

# **Western Riverside County MSHCP/NCCP Best Practices**

**SCAG Open Space Conservation Working Group  
February 19, 2015**

*Preserving our open space heritage • Protecting our economy • Building our future*



# Outline

1. **Mission**
2. **Plan History**
3. **Implementation**
4. **Funding**
5. **Management**
6. **Monitoring**
7. **Successes**



Cachia Property – Tenaja Corridor

# Mission

- Joint Powers Authority comprised of the 18 western cities and Riverside County
- Permittees also include Caltrans and RCTC
- -MSHCP protects 146 native species
- Preserves half a million acres of habitat for those species
- *Allows transportation and development infrastructure, necessary for a healthy economy, to move ahead without sacrificing our region's environment and quality of life*

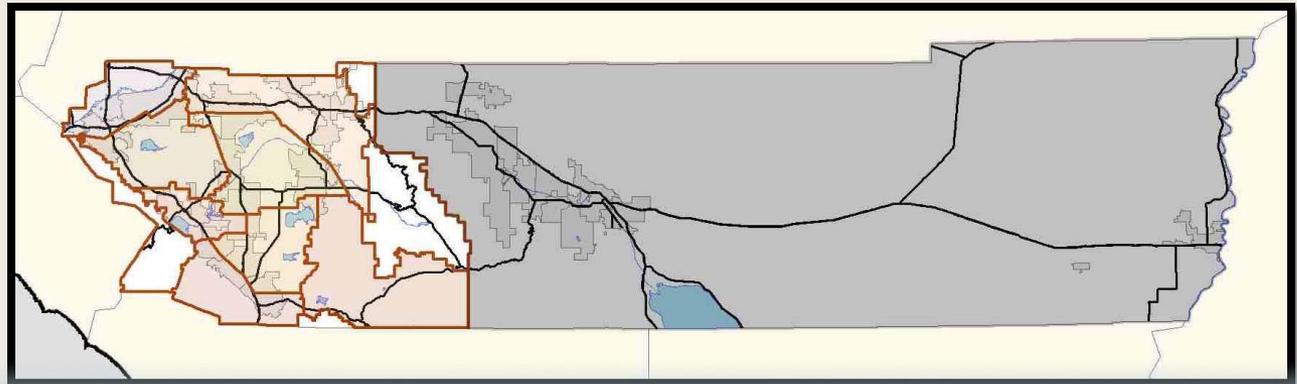


# History - Riverside County Integrated Project

- Initiated by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors
- Recognition that land use and infrastructure decisions were driven by environmental issues, especially endangered and threatened species rules
- Addresses environmental issues as a component of land use and infrastructure planning
- Three part integrated program the Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP)
  - Transportation
  - Land Use (General Plan)
  - Habitat Conservation (MSHCP)

# Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan

- Linchpin to the Riverside County Integrated Plan
- Adopted in June 2003
- Federal and State Permits issued in June 2004; 75 year plan
- Supported by County of Riverside and all 14 (now 18) western Riverside County Cities
- Partners include: Flood Control District, RCTC, Waste Management, Park and Open-Space District, Caltrans, State Parks



# Why a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP)?

- Needed infrastructure is able to be built
- Development is not fragmented
- Open space is not fragmented
- The most effective way to deal with thousands of parcels
- Habitat is not slowly strangled by cumulative edge effects
- Provides buy-in from diverse stakeholders
  - Certainty in transportation, infrastructure and development
  - Certainty in preservation

# The Basics

- Seeks conservation of 500,000 acres
  - 347,000 acres already conserved (PQP)
  - 153,000 acres of Additional Reserve Lands (ARL) – acquired from private property owners
- Covers “take” of 146 plant and animal species
- Criteria Based – no hard line maps
  - Criteria Area is 300,000 acres – 153,000 acres of ARL is carved out of the Criteria Area
  - Conservation is described – as opposed to mapped - to allow flexibility



