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# Central Mountain Subregional Plan

## San Diego County General Plan

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Adopted  
January 3, 1979

Adopted  
August 3, 2011

Amended  
November 18, 2015 – GPA14-001  
December 14, 2016 – GPA 12-004, GPA16-002

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# CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION

I hereby certify that this Plan, consisting of text and exhibits, is the Central Mountain Subregional Plan and is a part of the San Diego County General Plan, and that it was considered by the San Diego County Planning Commission during nine hearings that occurred from November 6, 2009 through the 20<sup>th</sup> day of August 2010, and adopted by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of August 2011.

Attest:   
MARK WARDLAW, Director  
Planning & Development Services

## Amendments

November 18, 2015 – GPA14-001

December 14, 2016 – GPA12-004, GPA16-002

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# Introduction to the Community Plan

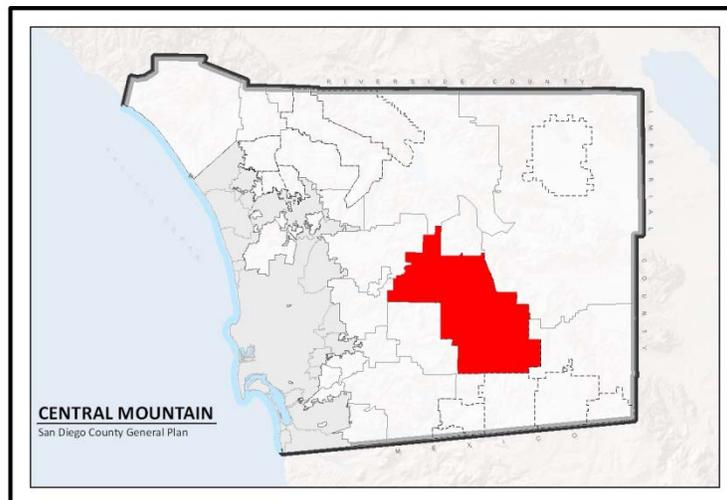
## ***Purpose of the Community Plan***

Community and Subregional plans, adopted as an integral parts of the County of San Diego's General Plan, are policy plans specifically created to address the issues, characteristics, and visions of communities within the County. These distinct communities each have a distinct physical setting with a unique history, culture, character, life style, and identity. Community and Subregional plans, thus provide a framework for addressing the critical issues and concerns that are unique to a community and are not reflected in the broader policies of the General Plan. As part of the General Plan, this Community Plan is consistent with all other parts of the County's General Plan.

Used in conjunction with the General Plan, a community or Subregional plan (Plan) is a key tool for the public, Community Planning/Sponsor Groups, County staff, and decision makers to identify the existing conditions and development that positively contribute to its character and should be conserved, as well as the location, scale, and design of desired new land uses, and community facilities. The Plan's policies require that development be comparable to, or transition with, existing development to ensure that new development "fits" with the community and enhances the community's vision.

## ***Scope of the Community Plan***

The Central Mountain Subregional Plan covers the Central Mountain Sub-regional planning area, which is illustrated in Figure 1. This Subregion includes approximately 203,000 acres and contains the communities of Cuyamaca, and Descanso..



*Figure 1: Central Mountain Subregion*

The Goals and Policies contained in each of the chapters of this text listed under one of the Subregional Group Areas apply only to lands and projects within that Subregional

Group area. The Goals and Policies not specifically identified with one of the two Subregional Group areas apply to all properties and projects within the Subregion. Adopted Specific Plans are regulated by the goals and policies contained in the adopted Specific Plan Text and by the adopted Resolution for the Specific Plan.

### ***Content and Organization of the Community Plan***

The following is the content and organization of the Plan and a brief description of each of these sections of the Plan.

**Vision Statement** A jointly developed Central Mountain Vision Statement that expresses the region's values and distinguishing character, quality of life, mix of uses, development form and scale, public realm and places, mobility, economy, environment, safety, and relationships to adjoining communities, open spaces, and the region.

**Background Data** A description of the sub-region's history/existing character/land uses, relationships to adjoining communities, environmental settings, circulation/mobility, facilities/infrastructure, public safety, and trends/future projections.

- **Goals, Policies & Implementation** Due to the breadth and detail of the Countywide elements, communities may find it unnecessary to identify unique goals and policies for all of the following subjects. Therefore, not all communities may use all of the following elements: Land Use Application of countywide land use designations, goals, and policies to reflect the distinguishing characteristics and objectives of the Community. These may address objectives, such as a specific mix of uses; priority development locations and projects; needed community facilities; development form and scale; architectural, landscape, and public realm design characteristics; land use compatibility; and similar topics.
- **Circulation and Mobility** Delineates the roadways, transit corridors, bicycle paths, equestrian paths, and pedestrian trails that supplement and complete the road networks defined by the countywide Circulation Element. Policies may also address unique Community issues, such as neighborhood traffic intrusion, commercial district parking, local public transit, and infrastructure improvements.

- **Conservation and Open Space** Application of countywide Conservation and Open Space Element policies to address issues associated with designated plant and animal habitats, agriculture, water bodies, open space, and other specific resources within the Community Plan area. This may encompass actions to protect resources that may uniquely apply to specific sites or resources.
- **Safety** Application of countywide Safety Element policies to address specific safety issues in the Community Plan area. This may encompass actions to protect residents and development from defined risks.
- **Noise** Application of countywide Noise Element policies to address specific source issues and impacts in the Community Plan area. This may consider the differentiation of land use compatibility standards to reflect community character and location—for example, villages located in rural setting and hillsides in contrast to those adjoining urban and suburban development.

## ***Public Involvement in Preparing the Community Plan***

### **Central Mountain Subregion**

A Central Mountain Subregion Vision Committee, made up of representatives from all the communities in the Subregion, collaborated and developed a joint Central Mountain vision statement, which was approved by their respective planning or sponsor groups. This joint vision reflects the unified concerns and goals for the entire Central Mountain Region. Refer to Figure 2 on page 7 for a map of the Sponsor Groups within the Subregion.

### **Cuyamaca**

The Cuyamaca Sponsor Group has held numerous public meetings since 2002, and reviewed, amended, and updated the Central Mountain Subregional Plan.

### **Descanso**

The Descanso Planning Group and Descanso Community Plan Subcommittee has held numerous meetings on the Draft Community Plan and has reviewed, amended, and updated the Central Mountain Subregional Plan.

## ***How to Use the Community Plan***

To use this Plan, the General Plan elements should first be reviewed for applicable goals and policies, and the General Plan Land Use Maps (General Plan Appendix LU-1) should be referred to when applicable to determine the type, location, and density of land use allowed. This plan supplements these countywide policies and diagrams and further directs the land uses and development desired to achieve the community's vision.

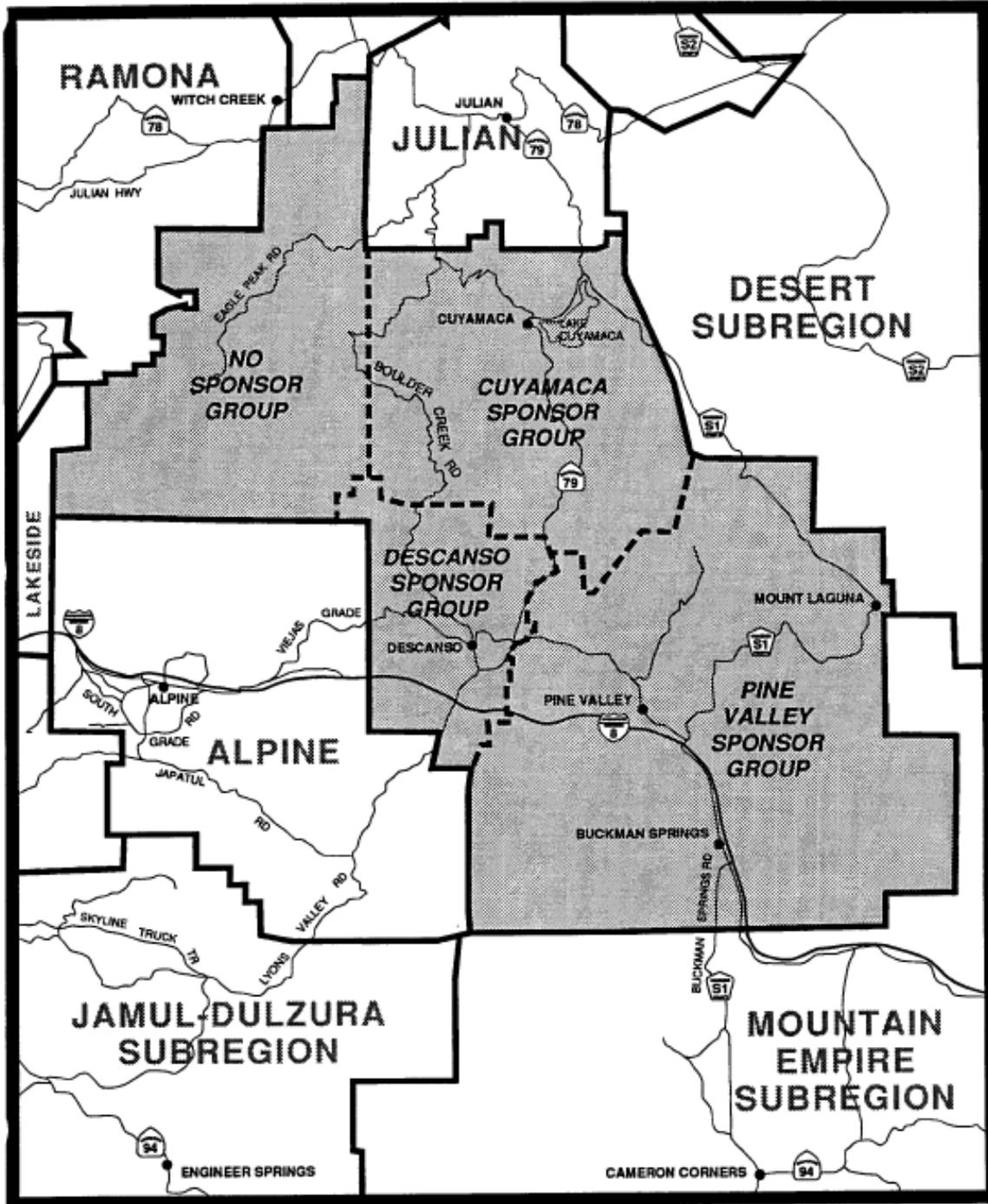
### ***Implementing, Monitoring, and Amending the Community Plan***

It shall be the responsibility of the County to implement the Plan, to monitor progress towards its implementation, and to amend the Plan when necessary. Each Plan includes the community's key issues, as well as the goals and policies to address the issues identified. For each policy or set of policies, there is one or more implementation actions identified to carry it out. The implementation program also identifies the County department or agency responsible for its implementation, where appropriate. Many of the policies will be implemented by County ordinances and other discretionary actions such as zoning, design guidelines, and development standards in the County Zoning Code.

Implementation of the Plan should be monitored on a periodic basis by the County and the Community Planning/Sponsor Group for progress towards its implementation. For compliance with State law, the Plan shall be reviewed no less than once annually so that its implementation status may be included in the County's Annual General Plan Report to the State. The annual review provides the opportunity for the Plan to be updated and amended, as appropriate, to reflect changes in the community vision, conditions, or attitudes.

Figure 2:

# CENTRAL MOUNTAIN SUBREGIONAL PLAN LOCATION MAP



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# Community Background

The Central Mountain Subregion lies east of the Alpine and Ramona Community Panning Areas (CPA), west of the Desert Subregion, south of the Julian CPA, and north of the Mountain Empire Subregion. The Central Mountain Subregion is one of the most scenic areas in the County. It is a recreational and agricultural resource for the entire County. It offers its residents and visitors a place to experience tranquility and the beauty of undisturbed nature. A map of the Central Mountain Subregion can be found on Figure 2 on page 5.

The Central Mountain Subregion communities include: Cuyamaca and Descanso. There are two public recreation and wilderness areas in the Subregion: Cuyamaca Rancho State Park (approximately 25,000 acres) and the Cleveland National Forest (approximately 120,000 acres).

The Subregion covers approximately 200,000 acres, 78 percent of which are in public ownership or in the Inaja, Cosmit, La Posta, or Capitan Grande Indian Reservations. The principal types of vegetation found in the Subregion are southern oak woodland, which consists of two communities: the mountain woodland and the valley woodland, the coniferous forest, chaparral, and riparian vegetation. The Central Mountain Subregion contains most of the highest mountains in the County: Cuyamaca Peak (6,512 feet), Cuyapaibe Mountain (6,378 feet), Monument Peak (6,272 feet), and North Peak (5,993 feet). Other striking features of this Subregion are: Cuyamaca Lake, a reservoir for the Helix Water District the northern tip of El Capitan Reservoir; meadows and coniferous forests; and spectacular views of the Anza Borrego Desert from the Sunrise Highway.

## Cuyamaca Subregional Planning Area

### **a. History**

The Kumeyaay Indians lived in Cuyamaca for at least seven thousand years before the Spanish came. The Kumeyaay called the area “Ah-ha-kwe-ah-mac” meaning “Place Beyond the Rain” or “The Place Where It Rains”. The Kumeyaay main food staple was acorns which they ground into a meal in rock mortars. Cuyamaca is rich in archaeological sites because of the Kumeyaay Indians.

Gold was discovered in Cuyamaca in 1870. The Stonewall Mine was the county’s richest gold strike. At its peak 1886-1891, it employed two hundred men. The few Kumeyaay still living in Cuyamaca were forced to move onto a reservation. The town of Cuyamaca grew up around the Stonewall Mine just south of Cuyamaca Lake.

The natural lake basin of Lake Cuyamaca was made permanent by an earthen dam built in 1888, the second oldest dam in California. In 1925 the Helix Water District acquired the dam and lake for San Diego residents’ water usage. The Lake

Cuyamaca Recreation and Park District was formed in 1962, and, with grants from the Wildlife Conservation Board, built a dike to form a ten foot average, deeper lake.

In 1933, the Rancho Cuyamaca 20,000 acre Dyar property was sold to the state and Cuyamaca Rancho State Park was created. The first park trails and campgrounds were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The Park now is over 25,000 acres, with 13,000 classified as Wilderness. In 1950, the Conejos Fire burned about half the park's acreage. The Cedar Fire in 2003, burned ninety percent, including the historic eighty year old Dyar House Visitor Center and Museum.

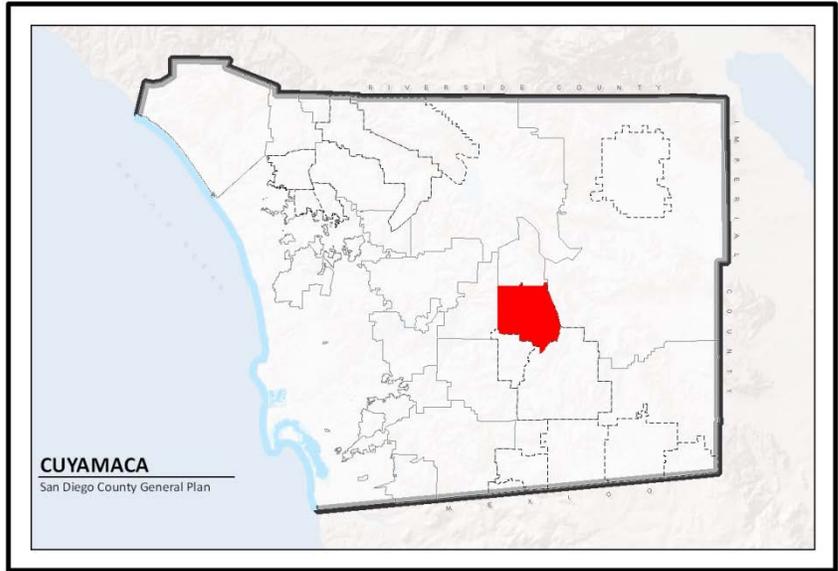


Figure 3: Cuyamaca Community Plan Area

**b. Relationship to Adjoining Communities**

Cuyamaca is connected to the Central Mountain Region communities and the Julian area by narrow, scenic two lane highways. Sunrise Highway is a National Scenic Byway and the only road between Cuyamaca and Mt. Laguna. Scenic Highway 79 connects Cuyamaca south through Cuyamaca Rancho State Park to Descanso and north to Julian. Most Cuyamaca residents travel to Julian for civic groups and services such as schools, library, churches, and the post office. Residents meet their commercial needs in Julian or “down the hill”. Emergency service and fire protection is provided by volunteers and the Julian-Cuyamaca Fire Protection District. Refer to Figure 3.

**c. Environmental Setting**

Cuyamaca is a scenic mountain community of Cuyamaca Peak, elevation 6512 ft., North Peak 5993 ft., Middle Peak 5883 ft., and Stonewall Peak 55730 ft. Cuyamaca is a forested area of oaks, incense cedar, white fir, and pines. Also riparian trees, such as willow, alder, and sycamore, lie along many small spring fed streams. Boulder Creek is designated a “Wild and Scenic River”. Lake Cuyamaca is located in a natural valley and covers about 100 acres. The Lake Cuyamaca meadow has fifteen sensitive plant species, is biologically one of the most important areas in the county, and is a Resource Conservation Area. The Cuyamaca Sponsor Group area has abundant wildlife, mountain lions, bobcats, deer, badgers, foxes, bald and

golden eagles, and over a hundred species of birds. At an altitude of over 4000 ft., Cuyamaca is characterized by seasonal color changes on the open meadows and hillsides, from wildflowers to snow.

**d. Existing Land Uses and Community Character**

The Cuyamaca Subregional Group area is one of the most unique scenic areas of San Diego County. It is a rural, residential mountain community, dependent on limited groundwater. Residents have a recreational lifestyle of hiking, biking, fishing, hunting, and horseback riding. They enjoy clean air and water, a clear night sky, spacious mountain views, and peace and quiet. The Cuyamaca Volunteer Fire Station is a community owned and operated fire department and community meeting center.

The Cuyamaca Subregional Group area is about 25 percent residential property, and 75 percent public. The Inaja Indian Reservation is 811 acres, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and Anza Borrego State Park are over 25,000 acres, and Cleveland National Forest is about 11,000 acres of the Sponsor Group area. One characteristic of the community is that many lots and residences are owned as second home properties. The community has one commercial business the Lake Cuyamaca Recreation and Park District, consisting of a restaurant, store, tackle shop, boat rental facility, two campgrounds, picnic areas, and rental cabins. The Cuyamaca neighborhoods are Cuyamaca Woods, Cuyamaca Resort, and the North Peak area. The Cuyamaca area does not have any industrial uses. The desire of residents to preserve the area's beauty of undisturbed nature will severely limit the future development of Cuyamaca. The Cedar Fire in October 2003, burned ninety percent of the Cuyamaca Sponsor Group area. A majority of the structures were damaged or destroyed and most of the forest was burned. Rebuilding from this human caused wildfire has been a major effort and concern.

**e. Existing Circulation and Mobility**

Primary access to Cuyamaca from the south is via Interstate 8 and from the north is via Highway 79.

The Cuyamaca Sponsor Group area is served by a road network consisting of State Highway 79, which is a Scenic Highway, and County roads Sunrise Highway, a National Scenic Byway, Engineers Road and Boulder Creek Road. These two lane roads are often windy and devoid of sidewalks. They provide open views of scenic vistas and contribute to the rural character. At current levels, these roads serve the community well. Traffic on steeper portions of State Highway 79 is at times congested because of slow moving vehicles and bicyclists. Turnouts and bike lanes would improve that issue. Cuyamaca has no public transportation.

#### **f. Existing Community Facilities and Infrastructure**

The Cuyamaca Subregional Group Area lies outside the County Water Authority and is totally dependent upon groundwater resources. Residents rely solely on groundwater and local wells for their supply. Residents have septic systems for their sanitation, and use propane for their gas. The Cuyamaca Woods neighborhood has no electricity and use solar and generator systems.

School services are provided by the Julian Union School District for Cuyamaca residents. An Outdoor Education County School Camp is located in the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and serves all school districts, except the San Diego Unified School District.

A San Diego County Library is located in Julian.

#### **g. Public Safety**

The Cuyamaca area has a high fire hazard potential. The Cedar Fire in 2003, burned ninety percent of the area. Fire hazard is high because of the steep topography, dense vegetation, and windy climate. There are no seismic faults in the Cuyamaca area.

Structural fire protection and emergency services are provided by Julian-Cuyamaca Fire Protection District. The Cuyamaca Volunteer Fire Station is located at Highway 79 and Engineers Road. The average response time is ten to fifteen minutes. Cal-Fire on Highway 79 and the United States Forest Service on Boulder Creek Road provide wildland fire protection.

The County Sheriff provides basic law enforcement service to Cuyamaca. The substation is located in Julian. The average response time is ten to fifteen minutes.

#### **h. Trends and Future Projections**

The Cuyamaca area has very few employment opportunities for residents. Any new development is limited by the surrounding State and National public lands. Groundwater is the single-most limiting natural resource for future growth.

Cuyamaca residents are resistant to road development and desire to retain the natural beauty and rural character of the community. There is a need to underground electric lines to reduce fire hazard.

San Diego County population growth and urbanization may cause an increase of visitors to the Cuyamaca Sponsor Group area. The protection of wildlife, vegetation, lake, meadows and peaks is an important issue.

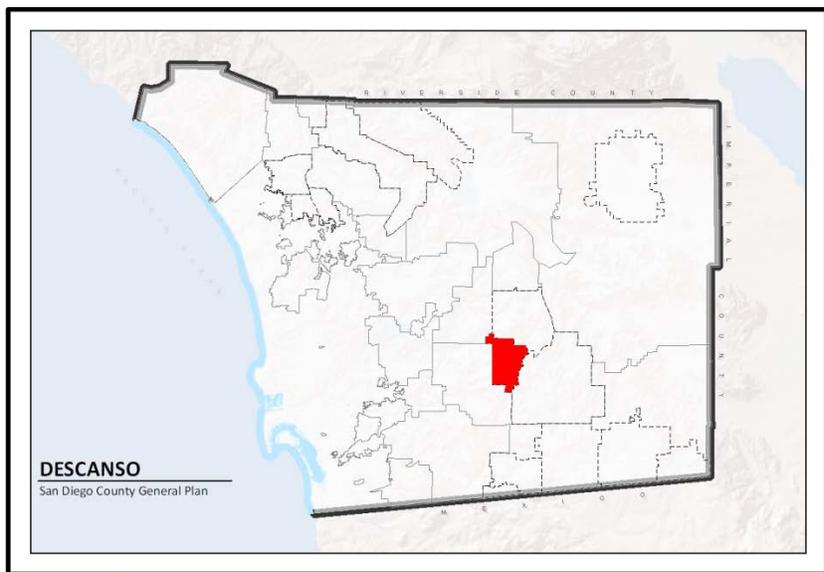
## Descanso Subregional Planning Area

Descanso is a Spanish word meaning rest, repose, or tranquility. As applied to a particular area, it means “place of rest.” Mercifully still a small community, Descanso lies in the foothills of the Cuyamaca Mountain Range at an elevation of 3,450 feet, approximately forty miles east of San Diego, California. Descanso is an area of clean air, mountain views, open meadows, dark night skies, and quiet solitude. Elevations range from 3,450 feet to approximately 3,700 feet.

We are a small rural, mountain village bordered by Cuyamaca State Park and Cleveland National Forest. The village of Descanso is a residential community that has gateways to wilderness areas and recreational opportunities.

Our community provides valuable wildlife habitat and wildlife corridor. It is an area of great and virtually unspoiled natural beauty with an extensive variety of trees, shrubs, plants, and an impressive and colorful display of hundreds of species of wild flowers. Once the brown bear roamed the hillsides and mountain lions were plentiful, but only a few lions remain in the mountains and are occasionally seen. Mule deer, bobcat, coyote, rabbits, squirrel raccoon, skunk wild turkey, opossum, and other rodents, including the “pesky” gopher still make their home in Descanso.

Red-tailed hawks, sparrow hawks, and turkey vultures are predators often glimpsed soaring through the valleys and up into the hilltops. Peregrine falcons have been sighted. A great variety of lesser birds nest among the stands of oak, pine, sycamore, and willow, notably the mourning dove, Steller’s jay, scrub jay, California quail, horned owl, house finch, chickadee, common titmouse, several woodpecker species and the ever-present sparrow, brown towhee, and Allen’s hummingbird. But it is the granite outcroppings among the oak and conifer, the dramatic Whipplei yucca raising its regal spear side-by-side with the manzanita, wild lilac, and elderberry, the tree-lined river courses and seasonal mountain streams that still draw vacationers to Descanso to play and rest. Increasing numbers have also come to homestead and settle into the kind of rural existence that is fast vanishing.



*Figure 4: Descanso Community Plan Area*

The Descanso Subregional Group Area is approximately 19,483 acres or 30.44 square miles (Refer to Figure 4 on page 11) with a population of 1742, according to the 2000 Census population. (This does not include the inmate population at the Descanso Detention facility.) Most of Descanso is covered by Cuyamaca State Park and the Cleveland National Forest. The core of development has centered on Viejas Grade, Oak Grove, and north of Viejas Boulevard to Manzanita Lane. There is also high density residential along both the east and west side of Highway 79 up to the Cuyamaca State Park. The Descanso community is a mix of high density residential near the town center and low density in the outlying areas. We have individual septic systems and we are a groundwater dependent community.

#### **a. History**

The following is an excerpt from the book "Descanso Place of Rest". It is researched, compiled, and written by The Historical Committee of the Friends of the Descanso Library, and presented as a community service July 1988. It is published by the Friends of the Descanso Library. The history of the Descanso area reaches far into the past, it is not until 1879 that the name "Descanso" appears in County records. It was known to the Indians and early white settlers by the Indian name "Na-Wa-Tie" (rendered in Spanish as "Guatay") which means "Council House" or "Big Chiefs House". The greater valley spreading southwest from the current racetrack called "Big Guatay Valley"; the smaller though which the Sweetwater River flows, was known as "Little Guatay."

Descanso owes its name to Ysadora Ellis, so the story goes. In about 1879, a party of young surveyors headed by Myron G. Wheeler was surveying township lines in the mountains east of San Diego. When working the Viejas Valley, they had to climb the steep grade at the end of the day to spend the night at the Ellis Ranch (roughly where the Ranger Station is today).

"Here in the cool and restful place among the oak trees, a gracious lady, Mrs. Charles Ellis, had her home, to which strangers were always welcome. When the tired surveyors reached this place, exhausted after the long, hot pull up the mountain, the Ellis home seemed like a bit of heaven. "It is good to rest here after climbing the Viejas Grade," Wheeler would remark, to which Mrs. Ellis replied, in Spanish, Descanso. Today residents have forgotten-or perhaps have never known that once this place was known by all as "Guatay". None of the Native American history was written down, for the Kumeyaay had no written language, and so all that is known of those days before settlement by white people has been gleaned from a handful of Native Americans prepared to share their tribal memories.

