Notice of Public Meeting

San Diego River Conservancy

A public meeting of the Governing Board of The San Diego River Conservancy will be held Thursday, May 2, 2013 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Meeting Location

County of San Diego Administration Center (CAC) 1600 Pacific Highway, Room 302 San Diego, California 92101

Tele-Conference Locations

Natural Resources Agency 1416 Ninth Street, Room 1311 Sacramento, CA 95814

Department of Finance State Capitol, Room 1145 Sacramento, CA 95814

(877) 287-0283 / Pass code 606349

Contact: Kevin McKernan (619) 645-3183

Meeting Agenda

The Board may take agenda items out of order to accommodate speakers and to maintain a quorum, unless noted as time specific.

- 1. Roll Call
- 2. Approval of Minutes (ACTION)

Consider approval of minutes for the March 7, 2013 meeting.

3. Public Comment

Any person may address the Governing Board at this time regarding any matter within the Board's authority. Presentations will be limited to three minutes for individuals and five minutes for representatives of organizations. Submission of information in writing is encouraged. The Board is prohibited by law from taking any action on matters that are discussed that are not on the agenda; no adverse conclusions should be drawn by the Board's not responding to such matters or public comments.

- 4. Chairperson's and Governing Board Members' Report (INFORMATIONAL)
- 5. Deputy Attorney's General Report (INFORMATIONAL)
- 6. San Diego River Ruffin Canyon Trail and Urban Walk POSTPONED

The Board will consider adoption of a mitigated negative declaration and approval of the Ruffin Canyon Trail and Urban Walk Project in Ruffin Canyon in the communities of Serra Mesa and Mission Valley and will consider authorizing the Executive Officer to apply to use \$1.5M of funds from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84) for the project.

Presentation and Report: Kevin McKernan, Executive Officer Jim King, Project Manager

Recommendation: Adopt SDRC Resolution 13-02

7. San Diego River Conservancy's Application for \$1.5 million for the San Diego River Watershed Riparian Restoration Program, a Tier 1 project outlined in the Southern California Wetland Recovery Project (INFORMATIONAL / ACTION)

The Board will consider authorizing the Executive Officer to execute all applications and agreements for \$1.5 million in funding for the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project - San Diego River Watershed Riparian Restoration Program; the Board may authorize the Executive Officer to apply for these funds from the California Wildlife Conservation Board and/or other potential matching sources available to the SDRC such as the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84).

<u>Presentation and Report:</u>
Kevin McKernan, Executive Officer

Recommendation: Adopt SDRC Resolution 13-03

8. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL / ACTION)

The following topics may be included in the Executive Officer's Report. The Board may take action regarding any of them:

Helix Water District: Potential Settlement and Sale: 500+/- riparian acres El Capitan Golf Club, LLC v. Helix Water District)

Proposition 40 Project Status

- Riverford Road- San Diego River Trail
- Invasives Control and Restoration

9. Next Meeting

The next scheduled board meeting will be held Thursday, July 11, 2013, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

10. Adjournment

Accessibility

If you require a disability related modification or accommodation to attend or participate in this meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please call Kevin McKernan at 619-645-3183.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting of May 2, 2013

ITEM: 1

SUBJECT: ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting of May 2, 2013

ITEM: 2

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF MINUTES (ACTION)

The Board will consider adoption of the March 7, 2013

public meeting minutes.

PURPOSE: The minutes of the March 7, 2013 Board Meetings are

attached for your review.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve minutes

SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY (SDRC)

Minutes of March 7, 2013 Public Meeting

(Draft Minutes for Approval on May 2, 2013)

SDRC Board Chair, Ben Clay called the March 7, meeting of the San Diego River Conservancy to order at approximately 2:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members Present

Lee Burdick Mayor, City of San Diego, Designee

Todd Gloria Councilmember, City of San Diego, District 3

Bryan Cash Natural Resources Agency, Alternate Designee (via phone)

Clay Phillips Department of Parks and Recreation, Designee
Dianne Jacob Supervisor, County of San Diego, Second District

Ben Clay, Chair Public at Large Ruth Hayward Public at Large

Ann Haddad Public at Large (arrived 2:13 p.m.)

Andrew Poat Public at Large

John Donnelly Wildlife Conservation Board (via phone)

Gary Strawn San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board

<u>Absent</u>

Karen Finn Department of Finance, Alternate Designee
Lorie Zapf Councilmember, City of San Diego, District 6

Staff Members Present

Kevin McKernan Executive Officer

Julia Richards Administrative Services Manager

2. Approval of Minutes

Todd Gloria made a motion to approve the draft minutes of the January 24, 2013, meeting which was seconded by **Lee Burdick** and approved by the Board 8 ayes -0 no.

3. Public Comment

Any person may address the Governing Board at this time regarding any matter within the Board's authority. Presentations will be limited to three minutes for individuals and five minutes for representatives of organizations. Submission of information in writing is encouraged. The Board is prohibited by law from taking any action on matters that are discussed that are not on the agenda; no adverse conclusions should be drawn by the Board's not responding to such matters or public comments.

Janis Shackelford asked if an equestrian interest had been present at the last Intergovernmental Work Group.

Rob Hutsel said the San Diego River Park Foundation recently purchased 11 acres on Boulder Creek. This was the second acquisition this year and raised \$55,000 from private donations in a few weeks. This area also is known as Fisherman's Camp.

4. Chairperson's and Governing Board Members' Report (INFORMATIONAL) No report.

5. Deputy Attorney's General Report (INFORMATIONAL)

No report.

Executive Officer Kevin McKernan reminded all Board Members Form 700s are due April 1, 2013. He requested they be sent to SDRC 10 days ahead of time.

6. Introduction of Kevin McKernan as Executive Officer (INFORMATIONAL)

The Chair will introduce the San Diego River Conservancy's New Executive Officer.

Introduction:

Ben Clay, Chair

Kevin McKernan, Executive Officer

Ben Clay introduced Kevin McKernan as the San Diego River Conservancy's new Executive Officer. Mr. McKernan previously worked at a State Conservancy and has a lot of experience from prior positions.

