

# MULTIBENEFIT LAND REPURPOSING PROGRAM

Annual Report 2024



Report developed by Self-Help Enterprises, Environmental Defense Fund, and Environmental Incentives with support from the California Department of Conservation. We thank the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program block grantees for their valuable contributions to this report.



## Table of Contents

<b>Acronym Glossary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
Implementation Highlights	5
<b>Program Summary</b>	<b>8</b>
Program Overview & Goals	9
Program Goals	10
Program-level Progress	11
<b>Block Grantee Overviews &amp; Progress</b>	<b>15</b>
MLRP Block Grantees	15
Block Grantee Progress	24
Highlights & Learnings from Block Grantees	28
<b>Tribal Grant Funding Overview &amp; Progress</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Program Administration Highlights</b>	<b>33</b>
Meaningful Benefits Definition Development & Updated Program Guidelines Process	33
The MLRP Statewide Support Entity	36
Statewide Monitoring Approach	41
<b>Looking Ahead</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Appendix. Block Grantee Resources Developed by the Statewide Support Entity</b>	<b>45</b>

## Acronym Glossary

CA	California
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CNRA	California Natural Resources Agency
DOC	Department of Conservation
EDF	Environmental Defense Fund
EI	Environmental Incentives
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
MALRP	Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plan
MLRP	Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SHE	Self-Help Enterprises
SSE	Statewide Support Entity



## Executive Summary

The Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program (MLRP) increases regional capacity for repurposing irrigated agricultural land to uses that reduce reliance on groundwater while providing community health, economic well-being, water supply, habitat, renewable energy, and climate benefits. The program provides funding for regional block grants, tribal grants, and a Statewide Support Entity to provide technical assistance to block grantees and support progress toward program goals.

The California Department of Conservation (DOC) launched MLRP activities in summer 2022 with awarding its first round of funding. In response to the first application solicitation, the MLRP received 12 block grant applications requesting over \$100M in funding. DOC awarded \$10M block grants to 4 applicants partnering and collaborating with 73 different organizations. In the second application solicitation, the MLRP received 10 applications requesting \$85M in block grant funding. In June 2023, DOC awarded \$8.89M block grants to 4 applicants partnering and collaborating with over 36 different organizations, doubling the number of block grantees and extending the total reach of MLRP partner and collaborator support to over 100 organizations. Since these two initial rounds of funding awards, the program has seen significant progress toward program and block grant goals, as shown in Figure B.

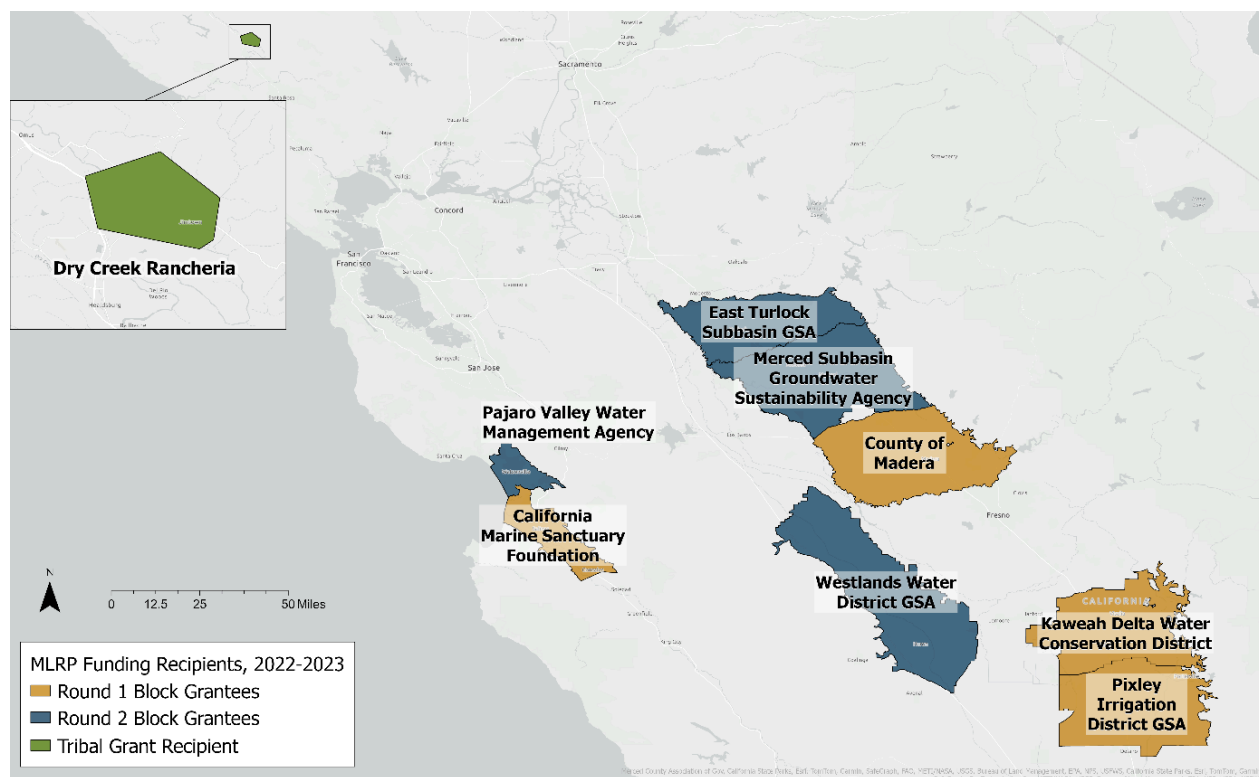


Figure A. Map of funding awards, 2022-2023

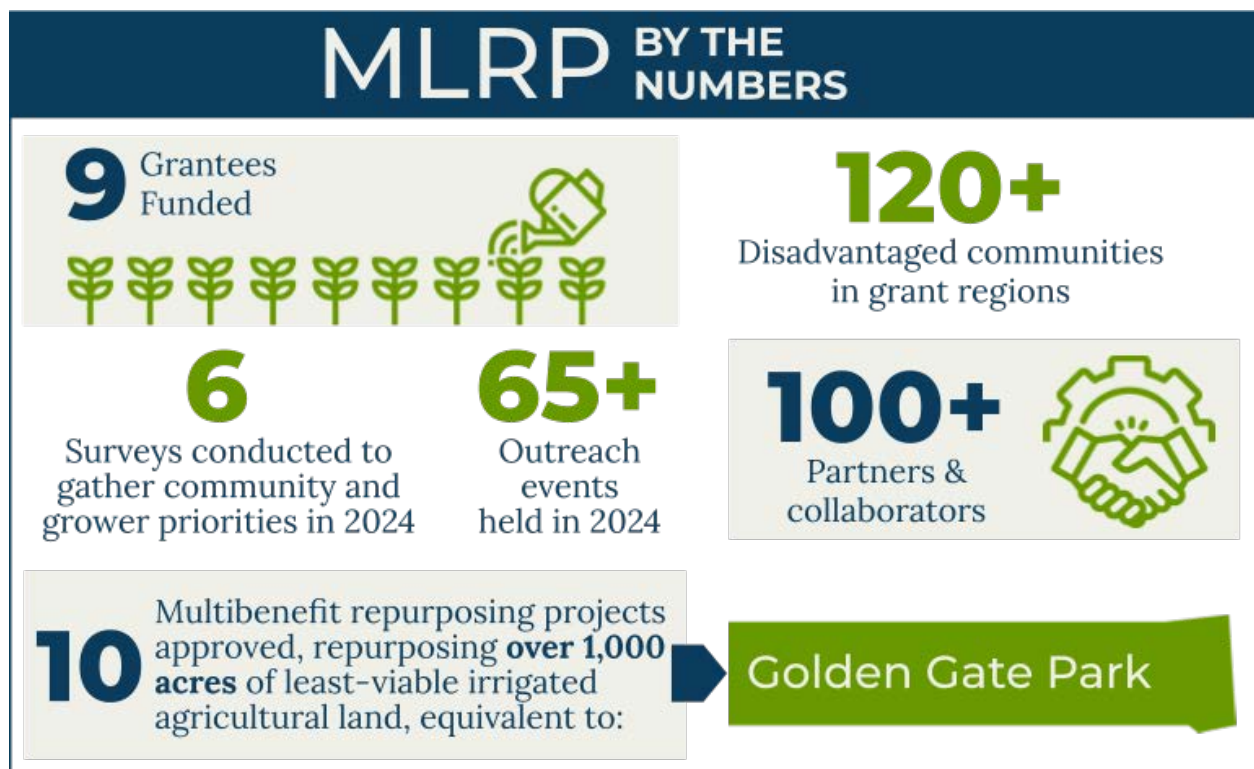


Figure B. Highlighting MLRP participation and engagement by the numbers

## IMPLEMENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

In 2024, MLRP block grantees led a wide range of outreach activities to actively engage local communities and growers in the planning and implementation of land repurposing initiatives across their regions. Nearly every block grant team organized events—from grower resource fairs to dynamic town-hall meetings—in efforts to ensure that outreach formats were accessible in multiple languages, and inviting as many voices as possible into the MLRP process.

Block grantees worked to establish clear, inclusive criteria to evaluate and select land repurposing projects for funding. These criteria, developed with input from growers, community members, the Department of Conservation (DOC), and the Statewide Support Entity, contribute to rigorous, inclusive, and transparent project prioritization processes. This collaborative approach aims to strengthen community trust while guiding the selection of impactful projects.





MLRP achieved a significant milestone in 2024 with DOC approval of the first ten multibenefit land repurposing projects. The ten projects reduce groundwater demand and/or increase groundwater recharge while providing additional community and environmental benefits. These approved projects exemplify the power of collaborative planning, driven by community and grower input, and highlight the broad range of benefits possible with land repurposing, as illustrated in Figure C below.

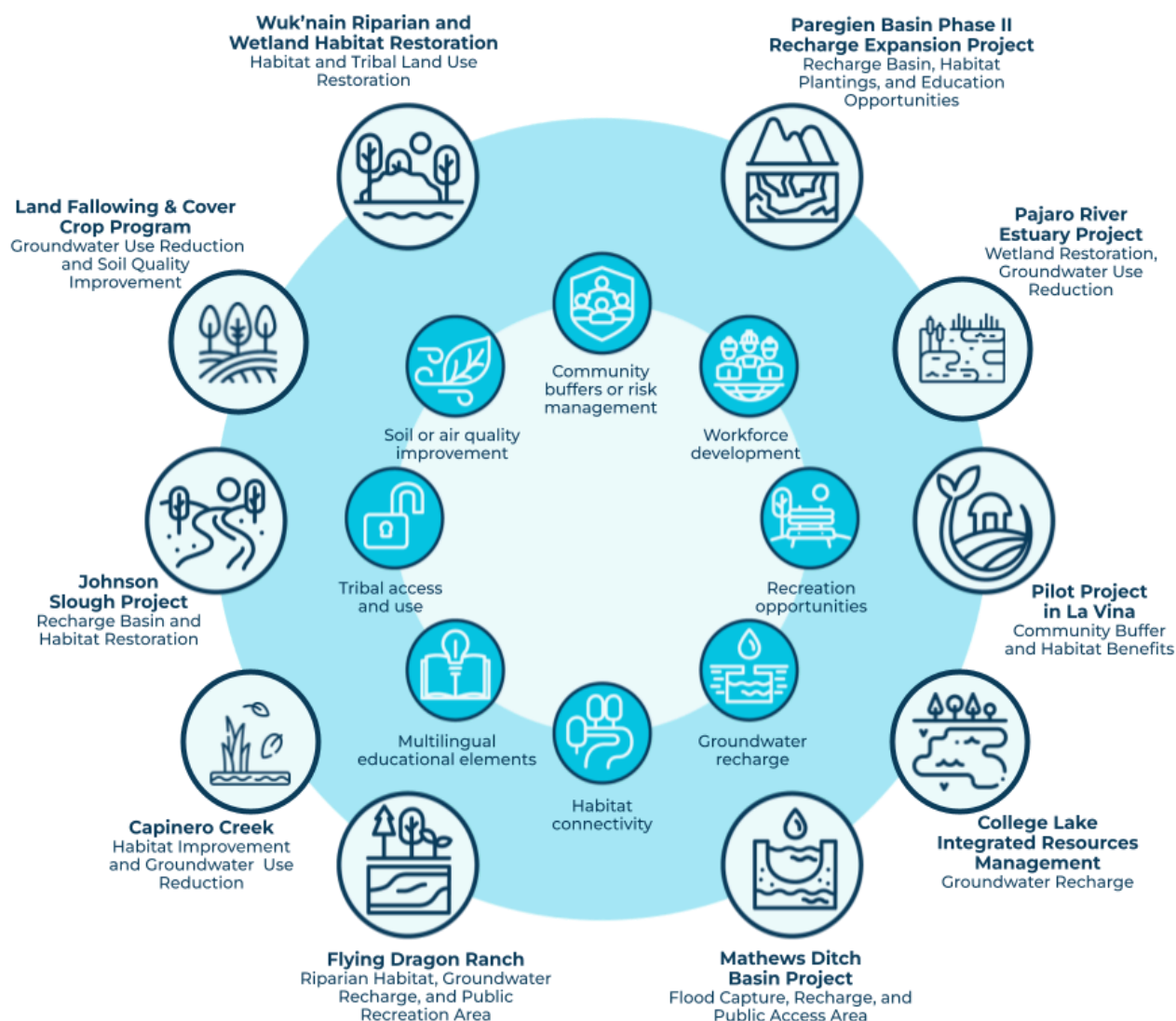


Figure C. Snapshots of benefits from the ten land repurposing projects approved in 2024

The Statewide Support Entity facilitated collaboration and learning among the block grantees through the MLRP Community of Practice, providing 11 learning exchange opportunities and guiding resources (see Figure D below). The Statewide Support Entity worked with DOC, block grantees, and program partners to develop several resources to aid block grantees in implementation efforts, such as the Statewide Monitoring Approach.

