

A. MSHCP Conservation Area Description



Discrete Habitat patches were defined by separations between natural Vegetation Communities by major roadways (as described above), urban and disturbed land covers, and intensive agricultural (dairies, intensive row crops and orchards). There was no minimum connection width or length between patches that defined the patches as separate; *i.e.*, all continuous Habitat polygons were considered a single patch.

3.5.2 Results of the Habitat Patch Analysis

The MSHCP Conservation Area, including Additional Reserve Lands and existing Public/Quasi-Public Lands, is composed of approximately 575 patches of intact vegetation. The spatial character of the Conservation Area is complex, with a large number of small, spatially disjunct patches and a relatively small number of large connected patches (*Table 13*). (This may seem to be a trivial result, because one could logically assume there would only be a few large Habitat patches without doing the analysis. However, quantifying the distribution of patch sizes is useful, because one could conceive of a MSHCP Conservation Area that is comprised of a large number of small patches and no large patches).

**TABLE 13
NUMBER AND ACREAGE OF NATURAL VEGETATION PATCHES
WITHIN THE MSHCP CONSERVATION AREA**

Size Class Intervals (Acres)	Number of Patches	% of Patches	Number of Acres	% of Acres
<1	189	33%	56	0.01%
1 to 10	187	32%	714	0.2%
11 to 100	116	20%	3,881	0.8%
101 to 1,000	55	10%	21,975	4.6%
1,001 to 10,000	21	4%	79,354	16.5%
> 10,000	7	1%	373,628	77.9%
TOTAL	575	100%	479,608	100%

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Although 65% of the vegetation patches in the MSHCP Conservation Area are less than 10 acres in size, they comprise only 0.2% of the area of the proposed MSHCP Conservation Area. The vast majority of these small patches occur within areas heavily fragmented by urbanized areas in the Riverside Lowlands Bioregion. By contrast, only 28 (5%) of the patches are greater than 1,000 acres in size, but these comprise 94% of the proposed MSHCP Conservation Area. A single intact Habitat block comprises approximately 238,000 acres (50%) of the area.

3.5.3 Methods for Measuring Edge Effects

Edge areas were calculated using the vegetation data base, the Bioregions coverage, highways, the proposed MSHCP Conservation Area and existing Public/Quasi-Public Lands. These polygon-based data layers were converted to 100-foot pixel grids for the quantitative analysis. The Edge Effects analysis was conducted both for the existing conditions in the Plan Area and for the anticipated “buildout” scenario after assembly of the MSHCP Conservation Area. Lands were either classified as natural Habitat or urban/agricultural under the existing conditions and buildout scenarios. For the buildout scenario, it was conservatively assumed that all non-MSHCP Conservation Area lands, including Rural/Mountainous, would be converted to urban development or Agriculture. A distance function then was used to measure the distance from urban or agricultural lands to each cell supporting land mapped as Habitat. Lands were classified under one of the three following edge categories:

1. < 250 feet - high edge
2. 251 to 600 feet - moderate edge
3. > 600 feet - low to no edge.

Again, these edge intervals are somewhat arbitrary and are not meant to reflect the absolute Edge Effects in the Plan Area but are consistent with those used for the San Diego MSCP.

3.5.4 Results of Edge Effects Analysis

The results of the edge analysis are summarized in *Table 14*. This summary includes the existing conditions in the Plan Area and the potential future condition in the Plan Area assuming complete buildout in non-MSHCP Conservation Area lands. In addition, the table shows a comparison of existing conditions and buildout conditions with an idealized single circular block of Habitat as a Core Area that is the same size as the proposed MSHCP Conservation Area, and excludes any developed, disturbed and agricultural lands that would cause internal edge.