San Diego Thornmint (*Acanthomintha ilicifolia*) Enhancement in Declining Populations





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Conservation Director

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San Diego Thornmint Background

Acanthomintha ilicifolia (ACIL)

Federally Threatened

California Endangered

California Rare Plant Rank 1B.1

Annual Herb

Bloom Period: April – June

Prefers openings in clay soils





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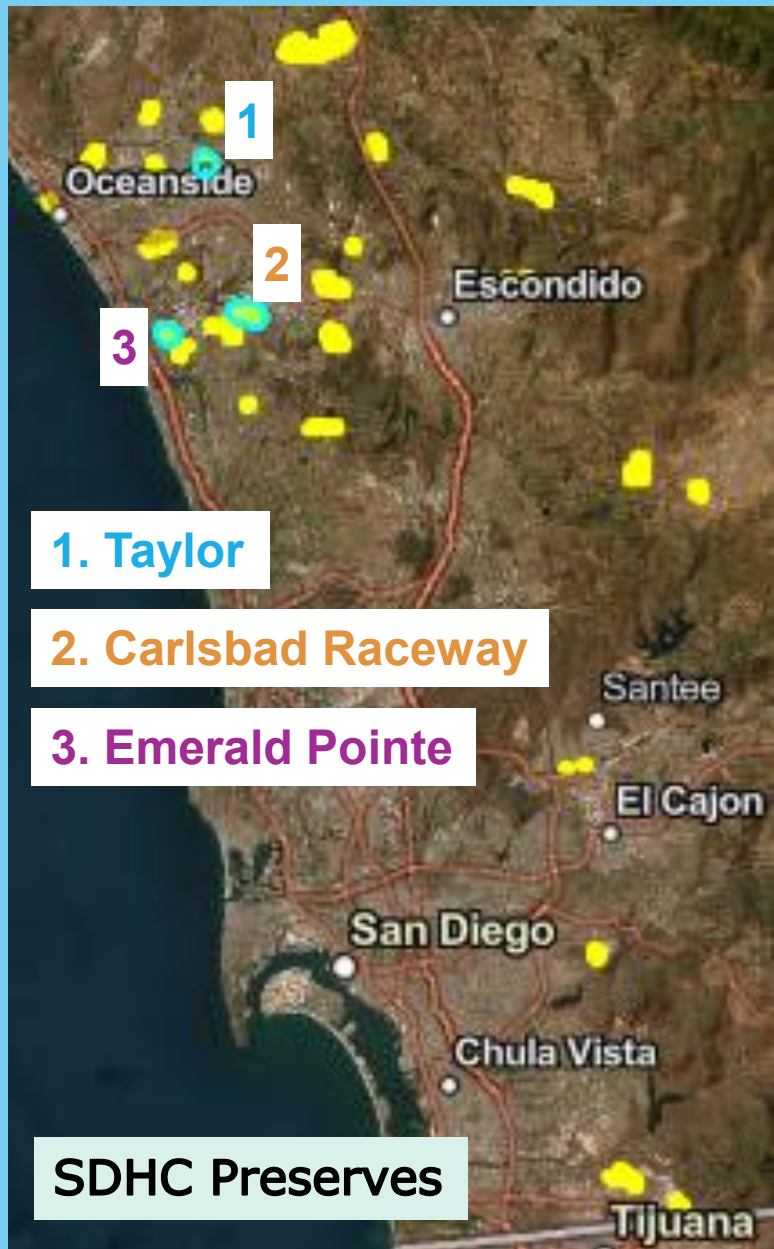
San Diego Thornmint Distribution





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Threats to San Diego Thornmint

Urbanization responsible for loss of majority of occurrences.

Threatened by nonnative plants, grazing and trampling, changing climate conditions, poor seed viability.





