

Executive Summary and Proposed Planning Project

Please provide a brief overview of the project (1-page maximum). This overview should describe the following:

- Provide a brief description of the proposed planning project.
 - Why the proposed project is appropriate for protecting agricultural lands in the jurisdiction.
 - Participating stakeholders.
 - Any critical deadlines.
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The Nevada County Resource Conservation District has an MOU in place with Nevada County and is applying for the SALC Planning Grant to fund the creation of an Agricultural Working Landscape Conservation Plan (AWLCP). Several municipalities are currently undergoing a planning process to address climate change and greenhouse gas reduction within the county, including a 50-year water plan, a Climate Resiliency plan, and an Air Quality Control plan. In addition, there are strong non-profit partners that are looking at the future of Nevada County in their strategic planning process to address farming and food insecurity needs, along with tribal preservation. However, to date, there is no agricultural and conservation plan being incorporated. Although agriculture has been around for centuries in the small Sierra Nevada Region, the way of life is currently under threat of extinction. With development on the rise and economic factors creating hardships for many of the generational farming families, protecting the agricultural working lands is an essential part of planning for the future sustainability of the rural county.

In order to create a collaborative, effective and policy-driven plan, the core team will address the following:

- 1) Assess existing land use policies for the County.
- 2) Assess existing ecological, environmental and social values.
- 3) Assess the working lands inventory.
- 4) Assess preservation conservation practices in place, including conservation easements, Williamson Act properties, and property trusts.
- 5) Assess the economic agricultural factors:
 - a. including potential revenue streams from on-farm carbon sequestration practices,
 - b. including current affordable housing practices for farmers and ranchers,
 - c. including agritourism opportunities,
 - d. including marketplace modeling.

- 6) Establish a baseline of social and land-based values throughout the multiple regions of the county, including up into the Sierra region of Truckee.
- 7) Develop and implement stakeholder engagement activities.
- 8) Identify Co-Benefits
- 9) Identify current municipality and partner conservation practices for water, habitat, land, fire mitigation and greenhouse gas emissions.
- 10) Identify current partner non-profit goals for addressing food scarcity, tribal land practices, and conservation of open space public lands.

The completed plan will include four major components:

- 1) Agricultural Economic Development Strategy
- 2) Land Use policy development that favors agricultural activities
- 3) Climate Resiliency Strategy:
 - a. natural and working lands focus.
- 4) Education and Awareness Strategy:
 - a. for farmers and ranchers on lifestyle affordability and succession planning.
 - b. for the public on the importance of agriculture in mitigating climate and preserving habitat and natural resources.
 - c. for the consumer on the importance of supporting a local food system.

The core team will include the Nevada County Resource Conservation District, The County of Nevada, including the Ag Commissioner and the consultant. The second group of essential feedback partnerships for engagement will include: the Nevada Irrigation District, Air Quality Control of Nevada County, the Nevada County Farm Bureau, The Bear Yuba Land Trust and Sierra Harvest.

Preproposal Questions

1. Are you a county, city, local area formation commission, council of government, municipal planning organization, regional transportation planning agency, groundwater sustainability agency, or special district with land use or transportation planning authority, and federally recognized California Native American tribe or a non-federally recognized California Native American tribe that is on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission?

Yes, the County of Nevada has planning authority and works with multiple municipal organizations in creating the general planning policies that systematically address the planning needs for Nevada County. The County will be partnering with the Nevada

County Resource Conservation District to facilitate the planning process for the Agricultural Working Landscape Conservation Plan.

2. Are you a Resource Conservation District, special district with a mission related to agricultural preservation, academic institutions, land trusts and other agricultural non-profit organizations? Have you partnered with one or more of the organizations listed above? Will you be able to provide evidence, by the time of the application, that one or more of the organizations listed above will enter a memorandum of understanding for the project demonstrating support for the project and SALC's purposes? Please provide information detailing the partners roles in the project and confirmation that the partners will consider adopting the plan resulting from the project.

Nevada County Resource Conservation District's mission is to promote responsible resource management throughout the jurisdiction, through education, leadership, technical assistance and project facilitation regarding agricultural preservation and conservation. The organization has worked with the County of Nevada previously on several implementation projects, including the general plan several years ago. An MOU between organizations has already been discussed and is in progress of completion. The NCRCD will lead the planning and facilitation process and work closely with the county Ag commissioner and CEO's office on developing a plan that can support the Climate Resiliency initiative along with other appropriate policies that could include initiatives that affect planning, housing, and economic policy.

