

3.0 Relationship to Other Conservation Plans

3.1 Water Authority NCCP/HCP

The Water Authority began to prepare this Plan in 1995, at a time when other jurisdictions and regional utilities in southern California were preparing NCCP/HCPs in response to recently issued NCCPA and Coastal Sage Scrub Process Guidelines and Conservation Guidelines. Those guidelines presumed that a number of independent planning areas would be established and plans would be prepared to address conservation and management of the coastal sage scrub community. Preparing the plans under the same set of guidelines would establish the mechanism for coordinating these conservation efforts. Subsequent amendments to the NCCPA in 2003 required the Water Authority to prepare its Plan so that it would be comparable to the approved subregional plans in San Diego County. As described in Section 1.0, the Water Authority's Plan was developed to function as an independent permitting process for Water Authority projects and activities (i.e., Covered Activities), but one that is consistent with and complementary to the other plans. This Plan is not a land-use-based plan and does not impose new regulations on local, state, federal, or independent land-use agencies, private citizens, or other parties of interest within the Plan Area.

3.2 Conservation Plans in the Region

The geographical areas covered by other regional conservation plans within the Plan Area are listed in Table 3-1 and illustrated in Figure 3-1.

3.2.1 San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program

The MSCP Subregional Plan, finalized in August 1997, is a comprehensive, long-term habitat conservation plan that addresses multiple species' habitat needs and the preservation of native vegetation in 12 jurisdictions of southwestern San Diego County. The MSCP Subregional Plan encompasses 582,000 acres, establishes a 172,000-acre preserve system, and covers 86 species of plants and animals. The Subregional Plan identifies preserve lands where conservation planning is directed and where permanent conservation of habitat will be accomplished through individual Subarea Plans.

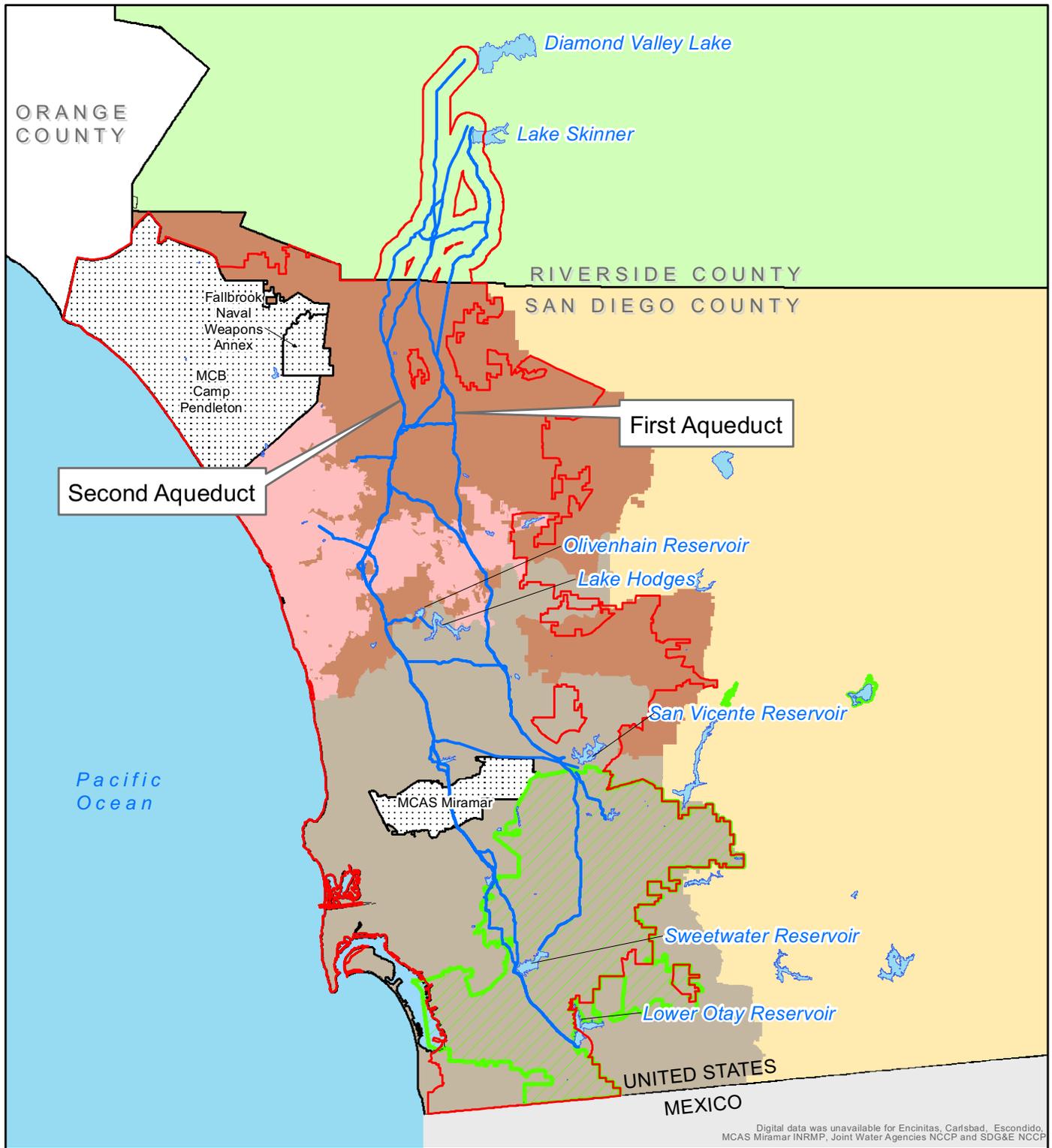
The MSCP Subregional Plan is implemented through local Subarea Plans that are approved or in process as indicated on Table 3-1. The MSCP North County Plan

