

# SALCP Strategy Grant Recommendations

FY 2014-15

<b>Funding Recommendations (proposal summaries following)</b>		
<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>
Butte County	Butte County Agricultural Land Conservation Strategy	\$100,000
Mendocino County	Mendocino County Agricultural Land Conservation Planning Program	\$ 93,400
County of Mono	Mono County Sustainable Agricultural Land Strategy	\$ 100,000
Santa Clara County	A Sustainable Agricultural Lands Policy Framework – Southern Santa Clara Valley	\$ 100,000
County of Santa Cruz	Rotational Cover Crop Plan for Pajaro Valley	\$ 99,095
<b>Total Recommended</b>		<b>\$ 492,495</b>
Not Recommended for FY 2014-15:		
Solano County	Land Evaluation and Site Assessment System Development for Solano County	\$ 93,440
Placer County	Placer County Agricultural Land Conservation Strategy	\$ 57,625
City of Riverside	Grow Riverside Assessment & Strategic Plan	\$ 100,000
Contra Costa County	Cultivating Contra Costa County’s Agricultural Future: Assessment of Present Land Use, Conservation Tools, and Infrastructure to Foster Environmental and Economic Viability	\$ 99,965
City of Davis	City of Davis Sustainable Agricultural Land Strategy	\$ 30,000

**Applicant: Butte County**

**Proposal Name: Butte County Agricultural Land Conservation Strategy Plan**

**Amount Requested: \$100,000**

Purpose and GHG Reduction Benefits

The purpose of this planning effort is to identify the County's most productive and critically important agricultural land, develop a model program and adopt the necessary policies to ensure that these lands are not prematurely or unnecessarily converted to more intensive non-agricultural uses. GHG benefits will be realized by avoiding the conversion of prime agricultural lands to more intensive non-agricultural uses, and implementing a model sustainable farm program that results in the implementation of best management practices that will reduce industry wide GHG emissions, and capitalize on agriculture's potential to sequester carbon.

Summary

Butte County's Sustainable Agricultural Land Strategy will build on the existing work completed by the County's Climate Action Plan (CAP), comprehensive General Plan update, Zoning Ordinance, and Draft Agricultural Mitigation Ordinance (which is currently under review). In addition, under this proposal, Butte County will develop best practices for model sustainable farms. The proposal will seek input from local experts who will help develop a framework of best practices that sustain agricultural resources and reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions. A Priority Base Map will be developed that will help identify those agricultural lands at greatest risk of conversion. This base map will be used as a tool to help frame Butte County's overall sustainable agricultural land strategy. This includes lands that are under pressure of being converted to nonagricultural uses, particularly those adjacent to areas at risk of urban or suburban sprawl, those that exhibit special environmental significance, or those that may result in enhanced carbon sequestration depending on the cropping and management of the protected lands.

A Stakeholder Group will be assembled to study issues, identify areas needing improvement, review Model Farm Practices, and review and make recommendations for the Draft Sustainable Agricultural Land Strategy. The stakeholder Group will be made up of representatives from the Butte County Farm Bureau, Butte County Cattlemen/Women, Farm Advisors Office, City and County Planning Staff, Butte County Association of Governments, USDA/Farm Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Local Agency Formation Commission, local Land Trusts, Butte County Resource Conservation District, agricultural water providers and irrigation districts, conservation and environmental interests, and developer interests. A representative from the County's Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) Committee will also be included.

Two workshops are proposed, one with the Butte County Planning Commission and one with the Butte County Board of Supervisors. After recommendations from these workshops are incorporated into the final strategy, the Board of Supervisors will consider the adoption of a Resolution approving and supporting the Butte County Agricultural Land Strategy.

