

Vina Subbasin Demand Reduction Strategies

Extend Orchard Replacement (EOR) Pilot Program Summary

Background

Extending the fallowing period between orchard removal and replacement has numerous potential benefits, one of the most important being reducing water demand. While fallowed orchards use much less water than existing orchards, the difference in water use has not been quantified in the Vina Subbasin, and could vary depending on fallowing strategies, irrigation management practices, and other site-specific factors. The Vina Subbasin GSA estimates EOR could reduce water demand by 4,000-8,000 acre-feet per year.

The EOR Pilot Program is funded by the Sustainable Groundwater Management grant program through March 2026. It is being implemented by the Vina Subbasin GSA and its cooperators to demonstrate quantifiable water savings and other potential benefits such as pumping cost reduction, soil quality improvement, and improved yield of subsequent orchard crops from extending orchard replacement by 1 to 2 years.

Approach

1. Employ technical advisors to work with landowners/operators of removed walnut and almond orchards to 1) plan and implement OR 2) monitor existing voluntary fallowing practices. These practices include cover cropping, conservation cover, short-season annuals, or incorporation of chipped trees.
2. Collect evapotranspiration (ET) data to quantify consumptive use of producing and fallowed orchards with various fallowing practices implemented.
3. Quantify water savings of EOR pilot orchards and make recommendations, based on the pilot program, for subbasin-wide implementation.
4. **All farm data will be confidential and aggregated with anonymity for GSA purposes.**

Landowner Benefits

Landowners who agree to extend the fallow period before replacing their orchard for a minimum of 1 year will receive, free of charge:

- Technical assistance to develop an EOR Plan for the 2025 fallowing period.
- Plan requirements such as seed, soil amendments, and field operations (cultivation, planting, etc.) up to \$100/ac or a total maximum of \$15,000.
- Results of ET data collection and analysis.

Landowner Requirements

- Must work with Technical Advisor to develop EOR Plan
- Must implement EOR Plan
- Must have flow meter (previously installed or installed at expense of program)
- Must be willing to consider a fall seeded cover crop or similar

Eligibility

The EOR Pilot Program requirements are as follows:

- Removed almond or walnut orchards
- Removed orchard ground may be bare or may have a fallowing practice already implemented, such as cover crops, or annuals.
- Limited to between 5 and 150 acres per landowner

How to Participate

Submit the following information to (vinademandreduction@landiq.com)

1. Landowner/operator name

2. Landowner/operator contact information

Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Orchard Location (APN)	Crop Type	Acreage (must be 5-150 ac)	Date of Removal	Existing Status (bare ground, cover cropped, etc.)	Irrigation Available for Fallow Period (if yes, specify type)