

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
Planning Presentation Summary
FY 2022-23 Funding Recommended
SALC22_PG01_PLA

Applicant

Placer County

Project Location

Placer County

Project Title

Placer County Agricultural Resilience Initiative

Total Funding

\$550,000

Funding Request

\$500,000

Match Funding

\$50,000

Priority Populations Benefits

Yes

Project Description

The proposed project will develop an Agricultural Resilience Initiative to assess and address issues surrounding agricultural labor housing, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, agricultural land use planning and policies, and agricultural viability and feasibility in the face of housing development pressure. The Initiative will align with other Placer County planning efforts related to sustainability and conservation and will include an outreach plan to ensure stakeholder input from the public, non-profit, and private sectors with the goal of leveraging existing efforts and identifying emergent issue areas.

Land Use Conversion Threats

Agricultural land is at threat of being developed into urban and residential uses as population growth and development pressures increase. This is leading to the conversion of farmland into residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Other factors that contribute to agricultural land conversion include changes in land values, water availability and quality, and economic conditions affecting the agricultural industry.

Strategic Value or Special Features

The project was developed with a SALC-funded technical assistance provider. The proposal was developed through community-initiated, early involvement from stakeholders in the private, public, and non-profit sectors.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
Planning Presentation Summary
FY 2022-23 Funding Recommended
SALC22_PG02_TUL

Applicant

City of Tulare Community
Development Department

Project Location

Tulare County

Project Title

City of Tulare Planning
Grant

Total Funding

\$550,000

Funding Request

\$500,000

Match Funding

\$50,000

Priority Populations Benefits

Yes

Project Description

The City of Tulare proposes to fund the creation of a Strategic Plan focusing on the conservation of agricultural lands within the City's sphere of influence through the use of easements and mitigation banks to preserve greenbelts and other multi-benefit corridors. In collaboration with local land trusts, the County, irrigation districts and GSAs, LAFCO, and other agricultural, non-profit, and private agencies, the Strategic Plan will create congruent and complementary policies and implementation plans for multiple benefits regarding farmland conservation, open space and habitat conservation, groundwater recharge, greenhouse gas reduction and economic development.

Land Use Conversion Threats

The agricultural land surrounding the City of Tulare is at high risk of conversion to urban development due to increased housing pressures and limited water resources within the San Joaquin Valley.

Strategic Value or Special Features

The Strategic Plan will work in coordination with other SALC funded work conducted by the County of Tulare's Planning Department as well as the Tulare Basin's Multi-benefit Land Repurposing grant to best identify and prioritize agricultural land for conservation, strategic land fallowing, and groundwater recharge opportunities.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
Planning Presentation Summary
FY 2022-23 Funding Recommended
SALC22_PG03_SBT

Applicant

San Benito County,
Resource Management
Agency

Project Location

San Benito County

Project Title

San Benito County
Sustainable Agricultural and
Land Conservation Plan

Total Funding

\$550,000

Funding Request

\$500,000

Match Funding

\$50,000

Priority Populations Benefits

Yes

Project Description

The proposed project is to update San Benito County's 2035 General Plan with an Agricultural Element inclusive of policies that promote effective agricultural and working lands conservation throughout the County. The aim of this effort is to reduce the threat of conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses, as well as to identify environmental, public health, cultural, transportation, and other co-benefits that can be achieved through the conservation and sustainable management of the County's agricultural and natural lands.

Tasks include mapping and risk assessment analysis, review of existing General Plan Land Use designations and policies, community engagement and partnership development, economic assessment and analysis of agricultural and natural lands, climate change analysis, and an Agricultural Element for inclusion into the County's General Plan Update.

Land Use Conversion Threats

San Benito County's population growth rate between 2010- to 2020 was 17.8% based on census figures. According to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, nearly 17,000 acres of the County's farmland was converted to urban development between 1992 and 2016.

