



SGM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

for Tribes, Underrepresented Communities and Small Farmers



Sustainable Groundwater Management Technical Assistance (SGM TA) Program for Tribes, Underrepresented Communities, and Small Farmers

PRESENTED TO THE STANISLAUS COUNTY WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Overview

- AB 685 - The Human Right to Water legislation passed in 2012, declares that “every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking and sanitary purposes.”
- The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), passed in 2014, requires Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) in their Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) to address water-related needs, risks, and vulnerabilities for underrepresented areas in groundwater basins regulated by SGMA.



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Overview

- According to many estimates, more than 1 million Californians lack safe water, particularly in rural communities, underserved/low income, and communities of color.
- California is home to more people of Native American heritage than any other state.
- Federally and non-federally recognized Tribes and Underrepresented Communities face multiple challenges to clean, affordable, and sustainable groundwater and water resources.



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Purpose of the Initial URC TA Program

The URC TA Program was developed in 2021 is to:

- **Communicate with and engage** Tribes, Underrepresented and Communities through interviews, site visits, workshops to determine needs, risks and vulnerabilities assessments.
- **Provide Technical Assistance services** to address water supply, water quality, water resiliency needs, risks and vulnerabilities.
- **Communicate with GSAs** on the needs of communities within their GSP Boundaries



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Program Evolution from 2021 - 2024

Evolution of the URC TA Program to the SGM TA Program:

- In reaching out to agencies, CBOs/CBPs, and Communities, conducting needs assessments and developing the heat maps associated with the Program, it became apparent that Small Farmers were facing similar challenges as Tribes and URCs with regard to SGMA implementation.
- In 2022, a report was prepared by CAFF, CivicWell, Leadership Council for Justice & Accountability, Clean Water Action/Clean Water Fund, and the University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources released a white paper on the impact of SGMA on Small Farmers



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The white paper brought into focus:

- ***Need for more coordination and communication between GSAs and Small Farmers***
- Need to recognize the Farmer Equity Act of 2017, and “call attention to the plight of Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDFRs) including farmers of color who have historically not had equitable access to land and other resources necessary to conduct farming in California”

SGMA and Underrepresented Farmers

Impact of Groundwater Sustainability Plans on Underrepresented Farmers



May 2022



University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources



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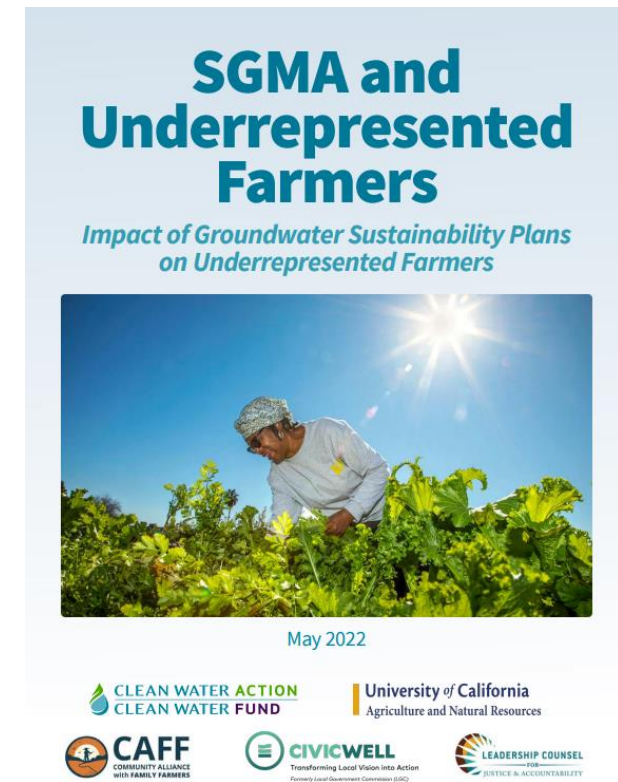
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The white paper outlined the following challenges to Small Farmers:

- Drought
- Groundwater pumping fees
- Water allocation
- Water Trading/Markets
- Land fallowing



[Full Report: SGMA & Underrepresented Farmers - Community Alliance with Family Farmers \(caff.org\)](https://caff.org)



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2023 - Present

- DWR, in response to the outcome of the 2021 URC TA program, in concert with the need to address the focus areas of the white paper, included Technical Assistance to include Small Farmers.
- DWR and Dudek are collaborating with organizations that have established trusted relationships with small farmers.
- Specific organizations include UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR) and Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF).



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Small Farmers – Program Definition (Working Definition from CAFF and DWR)

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines a “small farmer” as an operation with **gross cash farm annual income under \$350,000**. Within this definition are commercial and noncommercial farms.



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Small Farmers – Program Definition (Working Definition from CAFF and DWR)

The USDA and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) defines socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher as a **member of a socially disadvantaged group** who's been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities.



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Small Farmers – Program Definition (Working Definition from CAFF and DWR)

These groups include **African Americans, Native American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders**. The USDA goes further to include “Historically Underserved Farmers or Ranchers” to include beginning, socially disadvantaged, **Veterans**, and Limited Resourced.



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Small Farmers – Program Definition (Working Definition from CAFF and DWR)

Therefore, for the purpose of this program and use of funds, DWR will define small farmer as two or more of the following:

- Limited-resource farm households with low farm sales and low household income for two years in a row. Low farm sales means direct or indirect gross farms sales **less than \$350,000** and low household income means less than 85% of the median household income (MHI).