3. Describe the proposed planning project. Include details such as the anticipated outcomes and deliverables; agricultural land base, economy, regional food systems and infrastructure within the project area; and amount and quality of agricultural land that can be expected to receive protection through the proposed project. Include maps of important farmland, jurisdictional boundaries, and other pertinent data that would portray the project scope (as attachments to the application).

Agriculture has always been an integral part of Nevada County. The beginning of the major agriculture pursuits began concurrently with the discovery of gold in California. The Mediterranean climate with good soil is ideal for a variety of crops and the oak woodlands and mountain ranges are ideal for raising large quantities of livestock. Timber is another crop that continues to be harvested today as the second or third generation which reseeded from the initial stand. Farming and ranching and open space were valued and considered an essential part of the ecosystem and were rightly protected in the last general plan that was enacted in 1995. Unfortunately, the last 28 years have been a time of considerable change for agriculture in Nevada County, land prices have escalated rapidly and the pressure to subdivide large tracts of historical farmland have increased dramatically. Additionally, a significant portion of large-scale ranches and homesteads are owned by a select number of families, many of which don't have children to pass their legacy down to, and those that do have someone to take the helm, are questioning

the economic return on investment, given the drastic increase in the cost of living and the challenge to provide a viable lifestyle for themselves and the community. The individuals moving to the region that would like to create a livelihood out of farming and ranching, are finding that land acquisition is not only challenging to afford, but that the economic infrastructure of the region for selling their products is limited. There are multiple variables that are affecting the sustainability of agriculture in the region. The Nevada County Food Policy Council, made up of a diverse group of stakeholders, conducted a food assessment of the region to establish a baseline for the regional food system, looking at data from 2015-2020. It was estimated that Nevada County residents buy over \$340 Million annually, and of that amount, only \$16 million is produced locally, and of that amount, only 5% is consumed rather than exported, due to economic factors. The study concluded that establishing county wide policies that support agricultural is vital to ensure economic vitality, improve food security and ensure that the regional resources remain a sustainable viable resource for generations. This food assessment plan is one of the many regional organizational plans that have started, however, to date there is not one plan that places conservation and agriculture at the center of the discussion, which is necessary for policy change.

Nevada County Resource Conservation District is applying for grant funds through the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program to fund the creation of an Agricultural and Working Landscape Conservation Plan. This plan would provide the framework, collaboration, and policies necessary to ensure that conserving agricultural lands will not only be essential in addressing climate change, addressing food security, but will also ensure that the farming and ranching lifestyle is sustainable, equitable, and preserved for the community for many more generations. The four components of the plan are expected to include: a) Agricultural Economic Development Strategy; b) Land Use policy development that favors agricultural activities; c) Climate Resiliency Strategy; d) Education and Awareness Strategy.

A) Agricultural Economic Development Strategy

Establishing a strategic approach to economic development that reinforces agriculture is essential to ensuring that the farming and ranching lifestyle is not threatened, and that climate change is addressed with a sense of urgency for conservation practices. The AWLCP will bring the necessary organizations and partners together to identify current activities that reinforce agricultural interests and establish areas of beneficial overlap including, but not limited to addressing working lands as a strategic approach to workforce development. Assessing the regional infrastructure to promote a farm institute and ranch school. In addition, promoting the work of the local Land Trust to ensure that tribal and private lands have the resources and plans in place necessary to preserve the conservation practices for the community.

B) Land Use Policy that favors Agricultural Activities

The AWLCP will be used in future policy planning efforts. The information reflected in the document will be a result of the data and knowledge that was gathered through the AWLCP process and will directly assist Nevada County, as well as the state, in making significant progress to meeting GHG and climate goals. Part of the planning process will include assessing the current inventory of land designated within the agricultural and working land general plan and updating the records accordingly to accurately reflect the recent changes in population. According to the Nevada County 2021 Crop and Livestock Report out of a total land area of 613,120 acres, there are 133,393 acres of grazing land and 7,760 acres of farmland and 3,313 acres of cropland. Nevada County agriculture is unique in its elevation range, which has an extreme range from 280 ft at its lowest elevation to over 9,152 feet at the summit. Not only does agriculture in Nevada County offer a wide variety of climates, it also has a significant portion of cropland in Timber. The last 20 years have been a time of considerable change for agriculture in Nevada County. Land prices have escalated rapidly and the pressure to subdivide large tracts of historical farmland have increased significantly. However, there has also been growth in the number of farms and with that expansion, a diversification of cropping systems such as specialty nurseries, herb farms, mushroom farms, and exotic livestock. In order for the future of agriculture to continue to benefit farmers, ranchers and the community, there needs to be an understanding of the land use policies that are both hindering and helping the future of agriculture.