#### **Indian Era**

Much of the oral history was preserved in tribal song and "squaw tales," a practice common to the tribal cultures and remarkably effective. According to Hero Rensch, curator of the Cuyamaca State Park in the 1950's, a score of old legends and tales

have been written down by those privileged to learn them. “The poetic and dramatic quality as well the realism of these old tales was interpreted from word-of-mouth narratives of Maria Alto by Elizabeth Johnson in 1914. Maria Alto was the mother of Tom Lucas and was a woman skilled in basketry. Today her baskets are greatly prized by those fortunate enough to have obtained one. Maria was, according to Rensch, “a wonderful source of information about Indian population and lore.” Max Birkey recalls that she lived in a hut on a piece of land behind the Oak Gove Hotel. She died in 1924, after having been discovered seriously ill in her hut and brought into the San Diego County Hospital.

The white man did not intrude into the Indian region of the Cuyamaca (Ah-ha-Kwe-ah-mac meaning “Rain Beyond”) until the Spanish incursion into California which began in 1540, but reached this area in 1769, when the military and missionary expedition under Gaspar de Portola arrived in Alto, California. The Native Americans, whose presence here has been traced back 11,000 years, were of the Hokan family who came out of the deserts in Arizona and Colorado to settle here. They were a peaceful, pastoral people, gatherers of nuts and hunters of small animals. Semi-nomadic, they traveled between mountains and foothills, harvesting acorns from the many varieties of oak, they were accomplished makers of baskets and tools, but pottery did not make its appearance until about 2,000 years ago. An early fur trader, James Ohio Pattie, who entered the area in 1774-about the time Dc Anza first penetrated the hinterland-described the Indians here as excellent physical specimens in his memoirs, Pattie writes, “...if the truth must be told, they were as naked as Adam and Eve in their birthday suits. they were the stoutest men, the finest forms I ever saw, well-proportioned and as straight as an arrow.” However, Robert Cleland credits the women with more modesty, “clothed with aprons of grass and breast caps of fur.” There were, in Old Guatay Valley, two well-populated Indian villages, Hun-poo-Arrup-ma (Whip of the Wind), located at the northeastern end of the valley, and Pilch-oom-wa (White as Ashes) just west of the Sweetwater River, across from Perkins Corner. The reason for the latter name is evident to anyone who has seen that valley under frost in the early morning. A smaller village, east of the river, was tucked into the oak trees. There is an old burial ground in the valley, cited by John Mulkins, the Green Valley pioneer, as the only known exception to the Kumeyaay custom of cremating their dead and burning their clothes and possessions. Robert Garbani, who was born in Descanso and been a prominent rancher for more than half a century, recalls seeing as a child, weekend visitors digging in and sifting the soil at a site just east of the junction of Manzanita land and Guatay Road, toward Maggio’s ranch and removing artifacts and necklaces and so forth. This may be the site Mulkins referred to.

The end of the traditional life came reluctantly for the mountain Indians, and with great resistance. Unlike their brothers on the coast, they never converted to Christianity, retaining their religious interpretations, their customs and their pride.

They kept their identity intact for seventy-five years after the coming of the Spanish—an event foretold by the shamans, according to Tom Lucas, and it was not until the American migration that they were finally driven from their traditional homes. Once American ranchers and settlers began moving into Old Guatay Valley, the character changed, and by 1903, Descanso was referred to as a valley “of thrift and plenty,” where “every farmer looks happy and contented.” Leading industries at that time were hay and grain raising, cattle ranching, apple growing, and mining. Old Guatay was a favorite place for the Native Americans, who would return there from summer camps in higher elevations as soon as they had harvested the acorns and when the winter storms began to threaten. Their affection for this valley was reflected by J.G. McCormac, then proprietor of the Oak Grove store, in 1900 when he wrote that “Descanso is an almost perfect all-year-round resort, sheltered from cold winds by the lofty Cuyamaca and considering the latitude, it has a remarkably mild and open winter. Snow is rarely on the ground for more than a week or ten days in the winter season. The warm summer days, the dry bracing mountain air, the cool nights, the fine spring water, the gigantic spreading oaks, have brought back to many a broken-down constitution the zest of living which makes Descanso, in fact as well as in time, an ideal resting place.”

### **Early Settlers in the Descanso Area**

Prominent ranchers in the Guatay Valley (Descanso) who had homesteaded parcels, while Olvera held the property, were Trinidad Rodriguez, Julian Sandoval, Moses Manasee, and Gavino Aguilar. Trinidad Rodriguez had come from Sonora to establish a modest ranch on 160 acres with horses, mules, and cow. Gavino Aguilar and his wife, Maria Antonio, came to the valley from Baja California in 1859, and established the Santa Gertrudes Ranch on 480 acres. They raised barley and wheat in addition to cattle, sheep, and horses. They built a large adobe house just south of the present Interstate near Japatul Road. Here they reared a family of four boys and four girls. Gavino was killed in 1882, over a land dispute. He was buried in a grave on the ranch, a tract that later became the local cemetery. A daughter, Ysadora married a Norwegian ex-sea captain, Sur Ellingson, who jumped ship in San Diego, intending to remain in the country. He changed his name to Charles Ellis and, in 1865, came to Descanso. Ysadora and he went to the Coyote Wells (now Ocotillo) for a while, where he manned the stage station, but soon they returned to the mountains and oaks of Descanso. In about 1880, they took up 160 acres straddling the Sweetwater River and a forty-acre timber claim and built a house about a half mile north of the Aguilar Ranch. The Ellis's also reared four boys and four girls, all of whom were at one time involved in the ranch. They later left the valley, except for son Charles, who continued to farm from the old homestead and William who with his family farmed down on Japatul Road near the upper end of Horsethief Canyon. Until the early 1940's, Christine Ellis Groome owned a resort at Los Terrinitos. She also taught school in Descanso and later at Alpine. Only Frank, then ninety years

old, and Dora Ellis Case, eighty-eight, were present in 1970, when the Ellis Wayside Vista Point on Interstate 8 was officially named for the family. Frank died the following year. His burial in the old Descanso cemetery was followed two month later by a dedication of a native stone monument in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the cemetery.

When the Aguilar's began selling off parcels from their holdings in the 1880s, James Flinn was among the purchasers. Rebuilt a rambling ranch house within a few yards of the original Aguilar adobe and collaborated with Charles Ellis in building the first schoolhouse in the Descanso area. Some of the foundation of the school and house remain just north of the juncture of 1-8 and Highway 79. Julian Sandoval, who moved into the valley in 1856, raised barley and grazed horse, mules, cattle, sheep, and hogs on his flourishing 160 acre parcel. His ranch, which is cited as an important stopover for early mail and stage coach, runs to and from San Diego. His home was frequently the site of election polls, officiated over by his neighbor Gavino Aguilar. Records show as many as twenty votes cast at one election. Moses Manasee lived in Guatay Valley from 1859 until about 1864. He had come from Prussia to San Diego; purchased land originally improved by Trinidad Rodriguez, and built a successful ranch. This enterprising young immigrant, at the age of twenty-seven, employed seven hands on his ranch. He reported that elections held on his ranch sometimes attracted forty voters. These ranchers, like others in the valley, allowed their stock to graze in open range and cooperated in an annual rodeo for sorting and branding. The Guatay Valley was still thickly populated by Native Americans in 1850, when the first pioneers began to locate there. Names of fifty Native-American families were included in the 1860 census. After the earliest ranchers, other immigrants came, farmers, ranchers, merchants, artisans, laborers. By 1870, only eight Indian family names were recorded, but white settlement had increased considerably.

#### **b. Relationship to Adjoining Communities**

We are a small rural, mountain village bordered by to the north by Cuyamaca State Park and the community of Cuyamaca. To the west is the Kumeyaay Reservation, better known as the Viejas Reservation. To the southwest is the east end of Alpine and Japatul Road, and to the South is the Cleveland National Forest. To the east is the community of Guatay. We are connected by Interstate 8 and Scenic Highway 79. We have higher density residential within the rural village boundary and low density in the outlying areas. Parcel sizes range from less than 1/4 acre to over 450 acres.

#### **c. Existing Land Uses and Community Character**

Our entire area is groundwater dependent and uses septic systems. We are small, rural residential community that supports ranching, small agricultural enterprises, and limited rural commercial uses. Also, as a major terminus of the backcountry trail system featuring larger land parcels, Descanso has become the ideal San Diego

County community for horse owners and distance riders. Descanso has four small commercial areas. They are small commercial centers that are connected by a delicate framework of narrow rural roads interlaced through the residential district. These small businesses provide goods and services to the local community and support visitor's recreational uses. One of the commercial areas is neighbored by businesses serving the needs of agricultural animals and horse owners with a hay and feed store and a historic saddlery. There are no large plastic inner light signs and storefronts share a rustic theme.

Because of the Mount Laguna observatory, Descanso falls within the radius of the Dark Skies Ordinance. We discourage any violation of the Ordinance. We enjoy night skies that are dark and free of light pollution. Beautiful stars, constellations, and planets stand out like diamonds on a black velvet sky. Our area is totally dependent on our groundwater resources. Attention to the quantity and quality of groundwater is imperative. San Diego County has experienced several years of drought. Nowhere in the County is the lack of rainfall more apparent than in Descanso. We have lost thousands of trees due to beetle infestation. This area once received enough rainfall for trees to be able to naturally produce enough sap or tannins to naturally fight off infestation. Trees are dying at an alarming rate. Rainfall charts show that the area has been in a drought condition with moderate to severe drought over the last 20 years. There have been a few years of average to above average rainfall, but the prevailing rainfall pattern has been less than average. This area was devastated by the 2003 Cedar Fire. Descanso residents were fortunate not to have lost very many homes, however; we did lose thousands of trees in the 2003 Cedar Fire. In addition, we also lost vital wildlife habitat.

Rainfall is recharge to our aquifers. Certain areas of Descanso have experienced a drop in the water table on their wells. Many residents have reported issues with a decrease in water levels. In 2002, the most severe year of drought in 20 years, many people were forced to re-drill when their wells went dry. Several people drilled to depths from 600 to 1200 feet. We understand and respect the need for long term sustainability and protection of our groundwater resources.

We oppose large subdivisions, clustering or tract home developments, large commercial or industrial developments in Descanso. This type of development has negative impact on our natural resources. This type of development sacrifices the safety and property values of the existing residents through the depletion of groundwater, open space, and increased traffic congestion. This type of land use is incompatible with current land uses and the rural character of our community. Parcels in Descanso range from slightly less than 1/4 acre to over 200 acres.

We support every property owner's right to build a dwelling unit and outbuildings on their legal lots. We encourage the use of native plants in landscaping. We support the building of Second Dwelling Units or Guest living Quarters in accordance with County regulations.

One of the biggest problems facing Descanso residents is the lack of walkability in and around the community. Pedestrians are forced into roadways walking to and from their destinations. To mitigate this hazard, many land owners allow an informal trail system for recreational use. These trails are an important part of the community character and rely on California Civil Code 846 to limit land and owner liability. The purpose of 846 is to encourage property owners to allow the general public to recreate free of charge on privately owned property. In order to encourage this use, it insulates landowners from lawsuits by people injured, while using their property for recreational purposes. Section 846 grants immunity from liability to an owner of any estate or any other interest in real property, whether possessory or nonpossessory. Additional protection of landowners of these trails from liability when a horse rider is injured on the owner's property is also found in legal doctrines know as Assumption of the Risk. These principles establish that, as a matter of law and policy, a defendant owes no duty to protect a plaintiff from particular harms. Applied in the horse trail context, the doctrines preclude liability for injuries arising from those risks inherent in horseback riding.

**d. Existing Circulation and Mobility**

Our circulation element includes Scenic Highway 79 and we encourage the preservation of this Scenic Highway in adherence to the rules and regulation governing Scenic Highways. While we have easy access to Interstate 8; two lane narrow rural roads traverse most of our community. Most of these roads do not have a shoulder, bike lane or walkway. These narrow rural roads are sole evacuation routes for most members of the community.

These roads must be maintained and remain devoid of developments that would create traffic congestion. Descanso is flanked by two bridges on the north and south side of the town. There is also one bridge on Viejas Boulevard in front of the Elementary school. This bridge has recently undergone reconstruction. The bridge on Riverside Drive is narrow without any pedestrian walkway. Two fire engine trucks are unable to use the bridge at the same time; it is too narrow. This bridge needs widening and a pedestrian walkway. There is no shoulder, walkway, or curb for pedestrians to step onto to avoid oncoming vehicles. It is an imminent danger for pedestrians and trucks with a broad wheel base. It is imperative that the two lane rural roads in Descanso be maintained and congestion free.

For the safety and enjoyment of the residents of Descanso, we want our community to develop walkability. The Descanso Planning Group adopted a Community Trail Plan, which includes the Descanso Valley Trail. Implementation of the Descanso Valley Trail, which loops around the community, would benefit all residents. Outside of the State Park and Cleveland National Forest, the town of Descanso does not have an identified, formalized system of non-motorized trails for hiking, biking, or horseback riding. The California Riding and Hiking Trail shares the roadway on parts of Viejas Grade, Oak Grove, and Boulder Creek Roads and several dirt roads

leading to its entrance into the Cleveland National Forest. There are several informal trails on private land as noted. We envision a pedestrian oriented road shoulder design along the proposed Descanso Valley Trail that accommodates pedestrians and bicycles and that would separate them from vehicular traffic. This proposed project would also provide schoolchildren walking to and from school with much greater safety.

**e. Existing Community Facilities and Infrastructure**

Descanso has a small population and, therefore, we are a small tax based community. Services such as hospitals, Industrial sites, etc. exist outside of our community. We have a library, elementary school, fire station, post office, and water district. We support small rural commercial developments that do not adversely affect groundwater, noise level, dark sky, air quality, or the safety of our residents. We support managed slow growth and single family residential development on existing legal lots. We value our agricultural and grazing lands. We encourage ranching, agriculture production and distribution; in and from our area. We do not support massive commercial agriculture that depletes aquifers. Groundwater is our single most important natural resource in our community.

It is vital to our community that quantity and quality of groundwater be protected and monitored. Time and attention needs to be given to development of a San Diego County/Descanso community Park, instead of the joint use facility that now exists between the County of San Diego Parks and Recreation and the Mountain Empire Unified School District. A resolution should be found to the joint-use of the Park Land Dedication Ordinance Funds between Pine Valley and Descanso. The County of San Diego owns a boarded up house that is located in front of the San Diego County/Fleet Operations Fueling Site. This site is in the center of the Descanso and, unfortunately, is a poor reflection on the community. It decreases property values in the area. This site has a potential for a County Park or Community Center. With proper safety measures and adherence to County zoning and regulatory procedure, this could be an ideal location for a small County Park or Community Center. Several residents have volunteered their time and skills to make improvements and provide maintenance to the property. We encourage resolution regarding this property through dialogue and action with the Descanso Planning Group and the appropriate County agencies.

The Descanso Community Water District (DCWD) currently provides water service to 314 homes. There are 328 meters in the DCWD. They are managed by Cal-American Water and have a Water District Board with 5 elected members. The DCWD has only one well (#5) that services the entire water district. Well #5, is operational and able to be permitted by the State. Well #6 is only able to be used for emergency services due to high levels of naturally occurring contaminants. These high levels of contaminants make permits unobtainable. Wells #1 thru #4 are non-operational. They also have high levels of contaminants. They are the original wells

operated by the DCWD and there are no plans to bring them on line. DCWD rate payers pay the second highest rate for water service in the entire County. They are second only to Coronado. All residents outside of the DCWD are on private wells.

We have the Descanso Detention Facility in our Planning area. It is located just south (about 1/4 mile) of the Interstate 8 exit/entrance ramps off of Japatul Road on Campbell Ranch Road. They use a septic system and are groundwater dependent and do not import water to the facility. This is a San Diego County jail that is managed by the San Diego County Sheriff's department in conjunction with San Diego County Department of Public Works. There is a rate capacity of 440 beds. It has a transient but consistent inmate population of approximately 320 daily. Current staff consists of 59 sworn staff and 20 professional staff. The 2000 Census population for Descanso does not include staff or the inmate population. In recent years, there has been no problem with escapes or violence that has affected the community of Descanso. New security measures have been installed over the years. There is a keypad and locked gate at the entrance. The facility has 2 perimeter fences; the main exterior fence and an interior fence. Fences are reinforced by razor wire across the top and anti-grab wire mesh. There are security cameras installed throughout the facility. Lighting is in accordance with County standards. The Descanso Detention Facility acts as good neighbor to the community and is responsive to questions and concerns regarding the Facility. Citizens in the area have not voiced concerns with Facility.

The following is a list of the existing of community facilities and infrastructure:

- Descanso Detention Facility
- California Riding and Hiking Trail
- Scenic Highway 79
- Interstate 8
- Viejas Grade Road
- Viejas Boulevard
- Boulder Creek Road
- San Diego County Fleet Operations/County Fueling Site
- Descanso Community Water District
- Descanso Fire Station (#45)
- Descanso Elementary School
- Joint Use Facility/Descanso Elementary School and Descanso Community Park
- Descanso Library
- Monopine Cell Site
- Forest Service Fire Station
- Post Office
- Descanso Town Hall
- Refuse Disposal/Waste Transfer Station Operated by Ramona Landfill Inc.
- CAL TRANS/Descanso Maintenance Station
- San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) Substation on Boulder creek and Oak Grove

## **f. Public Safety**

We are prone to high winds and Santa Ana/high pressure east wind conditions. Winds of over 50 miles per hour (mph) sustained and wind gusts of over 80 mph have been recorded in Descanso and throughout the backcountry. The natural disaster of wind driven vegetation fires, or firestorms, as they come to be called, is one that continually threatens our safety. Interstate 8 is closed periodically due to these wind conditions. More frequently, 1-8 is closed to high profile vehicles during windy conditions. This causes school closures. The Descanso Fire Station is staffed with 5 full time employees. There is one Captain, two engineers, and two firefighters. They are all CALFIRE (CDF) state employees. They are also staffed by part-time volunteers and reserves. They can respond to other areas, but this station is called a "Must Cover" station. If they are called out to respond to a fire in another area, they will back fill with another engine. The Descanso Fire Station is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The response time for a firefighter to inside the truck and leaving the station is 1 minute during the day and 3 minutes at night. San Diego Rural Fire provides fire engines, station houses, and equipment for the Fire Station.

The Fire Safe Council works in conjunction with the Descanso Fire Department. Since the 2003 Cedar Fire, Descanso residents are more acutely aware of the danger of wildfire. Firefighters do inspections on properties in their area. San Diego Rural offers free chipping. Two chippers are available and will go to a private property. Appointments for this free service are set up through the Jamul Fire Station.

Fuel Management by property owners is critical to the safety of the entire community. Fuel Management of public and private lands is critical to the safety of the entire community. We encourage fuel load reductions through controlled burns, fuel breaks, mechanized and hand brush clearing, grazing, and other methods. Handbooks with instructions and advice on defensible space and smart landscaping choices are available at the Fire Stations. We encourage fire resistant trees and plants in landscaping. New homes should be built to fire resistant standards. Safe ingress and egress for residents is a priority. Descanso is flanked by two bridges. The two lane narrow roads in Descanso must be maintained and congestion free. Viejas Boulevard, Oak Grove, Viejas Grade, River Drive, and Riverside Drive serve as our evacuation routes. We have a Disaster Preparedness Plan for our Community.

The only San Diego County Sheriff's Department Substation within the area is the Pine Valley substation. The substation is staffed with 5 deputies. They are resident deputies. Due to the large area this substation covers and whether the deputy is dispatched from his home or the facility, response times can vary significantly.

## **g. Future Trends / Sustainability**

The State Park, Cleveland National Forest, local small businesses, the Elementary school, the Post Office, and the Library provide some employment opportunities. However, most residents will continue to commute to employment outside of the community. Residents enjoy coming home to their rural, quiet, and peaceful homes. We have a very low incidence of crime in Descanso. We want to continue this trend in our community.

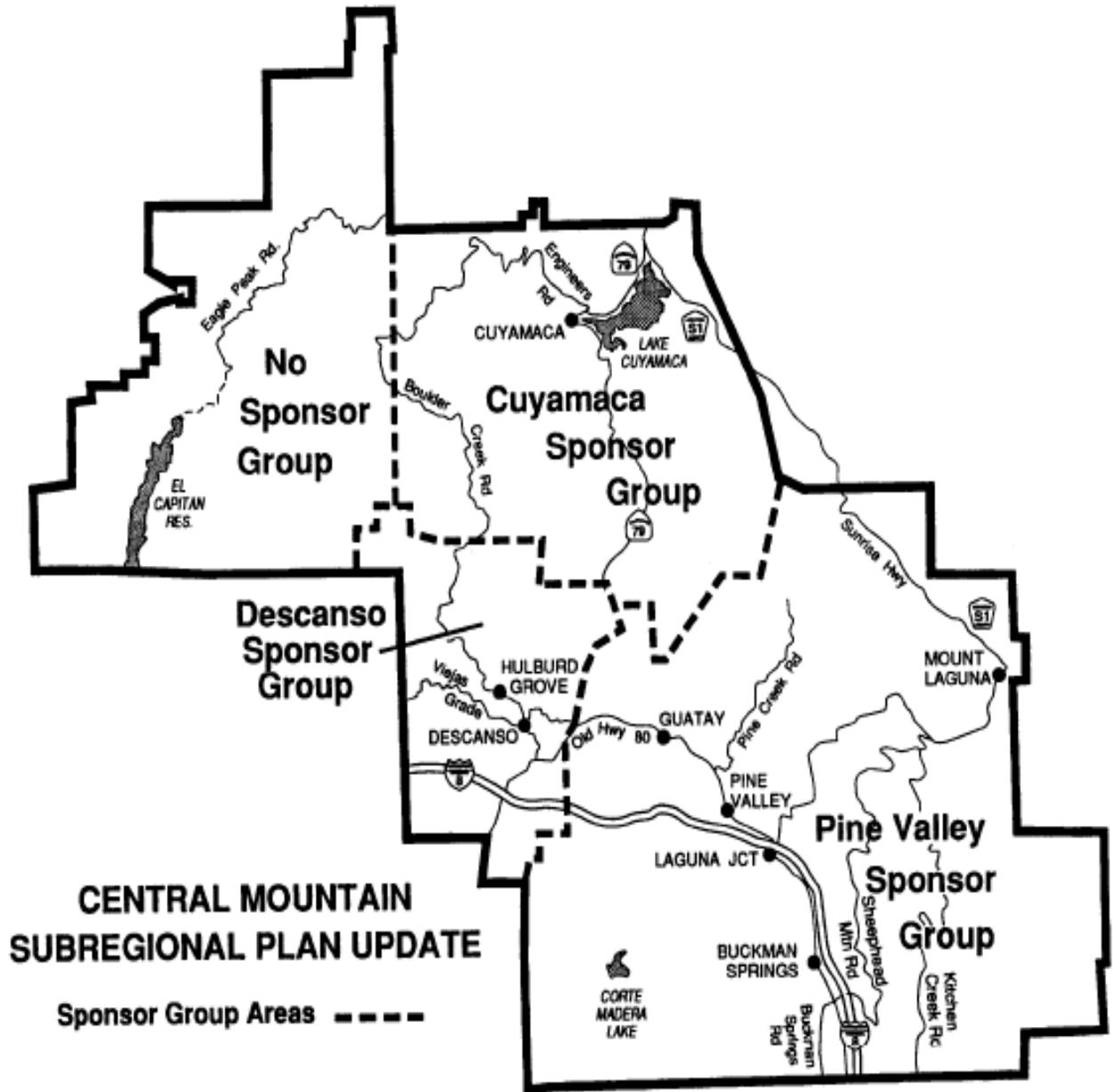
The recurring theme among the backcountry Planning Groups is slow growth. Descanso residents are part of this mindset. A slow influx of new residents while maintaining our open space and ranchlands is how we foresee sustainability of our natural resources and our rural lifestyle. Due to climate change, groundwater has receded in certain areas of Descanso. Springs have dried up and only after several sustained years of rainfall can we recover from the effects of over two decades of drought conditions. We need to meet the needs of our existing population. A small percentage of our population is already importing water and we do not want this number to increase.

If our roads become congested, our safety is threatened. Our safety and all of our natural resources are threatened by overdevelopment. The future trend of our community will be property owner's rights. It is a property owner's right to have sustainable property values. It is a property owner's right to have the expectation of protection of the quality and quantity of groundwater in their community. Care must be taken not to overdraft the aquifers by overdevelopment. It is a property owner's right to have an expectation of safety and wellbeing. This goal of sustainability for Descanso residents can be reached by the commitment to carefully managed planning and land use.

We support the undergrounding of electrical lines to retain the natural beauty and rural character of the community, and as a means by which to reduce fire hazard.



Figure 6: Central Mountain Subregional Group Areas



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# Central Mountain Joint Community Vision

This Central Mountain Vision Statement was developed jointly by the Cuyamaca Sponsor Group and the Descanso Planning Group.

## **Who We Are**

Two small backcountry communities, located within the Central Mountain Subregion of San Diego County, offer residents and visitors places to live, work, and play in settings dominated by the beauty of the natural environment and wide open spaces. Made up of the communities of Cuyamaca, and Descanso, , these small rural villages are separated by appreciable distances and are physically isolated from each other by mountain ranges and plateaus, meadows and valleys, river courses and watersheds, agricultural lands, and public land preserves. Although each community has been uniquely shaped by their environs, we all share a common vision. The focus of our unified vision is the protection and preservation of our area's intrinsic beauty, its natural resources, and wildlife habitat, as well as the safety and well-being of area residents and visitors.

## **Our Physical Settings**

Each of our communities has developed around natural land features in settings that differ from the others and these features help to define our unique identities. The tiny mountain village of Cuyamaca drapes hillsides beside scenic Lake Cuyamaca and its broad picturesque montane mountain valley. Descanso hides away in foothills and folds that overlook fertile agricultural lands in the upper Sweetwater Valley. Public lands, State Parks, and the Cleveland National Forest, set aside to conserve natural resources, water, woodlands, and unspoiled views, border our communities as agricultural lands provide natural transitions at wildland interfaces.

## **Our Community Character**

Within the Central Mountain Subregion, we preserve and respect our venerable and historic structures in the form of lodges, halls and restaurants, churches and residences, barns, and bridges. Our compact utilitarian commercial cores represent a very small percentage of our overall land use and provide essential local services for area residents and visitors. Limited pockets of residential development spread outward from our village centers to areas where they fit well within their surroundings. The lack of tract housing developments and larger commercial centers further defines and enhances the unique character of our backcountry communities. It is the combination of these factors that contribute to our quaint rural ambiance and charm. Because of limited infrastructure and limited natural resources like groundwater, any further growth must be carefully managed. Any growth must also complement our natural rural landscape and adhere to our community character.

Our communities are gateways to recreational opportunities. We place an extremely high value on recreational opportunities provided by open space and community trails

which offer pedestrians, equestrians, and mountain bikers access to federal, State and County Parks. As committed backcountry stewards, we believe in the preservation of clean air and dark skies, mature woodlands and open spaces, natural resources, and water quality. These core values are reflected in our rural lifestyles and make up some of the essential components of our community character.

