
Agriculture, Natural Resources + Conservation Element

Chapter 5 of the Santa Cruz County General Plan/LCP

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a framework for the conservation and sustainable management of agricultural land, natural and cultural resources, and open space in Santa Cruz County for today's residents and future generations.

In 1978, forward-thinking citizens of Santa Cruz County passed the Measure J voter initiative, which established the Urban and Rural Services Lines and other policies to preserve and protect these important resources for current and future generations. Since 1978, County land use policies have directed development to urbanized areas where services are available, and limited land divisions, development density and allowable land uses outside these areas and in areas with natural resources. Guided by the principle to preserve the County's unique natural resources and habitats by carefully managing new development outside the urban and rural services line, the Agriculture, Natural Resources + Conservation Element continues to preserve agricultural land for agricultural use; protect cultural resources; protect and restore natural resources including sensitive habitats and scenic areas; provide for the long-term sustainable management and conservation of water, timber, and mineral resources; and preserve open space in rural and urban areas.



Wilder Ranch State Park

Photo credit: Santa Cruz County



RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ELEMENTS

The effectiveness of the Agriculture, Natural Resources + Conservation Element depends upon its integration with the other elements comprising this General Plan.

Chapter 2: Built Environment provides the overall development framework that limits development density and subdivisions outside the urban and rural service lines, while supporting the intensification of land uses in urban areas. This framework reduces pressure to develop outside of urban areas, supporting the long-term protection of agricultural land, natural resources, and open space outside urban areas. The development guidance and environmental review requirements further protect natural resources and open space. By identifying land with natural resources and other constraints that limit development, the Agriculture, Natural Resources + Conservation Element also informs the Built Environment Element in identifying sites suitable for development.

Chapter 7: Parks, Recreation + Public Facilities is essential to the preservation of open space and natural resources in the County. The County parks system protects natural habitats and provides important open space and recreation opportunities including beach access in urban and rural areas throughout the County. Policies in Chapter 7: Parks, Recreation + Public Facilities addressing water supply and demand, water conservation, and wastewater treatment, disposal and drainage are supported by the policies in this Agriculture, Natural Resources + Conservation Element that protect water quality and quantity.

Chapter 6: Public Safety protects the public health and safety and limits development in high hazard areas, including steep slopes, areas of seismic risk, and high fire hazard areas. These high hazard areas where development potential is limited contribute to open space in the County. In addition, Chapter 6 contains policies that protect air quality.

Conservation + Natural Resources

California state law requires the Conservation Element to address the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, including:

- Water and its hydraulic force, rivers and other waters, and harbors;
- The identification of rivers, flood corridors and land that can accommodate floodwater;
- Fisheries and wildlife; and
- Minerals, forests, soils, and other natural resources.

In updating the Conservation element, the County is required to coordinate with any countywide water agency and with all district and city agencies including groundwater agencies which have developed, served, controlled or conserved water within the County.



References to specific goals, objectives, and policies in other elements are provided in each section of the Agriculture, Natural Resources + Conservation Element.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS + REGULATIONS

This chapter of the General Plan/Local Coastal Program (GP/LCP) combines two required elements: Conservation and Open Space. The chapter also includes Agriculture as an optional component of the Open Space Element. The conservation and management of agricultural land, natural and cultural resources, and open space are interrelated: natural resource areas and agricultural land, along with parks addressed in Chapter 7: Parks, Recreation + Public Facilities, comprise most of the open space in the County. Therefore, policies for the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources and agricultural land are essential to the conservation of open space, and policies protecting open space also reinforce the protection of natural resources.

This element also implements California Coastal Act regulations pertaining to the management of coastal resources, including marine resources, environmentally sensitive habitat areas, coastal waters, agricultural land, and scenic and visual resources. Policies that are part of the LCP are identified with the letters "LCP."

The policy framework provided in this element of the General Plan/LCP for the conservation and sustainable management of agricultural land, natural and cultural resources, and open space is implemented primarily through the Santa Cruz County Code (SCCC). Title 16, Environmental and Resource Protection, provides a comprehensive set of regulations protecting natural and cultural resources. The preservation of agricultural land and support for the local agricultural economy is also addressed comprehensively in the Zoning Ordinance and in the

Open Space

California State law requires counties to prepare a plan for the long-range conservation of open space land designated for the following uses:

- Natural resources;
- Managed production of resources, including forest and agricultural lands;
- Recreation;
- Public health and safety;
- Cultural/tribal resources.

Agriculture

In accordance with California State Law, the agricultural land component of an open space element shall include the following:

- Map agricultural land as designated in the State Farmland Monitoring and Mapping Program.
- Identify land to prioritize for conservation.
- Provide goals and policies to support the long-term protection of agricultural land.



Agricultural Land Preservation and Protection Ordinance. Open space is also protected through the Zoning Ordinance. The Rural Density Matrix of the SCCC implements policies in this element that limit development density and subdivisions to protect open space and natural resources. The countywide Geographic Information System (GIS) identifies known locations of resources, constraints, and land use designations addressed in this chapter (see Appendix F: Natural Resource and Environmental Hazard Areas: Maps and Development Constraints). The official adopted General Plan/LCP maps are the most current versions residing in the County’s GIS system. The Agriculture, Natural Resources + Conservation Element policies and implementation strategies are also coordinated with other County plans. This element implements objectives of the County’s Climate Action Strategy (CAS) to increase energy efficiency and strategies for natural systems and agriculture that foster adaption to climate change. The element also furthers the County Strategic Plan and vision for a sustainable environment, with policies and strategies to protect and restore natural resources, forests, coastlines, and agricultural land. Strategic Plan objectives to protect water quality and sustainably manage water resources, and promote renewable energy are also supported by policies of this element.

Implementation of the policies in the Agriculture, Natural Resources + Conservation Element requires close coordination and cooperation with local, state, and federal agencies, including local water and sewage disposal agencies, the Resource Conservation District, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the California Coastal Commission, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the California Department of Forestry. Details are provided in the policies and implementation strategies.



Tidepools in Pleasure Point. Photo credit: Santa Cruz County.



5.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Santa Cruz County is graced with unparalleled scenic beauty, with oak and redwood forests, grasslands and coastal scrub, networks of creeks and streams, and stunning coastlines, all providing outdoor recreation opportunities as well as supporting important, diverse habitats for rare and unique plant and animal species. The abundance of natural resources including water, timber and mineral resources, have supported a long history of human settlement that is reflected in the rich archaeological record and eclectic built environment. Prime and productive agricultural land concentrated along the north coast and in south county continues to support a strong agricultural industry and contributes to the open space and scenic landscapes in rural areas.

AGRICULTURE

Since the founding of Santa Cruz County, agriculture has shaped the economic, cultural, and physical landscape. Blessed with fertile agricultural soil and a mild year-round growing season, Santa Cruz County supports a thriving and diverse agricultural industry. Agricultural land also contributes to the character of rural areas and to the quality and extent of open space in the County.

Economic importance. Agriculture continues to be one of the largest industries in the County, with a gross value of nearly \$500 million annually from 2000-2018 (County of Santa Cruz Crop Reports 2000-2018). Organic farming and pastures represented approximately 25% of the total crop value as of 2018.

Santa Cruz County is also recognized as an important wine-growing region. The Santa Cruz Mountains American Viticultural Area includes, in general, all lands above the 400-foot topographical contour. “Santa Cruz County” is also a viticultural area. In addition, after the State legalized cannabis cultivation and manufacturing for recreational use in 2016, cannabis has also become a significant specialty crop in the County.

Agricultural Land. Commercial agricultural land, which is land that is best suited to the commercial production of food, ornamental crops and livestock and meets the General Plan criteria for agricultural resource soils, represents approximately 20.5% of the total land area of the County (Figure 5-1, Commercial and Non-commercial Agricultural Land). Parcels zoned for commercial agricultural uses are concentrated along the North Coast and in South County.

Non-commercial agricultural land in the County is not necessarily viable commercially but may support agricultural activities, and parcels zoned “A” (Agricultural) are often used for very low-density residential purposes, with large parcels developed with a residential dwelling in a manner that also assists with open space and habitat protection.



Non-commercial agricultural land is distributed throughout the rural areas of the County and represents approximately .6% of the area of the County (Figure 5-1).

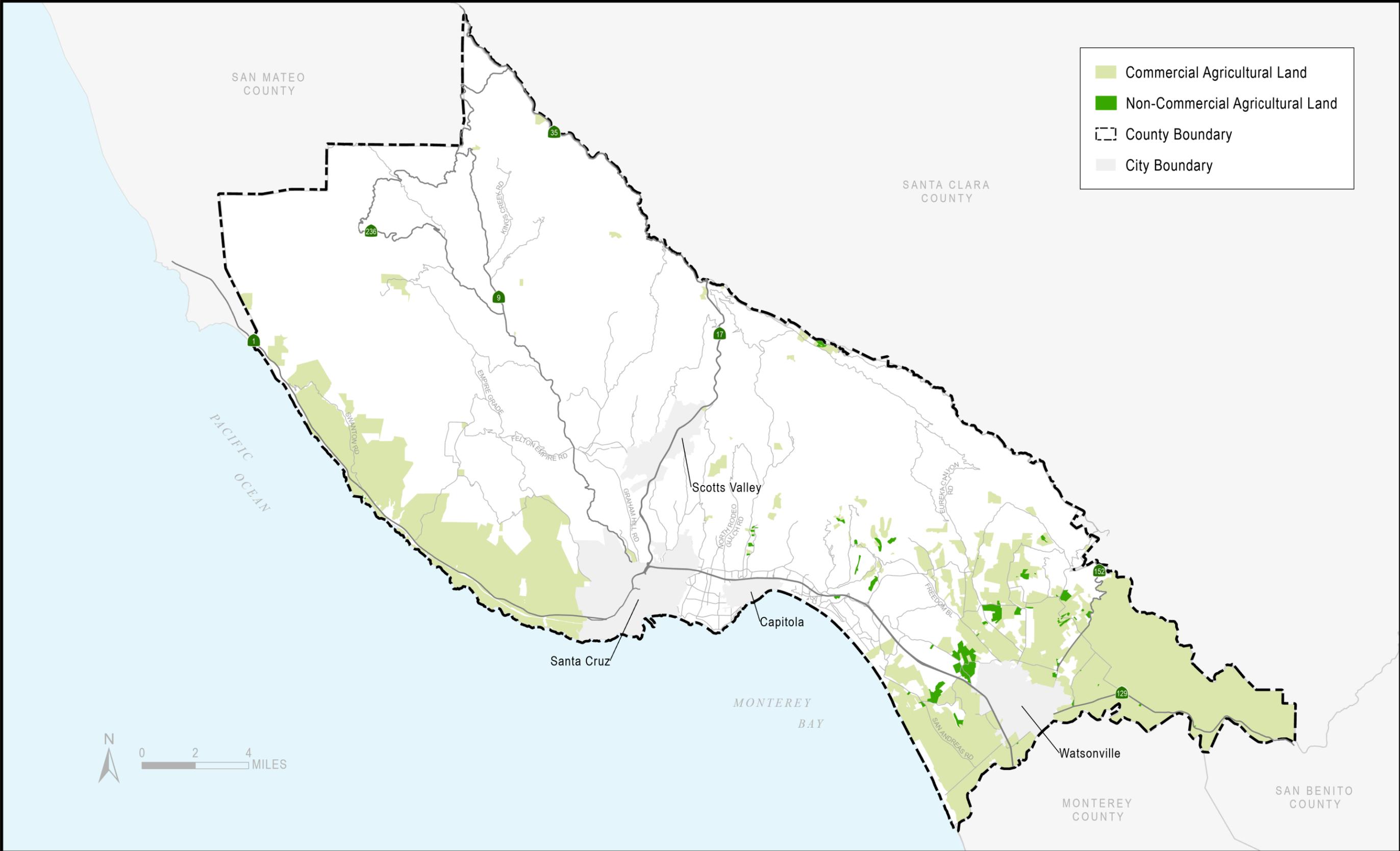
The State also recognizes the importance of farmland in the County. The Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program in 2018 identified over 15,000 acres of prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance, and over 3,000 acres of unique farmland and farmland of local importance (Figure 5-2, Farmland). Additionally, approximately 20,000 acres are preserved under the Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) contracts, some of which includes Open Space contracts.

Preserving Agricultural Land and Supporting Agriculture. Since the 1970s, County land use policies have preserved agricultural land by focusing development in urbanized areas where services are available. Agricultural policies that limit land divisions and development density and allow only agricultural uses and uses compatible with agriculture on commercial agricultural land, ensure that important farmland remains largely undeveloped, and values as productive farmland and open space are preserved.

Over the decades since the 1970s, the local agricultural economy has undergone significant changes. One trend has been the centralization and consolidation of farming operations in the County. Agricultural research and development (Ag R&D) has become increasingly important to ensure that the local agricultural economy remains at the forefront of agricultural innovation. To support the evolving needs of local agriculture, policies in this General Plan allow for centralized storage as well as Ag R&D facilities on commercial agricultural land. Policies for siting development ensure that it occurs in a manner that is protective of productive agricultural lands so that disturbance to agricultural soils is avoided and minimized as feasible, even as the facilities are allowed in order to support the agricultural economy and local agricultural operations.

At the other end of the economic scale, policies of the General Plan support the continued viability of smaller local farms by allowing innovative on-farm agritourism enterprises such as farm dinners and community education. Agritourism also provides an opportunity for county residents to connect with local agriculture and enjoy healthy outdoor activities. Many local wineries also rely on on-site events to remain profitable. Policies support agritourism on agricultural lands and on-site marketing events at wineries, with criteria to ensure compatibility with any adjacent residential or agricultural properties.

Figure 5-1: Commercial and Non-Commercial Agricultural Lands



Source: Santa Cruz County. Commercial Agricultural Land includes lands with mapped 1-3 Ag Soils, including lands located in an Agricultural Preserve (Williamson Act). Non-Commercial Agricultural Land includes all land with an Agriculture (AG) land use designation and zoned as Agriculture (A) outside of mapped Ag soils. Please refer to the Santa Cruz County GISWeb for the latest data and maps available.



Farmworker housing that is safe, sanitary, and affordable is also essential to the farming community. As required under the State Employee Housing Act, the County recognizes farmworker housing meeting specified criteria as an agricultural use. County policies also provide additional options for larger farmworker housing projects as a discretionary use on agricultural lands located within a defined Pajaro Valley Development Reserve that is located outside of the Coastal Zone.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

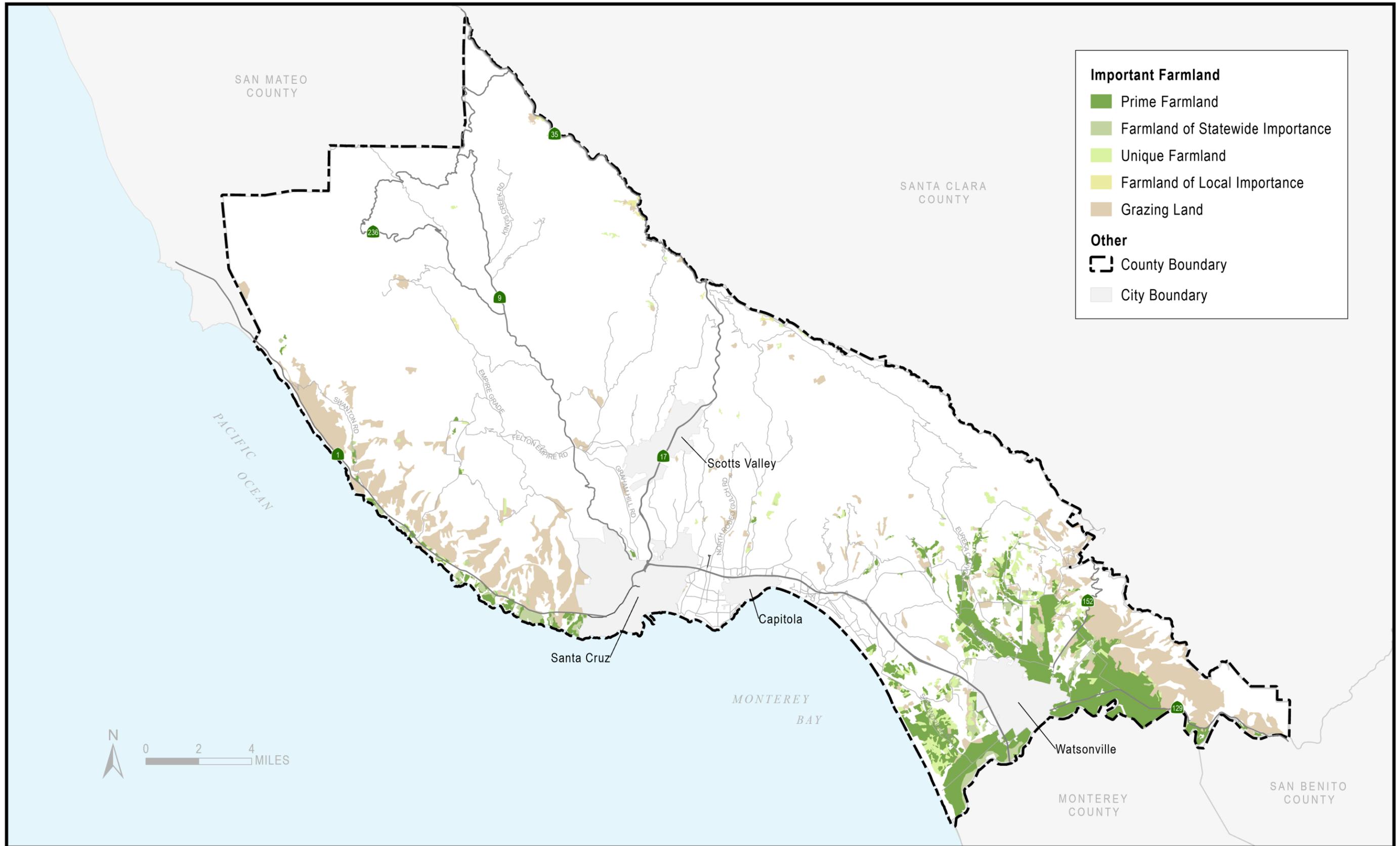
Santa Cruz County has a wide variety of natural habitats supporting rich biological diversity, including listed plant and animal species that are locally unique or rare or are identified as rare, threatened, or endangered under state and federal law (See Appendix K: Sensitive Habitat Plant and Animal Species). The natural habitats of listed plant and animal species and communities (sensitive habitats) include stream corridors, lakes, ponds and wetlands; beaches, reefs, and marine habitats; the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary; the unique Sandhills habitat in the San Lorenzo Valley and North Coast; the salamander habitat around Aptos and Watsonville; the native grass lands of the coastal terraces; and the San Andreas oak woodland.

Sensitive habitats in the County may provide some of the last remaining habitat for plants and animals in danger of extinction due to low numbers of individuals or populations, or to highly limited, fragmented, or vulnerable habitats. This policies in this chapter, implemented by SCCC Title 16, carefully regulate development to protect and restore sensitive habitats, and the rich biological diversity and special status species these habitats support, consistent with state and federal regulations. Some habitat areas are also considered to be Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHAs), which is a term that applies only within the Coastal Zone. Coastal Act Section 30107.5 defines ESHA as *"any area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and developments."* ESHA policies and limitations may affect development of all or portions of properties containing an ESHA.



Indian Paintbrush. Photo Credit: Santa Cruz County

Figure 5-2: Important Farmlands



Source: Santa Cruz County and California Department of Conservation. Please refer to the Santa Cruz County GISWeb for the latest data and maps available.



WATER RESOURCES

Water is a precious natural resource that is limited in Santa Cruz County. Nearly 100% of the water supply comes from streams and groundwater aquifers, which are fed entirely by local rainfall. This is unusual within California, as most urbanized counties participate and rely upon "state water" to at least some extent, which is not the case in Santa Cruz County. However, in the County, as of 2020 stream flow is inadequate to meet demands during droughts and all the

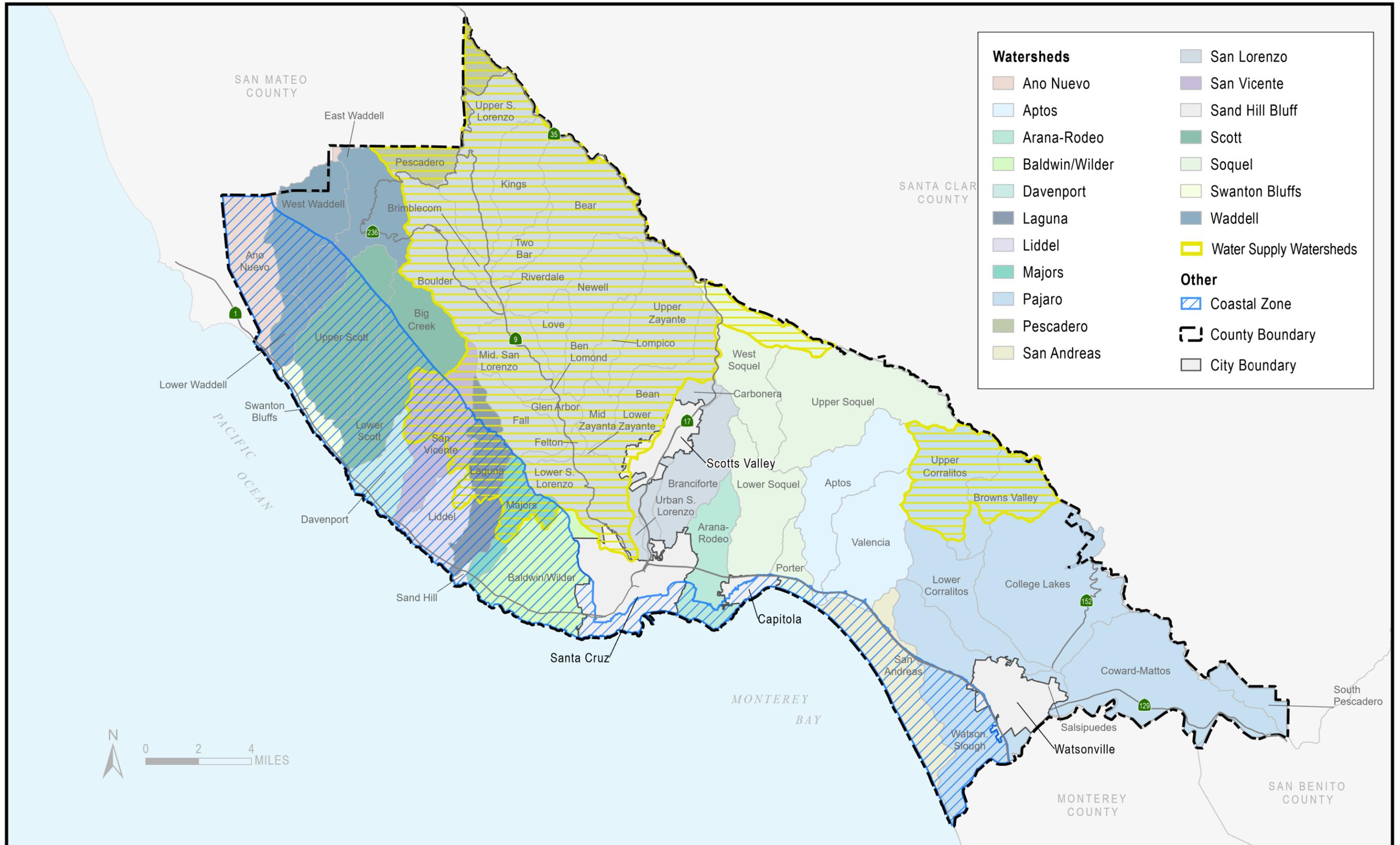


Corralitos Creek

major groundwater aquifer basins in Santa Cruz County were in some level of overdraft. In order to protect the quality and quantity of the water supply essential to a sustainable community and to healthy natural habitats, this chapter provides policy guidance for development to allow the groundwater to recharge, support the water districts' long-term goals of adequate supply, eliminating overdraft, and of protecting the quality of surface and groundwater supplies, watersheds, and coastal waters (see Figure 5-3, Watersheds). This section is closely linked to Chapter 7: Parks, Recreation + Public Facilities sections on water supply, wastewater treatment and disposal, and drainage.

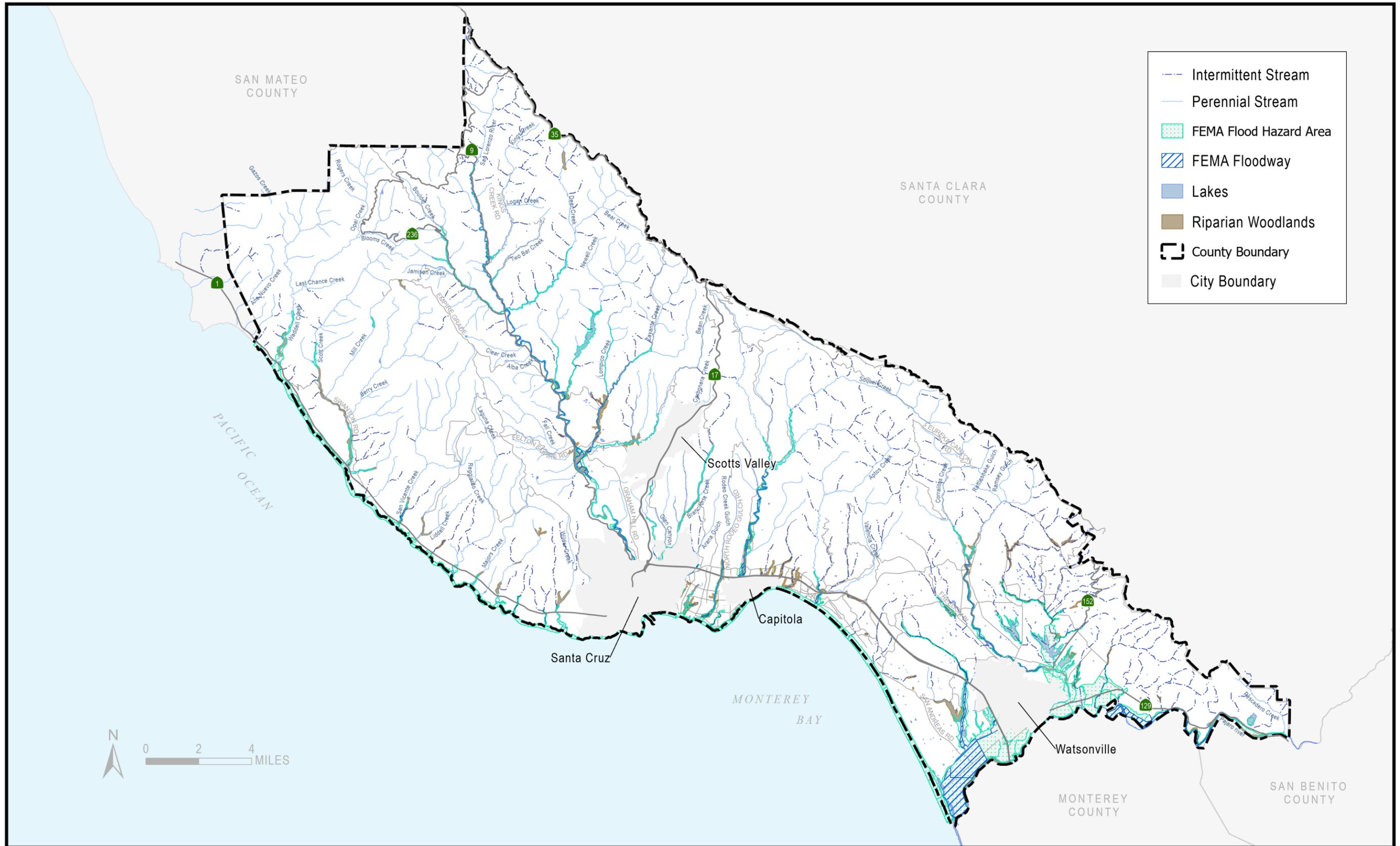
In addition to providing water to the community and maintaining healthy habitats, healthy rivers and streams are essential to public health and safety and to floodwater management. Figure 5-4 identifies lands that may accommodate floodwater for groundwater recharge and stormwater management, including rivers and creeks, and the 100-year floodplain. Chapter 6: Public Safety provides policies relating to flood management to protect public health and safety.

