



**Riverside County  
Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan  
Interim Management Evaluation and Recommendations**

SITE NAME: **WINCHESTER1**

EDA NAME: **DUTCH** *Inventors*

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**I. SITE PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**1.A. Site Physical Location & Access:**

The Winchester1 site is located adjacent to Winchester Road (State Highway 79) approximately 1.5 kilometers north of the boundary of the City of Temecula. It basically represents a wheat field and a small riparian strip to the southeast. The oddly-shaped parcel is bordered on the northwest by Winchester Road, but no other highways border it. The southeastern boundary is formed by an unnamed riparian area. These two sides represent the "long sides" of the site. The "ends" of the site are much shorter. The southwestern end has no distinct boundary, and the habitat of the site is contiguous with the next parcel(s) southwest. The northeastern end of the site is formed, more or less, by a western trend of the riparian area. Access to the site is through breaks in the fence along Winchester Road. The site can be located at:

Township / Range / Section: NE1/4, Section 32, T8S, R2W (SBBM)

UTM Coordinates: 490159E, 3718689N (NAD-27)

State Plane Coordinates: 6300758E, 2166614N (NAD-83)

<b>1.B. APNs &amp; Acreage:</b>	467-240-044	26.70 acres
	467-240-049	1.27 acres
	467-240-047	<u>0.50 acre</u>
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>28.47 acres</b>

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**1.C. Topography:**

The site is mostly flat to rolling terrain, tapering gently to the southeast riparian area.

**1.D. Surrounding Land Use:**

Winchester Road is a major highway representing the main route between Temecula and Hemet. At this location, it is a high speed, two-lane highway with dirt shoulders. To the adjacent north and east (and also south but a little further away), residential areas are currently under construction. These tracts will undoubtedly isolate the site from points east. West of Winchester Road, much of the land is held in small ranches or sporadic custom homes on larger lots.

## **2. BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

### **2.A. Plant Communities:**

The vast majority of the site is a wheat field. Native vegetation can be found only within the riparian strip, and consists of scattered but mature willows (*Salix sp.*) with mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) and saltbush (*Atriplex sp.*). One small area of dense sunflower (*Helianthus sp.*) can be found at the southeastern corner, west of the main riparian strip.

### **2.B. Likely Animal Species:**

Few animals inhabit the cultivated area of the site. Those that do are likely to be highly adaptable species, used to human disturbance. These could include the valley pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*), California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*), western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), and the side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*). Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) are likely to move through the area occasionally. The mature willow tress undoubtedly serve as roosts for birds of prey, and potentially for nesting spots as well.

### **2.C. Other Habitat or Wildlife Features:**

None

### **2.D. Target Species:**

Please see Appendix A for a qualitative checklist of MSHCP target animal species, and Appendix B. for plant species.

## **3. IMPACTS AND CURRENT CONDITIONS**

### **3.A. Current Uses:**

Up until purchase, the site had been used for wheat cultivation.

### **3.B. Fencing & Access Controls:**

The long side adjacent to Winchester Road is fenced, but in many places the barbed wire is broken, and posts knocked over or otherwise removed. This fence should be repaired, and a low cost gate installed near the southwestern corner to allow access.

### **3.C. Off-Road Vehicle (OHV) Use / Damage:**

None

**3.D. Illegal Dumping:**

None, other than sporadic trash along Winchester Road thrown out from passing autos.

**3.E. Target Shooting & Hunting**

None

**3.F. Weed Abatement::**

In spite of a relatively high fire potential, currently the site does not border any residences. This will change in the very near future. As the wheat dies-off, and non-native grasses and weeds take over, it would be advisable to mow the side adjacent to Winchester Road to prevent fires derived from passing vehicles from rapidly spreading to the sensitive riparian area.

**3.G. Other Recreational Opportunities and Constraints:**

None

**3.H. Special Conditions of Purchase:**

An additional agreement was entered into with Brookfield Development allowing them to perform limited grading along the northern extreme of the site up until September 30, 2003. This agreement has been extended until September 30, 2004.

