

California Department of Food and Agriculture
ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING ACT SCIENCE ADVISORY PANEL
INCENTIVES WORKING GROUP

MEETING AGENDA

December 14, 2012
9 AM to 12 PM

1220 N Street
Room 133
California Department of Food and Agriculture
Sacramento, CA 95833
(916) 654-0433

Call in information:
Please call 1-877-238-3859
Participant passcode - 3964856#

Jeff Dlott, PhD, Member and Chair
Mark Nechodom, PhD, Member
Mike Tollstrup, Member
Don Cameron, Member
Ann Thrupp, PhD, Member
Luana Kiger, MSc, Subject Matter Expert
Louise Jackson, PhD, Subject Matter Expert
Amrith Gunasekara, PhD, CDFA Liaison

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| 1. Introductions
(10 minutes) | Jeff Dlott |
| 2. Qualitative Assessment Model White Paper update
Incentives/Pilot Projects White Paper Proposal update
(20 minutes) | Amrith Gunasekara |
| 3. Continue discussion from Nov 8 meeting on Incentives/Pilot Projects
(80 minutes) | Jeff Dlott |
| 4. Ecosystem Services Database Presentation and feedback
(40 minutes) | Jessica Sharkey |
| 5. Discussion and Public Comments
(30 minutes) | All |
| 6. Next Meeting Date and Adjournment | Jeff Dlott |
| 7. Working lunch for EFA SAP members (12-1 PM) | Amrith Gunasekara |

All meeting facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. If you require reasonable accommodation as defined by the American with Disabilities Act, or if you have questions regarding this public meeting, please contact Amrith Gunasekara at (916) 654-0433.
More information at: <http://cdfa.ca.gov/Meetings.html> and http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/EnvironmentalStewardship/Meetings_Presentations.html

Agenda Item 3 (Supplemental Information)

The following information is to provide participants information about presentations given at the November 8, 2012, meeting.

Voluntary Local Program for Tiger Salamander in Alameda County

Marcia Grefsrud – Environmental Scientist, Department of Fish and Game

Leslie Koenig – Biologist, Alameda County RCD

Purpose is to encourage farmers and ranchers engaged in agricultural activities to establish locally designed programs to voluntarily enhance and maintain habitat for endangered and threatened species.

This specific program encourages farmers and ranchers to enhance and maintain stock pond habitats for the Alameda Whipsnake and California Tiger Salamander. CDFA has sent a letter of support.

Habitat Restoration and Buffer Strips

Jessa Guisse, MS – **Pollinator Habitat Restoration Specialist, Xerces Society**

Mace Vaughan – Pollinator Program Director, Xerces Society

The diversity and abundance of native bees on a farm, and subsequently their ability to serve as crop pollinators, are strongly influenced by two factors: suitable habitat on the farm and in the surrounding landscape. The basic habitat needs of native pollinators in any location are the same – nesting or egg-laying sites, flowers on which to forage, secure overwintering sites, and a refuge from pesticides.

Discussed will be the benefit of native buffer strips and efforts of the NRCS and RCDs to support these projects.

Riparian Habitats - Ecosystem Services on Agricultural Lands

Keiller Kyle – Bird conservation Project Manager, Audubon California

Rodd Kelsey, PhD – Director Migratory Bird Conservation Program, Audubon California

Audubon California's Working Lands Program recently established our Working Waterways Initiative, the goal of which is to increase habitat along remnant creeks, agricultural water delivery and tailwater systems across the Central Valley. This initiative grows out of our Landowner Stewardship Program's fifteen years of working with farmers and ranchers to develop habitat on their properties. Revegetating sloughs, canals, and creeks provides important habitat for our target birds, helping recover populations of riparian songbirds in the Central Valley, as well as benefitting farmers through decreased soil loss and increased water quality, weed control and other ecosystem services.

Effects of Native California Grasses on Ecosystem Services

Andrew Rayburn, PhD – Postdoctoral Fellow, UC Davis Dept. of Plant Sciences

The inclusion of native grasses in California's agricultural landscapes may enhance the provision of numerous beneficial ecosystem services related to water, nutrient cycling, diversity, forage, and other factors. This presentation will provide a brief summary of native grass effects on ES (focusing on those most relevant to the panel), and end with a quick summary of our current research on this topic.

Pollination Services and Native Bees (San Joaquin Valley)

Steve Peterson, PhD – Entomologist, AgPollen LLC

Since 2007, AgPollen has provided blue orchard bees for pollination of almonds. Steve has released blue orchard bees on up to 200 acres of almonds and raised bees on wildflowers in a 5-acre screen houses.

Performance-based Conservation Incentives and Water in the Pajaro Valley

Nik Strong-Cvetich – Program Development Manager, Santa Cruz Country RCD

Karen Christensen – Director, Santa Cruz RCD

When it comes to water resources, the Pajaro Valley has no shortage of challenges. Over the last 50 years the aquifer providing water to the ag community, rural citizens and the city of Watsonville has been significantly overdrafted, leading to saltwater intrusion. Additionally, the Pajaro River and other tributaries have been shown to have some of the highest concentrations of nitrate across the state.

In response to these complex issues, RCDSCC and Driscoll's Strawberry Associates Inc, with the support of the Sustainable Conservation, began looking at how incentives can motivate positive change in the condition of the aquifer and watershed. This led the partnership to develop the **Performance-Based Conservation Incentive Pilot**, made possible by a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture's Conservation Innovation Program and CA Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crop Block Grant.

As noted above, the pilot program seeks to improve aquifer and water quality conditions in the Pajaro Valley, by creating a series of standardized metrics to measure water quality and quantity of water used. It also is currently developing a structure of economic and non-economic incentives (e.g. regulatory relief) to motivate grower action, and testing these models on the ground.

This overall approach is unique, uniting private industry, the public and non-profit sectors to use business and policy related incentives to improve environmental conditions. By incentivizing outcomes rather than practices, farmers can find their own strategies to reduce nutrients and improve water quality in ways that are more economically feasible and practical for their own business models.