



SANTA CLARA VALLEY  
HABITAT AGENCY

## **Conservation Plan in Santa Clara County: Agencies Agree to Species Strategy**

By David L. Beck

*Mercury News*

San Jose, Santa Clara County and four other cities and agencies have agreed to create a conservation strategy for more than half of the county.

When put in place four years from now, the plan will spell out how damage to threatened and endangered species and their habitat can be mitigated. That could lead to a simpler permit process for both public and private projects.

The idea is to “come up with clear and comprehensive means to mitigate, preserve and enhance those species,” said Ann Draper, a watershed planner for Santa Clara Valley Water District, one of the agencies involved. The agreement lists 26 species, from the tricolored blackbird and the San Joaquin kit fox to the Mount Hamilton thistle.

The next step, said Draper, is to evaluate how to protect those species -- and where. “On a project-by-project basis, mitigation has to be at the site. For species, that may not be the best thing.”

The plan must be approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game. The agreement also calls for an independent scientific advisory panel.

The other partners are Gilroy, Morgan Hill and the Valley Transportation Authority. Representatives of all six agencies were expected to be at a public signing ceremony at the Guadalupe River Park's Arena Green in downtown San Jose on Thursday.

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