This document captures the program’s approach to monitoring progress toward MLRP goals and includes recommendations for tracking indicators of groundwater sustainability, resilient communities, adaptive capacity, functional ecosystems, and equitable economies to support block grantees’ development of monitoring plans.

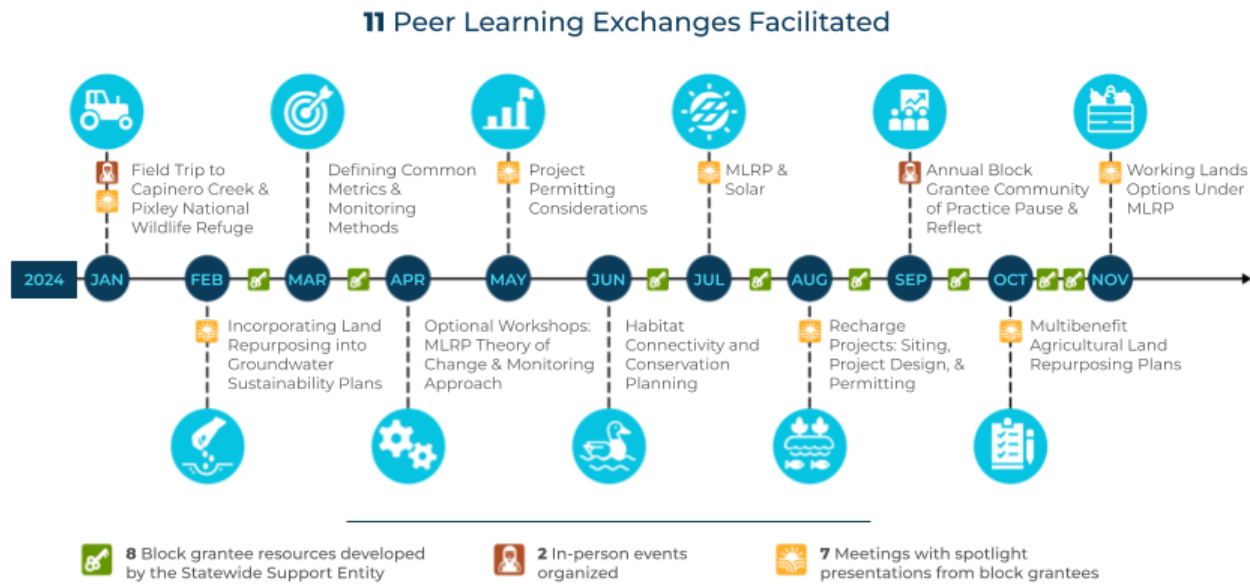


Figure D. MLRP 2024 Statewide Support Entity programming highlights



## Program Summary

The Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program (MLRP) seeks to facilitate groundwater sustainability by repurposing the least-viable irrigated agricultural lands to other beneficial uses. The program increases capacity for locally-led development through regional grants that facilitate planning and coordination to identify projects that reduce reliance on groundwater and support communities, habitat, and other beneficial uses.

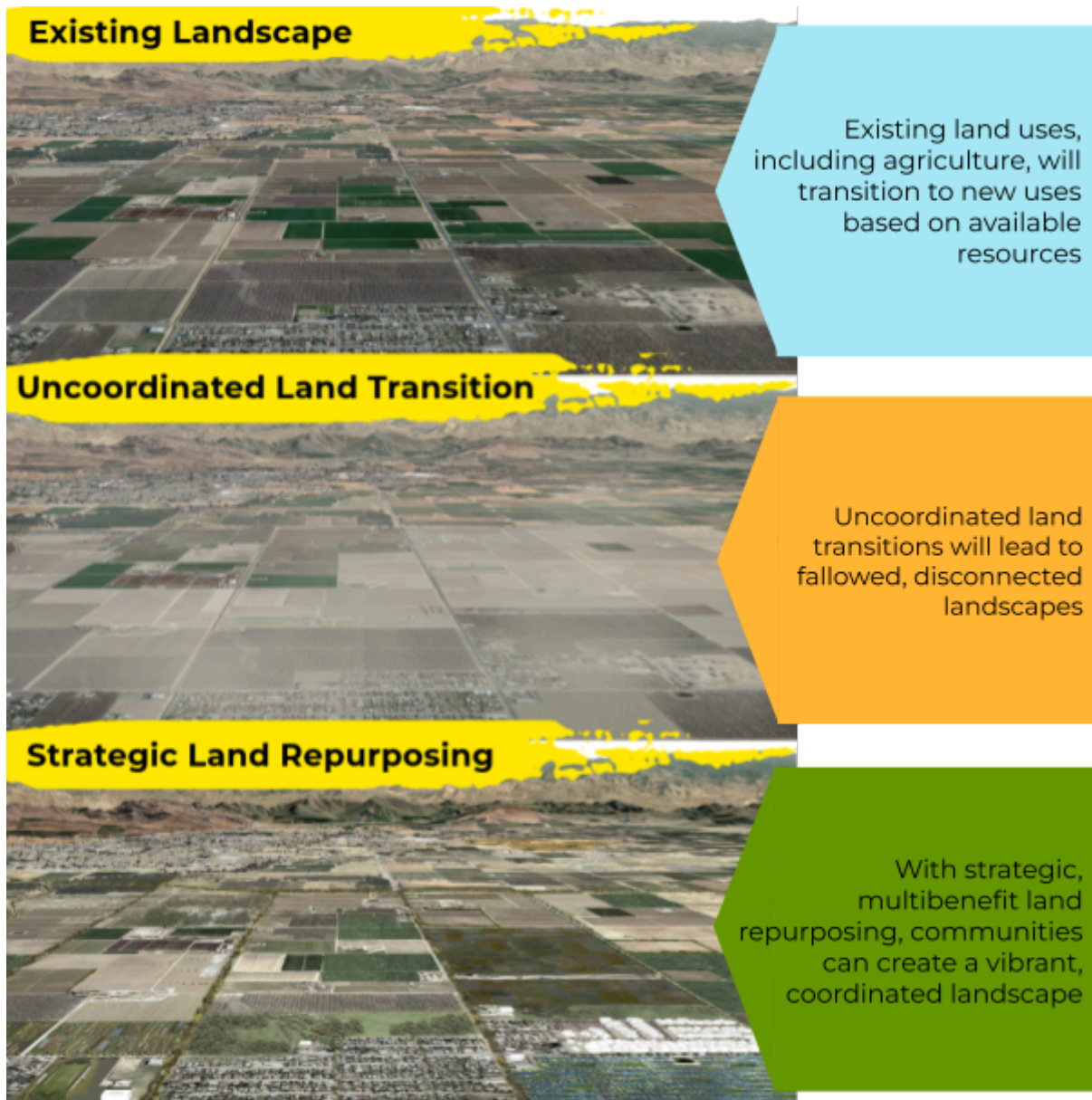


Figure 1. Hypothetical model of existing land uses, and what could be created with MLRP (e.g., more riparian areas, habitat for wildlife, and alternative energy production)

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW & GOALS

The Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program (MLRP) provides grant funding to increase regional capacity to repurpose agricultural land to reduce reliance on groundwater while providing community health, economic well-being, water supply, habitat, renewable energy, and climate benefits. Funding is provided for regional block grants, grants to tribes, and one statewide support entity to provide technical assistance to block grantees and facilitate communications about the program. The California (CA) Department of Conservation (DOC) administers the program supported by an Agency Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from state and federal agencies:

- CA Department of Conservation
- CA Department of Water Resources
- CA Department of Food and Agriculture
- CA Department of Fish and Wildlife
- CA State Water Resources Control Board
- CA Wildlife Conservation Board
- Governor's Office of Business Development
- CA Strategic Growth Council
- United States (US) Natural Resources Conservation Service
- US Fish and Wildlife Service

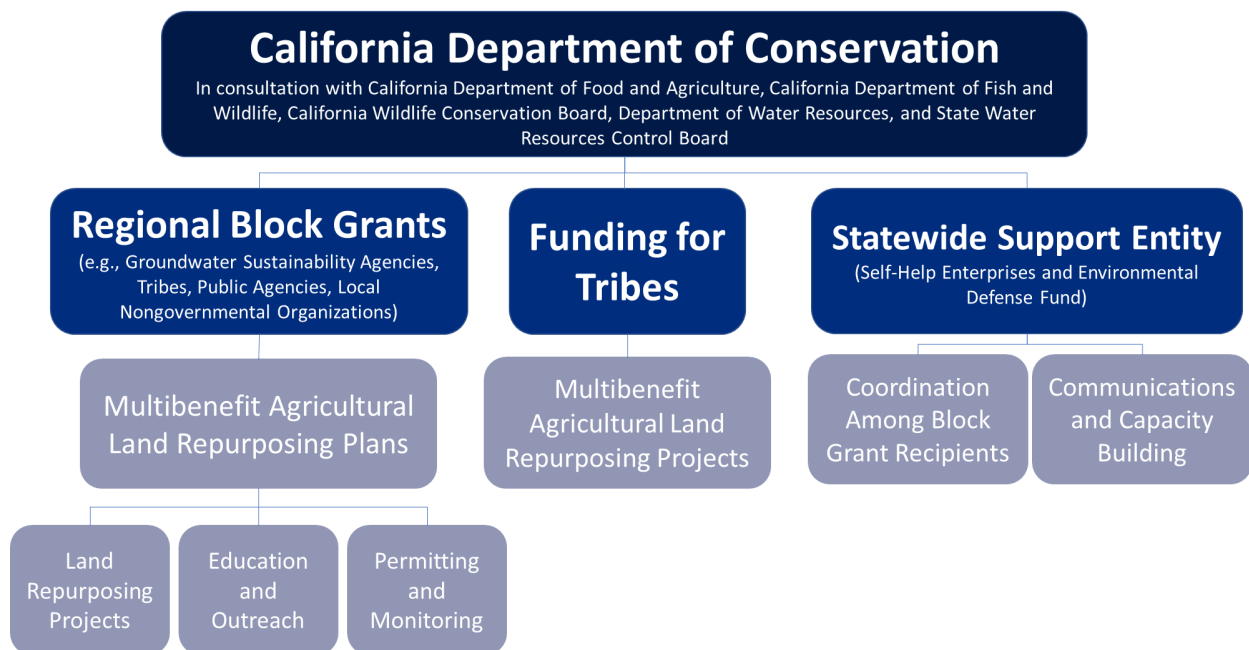


Figure 2. Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program entities, grant types, and deliverables



## PROGRAM GOALS

The primary goals of the MLRP are to:



Support coordinated, regional, and basin-scale efforts to achieve groundwater sustainability in critically overdrafted basins and in high and medium-priority basins where a state emergency drought declaration has been declared.



Support long-term repurposing of lands least viable for agriculture and multibenefit opportunities that convert land to less intensive water uses while maintaining natural and working lands.



