



Vina GSA Pilot Programs for Water Demand Reduction

The Vina Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (Vina GSA) is launching two innovative pilot programs—**Precision Irrigation (PI)** and **Extend Orchard Replacement (EOR)**—to explore strategies for reducing agricultural water demand in support of groundwater sustainability goals.

Precision Irrigation: Optimize Water Use

This program aims to **reduce non-beneficial water use** - like evaporation and weed transpiration - **without affecting crop yields.**

Participants - almond and walnut growers with orchards planted 2001-2019 - will work with technical advisors to **develop site-specific irrigation management plans for 2025.**

Benefits include **complimentary precision irrigation equipment, hands-on guidance, and detailed analysis of water-use efficiencies.**

Eligible orchards are **5-500 acres**, and the program provides flow meters if not already present.

Extend Orchard Replacement: Conserve Water

Extending the fallow period between orchard removals and replants **could save 4,000-8,000 acre-feet of water annually.**

This program supports almond and walnut growers who've recently removed orchards and are considering **1-2 extra years of fallowing.**

Participants get **free technical help to develop fallowing plans**, plus **direct funding for cover cropping and other fallowing practices** (up to \$100/acre, max \$15,000).

Eligible orchards are **5-150 acres**, and the program provides flow meters if not already present.

Both programs offer confidential data handling, aggregating findings anonymously to provide recommendations beneficial for broader application across the Vina Subbasin.

Enrollment & Implementation

March 24 - April 30

Enrollment period; In-person meetings - landowners and technical advisors.

Implementation

March 24 through December 31, 2025

Technical Advisors:

Tom Devol - Irrigation & Technology Advisor

A Senior Advisor at Land IQ since 2025, Tom is a recognized leader in advancing agricultural technologies. His expertise includes irrigation design and real-time, sensor-based monitoring, and automation to help growers optimize water use and yield. Tom is passionate about educating and supporting growers in adopting sustainable farming technologies.

Allan Fulton - Irrigation & Water Resources Advisor Emeritus

Allan has 33 years of experience as a UCCE advisor, specializing in sustainable irrigation and soil management practices. His work has emphasized efficient water and energy use, aquifer systems understanding, groundwater management, and conjunctive water use strategies. Allan has extensive knowledge of orchard and agronomic crops, pasture management, and water conservation.

Joel Kimmelshue - Owner/Principal Soil & Agricultural Scientist, LAND IQ

Joel, with over 27 years of consulting experience and a Ph.D. in Soil Science (Water Resources), focuses on practical agricultural solutions for soil, water, and plant systems. He is dedicated to improving the management of irrigated agricultural systems and maintains an active role in family farming operations.

Joe Connell - Farm Advisor Emeritus

With 34 years as a farm advisor in Butte County, Joe specializes in almonds, olives, citrus, and landscape plants. He contributed significantly to pest management, irrigation, and pollination strategies. Joe also initiated the Butte County Master Gardener program and supports ongoing research and education efforts post-retirement.

For more information, please send an email to vinademandreduction@landiq.com.