### **Our Connections**

Circulation elements between roadways connecting the communities of the Central Mountain Subregion consist primarily of narrow, twisting scenic two-lane highways that bisect large open vistas. Old Highway 80, a designated historic rural road serves Descanso. Sunrise Highway is a national scenic byway that provides the sole means of travel to the village of Cuyamaca. Highway 79 traverses a scenic route next to Lake Cuyamaca, through Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, and connects to Descanso. Descanso has easy access to Interstate 8. While the heavy traffic associated with seasonal recreational visitors, highway accidents, and winter snows may impede movement between our communities, we wish a balance between having safe and well maintained roads and keeping these roads at current capacities to help retain the rural character of our Subregion.

### **Our Economy**

Within our Subregion, a limited number of locally-based businesses provide services that support a rural customer base and the flow of seasonal recreational visitors and tourists. These businesses, along with utilities like power and water companies, a small number of schools and the Subregion's surviving agricultural concerns, offer limited employment opportunities for residents. Governmental agencies, such as the County Sheriff's Department and library system, the California Department of Forestry, the U.S. Postal Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Department of Homeland Security Border Patrol, round out other employment options within our Subregion. Larger commercial concerns, such as Indian casinos and shopping centers, border our Subregion and provide employment nearby. And, just as elsewhere in the County, residents also commute to work farther outside our Subregion, are self-employed, work out of their homes, or are retired. Our Subregion suffers from a lack of adequate public transportation systems that could support daily commuting.

Accepting that our Subregion will only support limited economic opportunities, we strike a balance between our need to preserve our rural landscape with its precious natural resources and any need for economic growth which would change, without necessarily improving, our rural environment. Conservation of limited groundwater is a prime factor directing economic development. With land use policies that reflect this balance, future economic intensification, with possibly suburban expansion following, is not anticipated nor is it desired.

### **Our Safety**

Because we live in tight-knit communities that share a mutual respect for our

environment and our neighbors, our residents volunteer and support many unique community self-help organizations. Through local workshops we receive training in disaster preparedness. Our citizens participate in a variety of civic planning groups, town hall and community center boards, school and local water boards. We serve as senior volunteers with the Sheriff's Department and in the Cleveland National Forest.

Having experienced devastating wildfires in the past, preventing future wildfires is a top priority. We augment our community fire protection providers as volunteer firefighters, support personnel, and members of Community Emergency Response Teams. Fire Safe Councils have become a means to implement fuel management policies. These volunteer efforts contribute a critical margin of safety in a region with sparse fire protection and law enforcement resources.

### **Our Future**

The Central Mountain Subregion is perhaps one of the few remaining areas within the County that still offers visitors a chance to escape their fast-paced urban lifestyle and recall with nostalgia, the essence of life in a small mountain village. As nearby suburban populations continue to increase, it is of the utmost importance that the natural beauty of our local rural landscapes and vital character of our small villages be treasured and preserved for future generations.

## 1. COMMUNITY CHARACTER

### GOALS

1. THE PRESERVATION OF THE SMALL-TOWN, RURAL CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITIES IN THE SUBREGION AND THE NATURAL AMBIANCE OF MOUNTAINS, HILLS, VALLEYS, AND PUBLIC LANDS.
2. THE PROTECTION OF EXISTING VEGETATION, WILDLIFE, AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES.
3. RETENTION OF THE SUBREGION'S LOW DENSITY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT.

### FINDINGS

The Central Mountain Subregion contains seven areas with their own unique identities, but with similar natural characteristics, such as topography, undisturbed habitats, dependence on groundwater, and large acreages of public lands. These areas are: Cuyamaca, Descanso, and land north of El Capitan Reservoir. The Central Mountain Subregion is one of the most scenic areas of the County of San Diego. It is a recreational resource for the whole County and offers urbanites a place to experience the tranquility and the beauty of undisturbed nature.

San Diego County has experienced a rapid rate of growth in rural unincorporated areas, which has diminished the identity of these areas. There exists a need to preserve a rural form of life-style within San Diego County in spite of pressures to urbanize rural areas, particularly those within the urban fringe.

### POLICIES

#### A. GENERAL

1. Consider adopting a Tree Preservation or Protection Ordinance to preserve significant trees in the Subregion. [CP]
2. Preserve mature healthy trees, whenever possible, in all public and private developments, except when recommended for removal by a professional forester or by a Fire Protection District to promote the health of the forest. [PP]
3. Stands and forests of oaks, coniferous, and deciduous trees should be conserved to maintain the ambiance which defines the character of the communities in the Subregion. [CP]
4. Open space easements should be placed over all significant stands of native vegetation, as identified in the environmental analysis. [CP]

5. Discretionary permit requests should identify trees that may need to be removed and provide for three replacement trees, preferably of the same species, for each tree removed at appropriate locations elsewhere on the subject property. Replacement trees are to be healthy and maintained until established. [PP]
6. Creeks, rivers, and wetlands shall be preserved as scenic open space and should be maintained in as natural a state as possible. [PP]
7. Enhance the community character of the Subregion by incorporating significant natural features, such as native vegetation and rock outcroppings, into the design of residential developments. [CP]
8. Grading shall be strictly limited so that structures conform to the natural terrain. [CP]
9. Revegetate and landscape all manufactured slopes subject to a Grading Permit, Major Use Permit or Site Plan, using native or naturalizing plants. [PP]
10. Require large developments to utilize a variety of site orientations, roof lines, exterior building materials, and colors so as to avoid uniform tract-like housing developments and to comply with sustainable building technologies and practices. [PP]
11. Clustered projects may be allowed, only if at least 40 percent of the project is in a permanent open space easement. Clustered housing is an option if the number of dwelling units proposed is not more than the lot yield that could be obtained by the current General Plan density. The area where clusters of lots are proposed that are smaller than required by the Zone should not exceed 25 percent of the gross acreage. That core shall be located so as to minimize the visual impact to the community. [PP]
12. Preserve the rural character by not requiring urban-scale improvements, such as sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and street lighting, where the public health, safety, and welfare is not endangered. [PP, DPW]
13. All major subdivisions requiring major grading permits shall have an approved landscaping plan. [PP]
14. Encourage the preservation and addition of hiking and riding trails. [PP, DPW]
15. Recreational Vehicle Parks shall be sensitively designed and in scale and harmony with the Subregion and surrounding communities. [PP]

16. Enforce animal regulations in order to maintain rural lifestyle, while recognizing that animals on small lots can create nuisances for neighbors. [PP, AP]
17. Retain minimum lot sizes outside the Rural Villages to four acres for designations of SR10 or lower, whenever feasible. [PP]

B. CUYAMACA

1. Require architectural styles to reflect the historic past of Cuyamaca. Wood and stone materials, used singly or in combination, shall be the predominant materials for all exteriors. [PP]
2. Require residential developments on 20 acres or more to provide a variety of house designs in harmony with existing homes in the area. [PP]

C. DESCANSO

1. Discourage, unless the preservation of open space, significant resources, habitat, and community character results in a better subdivision design, Clustered Development Projects and Conservation Subdivisions within the community of Descanso.
2. Discourage the development of Recreational Vehicle Parks within Descanso as they are out of scale, harmony and character of the rural community. Adequate facilities for RV Parks already exist on Public Lands within the Cuyamaca State Park and the Cleveland National Forest.

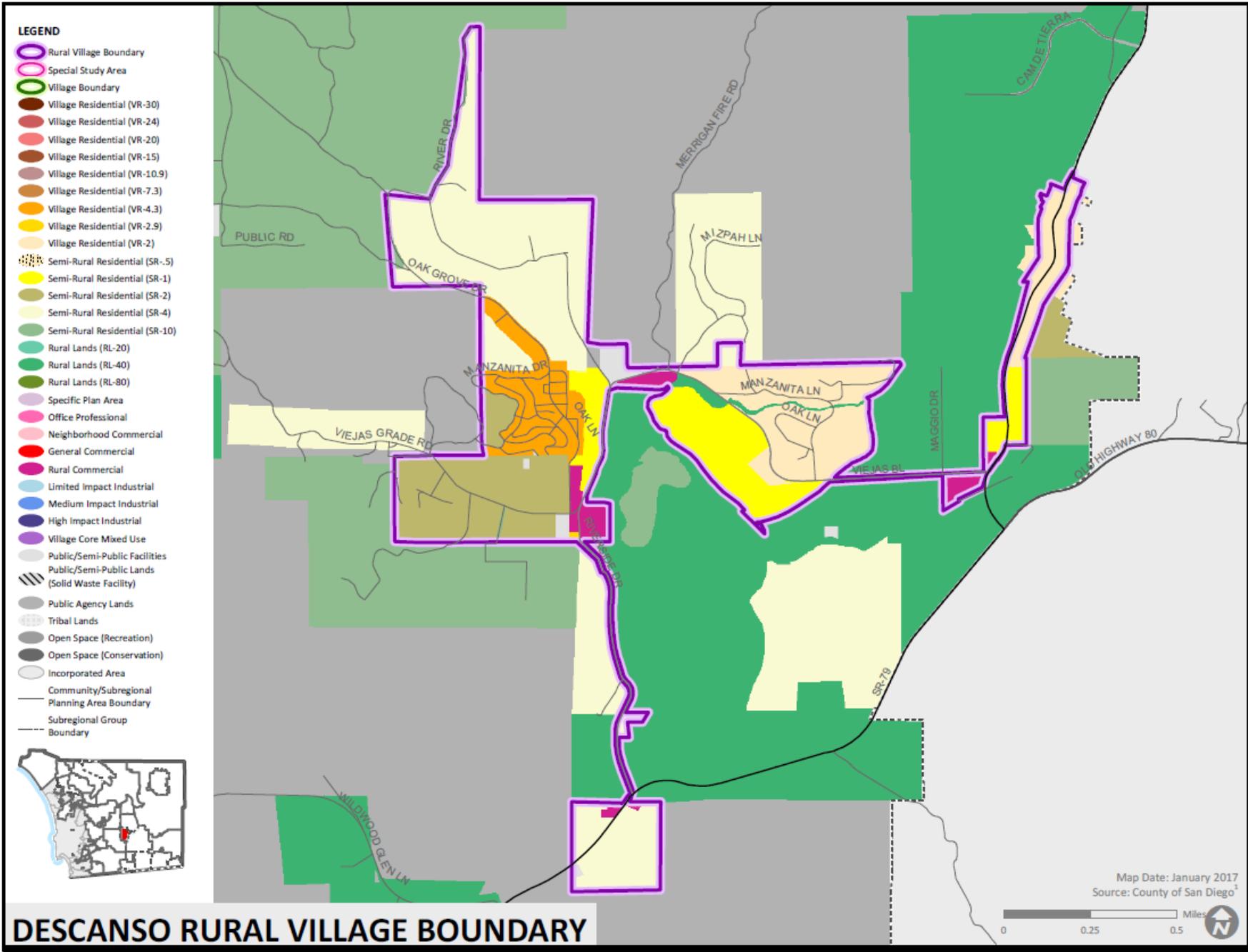


Figure 6

## 2. LAND USE

### GENERAL

#### GOALS

##### A. GENERAL

1. THE PRESERVATION OF THE INTEGRITY OF THE CLEVELAND NATIONAL FOREST, ANZA BORREGO STATE PARK, AND THE CUYAMACA RANCHO STATE PARK BY MINIMIZING IMPACTS OF ACTIVITIES ON PRIVATE INHOLDINGS OR ADJACENT PROPERTIES.
2. THE PRESERVATION OF A LOW-DENSITY PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT WITH A MINIMAL LEVEL OF CONVENIENCE SERVICES.
3. THE RETENTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE RURAL CHARACTER OF CENTRAL MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES.
4. THE PRESERVATION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL HABITAT OF WILDLIFE TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE.

#### FINDINGS

A Table of Land Use Designations in the Cuyamaca and Descanso Land Use Maps is provided as Table LU-1 in the General Plan Land Use Element. This Table breaks down land ownership according to Private, Public and Indian Reservations. Even though the County does not have jurisdiction over Federal, State and Indian Reservation lands, such lands constitute such a large percentage of the Subregion.

The Central Mountain Subregion contains two unique and charming communities: Cuyamaca and Descanso. These communities vary in size and level of convenience services. Each of these communities are described in the background information section of this community plan.

## POLICIES

### A. GENERAL

1. Projects on private lands shall not depend on using public lands for siting facilities, such as water storage tanks, wells, roads, etc.; unless the concerned public agency agrees that there is no other feasible alternative. [PP]
2. No residential development is proposed on Cleveland National Forest lands. However, should these lands be exchanged or sold to private persons, the properties should be rezoned so as to establish the same density and intensity of land use as is allowed on adjacent and similar private lands. [DPLU]
3. Require development to identify adequate groundwater resources in compliance with Land Use Element Policy LU-8.2 and require all projects proposing a significant increase in water consumption to submit a water study before such a project is approved. A water study must show, without doubt, that sufficient water will be available for the expected life of the proposed project and that water quality and neighboring properties will not be negatively affected. [PP]
4. Discourage land uses that would result in traffic volumes that would adversely impact a community's rural lifestyle. [CP] (Descanso Agree)
5. Preserve areas with rare, unique, or endangered wildlife and plants. [PP]
6. Encourage the County, State, and Federal governments to protect the groundwater system. [GEN]
7. All new and existing electrical utilities, telephone, and cable shall be put underground for safety and a more reliable systems operation, whenever feasible, and not damaging to the environment. [PP]
8. All developments/remodeling in the community shall preserve the rural qualities of the area, minimize traffic congestion, and not adversely affect the natural environment. [PP]
9. No development shall be permitted on significant or prominent mountain tops, ridgelines, or summits. [PP]
10. In order to preserve the natural terrain, extensive, unsightly, or severe grading for development, both private and public, shall be prohibited. [PP]
11. Parcels within agricultural areas or Semi-Rural and Rural lands are to maintain rural character, protect steep slopes, preserve and protect open space and agriculture, discourage water intensive crops, and encourage drip irrigation and/or irrigation conservation systems. [PP]

12. Permit mixed rural land uses, such as cottage industries, residences, agricultural sale of farm related products (not necessarily home-grown). [AP]
13. Minimize impacts of activities on public lands onto private lands. [GEN]

B. DESCANSO

1. Encourage and support the existing, developed private residences in the Hulburd Grove Federal US Forest Service housing tract, in Descanso, into proceeding with the process of parcelization through the Planned Land Exchange. [GEN]

**LAND USE DESIGNATION BY OWNERSHIP AND BY PLAN DESIGNATION**

DESCANSO SUBREGIONAL GROUP AREA

<u>PLAN DESIGNATION</u>	<u>OWNERSHIP</u>	PERCENTAGES
VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL 2	PRIVATE	0.5%
VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL 4.3	PRIVATE	0.2%
SEMI-RURAL RESIDENTIAL 1	PRIVATE	0.4%
SEMI-RURAL RESIDENTIAL 2	PRIVATE	0.5%
SEMI-RURAL RESIDENTIAL 4	PRIVATE	2.2%
SEMI-RURAL RESIDENTIAL 10	PRIVATE	8.6%
RURAL COMMERCIAL	PRIVATE	0.1%
RURAL LANDS 40*	PRIVATE	18.4%
RURAL LANDS 80	PRIVATE	3.9%
PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC	PUBLIC	2.4%
PUBLIC AGENCY LANDS	PUBLIC	60.6%
NO PLAN	INDIAN RESERVATION	2.2%
	TOTAL ACRES	20,941

## **RESIDENTIAL**

### **GOALS**

1. THE PRESERVATION OF EXISTING LANDFORMS AND THE CONTINUITY OF NATURAL HORIZON LINES WITH A LACK OF VISUAL INTERRUPTIONS.
2. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT DESIGNED TO CONSERVE WATER.
3. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT THAT PRIMARILY CONSISTS OF SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLINGS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE RURAL ATMOSPHERE AND AMBIANCE OF THE AREA.
4. THE PRESERVATION OF THE NATURAL LANDFORMS AND NATIVE VEGETATION AROUND RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES THAT PRESERVE THE OVERALL OPEN CHARACTER AND SCENIC QUALITY OF THE SUBREGION.
5. EXPANDED USE OF GREEN BUILDING PROGRAMS AND TECHNIQUES IN THE BACKCOUNTRY

### **FINDINGS**

The Subregional Group Areas in the Subregion are characterized by large lot single-family residential development, grazing and dry farming lands, and undisturbed open space and mountains outside of the towns. Many homes are built of natural materials, such as rock and wood. Groundwater supply and natural constraints, such as sensitive habitats and steep slopes, limit the number of households that can be accommodated.

In the rural villages, many homes are built on lots as small as 4,000 square feet. These homes are on individual septic systems that generally function well due to porous soils. They were built at a time when the towns were vacation resorts and when only a 50 percent reserve area was required. Today, the Department of Health and Human Services requires 100 percent reserve areas, which amounts to 400 feet of lines and 400 feet reserve area for a three bedroom home.

The Subregion's population has changed in the past few years from a predominance of retired households to a more balanced population of retirees and families. The needs of children must be addressed together with the needs of an elderly population.

There appears to still be a balance in the Central Mountain communities between people who both work and live in the Subregion and those residents who spend most of the weekdays in more urban communities. This balance has preserved these communities from becoming bedroom communities.

There are 243 recreation residences in the Descanso Ranger District area of the Cleveland National Forest in tracts established long ago when public recreation in

the National Forests was just beginning. The table below lists the number of recreation residences by tract and area. As a result of the growing demand for recreation sites, no new tracts are being established. Those who own the recreation residences own only the improvements; the land belongs to the United States Government. Special use permits for recreation residences are issued for terms up to 20 years, and are for recreation residences only, not for primary residences.

## POLICIES

### A. GENERAL

1. Prohibit the creation of new lots with lot sizes of less than four acres (or the zoning minimum lot size, if that is less than four acres) outside of Rural Village boundaries, unless specifically exempted in this text. [CP]
2. Whenever possible, structures shall be designed to tuck into the natural hillside and conform to the natural contours of the land. No Portion of any structures will be permitted on or above the ridgeline. [PP]
3. Residential structures on steep slopes shall be generally oriented such that their greatest horizontal axis or axes are parallel to the predominant natural contours of the site. [PP]

4. Manufactured slopes shall be rounded and contoured to resemble natural slopes and shall be concealed to the maximum extent possible by building on or in front of them. [PP]
5. Roads and driveways shall follow slope contours unless such design would result in significantly greater grading or visual impact. [PP]
6. Roof forms should be stepped or otherwise articulated so as to avoid long unbroken roof lines, so long as it does not preclude technology for solar systems or green roofs. [PP]
7. Scale, style, exterior colors, and materials of residential structures should be harmonious with the site and vicinity, including existing residential structures. [PP]
8. Landscaping on hillsides and ridgelines shall not significantly alter the natural landform silhouette, and should be composed primarily of indigenous, drought-tolerant plants. [PP]
9. Grading and brushing shall be strictly limited to building pads, access roads, and fuel breaks as required by the responsible fire protection district or as recommended by a professional forester to promote the health of the forest. [PP]
10. Residential development should not be allowed unless adequate facilities can serve and protect the proposed number of structures. [CP]
11. Discourage tract developments, clustering, conservation subdivisions, and major subdivisions that are out of scale and harmony with the character of the rural community. [PP]
12. Lots abutting Cuyamaca Rancho and Anza Borrego State Parks and the Cleveland National Forest shall establish no access, such as roadways and trails, to the Park or Forest unless such access is permitted by the Park Superintendent or the Forest Ranger. [PP]

**B. DESCANSO**

1. Within the rural village, to preserve the community character, larger lots should generally be located on the more visible flat land and on the steep slopes, and smaller lots should generally be located on the foothills of gentler slopes. [PP]

## **COMMERCIAL**

### **GOALS**

#### **A. GENERAL**

1. COMMERCIAL USES THAT ARE LIMITED TO THOSE THAT PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND DO NOT ADVERSELY IMPACT THE DARK SKY, AIR QUALITY, NOISE, AND/OR GROUNDWATER GOALS.

#### **B. CUYAMACA**

1. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT THAT IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT LIMITED TO ONLY SUPPORTING LOW INTENSITY RECREATIONAL USES AND THOSE SERVICES ESSENTIAL TO THE SUBREGION'S RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

#### **C. DESCANSO**

1. COMMERCIAL USES THAT ARE LOCATED IN THE RURAL VILLAGES AND PRIMARILY SERVE RESIDENTS.
2. COMMERCIAL USES ORIENTED TO VISITORS AND HIGHWAY TRAVELERS LOCATED AT INTERSECTIONS WITH STATE HIGHWAYS.
3. ALL COMMERCIAL ZONING IS LOCATED WITHIN THE COUNTRY TOWN OR AT INTERSECTIONS WITH STATE HIGHWAYS.
4. COMMERCIAL USES THAT PRESERVE THE RURAL CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING LOCALE.

## **FINDINGS**

The two communities of Cuyamaca and Descanso in the Central Mountain Subregion offer a variety of limited commercial services. These businesses are generally concentrated at major intersections or along Old Highway 80, Highway 79, Viejas Boulevard, and Sunrise Highway, and provide limited convenience services for residents and visitors. Most of the commercial needs of residents are met in the more urban communities to the west or in Julian. The location, size, and scale of existing commercial uses appear to be quite compatible with the two communities. Any change to the existing commercial nodes must be done carefully, so as not to disturb the balance that exists.

### **CUYAMACA**

Cuyamaca has one commercial business, the Lake Cuyamaca Recreation and Park District, consisting of a restaurant, store, tackle shop, boat rental facility, and R.V. campground. Residents meet their commercial needs in Julian or "down the hill". The water supply may be too limited to support other businesses of this type.

## DESCANSO

- A: Descanso is different from the rest of the Central Mountain Subregion regarding its commercial properties. The placement of its commercial properties is uncommon. There exist three completely separate and distinct commercial properties. The first is the Bohemia/Descanso Junction section of Descanso on the corner of Highway 79 and Riverside Drive. It has approximately 2 acres that support historically established commercial uses; all uses should be compatible with community character. The second is on the corner of Viejas Blvd. and Viejas Grade, located in the commercial core of the community; it supports the Post Office, gas station, convenience store, and two other businesses, all of which are rural in nature. Across the Street on Viejas Blvd is an approximately 1 acre property that is designated Rural Commercial. Across the street on Viejas Boulevard is a small plant nursery that is currently zoned A70 Agricultural. This property is approximately 12 acres of which 3 acres is currently being used as commercial and necessitates a change in designation to Rural Commercial. The third property is located on the corner of Viejas Blvd and Highway 79. It is approximately 1 acre and supports a convenience store and produce stand.
- B. There is an existing County House that is boarded up on the corner of Viejas Blvd and Viejas Grade. It is located within the existing commercial center of Descanso. It is directly in front of the County fueling station. This property should be either demolished and the site cleaned up or preferably renovated into a Community Center for the residents of Descanso. This is a detriment to the community that affects property values and the rural character of the community.

## POLICIES

1. All new commercial uses shall be consistent with the communities' design or scenic preservation objectives and criteria. [PP]
2. Commercial uses should be located in areas, which not only have adequate roads for vehicular circulation, but also provide safe access for pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists. [PP]
3. Highway commercial structures should incorporate the significant design elements found in the nearby community. [PP]
4. Provide appropriate commercial zoning designations to support agricultural activities. [CP]
5. Require commercial uses through appropriate zoning to be located on adequately sized roads, and to be compatible with surrounding non-commercial uses. [PP]
6. Trash sites for commercial properties should be enclosed with the kinds of materials used on the building, or landscaped with drought tolerant plantings. [PP]
7. Heating and cooling equipment shall be located inside buildings, or if located outside shall be in an enclosure and baffled in order to reduce noise. [PP]
8. Conducting a business from a Recreation Residence on National Forest tracts shall be prohibited. [GEN]
9. Commercial activities should be limited to existing commercial areas. [PP]
10. Discourage commercial establishments of high water consumption. [PP]
11. Prohibit commercial activities that generate visual unsightliness, excessive noise, unpleasant odors, light pollution, air pollution, or health hazards. [PP]
12. Off-site commercial billboards should be prohibited. [PP]

## INDUSTRIAL

### GOALS

1. RESTRICT INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS TO THOSE THAT SERVE THE RESIDENTS AND ARE COMPATIBLE WITH THE RURAL AND SCENIC CHARACTER OF THE SUBREGION, AND TO THOSE INDUSTRIAL USES THAT DO NOT ADVERSELY IMPACT THE DARK SKY, AIR QUALITY, NOISE, AND/OR GROUNDWATER GOALS IN THE CONSERVATION CHAPTER.
2. IN ALL AREAS DEPENDENT UPON GROUNDWATER QUALITY: PROHIBIT FACILITIES THAT WILL TRANSPORT, USE, AND/OR STORE SUCH QUANTITIES OF TOXIC SUBSTANCES AS A PART OF THEIR NORMAL OPERATION BECAUSE OF THE POTENTIAL DEVASTATING IMPACT TO GROUNDWATER THAT COULD RESULT FROM LEAKAGE OR SPILLS.
3. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT THAT MINIMIZES IMPACTS ON DARK SKIES, AIR QUALITY, NOISE, AND GROUNDWATER QUALITY WITHIN THE SUBREGION,

### FINDINGS

Remoteness from urban centers and lack of imported water and sanitation systems are constraints to industrial development in the Subregion. Moreover, the desire of residents to keep their communities rural and free from urban nuisances will limit future industrial development to businesses that serve the residents and ranchers. Excessive noise, light pollution, and adverse visual and environmental impacts associated with some types of industrial developments would alter the rural and scenic character of the Subregion.

### CUYAMACA

The Cuyamaca area does not support any industrial uses at present. The only individual uses that may be compatible with the area are those that are classified in the Zoning Ordinance as Custom Manufacturing.

### DESCANSO

One light industrial operations exists in the Descanso area. Several miles out Boulder Creek Road there is an industrial operation located at Sherilton-King Creek, where portable school rooms are manufactured The cabinet shop in Merigan's barn and the borrow pit have closed down.

### POLICIES

1. All new industrial uses shall be discouraged. [PP]

## **AGRICULTURAL**

### **GOALS**

1. THE CONTINUED SUPPORT OF AGRICULTURAL PRESERVES THAT PROVIDE AND CONSERVE OPEN SPACE AND PREVENT THE CONVERSION OF OPEN LANDS TO MORE INTENSIVE USES.
2. AGRICULTURAL USES IN THE SUBREGION THAT HAVE ONLY MINIMAL IMPACTS ON GROUNDWATER SUPPLY AND QUALITY.
3. TRADITIONAL CATTLE GRAZING AND DRY LAND PRACTICES THAT PRESERVE OPEN SPACE, WILDLIFE HABITATS, AND THE RURAL CHARACTER AND ECOSYSTEMS OF THE AREA.

