

# Town Hall

2-3 pm, March 21, 2024

## Agenda

- Welcome
- Leadership Update
- Stories from the Field: Kristin Dobbin
- Strategic Focus: Rachel Lee
- ANR in the News
- New Hires
- Other Updates: Elizabeth Moon

Chat warmup  
Learning about each other:  
What is the best thing about spring?



# Leadership Update

Vision & News - (10-15 mins)



# Stories from the Field

with Kristin Dobbin

Leveraging  
policy &  
governance  
research for  
water justice in  
California

Kristin B. Dobbin, PhD

Asst. Cooperative Extension  
Specialist

UC ANR & UC Berkeley



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
Agriculture and Natural Resources



Photo: Bear Guerra

Water  
Governance



Environmental  
(In)Justice

# Presentation outline

- Background: California's drinking water crisis
- Research & extension examples:
  1. Advancing equitable drinking water access through water system consolidation
  2. Addressing the needs of "decentralized" water users

# California's Human Right to Water Law



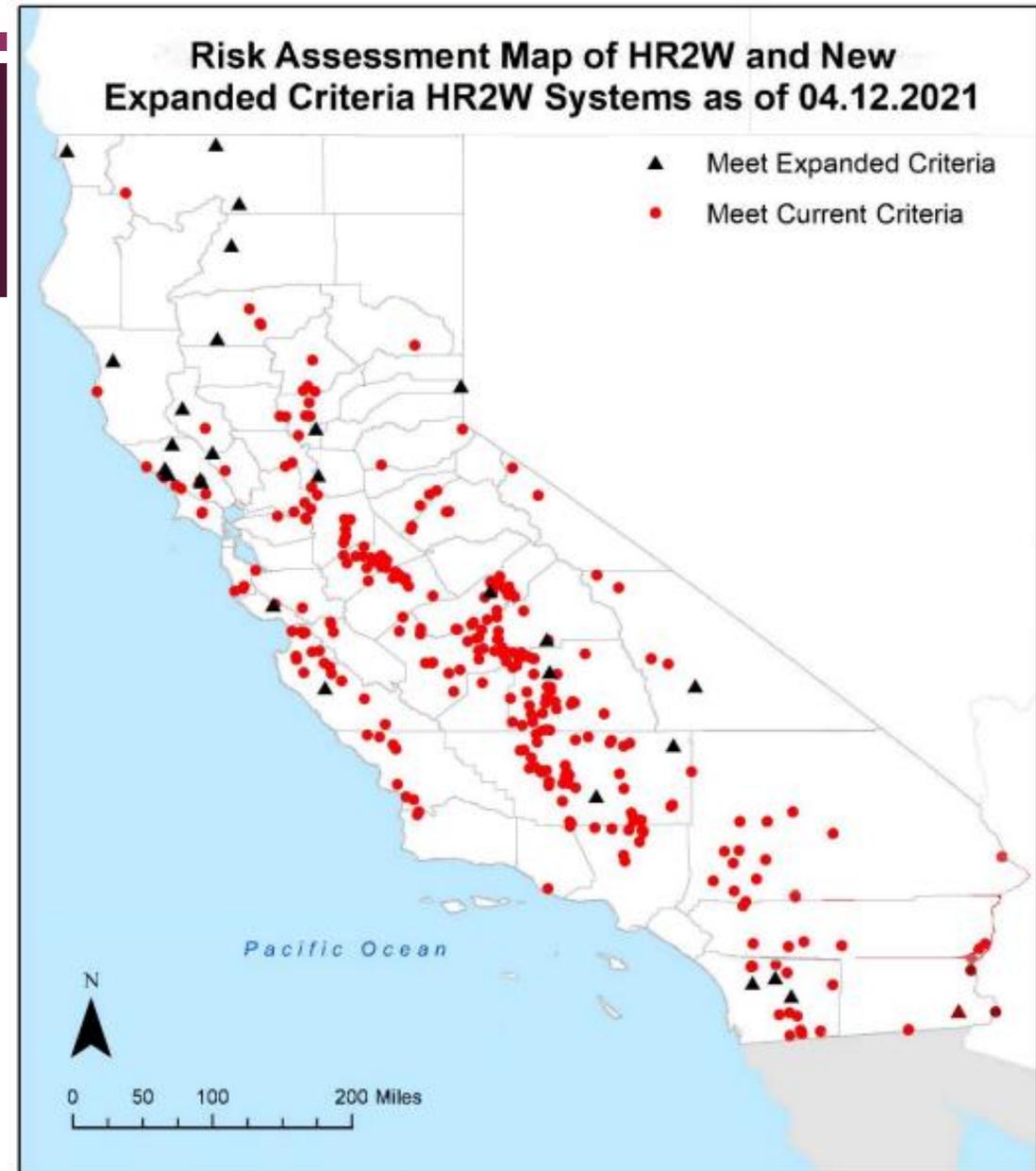
Photo: Community Water Center

AB 685 (2012) excerpts:

- (a) It is hereby declared to be the established policy of the state that every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water...
- (b) All relevant state agencies... shall consider this state policy...

# Water quality challenges

- As of January 2024: 907,263 Californians are served by non-compliant public water systems.
- More than 6.6 million have been impacted by primary drinking water violations since 2012.
- ~1.5 million Californians served by domestic wells or unregulated small systems with unknown, likely poor, water quality



Data: State Water Resources Control Board, Human Right to Water Portal

# Water accessibility challenges

- 5,588 household water outages reported statewide
- More than 150 Public Water Systems required emergency assistance
- Tens of millions spent on drinking water assistance



Photo: Community Water Center

# Water affordability challenges

- 21% of California water systems estimated to have unaffordable rates by the State Water Board
- A 2021 survey found that ~12% of California have overdue water payments, totaling \$1 billion in collective water debt
- No low-income rate assistance programs for water like other utilities

California households owe \$1bn in water bills as affordability crisis worsens

**One in every eight households owes water debt, survey shows, with Black and Latino neighborhoods more likely to be in arrears**



