

# Multibenefit Land Use Alternatives

Unlocking sustainable futures for local communities

## Multibenefit Land Repurposing Project Options

The following multibenefit land repurposing projects require less water and create additional community and environmental benefits. The Merced subbasin could implement these projects to benefit your community. These are not the only options for projects. Community recommendations are encouraged in the survey linked above.



### Less Water-Intensive Crops

- + Can provide water savings and help maintain regional crop diversity.
- + Some types of less water-intensive crops can be annually fallowed during times of drought.
- + Must consider market demand and specialized labor need.



### Low Impact Solar

- + Clean energy source that helps California reduce its climate impacts.
- + Creates some jobs and can complement other land uses like grazing or cover crops.
- + Requires the right physical conditions and accessibility to transmission infrastructure.



### Grazing Land

- + Can support soil health if well-managed and can be compatible with native plants.
- + Can require investment in fencing and the amount of feed available is dependent on rainfall.
- + Low-density and rotational grazing practices can avoid erosion and soil degradation.



# Multibenefit Land Repurposing Project Options

The following multibenefit land repurposing projects require less water and create additional community and environmental benefits. The Merced subbasin could implement these projects to benefit your community. These are not the only options for projects. Community recommendations are encouraged in the survey linked above.



## Dryland Agriculture

- + Can serve as a transition crop and be flexible year to year.
- + With proper management can promote soil health and provide pollinator habitat.
- + Yields can be unpredictable, so it may not be viable in regions with limited rainfall.



## Recreational Areas & Parks

- + Provide recreational opportunities for communities, such as parks, outdoor education.
- + Can buffer against environmental health threats, especially near rural communities that experience poor air quality and water quality.
- + Xeriscaping, a type of specialized landscaping that requires little to no irrigation, can reduce or eliminate need for applied water beyond rainfall.



## Groundwater Recharge

- + Helps store water for future use, can improve well reliability and water quality, and can support habitat and ecosystems.
- + Diverting flood flows to dedicated areas can reduce downstream flood risks to communities and farmland.
- + Can work successfully with agriculture with the right soil conditions. Crops like rice, almonds, and alfalfa can be good options if managed properly.
- + Water quality should be carefully considered to avoid worsening groundwater quality in areas that support drinking water wells.

# Multibenefit Land Use Alternatives

Unlocking sustainable futures for local communities

## Multibenefit Land Repurposing Project Options

The following multibenefit land repurposing projects require less water and create additional community and environmental benefits. The Merced subbasin could implement these projects to benefit your community. These are not the only options for projects. Community recommendations are encouraged in the survey linked above.



### Pollinator-friendly Cover Crops

- + Can improve soil quality, reduce dust and erosion, and support pollinators like bees and butterflies.
- + Seed mixes need to be selected based on local rainfall patterns and soil conditions.
- + Can be planted field-wide, as hedgerows, or between crop rows.



### Tribal Land Uses & Cultural Practices

- + Traditional land uses are an important part of keeping cultural traditions alive for many tribes, and can help tribes maintain their traditional arts and lifestyle.
- + Can provide other benefits, such as habitat for wildlife, flood protection, and recreational opportunities.
- + Tribal rights, regulatory hurdles, and conflicting land use interests can pose challenges to restoring tribal land uses and cultural practices.



### Wildlife Habitat

- + Improves regional biodiversity and can help recover plants and animals that are at risk of extinction.
- + Can improve soil health, support pollinators like birds and butterflies, and offer recreation and education opportunities to communities.
- + Should consider the distance to existing habitat to connect large areas and create more successful habitat.
- + Working with wildlife agencies will ensure projects are properly permitted and that project implementers have guaranteed assurances.

# Multibenefit Land Use Alternatives

Unlocking sustainable futures for local communities