



# Valley Water

Clean Water • Healthy Environment • Flood Protection

## Public Trails on Valley Water Lands – Policy Criteria and Guidance

September 12, 2021

Attachment 5  
Page 1 of 22

# Trail Policy Criteria and Guidance

- Purpose and Need
- Goals of Policy Criteria and Guidance
- Goals of Public Outreach
- Public Outreach Process
- Criteria and Guidance
- Resolutions to Adopt Criteria and Guidance



**Valley Water**

Clean Water • Healthy Environment • Flood Protection





# Purpose and Need

## Valley Water Supports Trails and Access to Open Space

District Act

Resolution 72-44: Recreational Use

Resolution 74-38: Joint Use



# Purpose and Need

## What is compatible?



- Water storage
- Levees and floodwalls
- Flood flow capacity
- Aquifer recharge
- Mitigation



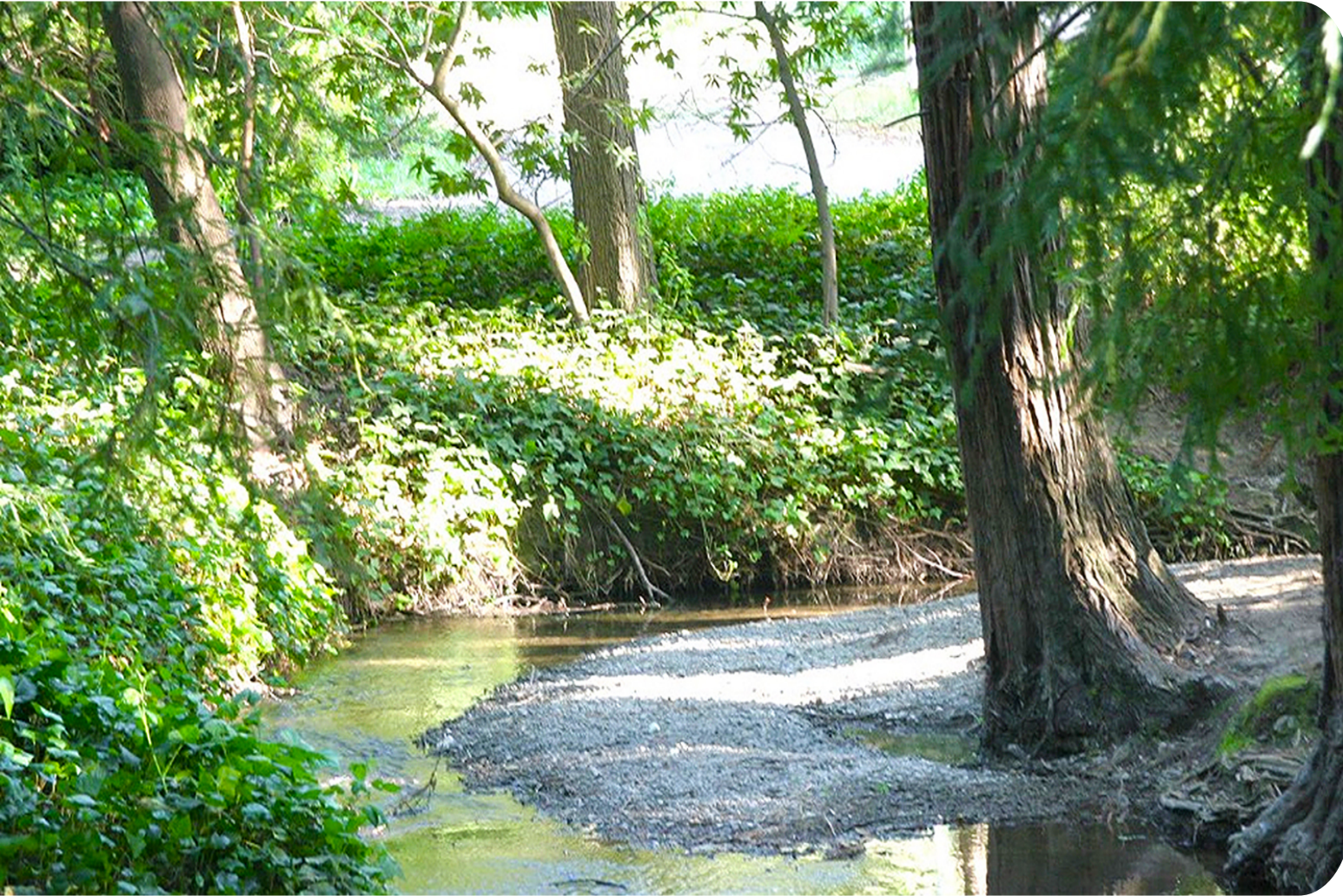
- Sediment Removal
- Levee and Bank Repair
- Vegetation management