# Objectives

- Addresses cumulative impacts to biological resources to expedite infrastructure to serve growing region
- Protects biological resources
- Provides advanced mitigation for infrastructure projects within the plan
- Provides flexibility in Reserve Assembly – thousands of parcels are affected
- Provides local control of permitting process – Federal and State permits grant authority to “take” species

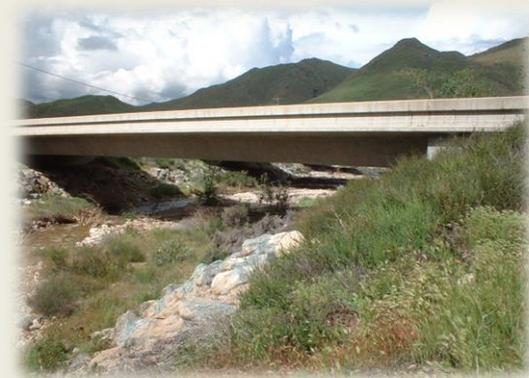


# What the MSHCP Provides

- Allows all covered public infrastructure projects to proceed inside the Criteria Area
- Allows all public and private projects outside the Criteria Area to proceed without delays associated with listed species
- Compliance with the Plan provides all species related mitigation for project State CEQA documents
- Allows all single-family home construction with no Plan compliance (one lot, one house)
- Allows hiking, horseback riding and other recreation on designated trails and designated areas

# Transportation Coverage

- Provides coverage for all existing roads, highways and freeways to ultimate build-out (Four categories)
  - Freeways (I-10, I-15, I-215, SR-60 and SR-91)
  - General Plan Circulation Element Roads
  - SR-79 North Corridor
  - CETAP Corridors
- New facilities are Covered if identified in the Plan
- Maintenance activities are listed and Covered under the Plan
- Streamlines Section 7 Consultation and Mitigation Requirements
- RCTC Mitigation: \$121 million
- Caltrans Mitigation: 3,000 acres (\$32 million STIP/RIP and \$9.6 million endowment)



# Covered Species

## 33 Federal or State Listed Species

### BIRDS

Bald Eagle  
Coastal California gnatcatcher  
Least Bell's vireo  
Golden Eagle  
Peregrine falcon  
Southwestern willow flycatcher  
Swainson's hawk  
Western yellow-billed cuckoo  
White-tailed kite

### MAMMALS

Stephens' kangaroo rat  
San Bernardino kangaroo rat  
San Bernardino flying squirrel\*

### INVERTEBRATES

Riverside fairy shrimp  
Vernal pool fairy shrimp  
Delhi Sands flower-loving fly  
Quino checkerspot

