



FACT SHEET

NUMBER 1

A PUBLICATION FOR THE SANTA CLARA BASIN WATERSHED MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE • Revised May 2000

MISSION:
To protect & enhance the watershed, creating a sustainable future for the community and the environment.



REGIONAL SETTING

The Santa Clara Basin

The South San Francisco Bay (south of the Dumbarton Bridge) is a unique water body. Its shallow depths, limited freshwater inflow and slow currents create increased potential for environmental impacts from natural and human activities.

The South Bay receives all water runoff from the Santa Clara Basin watershed, which is bounded by the Diablo Mountains to the east, the Santa Cruz mountains to the south and west and Coyote Reservoir to the south. The basin is home to a diverse community of about 1.7 million people. All the land in the basin drains to storm drains, creeks and rivers, which in turn flow to the Bay. Fresh water contributions also come from the three South Bay wastewater treatment plants in Palo Alto, Sunnyvale and San Jose.

Northern watershed.

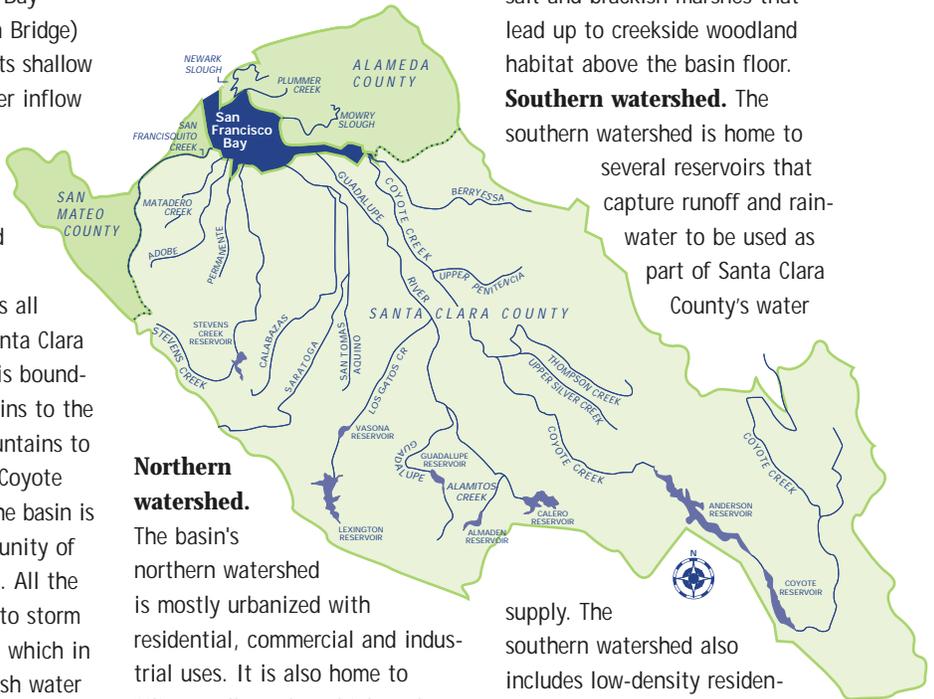
The basin's northern watershed is mostly urbanized with residential, commercial and industrial uses. It is also home to Silicon Valley, where high-tech industries employ thousands of people. The watershed's edge is lined with sloughs, salt ponds and

salt and brackish marshes that lead up to creekside woodland habitat above the basin floor.

Southern watershed.

The southern watershed is home to several reservoirs that capture runoff and rain-water to be used as part of Santa Clara County's water

supply. The southern watershed also includes low-density residential development, scattered agricultural and grazing lands, abandoned mines and undeveloped and preserved open space.



WHAT IS The WMI?

To provide an opportunity for local stewardship of the watershed, the Santa Clara Basin Watershed Management Initiative (WMI) was initiated in 1996 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the State Water Resources Control Board and the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board. In the past, specific issues affecting watersheds have been addressed by separate regulatory actions, resulting in a "patchwork"

approach. A major aim of the WMI is to coordinate existing regulatory activities on a basinwide scale, ensuring that problems are addressed efficiently and cost-effectively.

