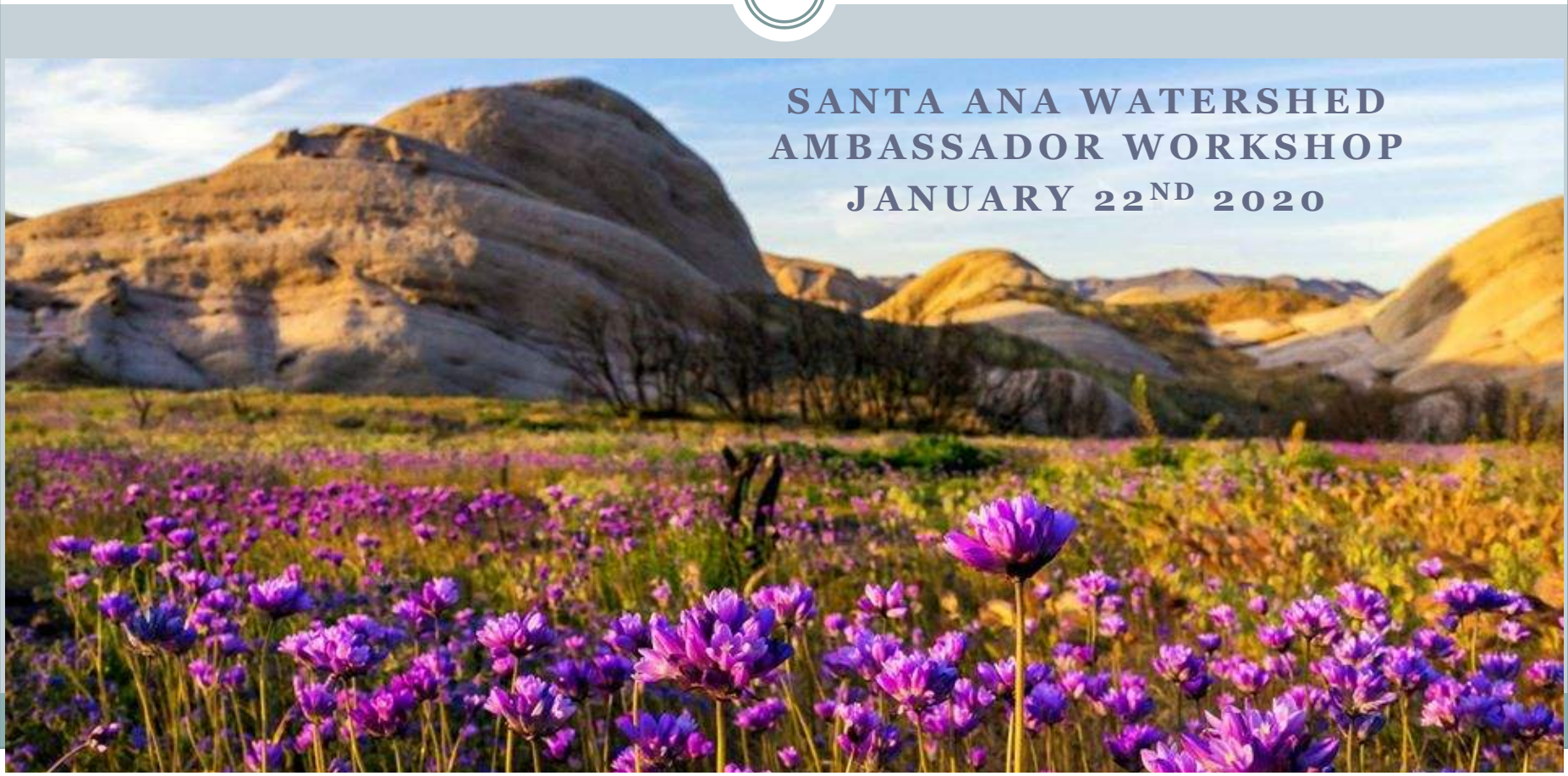


Multi Benefit Projects in the Upper Santa Ana Watershed



**SANTA ANA WATERSHED
AMBASSADOR WORKSHOP
JANUARY 22ND 2020**



Presentation Outline

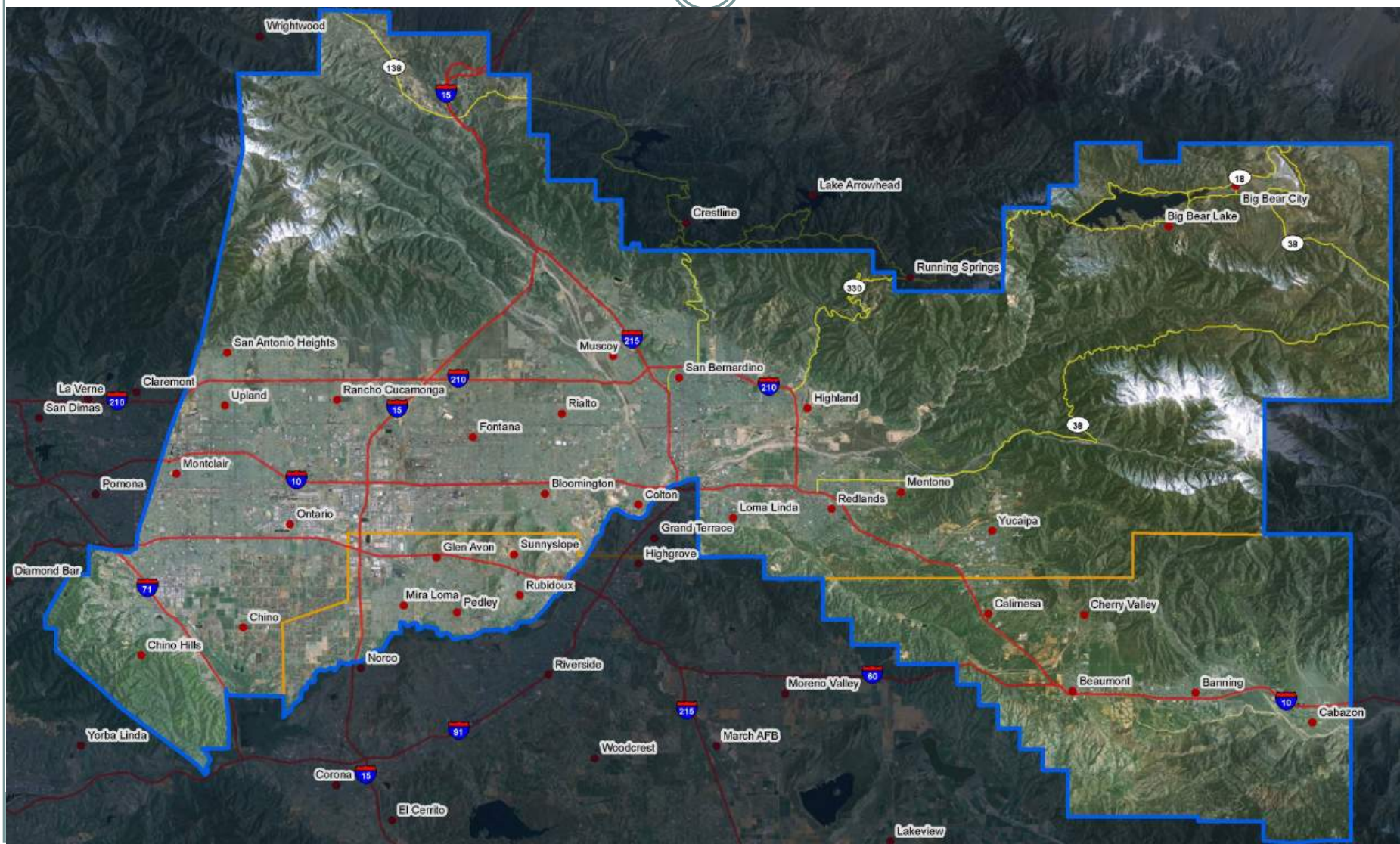


1. Introduction to the IERCD
2. Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Grant
3. Regional Planning for Sustainable Agriculture
4. Multi-Agency Funded Projects

Who is the IERCD?

- Public Agency, governed by 7-member appointed board of directors
- 16-member field, education, project management, and admin staff carry out Board direction within service area
- IERCD Board and staff focus on collaboration with federal, state, and local entities to conduct conservation, restoration, education, and outreach programs





IERCD Project Work



Mitigation, habitat
restoration, and open
space preservation

K-12 education and
field trip programs

Urban and
traditional
agriculture projects

Forestry and fire
prevention



California Association of RCD's

- California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) serves as support 501c3 for all RCD's
 - 96 RCD's statewide
- All RCD's operate with a Board of Directors made up of elected or appointed volunteer landowners in that district.
- Primary funding sources:
 - Grants, mitigation fees, and property tax revenues
- All districts partner on some level with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, our federal partner



Forestry Issues and Implications to Watershed



Why should we care about our forests?

