

Planning for Land Use and Habitat Protection in the Santa Clara Valley

Building a common vision – Balancing projected development with the natural environment



Like many California locations, Santa Clara County's weather, economy, and proximity to stunning natural environments make it an incredibly desirable place to live. California's climate, geology, and topography also make the state one of the world's richest biological regions, housing the second greatest number of threatened and endangered species of any US state (Hawaii being the first).

The Association of Bay Area Governments projected that between 2000 and 2020, Santa Clara County will gain 261,400 new residents and 231,000 new jobs - more than any other county in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Research on endangered species determined many years ago that urban sprawl and habitat loss are primary contributor to species decline in the United States. Invariably, all "land uses" to support growth - whether it be constructing and maintaining public infrastructure, agricultural development, or urban development - contribute to habitat decline by converting land from its original use. So how is Santa Clara County going to maintain it's current infrastructure and accommodate anticipated growth without compromising the region's biological diversity?

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Species Recommended for Potential Inclusion in HCP/NCCP

(as of September 2006, ongoing analysis will result in adjustments to the list)

Amphibians and Reptiles

California Tiger Salamander
California Red-legged Frog
Foothills Yellow-legged Frog
Western Pond Turtle

Birds

Bank Swallow
Golden Eagle
Least Bell's Vireo
Purple Martin
Saltmarsh Common Yellowthroat
Tricolored Blackbird
Western Burrowing Owl

Fish

Central California Coast Steelhead (ESU)
Central Valley Fall Run Chinook Salmon (ESU)
Monterey Roach
Pacific Lamprey
South Central California Coast Steelhead (ESU)

Insects (Invertebrates)

Bay Checkerspot Butterfly
Unsilvered Fritillary Butterfly

Mammals

San Joaquin Kit Fox
Townsend's Western Big-eared Bat

Plants

Arcuate Bush Mallow
Big-scale Balsamroot
Chaparral Harebell
Coyote Ceanothus
Fragrant Fritillary
Hall's Bush Mallow
Loma Prieta Hoita
Metcalf Canyon Jewelflower
Most Beautiful Jewelflower
Mt. Hamilton Thistle
Robust Monardella
Rock Sanicle
San Francisco Collinsia
Santa Clara Valley Dudleya
Smooth Lessignia

Species Recommended for No-Take Status:

Birds

California Condor

Plants

Tiburon Indian Paintbrush
Pink Creamsacs
Robust Spineflower
Contra Costa Goldfiends
Hairless Popcornflower
Showy Indian Clover
Caper-fruited Tropicocarpum

SANTA CLARA VALLEY

Habitat Conservation Plan / Natural Community Conservation Plan



County of Santa Clara • City of San Jose • City of Gilroy • City of Morgan Hill
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority • Santa Clara Valley Water District
California Department of Fish and Game • U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Marine Fisheries Service

For more information please visit www.scv-habitatplan.org or contact Program Manager Ken Schreiber at (408) 299-5789.

In response to land use-related projects, the County of Santa Clara, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and the cities of Gilroy, Morgan Hill, and San Jose (Local Partners) initiated a collaborative process to prepare and implement a joint Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) to promote the recovery of endangered species while accommodating planned development and infrastructure. The Local Partners, in association with regulatory wildlife agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and National Marine Fisheries Service, will develop a long-range plan to protect and enhance ecological diversity and function within more than 500,000 acres of Santa Clara County.

Habitat Conservation Plans/Natural Community Conservation Plans are a relatively new tool for protecting endangered species and represent an innovative integration of land-use planning and habitat conservation. The Santa Clara Valley HCP/NCCP will provide a more efficient process for protecting the environment while streamlining the permitting process. Under the current system, local governments evaluate projects with the potential to affect endangered species individually in consultation with federal and state regulatory agencies -- a lengthy process that can cost considerable time and money. Rather than surveying, negotiating, and securing mitigation for habitat loss on a project-by-project basis, the Santa Clara Valley HCP/NCCP will provide a more effective process for protecting



the environment by creating a number of new habitat reserves that will be both larger in scale, more ecologically valuable, and easier to manage than the fragmented, piecemeal habitats currently yielded by mitigating projects on an individual basis.

The process works like this: When state or local governments, private developers, or other non-federal entities wish to conduct activities on land that might result in harming or significantly modifying the habitat of a threatened or endangered species, they must obtain an incidental take permit from one or more regulatory wildlife agencies (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the California Department of Fish and Game). An approved incidental take permit authorizes the landowner to legally proceed with an activity (such as building a road, installing a water pipeline, or constructing a

development) that would otherwise result in an illegal impact to a listed species (i.e., take). By means of the Santa Clara HCP/NCCP, the Local Partners will ensure there is adequate mitigation for the cumulative effects of authorized incidental take and will request permits from regulatory Wildlife Agencies to cover federal or state listed species and species likely to become listed during the Plan's permit term. If the HCP/NCCP is approved by participating Wildlife Agencies, incidental take permits will be issued for a list of projects and activities identified within the Plan as likely to occur during the permit term. These activities are expected to include urban and rural development consistent with current city and County land use plans; maintenance and operations of public infrastructure (water, transportation); activities within streams; and management and monitoring activities within habitat reserve lands. By collaboratively agreeing on covered species, no-take species, covered activities, conservation requirements, and the permit term, infrastructure and development projects included in the HCP/NCCP will be able to proceed as scheduled with the assurance that permitting and critical habitat issues have already been addressed.

Terms

Endangered – Species at risk of becoming extinct

Threatened – Species at risk of becoming endangered in the foreseeable future

Take – Defined in the Federal or State Endangered Species Acts as to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, or collect a species

Incidental Take Permit - Permits allowing the “take” of endangered species incidental to an otherwise lawful activity (such as building a road or constructing a development).



Western Pond Turtle



California Burrowing Owl



Diablo Helianthella



Common Yellowthroat

Project Milestones and Schedule

2006	2007	2008	2009
Develop Baseline Data (covered species; covered activities; land cover and land use maps)	Draft Conservation Strategy	Draft HCP/NCCP and Draft Environmental Review documents preparation and public review	Certification of the Environmental Review and Approval of Final HCP/NCCP



San Joaquin Kit Fox



Mt. Hamilton Thistle



California Red-Legged Frog



Golden Eagle