Figure 5-3: Watersheds



Source: Santa Cruz County. Please refer to the Santa Cruz County GISWeb for the latest data and maps available.

Figure 5-4: Lands Able to Accommodate Floodwaters



Source: Santa Cruz County. This map represents an assessment of landscape features. Please refer to the Santa Cruz County GISWeb for the latest data and maps available. This map is not a reflection of risk and is not to be used for flood insurance purposes.



VISUAL RESOURCES

The County is highly scenic and supports diverse important scenic resources, from stunning ocean vistas along the entire coastline, open agricultural lands along the northern coasts and in South County, redwood forests, and the rolling hillsides and ridgetops of the Santa Cruz Mountains. These visual resources are important to County residents as well as the entire region, attracting visitors and helping to support the local tourism industry. Additional scenic resources include rivers, watersheds, reservoirs, special geologic formations such as sandhill outcroppings, and selected vegetative communities. Scenic areas of the County that have been mapped are identified in Appendix F: Natural Resource and Environmental Hazard Areas: Maps and Development Constraints. Policies in the General Plan, implemented through the Site Development and Design Chapter of the SCCC and Coastal Zone regulations, provide guidance for development to protect these important visual resources.



*Wilder Ranch State Park
Photo Credit: Santa Cruz County*

Public roads provide the broadest range and greatest level of public access to the various scenic and aesthetic resources within the County, offering important viewing areas and scenic corridors. Scenic roads and highways, such as portions of Highway 1, as well as Highways 9, 17, 35, 152, and 236, and local County roads provide public views of the Monterey Bay, agricultural fields, dense redwood forests, open meadows, and mountain hillsides. Any public vistas from County-designated scenic roads are afforded protection, and developments that could affect these vistas are carefully reviewed.



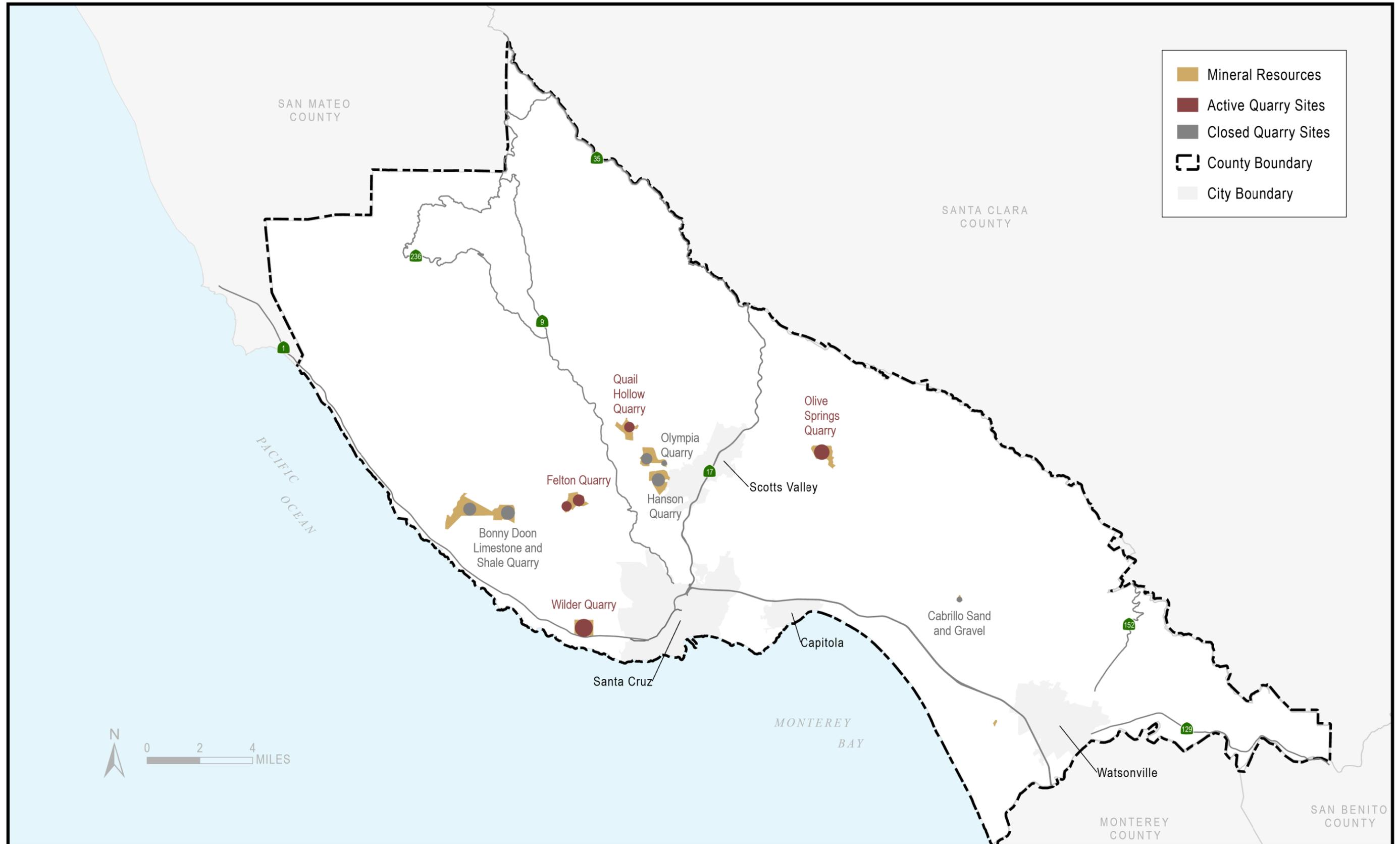
TIMBER AND MINERAL RESOURCES

The Santa Cruz Mountains and inter-mountain valleys support extensive forests with active timber production operations. Over 90,000 acres in the County are designated as timber resource lands (Appendix F: Natural Resource and Environmental Hazard Areas: Maps and Development Constraints). Some of these lands are also protected by Williamson Act and Open Space contracts that limits uses. These lands provide for the sustainable harvesting of timber, while also contributing to open space and providing important natural habitat. Policies in the General Plan as implemented by the County Code and the Timber Production Zone District provide for economically viable timber production and timber management practices to protect soil, water, and habitat values.

Minerals are also an important productive natural resource. Several active mining operations in Santa Cruz County provide important mineral resources for industry and construction, including sand and granitic rock (Figure 5-5, Quarry Sites). Other quarries are no longer in operation and are in the process of reclamation. Reclamation may result in alternate productive uses, open space, or a combination of uses.

In addition to the quarries, other lands in the County have been designated by the State as Regional or Statewide Significant Mineral Resource Areas and are identified as mineral resource areas in Appendix F: Natural Resource and Environmental Hazard Areas: Maps and Development Constraints and in the County GIS system. Policies in the General Plan/LCP and implementing regulations of the SCCC require environmentally sound quarry operation and restoration practices and provide guidance for land uses in areas designated as Mineral Resource Lands to support the conservation and future development of mineral resources.

Figure 5-5: Quarry Sites



Source: Santa Cruz County and Department of Conservation, Division of Mine Reclamation. Please refer to the Santa Cruz County GISWeb for the latest data and maps available.



CULTURAL RESOURCES



St. Peter's Wee Kirk Church in Ben Lomond, on the National Register

Photo Credit: Santa Cruz County

Santa Cruz County recognizes the importance preserving its historic and cultural resources. Archaeological sites reflect the long history of human occupation in the County, beginning with the arrival of the ancestors of the present-day Amah Mutsun Tribal Band (also referred to as the “Ohlone”) over 6,000 years ago, and are considered fragile, nonrenewable resources in California. There are also areas of the County that include additional cultural resources that are important to local tribes today. Policies protect archaeological sites and tribal cultural resources and require tribal consultations in accordance with state law in order to protect archaeological sites as well as the culture and heritage of the Native American community.

The built environment in Santa Cruz County has developed over time, from before the County’s founding in 1850 to the present day, resulting in a unique, vibrant and eclectic design character that tells the story of our community's more recent history. Architectural styles such as Adobe, Mission-style, Victorian and Craftsman, and building types that reflect the economic development of the County including schools, churches, motels and agricultural buildings, and these help connect us to our history. These properties enhance the sense of community in historic town and village centers, rural and agricultural areas, and neighborhoods. Recognizing the importance of preserving the buildings that connect us to our past, the County has designated over 200 properties as historic, and these resources are protected through historic preservation policies in this element and SCCC regulations. Additionally, as of 2020, 12 historic properties in the unincorporated area of the County have been determined to be of national importance and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

OPEN SPACE

Open space is well-protected in Santa Cruz County. Approximately 11,577 acres of land in urban and rural areas of the County are preserved as open space through the Resource Conservation (O-C) land use designation, representing approximately 4.3% of the total unincorporated land area of the County (Figure 5-6). Additional land in the County is preserved as open space through



open space contracts or easements. Many additional acres are essentially undeveloped and are devoted to open space even though associated with other developed uses or activities, including natural resources conservation; preservation of commercial agricultural land; sustainable management of timber, mineral and water resources; and lands used for outdoor recreation, including State parks, federal land, and County parks.

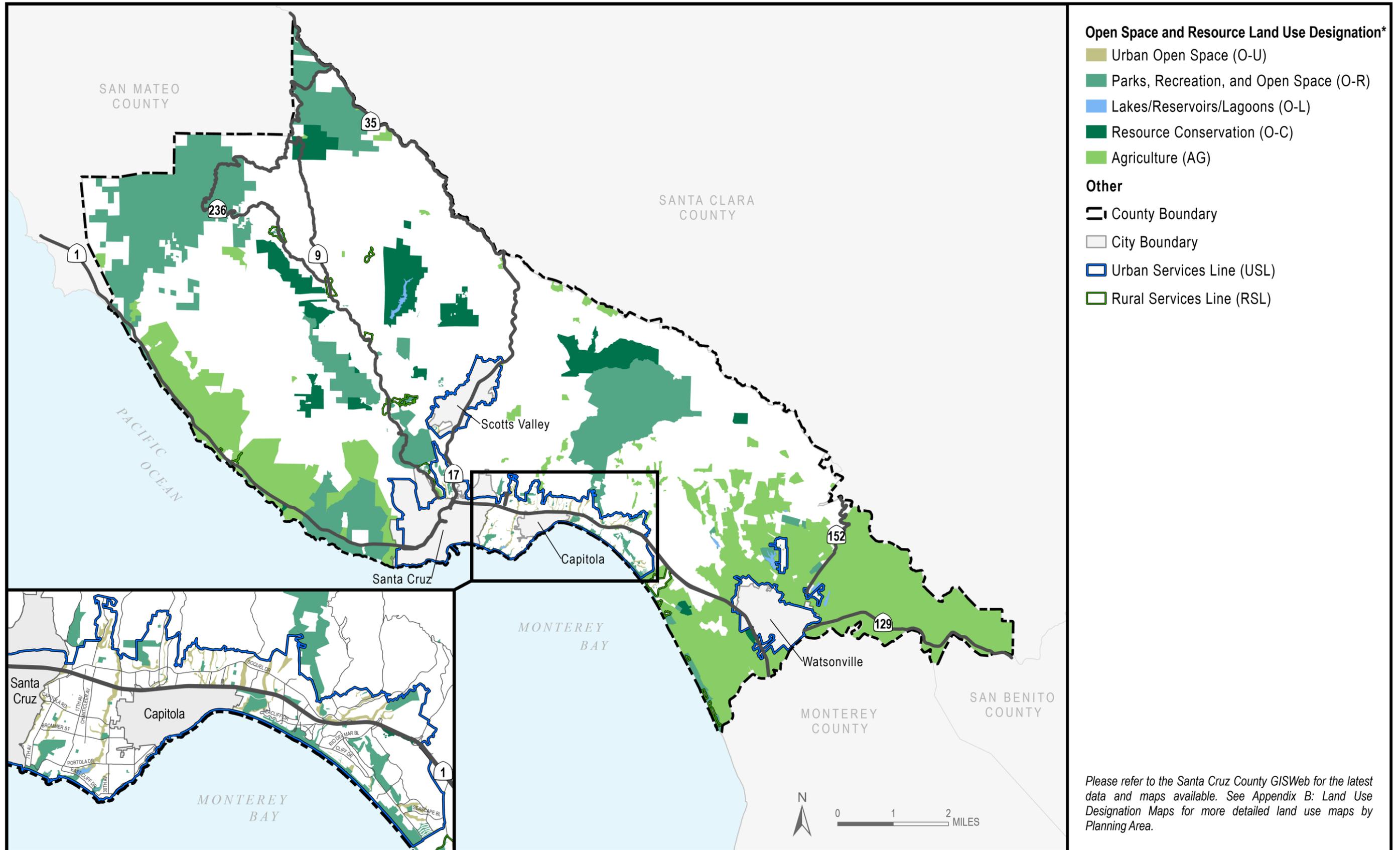
The Agriculture, Natural Resources + Conservation Element provides an Open Space Plan that identifies the policies and regulations that preserve open space in the County. Figure 5-6 also identifies categories of land that are included in the County Open Space Inventory, with individual parcels identified in the County GIS system.

In addition to polices in the Open Space section, other policies in this element that protect natural resources, visual resources, and tribal resources also protect the open space values of these lands. Chapter 7: Parks, Recreation + Public Facilities also identifies and protects parks, recreation, and open space lands for outdoor recreation, and policies of that chapter further protect the open space character of those areas.



*Santa Cruz County North Coast.
Photo Credit: Santa Cruz County*

Figure 5-6: Open Space and Resource Land Use Map



*See Appendix F for complete list of resource areas and maps. Source: Santa Cruz County.



5.3 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES + IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

AGRICULTURE

GOAL ARC-1 SUSTAINING AGRICULTURE

Support the agricultural economy and protect agricultural lands for current and future generations, preserving commercial agricultural lands for agricultural use and allowing agricultural and other uses on agricultural lands that are not commercially viable.

OBJECTIVE ARC-1.1 PRESERVE COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURAL LAND

(LCP) To maintain for exclusive agricultural uses those lands identified on the County Agricultural Resources Map as best suited to the commercial production of food, fiber and ornamental crops and livestock, and to prevent conversion of commercial agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses that are not associated with farming and/or are necessary to support the agricultural economy. To recognize that agriculture is a priority land use and to resolve policy conflicts in favor of preserving and promoting agriculture on designated commercial agricultural lands.



*Agricultural production facility
Photo credit: Santa Cruz County*



Policies

ARC-1.1.1 (LCP) Designation of Commercial Agricultural Land. Designate on the General Plan and LCP Resources and Constraints Maps as “Agricultural Resource” all lands that meet the criteria (as defined in the General Plan Glossary) for commercial agricultural lands.

See also Policy ARC-1.6.1 regarding non-commercial agricultural land that is designated as Agriculture, which may be used for a broader variety of purposes.

ARC-1.1.2 (LCP) Types of Agricultural Resource Lands. Maintain by County ordinance specific agricultural land type designations for parcels identified as commercial agricultural land based on the criteria set forth in the General Plan and LCP Land Use Plan* and maintain Agricultural Resources Maps to identify the distribution of the following types of Agricultural Resource Land in the County:

Type 1A – Viable Agricultural Land – Prime and unique farmland, and prime rangeland;

Type 1B – Viable Agricultural Land in Utility Assessment Districts – Prime farmland, unique farmland, and prime rangeland located in a utility assessment district;

Type 2A – Limited Agricultural Land – Land in large blocks suitable for commercial agricultural use, with one or more factors that may limit productivity;

Type 2B – Limited Agricultural Land-Geographically Isolated – Land suitable for commercial agricultural use that is geographically isolated from other agricultural areas;

Type 2C – Limited Agricultural Land in Utility Assessment Districts – Land suitable for commercial agricultural use that located in a utility assessment district and has other factors that may limit productivity;

Type 2D – Limited Agricultural Land Experiencing Use Conflicts – Land suitable for commercial agricultural use, but with limiting factors including pressure from residential land use;

Type 2E – Vineyard Lands – These are agricultural lands that may or may not be located on lands zoned “Commercial Agriculture” (CA), and often occur in the rural residential (RR), special use (SU), and non-commercial agricultural (A, RA) zoning districts;

Type 3 – Viable Agricultural Land Within the Coastal Zone – Prime farmland, unique farmland, and prime rangeland in the Coastal Zone that is protected by the Coastal Act.

**See Glossary for detailed definition of Agricultural Land, Commercial.*

ARC-1.1.3 (LCP) Land Use Designations for Agricultural Resource Lands. Lands designated as Agricultural Resource will be maintained in the Agriculture (AG) Land Use designation unless the property is included in a public/quasi-public park or biotic reserve, in which case it shall be assigned to the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (O-R), Resource Conservation (O-C), or Public Facility (P) land use designations.



ARC-1.1.4 (LCP) Development Density and Intensity on Commercial Agricultural Land. Limit development density and intensity on commercial agricultural land in order to preserve the land for long-term commercial agricultural use, accordance with Table 5-1.

Table 5-1: Development Density + Intensity on Agricultural Lands			
Land Use	Building Intensity		Maximum Residential Density^{3,4}
	Maximum Building Height	Estimated Lot Coverage²	
Commercial Agricultural Lands ¹ (Agricultural Resource soils)	40 feet (agricultural structures)	0% - 10%, or per Master Plan	1 single-family dwelling/ parcel
Non-commercial Agricultural Lands (Agricultural Land Use Designation/ Agriculture Zone District)	40 feet (agricultural structures); 28 feet (residential structures)	0% - 20%	1 single family dwelling/ 2.5 - 40 net developable acres ⁵

¹ See Policy ARC-1.1.3 and ARC-1.1.5 regarding applicable land use designations and zone districts.
² Lot coverage is provided as an estimated range and is not a regulatory standard. Allowable lot coverage is determined by the provisions of any contract, site conditions, and development criteria for the zone district and use. Greenhouses and agricultural storage structures do not count toward lot coverage.
³ Farmworker housing, including caretaker’s units and other types, is considered an agricultural use and does not count towards residential density.
⁴ An accessory dwelling unit and residential accessory structures are considered accessory to a single-family dwelling and do not count toward residential density.
⁵ On non-commercial agricultural land, maximum residential density is determined through the rural density matrix.

ARC-1.1.5 (LCP) Zoning of Agricultural Resource Land. Maintain all lands designated as Agricultural Resource in the Commercial Agricultural (CA) Zone District, except as follows: land in agricultural preserves designated by the Agricultural Preserve (-P) Combining District on either A-zoned lands or CA-zoned lands; timber resource land zoned to the Timber Production (TP) Zone District; and public parks, public/quasi-public recreation uses and open spaces, and biotic conservation areas zoned to the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PR) Zone District.

ARC-1.1.6 (LCP) Principal Permitted Uses on Commercial Agricultural (CA) Zoned Land. Maintain a Commercial Agricultural (CA) Zone District for application to commercial agricultural lands that are intended to be maintained exclusively for long-term commercial agricultural uses, including farming and other limited uses and activities necessary to support the agricultural economy. Allow principal permitted uses in the CA Zone District to include agricultural pursuits for the commercial cultivation of plant crops, including food, flower, and fiber crops; raising of animals including grazing and livestock production; small-scale, ancillary agricultural support uses such as the marketing of products grown on site and agri-tourism events that are compatible with the primary agricultural use; Employee Housing Act (EHA) farmworker housing projects,



and, outside the Coastal Zone only: Small Farmworker Housing Projects, Streamlined EHA Projects” one single family dwelling, and timber harvesting operations. While these uses are principally permitted, establishing the use may require other discretionary permits such as a Site Development Permit and/or Coastal Development Permit, pursuant to the SCCC.

See also policies ARC-1.4.9, ARC-1.4.10, and ARC-1.4.11 regarding farmworker housing.

ARC-1.1.7 (LCP) Conditional Uses on Commercial Agricultural (CA) Zoned Lands. All conditional uses will be subject to standards that specify siting and development criteria, including: size, location, and density. Allow conditional uses on CA-zoned lands as identified in the Zoning Ordinance based upon the following conditions:

- (1) The use, if a primary use of the property, is directly related to necessary uses that support the commercial agricultural economy of Santa Cruz County; or
- (2) The use, if an ancillary, incidental, or accessory use to a primary agricultural farming or other use of the parcel, or is ancillary when taking into consideration the collective, multiple parcels owned or leased by the applicant for commercial agriculture operations, is directly related to necessary uses that support the commercial agricultural economy of Santa Cruz County; or
- (3) The use consists of a Small Farmworker Housing Project, as provided in Policy ARC-1.4.9 and defined in SCCC 13.10, and is proposed within the Coastal Zone to provide housing for four or fewer farmworkers in a manner that is ancillary, incidental, or accessory to a primary agricultural use of the parcel; or
- (4) The use consists of an Affordable Farmworker Rental Housing (“ARFH”) Project pursuant to the Pajaro Valley Development Reserve established in Policy 1.4.9 below and is located outside of the Coastal Zone; or
- (5) The use consists of:
 - a. An interim public use that does not impair long term agricultural viability, or consists of a permanent public use that will result in the production of recycled wastewater solely for agricultural irrigation, or other community or public facility use allowed in the CA Zone District use chart, and that minimizes and offsets the loss of agricultural land resulting from facility construction; or
 - b. A landfill, materials transfer station, or similar facility, which the County has determined is necessary to address a compelling public health and safety or environmental concern and for which mitigation will be provided; and



- (6) The use is sited to avoid conflicts with primary agricultural activities on the property and in the area; and
- (7) The use is sited on the property to avoid and minimize removal of land from production and to preserve productive agricultural resource soils.

ARC-1.1.8 (LCP) Agricultural Land in State Parks. In processing State Parks and Recreation Department development plans and projects for park units within the Coastal Zone:

- (1) Retain the maximum amount of commercial agricultural land in agricultural production within each state park unit.
- (2) Require a site-specific justification demonstrating the overriding public access or recreational need, for removing agricultural lands from production or for not offering lands capable of farm production for lease; and favor public/quasi-public open space and recreation as use alternatives to active agricultural farming use.

See also Objective PPF-2.5: Support for Local Park Providers

ARC-1.1.9 (LCP) Coastal Access and Agricultural Uses in the Coastal Zone. Protect coastal access and access to public lands, while also protecting agricultural land uses in the Coastal Zone by minimizing coastal accessways through and adjacent to agricultural land to the extent feasible, clearly designating coastal accessways, providing physical buffering and separation between accessways and agricultural land, and other appropriate measures.

ARC-1.1.10 (LCP) Biomedical Livestock Operations. Allow biomedical livestock operations as a Conditional Use on agriculturally zoned land, subject to all other provisions of the General Plan/LCP, to the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance applicable to agriculturally zoned land, and to standards which assure protection of the public health, safety and welfare, while prohibiting biomedical laboratories on agriculturally zoned land.

ARC-1.1.11 Agriculturally Oriented Structures. Allow only agriculturally oriented structures or dwellings on Commercial Agricultural Land, as either principally permitted or conditionally permitted uses. The following are considered agriculturally oriented structures: one residence and one accessory dwelling unit; farmworker housing of all types allowed by the zoning district; structures associated with recycled wastewater (i.e., tertiary treatment) facilities in the immediate proximity of existing municipal waste water treatment plants for the production of recycled wastewater to be used solely for agricultural irrigation; and other community or public facility use allowed in the CA Zone District use chart that the County has determined to be of significant benefit to the public health, safety and welfare. Prohibit non-agricultural residential land use when in conflict with the fundamental objective of preserving agriculture.

ARC-1.1.12 Location of Agricultural Support Facilities. Agricultural support facilities, where permitted, should be located off of agricultural resource soils, or when this is not feasible, should

be sited to avoid and minimize loss of agricultural resource soils and impacts to farming operations.



Silva Ranch Barn in Corralitos
Photo Credit: Santa Cruz County

ARC-1.1.13 (LCP)(EJ) Utility District Expansion. Prohibit the expansion of County-controlled sewer district boundaries, and oppose the expansion (through annexation) of special district, or municipal, sewer or water boundaries, onto Types 1 and 3 Commercial Agricultural Land , except under the following exceptional circumstances related to public health and safety; and where sewer and water lines are located well below tillable soil depths and with sufficient construction and buffers from pipelines to ensure public health and safety; and where consistent with Built Environment policies BE-5.5.1 through BE-5.5.5 regarding the San Andreas Planning Area:

- (1) County sewer district boundaries may be expanded to serve existing development on commercial agricultural parcels with failing sewage disposal systems, where an enhanced onsite wastewater treatment system would be inadequate to serve the existing development, and where the expansion is limited in size to the minimum capacity necessary to serve the intended existing development so as to discourage additional urban development.
- (2) The County may support the expansion or annexation of water district boundaries to serve existing development on commercial agricultural parcels, on sites served by well water that does not meet minimum state drinking water standards, and where the



expansion is limited in size to the minimum capacity necessary to serve the intended existing development so as to discourage additional urban development.