7. City of San Diego: Draft San Diego River Park Master Plan (INFORMATIONAL/ACTION)

Representatives of the City of San Diego will present the final draft master plan

Status Report and Presentation:

Robin Shifflet, Park Designer, City of San Diego

Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 13-01

Robin Shifflet provided the San Diego River Conservancy (SDRC) Board Members a copy of the draft master plan for the San Diego River Park, a timeline of organizational approvals and plans to take to City Council in May, 2013. The trail is called the San Diego River Pathway. The City of San Diego and San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) are in agreement on the plan.

The City of San Diego (City) received a letter from the County of San Diego when the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was sent out. The City added a feasibility study should be done looking at the connection from Mission Trails to Santee for a paved pathway and a soft surface pathway for bicycle users and equestrians. The term equestrian was not used because that would open EIR for another 6-month review and that equestrian impacts could require additional mitigation. When a feasibility study is done and a project comes forward in the CEQA document, the City will explore mitigation for equestrian users. SANDAG is working on agreement with the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) to do this, and KTU+A will do the study. City asked to see SANDAG's outreach to make sure the public and the City of San Diego will be involved in the trail placement. The City suggested that maybe from Mission Trails to Santee there would be 2 paths, one large for equestrian/joggers users and one large enough for pedestrian and bicycles. The City and the SDRC Board Members discussed the types of surface for the trail/pathway. The City will determine the type of surface on a case by case basis.

Dianne Jacob noted although the hard surface is not perfect for riding horses, there is nothing that prevents it. Riding horses would be a future project that would have to be studied for impacts. Robin Shifflet stated her understanding from the resources agencies is equestrians might not be permitted to go west of Mission Trails.

Ben Clay asked about access points for emergency situations or flood events on the San Diego River. It is hard to get access and where would responders launch an emergency paddle board, boat or vehicle. The City stated along the trail there will be pathways through development every 1000 linear feet from the river to the street to provide access to emergency vehicles. This will be implemented when redevelopment occurs. Two-Thirds of property on the river is privately owned and the City will need to work with private landowners on these issues as well.

Clay Phillips asked if the draft master plan addressed Old Town a State Historic Park's physical link to the river trail system created and the historic placement of "Old Town San Diego" on the San Diego River. It would help have some statement that links Old Town to the story of the river.

The City stated although there is no connection to Old Town San Diego State Historic Park, one of the draft master plans' recommendations is to provide a kiosk at the Presidio Park to connect to the San Diego River. A feasibility study will be done to find the best path to get to the river. The City indicated its willingness to make the connection and Robin Shifflet said she will look at the recommendation and see if the City can add a little bit more to it.

Lee Burdick had a few questions: (1) Is this programmatic EIR which anticipates future review at a project level? (2) The few projects that went forward did they voluntarily follow the master plan even though it was not legally binding? (3) Did those projects deviate or reject any of the master plan in any significant way? (4) Any current projects in the works? (5) Will the master plan be approved before the final permitting, so it is mandatory?

Robin Shifflet responded: (1) Yes, this is a programmatic EIR; (2) Yes, the few project that went forward voluntarily followed the master plan; (3) No, most projects made a very good effort to accommodate the master plan; (4) Yes the Union Tribune project has been in twice with a proposal to place residential tower next to the river they will be required to place a fire road between the tower and the river, for fire protection. The City is looking at the fire road as the river pathway. The City suggested to make the pathway across the Union Tribune's land something special. The pathway could tell the history of the river, have art in it, or all kinds of other things to dress it up and make it a unique place; and (5) Yes, it is Robin's understanding that the San Diego River Park Master Plan will be approved before final permitting on the Union Tribune project.

Todd Gloria said the San Diego River Park Master Plan has been a long time coming. He thanked all of the City of San Diego's staff for their work on this. He stated it is time to take action and give this river to the people. He moved to adopt resolution 13-01 and encouraged colleagues on the board to support it in recognition of the great work done. Dianne Jacob seconded the motion.

Ruth Hayward added the San Diego River Park Master Plan has been a work in progress for 12 years. This has taken a lot of compromise to reach consensus and every stakeholder/planning group has provided a recommendation in support. She suggested, the best incentive for someone to do redevelopment along the river is the vision of the river trail. All the studies show a minimum increase of 5-10% of property values and people want to live there. She concluded saying if we can make the river a better place, it will be all the more attractive to live and work there.

Janis Schakelford (public) was glad to hear a feasibility study will be included for equestrians using the river pathway plan developed by the City of San Diego. She submitted her comments to the City. The City's master plan is consistent with the City's general plan goal of providing pedestrian, bicycle and equestrians paths linking

community, neighborhood, parks, and open space. She said it is appropriate that anything west of Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) be hard surface. East of MTRP it is a different type of neighborhood with equestrian users and open space including a soft surface trail east of Mission Trails since it will connect with the County's trail system. She commented in the draft EIR it stated horseback riding and mountain biking may be permissible if measures are taken to ensure biological values are not threatened. She added there has to be a way to develop a method to mitigate for the few piles of horse manure that might occur along the trail.

Dianne Jacob addressed the horse manure issue and said as mitigation have someone pick it up, compost it and reuse in the community gardens so it is recycled. It is not a problem; it may actually become an asset. Let's take that into consideration when doing the feasibility study.

Bryan Cash found with the Rivers Parkway Program that public safety has increased. Initially a concern was that bringing people in would bring crime in and the opposite is true. He stated when more eyes are in an area, the area often becomes safer.

Todd Gloria moved to approve SDRC Resolution 13-01 and was seconded by Dianne Jacob, the Board unanimously approved SDRC Resolution 13-01 (8-0)

8. San Diego River Coalition: 2013 Work Plan (INFORMATIONAL)

Chair of the San Diego River Coalition will present the recommendations of the 2013 Work Plan.

<u>Presentation and Report:</u> Rob Hutsel, Chair San Diego River Coalition

Rob Hutsel gave presentation on the San Diego River Coalition: 2013 Work Plan.

Mayor Filner welcomed Kevin McKernan to the San Diego River Conservancy. He thanked the San Diego River Conservancy for everything it has done, is doing, and will do. The City of San Diego would like to look at the efforts in a more expansive way. He said there is a new administration that will be aggressively supporting the SDRC, so think bigger.

Lee Burdick inquired about the cost for the bridge from Mission Valley YMCA to the park. Rob Hutsel responded the City of San Diego completed an alignment study of where the bridge should be located and the consensus was to make it straight across. The price of the bridge was approximately \$1.23 million.

