

3.6 Recreation: Parklands, Recreation Areas, and Wildlife Refuges

The Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Corridor (HCLE Corridor) study area includes a number of municipal parks, recreational facilities, conservation areas, and wildlife refuges. These public lands were identified through early coordination and were mapped as control points to guide the early planning of the project. Public parklands and wildlife refuges are important resources because these lands have special status under the provisions of Section 4(f) of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1968 (now codified as 49 USC 303). Through early identification of these resources, opportunities for avoidance were considered in the earliest stages of project planning (please refer to CETAP Working Papers 1 through 7a/7b prepared by Transcore, 1999-2000). A separate Section 4(f) analysis is provided in Chapter 5.0 of this EIS/EIR. This section provides a review of existing and planned recreational resources within the HCLE Corridor.

3.6.1 City/County/State Parks and Recreation Areas

The parks and recreation areas located in the cities and counties within the HCLE Corridor were mapped and are listed in Table 3.6.A. The inventory of parks and recreation resources included municipal, county, state and national parks, playgrounds and playing fields open to the public for walk-on or scheduled/league use, and recreation areas such as publicly accessible lakes. Recreational areas within the HCLE Corridor are shown in Figure 3.6.1. Park and recreation areas located within 0.4 km (0.25 mi) on either side of the bandwidths were also identified.

3.6.1.1 Lake Elsinore

Lake Elsinore is a 1,215 ha (3,000 ac) natural lake that is managed by a variety of local, County, and State agencies, including the California Department of Fish and Game, the County of Riverside, and the City of Lake Elsinore. Lake Elsinore is a popular year-round recreation area and offers facilities for water skiers, boaters and anglers, as well as two marinas and a campground on the north shore of the lake. Lake Elsinore is an important recreational resource within the region, but will not be directly affected by any of the HCLE Corridor alternatives. The alternatives closest to Lake Elsinore (Alternatives 4d, 5d, 6a, and 6b) are approximately 0.8 km (0.5 mi) away, where the San Jacinto River meets Lake Elsinore.

3.6.1.2 Diamond Valley Lake

Diamond Valley Lake is a 1,822 ha (4,500 ac) lake that is owned and operated by the Metropolitan Water District (MWD). The primary purpose of Diamond Valley Lake is to provide a six-month emergency supply of water to Southern California. Alternatives 1, 3, 5a, and 5b are located along State Route 79 adjacent to the western boundary of Diamond Valley Lake. There are currently no existing recreation resources at Diamond Valley Lake, and current, pending plans call for two museums (The Western Center for

Table 3.6.A - Existing City/County/State Parklands

Alternative	Resource	Jurisdiction	Size/ Facilities	Information Source	Comments
1a, 1b	Lake Perris State Recreation Area	State of California	810 ha (2,000 ac)	Riverside County Existing Setting Report	Multi-use park facility - Lake Perris
4a, 4c, 4d	Gibbel Park	Hemet	4.46 ha (11 ac)	City of Hemet Planning Division	Developed park facility - 2500 West Florida Avenue
4a, 5a, 4d, 5d	Yarborough Park	Lake Elsinore	1.09 ha (2.7 ac)	Lake Elsinore General Plan	Developed park facility - Flint and Poe Street
5a, 4d, 5d	Kabian Park	Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District	259.20 ha (640 ac)	Riverside County Existing Setting Report	Nature park and wildlife management facility - near Perris
5d	Tuscany Hills Community Park	Lake Elsinore	2.03 ha (5 ac)	City of Lake Elsinore website	Developed park facility - 30 Summerhill
6a	Indian Beach Park	Canyon Lake	1.11 ha (2.75 ac)	Canyon Lake General Plan	Developed park facility
6a	Roadrunner Park	Canyon Lake	0.29 ha (0.71 ac)	Canyon Lake General Plan	Developed park facility
6a, 6b	East Port Park	Canyon Lake	2.21ha (5.45 ac)	Canyon Lake General Plan	Developed park facility
6a, 6b	Summerhill Park	Lake Elsinore		Thomas Bros. Maps	
H1, H3	Bob Long Memorial Ballpark	Perris	1.79 ha (4.41 ac)	City of Perris Parks/facilities Department	Developed park facility - 590 E. San Jacinto Avenue
H1, H3	Foss Field Park	Perris	1.87 ha (4.62 ac)	City of Perris Parks/facilities Department	Developed park facility - 138 N. Perris Boulevard
H1, H3	Metz Park	Perris	7.23 ha (17.84 ac)	City of Perris Parks/facilities Department	Developed park facility - 251 Metz Road
H1, H3	Russell Stewart Park	Perris	0.61 ha (1.5 ac)	City of Perris Parks/facilities Department	Developed park facility - 160 E. First Street
H3	Victoria/Cross Park	Riverside (City)	2.92 ha (7.2 ac)	City of Riverside Park and Recreation Department	Undeveloped park facility - Victoria Avenue and Cross Street

Figure 3.6.1 - Recreation Areas

Archaeology and Paleontology, and the Southern California Water Education Center), a youth camp, and recreational water use at the eastern end of the lake. Although future recreation uses for the western portion of the site, which may possibly be affected by the HCLE Corridor project, are contemplated, there are no plans approved or being developed at this time for such use.¹ The western boundary of Diamond Valley Lake land abuts Route 79. Although the eastern terminus of HCLE alternatives 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 6a, and 6b encroach onto MWD land, it has been determined that the affected portion of land consists of an access road and non-recreational uses.

3.6.2 National and State Parks

There are no national parks within or adjacent to the HCLE Corridor alternatives. There is one State recreation area, as described below.

3.6.2.1 Lake Perris State Recreation Area

Lake Perris State Recreation Area, owned by the State of California, lies within the study area. Formed by Perris Dam, Lake Perris is a 810 ha (2,000 ac) reservoir that offers water recreation, including swimming, fishing (shore, pier, and boat), boating, sailing, waterskiing, and a special area for scuba diving. Wildlife includes ducks and Canadian geese. Anglers can find rainbow trout, catfish, and Alabama spotted bass. The area also offers opportunities for hikers, bikers, and equestrians. Rock climbing is featured in an area south of the dam. The Ya' Heki' Regional Indian Museum is also in the area.

3.6.3 Conservation Areas/Wildlife Areas

Conservation areas are listed in Table 3.6.B and discussed in more detail below.

3.6.3.1 Lake Mathews Ecological Reserve

The Lake Mathews reservoir was completed in 1939 by MWD as the western terminus of the Colorado River Aqueduct. Since that time, the lands immediately surrounding the lake have been held by MWD, and human intrusions have been few. As Riverside County continued to grow during the latter part of the century, surrounding areas began to be developed primarily with custom built homes on small ranchettes. Additionally, since the 1930s, many of the surrounding lands were—and continue to be—used for citrus agriculture. As part of a mitigation plan for its water projects, and recognizing the value to wildlife of such a large open source of water, MWD lands (approximately 1,620 ha [4,000 ac]) surrounding the lake were formally designated as a State ecological reserve in 1982.

¹ Telephone conversations: Mr. Leslie Barrett, Senior Engineer, MWD, June 17 and 28, 2002.