

Valley Water

Clean Water. Healthy Communities. Strong Economy.

Valley Water is proud to serve as the largest multi-purpose special district in California, providing essential water resources, flood protection, and environmental stewardship since 1929.

With a team of around 1,000 dedicated professionals, we ensure that the people and businesses of Silicon Valley have access to safe, clean water every day. In 2024, we invested \$856 million to support the water needs and safety of our communities.

Our funding comes mainly from a small portion of property taxes (about 1%) and the sale of water to local providers, like San Jose Water, who deliver it directly to your taps.

We're financially strong—with a top-tier Moody's credit rating of Aa1 and a net position of \$3 billion—so you can trust that we're here for the long haul.

At Valley Water, we're committed to protecting public health, supporting the local economy, and preserving our natural environment for generations to come.

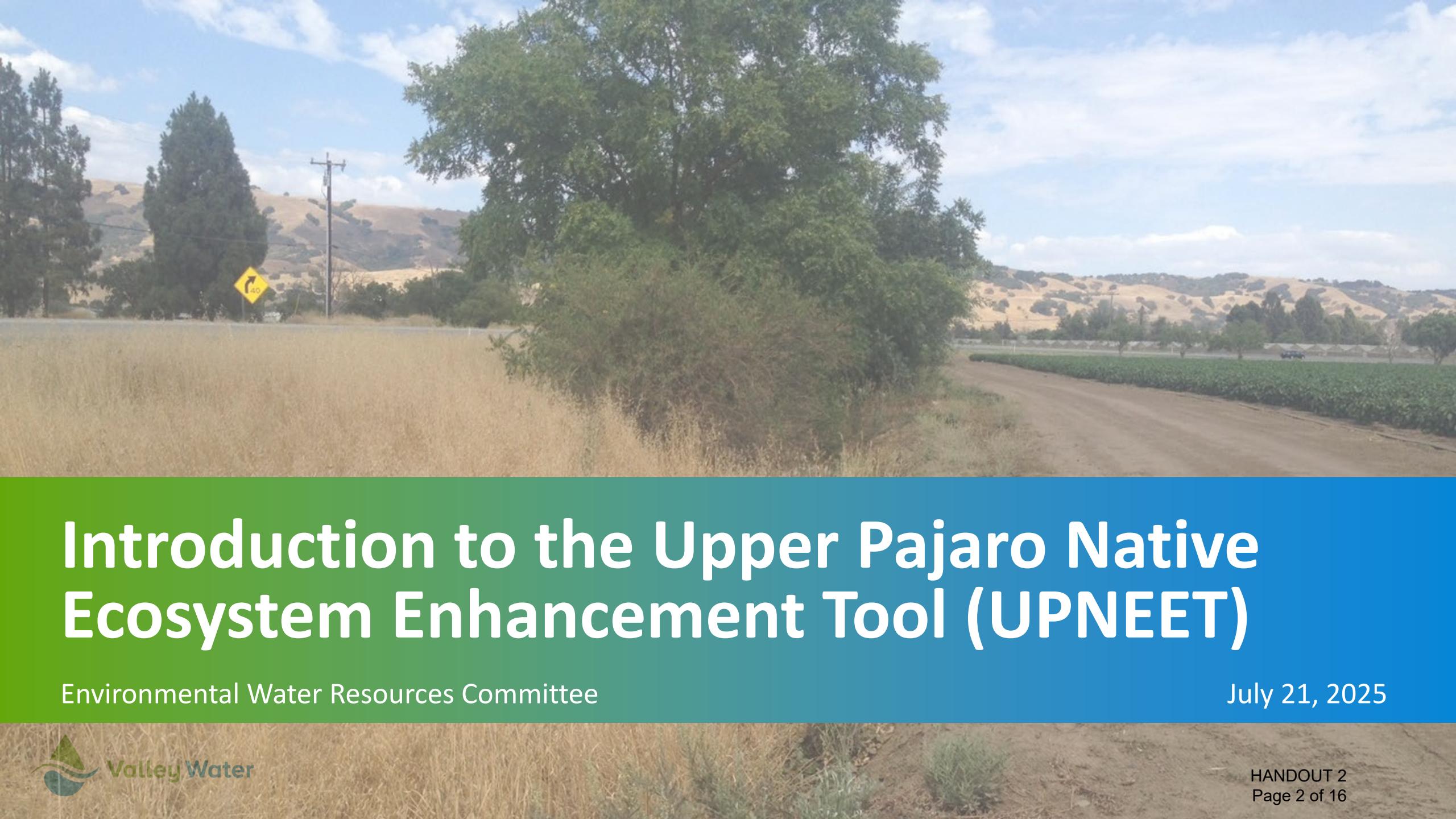
Valley Water—Delivering the water Silicon Valley depends on.

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Valley Water

Clean Water • Healthy Environment • Flood Protection



Introduction to the Upper Pajaro Native Ecosystem Enhancement Tool (UPNEET)

