

would have no direct impacts to the Southern Hotel. National Register eligibility determinations have not yet been made for any of the structures located within the bandwidth.

5.2.4 Wildlife Management Resources

Section 4(f) applies to wildlife refuges and to wildlife management areas that primarily function as a sanctuary or refuge for the protection of species (FHWA Policy Paper).

Wildlife management resources are identified in the Biological Resources Technical Report and in Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of this EIS/EIR. The RCIP, of which the HCLE Corridor study is a component, also includes a proposed Multi-Species Habitat Plan (MSHCP). The MSHCP is intended to protect wildlife species that are federal and state listed as threatened or endangered.

The Lake Mathews reservoir was completed in 1939 by the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) as the western terminus of the Colorado River Aqueduct. 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. In the early 1990s, with the federal listing of the Stephens' kangaroo rat (SKR) as an endangered species, these same lands, along with an additional 2,430 ha (approximately 6,000 ac) purchased by the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency (RCHCA), were designated as critical habitat for the SKR in its Habitat Conservation Plan because they harbored extensive SKR populations and habitat. The Lake Mathews Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan was formally accepted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the CDFG in 1995.

There is currently no public access to any of the Lake Mathews/Estelle Mountain Reserve lands; therefore, the Reserve is not a recreation resource as defined under Section 4(f) (Phone conversation, Julie Greene, Interim Reserve Manager, June 14, 2002). However, the Reserve is a designated preserve managed for an endangered species, and is managed by a public agency, the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency (RCHCA). Therefore, the Reserve qualifies for Section 4(f) status as a wildlife refuge.

Portions of the existing Lake Mathews/Estelle Mountain Reserve on the eastern side of the lake, and portions of the MSHCP criteria area that would connect to the reserve on the eastern side of the Lake, are transected by Alternatives H1, H3, 1a, and 1b.

The San Jacinto Wildlife Reserve 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. Waterfowl, wading birds, and quail are a few of the many animals found here. The San Jacinto Wildlife Reserve is owned and operated by CDFG. The southern boundary of the refuge abuts SR-74, east of I-215. The bandwidths for Alternatives 1a and 1b along Ramona Expressway were designed to allow for widening on the south side of the existing right-of-way to minimize potential impacts to the existing Wildlife Reserve. Portions of the proposed MSHCP criteria area would connect to the Wildlife Reserve and are transected by these alternatives.