Glossary

Biological Goals - Guiding principles for conservation within the study area, biological goals are based on the conservation needs of the covered species and natural communities. Descriptive, broad statements of desired future conditions, biological goals are typically qualitative rather than quantitative – they convey a purpose, but do not define measurable results.

Biological Objectives - Quantitative, measurable targets, derived from biological goals, biological objectives are concise statements of what and how much should be achieved, when and where it will be achieved, and who is responsible. Biological objectives are measured to evaluate the Plan’s success.

Conservation Actions - Specific activities to achieve the biological goals and objectives, conservation actions make up the conservation strategy.

Conservation Strategy - A comprehensive set of conservation actions, a conservation strategy is designed to achieve all biological goals and objectives.


Endangered – Species at risk of becoming extinct.

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).

Reserve System – A compilation of discrete areas of conserved habitats managed collectively under the habitat plan.

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

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

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Protecting Natural Resources while Promoting Economic Development

To promote the recovery of endangered species while accommodating planned development, infrastructure, and maintenance activities, 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) are preparing a joint Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP). The Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan (Plan) is being developed in association with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game in consultation with stakeholder groups and the general public to protect and enhance ecological diversity and function within more than 500,000 acres of Santa Clara County. The final Plan will provide a framework for the Local Partners and landowners to complete projects while protecting at-risk species and their essential habitats, some of which only occur in Santa Clara County.

The Case for Habitat Conservation Planning

The current process of obtaining development permits and mitigating for habitat loss on a project-by-project basis is inefficient and often ineffective. Before a land-disturbing project may proceed, project applicants (such as a public agency or private landowner) may need to pursue endangered species permits from many regulatory agencies – a lengthy and costly process frequently resulting in fragmented, piecemeal habitat areas. Long-term habitat-conservation planning provides a more efficient mechanism for protecting the environment while streamlining the permitting process.

Rather than separately permitting and mitigating the endangered species impacts of individual projects, the Plan will look at natural-resource impacts and mitigation requirements comprehensively. Instead of applying for permits through several regulatory wildlife agencies, this coordinated approach will allow project applicants to receive their endangered-species permits through local agency Planning Departments.

Application and permit fees are among the funding sources that will help purchase and enhance habitat from willing sellers and provide long term monitoring and adaptive management of a reserve system. These permits will facilitate the projects and activities included in the Habitat Plan, such as planned public infrastructure, road and water projects, and approved developments currently included in existing general plans.

In addition to strengthening local control over land use and species protection, the Plan will provide a more efficient process for protecting natural resources by creating a number of new habitat reserves that will be larger in scale, more ecologically valuable, and easier to manage than the current project-by-project approach. By proactively addressing long-term conservation needs, the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan will promote the recovery of endangered species and habitats while accommodating planned development and infrastructure.

Conservation Strategy

The Conservation Strategy is a series of conservation actions that collectively achieve the biological goals and objectives of the Plan.

Conservation Strategy in a nutshell:

- Create a Reserve System that will preserve in the range of 47,000 acres of high-quality habitat for the benefit of covered species, natural communities, biological diversity, and ecosystem function.
- Enhance approximately 12,000 acres of existing open space areas and incorporate into the Reserve System for long-term management and monitoring.
- Restore over 500 acres of riparian woodland, wetlands, ponds, and 12 miles of degraded streams to offset losses of these land cover types and contribute to species recovery.
- Preserve and upgrade major local and regional connections between key habitat areas and between existing protected areas.
- Establish a framework for long-term management and monitoring of the Reserve System to enhance populations of covered species and maintain biological diversity.

Project Milestones and Schedule


San Joaquin Kiti Fox Mt. Hamilton Weasels California Red-Legged Frog Golden Eagle

For more information, please visit www.scv-habitatplan.org.