

Need

The Blueprint adopted by the San Joaquin Valley Councils of Governments is a voluntary framework to guide future urban growth in the region that will maintain and improve its economy and quality of life. One of the Blueprint's benefits is that it encourages more efficient development that conserves open space, farmland and environmental resources. But the Blueprint does not address the significant resource management opportunities and challenges in parts of the eight-county region that remain green and open. How we care for and manage these land, water and living resources will influence the economy and quality of life in the entire region just as much as how and where cities grow.

For example, how can we be assured that there will be enough water for irrigated agriculture, the economic mainstay of the region? What areas are best for groundwater recharge and storage? What areas are subject to flooding hazards? What areas should be restored and improved to provide habitat for wildlife and other benefits from the land? What areas contain cultural and archeological resources needing protection? Where are trails and other outdoor recreational opportunities most needed? Where could large solar and wind energy facilities be located so as to minimize their impact on farming and the environment? What should be done to protect economic resources such as farmland, oil, minerals, timber and fisheries? What areas are nationally strategic for military operations? And how can we achieve multiple resource management goals simultaneously to optimize the contributions they make to the economy and quality of life in the Valley?

A different kind of planning process is needed to address these and other rural land management challenges and opportunities; one that deepens our understanding of the land, water and living resources in the region and assures that those resources continue to benefit the region economically and environmentally for future generations.

Purpose & Objective

The San Joaquin Valley Greenprint project proposes to fulfill this need. Its ultimate objective is to assemble the perspectives of the residents of the region into a shared vision, and to identify a series of strategies for the conservation and management of the region's land, water and living resources. These strategies will be developed with extensive public input, will be based on sound science and economics and, if the effort is successful, will enjoy broad public support throughout the region. The resulting "greenprint" can then reinforce local efforts and serve as a guide to local, state, federal and private sector decision makers as they make choices about the future of the Valley's resources. Due to its Valleywide focus, it may be able to achieve results for the Valley economy and quality of life not otherwise achievable by individual jurisdictions and organizations.

The Greenprint project will collect and analyze a wealth of information about the Valley's resource base; how it supports jobs, impacts the cost of living and provides a range of products and services that benefit people; how its physical elements and functions are interrelated across political boundaries and how they are changing under the influence of population growth, emerging technologies and climate trends. It will acknowledge and attempt to reconcile the tradeoffs involved in resource management by evaluating a wide variety of options and their implications. It will also evaluate current local, state and federal programs and policies that affect Valley lands, waters and living resources, and may suggest changes to improve their management and increase their benefits. However, the project reports and recommendations will not establish public policy or override local land use decision making, and will respect private property rights.

Geographic Scope

The Greenprint project covers the entire area within the eight counties that participate in the San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council. Because the foothills and federal lands have an influence on what is generally considered the Valley proper, they will be included.

Although the counties of Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne and Mariposa are not represented on the San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council, they too have foothills and federal lands that should be considered. Thus, their leaders and citizens will also be invited to participate in whatever ways seem appropriate to them.

Project Management

The Greenprint project was inaugurated by the San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council, a bottom-up organization made up of elected members from local governments in the eight-county region. It is supported by a grant from the California Strategic Growth Council, comprised of several state agencies, that also provides funds to implement the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint.

The Fresno Council of Governments, which manages the Blueprint, is also responsible for managing the Greenprint project. To assist in this process, a steering committee has been formed, comprised of individuals representing the public and private sector and a diverse range of interests in the Valley's resources.

Process & Steps

The San Joaquin Valley Greenprint project will have two phases. The first phase will take about 12 months and concentrate on fact-finding and information sharing. The second phase will take another 15-18 months. It will evaluate options and recommend strategies for resource conservation and management. The target for completion is mid 2014.

Phase I – The State of the Valley’s Resource Base

- Solicit input from region residents, interest groups, government agencies, and experts
- Compile data and other information describing the lands, waters and living resources of the region and the trends affecting them, and that document their public benefits
- Identify and document resource management challenges and opportunities
- Compile and analyze existing resource preservation programs, policies and regulations such as local General Plans, Habitat Conservation Plans, Agricultural Preservation Programs, etc.
- Publish and disseminate a State of the Valley report

Phase II – Development and Evaluation of Resource Management Options

- Develop principles to guide resource management options and strategies
- Develop a shared vision and goals for resource management
- Identify and evaluate resource management options and strategies
- Recommend consensus strategies for resource management
- Publish a guide for resource management

Throughout the process, public officials, property owners, interest groups, technical experts and the
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public will be invited to participate so that the final product reflects a broad range of inputs and consensus on the future of the Valley’s lands, waters and living resources.

Advisory committees will be formed to focus on specific resource management issues. Opinion surveys and open meetings will be used to gather ideas and information about public preferences. A web site will be created to provide up-to-date information on progress and products, and to encourage public feedback. Your own ideas about how to broaden and deepen participation are welcome.

For further information on the San Joaquin Valley Greenprint Program please contact:

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SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

Greenprint



An eight-county technical and stakeholder initiative to document how natural resources support the region’s economy, health, and quality of life, and to identify strategies to guide stewardship of land, water and living resources