### REPTILES

Southern rubber boa

### AMPHIBIANS

Arroyo toad  
California red-legged frog  
Mountain yellow legged frog

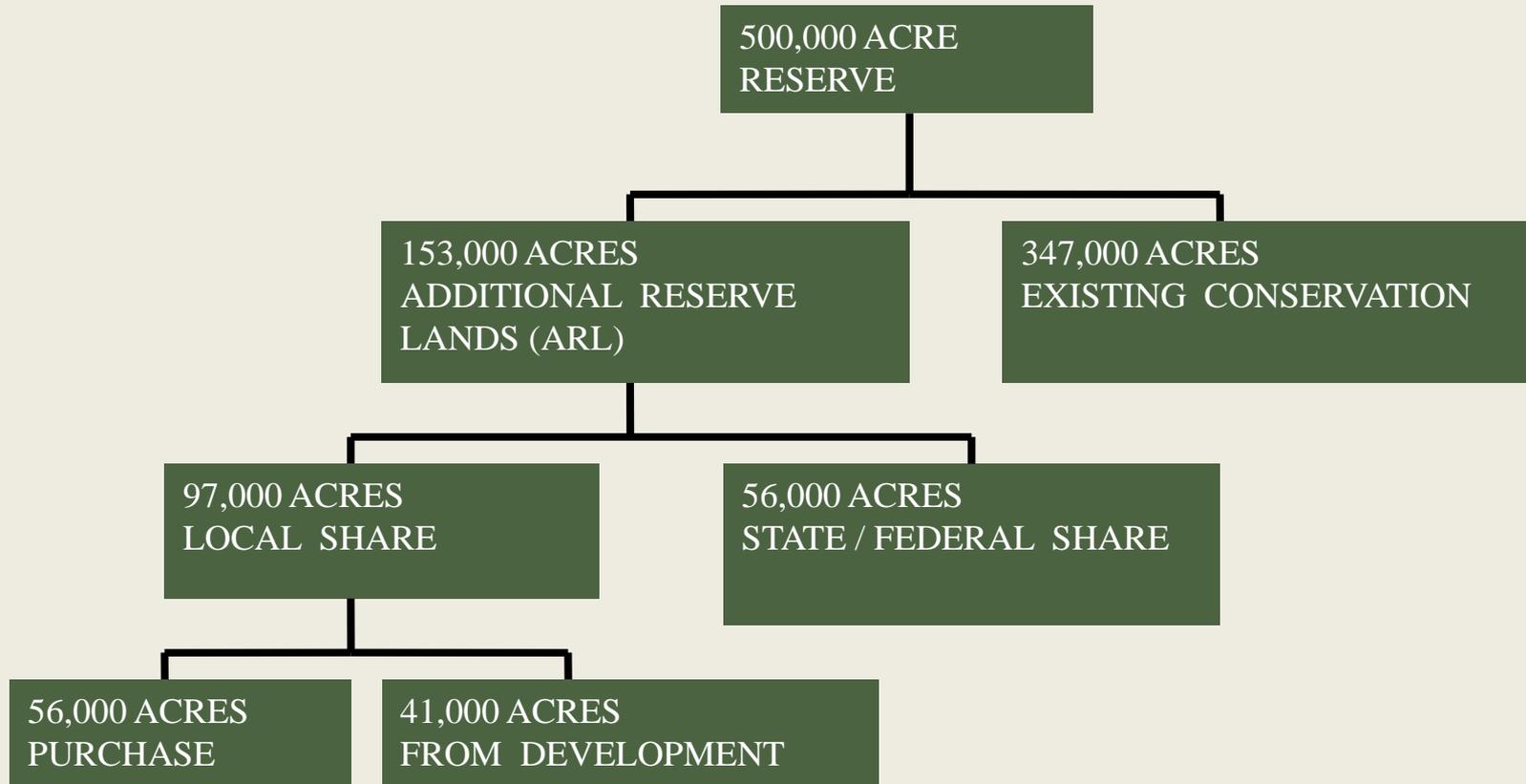
### FISH

Santa Ana sucker

### PLANTS

California orcutt grass  
Mojave tarplant  
Munz's onion  
Nevin's barberry  
Parish's meadowfoam  
San Diego ambrosia  
San Diego button-celery  
San Jacinto Valley crownscale  
Santa Ana River woollystar  
Slender-horned spine flower  
Spreading navarretia  
Thread-leaved brodiaea  
Vail Lake ceanothus

# Obligations



# Obligation / Status

## 2000 – January 26, 2015

	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>LOCAL *</b>	<b>STATE / FED</b>
<b>ARL OBLIGATION</b>	153,000	97,000	56,000
<b>ARL TO DATE</b>	48,774	31,152	17,622
<b>REMAINING OBLIGATION</b>	104,226	65,848	38,378

\* Plan anticipated 41,000 acres would be assembled through the City/County Development Process



# Key Implementation Processes

## Permittee Processes

- HANS (Habitat Acquisition and Negotiation Strategy)

## Permittee and RCA Processes

- Joint Project Review (JPR)
- Criteria Refinement
- Minor Amendment
- Major Amendment
- Public Quasi Public (PQP) Land Replacement



# Acquisition Challenges

- Balancing Reserve Assembly
- Joint Project Reviews (JPRs) – Full Conservation – required to purchase
- Rough Step requirements
- Development pressure
- Funding Availability
- Best Practice; Approach willing sellers early



