

# Santa Clara Valley Water District Fact Sheet

## Managing Watershed Vegetation

The Santa Clara Valley Water District employs a wide range of tools and techniques to preserve and enhance trees and plants in Santa Clara County's watersheds and along more than 800 miles of streams. Protecting habitat along local waterways sometimes means selective use of herbicides.

Taking into consideration groundwater protection, public health and safety, environmental stewardship and clean safe creeks, the district evaluates all herbicide products, selecting only those that provide minimum risk. The district maintains a very short list of herbicides, each of which has been shown in laboratory tests to be less toxic to humans than vitamin A, aspirin, vinegar and other commonly ingested products. Because these herbicides are formulated to affect plant chemistry, they are practically non-toxic to humans and wildlife.

All herbicide applications are performed by state-certified applicators under written direction of a state-licensed pest control advisor. The herbicide program has been evaluated through public review and through a long-term environmental review, and is closely monitored by state and federal regulatory agencies.

### Why are herbicides used?

Vegetation may require herbicide applications to:

- Minimize fire hazards
- Maintain flood conveyance of waterways
- Control invasive species which harm native vegetation habitats



*Herbicides are used to help protect riparian habitat in local creeks.*

### How does the district decide when to use an herbicide?

When vegetation management is deemed necessary, the district utilizes a process to evaluate control methods, including non-herbicide alternatives such as mowing or disking, based on:

- Effectiveness
- Public health aspects
- Long- and short-term environmental impacts
- Financial cost of alternatives
- Consistency with environmental policies

Once these alternatives have been explored, a determination is made as to the most appropriate control method.

*continued on back...*

## Contact us

For further information about the Santa Clara Valley Water District herbicide program, contact **Zak Mousli** at **(408) 265-2607**, ext. **3862**.



## What safeguards are employed when using herbicides?

To ensure public exposure is minimized and legal requirements met, district applicators post signs in areas where herbicides are used. The postings notify staff and the general public of the date and time of application, the product's common name and the time of allowable re-entry into a treated area.

A district staff contact phone number is posted on the signs which are not removed until after the end of the specified re-entry interval.

In addition, the district maintains records of neighbors who request prior notification before a particular area is treated.

All district personnel who use or oversee pesticides applications receive annual training by the district and the state. Annual training provides:

- Review of pesticide laws and regulations
- Updates on new products
- Review of proper procedures for use and handling
- Review of impacts of pesticides on the environment
- Pesticide Label/Material Safety Data Sheet training
- Best management practices
- Surface water quality and groundwater protection



*Herbicides used by the water district are considered non-toxic to people and wildlife.*

## What we do

The Santa Clara Valley Water District manages water resources and provides stewardship for the county's five watersheds, including 10 reservoirs, more than 800 miles of streams and groundwater basins. The water district also provides flood protection throughout Santa Clara County.

Visit our website, [www.valleywater.org](http://www.valleywater.org).

## Pollution hotline

To report illegal dumping of hazardous materials in or around reservoirs and creeks, please call **1-888-510-5151**.

## Fight West Nile Virus

**Target the source. Dump standing water.**

For more information, visit Santa Clara County Vector Control District's website at **[www.sccvector.org](http://www.sccvector.org)**, or call the West Nile Virus Hotline at **1-800-314-2427**.

