



The Williamson Act: Past, Present, Future?

The Summary Report
from the
Legislative Oversight
Hearing



Wednesday, March 3, 2010
State Capitol
Sacramento, California

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The Williamson Act: Past, Present, Future? **A Legislative Oversight Hearing**

On Wednesday, March 3, 2010, the Senate Local Government Committee held an oversight hearing on the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 --- better known as the Williamson Act. The hearing began promptly at 9:30 a.m. and continued until 11:40 a.m. Held in Room 112 of the State Capitol in Sacramento, the Committee's hearing attracted about 60 people.

Four of the five Committee members participated in the oversight hearing:

Senator Dave Cox, Committee Chair
Senator Christine Kehoe, Committee Vice Chair
Senator Sam Aanestad
Senator Curren D. Price, Jr.

Three other legislators joined the Committee members' hearing:

Senator Lois Wolk
Assembly Member Anna Marie Caballero
Assembly Member Mariko Yamada

This report contains the staff summary of what happened at the Committee's hearing [*see the **white** pages*], reprints the Committee staff's briefing paper [*see the **blue** pages*], and reproduces the written materials provided by the speakers and others [*see the **yellow** pages*].

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STAFF FINDINGS

After reviewing the speakers' presentations and written materials, and thinking about the comments that the legislators made during their oversight hearing, the Committee's staff reached these findings:

- County officials, conservation groups, and landowners generally support the Williamson Act's voluntary contracts, the use-value property tax assessments, and the state subventions to county governments.

- Governor Schwarzenegger's near-elimination of the state subventions in 2009-10 makes it tough for counties to remain in Williamson Act contracts.
- Unless the Legislature restores the subventions in 2010-11 --- wholly or partially --- more counties will follow Imperial County's example and nonrenew their Williamson Act contracts.
- If contract nonrenewals spread, it may be impossible to replace Williamson Act contracts on millions of acres of agricultural and open space land.
- Legislators want to explore other revenue sources to replace the State General Funds to pay for the state subventions to counties.
- Some legislators want to consider statutory changes to the Williamson Act that will focus attention on farm and ranch land of statewide importance.
- Some legislators worry about landowners who transfer or sell their water rights from Williamson Act contracted land, making the property less productive.
- Some legislators want to explore other long-term ways to preserve agricultural and open space lands, possibly income tax relief for the landowners as an alternative to use-value property tax relief.

OPENING REMARKS

After conducting the Committee's regular business and passing three bills, **Senator Cox**, the Committee Chair, turned to the Williamson Act topic. He noted that the dramatic cut in direct state subventions to counties caused many to question the state government's commitment to the conservation of agricultural land and open space. Just last week, the Senator reported, Imperial County's board of supervisors voted to nonrenew their Williamson Act contracts.

This oversight hearing will allow legislators to learn more about the Williamson Act, **Senator Cox** stated, allowing them to speak up during other committee hearings, budget debates, and in caucus meetings. The hearing is a chance to listen closely to county officials, conservation groups, and landowners about the future of the Williamson Act.

STAFF BRIEFING

Before the hearing, the legislators received a briefing paper, including suggested questions for the speakers. The appendix reprints that paper. [*See the blue pages.*]

Committee consultant **Peter Detwiler** briefed the legislators about the Williamson Act by taking apart the statute's formal name, the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, and describing each of those terms. "California is just like the rest of the United States, only more so," said Detwiler as he explained that the law simultaneously serves multiple goals. The state's literal foundation is the "land," and the Act affects about one-third of all private, non-forested land in California. He handed out two charts prepared by the State Department of Conservation which showed how much Williamson Act contracted land was in each county and how much the counties claimed in state subventions for 2007.

The term "conservation" in the law's formal name was intentional, Detwiler said. "It's 'conservation' like Gifford Pinchot, not 'preservation' like John Muir." Under the Williamson Act, landowners "grudgingly give way" to development at regional edges through nonrenewal, cancellation, and public acquisition. The "Act" was a conscious adoption of three statutes covering the contracts, property reassessments, and the subvention program.

The "1965" in the title is significant, Detwiler argued, because the law reflects the historical, economic, and political context that existed 45 years ago. Referring to a chart on pages 6 and 7 in the Committee's briefing paper, Detwiler explained that the Williamson Act predated robust land use planning and zoning practices, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), local agency formation commissions' (LAFCOs) spheres of influence and municipal service reviews, alternative easements, and the profound fiscal shifts caused by the Serrano decision and Proposition 13. "Like any 45-year old," said Detwiler, "The Williamson Act may be having a mid-life crisis."

THE SPEAKERS

The Committee invited nine people to speak, organized into three panels based on their points-of-view: county officials, conservation groups, and landowners. Legislators invited the speakers to provide written materials to supplement their brief remarks. The witnesses whose names appear with an asterisk (*) provided written materials. The appendix reprints the speakers' materials. [*See the yellow pages.*]

Counties' Reactions and Advice

The first panel consisted of county officials with considerable experience with the Williamson Act:

Honorable Judy Case, County Supervisor*
County of Fresno

Susan Thompson, County Administrative Officer*
County of San Benito

Ted James, Planning Director*
County of Kern

Fresno County Supervisor **Judy Chase** spoke on behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), as well as her own county. She warned legislators that another year without state subvention payments could be “the last straw” that would cause counties to nonrenew their Williamson Act contracts. The Supervisor presented the results of CSAC’s recent survey of its members which elicited responses from 23 counties. Although a majority indicated that they have continued their contracts, the survey represents just a “snapshot in time.” Once counties non-renew, she cautioned, it’s almost “impossible to reverse” those decisions. Continuity is important, she said, asking legislators to “reinvest” in the program.

Answering a question from **Senator Wolk**, Chase said that Fresno could nonrenew if the state government doesn’t resume its subventions. **Senator Price** asked how Fresno County dealt with the loss of subventions. Chase explained that the \$5.6 million in state subventions was small compared to her county’s \$1.7 billion annual budget, but the subventions were an important part of the County’s discretionary revenues.

Declaring that “we are ready to work with you,” San Benito County Administrative Officer **Susan Thompson** told the legislators that the continuation of the Williamson Act is “critical for small counties.” Thompson said that she was speaking on behalf of the Regional Council of Rural Counties, in addition to her own county. While the loss of state subventions is a blow to rural counties’ budgets, the “bigger message ... is that the Williamson Act is good policy” which is as relevant in 2010 as it was in 1965. While her county has not issued contract nonrenewals, it has stopped accepting additional applications from landowners. With 76% of San

Benito County's private land under contract, the program is important to keeping both row crops and rangeland in production. Thompson gave the Committee two examples of large development projects that County officials were able to deflect because of its commitment to the Williamson Act. **Senator Aanestad** was interested in the state subventions' effects on the County's budget.

Speaking for the California County Planning Directors' Association was **Ted James** who is also Kern County's Planning Director. Williamson Act contracts help counties discourage "leapfrog development," he said, demonstrating the state law's "on the ground effectiveness." While the County's general plan and zoning ordinance are "in my arsenal" to shape development patterns, James said that those tools are only as good as the county supervisors' political will. The Act "has more teeth for me" because of the contracts' self-renewing obligations. The Williamson Act contracts plus the County's use of CEQA, mitigation requirements, subdivision standards, and LAFCO decisions help retain land in agricultural use. He gave the legislators a recent example of how the Kern County LAFCO turned down the City of Bakersfield's attempt to annex land because of the development pressures that it would have created.

Conservation Organizations' Reactions and Advice

Having heard from county representatives about their interest in continuing Williamson Act contracts and state subventions, the Committee turned to conservation groups for their perspective:

Brian Leahy, Division of Land Resource Protection*
State Department of Conservation

Edward Thompson, Jr., California Director*
American Farmland Trust

Michael B. Endicott, Resource Sustainability Advocate*
Sierra Club - California

Brian Leahy is the State Department of Conservation's Assistant Director who manages the Division of Land Resource Protection. Half of California's land area is owned by the federal and state governments, with the remainder in private ownership. Leahy displayed a large California map and pointed out the grazing land in yellow and irrigated farmland in green for the legislators. Ranching and farming

may be the “highest-and-best-use” for these soils, although perhaps not the most economical. With the development pressures expected over the next 40 years, there’s “not a lot of land left” for other uses, Leahy explained. Calling the Williamson Act a “very effective” program, he said that the contracts are “the excuse” that allow local officials to say “no” to development.

Senator Aanestad told Leahy that “it’s your fault” that the subventions disappeared in 2009-10. Echoing the hearing’s subtitle, Senator Aanestad said that the Williamson Act’s past has been “successful,” but he’s “very much concerned” about the present, because the Administration seems to leave the future up to others. The “state is not holding up its end of the bargain” in what should be a state-local partnership, the Senator declared. We “can’t just leave the locals in the lurch,” said the Senator, especially not the 12 rural counties in his Senate district. Aanestad said he was “adamant” about the need to restore the subventions. When the Senator asked about the likelihood of restoring the state subventions in 2010-11, Leahy described the Administration’s reasoning for cutting the subventions and replied that he doesn’t “see any reason for that logic to change.”

Senator Wolk claimed that the Administration doesn’t care about the program. She asked Leahy if there are funding sources for state subventions other than the State General Fund and if statutory changes should tighten up on compatible uses, including regulating water transfers. Leahy said that it was “not our place to comment” on water transfers, but selling permanent water rights affects the long-term productivity of Williamson Act contracted lands.

The California Director for the American Farmland Trust, **Ed Thompson**, told the legislators that he wanted to make three points: (1) the Williamson Act is a bargain for state taxpayers, (2) the Act needs significant improvements, and (3) legislators need to do even more to effectively preserve farmland. Agriculture pays more in taxes than it consumes in local public services, Thompson declared. He asked legislators to think carefully about what a “Williamson Act version 2.0” might look like because the tax relief is more important to ranchers than crop producers. The pattern of land enrollment around cities is “pretty spotty,” causing him to question whether tax incentives are sufficient to limit sprawl. Policy makers should look to other states --- New York, Wisconsin, Michigan --- that offer “circuit breaker” income tax relief to landowners. State income tax relief is fairly popular among local officials in those states because they don’t have to fight for annual subventions. Thomson called upon legislators to increase the state government’s investment in agricultural conservation easements, noting that other states spend more than California’s 11¢ a person. Conversely, local officials need to do better to “increase the

efficiency of development” because denser development patterns are the “most important” way to conserve farmland. But the biggest hole in California’s programs is the “lack of clear, firm state policy” that favors farmland preservation. That lack of policy direction “underlies our difficulty here” as California loses 75 square miles of agricultural land a year.

How does Wisconsin’s income tax circuit breaker program work, **Senator Wolk** asked Thompson. He explained that if local property taxes go up, the state income tax credits kick in, targeting tax relief to those who need it the most. Have other states adopted farmland preservation goals, asked **Assemblymember Yamada**. “California is a national leader in many areas, but not this one,” Thompson replied. But, he noted, federal officials haven’t always followed their own 1981 law on farmland preservation.

Michael Endicott is Sierra Club-California’s sustainability advocate, promoting social, economic, and ecological values. Endicott told the legislators that he shares Senator Wolk’s concerns about landowners who transfer their water rights away from Williamson Act contracted land. Especially in coastal areas the Williamson Act helps to reduce the pressures to convert agricultural land to other uses. Because the type of farming influences the ability to achieve sustainability goals, it’s important to maintain the subvention program even in tough times, he said. As legislators think about a “Williamson Act 2.0” they shouldn’t complicate the program because “focus and prioritization is in order.” Endicott said that he had “some concern” about the income tax approach advocated by AFT’s Ed Thompson because he didn’t want the Legislature to encourage “hobbyist farmers” while trying to protect real agriculture. As for other revenue sources to pay for the state subventions, Endicott suggested looking into oil severance taxes and property transfer taxes.

When **Assemblymember Caballero** asked Endicott to explain his concern about the income tax relief approach and what she called boutique farms, he replied that other states’ requirements may not fit California’s context. Besides, Endicott said, boutique farmers have different interests than what he called “general farming.”

Senator Price asked Endicott about his recommendation to prioritize the state’s goals. He replied that the “proof that the Williamson Act is a good act is that people renew [their] contracts.” Continuing contracts shows that the landowners’ commitment to property is worth protecting. When it comes to agricultural production, “the more stability the better,” Endicott said. Agricultural operations need “big pockets” of land, not just little protected islands.

Landowners' Reactions and Advice

For its final panel, the Committee invited representatives of landowners' groups that have used Williamson Act contracts:

Paul Wenger, President*
California Farm Bureau Federation

Jack Hanson, Treasurer*
California Cattlemen's Association

William H. Geyer, Executive Director*
Resource Landowners Coalition

Besides being the President of the California Farm Bureau Federation, **Paul Wenger** is a Williamson Act landowner in the San Joaquin Valley. While Proposition 13 helped landowners control their property taxes, those who bought agricultural land after 1978 still face problems. They can afford to pay their property tax bills, but they won't have much return on investment. The Williamson Act helps landowners reduce their tax bills even further, increasing their operating income. Buyers who acquire adjacent agricultural land under "1031 exchanges" drive up the price for the surrounding farmland. The result will be increased pressure for development if the Williamson Act ends, Wenger explained. He told the legislators about his concerns about selling agricultural land for water transfers and buying ranches for recreational use. Land should be taxed on its productivity, he declared. As much as 14.5 million acres have been under Williamson Act contracts for at least 35 years, demonstrating the landowners' commitment to conserving their property.

What about compatible uses on Williamson Act contracted land, asked **Senator Wolk**, specifically mentioning energy facilities that use solar and wind power. Wenger explained that his standard is whether a nonagricultural use takes away the land's agricultural productivity. We "need to look at what the Act is all about," he said. What about an agricultural processing plant, Senator Wolk asked. If it's an "adjunct" to the agricultural use, that would be OK, but "it's really degrees" of compatibility, Wenger explained. He wants to encourage family farms to stay in operation. What about water transfers, Senator Wolk asked. Should the Legislature prohibit the permanent transfer of water rights from Williamson Act contracted land? Wenger said that legislators should "look at it pretty closely ... if a permanent transfer harms agricultural productivity."

When **Assembly Member Yamada** asked Wenger about his “barometer” of understanding among urban legislators, he replied that the Act’s supporters need to explain the program in terms that legislators understand. “Everybody can understand taxation based on value,” he said. The goal is to “keep the family on the farm.”

Jack Hanson, the California Cattlemen’s Association’s Treasurer (and Lassen County Supervisor), told legislators that he found common ground with many of the previous speakers. “There are just a few givens,” he said: the Act has been enormously successful, the Act’s future is in doubt without subventions, the Act is a bargain, and if the Act disappears, some more development will occur. The program is “not a subsidy or free lunch” for landowners because everybody gives up something. Spending \$39 million to replace counties’ revenue losses “is a bargain,” he claimed. “It’s the money issue, I’m sorry to say,” observed Hanson. “The Williamson Act has definitely not outlived its usefulness,” he continued, and it would be “very difficult” to continue ranching without the program.

Senator Cox asked Hanson if state law should treat rangeland differently than cropland. Hanson explained that because of their different characteristics, ranching may be the best use of nonprime soils.

Bill Geyer, Executive Director of the Resource Landowners Coalition, was the consultant to the Assembly Agriculture Committee and worked with Assemblyman John Williamson on the original statute and the subsequent subvention program. Geyer warned legislators that “you can’t have an on-again-off-again” subvention program because the lack of certainty will discourage landowners and county officials. Although he would “love to be dissuaded” that subventions from the State General Fund aren’t in trouble, he believes that they are. Geyer noted that many of the questions on page 13 of the Committee’s briefing paper reflect the thinking that he put into his client’s white paper on the Williamson Act. His group has hired Vince Minto, the former Glenn County Assessor, to “crunch the numbers” and analyze alternative funding sources. In the meantime, Geyer suggested that the Legislature consider an interim relief program as a “bridge to the future.”

Can you “give us a hint” of some of these alternative revenue sources, asked **Senator Aanestad**. Geyer said four alternatives might generate as much as \$10 million each: (1) charging new fees on early termination of contracts, (2) using a “mixed bag” of ideas, including fees on compatible uses that displace agricultural production, (3) allowing counties to charge administrative fees, and (4) reducing subven-

tion payments for substandard contracts. Senator Aanestad then asked when Minto's work would be ready and Geyer indicated that the project was just getting underway with results still months away.

Senator Wolk mentioned her SB 715, which proposes Williamson Act reforms, and noted the need to build consensus for changes.

Referring to her own AB 1965, **Assembly Member Yamada** asked Geyer about the concept of proportional restoration of state subvention payments. He replied that the concept should be under discussion, but there are "obviously different voices among counties."

Others' Reactions and Advice

Following the three panels, Senator Cox invited public comments and two other speakers share their views with the legislators:

Eric Carruthers, Citizens Advisory Council
Santa Clara County Open Space Authority

Pablo Garza
The Nature Conservancy

Eric Carruthers is a retired Santa Clara County planner who serves on the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority's Citizens Advisory Committee. He told the legislators that the state government needs to find the means to keep the Williamson Act program intact. Echoing Ted James' advice, he agreed that the Act complements counties' land use regulatory programs. He wanted to "re-enforce" the Sierra Club's position on the need to protect farming on the edges of coastal development. He cited an American Farmland Trust study for San Francisco which found that specialty crops are important in metropolitan areas. Climate action change needs a local food supply, Carruthers concluded.

Speaking for the Nature Conservancy, **Pablo Garza** gave his strong support for the Williamson Act because of its "effective, economical, environmental benefits." The state government needs to finance the subventions, he said.

ADDITIONAL ADVICE

In addition to the speakers at the oversight hearing, the Committee also received written advice from six other sources:

41 signatories*

California Rangeland Conservation Coalition

10 signatories*

Sacramento/Capital Region Food System Collaborative

Honorable Simón Salinas, Chair*

Monterey County Board of Supervisors

Mike McKeever, Executive Director*

Sacramento Area Council of Governments

Amy L. White, Executive Director*

Land Watch Monterey County

Honorable Dave Goicoechea, Chairman*

Sierra County Board of Supervisors

The members of the **California Rangeland Conservation Coalition** submitted a copy of their January 27, 2010 letter to Governor Schwarzenegger declaring their distress at the proposal to continue elimination of the Williamson Act subvention payments. The Coalition wrote that the “longer-term negative impacts vastly outweigh the [state’s] short-term budget savings.”

The Sacramento-based coalition known as the **Food System Collaborative** gave the Committee a copy of its February 9, 2010 letter to Governor Schwarzenegger, urging his Administration to restore the state’s Williamson Act subventions. They wrote that “the region and the State will need the Williamson Act more than ever in order to meet greenhouse gas emissions (GGE) reduction targets” called for by AB 32 and SB 375.

In his February 23, 2010 letter to the Committee, Salinas County Supervisor **Simón Salinas** declared that the Williamson Act subventions have “provided a

tangible incentive for local governments to stay in the program and initiate more contracts.” He called for the subventions’ “eventual restoration.”

Mike McKeever, Executive Director of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments, sent the Committee a copy of his March 1, 2010 letter to Governor Schwarzenegger encouraging him to restore the Williamson Act subventions. McKeever wrote that “to not fund them threatens AB 32 and SB 375 implementation.”

On March 2, 2010, Land Watch Monterey County Executive Director **Amy White** wrote to the Committee, enclosing a copy of a February 1 joint letter to Governor Schwarzenegger urging him to avoid suspending Williamson Act subventions in 2010-11.

Supervisor **Dave Goicoechea**, Chairman of the Sierra County Board of Supervisors provided his board’s March 2, 2010 formal resolution urging the Senate Local Government Committee “to reaffirm the significant value of these [subvention] programs to the preservation of agricultural land and open space in California.

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To promote the conservation, preservation and continued existence of open space lands, the Legislature may define open space land and shall provide that when this land is enforceably restricted, in a manner specified by the Legislature, to recreation, the enjoyment of scenic beauty, use or conservation of natural resources, or production of food or fiber, it shall be valued for property tax purposes only on a basis that is consistent with its restrictions and uses.

California Constitution Article XIII §8
Originally added by Proposition 3 (1966)

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Declaring that “we are ready to work with you,” San Benito County Administrative Officer **Susan Thompson** told the legislators that the continuation of the Williamson Act is “critical for small counties.” Thompson said that she was speaking on behalf of the Regional Council of Rural Counties, in addition to her own county. While the loss of state subventions is a blow to rural counties’ budgets, the “bigger message ... is that the Williamson Act is good policy” which is as relevant in 2010 as it was in 1965. While her county has not issued contract nonrenewals, it has stopped accepting additional applications from landowners. With 76% of San

Benito County's private land under contract, the program is important to keeping both row crops and rangeland in production. Thompson gave the Committee two examples of large development projects that County officials were able to deflect because of its commitment to the Williamson Act. **Senator Aanestad** was interested in the state subventions' effects on the County's budget.

Speaking for the California County Planning Directors' Association was **Ted James** who is also Kern County's Planning Director. Williamson Act contracts help counties discourage "leapfrog development," he said, demonstrating the state law's "on the ground effectiveness." While the County's general plan and zoning ordinance are "in my arsenal" to shape development patterns, James said that those tools are only as good as the county supervisors' political will. The Act "has more teeth for me" because of the contracts' self-renewing obligations. The Williamson Act contracts plus the County's use of CEQA, mitigation requirements, subdivision standards, and LAFCO decisions help retain land in agricultural use. He gave the legislators a recent example of how the Kern County LAFCO turned down the City of Bakersfield's attempt to annex land because of the development pressures that it would have created.

Conservation Organizations' Reactions and Advice

Having heard from county representatives about their interest in continuing Williamson Act contracts and state subventions, the Committee turned to conservation groups for their perspective:

Brian Leahy, Division of Land Resource Protection*
State Department of Conservation

Edward Thompson, Jr., California Director*
American Farmland Trust

Michael B. Endicott, Resource Sustainability Advocate*
Sierra Club - California

Brian Leahy is the State Department of Conservation's Assistant Director who manages the Division of Land Resource Protection. Half of California's land area is owned by the federal and state governments, with the remainder in private ownership. Leahy displayed a large California map and pointed out the grazing land in yellow and irrigated farmland in green for the legislators. Ranching and farming

may be the “highest-and-best-use” for these soils, although perhaps not the most economical. With the development pressures expected over the next 40 years, there’s “not a lot of land left” for other uses, Leahy explained. Calling the Williamson Act a “very effective” program, he said that the contracts are “the excuse” that allow local officials to say “no” to development.

Senator Aanestad told Leahy that “it’s your fault” that the subventions disappeared in 2009-10. Echoing the hearing’s subtitle, Senator Aanestad said that the Williamson Act’s past has been “successful,” but he’s “very much concerned” about the present, because the Administration seems to leave the future up to others. The “state is not holding up its end of the bargain” in what should be a state-local partnership, the Senator declared. We “can’t just leave the locals in the lurch,” said the Senator, especially not the 12 rural counties in his Senate district. Aanestad said he was “adamant” about the need to restore the subventions. When the Senator asked about the likelihood of restoring the state subventions in 2010-11, Leahy described the Administration’s reasoning for cutting the subventions and replied that he doesn’t “see any reason for that logic to change.”

Senator Wolk claimed that the Administration doesn’t care about the program. She asked Leahy if there are funding sources for state subventions other than the State General Fund and if statutory changes should tighten up on compatible uses, including regulating water transfers. Leahy said that it was “not our place to comment” on water transfers, but selling permanent water rights affects the long-term productivity of Williamson Act contracted lands.

The California Director for the American Farmland Trust, **Ed Thompson**, told the legislators that he wanted to make three points: (1) the Williamson Act is a bargain for state taxpayers, (2) the Act needs significant improvements, and (3) legislators need to do even more to effectively preserve farmland. Agriculture pays more in taxes than it consumes in local public services, Thompson declared. He asked legislators to think carefully about what a “Williamson Act version 2.0” might look like because the tax relief is more important to ranchers than crop producers. The pattern of land enrollment around cities is “pretty spotty,” causing him to question whether tax incentives are sufficient to limit sprawl. Policy makers should look to other states --- New York, Wisconsin, Michigan --- that offer “circuit breaker” income tax relief to landowners. State income tax relief is fairly popular among local officials in those states because they don’t have to fight for annual subventions. Thomson called upon legislators to increase the state government’s investment in agricultural conservation easements, noting that other states spend more than California’s 11¢ a person. Conversely, local officials need to do better to “increase the

efficiency of development” because denser development patterns are the “most important” way to conserve farmland. But the biggest hole in California’s programs is the “lack of clear, firm state policy” that favors farmland preservation. That lack of policy direction “underlies our difficulty here” as California loses 75 square miles of agricultural land a year.

How does Wisconsin’s income tax circuit breaker program work, **Senator Wolk** asked Thompson. He explained that if local property taxes go up, the state income tax credits kick in, targeting tax relief to those who need it the most. Have other states adopted farmland preservation goals, asked **Assemblymember Yamada**. “California is a national leader in many areas, but not this one,” Thompson replied. But, he noted, federal officials haven’t always followed their own 1981 law on farmland preservation.

Michael Endicott is Sierra Club-California’s sustainability advocate, promoting social, economic, and ecological values. Endicott told the legislators that he shares Senator Wolk’s concerns about landowners who transfer their water rights away from Williamson Act contracted land. Especially in coastal areas the Williamson Act helps to reduce the pressures to convert agricultural land to other uses. Because the type of farming influences the ability to achieve sustainability goals, it’s important to maintain the subvention program even in tough times, he said. As legislators think about a “Williamson Act 2.0” they shouldn’t complicate the program because “focus and prioritization is in order.” Endicott said that he had “some concern” about the income tax approach advocated by AFT’s Ed Thompson because he didn’t want the Legislature to encourage “hobbyist farmers” while trying to protect real agriculture. As for other revenue sources to pay for the state subventions, Endicott suggested looking into oil severance taxes and property transfer taxes.

When **Assemblymember Caballero** asked Endicott to explain his concern about the income tax relief approach and what she called boutique farms, he replied that other states’ requirements may not fit California’s context. Besides, Endicott said, boutique farmers have different interests than what he called “general farming.”

Senator Price asked Endicott about his recommendation to prioritize the state’s goals. He replied that the “proof that the Williamson Act is a good act is that people renew [their] contracts.” Continuing contracts shows that the landowners’ commitment to property is worth protecting. When it comes to agricultural production, “the more stability the better,” Endicott said. Agricultural operations need “big pockets” of land, not just little protected islands.

Landowners' Reactions and Advice

For its final panel, the Committee invited representatives of landowners' groups that have used Williamson Act contracts:

Paul Wenger, President*
California Farm Bureau Federation

Jack Hanson, Treasurer*
California Cattlemen's Association

William H. Geyer, Executive Director*
Resource Landowners Coalition

Besides being the President of the California Farm Bureau Federation, **Paul Wenger** is a Williamson Act landowner in the San Joaquin Valley. While Proposition 13 helped landowners control their property taxes, those who bought agricultural land after 1978 still face problems. They can afford to pay their property tax bills, but they won't have much return on investment. The Williamson Act helps landowners reduce their tax bills even further, increasing their operating income. Buyers who acquire adjacent agricultural land under "1031 exchanges" drive up the price for the surrounding farmland. The result will be increased pressure for development if the Williamson Act ends, Wenger explained. He told the legislators about his concerns about selling agricultural land for water transfers and buying ranches for recreational use. Land should be taxed on its productivity, he declared. As much as 14.5 million acres have been under Williamson Act contracts for at least 35 years, demonstrating the landowners' commitment to conserving their property.

What about compatible uses on Williamson Act contracted land, asked **Senator Wolk**, specifically mentioning energy facilities that use solar and wind power. Wenger explained that his standard is whether a nonagricultural use takes away the land's agricultural productivity. We "need to look at what the Act is all about," he said. What about an agricultural processing plant, Senator Wolk asked. If it's an "adjunct" to the agricultural use, that would be OK, but "it's really degrees" of compatibility, Wenger explained. He wants to encourage family farms to stay in operation. What about water transfers, Senator Wolk asked. Should the Legislature prohibit the permanent transfer of water rights from Williamson Act contracted land? Wenger said that legislators should "look at it pretty closely ... if a permanent transfer harms agricultural productivity."

When **Assembly Member Yamada** asked Wenger about his “barometer” of understanding among urban legislators, he replied that the Act’s supporters need to explain the program in terms that legislators understand. “Everybody can understand taxation based on value,” he said. The goal is to “keep the family on the farm.”

Jack Hanson, the California Cattlemen’s Association’s Treasurer (and Sierra County Supervisor), told legislators that he found common ground with many of the previous speakers. “There are just a few givens,” he said: the Act has been enormously successful, the Act’s future is in doubt without subventions, the Act is a bargain, and if the Act disappears, some more development will occur. The program is “not a subsidy or free lunch” for landowners because everybody gives up something. Spending \$39 million to replace counties’ revenue losses “is a bargain,” he claimed. “It’s the money issue, I’m sorry to say,” observed Hanson. “The Williamson Act has definitely not outlived its usefulness,” he continued, and it would be “very difficult” to continue ranching without the program.

Senator Cox asked Hanson if state law should treat rangeland differently than cropland. Hanson explained that because of their different characteristics, ranching may be the best use of nonprime soils.

Bill Geyer, Executive Director of the Resource Landowners Coalition, was the consultant to the Assembly Agriculture Committee and worked with Assemblyman John Williamson on the original statute and the subsequent subvention program. Geyer warned legislators that “you can’t have an on-again-off-again” subvention program because the lack of certainty will discourage landowners and county officials. Although he would “love to be dissuaded” that subventions from the State General Fund aren’t in trouble, he believes that they are. Geyer noted that many of the questions on page 13 of the Committee’s briefing paper reflect the thinking that he put into his client’s white paper on the Williamson Act. His group has hired Vince Minto, the former Glenn County Assessor, to “crunch the numbers” and analyze alternative funding sources. In the meantime, Geyer suggested that the Legislature consider an interim relief program as a “bridge to the future.”

Can you “give us a hint” of some of these alternative revenue sources, asked **Senator Aanestad**. Geyer said four alternatives might generate as much as \$10 million each: (1) charging new fees on early termination of contracts, (2) using a “mixed bag” of ideas, including fees on compatible uses that displace agricultural production, (3) allowing counties to charge administrative fees, and (4) reducing subven-

tion payments for substandard contracts. Senator Aanestad then asked when Minto's work would be ready and Geyer indicated that the project was just getting underway with results still months away.

Senator Wolk mentioned her SB 715, which proposes Williamson Act reforms, and noted the need to build consensus for changes.

Referring to her own AB 1965, **Assembly Member Yamada** asked Geyer about the concept of proportional restoration of state subvention payments. He replied that the concept should be under discussion, but there are "obviously different voices among counties."

Others' Reactions and Advice

Following the three panels, Senator Cox invited public comments and two other speakers share their views with the legislators:

Eric Carruthers, Citizens Advisory Council
Santa Clara County Open Space Authority

Pablo Garza
The Nature Conservancy

Eric Carruthers is a retired Santa Clara County planner who serves on the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority's Citizens Advisory Committee. He told the legislators that the state government needs to find the means to keep the Williamson Act program intact. Echoing Ted James' advice, he agreed that the Act complements counties' land use regulatory programs. He wanted to "re-enforce" the Sierra Club's position on the need to protect farming on the edges of coastal development. He cited an American Farmland Trust study for San Francisco which found that specialty crops are important in metropolitan areas. Climate action change needs a local food supply, Carruthers concluded.

Speaking for the Nature Conservancy, **Pablo Garza** gave his strong support for the Williamson Act because of its "effective, economical, environmental benefits." The state government needs to finance the subventions, he said.

ADDITONAL ADVICE

In addition to the speakers at the oversight hearing, the Committee also received written advice from six other sources:

41 signatories*

California Rangeland Conservation Coalition

10 signatories*

Sacramento/Capital Region Food System Collaborative

Honorable Simón Salinas, Chair*

Monterey County Board of Supervisors

Mike McKeever, Executive Director*

Sacramento Area Council of Governments

Amy L. White, Executive Director*

Land Watch Monterey County

Honorable Dave Goicoechea, Chairman*

Sierra County Board of Supervisors

The members of the **California Rangeland Conservation Coalition** submitted a copy of their January 27, 2010 letter to Governor Schwarzenegger declaring their distress at the proposal to continue elimination of the Williamson Act subvention payments. The Coalition wrote that the “longer-term negative impacts vastly outweigh the [state’s] short-term budget savings.”

The Sacramento-based coalition known as the **Food System Collaborative** gave the Committee a copy of its February 9, 2010 letter to Governor Schwarzenegger, urging his Administration to restore the state’s Williamson Act subventions. They wrote that “the region and the State will need the Williamson Act more than ever in order to meet greenhouse gas emissions (GGE) reduction targets” called for by AB 32 and SB 375.

In his February 23, 2010 letter to the Committee, Salinas County Supervisor **Simón Salinas** declared that the Williamson Act subventions have “provided a

tangible incentive for local governments to stay in the program and initiate more contracts.” He called for the subventions’ “eventual restoration.”

Mike McKeever, Executive Director of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments, sent the Committee a copy of his March 1, 2010 letter to Governor Schwarzenegger encouraging him to restore the Williamson Act subventions. McKeever wrote that “to not fund them threatens AB 32 and SB 375 implementation.”

On March 2, 2010, Land Watch Monterey County Executive Director **Amy White** wrote to the Committee, enclosing a copy of a February 1 joint letter to Governor Schwarzenegger urging him to avoid suspending Williamson Act subventions in 2010-11.

Supervisor **Dave Goicoechea**, Chairman of the Sierra County Board of Supervisors provided his board’s March 2, 2010 formal resolution urging the Senate Local Government Committee “to reaffirm the significant value of these [subvention] programs to the preservation of agricultural land and open space in California.



The Williamson Act: Past, Present, Future?

A Legislative Oversight Hearing

Wednesday, March 3, 2010
State Capitol, Room 112

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To promote the conservation, preservation and continued existence of open space lands, the Legislature may define open space land and shall provide that when this land is enforceably restricted, in a manner specified by the Legislature, to recreation, the enjoyment of scenic beauty, use or conservation of natural resources, or production of food or fiber, it shall be valued for property tax purposes only on a basis that is consistent with its restrictions and uses.

California Constitution Article XIII §8
Originally added by Proposition 3 (1966)

The Williamson Act: Past, Present, Future? **A Legislative Oversight Hearing**

This briefing paper prepares the members of the Senate Local Government Committee for their March 3, 2010 oversight hearing on the Williamson Act.

With 16.6 million acres under Williamson Act contracts, the statute affects about half of California's farmland. That's nearly one-third of all private real estate. These voluntary contracts between landowners and local officials stretch from urbanism's edges to the far reaches of the most rural counties. Fifty-three of the 58 counties have land under contract. Alpine, Del Norte, Inyo, San Francisco, and Yuba counties are the exceptions. Since 1972-73, the State General Fund has paid about \$875 million as direct subventions to the participating county governments.

Despite the law's broad application, the 2009-10 State Budget all but eliminated the State General Fund's direct subventions to counties for this 45-year old effort. Landowners, conservation groups, and county officials now question the state government's commitment to conserving farmland and open space.

The March 3 hearing is an opportunity for the five Senators who serve on the Senate Local Government Committee to review the California Land Conservation Act of 1965. When the future of the Williamson Act comes up in other policy committees, during debates over the State Budget, and in closed caucuses, other legislators can turn for advice to Senators Cox, Kehoe, Aanestad, Price, and Wiggins.

How It Works

What most call the Williamson Act is the result of three interlocking statutes:

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965 ("Williamson Act") allows landowners to contract with counties to conserve their properties as farmland and open space (Government Code §51200, et seq.).

Mandatory property tax reassessments for the lands that are enforceably restricted to open space uses (California Constitution Article XIII §8; Revenue & Taxation Code §421, et seq.).

Open space subventions paid by the State General Fund to counties for the Williamson Act contracted lands (Government Code §16140, et seq.).

Land in agricultural production and other open space uses are eligible for Williamson Act contracts. Landowners and counties can voluntarily sign ten-year contracts that automatically renew annually, so that a contract's termination date is always a decade away. The Farmland Security Zone program within the Williamson Act allows landowners to sign 20-year contracts, resulting in lower property tax assessments and more protection for their agricultural and open space lands.

It is relatively difficult to end a Williamson Act contract, but there are five main methods:

- *Nonrenewal*: contracts run out over the next nine years.
- *Cancellation*: contracts can end immediately if counties make findings and landowners pay penalties.
- *Rescission*: contracts end when other programs protect the land.
- *Public acquisition*: contracts end when agencies buy or condemn the land.
- *Annexation*: contracts may end when certain cities annex the lands.

While their lands are subject to Williamson Act contracts, landowners give up the right to develop their farms, ranches, and open space lands. In return, counties must reassess the contracted lands to reflect these enforceable restrictions. County assessors rely on clear constitutional authority and complicated statutory formulas to determine "use value" preferential tax assessments for the contracted lands.

The State General Fund pays direct subventions to counties (and a few cities) to replace the property tax revenues that the local governments forgo because of the preferential tax assessments. The subvention payments for prime agricultural land are higher than subventions for nonprime land. The State General Fund also pays indirect subventions to school districts to replace all of the property tax revenues that schools lose because of the lower property tax assessments on the Williamson Act contracted lands.

State Policies, State Programs

California's efforts to conserve agricultural and open space lands rely on constitutional and statutory foundations, but also need the willing cooperation of the affected landowners and county officials. Underlying the subventions and contracts is the language added to the California Constitution by Proposition 3 (1966). This briefing paper reprints the key language in the box on the Table of Contents page.

Government Code §51220: Williamson Act's Statement of Legislative Intent

51220. The Legislature finds:

(a) That the preservation of a maximum amount of the limited supply of agricultural land is necessary to the conservation of the state's economic resources, and is necessary not only to the maintenance of the agricultural economy of the state, but also for the assurance of adequate, healthful and nutritious food for future residents of this state and nation.

(b) That the agricultural work force is vital to sustaining agricultural productivity; that this work force has the lowest average income of any occupational group in this state; that there exists a need to house this work force of crisis proportions which requires including among agricultural uses the housing of agricultural laborers; and that such use of agricultural land is in the public interest and in conformity with the state's Farmworker Housing Assistance Plan.

(c) That the discouragement of premature and unnecessary conversion of agricultural land to urban uses is a matter of public interest and will be of benefit to urban dwellers themselves in that it will discourage discontinuous urban development patterns which unnecessarily increase the costs of community services to community residents.

(d) That in a rapidly urbanizing society agricultural lands have a definite public value as open space, and the preservation in agricultural production of such lands, the use of which may be limited under the provisions of this chapter, constitutes an important physical, social, esthetic and economic asset to existing or pending urban or metropolitan developments.

(e) That land within a scenic highway corridor or wildlife habitat area as defined in this chapter has a value to the state because of its scenic beauty and its location adjacent to or within view of a state scenic highway or because it is of great importance as habitat for wildlife and contributes to the preservation or enhancement thereof.

(f) For these reasons, this chapter is necessary for the promotion of the general welfare and the protection of the public interest in agricultural land.

Building on that constitutional foundation, the Williamson Act contains very clear legislative findings, as reprinted on page 3.

In addition to these constitutional and statutory provisions, a collaboration among landowners, county governments, and state officials implements the Williamson Act to achieve at least five very broad policy goals:

- Promoting food security by protecting the land base.
- Encouraging agricultural support industries.
- Complementing regulatory efforts to curb sprawl.
- Avoiding costly public facilities and public services.
- Promoting environmental quality and resource values.

Other state laws contain links to Williamson Act contracted land:

The *Planning and Zoning Law* requires county and city general plans to identify agricultural and open space lands in their land use, conservation, and open space elements. Further, 33 counties and 21 cities report adopting optional agricultural elements as part of their state-mandated general plans.

The *Subdivision Map Act* prohibits county supervisors and city councils from approving the subdivision of Williamson Act contracted lands if the resulting parcels would be too small to sustain their agricultural use, or if the subdivision would result in residential development that wasn't incidental to commercial agricultural production.

The *Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act* generally prohibits a local agency formation commission (LAFCO) from placing Williamson Act contracted lands within the sphere of influence of a city or special district that provides sewers, nonagricultural water, or streets. State law also prohibits a LAFCO from annexing contracted land to those cities and districts.

The *Community Redevelopment Law* prohibits local officials from including Williamson Act contracted lands in redevelopment project areas.

Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the formal state regulations that interpret the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)*, require public officials who conduct an initial study for a proposed development to determine whether the project would conflict with a Williamson Act contract.

The Past: An Historical Sketch

After efforts to preserve open space and agricultural land suffered discouraging defeats, in 1963 the Assembly created an interim committee and an expert advisory group to develop an acceptable solution. The result was AB 2117 (Williamson, 1965) which enacted the California Land Conservation Act of 1965. In 1967, the Legislature added the title “Williamson Act” to honor the statute’s author, Assemblyman John C. Williamson who represented Kern County from 1959 to 1966.

Based on a chronology prepared by University of California researchers, **Table 1** on pages 6 and 7, traces the Williamson Act’s key historical milestones and shows other related actions in *italics*.

Statutory evolution. Like all statutory programs, the Williamson Act reflects the economic and political conditions that existed when the Legislature passed the statute. Similarly, statutory amendments and program adjustments over the last 45 years reflect continually changing conditions and concerns. When legislators created the Williamson Act in 1965, the *Planning and Zoning Law* already mandated counties and cities to adopt general plans, but the statute required only three elements: land use, circulation, and housing. Legislators didn’t add the requirements for the conservation and open space elements until 1970. That year, the Legislature also passed the *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)*. Bills passed in 1971 adopted the *vertical consistency requirement*, requiring local zoning and subdivision decisions to be consistent with county and city general plans. Also in 1971, legislators told the local agency formation commissions (LAFCOs) to adopt policy documents called *spheres of influence* to guide development away from open space lands. *Proposition 13* (1978) fundamentally changed how counties assess property tax values. The state government lacked a reliable way to track agricultural acreage until the 1982 bill that created the *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program* within the California Department of Conservation.

Other approaches. The Williamson Act is not the only statutory program that allows landowners to voluntarily conserve agricultural, open space, and other resource lands. The Open-Space Easement Act of 1974, the 1979 conservation easement law, and the 1995 California Farmland Conservancy Program Act all rely on voluntary easements to protect land resources. In addition, the California Timberland Productivity Act of 1982 uses landowners’ contracts to trigger the preferential property tax assessments, similar to the Williamson Act’s approach.

Table 1: Key Milestones in the Williamson Act's History

1965	<p>AB 2117 (Williamson) creates the California Land Conservation Act.</p> <p><i>Legislature requires the equalization of local property tax assessments, resulting in higher property tax bills on rural lands.</i></p>
1966	<p>Proposition 3 amends the California Constitution to allow for the preferential assessment of open space lands.</p>
1967	<p>Legislature adopts the capitalization of income method for assessing contracted lands.</p>
1967-70	<p>Bills expand the definition of the lands that are eligible for contracts.</p>
1969	<p>Legislature allows contract cancellations, but requires county officials to make findings and landowners to pay cancellation fees.</p>
1970	<p><i>Legislature passes the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).</i></p> <p><i>Legislature requires counties and cities to include conservation elements and open space elements in their general plans.</i></p>
1971	<p>Legislature creates the state subvention program.</p> <p><i>Legislature requires county and city zoning and subdivision decisions to be consistent with their general plans.</i></p>
1974	<p><i>Legislature authorizes open space easements.</i></p>
1976	<p>Legislature changes subventions to eliminate direct payments to schools and to emphasize urban prime lands.</p> <p><i>Legislature begins to equalize school funding after <u>Serrano</u> decision.</i></p> <p>Legislature creates Timber Preserve Zones, starting the transfer of timberland out of Williamson Act contracts.</p>
1978	<p><i>Proposition 13 amends the California Constitution to roll back the full cash value of property assessments and to limit reassessments.</i></p>

- 1979 Legislature caps contracted lands' assessments to their Proposition 13 assessments.
- Legislature authorizes conservation easements.*
- 1981 California Supreme Court limits contract cancellations to "extraordinary" situations. Legislature adopts tighter cancellation rules.
- 1982 Legislature allows counties to limit contracted lands' assessments to 70% of their Proposition 13 assessments.
- Legislature creates the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.*
- 1984 Legislature limits the subdivision of contracted lands.
- 1987 Legislature codifies fair market value as the basis for computing landowners' cancellation fees.
- 1988 Department of Conservation starts its audit program.
- 1989 Department of Conservation publishes *Land in the Balance*.
- 1993 Legislature triples the state subventions for contracted land.
- 1994 Legislature creates specific standards for compatible uses.
- 1995 *Legislature authorizes agricultural conservation easements, now called the California Farmland Conservancy Program.*
- 1996 *Proposition 218 amends the California Constitution to limit local taxes, assessments, and fees.*
- 1998 Legislature creates Farmland Security Zones within the Williamson Act with longer contracts, lower assessments, and other protections.
- 2008 Legislature reduces the state subventions for contracted land by 10%.
- 2009 Governor cuts the state subventions for contracted lands to \$1,000.

Source: Based on *Land in the Balance* (1989)

Statewide review. *Land in the Balance* was the state government's most comprehensive look at the Williamson Act. The University of California's Agricultural Issues Center reviewed the law and its implementation, and the California Department of Conservation published the results in December 1989. Although more than two decades old, *Land in the Balance* remains a valuable resource for policy advisors and the decision makers they serve.

The UC researchers estimated a \$12 billion difference between the restricted and unrestricted assessed valuations on Williamson Act contracted land in 1988-89. The general funds of the (then) 48 participating counties received about \$44.5 million less in property tax revenues than they would have without the Williamson Act contracts. Special districts and other county funds received about \$16.4 million less; K-14 school districts about \$59.4 million less. The State General Fund replaced the schools' foregone revenues. In 1988-89, the \$14.5 million in direct state subventions covered about a third of the counties' foregone revenues, although there were county-by-county variations.

Since *Land in the Balance*, both the state-local fiscal relationship and the open space subvention program have changed in significant ways. The Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF) shifts that began in 1992-93 moved property tax revenues from cities, counties, special districts, and redevelopment agencies to favor the schools and the State General Fund. The state government significantly increased its direct subvention payments to county governments, starting in 1992.

Because of these important changes, it's impossible to extrapolate from the 1989 findings in *Land in the Balance* to reach detailed conclusions about the Williamson Act's 2010 fiscal effects on counties and school districts.

The Present: Where We Are

In 2007, the last year for which the California Department of Conservation has published its data, 16,565,519 acres were under Williamson Act contracts.

Of those 16.6 million acres, 15.6 million acres were eligible for open space subvention payments from the State General Fund to county governments. Local officials claimed \$37,737,344 in direct General Fund subventions, of which nearly 60% went to San Joaquin Valley counties. **Table 2** on page 9 reports the 10 counties with the highest subventions.

Table 2: Top 10 Subvention Counties (2007)

1. Fresno	\$5,270,408	6. Stanislaus	\$1,466,943
2. Kern	\$4,733,094	7. Merced	\$1,429,352
3. Tulare	\$3,411,417	8. Yolo	\$1,283,038
4. Kings	\$2,681,127	9. Madera	\$1,246,397
5. San Joaquin	\$1,908,313	10. San Luis Obispo	\$1,088,726

Source: California Department of Conservation

Other facts from this 2007 statistical snapshot can help legislators appreciate how landowners and county officials use the Williamson Act:

- Contract nonrenewals covered 535,372 acres.
- Landowners and officials successfully cancelled contracts on 1,788 acres.
- Public agencies terminated contracts when they acquired 14,901 acres.
- Cities annexed 481 acres.

These data shifted over time as the Williamson Act gained acceptance among increasing numbers of landowners and counties. Economic pressures --- commodity prices, energy and labor costs, global competition, land speculation, development pressures --- influenced participation rates. The behavior of landowners and county officials also changed in response to changes in state law. For example, historical records show that in the first two years after the Legislature passed the Williamson Act, counties had signed contracts affecting only 200,000 acres. By 1970-71, about 6.2 million acres were under contract. Five years later (1975-76), with the advent of state subvention payments, 14.4 million acres were subject to Williamson Act contracts.

Subvention payments grew as landowners signed more contracts and the state government increased the subvention formulas. In 1972-73, the first year for the subvention program, the State General Fund paid about \$8.8 million to county governments and some cities. By 1990-91, the direct subventions were \$13.6 million, reflecting the additional acreage under contracts. When the Legislature changed the subvention formulas after the ERAF shifts, payments climbed. In 2005-06, the direct subventions were about \$38.7 million.

Skepticism. As the State General Fund faces a profound structural imbalance between expenditures and revenues, some have questioned the wisdom of the subvention program. When Governor Schwarzenegger's proposed 2003-04 Budget wanted to save about \$39 million by ending the state subvention payments, the Legislative Analyst's Office instead recommended a ten-year phase-out.

The LAO has been generally skeptical of the Williamson Act's benefits. In 2004, the LAO restated its two main concerns about the subventions' effectiveness:

The state exercises no control over the specific land parcels that are put under contract, and as such, cannot ensure that participating lands are in fact at risk in terms of development pressures. As a consequence, it is likely that some lands under contract would not be developed even absent the Williamson Act subventions. As a result, a portion of the tax reduction may result in no behavioral change by the landowner at all.

If such development pressures *should* occur, this results in creating incentives for the landowner to cancel or not renew the contract... As a consequence, the program may not result in permanent changes to land use patterns but simply delay for a relatively short period of time the development of open space and agricultural lands.

Budget cuts. The first cuts came in 2008-09 when legislators passed and Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 1389 (Assembly Budget Committee, 2008), a State Budget "trailer bill" that ordered the State Controller to reduce the counties' open space subventions by 10%. When it passed the 2009-10 State Budget, the Legislature further reduced the state subventions to \$27.8 million. Exercising his constitutional authority, Governor Schwarzenegger all but eliminated the direct subventions to counties, slashing the annual appropriation to a mere \$1,000.

Reactions. Although agricultural groups and county officials knew about the earlier skepticism, many were shocked by the immediate severity of this year's cut. Landowners, conservation groups, and county officials openly questioned the state government's commitment to conserving farmland and open space.

Newspaper articles last fall reported that some counties stopped accepting and approving landowners' applications for new Williamson Act contracts. Other counties continued to sign new contracts, but expressed wariness about the subvention program's long-term future. A few counties began to explore nonrenewing their existing contracts, which would trigger higher property assessments. On February 23, the Imperial County Board of Supervisors voted to nonrenew its contracts.

At its March 3 oversight hearing, the Committee may wish to consider asking county officials how they are reacting to the subvention cuts:

- ☞ *Have county supervisors nonrenewed existing Williamson Act contracts?*
- ☞ *If so, which counties, how many contracts, and how many acres?*

- ☞ *Have more landowners than usual filed notices of nonrenewal?*
- ☞ *Have more landowners than usual applied for cancellations?*

- ☞ *Have county supervisors stopped signing new Williamson Act contracts?*
- ☞ *If so, in which counties?*

- ☞ *What are the 2009-10 fiscal effects on counties' budgets?*
- ☞ *How have counties responded to this year's loss of subventions?*

The Future: What Comes Next?

The March 3 oversight hearing gives Senators the chance to explore the future of the Williamson Act with county officials, conservation groups, and landowners' representatives. As they think about the future of the Williamson Act, legislators may wish to consider asking the speakers about these topics:

Statewide benefits. Over the last 45 years, landowners, conservation groups, and county officials have claimed at least five statewide benefits of conserving productive agricultural land and open space under the Williamson Act:

- Promoting food security by protecting the land base.
- Encouraging agricultural support industries.
- Complementing regulatory efforts to curb sprawl.
- Avoiding costly public facilities and public services.
- Promoting environmental quality and resource values.

- ☞ *Are these five statewide benefits still important and valuable?*
- ☞ *Should legislators recognize additional statewide benefits?*
- ☞ *Can the Williamson Act help achieve the goals set by AB 32 (2006)?*
- ☞ *Can the Williamson Act help achieve the goals set by SB 375 (2008)?*
- ☞ *Can the Williamson Act help achieve the goals for water conservation and protecting the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta?*

Land base. The Williamson Act recognizes "prime agricultural land," based on its soil quality, water availability, livestock carrying capacity, and commercial productivity. The Act also defines open space use and compatible uses.

- ☞ *After 45 years, are these statutory definitions still valid?*
- ☞ *Should legislators refocus the Williamson Act on other land categories?*
- ☞ *Should the Act treat cropland, rangeland, and habitat land differently?*

- ☞ *Are the state and local definitions of compatible uses adequate to avoid interference with commercial agriculture and open space uses?*
- ☞ *Should legislators expect pressure from alternative energy producers (solar, wind, biogas) to broaden the compatible use definition?*

Tax relief. The Williamson Act relies on preferential property tax assessments to encourage landowners to voluntarily promote statewide policy goals. Preferential assessments reduce property tax revenues which, in turn, trigger direct and indirect subventions from the State General Fund. Property tax relief helps landowners stay in business, especially ranchers.

- ☞ *Should the Legislature explore other forms of tax relief that could achieve the same statewide policy goals?*
- ☞ *Would state income tax credits be adequate economic incentives for private landowners to preserve agricultural and open space lands?*
- ☞ *Would counties and school districts prefer to receive property tax revenues rather than state subvention payments?*
- ☞ *Should state income tax credits be proportional to landowners' income?*
- ☞ *Should legislators link a landowner's eligibility for state income tax credits to land, water, and energy conservation practices?*
- ☞ *Should legislators offer state income credits to landowners in every county or should legislators require counties to adopt programs to promote agriculture and open space before landowners are eligible?*

Contracts. The term for a standard Williamson Act contract is 10 years, automatically renewing annually. Farmland Security Zone contracts run for 20 years, offer better protection from development, and require higher cancellation fees.

- ☞ *Are there statutory obstacles that discourage landowners and counties from signing voluntary contracts?*
- ☞ *What is the state government's role in supervising and enforcing Williamson Act contracts between landowners and county governments?*
- ☞ *Should the Legislature close the Williamson Act to new contracts, encouraging landowners and counties to sign Farmland Security Zone contracts instead?*

Terminations. The California Supreme Court said that the constitutionality of preferential property tax assessments depends on enforceable restrictions on agricultural and open space uses. Nevertheless, there have been controversies over how contracts terminate: nonrenewals, cancellations, rescissions, public agency acquisitions, and city annexations.

- ☞ *Are the cancellation fees and findings adequate to discourage speculative investments and development pressures on contracted lands?*
- ☞ *Are there adequate safeguards to discourage public agency acquisition of Williamson Act contracted lands for non-agricultural use? Habitat use?*

County programs. If the Legislature is unlikely to restore subventions to replace lost property tax revenues, some counties may wish to consider running their own land conservation programs. Some have talked about a “Williamson Act 2.0.”

- ☞ *Should legislators pass an alternative law, without state subventions, that allows counties and landowners to agree on enforceable land use restrictions to obtain lower property assessments?*

Subventions. Until recently, the State General Fund invested nearly \$40 million a year in direct subventions to counties; more in indirect subventions to schools.

- ☞ *Is the state government likely to restore the counties’ direct subventions?*
- ☞ *Are there alternatives to State General Fund revenues to pay for the counties’ direct subventions?*
- ☞ *Should legislators earmark cancellation fee revenues as a partial source of funding for county subventions?*
- ☞ *Should legislators increase cancellation fees to recover the landowners’ historical property tax benefits?*
- ☞ *Should legislators impose termination fees on public agencies’ acquisitions? Should the termination fees be similar to the cancellation fees?*
- ☞ *Should legislators impose fees when cities annex land and terminate the contracts? Should these termination fees be similar to cancellation fees?*
- ☞ *Should legislators earmark material breach penalty fee revenues as a partial source of funding for county subventions?*
- ☞ *Should legislators charge annual fees on “compatible uses” that displace agricultural production or open space uses on contracted lands?*
- ☞ *Should legislators recapture some of the historical property tax benefits that occur when contracted land changes ownership?*
- ☞ *Should legislators impose a state surcharge on local building permit fees as a partial source of funding for county subventions?*
- ☞ *Should legislators impose a state mitigation fee on projects that convert agricultural and open space land to new development?*
- ☞ *Are there other revenue streams that legislators should explore to fund county subventions? Oil severance taxes? Tidelands leases? Credits for carbon sequestration? Commercial agricultural marketing orders?*

Sources & Credits

The following publications helped the Senate Local Government Committee's staff prepare this briefing paper:

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Remy, Michael H., et al., Guide to CEQA (Eleventh Edition), Solano Press Books, 2007.

Sokolow, Alvin D., Land in the Balance: Williamson Act Costs, Benefits and Options (Part 2), Department of Conservation, December 1989.

The California Department of Conservation's Division of Land Resource Protection maintains a useful website with important information about the Williamson Act, use value property assessments, and open space subventions:
www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/Pages/index.aspx



Elvia Diaz, the Committee Assistant, produced this briefing paper. Peter Detwiler, staff consultant, wrote the paper. The mistakes are his, but he gratefully acknowledges the advice he received from Dan Chia, Jim Collin, John Gamper, Bill Geyer, Brian Leahy, Steve Oliva, Marianne O'Malley, and Ed Thompson, among others.

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“Williamson Act: Past, Present, Future?”

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41 signatories
California Rangeland Conservation Coalition

10 signatories
Sacramento/Capital Region Food System Collaborative

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Honorable Dave Goicoechea, Chairman
Sierra County Board of Supervisors

Total Reported Enrollment (Acres)

Source: Dept. of Conservation, Williamson Act Status Report (2008)

Participating Local Jurisdictions	2007									
	Land Conservation Act*		Farmland Security Zone*				Agricultural Conservation Easement		Other Enforceable Restriction	TOTAL
	Prime	Nonprime	Urban		Non-Urban		Prime	Nonprime		
			Prime	Nonprime	Prime	Nonprime				
Alameda	2,459	133,066	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	135,525
Amador	5,230	88,554	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	93,783
Butte	109,711	106,171	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	215,882
Calaveras	566	133,891	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	134,457
Colusa	65,857	194,355	15,881	699	40,380	2,378	-	-	-	319,551
Contra Costa	9,559	37,749	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	47,308
El Dorado	2,252	32,634	-	-	5	180	-	-	-	35,071
Fresno	985,729	485,480	-	-	25,612	3,482	-	-	-	1,500,303
Glenn	61,537	265,749	13,417	500	73,114	2,226	-	-	-	416,544
Humboldt	4,661	195,495	-	-	236	31	-	-	-	200,422
Imperial	131,273	4,464	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	135,737
Kern	628,962	919,117	25,176	-	133,751	-	-	-	-	1,707,006
Kings	282,278	111,621	28,851	227	245,499	10,642	-	-	-	679,118
Lake	5,815	44,061	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	49,876
Lassen	16,036	287,280	546	34	11,189	7,734	-	-	-	322,819
Los Angeles	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40,031	40,031
Madera	205,468	276,514	12,935	362	41,593	2,091	328	-	-	539,290
Marin	1,636	84,951	-	-	290	16,772	-	-	-	103,649
Mariposa	-	205,342	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	205,342
Mendocino	34,758	463,171	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	497,929
Merced	250,014	200,749	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	450,763
Modoc	16,070	100,919	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	116,989
Mono	13,310	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,310
Monterey	61,397	668,108	12,620	1,695	11,486	5,477	-	-	2,613	763,396
Napa	18,294	51,884	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	70,178
Nevada	3,349	804	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,485	6,638
Orange	285	7,849	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,134
Placer	15,188	27,414	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	42,601
Plumas	5,576	72,824	-	-	1,160	3,435	-	-	-	82,996
Riverside	52,825	6,601	-	-	-	-	255	214	-	59,895
Sacramento	88,771	98,331	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	187,102
San Benito	52,529	530,993	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	583,522
San Bernardino	2,247	2,402	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,649
San Diego	4,840	57,214	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	62,054
San Joaquin	333,697	143,522	15,026	79	34,584	10,531	-	-	-	537,439
San Luis Obispo	87,584	706,162	462	67	55	64	-	-	-	794,394
San Mateo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Santa Barbara	71,993	476,484	-	-	133	-	170	1,996	-	550,777
Santa Clara	10,316	302,322	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	312,638
Santa Cruz	2,702	14,182	82	32	-	10	-	63	-	17,071
Shasta	23,166	164,018	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	187,184
Sierra	1,919	34,620	-	773	-	2,904	-	-	-	40,216
Siskiyou	91,232	319,760	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	410,992
Solano	118,555	146,710	-	-	-	-	1,601	1,979	-	268,845
Sonoma	42,321	230,937	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	273,258
Stanislaus	290,971	400,076	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	691,048
Sutter	49,860	13,162	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	63,022
Tehama	50,829	737,818	2,655	2,467	1,190	5,044	-	-	-	800,003
Trinity	21,805	231	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22,035
Tulare	573,105	513,565	11,132	50	-	-	-	-	686	1,098,538
Tuolumne	119,932	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	119,932
Ventura	46,653	79,459	1,547	661	426	248	-	-	-	128,993
Yolo	242,176	173,798	158	1	-	-	200	7	-	416,340
Cities										
Camarillo	75	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	76
Hayward	-	384	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	384
Menlo Park	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newark	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Palo Alto	149	317	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	466
Perris	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Redlands	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals										
Counties	5,317,297	10,352,582	140,488	7,647	620,702	73,250	2,553	4,259	45,815	16,564,593
Cities	224	702	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	926
Grand Totals	5,317,521	10,353,284	140,488	7,647	620,702	73,250	2,553	4,259	45,815	16,565,519

*Totals include both continuing term and nonrenewal contracts.

