



California's last vernal pools, wintering water-fowl, spring wildflowers, and several species of endangered plants. It is, without doubt, a special place.

A further indication of uniqueness is found in the creekbeds throughout the reserve. They contain deep holes called tenajas, which hold water throughout the rainless summer months and provide important water sources for wildlife. These riparian zones support such species as sycamore and willow trees, California treefrogs, and Southwestern pond turtles.

Vail Lake



A tenaja found in the Santa Rosa Reserve

Vail Lake nestles in the Black Hills about 15 miles east of Temecula, just north of State Route 79. Vail Lake was formed in 1948 when Walter Vail dammed Temecula Creek. A haven for fishing and water activities as well as camping, hiking, bicycling, and equestrian trails, Vail Lake and the surrounding areas are recognized for significant biological and natural habitat resources. The considerable unspoiled landscape varies in topography and is accented by oak woodlands and riparian corridors.

The Cleveland National Forest

Along the southeastern boundary of the Southwest planning area is a portion of the Cleveland National Forest. The pristine environment contains thousands of species of plants and animals native to southern California. The rolling topography and hillsides lead to unspoiled views of natural habitats and tree stands. The forest is also home to treasured oak woodlands. This wonderful piece of history has ample public access and recreational opportunities, such as hiking, camping, bicycling, and equestrian facilities.

Lake Skinner



An aerial view of Lake Skinner and the water filtration facility

Located in the northeastern corner of the Southwest planning area is Lake Skinner. Surrounding the lake is the Lake Skinner Regional Park and a water filtration facility. This area is characterized by rolling hills and agricultural uses extending westward, with largely vacant lands to the east. This man-made lake is operated by the Metropolitan Water District (MWD), and it affords activities such as fishing, boating, hiking, and other outdoor activities that draw tourists and visitors to the area.

The Temecula Valley Vineyards, Winery, and Citrus Groves

Located east of the City of Temecula and extending westward along Rancho California Road lay the wine producing area of Temecula Valley. This jewel of the Southwest planning area and western Riverside County boasts beautiful vineyards and gracious wineries scattered among rolling hills and spreading oaks. The wineries, which offer tours and wine tasting, are an attraction for tourists as well as an economic powerhouse for western Riverside County. This appealing landscape also offers citrus groves and a scattering of residential and equestrian estates.