

Discover the Natural Wonders of Riverside County

The Western Riverside County Multiple Species
Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP)

A model open space preservation plan
for the 21st Century

Riverside County

Located 50 miles east of Los Angeles, Riverside County is one of the largest counties in the nation. In square miles, it rivals the states of New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts. A last vestige of the Frontier Era, it features many miles of untouched open space.

This region boasts some of the most diverse topography of plants and wildlife in the United States. More than 230 species can be found here in a rich landscape of fertile river valleys, low deserts, mountains, foothills and rolling

plains. It offers endless opportunities to appreciate the natural wonders of Inland Southern California.

With diverse ecosystems and climates, rare plants and animals, and scenic landscapes, this region is one of the nation's greatest natural treasures – an ecological wonderland for all to cherish.

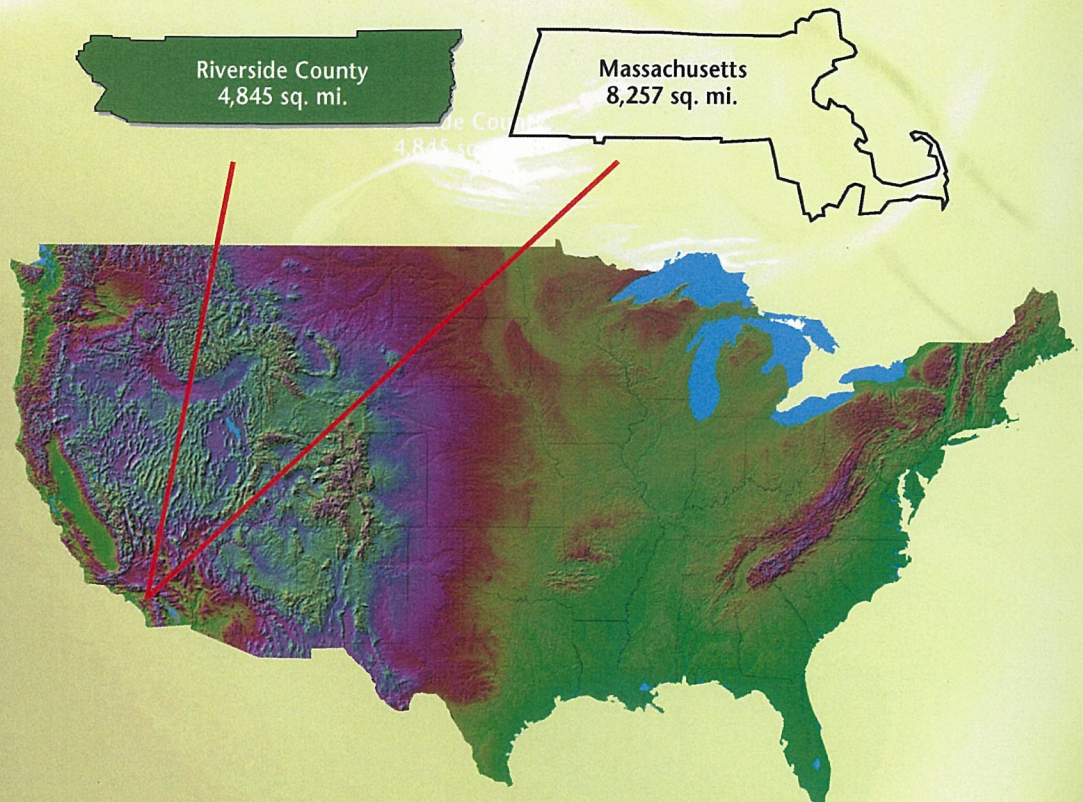
Preserving natural wonders for future generations and protecting opportunities for continued prosperity—these are the goals of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP).



Michael J. Elderman



Michael J. Elderman



A Groundbreaking Effort

The MSHCP is a large-scale conservation effort designed to meet the requirements of the Federal and State Endangered Species Acts — laws enacted to protect plants and animals at risk of extinction.

It is the largest conservation plan in the United States in terms of species protected.

The MSHCP protects 146 species, conserves 500,000 acres of open space and provides environmental clearances for future homes, schools, businesses and freeways.

By making conservation part of front-end infrastructure planning, this visionary effort strengthens local control over land-use decisions, thereby addressing housing needs, job creation and traffic congestion relief throughout Riverside County.

