

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

BETWEEN THE

THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE,

THE CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS,

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES,

AND

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE/

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE - N0622MOU0012461

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is made and entered into by and between California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD), The Regents of the University of California on behalf of its University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), hereinafter referred to as “the Parties.” The effort will hereafter be referred to as the California Conservation Planning Partnership.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this MOA is to encourage strong partnerships as well as to strengthen cooperation among the Parties that result in coordinated interagency delivery of conservation assistance to private landowners and others and to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the California’s natural resources. The Parties’ vision is to collectively have greater impact on resource protection and to accelerate conservation on the ground. The Parties share a long-term commitment to the federal/state/local government conservation delivery system to help private landowners, communities, and others conserve natural resources across California. To make the vision a reality, the partnership will support locally led efforts that result in voluntary decisions of agricultural producers, forest managers, and Tribes to conserve natural resources, applying solutions that are practical, economical, customized to specific needs of our customers and communities served, and beneficial to the environment. The Parties agree that providing science-based technical assistance on natural working lands will play a key role in enabling the creation and implementation of these solutions. As a partnership, we will put quality first, enable people to make sound conservation decisions, demonstrate professionalism and dedication, and strive for continuous improvement.

Shared Values

The Parties are committed to the following values:

- Voluntary approach to conservation.
- Recognize the value of providing science-based technical assistance. The Parties have confidence agricultural producers, forest managers, and Tribes will make and implement sound decisions if they understand their resources, natural resource concerns and opportunities, and the effects of their decisions.
- Recognize the important role of natural and working lands and their significant contribution to the environmental and economic health in California.
- Meeting customer needs. The Parties recognize that agricultural producers, forest managers, and Tribes are key customers for our programs and services and will collaborate to make it as easy as possible for customers to utilize services and programs. The Parties strive to serve all customers with an emphasis on Tribes and historically underserved producers and land managers, making sure all are aware of opportunities and have equal access to services and programs. “Historically underserved” includes beginning farmers and ranchers, organic, small-scale, urban garden, micro-farm, community agriculture, limited resource, and socially disadvantaged producers, and others.

II. BACKGROUND

The Parties recognize the importance of natural resources, sound resource conservation development, and the wise use and management of these natural resources. In addition, the Parties recognize the importance of working with NRCS due to its broad strategic assessment and planning authority, and the importance of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 (RCA), for the conservation, protection, and enhancement of soil, water, and related natural resources. The Parties further recognize that our state’s resources are finite and under increasing pressure from a variety of impacts. The conservation of soil, water, air, plant, animal, and energy resources will all be addressed under the programs, initiatives, and partnership efforts of the Parties.

The NRCS has federal responsibility for conservation of our Nation’s private lands which recognizes that the wastage of soil and moisture resources on farm, grazing, and forestland is a menace to the national welfare. Congress directed Secretary of Agriculture the creation of Soil Conservation Service (currently called the Natural Resources Conservation

Service) as permanent Agency is USDA. NRCS has a vested interest in working with other partners to jointly carry out this charge using the voluntary conservation planning process as a framework.

The State of California has a strong commitment to its resources and recognizes the great challenge of keeping natural resources, the economy, and communities strong for its people and future generations. The State of California recognizes the importance of federal agencies, state agencies, local agencies, and other organizations working towards these collective goals. The Food and Agricultural Code enacted by Stats. 1967, Ch. 15 provides the California Department of Food and Agriculture authority to promote and protect the agriculture industry of the state for the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare.

The University of California (UC) is part of the nation's Land-Grant University System established by the Morrill Act of 1862. UC's federally-mandated mission of agricultural research, extension and public service is fulfilled by UC ANR – a statewide entity comprised of the Agricultural Experiment Station (established by the Hatch Act of 1887), Cooperative Extension (established by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914), nine Research and Extension Centers, two Institutes and several Statewide Programs. UC ANR develops knowledge and practical information in agricultural, natural, and human resources, conducts research and outreach aimed at transforming basic scientific knowledge into new practices and technologies, identifies current and emerging problems, and promotes the use of pertinent research-based findings and practices to best serve California's needs.

California RCDs have a strong commitment to – and deep experience with – implementing and providing technical assistance and implementation support of locally-led community driven conservation projects that meet local needs on public and private lands. Maintaining deep connections to local stakeholders, especially farmers and ranchers, RCDs are on-the-ground partners informed by local knowledge and are an essential component of the locally-led conservation equation.

Therefore, the Parties sees this partnership as an important tool to help California meet its resource conservation goals. The Parties recognize by working together, they can pool resources and have more impact on addressing natural resource issues such as water quality, drought resiliency, healthy forests, healthy soils, and the existential threat of climate change.

