

# Public Participation and Regional Conservation Plans

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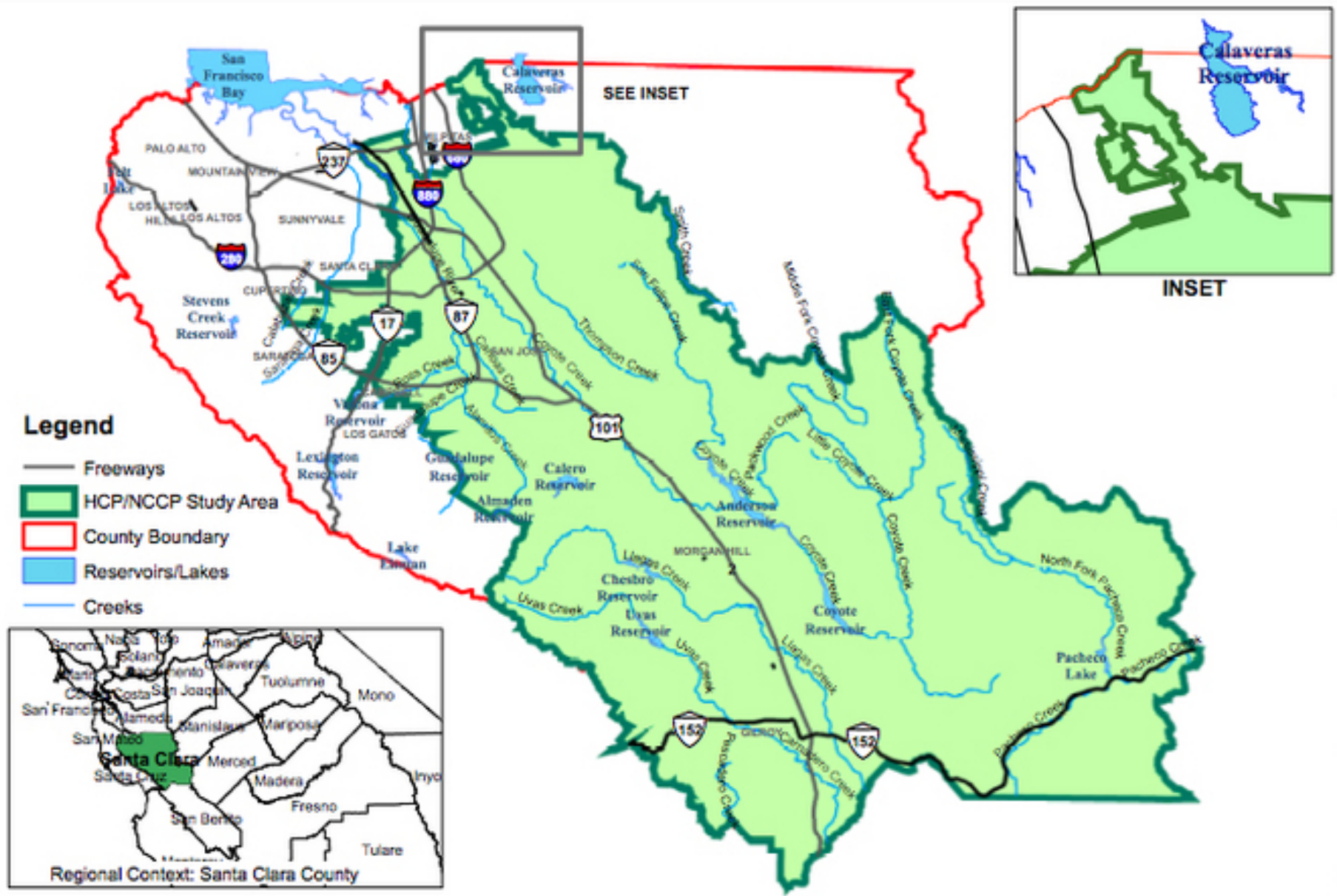
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# Presentation

- Review benefits and challenges of regional conservation plan processes
- Identify success factors for your regional public participation process
- Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan as a case example

# Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan

- Provides a more efficient process for protecting the environment and processing applications for local projects that may affect endangered species
- Covers approximately 520,000 in Santa Clara County
- Partners include:
  - Santa Clara County
  - Valley Transportation Authority
  - Santa Clara Valley Water District
  - Cities of San Jose, Gilroy and Morgan Hill
  - Started process in 2005; final document is currently under review



**Santa Clara Valley HCP/NCCP Study Area Boundary**



While the GIS data used to create this map is deemed reliable, it should be only used for planning purposes and the Local Partners assume no liability

# Benefits of Regional Plans

- Process can achieve high impact conservation results
- Multiple goals can be achieved
- Measure of certainty is provided regarding future conservation activities

# Challenges of Regional Plans

- Lengthy process
- Subject matter is complex
- Requires participation of stakeholders with multiple view points
- Involves multiple decision makers and advisors
- Requires participation and agreement by many



# Success Factors

- Strategy that is likely to achieve positive outcomes
- Helps manage the unpredictable nature of public and stakeholder interactions
- Helps ensure the project team is prepared!

# Success Factor #1 Set Yourself Up for the Long-Term

Develop a group charter and operating protocols

- Identify roles and responsibilities
- Be clear about the commitment required
- Address attendance and use of proxies
- Identify a decision making structure
- Be ready- before you engage with the public



# Success Factor #2 Have a Clear Decision Making Structure

Determine how decisions are made at all levels

- Elected officials
- Project Team
- Technical Advisors
- Stakeholders and the Public

# Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan Operating Structure

- Elected Officials
- Liaison Group – representative group of elected officials
- Management Team
- Mare Island Group
- Stakeholder Group- with neutral facilitator

# Six Levels of Agreement

- 1) I can say an unqualified “yes” to the decision.
- 2) I find the decision perfectly acceptable. It is the best of the options we have available to us.
- 3) I can live with the decision; I am not especially enthusiastic about it.
- 4) I do not agree but am willing to support the decision because I trust the wisdom of the group.
- 5) I feel that we have no clear sense of unity in the group. More work needs to be done
- 6) I do not agree with the decision and feel the need to register my disagreement.

# Success Factor #3 Create a Shared Understanding of the Facts

- Describe the benefits of the process
- Describe the legal requirements
- Develop clear talking points for use by all
- Use example species consistently
- Correct misinformation as quickly as possible
- Provide educational opportunities
  - HCP 101 Training
  - Tours
  - Educational Forums

# Success Factor #4 Keep Your Stakeholder Group Balanced

- Determine a balance of the constituencies your group should represent
- Continually recruit members from key constituencies - such as land owners and the development community
- Add representatives from new groups as they surface

# Success Factor #5 Develop Metrics and Document Results

- Demonstrate transparency by sharing information widely
- Describe how comments and concerns will be responded to
- Share results of key activities
- Maintain regular communications – even when there is nothing new to report!

# Success Factor #6 Be Ready When You Go Out to the Public

- Have a clear reason for going out to the public is it to educate or seek input
- Be clear on what and how a member of the public can influence the process
- Project partners should all be on the same page
- Use a range of methods to inform and engage



# Summary of Success Factors

- 1) Set Yourself Up for the Long-Term
- 2) Have a Clear Decision Making Structure
- 3) Create a Shared Understanding of the Facts
- 4) Keep Your Stakeholder Group Balanced
- 5) Develop Metrics and Document Results
- 6) Be Ready When You Go Out to the Public