



Vegetation

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Native habitat for plants and animals endemic to this area that make up such important part of our natural heritage now have interconnected spaces in a number of locations that allow these natural communities to prosper and be sustained.

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– RCIP Vision Statement

The vegetation/flora of Riverside County is exceedingly diverse in its size, shape and form, yet various species share a common unity in their adaptation to climate and environmental conditions. Further, habitat areas are strongly characterized by flora, in addition to the fauna/animal life, that thrives within the vegetation. Although ecological conditions may fluctuate and affect various plant communities, these natural changes occur gradually, with most species adapting by changing their physical form and structure. Over thousands of years, both the landscape and the plants upon it have slowly evolved together, so that those plant species with the best record of survival in a specific setting have usually become the most prominent identifying characteristics of that setting.

As development continues in the County, the natural succession and evolution of vegetation is altered. This disturbance of vegetation results in changes that are often drastic in wildlife habitats, microclimates, water absorption and purification, soil erosion, fires, and aesthetic quality. The management of vegetation will assure the continued viability of habitat communities within the County for present and future generations. See Figure OS-4, Western Riverside County Vegetation, for a map of those vegetation types in the western portion of the County.

Native vegetation must be managed in order to maintain the ecological diversity of the County. The policies that follow are intended to protect superior examples of native vegetation resources in conjunction with permitted uses.

Policies:

- OS 9.1 Update the Vegetation Map for Western Riverside County in consultation with the California Department of Fish and Game, the Natural Diversity Data Base, the United States Forest Service, and other knowledgeable agencies. The County shall also provide these agencies with data as needed. (AI 11)
- OS 9.2 Expand Vegetation mapping to include the eastern portion of the County of Riverside. (AI 11)
- OS 9.3 Maintain and conserve superior examples of native trees, natural vegetation, stands of established trees, and other features for ecosystem, aesthetic, and water conservation purposes. (AI 3, 79)
- OS 9.4 Conserve the oak tree resources in the County. (AI 3, 78)
- OS 9.5 Encourage research and education on the effects of smog and other forms of pollution on human health and on natural vegetation.
- OS 9.6 Conserve important traditional Native American plant gathering resource areas.*



CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES



The California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) contains information from surveys of archaeological and cultural resources as well as the built environments. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) coordinates a statewide network of Information Centers that manage and make available survey information for environmental review, planning, and research needs.



A major thrust of the multipurpose open space system is the preservation of components of the ecosystem and landscape that embody the historic character and habitat of the County, even though some areas have been impacted by man-made changes.



- RCIP Vision Statement

Cultural resources consist of places (historic and prehistoric archaeological sites), structures or objects that provide evidence of past human activity. They are important for scientific, historic, and/or religious reasons to cultures, communities, groups or individuals. The cultural history of Riverside County is divided chronologically into ~~three~~ two primary time periods: ~~prehistory,~~ ~~ethnohistory and history~~ prehistoric and historic. Pre-contact Native American cultures predominate in the prehistorical and ethnohistorical periods of County history, including the Early Archaic through Contact or Early Historic Periods, consisting of approximately 10,000 years of cultural history in the region. Local Native American cultures continue to flourish in the County. The County is rich with archaeological sites from the prehistoric periods, and many areas within the County have a high sensitivity for finding archaeological sites associated with the First Nations peoples. In some areas, archaeological cultural deposits from older time periods have been found below those from younger time periods demonstrating lengthy and repeated prehistoric occupation in certain areas. The Relative Archaeological Sensitivity of Diverse Landscapes in the County has been mapped and is shown in Figure OS-6. Three classifications have been used: high, undetermined, and low. Properties with high potential include those listed or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The historical period includes settlement from 1774, with the expedition of Juan Bautista de Anza into the region, to 45 years before the present as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). An initial inventory of Historical Resources in the County has been completed and mapped in the 1980s, as shown in Figure OS-7 6.

