

Santa Clara River Watershed - Vision and Mission Statements

Adopted by the Santa Clara River Watershed Committee

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Vision

The Santa Clara River system (i.e., the Santa Clara River, its tributaries, and associated floodplain) is one of the last remaining river systems relatively intact in the state and is recognized as exceptional in its value and quality by local communities and the public in southern California and beyond. The river system drains a 1600-square-mile watershed the majority of which is publicly owned, and encompasses a river corridor supporting a thriving agricultural industry and several urban communities. All of these uses help define the character of the watershed. The Santa Clara River system merits appropriate stewardship to ensure that the river, its natural resources, the economic activities it supports, and the ecosystem services it provides are protected for generations to come. This stewardship protects the river's ecological integrity, provides water supplies for various uses, minimizes damage resulting from floods, and supports sustainable economic development.

To this end, we envision a Santa Clara River system that:

- Allows for **natural river processes**, to the maximum extent feasible, including permitting the river to freely meander within its floodplain and to accommodate flows within the natural range of variation.
- Allows for the preservation and **protection of existing and future sustainable uses** in the watershed including cultural, agricultural, and educational activities, low impact recreation, scientific studies, and aesthetic and spiritual enjoyment.
- Emphasizes environmentally sensitive **flood management** that allows for a functional floodplain while minimizing damage to life and property.
- Maintains **biodiversity** through matrix of native aquatic, riparian, and upland habitat with minimal habitat fragmentation and barriers, with emphasis on enhancing recovery of species of conservation concern.
- Is **unimpaired by pollution or invasive non-native species**.
- Is managed by cooperating public entities, private landowners, and organizations working toward the **common vision**.
- **Supplies water** for agriculture, groundwater recharge, and habitat maintenance.

Mission Statement

The Santa Clara River Watershed alliance is dedicated to the conservation of the Santa Clara River, from its headwaters and tributaries to its estuary, for the mutual benefit of the natural resources dependent on the river and the people who live, work, and recreate along the river.