C) Climate Resiliency Strategy

According California's Climate Smart Lands Strategy plan that was produced in April of 2022, "Healthy landscapes can sequester and store carbon, limit future greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere, protect people and nature from the impacts of climate change-unhealthy landscapes have the opposite effect." In order to meet the climate mitigation agenda that was passed by Governor Newsome in October 2020, Nevada County has adopted a Climate Resiliency priority to safeguard the economic durability, environmental integrity and public health and safety of the rural county. A primary objective of the plan is to enhance carbon storage and sequestration on natural and working lands. In addition, a local collaborative collation, the Sierra Cascade Land Trust Council, established an Action Plan Report that focuses on the Sierra Cascade region, as it faces enormous threats with droughts, flooding, and catastrophic wildfires. Nevada County sits within the Sierra Cascade region, a region that is vital the California ecosystem. Conservation in the Sierra cascade region protects water, soil and pollinator resources that are crucial to farmers and ranchers. Additionally, the region stores 60% of California's fresh water; protecting and

restoring forests, mountain landscapes and agricultural lands is essential to managing the ecosystem and is essential to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The AWLCP is a key factor for the planning process. It will bring the structure, collaboration and strategy to the already existing plans, in order to understand and fully maximize the potential for beneficial mitigation activities. As part of the planning process, a data system will be incorporated with all agencies, to ensure that the carbon tracking information is consistent and unified, in order to ensure that ongoing policies and funding affecting the Nevada County region are well integrated in a systematic strategic approach for utilizing natural and working lands that not only enhances the resiliency of the county and region, but inevitably the state.

D) Education and Awareness Strategy

Nevada County Resource Conservation District has the mission to promote responsible resource management within our jurisdiction through education, leadership, technical assistance, and project facilitation. As an organization the vision is to educate and assist landowners and land managers in establishing a balance between a high-quality rural environment, a biologically diverse landscape, and a healthy economy for the community. The AWLCP will involve collaboration with critical partnerships and community members to assess and address the needs of the rural county. The outcome will include a thorough assessment of the existing operational strategic plans and identify new opportunities to actively change and protect agricultural lands, safeguard for food security and address climate change through local policy reform. For the past 20 years, many of the rural properties have changed hands, and as a result, the institutional knowledge of land cultivation has disappeared. It is essential that the community understands the importance that agriculture plays in ensuring a resilient and abundant ecosystem. Throughout the process, the members of the organizations and the public at large will continue to be informed and educated about how the AWLCP will affect their individual properties, along with a deep understanding of how strategically enforcing the developed policies will only serve to enhance the future of the rural community for several generations.

4. Why and to what extent agricultural land is being converted to other uses within project area? To what extent those conversion risks are expected to continue? How will the proposed project address those conversion risks? Include an overview of anticipated data sets, tools, and policies to be reviewed, aligned with, or created during the course of the work plan.

According to most recent ag commission crop and livestock reports, Nevada County has maintained a consistent agricultural land base, with the number of farms at approximately #365 for the last few years and the number of acres of farmland at approximately #7,760 acres and #133, 393 acres of grazing land. Theoretically, the average farm would be about #146 acres, however, the majority of large land owners who are aging out is increasing at an alarming rate, and many don't have an heir to carry on the land stewardship. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture for Nevada County, of the #1,199 producers, only 12% (#155) were 35 years and younger. In contrast, over 36% (#428) were 65 years and older. It has been five years since the last census, and the rate at which farmers are retiring is compounding at a rapid rate. As indicated, many of the large landowners do not have a next of kin or easement to steward the land, which necessitates the need to sell their land for retirement. As the population ages, a majority of the county open space land and previous agricultural land is at threat of development. The proposed AWLCP will address these risks by collaborating with partner organizations to take an inventory of the properties within the county. As discussed in a previous question, a data tool will be researched and utilized to keep accurate data on the existing lands. Currently, partner organizations, using a data tool for both carbon sequestration modeling, as well as land tracking and the purpose of the AWLCP will be to further concentrate those resources to reflect the most accurate agricultural data for long-term strategic planning. Once that data set has been established and the organizations are using to capture existing and future planning data, the policies for the County can be established, to properly plan for future development and establish the resources necessary for land conservation easements and acquisitions.

