



CONSERVATION EASEMENT

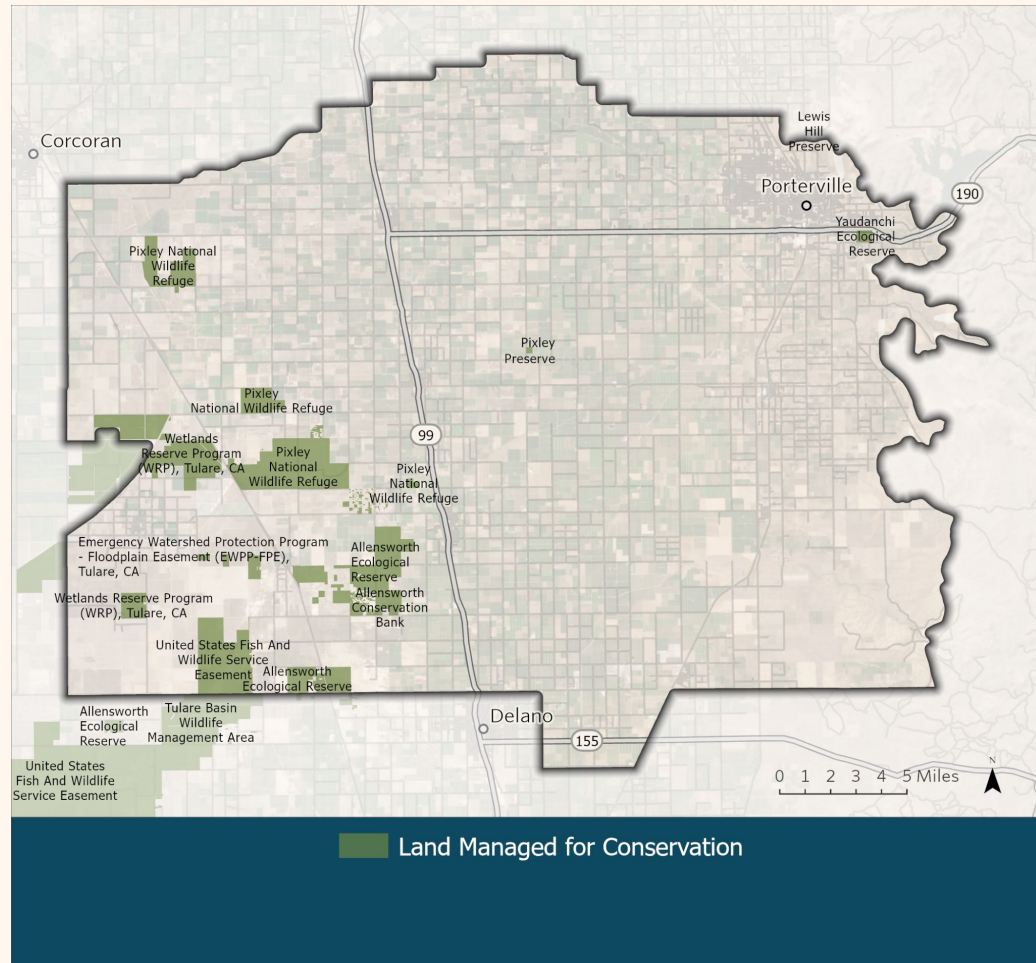


Land Repurposing Solutions Seminar



What is Conservation?

Conservation is the practice of restricting land use to preserve certain landscape functions, such as habitat connectivity, public access, or agricultural productivity. Conservation is a tool which can help accomplish local SGMA goals for groundwater sustainability.



Potential Water Benefits

Conservation easements are legal tools that limit development and promote conservation practices on private land in perpetuity. Easements may be negotiated between landowners and qualified entities to implement land repurposing project that will reduce groundwater extraction rates and create other beneficial uses. Examples include converting irrigated agriculture to open grazing land or habitat-friendly recharge basins while allowing landowners flexible control over how they use remaining sustainable water rights.



Benefits to the Grower/Landowner

Water rights: A multi-benefit land repurposing conservation easement can be flexible in how landowners use sustainable water rights, such as surface allocations and native yield. An easement on a portion of a farm can provide opportunities to continue irrigated farming on adjacent or nearby parcels, allowing landowners to use or transfer their remaining water in accordance with local SGMA regulations.

Easement value: Landowners willing to limit future uses of their land by preventing intensive development and excessive groundwater pumping can be reimbursed a significant portion of their land value from the sale of a conservation easement. That capital can help to sustain their extended agricultural operations and/or the transition to multi-benefit uses on the property being conserved.



Benefits to Other Stakeholders



Organizations and agencies that provide landowners with resources for land management activities such as on-farm recharge or implementing sustainable practices benefit from the security that conservation easements provide for their investments.

A conserved multi-benefit land repurposing project will help local groundwater sustainability agencies meet long-term goals for reductions in groundwater use, and landowners and their neighbors will have greater flexibility in using groundwater and surface water allocations on the lands that remain in production with intensive irrigation.

Continued Agricultural Use

Many conservation easements are designed to maximize the capacity that landowners have to continue agricultural use of their land, which may otherwise be conserved for multiple benefits such as habitat or groundwater recharge values. Every easement is unique and crafted for resilient and flexible future use of the land.



Resources to Learn More

The following websites are recommended to visit and learn more about the basics of conservation easements on private working lands:

Land conservation basics from the Land Trust Alliance:

<https://landtrustalliance.org/take-action/conserves-your-land/how-to-conserves-your-land>

Conservation easement basics from the California Council of Land Trusts:

<https://calandtrusts.org/conservation-basics/conservation-tools/conservation-easement/>

Thank you!