- Water Quality
- Habitat Protection
- Restoration and Enhancement

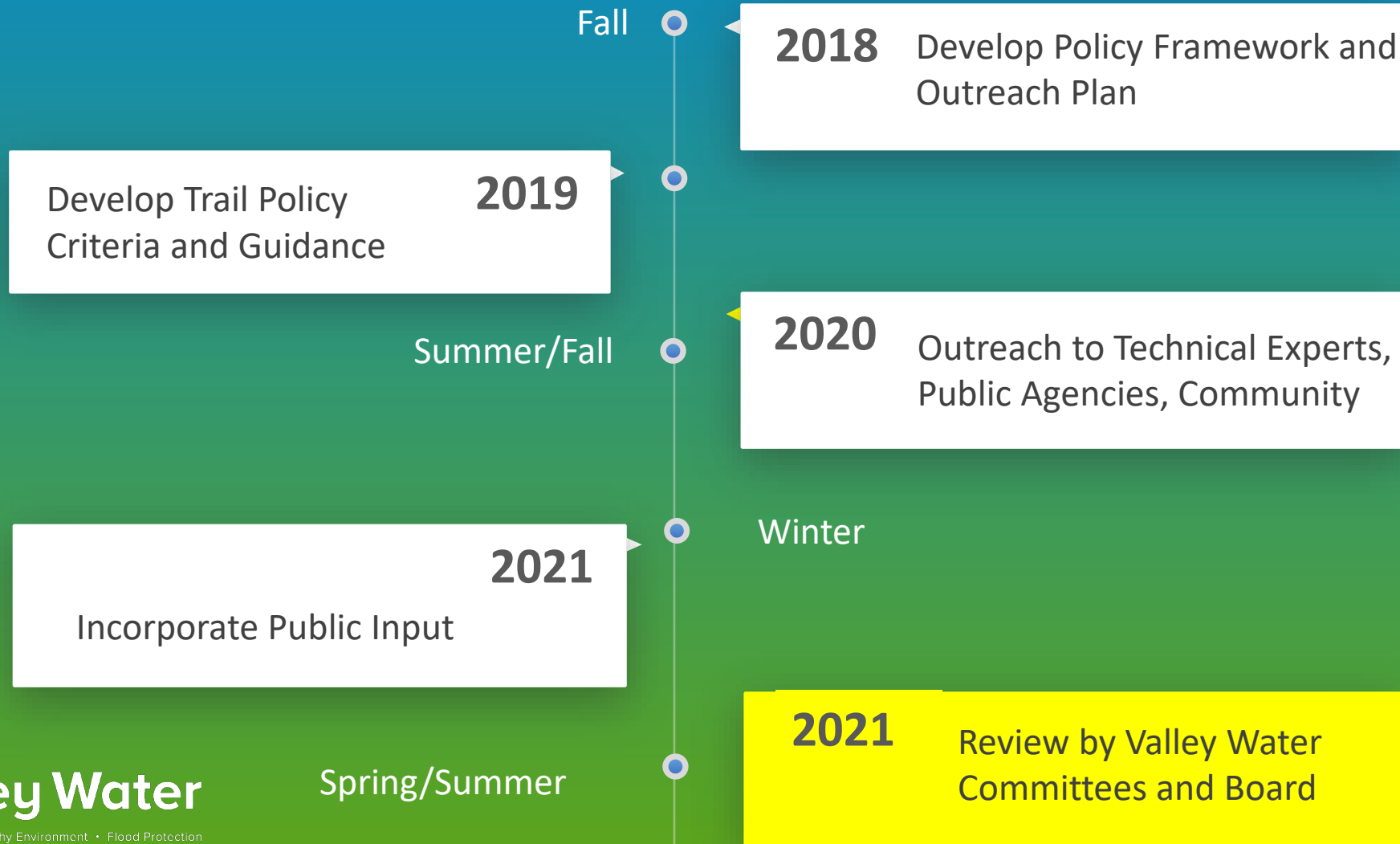


# Goals of the Policy Criteria and Guidance



- Provide clear standards to evaluate trails projects
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of Valley Water and Partner Agencies
- Define a collaborative process

# Public Outreach Process



**Valley Water**

Clean Water • Healthy Environment • Flood Protection

Spring/Summer



# Goals of Public Outreach

Awareness

Education

Expertise

Input

## Policy Criteria Valley Water Operations

Trail Projects must not limit or constrain Valley Water access to maintain and operate



## Importance of Riparian Habitat to Preserving Biodiversity

San Francisco Bay Area is a hotspot of biodiversity within CA and the US

80% of all animals use riparian resources and habitats at some life stage

nest in riparian habitats  
threatened or rare species use SC



YOUR  
INPUT IS  
NEEDED

Take our survey now

Valley Water Does Not Plan, Construct or Operate Trails.



