



The Board of Directors of the Santa Clara Valley Water District  
5750 Almaden Expressway  
San Jose, CA 95118  
Via email c/o [info@safecleanwater.org](mailto:info@safecleanwater.org)

SUBJECT: Comment on the Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Plan

December 19, 2011

Dear Chairman Gage and the Board of Directors:

**Save Our Trails: Connecting Santa Clara County Communities** is a California Not-for-Profit Corporation whose mission is *“To promote trails in Santa Clara County for the benefit and enjoyment of all people.”* On behalf of Save Our Trails (SOT), I am writing to provide a comment on your document titled **“Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Blue Ribbon Forum | December 7, 2011.”**

This document summarizes a list of five priorities that the Water District proposes to address as part of the overall plan. Among these, Priority "D" is *“Restore wildlife habitat and provide open space”*. There are seven projects under this rubric. Project “D3” reads *“Grants and partnerships to restore wildlife habitat and provide access to trails.”* One short statement talks about trails, almost as an afterthought: *“...providing public access to creekside trails or trails that provide a significant link to the creekside trail network.”*

This is certainly important, and SAVE OUR TRAILS supports this project. But we were surprised and very disappointed that, among the many projects described, there is no mention of providing rights-of-way for new trails along waterway projects, nor any allocation of funds for trail construction.

We think this is a serious omission from your list of priorities.

Almost all of the trails in the Santa Clara Valley are either along the Baylands or along waterways leading to the Bay: the Stevens Creek Trail, the San Tomas Aquino Creek Trail, the Guadalupe River Trail, the Los Gatos Creek Trail, the Coyote Creek Trail, the Los Alamitos Creek Trail, and the Penitencia Creek Trail among them. However, on almost all of these waterways, the trails are implemented in disconnected pieces, often with large missing gaps.

SAVE OUR TRAILS believes that closing the gaps in this trail network is of the utmost importance. Whenever flood control or habitat restoration work is done along a waterway that has an existing trail upstream or downstream, providing a connecting trail link should be of the highest priority. Some waterways have access roads which can easily be opened to the public as trails. Other cases will require building a new trail.

Providing grant funding to other community organizations working on trails will allow you to leverage their funds and provide a significant multiplier effect for these projects.

SAVE OUR TRAILS therefore urges you to add a new project to Priority D to explicitly include setting aside the right-of-way for trails open to the public along District waterways wherever feasible, to build trails when necessary, and to provide public access to these trails.

Sincerely yours,

Martin Delson  
Secretary, SAVE OUR TRAILS  
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