Strategic Value or Special Features

The project is in a low-income census tract and will engage underserved community members, including farmers, local ranchers, immigrant communities, and California Native American tribes in the Plan's development. Translation services and tools will be used to enhance communication between the SALC Team and participants. This effort will address needs and provide benefits to prioritized populations in San Benito County. The county will be working with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of San Juan Bautista and will be incorporating indigenous land stewardship and agricultural practices within its framework. The team will also include leadership from the farmworker community and its representatives in the planning process. San Benito Agricultural Land Trust and the San Benito Resource Conservation District will also be key partners in the project.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program

Planning Presentation Summary

FY 2022-23 Funding Recommended

SALC22_PG05_FRE

Applicant

Cold Springs Rancheria of Mono Indians of California

Project Location

Fresno County

Project Title

Cold Springs SALC Planning

Total Funding

\$500,000

Funding Request

\$500,000

Match Funding

\$0

Priority Populations Benefits

Yes

Project Description

The proposed project includes the development of a Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) Plan to: modify policies, practices, and programs to address community needs spanning health, wellness, housing, and food access and security; and identify agricultural lands for increased community gardening, grazing, plant-material gathering, and land stewardship actions that promote healthy trees, shrubs, and perennial forbs for the cultivation of traditional foods, herbal medicine, dyes, and fibers. The plan will also include the identification of potential land acquisitions, the identification of opportunities for restoring resilient forests and the inclusion of climate-smart management practices, and the inclusion of strategies aligning housing developments with rural and agricultural needs.

The plan will also include provisions for disseminating Tribal traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). Food sovereignty will be one of the focus areas of the plan. Through this process the Tribe will define its own healthy, culturally appropriate, ecologically sound and sustainable food systems drawing on interviews with elders and other Tribal experts.

Land Use Conversion Threats

Lands adjacent to the rancheria are at risk of conversion from agricultural land to urban sprawl. This is especially true on the western side of the Rancheria in Sycamore and Burrough valleys. Additionally, the Rancheria is a food desert with many community members and priority groups having limited or no transportation to the only local food centers located 30 minutes away.

Strategic Value or Special Features

The project team will work with three local neighboring tribes: Dunlap Rancheria of Mono Indians, Big Sandy Rancheria of Mono Indians, and North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians. Other local partner groups will include the Sierra Foothill Conservancy, Sierra Tribal Consortium, Sierra Resource Conservation District, UC Cooperative Extension Central Sierra, Sierra County Fire Safe Council, and Sierra-Sequoia Burn Collective, with state/federal support from Bureau of Indian Affairs, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and the US Forest Service.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
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FY 2022-23 Funding Recommended
SALC22_PG06_SOL

Applicant

Solano County Department of Agriculture

Project Location

Solano County

Project Title

Solano County Strategic Initiative for Agriculture

Total Funding

\$740,000

Funding Request

\$500,000

Match Funding

\$240,000

Priority Populations Benefits

Yes

Project Description

The proposed plan aims to protect at-risk agricultural lands in Solano County through the development of the Solano County Strategic Initiative for Agriculture, to be presented to the County's Board of Supervisors for adoption. The report will include a series of agricultural related plans and deliverables including an economic assessment and development plan, infrastructure gap analysis and development plan, land use planning assessment and action plan, expanded GIS crop and agricultural mapping data and GIS gap analysis, and a stakeholder engagement plan.

Land Use Conversion Threats

Between 1984 and 2018, Solano prime farmland was converted to other uses at a rate of over 600 acres per year, or a total of 20,488 acres, decreasing from 152,225 to 131,737 acres. Including farmland of statewide importance, unique farmland, and grazing land, these figures increase to an average annual conversion rate of 1,334 acres, or 45,355 acres in total, declining overall from 401,099 to 355,744 acres. During the past 40 years, Solano's population grew 90% from 235,000 to 444,000, pressuring local cities to expand into agricultural lands within their spheres of influence. By 2050, the County's population is projected to grow an additional 18% to 530,500.

Strategic Value or Special Features

The project includes an advisory committee that includes the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, beginning and Veteran farmers and ranchers, Solano County Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers, community-based organizations, and farmworker advocates. These committee members will participate and recommend actions that provide direct benefits to the communities these groups represent and other priority populations throughout the county.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
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FY 2022-23 Funding Recommended
SALC22_PG07_NEV

Applicant

Nevada County Resource Conservation District

Project Location

Nevada County

Project Title

Nevada County Agricultural Working Landscape Conservation Plan

Total Funding

\$500,000

Funding Request

\$500,000

Match Funding

\$0

Priority Populations Benefits

Yes

Project Description

The proposed project is focused on the creation of an Agricultural and Working Landscape Conservation Plan. This plan will provide the framework, collaboration, and policies necessary to conserve agricultural lands, while addressing the challenges of climate change and food security and supporting infill development in the urban areas of the county. The four components of the plan include: a) Agricultural Economic Development Strategy, b) Land Use Policy Strategy, c) Agricultural Climate Resiliency Strategy, d) Education and Awareness Strategy.