Source: The Guardian, Jan 2021

I AM ONE  
OF THE MILLION IN CA WITHOUT SAFE WATER

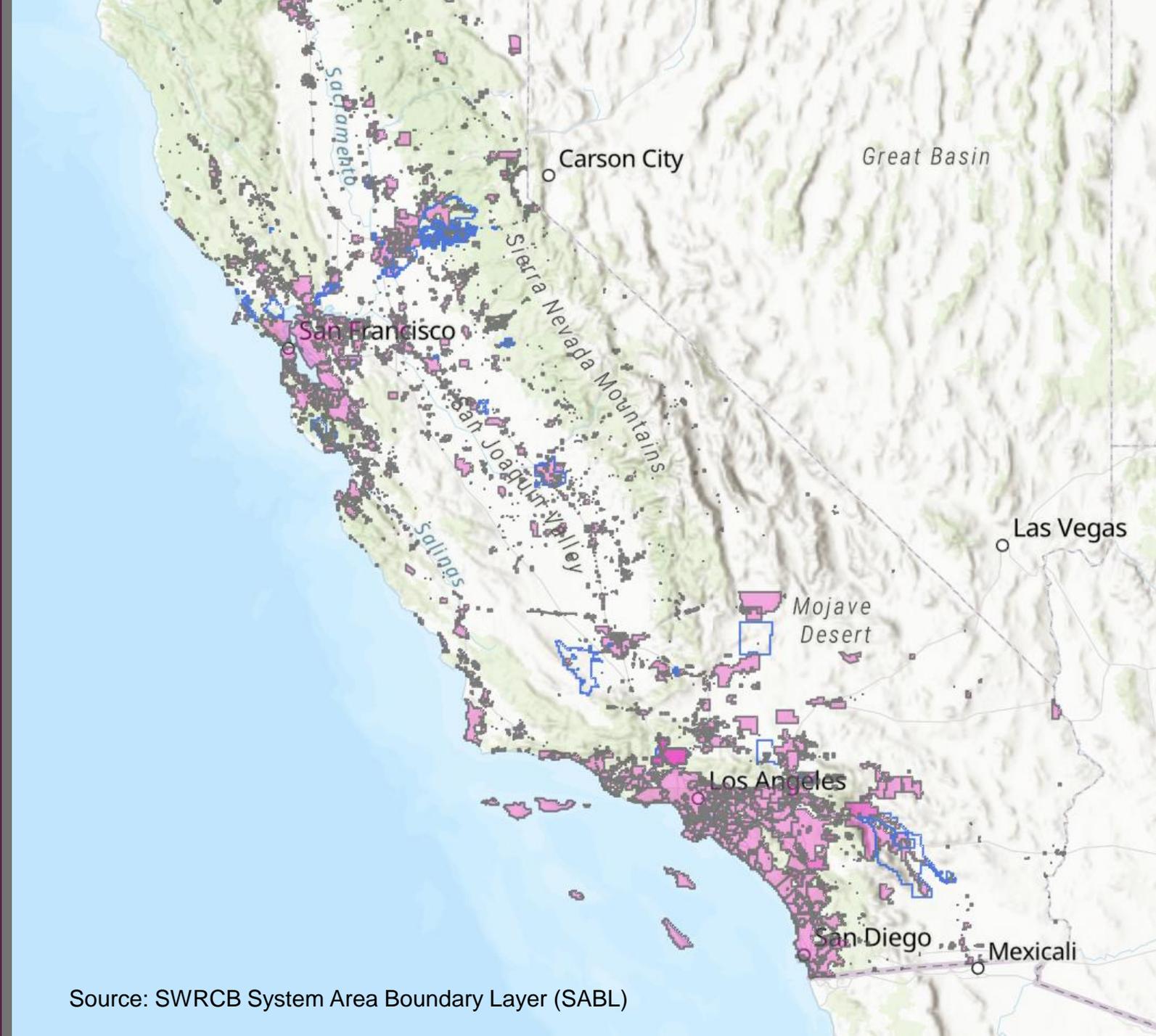
PASS THE  
SAFE WATER  
ACT



Photo: Kristin Dobbin

# Example 1:

Advancing equitable drinking water access through water system consolidation



Source: SWRCB System Area Boundary Layer (SABL)

# Consolidation is the formal merging of some or all governance, management and financial functions of drinking water provision between two or more water system entities

Figure 1: Types of regional collaboration

Increasing Transfer of Responsibility →

Informal Cooperation	Contractual Assistance	Shared Governance	Ownership Transfer
<p>Work with other systems, but without contractual obligations</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing equipment</li> <li>• Sharing bulk supply purchases</li> <li>• Mutual aid agreements</li> </ul>	<p>Requires a contract, but contract is under systems' control</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contracting operation and management</li> <li>• Outsourcing engineering services</li> <li>• Purchasing water</li> </ul>	<p>Creation of a shared entity by several systems that continue to exist independently (e.g., regional water system)</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing system management</li> <li>• Sharing leadership</li> <li>• Sharing source water</li> <li>• JPA</li> </ul>	<p>Takeover by existing or newly created entity</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquisition and physical inter-connection</li> <li>• Acquisition and satellite mgmt</li> <li>• One system transferring ownership to another to become a larger existing system or a new entity</li> </ul>

Using “consolidation” to be inclusive of:

- Regionalization
- Acquisition
- Service extension
- Managerial consolidation



Graphic adapted by RCAP and RCAC from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency resources

# Promoted Benefits of Consolidation

- Increasing economies of scale
- Greater technical, managerial and financial capacity
- Obtaining/retaining qualified staff
- Improving water supply (quality and/or quantity)
- Increasing system sustainability and resilience
- Reducing service burden for community volunteers
- Increasing involvement/role in water planning/policy

# Research & Extension Objectives

1. Advance our understanding of the role water system consolidations play in increasing sustainable access to safe, affordable drinking water in California, and how consolidation might be leveraged more effectively towards these ends
2. Provide information and resources to stakeholders to support the implementation of community-driven consolidation projects

## Trends in California Water Systems Consolidation

DECEMBER 2023

### ISSUE

Small water systems are 13 times more likely to violate the Safe Drinking Water Act than large systems and are less resilient in the face of drought and other challenges resulting from the climate crisis. Low-income, rural, and indigenous communities bear the brunt of these consequences, thereby perpetuating inequality. Water system consolidation — or the merging of two or more previously independent water systems — presents one possible solution to many of these challenges.

