



1.0 Introduction

County's residents, a community-outreach program has been at the heart of RCIP. The County gathered initial community input in the summer and fall of 1999 through public meetings and surveys asking County residents what they thought their county should look like in 20 years. Residents expressed concerns about the County's ability to retain the rural environment, to attract high-paying jobs, and to focus growth around current city centers. This initial information was compiled into a "Vision Statement" to guide development of each element of RCIP. The County also set up a website to serve as an information portal for the public to learn about the status of each plan, upcoming meetings, and read/download documents produced during the planning process. RCIP and each of its elements has been the subject of hundreds of community meetings throughout the County. Numerous regularly scheduled meetings with representatives of stakeholders took place during development of RCIP documents between the years 1999-2002. Television, radio, and newspaper were also used during this time period to inform the public. Comprehensive documentation of the public outreach effort is available at the County.

1.2.6 Related Documentation

The MSHCP and CETAP are subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review and the General Plan is subject solely to CEQA review. The MSHCP's Joint Environmental Impact Report (EIR), required by CEQA, and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), required by NEPA, will be prepared in order to document the anticipated environmental consequences of implementing the MSHCP. The County is the local lead agency for CEQA, and USFWS is the federal lead agency under NEPA. While each element of RCIP will be subject to its own environmental document(s), the MSHCP will benefit from programs implemented under the General Plan and analyzed in the General Plan EIR. Although the other components of the RCIP are related through integration of the overall RCIP, the project description for the MSHCP EIR/EIS will be independent of the other two environmental documentation efforts. The MSHCP is also accompanied by an IA.

1.3 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the MSHCP is based on the RCIP Vision Statement and supporting policy directives. The MSHCP will enhance and maintain biological diversity and ecosystem processes while allowing future economic growth. Preserving a quality of life characterized by well-managed and well-planned growth integrated with an associated open-space system is a component of the RCIP vision. The MSHCP will create an MSHCP Conservation Area in excess of 500,000 acres and