

## What is the Open Space Authority?

The mission of the Open Space Authority of Santa Clara Valley is to conserve the natural environment, support agriculture and connect people to nature, by protecting open spaces, natural areas, and working farms and ranches for future generations. The Authority was created in 1993 to balance rapid urban growth through acquiring and protecting open space, greenbelts, water resources and wildlife habitat. In the 20+ years since its inception, the agency has worked to effectively leverage its modest funding for open space land protection within the cities of San Jose, Santa Clara, Milpitas, Campbell and Morgan Hill and unincorporated areas of the county.

## Funding

The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority is funded primarily from an annual \$24 benefit assessment and Measure Q, a parcel tax, which was overwhelmingly approved by the voters on November 4, 2014. The agency also receives funding from grants and gifts. The Open Space Authority—working in partnership with the county, cities and nonprofit organizations—has acquired and preserved over 17,500 acres of open space lands in the Santa Clara Valley including mountaintops, rolling hills, creeks, ranches and farmland. The agency recently changed its name from Santa Clara County Open Space Authority to Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority through Senate Bill 422. This change in name reflects a sense of the unique landscapes the Authority works to protect and distinguishes the Authority as a separate entity from county government. SB 422 also allows the Open Space Authority to acquire and hold lands adjacent to the county.



## Protection and Community Programs

The Open Space Authority protects and carefully stewards the plants, animals, water, soil resources, and cultural and recreational assets on its lands by:

- Providing and maintaining hiking, walking, biking and equestrian trails
- Preserving local family farms and healthy local food sources
- Helping to ensure clean, safe drinking water by protecting lands around rivers, lakes and streams
- Protecting natural habitats for native species
- Helping to prevent wildfires and floods by managing land and water



The Open Space Authority also hosts numerous activities and programs for the community in its three open space preserves. These activities include the annual Coyote Valley Family Harvest Feast, Perseid's Meteor Shower, and docent-led hikes. The Authority also partners with local organizations including the Wildlife Education & Rehabilitation Center and Healthy Parks Healthy People to expand its reach throughout the Santa Clara Valley. The Authority's work is guided by the *Santa Clara Valley Greenprint*, a 30-year vision for conservation and stewardship of land, water and natural resources to help achieve community health, safety and economic sustainability.