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Small Farmers – Program Definition (Working Definition from CAFF and DWR)

- A **ranch or farm of 50 acres or less** that is operated by a farmer or rancher who qualifies as a socially disadvantaged, beginning, or veteran farmer or rancher.
- A farm that has an owner that is **socially disadvantaged and subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice** because of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual qualities. This includes women owned farms or ranches.



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Small Farmers – Program Definition (Working Definition from CAFF and DWR)

- **Beginning farmers or ranchers** who have materially and substantially participated in the operation of any farm or ranch for **10 years or less**. All operators of the farm or ranch must be a beginning farmer or rancher to qualify under this definition. A beginning farmer or rancher can also qualify if they have undergone a transformation in agricultural processes in the last 10 years and are operating under a regenerative agricultural process, indigenous farming methods, cover crops, agroforestry, permaculture, or any other farming and ranching practices that results in a regeneration of the soils to increase carbon sequestration.



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Small Farmers – Program Definition (Working Definition from CAFF and DWR)

A **veteran farmer or rancher** is a person who served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, including the reserve components thereof, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.



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Small Farmers – Program Definition (Working Definition from CAFF and DWR)

We are requesting comment on this definition. Please provide feedback by June 30, 2024. Please send comments to:

SGM_TA@water.ca.gov



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Communication, Outreach and Engagement

- Preparation of multi-lingual materials customized to the needs of Tribes, Underrepresented Communities, Small Farmers
- Coordination with GSAs, Cities, Counties, RCDs, Farm Bureaus, Ag. Commissioner's Offices, CBOs/CBPs
- Presentations, Workshops and coordination
- Site Visits, Needs Assessments and Surveys
- Graphics, Animations, Videos



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Technical Assistance Services Available to Small Farmers

- Groundwater level monitoring
 - Including instrument installation and training
- Aquifer testing to determine long-term yield and supply
- Soil moisture monitoring
- Groundwater quality testing & treatment



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Technical Assistance Services Available to Small Farmers

- Analysis of well interference
- Analysis of existing well conditions using downhole video log and pump testing
- Facilitation of water well and/or pump construction and/or repair.
 - Well location, design, and construction oversight.
- Groundwater impact analysis for new or existing wells or crops
 - Analysis of groundwater level decline and reduction in storage, land subsidence, GDE depletion, etc.





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Outcomes

- Needs Assessments
 - Summarized understanding of the needs, risks, vulnerabilities that a Tribe, Underrepresented Community
- Summary of Needs Assessments and Potential TA Support Services
 - Once site visit/reconnaissance/needs assessment is conducted, Dudek prepares a summary and outlines potential services/solutions
 - The memo is provided to the Tribe, Underrepresented Community and discussed so there is shared path forward on any work that ensues



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Outcomes

- Preliminary Engineering Reports / Hydrogeologic Reports
 - Preparation of 100% plans and specs, assistance with associated permits and reporting requirements. Regional information, sustainability indicators.
- Groundwater Monitoring Systems / Training
 - Instillation of monitoring wells, logging equipment, and associated training.
- SGMA - Related Groundwater Impact Analyses and GSA Permitting Procedures
 - Impact of new wells on GSP Sustainability Indicators. Well Permitting Requirements related to Executive Order N-3-23.
- Assistance with Project Implementation and Funding



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Case Studies

- **Peer Review for Yolo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District GSA in response to Executive Order N-7-22**
 - **Dudek peer reviewed the GSA's well permit form to ensure compliance with E.O. N-7-22, which requires GSA approval on well permits.**

9. To protect health, safety, and the environment during this drought emergency, a county, city, or other public agency shall not:
 - a. Approve a permit for a new groundwater well or for alteration of an existing well in a basin subject to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and classified as medium- or high-priority without first obtaining written verification from a Groundwater Sustainability Agency managing the basin or area of the basin where the well is proposed to be located that groundwater extraction by the proposed well would not be inconsistent with any sustainable groundwater management program established in any applicable Groundwater Sustainability Plan adopted by that Groundwater Sustainability Agency and would not decrease the likelihood of achieving a sustainability goal for the basin covered by such a plan; or
 - b. Issue a permit for a new groundwater well or for alteration of an existing well without first determining that extraction of groundwater from the proposed well is (1) not likely to interfere with the production and functioning of existing nearby wells, and (2) not likely to cause subsidence that would adversely impact or damage nearby infrastructure.



Case Studies

- **City of Tehama, Water System Needs Assessment and Preliminary Engineering Report**
 - Water infrastructure (wells, storage tanks, etc.) in Tehama failed to provide adequate water supplies to residents.
 - Dudek produced a report with recommended water storage location and volumes to comply with fire flow and maximum demand requirements.
 - The report also explored the feasibility of consolidation with neighboring districts.
 - The report also included a funding matrix with grant and low-interest loan opportunities.
 - Tehama was approved for funding under the DWR Small Community Drought Relief Grant and was able to build an additional groundwater well.





Case Studies

- **Fillmore Irrigation Company**
 - Fillmore Irrigation Company is a groundwater-dependent water system that delivers supplies to both agricultural and domestic customers.
 - Dudek prepared a report to outline necessary improvements, including replacement of distribution infrastructure, additional storage, earthwork adjacent to the existing tank, replacement of wells, and the addition of a booster station.





Case Studies

- **Plantation Mobile Home Park**
 - Small community in South Sacramento; infrastructure damage due to fire
 - Faces power outages and vandalism
 - Water system lacks adequate staffing, resources, and expertise.
 - Completely dependent on one well.
 - Dudek prepared a report detailing the feasibility of consolidation with neighboring districts.



Questions

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PROGRAM WEBSITE:

[UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM \(URC TA PROGRAM\)](#)



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