Environmental Water Resources Committee

July 21, 2025

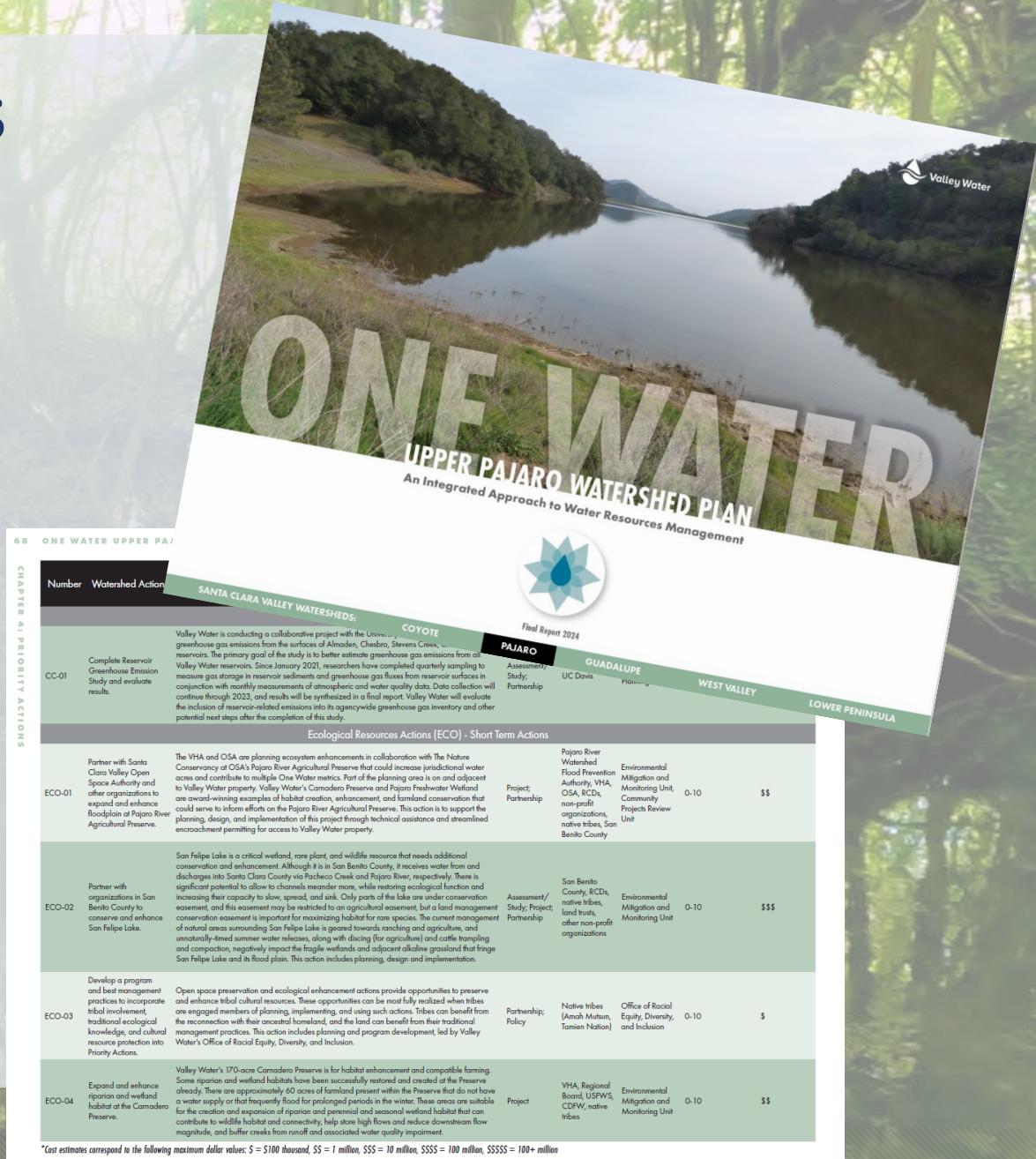
Impetus, Goals, and Objectives

Project Goals

- Help coordinate, prioritize, plan, and implement Upper Pajaro Watershed Plan recommendations
- Build from Coyote Creek Native Ecosystem Enhancement Tool programming

Overarching Goals

- Enhance and protect creek habitats
- Facilitate watershed approach to project selection
- Support grant applications and partnerships
- Enable organization and project coordination



ONE WATER, UPPER PAJARO WATERSHED PLAN
An Integrated Approach to Water Resources Management

Final Report 2024

Valley Water

Number	Watershed Action	SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATERSHEDS:	COYOTE	PAJARO	GUADALUPE	WEST VALLEY	LOWER PENINSULA
CC-01	Complete Reservoir Greenhouse Emission Study and evaluate results.	Valley Water is conducting a collaborative study with the University of California, Santa Cruz to measure greenhouse gas emissions from the surfaces of Almaden, Chesbro, Stevens Creek, and Lake Casitas reservoirs. The primary goal of the study is to better estimate greenhouse gas emissions from all Valley Water reservoirs. Since 2021, valley water has completed monthly sampling to measure gas storage in reservoir sediments and greenhouse gas fluxes from reservoir surfaces in conjunction with monthly measurements of atmospheric and water quality data. Data collection will continue through 2023, and results will be synthesized in a final report. Valley Water will evaluate the inclusion of reservoir-related emissions into its agencywide greenhouse gas inventory and other potential next steps after the completion of this study.	Assessment/ Partnership	UC Davis	Hollister	Hollister	
ECO-01	Partner with Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority and other organizations to expand and enhance floodplain of Pajaro River Agricultural Preserve.	The VHA and OSA are planning ecosystem enhancements in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy and OSA's Pajaro River Agricultural Preserve. This could involve restoring 100+ acres and contribute to multiple One Water metrics. Part of the planning area is and adjacent to Valley Water property. Valley Water's Camarillo Preserve and Pajaro Freshwater Wetland are award-winning examples of habitat creation, enhancement, and farmland conservation that could serve to inform efforts on the Pajaro River Agricultural Preserve. This action is to support the planning, design, and implementation of this project through technical assistance and streamlined encroachment permitting for access to Valley Water property.	Project; Partnership	Pajaro River Watershed Flood Prevention Authority, VHA, OSA, RCDs, non-profit organizations, native tribes, San Benito County	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Unit, Community Projects Review Unit	0-10	\$\$
ECO-02	Partner with organizations in San Benito County to conserve and enhance San Felipe Lake.	San Felipe Lake is a critical wetland, rare plant, and wildlife resource that needs additional conservation and enhancement. Although it is in San Benito County, it receives water from and discharges into Santa Clara County via Pajaro Creek and Pajaro River, respectively. There is significant potential to allow the channels meander more, while restoring ecological function and increasing their capacity to slow, spread, and sink. Only parts of the lake are under conservation easement, and this assessment may be related to an agricultural easement, but a land management committee exists for conserving habitat and enhancing ecological function. The current management of natural areas surrounding San Felipe lake is a move towards rangeland restoration, and unseasonably-flooded summer water releases, along with dredging (for agriculture) and cattle camping and composting, negatively impact the fragile wetlands and adjacent oak/citrus grassland that fringe San Felipe Lake and its flood plain. This action includes planning, design and implementation.	Assessment/ Project; Partnership	San Benito County, native tribes, land trusts, other non-profit organizations	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Unit	0-10	\$\$\$
ECO-03	Develop a program and best management practices to incorporate tribal involvement, traditional ecological knowledge, and cultural resource protection into Priority Actions.	Open space preservation and ecological enhancement actions provide opportunities to preserve and enhance tribal cultural resources. These opportunities can be most fully realized when tribes are engaged members of planning, implementing, and using such actions. Tribes can benefit from the reconnection with their ancestral homeland, and the land can benefit from their traditional management practices. This action includes planning and program development, led by Valley Water's Office of Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.	Partnership; Policy	Native Tribes (Amoh Mutun, Tamen Nation)	Office of Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	0-10	\$
ECO-04	Expand and enhance riparian and wetland habitat at the Camarillo Preserve.	Valley Water's 170-acre Camarillo Preserve is for habitat enhancement and compatible farming. Some riparian and wetland habitat has already been restored and maintained at the preserve already. There are approximately 60 acres of farmland associated with the Preserve that do not have a water supply or that frequently flood for prolonged periods in the winter. These areas are suitable for the creation and expansion of riparian and perennial and seasonal wetland habitat that can contribute to wildlife habitat and connectivity, help store high flows and reduce downstream flow magnitude, and buffer creeks from runoff and associated water quality impairment.	Project	VHA, Regional Board, USFWS, CDFW, native tribes	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Unit	0-10	\$\$

