

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
Planning Presentation Summary
Round 10 Funding Recommended
SALC23_PG01_SBA

Applicant

Santa Barbara Local
Agency Formation
Commission

Project Location

Santa Barbara County

Project Title

The Santa Barbara County
Agriculture and Natural
Resource Initiative

Total Funding

\$ 550,000

Funding Request

\$ 500,000

Match Funding

\$ 50,000

Priority Populations Benefits

Yes

Project Description

The development of a collaborative Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) framework between the County and its incorporated cities to guide decision-making around Spheres of Influence (SOIs) and future development. The MOA framework will clarify jurisdictional roles, establish consistent development standards and zoning guidelines, and promote smart growth strategies that protect critical agricultural lands, maintain open space, and meet regional housing needs. The overarching goal is to preserve the rural character of the county while ensuring sustainable growth. To support the process, the LAFCO will perform a participatory spatial analysis and extensive mapping to inform policy. This analysis and its results will build upon and update existing data compiled by the Conservation Blueprint.

Potential policy provisions include directing growth towards or adjacent to existing urbanized areas, enabling walkable and transit-friendly neighborhoods, expanding transportation and housing options, encouraging compact building design, addressing jobs/housing imbalances, and coordinating infrastructure and service planning.

Land Use Conversion Threats

Santa Barbara County has seen the loss of working lands, with the number of acres of land in farms decreasing by 13% from 2017 to 2022. In order to meet the state housing mandates, many of the cities in the County will be looking at adjacent agricultural lands to meet their housing requirements. Currently, four cities are evaluating or actively seeking to expand beyond their urban boundaries, increasing pressure on agricultural land.

Strategic Value or Special Features

The project is time-sensitive, with completion targeted to align with key updates to local housing elements and general plans. It will position Santa Barbara County and its cities to make coordinated, sustainable policy decisions that protect farm and range lands, address housing needs, and advance climate and equity goals across the region.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
Planning Presentation Summary
Round 10 Funding Recommended
SALC23_PG04_Lake

Applicant

County of Lake Community
Development Department

Project Location

Lake County

Project Title

Revitalizing Lake County
Agriculture: Phase 1

Total Funding

\$ 550,000

Funding Request

\$ 500,000

Match Funding

\$ 50,000

Priority Populations Benefits

Yes

Project Description

This project will conduct a comprehensive socioeconomic and ecological analysis of Lake County agriculture. The findings will be synthesized into the State of the Agriculture report and action plan which will be designed to reinforce the agricultural element of Lake County 2050, ongoing General Plan update, and evolving Climate Adaptation Plan. Primary components: (1) broad community engagement, including outreach and partnership building at all levels, a countywide survey of the agricultural sector, stakeholder convenings, and multiple opportunities for public input; (2) mapping and economic analysis to assess the value and condition of agricultural lands and infrastructure; (3) evaluation of tools and incentives to support long-term agricultural viability and land protection; and (4) integration with ongoing County planning efforts to ensure alignment with conservation, land use, and economic development goals.

Land Use Conversion Threats

Declining market prices for walnuts and pears have presented challenges for property owners in the region resulting in abandoned fields in the last two years which increases the risk of conversion to other uses.

Strategic Value or Special Features

The proposed project will deliver the following co-benefits: a pathway for enhanced socioeconomic stability and ecological vibrancy, support for food sovereignty and cultural heritage preservation among Tribes, and strengthened local and regional partnerships. Sustainable ag lands may reduce the growing wildfire threat and avoid the loss of sequestered carbon in established vineyards and orchards. The proposed project will include extensive community outreach and collaboration with Lake County Land Trust, Lake County Farm Bureau, Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians, and Mendo Lake Food Hub. The Technical Advisory Committee consists of the LAFCO, Winegrape Commission, UC Cooperative Extension, Water Protection District and NRCS.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
Planning Presentation Summary
Round 10 Funding Recommended
SALC23_PG06_HUM

