

# Western Water and Working Lands Framework for Conservation Action

There is an increasing demand for water in the West, but available water is in fast decline. Impacts of climate change, including the increasing frequency and intensity of drought, are being experienced across the West and are projected to worsen. This threatens working lands resources and agricultural productivity, while impacting whole communities who depend on the same water source.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is laying the foundation to help producers conserve water, address climate change and build drought resilience in the West through a new framework: **The Western Water and Working Lands Framework for Conservation Action**.

In this framework, NRCS identifies six major water and land resource management challenges, guidelines for identifying vulnerable agricultural landscapes and 13 strategies for NRCS leaders in western states to use now to collaborate with partners, water resource managers and producers. Our goal is to help secure clean and available water supplies, healthy soils, resilient landscapes and thriving agricultural communities, now and in the future.

Between 2020 and 2022, NRCS provided more than \$410 million in annual conservation assistance to producers that fits within the Western Water and Working Lands Framework for Conservation Action. As NRCS moves forward with leveraging the tools and roadmap provided by the Framework, we will continue to build upon these investments and expand support by advancing innovative targeting at the state, local, and regional levels, including through additional funding from the Inflation Reduction Act to support investments that advance both climate mitigation and Western water priorities.

*NRCS and its partners offer a wide variety of financial and technical assistance to help individuals, entities, and communities meet resource management challenges from threats to water supply in the Nation's most arid landscapes. Contact your **local service center** to get started putting conservation to work for you and future generations.*

## Water and working lands resource management challenges resulting from threats to water supply in the West:

1. Forecasting water supply
2. Sustaining agricultural productivity
3. Protecting groundwater availability
4. Protecting surface water availability
5. Managing and restoring rangelands and forestlands
6. Responding to disruptions from catastrophic events

## Strategies to help individuals, entities, and communities respond to the six management challenges:

1. Improve reliability of water supply forecasts.
2. Improve soil moisture and irrigation water management.
3. Improve water and nutrient management in crop fields and pastures.
4. Modernize water infrastructure.
5. Improve community water supply by completing watershed projects.
6. Increase reuse of wastewater for agriculture and conservation.
7. Prolong aquifer life.
8. Complete managed aquifer recharge projects.
9. Reduce surface water withdrawals.
10. Install conservation systems that protect water quality.
11. Restore and protect streams and wetlands.
12. Manage and restore rangelands and forestlands.
13. Increase resilience during disaster recovery.