- The headwaters of the Santa Ana River begins in the SBNF. Nearly 30% of the watershed is forested and receives 90% of the precipitation.
- Forests are the most dependable of our carbon stores and help purify our air
- Forests are home to many of our endangered species



How does fire impact our watershed?



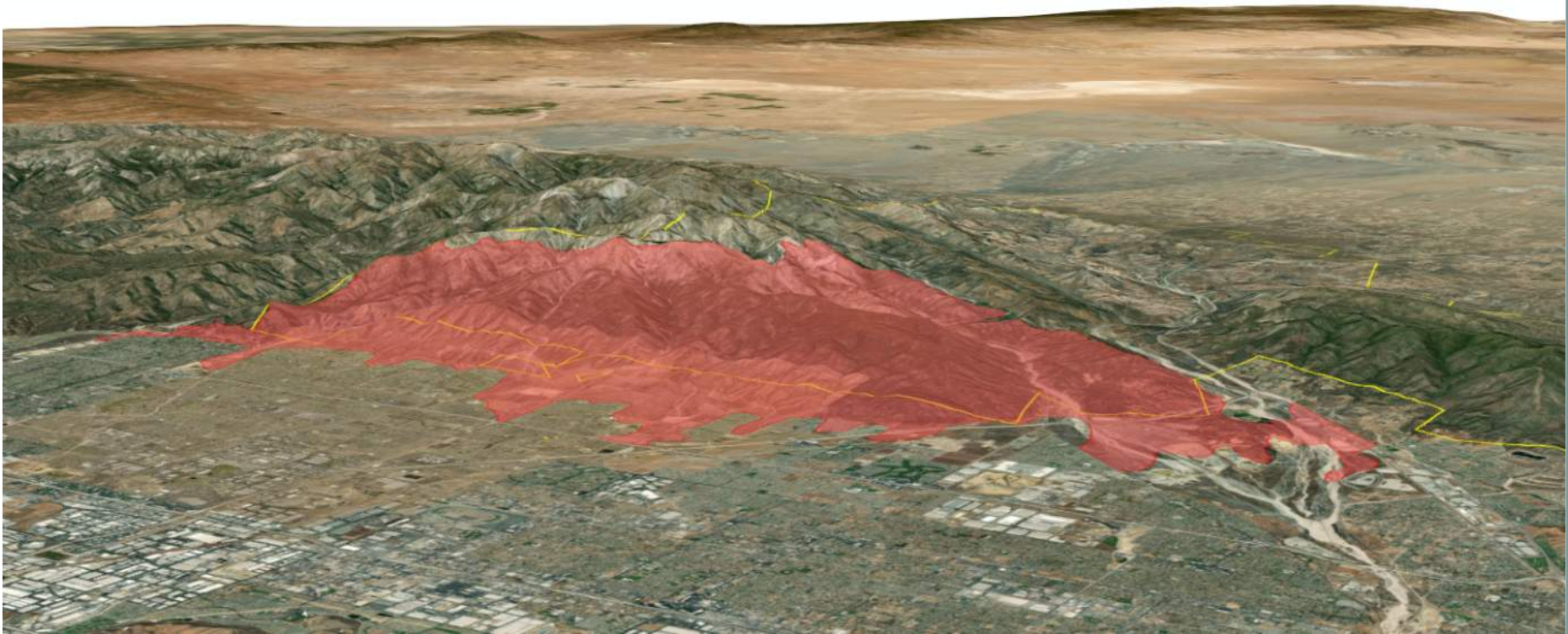
- Vegetation that holds soil in place is burned during fire. Rainstorms following burn events wash large quantities of ash, sediment, and contaminants into waterways.
- Impacts:
 - Degraded quality of drinking water and sediment increases into treatment plants
 - Large erosion events and mudslides
 - Contamination of streams and sources of water for native species



Burn Perimeter for 2003 Grand Prix Fire



Grand Prix Fire



Source: <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=972ea8e8083f42fdbdad3oad556a42fc>

Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Grant



- In 2018 the CA Natural Resources Agency began soliciting projects for the RFFC Grant in 7 regions throughout the state.
- Flexible block funding to accomplish what is most needed in the SBNF and surrounding communities
- Goal is to build capacity and implement planning efforts for the region
- Collaborative regional project between IERCD, USFS, CAL FIRE, County Fire, local fire departments, community groups and Fire Safe Councils, tribes, and more.