**4. RESTORATION OPPORTUNITIES**

**4.A. Target Species:**

It is difficult to know what plant community existed on this site prior to its use for agriculture. By virtue of the remaining salt bush, it is likely the site once represented a salt bush plain, possibly interspersed with sage scrub or native grassland elements. Currently, the most available restoration scenario would involve the control of the non-native annual grasses and weeds that will undoubtedly colonize once the wheat has decayed. This could be easily accomplished on this site with prescribed fire, followed by the imprinting of native sage scrub, salt bush and/or native grassland elements. It is advisable to perform this as soon as possible, before the non-natives have had a chance to colonize. The presence of salt bush indicates the possibility of halophytic soils, thus lending itself to the establishment of several of the target halophyte plant species. Likewise, the site has a high potential to support the SKR.

#### **4.B. Multi-Species Aspects:**

Multi-species are best served by maintaining and enhancing the riparian strip on the site, and insuring its continuity with adjacent areas yet to be acquired. Additionally, this site could serve as a site for the construction of a bridge or culvert to insure animal movement west across Winchester Road.

### **5. RERSERVE DESIGN AND CONNECTIVITY**

#### **5.A. Boundary, Edge and Community Location:**

This site maintains a high degree of edge. The more-or-less linear form of the site presents its long sides to Winchester Road on the northwest, while the sensitive riparian area represents the southeastern edge. This latter edge will soon be adjacent to a housing tract. This will increase the impacts to the native [albeit depauperate] biota by increased pressure from domestic pets. In the long run, care should be taken to protect this southeastern area from these homes and their inevitable impacts.

#### **5.B. Connectivity:**

The proposed function of this site is as a movement corridor; Proposed Constrained Linkage 18. This corridor is to provide movement from Proposed Core Area 2 (Menifee area) to the proposed westward extension of Existing Core 7 (DVA / Skinner area). The success of this function will depend directly upon the acquisition of additional parcels to the northeast and southwest of the site, to continue the protection of the riparian corridor. Additionally, connections across Winchester Road will eventually become a necessity.

#### **5.C. Nearby Existing Reserves:**

The Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve (SWRCMSR) is approximately 2 kilometers to the east.

#### **5.D. Priority for Future Purchases:**

Priority should be given to acquiring the additional parcels to the northeast of the site to insure the connection with the SWRCMSR.

### **6. INTERIM MANAGEMENT**

#### **6.A. Public Issues:**

Few public issues impact this site. The presence of Winchester Road allows for minor trash dumping, but for the most part, this site is ignored by the public on

their way to somewhere else. It is recommended to repair the existing fence along Winchester Road, to prevent the occasional trespasser, and to install a gate within the fence to allow access without having to traverse private property. Signs should be placed along this fenceline. Occasional drive-by patrols could be accomplished mostly during patrols to other sites; these patrols noting the fence condition, any increase in trespass, and/or any trash dumping. Additionally, it is recommended to mow the side of the site adjacent to Winchester Road to help prevent fire from reaching the riparian area.

#### **6.B. Biological Issues:**

At this stage, there are no biological issues to speak of. In the not to distant future, control of invasive non-native annual grasses and weeds will be an important issue, and should be accomplished during the spring of 2004 if possible.

#### **6.C. Recommended Interim Management Scenario:**

- 1) Repair and/or replace the fence along Winchester Road. Install a gate for MSHCP and CDF access.
- 2) Patrols should consist of drive-by inspections while on the way to other sites.
- 3) Mow the northwestern side of the site, adjacent to Winchester Road for fire abatement.
- 4) Install signs along the repaired fence on Winchester Road

#### **7. SUGGESTED YEARLY INTERIM BUDGET**

Please see Appendix C. for suggested budget for interim management.

#### **8. MAPS – Appendix D.**

#### **9. SITE PHOTOGRAPHS – Appendix E.**