Open Space Subvention Act Payment Claims

Participating Local Jurisdictions	2007									
	Land Conservation Act		Farmland Security Zone				Agricultural Conservation Easement		Other Enforceable Restriction	TOTAL
	Prime	Nonprime	Urban		Non-Urban		Prime	Nonprime		
			Prime	Nonprime	Prime	Nonprime				
Counties										
Alameda	\$ 11,896	\$ 87,205	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 99,101
Amador	\$ 25,445	\$ 85,372	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 110,818	
Butte	\$ 542,799	\$ 96,762	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 639,561	
Calaveras	\$ 2,830	\$ 127,971	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 130,801	
Colusa	\$ 315,902	\$ 194,324	\$ 127,049	\$ 5,594	\$ 201,898	\$ 2,378	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 847,145	
Contra Costa	\$ 33,225	\$ 33,930	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 67,155	
El Dorado	\$ 11,043	\$ 30,625	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ 180	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 41,874	
Fresno	\$ 4,657,724	\$ 481,140	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 128,061	\$ 3,482	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,270,408	
Glenn	\$ 301,260	\$ 264,288	\$ 107,337	\$ 4,003	\$ 365,570	\$ 2,226	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,044,684	
Humboldt	\$ 23,221	\$ 192,578	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,178	\$ 31	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 217,007	
Imperial	\$ 557,078	\$ 2,946	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 560,024	
Kern	\$ 2,972,471	\$ 890,458	\$ 201,411	\$ -	\$ 668,755	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,733,094	
Kings	\$ 1,103,521	\$ 106,845	\$ 230,805	\$ 1,817	\$ 1,227,497	\$ 10,642	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,681,127	
Lake	\$ 27,555	\$ 41,101	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 68,657	
Lassen	\$ 79,179	\$ 285,663	\$ 4,364	\$ 272	\$ 55,945	\$ 7,734	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 433,157	
Los Angeles	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 40,031	\$ 40,031	
Madera	\$ 672,824	\$ 256,441	\$ 102,546	\$ 2,893	\$ 207,963	\$ 2,091	\$ 1,639	\$ -	\$ 1,246,397	
Marin	\$ 7,987	\$ 83,951	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,450	\$ 16,772	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 110,160	
Mariposa	\$ -	\$ 183,869	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 183,869	
Mendocino	\$ 173,280	\$ 451,228	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 624,508	
Merced	\$ 1,228,884	\$ 200,468	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,429,352	
Modoc	\$ 80,348	\$ 100,658	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 181,006	
Mono	\$ 66,548	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 66,548	
Monterey	\$ 126,641	\$ 655,917	\$ 100,964	\$ 13,559	\$ 57,430	\$ 5,477	\$ -	\$ 2,338	\$ 962,326	
Napa	\$ 48,065	\$ 44,220	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 92,285	
Nevada	\$ 16,344	\$ 299	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,315	\$ 18,958	
Orange	\$ 157	\$ 194	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 351	
Placer	\$ 24,399	\$ 17,390	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,323	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 43,112	
Plumas	\$ 27,850	\$ 66,523	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,800	\$ 3,435	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 103,609	
Riverside	\$ 200,631	\$ 5,801	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,275	\$ 214	\$ 207,921	
Sacramento	\$ 438,220	\$ 88,853	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 527,073	
San Benito	\$ 237,955	\$ 524,809	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 762,764	
San Bernardino	\$ 10,258	\$ 1,493	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11,752	
San Diego	\$ 23,390	\$ 56,574	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 79,964	
San Joaquin	\$ 1,479,728	\$ 124,294	\$ 120,208	\$ 632	\$ 172,920	\$ 10,531	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,908,313	
San Luis Obispo	\$ 399,609	\$ 684,546	\$ 3,696	\$ 536	\$ 275	\$ 64	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,088,726	
San Mateo	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Santa Barbara	\$ 213,603	\$ 420,782	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 666	\$ -	\$ 849	\$ 1,996	\$ 637,896	
Santa Clara	\$ 45,881	\$ 295,963	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 341,843	
Santa Cruz	\$ 6,556	\$ 13,558	\$ 653	\$ 258	\$ -	\$ 10	\$ -	\$ 63	\$ 21,097	
Shasta	\$ 115,830	\$ 163,803	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 279,632	
Sierra	\$ 9,595	\$ 33,237	\$ -	\$ 6,186	\$ -	\$ 2,904	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 51,922	
Siskiyou	\$ 454,206	\$ 316,449	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 770,655	
Solano	\$ 581,850	\$ 126,527	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,007	\$ 1,979	\$ 718,362	
Sonoma	\$ 211,606	\$ 227,385	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 438,990	
Stanislaus	\$ 1,101,751	\$ 365,193	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,466,943	
Sutter	\$ 249,142	\$ 13,162	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 262,304	
Tehama	\$ 198,625	\$ 710,495	\$ 21,242	\$ 19,735	\$ 5,950	\$ 5,044	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 961,091	
Trinity	\$ -	\$ 21,805	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 21,805	
Tulare	\$ 2,827,269	\$ 494,005	\$ 89,057	\$ 400	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 686	\$ 3,411,417	
Tuolumne	\$ -	\$ 107,097	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 107,097	
Ventura	\$ 230,627	\$ 77,141	\$ 12,376	\$ 5,286	\$ 2,128	\$ 248	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 327,805	
Yolo	\$ 1,115,072	\$ 165,689	\$ 1,265	\$ 8	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 998	\$ 7	\$ 1,283,038	
Cities										
Camarillo	\$ 375	\$ 1	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 376	
Hayward	\$ -	\$ 384	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 384	
Menlo Park	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Newark	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Palo Alto	\$ 745	\$ 304	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,049	
Perris	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Redlands	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Totals										
Counties	\$ 23,289,879	\$ 10,021,026	\$ 1,122,972	\$ 61,178	\$ 3,103,511	\$ 74,573	\$ 12,767	\$ 4,259	\$ 45,369	\$ 37,735,535
Cities	\$ 1,120	\$ 689	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,809
Grand Totals	\$ 23,290,999	\$ 10,021,714	\$ 1,122,972	\$ 61,178	\$ 3,103,511	\$ 74,573	\$ 12,767	\$ 4,259	\$ 45,369	\$ 37,737,344

The Williamson Act: Past, Present, Future?
A Legislative Oversight Hearing -- Senate Local Government Committee
Wednesday, March 3, 2010, State Capitol, Room 112

Testimony of Fresno County Supervisor Judy Case on behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC)

Good morning and thank you, members of the committee. I am Judy Case, a member of the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, and I am here today on behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC). I appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you the county perspective on the past, present and future of the Williamson Act.

Counties recognize the importance of agriculture and its contribution to the state's economy. If California is to continue as the leading agriculture state in the nation, our remaining viable agricultural lands must be protected. One of the best tools available to ensure this status and protection is the Williamson Act. While some may disagree we believe that this program has allowed many farmers all over the state to keep their lands in agriculture production because their property taxes are maintained at affordable rates. We also believe that without this incentive, the pressure to sell their lands to developers will eventually become overwhelming.

While some may disagree we believe that this program has allowed many farmers all over the state to keep their lands in agriculture production because their property taxes are maintained at affordable rates. We conservatively estimate an economic multiplier of 3.5, although some counties use higher multipliers. Fresno County agriculture (number one in the state and nation) produced \$5.66 billion in 2008 or \$19.8 billion in our economy.

In 2007, Fresno County's growers/ranchers had a Net Operating Loss of 42%. This is prior to the economic downturn and the continuing impact of drought and water shortages. I can only comment that in the last two years even more farmers experienced net operating losses. In 2008-09, eight long-term packing houses closed their doors. Each of these facilities provided 250 – 400 jobs. Dairies have experienced major hardships. It is estimated as many as 50 dairies have shut down. The unemployment in Fresno County is currently 16.8%. Our rural cities are facing unemployment as high as 41.3%. The agriculture industry is on the edge. County government,

as the administrator of the State program, is caught with a 10-to-20-year contract and no ability to sustain the program without the State subvention.

I would also like to point out that other industries are impacted by production agriculture. For example, the processed tomato industry moved approximately \$87 million in trucking alone. Approximately 40% of the total export value moving through the Port of Oakland is created by agriculture.

As for the subventions, we strongly believe that the financial support from the state has provided a tangible incentive for counties to stay in the program, initiate more contracts and continue to provide valuable public services.

Unfortunately, the loss of state financial support for the program has resulted in the entire fiscal responsibility falling to the counties. Similar to the State, counties are also being faced with making tough decisions due to declining revenues and significant budget shortfalls. Another year without this support from the state may be the last straw for some counties struggling to provide essential public services.

At the suggestion of this committee, CSAC conducted a survey of the counties regarding their plans for addressing the loss of the Williamson Act subventions. A summary of the results are attached to my written statement which has been distributed. As noted, the survey was sent to all 58 counties on February 19, 2010. CSAC and thus far received 23 responses from the following counties: Alameda, Butte, Contra Costa, Fresno, Imperial, Kern, Kings, Lake, Lassen, Mariposa, Monterey, Napa, Placer, San Benito, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Tehama and Yolo. We view these responses as "snap shots in time," likely to change and primarily dependent on the State and counties' fiscal health.

While several of the responding counties indicated a willingness to hold the line last year, many will be taking a second look at the program now that this appears to be more than a "one-year" suspension. In general, the majority of respondents to the survey indicated that the loss of subvention funding from the state has forced them to make cuts in other areas of their budget. Many counties indicated that this is a short-term solution that is not sustainable at the local level. Several counties have decided not to accept new Williamson Act contracts and few are considering more serious steps, such as non-renewal of contracts and program termination. The

consensus from survey respondents indicates that counties are not in the fiscal position to fund the program regardless of their commitment to the Williamson Act.

Beyond the agricultural and associated economic benefits of the Williamson Act, the environmental rewards have been significant. Simply put, in many instances throughout California, the Williamson Act has helped to curb urban sprawl. As previously noted, when farmers have the ongoing economic ability to continue keeping their land in production, the incentive to sell is minimized. Not only has this kept thousands of acres of prime farmland in production, but it has ensured this land is maintained as open space – rather than new suburbs. California has long been a leader in the environmental movement. With landmark legislation such as AB 32, California has the obligation to do everything we can to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In a very direct way, the Williamson Act plays a role in this challenge.

Given the Act's statewide benefits to the economy, agriculture, and the environment, it is our hope that State leaders will demonstrate their commitment to the program by reinvesting in its long-term success. As an organization, with a long history of supporting the program, CSAC is open to looking at revisions to the Act that provide property owners greater incentives to continue participation under the Act, as well as other reasonable legislative changes that preserve the integrity of the Williamson Act and eliminate abuses resulting in unjustified and premature conversions of contracted land for development. We are also certainly open to vetting other funding and policy options with our members.

Thank you again for inviting us to participate in this important discussion.

Attachment One
County Williamson Act Survey Results



**County Williamson Act Survey Results
Executive Summary
March 1, 2010**

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Introduction

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) was asked by the Senate Local Government Committee (Committee) to help obtain information on the Williamson Act for a special oversight hearing of the Committee. The hearing, *Williamson Act: The Past, Present & Future*, is scheduled to take place on March 3, 2010 from 9:30am - 11:00am in Sacramento.

Consequently, CSAC conducted a survey on county Williamson Act issues specifically related to the lack of subvention funding to counties. The survey was sent to all 58 counties on February 19, 2010. CSAC received 23 responses from the following counties: Alameda, Butte, Contra Costa, Fresno, Imperial, Kern, Kings, Lake, Lassen, Mariposa, Monterey, Napa, Placer, San Benito, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Tehama and Yolo. The brief survey contained basic questions related to how counties are dealing with the cuts to Williamson Act subventions. The following is a summary of responses received.

How is your county responding to the state's failure to restore Williamson Act subvention funding?

The majority of respondents to the survey indicated that they have continued to fund the program in the 2009-2010 budget year despite the lack of subvention funding. However, the majority of respondents also indicated that they are investigating options for the non-renewal process and other longer term strategies to deal with a lack of subvention funding.

Nine counties, including Fresno, Imperial, Kings, Lake, San Benito, San Joaquin, Shasta, Sonoma, and Yolo have indicated that they have stopped accepting any new Williamson Act applications. Furthermore, Imperial County Board of Supervisors voted recently to not accept any new contracts and to not renew existing contracts, making them the first to begin the non-renewal process as a direct result of the state budget cuts. Additionally, Lassen County is initiating an economic study to investigate the potential impact of terminating the entire program.

The consensus from respondents also suggested that counties continue to be in a "holding pattern" with respect to making any type of decisions on the future of the program. With the loss of subvention funding from just one budget year, the state has not clearly indicated if this is a short-term solution or if the program will not be funded for a significant period of time. One county clearly indicated that they will be considering cessation of the program if the State continues to not appropriate subvention funds.

Is your county exploring any options or alternatives to the Williamson Act Program, such as developing a local program?

The majority of respondents to the survey are not currently considering alternatives to the Williamson Act Program. Several counties remarked that they have explored alternative options, including a locally funded and administered program, but have found alternative options not attractive enough to divest from the Williamson Act Program despite the



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uncertainty surrounding subvention funding. As mentioned in the response to the previous question, counties remain in a holding pattern and are hesitant to dedicate scarce resources towards investigating alternative options until the future of the Williamson Act Program becomes clearer.

If your county is continuing to fund the Williamson Act program, have you had to make cuts to other programs? How are you dealing with the loss of subvention funds?

Counties have indicated a variety of different ways in which they are handling the lack of subvention funding. Several counties are making cuts to other programs and services as a result of the need to backfill the program.

Tehama County detailed the loss of over \$800,000 in subvention funding and how it directly affects their general fund revenues. As a result, Tehama County has made staff reductions and other program cuts to deal with the loss. San Benito County detailed how the loss of subvention funding combined with the deterioration of property tax revenues and slumping sales taxes has caused their County to eliminate positions, lay off employees and to tap into reserve funds. Kern County also described a loss of \$4.6 million in subvention funding and its ripple effect on the County's ability to provide other services. Siskiyou County described how the lack of subvention funding has had a direct impact to their general fund as their budget reserves have been depleted.

The majority of respondents are making cuts in their respective budgets to absorb the cut to subvention funding. In addition, all respondents emphasized the importance of the program to their respective communities and the dramatic impact that continued cuts to the program would have on counties, agriculture and the environment.

The Williamson and Farmland Security Zone Acts

Preserving California Agriculture

Study Area: San Joaquin
Valley

Presented to the
Senate Local Government Committee

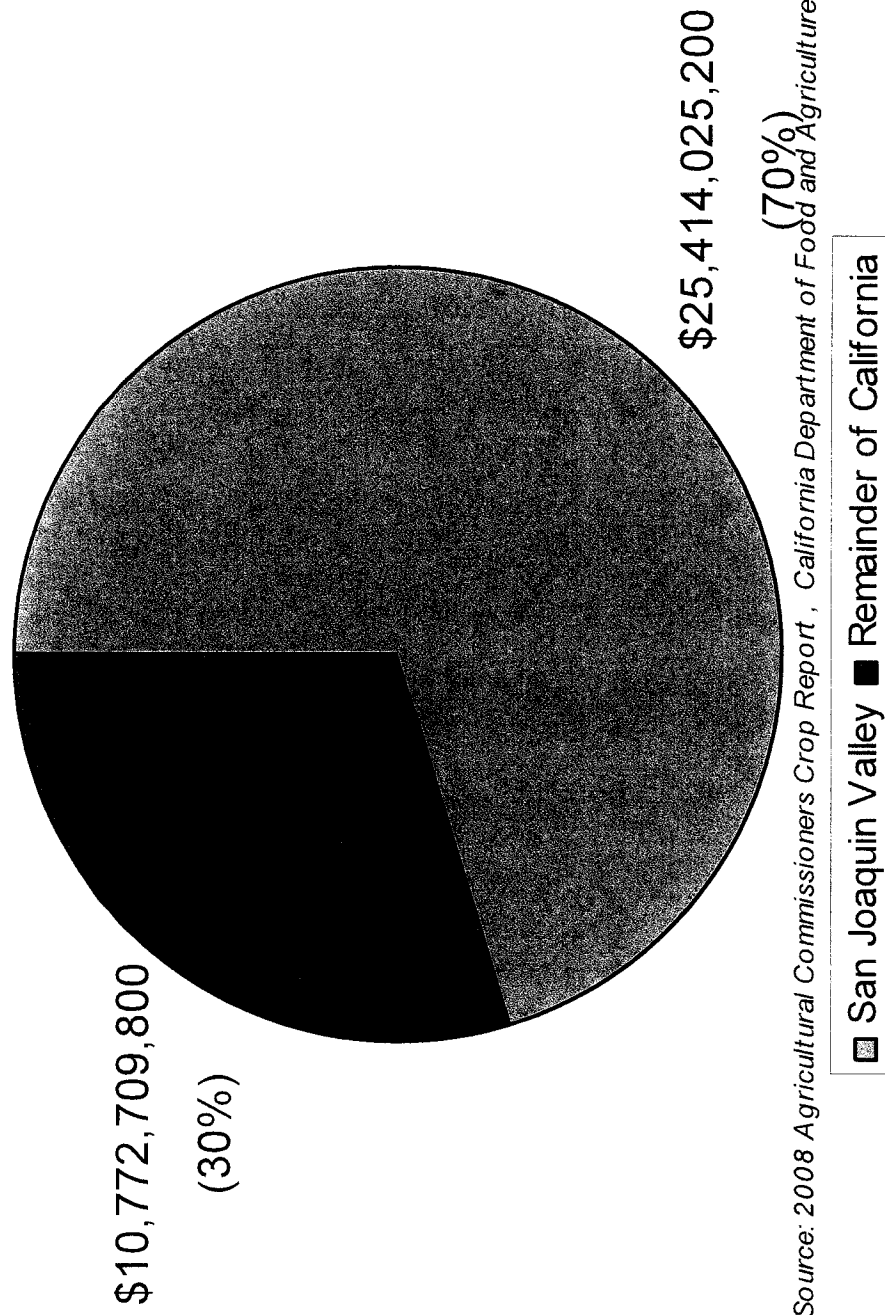
March 2010

Partnership between the State, Local Government and Private Landowners

- The Williamson Act and Farmland Security Zone are State programs designed to preserve agricultural and open space lands. They also ensure a safe and secure food supply and combat greenhouse gasses by restricting land uses to farming and ranching. The programs depend upon a partnership with counties and landowners.
 - Williamson Act: Counties enter into 10 year contracts with landowners. Property taxes are reduced through a change in basis for assessment to the production capability, rather than the development value of the land.
 - FSZ: Counties issue 20 year contracts to landowners. Property taxes are reduced 35 % below the Williamson Act property tax level.
 - Contracts are renewed automatically for a 10 or 20 year period unless non-renewed by the county or cancelled by the landowner.
- The subvention represents the State's good faith incentive for counties to offer contracts to landowners.
- Without the State subvention, counties are left with no option but to issue notices of nonrenewal, which take 9 (Williamson Act) to 19 (FSZ) years to phase back to normal property tax levels.

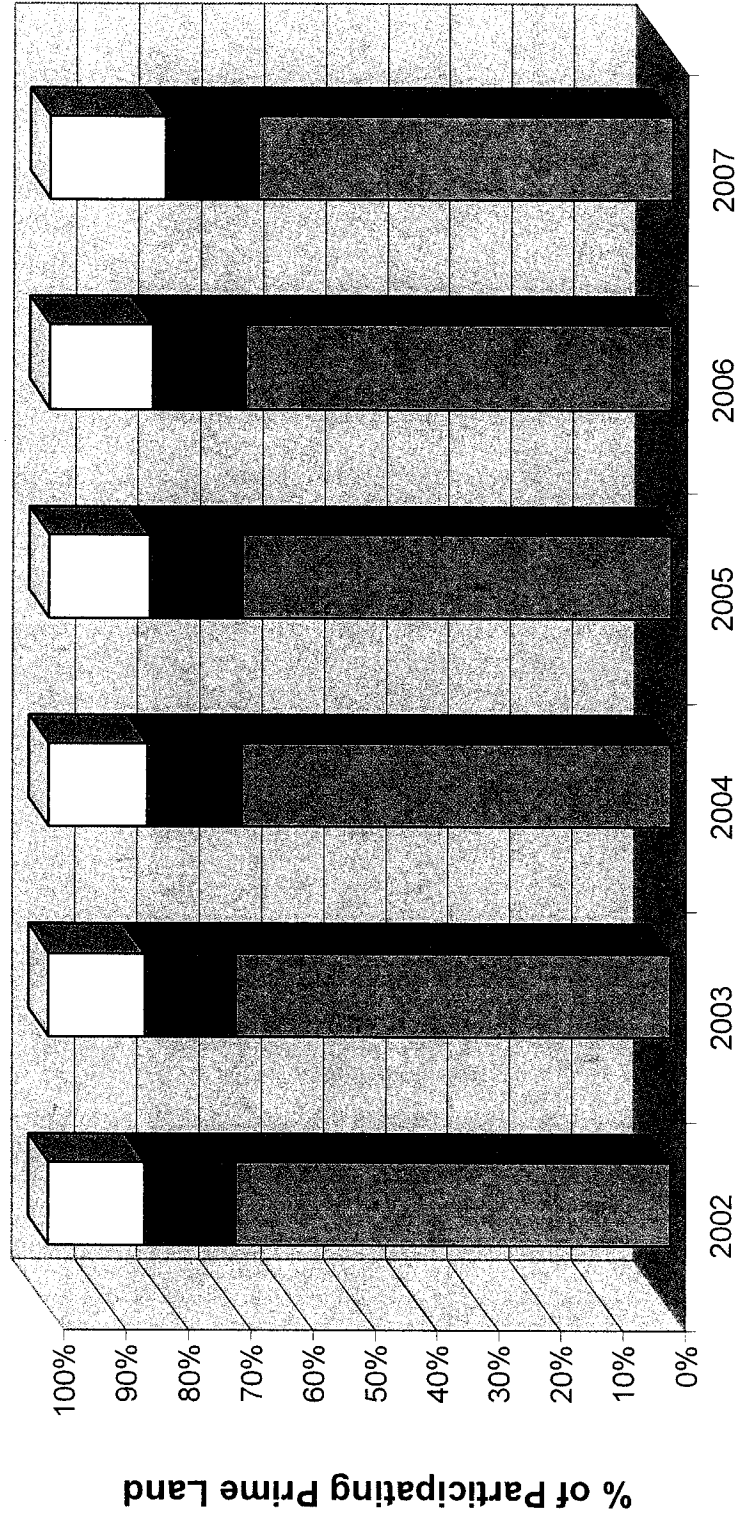
Reference Figure 1: Prime Agricultural Land in the San Joaquin Valley (2006)

California Gross Agricultural Production Values (2008)



Reference Table 1: Total Gross Production Value of Agricultural Commodities (2008)

Williamson Act (10 Year): Prime Agricultural Land

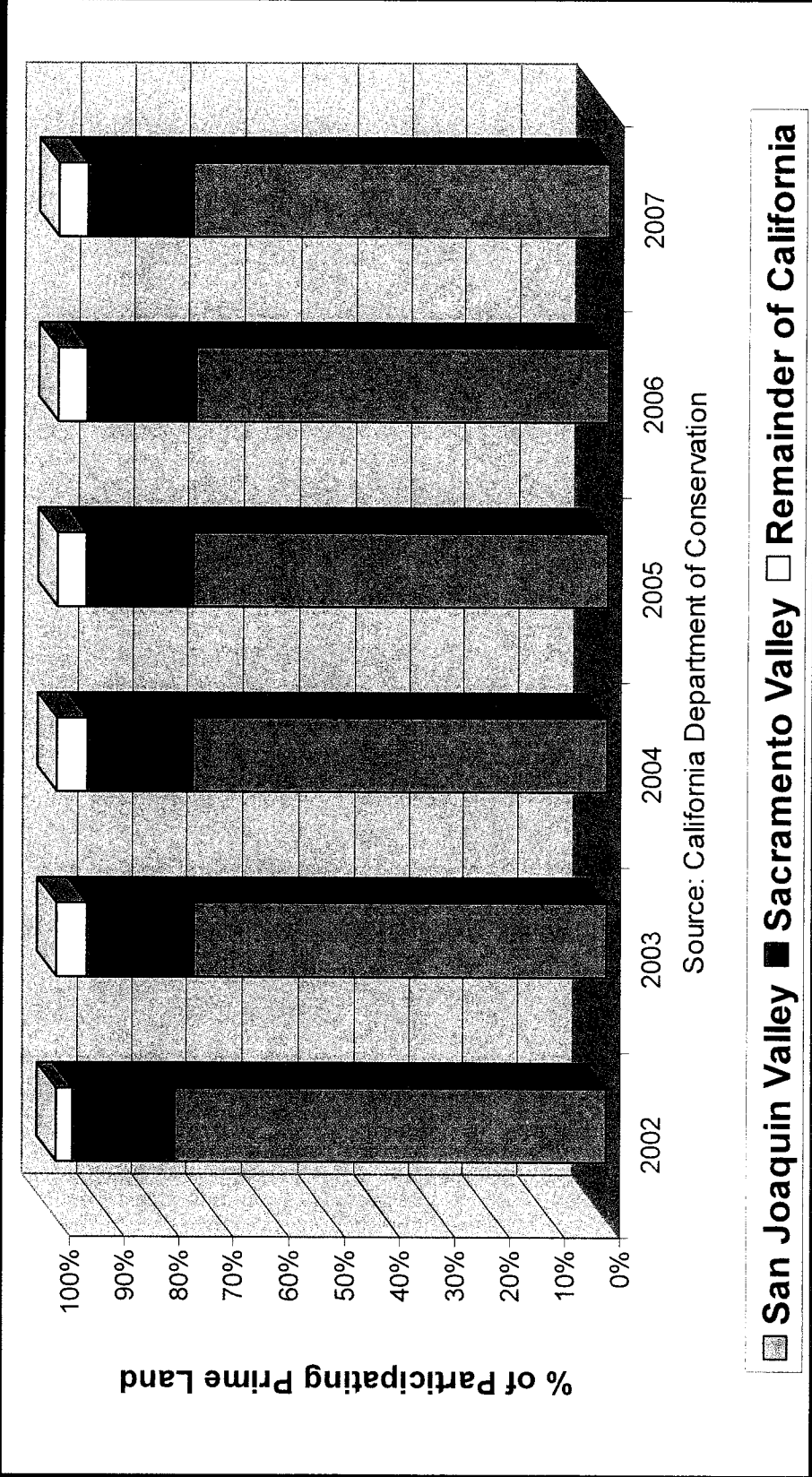


Source: California Department of Conservation

■ San Joaquin Valley ■ Sacramento Valley □ Remainder of California

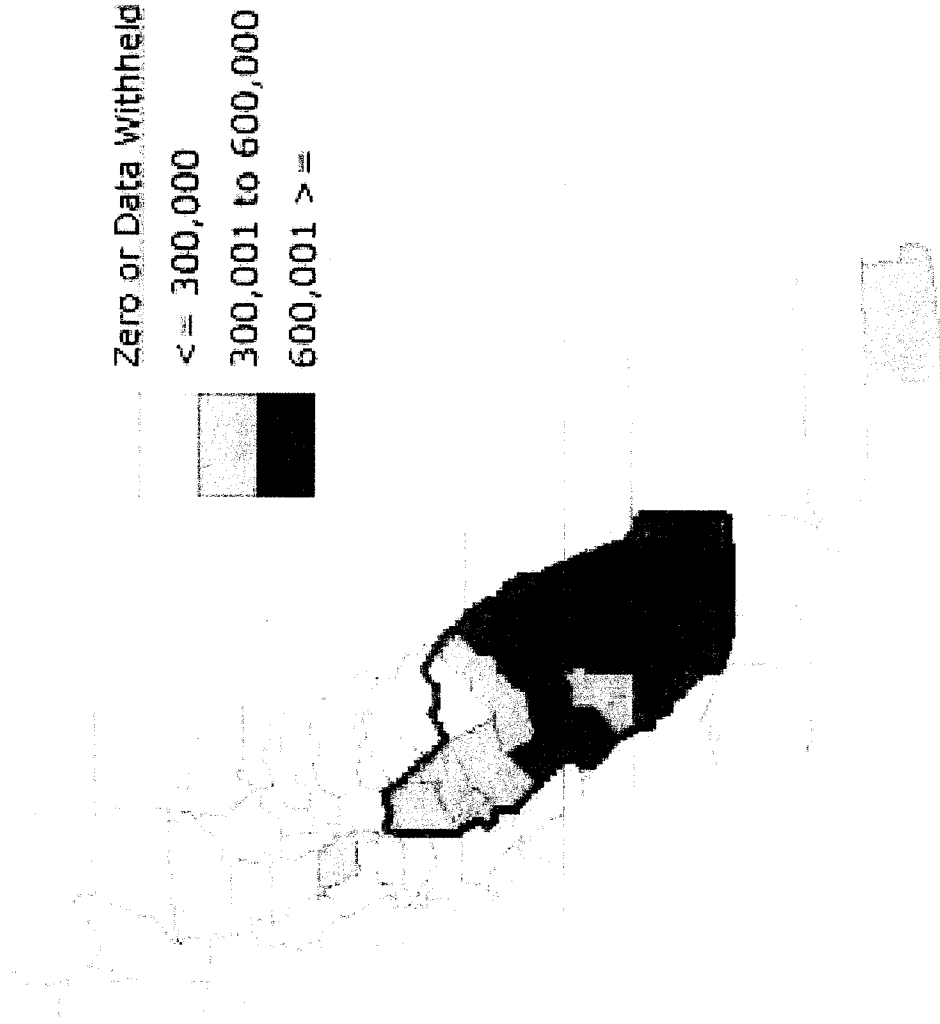
Reference Table 2: WA (10 Year): Participating Prime Agricultural Land (acres)

Farmland Security Zone (20 Year): Prime Agricultural Land



Reference Table 4: FSZ (20 Year): Prime Agricultural Land

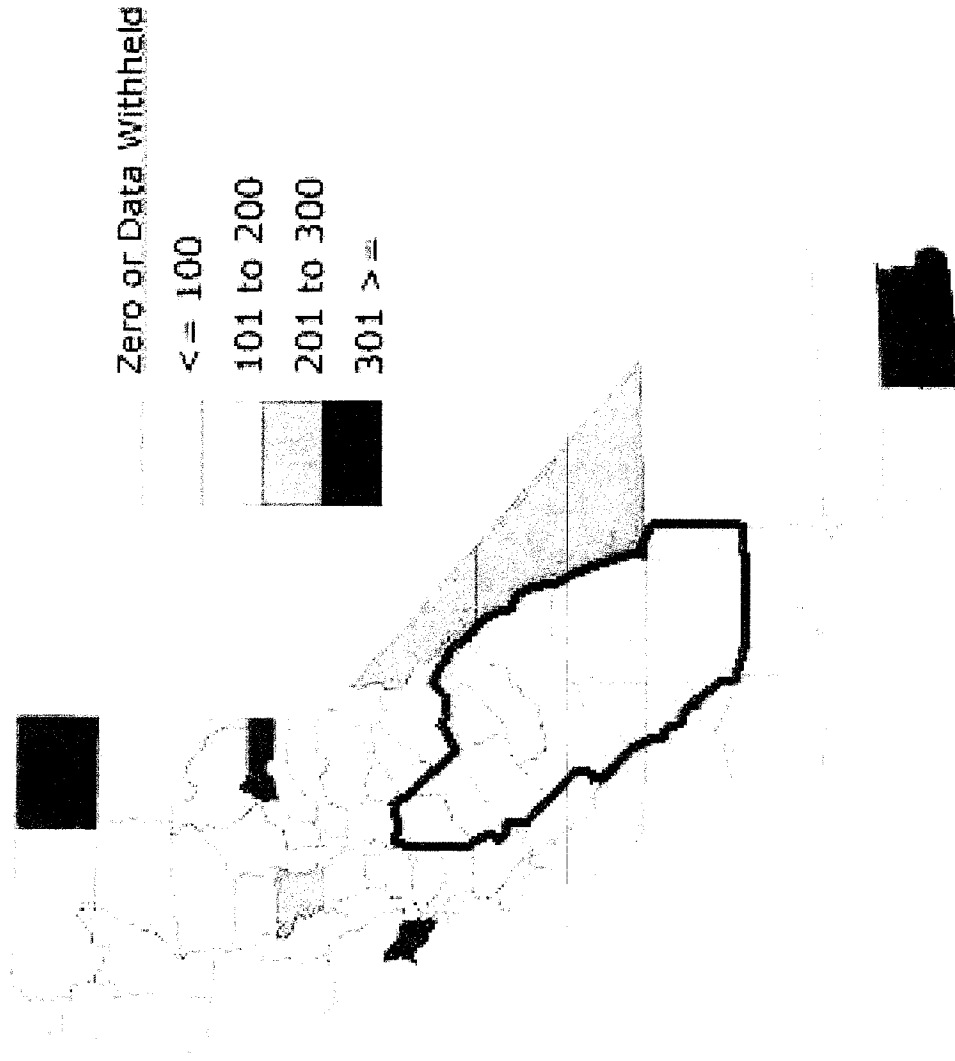
Harvested Cropland (acres)



Source: USDA-NASS 2002 Census of Agriculture
© USDA-NASS 2005-2006

Reference Table 6: Harvested Cropland (2002)

Median Farm Size (acres)

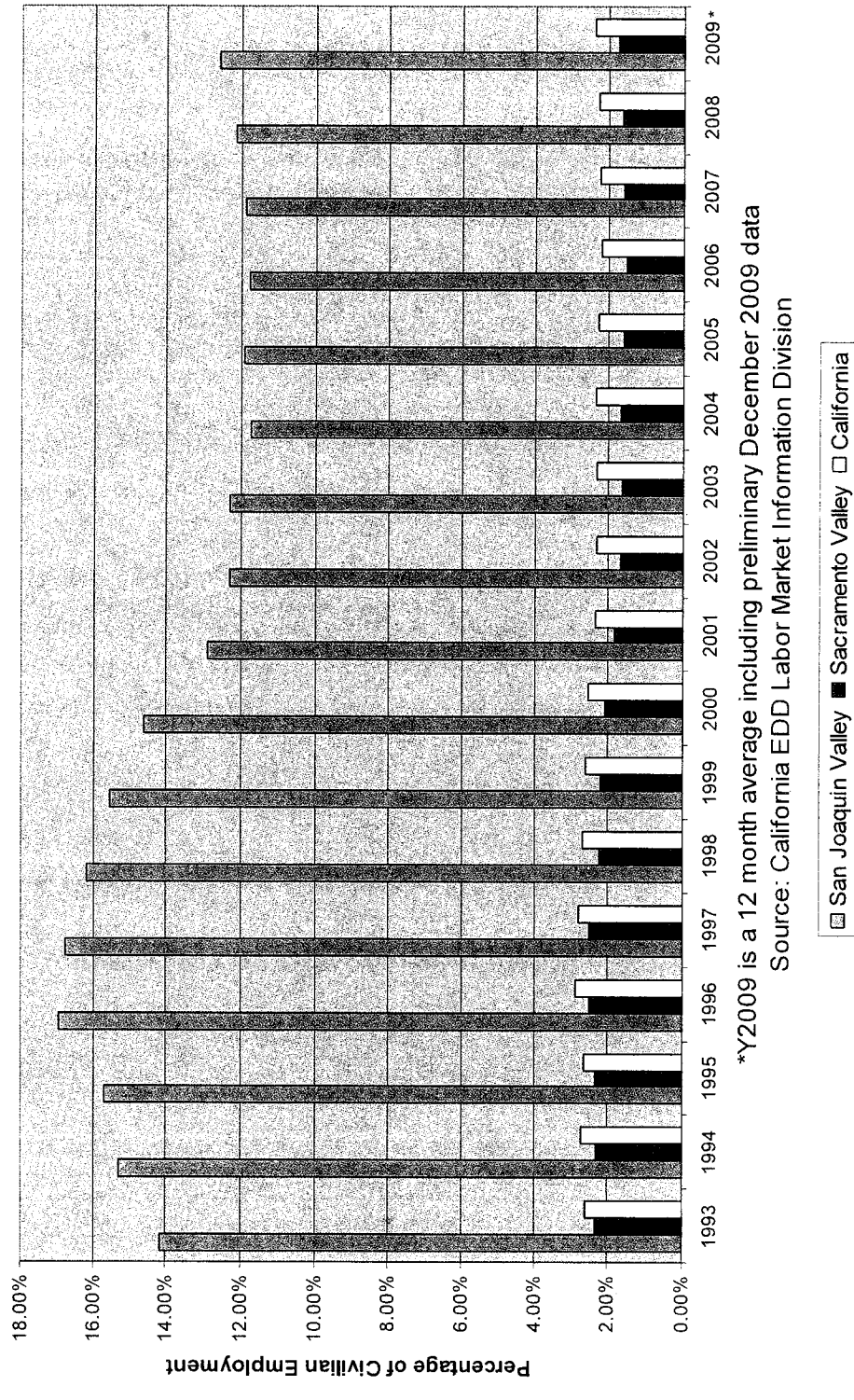


Source: USDA-NASS 2002 Census of Agriculture
& USDA-NASS 2005-2006

Reference Table 8: Median Farm Size by San Joaquin Valley County (acres)

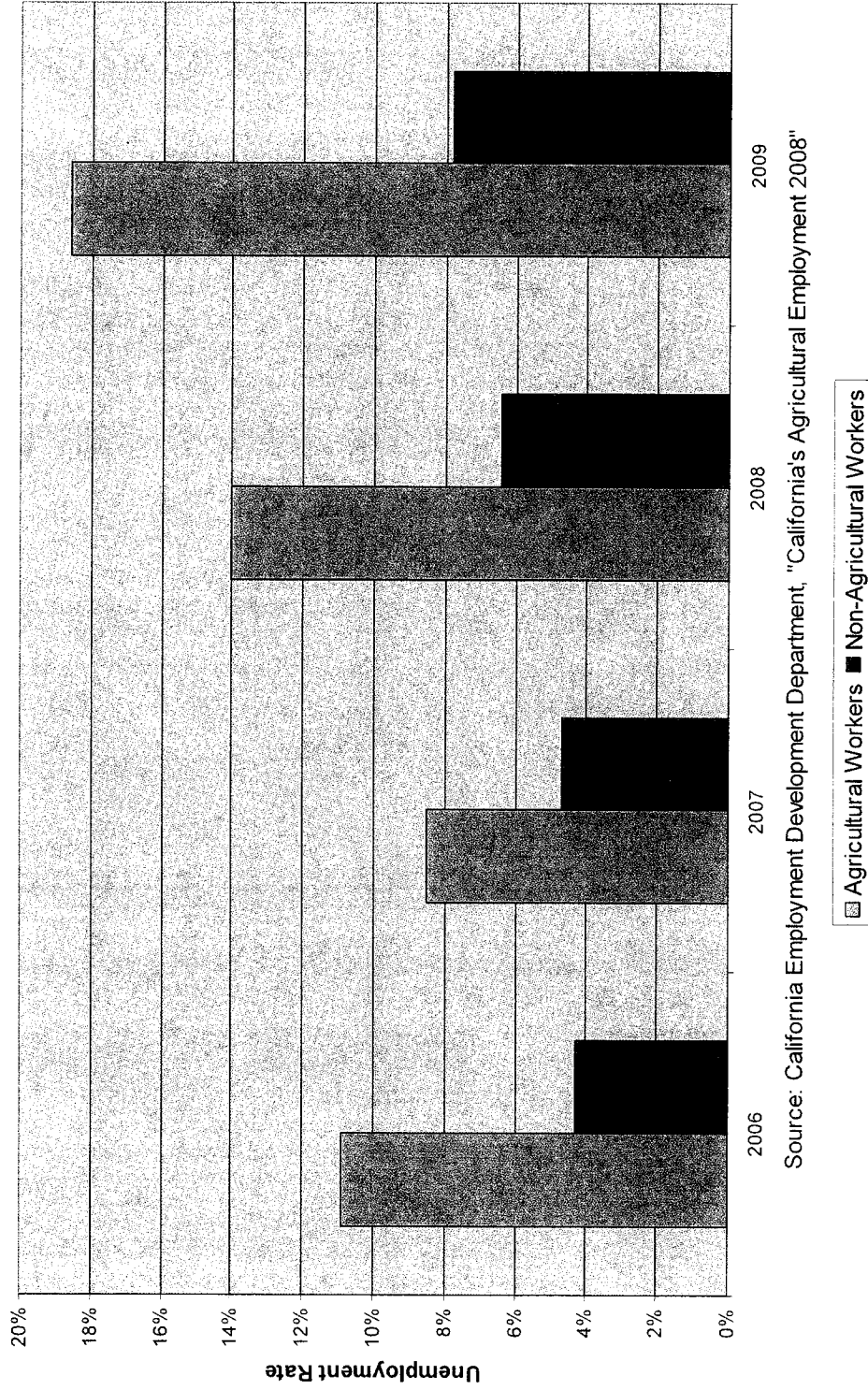
California Agricultural Employment 1993 2009

Data does not include agricultural processing workers or undocumented workers



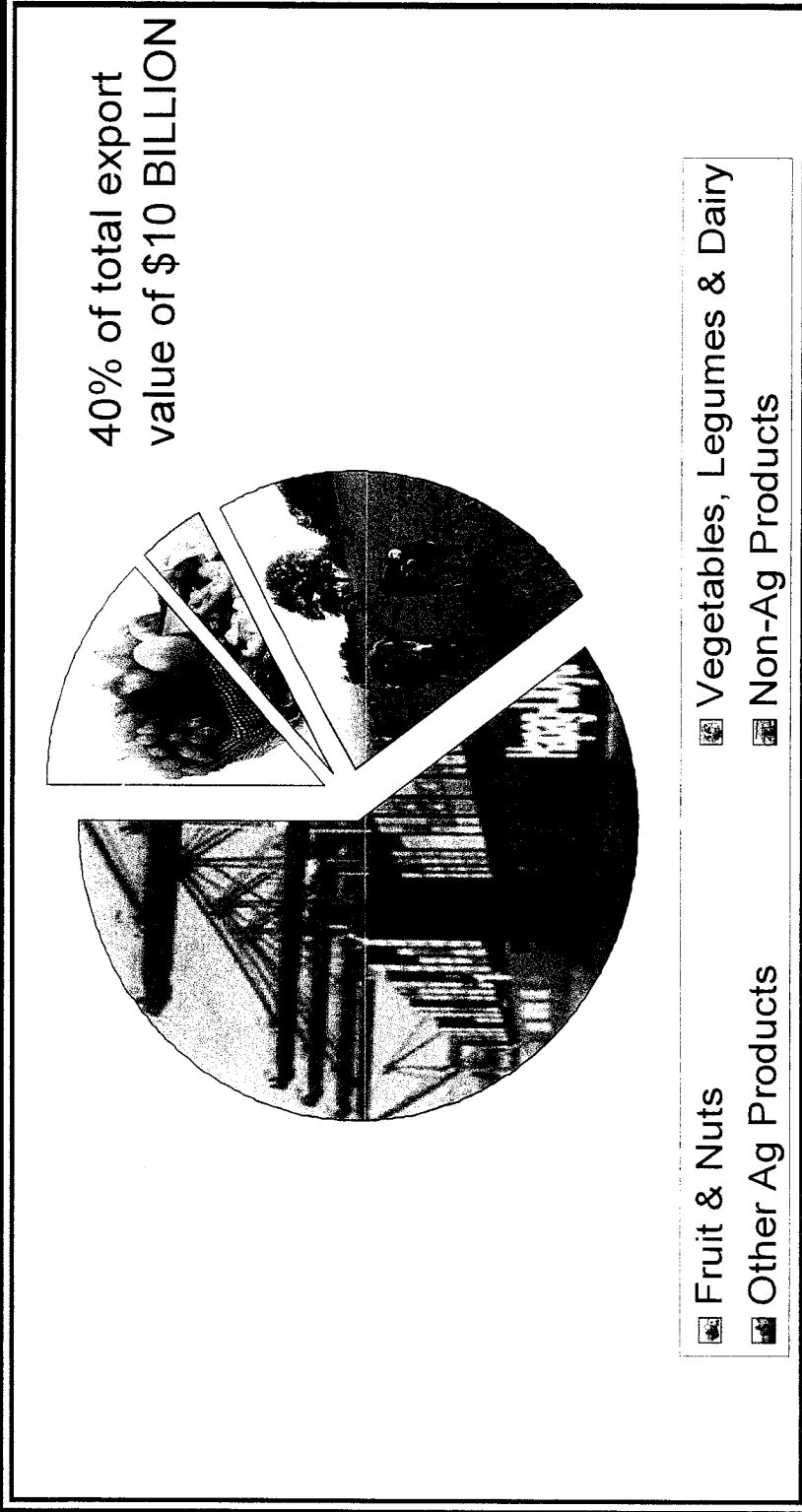
Reference Table 10: Agricultural Employment as a Percentage of Civilian Employment

California Unemployment



Port of Oakland Exports

Agricultural exports create 22% of the Port's annual revenue of \$135 MILLION



Source: Jahan Byrne, Port of Oakland, Business Development and Marketing
Reference Page 14 of *Additional and Supporting Documents*

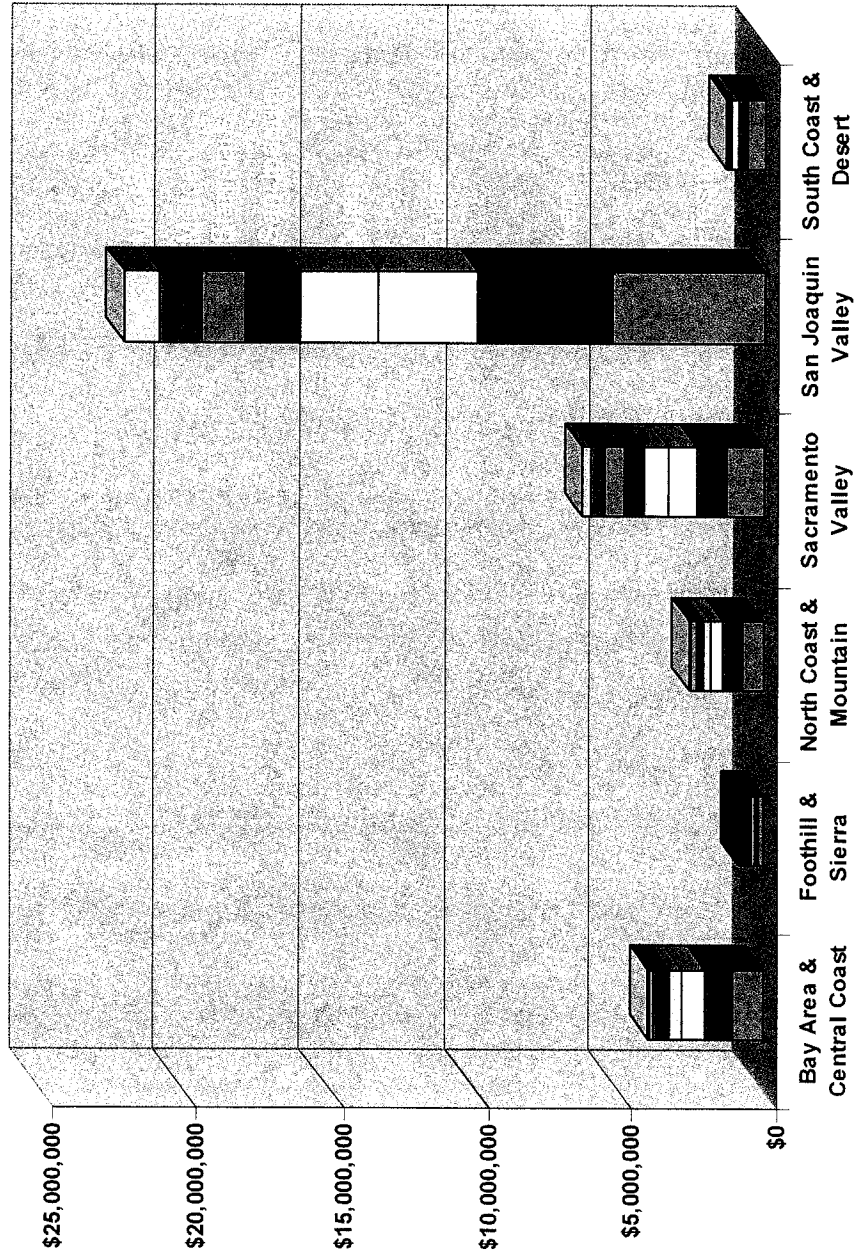
State and Local Partnership: San Joaquin Valley Contributions (2008/09)

	Williamson/FSZ Acts Value	Value without Williamson/FSZ Acts
Total Assessed Value	\$13,857,461,057	\$26,011,929,709
Taxes @ 1%	\$138,574,611	\$260,119,297

Source: Counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Tulare

Reference Table 12: Property Tax Losses to San Joaquin Valley (SJV) Counties (dollars)

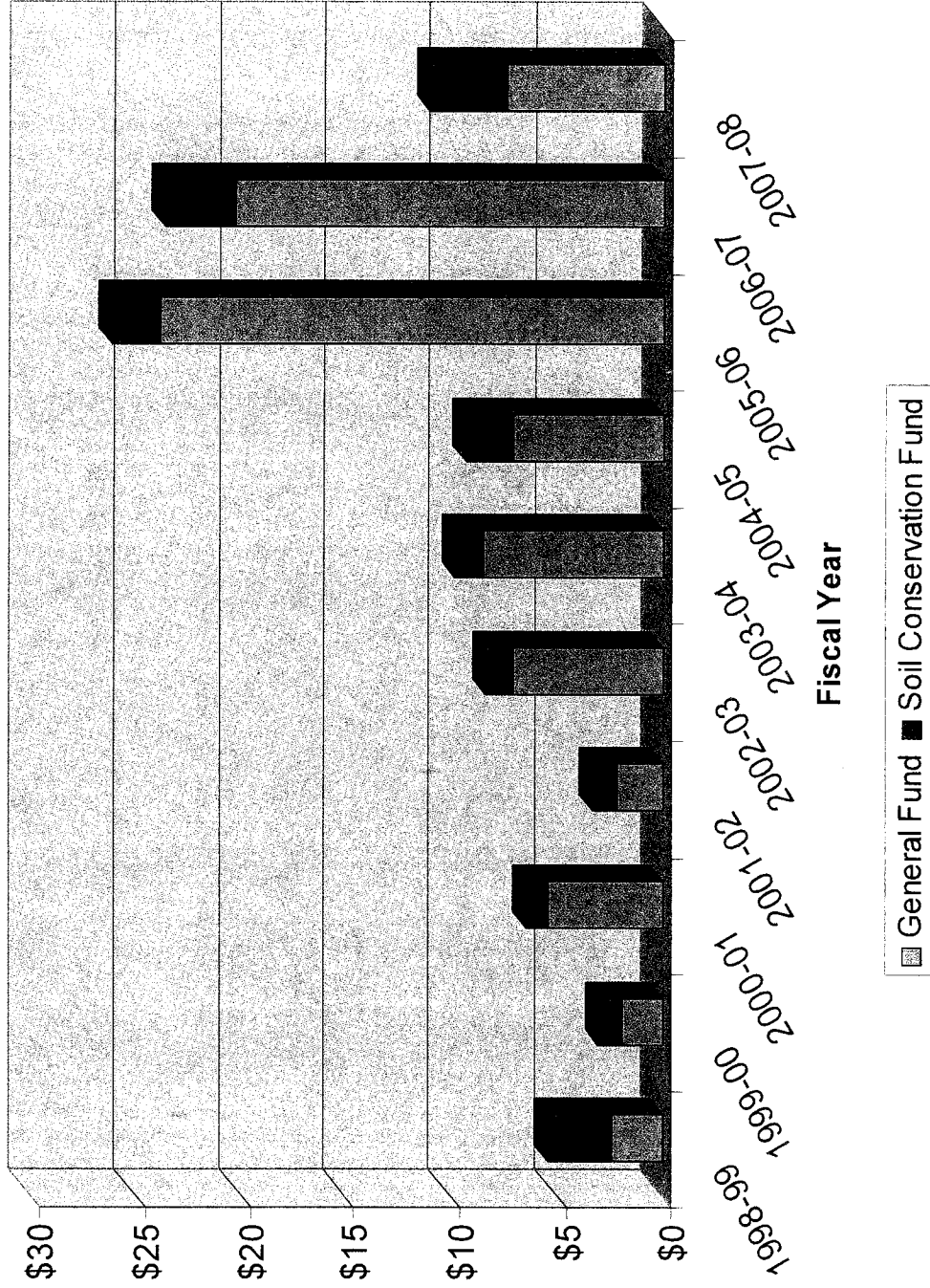
2007-2008 Williamson Act Subvention Payments by County



Source: California Department of Conservation,
 "The California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act 2008 Status Report"

Reference Table 13: 2007-2008 Williamson Act Subvention Payments by County

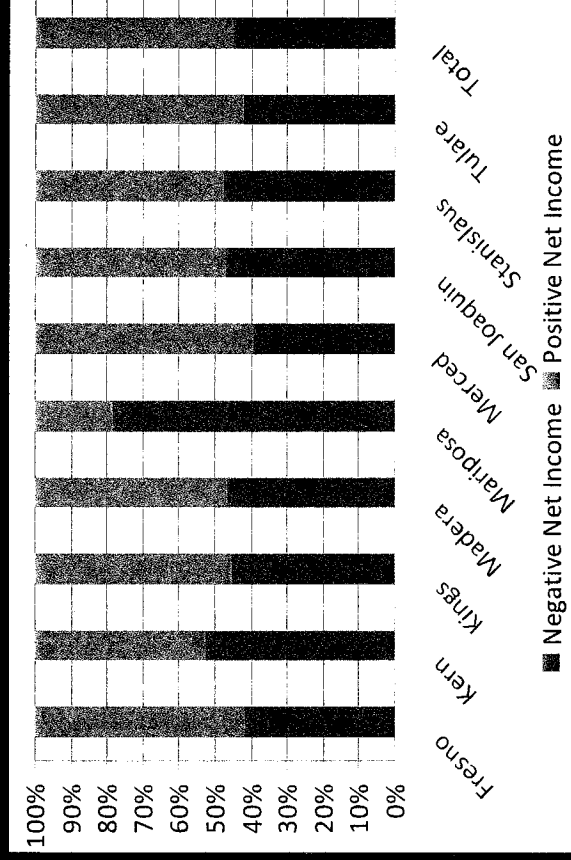
Cancellation Fees Paid to the State of California



Source: California Department of Conservation
 Reference Table 14: Early Cancellation Fees Paid to the State of California

Casualties of the Williamson Act Subvention Cuts?

- Williamson Act subventions pay for County Public Safety, Land Use, Elections, Human Services. . .all services that depend upon local discretionary dollars are at risk.
- Farming Operations on the edge due to drought, environmental and economic factors will fail.



Source: USDA 2007 Census of Agriculture - County Data, Table 4.

Reference Table 15: Farms by Net Income

The Williamson and Farmland Security Zone Acts

Preserving California Agriculture

Study Area: San Joaquin
Valley

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Additional Documents

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California Government Code §56300(a)

"It is the intent of the Legislature that each commission, not later than January 1, 2002, shall establish written policies and procedures and exercise its powers pursuant to this part in a manner consistent with those policies and procedures and that **encourages** and provides planned, well-ordered, efficient urban development patterns with **appropriate consideration of preserving open-space and agricultural lands** within those patterns." [Emphasis added]

California Public Resources Code §30242

"All other lands suitable for agricultural use shall not be converted to nonagricultural uses unless (1) continued or renewed agricultural use is not feasible, or (2) such conversion would preserve prime agricultural land or concentrate development consistent with Section 30250. Any such permitted conversion shall be compatible with continued agricultural use on surrounding lands." [Emphasis added]

California Gross Agricultural Production Values (2008)

**Table 1:
Total Gross Production Value of Agricultural Commodities (2008)**

<i>Region</i>	<i>Gross Production Value</i>	<i>% of California</i>
California	\$36,186,735,000	100.00%
Fresno	\$5,662,895,000	15.65%
Kern	\$4,033,312,000	11.15%
Kings	\$1,760,168,000	4.86%
Madera	\$1,310,875,000	3.62%
Mariposa	\$25,483,400	0.07%
Merced	\$2,999,701,000	8.29%
San Joaquin	\$2,129,725,000	5.89%
Stanislaus	\$2,473,843,000	6.84%
Tulare	\$5,018,022,800	13.87%
San Joaquin Valley	\$25,414,025,200	70.23%
Remainder of California	\$10,772,709,800	29.77%

Source: California Department of Food and Agriculture, 2008 Agricultural Commissioner's Crop Report

“California’s agricultural abundance includes more than 400 commodities. ... Many crops are produced solely in California.”

– UC Davis, “Agricultural Statistical Review”

Williamson Act (10 Year): Prime Agricultural Land

Table 2:			
WA (10 Year): Participating Prime Agricultural Land (acres)			
	<i>San Joaquin Valley</i>	<i>Sacramento Valley</i>	<i>Remainder of California</i>
2002	3,734,107	764,792	827,267
2003	3,699,740	771,237	809,037
2004	3,634,353	779,845	831,447
2005	3,602,794	781,408	838,821
2006	3,572,144	783,483	844,894
2007	3,550,224	787,297	980,000
<i>Source: California Department of Conservation, "The California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act 2008 Status Report"</i>			

“Prime farmland has the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long-term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.”

– California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection

Table 3:			
WA (10 Year): Participating Nonprime Agricultural Land (acres)			
	<i>San Joaquin Valley</i>	<i>Sacramento Valley</i>	<i>Remainder of California</i>
2002	3,233,218	1,727,249	5,450,193
2003	3,237,764	1,724,573	5,495,760
2004	3,269,103	1,729,409	5,528,725
2005	3,265,791	1,724,364	5,503,874
2006	3,255,403	1,734,164	5,520,326
2007	3,255,986	1,736,093	5,361,204
<i>Source: California Department of Conservation, "The California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act 2008 Status Report"</i>			

Nonprime farmland would be all other agricultural land used for farming and ranching purposes

Farmland Security Zone (20 Year): Prime Agricultural Land

Table 4:
FSZ (20 Year): Participating Prime Agricultural Land (acres)

	<i>San Joaquin Valley</i>	<i>Sacramento Valley</i>	<i>Remainder of California</i>
2002	512,098	124,579	18,939
2003	516,546	136,114	38,009
2004	545,585	142,204	40,507
2005	553,120	145,425	39,833
2006	553,613	146,061	40,043
2007	574,159	146,795	40,236

Source: California Department of Conservation, "The California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act 2008 Status Report"

“Prime farmland has the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long-term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.”

– California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection

Table 5:
FSZ (20 Year): Participating Nonprime Agricultural Land (acres)

	<i>San Joaquin Valley</i>	<i>Sacramento Valley</i>	<i>Remainder of California</i>
2002	21,342	10,059	21,326
2003	20,825	14,082	37,221
2004	26,350	12,802	39,530
2005	26,275	12,872	40,673
2006	26,160	13,309	40,665
2007	27,464	13,315	40,117

Source: California Department of Conservation, "The California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act 2008 Status Report"

Nonprime farmland would be all other agricultural land used for farming and ranching purposes

Harvested Cropland (acres)

**Table 6:
Harvested Cropland (2002)**

<i>Region</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>% of California</i>
California	8,466,321	100.00%
Fresno	1,078,900	12.74%
Kern	798,722	9.43%
Kings	414,608	4.90%
Madera	314,715	3.72%
Mariposa	636	0.01%
Merced	479,156	5.66%
San Joaquin	517,267	6.11%
Stanislaus	347,750	4.11%
Tulare	682,460	8.06%
San Joaquin Valley	4,634,214	54.74%
Remainder of California	3,832,107	45.26%

Source: US Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, "2002 Census of Agriculture"

**Table 7:
Harvested Cropland (2007)**

<i>Region</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>% of California</i>	<i>Change from 2002</i>	<i>% Change from 2002</i>
California	7,633,173	100.00%	(833,148)	-9.84%
Fresno	978,948	12.82%	(99,952)	-9.26%
Kern	764,929	10.02%	(33,793)	-4.23%
Kings	419,954	5.50%	5,346	1.29%
Madera	264,767	3.47%	(49,948)	-15.87%
Mariposa	286	0.00%	(350)	-55.03%
Merced	466,304	6.11%	(12,852)	-2.68%
San Joaquin	444,670	5.83%	(72,597)	-14.03%
Stanislaus	307,992	4.03%	(39,758)	-11.43%
Tulare	560,320	7.34%	(122,140)	-17.90%
San Joaquin Valley	4,208,170	55.13%	(426,044)	-9.19%
Remainder of California	3,425,003	44.87%	(407,104)	-10.62%

Source: US Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, "2007 Census of Agriculture"

The San Joaquin Valley lost 426,044 acres of harvested cropland between 2002 and 2007 while the remaining counties in California lost 407,104 acres of harvested cropland.

Median Farm Size (acres)

**Table 8:
Median Farm Size by San Joaquin Valley County (acres)**

<i>County</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2007</i>
Fresno	40	36
Kern	167	80
Kings	75	40
Madera	80	58
Mariposa	169	86
Merced	60	40
San Joaquin	35	25
Stanislaus	28	20
Tulare	39	25

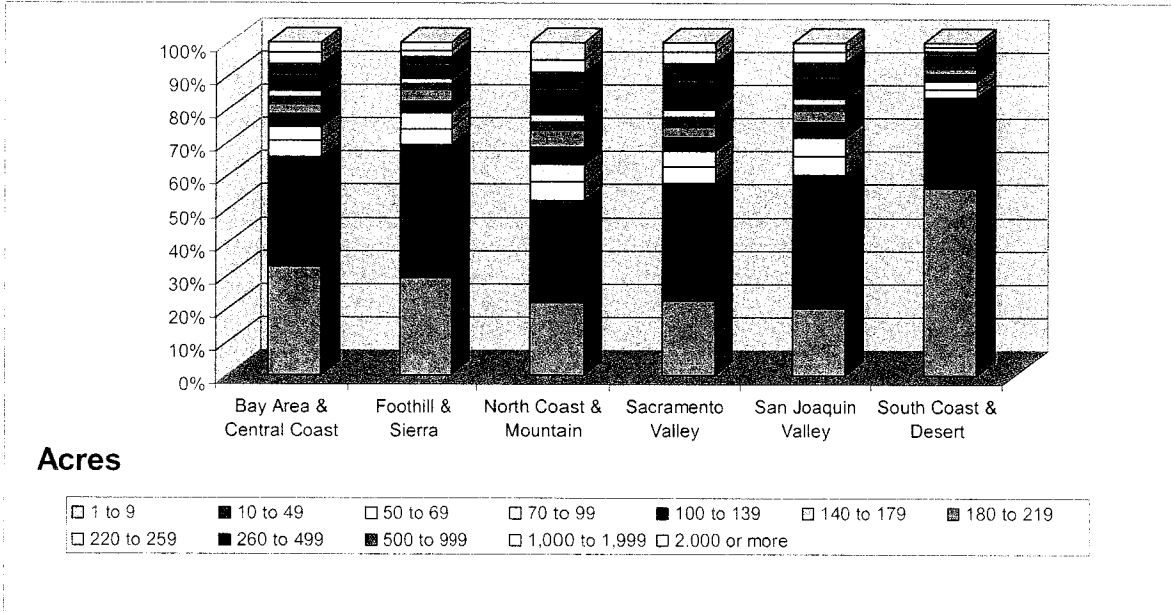
Source: US Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, "2002 Census of Agriculture"

**Table 9:
Median Farm Size by California Region (acres)**

<i>Region</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2007</i>
Bay & Central Coast	24	20
Foothill & Sierra	22	20
North Coast & Mountain	50	42
Sacramento Valley	40	32
San Joaquin Valley	39	32
South Coast and Desert	9	7

Source: US Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, "2002 Census of Agriculture"

**Figure 2:
Percentage of Farms by Size by Region**



California Agricultural Employment 1993-2009

Data does not include agricultural processing workers or undocumented workers

**Table 10:
Agricultural Employment as a Percentage of Civilian Employment**

	<i>San Joaquin Valley</i>	<i>Sacramento Valley</i>	<i>California</i>
1993	14.16%	2.34%	2.62%
1994	15.27%	2.31%	2.72%
1995	15.69%	2.34%	2.66%
1996	16.97%	2.49%	2.85%
1997	16.76%	2.49%	2.79%
1998	16.16%	2.25%	2.67%
1999	15.55%	2.22%	2.60%
2000	14.59%	2.08%	2.55%
2001	12.89%	1.83%	2.34%
2002	12.31%	1.69%	2.30%
2003	12.28%	1.64%	2.32%
2004	11.73%	1.66%	2.36%
2005	11.93%	1.61%	2.27%
2006	11.79%	1.54%	2.21%
2007	11.89%	1.60%	2.24%
2008	12.15%	1.64%	2.29%
2009*	12.58%	1.74%	2.39%

**Year 2009 is a 12 month average including preliminary December 2009 data
Source: California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division*

**Table 11:
Daily Harvest Labor Demand for Selected Crops (1998)**

<i>County</i>	<i>Crop</i>	<i># of Workers/Day</i>
Fresno	Grapes	56,800
Kern	Misc. Vegetables	15,500
Kings	Peaches/Nectarines	1,750
Madera	Figs	3,000
Merced	Melons	2,750
San Joaquin	Cherries	9,000
Stanislaus	Peaches/Nectarines/Plums	5,600
Tulare	Navel Oranges	4,500

Source: Nisei Farmer's League, "Crop Calendar/Harvest – Labor Statistics"

California Unemployment

“The unemployment rate among agricultural workers was 14.0 percent in 2008, up from 8.5 percent in 2007 and 10.9 percent in 2006. The unemployment rate among nonagricultural workers was 6.4 percent in 2008, up from 4.7 percent in 2007, and 4.3 percent in 2006. By April 2009, the unemployment rate among agricultural and nonagricultural workers had risen to 18.6 and 7.8 percent, respectively. These data are expressed as a 12 month average of Current Population Survey data.”