To advance consolidations, California has developed financial incentives for larger water systems to absorb small systems, introduced new powers to mandate consolidation under specific circumstances, and invested significantly in Technical Assistance resulting in over than 200 completed projects with more underway. Understanding more about these efforts is an important first step towards ensuring that new policies and funding achieve the desired benefits. To this end, UC Berkeley and UCLA researchers compiled a novel dataset of consolidation projects completed between 2015 and 2021.

### KEY FINDINGS

**Water quality challenges and climate change impacts are driving consolidations.** Among systems with data about motives for consolidation, 81% cited water quality compliance concerns. Climate change was the second most common motivating factor cited by more than 10%, including drought, fire, and landslide impacts.

**Consolidations involve systems in very close proximity.** The median distance between consolidations was 0.174 miles for physical consolidations and 0.751 miles for managerial consolidations. Only nine consolidations spanned more than three miles.

**Consolidations are reaching high priority systems like Mobile Home Parks and schools.** In addition to reducing the number of regulated water systems gen-

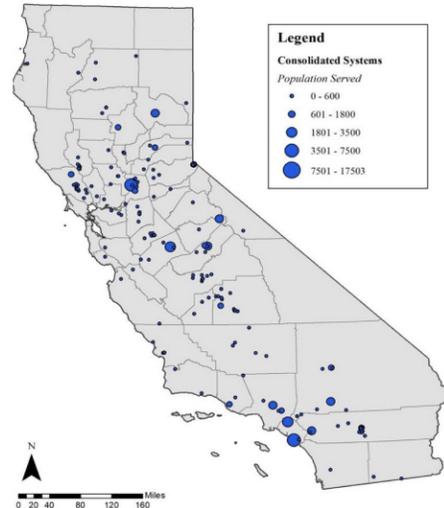


Figure 1. Consolidated systems 2015-2021 by population served.

erally, water systems serving schools and mobile home parks represent a particularly large share of consolidated systems compared to their statewide prevalence.

**Both consolidated and receiving systems are generally very small.** The median population served by a consolidated water system is just 120. One reason for this is the large number of non-Community Water Systems that have been consolidated (46%). Receiving systems, in turn, have a median population of 7,061. Forty-five percent of receiving systems serve under 5,000 customers.

**Consolidations have the potential to increase representation in local water decision-making.** Over 60% of consolidated systems are privately owned water systems without elected governing boards. In con-

# Secondary data analysis of consolidations 2015-2021:

- Consolidations are reaching high priority systems like Mobile Home Parks and schools
- Consolidations involve systems in very close proximity
- Both consolidated and receiving systems are generally very small
- Water quality challenges and climate change impacts are driving consolidations

COMING SOON:  
**CALIFORNIA WATER SYSTEM  
CONSOLIDATION SURVEY**



The upcoming California water system consolidation survey seeks to improve our understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with consolidation and help California communities identify and advance locally appropriate strategies for ensuring safe, affordable, and sustainable drinking water access. In late January 2024, invitations to participate in the survey will be sent via post mail and email to all water systems with active consolidation projects or that have participated in one or more completed consolidations since 2015.

**If you receive the invitation, please complete the survey.  
Your experiences are critical to informing future efforts.**

**TO LEARN MORE, CONTACT KRISTIN DOBBIN AT (916) 476-2750 OR [KDOBBIN@BERKELEY.EDU](mailto:KDOBBIN@BERKELEY.EDU)**

This research is being conducted by the University of California Berkeley and the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources with funding from the California Institute for Water Resources and the U.S. Geological Survey.

## The California water system consolidation survey:

- Launched Feb 1st 2024
- Collecting responses through ~March 31st 2024
- Designed for consolidations in all phases (scoping - completed)
- Goals:
  1. Understand motivations for consolidation and desired objectives
  2. Identify common local challenges
  3. Quantify outcomes

PROVIDE  
INFORMATION  
AND RESOURCES  
TO STAKEHOLDERS

# LAFCo and Water System Consolidation:

*Bridging the gap between  
local and state regulators  
to stop and reverse  
water system fragmentation*