Rob Hutsel encouraged a community connection to the San Diego River Trail from Alpine that will reach El Capitan Dam via Puetz Valley and requested the SDRC slightly amend the San Diego River Trail. Currently there is no public access to the El Capitan Dam and surrounding public property which is owned by the City of San Diego. There was discussion about the connection. Rob Hutsel stated the San Diego River Park Foundation recently purchased 152 acres of land in Puetz Valley (located 0.75 from El Capitan Reservoir). Kevin McKernan said SDRC's statute provides for jurisdiction of 0.5 miles on either side of the river and our statute is flexible enough to go within the watershed with 2/3 vote of the Board Members. The Puetz Valley trail connection could go across the land, but the Foundation would like to conduct a feasibility and alignment study for a cost of \$100,000. Dianna Jacob said she would be willing to sit down and talk about working with the San Diego River Park Coalition on that trail connection going from El Capitan to Alpine.

Rob Hutsel responded to a question about continuing the trail to River Gorge. He explained El Capitan Grande Indian Reservation was in the river valley long before the dam was built, and the access to River Gorge from El Capitan Dam is a sensitive issue because a person would have to cross tribal reservation. Funds came in to the

City of San Diego from the federal government to provide money to the Native American Indian families that lived along the river. Some families pooled their money to buy what is now known as the Barona reservation and the Viejas reservation; others came to town or purchased other property. Both tribes hold the upper part of the river very closely and are carful and mindful of how it is used and what activities take place out there. He respects that fully. He is very careful not to put a line on a map with a trail going across reservation land until they welcome it and invite him to do so. That is why not crossing Conejos Creek is so important.

Dianne Jacob thanked the Mayor for his support. There is now a plan, and SDRC needs the money, willing property owners and it will be completed. The Conservancy maps out what property it needs to build trails and the Coalition just provided a list of their priorities and it is not a matter of the "what" anymore, it is a matter of getting to the "how" and finding the financial ability to complete.

Ben Clay concluded the SDRC had all kinds of partnerships to build the San Diego River Trail from the estuary to the headwaters and on the urban side the ability of the San Diego River Trail to link in with SANDAG's San Diego Regional Bicycle Plan.

Mayor Filner said he is very excited for the City's river park system as a whole from San Diego to Chollas Creek to the Otay River. He commented, people and tourist don't know a whole lot about them. We aren't maximizing the potential of these river areas. He would like to work with the Conservancy to make sure that occurs.

9. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL / ACTION)

Kevin McKernan thanked the Mayor for welcoming him and mentioned we could make it San Diego River(s) Conservancy and the opportunity to explore.

The next steps for Helix Water District potential settlement and sale of 500 acres will be at a hearing in October 2013 (El Capitan Gold Club, LLC v. Helix Water District).

There is no updated on the CalTrans/ California Dept of Transportation former Old Town Office auction/sale. Most state agencies are in agreement that the property can and should be transferred to another state entity.

He reviewed the LAO Report "The 2013-14 Budget: Resources and Environmental Protection" and stated some of the state conservancies are proposed for consolidation or elimination in this report. He asked the Board Members to look at this document and work with him on responses and tracking the issue into the future.

Senate Bill No. 783, was introduced by Senator de Leon and could be vehicle for a future park bonds. This would be in line with the SDRC mission, needs and mandates.

Bryan Cash stated for the record that the LAO report/recommendation is not supported in anyway by the Natural Resources Agency's nor the Administration. Nothing to worry about on the CalTrans'/ California Dept of Transportation's building disposition, he is monitoring from Sacramento and he is optimistic.

10. Next Meeting

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting of May 2, 2013

ITEM: 3

SUBJECT: PUBLIC COMMENT

PURPOSE: Any person may address the Governing Board at this time

regarding any matter within the Board's authority. Presentations will be limited to three minutes for individuals and five minutes for representatives of organizations. Submission of information in writing is encouraged. The Board is prohibited by law from taking any action on matters that are discussed that are not on the agenda; no adverse conclusions should be drawn by the Board's not responding to such matters or public comments.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting of May 2, 2013

ITEM: 4

SUBJECT: CHAIRPERSON'S AND GOVERNING BOARD

MEMBERS' REPORTS (INFORMATIONAL)

PURPOSE: These items are for Board discussion only and the Board

will take no formal action.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting of May 2, 2013

ITEM: 5

SUBJECT: **DEPUTY ATTORNEY'S GENERAL REPORT**

(INFORMATIONAL)

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT Meeting of May 2, 2013

ITEM: 6

SUBJECT: SANDIEGO RIVER – RUFFIN CANYON TRAIL AND URBAN WALK (ACTION)- POSTPONED

The Board will consider adoption of a mitigated negative declaration and approval of the Ruffin Canyon Trail and Urban Walk Project in Ruffin Canyon in the communities of Serra Mesa and Mission Valley and will consider authorizing the Executive Officer to apply to use \$1.5M of funds from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84) for the project.

Presentation and Report:
Kevin McKernan, Executive Officer
Jim King, Project Manager

Consistency with the San Diego River Conservancy Act and Strategic Plans, and Work Plans

Public Resources Code Division 22.9, Chapter 1 Section 3261; and Chapter 2, Section 32633 (a) and (b)

The San Diego River Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update (2012-2017), Program 2: Emphasize Recreation and Education

Annual Work Plans 2011, 2012 (Tributary Canyon Project/Ruffin Canyon Trail and Urban Walk)

Previously approved Resolutions: 07-04, 8-02, 10-01

<u>Partner</u>: State Coastal Conservancy <u>Recommendation</u>: Adopt Resolution 13-02

Exhibits and Documents:

Staff Report Resolution 13-02

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT Meeting of May 2, 2013

ITEM: **7**

SUBJECT:

SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY'S APPLICATION FOR \$1.5 MILLION FOR THE SAN DIEGO RIVER WATERSHED RIPARIAN RESTORATION PROGRAM, A TIER 1 PROJECT OUTLINED IN THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WETLAND RECOVERY PROJECT (INFORMATIONAL / ACTION)

The Board will consider authorizing the Executive Officer to execute all applications and agreements for \$1.5 million in funding for the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project-San Diego River Watershed Riparian Restoration Program; the Board may authorize the Executive Officer to apply for these funds from the California Wildlife Conservation Board and/or other potential matching sources available to the SDRC such as the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84) administered through the State Coastal Conservancy.

