
Margarita (MWD)

The Margarita (MWD) study area is located at the western portion of the Temecula Valley within the City of Temecula.

Existing Conditions

General Site Conditions

The study area is located on an MWD easement that contains an underground water pipeline. There is currently no evidence of the underground pipeline except for the presence of a minimally used dirt access road. The elevation of the study area is approximately 1,070 feet above sea level. The study area is located on an undulating hillside that is sloped to the east. Two gullies run south across the slope and connect to Murrieta Creek, located east of the study area. The soils present consist of Escondido fine sandy loam, based on the USDA soil survey. Land use in the vicinity consists of the pipeline easement to the east and west, and open space in all other directions. Beyond the immediate land uses to the east, is commercial development and to the northwest is a rural residential development. The study area is subject to infrequent maintenance and monitoring activities by the water district and infrequent illegal use by off-road vehicles.

Vegetation

The vegetation on the study area comprises a coastal sage scrub plant community. The dominant shrub species is California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), but white sage (*Salvia apiana*), deerweed (*Lotus scoparius*), California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), and sticky monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*) were also observed. Various herbaceous plant species occurred throughout the interstitial areas. The dominant species include broad-leafed filaree (*Erodium botrys*) and red brome (*Bromus rubens*), but slender wild oats (*Avena barbata*), phacelia (*Phacelia distans*), blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), popcorn flower (*Cryptantha* sp.), dodder (*Cuscuta californica*), and locoweed (*Astragalus trichopodus*) were also observed. The gully features on the slope contain sparse occurrences of arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), and tree tobacco (*Nicotina glauca*) trees and shrubs. An oak woodland occurs upslope of the study area to the southwest and is comprised of many coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) trees.

Wildlife

Wildlife activity was high during the survey. The species observed include wrentit (*Chamaea fasciata*), California quail (*Callipepla californica*), killdeer (*Charadris vociferus*), lesser goldfinch (*Carduelis psaltria*), California towhee (*Pipilo crissalis*), and Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*).

Sensitive Biological Resources

Sensitive Species

Federally and State Listed Species

Habitat for any State- or federally-listed threatened or endangered species not already covered by an existing HCP does not occur within the study area. Therefore, the development of the study area is not anticipated to impact any plant or animal species protected under CESA or FESA.

WRMSHCP

The study area is located within an area identified by the WRMSCHP as requiring a habitat assessment for burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), a CSC covered by the WRMSHCP. No suitable habitat for the species was observed on or in the vicinity of the study area and no impacts to the species are anticipated

The study area contains suitable habitat for coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*), a federally-listed threatened species covered by the WRMSHCP, San Diego (coast) horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillii*), Bell's sage sparrow (*amphispiza belli belli*), and southern California rufous-crowned sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps canescens*), all CSC covered by the WRMSHCP, rainbow manzanita (*Arctostaphylos rainbowensis*) and Jager's milkvetch (*Astragalus pachypus var. jaegeri*), both CNPS listed species covered by the WRMSHCP. None of these species were observed within the study area. Impacts to these species' habitat have been adequately accounted for by the WRMSHCP and if the development of the study area is found consistent with the WRMSHCP, then further consideration of potential impacts will not be necessary. Coastal California gnatcatcher, Bell's sage sparrow, and Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow, however, are also protected under the MBTA and CDFG code and impacts to their nesting activities will still need to be avoided.

SKRHCP

The study area contains suitable habitat for Stephens' kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys stephensi*), a federally-listed endangered and State-listed threatened species, covered by the SKRHCP. The species was not observed within the study area. Impacts to the species' habitat have been adequately accounted for by the SKRHCP and if the SKRHCP fee is paid, then further consideration of potential impacts will not be necessary.

CNPS Listed Species

The study area contains suitable habitat for Parry's tetracoccus (*Tetracoccus dioicus*), a CNPS List 1B.2 species. The species was not observed within the study area. Regardless, plant species identified as sensitive only by CNPS are not protected by any State or federal laws or policies.

Other Sensitive Species

No suitable habitat for sensitive species not specifically protected under any other policy occurs on the study area.