JANUARY 2024

# DESIGNING WATER SYSTEM CONSOLIDATION PROJECTS

*Considerations for California Communities*

Kristin Dobbin, Justin McBride and Gregory Pierce

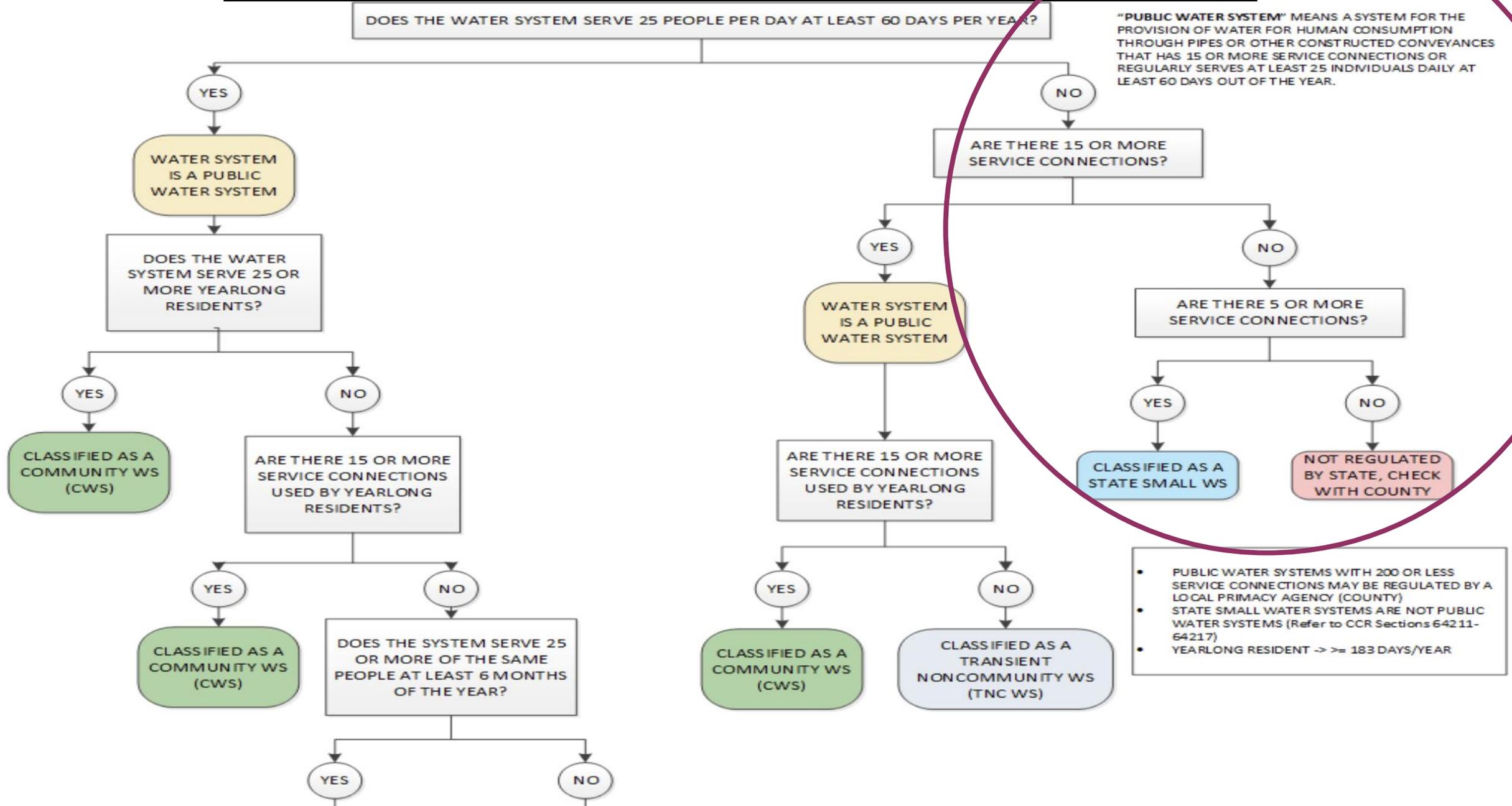
## Example 2:

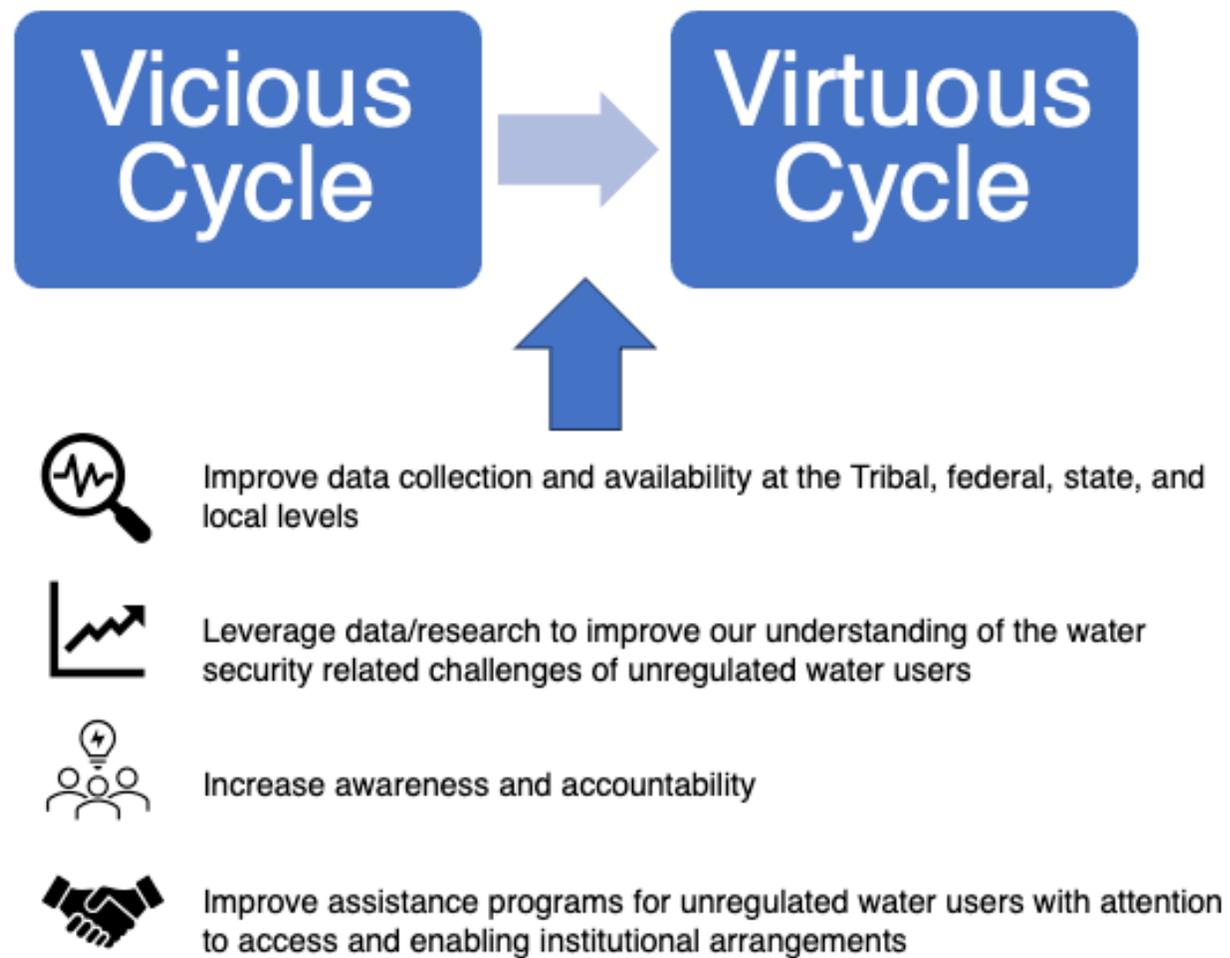
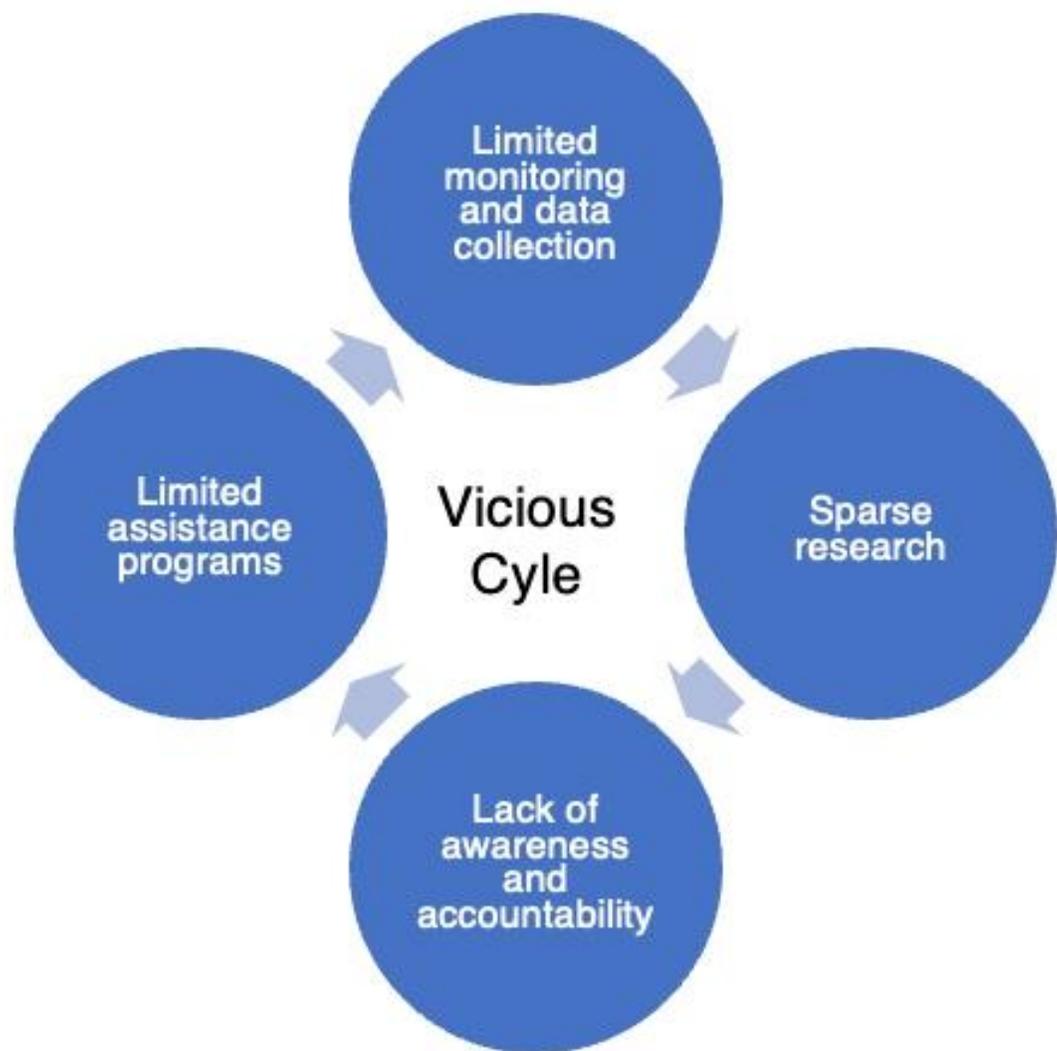
Addressing  
the needs of  
“decentralized”  
water users