# Other Implementation Lessons Learned

- Even with highly successful plans, subjective interpretation of the plan will lead to conflict
  - Most plans are written as compromises
- Revenue cycles may not be tied to plan requirements
- A criteria-based plan requires extensive understanding of plan objectives
  - Flexibility is critical
- Continuing to remind stakeholders why you made the plan is a must do
  - Newsletters, meetings

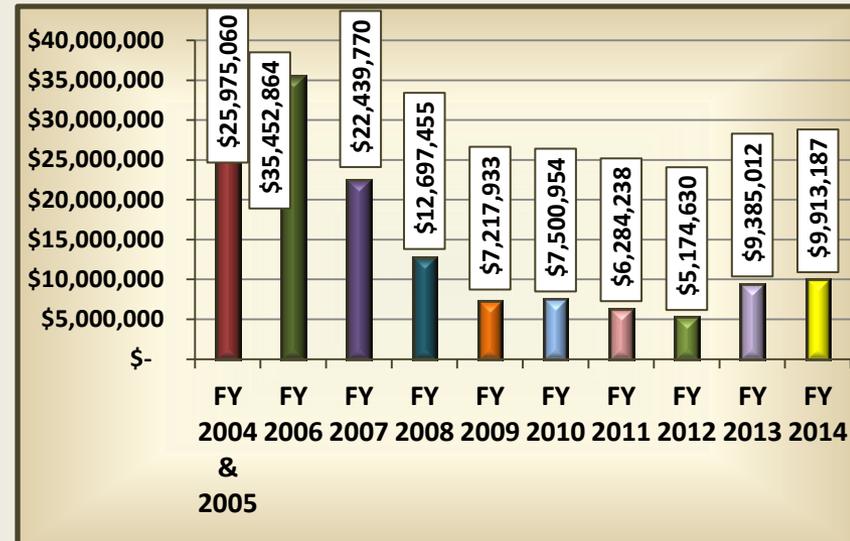


# Funding Sources

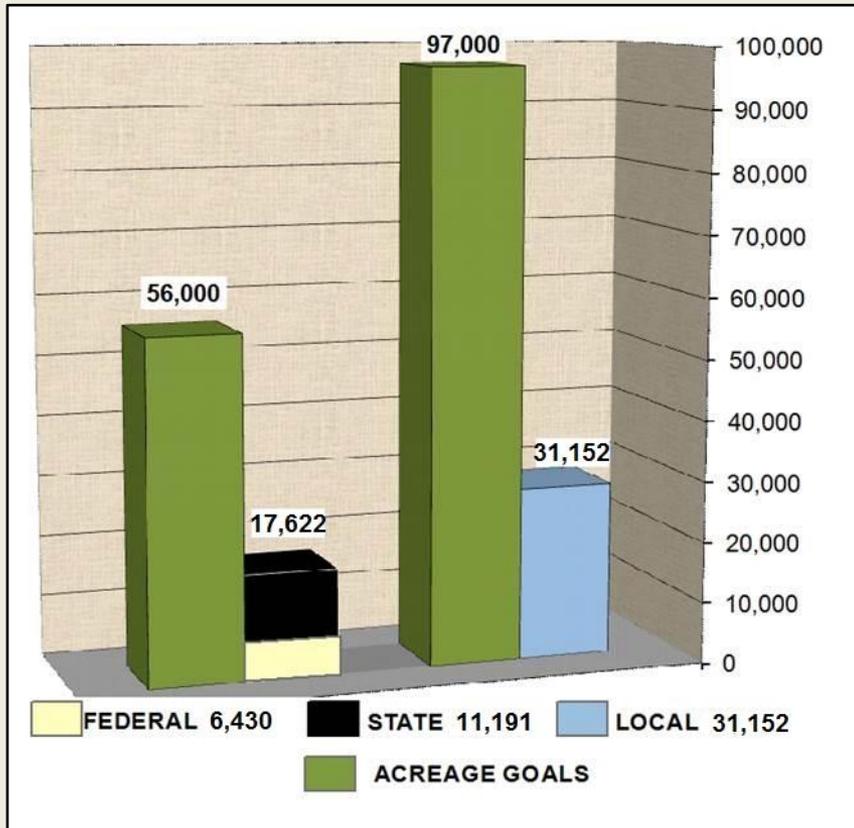
- Shared acquisition: 2/3 Local, 1/3 State and Federal
- Local Funding
  - Development mitigation fees
  - Landfill tipping fees
  - Infrastructure contribution – Measure A, TUMF (5%), Flood Control (3%), other (5% or per acre fee)
  - Other public facilities (libraries, parks, etc.)
  - Participating Special Entities (i.e., Utilities)
- Federal Funding – Section 6 (HCP) only