*Cost estimates correspond to the following maximum dollar values: \$ = \$100 thousand, \$\$ = 1 million, \$\$\$ = 10 million, \$\$\$\$ = 100 million, \$\$\$\$\$ = 100+ million

Examples of Watershed Plan Recommendations in UPNEET

Pretty specific

- Partner with organizations in San Benito County to conserve and enhance San Felipe Lake
- Expand and enhance riparian and wetland habitat at Carnadero Preserve
- Implement gravel and LWD projects at specific locations in Uvas, Llagas, and Pacheco Creek

Less specific

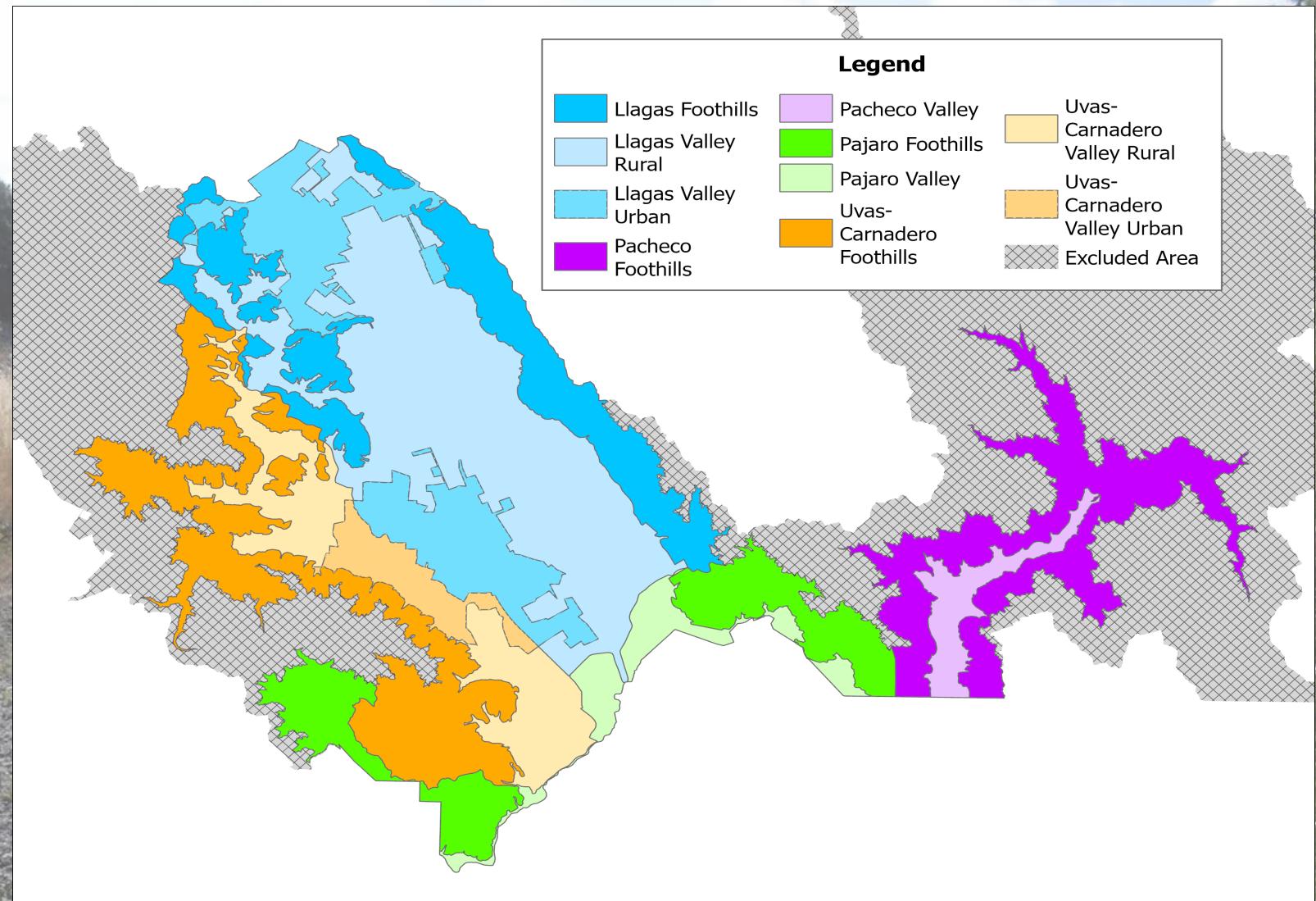
- Enhance ecological conditions in modified channels
- Connect and expand riparian corridors where missing or very narrow
- Partner to support efforts to manage livestock ponds for habitat benefit

Multi-benefit

- Identify open space areas for flood detention and environmental protection
- Support efforts to assist farmers and landowners to improve water quality and habitat conditions
- Partner with cities to reduce and prevent specific trash dumping areas

