

## **SOIL RESOURCES POLICIES**

The County will:

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### 2.1 Protect and Preserve Soil as a Resource

Protect and preserve the availability and quality of soil as a resource for its ability to sustain healthy plant, animal, and human life within San Mateo County.

#### 2.2 Minimize Soil Erosion

Minimize soil erosion through application of appropriate conservation practices.

#### 2.3 Prevention of Soil Contamination

Prevent soil contamination through the appropriate use, storage, and disposal of toxic substances.

#### 2.4 Protection of Productive Soil Resources

Protect productive soil resources from abuse, misuse, and degradation.

#### 2.5 Minimize Depletion of Productive Soil Resources in Agricultural Areas

Minimize depletion of productive soil resources in agricultural areas through application of appropriate management practices.

### **DEFINITIONS**

#### 2.6 Definition of Productive Soil Resources

Define productive soil resources as soils in rural areas capable of feasible or economic agricultural and timber production.

#### 2.7 Definition of Soils with Agricultural Capability

As designated on the Productive Soils Resources Map, define productive soils with agricultural capability as including, but not limited to:

- a. Soils with the best combination of physical and chemical features for the production of agricultural crops, or

- b. Soils which have a good combination of natural, physical, and chemical characteristics for producing agricultural products,<sup>1</sup> and for which a dependable source of irrigation water is available, or
- c. Soils that are of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage and oilseed crops, or
- d. Soils other than identified in subsection c that are used for the production of specific high value food and fiber crops, or
- e. Soils that have been identified as having local importance for agriculture by the County with the assistance of the Agricultural Advisory Committee, or
- f. Soils which are or recently have been in agricultural production, or
- g. Soils which support vegetation, whether grown naturally or managed, feasible for grazing or browsing of livestock.

#### 2.8 Definition of Productive Soils With Timber Capability

Define productive soils with timber capability as including, but not limited to:

- a. Soils which have a combination of physical and chemical characteristics necessary for productive timber growth.
- b. Soils which are supporting productive timber growth.

#### 2.9 Definition of Soil Erosion

Define soil erosion as the process by which soil is detached and transported by running water, wind, and gravity. Include naturally occurring soil erosion, and that accelerated by human activity.

#### 2.10 Definition of Soil Contamination

Define soil contamination as the addition of chemical or other degrading substances to soil such that the soil becomes toxic or injurious to plant or animal life.

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<sup>1</sup> As determined by the State Department of Conservation--Advisory Guidelines for the Farmland Monitoring Program (Sections 201.1, 202.1) April, 1984.

2.11 Definition of Protective Use of Productive Soil

Define protective use of productive soil as any activity which preserves, renews, and sustains the ability of the soil to support plant and animal life.

2.12 Definition of Good Soil Conservation Techniques

Define good soil conservation techniques as any activity which preserves, renews and sustains the ability of the soil to support plant and animal life; including, but not limited to, public or private land in a natural condition, and properly managed agriculture and forestry.

2.13 Definition of Nonprotective Use of Productive Soil

Define nonprotective use of productive soil as any activity which eliminates, depletes, or significantly alters the availability and capacity of soil to support plant and animal life.

2.14 Definition of Improper Soil Conservation Techniques

Define improper soil conservation techniques as any activity which significantly alters the availability and capacity of soil to support plant and animal life.

2.15 Definition of Soil Conversion

Define soil conversion as the process of (a) transforming productive soil from a protective use to a nonprotective use, or (b) shifting from good soil conversion techniques to poor soil conversion techniques.

**DESIGNATIONS**

2.16 Designation of Productive Soil Resources

Recognize the Productive Soil Resources Map (dated December 1984), and subsequent updates, as representative of the distribution of productive soil resources within San Mateo County, based upon the best and most current information available.

**REGULATION OF DEVELOPMENT**

2.17 Regulate Development to Minimize Soil Erosion and Sedimentation

Regulate development to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation; including, but not limited to, measures which consider the effects of slope, minimize removal of vegetative cover, ensure stabilization of disturbed areas and protect

and enhance natural plant communities and nesting and feeding areas of fish and wildlife.

2.18 Encouragement of Soil Protective Uses

Encourage the continuance and expansion of soil protective uses in rural areas, specifically agriculture and forestry, for their ability to protect soil as an available resource, as well as produce beneficial food, fiber, and decorative crops.

2.19 Preferred Uses in Areas With Productive Soil Resources

Give preference to soil protective land uses in areas with productive soil resources. Allow other land uses which are compatible with soil protective uses and which minimally impact the continued availability and productivity of productive soil resources.

2.20 Regulate Location and Design of Development in Areas With Productive Soil Resources

Regulate location and design of development in a manner which is most protective of productive soil resources, including, but not limited to, measures which require clustering of structures.

2.21 Protect Productive Soil Resources Against Soil Conversion

Regulate land use and subdivision of productive soil resources and encourage appropriate management practices to protect against soil conversion. Regulations should place priorities according to the relative productive characteristics of the resource.

2.22 Regulate Forestry Operations Against Accelerated Soil Erosion

Regulate forestry operations to protect against accelerated soil erosion and sedimentation through measures which include construction of water breaks, slope stabilization, restricted seasonal operation, and streamside protection.

2.23 Regulate Excavation, Grading, Filling, and Land Clearing Activities Against Accelerated Soil Erosion

Regulate excavation, grading, filling, and land clearing activities to protect against accelerated soil erosion and sedimentation.

2.24 Regulate Surface Mining Operations Against Accelerated Soil Erosion

Regulate surface mining operations to protect against accelerated soil erosion and sedimentation through measures which ensure siltation control and site reclamation.

2.25 Regulate Topsoil Removal Operations Against Accelerated Soil Erosion

Regulate topsoil removal operations to protect against accelerated soil erosion and sedimentation through measures which ensure slope stabilization and surface drainage control.

2.26 Regulate Oil and Gas Well Operations Against Accelerated Soil Erosion

Regulate oil and gas well operations to protect against accelerated soil erosion and sedimentation through measures which include establishment of streamside buffer strips, construction of water breaks, roadside berms, and site revegetation.

2.27 Regulate Development and Agriculture Against Soil Contamination

Regulate development and agriculture to protect against soil contamination through measures which ensure proper use, storage, and disposal of toxic chemicals and pesticides.

2.28 Regulate Agricultural Activities Against Soil Depletion in Agricultural Areas

Regulate agricultural activities to minimize against soil depletion.

**RESOURCE MAINTENANCE**

2.29 Promote and Support Soil Erosion Stabilization and Repair Efforts

Promote and support efforts aimed at stabilization of ongoing soil erosion and repair of erosion caused land scars.

2.30 Emergency Creekside Erosion Control

Assure timely implementation of emergency creekside erosion control activities.

2.31 Support and Reward Soil Improvement Efforts

Support and, to the maximum extent feasible, reward the efforts of individuals who have voluntarily enhanced soil productivity and nutrient level.

## **PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **ROLE OF OTHER AGENCIES**

#### 2.32 **Support Soil Protection Efforts of Other Agencies**

Recognize, encourage and cooperate with the efforts of public agencies and private groups which are consistent with the goals, objectives and policies of this chapter.