

# **Turlock Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program**

## **FREQUENCY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program (MLRP)?**

- The MLRP is an incentive program that is being developed by the East Turlock Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (ETSGSA) to support the transition of irrigated farmland into alternative, lower water use land uses. The initial development and implementation of the program is being funded by an \$8.89 million grant from the California Department of Conservation (DOC).
- MLRP aims to achieve multiple benefits, in addition to the primary benefit of reduced groundwater consumption on repurposed agricultural lands. Additional benefits may include:
  - Enhanced groundwater recharge
  - Habitat creation
  - Improved community health and economic wellbeing
  - Improved water quality
  - Flood protection
  - Improved soil health, and
  - Bolstered climate resilience.

### **What are the goals of the Turlock MLRP?**

- Through the MLRP and an Incentivized Fallowing Program being implemented under the Turlock Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP), ETSGSA aims to achieve groundwater demand reduction in the ETSGSA area equivalent to taking approximately 5,000 acres of land out of production by 2027, and 21,000 acres by 2037.
- The Turlock MLRP includes development of a Multibenefit Agricultural Land Repurposing Plan (MALRP) that outlines the program framework and can be carried forward into the future, beyond the MLRP grant term.
- Ultimately ETSGSA aims to reduce groundwater demand where it can by providing additional surface water supplies, but it is anticipated that the majority of the overdraft in the eastern portion of the Turlock Subbasin will need to be addressed through MLRP, land fallowing, other management actions, and increased recharge.

### **How will ETSGSA reach the above goals?**

- ETSGSA is currently developing proof-of-concept demonstrations of land repurposing approaches on a small number of MLRP pilot projects, laying the groundwork for broader application of MLRP practices in the coming years to help bridge the gap between available groundwater supply and demand in the Basin.
- ETSGSA is focused on multibenefit land repurposing approaches that can be integrated with existing agricultural operations (i.e., a “working lands” philosophy). These approaches aim to leverage low-tech, self-implementable, scalable solutions, and lend to building regional capacity.

### **How much money is available for MLRP projects?**

- ETSGSA was awarded an \$8,890,000 grant from the DOC’s MLRP to develop and begin implementing its regional Turlock MLRP. Of this amount, the majority will be allocated for development and implementation of MLRP projects.
- After the first round of MLRP project implementation in 2026, the MLRP program will continue to be funded through proceeds from ETSGSA’s Groundwater Use Fee.

### **What projects are eligible for funding?**

- Projects that are potentially eligible to receive MLRP funding are those that repurpose (convert) irrigated farmland to non-irrigated use land uses, while also achieving additional benefits, such as habitat, disadvantaged communities, and/or economic benefits.
- Depending on project specifics, eligible project types could include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:
  - extended fallowing with a beneficial cover crop;
  - rewilding orchard swales with native vegetation;
  - construction of recharge basins or stormwater retention ponds;
  - floodplain reconnection and flood flow spreading;
  - agricultural buffer zones around communities or other sensitive areas; and
  - solar energy production.
- To be eligible for MLRP funding under the DOC grant program, projects must have durable benefits lasting at least 10 years.

### **Are some projects better than others?**

- ETSGSA is open to exploring any land repurposing projects that have potential to contribute to the sustainability goals of the Turlock MLRP. Projects will be prioritized for implementation based on a scoring and ranking approach. ETSGSA will prioritize projects that have the highest overdraft reduction benefit for the least cost and projects that are located in a Priority Action Area by assigning 50 percent of a project's score to cost-effectiveness in achieving overdraft reduction. The remaining 50 percent of the project score will be based on the project's ability to provide additional co-benefits, such as habitat connectivity, community benefits, flood reduction benefits, and benefits to at-risk wells.
- While other land repurposing project types are possible, ETSGSA is specifically developing guidance and materials to support landowners in implementing the following core MLRP strategies:
  - Recharge / Equalization Basins;
  - Orchard Swale Rewilding;
  - Stormwater Retention Ponds;
  - Floodplain Reconnection;
  - Flood Flow Spreading;
  - Agricultural Buffer Zones;
  - Extended Multibenefit Fallowing; and
  - Re-cropping (to lower water use crops)

### **How will projects ultimately be selected?**

- ETSGSA will use an objective project prioritization and scoring framework developed with input from a broad range of stakeholders. Under this framework, project proposals will be assigned scores based on their potential to achieve as many benefits as possible using a criterion-weighted decision matrix that considers:
  - Project Benefits in the four main benefit categories – groundwater sustainability, disadvantaged communities, local economy, and habitat.
  - Geographic prioritization criteria (e.g., land viability for agriculture, location within ETSGSA's Priority Action Areas, and Recharge Suitability Analysis, as applicable)
  - Other project characteristics such as implementability, scalability, community support, and others.
- The project selection process will be conducted in a transparent manner by a committee of ETSGSA representatives, growers, and community members. Projects selected must also be approved by DOC before funding is released.

### **What is the application process and where can I find an application?**

- Interested parties are encouraged, but not required, to submit their ideas for an MLRP project using the [Demand Reduction Project Concept Form](#). Submittal of this form will open the door for ETSGSA and local Resource Conservation District (RCD) staff to discuss and provide technical assistance to refining your project concepts.
- A formal application for MLRP projects is being developed and solicitations will open in early January 2026. The MLRP Project Application will be available on the [Turlock MLRP website](https://turlock-mlrp.netlify.app/) (<https://turlock-mlrp.netlify.app/>)

### **I have a project in mind, but don't know all the technical details. Is there support available?**

- Visit the [Turlock MLRP website](#) to find information on MLRP alternatives in the form of “cutsheets” and DRAFT Implementation Standards. More information is added frequently.
- Attend Workshops listed on the MLRP Calendar on the [Turlock MLRP website](#).
- Send us an email with your questions at [etsgsa-support@formationenv.com](mailto:etsgsa-support@formationenv.com).
- Contact us at [etsgsa-support@formationenv.com](mailto:etsgsa-support@formationenv.com) to set up an appointment for a telephone or video conference or to set up a site visit with ETSGSA or RCD staff.

### **I don't have a project, but I want to get involved with the MLRP. What are my options?**

- There are multiple ways to get informed and involved about the Turlock MLRP, including:
  - Reach out to Self Help Enterprises (SHE) to join the Stakeholder Advisory Committee.
  - Attend public workshops (e.g., the ETSGSA Board meetings, Technical Advisory Committee Meetings, and other public meetings); see the MLRP Calendar on the [Turlock MLRP website](#).
  - Respond to questionnaires and/or surveys, when made available by the ETSGSA.
  - Join the ETSGSA mailing list by contacting [etsgsa-support@formationenv.com](mailto:etsgsa-support@formationenv.com) to be kept up to date with the latest news regarding the Turlock MLRP.