

# Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program

Annual Report 2025



This report was 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>
Project & Planning Progress	5
Supporting Statewide and Regional Capacity Development	6
Looking Forward	8
<b>Program Purpose</b>	<b>9</b>
Program Overview	9
Program Goals	10
<b>Block Grantee Overviews &amp; Progress</b>	<b>12</b>
Kaweah Subbasin	14
Tule Subbasin	15
Madera County	16
Turlock Subbasin	17
Merced Subbasin	18
Pajaro Valley	19
Salinas Valley	20
Westside Subbasin	21
Planning and Project Progress and Common Learnings	22
Projects Approved in 2025	24
Previously Approved Projects	27
<b>Tribal Grant Funding Overview &amp; Progress</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Program Administration and Support Highlights</b>	<b>32</b>
Program Updates from the Department of Conservation	32
The MLRP Statewide Support Entity	35
<b>Statewide Monitoring Approach</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Looking Ahead</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Appendix A. MLRP Project Approval Process</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Appendix B. Block Grantee Resources Provided by the Statewide Support Entity</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Appendix C. MLRP Journey Map</b>	<b>50</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
MAR	Managed Aquifer Recharge
MLRP	Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SHE	Self-Help Enterprises
SSE	Statewide Support Entity

# Executive Summary

In California’s agricultural regions, demand for groundwater has long exceeded supply — an imbalance that led the state to enact the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which requires critically overdrafted groundwater basins to be sustainably managed by 2040. Achieving SGMA’s sustainability targets will require a portfolio of supply- and demand-side projects and management actions, including significant reductions in irrigated agriculture in many areas. The Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program (MLRP) strengthens California’s long-term groundwater resilience by supporting proactive, community-led strategies to repurpose the least-viable irrigated agricultural lands to other uses that benefit communities and ecosystems.

MLRP enables growers and community members to work together on land use changes that result in sustainable groundwater supplies; healthy, resilient communities; equitable and productive economies; healthy, functioning ecosystems; and regional adaptive capacity. The program provides funding for regional block grants and Tribal grants that support collaborative planning and project implementation led by local block grantees who mobilize growers and community members. The California Department of Conservation (DOC) administers the program, and the Statewide Support Entity provides technical assistance to block grantees and supports progress toward program goals.

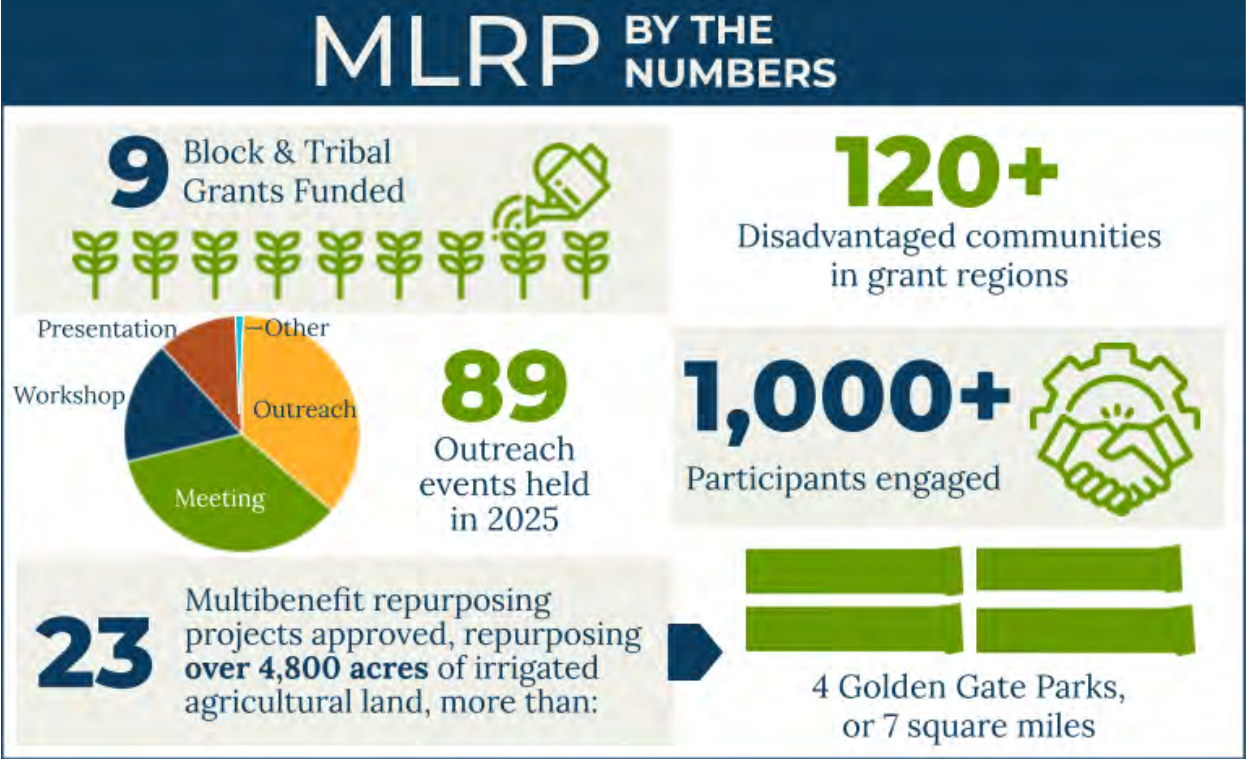


Figure A. Highlighting MLRP participation and engagement by the numbers

The MLRP block grant structure allocates funds to grantee regions for community engagement, Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plan (MALRP) development, and project implementation. In 2022 and 2023, MLRP allocated nearly \$80 million to grantees in nine regions. In 2025, MLRP advanced from early coordination to initial implementation and is transitioning to supporting block grantees and project proponents in their implementation efforts.

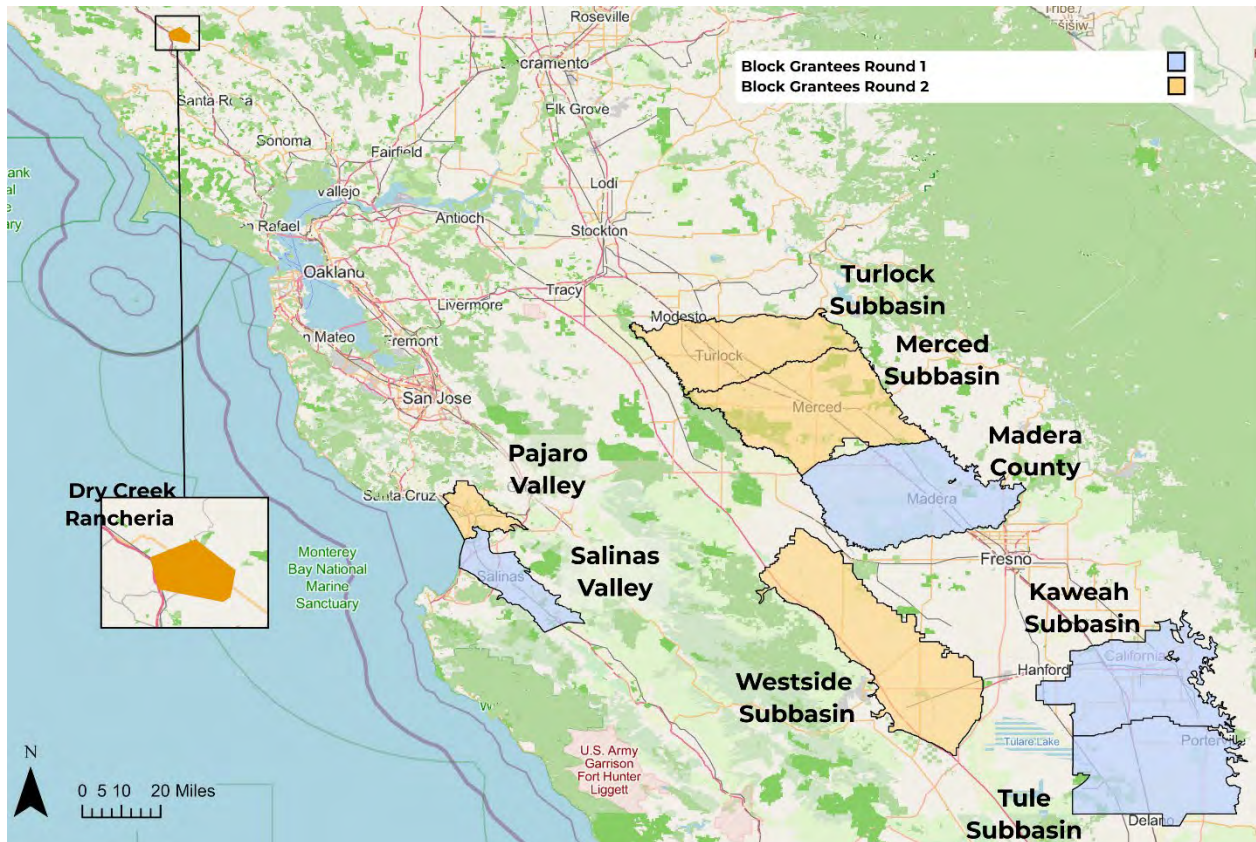


Figure B. MLRP has funded eight block grants and one Tribal grant. These regions represent areas in critical need of support to reach SGMA goals.

## PROJECT & PLANNING PROGRESS

The Department of Conservation (DOC) has approved 23 MLRP implementation projects to date, including 13 projects approved in 2025, bringing the total acres enrolled in the program to over 4,800. The projects are located in six block grant regions: Pajaro Valley Subbasin, Madera County, Merced Subbasin, Tule Subbasin, Turlock Subbasin, and Kaweah Subbasin. The projects bring a wide range of benefits to their regions. For example, five projects feature recharge or flood control basins, eleven projects offer habitat or environmental benefits, and five projects continue working lands practices more sustainably, such as switching to grazing land or installing less water-intensive cover crops.

## **SUPPORTING STATEWIDE AND REGIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT**

To support the identification, prioritization, and implementation of regional land repurposing projects, DOC and the Statewide Support Entity provide guidance and resources to block grantees, such as hosting monthly peer learning sessions and developing guiding materials to help navigate questions on topics such as permitting, project prioritization, and monitoring. In 2025, several resources and meetings focused on outreach and engagement of communities, small growers, and Tribes to support block grantees in identifying local priorities and needs.

The Statewide Support Entity facilitates collaboration and learning among the block grantees through the MLRP Community of Practice, a collaborative forum of MLRP block grantees and their partners who regularly learn from one another, share resources, and solve implementation challenges to advance strategic, inclusive, and multibenefit land repurposing across California. In 2025, the Statewide Support Entity provided [11 learning exchange opportunities](#) and 4 guiding resources (see Figure C 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 a [SGMA-MLRP handout](#) grantees can use in outreach to elucidate how SGMA and MLRP are distinct but complementary. In addition, the Statewide Support Entity expanded the monitoring efforts by leveraging the [Statewide Monitoring Approach](#) document to track regional and statewide program accomplishments. Efforts included defining roles and workflows for capturing and reporting program data. The Statewide Support Entity worked closely with DOC to develop these roles and workflows. Program monitoring results will identify the factors that create successful multibenefit projects which will be communicated in future MLRP Block Grantee Community of Practice meetings and guidance materials.

## 11 Peer Learning Exchanges Facilitated by the Statewide Support Entity

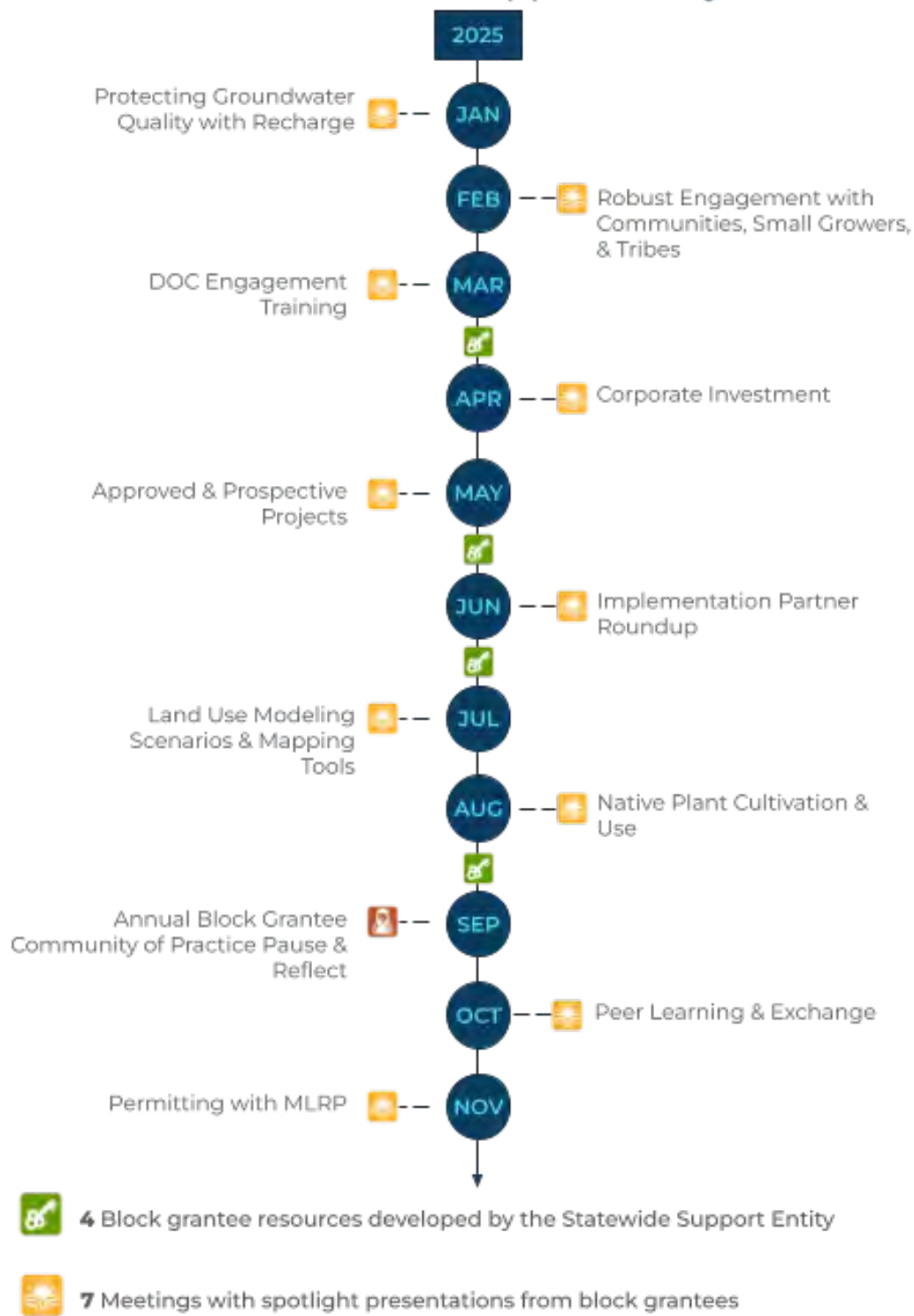


Figure C. MLRP 2025 [Statewide Support Entity](#) programming highlights

## LOOKING FORWARD

In 2026, the first two rounds of grantees will be continuing planning efforts and focusing increasingly on project solicitation and implementation. California's 2024 Climate Bond included \$200 M for MLRP. The state allocated \$32 million of Climate Bond funds for MLRP for FY 2025-26. In 2026, DOC will set the guidelines and solicit proposals for this initial round of Climate Bond funded MLRP grants.