- California Employment Development Department, “California’s Agricultural Employment 2008”

Port of Oakland Exports

- **40% of total export value of \$10 Billion came from agricultural products in 2008**
 - *\$1.3 Billion from edible fruit and nuts*
 - *\$400 Million from vegetables, legumes, nuts and dairy*
 - *\$2.3 Billion from other products (meat products, hay, cotton, grain, etc.)*
- **22% of Port's annual revenue of \$135 Million came from agricultural products in 2008**

• Jahan Byrne, Port of Oakland, Business Development and Marketing

State and Local Partnership: San Joaquin Valley Contributions (2008/09)

**Table 12:
Property Tax Losses to San Joaquin Valley (SJV) Counties (dollars)**

<i>Williamson/ FSZ Acts Value</i>	<i>Taxes @ 1%</i>	<i>Value without Williamson/ FSZ Acts</i>	<i>Taxes @ 1%</i>	<i>Counties' Portion</i>
13,857,461,057	138,574,611	26,038,929,709	260,389,297	26,807,424
<i>Williamson/FSZ Acts Value</i>		<i>Value without Williamson/FS Z Acts</i>		
<i>Total Assessed Value</i>	13,857,461,057	<i>Assessed Value Total</i>	26,038,929,709	
<i>Taxes @ 1%</i>	138,574,611	<i>Taxes @ 1%</i>	260,389,297	
 <i>Lost Revenue to SJV Counties</i>		26,807,424		

Source: Counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Tulare

2007-2008 Williamson Act Subvention Payments by County

**Table 13:
2007-2008 Williamson Act Subvention Payments by County**

<i>Bay Area & Central Coast</i>		<i>Foothill & Sierra</i>	
San Luis Obispo	\$1,088,726	Mariposa	\$183,869
Monterey	\$962,326	Calaveras	\$130,801
San Benito	\$762,764	Amador	\$110,818
Sonoma	\$438,990	Tuolumne	\$107,097
Santa Clara	\$341,843	Plumas	\$103,609
Marin	\$110,160	Mono	\$66,548
Alameda	\$99,101	Sierra	\$51,922
Napa	\$92,285	Placer	\$43,112
Contra Costa	\$67,155	El Dorado	\$41,874
Santa Cruz	\$21,097	Nevada	\$18,958
San Mateo	\$0	<i>Total</i>	\$858,608
<i>Total</i>	\$3,984,447		
<i>North Coast & Mountain</i>		<i>Sacramento Valley</i>	
Siskiyou	\$770,655	Yolo	\$1,283,038
Mendocino	\$624,508	Glenn	\$1,044,684
Lassen	\$433,157	Tehama	\$961,091
Shasta	\$279,632	Colusa	\$847,145
Humboldt	\$217,007	Solano	\$718,362
Modoc	\$181,006	Butte	\$639,561
Lake	\$68,657	Sacramento	\$527,073
Trinity	\$21,805	Sutter	\$262,304
<i>Total</i>	\$2,596,427	<i>Total</i>	\$6,283,258
<i>San Joaquin Valley</i>		<i>South Coast & Desert</i>	
Fresno	\$5,270,408	Santa Barbara	\$637,896
Kern	\$4,733,094	Ventura	\$327,805
Tulare	\$3,411,417	Riverside	\$207,921
Kings	\$2,681,127	San Diego	\$79,964
San Joaquin	\$1,908,313	Imperial	\$60,024
Stanislaus	\$1,466,943	Los Angeles	\$40,031
Merced	\$1,429,352	San Bernardino	\$11,752
Madera	\$1,246,397	Orange	\$351
<i>Total</i>	\$22,147,051	<i>Total</i>	\$1,365,744

Source: California Department of Conservation, "The California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act 2008 Status Report"

Cancellation Fees Paid to the State of California

**Table 14:
Early Cancellation Fees Paid to the State of California**

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>General Fund</i>	<i>Soil Conservation Fund</i>	<i>Total</i>
1998-99	\$2,453,432.00	\$2,988,318.00	\$5,441,750.00
1999-00	\$1,930,070.00	\$1,098,797.00	\$3,028,867.00
2000-01	\$5,388,514.00	\$1,091,057.00	\$6,479,571.00
2001-02	\$2,158,537.50	\$1,179,460.00	\$3,337,997.50
2002-03	\$7,086,623.50	\$1,298,596.00	\$8,385,219.50
2003-04	\$8,519,226.75	\$1,349,894.00	\$9,869,120.75
2004-05	\$7,141,387.00	\$2,193,053.00	\$9,334,440.00
2005-06	\$23,918,009.12	\$2,254,000.00	\$26,172,009.12
2006-07	\$20,307,442.25	\$3,360,400.00	\$23,667,842.25
2007-08	\$7,480,922.00	\$3,599,761.00	\$11,080,683.00

Source: California Department of Conservation

Casualties of the Williamson Act Subvention Cuts?

**Table 15:
Farms by Net Income**

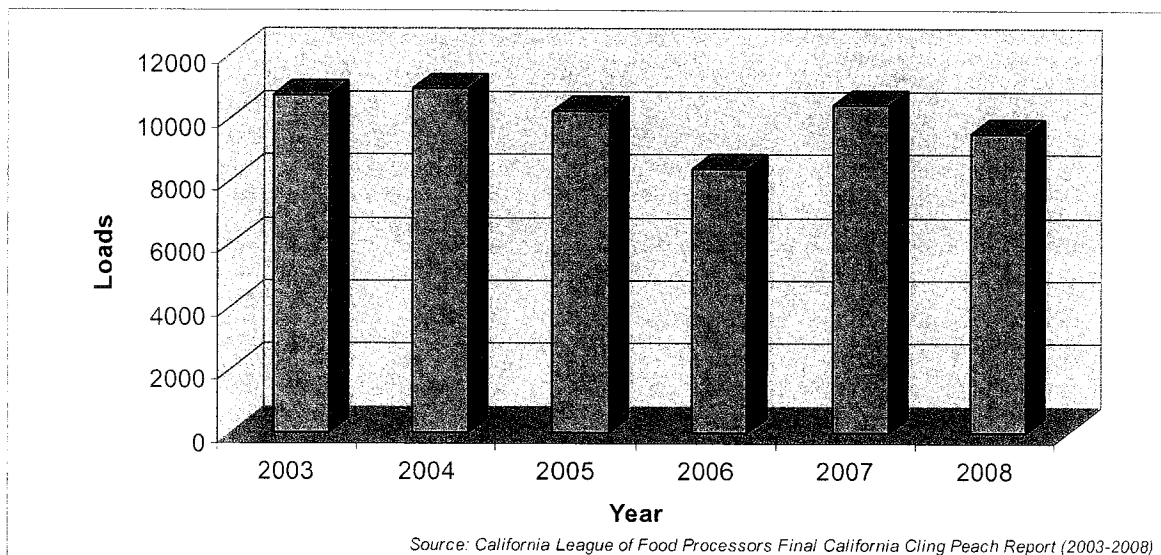
<i>County</i>	<i>Farms with (+) Net Income</i>	<i>Farms with (-) Net Income</i>	<i>% of Farms with (+) Net Income</i>	<i>% of Farms with (-) Net Income</i>
Fresno	3,536	2,545	58%	42%
Kern	1,002	1,115	47%	53%
Kings	614	515	54%	46%
Madera	911	797	53%	47%
Mariposa	65	237	22%	78%
Merced	1,581	1,026	61%	39%
San Joaquin	1,916	1,708	53%	47%
Stanislaus	2,147	1,967	52%	48%
Tulare	3,025	2,215	58%	42%
Total	14,797	12,125	55%	45%

Source: USDA 2007 Census of Agriculture - County Data, Table 4.

Other Additional Documents

Examples of Agricultural Impact on Trucking Industry

**Figure 3:
Cling Peach Deliveries by Truck Load**



**Table 16:
Tomato Deliveries in the San Joaquin Valley (July 2008-October 2008)**

County	Crop Weight (tons)	Crop Gross Value (\$)	Trucking (loads)	Trucking Gross Value (\$)
Fresno	4,155,117	\$332,409,360	159,812	\$41,551,120
Kern	637,116	\$50,969,280	24,504	\$6,371,040
Kings	1,388,214	\$111,057,120	53,392	\$13,881,920
Madera	50,757	\$4,060,560	1,952	\$507,520
Merced	735,065	\$58,805,200	28,271	\$7,350,460
San Joaquin	1,253,834	\$100,306,720	48,224	\$12,538,240
Stanislaus	490,769	\$39,261,520	18,875	\$4,907,500
Total	8,710,872	\$696,869,760	335,030	\$87,107,800

Source: Processing Tomato Advisory Board

County Boards of Supervisors

Fresno – Judy Case, Phil Larson

Kern – Jon McQuiston

Kings – Tony Oliveira

Madera – Frank Bigelow

Mariposa – Lyle Turpin

Merced – John Pedrozo, Deidre F. Kelsey

San Joaquin – Ken Vogel, Leroy Ornellas

Stanislaus – Jim DeMartini, Vito Chiesa

Tulare – Steve Worthley, Mike Ennis

Fresno County Ag Commissioner – Carol Hafner

Fresno County Office of Economic Development – Jeanette Ishii

Kahn, Soares and Conway – George Soares, Louie Brown

Kingsburg Federal Land Bank – Scott Anderson

Fresno County Farm Bureau – Ryan Jacobsen

Nisei Farmers League – Manuel Cunha, Jr.

Data Compiled by:

Fresno County Economic Development

Data Collected by:

Fresno County Economic Development, United States Department of Agriculture, San Joaquin Valley Agricultural Commissioners, San Joaquin Valley Assessor-Recorders, Fresno County Farm Bureau, Nisei Farmers League

COUNTY OF SAN BENITO

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

481 Fourth Street • Hollister, CA 95023
Phone: 831-636-4000 • Fax: 831-636-4010

Susan Thompson
County Administrative Officer

Written Statement of Testimony

Presented to: Honorable members of the Senate Local Government Committee March 3, 2010

Hearing topic: The Williamson Act: Past, Present, Future?

Presented by: Susan Thompson, County Administrative Officer, San Benito County, representing the thirty-one member counties of the Regional Council of Rural Counties

Honorable Committee members,

Good morning Mr. Chairman and committee members. My name is Susan Thompson and I am the County Administrative Officer of San Benito County. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I am here today with the blessing of my own Board of Supervisors of San Benito County to represent the thirty-one member Counties of the Regional Council of Rural Counties (RCRC).

I hope to express to the Committee how important the Williamson Act and accompanying property tax subventions to participating counties has been to the environmental and economic stability and security of our communities and State.

Williamson Act is Good Policy

The Williamson Act is good public policy, it produces the intended effects as stated by the legislature at enactment and these intentions are as relevant today as they were when the Act was first signed into law in 1965.

What makes the Williamson Act effective is that it incentivizes owners to keep their property in agricultural production and eliminates any disincentive for the Counties to support these vital land uses. In order to continue to reap the positive benefits of the Williamson Act, both sides of this equation must continue to be honored.

On page 9 of the committee briefing paper you were provided the 2007 top 10 Subvention counties list in terms of dollars. I would like to share with you another way of looking at subvention funding from a small county perspective. Rural counties operate with several handicaps in that we historically have relatively low assessed property values and/or receive a very low percentage of each property tax dollar. In San Benito we receive 11% of the 1% property tax dollar to support all county services. The top 10 counties that receive less than \$10 million in property tax revenue and are most dependent on the Williamson Act Subventions are Modoc, Sierra, Trinity, Lassen, Glenn, Mariposa, Colusa, San Benito, Plumas and Siskiyou. While all counties are hurt by the elimination of subvention funding, our smallest counties are bearing a disproportionate share of the pain.

Broad based Coalition supports full funding of Williamson Act

Because of the many important benefits of the Williamson Act, a broad coalition composed of RCRC, CSAC, numerous environmental/conservation organizations and agricultural groups have been actively supporting state funding for Williamson Act subventions -- and we continue to do so. The Williamson

Act is one of the most cost effective "on the ground" tools available today to preserve California agriculture, preserve open space, protect habitat, control urban sprawl and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Act is too important in setting foundational land use policy priorities to allow it to be abandoned and dismantled even during these times of economic stress.

Williamson Act subventions- a 38 year State/County fiscal partnership that works

The State/County fiscal partnership designed to maximize the positive impact of the Act began in 1972-73 to provide direct subventions to replace property tax revenues forgone to implement the Act. This partnership has been a stable good faith commitment by the State for these 38 years. Counties have vastly increased the number of acres under contract since that time in accord with the purposes and intent of the Act. Subvention revenues replacing property tax incentives to land owners are significant to our counties ability to fund basic local services including law enforcement, roads, libraries, human services and general government operations. The abrupt withdrawal of these revenues in the State FY 2009-10 budget failed to recognize or ignored the devastating local service effect of this revenue loss. Compounding this problem is that Counties have no ability under the Act to cancel Williamson Act contracts in a timely manner. The result is that while the state achieved a general fund budget cost reduction for itself, this cost shifted instantaneously to the Counties where there is no ability under the law to recover this loss in the same fiscal period and in fact, contract nonrenewal procedures if evoked are not effective for nine years. If there is legislative current or future intent to rethink the intent of the Act then we need to accomplish this together with a full acknowledgement of the impacts that will result to all stakeholders.

There is no denying that today's economic climate has contributed to the unprecedented state budget crisis. Crisis encourages creativity. In this context, a number of interesting concepts are expressed in the Committee's briefing paper that deserve thoughtful consideration by counties, farming and ranching interests and environmental/conservation partners. In addition to vetting these concepts among ourselves, counties will fully explore these ideas with our coalition partners to determine which if any are viable and enjoy broad support.

Non funding =Non renewal= Poor outcomes on many fronts

Quite frankly, if the state does not renew the property tax subventions, wholesale non renewal of Williamson Act contracts will have to be seriously considered if not already implemented. The resultant outcomes of this action cannot be justified because it is in the best public interest. It is not. Instead this reaction would be a defensive fiscal response necessitated by the extremely limited fiscal options counties have at their disposal undoing decades of positive land use policy and harming our already precarious agricultural industry in a time of unprecedented economic and environmental challenges.

The San Benito County Story

The Williamson Act has been fully embraced in San Benito County for decades. Of the total 767,040 acres of privately owned land in the county, 583,781 acres are under Williamson Act contracts. This is fully 76% of all privately held land in our county. Prime agricultural land in the Act totals 52,162 acres, while non prime totals 531,101 acres. Home sites total 518 acres. Gross agricultural production during 2008 topped \$262 million with Field, Fruit and Nut, and Vegetable and Row crop production comprising 90% of this output. Cattle and Other Livestock and Poultry Products completed the production at \$25.6 million. Agriculture is the number one industry in the County. Williamson Act subvention in FY 2007-08 totaled \$763,000, FY

2008-09 \$ 688,000, and \$0 during FY 2009-10. This subvention equates to 3% of the total local discretionary general fund revenue received in 08-09, but represents 22% of the total general fund discretionary revenue reductions experienced during 2009-10 budget year.

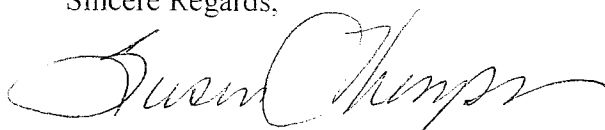
Budget reductions required to absorb this revenue loss included Sheriff Deputies, Probation Officers, 911 Communications Dispatchers, closure of the Library on Saturdays, government operations positions in the Auditor, Recorder, and Public Health budgets to name a few. All employees gave back COLA increases that they were entitled to receive in existing labor agreements and they further agreed to additional 5% salary reductions in the form of furlough days and/or holiday pay. A number of these furlough days required office closure countywide. Even with these significant cut-backs, the Board of Supervisors had to utilize fund balance and reserves to balance their 2009-10 budget. FY 2010-11 will require additional more-draconian staff and program/service reductions, and further consumption of limited reserve funds to maintain even minimum service levels in vital local services.

San Benito County is a small rural county with a total population of less than 60,000 geographically located in the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area of the Southern Silicon Valley. Our population is comprised of a large percentage (40-45% estimated) of residents who commute along the SR 101 corridor to the greater San Jose Area each day to work. Our County is not served by commuter train or other mass transit, so this commuting is done in private vehicles. Our real estate prices are significantly lower than those in Santa Clara County, Monterey and Santa Cruz County who are our regional neighbors. As a result many of the teachers, law enforcement officers and other critical workforce for our surrounding communities live in San Benito. The pressures for residential development have been significant here since the 1980's. In example a 6800 unit development application was being processed by the county and reached the stage of beginning their Environmental Impact Report recently before the application was withdrawn due to the economic downturn. This project was the largest but by no means the only recent development pending or in process in the County. A 1100 unit residential development is still in process of application review at this time, and a number of smaller projects are also advancing even during the economic downturn. This kind of pressure is real and does potentially threaten the conversion of Agricultural and Open Space acreage to development. The Williamson Act is a vital and effective tool in the management of growth for our Board of Supervisors together with their own ordinances and land use policy. We need your help to sustain the long standing and effective partnership between the State and counties like mine through the full funding of the Williamson Act subvention program.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you.

Should there be any questions or further information I can provide, please contact me at sthompson@cosb.us or (831) 636-4000.

Sincere Regards,



Susan Thompson
County Administrative Officer, San Benito County

**The Williamson Act: Past, Present, Future?
A Legislative Oversight Hearing**

California Senate Local Government Committee

Land Use Planning Implications of the Williamson Act
and its Importance as a Planning Tool to
Sustain California's Growth and Prosperity

Ted James, AICP
Kern County Planning Director

March 3, 2010

Honorable Senate Local Government Committee:

I am here today representing the California State Association of Counties and the California County Planning Director's Association in presenting you with reasons why the continued use of the Williamson Act Program, including the provision of State subventions to counties, is important for California's future. This important farmland conservation program not only assures the sustainability of a strong agricultural presence for California's economy, but also provides an important land use planning program used by county planning agencies to effectively implement General Plan conservation programs which address the growth of urban areas, the expansion of public infrastructure and the conservation of important agriculture and open space resources. As an administrator of a large Williamson Act Program in the Central Valley, I intend to provide you some insight of the benefits this program provides in promoting effective land use planning.

Kern County Assemblyman John C. Williamson authored the California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) in 1965. Assemblyman Williamson's legacy after the program's 45 year existence is a 16.6 million acre conservation program that has successfully kept agricultural lands under contractual land use restrictions for purposes of ensuring a strong agricultural presence in the State's economy.

Kern County's Williamson Act Program is one of the largest in the State with 1,471,469 acres enrolled in Williamson Act contracts plus another 145,150 acres included in Farmland Security Zone contracts. This Statewide agricultural conservation program has been a popular program with Kern County land owners and has successfully kept large contiguous areas in continued agricultural production (see attached map).

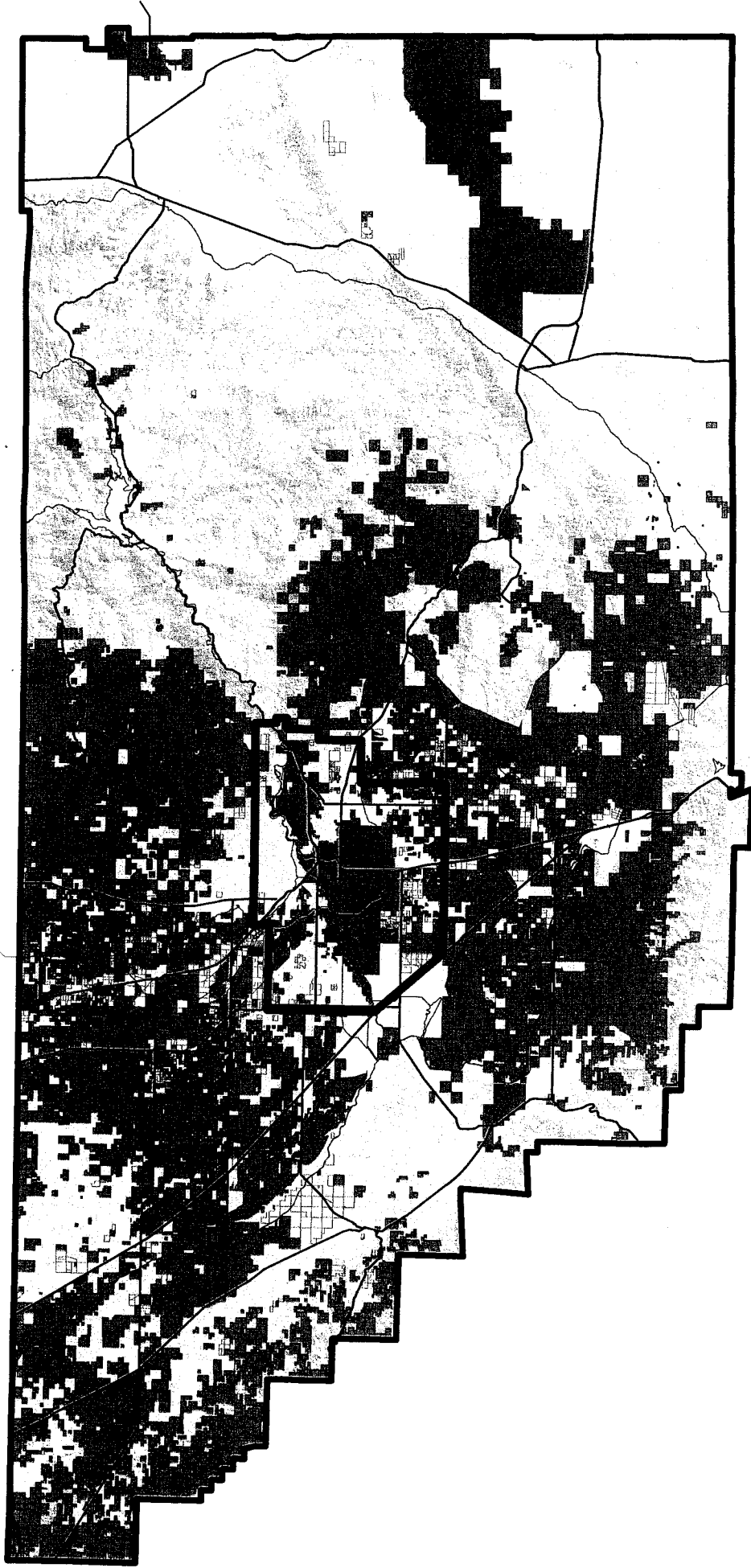
As a land use planner, I am going to focus my comments on the importance of how the Williamson Act Program compliments local government planning efforts and is effective when used in conjunction with General Plan, Zoning and other programs to guide urban growth and help protect agricultural resource areas from incompatible use. In addition, I am going to address the importance that the Williamson Act Program plays in promoting the State's efforts to implement greenhouse gas reduction strategies imposed by AB 32 and SB 375.

Williamson Act's Importance in Promoting Orderly Urban Growth

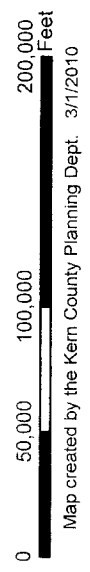
Although much can be said of the importance of the Williamson Act Program in sustaining agriculture, it is important to also focus on the influence that this conservation program has in controlling the expansion of urban growth into agricultural areas. The Williamson Act Program's purpose is to discourage haphazard and premature urban development patterns in agricultural areas. County planning agencies rely on the Williamson Act Program as an effective tool to forestall premature urbanization of agricultural areas.

Kern County has been successful in utilizing the presence of Williamson Act contracted properties as a reason to discourage premature urban expansion adjacent to the Metropolitan Bakersfield Area and to discourage leapfrog development proposals. By incorporating specific policy directives in the General Plan which discourage amendments to planned agricultural land use designations involving contracted property, the General Plan works together with the Williamson Act to effectively discourage premature development proposals on the periphery of the Metropolitan area.

Kern County Williamson Act Property



- Metropolitan Bakersfield
- Properties Under Active Williamson Act and Farmland Security Zone Contracts
- Properties Under Williamson Act Non-Renewal Status
- City Boundaries



The County also incorporates specific criteria in the General Plan that must be considered by the decision-makers when evaluating the suitability of converting agricultural land to urban use. These standards include proximity to urbanization and services and the potential to adversely affect adjacent Williamson Act contracted properties. The presence of contracted land adjacent to development proposals has been an important factor used by decision-makers in concluding that some proposals to amend the General Plan from agricultural use are premature.

The use of General Plan designations and zoning by themselves have not been effective in assuring orderly growth that discourages sprawl into the State's farmlands. Presently, the Williamson Act offers the only large-scale effective means for local governments to set aside large contiguous areas as agricultural preserves. Williamson Act agricultural preserves combined with enforceable contractual restrictions are not as vulnerable as General Plans to short-term shifts in the local political economy.

In addition to the important relationship the Williamson Act has with General Plans, there are other State laws utilized by land use planning agencies which acknowledge the importance of the Williamson Act program when land use decisions are made. These include the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Subdivision Map Act and the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act which all have provisions that acknowledge the importance of Williamson Act contracted land when determining the environmental effects of a project, subdividing property into smaller parcel sizes and when considering the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) Spheres of Influence designations and city incorporated boundary annexations. The recognition of the restrictive nature of Williamson Act contracts has long been an important tool of local government land use planning programs.

In discussing approaches to conserve farmland from urban encroachment, critics are always quick to assert that the Williamson Act program is voluntary and consist of limited 10 or 20 year contract terms which presents only a temporary fix to protecting farmland. In response, I would assert that the program while in effect adds a self-renewing additional year to the contract on an annual basis such that the terms of the contract are always 10 years for the Williamson Act property and 20 years for the Farmland Security Zone property. Many of these properties have been under contract for over four decades. In reviewing the program's effectiveness over the last 45 years, it is clear that a significant amount of the State's agricultural lands have been kept in long-term farming and ranching use for the benefit of the State's economy.

Williamson Act's Effect on Addressing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

With the advent of the greenhouse gas reduction legislation (AB 32, SB 375) it would seem logical for the State to recognize the important contribution the Williamson Act Program provides by preserving productive farmland that takes substantial amounts of carbon dioxide out of the air. In order to meet the aggressive greenhouse gas reduction goals of these climate change laws, it is important for the State to recognize the greenhouse gas reduction benefits the Williamson Act Program provides by reinstating subvention payments to County program participants.

Loss of Williamson Act Subvention Payments Could Impede Effective Land Use Planning

In the FY 2009-10 State Budget, Governor Schwarzenegger deleted all but \$1,000 to counties participating in the Williamson Act Program. This action eliminated over \$4.6 million in State

subvention funds to Kern County that would have helped backfill the County for property tax reductions granted to property owners participating in the Williamson Act Program. Continued failure by the State to provide Williamson Act subvention funds will cause cash-strapped counties to question their ability to continue participating in the program since the subvention funds incentivize program participation by partially replacing property tax revenues lost on enrolled lands. Local government decisions to curtail participation in the program could exacerbate farmland conversion and jeopardize the economic viability of thousands of farming and ranching enterprises.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize the important role that the Williamson Act Program plays in assisting local governments in conserving farmland and providing for orderly growth. The limited tax burden on contracted parcels helps to stabilize farm income and keep many farmers and ranchers in business. In return, the recurring 10 and 20 year contracts provide an effective tool to prevent premature and leapfrog development and support efforts in county General Plans to conserve California's remaining important farmlands and ensure orderly growth.

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The California Land Conservation Act of 1965

Testimony of Brian R. Leahy
Assistant Director
Department of Conservation
Division of Land Resource Protection

The Department of Conservation's Division of Land Resource Protection (DLRP) develops and provides information, grants, and technical assistance to protect agricultural and open space land, and supports land-use planning and watershed management. The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly known as the Williamson Act, is one of four programs administered by DLRP. DLRP's other programs include the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, California Farmland Conservancy Program, and the Watershed and Resource Conservation Districts Program. All of the programs are voluntary, local assistance programs that work with local entities to bring about statewide benefits. The DLRP Williamson Act Program receives all of its funding from the Soil Conservation Fund, which is funded from Williamson Act cancellation fees. The other programs are funded from a combination of Soil Conservation Funds and bond support money. DLRP receives no general funds.

California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act

The purpose of the California Land Conservation Act (ACT) is to assure sufficient food supplies, to discourage the premature and unnecessary conversion of agricultural lands, to discourage discontinuous urban development patterns, and to preserve the open space and aesthetic values of agricultural lands. A reaction to escalating property taxes and the explosive population growth California experienced after the Second World War, the Act was created before Proposition 13, before the California Environmental Quality Act, and before the Endangered Species Act. General Plans were considered little more than advisory documents and the state population was just over 18.5 million individuals.

Forty-five years later the state population has more than doubled and, the rules defining the planning process are infinitely more complex. And California property tax formulas are now fixed by the state constitution. While California agriculture continues to lead the nation in productivity, the open space lands that agriculture – as well as wildlife and important ecosystem services rely upon – are being converted to urban development at an alarming rate. Farm and grazing lands in California decreased by 275 square miles (176,014 acres) between 2004 and 2006 as documented by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. That includes 81,247 acres of highest-quality agricultural soils, known as Prime Farmland. Meanwhile, the Williamson Act continues to be the primary farmland preservation law in California.

Currently, 53 counties have land under contract in the Act. The Imperial County Board of Supervisors voted to non-renewal all of the 136,649 acres currently under contract in the county and begin the 10 year non-renewal process. As a voluntary program the Act is protection 16.6 million acres, nearly one-third of all of the private land in the state. All of the land is under contracts that are enforceable restrictions on land and are binding on successors to both landowners and the local government.

Landowners enter into agreements with cities and counties to restrict use of their land in return for lower tax assessments based on the agricultural use versus the potential market value of the property. Article XIII Section 8 of the California State Constitution allows county assessors to assess Williamson Act contracted land using a formula established by the State Board of Equalization and the Revenue and Taxation Code. The land tax savings varies drastically based on a number of factors such as proximity to urban development pressures and the amount of income that can be generated off the land under contract. For low-value crops such as grass for grazing, the savings can be substantial and make the difference between economic viability and failure. The contracts have annual automatic one-year extensions.

A newer addition to the Williamson Act is a provision for Farmland Security Zones (FSZ). Also voluntary, enrollment in an FSZ is for a 20-year automatically renewed contract, with greater protections from urbanization. FSZs also provide landowners with greater property tax reductions: a minimum of 33 percent from Proposition 13 values. Twenty five counties have adopted the FSZ program with a total of 837,263 acres now contracted.

Prior to entering into Williamson Act contracts local governments must first create agricultural preserves. Many land use activities are disruptive to and in conflict with the activities necessary to produce food and fiber. Williamson Act contracts and agricultural preserves give local governments, and in some instances the state, a larger say in what land use activities can occur in the agricultural preserves.

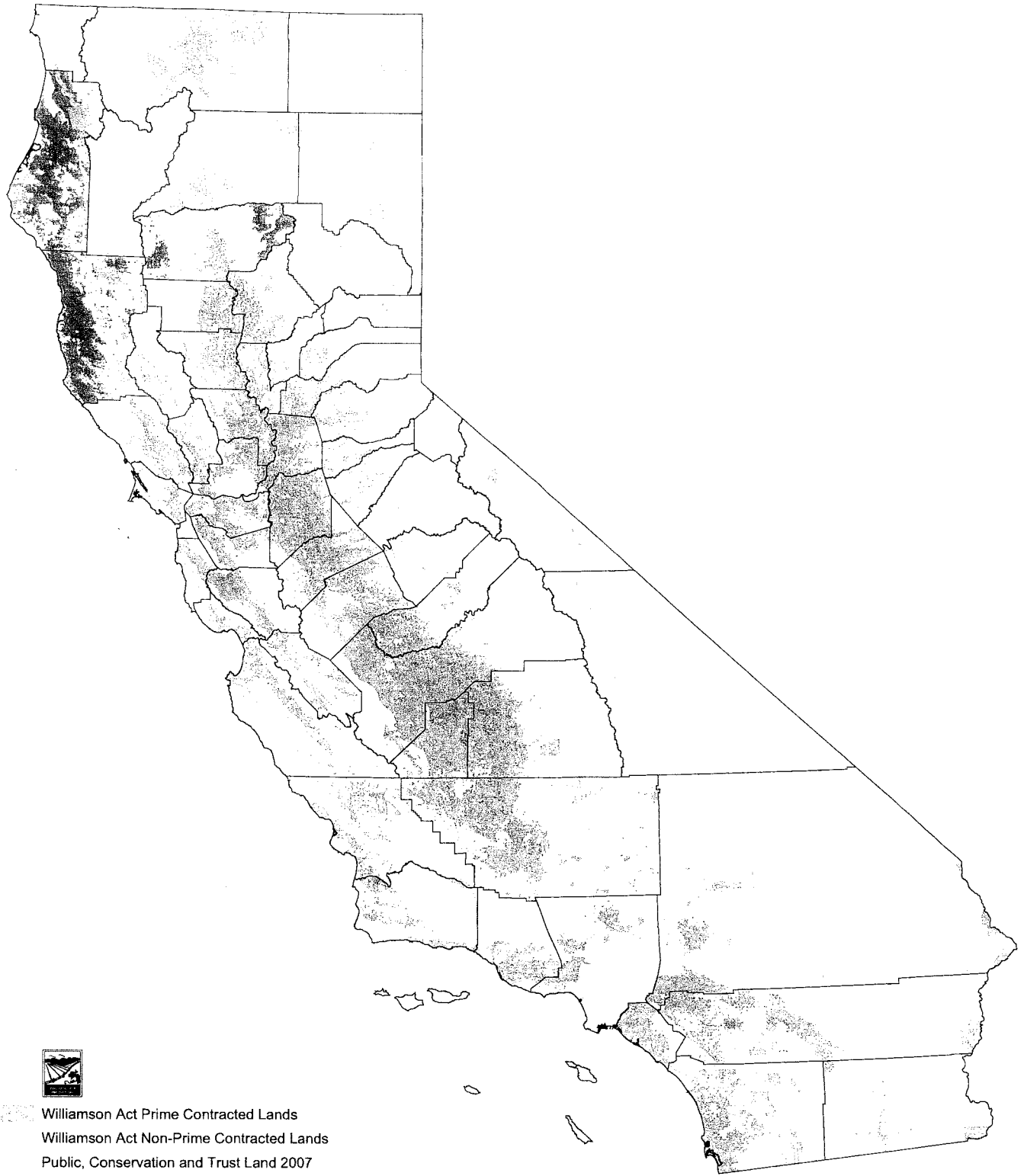
Few places on earth are as naturally endowed for the production of food as California. And fewer yet have managed to develop land from its natural state into productive agricultural land and then to urban uses in such a short period of time. The once world-renowned agricultural counties of Los Angeles, Orange, and Santa Clara are now almost entirely urban. In the 24-year span between 1984 and 2008 that the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program has documented, California's agricultural industry adapted to the loss of over 1.2 million acres of its productive land base, accommodated the growth of 12 million new Californians and yet still managed to more than double direct farm sales from \$15 billion to \$39 billion. By adopting new technologies and shifting to more capital-intensive crops, California agriculture has learned to produce more food on less land. But, as California continues to grow in both its population and its economy, local land use decisions will affect our food security, and the other critical ecosystem services that working lands provide.








For over forty years the California Land Conservation Act has served the purposes it was originally intended to address. According to one University of California study the Act has been an important tool in preventing many agricultural businesses from having to exit the industry because of excess property taxation. The Act has prevented leapfrog development and helped to keep intact large tracts of land that act as important wildlife corridors, as areas of important watershed protection, as future sites for important infrastructure, including potential solar and renewable energy sites. And, as seen in the Chino basin, the Act was part of a long term development pattern that created the possibility of more thoughtful planned communities. The Act is one tool in the tool chest of local planning that has served to bring about a more thoughtful planning process.



Williamson Act Contract Land

Geographic Information System Data to 2008



-  Williamson Act Prime Contracted Lands
-  Williamson Act Non-Prime Contracted Lands
-  Public, Conservation and Trust Land 2007
-  Incorporated City
-  Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program: Urban and Built-up Land
-  Timberland Production District (TPZ)
-  Tribal Lands 2007

Open Space Subvention Act: Annual Entitlements and Enrollment (Fiscal Years 1972 - 2008)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Counties</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Certified Entitlement Amount</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1972-1973	44	11,440,008	\$8,802,668	
1973-1974	45	12,719,389	\$9,683,840	
1974-1975	47	13,742,005	\$10,539,084	
1975-1976	47	14,427,087	\$11,371,706	
1976-1977	47	15,073,341	\$12,166,919	
1977-1978	47	15,625,461	\$12,604,632	
1978-1979	48	16,126,498	\$12,905,683	
1979-1980	48	16,179,417	\$13,214,634	
1980-1981	48	16,222,376	\$13,236,976	
1981-1982	48	16,211,160	\$13,722,636	
1982-1983	48	15,179,233	\$13,474,948	
1983-1984	48	15,381,037	\$13,526,818	
1984-1985	49	15,198,964	\$13,972,332	Mono County was added this fiscal year but no acreage was reported.
1985-1986	49	15,325,502	\$13,822,125	
1986-1987	49	15,455,225	\$14,899,205	
1987-1988	49	15,228,706	\$14,047,226	
1988-1989	49	15,294,451	\$14,468,242	
1989-1990	49	15,304,588	\$19,415,759	Base entitlement was \$14,430,977. Per AB 284, \$4,984,782 was added on to the base entitlement.
1990-1991	49	15,081,495	\$13,563,662	
1991-1992	49	15,051,505	\$14,143,714	
1992-1993	49	14,858,083	\$13,853,041	
1993-1994	49	14,853,860	\$35,062,389	
1994-1995	49	14,786,142	\$34,695,800	
1995-1996	49	14,792,816	\$33,802,466	
1996-1997	49	14,918,126	\$34,838,743	
1997-1998	49	14,901,502	\$34,936,086	
1998-1999	49	15,137,247	\$35,302,200	
1999-2000	49	15,392,812	\$36,583,422	
2000-2001	52	15,936,437	\$36,587,167	Imperial, Merced, and Sutter Counties were added this fiscal year (2000).

Open Space Subvention Act: Annual Entitlements and Enrollment (Fiscal Years 1972 - 2008)

2001-2002	52	16,344,433	\$38,671,039		Alpine County was added this fiscal year (2002) but no acreage was reported.
2002-2003	53	16,504,721	\$38,996,493		
2003-2004	54	16,560,789	\$39,234,597		Modoc County was added this fiscal year (2003) but no acreage was reported. The Enrollment figure includes 657 acres reported by the City of Perris. These 657 acres were <u>not</u> reported (accidentally) in the 2004 Status Report.
2004-2005	54	16,640,193	\$39,209,448		
2005-2006	54	16,581,920	\$38,676,534		
2006-2007	54	16,580,987	\$38,074,070		
2007-2008	54	16,565,519	\$37,648,743		
2008-2009	54	16,583,467	\$33,848,811		The original certified amount was \$37,609,791. The actual certified amount included the 10% reduction per Section 16142 (AB 1389). This reduction was performed by the Controller, not the Dept of Conservation.

*** Please note that the "Certified Entitlement Amounts" are not found in the published, biennial Status Reports.

The Status Reports only contain the subvention claims made by the counties.

In contrast, the "Certified Entitlement Amounts" are the actual amounts paid to the counties (which include payment withholdings, etc).

FARMLAND MAPPING AND MONITORING PROGRAM



Farmland and Open Space in California

The rich land, water, and mild climate that allowed California to become the leading agricultural state in the country have also helped it become one of the most populous and fastest growing states. Decisions are made daily that will determine the quality of both human and natural environments. The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) provides information that supports informed land use decisions in California.

Program Goals and Scope

FMMP's goal is to provide consistent, timely and accurate data to decision makers for use in assessing present status, reviewing trends, and planning for the future of California's agricultural land resources.



Approximately 96% of the privately owned land in the state (48.2 million acres, above) was mapped as of 2006, with Mendocino County the most recent addition. Each map is updated every two years, providing an archive for tracking land use change over time.

Mapping System

Using a geographic information system (GIS), air photos, local comments, and other information, FMMP combines soil quality data and current land use information to produce *Important Farmland Maps*.

Products

FMMP data is available in a number of forms:

Important Farmland Maps, which show the location and extent of *Prime Farmland*, and other agricultural categories, relative to *Urban* areas.

The *California Farmland Conversion Report*, containing statistics and information on how land use has changed during the two-year update cycle. Comparisons to prior-year data are also included.

Field Reports, describing in detail the types of change seen in each county by analysts as the update was conducted.

Digital Products, including the GIS files for each year of mapping. Custom products can be generated to suit the user's requirements.

Uses: Assessment & Incentives

The maps and data are used in environmental studies to assess the impacts of proposed development on agricultural and open space land. FMMP data is also widely used in urbanization and environmental modeling.

FMMP data is used to determine eligibility for enrollment in *Farmland Security Zones**, in which landowners receive substantial property tax benefits for committing to keep their land in agricultural use for 20-year periods.

*www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/LCA/farm_security_zone

FARMLAND MAPPING AND MONITORING PROGRAM

Findings and Program Improvements

Between 1984 and 2006, FMMP documented the loss of more than 1.2 million acres of agricultural and open space land in California, an area larger than the size of Merced County. The majority of that land was converted to urban uses (right).

Prime Farmland, the highest quality agricultural soils, decreased by more than 461,000 acres during this timeframe. This is an area about the size as Contra Costa County.

Other Land, a miscellaneous category that includes disparate uses such as low-density rural residential, mining operations, confined animal agriculture facilities, and ecological restoration areas, grew at about 20% of the rate of urban land. FMMP has begun an effort to document what is happening with the *Other Land* class with the Rural Land Mapping Project. This project is limited to the San Joaquin Valley and Mendocino County until funding for statewide mapping can be made available.

Contact Information

California Department of Conservation
 Division of Land Resource Protection
 Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
 801 K St, MS 18-01
 Sacramento, CA 95814

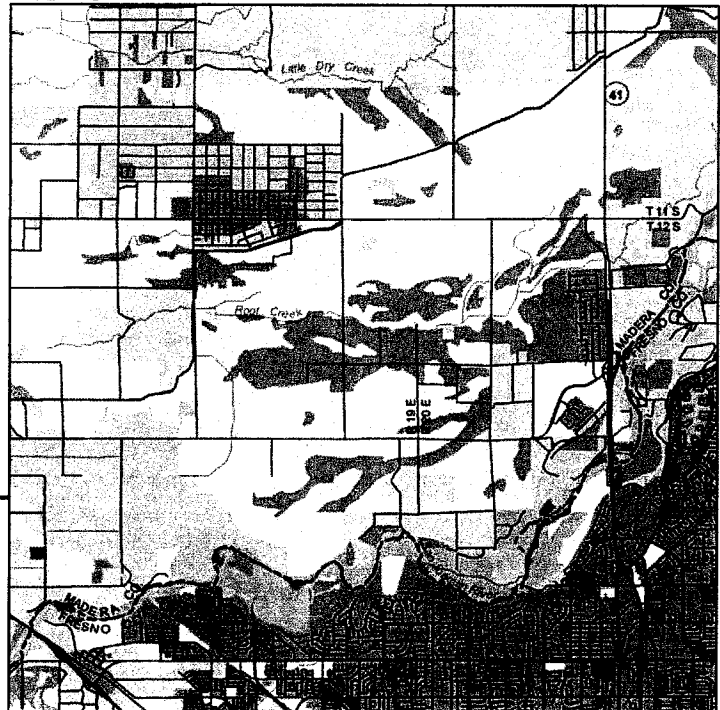
Phone: 916-324-0859
 Fax: 916-327-3430
 Email: fmmp@consrv.ca.gov
www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp



Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program 1984-2006 Conversion Summary

	Total Change	Annual Average
	(acres)	
Irrigated Farmland	-656,134	-32,807
Dryland Farming and Grazing Land	-572,373	-28,619
Urban and Built-up Land	967,682	48,384
Other Land	243,777	12,189
Water (1)	17,622	881

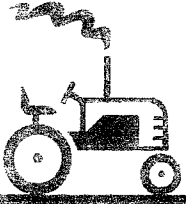
(1) Water increase primarily due to construction of Diamond Valley Reservoir, Lake Sonoma, Los Vaqueros Reservoir, Olivenhain Reservoir, and reclamation of former gravel pits into permanent water bodies in Alameda County.



Newest statewide data:
California Farmland Conversion Report, 2004-2006
 Being released monthly:
2008 County Important Farmland Maps and Statistics

California Farmland Conservancy Program

Focus on Farmland



Volume 7, Number 3

Newsletter of the CFCP

Winter 2010

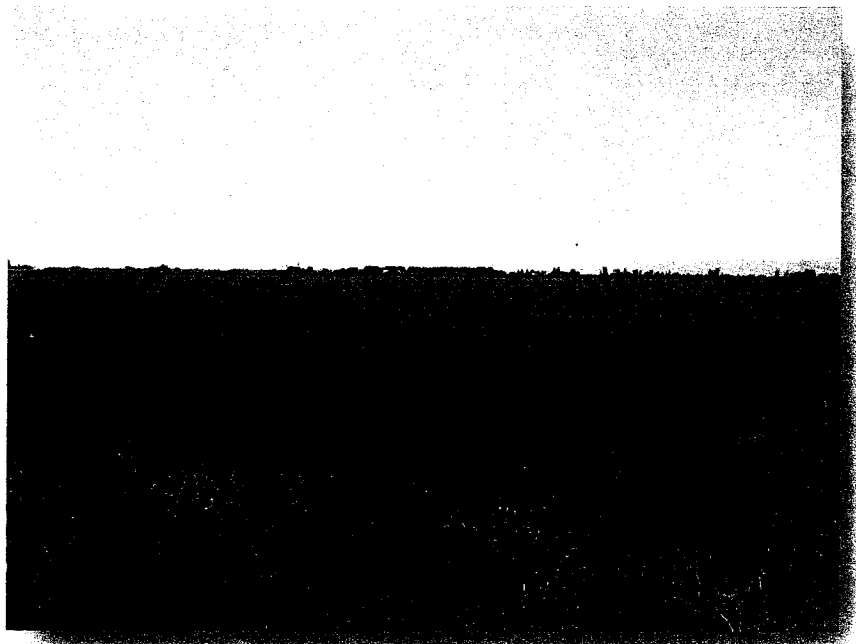
This edition of Focus on Farmland features:

- ❑ Miles and Kidwell Farms Preserved in Solano County
- ❑ Gill and Turri Ranches Preserved in Monterey County
- ❑ Cypress Lane Ranch Preserved in Marin County
- ❑ Laying the groundwork through CFCP Planning Grants
- ❑ CFCP / DOC News Updates
- ❑ Other News and Upcoming Events

Growing the Dixon-Davis Greenbelt: Miles and Kidwell Farms Preserved in Solano County

The Solano Land Trust recently completed a \$4.4 million purchase of the 488-acre Miles/Kidwell agricultural conservation easement. The purchase caps a long-standing effort to preserve the farmland within the Dixon-Davis greenbelt. Partnering in the effort were the California Department of Conservation (DOC), the federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, the cities of Dixon and Davis, and the Solano Land Trust, which will hold the easement. DOC's CFCP contributed \$572,500 toward the ACE purchase.

This is the third farmland easement in the greenbelt to be purchased as part of the conservation plan between the cities of Dixon and Davis, in coordination with the Solano Land Trust. Previously acquired were the 196-acre McConeghy North/Ebey Laughton easement and the 254-acre McConeghy South easement. With the Miles/Kidwell easement purchase, the Dixon-Davis greenbelt now includes 938 acres of protected farmland.



The Miles and Kidwell Farms contain excellent soils that make the area ideal for growing a variety of crops, including winter wheat (above). Photo courtesy of Solano Land Trust.

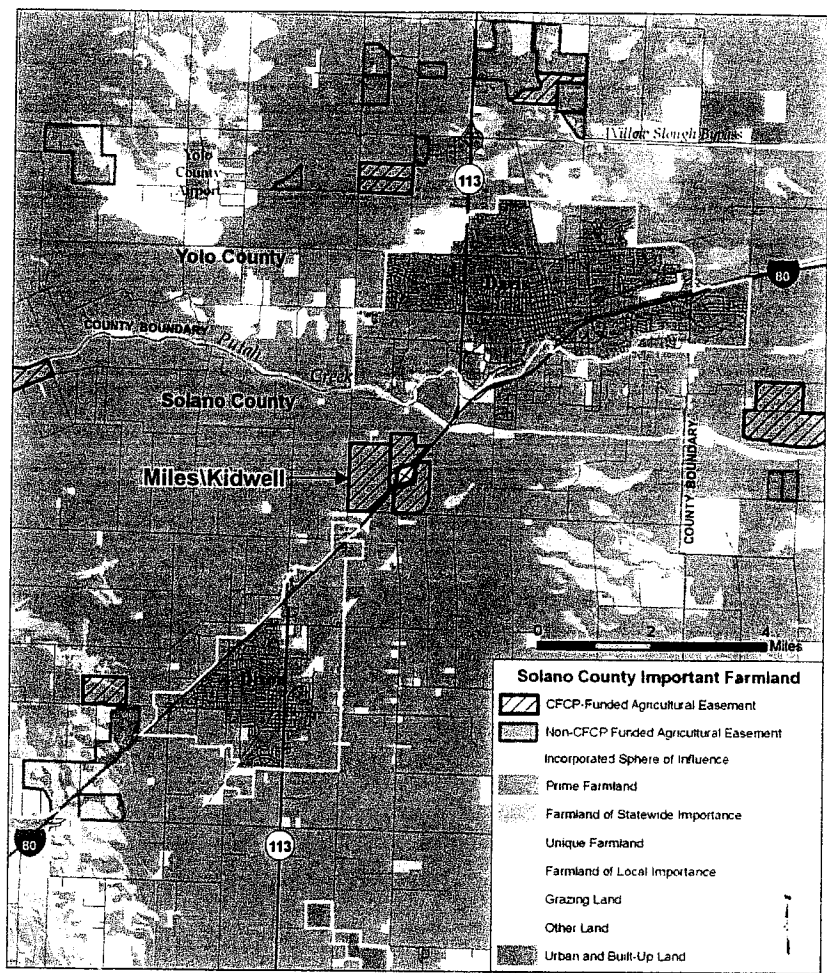
The greenbelt is located in Solano County between the cities of Dixon and Davis along the Interstate 80 corridor. The two cities have been working for several years to preserve land between their borders. This land is classified as Prime Farmland by DOC's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), making it ideal for growing various row crops, including alfalfa, ryegrass, wheat, tomatoes, corn, and sunflowers. The Kidwell family historically owned and farmed both the Miles and Kidwell farms. In conjunction with this easement, the current owner of the Kidwell farm repurchased the Miles Farm so it could become part of a single easement-protected farm.

The Solano Land Trust and cities of Dixon and Davis have long recognized the potential for intense development pressure in this area. In recent years, it has been an attractive location for rural residential development due to its close proximity to large population centers in San Francisco and Sacramento.

"We congratulate both the Solano Land Trust and the landowners on the completion of this project," Department of Conservation Director Bridgett Luther said in a press release, "and we encourage other Solano County landowners to consider the agricultural conservation easement option for their properties."

As of 2007, Solano ranked No. 28 among California counties in total agricultural production at about \$268 million. Despite the efforts of local government and organizations to preserve Solano County's agricultural heritage, nearly 2,750 acres of farmland and grazing land were reclassified to non-agricultural use from 2006 to 2008, according to DOC's FMMP.

The Solano Land Trust has protected over 19,000 acres of land in Solano County since 1986, including nearly 7,000 acres of farms and ranches. See the Solano Land Trust website for more information: www.solanolandtrust.org.



The 488-acre agricultural conservation easement on the Miles and Kidwell Farms is located directly north of I-80.

Gill and Turri Ranches are Preserved in Monterey County

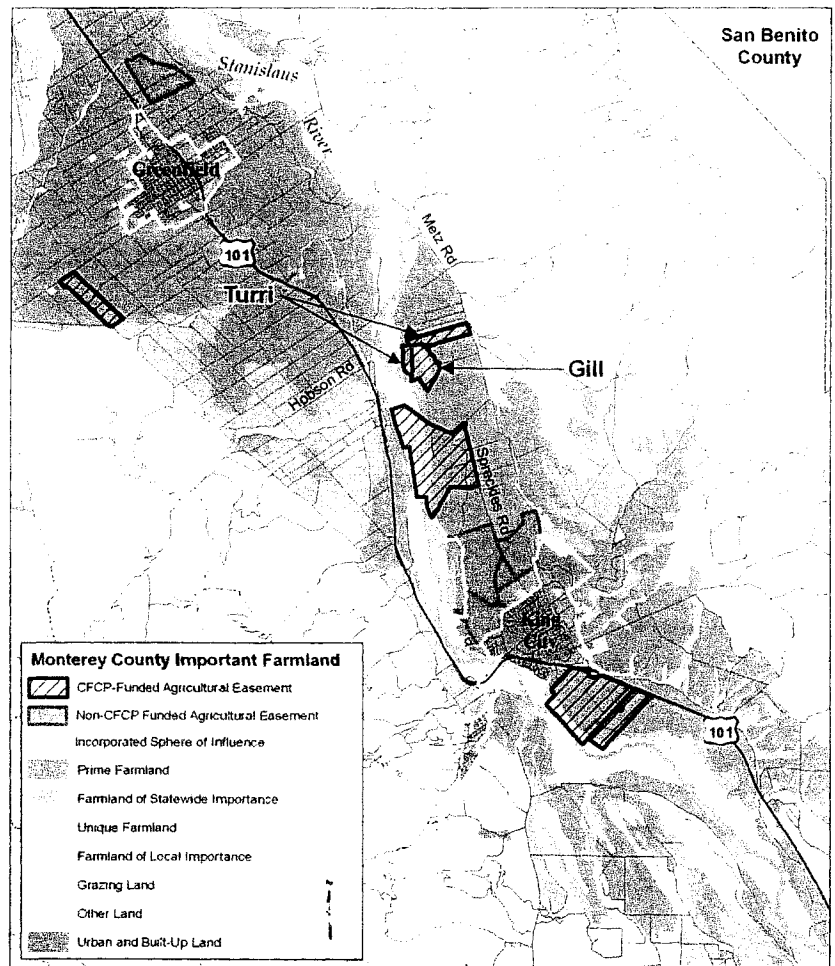
Two productive farms north of King City have been permanently preserved for agriculture by the Monterey-based Ag Land Trust and California Department of Conservation (DOC). The two ranches – Gill Ranch and Turri Ranch -- grow all the typical crops of the area, including lettuce, spinach and carrots. The Gill Ranch is 159 acres; Turri Ranch is 166 acres.

The Turri and Gill ranches – adjacent but separately owned – were advanced as a single conservation effort by the Ag Land Trust. Separate conservation easements were customized and recorded for each property. DOC's CFCP contributed \$1,057,000 to ensure the properties will never be developed.

Working with the Ag Land Trust, the CFCP has funded 34 agricultural conservation easements comprising 6,739 acres of farmland in Monterey County since 1998. Nearly all of the preserved land is classified as Prime Farmland.

Historically, King City has grown both to the north and south on Prime Farmland. The group of agricultural easements that has been created in the area is designed to encourage future growth toward the east, toward lower-quality farmland.

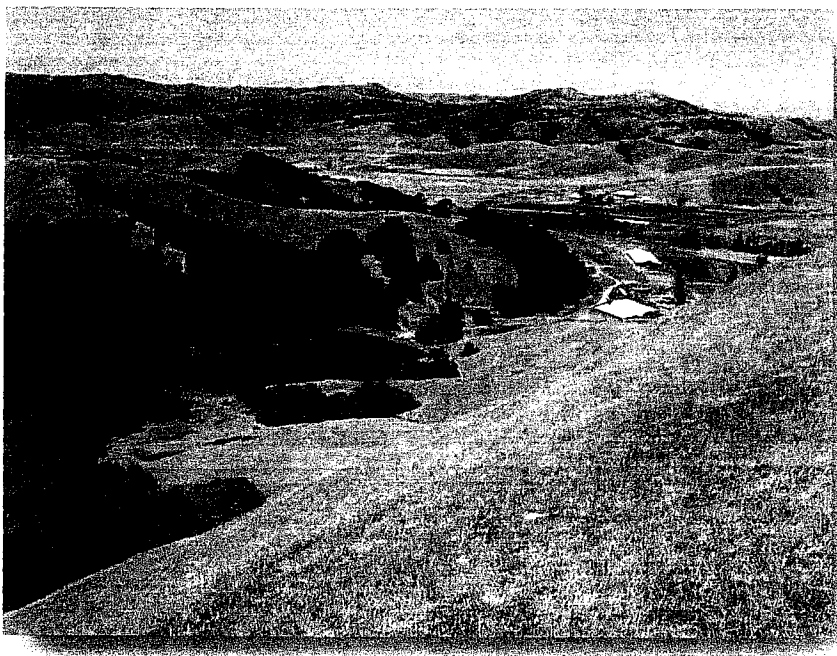
Formally known as the Monterey County Agricultural and Historical Land Conservancy, the Ag Land Trust was founded in 1984. This nonprofit organization focuses on preserving farmland and benefitting the farmers who make their living from that land. The Ag Land Trust has exceeded the milestone of 20,000 acres in recorded conservation easements. The organization estimates the value of the crops from these protected properties exceeds \$200 million per year. For more information, please visit www.aglandconservancy.org.



The Turri and Gill ranches – adjacent but separately owned -- grow all the typical crops of the area, including lettuce, spinach and carrots

Cypress Lane Ranch Preserved in Marin County

Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT), with financial assistance from the Department of Conservation's California Farmland Conservancy Program and the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has purchased an agricultural conservation easement on the 772-acre Cypress Lane Ranch. Members of the Spaletta family have owned the dairy property since 1932. The ranch is located in the picturesque Hick's Valley along two of the major driving routes into West Marin. Due to its proximity to Petaluma and Highway 101, Hick's Valley is among the areas in West Marin that are most susceptible to conversion to non-agricultural estate properties.



The Spaletta's dairy operation is served by two reservoirs on the property, one of which is visible here.

"Protecting the land so this productive dairy can continue operation is an example of how MALT works with ranching families to find a conservation alternative to the sale or development of the land," said Robert Berner, Executive Director of MALT.

Under the terms of the agricultural conservation easement, the development rights have been extinguished and the land can never be subdivided. MALT paid the appraised value of \$2,495,000 for the easement. The Department of Conservation and NRCS provided grants to MALT of \$831,667 each for the project. The remaining third of the funds was raised from MALT members and supporters.

One of only 28 dairies remaining in Marin County (down from 100 dairies in the 1970s), the Spaletta's dairy is one of the largest in the county, currently milking 600 cows (Marin County average is 409 cows per dairy). In addition to the dairy operation, the Spaletta family raises replacement heifers, silage and hay on the ranch and on 1,400 acres of adjacent land under long-term lease. Approximately 145 acres of the easement property is irrigated and used to produce silage for the dairy operation.

The property has great strategic importance due to its location and high visibility. The eastern property border is defined by the Point Reyes Petaluma Road and the southern boundary is defined by Novato Boulevard. The property is easily visible from both roads and contributes to the agricultural contiguity of the area.

Marin Agricultural Land Trust is a member-supported, nonprofit organization created in 1980 by a coalition of ranchers and environmentalists to permanently preserve Marin County farmland. Some of the Bay Area's most highly acclaimed dairy products and organic crops are produced on farmland protected by MALT conservation easements, which total more than 41,500 acres on 64 family farms, representing nearly 40 percent of the farmland in the county. To learn more about Marin's family farms and the food they produce, visit www.malt.org.