Stakeholders. In addition to federal, state and local regulators, the WMI also includes representatives from business and industrial sectors; professional and trade organizations; environmental, resource conservation and agricul-

tural groups; and local public agencies. With a vested interest in future watershed management and health, these stakeholders are committed to improving basin conditions by maintaining an open dialogue. Stakeholders help manage the WMI through monthly Core Group meetings, where they determine priorities and apply resources to meet agreed-upon goals (see Goals on back).

GOALS

Recognizing the importance of sustained dialogue and a community-supported process, WMI stakeholders developed the following goals:

- Ensure that the WMI is a broad, **consensus-based** process.
- Ensure that **necessary resources** are provided for WMI implementation.
- **Simplify compliance** with regulatory requirements **without compromising** environmental protection.
- **Balance the objectives** of water supply management, habitat protection, flood management and land use to protect and enhance water quality.
- **Protect and/or restore** streams, reservoirs, wetlands and the Bay for the benefit of fish, wildlife and human uses.
- Develop an implementable Watershed Management Plan that incorporates science and will be continuously improved.



WMI assessment and plan. Currently, WMI members are conducting a scientific watershed assessment to document the basin's environmental conditions and regulatory framework. WMI participation ensures a coordinated approach to data collection and allows Core Group stakeholders to plan watershed protection and restoration activities using a scientific basis. When completed, the assessment will be the foundation for a basin-wide watershed action plan. Once the plan is approved by the stakeholders, it will be implemented and continuously improved.

Funding. The WMI is funded primarily by stakeholder in-kind services and contributions as well as grants from state and federal agencies.

ISSUES Affecting the Watershed

Pollution. One example of the challenges being addressed by the initiative is water pollution. The South Bay faces constant water quality threats from pollution due to its unique physical characteristics and location adjacent to a major urban area. Government regulations and pollution prevention programs have been instrumental in reducing the flow of pollutants from areas within the Santa Clara Basin. In the past, most of these measures were aimed at wastewater treatment facilities and major industries. However, it is currently recognized that urban and rural sources also play a major role in contributing to pollutants entering our creeks and the Bay. People's individual actions—such as washing and driving cars, using chemicals in home and landscape upkeep—add up to a significant source of pollution to the Bay.

Many diverse factors impact the basin, including water quality, land use, flood protection, water supply and habitat protection. A holistic strategy is required to confront and manage these issues. By addressing all sources of pollution that threaten the Bay we can achieve a sustainable balance of human and natural uses and needs. Regulators, along with local community, environmental, agricultural and business representatives, must maintain a continuous, productive dialogue to protect the Santa Clara Basin, its creeks and South Bay.

A fresh approach. The WMI is a new way of doing business that allows for effective coordination between a variety of agencies and stakeholder interests. This effort is vitally important because of the many jurisdictional boundaries that overlie the basin. The WMI will meet these challenges to preserve and protect our unique environmental heritage.

For more information on the Watershed Management Initiative, please contact Alice Ringer at 650-494-3819, or alice_ringer@city.palo-alto.ca.us Or check out our web site at www.scbwmi.org

WMI SIGNATORIES

PUBLIC AGENCIES

California Department of Fish & Game
City of Cupertino
City of Palo Alto
City of San Jose
City of Santa Clara
City of Sunnyvale
Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District
San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
Santa Clara County
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program
Santa Clara Valley Water District
US Army Corps of Engineers
US Environmental Protection Agency
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

BUSINESS/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

California Restaurant Association/Dairy Belle Freeze
Home Builders Association of Northern California
San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce
Santa Clara Cattleman's Association
Santa Clara County Farm Bureau
Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group

ENVIRONMENTAL & CIVIC GROUPS

CLEAN South Bay
League of Women Voters
Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Group
San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory
Santa Clara County Streams for Tomorrow
Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
Silicon Valley Pollution Prevention Center
Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition
Western Waters Canoe Club