A National Leader

Riverside County, CA 146 species

San Diego County, CA 85 species

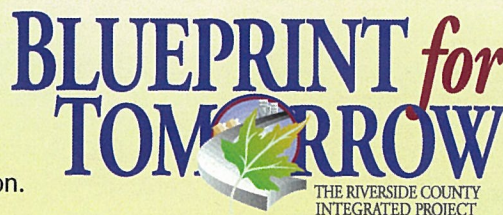
Clark County, NV 78 species

King County, WA 77 species

Orange County, CA ... 39 species

Riverside County's MSHCP is the nation's largest conservation plan, protecting 146 threatened or endangered plant and animal species.

The MSHCP is part of the County's *Blueprint for Tomorrow*, a comprehensive, three-part, integrated program designed to determine future conservation, transportation, housing and economic needs in Riverside County. This innovative project is the first of its kind in the nation.



A Better Path

A Plan for the Future

The initiation of the MSHCP began with a single-species conservation effort in Riverside County back in 1988, when the federal government placed the Stephen's Kangaroo Rat on the endangered list.

Following the listing of the kangaroo rat, the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency was formed to develop and implement a conservation plan for its protection. But this single species conservation plan only addressed a fraction of the total habitat conservation needs of Riverside County. Moreover, single species plans are extremely expensive and time consuming, as well as controversial.

With multiple species listed as threatened or endangered, it was decided that habitat conservation must take place on a broad scale and within the context of a larger plan, The Riverside County Integrated Project, that also addresses Riverside County's long-range transportation and land-use needs.

By providing a higher degree of species and habitat protection, the MSHCP results in the highest level of certainty to property owners, builders, farmers, environmentalists, and local governments concerning their future obligations and benefits under the State and Federal ESAs.

Evolution of the Western Riverside County

1973: Congress passes the Federal Endangered Species Act.

1984: The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) is administered by the California Department of Fish and Game and prohibits the take of plant and animal species designated by the Fish and Game Commission as being either threatened or endangered in California.

1989: Residential and commercial development accounted for a significant portion of total economic activity in Western Riverside County.

1991: The Natural Community Conservation Planning Act (NCCP) supports broad-based planning to provide protection and conservation of California's wildlife while allowing for appropriate development and growth.

1988: A real estate boom in the late 1980's contributed to a rapid decline in Stephen's Kangaroo Rat (SKR) habitat and prompted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to place the SKR on the endangered species list, delaying development projects in Western Riverside County.

1990: Riverside County and eight cities formed the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to address SKR protection and development on a regional level. Under the JPA, the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency (RCHCA) was created to develop and implement a long-term plan.

Sound Science

To make the multiple species plan acceptable to a broad range of stakeholders, it needed a strong scientific foundation.

The County teamed up with the University of California, Riverside's Center for Conservation Biology to assemble a Scientific Review Panel (SRP) comprised of independent scientists. The SRP provided a formal



review of the data and methods used in the MSHCP to ensure that the best science available was being utilized and applied appropriately.

Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP)

1996: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approved a long-term HCP and granted an incidental take permit (ITP) for Riverside County covering an estimated 30,000 acres of occupied habitat.

2000: Federal, State and County leaders sign the historic Partnership Agreement, pledging long-term support for the Riverside County Integrated Project, which includes the MSHCP.

2003: Government agencies and environmentalists announced a \$25.5 million acquisition of Potrero Wildlife Area, a 9,100 acre property that will create a huge nature preserve in southern Beaumont.

1999: A regional planning effort to accommodate the County's anticipated growth begins in the form of the Riverside County Integrated Project.

2003–2004: The County of Riverside, the City of Banning, the City of Beaumont, the City of Calimesa, the City of Canyon Lake, the City of Corona, the City of Hemet, the City of Lake Elsinore, the City of Moreno Valley, the City of Murrieta, the City of Norco, the City of Perris, the City of Riverside, the City of San Jacinto and the City of Temecula formally adopt the MSHCP.

2004: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game grant take permits.

