

Mokelumne Watershed Environmental Benefits Program

Creating New Financial Returns for Mokelumne Watershed Landowners



Robert Hoffman

Mathew Hoffman of Heritage Oak Winery.

“This Program is allowing us to improve the ecological function of our land while providing new funding to maintain a natural scenic venue that is key for our winery guests.”

—Tom and Mathew Hoffman

Across the nation there is a growing trend for companies, municipalities, government agencies and other entities to pay for conservation actions that provide important and measurable environmental benefits like clean water, clean air and healthy forests. These environmental services help regulated entities and service providers to meet their own environmental sustainability goals, reduce costs and at times offset actions taken elsewhere. Additionally, land stewardship helps to provide additional benefits to local communities such as protection from floods and fires while providing the raw materials to fuel the economy and beautiful natural areas for all to enjoy.

Typically farmers, ranchers and foresters are paid to grow crops and timber and raise livestock, but many who manage their land responsibly provide important services that benefit nature and human well-being. We are working to create ways to pay farmers, ranchers and foresters for these services. By participating in this program, you may be able to undertake projects on your land to improve the environment and generate revenue from both public and private sources.

Developing a Program to Pay You for Land Stewardship

There are a number of practices that could qualify as resulting in environmental benefits such as allowing streamside forests to grow, providing important shading for instream aquatic species, and stabilizing streamside channels to help reduce erosion and protect water quality. These actions can be undertaken

without interfering with your business of farming, ranching or forestry. *But what's missing is a coordinated program to help measure and pay for the conservation benefits that you provide. That's where the Mokelumne Watershed Environmental Benefits Program comes in.*



Matthew Grimm

A view of Vino Farms riparian restoration site, which partially used marginal and fallow land for restoration without affecting the farm's productivity.



Fundable opportunities

With our program, there will be numerous opportunities for landowners to implement sustainable land management and restoration practices that will produce environmental benefits and maintain a robust rural economy. On the contrary to traditional environmental regulations, we envision that our voluntary market-based approach and the conservation practices that result will help ease current regulations.

We expect these practices to include:

- riparian restoration
- sustainable grazing management
- stream bank restoration and erosion control
- establishment of native forest and herbaceous cover
- forest restoration and fuels reduction, and more.

Getting involved with the Mokelumne Watershed Environmental Benefits Program

As we develop the program, we'd like to assess your interests and discuss future opportunities to participate in land stewardship activities. We'll work directly with you to design tailored projects to make it efficient and worth your time. If you are interested in learning more about the program, we'd welcome the opportunity to meet with you to identify:

- The most appropriate and desirable practices that you can implement.
- The best payment structure for the conservation benefits or "credits" that your practices produce.
- How this environmental benefits program can leverage other incentive programs such as Lodi Rules, the sustainability certification program in which some growers are paid a premium for the sustainable grown grapes they produce.
- How to make the program work the best for you and other landowners in the Mokelumne watershed.



Linda Estel Mendez

This program can leverage existing opportunities that encourage sustainable winegrape growing practices.

The Program is led by Sustainable Conservation, Environmental Defense Fund, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy and Environmental Incentives who have convened a working group including local and regional stakeholders such as the Lower Mokelumne Watershed River Stewardship Steering Committee, Amador Calaveras Consensus Group, Protected Harvest, Foothill Conservancy, San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District, East Bay Municipal Utility District, U.S. Forest Service, private landowners and others.

Please contact us to provide input on how we can make this program work for you.

This material is based upon work supported by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under number 68-9104-1-131.



Kelli McCune
Sustainable Conservation
415-977-0380 ext. 336
kmccune@suscon.org



Ann Hayden
Environmental Defense Fund
415-293-6086
ahayden@edf.org



Jeremy Sokulsky
Environmental Incentives
530-541-2980
jsokulsky@environincentives.com



Cliff Ohmart
SureHarvest
530-601-0740
cohmart@sureharvest.com