

FRESNO STATE NEWS

California Water Institute awarded grant to bolster regional climate resilience

January 24, 2024

By: Julissa Zavala, California Water Institute



The Governor's Office of Planning and Research has awarded nearly \$569,000 to the California Water Institute's Research and Education Division at Fresno State for a project that addresses drought and flooding by planning for sustainable use of surface and groundwater.

The project, "Climate Resiliency through Regional Water Recharge in the San Joaquin Valley," will educate rural communities on groundwater recharge and establish a collaborative response team and plan for effective floodwater management, ensuring vulnerable communities are prioritized.

"Climate problems happen by regions and watershed. Therefore, we believe solutions should also be regional in nature — which is why we proposed this project," said Laura Ramos, interim director of the California Water Institute's Research and Education Division. "We are very excited to work on a comprehensive solution for the region."

State leaders unveiled a \$21.7 million funding initiative in the inaugural round of California's Regional Resilience Grant, part of the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program. This grant, supported by the governor's multi-year climate budget, aims to fortify climate change resilience at a regional level.

"As climate change impacts intensify in California, affecting entire regions rather than isolated jurisdictions, the Regional Resilience Grant program is designed to support collaborative projects

that align with the scale of climate impacts,” said Saharnaz Mirzazad, executive director of the State Planning and Policy Development branch within the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research. “By fostering partnerships across multiple communities and diverse partners, the aim of this program is to develop new and important ways of governing and responding to climate change.”

The Regional Resilience Grant focuses on addressing a range of climate-related challenges, including wildfires, rising sea levels, droughts, floods, extreme heat events and more. In the first round, California is awarding 16 regional partnerships, each comprising diverse collaborators who will together plan and implement a project tailored to the unique challenges of their region.

The California Water Institute’s Research and Education Division will partner with Self-Help Enterprises, North Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency, Madera County Groundwater Sustainability Agency and Mid-Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency for this project.

“We look forward to working with our partners in the region to create a solution that takes advantage of flood waters to recharge our aquifers, as well as educate community members about the benefits of groundwater recharge in the Valley,” Ramos said.