Critical Habitat

The study area is located within Critical Habitat for coastal California gnatcatcher, as designated by the USFWS. Because the study area is located within the WRMSHCP and suitable habitat for coastal California gnatcatcher occurs within the study area, consultation with the USFWS will need to occur prior to construction and avoidance measures will need to be implemented.

Nesting Birds

No nests or nesting activities were observed during the survey; however, the vegetation in the study area contains suitable nesting habitat for shrub nesting avian species, such as California towhee.

California Desert Native Plant Act

No plant species protected under the CDNPA were observed within the study area and no impacts associated with the development of the study area are anticipated to occur.

Jurisdictional Waters

The two gullies that occur on the slope contain intermittent riparian vegetation and connect with Murrieta Creek downslope. Depending on the precise placement of the tower site, these gullies could be impacted. However, they could also be avoided depending on where the project is constructed. No vernal pools occur on or in the vicinity of the study area and there is no suitable habitat for sensitive fairy shrimp.

Wildlife Corridors and Movement

Given the limited size and minimal disturbance associated with the development of the study area, no impacts to any wildlife corridors or wildlife movement patterns are anticipated.

Applicable HCP or Land Use Management Plan

WRMSHCP

The study area is located on land owned by the MWD but will be leased by the County so is, therefore, subject to the WRMSHCP. The study area is located within an Existing Core Area in the "Southwest" Area Plan, SU1-Murrieta Creek Sub-unit, and falls within Criteria Cells 7355.

SKRHCP

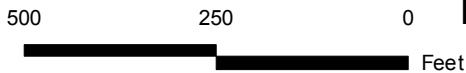
The study area is located within a fee area under the Western Riverside County SKRHCP.



Source: Riverside County NAIP, 2005.