Spectrum of Life and Open Space

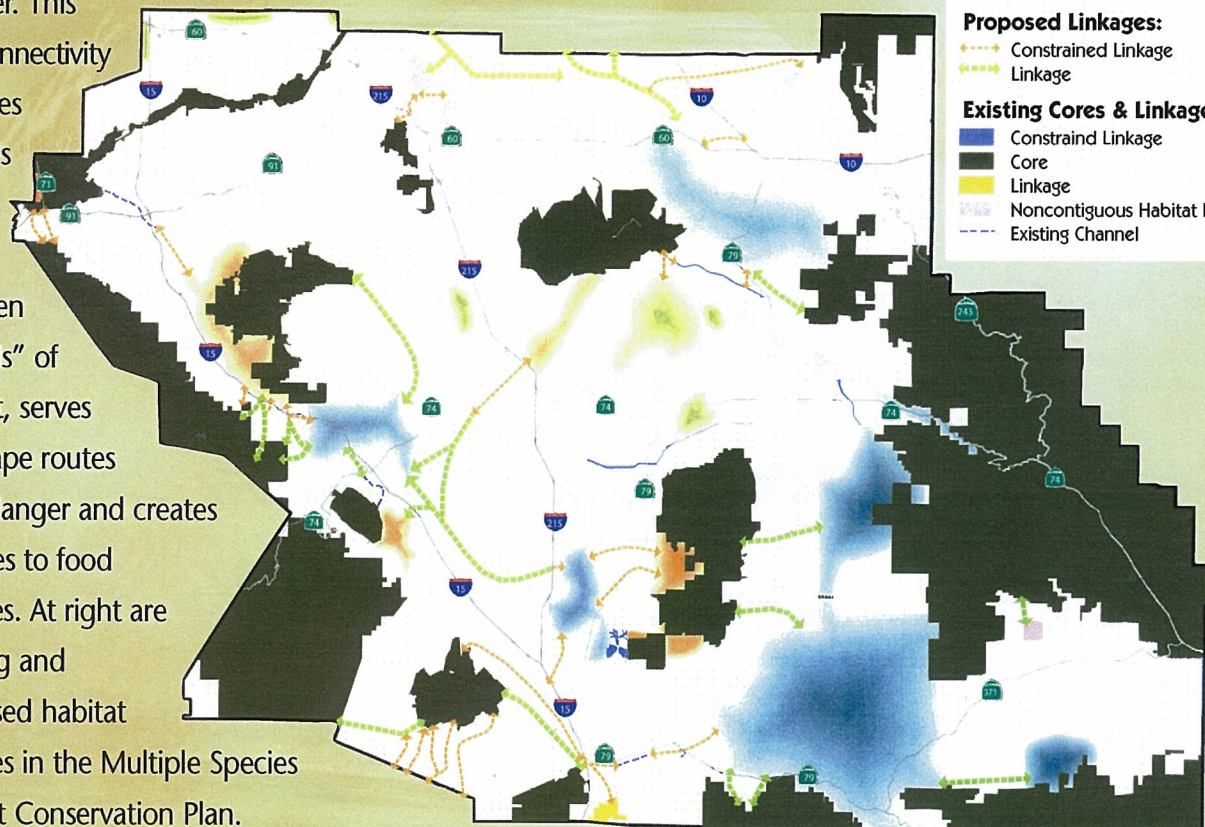
Riverside County's multiple species plan supports an incredible spectrum of life and ecosystems.

The MSHCP will preserve 500,000 acres as protected habitat and wildlife corridors for 146 threatened, endangered and sensitive species and plants such as the Coulter's Goldfields, Quino Checkerspot Butterfly, Yellow-Breasted Chat, Burrowing Owl, Bald Eagle and Munz's Onion.

1. **Coulter's Goldfields** (*Lasthenia Glabrata* ssp. *Coulteri*) — thriving in wetlands and vernal pools, this beautiful long stemmed flower displays vibrant yellow petals when in full bloom.
2. **Quino Checkerspot Butterfly** (*Euphydryas Editha* *Quino*) — this medium sized butterfly displays a patchwork of brown, red, and yellow spots and thrives in grasslands and vernal pools.
3. **Yellow-Breasted Chat** (*Icteria Virens Auricollis*) — an atypical wood warbler, the yellow-breasted chat has a yellow throat and breast with olive upper parts and white spectacles. More often heard than seen, the yellow-breasted chat can be found in bushy riparians and hillsides.
4. **Burrowing Owl** (*Speotyto Cunicularia*) — lives in dugout burrows lined with feathers, this relatively small owl is known for its barred colors and bright yellow eyes.
5. **Bald Eagle** (*Haliaeetus Leucocephalus*) — is the only eagle confined to North America. Weighs from 10-14 pounds with an average life span is estimated to be 15-20 years.
6. **Munz's Onion** (*Allium Munzii*) — a small, bulb-bearing perennial herb, restricted to clay soils in the grasslands of western Riverside County.