**TABLE 3-1
CONSERVATION PLANS WITHIN THE PLAN AREA**

Subregional Plan	Abbreviation	Subarea Plans	Status*
Multiple Species Conservation Program	MSCP	City of Chula Vista	Approved 2005
		City of La Mesa	Approved 1999
		City of Poway	Approved 1996
		City of San Diego	Approved 1998
		City of Coronado	No Progress
		City of Del Mar	No Progress
		City of El Cajon	No current progress on draft plan
		City of Santee	In Preparation
		City of National City	N/A [†]
		City of Imperial Beach	N/A
Draft MSCP North County_Plan		City of Lemon Grove	N/A
		South County Subarea Plan	Approved 1998 In Preparation
Draft MSCP East County_Plan			Early Planning
North County Multiple Habitat Conservation Plan	MHCP	City of Carlsbad	Approved 2004
		City of Encinitas	In Preparation
		City of Escondido	In Preparation
		City of Oceanside	In Preparation
		City of San Marcos	In Preparation
		City of Solana Beach	No Progress
		City of Vista	In Preparation
Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan	MSHCP	None	Approved 2004
Joint Water Agency Subregional Conservation Plan	JWA NCCP/HCP	Helix Water District	In Preparation
		Padre Dam Municipal Water District	In Preparation
		Sweetwater Authority	In Preparation
		Otay Water District	In Preparation
San Diego Gas & Electric Subregional NCCP	SDG&E NCCP	None	Approved 1995

* Current NCCP status can be accessed at: www.dfg.ca.gov/habcon/nccp/status.html

[†] Indicates jurisdictions that are not participating in the subregional plan.



Digital data was unavailable for Encinitas, Carlsbad, Escondido, MCAS Miramar INRMP, Joint Water Agencies NCCP and SDG&E NCCP



* based on available digital data

FIGURE 3-1
Conservation Plan Boundaries
in the NCCP/HCP Plan Area

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is currently in preparation to cover unincorporated areas of San Diego County north of the San Dieguito River, Elfin Forest and Harmony Grove, northeast of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton (Camp Pendleton), DeLuz, Fallbrook, Rainbow, Pauma Valley, Lilac, Valley Center, Rancho Guejito, and the majority of Ramona. The MSCP East County Plan, much of which is outside this Plan Area, is in the early planning process to cover unincorporated areas of San Diego County east of the MSCP and MSCP North County Plan areas.

