Multipurpose Open Space

The Sun City/Menifee Valley Area contains a multitude of functions, hence the 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. This Multipurpose Open Space section is a critical component of the character of the County of Riverside and of the Sun City/Menifee Valley Area Plan. Preserving the scenic background and natural resources of the Valley 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.

In this area plan, the natural characteristics are not dominant. They offer design opportunities for quality development, but on a somewhat limited basis. Habitat preservation opportunities are less extensive here than in many other areas. Achieving a desirable end state of valued local open space to benefit residents and visitors will require sensitive design attention in laying out development proposals.

LOCAL OPEN SPACE POLICIES

Watercourses

The Warm Springs Creek, which eventually flows into the Santa Margarita River, begins in the Harvest Valley/Winchester Area Plan and traverses a corner of this plan. Salt Creek divides the Plan area from east to west. Paloma Wash, mostly east of Interstate 215, is a less visible but important major watercourse within the planning area.

Policies:

SCMVAP 19.1 Protect Warm Springs Creek, Paloma Wash, and Salt Creek through the application of General Plan Multipurpose Open Space policies and sensitive development design practices.

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The 36-acre Ringing Rock site in Menifee was purchased by the County in October 1990 in order to preserve it. The rare rock, which resonates like a bell when struck, may have been used in Native American religious ceremonies.

Cultural Resources

The Sun City/Menifee Valley Area Plan contains historical, archaeological, cultural, and/or paleontological resources. The Menifee Archaeological Site ("Ringing Rock" site) will be the nucleus of a Native American Interpretive Park connected by trails to other archaeologically valuable sites and recreation centers.

Policies:

SCMVAP 20.1 Protect the Sun City/Menifee Valley's historical, archaeological, cultural, and paleontological resources through adherence to General Plan Multipurpose Open Space Element policies.

SCMVAP 20.2 Require development proposals to be sensitive to valuable resources and provide additional buffers and/or dedications of land as necessary.

MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN

*Please refer to the **Multipurpose Open Space Element of the General Plan** for further information on the MSHCP*

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 outside of existing reserve areas and existing private and public reserve lands into a single comprehensive plan that 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.

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

Conservation Areas

The total target conservation acreage within this area plan more than 1,420 acres of privately owned land, broken into two conservation subunits identified on Figure 9, Western Riverside County MSHCP Area. These subunits are a critical portion of the criteria-based conservation plan for Sun City/Menifee Valley. The target conservation acreages for each subunit and its general location are listed below.

Subunit 1: Warm Spring Creek

Subunit 1 is located east of Interstate 215, west of Leon Road, and south of Scott Road, with the exception of the northeastern corner, which is located north of Scott Road. The target acreage range for new conservation on private lands within Subunit 1 is between 570 and 590 acres.