



## Conservation

Policies within the Conservation section of this element seek to guide decision-making related to renewable and non-renewable County resources. These types of resources require conservation—a conscious effort to consume less of scarce resources so that their stock can be sustained for the future. Conservation of natural resources applies to water, agricultural resources, forests, vegetation, mineral, and energy resources. By conserving resources we prevent degradation of the environment through pollution or loss of productive capacity within our environment.

### RENEWABLE RESOURCES

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Population growth and development continually require the use of natural resources, including those that are renewable. Following are Vision Statements that represent the guiding principles established by Riverside County to conserve and protect renewable resources for economic, cultural, and aesthetic purposes.

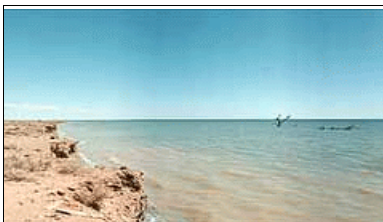
*“We acknowledge the inter-relatedness of the economic, environmental, cultural and institutional realms of our community life as we continue to plan and build our communities in a manner that enables us to achieve mutually beneficial results.”*

*“We acknowledge and respect the long heritage of economic endeavors that have shaped portions of our environment through mining, agriculture, and similar enterprises and continue to take their value into consideration in shaping our environmental management.”*

Additionally, the Vision addresses the need to protect Riverside County’s environmental sustainability for future generations:

*“We are beneficiaries of the past and we value that. We seek the same for our heirs. We declare that they should have an expectation that they will inherit communities and a natural environment that offer them a reasonable range of choices.”*

### Water Resources



The Salton Sea

Riverside County incorporates four major watershed areas in which river systems, numerous lakes and reservoirs, and natural drainage areas are located. Water resources are mapped in Figure OS-1. The County’s supply of water is limited by its arid climate, agricultural practices, projected population growth and its associated demand and development, and the dependence on low quality imported water. Further, the availability of imported surface water has been reduced due to changing regulations, despite an ever-increasing water demand.

In some areas within Riverside County, contamination from natural or manufactured sources has reduced groundwater quality such that its use requires



treatment. Management of the amount of water available (local and imported) and its quality, is an important response to the gap between supply and demand in Riverside County.

Policies in this section seek to protect and enhance the water resources in the county. These policies address broad water planning issues, and the relationship of land use decisions to water issues.

### Water Supply

The economy of the developed portions of western Riverside County—the inland valley—is sustained primarily by water imported from northern California and the Colorado River, and secondarily by production of local groundwater. The eastern portion of the County—the majority of which is desert—also relies on water from the Colorado River, northern California, and local groundwater. This portion of the County is largely undeveloped, with uncertain increases in the water resource available to meet increases in water demand being a major factor that might constrain future development.

Riverside County’s water supply is uncertain for two reasons: recent water apportionments from northern California have been reduced as part of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, as well as decreased supplies to California from the Colorado River. Additionally, most of the County’s sources of water are currently at capacity. Water storage to meet peak demand, or a two-day to one-day supply, is provided by many local water agencies within Riverside County. However, long-term storage of large quantities of water is provided only in the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) and California Department of Water Resources (DWR) facilities. Total storage capacity in the existing reservoir system is 871,000 acre-feet (a.f.). Three of these storage facilities are located in Riverside County: Lake Mathews, Lake Skinner, and Lake Perris. Together, these storage facilities have a total of 342,300 a.f. of storage capacity. Diamond Valley Lake triples this capacity with an additional 800,000 a.f. of storage, bringing the total storage capacity available within Riverside County to 1,142,300 a.f. Even though the creation of Diamond Valley Lake has allowed for three times the current storage of water, there is no increase in the total amount of water available to the County that can be identified. This increase in water storage will benefit the whole South Coast region, which includes other significant jurisdictional water users such as San Diego County, as well as Riverside County. Currently, approximately 3/8ths of existing storage capacity may be used to meet seasonal demand. The remaining 5/8ths is reserved for emergency need such as severe droughts and/or use when a natural disaster, such as an earthquake, makes it impossible to meet demand through usual supply facilities.

Projected 2020 water use and population levels indicate an expected water shortage for the two hydrologic regions that comprise Riverside County: the South Coast and Colorado River regions. Though these regions include most of southern California, and not just Riverside County, they are each representative of the types of supply and demand within the County. The two regions are defined as follows:

- South Coast: Basins draining into the Pacific Ocean from the southeastern boundary of Rincon Creek Basin in western Ventura County to the Mexican border.



*The Metropolitan Water District, which serves water agencies in the western part of the County, projects at least a doubling of water demand between 2000 and 2020. This agrees with the Department of Water Resources projections for the same period.*



*An acre-foot of water is the volume of water represented by a 1-foot depth of water over a one-acre area (43,560 cubic feet of water or approximately 326,000 gallons), and is enough to supply the water needs of 2 families for 1 year.*