



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY **CONSERVATION BLUEPRINT**

THE NEED FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO CONSERVATION

Santa Barbara County is a special place with unmatched scenery, abundant recreation opportunities, incredible diversity of plants and animals, and productive agricultural lands – all of which contribute to our economy and quality of life. County residents have been good stewards of these resources with a long history of effective land management, conservation and environmental protection. Yet, there is no comprehensive compilation of the natural resources and land assets in the county.

THE OPPORTUNITY

With increasing pressure to accommodate population growth on open space and agricultural lands, along with the new realities of climate change, it is critical that we develop a collective vision for the future of our community's most important wild and working landscapes, and tools and strategies for how to move toward that vision. Our first step will be the creation of a comprehensive countywide atlas of local resources that reflects our shared values and objectives for keeping Santa Barbara County a beautiful, desirable and healthy place to live and work. We are launching a data gathering and community engagement process leading to a **CONSERVATION BLUEPRINT** that will provide a science based decision-making platform for conservation and land protection.

PROJECT LEADERS

The Santa Barbara County **CONSERVATION BLUEPRINT** is being developed in partnership with Santa Barbara Foundation's LEAF Initiative (Landscapes, Ecosystems, Agriculture, Food Systems), the Cachuma Resource Conservation District, and the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County. The Blueprint is funded by a consortium of foundations and donors through the Land Trust and the LEAF Initiative fund.

APPROACH

Over the course of 18-24 months, an 'atlas' describing natural resources and land assets in Santa Barbara County will be developed with community input. The information will be presented in a report and through an online data portal with the ability to view and analyze data for a wide range of end users. The data portal will allow for all of the community to participate in informed discussions on shared values and community needs, such as protecting our wildlands, conserving water resources, sustaining agricultural lands, and providing recreational and cultural opportunities.

POTENTIAL OUTCOMES

We anticipate a wide range of stakeholders utilizing the atlas and the online data portal for their own strategies and goals. We also hope to inspire new partnerships and greater collaboration among conservation practitioners, developers, landowners and managers, farmers and ranchers, planners, housing advocates, energy advocates, and conservation funders. There are many potential outcomes from the inclusive community process, but many agree that this project will be transformational for our region.

SUCCESS STORIES FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES

BAY AREA CONSERVATION LANDS NETWORK

The Network established conservation priorities across San Francisco Bay area counties; increased cross agency focus on common values and threats to conservation; and fostered conservation of over 100,000 acres of land in the first 3 years.

SANTA CLARA VALLEY

The Open Space Authority's 'Greenprint' identified conservation priorities, increased public understanding of conservation trade-offs, and fostered conservation partnerships that led to passage of an Open Space, Habitat, Clean Water and Public Access measure that generated funding for implementation.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Their conservation planning 'Blueprint' is the accepted frame of reference for most development and conservation decisions. It is described as 'transformational' for uniting different aspects of their community behind a strategic approach.



The Cachuma Resource Conservation District was founded in 1944 – one of the first RCDs in California. Their mission is to promote land stewardship ethics that result in long-term, sustainable use of natural resources while protecting and enhancing the environment. For more information, visit: www.rcdsantabarbara.org



The Land Trust works to preserve and enhance our county's natural open spaces and agricultural heritage for present and future generations. Since its inception in 1985 the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County has helped to preserve over 24,000 acres of natural resource and agricultural land. For more information, visit: www.sblandtrust.org



The Santa Barbara Foundation is committed to building philanthropy, strengthening the nonprofit sector and solving community problems. The foundation has launched the LEAF Initiative to address landscapes, ecosystems, agriculture and food systems in our county. For more information, visit: www.sbfoundation.org/leaf

Examples of what is possible:

- **Develop a science-based platform** for community dialogue and action
- **Increase funds** for conservation, restoration, and best practices implementation
- **Increase land conservation** with strategic planning and prioritization
- **Promote greater appreciation** and support for conservation and ecosystem health
- **Strengthen community resiliency** to development pressure and climate change

FOUR WAYS YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

Your participation is critical to the success of this effort. Working groups and community engagement opportunities will allow for your voice to be heard.

1. Help us identify the conservation values you treasure,
2. Provide input on your vision for conservation priorities,
3. Spread the word about conservation as an essential element of preserving the things you love the most about this beautiful place,
4. Assist us in fostering a greater community understanding of the connections between conservation planning and food, water, native species and habitat, working lands, and open space.