<u>Presentation and Report</u>: Kevin McKernan, Executive Officer

Recommendation: Adopt SDRC Resolution 13-03

Consistency with the San Diego River Conservancy Act and Strategic Plans, and Work Plans

Public Resources Code Division 22.9, Chapter 1 Section 3261; and Chapter 2, Section 32633 (a) and (b)

The San Diego River Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update (2012-2017), Program 3A: Preserve and Restore Natural Resources

Annual Work Plans 2010, 2011, 2012

Previously approved Resolutions: 07-02; 08-08; 10-04A; 10-04B

Partner: Wildlife Conservation Board/State Coastal Conservancy

Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 13-03

Exhibits and Documents:

Resolution 13-03
Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project description SDRC Grant Application to State Coastal Conservancy

Programmatic Documents:

CEQA – State of California, OPR RGP 41 (Regional Permit) – Army Corps of Engineers Streambed Alteration Agreement – State of California, Dept. Fish and Wildlife (formerly DFG) Encroachment Permit – State of California, Dept of Transportation Right of Entry Permits **Resolution No: 13-03**

RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY

AUTHORIZING THE FILING FOR UP TO \$1.5 MILLION IN GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING THE SAN DIEGO RIVER CONSERVANCY'S INVASIVE NON-NATIVE PLANT CONTROL AND RESTORATION

WHEREAS, the mission of the San Diego River Conservancy is to further the goals of its enabling legislation by conserving and restoring its land and water for the enjoyment of present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, the Invasive Non-Native Plan Control and Restoration (the project) is consistent with San Diego River Conservancy's Strategic Plan Update (2012-1017), Program 3A: Preserve and Restore Natural Resources, Remove Invasive Non-Native Plants and Restore the Land; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature and Governor of the State of California have provided Proposition 84 (The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006) funds to the State Coastal Conservancy for projects approved by the San Diego River Conservancy; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature and Governor of the State of California have provided funds to the Wildlife Conservation Board for land protection, habitat restoration and wildlife-oriented public access; and

WHEREAS, the project is located along San Diego River and its tributaries and are outlined in the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project, Work Program Tier #1; and

WHEREAS, the San Diego River Conservancy, pending application approval, will enter into an agreement or agreements with the State of California through the Wildlife Conservation Board and/or the State Coastal Conservancy to carry out the estimated \$1.5 million project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board authorizes its Executive Officer to execute all applications, agreements, sub-grants, sub-contracts and amendments, as necessary, to receive up to \$1.5 million in grant funds from State Coastal Conservancy, Proposition 84 San Diego River set aside for the San Diego River Conservancy's Invasive Non-Native Plant Control and Restoration Program;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board also authorizes its Executive Officer to execute all applications, agreements, sub-grants, sub-contracts and amendments, as necessary, to receive up to \$1.5 million in grant funds from the Wildlife Conservation Board for the San Diego River Conservancy's Invasive Non-Native Plant Control and Restoration Program;

Approved and adopted the 2nd day of May 2013. I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution Number 13-03 was duly adopted by the San Diego River Conservancy's Governing Board.

Roll Call Vote Yeas: Nays: Absent:		
Kevin McKerr	iaii	



Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP)

WRP Work Plan Project Descriptions 2012

Project description

53. San Diego River Watershed Riparian Restoration Program Tier: 1

Local Lead: Michael Nelson, San Diego River Conservancy, (619) 645-3183, mnelson@sdrc.ca.gov

SCC Project Manager: Megan Cooper, 510-286-4172, mcooper@scc.ca.gov

Project Description: The San Diego River Conservancy has initiated a watershed based invasive, non-native plant control program in the San Diego River Watershed. This program will help to implement one of the Conservancy's strategic initiatives contained in its Five Year Strategic and Infrastructure Plan, Program 3, Project 1, Remove Invasive Non-Native Plants and Restore the Land. Initial baseline mapping has been completed, watershed-based permitting is being initiated, and funding for implementation of control and restoration is being developed. Over 329 acres of high priority invasive plant species have been mapped in riparian areas that need to be controlled and replanted. Arundo, tamarisk, palms, and pampas grass are the bulk of the acreage, but non-native trees are also in abundance. All of these species degrade habitat quality and pose a significant fire and flood risk. Initial funding for the program has been committed from the Proposition 40 River Parkways program. Treatment areas not covered by the Prop 40 funds include: Arundo donax (86 acres), tamarisk (3 acres), pampas grass (15 acres), palms (16 acres), mixed exotic trees (11 acres) and other species (17acres).

Status: The San Diego River Conservancy has created a watershed-wide program for invasive species management and has completed a mitigated negative declaration and received an Army Corps regional permit for the program. Invasive species removal has begun at two sites, the Ward Road property and the Carlton Oaks Golf Course. The Ward Road site, managed by the Department of Fish and Game, is 17 acres and should

be completed by 2013. The Carlton Oaks site is 25 acres, contains both public and private land, and should be completed by 2014. This project is an example of a multiagency partnership and a model for watershed-wide invasive species management. Invasive control is being implemented for approximately \$20,000 per acre.

