



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



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. Those properties are identified by subunit on Figure 7, Western Riverside County MSHCP Reserve Areas, and total more than 2,000 acres. These subunits are the localized “building blocks” of habitat resources necessary to achieve a true system or network of multi-species environments that can be sustained indefinitely, rather than being carved up into isolated spaces that cannot thrive over extended periods.

Conservation Areas

The total target conservation acreage for the Highgrove area is more than 1,900 acres, 1,193 of which are existing public/quasi public lands. The remaining privately owned land is encompassed within two conservation subunits as shown on Figure 7, Western Riverside County MSHCP Reserve Areas. These subunits are a critical portion of the criteria-based conservation plan for the Highgrove area. The general location and target conservation acreages for each subunit are listed below.

Subunit 1: Sycamore Canyon to Box Springs Linkage

Subunit 1 is located in the far southern portion of the Highgrove area. The target acreage range for new conservation on private lands within Subunit 1 is between 150 and 160 acres.

Subunit 2: Springbrook Wash Area

Subunit 2 has a target acreage range for new conservation on private lands from 680 to 710 acres. The subunit is located in the northern portion of Highgrove, encompassing much of the southern and eastern portions of Highgrove.

Note: In those subunits where the vegetation described in the text does not depict the actual vegetation on the land, the written description for the subunit reflects the ultimate habitat composition analyzed in the MSHCP.



The following species, covered under the MSHCP, may be found within the subunit of this Area Plan:

- *Slender-horned spineflower*
- *coyote*
- *California gnatcatcher*
- *least Bell's vireo*
- *Cooper's hawk*

Key Biological Issues

The habitat requirements of the listed species, combined with sound habitat management practices, have shaped the following policies which apply to areas within identified subunits. These policies provide general conservation direction for the MSHCP reserve assembly process. Refer to specific design criteria in the MSHCP Implementing Agreement.

Policies:

- HAP 19.1 Protect biological resources in the Highgrove area through adherence to General Plan policies found in the General Plan