Photo: Community Water Center

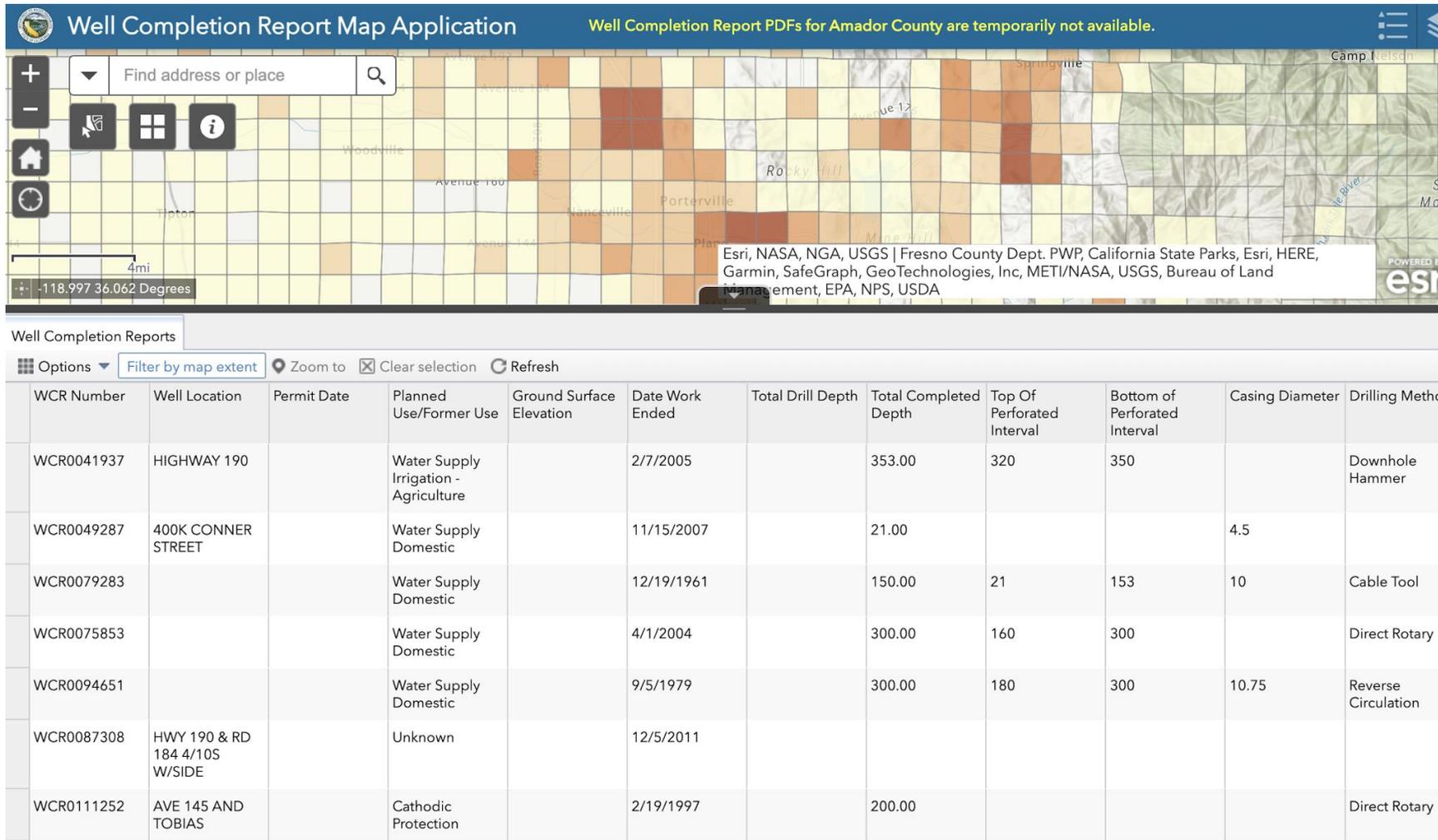
# DECISION TREE FOR CLASSIFICATION OF WATER SYSTEMS







# Data challenges impede these efforts



- Limited data
- Poor data quality
- Very limited reporting of well retirement

# Patchwork monitoring & assistance programs

## Programs

- Hauled water programs
- Well testing programs
- Well loan programs
- Bottled water replacement

## Providers

- Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP)
- CV-SALTS
- SGMA
- Technical Assistance providers
- Counties
- SWRCB & DWR

Thank you!

[kbdobbin@Berkeley.edu](mailto:kbdobbin@Berkeley.edu)

# Strategic Focus

with Rachel Lee

# *California Agriculture*

## News and Updates

Rachel Lee, Director of Publishing

March 2024

# ANR Publishing

- Who are we?
- Publisher for the ANR division
  - Open Access, peer-reviewed publications that share research with the wider community
    - Short-form advice and 'how to' publications
    - Long-form books and manuals
    - Identification cards
  - *California Agriculture* journal
  - *Hilgardia* journal (ceased publication)

# California Agriculture

- Open Access, peer-reviewed
- ANR's flagship journal, published quarterly since 1946
- Online version of record since 2011
- Indexed in Google Scholar, Web of Science, SCOPUS, DOAJ
- Impact Factor of 1.49



# California Agriculture Online

- Current site
  - Dated tech caused issues with support
  - No site development
  - Time-consuming workflows
  - Difficult to search and find older articles

The screenshot shows the homepage of the California Agriculture journal website. At the top, it features the University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources logo and the journal title 'California Agriculture'. A navigation bar includes links for Home, All Issues, About, Associate editors, Submit articles, Accepted Papers, Subscribe, and Advanced search. The main content area is titled 'Current issue and featured articles' and highlights the April-June 2023 issue (Volume 77, Number 2). Below this, there are three featured articles with their titles, authors, and abstracts. On the right side, there are social media links for RSS, Twitter (@Cal\_Ag), and Facebook, along with a 'Find us on' section for the journal's Facebook page.

University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources

California Agriculture

Home All Issues About Associate editors Submit articles Accepted Papers Subscribe Advanced search

Current issue and featured articles

California Agriculture April-June 2023  
Volume 77, Number 2  
[PDF of Issue](#) | [View Abstracts](#)

**Peer-reviewed research and review articles**

**California wine grape growers need support to manage risks from wildfire and smoke**  
by Emily Zakowski, Lauren E. Parker, Devon Johnson, John Aguirre, Steven M. Ostoja  
[Abstract](#) | [Full text HTML](#) | [PDF](#)  
Wildfire smoke exposure presents a unique challenge for viticulture as it can result in mild to severe degradation in wine grapes.

**More jobs and less seasonal employment in California agriculture since 1990**  
by Zachariah Rutledge, Philip Martin  
[Abstract](#) | [Full text HTML](#) | [PDF](#)  
Agricultural employment rose 10% from 1990 to 2020, with less seasonality but more use of contract labor.

**Urban agriculture in California: Lessons learned from an urban farmer workshop series**  
by Rachel A. Surls, Rob Bennaton, Gail W. Feenstra, Ramiro E. Lobo, Alda F. Pires, Jennifer Sowerwine, Julia Van Soelen Kim, Cheryl A. Wilen  
[Abstract](#) | [Full text HTML](#) | [PDF](#)  
Evaluation of workshops offered to urban farmers highlights the need for training to achieve economic viability and access to land.

**Recycled water could recharge aquifers in the Central Valley**  
by Sarah D. Cardenas, Dana Bertram, Jordan E. Clark, Nicola Ullrich

EARLY VIEW  
**Exploring the challenges and benefits of online youth-led nutrition programs**  
Yu Meng, Marisa Neelon, Nancy LePage, Brandon Louie, Nancy Erbstein  
[Abstract](#) | [Full text HTML](#) | [PDF](#)  
When youth-led participatory action research programming went online, it became easier to schedule meetings, but participants' engagement was weakened.  
[See All Early View](#)

[Subscribe to RSS feed](#)

[@Cal\\_Ag](#)

Find us on [f](#)

[Cal Ag](#) California Agriculture j...  
[Follow Page](#) 3.1K followers

California Agriculture

# *California Agriculture Online*

- New site: <https://calag.scholasticahq.com/>
  - Third-party dedicated hosting platform via Scholastica
  - Benefits to the author and reader
    - Clean, modern design
    - Decreased time to publication
    - Improved search
  - Benefits to the Publishing team
    - ‘Push button’ publishing
    - Accurate reporting and usage metrics
    - Continuous improvement and development

# *California Agriculture* – Next Steps

- ‘Soft Launch’
  - Conversations with stakeholders, surveys
    - Understanding how readers navigate and use content
    - Improving the author experience
    - Who isn’t reading, and why?
    - Looking towards the future of Cal Ag
  - We want to hear from you!
    - Email me your thoughts at [anrlee@ucanr.edu](mailto:anrlee@ucanr.edu).

