

# Caring for Nature So Nature Can Care for You

**W**hile the word “infrastructure” isn’t usually associated with beauty or inspiration, in the case of nature, it is both of those and more. The natural landscapes that are within and surround the Santa Clara Valley take care of us all in countless ways – provided we take care of them. When we invest in the nature-based solutions that protect our clean water supply, filter our air and protect us from wildfires and floods, we reap enormous returns. The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority is here to do that work for you.

## Protecting Us from Wildfire, Floods and Drought

### Nature as defense

As the saying goes, the best offense is a good defense. When we protect open spaces and keep them healthy, they help to protect us from the impacts of extreme weather events.

Undeveloped natural lands like hillsides, forests and even farms and ranchlands, serve as a buffer zone that protects our residential communities from wildfire and floods, and provides safe space for native wildlife seeking food, water, mates and shelter.

### Nature as healing

Studies confirm that time spent in and around nature is good for all of us. It reduces stress, provides opportunities for recreation and inspires awe. We are fortunate to live in Santa Clara Valley, where the climate permits us to be outdoors year-round. When we protect outdoor open spaces for public access – and help create green spaces in our urban areas – all of us can enjoy these health benefits equitably.

**Nature does all these things to care for us — if we care for nature. Your ongoing support of the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority makes that possible.**

*Did you know  
your preserves  
are open 365  
days a year,  
free to all?*





### Who is the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority?

We're a regional public agency that has spent more than 30 years protecting and restoring lands, streams, forests and farms, creating parks and preserves and building climate resiliency for the people and wildlife of our region.

### How Does the Open Space Authority Do its Work?

We work with willing sellers to purchase land and protect it permanently from development. We also use science-based techniques to restore lands. That includes cleaning up streams and lakes, removing invasive plants that threaten native species and managing overgrown areas to reduce the risk of severe wildfire. We also seek public input on what you want most when we create new preserves and trails.

### How is the Open Space Authority Funded?

Since our founding, the Authority's work has received consistent, overwhelming support from the residents of Milpitas, San José, Santa Clara, Campbell, Morgan Hill and most of unincorporated Santa Clara County. Most recently, voters renewed Measures Q & T that provide a critical foundation of funding that we steward as thoughtfully as the lands we protect: For every \$1 of that revenue, we have been able to raise another \$3 in outside funding through grants and partnerships.

### What Has the Open Space Authority Done Since its Founding in 1993?

We have protected more than 30,000 acres of natural and working lands across Santa Clara County – all of which connect a network of 1.1 million acres of wildlife habitat. That total includes nearly 3,500 acres of productive farmland, so that family farms can continue to provide local, healthy food for all of us.

With those protections, we've created a system of open space preserves with 33 miles of public trails for people on foot, on wheels and even on horseback.

Knowing that having green space close to home is equally important in city centers, we have also distributed nearly \$15 million in grants to more than 950 community programs so that everyone can experience natural wonders every day.

### It's Time to Grow Our Investment in Nature

As weather patterns have become more extreme and the threat of sprawling development has grown, the need for land protection has grown along with them. In the past 10 years alone, the amount of public open space that we manage has tripled. It will continue to grow so that we can expand the services and access that healthy natural lands provide.

We know that protecting and restoring nature is a much smarter, more efficient use of our precious public funds than paying for recovery after each disaster.

### Looking Ahead

We are seeing a growing gap between the funding that has fueled our conservation successes to-date and what will be needed to sustain and protect Santa Clara Valley residents from more extreme weather events, biodiversity losses and development threats.

The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority is considering placing a new funding measure on the November 2024 ballot asking commercial and residential property owners to invest a minimal, supplemental amount based on the size of their building each year. Average homeowners would pay less, and commercial properties would pay more. With this meaningful investment, we can continue our work to make sure our natural lands work for your benefit.

For more information about investing in nature in Santa Clara Valley, please visit [news.openspaceauthority.org/investing-in-nature-2024](https://news.openspaceauthority.org/investing-in-nature-2024)



Please email [ada@openspaceauthority.org](mailto:ada@openspaceauthority.org) for questions or specific accessibility resource requests.



*Did you know that a bobcat can travel up to 7 miles to hunt each day? By providing wild cats with connected habitat, we help them to survive – and avoid human interactions that pose the highest risks to them.*