

Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority
2016 Annual Report to the Community

Making Connections to Nature



MESSAGE FROM ANDREA MACKENZIE, GENERAL MANAGER

Amongst the most fundamental elements of ecology are the principles of **connectivity** and **cooperation**. This includes the physical, biological and chemical interconnections that support life on Earth and the complex web of interdependence and mutual cooperation amongst organisms.

Over 100 years ago, John Muir, America's foremost naturalist and conservationist who led the fight to create Yosemite, Sequoia, Mount Rainier, Petrified Forest, and Grand Canyon National Parks,



was perhaps the first to articulate the fundamental principle of connectedness when he said: **"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."**¹

In a fast-growing county in California, the mission of the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority is guided by these ecological principles which inform our priorities and investments to protect connected habitat for wildlife, connect people to nature, and

connect communities and the land. The 2015-2016 Annual Report provides the public with important information about the projects that the Authority has launched to implement its *Santa Clara Valley Greenprint* (<http://www.openspaceauthority.org/about/strategicplan.html>) with the first full year of funding made possible by the voter-approved *Measure Q* (<http://www.openspaceauthority.org/about/openspacefunding.html>).

From protecting and restoring natural areas, to maintaining existing open space preserves; from constructing new trails to increasing environmental education, the Authority is connecting communities to the land and building a stronger sense of place across Santa Clara County. With a focus on nature in neighborhoods, the Open Space Authority's Urban Open Space Program invested \$308,000 to support *Bridge to Nature: Bill's Backyard*, an innovative outdoor nature space at Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose next to the Guadalupe River; \$425,000 for a 3-acre park and community garden in the City of Santa Clara near San Tomas Aquino Creek; and \$825,000 invested jointly with the City of San Jose to acquire the first of several planned open space acquisitions in the Santa Teresa Foothills.

To further wildlife movement and connectivity between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo/Mt. Hamilton Range, the

Authority purchased the 1,831-acre Coyote Ridge property from United Technologies Corporation – the largest purchase in Open Space Authority history and the first critical habitat property to be enrolled in the Valley Habitat Plan Reserve System. By connecting this purchase with the adjoining Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority and Santa Clara Valley Water District properties (managed by the Authority), over 3,067 acres of connected habitat on Coyote Ridge has now been protected to provide home and habitat for over 20 federal and state listed plant and animal species.

And to lay the groundwork for future open space, habitat and agricultural land conservation efforts, the Authority launched three important multi-agency efforts: 1) an assessment of wildlife movement in Coyote Valley with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Pathways for Wildlife and Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District that confirms Coyote Valley is a critical pathway used by wildlife to move between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range; 2) a joint effort with the County of Santa Clara to create the *Climate and Agricultural Protection Plan (CAPP)*, a regional land use and economic development strategy to support the local food and farming economy and further climate change mitigation and resiliency by preventing conversion of farmland to development ; and 3) a new statewide conservation tool called the *Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS)*, made possible by AB 2087, that aims to promote voluntary habitat protection, enhancement and restoration activities in coordination with infrastructure (transportation, water) projects and in cooperation with the Valley Habitat Agency, regulatory agencies and local municipalities.

On behalf of all of us at the Open Space Authority, we hope you'll get connected to and involved in the hands-on conservation and community-building work we are doing to benefit people and nature. It is hopeful work in challenging times. And as David W. Orr, distinguished Professor of Environmental Studies at Oberlin College has inspiringly said, "Hope is a verb with its sleeves rolled up."

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Mackenzie". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional but personal style.

Andrea Mackenzie
General Manager

¹ John Muir, *My First Summer in the Sierra*, 1911

Connecting to Coyote Ridge

In a historic land deal, the Open Space Authority acquired 1,831 acres of pristine property on the Coyote Ridge in the Diablo Range of Santa Clara County. A former engine test site of United Technologies Corporation (UTC), the acreage is now permanently protected as open space land. This acquisition is the largest in the Authority's history and made possible by an extraordinary private and public sector funding partnership.