RFFC Projects



1. Regional Priority Plan Development
2. USFS and CAL FIRE Project Planning and Implementation
 - Focusing on CEQA/NEPA process
3. Goldspotted Oak Borer Outreach and Tree Removals
4. Fire Safe Alliance and Fire Safe Council Support

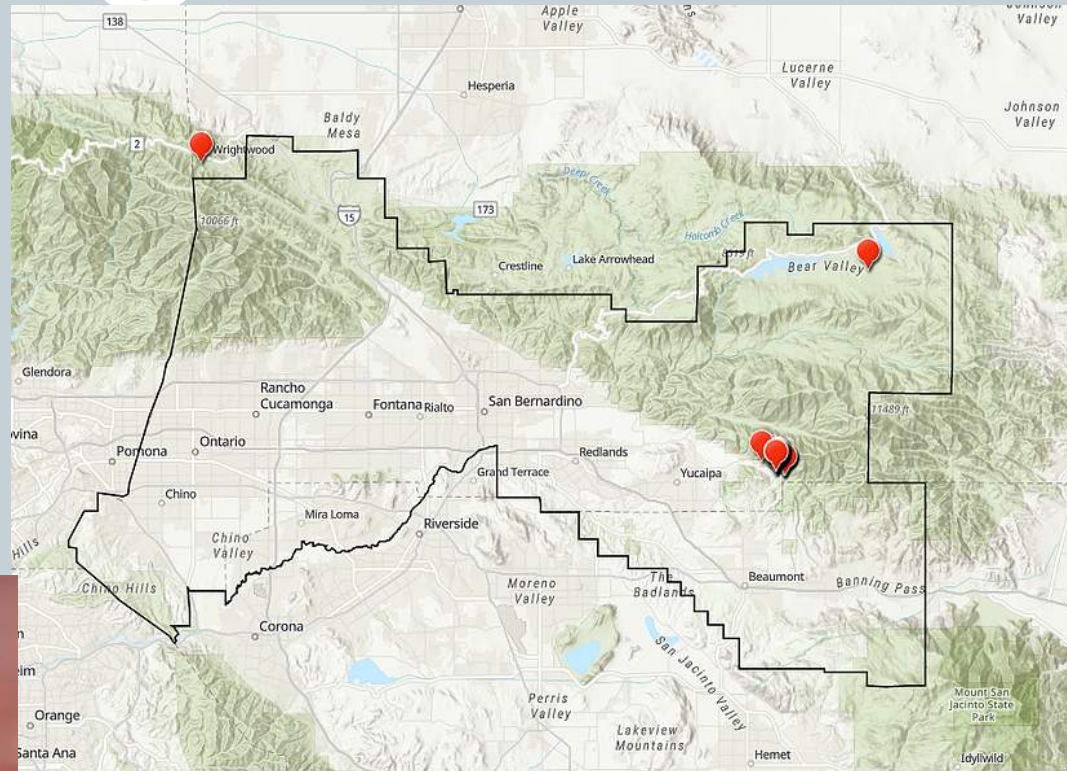


GSOB in the Inland Empire

- The Goldspotted Oak Borer (GSOB), *Agrilus auroguttatus*, is a beetle that is native to southeastern Arizona but introduced to CA
- GSOB is decimating oak tree species throughout Southern California, both live oak and black oak varieties



Goldspotted Oak Borer
(*Agrilus auroguttatus*)



- Since Dec. 2018, GSOB has been detected in Oak Glen, Big Bear, and Wrightwood

GSOB Response



- IERCD is funding removals of amplifier trees and treatments for high value trees
- Local outreach campaign:
 - Is there a killer lurking in your firewood?
- Meetings with elected officials to develop a quarantine for moving oak firewood that has not been debarked.
- Community outreach & education



Developing FSC Capacity

- Formalizing IEFSA into 501c3 to be eligible for grants and serve in more official capacities
- Support for individual communities to develop FSC's
 - Currently only about 4-5 active FSC's in our region

