



## **Safeguarding the Valley and its Water Resources through Watershed Protection**

Zone 7 Water Agency has purchased approximately 5,000 acres of rangeland near Lake Del Valle for the purposes of watershed protection. Zone 7 purchased this property to preserve and protect, using integrated management methods, part of the regional flood protection system and a key source of the area's drinking water supply. The Del Valle Reservoir is owned by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and is part of the State Water Project, which provides the majority of Zone 7's water supply. It is operated in accordance with a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as an important component of the region's flood protection system. Lake Del Valle also collects and stores local runoff for Zone 7 and the Alameda County Water District.

The protection and management of the Del Valle Reservoir watershed is of primary importance to Zone 7, which manages the watershed to achieve the goals of water quality, water supply and flood protection – and to do so in a fiscally responsible and environmentally sensitive manner.

### ***Water Quality & Flood Protection Benefits***

Zone 7's ownership of the property allows the Agency to protect downstream drinking water quality and better manage flood risk through various land management practices aimed at:

- Minimizing sediment and other contaminants that can be carried downstream, adversely affecting water quality and reducing capacity of flood control facilities.
- Reducing soil compaction that can adversely affect the amount, intensity and drainage channel patterns of stormwater runoff and lead to downstream flooding.
- Providing for adequate vegetation both to minimize erosion and to act as a filter to help purify water before entering downstream drinking water supplies.
- Controlling vegetation overgrowth to reduce fire hazards that can lead to erosion and contamination, and cause downstream water-quality problems and flooding.

### ***Grazing Management and Watershed Protection Plan***

In 2014, Zone 7 developed a Grazing Management and Watershed Protection Plan as the next step in assuring the property would be managed to achieve multiple benefits. The goal was to build on previous planning efforts including the Stream Management Master Plan and the Eastern Alameda County Conservation Strategy. The continuation of well-managed grazing is a way to help Zone 7 achieve multiple watershed protection benefits including:

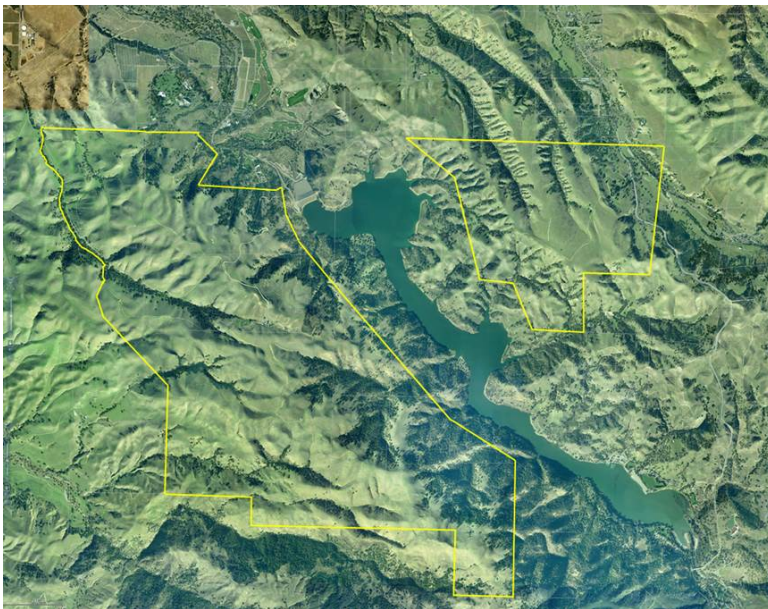
- Vegetation management to reduce wildfire fuel loads;
- Control of invasive weeds; and
- Maintenance of grassland habitat for sensitive species.

### ***Grazing as Watershed Management Tool***

Rangeland, if properly managed, serves multiple benefits. These are described in the California Rangeland Resolution signed by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors and many others.

### ***Watershed Ownership Common Among Water Agencies***

This approach to integrated water resources management -- in which a public water agency protects land surrounding a reservoir in order to protect drinking water quality and better manage flood risk -- is common throughout the Bay Area and California. Over the decades, water agencies across the country have found that purchasing watershed property to assure proper management is less costly in the long term than the alternative, such as increasing the level of water treatment to address water quality issues or constructing additional sedimentation basins to capture runoff from erosion.



### ***History of the Lake Del Valle Watershed Property***

Patterson Ranch was a landholding created through parcel purchases by the George Washington Patterson family in the late 1800s. The family's first purchases of farm land were in the western Fremont area but in 1893, the Pattersons purchased a large ranch for a cattle operation in the South Livermore area. When the Patterson family originally purchased and operated the ranch, the Arroyo del Valle flowed

through the middle of it but in 1964, the California Department of Water Resources purchased the middle of the ranch and built the Del Valle Reservoir. Zone 7's purchase of the property, adjacent to state-owned property, creates a continuous publically-owned and preserved rangeland.