Provide short- and medium-term drought relief.



Support regional efforts to sustain land-based economies that are impacted by groundwater sustainability measures.



Reduce groundwater use.



Create or restore wildlife habitat and wildlife connectivity, including seasonal wetland habitat to replenish aquifers.



Improve groundwater supply, including through groundwater recharge, improved baseflows in rivers and streams, and groundwater supply improvement for fish and wildlife habitat.



Support nature-based solutions to reduce the impacts of hazards on lives, property, and the economy from overdrafted groundwater basins.



Provide benefits to disadvantaged communities and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.



Foster partnerships and collaboration among diverse entities to enable regional-scale leadership to meet this program's goals.



Develop scalable, transferable land repurposing models.



Support farmer, rancher, and farm worker leadership in multibenefit land repurposing strategies and project implementation.



Provide flexible and efficient program administration so that grantees can lead expeditious and adaptive programs to meet their needs.

These goals are integrated into program expectations and activities as outlined in the program guidelines. Specifically, MLRP-funded projects must improve groundwater sustainability, and must include at least one other benefit related to community or environmental goals, which includes protecting and restoring biodiversity, expanding access to nature, and building resilience to climate change. The Statewide Support Entity has also developed resources to support block grantees' prioritization of disadvantaged communities and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers (see the Appendix for a full list of resources provided to block grantees).

Benefits achieved as a result of MLRP-funded projects extend beyond the program itself, supporting goals of other state initiatives, including 30x30 California, the California Water Plan, FloodMAR, the Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS) Program, and more.

## PROGRAM-LEVEL PROGRESS

MLRP funding was initially authorized by the Budget Act of 2021 (SB 170, Ch. 240, Stat. of 2021). Program guidelines were developed with interested party and partner agency input in late 2021 and early 2022, followed by the release of the guidelines and the first round of funding. The Public Resources Trailer Bill (AB 211, Ch. 574, Stat. of 2022) appropriated additional funding for MLRP in 2022. In January 2023, DOC announced the Round 2 grant funding and guidelines. In Fall 2024, California voters approved Proposition 4, which will generate an additional \$200M for MLRP.

Fall 2021	Winter 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022	Winter 2022	Spring 2023	Summer 2024	Fall 2024
California establishes the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program (MLRP) and allocates \$50M to the program in its first year.	Department of Conservation (DOC) releases program guidelines based on input from interested parties, and opens the first application period.	12 regions apply for MLRP funding.  4 regions are awarded \$8-10M block grants, and SHE and EDF are selected as the Statewide Support Entity.	California allocates an additional \$40M to DOC for MLRP.	DOC releases second set of guidelines for public comment, opens second application period in January.	10 regions apply for MLRP funding.  4 regions are awarded \$6-9M block grants.	First MLRP implementation projects approved for implementation and first Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plan finalized.	California Proposition 4 passes, directing an additional \$200M state investment in MLRP.

Figure 3. Timeline of MLRP implementation from the passage of land repurposing legislation

In 2024 as Round 1 grantees entered the third year of their grants and Round 2 grantees entered the second year of their grants, they made meaningful progress in educating and engaging growers and community members, soliciting project ideas, drafting their Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plans (MALRPs), and submitting the highest priority projects for DOC approval.

While progress was made across program goals, one of the early takeaways from grantees was the difficulty in rolling out several concurrent efforts to meet MLRP's program requirements around outreach, engagement, planning, project development, and project implementation. Round 1 grantees specifically felt that the timeline for grant

implementation initially mandated by program funding would restrict their ability to fulfill grant requirements. DOC staff worked with the California Natural Resources Agency, the Department of Finance, and the Legislature to authorize an extended grant period. Grant terms for Round 1 grantees may now be extended from their initial anticipated end date of March 31, 2026, to December 31, 2027. With this additional time, grantees anticipate increased success in their grant outcomes. Additional DOC response included amending individual grant agreements, reviewing and approving proposed implementation projects, fostering peer learning, and providing individual grantees with technical assistance.

Even with the timeline extension, it remains critical that grantees quickly roll out their programs, and many grantees identified the need to begin implementation project selection and funding. Several grantees submitted implementation projects to DOC staff for review, feedback, and approval.

Implementation project review frequently required iterative feedback between grantee and DOC staff. Some of this feedback resulted in changes to proposed projects to better incorporate community feedback or clarify program goals and MLRP's role in large projects. As an increasing number of projects were approved, DOC and Statewide Support Entity staff noted the need to begin summarizing and sharing information regarding approved projects. DOC is developing a public-facing platform for this type of information sharing.



Photos from the tour of the La Vina MLRP pilot project site in 2024

Block grantee progress in outreach, planning, and project approval has facilitated increased peer learning opportunities between regions. For instance, the partners within the Pixley Irrigation GSA MLRP block grant hosted other MLRP grantees at the Capinero Creek project site, which emphasized the concepts of resource connectivity, habitat restoration, and cooperation needed to implement an innovative restoration project. The Madera County MLRP block grant team invited legislators, government officials, and community groups to tour the approved La Vina MLRP project site. This provided an opportunity to educate elected officials on the potential for cooperation and public outreach within MLRP.





Figure 4. Conceptual Map of the Pilot Project in La Vina, Madera County, one of the projects approved by DOC in 2024

The rapid progress made by MLRP block grantees allowed DOC and SSE staff to increase their level of support through targeted technical assistance. This assistance ranged from specific feedback on implementation project development, to guidance regarding responsibilities under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and support for overall work planning. In some instances, the DOC and SSE identified the need for supporting materials that could be used by all grantees to face similar challenges. For example, project-specific questions regarding CEQA requirements for cover cropping led DOC staff to present broadly applicable CEQA information to all block grantees during a monthly meeting.

DOC staff have also strengthened cross-programmatic ties within the Department and the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) more generally. Within DOC, MLRP staff have relied on existing guidance and best practices to assist grantees in developing invoicing materials, demonstrating and billing indirect costs, and generating more detailed work plans to prevent issues related to timing and grant progress.

Across CNRA, DOC staff have improved programmatic links to the Wildlife Conservation Board and Department of Water Resources (DWR) among others. As part of this effort, DOC staff presented information on MLRP at the 10-year anniversary event for the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Presenting MLRP information at events and networking with DWR staff increases awareness of MLRP and allows DOC staff to support grantee requests for technical assistance with expert support from relevant DWR staff.

Finally, as MLRP block grantees push forward progress on grant deliverables, several key policy determinations and clarifications have been needed. In particular, block grantees, the SSE team, and program advocates requested that DOC staff produce clear guidance for determining when projects provide meaningful benefits to disadvantaged communities. The process for developing a definition of meaningful benefits is discussed in the Program Administration section of this annual report.

Block grantees also identified two additional areas where guidance was needed: the first was the issue of CEQA responsibilities for implementation projects discussed previously, and the second was clarification regarding accounting for groundwater saved as part of an MLRP funded project. To explore ways to clarify how to account for groundwater saved as part of MLRP-funded projects, DOC staff began by consulting block grantees who had requested further information. DOC staff then began drafting guidance with assistance from the Statewide Support Entity and internal DOC legal staff. Programmatic connections within CNRA assisted this process by allowing DOC staff to consult with subject matter experts at DWR. Following these consultations, DOC staff published proposed revisions to the guidelines for public review and comment. Work on these updates to the guidelines continued into 2025.

Overall, MLRP program implementation has benefited from collaboration at every level. As block grantees make progress, the successes and challenges faced in each region have helped to strengthen planning approaches and ultimately improve program outcomes.



## Block Grantee Overviews & Progress

Between May 2022 and November 2023, DOC awarded a total of \$75M in block grant funding to eight regions across the Central Valley and Central Coast. All eight block grant regions prioritize a reduced reliance on groundwater, and each one features a set of additional benefits tailored to their region.

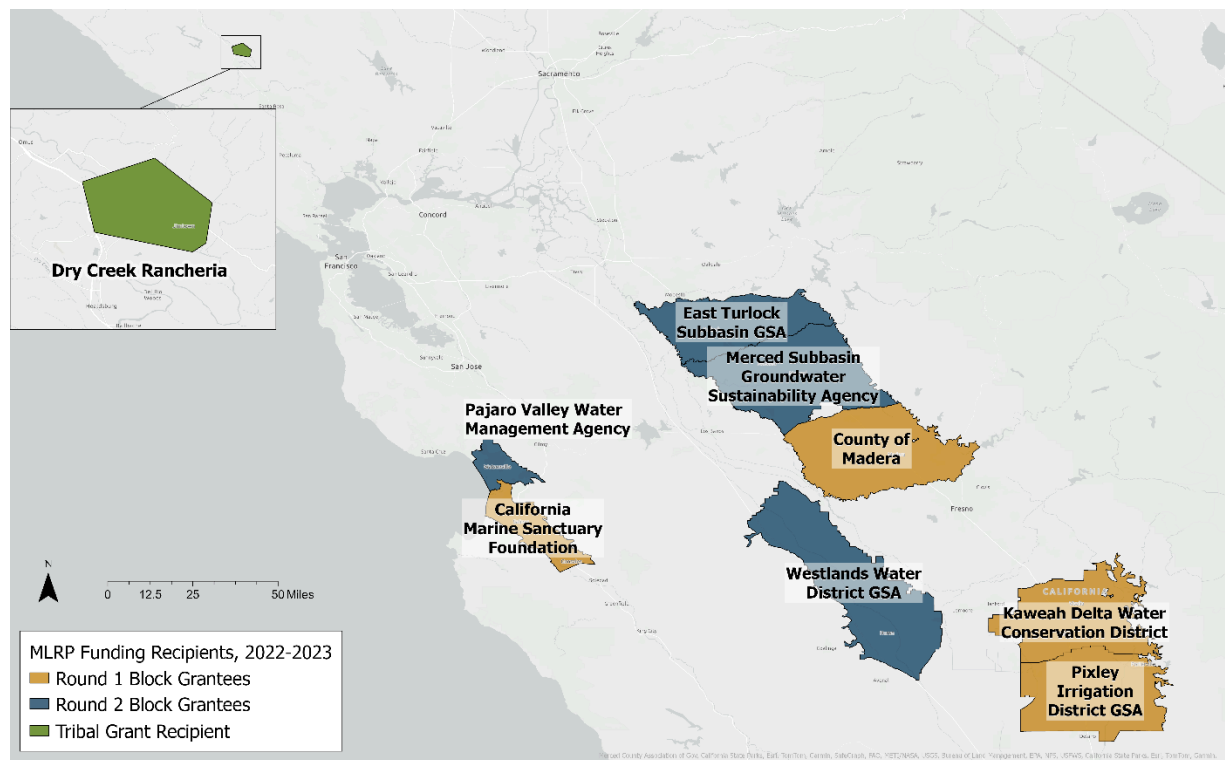


Figure 5. Map of funded applicants from the first two rounds of program funding

### MLRP BLOCK GRANTEES

In May 2022, DOC awarded \$38.2M to 4 block grantees: the California Marine Sanctuary Foundation, County of Madera, Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District, and Pixley Irrigation District Groundwater Sustainability Agency. In September 2023, the program welcomed four additional block grantees into the MLRP in the Turlock, Merced, Pajaro Valley, and Westside Subbasins.

All block grants prioritize a reduced reliance on groundwater, and each one features a set of additional benefits tailored to their region. Block grantees can use their awarded funding to conduct outreach and education, plan and implement land repurposing projects, monitor and report progress toward block grant goals, and more. A brief snapshot of each of these eight block grants is provided below, including a summary, initial successes, and key partners.

