

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

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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

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data overlays using GIS. Initial refined concepts were developed for review and comment by the Wildlife Agencies and their comments were addressed in the refined concepts. A more detailed description of the organizing framework and methodology used to develop the Conceptual Reserve Design/Criteria-Based Plan is presented in *Section 3.3.1* of this document.

### **3.1.10 Description and Analysis of MSHCP Conservation Area**

The process described in *Sections 3.1.1 through 3.1.8* resulted in identification of an MSHCP Conservation Area that could be described and analyzed. The description and analysis of the MSHCP Conservation Area have two primary purposes: **(1)** to provide a complete enough description of the Conservation anticipated under the MSHCP such that Reserve Assembly can be adequately measured and monitored over the long-term MSHCP implementation process, while at the same time incorporating sufficient flexibility to allow appropriate response to new information and changing conditions; and **(2)** to provide a sufficient level of detail to permit analysis of Covered Species consistent with regulatory requirements. A generalized description and analysis of the MSHCP Conservation Area is presented in *Section 3.2* of this document and in *Section A* of the *Reference Document - Volume II of the MSHCP Plan*. The detailed species accounts are included in *Section B* of the *Reference Document - Volume II of the MSHCP Plan* and summary species accounts are provided in *Section 9.0* of this document.