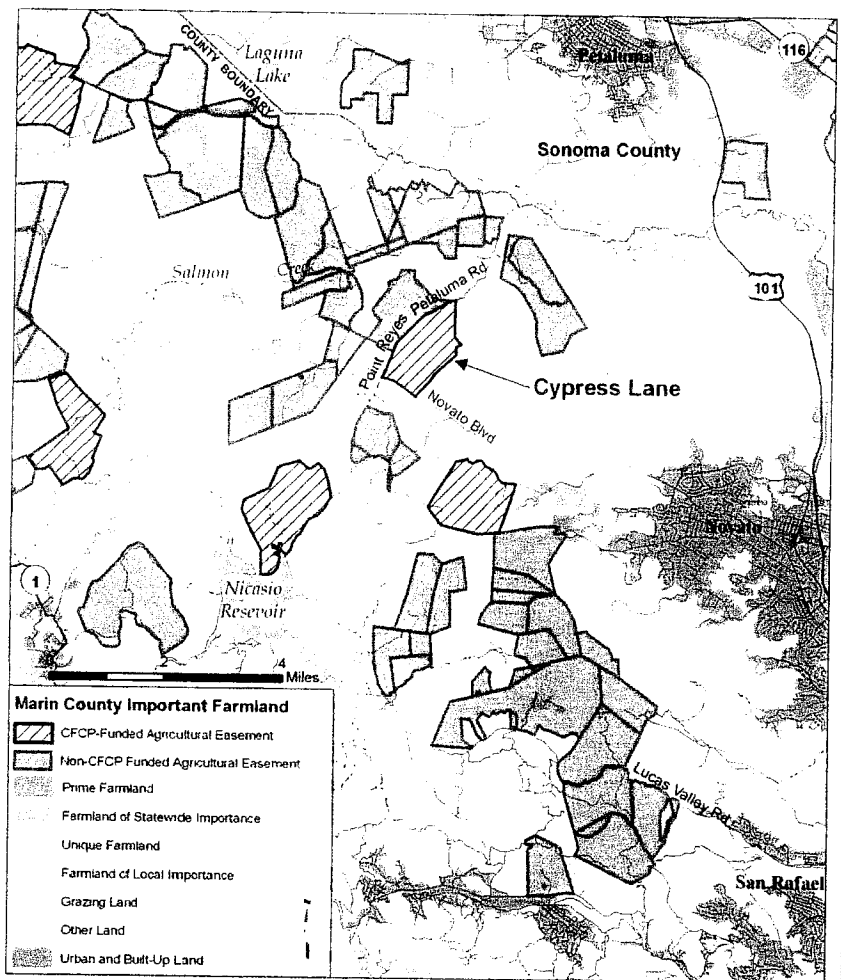
Laying the Groundwork Through CFCP Planning Grants

The California Farmland Conservancy Program has recently completed a number of planning grants with land trusts. The grants facilitated local agricultural land conservation initiatives and are summarized below.

Central Valley Farmland Trust: Agricultural Conservation Easement Planning for the Mid-Central Valley

The Central Valley Farmland Trust (CVFT) recently completed a two-year planning grant that had three objectives: updating strategic agricultural conservation easement (ACE) priority plans for Merced, Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus Counties; providing outreach to targeted landowners in these priority plan areas; and developing ACE projects with landowners in the high priority areas.

After the landowner outreach was complete, 20 farm properties were inspected for future project potential, and of these 20 properties, CVFT brought forward 12 potential ACE projects for further consideration by funders. In all, 10 grant applications were submitted to CFCP and other funders. Of these 10 applications, six ACE projects, totaling 660 acres, were funded as a result of the efforts put forth in this planning grant. Several of the remaining projects are pending approval.



Prominently located on Point Reyes-Petaluma Road at its intersection with Novato Boulevard, the Cypress Lane Ranch is now part of a greenbelt of protected historic farmland on the road leading to Petaluma.

California Council of Land Trusts: Capturing Opportunity, Facilitating Farmland Preservation Project

The California Council of Land Trusts (CCLT) completed this planning grant in coordination with the Sierra-Cascade Land Trust Council. Conducted at the statewide level, this planning grant had two primary objectives. The first objective was to provide outreach and education on the new federal tax incentives under the Pension Protection Act (PPA) of 2006. To that end, CCLT and legal experts in the field of tax incentives provided outreach and education to interested land trusts, attorneys, financial advisors, and appraisers throughout California. The land trusts in turn provided outreach to landowners in their area to develop donated or bargain sale agricultural conservation easements.

The second objective was to provide support for the transaction costs associated with facilitating donated or bargain sale conservation easements benefiting from the federal income tax incentives that increase the tax deductibility of qualified donations of interest in land. With CFCP funding, CCLT's facilitated six donated or bargain sale agricultural conservation easements with a total of 3,055 acres protected in 2007 through 2008. All six conservation easements took advantage of the new federal tax incentives.

Although the bulk of CFCP grant awards are for agricultural conservation easement acquisitions, the program also offers planning and technical assistance grants that support agricultural land conservation and easement acquisition work. Activities and costs that may be supported through overall conservation planning work may include appraisals, surveys, title review, staff and consultant costs, and other costs directly related to bringing agricultural conservation easements to the acquisition stage. CFCP planning grant funds are one of the few sources of seed money to translate landowner interest in agricultural conservation easements into actual conservation projects. For more information about CFCP planning grants, please visit our [Website](#).

Other News:

California Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) Sign-up Announced. Proposals for 2010 funding consideration under FRPP are being accepted until February 15, 2010. This voluntary program assists eligible organizations to purchase conservation easements that ensure agricultural lands remain in production and are not subdivided. The highest-quality parcels will be selected for funding to the extent FRPP resources are available. Ranking and selection of parcels will take place immediately after the February 15 sign-up, and funds will be obligated by April 1, 2010. For further information contact Jessica Groves, Easement Programs Specialist, at 530-792-5604 or e-mail Jessica.Groves@ca.usda.gov. Information is also available on the NRCS website at: <http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp.html>.

Internet Resource: The Land Trust Alliance has temporarily posted on its website materials, presenters, and speeches from the National Land Conservation Conference: Rally 2009 in Portland, OR. For a direct link to the materials click [here](#), or click through Rally 2009/Rally in Review/Materials.

CFCP / DOC News Updates:

Budget Update: The Governor's release of his proposed 2010-11 Budget includes \$7.9 million in local assistance funding for the CFCP. These funds represent a reauthorization of Proposition 40 funds that had previously been appropriated for grants by the CFCP. The ongoing prohibition in making new bond-funded grants prevented the program from being able to commit these funds prior to their June 30, 2009 sunset date, and therefore necessitates gaining new funding authorization.

Upcoming Events:

The California Council of Land Trusts is hosting the Annual California Land Trust Conference on March 2 & 3 in Sacramento. The annual conference features conservation news, information, advocacy and networking opportunities with land trust and public agency colleagues. For more information please visit www.calandtrusts.org.

Save the Date: The Great Valley Center's Annual Conference, "Valley Up: Ideas, Innovation, and Inspiration" will be held on May 6 & 7 in Modesto. This year's theme focuses on regional change and real life solutions that will help the Central Valley's economy as it begins to rebound. To learn more about this event, please visit www.greatvalley.org/conference.

The 2010 Spring Ag Outlook Conference of the California Chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers will be held Thursday, March 25th at the Marriott Visalia. "A New Era for California Agriculture" will bring an informative program and roster of speakers to the south valley in addition to the release of the 2010 Trends in Agricultural Land & Lease Values publication. A complete program and on-line registration will be available in early 2010. For more details, please visit www.calasfmra.com.

The California Farmland Conservancy Program, administered by Department of Conservation's Division of Land Resource Protection, is designed to ensure that the state's most valuable farmland can be preserved. Through the program, local governments and nonprofit organizations can receive grants to purchase development rights from willing landowners, thus creating permanent conservation easements.

We hope you've found this issue of *Focus on Farmland* useful and informative. Please contact us with any questions or ideas you have for future editions. Feel free to forward this email to other interested parties.

If you wish to be added to or removed from this mailing list, email cfcf@conservation.ca.gov.

California Farmland Conservancy Program



Manager: Charles Tyson
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Sacramento, CA 95814
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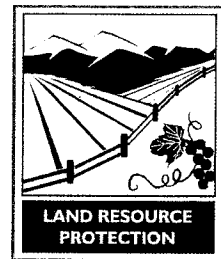
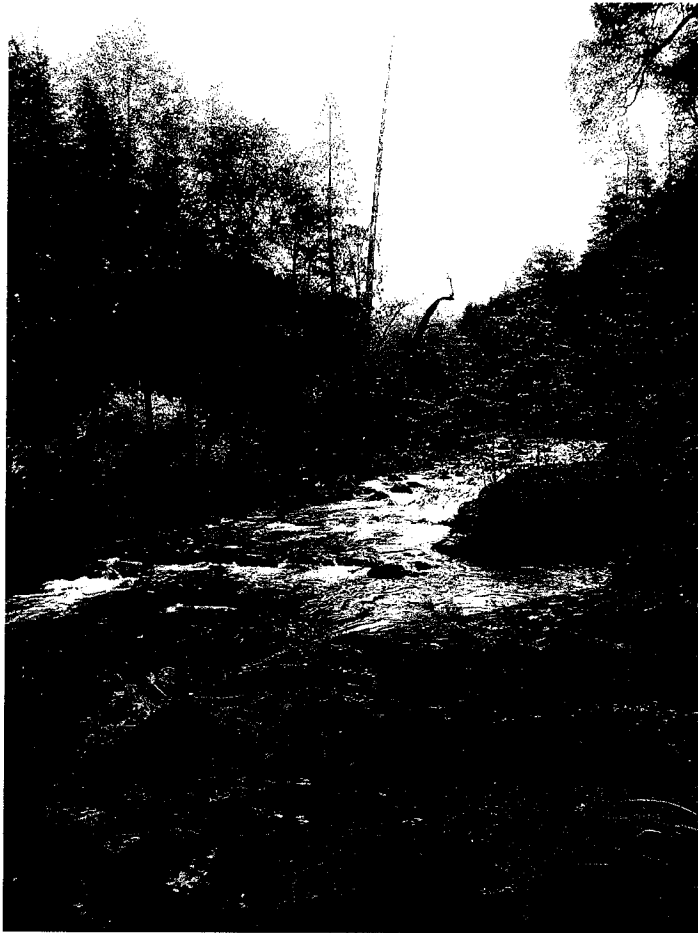
2004 - 2007 Watershed Coordinator Grant Program

Final Report Errata Sheet

Although every effort was made to avoid errors in the Final Report, occasional mistakes exist. The table below lists the known corrections.

Report Section	Correction
2004 - 2007 Overview: Acquiring Watershed Funding - (pie chart legend) Overall Funding	<i>Matching Funds Secured: Total = \$49,817,403</i>
Contra Costa RCD	<i>Funds raised: Local = \$93,679</i>
El Dorado Irrigation District	<i>Funds raised: Local = \$30,000 Funds raised: Total = \$653,236</i>
Friends of Deer Creek	<i>Contact Information: 132 Main Street, Nevada City, CA 95959 (530) 265-6090</i>
San Francisquito JPA	<i>Funds raised: Local = \$4,261,000</i>
Tehama County RCD	<i>Funds raised: Federal = \$120,340 Funds raised: State = \$398,820</i>
West Lake RCD	<i>Funds raised: Total = \$876,349</i>
Western Shasta RCD	<i>Funds raised: Total = \$2,619,892</i>
Yolo County RCD	<i>Matched Funding. Funds raised: no breakdown available</i>

**2004 - 2007
Department of Conservation
Watershed Coordinator Grant Program Report**



**Final Report
July 1, 2008**

**California Bay - Delta Authority
Interagency Agreement #4600002373**

Department of Conservation Watershed Coordinator Grant Program Report 2004 - 2007 Overview

The Watershed Coordinator Grant Program (WCGP) was established by the Legislature in the Budget Act of 2000 to fund Watershed Coordinator positions throughout the state. The purpose of the program was to improve impaired watersheds throughout California by providing support for watershed improvement efforts at a local level. This highly successful program demonstrates that Watershed Coordinators are very effective and extremely valuable. By facilitating collaboration among diverse stakeholders across the watershed, coordinators were able to build coalitions for watershed work with thousands of partners including government agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses, landowners, and individuals. In addition to building consensus, the coordinators contributed significantly to the success of many other state programs including the CALFED Watershed Program, CDFA noxious weed programs, CDFFP fire safe programs, IWMB Farm and Ranch Clean Up Program, SWQCB Water Quality Grant Programs and DFG salmon enhancement programs. Using a coordinated, local approach to watershed planning and management resulted in highly successful and sustainable watershed improvements.

Statewide Benefits of the Program

Because of the work of the coordinators, thousands of citizens and hundreds of private firms and public agencies that had not previously been involved with watershed management plans or improvement projects are now involved and actively engaged at the local level. Also, over \$47 million in additional funding has been acquired for watershed improvement projects statewide. All of this contributes to improving the overall health of the state's watersheds throughout the Bay-Delta. Some of the additional funding obtained for on-the-ground projects will result in watershed improvements for years to come.

Further, this program is one part of an overall strategy for watershed management in California, and should not be viewed in isolation. A statewide study of watershed partnerships conducted by the Resources Agency and the State Water Resources Control Board found that a key gap in watershed management was in building the local capacity to develop and implement projects. The WCGP, if implemented over the long term, would work to fill that gap.

Coordinators are Crucial for Successful Watershed Improvements.

Prior to the WCG program, relatively few of the state's watersheds had a Watershed Coordinator position identified and funded. For those few, results had been impressive, and those that were subsequently funded by the WCGP have been very successful. As the program has progressed, it has become increasingly apparent that stakeholder awareness, consensus building and funding of projects is almost prohibitively difficult without a Watershed Coordinator position. Over the past several years, state government has designed bond funding and major programs, such as CALFED, that focus on locally-led solutions to resource issues on a watershed basis. And very few of these programs, if any, fund positions rather than strictly on-the-ground projects. Without funded Watershed Coordinator positions, many of these programs will find it difficult to get their grant dollars to local groups and have successful projects. Also, many watersheds will not be able to acquire funding offered by state, federal or private grant programs for watershed improvements without the availability of a coordinator.

Highly Level of Accountability

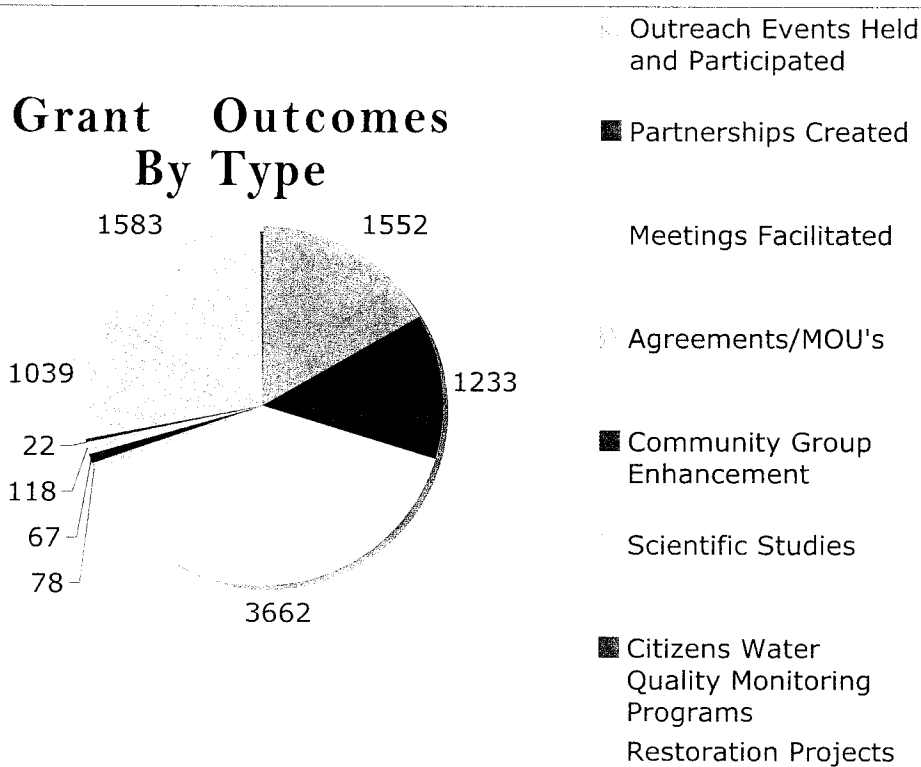
The Watershed Coordinator Grant Program is one of the few in the state that requires performance measures for grantees. Grantees are required to report quarterly progress on performance measures. As part of the management of the grant program, the DOC staff maintains regular contact with the Watershed Coordinators and conducts field visits to monitor progress on work plans and program objectives. Throughout the state, coordinators have confirmed that the program fulfills a great need.

Acting locally to Solve Statewide Problems

By working on local high intensity problems within their watersheds, The Watershed Coordinators provide local solutions to statewide problems. The accumulated impact of local action is a cleaner, healthier, more intact environment for the State of California. Over 1039 on the ground restoration projects were accomplished by the Watershed Coordinators. Projects included 409 native plantings or invasive species removals, 132 community clean-up events, 68 storm water pollution reduction projects and 353 individualized conservation plans for local landowners.

Providing Scientific Information to Lead Habitat Restoration

Scientific analysis of watershed issues allows for a sound prioritization of watershed efforts. This leads to an efficient use of watershed energies, resources, and finances. Unlike other grant programs, the Watershed Coordinator grant allows the Coordinators to gather the needed scientific data to provide the highest quality results and an efficient use of taxpayer dollars. Over 115 studies were completed during the three years of the grant program. 34 water quality data sets were collected, 13 vegetation maps were created, 15 watershed assessments were completed, and 12 watershed inventories were compiled. This effort led to a better use of money to support local restoration efforts.



Educating Citizens to Protect their own Watershed

Private landowners play a key role in protecting the watershed. Unfortunately many do not know what to do to create an environmentally friendly property. Watershed Coordinators work with all the landowners in their watershed to provide the information residents need to make a positive impact. Watershed Coordinators held 887 public outreach events including land management workshops, watershed celebrations, landscaping demonstrations, community forums, and restoration activities. To increase the effectiveness of outreach activities, the Watershed Coordinators created and distributed 1583 publications. Publications included 709 newspaper articles, 758 educational brochures and fliers, 61 technical documents and 13 informational documents. Educating the local stakeholders provides a more informed citizenry that is better able to protect its resources, prevent future problems, and effectively manage future problems as they arise.

Partnerships

Watershed Coordinators have built extensive networks of partnerships among community stakeholders and have facilitated collaborative decision-making between diverse private and public entities. They have developed an understanding of issues relevant to their local watersheds and have become an important resource to their communities. It has taken time to integrate themselves into the community, develop relationships, and establish a reputation for being reliable and getting things done. Over a period of years, the coordinators have developed an understanding of the watershed and how to best address local issues. After many years of persistent effort, momentum has grown and progress has accelerated dramatically.

Watershed Coordinators have made over 1230 partnerships, reached over 71,000 people, held over 3650 meetings, created and supported 67 community groups, and signed 78 cooperative agreements.



Creative Impacts

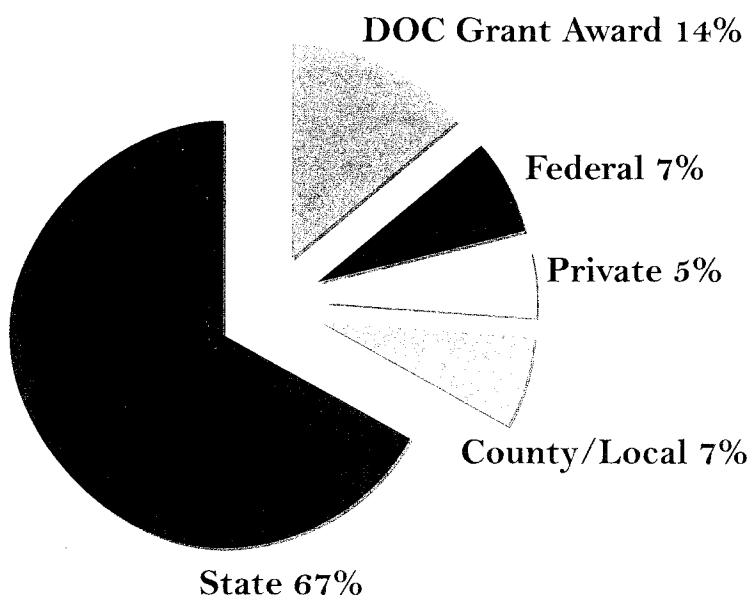
Because Watershed Coordinators work in local communities, they find creative solutions to traditional problems. Some of the creative projects not included in other categories include: a History of Water exhibit at the Pasadena Museum of History, building a native plant nursery, Native Plant Sales, Storm Drain Marking on 3000 Storm Drains, having Lodi designated a "sustainable city", Youth Summit, Summer River Camp Program, Smokey Firesafe village at the Tehama county fairgrounds, Lending libraries of watershed info, watershed signage and Watershed poster competitions.



Acquiring Watershed Funding

The acquisition of additional funding to carry out planning and on-the-ground watershed projects is one of the most important successes of the WCGP. As the grants only cover the salary for coordinators and not project costs, funding for on-the-ground watershed improvement projects must be obtained by the coordinators through grant writing, match or fund raising. So far, the coordinators have been responsible for obtaining in excess of \$47 million in grants, contributions and matching funds to carry out future watershed work. The coordinators, through their grant efforts, have made locally-based organizations the prime delivery mechanism for

many state agency programs, such as numerous CALFED Programs, the Department of Fish and Game's Coastal Salmon Program, the Department of Water Resources' Urban Streams Restoration Program and numerous other state programs. Without the WCGP, funds for these and other important programs may have gone unallocated or may have been transferred to other government agencies. Without the coordinators, it would have been more difficult for state agencies to meet their goals of funding and implementing locally-based watershed improvement projects.



Overall Funding 614% Matched Funding

Program Grant Awards 7,780,535

Matching Funds Secured

Federal	4,115,488
State	38,425,498
County/ Local	4,194,873
Private	3,081,544
Total	47,806,332

Alpine County

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 1
State Assembly
District 4



170% Matched Funding

Grant Award: \$138,473

Funds raised:	
Federal	0
State	128,000
Local	72,000
Private	35,745
Total	235,745

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Restored 5 Acres of floodplain

Created erosion control BMP's for roads within the county

Make a Splash Day" Educated over 150 5th graders about water related issues

Trained 18 volunteer Citizen Water Quality Monitors

Field annual Creek Day events, involving over 400 community members improved over 1000 ft of streambank integrity

Planted over 250 native plants and native seed in restoration of riparian areas

PARTNERS

Sierra Nevada Alliance
Central Sierra RC&D
Carson WSD
USFS
BLM
SWRCB
El Dorado Irrigation District
Washoe Tribe in Woodfords
PG&E
Kirkwood Home Tour
CADFG
National Forest Service
RDC
Diamond Valley High School
Alpine Historical Society
High Sierra Flycasters
Local Stakeholders
Tahoe Sierra IRWMP
Bear Valley Residents Inc.
Rose Foundation
SYRCL
Friends of Hope Valley
California State Parks
Rose Foundation
Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Woodfords High School
and many more

Water Quality and Education in Alpine County

"A full-time coordinator has: enhanced watershed community capacity; developed and refined watershed assessments and plans; implemented discrete watershed restoration activities; strengthened the already diverse stakeholder partnerships of the Group; led local education and outreach activities; implemented monitoring and assessment protocols that are based on sound science; inspired a long-term commitment to watershed protection and, most importantly, improved water quality in the Upper American, Upper Stanislaus, and Upper Mokelumne headwaters, which are all tributaries to the Bay-Delta System." The Alpine County Watershed Coordinator raised over \$235,000 toward the improvement of the upper watershed while providing valuable services to the watershed and the communities that rely on it. He focused on gathering water quality information and engaging the community around the water in their backyard. In addition to training citizen volunteers on water quality, he provided a basic water education to all the 5th graders in the county giving them a chance to literally "make a splash." Citizens educated on water issues make better water decisions, which is something we can't afford to live without in these times of increasing water scarcity.

Alpine County Creek Day

Helping citizens see their impact on their local creek is the best way to prevent future pollution. The Alpine Watershed Coordinator got people out and involved in their watershed. With an educational forum, hands on restoration activities, and fun for the whole family, alpine county got a close up look at the mess in their backyard. Over

200 feet of stream bank were cleaned and restored annually including the removal of large amounts of trash. When it was done, the creek looked a lot more like a creek and a lot less like a garbage dump. With less garbage and more intact banks, we all have cleaner drinking water.

Erosion Control Workshops

Building can send a significant amount of sediment and debris directly into our rivers and streams, especially in mountainous regions. Sediment affects the homes animals live in and the water we drink. Fortunately, with basic practices, dirt contamination can be kept to a minimum. The Alpine Watershed Coordinator worked with over 35 builders to make sure they were up to date on the latest methods and techniques to keep dirt where it belongs - on the ground.

Markleeville Creek

High Sierra Fly Casters Volunteers, local high schools and citizens came together to restore this highly sensitive area. Non-native vegetation and trash were removed and then volunteers planted over 250 native plants and spread over 60 pounds of seed to restore the newly-cleaned area. Birds, animals, and native plants are returning to the area and the ecosystem is functioning a lot more normally. In addition, the volunteers now have a special connection to their very own place in the watershed.

Contact Info:

17300 State Route 89,
Markleeville, CA 96120
(530) 694-2327

www.alpinecounty.ca.com

State Senate
District 21, 22, 24 & 29
State Assembly
District 44 & 45

Arroyo Seco Foundation

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

**1487%
Matched
Funding**

Grant Award: \$214,360

Funds raised:	
Federal	0
State	2,522,000
Local	652,000
Private	35,000
Total	3,189,000

Water Conservation Exhibits Great Success!

"The Arroyo Seco Foundation is grateful to the California Department of Conservation for providing us with financial support to make possible the Arroyo Seco Watershed Coordination Program (ASWC). ASWC has been a great value to our region in the past three and a half years, allowing the Arroyo Seco Watershed to develop a strong organizational base for conservation and better watershed management. We have been able to develop stakeholder and agency organizational vehicles, secure almost \$3 million in additional funding, and win prestigious awards such as the Nahai Water Quality Award from the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. The DOC grant has propelled restoration and watershed management work forward in a key region of Southern California." The Arroyo Seco Watershed Coordinator has made public outreach on water efficiency a primary goal of his efforts. Water efficiency in Southern California helps reduce the pressure on local utilities to provide water resources to this growing community and reduces drawdown on the Bay-Delta ecosystem. It is a win-win for the entire State of California. Through creative outreach, intensive fund raising, and practical, on-the-ground projects, Arroyo Seco has made a huge difference in the way Southern California sees and uses valuable water resources.

Creating History

Reaching audiences can be challenging, especially when the subject is water. Arroyo Seco used creative means to get the message across that Southern California needs to reduce its water impact. A partnership with the Pasadena History Museum and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California allowed Arroyo Seco to get the message out in a locally significant way. A "Water History" exhibit at the museum



provided a forum for local people to relearn about water and to discuss water issues with experts. Creative education techniques are helping locals rethink their water use.

Rain Gardens

Homeowners often do not realize that they have a significant impact on their rivers and streams every time it rains. Rain gardens keep water on property rather than letting dirt, chemicals, debris and valuable water slip into the storm drain and into our waterways. However, most people are not familiar with rain gardens or do not know how to create them. The Arroyo Seco Watershed Coordinator recognized this problem as an opportunity and rallied the community to create a demonstration rain garden in a local park complete with signage and how-to directions. Public forums were held to assist local landowners in creating a rain garden of their own.

Cleaning up a Canyon

LA residents learn to love their local canyon as an opportunity for outdoor recreation. The Watershed Coordinator organized local volunteers to get out and clean up the canyon. In addition to removing large quantities of trash, the volunteers stabilized trails, removed invasive species and planted native plants. The local park is now a source of pride and personal accomplishment throughout the watershed.

Contact Info:

539 E. Villa St. #2
Pasadena, CA 91101
(626) 792-2442
www.aroyoseco.org

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Created a "Water History" exhibit at the Pasadena Museum of History and information events at the exhibit

Five public forums on Bay Delta Issues

50 presentations to public forums reaching over 8000 people

Received Nahai Water Quality Award

9 workshops for water retention reaching over 150 people

Raised 2.7 million dollars to support Arroyo Seco Ecosystem Study

Engaged 500 volunteers

Water efficient landscaping workshops in high water-use areas

Rose Bowl Stream Restoration program to treat storm water runoff

PARTNERS

- LA Co. Public Works Dept
- Pasadena Water & Power Company
- Valley Water Company
- Raymond Basin Management Board
- North East Trees
- Highland Park Heritage Trust
- Audubon Center
- Altadena Watershed Committee
- LA Bureau of Sanitation
- Army Corps of Engineers
- Friends of the LA River
- National Parks Service
- Pasadena Public Works Department
- California Art Club
- Pasadena Museum of History

Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 4
State Assembly
District 2

756%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$87,918

Funds raised:	
Federal	0
State	635,980
Local	19,490
Private	10,000
Total	665,470



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Created Stream Condition Monitoring Plan to gather data on Battle Creek water quality

Worked to reduce sediment loads by paving unused roads in the upper watershed decommissioned

Continued management, restoration and community education on CALFED's Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project

Held 7 workshops to educate landowners on resource management practices

Held 4 community meetings with over 400 people in attendance to address community resource concerns

Created watershed signage to educate the public as they come in and out of the watershed

Distributed 10 education fliers to inform the public of pressing concerns

PARTNERS

Lassen National Forest
Tehama County RCD
Greater Battle Creek Watershed Working Group
Sierra Pacific Industries
CAL FIRE
Tehama-Glenn Fire Safe Council
Manton Fire Safe Council
USFWS
DFG
DWR
CRWQCB
The Nature Conservancy

Community Supports Restoration Efforts

"Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy (BCWC) continues to play an important role in the assessment, monitoring, and implementation of projects that protect the anadromous waters of Battle Creek including helping watershed landowners protect water quality and riparian areas. The BCWC Watershed Coordinator has played an important role facilitating collaboration and building consensus to successfully fund and implement these projects." The Watershed Coordinator has played a key role in identifying restoration needs and then reaching out to the public to find creative solutions to local problems. Community action has been critical to the continued success of CALFED's Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project as well as the continued salience of the Battle Creek Watershed. The community is much more aware of their role in the watershed and now takes a more active role in the protection of its resources thanks to the work of the Watershed Coordinator.

CALFED's Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project

BCWC has played an important role in protecting the spawning grounds of endangered anadromous fish populations. By finding resources, raising community awareness, and providing on-the-ground restoration work, the anadromous fish of Battle Creek are one step closer to recovery.

Stream Condition Monitoring

The Watershed Coordinator worked with local community members, and government agencies to create a stream condition

monitoring program. Citizens are now more aware of their local creek and the watershed group can now identify high need areas for restoration creating a maximum return on invested time, money and energy.

Community Education

The Watershed Coordinator held 7 workshops and 4 community meetings; distributed 10 different informational fliers; created signage identifying watershed boundaries; met with countless local agencies; and outreached to landowners one on one to make sure that the community is aware of resource issues and the practical steps they can take to help correct them. Members of the watershed are much more aware of their watershed and the impact they have on it.

Contact Info:

PO Box 606
Manton, CA 96059
(530) 474-3368
www.battle-creek.net

0%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$138,473

Funds raised:	
Federal	0
State	0
Local	0
Private	0
Total	0



Oaks and Groundwater Outreach

During implementation of the DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant, the Cherokee Watershed Alliance Watershed Coordinator implemented diverse activities to develop a formal relationship with the Butte County Resource Conservancy District; promote coordination among local watersheds, implement watershed management, water quality, and citizen involvement through coordination and/or participation in meetings; workshops and opportunities for growers and the general public; watershed tours; citizen water quality testing; and development and distribution of a watershed calendar, an Existing Data Summary, and planning documents. A focus was made to find voluntary solutions to agricultural impacts on the watershed.

Highlighting Watershed Issues to Local Stakeholders

Cherokee Watershed stakeholders became more aware of groundwater recharge processes, recharge areas within the watershed, and issues relating to groundwater recharge through a watershed tour which included a presentation and field trips by car and helicopter of areas of interest within the watershed. 21 individuals participated including RCD members, watershed stakeholders, farmers, business owners, agency staff, the general public, environmentalists, and the press.

Living Among the Oaks Workshop

A group of watershed and resource conservation representatives coordinated by the Watershed Coordinator presented a Living Among the Oaks workshop for 75 homeowners interested in growing and

preserving native oak trees. The workshop included classroom presentations and a walking tour of Butte College's oak trees during which presenters and participants discussed landscaping, road placement, weeds, and grazing practices to encourage oak tree preservation. Free oak seedling shelter tubes, provided by the California Oak Foundation, were distributed to workshop participants.

Existing Data Summary

In order to better understand the watershed and to identify data gaps, the Watershed Coordinator created an Existing Data Summary. The 48-page document contained a summary of existing data including information on groundwater, surface water, land use, physical setting, geologic setting, vegetation, wildlife, and gaps in data. From the data summary, Cherokee Watershed Alliance members were able to approve the development of a formalized Management Strategy that includes voluntary activities for residents to promote a healthy watershed, the identification of a desired state for the watershed, and set watershed goals and objectives. The summary can now be used to create a watershed management plan.

Contact Info:

150 Chuck Yeager Way, Suite A
Oroville, CA 95965

(530) 534-0112

www.buttecountyracd.org

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Initiated a citizen-level surface water quality monitoring effort collecting baseline water quality data

Compiled and distributed an Existing Data Summary. The 48-page document included a summary of existing data and information on groundwater, surface water, land use, physical setting, geologic setting, vegetation, wildlife, and gaps in data

Held a Living Among the Oaks workshop for homeowners interested in growing and preserving native oak trees.

Day in the District Bus Tour highlighting local watershed issues

Held three growers' meetings to educate agriculturists on the latest conservation techniques

PARTNERS

- Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance
- CSU, Chico
- CA Department of Conservation
- California Department of Fish and Game
- Butte Community College
- Butte County Fire Safe Council
- Butte Creek Watershed Alliance
- California Oak Foundation
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Northern California Regional Land Trust
- University of California
- Cooperative Extension
- California Department of Water Resources

Central Modoc Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 1
State Assembly
District 2

170%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$196,330

Funds raised:

Federal	256,495
State	1,511,580
Local	14,000
Private	86,703
Total	1,868,778

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Designed 27 restoration projects

Organized educational tours of restoration sites for partners and stakeholders

Established 13 water quality monitoring stations

Managed and monitored 9 existing restoration sites

Held 3 annual "Day in the District" watershed tours

Taught classes to children for "adopt-a-watershed" project

Demonstrated innovative water-jet stinger technique for planting willow

Developed an educational curriculum for the River Center

PARTNERS

- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Ducks Unlimited
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Department of Fish and Game
- State Water Boards
- Wildlife Conservation Board
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Modoc County
- North Eastern California Water Association
- Farm Bureau
- US Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- North Cal-Neva RC&D
- Modoc High School
- Modoc School District
- Modoc National Wildlife Refuge
- CALFIRE
- and many more



Working with Private Lands for Watershed Health

In addition to implementing on the ground restoration projects, The Upper Pit River Watershed Coordinator worked to solve local watershed issues by informing and engaging the watershed community. By making community members aware of their impact and teaching them simple things they can do to improve the health of their watershed, the Watershed Coordinator improved the overall health of our waterways. The Watershed Coordinator engaged his community around natural resources by contributing to the Pit River watershed assessment and management planning process; continuing watershed monitoring; implementing demonstration projects; coordinating with watershed partners and stakeholders and ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of and informed about watershed concepts and issues; and ensuring continued implementation of the Central Modoc Resource Conservation District / Upper Pitt River Watershed Enhancement and Protection Project Vision and Goals.

Restoration

The Watershed Coordinator restored habitat and maintained previous restoration projects throughout the watershed. He managed, monitored and maintained 9 restoration projects installed by the RCD prior to the Watershed Coordinator funding. He also designed 27 projects for installation during or immediately following the grant period. Education programs were established to use the restoration sites to increase community understanding of watershed health and to get volunteers involved in hands-on watershed restoration.

Working with Private Landowners toward Better Management

Helping landowners better understand and manage their properties leads to greater watershed salience. The Watershed Coordinator worked one-on-one with landowners to develop restoration projects and monitor water quality. He established 13 monitoring stations on 10 sites that were overseen by the property owner. This gave the property owner a better sense of their impact on water quality allowing them to make better decisions.

Upper Pit Watershed Assessment

Watershed assessments provide clear scientific data to guide management decisions. By examining the entire watershed, major issues can be identified and solutions can be prioritized for efficient implementation. The Upper Pit Watershed Coordinator contributed to the Watershed Assessment by providing coordination, maps, photos, and other scientific documents. The watershed group is now in a position to write a management plan in order to provide scientifically informed management for this critical watershed. With the guidance of the Watershed Assessment, habitat restoration will be more effective and efficient.

Contact Info:

804 W 12th St.
Alturas, CA 96101
(530) 233-8872
www.cmrcd.org

101% Matched Funding

Grant Award: \$311,591

Funds raised:

Federal	47,080
State	145,000
Local	109,327
Private	13,299
Total	314,706



Erosion and Public Education for Water Quality

The Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Coordinator provided a platform for coordination, partnership, collaboration, and local economic development in a consensus building fashion. This was accomplished by establishing a watershed council directed by volunteers, landowners, representatives from local water agencies, non profits, and local and State government agencies. Benefits to the watershed as related to CALFED goals included an opportunity for improved collaboration, increased coordination, the development of water quality monitoring programs, and improving watershed planning and management. The Watershed Coordinator accomplished this by encouraging the watershed council to become a voice for the watershed in the community through education and media efforts; formation of the volunteer water monitors; participation in watershed events and forums; water monitoring; watershed signs; and educational fliers. Through The Watershed Coordinator's efforts, the community is on the path to realize the importance of protecting the watershed and the purity of the water in and around the river by protecting watershed habitat.

Educating the Public

The Watershed Coordinator has been engaging community members through media outlets and public avenues. The council posted watershed signs along the major road ways, created a 16 page newspaper insert for 2 newspapers, developed an insert for the local telephone bill reaching over 12,000 residents and businesses, and printed 5,000 decals for residents and local business to show their support for the protection of the watershed. With

these types of efforts the public is becoming more aware of their watershed.

Erosion and Sediment Control

Providing information on preventing sediment and erosion can greatly reduce the contaminants found in our waterways. The Watershed Coordinator worked with the County Public Works Department to host erosion and sediment control workshops for local contractors. To reach contractors and small business owners not in attendance, the Watershed Coordinator made erosion sediment control field manuals available at two county libraries.

Outreach and Education Accomplishments

Watershed education activities were funded for all K-12 classrooms in Amador County. The Watershed guide, "Circles and Cycles," was developed and presented with accompanying watershed tours to introduce youth to watershed and water conservation and awareness. Watershed Poster Competition was conducted in all fifth grade Amador and Calaveras classrooms. Thirty-one Amador and Calaveras County schools benefited from this outreach and education activity and additional schools in Alpine and San Joaquin Counties outside of the immediate watershed but also benefiting the San Joaquin Basin and CALFED. These activities have been implemented for three consecutive years.

Contact Info:

235 New York Ranch Road, Suite D
Jackson, CA 95642
(209) 257-1851
www.csrnd.org

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Developed 27 restoration projects with local landowners and multiple agencies

Established a Citizen's Water Quality Monitoring Program to collect 3 years of Water Quality Data

Secured funding for a Water Feasibility Analysis

Hosted erosion and sediment control trainings for contractors

Created a 16-page educational insert for 2 newspapers

Restored and monitored a site burned by the Power Fire

Created an *E. coli* bacteria identification monitoring program

Took part in creating a Voluntary Oak Management Plan

PARTNERS

- Central Sierra Resource Conservation & Development, Inc.
- USDA—Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Stewardship Through Education, LLC
- Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority
- Calaveras Co. Water District
- Amador Water Agency
- Pacific Gas & Electric
- El Dorado National Forest
- CALTRANS
- Environmental Defense
- Amador Water Agency
- Calaveras County
- Sierra Pacific Industries
- Sierra Nevada Alliance
- City of Sutter City
- Mokelumne River Pact

Chowchilla-Red Top Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 14
State Assembly
District 25

271%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$176,430

Funds raised:	
Federal	25,000
State	441,923
Local	1,130
Private	
Total	478,253



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mapped invasive species in the watershed for eradication

Creek Stewardship Days featuring education and family activities

Petitioned for *Arundo
Ailanthus altissima* declared as rated pest species by CDFA

Dairy workshops for 72 people to discuss BMP's on dairies

Held an Irrigation Water efficiency workshop for local agriculturists on irrigation water management practices

Created a long-term plan for watershed conservation and restoration

PARTNERS

- Central Sierra Watershed
- NRCS
- Madera County RMA
- Yosemite/ Sequoia RC&D
- San Joaquin Valley RC&D
- Oakhurst River Parkway Committee
- Coarsegold RCD
- Eastern Madera County Fire Safe Councils
- Sierra/ San Joaquin Noxious Weed Alliance
- East Merced RCD
- Mariposa RCD
- Sierra RCD
- Upper Merced River Watershed Council
- City of Chowchilla
- Chowchilla Water District
- Team Arundo Del Norte
- Sierra Nevada Alliance
- Millerton Watershed Coalition
- Mariposa School District
- Western United Dairymen
- UC Cooperative Extension
- Air Pollution Control District
- RWQCB 5
- and many more

Education for All Ages

For Over 50 years the Chowchilla Red Top Resource Conservation District (RCD) has been involved in conservation projects. In extending their area to the Watershed model (for the DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant) they have extended into 2.2 million acres of the Upper Chowchilla/ Upper Fresno and the Lower Chowchilla/ Middle San Joaquin Watersheds to accomplish even more. The goals of this project were the coordination of stakeholders working together through community involvement; public education regarding watershed issues; the implementation of recent watershed planning efforts; securing grants to achieve goals of improving water quality and quantity; and providing expertise, advice, educational information and Best Management Practices (BMPs) to landowners, government agencies and the general public. The goal is to continue to strive for a comprehensive watershed approach to improve on the fragmented approach that has been used in this area in the past."

Helping Agriculturists Reduce Their Impact

Dairy farmers have recently come under increased regulations by the state and federal government to decrease levels of pollution. Yet little has been done to assist dairy farmers in implementing better practices. The Watershed Coordinator saw a need to improve local knowledge of environmentally friendly practices and decided to educate local agriculturists. Seventy Two dairy farmers attended two workshops that provided hands on technical information as well as inspiring farmers as to why they should care about the impact

they are having. By addressing large-scale issues in a personal, informative way, the Watershed Coordinator had a large impact in her community.

Promoting Creek Stewardship Day

The Watershed Coordinator organized the first, second and third annual Oakhurst River Parkway Committee Creek Stewardship Days. Over 25 community groups and hundreds of people spent their Saturday learning about the watershed, cleaning up trash, planting native plants, and participating in family activities. The parkway is a lot healthier thanks to the hard work of the Watershed Coordinator and local community members. In addition, community members have a greater ownership of their watershed and a sense of community pride in accomplishing important work.

Education, Education, Education

Great educational programming starts with great educational materials. The Watershed Coordinator worked to inform her community by providing them with up-to-date information in user-friendly publications. The Watershed Coordinator produced 14 brochures ranging from maps and visitor information for the Oakhurst River Parkway to a property owners guide to managing their land. Water use, efficiency quizzes, and kids activities further engaged community members around the issues of resource use and conservation.

Contact Info:

11791 Avenue 22,
Chowchilla, CA 93610
(559) 665-3502
www.cfwatershed.org

State Senate
District 15
State Assembly
District 33

1064%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$165,977

Funds raised:

Federal	60,000
State	501,500
Local	311,000
Private	894,952
Total	1,767,452



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Worked with local landowners to create 81 Conservation plans with 20 more in development

Published an Arroyo Grande Creek Erosion, Sedimentation and Flooding Alternatives Study

Adopted a Creek Protection Ordinance requiring a 35-foot Creek setback for development

Removed the Pismo Creek Fish Passage Barrier allowing endangered species access to historic spawning grounds

Held 48 watershed tours to educate the community about the issues facing the watershed

Conversion of conventional irrigation to micro-irrigation systems on 400 acres of farmland reducing water consumption

PARTNERS

- NRCS
- Morro Bay National Estuary Program
- State Water Resources Control Board
- The Coastal Conservancy
- San Luis Obispo County
- City of Arroyo Grande
- California State Parks
- The Dunes Center
- The Land Conservancy
- San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation
- Sustainable Conservation
- Upper-Salinas Las Tables RCD
- Central Coast Regional Water Quality Board
- Cachuma RCD and many more

Water Quality and Conservation

The Watershed Coordinators engaged in activities that served to protect water and soil resources, and to protect and enhance important natural habitats and ecosystems throughout the district. This goal was achieved by the completion of a work plan that focused on the need to assist landowners in the development of conservation plans and implementation of best management practices (BMPs) in the watershed. Conducting educational workshops and demonstrations developed new partnerships by attracting landowners and familiarizing them with beneficial land treatment practices that improve water quality and the environment. Outreach to watershed stakeholders increases public awareness of the need for resource conservation and how it applies to their lives. Cooperation among watershed residents, local groups and government agencies was essential in achieving the mutual goals of the District and CALFED.

Helping Agriculturists Reduce their Impact

The Watershed Coordinators built strong relationships with local agriculturists and helped them improve their land management practices. The Watershed Coordinators provided technical assistance, identified financial assistance, and streamlined the process for the creation of 81 conservation plans. Twenty more conservation plans are in process. This represents a large part of the watershed. By improving habitat on agricultural land, the viability of both local wildlife and local agriculturists was increased. In addition, local agriculturists are more likely to implement additional conservation practices and look to the RCD for assistance in the future.

Science Leading Restoration

The newly released "Arroyo Grande Creek Erosion, Sedimentation, and Flooding Alternatives Study" allows local agencies to identify high priority restoration areas based on scientific analysis of current stream conditions. Once the report was published, the Watershed Coordinators began raising money to address 11 high-priority erosion and sediment control projects and 5 floodplain enhancement and restoration projects. With their completion, the creek will flow in a much more natural pattern reducing pollution and improving important natural habitat.

Educating Residents about Their Personal Water Use

The Watershed Coordinators completed 38 water audits of local agricultural operations. By showing landowners and land managers exactly how much water they use and making suggestions for water use reductions, they are able to make critical changes in their water use patterns. Changing water practices one landowner at a time reduces the burden placed on local and state governments to provide water, reduces conflicts between agricultural and urban water supply and protects critical habitat.

Contact Info:

545 Main St. Suite B-1
Morro Bay, CA 93442
(805) 772-4391
www.coastalrcd.org

Colusa County Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 4
State Assembly
District 2

432%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$127,317

Funds raised:	
Federal	98,750
State	314,656
Local	32,191
Private	104,848
Total	550,445



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Developed a Bear Creek guide watershed restoration.

Installed a livestock-exclusion on Sulphur Creek to minimize mercury contributions

Planted over 40 species of native plants throughout the watershed

Completed research evaluating saline irrigation water impact on native grasses

Developed a stewardship plan on 1800 acres of a local resort property

Published a 50 page pictorial-narrative handbook of local invasive plants

Created a Tamarisk eradication program to fight a major infestation in the watershed.

Created a forum to address sedimentation and mercury issues

PARTNERS

- American Land Conservancy
- Ashley Payne Ranch
- Bureau of Land Management
- Cache Creek Stakeholders
- CA Dept of Conservation
- CA Bay Delta Authority
- CDFA
- CALFIRE
- CA Dept of Water Resources
- California Rangeland Trust
- Caltrans
- Fout Springs Youth Facility
- Konocti Conservation Camp
- Pacific Watershed Associates
- NFWF
- NRCS
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Tuleyome
- UC Davis
- and many more

Local Partnerships are Critical to Program Success

Watershed Coordinators are important to a functioning watershed because they work to bring people together around complex issues providing attention, education, and collaborative problem solving. The Upper Cache Creek Watershed Coordinator is an excellent example. During the three years of the DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant, he worked to build capacity, conduct outreach, initiate and complete research projects, summarize data and reporting results, write grants, and set the stage for future collaboration. To accomplish these objectives, the Watershed Coordinator formed partnerships with 28 entities including local resorts, universities, government agencies, non-profit groups, agriculturists, a youth correctional facility and local volunteers including local scientists. The broad based collaboration fostered by the Watershed Coordinator brought about outstanding results including two important restoration events, one of which removed the major source of Tamarisk in Sulfur Creek; developed a Bear Creek Watershed Assessment Program; re-vegetated 40 species of native plants throughout the watershed; conducted botanical inventories; evaluated the use of saline water on native grasses; wrote articles for local papers and professional journals; and began to address mercury issues in the watershed. The Upper Cache Creek Watershed is functioning much more efficiently thanks to the work of the Watershed Coordinator.

Addressing Mercury Issues

The high levels of mercury that can be found throughout the watershed pose a threat to public health. The Watershed Coordinator convened a group of local stakeholders to

find ways to keep mercury from entering waterways. The first project was an exclusion fence for cattle along a high mercury-contribution area. Cattle stir up mercury containing sediment as they enter creeks and streams to drink. By excluding cattle, water-borne mercury levels should also be reduced.

Restoring the Watershed One Land Owner at a Time

Wilbur Hot Springs is an 1800 acre resort that has approximately 12,000 visitors a year. The Watershed Coordinator worked with the resort to address their most important resource issues including a large infestation of Tamarisk that provided the source of an infestation throughout the watershed. Tamarisk was controlled and nearly eradicated on the property. An education project was also completed to increase the local community's awareness of Tamarisk and how to remove it. A 50 page pictorial booklet was created to help demonstrate the issue.

Celebrating the Watershed

The Watershed Coordinator kicked off the first annual Cache Creek Watershed Celebration. In addition to educational and family fun, the event also included a creek cleanup to remove invasive species and trash on Cache Creek. Engaging the community around water issues created a more informed community that is better able to take action to improve water and stream quality.

Contact Info:

100 Sunrise Blvd. Suite B
Colusa, CA 95932
(530) 458-2931
www.colusarc.org

1652% Matched Funding

Grant Award: \$138,473

Funds raised:

Federal	10,000
State	3,463,166
Local	54,419
Private	40,000
Total	3,567,585



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Installed BMPs reducing sediment in tailwater discharge from 2600 mg/l to 17 mg/l

Installed drip irrigation in a 144 acre field reducing irrigation from 432 acre ft to 142 acre ft.

Held planting and clean-up events that attracted 1700 participants

Taught 150 residents to use GPS and benthic invertebrate sampling

Completed Chinook Salmon monitoring using 150 local volunteers

Removed invasive plants on 4,800 square feet and replaced them with 375 native plants

Incorporated 8 stormwater reduction BMPs into new developments

PARTNERS

- NRCS
- Contra Costa County Community Development
- Natural Heritage Institute
- Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
- Local Residents
- Developers
- City of Brentwood
- Contra Costa County California Fish and Game
- East Bay Regional Park District
- Contra Costa Co Fish and Wildlife Prorogation
- State Water Resources Control Board
- National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration
- CALFED
- The San Francisco Foundation and many more

Water Quality and Best Management Practices

The San Joaquin Delta Watershed Coordinators addressed Delta issues in two ways. First, one Watershed Coordinator worked with local agriculturists to provide technical support and information to encourage better management practices. They improved the quality of water flowing into the Delta through an integrated program of agricultural tailwater management, water conservation, and wildlife-friendly agriculture. Best management practices were implemented to reduce the amount of agricultural discharge, improve the quality of agricultural discharges, and improve the wildlife value of irrigated agriculture. A second Watershed Coordinator focused on improving the watershed by working with urban residents. She improved the quality of aquatic habitats in the lower watershed and Delta through an integrated program of urban stormwater management and volunteer participation in habitat restoration. The Watershed Coordinator engaged local residents in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of ecosystem restoration, habitat enhancement, and water quality improvement projects. Stormwater reduction and water quality improvement BMPs were incorporated into the planning, review, permitting and construction of new development and into the retrofit of existing urban developments.

Improving Agricultural Water Efficiency and Runoff

The Watershed Coordinator worked with 5 local agriculturists to install drip irrigation systems and BMPs on over 450 acres of agricultural lands. Tests showed

that the volume and sediment content in the runoff water was greatly reduced. One field showed a reduction in sediment content in runoff water of nearly 720%. Efficiency was also increased. One field reduced the use of irrigation water by nearly 75%. In order to further improve habitat, we began the installation of 22 barn owl boxes throughout the county.

Community Creek Clean-ups and Habitat Restoration

Over 1950 residents of the county got involved in cleaning up their watershed. The Watershed Coordinator organized and hosted several creek clean-up and restoration events. The most notable event involved the removal of invasive species from 4,800 square feet of California Red-Legged Frog habitat. Once the invasives were removed, 375 native plants were planted. The Watershed is starting to look a lot more natural thanks to the hard work of the Watershed Coordinators.

Changing City Ordinances to Change our World

The Watershed Coordinator worked to have BMPs to reduce water pollution incorporated into new developments. The BMPs included vegetated buffer strips, constructed wetlands, vegetative swales, and water quality inlets. The BMPs were applied to 4 developments along 5,400 linear feet of creek. The impact of development is being reduced one development at a time.

Contact Info:

255 Glacier Drive
Martinez, CA 94553
(925) 313-2313

Contra Costa Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 7
State Assembly
District 11 & 14

109%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$188,730

Funds raised:	
Federal	0
State	99,700
Local	314,656
Private	14,040
Total	207,419



Community Involvement Flourishes

“Over the 3 years the CA Department of Conservation funding, the Watershed Coordinator served as the critical link among more than 20 organizations that cooperatively worked to accomplish restoration goals. To implement projects, the Watershed Coordinator wrote grant proposals and secured non-grant awards and donations totaling \$207,419. General outreach and networking efforts complemented specific, targeted, collaboration with community groups. These outreach activities enabled the Watershed Coordinator to secure critical community support for, and participation in, restoration projects. The Watershed Coordinator promoted awareness of regional activities and acted as a resource for all concerned groups. The watershed is beginning to be a lot more natural thanks to the hard work of the Watershed Coordinator.

The Neighbors of Alhambra Creek

Forty seven neighbors are working in coordination to improve their creek. Together they are creating a plan to restore a one mile stretch of Alhambra Creek that includes the John Muir Grave Site. Through the efforts of the Watershed Coordinator, grants were secured to fund capacity-building and planning, a topographic survey of the channel was completed, and conceptual engineering designs were developed and presented for public review at community outreach events. AVCC is currently seeking funds for the final phase: construction.

Awards

The work of the Watershed Coordinator was instrumental in local work that

received two prestigious awards. Work coordinated by the Watershed Coordinator completed on the Sky Ranch restoration site received the “SeaWorld/ Busch Gardens Environmental Excellence Award.” Work coordinated by the Watershed Coordinator that was completed on the Dow Chemical Company lands was awarded the Wildlife Habitat Council’s “Corporate Lands for Learning of the Year” Award.

Clean-ups, Planting, and Community Involvement

Over the course of the three years of the DOC grant, the Alhambra Creek Watershed has undergone a face-lift. Projects included 14 creek clean-ups, 62 invasive plant removal workdays, and 50 native plant propagation and planting events at 3 different sites throughout the watershed. Through this extensive restoration, 14,000 native plants were planted, 462 cubic yards of trash were disposed of, and 21,000 square feet of invasive plants were removed. That is an impressive total. To keep people committed to and engaged with their watershed, the Watershed Coordinator held events, published newsletters, submitted articles to the local newspapers, and provided educational opportunities as well as entertainment. The highlight of the outreach was the first annual creek celebration event.

Contact Info:

Contra Costa RCD
5552 Clayton Road
Concord, CA 94521
(925) 672-6522 x 110
www.crcd.org

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

14 Creek Clean-ups collected 463 cubic yards of trash along 2 miles of creek

62 invasive plant removal work-days removed weeds from 7,000 square feet per year

2006 Sea World/ Busch Gardens “Environmental Excellence Award”

Dow Chemical Company property received the Wildlife Habitat Council’s “Corporate Lands for Learning of the Year” Award

50 Native Plant propagation and planting events planted over 14,000 native plants

Kirker Creek Management Plan and Alhambra Creek Watershed Management Plan developed

47 Neighbors came together to restore a 1 mile stretch of Alhambra Creek

87 restoration projects

PARTNERS

- Environmental Studies Academy
- Friends of Alhambra Creek
- Martinez Historical Society
- Martinez Unified School District
- Muir Heritage Land Trust
- National Park Service
- Partners for the Watershed
- City of Pittsburg
- The Watershed Nursery
- UC Berkeley
- Contra Costa County and many more

Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy

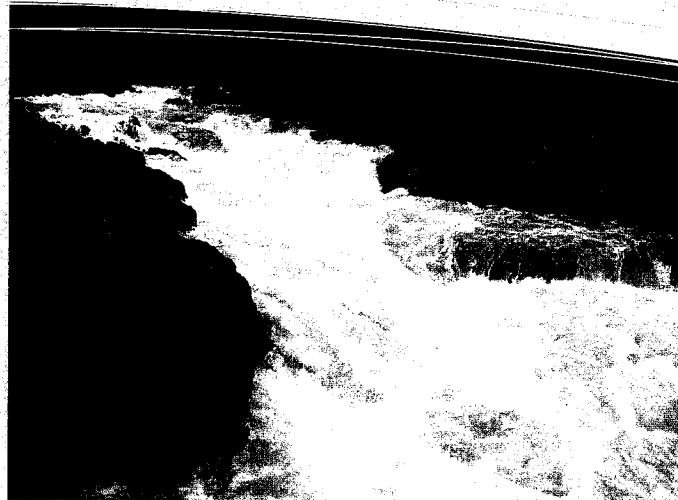
State Senate
District 4
State Assembly
District 2

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

27%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$192,099

Funds raised:	
Federal	38,170
State	10,000
Local	0
Private	4,155
Total	52,325



Watershed Management for Better Resource Use

The DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant Program has provided the resources to further the goals of the Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy's Watershed Management Plan that directly support the goals for the Bay-Delta. The Watershed Coordinator's accomplishments over the grant period encompass an integrated, long-term approach to watershed management and include significant progress towards sustainable management activities. The work focused on establishing, coordinating and facilitating locally appropriate, community-based activities and projects to maintain and improve watershed conditions. The outcome is a cooperative and collaborative effort to review, discuss and implement watershed-wide actions that incorporate local, state and federal goals. The Watershed Coordinator's efforts produced positive results and accomplishments that preserve natural resources, protect private property rights and promote responsible land stewardship within the watershed.

Watershed Management Strategy

The Watershed Coordinator organized and facilitated the revision of the Watershed Management Strategy utilizing a collaborative, interdisciplinary, multi-species and ecosystem approach. This collaborative effort resulted in a significant increase in communication and cooperation amongst agencies and organizations and increased participation and awareness within the Deer Creek Watershed. The strategy will be used as a tool to guide management decisions within the Deer Creek watershed. A Project Summary Report identifies future watershed activities/projects as determined by the recommendations in the Strategy. Collaborative

management documents like the Deer Creek Watershed Management Strategy help the community understand the challenges to their watershed and prioritize solutions. Groups working on the watershed then have direction that meets the priorities of local stakeholders and a clear understanding of total watershed efforts.

Educating the Public for Better Resource Management

The Watershed Coordinator sought to establish Deer Creek Watershed Council's mission and encourage good land stewardship practices landowners and resource managers within the watershed via education and public outreach efforts including 3 annual meetings, 4 public workshops, over 50 individual landowner meetings, 6 field trips/watershed tours, 2 events, the publication and promotion of the DCWC website and the establishment of an office and phone number located within the watershed. The private landowner meetings resulted in countless changes on private property. Most notably, 6 landowners collectively owning more than 20,000 acres installed individualized ranch conservation plans.

Removing Sediment from the Water

The Watershed Coordinator reduced chronic sources of erosion and associated sedimentation to the Deer Creek watershed by removing 94 head of cattle from the upper watershed to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation runoff where cattle cross.

Contact Info:

PO Box- 26240 7th St
Vina, CA 96092
(530) 839-2105

www.deercreekwatershed.org

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Updated the Watershed Management Strategy

Created Ranch Management Conservation Plans for 6 landowners covering more than 20,000 acres

Held 4 public workshops

Met with over 50 private landowners

Vegetation mapping on the lower 11 miles of the creek

Conducted 6 watershed tours

Coordinated a Flood Feasibility Study

Completed a fish passage study

PARTNERS

- CA Department of Fish and Game
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Tehama County Resource Conservation District
- CA Department of Water Resources
- US Geological Survey
- CA State Water Resource Control Board
- US National Marine Fisheries Service
- CALFIRE
- US Bureau of Reclamation
- CA Cattlemen's Association
- US Forest Service
- National Forest
- Sierra Pacific Industries
- The Nature Conservancy
- Collins Pine Company
- Tehama County
- NRCS
- UC Berkeley
- Plumas Unified School
- District/Chester Junior-Senior High School
- Abbey of New Clairvaux and many more

East Merced Resource Conservation District

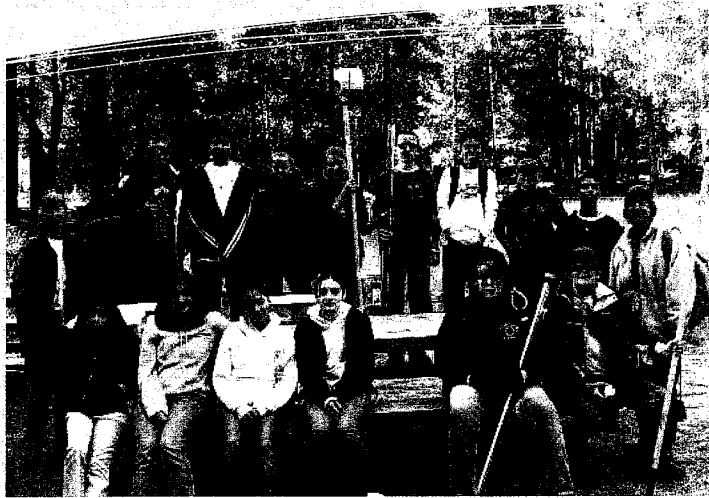
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 12
State Assembly
District 17

826%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$123,386

Funds raised:	
Federal	50,000
State	2,315,977
Local	4,850
Private	0
Total	2,370,827



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Prepared a lay-person's version of the Biological Assessment

Held 7 Landowner Workshops with 347 participants

Prepared and distributed a water quality self-assessment tool to 40 landowners

Held the first Merced River Summit

Facilitated the Merced River Stakeholders group

Catalogued listed species

Mapped endangered species

PARTNERS

- National Resource Conservation Service
- Sustainable Conservation
- Supervisor Deidre Kelsey
- Merced Irrigation District
- Merced County Public Works
- Merced County Planning
- UC Merced
- Department of Fish and Game
- US Fish and Wildlife
- Cramer Fish Sciences
- Stillwater Sciences
- Merced County Farm Bureau
- East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition
- Private Landowners
- Merced River Alliance
- East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition
- Merced County UC Cooperative Extension
- Army Corps of Engineers
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- CALFED

Endangered Species and Biological Assessment

The DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant allowed the Watershed Coordinator to continue to advance the goals of several watershed plans by connecting and managing the relationships and actions of participating landowners, agencies, organizations and other stakeholders. The Watershed Coordinator conducted outreach and trained landowners on self-assessment and best management practices (for compliance with the Central Valley's Irrigated Lands Conditional Waiver Program); planned and laid groundwork to provide incentives for voluntary conservation work, identified appropriate funding sources and submitted grant applications; and collaborated with local, regional and statewide watershed groups and interests for training, information sharing, watershed enhancement and fundraising purposes. The Watershed Coordinator brought local interests forward in order to make real progress in the watershed. Thanks to her work, the watershed works more efficiently in a more cohesive, intact manner.