# Pajaro Valley's Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Program

## Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency

### Co-Applicants, Partners, & Collaborators

Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency

Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County

University of California, Santa Cruz

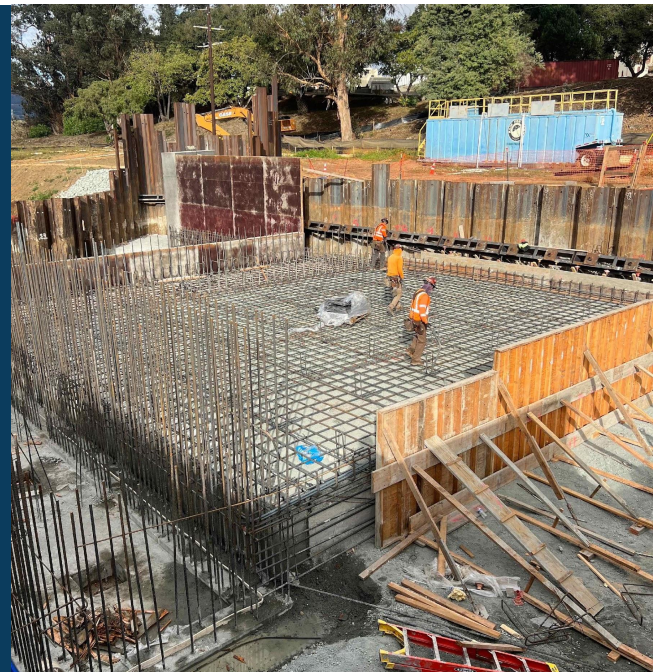
Watsonville Wetlands Watch

### Block Grant Goal & Progress

Goal: To enable regional and collaborative identification, prioritization, development, and implementation of projects that repurpose marginalized agricultural lands to support groundwater sustainability, flood risk reduction and environmental preservation while protecting the \$1 billion agricultural economy.

Santa Cruz Land Trust acquired 247 acres of former coastal wetland turned farmland and will begin by returning 47 acres back to coastal wetland.

The College Lake Project, reducing seawater intrusion while supporting fish passage and agriculture, was approved and will be operational in 2025. It will provide groundwater savings and a seasonal lake.



# MLRP Madera

## Madera County

### Co-Applicants, Partners, & Collaborators

Madera County  
Madera/Chowchilla Resource  
Conservation District  
Madera County Farm Bureau  
Madera Ag Water Association  
California Farmland Trust  
Zanjero  
ERA Economics  
Davids Engineering  
Linguistica



2024 Grower Resource Fair

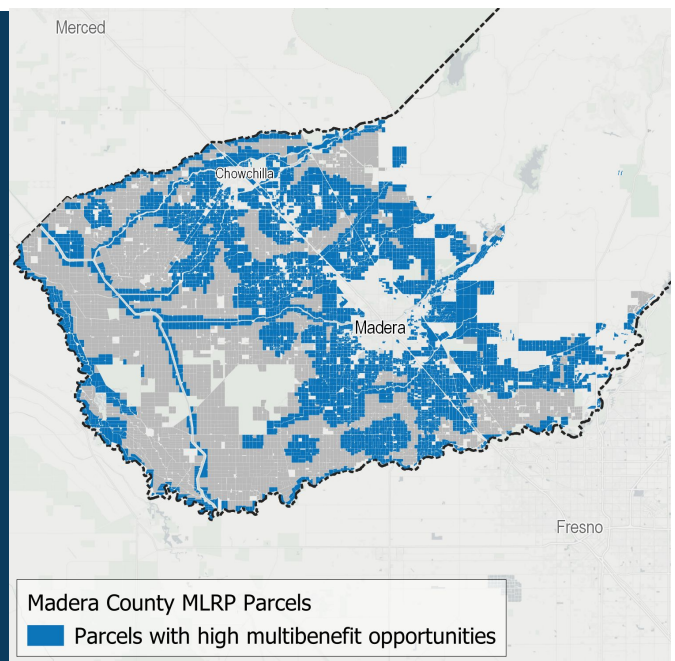
## Block Grant Goal & Progress

Goal: Develop a portfolio of projects that create net water savings and prioritize beneficial outcomes for:

- Dry community and domestic wells
- Disadvantaged communities
- Priority waterways

### Progress:

- Released a Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plan with input from partners & stakeholders
- Held or participated in 39 public outreach activities & events, including grower resource fairs
- Implementing a community buffer pilot project in La Vina



## Block Grant Region Map





# Merced Subbasin MLRP

## Merced Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

### Co-Applicants, Partners, & Collaborators

SocioEnvironmental and Educational  
Development Strategies (SEEDS)

East Merced Resource Conservation District

Great Valley Seed, Co.

River Partners

La Paloma Mutual Water Company

Sandy Mush Mutual Water Company

United States Fish and Wildlife Service

Valley Eco

Zanjero, Inc.

EKI Environment & Water, Inc.

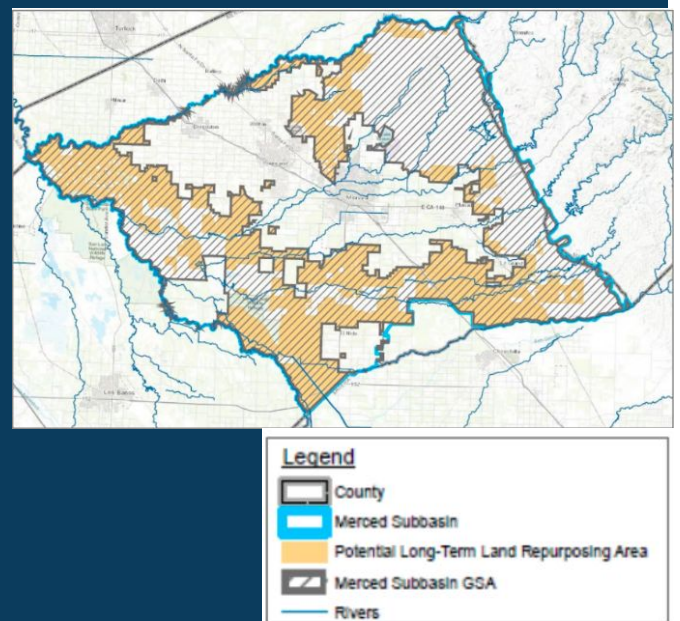


SEEDS Outreach Event

### Block Grant Goal & Progress

The Merced Subbasin MLRP aims to increase the groundwater sustainability of the subbasin while supporting a viable agricultural economy, increasing native wildlife habitat, and improving community and health outcomes through land repurposing, particularly in a wildlife habitat corridor between the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Merced Wildlife Refuge.

In 2024, the Merced Subbasin MLRP facilitated or presented at 16 outreach events, released the project solicitation, and developed project selection criteria with input from the Stakeholder Advisory Committee.



Merced Subbasin Map



## Westside Subbasin Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program

### Westlands Water District

#### Co-Applicants, Partners, & Collaborators

#### Partners

Ceres Collab  
Linguistica  
Sequoia Riverlands Trust  
The LEAP Institute  
Vista Consulting

#### Collaborators

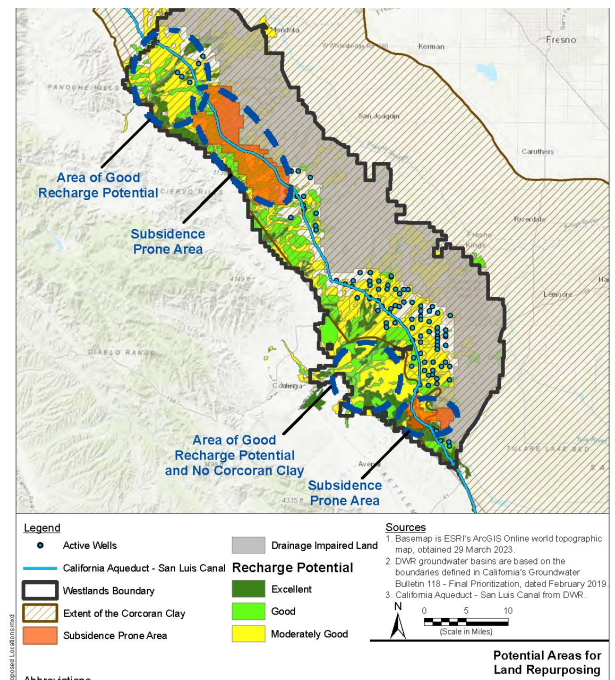
City of Avenal  
City of Firebaugh  
City of Huron  
Fresno County GSA  
UA Local 246

### Block Grant Goal & Progress

Westlands Water District's land repurposing vision is to develop a Subbasin-wide program to implement projects that repurpose agricultural land to reduce reliance on groundwater while providing community health, economic well being, water supply, habitat, and climate benefits.

#### Progress in 2024:

Conducted five outreach events and two surveys to gather input on land repurposing planning  
Formalized roles with Project Partners  
Developing MALRP  
Forming Steering and Outreach Advisory Committees





# Kaweah Subbasin MLRP

## Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District

### Co-Applicants, Partners, & Collaborators

Greater Kaweah GSA  
East Kaweah GSA  
Mid-Kaweah GSA  
Sequoia Riverlands Trust  
Self-Help Enterprises  
SocioEnvironmental  
Education Network  
Valley Eco



Kaweah Stakeholder Advisory  
Committee Meeting

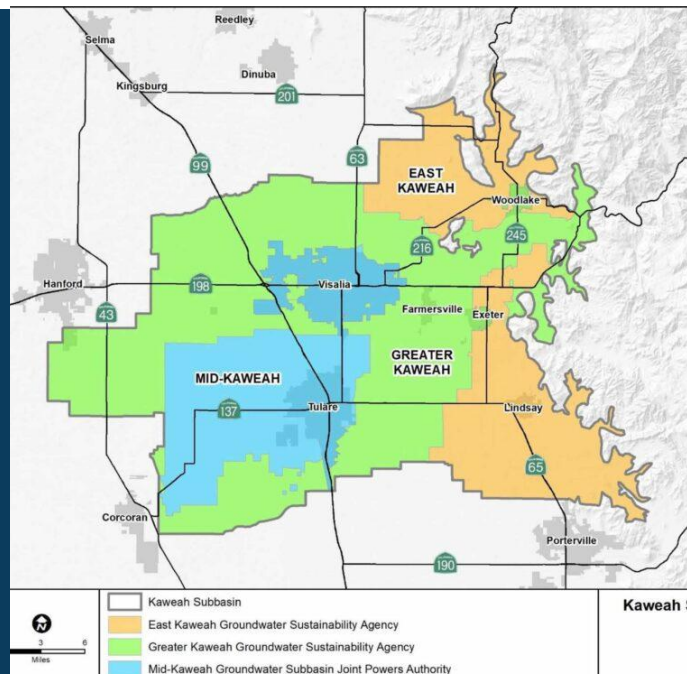
## Block Grant Goal & Progress

The primary goal is to repurpose land to restore habitat and implement projects with substantive multibenefits, sustainable management of groundwater supplies, and long-term conservation protections.

The block grantee and partners are collaborating with a diverse range of stakeholders, including farmers and ranchers, disadvantaged communities, Tribes, and conservation organizations. The team held five outreach events and activities in 2024.

The Kaweah MLRP has five implementation projects under contract, and will be releasing an additional solicitation for Development projects in early 2025.

The team is developing a monitoring plan and project prioritization criteria.



Kaweah Subbasin Map

# Salinas Valley Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program

## California Marine Sanctuary Foundation

### Co-Applicants, Partners, & Collaborators

Central Coast Wetlands Group  
Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater  
Sustainability Agency  
Resource Conservation District  
of Monterey County  
Big Sur Land Trust  
Ag Land Trust  
Amah Mutsun Land Trust  
Monterey County Water  
Resources Agency

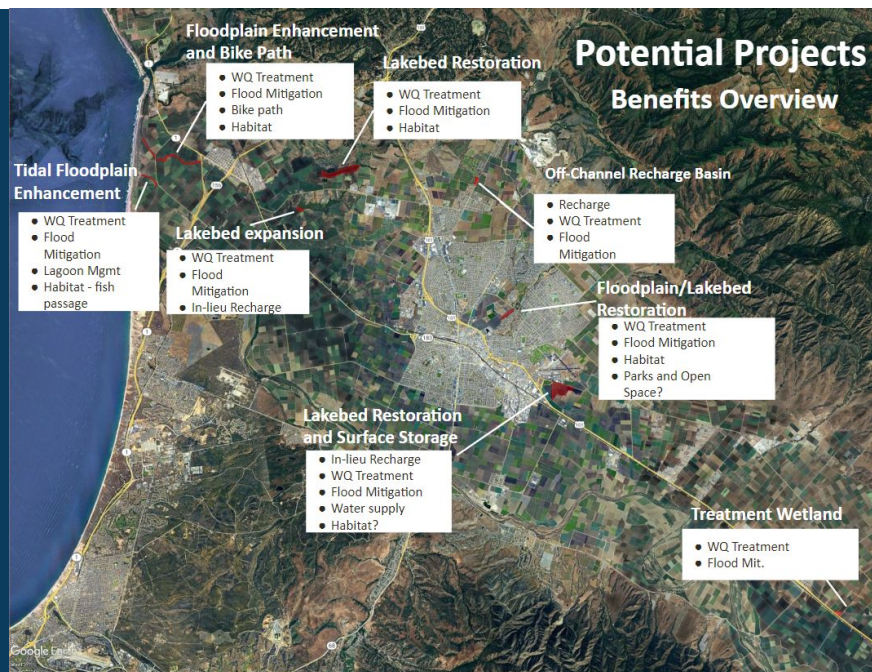


2024 Community Resource Fair

## Block Grant Goal & Progress

Goal: Acquire least viable agricultural lands that can be repurposed to provide water resource benefits from willing landowners. Projects on acquired lands will be 'shovel-ready', to be completed with additional grant funds.

