



Multipurpose Open Space



Murrieta Creek



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 Southwest planning area 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 Southwest planning area open space system is highly rich and varied, including such features as the Agua Tibia and the Santa Margarita Mountain ranges; Murrieta, Warm Springs, and Santa Gertrudis Creeks; the richly diverse Santa Margarita River; and numerous mountains, hills, and slopes that provide open space, habitat, and recreation spaces. These quality spaces encompass a variety of habitats including riparian corridors, vernal pools, oak woodlands, chaparral habitats, groves, vineyards, and agricultural fields, as well as a number of parks and recreation areas.

This Multipurpose Open Space section is a critical component of the character of the County of Riverside and the Southwest planning area. The scenic background and the natural resources of the Southwest planning 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 topography of the Southwest planning area is a major factor in shaping the distinct character of the region. The slopes and ridgelines defining the valleys where most development is located not only provide a scenic vista; they also account for much of the irreplaceable habitat. Because many of these areas are impractical to develop, at least at suburban densities, they also contribute to the diversity of development character by inducing large lot rural neighborhoods.

It is of the utmost importance to maintain a balance between growth and natural resource preservation if the overall character reflected by the Southwest planning area is to be sustained.

LOCAL OPEN SPACE POLICIES

Watersheds, Floodplains, and Watercourses

The Southwest planning area contains a major portion of the Santa Margarita River watershed, which includes the Murrieta, Temecula, Warm Springs, Santa Gertrudis, and Pechanga creeks. This watershed, and its included watercourses, provide a truly unique habitat for flora and fauna. The watercourses provide corridors through developed land as well as linking open spaces outside of development areas. This allows wildlife the ability to move from one locale to another without crossing developed land. The following policies preserve and protect these important watershed functions.

Policies:



SWAP 14.1 Protect the Santa Margarita watershed and habitat, and provide recreational opportunities and flood protection through the



A watershed is the entire region drained by a waterway that flows into a lake or reservoir—or the ocean. 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 a wide variety of resources and environments.