

# A BIG MOMENT OF OPPORTUNITY

As Sustainable Conservation's new Board Chair, I'm honored to ask you to unite with us in one of the most transformational moments in Sustainable Conservation's 22-year history: a capital campaign to scale up our programs and magnify our impact.

The name of our campaign – Making Big Ideas Work – perfectly reflects the essence of Sustainable Conservation's guiding principles: think big; be bold in taking on the toughest challenges facing California's land, air, and water; and build trust with a wide variety of partners. We are doing this and achieving meaningful results using practical solutions.

I'm so excited by our success to date, and am really proud to tell you that we have early commitments of \$12.7 million toward

our goal of raising \$14 million by the end of this year. Funds contributed through the Making Big Ideas Work campaign will help us address a number of urgent and important opportunities – including building a secure water supply for our Golden State.

Our partners are ready to move ahead, and I hope you will join us too with a gift to the Making Big Ideas Work campaign.

Thank you for your consideration,



Chris Buchbinder,  
Board Chair, Sustainable Conservation







# MAKING BIG IDEAS WORK



*Blossoming Partnerships for When the Drought Breaks*

## WATER FOR THE FUTURE

After a harrowing string of dry years, California pines for wet weather on the horizon. With summer in the rearview mirror, our farms, communities, and wildlife sure could use a hydrating boost this winter.

The Golden State's record-breaking drought has prompted widely voiced concerns about farming's use of water. At the same time, our agricultural sector helps feed the nation. How can California conserve and protect water while providing sustenance to millions?

*“Groundwater has always been a vital resource for all Californians, and has played a critical role in maintaining California's economic and environmental sustainability through the years. The Almond Board will identify farmers who are already using or are interested in trying groundwater recharge to join the Sustainable Conservation program.”*

—RICHARD WAYCOTT,  
PRESIDENT AND CEO, ALMOND BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

Sustainable Conservation has a plan to marry these pivotal actions. We're mobilizing San Joaquin Valley farmers to accept flood flows from pending storms onto active cropland to help replenish

groundwater – California's underground “savings account” for parched seasons.

And, we're thrilled to announce a remarkable new partner in our outreach: the Almond Board of California. The key group – which represents nearly 7,000 almond growers and processors on approximately one million acres throughout the state – has committed to being part of California's groundwater solution with us.

With forecasts calling for strong El Niño rains, we're just in time. Throughout the drought, Sustainable Conservation has been working diligently to line up willing farmers with the right soils to demonstrate our strategy as soon as precipitation returns.

The technique more closely mimics the natural floodplain process of rivers spreading seasonally across the valley and recharging over-tapped aquifers below. By allowing waterways to stream back onto agricultural lands with sandy, permeable soils and among crops that can handle large volumes of water, we can also reduce the risk of flooding to downstream communities.

“Both the Almond Board and Sustainable Conservation believe that a healthy environment and farming sector can only be achieved through collaboration and uniting around

common goals,” said Ashley Boren, Sustainable Conservation's Executive Director.

Through nearly 100 innovative Almond Board-funded research projects since 1994, California almond growers have incorporated irrigation practices that reduced the amount of water needed to grow each pound of almonds by 33%\*.

As part of our partnership, a team of Almond Board-funded UC Davis researchers will monitor three of our ten plots testing on-farm recharge. Findings will assist in identifying the orchard practices and conditions best suited for the technique, and which orchards can be part of replenishing our subterranean stores.

Bold alliances are needed now more than ever, and we're proud to join forces with this vital industry player to build a powerful buffer against future droughts. Ever the solution match-maker, we're hoping to unite storm with soil very soon to the benefit of our Golden State's environment and people.

\*UC Drought Management – Historical Almond ET, see Goldhamer, David. 2012. Almond in Group Yield Response to Water. FAO Irrigation and Drainage Paper No. 65, P. Steduto, T.C. Hsiao, E. Fereres, and D. Raes, eds. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, Italy, pp. 246-296.



# CONNECT ONLINE

**ON OCTOBER 20TH, SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION CONVENED A DIVERSE PANEL OF FARMERS AND POLICY LEADERS FOR A TIMELY DISCUSSION ABOUT THE GOLDEN STATE'S WATER FUTURE.** If you weren't able to join us live for Weathering the Drought: Farming Solutions for a Thriving California, please enjoy the video recording: [bit.ly/wtdvideo](http://bit.ly/wtdvideo)



**INVASIVE PLANTS ON PLANTRIGHT'S ORIGINAL LIST CONTINUE TO DECLINE IN AVAILABILITY,** now found at only 13% of California garden centers. Check out the results of our 2015 nursery survey, which helps track the impact of our campaign to promote non-invasive plants for California: [plantright.org/spring-nursery-survey](http://plantright.org/spring-nursery-survey)

**YOU CAN HELP CALIFORNIA THRIVE FOR MANY YEARS TO COME BY MAKING A LEGACY GIFT TO SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION.** For more information, please contact Martha Henderson, Director of Development: 415-977-0380 x305 or [mhenderson@suscon.org](mailto:mhenderson@suscon.org)

Uniting people to solve the toughest  
challenges facing our land, air, and water.

