

Work Plan Proposal

Developed by staff for Task Force members' consideration at the August 14 & 15, 2024 meeting.

Guiding Principles and Approaches for Recommendations

Task Force members have communicated that the following approaches should be kept in mind while developing recommendations:

- Design recommendations for the Governor and Legislature that are actionable and that balance bigger goals with feasible outcomes;
- Ensure that the Task Force's work reflects and is anchored in the communities that Task Force members intend to serve;
- Approach agricultural land access as part of a broader suite of concerns and goals about well-being and equity;
- Be mindful of the wide range of experiences with land access and tenure that make it difficult to generalize across groups or find a singular solution;
- With the above in mind, consider solutions across diverse contexts, including urban and rural, public and private, and California Native American tribal lands;
- Be mindful of the violent history of stolen land in California and work to address the continued barriers faced by California Native American tribes in practicing sovereignty and cultivating healthy communities on ancestral lands;
- Work to "close the loop" so that the Task Force's recommendations reach those involved in the process.

Emerging Priorities and Preliminary Recommendations

The section below offers a consolidated list of priority topics, subtopics, and potential recommendations that Task Force members have elevated during previous conversations. The purpose of this section is to structure and organize those priorities. If Task Force members find this organization useful, Staff will continue updating this list and using it to guide the final report of recommendations.

Three Dimensions of Land Equity

The following list of priorities and potential recommendations is organized around three dimensions of land equity:

1. **Land access and acquisition:** How an individual, entity or organization gains access to land in the first place. "Access" is interpreted broadly to entail a range of relationships with land.
2. **Land use governance and sovereignty:** What is allowable and possible once an individual, entity or organization has access.

3. **Secure land tenure:** How an individual, entity or organization maintains relationships with land once they have access, and what is required to do so.

The headers in the tables are defined in the following ways:

1. **Topics:** High-level themes that impact agricultural land access and that could be addressed through a variety of strategies and approaches.
2. **Subtopics:** Specific challenges, ideas, and details that should be considered when thinking about the main topic.
3. **Potential recommendations:** Concrete directives or requests intended to produce more equitable access to agricultural land in California. Note that not all identified topics and subtopics will have an associated recommendation in the final report.

1. Land access and acquisition

Guiding principles

- Acknowledge California Native American tribal sovereignty
- Prioritize access and acquisition for land stewards, especially those who have been excluded
- Understand and account for immigrant experiences and needs, especially those of undocumented farmers and farmworkers

Topics, subtopics, and potential recommendations

Topic	Subtopics	Potential recommendations
Land back, repatriation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All land is stolen CA Native American land • Challenging to enforce respect for ancestral lands, sacred sites, human remains, and cultural artifacts, especially on private land • Facilitating fee-to-trust acquisitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase public awareness of and support for California Native American tribal nations
Land markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land consolidation (big landowners getting bigger) and financialization (institutional investing) make agricultural land prohibitively expensive for land stewards • Well-resourced, connected entities have early access to land sales • Consolidated land ownership can lead to consolidated water access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot size adjustments • Prioritize alternative land arrangement possibilities, e.g., cooperatives, public land • Rights of first offer or first refusal • Platform to connect land seekers with landholders • Platform to notify of land availability

Topic	Subtopics	Potential recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban development pressure on farmland • Racism in land sales and leasing 	
Access to and acquisition of public lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How might “public land for public good” movement apply to agricultural context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term ag leases on public lands • Different recommendations for public and private landholders
Access to finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant and loan programs exclude or disadvantage certain communities, e.g., eligibility requirements and loan financing • Incentives and disincentives impact equitable land access, e.g., tax incentives for owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New pathways for land acquisition, including subsidies for land purchases, land grants, forgivable loans • Mechanisms for timely response to acquisition opportunities • Capacity for community-based organizations (CBOs) to coordinate with other organizations/agencies and assist land seekers with the multi-step process of land acquisition • Public funding that directly supports land stewards
Land succession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers aging out, no clear pathway to ensure an equitable transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public resource that connects land sellers with land seekers

2. Land use governance and sovereignty

Guiding principles

- Prioritize sovereignty for BIPOC land stewards
- Respect California Native American tribal lands, sacred sites, and land management practices