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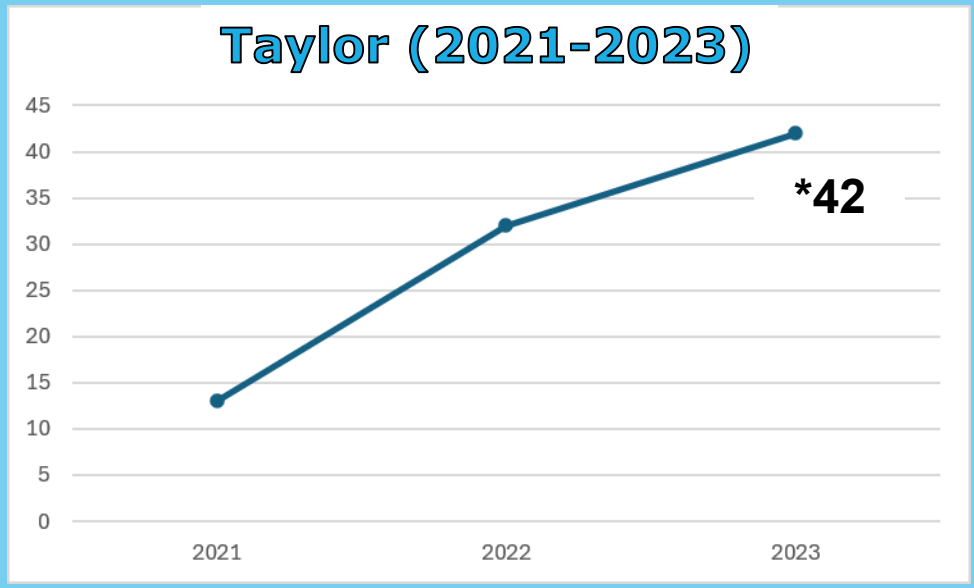
Historic Populations at SDHC





*Data collected from annual Inspect and Manage (IMG) surveys

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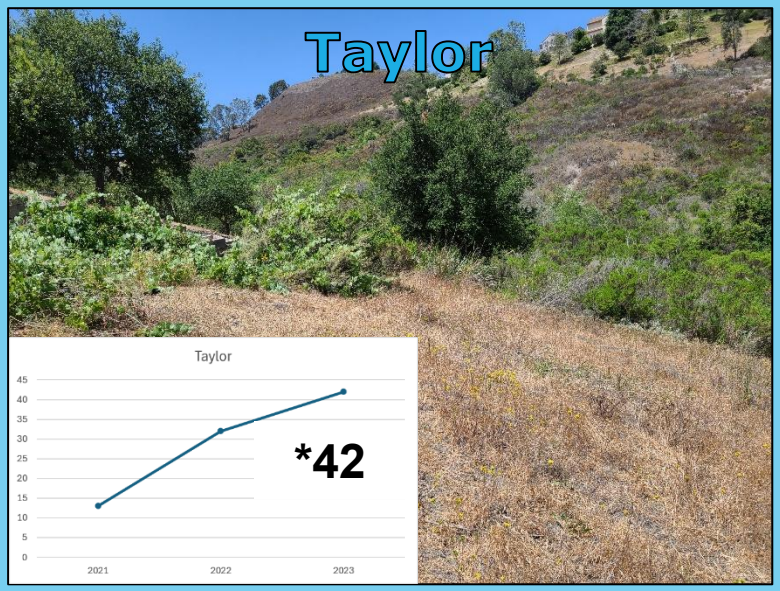
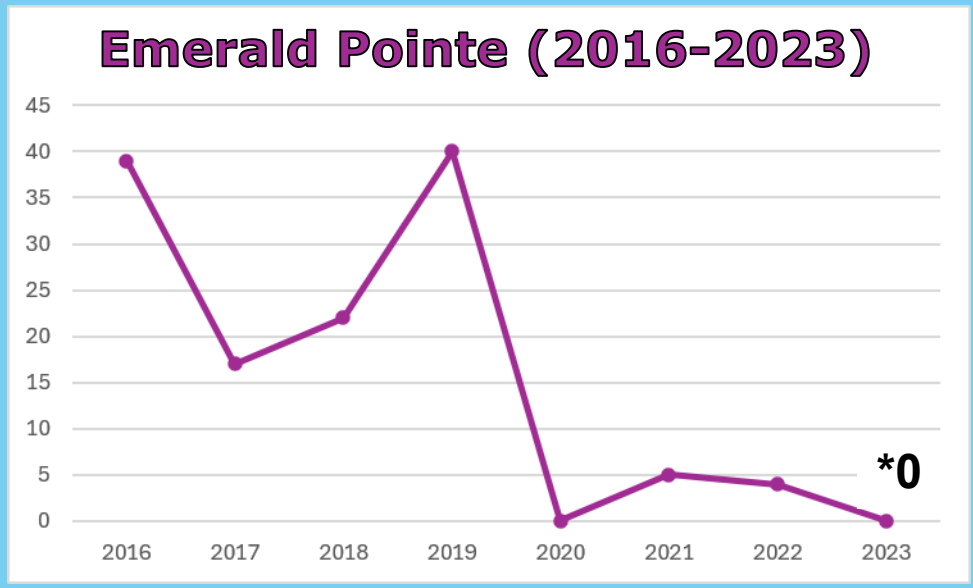
Historic Populations at SDHC







