

reserve system that conserves the covered species pursuant to state and federal law.

- Develop a fee-based funding plan that will generate sufficient revenue to contribute to the reserve's funding needs.
- To the maximum extent practicable, eliminate surprises by providing certainty to permittees and third parties that the take authorization will cover additional species that may be listed while the permits are in effect.
- To the extent legally possible, provide assurances that private parties will not be required to mitigate biological impacts except as specified in the Plan.
- Expand the conservation value of existing public and quasi-public resources for the benefit of covered species.
- Comply with all applicable federal and State laws and constitutional requirements.

### 1.2.3 Purpose of the Joint EIS/EIR

Approval and implementation of the proposed MSHCP and issuance of incidental take authorizations could result in significant environmental impacts. Therefore, preparation of an EIR/EIS is necessary.

This joint EIR/EIS evaluates the potential for environmental effects from the Proposed Action, which is the adoption of an MSHCP for western Riverside County and the issuance of incidental take permits. This EIR/EIS has been prepared in compliance with CEQA and NEPA as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations. Joint environmental documents are permitted and encouraged under both CEQA and NEPA. For this joint document, both CEQA and NEPA terminology is used, generally with CEQA being listed first.

As required by both CEQA and NEPA, lead and responsible agencies must be identified, if possible, to review, comment, and approve of the environmental document. Riverside County is the Lead Agency for CEQA compliance requirements, while the USFWS is the Lead Agency for NEPA compliance. Each of the 14 cities (Banning, Beaumont, Canyon Lake, Calimesa, Corona, Hemet, Lake Elsinore, Moreno Valley, Murrieta, Norco, Perris, Riverside, San Jacinto, and Temecula) within the proposed MSHCP Plan Area, and the County of Riverside, Flood Control, RCTC, Riverside County Parks and Open Space District, Riverside County Waste Management District, Caltrans, CDFG, and California Department of Parks and Recreation are designated responsible agencies. Adoption of the proposed MSHCP and issuance of incidental take authorizations are required to be evaluated under CEQA and NEPA. Individual projects that require a subsequent discretionary action or a major federal action would be subject to additional environmental review, in accordance with the standard process.

This joint EIR/EIS is an informational document intended to provide public decision-makers, responsible or other interested agencies, and the general public with an assessment of the potential environmental impacts associated with implementation

of the proposed MSHCP. This document will evaluate the potential environmental consequences and impacts associated with implementation of the proposed MSHCP; will evaluate, at an equal level of detail, the two “Action” alternatives (Listed, Proposed, and Strong Candidate; and Listed and Proposed) and two “No Action” alternatives (Existing Reserves and No Project/No Action) to the Proposed Action; provide mitigation measures for environmental effects identified as significant; address cumulative and growth inducing effects resulting from implementation of the proposed MSHCP; and provide enough data to enable decision-makers to make an informed decision whether to approve the Proposed Action.