Highlights: Multiple appraisals completed or underway, community outreach coordinator hired, held resource festival attended by over 950 families, and developing a multi-criteria decision support tool for siting recharge projects.





# Tule Subbasin Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program

## Pixley Irrigation District Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA)

### Co-Applicants, Partners, & Collaborators

Eastern Tule GSA	Tri County Water Authority GSA
Sequoia Riverlands Trust	Tule Trust
Self-Help Enterprises	UC Merced
Audubon	Six 33 Solutions
Ag Innovations	The Nature Conservancy
SEEN	Tulare Basin Watershed Network



Community Resident Advisory  
Committee Meeting

## Block Grant Goal & Progress

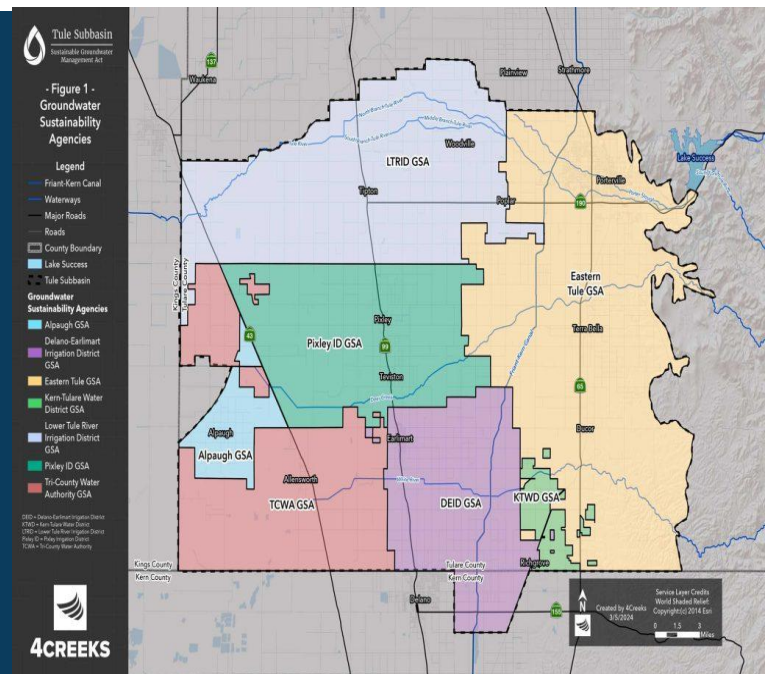
The Tule Subbasin MLRP team has conducted 18 outreach events in 2024.

The Capinero Creek project is close to completion.

The team is reviewing project applications, with three projects potentially moving to a workshop phase.

The team has a near-complete draft of their Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plan.

The team's goal is to get a community project application submitted for scoring.



California  
Department of  
Conservation

## Map of Tule Subbasin

2024 MLRP ANNUAL REPORT | 22

# East Turlock Subbasin Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program

## East Turlock Groundwater Sustainability Agency

### Co-Applicants, Partners, & Collaborators

West Turlock Groundwater  
Sustainability Agency  
EKI Environment and Water  
Environmental Science Associates  
Formation Environmental  
Sustainable Conservation  
Self Help Enterprises  
East Stanislaus & East Merced  
Resource Conservation Districts  
Merced & Stanislaus Counties



**Mike Tietze presenting at a grower  
workshop outreach event**

### Block Grant Goal & Progress

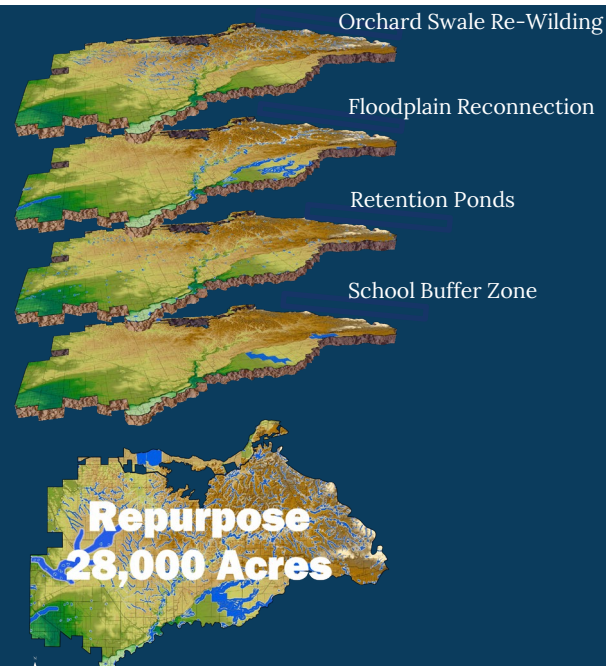
Held in-person kickoff field trip toured examples of  
successful repurposing

Identified priority areas

Identified priority land use alternatives & quantified  
feasible acreage & water budget impacts

Held 16 workshops & events, including community  
workshops, field site visits, and office hours

Started developing four pilot projects, anticipated to  
begin implementation in 2025



California  
**Department of  
Conservation**

**Initial block grant region priorities**

2024 MLRP ANNUAL REPORT | 23



## BLOCK GRANTEE PROGRESS

Block grantees have made significant progress toward program goals in the first two years of implementation, as highlighted in Figure 6 below.

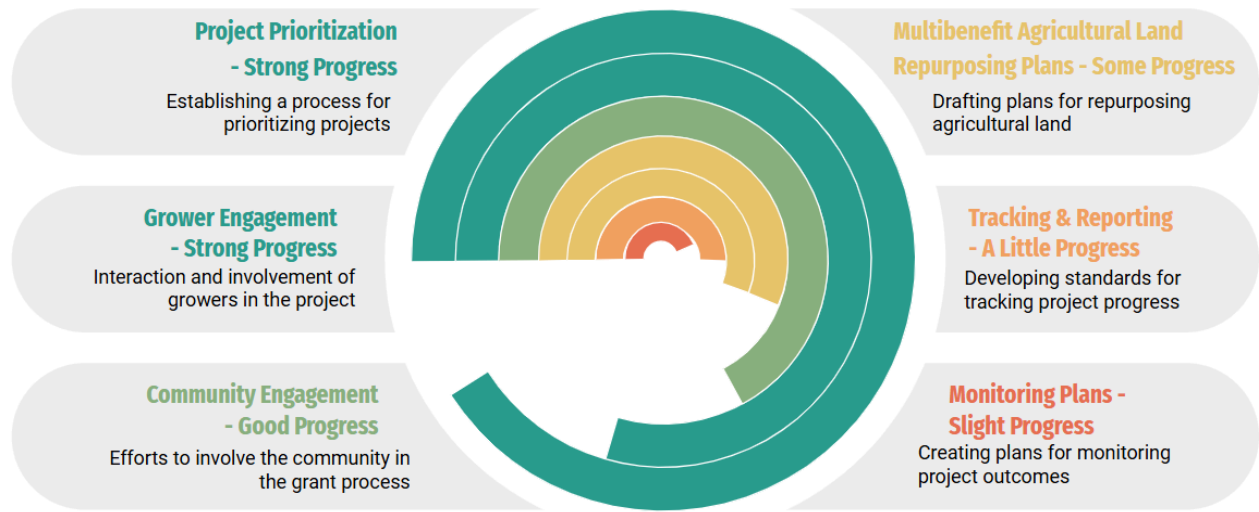


Figure 6. Self-reported block grantee progress toward program goals in 2024

## Major Milestones: Approved Projects

In 2024, the program celebrated the approval of ten multibenefit land repurposing projects, located in Kaweah Subbasin, Tule Subbasin, Pajaro Valley, Salinas Valley, and Madera County. The projects all contribute to groundwater sustainability by reducing groundwater demand and/or increasing groundwater recharge, while providing additional community and environmental benefits. Summaries of the ten approved projects are provided below.

### Pilot Project in La Vina

Madera County MLRP is developing a pilot project with Davis Diversified Farms on 5 acres adjacent to the disadvantaged community of La Vina, CA as a case study for multibenefit land repurposing in the region and to help inform the MLRP Madera Plan.

The proposed project will remove approximately four rows of almond and walnut orchard and convert to pollinator habitat with native plants, creating a 100 ft. "buffer" area between residential homes and the agricultural operation, improving soil and air quality, reducing pesticides used, and generating water savings.

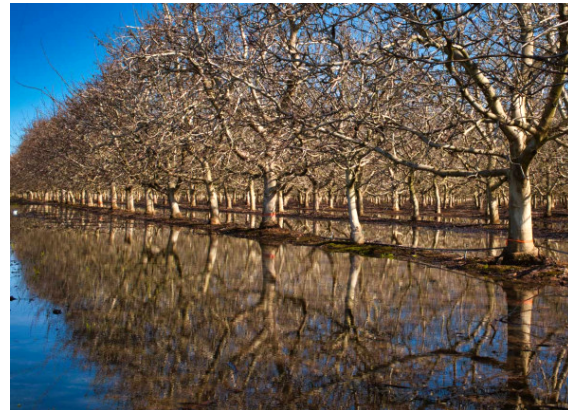


Location of La Vina Pilot Project

## Paregien Basin Phase II Recharge Expansion Project

This project, located in the Kaweah Subbasin, will repurpose 55 acres previously planted with walnut trees to a recharge basin, expanding a recharge project completed in 2016 to generate up to 900 acre-feet per year of recharge and create flood risk reduction and groundwater recharge benefits to Farmersville, CA.

The project incorporates habitat islands and native habitat plantings, and includes educational opportunities through a multilingual informational kiosk and online videos, as well as a potential program for guided access to ecological areas of interest. The Wukchumni Tribe is collaborating on educational information on indigenous village sites, and future Tribal access on the adjacent KDWCD Paregien Basin Site.



Flooded walnut orchard  
(Photo by Jain Irrigation)

## Flying Dragon Ranch

The project in the Kaweah Subbasin will repurpose 31 acres of citrus and 27 acres of open land along Cottonwood Creek near Seville, CA to create riparian habitat with public access, groundwater recharge, and flood control basins. This project will work in tandem with a linear recharge project on Cottonwood Creek, in development by the East Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency.

The project will reduce groundwater use and generate groundwater recharge, while providing conservation and public recreation benefits, and provide flood management benefits and increased public access and educational opportunities for the communities of Seville and Yettem.



Cottonwood Creek and St. Johns River  
near Visalia (Photo by VISALIA2010)

## Wuk'nain Riparian and Wetland Habitat Restoration

This project in the Kaweah Subbasin will enhance and restore over 10 acres in a groundwater-dependent region to woodland, forest, marsh, and wetland areas. Project partners will collect native seed for restoration on-site. An area was once referred to as Wuk'nain by Yokuts communities and one of the villages of the Wukchumni people, this project will revitalize Tribal land uses.

The project incorporates educational, recreational, and workforce opportunities for local communities and Tribes. Traditional Ecological Knowledge will be incorporated into the cultivation of native plant species for restoration and land stewardship. The project will increase habitat connectivity through native habitat plantings such as hedgerows, and provide potential flood protection benefits from wetland restoration. It is also next to the Kaweah Oaks Preserve and will increase the contiguous wildlife habitat area.



Native plantings in a marsh

## Mathews Ditch Basin Project

This project in the Kaweah Subbasin will repurpose an area of walnut trees just south of the disadvantaged community of Patterson Tract to a 100-acre facility for flood capture and groundwater recharge. The project will create a mini buffer zone and provide public access for Patterson Tract.

The project is anticipated to provide 3,000 acre-feet of recharge during wet years, while incorporating trails for public access for Patterson Tract, as well as habitat restoration elements such as berm slopes that accommodate waterfowl access. The project will result in reduced dust emissions and pesticide and herbicide use that will benefit Patterson Tract residents.



