

CHAPTER 7 Conservation Focus Areas

To identify where these goals can best be met with resource protection, the *Valley Greenprint* team integrated the latest science and natural resources data into a comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS). This included information from adopted plans, expert input from more than 100 conservation partners who participated in project workshops and meetings, and input from community meetings and an online project forum. The resulting data layers (detailed in the Appendix) were used to create a series of maps representing areas with the highest conservation values associated with each goal.

The Conservation Focus Areas represent natural landscapes where the return on conservation investment is the highest.

By overlaying these layers, Authority staff created an integrated Greenprint map highlighting the areas within the Authority's

jurisdiction where conservation benefits are concentrated, and where direct purchase, conservation easements, land stewardship, restoration, or policy protection would help protect many resources. Each Conservation Focus Area offers opportunities to protect each of the identified resource categories: wildlands, water, working lands, and recreation and education. Importantly, the *Valley Greenprint* analysis also considered the urgency of protecting each area, given the risks facing them, and the suitability of each area for preservation – as well as areas that are important to the Valley's natural or cultural heritage.

The resulting 10 Conservation Focus Areas (**Figure 13**) represent high-priority natural landscapes where the return on conservation investment is the highest, and where the Open Space Authority and its partners have the best opportunities for realizing the vision of a protected and connected landscape:

1. Baylands
2. Upper Penitencia Creek / East Foothills
3. Upper Alameda Creek
4. Coyote Ridge
5. Coyote Valley
6. Upper Coyote Creek
7. Southern Santa Cruz Mountains
8. Sargent Hills
9. Upper Pajaro River
10. Pacheco Creek

The *Valley Greenprint* map and Conservation Focus Areas provide the Authority and its partners with an important high-level guide – not a specific prescription. Most data were collected at a county level, and are therefore too broad to address specific, local conservation priorities and needs. Still, by directing conservation actions to the Conservation Focus Areas, the Open Space Authority and others have the best opportunity to meet the goals of the *Santa Clara Valley Greenprint*.

1. Baylands

San Francisco Bay is one of the world’s most diverse and productive tidal marsh ecosystems, providing habitat for more than 500 species of plants and animals, including dozens that are considered to be rare, threatened, or endangered. The Baylands are a critical stop along the Pacific Flyway for migrating and nesting birds, and contain the most important coastal salt pond complexes for waterbirds in the United States, supporting more than a million waterbirds through the year (San Francisco Bay Area Wetlands Ecosystem Goals Project 1999). The Baylands also provide a host of critical ecosystem services, including flood control and protection against storm surges. Because of historic land subsidence in Silicon Valley, some of California’s most valuable commercial real estate is at risk of tidal flooding; impacts to both the business sector as well as loss of vital wetland habitat are expected due to a projected increase in sea level of sixteen inches by mid-century (Tam 2012). Conservation, restoration, and active stewardship will be necessary to protect this vital ecosystem and to maintain its natural flood control services.

The overall restoration vision for the South San Francisco Bay is to restore large areas of tidal marsh connected by wide corridors of natural habitats along the Bay’s perimeter, with transitions from mudflat through tidal marsh to adjacent upland grasslands. The South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project encompasses a portion of the Baylands Focus Area. This project is the largest tidal wetland restoration project on the West Coast. When complete, the project will restore 15,100 acres of industrial salt ponds to a rich mosaic of tidal wetlands and other habitats. The Restoration Project will also result in a series of improved levees and restored outer marshes that will protect communities from tidal surges and increase the flood carrying capacity of local creeks, flood control channels, and rivers.

The Baylands represent an opportunity for the Authority to partner with cities and public agencies that are working on the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project and related efforts.