# Many thanks...

- It takes a village!
  - Thanks to Debbie Thompson, Cal Ag Managing Editor
  - Jaki Hsieh Wojan and Steve Edberg, and IT Support Staff

A person wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt, a tan wide-brimmed hat, and yellow gloves is working in a garden. They are positioned behind a wire mesh fence, and their hands are near the ground, possibly planting or tending to a plant. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and greenery.

# Donor Feedback

*People care about what we do.*

*“Happy to be part of the program that does so much to help people learn about so many parts of gardening.”*

Laurie M.  
Master Gardener Program

# In the Media

- **Selina Wang** told [CNN](#) viewers to consume olive oil asap before its healthfulness and flavor decline
- **Jhalendra Rijal** was interviewed by [ABC10](#) and [CBS13](#) about the carpophilus beetle threatening almond, walnut and pistachio trees
- **Cindy Kron** warned [Wine Business](#) readers to be on the lookout for spotted lanternfly
- **Edith de Guzman** told [LAist](#) capturing stormwater in our yards can help refill aquifers
- **Cameron Zuber** talked to [Merced Focus](#) and **Mohammad Yaghmour** talked to the [Bakersfield Californian](#) about the almond bloom
- **Alison Van Eenennaam** discussed pigs that are gene-edited for resistance to a virus in [Science](#) magazine and [National Hog Farmer](#)

[https://ucanr.edu/News/UC\\_ANR\\_in\\_the\\_news](https://ucanr.edu/News/UC_ANR_in_the_news)



**Keith Taylor** discusses utility costs on ABC10

# New Hires

Elizabeth Alcantara	UCCE CAPITOL CORRIDOR MCP
Damaris Camarena	STATEWIDE PROGRAMS & REC OPS
Matthew Davis	IT SERVICES
Adriana Deloera	UCCE KERN COUNTY
Hasmik Djoulakian	UCCE SANTA CLARA COUNTY
Gabrielle Ednilao	UCCE CAPITOL CORRIDOR MCP
Omar El Nashar	CA INST FOR WATER RESOURCES
Caitlin French	NUTRITION POLICY INSTITUTE
Jose Huirache	DESERT REC
Christian Jordan	UCCE SHASTA COUNTY
David Landis	UCCE ORANGE COUNTY
Azusena Ledesma Calderon	UCCE FRESNO MADERA MCP
Rachel McFarland	SUSTAINABLE AG RESEARCH & EDU
Justin Mickle	UCCE CENTRAL SIERRA NEVADA MCP
Shelby Motley	VICE PROVOST OF RESEARCH & EXT
Ge Moua	UCCE CAPITOL CORRIDOR MCP
Yesenia Valverde	UCCE SANTA CLARA COUNTY
Angela Velazquez	DESERT REC