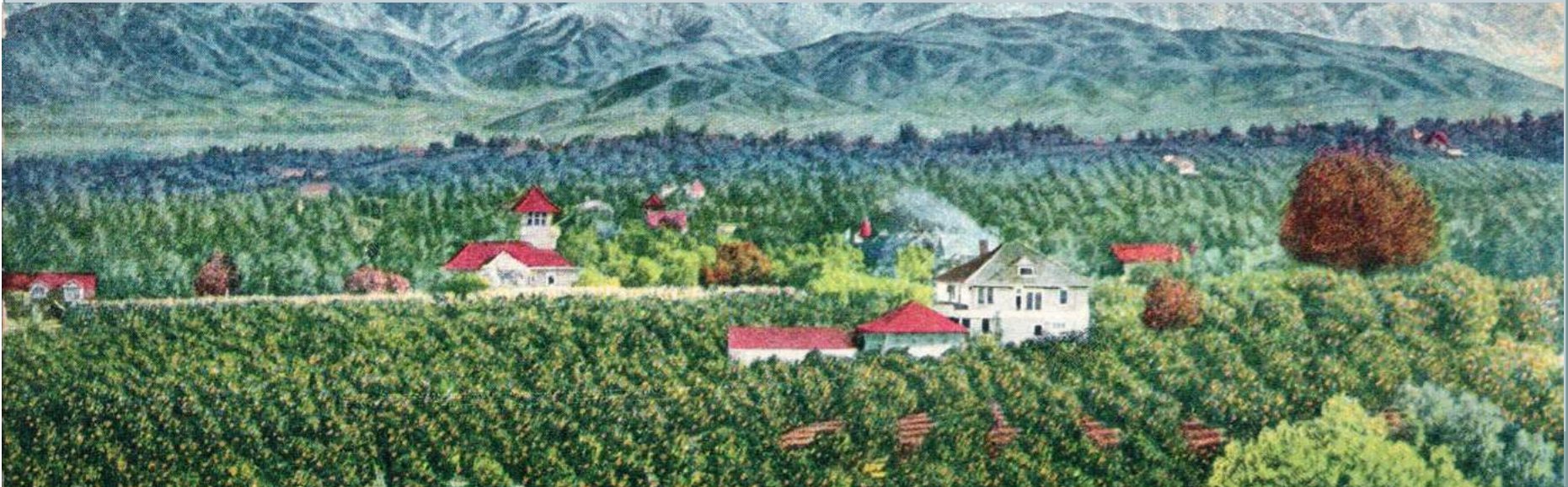


Agricultural Issues and Implications to Watershed



Why should we care about agriculture?

- Ag lands serves as important open space and can help restore groundwater through infiltration and prevent runoff
- Sustainable agriculture operations have the potential to store carbon
- Ag lands act as a buffer for floods, fire, and other climate change issues
- Food security is a big consideration when talking about climate adaptation



