

**AGRICULTURE OPERATORS
AND
THE WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT
CONSERVATION PLAN**

**A GUIDE TO THE
AGRICULTURAL CERTIFICATE OF INCLUSION**

In June, 2003 the Riverside County Board of Supervisors adopted the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (“MSHCP”). The MSHCP was adopted by all fourteen cities within Western Riverside County. The Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (“RCA”) was created as a Joint Powers Authority to represent the County and Cities collectively for implementation and management of the MSHCP.

On June 22, 2004, “Take” Permits were issued by the State and Federal Wildlife Agencies allowing Take of 146 species in accordance with the terms of the Permits and the Plan by the Permittees.

It was recognized during development of the MSHCP that “Take” of listed species could occur in the normal conduct of agricultural operations existing within the MSHCP Area. It was important to insure that existing Agricultural Operators (“Operators”) would be protected under the MSHCP and an agreed amount of “New” agricultural land could be put into production with Take coverage under the MSHCP.

The Riverside County Farm Bureau and County of Riverside entered into an agreement to insure the MSHCP would not adversely impact Agriculture and that Take granted to Agriculture was clearly spelled out. Following issuance of the Permits, the RCA assumed the general implementation duties of the MSHCP, representing the County and the Cities and working with the County and the Farm Bureau to clarify the relationship of Agriculture and the MSHCP.

A data base of Agricultural Operations has been prepared by the County and the RCA using various methods of reporting, including Assessor’s Tax Roll, pesticide permits and miscellaneous registrations required by the County Agricultural Commissioner (“Commissioner”). This Agricultural Operations Database identifies existing agricultural operations. These methods did not always include “vacant” Agricultural lands, nor did they always report APN, acres, or type of operation in a single data base.

The RCA, utilizing all available data from County sources and aerial photographs, has updated and is now the repository for the Database” in GIS format as called for in the MSHCP. Working cooperatively with the Commission’s office, the RCA will insure that the Database is updated in accordance with the MSHCP.

A Certificate of Inclusion (“COI”) has been prepared for existing Operators to VOLUNTARILY apply for Take protection for normal agricultural operations on their land. When filled out by an Operator, signed by the Commissioner’s Office and the RCA, the certificate identifies existing agricultural operations including their location, thereby ensuring that the agricultural operations receive Take under the MSHCP.

In 2005 the RCA updated the Database in GIS format with the latest available information from the Assessor’s Rolls, Commissioner’s pesticide permit activity, and review of the most recent October, 2004 aerial photographs of the Plan area.

To insure Operators who voluntarily want Take coverage and protection under the MSHCP are accurately reported they must complete the COI and submit it to the Commissioner’s Office. COI forms are available from the Commissioner’s Office or may be printed from the RCA web site at www.wrc-rca.org . Completed forms may be mailed or faxed to the Agricultural Commissioner’s office at 951-955-3012. The Commissioner’s office will verify the information and forward the form to the RCA for recording in the Database. The RCA, upon recording the certificate, will return a signed copy to the Applicant and the Commissioner’s office.

All information on Page 1 of the application should be completed and signed. If the owner and operator are different BOTH names and addresses are required but only one qualified signature is needed. Page 2 serves as “Exhibit “1””. Listing each Assessor’s Parcel Number (APN) and parcel acreage is required. Crop type is optional and more than one crop may be listed to the same APN. Note: If only a portion of the parcel is actively under Agriculture use, the owner/operator should still record the total APN acreage. Mapping exhibits similar to those used in pesticide permits are not required.

If you have any questions regarding the Agricultural Certificate of Inclusion please contact:

Western Riverside County
Regional Conservation Authority
Riverside Centre Building
3403 10th Street, Suite 320
PO Box 1667
Riverside, CA 92502-1667
Phone: 951-955-9700
FAX: 951-955-8873

Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner
County Administrative Center
4080 Lemon Street, Room 19
PO Box 1089
Riverside, CA 92501-1089
Phone: 951-955-3000
FAX: 951-955-3012