

A. MSHCP Conservation Area Description



The following sections provide a general description of the MSHCP Conservation Area. *Section 2.0* provides a general overview of the Plan Area in terms of the geographic and Conservation planning setting, climate, and Bioregions. *Section 3.0* describes the MSHCP Conservation Area in terms of Vegetation Communities, Conservation within the different Bioregions as a measure of diversity and representativeness, Conservation of selected soils that support listed and sensitive plant species, Conservation of federally designated and proposed critical Habitat for several listed wildlife species, and Habitat patch size, shape and Edge Effects.

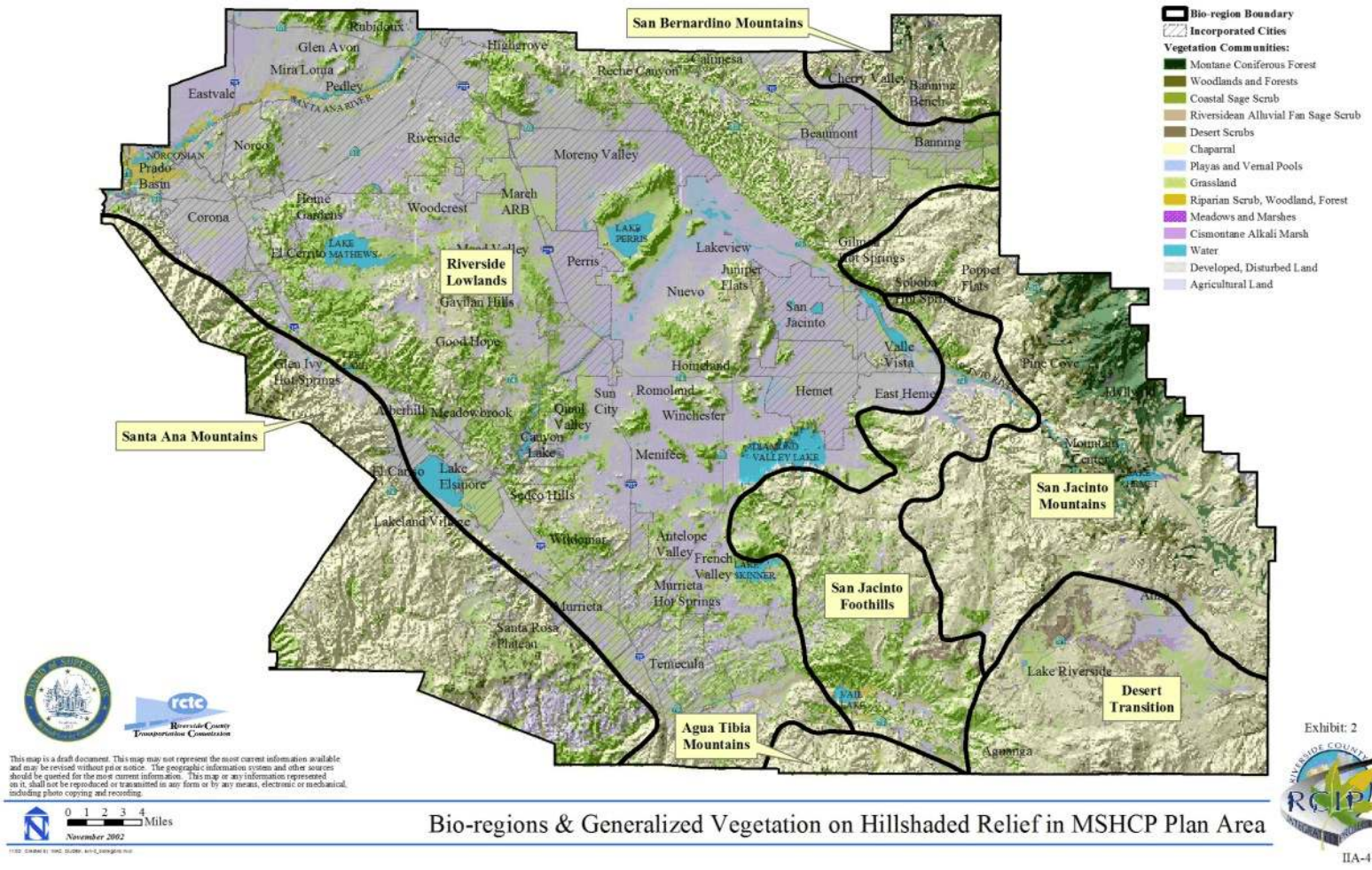
2.0 OVERVIEW OF MSHCP PLAN AREA

2.1 Physiography

The MSHCP Plan Area is situated in the western one-third of Riverside County and spans approximately 40 miles from north to south and 70 miles from east to west. The Plan Area is bounded by Orange County and the Santa Ana Mountains to the west and southwest, San Bernardino County and the San Bernardino Mountains to the north, the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa mountains to the east, and San Diego County and the Agua Tibia Mountains to the south.

The Plan Area encompasses approximately 1,258,800 acres generally bounded by the Peninsular and Transverse Mountain Range provinces (*Exhibit 2*). The Transverse Ranges trend east to west, one of the only mountain ranges in North America with such an orientation. This mountain range system lies in a narrow strip west from Santa Barbara east to approximately Joshua Tree National Monument of the Mojave Desert. The Transverse Ranges largely form the northern boundary of the Plan Area, although the San Bernardino Mountains of this system intersect the Plan Area only in the northeast corner in the area of Banning and Morongo (*Exhibit 2*). Most of the Plan Area lies in the Peninsular Range Province, which extends in a north-south orientation and stretches along the coastline north from the Transverse Range province and the Los Angeles Basin southward to the tip of Baja, Mexico. Within the Plan Area, the San Jacinto, Santa Rosa, and Santa Ana Mountain ranges form the Peninsular Range province (*Exhibit 2*). The San Jacinto Mountains reach elevations over 8,000 feet within the Plan Area, with Mt. San Jacinto the highest peak in this system at 10,805 feet just outside the eastern boundary of the Plan Area. Elevations in the Santa Ana Mountains along the western edge of the Plan Area are less dramatic, reaching heights of about 4,000 feet.

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Bio-regions & Generalized Vegetation on Hillshaded Relief in MSHCP Plan Area