Protecting Endangered Species through Science

In order to provide sound science to guide local residents in the protection of endangered species, the Watershed Coordinator catalogued listed species in the region, described their life history, mapped their distribution and elucidated protection measures that can be implemented by landowners. When funds become available, the East Merced Resource Conservation District hopes to publish the map and make it available for local schools and organizations. Finally, a Power Point Presentation was prepared on endangered species found in

Eastern Merced County, which includes the Merced River Watershed. This presentation was adapted from work done for permit coordination and was presented to six landowner groups. Local landowners now know more about the endangered species in their area and how to protect them.

Creating Tools to Help Landowners

The Watershed Coordinator created a self-assessment tool that allowed landowners to assess their impact on water quality without fear of reprisal from regulatory agencies. The tool was presented in a workshop, demonstrations and through one-on-one meetings with individual landowners. Landowners were guided through the process, allowed to keep their results private, and given simple activities to mitigate impact. This allows landowners to make the corrections necessary to protect their watershed.

Biological Assessment

The Watershed Coordinator participated in the completion of a biological assessment of the entire watershed. The assessment catalogued the birds, fish, and macro-invertebrates living in the watershed. Once the assessment was completed, the Watershed Coordinator translated the scientific information into a format that is understandable and relevant to local residents. Local landowners can now work to protect species on their properties with the guidance of solid scientific data.

Contact Info:

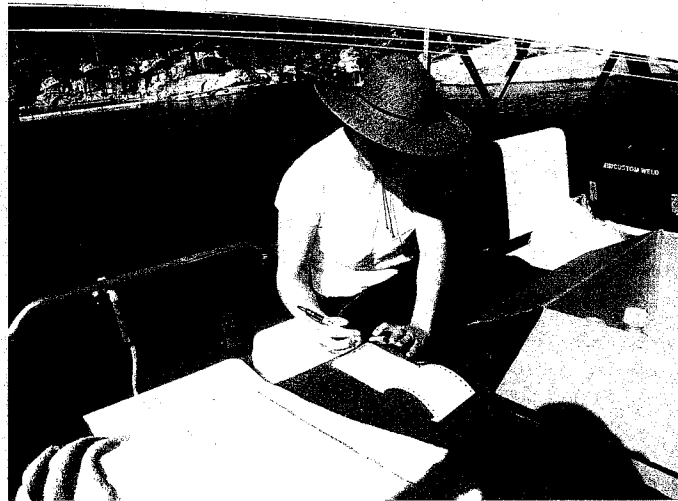
2135 Wardrobe Avenue, Suite C
Merced, CA 95431
(209) 722-4119 x3
www.emrcd.org

355%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$214,157

Funds raised:

Federal	5,000
State	618,236
Local	3,000
Private	0
Total	761,036



Science and Planning in the Watershed

El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) depends upon reliable, well-managed water resources and a healthy, well-functioning watershed. Having a Watershed Coordinator is critical to ensure a future of quality water for humans and wildlife. Watershed work is important for the assurance of clean water, adequate supply, and a balance of human needs, wants, and natural services and order; raising the value of the management of these issues in the public eye means that greater emphasis will be put on project implementation, funding, and all-around public support. The Watershed Coordinator worked throughout the three year period to engage citizens, complete important studies, and provide solid scientific information on which the community can make well-informed water management decisions. Because of the success of the Watershed Coordinator, the watershed perspective will remain an important aspect of EID's overall operations. EID now has a division devoted to watershed management and planning.

Ground breaking Scientific Information

Thanks to the Watershed Coordinator we will have much more information available to us as we face the water shortages that California is predicted to have in the near future. Little research has been performed on the effects of recreation on water quality, yet recreation continues on the main supply source for EID's water. The Watershed Coordinator's research will assist the agency in making management decisions for human and ecosystem health. In addition, the Watershed Coordinator expanded the study to include the impact of increasing recreation on all of the deli-

cate Sierra Nevada Ecosystem. This study will assist Sierra Nevada Communities in facing upcoming management decisions in their community. Finally, the Watershed Coordinator completed one of the first studies assessing the effects of climate change on fire frequency and intensity in the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Watershed Planning Process

Creating an Integrated Regional Watershed Management Plan (IRWMP) was instrumental in securing funding and providing high quality management throughout the American River Watershed. The Watershed Coordinator was instrumental in creating the CABY (Cosumnes Bear American Yuba) IRWMP. CABY is now well-respected and received the highest ranking in the Prop 50 round of IRWMP grants. Now all members of the region can share resources, compare management ideas and plans, and assist each other in reaching watershed goals.

Getting the Community Informed and Involved

The Watershed Coordinator worked to inform and educate the community in order to create a more educated, engaged community. Through watershed events including World Water Quality Monitoring Days, Ag in the classroom day, and the first EID customer appreciation day thousands of people were exposed to basic water issues and concepts and informed of ways they can protect their watershed.

Contact Info:

2890 Mosquito Rd
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 642-4007

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Created an Interregional Watershed Management Plan

Completed the first formal study on the impacts of increasing recreation on the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem

Created the El Dorado Drought Preparedness Plan for the local water supply

Compiled a GIS database of water quality issues in the Sacramento Region

Studied the effects of climate change on fire intensity and frequency in the South Fork American River

Developed watershed monitoring and assessment protocols

Began a stakeholder planning process for a watershed management plan

Held El Dorado's first World Water Quality Monitoring Event

PARTNERS

- Georgetown Divide RCD
- El Dorado and Tahoe National Forests State of California
- Regional water agencies (CABY)
- El Dorado County Water Agency
- Placer County Water Agency
- Nevada Irrigation District
- Sacramento River Watershed Program
- Regional Watershed Coordination Team
- EPA

Fall River Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 1
State Assembly
District 2&3

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Developed management plans and cost analysis for 3 invasive weed species

Implemented a monitoring plan

Completed Fall River physical and biological assessments

17 water quality sample sites established and monitored

Mapped noxious weeds

Developed a restoration project for Big Bear Flat

Treated 200 acres of Pepperweed

Monitored bank erosion sites

PARTNERS

- NRCS
- UC Cooperative Extension
- Calif. Dept. Food and Ag
- BLM
- USFWS
- Big Valley Pest Abatement District
- Wildlife Conservation Board
- Shasta County Dept. Food and Ag
- Regional Water Quality Control Board
- CALFED
- PG&E



332%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$195,518

Funds raised:

Federal	69,000
State	578,332
Local	0
Private	1,512
Total	648,844

Weed Control and Monitoring with Citizens

The Fall River Resource Conservation District used the DOC Watershed Coordinator funding to complete four important objectives toward the better health of the watershed. The Watershed Coordinator developed, prioritized, and implemented a noxious weed management plan; promoted a district wide noxious weed eradication education program that reached out to landowners and agency partners; developed a monitoring program that supports the weed management plan; and developed and coordinated funding to sustain support for the weed management plan and related restoration activities.

Weed Control Management Plans

Management plans were developed for three invasive weeds in the Lower Pit River Watershed: perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*), Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), and purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*). Draft plans were submitted to the RCD board and stakeholders to ensure a community supported plan was adopted. The Watershed Coordinator then implemented the management plan including finding appropriate funding sources and acquiring permits.

Outreach

Helping citizens understand invasive species is a key part of eradicating noxious species. Educating local citizens about the weed eradication program was carried out through outreach to individual landowners, articles written in newsletters and local newspapers, quarterly progress reports for public RCD board meetings, and presenting restoration activity information at the local annual fair. The

Watershed Coordinator also submitted 2 annual reports and a final report to the DOC, developed landowner access agreements to allow implementation of the weed management program, conducted worksite training for the management plans, and created 5 noxious weed posters to inform local citizens. Landowners are now on the lookout for noxious weeds and better able to eradicate them.

Monitoring

A monitoring plan was necessary to ensure that the management plans were effective. The Watershed Coordinator developed a monitoring plan that included increased stakeholder awareness, established ongoing monitoring sites, determined monitoring protocol, and created directed steps to implement monitoring. All of these tasks were completed and future monitoring programs are planned based on the results of current monitoring.

Continued Improvement

Monitoring results help to identify weaknesses in the plans in order to fix the problems and are a crucial part of watershed management. The Watershed Coordinator refined the program constantly and sought funding to further improve weed management strategies. As part of continued plan refinement, he applied for 16 grants and received \$648,844 in funding. Because of the continued efforts of the Watershed Coordinator, work will continue well past the funding provided by the DOC.

Contact Info:

PO Box 83
McArthur, CA 96056
(530) 336-6591

787%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$145,000

Funds raised:

Federal	210,000
State	0
Local	1,400
Private	929,750
Total	1,141,150



Reducing Impairment of Watersheds

"Through scientific analysis, education, and stakeholder cooperation and participation, Friends of Deer Creek was able to make a positive impact on the present water quality of Deer Creek and lay the foundation for future improvements and protection of the watershed." Watershed Coordinators provide local solutions for state-wide problems with a great return on the investment. The Deer Creek Watershed Coordinator is no exception. Friends of Deer Creek saw problems with eroding roads, high levels of Mercury and little community awareness of local problems. By partnering with local community members, federal agencies, state agencies, the city, county, local schools, businesses, non-profits and the wastewater treatment plant, the Deer Creek Watershed Coordinator created real change reducing mercury, phosphorous, nitrogen and sediment loads. Thanks to her efforts, we all have cleaner water, more wildlife and a healthier ecosystem. But the Watershed Coordinator didn't stop there. She knew that restoration without community education would not have lasting results. The education and outreach program reached almost every family in the watershed.

Restoring Habitat

Our Squirrel Creek Restoration Site is an abandoned road crossing and tributary to Deer Creek that was partly filled in with nonnative weeds and had eroding banks causing unacceptable amounts of sediment to enter the watershed. Partnering with the Applied Ecology Class at Nevada Union High School, the Watershed Coordinator offered a hands-on educational opportunity for high school students. The students conducted pre-restoration vegetation surveys,

learned about native plants and riparian ecology, and constructed willow wattles for erosion control and bank revegetation to improve water quality, decrease water temperatures, decrease fine sediment levels, and improve riparian structural habitat.

Reducing our Impact

In the past three years, we have partnered with the City of Nevada City to install five storm drain traps within Nevada City city limits. The storm drain traps have had a 15% cumulative reduction in sediment deposition into Deer Creek. Further improvements to the storm drains are estimated to reduce sedimentation from the road by 75%. By formulating and discussing our Erosion Best Management Practices, we have worked with contractors and City and County staff to reduce sediment flow by approximately 20% from dirt roads into the creek.

Cleaning up Mercury

A mercury working group was developed and divided into two sub-groups to better reflect their purposes: The Mercury Advisory Group consisting of scientists and researchers with technical expertise and the Mercury Community Affiliates consisting of local stakeholder and project partners. We continue to meet with and strengthen cooperation between both groups. In order to reduce mercury levels in our local waterways for the health of humans and animals alike.

Contact Info:

P.O. Box 26240
7th Street
Vina, CA 96092
(530) 839-2105

ACCOMPLISHMENT

Removed over 2000 lb. of non-native strangling ivy.

15% reduction in sediment pollution into de Creek

Wastewater treatment plan upgrades reduce pollution by 50%

Grazing education reduces nitrates and phosphates by 50%

4 critical habitat sites restored with the efforts of high school and junior high school classes

Community action on mercury reduction

Education programs reached just about every member of the watershed

PARTNERS

- City of Nevada City
 - Central Valley Regional Water Quality Board
 - State Water Resource Control Board
 - U.S. Bureau of Land Management
 - U.S. Forest Service
 - Bitney Springs High School Community Service Class
 - Nevada Union High School Stream Club
 - Forest Charter School
 - Delta Tributaries Mercury Council
 - County of Nevada County
 - United States Geological Survey
 - Natural Heritage Institute
 - Nevada County Fish & Wildlife Commission
 - U.S. EPA
 - The Resources Agency
 - Teichert Foundation
 - Sierra Nevada Alliance
 - USGS
- and many more

Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 1
State Assembly
District 4

899%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$123,386

Funds raised:

Federal	11,000
State	1,061,115
Local	37,453
Private	
Total	1,109,568



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Developed and distributed 5000 agricultural land use brochures

Published a South Fork American River Stewardship Strategy

Implemented an irrigated lands program

Reduced fire hazard by chipping over 2440 residential properties

Collected 3 years of water quality data using the citizen's water quality monitoring program

Installed demonstration xeriscape gardens.

Reduced fire risk by implementing a fuel load reduction program

Held a conservation planning workshops

PARTNERS

- NRCS
- El Dorado County RCD
- USFS
- Bureau of Reclamation
- El Dorado County
- Sierra Pacific Industries
- Division of Water Resources
- Mosquito Volunteer Fire Association
- CABY
- El Dorado Irrigation District
- El Dorado County Water Agency
- CALFIRE
- Watershed Groups
- Fire Safe Councils
- City of Placerville
- Homeowners Associations
- High Sierra RC&D
- Georgetown Fire Dept
- RDC
- Diamond Valley High School
- Alpine Historical Society
- High Sierra Flycasters
- Local Stakeholders

Fuel Load Reduction in the Watershed

The Watershed Coordinator promoted a community based watershed-wide approach to build cooperation and collaboration, collect and disseminate watershed and resource information, conduct citizen monitoring using specific monitoring and assessment protocols, and develop a framework for local watershed programs to function more efficiently under a long-term comprehensive SFAR watershed management plan. The major accomplishment of the 3 years of the DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant was the creation of the "Stewardship Strategy." The Stewardship Strategy is a community based plan that includes the protection and improvement of water quality and a reduction in fuel loading in order to decrease the threat of catastrophic wildfire. The strategy promotes a community based stewardship of the South Fork American River. The coordinator used community identified strategies to prioritize watershed projects.

Water efficient plants

One of the easiest and most effective ways for citizens to reduce water use is to remove lawn and plant a low water use garden (xeriscape garden). Homeowners often are not familiar with xeriscape gardens or do not feel comfortable installing them. The Watershed Coordinator worked with the El Dorado County Fairgrounds to install a demonstration garden complete with plant lists and educational materials. Now everyone who attends the county fair will get an education in water-efficient plants. In addition to installing this garden, the Watershed Coordinator also worked to maintain and enhance 3 additional gardens.

Education of Landowners

Educating landowners on land management guidelines is essential to the health of the watershed. The Watershed Coordinator worked to educate the public in multiple ways. First, he distributed over 5000 agricultural land use brochures to inform working landscape management decisions. Information will lead to better practices on private property and more interaction of landowners with local agencies. He also held workshops to help landowners assess their own property. In face-to-face meetings, landowners have the ability to learn more, ask questions, and have someone to follow up with when practices do not make sense. The end of the workshop resulted in the creation of conservation plans for each of the participants. Finally, he followed up with landowners to make sure they could implement their plans. Educating the public one landowner at a time is a great way to change the watershed.

Fuel reduction in action

Catastrophic wildfire is a large potential hazard in the foothills and mountain communities. The Watershed Coordinator worked extensively with landowners, fire-safe councils, and management agencies to reduce fuel loads through prescribed burns, education, and grant writing. The result is a reduced risk of catastrophic wildfire that can hurt wildlife and human populations alike.

Contact Info:

100 Forni Road, Suite A.
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 295-5630

559%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$78,292

Funds raised:

Federal	7,500
State	430,000
Local	0
Private	0
Total	437,500



Permit Coordination for Environmental Enhancements

The Stony Creek Watershed is a highly impacted and altered ecosystem. The initial disturbance to the physical integrity by Black Butte Dam and its continued influence on increasing the distribution of non-native invasive species has created a very difficult situation. Thanks to the DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant, the Watershed Coordinator improved watershed coordination and awareness through organizing, coordinating, and promoting outreach and education; improved watershed-wide planning efforts through facilitating the development of a Watershed Assessment; improved watershed project effectiveness through facilitating the development of a Monitoring Program; and reduced invasive vegetation in the watershed through facilitating a Mapping Project of *Arundo donax* (giant reed) and *Tamarix* (salt cedar); and began the watershed planning process. The efforts of the Watershed Coordinator led to a healthier, more intact watershed.

Educating the Community to Increase Environmental Awareness

The Watershed Coordinator hosted 20 educational events during the course of the Grant. Events including community water monitoring days, watershed tours, community restoration projects, invasive species removal events, and workshops for landowners. Over 300 watershed members participated in at least one of the activities. When community members are educated about the issues that face our watershed, they are better able to correct problems, prevent future problems, and manage problems that will arise in the future.

Weed Removal from Start to Finish

The Watershed Coordinator organized and implemented a comprehensive weed removal program. He started by coordinating the creation of a watershed assessment to identify priority issues, locations of invasive species, and weed management needs. Once *Arundo* was classified as a major issue, the Watershed Coordinator mapped the *Arundo* distribution in the watershed. Treatment followed with the completion of a demonstration site to try experimental removal techniques. Finally he monitored the locations to ensure that invasive removal was successful. The weed management program was a successful demonstration of how science can be used to create effective, long-lasting, informed watershed management.

Permit Coordination Program

Permitting for environmental restoration projects can be a substantial impediment to completing important work for the health of the environment. Landowners that want to make sound management decisions often find the time and expense of permitting to be prohibitive. The Watershed Coordinator worked with local, state, and federal permitting agencies to secure streamlined permitting through the Resource Conservation District. Now, landowners that want to do good work for the watershed can work with the Resource Conservation District to implement standard projects in a timely manner.

Contact Info:

132 N Enright Ave, Suite B
Willows, CA 95988
(530) 934-4601 x4
www.glenncountyrcd.org

ACCOMPLISHMENT

Organized 20 educational events

Completed a Watershed Assessment

Created a demonstration site to test various management practices

Facilitated a Water Quality Monitoring Program

Implemented a permit coordination program for environmental improvement project

Mapped *Arundo donax*

Created 8 newsletters that reached 448 landowners

PARTNERS

- Department of Water Resources
- CARCD
- City of Orland
- County of Glenn
- Department of Conservation
- Department of Fish and Game
- Lower Stony Creek Landowners
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- NOAA Fisheries
- Regional Water Quality Control Board
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Bureau of Reclamation
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Wildlife Conservation Board
- Stony Creek 4-H
- SLEWS
- Orland Unified School District
- California State University, Chico

Los Angeles & San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 17 & 19 - 30
State Assembly
District 38 - 59

54%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$249,854

Funds raised:	
Federal	0
State	133,693
Local	0
Private	0
Total	133,693



Landscaping for Water Conservation

The Goal of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Sustainable Landscape Watershed Coordinator was to develop and promulgate a program that highlights both the water conservation and ecosystem restoration benefits of sustainable landscape practices. Through innovative programs such as Plant Profiler, WeedWatch.org, and the Sustainable Landscape Design Seminar Series for landscape and planning professionals, we directly addressed objectives in CALFED program. The Watershed Council is very proud to have been a part of the Department of Conservation's effective Watershed Coordinator program.

Spreading the Word about Invasive Species

To help facilitate a new understanding of the habitat and water conservation values of native plants, the Watershed Coordinator developed the Plant Profiler (www.theplantprofiler.com) an online image and information database and website. He gave presentations demonstrating the site's functionality to targeted potential users and the site is now widely recognized as a resource by landscape architects, biologists, and planners for developing ecological restoration and landscape plans within the watershed. He then developed a biannual series of sustainable landscape seminars targeted at landscape architects, designers, builders, municipal planners, and maintenance professionals. Over 160 professionals attended at least one of the seminars.

But the Watershed Coordinator did not stop there. He collaborated with other Watershed Council staff and partners outside of the Watershed Council to develop

three outreach publications along with a map that compiled existing locations of *Arundo donax* (giant reed) for 11,000 square miles of coastal Southern California. Additionally, funding allowed Watershed Council staff to survey for twenty select high water-use, habitat degrading invasive plant species in the upper reaches of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel River watershed, primarily in the San Gabriel Mountain foothills. The results of all four projects can be found on their WeedWatch.org website.

Native Seed Resources Program

Co-developed the Native Seed Resources program and developed an initial proposal for a mapping, collecting, banking and distribution effort that will provide eco-typic native plant seed to growers for watershed restoration and landscaping efforts. This program seeks to ensure that locally native plants are used when restoring "native" habitat in public landscapes, especially along the rivers. A secondary goal is to assure that genetically distinct remnant populations of native plants are protected when landscaping and restoration takes place adjacent to natural areas and wildlands. The mapping phase of the program is currently underway with our staff ecologist and an intern having completed most of the work. We continue to seek additional funding resources.

Contact Info:

700 N Alameda
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 229-9951
www.lasgrwc.org

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Created a "Plant Profiler" database of recommended native landscaping species

Planned a native and water-efficient plant landscaping project at Griffith Observatory

Held 5 Landscape Design seminars for over 160 landscape designers

Developed a Weedwatch outreach program including a "Terrible Ten" invasives poster and wallet card

Coordinated a Watershed Symposium on post-fire recovery Best Mangement Practices attended by 94 people

Published a SAFE Landscapes calendar and guidebook

Planned a Native Seed Resources Program

PARTNERS

- City of Los Angeles
- County of Los Angeles
- San Gabriel Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
- Los Angeles WMA
- California Native Plant Society
- American Society of Landscape Architects
- Metropolitan Water District
- Los Angeles County Fire Department
- Long Beach Aquarium
- Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority
- Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden
- National Park System - Santa Monica Mountains
- The River Project
- TreePeople
- and many more

478%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$155,654

Funds raised:

Federal	15,320
State	728,766
Local	0
Private	0
Total	744,086



Getting Citizens Involved in Their River

The DOC Watershed Coordinator grant provided the Upper Merced River Watershed Council (UMRWC) key components for success. The overarching goal of the Council, as identified by the stakeholders, is to protect and improve the ecological condition of the Watershed while maintaining beneficial uses of the water. This grant program allowed the Council to reach out to underserved areas of the Watershed: specifically the sensitive Native American lands around the Merced's North Fork, the popular campgrounds along the five mile Briceburg Road, and the wildflower displays of the Hites Cove Trail. In addition, the funding allowed the staff to move into their own local office in order to create a visible watershed presence. This grant also focused on improving coordination among public and private interests and did so by partnering with Bureau of Land Management, Private rafting companies, the Merced River Alliance, the US Forest Service (Stanislaus and Sierra National Forests), the National Park Service, hiking groups, and others. The Council applied for and received more than \$744,086 additional monies to fund projects.

Citizens Monitoring Water Quality

Citizen water quality monitors were recruited and trained by the Watershed Coordinator, and between 10 and 14 sites (the number is dependent on seasonal flows) along the river have been monitored quarterly by up to 24 monitors. Stream walk assessments have been conducted by monitors annually. A baseline and four years of water quality data (surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program compliant) has been compiled, interpreted, and distributed to

stakeholders. In addition, 16 volunteers were trained in benthic macroinvertebrate/bioassessment (BMI) monitoring, and 4 sites were monitored in fall of 2007. This additional data allows the true long term health of the river to be assessed, in addition to the quarterly snapshot events.

Educating Stakeholders

At least seven informational events were presented to stakeholders/community members. Topics of the events included wildflowers, Sierra Nevada natural history, oaks, climate change, and Sierra salamanders. Presentations on the work of the watershed were made to local service groups.

Making the Watershed Digital

Making information available to local citizens is an important aspect of good management. To do so, the Watershed Coordinator created a digital library at www.mercedriverwatershed.org. The site was designed and established as a portal for research and information sharing on the watershed. It contains over 1400 items on the Upper Merced River Watershed. Informational outreach publications included four issues of the River Reach newsletter, both an English and a Spanish version of Upper Merced River Watershed brochure, brochure for river rafters, and brochure on the wildflowers of Hites Cove. A new UMRWC website, www.merced-river.org, is in place and updated regularly.

Contact Info:

PO Box 746
Mariposa, CA 95338
(209) 966-2221
www.merced-river.org

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Quarterly Water Quality Monitoring at 10 locations in the Watershed

Trained 14 volunteers to conduct macro-invertebrate sampling

Removed invasives from two miles of wild and scenic riverway

Trained docents at Hites Cove Trail to educate visitors about "leaving no trace"

Created a watershed lending library and put information on the web

Completed a photo-documentation project on recreational impact on a local trail

PARTNERS

- Bureau of Land Management
- National Park Service
- US Forest Service Sierra National Forest
- US Forest Service Stanislaus National Forest
- National Forest
- Sierra San Joaquin Noxious Weed Alliance
- Yosemite Area Audubon
- Sierra Nevada Alliance
- NRCS
- Mariposa County Integrated • Waste Management
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy
- State Water Quality Control Board

Mojave Desert RC&D Council

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 18
State Assembly
District 32 & 34

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Created and implemented an Erosion/sedimentation mitigation plan

Organized 2 fire resistant, water efficient native plant sales

Held 4 irrigation efficiency workshops for local landowners.

Compiled a comprehensive library of reference materials

Assisted in developing a conservation easement on 711 acres of private agricultural land

Held 24 community events educating the public about watershed issues

Provided watershed education to 240 K - 4th grade students

Implemented 3 restoration projects including the planting of 50 pounds of Pinyon seeds

Provided technical assistance to local landowners

PARTNERS

- Local Chamber of Commerce
- Fire Safe Councils
- California Audubon
- Mojave Desert-Mountain RC&D
- Eastern Kern RCD
- Kern County WMA
- Kern County Water Agency
- CDF&G
- Kern River Valley Golf Course
- OWEN Valley Career Development, Kern River
- Tribes
- Owens Valley Indian Water Commission
- and many more



476% Matched Funding

Grant Award: \$216,236

Funds raised:	
Federal	4,530
State	1,107,141
Local	4,075
Private	4,488
Total	1,030,234

Linking Social Clubs with Conservation

The upper Kern watershed is a challenging watershed to work on. With very little water and the risk of fire high, the Watershed Coordinator had his work cut out for him. Through practical hands-on restoration projects, water-efficiency education, partnering with local agencies, and creating management documents like the erosion/sediment mitigation plan, the Watershed Coordinator reduced local water use and decreased the likelihood of catastrophic wildfire. The Watershed Coordinator also played the critical link in negotiating agreements between local landowners and regulating agencies. He assisted landowners in making their management goals come to fruition. Finally, the Watershed Coordinator worked to give every citizen of the watershed a basic watershed education by addressing local social clubs (like the Rotary Club), presenting in the school system, and providing free community education. The upper-kern watershed is more efficient, intact, and informed thanks to the efforts of the Watershed Coordinator.

Erosion/ Sedimentation Mitigation Plan

An Erosion / Sediment Mitigation plan was created and distributed for use by farmers to help them reduce sedimentation and for owners of private lands to assist with expediting protection and revegetation measures following fires in order to reduce sediment loads in the South Fork and Main Channel of the Kern River. Best Management Practices, suggestions and guidelines provide practical information for landowners as well as set high-priority needs for the watershed as a whole. Irrigation control structures in need of replacement or improvement are documented as a high priority and potential funding sources are identified.

Making fire-resistant, water efficient plants more accessible to the public

The Watershed Coordinator conducted 2 fire resistant, water efficient native plant sales. The sales were truly a community effort. NCICC donated space, both the Kernville Chamber and the Kern River Valley Chamber of Commerce took orders and both news papers and the radio station donated advertising time/space. The Watershed Coordinator made the sale happen through coordination. The plant sales are very successful educational tools to introduce the public to xeriscape landscaping techniques and the use of native plants for their landscaping projects.

Providing the Link to Make Restoration Happen

California Department of Fish and Game Fisheries Biologist identified a private property owned by Pyles Boys Camp in the Golden Trout Wilderness that is experiencing riparian habitat degradation due to livestock activity along Lions Creek. Degradation threatens the native Golden Trout population in that stream. The Watershed Coordinator facilitated a meeting between Pyles Boys Camp Manager and Kern Wildlife Reserve Manager to construct a riparian protection fence and to reroute a trail away from a critical area of the creek. They embraced the idea and the assistance that was offered. Installation of the fencing and rerouting of the trail are planned for the summer of 2008.

Contact Info:

1525 North Norma Street, Suite C
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

(760) 446-1974

State Senate
District 21 - 28
State Assembly
District 42 - 48,
51 & 53

Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

1804%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$230,892

Funds raised:

Federal	0
State	4,165,000
Local	0
Private	0
Total	4,165,000



Affecting Change in an Urban Environment

The DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant allowed the Mountains Recreation Authority to implement the stakeholder driven Ballona Watershed Management Plan that was created prior to grant funding. The Watershed Coordinator continued the stakeholder process by facilitating and supporting the Task Force in strategic planning. She also helped citizens drive the planning effort for a Ballona Greenway which is being developed as a "short-term" plan to complement a long-term restoration planning effort to be implemented throughout the watershed. The Watershed Coordinator has also worked to increase the community's awareness of stream protection. She spearheaded a study to create regional curves for bankfull channels for the Los Angeles Region; hosted a "Stream Assessment and Restoration Design" Workshop; restored habitat at Stone Canyon Creek; and provided technical support to the City of Los Angeles to develop a stream protection ordinance. Los Angeles rivers are beginning to look more like rivers thanks to community efforts and the hard work of the Watershed Coordinator.

Establishing Bankful Regional Curves

While this may sound like a fairly mundane research project, establishing a bankful curve for the region is the first step in restoring Los Angeles severely altered waterways. Establishing basic parameters for stream dimensions provides clarity to the streams natural functioning. Understanding a stream's natural functioning helps guide restoration projects in a more natural, more watershed-friendly way.

Go Wild!

The Watershed Coordinator facilitated "Go Wild!" "Go Wild!" is an education program in the Ballona Watershed that brings together habitat experts (RCDSMM), a native American tribe (the Gabrielino-Tongva, who have not previously been active stakeholders in Watershed activities), and the LA Unified School District, to restore natural springs on the University High School campus. This provides exposure to nature to a group of youth who are generally not outside the urban environment.

Affecting Local Policy

The Watershed Coordinator worked with City of Los Angeles to create a Stream Protection Ordinance. She provided technical support to the development of the draft ordinance. If passed, the ordinance would help revive lost remnant streams and provide a more cohesive, natural water system in the heart of an urban environment. The Mayor's Office is currently reviewing the ordinance.

Franklin Canyon Restoration

For over a year, the Watershed Coordinator has been working with the City of Los Angeles to develop a viable restoration proposal for lower Franklin Canyon. If funded, this project would provide a safe context within which for public agencies to explore stream restoration without the need for armoring. It also proposes a partial dam removal, another potentially historic action in this highly populated urban area.

Contact Info:

570 West Avenue 26, Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA 90065
(323) 221-9944 x 117
www.mrca.ca.gov

ACCOMPLISHMENT

Held Stream Assessment and Restoration Design Workshop for 25 professionals

Initiated the Ballona Greenway Committee

Scientifically determine a Bankfull Channel Regional Curve

Created "Go Wild!" educational program in the Los Angeles Unified School District

Completed Lower Ballona Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study

Collaborated on the Stone Canyon Creek Habitat Restoration Project

PARTNERS

- Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission
- County of Los Angeles
- City of Los Angeles
- UCLA
- State Water Resources Control Board
- Phillip Williams and Associates
- Baldwin Hills Park
- National Park Service
- Ballona Network
- Army Corps of Engineers
- Coastal Conservancy
- Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust
- Mid-Cities Neighborhood Council
- North East Trees
- 10th Street Elementary Schools
- Department of Water Resources
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- Southern California Association of Governments
- Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission and many more

Napa County Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 2
State Assembly
District 7

1745%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$228,139

Funds raised:

Federal	1,067,273
State	2,216,112
Local	696,717
Private	0
Total	3,980,102



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Removed 5 fish barriers opening historic spawning ground to endangered fish

Restored and improved habitat on approximately 19.8 miles of stream

Created Restoration plans for approximately 16.5 additional miles of creek

Implemented Napa Fish Friendly Farming/Napa Green Certification (FFF) program

Instituted the Watershed Information Center & Conservancy (WICC) Board's online watershed portal/web-site.

Developed restoration plans for 14.5 miles of river, 3 acres of floodplain and improvement of rural roads

Created 6 watershed/creek/river stewardship groups

Enhancing a Watershed

The Watershed Coordinator addressed resource concerns in the Napa River and San Pablo Bay watersheds including excess sediment, stream bank instability, high water temperatures, low summer flows, lack of in-stream and riparian habitat, fish migration barriers, and overall habitat degradation. Through coordination of over 25 ad hoc and formal watershed organizations and assistance to individuals, the Watershed Coordinator provided an efficient means to foster communication and address local resource challenges. A collaborative process was used to involve the community in gathering and summarizing existing watershed data, identifying specific watershed conditions, and prioritizing watershed areas for restoration and enhancement. A centralized "watershed information center" website was maintained as a publicly accessible clearinghouse of information; coordination assistance was to be provided to implement existing watershed management plans within sub-watersheds of the Napa River Watershed; facilitation assistance was provided to landowners interested in forming ad-hoc watershed groups to conduct watershed assessment, planning and project implementation; and a San Pablo Bay cooperative was developed to explore and implement opportunities for collaborative watershed improvement. Through these and other related tasks the Watershed Coordinator facilitated water quality and habitat improvements on 50+ acres of land and 10+ miles of stream, remove 10+ fish migration barriers, and raise \$2,000,000 to support watershed improvements and coordination efforts.

Rural Road Improvement Project

The Watershed Coordinator facilitated the Carneros Creek Stewardship and Sulphur Creek Watershed Task Force for several years, helping them to conduct watershed assessments, develop a watershed management plans, and prioritize their interests. Following up on their priorities, the Watershed Coordinator wrote a successful grant to implement rural road improvements at "high priority" sites that were likely to deliver significant amounts of sediment to streams that support threatened steelhead trout.

Over \$3.5 million dollars in funding secured

Funds were used to restore, enhance, and protect water quality, plant and animal species and habitats, natural stream processes, and community relationships. The Watershed Coordinator successfully obtained funds from several sources to support watershed activities such as, but not limited to conducting hydraulic and fisheries monitoring and modeling for low-flow conditions in creeks that support threatened anadromous fish, implementing the Watershed Assessment Framework, planning and implementing creek and upland restoration and waters quality protection projects, and placing creek signs at major creek crossings along portions of the Silverado Trail.

Contact Info:

1303 Jefferson St. Ste 500B
Napa, CA 94559

(707) 252-4188

PARTNERS

- Napa County
 - Napa County Flood Control & Water Conservation District
 - NRCS
 - California Department of Fish and Game
 - Regional Water Quality Control Board
 - NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
 - Staff and elected officials
 - Napa County Board of Supervisors
 - Watershed Groups
 - Sonoma Ecology Center
 - North Bay Watershed Association and Watershed Council
- and many more

8% Matched Funding

Grant Award: \$232,434

Funds raised:

Federal	0
State	7,975
Local	2,900
Private	8,100
Total	18,975



Working with Small Landowners

The Bear River Watershed Coordinator coordinated watershed projects; collaborated with a diverse group of stakeholders; encouraged communication, and conveyed and disseminated information to landowners throughout the watershed and region over the life of the grant. She increased awareness and understanding of natural resources in the public and schools through information sharing and joint projects focused on protecting and enhancing watershed resources. The Watershed Coordinator improved ecological health and water management for beneficial uses in the Bear River Watershed and throughout the CALFED Bay-Delta system. This grant addressed the CALFED Bay-Delta goals of: watershed management, water use efficiency, ecosystem restoration, water storage and science. Almost 90% of the Bear River Watershed is privately owned, therefore, a major focus was to cooperatively educate and work with private landowners.

Workshops For Landowners

The Watershed Coordinator developed an all day seminar, "Raising Horses on Small Acreage" educating landowners on manure management, pasture development and rotation, weed eradication, protecting water quality, reducing surface water run-off, implementing filter and natural buffer strips and developing their sites with minimal impacts to the natural resources. A large binder of materials and six presentations were developed that included personalized maps with soils information, topography and aerial photo maps for each participant. The first seminar of 52 landowners filled up immediately. The class is now hosted twice a year. The curriculum is expanding into other watersheds/ counties.

Community shaded fuel break project

The Watershed Coordinator facilitated a large Community Shaded Fuel Break project. The fuel break is almost 15 miles long and will aid in protecting Grass Valley, Nevada City, and Cascade Shores from a catastrophic wildfire. This project coordinated the work of 90 landowners to effectively reduce fuel loads in order to lessen the threat of fire, prevent soil erosion and protect water quality in the watershed. The Watershed Coordinator communicated with landowners, taught seminars, wrote press releases and held public meetings to inform and teach landowners how to reduce fuel loads. To date, 70% of the fuel reduction project has been completed.

Labeling Storm Drains

Labeling storm drains reminds citizens not to dump in drains that lead directly to the river. The Watershed Coordinator created a Storm Drain Marking project that labeled 800 storm drains in the city of Grass Valley. 200 volunteers participated including several schools and local businesses. Over 3,000 door hang tags were distributed to local residents reminding them to recycle. A large committee was created to identify and map the location of storm drains in the city, which was a large task. The event was coordinated as part of the 9-day Watershed Awareness Month celebration.

Contact Info:

113 Presley Way, Suite 1
Grass Valley, CA 95945

(530) 272-3417

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Coordinated over 150 watershed seminars attended by almost 3,000 attendees

Presented in over sixty forums

Wrote and published a twelve page, color brochure on "How To Manage The Vegetation On Your Property" that was distributed throughout CA.

Created a fuelbreak in a high-fire prone area that is approximately fifteen miles long and involved ninety private landowners and public agencies.

Conducted numerous outreach projects involving local stakeholders

PARTNERS

- Bear River Watershed Group
- RCD's
- CARCD
- NACD
- USDA Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- US Geological Survey
- US Fish & Wildlife
- California Dept of Fish & Game
- California Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire)
- Sacramento River Watershed Program
- PG&E
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy
- Sierra Nevada Alliance
- Local Watershed Groups
- Beale Air Force Base
- Sierra Pacific Industries
- Nevada Irrigation District
- High Sierra RC&D
- Fire Safe Councils
- Agriculture Commissioners
- Nevada County
- Placer County
- and many more

Placer County Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 1 & 4
State Assembly
District 3 & 4

247%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$234,013

Funds raised:	
Federal	0
State	554,400
Local	0
Private	22,810
Total	577,210



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Completed a 3 year sediment dynamics study

Held 7 clean-up days that removed over 8 trucks worth of trash

Initiated "Watershed Education Summit-North"

Participated in 36 educational opportunities for local community members

Developed Cigarette Litter Prevention Program

Planned 2 American River Watershed conferences

Assessed baseline soil and water quality conditions for application to a restoration project of local off-highway vehicle trail system

Participated in the creation of the CABY Inter-regional watershed management plan

Gained 501c3 designation for the Upper American River Foundation

PARTNERS

- Department of Conservation
- CALFED
- Auburn Recreation District
- Individual Donors
- Granite Bay Flycasters
- Sierra Nevada Alliance
- US Forest Service (Tahoe and El Dorado National Forests)
- Placer County Water Agency
- Placer County
- Fire Safe Alliance
- Keep California Beautiful
- Protect American River

Restoration and Science

Watershed coordination relies on getting the community educated, active and involved in the issues that affect their river. The North Fork American River Watershed Coordinator did this very well. He worked to complete studies like the sediment dynamics study to guide restoration work, educated the public about the problems facing the watershed through such events as the "Watershed Education Summit," and then got people out to take part in cleaning their own river through numerous clean-up events. In addition, he built collaboration between the public, stakeholders and local agencies; improved the understanding of watershed processes; gathered data on water quality; restored ecosystems; and improved the connectivity between the American River and the Bay-Delta ecosystem.

Better Understanding our Watershed Through Science

The Watershed Coordinator completed a three year sediment dynamics study that assessed all the major sources of sediment contribution to the river. By identifying and quantifying major inputs, the watershed group is now able to make smart management decisions by addressing the largest sources of sediment first. This information led to a better understanding of an Off Highway Vehicle trail and allowed the group to mitigate damages from the site. Increased information should guide similar projects throughout the next three years.

Cleaning up Sugar Pine Reservoir

Clean-up projects are hard work. The Watershed Coordinator was successful in recruiting 30 people to come out and make their watershed a cleaner place. With the help of the Auburn Flycasters, Granite Bay Flycasters, Foresthill High School, the California Conservation Corps, American River Ranger District and other devoted volunteers, an entire dumpster and two-ton truck were filled with trash and debris left behind by recreationists. The Watershed Coordinator facilitated 4 additional clean up projects and partnered with 3 existing clean up projects involving 100's of volunteers to remove countless pounds of garbage from the watershed and our waterways.

Keep California Beautiful

As part of the keep America Beautiful Campaign, the Watershed Coordinator partnered with local entities to install cigarette collection devices throughout the watershed at major recreation sites. Now cigarette butts can easily be deposited where they should be rather than in our streams, rivers, and eventually oceans.

Contact Info:

251 Auburn Ravine Road, Suite 107
Auburn, CA 95603

(530) 885-3046

747%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$171,542

Funds raised:

Federal	610,000
State	321,342
Local	157,576
Private	192,128
Total	1,281,046



Creating a Cultural Change Toward Conservation

The Malibu Creek Watershed Coordinator assisted diverse stakeholders to make shared watershed goals come to pass. The Coordinator and the many members of the Malibu Creek Watershed Council (MCWC) have been dazzled by the outcome of the last three years. Success in on-the-ground projects, watershed-scale environmental education/behavioral change outreach and securing funding has resulted in real habitat restoration, water quality improvement and water conservation. Some on-the-ground projects include the acquisition of 20 acres of seasonal wetland in the Malibu Legacy Park, the acquisition of 10 acres of seasonal wetland adjacent to the Malibu Lagoon, the restoration of 450 feet of Las Virgenes Creek in the heart of downtown Calabasas, the habitat restoration and expansion of the Malibu Lagoon.

Changing the Community

Creating cultural change to improve watershed conditions has been a long-term goal of the MCWC. The revision, reprinting and distribution of 19,000 copies of the Living Lightly In Our Watersheds Guide has been an effective tool for community outreach, as was the filming and distribution of *The Clean Water Act and Our Backyards: Improving Water Quality in the Santa Monica Mountains*, starring Wendie Malick, which has been aired on public access and city TV stations reaching over 250,000 people. The Watershed Coordinator also organized the Water Run-off Conference 2008 which will also have a DVD going out into the community via the same mechanism, demonstrating cisterns, low impact development, nativescaping, green roofs, best irrigation practices, run-off ordinances, enforcement programs, fundraising mechanisms and more.

Restoring Malibu

The Malibu Creek Watershed has outperformed the MCWC's brightest dreams in acquiring open space for habitat restoration. Various stakeholders have partnered to acquire the former SOKA property (now called King Gillette Ranch), the Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve (formerly Ahmanson Ranch), the Malibu Legacy Park (formerly the Chili Cook-off Site), a legacy donation of 10 acres adjacent to the Malibu Lagoon from the Perenchio family and more. The Malibu Lagoon Restoration is underway, managed by the RCDSMM and two fish migration barriers were removed from the MCWC over the duration of this grant.

Reducing Water Consumption

Reducing water use regionally is an outgrowth of personal choices. The Watershed Coordinator was successful in reaching out to community members regarding water quality and moving the community towards a Native Plants aesthetic. Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (LVWMD) and West Basin Municipal Water District (WBMWD) have been working to switch over to low flush toilets, making tremendous strides to fund pipes required for deepening an already impressive recycled water use programs and have both been utilizing MWD and various grants to provide rebates to customers who install E.T. Controllers.

Contact Info:

3000 Mulholland Highway

Agoura Hills, Ca 91301

www.malibuwaterhed.org

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Acquisition of 20 acres of seasonal wetland in the Malibu Legacy Park, & 10 acres of seasonal wetland adjacent to the Malibu Lagoon

Restoration of 450 feet of Las Virgenes Creek in downtown Calabasas

Installation of five Nativescaping gardens, and the sale of over 3,000 Native Plants.

Revision, reprinting and distribution of 19,000 copies of the *Living Lightly In Our Watersheds Guide*

Filming and distribution of *The Clean Water Act and Our Backyards: Improving Water Quality in the Santa Monica Mountains*.

PARTNERS

- Los Angeles County
- West Basin Municipal Water District
- The Cities of: Calabasas, Malibu, Agoura Hills, Westlake Village, Thousand Oaks, Hidden Hills and Santa Monica, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara.
- Las Virgenes Municipal Water District
- Heal the Bay
- Santa Monica Baykeepers
- Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission
- TreePeople
- Ed Begley, Junior
- Wendie Malick
- Dorothy Green
- Ozzie Silna
- CARCD
- NRCS
- UCLA Stunt Ranch
- School districts of Los Angeles, Las Virgenes and Malibu-Santa Monica, and many more

Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 1
State Assembly
District 4

249%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$278,036

Funds raised:	
Federal	0
State	569,000
Local	6,500
Private	115,500
Total	691,000



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Completed fall salmon run surveys on 20 miles of creek while training 40 volunteers to complete assessments

Coordinated Creek Week in 2006 and 2007. 800 volunteers helped clean watershed creeks, rivers and streams

Revegetated 2 acres of riparian forest in a City of Roseville Preserve

Developed a regional program to eradicate Red Sesbania

Coordinated a three-day benthic vertebrate workshop to train local stream monitoring volunteers

Worked with Rio Linda High School to develop a watershed stewardship program that included a creek restoration

Installed Creek ID signs on major roads throughout the watershed

Developed a Placer County handbook on Low Income Development projects

PARTNERS

- Dry Creek Conservancy
- Cal EPA
- Placer County
- City of Roseville
- Placer County RCD
- Sacramento Flood Control
- REI
- California Department of Fish and Game
- Bella Vista
- American Water
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy
- PG&E
- and many more

Restoring with Knowledge

Watershed Coordinators provide local solutions to statewide problems by addressing the needs of the community they work in. The Dry Creek Watershed Coordinator assessed Dry Creek's needs and worked to meet those needs through a prescription just right for Dry Creek. The Dry Creek Watershed Coordinator's overall goal was to reduce run-off, improve water quality, and improve aquatic and terrestrial habitat thus improving the overall health of the watershed. He accomplished this through two strategies. First, he strengthened the organizational capacity of the Dry Creek Watershed Council (replaced by a collaborative group called American Basin Council of Watersheds) in order to provide continuous, long-term management of the watershed. Second, he provided information to stakeholders about the impact of their decisions on watershed health, organizing educational opportunities, and providing techniques to minimize impact. More educated citizens make better watershed management decisions. He trained citizens and involved them in watershed monitoring; merged several watershed groups together to make a stronger, more cohesive group (American Basin Council of Watersheds); coordinated Creek Week; and completed numerous restoration projects. Not only is Dry Creek healthier thanks to his work, the community now knows how to keep it healthier.

Restoration through Better Science

The Watershed Coordinator and watershed partners completed important studies assessing the current conditions of the watershed. This included monitoring of water quality, aquatic micro-invertebrates (an indicator of water health), and salmon species. Leading

minds in ecological restoration convened in a two-day workshop to present and discuss current watershed assessments and data. This information can be used to assess Dry Creek's biggest needs and then solve those problems in an informed way.

Knowledge-transfer

The Watershed Coordinator knew that informing the public is important to science being practical as well as informative. Not only did he gather watershed information, but he also taught the citizens of the watershed how to go out and collect that information themselves. He held a three-day benthic invertebrate workshop to make sure volunteers were up to date on the latest information and techniques. Citizen monitoring creates a more informed, more engaged citizenry that is able to take action to solve issues in their own community. He trained a volunteer base that grew throughout the cycle of the grant and that will work for the improvement of their watershed for years to come.

Re-vegetation and restoration

When used in the wrong places, off-road vehicles can do a lot of harm to the environment. Riparian areas are particularly sensitive because they are wet most of the year. The Watershed Coordinator organized volunteers to re-plant two acres of riparian forest badly damaged by irresponsible off-road vehicle use. He then installed signs and information to deter future destructive activities.

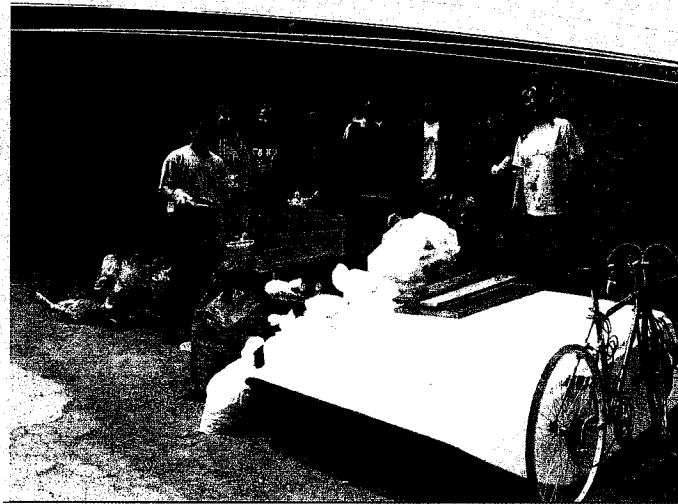
Contact Info:

1007 7th Street, 7th Floor
Sacramento, Ca 95814
916-771-2013

2317% Matched Funding

Grant Award: \$210,091

Funds raised:	
Federal	550,000
State	5,000
Local	4,21,000
Private	52,233
Total	4,868,233



Creeks, Trees and Citizens

Thanks to the Department of Conservation grant, the San Francisquito Watershed Council (SFWC) and JPA met a set of important measurable objectives to improve aquatic and riparian habitat within the San Francisquito watershed. Both Watershed Coordinators addressed goals of ecosystem restoration, improved conveyance, increased levee system integrity, and improved water quality, and expanded education and outreach. Citizens were educated about flood damage reduction, ecosystem restoration, native plants, steelhead, water usage, storm water runoff, bank stabilization, and sediment. Working with partners, the Watershed Coordinators improved approximately 1300 linear feet of streambank; designed, permitted, and built three modifications to instream barriers that previously limited the migration of steelhead (a federally listed species) to 15.5 miles of prime habitat; and designed and built two demonstration projects that reduce stormwater runoff by 250,000 gallons. SFWC also completed several planning documents including a water budget study for a habitat-sensitive sub watershed; a water conservation and runoff reduction plan for homeowners; a set of recommendations for local agencies on stormwater management; an action plan for working with partners and volunteers to remove invasive plants and plant natives; a priority list for removing instream barriers to steelhead passage; a scientific, volunteer monitoring program to assess revegetation sites; and a study correlating tree canopy cover to stream temperature and quality of habitat for steelhead.

Mapping and Protecting Vulnerable Trees

The Watershed Coordinators inventoried vulnerable trees on 14 miles of creek with help from the Boy Scouts, their families and creekside residents. Roughly 75 vulnerable/mature trees have been photo documented and mapped. Protecting these trees protects habitat, bank stability and water temperature. The square footage of habitat documented as "in need of protection" is approximately 16,000 to 17,000 square feet. Not only is habitat more protected, but local citizens know how and where to protect their stream.

Providing Scientific Evidence to Guide Restoration

The Watershed Coordinator significantly expanded the utility of the existing invasive removal and native planting programs by developing three new project elements: a monitoring component for its revegetation projects, a study correlating tree canopy cover with water temperatures, and a study examining the effects of immediate revegetation on success in suppressing regrowth of *Arundo donax*, an invasive plant that is highly deleterious to the riparian corridor. These three elements will provide a set of scientific findings and outreach tools that will help property owners in our watershed – and potentially throughout Northern California – understand the implications of different land management strategies for the riparian corridor.

Contact Info:

701 Laurel Street
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(650) 330-6765

www.sanfrancisquito.org

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Completion of Citizens Guide to Creekside maintenance

Oversaw 42 volunteer habitat improvement workdays involving 831 volunteers who spent 2,900 hours removing 1.9 acres of invasive species and planting 2,100 native plants

Conducted "Vulnerable Tree Inventory"

Mapped and treated 37 stands of *Arundo donax*

Coordinated emergency declaration and levee repair estimates for East Palo Alto

Launched a scientifically rigorous, volunteer-based assessment project for re-vegetation

Installed 2 demonstration projects to reduce, slow, and clean stormwater runoff on existing landscapes

PARTNERS

- Acterra
- CDFG
- California Native Plant Society
- City of Menlo Park
- City of Palo Alto
- Girl Scouts
- Save the Bay
- Jasper Ridge Preserve
- NOAA Fisheries
- Palo Alto homeowner
- Portola Valley Conservation Committee
- San Mateo County Parks
- San Francisquito Creek JPA
- Santa Clara Valley Water District
- Sonoma Ecology Center
- UC Davis
- and many more

San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 5 & 14
State Assembly
District 10, 15 & 26

1323%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$182,505

Funds raised:	
Federal	80,497.21
State	2,268,539
Local	11,560
Private	54,312
Total	2,414,908



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Secured the first non-mitigation programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement in the State of California

Created an annual "Watershed Stewardship Award"

Held an agricultural best management practices field day in the watershed

Coordinated and restored a SLEWS project site

Created a workshop for homeowners to reduce storm water pollution

Reduced turbidity in the water by 31%

Improved dissolved oxygen in the river by 5%

PARTNERS

- San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Lower Mokelumne River Partnership Group
- East Bay Municipal Utility District
- City of Lodi, Depts. Of Parks and Recreation, and Public Works
- U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
- Department of Water Resources
- Lodi Public Library
- Lodi-Woodbridge Winegrape Commission
- SLEWS and FARMS Leadership Program and many more

Working with Landowners for a Healthier Watershed

The purpose of this DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant was to increase water quality; facilitate and improve coordination, collaboration and assistance among government agencies, other organizations, and the local watershed group; and to implement a strategy that will ensure the long-term sustainability for local watershed activities. The Watershed Coordinator accomplished these goals by implementing The Lower Mokelumne River Watershed Stewardship Plan. The Plan promotes individual responsibility, collaboration, and an approach to watershed stewardship that depends on many different actions by many different individuals. The Watershed Coordinator was successful in increasing participation on the Lower Mokelumne River Watershed Stewardship Steering Committee; held two agricultural water quality field days; created an annual watershed stewardship award; worked with the Center for Land-Based Learning to expand the SLEWs and Farms Leadership programs; and raised more than \$2 million dollars in additional funding. The efforts of the Watershed Coordinator helped create a more intact, more informed watershed.

Agricultural Water Quality Field Days

The Watershed Coordinator planned and held an agricultural water quality field day. The field day was coordinated with government agencies and non-governmental organizations to promote best management practices to reduce non-point source pollution. The field day fostered cooperation among watershed stakeholders and provided information to agricultural producers in the watershed on ways to reduce non-point source contamination.

Empowering Landowners to Protect their Watershed

Local residents contribute greatly to non-point source pollution, yet most do not even know they are doing it. The Watershed Coordinator worked with the Lodi-Woodbridge Winegrape Commission to create a workshop for homeowners to help them reduce runoff and non-point source pollution that enters the river from urban/suburban sources. The Watershed Coordinator also conducted several tours of the watershed, showcasing restoration and education and outreach activities for funders, stakeholders and others. Local residents know more about protecting their watershed thanks to the work of the Watershed Coordinator.

Creating Safe Harbor

Sometimes landowners who want to institute restoration projects on their properties are unable to do so because of fears of future litigations. The Watershed Coordinator helped to secure the first non-mitigation programmatic safe harbor agreement in the State of California. The agreement protects landowners from endangered species concerns when restoration activities are successful. This benefits the watershed by restoring ecosystem function, encouraging actions that benefit listed species, and fosters collaboration, cooperation, and understanding among governmental agencies and non-governmental groups and individuals.

Contact Info:

3422 W Hammer Lane, Suite A
Stockton, CA 95219
(209) 472-7127 ext 125
www.sjcrd.org

San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust

State Senate
District 14 & 16
State Assembly
District 25, 29
& 31

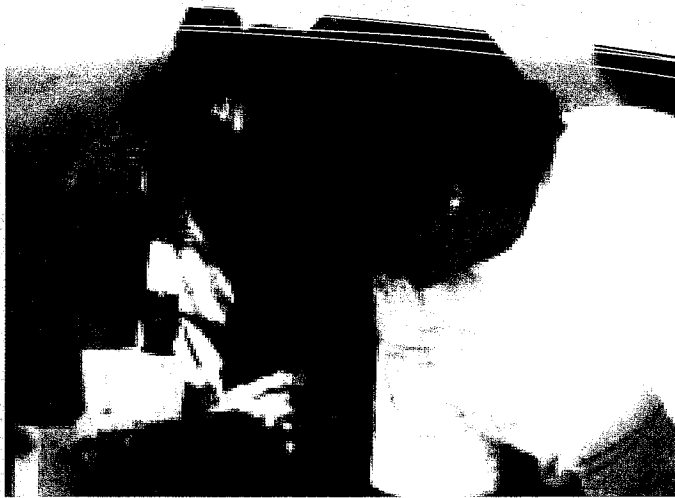
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

960%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$158,624

Funds raised:

Federal	153,900
State	1,361,408
Local	0
Private	7,974
Total	1,523,282



Empowering Volunteers to Restore Habitat

The Department Of Conservation Watershed Coordinator Grant gave the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust the ability to coordinate the restoration of riparian and adjacent upland and wetland habitat along the San Joaquin River by collaborating with public agencies, non-profits, and community groups. Restoration was achieved by establishing an outreach program to solicit community involvement in restoration activities and building strong relationships with local landowners and partners to facilitate restoration. The Watershed Coordinator successfully implemented the Jensen River Ranch Habitat Enhancement Project, an Arundo Eradication and Coordination effort, a small native plant planting project at Camp Pashayan, and the planning of 3 additional restoration project. In the midst of these large accomplishments, the Watershed Coordinator coordinated monthly volunteer workdays, provided several special workdays and field trips for student and community groups, and conducted seven semi-annual river clean-up events.

Restoration

The Watershed Coordinator was extremely successful in getting local community members to restore and improve their natural areas. Restoration has been completed on 100 acres, invasive weeds have been removed on 500 acres, and an additional 150 acres are being planned for restoration. Approximately 600 volunteers from high schools, church groups, service organizations, university students, and businesses assisted in making these natural areas more natural.

Reaching out to the Community

Community direction for restoration is important to ensure that projects are in line with community values and to gain community support for local efforts. The Watershed Coordinator held stakeholder meetings, coordinated two Latino focus groups, held outreach meetings with local organizations, coordinated a stakeholder advisory committee, and submitted a survey to the committee. The community outreach led to restoration projects that brought over 600 volunteers on-site to donate their services.

Educating Youth for a Better Environment

The Watershed Coordinator provided extensive opportunities for youth to become more involved in protecting their environment. She created a Youth Summit to bring local youth together to learn more about local issues, presented environmental issues to countless youth organizations and classrooms, worked closely with local Cub Scouts to guide the implementation of an acorn planting project, held a Summer River Camp Program, held river clean-up events, and held workdays for many high schools, youth groups, boy scout troops, cub scout troops, and college students. Thanks to the Watershed Coordinator local youth better understand their world and how to protect it.

Contact Info:

1550 E Shaw Avenue Suite 114
Fresno, CA 93710

(559) 248-8480

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Completed a 100 acre restoration project at Jensen River Ranch including a native Oak Acorn collection and planting

Coordinated and conducted 7 semi-annual River Clean up events utilizing hundreds of volunteers. Several tons of trash were removed from the river corridor.

Educated local youth by providing educational river field trips for local groups

Coordinated a Project Wet facilitator training

Restored Riverside Trail by planting native grass

Recruited interns to plan and for a large-scale restoration projects at Spano River Ranch, Owl Hollow, and the Riverbottom Nature Area

Held a Youth Summit and Summer River Camp Program to educate youth

PARTNERS

- San Joaquin River Conservancy
- City of Fresno
- DWR
- Fresno Pacific College
- Fresno City College
- Clovis West High School
- Bullard High School
- East Fresno Kiwanis
- The Unitarian Church
- FARMS program
- Cub Scouts
- 4H Club
- Society for Ecological
- Restoration Conference
- Chaffee Zoo
- Wildlink Program and many more

Santa Barbara County

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 19
State Assembly
District 35

170%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$202,943

Funds raised:	
Federal	38,000
State	0
Local	0
Private	0
Total	38,000



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Conducted 10 water quality workshops with in attendance of 321 growers

Conducted 74 irrigation evaluations on agricultural land

Reduced agricultural water usage by 473 acre ft. a year

Trained 247 professional landscapers on water-efficient landscaping

Removed 1 fish barrier and proposed 7 others

Restored native vegetation along Mission Creek

Created "Our Water Our World" program to educate the public about best management

PARTNERS

Cachuma Resource Conservation District
Rincon Creek Watershed Council
Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition
Community Environmental Council
Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project
Local water purveyors
Carpinteria Valley Water District, Montecito Water District, City of Santa Barbara, Goleta Water District)
Southern San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties Agricultural Watershed Coalition
UC Cooperative Extension Farm Advisors
1st and 2nd District County Supervisors

Watershed Management, Fish and Water Quality

The goal of this grant was to improve water use efficiency, water quality, and ecosystem restoration in watersheds along the South Coast of Santa Barbara County. Other goals included improving coordination between watershed groups and developing an organizational approach to watershed management within the County. To meet these goals, the Watershed Coordinator worked to increase water use efficiency for irrigation systems, promoted the reduction of fertilizer and pesticide use, facilitated ecosystem restoration and watershed planning, and developed a strategy for incorporating watershed protection and restoration into County operations. Many of the Watershed Coordinator's accomplishments will have long-term benefits for watershed health on the South Coast.

Reducing Water use and Improving Water Quality

The Watershed Coordinator reduced water use and improved water quality through workshops, classes, irrigation evaluations, and public outreach and education. A total of 568 growers and landscapers were trained on methods to increase irrigation efficiency and reduce the application of fertilizers and pesticides. Over 74 irrigation system evaluations were conducted. Results can save a total of 473 ac-ft of water per year if implemented correctly. Through follow-up visits, it was found that 18 irrigation systems have been improved to date. The Watershed Coordinator conducted educated multiple watershed groups, wrote newspaper articles, and created fact sheets to distribute at local stores and events. Residents of the South Coast are more aware of their impact on the watershed thanks to the efforts of the Watershed Coordinator.