Critical Linkages

Specially designed pathways, or *linkages*, enable animals to move from one core habitat area to another. This interconnectivity provides animals a lifeline between "islands" of habitat, serves as escape routes from danger and creates avenues to food supplies. At right are existing and proposed habitat linkages in the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan.





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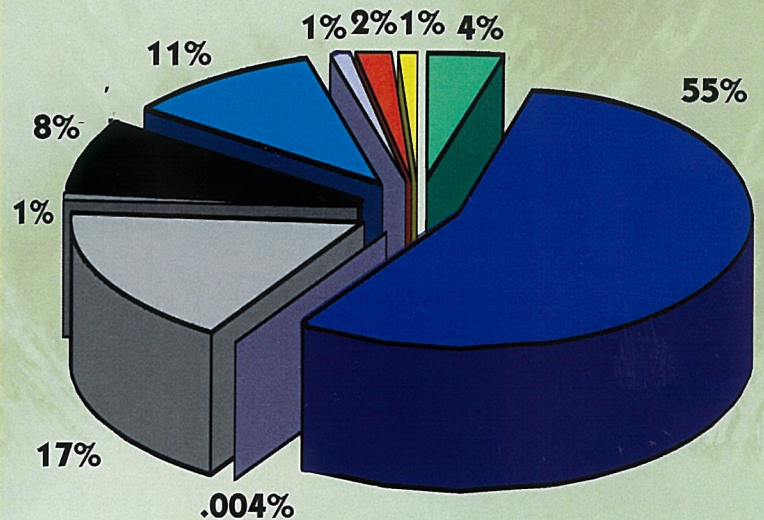


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Diverse Landscapes

The 500,000-acre reserve system created by the MSHCP showcases the stunning array of topography contained within Western Riverside County, from mountain forest to grassland to desert to marshes, vernal pools and other watershed habitat. Below is an estimated breakdown of vegetation types within the reserve system.



- | | |
|--|---|
| Developed Land | Desert Scrubs |
| Agriculture | Grasslands |
| Chaparral | Montane Coniferous Forest, Riparian Scrub, Woodland, Forest |
| Cismontane Alkali Marshes and Meadows | Playas and Vernal Pools |
| Coastal Sage, Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrubs | Water |

Protected Jewels

The Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan protects some of California's most scenic natural treasures.

Gunnerson Pond

Gunnerson Pond located near Lake Elsinore is the perfect location for walking and bird watching. Established in 2001 by the Army Corps of Engineers and Riverside County Flood Control District, Gunnerson Pond was developed to restore environmental habitat for the least Bell's vireo bird and provide a storage area to maintain overflow from Lake Elsinore's outlet channel.



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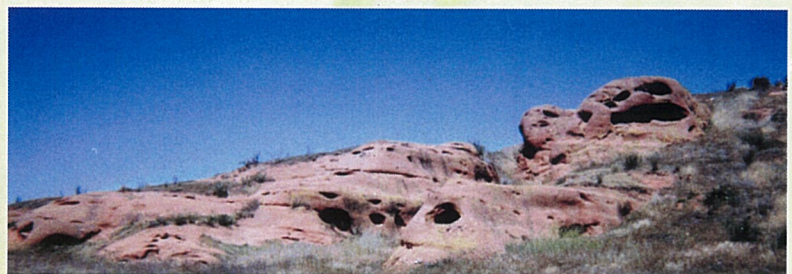


Potrero Wildlife Area

Hosting one of the Plan's more noteworthy concentrations of MSHCP covered species, the Potrero Wildlife Area is located between the Cities of Beaumont and San Jacinto.

It is a primary building block in one of the Plan's largest landscape linkages and a crown jewel of the reserve system.

Its landscape is a rich mosaic of riparian forest, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and grassland. The Potrero Wildlife Area also serves as a key habitat



linkage between the San Jacinto Mountains, the San Bernardino Mountains, and the San Jacinto Valley floor.



"Unlike most of Southern California, Riverside County has an abundance of natural wonders to protect."