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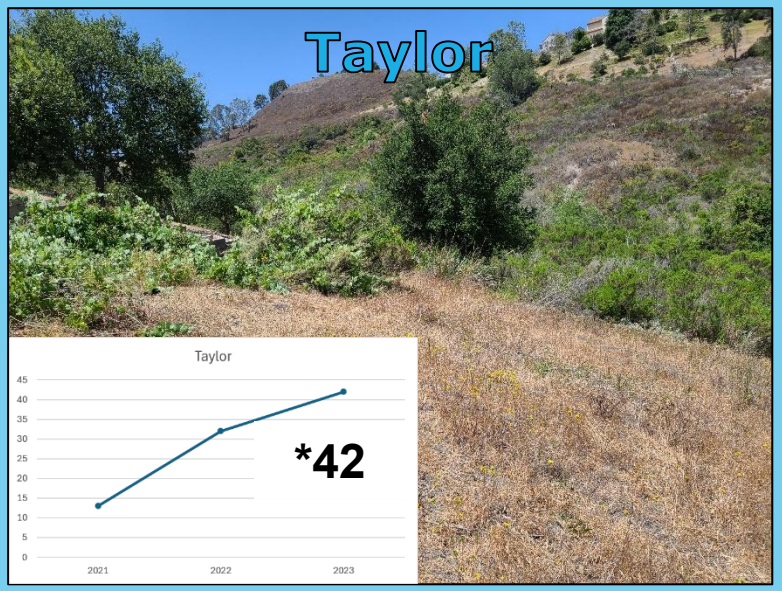
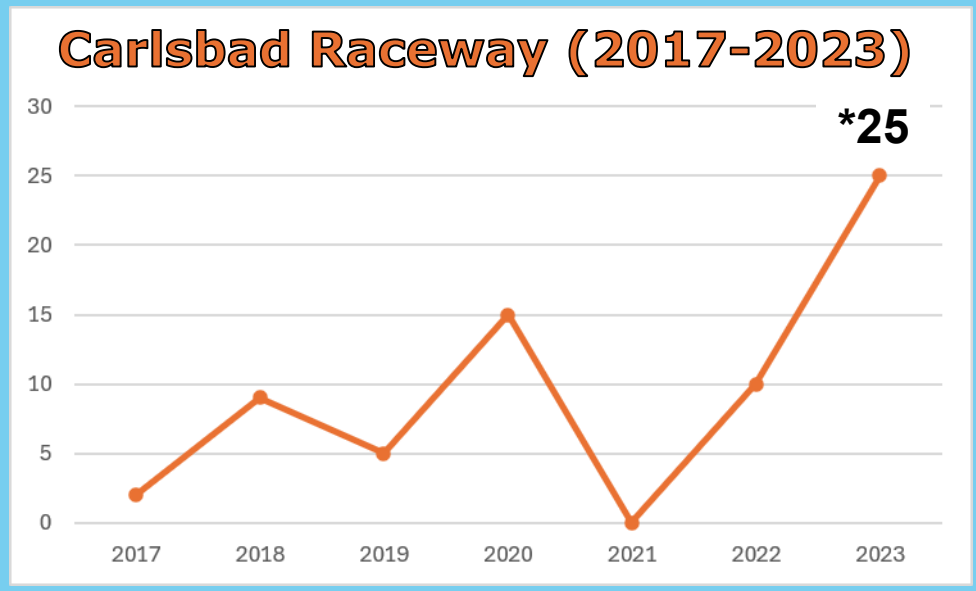
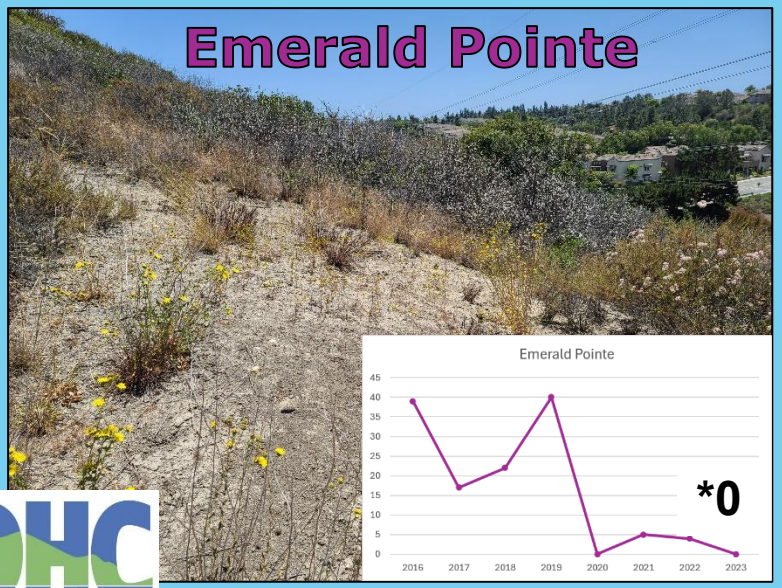
Historic Populations at SDHC