The Authority’s jurisdiction includes several unique opportunities to implement this vision: it includes one of the few South Bay areas where it is possible to restore tidal brackish marsh and reestablish landscape linkages to nearby uplands, including restoration of a very rare complex of vernal pools (San Francisco Bay Area Wetlands Ecosystem Goals Project 1999). Land conservation will be a vitally important adaptation strategy in response to a changing climate. With a larger network of interconnected natural areas, plant communities and wildlife habitats can shift to higher elevations as sea levels rise. Areas north of Highway 237 and west of Highway 880 have been identified as critical priorities for land conservation and restoration in many recent climate planning and adaptation

studies (PRBO website 2013). Conservation and restoration work in this portion of the Baylands Focus Area is important to establish new wetlands to absorb waves, attenuate flooding, and protect developed areas while improving the environment.

Partners include US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California State Coastal Conservancy, San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority, County Parks, the cities of San Jose and Milpitas, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Point Blue Conservation Science, San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, San Francisco Wildlife Society, Bay Area Ecosystems Climate Change Consortium, California Landscape Conservation Cooperative, and other South Bay Salt Pond Restoration partners.



Derek Neumann

The Baylands includes the largest tidal wetland restoration project on the west coast.

2. Upper Penitencia Creek / East Foothills

Located near San Jose's eastern foothills, this area rises from the valley floor to the crest of the Diablo Range. Much of this area falls within the Penitencia Creek watershed, which is characterized by rolling grasslands and oak woodlands interspersed with heavily forested canyons. The region includes a rapid transition from urban lands to some of the most rugged



Derek Neumann

The Upper Penitencia Creek / East Foothills Conservation Area provides an opportunity to expand and connect a number of trails and open spaces, as well as to protect natural areas can reduce impacts of downstream flooding.

hills of the Diablo Range. The scenic west-facing slopes are highly visible from nearby urban and residential areas in Milpitas and San Jose. This watershed is a great example of an urban/natural land interface where the densely developed City of San Jose is adjacent to Alum Rock Park and the Authority's Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve.

Conservation in this area is necessary to preserve the dramatic ridgeline that serves as the region's scenic backdrop, protect watershed values, and increase recreational opportunities for residents of Milpitas and East San Jose's Berryessa, Alum Rock, and Evergreen neighborhoods. This area provides an opportunity to close significant gaps in the Bay Area Ridge Trail between Ed Levin and Joseph D. Grant County Parks, and to establish better trail connections and access to Alum Rock Park and Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve (for example, by completing Penitencia Creek Trail). Expanding parks and open spaces within the upper Penitencia Creek watershed will protect critical natural areas that capture and ameliorate runoff from storms to reduce risk of downstream flooding, and will leverage downstream stormwater management projects being led by the Santa Clara Valley Water District. This area also provides a unique opportunity to partner with the University of California to integrate results of the many ongoing science and research projects at University of California's Blue Oak Preserve into management of this diverse landscape. Key partners include San Jose Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services, Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation, the California State Coastal Conservancy, the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, The Nature Conservancy, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and the University of California.

3. Upper Alameda Creek

Alameda Creek is the largest watershed in the South Bay, covering more than 700 square miles. Two-thirds of the watershed is located in Alameda County, and the rest encompasses Mount Hamilton and the rugged crest of the Diablo Range in northeastern Santa Clara County. This landscape is characterized by rolling grasslands, oak woodlands, steep, chaparral covered hillsides, and dramatic ridges. This area represents one of the last near-wildernesses between Silicon Valley and the Central Valley. A number of public agencies and nonprofit conservation partners have come together as the Upper Alameda Creek Watershed Partnership to achieve the common goal of protecting and restoring this landscape. The Partnership recognizes the area's remarkable watershed values and conservation significance:

It is a largely intact, ecologically functioning landscape of nearly one million acres within easy reach of eight million people in the greater Bay Area region. It has a thriving ranching community, provides nearly one sixth of the water supply for 2.4 million residential, commercial, and industrial customers in the Bay Area and supports a wide array of native plants, animals and natural communities, many of which are rare, imperiled or endemic (Alameda Resource Conservation District et al. 2013).