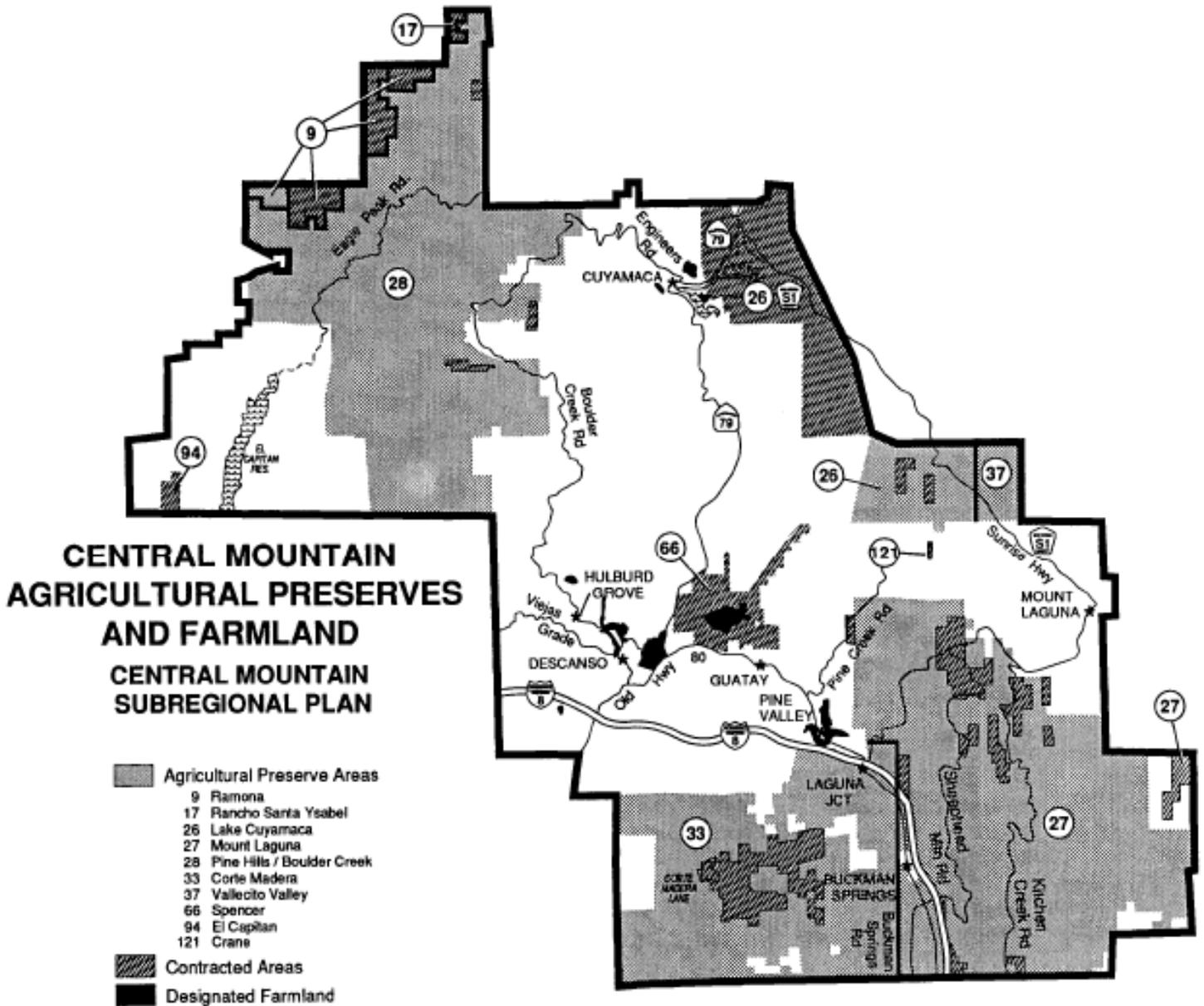
### **FINDINGS**

Agricultural uses in the Subregion include cattle grazing, small-scale animal husbandry, and dry land oat/hay farming. Other agricultural pursuits are limited by the availability of water and the climate. Dry land farming provides a valuable agricultural commodity and has a positive effect on the local economy. The preservation of productive agricultural lands is of national significance.

The Williamson Act enables local governments to contract with landowners to keep their land in agricultural and open space uses. Implementing the Williamson Act requires setting up agricultural preserves. The preserves are limited to agricultural and compatible uses, as defined by the local legislature. Agricultural preserves are encouraged because they provide and conserve open space and prevent the conversion of open lands to more intensive uses. A map of agricultural preserves and farmland is provided in Figure 8.

San Diego is generally a "Fence-In" County. It is the responsibility of individual property owners to fence their properties to keep their livestock from wandering onto others' properties.

Figure 9: Central Mountain Agricultural Preserves and Farmland



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## POLICIES

1. Where commercial zones are allowed by the Plan, provide for commercial uses that support agricultural activities. [CP]
2. Apply appropriate Animal Designators on agricultural lands. [CP]
3. Buffer residential neighborhoods from intensive agricultural uses. [CP]
4. Clearing the land of native vegetation should be discouraged; any land cleared should be limited to what is required; any land cleared and not used should be replanted to blend in with the natural surroundings. [CP, DPW]
5. Discourage nuisance-prone heavy agriculture, such as commercial productions of poultry and swine, and feed lots. [CP]
6. Consult existing biological inventories and utilize for the protection and management of agricultural lands. [CP]
7. Discourage conversion of agricultural lands to residential uses.

## **CIVIC**

### **GOALS**

1. THE CAREFUL INTEGRATION OF CIVIC DEVELOPMENT WITH THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE, AND MINIMIZATION OF VISUAL IMPACTS ON THE COMMUNITY'S RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS BY RETAINING IMPORTANT NATURAL FEATURES, LANDFORMS, AND SCENIC RESOURCES.

### **FINDINGS**

Civic uses, such as churches and recreation centers, are important features in any community. Their potential land use and aesthetic impacts necessitate that they be reviewed carefully.

### **POLICIES**

#### **A. General**

1. Require new civic structures to be designed to be compatible with the mountain village character of the communities in the Subregion. [CP]
2. Building surfaces over 50 feet in length should be relieved with changes of plane or architectural treatment that provide a strong vertical shadow line and visual interest. [CP]
3. Structures shall be compatible with neighboring structures with respect to scale and bulk. [CP]
4. Minimum slope on roofs shall be 4 to 12 pitch. Long unbroken rooflines shall be avoided. [CP]
5. Every structure should have some shadow relief. Offsets, projections, roof overhangs and recesses may be used to produce areas of relief. [CP]
6. Multi-building developments shall propose consistent design among the separate structures. [CP]
7. Facades and rooflines facing streets, parking areas, and residential neighborhoods shall be consistent in design, color, and materials throughout the development. [CP]
8. Architectural Elements and signage should be integrated into the design of the facade of structures. [CP]

#### **B. Building Materials**

1. Brick, native stone, wood siding, and exposed timber structural members are encouraged. [CP]
2. Concrete, concrete masonry with textured surfaces and integral color, and high contrast color glazed masonry are discouraged. [CP]

3. Clay or concrete tile, and composition shingles with a shadow line are encouraged roofing materials. [CP]
4. Colors shall be earthtones. [CP]

#### C. Walls and Fences

1. Solid fences or walls along public streets should be minimized and/or provide a change of plane at a minimum of 50 foot intervals. [CP]
2. Planting shrub masses or trees along fences or walls is encouraged. [CP]
3. Walls on sloping terrain should be stepped at regular intervals to follow the terrain. [CP]
4. Native stone, wrought iron, wood, brick, and chainlink materials are encouraged. [CP]
5. Open wire, except when heavily screened with landscaping, corrugated metal, brightly colored plastic coated materials, reed materials, and concrete block materials, are discouraged. [CP]

#### D. Site Details and Furnishings

1. The design, selection, and placement of all site furnishings, such as tables, benches, bollards, and trash receptacles, should be of a material and design compatible with the design guideline objectives listed herein. [CP]

#### E. Signage

1. Signs should be designed to communicate in a simple, clear, and uncluttered manner. They should be in character with the neighborhood and the buildings and uses they represent. [CP]
2. All signs should be of minimum size, and of a height not to exceed the highest portion of the building. All monument signs should be kept as low to the ground as possible. [CP]
3. The total sign area should be limited to one square foot per lineal foot of building frontage, up to a maximum of 50 square feet. All kiosk and pole signs should be limited to 10 feet in height. [CP]
4. Illumination should be projected onto the sign face. All sign illumination shall comply with 'dark sky' conditions due to the Mount Laguna Observatory. Color of all signs and components should be limited to three colors in addition to black and white. [CP]
5. The following signs should be prohibited: Internally illuminated signs, back lit signs that appear to be internally illuminated, signs that flash, blink, revolve, are in motion or give the illusion of motion, portable or mobile signs, and off-premise signs. [CP]

#### F. Site Lighting

1. Lighting should be used efficiently to aid safety, security, and to compliment architectural character without intrusion into adjacent properties, roadways, and the 'dark sky' conditions due to the Mount Laguna Observatory. [CP]

#### G. Building Equipment and Services

1. Building equipment, services, and trash receptacles should be carefully located and designed to minimize their visual impact on public streets and neighboring properties. [CP]
2. Heating and cooling equipment shall be located inside buildings, or if located outside, shall be in an enclosure and baffled in order to reduce noise. [CP]

#### H. Landscaping

1. Projects should demonstrate that a diligent effort has been made to retain as many significant trees as possible. Significant trees are defined as trees measuring more than 10 inches in diameter, or with a total diameter of any two trunks of at least 16 inches, as measured 4 feet above the root crown. [CP]
2. Significant natural features characteristics of the community's landscape shall be retained to the maximum extent possible. [CP]

#### I. Circulation and Parking

1. A clearly organized circulation plan for automobiles, pedestrians, and service vehicles should be provided. [CP]
2. Parking and service areas should be located and landscaped to minimize public view from roads and neighboring properties. [CP]
3. On hillside sites, roads shall follow existing land contours to the maximum extent possible. [CP]

## **PRIVATE INHOLDINGS IN OR LANDS ADJACENT TO U.S. FOREST SERVICE LANDS AND STATE PARKS**

### **GOALS**

1. THE PRESERVATION OF THE INTEGRITY OF THE CLEVELAND NATIONAL FOREST AND THE CUYAMACA RANCHO STATE PARK AND THEIR USES.
2. ACTIVITIES ON PUBLIC LANDS ARE LIMITED TO THOSE THAT ARE COMPATIBLE WITH PRIVATE PROPERTY.
3. OPEN SPACE CORRIDORS THAT MAINTAIN BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND PROVIDE VIABLE ACCESS FOR WILDLIFE TO AND FROM WATER, FOOD, AND BREEDING AREAS.

### **FINDINGS**

Administrators of both the U.S. Forest Service and the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park have expressed concern about the number of private landowners who have direct access to public lands, and who use this access to the detriment of the public lands. In many instances, trails have been created from the amount of use that these make-shift ingress receive. If such misuse continues and/or is intensified, significant damage to public lands may occur, including destruction of habitat, visual blight, erosion, or loss of rare and endangered species. Concern has also been expressed by the administrators of these public lands about the clearing of brush on public lands.

The Descanso and Palomar Ranger Districts of the Cleveland National Forest are highly fragmented with private lands, as shown on the Public/Private Lands Map shown in Figure 10 on page 79. These lands for the most part are the homesteads and ranches that were patented in the westward expansion prior to the establishment of the Cleveland National Forest. These homesteads and ranches were generally areas with good grass, trees, and water. The more rugged, drier tracts of public lands that were never patented were incorporated into Federal Land Reserves in 1892, and, in 1907, they became part of the Cleveland National Forest. From its creation, the Forest Service was directed to develop plans to acquire interior acreage through land exchange, outright purchase, or a combination of both. The dollars have never been available on a continuing basis to implement the Cleveland National Forest land adjustment plan.

As the County continues to urbanize, what little wildlife habitat still remains outside the National Forest is rapidly disappearing. The Cleveland National Forest and those privately held third generation family ranches inside the Forest together with scattered Bureau of Land Management, Indian Reservation lands, and State Park land will soon be the only wildlife habitat left in the County. Unfortunately, many of the family-owned ranches within the National Forest are facing a very uncertain

future. The drought has greatly reduced the number of livestock that can be grazed on private and public lands. The public's demand for beef is down and there is pressure to remove livestock from National Forest lands. Development of these properties is not an answer that San Diego's indigenous wildlife can live with. The current configuration of Cleveland National Forest lands cannot provide all the habitat requirements for San Diego County's remaining wildlife populations.

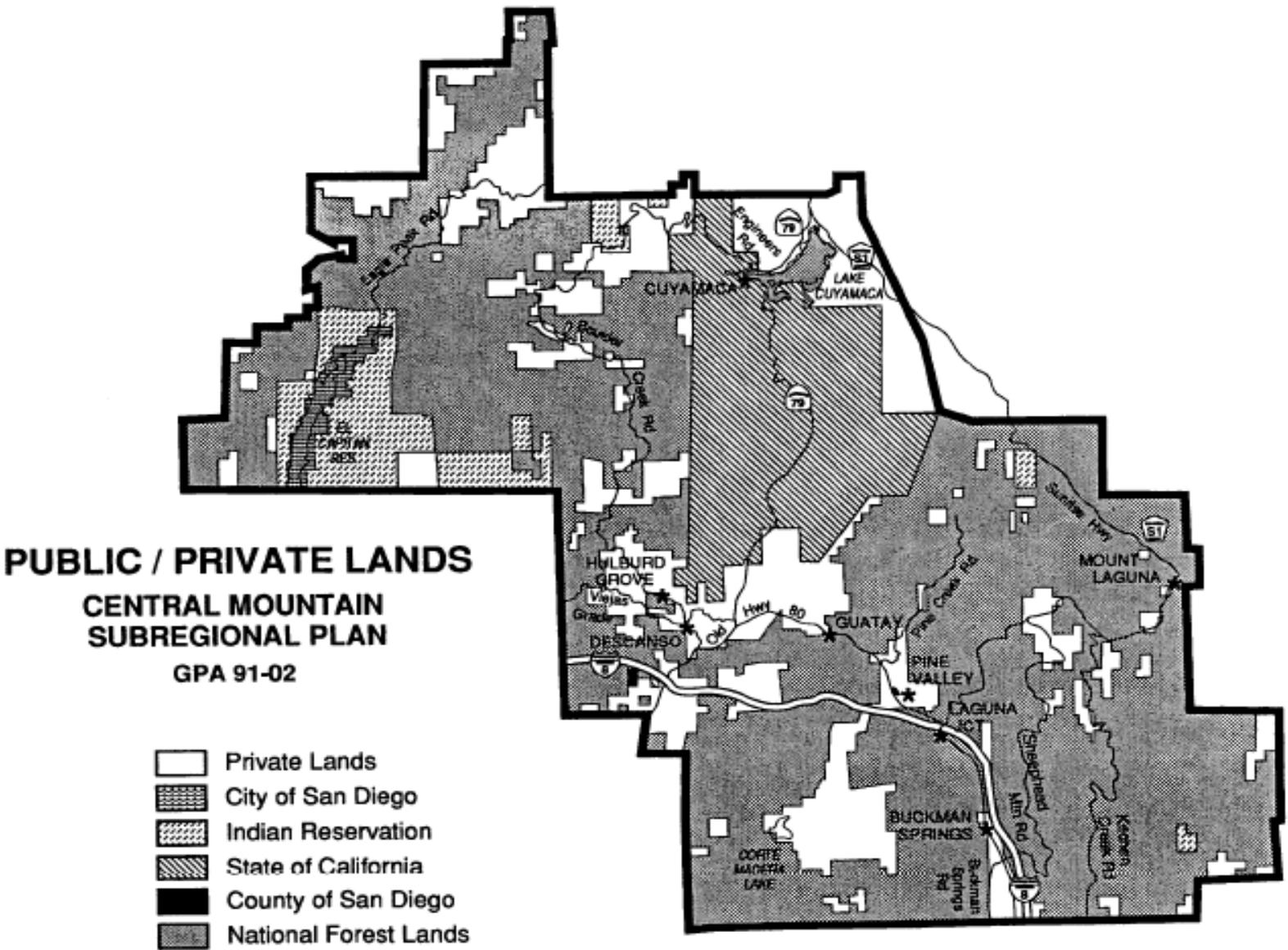
Many viable wildlife movement corridors existing on public lands continue for some distances onto private lands. Development insensitive to the movement and migration of certain species along these established corridors would effectively block animals' access to foraging and or breeding grounds.

## POLICIES

### GENERAL

1. All development on private inholdings or adjacent properties shall aim to minimize impacts on adjacent public lands, especially with regard to visual, biological, noise, and dark sky resources. [B]
2. Lots abutting the Cleveland National Forest or the Cuyamaca Rancho and Anza Borrego State Parks shall locate building pads as far away from the boundary with those public lands as feasible. [PP]
3. Lots abutting Cuyamaca Rancho and Anza Borrego State Parks and the Cleveland National Forest shall establish no access, such as roadways and trails, to the Park or Forest unless such access is permitted by the Park Superintendent or the Forest Ranger. [PP]
4. Projects on private lands shall not depend on using public lands for siting facilities, such as water storage tanks, wells, roads, etc., unless the concerned public agency agrees that there is no other feasible alternative. [PP]
5. No residential development is proposed on Cleveland National Forest lands. However, should the Hulburd Grove residencies or any other residential leased lands be exchanged or sold to private persons, the properties should be rezoned so as to establish the same density and intensity of land use as is allowed on adjacent and similar private lands. [AP]

Figure 10: Central Mountain Public/ Private Lands



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## **PRIVATE AND PUBLIC RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTERS**

### **GOAL**

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTERS THAT ARE COMPATIBLE WITH THE LAND USES AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER OF THE SUBREGION.

### **FINDINGS**

Private and public residential treatment centers, such as centers for drug/alcohol/behavior rehabilitation and for the physically and mentally handicapped, are perceived to have negative impacts on surrounding land uses and residents. This section provides specific guidelines and standards for these unique land uses.

Private and public institutions often choose to locate in rural areas in order to more effectively accomplish their clients' rehabilitation, and because they can purchase larger parcels of land than in more urban areas, and consequently can better isolate their clients from neighbors who usually oppose such establishments. While recognizing that treatment centers may be best located in rural areas, neighbors and other residents often object to such centers locating in their community for several reasons: lowered property values, fire danger, additional traffic and noise, loss in security, negative impacts on groundwater supply and quality, and increased intensity and density of land uses.

The Phoenix Foundation operates a residential group care facility for 40 adolescent former substance abusers in Sherilton Valley, on a 55 acre site.

### **POLICIES**

1. Access to the site shall be provided by an existing publicly dedicated and maintained road. [PP]
2. The facility shall be designed and located so as to minimize visual impacts on adjacent properties. [PP]
3. The use and development of the site shall be designed and located so as to minimize noise impacts to and from adjacent properties. [PP]
4. A comprehensive water study shall be conducted to ensure that surrounding uses will not be negatively impacted. [CP]
5. Discourage construction and/or installation of facilities that will negatively impact the community character and lifestyle and/or that will have a negative impact on health, safety, and/or security of the community. [CP]

6. Discourage facilities which are expected to require a substantial amount of vehicle traffic, add substantial congestion, or are expected to use equipment which will discharge a substantial amount of combustion products detrimental to air quality. [CP]
7. In all areas dependent upon groundwater quality, prohibit facilities which will transport, use, and/or store toxic substances as a part of their normal operation, because of the potentially devastating impacts on groundwater that could result from leakage or spills. [PP]

## **SPECIFIC PLANNING AREAS**

### **GOAL**

1. THE SENSITIVE AND HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF LARGE OWNERSHIPS AND LANDS WITH UNIQUE LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS.

### **FINDINGS**

When acreages held in a single ownership develop, they have the potential to create a separate and different community from the existing historical community and/or to impact adjacent public lands. Policies and recommendations are provided to ensure that no large single development drastically changes the community character of existing historical communities, damages the supply and quality of groundwater, or significantly reduces the quality of existing environmental resources.

Within the Descanso Area, Merigan Ranch, which is 430+ acres, is a candidate for a specific plan.

Guidelines for the future development of properties that may be candidates for specific plans follow.

### **POLICIES**

1. Large-scale projects are not recommended for the Central Mountain Subregion. [GEN]
2. Large-scale developments should provide funding for sites for needed public facilities such as schools and fire stations. [PP]
3. Large-scale developments which are reliant on groundwater and utilize clustering shall not propose lots smaller than allowed by the Groundwater Ordinance. [PP]
4. Whenever feasible, agricultural uses shall be integrated into large-scale projects. [PP]

5. Any new commercial or industrial uses proposed as part of a large-scale project shall be accompanied by a market study prepared by the applicant. [PP]
6. All large-scale projects shall prepare an analysis of the impacts of the project on the closest community and on any community through which the future residents of the project are expected to travel. [PP]
7. Large-scale projects shall design a road network that connects with the existing road network and provide for future connection with neighboring properties. [PP]
8. Equestrian, biking and pedestrian uses and facilities must be included in large-scale projects. [PP]
9. Open space easements to protect steep slopes, sensitive habitats, and cultural resources may be held in common ownership by a homeowners association or an appropriate open space district and shall be offered for dedication to the County or an appropriate conservation agency. [PP]
10. The design of structures shall be compatible with the community character of the Subregion. [PP]
11. All Specific Plans must incorporate into their project design a feasible recycling program by, for instance, providing neighborhood depositories and pick-up of recyclables. [PP]

### **3. HOUSING**

#### GOAL

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS OF THE SUBREGION.

#### FINDINGS

The Central Mountain Subregion presents fiscal challenges incompatible with low-income housing. Lack of public transportation, the cost of commuting, excessive heating costs, and a lack of employment are some of the primary challenges that the Subregion must face. The 2008 Housing Element estimated 2,127 dwelling units in the Central Mountain Subregion. Conventional single-family homes, comprised 77.2 percent, and mobilehomes comprised 8.6 percent of the housing stock. The housing vacancy rate was estimated to be 21.2 percent.

The Housing Element of the General Plan sets forth goals, policies, and action programs designed to adequately provide housing for all segments of the population. However, housing for low to moderate income families in the Subregion is limited by the increasingly high cost of land; by the lack of infrastructure to support multi-family housing densities; and by the lack of employment and social and medical support services. Additionally, because the Subregion is dependent upon groundwater and the desire of residents to protect the rural character and maintain low densities of their communities, the area should be supported by adequate lot sizes.

The lower-cost dwelling units that are feasible in the Subregion are mobilehomes, manufactured units, accessory dwellings, such as "granny flats", and existing and future homes built on the small lots that were created when communities in the Subregion were resort areas. Because of the constraints previously mentioned, it is anticipated that these lower-cost dwellings will comprise only a very small percentage of the future housing stock in the Central Mountain Subregion.

The State of California requires local governments to formulate housing programs that will attain decent housing and a suitable living environment for every California family.

The problem of homeless individuals and families is national in scope and the Housing Element encourages communities to provide temporary emergency shelter in an effort to reduce alienation of these families and individuals. Most existing shelters are located within urban areas, but the Subregion can contribute to resolving this problem by identifying private or non-profit organizations within the Subregion that may be able to help provide emergency shelter.

#### POLICIES

1. New housing shall be compatible and consistent with community character.

#### **4. MOBILITY**

##### GOALS

1. A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT CAN ACCOMMODATE VARIOUS MODES OF TRAVEL. SUCH A SYSTEM SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF CURRENT RESIDENTS WHILE DIRECTING FUTURE GROWTH IN A MANNER THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE PLANNING GOALS OF THE COMMUNITY.
2. THE HARMONIOUS INTEGRATION OF TRANSPORTATION MODES WHERE ACCESS AND CIRCULATION ARE PROVIDED IN A SAFE MANNER FOR VEHICLES, BICYCLES, PEDESTRIANS, AND EQUESTRIANS.
3. THE PROVISION AND USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR THE DENSITY AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER OF THE SUBREGION.
4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MOBILITY ELEMENT IN A WAY THAT COMPLEMENTS THE NATURAL BEAUTY AND RURAL ATMOSPHERE OF THE COMMUNITY, WHILE NOT ENDANGERING PUBLIC SAFETY.
5. THE PRESERVATION, AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, OF THE WINDING ROADS THAT GIVE THE SUBREGION ITS RURAL CHARACTER.
6. EMERGENCY ACCESS THAT PROVIDES FOR THE SPECIAL AND URGENT NEEDS TO AND FROM ALL AREAS OF THE COMMUNITY.

##### FINDINGS

The Central Mountain Subregion is served by a road network consisting of two lane State highways and local County roads. All the area's centers of population have access to this network. The Subregion's Mobility Element roads are shown in the Mobility Element Appendix on Figure M-A-3.

The Subregion is served by limited public transportation, and it depends principally on private motor vehicle transportation, because of its remoteness and low population density.

Transportation facilities have significant design, location, and environmental impacts on community character. Any local or State road improvement project will require detailed environmental documentation addressing the specific impacts of the proposed improvements.

Primary access to the Subregion from the south is via Interstate 8 with interchanges at Japatul Valley Road and Sunrise Highway. Access from the north is via Highway 79.

Secondary access is a major concern in populated areas. Under emergency

conditions, the evacuation of residents and access by emergency vehicles is restricted where only one road exists. The provision of multiple access routes into and out of residential areas could be improved within the Subregion.

Increases in regional recreational travel and local growth are reflected in local traffic volumes. Traffic on steeper portions of State Highway 79 through the Subregion is at times congested because of slow moving vehicles and bicyclists. The desirability of turnouts, passing lanes, and bike lanes is identified in the goals and policies section.

Under normal conditions, the current road network can accommodate the existing daily traffic levels without encountering capacity problems. Large portions of the Subregion are not served by public roads. Access to public lands is not required by law; and, for those areas in private ownership, local public roads will be built as development occurs. State Highway 79 traverses primarily Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. Improvements to this highway will be coordinated through the State Park.

## POLICIES

1. Maintain the quiet atmosphere and tree-lined streets of Rural Villages through: Mountable Asphalt Berms and Unpaved Parkway Strips
2. To preserve the rural atmosphere of the community and minimize urban improvements, such as vertical concrete berms, curbs, gutters, and sidewalks. [DPW]
3. Encourage the provision of improvement options, such as passing lanes, turnouts, and left-turn pockets for Mobility Element Roads as designated in the Mobility Element [DPW, PP]
4. Encourage the provision of increased sight distances and improved shoulders to facilitate emergency parking, placement of excess snow and increase safety on existing public roadways.
5. Encourage the State to implement major realignments along portions of Highway 79 to improve traffic flow under all weather conditions, promote safety, and reduce traffic accidents. [DPW]
6. Design roads to follow natural contours, avoid grid pattern streets, and minimize cuts and fills and the disturbance of natural rock outcroppings and trees, wherever possible. [CP]
7. Retain State Highway 79 and major roads within the Subregion as two-lane roads, as long as is reasonable and safe. [CP]
8. Provide off-street parking in commercial areas. [PP]
9. It is recommended that localized access problems be resolved by the planning/sponsor groups and the appropriate governmental agencies.