Opportunities the Parties will address include, but are not limited to:

A. Equity in Delivery of Technical Assistance

The Parties recognize Tribes and historically underserved producers may not have had equal access to conservation technical assistance and subsequent funding opportunities, and that technical assistance is a critical gateway to programs. Interagency collaboration to address equity is needed. The Parties will seek input and guidance on challenges and barriers to participation. Furthermore, the Parties will increase opportunities for guidance by Tribes and historically underserved producers to ensure that services and programs can be tailored to fit their needs, and that Traditional Ecological Knowledge / Indigenous Stewardship Methods and practices are valued and recognized components of these service and program offerings. The Parties will consider setting aside funding or prioritizing services and programs for Tribes and historically underserved groups, with input and guidance from these groups. Through these processes of engagement, the Parties seek to build stronger partnerships with Tribes and historically underserved producers that will lead to increased participation in services and programs concerning the implementation of conservation practices.

B. Conservation Innovation and Practice Adoption

The Parties recognize the importance of accelerating conservation research and having it accessible to agricultural producers, forest managers, and Tribes. Therefore, it is mutually beneficial for the Parties to collaborate to create a process to identify research needs, validate outcomes, provide access to new conservation practices, and evaluate those practices for effectiveness and on a cost-benefit basis. Similarly, there is a need to evaluate and continually update existing conservation practices and look for ways to increase adoption.

C. Coordination

To increase accessibility of services and programs for agricultural producers, forest managers, and Tribes, the Parties will strive for consistency and complementarity of programs offered. The Parties will work together to streamline and coordinate services to prioritize customers' experience. The Parties will be knowledgeable of each other's offerings and services, which will become better known and available to the agricultural and forestry communities.

Recognizing there are inherent statutory and programmatic differences, the Parties will strive to coordinate services and programs including but not limited to outreach, technical standards, payment rates, training resources, and sharable databases, contacts, processes, and other mutually beneficial items. When feasible, the Parties will prioritize technical assistance coordination based on equity impacts and implement changes that would increase participation in services for Tribes and historically underserved groups.

D. Technical Capacity

The Parties recognize the importance of having strong and consistent technical capacity at the federal, state, and local levels to better deliver assistance. Furthermore, the Parties identified training as a key area for collaboration with the goal of building consistent technical capacity at all levels.

Training Collaboration Objectives:

- Build a strong foundation of technical and delivery skills.
- Ensure needed technical knowledge and support are readily available.
- Build a strong mutually supportive network of personnel with technical expertise that continues to expand as needs emerge.

E. Maintain Consistent Locally Led Technical Assistance

The Parties recognize that building stable relationships and establishing trust with agricultural producers, forest managers, and Tribes are critical to the successful implementation of conservation practices. Locally led conservation, through the Local Work Group as identified in the Farm Bill legislation, requires involving community stakeholders in identification and prioritization of natural resource concerns, natural resource planning, implementation of solutions, and evaluation of results. Whenever possible, the Parties will collectively support a constant and consistent local presence and offer services and programs culturally relevant to the community. The Parties will strive to share resources when feasible and work together to ensure there is capacity to deliver technical assistance locally. The Parties will pursue joint programs for funding, when feasible, to support these fundamental staffing requirements.

F. Collective Impact and Communication

To increase awareness, stories, opportunities, and technical resources will be promoted within the Parties' organization and to the public. The Parties recognize that amplified outreach will encourage participation and improve comprehension of the available services.

III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This MOA commits the Parties to increase cooperation within the State of California to ensure coordinated, efficient, and effective delivery of conservation assistance. The actions taken under this MOA are expected to enable the Parties to accomplish their individual and collective conservation missions and goals in a strategic approach with improved outcomes.

The Parties recognize the unique and complementary role that each Party brings to the partnership:

- The California Department of Food and Agriculture was established to serve the citizens of California by promoting and protecting a safe, healthy food supply, and enhancing local and global agricultural trade, through efficient management, innovation, and sound science, with a commitment to environmental stewardship. To be recognized as the most highly respected agricultural agency in the world, CDFA will:
 - Ensure that only safe and quality food reaches the consumer
 - Protect against invasion of exotic pests and diseases
 - Promote California agriculture and food products both at home and abroad
 - Ensure an equitable and orderly marketplace for California's agricultural products
 - Build coalitions supporting the state's agricultural infrastructure to meet evolving industry needs
- Resource Conservation Districts are a community-driven source of conservation. They support and implement locally driven conservation on private and public lands and support their communities in conservation and agriculture.

