

San Diego Association of Governments
Otay River Valley Cactus Wren Fence Project
Final Report
Project Period: 1/27/17-9/27/17
SANDAG Contract Number: 5004944

Executive Summary

The short-term Otay River Valley Cactus Wren Fence Project reduced threats to coastal cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus sandiegensis*; CACW) habitat by providing access control via fence and sign installation for the 3-year Otay River Valley Cactus Wren project (SANDAG Grant Number 5004730). The overarching goal of the Cactus Wren project is to increase the amount of suitable habitat and improve connectivity for the coastal cactus wren along the Otay River Valley through restoration and enhancement of degraded habitat areas. CACW is a Management Strategic Plan (MSP) Category SO species (significant occurrence(s) at risk of loss from MSP area). This short-term project fulfills the immediate need for access control in the CACW restoration area by deterring off-road vehicles, bikers, equestrians, and other trails users from entering the 3-year project site.

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Project Background

The population of coastal cactus wrens within the Otay River Valley is part of the Otay River genetic cluster identified by the MSP as being at high risk of genetic diversity loss (San Diego Management and Monitoring Program [SDMMP] 2013; MSP Vol. 2, page 2-157 and Vol. 2 Table 2-2.9). The coastal cactus wren restoration program in the Otay River Valley and Salt Creek areas addresses the immediate needs of coastal cactus wren where loss and degradation of existing cactus wren habitat has occurred due to historical cattle grazing, an increase of invasive plant species, unauthorized off-road-vehicle use, drought, and vegetation succession processes. This cactus wren fencing project complements the existing coastal cactus wren habitat restoration projects led by County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the City of Chula Vista, which have been funded by previous TransNet Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP) grant cycles.

The project planned to implement access control to protect maritime succulent scrub habitat restoration and enhancement activities within the Otay River Valley that are improving connectivity, increasing suitable habitat patches, reducing the risk of fire, and reducing the risk of extirpation or a population bottleneck of CACW within this area. Activities were to include fence and sign installation. This project protects suitable cactus scrub and coastal sage scrub habitat within the Otay River genetic clusters which is consistent with the management efforts, goals, and objectives prescribed in SDMMP's Management Strategic Plan (2013; MSP Vol. 2, Table 2-2.9).

The project is located in Otay River Valley Conserved Lands within the City of Chula Vista's jurisdiction, north of the Otay River, west of Otay Lakes County Park. The County of San Diego DPR owns the project parcel, assessor's parcel number 646-010-06 (Figure 1).

Project Goals

Project goals are listed below:

- Install fencing and signage to increase access control for the CACW restoration site (EMP Grant Number 5004730). Fence and sign installation are shown in Photographs 1-4.
- Deter off-road vehicles, bikers, equestrians, and other trails users from entering the project site.

Work Performed by Task

Task 1 – Fence and Sign installation

Budget: \$4,897.20

Spent: \$4,896.20

Match for Task: \$0

On April 28 and May 1 and 5, the RECON crew installed approximately 1,650 linear feet of three strand barbless wire t-post fence (see Photographs 1, 2, and 3). A RECON biologist monitored the fence installation. On September 7, 2017, eight signs were installed around the restoration area (Photograph 4) which include County regulations to notify that the area is closed. Sign installation locations are represented on Figure 1.

Task 2 – Quarterly Reports

Original Budget: \$1,517.30

Reallocated Budget: \$2,402.70

Spent: \$2,402.70

Match for Task: \$0

Quarterly Report I was submitted to SANDAG on April 20, 2017. Quarterly Report II was prepared by RECON and submitted to DPR on July 10, 2017, and to SANDAG on July 20, 2017. Quarterly Reports I and II included a list of tasks that were performed for the project during the corresponding quarterly reporting period. This final report serves as both Quarterly Report III and the Final Report. Additional funds were remaining after the conclusion of Task 3. SANDAG approved the reallocation of \$885.40 to this task for completion of reports, as represented in the budget above.

Task 3 – Expenses – Fence and Sign Materials

Original Budget: \$2,440.00

Reallocated Budget: \$1,554.60

Spent: \$1,173.63

Match for Task: \$0

Project expenses included fencing materials, eight signs, and a portable restroom rental. Additional funds were remaining after the conclusion of this task. SANDAG approved the reallocation of \$885.40 to Task 2 for completion of reports, as represented in the budget above.

