



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



A major thrust of the multipurpose open space system is the preservation of components of the ecosystem and landscape that embody the historic character and habitat of the County, even though some areas have been impacted by man-made changes.



- RCIP Vision

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

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

Lake Mathews/Woodcrest contains a variety of open spaces that serve a multitude of functions, hence the open space 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. The pattern of hills, valleys and slopes provide open space, habitat, and recreation spaces alike. These open spaces encompass a variety of habitats including riparian corridors, oak woodlands and chaparral habitats. Examples include features such as the Gavilan Hills and Harford Springs Reserve. In particular, the Lake Mathews/Estelle Mountain Reserve, situated south of Cajalco Road in the central portion of the planning area, is home to many native and narrow endemic species.

This Multipurpose Open Space section is a critical component of the character of the County of Riverside and the Lake Mathews/Woodcrest area. Preserving the scenic background and the natural resources of Lake Mathews/Woodcrest 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 (such as Woodcrest and El Sobrante), which is another important aspect of the Vision.

It is of the utmost importance to maintain a balance between growth and natural resource preservation through the Lake Mathews/Woodcrest Area Plan to help preserve the overall character of this special environment.

MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN

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 core habitats, habitat linkages, and wildlife corridors, including those outside of existing reserve areas and within existing private and public reserve lands, into a single comprehensive plan than 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. The Wildlife Agencies have authority to regulate this "take". The intent of the MSHCP 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. Therefore, the Western Riverside County MSHCP will allow the County to "take" plant and wildlife species within identified areas through the local land use planning process. 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 within the Elsinore Area Plan are identified by subunit on Figure 8, Western Riverside County MSHCP Reserve Areas.

Conservation Areas

The total target conservation acreage for the Lake Mathews/Woodcrest Area Plan is more than 15,900 acres, 10,660 acres of which are existing public/quasi public lands. The remaining privately owned land has been broken into four conservation subunits as shown on Figure 8, Western Riverside County MSHCP Reserve Areas. These subunits are a critical portion of the criteria-based conservation plan for Lake Mathews/Woodcrest. The target conservation acreages for each subunit and its general location are listed below.



The following species, covered under the MSHCP, may be found within the subunits of this area plan:

- orange-throated whiptail
- least Bell's vireo
- Stephen's kangaroo rat
- granite spiny lizard
- California gnatcatcher
- Bell's sage sparrow
- southwestern willow flycatcher
- Quino checkerspot butterfly
- Munz's onion
- many-stemmed dudleya
- bobcat
- thread-leaved brodiaea
- slender-horned spineflower

Subunit 1: Sierra Hills/Lake Mathews

Subunit 1 is located in the northwestern corner of the Lake Mathews/Woodcrest area. The target acreage range for new conservation on private lands within Subunit 1 is between 1,990 and 2,050 acres.

Subunit 2: Temescal Wash East

Subunit 2 has a target acreage range for new conservation on private lands from 1,740 to 1,790 acres. The subunit is located in the southwest corner of the Lake Mathews/Woodcrest area.

Subunit 3: Gavilan Hills West

The Gavilan Hills West area subunit is in the southeastern portion of the Lake Mathews/Woodcrest planning area, primarily south of Cajalco Road. The target acreage range for this subunit is from 1,500 to 1,540 acres.

Subunit 4: Good Hope West

The Good Hope West area subunit is located in the extreme southeast corner of the Lake Mathews/Woodcrest planning area. The target acreage range for this subunit is from 70 to 80 acres.

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 process. Refer to the MSHCP Implementing Agreement for reserve design criteria.

