



## Our Golden Opportunity

The San Francisco Bay Area's iconic landscapes provide more than beautiful vistas. They are vital to the health and prosperity of the region—and the state.

### The Benefits of Bay Area Lands

Bay Area lands support the region's \$400 billion economy and contribute to California's quality of life.

- Bay Area watersheds provide clean water for people and wildlife, and some drain into the Sacramento–San Joaquin River Delta, which supplies drinking water to 24 million Californians.
- Farms and ranches provide fresh, local, affordable food.
- Community greenbelts make cities and towns more livable by encouraging development within their boundaries.
- Diverse habitats support a broad array of native plants and animals—many endangered or threatened.
- Parks and trails help California's families stay healthy and draw a talented workforce.

### Facing the Challenges

A network of vital Bay Area lands is a great asset to our region and state, but it is not a guarantee. Habitat degradation, climate change, and development pressures pose serious threats.

The Bay Area faces great change: an estimated 1 million more people will call the region home by 2020. To accommodate this growing population while maintaining a strong, diversified economy and a healthy environment, we must act now to ensure that our land continues to provide for our way of life.

### A Coordinated Strategy for Conservation

Greenbelt Alliance and the Bay Area Open Space Council have assembled experts from land trusts, park districts, environmental nonprofits, and government agencies throughout the region to

identify vital Bay Area lands and create a coordinated, strategic approach to protecting them.

### Key Actions

These key actions are needed to preserve these lands:

#### Create Access

Provide parks that are safe, clean, and easy to reach, to ensure that open space benefits are shared by all.

#### Fund Conservation

Increase funding for land purchases, conservation easements, and stewardship to protect essential natural areas and keep them healthy and functioning.

#### Adopt Strong Policies

Create policies and programs that protect privately held lands—including farms, ranches, and forests—and support their care and restoration, to safeguard their public benefits.

### Poised for Success

The Bay Area is well positioned to make the most of initiatives and investments in these areas. In addition to the mapping and strategic planning work led by the Bay Area Open Space Council and Greenbelt Alliance, the Association of Bay Area Governments and other regional agencies have identified priority conservation areas as part of their blueprint for growth. The result is a remarkable level of consensus about what needs to be done and a collective commitment to making it happen.

### The Time Is Now

This is a time of great challenge, and it is the time we most need to lead. We can secure a network of vital Bay Area lands that supports people and wildlife, helps us to cope with climate change, supports our health and our economy, and makes the state's natural heritage accessible to all Californians. We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to leave a legacy.