



California
**Department of
Conservation**
Division of Land Resource
Protection

Multibenefit Land Repurposing

Public Comment Workshop
December 13, 2022

Shanna Atherton
Melinda Kelley

Land Acknowledgement

<https://native-land.ca>



Agenda



- Welcome
- Program Overview
- Changes for Round 2
- Next Steps and Timeline
- Public Comment

Program Overview

- Increase regional capacity to repurpose agricultural land to reduce reliance on groundwater while providing community health, economic wellbeing, water supply, habitat, renewable energy, and climate benefits

Program Goals



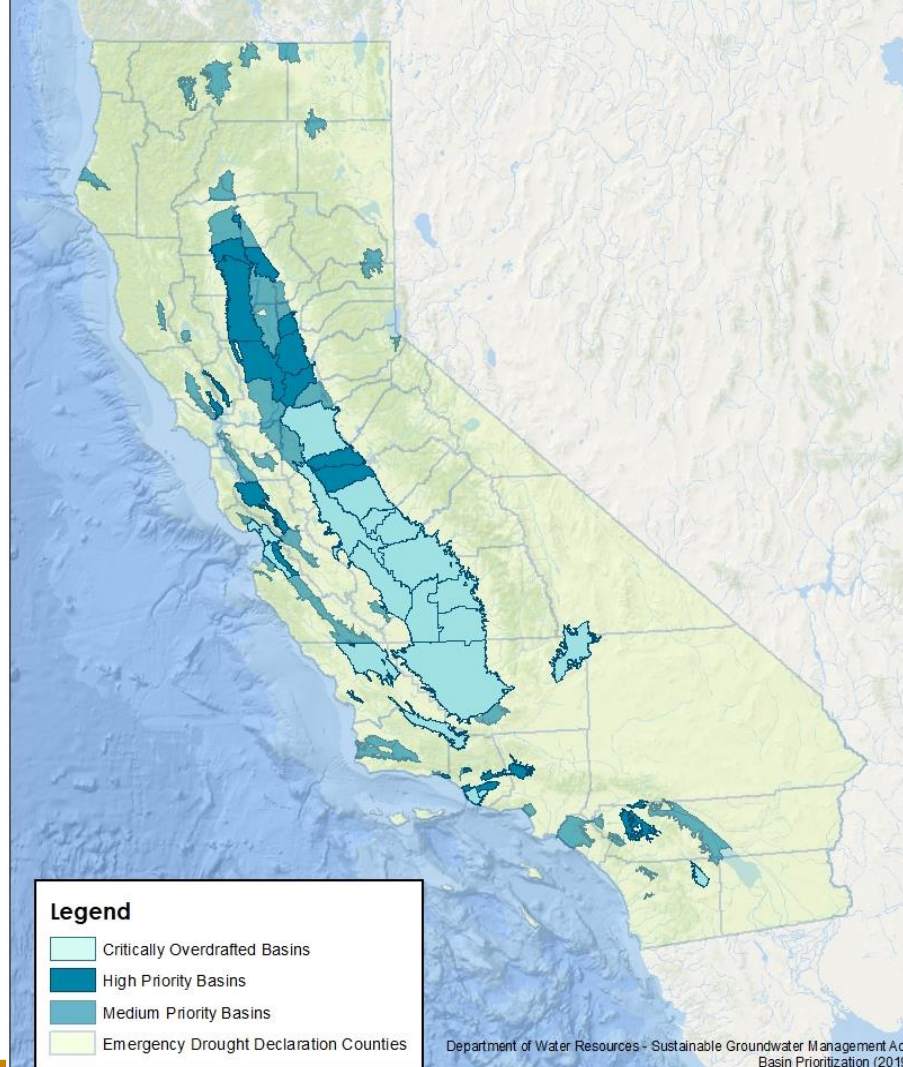
- Support:
 - Coordinated regional efforts to achieve groundwater sustainability by repurposing irrigated agricultural lands
 - Regional efforts to sustain land-based economies
 - Farmer, rancher, and farmworker leadership in land repurposing strategies
- Reduce groundwater use
- Create/restore habitat
- Provide benefits to disadvantaged communities and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers
- Foster partnerships and collaboration