The Authority is working as a member of the Partnership to help coordinate planning for watershed protection and stewardship activities within the upper Alameda Creek Watershed. The aim of this work is to (1) protect rangeland and other working landscapes through focused land acquisition and conservation easement projects with willing sellers, (2) to promote the many conservation tools and incentives that are available to landowners to protect agriculture and watershed resources – such as the Williamson Act and NRCS stewardship payment programs – and (3) to enhance public awareness of the Alameda Watershed's regional significance.

By protecting the integrity of the watershed through land conservation and careful land management, the Partnership is helping maintain the green infrastructure that naturally supplies much of the region's high-quality drinking water. This watershed-based approach to conservation greatly reduces the need for downstream flood protection and water treatment facilities, supports the agricultural economy, and will protect a beautiful expanse

of natural habitat. Key partners in this area include the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, Alameda County Resource Conservation District, Defenders of Wildlife, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the California Rangeland Trust.



The Authority and other members of the Upper Alameda Creek Watershed Partnership are working to protect and restore the landscape of the South Bay's biggest watershed, including promoting conservation incentives for landowners.

4. Coyote Ridge

Coyote Ridge extends along the east side of the Santa Clara Valley between San Jose and Morgan Hill. Highly visible from southern San Jose and the Highway 101 corridor throughout Coyote Valley, the dramatic ridge extends 1,400 feet above the valley floor. A number of creeks originate on Coyote Ridge, and ultimately feed into Coyote Creek, an important steelhead stream. Coyote Ridge encompasses extensive serpentine grasslands and oak woodlands, which



Derek Neumann

Conservation along Coyote Ridge provides an opportunity to close critical gaps between parks and protected areas, creating the possibility of an interconnected landscape covering 500,000 acres extending from the Coyote Creek Parkway to Mount Hamilton and Henry Coe State Park.

provide habitat to more than 12 rare, threatened, and endangered species. This area has been identified as a critical priority in the *Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan* to protect and actively manage these remaining serpentine grasslands. Coyote Ridge also serves as the gateway to the Diablo Range, and is located within a critical landscape linkage that allows for wildlife movement between the Diablo Range and the Santa Cruz Mountains. Literally just minutes from San Jose, Coyote Ridge supports a large tule elk herd that embodies the wild and rugged spirit of the Diablo Range.

Conservation along Coyote Ridge provides an opportunity to close critical gaps between existing parks and protected areas, creating the possibility of a protected and interconnected landscape covering 500,000 acres that extends east from the Coyote Creek Parkway to Mount Hamilton in the north and Henry Coe State Park in the south. This would provide unparalleled opportunities for recreation access to this area, including extending the Bay Area Ridge Trail from Joseph Grant County Park in the north to Anderson Lake County Park in the south. Key partners include the Valley Habitat Agency, Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation, Santa Clara Valley Water District, The Nature Conservancy, State Coastal Conservancy, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

5. Coyote Valley

The conservation values of Coyote Valley are myriad and unparalleled – perhaps greater than they are anywhere else within the Open Space Authority’s jurisdiction. The 7,400-acre Coyote Valley, stretching from San Jose south to Morgan Hill, includes some of the last remaining contiguous, prime farmland in a region heralded for its agricultural heritage. In 2012, Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE) and the California Coastal Conservancy published a feasibility study, *Coyote Valley: Sustaining Agriculture and Conservation*, investigating the future of sustained agricultural production and open space conservation in the Valley (SAGE 2012). The study highlighted the multiple values of Coyote Valley, including valuable farmland, critical habitat, a reliable source of healthy, local food, and opportunities for the sustained livelihood of the County’s farmers and ranchers.



Stephen Joseph

Coyote Valley includes perhaps the most important conservation opportunities within the Open Space Authority’s jurisdiction, with outstanding habitat and critical linkages, some of the area’s last prime farmland, and an open space greenbelt between San Jose and Morgan Hill.

