The El Segundo blue butterfly (Euphilotes battoides allyni) depends on the dune buckwheat (Eriogonum parvifolium) for its entire life cycle. Adult butterflies feed on the dune buckwheat’s nectar and lay eggs on the flowerheads. The caterpillars eat the flowerheads, form pupae in the soil, and then they wait for the next summer to emerge as butterflies. An individual butterfly can spend its entire life within a few yards of a single plant.

Urban development reduced the local distribution of dune buckwheat to three isolated areas: the dunes west of LAX, Chevron’s El Segundo refinery property, and the bluffs northwest of Palos Verdes Estates. A dramatic decline in the El Segundo blue butterfly population following the loss of suitable habitat led to its listing as a federally endangered species. Replacing iceplant with dune buckwheat can allow establishment of new populations to increase its chance of recovery and eventual removal from the endangered species list.