

Growing Resilience: Integrating Natural and Working Lands into Climate Action Planning Breakout Session 2

Speakers: Lynda Hopkins, Heather Nichols, Margot Flynn, Kristen Wraithwell (Moderator)

- Natural and working lands are often under-utilized in climate action planning but can be really powerful tools
- Resource Conservation District = provide funding and technical assistance to farmers who want to naturally improve their lands
- Technical assistance = project management, implementation, planning and funding, actually getting plants in the ground, developing conservation plans
- Carbon farm planning services quantify the benefits of working lands (metric tons of carbon from working on a farm) and help connect the dots with local/eeional government
- Specific plans to individual farms document the process of capturing and storing carbon on farmlands and serve as living documents
- Most farmers do this for the on-farm benefits, like improved water quality
 - People need technical and financial assistance to reduce the cost for these endeavors through RCDs and community organizations
- Carbon farm plans are co-developed with farmers
- Farm-level work informs state planning in the natural and working lands space
 - 30x30, AB 1757, etc. are all state climate goals supported by this work
- EQPP = Environmental Quality Protection Program
- NRCS = Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - Survey phase asks farmers questions about their goals and current practices, which informs GHG emissions and how to move forward
- Providing free technical assistance and services like soil testing is key for adoption of these farm plans
- Find an RCD or NRCS in your area and work with them on these programs
- Healthy Soils Program and Alternative Manure Management Program are examples of programs that rely on state funding
- Sonoma County has directly funded strategic prescribed grazing on private farms in order to create green belts that reduce wildfire risk
- Match.Graze = allows private property owners to connect their goats to lands that need grazing (like Match.com for goats and lands)
- Grazing happening on about a third of regional parks
- Rotational grazing enhances carbon sequestration, acting like a pump
- Sonoma County has a special district: Ag + Open Space
- In addition to wildfires, Sonoma County is focusing on things like water quality and extreme flooding (restoring wetlands and floodplains)
- Q&A
 - Start with willing landowners, then all the farmers talk to each other, and more get on board

- Farmers are not showy and historically don't trust government, but if they see proof-of-concept then they will be more willing to participate
- Do what you say you're going to do and provide something of value, then those relationships come around and you can start to prioritize efforts
- Local tribal communities are really at the forefront of these efforts, helping with land stewardship and climate action planning -> look to partnerships with tribes as leaders in this space
- Making early and meaningful connections with tribes helps to build those relationships and not just reach out when a project comes up, especially during meetings that have to navigate tribal sovereignty forms
- Trying to find creative funding sources for all of these programs to keep efforts going