



Multipurpose Open Space



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

The Highgrove planning area open spaces perform 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. Highgrove’s natural open space resources are quite extensive and specialized. That means that each resource requires thoughtful preservation and, in some cases, restoration. This Multipurpose Open Space section is a critical component of the character of the County of Riverside and of the Highgrove area. Preserving the scenic background and natural resources of this special area 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 appeal of the Highgrove area lies in its dramatic and expansive natural setting. The Highgrove area contains a unique open space network that encompasses a diverse variety of habitats, including riparian corridors, vernal pools, grasslands, foothills, mountains, wetlands, and agricultural fields. These open space areas provide visual relief, serve as habitat for plants and animals, provide recreational opportunities, and otherwise establish the area’s unique character. Open space areas also are important in protecting citizens from natural hazards.



Due in part to its proximity within the growing Inland Empire, the Highgrove area continues to experience growth and development pressures. Establishing a balance between preserving open space areas and accommodating additional population needs is essential to maintaining the open space and rural character of the area.

Policies:

HAP 17.1 Protect visual and biological resources in the Highgrove area through adherence to General Plan policies found in the Multipurpose Open Space Element, as well as policies contained in the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan.



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.

LOCAL OPEN SPACE POLICIES

Floodplains and Watercourses

The Santa Ana River, Springbrook Wash, Riverside Canal Aqueduct, and Gage Canal serve as the major drainage areas for the Highgrove planning area. Due to the area’s mountainous terrain, there exists several other major drainage courses throughout the planning area. These and smaller perennial streams create a system of ever-changing channels within the Highgrove area, which gradually change its physical appearance.



Watercourses are the corridors of streams, rivers, and creeks, whether permanent or seasonal, natural or channelized.

Policies:

HAP 18.1 Protect the watercourse and floodplain areas, and provide recreational opportunities and flood protection through the adherence of the General Plan Land Use and Multipurpose Open Space Elements.

MULTIPLE-SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN



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

One of the major challenges confronting Riverside County is the fact that it presently contains a huge proportion of the remaining southern California natural habitat—and a very diverse one at that. While these rich mountain, valley, riparian and desert resources contribute much to the “remarkable environmental setting” that underlies the Riverside Vision, they also encompass extensive privately owned lands. Thus, a balancing of long-term habitat viability and private property interests is an essential feature of the RCIP and must be reflected in this Area Plan.



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

Regional resource planning to protect individual species and habitats such as the Stephens Kangaroo Rat and Coastal Sage Scrub Habitat has occurred in Riverside County for many years. Privately owned reserves and publicly owned land have 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 comprehensively core habitats linkages, and wildlife corridors resources. This includes territory outside of existing reserve areas and folds existing private and public reserve lands into a single comprehensive plan that can accommodate the present and future species and habitat needs.

With its rich and varied landscape, the Highgrove area accommodates several ecological habitats, from grasslands and hillside sage scrub to wetlands and riparian corridors. Though the Highgrove Land Use Plan preserves the existing open space and rural character of the area, future urban development could have detrimental effects upon habitat areas, including the Springbrook Wash and the Box Springs Mountains. Preserving habitat not only aids in sustaining species’ survival, but also maintains the quality of life in the Highgrove area and promotes tourism.

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. The Wildlife Agencies have authority to regulate this "take". The Wildlife Agencies have authority to regulate the acquisition and preservation of threatened, endangered or otherwise sensitive species. The intent