Coverage Area

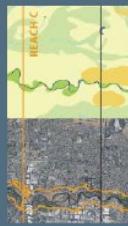
- Llagas, Uvas, Pacheco, and Pajaro subwatersheds
- Foothills
- Rural Valley Floor
- Urban Valley Floor



UPNEET Development Process

TAC &
Core Team

Stakeholder
Groups

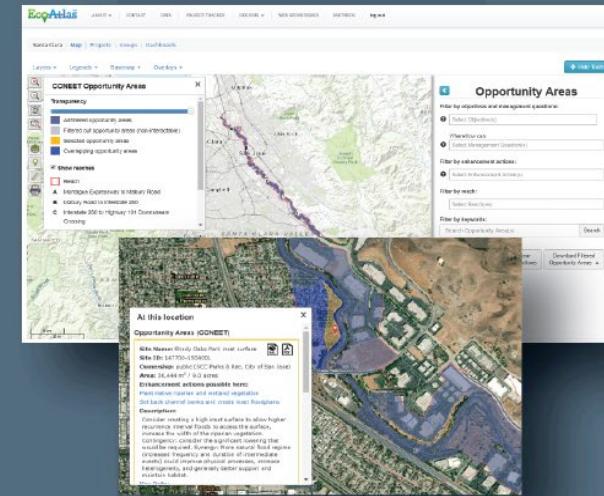


Best available science

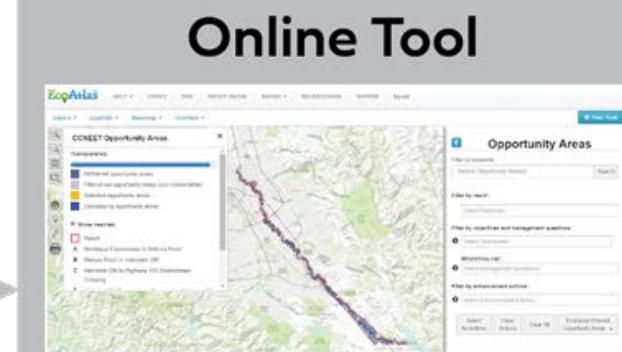
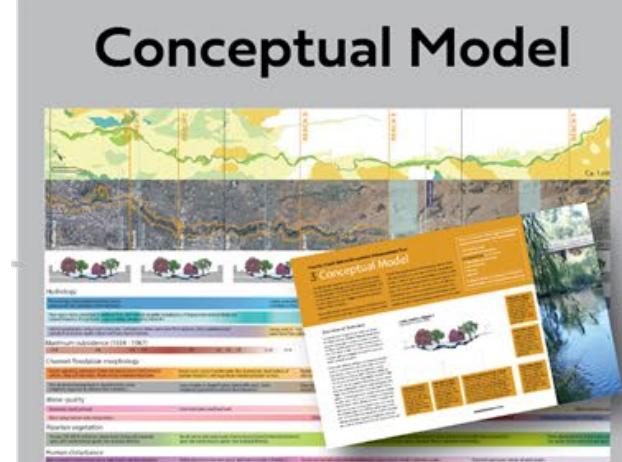
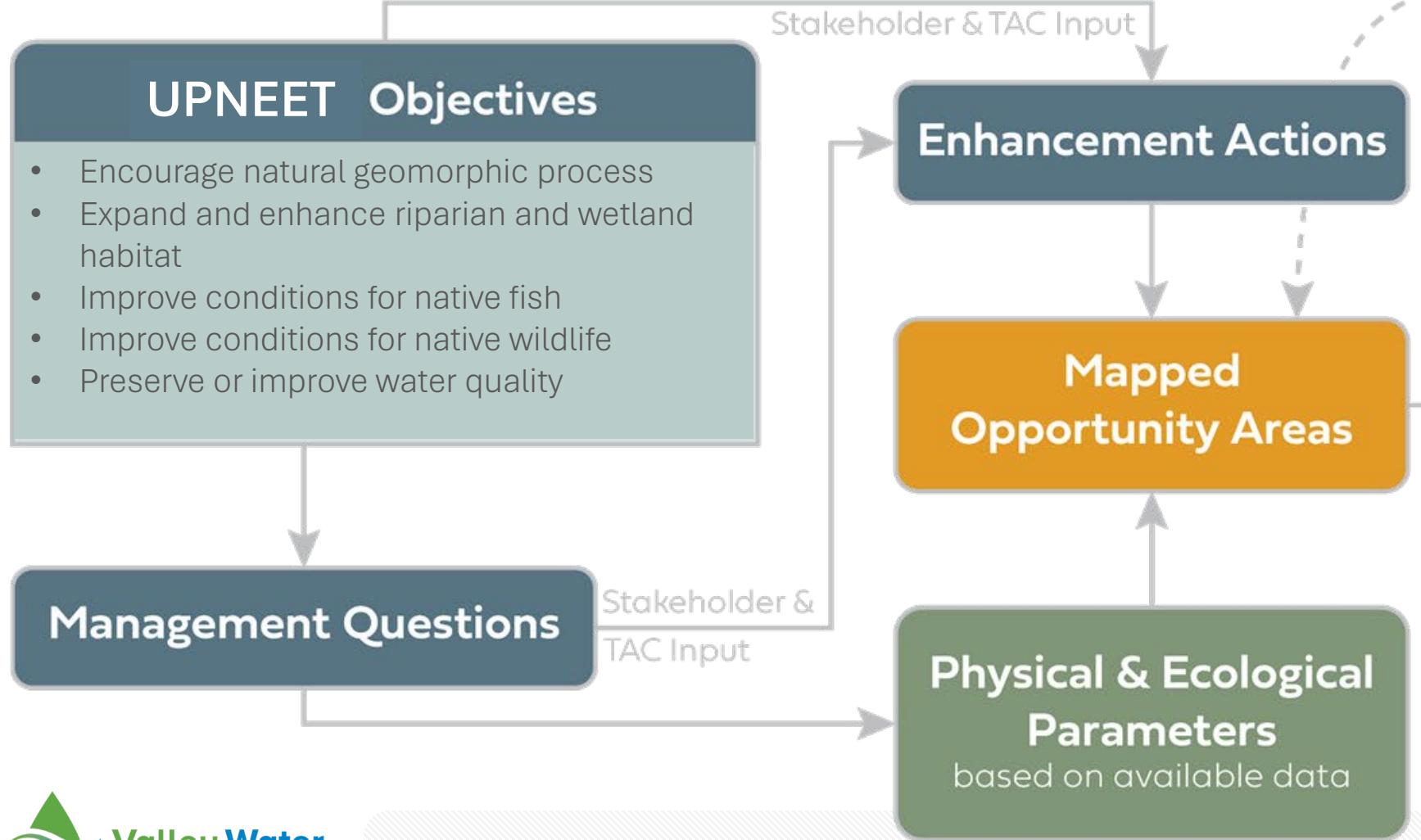
Historical, current and potential future
physical and ecological conditions