Bird standing in a recharge pond



## Johnson Slough Basin Project

This project in the Kaweah Subbasin will repurpose 25 acres of walnuts near Kaweah Oaks Preserve (north of Farmersville) to a groundwater recharge basin with habitat elements.

The project may result in 750 acre-feet of recharge during wet years and will incorporate habitat restoration elements such as berm slopes that accommodate waterfowl access. It is anticipated to provide flood management benefits to the surrounding area as well as Farmersville downstream. The project will also provide habitat connectivity benefits, as it is adjacent to the Kaweah Oaks Preserve.



Kaweah Oaks Preserve

## Land Fallowing & Cover Cropping Program

This program in the Tule Subbasin incentivizes landowners and operators to plant cover crops that will reduce groundwater use. Participants will forego the use or transfer of any transitional pumping allocations associated with the acreage enrolled in the program for the participating year(s).

The program prioritizes the reduction in water usage and offers opportunities for groundwater recharge through seasonal flooding.



Cover crops in an almond orchard

## Capinero Creek

This project in the Tule Subbasin restores 460 acres of scrubland from irrigated agriculture, reducing groundwater use and transitioning the land to less water-intensive use. The restoration will benefit sensitive kangaroo rat species.

The project is located near the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge and disadvantaged communities, and is under development with input from a wide array of community members and growers.



Scrubland habitat



## Pajaro River Estuary Project

This project in the Pajaro Valley Subbasin acquires nearly 250 acres of land to restore coastal habitat from irrigated agricultural land in Monterey Bay. The project will benefit salmon and endangered tidewater goby, and will retain organic, regenerative agriculture while the land is in agricultural production.



Tidal wetland habitat in Monterey Bay (Photo courtesy of Moss Landing Marine Laboratories)

## College Lake Integrated Resources Management Project

This 285-acre project constructs a water treatment plant, intake facilities and fish passage at College Lake, a lake previously drained to farm the lake bottom. The project includes a pipeline to deliver water to the coastal region most impacted by seawater intrusion.



College Lake (Photo courtesy of Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency)

## HIGHLIGHTS & LEARNINGS FROM BLOCK GRANTEES

In 2024, block grantees identified shared insights, emphasizing the critical importance of early, robust, and ongoing engagement with landowners, growers, and community members. They highlighted the value of maintaining multiple touchpoints and ensuring clear, consistent communication throughout the process. Additionally, grantees recognized the need to provide transparent information about financial incentives and to address or mitigate perceived risks effectively.

Outreach was the major focus of efforts across the block grants in 2024. Every region held outreach events to inform communities and growers about MLRP efforts and gather their input, and several regions formed committees or advisory groups to capture community and grower input in MLRP planning. A total of 65 outreach and engagement events and activities were held across the 8 regions.

Many block grantees were surprised by the positive reactions to their outreach, and the openness to engage in repurposing work. The public input in MLRP efforts has helped block grantees understand what motivates landowners and growers, and will lead to stronger, more inclusive program outcomes.

“To see an outspoken representative from a local water management agency and a member of local tribal leadership engaging in productive discussion about project monitoring and outcomes increased my faith in the collaborative process.”

- MLRP block grant team member

Through their extensive outreach and engagement, block grantees have also learned that it takes multiple touch points to gain full understanding of MLRP and gain public trust, and that many people are not starting from the same common understanding of SGMA and its impacts. Block grantees have learned that all partners need to stay deeply engaged for robust outreach to happen, that residents value consistent and sincere engagement, and that dedication and passion leads to successful projects.



Photos from the Annual Block Grantee Pause & Reflect in September 2024

Partners and collaborators supporting every block grant have hosted or presented at meetings and events engaging landowners, growers, socially disadvantaged farmers, Tribes, disadvantaged communities, and environmental groups. Three quarters of the partners and collaborators who have conducted this engagement have seen these events lead to a clear understanding of what might motivate participation in MLRP.

“From the perspective of a small farmer myself, I must say that I have felt inspired with the process.”

- MLRP block grant team member

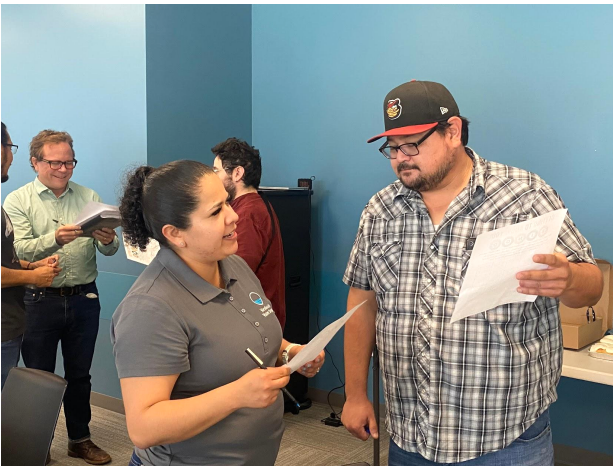
Engagement directly informs MLRP block grant priorities and planning. Over 80% of partners and collaborators contributing to developing strategic regional priorities or a Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plan (MALRP) say the process to develop strategic regional priorities has been inclusive and equitable.

Shared challenges among block grantees fostered collaboration as they worked together to find solutions. Block grantees noted public audiences confuse MLRP for other programs and struggle to see how MLRP aligns with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). One block grantee, the Madera County team, drafted material to compare MLRP to other relevant programs (e.g., LandFlex) as a resource for audiences to learn more. As the Round 2 block grantees established their teams, they learned from Round 1 block grantees on defining team roles, including identifying community outreach leads, and planning appropriate engagement strategies to begin their outreach efforts. Additionally, block grantees recognized that while diverse, multi-partner teams offer many significant benefits, the complexity of collaboration across stakeholders requires considerable time and effort to manage effectively.

This year's MLRP implementation also brought unexpected positive developments. Block grantees reported enthusiastic responses to their outreach efforts, particularly from growers and other diverse audiences. They also expressed appreciation for DOC's adaptability and support in navigating the complexities of grant implementation.

As they continue to navigate implementation, block grantees have learned:

- To not be afraid to ask questions.
- To stay informed of the process and attend as many meetings as possible.
- Risks should be addressed and minimized as early as possible.
- There are many ways to achieve land repurposing, and each region needs to build their plan according to their unique needs and values; no approaches are simple, but the type of complexity varies.
- Community engagement is a slow and steady process, and many community groups have limited capacity to effectively engage.
- Regular communication and consistent facilitation are keys to success.



Photos: Block grantees connecting and visiting the UC Merced experimental farm during the MLRP Block Grantee Pause and Reflect meeting in September, 2024



## Tribal Grant Funding Overview & Progress

The Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians were awarded a MLRP grant of \$1,753,000 in May 2023, matching funding with \$8.9M in grants from the Department of Water Resources and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Due to the state budget crisis and restrictions in 2024, the remaining Tribal set-aside funding was reverted to general funds, as no other interested parties had applied. A key DOC priority for the Proposition 4 funding is to increase tribal access to MLRP through additional engagement and set aside funding.

The Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians made great strides in 2024. In partnership with local landowners, agencies, and nonprofits, they are working to replenish the local groundwater system by annually diverting a maximum 8,000 acre-feet of high winter flows from the Russian River in the Alexander Valley onto agricultural land when commercial crops are dormant. The project has two phases: an initial pilot study to inform and support the long term, five-year version of the groundwater recharge project.

The pilot study commenced in November 2024; in January 2025 the first flooding began. As part of the pilot study in late 2024, participating landowners installed monitoring wells for on-farm vineyard recharge. Each landowner is responsible for distribution of flood waters on their properties; the project's outline for water distribution is for thirty days of water application during a three-month window, allowing water application when landowners and project team determine soils, vineyards, and staff capacity can benefit.

The Tribe has submitted two water rights applications: first for the 180-day short term pilot study covering October 2024 through March 2025, and a five-year water right permit that requires full CEQA analysis of the project, which is in process.



Photo: First pilot study application, January 2025



The project creates recharge service areas instead of districts, as they require less construction, which has encouraged increased landowner participation. Service areas will be based on soil type, water needs, and participating landowners (see Figure 7 below). Each service area will require a single shallow groundwater well and electric pump adjacent to the Russian River to capture underflow.

## Defining Service Areas

- Service Areas are laid out in a clockwise direction in Alexander Valley
- Designed to minimize crossing (e.g., streams, roads) and leverage landowner systems
- Each Service Area will have Russian River OFR supply pump station

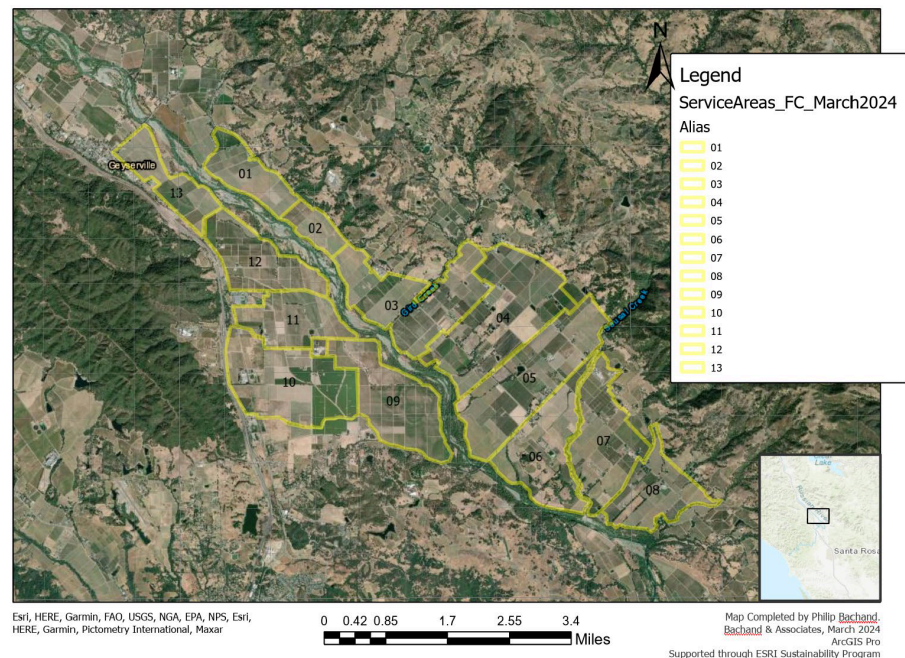


Figure 7. Service areas defined by the Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians MLRP project

In 2024, the Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians set up a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to support continued outreach and education by meeting bi-weekly and conducting site visits with landowners to provide support and continued education. Additional progress in 2024 included building the framework for their MALRP, which consists of seven principles for success:

- Governance
- Water Rights
- Service Water System Design and Diversion Schedule
- Service Water System Operation, Maintenance and Financials
- Landowner - On-farm Recharge Design and Diversion Schedule
- Landowner Implementation, Financial Credits, and Monitoring
- Agreements with Landowners and Duration of Agreements

## Program Administration Highlights

Since the MLRP's inception in 2021, DOC has engaged a wide variety of interested parties, advisors, technical support providers, and the public for input on MLRP administration.

### MEANINGFUL BENEFITS DEFINITION DEVELOPMENT & UPDATED PROGRAM GUIDELINES PROCESS

The MLRP Program Guidelines for Round 1 and Round 2 identify three program priorities that implementation projects must collectively meet: 1) meaningfully benefit disadvantaged communities; 2) be conducted on lands that are least viable for irrigated agriculture; and 3) contribute to resource connectivity.

DOC staff declined to specifically define what constitutes a 'meaningful benefit to a disadvantaged community' within the program guidelines. Initially, staff believed that the regional partnerships supported by each block grantee would want to define this type of benefit in a way that was relevant to their unique mosaic of communities.

After launching MLRP in 2022, DOC staff and program advocates agreed that a program-wide definition for what constitutes a 'meaningful benefit to disadvantaged communities' would increase program transparency. DOC staff began to work closely with program advocates, non-governmental partners, and grantees to draft a clear, workable definition.

DOC staff iteratively drafted the definition with a consistent cycle of soliciting input, applying edits, and soliciting further review. This process incorporated outreach to formal and informal partners and expert organizations, multiple rounds of input, and soliciting input through multiple formats.