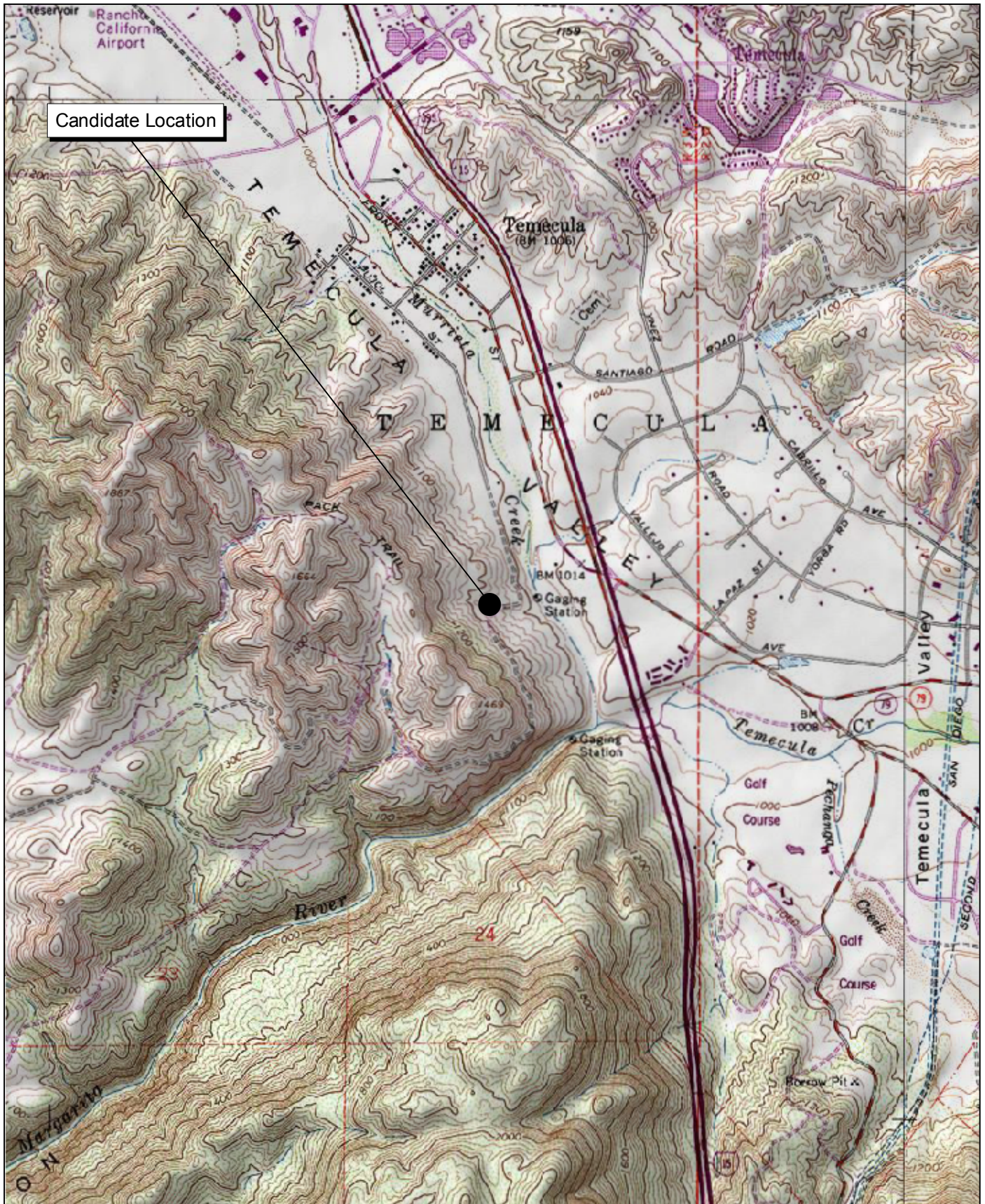


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Margarita MWD Communication Site Local Vicinity Aerial Map

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE
PUBLIC SAFETY ENTERPRISE COMMUNICATION PROJECT



Source: USGS Temecula 7.5' Topographic Map.



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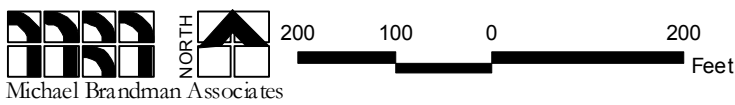


Margarita MWD Communication Site Local Vicinity Topographic Map

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE
PUBLIC SAFETY ENTERPRISE COMMUNICATION PROJECT



Source: USDA Soils Data (NRCS).





Photograph 1: Overview of Margarita candidate location, facing west.



Photograph 2: View toward Margarita candidate location, facing south.



Photograph 3: Overview of Margarita candidate location, facing east.



Photograph 4: Overview of Margarita candidate location, facing north.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2008.



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Margarita (MWD) Candidate Photographs 1 to 4
PSEC Project



Photograph 5: View from Margarita candidate location, facing north.



Photograph 6: View from Margarita candidate location, facing southwest.



Photograph 7: View from Margarita candidate location, facing east.



Photograph 8: View from Margarita candidate location, facing northwest.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2008.



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Margarita (MWD) Candidate Photographs 5 to 8
PSEC Project

Margarita (MWD)


TRANSPORTATION & LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY


Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP)

APN	Cell	Cell Group	Acres	Area Plan	Sub Unit
922210011	7264	Independent	0.67	Southwest Area	SU1 - Murrieta Creek
922210011	7355	Independent	8.08	Southwest Area	SU1 - Murrieta Creek
922210011	7356	Independent	1.04	Southwest Area	SU1 - Murrieta Creek

HABITAT ASSESSMENTS

Habitat assessment shall be required and should address at a minimum potential habitat for the following species:

APN	Amphibia Species	Burrowing Owl	Criteria Area Species	Mammalian Species	Narrow Endemic Plant Species	Special Linkage Area
922210011	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO

Burrowing Owl

Burrowing owl.

If potential habitat for these species is determined to be located on the property, focused surveys may be required during the appropriate season.

Background

The final MSHCP was approved by the County Board of Supervisors on June 17, 2003. The federal and state permits were issued on June 22, 2004 and implementation of the MSHCP began on June 23, 2004.

For more information concerning the MSHCP, contact your local city or the County of Riverside for the unincorporated areas. Additionally, the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (RCA), which oversees all the cities and County implementation of the MSHCP, can be reached at:

Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority
4080 Lemon Street, 12th Floor
Riverside, CA 92502-1604

Phone: 951-955-9700
Fax: 951-955-8873

www.wrc-rca.org

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