This incredibly scenic and threatened landscape serves as the only open space buffer separating the cities of San Jose and Morgan Hill, and has irreplaceable conservation values. Coyote Valley encompasses one of two critical landscape linkages that allow wildlife movement between the Diablo Range and the Santa Cruz Mountains. Coyote Valley is a critical recharge area for the groundwater basin upon which Silicon Valley depends. Laguna Seca, the largest freshwater wetland in the County, is located in the Coyote Valley. This historic lake provides outstanding wildlife habitat and provides opportunities for wetland restoration and stormwater management improvements to increase flood protection downstream in San Jose. The foothills on either side of Coyote Valley provide habitat for many rare, threatened, and endangered species, including California Red-legged Frog, California Tiger Salamander, and a host of rare plants found only in serpentine grasslands. This natural and agricultural landscape supports the greatest diversity of raptors in the County.

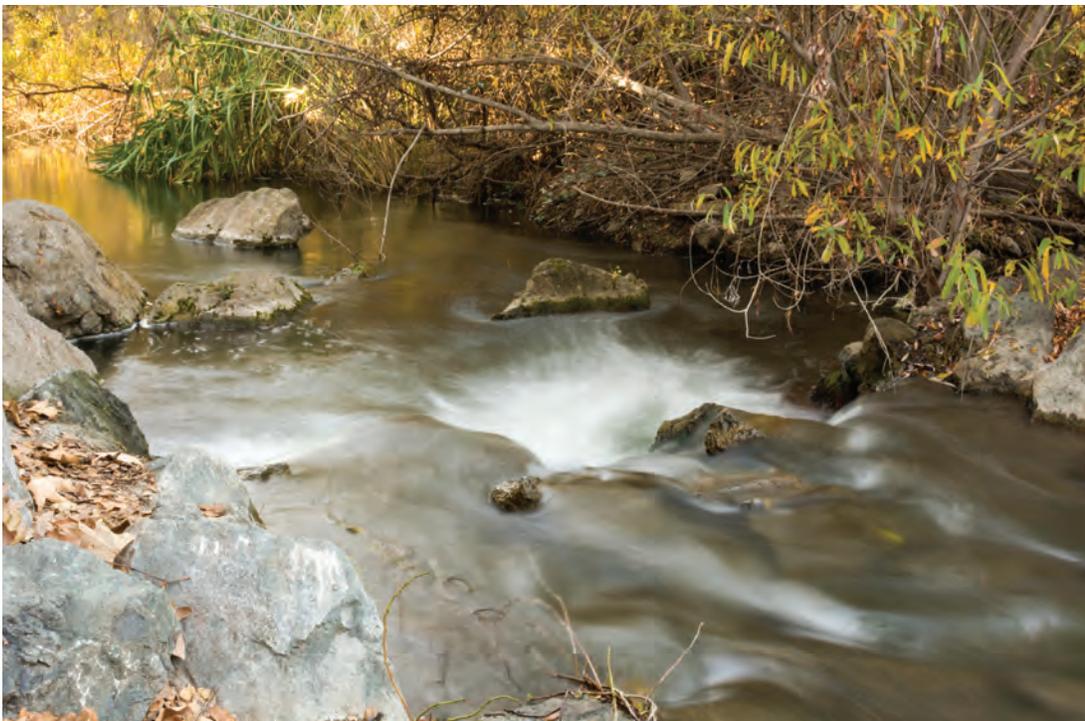
While the northern portion of Coyote Valley is zoned in the City of San Jose’s *Envision San Jose 2040: General Plan* (City of San Jose 2011) for light campus industrial development, there may still be opportunities to work with willing landowners in this area to integrate conservation and green infrastructure projects into development proposals. In mid-Coyote Valley, there may be opportunities to work with agricultural landowners to increase the economic viability of their operations by promoting use of higher-value specialty crops and taking advantage of new and emerging markets for local produce. Through a carefully planned network of open spaces and working lands, Coyote Valley’s vital role for floodplain protection, agriculture, habitat, and recreation can be preserved. Key partners include the City of San Jose, Santa Clara County Parks Department, Peninsula Open Space Trust, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Resource Conservation Districts, Silicon Valley Land Conservancy, Sustainable Agriculture and Education, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and UC Agricultural Extension.