5. How will the project avoid or reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

According to the 2021 Crop and Livestock report for Nevada County, of the 623,360 acres, 7,760 is active farmland. California's Climate Smart Lands Strategy in the report Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy produced in April 2022:

Our lands are a critical yet underutilized sector in California's critically urgent effort to achieve carbon neutrality and build resilience to the impacts of climate change...the gains and losses of carbon on our lands will fluctuate in the future; what is important is to restore carbon in places where it has been lost and reduce large carbon losses on our natural and working lands through active, attentive, and adaptive management.

Irrigated cropland cover over 9 of the state of California (9.5 Million acres) and make the state a global leader in agriculture...Perennial crops, particularly woody orchards store carbon within their woody materials and in the soils, which represent the primary carbon reservoir...Croplands carbon stocks are relatively stable to risks from fire because they are heavily managed and generally irrigated landscapes...The opportunities to increase carbon storage through climate smart land management actions are substantial and generally dependent on continuing those practices along with conservation practices.

The AWLCP plan for Nevada County will focus on how to incorporate nature-based climate changes into future agricultural planning in order to continue to encourage private landowners to adapt essential beneficial practices. In addition to gathering the land inventory, educational based practices will be incorporated and documented with existing partners, within the approved data system, to show a decrease in greenhouse emissions and overall carbon sequestration. Educational opportunities will be provided for farmers and ranchers to encourage sustainable land use practices, which could include, but are not limited to: scaling up healthy soil practices, increase ground water recharge, integrating pest management practices and enhancing circular economies for organic waste. Additionally, 133,393 acres in Nevada County are grazing land. The Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy indicates:

Grasslands cover 9% of California (9.7 million acres), they provide space for livestock grazing, open space and wild habitat. In grasslands, the bulk of the carbon components and associated storage are in the soil and root systems, versus the standing biomass, offering a potentially significant and unique carbon sink. However, their ability to store carbon and their resilience is highly dependent on both management practices and species diversity and abundance. Over the past few centuries, native perennial grasses with large root systems have been replaced by invasive annual grass species across California. The state's grasslands are experiencing the stress of climate change and historic degradation are losing carbon stocks due to associated species composition change, changes in annual wet up events and disturbances patterns, and decreased groundwater replenishment.

To ensure that the agriculture lands continue to provide beneficial outcomes for a healthy economy and ecosystem, the following practices would encourage through similar planning policies: Increased regenerative practices such as rangeland planting, riparian restoration, grazing and livestock management for fire resiliency. The ecosystem of Nevada County is rich in grassland biodiversity and protecting those grasslands from development and conversion is essential in maintaining the health of the lower elevations of the county.

6. How will the proposed project implement an adopted or draft Sustainable Communities Strategy or, if a Sustainable Communities Strategy is not required for a region by law, a regional plan that includes policies and programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions? Provide references to the specific goals, objectives, or policies that the project supports.

To meet environmental climate mitigation standards, Nevada County must address a reduction in both gas emissions and increase sequestration. The Climate Transformation Alliance has been formed with members of Nevada County, the town of Truckee and the Resource Conservation Districts, along with the Air Quality Control partners to begin discussion to assess the benefit of Natural and Working Lands within the region. The proposed plan is designed to measure GHG emission reduction potential through forest health and meadowland restoration management practices. The Climate Transformation Project group is looking to quantify both the carbon stocks and fluxes for vegetation types of these natural lands, to have a baseline of existing inventory. Since forests and meadows are two of the largest carbon stored repositories in the basin, it is essential to have data driven methodology to measure the resources available to inform regional data driven climate policies for the region. Most of the focus currently is on reducing wildfire risk with natural land management and stewardship practices, but it currently does not include an agricultural focus for working lands.