SALC Program



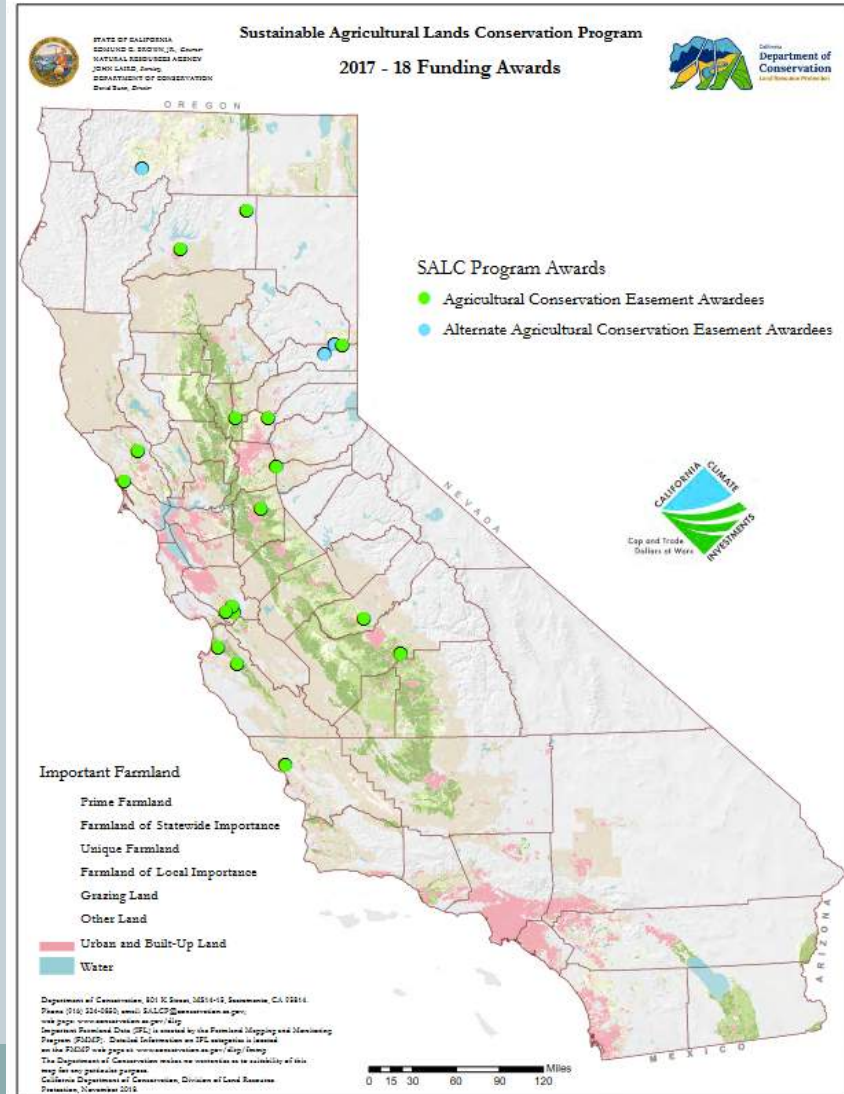
CALIFORNIA STRATEGIC
GROWTH COUNCIL

The Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program protects at-risk agricultural lands from sprawl development in order to promote growth within existing jurisdictions, ensure open space remains available, and support a healthy agricultural economy.



Program at a Glance

- **Types of funding:**
 - Conservation Easement Program
 - ✦ Fund purchase of agricultural easements
 - Regional Ag Planning
 - ✦ Land use strategies
 - Creating zone of agriculture
 - Developing agricultural mitigation
 - ✦ Multi-benefit community strategies
 - Develop carbon sequestration/regenerative agriculture program
 - ✦ Branding and awareness
 - Launch a regional agriculture campaign



Vision for Agriculture

- Balancing the need for housing with the region's needs for agriculture
- Build agricultural infrastructure, skills, and training
- There is a need for a mitigation program or bank in the region to mitigate for the loss of ag land locally and preserve in perpetuity
- Consider environmental justice
- Plan with teeth!



Involved Stakeholders

- **Public Agencies**

- SB County LAFCO
- SB County
- City of Ontario
- City of Yucaipa
- SCAG

- **Community Partners**

- Huerta del Valle
- UC Cooperative Extension
- SB County Farm Bureau
- Loma Linda University
- Robert Redford Conservancy
- Center for Social Innovation
- Rivers and Lands Conservancy



(Left) Regional partners discussing issues and solutions for Inland Empire agriculture



(Above) David Bunn, Director of the DOC, visiting Amy's Farm

Regional Project Concept Development



- Regional effort to ensure that agriculture is begin considered as part of regional planning, climate change adaptation, and watershed health
- Looking for local leaders to help move forward concept and be “champions” of this project
- Ensure agricultural land is set aside for future generations



Coordinated Funding Projects

- Public Lands into Working/Managed Lands
 - Louis Robidoux Nature Center
 - Huerta del Valle Projects
 - ✦ City of Ontario, Riverside County Parks & Open Space, Jurupa Area Recreation & Parks District

Crestmore - RCPOSPD



HdV Jurupa- Jurupa Area
Recreation & Parks District



HdV Ontario – City of Ontario



Louis Robidoux Nature Center

- 40-A site owned by Riverside County Parks and Open Space District
- The site was closed to the public in 2017 and released an RFP the following year for management of the site



Individual Partner Goals on Site

- **SBVMWD** – Access to Sunnyslope Creek, one of SBVMWD's focus areas for restoration as an upstream partner
- **OCWD** – Access to Sunnyslope Creek, one of OCWD's focus areas for restoration as a downstream partner
- **IERCD** – A public facing facility to expand outreach and education efforts including field trip opportunities
- **Huerta del Valle** – Agricultural lands to manage and connect into their new farmer training program
- **Sunshine Haven** – A publically accessible wildlife rehabilitation center



City of Ontario and HdV



- Huerta del Valle began in 2015 through a partnership with the City of Ontario, Pitzer College, and the local community
- Today it hosts 60 individual family plots and 2.5 acres of intensive production sold at their weekly market and through other programs
- While sustainable food production is a main part of their mission, their work also focuses on community building and equity.



Thank You!



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