# Policy Criteria Planning and Public Outreach

Partner Agency is  
responsible for conducting:

- Public Planning Process
- Community Outreach
- Stakeholder Engagement





# Policy Criteria Flood Protection

Trail Projects must not:

- Reduce existing or design levels of flood protection
- Adversely affect existing FEMA flood mapping,
- Increase flooding or the frequency of flooding.





# Policy Criteria Valley Water Operations

Trail Projects must not limit or constrain Valley Water access to maintain and operate its facilities.





# Policy Criteria Valley Water Operations

- Sediment Removal
- Maintaining Native Plant Mitigation Sites
- Erosion Repair
- Vegetation Management
- Trails must be designed to withstand access by heavy equipment.



Neighborhood Work 2017  
**Calabazas Creek Sediment Removal**

**What:** The Santa Clara Valley Water District will remove sediment from Calabazas Creek in the cities of Sunnyvale and Santa Clara. Crews will use excavators, dump and crew trucks and small loaders. Expect typical construction noise and dust during work hours.


**When: September to November\***  
Work hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday and possibly Saturdays in case of delays.

**Where:** Between Tasman Drive and upstream of Highway 101.

\*Project start dates and duration may vary due to site conditions and equipment availability.

**Jay Lee**  
(408) 630-2231  
jay@scvvalleywater.org

For more information on the Stream Maintenance Program visit the GFI code at: <http://caltrans.ca.gov/Service/StreamMaintenance/Program.aspx>





# Policy Criteria

## Habitat Protection

Trail Construction and Use must not result in serious or major disturbance to biological resources, including aquatic, riparian and wetland habitats, and the streamside ecosystem.

- Sensitive Trail Siting and Design
- Maintain Native Tree Canopy
- Protective Design Features
- Enhancement of Existing Habitat

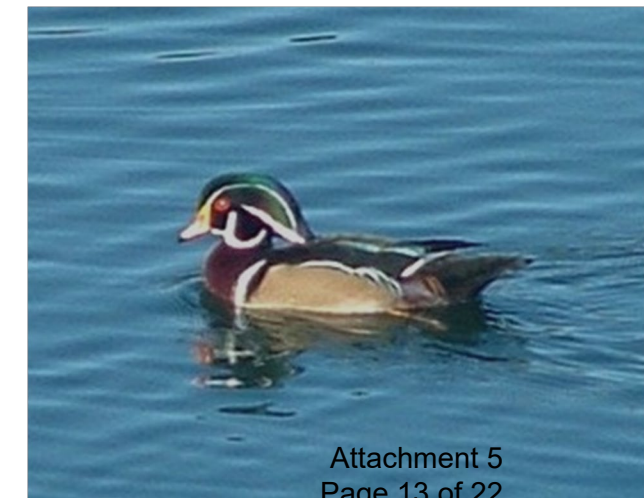






JUA Application requires:

- Biological Resources Assessment
- VW Habitat Protection Criteria may not align with CEQA thresholds or other state and federal permitting regulations
- Trail Projects may clear CEQA and not be suitable for development on Valley Water lands



# Policy Criteria Trail Maintenance and Security

Maintenance, patrolling, and management of the trail is at the sole cost and responsibility of the Partner Agency. JUA Application requires:

- O & M Plan and a Commitment to Fund these costs for the life of the trail
- Partner Agency to remove a trail for Flood Control Improvements





# Policy Criteria

## Channel Stability

Trail Projects, including any in-channel features, must not adversely affect channel bank or bed stability or cause or exacerbate existing erosion problems.

- Trail Ramps and Underpasses
- Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridges
- Restoration Structures





# Policy Criteria Water Quality

Trail Projects must be designed to:

- Minimize erosion
- Reduce the flow of pollutants, including trash and litter, into the creeks