The Coyote Ridge property encompasses one of the most significant wildlife habitat areas in the Bay Area. It contains nearly a fifth of the remaining undeveloped serpentine grassland habitat in Santa Clara County, which is vital to the recovery of the federally threatened Bay checkerspot

butterfly and federally endangered Metcalf Canyon jewelflower.

In addition to outstanding recreational and educational opportunities, the property is the source of three streams that feed into Coyote Creek, supporting critical habitat for Steelhead trout and serving as oases for wildlife. The property provides recharge to the groundwater basin, sustaining local drinking and agricultural water supplies.

United Technologies Corporation donated the property to the Authority through the California Natural Heritage State Tax Credit Program. A broad public and private partnership contributed the majority of funding required for the acquisition. The Open Space Authority contributed \$7,500 toward the \$8.6 million total, which is approximately 55% of the property's fair market value of \$15.6 million.

"The importance of the acquisition stems from the rare serpentine plant community that supports the Bay checkerspot butterfly now being protected in perpetuity."

Edmund Sullivan, Executive Officer of the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency



COYOTE RIDGE



3,900
acres of rare
serpentine
habitat



10
miles of
protected
streams



20
miles of
planned
trails



20
federally listed/
special status
species



\$8.6 million
contributed
by private and
public funders for
purchase

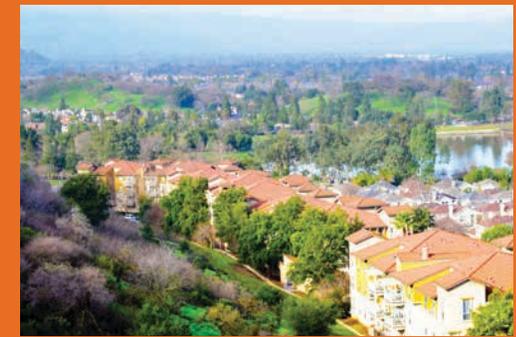
Maintaining A Healthy Balance

View from new parcel that expands Rancho Cañada del Oro

The Open Space Authority preserves open space lands to help balance rapid growth and development within Santa Clara County. Open space lands help maintain a high quality of life and sustain the health and well-being of those who live and work in the Santa Clara Valley. The Authority's land acquisitions are guided by the *Santa Clara Valley Greenprint*, which identifies 10 high priority Conservation Focus Areas. In addition to acquiring the Coyote Ridge property, the Authority completed these acquisitions in 2015-2016:

Conservation Focus Area: Southern Santa Cruz Mountains

- The acquisition of 50 acres in the Southern Santa Cruz Mountains expands the popular Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve and provides protection for the region's water resources. This region receives the most rainfall in Santa Clara County and comprises a portion of the Llagas Creek watershed.
- The Authority acquired two pivotal land parcels totaling 8.79 acres located on Santa Teresa Ridge in San Jose's Santa Teresa neighborhood. The parcels are a gateway to 1,500 acres of open space land with sweeping views across the Almaden Valley to downtown San Jose and the Mt. Hamilton Range.



View from Santa Teresa Foothills Property

"We congratulate the Authority for this acquisition, which will help preserve the Santa Teresa hills for the enjoyment of everyone who works and lives in south San Jose and for future generations."

Jon Reinke, President of the Santa Teresa Foothills Neighborhood Association



OPEN SPACE AUTHORITY



22,568
acres of open space lands and farmland protected by the Authority



10,000
acres of protected watershed land



6
grazing leases



500
acres grazed



5,500
miles walked by Open Space Authority field staff to build trails and maintain preserves



Understanding Our Community

Community Assessment for Parks and Open Space Identifies Significant Barriers to Open Space Access

Understanding Our Community: A Community Assessment Project analyzes the barriers to open space within Authority’s jurisdiction. This analysis is a first step leading towards deeper and richer engagement with the diverse communities the Authority is so fortunate to serve.

The report identifies Deep Engagement Communities, where residents experience greater potential barriers to accessing open space – barriers that include language, income level, and access to private transportation. Based on the California Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) CalEnviroScreen, which was used in the assessment, these communities have greater environmental burdens that include air and water pollution, traffic density, solid waste sites and facilities.