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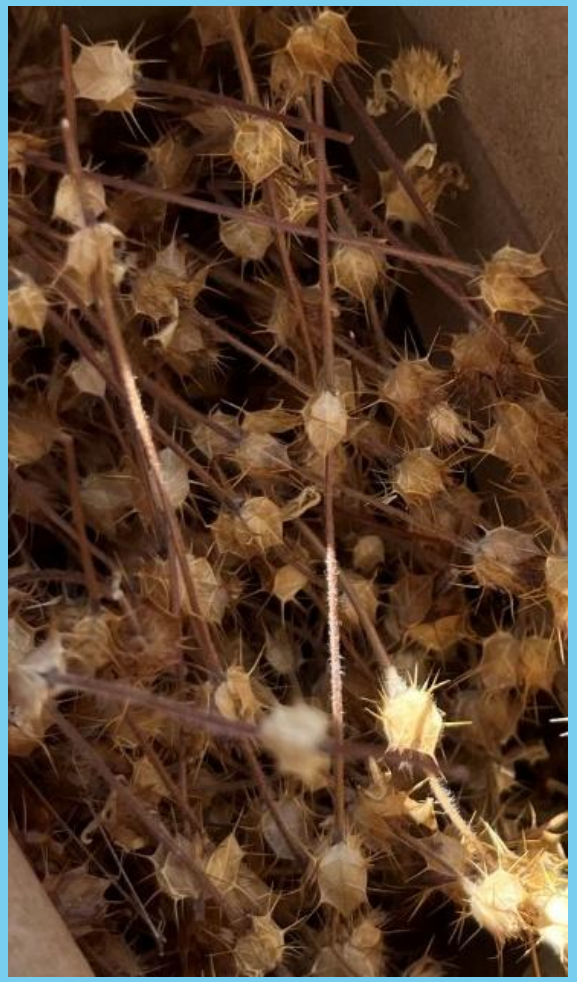
San Diego Thornmint Enhancement Project

Awarded Environmental Mitigation Program Land Management Grant (EMP LMG) by San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) to enhance ACIL populations across the three preserves.