# Funding Challenges

- Issues
  - Required 100% Acquisitions must come first
  - Have to stay in Rough Step
  - Development Pressures
  - Limited Funding Availability
- Lessons/Best Practices
  - Prioritize acquisitions
  - Look for other partners
  - Be flexible within your priorities
  - Use any opportunities to acquire “gems”

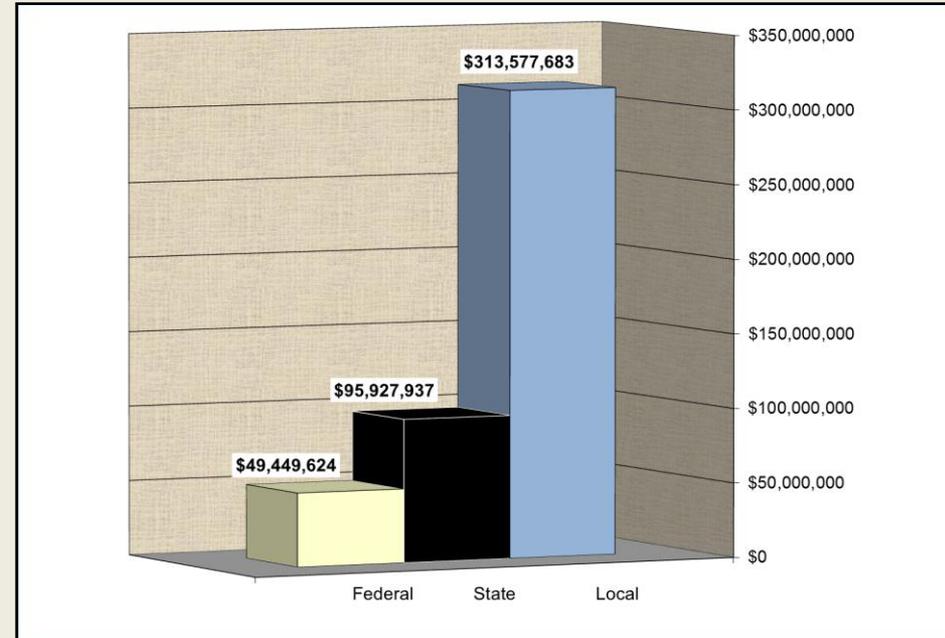


## Acres Conserved



Total Acres Conserved 48,774

## Funding Expended

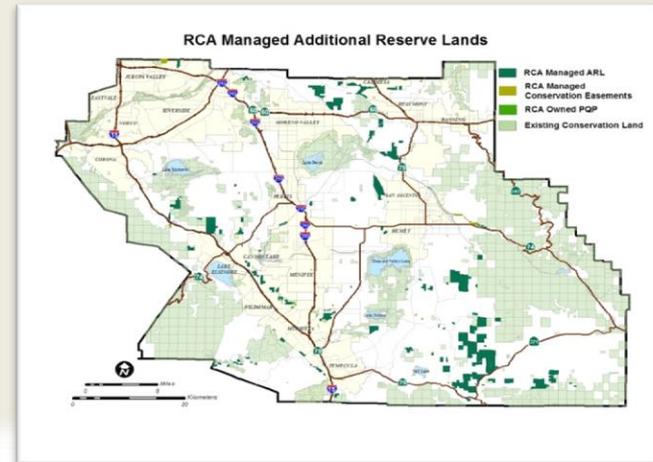


Total Funding Expended \$458,955,244



# Management/Monitoring

Total Reserve comprises 400,000 acres now; RCA currently manages 30,000 acres



“To protect, restore and enhance habitats and the populations of native plants and animals of western Riverside County.”