The County of Nevada already has a priority to adopt policies that focus on Climate Resilience initiatives. The creation of the AWLCP would allow a similar model to be forward for the assessment of current working lands in the county. Once a baseline was established that offered a more thorough understanding of current conservation and climate mitigation practices, it could work in conjunction with the Northern Sierra Air Quality District and the Climate Transformation Acceleration project to have a full picture of the climate resources inventory and allow for strategic and proactive policy driven recommendations that would reinforce and support agriculture as a working lands solution to building climate resilience and contributing to carbon neutrality.

7. How is the proposed plan consistent with California's Planning Priorities?

In February of 2023, the California Air Resources Board released a staff assessment of the Ozone Attainment Plan for Western Nevada County prepared by the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District.

CARB concluded that the Western Nevada County 2023 Plan meets the state implementation planning requirements of the federal Clean Air Act, including attainment demonstration, emissions inventory, etc. Effective August 3rd, 2018,

U.S. EPA designated Western Nevada County as a nonattainment area with a moderate classification. During the SIP development process, the District determined that the area could not meet the moderate attainment deadline and requested to be classified as a serious nonattainment area with an August 3, 2027 deadline. To address the 70 ppb ozone standard, the staff plan is being put forward for adoption. Air Quality in Western Nevada County is affected by various factors, including its complex terrain and topographic features, precursor emissions in the upwind source regions local emissions from anthropogenic and naturally occurring biogenic sources, ozone chemistry along the transport pathways, as well as the meteorological conditions that facilitate transport of ozone and its precursors. The highest elevated ozone concentrations occur in Western Nevada County during the late spring through early fall, when high temperatures and atmospheric conditions favor ozone formation. Western Nevada County is regularly impacted by emissions and polluted air masses from within the Sacramento Federal Ozone Nonattainment area and San Francisco Bay Area, as ozone can be transported up into nonattainment area and become trapped in the mountain valleys. The foothills of the Sierra Nevada allow air to transport ozone and ozone precursors into the basin from the west under normal summertime Delta breeze conditions. Ozone during this season generally reaches peak levels by early evening and remains elevated throughout the night, both of which are evidenced by the nature of the ozone recorded in Western Nevada County. Additionally, in recent years, the prevalence of wildfires during the summer ozone season significantly impacted the air quality. High ozone concentrations were observed on days affected by forest fires, particularly in 2018, 2020, and 2021. The number of exceedance days were 22, 16, 38, but drop down significantly when wildfire days are excluded to: 7, 3, 18. The 2023 plan addresses the district ozone strategy has relied on oxides of nitrogen and reactive organic gases emission reductions from stationary and mobile sources, as well as concurrent emission reductions in upwind areas. Western Nevada County have shown significant improvement in response to reductions despite a 10% decrease in population.

Carbon sequestration strategy is not discussed as part of the Air Quality Control plan but is necessary in order to have a strategic and comprehensive approach to addressing climate change within the rural county.

8. What economic, environmental, public health, cultural or other co-benefits that would arise from the project? How will those co-benefits be measured?

The anticipated outcomes of the AWLCP plan: a) Agricultural Economic Development Strategy; b) Land Use policy development that favors agricultural activities; c) Climate Resiliency Strategy; d) Education and Awareness Strategy will offer invaluable co-benefits as part of the

project. These include, but not limited to environmental land and watershed and habitat protection; the growth, retention and support of local jobs and agricultural revenue; the public health benefit of increased and affordable nutritious foods, reductions in food waste and a reduction in the risk of wildfire related health impacts. The partnerships involved in establishing this working plan are not only essential to the infrastructure and health of the community, their involvement in the AWLCP plan allows for intentional, mission driven integral work that includes agricultural as a necessary partner in establishing sustainable beneficial land practices.