“The Open Space Authority works diligently to connect all of our communities with Nature and open space and all of the critical benefits they provide,” said Marc Landgraf. “The Authority will launch increased community engagement and form strategic partnerships with community leaders and organizations of Deep Engagement Communities in order to help balance the distribution of parks and open space amenities across the Authority’s jurisdiction.”

Understanding Our Community: A Community Assessment Project and follow up community meetings were conducted by Basecamp Strategies. Visit www.openspaceauthority.org to review the full report.



COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT



1.4 million
residents
in the
Authority’s
Jurisdiction



31%
live in
linguistically
isolated
households



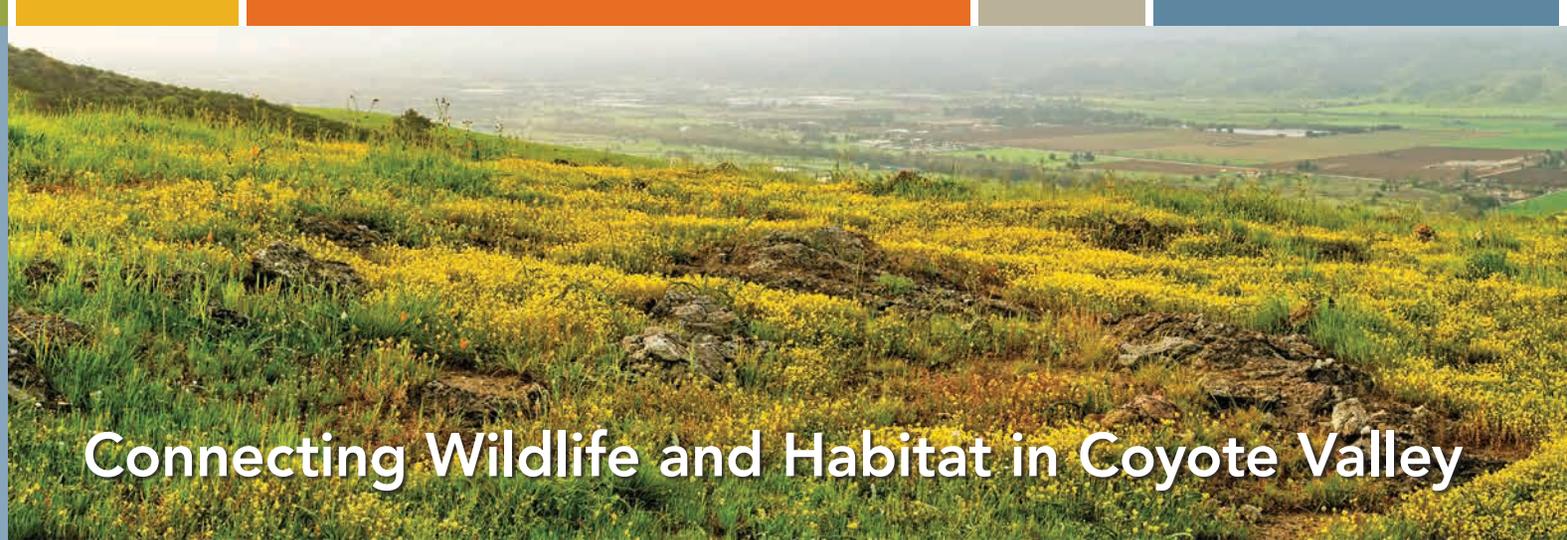
11%
live in
low-income
households



8%
live within a
Disadvantaged
Community as defined
by the California EPA



15%
live in Deep
Engagement
Communities



Connecting Wildlife and Habitat in Coyote Valley

Coyote Valley is located between the rapidly growing cities of San Jose and Morgan Hill and comprises a critical landscape linkage that allows passage for wildlife species such as bobcat, deer, gray fox, raccoon, and mountain lion. This landscape linkage connects the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range with some 500,000 acres of open space at varying altitudes, which help species maintain resilience as climate change impacts their natural habitat.