ARC-1.1.14 (LCP) Water and Sewer Lines in the Coastal Zone. Allow the placement of water or sewer lines on commercial agricultural lands in the Coastal Zone where the expansion is limited in size to the minimum capacity necessary to serve the intended existing or new development so as to discourage additional urban development, and only under the following circumstances and with safeguards (see Policy ARC-1.1.15) to ensure that such facilities will not impair agricultural viability, either through increased assessment costs or degraded air and water quality, of nearby agricultural lands or result in subsequent conversions of commercial agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses due to the utility extensions:

- (1) Allow water transmission lines from the North Coast to the City of Santa Cruz and allow service lines to be placed on commercial agricultural lands for the purpose of irrigation and related agricultural uses, which may include uses such as limited agricultural employee/farmworker housing as may be approved by the County.
- (2) Allow sewer transmission lines to and from the City of Watsonville sewage treatment plant to cross commercial agricultural lands without service to the affected parcels, except where necessary to allow for agricultural employee/farmworker housing as may be approved by the County.
- (3) Allow water and sewer lines to be placed on commercial agricultural lands to serve existing development which has failing wells and/or sewage disposal systems.
- (4) Within the area of the county served by the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency, allow the placement of water lines on commercial agricultural land, if the purpose is to prevent saltwater intrusion, recharge groundwater basins, or provide tertiary treated wastewater for agricultural uses and purposes including irrigation and farmworker housing.

ARC-1.1.15 (LCP) Protection for Water and Sewer Lines in the Coastal Zone. For the purposes of policy 1.1.14, safeguards shall include, but not be limited to:

- (1) Prohibiting hookups to trunk lines through commercial agricultural lands, except where necessary to provide service in accordance with policies ARC-1.1.13 and 1.1.14;
- (2) Prohibiting the levying of assessment fees against commercial agricultural land for the construction of sewage transmission lines running through the commercial agricultural parcels, except that an appropriate service fee may be applied to an agricultural parcel



to which sewage treatment service has been provided in accordance with policy ARC-1-1-14.; and

- (3) Locating water and sewer lines on commercial agricultural land below the tillable soil depth, with buffers as may be advised by agricultural professionals.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-1.1a Maintain, and update as warranted, designations of commercially important agricultural lands on the adopted Agricultural Resources Map. (Responsibility: Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission, Community Development & Infrastructure Department (CDID), Board of Supervisors).

ARC-1.1b Maintain an Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission (APAC) for the purpose of providing the Board of Supervisors information on the County's agricultural industry, and evaluating matters referred to the Commission by the Board. Such duties shall include those specified in section 2.82 and Chapter 13.10 of the County Code, or policy/code interpretation matters as referred by the Planning Director. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, CDID).

ARC-1.1c Develop a program to publicize agri-tourism opportunities and regulations and facilitate compliance for existing and new agri-tourism operations. (Responsibility: CDID, County economic development efforts).

ARC-1.1d (LCP) Encourage the use of Agricultural Preserve contracts and agricultural conservation easements to maintain land in agricultural use for the long term or in perpetuity. Investigate options for making such contracts and easements more attractive, such as changes in allowable uses or tax benefits. (Responsibility: CDID, Planning Commission, Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission, Board of Supervisors).

ARC-1.1e Support ongoing agricultural support efforts of the Agricultural Commissioner, UC Ag Extension, Farm Bureau, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, Resource Conservation District, and similar entities. (Responsibility: CDID, Board of Supervisors).

ARC-1.1f Support tax assessments for agricultural land on the basis of land use. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, County Assessor).

ARC- 1.1g (LCP) Maintain, and enhance as feasible, the State Parks and Recreation Department policies toward agriculture in state parks in the Coastal Zone as follows: retain existing agricultural uses, including grazing within Coastal Zone park units, consistent with recreation uses and biotic production of existing environmentally sensitive habitats within the park. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, CDID).



ARC-1.1h (LCP) Maintain, and enhance as feasible, State Parks and Recreation Department and, California Department of General Services policies and agricultural lessees, which supports integrated pest management and experimental agricultural techniques on lands used for agriculture within State Parks as a means of enhancing the compatibility of agriculture with recreation in the state parks. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, County Agricultural Commissioner).

ARC 1.1i (LCP) Minimize the number of accessways through and adjacent to agricultural areas as feasible. Delineate the accessways adjacent to agricultural areas, so it is clear where the public is allowed. As needed, use such methods as low barriers, fences, thorny hedges, and paving. (Responsibility: Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission, CDID).

ARC-1.1j (LCP)(EJ) Require separation of agricultural fields and identified accessways by as much distance as practicable and further providing buffer zones, elevation separations, fencing, landscaping with natural vegetation where practicable. For agricultural land adjacent to coastal accessways, consider, where appropriate, provision of a gate at the road and a sign on the gate for pesticide spray warnings. (Responsibility: Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission, CDID).

ARC-1.1k (LCP) Encourage agricultural operators with facilities adjacent to high use recreational areas and shoreline accessways to erect barriers, consistent with LCP policies, designed to discourage public encroachment while ensuring that beach access is protected. (Responsibility: Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission, CDID).

ARC-1.1l (EJ) Support the use of properties in urban areas for urban agriculture, where conducted in a manner which does not adversely impact adjacent residential neighborhoods and development.

See also Policy BE-1.4.8: Urban Agriculture.



OBJECTIVE ARC-1.2 LAND DIVISIONS OF COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURAL LANDS

(LCP) To ensure that any land divisions of Commercial Agricultural Lands protect agricultural land values and allow for long-term agricultural operations on the property and in the area.

ARC-1.2.1 (LCP) Type 1, 2 and 3 Land Division Criteria. Allow land divisions of Agricultural Resource Lands only for exclusive agricultural purposes, where post-division parcels are of sufficient size to allow for economic farming and comply with the minimum parcel size requirements, and where the division is consistent with other provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and the Agricultural Land Preservation and Protection Ordinance for land divisions.

ARC-1.2.2 (LCP) Dividing Off Non-Farmable Land. Land divisions involving commercial agricultural lands for the purpose of using the new parcel(s) for non-agricultural uses or for the purpose of dividing off land not usable for agriculture shall not be permitted, except as provided in Policy ARC-1.2.4 and other provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and the Agricultural Land Preservation and Protection Ordinance of the County Code.

ARC-1.2.3 (LCP) Division Must Not Hamper Long-Term Agriculture. No proposed division of CA lands shall be approved except where it is shown that such division will not have an adverse effect on or discourage long-term commercial agricultural operations in the area.

ARC-1.2.4 (LCP) Dividing Off Non-Designated or Non-Viable Land for Public/Quasi-Public and Related Purposes. Commercial Agricultural parcels may divide off portions of the land that are determined to not be commercially viable from the portion that is zoned as Commercial Agriculture (CA), or is identified as Type 1, 2 or 3 Agricultural Resource Land, only when the division is for a public/quasi-public community purpose, will not adversely impact agricultural activities of the commercial agricultural area, and is consistent with the Agricultural Land Preservation and Protection Ordinance and Policy ARC-1.2.1.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-1.2a Maintain criteria in the County Code for land divisions on commercial agricultural land in order to protect the viability of agricultural lands and the agricultural economy in accordance with the above policies. (Responsibility: CDID, Planning Commission)

ARC-1.2b (LCP) Agricultural Preserve Contracts. Support and monitor compliance with Agricultural Preserve (Williamson Act) contracts and covenant enforceable by the County to protect the use of the commercial agricultural land for agricultural uses purposes. (Responsibility: Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission, CDID)



OBJECTIVE ARC-1.3 PREVENT THE CONVERSION OF COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURAL LAND

(LCP) To prevent the conversion of Commercial Agricultural Land that is agriculturally viable to non-agricultural uses, in order to protect agricultural lands and support the local agricultural economy.

ARC-1.3.1 (LCP) Conversion of Commercial Agricultural Lands. Consider conversion and/or development of commercial agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses only when all of the following criteria are met:

- (1) It is determined that the land is not viable for farming or for other allowable agriculture uses, and that it is not likely to become viable in the future (see policy ARC-1.3.2); and
- (2) Findings are made that new information has been presented to demonstrate that the conditions on the land in question do not meet the criteria for commercial agricultural land; and
- (3) The conversion of such land or use to non-agricultural uses will not impair the viability of, or create potential conflicts with, other commercial agricultural lands in the area; and
- (4) The conversion of such land is concentrated on the site or parcel to the minimum area necessary to achieve the objectives of the proposed conversion.

ARC-1.3.2 (LCP) Determining Agricultural Viability. Require a viability study to be conducted in conjunction with an application that proposes to convert commercial agricultural and prime agricultural lands to non-agricultural land uses, to include but not limited to an economic feasibility evaluation which contains at least:

- (1) An analysis of the gross revenue from the agricultural products grown in the area for the five years immediately preceding the date of filing the application.
- (2) An analysis of the operational expenses, excluding the cost of land, associated with the production of the agricultural products grown in the area for the five years immediately preceding the date of filing the application.
- (3) An identification of the geographic area used in the analyses. The area shall be of sufficient size to provide an accurate evaluation of the economic feasibility of agricultural uses for the land stated in the application*.

Recommendations regarding viability shall be made by the Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission based on evaluation of the viability study and the following criteria: parcel size, sizes of adjacent parcels, degree of non-agricultural development in the area, inclusion of the parcel



in utility assessment districts, soil capabilities and topography, water availability and quality, and proximity to other agricultural use.

**A viability study is not required for lands to be included in allowable public/quasi-public uses such as for a public park or biotic reserve, or land for use as setback levees for the Pajaro Levee project.*

ARC-1.3.3 (LCP) Conversion to Non-Agricultural Uses Near Urban Areas. Prohibit the conversion of commercial agricultural lands (changing the land use designation from Agriculture to non-agricultural uses) around the periphery of urban areas except where it can be demonstrated that the viability of existing commercial agricultural uses are already severely limited by conflicts with the urban uses, where the conversion of the lands would complete a logical and viable neighborhood and contribute to the establishment of a stable limit to urban development, and where the conversion of such lands would not impair the viability of other commercial agricultural lands in the area. Within the Sphere of Influence of the City of Watsonville, no conversion of commercial agricultural land is allowed which would adversely affect the City's General Plan affordable housing goals, unless determined to be of an overriding public benefit.

See also Implementation Strategy BE-1.1d.

Implementation Strategies

ARC- 1.3a (LCP) Support LAFCO policies to prohibit urbanization of commercial agricultural land within the Coastal Zone. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors)

ARC-1.3b (LCP) Oppose expansion of municipal boundaries which would include commercial agricultural land in the Coastal Zone within municipal boundaries. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors; LAFCO)



OBJECTIVE ARC-1.4 RESOLVING LAND USE CONFLICTS TO PROTECT COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURAL LAND

(LCP) To ensure the long-term viability of local commercial agriculture by minimizing land use and operational conflicts, carefully regulating residential uses, and resolving conflicts in favor of protecting commercial agricultural lands and supporting continued agricultural operations on commercial agricultural lands.

Policies

ARC-1.4.1 (LCP) Agricultural Buffers Required. In order to prevent or minimize potential land use conflicts, nonagricultural habitable uses such as residences (excluding farmworker housing), habitable accessory structures and non-agricultural commercial businesses that are located on land adjacent to a parcel in the Commercial Agriculture or Agricultural Preserve zone districts are required to provide a 200-foot buffer setback to the property line of the adjacent commercial agricultural parcel, unless an exception, as provided in ARC 1.4.2, is approved to reduce the extent of the agricultural buffer.

ARC-1.4.2 (LCP) Reduced Agricultural Buffer Setbacks. Any reduction in the 200-foot agricultural buffer setback may only occur as approved by the APAC or other County decision-maker, as established by the Agricultural Land Preservation and Protection ordinance.

ARC-1.4.3 (LCP) Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission Review. Require the following projects to be reviewed by the Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission for the purpose of recommending or approving an appropriate setback and/or buffer area for non-developable land adjacent to commercial agriculture lands, consistent with the Agriculture Preservation and Protection Ordinance:

- (1) New residential development within 200 feet of commercial agricultural lands.
- (2) Land divisions within 200 feet of commercial agricultural lands.
- (3) Density Credit will be given for the buffer area.

ARC-1.4.4 (LCP)(EJ) Windbreaks. Windbreaks designed to reduce or eliminate the hazard of pesticide drift or other use conflicts based on the prevailing wind direction, should be incorporated into buffers, as warranted and feasible.



ARC-1.4.5 (LCP) Siting to Minimize Conflicts. Structures shall be sited to minimize possible conflicts with productive commercial agricultural lands in the area. Where structures are located on commercial agricultural land, the structures shall be sited in such a manner to remove as little land as possible from production while still meeting supportable project objectives.

ARC-1.4.6 (LCP) Residential Single-Family Dwellings on Commercial Agricultural Lands Located within the Coastal Zone. Issue a residential building permit for one single-family dwelling pursuant to Policy ARC-1.4.12 in areas designated as commercial agricultural land and located within the Coastal Zone, only upon documentation that:

- (1) The residential use is ancillary to commercial agricultural use of the parcel (see criteria in Policy ARC-1.4.8) and residential development will be concentrated on the site or parcel to the minimum area necessary to avoid disturbance of prime agricultural land; or
- (2) The parcel is less than one net acre in size or has physical constraints other than size which preclude commercial agricultural use.

In either case, single-family residential development shall be allowed only if the use does not conflict with on-site or adjacent commercial agricultural activities and the building site has approved agricultural buffer setbacks.

ARC-1.4.7 Accessory Dwelling Units on Commercial Agricultural Land within the Coastal Zone. Allow one accessory dwelling unit (ADU) on parcels in the Commercial Agriculture (CA) Zone District as accessory to a single-family dwelling, subject to locational requirements and other requirements in the Zoning Ordinance.

ARC-1.4.8 (LCP) Residential Use Ancillary to Commercial Agriculture. Utilize the following criteria for determining when a single-family residential use would be ancillary to commercial agriculture:

Farmworker Housing Types

Employee Housing Act (EHA) Projects (Health and Safety Code 17000-17062.5):

Standard EHA projects:

- Housing for five or more farmworkers;
- Up to 36 beds in group quarters; or
- Up to 12 dwelling units/housing accommodations for farmworker households.

Streamlined EHA Projects:

- 100% affordable;
- Up to 36 dwelling units for farmworker households; and
- Applicants are non-profit housing providers.

Non-EHA projects:

Small Farmworker housing projects:

- One to four dwelling units for farmworker households; and
- Houses at least five farmworkers total.

Affordable Rental Farmworker Housing (ARFH) projects:

- Up to 200 total units in Pajaro Valley Development Reserve (non-Coastal Zone);
- 100% affordable;
- Multi-family rental housing for farmworker households; and
- Applicants are non-profit housing providers.



- (1) Documentation that the farmable portion of the subject parcel, exclusive of the building site, is large enough in itself to constitute a minimum economic farm unit for three crops – including within greenhouses – that are suited to the soils, topography, and climate of the area; or
- (2) Documentation that the owners have a long-term binding arrangement for commercial agricultural use of the remainder of the parcel by another party; and
- (3) Documentation that the home structure is sited in such a manner so as to minimize possible conflicts with commercial agriculture in the area, and to remove as little land as possible from production.

ARC-1.4.9 (EJ) Farmworker Housing Approval. Recognizing that farmworker housing is essential to the viability of local agriculture, and that there is a shortage of safe and affordable farmworker housing, allow standard Employee Housing Act (EHA) Projects, , including Streamlined EHA Projects (outside the Coastal Zone only), within the Agriculture and Commercial Agricultural zone districts as principal permitted agricultural uses, consistent with the EHA and the licensing and permit approval procedures specified in SCCC 13.10. Allow Small Farmworker Housing Projects as a principally permitted use on CA and A parcels outside the Coastal Zone, and as a conditional use on parcels within the Coastal Zone, subject to applicable permit approvals provided in the SCCC. A. Require Site Development Permit review for all farmworker housing projects to ensure appropriate siting, buffering, and other objective development standards and conditions of approval as applicable.

See also ARC-1.14.11: Pajaro Valley Development Reserve for Affordable Rental Farmworker Housing (ARFH) Projects.



Photo Credit: California Human Development: <https://californiahumandevlopment.org/farmworkers-fair-share/>



ARC-1.4.10 Farmworker Housing as an Agricultural Use. Farmworker housing projects, proposed on property within an agricultural zone district (CA and A) are considered agricultural land uses and are not subject to residential density determinations in the Rural Density Matrix. As an agricultural land use, farmworker housing proposed within agricultural zones is also not subject to provisions in the General Plan that limit residential density or require a minimum amount of land area per dwelling, including, policies within Objective BE-2.2: Rural Residential Designations, Policies ARC-4.2.6 (Land Division and Density Requirements in Water Supply Watersheds), ARC-4.5.2 (Land Division and Density Requirements in Primary Groundwater Recharge Areas), and ARC-4.5.9 (Development Densities With Poor Groundwater Availability). Except as indicated in the Zoning Ordinance for ARFH projects, which allow creation of a separate parcel for the project if needed to allow for ARFH project financing, any land division proposed in association with other types of farmworker housing (EHA or Small Projects), such as a parcel map, condominium or subdivision map, is subject to the minimum parcel size determinations in the Rural Density Matrix where applicable, to minimum parcel size requirements for the applicable zone district, and to minimum parcel size requirements in the above policies.

ARC-1.4.11 (EJ) Pajaro Valley Development Reserve for Affordable Rental Farmworker Housing (ARFH) Projects. For sites located outside of the Coastal Zone only, a Pajaro Valley Development Reserve has been mapped and established to allow development of no more than 200 total units of affordable, multi-family rental housing for farmworker households by qualified non-profit housing providers (“ARFH Projects”) within certain qualifying agricultural areas of unincorporated Pajaro Valley, as further set forth in SCCC 13.10. The ARFH Projects may be allowed as a conditional use on qualifying agricultural lands in CA or A zoning districts subject to CEQA review and approval by the Board of Supervisors. The Board may in the future take action to adopt policy and regulatory amendments to increase the reserve to more than 200 units, if determined to be warranted and in the broader interests of support for the agricultural economy. Each ARFH project is estimated to consist of approximately 40 to 60 multi-family dwelling units, therefore the initial 200-unit capacity of the Development Reserve is expected to be sufficient for four to five ARFH projects in total. ARFH projects are not EHA Projects.

ARC-1.4.12 (LCP) Agricultural Notification Recordation for Land Divisions. Continue to require an Agriculture Notification statement to be included on the Final Map or Parcel Map and in each parcel deed for land divisions within 200 feet of commercial agriculture land in accordance with the Subdivision Regulations ordinance. The purpose of the statement is to inform property owners about adjacent agricultural practices and advise them to be prepared to accept inconvenience or discomfort from normal operations.

ARC-1.4.13 (LCP) Agricultural Statement of Acknowledgment. In accordance with the Agricultural Land Preservation and Protection ordinance and the Subdivision Regulations ordinance, require the Recordation of a Statement of Acknowledgement for parcels within 200



feet of commercial agricultural land that informs property owners about adjacent agricultural practices and advises them to be prepared to accept inconvenience or discomfort from normal operations. Where a reduction of the 200-foot buffer is approved, such deed notice shall also state that the permanent provisions and maintenance of the specified buffer setback shall be required.

ARC-1.4.14 Density on Parcels Adjacent to Commercial Agricultural Lands. Maintain, in rural areas, (i.e., areas outside the Urban Services Line [USL] and Rural Services Line [RSL]), minimum densities of 2.5 net developable acres for newly created residential parcels which adjoin Commercial Agricultural Land except where the General Plan/ LCP Land Use Map provides for suburban densities, and

- (1) the new parcels constitute infill development within the mapped Suburban designation,
- (2) the resulting parcel sizes will be no smaller than the smallest existing conforming parcel within that designation which adjoins or is generally established nearby said agricultural lands, and
- (3) the Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission has recommended that parcel sizes smaller than 2.5 net developable acres will not conflict with or otherwise hamper or discourage long-term commercial agricultural uses of said agricultural lands.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-1.4a (LCP) Encourage the development and application of integrated pest management programs for Coastal Zone crops as one means of minimizing pesticide related land use conflicts. (Responsibility: Agricultural Commissioner, Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission, University Cooperative Extension)

ARC-1.4b (LCP)(EJ) Encourage wind shelter from pesticide drift or dust for existing housing in agricultural areas. (Responsibility: Agricultural Commissioner, Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission)

ARC-1.4c (EJ) Create, make public on the County website, and distribute bi-lingual materials to agricultural landowners, managers and lessees regarding opportunities and applicable development standards for farmworker housing, in order to support the development of farmworker housing in the community. (Responsibility: CDID)



OBJECTIVE ARC-1.5 SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

(LCP) To support sustainable agricultural and land management practices on commercial and non-commercial agricultural lands, including efficient use of water and energy, reduction of agricultural waste entering landfills, and adaption to climate change.

ARC-1.5.1 Energy Efficiency and Resource Protection. Encourage energy-efficient and resource protection agricultural practices such as organic farming, integrated pest management, biodynamic cultivation, and utilization of agricultural wastes and crop residues for fertilizer and on-site energy production.

ARC-1.5.2 (LCP) Composting Agricultural Wastes. Encourage the composting of agricultural wastes and the use of composts in agriculture production, as a means of reducing irrigation water demand and reducing solid waste disposal requirements. Allow the commercial composting of source separated organic material such as yard waste on agricultural lands with an approved development discretionary permit, including a coastal development permit in the Coastal Zone, subject to health and water quality requirements.

ARC-1.5.3 (LCP) Encourage Water Conservation. Encourage water districts, resource management agencies, and all agricultural users to implement water conservation measures, especially in areas subject to overdraft. Support the efforts of the Resource Conservation District to provide water conservation assistance and education to growers.

ARC-1.5.4 (LCP) Visual Mitigations for Large Agricultural Structures. Require large scale agricultural structures, such as greenhouses, packing sheds, and closed storage structures to minimize their visual impacts on designated scenic roads, beaches, or recreation facilities. Visual impacts shall be minimized by locating structures within or near existing groups of structures; using materials and colors which blend with the building cluster or the natural vegetative cover of the site; and/or using landscaping to screen or soften the appearance of structures. Do not approve new discretionary development permits that would allow location of such structures where they would block public ocean views. Shoreline facility structures shall be well screened.

See also Goal ARC-5: Visual Resources and Goal BE-4: Community Character and Design.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-1.5a (LCP) Ensure a continued sustainable supply of water for agricultural uses through conservation, protection and development of surface and groundwater, managed aquifer recharge, voluntary fallowing, and/or utilization of reclaimed wastewater. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, Water Purveyors, CDID, Environmental Health, Flood Control Districts, Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency [PV Water], Resource Conservation District)



ARC-1.5b (LCP) Establish a program coordinated with the state and Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program to manage irrigation runoff so that fertilizers and pesticides do not infiltrate watersheds, streams and groundwater basins, and to encourage the recycling of irrigation water for irrigation purposes. No irrigation runoff shall be allowed to run off sites. (Responsibility: Agricultural Commissioner, Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission, CDID, PV Water, University of California Cooperative Extension, Resource Conservation District)

See also Implementation Strategy ARC-3.1i.

ARC-1.5c Support efforts by agricultural organizations such as the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, U.C. Agricultural Extension, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and the Resource Conservation District to work with the agricultural sector to identify changes in farming practices that would support the sustainability of agriculture in an era of climate change. (Responsibility: CDID, Agricultural Commissioner)



OBJECTIVE ARC-1.6 NON-COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURAL LAND

(LCP) To encourage and provide for a broad range of agricultural, agricultural support, low-intensity residential, open space, and other compatible uses on the agricultural lands in the County which are not designated as commercially viable. These uses may include small-scale agriculture, single-family residences, community gardens, and agri-tourism uses, in order to maintain a diversity of low-intensity land uses, farm and related supportive uses, as well as open spaces that contribute to rural character.

Policies

ARC-1.6.1 (LCP) Uses Allowed on Non-Commercial Agricultural (A) Zoned Lands (Agricultural Land Use Designation with Agricultural Zone District). On lands designated Agricultural on the General Plan and LCP Land Use Designation Maps, but not Agricultural Resource on the Agricultural Resources Maps, allow the following range of residential, agricultural, agricultural support and open space/recreational uses.

- (1) The following uses are compatible with agricultural activity and adjacent residential uses and are principally permitted: One residence and accessory uses including one accessory dwelling unit; agricultural uses including EHA Projects; Small Farmworker Housing Projects and Streamlined EHA Projects outside the Coastal Zone; non-commercial agricultural uses such as family gardening; small scale commercial agricultural uses and agricultural support uses and service establishments, open space uses; recreational uses, public/quasi-public uses, and community facilities where these uses can be shown to not conflict with any adjacent agricultural activity, and other similar uses as provided in the Zoning Ordinance for the Agriculture (A) Zone District. While these uses are principally permitted, establishing the use may require other discretionary permits such as a Site Development Permit or a Coastal Development Permit.
- (2) The following discretionary uses are allowed on property designated Agriculture and not zoned “commercial agricultural”, where consistent with the Coastal Act within the Coastal Zone, and with development criteria provided in the SCCC to ensure that uses will be buffered and not conflict with adjacent commercial agricultural activity: residential dwelling groups; ARFH Projects outside the Coastal Zone and Small Farmworker Housing Projects inside the Coastal Zone; agricultural support facilities; agricultural service establishments; public/quasi-public, open space and recreational uses; and other appropriate uses; all subject to limitations and permit requirements as provided in the Zoning Ordinance for the Agriculture (A) Zone District.



ARC-1.6.2 (LCP) Non-Commercial Agricultural Lands in Urban Areas with Services. Within the Urban Services Line, allow organic agricultural farming on agriculturally productive land, where the activity does not adversely impact the adjacent residential neighborhood development.