Emergency access, other identified problem areas and secondary routes, are particularly important issues. [PP]

10. Require any land division along a Mobility Element Road that would create two or more lots to provide common access to the highway or otherwise satisfy the engineering and safety requirements, especially secondary access, of CalTrans and the County of San Diego, Department of Public Works. [GEN]
11. Safely separate pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycle traffic from vehicular traffic when these modes share Rights-of-Ways. [PP,DPW]
12. Encourage the expansion of public transportation between the Central Mountain Subregion and the San Diego Metropolitan Area. [GEN]

## **5. SCENIC HIGHWAYS AND VISUAL RESOURCES**

### GOALS

1. THE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF SCENIC VIEWS, WILDLIFE HABITATS, NATIVE PLANT MATERIALS, AND HISTORICAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES WITHIN SCENIC HIGHWAY CORRIDORS.
2. THE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF AREAS DESIGNATED AS HAVING SCENIC VALUE.

### SCENIC HIGHWAYS/VISUAL RESOURCES FINDINGS

Scenic Highways are mapped in the Visual Resources Section of the Conservation and Open Space Element. Policies addressing the development of these resources are also included.

Roads and Highways provide views of scenic vistas throughout the Subregion. The Central Mountain Subregion contains several highways and roads with high scenic value: Sunrise Highway, Highway 79, Highway 8, Engineers Road, Old Highway 80, Viejas Grade Road, Viejas Boulevard, and Riverside Road. The Conservation and Open Space Element identifies State Route 79 [from Interstate 8 north to intersection of Sunrise Highway], Interstate 8 [from El Cajon to State Route 79], Sunrise Highway, Recreation Park Road [from Interstate 8 north to State Route 79] and Interstate 8 [from State Route 79 east to Imperial County line] in the County Scenic Highway System.

Scenic resources are gradually being diminished, especially along roads. The need to guide development within scenic corridors is imperative because views are continually changing through vegetation removal, grading, a changing road network, the extension of overhead utilities, the raising of advertising signs, and subdivision development. The roads identified as scenic are shown in the Visual Resources Section of the Conservation and Open Space Element.

Lack of funding prevents the County from conducting extensive corridor studies for roads determined by residents to have high scenic value. However, viewshed corridors were identified along certain roads as scenic based on topography. These viewshed corridors are shown in Figure 11 on page 93. It is intended that all developments on lands visible from the aforementioned roads be designed, landscaped, graded, sized, and setback in a manner that maintains harmony with the scenic setting. It is also intended that the Scenic Highways and Routes identified in the Central Mountain Subregional Plan be classified, improved, and signed in a way consistent with the Scenic Highway Program.

The United States Forest Service proposes to classify Sunrise Highway as a National Scenic Byway from Interstate 8 north to Route 79 because this route offers educational and interpretive opportunities to instill land and resource

conservation ethics and appreciation to an urban population. The route crosses National Forest lands for 16 of its 24 miles; 4 miles are within the Anza Borrego Desert State Park and 4 miles cross private land. The plan of the Forest Service requires cooperation from the County of San Diego to develop turnouts and road signing, and from the Laguna Mountain Volunteer Association to develop interpretive program opportunities. A cooperative marketing effort is also planned with the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park to highlight the 50 mile scenic loop that would use the Sunrise National Scenic Byway, State Route 79, and portions of Old Highway 80. This expanded loop will also necessitate future partnerships with Caltrans, the Cuyamaca Sponsor Group, and the Descanso Sponsor Group.

Before State Highway 79 and Interstate 8 can be designated as official State scenic highways, the County would need to adopt a scenic corridor protection program, apply to Caltrans for scenic highway approval, and receive notification from Caltrans.

### SCENIC PRESERVATION FINDINGS

The Subregion contains many areas that are not visible from a designated scenic highway but that have nevertheless been identified as having scenic value. These areas include most of the Cleveland National Forest, the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, Cuyamaca Lake, and certain private lands that are either visible from the aforementioned public lands, or from a road that is not classified as a Scenic Highway/Route but that has scenic value to the residents and visitors.

### POLICIES

1. Encourage the pursuit of State Scenic Highway designation for Highway 79 and Interstate 8. [GEN]
2. All development in scenic corridors shall be subject to the following policies and recommendations:
  - a. All development shall be required to show on a Site Plan how lot sizes, structures, and open space easements relate to the road identified as scenic and/or to properties from which it is visible. [PP]
  - b. All development shall be required to show on a Site Plan how lot sizes, structures, and open space easements relate to the road identified as scenic and/or to properties from which it is visible. [PP]
  - c. Require development along Interstate 8 to site and design structures and parking areas in a way that does not detract from the scenic vistas viewed by the highway traveler. Wherever possible, structures and parking areas should be integrated into the natural setting to minimize visual impacts. (See Conservation and Open Space policy COS-11.3)
  - d. All rezones of properties located along a scenic highway or road

identified as scenic in this text shall include a scenic Special Area Designator. [PP]

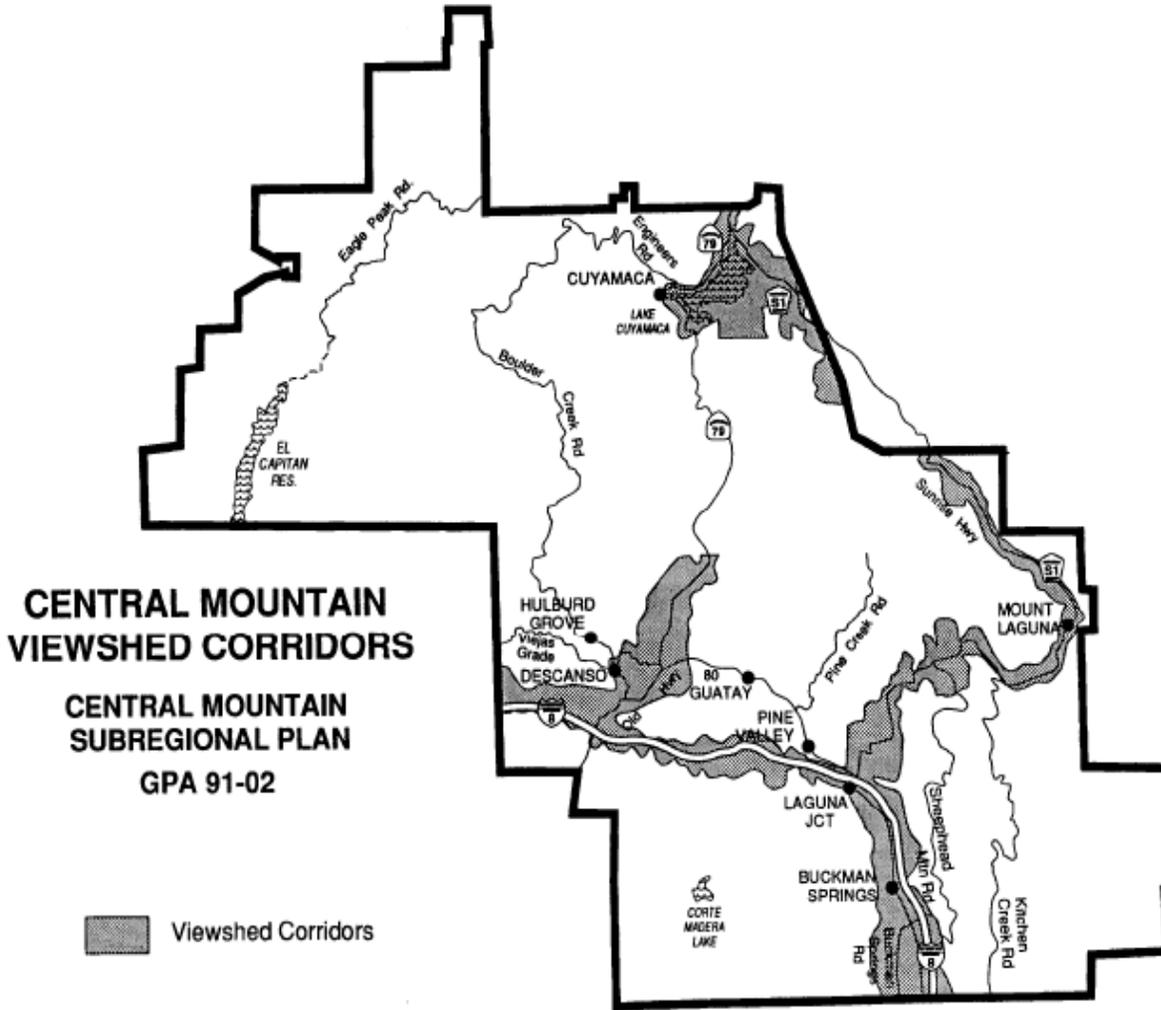
- e. All utilities shall be undergrounded whenever feasible unless undergrounding would significantly impact environmental resources. [DPW]
- f. Water tanks in Scenic Corridors shall not be obtrusive; they should be painted National Forest colors, and/or landscaped with drought tolerant plants native to the Central Mountain area. [PP]
- g. Residential structures on 15 percent slope or more should use wood-framed floor systems along with no pad grading, where possible. Every effort should be made to have the structure conform to the natural slope. [PP]
- h. Widths of private and public roads shall be the minimum required for safety. [DPW]
- i. Scenic beauty in the form of wetland meadows, streams, waterfalls, spillways, floodplains, and riverbeds shall be preserved. No concrete channelization, concrete bank protection, or rip rap shall be allowed. Natural materials shall be used for bank protection. Any proposed bank protection shall be shaped to look natural. [DPW]
- j. All signs in Scenic Corridors shall harmonize with the building, shall not be internally illuminated, and shall be sized in relationship to size of building. [PP]
- k. Existing open space easements and wildlife corridors, and existing easements to historic sites and to artifact locations, shall be retained whenever feasible. [PP]
- l. Walled or gated communities are incompatible with an open rural community and shall be prohibited, as well as any obstruction which would significantly block or restrain views and vistas from Scenic Highways/Routes. This policy does not prohibit gated entries. [PP]
- m. Natural wood finishes, or non-glaring earth tone colors should be used on all structures. Rock or other natural materials are also encouraged. [PP]
- n. Existing mature healthy trees should be retained whenever possible. Discretionary projects should identify trees which may need to be removed and provide for replacement trees with diameters equal to those of the trees to be removed and preferably of the same species. Replacement trees are to be maintained until established. [CP]
- o. County agencies reviewing site plans, landscaping plans, and grading

plans shall favor the retention of existing native vegetation, especially mature, healthy trees. [PP,DPW]

- p. Grading of roads and pads shall utilize techniques to minimize visual impacts.
- q. Lighting shall be limited to the minimum necessary for safety. [CP,DPW]
- r. Require development to screen from view by landscaping or architectural details potentially unsightly features. [PP]
- s. Homes along roads identified as scenic should be located as far away

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Figure 11: Central Mountain Viewshed Corridors



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## 6. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### SCHOOLS

#### GOALS

1. THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE SERVICES AND FACILITIES TO MEET THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF ALL THE RESIDENTS IN THE AREA.
2. THE ABILITY OF SCHOOL FACILITIES TO ALSO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY FUNCTIONS.

#### FINDINGS

School services are primarily provided by the Julian Union School District and by the Mountain Empire Unified School District. The Grossmont Union High School District, Lakeside School District, and the Ramona Unified School District serve the less populated western portion of the Subregion. A map of the boundaries of these five school districts is shown in Figure 12 on page 97.

There is one elementary school located in the Subregion: Descanso Elementary, and one junior-senior high school located in the Buckman Springs area. The Descanso Elementary School serves the Descanso students in Grades Kindergarten through Six. Descanso School will serve grades 4th through 8th grades. Students in 9th through 12th grades receive services at the Mountain Empire Unified High School. Mountain Empire Junior-High School is at capacity, but the site is large enough to accommodate future growth.

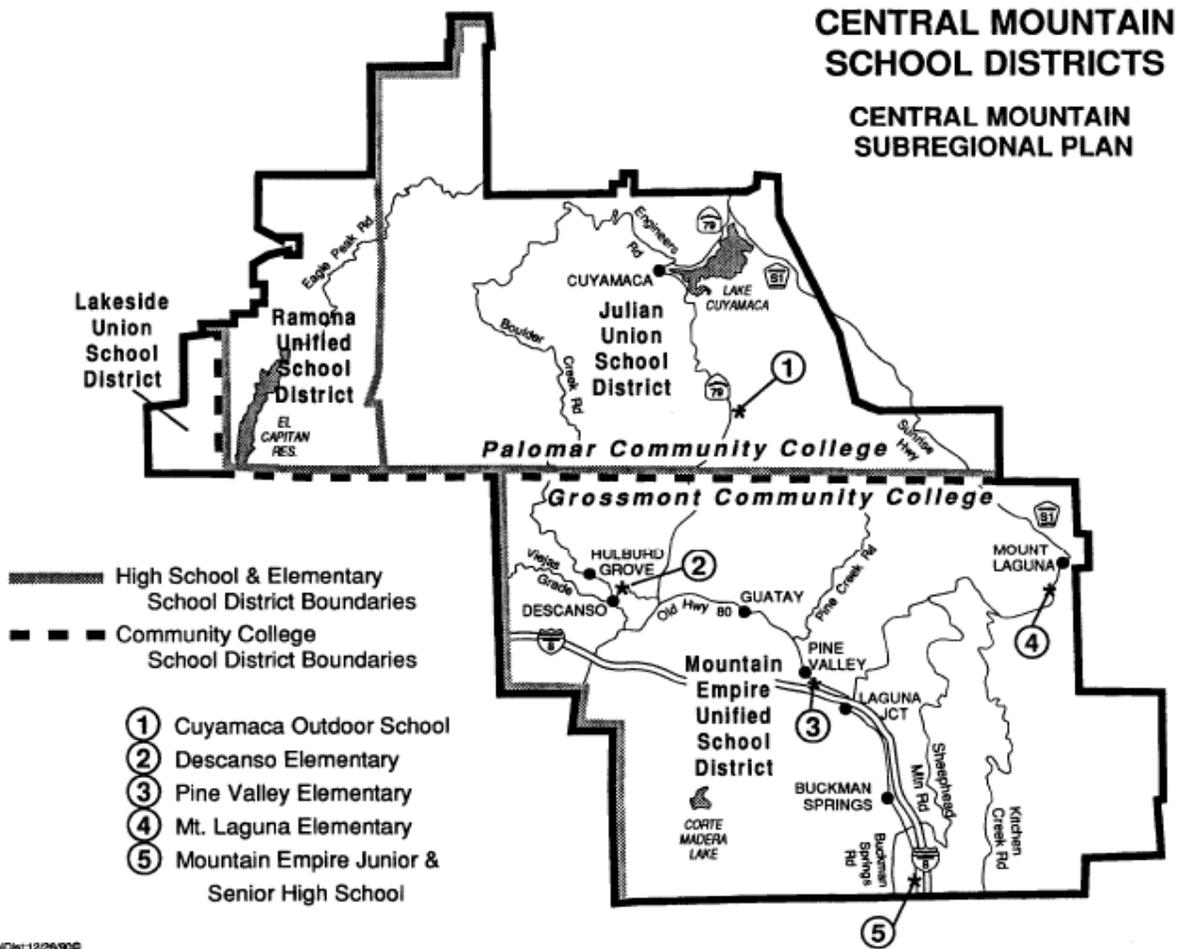
The Descanso School site will add portable buildings to accommodate students as needed. The site acreage is adequate for this increase.

#### POLICIES

1. The nucleus of all schools should be housed in permanent structures which are designed to blend in with the original school buildings. [GEN]
2. The Mountain Empire and Julian School Districts should consider a boundary adjustment in the Boulder Creek area, where students receive transfers to the Mountain Empire Unified School District due to location and transportation issues. [GEN]

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Figure 12: Central Mountain School Districts



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## **LIBRARIES**

### **GOALS**

1. SUFFICIENT SQUARE FEET OF FLOOR SPACE AND LIBRARY MATERIALS PER CAPITA CONSISTENT WITH THE COUNTY LIBRARY'S FACILITY GOALS.
2. A PERMANENT LIBRARY FACILITIES FOR THE SUBREGION, PREFERABLY IN JOINT USE WITH SCHOOL FACILITIES.

### **FINDINGS**

The Subregion is within the County Library District. The Central Mountain County Library has one branch located within and serving the Subregion: the 1,792 square foot Descanso Library leased on the elementary school site. The County Library also operates one bookmobile which serves the Subregion. Descanso has had a library since before 1920. It has been located in various structures on various sites and was relocated to the Descanso Elementary School site and significantly expanded in 1991, and again in 2006.

New funding sources would be required to improve the facilities and services in the Subregion and to meet the needs of new development.

## **WATER SUPPLY AND SERVICE**

### **GOALS**

1. ADEQUATE LONG-TERM WATER SUPPLY FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO THE SUBREGION THROUGH THE CONSERVATION AND EFFICIENT UTILIZATION OF ALL WATER RESOURCES.
2. THE PRESERVATION OF GROUNDWATER QUALITY THAT IS NOT ADVERSELY IMPACTED BY GROWTH AND INAPPROPRIATE LAND USES.
3. THE LAND USES ESTABLISHED BY THE PLAN ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE AVAILABLE WATER SUPPLY.
4. THE PREVENTION OF LAND USES WHICH REQUIRE EXCESSIVE AMOUNTS OF GROUNDWATER OR PUT THE PURITY OF THE GROUNDWATER AT RISK.

### **FINDINGS**

The Central Mountain Subregion lies outside the County Water Authority and is totally dependent upon groundwater resources. Many areas within the Subregion are experiencing low groundwater levels due to a recent drought period. Water is the single-most limiting natural resource for the future well-being of the people of the Central Mountain Subregion. Residents rely solely on groundwater and local wells for their supply. If overdrafting (mining) of water takes place over too long a

period, groundwater will either physically disappear or become too expensive to pump. The region will remain dependent on this groundwater resource since imported water will likely never become available to the area. Residents of the Subregion are very concerned about the impact of growth on the area's supply and quality of the groundwater resources and generally would prefer to remain independent of imported water.

The Central Mountain Subregion receives between 15 and 39 inches of precipitation per year, with most of the Subregion receiving over 21 inches per year, as shown on the Precipitation Map in Figure 14 on page 102. Many creeks and rivers flow through the Subregion and significant run-off is contributed from the thousands of undeveloped acres in public ownership. Relative safety ratings, or the ability of various-sized lots to meet the long-term groundwater requirements of an average single-family house, are based on the reserve capacity of groundwater in storage needed to sustain an average family during a 7-year drought, a period of time without recharge, and a use of demand of .5 acre feet per year.

### CUYAMACA

The Cuyamaca area is primarily served by two private water companies and one district: Cuyamaca Forest Mutual Company, North Peak Mutual Water Company, and the Cuyamaca Water District. The Cuyamaca Forest Mutual Company has approximately 41 shareholders and serves parcels located on North Peak. The North Peak MWC, formed in 1921, has three wells that serve 90 metered properties and serves the Cuyamaca Woods Subdivision. Complete restructuring of water pumping, storage and the distribution system would be necessary if the majority of the seasonal residents become full-time residents in the future. The Cuyamaca Water District was formed under the California Water District Act. It has four wells, and serves 131 properties, 83 of which are either part-time uses or undeveloped properties. Fifty-three additional lots could be served in the future. The area served by the District is on the north side of Cuyamaca Lake.

The Helix Water District, which does not provide service to the Subregion, owns the water in Cuyamaca Lake. Cuyamaca Lake was formed when Cuyamaca Dam on Boulder Creek was built in 1887 to bring water to the lower San Diego River areas through a wooden flume 35 miles long. The City of San Diego had relied on groundwater until the 1890s, when the first water was delivered from Cuyamaca Reservoir. El Capitan Reservoir, which partially lies in the Subregion, was finished in 1935. Following a population explosion during World War II, the County Water Authority was formed to import water from the Colorado River. Cuyamaca Lake and El Capitan Reservoir are recreational lakes where fishing and boating are allowed, and are necessary water storage areas for emergency fire suppression in the Subregion.

Figure 13: Central Mountain Water and Sewer Districts

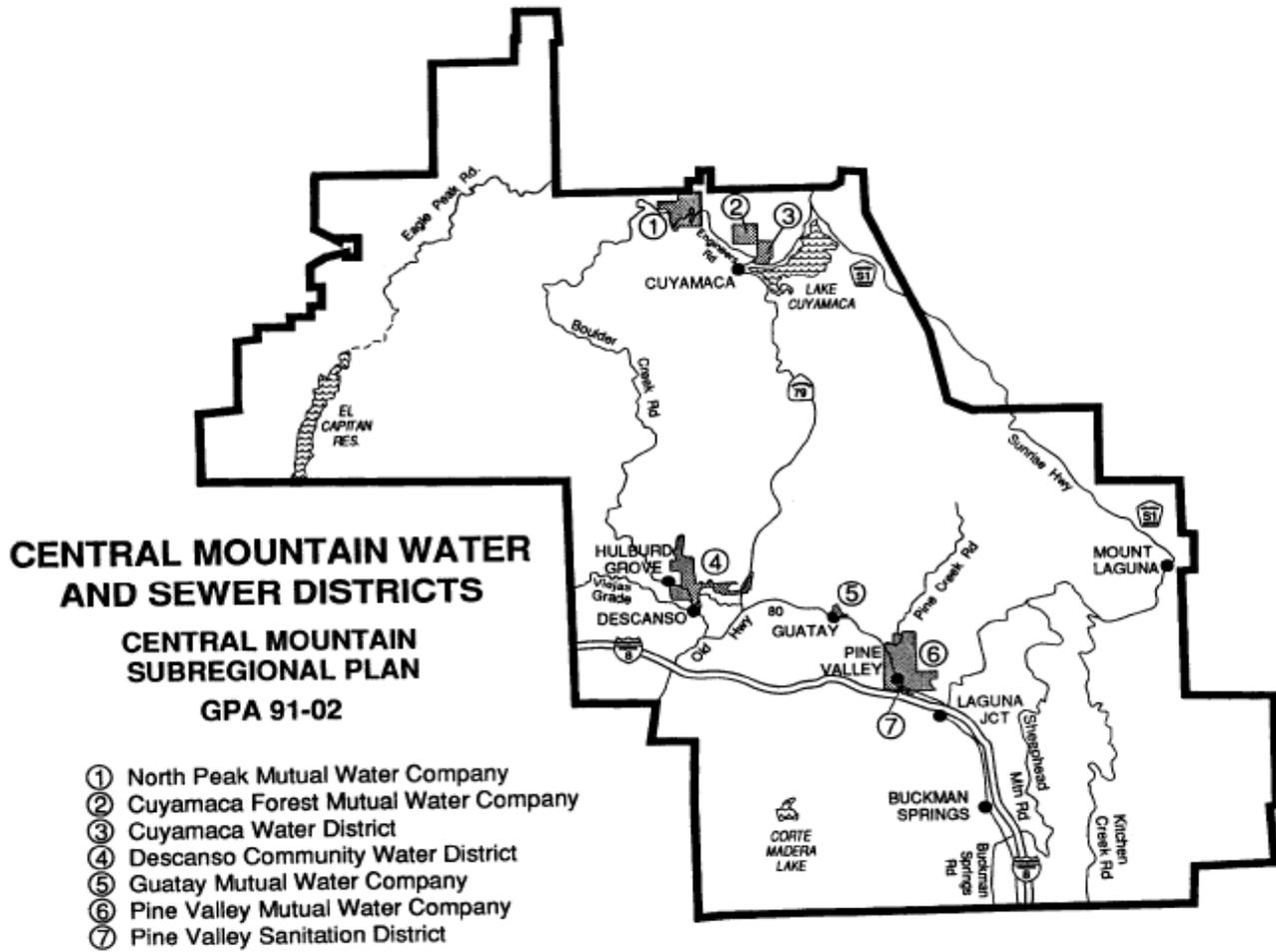
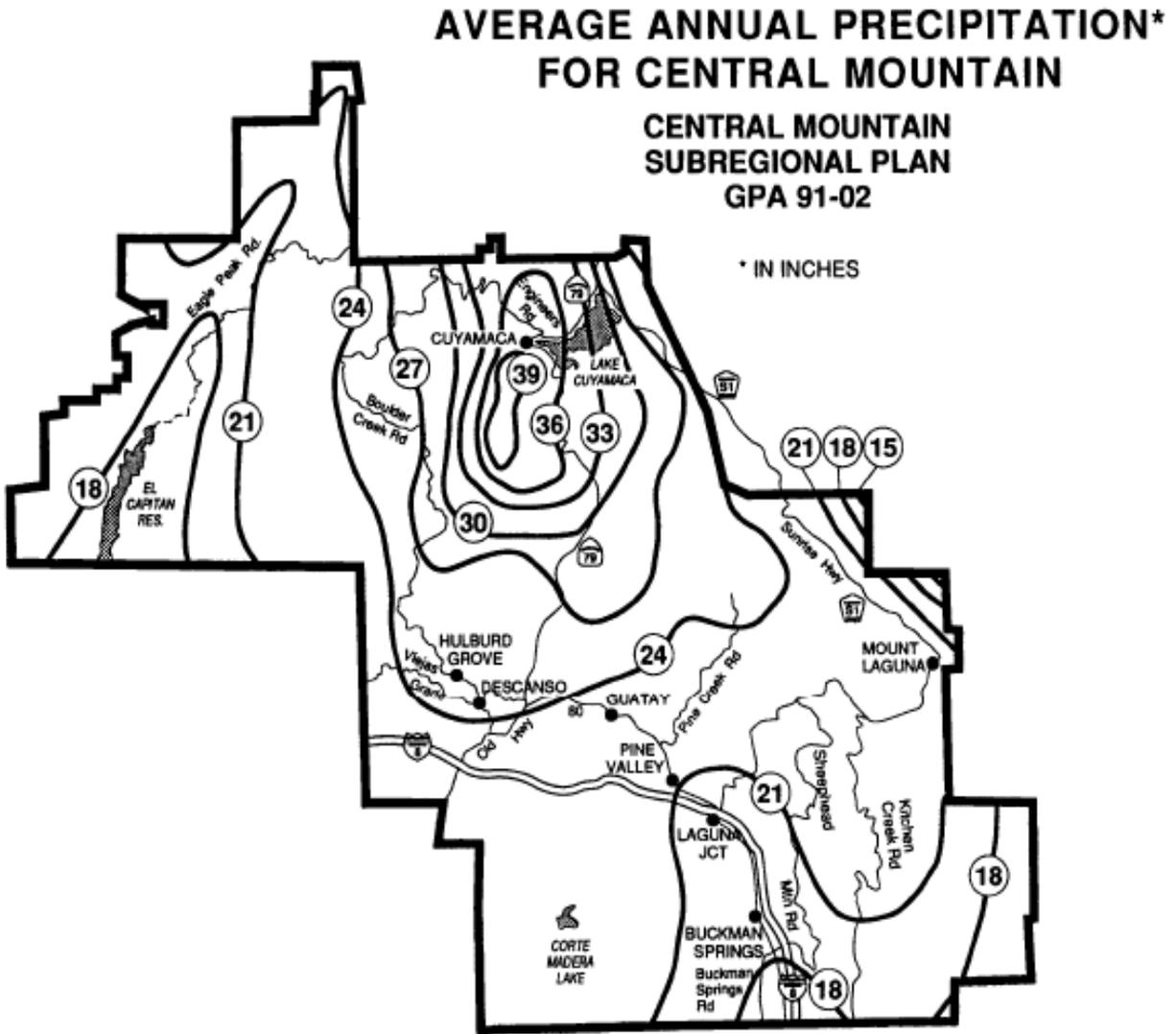


Figure 14: Central Mountain Average Annual Precipitation



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## POLICIES

1. Imported water is not required and should not be introduced to the Subregion. [GEN,PP]
2. Projects that would adversely impact groundwater supply should not be permitted, or should be fully mitigated if allowed. [CP,PP]
3. Projects that would adversely impact groundwater quality shall not be permitted. [CP,DER]
4. All projects in Rural Villages should be served by a water district. [PP]
5. Development for which a discretionary permit is required shall be consistent with long-term groundwater availability criteria contained in the Groundwater Ordinance. [PP]
6. Groundwater levels should be monitored in the Subregion. Monitoring should be concentrated in the areas of highest population densities. [PP]
7. Cumulative effects of new development should be carefully regulated and the quality of groundwater regularly monitored. [PP,DHS]
8. Groundwater recharge basins may need to be preserved through the use of open space easements. [PP,PP]
9. Impact analysis of the installation of new sewage treatment plants or significant expansion of service should address the potential loss of groundwater recharge resulting from the conversion of septic tanks. [DPW]
10. Cumulative effects of additional septic tanks on water quality shall be monitored. [DEH]
11. Commercial establishments of high water consumption are not encouraged. [CP]
12. Prohibit the mining of water. [PP]
13. No source of possible contamination shall be permitted in a Wellhead Protection Area.