3.2.2 San Diego Multiple Habitat Conservation Program

The MHCP is a conservation planning program covering seven municipal jurisdictions of northwestern San Diego County: Carlsbad, Encinitas, Escondido, Oceanside, San Marcos, Solana Beach, and Vista. The MHCP Subregional Plan was adopted by SANDAG in 2003. Its goal is to conserve approximately 19,000 acres of habitat, of which roughly 8,800 acres (46 percent) are already in public ownership and contribute toward the habitat preserve system for the protection of 56 covered species, 19 of which are narrow endemics. The MHCP has identified Focused Planning Areas (FPA) where permanent conservation of resources for covered species and their habitats will be accomplished. Each jurisdiction is responsible for developing their own Subarea Plan, and each Subarea Plan has specific covered species and narrow endemic species lists.

3.2.3 Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan

The Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) is a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional habitat conservation plan focusing on conservation of species and their associated habitats in western Riverside County. The MSHCP was approved by the Wildlife Agencies in 2004. A total of 146 sensitive plant and wildlife species are covered under the plan. Of that total, 118 species are considered to be adequately conserved under the MSHCP; the remaining 28 species are conditionally covered. Sixteen plant species are classified as narrow endemic species. The MSHCP plan area encompasses approximately 1.26 million acres (1,966 square miles); it includes all unincorporated Riverside County land west of the crest of the San Jacinto Mountains to the Orange County line, as well as the jurisdictional areas of the cities of Temecula, Murrieta, Lake Elsinore, Canyon Lake, Norco, Corona, Riverside, Moreno Valley, Banning, Beaumont, Calimesa, Perris, Hemet, and San Jacinto. The county of Riverside has prepared individual preserve plans for each region within the county to guide implementation of the MSHCP. The MSHCP Conservation Area includes approximately 347,000 acres on existing Public/Quasi-Public Lands, and approximately 153,000 acres of Additional Reserve Lands (RCIP 2003).

3.2.4 Joint Water Agencies NCCP/HCP

The JWA draft NCCP/HCP describes how the Padre Dam Municipal Water District, the Helix Water District, the Sweetwater Authority, and the Otay Water District will manage their lands to conserve natural habitats and species while continuing to provide their mandated water services. The JWA plan addresses 50 animal species and 28 plant species, for a total of 78 species. The Subregional Plan will serve as an umbrella document for the Subarea Plans of these water districts and any water districts approved to participate in the future. A series of public workshops were held in summer 2004, and input from independent scientists was completed in late 2006 (State of California 2006c).

3.2.5 San Diego Gas & Electric NCCP/HCP

San Diego Gas & Electric's (SDG&E's) NCCP/HCP was approved in 1995 and addresses potential impacts to sensitive resources associated with SDG&E's ongoing installation, use, maintenance, and repair of its gas and electric systems, and typical expansion to those systems throughout SDG&E's easements in their existing service area (San Diego and southern Orange counties). The SDG&E NCCP/HCP includes mitigation measures and operational protocols designed to avoid potential impacts to biological resources. In addition, appropriate mitigation is provided to ensure the protection and conservation of covered species where impacts are unavoidable (SDG&E 1995). SDG&E's properties and easements play an important role in the plan region in providing habitat connectivity in areas where little natural habitat remains. The SDG&E NCCP/HCP covers 110 species, 18 of which are considered narrow endemic species. The SDG&E NCCP/HCP allows for up to 400 acres of impacts in natural areas over the 50-year permit period. A 240-acre mitigation bank, from which mitigation credits are deducted, was established at the inception of the plan. SDG&E has recently completed an amendment to their federal HCP permit (not the NCCP) to add the quino checkerspot butterfly as a covered species.