RCDs:

- Provide technical assistance to farmers, ranchers and communities
- Implement conservation projects on public and private lands
- Provide workshops and public education opportunities
- Connect Federal, State, local and private funding to implement projects

- Coordinate, support and connect partners to critical resource challenges
- University of California’s UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR) connects the power of UC research to improve the lives of all Californians, through research and Cooperative Extension in agriculture, natural resources, nutrition, economic and youth development. Its mission is to improve the lives of all Californians.

UCANR serves the people of California by:

- Promoting economic prosperity
 - Developing a qualified workforce
 - Safeguarding abundant and healthy food for all
 - Protecting California’s natural resources
 - Building climate-resilient communities and ecosystems
 - Promoting healthy people and communities
 - Developing an inclusive and equitable society
- The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) draws on a long history of helping people help the land.
 - NRCS works in close partnerships with farmers and ranchers, local and state governments, and other federal agencies to maintain healthy and productive working landscapes.
 - NRCS is a source of interdisciplinary technical expertise for natural resource conservation and provides this assistance to landowners and communities in every county in California.

The Parties will work to address conservation priorities through joint and individual actions. The agency contacts (as identified below), or their designees, will meet at least annually to review performance under this MOA, and provide recommendations as appropriate.

AGENCY/ORGANIZATION CONTACTS

California Department of Food and Agriculture:	Karen Ross Secretary 1220 N Street Sacramento, CA 95814 Telephone: (916) 654-0433 Email: secretary.ross@cdfa.ca.gov
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California Association of Resource Conservation Districts	Donald Butz CARCD Board President 801 K Street, MS 14-15 Sacramento, CA 95814 Telephone: (916) 457-7904
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UC Agriculture and
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NRCS:

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State Conservationist
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Email: carlos.suarez2@usda.gov

IV. AUTHORITIES

This MOA is entered into in accordance with the following laws and organizational policies:

- A. The Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, Public Law 103-354, 7 U.S. C. 6901-7014.
- B. Secretary's Memorandum 1010-1, Reorganization of the Department of Agriculture, dated October 20, 1994.
- C. Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, Public Law 74-461, 16 U.S.C. 590, as amended (16 U.S.C. 590a, et seq.).
- D. Section 1242(d) of the Food Security Act of 1985, 16 USC 3842(d).
- E. Morrill Land-Grant Acts of 1862, Public law 37-130, 12 Stat. 503, later codified as 7 U.S.C. ch. 13 § 301 et seq, as amended.
- F. 1868 Organic Act to Create and Organize the University of California: Chapter 244
- G. Hatch Act of 1887, Public law 49-314, 7 U.S.C. ch. 14 § 361a et seq, as amended.
- H. California Education Code, EDC § 92142, Authorize UC to support agricultural experiment stations.
- I. Smith-Lever Act of 1914, Public law 63-95, 7 U.S.C. ch. 13 § 341, as amended.

V. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- A. This MOA takes effect upon the signatures of the Parties and remains in effect for five years from the latest date of execution. In the event of termination by one of the parties, the other parties will continue the MOA between them.

- B. This MOA is not intended to, and does not create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity, by any party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.
- C. This MOA does not affect or modify existing regulations or agency responsibilities and authorities. It specifically does not commit any agency activities beyond the scope of its mission and authorities under its organic statutes.
- D. The California Department of Food and Agriculture, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service and their respective officials will handle their own activities and utilize their own resources, including expenditures of their own funds, in pursuing the purposes of this MOA. Each party will carry out its separate activities in a coordinated and mutually beneficial manner.
- E. Nothing in this MOA shall obligate California Department of Food and Agriculture, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, or the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service to expend or transfer any funds. Specific work projects or activities that involve the transfer of funds, services, or property among the various agencies and offices of the Parties will require execution of separate agreements and be contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds. Such activities must be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority. This MOA does not provide such authority. Negotiation, execution, and administration of each such agreement must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations.
- F. Any information furnished to NRCS under this agreement is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U. S. C. 552).
- G. All activities and programs, conducted under this MOA shall be in compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions contained in Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (Public Law 100-250); and other nondiscrimination statutes; namely, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. They will also be in accordance with regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture (7 CFR 15.3, Subpart A), which provide that no person in the United State shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, sex,

religion, marital status, or handicap be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination from USDA or any agency thereof.

- H. All activities conducted under this MOA shall be in compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-690, Title V, Subtitle D).

VI. APPROVAL

The undersigned parties hereby agree to the terms and conditions specified above.

Karen Ross Secretary California Department Food and Agriculture	Date
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Donald Butz President California Association of Conservation District Association	Date
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Glenda Humiston Vice President UC Agriculture and Natural Resources	Date
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Carlos Suarez State Conservationist Natural Resources Conservation Service	Date
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Other organization(s), if applicable	Date
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