Topics, subtopics, and potential recommendations

Topic	Subtopics	Potential recommendations
Land use planning and restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-use zoning can prohibit diverse agricultural land uses, including grazing, housing, and cultural land management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiuse zoning • Build respect for agriculture among neighbors, the wider public • Acknowledge and address ways that California Native American

Topic	Subtopics	Potential recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easements and covenants can restrict certain cultural and agricultural practices and uses Local land use planning and State legislation and regulations can be contradictory and present challenges for small scale, diversified agriculture 	tribes are prevented from practicing sovereignty on ancestral lands
State and federal legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disproportionate impacts of Sustainable Groundwater Management Act on small and tenant farmers Regulations fail to provide different considerations and approaches for small scale, diversified farmers and for urban, peri-urban, and rural lands Regulatory barriers prevent CA Native American Tribes' ability to practice sovereignty, including the right to engage in practices like cultural fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal framework that supports California Native American land management practices Advocate for the removal of policies that are barriers to practicing sovereignty Ensure that diverse production systems and small-scale farmers are considered when designing regulations
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding land with appropriate housing is a challenge for underserved farmers Stipulations on land use do not align with CA Native American practices of stewardship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure ag land easements allow for housing

3. Secure Land Tenure

Guiding principles

- Land equity requires secure relationships with land
- Support farmer and community wellbeing
- Support grassroots organizing and creating safe spaces
- Critical to increase capacities of all kinds—community, individual, ecological, organizational, and governmental

Topics, subtopics, and potential recommendations

Topic	Subtopics	Potential recommendations
Leasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term leases prevent investment in land and business, in turn, prevent tenant farmers from becoming landowners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair leasing terms and tenants' rights, including decision-making powers • Tenant farmer bill of rights
Infrastructure and land improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insecure access (e.g., short-term leasing) reduces ability to invest in improvements to the land 	
Technical assistance, education, and information-sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language barriers reduce access to public resources and technical assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and outreach to farmers that account for diverse languages, cultural norms, and accessibility needs • Improve capacity for community-based organizations (CBOs) to assist farmers with access to programs
Financial wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of insurance options and high costs • Different expenses for urban, peri-urban, and rural producers, e.g., with costs of housing and water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guaranteed basic income for land stewards • Forgivable loans • Public funds directly to land stewards
Access to technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal access has impacts on financial and physical wellbeing and land tenure 	

Proposed Meeting Topics and Timeline: August 2024 – December 2026

This section outlines a proposed roadmap and timeline for the Task Force to explore their priorities and to develop recommendations by January 1, 2026. The topics included are pulled from the framework outlined above.

<i>Work Phase Overview</i>	<i>Period</i>
Regional, quarterly Task Force meetings, and subcommittee meetings. Identify priority topics to address and begin drafting recommendations.	August 2024 – April 2025 Quarterly meetings: Aug '24, Nov '24, Feb '25
Drafting, reviewing, revising, and gathering feedback on draft recommendations	May 2025 – November 2025 Quarterly meetings: May '25, Aug '25, Oct '25(?), Nov '25
Approval and delivery of final report	December 2025
Outreach and information sharing	January – June 2026

In advance of each meeting outlined below, staff will seek Task Force member input on the following:

- **Materials**, including additional information and research required to better specific topics;
- **Site visits**, including people and projects the Task Force should visit and learn from to inform the final recommendations;
- **Speakers**, including guidance on perspectives and individuals who may provide additional insights on specific topic areas; and
- **Gaps**, including prioritization of existing topics and suggestions for additional topics not included in the proposed work plan.

<i>August 14 & 15, 2024</i>	
Location	Fresno
Topics of Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SGMA's impacts on agricultural land access and tenure • Connections between land and water markets, especially as related to corporate investment and land consolidation • Unique challenges and solutions for diverse farming communities
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing packet with the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Overview of SGMA and impacts on land access and tenure in the San Joaquin Valley b. List of reports and guides addressing land access and equity
Site Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two sites with UC Cooperative Extension Small Farms Advisors

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yo'Ville Community Garden and Farm • African American Farmers of CA • Wukchumni Farms
Guest Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visit hosts • Janaki Anagha • Ruth Dahlquist-Willard • Ngodoo Atume