3.2.6 Assessment District 161 Multiple Species Subregional Habitat Conservation Plan

Multiple jurisdictions as well as private entities are participants in the Assessment District 161 (AD161) Multiple Species Subregional Habitat Conservation Plan associated with the buildout of residential, commercial and light industrial facilities, schools, parks, associated infra-structure, and public projects in western Riverside County. A key goal of this plan is to maintain linkages between the Lake Skinner Core and the Lake Mathews multiple species reserve system and ensure a regional preserve design in western Riverside County. The AD161 plan covers 21 species and addresses impacts to 2,028 acres of suitable habitat (including coastal sage scrub, chaparral, coast live oak woodland, riparian habitat, stream bed, non-native grassland, eucalyptus woodland, and agricultural land) for the covered species. Mitigation for impacts to covered species

include the conservation of 1,450 acres within the plan area. Many of these acres are occupied by species proposed for coverage under the plan.

3.3 Coordination within Military Lands

It is the intent of this Plan to provide conservation and management for impacts by Covered Activities to Covered Species and their habitats, including where those activities occur on military lands. Recognizing that military lands are managed independently from this Plan, the Water Authority expects that compliance with implementing the Plan's requirements will be consistent with species and habitat requirements in the resource management plans for military installations, but those installations may impose additional mitigation measures at their discretion in addition to what is required by this Plan. Military lands within the Water Authority Plan Area include Camp Pendleton, Fallbrook Naval Weapons Station, and MCAS Miramar. There are currently no Water Authority facilities on Camp Pendleton or the Fallbrook Naval Weapons Station. Potential future projects include an agreement to build 15,000 feet of pipeline, which may be constructed by Camp Pendleton under their Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP). The Second Aqueduct crosses MCAS Miramar. Military installations support important natural resource areas and are unique in their land uses since they conduct a variety of operation and training exercises.

Camp Pendleton, Fallbrook Naval Weapons Station, and MCAS Miramar are required to coordinate with USFWS to integrate resource management needs with military missions/mandates. MCAS Miramar must implement its INRMP, which was last updated in 2006. To ensure continued ability to provide a safe and reliable water supply, while ensuring compatibility with military operations, the Water Authority will continue to coordinate its Covered Activities with MCAS Miramar and Camp Pendleton.

In general, temporary impacts associated with activities at existing Water Authority facilities that occur on military lands would be minimized by restoration of disturbed areas. Permanent impacts will be mitigated off-site at a Water Authority Preserve Area established for off-site mitigation or through project-specific mitigation, in consultation with MCAS Miramar and Camp Pendleton.

3.4 Coordination within Preserve Lands

The Water Authority has operated facilities in San Diego County since 1944. The majority of Water Authority facilities pre-date the NCCP/HCP planning efforts within San Diego and Riverside counties. Some facilities and rights-of-way, predominantly pipelines, are located within habitat areas that subsequently have been designated as preserve lands by other entities as part of their HCPs. Those plans acknowledge that

regional public facilities, including roads, landfills, and other infrastructure (e.g., public water systems), would be incorporated in such a way to allow the preserve lands to function. This Plan includes commitments and specific measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate for impacts to all habitat lands, whether part of this Plan or other plans (see Sections 6.4 and 6.5).

This Plan designates a Preserve Area and MMAs that were acquired by the Water Authority as mitigation for prior, Existing, and Planned Projects. All of the habitat in the MMAs has been used to mitigate past projects; some of the HMA's in the Preserve Area have used a portion of their habitats for past projects but have residual habitat credits; only the San Luis Rey and Tijuana HMA's have not used any portion of their (future) habitat for past projects. All of these lands provide for conservation and management of Covered Species and their habitat in addition to the mitigation areas. The Water Authority maintains a ledger for each Preserve Area to track the amount of compensation (typically measured in acres of habitat) assigned to past and existing projects against the total compensation provided by the individual Preserve Area. This tracking system prevents an over allocation of a given habitat type or vegetation tier, and this information will be reported to the Wildlife Agencies on an annual basis. This Plan identifies potential impacts by Covered Activities (primarily new facilities construction) to existing preserve lands, provides an analysis to assess impacts to all habitats throughout the Plan Area, and identifies avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures to reduce and compensate for those impacts. The Water Authority will avoid and/or minimize impacts to existing preserve lands to the maximum extent feasible. However, improvements and/or repairs to existing facilities located within preserve lands are periodically required for the Water Authority to conduct its mission.