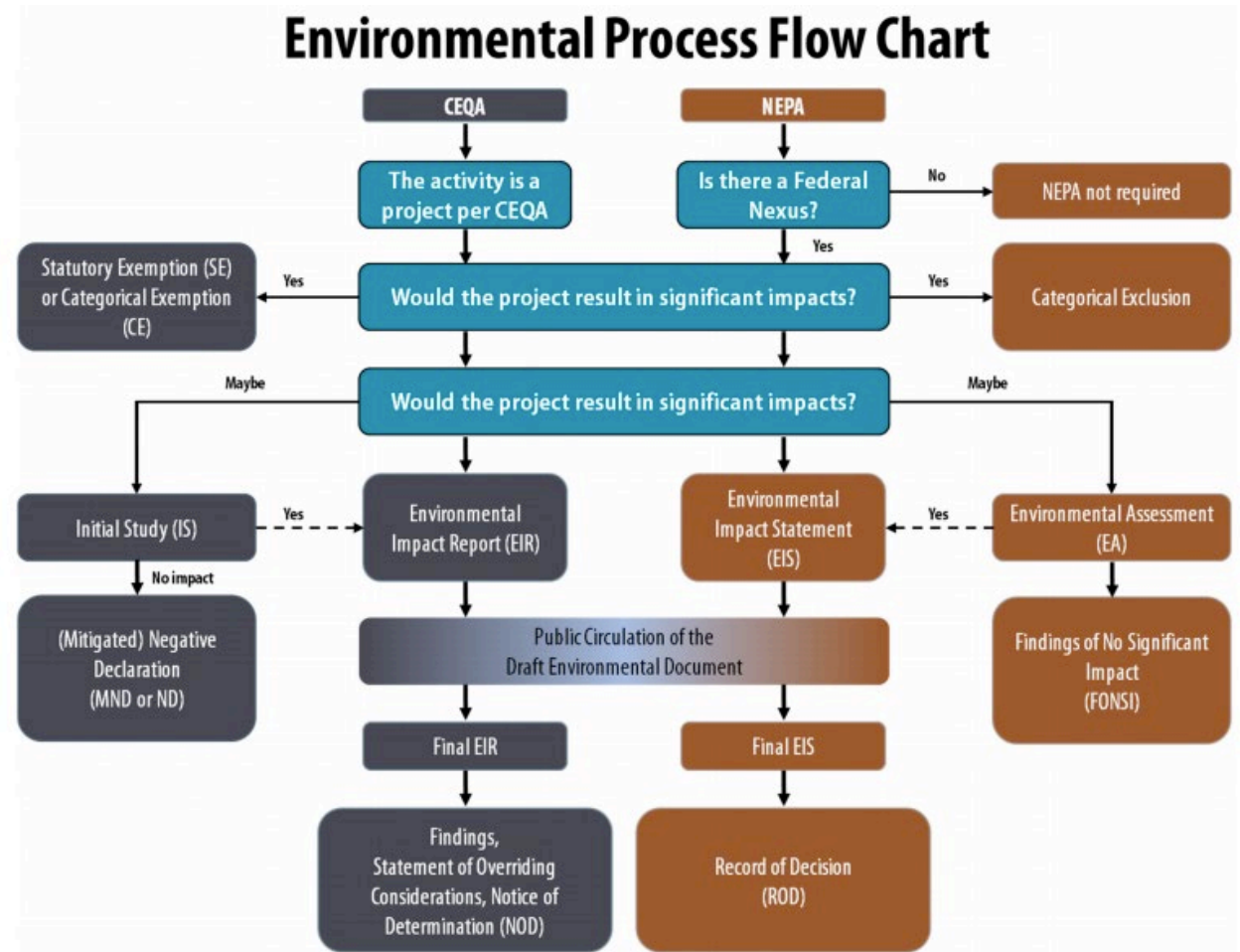




# Policy Criteria Regulatory Compliance

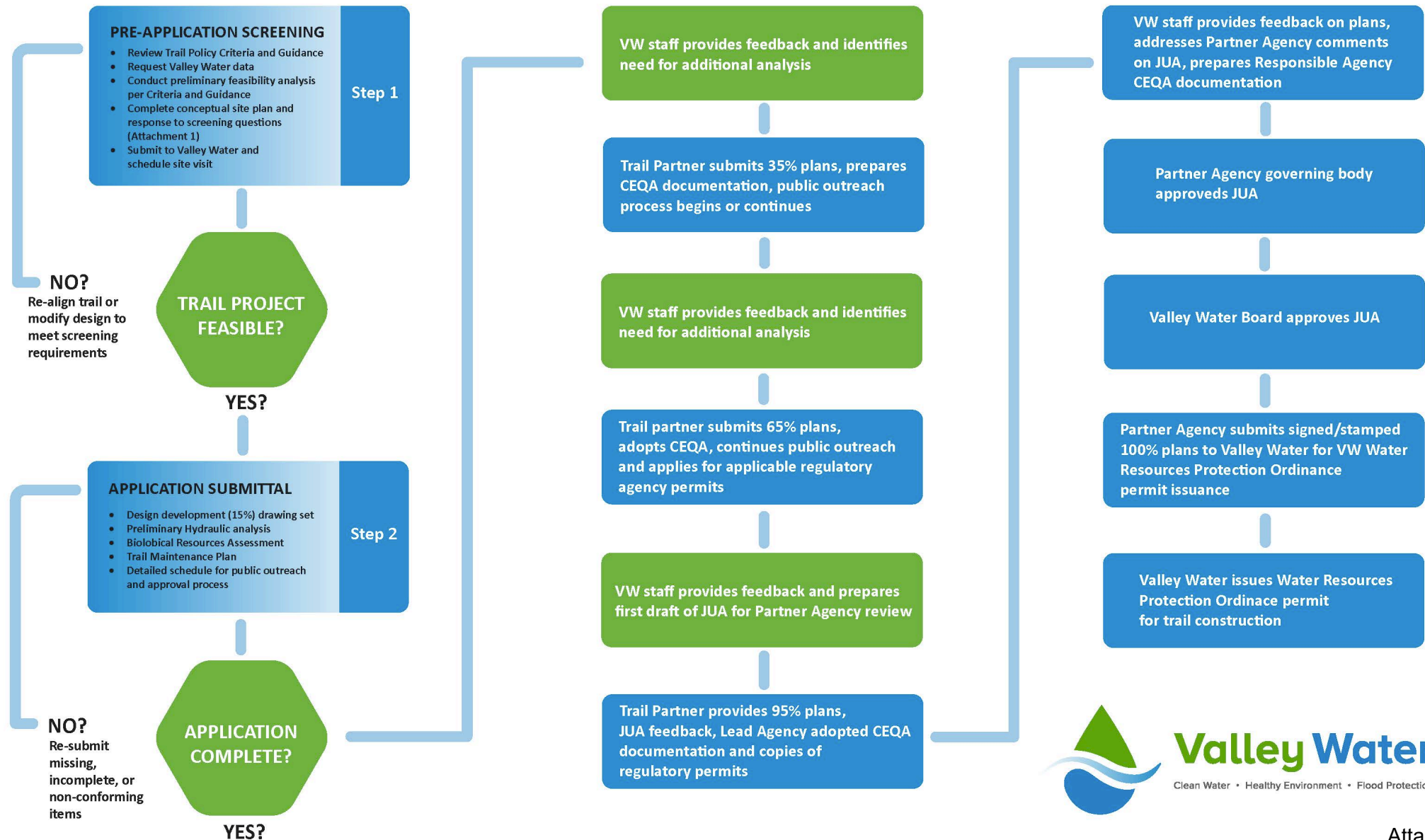
Partner Agency is responsible for:

- Environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
- Obtaining all necessary regulatory permits





# Guidance to meet the Criteria – JUA Process





# Guidance to meet the Criteria – Habitat Protection

**New construction of trails or trail segments within wetlands or parallel to waterways within riparian habitat shall be avoided, and an appropriate buffer provided where feasible**

**Access areas to the waterway or riparian habitat** for interpretive/educational purposes, designed to minimize impacts to habitat, **are encouraged.**

Trail Projects shall be located along **existing access roads or within other previously-disturbed areas**, and shall be generally limited to one side of the waterway.

Trail Projects **shall avoid removal or substantial pruning of native trees**, and seek an alignment that maintains a contiguous tree canopy

**Habitat enhancement** may be incorporated into the design or Trail Projects to offset adverse effects and create an **overall beneficial impact** on habitat quality.

# Recommendations

- A. Consider the January 25, 2021 Board Policy and Planning Committee recommendation to approve the Policy Criteria and Guidance for Public Trails on Valley Water Lands;
- B. Adopt the Resolution ESTABLISHING POLICY CRITERIA FOR PUBLIC TRAILS ON VALLEY WATER LANDS;
- C. Open the Public Hearing to Consider Amendment of the Water Resources Protection Manual to Include the Policy Criteria and Guidance for Public Trails on Valley Water Lands;
- D. Close the Public Hearing; and
- E. Adopt the Resolution AMENDING THE WATER RESOURCES PROTECTION MANUAL TO INCLUDE POLICY CRITERIA AND GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC TRAILS ON VALLEY WATER LANDS.



An aerial photograph of a park area. On the left, a river flows through a lush green forest. A paved path curves along the right side of the river, with two people walking on it. In the background, a city skyline is visible through the trees. The word "Questions?" is overlaid in large, bold, black text in the center of the image.

# Questions?



# Valley Water

Clean Water • Healthy Environment • Flood Protection