Statute – AB 170 Sec. 44

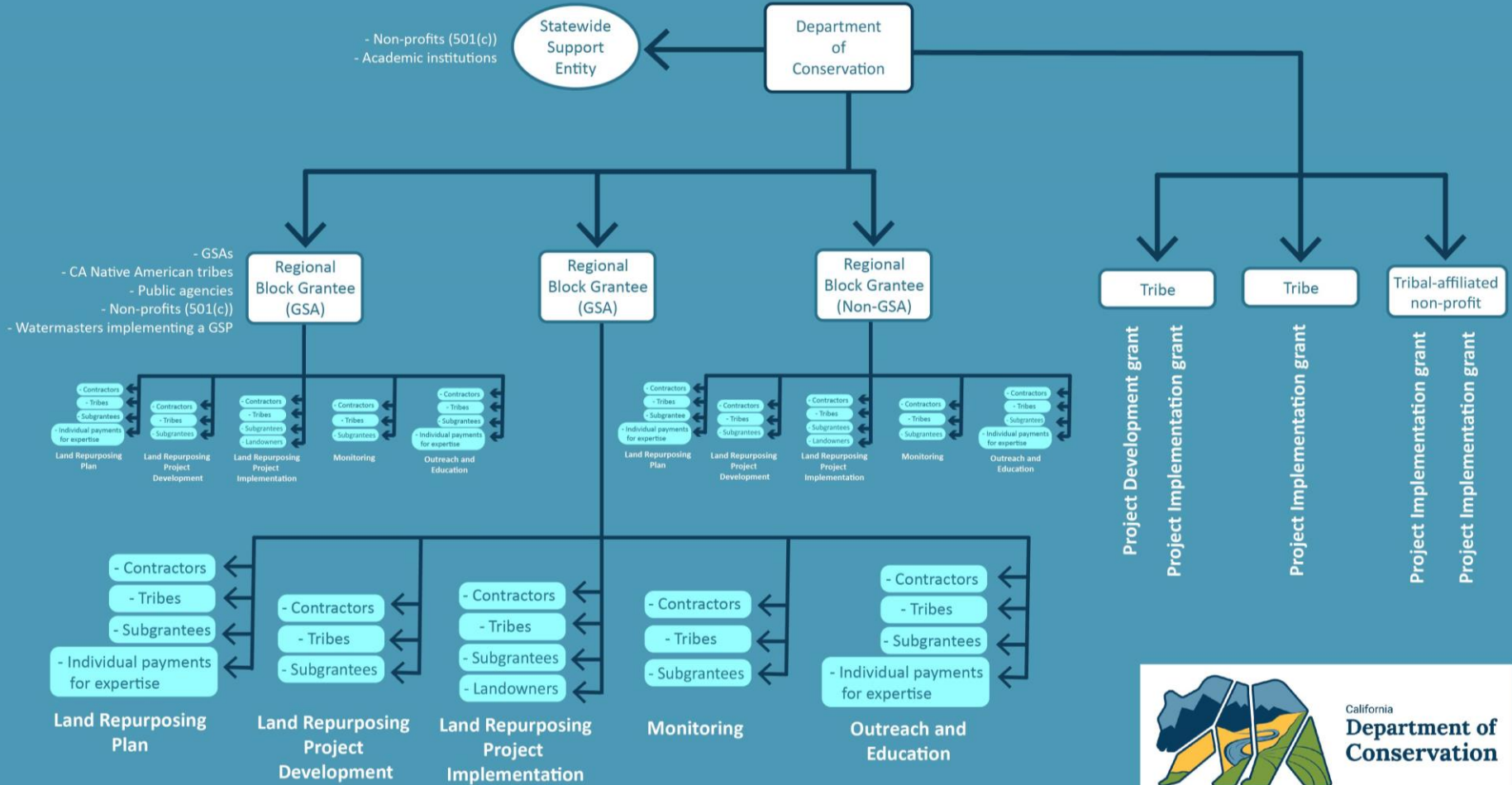


- Consult with: DWR, CDFW, SWRCB, CDFA
- Implement MLRP for groundwater sustainability projects that reduce groundwater use, repurpose irrigated agricultural land, and provide wildlife habitat
- Eligible expenditures include (but are not limited to) projects that:
 - Create/restore permanent wildlife habitat
 - Create/restore seasonal wetland habitat that provides aquifer replenishment
 - Improve groundwater supply
 - Convert land to less intensive water uses while maintaining natural and working lands
- Any groundwater recharge achieved must be subtracted from amount available for extraction for the duration of the benefit provided
- Disadvantaged Community benefits shall be prioritized
- Eligible geographic areas:
 - Critically overdrafted basins
 - High or medium priority basins subject to a state emergency drought declaration