**Applicant: Mendocino County**

**Proposal Name: Mendocino County Agricultural Land Conservation Planning Program**

**Amount Requested: \$93,400**

Purpose and GHG Reduction Benefits

The purpose of this planning effort is to provide more specific protection for agricultural lands within the county, and develop a Carbon Farm Planning Program. GHG benefits will result by avoiding the conversion of the limited remaining agricultural land to more intensive non-agricultural uses and implementing carbon farm plans - an approach that will reduce GHG emissions and promote long term carbon sequestration.

Summary

The County of Mendocino contains only 55,423 acres of productive farmland, 54% of which is identified as Prime, Unique, or soils of Statewide Importance (FMMP 2010). The majority of this "Important Farmland" is located in southern Mendocino County in areas anticipated to experience significant population growth and urbanization over the next two decades. As of 2014, only 43% of productive farmland in the Ukiah Valley was protected through Williamson Act contracts or agricultural conservation easements.

Primary goals of the proposed project are to assist the County in increasing Williamson Act contract enrollments on "Important Farmland", increase the capacity of local land trusts to expand agricultural conservation easement programs, prioritize conservation easement acquisitions, and educate the agricultural community about the need for and benefits of agricultural land conservation programs. The proposed project will also significantly increase technical assistance to the agricultural community to foster widespread adoption of climate beneficial management practices to better protect the values and productivity of agricultural lands and mitigate GHG emissions.

Mendocino County officials participating on the core planning team include the Agricultural Commissioner, the Director of Planning and Building Services, and a County Supervisor. Agencies and organizations participating on the team include representatives from the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of California Cooperative Extension, and the Mendocino County Food Policy Council. Other important community partners actively participating in planning efforts include the Mendocino County Farm Bureau, Inland Mendocino Land Trust, Anderson Valley Land Trust, and the Mendocino Land Trust.

**Applicant: County of Santa Cruz**

**Proposal Name: Santa Cruz Rotational Cover Crop Plan for Pajaro Valley**

**Amount Requested: \$99,095**

Purpose and GHG Reduction Benefits

This main goal of this planning project is to prevent the premature and unnecessary conversion of agricultural land to more intensive non-agricultural uses. The primary benefit will be avoided increases in GHG emissions associated with conversion to these non-agricultural uses. Other GHG benefits will result from the implementation of management practices (land fallowing, reduced tillage, cover crops, etc.) that reduce energy needs related to water pumping, increase soil organic matter and soil carbon sequestration potential.

Summary

The Pajaro Valley supports an over \$800 million agricultural industry. The Valley has been affected by groundwater overdraft conditions and resulting seawater intrusion that threaten agricultural sustainability in the area, making agricultural lands more susceptible to future urban or suburban development. Local stakeholders have identified the need to explore rotational fallowing with cover cropping as a strategy for conserving water and building soil health. This would sustain agricultural lands, particularly in the face of climate change. Stakeholders also identified the need to develop appropriate incentives to make the practice a feasible option for growers.

The goal of the project is to develop a community-based *Rotational Cover Crop Plan for Pajaro Valley* to improve the long term viability of local agriculture. The cover crop strategy will establish a target number of acres of agricultural land within the Pajaro Valley to be voluntarily set aside each year by willing landowners and put into reduced tillage and/or cover crop on a cyclic basis. This strategy will keep the most productive lands in production, and will prioritize the lesser productive lands into voluntary rotational fallowing. Improving the soil health of these lands through the program will help ensure the continued viability of agriculture in the Pajaro Valley.

The Pajaro Valley Community Water Dialogue (CWD) is a forum that began in 2010 to address pressing concerns of water supply. Working through the CWD this project will engage growers and landowners; local governments and agencies including the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency; resource agencies including the NRCS and two RCDs; agricultural industry groups; technical advisors at the UC Cooperative Extension; the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County; and NGOs including Sustainable Conservation and the Central Coast Ag Water Quality Coalition. The project will serve the disadvantaged communities of Watsonville and Pajaro, many of whom work in the agriculture industry, and all of whom depend on the basin for their drinking water supply.

