

2.0 Region of Plan Coverage

2.1 Establishment of NCCP/HCP Boundaries

2.1.1 Water Authority Service Area

The Water Authority Service Area extends over 920,463 acres of western San Diego County (see Figure 1-1) and is subject to change due to annexations. The Water Authority and its Member Water Agencies currently own and operate facilities within and outside the Service Area described above that are crucial for providing a safe, reliable water supply to the San Diego region. While the Water Authority primarily undertakes projects independent of Member Water Agencies' projects, it also has a policy of participating in proposed facilities that benefit two or more Member Water Agencies when the total cost would be lower than if two separate facilities were built. As a result, Water Authority interests are widely distributed within the boundaries of its Service Area and the Plan Area.

2.1.2 Water Authority Plan Area

The Water Authority is the county of San Diego's only importer of water, and it also works cooperatively with its Member Water Agencies to develop local water supplies and reduce water demand through regionally coordinated conservation programs. The Plan Area encompasses the Service Area and those lands that extend northward into Riverside County within a one-mile area on each side of the First and Second Aqueducts originating at Lake Skinner and Diamond Valley Reservoir, as well as a one-mile area on each side of the rights-of-way, and exterior boundaries of other facilities within San Diego County that are outside the Service Area boundary (see Figure 1-1). The Plan Area also includes isolated landholdings that were never annexed by the Water Authority, but that are otherwise entirely surrounded by the Service Area, such as the Water Authority's Elfin Forest Reserve property. These lands comprise the Plan Area, which covers approximately 992,000 acres of land in San Diego and southern Riverside counties.

Currently, water imported by the Water Authority flows through the MWD Diamond Valley Lake/Lake Skinner storage system in southwestern Riverside County. MWD pipelines carry water from Lake Skinner to their delivery points in San Diego County. Therefore, the Water Authority is including a portion of southwestern Riverside County within its Plan Area boundaries, given that Riverside County facilities are critical elements of the regional water import system. In the future, the Water Authority may construct its own pipeline/appurtenant facilities from one of these reservoirs to its San

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Diego County facilities. Also, the Water Authority may determine to construct the extension of Pipeline 6 from Temecula to its San Diego County facilities using an alternative route than the approved (and already mitigated) alignment. None of these projects is included in or covered by another conservation plan. For these reasons, the Plan Area includes portions of southwestern Riverside County. This Plan includes Pipeline 6 alternative alignments in its analysis of potential impacts and will process approval of any Pipeline 6 alignment within Riverside County as a conditionally covered activity under the Minor Amendment process. No other Covered Activities will be processed in the Riverside County portion of the Plan except by a Major Amendment (see Section 8.4).

In addition to evaluating future water supply needs, the Water Authority also focuses on existing system reliability issues. Therefore, the Water Authority's interests include lands outside of the defined confines of its Service Area. As an example, the Water Authority's interests include the MWD pipeline corridor between Diamond Valley Lake/Lake Skinner and the northern service boundary, and the existing joint Pipeline No. 6 project. The Water Authority also has an interest in the safe and reliable operation of reservoirs located in eastern San Diego County owned by Member Water Agencies (e.g., San Vicente Reservoir, El Capitan Reservoir, and Loveland Reservoir) and is presently conducting an expansion project at the San Vicente Reservoir. The relationship of this Plan to joint projects that are planned/implemented by Member Water Agencies is described in Sections 6.0 and 8.0.

The Water Authority has been evaluating opportunities for reservoir and groundwater basin development, as well as other options to increase the water supply (e.g., water recycling and seawater desalination). Presently, 75-90 percent of the region's water supply is imported from outside the Water Authority's Service Area. It is anticipated that future management and development of existing local surface and groundwater facilities will play a key role in meeting future water demand. As a result, the protection of activities within and around these facilities is of strategic interest to the Water Authority.

2.1.2.1 Major Amendment Area – Riverside County

Within the Plan Area, the area within Riverside County (with the exception of the Pipeline 6 project area) is designated as a Major Amendment Area. Because Future Covered Activities (Projects and O&M Activities) in Riverside County could not be analyzed and permitted at the time of the implementation of the NCCP/HCP, an area of approximately 48,700 acres in Riverside County within the Plan Area has been designated as "Major Amendment Area." Future Covered Activities within the Major Amendment Area in Riverside County of the Plan Area will be processed as Major Amendments, with the exception of the Pipeline 6 alignments and their associated PIZ. Pipeline 6 alignments and associated PIZ are an exception: Pipeline 6 is an Existing Project with a certified EIR that has fulfilled its mitigation requirements and obtained its

