SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The San Francisquito Creek Bank Stabilization and Revegetation Master Plan was created with four primary goals in mind:

1) To preserve and/or enhance the natural character of San Francisquito Creek by increasing the presence of native vegetation. This will improve habitat value, water quality, and bank stability – while protecting or improving creek conditions for state and federally listed species.

2) To stabilize banks in an environmentally sensitive manner that protects property and infrastructure, without significantly changing the conveyance of the creek.

3) To enhance the value of the creek as a community amenity by improving access to public areas, enhancing interpretive and education opportunities, and improving visual connections.

4) To develop a unified approach to implementation of the Plan that promotes consistency across jurisdictional boundaries and streamlines the permitting process for participating landowners.

This project is a multi-jurisdictional effort, intended to assist agencies and landowners' consultants in the planning, conceptual design and permitting of San Francisquito Creek stabilization and revegetation projects. The recommendations herein are based on analyses of site conditions by a multidisciplinary team that has considered the entire creek system and has recommended treatments that are consistent with the needs of that system.

1.2 PROJECT HISTORY

In January of 1998, the City of Menlo Park issued a request for proposals for the San Francisquito Creek Bank Revegetation Project. This project called for the preparation of a general Master Plan to revegetate and remove non-native plants in the creek from Junipero Serra Bridge in Menlo Park to University Avenue in Palo Alto.

Effects of the record flows of February 1998 prompted an increased interest in developing methods for creek bank stabilization to work in conjunction with the Plan's revegetation recommendations. Several other agencies and municipalities joined the effort and the project scope expanded to include the creek downstream of University Avenue to Highway 101. The full study area encompasses an approximately 6.5-mile length of San Francisquito Creek. The project has evolved into a collective effort funded by the Cities of Menlo Park, Palo Alto, and East

Palo Alto, San Mateo County, and the Santa Clara Valley Water District.

The project consisted of two phases. Phase One included the collection of existing conditions data by the consultant team via on-site investigations, detailed mapping, and historical research. Phase Two included development of this Master Plan Report and its companion document, the Existing Conditions Report. Site data were collected and summarized in the two-volume Existing Conditions Report. Recommendations in this Master Plan are based on a synthesis of this extensive data. Although flood events have played a major role in San Francisquito Creek's history, this project does not address flood control issues specifically.

1.3 MASTER PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Master Plan consists of five main components, divided into sections, which cover the following subjects:

- Project and Purpose

  Section 1 – *This Introduction;*

  Section 2 – *Project Overview*, describes site conditions, benefits of compliance with Report recommendations, Report use, and the anticipated approval process;

  Section 3 – *Contextual Setting,* describes the study area, urban edge, cultural/historical context, and archaeological concerns;

- The Master Plan

  Section 4 – *Revegetation and Bank Stabilization Treatments and Plans,* recommends concept-level bank stabilization treatments and associated vegetation restoration, with maps illustrating appropriate treatments by location along the creek;

- Implementation Guidelines

  Section 5 – *Vegetation Restoration Guidelines,* describes the elements involved in planning habitat restoration that may follow bank stabilization;

  Section 6 – *Fisheries and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement Guidelines,* discusses methods for protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat relative to the recommended bank stabilization technique;

  Section 7 – *Access Guidelines,* describes methods for improving the community's relationship to the creek;

- Permitting Scenarios

  Section 8 – *Current Permitting Process for Proposed Projects on San Francisquito Creek*, outlines the current steps required for project approval by agencies;

  Section 9 – *Programmatic Permitting/Conservation Banking*, describes the proposed mitigation/conservation banking method of project implementation, and the Regional General Permit;

- Appendices

  Appendix A – Glossary of Terms ;

  Appendix B – Additional Reference Materials;

  Appendix C – The Compliance Evaluation Checklist, key factors to consider when evaluating proposed project compliance with the Master Plan;

  Appendix D – Cost considerations and summary of treatments by lineal feet;

  Appendix E – Methodology Guiding the Application of the Stabilization /Revegetation Treatment Alternatives.