Facilitated Watershed Management

The Watershed Coordinator was instrumental in the development of three watershed plans for Carpinteria, San Jose, and Rincon Creek watersheds. The plans are already being used by agencies, watershed groups, and individuals to guide restoration objectives. Plans include projects to remove barriers to steelhead migration on Carpinteria Creek and its tributaries.

Restoration and Removal of Fish Barriers

The Watershed Coordinator completed two ecosystem restoration projects on local creeks. The Watershed Coordinator managed the preliminary design and permitting work for modification or removal of five fish passage barriers on the South Coast. The progress made on the projects will allow construction to begin as early as summer 2008. The permitting process can be a major hurdle for restoration projects. The Watershed Coordinator's involvement ensured that the necessary permits were secured in a timely fashion so that the projects could be carried out. The projects also included public outreach and education components such as permanent interpretative signs at the project sites. Both the watershed plans and restoration projects coordinated by the Watershed Coordinator will have a lasting effect on watershed health on the South Coast.

Contact Info:

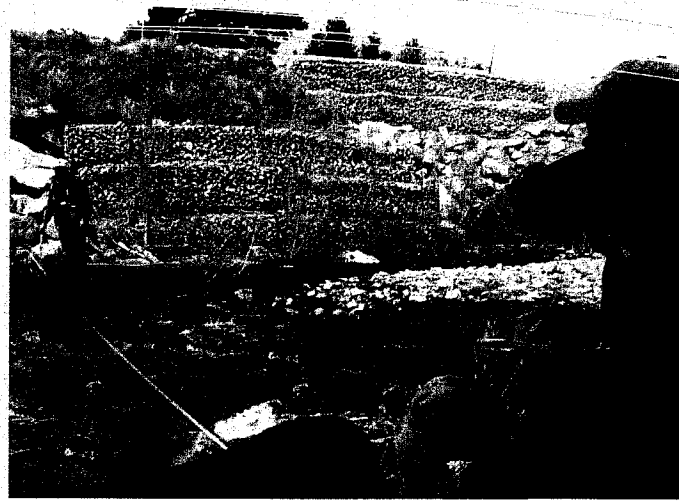
123 E Anapamu St
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-3440
www.countyofsb.org

513%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$182,505

Funds raised:

Federal	10,000
State	831,980
Local	94,760
Private	0
Total	936,740



User-friendly Science Guiding Restoration

Watershed Coordinators specialize in using valid scientific information to educate the public and guide restoration projects. Making science usable gives it practical value. The Middle Fork Feather River Watershed Coordinator utilized existing information to develop and implement a watershed action plan in order to prioritize actions to improve watershed conditions. The sole purpose of the Watershed Coordinator was to bring surrounding watershed groups to the table in order to work cooperatively on watershed wide solutions that foster land stewardship. The 3 years of the Watershed Coordinator Grant resulted in a number of accomplishments and achievements including the management of 5 resource management areas, completion of a watershed assessment report, two "Barns Birds and Barbecues" (BBB) festivals, a sustainable agriculture conference, a honey bee and native pollinator workshop, noxious weed removal, an agricultural waiver program, and collection of watershed data.

Carmen Valley Restoration Project

The Watershed Coordinator actively organized and coordinated efforts on one of the largest restoration projects in Sierra Valley. This project utilized the efforts of the USFS an ongoing large-scale venture that included 10 organizations; some of the major contributions to the project included Feather River Coordinated Resource Management Group (FRCRM), San Francisco State University and USFS. The project restored several acres of meadows and stream channel that were actively down cutting and depositing sediment in the watershed. This project stabilized the streambanks, brought the

stream up to meadow surface, reseeded native grasses and planted native plants like willow along the water ways. This project also included the Loylton High School in revegetation efforts. The project was completed and a video of the efforts was created.

Barns Birds Barbecue Festival

The event fosters awareness about the connections between farming, ranching and the environment in the Sierra Valley. The SVRCD was a key organizer and sponsor in the first ever BBB event. The First festival earned the State Innovation Award. The success of the festival has placed the SVRCD in the public spotlight and allowed the RCD to become the lead sponsor on the second annual BBB. All the funds raised benefited the local agriculture industry. The Watershed Coordinator along with the SVRCD has recognized the importance of Agri-tourism in the Sierra Valley watershed and continues to promote the BBB to help foster connections between people and the land.

Watershed Action Plan (WAP)

The plan is a guiding document for the SVRCD that was compiled from all existing sources. One of the main sources of information was the Watershed Assessment Report (WAR) and information from public meetings. The Watershed Coordinator reviewed all relevant reports/finding for the Sierra Valley WAP and participated in drafting priorities for watershed restoration.

Contact Info:

PO Box 50
Vinton, CA 96135
(530) 993-4580

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Held a conservation easement workshop to provide agriculturists with alternatives to selling their land

Organized and coordinated one of the largest restoration projects in the Sierra Valley

Created a Sierra Valley Watershed Assessment Report and an Action Plan

Managed 5 wildlife areas

Conducted watershed wide frog surveys

Hosted and coordinated 2 sustainable agriculture workshops

Held a Honey Bee and Native Pollinator Workshop with over 36 people in attendance

Collected water quality data from 7 sites

PARTNERS

- USDA Forest Service-
- UC-Cooperative Extension
- DFG
- DWR
- Caltrans
- Sierra & Plumas Counties
- Public Works Departments
- NRCS
- Loyalton City Council
- Sierra Pacific Industries
- Sierra Valley Water Company
- Sierra Valley Ground Water Management District
- Plumas County Flood Control & Water Conservation District
- Plumas-Sierra Agricultural Commissioner
- CDF
- RWQCB
- and many more

Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 1 & 14
State Assembly
District 10, 15 & 26

40%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$149,044

Funds raised:

Federal	60,000
State	0
Local	0
Private	0
Total	60,000



Managing, Educating, and Improving The Watershed

The Cosumnes River is a unique gem in the state of California because it is the last river on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains without a major diversion. The Watershed Coordinator had the unique opportunity to work with local agriculturists, residents, and agencies to create real change in the watershed. The focus of the three years of DOC funding was restoration, planning and education. In order to guide restoration in an informed manner, the Watershed Coordinator wrote the Cosumnes Watershed Management Plan. The 75 page, document will provide the basis of watershed action over the next decade and will guide the restoration of this highly important watershed. Education and outreach was also very important. Through distributing information at community events, holding workshops for agriculturists, guiding watershed tours, holding public meetings, training citizens in water quality sampling, presenting in local schools and creating educational materials, the Watershed Coordinator educated the public about important watershed issues. With a more informed, engaged citizenry, the watershed is more able to address current issues and react to issues that may arise in the future.

Watershed Management Plan

In December 2007, the Sloughhouse RCD released a watershed management plan based on over 10 years of assessments. The 75 page, management plan identified all the major issues in the watershed, presented all reasonable solutions to the problems, and outlined a recommended strategy for watershed improvement. The plan was comprehensive enough to provide a framework for implementation. Find the plan at: www.cosumneswatershed.org

Improving Agricultural Practices

Outreach to agriculturists made a big change in the way the watershed works. three ranch water quality management workshops were held to educate agriculturists on better management practices. Presenters from the Natural Resource Conservation Service and University of California Extension Services transferred the latest techniques to agriculturists to encourage them to update practices. The workshops allowed agriculturists to share ideas, resources and advice in both formal and informal dialogue.

Educating the Watershed

Education and outreach to the watershed was an integral part of the Watershed Coordinator Grant. Over 550 "Backyard Conservation" brochures and over 550 other conservation brochures were distributed to local residents along with technical assistance and advice. Many local residents approached the Watershed Coordinator at local events to ask advice, say thank you for helping them design a better yard, and to receive specific information about local concerns. Community interest in conservation practices was encouraged and strengthened. A Citizen's Water Quality Monitoring Program was initiated and sampling was completed on World Water Quality Monitoring days. Two watershed tours were held to educate citizens about the challenges facing the watershed.

Contact Info:

9701 Dino Drive, Suite 170
Elk Grove, CA
(916) 457-7904

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Created 17 conservation plans on 15 ranches or farms encompassing over 6,000 acres of land

Held 3 Ranch Water Quality Monitoring workshops to educate over 60 agriculturists about watershed-friendly production techniques

35 watershed members were trained in water monitoring

Coordinated 3 watershed tours with 36 presenters and approximately 90 people in attendance

Helped agriculturists in applying for and receiving over \$6 million in EQIP, CSP and CRP funding.

Distributed over 1100 conservation brochures including "water-wise planting" and "backyard conservation"

PARTNERS

- Cosumnes River Task Force
- Sacramento County Farm Bureau
- Local land owners
- NRCS- Sacramento County
- The Nature Conservancy
- Florin RCD
- Lower-Cosumnes RCD
- Amador RCD
- El Dorado RCD
- Rancho Murieta CSD
- City of Elk Grove
- CARCD
- Cosumnes Preserve
- UC Davis
- Elk Grove School District
- Elk Grove Water Service
- El Dorado Irrigation District
- CABY IRWMP
- and many more

Solano Resource Conservation District

State Senate
District 2 & 5
State Assembly
District 7 & 8

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

740%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$208,100

Funds raised:

Federal	105,876
State	1,153,941
Local	279,906
Private	0
Total	1,539,723



Outreach, Planning and Preparedness

The Watershed Coordinators worked hard to get the word out about protecting the watershed and to implement on-the-ground restoration projects. They worked with regional and local partners to increase stakeholder participation in water quality improvement, watershed restoration, watershed education and stakeholder-driven resource management. The workplan for the project expanded and broadened partnerships and strengthened support for multiple watershed projects including the development of a regional landowner watershed education program, the creation of the Yolo Solano Conservation Partnership, a regional agricultural water quality education program, a thriving school watershed education program, a seasonal person-to-person outreach program at Lake Berryessa, and numerous multi-partner restoration projects.

Welcome to the Watershed

Welcome to the Watershed is a landowner stewardship education program created and facilitated by the Watershed Coordinators. The program includes a personal site visit, a handbook, information (including a website) and a welcome bucket of watershed friendly gadgets and products. Watershed members are invited to a series of workshops on watershed friendly management issues. Welcome to the Watershed targets 100 rural residents each year. The idea is so popular that the program has already expanded into Yolo County. Yolo County now contributes both directed action funding and technical expertise to the program's steering committee meetings, program development, implementation and funding development.

Flood Awareness

The Watershed Coordinators developed and coordinated a comprehensive flood awareness and preparedness program, supported by the Solano County Water Agency. The Watershed Coordinators developed a flood preparedness manual in English with Spanish translation. Once the manual was complete, they held a series of presentations at local organizations to provide information to local residents. A series of flood awareness articles were posted on the website and submitted to the local press.

Conservation Planning Workshops

Conservation Planning Workshops are held annually at UC Davis by the Watershed Coordinators. The program pairs landowners with local conservation professionals and landscape architecture students to create a custom conservation plan for their land complete with drawings. The Coordinator recruited 7-12 landowners for each session, and worked with participants to gather all information needed to create a successful plan. At the end of the program, landowners were better able to manage their land in a watershed-friendly way. Over 25 Solano County landowners participated in the program during the grant. Each workshop series is jointly produced by Solano and Yolo County RCDs, in partnership with the UC Davis Landscape Architecture Department.

Contact Info:

1170 N Lincoln, Ste. 110
Dixon, CA 95620
(770) 678-1655 x3
www.solanorcd.org

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Annual participation with 4 high school bio-monitoring and 6 elementary school watershed exploration programs

Facilitated Agricultural Waiver Stewardship Group to improve water quality on 190,000 acres of irrigated farmland

Coordinated more than 1200 volunteers in removing thousands of pounds of trash from Lake Berryessa

Held 4 conservation Planning Workshops

Hosted 3 watershed tours

Created a Flood Preparedness and Prevention Handbook in English and Spanish

Coordinated the Yolo-Solano Conservation Partnership

PARTNERS

- Fairfield Suisun Sewer District
- Solano County Water Agency
- Napa County Environmental Management
- Solano County Cities
- Yolo County RCD
- Solano Land Trust
- CA Audubon
- Center For Land-based Learning
- Vallejo Sanitation and Flood Control District
- Vallejo Watershed Alliance
- EPA
- Dixon RCD
- Barryessa Resorts
- Lake Barryessa Chamber of Commerce
- Upper Putah Creek Stewardship
- Solano Irrigation District and many more

Sonoma Ecology Center

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 2 & 3
State Assembly
District 6 & 7



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Made 79 site visits to streamside properties to promote better management

Held 10 "Creek Salons" in a high-priority reach to develop a rehabilitation plan

Created concept designs and permitting on 2 fish passages

Updated maintenance practices on 600 acres of erosive hillside

Held a middle school native planting event

Created the North Bay Watershed Network

Monitored water quality and base flows all three years of the grant

PARTNERS

- Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District
- Sonoma County Water Agency
- City of Sonoma
- Sonoma County Public Works, Roads Department
- Landowners and Residents
- Department of Fish and Game
- US Geological Society
- North Bay Watershed Association, council and network
- Sonoma Creek Watershed Conservancy
- Bay Area Open Space Council
- SWRCB
- Coastal Conservancy
- California ReLeaf
- CALFED
- San Francisco Foundation
- Bella Vista Foundation
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Providing Technical Support for a Healthier Creek

The Sonoma Creek Watershed Coordinators accomplished a tremendous amount in three years. They provided technical assistance to hundreds of landowners and residents; teamed with local agencies and landowners to develop large-scale restoration projects; obtained significant funding for future projects; improved the quality, coordination, and representation of several governance processes; helped the community understand and respond to the largest flood event on record; and increased the number of miles of accessible steelhead spawning habitat. The watershed is functioning in a much more natural way thanks to the efforts of the Watershed Coordinators.

Providing Assistance to Landowners

The Watershed Coordinators provided extensive advice on improving instream fish habitat, helped landowners work with permitting agencies and contractors, made referrals to native plant nurseries, helped landowners compare streambank options, assisted landowners in planning drip irrigation and native plantings, developed and distributed a Stream Stewards manual filled with information, held 10 "Creek Salons" to receive and convey information for reach-scale stream rehabilitation projects, connected interested landowners with each other, and helped organize stewardship groups in 6 locations. The watershed is 85% privately owned, so voluntary, informed actions hold the most hope for a future healthy watershed.

Large Scale Restoration Projects

Restoration projects included a flood reduction/groundwater recharge/habitat improvement/bridge protection project on Sonoma Creek in Kenwood. This project capitalized on a very energetic stewardship group that was built there. The Watershed Coordinator

also completed a riparian weed removal and revegetation project along Sonoma Creek; a riparian weed removal/ revegetation/ flood reduction project on a vineyard on lower Sonoma Creek; and a riparian revegetation/ environmental education/ flood reduction project on Nathanson Creek in the City of Sonoma. The watershed is looking a lot more natural thanks to the efforts of the Watershed Coordinators

Helped With Flood Response

The Watershed Coordinators helped the community respond to one of the largest flood events in history. They met onsite with numerous landowners; explained the hydrological history behind the flood; demonstrated onsite evidence of past similar flooding; explained the tangle of agency responsibility; developed habitat-friendly approaches to restoration that were satisfactory to landowners and regulatory agencies; and helped landowner groups at 4 sites accomplish debris removal projects. They also held a well-attended public forum to elicit community goals for water management and to convey the connection between slowing runoff and reduced flood and drought risk.

1401%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$155,193

Funds raised:	
Federal	0
State	2,050,815
Local	0
Private	123,000
Total	2,173,815

Contact Info:

PO Box 1486
Eldridge, CA 95431
(707) 996-0712 x105

www.sonomaecologycenter.org

State Senate
 District 4, 5 & 15
 State Assembly
 District 17, 25
 & 26

Stockton East Water District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

89%
 Matched
 Funding

Grant Award: \$106,472

Funds raised:	
Federal	0
State	0
Local	95,266
Private	0
Total	95,266



Community Building for Watershed Health

The DOC Watershed Coordinator grant allowed the Stockton East Water District to implement short-term and long-term watershed goals included in the collaborative creation of a Watershed Management Plan. The main goals of the plan were "to ensure ongoing community involvement in the watershed planning and management process..., providing community education, keeping the community informed on progress made in improving water quantity and quality and habitat function." The Watershed Coordinator provided a mechanism for stakeholders to work in collaboration in an efficient manner to achieve common watershed goals. This grant provided an opportunity to form new partnerships, develop old partnerships, reach out to the public and allowed stakeholders to be part of managing the watershed where they live and work

Watershed Stewardship Group

The Watershed Coordinator established a watershed stewardship group, known as the Calaveras River Watershed Stewardship Group (CRWSG) which encourages preservation and proper management of the Lower Calaveras River Watershed through watershed-wide cooperation between landowners, water users, recreational users, conservation groups, and local, state, and federal agencies. The Watershed Coordinator provided the framework for group development and facilitated the creation of a mission, goals, and decision making process. The CRWSG developed a Watershed Implementation Plan (2007) to function as an adaptive management tool that identifies and prioritizes watershed improvement and monitoring projects that will achieve the Lower Calaveras River Watershed Stewardship Group's long-range goals.

Community Outreach and Education

The Watershed Coordinator has made community outreach and education a priority in the watershed. Before the existence of a Watershed Coordinator and the formation of a watershed stewardship group, most residents of Stockton weren't aware that there is a river running through the city. That has changed with the visibility of CRWSG, watershed events, increased media coverage, and public education. The Calaveras River Watershed Coordinator created an educational watershed website for the CRWSG (www.calaverasriver.com) which contains regular updates of recent meeting agendas, meeting notes, presentations, calendar of events, educational material, news articles, fisheries reports, and documents of interest to the stewardship group.

Building Community Partnerships

The community is more engaged thank to The Watershed Coordinator. New partnerships were formed, old partnerships were further developed and community processes brought together various agencies in common goal. The Watershed Coordinator is attempting to expand the coordination area of focus into the upper watershed, form an upper watershed stewardship group, and form a watershed-wide citizen's water quality monitoring coalition.

Contact Info:

PO Box 5157
 Stockton, CA 95205
 (209) 948-0333

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Formed a watershed group representing 20 organizations
- Mapped invasive species in the watershed
- Created a Citizen Water Quality Monitoring program
- Conducted 6 river cleanup events with 600 attendees removing 50,000 pounds of debris
- Hosted 3 watershed tours
- Developed a "Lower Calaveras Watershed Implementation Plan"
- Created a research monitoring and watershed improvement database

PARTNERS

- Calaveras River Watershed Stewardship Group
- Stockton East Water District
- Calaveras County Water District
- Fishbio Environmental
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Anadromous Fish Restoration Program
- Department of Fish and Game
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Water Quality Control Board
- San Joaquin County
- Calaveras County
- City of Stockton
- University of the Pacific
- Delta Community College
- Deltakeeper
- Fishery Foundation
- Central Sierra RC&D
- Peace and Justice Network
- Stockton Urban Waterway

Tehama County Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 4
State Assembly
District 2



610% Matched Funding

Grant Award: \$132,196

Funds raised:	
Federal	120,000
State	328,820
Local	0
Private	287,150
Total	806,310

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Completed the Tehama West Watershed Assessment

Created the Tehama East and Tehama West Fire Plan

Negotiated an agreement with the California Department of Fish and Game for the maintenance of state owned grazing lands

Complete trash cleanup projects that removed approximately 10 tons of garbage

Mapped arundo infestations along the Sacramento River

Planted approximately 15 acres of oak trees

Trained hundreds of volunteers in watershed monitoring and distributed 74 rain gauges

PARTNERS

- SWRCB
- BLM
- Bureau of Reclamation
- US Forest Service
- NRCS
- Tehama County Department of Public Works
- Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
- Tehama County Sanitary Landfill District
- Tehama County Agriculture Department
- UCCE
- The Nature Conservancy
- Cal Fire
- Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy
- Resources Legacy Fund Foundation
- Tehama County RAC

Building Relationships to Build a Better Watershed

The Watershed Coordinator developed and coordinated new projects with multiple organizations to improve and protect the Sacramento-Lower Thomes (SLT) Watershed. The work developed relationships with land owners and watershed managers within areas of eastern Tehama County that had no watershed groups. The activities and efforts accomplished during the past three years lead directly towards the achievement of the TCRCD's long term goal of improving upper watershed and riparian health and water quality while at the same time, increasing water quantity. The work was achieved through restoration, clean-up projects, a watershed assessment, native oak restoration, creating a sediment budget, fire plans, strong relationships with key stakeholders, outreach, education, workshops and working one-on-one with local landowners.

Establishment and Protection of Conifer and Oak woodlands

A comprehensive effort was made to identify areas for reestablishing conifer and oak woodlands as well as funding for reforestation efforts. Approximately 15 acres of formerly open rangeland were planted with funding for this effort obtained through the organization, American Forests. In addition, creation and approval of the Tehama County Voluntary Oak Woodland Management Plan helped lead to the creation of a conservation easement on 15,000 acres of oak woodlands. With the establishment of this easement, a large portion of the County's oak woodlands will be protected in perpetuity.

Building Relationships with Federal Agencies

The Watershed Coordinator has been involved in strengthening the relationship between the TCRCD and the Bureau of Land Management by working on the Bend Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). During that time, a master services agreement (MSA) was prepared by the agency in order to effectively and efficiently procure mapping and survey services from the TCRCD. Among the projects completed through this agreement was an historical survey of the ACEC as well as numerous elderberry surveys. An initial field survey was completed in order to map areas infested by Arundo.

Planning Efforts

The Watershed Coordinator managed the preparation of the Tehama West Watershed Assessment. This document is now being used to guide development of the Tehama West Watershed Management Plan and future project work being developed throughout the watershed. Other planning efforts accomplished during the past three years include preparation of the Tehama County Voluntary Oak Woodland Management Plan, Tehama West Fire Plan, Tehama East Community Wildfire Protection Plan documents, Manton Community Wildfire Protection Plan and Lassen Foothills Fire Vegetation Mapping and Modeling Project.

Contact Info:

2 Sutter Street, Suite D
Red Bluff, CA 96080
(530) 527-3013 x120

www.tehamacountyRCD.org

261% Matched Funding

Grant Award: \$153,400

Funds raised:

Federal	0
State	400,000
Local	0
Private	0
Total	400,000



Septic Systems and Trout in the Watershed

"Watershed Coordinators facilitate community coordination among existing groups. With a stronger network of local agencies and stakeholders, the watershed functions more effectively and efficiently. The Upper Putah Creek Watershed Coordinator did an excellent job of connecting stakeholders, coordinating local groups and agencies, and streamlining watershed work with the aim to get work done on-the-ground." The main thrust of the grant was to encourage the Upper Putah Creek Stewardship to actively participate in watershed work and expand stakeholder involvement in Lake and Napa County. This was accomplished by developing opportunities to collaborate on common issues. Outreach and education were used to inform and educate watershed inhabitants about the need to manage their environment on a watershed level. With increased coordination, the watershed will better manage critical water resources and will be better able to address the challenges to come.

Field Days in the Creek

Outreach and education strengthened an already good working relationship with the local school district. "Field Days in the Creek" is an institution in our watershed. We usually have at least five presentations on geology, biology, soils, ecology and Native American subjects. This part of our education program reaches a large segment of the families living in our watershed and provides inspiration to our students to care for their watershed.

Trout in the Classroom

Trout in the Classroom is both an excellent educational opportunity for students and a

chance to build strong partnerships for our organization. This program is supported by two of our partners, Trout Unlimited and the California Department of Fish and Game. At the beginning of the program students are taught the ecology of trout species and are given trout eggs. For six weeks each spring, young students watch their trout eggs hatch and grow to the point where they can be released into a stream. They then take a field trip in order to release them into the stream. This learning experience provides a strong relationship between the student and their watershed and creates educated watershed citizens.

Education Through Targeted Workshops

Workshops were held on the Septic Systems explaining current and future regulations and the proper methods of operating systems. A workshop was held on Soils to aid citizens in learning about their own soil types and where to look for more information on problems they may be experiencing. Good management of potential erosion problems was addressed. A special workshop was held just for citizens with horses who happened to live on small acreages. Emphasis was placed on the relationship of these small plots to their effect on riparian areas. The information provided enabled them to avoid or mitigate problems that arise from erosion, manure control and general horse management. A local veterinarian presented options to control locally prevalent diseases found in horses and mules.

Contact Info:

Box 27
Middletown, CA 95461
(707) 987-0663

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Constructed a nursery to grow and sell native plants

Created a watershed center complete with a lending library and photographic history of the watershed. Classes for local kids are offered.

Trained 19 volunteers to identify and map invasive weed species

30,000 square feet of broom, Arundo and tree of heaven were removed.

14 people were trained to do macroinvertebrate bioassessment and 42 samples were taken and analyzed

Held 5 land management workshops for local landowners

"Capture, care and feeding of volunteers" paper created

Watershed signage installed throughout the watershed

PARTNERS

- Lake County
- NRCS
- West Lake RCD
- East Lake RCD
- Napa RCD
- Upper Cache Creek
- Watershed Alliance
- DWR
- Middletown School District
- Middletown Rancheria
- Adopt-A-Watershed
- Trout Unlimited
- Montesol Ranch
- SCWA
- Middletown Rancheria
- Berryessa Partners
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- US Geological Survey

Upper Sacramento River Exchange

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 4
State Assembly
District 2

408%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$163,994

Funds raised:	
Federal	2,000
State	335,508
Local	27,999
Private	303,638
Total	669,146



Public Education to Restore an Urban Watershed

The accomplishments that have resulted from the Watershed Coordinator Grant Program are many. The major accomplishments include: 1. The establishment of an annual community river clean-up and festival 2. The formation of a Science and Watershed Education Collaboration with Siskiyou County Office of Education, resource agencies, conservation groups, and the River Exchange; 3. The establishment of an annual stakeholder Watershed Roundtable to discuss watershed needs and solutions; 4. Coordination of community and school restoration activities; 5. Design and implementation of five large scale watershed restoration projects; 6. Improved communication and awareness of watershed values, needs, benefits and features through media coverage, community programming, and outreach; 7. Improved coordination and cooperation among conservation groups, resource agencies, private stakeholders and communities; and, 8. The establishment of an on-going community-based organization that can serve as a resource for individuals to directly participate in the long-term stewardship of the watershed. Through this work, the Watershed Coordinator has built trust in the community and enabled the community to expand our resources and ability to address watershed needs more effectively.

Helping Kids Help Their Watershed

The Watershed Coordinator established an annual restoration program for local kids. The kids were taught an overview of the watershed, watershed issues, and their impact on it. They were then taken to a restoration site to remove invasive species

and planting native plants in their place. Over 500 children removed 10 acres of invasive species and planted 1000 native riparian plants. Thanks to the efforts of the Watershed Coordinator, local kids now better understand their watershed, how to protect it and the importance of native plants.

Restoring the Watershed

The Upper Sacramento River is looking much more natural after three years of intensive restoration work. The Watershed Coordinator implemented 6 restoration projects throughout the course of the grant. Restoration occurred on over 5,000 feet of stream bank, 21 acres of upland or riparian habitat, and involved over 3,000 people. One project included the construction of a boundary fence to exclude horses and cattle from a sensitive stream.

Making Water Quality Data Available to the Public

It is important to know what impacts the community is having on the watershed in order to know what needs to be improved. The Watershed Coordinator collected 3 years worth of water quality data through the work of local volunteers as part of the Citizen Water Quality Monitoring Program. The data was then made available along with education materials in a newly created watershed library.

Contact Info:
PO Box 784
5819 Sacramento Ave
Dunsmuir, CA 96025
(530) 235-2012
www.riverexchange.org

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Held an annual river-wide clean-up event to remove over 30 cubic yards of debris

Yearly school restoration field trip involving over 500 children removing 10 acres of invasive plants and planting 1,000 native plants

Produced and distributed 10,000 water quality informational brochures

Completed 6 restoration projects

Involved over 3,000 members of the community in outreach events

Initiated student storm drain stencil program

Conducted monitoring in 10 restoration sites

PARTNERS

- Shasta Trinity National Forest
- Siskiyou County Office of Education
- California Department of Fish and Game
- California Trout
- Dunsmuir Schools
- City of Dunsmuir
- Dunsmuir Garden Club
- Northern California Resource Center
- National Forest Foundation
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- CALTRANS

157%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$63,600

Funds raised:

Federal	0
State	100,000
Local	0
Private	0
Total	100,000



“Daylighting” Buried Streams

The watersheds involved in this grant are heavily urbanized with relatively smaller areas of restored ecological habitat. Both combined and separate stormwater and sewage systems are utilized. Where they are separate, especially at the Presidio of San Francisco, there is little to no inspection or treatment of stormwater entering the Crissy Field marsh and San Francisco Bay. Coliform bacteria is a major in the San Francisco Bay watershed and over the course of this grant, specific sources were identified and eliminated, significantly reducing coliform contamination. Nitrate contamination was identified in the drinking water source creek and extensive sampling pinpointed a source area for remediation and reduction of nitrate contamination in the drinking water. Thanks to funding from the Watershed Coordinator Grant, The Urban Watershed Project (UWP) continued as a leader in promoting the restoration of habitat. UWP was successful in working with the managing federal agencies to insure that restoration plans continued to move ahead, most recently with the release (September 2007) of the Tennessee Hollow Environmental Assessment, a process which consumed over ten years of effort.

“Daylighting” Buried Streams

During the grant period over 70,000 cubic yards of debris were removed from the top of a buried, culverted stream. Some of this waste was identified as California Hazardous waste and included lead, mercury, cadmium and PCBs. The removal reduced impacts to water quality and wildlife. The 250-meter reach of creek system has been replanted with native plants and has seen colonization by insects, birds and fish. The watershed

is looking more like a natural area and less like a city thanks to the efforts of the Watershed Coordinator.

Eliminating Bacteria

Coliform contamination was identified as a significant contaminant prior to the beginning of the grant. During the grant period two major point sources of coliform bacteria were identified and eliminated. Both were leaking sewer lines crossing a drinking water source creek that emptied to the San Francisco Bay. The creek was often played in by small children and had been posted by authorities as being unsafe for human contact. The contaminated source reduction improved water quality and reduced potential waterborne disease that may have been transmitted to small children, making the area once again safe for human contact.

Being a Pillar of the Community

Over the period of the grant the Watershed Coordinator introduced, trained and supported hundreds of high school students, tens of undergraduates and a handful of graduate students in examining and studying watersheds and making recommendations to land managers regarding improvements to those watersheds. The Watershed Coordinator also received a “Community Hero” award for over ten years of service to the Presidio of San Francisco and for identifying critical watershed restoration plans and ideas.

Contact Info:

3229A Clement St.
San Francisco, CA 94121
(415) 828-2622

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Watershed Coordinator received a “community hero” award

“Daylighted” a section of Los Lobos Creek

Identified and removed sources of nitrate and Coliform bacteria entering the creek

Removed over 70,000 cubic yards of waste from the creek

Completed 4 years worth of planning on a future restoration site

Provided watershed education and restoration for over 200 high school students

Trained several graduate and undergraduate students on water quality monitoring

PARTNERS

- The National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area
- The Presidio Trust
- Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy
- University of California, Berkeley
- San Francisco State University
- San Francisco Unified School District
- Galileo Academy of Science and Technology
- US EPA
- NOAA

West Lake Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 2
State Assembly
District 1



584%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$148,414

Funds raised:

Federal	440,640
State	425,372
Local	9,467
Private	870
Total	866,882

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Held 8 creek clean up events with over 350 volunteers

Clean ups removed 175 tons of trash, 150 tons of white metal, 40 tons of green waste, 50 tons of recyclables, and more than 1100 tires

Created 3 new watershed groups

Restored a 16 acre meadow

Implemented a streamlined permitting process

Started a Citizens Water Quality Monitoring Team with 111 volunteers

Conducted a stream inventory and assessment of a 4 mile reach of Middle Creek

PARTNERS

- Army Corps of Engineers
- Big Valley Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians
- Blue Ridge-Berryessa Natural Area
- Bureau of Land Management
- CALFED
- Colusa County RCD
- County of Lake
- East Lake RCD
- Elem Pomo Tribe
- Lake County Historical Society
- Lake County Fair
- Lake County Farm Bureau
- Lake County Land Trust
- Lake County Wine Grape Growers Commission
- Lake County WMA
- Local Schools
- Mendocino County RCD
- NRCS
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Sacramento River Watershed

Educating for Restoration

The Watershed Coordinator Program in the Upper Cache Creek Watershed (UCCW) has proven beneficial in facilitating natural resource protection in the UCCW. Over the past three years, the Watershed Coordinator provided a vital service to the citizens of the UCCW by coordinating efforts, providing technical assistance, and educating the public. The Watershed Coordinator has successfully cultivated partnerships, increased the number of local watershed groups, and helped develop projects to address issues and concerns in the sub-watersheds. The DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant funding has provided the Watershed Coordinator the opportunity to engage with the community and provide opportunities for landowners and stakeholders to participate in having a voice in managing their watersheds. The grant also allowed the Watershed Coordinator to participate in unanticipated projects and activities while still bringing the plans to fruition. The areas of focus were: facilitation, coordination, and collaboration among agencies, partners, citizens, and local watershed groups; providing education and outreach opportunities to create an informed public; coordination of resource protection and restoration activities on public and private lands; improvement of stream channel conditions; providing assistance to the Lake County Weed Management Area; providing coordination, training, and technical assistance to the Citizen's Water Quality Monitoring Team; and coordinating activities within and across watershed/geo-political boundaries. The Watershed Coordinator was very successful at getting local citizens to get out and restore their watershed.

Educating Kids about Their Watershed

The Watershed Coordinator hosted three annual "Kids-in-the-Creek" events. Up to 150 middle school students each year came out to clean up their creek while learning about watersheds, natural resources, wildlife, pollution, fire safety, erosion, non-native invasive weeds, local native basketry, and local species of concern. Getting hands-on in the creek helps students understand their individual role in protecting their watershed and gives them a sense of ownership over the world they live in.

Restoring Seigler Canyon and Scotts Creek

Siegler Canyon and Scotts Creek are looking much more natural. The Watershed Coordinator assisted in the development of a habitat restoration project on Seigler Canyon Creek and a meadow restoration project on BLM's South Cow Mountain Recreation Area. The Watershed Coordinator identified and designed the project, identified funding sources, and implemented a large scale debris jam removal over a one-mile reach of Scotts Creek removing approximately 7,000 cubic yards of debris. The Watershed Coordinator facilitated the removal of centerline vegetation from the creek and the removal of a Scotch Broom infestation on the bank.

Contact Info:

889 Lakeport Blvd
Lakeport, CA 95453
(707) 263-4180
www.lakecountyr cds.org

State Senate
District 4
State Assembly
District 2

Western Shasta Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

1374%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$190,765

Funds raised:

Federal	136,500
State	1,873,247
Local	300,089
Private	310,056
Total	2,620,870



Cleaning-up Our Drinking Water

The Western Shasta RCD is thankful for the DOC funding to support a Watershed Coordinator for both the Cow and Bear Creek watersheds. The purpose of the Watershed Coordinator was to find solutions to areas of concern in both watersheds including water quality exceedences, fecal coliform contamination, livestock issues, high water temperatures in the lower reaches of the creeks, riparian habitat restoration concerns, wildlife restoration, water diversions, fish screens and ladders, opportunities for tailwater recycling and the need for a network of fuels reduction projects to minimize the potential for catastrophic wildfire. The Watershed Coordinator addressed known and anticipated problems by educating and encouraging landowners to participate in federal and state cost share programs, being a point of contact for conservation and restoration, communicating with landowners about their resource concerns, creating and promoting long-term relationships with conservation partners, and becoming the source of information for watershed improvements. The Coordinator involved as many landowners and media outlets as practical in activities and educational programs to restore the long-term health of the watershed.

Outreach to the Watershed

The Coordinator supported education and outreach by increasing watershed education through multiple newspaper articles and educational meetings for landowners highlighting the areas of concern within the watersheds and the restoration efforts addressing these areas of concern. This included the preparation and distribution

of 82 separate press releases aimed at reaching a large number of people in Shasta County, about 8,200 based on conservative estimates of 100 individuals being reached by each press release. Outreach included educational displays at 11 individual community events, 20 different times over the three-year period. The combined attendance at these events equaled 423,370; demonstrations in 12 individual classroom demonstrations to about 240 students in 1st through 6th grades; 3 annual presentations to the Shasta County Board of Supervisors, which is aired on television twice after each event and developing a watershed group membership of over 150 active members.

Cleaning up our drinking water

The Coordinator identified over twenty water quality improvement projects aimed at addressing the fecal coliform and elevated water temperatures in the Cow Creek Watershed during the grant term. This was accomplished by providing coordination and education to local watershed groups and Technical Advisory Committees. Efforts here resulted in a number of these projects moving to the implementation stage, during which the Coordinator provided coordination for obtaining landowner permissions and the permitting process associated with the implementation of these projects. In addition, the Watershed Coordinator assisted agriculturists in implementing 37 conservation practices on 5 separate ranches throughout the Cow Creek Watershed.

Contact Info:

6270 Parallel Road
Anderson, CA 96007
(530) 365-7332

www.westernshastarc.org

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Constructed a tailwater retention pond in the Cow Creek watershed to address *E. coli* and water temperature

Installed two fish screens in the Cow Creek Watershed

Assisted agricultural landowners in implementing 37 conservation practices on 5 separate ranches throughout the Cow Creek

Installed pipe on a 1.15 mile section of ditch which has over 50% water loss through seepage keeping 7 cfs in the creek for in stream benefits

80 newspaper articles and educational meetings for landowners on watershed issues

Implemented a video fish weir technology pilot project on Bear Creek

Completed an 18-month water quality monitoring study

PARTNERS

- Department of Conservation
- CALFED
- Watershed Groups
- USF&W
- California Department of Fish and Game
- NRCS
- State Water Quality Control Board
- DWR
- Fire Safe Council
- Shasta County
- CALFIRE
- Sacramento River Watershed Program
- Local Community Members and many more

Westside Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 16
State Assembly
District 30

55%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$106,614

Funds raised:

Federal	0
State	55,000
Local	3,500
Private	0
Total	58,500

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Held permitting workshop to assist landowners

Negotiated a lower price for landowners implementing Tamarisk Treatment Projects

Coordinated annual watershed tours for local stakeholders

Wrote a Watershed Management Plan

Created a Tree Bank whereby students propagate tree cuttings for restoration projects

Installed fencing projects to restore riparian habitat

Collected 3 years of rainfall data and correlated it to NRCS field clipping data

PARTNERS

- Sage Associates
- Department of Conservation
- CARCD
- Bureau of Land Management
- Department of Fish and Game
- CALFED
- Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Department of Water Resources
- Westlands Water District
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Coalinga High School
- West Hills College
- Fresno Agricultural Commissioners Office
- Packard Foundation
- Sustainable Conservation
- Alnus Ecological
- Wilbur-Ellis
- Cache Creek Conservancy
- Wildlife Conservation Board and many more



Rainfall, Tamarisk and Tree Propagation

The Watershed Coordinator worked with landowners and stakeholders in the watershed to implement best management practices that will improve the water quality of the Arroyo Pasajero and its tributaries and reduce flooding into the California Aqueduct. This was accomplished through the following objectives: increasing the visibility of the Arroyo Pasajero in order to better address water quality issues and reduce flooding into the Aqueduct; assisting with monitoring activities in order to assist agencies in determining the previous and current affects of plans as they are implemented; securing funding for projects to assist landowners with the cost of implementing plans and holding education and outreach events. With these efforts, the Watershed Coordinator has brought about a more organized, cleaner watershed that is better able to address water quality and other watershed issues.

Tree Bank

Teaching students to protect their watershed is an important step in building educated watershed citizens. The Watershed Coordinator initiated a Tree Bank in which students at Coalinga High School and West Hills College propagated tree cuttings. Students were taught tree basics, the importance of trees and the basics of Watershed Science. Students were then given cuttings to propagate. After raising the trees, the students planted their trees at a restoration site, mostly along sensitive riparian corridors that needed stream bank stabilization. Students are now able to visit their trees and see the enhancement of their own watershed.

Removing Tamarisk

Eradicating Tamarisk from the watershed is important to watershed health. The invasive plant can take over watersheds and is difficult to remove once it becomes established. The Watershed Coordinator knew how important the removal of Tamarisk was and worked within her watershed to remove it. She found large infestations and worked with landowners for removal. She then helped them acquire the necessary permits. When the money she had relied on to help these landowners suddenly was unavailable, she worked to find other sources. She negotiated with a treatment company to provide the landowners with low-cost treatments and then wrote a grant to fill in some of the funding. Without the hard work and resourcefulness of the Watershed Coordinator, Tamarisk would have a stronger footing in the watershed.

Gathering Data to Inform Practice

To better understand how rainfall patterns influence flood and erosion problems within the watershed, the Watershed Coordinator collected rainfall data for the watershed over the three-year life of the grant. Once collected, she produced an annual monitoring report that was distributed to stakeholders. As part of the application of the data, she correlated rainfall data with field clipping data from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Better understanding how watershed practices work together improves the management practices that are implemented.

Contact Info:

PO Box 38
Tranquility, CA 93668
(559) 647-9198

1442%
**Matched
Funding**

Grant Award: \$229,662

Funds raised:

Federal	0
State	0
Local	0
Private	0
Total	3,312,588.94



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Held 25 workshops for landowners on a broad range of management topics with 12 to 30 attendees per workshop

Created a Permit Coordination Program to facilitate the implementation of restoration projects

Completed two farm and ranch clean ups including removing trash from stream channels, reshaping banks, and native plantings

Worked with 7 landowners to develop site-specific restoration plans

Restored two sloughs including trash clean-up, stream bank restoration and native plantings

Coordinated the Yolo Floodsafe Program to mitigate potential impacts of floodwaters. The program is now undergoing a feasibility study

Facilitating Community Efforts

The overall goals of this Watershed Coordinator grant was to work with, facilitate and support sub-watershed or "tributary" groups, toward the ultimate goal of getting conservation projects on the landscape. A second key goal was to successfully develop a permit coordination program to reduce that barrier to conservation practice installation. Through our efforts, four fairly cohesive sub-watershed groups were identified and supported in the Lower Willow Slough Watershed and an adjacent watershed. Two small grants resulted in clean-up and revegetation of riparian sites and we participated in the formation of the 501(c)3 Delta Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council. After over two years of effort, we have in place a functioning permit coordination program for riparian projects in Yolo County.

Workshops to Encourage Good Management

Over the course of the grant, the Watershed Coordinator held 25 workshops covering topics of interest to, and suggested by landowners. The majority of these have been single topic, 2-hour workshops on management practices such as Roadside Revegetation, Monitoring on Your Farm, Water Structures for Wildlife, Water Quality, Water Use Efficiency, Native Pollinators, and BioEngineering. Landowners particularly benefited from our two-part Conservation Planning workshops, after which they received a beautifully illustrated map of conservation projects planned for their farm. Many of these have directly resulted in implementation of part or all of their plans.

Helping Landowners Implement Habitat Improvement Projects

Obtaining the permits to do riparian revegetation or restoration projects can be sufficiently challenging so as to prevent projects from being undertaken. The Watershed Coordinator co-facilitated the development of a local permit coordination program through a training process sponsored by Sustainable Conservation. Our effort here was to obtain pre approval from all required agencies for specific practices such that landowner project permits could be covered through the Yolo RCD Permit Program. In the course of these activities, we desired to broaden and strengthen our partnerships with other local and regional conservations organizations, the county, and the irrigation district.

Building Capacity in the Community

The Watershed Coordinator built local capacity by working with, facilitating and supporting existing watershed groups, particularly sub-watershed or "tributary" groups, within the Willow Slough Watershed and southern areas of Yolo County. He helped them to further their goals, determine where groups are lacking and desired, and assist in developing and completing watershed plans in those areas. This is a preliminary step to the ultimate, long-range goal of getting conservation projects on the landscape. The Watershed Coordinator directly supported four local groups and assisted multiple others.

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PARTNERS

- SLEWS program
- Audubon California Landowner Stewardship Program
- Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
- Integrated Waste Management Board
- Solano RCD
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- CalFed
- BASF
- CDEA

Yuba County Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate
District 1
State Assembly
District 2 & 3

803%
Matched
Funding

Grant Award: \$165,096

Funds raised:	
Federal	5,000
State	1,318,464
Local	3,000
Private	0
Total	1,326,464



Oaks and Children Grow in Yuba County

Watershed Coordinators play a critical link among science, government agencies, landowners and local citizens. They identify, assess and provide scientific understanding of watershed issues to local citizens in understandable formats. The Lower Feather River Watershed Coordinator exemplified this useful service. First, he completed a Feather River Watershed Assessment to identify watershed needs. He then facilitated stakeholders in the creation of a management plan that set community priorities for watershed restoration. With prioritized goals, the Watershed Coordinator worked with various members of the community to implement high-priority projects. He worked with agriculturists to install better irrigation systems, create an agricultural waiver program, developed educational fliers in English and Spanish, implemented a farm and ranch clean-up program, and created Best Management Practices for local fields. He also worked with the community in implementing an urban stream restoration program, developed a watershed coalition, created a voluntary oak management program, installed an educational garden at Dobbins Elementary School, presented to four science classes at Sutter Union High School, and held local clean-up events. The Watershed Coordinator did an excellent job of using solid scientific evidence to build community programs that improved the watershed.

Working with Local Needs

The Watershed Coordinator developed a multi-language education and outreach program, which targets underserved communities in Yuba and Sutter Counties, by highlighting various agency programs that

endorse watershed-friendly farming practices. The program consisted of developing, producing and distributing printed materials translated in seven languages and a translator network to promote interest in available services and programs.

Oak Restoration

The Watershed Coordinator developed the Yuba County Voluntary Individual Oak and Oak Woodland Management Plan which focuses on the retention and regeneration of all oak species indigenous to Yuba County. Management practices include: wildlife habitat preservation/restoration; promoting size, shape and species variety; fire suppression; oak woodland incorporation in proposed development areas; replacement of felled trees; educating the public on the important impact oak woodlands have on soil and water regeneration, restoration, and easement projects.

Educating Kids

The Dobbins Elementary School became home to an educational garden teaching students about the importance of water conservation. The Watershed Coordinator demonstrated the water cycle and basic concepts of watershed science. He also presented to 4 science classes at Sutter Union High School on the importance of water quality and monitoring. The presentation covered testing techniques and the importance of turbidity, dissolved oxygen, temperature and pH on the local watershed.

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Hired an Irrigation and Monitoring specialist to work one-on-one with agriculturists to improve their irrigation systems

Created a Lower Feather River/ Honcut Creek Watershed Assessment

Developed the multi-language Education and Outreach Program to work with all landowners

Implemented the Individual Oak and Oak Woodland Management Plan to promote Oak Regeneration

Initiated a Farm and Ranch Clean-up Program

Installed an educational garden at Dobbins Elementary School

Carried out a Best Management Practice Effectiveness study to evaluate success

PARTNERS

- Yuba County RCD
- Sutter RCD
- Butte County RCD
- NRCS
- Department of Conservation
- CARCD
- CalFed
- DWR
- California Integrated Waste Management Board
- SWRCB
- City of Yuba City
- Butte-Yuba-Sutter Sub-Watershed Coalition
- Lower Feather River Watershed Group
- Dobbins Elementary School
- Sutter Union High School
- Yuba Fire Safe Council
- Yuba River Conservancy
- Yuba County Water Agency
- PG&E

For more information on the Watershed Coordinator Grant Program, please contact the grant administrators Gail Chun (gail.chun@conservation.ca.gov) or David Thesell (david.thesell@conservation.ca.gov).



The Department of Conservation (DOC) would like to thank all of the grant recipients and their watershed coordinators for all of their hard work and dedication in improving California's watersheds and water resources. DOC would like to thank CALFED and the California Bay-Delta Authority for generously providing the funding for this important grant program. DOC would also like to thank the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts staff for their valuable assistance with organizing coordinator training workshops and in the compilation of this report.



Testimony of Edward Thompson, Jr.,
California Director, American Farmland Trust
Before the California Senate Local Government Committee
Legislative Oversight Hearing on The Williamson Act
March 3, 2010

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. In my brief time, I will make three points:

First, Williamson is a bargain for state taxpayers.
Second, we need to improve it – significantly.
Third, we need to do even more effectively to preserve farmland in California.

Allow me to elaborate.

Williamson Is A Bargain

As others have testified, Williamson provides important tax relief for working farms and ranches that helps them stay economically viable. Every state but one has some variation of use value taxation of agricultural land. The nation's leading agricultural state should not be an exception. On balance, farms and ranches demand few public services and cost the government far less than they contribute in taxes, even at reduced rates. So, Williamson is a bargain that pays dividends for state taxpayers.

Are Williamson Incentives Enough?

The tax relief Williamson offers seems to be more important to ranchers than to crop producers. The former generally earn less per acre and own more taxable acreage. Perhaps that's why the pattern of enrollment in Williamson is more consistent on rangeland than on cropland, particularly around cities where the state's best farmland is located and where it is truly at risk of being developed.

That raises a question about whether the tax incentives provided by Williamson are enough to have a significant influence on farmland conversion. Since 1984, the annual rate of farmland loss in California has pretty consistently ranged between 40 and 50 thousand acres. And it is prime farmland that is bearing the brunt of this.

Ideas for Improving Williamson

This suggests that Williamson could be improved to provide more incentives to landowners. Other states offer some useful ideas about this.

For example, Wisconsin, New York and Michigan all offer state income tax credits to agricultural landowners that offset their local property taxes. These so-called circuit breakers typically reimburse landowners for property taxes that exceed a certain percentage of household income. This targets relief where it is most needed while helping to keep down the cost to the state's taxpayers. Needless to say, this approach is popular with local

governments, whose revenues are neither reduced nor made unpredictable by annual squabbling over subvention payments.

Like Williamson, these voluntary programs require landowners to make a commitment not to develop their property for a period of years. In New York it's 8 years, in Michigan 10. In both cases, taxes foregone over a period of years must be repaid if and when the contract is not renewed.

What's interesting about New York is that landowners cannot simply enroll individually, unless they have very large farms. They must join an agricultural district of at least 500 acres. The theory is that when several contiguous farms are restricted against development, it provides more security to each of them than if they were an isolated parcel that could become surrounded by development. The districts must be approved by both local and state governments, to exclude land that either isn't suitable for agriculture or will be needed for development within the near future.

New York's agricultural districts offer more than tax relief as an incentive for enrollment. Landowners also have protection against eminent domain and special tax assessments, and local governments are not allowed to build infrastructure that would encourage non-agricultural uses in the districts. This approach has proved pretty successful. There are now more than 400 agricultural districts in New York averaging 20,000 acres. Other states with similar agricultural district programs offer enhanced right to farm protection and priority for the sale of conservation easements through their equivalent of the California Farmland Conservancy Program.

Wisconsin's program is even more interesting. There, to qualify for the state income tax credit, farmland must be locally zoned exclusively for agricultural use or the county must have adopted a state-certified farmland preservation plan, similar to an agricultural element in California general plans. These conditions took effect 5 years after the program began in the late 1970s. During that initial period, landowners could enroll individually, as they can now do under Williamson. If within 5 years their county adopted an agricultural plan and/or zoning, the amount of the credit increased. If not, the landowners in the county no longer qualified. This had the predictable effect of encouraging farm communities to support these other, stronger farmland preservation measures. Seventy of Wisconsin's 72 counties have adopted certified plans and there's 8 million acres enrolled in the program, which is half the state's farmland.

I especially recommend the tax relief programs that are linked to local districts or strong agricultural zoning. They recognize that farms simply cannot exist in isolation. They have a better chance of thriving if they are part of a larger landscape where there is a policy commitment to agriculture that prohibits or strongly discourages non-farm development. Judging from the pattern of Williamson enrollment, those conditions do not appear to exist within 5 miles of any California city. Perhaps what we need are spheres of influence for agriculture similar to those of the cities?

Going Beyond Williamson

The experience in other states – and, I submit, here in California – suggests that tax incentives for agriculture are a necessary, but insufficient means of preserving farmland. So, I would urge you to consider three other policy options to reduce farmland conversion.

First, increase investment in the California Farmland Conservancy Program to enable more farmers and ranchers to take equity out of their property without developing it. Funding for this conservation easement purchase program has been miniscule compared with what other states have done. California has committed about 11 cents per person per year, while states like Maryland, Pennsylvania and Vermont invest \$4 to \$7 dollars per person annually. In every big conservation bond measure passed in California during the past two decades, funding for habitat and open space has been 10 to 50 times greater than for farmland preservation.

Second, encourage more efficient development that consumes less land per person for all uses, residential, commercial and institutional. This is the most important thing we could do to preserve farmland. Over the past decade, development in California has consumed on average an acre of land for every 9 new residents. Imagine two four-person touch football teams playing on a standard gridiron – with a referee – and you get an idea of how spread out that is. Places in Sacramento County, the Bay Area and Southern California are doing far better at between 12 and 20 people per acre. And we're not talking high rises, but typical California development on a slightly more compact scale that, not coincidentally, has many co-benefits like greenhouse gas reduction. If our major agricultural areas were to achieve these levels, over the next generation, we could save at least a half million acres of farmland and \$3 to \$4 billion every year for the California agricultural economy. But, though the general plans of most agricultural counties and their cities are well-intentioned in calling for more efficient development, it is not happening in most places. Requiring more efficient development as a condition of state infrastructure funding is one way the state could help local government translate good intentions into actual results.

Finally, let me suggest that we need a clear and firm state policy in favor of preserving the land on which, not just agriculture, but everyone in California depends for food, jobs and environmental services. Astonishingly, for the nation's leading agricultural state, such a policy does not exist. Yes, the preamble to Williamson talks about how important farmland is, as does CEQA. AB 857, passed in 2003, establishes farmland preservation as a state planning goal (along with more efficient urban development). But a farmland preservation goal has never been set. We just keep losing 75 square miles a year and trust that agriculture can continue to make up for it through increased productivity that depends largely on fossil energy, abundant water and technologies that the public is beginning to question.

Today, there is a great hue and cry about a couple hundred thousand acres of farmland being idled on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley because of the water situation, which everyone hopes can be fixed. But in just four years, California will have lost an equivalent amount of agricultural land to urban development. This loss can never be reversed. Yet, hardly anyone seems to be concerned.

Maybe it's because the loss of farmland is incremental and distributed around the state. Regardless, it is taking a toll on California agriculture just as surely as competition for water. It is time to get as serious about saving the land itself as we are about water. Williamson may be the place to start, but it is not the whole solution.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify. I'll be glad to try to answer your questions.

Sustainable Communities are Balanced Communities: Every day, in all aspects of our lives, we are becoming increasingly aware that it is important for us to build and maintain sustainable communities which can keep us within the carrying capacity of our planet and our state. The agricultural sector is an important part of the social and ecologic fabric of an ideal sustainable community that should be preserved. Though zoning laws have changed since the Williamson Act was enacted at the state level, Sierra Club California believes that the Williamson Act Program does have a valuable role to play in conserving working agricultural lands.

Preservation of ecosystem services should be a focus for us. Agricultural lands provide a variety of important functions besides providing food for our table. In addition to the social benefits that I will leave to the next panel to address, California's working landscape also can provide import ecosystem services including:

- 1) Water and air quality filtration. Particularly in our coastal areas.
- 2) Flood Plains and groundwater recharge.
- 3) Solution to global warming impacts by reductions in GHG gases and potential sequestration.
- 4) Habitat, both as refugia and as wildlife corridors.

The open farming landscape is also important for maximizing the resiliency of California's environment and to providing options for our Adaptation Strategy.

We recognize that California is facing tremendous budgetary pressures and extremely tough budget forecast in the near term. But it is important to maintain our state's "environmental program infrastructure" so we can quickly rebuild the vitality of the programs that have made our state so popular for people in which to reside and to visit.

Some quick Williamson Act 2.0 thoughts. If there is to be a subvention by the state, then state does have a role to play in the design and criteria as the program re-evolves. The act is relatively simple to implement and enforce. We should maintain those design elements. We do not want to try and use the Williamson to pick and choose between particular agricultural practices, but some focus or prioritization is in order especially as the size of the pot of money may not be fully restored for some time.

Criteria that might be used to direct priorities might include:

- 1) Preserving agricultural use of prime soils and in coastal areas.
- 2) Assessing suitability for preserving wildlife refugia and maintaining or establishing connectivity and wildlife corridors.
- 3) Enabling flood protection without channelization.
- 4) Increasing or preserving groundwater recharge zones.
- 5) Encouraging a longer commitment period such as 20 years instead of 10 years.
- 6) Helping sustainable farmers and organic farmers stay in business and encourage the proliferation of grow and eat local.

While it evident that agricultural lands can provide important ecological services, their value for those additional benefits can vary significantly depending on the type of agricultural practices that are being

conducted on those lands, including tilling practices, pesticide use, irrigation needs, co-location with open space or wetlands areas, and types of crops or intensity of grazing use.

We do have some concerns with changing the nature of the program to one with more of a focus on providing income tax subventions rather than property tax as source of benefit for subscribing lands. Overly large income/profits do not seem to be the biggest problem for most farmers. The property tax focus may better help assure that the benefit is connected to the community as much as possible. An income tax subvention could lead to a boon in “boutique” farms whose primary function is not perpetuating active agricultural use for the area or to a less diverse agricultural menu. And of course we want to be careful that we do not expand what is considered to be “compatible” uses such that we create a new pressure to take arable land out of production prematurely.

Our well being, as a people and as a planet depends on sustainable communities and a viable and sustainable agricultural component should be a part of our future.

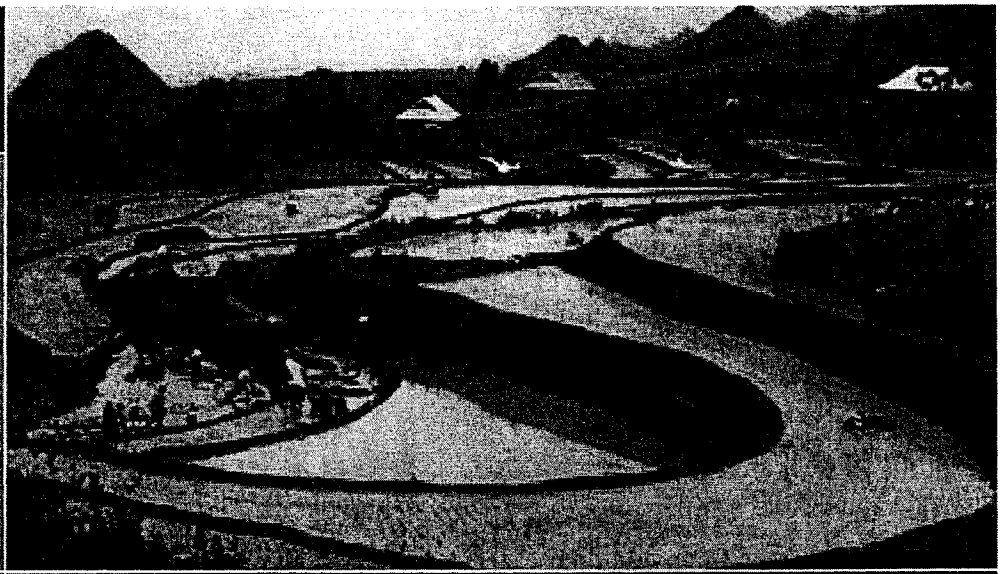
We look forward to working with other stakeholders and the Committee as we examine ways to keep the core elements of this program intact and to rejuvenate it as quickly as possible.

Thank you.

References:

- 1) Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, Ecosystems and Human Well-Being: Synthesis, World Resources Institute and Island Press (2005).
<http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/Synthesis.aspx> excerpts attached
- 2) “The Climate Benefits of Farmland Preservation” Brian Leahy, Ca. Department of Conservation. www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp powerpoint attached

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ECOSYSTEMS AND HUMAN WELL-BEING

Synthesis



MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT

ECOSYSTEMS AND HUMAN WELL-BEING

Synthesis

A Report of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

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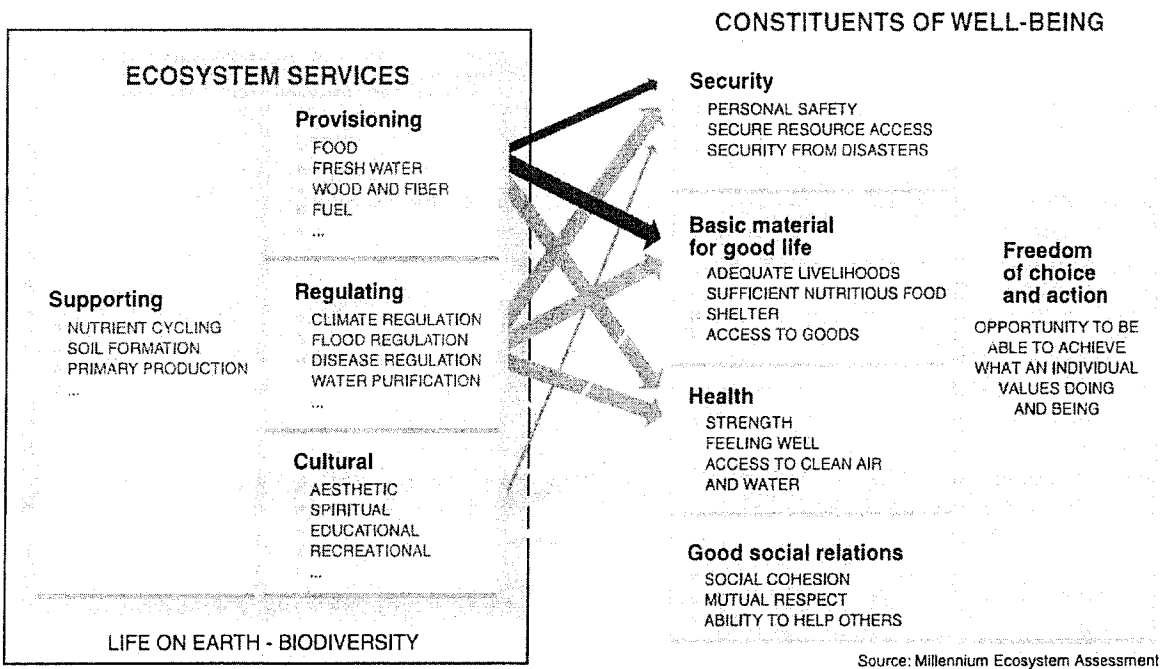
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Figure A. LINKAGES BETWEEN ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND HUMAN WELL-BEING

This Figure depicts the strength of linkages between categories of ecosystem services and components of human well-being that are commonly encountered, and includes indications of the extent to which it is possible for socioeconomic factors to mediate the linkage. (For example, if it is possible to purchase a substitute for a degraded ecosystem service, then there is a high potential for mediation.) The strength of the linkages and the potential for mediation differ in different ecosystems and regions. In addition to the influence of ecosystem services on human well-being depicted here, other factors—including other environmental factors as well as economic, social, technological, and cultural factors—influence human well-being, and ecosystems are in turn affected by changes in human well-being. (See Figure B.)



