

# SANTA CLARA VALLEY HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN / NATURAL COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PLAN



The Santa Clara Valley HCP/NCCP *Local Partners* (City of San Jose, County of Santa Clara, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and Valley Transportation Authority) are pleased to announce the inclusion of the Cities of Morgan Hill and Gilroy in the Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP). The inclusion of these cities process provides mutual benefits by having a more inclusive regional approach for habitat protection and an enhanced means to guide future development. Both of these cities are located within the proposed planning area.

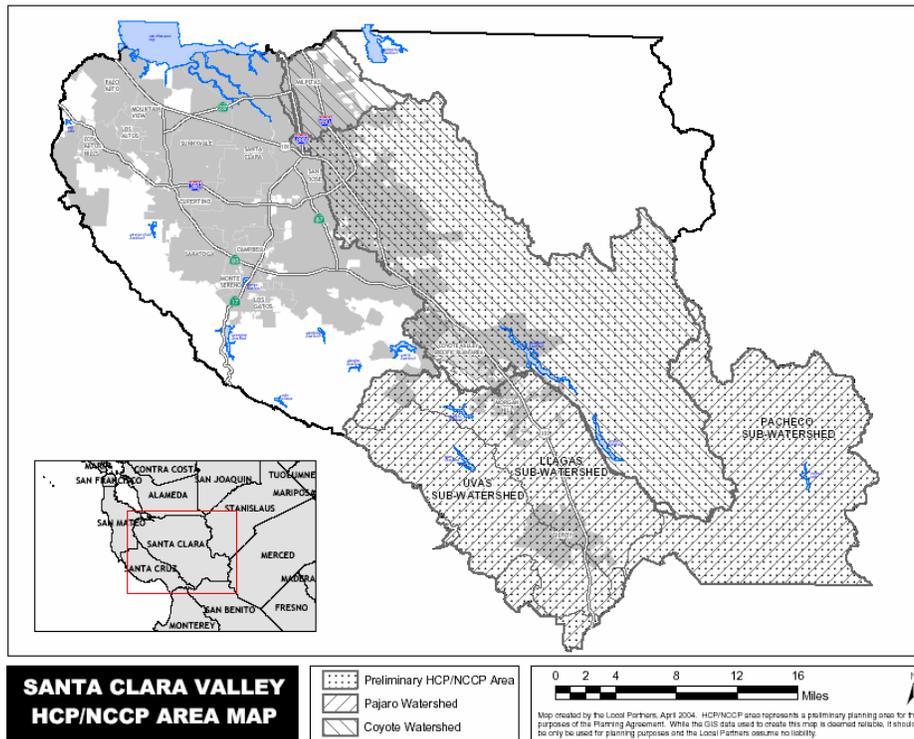
The development and implementation of an HCP/NCCP allows for otherwise lawful public and private activities to occur in the presence of endangered or threatened species. The HCP/NCCP integrates the impacts of potential projects or activities with the needs of endangered or threatened species and it describes, among other things, the anticipated affect of the impact and how it will be minimized and mitigated. The HCP/NCCP allows the *Local Partners* to apply for an "incidental take" permit under Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the U.S. Endangered Species Act and California Fish and Game Code 2800, respectively.

A Planning Agreement (PA) between the *Local Partners*, California Department of Fish and Game and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ("Wildlife Agencies") has been completed. The PA

establishes certain terms and conditions of the planning process and is a requirement of the California Natural Community Conservation Planning Act. Among other things, the PA outlines: preliminary conservation objectives, the preliminary geographic planning area, a preliminary list species and natural communities to be addressed, a processes for scientific and public input, and an interim process for project review. The PA went through a public review and local approval process and has been accepted by the Wildlife Agencies. A ceremonial signing of the PA will take place in San Jose on October 20th.

Over the past several months the *Local Partners*, with assistance from the Wildlife Agencies, have conducted interviews and selected consultants to assist in the development of the HCP/NCCP and planning process. Jones and Stokes has been selected to assist the Local Partners as the lead technical and conservation biology consultant. Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) has been selected to provide facilitation services for a stakeholder group and public meetings. Kleinschmidt Associates has been selected to provide facilitation services for an independent scientific advisors group. Additional consultants will be considered as the development of the plan progresses.

The development of the HCP/NCCP has been divided into several phases with the completion scheduled for 2009. During the first phase of



plan development, which will extend to mid-2006, the *Local Partners* with the assistance of consultants, will be making key strategic decisions and assemble baseline data. Major deliverables of this phase include: determining covered species and activities, developing land cover and land use maps, documenting existing conditions, and preparing species and natural community profiles.

A stakeholders group will be appointed to provide an ongoing facilitated forum for education, interaction, and communication with representatives of the *Local Partners* and Wildlife Agencies. The stakeholders group will be comprised of individuals representing a broad range of interests within the planning area. The stakeholders group, which is anticipated to have approximately twenty members, is a major component of the public outreach effort. The stakeholders group will assist in the development of the HCP/NCCP by providing a broader understanding of public and interest group perspectives including review and making recommendations on work leading to development of the HCP/NCCP. It is anticipated

that the stakeholders group will start convening by the end of the year.

An independent science advisors group will be formed in accordance with state regulations. The science advisors will review information and apply their expertise to prepare a report that will be a key element in guiding the preparation of the HCP/NCCP. A workshop will be held in early 2006, which will bring the independent scientists together and allow them to engage in an interdisciplinary discussion regarding key scientific issues in providing guidance for the development of the HCP/NCCP.

The *Local Partners* have developed a website to keep the public informed about the HCP/NCCP process. All public materials associated with the planning process will be published on the website. You can access the website at:

<http://hcp.sccgov.org>

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