1. Collected ACIL seed from donor site
   a. Processed by San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance (SDZWA) Native Plant Seed Bank





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San Diego Thornmint Enhancement Project

2. Site preparation
   a. Dethatching and weed removal
   b. Antiherbivore fencing



3. Seed installation
   a. December 2023: only on Carlsbad Raceway and Emerald Pointe
   b. November 2025: on all three preserves





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4. Increased monitoring visits
   a. As needed hand weeding within 3 feet of occurrences
   b. Supplemental watering during weeks without significant rain events >0.5”







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5. Focused maintenance
   a. Treatment of nonnative grass (*Brachypodium distachyon*) and herbs (e.g., *Brassica nigra* and *Centaurea melitensis*)





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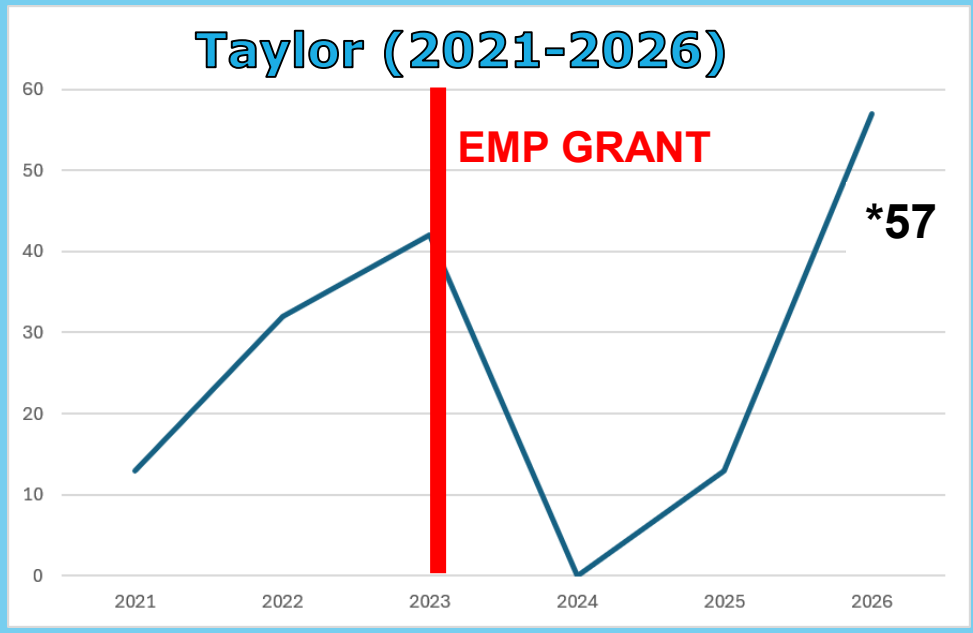
Impacts of Grant Activities