Photo. Wetland at Merced National Wildlife Refuge. Many projects approved for MLRP transition least-viable agricultural lands to wetland areas or wildlife-friendly recharge basins.

# Program Purpose

MLRP seeks to strengthen California’s long-term groundwater resilience by supporting proactive, community-led strategies to repurpose the least-viable irrigated agricultural lands to other beneficial uses. The Program increases capacity for locally-led land repurposing through regional grants that facilitate planning and coordination to identify and implement projects that reduce reliance on groundwater and support communities, habitat, and other beneficial uses.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Through its block grants, Tribal grants, and Statewide Support Entity, MLRP strengthens regional leadership to repurpose land, reduce groundwater dependence, and achieve multiple benefits for people, ecosystems, and economies (see Figure 1). 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
- Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation



Figure 1. 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.
- Provide short- and medium-term drought relief.
- Reduce groundwater use.
- Improve groundwater supply, including through groundwater recharge, improved baseflows in rivers and streams, and groundwater supply improvement for fish and wildlife habitat.
- 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.
- Provide flexible and efficient program administration so that grantees can lead expeditious and adaptive programs to meet their needs.
- Create or restore wildlife habitat and wildlife connectivity, including seasonal wetland habitat to replenish aquifers.
- Support nature-based solutions to reduce the impacts of hazards on lives, property, and the economy from overdrafted groundwater basins.
- 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.
- Support regional efforts to sustain land-based economies that are impacted by groundwater sustainability measures.
- Support farmer, rancher, and farm worker leadership in multibenefit land repurposing strategies and project implementation.

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 **healthy, resilient communities; equitable and productive economies; healthy, functioning ecosystems; and regional adaptive capacity.**



Sustainable  
Groundwater  
Supply



Healthy,  
Resilient  
Communities



Regional  
Adaptive  
Capacity



Equitable &  
Productive  
Economy



Healthy,  
Functioning  
Ecosystems

These five high-level goals informed the outcome categories defined in the MLRP Theory of Change (see the [Statewide Monitoring Approach](#) section for details) and are featured throughout the report to highlight Program progress toward its goals.

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, Nature Based Solutions Climate Targets, and Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

### MLRP Drives Progress Toward California's Sustainable Water Future

As California implements SGMA and faces increasing climate variability, MLRP provides a practical, locally led pathway to achieve groundwater sustainability while delivering multiple community, habitat, and climate benefits. The program addresses the reality that not all irrigated agricultural lands can remain in production under sustainable conditions, and supports regions in transitioning land in ways that strengthen long-term resilience. In 2025, MLRP entered a pivotal phase - moving from planning to demonstrated results. Aligned with statewide efforts such as the California Water Plan, Flood-MAR, 30x30, and Nature-Based Solutions targets, MLRP positions land repurposing as a scalable, cost-effective component of California's water future. Proposition 4 funding will enable the program to expand and deliver impact at scale.

Since its launch in 2021, MLRP has evolved from program design and pilot implementation to a 2025 phase defined by growing institutional maturity across state and regional partners. See Appendix C for details of the journey program actors take through MLRP funding.

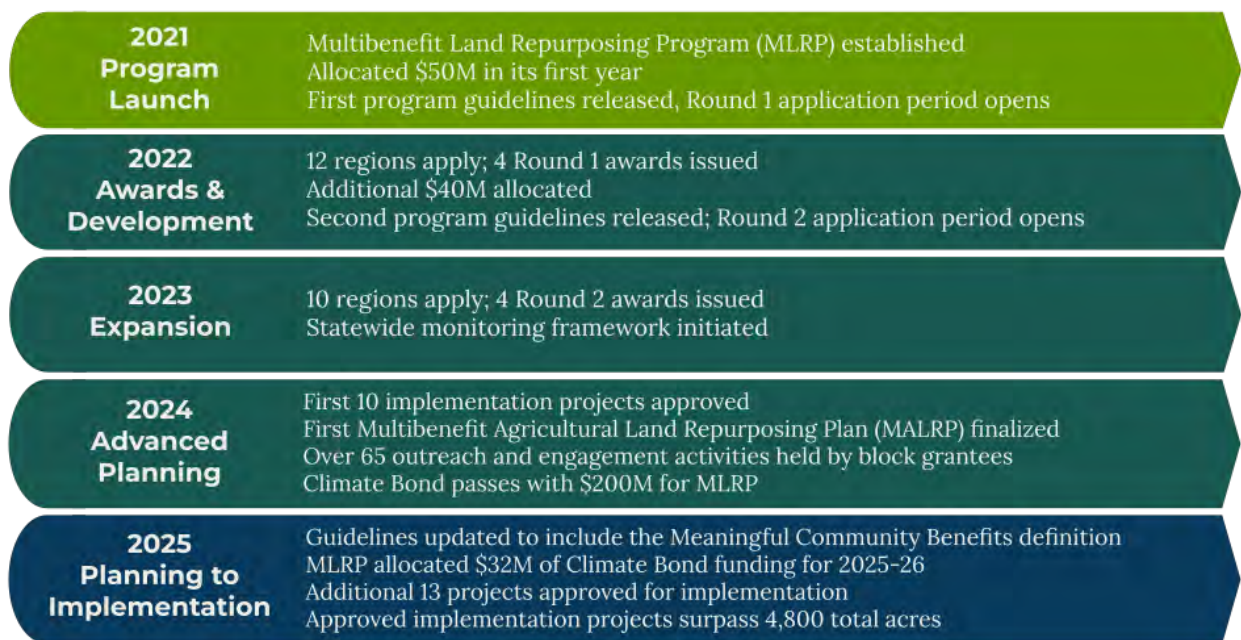
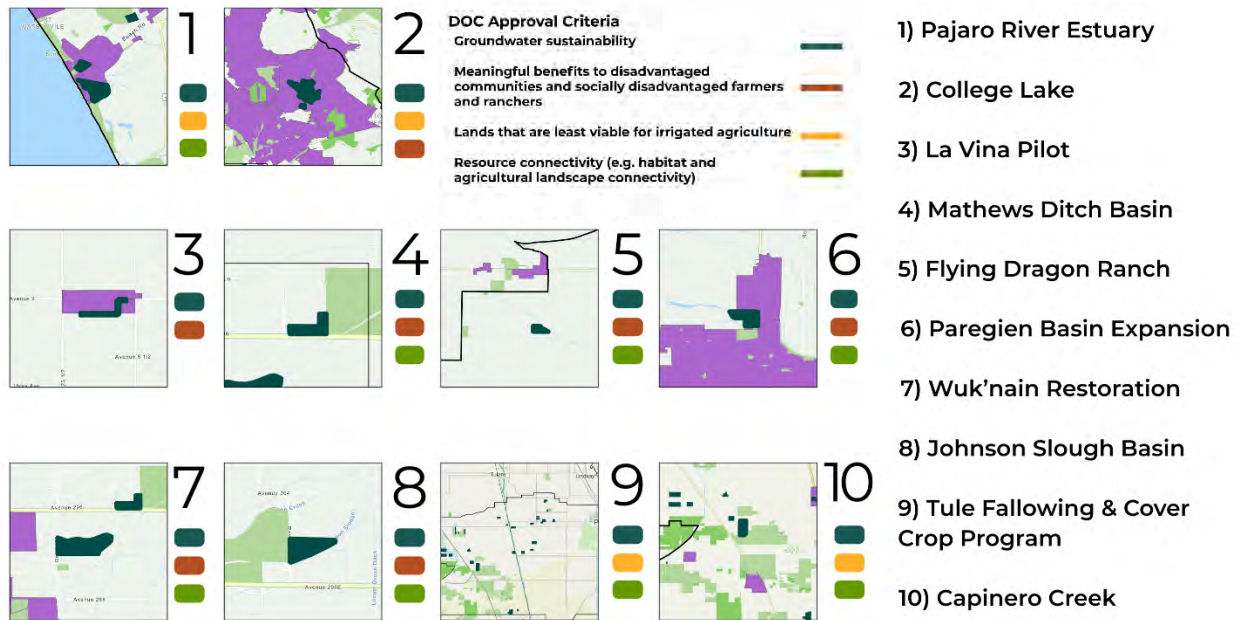
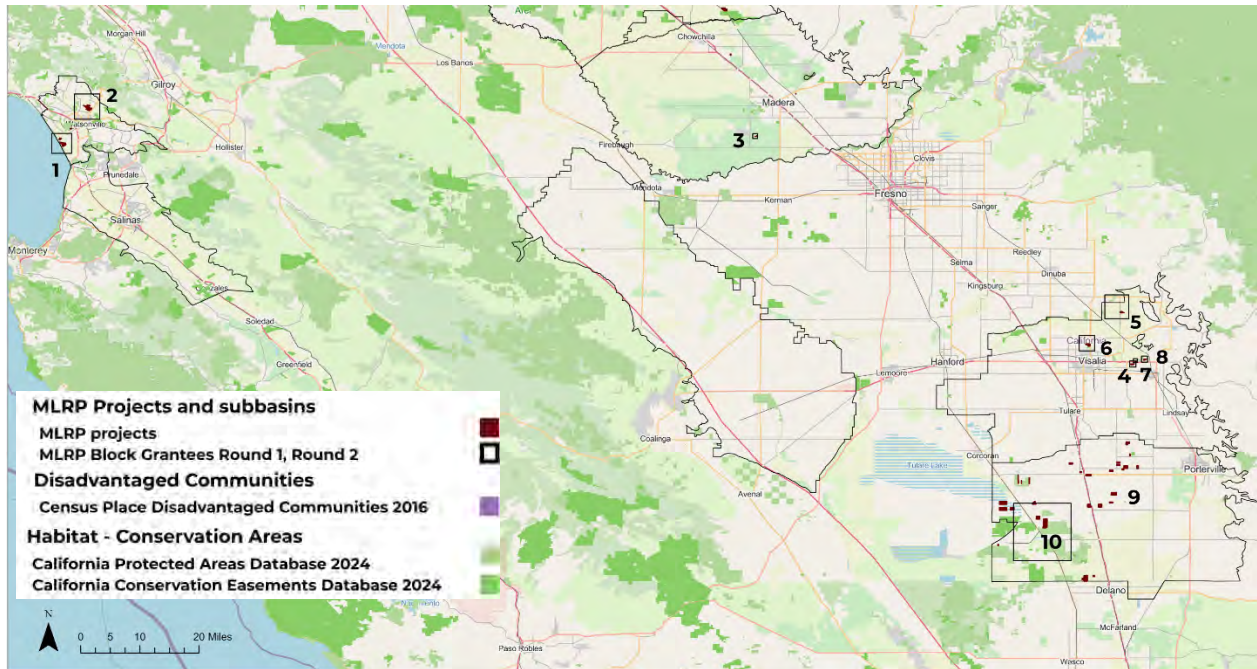
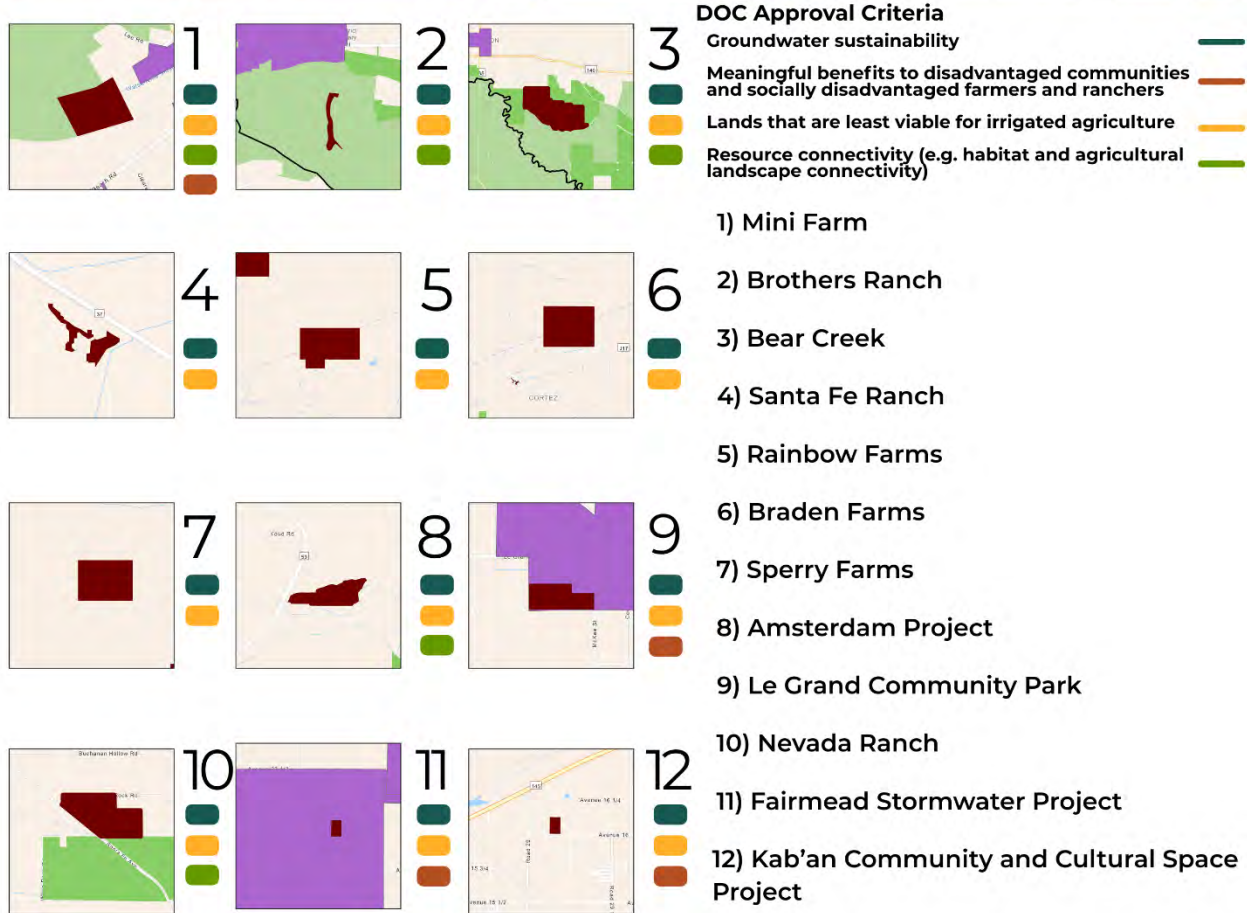
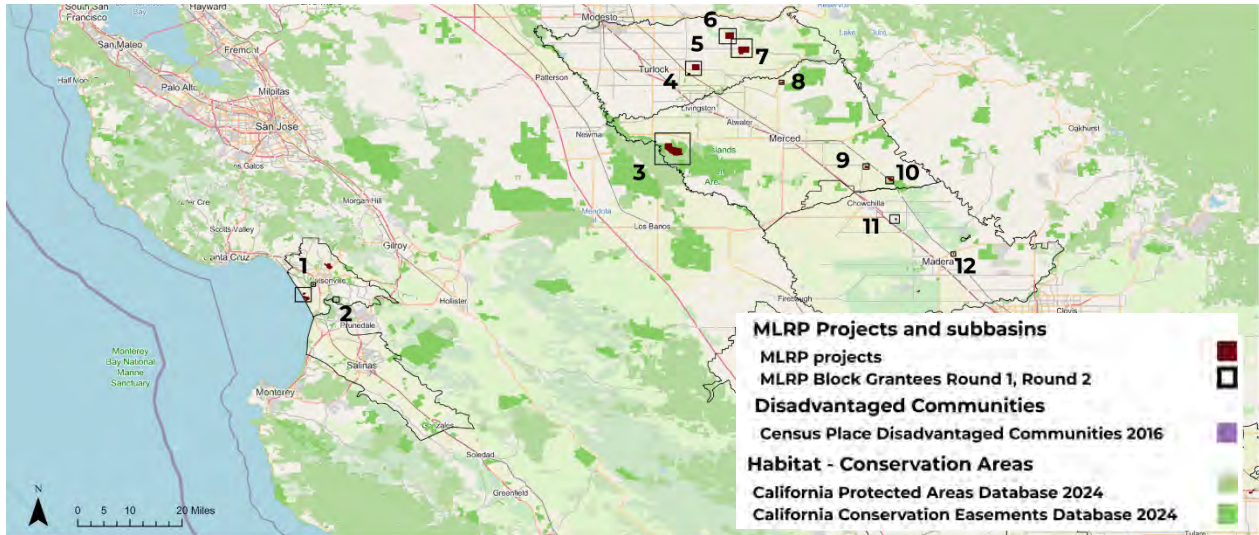