6. Upper Coyote Creek

The Upper Coyote Creek Conservation Focus Area extends from the valley floor near the communities of Morgan Hill and San Martin east to the prominent ridge of the Diablo Range. This area is incredibly important for local agricultural viability, wildlife habitat, local water supplies, and recreation. While much of the area along the valley floor has been developed, many small farms and ranches are located south and east of Morgan Hill. These contribute to the County's agricultural economy and add to the city's charm and sense of place. The scenic hillsides above the valley are comprised of valley oak and blue oak woodlands, serpentine grasslands, and high-quality riparian forests along Coyote Creek and its tributaries. These natural areas provide habitat for a number of rare, threatened and endangered species including Bay Checkerspot Butterfly, California Red-legged Frog, Foothill Yellow-legged Frog, and California Tiger Salamander. This area is especially important as a primary source of local water supplies, as rainfall is captured and conveyed downstream to Anderson and Coyote Reservoirs, which are managed to recharge local groundwater supplies.

This area is very important for future public access and recreation. It has been identified as a priority area for future parkland in the County Parks Acquisition Plan. Land protection would help close gaps between Anderson and Coyote Reservoirs, San Felipe Ranch, Henry Coe State Park, and the Authority's Palassou Ridge property. This would facilitate completion of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, as well as a number of routes proposed in the Countywide Trails Master Plan such as the Morgan Hill Cross Valley Trail and the San Martin Cross Valley Trail, both west-to-east connections that connect urban communities to the Diablo Range and the Bay Area Ridge Trail.

Much of this area is considered at high risk of development. Given the extensive loss of farmland over the past twenty years, and how little undeveloped open space exists in the hills immediately surrounding Morgan Hill, the Authority and many partners are working to implement a conservation vision where future development is largely concentrated within existing city boundaries. The Authority may play an important role in helping to implement an effective agricultural mitigation program that gives shape to a compact and efficient community, and that preserves the city's agricultural heritage and economy. Partners include The Nature Conservancy, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Silicon Valley Land Conservancy, Santa Clara County Parks, Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, and State Parks.



Derek Neumann

The high-quality riparian forests along Coyote Creek and its tributaries provide habitat for a number of rare, threatened and endangered species, and are an important source of local water supplies.

7. Southern Santa Cruz Mountains

The Southern Santa Cruz Mountains Conservation Focus Area covers some of the County's most rugged terrain and diverse habitats. This area includes the eastern range of the Santa Cruz Mountains (a vast area extending from the Santa Teresa foothills in the north, south to

Sargent Hills) from the highest points along the ridge east to the Santa Clara Valley floor. This area supports incredibly diverse vegetation including knobcone pine, redwood, mixed evergreen riparian forests, oak woodlands and oak savannas, chaparral scrub, and serpentine grasslands. The diverse vegetation and complex landscape features provide habitat for many rare, threatened, and endangered species, and make this area one of the most important in the County as a refuge for plants and animals in the face of a changing



William K. Matthias

The rugged terrain and diverse habitats of the Southern Santa Cruz Mountains are among the County's most important refugia for allowing adaptation to a changing climate.

climate. This remote and rugged landscape is also considered to be core habitat for the reclusive mountain lion, an animal that requires extensive acreage of high-quality habitat.

The Southern Santa Cruz Mountains are truly significant for their watershed values. The highest amount of rainfall in the County occurs here, where it slowly percolates into the soil and is conveyed to streams and downstream reservoirs. Uvas, Calero, and Chesbro Reservoirs are used to replenish the groundwater that supplies much the area's drinking water. The natural areas of the Southern Santa Cruz Mountains allow this groundwater recharge to happen naturally, rather than forcing rainfall to run quickly off the landscape. This area encompasses the headwaters of many creeks – including Uvas and Llagas and their tributaries – that are critical to the recovery of steelhead trout within the County. Conservation and restoration groups like Coastal Habitat Education & Environmental Restoration are actively working to address fish passage problems in Little Arthur and other local creeks.

