

SECTION 4.0

ASSEMBLING THE MSHCP CONSERVATION AREA

Methods for assembling and equitably distributing the costs associated with the MSHCP Conservation Area have been the subject of extensive discussion and consideration by stakeholders, officials from state and federal Wildlife Agencies, and elected officials. The Western Riverside County MSHCP Advisory Committee, composed of representatives of private Development groups, farming groups, environmental groups, and public agencies, helped to develop and recommend strategies for assembling and funding the MSHCP Conservation Area. The MSHCP, which incorporates the input from this diverse group of entities, offers a balanced approach to conserving species and Habitats while equitably distributing the costs.

The MSHCP establishes a framework for compliance with state and federal endangered species laws and regulations that accommodates future growth in the Plan Area. Without the MSHCP, the responsibility for conserving Endangered Species and their Habitats would rest only with those public and private entities whose activities directly affect declining species and their Habitats. The MSHCP distributes this responsibility for Conservation more widely under the assumption that the benefits of a successful MSHCP will be shared by a broader group that includes not only the existing and future communities within the MSHCP Plan Area but also the citizens of California and the United States. The following groups will directly benefit from the MSHCP; they will also share in the responsibility for implementing the MSHCP, which includes the costs associated with land acquisition and the long-term management and monitoring of those lands:

- ❑ **Federal and state governments.** The U.S. Congress and the California legislature have determined that conserving species and their natural Habitats is an issue of both national and state importance. The federal and state governments will fulfill their responsibilities for Conservation by assisting local governments and property owners to assemble, manage, and monitor an MSHCP Conservation Area in Western Riverside County that will reduce or avoid the need to list additional species as threatened or endangered. The federal and state governments have significant lands under their jurisdictions that will contribute to the successful implementation of the MSHCP. The management and enhancement of the Conservation values on federal and state lands is consistent with the mission of the state and federal Wildlife Agencies and will further the Conservation of Covered Species in Western Riverside County.

- ❑ **Local governments.** Jurisdictions in the MSHCP Plan Area are responsible for contributing to the assembly of the MSHCP Conservation Area. Existing communities benefit from the preservation of their natural heritage and the visual and recreational values of regional open

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space. Critical regional infrastructure and facilities that will benefit current and future residents of these communities are being identified and planned for as part of the overall RCIP process. Local governments will direct mitigation for impacts of public projects they undertake and private projects they approve toward assembling, managing, and monitoring the MSHCP Conservation Area.

- ❑ **Private landowners.** Private landowners and developers benefit from the MSHCP because it establishes a local permitting process for the Incidental Take of Covered Species; this modified permitting process will reduce uncertainty about the future and eliminate the duplication of effort that often occurs when projects are reviewed and permitted piecemeal by the Wildlife Agencies. Private landowners and developers will direct mitigation efforts they undertake to address the impacts of their Development projects; these efforts will contribute to the assembly, management, and monitoring of the MSHCP Conservation Area.

- ❑ **Current and future residents of Riverside County.** Current and future residents of western Riverside County will benefit from the MSHCP because it establishes a process through which infrastructure projects that serve the County's residents can be undertaken and conserves the County's natural heritage for generations to come. Through the funding mechanisms identified in *Section 8.0* of this document, current and future residents of Riverside County will contribute to the assembly, management, and monitoring of the MSHCP Conservation Area.

4.1 SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TO ASSEMBLE THE MSHCP CONSERVATION AREA

The MSHCP Conservation Area will contain approximately 500,000 acres of which approximately 282,000 acres are state or federal lands and approximately 56,000 acres are privately owned lands that will be acquired from willing sellers. Approximately 97,000 acres of private lands will be conserved through local Development processes, including mitigation for impacts to biological resources as a result of development projects in the Plan Area. The federal and state agencies will contribute a total of 338,000 acres (68%) of the MSHCP Conservation Area, private sector Development will contribute 72,000 acres (14%), public infrastructure projects will contribute 25,000 acres (5%), and local public lands will contribute about 65,000 acres (13%).