Damaris Camarena



Gabrielle Ednilao



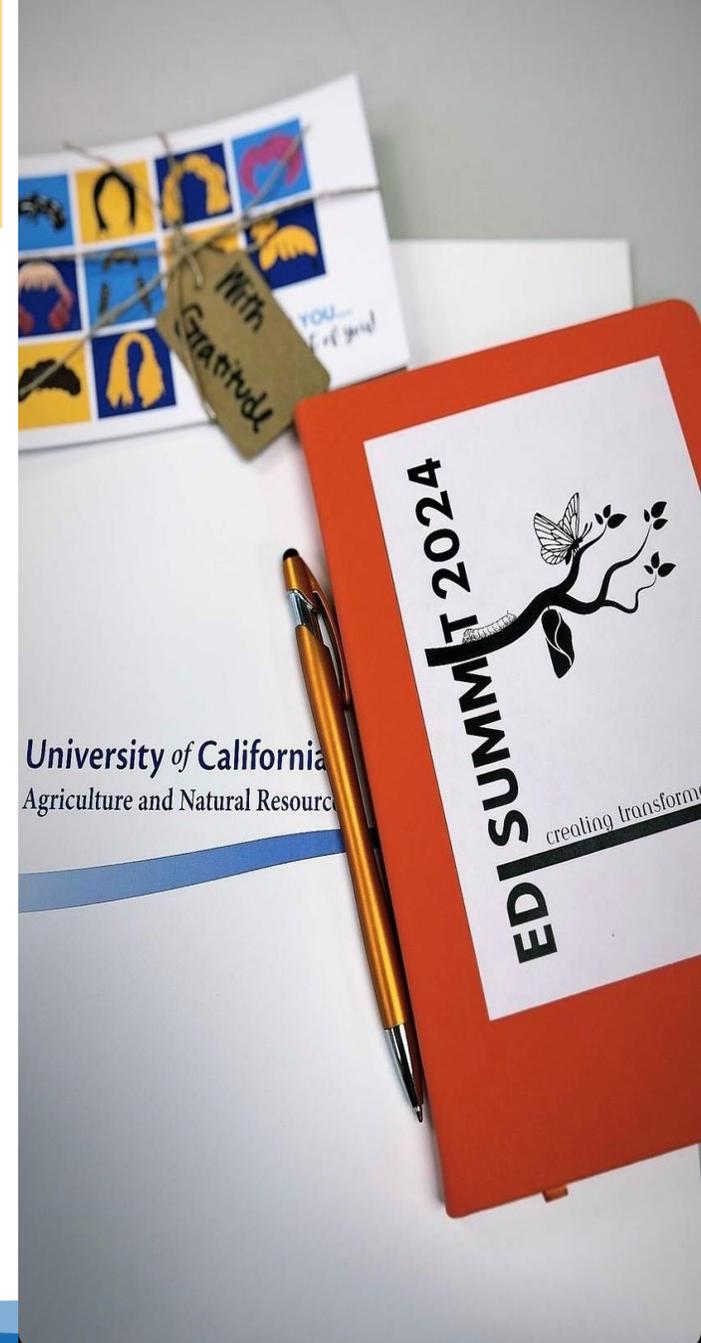
Shelby Motley

# Other Updates

with Elizabeth Moon



# EDI Summit Review: Creating Transformations

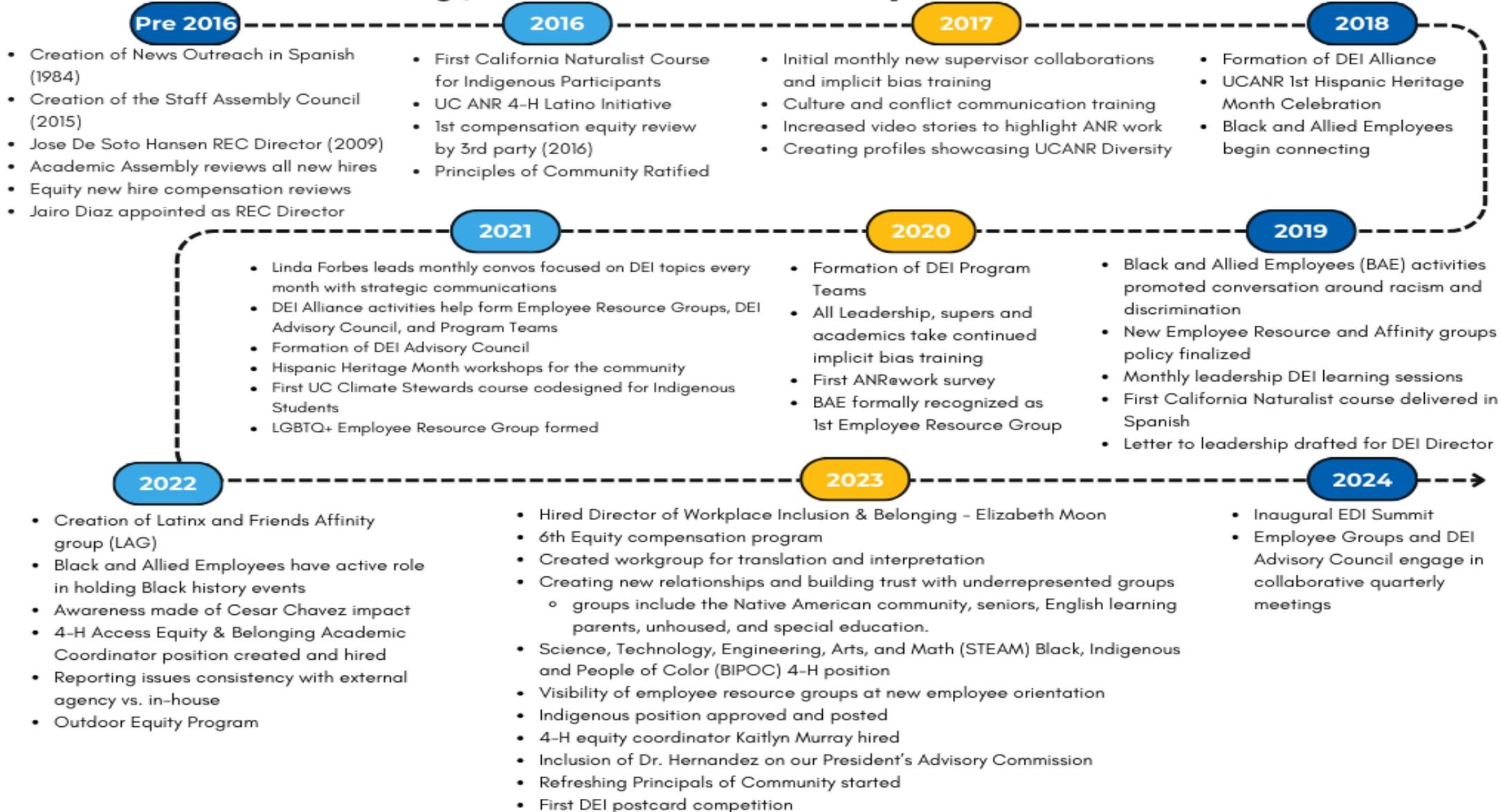




Workplace Inclusion and Belonging

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
Agriculture and Natural Resources

# University of California Agriculture & Natural Resources Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Accomplishments Timeline



# Steps Following the Summit

- ❑ **Priorities from Challenges Identified:** People, Processes, Resources, Knowledge, and Accountability

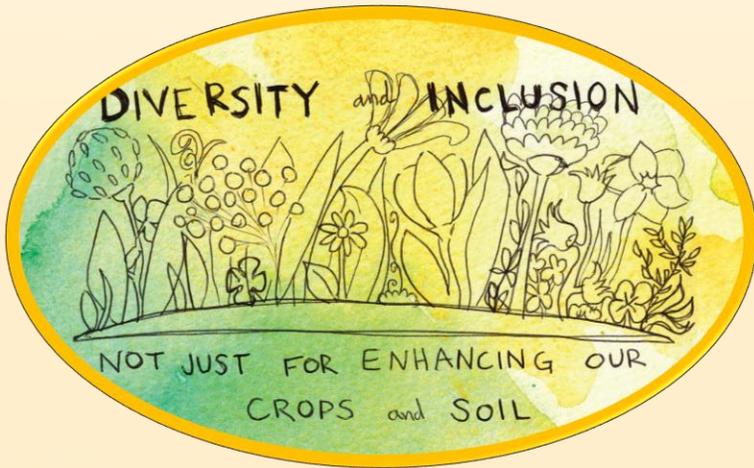
- ❑ **Enhanced Collaborative Communication**

- ❑ Quarterly Employee Groups meet w/ DEI Advisory Council
- ❑ Biannual Newsletter: Updates from DEI Advisory Council, Employee Groups, and Upcoming Events
- ❑ Central Email: [DEIadvCouncil@ucanr.edu](mailto:DEIadvCouncil@ucanr.edu)
- ❑ WIB Website- March 28



- ❑ **Principles of Community 2.0 Refresh Next Steps**

# Thank You!



## Save the Date!

- UC ANR Moves on May 1

## Please nominate someone for the upcoming awards!

- Nominations of Academics for the DSAs are due April 1.
- Nominations for STAR awards are due April 11.



# THANK YOU!

The next town hall will be  
Thursday, April 18, 2024

 **UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**  
Agriculture and Natural Resources