



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FURTHER INFORMATION:

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Newly Established Preserve to Provide Habitat for Burrowing Owls

San Diego Habitat Conservancy now managing 25.1 acres along the U.S./Mexico border

Otay Mesa, CA — San Diego Habitat Conservancy (SDHC) now manages Otay Crossings Open Space Preserve, located at the base of the San Ysidro Mountain foothills in the southeastern portion of Otay Mesa along the U.S./Mexico border. This 25.1-acre preserve consists of three parcels which serve as onsite mitigation for the 311-acre Otay Crossings Commerce Park project currently under construction.

The preserve provides much needed habitat for burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*). The burrowing owl is a small raptor whose numbers have dwindled over the years due to loss of habitat associated with urbanization as well as with eradication programs aimed at rodents which have incidentally poisoned countless burrowing owls. The preserve also provides refuge for a number of other sensitive wildlife species, including two species of federally endangered fairy shrimp, the federally endangered Quino checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas editha quino*), and golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*), one of the largest and fastest raptors in North America. A number of rare plants are also being protected at the preserve, including Otay tarplant (*Deinandra conjugens*), California adolphia (*Adolphia californica*), and San Diego sunflower (*Bahiopsis laciniata*). SDHC's long-term management duties will include monthly site visits, surveys for rare wildlife and plant species, and removal of invasive plants.

SDHC was established in 2000 and currently manages 26 open space preserves throughout the San Diego region, for a total of nearly 1,800 acres. Our focus is to preserve and manage sensitive habitat and species that are unique to our southern California environment. SDHC strives to share our knowledge and appreciation of the natural environment with the San Diego community, encouraging participation in the stewardship of our region's precious open space. The mission of SDHC is *to conserve and manage sensitive habitats and species while inspiring land stewardship through education and outreach.*

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