

Priority B

Reduce Toxins, Hazards, and Contaminants in Our Waterways



PROJECT B1: IMPAIRED WATER BODIES IMPROVEMENT

- Reduces pollutants in streams, reservoirs and groundwater
- Reduces methylmercury in reservoirs
- Reduces greenhouse gases

Priority B projects use multiple strategies to reduce and remove contaminants in our local creeks, streams and bays. Along with mercury treatment systems in our reservoirs, projects under this priority prevent toxins from entering waterways by working with municipalities and other agencies across the region to reduce runoff pollution. In addition to carrying forward existing projects, the priority would include funding to support the implementation of green stormwater infrastructure. It would also continue projects to provide rapid emergency response to hazardous materials spills and to support volunteer cleanup efforts.

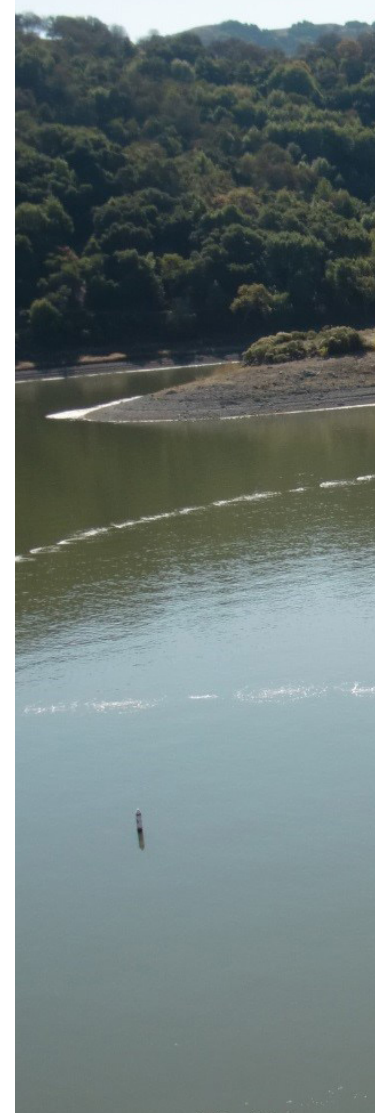
PROJECT B1 IMPAIRED WATER BODIES IMPROVEMENT

This project reduces pollutants in streams, reservoirs and groundwater of Santa Clara County by supporting surface water quality pollution prevention activities. These programs address water quality concerns currently identified by local and state regulatory agencies, as well as contaminants of emerging concern. Initiatives under this project are consistent with the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) impaired water bodies designation and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), which are the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive and still safely meet water quality standards. Under this project, Valley Water studies and implements methods to reduce methylmercury formation in reservoirs, and helps create and carry out realistic plans to reduce contaminants, such as nutrients, bacteria, pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and others, in local creeks and reservoirs.

This project addresses both greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction and climate change adaptation, as reservoirs are a major source of GHG emissions (i.e. methane) during low oxygen conditions. Oxygenation is the current mechanism to control mercury in fish and may reduce methane emissions. Oxygenation can also reduce the formation of harmful algal blooms, which may become more frequent with warmer temperatures.

Benefits

- Reduces contaminants in streams and reservoirs
- Improves water quality, including water slated for drinking water treatment plants
- Increases understanding of mercury cycling in reservoirs to develop strategies that reduce toxic methylmercury in fish consumed by people and wildlife



Calero Reservoir Oxygenation System

PROJECT B2: INTER-AGENCY URBAN RUNOFF PROGRAM

- Reduces contaminants in stormwater
- Maintains programs or devices to reduce trash in creeks
- Addresses surface water quality improvements
- Implements green stormwater infrastructure projects



Trash boom cleaning on Lower Silver Creek.

- Increases the scientific understanding of environmental pollutants to assist in developing actions to manage them
- Supports regulatory compliance with surface water quality standards for local creeks and reservoirs
- Addresses climate change

Key performance indicators

1. Investigate, develop, and implement actions to reduce methylmercury in fish and other organisms in the Guadalupe River Watershed.
2. Prepare and update a plan for the prioritization of surface water quality improvement activities, such as addressing trash and other pollutants.
3. Implement at least two (2) priority surface water quality improvement activities identified in the plan per 5-year implementation period.

Geographic area of benefit: Countywide

Estimated funding from Safe, Clean Water Renewal: \$32.8 million

Estimated total project cost: \$32.8 million

PROJECT B2 INTER-AGENCY URBAN RUNOFF PROGRAM

This project supports Valley Water's continued participation in the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program (SCVURPPP) and South County stormwater programs. These programs enable Valley Water to reduce stormwater pollution through technical support and regional leadership. In addition, this project supports stormwater pollution prevention activities in South County Watersheds and green stormwater infrastructure (GSI). GSI allows rainwater runoff from roads, parking lots and other impervious surfaces to soak into the ground and be filtered by soil rather than discharge into storm drains that transport the water to creeks.