POTENTIAL FOR MEDIATION BY SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS

INTENSITY OF LINKAGES BETWEEN ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND HUMAN WELL-BEING

Low	Weak
Medium	Medium
High	Strong

Figure B. MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF INTERACTIONS BETWEEN BIODIVERSITY, ECOSYSTEM SERVICES, HUMAN WELL-BEING, AND DRIVERS OF CHANGE

Changes in drivers that indirectly affect biodiversity, such as population, technology, and lifestyle (upper right corner of Figure), can lead to changes in drivers directly affecting biodiversity, such as the catch of fish or the application of fertilizers (lower right corner). These result in changes to ecosystems and the services they provide (lower left corner), thereby affecting human well-being. These interactions can take place at more than one scale and can cross scales. For example, an international demand for timber may lead to a regional loss of forest cover, which increases flood magnitude along a local stretch of a river. Similarly, the interactions can take place across different time scales. Different strategies and interventions can be applied at many points in this framework to enhance human well-being and conserve ecosystems.

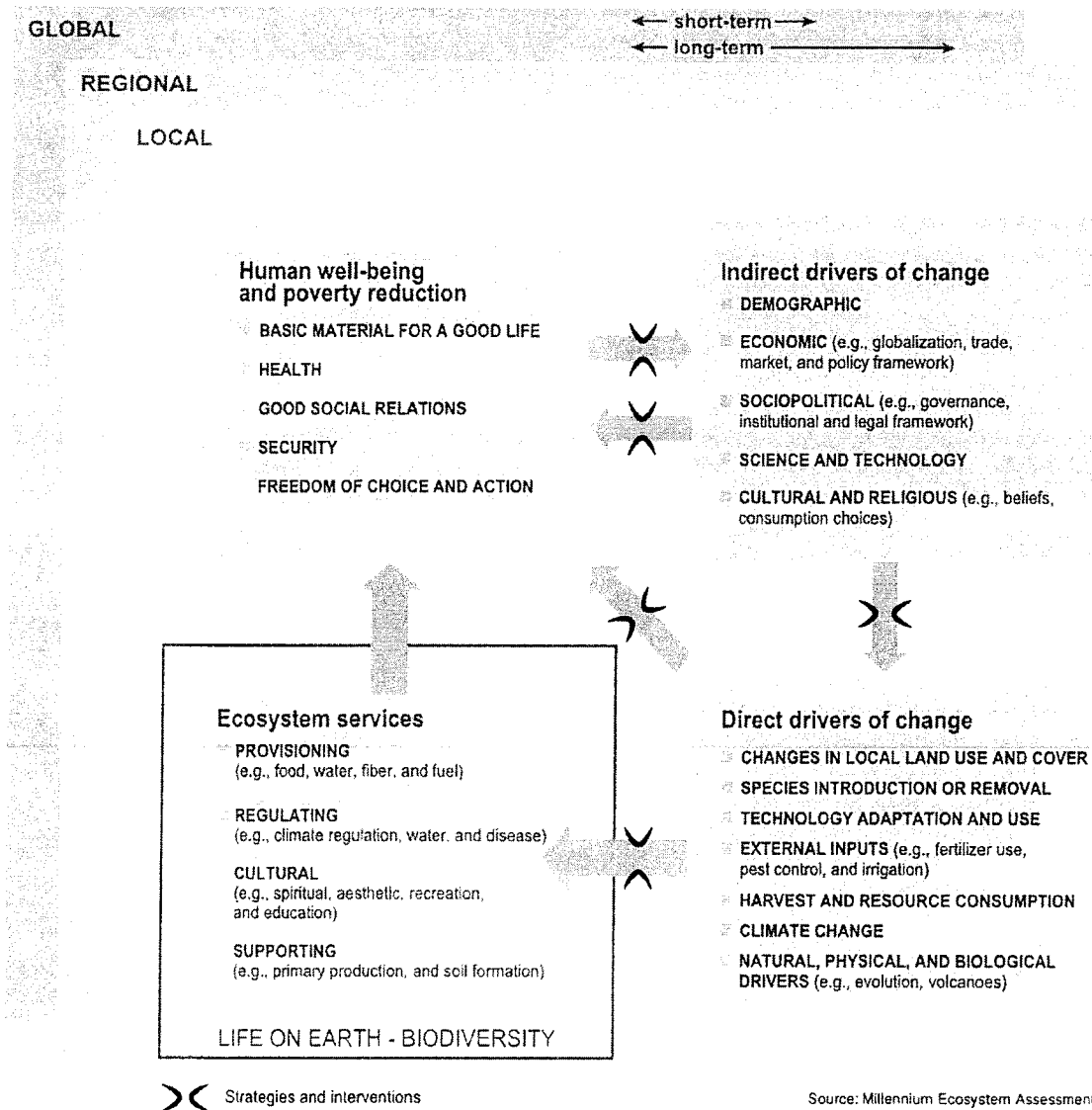


Table 1. GLOBAL STATUS OF PROVISIONING, REGULATING, AND CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM SERVICES EVALUATED IN THE MA

Status indicates whether the condition of the service globally has been enhanced (if the productive capacity of the service has been increased, for example) or degraded in the recent past. Definitions of “enhanced” and “degraded” are provided in the note below. A fourth category, supporting services, is not included here as they are not used directly by people.

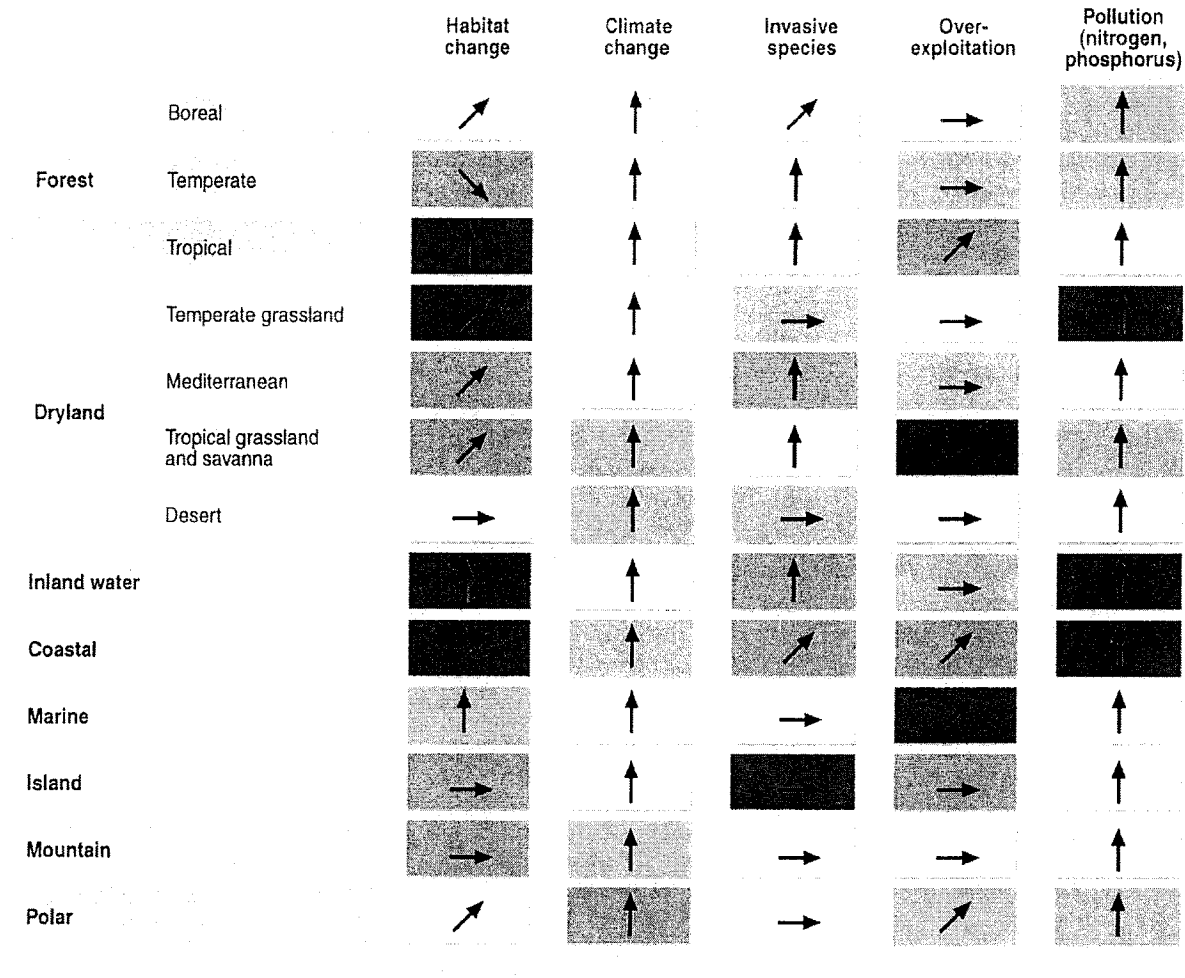
Service	Sub-category	Status	Notes
Provisioning Services			
Food	crops	▲	substantial production increase
	livestock	▲	substantial production increase
	capture fisheries	▼	declining production due to overharvest
	aquaculture	▲	substantial production increase
	wild foods	▼	declining production
Fiber	timber	+/-	forest loss in some regions, growth in others
	cotton, hemp, silk	+/-	declining production of some fibers, growth in others
	wood fuel	▼	declining production
Genetic resources		▼	lost through extinction and crop genetic resource loss
Biochemicals, natural medicines, pharmaceuticals		▼	lost through extinction, overharvest
Fresh water		▼	unsustainable use for drinking, industry, and irrigation; amount of hydro energy unchanged, but dams increase ability to use that energy
Regulating Services			
Air quality regulation		▼	decline in ability of atmosphere to cleanse itself
Climate regulation	global	▲	net source of carbon sequestration since mid-century
	regional and local	▼	preponderance of negative impacts
Water regulation		+/-	varies depending on ecosystem change and location
Erosion regulation		▼	increased soil degradation
Water purification and waste treatment		▼	declining water quality
Disease regulation		+/-	varies depending on ecosystem change
Pest regulation		▼	natural control degraded through pesticide use
Pollination		▼ ^a	apparent global decline in abundance of pollinators
Natural hazard regulation		▼	loss of natural buffers (wetlands, mangroves)
Cultural Services			
Spiritual and religious values		▼	rapid decline in sacred groves and species
Aesthetic values		▼	decline in quantity and quality of natural lands
Recreation and ecotourism		+/-	more areas accessible but many degraded

Note: For provisioning services, we define enhancement to mean increased production of the service through changes in area over which the service is provided (e.g., spread of agriculture) or increased production per unit area. We judge the production to be degraded if the current use exceeds sustainable levels. For regulating and supporting services, enhancement refers to a change in the service that leads to greater benefits for people (e.g., the service of disease regulation could be improved by eradication of a vector known to transmit a disease to people). Degradation of regulating and supporting services means a reduction in the benefits obtained from the service, either through a change in the service (e.g., mangrove loss reducing the storm protection benefits of an ecosystem) or through human pressures on the service exceeding its limits (e.g., excessive pollution exceeding the capability of ecosystems to maintain water quality). For cultural services, enhancement refers to a change in the ecosystem features that increase the cultural (recreational, aesthetic, spiritual, etc.) benefits provided by the ecosystem.

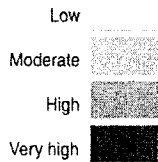
^a Indicates low to medium certainty. All other trends are medium to high certainty.

Figure 13. MAIN DIRECT DRIVERS OF CHANGE IN BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS (CWG)

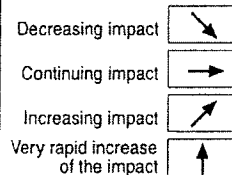
The cell color indicates impact of each driver on biodiversity in each type of ecosystem over the past 50–100 years. High impact means that over the last century the particular driver has significantly altered biodiversity in that biome; low impact indicates that it has had little influence on biodiversity in the biome. The arrows indicate the trend in the driver. Horizontal arrows indicate a continuation of the current level of impact; diagonal and vertical arrows indicate progressively increasing trends in impact. Thus, for example, if an ecosystem had experienced a very high impact of a particular driver in the past century (such as the impact of invasive species on islands), a horizontal arrow indicates that this very high impact is likely to continue. This Figure is based on expert opinion consistent with and based on the analysis of drivers of change in the various chapters of the assessment report of the MA Condition and Trends Working Group. The Figure presents global impacts and trends that may be different from those in specific regions.



Driver's impact on biodiversity over the last century



Driver's current trends

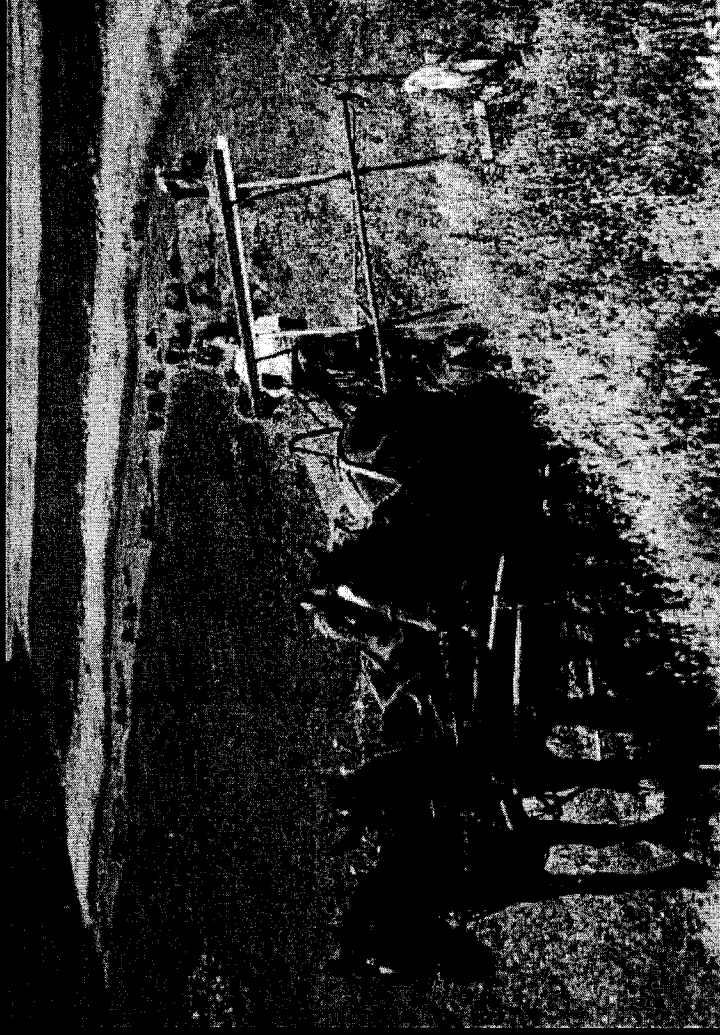


Source: Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

The Climate Benefits of Farmland Preservation



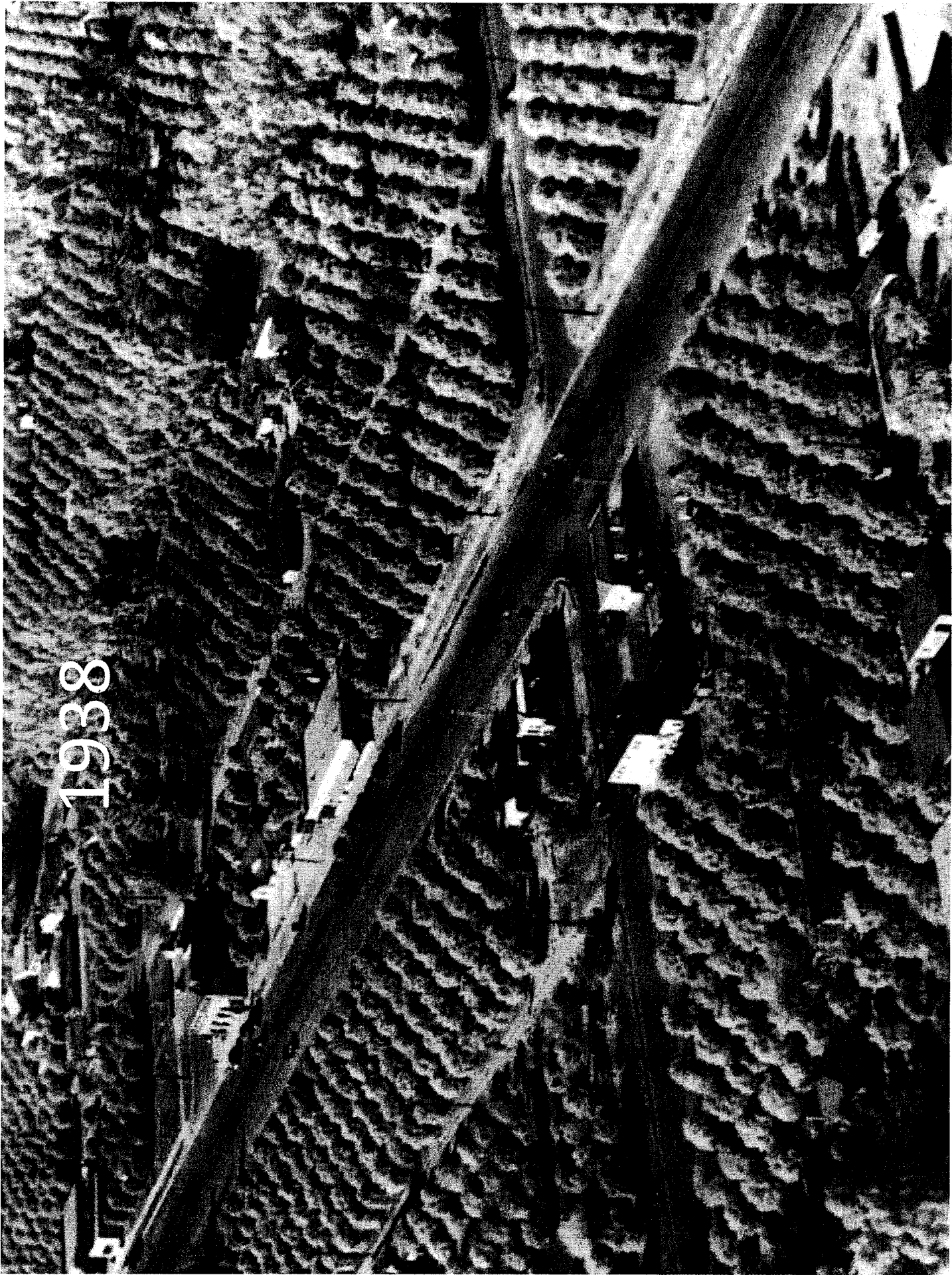
**The ability of agriculture to adapt
to changing conditions is amazing**



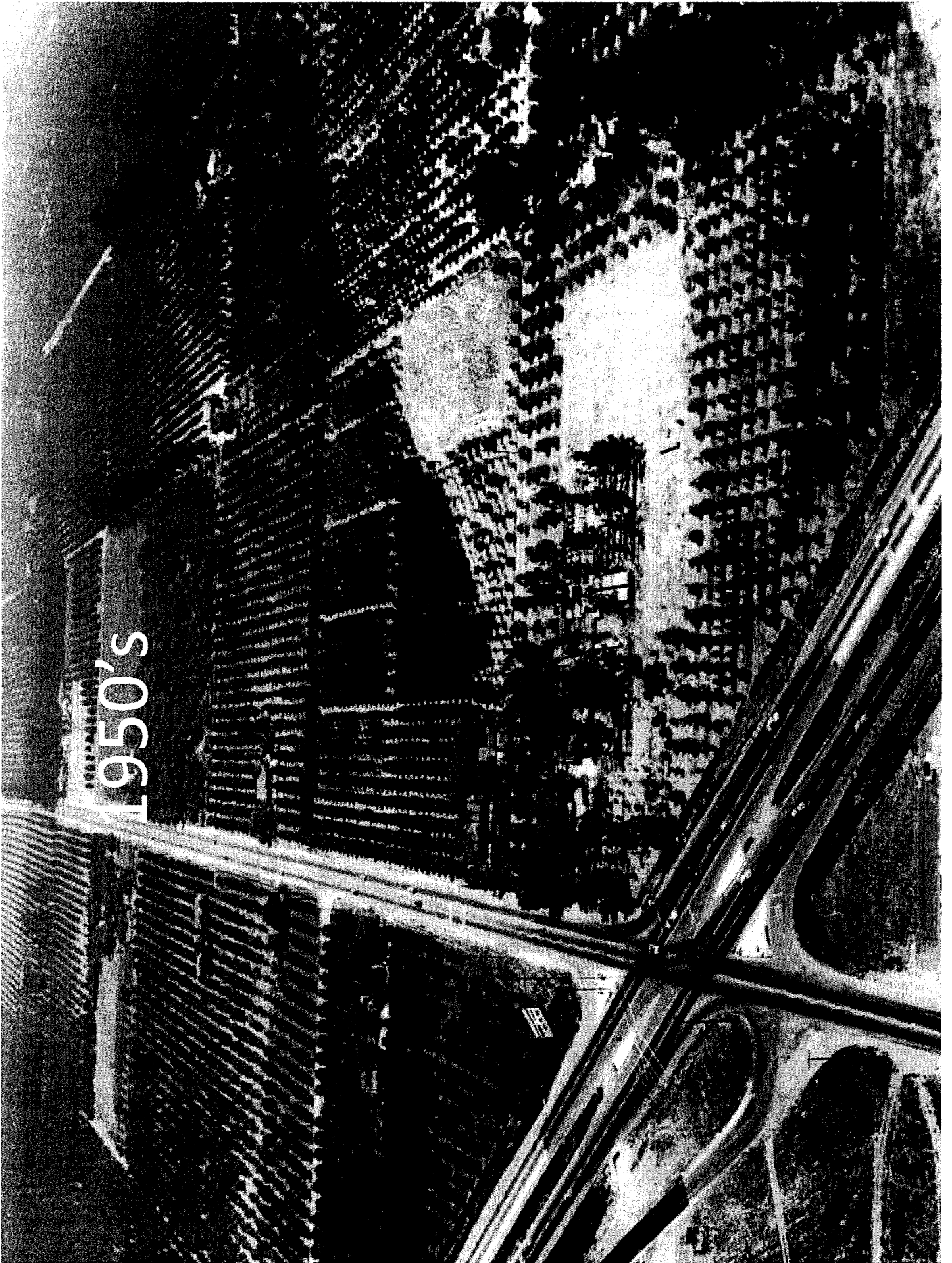
But there are limits to that ability



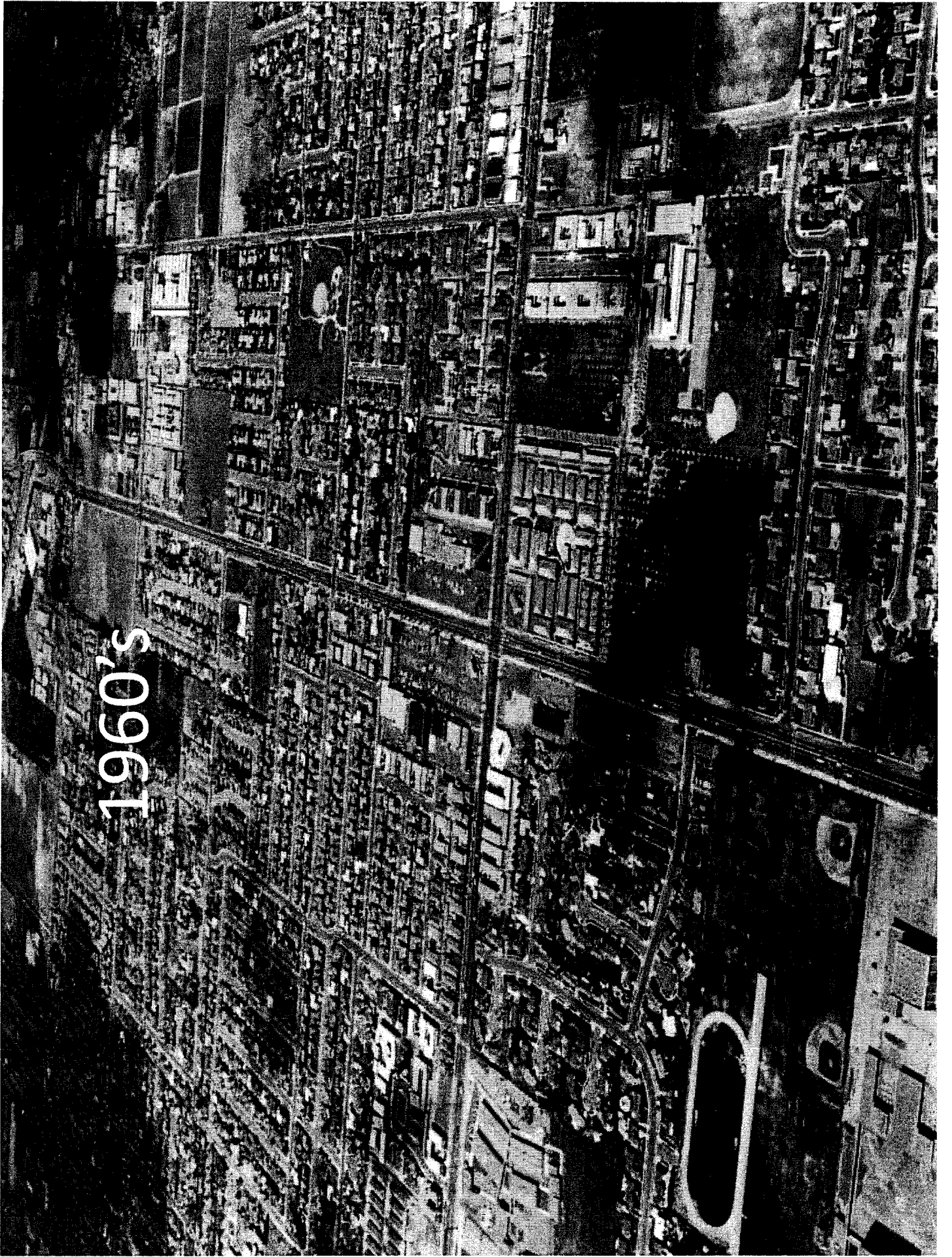
1938



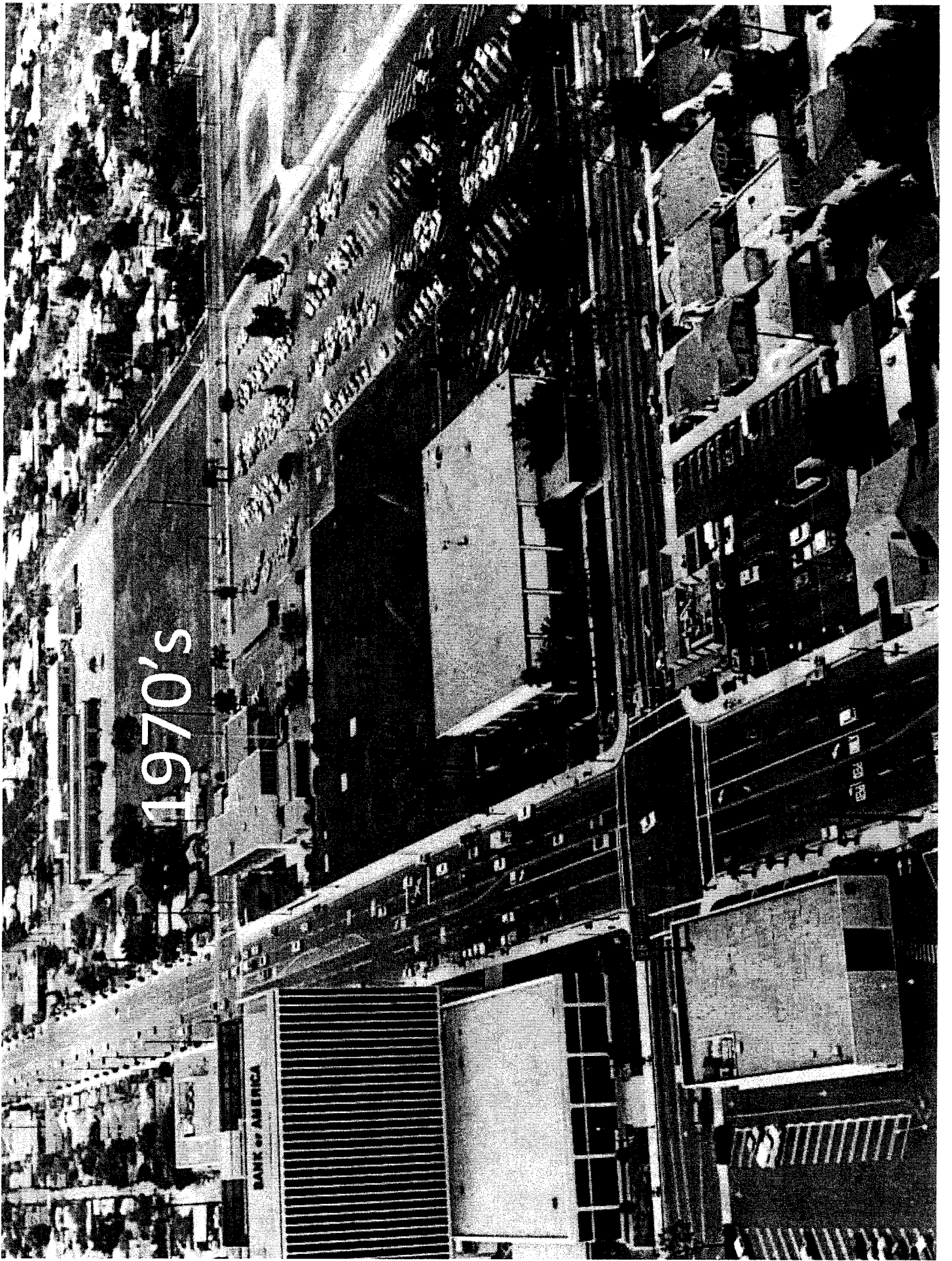
1950's



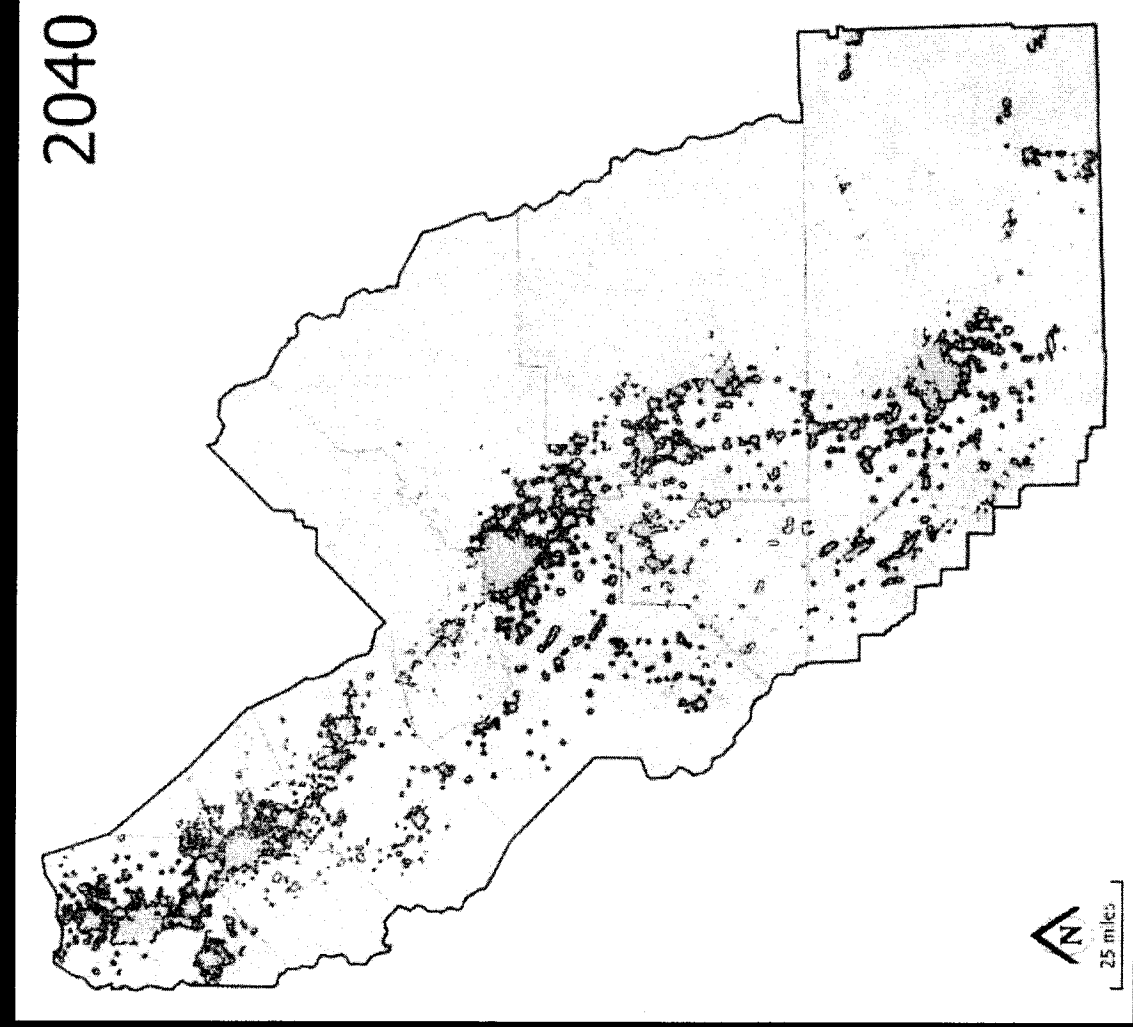
1960's



1970's



“Status Quo” Scenario
assumes development patterns of the past
60 years continue for next 40



26% reduction in farmland and almost continuous urbanization along Hwy. 99
One million acres of land could be consumed for urban use in the San Joaquin Valley.

Source: “Urban Development Futures in the San Joaquin Valley” Michael Teitz, Public Policy Institute of California, www.ppic.org

**A nation that destroys its soils, destroys itself.
Franklin D. Roosevelt**



**California lost 176,014 acres of farmland and
grazing land between 2004 and 2006 including
81,247 prime acres.**



Multi-benefits of Agricultural Land



- Ecosystem services are the “conditions and processes through which natural ecosystems, and the species that make them up, sustain and fulfill human life” (Daily, 1997) by “purifying air and water, detoxifying and decomposing waste, renewing soil fertility, regulating climate, mitigating droughts and floods, controlling pests, and pollinating plants” (Salzman, Thompson, and Daily, 2001).

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Provisioning

- FOOD
- FRESHWATER
- WOOD AND FIBER
- FUEL
- ...

Regulating

- CLIMATE REGULATION
- FLOOD REGULATION
- DISEASE REGULATION
- WATER PURIFICATION
- ...

Cultural

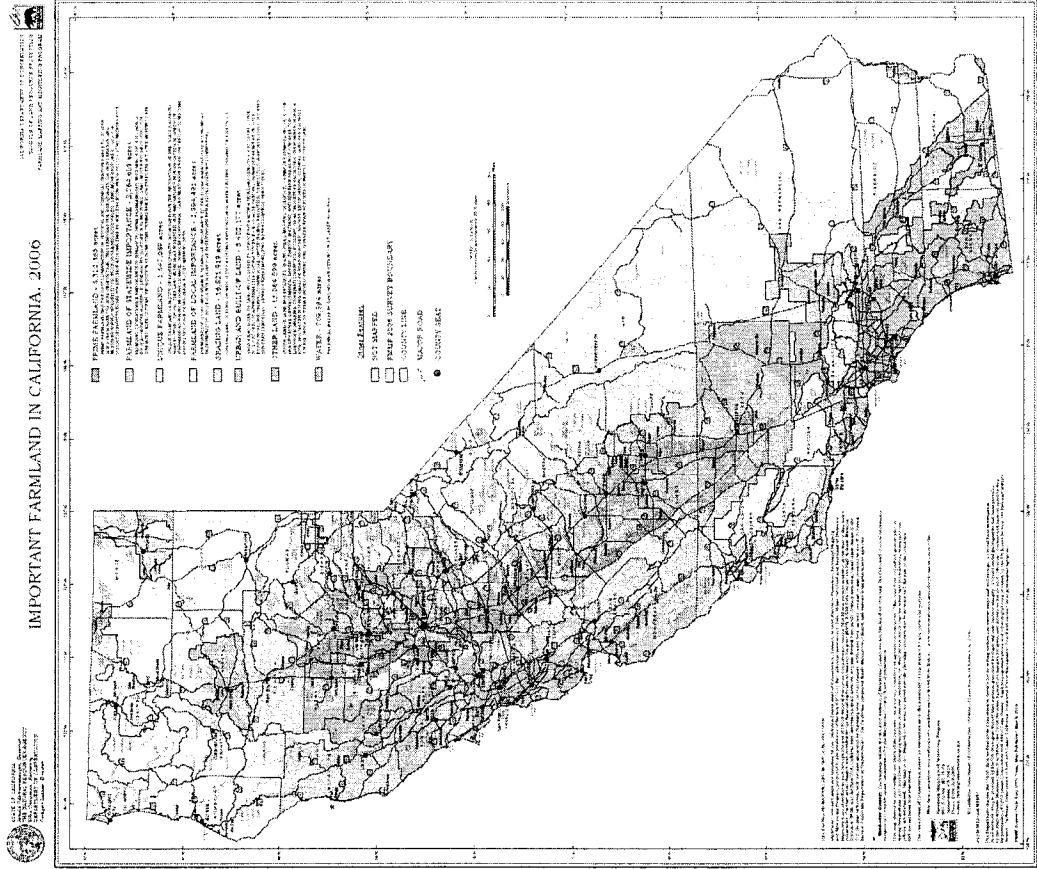
- AESTHETIC
- SPIRITUAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- RECREATIONAL
- ...

Supporting

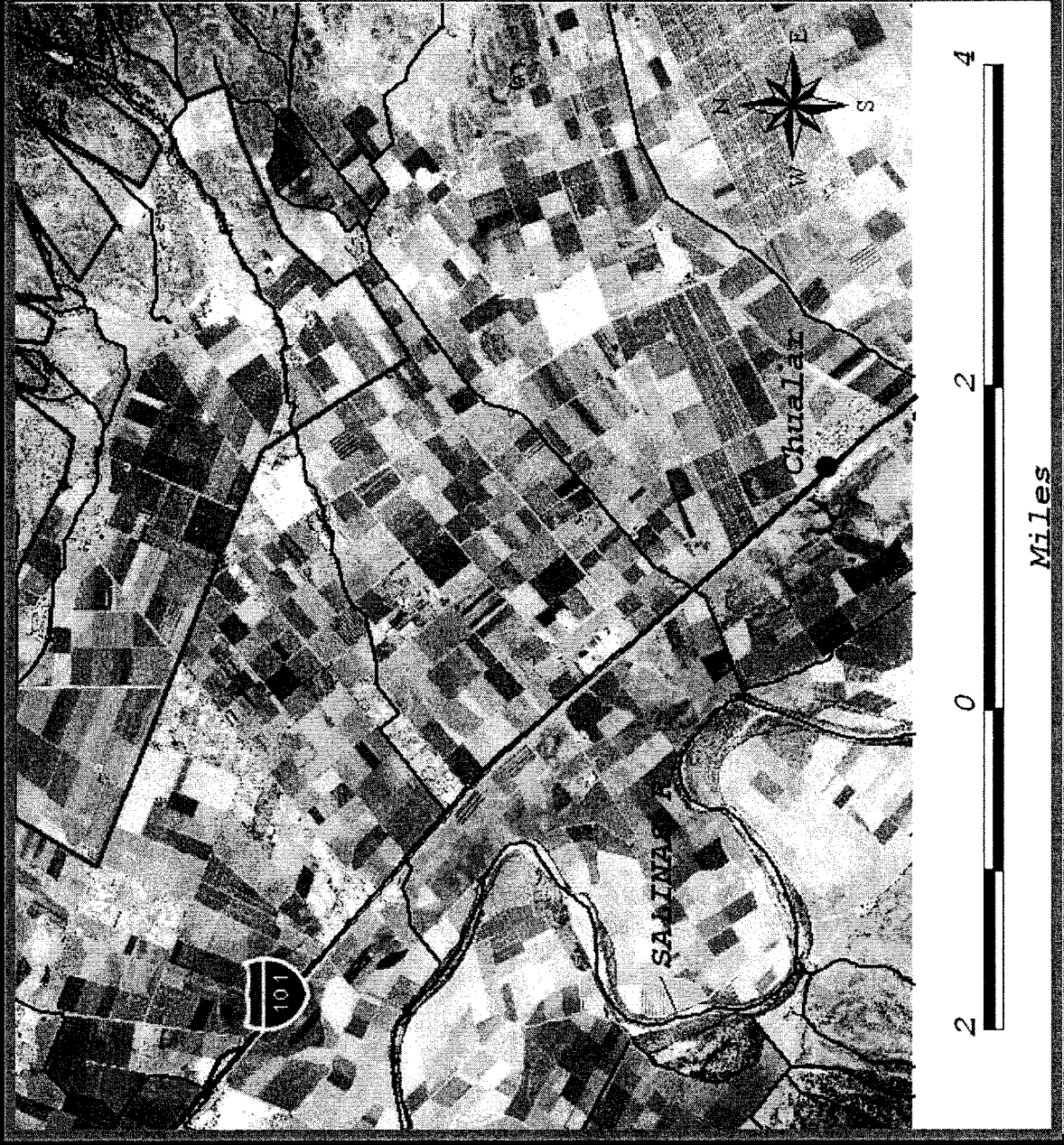
- NUTRIENT CYCLING
- SOIL FORMATION
- PRIMARY PRODUCTION
- ...



California Prime Soil



Ground Water Recharge Area



Flood Protection



Prevention of Urban Build Up in Fire Plains



MA Framework

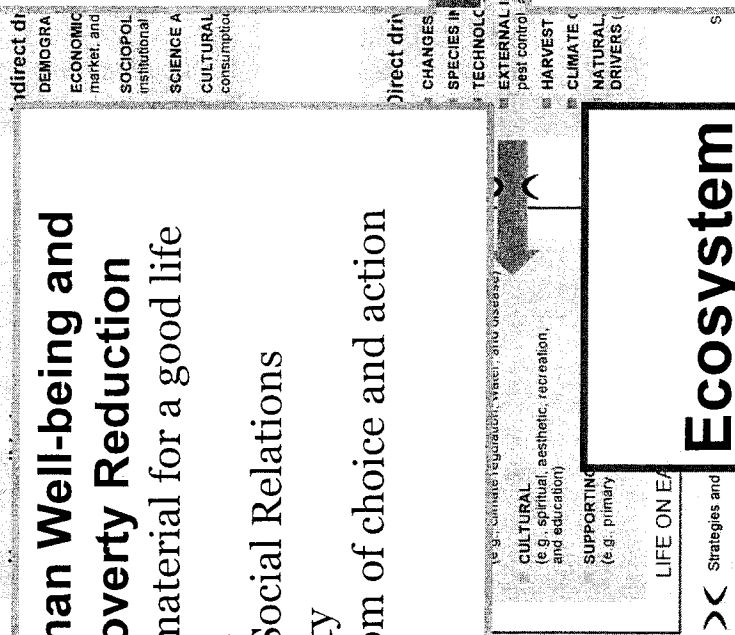
GLOBAL
REGIONAL
LOCAL

- **Human Well-being and Poverty Reduction**
- Basic material for a good life
- Health
- Good Social Relations
- Security
- Freedom of choice and action

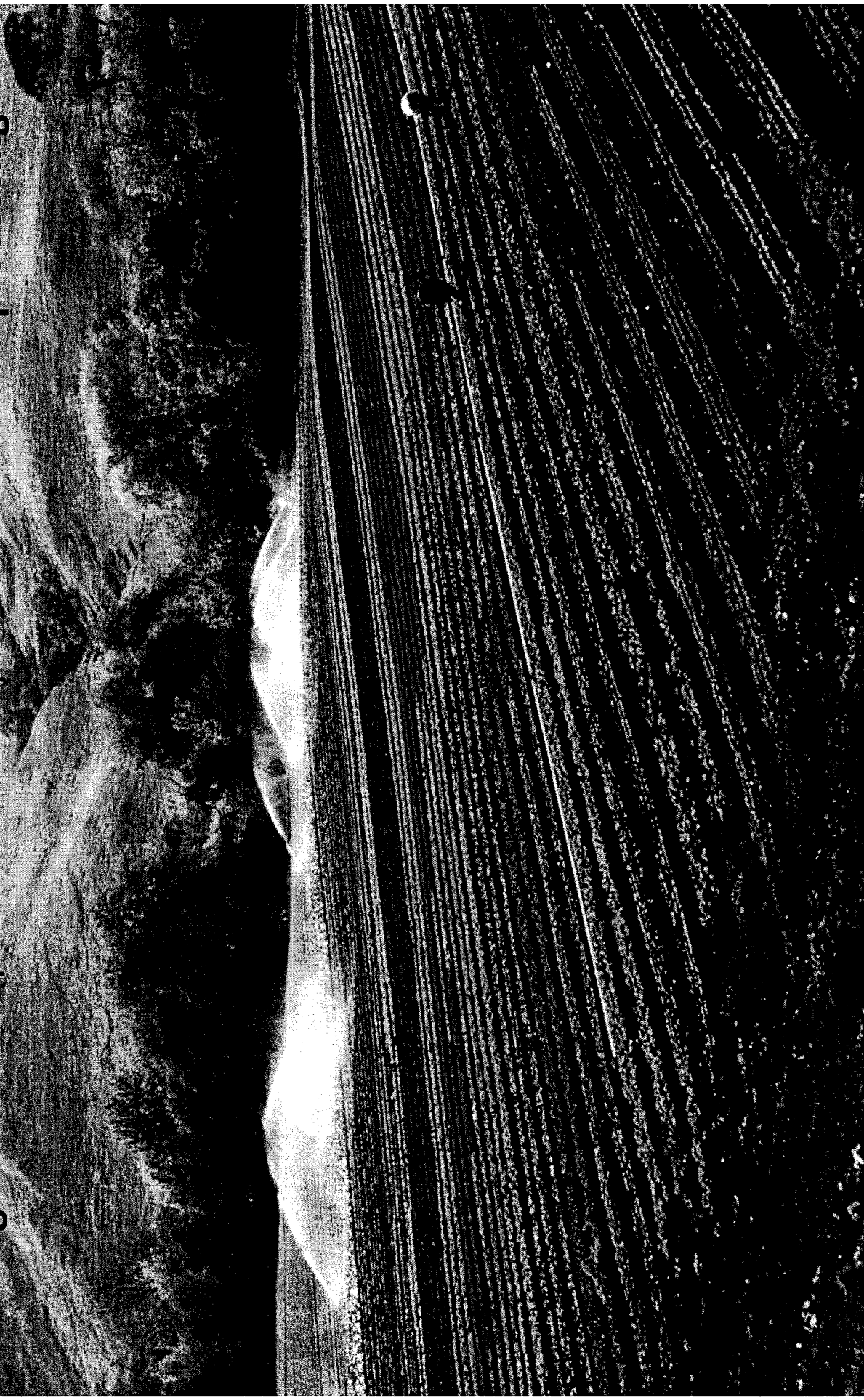
- **Indirect Drivers of Change**
- Demographic
- Economic (*globalization, trade, market and policy framework*)
- Sociopolitical (*governance and institutional framework*)
- Science and Technology
- Cultural and Religious

- **Direct Drivers of Change**
- Changes in land use
- Species introduction or removal
- Technology adaptation and use
- External inputs (*e.g., irrigation*)
- Resource consumption
- Climate change
- Natural physical and biological drivers (*e.g., volcanoes*)

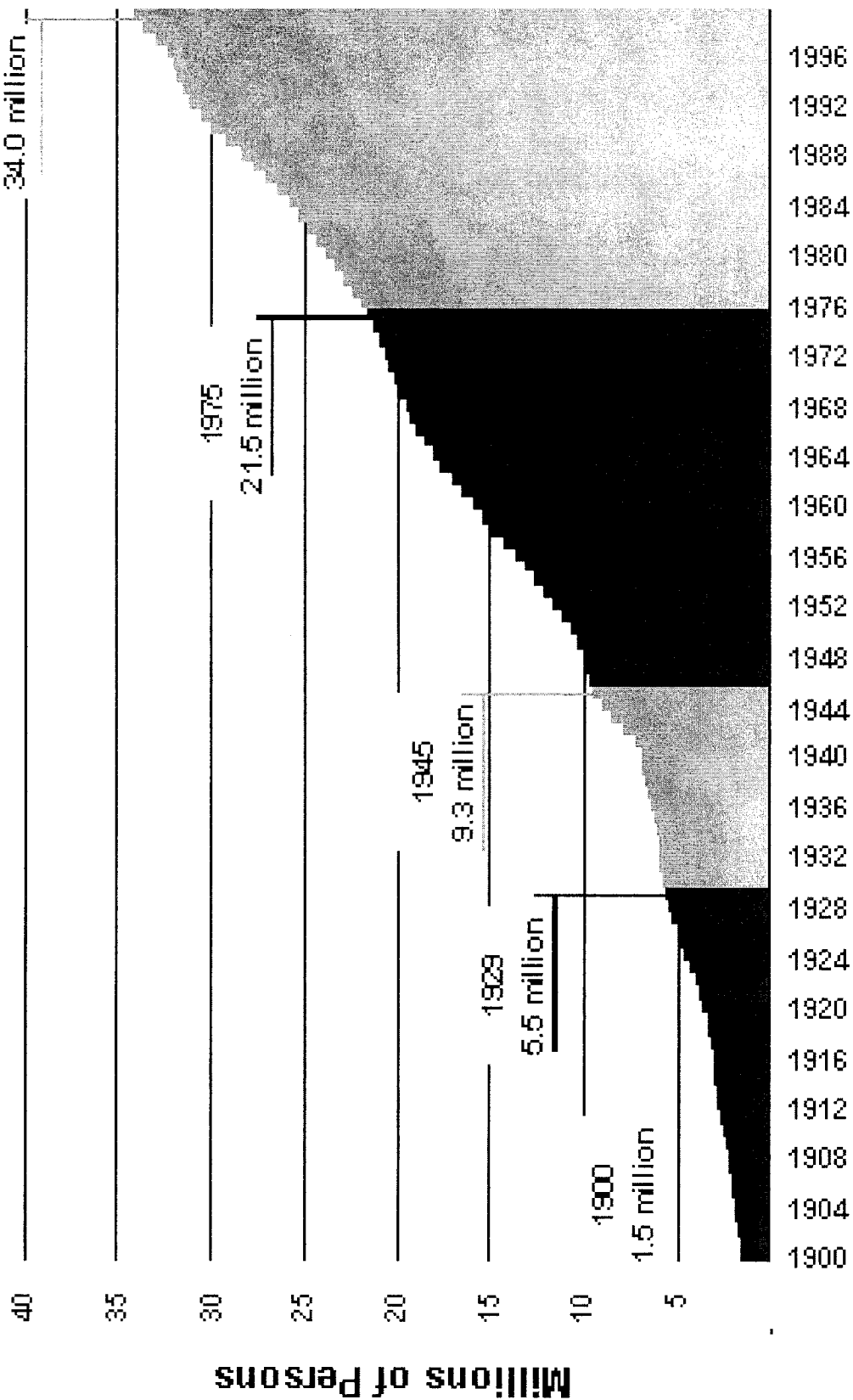
Ecosystem Services



California leads the nation in over 80 crops and produces 60% of the fruits, nuts and vegetables by value in the nation. California has farm gate sales of \$31 billion and \$60+ billion in food processing



CALIFORNIA'S POPULATION IN THE 20TH CENTURY



The Legislature also finds that decisions involving the future growth of the state, most of which are made and will continue to be made at the local level, should be guided by an effective planning process, including the local general plan, and should proceed within the framework of officially approved statewide goals and policies directed to land use, population growth and distribution, development, open space, resource preservation and utilization, air and water quality, and other related physical, social and economic development factors.

Government Code § 65030.1



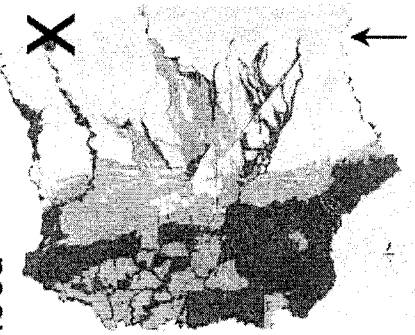
California Sprawl





Flood

X 1



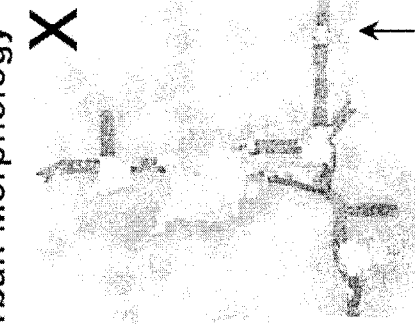
Highest Priority
FEMA 100-Year Flood Plain
above - 1m elevation

Medium Priority
FEMA 500-Year Flood Plain
FEMA 100-Year Flood Plain
below - 1m elevation

Lowest Priority
Not in the FEMA Flood Plain

Urban Morphology

X 3



Highest Priority
Scenic Highway +
Growth:
2004 urban - 2050

Higher
Scenic Highway +
Growth:
2050 - 1mi buffer

Medium High
Scenic Highway +
Growth:
1mi - 2mi buffer

Medium
Scenic Highway OR
Growth:
2004 urban - 2050

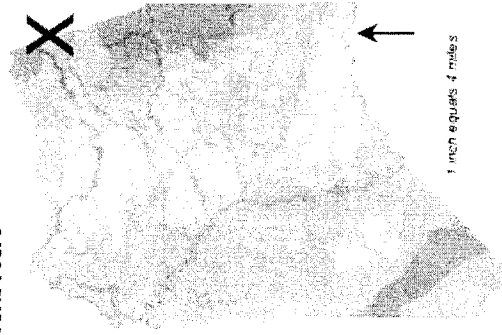
Low
Growth:
2050 - 1mi buffer

Lowest Priority
Growth:
1mi - 2mi buffer

No Priority

Habitat

X 2



Highest Priority
Has Riparian Vegetation
Has a Major River
3 Types of Habitat Reserve

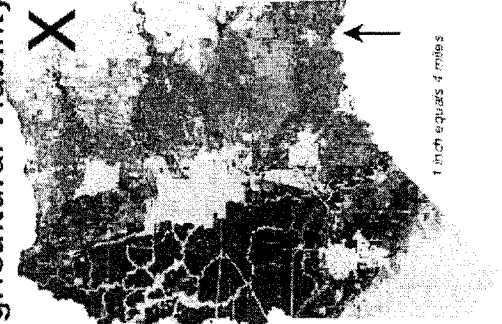
Medium Priority
Has Natural Vegetation
Has a Minor River
2 Types of Habitat Reserve

Low Priority
Has a Habitat Crop
No Riparian Corridor
1 Type of Habitat Reserve

No Priority

Agricultural Viability

X 2



Highest Priority
Prime or Local +
Surface Water

Higher
Prime or Local +
Surface Water
Statewide + Surface

Medium High
Prime or Local +
Ground Water
Statewide + Mixed
Unique + Surface

Medium
Statewide + Ground
Unique + Mixed

Low
Unique + Ground

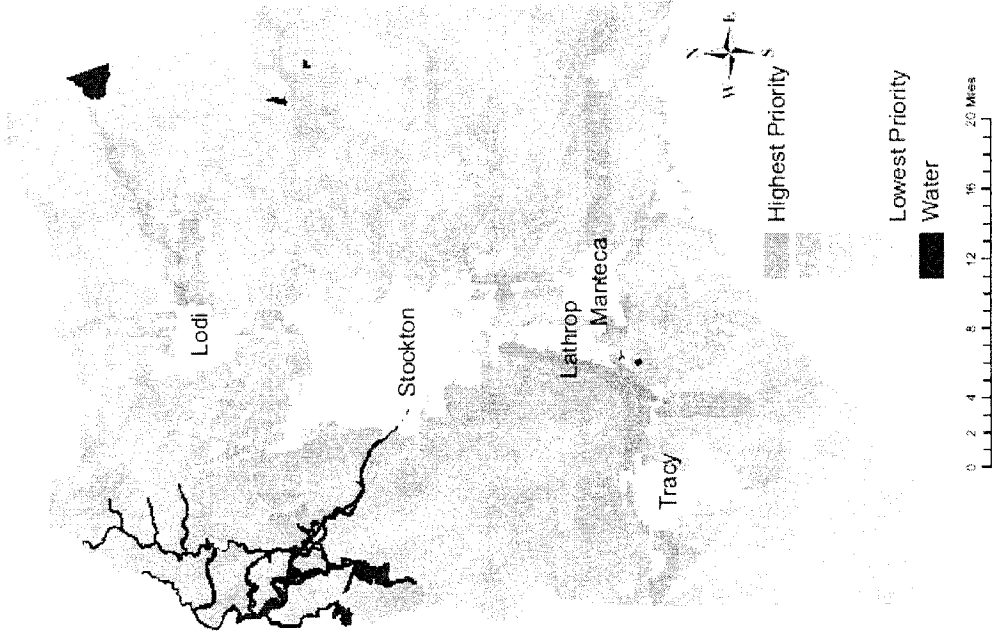
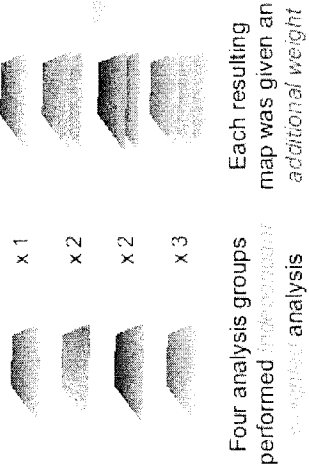
Lowest Priority
Unique + No Water

No Agriculture

Randi Adair, Wenjing Huang, Freya Knapp, Anne Martin, Stephen Miller, Shiva Niazi,
Brooke Ray Smith, Jane Wardani, Alex Westhoff, Carmen Wong, Tim Duane, Randy Hester



WEIGHTED OVERLAY LOGIC



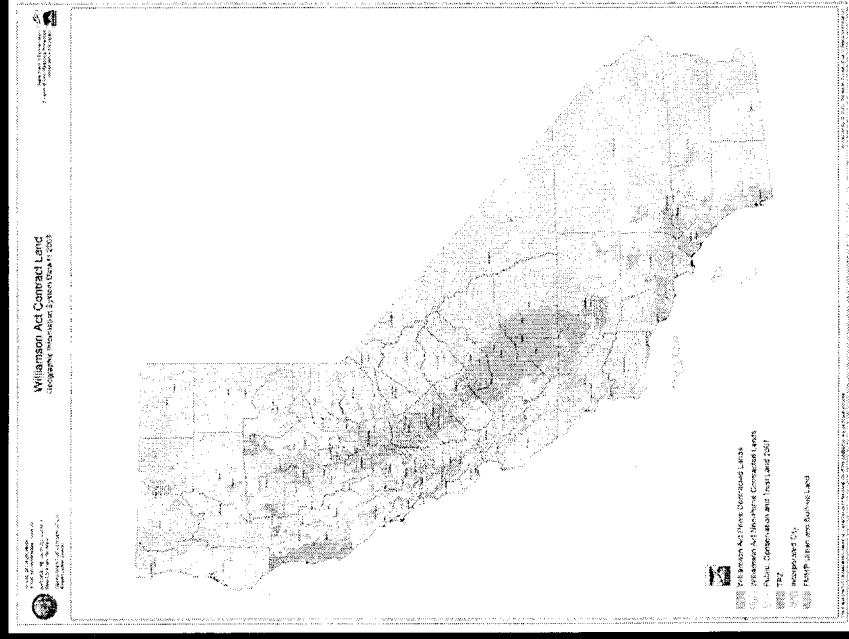
This analysis provides a *different methodology* that could be used to identify parcels or regions to be targeted for conservation.

A caveat to this kind of analysis is that the *underlying logic* must be accepted.










The result can be a *detailed range* of priorities tailored by various levels of detail included in the foundational analysis.