Photo Credit: Skylar Jay Unsplash

ARC-1.6.3 (LCP) Non-Commercial Agricultural Land Division and Density Requirements in Rural Areas Located Outside of the Urban/Rural Service Line Boundaries. Encourage retention of large parcels and a minimum parcel size of 10-40 net developable acres, based on the Rural Density Matrix, for lands designated as Agriculture but which are not identified as commercial agricultural land, for properties located outside of the Urban/Rural Service Area boundaries. Utilize the following criteria for land divisions and residential development proposals on land designated Agriculture but not designated as commercial agricultural lands on the General Plan and LCP Resources and Constraints Maps, which are located outside of the USL/RSL:

- (1) Based on the Rural Density Matrix, the minimum parcel size shall be 10-40 net developable acres and the maximum residential density on an existing parcel of record shall not exceed one unit per 10-40 net developable acres.
- (2) Division or development of parcels may be allowed at densities of 2 ½-20 net developable acres under the following conditions*:



- a. The land has been determined to be non-viable for commercial agriculture, as determined by policies ARC-1.3.1 and ARC-1.3.2, and that continued or renewed agricultural use it not feasible;
 - b. Adequate buffering can be provided between any proposed non-agricultural use and adjacent commercial agricultural uses, as specified in the County Code;
 - c. All proposed building sites are within ½ mile of a through road that is maintained for public use; and applicable septic and fire code standards can be met; and
 - d. Less than 50 percent of the land area within ¼ mile of the subject property is zoned as commercial agricultural, and/or is designated Mountain Residential.
- * An exception to the minimum parcel size and conditions 1, 3 and 4 in subdivision (b) applies to the creation of a new parcel for an ARFH project where necessary to obtain financing for construction of the project. Such a parcel shall not be less than one acre in size, and shall not include a condominium map.

See also Table 5-1: Development Density and Intensity on Agricultural Lands.



GOAL ARC-2 SPECIALIZED AGRICULTURAL USES

Recognize greenhouses, aquaculture, wineries, and cannabis activities as specialized agricultural uses that are important to the Santa Cruz County agricultural economy.

OBJECTIVE ARC-2.1 AGRICULTURE WITHIN GREENHOUSES + OTHER STRUCTURES

(LCP) To allow greenhouses and specialized forms of agriculture within structures as a necessary part of agricultural operations, while minimizing impacts to agricultural lands and the environment.

Policies

ARC-2.1.1 (LCP) Agriculture Inside Structures. Recognize that certain forms of agriculture require production of crops, livestock or related products to occur inside of structures (e.g., greenhouses, insectories, aquaculture, winery buildings) and may be a necessary part of an agricultural operation. Require such uses to comply with applicable regulations that ensure appropriate management and mitigation of potential impacts.

ARC-2.1.2 (LCP) Runoff Retention. Require stormwater runoff from agricultural structures to be retained and percolated/infiltrated on site so that natural runoff rates are not exceeded, in compliance with applicable state and County design standards and criteria.

ARC-2.1.3 (LCP) Preserving Prime Soil. Prohibit removal of indigenous prime soil used as a growing medium for container plants which are sold intact.

ARC-2.1.4 (LCP) Limiting Impervious Surfaces. As feasible while also accommodating the needs of the agricultural enterprise, limit flooring or impervious surfacing within agricultural structure that could impair long-term soil capabilities to the minimum area needed for access, loading, and storage, prohibit the use of long-term sterilants under impervious surfacing, and require appropriate mitigation, management and restoration strategies that protect soil capabilities for the future to a reasonable extent.

ARC-2.1.5 (LCP) Maximum Energy Efficiency. Encourage the use of alternative energy sources such as passive and active solar design techniques to maximize energy efficiency.

ARC-2.1.6 (LCP) Ventilation. Encourage open ventilation where feasible, and where exhaust fans are necessary, the fans should be located away from non-agricultural uses, and should maximize energy efficiency.

ARC-2.1.7 (LCP) Water Conservation. Require irrigation systems to be water conserving, which reduces operational costs for the grower and conserves a valuable resource.



AQUACULTURE

OBJECTIVE ARC-2.2 AQUACULTURE

(LCP) To allow aquaculture as a specialized agricultural use subject to discretionary approval, and where sited and designed to protect the environment and coastal resources.

ARC-2.2.1 (LCP) Development Permit Required. Require new or expanded aquaculture operations to obtain a coastal development permit, and utilize the environmental review process, and the expertise of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in reviewing any such permit.

ARC-2.2.2 (LCP) Siting of Coastal Dependent Facilities. Require that aquaculture facilities to be sited on or near the shoreline be coastal-dependent.

ARC-2.2.3 (LCP) Appropriate Land Use Designations. Permit new and expanded aquaculture facilities as a conditional use in the Agricultural (AG), Mountain Residential (R-MT), and Service Commercial and Light Industrial (C-S) land use designations if consistent with LCP policies.

ARC-2.2.4 (LCP) Prevent Adverse Impacts to Sensitive Habitats. Require aquaculture facilities to be sited and designed to prevent adverse impacts on areas designated as sensitive habitats.

ARC-2.2.5 (LCP) Protection of Riparian Habitats. Require that with aquaculture facilities development, natural vegetation buffer areas be maintained to protect riparian habitats.

ARC-2.2.6 (LCP) Beach Access. Require adequate provision for lateral beach access as a condition of approval for aquaculture facilities consistent with the provisions of Government Code Sections 65909(a) and 66475.4(b).

ARC-2.2.7 (LCP) Protection of Private Property. Allow aquaculture facilities adjacent to high use recreational areas to erect barriers designed to discourage public encroachment and protect public safety, with the condition that lateral beach access is protected.

ARC-2.2.8 (LCP) Intake/Outfall Lines. Require that intake and outfall lines be placed underground unless underground placement is infeasible for the aquacultural activity or will result in geologic instability.

ARC-2.2.9 (LCP) Bonds Required. Require aquaculture operators to post a bond where aquaculture operations are to be located on a publicly used beach or shoreline area, or will affect sensitive habitat areas and/or public views. The bond shall be sufficient to ensure that all facilities constructed for an aquaculture operation which becomes inoperative, will be removed at the operator's expense.

ARC-2.2.10 (LCP) Support Aquaculture. Support the location of carefully designed aquaculture facilities in the Coastal Zone which can meet the LCP aquaculture policies.



WINERIES + VITICULTURE

OBJECTIVE ARC-2.3 WINERIES, VITICULTURE + CANNABIS

To recognize and provide for wineries, viticulture, and cannabis activities (subject to discretionary review where applicable and approval of permits, licenses, or other authorizations, which shall include any applicable environmental review pursuant to Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code) on lands which are properly suited for these specialized uses to maintain the optimum agricultural diversity. ARC-

ARC-2.3.1 Wineries, Breweries, and Distilleries as Discretionary Agricultural Uses. Recognize the growing and processing of wine grapes and hops, as agricultural activities, and recognize Santa Cruz County as an area uniquely suited for the growing of premium quality wine grapes. Allow wineries, breweries and distilleries for spirits as discretionary agricultural uses where sited and designed to protect agricultural lands and uses, and to minimize impacts to adjacent sites.

ARC-2.3.2 Winery Locations. Support the continued operation of wineries which include the growing and processing of grapes in existing locations throughout the County and on-site marketing activities where compatible with adjacent land uses. Ensure that new winery locations, particularly where processing facilities or visitor serving uses are proposed, are consistent with environmental protection policies and compatible with existing neighborhoods.

ARC-2.3.3 Vineyard Locations. Encourage the development of premium varietal wine grape vineyards on those lands within the County which, by virtue of their location and physical characteristics, are suited for grape production, especially within the Santa Cruz Mountains Viticultural Area which generally includes all lands above the 400-foot topographical contour. Ensure that vineyard locations are consistent with environmental protection policies and compatible with existing neighborhoods.

ARC-2.3.4 (LCP) Cannabis Industry and Agricultural Diversity. In order to ensure a diverse and balanced agricultural economy, and to support a diversity of crops, livestock and fiber on County agricultural lands, monitor the location and scale of the cannabis industry to ensure that cannabis activities do not lead to over-concentration in the cannabis sector of the County's agricultural economy. *See also Objective BE-3.6: Cannabis Industry.*

Implementation Strategies

ARC-2.3a Periodically review cannabis policies and regulations for consistency with state and federal laws and regulation.



ARC-2.3b Periodically review winery policies and regulations as appropriate to ensure that regulations support the winery industry while protecting adjacent residential land uses from significant adverse impacts.

ARC-2.3c Ensure that wineries, breweries, distilleries, and cannabis activities comply with the state and Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, Industrial General Permit, and Cannabis Cultivation Program.



Photo Credit: Rohit Tandon on Unsplash



NATURAL + CULTURAL RESOURCES

GOAL ARC-3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES PROTECTION

Protect and restore biological resources, including unique, rare, threatened, and endangered plant and animal species and their habitats, that warrant preservation because of their biological and scientific values, contributions to open space, and importance in maintaining a healthy environment and mitigating the effects of climate change.

OBJECTIVE ARC-3.1 BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

(LCP) To maintain the biological diversity of the County through an integrated program that includes open space acquisition and protection; identification and protection of plant habitat and wildlife corridors and habitats; protection and restoration of habitat for local, state, and federally protected species; careful regulation of low-intensity and resource compatible land uses in sensitive habitats; and mitigation for project impacts and resource extraction.

Policies

ARC-3.1.1 (LCP) Sensitive Habitat Designation. Designate the following areas as sensitive habitats: (1) areas shown on the County General Plan/LCP Resources and Constraints Maps and as incorporated into the County GIS system; (b) any undesignated areas that meet the criteria provided in Policy ARC-3.1.2 and that are identified through the biotic review process or other means; and (c) areas of biotic concern as shown on the Resources and Constraints Maps that contain concentrations of rare, endangered, threatened, or unique species.

ARC-3.1.2 (LCP) Definition of Sensitive Habitat. An area is defined as a sensitive habitat if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

- (1) Areas of special biological significance as identified by the State Water Resources Control Board.
- (2) Areas that provide habitat for locally unique biotic species/communities, including coastal scrub, maritime chaparral, native rhododendrons and associated Elkgrass, mapped grasslands in the coastal zone and sand parkland; and Special Forests including San Andreas Live Oak Woodlands, Valley Oak, Santa Cruz Cypress, indigenous Ponderosa Pine, indigenous Monterey Pine and ancient forests.
- (3) Areas adjacent to essential habitats of rare, endangered or threatened species as defined in (5) and (6) below.



- (4) Areas that provide habitat for Species of Special Concern as listed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in the Special Animals list, California Natural Diversity Database.
- (5) Areas that provide habitat for rare or endangered species that meet the definition of Section 15380 of the California Environmental Quality Act guidelines.
- (6) Areas that provide habitat for rare, endangered or threatened species as designated by the California Fish and Game Commission, United States Fish and Wildlife Service or California Native Plant Society.
- (7) Nearshore reefs, rocky intertidal areas, seacaves, islets, offshore rocks, kelp beds, marine mammal hauling grounds, sandy beaches, shorebird roosting, resting and nesting areas, cliff nesting areas and marine, wildlife or educational/research reserves.
- (8) Dune plant habitats.
- (9) All lakes, wetlands, estuaries, lagoons, streams and rivers.
- (10) Riparian corridors.

See also Appendix K: Sensitive Habitat Plant and Animal Species.



Schwan Lake at Twin Lakes Lake State Park. Photo Credit: Santa Cruz County

ARC-3.1.3 (LCP) Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA). Evaluate sites proposed for development within the coastal zone for the presence of ESHA, within the categories of habitat areas described in ARC-3.1.2(d) through (j), and other categories that may meet the Coastal Act Section 30107.5 definition of ESHA. Areas confirmed to be ESHA may only be developed for uses dependent on such resources in these habitats within the Coastal Zone, unless the other uses are:

- (1) Consistent with sensitive habitat protection policies and serve a specific purpose beneficial to the public;
- (2) Determined through environmental review that any adverse impacts on the resource will be completely mitigated and there is no feasible less-damaging alternative; and
- (3) Legally necessary to allow a reasonable economic use of the land, and there is no feasible less-damaging alternative.

See also Policy BE-5.1.6: Avoid Impacts to Environmentally Sensitive Coastal Habitats.



ARC-3.1.4 (LCP) Sensitive Habitat Protection Ordinance. Implement protection of sensitive habitats and of ESHA through SCCC Chapters 16.32 Sensitive Habitat Protection, 16.30 Riparian Corridor and Wetlands Protection, and 13.20 Coastal Zone Regulations. Any amendments to this ordinance shall require a finding that sensitive habitats shall be afforded equal or greater protection by the amended language.

ARC-3.1.5 (LCP) Land Division and Density Requirements in Sensitive Habitats. Allow land divisions in sensitive habitats only when the density and design of the proposed division are compatible with protection of these resources as determined by environmental assessment and applicable County land use, zoning, and Title 16 environmental regulatory standards and permit requirements.

- (1) Prohibit land division of native and mixed native grassland habitat mapped in the Coastal Zone unless the area to be divided has been determined by the county not to be sensitive habitat and is proposed for removal from the mapped habitat area by General Plan/LCP amendment. On parcels with existing mapped habitat that contains developable land outside those habitats, allow development at the lowest density of the land use designation and require that development be clustered and located outside the habitat areas. Allow one single-family dwelling unit per existing parcel of record. Where property owners upgrade habitat areas on their parcels outside of mapped areas through resource management activities, the prevailing General Plan densities shall not be reduced.
- (2) Special Forests – Prohibit land divisions within designated Special Forests unless the area to be divided is removed from the mapped special forests habitat area by General Plan-Local Coastal Plan amendment. On parcels with existing mapped special forest areas which contain developable land outside that habitat, allow development at the lowest density of the land use designation and require that development be clustered and located outside the habitat areas. Allow one single-family dwelling unit per existing parcel of record. Where property owners upgrade special forest areas on their parcels, outside of mapped areas, through resource management activities, the prevailing General Plan densities shall not be reduced.

ARC-3.1.6 (LCP) Development Within Sensitive Habitats. Sensitive habitats shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and any proposed development within or adjacent to these areas must maintain or enhance the functional capacity of the habitat. Reduce in scale, redesign, or, if no other alternative exists, deny any project that cannot sufficiently mitigate significant adverse impacts on sensitive habitats unless approval of a project is legally necessary to allow a reasonable use of the land.



Trillium in Redwood Forest. Photo credit: Santa Cruz County.

ARC-3.1.7 (LCP) Site Design and Use Regulations. Protect sensitive habitats against any significant disruption or degradation of habitat values in accordance with the Sensitive Habitat Protection ordinance. Utilize the following site design and use regulations on parcels containing these resources, excluding existing agricultural operations:

- (1) Structures, when allowed, shall be placed as far from the habitat as feasible.
- (2) Delineate development envelopes to specify location of development in minor land divisions and subdivisions.
- (3) Consider use of conservation or open space easements, deed restrictions, Conditions of Approval or equivalent measures to protect that portion of a sensitive habitat on a project parcel which is undisturbed by a proposed development activity or to protect sensitive habitats on adjacent parcels.
- (4) Limit or restrict outdoor access of domestic animals where they threaten sensitive habitats.



- (5) Limit removal of native vegetation to the minimum amount necessary for structures, landscaping, driveways, septic systems and gardens.
- (6) Maintain regulations and impose development permit conditions of approval as warranted, to limit landscaping with invasive or exotic species and to strongly encourage or require the use of characteristic native species, as well as consistency with the Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance.

ARC-3.1.8 (LCP)(EJ) Chemicals Within Sensitive Habitats. Maintain regulations that restrict the use of insecticides, herbicides, or any toxic chemical substance in sensitive habitats, except when the habitat itself is threatened, an emergency has been declared, when a substantial risk to public health and safety exists, including maintenance for flood control by the CDID, or when such use is authorized pursuant to a permit issued by the Agricultural Commissioner. The responsible use of herbicides to eradicate invasive, non-native plants can be an appropriate management action in Sensitive Habitats.

ARC-3.1.9 (LCP) Biotic Assessments. Within the following areas, require a biotic assessment as part of normal project review to determine whether a full biotic report should be prepared by a qualified biologist, and require biotic permits as part of application reviews as may be needed:

- (1) Areas of biotic concern, mapped;
- (2) Sensitive habitats, mapped and unmapped; and
- (3) For sites within the coastal zone, for the presence of ESHA.

ARC-3.1.10 (LCP) Species Protection. Recognize that habitat protection is only one aspect of maintaining biodiversity and that certain wildlife species, such as migratory birds, may not utilize specific habitats. Require protection of these rare, endangered, and threatened species and continue to update policies as new information becomes available.

ARC-3.1.11 (LCP) Santa Cruz Long-Toed Salamander Habitat. Support state and federal preservation of the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander habitat in various state parks and preserves.



Juvenile Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander, Ellicott Slough. Photo Credit: Fish and Wildlife Service: [Ellicott Slough National Wildlife Refuge - Home of the Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander - Ellicott Slough - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service \(fws.gov\)](https://www.fws.gov)

ARC-3.1.12 (LCP) Steelhead and Coho Salmon Conservation Strategy. Implement the policies and programs identified in the 2013 Steelhead and Coho Salmon Conservation Strategy and updates to this strategy to support the recovery of steelhead and coho salmon in Santa Cruz County. Priority actions include addressing streamflow, habitat complexity, sediment reduction, and migration passage.

ARC-3.1.13 (LCP) Wildlife Resources Beyond Sensitive Habitats. For areas which may not meet the definition of sensitive habitat contained in policy ARC-3.1.2, yet contain valuable wildlife resources (such as migration corridors or exceptional species diversity), protect these wildlife habitat values and species using the techniques outlined in policies ARC-3.1.5 and 3.1.7, or prioritize for open space designation, and use other mitigation measures or strategies identified through the environmental review process or other conservation plans and programs of the County, State and non-profit agencies.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-3.1a (LCP) Maintain, as Appendix K, a current plant and animal habitats and species list as a reference for the General Plan/LCP. Sources for species classification include, but are not limited to: State Water Resources Control Board, Section 15380 of the California Environmental Quality Act, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Special Animals List, California Natural Diversity Database, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration [NOAA] Fisheries, and California Native Plant Society. Periodically review the list to ensure its accuracy. (Responsibility: CDID)



ARC-3.1b (LCP) Work with California Department of Fish and Wildlife, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and other relevant agencies to ensure adequate protection of biological resources in the County. (Responsibility: Planning Department, CDID, Board of Supervisors)



Big Leaf Maple in Redwood Forest

ARC-3.1c (LCP) Determine the boundaries of sensitive habitats as defined in ARC-3.1.2 based on field mapping of parcel specific conditions, and update the mapping of sensitive habitats in the County GIS system to reflect field mapping and current data. (Responsibility: CDID, Information Services, Environmental Health)

ARC-3.1d (LCP) Periodically update County maps and the County GIS system when biotic and environmental reports are accepted by the County on individual parcels, areas or development projects, or when updated confirmed biotic information is received from any source. (Responsibility: CDID, Information Services)

ARC-3.1e (LCP) Identify and seek funding sources to acquire special sensitive habitats. (Responsibility: CDID, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-3.1f (LCP) Maintain a Sensitive Habitat Protection ordinance which describes habitat types, permitted and conditional uses within the habitats, and development standards. Review and



update the ordinance to be consistent with policies and terminology in the General Plan/LCP and clarify permit and approval requirements for development within or adjacent to sensitive habitats. Any amendments to this ordinance shall require a finding that sensitive habitats shall be afforded equal or greater protection by the amended language. (Responsibility: CDID, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-3.1g Maintain a program to coordinate and implement priority actions from the Steelhead and Coho Salmon Conservation Strategy. (Responsibility: Environmental Health; CDID; Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services Department (Parks Department); Agricultural Commissioner; Board of Supervisors)

ARC-3.1h (LCP) Develop a program to enforce performance standards protecting rare, endangered, threatened, and unique species. Develop Memoranda of Understanding and similar agreements with state and federal agencies to assist with enforcement of performance standards. (Responsibility: CDID, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-3.1i (LCP) Evaluate those sensitive habitats that are affected by agricultural activities to determine their biological importance relative to the importance of the agricultural use and develop programs to resolve conflicts between resource use and protection, including seeking grant funds to address the conflicts and enhance resources. (Responsibility: CDID, Agricultural Commissioner)

ARC-3.1j Work with state and federal natural resources agencies to standardize environmentally appropriate fuel reduction practices in sensitive habitats, with the goal of reducing fire risk while protecting sensitive habitats. (Responsibility: CDID, Fire Agencies, California Department of Fish and Wildlife)

See also Chapter 6: Public Safety.

ARC-3.1k Prepare a countywide grassland management plan. Develop education programs, grazing management plans, or other solutions where there is evidence of over-grazing in cooperation with Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County. Develop prescribed burning, grazing, or other measures to preserve grassland, except where an area is being replanted with native trees and a timber management plan has been approved. (Responsibility: CDID, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-3.1l Continue to ensure survival of the endangered Santa Cruz long-toed salamander (SCLTS) through County programs including:

- (1) Maintain salamander protection development criteria in the Sensitive Habitat Protection ordinance and seek funding to improve protection efforts.



- (2) Support state and federal efforts for habitat preservation at Valencia Lagoon, Ellicott Pond, Seascape Uplands, or other known habitat locations, and habitat locations that may be discovered in the future through information obtained in environmental review or other professionally recognized sources. Support state and federal efforts to designate Valencia Lagoon and Ellicott Pond as park preserves.
- (3) Seek funding for acquisition of lots in order to protect the salamander habitat, and for development of Habitat Conservation Plans for all known SCLTS habitats.
- (4) Establish a procedure whereby, upon receiving a development application for an undeveloped parcel within the SCLTS essential habitat, the County shall notify the California Coastal Commission, Coastal Conservancy, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other interested organizations. The County or other agency shall have six months from the date of the application completeness determination to decide whether to acquire the parcel. If the County and other agencies decide not to acquire the parcel, and if development potential in the essential habitat has not been otherwise eliminated and development cannot be accommodated on the parcel outside the essential habitat, development may proceed consistent with the standards for the area adjacent to the salamander essential habitat and other LCP policies. A security deposit shall be required to ensure compliance with those standards.
- (5) Delineate SCLTS habitat on County maps and utilize a salamander habitat combining zone district to identify parcels which contain such habitat.
- (6) Establish inter-agency communication between Planning, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife to determine the success of the current policies in protecting the SCLTS. If current policies are inadequate, implement additional actions as recommended by inter-agency consultation.
- (7) Prohibit reduction in parcel size on those parcels in the Deer Park Villas area with a Salamander Protection (SP) Combining District. Cooperate with Fish and Game Commission efforts to create a wildlife refuge in this area.

(Responsibility: CDID, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Fish and Game Commission, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-3.1m Establish an education and monitoring program cooperatively with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and other interested agencies to prevent substantial lot disturbance and removal of native vegetation on lots which are currently built out in or adjacent to essential salamander habitat. (Responsibility: CDID)

ARC-3.1n Consider developing specific criteria for development and landscaping on sites within or adjacent to ESHA to control stormwater and dry-weather runoff in order to protect especially sensitive and important habitats. (Responsibility: CDID)



ARC-3.1o Evaluate the current program for monitoring projects in sensitive habitats for compliance with project conditions and update as needed. (Responsibility: Environmental Health, CDID)

ARC-3.1p Periodically review policies protecting biological resources, and update where necessary to ensure policies are consistent with current scientific knowledge, as well as best practices to facilitate species adaptation to climate change. Consider adoption of mitigation ratios where restoration or replacement of species or habitats is required. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health)



Shooting Stars in Grassland habitat (left) and Columbine in Redwood Forest habitat

ARC-3.1q Support private and non-profit organizations' efforts to promote community awareness of Santa Cruz County's rich biological systems and their vulnerability to climate change, as well as their role in mitigating climate change. Develop approaches to track indicators of the effects of climate change on important biological systems. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health)

OBJECTIVE ARC-3.2 SENSITIVE HABITAT RESTORATION

To restore the quality and extent of damaged sensitive habitats, including the restoration of native vegetation, natural drainage, and water quality, in order to enhance functional capacity, productivity, and biological diversity.



Policies

ARC-3.2.1 (LCP) Habitat Restoration with Development Approval. Require as mitigation and/or condition of development approval, restoration of any area of the subject property which is an identified degraded sensitive habitat, with the magnitude of required restoration to be proportional and commensurate with the scope of the project. -Restoration and monitoring plans must ensure sufficient detail to guide efforts through the duration of the restoration period and include success criteria. Project conditions may include erosion control measures, removal of non-native or invasive species, planting with characteristic native species, diversion of polluting run-off, water impoundment, and other appropriate means. The objective of habitat restoration activities shall be to enhance the functional capacity and biological productivity of the habitat(s) and whenever feasible, to restore them to conditions which can be sustained by natural occurrences, such as tidal flushing of lagoons.

ARC-3.2.2 (LCP) Habitats Damaged from Code Violations. In all cases where a sensitive habitat has been damaged as a result of a code violation, require that restoration of damaged areas be undertaken in compliance with all necessary permits and that the size of the restored area be in compliance with California Department of Fish and Wildlife requirements. Such restoration shall include a detailed restoration plan with monitoring over time to ensure the success of the restoration effort.

ARC-3.2.3 (LCP) Habitats Damaged Prior to Sensitive Habitat Ordinance. In cases where a sensitive habitat has been damaged from development occurring prior to the Sensitive Habitat Ordinance, provide technical guidance materials and work cooperatively with private property owners to enhance the quality and extent of the sensitive habitat. Encourage the Land Trust, Resource Conservation District or similar entity to establish a micro-grant program available to owners to carry out voluntary restoration work on their properties.

ARC-3.2.4 (LCP) Removal of Invasive Plant Species. Encourage the removal of invasive species and their replacement with characteristic native plants, except where such invasive species provide significant habitat value and where removal of such species would severely degrade the existing habitat. In such cases, develop long-term plans for gradual conversion to native species providing equal or better habitat values. Support the responsible use of herbicides to assist with the removal of invasive plant species.

ARC-3.2.5 (LCP) Priorities for Restoration Funding. Use the following criteria for establishing funding priorities among restoration projects:

- (1) Biological significance of the habitat, including productivity, diversity, uniqueness of area, presence of rare, endangered, or unique species, or regional importance (e.g., waterfowl resting areas, etc.).