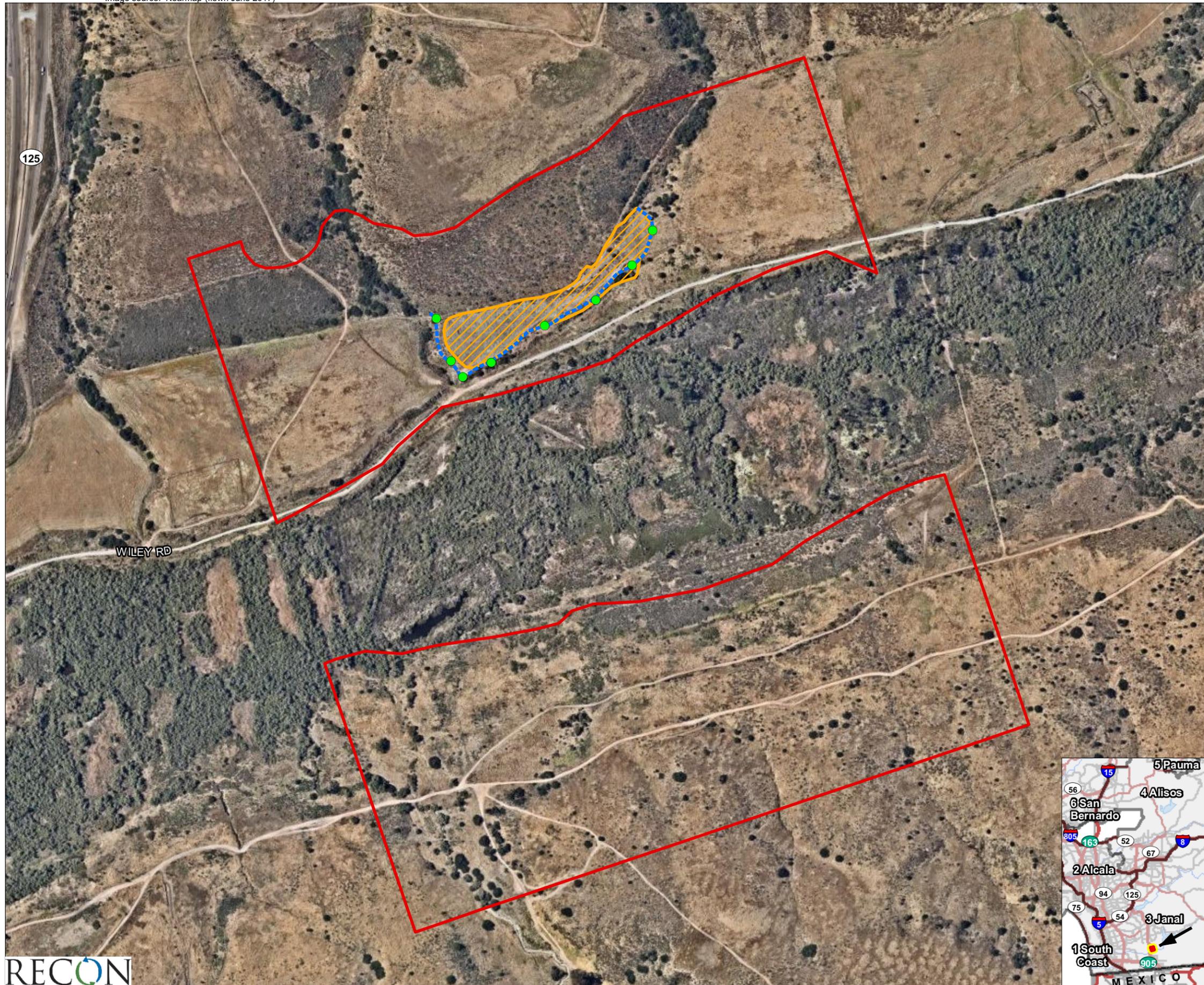
Conclusions

The short-term Otay River Valley Cactus Wren Fence Project reduced threats to CACW habitat by providing access control via fence and sign installation for the 3-year Otay River Valley Cactus Wren project. The project successfully fulfilled the immediate need for access control in the CACW restoration area. The goals of the project were achieved by installing fencing and signage which will deter off-road vehicles, bikers, equestrians, and other trails users from entering the 3-year project site. DPR staff has already observed a reduction in the number of bikers within the fenced in area. Future management recommendations include periodic fence and sign inspection.

Reference Cited

San Diego Management and Monitoring Program (SDMMP)

2013 Management Strategic Plan for Conserved Lands in Western San Diego County.



APN - 646-010-

Fence Installation Location

Fence Installed

Additional Efforts Currently Funded by TransNet (Not Part of This Short-term

CACW Habitat Restoration (County of San Diego EMP Grant)



FIGURE 1
Fence and Sign Installation Locations



PHOTOGRAPH 1
Barbless Wire T-post Fencing was Installed to Protect the CACW
Habitat Restoration Site, May 1, 2017



PHOTOGRAPH 2
Barbless Wire T-post Fencing was Installed, May 1, 2017



PHOTOGRAPH 3
Barbless Wire T-post Fencing was Installed, May 1, 2017



PHOTOGRAPH 4
Eight Habitat Restoration Area Signs were Installed,
September 7, 2017