Photos: DOC staff describing MLRP objectives to community residents at Capinero Creek in January 2024 (left) and presenting implementation project requirements at a block grantee meeting (right)



MLRP benefits from a strong network of support from non-governmental entities and advocates who are active in communities within grant regions. Members of this network offered to draft a proposed definition for meaningful benefits to disadvantaged communities, which provided a strong foundation for community-centered concerns and opportunities. While seeking to maintain these strengths, DOC staff revised this draft by tailoring the definition to align with program goals and ensuring the definition would be achievable for MLRP projects.

Following these initial revisions, DOC staff provided interested parties with two opportunities to comment on the draft: first during a live working meeting, and second, by accepting additional written responses following each meeting. This approach allowed interested parties to review the definition on their own before each meeting. DOC staff could then provide context and receive initial feedback during the meeting and commenters could subsequently refine their feedback following further reflection. A key benefit of this approach was that it fostered mutual understanding between DOC and commenters, which allowed DOC staff to more effectively interpret, respond to, and implement comments.

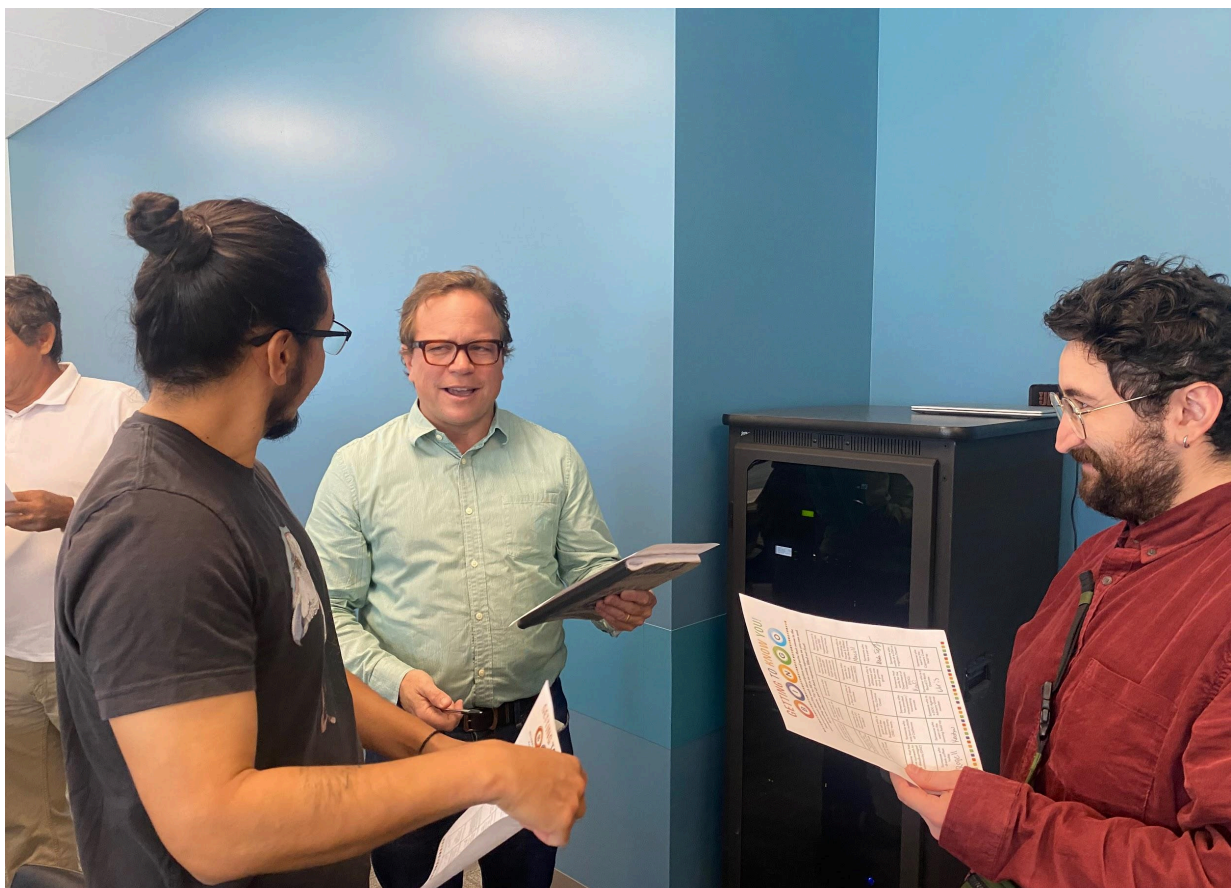


Photo: Block grantees connecting with DOC staff at the MLRP Block Grantee Community of Practice Annual Pause and Reflect meeting in September, 2024.



This process also allowed DOC staff to adjust the approach to the series of meetings. For instance, initial meetings with the Statewide Support Entity illuminated the need for examples of projects that do and don't meet the definition. DOC staff used proposed projects as examples, which allowed block grantees to effectively respond to the examples and reflect on their own projects. This deepened the block grantees' ability to understand how the definition would be implemented and how their work fit into the requirements being considered.

The iterative definition development began with an initial meeting with program advocates and non-governmental experts who drafted the initial proposal. DOC staff applied revisions with support from the Statewide Support Entity. DOC met with each grantee, a plenary meeting of all grantees, and a final meeting with the Statewide Support Entity to review the revised definition. After pre-final revisions, a follow-up meeting with the individuals and organizations that initially drafted the definition was held and the definition was then brought to the Statewide Support Entity Advisory Committee.

The iterative process allowed DOC staff to collaboratively respond to concerns raised by commenters. Two areas of particular concern required specific attention: right-sizing the required level of community engagement and responding to potential harms caused by otherwise beneficial projects. In both cases, DOC staff began problem-solving by identifying high-level desired outcomes from these sections of the definition, considering the existing requirements and resources already available within the program and department, and stress testing potential solutions with realistic examples. Once potential solutions were drafted, DOC staff focused subsequent conversations and feedback solicitations on these sections.

The MLRP Guidelines allow DOC staff to begin using the definition immediately during discretionary project review. However, at the behest of program advocates and to ensure clarity, DOC staff will formally adopt the definition through amendments to the Round 1 and Round 2 guidelines. Updating the guidelines will include an additional opportunity for affected parties to comment on the proposed language.

DOC staff drafted a glossary to provide background and implementation support for each point of the definition. The glossary is intended to clearly demonstrate how DOC staff will apply the definition during the implementation project review. This glossary will be made available to all grantees along with the final definition.

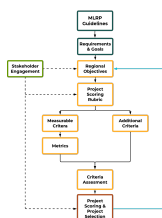
By iteratively and inclusively developing this definition, DOC staff have created an attainable and purposeful standard by which to evaluate projects. Feedback on the definition offered in the proposed guideline amendments indicates that the drafting process has cultivated trust and clarity between DOC staff and grantees, program advocates, and community advocates.

## THE MLRP STATEWIDE SUPPORT ENTITY

DOC established the MLRP Statewide Support Entity to provide technical assistance and facilitate communication and collaboration necessary for block grantees to meet MLRP goals. In May 2022, DOC selected a joint application from non-profit organizations Self-Help Enterprises (SHE) and Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) to co-chair MLRP's Statewide Support Entity, with additional support provided by Environmental Incentives. Together, these organizations are responsible for:

1. Coordination of Grant Recipients
2. Peer-Learning Facilitation
3. Grant Recipients Resources Facilitation
4. Communications
5. Community Engagement
6. Capacity Building and Technical Assistance
7. Monitoring and Outcomes Reporting

The Statewide Support Entity hosts monthly meetings with grantees, organizes learning events, creates guidance materials and resources to support grant implementation, and offers guidance to support block grantee engagement activities. The Statewide Support Entity advocates for and provides resources to facilitate meaningful engagement of historically underserved groups, such as small farmers, farmers of color, disadvantaged communities, and tribes, to ensure that these stakeholders can shape the direction of the program. In support of these efforts, the Statewide Support Entity developed the following resources for block grantees in 2024:



### Prioritizing Multibenefit Land Repurposing Projects

Guidance for block grantees to support prioritizing projects for MLRP funding. Developed by the Statewide Support Entity, with support from DOC, Implementation Partners, and block grantees.



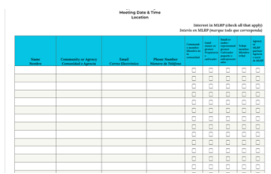
### MLRP Plan Guidance

Provides grantees with recommendations and requirements for Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plans.

Area	Topic of Interest	Community Engagement	Community Engagement	Community Engagement
EXAMPLE 1: Understanding community needs and priorities	Community Engagement	Community Engagement	Community Engagement	Community Engagement
EXAMPLE 2: Prioritizing projects	Community Engagement	Community Engagement	Community Engagement	Community Engagement
EXAMPLE 3: Monitoring and reporting	Community Engagement	Community Engagement	Community Engagement	Community Engagement

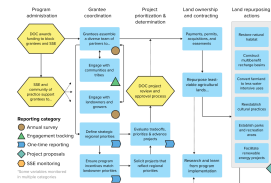
### Community Engagement Tracker

A tool to better understand engagement in each region, ensure progress toward MLRP engagement requirements, and identify opportunities for additional support.



## Meeting Sign-in Sheet Template

A template for block grantees to use to track participation at community events.



## Statewide Monitoring Approach

Defines the approach to statewide MLRP program monitoring, as well as requirements and recommendations for regional monitoring that block grantees can use to inform their regional monitoring plans.

Block grantees access resources like those above as well as information about the MLRP Block Grantee Community of Practice activities on the online Collaboration Space, developed and maintained by the Statewide Support Entity. In 2024, the Statewide Support Entity expanded the Collaboration Space elements to include a virtual platform, the Block Grantee Forum, for block grantees to informally communicate. Members of the MLRP Block Grantee Community of Practice can access the Block Grantee Forum for open dialogue and creative brainstorming.

Block grantees also access the above resources and other relevant information such as external guidance documents and upcoming webinars via regular email and virtual meeting communications from the Statewide Support Entity. The Statewide Support Entity shared 18 external resources to block grantees in 2024, including relevant events and webinars. See the Appendix for a full list of resources the Statewide Support Entity provided, which includes internally-developed and externally-sourced resources.

Monthly MLRP Block Grantee Community of Practice meetings highlighted topics relevant to block grant efforts, informed by block grantees' interests and needs. The meetings featured best practices to support the block grantee's implementation of their MLRP grants and program goals. Meetings often feature guest speakers sharing their relevant expertise on the topics selected by block grantees.

When asked to select the most valuable monthly meeting components, block grantees highlighted Statewide Support Entity template resources and peer spotlight presentations (presentations from block grant representatives on recent work, such as a grower resource fair or integrating solar energy generation into multibenefit projects). See Table 1 below for summaries of the 2024 monthly meeting topics and speakers, and the Appendix for additional monthly meeting content details.



Table 1. Monthly meeting topics and speakers

Month	Topic	Speaker(s)
January	Field Trip to Capinero Creek	Susan Long (Tule Basin Land and Water Conservation Trust) & Allison Tristao (Pixley Groundwater Sustainability Agency)
February	Land Repurposing Project Incentives & Prioritization	Katie Riley (Environmental Incentives), Ross Clark (Central Coast Wetland Group), Len Mason (Formation Environmental), Katie Carlson (Zanjero)
March	Defining Common Metrics & Monitoring Methods	Jacob Byrne & Brian Newman-Lindsay (Department of Conservation), the Statewide Support Entity
April	Optional Workshops on MLRP Metrics & Theory of Change	Gopal Penny & Jose Rodriguez (Environmental Defense Fund)
May	Land Repurposing Project Permitting	Jacob Byrne & Brian Newman-Lindsay (Department of Conservation), Chris Beale (Resources Law Group)
June	Habitat Connectivity & Conservation Planning	Abigail Hart (The Nature Conservancy), Rob Hansen (Hansen's Biological Consulting)
July	MLRP & Solar	Angel S. Fernandez Bou & Vivian Yang (Union of Concerned Scientists), Marybeth Benton (The Nature Conservancy), Elizabeth Jonasson (Westlands Water District)
August	Virtual Spotlight on Pajaro Valley & Discussion: Multibenefit Recharge Projects	Lisa Lurie & Dan Hermstad (Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County)
September	Annual Pause & Reflect Meeting in Merced, CA	Keali'i Bright & Jacob Byrne (Department of Conservation), the Statewide Support Entity, Emma Adest (ValleyEco), Christina Beckstead (Madera County Farm Bureau)
October	Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plans	Jacob Byrne (Department of Conservation), Katie Carlson (Zanjero)
November	Regenerative Agriculture & Other Working Lands Options	Macall Teague & Alyssa DeVincentes (Formation Environmental), Craig Reynolds (CA Agave Council)

## Statewide Support Entity Implementation Partners

Based on block grantee needs and interests, the Statewide Support Entity leverages experts in various fields as Implementation Partners to provide specific technical assistance to block grantees and entities applying for repurposing funding. Current Statewide Support Entity Implementation Partners include The Nature Conservancy and the Union of Concerned Scientists, with additional Implementation Partners likely to be brought on in the future.



