Pajaro River Watershed Resilience Program

Workshop #4: Prioritizing Adaptation Strategies

November 6, 2025 - Held at Paicines Ranch - a regenerative working cattle ranch in San Benito County

The Pajaro River Watershed Resilience Program (PRWRP) is a grant-funded pilot with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) designed to help California's watersheds prepare for the impacts of a changing climate through integrated, community-driven resilience planning. Workshop #4, the fourth and final PRWRP workshop, was held in person on November 6, 2025 at Paicines Ranch and focused on prioritizing adaptation strategies and implementation actions identified through earlier phases of the planning process.

Workshop Purpose and Goals

Workshop #4 built directly on the outcomes of Workshop #3 and earlier engagements, including the qualitative Climate Vulnerability Assessment, quantitative water budget and climate analyses, and adaptation strategy development. The goals of Workshop #4 were to:

- Share updated technical findings, including key vulnerabilities and water budget insights, to inform prioritization.
- Gather structured input from the Advisory Group and broader watershed network on which adaptation strategies and implementation actions should be advanced.
- Apply prioritization criteria to evaluate relative benefits, feasibility, and barriers to implementation.
- Identify implementation considerations, including governance needs, funding opportunities, and pathways to reduce delivery barriers.

If you have questions regarding the Pajaro River Watershed, please contact:

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Funding for this project has been provided in full or in part from the Budget Acts of 2022 and through an agreement with the California Department of Water Resources.

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Workshop Activities

The workshop activities were designed to be highly interactive and result in prioritization of key resilience ideas. Participants first reviewed posters organized by PRWRP Goals, each highlighting adaptation strategies, implementation actions, and the climate vulnerabilities they address. During **Activity 1**, participants used "thumbs up" and "thumbs down" stickers to indicate support or concern for individual actions, and added written comments to identify gaps, refinements, or "big idea" strategies not yet captured. In **Activity 2**, participants engaged in facilitated tabletop discussions to further prioritize strategies. Small groups reviewed the most-supported implementation actions from Activity 1 and ranked them using agreed-upon prioritization criteria. The workshop concluded with **Activity 3: the Investment Game**, an interactive budgeting exercise designed to simulate real-world funding tradeoffs. Participants allocated "funding" across the highest-ranked strategies and actions, revealing where the group would concentrate limited resources and where additional investment could leverage implementation.

Outcomes and Key Themes

Across activities, participants demonstrated strong alignment around a focused set of high-priority adaptation strategies and implementation actions that provide watershed-scale, multi-benefit outcomes. Key themes that emerged included:

- Strong support for strategies that deliver multiple benefits across flood management, water supply reliability, ecosystem health, and community resilience.
- Recognition that implementation barriers—such as permitting complexity, funding coordination, and governance capacity—must be addressed alongside project identification.
- Emphasis on the need for a durable watershed governance and coordination structure to carry priority actions forward beyond the planning phase.
- Clear interest in transitioning from broad strategies to actionable, well-defined implementation roadmaps that clarify roles, sequencing, and funding pathways.

Next Steps:

- **Refine and confirm Keystone Actions**. Prioritized strategies and actions from the Workshop will be finalized and flagged as Keystone Actions in the Pajaro River Watershed Resilience Plan, reflecting alignment across the Watershed Network, with implementation potential leads identified in partnership with the Advisory Group.
- **Define implementation pathways and success metrics**. Each strategy will be paired with clear implementation roles and measurable performance metrics to track progress, outcomes, and accountability over time.
- **Advance public review and plan adoption**. The Draft Pajaro River Watershed Resilience Plan will be released for public review in mid-February 2026, supported by public office hours in February, with final plan submittal to DWR by **March 31, 2026**.

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