While there are outstanding opportunities for strategic land purchases to expand and connect the Authority's Rancho Cañada del Oro and Uvas Creek Preserves with Mount Madonna County Park and Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve (which will help facilitate completion of the Bay Area Ridge Trail), a key conservation strategy for this area will focus on watershed-level stewardship and coordinated resource management efforts between public and private partners. The area has been significantly affected by the impacts of rural homesite and vineyard development, and from a deteriorating network of eroding streamside roads, highlighting the need to engage landowners in streamside restoration projects. This area has also experienced severe fires in the past, and coordinated fuels management efforts will remain important to prevent catastrophic wildfire and associated erosion and sedimentation. Key partners for the Authority in this part of the County include Peninsula Open Space Trust, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency, Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation, Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, CalFire, California Fire Safe Council, the Loma Prieta Resource Conservation District, and the Santa Teresa Foothills Neighborhood Association.

8. Sargent Hills

Located in the southwestern corner of the County south of Highway 152 and west of Highway 101, the Sargent Hills area encompasses a remarkably diverse landscape. Highly visible from Highway 101 and throughout southern Santa Clara County, the Sargent Hills serve as the scenic backdrop to the City of Gilroy and help define the region's rural character. Rising steeply from the Santa Clara Valley floor where some of the County's most productive commercial farmland is located, the Sargent Hills are comprised of rolling grasslands that climb to the redwood-forested crest of the southern Santa Cruz Mountains. A number of streams originate in the Sargent Hills and flow through steep canyons on the way to their confluence with the Pajaro River. Unimpeded by dams, these streams provide important habitat for California Red-legged Frog and many other species, and are important to the recovery of steelhead trout populations within the larger Pajaro River watershed.

The Sargent Hills are part of an extensive and largely intact landscape that extends west into Santa Cruz County. Nearly 20,000 acres in size, this area includes some of the region's largest cattle ranches and provides core habitat for mountain lion and other far-ranging species. The Sargent Hills are located within the critical landscape linkage connecting the Santa Cruz Mountains to the Diablo Range.

Because there are relatively few landowners in this extensive area, the Sargent Hills provide unique opportunities for conservation. They figure prominently in a number of organizations' conservation visions: they are included in the *Valley Habitat Plan* as a top priority for land protection; and portions of the Sargent Hills are included in the *County General Plan*, *Countywide Trails Master Plan*, and *the County Park Acquisition Plan*. The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County and their partners are actively working in this area to protect habitat, watershed integrity, and working timberlands, and a consortium of conservation organizations including the Peninsula Open Space Trust and The Nature Conservancy is working to protect this area as part of the critical linkage to the Diablo Range. The Sargent Hills represent an opportunity for the Authority to work with these and other partners to protect vital rangelands and critical habitat. Land protection in this area could provide new opportunities for public access and recreation like the Bay Area Ridge Trail – with views extending from the Monterey Bay to the Diablo Range – in a large landscape minutes from Gilroy and south County communities.



Derek Neumann

The Sargent Hills rise steeply from some of the County's most productive commercial farmland. The area includes a diverse and extensive landscape with large ranches and critical habitat.

9. Upper Pajaro River

The Santa Cruz, Diablo, and Gabilan Mountain Ranges all converge at the Upper Pajaro River, located in the southern Santa Clara Valley. This landscape has outstanding water, wildlife, and agricultural conservation values. With rich, deep soils, the areas immediately east and south of Gilroy include the County's largest and most productive commercial farmlands. Some of these undeveloped farms and ranches are part of an extensive floodplain. During winter rains, San Felipe Lake swells over four times in size and, along with nearby ponds and seasonal wetlands, provides critical flood protection to the downstream communities of Pajaro and Watsonville. Wetlands and riparian areas along the Upper Pajaro River are key destinations for birds migrating along the Pacific Flyway, while the river itself – which flows into Monterey Bay, a National Marine Sanctuary – provides important habitat for steelhead trout and many other aquatic species.

