



Features

The Riverside County Vision builds heavily on the value of its remarkable environmental setting. That theme is certainly applicable here. The setting is especially situated to capture distant mountain views in almost every direction. The hills, mountains and watercourses that frame this valley also serve to contain urban development in the more developable portions of the landscape. The internal system of hills and mountains provides a habitat for many native species, while the more distant mountains provide a scenic backdrop. The Lake Mathews reservoir, aside from its function as a regional source of fresh water, acts to buffer development here from development north of El Sobrante Road and provide habitat for many plants and animals. This section describes the setting, features and functions that are unique to the Lake Mathews/Woodcrest Area Plan. These defining characteristics are shown on Figure 2, Physical Features.

SETTING

The distinctiveness of the Lake Mathews/Woodcrest area can be found in its wonderful natural setting. From the lush riparian corridors along Mockingbird Canyon Road and throughout the area, to the gently undulating terrain of Woodcrest, to the dramatic rolling landscape of the Gavilan Hills, to the stark, rugged outcroppings of El Sobrante, the Lake Mathews/Woodcrest area is truly a wondrous and diverse haven. Of course, the Lake Mathews reservoir provides an open space resource and visual amenity for the area.

The majority of the Lake Mathews/Woodcrest area is hilly in nature, with scattered gentle rolling foothills and rugged rock outcroppings throughout the El Sobrante and Gavilan Hills areas. The Gavilan Hills and adjacent Gavilan Valley provide a peaceful setting for the rural neighborhoods south of Cajalco Road as well as a pleasing backdrop for outlying communities adjacent to the hills.

UNIQUE FEATURES



Lake Mathews

Lake Mathews/Estelle Mountain Reserve

Located in the central portion of the planning area, the 2,800-acre Lake Mathews reservoir represents a significant habitat and visual resource, in addition to serving as a major source of fresh water for southern California. Though public access to this area is restricted, residents and visitors enjoy the scenic qualities this area possesses. Adjacent habitat lands along the western and southern shores of Lake Mathews are part of the 13,000-acre Estelle Mountain Reserve, a primary habitat for the Stephens' Kangaroo Rat.

Gavilan Hills

The Gavilan Hills constitute an extensive mountainous environment located along much of the southern portion of the planning area. They extend beyond Lake Mathews into both the Temescal Canyon and Elsinore areas.