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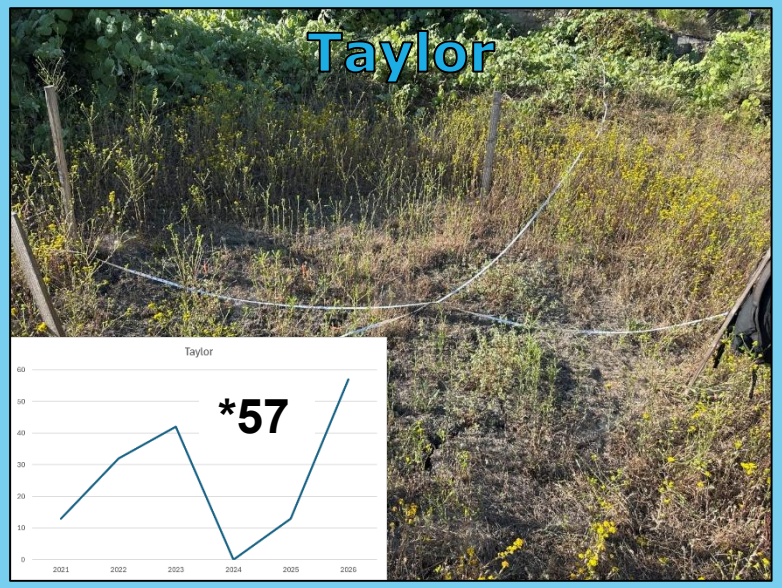
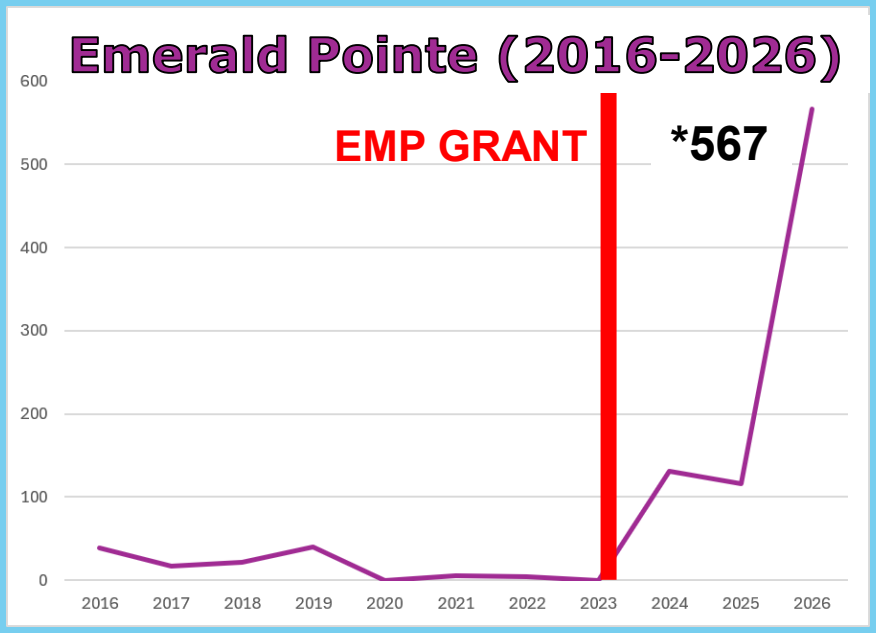
Impacts of Grant Activities