The Nature Conservancy presented at several monthly meetings to engage block grantees on effective strategies to incorporate habitat into land repurposing planning. The Nature Conservancy also supported the January 2024 field trip to Capinero Creek and Pixley National Wildlife Refuge, where block grantees explored what multibenefit habitat projects look like from start to finish. The Nature Conservancy supported block grantees through one-on-one advising sessions to tailor guidance to their specific needs.

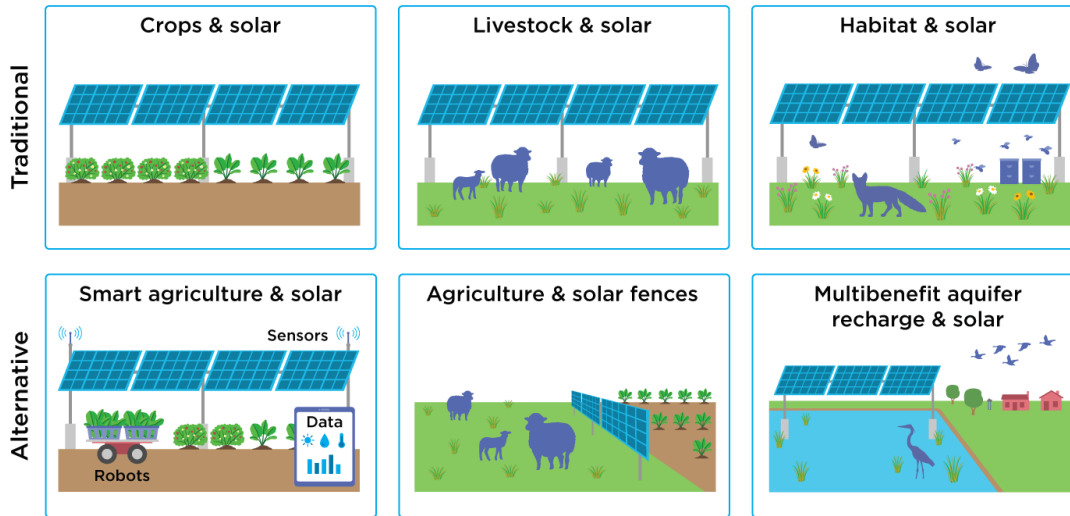


Photos: Block grantees, partnering organizations, and community residents visiting Pixley National Wildlife Refuge in January 2024, a site visit led by The Nature Conservancy.



The Union of Concerned Scientists, with the support of the Statewide Support Entity, developed block grantee guidance on agrivoltaics and ecovoltics in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). The Union of Concerned Scientists presented this guidance at the July 2024 monthly meeting. Additionally, the Union of Concerned Scientists collaborated with the Statewide Support Entity to develop project prioritization guidance to support block grantees as they plan for and select projects for land repurposing.

## Agrivoltaics & Ecovoltaics Models



© 2024 Union of Concerned Scientists

Figure 8. Models of traditional and alternative methods for incorporating agrivoltaics and ecovoltaics into existing practices, excerpted from the [Agrivoltaics and Ecovoltaics factsheet](#).

The Statewide Support Entity will leverage existing and new Implementation Partners in 2025 and beyond to meet the changing needs of block grantees as they implement their block grants. Activities planned for 2025 include establishing new Implementation Partners, developing GIS resources to aid block grantees in identifying effective areas for land repurposing and presenting guidance and recommendations on strategies for multibenefit recharge projects.

### Statewide Support Entity Advisory Committee

The Statewide Support Entity coordinates with an Advisory Committee to support the goals of MLRP. The Statewide Support Entity Advisory Committee provides a range of perspectives and expertise to ensure the Statewide Support Entity develops effective and timely resources and guidance to MLRP block grantees. The Advisory Committee meets semi-annually, and periodically reviews materials produced by the Statewide Support Entity to provide high-level input related to program implementation, connect grantees to other funding opportunities and planning initiatives, and advise on specific aspects of the program, such as informing the program's definition of Meaningful Benefits to Disadvantaged Communities. Members include representatives from organizations focused on environmental conservation, working lands, disadvantaged communities, and tribes (see Figure 9 below).





Figure 9. Statewide Support Entity Advisory Committee members represented by their associated organization logos (not represented by logo here is the participation of Baldwin Moy, a community member of Madera County)

## STATEWIDE MONITORING APPROACH

The Statewide Support Entity oversees monitoring efforts and outcomes reporting to ensure consistency and transparency in outcomes monitoring across regions. The Statewide Support Entity developed the MLRP Statewide Monitoring Approach to promote effective program-wide implementation and facilitate dialog and co-learning across grantees.

### Defining Outcomes

The Statewide Support Entity, in collaboration with DOC and block grantees, developed the MLRP Theory of Change, which presents a high-level conceptualization of program actions, outputs, and outcomes (Figure 10). The MLRP Theory of Change also illustrates how block grantees face various challenges in coordinating, engaging, and planning strategic land repurposing projects.

The MLRP Theory of Change illustrates desired outcomes resulting from program and regional actions. These outcomes include a sustainable groundwater supply; healthy, resilient communities; regional adaptive capacity; healthy functioning ecosystem; and an equitable and productive economy. Regional actions described in the MLRP Theory of Change align with block grant deliverables, such as meaningfully engaging with communities and Tribes. To the extent applicable and feasible, block grantees, the Statewide Support Entity, and DOC monitor and report on actions to track progress toward the defined outcomes (as shown using reporting category icons in Figure 10).



Figure 10. The MLRP Theory of Change

## Measuring & Reporting Progress

The Statewide Monitoring Approach connects the metrics defined in the MLRP Theory of Change to the activities of DOC, the Statewide Support Entity, and block grantees and their partners and collaborators through monitoring guidance and recommendations. Progress toward the outcomes identified in the MLRP Theory of Change will be monitored through indicators, an initial set of which are described in Figure 11 below.



Figure 11. Indicators monitored to track progress toward key outcomes of MLRP.

### Outcome Categories & Indicators

**Sustainable groundwater supply** indicators focus on groundwater use reduction, improvements on supply, through crop transitions and recharge areas.

**Healthy, resilient communities** indicators reflect community engagement and benefits, such as protecting domestic wells, improving groundwater quality, reducing air pollution from reduced pesticides, and expanding green spaces.

**Regional adaptive capacity** and **project characteristics** indicators are key characteristics and status of projects and block grant teams to track progress of key factors related to block grantees deliverables and community engagement.

**Equitable and productive regional economy** indicators track job creation, land-based economic sustainability, income diversification (e.g., solar energy), and local economic benefits. These indicators are optionally reported by grantees.

**Healthy, functioning ecosystems** indicators assess environmental benefits provided by projects and the potential to enhance connectivity and habitat for species of concern.



## Looking Ahead

The future of MLRP is one of collaboration and resilience. With the additional Proposition 4 funding to DOC for MLRP and continued broad interest in the program, MLRP will make significant impacts to water and community resilience across the state. California passed Proposition 4 in November 2024, paving the way for MLRP to receive an additional \$200M in funding for multibenefit groundwater sustainability projects. The additional funding symbolizes the continued need and support for multibenefit land repurposing. DOC staff are exploring ways in which the program can effectively administer the new funding, which may take the form of new regional block grants, increased investment in existing block grant regions, and more funding for Tribal grants.



Photo: Members of the MLRP Block Grantee Community of Practice at their Annual Pause and Reflect meeting in September, 2024

## Appendix. Block Grantee Resources Developed by the Statewide Support Entity

The Statewide Support Entity facilitated block grantees' access to relevant resources to support block grant implementation. The following table includes a list of all resources (e.g., guidance documents, funding opportunities, webinars) provided to block grantees, developed either by the Statewide Support Entity or an external party.

Table A1. Block Grantee Resources Shared by the Statewide Support Entity in 2024

Resource Name	Source	Type	Description
<b>Prioritizing Multibenefit Land Repurposing Projects</b>	Statewide Support Entity	Guidance Document	Guidance for block grantees to support prioritizing projects for MLRP funding
<b>Agrivoltaics &amp; Ecovoltaics</b>	Union of Concerned Scientists & Statewide Support Entity	Factsheet	Information and guidance for block grantees interested in pursuing agrivoltaic or ecovoltaic projects in their region
<b>Developing Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plans</b>	Statewide Support Entity	Guidance Document	Details benefits, recommendations, and key ideas for implementation - including a focus on costs, funding sources, and permitting
<b>Statewide Monitoring Approach</b>	Statewide Support Entity	Guidance Document	Overview of the monitoring approaches to statewide program metrics and recommendations for regional monitoring
<b>Block Grantee Forum</b>	Statewide Support Entity	Webpage	Online platform for block grantees to connect informally
<b>MLRP Community Engagement Tracker</b>	Statewide Support Entity	Template	Template to help block grantees track and report outreach and engagement activities that enable community participation and input
<b>Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program</b>	California Water Boards	Funding Opportunity	4-6 two-year grants for CA Native American tribes to enhance their capacity for climate-related work
<b>Habitat and Facilities Improvement funding</b>	Bureau of Reclamation	Funding Opportunity	Funding for river improvement projects supporting fish and wildlife habitat and improving infrastructure
<b>Corporate Water</b>	California	Guidance	Invitation to view information about

Resource Name	Source	Type	Description
<b>Stewardship</b>	Water Resilience Initiative	Document & Meeting	and attend a meeting to discuss corporate water stewardship and its alignment with block grant goals and projects
<b>Roads to Removal Conference</b>	University of California Merced	Conference	Events to examine the opportunities and challenges of developing local carbon dioxide removal programs in response to climate change and its impacts
<b>Climate Resilience Through Regeneration</b>	Sustainable Conservation	Webinar Series	Webinars exploring actionable strategies for climate resilience
<b>Virtual Funding Fairs</b>	California Financing Coordinating Committee	Webinar Series	Presentations covering available grants, loans, and bond financing for infrastructure projects
<b>Groundwater Demand Management</b>	University of California Davis	Workshop	Pre-conference workshop on implementing groundwater demand management in agricultural regions; regulating, monitoring, and managing groundwater; and tools and strategies to engage interested parties in groundwater management
<b>Exploring the Coexistence of Water Users in California</b>	Maddy Institute & California Water Institute	Conference	Agricultural summit to discuss pressing issues and foster collaborative solutions among water users in California
<b>Scaling Solutions for Water Resilience</b>	Sustainable Conservation	Webinar	Panel discussion with water experts highlighting work promoting recharge
<b>Flood Diversions for Groundwater Recharge</b>	State Water Resources Control Board	Virtual Workshop	Workshop covering how the California Water Code may allow for the diversion of flood waters for groundwater recharge
<b>Integrated Land and Water Management Transitions in California</b>	University of California Agriculture & Natural Resources	Conference	Presentations, panels, and other activities to discuss adapting and integrating land and water management
<b>CalCAN Climate &amp;</b>	University of	Conference	Tours and presentations highlighting



Resource Name	Source	Type	Description
<b>Agriculture Summit</b>	California Davis		efforts to support a healthy, just, and resilient future for California agriculture
<b>American Grown: My Job Depends on Ag</b>	PBS	Informational Video	Showcasing agriculture's connection to many facets of our daily lives
<b>California Farmers Turn to Agave Amid Drought Conditions and Climate Change</b>	NPR	News Article	Writeup about how climate change is affecting our food, and how our food is affecting our climate
<b>California Agave Council</b>	California Agave Council	Website	Official website for the growers and makers of California-grown agave spirits
<b>California Agave Growers</b>	California Agave Growers	Website	Official website for California agave growers
<b>EPA Clean Water Programs &amp; Partnerships for Land Protection</b>	The Watershed Academy	Webinar	Presentations on integrating land protection across Clean Water Act programs
<b>Making the Most of Multibenefit Water Management on Dairies</b>	The Nature Conservancy	Webinar	Presentations on the water management practices of conservation tillage and groundwater recharge, and opportunities to access funding and partners