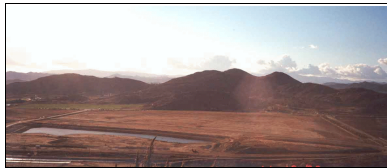




## Multipurpose Open Space



A view of the vast amount of open space within the planning area

The Harvest Valley/Winchester open space system contains a multitude of functions, hence the label of “multi-purpose.” The point is that open space is really a part of the public infrastructure and should have the capability of serving a variety of needs and diversity of users. Some of the Harvest Valley/Winchester planning area natural open space resources are quite special. This means that each existing resource requires thoughtful preservation and, in some cases (as with Double Butte), restoration. This Multipurpose Open Space section is a critical component of the character of the County of Riverside and of the Harvest Valley/Winchester planning area. Preserving the scenic background and natural resources of this extensive valley system gives meaning to the “remarkable environmental setting” portion of the overall Riverside County Vision. Not only that, these open spaces also help define the edges of and separation between communities, which is another important aspect of the Vision.



*The open space system and the methods for its acquisition, maintenance, and operation are calibrated to its many functions: visual relief, natural resources protection, habitat preservation, passive and active recreation, protection from natural hazards, and various combinations of these purposes. This is what is meant by a multipurpose open space system.*



- RCIP Vision

In this planning area, the natural characteristics are somewhat specialized. They offer design opportunities for quality development and, in some cases (as with the Diamond Valley Lake) the opportunities are exceptional. Habitat preservation opportunities are likewise important here. Achieving a desirable end state of valued local open space to benefit residents and visitors will require sensitive design attention in laying out development proposals.

The impressive open space inventory here includes features such as Double Butte, the Lakeview and Dawson mountain ranges, and the Warm Springs and Salt Creeks. Each of these natural features offer open spaces, habitat, and recreation opportunities, enhanced by the scenic vistas associated with the varied topography that defines this area. These features encompass a variety of habitats, including riparian corridors, vernal pools, oak woodlands, and chaparral habitats. There are also a number of parks and recreation areas where many of these resources can be enjoyed.

The Harvest Valley/Winchester planning area has experienced relatively little growth over the past 20 years, but that is expected to change dramatically. That is why these policies are needed to achieve a balance between growth, natural resource conservation, and preservation of community character.

## LOCAL OPEN SPACE POLICIES

### Watersheds, Floodplains, and Watercourses

The northern portion of the Harvest Valley/Winchester planning area is part of the Santa Ana River Watershed, and the southern portion is part of the San Diego Basin Watershed. Warm Springs Creek feeds the Santa Margarita River, while the Salt Creek is a tributary of the San Jacinto River. These two watersheds, and their included watercourses, provide natural habitat, open space linkages, and recreation potential. The following policies preserve and protect these important spaces.



*A watershed is the entire region drained by a waterway that drains into a lake or reservoir. It is the total area above a given point on a stream that contributes water to the flow at that point, and the topographic dividing line from which surface streams flow in two different directions. Clearly, watersheds are not just water. A single watershed may include combinations of forests, glaciers, deserts, and/or grasslands.*



### Policies:



HVWAP 15.1 Protect the Santa Ana and San Diego Basin Watersheds and habitats, and provide opportunities for flood protection through adherence to Open Space, Habitat, and Natural Resources section of the General Plan Land Use Element and the Renewable Resources section of the General Plan Multipurpose Open Space Element.



For further information on the MSHCP please see the Multipurpose Open Space Element of the General Plan.



The Wildlife Agencies include The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Game. (CDFG)

## MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN

Regional resource planning to protect individual species and habitats, such as the Stephens Kangaroo Rat and Coastal Sage Scrub, has occurred in Riverside County for many years. Privately owned reserves and publicly owned land has served as habitat for many different species. This method of land and wildlife preservation proved to be piecemeal and disjointed, resulting in islands of reserve land without corridors for species migration and access. To address these issues of wildlife health, and habitat sustainability, the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Program (MSHCP) has been developed. The MSHCP comprises a reserve system that encompasses core habitats, habitat linkages, and wildlife corridors outside of existing reserve areas and existing private and public reserve lands into a single comprehensive plan that can accommodate the needs of species and habitat in the present and future.

### MSHCP Program Description

The Endangered Species Act prohibits the "taking" of endangered species. Taking is defined as "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect" listed species. "Harm" includes destruction of a listed species' habitat. Therefore, the MSHCP will allow the County to "take" plant and wildlife species within identified areas through the local land use planning process. The Wildlife Agencies have authority to regulate this "take". The intent of the plan is for the Wildlife Agencies to grant a "take authorization" for otherwise lawful actions that may incidentally take or harm species or habitats outside of preserve areas, in exchange for supporting assembly of a coordinated reserve system. In addition to the conservation and management duties assigned to the County and other agencies, a property-owner-initiated habitat evaluation and acquisition negotiation process has also been developed. This process applies to property which may be needed for inclusion in the MSHCP Reserve or subjected to other MSHCP criteria.

### Conservation Areas

The total target conservation acreage for the Harvest Valley/Winchester planning area is more than 2,500 acres, a major portion of which are existing public/quasi public lands. The remaining privately-owned land has been broken into three conservation subunits as shown on Figure 9, Western Riverside County MSHCP Reserve Areas. These subunits are a critical portion of the criteria-based conservation plan for the Harvest Valley/Winchester planning area. The target conservation acreages for each subunit and its general location are listed below.