Figure 2. Timeline of MLRP implementation from the passage of land repurposing legislation

# Block Grantee Overviews & Progress

The eight funded block grant regions are transforming collaborative plans into action, developing projects, deepening partnerships, and demonstrating early results that reflect MLRP’s statewide goals. Since May 2022, DOC has awarded a total of \$75 million 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.





\*\*Shapefile not available for this project

13) Flood Management System Project\*\*

Figures 3a and 3b. Map of approved MLRP implementation projects as of September 2025

The following summaries provide an overview of each block grantee and their progress through September of 2025.

# Kaweah Subbasin

## MULTIBENEFIT LAND REPURPOSING PROGRAM



### HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

- Ongoing project implementation, monitoring, and technical assistance provision on 5 approved Implementation projects.
- 8 development projects approved and entered the contracting phase.
- Kaweah Subbasin MLRP Monitoring Plan finalized and in final stages of approval.

The Kaweah Subbasin MLRP is committed to the selection and implementation of multibenefit projects that aim to reduce reliance on groundwater while supporting a viable agricultural economy and improving community and environmental health outcomes.

### KEY PARTNERS

Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District

Greater Kaweah GSA

East Kaweah GSA

Mid-Kaweah GSA

Sequoia Riverlands Trust

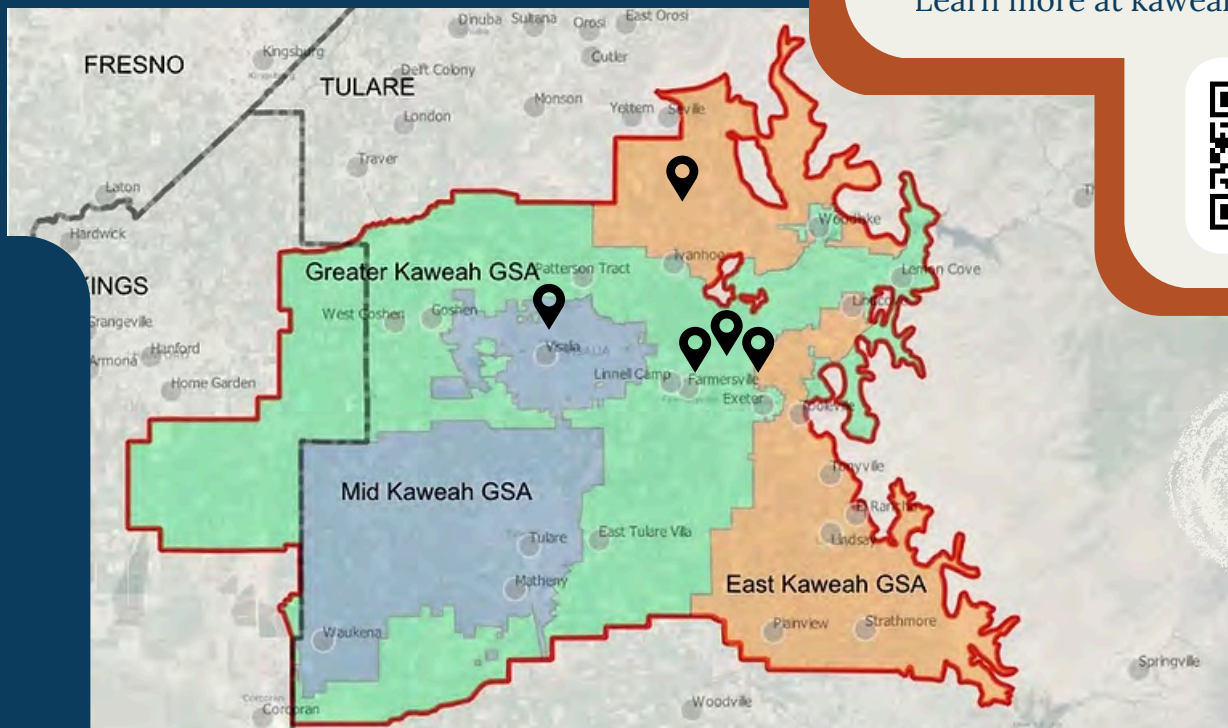
Self-Help Enterprises

SocioEnvironmental and Education Network (SEEN)

University of California Merced

Valley Eco

Learn more at [kaweahmlrp.org](http://kaweahmlrp.org)



### APPROVED PROJECTS

- Wuk'nain Riparian and Wetland Habitat Restoration
- Mathews Ditch Basin Project
- Paregien Basin Phase II Recharge Expansion Project
- Flying Dragon Ranch
- Johnson Slough Basin Project



# Tule Subbasin

## MULTIBENEFIT LAND REPURPOSING PROGRAM



### HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

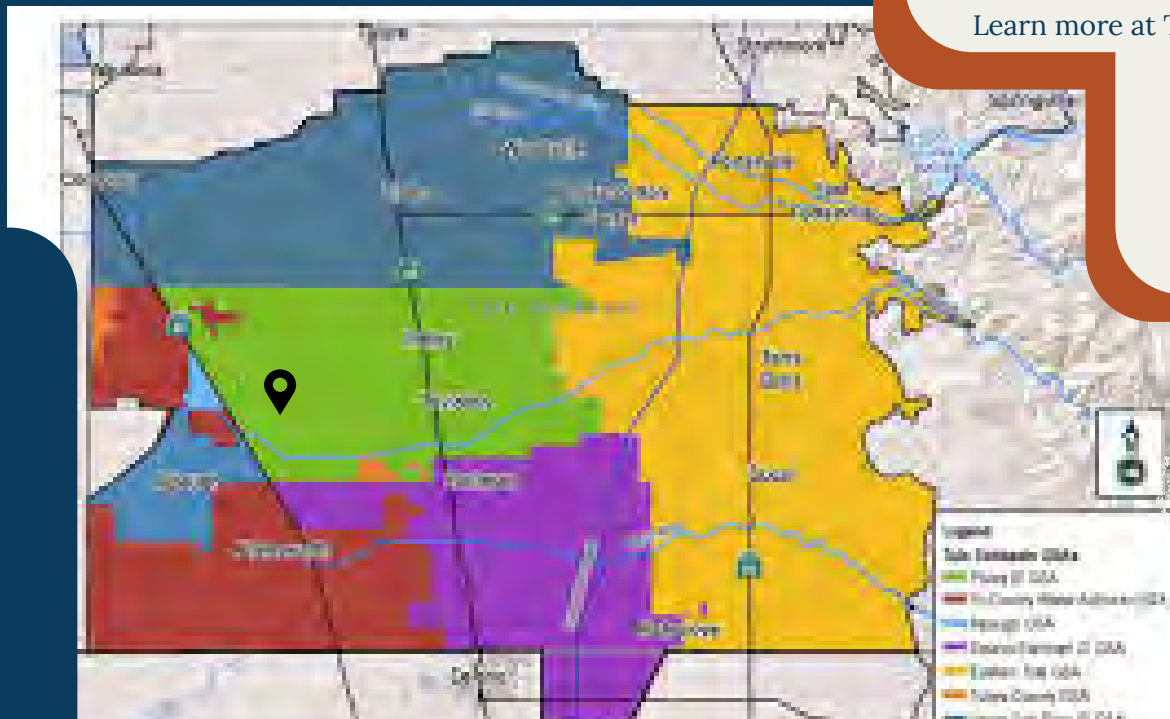
- Held 6 advisory group meetings and 2 multi-stakeholder workshops, and updated the process and efforts to align with program goals and feedback.
- Draft local plans completed, which contribute to the Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plan (MALRP), coming soon.
- Successfully delivered multiple newsletters, shared resources, and collaboration efforts.

The Tule Subbasin MLRP prioritizes groundwater sustainability by reducing pumping and repurposing farmland to multiple uses. Key efforts include the Capinero Creek restoration, transitioning over 400 acres of irrigated land to habitat near disadvantaged communities, and a land fallowing and cover cropping program that supports water savings and recharge.

### KEY PARTNERS

Pixley Irrigation District,  
 Eastern Tule, & Tri-County  
 Water Authority  
 Groundwater Sustainability  
 Agencies  
 Sequoia Riverlands Trust  
 Tule Basin Land and Water  
 Conservation Trust  
 Self Help Enterprises  
 UC Merced  
 Audubon  
 Six 33 Solutions  
 Ag Innovations  
 The Nature Conservancy  
 SocioEnvironmental Education  
 Network (SEEN)  
 Tulare Basin Watershed  
 Network

Learn more at [Tule-MLRP.org](http://Tule-MLRP.org)



### APPROVED PROJECTS

- Capinero Creek continues ongoing restoration, with protected species observed in 2025, and education and volunteer activities at Capinero Creek (33 volunteers, 46+ tour attendees, 32 students)
- Land Fallowing & Cover Cropping Program has funded 1,100 acres of annual fallowing and habitat-friendly cover cropping. Up to 2,600 acre feet of groundwater savings is estimated in 2025 (up to 9,200 over 3 years)
- Three projects are pending approval, with additional project concepts in development

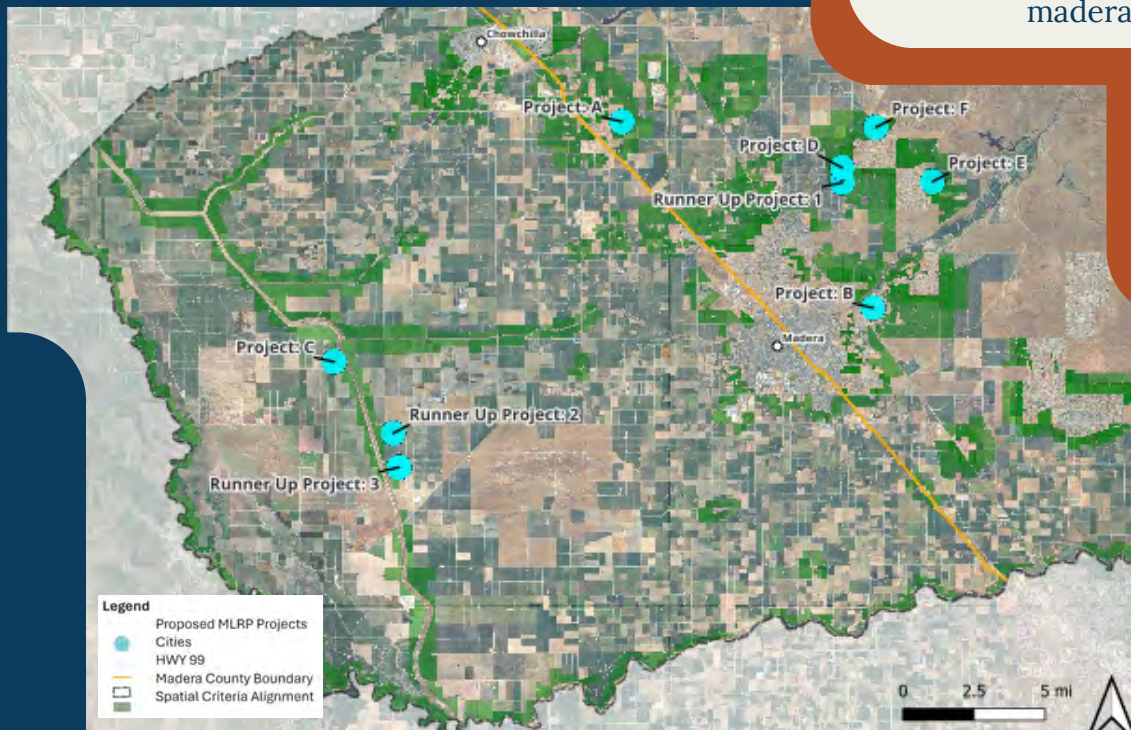
# Madera County

## MULTIBENEFIT LAND REPURPOSING PROGRAM



### HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

- Deployed a project solicitation process that generated 72 pre-applications for multi-benefit projects.
- Supported applicants with technical assistance and network connections to enhance project benefits.
- Scored 28 complete project applications and selected 6 projects for funding awards.
- Completed implementation of the La Vina Community Buffer pilot project.



