

In the early 1990s, after the federal listing of the Stephens' kangaroo rat (SKR) as an endangered species, these same lands, along with an additional 2,430 ha (6,000 ac) purchased by the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency (RCHCA), were designated as a biological preserve for the SKR in its Habitat Conservation Plan because they harbored extensive SKR populations and habitat.

At approximately the same time, MWD and RCHCA combined forces to study MWD lands as a multispecies reserve for eventual inclusion in a series of such reserves in western Riverside County. This effort came to fruition in 1995 with the formal acceptance of the Lake Mathews Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the issuance of a Section 2081 permit by the CDFG.

3.6.3.2 San Jacinto Wildlife Refuge

The San Jacinto Wildlife Refuge consists of 2,971 ha (7,337 ac) of restored wetlands, including ponds, and is the first state wildlife area to utilize reclaimed water to enhance its wetlands. Improvements are ongoing. The refuge provides native species conservation and habitat enhancement. Hunting and fishing is permitted in some areas. Mowing of 607.5 ha (1,500 ac) for the maintenance of SKR habitat in accordance with the SKR Habitat Conservation Plan. Waterfowl, wading birds, and quail are a few of the many animals found here. The San Jacinto Wildlife Refuge is owned and operated by CDFG. The southern boundary of the refuge abuts SR-74, east of I-215.

3.6.3.3 Kabian Park

Kabian Park is a 259 ha (640 ac) site owned by the County of Riverside and the Bureau of Land Management. It is intended to serve as a nature park with a focus on wildlife management and with recreation facilities such as equestrian trails, hiking trails, and picnic tables. It is being considered as a building block for a future core reserve within the MSHCP.

3.6.4 Schools

While the primary purpose of school playgrounds is for structured physical education classes and recreation for students, such lands may also serve public recreational purposes. When the playground is open to the public and serves either organized or recreational purposes (walk-on activity), it is considered a recreational resource (FHWA, Section 4(f) Policy Paper, 1989). Table 3.6.C lists several schools located within the HCLE Corridor within the public school districts of Alvord USD, Corona-Norco USD, Hemet USD, Lake Elsinore USD, Menifee Union School District, Perris Elementary School District, ValVerde USD, and the Mount San Jacinto Community College District. It is the policy of these public school districts to allow recreational uses on school property after regular school hours. The individual schools determine what uses will be permitted on school property. Some common uses include organized and informal sporting events and practices, and weekend use of playground equipment.

The Menifee campus of Mt. San Jacinto Community College does not currently have recreational facilities.