Applicant

County of Humboldt
Planning and Building
Department

Project Location

Humboldt County

Project Title

Humboldt Natural and
Working Lands Carbon
Stock and Management
Study

Total Funding

\$550,00

Funding Request

\$500,000

Match Funding

\$50,000

Priority Populations Benefits

Yes

Project Description

The development of a Carbon Stock Inventory and Carbon Sequestration Feasibility Study to develop a better understanding of the existing and future carbon sequestration capacity in Humboldt County. This effort will create the initial understanding of carbon sequestration as a resource for the region so that future efforts can be developed and made to use carbon sequestration as an effective strategy to climate resilience. The studies will also inform the Humboldt Regional Climate Action Plan 2030 update to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. This includes promoting the protection and enhancement of natural and working lands, including agricultural lands, through giving a value to these lands as a statewide resource to respond to climate change by estimating their carbon sequestration capacity.

The project will include engagement with a multitude of agencies and constituents to develop the project framework, identify best management practices and policies, incentives programs, and potential future priority conservation and restoration projects.

Land Use Conversion Threats

Approximately a third of the County's land area is directed to some type of agricultural use. According to the Humboldt County Farm Bureau, about 67,000 acres of land is classified as being under intensive farming, while an estimated 605,000 acres of land is used primarily for grazing related purposes. The conversion of up to 100,000 acres has occurred in the County due to subdivision activities in the last several decades, and future conversions are possible. The cooler climate of the region buffers it from the rapid effects of climate change such as extreme heat, extreme wildfires and extreme flooding. Because of this, the County is anticipated to be a climate refuge in the future and the most developable lands in the County are agricultural lands and timberlands.

Strategic Value or Special Features

The project included multiple letters of support from the community including the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria, the Cities of Arcata, Eureka, Fortuna, Ferndale and Rio Dell, UCANR, Humboldt County Association of Governments, and the North Coast Growers Association.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
Planning Presentation Summary
Round 10 Funding Recommended
SALC25_PG07_ALM

Applicant

Alameda Local Agency
Formation Commission

Co-Applicant

Alameda Resource
Conservation District

Project Location

Alameda County

Project Title

The Bay Area Agricultural
Resiliency Collaborative
Planning Project

Total Funding

\$ 550,000

Funding Request

\$ 500,000

Match Funding

\$ 50,000

Priority Populations Benefits

No

Project Description

The proposed plan is a continuation of a previously funded SALC planning project with Alameda LAFCO and Alameda RCD, which aims to build upon their *Bay Area Regional Agricultural Plan Framework (2024)*, as well as the *Alameda County Agricultural Resilience Project (2023)* and several other regional land conservation plans in the area. This plan will create tools, strategies, and a collaborative structure that will support coordinated agricultural land conservation and stewardship for Alameda County and the other eight Bay Area Counties. Collaboration is a key component of this project, as it involves coordinating with various jurisdictions and non-profits throughout the Bay Area. The result of this project will help jurisdictions coordinate protections for farmland at risk and prioritize investments that will reduce GHG emissions and promote nature-based climate solutions.

Land Use Conversion Threats

As with many regions throughout California, the Bay Area and beyond face a housing crisis. To accommodate a growing population expected to reach over 10 million by 2050, more housing will need to be built throughout the region. Over the last 30 years, the nine-county Bay Area has lost 217,000 acres of agricultural land, much of which has been converted to sprawl development. Just beyond the Bay Area lies San Benito County, situated at the southernmost edge of sprawling Silicon Valley, where the loss of agricultural land amounted to over 17,000 acres during that time period. Santa Cruz County lost over 2,000 acres, making the collective loss of agricultural lands in the project area over 236,000 acres in 30 years.

Strategic Value or Special Features

The project includes an advisory council of ten members who all have a vested interest in strengthening the economic, social, and environmental resilience of regional agriculture.