### APPROVED PROJECTS

- La Vina Community Buffer Pilot Project
- Fairmead Stormwater Project
- Community and Cultural Space Project
- Flood Management System

Madera MLRP helps landowners voluntarily transition irrigated farmland to more sustainable uses, while protecting local economies and communities, aiming to implement at least six multibenefit projects, prioritizing those near communities, domestic wells, and waterways.

The Madera MLRP Plan also includes strategies for building a durable, long-term framework to sustain land repurposing beyond the initial grant period.

### KEY PARTNERS

Madera County

Madera/Chowchilla Resource Conservation District

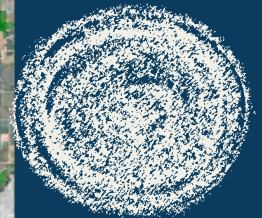
Madera County Farm Bureau

Madera Ag Water Association

California Farmland Trust

Linguistica

Learn more at [maderacountywater.com](http://maderacountywater.com)



Madera County successfully selected 6 projects for funding awards, representing a diverse portfolio of project types and outcomes aligned with regional priorities, including stormwater management, tribal/cultural space, recharge/flood management, agave crop transition, community buffer zone, and large-scale recharge.

# Turlock Subbasin

## MULTIBENEFIT LAND REPURPOSING PROGRAM



### HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

- Selected four pilot projects for early development and implementation to help inform the full-scale MLRP project process.
- Developed Implementation Standards and Incentive Payment framework for common MLRP practices.
- Formed a MLRP Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC), a platform for diverse stakeholders to provide feedback on the MLRP process to ensure local needs and desired outcomes are considered.
- Conducted extensive outreach about MLRP development in diverse settings (GSA Board Meetings, GSA TAC meetings, Grower Ad-Hoc Committee Meetings, MLRP SAC Meetings, Community Meetings, Municipal Advisory Council meetings, and a field trip to a regenerative organic farm).

Turlock MLRP partners are working to identify, prioritize, develop, and implement projects that provide the greatest impact on groundwater sustainability, while providing additional benefits such as soil health, flood protection, and economic resilience. Key outcomes include reducing groundwater demand equivalent of up to 5,000 acres of orchard removal, enhancing water quality, and protecting wildlife habitats.

### KEY PARTNERS

East & West Turlock  
Groundwater Sustainability  
Agencies

EKI Environment & Water, Inc.

Environmental Science  
Associates

Formation Environmental, LLC

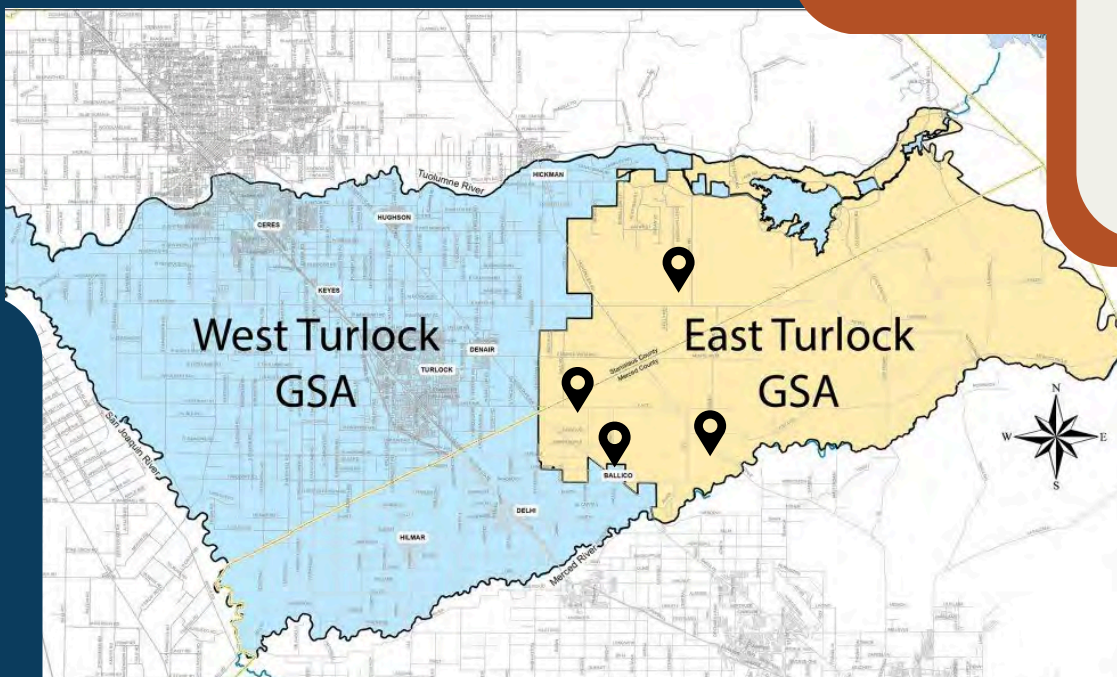
Sustainable Conservation

Self-Help Enterprises

East Stanislaus & East Merced  
Resource Conservation Districts

Merced & Stanislaus Counties

Learn more at [conservation.ca.gov](https://conservation.ca.gov)



### APPROVED PROJECTS

- Braden Farms Orchard Swale Rewilding and Stormwater Retention Project
- Rainbow Farms Orchard Swale Rewilding and Recharge Basin Project
- Sperry Farms Orchard Swale Rewilding Project
- Santa Fe Ranch Recharge Basin and Orchard Swale Rewilding Project

# Merced Subbasin

## MULTIBENEFIT LAND REPURPOSING PROGRAM



### HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

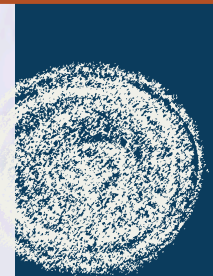
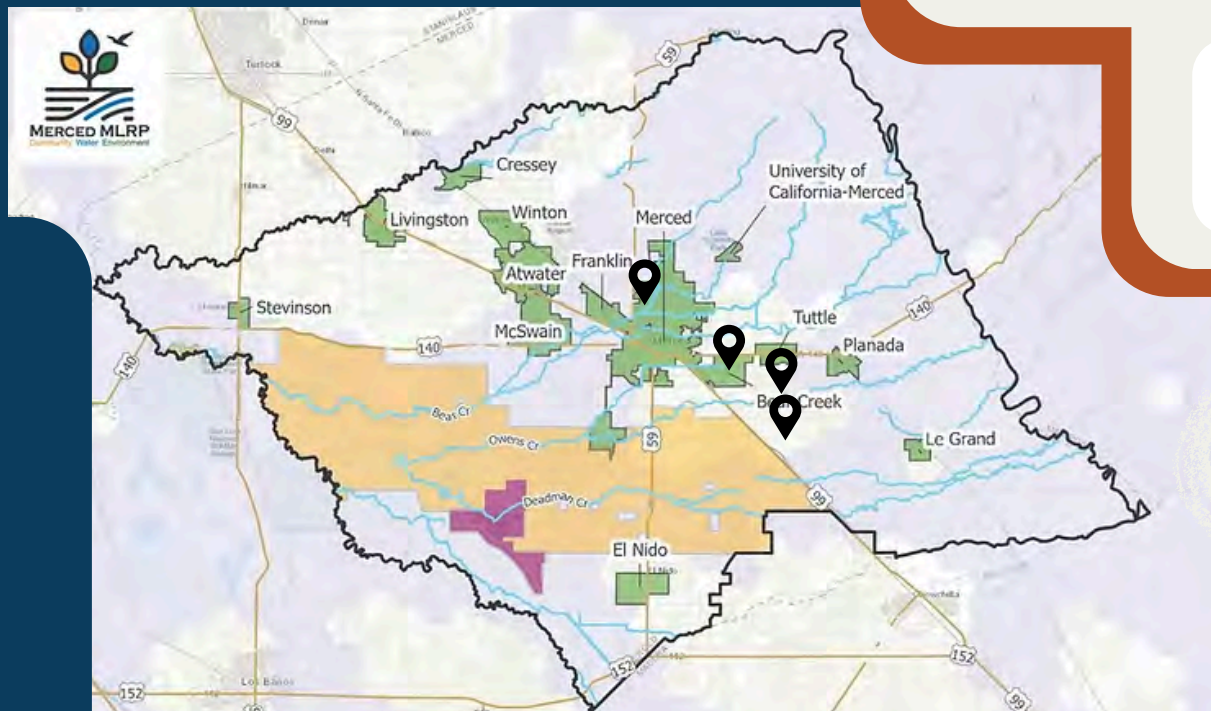
- Held 43 outreach events, including 17 educational workshops and 5 Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings.
- Two RFPs released and closed; Project development underway for 3 approved Implementation Projects and a Community Benefit Project.
- Outreach and Engagement Plan released.
- Land repurposing suitability mapping tool created and available on [mercedmlrp.org](http://mercedmlrp.org).

The Merced Subbasin MLRP is focused on increasing groundwater sustainability while supporting a viable agricultural economy and expanding native habitat. Priorities include developing projects in a key wildlife corridor linking the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the Merced Wildlife Refuge, improving community health outcomes, and reducing groundwater demand.

### KEY PARTNERS

- Merced Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency
- SocioEnvironmental and Educational Development Strategies (SEEDS)
- East Merced Resource Conservation District
- River Partners
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Valley Eco
- Zanjero, Inc.
- EKI Environment & Water, Inc.

Learn more at [mercedmlrp.org](http://mercedmlrp.org)



### APPROVED PROJECTS

- Amsterdam Water District - Johnson MLRP
- Nevada Ranch
- Bear Creek Ranch
- Le Grand Community Park



# Pajaro Valley

## MULTIBENEFIT LAND REPURPOSING PROGRAM



### HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

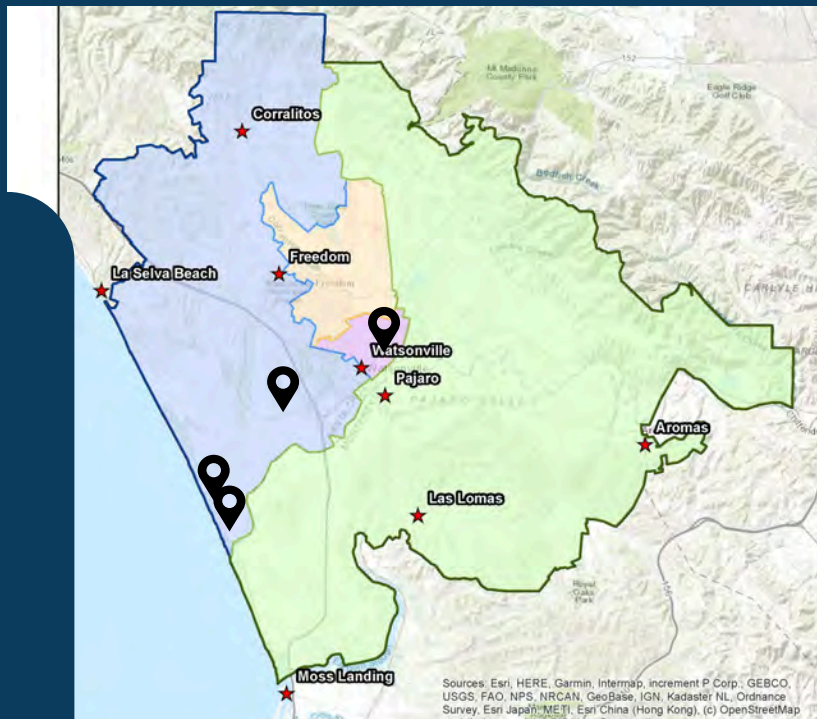
- Continued progress on approved and conceptual projects, including advancing planning and designs for Brothers Ranch Hydrologic Restoration Project.
- Expected benefits from approved projects include habitat restoration, water quality improvements, drought relief, and groundwater recharge.
- Determining permitting pathways and revising project conceptual designs based on input.

The Pajaro Valley MLRP prioritizes reducing seawater intrusion, enhancing groundwater sustainability, and restoring coastal wetlands while supporting agriculture and community resilience. The region emphasizes balancing agricultural viability with habitat restoration and flood management.