According to the Nevada County Food Assessment report, farmers and ranchers as a whole have not made a profit since 1982 because food prices have remained almost constant while production expenses have increased dramatically. The 2018 Nevada County crop and Livestock report noted that “agricultural businesses and their suppliers and their employees spent an estimated \$7.7 million in the county economy. When this was combined with farm production value, this brought agriculture’s total 2018 economic contribution to \$33,356,991. Additionally, it estimated that the ecosystem services such as scenic wildlife habitat and wildlife protection provided between \$420 million and \$1.2 billion dollars in benefit to the community.” As indicated by these numbers, the basis of agriculture as an economic factor for the rural community is vital, not only to the workforce development, but for the co-benefits that the natural resources provide. The public health benefit that comes from clean air, clean water, and nutrient dense food are immeasurable and essential, given the rise of health-related contributing co-morbidities that affect sustainability on a large scale, in the face of natural disasters and pandemics. Additionally, as of 2018 the median age of the population at 49.5 in Nevada County is over ten years higher than the state at 36.7, with over 10% being over 75 years old. These statistics create a significant issue with workforce development. Additionally, one of the main obstacles, besides age, to having a productive agricultural workforce is the access to land. A main priority of the AWLCP is to assess the existing working lands and to understand the inventory available, as well as to flush out opportunities that exist within other partnering organizations to maximize co-benefits, including potential recreational and protected natural landscapes. Currently the County of Nevada has Climate resiliency and Recreational Land use as a priority, that already incorporates plans to increase the natural and cultural resources essential to the preservation of the community. It will only be beneficial to establish measuring systems that can be coordinated and utilized from multiple perspectives. The measurement of these practices will need to begin first with the AWLCP planning process and then an established data tracking system, along with a comprehensive strategy to incorporate multiple different organizational strategic plans into the county general plan update.

9. How will the project benefit priority populations; beginning or Veteran farmers and ranchers; residents of disadvantaged or low-income communities; or federally recognized California Native American tribe or a non-federally recognized California Native American tribe that is on

the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission and/or a priority population?

In order to create on-going and sustainable change within the priority populations, planning efforts need to include those organizations that are constantly advocating and providing resources for change making. One of the stakeholders that will be included is the Bear Yuba Land Trust, an accredited land trust that has over 30 years of conservation experience. Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, community-supported organization that works to promote voluntary conservation of the region's natural, historical and agricultural legacy. BYLT stewards a lasting community heritage by protecting and enhancing meadows, watersheds, forests, farms and ranches, trails and parks. BYLT's strategic plan, from 2020-2024 puts climate resilience at the forefront of their goals, in order to protect and restore the lands that provide multiple benefits to the ecosystem and their communities. As part of their "Culture of Stewardship and Preservation" initiative they have been dedicated advocates for the local Nisenan tribe, a non-federally recognized California Native American Tribe to ensure that preservation of cultural heritage is celebrated through their land acknowledgement: *"We acknowledge that the lands we serve are the ancestral homelands of the Nisenan, whose land is unceded and who were nearly exterminated by colonization, and who share intersecting boundaries with the Konkow and Washoe. We support tribal priorities, including returning land to tribal families and communities, consistent with our mission to preserve the natural, scenic, and cultural resources of these lands."*

Sierra Harvest, another partnering organization, "envisions a thriving local food economy where everyone has access to fresh, local, seasonal food through strong connections among farmers, schools and the community. We envision a network of financially viable farms providing food for the community, where health and wellness is the norm and people are engaged in growing, harvesting, preparing, and sharing fresh food. As of 2019, they had trained over 100 beginning farmers and gleaned over 12,000 pounds of food per year, along with educating over 9500 school children on the importance of whole nutrient dense food. Education and awareness are at the core of these partnerships. The benefit of living in a small rural community is in understanding the very nature of collaborative co-existence. The focus of creating the AWLCP is to bring together a group of active and community enriched non-profit partners who are already working tirelessly to ensure that their mission is creating a significant impact. In the context of a changing climate, by using SALC, as a planning resource for the agricultural lands, the County of Nevada, can ensure that the most powerful strategic policies are in place to support the work of the private landowners, the farmers, ranchers, non-profits, and other district agencies to continue to prioritize the economic and ecological future of the land and livelihood.

10. How will the proposal complement other efforts in the region, including comprehensive planning efforts (e.g., Greenprints, general or special plan objectives or goals), and agricultural

land use policies (e.g., Williamson Act)? How would the project leverage other permanently protected lands to promote location and resource-efficient development?

