

Voluntary Land Repurposing Program

Interested Parties Quick Reference Guide

Overview

This document provides a concise overview of salient features of the Voluntary Land Repurposing Program. Interested parties are encouraged to reference the Voluntary Land Repurposing Program Rules for additional detailed information.

What is the Voluntary Land Repurposing Program (VLRP)?

- A voluntary program available to landowners (or their designated agents) in the Madera County GSA (GSA), for the Madera and Delta-Mendota Subbasins. The GSA and a landowner enter into an agreement where the GSA pays landowners to forgo use of their groundwater allocation on defined Parcel-Fields and repurpose those Parcel-Fields to non-irrigated uses.

Who is eligible for the VLRP?

- Landowners, or their designated agents, of full Parcels or portions of a Parcel-Fields that are greater than 10 acres and that pay the GSP Fee (i.e., are eligible for a groundwater allocation) and are in the Madera or Delta-Mendota Subbasin portions of the GSA are eligible.

How can a landowner enter lands into the VLRP?

- The GSA has an open enrollment period where it accepts applications from landowners. Applicants must submit information including the lands, acreage, and length of agreement (between 1 and 510 years). Importantly, applicants must specify the compensation terms (bid), expressed as the price per acre, that the GSA would pay the applicant, if selected.

How does the GSA select lands for the VLRP?

- The GSA accepts all applications/bids from landowners. After the enrollment period closes the GSA ~~first groups applications by duration (number of years) and then~~ ranks bids lowest to highest cost per acre per year.
- The GSA selects the lowest cost bids up to the available funding in each year and subject to its discretion of reasonable, prevailing economic values of land and lease rates.

What happens if an application is selected?

- The landowner applicant will enter into a contractual agreement with the GSA. The salient features of that agreement include the landowner forfeiting giving up the groundwater allocation on those lands, forgoing irrigation, completing basic management and maintenance on the lands, in exchange for compensation as defined by the applicant's bid.

What is required of lands in the VLRP?

- Landowners cannot irrigate lands that are in the VLRP, and the landowner gives up its allocation of groundwater associated with those lands for the duration of the agreement. In addition, the

VLRP agreement requires general weed, dust, and appropriate field management practices on the repurposed lands.

How are landowners in the VLRP paid?

- Payments are sent by the GSA to landowners in March and November of each year. The annual payment amount is equal to the per acre bid submitted by the landowner multiplied by the total number of acres.

What are the benefits of this program for the Subbasin?

- The GSPs covering the Madera County GSA lands specify planned demand management (groundwater pumping reductions) to achieve sustainability. This program affords landowners with additional flexibility to adjust to the groundwater allocation and helps achieve GSP demand management goals.
- The groundwater saved by the VLRP is accounted for in a “VLRP Water” pool that is then reallocated to remaining Eligible Parcels (as defined in the Madera County GSA Allocation Approach). Therefore, other lands benefit from the program by receiving additional water.
- VLRP does not increase the total amount of demand reduction or accelerate the ramp-down of the transitional water beyond what was defined in the GSP and is now in the GSA allocation. However, VLRP shifts more of the demand reduction into voluntarily fallowed lands and reduces the amount of demand reduction required by remaining lands. Without VLRP all of the demand reduction required by the aggregate allocation is spread across all acres. VLRP takes a chunk of that required demand reduction and handles it through voluntary land fallowing. That water is then spread across the remaining eligible acres, thereby reducing the demand reduction burden on the other lands.

Who is eligible for VLRP Water?

- Parcel-Fields that are not in the VLRP but are in the Madera County GSA, pay the GSP Fee, and are eligible to receive Sustainable Yield and Transitional Water will receive a proportional allocation of VLRP Water each year. The GSA does not retain any VLRP Water, it is all allocated back to the landowners.