Online interactive
data-driven decision
support tool showing
enhancement opportunity
areas and actions with
supporting documentation
including a conceptual
model and user guide

Native Ecosystem Enhancement Tool



UPNEET Content & Products



UPNEET User Interface

EcoAtlas™

Welcome to the Beta Version of UPNEET!

Native Ecosystem Enhancement Tools

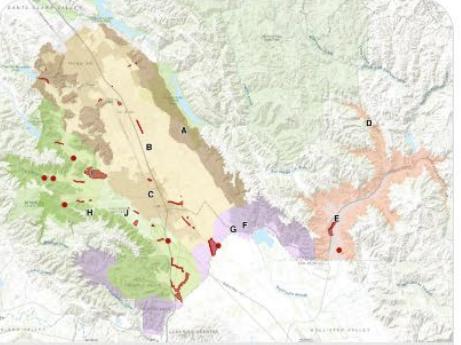
Please select a tool to use



Coyote Creek NEET

The Coyote Creek Native Ecosystem Enhancement Tool is an online decision-support tool to identify opportunities to improve ecological conditions.

[Go to CCNEET](#)



Upper Pajaro NEET

The Upper Pajaro Native Ecosystem Enhancement Tool is an online decision-support tool to identify opportunities to improve ecological conditions.

[Go to UPNEET](#)

<https://upneet.ecoatlas.org/regions/neet/santaclara>

UPNEET Disclaimers



ABOUT ▾ CONTACT DATA PROJECT TRACKER REGIONS ▾ WEB SERVICES/API PARTNERS log out

Welcome to the Beta Version of UPNEET!

Santa Clara : [Map](#) | [Projects](#) | [Groups](#) | [Dashboards](#)

Layers ▾ Legends ▾ Basemap ▾ Overlays ▾



Hide Tools

UPNEET Opportunity Areas

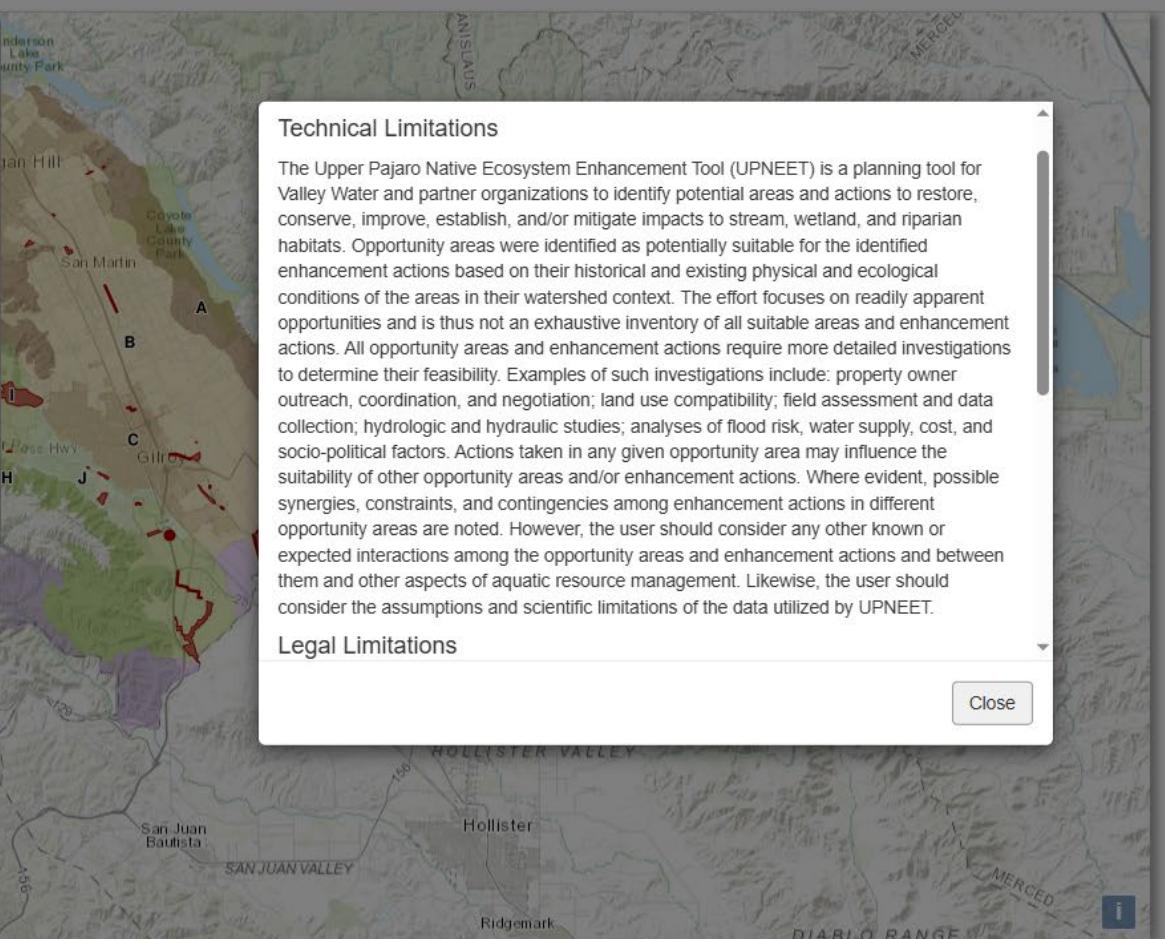
Transparency

- All/filtered opportunity areas
- Filtered out opportunity areas (non-interactable)
- Selected opportunity areas
- Overlapping opportunity areas