**Applicant: Santa Clara County**

**Proposal Name: Santa Clara County Sustainable Agricultural Lands Policy Framework**

**Amount Requested: \$100,000**

Purpose and GHG Reduction Benefits

The purpose of this proposal is to protect the remaining agricultural lands in south Santa Clara County. GHG benefits will be achieved by preventing the conversion of these lands to urban and suburban use.

Summary

Santa Clara County (County) was once known as the Valley of Heart's Delight, famous for its orchards and at one point the largest fruit production and packing region in the world. Today, Santa Clara County is home to Silicon Valley and is the fastest growing County in California, with a projected population growth of 35% in the next 20 years. Despite decades of urbanization associated with the growth of Silicon Valley, southern Santa Clara County is trying to hold on to that identity as an agricultural and orchard hub and its \$263 million in total commodity value. Numerous plans, programs, initiatives and policies have been launched by government and non-profit organizations in the County to address climate change and agricultural land protection, however, there has been little to no effort to proactively link agricultural preservation, thoughtful land use planning and climate adaptation planning into a singular "Action Plan."

In tandem with its partners, the County is proposing to prepare a *Sustainable Agricultural Lands Policy Framework* that will provide a comprehensive preservation plan to protect the farmlands most at risk in southern Santa Clara County. In partnership with the cities of Morgan Hill, Gilroy, San Jose, the Open Space Authority, and the agriculture sector, the project will comprehensively map the farmlands most at risk and create an integrated policy framework for their preservation. The Framework will protect the 21,000 acres of remaining farmland in South County, approximately half of which is considered at immediate risk of conversion to urban or suburban use.

While the Framework does not directly affect Disadvantaged Communities, it will benefit these communities throughout the County by ensuring regional food security and access to fresh food. Acknowledging the partnership approach for the proposed Framework, the Grant application includes resolutions of support for the proposal from the cities of Gilroy, Morgan Hill, and the Open Space Authority.

**Applicant: County of Mono**

**Proposal Name: Mono County Sustainable Agricultural Land Strategy**

**Amount Requested: \$100,000**

Purpose and GHG Reduction Benefits

The purpose of this planning effort is to protect critical agricultural lands from conversion to non-agricultural uses, keep agricultural land contiguous and intact, and promote compact growth patterns within existing communities. GHG benefits will be realized by avoiding the conversion of rural agricultural lands to more intensive non-agricultural uses.

Summary

As a rural county with low population densities and only 6% of the land base in private ownership, Mono County has a unique agricultural story. Agriculture is the County's second economic industry and is key not only to the stability of the County's communities, but also its rural character and quality of life. Most people move to Mono County for the magnificent views and inherent wildness of the land, which has been preserved by open space, open ranges, and family-owned agricultural lands handed down through generations. These ranches rely heavily on the 94% of land owned by public agencies, as few agricultural producers in the County can survive on the limited private land base. Management issues cross these jurisdictional boundaries. There is development pressure as the economy recovers, along with natural resource management concerns -- water conservation, wetlands protection, riparian habitat conservation, and sensitive species issues. These issues indicate the need for comprehensive land use, agricultural land and rangeland management across Mono County.

The purpose of this project is to complete an agricultural lands inventory across jurisdictional boundaries, prioritize the most highly productive and critically threatened lands, coordinate management across jurisdictions, and develop mitigation strategies to balance grazing operations with conservation and improvement of natural resources such as wildlife habitat. The project will protect lands most at risk by identifying specific mitigations, tools and strategies based on inventory data, followed by interagency coordination to seek mutual benefits between agricultural operations and resource conservation. By defining win-win solutions, Mono County can collaboratively preserve its unique agricultural industry into the future.

Key partners involved in the project will include local ranchers and agricultural operators, the Eastern Sierra Land Trust, and Inyo Mono Agricultural Commissioner's Office, as well as public land and resource management agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service (Inyo and Humboldt-Toiyabe), California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.