“The purpose of the *Coyote Valley Linkage Assessment Study* was to identify active wildlife pathways across the valley floor,” said Tanya Diamond, wildlife ecologist and co-principal of Pathways for Wildlife, who conducted the study. “We set up cameras to document wildlife movement and collected scat and hair for genetic sampling to determine if genetic flow or isolation is occurring for two study species — the bobcat and ground squirrel.”



Protecting Aquatic Habitat

Resource Management Specialist Galli Basson led surveys of more than 34 ponds on Authority lands – with exciting results. She discovered both endangered California red-legged frogs and California tiger salamander larvae in one pond. “It is unusual to find both species occupying the same pond,” said Basson. “This indicates that the ponds and surrounding habitat provide quality breeding and food sources.” The Santa Clara Valley Water District, Valley Habitat Agency and the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program provided generous support for the surveys and related restoration work.



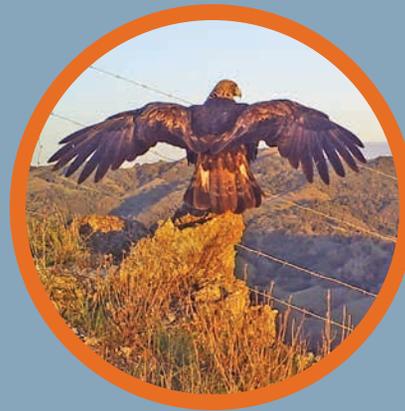


Barriers Prevent Ease of Wildlife Passage

The study area contains major physical barriers to wildlife passage at six sites, including fencing and culverts filled with debris or blocked by concrete slabs. Areas with high instances of roadkill correlated with blocked culverts and fencing.

Presence of Young Animals Signals Hope for the Future

The study confirmed juvenile deer, coyote and bobcat traveling with parents – highlighting the significance of Coyote Valley as key habitat. The presence of food and water resources, breeding and birthing habitat sets a stage for future generations.



COYOTE VALLEY



12
cameras
sited across
Coyote
Valley floor



1,301
animals
detected
over
10-month
study period



34%
deer, 14%
coyote, and
14% bobcat



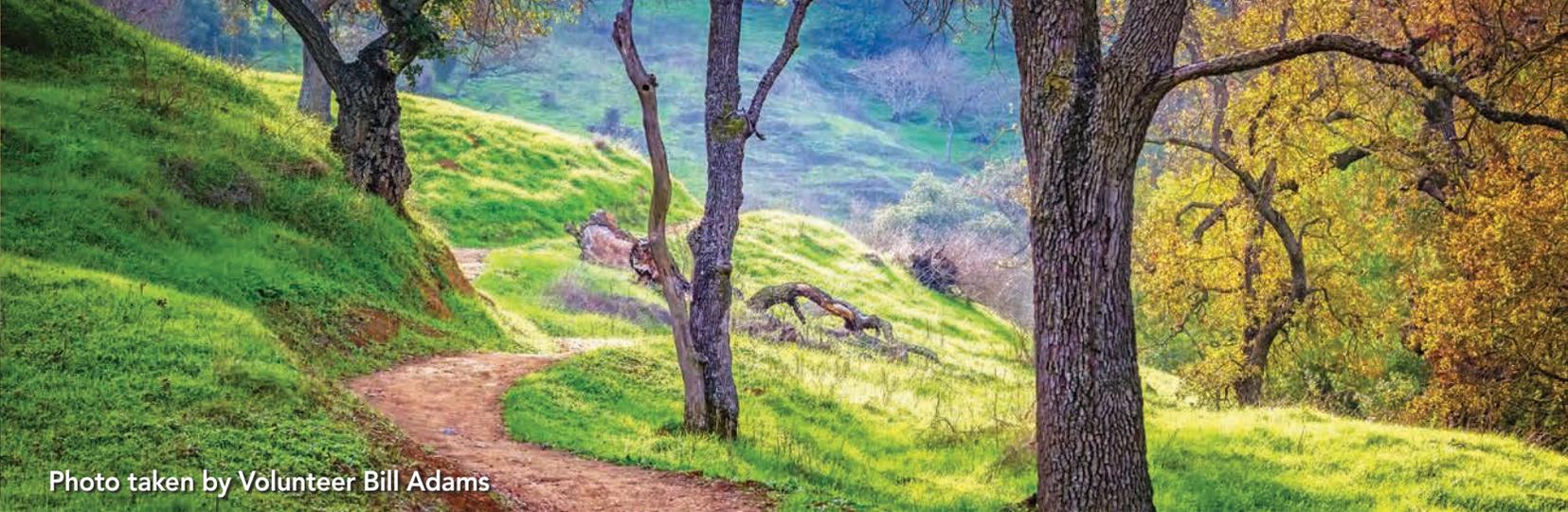
114
juveniles
traveling with
parents at 8
camera sites