Zones

Show

- A Llagas Foothills
- B Llagas Valley Rural
- C Llagas Valley Urban
- D Pacheco Foothills



Technical Limitations

The Upper Pajaro Native Ecosystem Enhancement Tool (UPNEET) is a planning tool for Valley Water and partner organizations to identify potential areas and actions to restore, conserve, improve, establish, and/or mitigate impacts to stream, wetland, and riparian habitats. Opportunity areas were identified as potentially suitable for the identified enhancement actions based on their historical and existing physical and ecological conditions of the areas in their watershed context. The effort focuses on readily apparent opportunities and is thus not an exhaustive inventory of all suitable areas and enhancement actions. All opportunity areas and enhancement actions require more detailed investigations to determine their feasibility. Examples of such investigations include: property owner outreach, coordination, and negotiation; land use compatibility; field assessment and data collection; hydrologic and hydraulic studies; analyses of flood risk, water supply, cost, and socio-political factors. Actions taken in any given opportunity area may influence the suitability of other opportunity areas and/or enhancement actions. Where evident, possible synergies, constraints, and contingencies among enhancement actions in different opportunity areas are noted. However, the user should consider any other known or expected interactions among the opportunity areas and enhancement actions and between them and other aspects of aquatic resource management. Likewise, the user should consider the assumptions and scientific limitations of the data utilized by UPNEET.

Legal Limitations

Close

Opportunity Areas

Filter by objectives and management questions:

Select Objective(s)

Where/how can:

Select Management Question(s)

Filter by enhancement actions:

Select Enhancement Action(s)

Filter by zones:

Select Zone(s)

Filter by keywords:

Search Opportunity Area(s)

Search

Show Valley Water opportunity areas

View additional layers

Clear Filters

Reset

Download Filtered Opportunity Areas

UPNEET Beta Version



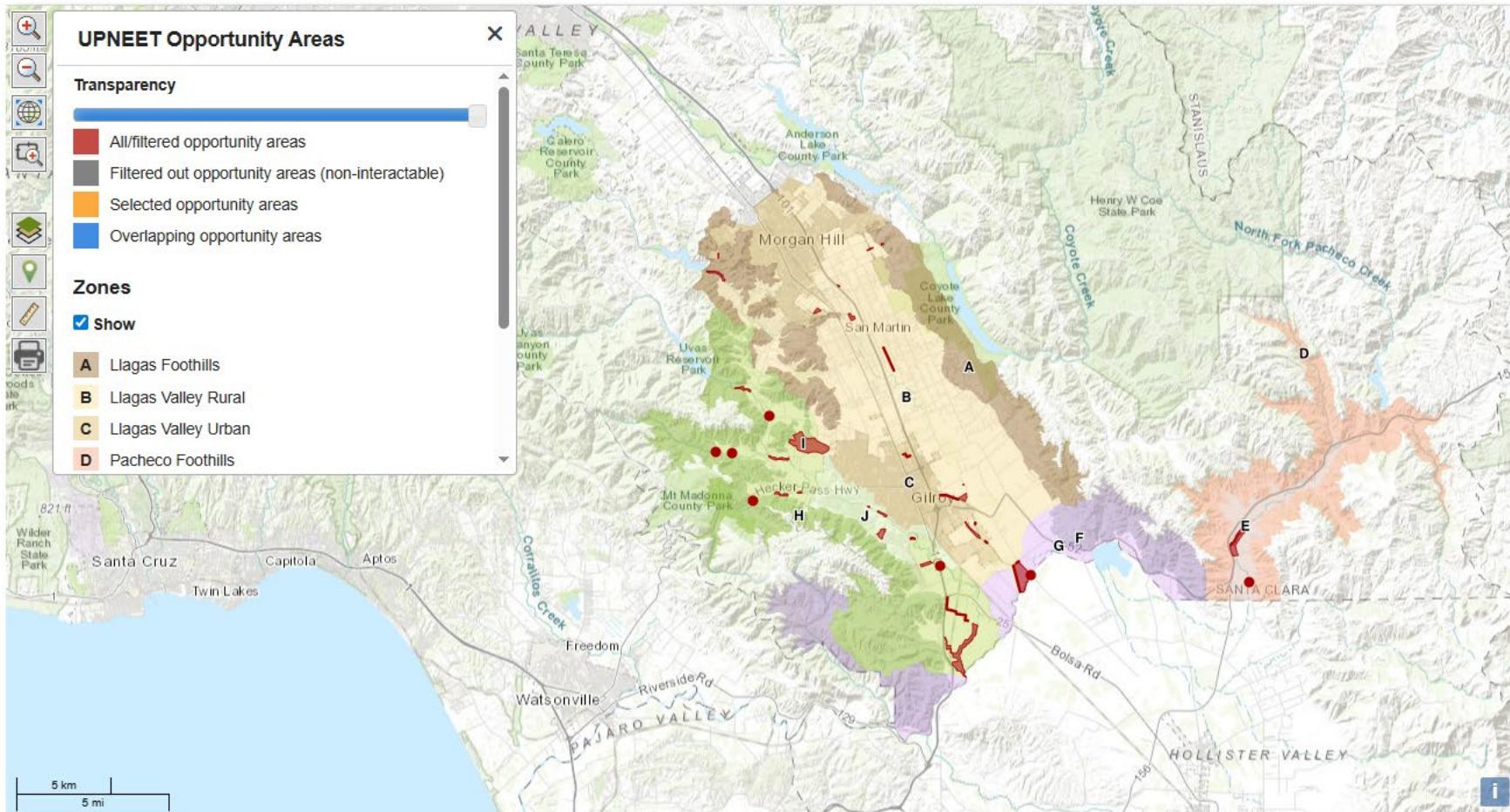
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Layers ▾ Legends ▾ Basemap ▾ Overlays ▾

Hide Tools



Opportunity Areas

Filter by objectives and management questions:

Select Objective(s)

Where/how can:

Select Management Question(s)

Filter by enhancement actions:

Select Enhancement Action(s)

Filter by zones:

Select Zone(s)

