

**STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS**  
**San Luis Rey River Park Master Plan**  
**San Diego, California**  
**State Clearinghouse Number 2006051074**  
**September 24, 2008**

**THE STATEMENT:**

The Board of Supervisors of the County of San Diego adopts and makes this statement of overriding considerations concerning the project's unavoidable significant impacts to explain why the project's benefits override and outweigh its unavoidable impacts to Agricultural Resources and Mineral Resources. The Board of Supervisors of the County of San Diego finds that the project's unavoidable impacts are acceptable in light of the project's benefits. The substantial evidence supporting the various benefits can be found in the Findings Concerning Mitigation of Significant Environmental Effects, the Final PEIR and in the Record of Proceedings. Each benefit set forth below constitutes an overriding consideration warranting approval of the project, independent of the other benefits, despite each and every unavoidable impact.

- 1. The proposed project would provide active recreational opportunities of significant benefit to nearby communities and the region.**

There currently is a shortage of active recreational opportunities for communities such as Bonsall, Fallbrook, and the community near Interstate 15 (I-15). In planning for the Park, the County found that the shortage was so great that many sports teams do not have access to fields to host games and many existing fields overused and degraded and very crowded. Using the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standard for playing fields, the Master Plan process determined that for the communities in the Park service area, especially Bonsall, Fallbrook, and the area near I-15, approximately eight additional fields for soccer and football (these sports can be played on the same field) were needed. There is also a deficit of baseball and softball fields according to NRPA standards, with the population served requiring approximately 21 such fields, and only 5.5 are present in the service area. The proposed project would provide passive and active recreational amenities for the Fallbrook and Bonsall Community Planning Areas (CPAs). (FEIR pages 1-4 and 1-5)

- 2. The proposed project would provide an approximately 1,600-acre ecological and biological Preserve in an approximately 8.5-mile stretch of the San Luis Rey River valley.**

The San Luis Rey River valley supports a combination of riparian and upland habitats and diverse soils that contribute to good growing conditions for a large number of species. Such habitats include freshwater marsh, coast and valley fresh water marsh, southern cotton wood willow riparian forest, southern riparian scrub, mules fat scrub southern willow scrub, diegan coastal sage scrub, chaparral, southern mixed chaparral, valley and foothill grassland, coast live oak woodland and non-native grassland. In addition, the vegetation communities provide habitat to support a diversity of wildlife species including those listed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and/or California Department of Fish and Game as threatened or endangered including arroyo toad, California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo, and southwestern willow flycatcher. The valley also includes an extensive wildlife movement corridor. For regional habitat preservation to be successful, it is important to establish connections to proximate wildlife corridors allowing broader regional species movements and access to a wide range of habitat. In addition, by preserving open space, avoiding extensive development near the river course, and offering numerous and extensive opportunities for revegetation and restoration of native ground cover, the proposed project would allow the County to develop strategies to manage water resources and preserve or enhance water quality within an extensive portion of the San Luis Rey River's watershed. The Preserve would protect in perpetuity one of the County's biologically richest river corridors. (FEIR pages 1-4 and 2.3-1 through 2.3-4)

- 3. The proposed project will provide a continuous year-round trail system providing access to the River Park's various natural environments and recreational amenities and is intended to implement the County of San Diego Trails Master Plan.**

The proposed project would unify, improve, and maintain a system of formally multi-use trails for equestrians, bikers and hiker within a sizable segment of the San Luis Rey River valley to replace the unofficial trail system currently present. The trails will respond to the public need for recreation and will also provide health and quality of life benefits to County residents associated with hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding throughout the San Luis Rey River valley's biologically diverse environments. In January 2005 the Board of Supervisors adopted the County's Trail Program and Community Trails Master Plan. The Community Trails Master Plans is the implementing document for the trails program and contains adopted individual community trails and pathways plans. The establishment of the trail network within the San Luis Rey River Park will implement the intention of the Trails Master Plan for this area of the County. In addition the proposed trail system will bring the County one step closer to its long term goal to connect the park westward

to Oceanside's trail network and eastward toward the mountains creating a continuous trail from the ocean to the mountains. (FEIR pages 1-2 through 1-3 Appendix A pages 32-33)

**4. The proposed project would preserve the most significant elements of the San Luis Rey River valley's cultural and historical heritage.**

The cultural history of the San Luis Rey River is known from the time of the Luiseño people. Many Native American artifacts and traditional gathering and ceremonial sites have been identified and mapped within this segment of the river corridor. Preservation and interpretation of these sensitive resources will be incorporated into an education program. The establishment of the proposed Interpretive Areas will be an effective way of preserving and presenting the multiple histories and cultures of the local tribes in a uniform fashion. These facilities will provide an opportunity for learning about tribal language, stories, music, crafts, and ethnobotany and will educate County residents regarding the rich cultural heritage of the area. The most sensitive areas would be protected within the proposed Preserve area through a long-term maintenance and management program ensuring that history is protected. (FEIR Pages 2.4-2 – 2.4-4 and Appendix A pages 46-47).