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City of Healdsburg

# Saggio Hills Affordable Housing

Healdsburg, California



Central area of Saggio Hills, with creek tree canopy seen on the left.

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*The design of an affordable, sustainable housing community is informed and enriched by the site's ecological context.*

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## **SERVICES**

Conservation Planning  
Water Strategies  
Climate Adaptation

**A**n affordable housing project of the City of Healdsburg, CA, Saggio Hills is situated in the headwaters of Foss Creek, an ephemeral stream that flows into the Russian River. It is also surrounded by properties that are either dedicated to conservation or have a low density.

As the ecological consultant to Mithun on the Freebird Development team, Biohabitats performed an ecological analysis of the site through remote sensing, interpretation, and a site visit. Biohabitats examined site hydrology, soils, vegetation, and wildlife. A report summarizing the analysis helped the design team understand site conditions and identify opportunities to maximize its sustainability and ecological performance. These opportunities included restoration of Foss Creek, which was experiencing erosion during rain events. The report, which also addressed fire risk and the protection of hydrological processes in its recommendations, established the basis for the development of a sustainability vision and initial design phases.

Biohabitats then participated in a community charrette to convey the stewardship response of the design to the site's ecological conditions, opportunities, and context. Biohabitats also participated in design sessions to help integrate ecological design elements. Informed by equity and ecology, the Saggio Hills community will provide residents with an experience of place stewardship, and ecological literacy.