Acres/Stream Miles/Other: 52 miles of stream

Estimated Total Cost:	\$5,000,000

Funding:

River Parkways (Resources Agency)	\$575,000
Department of Defense	\$175,000
Regional Water Quality Control Board	\$400,000
Department of Fish and Game	\$233,000
Wetlands Recovery Project (requested)	\$3,617,000

Last updated: 11/3/2011

Links:

The Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project – Work Plan http://www.scwrp.org/work_plan.htm

The Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project Project 53. San Diego River Watershed Riparian Restoration Program
http://www.scwrp.org/pdfs/2012-Work-Plan-Project-Descriptions-SCWRP.pdf



GRANT APPLICATION FORM

PART A: SUMMARY

APPLICANT INFORMATION:

Applicant name (organization): San Diego River Conservancy

Address: 1350 Front St. Suite 3024, San Diego, CA 92101

Contact name: Kevin McKernan, Executive Officer

Telephone: 619-645-3183 Fax: 619-238-7068 Email: kmckernan@sdrc.ca.gov

Federal Tax ID# <u>51-0519569</u>

Position(s) whose incumbents are authorized to negotiate agreements and amendments: Executive Officer – Kevin McKernan

SCC Grant Application: San Diego River Conservancy

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Project name (limit 75 characters): San Diego River Arundo Control Project: Upper Watershed

Project location: City: <u>San Diego</u> County: <u>San Diego</u>

Street: ____ Cross street: ____

Proposed start date: Sep-1-2013 Estimated completion: Dec-31-2017

Acreage (if relevant): 50 acres of *Arundo* and other target invasive non-native plants

APN's (if an acquisition): _____

Trail length (if relevant – miles or linear feet): _____

Stream miles (if relevant – miles or linear feet): 15 miles

Latitude (e.g. 38.337094): <u>32.846423</u> Longitude: (e.g. -122.589652): <u>-116.868095</u>

What point is represented by the lat/longs (i.e., parking lot, center of site, etc): Center of project area

Elected Representatives for Project:

Congressional District(s): www.house.gov

District number	Name
50, 52	Duncan Hunter, Scott Peters

State Senate District(s): www.senate.ca.gov

District number	Name		
36, 39	Joel Anderson, Marty Block		

Assembly District(s): www.assembly.ca.gov

_	<u>-</u>		
	District number	Name	
	36	Toni Atkins	

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The San Diego River Conservancy (SDRC) initiated a watershed based invasives control program focused on *Arundo donax* in 2007. This program is modeled on successfully run programs in other high priority portions of San Diego County, including the San Luis Rey, Santa Margarita, Carlsbad and San Dieguito watersheds. The SDRC program is designated a Tier 1 project in the WRP Work Plan (project #53), reflecting both the need for the project and the capacity to implement project goals. SDRC has successfully built a watershed based *Arundo* control program as demonstrated by completed projects within the watershed. SDRC's program is based on watershed based mapping of *Arundo* and other targeted species and watershed based permitting that has been completed and is maintained.

1) Need for Project:

Arundo is the primary focus of the watershed based invasives program as this species is causing particularly severe impacts to both abiotic and biotic riverine processes and riparian habitat. As recently documented in the Arundo Impact Study (www.cal-ipc.org), Arundo has pronounced effects on multiple abiotic factors that reshape riverine processes. These modifications include changes to sediment transport (due to reduced flow capacity and roughness of Arundo stands), hydromodification (due to Arundo's high water consumption per unit area in comparison with native vegetation), and the introduction of fire into riparian ecosystems (fires initiated in Arundo stands as well as conveyed across the landscape). These abiotic impacts have severe ecological consequences, degrading the habitat for native flora and fauna, several of which are State and/or Federally listed species (least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, Ambrosia pumila, and light-footed clapper rail). In addition to these abiotic factors, Arundo physically displaces native vegetation and naturally open spaces, impacting both flora and fauna that inhabit these areas. Dense Arundo stands, particularly along the channel banks, are also a physical barrier to wildlife that move within and through riverine habitat areas. In addition to all of these ecological considerations, *Arundo* poses a significant threat to infrastructure and water resources. Arundo exacerbates flooding by contributing to overbank flows, and biomass mobilized during flood events builds up against bridges and flow control structures, causing significant damage or failure. Arundo's high water use depletes belowground aquifers that are increasingly being used by water agencies to supplement water resources. And perhaps most significant of all, Arundo has directly caused and exacerbated fires that impact both ecological resources (direct mortality and reduced habitat function) and urban areas, causing damage to public and private property. In addition these fires put both the public and fire crews at risk of injury.

Control of *Arundo* is difficult as it has large energy stores underground in its rhizomes, and stands have unusually high amounts of above ground biomass. Fortunately *Arundo* does not produce viable seed and only spreads asexually, typically by rhizome fragments mobilized during flood events. This allows watershed based control programs to implement projects that have sustainable long-term benefits as well as follow through on the commitment to achieve 100% of *Arundo* which can take over 10 years to achieve.

2) Project Goals and Objectives:

The watershed based eradication program has initiated projects both on its own, and in partnership with other organizations. Of the 161 acres initially mapped, 58 acres have been treated to date (Figs. 1-4). The requested Coastal Conservancy funding to implement 50 acres of *Arundo* control will focus on areas in the upper watershed which will allow the program to have initiated control on all *Arundo* stands from Mission Trails Regional Park and above (Fig. 1). This control effort will help protect projects that have already been implemented in the middle watershed that were undertaken on public lands by both the City of San Diego and SDRC under River Parkways funding (could only occur on public lands).

The Coastal Conservancy funding will complete the goal of initial control, biomass reduction and native revegetation on a minimum of 50 acres of Arundo. By the end of the project, treated sites will have less than 1% cover of Arundo and a native woody plant density of >100 plant per acre. SDRC is currently funded through the

SANDAG EMP program to carry out re-treatments on previously completed project areas. The recently completed plan 'Management Priorities for Invasive Non-Native Plants' specifically highlights continued support for watershed based *Arundo* eradication programs that have achieved significant progress. SDRC has received previous funding from the SANDAG EMP program and it is likely this funding will continue as the SDRC program implements projects as part of its watershed based program.

3) Specific Tasks Undertaken (Budget and schedule explanation):

Task 1: Project Management. SDRC will oversee project management, including all contracting and invoicing. Schedule: this work will occur for the duration of the project.

Task 2: Permitting compliance. Consultants will maintain existing regulatory approval permits (USACOE, USFWS, CADFW). This task includes biological monitoring during program implementation, annual reporting, and communication with regulators to assure that project follows procedures outlined in the both the regulatory permits held, as well as the Mitigated Negative Declaration that was completed for CEQA compliance. Schedule: this work will occur for the duration of the project.

Task 3: Outreach. This task is focused on obtaining permission to initiate work on both public and private property as well as maintaining databases. This effort involves communicating with property owners through mail, phone and in person. Over 150 properties occur within the project area. SDRC has already expended significant resources securing right of entry (ROE) agreements with property owners. To date over 90 ROEs are held on the watershed for both this and previously completed projects. These are maintained in an ROE database as well as a GIS spatial database tied to parcel and APN information. This database is used to generate maps of where permission has been obtained that the contractors can then use to implement work in the field. Schedule: this work will occur for the duration of the project.