- (2) Degree of endangerment from development or other activities, and vulnerability to overuse or misuse.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-3.2a (LCP) Identify key restoration sites and seek funding to supplement private restoration. (Responsibility: Planning Department, Environmental Health, Parks Department, CDID; Partner Agencies)

ARC-3.2b Encourage enhancement and restoration of sensitive habitats on private lands by providing technical assistance and available resource information to property owners. Work to develop incentives for habitat restoration. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health, Board of Supervisors, Resource Conservation District and Partner Agencies)

ARC-3.2c Support implementation of Riparian Enhancement efforts of the County to work cooperatively with private property owners to improve the extent and quality of riparian habitat along perennial streams to benefit fish and wildlife, water quality and quantity/flow, and stream habitat. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health, Board of Supervisors, Resource Conservation District and Partner Agencies.)

ARC-3.2d Cooperate with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), Monterey County, San Benito County, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife in the implementation of the Pajaro River Corridor Management Plan and Lagoon Management Plan for the lower Pajaro River including specific habitat restoration projects for the Pajaro River and tributaries. (Responsibility: Fish and Game Commission, CDID, Environmental Health)

ARC-3.2e Support the City of Watsonville in its efforts to maintain and implement a comprehensive management plan for South County sloughs and wetlands. (Responsibility: CDID, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-3.2f Develop a coordinated review procedure and criteria that protect sensitive habitats as well as meet standards for fire protection. (Responsibility: Fire Agencies, County Fire Marshal, California Department of Forestry, CDID)

ARC-3.2g Support the efforts of the Resource Conservation District, Land Trust, Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, the Sempervirens Fund, and similar partner entities to attract private capital donations for purposes of restoration and stewardship of natural resources including vegetation, wildlife, water and soil resources. Consider assembling an ecological enhancement group to include: land owners, professionals in the fields of planning, natural resources and development for the purpose of creating a resource protection incentives program. Consider development



program recommendations that the County could carry out, such as a system of density bonuses, cost savings, or other resource protection incentives based upon:

- (1) The quality and extent of preservation and/or restoration of natural habitat; and
- (2) Permanent measures for ongoing stewardship of natural resources.

(Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, CDID, Environmental Health, Resource Conservation District, Regional Transportation Commission, California Native Plant Society)



*Aptos Creek
Photo Credit: Santa
Cruz County*



OBJECTIVE ARC-3.3 RIPARIAN CORRIDORS + WETLANDS

(LCP) To preserve, protect, and restore all riparian corridors and wetlands for the protection of wildlife and aquatic habitat, water quality, erosion control, open space, aesthetic and recreational values and the conveyance and storage of flood waters.

Policies

ARC-3.3.1 (LCP) Designation of Riparian Corridors and Wetlands. Designate and define the following areas as Riparian Corridors:

- (1) 50' from the top of a distinct channel or physical evidence of high-water mark of a perennial stream;
- (2) 30' from the top of a distinct channel or physical evidence of high water mark of an intermittent stream as designated on the General Plan maps and through field inspection of undesignated intermittent and ephemeral streams;
- (3) 100' of the high water mark of a lake, wetland, estuary, lagoon, or natural body of standing water;
- (4) The landward limit of a riparian woodland plant community (water-dependent woodland areas); and
- (5) Wooded arroyos within urban areas.

Designate and define the following areas as Wetlands:

Transitional areas between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or the land is covered by shallow water periodically or permanently. Examples of wetlands are saltwater marshes, freshwater marshes, open or closed brackish water marshes, swamps mudflats, and fens. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other federal agencies utilize a "unified methodology" which defines wetlands as "those areas meeting certain criteria for hydrology, vegetation, and soils." *See also Figure 5-4.*

ARC-3.3.2 (LCP) Riparian Corridor and Wetland Protection Ordinance. Implement the protection of riparian corridors and wetlands through the Riparian Corridor and Wetland Protection ordinance to ensure no net loss and to encourage restoration and a net increase of riparian corridors and riparian wetlands. Any amendments to this ordinance shall require a finding that riparian corridors and wetlands shall be afforded equal or greater protection by the amended language.

ARC-3.3.3 (LCP) Activities Within Riparian Corridors and Wetlands. Development activities, land alteration, and vegetation disturbance within riparian corridors and wetlands and required buffers shall be prohibited unless an exception permit is granted per the Riparian Corridor and



Wetlands Protection ordinance. As a condition of a riparian exception permit, require evidence of compliance with applicable permit or review requirements of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other federal or state agencies that may have regulatory authority over activities within riparian corridors and wetlands.

ARC-3.3.4 (LCP) Riparian Corridor Construction Buffer Setback at Arroyos. Require a 10-foot construction buffer setback from riparian arroyo corridors in addition to the specified distances found in the definition of riparian corridor, due to slope and runoff considerations. Allow reductions to the buffer setback only upon approval of a riparian exception permit.

ARC-3.3.5 (LCP) Setbacks from Wetlands. Prohibit development within the 100-foot riparian corridor of all wetlands. Permit exceptions to this setback only where consistent with the Riparian Corridor and Wetlands Protection ordinance, and in all cases, maximize distance between proposed structures and wetlands as feasible and mitigated. Require measures to prevent water quality degradation from adjacent land uses, as outlined in Goal ARC-4: Water Resources.

ARC-3.3.6 (LCP) Compatible Uses with Riparian Corridors. Allow compatible uses in and adjacent to riparian corridors that do not impair or degrade the riparian plant and animal systems, or water supply values, such as non-motorized recreation and pedestrian trails, parks, interpretive facilities and fishing facilities. Allow development in these areas only in conjunction with approval of a riparian exception permit. Where the riparian corridor is already developed, support enhancement of riparian corridors with native plantings that increase and/or enhance the buffer qualities adjacent to streams.

ARC-3.3.7 Stream Wood Retention. Promote the retention of large woody material or stream wood in County streams to provide multiple benefits to riparian and aquatic habitats, including sorting sediment, protecting stream banks and channel stability, and providing pools and refuges.

ARC-3.3.8 (LCP) Environmental Review for Riparian Corridor and Wetland Protection. Require environmental review of all proposed development projects affecting riparian corridors or wetlands and preparation of a Biotic Report for projects that, as proposed, may have a significant effect on the corridors or wetlands. Compliance with County regulations is generally considered to prevent the possibility of significant environmental impacts, and any biotic and/or riparian exception permit process may involve project specifications and/or conditions that would also prevent the possibility of significant environmental impacts.

ARC-3.3.9 (LCP) Management Plans for Wetland Protection. Require development in or adjacent to wetlands to incorporate the recommendations of a management plan that evaluates: migratory waterfowl use from December 1 to April 30, native fish migration, compatibility of agricultural uses and biotic and water quality protection, maintenance of biologic productivity and



diversity, flood protection and hydrologic value, and the permanent protection of adjoining uplands.

ARC-3.3.10 (LCP) Development in Wetland Drainage Basins. Require development projects in wetland drainage basins to include drainage facilities or Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will maintain surface runoff patterns and water quality, unless a wetland management plan specifies otherwise, and will minimize erosion, sedimentation, and introduction of pollutants.

ARC-3.3.11 (LCP) Breaching of Lagoon, River, Stream, or Creek Sandbars. Do not permit breaching of lagoon sandbars unless the breaching is consistent with an approved management plan and applicable permits for that wetland, river, stream, or creek system.

Implementation Strategies

See also Objective ARC-3.1: Biological Diversity and Objective ARC-4.4: Surface Water Quality.)

ARC-3.3a (LCP) Maintain and enforce a Riparian and Wetland Protection ordinance to protect riparian corridors, wetlands, lagoons and inland lakes by avoiding to the greatest extent allowed by law development within these areas. Maintain a resource management program to fund protection and restoration of these areas, which would serve to increase riparian corridor and wetland acreage over the long-term. (Responsibility: CDID, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-3.3b Establish a program in cooperation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to identify and re-vegetate disturbed areas in riparian corridors with appropriate native species. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health)

ARC-3.3c Support a Riparian Enhancement Program to increase the quality and quantity of riparian habitat on private property, especially in established residential neighborhoods. (CDID, Environmental Health, Resource Conservation District)

ARC-3.3d Continue implementation of the Stream Wood Program with the goal of increasing the amount of large woody material in streams to benefit steelhead, coho salmon and other aquatic species. The County will assist with the evaluation and modification of large woody material when it threatens life, property, infrastructure or habitat. (Responsibility: Environmental Health, CDID)

ARC-3.3e (LCP) Cooperate with the City of Santa Cruz and the Harbor District in the evaluation of the Arana Creek Marsh and evaluate other appropriate marsh areas for rare and endangered plants and devise a Biotic Management Plan for their preservation. Investigate ways to return the marshes to their natural state. (Responsibility: CDID, Port Commission)



ARC-3.3f (LCP) In conjunction with the City of Watsonville and the State Water Resources Control Board, develop and implement a coordinated resource management plan for the Watsonville Slough system and surrounding wetlands to improve water quality, flood protection and hydrologic value, and biological habitat. (Responsibility: Department of Public Works, City of Watsonville, and/or other appropriate agencies)

ARC-3.3g (LCP) Follow the guidelines in the 1949 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Operations and Maintenance Plan as well as the 2002 Final Environmental Impact Report for the Pajaro River and Salsipuedes and Corralitos Creeks Management and Restoration Plan (or subsequent updates to these plans) to improve environmental quality of the riparian corridor and to reduce the risk of flooding to Watsonville and surrounding areas. (Responsibility: Pajaro River Task Force, CDID, Flood Control Zone 7, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, City of Watsonville, Board of Supervisors, Monterey County, and/or other appropriate agencies)

ARC-3.3h Review site-specific recommendations in the Urban Watersheds Study in connection with the design of drainage and other improvements and the review of development projects in or adjacent to riparian corridors within the Urban Services Line. Incorporate suggested restoration and enhancement measures where practical. Develop long-term plans to implement other suggested measures. (Responsibility: Planning Department, CDID, and/or other appropriate agencies)

ARC-3.3i (LCP) Prepare a map/County GIS layer of all wetlands and wetland drainage basins in the County, consistent with current definitions of a wetland in the California Coastal Act and California Code of Regulations. Seek funding and support for development of management plans for wetlands from state and federal agencies and explore the possibility of establishing a development-funded wetland management program to prepare wetland management plans. (Responsibility: CDID, Information Services)

ARC-3.3.j Prepare a map/County GIS layer of all riparian corridors in the County, including historic corridors that have been piped. Seek funding and support for development of management plans for riparian corridors from state and federal agencies and explore the possibility of establishing a development-funded riparian corridor restoration program to prepare management and restoration/daylighting plans. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health, Information Services)

ARC-3.3k Consider the creation of a mitigation bank program or participation in a similar regional program, along with the needed criteria, to provide a mechanism to offset impacts to riparian corridors and wetlands in those cases where the environmental benefit of a regional or community approach is greater than that of on-site mitigation. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health)



OBJECTIVE ARC-3.4 AQUATIC + MARINE HABITATS

(LCP) To identify, preserve, and restore aquatic and marine habitats; to maximize scientific research and education that emphasizes comprehensive and coordinated management consistent with the mission of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary; and to facilitate multiple-use and recreation opportunities compatible with resource protection.

Policies

ARC-3.4.1 (LCP) Support the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Support the mission of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to facilitate the long-term management, protection, understanding, and awareness of its resources and qualities.

ARC-3.4.2 (LCP) Protecting Shorebird Nesting Sites. Discourage all activities within 100 feet of shorebird nesting sites during mating season (March-July). Prohibit dogs from beaches with nesting sites.

ARC-3.4.3 (LCP) Davenport Pier, Rock Cliffs, and Outcrops. Maintain low-intensity uses, such as nature observation and educational instruction, on and adjacent to the Davenport Pier, Rock Cliffs and rock outcrops.

ARC-3.4.4 (LCP) Coastal Dunes and Strand. Prohibit off-road vehicle use in the coastal dunes and strand and discourage other uses with the potential to degrade dune habitat. Where trails through dunes are permitted, utilize wooden boardwalks or other techniques to minimize damage to dune habitat.

ARC-3.4.5 Anadromous Fish Streams. Require new water diversions, dams, and reservoirs that are constructed on anadromous fish streams to be designed to protect fish populations and to provide adequate flow levels for successful fish production.

ARC-3.4.6 (LCP) Marine Mammal Hauling Grounds. Prevent access to the bluff top observation points likely to cause disturbance to animals. Discourage access to immediately adjacent beach areas where necessary to minimize disturbance by roping off sensitive areas and posting explanatory signs along fence lines and restricted paths. Fence where necessary to prevent marine mammals from crossing Highway 1.

See also Implementation Strategy PPF-2.6d.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-3.4a (LCP) Support the designation of a Monterey Bay State Seashore. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors)



ARC-3.4b (LCP) Encourage creation of wildlife sanctuaries where appropriate; and pursue financing for their acquisition, including state and federal grants and private donations. (Responsibility: CDID; Parks Department)

ARC-3.4c (LCP) Discourage feeding of waterfowl in coastal lagoons through signage and public displays and develop a program to inform the public about the adverse effects of overfeeding waterfowl. (Responsibility: State Parks; Parks Department)

ARC-3.4d (LCP) Support efforts to prevent disturbance to shorebird resting and roosting sites by roping off sensitive areas, posting explanatory signs, and other means. (Responsibility: State Parks, California Department of Fish and Wildlife)



California Sea Otter
Photo Credit: <https://www.elkhornslough.org/story/>

ARC-3.4e (LCP) Close or improve trails across dunes, encourage use of alternate trails. Stabilize and restore dune environments where disturbed. (Responsibility: State Parks; Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services)

See also *GOAL AM-4.0: Access to Recreational Opportunities*.

ARC-3.4f Enforce leash laws to the fullest extent possible. (Responsibility: law enforcement agencies, Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services)



ARC-3.4g Manage anadromous sport fishing so that overall productivity of the native fish population is enhanced and restored; discourage introduction of non-native species into streams. (Responsibility: California Department of Fish and Wildlife Department, California Fish and Game Commission)

ARC-3.4h (LCP) Identify and restore aquatic and marine habitats that have been damaged due to human activities. (Responsibility: California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Board of Supervisors).



*Sea Lions, Santa Cruz Wharf
Photo Credit: Santa Cruz County*



GOAL ARC-4 WATER RESOURCES

Protect and manage water resources in the County in order to preserve the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater supplies and protect natural habitats for current and future generations.

See also Goal PPF-4.0: Public Infrastructure for water supply, wastewater treatment and disposal, and drainage.

OBJECTIVE ARC-4.1 MONTEREY BAY + COASTAL WATER QUALITY

(LCP) To improve the water quality of Monterey Bay and other Santa Cruz County coastal waters by supporting and/or requiring the best management practices for the control and treatment of urban run-off and wastewater discharges, as well as plastic and litter pollution, in order to maintain local, state and national water quality standards, protect County residents from health hazards of water pollution, protect the County's sensitive marine habitats.

Policies

ARC-4.1.1 (LCP) Protecting the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary from Adverse Impacts. Prohibit activities that could adversely impact sensitive habitats of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, including the discharge of wastes, plastics, litter, and hazardous materials. The main sources of concern are wastewater discharge, urban runoff, toxic agricultural drainage water, including that originating outside of Santa Cruz County, and the accidental release of oil or other hazardous material from coastal tanker traffic.

ARC-4.1.2 (LCP) Definition of Wastewater. Identify "wastewater" as all domestic and municipal sewage and other potentially toxic and/or hazardous materials or effluent resulting from industrial processes or other sources including brine from desalinization plants. Wastewater includes petrochemical compounds, "drilling mud" and associated potentially hazardous substances which may be directly or indirectly discharged into Monterey Bay or other coastal waters of Santa Cruz County as a result of exploratory or other oil drilling. Wastewater should not include storm water runoff, unless so determined by the California State Water Resources Control Board and the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

ARC-4.1.3 (LCP) Wastewater Discharges into Coastal Waters. Require a review of any new and/or increased wastewater discharge into the Monterey Bay or other coastal waters to address the potential marine water quality impacts and determine necessary mitigations.

ARC-4.1.4 (LCP) Disclosure of Chemical and Biological Characteristics of Wastewater. Require full disclosure of the projected chemical and biological characteristics of all proposed new and/or expansion of wastewater discharges to the Monterey Bay or other coastal waters of Santa Cruz County. Require full disclosure of the projected chemical and biological characteristics of



wastewater entering treatment and pretreatment facilities connected with new and/or expansion of wastewater discharges to Monterey Bay and other coastal waters of Santa Cruz County. Particular areas of concern include toxic chemicals, toxic metals, bacteria, virus, and other constituents identified as threats to the health and safety of coastal waters.

ARC-4.1.5 (LCP) Levels of Wastewater Treatment. Require complete information on levels of treatment proposed at the treatment and pretreatment facilities to remove those constituents identified or anticipated in all proposed new and/or expansion of wastewater discharges to the Monterey Bay and other coastal waters of Santa Cruz County. This information shall also include reliability and efficiency data of the proposed treatment.

ARC-4.1.6 (LCP) Monitoring Wastewater Treatment. Require a comprehensive monitoring plan for testing of wastewater at treatment and pretreatment facilities for critical constituents or indicators identified or anticipated in all proposed new and/or increased wastewater discharges into the Monterey Bay and other coastal waters.

ARC-4.1.7 (LCP) Location and Methods of Wastewater Discharge. Require oceanographic studies to determine the most suitable location and methods for wastewater discharge into the Monterey Bay or coastal waters.

ARC-4.1.8 (LCP) Baseline Tests for Wastewater Discharge Sites. Require tests of ocean waters at proposed wastewater discharge sites and surrounding waters to establish baseline or background levels of toxic chemicals, toxic metals, bacteria and other water quality constituents. These tests must be performed no more than one year prior to submittal of the proposal. Historical data may not be substituted for this requirement.

ARC-4.1.9 (LCP) Toxicity Studies for Proposed Wastewater Discharges. Require toxicity studies to determine the impacts of the proposed wastewater discharges on marine life, as well as on recreational uses of the coastal waters.

ARC-4.1.10 (LCP) New and/or Increased Wastewater Discharges. Approve new and/or increased wastewater discharges only if they will not degrade marine habitats; will not create hazardous or dangerous conditions; and will not produce levels of pollutants that exceed any applicable local, state or federal water quality standards.

ARC-4.1.11 (LCP) Land Disposal of Wastewater. Encourage land disposal or irrigation with wastewater after adequate treatment to State wastewater treatment standards to assist in recharging groundwater aquifers and maintaining higher summer stream flows.

ARC-4.1.12 (LCP) Disturbances of Coastal Waters, Wetlands, Estuaries and Lakes. Prohibit the diking, filling and dredging of open coastal waters, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes. Allow



exceptions only for the following purposes and only where there is no other feasible, less environmentally damaging alternative:

- (1) Incidental public service purposes, including, but not limited to, burying cables and pipes or inspection of piers and maintenance of existing intake and outfall lines.
- (2) Restoration purposes, including the protection and enhancement of existing harbors, and where the activity will maintain and enhance the functional capacity of the wetland or estuary as determined through the County environmental review process in conjunction with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- (3) Nature study, aquaculture, or similar resource-dependent activities.

ARC-4.1.13 (LCP) Redistribution of Dredged Materials. Require the redistribution of dredged materials into the same littoral cell from which it was taken in an effort to continue beach replenishment as long as the materials are suitable and non-toxic, and the deposition of the materials will not adversely affect marine environments or recreational uses. The deposition of such materials must be timed and located so as not to interfere with shoreline processes, longshore current systems, and public beach use.



Crab in tide pools. Photo credit: Santa Cruz County

ARC-4.1.14 (LCP) Water Pollution from Urban Runoff. Review proposed development projects for their potential to contribute to water pollution via increased storm water runoff. Require all development and redevelopment projects to be designed to minimize the generation, transport, and discharge of stormwater pollutants by maintaining natural discharge and groundwater recharge rates. Design strategies shall include minimization of impervious areas, pollution prevention strategies, retention and percolation of stormwater, filtration or treatment of stormwater, or other appropriate stormwater best management practices.



See also Objective PPF-4.4 Flood Control, Drainage + Stormwater and associated policies and implementation strategies.



*Twin Lakes State Beach
Photo Credit: Santa Cruz County*

Implementation Strategies

ARC-4.1a (LCP) Continue to coordinate with federal, state, and other local agencies, including NOAA Fisheries, California Coastal Commission, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and AMBAG to manage and protect the resources of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health, State Parks)

ARC-4.1b (LCP) Continue to review and regulate marine water quality impacts of proposed new and/or increased wastewater discharges into Monterey Bay and the coastal waters. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health, Regional Water Quality Control Board, State Parks)

ARC-4.1c (LCP) Continue periodically to review state and federal water quality standards associated with wastewater discharges to the ocean to determine if more stringent local standards are required. (Responsibility: Environmental Health, State Parks)

ARC-4.1d (LCP) Develop a program in conjunction with the Harbor District and other concerned agencies to ensure that dredged materials from the harbor will not harm the marine environment



or adversely affect public beach use. (Responsibility: Port Commission, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Environmental Health, State Parks)



OBJECTIVE ARC-4.2 WATERSHED PROTECTION

(LCP) To protect and manage watersheds, including least disturbed watersheds and those that provide surface water supplies, to preserve the quality and quantity of water as well as habitat values, and to meet the needs of County residents, local industry, agriculture, and the natural environment while taking into account the projected effects of climate change.

To protect the Least Disturbed Watershed areas that support the remaining clear running streams to preserve their water supply, recreation, and wildlife support values.

Policies

ARC-4.2.1 (LCP) Water Supply Watershed Designation. Designate on the General Plan/LCP Resources and Constraints Maps and County GIS those watersheds that supply the County's water, as well as coastal watersheds (see Figure 5-3, Watersheds).

ARC-4.2.2 (LCP) Least Disturbed Watershed Designations. Designate the following watershed areas that support the remaining clear running streams as Least Disturbed Watersheds:

- Waddell Creek Watershed, including Blooms Creek
- Scott Creek and Big Creek Watershed above their confluence, and Scott Creek tributaries below Swanton Road
- Jamison Creek Watershed
- Clear Creek Watershed
- Fall Creek Watershed
- Newell Creek Watershed upstream from Loch Lomond
- Eagle Creek Watershed
- Greenoaks Creek
- Ano Nuevo Creek
- Molino Creek
- Baldwin Creek and Peasley Creek: above Highway 1
- Wilder Creek: above Highway 1
- Laguna Creek and Majors Creek, designated corridors between Highway 1 and the City of Santa Cruz water diversions.

See Table 5-2: Water Supply Watersheds, and Appendix F: Natural Resource and Environmental Hazard Areas: Maps and Development Constraints.



Table 5-2: Water Supply Watersheds		
	Source(s)	Purveyor(s)
North Coast	San Vicente Creek, Mill Creek	Davenport Water System
	Liddell Spring, Laguna Creek, Majors Creek	City of Santa Cruz
	Reggiardo Creek	Bonnymede Mutual Water Company
	Redwood Spring (Tributary to Majors Creek)	Redwood Spring Mutual Water Company
	Sempervirens Creek	Big Basin State Park
San Lorenzo	San Lorenzo River, Newell Creek Reservoir	City of Santa Cruz
	Spring (Tributary to Bear Creek)	J.B. Ranch Mutual Water Company
	Hare Creek, Jamison Springs, Corvin Spring	Big Basin Water Company
	Forest Spring	Forest Springs Mutual Water Company, Big Basin Water Company
	West Fork Sand Creek	Bracken Brae Country Club
	Peavine Creek, Silver Creek, Foreman Creek, Harmon Creek, Sweetwater Creek, Earl-Manson Spring, Fall Creek, Bennet Creek, Bull Creek, Lompico Creek	San Lorenzo Valley Water District
	Spring (Tributary to Love Creek)	Love Creek Heights Mutual Water Company
San Lorenzo Continued	Miller Creek (Tributary to Zayante Creek), Mountain Charlie Creek	Summit West, Mutual Water Company
	Spring (Tributary to Zayante Creek)	Quail Hollow Circle Mutual Water Company
	Spring (Tributary to Zayante Creek)	Zayante Acres Mutual Water Company
	Spring (Tributary to Zayante Creek)	Moon Meadow Water Company
	Bean Creek, Spring (Tributary to Bean Creek)	Big Redwood Mutual Water Company
	Redwood Springs (Tributary to Bean Creek), Ferndell Springs (Tributary to Bean Creek), Arcadia Spring (Tributary to Zayante Creek)	Mount Hermon Association
	Boulder Brook (Tributary to Gold Gulch)	River Grove Mutual Water Company
Soquel-Aptos	Laurel Creek	Villa del Monte Mutual Water Company
	West Branch Soquel Creek	Summit Mutual Water Company
	Spring (Tributary to West Branch Soquel Creek)	Redwood Lodge Mutual Water Company
	Spring (Tributary to West Branch Soquel Creek)	Cathedral Wood Mutual Water Company
Pajaro	Corralitos Creek, Browns Creek	City of Watsonville
South County	College Lake (Salsipuedes Creek)	Potential Reservoir Site



ARC-4.2.3 (LCP) Water Quality Constraint Area Designation. Designate the following areas located within one mile upstream of intakes used for public water supply as Water Quality Constraint areas:

- (1) City of Santa Cruz intakes on Reggiardo, Laguna, and Majors Creeks, and Liddell Spring;
- (2) Bonnymede Mutual intake on Reggiardo Creek; and
- (3) Davenport water system intakes on Mill and San Vicente Creeks.

ARC-4.2.4 (LCP) Minimum Size for Existing Parcels in Water Quality Constraint Areas. Require 2½ net acre minimum parcel sizes for development of anything other than one accessory dwelling unit where a single-family home already exists on existing lots of record within Water Quality Constraint Areas. Allow exceptions to the 2½ net acre minimum parcel size only where consistent with the existing Sewage Disposal ordinance.