Land Use Conversion Threats

Nevada County has maintained a consistent agricultural land base, with the number of farms at approximately 365 for the last few years and acres of farmland and grazing land at approximately 7,760 acres and 133, 393 acres, respectively. However, many of the large landowners do not have a next of kin or easement to steward the land, which necessitates the need to sell their land for retirement. As the population ages, a majority of the county open space land and previous agricultural land is at threat of development.

Also of note is that while the number of farms has increased, the size of the individual farms has declined significantly in size to only 77 acres as of the 2017 agricultural census.

Strategic Value or Special Features

An MOU between the County and the Nevada County Resource Conservation District has been signed and the Board of Supervisors resolution has been executed. The NCRCD will lead the planning and facilitation process and will work closely with the Nevada County office of Economic Development, Ag Commissioner, Planning Department, and the CEO's office to develop the plan.

Working with Bear Yuba Land Trust and Sierra Harvest, the team will engage the Nisenan tribe, beginning and veteran farmers, and disadvantaged communities. As part of the planning effort, an advisory group will be established to assist with community engagement, technical reviews, and Plan development. This group will consist of local rancher/farmers, economic interests, environmental organizations, researchers, and technical advisors.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
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FY 2022-23 Funding Recommended
SALC22_PG09_SCAG

Applicant

Southern California
Association of Governments

Project Location

Los Angeles, Orange,
Riverside, San Bernadino,
Imperial, and Ventura
Counties

Project Title

Natural and Agricultural
Lands Economic and
Resilience Benefits Study

Total Funding

\$801,200.72

Funding Request

\$500,000

Match Funding

\$0

Priority Populations Benefits

Yes

Project Description

The proposed project will focus on the development of a Natural and Agricultural Lands Economic Benefit Study to provide an analysis of the economic, public health, co-benefit, and resilience benefits of key environmental services provided by natural and agricultural lands in Southern California. The study will also provide an analysis of current land conversion concerns and the quantity and quality of farmworker housing. This research is intended to inform regional and local planning efforts to preserve and enhance natural and agricultural lands and secure needed funding through the development of a user-friendly Conservation and Climate Resilience Toolkit, technical assistance, and training. The study and tools created through this proposal will be developed in partnership with stakeholders, including priority populations and tribal communities.

Land Use Conversion Threats

The SCAG region lost 21% of its farmland between 1984 and 2016. The counties of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Orange in particular experienced significant losses, as they lost 55%, 71%, and 78% of their farmland, respectively. The risk of natural and farmland conversion remains substantially high due to high pressure from the housing crisis, the market for warehouse development in the Inland Empire, solar production, and water restrictions during drought periods.

Strategic Value or Special Features

The project will include a series of one-on-one trainings with tribes and municipalities to identify opportunity areas for integrating the Toolkit and the project's technical findings in future project design, current project review, specific plans, general plans, municipal code updates (including zoning), and other planning efforts.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
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FY 2022-23 Funding Recommended
SALC22_PG10_VEN

Applicant

Ventura County

Project Location

Ventura County

Project Title

Developing local food system and ag education strategies to safeguard agriculture in Ventura County

Total Funding

\$550,000

Funding Request

\$500,000

Match Funding

\$50,000

Priority Populations Benefits

Yes

Project Description

The proposed project would develop the charter and framework for a regional Agricultural Roundtable to enhance coordination between various sectors and stakeholders associated with agriculture in Ventura County. Additionally, the proposal seeks to develop an Agricultural Infrastructure Plan to strengthen and support the economic sustainability of the local and regional food system. The proposal will also develop a Rural-Urban Connection Program Strategic Plan to help bridge the urban-rural divide, create awareness and appreciation for agriculture, and strengthen educational and career pathways in agriculture.

Land Use Conversion Threats

Ventura County agriculture faces several risk factors that increase the likelihood that farmland will be converted to urban use. The county is adjacent to the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area, and its desirable coastal location means it faces enormous growth pressures. Several other threats to the agricultural viability of Ventura County agricultural land include increasing water use restrictions required by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, climate change, invasive pest impacts, and low workforce availability.

Strategic Value or Special Features

The project was developed with SALC-funded technical assistance and would build upon the Round 6 SALC-funded Resilient Agriculture Lands Initiative (RALI) project.