Task : Project Reporting, Monitoring and Mapping. Effectiveness of *Arundo* control and re-vegetation will be monitored in the field and reported quarterly. This will include site descriptions, mapping, and photo documentation. Project reports and GIS coverages of completed work areas are the deliverables for the project. Schedule: this work will occur for the duration of the project.

Task 5: Arundo Control and Re-vegetation. Initial treatment and re-treatments will occur for the duration of the project. Only aquatic approved herbicide formulations will be used. All treatments will be carried out by experienced and licensed applicators that have completed large Arundo control projects within sensitive habitat. Most areas will require removing the Arundo biomass. Mechanized equipment mowers will have limited use due to site topography and poor access. Most areas will require hand cutting Arundo and hauling it to areas where it can be chipped and removed from the site. Areas with sufficient access and width may have Arundo biomass reduced with mowers. Once Arundo has been under treatment for at least a year and resprouting is scattered, re-vegetation may occur depending on the site. Most areas are planted using container stock (1gallon) grown from material collected on the watershed. Cuttings may be used in areas with saturated soils.

Schedule: All active field work will occur between September 15th and March 15th as required under regulatory permits. Passive maintenance (watering, hand weeding, backpack spraying) may occur between March 16th and September 14th, but only in areas that have no native vegetation structure. All work activities will occur for the duration of the project.

4) Work Products and Deliverables

The project will complete a minimum of 50 acres of invasive non-native plant control and re-vegetation. Predominantly *Arundo* will be treated, but Mexican fan palm, tamarisk and Brazilian pepper tree will also be targeted. Quarterly reporting and a final report will be the project deliverables documenting successful completion of project goals. Additional deliverables will be the GIS and the ROE databases.

FUNDING REQUEST:

Funding amount requested from Conservancy: \$1,500,000

Month and Year Conservancy funding needed: Sep-1-2013

Other Funding Sources (not including in-kind services):

Source of funds	Amount (\$)	Estimated commitment date
SANDAG EMP	\$110,000	Awarded
County Water Authority: SEP	\$55,000	Awarded
Resources: River Parkways	\$55,000	Awarded
CADFW: Ward Road re-treatments	\$35,000	Awarded
City of San Diego:	\$85,000	Awarded
Total	\$340,000	

Total Project Cost: \$1,840,000

In-kind Services

In-kind services or contributions include volunteer time and materials, bargain sales, and land donations. Please describe and estimate value, and differentiate between expected in-kind contributions and contributions (work or other types of contributions) already obtained/completed.

PROJECT GRAPHICS

See end of document.

PART B: BUDGET, TIMELINE, AND ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

PRELIMINARY BUDGET:

In the budget matrix below, list the major tasks of the proposed project, the estimated cost of the task, and the funding sources (applicant, Conservancy, and other) for the task. The listed tasks should correlate with the tasks described in the Project Description and listed on the Schedule.

Task Number	Task	Applicant's Funding	Coastal Conservancy	Other Funds	Total Cost
1	Project management and co-ordination		\$150,000		\$150,000
2	Permit compliance, biological supervision		\$100,000	\$ 20,000	\$120,000
3	ROE and property owner contact		\$100,000	\$ 20,000	\$120,000
4	Project monitoring, reporting, & mapping.		\$50,000		\$50,000
5	Control of Arundo and re-vegetation		\$1,100,000	\$ 300,000	\$1,400,000
	TOTAL:	\$ 0	\$1,500,000	\$ 340,000	\$1,840,000

Match: SANDAG EMP, SEP/CWA, CADFW, BCLT, City of San Diego, Resources/River Parkways

SCHEDULE:

List the project tasks and all significant project milestones related (for example, California Environmental Quality Act compliance, obtaining of permits, appraisal preparation and other land acquisition documents, commencement of construction, and project completion). For each item provide the expected completion date and any factors that could influence the timely implementation of the project.

Task or Milestone	Expected Completion	
Task of Minestone	Date	
Quarterly project summary reports.	Quarterly	
Final project report	Dec-31-2017	
Annual regulatory reports	Annually: Aug-31	
Final GIS and ROE databases	Dec-31-2017	

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:

1. Project and Applicant History:

SDRC formed in 2002 with the intent of to preserve, restore and enhance the San Diego River Area. One of SDRC's primary initial goals was to coordinate and unify invasive plant control on the watershed. Prior to the existence of SDRC's watershed based program, projects were typically small, scattered mitigation projects of limited success due to their scale and lack of long-term sustainability. SDRC has implemented several large projects above Mission Trails Regional Park in the upper watershed. This project initiates work on the majority of the upper watershed. A key component of the watershed based program has been the active partnering with numerous local entities (governmental and NGOs) to facilitate invasive plant control. SDRC watershed based permitting has greatly facilitated project implementation by SDRC partners, including: City of San Diego, City of Santee, County of San Diego, Lakeside River Park Conservancy, San Diego River Foundation, San Diego Canyonlands and Backcountry Land Trust. SDRC's watershed based invasives program is an approved Tier 1 Project on the Wetlands Recovery Program Work Plan (Project #53). The Coastal Conservancy has previously funded both acquisition projects, including Hanlon Walker property (2012), and trail projects: SDRC Gaps Analysis 2010, Flume trail, and preliminary planning for Carlton Oaks Golf Course and Fenton Parkway to I-15.

2. Site Description:

The Coastal Conservancy funded project areas are riparian habitat along the San Diego River and its tributaries (Figs. 1&2). The project area is expansive, covering over 15 miles of river and creek length. This includes a wide range of riparian habitat assemblages, including willow and cottonwood woodland, willow scrub, and mulefat scrub, as well as open channel areas. Many of these areas are dominated by infestations of *Arundo* and other invasive non-native plant species. These riparian areas are of significant value as identified under MHCP and MSCP plans for the region. Riparian areas are both valued habitat as well as critical wildlife corridors. The project will carry out activities on over 100 properties that are publicly and privately owned. For each property a separate ROE agreement is required, many of which have already been obtained (see Task 3description).