ARC-4.2.5 (LCP) Minimum Size for Developing Existing Parcels of Record in Water Supply Watersheds. Require one acre minimum parcel sizes for newly proposed development of existing lots of record in water supply watersheds in the Coastal Zone, in the North Coast and Bonny Doon Planning Areas, and in the San Lorenzo Water Supply Watershed, in accordance with the Sewage Disposal ordinance. Incorporate as General Plan/LCP Land Use Plan requirements the provisions of the Sewage Disposal ordinance with respect to Kristen Park and Water Quality Constraint Areas. Allow an exception to the one-acre minimum parcel size, in recognition that density and areas of development will not substantially increase in these situations, for the creation of one accessory dwelling unit on parcels already developed with a single-family residence or for an existing parcel of record or for a parcel that has been developed with a single family home but a replacement home is proposed after destruction of the prior home in a natural disaster or fire, or for commercial uses within the RSL, that meet the following applicable criteria:

- (1) The parcel is an existing lot of record with a residential land use designation; or has a designation of Community Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial, Office, or Service Commercial. in the General Plan that was adopted on May 24, 1994;
- (2) It is to be developed for commercial use; or a new home is proposed to replace a home lost due to natural disaster or fire;
- (3) It is within the Rural Services Line if a commercial use; and
- (4) The proposed sewage disposal system, whether for commercial or residential use, will meet all technical standards of the Sewage Disposal Ordinance, and will utilize an enhanced treatment system in accordance with the Sewage Disposal Ordinance.



ARC-4.2.6 (LCP) Land Division and Density Requirements in Water Supply Watersheds. Outside the Coastal Zone, require new parcel sizes to be an average of at least 10 gross acres in existing or proposed Water Supply Watersheds and allow a maximum average residential density of one dwelling unit per 10 gross acres for parcels that are not divided. Maintain provisions of the SCCC that allow for appropriate clustering of allowed development potential. Inside the Coastal Zone, require new parcel sizes to be an average of at least 20 gross acres in existing and proposed Water Supply Watersheds and within the North Coast and Bonny Doon Water Supply Watersheds extending outside the Coastal Zone, and allow a maximum average residential density of one dwelling unit per 20 gross acres for parcels which are not divided. For new land divisions, encourage a range of parcel sizes consistent with the average parcel sizes noted above where appropriate to maximize protection to the watershed, and allow appropriate clustering of development potential consistent with the SCCC to protect resource values.

These restrictions do not apply in the San Lorenzo River Watershed on lands:

- (1) Designated Urban Residential or Suburban Residential; or
- (2) Designated Rural Residential areas where the average parcel size within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of the subject parcel boundary is less than 1 gross acre.

See also policies ARC-4.2.5, and BE-4.2.3.

ARC-4.2.7 (LCP) Land Division and Density Requirements in Least Disturbed Watersheds. Maintain Least Disturbed Watersheds in open space densities by requiring an average 40 gross acre minimum parcel size for new parcels within Least Disturbed Watersheds and permit land divisions only where consistent with open space protection and where beneficial to the public, such as parcels for public facilities including public well sites, fire stations, and utility rights-of-way. For new land divisions, encourage a range of parcel sizes consistent with the average parcel sizes note above where appropriate to maximize protection to the watershed. Allow a maximum average residential density of one dwelling unit per 40 gross acres for parcels that are not divided, and allow for appropriate clustering of development potential to protect resource values, consistent with procedures of the SCCC.

See also policy BE-4.2.3.

ARC-4.2.8 (LCP) Allowed Uses in Water Supply and Least Disturbed Watersheds. In order to preserve the water supply, recreation, and wildlife support values, require uses in Water Supply and Least Disturbed watersheds to be compatible with watershed protection policies and limited to open space uses or recreational and residential uses at the specified Watershed densities, unless otherwise exempted.



ARC-4.2.9 (LCP) Development Activities Within Water Supply and Least Disturbed Watersheds. Require all grading, building, and timber harvesting in Water Supply and Least Disturbed watersheds to meet strict standards for erosion control and protection of water quality as outlined in the Erosion Hazard and Drainage Facilities sections of this Plan and as identified in the San Lorenzo River Watershed Management Plan. Provide a higher level of protection within karst areas of Water Supply Watersheds.

ARC-4.2.10 (LCP) Retaining Undeveloped Lands in Watersheds. Encourage property owners in designated watershed areas to sign Open Space Easement contracts or pursue other mechanisms to retain undeveloped lands within Water Supply Watersheds.

ARC-4.2.11 (LCP) Timber Harvest Review Process in Watersheds. Utilize the timber harvest review process to condition applications in Water Supply and Least Disturbed watersheds so that sustained yield programs are required to comply with restrictions or regulations on winter operations and other conditions to protect the watersheds.

ARC-4.2.12 (LCP) Drainage Design. Require retention of stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces for all new development and redevelopment.

See also Policy PPF-4.4.1: New Development and Redevelopment.

ARC-4.2.13 (LCP) Sewage Disposal for Publicly Owned Facilities. Permit installation of sewage disposal systems within an easement on another lot to serve a publicly owned facility where technical or minimum parcel size standards cannot be met for sewage disposal at the site of the facility.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-4.2a (LCP) Implement watershed management plans to protect and restore water resources, including the San Lorenzo River, Soquel Creek, Aptos Creek, Watsonville Sloughs, and Pajaro River. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health, Resource Conservation District, Water Purveyors, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-4.2b (LCP)(EJ) Continue to monitor surface water quantity and quality to locate and identify water quality problems arising from point and non-point sources of pollution affecting public health and the environment. (Responsibility: Water Purveyors, Environmental Health, Regional Water Quality Control Board)

ARC-4.2c (LCP) Support the continued notification of affected water purveyors and provide opportunity to comment on any development project or Timber Harvest Permit proposed to be located in a Water Supply Watershed. (Responsibility: CalFire)



ARC-4.2d (LCP) Encourage, support, and seek funding for the preparation and implementation of watershed management plans for other watersheds. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health, Resource Conservation District, Water Management Agencies)

ARC-4.2e (LCP) Support efforts for fuel management and other activities to reduce the threat and potential severity of wildfires that would cause serious long-term damage to watersheds, water supplies, water quality, and biotic resources. (Responsibility: Fire Agencies, CDID, Resource Conservation District)



OBJECTIVE ARC-4.3 ADEQUATE STREAMFLOWS

(LCP) To protect and restore in-stream flows to ensure a full range of beneficial uses including recreation, fish and wildlife habitat and visual amenities, as part of an ecosystem-based approach to watershed management and groundwater management that also takes into account the projected effects of climate change.

Policies

ARC-4.3.1 (LCP) Minimum Stream Flows for Anadromous Fish Runs. Support programs, policies, and projects that protect and enhance dry-season minimum streamflows for anadromous fish runs to the greatest extent feasible.

ARC-4.3.2 (LCP) Designation of Critical Water Supply Streams. Designate the following streams, currently utilized at full capacity, as Critical Water Supply Streams: Laguna, Majors, Liddell, San Vicente, Mill and Reggiardo Creeks and their tributaries; San Lorenzo River and its tributaries above the City of Santa Cruz; Soquel Creek and its tributaries; Corralitos Creek and Browns Creek and their tributaries upstream of the City of Watsonville diversion points. Oppose or prohibit as legal authority allows, new or expanded water diversion from Critical Water Supply Streams. Prohibit new riparian or off stream development, or increases in the intensity of use, which require an increase in water diversions from Critical Water Supply Streams. Seek to restore in-stream flows where full allocation may harm the full range of beneficial uses.

ARC-4.3.3 (LCP) New Major Water Supply Projects. Ensure the development of new major water supply projects are adequately conditioned to protect beneficial in-stream uses and riparian habitat. For new major water supply projects located in the Coastal Zone, ensure that no development proceeds unless such projects are adequately conditioned to protect beneficial in-stream uses and riparian habitat with minimal reliance on technology-based mitigation measures (e.g., relying on hatchery-raised fish instead of maintaining spawning grounds).

ARC-4.3.4 (LCP) On-stream Storage Reservoirs. Prohibit the designation of Scott Creek, Waddell Creek, San Lorenzo River and its tributaries, and Aptos Creek as on-stream storage reservoirs.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-4.3a (LCP) Monitor existing and proposed, public and private, stream diversions and applications for water rights. Work with water users to minimize existing impacts where possible and to protect adequate in-stream flows based on the following considerations:

- (1) Normal summer and fall streamflows should be preserved and enhanced, where feasible;



- (2) Adequate winter and spring baseflows should be preserved for fish migration and spawning and juvenile growth;
- (3) Stream flows should be maintained at adequate levels for sediment transport to preserve or enhance downstream habitat, to maintain County beaches, and to allow for natural, seasonal lagoon sand berm breaching; and
- (4) Groundwater recharge areas should be protected.

(Responsibility: State Water Resources Board, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Environmental Health)

ARC-4.3b (LCP) Protest water right applications that are inconsistent with policies for streamflow protection. (Responsibility Environmental Health, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-4.3c (LCP) Develop a monitoring program to ensure that Statements of Diversion and Water Use are filed by all water users as required by the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Water Rights. (Responsibility: Environmental Health)

ARC-4.3d (LCP) Develop a program to update and enforce the terms and conditions of the Soquel Creek adjudication decree and any other stream adjudications that may occur. (Responsibility: Environmental Health)

ARC-4.3e (LCP) Investigate stream conditions during low flow periods to monitor perennial flow throughout Soquel Creek and the San Lorenzo River. (Responsibility: Environmental Health)

ARC-4.3f (LCP) Request the intervention of the State Water Resources Control Board, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other interested agencies to evaluate and act on unauthorized surface water diversions and underflow extractions. (Responsibility: Planning Department, Environmental Health, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-4.3g (LCP) Develop more detailed information on streamflow characteristics, water use, sediment transport, plant and soil moisture requirements, impervious surface/watershed development, and habitat needs of Critical Water Supply Streams and streams located in the Coastal Zone. Use this information to formulate a more detailed strategy for maintenance and enhancement of streamflows on Critical Water Supply Streams and to better understand the role of streamflows in watershed ecosystems and provide a basis for cooperative management of watershed ecosystems and inter-connected groundwater. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health, Water Purveyors, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies)

ARC-4.3h (LCP) Coordinate with groundwater agencies on the conditions for issuance of water well permits in stream sediments to avoid adverse impacts on in-stream flows. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies)



ARC-4.3i (LCP) Coordinate with the City of Watsonville and PV Water to carry out projects that enhance or restore to the maximum extent possible in-stream flows on Corralitos and Browns Creeks. (Responsibility: CDID, Board of Supervisors, Environmental Health, City of Watsonville, PV Water)



San Lorenzo River
Photo Credit: Santa Cruz County



OBJECTIVE ARC-4.4 SURFACE WATER QUALITY

(LCP) To protect and enhance surface water quality in the County's streams, coastal lagoons, and marshes by establishing best management practices on adjacent land uses.

Policies

ARC-4.4.1 (LCP) Impacts from New Development on Water Quality. Do not approve new development adjacent to marshes, streams, and bodies of water if such development would cause adverse impacts on water quality that cannot be fully mitigated.

See also Policy PPF-4.4.1: New Development and Redevelopment.

ARC-4.4.2 (LCP) Minimum Septic System Setback from Natural Waterways. Do not allow installation of septic tanks or leach fields within 100 feet of all natural waterways including perennial or intermittent streams, seasonal water channels (that flow for more than seven days after significant rainfall), and natural bodies of standing water. Exceptions may be made for the repair or upgrade of existing systems, if the 100-foot setback cannot be maintained, and adequate provisions are made for water quality protection.

ARC-4.4.3 (LCP) Erosion Control for Stream and Lagoon Protection. For all new and existing development and land disturbances, require the installation and maintenance of sediment basins, and/or other strict erosion control measures, as needed to prevent siltation of streams and coastal lagoons.

See also erosion control policies in Chapter 6: Public Safety.

ARC-4.4.4 (LCP) Protecting Riparian Corridors and Coastal Lagoons. Require drainage facilities to infiltrate, filter, or treat stormwater runoff as needed to protect water quality for all new development within 1,000 feet of riparian corridors or coastal lagoons. Encourage vegetative-based treatments where feasible.

ARC-4.4.5 (LCP) Maintaining Saltwater Inflow to Coastal Lagoons. Do not allow new development, site alteration, or road projects adjacent to coastal lagoons unless it can be demonstrated that such projects will not restrict, impound or otherwise interfere with the natural drainage patterns and tidal circulation. Require redevelopment projects to restore natural drainage patterns to the maximum extent feasible.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-4.4a (LCP) In coordination with the Regional Water Quality Control Board, identify and control point and non-point sources of water quality contamination. (Responsibility: Environmental Health, CDID, General Services, Parks Department)



ARC-4.4b (LCP)(EJ) Continue to conduct a comprehensive monitoring program to assess long-term trends in surface and groundwater quality and to identify water quality problems arising from point and non-point sources of pollution affecting public health and the environment. (Responsibility: Environmental Health, CDID, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Water Agencies)

ARC-4.4c (LCP) Develop a program for control of non-point source pollution from agricultural activities and coordinate requirements with the State Water Resources Control Board Irrigated Lands Program requirements. (Responsibility: Agricultural Commissioner, Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission, PV Water, Board of Supervisors, Regional Water Quality Control Board)

ARC-4.4d (LCP) Expand educational programs regarding application and handling of fertilizers and pesticides which encourage lower fertilizer use rates and emphasize protection of water quality. (Responsibility: Agricultural Commissioner)

ARC-4.4e (LCP) Consider funding a program for pre-rainy season street sweeping of selected major roads in urban areas, with highest priority given those roads that drain into coastal lagoons, in order to prevent adverse water quality impacts. (Responsibility: CDID, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-4.4f (LCP)(EJ) Work cooperatively with the State Parks Department, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the University of California and other relevant agencies to initiate water quality restoration programs for coastal lagoons that will restore and improve natural drainage and saltwater balances, protect the natural habitat, and mitigate public health hazards. (Responsibility: Parks Department; CDID; City of Santa Cruz; City of Capitola)

ARC-4.4g (LCP) Monitor water quality near the County's Buena Vista Landfill and the Watsonville City Landfill in accordance with Regional Water Quality Control Board requirements. (Responsibility: CDID, Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Integrated Waste Management Board)

ARC-4.4h Continue interagency cooperation and coordination to address watershed-based stormwater management policies and practices and implementation of the Stormwater Management Plan. (Responsibility: CDID, Parks Department, General Services, Environmental Health, Board of Supervisors)



OBJECTIVE ARC-4.5 GROUNDWATER PROTECTION + OVERDRAFT

(LCP) To protect the quantity and quality of the County's groundwater resources through an integrated program of land use regulation and runoff management in groundwater recharge areas and karst areas, careful water quality monitoring and management of extractions consistent with long-term sustainable water supply yields and projected effects of climate change. To act directly and coordinate and work with relevant water purveyors and agencies to eliminate long-term groundwater overdraft in all water basins where overdraft has been documented.

Policies

ARC-4.5.1 (LCP) Primary Groundwater Recharge Area Designation. Maintain designations on the General Plan/LCP Resource and Constraints Maps and County GIS system identifying areas where local soil conditions and underlying geologic formations allow for infiltration and percolation of rainfall and runoff into groundwater basins.

ARC-4.5.2 (LCP) Land Division and Density Requirements in Primary Groundwater Recharge Areas. Require new parcel sizes to be an average of at least 10 gross acres for parcels with building sites located in primary groundwater recharge areas and allow a maximum average residential density of one dwelling unit per 10 gross acres for parcels that are not divided. Addition of Accessory Dwelling Units is not considered "density" as the living area is considered accessory to the primary dwelling. Allow exceptions only where the development is:

- (1) Located within the Rural Services Line or within the Urban Services Line; and
- (2) Served by a sewage disposal system operated by a County Service Area or public services district that provides at least secondary treatment with nitrogen removal or that disposes of effluent outside the primary groundwater recharge area.

ARC-4.5.3 (LCP) Uses in Primary Groundwater Recharge Areas. Prohibit any land use in a Primary Groundwater Recharge Area that would allow the percolation of pollutants into the groundwater system.

ARC-4.5.4 (LCP) Karst Protection. Seek funding for a study to map karst areas and identify management strategies. Within areas mapped or suspected to be underlain by marble or karst, the area within 200 feet of a proposed leachfield, leachfield expansion area, stormwater discharge system, structure, roadway or area of disturbance should be evaluated by a geologist familiar with karst landscapes prior to further development. Any new sewage or stormwater

What is a Karst? A karst is a type of underlying geology that may have the presence of subsurface fissures, caverns, sinkholes or other features resulting from dissolution of limestone or marble that could lead to the rapid subsurface movement of water, untreated sewage, or other water-borne contaminants.



dispersal system shall be located at least 100 feet from any sinkhole or other karst feature that would rapidly transmit contaminated water.

ARC-4.5.5 (LCP) Developing Groundwater Resources. Allow development of groundwater resources when consistent with sustainable yield, protection of streamflows, and maintenance of groundwater quality. Require water systems serving new development to meet applicable standards for yield to ensure a reliable water supply is provided to its users.

ARC-4.5.6 (LCP) Well Construction Standards. Require new and rehabilitated wells to comply with State and local construction standards as specified in the County well ordinance to prevent contamination of groundwater supplies.

ARC-4.5.7 (LCP) Pajaro Groundwater Protection Zone Designation. Designate the appropriate areas within the boundaries of the Pajaro Valley Basin as the Pajaro groundwater protection zone. Apply special testing and construction standards to identify strata containing poor quality water and to prevent the movement of such water into other aquifers.

ARC-4.5.8 (LCP) Wells with Poor Water Quality. Require all new wells found to be of unsuitable quality to be promptly sealed according to State standards and inspected by Environmental Health unless mitigating measures can be found to make the water potable and not adversely affect underlying groundwater quality.

ARC-4.5.9(LCP) Development Densities with Poor Groundwater Availability. Limit new development densities through the use of a Rural Density Matrix in rural areas identified as having poor groundwater availability based on the best available data for the area and the site.

See also Policy BE-2.2.5: Rural Density Matrix



Implementation Strategies

ARC-4.5a (LCP) Cooperate with the State and Groundwater Sustainability Agencies in implementing the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, addressing groundwater basin overdraft problems and seeking any available state or federal assistance to support local groundwater management programs. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, Environmental Health, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies)

ARC-4.5b (LCP) Review and evaluate proposals by water agencies to develop supplemental sources of water supply (such as wastewater reclamation, water importation or surface water development), water conservation, or other means to reverse overdraft seawater intrusion and other basin problems that are occurring in some areas of the County. (Responsibility: Water Agencies, Board of Supervisors, Environmental Health)

ARC-4.5c (LCP) Work with water purveyors and water management agencies to augment natural groundwater recharge where it is environmentally and fiscally acceptable. (Responsibility: Environmental Health, CDID, Water Agencies, Resource Conservation District)

ARC-4.5d (LCP) Continue to evaluate the groundwater recharge areas in the County to determine appropriate densities and uses considering both existing levels of development and new information on geology of the recharge area. Update zoning and County Design Criteria based on the evaluation as appropriate to protect groundwater recharge. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies U.S. Geological Survey)

ARC-4.5e (LCP) Utilize the County's GIS to update and further delineate groundwater recharge areas throughout the County as more detailed information becomes available. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies, Board of Supervisors)

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

Like many groundwater basins across California, Santa Cruz County's basins have been suffering from overdraft and salt-water intrusion. Statewide, California's groundwater basins support at least one-third of the water used by nearly 39 million people, sustain the nation's most robust agricultural industry, and support hundreds of billions of dollars in economic activity each year. Unlike many areas, Santa Cruz County's water comes solely from its groundwater.

Signed into law in 2014 by Governor Jerry Brown, the SGMA requires water agencies to protect groundwater supplies from irreversible impacts that can lead to loss of the supply altogether. Six indicators are used to measure the sustainability of groundwater resources: groundwater level declines, storage reductions, land subsidence, interconnected surface water depletion, seawater intrusion, and water quality degradation.



ARC-4.5f (LCP) Institute and continue monitoring programs to study streambed percolation in Corralitos Creek, Coward Creek, Soquel Creek, Bean Creek, Carbonera Creek and other streams which percolate water into critical groundwater basins. (Responsibility: Environmental Health, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-4.5g (LCP) Continue to work with the City of Watsonville on its Water Use Reduction Program for new and existing urban development within the Pajaro Valley. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health, PV Water, City of Watsonville)

ARC-4.5h. (LCP) (EJ) Continue to work with PV Water to eliminate overdraft and saltwater intrusion through implementation of their Basin Management Plan. (Responsibility: CDID, PV Water, Environmental Health, Board of Supervisors, Resource Conservation District)



Watsonville Slough

Source: Pajaro Valley Water: Management Agency, Watsonville Slough Hydro-Study, accessed at [Watsonville Slough Hydro-Study | Pajaro Valley Water Mgt Agcy \(pjwater.org\)](https://www.pjwater.org)

ARC-4.5i. (LCP) Continue to work with the PV Water, the Farm Bureau and landowners to ensure maximum water efficiency on agricultural lands in the Pajaro Valley. (Responsibility: Environmental Health, PV Water, Farm Bureau, Agricultural Commissioner, Resource Conservation District)

ARC-4.5j (LCP) Work with the Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency to develop and implement a groundwater sustainability plan for the Santa Margarita groundwater basin in the San Lorenzo



Valley and the Scotts Valley area. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health, Board of Supervisors, Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency)

ARC-4.5k (LCP) Work with the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency to implement the groundwater sustainability plan for the Santa Cruz Mid-County groundwater basin. (Responsibility: CDID, Environmental Health, Board of Supervisors, Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency)

ARC-4.5l (LCP) Review applications for well water permits for conformance with County well ordinance. Periodically review well construction standards and requirements for the destruction of inactive or abandoned wells. (Responsibility: Environmental Health, Water Advisory Commission, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-4.5m (LCP) Assist in development of additional water supply, additional recharge, or offsetting amounts of water conservation for the Pajaro Valley basin to meet current and future demands and climate change impacts while eliminating groundwater overdraft. (Responsibility: PV Water, Environmental Health, Water Purveyors)



GOAL ARC-5 VISUAL RESOURCES

Identify and protect the visual resource areas in the County that have regional public importance for their natural beauty or rural agricultural character.

See also Goal BE-4: Community Character and Design.

OBJECTIVE ARC-5.1 PROTECTION OF VISUAL RESOURCES

(LCP) To identify, protect, and restore the scenic values of visual resources, including Coastal scenic areas, and to ensure that new development is appropriately designed and constructed to have minimal to no adverse impact upon identified visual resources.

Policies

ARC-5.1.1 (LCP) Designation of Visual Resources. Designate on the General Plan/LCP Resources and Constraints Maps (Appendix F) and define visual resources as areas having regional public importance for their natural beauty or rural agricultural character. Include the following areas when mapping visual resources: vistas from designated scenic roads, Coastal Special Scenic Areas, and unique hydrologic, geologic, and paleontologic features identified in Goal 6. Ocean views, agricultural fields, wooded forests, open meadows, ridgetops, and mountain hillside views are also public scenic assets that should be identified and considered during development review permit processes.

ARC-5.1.2 (LCP) Development Within Visual Resource Areas. Recognize that designated visual resources of Santa Cruz County possess diverse characteristics that are worthy of protection. Require projects in visual resource areas to be evaluated against the context of their unique environments and regulate structure height, setbacks, materials, and design to protect these resources consistent with the objectives and policies of this section.

See also Objective BE-4.2: Design with the Environment.

ARC-5.1.3 (LCP) Protection of Public Vistas and Scenic Assets. Protect significant public vistas and public scenic assets as identified in Policy ARC-5.1.1, even those that are not mapped and designated as visual resource areas, scenic roads, coastal special scenic areas, or other unique features, by minimizing disruption of landform and aesthetic character caused by grading operations, timber harvests, utility wires and poles, signs, inappropriate landscaping and structure design. Provide necessary landscaping to screen development that is unavoidably sited within these vistas. Proposed landscaping within public vistas should be sited and designed to retain existing public views of vistas and scenic assets especially for coastal designated visual resources.



See also Policy ARC-5.2.2: *Development Visible from Rural Scenic Roads.*

ARC-5.1.4 Preserving Natural Buffers. Preserve the vegetation and landform of natural wooded hillsides that serve as a backdrop for new development. Also comply with Policy ARC-5.1.8 regarding protection of ridgetops and natural landforms.

ARC-5.1.5 (LCP) Preserving Agricultural Vistas. Preserve the aesthetic value of agricultural vistas. Encourage development to be consistent with the agricultural character of the community. Structures appurtenant to agricultural uses on agriculturally designated parcels are considered compatible with the agricultural character of surrounding areas.

ARC-5.1.6 (LCP) Preserving Ocean Vistas. Where public ocean vistas exist, require these vistas be retained to the maximum extent possible as a condition of approval for any new development.

ARC-5.1.7 (LCP) Open Beaches and Blufftops. Do not permit or allow the placement of new permanent structures that would be visible from a public beach, except where allowed on existing parcels of record, or for shoreline protection, public beach access, or public ocean viewing, and where consistent with SCCC Chapter 13.11. Use the following criteria:



Twin Lakes State Beach Photo Credit: Santa Cruz County

- (1) Allow infill structures (typically residences and accessory structures on existing lots of record) where compatible with the pattern of existing development.
- (2) Require shoreline protection and access structures to use natural materials and finishes to blend with the character of the area and integrate with the landform.

Also see Objective AM-4.1: Recreational and Coastal Access.



ARC-5.1.8 (LCP) Protecting Ridgetops and Natural Landforms. Ensure that any development protects the scenic and visual character of ridgetops and prominent natural landforms such as cliffs, bluffs, dunes, rock outcroppings, and other significant natural features. In connection with discretionary review, apply the following criteria:

- (1) Development on ridgetops shall be avoided if other developable land exists on the property.
- (2) Do not approve development permits that allow the removal of trees when such removal would erode the silhouette of the ridgeline form. Consider the cumulative effects of tree removal on the ridgeline silhouette.
- (3) Restrict the height and placement of buildings and structures to prevent their projection above the ridgeline or treeline. Restrict structures and structural projections adjacent to prominent natural landforms. Ensure that any newly created parcel includes buildable locations such that new development can be integrated into the existing terrain and does not project above the ridgeline, in accordance with design review standards provided in SCCC Chapter 13.11.
- (4) Through review and approval of discretionary development permits, ensure that exterior materials and colors blend with the natural landform and tree backdrops.

ARC-5.1.9 (LCP) Significant Tree Removal Ordinance. Maintain the standards in the County's regulations that require a permit for removal of significant trees and other major vegetation located within the Coastal Zone, and provide appropriate protection for significant trees and other major vegetation in other areas of the County.

ARC-5.1.10 (LCP) Restoration of Scenic Areas. Require on-site restoration of visually blighted conditions commensurate with the size and scope of the project as a mitigating condition of approval for new development permits. Provide technical assistance for restoration of blighted areas.