Eligible Areas



Funding Distribution



Regional Block Grants

General



- Number of grants: 4
- Amount: ~\$9 million each
- Grant term: ~4 years
- Region size: flexible

Eligible Block Grant Applicants

- Groundwater sustainability agencies
- Federally recognized California Native American tribes
- Non-federally recognized California Native American tribes on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission
- Public agencies
- Nonprofit groups with 501(c) status
- Watermasters implementing an approved groundwater sustainability plan or approved alternate

Eligible applicants that are not groundwater sustainability agencies or tribes must partner with at least one groundwater sustainability agency to submit an application.

Partnering and Collaboration

- Required to apply for funding through the program
- Required as a component of various deliverables
- Partners provide funds or in-kind services as match to grant
 - Letters of commitment required as proof of partnerships in application
- Level of coordination with partners and collaboration with other organizations will be considered during application selection

Deliverables



- Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plan
- Land repurposing project development and permitting
- Land repurposing project implementation
- Funding provided to support capacity needs of partners
- Outreach, education, and training conducted
- Monitoring conducted

Work toward deliverables may be conducted simultaneously or sequentially, as needed for the successful implementation of the grant

Projects

Example project types:

- Creation or restoration of habitat
- Creation of multibenefit recharge areas
- Transitioning irrigated land to dryland farming or rangeland
- Transitioning to less water intensive crops
- Planting cover crops or conservation cover
- Reestablishment of tribal land uses
- Implementation of tribal cultural practices
- Facilitation of renewable energy projects
- Creation of parks or community recreation areas
- Incentive payments to landowners, farmers, and ranchers to implement multibenefit projects
- Land acquisitions, voluntary land transfers, and easement acquisitions

Projects

Land repurposing projects must:

- Be consistent with the Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the area
- Either be identified through the Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plan **OR** be pre-identified, shovel-ready projects that meet program requirements and maximize project outcomes outlined in the Guidelines

Block grant recipients must prioritize projects that:

- Meaningfully benefit disadvantaged communities
- Are conducted on lands that are least viable for irrigated agriculture
- Contribute to resource connectivity (e.g., connectivity of habitat, agricultural landscapes, renewable energy centers, etc.)

Applications

Review Process

- DOC staff to verify eligibility
- Review panel will:
 - conduct applicant interviews
 - score projects and develop funding recommendations
- Department Director to make final funding decisions

Project ranking based on:

- Applicant's vision for land repurposing in their region and how it aligns with program goals
- Experience conducting effective, inclusive outreach and engagement across diverse communities, including farmers and ranchers, disadvantaged communities, and tribes
- Existing regional partnerships and capacity to expand partnerships
- Experience conducting regional planning/project implementation
- Fiscal and administrative controls to oversee expenditure of block grant awards
- Policy and project expertise relevant to program goals

Statewide Support Entity

Statewide Support Entity

- Work includes:
 - supporting regional block grantees
 - engaging disadvantaged communities, tribes, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in land repurposing efforts
 - increasing regional capacity to conduct land repurposing work

Grants to Tribes

Grants to Tribes - Overview

- Eligible Entities
 - Federally recognized California Native American tribes
 - Non-federally recognized California Native American tribes on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission
 - Nonprofit groups with 501(c) status and with connections to or applying on behalf of eligible tribes
- Maximum Award: None
- Solicitation Period: Rolling, non-competitive
- Funding to plan for, develop, or implement multibenefit agricultural land repurposing projects

CHANGES

Round 2 Updates

- Update funding information and dates
- Update language around partnerships and collaboration to clarify what we're looking for at the application stage and what we consider eligible costs
- Clarify allowances for work outside of critically overdrafted/high/medium priority basins on a limited basis consistent with statute
- Clarify the application review process

Proposed Program Development and Implementation Timeline



- **Public Comment Workshop:** December 13, 2022
- **Public comment ends:** December 30, 2022
- **Guidelines released:** January 16, 2023
- **Applications due:** March 15, 2023
- **Awards:** May 15, 2023

PUBLIC COMMENT



THANK YOU

mlrp@conservation.ca.gov