Land use agricultural planning policies for Nevada County have a long-standing history of including agriculture. In the 1991 General Plan, the historical reference points to the formation of the Nevada Irrigation District, the district's municipal water agency, which was established in 1921. With the availability of irrigation water, the number of livestock and dairies increased sharply before the World War II era. During the post World War II era, timber continued to be a strong industry, with millions of board feet of lumber a year supplying the marketplace. According to the 1987 census of Agriculture, the average size of a farm was 146 acres. While the number of farms has increased, the size of the individual farms has declined significantly in size to only 77 acres, as of the 2017 agricultural census. Originally in Nevada County, there were only 12 original ranches. Many of those families are still involved in agriculture today and have been at the forefront of utilizing land use policies such as the Williamson Act. However, with the increase in development, many of the small farms and ranches run the risk of selling due to economic factors, without the education of preservation and policies in place. However, in some areas, the county is on the forefront of combining preservation practices to create agricultural opportunities in perpetuity. As a recent example, a piece of land was permanently conserved through the Bear Yuba Land Trust, Forever Farms: An innovative model.

To help address some of these challenges, Bear Yuba Land Trust has launched Forever Farms with partners Sierra Harvest, BriarPatch Food Co-op, Tahoe Food Hub, and Mountain Bounty Farm to conserve local farmland. BYLT's role is to identify and purchase farmland at risk of subdivision and conversion from agriculture and to work with local farmers on long-term evergreen leases with stipulations to ensure that the land remains productive farmland and that its management is ecologically responsible. Access to the land remains affordable, and BYLT uses lease revenue for management of the property and lease. Any revenue earned beyond that will be used by BYLT as an endowment for the Forever Farm Program. In 2022, BYLT honored and renamed c'oompe (pronounced CH-oom pe) Preserve, a Nisenan place name. The site, home to Mountain Bounty Farm, holds significant historical and cultural meaning for the Nisenan Tribe of the Nevada City Rancheria. Bear Yuba Land Trust contributes a portion of the farm lease to the Tribe's [Ancestral Homelands Reciprocity Program](#), a community generated initiative to support and uplift the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe, the original peoples of this land, through their tribally-guided 501(c)(3) nonprofit [CHIRP](#) (California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project).

These partnerships portray the great work that is being done already by the County of Nevada and community members to lead the way with action planning.

11. What is the applicant's experience in developing and implementing similar projects? What are the internal resources and capacity to complete the proposed work, or will consultants or contractors be required? Are there professional staff qualified to develop and successfully implement the proposal? If not, please describe how will the applicant acquire this expertise.

The Nevada County Resource Conservation District envisions a balance between a high-quality rural environment, a biologically diverse landscape, and a healthy economy for the community. The Nevada County Resource Conservation District has been working with the County of Nevada and similar partners in assessing the natural resource landscape for planning since inception on November 13, 1943. The County of Nevada has been successful in assessing and implementing planning projects since its inception in 1851. In a small rural county, with a significant of mixed-use land, collaboration and cooperation with agricultural resources and planning are vital. Additionally, the non-profit stakeholders have been engaged with conservation and education combined for over fifty years. The Nevada County Resource Conservation District understands the strategic nature of conservation planning and concludes that the SALC planning grant is the preferred methodology for gathering the information necessary to establish future policy. The NCRCD staff will collaborate closely with the Nevada County staff to ensure that the outcomes of the AWLCP are aligned and supported. Consultants and contractors will be brought into the process to establish the expertise necessary for the facilitation process and the long range comprehensive final planning document.

12. Which stakeholders will participate in the proposed project? How will these stakeholders participate?

Core Team-

Nevada County Resource Conservation District-Project Lead, Core Team Participant, Administrative/Grant Management, Farmer/Rancher Expertise

The County of Nevada CEO's office-Project Partner, Core Team Participant, Climate, Economic, Planning Policy expertise

The County of Nevada Agricultural Commissioner's Office-Project Partner, Core Team Participant, Technical Assistance

Bear Yuba Land Trust-Project Partner, Core Team Participant, Advisory, Technical Assistance, Conservation Expertise

Sierra Harvest- Project Partner, Core Team Participant, Advisory, Economic and community engagement assistance

Nevada County Farm Bureau-Core Team Participant, Advisory, Farm/Rancher Expertise

Advisory Group-

As a part of the project tasks an advisory group is to be established for assistance in the community engagement; technical review and AWLCP development. This group would consist of local rancher/farmers, economic interest, environmental organizations, researchers, and technical advisors.

Nevada Irrigation District; Air Quality Control; Future Farmers of America, Placer County Cattlewomen; NRCS, Climate Transformation Alliance