



Features

This section describes the setting, features and functions that are unique to the Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan. These defining characteristics are shown on Figure 2, Physical Features.

SETTING

The Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan is set within the southeast portion of the Coachella Valley, south and east of the City of Indio, and east of the City of La Quinta and the Santa Rosa Mountains, stretching to the Imperial County line on the south. The area plan boundary extends east of the All American Canal, north and south of Interstate 10, taking in Chiriaco Summit. The southeastern edge is bounded by the Chocolate Mountain Naval Reservation Aerial Gunnery Range.

UNIQUE FEATURES

Physically, the Eastern Coachella Valley is bounded by the Santa Rosa Mountains to the west, and the Mecca Hills and the edge of the Joshua Tree National Park to the northeast. Nearly half of the Planning area, east of the All American Canal, is either desert or mountainous terrain.

Salton Trough & Salton Sea

The area west of the All American Canal is contained within the Salton Trough, a small section of the junction between the North American and Pacific tectonic plates. Roughly the northernmost quarter of the Salton Sea is located in the southern portion of the area and forms a good part of Eastern Coachella Valley's southern boundary, flowing into Imperial County to the south. The surface elevation of the sea is 227 feet below mean sea level, and the deepest area of the sea's bed is only 5 feet higher than the lowest point in Death Valley. The sea is home to large bird and fish populations, and is bordered by the Salton Sea State Recreation Area to the east, which provides camping, fishing, hiking and boating opportunities. The Whitewater River channel runs north to south through the plan area and empties into the sea.

Whitewater River Stormwater Evacuation Channel

The Whitewater River is the primary drainage course in the area, spanning the length of the Coachella Valley. The river has perennial flow in the north, becoming dry as water percolates the groundwater basin or is diverted for use. The river is fed by several tributaries, including the Box Canyon Wash. The channel also carries stormwater and agricultural runoff and supports some riparian vegetation and marsh habitat at the north end of the Salton Sea.

Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument

The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument encompasses more than 272,000 acres and overlaps the boundary between the REMAP and