Project B2 allows Valley Water to participate in the regulatory development process related to stormwater by participating in stormwater permit re-issuance and providing review, analysis and comments on various water quality regulatory efforts. This project also allows Valley Water to collaborate with local agencies on public education and outreach activities to help prevent urban runoff pollution at the source.

Multi-benefit projects, such as green stormwater infrastructure, are important strategies to address water quality. Green infrastructure uses plants to soak water into the ground, which slows down, spreads and helps absorb rainwater instead of having it go down a storm drain. This improves water quality, can increase groundwater supplies and reduces peak flows to a creek.

Benefits

- Partners with municipalities and other agencies to reduce contaminants in stormwater and improve surface water quality in our streams, reservoirs, lakes and wetlands
- Maintains Valley Water compliance with the Regional Water Quality Control Board

- requirements in National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits
- Allows continued participation in SCVURPPP and South County urban runoff programs
- Allows Valley Water to help direct required monitoring efforts in ways that benefit Valley Water programs and projects
- Promotes stormwater pollution prevention
- Facilitates collaboration with partners on stormwater projects that provide multiple benefits and support Valley Water’s mission
- Addresses climate change

Key performance indicators

1. Address trash in creeks by maintaining trash capture devices or other litter control programs.
2. Maintain Valley Water’s municipal stormwater compliance program and partner with cities to address surface water quality improvements, including participation in at least three (3) countywide, regional, or statewide stormwater program committees to help guide regulatory development, compliance, and monitoring.
3. Support at least one (1) stormwater quality improvement activity per 5-year implementation period in Santa Clara County, including providing up to \$1.5 million over 15 years to support implementation of green stormwater infrastructure consistent with Santa Clara Basin and South County Stormwater Resource Plans.

Geographic area of benefit: Countywide

Estimated funding from Safe, Clean Water Renewal: \$19.8 million

Estimated total project cost: \$45.2 million

PROJECT B3 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSE

This project allows Valley Water to continue providing a local number to report hazardous materials spills 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Valley Water staff will respond within two (2) hours of the initial report, with spill cleanup in Valley Water rights-of-way performed in a timely manner. Appropriate agencies will be alerted when spills are outside Valley Water jurisdiction.

Benefits

- Prevents and reduces contaminants in surface and groundwater
- Encourages public to engage in protecting our waterways
- Provides a quick, professional response that reduces impacts of hazardous materials spills

PROJECT B3: HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSE

- Prevents and reduces contaminants in surface and groundwater
- Encourages public to protect our waterways
- Allows for quick responses to reduce impacts of hazardous spills



Vehicle accident at Valley Water facility.

PROJECT B4: SUPPORT VOLUNTEER CLEANUP EFFORTS

- Reduces contaminants entering our waterways and groundwater
- Engages and educates the community through watershed stewardship
- Leverages volunteer community resources for efficient use of funds



National River Cleanup Day 2019.

Key performance indicator

1. Respond to 100% of hazardous materials reports requiring urgent on-site inspection in two (2) hours or less.

Geographic area of benefit: Countywide

Estimated funding from Safe, Clean Water Renewal: \$1.1 million

Estimated total project cost: \$4.2 million

PROJECT B4 SUPPORT VOLUNTEER CLEANUP EFFORTS

This project provides funding for Valley Water's creek stewardship program to support volunteer cleanup activities, such as National River Cleanup Day, California Coastal Cleanup Day, the Great American Litter Pick Up, Adopt-A-Creek and the Creek Connections Action Group; along with creekwise education and regional coordination efforts.

Benefits

- Reduces contaminants entering our waterways and groundwater
- Engages and educates the community, and supports watershed stewardship
- Leverages volunteer community resources for efficient use of funds

Key performance indicator

1. Fund Valley Water's creek stewardship program to support volunteer cleanup activities, such as annual National River Cleanup Day, California Coastal Cleanup Day, the Great American Litter Pick Up, and the Adopt-A-Creek Program.

Geographic area of benefit: Countywide

Estimated funding from Safe, Clean Water Renewal: \$5.1 million

Estimated total project cost: \$9.2 million

What happens to Priority B projects if funding is not available?

Funding for pollution prevention activities and green stormwater infrastructure will not be available. Only activities that fulfill legal and regulatory requirements will be funded.