### KEY PARTNERS

- Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency
- 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

Learn more at [pvwater.org/pajaro-valley-mlrp](http://pvwater.org/pajaro-valley-mlrp)



### Electoral Divisions

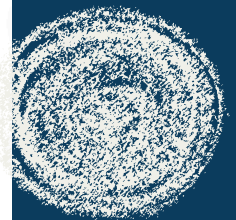
#### Explanation

- ★ Cities & Towns
- ⬢ Division A
- ⬢ Division B
- ⬢ Division C
- ⬢ Division D
- ⬢ PV Water Boundary



Pajaro Valley  
Water Management Agency

Prepared by PV Water on October 23, 2023.  
This Document is a graphic representation developed using



### APPROVED PROJECTS

- College Lake Integrated Resources Management Project
- Pajaro River Estuary Multibenefit Land Repurposing Project
- Brothers Ranch
- Mini Farm



**PAJARO VALLEY MLRP**  
Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program



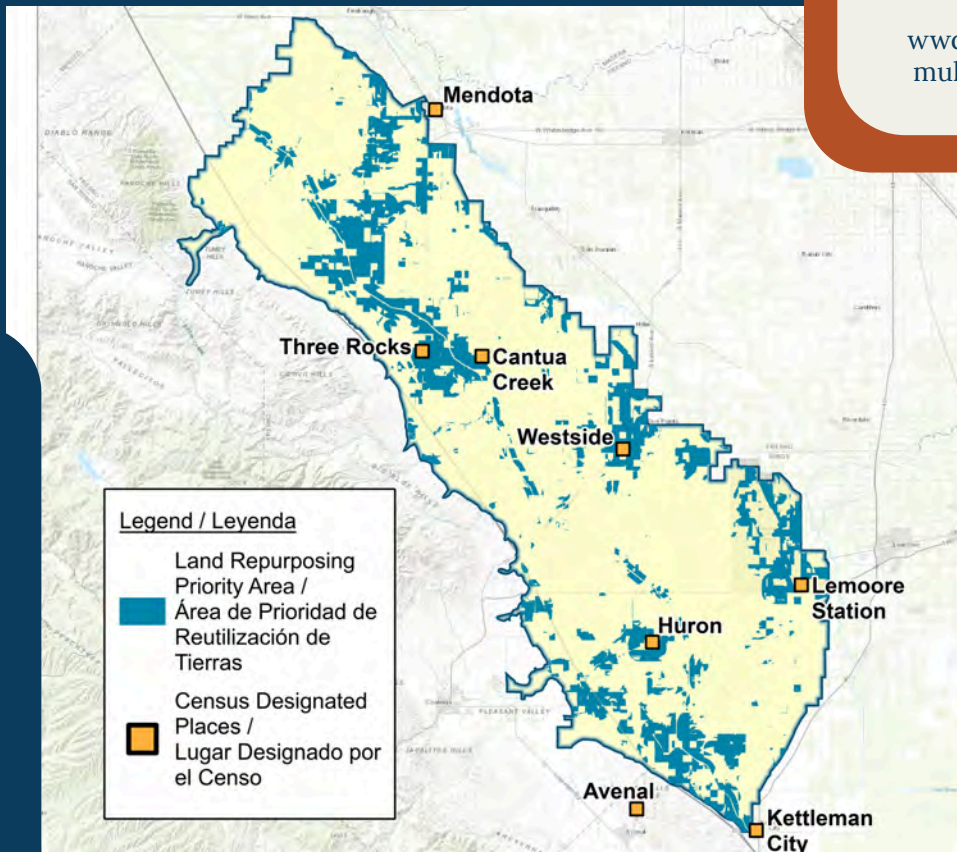
# Westside Subbasin

## MULTIBENEFIT LAND REPURPOSING PROGRAM



### HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

- Hosted community meetings to gather input and feedback on the MALRP and Proposed MLRP Project.
- Initiated the MLRP project process.
- Submitted MALRP to DOC for review.
- Submitted Proposed MLRP Project Implementation Packet to DOC.
- MALRP public review period: August 21 – September 11, 2025
- Launched MLRP webpage (English and Spanish).



### CURRENT EFFORTS

The Westside Subbasin MLRP team has drafted the Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plan (MALRP), which was available for public review and comment through September 11, 2025. The MALRP will complement the Westside Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan and provide the framework to identify and prioritize strategic land repurposing options to reduce groundwater dependence while delivering regionally-appropriate multibenefit outcomes.

The Westside Subbasin MLRP is developing a regional program to reduce reliance on groundwater while delivering community health, economic, habitat, and climate benefits.

The program emphasizes collaboration with cities, counties, labor, and conservation groups

### KEY PARTNERS

Westlands Water District

CeresCollab

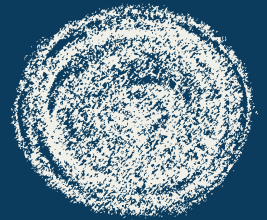
The LEAP Institute

Sequoia Riverlands Trust

Vista Consulting

Linguistica

Learn more at [wwd.ca.gov/westside-subbasin-multibenefit-land-repurposing-program](http://wwd.ca.gov/westside-subbasin-multibenefit-land-repurposing-program)



## PLANNING AND PROJECT PROGRESS AND COMMON LEARNINGS

Block grantees have made significant progress toward program goals in the first years of the program, as highlighted in Figure 4 below. Grower and community engagement is informing Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plans (MALRPs) and project prioritization, resulting in DOC approving projects. As projects are implemented, project monitoring plans will be developed and outcomes will be tracked and reported.



Figure 4. Block grantee progress in 2025 summarized

### Planning and Project Progress

In addition to advancing project development, block grantees have built significant administrative, technical, and partnership capacity to manage their multi-benefit projects. This includes administering subgrants, coordinating across both GSAs and Implementation Partners, and navigating permitting and compliance requirements, capabilities that were not in place at program launch now represent a significant milestone in regional capacity.

Across regions, block grantees report steady progress in advancing core grant deliverables, particularly outreach and engagement, development of Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plans (MALRPs), and project solicitation, prioritization, and proposals to DOC (see Appendix A for a full description of the project selection process). Several regions completed draft MALRPs in 2025 and advanced them through DOC review, while others moved into project solicitation and early implementation. Block grantees saw growing momentum as outreach activities matured and project concepts evolved into complete proposals through iterative engagement with landowners, GSAs, community partners, and DOC, including approval of thirteen projects for implementation.

*It has been exciting to see projects evolve from concepts to (almost) full-fledged packages through iterative engagement with landowners, partners, the GSA, and DOC.*

— Block grant partner supporting the Merced and Turlock Subbasins

The Program saw continued interest from growers and project proponents in several regions, with some regions reporting over two dozen applications, such as Madera County and the Kaweah Subbasin. Where outreach efforts brought growers, communities, and implementing partners together, block grantees noted improved alignment between regional priorities and proposed projects.

**Sustainable Groundwater Supply**  
 The Fairmead Groundwater Resilience Project anticipates 47-72 annual acre-feet in groundwater recharge. The project will feature multiple uses, as shown in the concept drawing, supporting the Madera County block grant.  
 Grazing/working land, Native vegetation, Community walking path, Stormwater basin. Rendered by Geosyntec.

**Healthy, Resilient Communities**  
 The Tule Subbasin team has held volunteer and outreach days at Capinero Creek, including hosting students from Alpaugh High School.

**Healthy, Functioning Ecosystems**  
 Bear Creek Ranch supports wildlife habitat and movement corridors (CDFW connectivity rating 4/5).  
 Connectivity Rank:  
 5 - Irreplaceable and Essential Corridors  
 4 - Conservation Planning Linkages  
 3 - Connections with Implementation Flexibility  
 2 - Large Natural Habitat Areas  
 1 - Limited Connectivity Opportunity

**Regional Adaptive Capacity**  
 Madera County received approval of Part I of their Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plan, a major milestone in block grant implementation.  
 Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program | MLRP Madera  
 Madera County Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plan (MALRP)  
 A Regional Block Grant Deliverable for the Department of Conservation's Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program (MLRP)  
 Administrative Draft  
 Revision: 03/2025

**Equitable & Productive Economy**  
 The Wukchumni Tribe leveraged project funding from the Kaweah Subbasin to hire farm staff, supporting their small business and food sovereignty initiative supplying Tribal members and the local community with fresh, sustainable produce.

Figure 5. Major milestones achieved by block grantees through 2025

## Highlights & Learnings from Block Grantees

Block grantees shared success stories and surprises from this year’s implementation efforts. Their input informs Program priorities, such as identifying topics for monthly block grantee meetings or connecting teams to relevant experts for technical assistance.

- Many block grantees highlight the value of peer learning and statewide coordination. Opportunities to share experiences, troubleshoot challenges, and learn from other regions can help regions navigating a program that is still evolving.
- Despite progress, block grantees consistently emphasize that implementation requires more time, coordination, and administrative capacity than initially anticipated. Regions note that managing complex partnerships, administering subgrants, and navigating permitting and compliance processes are resource-intensive, even in regions making strong progress.
- Most block grantees were surprised by the outreach and project application process experiences. Four block grantees have noted that outreach and project application response did not always meet expectations, underscoring the challenge of engaging landowners amid uncertainty around SGMA implementation, land use transitions, and long-term commitments. Conversely, two regions (Madera County and Kaweah Subbasin) had much stronger responses to project solicitations than anticipated, much more than they could fund.
- Block grantees emphasize that outreach must be early, continuous, and well-resourced. Many regions note engagement cannot be a one-time deliverable, but rather an ongoing process that builds trust and improves project quality.
- Successful land repurposing depends on landowner-centered project design. Projects must make economic and operational sense for landowners to move from concept to implementation.

## PROJECTS APPROVED IN 2025

The following thirteen projects were approved by DOC for implementation, allocating \$9.3 million of MLRP funds to advance multibenefit projects. The thirteen projects approved in 2025 are listed below starting with the four projects that claim meaningful benefits to disadvantaged communities.

### Approved Projects Providing Meaningful Benefits to Disadvantaged Communities

#### Mini Farm

This project in the Pajaro Valley Subbasin restores 63 acres of former farmland to wetland habitat in Santa Cruz County, improving water quality, reducing groundwater use, and supporting wildlife habitat while advancing regional conservation and community benefits.



## Fairmead Stormwater

This project in Madera County will repurpose an almond orchard to a 4.5-acre stormwater retention basin and 10 acres of publicly accessible open space with a walking trail and native pollinator habitat. The project is expected to reduce groundwater use and increase groundwater recharge through stormwater infiltration, while expanding recreation access and supporting community outreach, involvement, and education.



## Community and Cultural Space Project

This project in Madera County repurposes approximately 4.2 acres of almond orchard into a multibenefit cultural and wellness site. The project includes the establishment of pollinator habitat, areas for rotating culturally significant plants, and space dedicated to Indigenous land stewardship practices. Planned features include off-grid solar infrastructure, a traditional sweat lodge, and areas to support cultural gatherings. The project is designed to reduce groundwater use while transitioning land to less water-intensive, regenerative uses. It provides ecological benefits through habitat creation, supports the protection of cultural resources, and advances integrated benefits through partnerships with Indigenous and community organizations, including engagement with the Nu'u Yavi Indigenous women's group.



## Le Grand Community Park

This project in Merced Subbasin will repurpose 20 acres of agricultural land to public open space with cover crops, pollinator habitat, and walking trails. The project is intended to support reduced groundwater use and a transition to less water-intensive uses, while providing community co-benefits such as open space and environmental improvements (air and water quality improvement, soil quality improvement).



## Additional Projects Approved in 2025

### Flood Management System

This project in Madera County repurposes 12 acres of pistachio orchard into a groundwater recharge basin with integrated renewable solar infrastructure, capturing floodwater and increasing groundwater recharge.



## Brothers Ranch

This project in Pajaro Valley Subbasin is the fourth recharge basin implemented under Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency's Recharge Net Metering (RENEM) Program, a basin-wide effort to address seawater intrusion and declining aquifer levels. The project will construct a groundwater recharge basin on active farmland, contributing to regional recharge goals through a coordinated net metering approach. The project supports groundwater recharge and reduced groundwater use, while contributing to habitat benefits and water quality improvement. The RENEM framework emphasizes community-driven implementation, regional collaboration, and long-term replicability across the Pajaro Valley.



## Bear Creek Ranch

This project in Merced Subbasin will repurpose 1,090 acres of active agriculture to wildlife habitat. The project will begin with approximately 500 acres transitioning through two rounds of cover crops, with the intent to later transition into groundwater recharge basins or another floodplain habitat. The project is expected to reduce groundwater use and create/restore wildlife habitat and connectivity while supporting farmer, rancher, and farm worker leadership through cover cropping.



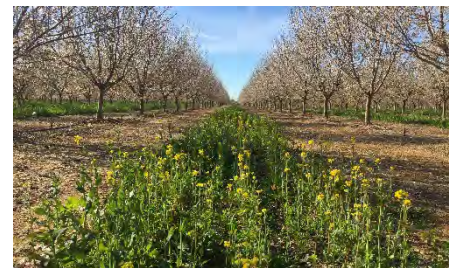
## Braden Farms Orchard Swale Rewilding and Stormwater Retention Project

This project in Turlock Subbasin converts 29 acres of orchard to swale rewilding, stormwater retention, and cover cropping to reduce groundwater use and restore wildlife habitat.



## Rainbow Farms Orchard Swale Rewilding and Recharge Basin Project

This project in Turlock Subbasin transitions 15 acres of orchard to recharge basins, swale rewilding, and cover cropping, reducing groundwater use while restoring habitat and supporting nature-based solutions.



### Sperry Farms Orchard Swale Rewilding Project

This project in Turlock Subbasin removes 10 acres of irrigated orchard to create seasonal wetland habitat and water retention areas, reducing irrigation demand and enhancing native species habitat.



### Santa Fe Ranch Recharge Basin and Orchard Swale Rewilding Project

This project in Turlock Subbasin repurposes 4 acres of orchard to recharge basins and swale rewilding, reducing groundwater use and restoring wildlife habitat.



### Nevada Ranch

This project in Merced Subbasin will repurpose 150 acres of almond orchards to cattle rangeland and native grasslands. The project is expected to reduce groundwater use and improve wildlife habitat and habitat connectivity.



### Amsterdam Water District – Johnson MLRP Project

This project in the Merced Subbasin will repurpose 15 acres of almond orchard into a 10-acre groundwater recharge basin with pollinator habitat and riparian restoration along Canal Creek. The project will reduce groundwater use while increasing recharge and restoring habitat connectivity through pollinator hedgerows and riparian vegetation.



## PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PROJECTS

Block grantees have continued making progress with the ten projects approved in 2024, developing monitoring plans, navigating permitting processes, and even breaking ground. Projects provide multiple benefits beyond groundwater sustainability, including supporting healthy, resilient communities and healthy functioning ecosystems. Table 1 below provides an overview of all previously approved projects, which are described in more detail in the 2024 MLRP Annual Report. View the 2024 Annual Report in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Table 1. Previously approved projects

Project Name	Block Grant Region	Description
Pilot Project in La Vina	Madera County	Transitions five acres of orchard near the community of La Vina into pollinator habitat, creating a buffer between agricultural operations and nearby residences
Paregien Basin Phase II Recharge Expansion Project	Kaweah Subbasin	Repurposes 55 acres of former orchard into a groundwater recharge basin, generating flood reduction, recharge, habitat, and community education benefits near Farmersville
Flying Dragon Ranch	Kaweah Subbasin	Repurposes 58 acres along Cottonwood Creek to create riparian habitat, groundwater recharge, flood control, and public access near Seville and Yetem
Wuk'nain Riparian and Wetland Habitat Restoration	Kaweah Subbasin	Restores over 10 acres to riparian and wetland habitat, improving habitat connectivity while supporting Tribal land uses and community education
Mathews Ditch Basin Project	Kaweah Subbasin	Repurposes approximately 100 acres of orchard into a flood capture and groundwater recharge facility with habitat restoration and public access near Patterson Tract
Johnson Slough Basin	Kaweah Subbasin	Transitions 25 acres of orchard near Kaweah Oaks Preserve into a groundwater recharge basin with habitat and flood management benefits
Land Fallowing & Cover Cropping Program	Tule Subbasin	Incentivizes fallowing and cover cropping to reduce groundwater use, with opportunities for seasonal recharge in the Tule Subbasin
Capinero Creek	Tule Subbasin	Restores 467 acres from irrigated agriculture to upland habitat, reducing groundwater use and supporting sensitive species near the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge
Pajaro River Estuary Project	Pajaro Valley Subbasin	Restores 48 acres of coastal habitat while maintaining organic agriculture, improving conditions for important fish species
College Lake Integrated Resources Management Project	Pajaro Valley Subbasin	Restores College Lake by transitioning previously farmed land to lake conditions and improving water supply reliability and fish passage

Several projects are located within one mile of 50-150 domestic wells (see Figure 6 below). Mathews Ditch Basin in Kaweah Subbasin has over 150 wells within one mile of the project. The 100-acre project transitions a walnut orchard into a recharge basin, also serving as a flood control basin for nearby communities.

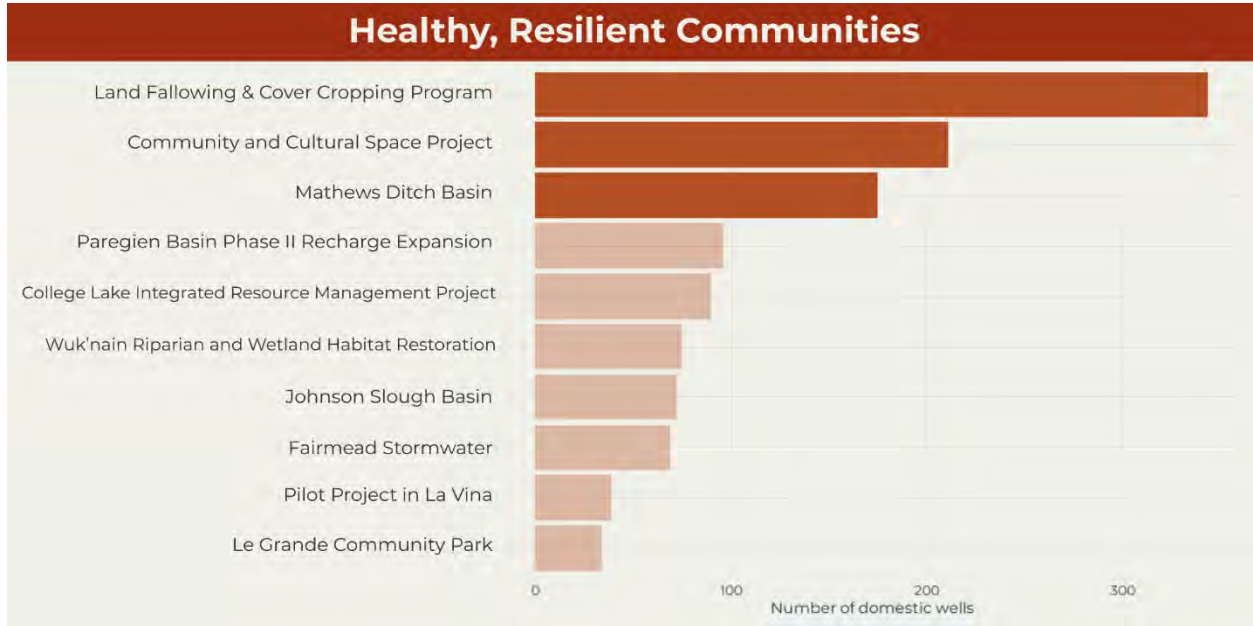


Figure 6. Projects within a one-mile buffer of domestic wells

Other projects incorporate benefits to wildlife and ecosystems, such as Capinero Creek in the Tule Subbasin. The 467-acre site restores upland habitat. Capinero Creek has seen several key species return to the site, including the blunt-nosed leopard lizard and Crotch's bumble bee.



Photos. (Left) Blunt-nosed leopard lizard found at Capinero Creek. (Right) Capinero Creek restoration site in bloom. Photos courtesy of The Nature Conservancy.

## Tribal Grant Funding Overview & Progress

MLRP's only Tribal grantee, the Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians have made exciting progress on their grant since they were initially awarded \$1,753,000 in May of 2023. MLRP funds is a match funding source to their \$7 million Department of Water Resources grant and a \$1.9 million Bureau of Indian Affairs grant. Proposition 4 funding will expand MLRP's efforts and goals to support additional Tribal grants by reestablishing a Tribal funding set-aside.

Dry Creek Rancheria's primary goal with this project has been to design a program to replenish the groundwater system, with outcomes associated with percolating flows to both the upper and lower aquifer zones and supporting subsurface flows into the Russian river to improve its base flows. An additional goal of this project is to support the Tribe in developing a governance structure in Alexander Valley, through the development of a new Alexander Valley Water District. The District would be responsible for continued program operations, maintenance, monitoring and reporting. The Alexander Valley would be represented by elected Board members, which is anticipated to include elected Tribal representatives. This Water District is planned to become a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

Their project includes two-phases, starting with an initial pilot study followed by a longer-term five-year project to study on-farm recharge through application of winter flood flows within the Russian River system. MLRP funding has contributed to design and planning for their pilot study, and the development of a Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plan for their region.

As discussed in the 2024 Annual Report, the pilot study began with installation of monitoring wells in late 2024 on participating landowner properties to monitor potential impacts of on-vineyard recharge. The first flooding occurred in January 2025; each participating landowner distributed flood waters onto their properties for 30 days of water application during a 3-month window. A second round of flooding began in January 2026. Data from both rounds of flooding will inform their Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plan, which has progressed significantly toward completion.

An initial lesson learned from the 2025 flooding and pilot study results has been the realization that drip systems are more efficient and less costly to maintain than overhead sprinkler systems for delivering flood flows. This lesson has changed the implementation of flooding in



2026 with results contributing to their ongoing analysis and regional plans. Outreach and education have continued throughout the last year by their Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and will continue until the end of the grant.

Most recently Dry Creek Rancheria has requested a no cost grant extension to continue their work beyond the current March 2026 end date until July 2027. This extension would extend the grant through another water year. The extension is intended to allow the grantee to obtain more data, continue their monitoring plan, and integrate these results into their Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plan. The additional time would also be used to develop a water budget to track and document water transport and to document groundwater responses and level maintenance. DOC staff are actively working with Dry Creek Rancheria to investigate the feasibility of the proposed extension.

2026 looks to be a great year for continued progress on Dry Creek Rancheria's work, and for MLRP to grow the number of Tribal grants supported.



## Program Administration and Support Highlights

The Statewide Support Entity and DOC strengthened program administration in 2025 by expanding technical guidance, facilitating peer learning, and establishing a monitoring program and sharing initial results. The following sections describe the activities of the Department of Conservation and the Statewide Support Entity in 2025.

### **PROGRAM UPDATES FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION**

Since MLRP's inception in 2021, DOC staff have engaged a wide variety of interested parties, advisors, technical support providers, and the public to receive input on program design and administration.

In 2025, DOC staff approved 13 additional implementation projects, bringing the total number of acres of agricultural lands being repurposed through MLRP to over 4,800 acres across 23 projects and 6 block grant regions. These projects bring community, economic, and environmental benefits such as flood protection, increased recreational trails, and cover cropping on working lands, as further described in the Block Grantee Overviews & Progress section above.

As grantees drove projects and planning forward, DOC staff worked with interested parties to revise key components of the program guidelines and introduce new processes for implementation project review. In addition to improving existing MLRP guidelines, DOC worked to develop new guidelines to expand the program under funding through the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (the Climate Bond).

In 2025, DOC staff responded to the expanding project portfolio by developing a definition of projects that achieve groundwater recharge while also implementing the definition of meaningful benefits to disadvantaged communities that was developed in 2024.

Grantees across MLRP regions have chosen to prioritize groundwater recharge projects as a key strategy to increase groundwater sustainability. While the MLRP guidelines support such projects, ambiguity existed regarding what projects are considered to 'achieve groundwater recharge.' DOC staff sought to clarify this concept by working with expert agency staff at the Department of Water Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board.

Following consultation with expert agency staff, DOC staff worked with interested parties through two public review and comment periods. Each public comment period included public workshops, individual meetings, and open office hours to solicit comments and input. Input from grantees during the first public comment period was essential to improving DOC staff's understanding of the implications of the initially proposed definition. DOC staff thoroughly revised the proposed definition in response to this input. The resulting definition was met with support from grantees during the second public review period and was ultimately adopted into the guidelines.

DOC staff implemented these guidelines revisions by updating the process for reviewing and approving projects that claim groundwater recharge benefits as well as projects claiming to provide a meaningful benefit to disadvantaged communities.

For each project claiming to provide a meaningful benefit to disadvantaged communities, DOC staff prepared written justifications for each project determination. These written justifications foster collaboration and transparency by providing grantees with clear reasoning behind DOC staff's determinations and establishing pathways for grantees to demonstrate benefits. Of the 13 projects approved in 2025, DOC staff agreed with grantees in determining that 5 projects met the definition of meaningful benefits to disadvantaged communities. Furthermore, DOC staff determined that although 4 additional projects were argued to provide direct benefits to disadvantaged communities, the applications did not substantiate this claim, and these projects were determined not to provide such benefits at the time of approval.

DOC staff believe that this diversity of outcomes in project determinations demonstrates the strength of the definition. By establishing clear standards that can be adapted to each project, the definition of meaningful benefits sets a demanding, yet attainable, bar.

This innovative approach to determining meaningful benefits to disadvantaged communities comes at a critical time for the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA). The Climate Bond requires that 40% of bond funding be spent on activities that provide direct and meaningful benefits to disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities. Because MLRP's definition of meaningful benefits to disadvantaged communities was generated with input from multiple departments through a transparent and rigorous process, CNRA used MLRP's definition as the foundation for the bond specific approach to determining what bond funded projects provide direct and meaningful benefits to these communities ([learn more about CNRA's implementation of the definition here](#)). Consequently, the time and effort invested in this definition by MLRP grantees, community advocates, and DOC staff, will help to ensure that \$4 billion in Climate Bond funds are spent to meaningfully and directly benefit some of the most vulnerable residents of California.

Beyond this contribution to the overall implementation of the Climate Bond, DOC staff are drafting updated guidelines that will be used to distribute \$200 million in Climate Bond funding for the program. Improvements to guidelines sections related to cost eligibility, grant structure, application processes, public outreach, and advances in groundwater sustainability best practices are being informed first through consultation with other DOC and CNRA programs. Following preparation of initial proposals, DOC staff will lead a robust public engagement process to improve upon these initial proposals. The draft Climate Bond guidelines will be released in Spring of 2026, with new grantees expected to be awarded in the summer to fall of 2026.



Figure 7. Highlights of program-wide progress through 2025.

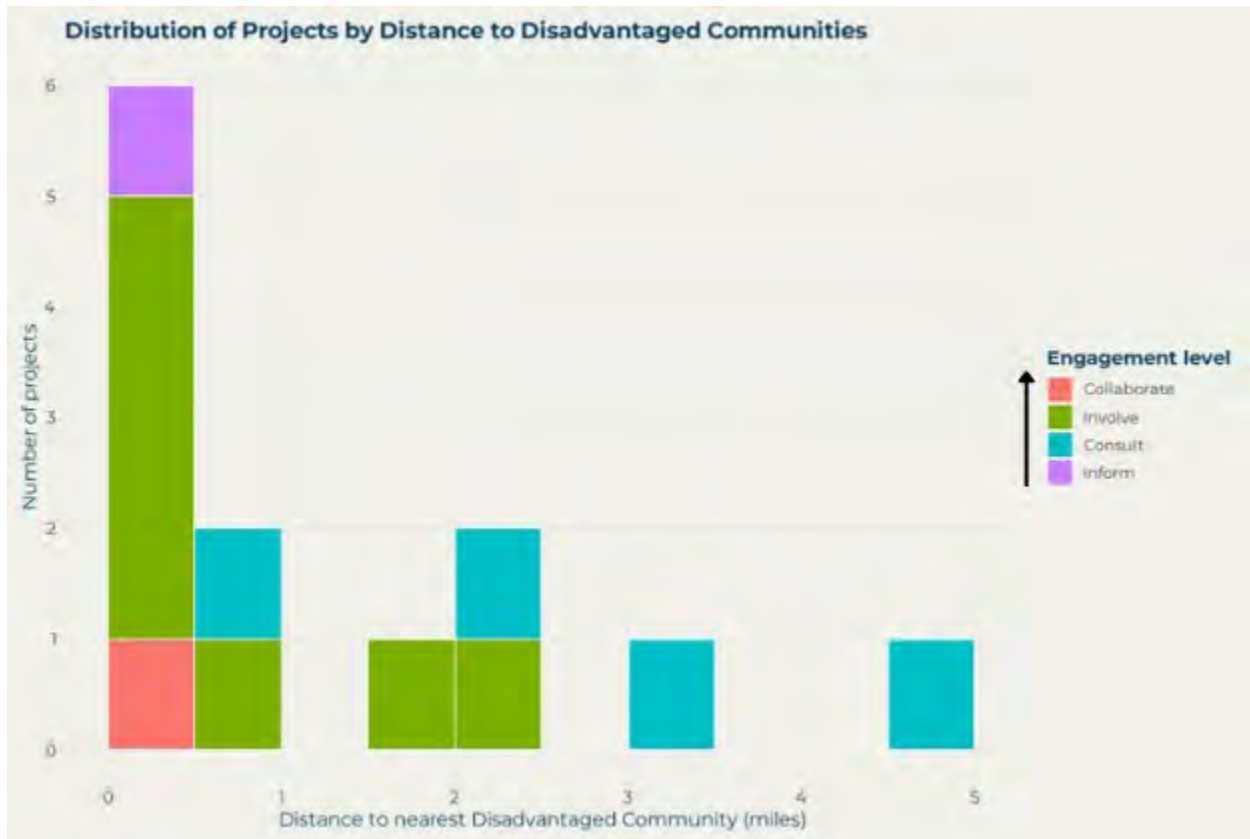


Figure 8. Project proximity to disadvantaged communities and their use of effective engagement strategies. Projects leveraged high levels of engagement on the [IAP2 spectrum of public participation](#) applied in MLRP (Involve and Collaborate). Engagement levels increase along the IAP2 spectrum (Inform < Consult < Involve < Collaborate) as projects get closer to disadvantaged communities, as indicated in the figure legend.