<i>November 14, 2024</i>	
Location	Sonoma
Topics of Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of forms of land tenure and associated challenges, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Trust, fee, and simple fee land ○ Leasing • Models for equitable ag land access, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Easements and covenants ○ Cooperative land ownership ○ Land back • Real estate and equitable alternatives to land markets
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing packet with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overview of common land tenure forms ○ Reports and guides from existing efforts for more equitable land arrangements
Site Visits	
Guest Speakers	

<i>February 13, 2025</i>	
Location	Inland Empire
Topics of Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban development's impacts on equitable and secure access to agricultural land and the specific needs of urban and peri-urban agriculture • Role of State and local governments in promoting ag land preservation and equitable access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ag on public land
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing packet with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outline of urban and peri-urban needs ○ Models and examples of agriculture on public land
Site Visits	
Guest Speakers	

<i>May 15, 2025</i>	
Location	Northern California
Topics of Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing and discussing draft recommendations • Collecting and incorporating community feedback
Materials	First draft of recommendations
Site visits	
Guest speakers	

<i>August 14, 2025</i>	
Location	TBD
Topics of Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing and discussing draft recommendations • Collecting and incorporating community feedback
Materials	Second draft of recommendations

<i>October TBD</i>	
Location	TBD
Topics of Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing and discussing draft recommendations • Collecting and incorporating public feedback
Materials	Third draft of recommendations

<i>November 13, 2025</i>	
Location	TBD
Topics of Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final review and discussion of draft recommendations before approval in Dec.
Materials	Final draft of recommendations

<i>December TBD</i>	
Location	Sacramento
Topics of Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve final recommendations
Materials	Final report of recommendations

Meeting Formats

The schedule above pertains to quarterly Task Force meetings. In addition to these meetings, subcommittees will meet on an as-needed basis. Below is a description of different objectives and activities for Task Force and subcommittee meetings. All activities will be supported by SGC staff, the facilitator, and other contracted parties as needed, including the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

Task Force meetings

- Objective: Develop common understanding of key challenges and potential solutions through guest speakers and regional site visits, discuss and deliberate as a full Task Force, and make key group decisions that cannot be achieved in subcommittees or in one-on-one conversations with staff.
- Regular agenda items:
 - Site visit reports
 - Subcommittee reports
 - SGC staff report and overview of briefing materials
 - Invited speakers, as relevant
 - Work planning, including recommendation drafting and review
- Held in person and on Zoom
- Site visits in advance of the meeting and reports given during the meeting

Subcommittee meetings

- Objective: Closer examination of specific topics to provide insights and draft recommendations for the full Task Force
- Held virtually on an as-needed basis
- Briefing materials as requested
- Guest speakers and site visits as requested

Subcommittees

The Task Force established three subcommittees at the May 9, 2024 meeting in San Diego.

Subcommittee	Membership
Community Outreach	Burgueno, Franco, Hawkins, Zhou
Grants & Resource Landscape	Barraicua, Nakahara, Rittenhouse, Robinson, Schwartzman
Sustaining Natural & Cultural Resources	Burgueno, Franco, Harlan

Possible Subcommittees

The Task Force can vote to establish the subcommittees outlined below or other subcommittees at any time during meetings. The following are optional subcommittees that Task Force members may consider establishing at the August meeting. If a maximum of two Task Force members wish to collaborate on a specific topic, they may form a Working Group, which has a different set of meeting requirements than subcommittees and the Task Force.

Report Outline & Defining Terms Subcommittee

- Draft and advise on a definition of agricultural land equity and other key terms for discussion and approval by the Task Force and inclusion in the final report.

- Work closely with staff to advise on the report outline and the major components and content of the report introduction and narrative. This will require time in and outside of subcommittee meetings and all work will be reviewed and approved by full Task Force.

Succession Planning Subcommittee

- Explore pathways for prioritizing equity in succession planning and land transfers.
- Draft recommendations on how to support and facilitate equity-focused succession planning for review and discussion with full Task Force.

Valuing Agricultural Land Subcommittee

- Hear from real estate and financial specialists about current agricultural land values and trends.
- Explore mechanisms and models that make agricultural land more financially accessible for priority communities, e.g. through regulatory structures, tax incentives, and assessment practices.
- Draft recommendations for review and discussion with full Task Force.