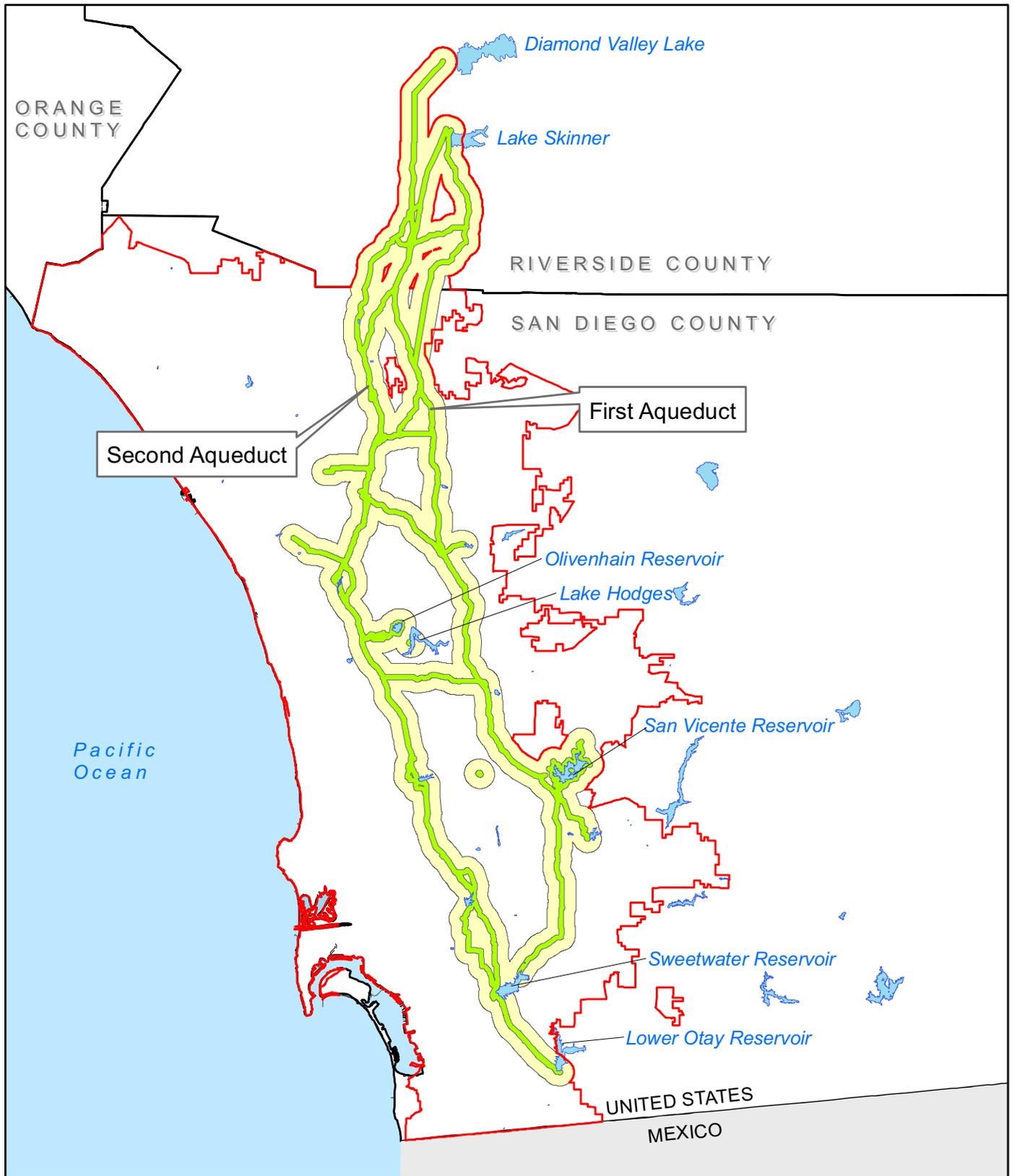
endangered species permits. This Plan includes those alternative alignments in its analysis of potential impacts and will process approval of any Pipeline 6 alignment within Riverside County as a conditionally covered activity under the Minor Amendment process.

