

## Climate Action through Conservation

**Summary:** The Climate Action through Conservation project seeks to help counties across California address climate change through changes in management and land use, and conservation. Through development of a county-level portfolio of tools and policy incentives, the project seeks to align conservation of priority natural and working landscapes with climate benefits as well as other regional public benefits.

### **Context: State climate policy is generating new funding for land management and conservation.**

- AB 32 and related legislation are creating new funding sources and other incentives to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases on natural and working lands. Currently, \$97 million/year from cap and trade auction proceeds goes to state grants for forest and wetland conservation and management and agricultural preservation. This amount may increase.
- The state's 2014 Scoping Plan Update – the road map for greenhouse gas reductions – envisions funding and other support for emissions reductions on forests, rangelands, and wetlands.
- Regional efforts are underway to reduce emissions related to changes in land use (under SB 375).

### **Accounting for greenhouse gas reductions in land use planning and management can help meet county and regional objectives.**

- New funding sources and other incentives could support conservation and land management activities on forests, wetlands, and potentially other land types, potentially including: changes in forest management, forest conservation, reforestation, and wetlands restoration and management.
- These activities may also support existing programs, such as regional habitat conservation plans; fuels reduction; and Regional Transportation /Sustainable Communities Strategies.

### **The challenge: Tracking greenhouse gas reductions from land use and management requires new analytic tools.**

- GIS-based tools are needed to quantify carbon in vegetation and soils.
- In addition, carbon isn't the only variable of concern. A system is needed to quantify impacts and benefits on other public values, such as water and air quality, jobs, wildlife habitat, recreation, food production, and more.

### **We are developing tools to support land use and management that balances greenhouse gas reductions and other values.**

- In partnership with the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, The Nature Conservancy is building data and analytic systems to support planning, conservation, and land management that integrates greenhouse gas reductions.
- The GIS-based decision support system will provide a guide for optimizing emissions reductions while advancing conservation goals and enhancing other public values.

