



# Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition

*Advocates for living streams*

## Member Organizations

Committee for Green Foothills

Northern California Council-  
Federation of Fly Fishers

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

August 14, 2008

Co-chairs Sam Liccardo and Shirley Lewis  
Envision San Jose 2040 Task Force  
By email

Re: Request to Discuss Integration of the Santa Clara Basin  
Watershed Management Initiative Watershed Action Plan  
principles into the General Plan and Specific Area Plan  
Development Processes

Dear Co-chairs Liccardo and Lewis,

The Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition is writing to request the opportunity at the appropriate time for presentations to the Task Force by the Santa Clara Basin Watershed Management Initiative (WMI) (of which the City is a signatory member) and by the Creeks Coalition to discuss the integration of the principles of the WMI's Watershed Action Plan into the General Plan process and into processes for the development of Riparian Corridor Specific Area Plans.

The Watershed Action Plan was adopted by the WMI in 2003 and was accepted by the City shortly thereafter. Attached are excerpts from that plan.

We see an acute need for the integration of land use planning with the application of river science to lay out a long term vision for what we want our streams and stream corridors to look like in 50 years. Such a process set in motion has the potential to transform our creeks into "Living Streams" – so that there are thriving populations of fish, birds, trees and other wildlife that once lived here in profusion and so there are opportunities for residents to enjoy and have a personal relationship with the creeks that flow through their neighborhoods. We believe this is an important "quality of life" consideration and one of many important elements in a long term vision for San Jose.

The Action Plan specifically states:

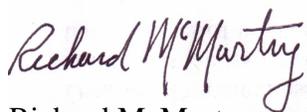
**Incorporate the WMI Vision into General Plans and Specific Area Plans (Chapter 3).** The WMI advocates that General Plans should incorporate detailed maps and plans to protect and enhance watersheds. Cities, towns, and the County should study obstacles to implementing detailed maps of habitat corridors in General Plans and should consider how to make these maps part of future General Plan updates.

It further elaborates:

“Watershed planning should start at the Basin-wide or landscape scale, but more detailed plans must be created at the scale of a subwatershed, stream corridor, or habitat. Typically, this scale is roughly the same as an urban neighborhood (one to several square miles). For this reason, Specific Area Plans may be the most effective planning tool for preserving and enhancing urban watersheds.”

Would it be possible to have presentations on these themes at a future Task Force meeting?

Sincerely

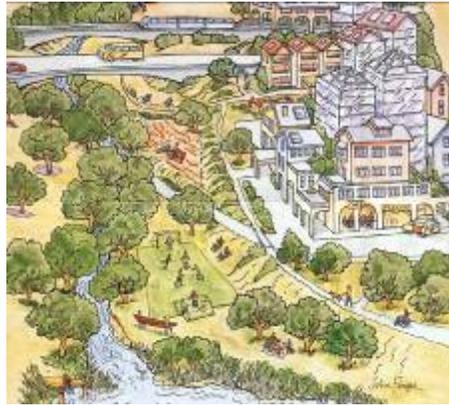
A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Richard McMurtry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'M'.

Richard McMurtry  
For the Creeks Coalition

Attachment:

Excerpts from SCBWMI Watershed Action Plan

Attachment:



**Excerpts from the WAP**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The strategic objectives and next steps follow:

**Incorporate the WMI Vision into General Plans and Specific Area Plans (Chapter 3).** The WMI advocates that General Plans should incorporate detailed maps and plans to protect and enhance watersheds. Cities, towns, and the County should study obstacles to implementing detailed maps of habitat corridors in General Plans and should consider how to make these maps part of future General Plan updates. Agencies that acquire and manage open space in the Santa Clara Basin should coordinate their individual strategies and link their efforts with General Plans, Habitat Conservation Plans/Natural Community Conservation Plans (HCPs/NCCPs), and floodplain management.

To further this objective, the WMI will:

- Convene a dialogue with Planning Commissioners and Directors regarding the use of General Plans and Specific Area Plans to implement, over the long term, the WMI's vision of continuous habitat corridors and intensely developed neighborhoods.
- Coordinate and integrate municipal land use planning with other WMI objectives, including riparian and floodplain planning and habitat conservation planning.

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**Integrated Planning of Floodplains and Riparian Corridors (Chapter 5).** The WMI advocates an integrated planning process to chart the future landscape of the Basin's floodplains and riparian corridors. The process should incorporate the cities' riparian corridor policies, the policies and procedures being developed by the Watershed Resources Protection Collaborative, applicable provisions in the cities' and County's General Plans, existing and planned recreational uses within floodplains and riparian areas, the *Countywide Trails Master Plan and*

*Uniform Interjurisdictional Trail Design, Use, and Management Guidelines*, the National Flood Insurance Program, and benefits attainable under the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) Community Rating System. The plans should also consider potential habitat for the red-legged frog and other riparian species.

To further this objective, the WMI will:

- **Work with the County, municipalities, SCVWD, and other agencies, provide a forum and develop a process for integrated planning of floodplains and riparian corridors.**

### **From Chapter 3:**

#### 3c3 Specific Area Plans

Watershed planning should start at the Basin-wide or landscape scale, but more detailed plans must be created at the scale of a subwatershed, stream corridor, or habitat. Typically, this scale is roughly the same as an urban neighborhood (one to several square miles). For this reason, Specific Area Plans may be the most effective planning tool for preserving and enhancing urban watersheds.