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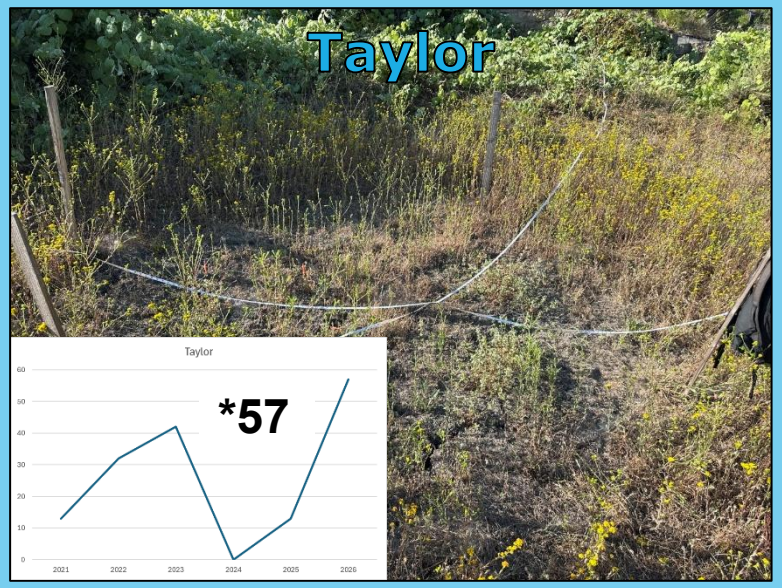
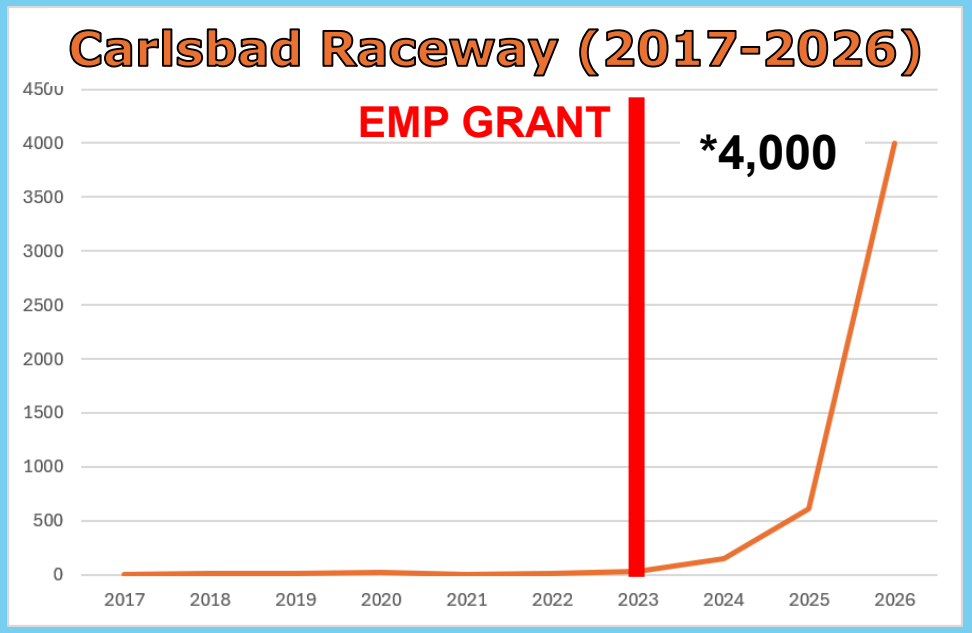
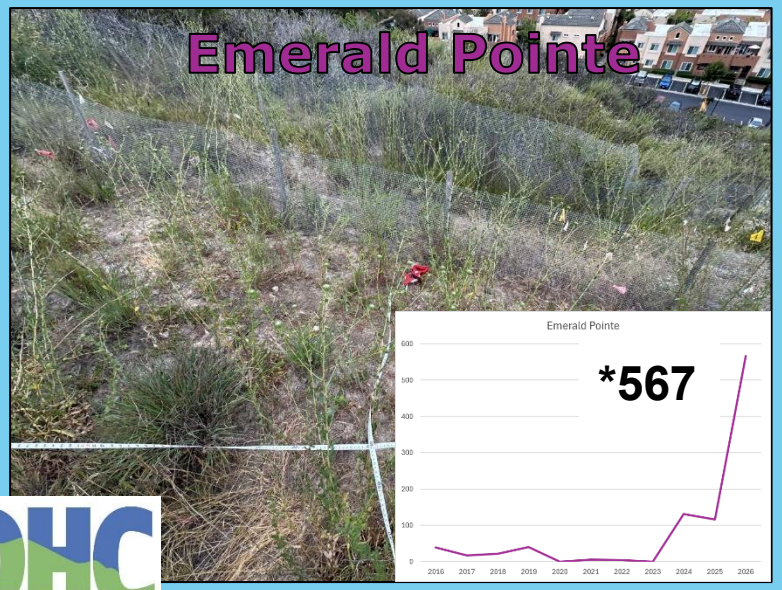
Impacts of Grant Activities









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Co-Occurring Rare Plants

Thread-leaved Brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*)
CRPR 1B.1





Wiggin's Cryptantha (*Cryptantha wigginsii*)
CRPR 1B.2

Palmer's Grapplinghook (*Harpagonella palmeri*)
CRPR 4B.2





Baja CA Oatgrass (*Sphenopholis interrupta* ssp. *californica*) **CRPR 1B.1**

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Future Management

SANDAG grant project completed in June 2026.

Use existing preserve management funds to prioritize continued maintenance of these populations.

Collaborate with community volunteers to continue additional seeding, watering, and maintenance.

Pursue additional funding opportunities to support ACIL efforts.

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Acknowledgements

SANDGAD EMP Land Management Grant

SDZWA Native Plant Seed Bank

Jessie Vinje (Sage Vinje Biological)

HELIX Environmental Planning

East County Transitional Living Center

Volunteers and student interns

SDHC staff (previous and current)















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Thank you!
Feel free to contact me at:
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