ARC-5.1.11 (LCP) Designation of Coastal Special Scenic Areas and Special Communities. Designate the following as Coastal Special Scenic Areas and Special Communities (see Appendix F: Natural Resource and Environmental Hazard Areas: Maps and Development Constraints) and require development to comply with the design criteria set forth in SCCC Chapter 13.20 Coastal Zone Regulations and Chapter 13.10 Zoning Ordinance:

- (1) Bonny Doon sandstone formations, generally found within the borders of Pine Flat Road, Laguna Creek, Ice Cream Grade, and Martin Road.
- (2) The area enclosed by the Swanton Road and Highway 1 scenic roads.
- (3) Davenport community.
- (4) Harbor area.
- (5) East Cliff Village tourist area.
- (6) Seacliff Beach area.
- (7) Rio Del Mar Esplanade.
- (8) Pleasure Point Community mapped residential and commercial areas.
- (9) Seascape Beach Estates.

ARC-5.1.12 (LCP) Swanton Road Coastal Special Scenic Area. In the Swanton Road Coastal Special Scenic area, require new development to be hidden from public view to the greatest extent feasible. Where it is not possible to locate development out of public view, require dense vegetative screenings consistent with patterns and types of existing vegetation and comprised of indigenous species.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-5.1a Review and update criteria in the Site Development and Design Chapter of the County Code (Chapter 13.11) to ensure that development in designated visual resource areas protects the scenic character of visual resources consistent with the General Plan/LCP, and also to protect other important categories of public vistas and scenic assets. (Responsibility: CDID, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-5.1b (LCP) Identify locations for and prioritize construction of scenic overlooks along coastal bluffs in conjunction with Objective AM-4.1: Recreational and Coastal Access. (Responsibility: County Parks Department; Board of Supervisors)

ARC-5.1c Consider revising the Significant Trees Protection Ordinance to expand the protection to all unincorporated areas within the Urban and Rural Services Lines of the County,



for protection of priority listed species that occur within the USL/RSL, considering conservation status. (Responsibility: CDID, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors)

OBJECTIVE ARC-5.2 SCENIC ROADS

(LCP) To designate roads in the County with significant public vistas as scenic roads and ensure that development and signage does not negatively impact the quality of the public viewshed visible from designated scenic roads.

Policies

ARC-5.2.1 (LCP) Designation of Scenic Roads. The following roads and highways are valued for their vistas. The public vistas from these roads shall be afforded the highest level of protection.

(1) State Highways

- Highway 1 - from San Mateo County to Monterey County
- Highway 9 – from Route 1 to Santa Clara County
- Highway 17 – from Highway 1 to Santa Clara County
- Highway 35 – from Highway 17 to San Mateo County
- Highway 129 – from Highway 1 to San Benito County
- Highway 152 – from Highway 1 to Santa Clara County
- Highway 236 – from Highway 9 in Boulder Creek to Highway 9 at Waterman Gap

(2) County Roads

- Amesti Road – from Varni Road to Browns Valley Road
- Beach Road – from Highway 1 to Palm Beach
- Bonita Drive and San Andreas Road – from Highway 1 to Beach Road
- Bonny Doon Road – from Highway 1 to Pine Flat Road
- Browns Valley Road – from Eureka Canyon Road to Hazel Dell Road
- Buena Vista Drive – from San Andreas Road to Larkin Valley Road
- Casserly Road – from Mile marker 1.75 to Highway 152
- Corralitos Road – from Freedom Boulevard to Browns Valley Road
- Empire Grade – from the Santa Cruz City limits to the end of Empire Grade
- East Cliff Drive – from 33rd Avenue to 41st Avenue
- Eureka Canyon Road – from Highland Way to Corralitos
- Graham Hill Road – from Lockwood Lane to Highway 9



Hazel Dell Road – from Browns Valley Road to Mt. Madonna Road

Highland Way – from Summit Road to Eureka Canyon Road

Ice Cream Grade

Martin Road – from Pine Flat to Ice Cream Grade

Mt. Hermon Road – from Scotts Valley City limits to Graham Hill Road

Mt. Madonna Road – from Gaffey Road to Hazel Dell Road

Pine Flat Road – from Bonny Doon Road to Empire Grade

Sand Dollar Drive

Smith Grade

Summit Road – from Highway 17 to Highland Way

Sunset Beach and Shell Road

Swanton Road – from Highway 1 at Davenport Landing to Highway 1 at Greyhound Rock

ARC-5.2.2 (LCP) Development Visible from Rural Scenic Roads. In the viewsheds of rural scenic roads, require new discretionary development, including development envelopes in proposed land divisions, to be sited out of public view, designed for compatibility with area character, and/or obscured by natural landforms and/or existing vegetation. Where proposed structures on existing lots are unavoidably visible from scenic roads, identify those visual qualities worthy of protection and require the siting, architectural design and landscaping to mitigate the impacts on those higher value visual qualities.

See Polic ARC-5.1.2.

ARC-5.2.3 (LCP) Development Visible from Urban Scenic Roads. In the viewsheds of designated urban scenic roads, require new discretionary development to respect, preserve or improve the visual quality through siting, architectural design, landscaping and appropriate signage.

See also policies ARC-5.2.7, 5.2.8, and 5.2.9.

ARC-5.2.4 Development Visible from the Highway Scenic Corridor. Require discretionary review for all development within the visual resource area of Highway 1, outside of the Urban and Rural Services Lines, as designated on the GP/LCP Visual Resources Map and apply the design criteria of the Coastal Zone Regulations ordinance.



ARC-5.2.5 (LCP) Landscaping Requirements. Grading and land disturbance projects involving more than 1,000 cubic yards that are visible from scenic roads shall conform to the following visual mitigation conditions of a discretionary grading and/or coastal development permit:

- (1) Blend contours of the finished surface with the adjacent natural terrain and landscape to achieve a smooth transition and natural appearance; and
- (2) Incorporate only characteristic or indigenous plant species appropriate for the area.

ARC-5.2.6 (LCP) Protecting Views in the North Coast and Bonny Doon. In order to preserve the agricultural and coastal grassland vistas of the North Coast and Bonny Doon Highway 1 view corridor, prohibit the division of all grassland habitat as mapped on the County's Resources and Constraints Maps.

See policies ARC-3.1.2, ARC-3.1.5, and ARC-5.2.2.

ARC-5.2.7 Design Review for Public Projects Visible from Scenic Roads. Require construction and development of any soundwalls and roadside amenities such as turnouts and vista points within or adjacent to Scenic Roads to be reviewed for consistency with the visual resource protection policies of this section and the Zoning Ordinance.

ARC-5.2.8 (LCP) Signs Visible from Scenic Roads. Actively discourage the placement of signs that will be visible from scenic roads; where allowed, require strict compliance with the County Sign ordinance to minimize disruption of the natural scenic qualities of the viewshed. Give priority to sign abatement programs for scenic roads.

ARC-5.2.9 (LCP) Highway 1 Signage in Rural Areas. In the rural Highway 1 corridor, allow only Caltrans standard directional, access, and business identification signs, except within the commercial area of Davenport.

ARC-5.2.10 (LCP) Highway 1 Signage in Urban Areas. In the urban Highway 1 corridor, allow signage where consistent with the Sign ordinance and any applicable village, town, community, or specific plan.

ARC-5.2.11 (LCP) Illuminated Signs Visible from Designated Scenic Roads. In accordance with the County Sign ordinance, allow illuminated signs to be visible from scenic roads only for state and county directional and information signs and in designated commercial and visitor-serving areas. Seek to eliminate all other non-conforming illuminated signs which are visible from scenic roads.

ARC-5.2.12 (LCP) Requirement for Sign Plans. Require new project submittal applications to include standard road sign designs for directional, access, and business identification and



designate appropriate locations for these signs consistent with the County Sign ordinance and Caltrans requirements.

ARC-5.2.13 (LCP) Utility Service Lines. Require underground placement of all new utility service lines and extension lines to and within new residential subdivisions and major commercial developments within the Urban Services Line. Prioritize or require underground placement of all other new or supplementary transmission lines within views from scenic roads where it is technically feasible, unless it can be shown that other alternatives are less environmentally damaging or would have unavoidable adverse impacts on agricultural operations. When underground facilities are installed parallel to existing above ground lines, require the existing lines to be placed underground with the new lines if feasible. When above ground facilities are necessary, require that the design of the support towers or poles be compatible with the surroundings and that lines cross roadways at low elevations or curves in the road in accordance with California Public Utility Commission regulations for public utility facilities.

See also Objective PPF-4.6: Electrical Distribution System.

ARC-5.2.14 (LCP) Access Roads for Transmission Lines. Require access roads for transmission line construction and maintenance within scenic corridors to be designed and constructed to parallel the contour of the land and to minimize grading and landscape alterations.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-5.2a Review and update the County Sign ordinance to replace those in effect as of 2020. Specific standards for signs proposed adjacent to scenic roads should be developed, consistent with policies in this section. (Responsibility: Planning Department, Planning Commission)

ARC-5.2b. Coordinate with CalTrans to replant trees along the urban portions of Highway 1 between Ocean Street and Bay Avenue, using appropriate native species or other drought-tolerant species adapted to highway conditions. (Responsibility: CDID, CalTrans)

See also policies for sensitive land uses in Chapter 6: Public Safety.



GOAL ARC-6 HYDROLOGICAL, GEOLOGICAL + PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Protect hydrological, geological, and paleontological resources that stand out as rare or unique and representative in Santa Cruz County because of their scarcity, scientific or educational value, aesthetic quality, or cultural significance.

Policies

ARC-6.1.1 (LCP) Protection and Designation of Significant Resources. Protect significant geological features such as caves, large rock outcrops, inland cliffs and special formations of scenic or scientific value, hydrological features such as karst topography, major waterfalls or springs, and paleontological features, through the environmental review process. Designate such sites on the General Plan/LCP Resources and Constraints Maps where identified. Currently identified sites of Significant Hydrological, Geological, and Paleontological Features are as follows:

Bonny Doon Planning Area:

- (1) Majors Creek Canyon: The cliffs and exposed rocks of this canyon to the east of Highway 1 are outstanding geologic and scenic features.
- (2) Martin Road: East and west of Martin Road, encompassed in the botanical sites, are unusual sandhill outcroppings.
- (3) Wilder Creek: This area contains a concentration of limestone caves worth protecting.



- (4) Table Rock: Highly scenic coastal rock formations (sedimentary intrusive bodies) can be found in the vicinity of Table Rock and Yellow Bank Creek.



Rock formations near Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve

Photo Source: Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve: <https://bdecoreserve.wixsite.com/bdecoreserve>

ARC-6.1.2 (LCP) Protecting Significant Resources Through Easements and Land Dedications. Encourage and obtain where possible Open Space Easements or other forms of land dedication to conserve as open space those areas containing hydrological, geological, or paleontological features of significant scenic or scientific value.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-6.1a (LCP) Continue to identify hydrological, geological, and paleontological features in the County, in addition to those currently identified, and continue to develop and maintain a countywide inventory for these resources and identify the location of these resources in the County GIS system. (Responsibility: CDID)

ARC-6.1b (LCP) Develop a program to protect unique hydrological, geological, and paleontological resources through the negotiation of Open Space Easements, other deed restrictions, conditions of development approval, and purchase as necessary and feasible. (Responsibility: CDID, Board of Supervisors)



GOAL ARC-7 TIMBER AND MINERAL RESOURCES

(LCP) Provide for the conservation and environmentally sound and managed economic use of timber and mineral resources to provide employment and income in Santa Cruz County while minimizing impacts to adjoining land uses and the environment.

OBJECTIVE ARC-7.1 TIMBER PRODUCTION

(LCP) To encourage the orderly and managed economic production of forest products on a sustained yield basis, to protect the scenic and ecological values of forested areas, including soil, water, and habitats, and to allow orderly timber production consistent with the least possible environmental impacts.

Policies

ARC-7.1.1 (LCP) Designation of Timberlands. Designate on the General Plan/LCP Resources and Constraints Maps (Appendix F) those timberlands that are devoted to and used for growing and harvesting timber and that are capable of producing an average annual volume of wood fiber of at least 15 cubic feet per acre.

ARC-7.1.2 (LCP) Uses Within Timber Production Zones. Allow the following types of uses compatible with Timber Production (TP) zoned land and other uses where allowed in accordance with the Timber Production ordinance (a Site Development Permit may be required in some cases):

- (1) The growing and harvesting of timber and other forest products, including Christmas trees, in conformance with the provisions of the Timber Production Zoning ordinance and the Forest Practice Act.
- (2) Watershed management.
- (3) Fish and wildlife habitat.
- (4) Grazing and other agricultural uses on that portion of the land not under timber production.
- (5) Outside the Coastal Zone, one single-family dwelling and utilities, with one associated Accessory Dwelling Unit and/or habitable and non-habitable accessory structures, subject to locational requirements and other requirements in the Zoning Ordinance.
- (6) Timber removal as necessary for the safe operation of public utility facilities.
- (7) Accessory structures incidental to timber, agricultural, or residential uses.

ARC-7.1.3 (LCP) Discretionary Uses Within Timber Production Zones. Allow the following types of uses with use permit approval, and other discretionary uses where allowed in accordance with the Timber Production ordinance. Discretionary uses must be consistent with the growing of a sustained yield tree crop, with the purposes of the Forest Taxation Reform Act of 1976 and the



Timber Production zone district and should be supported by a timber management plan or compatibility analysis submitted to the County of Santa Cruz, pursuant to the County Code.

- (1) Mineral production and mining operations, in conformance with the provisions of the Mining Regulations Ordinance.
- (2) Erection, construction, alteration, and maintenance of water and transmission facilities.
- (3) Outdoor recreation, educational or religious activities, in conformance with the provisions of the County's organized camp zoning regulations which do not conflict with the management of the parcel's timber resources.
- (4) Conversion to agricultural uses not exceeding ten percent of the total of the timber area on the parcel.
- (5) On parcels inside the Coastal Zone, one single family dwelling and Accessory Dwelling Unit subject to locational requirements and other requirements in the Zoning Ordinance.
- (6) Residential dwelling groups.
- (7) Timber processing and other related facilities.
- (8) Commercial cannabis activities outside the Coastal Zone only, within non-timbered portions of a site, subject to discretionary review and approval pursuant to all requirements of the non-retail commercial cannabis licensing ordinances, zoning ordinance, environmental regulations, coastal regulations, building code, and other applicable regulations, which shall include any applicable environmental review pursuant to Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code. A Timber Management Plan may be required as a requirement or condition of the Conditional Use Permit process. *See also Objective BE-3.6: Cannabis Industry. (Added by Resolution 88-2018)*

ARC-7.1.4 (LCP) Land Division and Density Requirements for Timber Production Zoned Lands. For land divisions of TP zoned lands, require new parcel sizes to be at least 160 gross acres in the Coastal Zone and 40 gross acres in other areas of the County, except as noted in Policy 7.1.5 below. Where development envelopes are clustered, require new parcel sizes to be an average of 40 gross acres in the Coastal Zone and 10 gross acres in other areas of the County.

For residential development on TP zoned lands where no land division is proposed, allow a maximum residential density of one dwelling unit per 160 gross acres in the Coastal Zone and 40 gross acres in other areas of the County. Where development envelopes are clustered, allow a maximum average residential density of one dwelling unit per 40 gross acres in the Coastal Zone and 10 gross acres in other areas of the County.

ARC-7.1.5 (LCP) Conditions for Clustered Development Envelopes on Timber Production Zoned Lands. In addition to the conditions listed in Policy ARC-7.1.6, the following conditions apply to the creation of new parcels below the minimum parcel size with clustered development envelopes pursuant to Policy ARC 7.1.4:



- (1) The timberland shall be managed as one unit under an approved Timber Management Plan for all timber harvest operations. The creation of such parcels shall be consistent with all policies of this section and provisions of the County Code, and requires approval by a four-fifths vote of the Board of Supervisors; and
- (2) The remainder of the property not included within the area of clustered development envelopes shall be held in common ownership, and timber rights shall be held by a designated property owner or individual.

ARC-7.1.6 (LCP) General Conditions for Development Proposals on Timber Production Zoned Lands. The following may be required in connection with any permitted development on Timber Production zoned lands in order to protect the timber production potential and ecological values of the site:

- (1) A Timber Management Plan, prepared by a Registered Professional Forester, submitted to and approved by the County for the entire land holding.
- (2) The individual designated as possessor of timber rights on the property shall enter into a binding contract with the Board of Supervisors to manage and harvest timber on the timberland and to abide by the provisions of the Timber Management Plan and/or Timber Harvest Plan.

ARC-7.1.7 (LCP) Location of Development on Timber Production Lands. Locate all new development on TP lands on a non-timbered portion of the property.

ARC-7.1.8 (LCP) Timber Resource Land Not Zoned Timber Production. Evaluate proposed land divisions and residential development permit applications on parcels larger than 20 gross acres designated Timber Resource on the General Plan and LCP Resources and Constraints Maps, but not zoned TP, for timber resource potential. Apply the TP land division and residential density requirement policies for any parcel found to have timber resources equivalent to TP parcels. Require, as a condition of any land division, rezoning to TP for parcels which have equivalent timber resources.

ARC-7.1.9 (LCP) Rezoning Lands to Timber Production. Encourage timberland owners to apply for Timber Production zoning where appropriate. Such re-zonings must be in accordance with the procedures set forth in the TP ordinance.

ARC-7.1.10 (LCP) Rezoning Lands from Timber Production. Do not support rezoning of timberland from TP to alternate zone districts unless it can be shown that the rezoning is consistent with the Forest Taxation Reform Act of 1976 and the County TP ordinance.

ARC-7.1.11 (LCP) Review of Timber Harvests. Require review of all timber harvests and conversions for conformance with Section 926 of the California Forest Practice Rules and with County regulations regarding land clearing, Sensitive Habitat protection, and other applicable regulations. Require the



approval of any applicable County permits prior to state approval of any timber harvest plan, to assure minimal environmental and neighborhood impacts. Deny all requests for “less than 3-acre conversions” as defined in Section 1104.1(a) of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations that cannot meet these standards.

ARC-7.1.12 (LCP) Timber Statement of Acknowledgment. As a condition of approval for any new land division or other development permit, require a Statement of Acknowledgement be recorded, or evidence that the statement has been made part of the parcel deed, for parcels adjacent to lands designated as Timber Resources on General Plan/LCP Resources and Constraints Maps. The purpose of the statement is to inform property owners about adjacent timber practices, and advise them to be prepared to accept such inconvenience or discomfort from normal timber operations.

ARC-7.1.13 (LCP) Zone Districts Where Timber Harvesting is Allowed. Allow timber harvesting and associated operations, requiring approval of a Timber Harvesting Plan by the California Department of Forestry, only in the Timber Production (TP), Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PR) (except in the coastal zone), Mineral Extraction Industrial (M-3), and the Commercial Agriculture (CA) (except in the coastal zone) zone districts.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-7.1a (LCP) Continue to apply the following policies when reviewing timber harvest plans:

- (1) Where applicable, do not support, and/or recommend denial, of a timber harvest plan that has the potential for cumulative adverse impacts to water quality, traffic, wildlife or other affected resources;
- (2) Encourage shared road access between adjacent timber owners; and
- (3) Allow for selecting the haul route which minimizes neighborhood impacts.

(Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, CDID)

ARC-7.1b(LCP) Ensure that the County’s concerns regarding individual timber harvests are addressed through active participation in review team meetings and California Department of Forestry public hearings. (Responsibility: CDID, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-7.1c (LCP) Provide appropriate review of all timber-related activities, including conversions, harvests, and vegetation management projects proposed by state agencies, in accordance with all applicable local, state and federal regulations and policies. (Responsibility: CDID)

ARC-7.1d (LCP) Periodically review and update policies and regulations where needed to comply with changes in state laws related to timber harvest activities. (Responsibility: CDID)



Photo Credit: Jay Mantri on Unsplash

OBJECTIVE ARC-7.2 MINERAL RESOURCES

(LCP) To allow the orderly and managed economic extraction of minerals with a minimal adverse impact on environmental and scenic resources and surrounding residential land uses in accordance with state law; to require reclamation of quarry sites concurrently with the extraction of the mineral resource and the completion of quarry operations in any specific area to the greatest extent feasible; and to ensure that the rehabilitation and future use of quarry sites are in accordance with safety, conservation, habitat preservation, restoration and open space values and state mining laws found in PRC section 2710 et. seq. and CCR section 3675-3676.

Policies

ARC-7.2.1 (LCP) Identification of Mineral Resource Areas. Areas classified by the State Geologist and designated by the State Mining and Geology Board as Regionally or Statewide Significant Mineral Resource Areas¹ and areas classified by the State as MRZ-2 Zones (areas

¹ Mineral Resources are classified via Special Report 146 Part IV, Mineral Land Classification: Aggregate Materials in the San Francisco-Monterey Bay Area; and designated by the State Mining and Geology Board via the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) Designation Report No. 7, Designation of



containing significant mineral deposits), excluding those areas with existing land uses and/or land use designations which conflict with mineral resource extraction, are shown on the General Plan/LCP Resources and Constraints Maps (Appendix F) as Mineral Resource lands.

ARC-7.2.2 (LCP) Uses in Mineral Resource Areas. Lands within Mineral Resource areas, as identified on the County General Plan/LCP Resources and Constraints Maps, shall be planned and used in ways that support future mineral extraction. Development on Mineral Resource lands shall be limited to mining and mining-related uses and other uses compatible with mining.

Uses compatible with future mining operations require a low public or private investment in structures and land improvements, facilitating future mining because of the low economic value of the land and its improvements. Examples of such uses include large-lot rural development, recreation (public and commercial), agriculture and grazing, timber operations, and open space.

Land uses inherently incompatible with mining require a high public or private investment in structures and land improvements inhibiting future mining because of the higher economic value of the land and improvements. Examples of incompatible uses include high-density residential development, public facilities, commercial uses, and extensive industrial uses.

ARC-7.2.3 Review of Incompatible Uses. Under special circumstances, the County may permit the development of incompatible uses on mineral resource areas. In such cases, the proposed use shall be reviewed to determine whether it would threaten future mineral extraction. Existing area development, existing and planned public infrastructure and other land use policies for the area shall be considered in making this determination. Buffer areas and visual screening may be required to mitigate impacts between mining and proposed adjacent land uses.

ARC-7.2.4 Minimizing Conflicts Between New Development and Mineral Resource Areas. Where a proposed land use has been determined to threaten the potential to extract minerals, the County shall require all reasonable and feasible mitigations to avoid or minimize conflicts between the proposed use and future development of the mineral resource. The County shall make written findings in support of its decision to permit such a use, in accordance with the requirements of the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act.

ARC-7.2.5 (LCP) Land Division and Density Requirements on Mineral Resource Land. Require a minimum size of 40 gross acres per parcel for land divisions, and allow a maximum residential density of one dwelling unit per 40 gross acres per existing parcel of record on Mineral Resource areas as designated on the General Plan/LCP Resources and Constraints Maps.

Regionally Significant Construction Aggregate Resource Areas in the South San Francisco Bay, North San Francisco Bay, Monterey Bay Production – Consumption Regions.



ARC-7.2.6 (LCP) Quarry (Q) Land Use Designation. The Quarry (Q) designation shall characterize sites where orderly extraction or reclamation of mineral resources is ongoing, while minimizing adverse impacts on environmental and scenic resources, and surrounding residential land uses. Implement the Quarry designation through the Mineral Extraction Industrial (M-3) Zone District.

ARC-7.2.7 (LCP) Siting of Quarries Identify on the General Plan/LCP Land Use Designation Maps, the sites of existing operating facilities for quarries (Figure 5-5, Quarry Sites). Any change in use or major expansion shall be subject to full environmental and economic analysis and review by the County for the adequacy and appropriateness of the site for the proposed use and shall be subject to a General Plan and LCP amendment.

ARC-7.2.8 (LCP) Operation of Existing Quarries Allow continued operation of existing quarries and allow expansion within areas designated as Mineral Resources including those located in the Coastal Zone, where impacts of environmental and scenic resources and surrounding residential uses can be mitigated. Require that existing quarries meet the requirements of the County's Mining ordinance. Require that all mining operations maintain and implement a County approved reclamation plan as required under the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) and ensure that the rehabilitation and future uses of depleted quarry sites are in accordance with conservation and open space values.

ARC-7.2.9 Environmentally Sound Quarry Operations. Require environmentally sound quarry operations through compliance with the County Mining ordinance. Require environmental impact assessments, implementation of approved reclamation plans, and posting of adequate financial security insuring the reclamation of mined areas.

ARC-7.2.10 Protection of Riparian Corridors and Wetlands. Carefully control the impacts of mineral extraction or processing operations adjacent to riparian corridors in accordance with the provisions of the Riparian Corridor and Wetlands Protection ordinance.

ARC-7.2.11 New or Expanded Quarries. Require any new or expanded mining operation to obtain a Mining Approval, Mining Certificate of Compliance, and a reclamation plan, according to the requirements of the County's Mining ordinance and applicable provisions of state law.

ARC-7.2.12 Environmental Review for New Quarries. Require full environmental impact analysis and amendment of the General Plan and LCP Land Use Plan to establish new quarries outside the areas designated as Mineral Resource Areas on the General Plan and LCP Resources and Constraints Maps. Do not allow new quarries in the Bonny Doon or North Coast Planning Areas.



ARC-7.2.13 (LCP) Resource Based Industry Within the Coastal Zone. Require an LCP amendment for any new resource-based industry within the Coastal Zone on land which is not designated for such use. Require that the following findings be met as conditions of any amendment.

- (1) The site is adequate and appropriate for the proposed use;
- (2) The project is compatible with available service infrastructure, surrounding uses, and the existing local economy; and
- (3) The development is consistent with all applicable LCP resource protection policies and use priorities.

See also Policy BE-5.1.10: Industrial Development in the Coastal Zone and Implementation Strategy BE-5.1g.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-7.2a Maintain the County Mining ordinance and apply Mineral Extraction (M-3) Zoning, after identification, to the designated Mineral Resource areas to identify and protect those lands for quarry use and allow extraction operations pursuant to a Mining Approval. (Responsibility: CDID, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-7.2b Use all feasible approaches to reclaim the sites of abandoned quarries, such as the large site of the depleted Kaiser Olympia Quarry, and encourage and work with the owners of such properties to achieve reclamation. (Responsibility: Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-7.2c Ensure reclamation of quarries for reuse when mining use is phased out in accordance with the Santa Cruz County Mining ordinance and the SMARA. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors)

ARC-7.2d Continue to maintain and update the County Mineral Resources Maps based on currently available information, including state designated and classified mineral areas. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, CDID)



GOAL ARC-8 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Promote the identification and protection of the cultural heritage of Santa Cruz County, including Native American cultural resources, archaeological sites, and historical resources.

