

East Turlock Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program

EXTENDED FALLOWING IN DESIGNATED BUFFER ZONES

How it Works

Buffer zones are designated areas that act to separate actively cultivated agricultural lands from sensitive areas such as schools or communities. Repurposing agricultural lands within buffer zones to land uses such as native habitat or open space can help reduce the impacts on those communities of agricultural activities, such as air pollution, pesticide drift, and groundwater depletion. Extended Fallowing involves lengthening the interval between replanting of permanent crops such as orchards to at least three years, with multiple benefits achieved through planting of beneficial cover crops that improve soil health and habitat.

+ Benefits



Community Health – Reduced exposure to health-related impacts of agricultural activities.



Environmental Protection – Reduced runoff; flood attenuation; improved water quality; increased habitat.



Social Benefits – Enhanced aesthetic value of the landscape; improved quality of life for nearby residents.



Economic Opportunities – Potential economic benefits to local communities.



Additional Considerations



Regulatory Complexity – Compliance with zoning and land use regulations.



Design – Vegetation planning to ensure vitality and sustainability.



Maintenance – Pest management, invasive species, drought and climate change impacts.



Access Enforcement – Preventing unauthorized activities or encroachment.



Community Engagement – Land use planning decisions around communities should reflect input from community members; engaged partners can provide for sustainable alternatives.



Implementation Incentive Payment

The ETSGSA will be able to provide incentive payments to growers to implement multibenefit land repurposing using funding from a grant awarded to the GSA by the CA Department of Conservation.

East Turlock Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

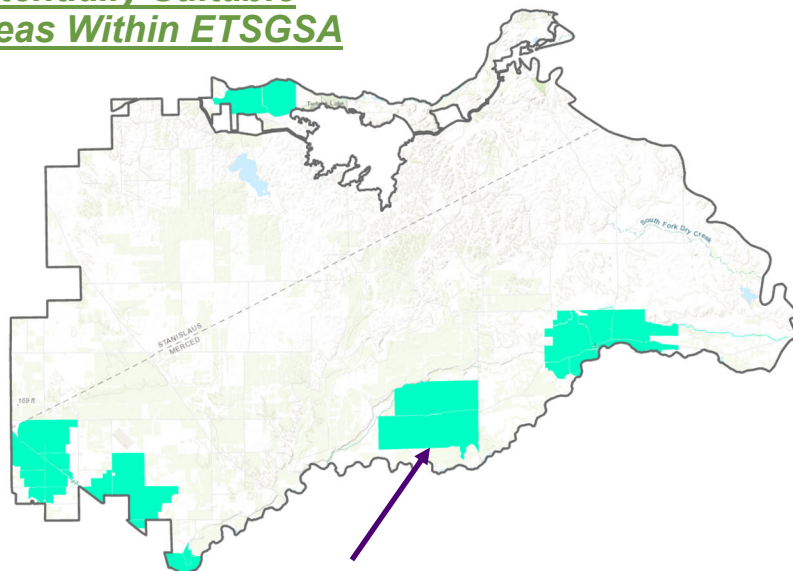
Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program

EXTENDED FOLLOWING IN DESIGNATED BUFFER ZONES

Implementation Steps

- 1) **Planning and Design** – Demarcate buffer zone and plan land use/vegetation, with community input.
- 2) **Regulatory Approvals and Permitting** – Obtain necessary permits and approvals.
- 3) **Site Preparation** – Remove crop and irrigation system from demarcated area; soil amendments, as needed.
- 4) **Vegetation Establishment** – Plant or seed resident vegetation, possibly using a cover crop first to remove excess nutrients.
- 5) **Other Infrastructure Installation** – Install fencing, pathways, drainage, erosion control, etc., as needed.
- 6) **Monitoring & Maintenance** – Replant desired vegetation, manage invasive species, maintain infrastructure, as needed.
- 7) **Adaptive Management** - Adjust and modify project features, as needed, based on monitoring data.

Potentially Suitable Areas Within ETSGSA

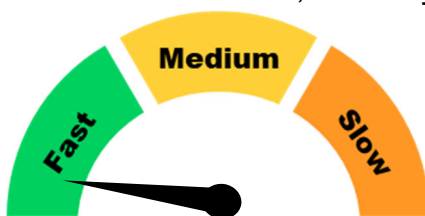


Priority Areas (13,618 acres identified): Areas surrounding residential neighborhoods, schools, healthcare facilities, ecological reserves, water bodies, and other areas sensitive to impacts from agricultural activities.

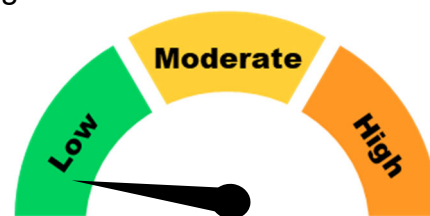
¹ Land area estimation from Formation Environmental Land Suitability Assessment. MLRP mapping is provided for preliminary planning purposes only. Project designs will need to be based on parcel-specific analysis.

Potential Permitting and CEQA Process

The general permitting and CEQA timeframe and complexity are shown below. However, permitting and CEQA requirements for specific projects may vary based on site- and project-specific conditions, and may be greater than indicated.



Permitting / CEQA
Timeframe



Permitting / CEQA
Complexity

Additional Information / Resources:

- [NRCS Conservation Practice Standard | 327 Conservation Cover](#) (USDA)
- [NRCS Conservation Practice Standard | 422 Hedgerow Planting](#) (USDA)
- [Buffer Planning Workbook](#) (UC Cooperative Extension)