— DAN SILVER, MD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ENDANGERED HABITATS LEAGUE

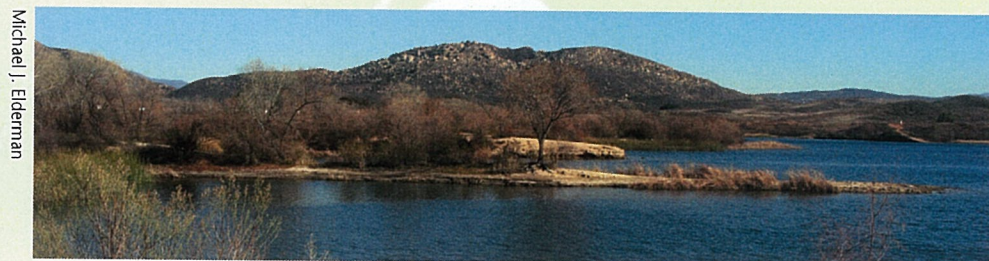
Lake Skinner

Lake Skinner Regional Park is located 10 miles northeast of Temecula and is the largest recreational facility in Riverside County. The 300-acre park is surrounded by Lake Skinner and offers boating, fishing and camping. Lake Skinner

Regional Park is home to endangered species such as the least Bell's vireo and Bald Eagle. More than 300,000 people visit the park each year.



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Santa Rosa Plateau

Located at the southern end of the Santa Ana Mountains near the City of Murrieta, the Santa Rosa Plateau is comprised of 8,300 acres and protects unique ecosystems like Engelmann oak, coast live oak woodlands, riparian wetlands, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, bunchgrass prairie and vernal pools.

Species protected at the Santa Rosa Plateau include mule deer, mountain lion, badger, bobcat, western pond turtle, and golden eagle.



Bob Dlouhy



Michael J. Elderman



Bob Dlouhy

Benefits

Transportation

The MSHCP will satisfy certain federal and state environmental requirements to help expedite construction of new highway routes. In doing so, the MSHCP will help minimize traffic congestion, maximize mobility within Riverside County and the Southern California region, and ensure the transportation of goods and services inside and outside the country.

Highway expansion will not only help shorten daily commutes, it will greatly benefit the local, state and national economies. Each year, more than 2 million trucks carrying goods from Southern California ports to the rest of the nation, travel the major highways in Riverside County.



Economic Growth

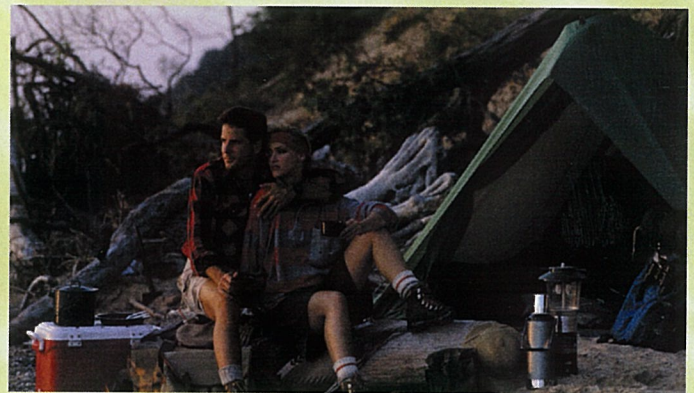
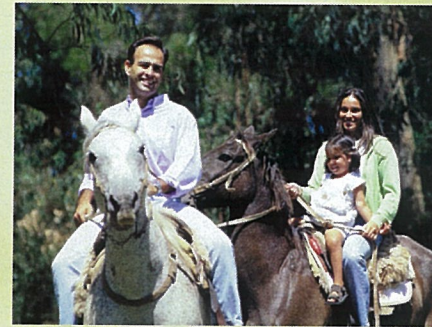
The MSHCP provides an important step in ensuring certainty and economic growth. With establishment of environmental protection up front, the MSHCP provides certainty for future industrial/commercial development and lowers the financial risk and uncertainty of business relocation — encouraging future business growth throughout the region.



Housing

As population growth continues, the Southern California Region faces a housing shortage. The MSHCP will help ensure an ample supply of housing and helps provide the greatest variety of housing options to accommodate all segments of the region's growing home buying market.

By proactively meeting the requirements of the Endangered Species Acts, the MSHCP will enable developers to build new homes for our growing region, helping scores of families achieve the "American Dream" of homeownership.