6
sites pose
significant
barriers
to wildlife
movement



Photo taken by Volunteer Bill Adams



Volunteer Mike Hundt with staff members Teri Rogoway and Dana Litwin

Connecting People to Nature

The Three C's of Volunteering

At the heart of the Open Space Authority are volunteers who freely share their talent to benefit people and nature. Volunteers serve in Trail Patrol, Land Steward, Docent, and Community Outreach roles and contribute to special projects.

Volunteer Program Administrator Dana Litwin says volunteer happiness lies in the 3 C's: Connection, Convenience, and Comfort. Volunteers connect with new friends and contribute by doing tasks that are flexible, self-scheduled, and convenient. Volunteer comfort is ensured through proper training and equipment – and refreshments! Dana is excited for the new youth engagement policy, which allows teens to connect with nature and develop into future conservation leaders.

Getting Outdoors for Education, Fitness and Fun

Once visitors experience the great outdoors, they crave more. "By working with local partners and docents, we reach people in a welcoming and personal way," said Educational Programs Coordinator Teri Rogoway. Each year, Teri and her partners introduce thousands of people to nature's benefits through hundreds of programs.

"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless."

Sherry Anderson



Program highlights from 2015-2016:

Getting up Close and Personal with Nature's Amazing Creatures

The Wildlife Education and Rehabilitation Center (WERC) of Morgan Hill features rehabilitated animals who cannot return to the wild. Elementary school children learned about the natural world from direct experience with live animals through the Authority's and WERC's partner program.



Gazing at the Evening Sky

Once a month the San Jose Astronomical Association and the Authority offered a popular and unique stargazing experience that showcases the beauty and science of the night sky.

Experiencing the Great Outdoors

Latino Outdoors and Bay Area Wilderness Training (BAWT) helped connect children and families to Nature with outdoor leader training, organized hikes and outdoor adventures.



Celebrating Healthy Parks Healthy People

Several times per month, gentle hikes, dance, tai chi and other fun activities were offered at local parks such as Martial Cottle, Alviso Marina, and open space preserves, helping reduce barriers to getting outdoors.



Hiking Your Pie Off – A Post-Thanksgiving Tradition

This year's hike explored the Arrowhead Trail at Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve — recently certified as a historic Juan Bautista de Anza interpretive site.



Celebrating the Harvest in Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve

The annual Harvest Feast celebrated our local farmland that produces fresh, nutritious foods. The event featured multicultural entertainment, environmental education, guided hikes, and fun family activities.

SERVING THE PUBLIC

 **180,000**
visitors to
open space
preserves

 **294**
environmental
programs for
8,465 people

 **408**
volunteers
with 4,912
total
volunteer
hours

 **11 to 1**
ratio of
volunteers
for each paid
staff person

 **7,484**
visitors at 18
community
events

Connecting With Nature in Neighborhoods

Community Meetings Focus on Nature in Neighborhoods

The Authority hosted seven community meetings to gather input for the Measure Q-funded Urban Open Space Grant Program.



“Many residents talked about barriers to accessing open space such as lack of transportation, fees for admission and parking, and safety concerns,” said Grant Administrator Megan Dreger.