OBJECTIVE ARC-8.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES + NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURAL RESOURCES

(LCP)To protect and preserve archaeological sites and Native American cultural resources for their scientific, educational and cultural values, and for their value as local heritage and significance to Native Americans, and preserve the confidentiality of these resources.

Policies

ARC-8.1.1 (LCP) Evaluation of Native American Cultural Sites.

Protect all archaeological resources until they can be evaluated. Prohibit any disturbance of Native American Cultural Sites, archaeological sites, or identified tribal cultural resources without an appropriate permit. Maintain the Native American Cultural Sites ordinance.

ARC-8.1.2 (LCP) Site Surveys. Require an archaeological site survey (surface reconnaissance) as part of the environmental review process for all projects with very high site potential within the Archaeological Sensitive Areas, as designated on the General Plan/LCP Resources and Constraints Maps (Appendix F).

ARC-8.1.3 (LCP) Development Around Archaeological Resources. Protect identified archaeological resources from development by restricting improvements and grading activities to portions of the property not containing these resources, where feasible, or by preservation of the archaeological site through project design and/or use restrictions as determined by a professional archaeologist, and through tribal consultations where required.

Defining Cultural Resources

Archaeological Sites are “places where material remains of past human life, culture and activities are located.” These sites can contain artifacts from historic settlements or from Native Americans.

Native American cultural resources include:

- Archaeological sites containing Native American artifacts;
- *Tribal Cultural Resources*, including any site feature, place, cultural landscape, sacred place or object of value to a Native American Tribe, that is eligible for listing on the California Register of Historic Resources or County Historic Resources Inventory, or is identified by the County as a Tribal Cultural Resource. (Public Resources Code Section 21074)



ARC-8.1.4 (LCP) Archaeological Evaluations. Require the applicant for development proposals on any identified archaeological site to provide an evaluation, by a certified archaeologist, of the significance of the resource and what protective measures are necessary to preserve important and unique archaeological sites and to mitigate any impacts of proposed development consistent with General Plan /LCP Land Use Plan objectives and policies and California state law. Avoidance shall be the preferred mitigation measure.

ARC-8.1.5 Accidental Discovery of Archaeological Resources. If archaeological resources or human remains are discovered accidentally during grading or construction, the activity shall cease and the property owner shall notify the proper authority in accordance with the Native American Cultural Sites ordinance.

ARC-8.1.6 (LCP) Environmental Review. Environmental review shall be required for any project with the potential to significantly impact archaeological or tribal cultural resources.

ARC-8.1.7 (LCP) Consultation for Discretionary Projects. The County shall consult with any California Native American tribe that requests notice of projects in the geographic area traditionally affiliated with the tribe prior to the release of a Negative Declaration or Environmental Impact Report, pursuant to Public Resources Code sections 21073 and 21080. If tribal cultural resources are identified, the County shall work with the affected tribe to identify appropriate mitigation measures to protect the resource.

ARC-8.1.8 (LCP) Consultation for General Plan Amendments. The County shall consult with California Native American tribes as identified by the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) prior to an amendment or update to the General Plan and prior to the designation of open space in order to identify and protect Native American cultural resources on land affected by the proposal, pursuant to California Government Code Section 65352.3.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-8.1a (LCP) Update the archaeological resource areas identified in the County GIS system as new archaeological sites are identified, while keeping the location of archaeological sites confidential. Maintain a liaison to the California Office of Historic Preservation, the Northwest Information Center, and the NAHC. (Responsibility: Planning Commission, CDID)

ARC-8.1b Consult with local tribes as identified by the NAHC to identify tribal cultural resources, archaeological sites, and other resources in the County of significance to local tribes, and develop strategies to protect the resources and preserve confidentiality. (Responsibility: CDID, NAHC, local Tribes)

ARC-8.1c Review and update County policies, regulations and procedures to ensure consistency with state and federal laws regarding tribal consultations, CEQA review of



archaeological resources and tribal cultural resources, NAHC recommendations for cultural resources assessments, and other laws protecting Native American cultural resources. (Responsibility: CDID, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-8.1d Review and update County policies, regulations and procedures to ensure consistency with state and federal laws to provide clear regulations and procedures for historic archaeological resources. (Responsibility: CDID, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-8.1e (LCP) Maintain and strengthen, where appropriate, the Native American Cultural Sites ordinance so that it will continue to assure:

- (1) The early identification of potential sites;
- (2) The evaluation of each potential site prior to project approval; and
- (3) The provision of procedures and permit conditions to preserve the resource and mitigate any adverse impacts through project design and management. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Planning Department)

ARC-8.1f Nominate examples of archaeological resources to the California or National Register. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, Parks and Recreation Commission, California Office of Historic Preservation, NAHC)

ARC-8.1g Include appropriate archaeological resources, tribal cultural resources, and other California Native American prehistoric, archaeological, cultural, spiritual, and ceremonial places in the public domain through donations or through purchase as part of open space and other programs. Consult with Native American tribes as identified by the NAHC prior to designating any Native American resources as open space in order to treat the resource appropriately and preserve confidentiality, in accordance with California Government Code Section 65562.5. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, Parks and Recreation Commission)

ARC-8.1h Encourage educational programs on the need for preservation of archaeological resources and tribal cultural resources, consulting with local tribes as appropriate. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, Planning Department, NAHC, Amah Mutsun Tribal Band)



OBJECTIVE ARC-8.2 HISTORIC RESOURCES

To protect and where possible restore buildings, sites and districts of historic significance to preserve the rich cultural heritage of the community.

Policies

ARC-8.2.1 Historic Preservation Program. Maintain, update, and strengthen, where appropriate, the County Historic Resource Preservation ordinance with the assistance of the Historic Resources Commission in accordance with the State Office of Historic Preservation.

ARC-8.2.2 Historic Resources Inventory. Maintain and update a County Historic Resources Inventory to describe those historic structures, objects, properties, sites, and districts which have been designated by the Board of Supervisors for protection of their heritage values.

ARC-8.2.3 Development Activities. For development activities on property containing historic resources, require protection, enhancement, and/or preservation of the historic, cultural, architectural, engineering, or aesthetic values of the resource consistent with regulations in the Historic Preservation ordinance as determined by the Historic Resources Commission.

ARC-8.2.4 Historic Resources Commission Review. Require that applicants for development proposals on property containing a designated historic resource submit plans for the protection and preservation of the historic resource values to the Historic Resources Commission for its review and approval; require an evaluation and report by a professional historian or a cultural resources consultant when required by the Commission. To expedite the review process, allow minor alterations to be reviewed by trained County Staff.

ARC-8.2.5 Encourage Protection of Historic Structures. Encourage and support public and private efforts to protect and restore historic structures and to continue their use as an integral part of the community.

See also Policy PPF-2.3.2: Cultural and Historical Resources.

ARC-8.2.6 Maintain Designation as a Certified Local Government. Support existing and further develop local historic resource programs in order to maintain the California State Department of Parks and Recreation's designation of Santa Cruz County as a Certified Local Government (CLG).

ARC-8.2.7 Historic Resource Property Maintenance. Encourage the maintenance and upkeep of historic resources to avoid the need for major rehabilitation and to reduce the risks of demolition, loss through fire or neglect, or impacts from natural disasters.

ARC-8.2.8 Environmental Review. Environmental review shall be required for any project with the potential to significantly impact historic resources.



*Hihn Apple Packing Shed, Historic Resource in Aptos Village
Photo credit: Santa Cruz County*

Implementation Strategies

ARC-8.2a Continue to sponsor investigative research to identify new historic resources and maintain and update an inventory of historic structures, objects, sites, and districts of significance to Santa Cruz County. Seek funding for updating the Santa Cruz County Historic Resources Inventory, prioritizing surveys in areas that have not been updated recently. (Responsibility: Historical Resources Commission, Board of Supervisors, CDID)

ARC-8.2b Update information on the Planning Department website regarding resources and incentives available to property owners to maintain and improve historic properties, including existing Zoning incentives, the California Historic Building Code, grants, and tax incentives. (Responsibility: CDID)

ARC-8.2c Encourage educational programs on historic resources, including educational programs regarding historic and cultural resources in the County Parks system. (Responsibility: CDID; Historic Resources Commission; local historic museums; Parks Department)

See also policies BE-3.4.6; Heritage Tourism and PPF-2.3.3: Interpretive Programs.

ARC-8.2d Nominate County historic resources to appropriate registries such as the California or National Register. (Responsibility: Historic Resources Commission, CDID)

ARC-8.2e Attempt to include appropriate historic resources in the public domain through donations or through purchase as part of open space and other programs. (Responsibility: Historic Resources Commission, CDID, Board of Supervisors)

See also Policy PPF-2.3.2: Cultural and Historical Resources.



ARC-8.2f Investigate sources of funding for private and public historic restoration and make such information available to the public. (Responsibility: Historic Resources Commission, County Historic Museums, CDID, County Administrative Office)

ARC-8.2g Apply the State Historic Building Code to County designated historic buildings, (Responsibility: CDID, Historic Resources Commission, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-8.2h Consider applying for grant funds and updating the County Historic Context Statement to provide a more complete context with which to evaluate the significance of historic properties and assist in identifying properties that may qualify for listing on the Historic Resources Inventory. (Responsibility: CDID, Historic Resources Commission, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-8.2i Consider adoption of the Mills Act, to grant local property tax subsidies to recognized historic structures to encourage rehabilitation. (Responsibility: CDID, Historic Resources Commission, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-8.2j Inventory County-owned properties of historic significance and develop plans for their protection, restoration, or adaptive reuse. (Responsibility: CDID; Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources)

ARC-8.2k Where possible, provide incentives to property owners to foster historic preservation. Maintain and consider revising County zoning regulations to include allowances for façade easements, favorable tax assessments such as taxing at pre-rehabilitation values, parking reductions, transfer of development rights, expanded and greater flexibility for uses allowed, density bonuses, and design assistance. Study the zoning of historic buildings to guard against economic incentives to demolish said buildings for more intense development, and to develop incentives for retaining and maintaining historic resources. (Responsibility: CDID, Historic Resources Commission, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-8.2l Participate in grants-in-aid programs as they become available to help finance restoration projects and stimulate the economic vitality of historic neighborhoods. (Responsibility: CDID, Historic Resources Commission, County Administrative Office)

ARC-8.2m Maintain deed recordation of properties listed in the County Historic Resources Inventory to ensure that knowledge of the historic status of the property is known to all parties at the time of the sale. (Responsibility: CDID, Office of the Recorder)

ARC-8.2n Provide on-going training of Planning and Building Staff in the knowledge and use of the California Historic Building Code. (Responsibility: CDID)



ARC-8.2o Consider designation of historic districts in areas such as Soquel Village, Boulder Creek Churches Hill, Pasatiempo and Aptos Village, where community support exists for such designations. Provide design guidelines to ensure compatible infill by setting standards for elements such as height, scale, and roof line for new construction and additions. (Responsibility: CDID, Historic Resources Commission)

ARC-8.2p Support local museums and other local organizations involved in historic preservation to increase community awareness and appreciation of the value and importance of historic preservation. (Responsibility: Historic Resources Commission. CDID; Parks Department)

ARC-8.2q Continue the review of proposed applications for demolition of any structure more than 50 years old that has not been previously surveyed for historic significance, and require a historic report prepared by a qualified historic consultant for structures that may have the potential to qualify as a historic resource as determined by County Planning staff. (Responsibility: CDID)



Felton Covered Bridge, on the National Register of Historic Places



Photo Credit: Santa Cruz County

OPEN SPACE

GOAL ARC-9 OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

(LCP) Preserve open space land for current and future generations to assure and conserve the continued availability of land for agriculture, the enjoyment of scenic beauty, outdoor recreation, and the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, and to support the County's economy.

OBJECTIVE ARC-9.1 OPEN SPACE PLAN

(LCP) To provide and maintain a comprehensive long-range plan for the unincorporated areas of the County to preserve open space land for natural resources, outdoor recreation, public health and safety, and tribal resources.

ARC-9.1.1 (LCP) Open Space Plan Content. Maintain an Open Space Plan consisting of General Plan/LCP policies and implementing SCCC regulations to preserve land that is designated or zoned as open space. The Open Space Plan consists of this Element; goals, objectives and policies in the Parks, Recreation and Public Facilities Element related to Parks and Recreation; and other policies and regulations protecting the open space value of other land that is essentially undeveloped and devoted to open space uses as identified in the County Open Space Inventory (Table 5-3). The Open Space Inventory includes land that is designated or zoned for open space uses; other privately or publicly owned land with open space easements; and mapped natural resource areas for natural resources conservation, sustainable resource management, outdoor recreation, and public health and safety.

ARC-9.1.2 (LCP) Open Space for Natural Resources Conservation. Maintain policies that generally limit development within Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas to resource-dependent uses. Protect other sensitive habitats, requiring clustered development, open space easements where appropriate, limitation on land divisions, and other appropriate development guidance and limitations.

See policies ARC-3.1.3: Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas and ARC-3.1.7: Site Design and Use Regulations.

ARC-9.1.3 (LCP) Open Space for Natural Resources Management. Limit allowable uses, development density and intensity, and maintain resource-appropriate minimum parcel sizes in new land divisions as necessary to support the long-term sustainable use and management of timber, mineral and water resource lands, including Least Disturbed Watersheds. Allow for low-intensity open space uses where compatible with sustainable management of the resource.



See also objectives ARC-4.2: Watershed Protection, ARC-4.5: Groundwater Protection + Overdraft, ARC-7.1: Timber Production, and ARC-7.2: Mineral Resources.

Table 5-3: Open Space Inventory	
Land Use Designation, Zone District, or Mapped Resource	Identification
Designated Open Space	
Resource Conservation Designation (O-C)	County GIS
Urban Open Space Designation (O-U)	County GIS
Open Space Easement Combining Zone District (O)	County GIS
Agricultural Preserve and Farmland Security Combining Zone District (P)	County GIS
Lakes, Reservoir, Lagoon Designation (O-L)	County GIS
Other privately or publicly-owned land with Open Space easements	California Protected Areas database: https://www.calands.org/cced/
Open Space for Natural Resources Conservation	
Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (Mapped Resources)	County GIS*
Mapped Grasslands and Special forests (Mapped Resources)	County GIS*
Open Space for Sustainable Resource Management	
Timber Resources (Mapped Resource)	County GIS
Water Supply Watersheds (Mapped Resource)	County GIS
Least Disturbed Watersheds (Mapped Resource)	County GIS
Primary Groundwater Recharge Areas (Mapped Resource)	County GIS
Open Space for Outdoor Recreation	
Parks, Recreation and Open Space Designation (O-R)	County GIS
Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PR) District	County GIS
Designated Park Site Combining District (D)	County GIS
Open Space for Public Health and Safety	
Floodways (Mapped Resource)	County GIS
Fault Zones (Mapped Resource)	County GIS

* The County GIS identifies the potential occurrence of sensitive habitat on a parcel. The presence of sensitive habitat on a site is determined through a biotic assessment by the County biologist.



ARC-9.1.4 (LCP) Preserving Agricultural Lands for Open Space. Maintain policies that preserve commercial agricultural lands for agricultural use, require large minimum lot sizes, and restrict conversion of commercial agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses, in order to maintain open-space scenic character in rural areas.

See Objective ARC-1.1: Preserve Commercial Agricultural Lands for Agricultural Use, Objective ARC-1.2: Land Divisions of Commercial Agricultural Lands, and Objective ARC-1.3: Prevent the Conversion of Commercial Agricultural Land.



*Agricultural fields in Corralitos
Photo credit: Santa Cruz County*

ARC-9.1.5 (LCP) Open Space for Outdoor Recreation. Support the acquisition and maintenance of parks and open space areas for outdoor recreation, with low-intensity land uses and facilities that enhance recreational opportunities and meet the needs of all community residents while maintaining the scenic and open space character of these areas.

See Chapter 7: Parks, Recreation + Public Facilities, including Objective PPF-1.2: Parks, Recreation + Open Space; Objective PPF-2.1: Parks + Recreation Access; and Policy PPF-2.5.1: Open Space and Trail Easements.

ARC-9.1.6 (LCP) Open Space for Public Health and Safety. Maintain policies and regulations to protect public health and safety in potentially hazardous areas, with special standards for development in or near fault zones, steep slopes, floodways, and fire hazard areas.



See Chapter 6: Public Safety Element and implementing regulations in SCCC Chapters 13.10, 16.10 and 16.20.

ARC-9.1.7 (LCP) (EJ) Open Space for Tribal Resources. Consult with Native American tribes to identify tribal lands and cultural resources on public lands that may be appropriate to preserve as open spaces pursuant to Government Code 65560(b)(6), and to identify appropriate strategies to preserve confidentiality regarding the location and use of these resources. Consult with Native American tribes prior to designating any lands as open space.

See Implementation Strategy ARC-8.1b and Policy PPF-2.3.2: Cultural and Historical Resources.

ARC-9.1.8 (LCP) Open Space for Scenic Resources. Maintain policies and regulations for development to protect the character of open space areas valued for their scenic qualities, including natural buffer areas and ridgetops; unique hydrological, palaeontologic, and geologic features; agricultural fields; forests; and ocean vistas, beaches and coastal bluffs.

See also Objective ARC- 5.1: Protection of Visual Resources and Policy ARC-9.2.4: Development Within Urban Open Space Areas.

ARC-9.1.9 (LCP) Open Space in Residential Neighborhoods. Maintain low development densities and intensities in rural residential neighborhoods and encourage clustered development to preserve open space and scenic character in rural areas. Establish and maintain appropriate standards for private and common open spaces for urban developments.

See also Objective BE-1.1: Urban Growth + Rural Preservation, Policy BE-4.1.6: Quality Open Space, Policy BE-4.2.3, Clustered Building Siting, and Objective PPF-2.1: Parks + Recreation Access.

ARC-9.1.10 (LCP) Supporting Open Space in Rural Areas. Support policies allowing for greater development intensity at appropriate locations within the USL and RSL, in order to preserve open space, reduce pressures to expand the urban and rural services lines, and to prevent leapfrog development outside of urbanized areas.

See also Objective BE-1.3: Vibrant Activity Centers.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-9.1a Maintain and update the Open Space Inventory, to reflect updated mapping of parcels within Sensitive Habitat Areas and other mapping updates, and changes to the status of parcels under conservation or open space easements. (Responsibility: CDID, Planning Commission)



ARC-9.1b Review zoning of all parcels under an open space or conservation easement and ensure that such parcels are appropriately zoned with the Open Space (O) Combining District, or rezoned to a more appropriate zoning district. (Responsibility: CDID, Planning Commission)

ARC-9.1c Prioritize open space dedications of land that may be important to adaption of sensitive species to climate change, including potential refuges and wildlife corridors. Consider protecting, and/or assisting non-profit organizations to protect such habitat through open space or conservation easements, including Habitat Conservation Plans. (Responsibility: CDID, Board of Supervisors, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, local conservation organizations)

See also the County's Climate Action Strategy, and Implementation Strategy ARC-3.1o.

ARC-9.1d Review any proposed changes to policies and regulations limiting density and intensity of development or other policy changes affecting categories of land identified in the Open Space Inventory to ensure the continued protection of the extent and quality of open space. (Responsibility: CDID, Planning Commission)

ARC-9.1e Support efforts by local Native American Tribes to protect as open space lands identified as important sacred or cultural sites. (Responsibility: CDID, NAHC, Board of Supervisors)



OBJECTIVE ARC-9.2 OPEN SPACE DESIGNATION

(LCP) To identify, designate and preserve in open space uses lands that are publicly or privately held for conservation purposes, and lands that are not suited to development due to the presence of natural resource values or physical development hazards.

Policies

ARC-9.2.1 (LCP) Development Density and Intensity on Designated Open Space Land. Limit development density and intensity on land designated as Urban Open Space (O-U), Resource Conservation (O-C), or Lakes, Reservoirs, and Lagoons (O-L), as shown in Table 5-4, in order to protect the open space character. Ensure that any development is consistent with policies protecting scenic resources, natural resources, and open space, and with the provisions of any open space contract or easement.

Table 5-4: Development Density + Intensity on Open Space Land				
Land Use Designation	Building Intensity		Maximum Population Density ³	Implementing Zone Districts
	Max. Building Height ¹	Estimated Lot Coverage ²		
Urban Open Space (O-U)	35 feet	0% - 10%	1 dwelling/ parcel	PR
Resource Conservation (O-C)	35 feet	0% - 5%	10-40 net developable acres / unit	PR, TP, A
Lakes, Reservoirs, Lagoons (O-L)	N/A	0%	N/A	PR

¹ Maximum building height for each site is determined through project review based on the specific use proposed, and any height restrictions provided in any open space or conservation easement.
² Lot coverage is provided as an estimated range and is not tied to any development standard or requirement. Allowable lot coverage at a site that is designated as Open Space is determined by the provisions of any open space or conservation easement, site conditions, including environmental resources and constraints, and availability of developable land outside the open space areas.
³ See policies ARC-9.2.4 and ARC-9.2.7 regarding when a single-family dwelling may be permitted on a parcel with an Urban Open Space (O-U) or Resource Conservation (O-C) Land Use Designation.

ARC-9.2.2 (LCP) Designation of Urban Open Space Lands (O-U). Designate Urban Open Space (O-U) areas on the General Plan/LCP Land Use Designation Maps to identify those lands within the Urban Services Line and Rural Services Line that are either not appropriate for development or are less suitable for development due to the presence of one or more of the following resources or constraints:

- (1) Coastal bluffs and beaches;



- (2) Coastal lagoons, wetlands and marshes;
- (3) Riparian corridors;
- (4) Floodways;
- (5) Wooded ravines and gulches which separate and buffer areas of development;
- (6) Slopes over 30 percent; and
- (7) Sensitive wildlife habitat areas and biotic resource areas.

ARC-9.2.3 (LCP) Development on Parcels with Urban Open Space (O-U) and Other Land Use Designations. Allow development, including clustering of development potential, on portions of the parcel with a land use designation other than O-U, to the extent specifically provided for by the General Plan/LCP Land Use Plan policies governing natural resources and public health and safety.

ARC-9.2.4 (LCP) Development Within Urban Open Space Areas. Consider development within areas identified as Urban Open Space only when consistent with all applicable resource protection and hazard mitigation policies, and only in the following circumstances:

- (1) For one single-family dwelling or other limited-scale use consistent with the adjacent General Plan/LCP Land Use Plan designation on an existing parcel of record if the parcel does not contain other areas for development that are not designated O-U, and if it is not possible to relocate facilities elsewhere on the property.
- (2) For other activities when the use is consistent with the maintenance of the area as open space, such as recreational use, habitat restoration, public/quasi-public uses and facilities, or flood or drainage control facilities.
- (3) For the location of service infrastructure when it cannot be placed in other locations out of the protected use areas.

ARC-9.2.5 (LCP) Mitigating Development Impacts. Require full mitigation of all potential adverse impacts associated with developments located in Urban Open Space areas.

ARC-9.2.6 (LCP) Designation of Resource Conservation Lands (O-C). Designate Resource Conservation areas on the General Plan/LCP Land Use Designation Maps to identify those lands which are publicly or privately held for conservation purposes (See Appendix F: Natural Resource and Environmental Hazard Areas: Maps and Development Constraints). These preservation lands shall include significant open space lands in the rural areas of the County for the protection of natural resources and habitats, the managed production of resources, outdoor recreational opportunities and protection of public health and safety. Consider the following high priorities:

- (1) Expansion of established preserves, parks or open space areas and connections between existing preserved lands.



- (2) Areas with significant biological, scenic or other natural resource value which are not adequately protected by current County or other ordinances.

See also *Objective PPF-1.2: Parks, Recreation + Open Space (O-R)*.

ARC-9.2.7 (LCP) Density and Parcel Size Determination for Resource Conservation Lands. On privately owned lands designated Resource Conservation, allow residential development at the same densities allowed by Policy BE-2.2.2 for the Mountain Residential Land Use Designation, where consistent with any open space or conservation easement.

ARC-9.2.8 (LCP) Designation of Lakes, Reservoirs, and Lagoons (O-L). Designate Lakes, Reservoirs, and Lagoons as O-L on the General Plan/LCP Land Use Designation Maps, and identify as areas not suited to development. Allow only resource-dependent uses which protect the water quality and habitat values.

Implementation Strategies

ARC-9.2a (LCP) Continue using open space and conservation easements and other methods to help preserve urban and rural open space areas. Review and revise the Open Space Combining District ordinance and/or existing open space easements and contracts to clarify uses allowed on properties containing open space easements. (Responsibility: CDID, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors)

ARC-9.2b (LCP) Provide additional guidance in the County Code regarding limited scale uses and appropriate public/quasi-public uses that are appropriate on Urban Open Space lands. (Responsibility: CDID, Parks Department)

ARC-9.2c (LCP) Evaluate zone districts in addition to the Parks, Recreation and Open Space District that may be compatible with the O-U designation. In addition, allow split zonings on sites where only a portion of the site is designated as O-U, to provide appropriate protection to the open space areas while also allowing appropriate development on portions of the site without the open space designation. (Responsibility: CDID, Parks Department)

ARC-9.2d (LCP) Review the placement of the O-U designation on parcels, and confirm that the designation corresponds to the presence of resources and constraints identified in Policy ARC-9.2.2. Consider updating land use designations on specific parcels as appropriate. (Responsibility: CDID)

ARC-9.2e (LCP) As appropriate and necessary, develop an integrated program involving land acquisition, conservation and open space easements, transfer or purchase of development credits, development agreements, lease-back agreements and other mechanisms to achieve



open space protection objectives. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, CDID)

ARC-9.2f (LCP) Work with all relevant government agencies such as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, non-profit groups, the Santa Cruz County Land Trust, and private landowners to secure funding and achieve open space objectives, including the acquisition of fee title or easement interests by land trusts, government agencies, and conservancies from willing landowners, while balancing land owner needs. (Responsibility: Board of Supervisors, Planning Department, other agencies and conservation organizations)