Randi Adair, Wenjing Huang, Freyja Knapp, Anne Martin, Stephen Miller, Shiva Niazi, Brooke Ray Smith, Jane Wardani, Alex Westhoff, Carmen Wong, Tim Duane, Randy Hester

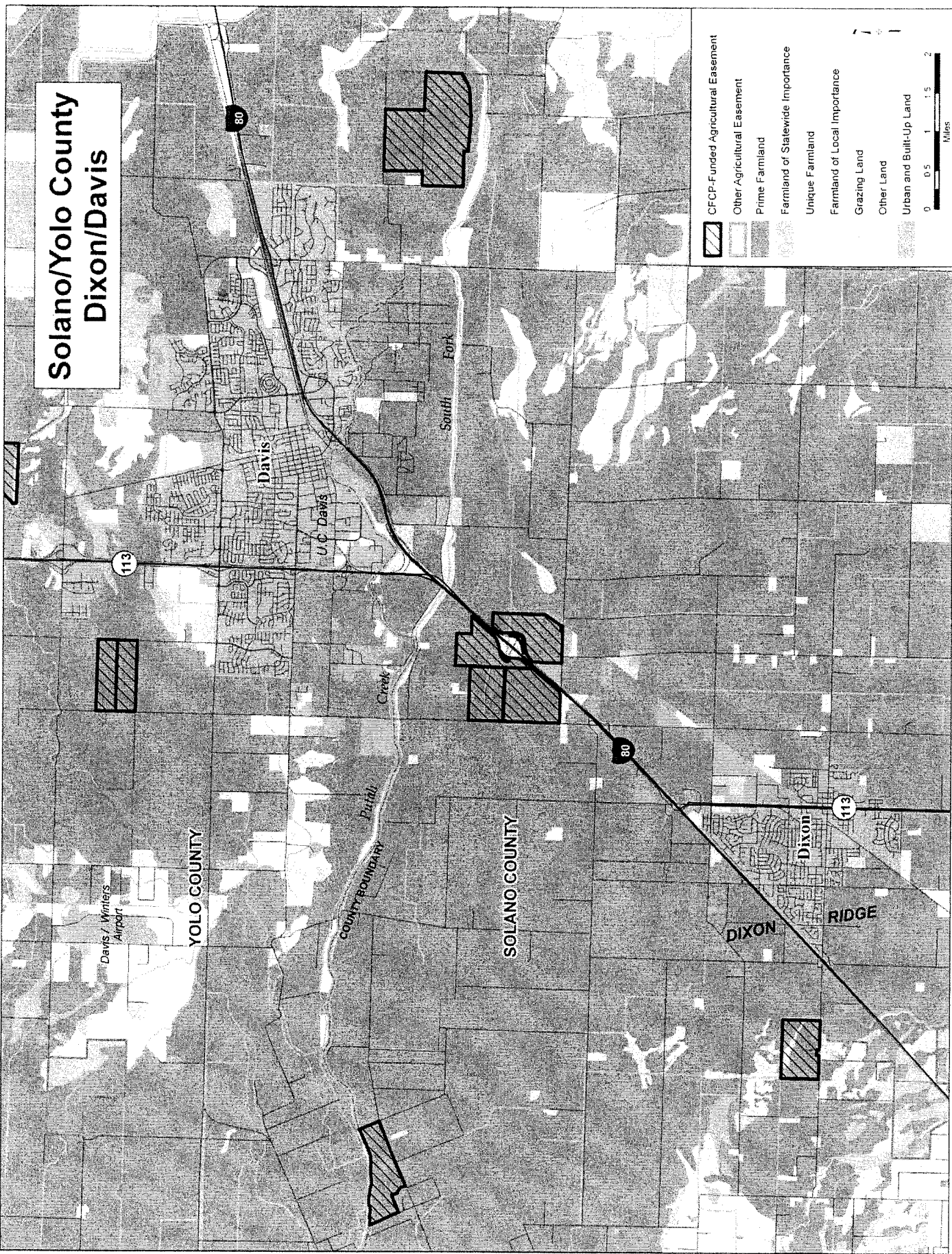
The California Land Preservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act) has 1/3 of all private land in the state under contract

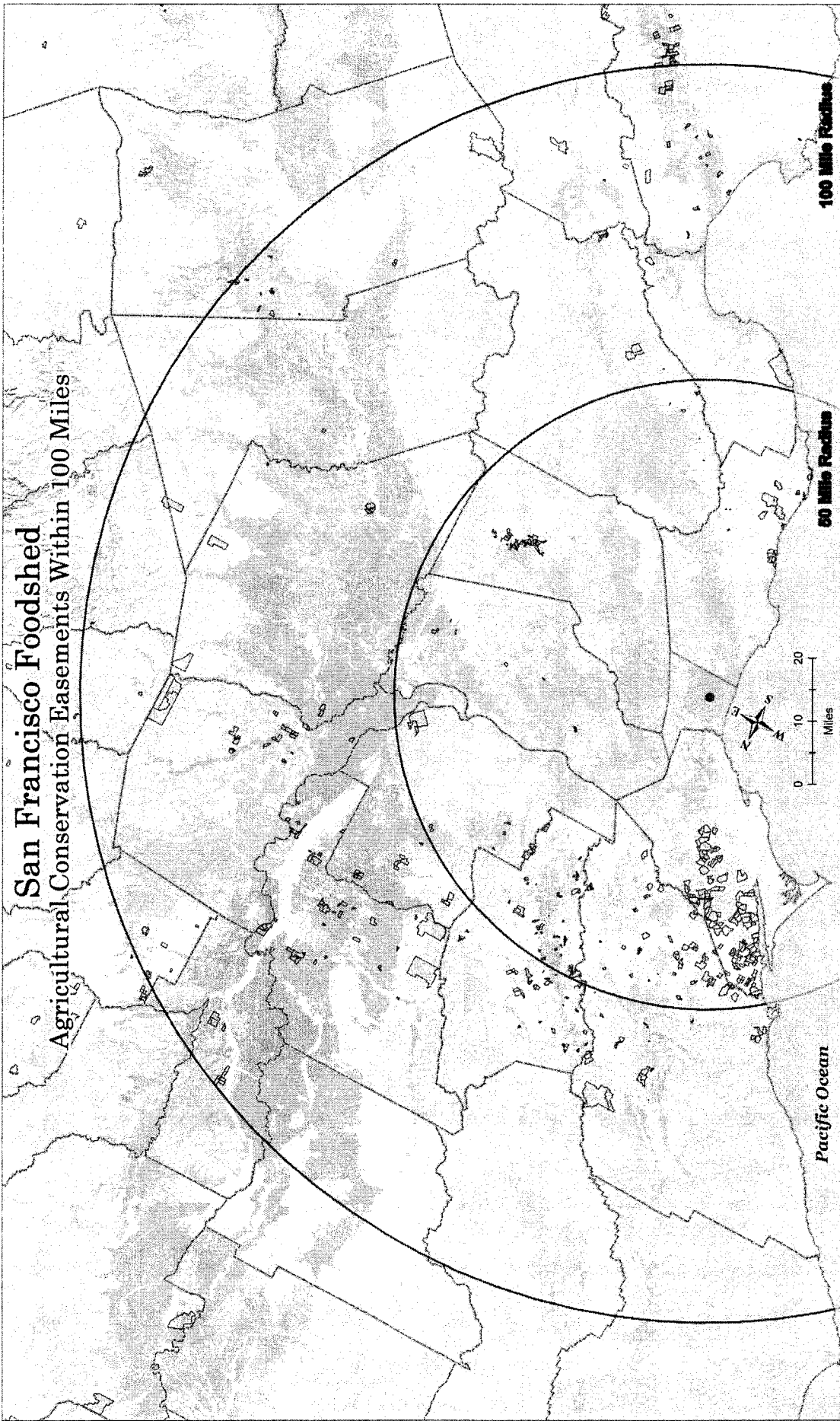


Solano/Yolo County Dixon/Davis

	CFCP-Funded Agricultural Easement
	Other Agricultural Easement
	Prime Farmland
	Farmland of Statewide Importance
	Unique Farmland
	Farmland of Local Importance
	Grazing Land
	Other Land
	Urban and Built-Up Land

0 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles





Brian R. Leahy
Assistant Director
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**SENATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE TESTIMONY
PAUL WENGER, PRESIDENT
CALIFORNIA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION**

MARCH 3, 2010

Mr. Chairman and Members,

My name is Paul Wenger and I'm president of the California Farm Bureau Federation. I appreciate the opportunity to be with you this morning to represent landowners in this discussion of the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, popularly known as the Williamson Act.

By any measure the Williamson Act is California's most important agricultural land conservation program. It provides long-term protection for over half of the state's privately owned cropland. 16.5 million acres of our most precious soil resources that when combined with Mediterranean Climate and a once plentiful water supply generates over \$30 billion in food and fiber annually and helps to provide food security to our nation.

From our perspective, it is truly a sad day that we are actually here discussing the continued relevance of what many consider to be California's most important environmental protection law be it past, present or future.

Any assumption that the Act may have outlived its usefulness gives little recognition to John Williamson's nightmare vision of California: an imminently threatened food producing landscape that deserved protection from real estate speculators/developers and a property tax system that forced farmers and ranchers to abandon their land and their source of livelihood.

Imagine what California would look like today without Assemblyman Williamson's Land Conservation Act. We would be living with far more urban sprawl and air pollution, more leapfrog suburban development and low-density ranchette subdivisions. All at the expense of our state's most precious resource and those that produce much of our food.

The idea that the state no longer needs the Williamson Act is a little like saying that we don't need the three strikes law anymore because it has worked so well. The laws that provide public safety, like food security, are far too important to simply cast aside because they've been so effective over time.

Farm Bureau has been a strong supporter of the Williamson Act since its inception. We have also worked tirelessly to protect the program's integrity for both participating landowners and California's taxpayers. We've sponsored numerous changes in law to clarify and protect how the Williamson Act was intended to work. For example, we helped write the principles of compatibility in the Act so counties could better protect their agricultural preserves from incompatible non-farming uses. Thanks to Farm Bureau's perseverance from 1989 to 1994 compatible uses cannot compromise, displace or impair current or reasonably foreseeable agricultural use of the restricted parcels. Nor can they lead to the removal of adjacent land from agricultural production. Today, one of the biggest threats to our prime farmland is shortsighted effort to locate large-scale solar projects on Williamson Act land. This would result in convert hundreds of thousands of acres of prime farmland to an industrial use.

Farm Bureau also was proud to sponsor SB 985 by Senator Pat Johnston in 1998 that closed numerous loopholes in the program. Although not considered a significant milestone in your briefing paper, farmers

and ranchers considered it a major victory to ban water ski lakes, golf courses, driving ranges, and ball fields from agricultural preserves. The bill also codified the opinions of three attorneys general relative to the subdivision of Williamson Act land, and tightened the Subdivision Map Act provisions relative to the division of contracted land into residential home sites. Unfortunately, the Act today is still threatened by the continued abuse of the Subdivision Map Act through the creation of scattered low-density residential home sites where the agriculture is incidental to the residential use instead of the other way around. That loophole needs to be closed, as well.

As you've heard today the biggest threat to the program is the state's lack of commitment to fund the Open Space Subvention program. For nearly 40 years the state has helped to backfill counties' foregone property tax revenue in order to encourage participation in the program. In 1993, we helped negotiate the current subvention formula in SB 683 that was approved 65 to 10 in the Assembly and 33 to 5 in this body. It was a vital part of the overall budget agreement that included the creation of the Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund in the state's General Fund and shifted \$2.6 billions annually in local property tax revenue to the state. Due to the fact that rural counties lacked the sales tax base to raise enough revenue from the half-cent shift from the state's portion of the sales and use tax earmarked to protect public safety funding, the Legislature and Governor Wilson agreed to increase the Open Space subvention funding from \$15M to \$36M.

Today, because rural counties, by definition, have much lower total assessed value on the property tax rolls than more urban counties, the state's subventions have become a crucial component of these counties' financing. If the state continues to walk away from its commitment to rural counties, while still taking their property tax revenue for ERAF, some of our most important agricultural counties will have no choice but to issue blanket nonrenewal notices on all of their landowners' Williamson Act contracts. This would result in the de-facto repeal of the California Land Conservation Act.

Imperial County took this unprecedented move just last week and, make no mistake; Farm Bureau rues that day but we hope it might serve as a wake-up call and lead to a recommitment on the part of the state to help fund this most successful farm and ranch land protection program in our state's history.

I would like to address some of the issues raised in the committee's briefing paper:

- The LAO's "general skepticism of the Williamson Act's benefits" is not well thought-out and clearly misses the mark. Virtually all land in California is threaten by parcelization, and scattered low-density subdivision in our state's watersheds has been highlighted, ironically by the LAO, as one of the reasons for increased fire risk in the State Responsibility Areas.
- The second paragraph of the LAO's 2004 statement on page 10 of the Briefing Paper further alleged that Williamson Act contracts "simply delay for a relatively short period of time the development of open space and agricultural land,." Yet it is clear from the previous page that as much as 14.4 million acres of land have been under contract for at least 35 years, and much of that land continues to be conserved today.
- We clearly believe that the five statewide benefits of promoting food security, encouraging agricultural support industries and their jobs, curbing sprawl, avoiding the need for costly public facilities and services, and promoting environmental quality, resource values, and quality of life remain very incredibly important and worth continued protection.
- We view inappropriate cancellations of Williamson Act contracts as a violation of those contracts and would support stronger requirements consistent with the California Supreme Court's rulings on this matter.

- We fear that earmarking cancellation penalty fees as a partial source of funding for county subventions would provide an inappropriate incentive to county boards of supervisors to immediately cancel contracts. This would be contrary to the California Supreme Court holding that nonrenewal is the proper way to exit a contract. The court reasoned that because the California Constitution requires land to be “enforceably restricted” in order to receive preferential property tax treatment, immediate cancellation should be reserved for extraordinary circumstances and not just because the land is ripe for development.
- On the other hand, we would strongly support earmarking material breach penalty fee revenue as a partial source of funding for county subventions.
- We would strongly oppose any weakening of the Williamson Act’s compatible use principles in order to extract a fee from those that want to significantly compromise, displace or impair agricultural production in our agricultural preserves. Sacrificing hundred of thousands of acres of contracted farm and ranch land for the sake of a few dollars of subvention funds will certain result in the death of the program by a thousand cuts.

Finally, I would simply like to remind you all that the state has an important and very significant investment in the California Land Conservation Program. It is a program that may not be perfect but it is elegant by design and proven effective for nearly half a century. Allowing the counties to assume the lead role without continued state oversight and enforcement capability would simply put the proverbial fox in the hen house. The Department of Conservation’s audit program has been effective and should continue in order to protect the state’s large investment in farmland conservation. The notion that state should toss out this venerable state law in favor of a “Williamson Act 2.0” is very troubling. We fear the 2.0 version will full of viruses that will crash the program and California’s food producing heritage will be lost.

Thank you and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

Message from
DOUG MOSEBAR
President, California Farm Bureau Federation

Gold attracted the first onslaught of American and foreign immigrants to California but before the gold rush ended, California's real gold, its rich soil, was discovered. Agricultural land is one of California's greatest resources. With the combination of excellent soil, climate and water, California's agricultural industry has become a vital part of our state's economy.

The gold rush was not the last major influx of population to California. The post WWII baby boom also brought tremendous growth to our state and our population growth continues today. As the state's population continues to swell so does the need for urban land. The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, also known as the Williamson Act, was passed by the state Legislature to protect agriculture and open space land.

The Williamson Act offers an innovative approach to agricultural land protection by building an interrelated set of property tax, land use and conservation measures in a single policy package. If California wants to help provide an environment where farmers and ranchers can continue to conduct their businesses, we need the Williamson Act. The open-space subvention program is equally important to the continued success of the Act because it provides county governments the financial support necessary to continue to offer the Williamson Act.

We urge everyone's support for the Williamson Act and the open-space subvention program.

SAVE THE
Williamson
ACT



"... CONSIDER 16 MILLION ACRES [PROTECTED BY THE WILLIAMSON ACT], IN MANY CASES THE BEST AGRICULTURAL LAND IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, WHICH MEANS THE BEST AGRICULTURAL LAND IN THE WORLD. I THINK THAT THE ACT HAS FORCED DEVELOPMENT ONTO OTHER LAND AND THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. BUT, ULTIMATELY, IF WE ARE GOING TO BE ABLE TO GROW ENOUGH FOOD TO FEED THE WORLD, IT WILL BE UP TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO KEEP OUR BEST LAND OFF THE MARKET, TO TELL DEVELOPERS 'NO, IF YOU WANT TO BUILD, YOU MUST GO SOMEPLACE ELSE.'"

JOHN WILLIAMSON
(1913-1998)

*Former State Assemblyman
and Author of the Williamson Act*



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BUREAU FEDERATION**

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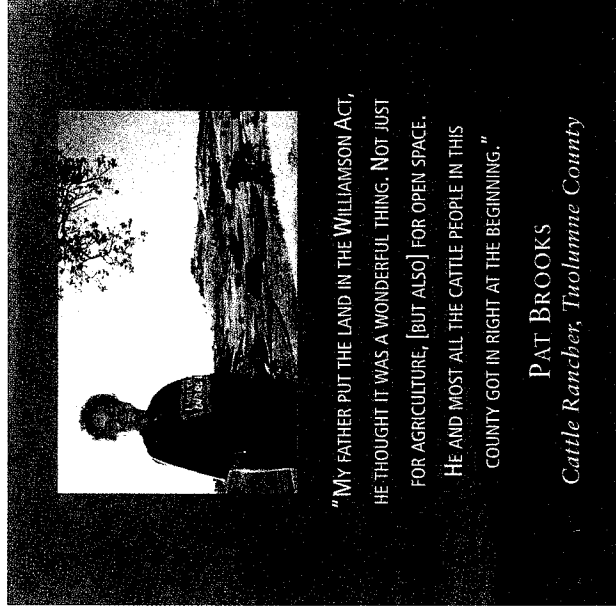
SAVE THE
Williamson
ACT

There is more to the Williamson Act than its long-term protection of over half of the privately owned cropland in California. This immensely popular and durable program is also about people, their land and their legacy.

The following pictures and quotes from actual Williamson Act participants help to explain why it is so important to continue to invest in California's landscapes.

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, more popularly known as the Williamson Act, was created to address skyrocketing property taxes on agricultural land. A 1966 land economics study reported that between 1950 and 1965, agricultural property taxes increased from 6.5 percent to more than 15 percent of net farm income. Without the Williamson Act, farmers and ranchers could not afford to stay on the land and California would look very different today.

Under the Williamson Act, an owner of agricultural land enters into a contract with the county if the landowner agrees to restrict use of the land to the production of com-



"MY FATHER PUT THE LAND IN THE WILLIAMSON ACT, HE THOUGHT IT WAS A WONDERFUL THING. NOT JUST FOR AGRICULTURE, [BUT ALSO] FOR OPEN SPACE. HE AND MOST ALL THE CATTLE PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTY GOT IN RIGHT AT THE BEGINNING."

PAT BROOKS
Cattle Rancher, Tuolumne County

mercial crops for a term of not less than 10 years. The term of the contract is automatically extended each year unless the landowner or county serves a notice of nonrenewal. When a contract is not renewed, it takes nine years for it to officially expire. Immediate contract cancellation is only allowed under extraordinary circumstances, plus there is a substantial penalty fee equal to 12.5 percent of the land's fair market value that is required, thus providing a significant disincentive to this method of contract termination. The law also requires the county to establish an agricultural preserve (i.e.: exclusive ag. zoning) and base the property tax assessment on the land's ability to produce agricultural income and not on the Proposition 13 value.

There are currently more than 16 million acres enrolled in the Williamson Act in 54 counties in the state. During the last three years, four additional counties have begun offering Williamson Act contracts and over 1 million additional acres are now being protected.

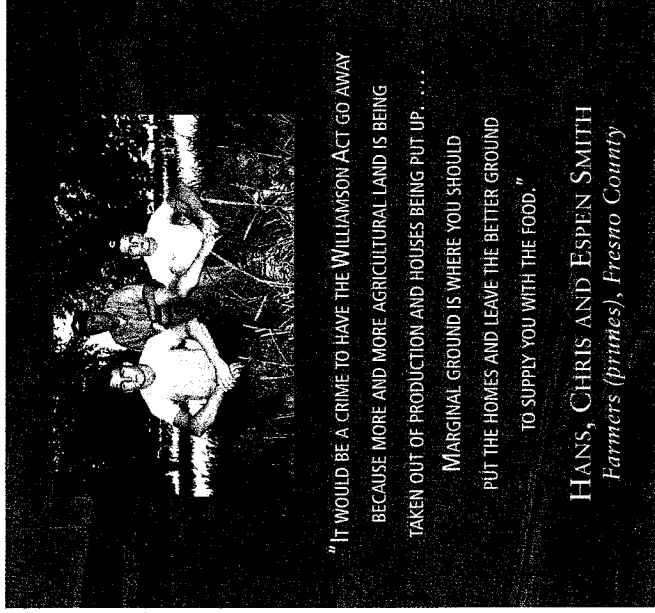
Recent changes in the law have strengthened its provisions as urbanization pressures have continued to mount in California. Perhaps the most significant change was made in August 1998 when the law was amended to provide for the establishment of Farmland Security Zones. Under

this new "Super" Williamson Act, farmers and ranchers keep their property in the conservation program for at least 20 years, and in return, they receive an additional 35 percent tax reduction in the land's value for property tax purposes. FSZ contracts are comparable to the Williamson Act contracts in that each year another year is added to the agreement, so nonrenewals take 19 years.

In the most recent poll of landowners who participate in the Williamson Act program, 85 percent of participating landowners are "satisfied" or "extremely satisfied" with the benefits brought to them by enrolling in the Williamson Act or a FSZ contract. The same study showed that 88 percent of knowledgeable state and county government officials felt the benefits of this land protection program outweigh the costs.

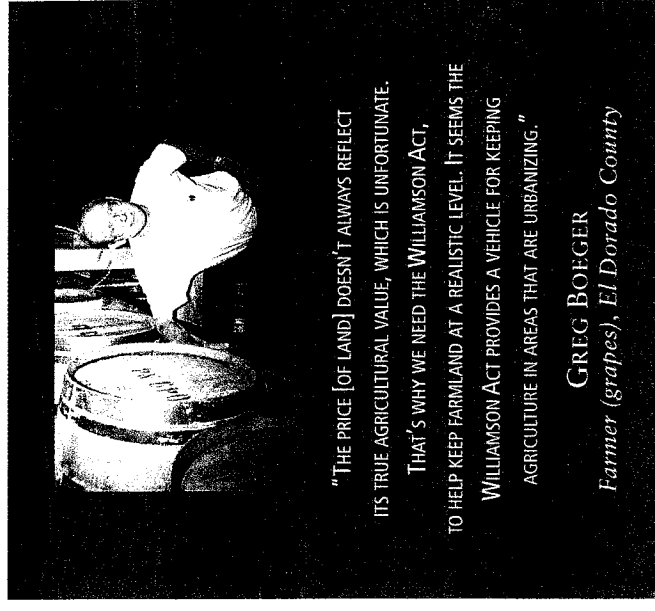
Participating landowners have concluded that one-in-three would not be farming or ranching without their Williamson Act contracts.

For more information, contact: *John Gamper, Director of Taxation and Land Use for the California Farm Bureau Federation, at (916) 446-4647.*



"IT WOULD BE A CRIME TO HAVE THE WILLIAMSON ACT GO AWAY BECAUSE MORE AND MORE AGRICULTURAL LAND IS BEING TAKEN OUT OF PRODUCTION AND HOUSES BEING PUT UP. . . . MARGINAL GROUND IS WHERE YOU SHOULD PUT THE HOMES AND LEAVE THE BETTER GROUND TO SUPPLY YOU WITH THE FOOD."

HANS, CHRIS AND ESPEN SMITH
Farmers (prunes), Fresno County



"THE PRICE [OF LAND] DOESN'T ALWAYS REFLECT ITS TRUE AGRICULTURAL VALUE, WHICH IS UNFORTUNATE. THAT'S WHY WE NEED THE WILLIAMSON ACT, TO HELP KEEP FARMLAND AT A REALISTIC LEVEL. IT SEEMS THE WILLIAMSON ACT PROVIDES A VEHICLE FOR KEEPING AGRICULTURE IN AREAS THAT ARE URBANIZING."

GREG BOEGER
Farmer (grapes), El Dorado County

CALIFORNIA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

1221 H STREET • SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA • 95814-1910

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Senate Committee on Local Government

March 3, 2010 Oversight Hearing

Subject: The Williamson Act: Past, Present, Future?

Testimony Respectfully Submitted by Jack Hanson

Treasurer, California Cattlemen's Association

INTRODUCTION

Good Morning Senator Cox and Members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting me to speak with you today about an issue that is of paramount importance to the future of ranching in California.

My name is Jack Hanson. I am currently serving my second term as Treasurer of the California Cattlemen's Association and I am honored to be representing its members at today's hearing. As a matter of introduction, my wife Darcy, our two sons and I own and operate a family cattle ranch in the high desert of Lassen County. I have been actively involved in farming and ranching for forty years and a Williamson Act contract holder since 1978. Also, I am completing my second term as a Lassen County Supervisor.

The California Cattlemen's Association is a non-profit trade association that has had the pleasure of representing California's ranchers and beef producers in state and federal legislative and regulatory arenas since 1917. CCA represents ranchers and beef producers who are ardent stewards of the land and California's natural resources. Collectively, CCA members provide millions of acres of wildlife habitat and protect vast open spaces all the while providing a safe and reliable food supply for California, the nation and the world.

Of the approximate 16.6 acres currently enrolled in Williamson Act contracts, approximately 10.5 million acres are non-prime – generally rangeland, representing roughly \$10 million out of the fully funded \$387 million in subvention funding. Non-



TOM TALBOT, DVM
PRESIDENT
BISHOP

JACK HANSON
TREASURER
SUSANVILLE

**NATIONAL CATTLEMEN'S BEEF
ASSOCIATION**

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SECOND VICE PRESIDENT
SANTA PAULA

MARTY WILLIAMSON
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT
EXETER

KEVIN KESTER
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT
PARKFIELD

DAVE WOOD
FEEDER COUNCIL CHAIR
COALINGA

MATT BYRNE
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
SACRAMENTO

BILLY FLOURNOY
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT
LIKELY

PAUL CAMERON
FEEDER COUNCIL VICE CHAIR
BRAWLEY

prime is subvented at an average \$1 per acre, which represents a tremendous bang for the buck when compared to other conservation easement models.

IMPORTANCE OF WILLIAMSON ACT

In the interest of time, I will not dwell on the importance and effectiveness of the Land Conservation Act as its success is obvious – over 16 million acres are protected, one-half of the state's farmland and close to one-third of its privately owned land. The question before you today is the future of the Act and the contracts which it caused to be executed. In my opinion, this question – as with many today – is one of finance, specifically the subvention payments to counties from the state. If the counties would honor the contracts in perpetuity without subvention payments, we would not be having this discussion. Conversely, if the land owners agree to honor the contracts to keep the land in agricultural production and open space without financial incentive, all would be well. Regrettably, neither of these scenarios will be the case under current conditions. In our opinion, considering the counties financial condition in general, without the subvention payments or some other form of financial compensation, the counties will begin the process of nonrenewal of the contracts, thus unraveling the protection provided by the Williamson Act – as evidenced by Imperial County's recent decision to non-renew contracts.

I believe in the Williamson Act and what I have foregone in exchange for a tax assessment based on the use value of my land, is the inability to use my land for anything other than ranching, which translates into open space, wildlife habitat preservation and environmental benefits. I respectfully submit that this is not a "subsidy" or "free lunch" for land owners. In return for use based property taxes, the land owner, at a minimum, gives up for the 10 or 20 years rolling term of the contract, certain uses of the property that would otherwise be available to him by right or permit. The owner may also be required to merge parcels and assume added zoning restrictions to enter into an agricultural preserve and thus a contract.

The Williamson Act allows ranchers to provide multiple benefits to the people of California: promoting food security; bolstering related industries; preventing sprawl; providing habitat, and; promoting environmental quality. We do all of this, as well as manage to feed the state, the nation and the world with an environmentally efficient, wholly nutritious product. California is home to the safest, most progressive and humane cattle production operations in the world.

A one size fits all approach to regional land use decisions is unwise, therefore, there are three main tools at the disposal of ranchers who seek to conserve farm and rangeland throughout California:

*The California Farmland Conservancy Program, which secures the permanent preservation of economically viable farmland by utilizing state and private grant funding to purchase easements to be held and monitored by land trusts or transferred to local governments.

*The Easement Exchange Program, which allows the rescission of a Williamson Act contract if a contracting party arranges a conservation easement on other farmland within the jurisdiction.

*The Williamson Act, which requires the local government to establish agricultural preserves prior to entering land into a contract. Preserves must be at least 100 acres. The minimum parcel sizes within a preserve are 10 and 40 acres, further disincentivizing speculation of potential ranchette developments. The goals of the Williamson Act are complimentary to Senate Pro Tem Steinberg's SB 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008), which seeks to encourage planned, compact development in order to further the goals of reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS HAVE WORSENERD

Now more than ever the State of California needs to reaffirm its commitment to assure an adequate, healthful and nutritious beef supply for residents of this state and nation. We know from our experience with petroleum products and energy that becoming reliant on a net import of any commodity is unwise as a public policy.

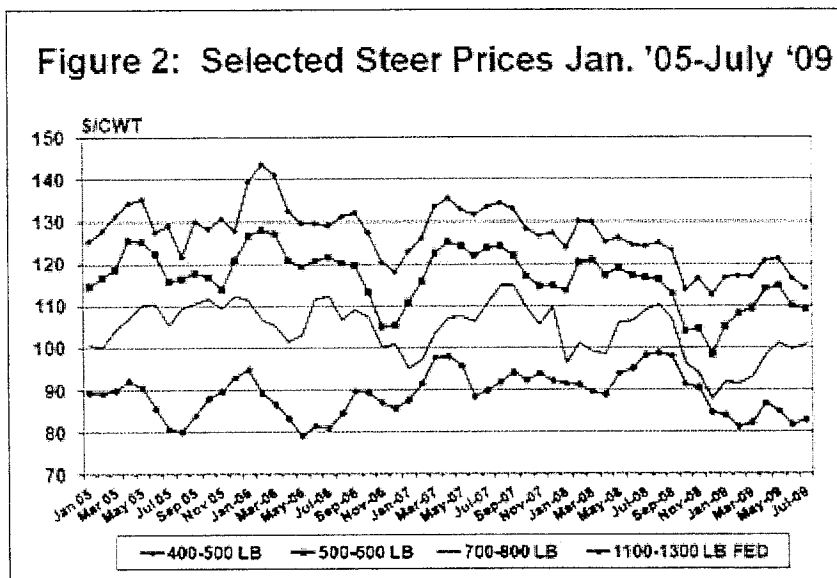
The approximately \$39 million in general fund subventions is a bargain. The Williamson Act upholds a statewide goal of helping to prevent leapfrog development, which can strain the budgets of localities and ultimately cost the state more than planned and infill development due to infrastructure costs. The Act can assist in defining the parameters of residential development, as we see in South Sacramento County along Interstate 5, where cattle are grazing amidst habitat (vernal pools) literally across the street from tract housing. During times of heavy development pressure, the Act served to protect this land from non-agricultural uses.

The Williamson Act is our last fixed input cost. Removing the last remaining fixed input cost to ranchers would be the final blow to our operations in California. Feed has become a volatile market. With increased demand for ethanol, the price of grain is unpredictable. Corn reached an all time high in 2008. Add to this the recent drought, which not only affected the amount of grass available to cattle, but also increased the price of hay, which is used to supplement the lack of available grass. Water continues to be a heavily regulated resource, which also tangentially affects the cost of providing water to cattle, as well as affecting alternative feed sources. The price of fuel has risen significantly over the past several years, as have energy costs. Other crucial input costs,

such as vet visits to ensure the health and welfare of the cattle can be unpredictable and potentially costly.

The rising cost of regulations, such as the truck rule, the Central Valley agricultural waiver and the agriculture pump rule just to name a few, have had and will continue to have an undetermined effect on our bottom line. Finally, catastrophic losses such as the heat wave of 2006 and even the loss of a family member and the resulting inheritance tax have dealt crushing blows to this industry. As a result, mid year cattle herd inventory is at its lowest since 1972¹.

Please recall that income is also variable for each segment of the industry. The recent federal dairy herd depopulation program for dairies resulted in driving down the price of certain beef products. In 2005, a finished steer sold for approximately \$125/cwt and in 2009 for \$115/cwt. Over four years, the price fluctuated \$26/cwt over the span of ten months for finished steers. Cow-calf operations saw even larger price fluctuations, as illustrated in the chart below.



Source: Peña, Volume 25, Issue 25 (July 29, 2009)

Over the many years the subvention funding for the Williamson Act has been jeopardized, you and your colleagues have heard from ranchers that we continue what we do out of passion and love for the land. I think the fact that we have ranchers left in California despite recent weather and economic conditions is testament to our level of

¹ Jose G. Peña, "Mid-Year Cattle Inventory Lowest Since 1972; Drought, Weak Markets and High Costs are Encouraging a Continued Liquidation," *Texas A&M Extension Agricultural Economics Ag-Eco News* 25:25 (July 29, 2009)

commitment, and I would ask that the committee, when speaking to colleagues throughout this budget process, take this into consideration.

THE FUTURE OF WILLIAMSON ACT

California's policymakers are at the precipice of deciding whether ranching will continue to be a part of its economic and cultural future. De-funding subventions is a clear message to local jurisdictions and ranchers that ranching does not play a part in our collective future.

In closing, I would ask this Committee to consider the wisdom of de-funding a program that for all intents and purposes continues to complement and support the policy goals of this state. Not only has the Williamson Act NOT outlived its usefulness, it is a well subscribed tool that is already poised to work in concert with the evolving policies in California.

STATEMENT of
WILLIAM H. GEYER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RESOURCE LANDOWNERS COALITION
before the SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT
March 3, 2010

THE WILLIAMSON ACT: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

PAST

John Williamson's original goal for the Williamson Act (WA), which he reiterated throughout his involvement, was to stop farmers and ranchers from being forced out of their occupation or off their land by property taxes. In 1964, his committee took field trips where we talked to farmers who were in that exact situation. The combination of the 1965 WA and the 1966 Open Space Constitutional Amendment (Proposition 3) have effectively precluded that outcome for participating landowners for the last 40+ years. To the end of his life, strangers frequently came up to him and said "you saved my farm (or ranch)." In these terms, the WA has been an unqualified success.

Almost from the beginning, the WA was criticized for either not doing enough (such as not creating an iron no-growth ring around CA's cities) or conversely, for rewarding farmers for "what they would have done anyway." Such criticism is naïve, and ignores the WA's contribution to the evolution of California's land use planning and management strategies in the last half-century:

1. It pioneered contract-based land use planning and has been a precursor of more recent instruments like NCCP agreements and conservation easements, which provide the alternatives to exclusive reliance upon the police power for achieving environmental goals.
2. Its "evergreen" terms have operated as self-fulfilling prophecies. While the legal contract terms seldom exceed 10 years, in fact the great majority of the land involved has been continuously under contract for 30 to 40 years. This has provided an enhanced sense of stability for landowners and local governments in a state where probably few or none of its nearly 50M acres of privately owned land are completely insulated from speculative land uses, values or potential tax consequences.
3. It is a building block for other landowner environmental stewardship relationships. The nearly 17M acres of land currently under WA contract and its owners represent a currently under-utilized asset for collaborative and conjunctive income-producing land stewardship for a variety of purposes. It is increasingly understood that the landowner is likely to be the most cost-effective environmental manager of his property, when properly tasked and compensated.

PRESENT

The WA has proven to be remarkably hardy, and has sustained its enrollment in the face of apparently adverse events, including court decisions and Proposition 13, that were predicted by some to result in mass program dropout. However, it appears to be currently facing the biggest challenge in its history, the proposed and actual defunding of the state's \$39M subvention program that offsets county property tax losses attributable to the WA. Tragically, the most recent funding veto, coupled with the years of threatened cuts and last minute rescues that preceded it, may have nearly destroyed the confidence of counties and landowners in the state as a constructive partner in farmland conservation. While the counties have so far displayed remarkable forbearance (in part because of the WA's widespread local popularity and in part because they have no options that provide immediate relief), I think their patience is about to end. This problem, unsolved, dwarfs any other issues that have been on the WA table currently and since last fall, as someone put it has "just about sucked all the air out of the room."

What can landowners do about this? In my professional capacity with RLC, and with my personal experience as a participant in the development of the WA itself and the original subvention program, I have organized a project to identify, vet, and ultimately establish alternative sources of funding for county subventions. While the General Fund has previously been both a serviceable and appropriate source for subventions, it is increasingly hard to believe, with ever more constituencies dependent upon it, that it will ever recover its former viability short of some miraculous "structural realignment." Working with RLC members and project participants, and ultimately with the 3 part WA subvention coalition (counties, landowners, and environmentalists) I am developing a White Paper to identify a range of potentially available sources, and quantify and evaluate their revenue capability and implementation feasibility. Then, if a review by the coalition results in a sufficient consensus on a package capable of funding a stable and equitable long term program, we will implement it legislatively. To date, I have produced a first concept draft, and have hired a consultant (former Glenn County Assessor Vince Minto) who is developing the local database and methodology necessary to price, cost, and evaluate various options.

Several caveats are necessary at this point in the process:

- 1) While I fear that the General Fund may turn out to be a dead end in the long run, I think it should have at the least a short term obligation to help bridge the transition to alternative funding sources. Beyond that, I think the state should continue to itself cover the tax losses for the 80% of the property tax dollar that it has taken.
- 2) Among alternative sources, I find myself attracted to diversity, and ones which are either dependent upon or related to WA constituencies or events. This is primarily for reasons of stability, nexus, and control. However, nothing is in concrete, and nothing can be considered as "in" the package until Vince has finished his homework and project participants and the coalition have had a chance to review and discuss the work product. Beyond that, any source that can be demonstrated to be productive, fair and workable will be a serious candidate.
- 3) Developing and implementing a multi-source alternative revenue package may mean that subvention distribution from it would not occur until FY 2011-12 at the earliest. Mindful of the urgency of the situation and the fact that several counties are already exploring

more immediate unilateral action, I and others are working one or more short-term approaches that might facilitate county revenue efforts and a possible state match.

FUTURE

If we can navigate our way through the local subvention funding crisis, there is more work than ever before that California's working landscapes are being asked to help with, and for which the WA and its variants are suitable tools. Within the last 5 years, the legislature and the administration have put ambitious initiatives on California's land use plate on regional planning (SB 375), greenhouse gas and carbon (AB 32), flood management (SB 5) and water supply, quality, and watershed/delta management (water/delta package). Each of these is underfunded or at best partly funded, and is predicated on substantial changes in land use regimes and priorities across rural as well as urban California. It would seem that collaborative landowner stewardship may be the only cost-effective way to implement many of these new priorities in non-urban California.

Specifically, early SB 375 efforts seem likely to produce some finished urban and non-urban landscapes, with a residual of unfinished rural landscapes for future planning. The WA (including the FSZ version) and term conservation easements could help satisfy landowner needs on both finished open space and unfinished landscapes. While carbon strategies pursuant to AB 32 are still relatively unresolved as they relate to working rural landscapes, it seems intuitive that ongoing protection of lands and vegetative resources that help with the carbon equation would be a wise policy as strategy evolves. For flood management, managing upstream watersheds and finding downstream areas that can provide temporary flood offloading capacity is a key part of legislative planning, and can minimize over-dependence on costly heroic levee solutions. Finally, unless the whole delta is to be returned to its pre-gold rush condition, the land resources there will need to accomplish a variety of resource tasks along with their agricultural use, through contractual collaborative mechanisms. The above context illustrates that the WA has a much broader application than just the urban fringe. It's hard to imagine tackling any of these challenges without the WA as a viable and available tool.

In conclusion, while there are always issues to work on, I think that perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the WA is that for a program that covers almost 17M acres (more than 1/3 of the privately owned land in the state) there have been so few significant compliance problems throughout its history. My own experience has been that those that arise tend to be legitimate differences of opinion or policy, matters of detail, or simply mistakes based upon erroneous title or anecdotal information. With the exception of the subvention problem, the most important cautionary feedback I get from landowners could be summed up in the phrase "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." I think a landscape without the WA would be far more unfriendly to landowners, unpredictable for local government, and dysfunctional for the environment and the general public. I don't think we ought to test that thesis.



January 27, 2010

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Williamson Act Subvention Funding

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

The undersigned partners of the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition (Coalition) are distressed that your proposed 2010-11 budget continues the current budget year's elimination of subvention funding to California counties for the California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act). The elimination of subvention funding is contrary to the underlying goals of our partnership to protect California's rangeland landscape.

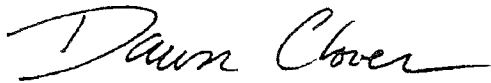
The Coalition is an unprecedented group of California ranchers, environmental organizations and government agencies. Together, these partners are working to preserve private working landscapes, support the long-term viability of the ranching industry, and protect and enhance California rangeland for both legally protected and still-common species. This unique partnership encompasses the expertise of rangeland managers, ecologists, grassland wildlife experts and private ranchers who strongly believe the Williamson Act is intrinsically linked to our Coalition's ability to preserve private working rangelands.

The Williamson Act plays a critical role in preserving rangeland. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Fire and Resource Assessment Program, California is losing tens of thousands of acres of rangeland annually. This significant conversion of rangeland contributes to the loss of open space, groundwater recharge, the state's primary watersheds, homes of common and threatened species, and family ranchers. Research on these rangelands finds that nearly all of the species of grassland birds, most native plants and the threatened vernal pool ecosystem actually benefit from responsible grazing practices. The Williamson Act plays an important role in preserving California's rangelands that are the foundation of the economic and social fabric of California's ranching industry and rural communities, and will only continue to provide habitat for plants, fish and wildlife if the Williamson Act remains a viable tool for landowners.

We greatly appreciate your leadership to get the state budget on track; however we believe longer-term negative impacts vastly outweigh the short-term budget savings the state would receive from the elimination of subvention funding to counties for the Williamson Act. Furthermore, the elimination of subvention funding sends the wrong message about the importance of open space, threatened and endangered species and domestic food production to the state of California. Again, the Coalition strongly supports subvention funding to California's counties for the Williamson Act. Should you have any questions regarding our support please contact Tracy Schohr, Director of Rangeland Conservation, California Rangeland Conservation Coalition at (916) 444-0845 or tschohr@calcattlemen.org.

Sincerely,

Partners of the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition



Dawn Clover
Director of Government Relations
California Cattlemen's Association



Belinda Morris
Regional Director, Center for Conservation Incentives
Environmental Defense Fund



Noelle Cremers
Director, Natural Resources and Commodities
California Farm Bureau Federation



Nita Vail
Executive Director
California Rangeland Trust



Vance Russell
Landowner Stewardship Program
Audubon California



Joe Ciolek
Executive Director
Agricultural-Natural Resources Trust
of Contra Costa County



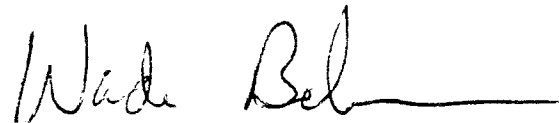
Lesla Osterholm
District Manager
Nevada County Resource Conservation



Melva Bigelow
Director of State Government Relations.
The Nature Conservancy



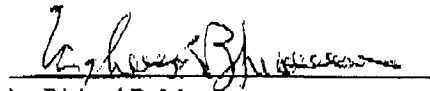
Kim Delfino
California Program Director
Defenders of Wildlife



Wade Belew
President
California Native Grasslands Association



Erik Vink
Central Valley Program Director
Trust for Public Land



Rich Morris
Chairman
Central Coast Rangeland Coalition



Darla Guenzler
Executive Director
California Council of Land Trusts



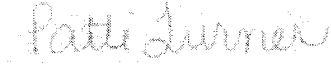
Leslie Koenig
Interim Executive Officer
Alameda County Resource Conservation District



Cory D. Wilkins
Executive Director
Middle Mountain Foundation



Mark Hennelly
Vice President.
California Outdoor Heritage Alliance



Patti Turner
District Manager
Colusa County Resource Conservation District



Pia Sevelius
District Manager
Butte County Resource Conservation District



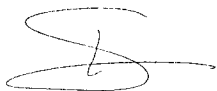
Matt Rogers
President
California Deer Association



Carol Witham
VernalPools.Org



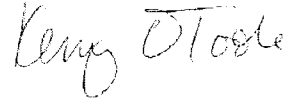
Phil Schoefer
President, Board of Directors
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California Association of Resource Conservation
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Kerry O'Toole
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Ed Pandolfino, Ph.D.
Chair, Placer County Conservation Committee
Sierra Foothills Audubon Society



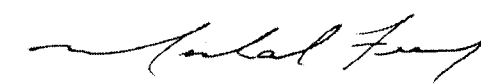
Nicole Byrd
Executive Director
Solano Land Trust



Lesa Carlton
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California Wool Growers Association



Ashley Boren
Executive Director
Sustainable Conservation



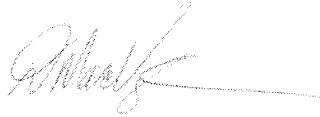
Michael Feeney
Executive Director
Land Trust for Santa Barbara County



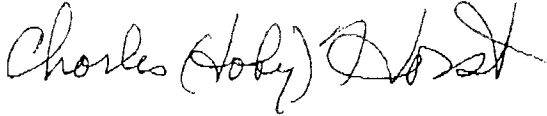
Debra Chase
Executive Director
Tuleyome



Dr. C. Mark Rockwell, D.C.
California State Representative
Endangered Species Coalition



Mace Vaughan
Pollinator Program Director
The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation



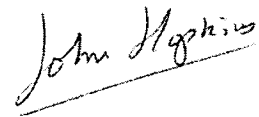
Toby Horst
Representative
Sierra Resource Conservation District




Ernest White
President
Tehama County Resource Conservation District



Mike Michael S. Johnson
President
San Benito County Cattlemen's Association



John Hopkins
President
Institute for Ecological Health



Aimee Rutledge
Executive Director
Sacramento Valley Conservancy



Jude Lamare
President
Friends of Swainson's Hawk



Bob Hammond
Lands Program Manager
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation



Tara Hansen
Executive Director
California Native Plant Society



Brian Stark
Executive Director
Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County

cc: Honorable Members, California State Senate
Honorable Members, California State Assembly
A.G. Kawamura, Department of Food and Agriculture
Bridgett Luther, Department of Conservation
Brian Leahy, Department of Conservation



February 9, 2010

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95818

Re: California Land Conservation Act of 1965 - Williamson Act Subvention Funds Program

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

On behalf of the Sacramento Region Food System Collaborative, we strongly urge the Administration to reconsider its proposal to suspend funding for Williamson Act subventions for the fiscal year 2010-2011 Budget. While we recognize the daunting challenges resulting from the budget crisis, Williamson Act funding has provided well-documented and huge leveraging of economic and environmental benefits that more than validate this investment of funds and achieve state policy goals.

The Food System Collaborative (FSC) is a unique coalition of more than 100 public, private and non-profit sector stakeholder groups of the six-county Capitol region focusing on food access, security and nutrition; rural economic development; land use; and healthy communities. The FSC is managed by Valley Vision, in collaboration with the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) and many other partners, with funding provided by The California Endowment.

Your important priorities are to create jobs, grow the economy, invest infrastructure funds wisely through more efficient land use, and achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Loss of Williamson Act subvention funds will counter all of these goals – it will hurt the ability of our farmers and ranchers to remain economically viable; it will make county government operations even more strained than they currently are - forcing them to override important land use and economic policy goals by opting out of the program; it will undermine the efforts of the region's groundbreaking Blueprint program and SACOG's Rural-Urban Connections Strategy to support our region's rural economies; and it will impair the region's ability to meet the goals of AB 32 and SB 375 for greenhouse gas emissions (GGE) reduction targets.

As you well know, agriculture is an economic engine for our region and the State – and is crucial to our region's economy. Direct agricultural production values in the Sacramento region reached \$1.67 billion in 2008, an increase of more than 25% over 2006 figures. Agriculture generated \$36.6 billion statewide in in-farm sales alone in 2007. These numbers do not include the economic revenues generated from the agricultural "value

chain” of pre-and post agricultural production, such as food processing, packaging, shipping and exports – and the overall support of rural economies. As well, a vibrant agricultural sector is a critical pre-condition for the region to thrive as a center of research, innovation and excellence in the life sciences.

Agriculture provides multiple and vitally important environmental, health, public safety, habitat and quality of life benefits, not the least of which is flood control and management, and health of the watersheds. In recognition of these benefits, farmers and ranchers in this region have enrolled more than 740,000 acres under the Williamson Act – more than one-third of our farms and ranchlands. It is the major tool to help them remain economically viable by providing essential property tax relief. In the most recent poll of landowners participating in the program, one in three landowners stated they would be unable to continue farming or ranching without the benefits of the program (per the California Farm Bureau Federation).

In recent years our region of more than 2.3 million residents has experienced rapid growth and loss of important farmlands to urban uses. The Regional Blueprint was adopted by all of the region’s jurisdictions in recognition that the region’s economic future, attainment of federal air quality mandates, and overall quality of life depend on a more sustainable land use and development pattern. This includes conservation of farmlands, and reduction of sprawl and low density development. The Williamson Act is a critical resource for achieving this future. With the passage of AB 32 and SB 375, the region and the State will need the Williamson Act more than ever in order to meet greenhouse gas emissions (GGE) reductions targets.

Here are some additional facts to consider in reinstating funding for the subventions:

- The Williamson Act is proven to be the State’s most cost-effective incentive-based farm and ranchland conservation tool, protecting an estimated 16.5 million acres.
- A Purdue University study earlier this decade found that every acre of farmland pulls an estimated 0.107 tons of CO₂ from the air each year; theoretically, the region’s 740,000 acres under the Williamson Act would store or absorb almost 80,000 tons of carbon annually.
- The region exports approximately 98% of its food production by value and must import 98% of its food. A high percentage of families are food insecure and do not have access to healthy fresh food. The Food System Collaborative and many partners are working to improve the regional food system to improve health outcomes, which will require a viable local agricultural economy.
- Conversion of farmlands to other urban uses would increase runoff and development pressures in the flood plain, putting the region at further risk of a catastrophic flood, with devastating economic impacts and potential loss of life.
- The State may be required to pay additional revenues in the Homeowner’s Property Tax Relief subvention, far exceeding the \$34.7 million in Williamson Act subventions.

To an unprecedented degree, support for Williamson Act Subventions funding crosses political, sectoral and geographic boundaries within the Sacramento region and across the State. We respectfully request that you reinstate the funding for this vitally important program.

Sincerely,

Paul Schramski Towers
State Director
Pesticide Watch

Trish Kelly
Principal
Applied Development Economics

Duane Chamberlain
Yolo County Supervisor
5th District

Paul Cultrera
General Manager
Sacramento Natural Foods Cooperative

Davida Douglas
Executive Director
Alchemist Community Development Corporation

Shawn Harrison
Executive Director
Soil Born Farms

David Hosley
President
Great Valley Center

Bill Maynard
President
Sacramento Area Community Garden Coalition

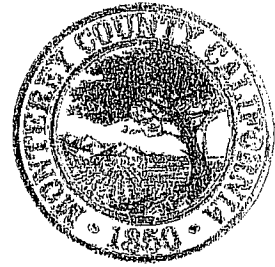
Elizabeth O'Sullivan
Graduate Student
University of California – Davis

Dan Silva
Former Sutter County Supervisor &
Owner
Silva Orchards

Cc:

Senator Darrell Steinberg
Senator Dean Florez
Senator Dennis Hollingsworth
Assemblymember Cathleen Calgiani
Assemblymember Connie Conaway
Assemblymember Martin Garrick
Assemblymember John Perez

MONTEREY COUNTY



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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February 23, 2010

The Honorable Dave Cox, Chair
Senate Local Government Committee
Room 5046 – State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Oversight Hearing on Williamson Act – Comments for the Record

Dave
Dear Senator Cox,

On behalf of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors and the constituents we represent, I write to thank you for an opportunity to emphasize the importance of the Williamson Act to the county's environmental and economic stability and security.

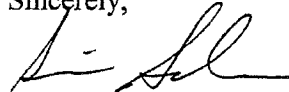
For cities and counties, the financial support provided by the Williamson Act subventions has provided a tangible incentive for local governments to stay in the program and initiate more contracts. More importantly, these incentives establish much needed protections for prudent planning for growth that enhances environmental safeguards for these lands. Monterey County is one of California's largest agricultural production regions, and faces continued pressures for development in these critical agricultural preserves.

In addition to the fiscal implications for Monterey County, we fear that eliminating the subvention payments is the first step toward a total unraveling of the broadest based agricultural conservation program in the state. California is losing its working landscapes at an alarming rate while simultaneously faced with tremendous population pressure that further jeopardizes the economic viability of thousands of farming and ranching enterprises.

As you know, California committed to reducing its carbon emissions and addressing global warming in a comprehensive manner with the enactment of AB 32 and SB 375. Please recognize that the Williamson Act is the ultimate compliment to these measures. The Act strives to protect farmland and open space, land that in itself reduces greenhouse gas emissions through the carbon sequestration process.

The preservation of agriculture and open space is not just a critical local priority; it is, and must remain, a State priority. We urge you to work with your colleagues in the Legislature and with the Governor to achieve the eventual restoration of the Williamson Act subventions so that the critical goals of the California Land Conservation Act may be maintained.

Sincerely,



Simón Salinas, Chair
Monterey County Board of Supervisors

cc: Assembly Member Anna Caballero
Assembly Member Bill Monning
Senator Abel Maldonado
Senator Jeff Denham
Monterey County Board of Supervisors
Lew C. Bauman, CAO, Monterey County
Charles McKee, County Counsel, Monterey County
Mike Novo, Director of Planning, Monterey County
Rosie Pando, Assistant CAO, Monterey County
Eric Lauritzen, Agricultural Commissioner, Monterey County
Lou Solton, Treasurer-Tax Collector, Monterey County
Steve Vagnini, Assessor, Monterey County
Nicholas E. Chiulos, Intergovernmental & Legislative Affairs Director, Monterey County
John Arriaga, JEA & Associates
Brent Heberlee, Nossaman LLP
Karen Keene, California State Association of Counties



March 1, 2010

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Greenhouse Gas Benefits of Williamson Act Subventions

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments, I strongly encourage you to restore subventions for the California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act in your May Budget Revise—to not fund them threatens AB 32 and SB 375 implementation. For \$30 million annually, 16.5 million acres of farmland statewide (740,000 acres in our six-county region) are protected from urban sprawl. As you know, transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in our state, and extending our urban footprint onto agricultural lands will cause increases in vehicle miles traveled. In many respects, funding the Williamson Act is really a proxy for funding AB 32 and SB 375 implementation.

SACOG has analyzed how urban growth and related vehicle movement and carbon emissions would change if Williamson Act lands were converted to urban uses. The results show significant negative impacts on our region's Blueprint plan to slow urban sprawl and reduce emissions. As much as 22 percent of the population that would have otherwise locate in Blueprint growth areas could end up in low-density rural development. One day's worth of carbon emissions from vehicle miles alone from new households would roughly equal one year's worth of carbon emissions from agricultural vehicles.

We looked at the *daily* impacts of development at 1 and 5 housing units per acre. According to our analysis of just the six-county region alone:

- if 20,000 acres of Williamson Act land were developed at 1 unit per acre, daily vehicle emissions for those households would increase by 508 tons of carbon, and at 5 units per acre, vehicle emissions would increase by 2,543 tons; and
- if 60,000 acres of Williamson Act land were developed—less than 10 percent of the lands currently protected in the SACOG region—*daily* carbon emissions from resulting households would range from 1,526 to 7,631 tons.

How does this compare to current emissions from agricultural uses? These lands are currently in agriculture—about half of which is pasture—where vehicle and equipment use occurs in terms of hours per year rather than miles per day. Using University of California Cooperative Extension data, we estimate that agricultural vehicles emit 455 tons of carbon *per year* on 20,000 acres, and 1,365 tons *per year* on 60,000 acres. Even if vehicle activity on pasture acreage was at the average level for agriculture, the emissions would range from 2,300 to 6,901 tons *per year*—still around the *daily* average for urban uses. While we did not include farm-to-market truck activity, we still content that carbon emissions from agriculture vehicles are considerably lower.

In addition to the greenhouse gas benefits, subventions protect agricultural lands, support agriculturally based economies, and provide environmental services such as flood control, carbon sequestration, and habitat conservation. Without subventions and a healthy agriculture industry, many counties may look to develop these lands to address budget shortfalls that affect emergency, health, and other services.

Auburn
Citrus Heights
Colfax
Davis
El Dorado County
Elk Grove
Folsom
Galt
Isleton
Lincoln
Live Oak
Loomis
Marysville
Placer County
Placerville
Rancho Cordova
Rocklin
Roseville
Sacramento
Sacramento County
Sutter County
West Sacramento
Wheatland
Winters
Woodland
Yolo County
Yuba City
Yuba County



March 2, 2010

Senator Dave Cox, Chair
Senate Local Government Committee
State Capitol, Room 5046
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: (916) 322-0298

Re: The Williamson Act: A Legislative Oversight Hearing

Dear Senator Cox and Members of the Local Government Committee,

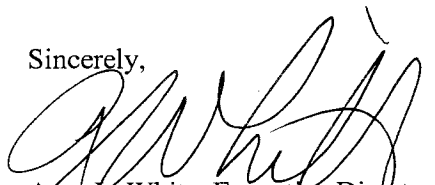
On February 1st of this year LandWatch Monterey County sent a joint letter with Supervisor Louis Calcagno, the Ag Land Trust, Monterey County Cattleman's Association, Monterey County Farm Bureau, and the Ventana Wildlife Society to Governor Schwarzenegger urging him not to suspend funds for Williamson Act subventions to cities and counties in the 2010-11 State Budget. Our groups share a strong commitment to the protection of California's Agriculture industry and the preservation of its open space. A copy of that letter is attached.

Monterey County currently has 541 active Williamson Act contracts totaling nearly 3,200 parcels and more than 750,000 acres. The Monterey County annual crop report in 2008 reflects a production value of over \$3.8 billion for that year. Agriculture is unarguably the largest and most important industry in Monterey County and in the entire state. Agriculture and its sister industries are key to the State's economic recovery. LandWatch feels policy that comes forth from Sacramento ought to foster enterprise in agriculture and not threaten the industry's viability. The suspension of Williamson Act subvention funding is one such threat.

LandWatch encourages this committee to push for continued funding of Williamson Act subventions to cities and counties. In Monterey County the state's annual subvention is approximately \$1 million dollars. This amount protects 750,000 acres throughout Monterey County from development and encourages continued agriculture uses because of the tax incentive it provides the land owner.

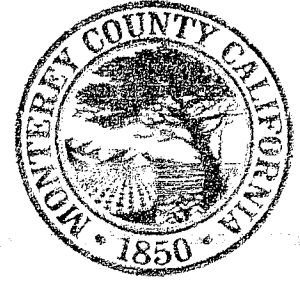
LandWatch Monterey County hopes that Sacramento makes the preservation of agriculture and open space a top priority in the budget and in all matter of public policy.

Sincerely,



Amy E. White, Executive Director
LandWatch Monterey County

MONTEREY COUNTY



THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

LOUIS R. CALCAGNO, SUPERVISOR - SECOND DISTRICT

February 1, 2010

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor, State of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

We, the undersigned, have joined together because of our shared commitments to the protection of California's agriculture industry and the preservation of its open space in the rural areas of our state. We are writing to you to express our strong opposition to suspension of the funds for *Williamson Act* subventions to cities and counties in the 2010-11 State Budget.

Agriculture is arguably California's most important industry and key to the State's economic recovery. Therefore, we feel strongly that the body of regulation and policy that comes forth from Sacramento ought to work together to foster enterprise in agriculture, not threaten the industry's long-term viability. The suspension of *Williamson Act* subvention funding in the budget is one such threat.

There is no doubt that the State, the country, and even the world all benefit from California's production of fruits, fresh vegetables, livestock and other agricultural products. The benefits of a thriving agricultural industry include greater economic activity, which translates into more jobs and prosperity, healthier food choices, and lower emission of greenhouse gases into the environment.

Conservation of the lands that yield agricultural production is critical to the continuity of providing these benefits to the public. It is imperative that Sacramento recognizes the importance to its residents of the long-term viability of our agriculture industry by making the preservation of farmland and open space one of its top legislative priorities with immunity from short-term budgetary reductions. Agriculture should be treated as the most sacred of cows in the sense that it is the cow whose milk is feeding our nation.

The cities and counties that play host to farmlands and our open space depend on the financial support provided by the *Williamson Act* subventions to supplement their discretionary funds and offset reduced property tax collections, which occur as a result of lower property assessments for *Williamson Act* contracts. Since the passage of *Proposition 13*, it has become extremely difficult for cities and counties to raise local tax revenues themselves. Property taxes remain the primary source of local discretionary spending by cities and counties.

The subvention component to the *Williamson Act* serves to spread the cost of conserving farmland and open space more evenly across the State so that all taxpayers pay their fair share. The unintended consequence of suspending the subvention component is that the cities and counties that continue to honor existing and enter into new *Williamson Act* contracts will unfairly bear the full burden of paying for our State's most effective method of conserving our most important farmlands and open space. These cities and counties, which recognize the importance of agriculture's impact on the growth of the economy, the health of the nation, and the stability of our climate, shall undoubtedly suffer with more cuts to crucial services such as law enforcement, emergency medical care, fire protection, etc...

As stated above, it is time for the Legislature to make the preservation of agriculture and open space a top priority in the budget, in acts of regulation, and in all matters of public policy. We stand together to urge you, our governor, to restore full funding for *Williamson Act* subventions in 2010.

Respectfully,



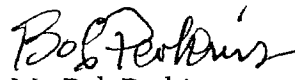
Louis R. Calcagno, Chair
County of Monterey, Board of Supervisors



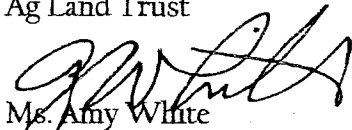
Aaron Johnson, Esq.
Monterey County Cattlemen's Association



Ms. Virginia Jameson
Ag Land Trust



Mr. Bob Perkins
Monterey County Farm Bureau



Ms. Amy White
LandWatch of Monterey County



Mr. Kelly Sorenson
Ventana Wildlife Society

cc: The Honorable Abel Maldonado, California State Senate, 15th District
The Honorable Jeff Denhan, California State Senate, 12th District
The Honorable Ana Caballero, California State Assembly, 28th District
The Honorable Bill Monning, California State Assembly, 27th District
Monterey County Board of Supervisors

LRC:hg

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SIERRA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Resolution No. 2010-039

IN THE MATTER OF THE
LAND CONSERVATION ACT OF 1965
AND THE
FARMLAND SECURITY ZONE ACT

WHEREAS, the Land Conservation Act and the Farmland Security Zone Act, including the resulting subvention payments to local governments are a mainstay of Sierra County's agricultural economy and County land use planning policies; and,

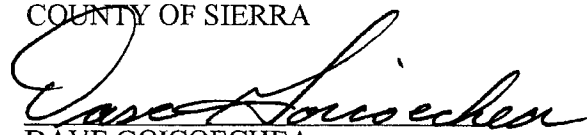
WHEREAS, the Senate Local Government Committee, on Wednesday, March 3, 2010, is conducting a hearing on the effectiveness of these programs and making recommendations for their future use and implementation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Sierra County Board of Supervisors resolves and declares that the continuation of the Land Conservation Act and the Farmland Security Zone Act, including the Open Space Subvention Program, is strongly supported by this Board of Supervisors and the Senate Local Government Committee is urged to reaffirm the significant value of these programs to the preservation of agricultural land and open space in California; to the continued emphasis on premature conversion of agricultural lands to other uses; and to the continued effectiveness of local land use plans which rely upon their continued implementation of these important state programs.

ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sierra on the 2nd day of March, 2010 by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisors Adams, Huebner, Nunes & Goicoechea
NOES: None
ABSENT: Supervisor Whitley
ABSTAIN: None

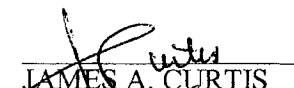
COUNTY OF SIERRA


DAVE GOICOECHEA
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ATTEST:


HEATHER FOSTER
CLERK OF THE BOARD

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


JAMES A. CURTIS
COUNTY COUNSEL

1460-S

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