

3.0 Conservation Planning Process/ Description And Area Plan Criteria of the MSHCP Conservation Area



Southeast Section of Plan Area

- New Core Areas in Wilson Valley, Vail Lake, Sage Area, Anza Valley and connections between these areas via Temecula Creek, Wilson Creek, Cahuilla Creek, Tule Creek, Kolb Creek, and Arroyo Seco Creek.
- Connections from the existing reserves in the Diamond Valley Lake and Lake Skinner areas via Warm Springs Creek to the southwest, converging at Murrieta Creek.
- Connection from Vail Lake to Santa Margarita River via Temecula Creek.
- Connections from the Wilson Valley area to the Diamond Valley Lake/Lake Skinner area via Tualota Creek to the south and the Mica Butte/Cactus Valley area to the north.
- Connection to San Diego County via Pechanga Creek east of I-15.
- Connection along Bautista Creek from the San Bernardino National Forest to the San Jacinto River confluence.

3.1.8 Identification of Alternatives and Selection of Proposed Alternative

As directed by the MSHCP Advisory Committee, the initial conservation planning process focused on identifying acreage requirements for a conservation scenario that would conserve the majority of species from the initial species list (*Table 2-2*). The MSHCP Advisory Committee also requested identification of alternative conservation scenarios that could result in Conservation of fewer species. These alternative conservation scenarios were identified as the Listed and Proposed Species Alternative, the Listed, Proposed and Strong Candidate Species Alternative, and the Existing Reserves Alternative. These alternatives were developed and analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively using the MSHCP database in the same manner as the Conceptual Conservation Scenario. Schematic maps were developed for GIS analysis and visual display purposes for stakeholders. The alternatives are summarized in *Section 3.4* of this document and in the MSHCP Alternatives Development Document (DUDEK, October 2000). Also considered as part of this process were a No Project/No MSHCP Alternative and a “more biologically robust” alternative. The No Project/No MSHCP Alternative is summarized in *Section 3.4* and in the Alternatives Development Document and the “more biologically robust” alternative is discussed in detail in the MSHCP EIR/EIS and briefly in *Section 9.0* of this document.

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In general, it was concluded that alternatives that resulted in Conservation of fewer species would not substantially reduce acreage requirements for Conservation, or costs associated with Reserve Assembly. It was also concluded that the “more biologically robust” alternative would result in substantially increased costs while not resulting in Conservation of additional species. Based on these general conclusions, and other factors considered by stakeholders and the County Board of Supervisors, the refinement of the initial Conceptual Conservation Scenario, known as Alternative 1, was selected as the preferred alternative and the conservation planning process proceeded with further development and refinement of that alternative.

3.1.9 Conceptual Reserve Design/Criteria-Based Plan

At the December 19, 2000 meeting of the County Board of Supervisors, policy direction was given to proceed with preparation of a criteria-based plan for Alternative 1, which would conserve approximately 500,000 acres in the Plan Area. The criteria-based approach anticipates Conservation within the existing Public/Quasi-Public Lands comprising approximately 347,000 acres and development of Criteria to describe additional Conservation on private lands of approximately 153,000 acres.

Development of the criteria-based plan involved review and refinement of the initial Conceptual Conservation Scenario and conceptual Alternative 1 and creation of the Conceptual Reserve Design. This included an iterative process of going back through the data compilation and review, gap analysis, and consideration of conservation biology principles that were completed for the Conceptual Conservation Scenario and Alternative 1. The data layers described in *Sections 2.1.1* and *2.2.2* were used for this process with updated data layers reflecting new information assembled throughout the planning process. The primary information updated throughout the process were the species occurrence data and other species-specific information obtained through review of literature and comments received on draft species accounts distributed at several intervals during the process. In addition, as noted previously, the Public/Quasi-Public data base was refined. A parcel-based Public/Quasi-Public Lands database was used for the description and analysis of the proposed MSHCP Conservation Area in this document. Updated land use data also were incorporated in the process including updated identification of lands with prior conservation agreements. Updated aerial topography became available in summer 2001.

As with the process for the Conceptual Conservation Scenario and Alternative 1, a specific quantitative model was not developed for the Conceptual Reserve Design. The iterative process involved overlaying data layers manually using hard-copy plots and acetates, as well as on-screen