2.1.3 Survey Area and Probable Impact Zone (PIZ)

Within the Plan Area, the Water Authority has identified a Survey Area and PIZ within which the majority of covered activities are anticipated to be located and incidental take would occur (Figure 2-1). The Survey Area encompasses existing facilities and lands owned by or under the control of the Water Authority including infrastructure rights-of-way (with and without underlying fee ownership), together with MWD's rights-of-way originating at Lake Skinner and Diamond Valley Reservoir that serve San Diego County, and a one-mile area on each side of rights-of-way and facilities. The Survey Area was delineated as the area within the Plan where the proposed Covered Species' are expected or likely to exist and where take potentially could occur. It is a planning tool used to provide the basis for determining which species would be appropriate for inclusion in the Covered Species list.

The nature of the Water Authority's water supply system dictates that Planned and Future Projects (and O&M Activities) will be mostly located along or close to the system's rights-of-way and other infrastructure. For that reason, the Plan identifies a PIZ in which most of the planned and future impacts are expected to occur. The PIZ includes 1,000 feet on either side of the rights-of-way/facilities. At present, the area of the PIZ is approximately 64,600 acres (approximately six percent of the Plan Area); however, it should be noted that the potential impacts from Covered Activities are expected to be much less (see Section 5.0 for specific descriptions of Covered Activities and Appendix C for the list and maps of Planned Projects).

Planned Projects are expected to impact approximately 71 acres of native vegetation that requires mitigation; nearly all of the project impacts are expected to occur within the PIZ or Survey Area. In addition, Future Projects/Activities and O&M are estimated to impact up to 183 acres of native vegetation within the Survey Area or PIZ that require mitigation. In addition, a potential alternative to Pipeline 6, with impacts up to 119 acres of mitigatable vegetation communities within the Survey Area or PIZ, may be approved and covered under this Plan. In total, this Plan identifies approximately 373 acres of impacts to habitats that require mitigation and may support Covered Species. Pipeline 6 is an Existing Project (discussed in Appendix C, Section 3.1.2) that has addressed its impacts for the current alignment, but that alignment currently is being reevaluated. Although it is probable that a substantial portion of the vegetation impacts associated with an alternative alignment would be temporary, all impacts are assumed to be permanent for the purpose of the Plan's vegetation community impact assessment.



- NCCP/HCP Plan Area
- Probable Impact Zone (PIZ)
- Survey Area



FIGURE 2-1
Survey Area and Probable Impact Zone

Within the approximately 1,920 acres of Preserve Area committed by the Plan, 1,220 acres have been set aside to mitigate previous projects, and approximately 700 acres are available or will be created to be used as credits to compensate project impacts to upland and wetland habitats that result from this Plan.

The rights-of-way may be augmented (e.g., increasing rights-of-way along the aqueducts) from year to year based on acquisition needs for Covered Activities. The Water Authority will maintain and update the boundaries of the rights-of-way and facilities and submit updated maps and acreage along with annual reporting requirements (see Section 6.0).

The Water Authority also acknowledges that some future facilities (i.e., Covered Activities) may be planned and located outside of the PIZ and Survey Area (e.g., water treatment plant together with its conveyance pipeline and pump stations), but within the Plan Area. This Plan requires that such projects be addressed with the Minor Amendment process described in Section 8.0.

2.1.4 Preserve Area and MMAs

The Plan Area includes large, biologically important areas that will be committed by the Plan. The three upland and three wetland HMAs comprise the formal Preserve Area that will be managed for the Covered Species in conformance with this Plan. The MMAs are habitat lands previously conserved by the Water Authority for specific projects and managed by other entities for a limited subset of the Covered Species. Both the Preserve Area and MMAs contribute to the regional conservation efforts in San Diego County (see Figure 1-3 and Appendix K). The Plan covers incidental take of Covered Species that may occur during implementation of approved monitoring and management activities on the Preserve Area, with the exception of State (CDFG) and Federal (USFWS) Preserve Area Managers. Where CDFG and USFWS Preserve Area Managers require incidental take authorizations for monitoring and management activities, such authorizations will be provided through applicable State and Federal regulatory mechanisms.

For the purpose of this Plan, the San Luis Rey River HMA wetland mitigation site is presented as an approximate location and acreage. The exact parcels, or portions of parcels, for the wetland mitigation site that contribute to the Preserve Area will be accounted for as planning proceeds and wetlands are established.

It is anticipated that adding new lands to function as Preserve Area or augmenting (increasing) a specific Preserve Area will be through a Minor Amendment process.

2.2 Future Modifications to the Plan Area

It is anticipated that the Plan Area will need to be modified to reflect Service Area annexations, future facilities, rights-of-way adjustments, additions to the Preserve Area, etc. To amend the Plan to include new lands for coverage under this Plan, it will be necessary to meet criteria identified in Section 8.0 for Major Amendments.