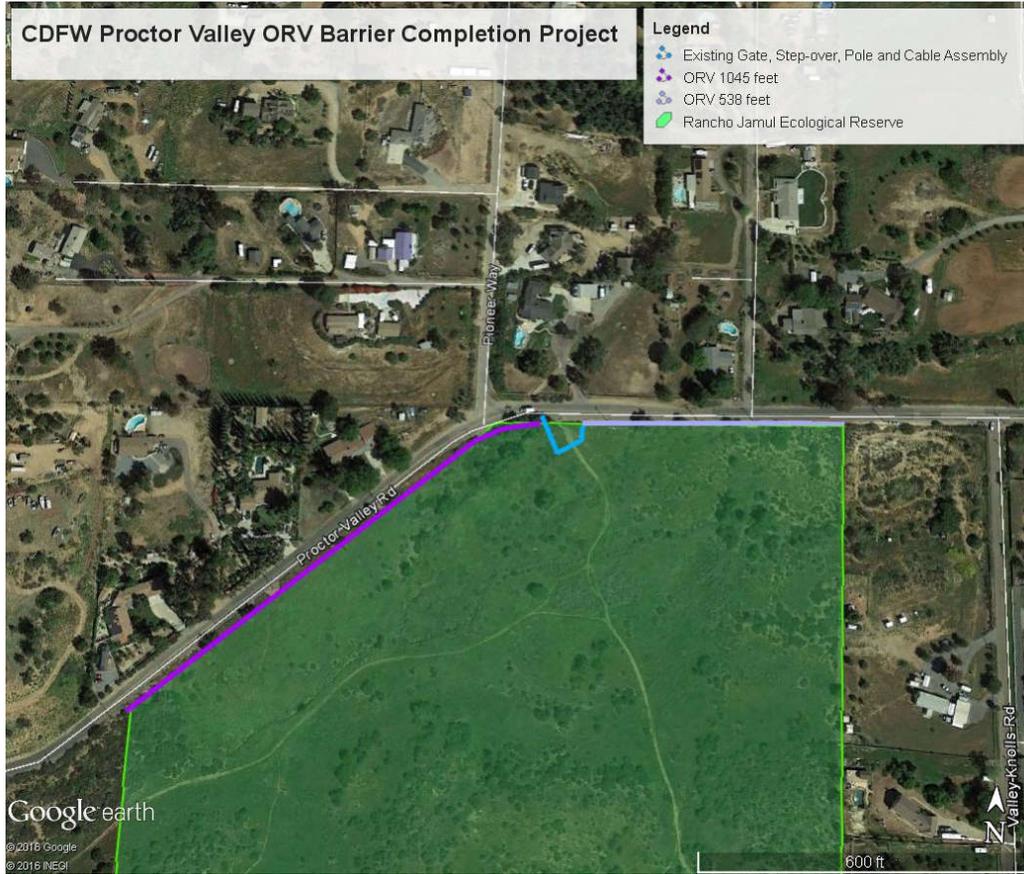
2008



2016

Central portion of Proctor Valley, from before and after the installation of ORV barrier fencing through lands belonging to City of San Diego, California Dept of Fish and Wildlife, and private properties. Images provided by staff of City of San Diego Utilities.

Project Exhibits (from Reporting Period: October 1 – December 31, 2017):



Project overview image



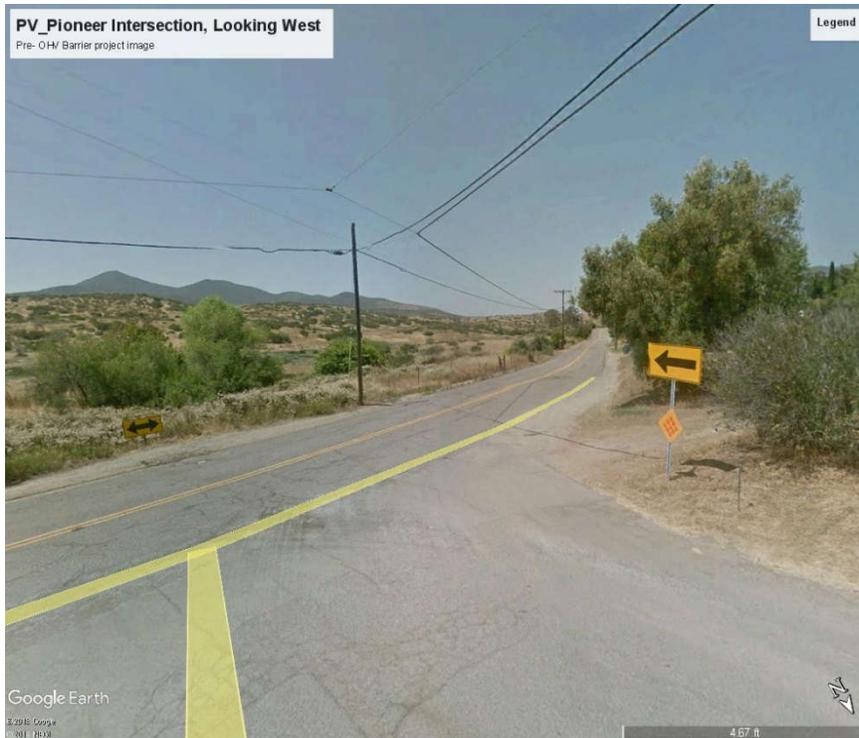
OHV Barrier segments fabricated by CDFW Contractor Sept/Oct 2017



East end of CDFW RJER PV (East Unit) property intersect with private property, looking west. White post is property boundary marker.



Post Project East End Property at boundary marker, looking west. Contractor equipment in background at CDFW entry gate.



Pre-project image at intersection of Pioneer and Proctor Valley Road looking west, showing existing dilapidated post and wire fence.



Post-project image at intersection of Pioneer and Proctor Valley Road looking west, showing new ORV barrier installed.



Pre-project Property

boundary marker west end, looking east.



Post-project

Property boundary marker west end, looking east.