

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