## THE MLRP STATEWIDE SUPPORT ENTITY

DOC established the MLRP Statewide Support Entity to provide technical assistance and facilitate communication and collaboration among grantees block grantees to meet MLRP goals. In 2025, the Statewide Support Entity added organizations to the team of funded Implementation Partners and expanded its support to grantees through additional guidance materials and responsive Community of Practice sessions.

Self-Help Enterprises (SHE) and Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) 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 project planning, development and implementation, and offers guidance to support block grantee education and engagement activities. The Statewide Support Entity advocates for and provides resources to block grantees to support 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 convened monthly Community of Practice meetings addressing topics identified as needs by block grantees (see Table 2).

Table 2. Monthly meeting topics and speakers

Month	Topic	Speaker(s)
<b>January</b>	Protecting Groundwater Quality in Recharge	Department of Conservation (DOC), Sustainable Conservation
<b>February</b>	Robust Engagement with Communities, Small Growers, & Tribes	Yaynicut Franco, Ngodoo Atume, and Kaweah
<b>March</b>	Outreach and Engagement Training by DOC	DOC
<b>April</b>	Corporate Investment	California Water Action Collaborative, Sustainable Conservation, and Fairmead
<b>May</b>	Approved and Conceptual Land Repurposing Projects	Antonio Solorio, Westside Subbasin Jenny Balmagia, Lower Salinas Valley Subbasin Emma Adest, Kaweah Subbasin Dan Hermstad, Pajaro Valley Subbasin Karina Mudd & Gregory Liebau, Merced Subbasin Jeannie Habben, Madera County Daniel Toews, Tule Subbasin Chris Heppner, East Turlock Subbasin
<b>June</b>	SSE Implementation Partner Roundup	Union of Concerned Scientists, The Nature Conservancy, and Sustainable Conservation
<b>July</b>	Land Use Modeling Scenarios & Mapping Tools	Yelenka Bolano and Dr. Vicky Espinoza
<b>August</b>	Native Plant Cultivation & Use	Valley Eco
<b>September</b>	Annual Pause & Reflect Meeting (in-person, Visalia, CA)	Statewide Support Entity and DOC

Month	Topic	Speaker(s)
October	Peer Connections & Learning	Statewide Support Entity
November	Permitting MLRP Projects	Sustainable Conservation

### Statewide Support Entity Implementation Partners

Based on block grantee needs and interests, the Statewide Support Entity leverages organizations and individuals with various expertise as funded Implementation Partners to provide specific technical assistance to block grantees and entities applying for repurposing funding. In 2025, the Statewide Support Entity engaged with the following Implementation Partners: The Nature Conservancy, Sustainable Conservation, Dr. Vicky Espinoza, and the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Dr. Vicky Espinoza developed outreach and technical resources to support program participation, including YouTube videos explaining MLRP and land repurposing options. She also created preliminary 10-year historical flood frequency geospatial layers to help grantees identify areas that have experienced past flooding and inform land repurposing decisions.



The Nature Conservancy has presented at monthly meetings to engage block grantees on effective strategies to incorporate habitat into land repurposing planning. Their team provides guidance during project planning and implementation to help them to navigate habitat considerations in their planning and permitting.



The Union of Concerned Scientists, with the support of the Statewide Support Entity, developed block grantee guidance on nature-based solutions, providing a [publicly-accessible report](#). Their team also met with block grantees to explore solutions to local challenges, such as air quality concerns from local communities.



Sustainable Conservation is the newest Statewide Support Entity Implementation Partner, but has been involved in the program for several years through direct block grant partnerships and their involvement in the Statewide Support Entity Advisory Committee. Sustainable Conservation supports block grantees in block grant planning through navigating permitting questions, prioritizing project concepts, and more. Their team joined several monthly meetings in 2025 to share their expertise.

## 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. Members include representatives from organizations focused on environmental conservation, working lands, 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).



Figure 10. Highlights from program-level implementation through 2025

## Statewide Monitoring Approach

Statewide and regional monitoring enables consistent tracking of Program outcomes across regions and connects program data to broader California climate resilience initiatives. This framework complements block grantee-led monitoring that is tailored to conservation goals at the subbasin or project scale. The Statewide Support Entity, in collaboration with DOC and block grantees, developed the MLRP Theory of Change (Figure 11 below) to provide a high-level conceptualization of program actions, outputs, and outcomes, including the coordination, engagement, and planning steps needed to implement strategic land repurposing projects.

Building from the MLRP Theory of Change, in 2024 the Statewide Support Entity developed a working version of the [Statewide Monitoring Approach](#) with support and input from DOC, block grantees, and program partners. Co-development activities included multiple workshops and review periods with block grantees and the [Statewide Support Entity Advisory Committee](#), which were used to refine the MLRP Theory of Change, identify priority indicators, and determine feasible, meaningful metrics that could be applied consistently across regions. The Statewide Support Entity worked closely with DOC and program partners to ensure that selected metrics aligned with program goals, reporting capacity, and relevant statewide frameworks.

The MLRP Theory of Change defines five desired outcomes: a sustainable groundwater supply; healthy, resilient communities; regional adaptive capacity; healthy, functioning ecosystems; and an equitable and productive economy. Regional actions described in the Theory of Change align with block grant deliverables, such as meaningful engagement with communities and Tribes. To the extent feasible, block grantees, the Statewide Support Entity, and DOC monitor and report on actions and indicators to track progress toward these outcomes, as illustrated through the reporting category icons in Figure 11 below.

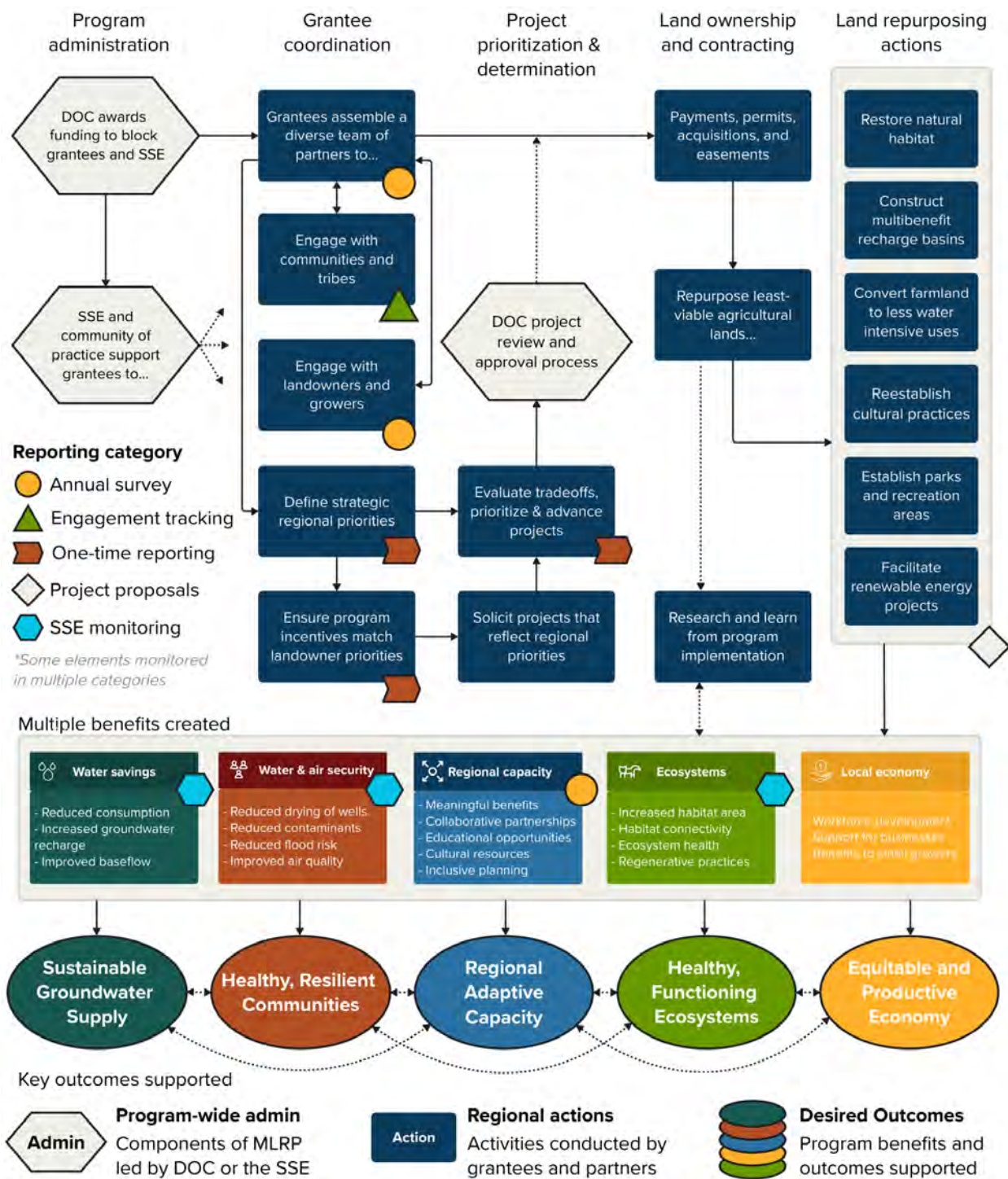


Figure 11. The MLRP Theory of Change

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, provided in Figure 12 below.

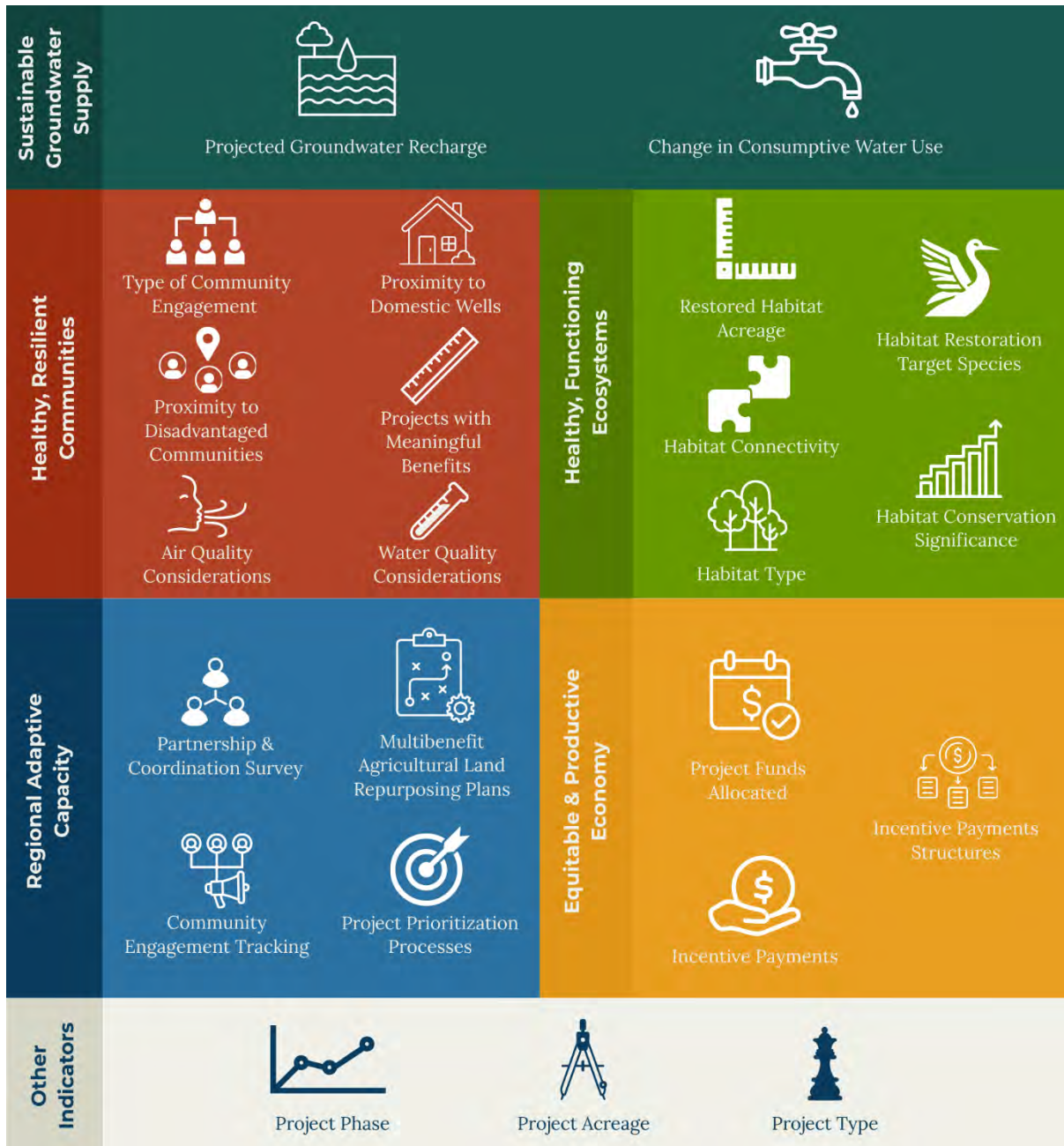


Figure 12. The draft monitoring approach includes indicators by primary outcome category, tracking progress toward key MLRP outcomes. Indicators may change as the monitoring approach is refined.

