



# Connections

April 2009

## Sacramento County Tour May 21

SACOG will host an agricultural tour of Sacramento County on **May 21**. The tour is designed to highlight rural challenges and opportunities related to rural economic and environmental sustainability, including unique commodities, agricultural infrastructure, agritourism, urban farms, rural roads, cold storage facilities, the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan and labor.

SACOG is working with board members, the Sacramento County Farm Bureau and local jurisdictions to identify destinations and speakers.

This tour will follow the model of the previous tours with the Board meeting beginning at 9 a.m. at a location to be determined followed by the tour. For more information, contact Monica Hernández at (916) 340-6237 or [mhernandez@sacog.org](mailto:mhernandez@sacog.org).



## Innovations for Local Market

As part of its innovations research, the Local Market Working Group has identified nine objectives in supporting and/or increasing local market opportunities and access to locally grown foods:

1. Increase consumer awareness with education and marketing programs
2. Support agritourism
3. Expand farm to institutions opportunities
4. Increase opportunities to purchase local foods
5. Create a food policy council
6. Identify, support and increase business training programs for farmers
7. Connect new farmers to available land
8. Improve processing of local foods in the region

9. Increase distribution opportunities in the region

Within each objective, a number of innovations and strategies were identified.

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## Land Use Working Group Update

In the past few months, the Land Use Working Group has examined agricultural land use policies and programs focused on the rural-urban interface. Over the course of two workshops, the working group identified issues confronting agricultural viability at the rural-urban edge, discussed innovations that can support agricultural viability, and identified benefits and drawbacks to those innovations. These latest results were folded into the Land Use Innovations Working Paper, which is still available for comments at: [www.sacog.org/rucs/wiki](http://www.sacog.org/rucs/wiki).

The next phase of the Land Use Working Group will look beyond the rural-urban edge into rural open spaces more generally. We will be reviewing the current conditions of all open space uses including habitat, agriculture, floodplain and recreation. As part of this, the first geographic inventory of crops is being assembled for the region. This crop map,

along with other open space resource layers, will be used to inform a review of open space innovations beyond the rural-urban edge.

The final phase of the working group will try to answer questions such as:

- What and where are current efforts to preserve and protect open space lands? For what uses? In what ways can these efforts work together or impede one another?
- What are the challenges and opportunities of different preservation efforts?
- What are ways to support economic vitality and environmental sustainability on the same rural land?

For more information, contact Kacey Lizon at (916) 340-6265 or [klizon@sacog.org](mailto:klizon@sacog.org).

## Innovations (continued)

On **March 12**, the Local Markets Working Group held a workshop where participants worked in groups to review the list of innovations. Each table selected their top choices, and recommended how to implement them, including identifying what resources are needed, who is needed to make it work, and how long each innovation would take to implement. Implementation of these innovations will be explored further as part of the next phase of the Local Market Working Group. From the workshop, the top three innovations were:

- Strengthen and expand local food education for schools and low-income communities
- Develop a regional buyer's guide to let consumers know where to purchase local products
- Develop supportive state and local policies for agritourism

The full list of innovations can be reviewed and commented on at:

[www.sacog.org/rucs/wiki](http://www.sacog.org/rucs/wiki).

### Project Contacts

David Shabazian  
Project Manager  
(916) 340-6231  
[dshabazian@sacog.org](mailto:dshabazian@sacog.org)

Monica Hernández  
Tours & Meetings  
(916) 340-6237  
[mhernandez@sacog.org](mailto:mhernandez@sacog.org)

Erik Johnson  
Publications  
(916) 340-6247  
[ejohnson@sacog.org](mailto:ejohnson@sacog.org)

Stay current on rural-urban issues  
at [www.sacog.org/rucs](http://www.sacog.org/rucs)

## What is an Agricultural Park?

An Agricultural Park or Ag Park is a combination of a working farm and a municipal park that is located at the urban edge. Ag Parks can serve as transition or buffer zones between urban and agricultural uses. They are designed for multiple uses that accommodate small farms, public areas and natural habitat. They allow small farm operations access to secure land and local markets. They provide fresh food, and an educational, environmental and aesthetic amenity for nearby communities.

Ag Parks can be located on either public or private land, vary in acreage, host single or multiple tenants, and have a variety of both agricultural and park components.

One example of this is the Sunol Water Temple Ag Park in the bay area. This model Ag Park is located on 18 acres of land leased by the non-profit group, Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE), for nine years from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. Six farmer tenants work rented plots in the park and sell their produce at farmers' markets, produce stands, to restaurants and through CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). Tenants share infrastructure, get training in organic agriculture practices and pay rent and water costs.

For more information about the Sunol Ag Park, visit: [www.sagecenter.org](http://www.sagecenter.org).



### Local Spring Crops

Support local farmers and ranchers by shopping at farmers' markets or joining a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) service. Fresh, locally grown produce or cattle conveniently available at a location near you or in some cases delivered to your home. To locate a CSA visit: [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org).

|              |             |                   |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Arugula      | Cauliflower | Meyer lemons      |
| Asian greens | Celery      | Lettuce           |
| Beef         | Cucumbers   | Onions            |
| Bell peppers | Eggs        | Oranges           |
| Broccoli     | Fava beans  | Peas              |
| Cabbage      | Herbs       | Potatoes          |
| Carrots      | Honey       | Rhubarb           |
|              |             | Strawberries      |
|              |             | Spinach           |
|              |             | Sunflower sprouts |

## Carbon Sequestration

Via their Cap-to-Cap advocacy efforts, the Sacramento Metro Chamber's Natural Resources Committee (formerly Land Use and Natural Resources) will raise the profile of RUCS and Blueprint policies in Washington, D.C. **April 25 to 29.**

Issues ranging from funding to broad policy objectives will be covered and include, but are not limited to: increases in funding for Section 6 grant dollars that aid in Habitat Conservation Plan development and implementation; continued funding for the SACOG-initiated Six-County Aquatic Resources Inventory; support for economic and environmental innovation on our forested lands; removal of the sunset provision in Section 214 of the Water Resources Development Act, which will give the Army Corps of Engineers the

continuing authority to receive funds from public entities in exchange for dedicated Corps staff; innovations in land uses, including using unused land for solar farms; and overall support of HCPs, RUCS and Blueprint implementation.

The Natural Resources Committee will be placing the majority of their advocacy efforts in producing issue briefs asking our local Congressional delegation, key committee staff and agency representatives for specific actions. The leadership of the Natural Resources Committee welcomes suggestions as to what these actionable items should be.

For suggestions for the issue briefs or questions, contact Stacey McKinley at [Stacey.McKinley@gmail.com](mailto:Stacey.McKinley@gmail.com) by **April 15.**