Because of its location at the junction of three mountain ranges, the Upper Pajaro River has been identified as a critical landscape linkage. Protection of this area is necessary to allow mountain lion, badger, and other wide-ranging animals to migrate and disperse between the extensive natural areas located in these ranges. Indeed, scientists with The Nature Conservancy estimate that protection of approximately 7,000 acres along the Upper Pajaro River will help maintain ecological connectivity to over 700,000 acres of core habitat. Land conservation along the Pajaro will be especially important to provide resilience to a changing environment. Keeping these lands intact and connected will allow plants and animals to relocate and adapt to changing environmental conditions, and will help human communities adapt by protecting an extensive floodplain and reducing impacts of downstream flooding. In addition, the Upper Pajaro provides important recreational opportunities, including a



William K. Matthias

Some of the farms and ranches in the Upper Pajaro River region are part of the area's extensive floodplain, and are important for regional agriculture, flood protection, and wildlife habitat.

proposed segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail that would link protected parks and open spaces in the Santa Cruz Mountains and Diablo Range.

Areas within the Upper Pajaro River floodplain are at risk as the City of Gilroy seeks to annex surrounding farmland for residential and commercial development. The Authority is working in close partnership with a number of agencies and organizations to protect open space in this area, primarily through agricultural conservation easements and focused riparian and wetland restoration projects. Partners in this work include The Nature Conservancy, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Pajaro River Flood Prevention

Authority, Silicon Valley Land Conservancy, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Loma Prieta Resource Conservation District. Recently, the Amuh Mutsun Tribal Band of the Ohlone has been pursuing land conservation in the Pajaro River watershed, and this group represents a potential new partner in this area. There may be opportunities for the Authority to expand its boundaries in the future to help implement effective regional agricultural mitigation and resource protection programs adjoining Gilroy and in northern San Benito County. By protecting farms, ranches and open space along the Upper Pajaro, the Authority and partners can help sustain local food supplies and our regional agricultural economy, protect a critical floodplain, and maintain regionally significant wildlife habitat.

10. Pacheco Creek

Located in the southeastern portion of the County, Pacheco Creek runs through an incredibly scenic valley that is traversed by Highway 152. Fertile soils in the valley bottom support many small farms, while the grasslands and oak savannas in the surrounding hills support a number of large cattle ranches. This agricultural landscape is also significant for its natural resource values. One of the County's last remaining sycamore alluvial woodlands extends along the banks and floodplain of upper Pacheco Creek, upstream of Casa de Fruta. The riparian area and adjacent hillsides located just to the south and east of Henry Coe State Park have been identified as important conservation priorities in the *Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan* to protect this increasingly rare habitat, and to promote recovery of the California Tiger Salamander. In addition, Pacheco Creek can potentially support an important run of steelhead trout. If stream flows are managed by carefully planned water releases from Pacheco Dam, this area can provide a unique opportunity to improve water supply and restore habitat conditions for steelhead, and to contribute to the species' recovery within the larger Pajaro River watershed. This area is part of the critical landscape linkage that connects the Diablo Range to the Santa Cruz Mountains. Pacheco Creek and the surrounding hills serve as the southern gateway to the extensive habitat in the Diablo Range for wildlife species that travel along the upper Pajaro River between these mountain ranges.

Given the distance of this remote area from the Authority's land management and operations facilities, the Authority will most likely play a supporting role in land conservation efforts in Pacheco Creek. While there may be opportunities to partner with other public agencies to close gaps between Henry Coe State Park and Rancho Cañada de los Osos Ecological Preserve, this landscape is ideal for use of conservation easements and stewardship incentives. These conservation tools allow farm and rangeland to remain in private ownership, while ensuring protection of their conservation values and providing funding for voluntary habitat restoration projects. Key conservation partners in this area include the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Loma Prieta Resource Conservation District, Valley Habitat Agency, California State Parks, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, County Parks and Recreation, Pacheco Pass Water District, and The Nature Conservancy.



Derek Neumann

Pacheco Creek runs through a scenic valley that includes small farms and large ranches. Its significant natural resource values include California Tiger Salamander and steelhead habitat.