

Volume One Unabridged  
**Watershed Characteristics Report**

Chapter 5  
Organizational Setting

SANTA CLARA BASIN



Prepared for the  
**Santa Clara Basin Watershed Management Initiative**

by

**Communication and Outreach Subgroup**

**Revised August 2003**

# Watershed Characteristics Report

## Chapter 5: Organizational Setting

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# Chapter 5

## Organizational Setting

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Santa Clara Basin (the Basin) is home to more than 1.9 million people and the thriving economic region of Silicon Valley. Among the people that live and work in Basin communities are members of local government and regulatory agencies; environmental, business, and community groups; and others who have general and specific interests in Santa Clara Basin Watershed Management Initiative (WMI) issues and activities.

The interaction of these communities is nearly as complex as the Basin's many natural ecosystems. Portions of three counties—Santa Clara, San Mateo, and Alameda—are part of the Basin, as are more than 20 cities and towns. Numerous languages are spoken by people who have come here from all over the world, and many cultures add to the area's character. Likewise, nearly every type of business is represented, from high-tech industries to organic farms. The Basin is an area of opportunity and growth, accompanied by significant challenges including threats to the watershed's natural environment and source water quality. In response, regional, state, and federal entities continue to enact and implement numerous regulations designed to protect the environment and quality of life.

The WMI is committed to protecting the Basin watershed, as well as coordinating and streamlining the approach to watershed-related regulations. To meet these and other WMI goals, improving communication between Basin communities is critical. In particular, WMI participants must foster and maintain communication between groups and individuals that have a strong interest in watershed protection. The entities listed in this chapter (see Table 5-1 for detailed information) share many priorities that intersect with those of the WMI; these organizations thus represent potential partnerships for delivering information and instituting positive change in the Basin watershed.

Table 5-1 is intended to be used by WMI participants and others interested in watershed protection as a resource guide and planning tool. It is anticipated that Table 5-1 will grow in size and complexity as new groups are added and existing organizations are changed; a yearly update will likely be necessary. Contact information is provided in Table 5-1 for groups listed in each section, along with organizational missions and funding sources where available.

### **5.1 Environmental Organizations**

Communities in the Basin are known for their support of environmental issues involving watershed protection. Many environmental groups and public agencies in the Basin share overlapping areas of interests, outreach, and activities; these groups are key to implementation of recommended actions based on assessments of the watershed. A wide list of local environmental organizations with interests in watershed issues is presented in Table 5-1 under the following

subcategories: Organization List, Adopt-A-Creek Groups, and Coordinated Resource Management Plan Groups.

## **5.2 Environmental Education Resources**

For effective watershed protection and management, a broad public understanding of watershed issues is essential. Many educational organizations and groups are currently teaching and promoting watershed-based programs in the Basin. These programs are an excellent resource for educators, planners, public resource management agencies, and the general public, for content, program development, and funding information. Environmental Education Resources are described in Table 5-1 in two subsections: Centers, and Organizations and Programs.

## **5.3 San Francisco Bay Estuary-Wide Organizations**

The Basin watershed drains into South San Francisco Bay. In turn, the South Bay is a part of the greater San Francisco Bay, into which flow the waters of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. The entire Bay-Delta Estuary is simultaneously a state and local water supply resource, an invaluable natural habitat for thriving and threatened wildlife species, a recreation hub, and next-door neighbor to several major Bay Area cities. Estuary-wide organizations, as listed in Table 5-1, provide information on a key piece of the Basin watershed, which is necessary for studying the Basin as a whole. These organizations also bring critical scientific data and information to discussions of the Basin, and provide an estuary-based environmental perspective on issues.

## **5.4 Universities and Colleges**

Important work on environmental issues, including watershed studies and management, is continually underway at various colleges and universities throughout the Basin watershed. Students, faculty, and staff from these institutions are an excellent resource for WMI research and activities.

## **5.5 Business and Industry Trade Organizations**

For the WMI to meet its objectives, all community sectors must be represented. An important sector is business/industry. Input from these stakeholders benefits overall development of a future watershed management plan; in addition, participation allows business sector representatives to help achieve a balance of objectives and formulate solutions to issues facing the Basin. Business and trade organizations are listed in Table 5-1 under the following categories: Chambers of Commerce, Labor Groups, and Business Groups and Associations.

## **5.6 Community Organizations and Foundations**

Along with environmental and business groups, community organizations and foundations represent a significant sector with abilities to organize and influence public opinion, develop positions on various issues, and provide or locate possible sources of funding. In Table 5-1, this

section includes information on voting, taxpayer, advisory, and neighborhood association organizations and is organized as follows: Community Organizations and Foundations.

## **5.7 Water Sport and Recreation Groups**

The Basin boasts many recreational opportunities including hiking, fishing, boating, bicycling, waterskiing, and more. Because recreation is one of the beneficial uses being studied and evaluated for the WMI's Watershed Assessment Report, the perspective of recreation and water sports stakeholders is particularly important.

## **5.8 Agricultural Organizations**

Before it was called “Silicon Valley,” Santa Clara Valley was known as “The Valley of Heart’s Delight.” Its fertile soil and miles of fruit orchards and fields yielded tons of produce shipped around the world. The Santa Clara Valley farms were some of the preeminent agricultural producers in the state, nation, and world. Although the valley and most of the Basin is now urbanized, agriculture still plays a significant role in terms of land and water use. Agricultural land is viewed in many ways, including green space or agricultural “reserve” areas, and as a potential user for recycled water. In addition, the farmers, growers, and ranchers that make up the agricultural community constitute a key audience concerning watershed and groundwater protection, and are key stakeholders with the opportunity to contribute to significant improvements in the watershed.

## **5.9 Government Agencies**

Coordination between local municipalities and agencies in the Basin is a central element of the WMI; local government support and involvement in the WMI is key to successful implementation of WMI outcomes. Many local government officials are WMI signatories and stakeholders. Likewise, the WMI relies on and uses data and research from state and federal agencies; such agencies are also likely to use WMI assessment information for future work. For the WMI to reach its goals, ongoing WMI communication to local, state, and federal government entities is of utmost importance. In Table 5-1, this section is organized as follows: City Governments, County Governments, Special Districts, and Regional/State/Federal Nonregulatory Agencies.

## **5.10 Media**

The WMI engages in its own outreach and coordinates with related agencies and programs. However, as WMI assessment work is completed, focus and attention from local news media will greatly assist in promoting WMI goals and bringing watershed protection issues to a larger public audience. In addition, information from the Watershed Assessment Report will also likely be of interest to environmental and business media. Ongoing media outreach, and a strategic plan for implementing it, are key to the WMI's acceptance and effectiveness in the greater Basin community. In Table 5-1, this section is organized as follows: Newspaper Media, Radio Media, Television Media, and Local Public Information Officers.