



agricultural lands of statewide importance. Irrigation for the crops is provided by channels filled from the Colorado River.

Colorado River



Recreational boating on the Colorado River

The Colorado River provides both a riparian and recreational resource for the region. It is a source of water for agriculture, a substantial recreational and tourist draw, and it can serve as a catalyst for future specialized development within this remarkable water dominated environment. Residents and tourists alike already enjoy a number of recreational pursuits, such as fishing, water sports, nature walks, bird watching, and other activities a river of this consequence affords. Its value is indicated by the location of five river-oriented County parks, as well as a number of recreational vehicle (RV) and camping facilities.

Mountains

The Big Maria, McCoy, and Mule mountains surrounding Palo Verde are rugged visual landmarks that accent the Palo Verde environment. Their stark presence is accentuated by the fact that there are no foothills, just steep rock structures that jut out of the surrounding mesa. They form a backdrop that helps to create a natural boundary between the vegetation rich valley and the arid—but still very much alive—desert.

Intaglios



Some of the Intaglios in Palo Verde

A unique part of Palo Verde's remarkable environmental setting has actually been created by the activities of early civilizations. The Blythe Intaglios or "Giant Figures," are geoglyphs located on a terrace above the Colorado River a few miles north of Blythe. These giant intaglios include human figures more than 60 feet long, a mountain lion, and a geometric pattern. Made by Yuman speaking tribes, geoglyphs such as these were used during ritual pilgrimages made along the Colorado River between the Land of the Dead, to the south, and the more northerly Place of Creation. Intaglios were created at the locations of mythic events, and were intended to portray the legendary beings whose actions occurred at these spots. Now these striking creations are a protected tourist attraction and a powerful cultural artifact.

Blythe Airport



The Blythe Airport Terminal

Located in the center of Palo Verde adjacent to Interstate 10, Blythe Airport is the only public airport serving the eastern portion of Riverside County. The 3,094-acre facility is a general aviation airport that is owned by Riverside County, and has two runways situated in a north-south and east-west direction. This public facility is often used as a base for crop spraying operations, flight rental, and flight instruction.

As shown in Figure 4, Policy Areas, a policy area surrounds the airport. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Riverside County impose restrictions on the uses, concentrations of population, and height of proposed development within this airport influenced area. For more information on the



Blythe Airport and its policies, see the Policy Areas section of this area plan and the Blythe Airport Land Use Plan.

UNIQUE COMMUNITIES

Nicholls Warm Springs/Mesa Verde

The residential community of Nicholls Warm Springs/Mesa Verde is located immediately south of the Blythe Airport. This community is mainly composed of small single- family dwellings and mobile homes.

Ripley

Ripley is located in the Palo Verde Valley south of Blythe. Ripley is an agricultural community based on agricultural uses and shipping. Ripley is built around the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe (AT&SF) railroad line.

INCORPORATED CITIES



A "Sphere of Influence" is the area outside of and adjacent to a city's border that has been identified by the County Local Agency Formation Commission as a future logical extension of the city's jurisdiction. While the County of Riverside has land use authority over city sphere areas, development in these areas directly affects circulation, service provision, and community character within the cities.

The City of Blythe, incorporated in 1916, is the focus of development in the Palo Verde Valley. The City comprises 15,865 acres and represents the only significant urban area in the region. The Chuckwalla and Ironwood State Prisons, located approximately 15 miles west of Blythe, are a non-contiguous island of the City. The prisons are one of the major sources of employment in the Palo Verde valley and consist of two facilities (Ironwood and Chuckwalla), which, combined, house approximately 8,000 inmates and employ a staff of approximately 2,000.

The City's Sphere of Influence extends roughly from Second Street on the north, to Fifteenth Avenue on the south, and from the Colorado River on the east to approximately the western boundary of the Blythe Airport.