



## Features



Badlands

This section describes the functions, setting, and features that are unique to the Pass. The San Gorgonio Pass, which is where this area plan derives its name, is a valley bound by the San Jacinto Mountains to the south and the San Bernardino Mountains to the north. The physical features within The Pass Area Plan are shown on Figure 2, Physical Features, and they are further described below.

## SETTING

The Pass is comprised of both lowland and highland geographic features. The lowlands, or valley, contains most of the existing and planned development. The highlands, or mountains, create the backdrop for these communities. The Pass is a narrow separation between the Peninsular Ranges, which extend southward into Baja California, and the Transverse Ranges, which extend northwest to include the San Bernardino and San Gabriel Mountains. These two ranges are accented by the distinctive San Gorgonio Mountain on the north, reaching to an elevation of 11,485 feet, and the southerly Mount San Jacinto, at a height of 10,831 feet. The western end of the Pass is framed by the Crafton Hills and the convoluted San Timoteo Badlands. The Colorado River Aqueduct cuts southwest across the Pass, just to the east of Cabazon. The Santa Ana River, the San Jacinto River, and the Salton Sea Watersheds are all fed by water that flows through or originates near the Pass. These rivers and watercourses, such as the San Timoteo Creek, the Smith Creek, and the San Gorgonio River, form a system of mesas flanking the valley.



The Community of Cabazon is located at the foot of the San Jacinto Mountains.

## UNIQUE FEATURES

### Benches

The benches, or mesas, that are found in the San Gorgonio Pass are ancient alluvial deposits that have been cut by watercourses that flow from the surrounding mountains and fault lines that traverse the area. Three of these benches, the North, Middle, and South, form distinctive landmarks in the area and contain identifiable communities. They have significantly shaped the community development patterns characterizing the Pass.

### Mountains/National Forest

The most remarkable features of the Pass are the San Bernardino and San Jacinto Mountains, which rise very steeply from the valley floor. These mountain ranges are home to the two tallest peaks in southern California, San Gorgonio and San Jacinto, which dominate the skyline. The mountain chains occupy most of the San Bernardino National Forest within the Pass, and they ensure the protection of these scenic mountains as well as assuring long-term open space and recreational environments. The Black Mountain National Scenic Area, which is part of the National Forest located in the San Jacinto Mountains, is a tourist attraction that stretches from State Route 243 to the Pacific Crest Trail.