Filter by keywords:

Search Opportunity Area(s)

Search

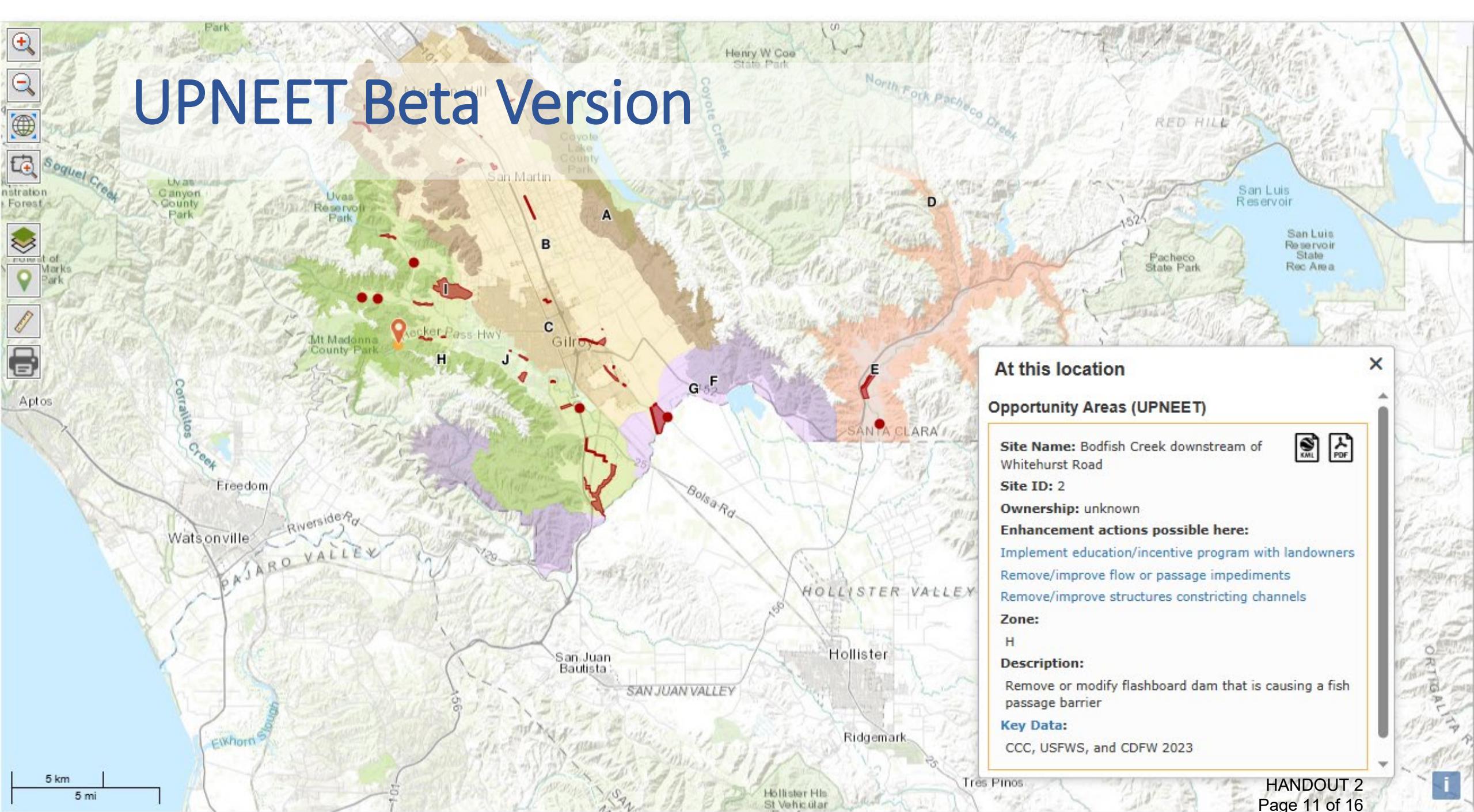
Show Valley Water opportunity areas

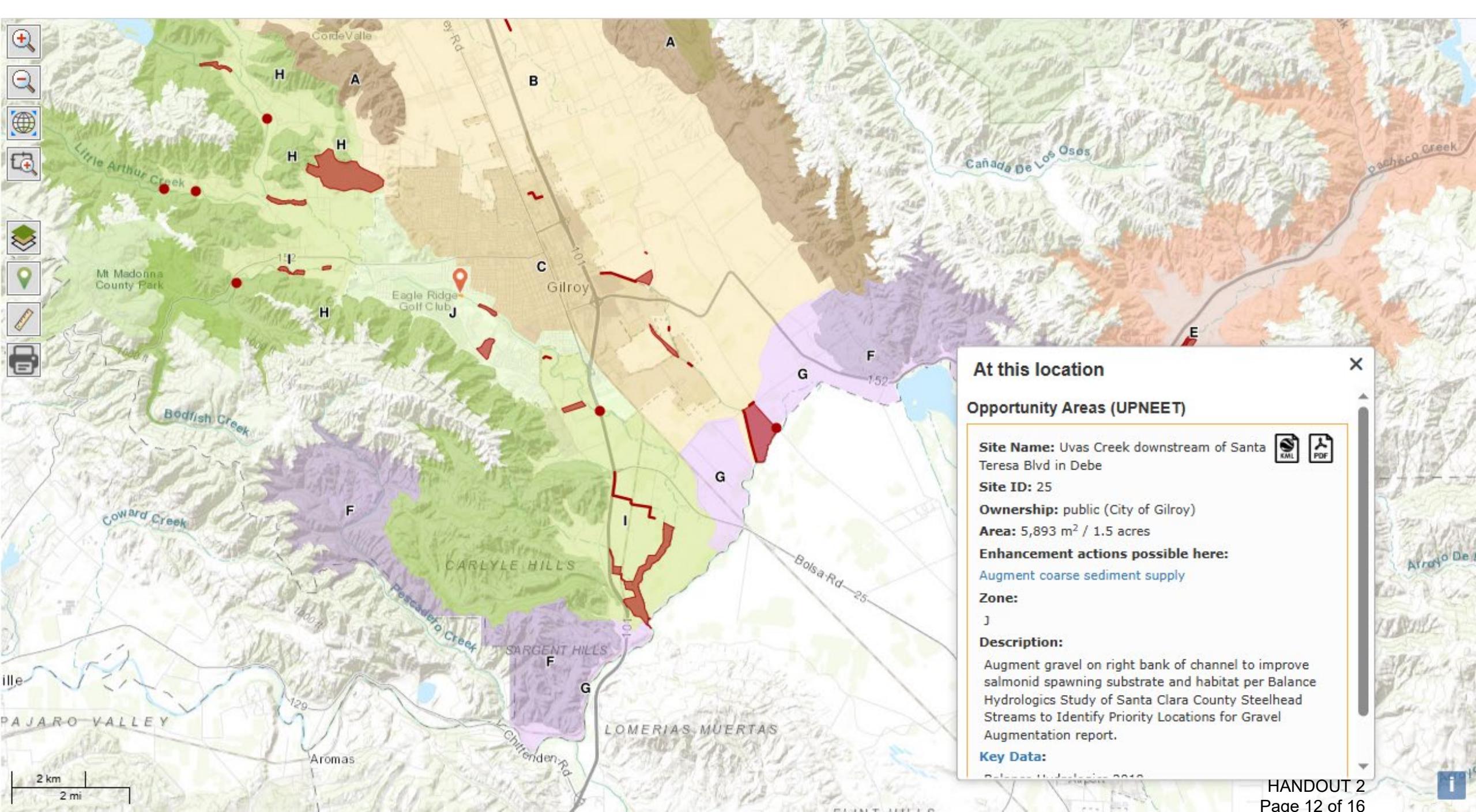
View additional layers

Clear Filters

Reset

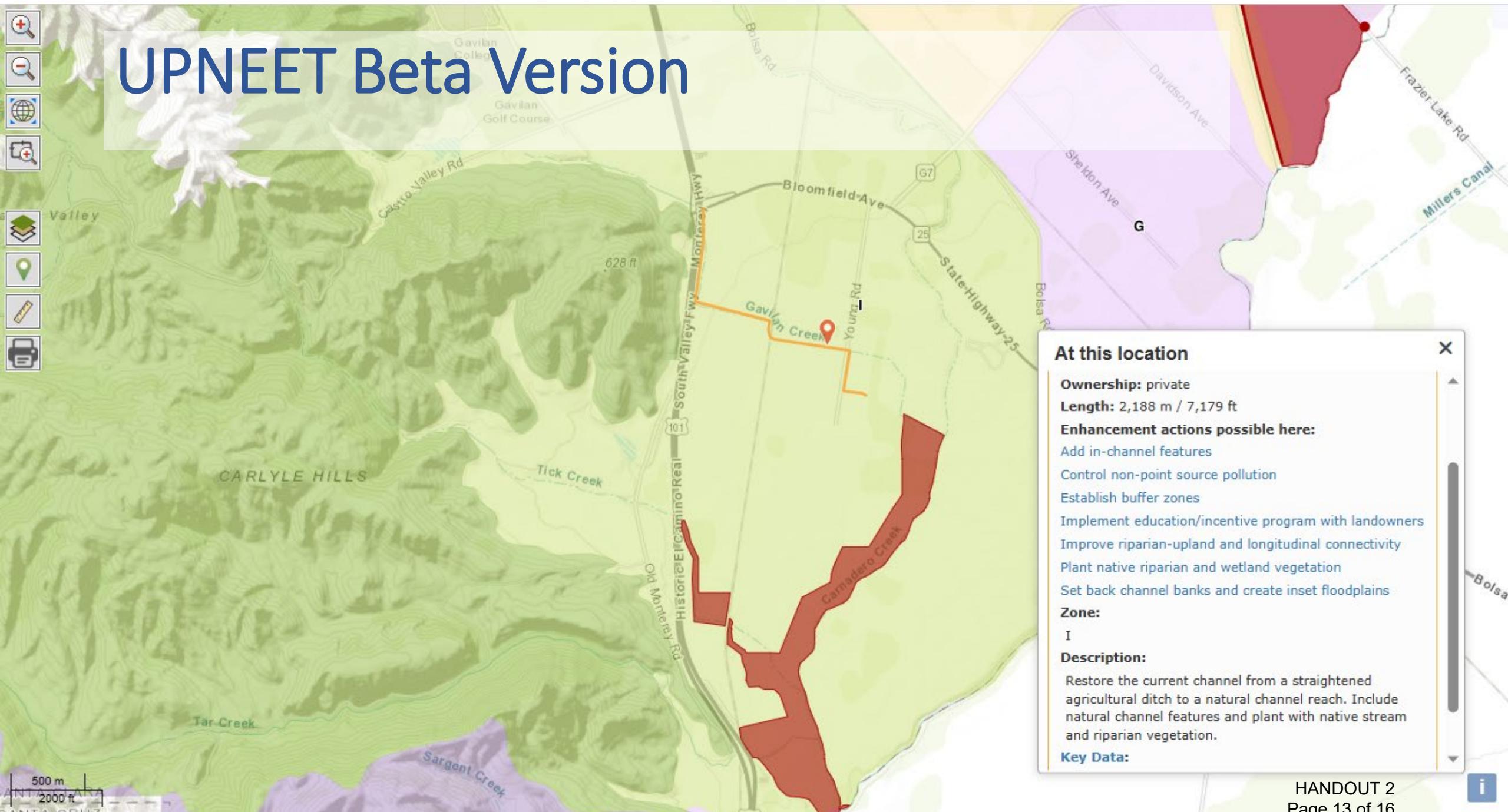
Download Filtered Opportunity Areas







UPNEET Beta Version



UPNEET Development Schedule

Planning & Beta Tool

11/2023 – 2/2025

- Develop Objectives, Questions, & Actions
- Convene Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Reach Out to Stakeholders
- Data Compilation
- Beta Tool Released

UPNEET Production

2/2025 – 2/2026

- TAC and Stakeholder Review
- Opportunity area development
- Conceptual model development
- Launch UPNEET

UPNEET Maintenance

2/2026 - ?

- Hosting & programming
- Training for UPNEET use
- Updates & enhancements

QUESTIONS

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