## Outcome Categories & Indicators

The Statewide Support Entity and partners identified initial indicators by which progress toward program goals can be assessed in 2024 and refined them in 2025. The indicators, described below by the outcome category they most correspond to, may change and may not all be publicly reported in the future. Many of the indicators of the Statewide Monitoring Approach, which will be consistent across projects, will be determined in the project planning and approval phases, or calculated based on secondary data. While more detailed monitoring will be conducted at a project scale, the specific indicators and monitoring approaches will depend on grantee and funding capacity and the intended conservation outcomes from each project.

- **Sustainable groundwater supply:** indicators focus on groundwater use reduction and improvements on supply through crop transitions and recharge areas. Projected groundwater recharge, estimated during project planning, quantifies the estimated volumes from projects that include managed aquifer recharge, while change in consumptive water use, determined via remote sensing estimates, provides an understanding of how much less water will be consumed through evapotranspiration. Implementation projects are all in early stages, and the current data can provide baseline conditions to set the context for changes as a result of MLRP.
- **Healthy, resilient communities:** indicators reflect community engagement and benefits to community health. Water and air quality considerations along with proximity to domestic wells and proximity to DACs can help provide an understanding of how project planning sought to improve community health and resilience. Type of community engagement provides an understanding of the degree of inclusiveness within block grantee priority setting and decisions. Additionally, projects that provide "meaningful community benefits" must adhere to the requirements included in the program guidelines.
- **Regional adaptive capacity:** indicators track block grantees deliverables and community engagement. The Partnership and Coordination Survey and community engagement tracking provide an understanding of both the activities and how MLRP collaboration changes local network capacity. Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plans (MALRPs) and project prioritization processes provide an understanding of both pre-project progress and how MLRP supports multiple objectives.
- **Equitable and productive regional economy:** indicators can track job creation, land-based economic sustainability, income diversification (e.g., solar energy), and local economic benefits. Most of these indicators are optionally reported by grantees. Three indicators support tracking toward equitable and productive regional economies as well as overall program cost effectiveness, including project funds allocated, incentive payments, and incentive payment structures. In addition to these indicators, grantees prioritize projects located on least-viable agricultural lands, strategically supporting regional agricultural economies.

- **Healthy functioning ecosystems:** indicators assess environmental benefits provided by projects and the potential to enhance habitat and habitat connectivity for species of concern. Five indicators support tracking toward healthy functioning ecosystems, including project restoration acreage, habitat restoration target species, and habitat type. Two additional indicators are determined by the value of the location for habitat connectivity and habitat conservation significance, based on indices from state agencies.
- **Project characteristics:** indicators inform project progress, scope, and magnitude. Project phase tracks the number and phase of each proposed and approved project. Project acreage and project type provide an understanding of the quantity of land and types of projects that are finding success in both proposals and implementation.

In 2025, DOC and the Statewide Support Entity expanded monitoring efforts to track progress toward nearly all indicators. The data management and reporting infrastructure is being built out as initial data provides the opportunity to understand the practical needs related to gathering, storing, and analyzing data. Analysis of indicator monitoring data demonstrates key areas of growth for the program in 2025, and provides context for areas of implementation that are slower to show progress. For example, unsurprisingly, little data exists for the Jobs Created indicator, as most projects are in very early stages of implementation. DOC and the Statewide Support Entity will enhance monitoring efforts in 2026, leading to richer project and program data to feed learning and improve future project and program effectiveness.

## Looking Ahead

As more projects MLRP move into implementation the results of early projects will begin to generate evidence about their effectiveness, which will inform learning to improve future local collaboration and planning efforts as well as project prioritization, planning and implementation. This learning will support the effectiveness of both existing block grantee efforts and projects as well as guiding decisions related to the allocation of future funding.

In 2026 DOC will develop updated MLRP grant guidelines and notices of funding availability to deploy Proposition 4 (approved in November 2024) funds. Over the life of the Climate Bond, DOC will invest an additional \$200 million in MLRP grantees and projects to enhance water, community, ecosystem, and economic resilience across the state.



Photo: Members of the MLRP Block Grantee Community of Practice at the Annual Pause and Reflect meeting in September 2025

## Appendix A. MLRP Project Approval Process

Under the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program (MLRP), project approval is structured to balance regional leadership and community vision with statewide priorities. After regional block grants are awarded, block grant recipients are responsible for identifying, developing, and prioritizing individual land repurposing projects within their regions. In doing so, grantees must prioritize projects that meaningfully benefit disadvantaged communities, are conducted on lands that are least viable for irrigated agriculture, and contribute to resource connectivity, such as habitat and agricultural landscape connectivity. Projects are informed by regional priorities and stakeholder engagement, and must align with applicable Groundwater Sustainability Plans, MLRP goals, and statutory requirements.

Before implementation funds are released, each proposed project undergoes a formal review by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Block grant recipients submit a project implementation review packet that documents project scope, anticipated benefits, budget, land access, environmental compliance, and alignment with MLRP priorities, including meaningful benefits to disadvantaged communities. Projects that include groundwater recharge benefits must also demonstrate coordination with the relevant Groundwater Sustainability Agency.

DOC reviews each project to confirm eligibility, consistency with program goals, legal and environmental compliance, and the durability and substantiation of proposed benefits. This review ensures that state funding supports well-developed, implementation-ready projects that deliver measurable groundwater sustainability and multibenefit outcomes. Implementation funds are released only after DOC approval, reinforcing fiscal accountability while allowing regions the flexibility to advance locally appropriate solutions.

Once approved, projects proceed to implementation and are subject to ongoing monitoring and reporting requirements to verify delivery of intended outcomes over time. This project-level approval process enables MLRP to maintain strong stewardship of public funds while empowering regional partners to lead land repurposing efforts tailored to local needs and conditions.

## Appendix B. Block Grantee Resources Provided 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 B1. Block Grantee Resources Shared by the Statewide Support Entity in 2025

Resource Name	Source	Type	Description
<b>Recharging California</b>	Sustainable Conservation	Webinar series	A webinar series exploring how to align incentives and scale groundwater recharge to strengthen water resilience across California.
<b>Making the Most of Multi-benefit Water Management on Dairies</b>	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	Webinar	Highlights multibenefit water management practices on dairy farms and provides guidance on accessing local incentive programs to support implementation.
<b>Greening Our Growing</b>	Union of Concerned Scientists	Podcast	Explores agrivoltaics and ecovoltaics as emerging strategies to integrate renewable energy with agricultural landscapes.
<b>Ojalá que lluevan electrones en el campo</b>	Union of Concerned Scientists	Podcast	Spanish-language podcast examining agrivoltaics and ecovoltaics and their potential benefits for agriculture and clean energy.
<b>Climate Resilience in Action: Restoring Rivers for Flood Protection</b>	Sustainable Conservation	Webinar	Examines how nature-based river and floodplain restoration efforts led by River Partners and American Rivers enhance flood protection, habitat, and water security.
<b>California Financing Coordinating Committee Virtual Funding Fairs</b>	California Financing Coordinating Committee (CFCC)	Event	Virtual funding fairs providing opportunities to speak directly with state and federal program staff about project funding and community needs.

Resource Name	Source	Type	Description
<b>Regulatory Strategies to Advance Restoration</b>	California Department of Fish and Wildlife / CNRA	Webinar	Focuses on regulatory tools supporting restoration, including CDFW's new Restoration Management Permit and practical solutions to permitting challenges.
<b>EDF Speaker Series: Land Repurposing Research Roundup</b>	EDF	Event series	A speaker series highlighting recent research related to land repurposing and groundwater sustainability, beginning with findings on dust, heat, and air quality impacts from fallowed lands.
<b>Lunch-MAR: Monthly Research Sessions</b>	Department of Water Resources and partners	Event series	Ongoing monthly research sessions focused on topics relevant to MLRP goals, including flood-MAR, regenerative agriculture, and groundwater accounting tools.
<b>Recharge and Water Quality Policy Recommendations</b>	Community Water Center and partners	Guidance document	Policy recommendations outlining strategies to better align groundwater recharge efforts with drinking water quality and community protections.
<b>Seeds of Change</b>	Seeds of Change	Decision support tool	A decision support tool for ecological restoration in California that identifies suitable seed collection and planting locations using climate, soil, and species data.
<b>Working with Nature to Protect California's Agricultural Regions: How Nature-Based Solutions Can Build Resilience</b>	Union of Concerned Scientists, Allensworth Progressive Association, and the Statewide Support Entity	Guidance document	Practical approaches for addressing groundwater depletion, improving socioenvironmental conditions, and creating multiple benefits for agricultural communities.
<b>Salt of the Earth Encuentro</b>	AFSC Pan Valley Institute	Event	Two-day conference on climate, food, and land justice, bringing together farmworkers, small farmers, immigrant, and Indigenous communities across Merced, Madera, and Fresno counties.

Resource Name	Source	Type	Description
<b>Monitoring Resources &amp; Opportunities</b>	Fresno State	Support	Fresno State’s resources for supporting monitoring across MLRP projects. from hydrogeology and soil science to economics and social science, that can help grantees design monitoring plans aligned with program goals.
<b>MLRP Project Signage Template</b>	Statewide Support Entity	Tool	Template for grantees to tailor and use on project sites awarded MLRP funding.
<b>MLRP-SGMA Educational Tool</b>	Statewide Support Entity	Tool	Two-page handout in English and Spanish for grantees to use in outreach, providing the nexus of SGMA and MLRP and how they achieve groundwater sustainability.

# Appendix C. MLRP Journey Map

California created the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program (MLRP) in 2021 to provide funding to agricultural regions for projects that provide incentives to farmers to transition irrigated farmland to new uses that create multiple benefits. This journey map outlines the conditions, key steps, and partnerships that enable implementation of multibenefit land repurposing programs and projects across several regions in California. While not a prescriptive road map, the journey map details a generalized process that could be customized and applied in other agricultural regions facing water scarcity challenges and shifting land use patterns.

## Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program Journey Map

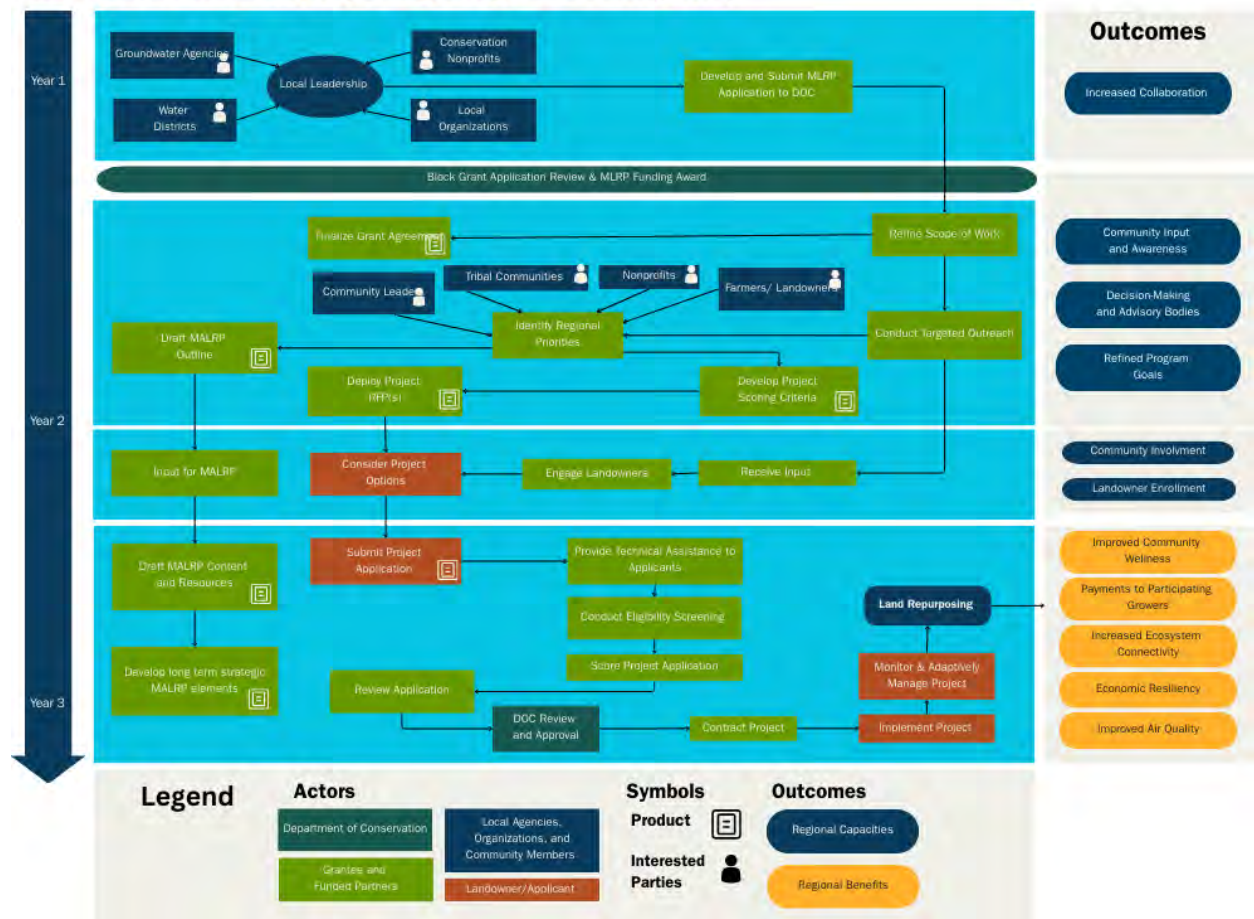


Figure C1. The MLRP Journey Map depicts the typical process participants (including DOC staff, grantees, and local partners/participants) experience as they navigate through the Program.