3. Consistency with Plans:

SDRC's watershed based invasive plant control program fulfills goals and objectives outlined in numerous regional plans. MSCP, MHCP, IRWM and the SANDAG SDMMP Strategic Framework and Plan all highlight the need for coordinated and sustainable invasive plant control and management. The SDRC watershed based program has significantly improved the region's ability to meet these landscape level implementation goals. The recent SANDAG SDMMP's 'Management Priorities for Invasive Non-Native Plants, A Strategy for Regional Control' makes two critical determinations. First, *Arundo* is the most detrimental invasive non-native plant as reflected in it receiving the highest San Diego regional PAF score, indicating its severe abiotic and

biotic impacts. Secondly, landscape level coordinated management of *Arundo* is occurring, and the San Diego River watershed is specifically identified as meaningful coordinated work occurring under the leadership of SDRC.

4. Support:

SDRC's board members represent a wide range of public agencies, non-profit organizations, elected officials, and citizens. The board strongly supports the invasive species control program as it embodies partnership and cooperation to address a pressing environmental and public need. SDRC has enjoyed strong public support and partnership allowing it to implement a large number of invasive plant control and habitat restoration projects. The wide range of public and NGO groups that have partnered with SDRC to implement projects reflects the broad support and need for the program. Public agencies that have partnered with SDRC include: County of San Diego, City of San Diego (multiple departments), City of Santee, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, and County Water Authority. Partnerships with other entities include Lakeside Conservancy, Backcountry Land Trust, San Diego Canyonlands, and the San Diego River Foundation.

Numerous private individuals and groups have also supported the programs as reflected in their granting permission for work to occur on their property. One of the benefits of invasive species programs, are that they bring neighbors together to work in partnership as nearly all individuals recognize that invasive non-native plants spread across property boundaries.

5. Regional Significance:

The project significantly benefits natural resources, including listed species (least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, *Ambrosia pumila*, and to a lesser degree light footed clapper rail). Riverine habitat in the San Diego region has been heavily impacted by development and degradation. Enhancing the remaining areas by controlling *Arundo* and re-vegetating with natives restores some of the functions that have been lost, including restoration of flow capacity, increased cover of native plants, and improved wildlife mobility. The MSCP specifically identifies the value of the San Diego River as a corridor for wildlife, linking conserved areas on the watershed. Specifically, the riparian corridor links Mission Trails Regional Park with portions of the upper watershed. Controlling *Arundo* also conserves water resources and significantly reduces the incidence of riparian fires. The restoration of flow capacity decreases flood damage from overbank flows. A recent study by Cal-IPC demonstrated that emergency responses to flood and fire events causes a significant additional impact to riverine native habitat, which can be avoided if *Arundo* is removed. The control of *Arundo* benefits the region, but also benefits the State as a whole, as it decreases the commitment of resources to suppress fires, import water, and repair infrastructure, all of which are increased when dense *Arundo* stands are present.

6. Need for Conservancy Funds:

SDRC has prioritized projects on the middle and upper watershed for implementation. This funding would significantly enhance the long-term viability of the middle and upper projects by initiating control on nearly all the *Arundo* stands above Mission Trails Regional Park. The City of San Diego and other entities are implementing projects on the lower watershed. Control of the significant *Arundo* infestation on the middle and upper watershed will help all of these projects maintain their ecological benefit and financial investment. The project needs to be implemented soon to reduce risk of *Arundo* spreading downstream, which is periodic and in response to heavy rainfall events. The same is true of wildland fire events, which have occurred several times in the past decade. Removing *Arundo* infestations from the upper and middle watershed, which are the areas most prone to wildland fire, will help reduce the risk of fires being conveyed across the landscape and into open space and urban areas. Both fire and flood events are unpredictable, but it is only a matter of time before *Arundo* exacerbates the impacts of these events.

7. Compliance with CEQA:

SDRC has already completed the CEQA process. A Mitigated Negative Declaration was adopted on September 3rd 2009. In addition to having completed the CEQA process, the project has the following permits: CA Department of Fish and Wildlife Streambed Alteration Permit (1600), US Army Corps of Engineers Regional General Permit 41 (completing the 404 permit process as well as the State Water Control Board 401 certification), and a US Fish and Wildlife Service Informal Consultation.

8. California Conservation Corps:

Where appropriate, properties will identified (typically public ownership) where California Conservation Corps (CCC) crews can be used to assist in re-vegetation. SDRC utilized CCC crews to carry out re-vegetation on the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife Preserve on Ward Road and on properties held by CalTrans.

9. Willing Seller:

Not applicable.

10. Management and Monitoring:

Monitoring will be carried out both during and after the grant project is completed. Monitoring activities include assessment of treatment effectiveness and re-vegetation success. This information is used to both dictate the frequency and timing of re-treatments and where re-vegetation efforts should be focused. The main goal of the project is effective control of *Arundo*, with a secondary goal of initiating re-vegetation with native woody species. Ongoing re-treatments beyond the Coastal Conservancy funding project will be needed in order to achieve 100% control of *Arundo* over the long-term. The SANDAG EMP program awards funds to organizations that are

implementing management priorities in the region. SDRC's watershed based *Arundo* control program is specifically identified in the 'Strategic Guidelines,' which makes future funding likely. SDRC also seeks other funding to carry out re-treatments from various other programs, or works with public entities to take on future re-treatment needs. This approach has worked well on previously completed project areas and will continue in the future.