“We saw great enthusiasm for community gardens, local trails for biking and commuting to school and work.”

Public agencies, non-profit organizations, schools and school districts are eligible for the grant program. Project categories include Environmental Stewardship and Restoration, Urban Agriculture/Food Systems, Environmental Education, and Parks, Trails, and Public Access.



Grants Awarded

Measure Q Urban Open Space Program



The Authority's Board of Directors awarded \$308,000 to the Children's Discovery Museum to support *Bridge to Nature: Bill's Backyard*, an innovative nature space next to the Guadalupe River in downtown San Jose. Executive Director Marilee Jennings said, “These funds will allow Bridge to Nature to become a safe environment for urban families to connect with nature.”

Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority 20% Funding Program

- The Authority granted \$425,000 for a 3-acre park in the City of Santa Clara near San Tomas Aquino Creek with a community garden and native plants.
- The Authority granted \$375,000 to the City of San Jose toward the purchase of 8.79 acres located on Santa Teresa Ridge in San Jose.



Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority 2015-2016 Financial Summary

In Fiscal Year 2015-2016, the Open Space Authority received its first funds from Measure Q, which the voters passed in 2014. Measure Q funds expanded the Authority's ability to protect and restore natural areas, maintain and operate new and existing open space preserves; construct new trails; and increase environmental education, while maintaining financial stability and sustainability.

REVENUES

District 1 Benefit Assessments	\$	4,209,818
Measure Q Parcel Tax	\$	7,766,669
Interest Income	\$	188,052
Land Management Income	\$	192,363
Donations	\$	1,247,854
Grants	\$	8,698,125
Other	\$	469,002
Total Revenues	\$	22,771,883

EXPENDITURES

Land Acquisitions	\$	9,312,891
Capital Expenditures	\$	757,452
Administrative	\$	2,286,434
Field Operations	\$	1,488,468
Public Affairs	\$	1,161,697
Planning	\$	812,133
Total Expenditures	\$	15,819,075

Urban Open Space Accounts (20% Funding Program) as of June 30, 2016

The Authority has granted more than \$8.05 million for urban open space projects throughout its jurisdiction.

Jurisdiction	Allocated to Date	Invested to Date	Account Balance
Campbell	\$ 387,486	\$ (363,650)	\$ 23,836
Milpitas	\$ 522,086	\$ (356,837)	\$ 165,249
Morgan Hill	\$ 211,703	\$ (184,000)	\$ 27,703
San Jose	\$ 7,754,582	\$ (6,561,946)	\$ 1,192,636
Santa Clara	\$ 938,399	\$ (512,953)	\$ 425,446
Unincorporated County	\$ 761,489	\$ (450,000)	\$ 311,489
Total Balance	\$10,575,745	\$(8,429,386)	\$2,146,359



Our heartfelt thanks to our donors, funders and sponsors for supporting protection of precious open space lands and the natural resources upon them.

DONORS

Paul Boehm	Meetup.com
Brian Carr	New Leaf Community Market
Larry & Patricia Coons	Frank & Patricia Nichols
Jeff & Josie Fox Family Foundation – Silicon Valley Community Foundation	Eric Petersen
Kathleen Hutnik	David R. Schrader Family Trust
	The Villages Hiking Club

FUNDERS

Anonymous	Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency
Bureau of Reclamation Central Valley Project	Santa Clara Valley Water District
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation	The Nature Conservancy
California State Parks Recreational Trails Program	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Section 6 land acquisition program to further Habitat Conservation Plans under the Endangered Species Act State Coastal Conservancy
Resources Legacy Fund	Wildlife Conservation Board
PG&E	
Partners for Fish and Wildlife - US Fish and Wildlife Service	

FAMILY HARVEST FEAST SPONSORS

Peninsula Open Space Trust
Bay Area Parent
Sound of Hope Radio

SPECIAL THANKS

Asian Americans for Community Involvement



**OPEN
SPACE
AUTHORITY**
SANTA CLARA VALLEY



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