



Forest Resources



The **montane forest** is the most complex bio-region in North America, though they can be found all over the world. Parts of Riverside County are within the Sierran Montane bio-region. These bio-regions are characterized by winter snows and summer fires, conifer species, and a great diversity of animal species.

Both of the major forests in Riverside County, the Cleveland and San Bernardino National Forests, are part of the Sierran montane range (see Figure OS-3 Parks, Forests and Recreation Areas). These forests occur on all of the higher mountain ranges of the Pacific Coast region, from southern Oregon to northern Baja California. At lower elevations, these forests commonly border mixed evergreen forest, oak woodland, and chaparral.

Policies in this section seek to protect forest resources in the Cleveland and San Bernardino National Forests. This can be accomplished through careful management of the forest ecosystem, protection of forest resources, and discouragement of the development of land uses that conflict with valuable conservation of forest land.

Policies:

- OS 8.1 Cooperate with federal and state agencies to achieve the sustainable conservation of forest land as a means of providing open space and protecting natural resources and MSHCP habitat lands. (AI 3)
- OS 8.2 Support conservation programs to reforest privately held forest lands.

Vegetation



Native habitat for plants and animals endemic to this area that make up such important parts of our natural heritage now have interconnected spaces in a number of locations that allow these natural communities to prosper and be sustained.



– RCIP Vision Statement

The vegetation/flora of Riverside County is exceedingly diverse in its size, shape and form, yet various species share a common unity in their adaptation to climate and environmental conditions. Further, habitat areas are strongly characterized by flora, in addition to the fauna/animal life, that thrives within the vegetation. Although ecological conditions may fluctuate and affect various plant communities, these natural changes occur gradually, with most species adapting by changing their physical form and structure. Over thousands of years, both the landscape and the plants upon it have slowly evolved together, so that those plant species with the best record of survival in a specific setting have usually become the most prominent identifying characteristics of that setting.

As development continues in the County, the natural succession and evolution of vegetation is altered. This disturbance of vegetation results in changes that are often drastic in wildlife habitats, microclimates, water absorption and purification, soil erosion, fires, and aesthetic quality. The management of vegetation will assure the continued viability of habitat communities within the County for present and future generations. See Figure OS-4, Western Riverside County Vegetation, for a map of those vegetation types in the western portion of the County.

Native vegetation must be managed in order to maintain the ecological diversity of the County. The policies that follow are intended to protect superior examples of native vegetation resources in conjunction with permitted uses.