Riverside County has also been inventoried for geologic formations known to potentially contain paleontological resources. Paleontological resources are the fossilized biotic remains of ancient environments. They are valued for the information they yield about the history of the earth and its past ecological settings. Lands with low, undetermined or high potential for finding paleontological resources are mapped on Figure OS-8 7, the Paleontological Sensitivity Resources map. This map is used in the environmental assessment of development proposals and the determination of required impact mitigation. Riverside County has an extensive record of fossil life starting in Jurassic time, 150 million years ago.



~~Figure OS-6 Relative Archaeological Sensitivity of Diverse Landscapes~~

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Figure OS-7 6 Historical Resources



Policies follow that are intended to ensure the preservation of cultural, historical, archaeological, paleontological, geological, and educational resources in the County.

Policies:

~~OS 19.1 — Make available programs that educate students about the rich natural and manmade environment of the County, and offer them to local schools. (AI 3, 75, 76)~~

The following policies address cultural resources:

~~OS 19.1~~ OS 19.1 Review all proposed development for the possibility of archaeological sensitivity. (AI 3)

~~OS 19.3 — Employ procedures to protect the confidentiality and prevent inappropriate public exposure of sensitive archaeological resources when soliciting the assistance of public and volunteer organizations.~~

~~OS 19.4 — Require a Native American Statement as part of the environmental review process on development projects with identified cultural resources.~~

OS 19.2 The County of Riverside shall develop and adopt appropriate policies and implementation guidelines to address cultural resources issues. (AI 75, xx-a, xx-b)

OS 19.3 Cultural resources (both prehistoric and historic) are a valued part of the history of the County of Riverside.

OS 19.4 Significant and unique cultural resources shall be avoided and preserved to the extent possible through a variety of methods and tools.

OS 19.5 The County shall exercise sensitivity and respect for human remains from both prehistoric and historic contexts.

OS 19.6 Cultural Resources are important to consider in promoting historic tourism, preservation goals, creation of open space, and other County goals and programs.

The following policies pertain to historical resources:

~~OS 19.7~~ OS 19.7 Transmit significant development proposals to the History Division of the Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District for evaluation in relation to the destruction/preservation of potential historical sites. Prior to approval of any development proposal, feasible mitigation shall be incorporated into the design of the project and its conditions of approval.

~~OS 19.6 — Enforce the Historic Building Code so that historical buildings can be preserved and used without posing a hazard to public safety.~~



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OS ~~19.7~~19.8 When possible, allocate resources and/or tax credits to prioritize retrofit of County historic structures, which are irreplaceable. (AI xx-f)

OS 19.9 The County shall adopt a County-wide Historic Preservation Ordinance to provide criteria and procedures for historic and cultural resources identification, evaluation, and protection. (AI xx-c)

OS 19.10 The County shall adopt a County-wide Historic Preservation Plan. (AI xx-d)

OS 19.11 The County shall implement the Historic Building Code whenever beneficial preservation goals can be achieved. (AI xx-e)

The following policies provide direction for paleontological resources:

OS ~~19.8~~19.12 Whenever existing information indicates that a site proposed for development may contain biological, paleontological, or other scientific resources, a report shall be filed stating the extent and potential significance of the resources that may exist within the proposed development and appropriate measures through which the impacts of development may be mitigated.

OS ~~19.9~~19.13 This policy requires that when existing information indicates that a site proposed for development may contain paleontological resources, a paleontologist shall monitor site grading activities, with the authority to halt grading to collect uncovered paleontological resources, curate any resources collected with an appropriate repository, and file a report with the Planning Department documenting any paleontological resources that are found during the course of site grading.

OS ~~19.10~~19.14 Transmit significant development applications subject to CEQA to the San Bernardino County Museum for review, comment, and/or preparation of recommended conditions of approval with regard to paleontological resources.



Three million years ago, the white sand beach at the edge of the Pacific Ocean was located near the present Interstate 15/State Route 91 interchange. The Ice Ages left fossils of giant sloths, elephants, camels, and bison that were preyed upon by giant bear, American lion and sabercats. Their remains lie waiting a few feet below the surface to be unearthed by construction excavation.