## Cuyamaca

1. All forms of water storage should be encouraged, including:
  - Agricultural ponds
  - Recreation ponds at public parks
  - Readily available water for fire fighting in subdivisions and public parks
    - Exploration of mandatory reserves in tanks for neighborhood water distribution

## **WASTE DISPOSAL AND MANAGEMENT**

### **GOALS**

1. WASTE DISPOSAL THAT PRESERVES GROUNDWATER QUALITY.
2. REGIONAL SITES THAT HAVE RECYCLING CONTAINERS AND ENCOURAGE THE EXPANSION OF WASTE RECYCLING PROGRAMS.
3. THE CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES BY REDUCING THE VOLUME OF WASTE GENERATED IN THE CENTRAL MOUNTAIN SUBREGION.
4. EACH SUBREGION WITH A SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL SITE TO PREVENT ILLEGAL DUMPING IN THE BACKCOUNTRY.

### **FINDINGS**

#### **Liquid Waste**

Most structures in the Subregion depend upon individual septic tanks for liquid waste disposal.

Reliance on septic systems for liquid waste disposal generally necessitates that the minimum size of parcels be 0.5 acre for parcels served by a water district or water company and one acre for parcels not served by a water district or company. In some instances, such as sites with a high water table, parcel sizes may need to be larger; this would be determined at project application stage by the Department of Health Services.

#### **Solid Waste**

Solid waste disposal is no longer provided in Descanso, the Viejas Bin Site was closed in 2009.

Illegal dumping of trash on private properties is a problem in the backcountry. Non-operational vehicles and other wastes are especially noticeable in rural areas.

There is great concern among the residents of the Subregion over the possibility that future landfills may be located in areas dependent upon groundwater for water supply.

## POLICIES

### Solid Waste

1. In all areas dependent upon groundwater: Prohibit all types of landfill operations, due to the devastation that could result from leakage or spills. [DPW]
2. Enforce regulations against illegal dumping of trash. [Z]
3. All Specific Plan Areas must incorporate into their project design a feasible recycling program by, for instance, providing neighborhood depositories and pick-up of recyclables. [PP,DPW]
4. All large-scale commercial and industrial developments that sell recyclable materials or goods in recyclable containers must provide community recycling facilities. [PP,DPW]
5. In all areas dependent on groundwater: Prohibit facilities which will incinerate, recycle, or transport toxic waste products as a part of normal operation, because of the potential pollution that could result from emissions, leakage or spills. [DPW,DHS]

### Liquid Waste

1. Individual septic systems shall not impair the quality of groundwater. [DEH]
2. Encourage efforts to minimize adverse impacts of the Sanitation District site to the rural village, along with the provision of landscaping for the Sanitation District site. [DPW]
3. Encourage treatment of the percolation pond water to appropriate standards for use of irrigation of the County Park. [DPW]
4. Consider the construction of a new facility away from the center of town. [DPW]
5. Investigate the introduction of water hyacinths into the percolation ponds until such time as a new facility is built. [DPW]
6. Impact analysis of the installation of new sewage treatment plants or significant expansion of service should address potential loss of groundwater recharge resulting from the conversion of septic tanks. [DPW]
7. Cumulative effects of additional septic tanks on water quality shall be monitored. [DEH]

## **FIRE PROTECTION**

### **GOAL**

THE PROTECTION OF LIFE AND PROPERTY FROM THE HIGH FIRE HAZARD POTENTIAL WHICH EXISTS IN THE SUBREGION.

### **FINDINGS**

Multiple agencies provide fire protection and emergency services in the Central Mountain Subregion. (Refer to Figure 15 on page 109). They can be classified as having either structural or wildland fire protection responsibilities. Although State and federal agencies and local fire protection districts have specific responsibilities and service boundaries, to the extent that resources permit, all agencies respond to a variety of emergencies in the Subregion. Fire Hazard is high in the Subregion because of the steep topography, dense and flammable vegetation, and the windy climate. Fire hazard is high also because powerlines are unattended and stretched over long distances and can be downed by the frequent high winds that blow in the Subregion. Another source of fire hazard is the many unsupervised shooting ranges that exist in the Subregion.

#### **Structural Fire Protection**

All the districts that serve the Subregion collect fire mitigation fees. The revenues are used to purchase new equipment or build new stations.

The northwest portion of the Subregion currently lacks local public structural fire protection. CAL FIRE will respond to structural fires in that area if resources permit. However, CAL FIRE is charged with the protection of forest, range and watershed land, and has no official structural fire protection responsibilities. In addition, many of its stations are closed during the winter months.

Water availability for fire protection is a major concern in the Subregion. Firefighters regularly bring water with them when responding to a fire because they cannot count on water being available on-site. Certain development proposals may warrant fire hydrants to ensure adequate fire protection. For these projects, water storage tanks and other typically used measures may not be sufficient to meet the potential fire suppression demands. However, fire hydrants, which require centralized water systems, are not always geologically and economically feasible in these areas. Coordination among affected fire agencies and the County is necessary to address this problem.

Many of the fire protection districts in the Subregion contain regional recreation areas that draw many visitors from outside their districts. Non-residents often require emergency medical and other services from these fire protection agencies, although non-residents do not contribute to funding facilities and services within these districts.

Several areas in the Subregion cannot be reached in the 20 minute fire protection and emergency service travel time, but these areas are consistent with the Safety Element since only very low land use densities have been assigned to these areas.

### Wildland Fire Protection

CAL FIRE and the United States Forest Service (USFS) provide watershed and wildland fire protection services in the areas within their jurisdiction. CAL FIRE protects the State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) from one station located on Highway 79. The USFS is responsible for fire protection of all federal wildlands. USFS operates one station within the Subregion: the Descanso Substation located on Viejas Grade Road.

Very dry weather conditions for several years and an increase in the number of people living in or near wildlands have created a major problem for state and federal firefighters who must at times turn away from wildland fire to protect lives and property.

### POLICIES

1. In areas lacking public structural fire protection or with emergency travel time greater than 20 minutes, development should be limited to 1 dwelling unit per 40 acres or lower. [AP]
2. Require preventive and self-protective measures prior to issuance of all building permits in areas lacking local public structural fire protection or with emergency travel time greater than 20 minutes. [PP,B]
3. Subdivisions shall not propose building sites along ridges, on ridge saddles, or in canyons. [PP]
4. Fuelbreaks and defensible spaces satisfactory to the local Fire Protection District and/or CDF or USFS shall be provided in all projects. [PP]
5. Roofs shall be made of noncombustible or fire resistant materials. [B]
6. Encourage SDG&E to make a diligent effort to reduce the fire hazard potential of downed powerlines. [GEN]
7. Shooting ranges should be supervised. [GEN]
8. All communities should establish a Fire Safe Council.
9. All connections provided for firefighting must provide for standardized hardware.
10. Coordination of all local firefighting equipment and personnel should be encouraged.

**Figure 15: Central Mountain Fire Protection District Boundaries**





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## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

### **GOALS**

1. THE PROVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES COMMENSURATE WITH SUBREGIONAL NEEDS, WHILE DEVELOPMENT IS DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THE SAFETY OF RESIDENTS.
2. THE LOCATION OF A SHERIFF SUBSTATION IN DESCANSO.

### **FINDINGS**

#### **Sheriff**

The County Sheriff provides basic law enforcement service to the Central Mountain Subregion. This area is within the Rural Division of the Sheriff's Law Enforcement Operations Bureau, and is served by one sheriff substation. The northern half is served by the Julian substation, located at 1485 Hollow Glen Road, outside of the Subregion boundaries. Service in the Subregion is below the Sheriff Department's acceptable response time of 12 minutes for priority calls and 24 minutes for non-priority calls in rural areas.

### **POLICIES**

1. Consider the provision of additional deputies to support peak tourist months when seasonal influxes of tourists in the Subregion visit regional recreational facilities. [SH]
2. The County should mitigate and provide an adequate number of law enforcement personnel proximal to the area prior to allowing the construction or installation of any facility which could subject the community to undue safety and/or security risks. [SH]

## **WATERCOURSES, DRAINAGE, AND FLOOD CONTROL**

### **GOALS**

1. THE PROTECTION OF LIVES AND PROPERTY FROM UNCONTROLLED FLOODING WHILE PROTECTING NATURAL FLOODPLAIN VALUES.
2. THE CONSERVATION OF HYDROLOGICAL AND BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES OF ALL LAKES, RIVERS, STREAMS, AND OTHER WETLANDS BY CONTROLLING WASTEWATER DISCHARGE AND RUN-OFF.
3. THE PRESERVATION OF NATURAL WATERWAYS FOR THEIR VALUE AS RECHARGE BASINS AND WILDLIFE HABITAT.

### **FINDINGS**

The County Flood Control District provides drainage and flood control services for the unincorporated portion of the County. The services include studies to determine needed flood control and drainage facilities, establishing funding sources through special flood control assessment district and fees for new development, allocation of tax money, etc. In rural areas, the main flood control function is to provide floodplain mapping. These maps identify areas that will be flooded. New development in floodplains is regulated so that natural characteristics of the river are retained and buildings are limited to the outside fringe of the floodplain and constructed so that they will not be damaged by a 100-year flood.

Descanso Creek, Samagatuma Creek, and Sweetwater River in the Descanso area have preliminary Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain maps. The County does not anticipate completing 100-year floodplain mapping of these streams in the foreseeable future.

The pollution of waterways is the result of dumping of large quantities of pollutants, but also due to the slow process of leaching and dissolution and transportation of pollutants in run-off. While the vagrant dumping of large quantities of pollutants are somewhat easily noticeable and therefore preventable through enforcement of prohibitions, the prevention of contamination by the other methods must rely on policy and project design.

Preventing pollutants from entering waterways through run-off can be accomplished in a number of ways, including: a) reducing pollution; b) education; c) sloping parking lots away from waterways; and, d) the use of petrochemical separators in parking lots.

Natural watercourses enhance the rural character of the Subregion and provide regionally scarce wildlife habitat.

#### POLICIES

1. Parking lots for commercial, industrial, and high-density residential uses shall be graded so that all run-off flows away from any watercourse(s). [DPW]
2. The construction of artificial drainage structures should be avoided in favor of natural channels and streambeds. Run-off and drainage shall be used for groundwater recharging where safe. [DPW]
3. Floodways shall be maintained in their natural state unless findings can be made that a threat to public safety exists. [DPW]
4. Watercourses and associated sensitive resources in the natural, undisturbed forms shall be protected by requiring ample setbacks and buffers, thus negating the need for disruptive flood control measures. [PP,DPW]
5. Applicants proposing projects in unmapped floodplains and floodways shall engage a registered engineer to map them. [GEN]
6. Road crossings of watercourses shall be strategically placed and minimized. [PP,DPW]
7. The run-off of agricultural chemicals shall be minimized. [GEN]

## **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

### **GOALS**

1. THE EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT AND COORDINATED USE OF EXISTING AND PROPOSED TELECOMMUNICATIONS SITES.
2. TELECOMMUNICATION FACILITIES WITH MINIMAL VISUAL IMPACT.

### **FINDINGS**

The Telecommunications Site Overlay Designation covers only one geographic area, North Peak, which is presently the location for regional telecommunication transmitting and receiving facilities. The intent of the overlay is to limit new transmitting and receiving telecommunication facilities in the Cuyamaca Sponsor Group Area to this designated area and to encourage the sharing of space on existing tower facilities. The intent of the overlay is not to encourage coverage of the whole site with facilities, but rather to provide flexibility in siting facilities in as sensitive a manner as possible. Additionally, the intent of the overlay is not to prevent the installation of downsized accessory facilities on sites other than that shown on the Telecommunications Overlay Map on Figure 16 on page 117.

Currently, there are four telecommunication facilities on North Peak consisting of a Crown Castle tower and facility, two American Tower facilities and towers, and a County facility with antennas and tower.

In the Cuyamaca Sponsor Group Area, North Peak is the only peak with telecommunication facilities that is owned by a private land owner. All other peaks in the Subregion are either in the Cleveland National Forest or in the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and are not subject to County land use regulations.

While residents in the Subregion recognize the need for telecommunications facilities, they have concerns over telecommunication facilities because of potential interference with electronic instruments, potential health damages, the visual impact of such facilities and the degradation of the wilderness experience, and because of the possible impact of service trucks on local roads that may be narrow and poorly improved.

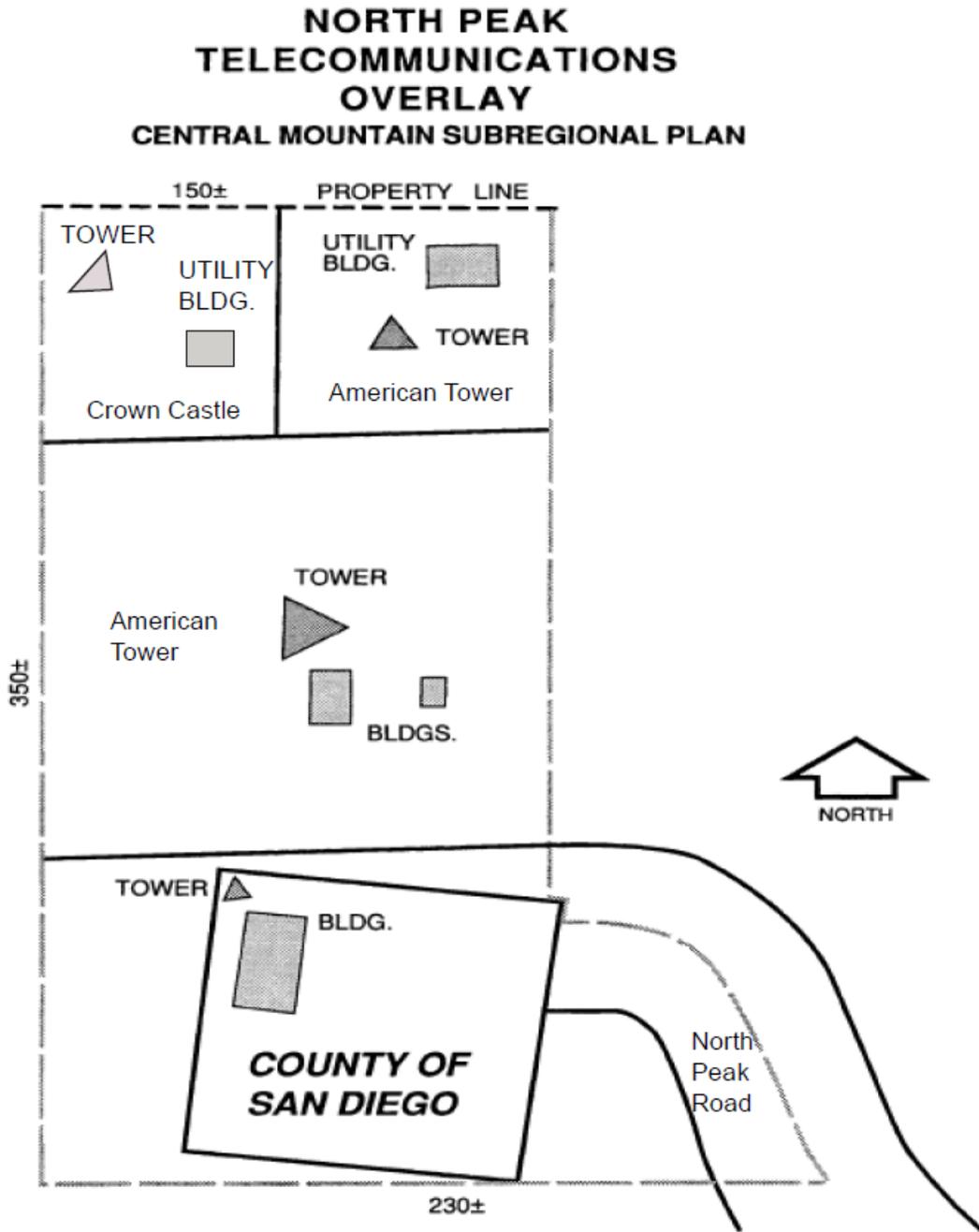
Policies and standards for the development of telecommunications facilities can be found in the San Diego County Zoning Ordinance and Land Use Element. In addition, the following policies are to be applied to discretionary permits for telecommunication facilities in the Subregion.

## POLICIES

1. Each tower operator shall maximize compatibility between towers, support facilities and structures and the surrounding environment by utilizing colors and building materials on all towers, support facilities and structures which visually blend into the surrounding landscape. [PP]
2. Visual impacts from roads identified as scenic shall be minimized. [PP]
3. All landscaping of telecommunication sites must utilize species of plants native to the local area. [PP]
4. All landscaping of telecommunication sites must be watered until firmly established and maintained during the life of the facility unless it is required to be removed by a fire protection district. [PP, B]
5. Applications for new facilities or expansion of existing facilities shall be reviewed for light pollution by the Laguna Mountain Observatory. [PP]
6. Structures should be screened to the maximum extent possible by landscaping or other natural features and accessory buildings shall not be allowed on ridgelines. [PP]
7. Dishes set at ground level or set as close to the ground as possible or under a lip instead of on towers should be considered whenever feasible. [PP]
8. Impacts on local roads shall be fully mitigated to the extent caused by construction and maintenance of telecommunications facilities as opposed to that caused by other users, and to the extent that environmental constraints allow road improvements. [PP,DPW]
9. Co-location and joint use of facilities is strongly encouraged unless co-location or joint use is found to negatively impact a community. [PP]
10. Master planning of telecommunications sites is strongly encouraged. [GEN]
11. In the absence of a master plan for a site, future Major Use Permits, Major Use Permit Modifications, and renewals must include a plan to co-locate the proposed facilities with any existing facilities on-site, on a nearby site, or to jointly use these facilities. It is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate that the proposed new facilities cannot be jointly used, or co-located with the existing facilities on-site or on a nearby site. [PP]
12. Any new Major Use Permit or Major Use Permit Modification shall assess the viability of existing facilities within the permit boundary. It is intended that any unused facility shall be either retrofitted or removed from the site. [PP]
13. The County of San Diego is obligated to comply with the above policies when and if its facilities are expanded. [GEN]

14. Limit all new Major Use Permits, Major Use Permit Modifications and renewals to a 10-year expiration date, if safety standards and visual impact were identified as issues by the DPLU during the review of the project. If the applicant proposes to renew the permit, a review of the original permit will be conducted. The 10-year review shall ensure that each permit meets the recognized National Safety standards in effect at the time of the review and shall include an assessment of any new technological advances which may allow the facilities to be downsized. [PP]
15. The downsizing of facilities as technology changes is strongly desired. [GEN]

Figure 16: North Peak Telecommunications Overlay



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## 7. SAFETY

### GOAL

EMERGENCY AND PREVENTATIVE PROCEDURES THAT REDUCE DAMAGES FROM GEOLOGIC HAZARDS, MEDICAL EMERGENCIES, AND OTHER DISASTERS.

### FINDINGS

**Faults** -- No known active faults are found within the Subregion.

Adjacent to the Subregion, however, is the Elsinore Fault, the largest active fault in San Diego County, which runs in a northwest-southeasterly direction down Banner Grade (Hwy 78) at a distance of approximately six miles northeast of the center of Cuyamaca. This fault presents a significant potential for major earthquake activity. Numerous epicenters have been located along the fault with the largest recorded earthquake magnitude measuring 6.02 on the Richter scale. Future activity along the Elsinore Fault has been estimated at a maximum credible Richter Scale magnitude of 7.6 sometime within 100 years. A major earthquake of this magnitude could potentially result in serious damage including disrupted utility services, failure of earthen dams, landslides, as well as structural damage in the Cuyamaca area. Although precise evaluation of specific earthquake risks for the Central Mountain area is difficult due to the incorporation of many interactive factors such as ground response, distance from earthquake epicenter, disturbance magnitudes, and structural capabilities, it should be noted that a considerable potential for damaging seismic activity does exist within parts of the Planning Subregion.

**Landslides** -- Without the benefit of extensive studies, landslide areas are primarily known only from evidence of previous landslides. In the Central Mountain area these areas have been mapped. The most prominent areas are the north and south faces of North Peak in Cuyamaca and the area north of Sherilton Valley. Care should be exercised in interpreting such a map, however, as areas that have experienced past landslides may be at equilibrium and, thus, might not experience any further movement. Further in-depth studies, at the time of project application, would have to be performed to determine the potential for future landslides.

## 8. CONSERVATION

### GENERAL CONSERVATION

#### GOALS

1. THE CAREFUL MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES IN THE PLAN AREA THAT PREVENTS WASTEFUL EXPLOITATION OR DEGRADATION OF THOSE RESOURCES, AND PRESERVES THEM FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.
2. RESOURCE CONSERVATION AREAS THAT ENSURE THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF HIGH QUALITY NATURAL RESOURCES AND SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL RESOURCES.
3. A COMMUNITY THAT IS ABLE TO FUNCTION WITHOUT OUTSIDE WATER AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

#### FINDINGS

The Central Mountain Subregional Planning Area possesses large areas of land of great scenic beauty in their natural state. These scenic resources are of vital ecological importance in providing (a) needed habitat for a rich variety of plants and animals, and (b) essential uncontaminated watershed. Groundwater is of critical importance in this region as the sole source of water supply. Archaeological and historical resources are also abundant in the area.

Groundwater Resources are not expected to be supplemented through any outside resource. The community must be able to function on what it has plus any recharge that occurs. Sustainability must be maintained and conservation used in the face of severe drought and overdraft.

Conservation may be defined as the foresighted utilization, preservation, and/or renewal of natural or biological resources, for the greatest good of the greatest number, on a sustainable basis. No generation should be allowed to needlessly damage or reduce the future general wealth or welfare by the way it uses or misuses any natural resource. Because of the local and regional significance of natural resources within the planning area, conservation of these resources is of vital importance to the Central Mountain Subregion.

The County Board of Supervisors has adopted Resource Conservation Areas (RCAs) for a number of areas within San Diego County. These RCAs identify lands that possess significant natural resources which require special attention so that they can be preserved or utilized in a manner best serving public and private objectives.

Resource Conservation Areas are designed to identify sensitive resources. They are not intended to restrict property rights. However, RCAs warrant special scrutiny to ensure that a proper balance is struck between individual rights and the

conservation, protection, and preservation of particularly sensitive resources. In the Central Mountain Subregion, RCAs have been identified to protect wildlife habitat, native plants and animals, scenic slopes, and landmarks.

The intent of the RCA overlay is to conserve resources in a manner best satisfying public and private objectives. This may be accomplished by any one of a number of actions, depending on specific situations, including: public acquisition, establishment of open space easements, and application of special land use controls such as the Scenic Area Regulations or the proposed Sensitive Resources Area Regulations or by incorporating special design into Subdivision Maps or Specific Plans.

RCAs are delineated on the RCA Map (Appendix B). The map identifies the RCAs by number. Appendix B contains the number, name, and description of each area and the resource or resources that should be protected. The RCA Map is an Overlay Map to the Land Use Map. An RCA overlay does not change the underlying land use designation of the Land Use Map; rather the overlay identifies sensitive resources and guides development.

### **POLICIES**

1. Apply appropriate Rural and Semi-Rural land use designations to areas identified as containing rare and endangered plant and animal species, archaeological sites, agricultural preserves, and other environmentally sensitive sites that could be adversely impacted by development. [AP]
2. The County and other public or non-profit agencies should consider purchasing the Resource Conservation Areas identified in Appendix B as funds become available. [GEN]

### **ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY**

#### **GOALS**

1. THE PRESERVATION OF KNOWN HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE PROTECTION FOR NEW SITES AS THEY ARE DISCOVERED.
2. THE PRESERVATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES THROUGH THE IDENTIFICATION OF RESOURCES AND REGULATORY REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

#### **FINDINGS**

The Subregion has a long history of human habitation from the early Kumeyaay people through the arrival of Spanish and Mexican explorers to the present. Riparian and Oak woodland biotic communities served as rich food resource areas and centers for habitation. Rock outcroppings in and around oak woodland areas were frequently used as grinding sites. Historical information was only

available for the community of Descanso at the time of preparation of the Plan Text.

The publication of the book "Descanso: Place of Rest" has led to the identification of numerous historic sites, and further research is being done on the history of Descanso. The Descanso Town Hall has been proposed for State and County historic designations. Past archaeological studies have reported significant archaeological sites and future studies will undoubtedly reveal additional sites.

The Community of Descanso and the County Historical Board find the following resources of historical importance:

- a. The Town Hall -- on Viejas Grade, 1898.
- b. Ellis Cemetery -- east of Highway 79, 1871.
- c. First Schoolhouse -- foundation is west of Highway 79, late 1870s or early 1880s.
- d. Descanso Station Restaurant -- on Highway 79, early 1930s.

The Community of Descanso finds the following resources of historical interest:

- a. The Jackass Mail Route -- part of the Old Viejas Grade, 1857-61.
- b. Magdalena and Esther Mines -- on Viejas Grade across from the Ranger Station, c1899.
- c. The Descanso Hotel -- on Viejas Grade, c1926-68.
- d. Perkins Store -- on present site at Viejas Grade and Viejas Boulevard, 1928.
- e. The "Red" Schoolhouse -- west of Sweetwater River and south of the bridge, 1898-1935.
- f. Elementary School-on Viejas Blvd., 1936

### POLICIES

1. Appropriate historical resources shall be nominated to the State and/or National Register of Historic Resources. [PP]
2. Significant historic and prehistoric sites located within the Subregion shall be evaluated for Historic Landmark Status under Ordinance 7105 and if qualified shall be designated and rezoned in accordance with Section 7550 and regulated under Section 5700 of The Zoning Ordinance. [PP]
3. Encourage public agencies and private property owners to make significant archaeological and historic resources available to the public for educational purposes. [CP,PP]

4. Create RCAs to protect unique or otherwise scientifically valuable archaeological sites that are identified in CEQA studies, scientific investigations, or from institutional records. [PP]
5. Create management plans to protect archaeological sites from future land development and vandalism. [PP]

## **DARK SKY**

### **GOAL**

THE PRESERVATION OF DARK NIGHT SKIES THAT MAINTAIN COMMUNITY CHARACTER IN THE CENTRAL MOUNTAIN AREA AND INSURE THE CONTINUED ASTRONOMICAL RESEARCH AND EXPLORATION BY THE MOUNT LAGUNA OBSERVATORY AND LOCAL ASTRONOMERS.

### **FINDINGS**

Minimal light pollution is an important aspect of the quality of life within the Subregion, and continued regulation is necessary for the retention and protection of the rural character. In the absence of careful regional and local controls, light pollution levels can be expected to reach higher levels during the life of the plan. The Descanso detention facility and the La Cima Honor Camp are already a major light pollution source in the Planning Area according to some residents.

Optical astronomy remains a basic and important field of research. The mountain region of San Diego County is one of the best visual astronomical research areas in the United States. The Mount Palomar and Mount Laguna astronomical research stations represent major capital investments which should be protected.

Light and air pollution are the chief threats to astronomical research in the United States. Light pollution is cumulative in that existing sky brightness is increased by each new source; it is incorrect to assert that any additional light, however minor, will be lost in the glow which presently exists.

### **POLICIES**

1. Strictly enforce the County's Light Pollution Ordinance. [PP]
2. Lighting shall be strictly limited to what is absolutely necessary for safety. [PP]
3. The use of technology advances (such as motion sensitive night lighting systems) which will reduce present and future light pollution will be encouraged. [PP]
4. The impacts of future development upon the dark sky characteristics of the planning area shall be minimized. [PP]

5. The creation of new roads in the planning area will be kept to an absolute minimum. [PP,DPW]
6. Future road and construction plans within the planning area should include revegetation elements containing plant and tree types at locations which will mitigate associated light pollution. [PP,DPW]
7. Forestation of areas adjacent to existing roads, structures and grading sites will be encouraged in order to block associated light pollution. [PP]
8. The impact of all facilities upon the dark sky characteristics of the planning area shall be reduced. [PP,GEN]

## **MINERALS**

### **GOAL**

THE EXTRACTION OF MINERAL RESOURCES WITHIN THE CENTRAL MOUNTAIN SUBREGION THAT DOES NOT ADVERSELY IMPACT THE OTHER CONSERVATION GOALS.

### **FINDINGS**

The Central Mountain Subregional Planning Area is for the most part underlain with fractured rock and granitic rock of volcanic origin.

The Subregion contains many mines, such as the Esther and Magdalena gold mines in Descanso and the Stonewall mine in the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, which ceased operation in the early 1900's. Also present are small quantities of precious stones. There are many quartz outcroppings in the Subregion which are highly valuable as aesthetic resources.

There are significant sand, rock, and gravel deposits in the Subregion. Mining of these deposits in the planning area would severely impact the aesthetic resources, wildlife habitat, plant communities, water and soils. Mining activities also generate dust, noise, blasting vibrations, and truck traffic, which makes them incompatible with the overall intention of resource conservation for the Subregion.

### **POLICIES**

1. Extraction of minerals shall comply with existing laws regulating such an activity. [PP]
2. Heavy truck traffic, frequent blasting, repeated noise and dust shall be discouraged in new mining operations. [PP]
3. Limit mineral resources and large scale mining operations that are not compatible with the quiet, rural community character in Central Mountain. Require mining and trucking minerals such as sand to wholly mitigate unacceptable impacts. [PP]

## SOILS

### GOAL

THE PRESERVATION OF NATURAL LANDFORMS, WATER RESOURCES, AESTHETIC RESOURCES, AND SOILS BY PREVENTING EROSION DUE TO THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.

### FINDINGS

The soil of the Central Mountain Subregion consists mostly of well-drained cobbly fine sandy loams and stoney loams that are weathered into place from various other rock types. These soils occur on mountainous uplands and are found to have slopes from 9 to 65 percent in most cases, generally between the elevations of 2,500 and 8,000 feet. Soil characteristics and depth are described in more detail in the general soil summary of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for this Community Plan and in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's soil survey of the San Diego area.

None of the soils found in the Central Mountain Subregion are classified as having special use constraints by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Only a few areas in Descanso have been classified as "prime agricultural land," that is, having the best combination of physical and chemical features for the production of agricultural crops.

Many of the mountains in the Subregion are formed from gabbroic rock, a type of rock (and associated soil) endemic to San Diego County and containing a high percentage of iron ore. While many plant species cannot tolerate the iron, some endemic species have adapted to the higher concentrations and, thus, are able to out-compete those species which cannot grow in soils which have a high iron concentration. For this reason, these endemic plants tend to be found in higher concentrations on gabbroic soils.

### POLICIES

1. Large-scale developments, or those with a large potential to create excessive run-off or erosion, shall provide the following analysis as part of the environmental review process: [PP]
  - a. Run-off calculations -- this includes run-off volumes, rates, and peak run-off flows.
  - b. Soil Loss Predictions -- this includes the annual soil loss in tons per acres (or fractions thereof) from the site prior to, during, and after construction per the County Grading Ordinance.
  - c. Design Management Facilities -- this includes modification of the proposed project as necessary to reduce soil loss by such mitigating measures as slope stabilization, vegetation protection, revegetation,

and other techniques which will reduce soil loss to natural or lower levels.

2. Future road construction and improvement plans within the planning area should include revegetation elements containing plant and tree types at locations which will mitigate associated soil erosion and degradation. [PP,DPW]
3. Forestation of areas adjacent to existing roads, structures, and grading sites will be encouraged in order to reduce soil erosion. [CP]

## **VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE**

### **GOALS**

1. THE PREVENTION OF THE UNNECESSARY ALTERATION OF THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT WITHIN THE PLANNING AREA.
2. THE PROTECTION OF ALL SENSITIVE LANDS AND HABITAT SUCH AS CONIFEROUS FORESTS, HIGH MONTANE MEADOWS, NATIVE GRASSLANDS, DIEGAN SAGE SCRUB, OAK WOODLANDS, MONTANE CHAPARRAL, RIPARIAN WOODLANDS, VERNAL POOLS, AND ANY OTHER WETLANDS, WHENEVER POSSIBLE.
3. OPEN SPACE CORRIDORS OF SUFFICIENT SIZE TO MAINTAIN BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND FUNCTIONAL ACCESS FOR WILDLIFE TO AND FROM WATER, FOOD, AND BREEDING AREAS, AND TO PREVENT THE CREATION OF BIOLOGICAL ISLANDS.
4. THE IDENTIFICATION AND PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED, THREATENED, OR SENSITIVE HABITATS, AND SPECIES OF PLANTS AND WILDLIFE.
5. THE USE OF VEGETATION NATIVE TO THE CENTRAL MOUNTAIN SUBREGION FOR REVEGETATION AND LANDSCAPING, INCLUDING TREES, SHRUBS, AND GROUNDCOVER.

### **FINDINGS**

A rich diversity of biological resources exists within the Central Mountain Subregion. The Descanso area is of particular biological interest because it lies in the transition from lower to upper Sonoran Life Zones and as a result has a complex ecology.

There are a number of plant communities in the Central Mountain Subregion. Of these, coniferous forest, Oak woodland, Riparian woodland, and meadow/grassland are particularly important due to their scarcity in San Diego County and their value as wildlife habitat. Chaparral is also ecologically significant

and is declining due to the brushing and grading associated with development throughout the County.

A number of sensitive animal and plant species have been identified in the Central Mountain Subregion. Based on habitat requirements others which have not been identified may occur here. The identification of these species and their habitat requirements is the first step in their preservation. Once this has been determined the development of a habitat preservation and/or recovery plan is necessary to prevent their extirpation.

A number of sensitive plant species found in the Subregion are, for example, Rattleweed Locoweed, which is endemic to San Diego, and Cuyamaca Cypress, a rare and endangered plant found in the King Creek watershed and possibly in other parts of the Subregion.

The plant communities provide habitat for numerous species of wildlife including species which are listed as Special Animals by the California Department of Fish and Game, Natural Diversity Data Base. Some examples of listed animals found or expected to be found in the plan area include the great blue heron, golden eagle, Cooper's hawk, least Bell's vireo, yellow warbler, American badger, Pacific kangaroo rat, Southern rubber boa, and San Diego horned lizard. The least Bell's vireo is federally listed as rare and endangered. The mountain lion is also found in the plan area. It is a protected species whose status is of statewide concern. Other valuable species of wildlife found in the plan area include the mule deer, bobcat, coyote, and gray fox.

The plant communities and associated wildlife species found in the Subregion represent a valuable resource to the people of San Diego County and the State of California. Their continued viability is threatened due to habitat loss or alteration from development. For the purpose of preserving biodiversity, the viability and importance of habitats increase proportionately with the area of the habitat. Presently not subject to the environmental review process, removal of native vegetation for agricultural or residential development produces the most serious impact on local wildlife. Care must be taken to preserve these resources for the future and minimize the impacts upon them.

The wide variety of habitat types in the Central Mountain Subregion support a tremendous diversity of plant and animal species. Open space corridors will help ensure that this diversity is maintained. Open space corridors along waterways such as the Sweetwater River will protect one of the most valuable habitat types, riparian woodland, and will also help to preserve and sustain groundwater supplies. Open space corridors provide wildlife migration routes between wild areas. The lack of these corridors between wild areas could isolate wildlife populations causing a loss of genetic diversity and population decline.

The use of native vegetation provides habitat for animals; increases the species population, thus ensuring a larger breeding population; reduces the visual impacts of development by helping structures blend into the surrounding environment; conserves water; and retains community and regional character.

The use of vegetation native to the Central Mountain Subregion in landscaping and erosion control plans for future private and public developments can significantly preserve and replenish biological resources.

Many plant communities, most notably chaparral, require periodic burning as a natural regrowth renewal process. Artificial fire suppression to protect private property has resulted in an accumulation of this high fuel content vegetation resulting in a fire hazard to other vegetation -- some of which requires very long regrowth periods, and some endangered species. Therefore, a comprehensive fire-fuel management plan of controlled burning is necessary for this plan area to address the natural regrowth process and avoid catastrophic wild fires on both private and public lands.

The aesthetic value of the impressive mature oak and pine trees for which the Subregion is well known is difficult to translate into dollars. The importance of protecting vegetation that has spanned generations cannot be overstated and will be enjoyed by generations to come. Education regarding open space requirements and groundwater needs is necessary to sustain the trees' ecosystem, especially in periods of drought.

### POLICIES

1. Grading for structures should be limited to the building footprint, garages and driveways. [PP]
2. In chaparral, clearing of brush shall be limited to that required for fire protection. [PP]
3. Cut/fill slopes shall be limited to five feet whenever possible. [PP]
4. Cumulative effects of habitat disturbance should be addressed during evaluation of environmental impacts of development projects. [PP]
5. County agencies reviewing site plans, landscaping plans, and grading plans shall favor the retention of existing native vegetation, especially mature, healthy trees. [PP]
6. Selective cutting and regeneration may be encouraged for reasons of wildlife and forestry management. [PP]
7. For any project requiring environmental review, biological studies will be required that specifically address wildlife movement corridors and areas of wildlife concentration whenever applicable. [PP]

8. Any identified wildlife corridors shall be preserved by the granting to the County of an open space easement. The width of the easement will depend on the type of wildlife using the corridor and the natural topography, plus a 50 foot buffer on either side of the corridor where feasible. [PP]
9. Biological studies addressing corridors shall attempt to identify where the corridor continues off-site for a distance of one half mile beyond the borders of the property. [PP]
10. Ensure that open space easements for corridors will continue on adjacent parcels by mapping all identified corridors on a Master Corridor Map. [PP]
11. Biological studies shall be required for discretionary permits when deemed necessary by County environmental review staff. These studies shall specifically address, but not be limited to, the identification of endangered, threatened, and sensitive species. [PP]
12. Spring surveys shall be required in areas where sensitive species are known to exist. [PP]
13. Require all biological resources to be recorded on a Resources Map and biological reports to be kept for public record and use. [PP]

## **VISUAL RESOURCES**

### **GOAL**

THE PREVENTION OF VISUAL BLIGHT AND THE RETENTION OF THE VISUAL RESOURCES IN THE CENTRAL MOUNTAIN SUBREGION.

### **FINDINGS**

The Central Mountain Subregion is one of the most visually significant areas in southern California. Claiming six of the ten highest peaks in San Diego County, the Subregion offers residents and visitors undisturbed views of mountains, meadows, chaparral-covered hills, Oak woodlands, and Riparian canyons. The Subregion also offers a glimpse of the rural America that is quickly disappearing in southern California.

The Central Mountain Subregion receives hundreds of thousands of visitors yearly, both from San Diego County and from elsewhere in the country. These visitors are attracted to the recreational open space found here, seeking physical and mental relief from urban and suburban environments. The undeveloped visual resources of the area contribute greatly to the value of the area as a recreational resource.

Urban development east of Greater San Diego stops at the border of the Cleveland National Forest, coinciding with the boundary of the Central Mountain Subregion. To prevent the continuation of such development and the

suburbanization of Descanso, and adjacent lands, fairly strict regulations addressing visual blight may need to be adopted.

#### POLICIES

1. Planned residential developments and Specific Plan areas shall blend harmoniously with the natural contours of the land, preserve native vegetation in an undisturbed state wherever possible, and require the use of native plant species and natural scenic geological formation in the project's landscape design. [PP]
2. Billboards are not desired in the Subregion. Adopt a Highway signs are small; and the program with its signs of acknowledgement encourage volunteers in the community to pick up litter. [GEN,CAL]
3. Development along scenic roads and highways shall be designed so as not to detract from the appearance of open spaces. [PP]

## **9. OPEN SPACE**

### GOALS

1. RURAL LANDS OUTSIDE OF ESTABLISHED COMMUNITIES WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS MINIMAL.
2. A SYSTEM OF OPEN SPACE THAT PRESERVES UNIQUE NATURAL FEATURES, ENHANCES RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, CONSERVES SCENIC RESOURCES, AND RETAINS THE PEACEFUL BEAUTY OF THE SUBREGION.

### FINDINGS

Open Space is defined herein as lands reserved for agricultural activities, outdoor recreation, and the protection of natural resources. Open Space is the primary factor contributing to the rural character of the Central Mountain Subregion. Communities are well defined by large expanses of intervening public and private lands that are undeveloped. Open Space is highly valued by the residents because it provides rich wildlife and vegetative habitats, and contributes immensely to the tranquility and beauty of the Subregion.

Open Space for outdoor recreation is discussed in the Recreation Chapter. Open space for the preservation of natural resources is discussed in the Conservation Chapter and in the Scenic Highways Chapter. Open Space for Agriculture is discussed in the Agriculture Section of the Land Use Chapter.

Most of the Open Space in the Subregion is managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (Cuyamaca Rancho and Anza Borrego State Parks) and by the United States Department of Agriculture (Cleveland National Forest). Open Space in private ownership is of sufficient high quality to warrant protection and to ensure that Open Space links between public and private resources are preserved.

The rural component of San Diego's Regional Open Space Plan recognizes that there must be ultimate limits to the extent of urbanization in this region, and that the rural component provides a necessary edge and contrast to the urban landform. Each is defined by, and has its quality and value improved by, the other. Rural open space also functions to make the San Diego region different and of a higher quality than other metropolitan areas, where the urban form has been allowed to stretch continuously and uninterrupted from one end of a region to the other.

## POLICIES

1. Minimize the urbanization of rural lands outside of established communities and maintain the open space character of the Subregion, the land use pattern should be limited as follows:
  - a. Residential development outside of rural communities should be at the lowest planned densities, and associated with defined, viable rural land uses on the same land. Residential development in towns should be limited in number of units and extent to maintain the small size of the town, and should have a scale and character of structure consistent with the rural setting; generally excluding multi-family or attached units, and generally limited to one or two stories in height. [PP]
  - b. Commercial development should be limited to Country Towns or individual stores/operations at highway crossroads; there should be no regional centers or malls. Commercial uses generally should be on small, individual lots such as along a "main street". Structures should be of a size and character to fit and maintain the rural or rural setting. [PP]

## Cuyamaca

1. Protect the integrity of Lake Cuyamaca as a valuable environmental and recreational resource
2. Encourage the coordination of planning between the Cuyamaca Subregional Community and the Inaja and Cosmit tribal lands in order to minimize impacts of regional activities.
3. Encourage privately and public owned open space to retain the existing rural character of Cuyamaca

## 10. RECREATION

### GOALS

1. ENCOURAGE COORDINATION AMONG PUBLIC AGENCIES PROVIDING RECREATIONAL AMENITIES.
2. ENCOURAGE THE USE OF SCHOOL SITES FOR ACTIVE RECREATION.
3. PROTECT LOCAL RESIDENTS FROM THE ADVERSE IMPACTS OF REGIONAL RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES.
4. PROTECT STATE AND FEDERAL LANDS FROM ENCROACHMENTS BY ADJACENT PROPERTY OWNERS AND PROTECT PRIVATE LANDS FROM ACTIVITIES OCCURRING ON PUBLIC LANDS.
5. ENHANCE THE PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL WELL BEING OF THE RESIDENTS BY PROVIDING AND PRESERVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION, REST, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, EDUCATION AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS.
6. PROVIDE A SYSTEM OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE, RIDING AND HIKING TRAILS, INDOOR AND OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES WHICH WILL PRESERVE THE RURAL MOUNTAIN LIFE STYLE SOUGHT BY THE RESIDENTS OF THE DESCANSO PLANNING AREA.
7. ESTABLISH A LOCAL PARK IN EACH COMMUNITY. DESCANSO IS DEFICIENT IN LOCAL PARKLAND WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.
8. DEVELOP A TRAILS ELEMENT WITHIN THE PRIVATELY OWNED AREAS WHICH WILL PERMIT CONTINUED ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS AS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OCCURS PROVIDED THAT LIABILITY FOR THESE TRAILS REMAINS WITH THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO.
9. ESTABLISH, PROTECT AND MAINTAIN AN ENJOYABLE, EFFICIENT AND SAFE NETWORK OF RECREATIONAL PUBLIC TRAILS.

### FINDINGS

#### Existing Facilities and Trails

The Central Mountain Subregion contains almost all of Cuyamaca Rancho State Park's 25,000 acres, a portion of Anza Borrego State Park and approximately 120,000 acres of the Cleveland National Forest. The County of San Diego has a Joint Powers Agreement with the Mountain Empire School District for local park facilities at Descanso Elementary School. The Lake Cuyamaca Recreation and Park District manages the Lake Cuyamaca Recreation Area. Existing local park facilities are shown on page 108.

The Parks, Open Space, and Recreation section of the County General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element establishes a goal of ten acres of local park land for every 1000 persons. Aggregate totals for the Central Mountain Subregion show that it currently has 19.7 acres of local park land for the current population. The current regional park need for the region is met by the available State and Federal park facilities.

Residents of the Subregion strongly support hiking and riding trails, additional facilities to meet the needs of the young, and conserving as much open space as feasible.

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park offers many recreational activities: over 100 miles of riding and hiking trails; a small museum at the Stonewall Mine, an interpretive center at Paso Picacho, and a museum at the park's headquarters; family campsites at Paso Picacho and Green Valley; group campsites at Paso Picacho; environmental campsites; primitive trail camps at Arroyo Seco and Granite Springs; and group equestrian camping at Los Vaqueros. Nearly 13,000 acres are classified as Wilderness where no vehicles, including bicycles, are allowed. There is the Equestrian Los Vaqueros Campground, with an 80 person capacity and family and group campsites at Arroyo Seco and Granite Springs. Approximately 600,000 visitors enjoy the park's amenities per year.

There are approximately 120,000 acres of the Cleveland National Forest within the Subregion. Most of this acreage lies in the Descanso Ranger District. Land within the Forest is managed as wilderness areas (Pine Creek Wilderness), developed recreation complexes (Laguna Mountain Recreation Area), general forest unroaded areas (Noble Canyon Area) where maintenance of natural qualities and conditions for wildlife are emphasized, general forest roaded areas (all areas not classified otherwise) where motorized access is allowed, and research natural areas (King Creek - Cuyamaca Cypress) to protect and maintain sensitive vegetation. There are 60 miles of riding and hiking trails in the Descanso Ranger District, including 37 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail, and miles of the California Hiking and Riding Trail, two trails for four-wheel drive vehicles, other motorized vehicles, hikers, riders, and mountain bikes (Bear Valley and Los Pinos Routes), and two trails for all uses except four-wheel drive vehicles, Kernan Cycle and Spur Meadow Cycle Trails. Remote camping is allowed along some of these trails. The Forest also offers campgrounds and picnic areas, and visitor activities such as nature walks.

Problems exist because of the proximity of private lands to State and Federal lands. Private landowners sometimes use public lands as extensions of their own backyards, by clearing vegetation and using non-designated areas for riding. These encroachments are especially damaging to wilderness areas. Encroachments also occur when visitors to State and Federal lands trespass onto private property. Problems also arise from changes in resource management

priorities. Additionally, persons used to riding on certain trails do not always accept the closure of these trails. Conflicts arise partly because State and Federal Rangers are more aware today than in the past of sensitive vegetation and habitats, and because there has been, and will continue to be, a significant increase of visitors. This increase in visitors causes periodic changes in resource management priorities.

The Lake Cuyamaca Recreation and Park District manages Lake Cuyamaca as a recreational resource. It stocks the lake with fish, operates two campgrounds, rental cabins, a permit, boat rental and tackle shop, and leases space to a private restaurant concession. It provides picnic areas, a hiking trail, and duck hunting.

#### Descanso Elementary

The County of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department has a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with the Mountain Empire Unified School District. It was signed August 8, 1995 and expires 20 years from that date, August 8, 2015. A 2 acre portion of the school site offers a multi-purpose field, play equipment, and ball field. This site has limited hours of operation. Portable toilets have been removed and picnic tables are behind locked gates. The field and bleachers are in need of repair and, as is, are safety concerns.

#### Future Facilities and Trails

The Central Mountains Subregion meets the General Plan goal for available regional park land of 15 acres per 1,000 population in 2030. The Subregion contains large acreages of public lands (State and federal), much of which is available for public recreational uses. The Planning Area contains approximately 24,677 acres of partially developed State park and 183 acres of developed Cleveland National Forest lands. Cuyamaca Rancho State Park proposes to open Seal Camp, which is no longer used by Navy Seals, as a small group campground. A large area of undeveloped Cleveland National Forest land is also available for future development. Consequently, County Parks and local planning and sponsor groups feel that review of regional park and recreation needs should concentrate on facility development rather than acquisition and that any regional type development proposals should be coordinated with the State and Cleveland National Forest Service, however park facilities should also be considered for each individual community.

Descanso Planning Group does not feel that review of regional park and recreation needs should concentrate solely on facility development; acquisition for each community should also be reviewed. The Descanso Planning Group feels that each community needs a local park and/or a local snow-recreational location, not a regional park benefiting only one community in the Subregion. Acquisition could be coordinated with the state and Cleveland National Forest, but not exclusively.

#### A. Parks and Recreational Facilities

Development of needed facilities will occur as funding for maintenance and operation becomes available. The priorities for the Descanso and Cuyamaca communities are identified below:

1. Descanso: Develop support for the maintenance and operation services of the Descanso Community Park in accordance with the needs of the citizens of the Descanso community. Develop additional facilities such as a community center, potentially at the site of the abandoned house at the road station
2. Cuyamaca: Develop a local snow-recreational location to provide an appropriate area for winter recreational use for local residents and visitors, including sufficient on-site parking, refuse disposal, and restroom facilities. At this time, an appropriate site would be Hual-cu-cush, which is part of the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park.

#### B. Trails

The Cuyamaca Rancho State Park has over 100 miles of trails for hikers, bikers and equestrians.

## POLICIES

### A. Parks and Recreational Facilities

1. All new recreational facilities should be coordinated between the San Diego County Parks Department, the local Sponsor Group and School District, and other qualified agencies in order to promote joint use of recreational facilities. [DPR,PP]
2. Future development and maintenance of park and recreational facilities is to be coordinated with the Cleveland National Forest and State of California Parks and Recreation Department in order to eliminate duplication of existing facilities and services and avoid concentration of recreational facilities and services in areas where the standards have been executed. [DPR]
3. Before dispersing Park Land Dedication Ordinance Funds to develop local park facilities, County Services Areas, alternative taxing agencies, or other organizations capable of providing ongoing park maintenance and operation services need to be created for each community requiring park facilities within the Subregion. [DPR]
4. In order to proceed with any local park improvements at this time, joint powers or cooperative agreements will be required with the affected community organizations. These agreements may be prepared when local groups have been established to provide maintenance and operations. [DPR]
5. Recreational uses shall be of a type and scale compatible with surrounding low density residential uses and the National Forest, State Park lands, and private holdings. [DPR]
6. Existing public facilities such as State and Federal lands, a part of the State Park next to Descanso Elementary, and unused facilities such as the County maintenance station at Viejas Grade Road in Descanso be given priority to study for acquisition as new park land and development of a community center. [DPR]
7. Acquisition of lands suitable for local park and recreation purposes will be encouraged to meet the current and projected recreation needs of the community. [DPR]
8. Specific Plans should provide sites for public park facilities to the satisfaction of the community, the Department of Planning and Land Use, and the Department of Parks and Recreation. [CP,DPR]

9. Discourage construction, installations, conversions, and other types of uses which will prohibit or restrict public access within sections of Parks and Public Recreation Areas, whenever possible. [CP]
10. Discourage construction, installations, conversions, and other types of uses which will prohibit or restrict public access to mountain tops and/or scenic areas, especially those areas that provide scenic panoramic views. [CP]
11. Develop the Descanso Valley Trail to provide walkability in Descanso.

## 11. NOISE

### GOAL

AN ENVIRONMENT FREE OF EXCESSIVE NOISE THROUGH THE CONTROL OF NOISE SOURCES.

### FINDINGS

Noise pollution could become a significant environmental problem in the Central Mountain Subregion, and is an issue of great concern and importance to its residents. Maintaining minimal noise pollution levels is an important aspect of the quality of life within the Subregion, and continued regulation is felt by many residents to be necessary for the retention and protection of the rural character. Some residents find that noise pollution and noise contamination levels in the Subregion are already at significant and unacceptable levels.

In the absence of careful regional and local controls, noise pollution levels can be expected to reach even higher levels during the life of the plan. The primary noise sources that have been identified are along and adjacent to Interstate Highway 8, Old Highway 80, Highway 79, Riverside Drive, and Viejas Boulevard. Private airports, helipads, and sport motorcycles are two types of uses that have been specifically identified as being a significant source of noise pollution and therefore are detrimental to the rural character of the Subregional planning area.

### POLICES

1. Regulate noise impacts along the main thoroughfares (Old Highway 80, State Highway 79, Sunrise Highway, River Road), those associated with development and enforce regulations to reduce these impacts. [PP]
2. Private airports, heliports, helipads, and helistops shall be discouraged in the Central Mountain Subregion except for emergency services. [PP]
3. Large projects shall be reviewed for possible noise impacts on the whole community. [PP]
4. The appropriate agencies and the Cuyamaca Planning Group will work with property owners to determine appropriate animal noise reduction measures.
5. Discourage the development of Private Off Road Vehicle Parks in the Central Mountain Subregion.

## POLICY CODE EXPLANATION

The responsibility for carrying out the policies of this Community/Subregional plan does not lie solely with the Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU). The cooperation of private property owners, developers, decision-makers and numerous other entities, both public and private, is necessary to make these policies successful.

A code within brackets [ ] has been placed at the end of each policy within the Plan Text to identify which county department or sub-departmental section of the Department of Planning and Land Use is responsible for taking the lead in carrying out the policy. In addition, there is a code identified as "GEN", which indicates those policies that are of a general concern to all persons or groups that might be involved in development or plan implementation.

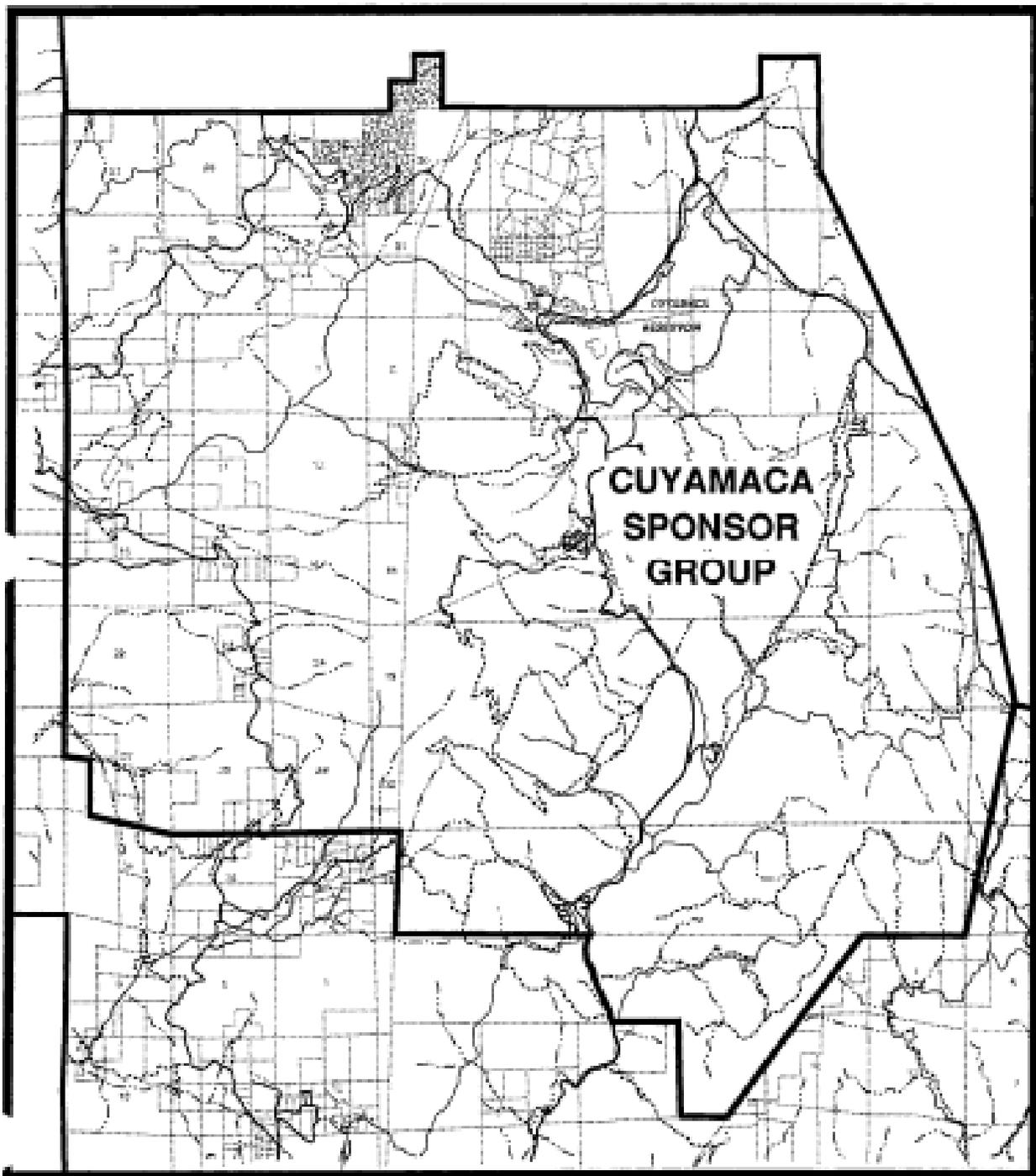
This approach will assist in providing detailed information regarding policies easier to locate, and aid staff in overseeing the progress of the plan.

### CODE

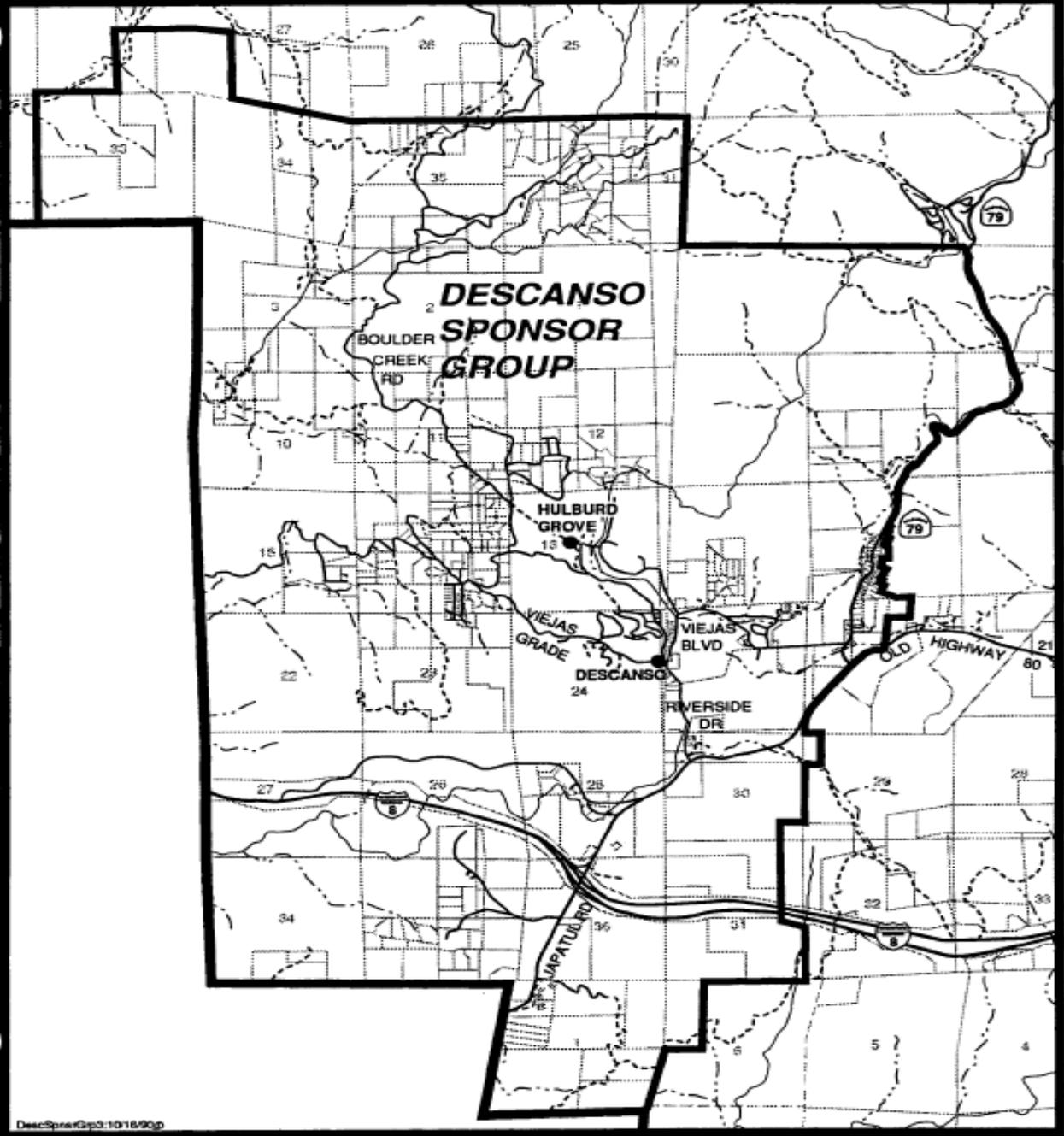
GEN	POLICY OF GENERAL APPLICATION
DPW	DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
DPR	DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
DHS	DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DA	DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
HCD	DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
PDS	PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
C	- Code Enforcement
PP	- Project Planning
AP	- Advanced Planning
B	- Building Division

APPENDIX A - SUBREGIONALGROUP AREA MAPS

CUYAMACA SPONSOR GROUP AREA



DESCANSO SPONSOR GROUP AREA



## APPENDIX B RESOURCE CONSERVATION AREAS

This overlay identifies lands requiring special attention in order to conserve resources in a manner best satisfying public and private objectives. The appropriate implementation actions will vary depending upon the conservation objectives of each resource but may include: public acquisition, establishment of open space easements, application of special land use controls such as cluster zoning, large lot zoning, scenic or natural resource preservation overlay zones, or by incorporating special design considerations into subdivision maps or special use permits. Resource conservation areas shall include but are not limited to groundwater problem areas, coastal wetlands, native wildlife habitats, construction quality sand areas, littoral sand areas, astronomical dark sky areas, unique geological formations, and significant archaeological and historical sites.

Within Resource Conservation Areas, County departments and other public agencies shall give careful consideration and special environmental analysis to all projects which they intend to carry out, propose, or approve, and shall select those conservation actions most appropriate to the project and consistent with the intent of this overlay designation.

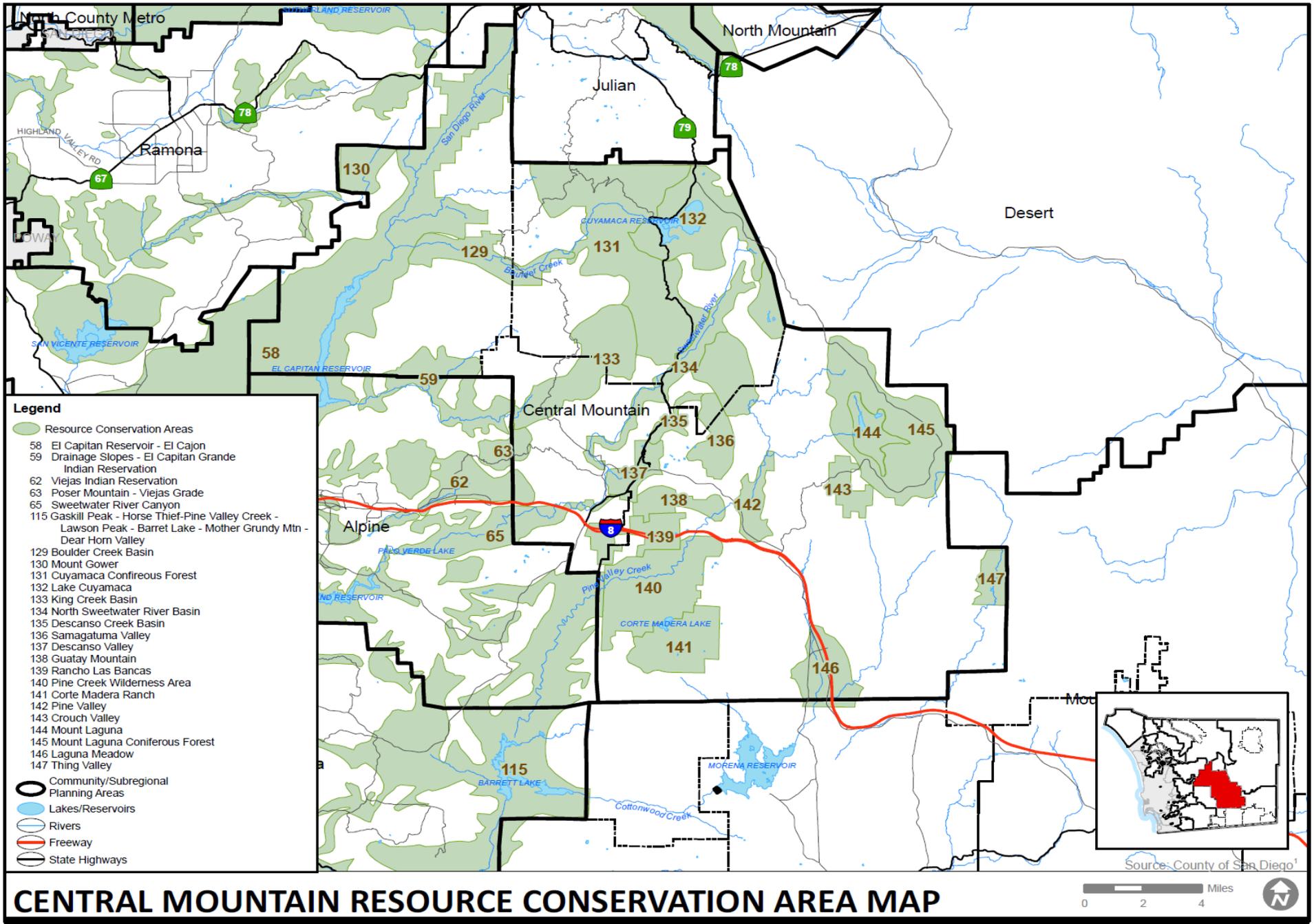
The Conservation and Open Space Section (3) of the Community Plan includes a Resource Conservation Element Area Map and reference to Resource Conservation Areas (RCAs) by number. This appendix identifies those areas, and provides discussion of those resources to be conserved in each of the numbered areas.

### CRITERIA

The following criteria were used in selecting resources worthy of conservation:

- Areas necessary for the protection of wildlife and representative stands of native vegetation.
- Areas containing rare and/or endangered plants.
- Wildlife habitats which are:
  - a. in large blocks, if possible;
  - b. wide, rather than long and narrow to minimize adverse effects along their margins; and
  - c. in contact with other wild areas and floodplains to provide migration corridors.
- Areas containing mineral resources. Conservation measures should ensure future availability.
- Areas which provide the scenic mountainous backdrop to development within the community

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# CENTRAL MOUNTAIN RESOURCE CONSERVATION AREA MAP

San Diego County General Plan

Figure 17

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#### 58. El Capitan Reservoir – El Cajon

This large area contains very steep slopes (the portion in Lakeside about 60 to 70 percent is greater than 50% slope) and isolated rocky peaks and ridges, including some of the largest granitic domes in San Diego County. Vegetation is excellent wildlife habitat with Oak woodlands, Coastal Sage scrub and Mixed and Chamise chaparral. The area contains such rare and endangered plants as the type locality for the threatened Lakeside wild lilac (*Ceanothus syaneus*), the threatened Morena current (*Ribes canthariforme*), the Felt leaf rock mint (*Monardella hypoleuca* ssp. *lanata*) and Adders tongue fern (*Ophioglossum californicum*), the very rare and endemic Dense reed grass (*Calamogrostis densa*) and the rare Ramona cinquefoil (*Horkelia truncata*). The area contains historical and existing golden eagle nest sites. The rocky peaks, especially El Cajon Mountain, serve as a scenic backdrop for El Cajon as well as the Lakeside region. Resources in this area include Lake Jennings Reservoir and surrounding habitat, and the north facing slope on the south side of the San Diego River. Wildlife to be conserved in this area includes several species of raptorial birds. These areas have been included in open space easements for several approved housing developments.

#### 59. Drainage Slopes - El Capitan Grande Indian Reservation

This RCA is an extension of that which was created during the Alpine Community Plan Update. The resources identified for that RCA extend beyond the political boundary of Planning Areas. From the Alpine Community Plan text: "Principal drainage and adjacent slopes in Capitan Grande Indian Reservation, include for high archaeological potential and high wildlife value. (sic)"

#### 62. Viejas Indian Reservation

Viejas Indian Reservation and surrounding areas have many known archaeological sites and highest potential for sites yet undiscovered. Surface artifacts and evidence of previous early Indian occupation have been disturbed.

#### 65. Sweetwater River Canyon

This canyon contains undisturbed Chaparral, Virgin Riparian and Oak woodlands as well as a pristine perennial stream and aquatic ecosystems. Any type of development to disturb the vegetation in this canyon would also alter the dramatic view which can be partially sensed at the Highway 8 roadside viewpoint.

#### 115. Gaskill Peak - Horse Thief-Pine Valley Creek - Lawson Peak - Barrett Lake - Mother Grundy Mountain - Deer Horn Valley

Lawson Peak is a scenically important mountain as well as biologically important area because of the presence of the threatened Felt leaf rock mint, Gander's butterweed, and the rare Campo clarkia and Creeping sage. This resource conservation area also contains the Riparian and Oak woodlands of Hollenbeck Canyon, Pringle Canyon, and Dulzura Creek. The rock formation namesake for this

mountain is a prominent landscape feature for the Dulzura area. It also contains some of the rare and endangered species that occur in the Barrett RCA. Resources in this area include Tecate Peak as an international landmark, Cottonwood Creek and its waterfall, Riparian woodlands, as well as rare and endangered plants such as Mountain misery, the spectacular Campo pea, Cleveland monkey flower, Dense reed grass, Slender pod caulanthus, Gander's butterweed and Orcutt's brodiaea.

#### 129. Boulder Creek Basin

Starting on the western border of the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, Boulder Creek extends westward to the San Diego River. Like the San Diego River, Boulder Creek's watershed also contributes to El Capitan Reservoir. The area also contains steep slopes, Diegan sage scrub, and Riparian woodland. Mildred Falls and Devil's Jump-Off are two of the area's significant geologic features, as is the Devil's Punchbowl, a natural rock hollow, found along the creek just west of Boulder Creek Road. Boulder Creek is also one of only two creeks in San Diego County in which the California Newt (*Taricha torosa*) is found. Parts of the basin also contain historic, though now defunct, goldmines.

#### 130. Mount Gower

Located in the northwestern-most corner of the sub-region, adjacent to the Ramona Planning Area, Mt. Gower (3,103 ft.) contains steep slopes, oak woodland, and chaparral.

#### 131. Cuyamaca Coniferous Forest

Very little acreage of undeveloped coniferous exists in San Diego County. Most has been developed with resorts, homes, or summer cabins. Only on portions of Mt. Laguna and in an area to the northwest of Middle Peak can undisturbed tracts of this plant community be found. Additional development of the forest should provide for wildlife habitat and corridors. Residential densities should be sparse. Wildlife corridors and the biodiversity of the Cleveland National Forest shall be protected and preserved.

#### 132. Lake Cuyamaca

Biologically one of the most important areas in San Diego County (counting fifteen sensitive plant species), Lake Cuyamaca and its surrounding meadows are also of major importance as a watershed (Lake Cuyamaca is owned and operated as a Reservoir by the Helix Water District), a viewshed, and a recreational resource (Lake Cuyamaca Recreational District operates the lake as a picnic, fishing, and hunting area). Because of the area's sensitivity, the Cuyamaca State Park has proposed to the California Department of Parks and Recreation the creation of a Nature Preserve on lands owned by the Park. Such a preserve would preclude any development on this land. Any development of this area should be very limited. Wildlife corridors and the biodiversity of the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, Anza Borrego State Park and

the Cleveland National Forest shall be protected and preserved. Sensitive, rare, and endangered plant species found around the lake include: *Blennosperma nanum*, *Brodiaea orcuttii* (Greene) Hoover, *Calochortus invenustus*, *Clarkia purpurea* ssp. *viminea*, *Cryptantha affinis* (Gray) Greene, *Delphinium hesperium* Gray ssp. *cuyamacae* (Abrams) Lewis & Epling, *Downingia concolor* Greene ssp. *brevior* (McVaugh) Beauchamp, *Echinocereus engelmannii* (Parry) Ruempler var. *munzii* P.& F. *Grindelia hallii* Steyermark, *Horkerlia bolanderi* ssp. *clevelandii*, *Hymenothrix wrightii*, *Lewisia brachycalyx* Engelm. ex Gray, *Lilium parryi* Wats. var. *parryi*, *Linanthus dichotomus*, *Limnanthes gracilis* T.J. Howell ssp. *parishii* (Jeps.) Beauchamp, *Montiastrum lineare*, *Navarretia tagetina*, *Orthocarpus lasiorhynchus* Gray, *Plagiobothrys hispidulus*, *Psoralea rigida* Parish, *Rubus glaucifolius* Kell. var. *ganderi* (Bailey) Munz, *Thermopsis macrophylla* H. & A. var. *semota* (Jeps.) Beauchamp.

### 133. King Creek Basin

Starting on the western border of the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, King Creek extends westward through Sherilton Valley to El Capitan Reservoir. Besides acting as a watershed, the area contains steep slopes, oak woodland, and riparian woodland. Large areas of gabbro soils are also found within this proposed RCA, on which there is a high likelihood of finding endemic plant species. The eastern boundary of this RCA, nearest the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, is also that of the National Forest Service's King Creek Research Natural Area. This area has been created because of the presence of the Cuyamaca Cypress (*Cupressus arizonica* ssp. *stephensonii*), a species found only here. Care should be given to prevent any impacts to this species due to development. Wildlife corridors and the biodiversity of the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and the Cleveland National Forest shall be protected and preserved.

### 134. North Sweetwater River Basin

Extending from East Mesa in Cuyamaca Rancho State Park down to Descanso Valley, the North Sweetwater River Basin is the headwater basin for the entire Sweetwater River system. Resources found along this stretch of the river include Riparian woodland, Oak woodland, montane meadows, and, of course, the watershed itself. Development should be limited to those uses that would not impact the water quality through increased run-off, erosion, sedimentation, or pollution. Residential density should be kept to a minimum. Grading should be minimized and confined to building footprint only. Any exposed soils should be replanted immediately. Paving should be minimized, as well, to allow maximum absorption of rainwater by the soils. All natural vegetation, essential to water absorption and retention, should be retained. Wildlife corridors and the biodiversity of the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and the Cleveland National Forest shall be protected and preserved.

### 135. Descanso Creek Basin

Like the Sweetwater River, the Descanso River has its beginning in the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. From here it continues down to the Descanso Valley where it joins the Sweetwater River and Samagatuma Creek. Riparian woodland, Oak woodland, and the watershed are the resources of note. Development should be limited to those uses that would not impact the water quality through increased run-off, erosion, sedimentation, or pollution. Residential density should be kept to a minimum. Grading should be minimized and confined to building footprint only. Any exposed soils should be replanted immediately. Paving should be minimized, as well, to allow maximum absorption of rainwater by the soils. All natural vegetation, essential to water absorption and retention, should be retained. Wildlife corridors and the biodiversity of the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and the Cleveland National Forest shall be protected and preserved.

### 137. Descanso Valley

The Descanso Valley is the centerpiece of the community of Descanso. It is currently used for dry farming and cattle and horse pasture. Scattered "rural" structures (barns, storage sheds) dot the borders of the fields which add to the bucolic character of the area. The valley is also the confluence of three waterways: The Sweetwater River, the Descanso Creek, and the Samagatuma Creek. Thus, the resources to be protected in this area are the viewshed, the watershed, Oak woodland, and community character. Wildlife corridors and the biodiversity of the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and the Cleveland National Forest shall be protected and preserved. As the valley is essentially flat, grading will not be much of an issue. Still, due to the importance of the watercourses, care should be given to minimize any impacts due to grading (erosion, run-off, and sedimentation). If a property was to be developed, community character could be best preserved by retaining as much of the open fields and hills as possible. This can be accomplished by encouraging a project design which clusters structures at the base of the foothills. Clustering would be feasible provided the property was annexed to the Descanso Water District and percolation tests proved smaller parcels feasible. Wildlife corridors and the biodiversity of the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and the Cleveland National Forest shall be protected and preserved.

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APPENDIX C - CNF COLOR STANDARDS

CNF COLOR STANDARDS  
FOR  
SUMMER HOME CABINS

I. ROOF COLORS

- A. Fiber Glass Asphalt Shingles similar in color to Celotex:
1. "Rustic Wood" shingles with medium to dark brown roof trim from following lists;
  2. "Chestnut Brown" shingles with dark brown from following lists;
  3. Black (only with gray color scheme) with black roof trim.  
\*"roof trim" in this case includes the fascia on the gables and along the eaves, the gutters, roof vents and any other features closely associated with the roof.

II. SIDING AND TRIM COLORS

- A. Colors similar to Frazee Exterior Flat Paint:

	<u>Siding</u>		<u>Trim</u>
1.	112 Mesquite	with	133 Bark
2.	109 Cocoa	" with	140 Oxford Brown

- B. Colors similar to Olympic Semi-Transparent Stain:

	<u>Siding</u>		<u>Trim</u>
1.	#916 (warm gray)	with	#913 (dark gray)
2.	#710 (med greenish brown)	with	#711 (dark brown)
3.	#716 Naturaltone Cedar	with	#725 (brown)

C. Colors similar to Olympic Solid Color Stain:

<u>Siding</u>			<u>Trim</u>
1.	Beige Gray	with	New Bark
2.	Fawn	with	Coffee
3.	Cocoa	with	Coffee
4.	Beachwood	with	Coffee or Ebony if black roof is <u>used</u>
5.	Sage	with	Coffee for roof trim and Avocado for other trim and/or small amount of white for windows.

D. Colors similar to Olympic Overcoat Housepaint:

<u>Siding</u>			<u>Trim</u>
1.	Beige Gray	with	Oxford Brown
2.	Clay	with	Oxford Brown

E. Colors similar to Sears Exterior Solid Color Stains:

<u>Siding</u>			<u>Trim</u>
1.	Sand Dune 2215	with	Espresso Brown 2227
2.	Adobe Brown 2256	with	Espresso Brown 2227
3.	Autumn Beige 2220	with	Espresso Brown 2227
4.	Teaberry Green 2250	with	Espresso Brown 2227 for roof trim
	or		Sagebrush Green 2217 for other trim
5.	Georgian Moss 2252	with	Small amount of white

F. Colors similar to Sears Exterior Paints:

<u>Siding</u>			<u>Trim</u>
1.	061 Desert Sand A	with	066 Saddle Brown A
2.	080 Graystone A	with	029 Tudor Brown A