11. Sea Level Rise Vulnerability:

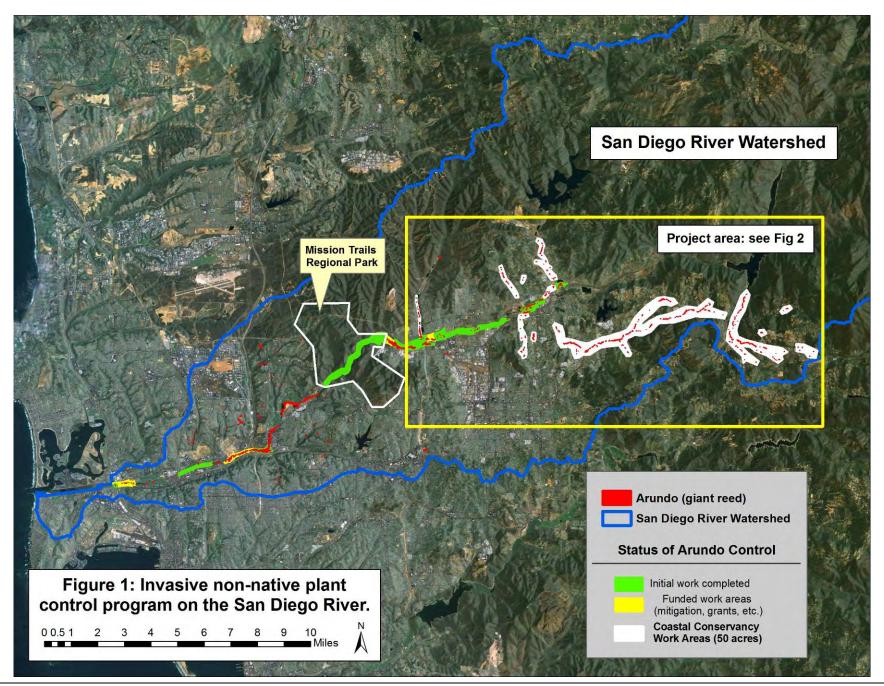
Not applicable. Project area is in riverine habitat upstream of estuary/tidal flow areas.

12. Vulnerability from Climate Change Impacts Other than Sea Level Rise:

The project has no vulnerability to climate change impacts, and will likely improve riparian ecosystem functioning under projected climate change scenarios. Two basic trends are likely to occur: more extreme rainfall events and associated flooding (which is made worse in portions of the watershed by the high percentage of impervious surfaces) and dry periods that exacerbate wildland fire risk. Controlling *Arundo* on the watershed will reduce the magnitude of both of these impacts. Removing *Arundo* will also conserve water resources by reducing transpiration, keeping more water in the riverine system and groundwater aquifers.

13. Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Climate Change:

Greenhouse gas emission and carbon sequestering is a complicated subject in regards to *Arundo* control programs. Large, dense *Arundo* stands with high biomass per acre sequester significant amounts of carbon. However, the documented increase of riverine fires, in addition to fire conveyance, result in direct release of this sequestered carbon periodically as areas burn. Since *Arundo* regrows rapidly, and even type converts riverine areas after fire, controlling *Arundo* will end this repeating cycle, which will reduce greenhouse gases over the long term. Equipment is used in the control and removal of *Arundo* from riverine systems. Vehicle use is minimized to the extent possible, however, the carbon emissions from control activities are minor compared to the expenditure of fuel in responding to *Arundo* driven wildland fires and fixing damage and cleaning up after flood events. *Arundo* control would also reduce the recurring maintenance around flood control structures and in channels that is carried out in some areas. Municipalities and the County Water Authority are exploring more active use of groundwater aquifers. Reducing *Arundo* cover and the associated water consumption will enhance available groundwater to some degree. This would potentially save water resources, reducing the amount of water that needs to be imported, which in turn saves fuel costs associated with water conveyance.



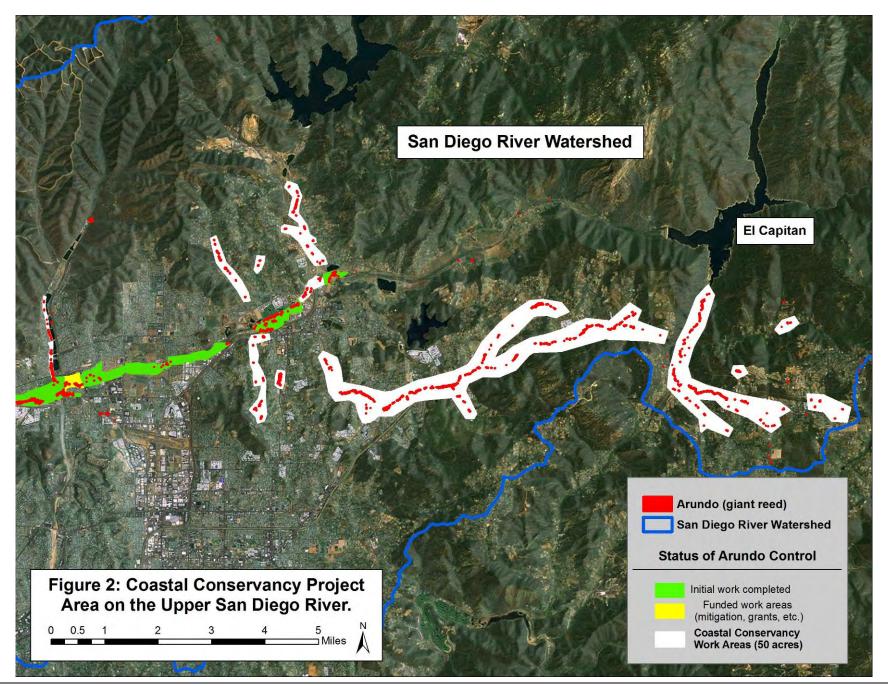






Figure 3. Carlton Oaks site before (top) and after (bottom) *Arundo* control.



Figure 4. California Department of Fish and Wildlife Reserve project site, showing aerial view of *Arundo* (top), during treatment (bottom left) and after treatment (bottom right).

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting of May 2, 2013

ITEM: 8

SUBJECT: **EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

(INFORMATIONAL/ACTION)

The following topics may be included in the Executive Officer's Report. The Board may take action regarding any of them:

Helix Water District: Potential Settlement and Sale: 500+/-riparian acres (El Capitan Golf Club, LLC v. Helix Water District)

Proposition 40 Project Status

Riverford Road- San Diego River TrailInvasives Control and Restoration

Procurement Report

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting of May 2, 2013

ITEM: 8

SUBJECT: **EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S PROCURMENT REPORT**

(INFORMATIONAL)

1) Purchase Order 12SDR014 for Infinite Business Solutions March 11, 2013 in amount \$48.78 for business cards.

2) Purchase Order 12SDR015 for Planning and Conservation League Foundation in amount \$4,800.00, for short and long term planning.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting of May 2, 2013

9 ITEM:

SUBJECT: **NEXT MEETING**

The next regularly scheduled board meeting is scheduled for July 11, 2013 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting of May 2, 2013

ITEM: **10**

SUBJECT: ADJOURNMENT