This Plan identifies and describes mitigation guidelines and ratios for impacts to all covered habitat impacts in Section 6.0. Similar to other plans in southern California, the mitigation obligation varies with the sensitivity of the habitat (vegetation) type and its location. The mitigation obligations are comparable to those plans.

3.4.1 Temporary Impacts in Preserve Lands

Water Authority Covered Activities are expected to cause temporary impacts within some of the preserve lands that have been or will be established by the regional conservation plans. Temporary impacts may be a one-time disturbance during construction or a repeated disturbance during routine O&M activities within rights-of-way and around facilities. In areas where one-time temporary impacts occur, the Water Authority would restore the area to its original condition; native species will be used except in locations where the surrounding area is landscaped with non-native species. If the Water Authority determines there will be repeated disturbances to an area, the Water Authority may treat the area of repeated disturbance as a permanent impact and mitigate off-site by debiting from a Water Authority Preserve Area established for that

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purpose. Future impacts to the same area will be revegetated on-site with no additional requirement for off-site mitigation. The Water Authority will then be limited to conducting on-site revegetation for subsequent disturbances. The decision to classify a disturbance as repeated will be made by the Water Authority on a case-by-case basis taking into account known future activities at that same location.

Revegetation and other measures pertaining to minimization and mitigation within preserve lands are outlined in Section 6.0. Verification that the post-project condition meets conservation goals and success criteria will be determined by the Water Authority, and success outcome documented in the annual report.

3.4.2 Permanent Impacts in Preserve Lands

Water Authority Covered Activities will be planned to avoid permanent impacts to preserve lands to the maximum extent feasible. The MSCP and MHCP Subregional Plans identify linear utilities' infrastructure, including support facilities, as being conditionally compatible with preserve lands designations (County of San Diego MSCP Plan, Section 1.9; City of San Diego MSCP, Section 1.4.1). Consistent with other plans, this Plan defines compatible uses as those that will not permanently interfere with the preserve lands, linkage system, and biological resources, including Covered Species and habitats. If the extent and type of impacts would not significantly threaten the integrity of the preserve lands or biological resources, then the facilities are compatible. Incompatible uses are those that will result in significant, unmitigable impacts to preserve lands. As noted in Section 2.1.2, except for Pipeline 6, Covered Activities in Riverside County will be processed as Major Amendments.

This Plan identifies subsurface pipelines, expansions of existing surface storage or water management facilities, and new, localized impact surface facilities, including new enclosed storage, pumping, or confined water management facilities, as compatible Covered Activities when undertaken in accordance with the impact avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures outlined in Section 6.0. New surface storage facilities and surface conveyance systems are potentially incompatible within preserve lands. To determine that a Covered Activity is compatible, the Water Authority must demonstrate to the Wildlife Agencies that surface facilities will not permanently:

- Impact the preserve lands and cause a significant reduction in the population size/extent of a Covered Species identified in this Plan or another plan;
- Block or otherwise substantially impair the connectivity of habitats for wildlife movement or genetic exchange by a Covered Species as anticipated with the initial preserve system design;

- Reduce or jeopardize the continued existence of a Covered Species or other federal or state listed species, including impacting the ability of a core population of a species to breed, forage, or find shelter; or,
- Substantially interfere with the goals of the preserve management or planned enhancement of a Covered Species within preserve lands.

The Water Authority will make a compatibility determination based on the criteria above and submit it to the Wildlife Agencies for their concurrence before the project can be implemented as a Minor Amendment (Section 8.3) or Major Amendment (Section 8.4). To achieve compatibility, avoidance and minimization measures may be taken either during project design or, if biologically appropriate, as mitigation through deductions from a Preserve Area established for that purpose or by acquiring mitigation/conservation land that will be permanently conserved and managed. On-site avoidance/minimization measures and habitat-based mitigation measures are discussed in Section 6.0. Species-specific mitigation measures and conditions are presented in the Conservation Analysis (Appendix B).

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