# MSHCP Reserve Management

- RCA manages all lands owned in fee title or under conservation easement
- Initial Management Evaluation Reports (IMER) conducted on all new property
- Property Protection/Security
  - Fencing, gates
  - OHV use
  - Vandalism
  - Dumping
- Current focus is on Habitat Management Plan development
  - Target Species
  - Vegetation management
    - (fire, mowing, grazing)
  - Adaptive Management



# Monitoring Program

A full time monitoring crew of biologists performs surveys throughout the year. All 146 species have had focused surveys conducted by the Monitoring Program or partnering agencies, and/or have been incidentally observed:

- 8 year monitoring cycle – some species more frequently (annual or more)
- A total of 141 of 146 species have been detected in the Conservation Area
- Focused surveys by Monitoring Program have detected 130 species
- Focused surveys have been conducted by partnering agencies for 3 additional species [e.g., SB flying squirrel (U.S. Forest Service)]
- Another 8 species have been detected incidentally



Spreading navarretia



Granite spiny lizard



Yellow-breasted chat



White-tailed kite



Long-tailed weasel

# Monitoring Program Challenges

- Scheduling and prioritization of manpower for 146 species
  - more than any other HCP in the U.S.
- Most 146 species have their own “species-specific” target objective
- Each species has different monitoring/success criteria

# Monitoring Program Successes

- Completed baseline inventory of 146 Covered Species
- Continuing to conduct monitoring activities for all Covered Species



# Summary of Major Projects Expedited Under the MSHCP

- New Metrolink rail line
- Two new freeways
- Six major freeway widening projects
- Five major highway widening projects
- Over a dozen freeway and highway interchange projects
- Major dam remediation
- Five major power distribution projects
- Water distribution projects
- Dozens of regional road improvements

# Major Projects Expedited under the MSHCP

- Hwy 91 CIP
- I-215 Widening – I-15 to Scott Rd
- I-215 Widening Scott to Nuevo
- State Route 79/I-15 Interchange
- State Route 79- Hunter Rd to Thompson Rd
- State Route 79 – Thompson Rd to Domenigoni Pkwy
- Scott Road Widening – Antelope to Briggs
- Clinton Keith Rd/I-15 Interchange
- Clinton Keith Rd/I-215 Interchange
- Scott Road/I-215 Interchange
- Bundy Canyon/Scott Rd – I-215 to I-15
- French Valley Parkway/I-15 Interchange
- Van Buren Blvd Bridge at Santa Ana River
- Van Buren Blvd/Hwy 91 Interchange
- Magnolia Ave/Hwy/91 Interchange
- Clinton Keith Extension – I-215 to SR 79
- Nason Ave/Hwy 60 Overcrossing
- Railroad Canyon Rd/Franklin St/I-15 Interchange
- River Road Bridge at Santa Ana River
- Calico Rd/I-15 Interchange
- Potrero Ave/Hwy 60 Interchange
- I-215/State Route 74 Interchange
- Hwy 91 Eastbound lane addition
- 60/91/215 East Junction
- Hwy 91/Green River Dr. Interchange
- Green River Drive
- Auto Center Drive grade separation
- Clay Street grade separation
- SR 71/Hwy 91 Interchange
- Perris Valley Rail Line
- Meadowlark Road Extension
- Ramona Expressway Widening
- Overland Drive Extension & Bridge

\*list does not include all projects

# Major Plan Successes

- Developed a comprehensive plan that ensures species habitat, development and infrastructure are holistically addressed
- Acquired over 48,000 additional acres to date
- Another 10,000+ acres has been conditioned through the land development process to be dedicated for conservation
- Facilitated Permittee projects, while restoring habitat, by using RCA properties for mitigation/restoration projects
- Total reserve is now over 400,000 acres

# Questions?