



Features

The Riverside County Vision builds heavily on the value of its remarkable environmental setting. That certainly applies here as well. This section describes the setting, features and functions that are unique to the Elsinore Area Plan. These defining characteristics are shown on Figure 2, Physical Features.

SETTING



The San Jacinto River meanders over 40 miles through Riverside County, beginning at Lake Hemet in the San Jacinto Mountains and terminating at Lake Elsinore.

Much of the Elsinore Area Plan is situated within a valley, running from northwest to southeast, framed by the Santa Ana and Elsinore Mountains on the west and the Gavilan and Sedco Hills on the east. Lake Elsinore, which is the largest natural lake in Southern California, covering about 3,000 surface acres, is a centerpiece in the valley. Lake Elsinore is the terminus of the San Jacinto River, which is regulated by the Railroad Canyon dam and generally stabilized at an elevation of approximately 1,230 feet. The Lake is fed by the San Jacinto River and underground springs and is drained by the Temescal Wash to the north, flowing eventually into the Santa Ana River. Murrieta Creek, which eventually drains into the Santa Margarita River, starts just south of Lake Elsinore. Lake Elsinore, Canyon Lake, the San Jacinto River, Temescal Wash, and Murrieta Creek provide a distinctive pattern of lakes and watercourses throughout the valley floor and the settlements here are significantly shaped by the richness of both waterways and the widely varied topography. It is truly a remarkable setting.

UNIQUE FEATURES

Cleveland National Forest

The Cleveland National Forest forms the western boundary of the area and encompasses large portions of the Santa Ana and Elsinore Mountains. This area is characterized by natural open space and outdoor recreational uses with pockets of rural residential and wilderness oriented visitor serving uses scattered along State Route 74. Private inholdings within the Forest boundary are developed in limited residential and commercial uses.

Temescal Wash

The Temescal Wash creates an impressive swath pinched between the Galivan Hills and the Santa Ana Mountains. Although dry most of the year, the wash serves as an outlet for Lake Elsinore and eventually drains into the Santa Ana River. While the wash runs in a generally northwest/southeast direction, it also provides a critical perpendicular linkage for animals between the mountain and hill habitats on either side. That is why the wash plays such an important role in the Western County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan.