

SECTION  
6

## Trail Planning Considerations

*How trails will be planned and designed*

**T**rail Planning Considerations are those items that influence trail development and management issues. These considerations are an integral part of the trail development and management guidelines.

### 6.1 General Trail Alignment

The first consideration of trail planning is the siting of the trails. Proposed trails shown on Community trails maps contained in this master plan or on the Regional Trails Map in the Public Facilities Element depict corridors of general alignments. The term “general alignment” is used to describe the general location of a future trail within a designated

corridor so that the specific alignment can be determined at the time of actual acquisition, implementation and/or construction. The designated corridor is usually, but not always, considered to be one-quarter mile wide. The concept of general alignments is especially useful in planning so that adjustments can be made to accommodate extreme topographical or other site specific constraints, and input from property owners and responsible parties when determining the final and precise trail location.

#### Route Study

Both existing and proposed trail and pathway locations in San Diego County cross a myriad of terrain, land uses, climate and vegetation zones as well as private and public property, all of which will impact

new trail development or improvements.

In general, there are several suggested steps, which will be considered in determining the location of new trails or trail systems. The **first step** is to examine the most recent topographic maps and aerial photos of the area to identify significant landforms, drainage patterns, existing trails or dirt roads, and vegetation. The **next step**, for which there is no substitute, is to walk the area for reconnaissance purposes and to apply established trail guidelines.

The reconnaissance process will include a systematic study of the area that will identify and evaluate proposed and alternative trail routes. The **final selection** of the best possible route will attempt to meet the established objective for that trail or trail system. The application of established trail design guidelines and the design and locational criteria (Appendix G) will avoid potential environmental impacts and will help minimize future trail operation and maintenance problems.

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***Countywide Implementation Strategy 4.1:***  
*When preparing to implement or open a new trail, consider design modifications to accommodate landowner concerns for privacy, security or safety.*

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When an application for a discretionary development permit, such as a subdivision map, use permit, specific plan or reclamation plan, is submitted for land that includes a trail corridor, the specific

location of a proposed trail within the trail corridor would be determined based on a route study. The route study could be as simple as the developer meeting with County staff and agreeing to a specific trail alignment. However, depending on site conditions or based on the steps described above, a more detailed study may be required. The proposed alignment would be incorporated into the development plans that include the site plan, grading and improvement plans.

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***County Policy 4.8***

*Establish and designate trails, whenever feasible, that correspond to existing (non-designated) trails, paths, or unpaved roadbeds that already have a disturbed tread*

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## 6.2 Land Use Considerations

The major purpose of trails is to provide the recreation, transportation, health, and quality of life benefits associated with walking, hiking, biking, and horseback riding throughout the County's varied environments. To ensure that this opportunity is provided and available in the future, it is important that these trails be located, designed and maintained so that their impact to surrounding land uses and sensitive environmental resources is minimal. Implementation of the County Trails Program should adhere to the following:

- Use lands already in public ownership or proposed for public acquisition wherever possible for trail alignments.
- Provide trail routes that meet the public needs while respecting the rights of property owners.
- Secure trail routes across private lands through purchase, easements, and dedication or by other means from a willing property owner/seller.
- Establish a fair and reasonable method for acquiring trails and for prioritizing acquisition needs.
- Establish new trails in locations that will not significantly impact sensitive environmental resources.
- Allow for the continued involvement and input of the agricultural community to help identify trail opportunities within agricultural areas

### Agricultural Operations

Agriculture is an important industry in San Diego County. According to the “1997 Census of Agriculture prepared by USDA”, San Diego County is ranked 24<sup>th</sup> for farms with sales over \$100,000 in the nation. According to the “Summary of County Agricultural Commissioners’ Reports 1998-99”, San Diego ranks seventh in California and has the second largest number of farms. Nursery and flower crops account for 62 percent of the total production. Agriculture is a vital part of the San

Diego economy and produces in excess of 1.24 billion dollars based on “1999 Annual Crop Report” statistics prepared by the County Agricultural Department.

Agriculture is not only economically important, but also represents a “lifestyle” that is deeply rooted in the families that participate in this profession. Farming, ranching and other agricultural activities allow people to work outdoors, live in rural areas, and carry on family based traditions with a strong sense of independence. Because of the importance of agriculture to San Diego County, the County Trails Program (CTP) recognizes the need to identify and understand potential agricultural impacts of trails.

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#### ***Countywide Policy 4.3:***

*Encourage the involvement and input of the agricultural community in matters relating to trails on or adjacent to agricultural lands and place a priority on the protection of agriculture.*

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There are a wide variety of agricultural lands in the County that produce many agricultural products. Crop production, animal production, soil types, or even temperature ranges can be used to identify agricultural lands. However, in order to address future trails within agricultural lands these complex and varying types of agriculture can be put into two major categories:

- Active Farming - This involves actual crop production, which includes a wide range of products, from fruits and vegetables to

nursery and flower stock. Also included is intensive livestock production such as dairies, meat processing and poultry farms.

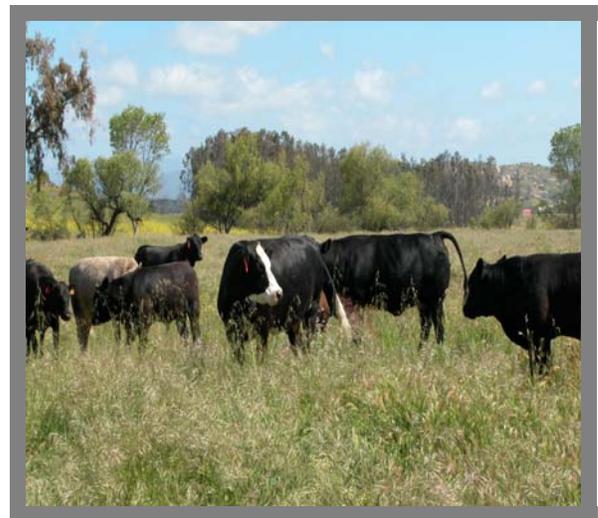
- Grazing - This generally involves land that is used for grazing purposes by a variety of animals. Grazing land could also be classified as fallow agricultural land that could later be used for future crop production.

Both of these types of uses have similar, but also separate concerns related to trails located near or through such property. In many cases, existing agricultural lands are considered disturbed from the standpoint of sensitive biological and cultural resources that might otherwise inhibit their use for trails.

Because of the significant amount of land devoted to agricultural activities in San Diego County, trail linkage through or adjacent to some of these areas may be unavoidable. Where linkages are necessary, the CTP strives to minimize effects on agriculture and the Agricultural Commissioner is consulted on issues of public safety and agricultural integrity.

Providing trails near active farming lands raises concerns on the part of agricultural operators. Their primary concerns include economic impacts and potential damage to crops; hindrance of spraying operations and spreading of crop disease; and destruction of property, vandalism, and theft. Operations associated with grazing or fallow lands are considerably less intensive than for active farming but nonetheless, very important to people that

manage these operations. Cattlemen and similar professionals have indicated that trails adjacent to grazing or fallow land raise concerns about disturbance, injury, or theft of animals; harm to animals from dogs or people that wander off the trail; trespassing and property damage. In addition, property owners who maintain bees (apiarists) have concerns about potential vandalism and hazards to trail users.



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*Grazing Land in Ramona*

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There are many legitimate concerns identified by agricultural interests related to the potential impacts of trails near agricultural lands. Their main concerns included the potential loss of the use of their land that would impact the economic viability of their operations, and the potential adverse impact to their lifestyle. As such, the CTP places a high priority on the protection of agricultural interests and concerns. In some cases, the best way to protect these interests will be to avoid the area entirely. However, in other cases, proper location, design, construction and active

management will be employed to minimize potential impacts. The CTP is committed to embracing a long-term working relationship with the agricultural community. Trails through agricultural lands can work. In areas with active crop production or grazing activity the management techniques discussed below will be instituted. Using the same management techniques for both of these agricultural categories will avoid the need for physical changes to the trails and associated facilities if the landowner decides to go into crop production at a future date.

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***Countywide Policy 4.6:***

*During trail design on or adjacent to agricultural land, notify and coordinate with the affected landowners to consider any special features that may be needed.*

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The County will seek the active involvement of the agricultural landowner when deciding how to best route specific trail segments through active farming or grazing land. Input will be sought on trail design and special features needed. When general agricultural concerns are raised, the County will seek guidance from the San Diego Farm Bureau, Cattleman's Association, or other recognized agricultural organizations. County resources will be committed to effectively manage trails in these areas and they will be monitored to help minimize any potential problems.

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***Countywide Policy 4.4:***

*Pursue mechanisms for securing trail routes across agricultural and grazing lands from willing property owners that are fair and reasonable*

*such as purchase, easements negotiated through incentives, or license agreements.*

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Incentives will be provided to encourage willing agricultural landowners to work cooperatively with County efforts to locate and operate trails. Incentives could include financial compensation for use of trail easements, and continued indemnification from liability for the landowner and owner of adjacent property. In addition, the County will offer the agricultural landowner reasonable measures of controlled access. In cases where easements are not voluntarily given by the property owner, or purchased by the County, revocable license agreements will be considered as a means of encouraging the property owner's participation. These agreements can provide the property owner the ability to terminate trail access if it is not properly maintained or if trail management is insufficient.

On lands where pesticide and herbicide applications occur, a minimum 50-foot buffer may be imposed during application periods. Buffer widths will vary from fifty feet to over one thousand feet, depending on the chemical being applied. Where feasible, the County will acquire sufficient easement width to locate trails outside the buffer zone. Protocols will be established for the necessary temporary closure of trails during the application of pesticides/fertilizers, during harvesting time, or for crop quarantine purposes. These protocols, when necessary, will be delineated in a written agreement with the property owner. This method of controlling use will be limited to periods most hazardous to users, and times when operational disruptions to agriculture

could have negative economic impacts. Closing the trail may require lockable gates at the beginning and end of trail segments.

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***Countywide Policy 4.5:***

*Establish specific guidelines for trails in areas with active agricultural operations or active grazing lands that will minimize potential impacts and accommodate operational necessities through proper location, design, construction, and active management.*

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Where possible, trails will be located along the edge (or perimeter) of agricultural land instead of across them. This will minimize potential impacts to agricultural operations, and the impact of trail closures during spraying or harvesting. A combination of fences, barriers, and signs will be used to provide a protective buffer between agricultural operations and trail users.

- Signs will be placed at the beginning and end of trail segments through agricultural lands.
- Signs will also notify users about sensitive agricultural operations and private property boundaries to discourage trespassing, theft, or damage to property.
- Fencing will be installed where necessary to provide a barrier between crop edges and the trail, and delineate the exact trail route, which will encourage users to remain on the designated trail.
- Fencing is required when adjacent to property owners who maintain bees

(apiarists) and appropriate setbacks to limit vandalism of hives and the potential threat to trail users will be established on a case-by-case basis. County Code Section 62.922 currently prohibits the placement of apiaries within 100 feet of a public road.

Trails through active farming or grazing land will be surfaced with a material that minimizes dust, with the expectation of minimizing potential pathogens that travel in airborne dust. The prohibition of motorized uses will be enforced to reduce the likelihood of airborne dust as well as the possibility of theft and destruction of private property. Dogs must be on a leash on trails, especially in areas with agricultural operations and where livestock is present to minimize possible conflicts between livestock and dogs. Adequate support facilities at trailheads may include parking, water, restrooms and trash receptacles that should help reduce possible contamination of crops by human litter and waste.

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***Countywide Implementation Strategy 1.7:***  
*Recognize the important public benefit of experiencing firsthand, natural habitats and cultural and historic resources along trail corridors, by designing trails that provide appropriate interpretive features and environmental protection.*

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## Cultural Resources

Trail development and management will be evaluated in terms of trail impact on archeological, cultural, and historical resources balanced with its value in enhancing the human experience. The county trail manager will handle

such activities in accordance within federal, state, and local ordinances. When Native American resources are involved, the County will consult with tribal governments and the appropriate agencies for protection and preservation of such resources.

Prior to construction, a qualified professional will make a cultural resource survey of the trail alignment. Where it is deemed appropriate, and use-related impacts can be avoided, trails may be designed to provide access to resources, such as historic sites. However, the County also recognizes that certain resources are so sensitive in some areas that it is inappropriate to locate a trail. Implementation Strategies 1.7 to 1.11 in Section 5 of the CTMP are designed to protect and mitigate any potential impacts to cultural resources. (Refer to Appendix G, Cultural Design Criteria, C-1 to C-4, for mitigation requirements.)

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***Countywide Policy 3.1:***

*Seek opportunities to designate or construct future trails on County-owned lands, such as parks, open space preserves and/or lands within the MSCP or other lands already under public ownership or proposed for public acquisition.*

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### Multiple Species Conservation Program

The Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) is a comprehensive habitat conservation-planning program that addresses multiple species habitat needs and the preservation of native vegetation communities. The plan is designated to streamline and coordinate existing local, state, and federal procedures for review and permitting

of project impacts to biological resources<sup>1</sup>. A key objective of the MSCP is to provide passive public recreation and educational opportunities within the preserve, while providing adequate protection for biological resources. Consistent with this goal, riding and hiking trails are allowed within appropriate portions of the preserve to provide passive recreational opportunities for the public<sup>1</sup>. In instances where trails intersect MSCP preserve land, the County will take certain precautions with the trail alignment to prevent ecological disturbance. In MSCP preserve areas, riding, hiking, and mountain biking may be allowed when in accordance with approved management plans and consistent with the County of San Diego Subarea Plans.

- All activities involved with trail design, construction, usage, and maintenance will incorporate appropriate methods that reduce potential impact on the preserve environment.
- Trail tread will be constructed with native soil (or disintegrated granite if necessary) and trail width will be minimized to reduce impacts to critical habitat and resources.
- Site design objectives will include avoidance and/or minimization of impacts to biological resources within the preserve.
- Access, non-native predators, non-native species, illumination, point source drain water, non-point source runoff, and noise

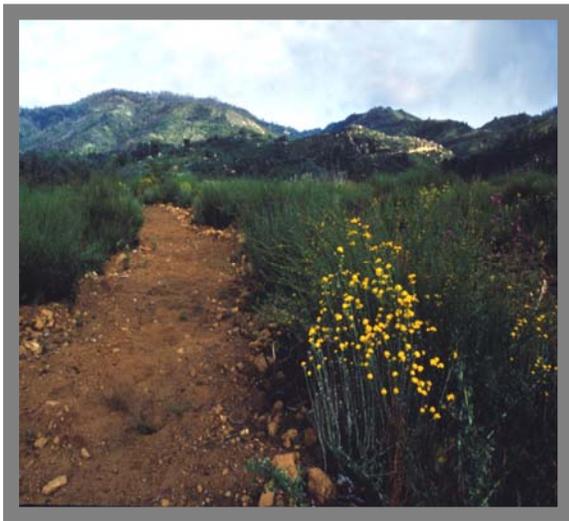
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<sup>1</sup> Multiple Species Conservation Program. August 1998

will all be taken into consideration during planning and construction of trails.

- Sufficient signs and appropriate barriers will be located to clearly identify access to the preserve.

Barriers, suitable to the location such as vegetation, boulders, and/or limited fencing, will also be employed to indicate the approved trail way and prevent unauthorized access into restricted areas. Sign objectives include education, directional information, and promotion of sensitive use. Signs that explain the rules of the preserve and trail system are most effective at public entrance points.



County trails are expected to be day-use only and therefore trails within MSCP land will not include a lighting aspect in order to protect and preserve sensitive species from night lighting. Lighting fixtures located on the perimeter of MSCP land will be directed away from the preserve and shielded if possible. Consideration should also be given to the use of less evasive, low-pressure sodium lighting.

## Natural Resources

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### ***Countywide Policy 4.7:***

*When locating specific trail segments, prioritize locations that avoid significant impacts to sensitive environmental resources.*

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Minimizing environmental impacts is a high priority with trail planning considerations. Many existing federal, state, and local laws protect natural resources which include, but are not limited to, vegetation communities, wildlife communities, sensitive species, soils, water sources, air quality and natural open spaces and geologic features that influence trail development and management. While protecting these natural resources within the law is necessary, it is not the only factor in developing and managing a trail system.

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### ***Countywide Policy 4.8:***

*Establish and designate trails, whenever feasible, that correspond to existing (non-designated) trails, paths, or unpaved roadbeds that already have a disturbed tread.*

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Trails function as linear parks that can provide access to natural, cultural and scenic resources for the visitor's enjoyment of those resources. Trail development will seek to include varied and diverse natural resources while attempting to minimize impacts from trails. CTMP design and management guidelines identify a variety of structures and techniques that can be employed to design trails around sensitive resource areas or minimize resource impacts.

When necessary, trail development may include the following design criteria:

- Barriers to control trail use and prevent environmental impacts
- Rerouting the trail and periodic trail closures if necessary
- Use of existing access routes and dirt roads
- Avoiding removal of mature native vegetation as much as possible
- Avoiding impacting geological features or be designed in such a way that will preserve the resource
- Locating trail alignments outside of any geological formations to avoid impacting paleontological resources or design trail alignments in such a way that will preserve the resource.

Some of the factors to be considered during trail development are:

- Soil characteristics
- Slope of surface and topography
- Elevation
- Type of ecosystem - wildlife and vegetation on or near the trail
- Type and level of trail use



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*Hikers in Borrego Springs*

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The trail manager is to ensure protection of resources and may limit trail alignment and use levels as appropriate.

The appropriate resource agencies shall be contacted for consultation regarding any proposed trail alignment that may potentially impact special status species or their habitat. These agencies ensure conformance with all applicable requirements of the 1603: Streambed Alteration Agreement permit issued by the California Department of Fish and Game, and the Clean Water Act, Section 404 permit issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

When necessary, to avoid potential impacts to biological resources, the following criteria will be used to locate a specific trail alignment:

- Appropriate buffers from sensitive resources shall be incorporated (1,000 feet from any golden eagle nest, 100 feet from any active raptor tree nests or 300 feet from any raptor ground nest).

- Physical and/or visual barriers may be incorporated to protect sensitive habitats, sensitive species, and wetland habitats, when deemed necessary.
- Trail grading, clearing, or construction shall follow distance and season requirements, when applicable.

Prior to implementation, trails will be required to conform with all requirements of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), Habitat Management Plan (HMP), Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) or similar regional planning efforts, where applicable.

In the unlikely event that impacts to sensitive habitat cannot be entirely avoided due to the necessity of connecting essential trail linkages, those impacts will be mitigated. Trails in areas where the Biological Mitigation Ordinance (BMO), Habitat Loss Permit (HLP) Ordinance or Natural Communities Conservation Planning (NCCP) Guidelines do not apply, mitigation measures may be required to reduce potentially significant impacts. (Refer to Appendix G, Biological Design Criteria, B-10, for the requirement to mitigate and for the listing of required habitat mitigation ratios.)

### Private Land

A countywide trail plan that identifies routes across or adjacent to private lands must address the cost, land-use, privacy, liability, and “due process” issues that concern many of San Diego County landowners. This will be true whether the lands in question remain in private ownership or are eventually

obtained by a public agency such as the County.

Privacy of adjacent landowners to trails and trail access facilities is of special concern. Privacy can be maintained or improved by modifying the trail alignment, planting landscape buffers, installing walls/fencing, allowing grade separations, or using a combination of these methods:

- Locate trails along property lines where feasible in conjunction with other land uses, to avoid unnecessarily crossing private property.
- Locate trails as far away from occupied dwellings as practical.
- Visually screen trail routes from adjacent dwellings when practical and economically feasible.
- Where desirable setbacks are not feasible, potential noise and privacy impacts should be evaluated and reduced by use of berms, fencing, landscaping, and other feasible and compatible means, if necessary.
- In areas where trails would pass adjacent land uses such as mining, railroads, and defense research and testing facilities, trail structures such as fences, barriers and signing will be used to deter trail users from leaving the trail.
- Temporary trail closures may be employed during intermittent operations,

such as agricultural spraying or other circumstances that would jeopardize the safety of a trail user when requested by the adjacent property owner, or determined by the County Trail Manager.

Although the rights of property owners are important, they are tempered with the recognition that trails are a needed facility for County of San Diego residents.

### Public Land

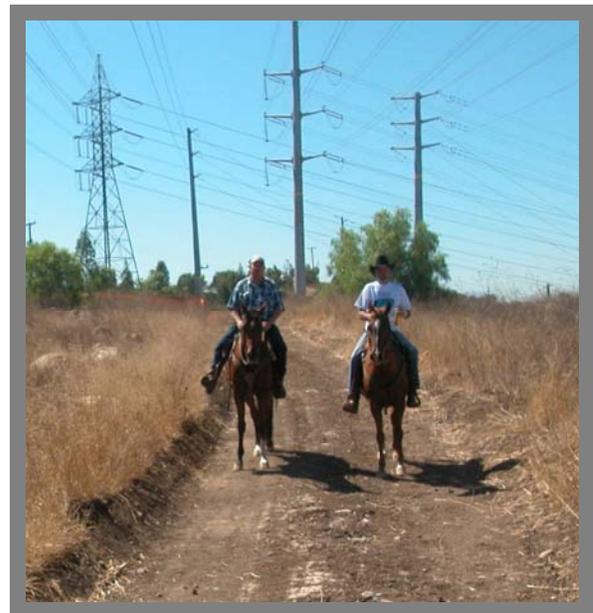
Most of the public land ownerships have public use or access policies that would allow for implementation of trail connections to their existing trails. The County will make a concerted effort to coordinate with other public agencies on future trail locations and to interconnect with planned trails and facilities. Providing trail connections to these existing facilities would benefit any trail system.

### Public Right of Way

The CTMP has identified the use of public road rights-of-way or parkway for community pathways. Pathways provide alternative transportation routes and enhance the ability of residents to access many parts of their communities without an automobile. Pathways associated with road rights-of-way through rural portions of the county have the potential to provide necessary connections between some communities and existing trails in outlying parks or region. Since an existing public right-of-way is already provided, legal access has been established,

but having sufficient right of way width to accommodate non-motorized transportation is sometimes a limiting factor.

The Bicycle Transportation Plan (BTP), contained in the Circulation Element of the General Plan, may utilize the same available rights-of-way for paved bikeways. Coordination between the CTMP and the BTP is necessary in order to avoid potential conflicts implementing both plans.



*Utility access roads serve as community trail connections*

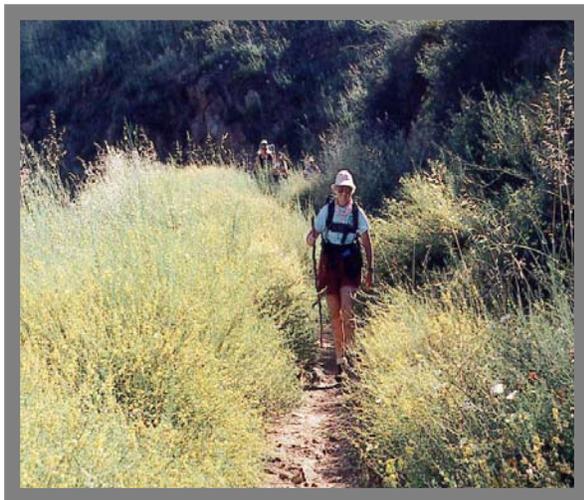
### Semi-Public Land

There are a variety of semi-public landowners. Each have their own methods of providing access to their lands or associated easements. Most have no specific policies that are directed toward trails. Any discussions regarding trail access or easements would require direct contact on a case-by-case basis with the specific parties.

The landowners with associated recreational facilities are likely to be willing participants. These owners would probably see an advantage in having trails connect to their recreational facilities from the surrounding community. Any trail alignment must consider the entity with which it will be dealing and prepare a strategy to obtain access agreements.

### Tribal Reservation Land

The County does not have jurisdiction over tribal reservation land. If a community desires a trail connection that involves tribal reservation land, the County will consult with the appropriate governing tribal council to discuss the feasibility of such a route.



*Hiker enjoying a trail experience on a regional trail*

## 6.3 Trail User Experience

Both recent and historical studies have shown that people want to gain certain rewards or outcomes from outdoor

experiences. These outdoor experiences are shaped, modified and greatly enhanced by the frequency and the quality level of both cultural and natural resources as well as aesthetics in general. Although, the protection of cultural and natural resources is fundamentally important, the significance of them may be diminished or lost without human awareness, concern and support. It is vital that humans have an opportunity to experience these resources first hand as natural resources have the ability to influence outdoor experiences, by stimulating the mind, body, and soul, and promoting the need for awareness, concern and support.

Trails provide a type of outdoor experience, which typically pass by or through rich and sensitive resources, both cultural and natural. They are a facility, which can control the level of human interaction while satisfying a need and elevating resource awareness, as well as enhancing the level of human experience. It is the intent of the County that trail planning, design and implementation should take full advantage, to the extent possible, the opportunities provided by cultural and natural resources, as well as other identifiable features, which can enhance the human experience.

Trails must be developed and managed with the experiences of the trail user in mind. Trail users tend to desire routes through areas containing viewpoints and vista corridors, water sources, scenic diversity, and interesting geologic features, as well as

other aesthetic, educational and historical points of interest.

Aesthetic considerations in trail development and management is a primary concern. Aesthetics are a primary reason why visitors come to natural settings and hike trails, which include the sights, smells, sounds, and textures that stimulate the mind, senses, and spirit of the visitor. A well-maintained and constructed trail will provide the visitor with a pleasant and memorable trail experience.



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*Community Open Space Trail*

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## User Safety

Providing safe and user friendly trails will be a major factor to the overall trail experience. To help maintain user safety on multi-use trails, the following should be considered when planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining multi-use trails:

- Provide adequate sight distances
- Build trails wide enough to accommodate expected levels and types of use
- Build and maintain trails wide enough for safe passing and provide periodic turnouts
- Design trails to control speeds where necessary by varying the trail surface and avoiding long, straight, downhill stretches
- Provide adequate trailhead facilities for all user types
- Provide appropriate signage that includes user group yielding rules
- Post trail use regulations prominently at trailheads and other appropriate locations and include them in trail brochures and on maps
- Utilize volunteer trail patrols

## 6.4 Accessibility

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the Department of Justice is responsible for issuing regulations to implement Titles II (state and local government services) and III (places of public accommodation; private businesses serving the public and commercial facilities) of the Act.

The Regulatory Negotiation Committee on Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas have developed ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) to be

proposed for trails, outdoor recreational access routes, beach access routes, and picnic and camping facilities. Although there are no specific regulations at this time, these guidelines will affect everyone who plan and design trails.

The proposed accessibility guidelines are for new trails, and substantially altered portions of existing trails, that will connect to an existing or proposed accessible trail or designated trailhead. The application of the proposed guidelines is limited to pedestrian use trails. These guidelines are not applicable to trails primarily designed and constructed for recreational use by equestrians, mountain bicyclists, snowmobile users, or off-highway vehicle users, even if pedestrians may occasionally use the same trails.

Accessibility guidelines also apply to trails used as non-motorized transportation facilities (pathways). Generally, these categories of trails are used by means of transportation other than foot travel (horse or bike) or personal mobility device (wheelchair) and do not preclude use by a person with a disability since that trail user would be using one of the alternative means of transportation. Trails that have been built to ADA standards should remain free of any hindrances that would deter wheelchair usage.

“Accessibility awareness” will be incorporated into trail development and whenever possible, trail access and design will provide for a range of user capabilities.

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***Countywide Implementation Strategy 1.1:***  
*Provide adequate support facilities, including*

*staging areas, which will sustain existing and future trail implementation. Facilities should include, but not be limited to parking facilities, potable water supply, restrooms, emergency telephones and access, signage, fencing, refuse containers, benches, gates, horse tie rails, and corrals*



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*Public staging area provided by a water district*

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## 6.5 Staging Areas

Staging areas should be easily accessible for a substantial number of residents. For this reason, locating staging areas on major arterial roads or near freeways is recommended. Locations for staging areas should also be carefully planned to avoid potential conflict with residential areas. This can be accomplished by placing them where higher traffic volumes for the staging area would not directly impact the local residents. The County will explore the possibility of utilizing parklands, school campuses, or other semi-public facilities with large parking areas for

staging areas. Coordination will be necessary to ensure that peak trail use times do not conflict with normal use of the facility.

### High Volume Trail Staging Areas

There are two categories of Staging Areas “High Volume” and “Low Volume” that can be provided along regional or community trails. They are determined based upon site-specific needs such as the potential quantity of use, which relates to the quantity of trails and potential links that can be accessed from any given point along the trail. The type of user should also be considered when planning the size of the staging areas.

These staging areas are intended to serve a large group of trail users by providing appropriate support features. These staging areas may include, but not to be limited to, some or all of the following:

- Adequate (automobile, horse trailer and/or motorcycle) parking
- Equestrian facilities
- Sanitary facilities
- Potable water
- Non-potable water
- Picnic area
- Shelter
- Informational kiosk

- Bicycle Racks
- Location map
- Telephone

In some cases, existing public facilities such as athletic fields, parks/open space preserves, fishing areas, or even shopping centers may have existing suitable areas for trail staging. Staging areas in these locations may contain additional features that are not primarily oriented toward trail users.

Regional trails typically have high volume staging areas. As a general guide, the County’s goal is to have one type of staging area at strategic access points every 25 miles as a minimum. Federal, state, and local parks, schools, or other public and semi-public facilities will be considered and utilized when determining placements of staging areas whenever possible.

It is necessary to include the planning of staging areas with trail locations incrementally, as trail use and demand increases, and make adjustments to the planned locations as necessary. Otherwise stated, the optimum level of service for regional trails is determined primarily on intended use and volume, along with relative distance between types of staging areas and the facilities they provide.



*Popular Staging Area in Bonita*

## Low Volume Trail Staging Areas

Community trails do not typically have high volume staging areas. Although in some instances, trail location, popularity, or other factors may create a need for high volume staging areas. Planning of all staging areas in a community relies heavily on input from individual CPSG, or other organized groups in the case where a community is not represented by a planning or sponsor group. It is intended that these staging areas be planned and located on a case-by-case basis.

These staging areas are intended to serve a small group of trail users by providing appropriate support features. These staging areas require fewer features, which may include, but not to be limited to, some or all of the following:

- Adequate parking
- Sanitary facilities

- Trash receptacles/service
- Potable water
- Location map
- Hitching Rails

In some instances, low volume staging areas may be located to supplement regional staging areas along regional routes. The County will monitor the need for staging and other support features as the County Trails Program evolves.

Each low volume staging area may serve a specific need and will be developed with the appropriate features. In some cases it can be anticipated that community trails may not require staging areas because of their proximity to local neighborhoods, schools, shopping centers and parks with existing support features. Staging areas that utilize these existing support features must not conflict with the existing use intended for those features. It is intended that these staging areas be planned and located on a case-by-case basis, preferably at the same time the trails are being planned. The need for staging and other support features will be monitored as the CTMP evolves.

## 6.6 Emergency Planning

### Access

During the trail planning process, final trail alignments and access points should be located to allow the trail to serve as emergency access routes for patrol or

emergency medical transport. For more remote trails, emergency access points should be located, where feasible, approximately every two miles along the trail and provide either access for ground vehicles or helicopter landing sites.



*Community repairing trails damaged in 2003 fire*

## Fire

Trails can serve as fuel/fire breaks, assist with fire containment, and provide a defensible position, especially in the heavily vegetated but less densely populated areas of the County. Providing firefighters with maps of existing community and regional trails can assist them by being able to quickly identify access points to remote or open space areas.

Prior to trail implementation, trail alignments should be reviewed by the local Fire Authority Having Jurisdiction (FAHJ) in conjunction with the California Department of Forestry (CDF). Where there is flexibility within a trail corridor, consideration should be given to siting trail alignments:

- that have the least flammable vegetation to aid fire suppression;
- that avoid severe slopes and hazards for access of emergency personnel and equipment; and
- that can provide wider horizontal clearance adjacent to trail tread and access points to assist the movement of emergency personnel and equipment.

Utilizing vegetation management zones for trail corridors complements the County requirement for minimum defensible area around structures and may also help eliminate potential development site constraints, such as environmental, for locating a trail alignment. Additionally, locating trails in these vegetation management areas could provide the trail user a “safety zone” in the event of fire.

## 6.7 Jurisdictional Coordination

San Diego County is unique in location, setting, and jurisdictional authority. The County of San Diego has jurisdiction over the unincorporated areas, although both regional and community trails will be influenced by surrounding

municipalities and public landowning agencies such as the State and Federal government. The County will coordinate development and management aspects of the CTP with other jurisdictional authorities in an effort to derive the greatest public benefit. In certain instances, such as regional trails, the County will coordinate with other jurisdictions to determine the alignment, cost, and maintenance and operation of existing and future trails. However, joint power authorities or formalized memorandums of agreement may be needed. The County will encourage other jurisdictions to adopt important and appropriate inter-jurisdictional trail connections to the CTP as part of their local general plans, master plans, public facilities plans and other planning documents when these trails have the potential to be either regional or community serving.

### Inter-Jurisdictional

It is anticipated that most community trails will be developed where the County has jurisdictional authority. However, trail opportunities from other jurisdictions may exist or may be planned for future construction. The County will coordinate with appropriate jurisdictions for trail connections and limitations. In such cases, the County will work with the CPSGs and with the other jurisdictions to determine trail management responsibilities and, where appropriate, negotiate the sharing of costs, maintenance and operational activities.

Below is a partial list of potential jurisdictional agencies to consider for trail coordination. A

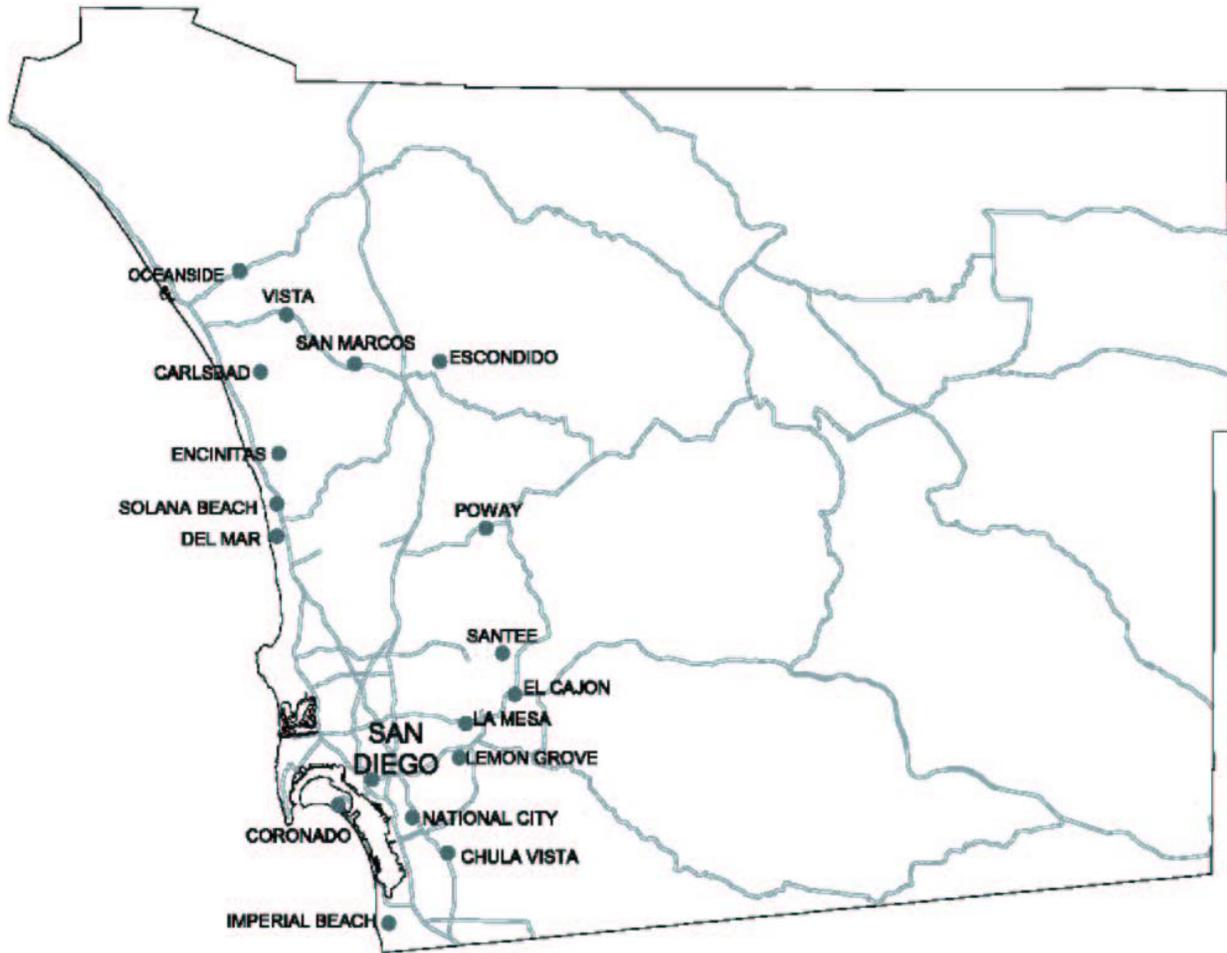
detailed list of jurisdictional agencies is located in the **Appendix DC, Agency Listing**.

- Conservancies
- Departments
- Federal Agencies
- Special Programs (e.g. MSCP)
- State Agencies
- Tribal Councils
- Utility Companies

### Incorporated Cities

Inter-jurisdictional coordination with San Diego County's eighteen cities (**Figure TPC-1**) will be an important component of the CTP. The Trail System Assessment assumed that the County would attempt to provide for the unincorporated region's population growth needs, while the cities would provide for their own trail needs as their populations grow. It is understood, however, that the County should recognize the magnitude of the growth in the cities and attempt to determine the potential impact to trails throughout the County. It is likely that the residents of the cities currently use trails throughout the County, and this use will potentially increase with the growth in population.

Figure TPC-1: Cities in the County of San Diego



Source: SANDAG (Base Layers)



7 0 7 14 Miles  
Scale 1" = 70,000' (1: 840,000)

**Figure TPC-1**  
**Cities in the**  
**County of San Diego**

County of San Diego, Community Trails Master Plan  
Trails Program

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