

3.6 Recreation: Parklands, Recreation Areas, and Wildlife Refuges

The Winchester to Temecula Corridor (WT 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 WT Corridor.

3.6.1 City/County/State Parks and Recreation Areas

The parks and recreation areas located within the WT 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 WT 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. All of the parklands are located outside of the bandwidths but within the 0.4 km (0.25 mi) study area, with the exception of Diamond Valley Lake.

3.6.1.1 Lake Skinner Regional Park

Lake Skinner Regional Park consists of 2,446 hectares (ha) (6,040 acres [ac]), including Lake Skinner, a man-made lake operated by Metropolitan Water District (MWD), and it affords activities such as fishing, boating, hiking, and camping. Lake Skinner is an important recreational resource within the region. The alternatives closest to Lake Skinner are approximately 1.6 km (1.0 mi) away, along Butterfield Stage Road (Alternatives 5a and 5b).

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 MWD. The primary purpose of Diamond Valley Lake is to provide a six month emergency supply of water to Southern California. There are currently no existing recreation resources at Diamond Valley Lake, and current, pending plans call for two museums (The Western Center for 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