Recreational Activities

By helping to preserve over 500,000 acres of open space, and protecting natural resources, the MSHCP will ensure that Western Riverside County remains an outdoor destination for all to enjoy.

The MSHCP will help protect scenic landscapes, provide safe habitat for plants and animals and preserve lands for fishing, camping, hiking and horseback riding.



Summary

Imagine less gridlock.

Imagine more good paying jobs closer to home.

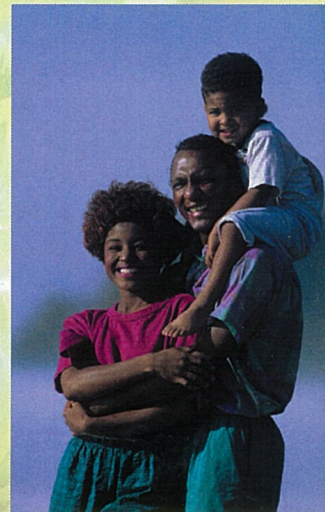
Imagine vast amounts of our precious natural resources preserved.

With the MSHCP in place, these visions become reality for future generations.

The MSHCP assists in the construction of new roads that will relieve traffic congestion and give us more time with our families. It will enable business growth and bring more high quality jobs. With the MSHCP, we can continue to hike in the rolling hills and mountains, and enjoy the extraordinary landscapes that make Riverside County an open space destination.

The Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan protects our open space heritage and habitats that have defined the County. The MSHCP is an innovative and responsible approach to planning for growth and protecting our quality of life. It will continue to make Riverside County a great place to live, work and play.

To learn more about the MSHCP please visit www.rcip.org.



Accolades

What Others Are Saying

"The MSHCP ... is county and city planning at its very best. It protects and provides better places to raise families."

MARY D. NICHOLS
FORMER CALIFORNIA SECRETARY FOR RESOURCES (1998-2003)

"The main purpose of the Plan is to support economic growth by satisfying current and future Endangered Species Act requirements. In that way, new development and highway projects can move forward without costly delays."

DAN SILVER, MD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ENDANGERED HABITATS LEAGUE

"This plan will leave a legacy of opportunity and promise for millions of Riverside County residents."

BORRE WINCKEL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BUILDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
RIVERSIDE COUNTY CHAPTER

"The MSHCP represents great progress in a scientific approach to ecosystem protection, and is a model of partnership between local elected officials and state and federal wildlife agencies."

PETE DESIMONE
DIRECTOR, SANCTUARIES AND STEWARDSHIP
AUDUBON CALIFORNIA

"It will protect threatened ecosystems, stimulate economic growth and empower local government officials with greater control over land-use decisions."

DIANNE FEINSTEIN
U.S. SENATOR

Project

Achievements

- Won the 2004 National Environmental Excellence Award from the National Association of Environmental Professionals
- Project has secured more than \$100 million in state and federal funding
- Featured in the White House "Livable Communities" program as a model planning project
- Won the American Highways Association Award
- Signed Historic Federal and State Government Partnership Agreement
- Won the 2000 Governor's Environmental and Economic Leadership Award



Glossary of Terms

The Blueprint for Tomorrow — Riverside County's integrated plan to address future conservation, transportation and housing needs.

California Department of Fish and Game — The Department of Fish and Game maintains native fish, wildlife, plant species and natural communities for their intrinsic and ecological value and their benefits to people. This includes habitat protection and maintenance in a sufficient amount and quality to ensure the survival of all species and natural

communities. The department is also responsible for the diversified use of fish and wildlife, including recreational, commercial, scientific and educational uses.

Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP) — The transportation element of the Blueprint for Tomorrow project, CETAP will identify four possible new transportation corridors as well as public transit opportunities.

Two of the routes will be entirely within Riverside County, while two would connect to adjacent counties (inter-county corridors).

Core Habitat Area — A block of Habitat of appropriate size, configuration and vegetation characteristics to generally support the life history requirements of one or more Covered Species.

Critical Habitat — Specific geographic areas, whether occupied by listed species or not, that are determined to be essential for the conservation and management of listed species, and that have been formally described in the Federal Register.

Development — The uses to which land shall be put, including construction of buildings, structures, infrastructure and all alterations of the land.

Endangered Species Act of

1973, as amended — Federal legislation intended to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered and threatened species depend may be conserved and provide programs for the conservation of those species, thus reducing the risk of extinction of native plants and animals.



Bob Dlouhy



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