Pajaro River Watershed Resilience Program
Workshop #4: Prioritize Adaptation Strategies

This document presents proposed adaptation strategies and implementation actions that were developed based on input from Pajaro River Watershed Resilience Plan (PRWRP) network, previous PRWRP workshops, written surveys, review of existing plans and resources, and focus groups held in October 2025. These proposed strategies and actions are organized by the seven goals the Watershed Network developed earlier in 2025 and address key vulnerabilities identified through the climate vulnerability assessment.
The following criteria were used to screen implementation actions under the PRWRP.
These criteria provide a consistent framework for identifying actions that most e□ectively advance the PRWRP's mission, vision, and goals, while addressing watershed-scale risks and opportunities

The following criteria were used to screen implementation actions under the Pajaro River Watershed Resilience Plan (PRWRP). These criteria provide a consistent framework for identifying actions that most effectively advance the PRWRP's mission, vision, and goals, while addressing watershed-scale risks and opportunities.

- Achieve PRWRP Mission, Vision, and Goals
- Reduce Risk to Communities
- Improve Performance of Water Resource System Infrastructure
- Achieve Equitable Outcomes.
- Technical Feasibility
- Address Acute or Chronic Issues

This list of strategies and actions focuses on **major actions** that require **thoughtful collaboration and agreement**; therefore, not all actions from the full set are included. Additionally, **some implementation actions apply to multiple strategies**, reflecting their cross-cutting relevance to climate resilience, water management, and community outcomes.

1. GOAL A: Improve Water Supply Reliability Through Water Supply Diversification:

Expand local and regional water security by advancing recycled water and reuse systems, increasing storage of local and imported water, expanding recharge capabilities, and pursuing alternative water supplies.

Key Vulnerabilities:

#1 Lower Pajaro water supply and sustainable groundwater management are threatened by seawater intrusion, and regional droughts and extreme heat conditions will worsen conditions.

#2 Upper Pajaro Sub-Watersheds' local and imported water supply, water quality, and sustainable groundwater management threatened by drought and extreme heat.

#11 Agricultural and ranching lands are increasingly vulnerable to soil degradation, reduced productivity, changing cropping patterns, and land conversion pressures under intensifying drought, extreme heat, and wildfire conditions.

Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
#14 Improve water use efficiency in urban/ residential areas	14a	**Develop neighborhood-scale or parcel-level greywater reuse regulations that support capture and treat laundry, sink, and shower water for landscape irrigation**, reducing potable demand on municipal systems.	• City of Watsonville Recycled Water Ordinance (Chapter 6-4) • Authorizes use of recycled and greywater for landscape irrigation • State Plumbing Code (California Title 24, Part 5) • Provides standards for simple and complex greywater systems • Monterey One Water – Pure Water Monterey • While focused on advanced reuse, their outreach includes neighborhood-scale greywater education and incentive pilots.
	14b	**Adopt local ordinances requiring high-efficiency water fixtures, smart irrigation controllers, and drought-tolerant landscaping for new development and major retrofits**. Pair these requirements with rebates, technical assistance, and flexible compliance pathways to ensure they do not disproportionately impact lower-income households, small property owners, or disadvantaged communities. Prioritize locally appropriate plant palettes and technology options that balance water savings with affordability and cultural relevance.	• State Plumbing Code (California Title 24, Part 5) • Provides standards for simple and complex greywater systems • CALGreen + Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO) – state-mandated • Santa Cruz County Water Conservation Ordinance (2022) • Valley Water Landscape Rebate Program
	14c	**Offer pilot programs that credit residents for directing roof runoff or yard runoff into infiltration features**, such as rain gardens, dry wells, or permeable driveways, in exchange for utility bill credits or rebates.	• Santa Cruz County "Rainwater Harvesting and Permeable Pavement Rebate Pilot" (2023) • SCVURPPP regional model - Encourages member cities (including Gilroy, Morgan Hill) to provide fee credits for on-site infiltration practices • Provides design specs and cost-share guidance.

Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
#16 Maximize and scale recycled water and water reuse	16a	**Partner with water agencies, irrigation districts, and growers to extend recycled water pipelines and delivery systems to agricultural users**, especially in areas dependent on groundwater.	• Identified as an action in the San Benito CCAP, City of Hollister/SBCWD has been delivering recycled water for ag irrigation since 2016
	16b	**Assess feasibility and provide financial support to convert rural communities from septic systems to centralized sewer networks**, enabling capture and re-use of wastewater for recycling. Work with LAFCO and County planning departments to maintain stringent land use controls to avoid sprawl.	• Santa Cruz County Sanitation District provides pathway for parcels to connect/convert from septic to sewer • County Local Area Management Plans (Santa Cruz & Monterey)
	16c	**Plan and construct tertiary (advanced) treatment facilities that produce high-quality recycled water** suitable for irrigation, industrial, and environmental uses.	• Watsonville Water Resources Center + PV Water Recycled Water Facility • Hollister Urban Area Water/Wastewater planning
	16d	**Implement managed aquifer recharge projects to advance groundwater banking. Emphasize use of advanced-treated recycled water to replenish groundwater basins**, improving drought resilience and long-term storage.	• Pure Water Monterey (Monterey One Water) • Semitropic Groundwater Banking/Exchange Program (with SCVWD)
	16e	**Pursue direct portable reuse pilot projects that deliver purified recycled water directly into potable systems** to meet future municipal, industrial and urban demand.	• Valley Water (Santa Clara County)—Board approved moving forward (Feb 27, 2024) with both a demonstration and full-scale DPR project • Pure Water Monterey (Monterey One Water)
	16f	**Develop a watershed-scale study to quantify opportunities and infrastructure requirements for direct potable reuse** as a future water source.	• Valley Water's Purified Water Project
#17 Maximize local and imported water storage and distribution	17a	**Plan, permit, and construct new or enlarged surface water reservoirs within the watershed** to increase local storage capacity and improve drought reliability.	• B.F. Sisk Dam/San Luis Reservoir Raise (USBR + partners)—adds ~130,000 AF of storage in San Luis Reservoir • Pacheco Reservoir
	17b	**Collaborate with regional and state partners to secure new Central Valley Project (CVP) and State Water Project (SWP) investments** that can increase imported water deliveries.	• Pajaro IRWM • Valley Water's "Protection & Augmentation of Water Supplies" report
	17c	**Coordinate with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and local partners to increase San Luis Reservoir storage capacity and optimize operational flexibility** for imported water deliveries.	• B.F. Sisk Dam/San Luis Reservoir Raise (USBR + partners)—adds ~130,000 AF of storage in San Luis Reservoir
#18 Advance solutions that develop groundwater supplies and mitigate groundwater quality issues	18a	**Accelerate production of indirect potable reuse supplies for delivery in lieu of groundwater** pumping and to replenish groundwater through managed aquifer recharge.	• Accelerated Drought Response Project (ADRoP)
	18b	**Conduct a technical review and pilot testing of emerging desalination technologies** to assess their feasibility for treating brackish groundwater and improving water quality across the watershed.	• Sand City Coastal Desalination Plant in Monterey County, People's Moss Landing Desal Project has been proposed near the coast in Monterey Bay, brackish water desalination projects, DWR's Water Desalination Grant Program
	18c	**Build additional water transmission facilities between regions and agencies with excess wet season and wet year water supplies** and areas that can support additional groundwater recharge, groundwater banking, or direct delivery in lieu of groundwater pumping	• San Juan Bautista Transmission Pipeline • Semitropic Groundwater Banking/Exchange Program (with SCVWD)
	18d	**Expand recycled water treatment capacity and distribution systems** to increase recycled water for recharge and irrigation.	• South County Recycled Water Pipeline Project (Valley Water)

2. GOAL B: Enhance and Protect Ecosystems and Enhance Agricultural Lands:

Preserve, restore and repurpose lands to improve soil health, support habitat connectivity, and strengthen biodiversity and ecosystem functions that sustain both agricultural productivity and native species.

Key Vulnerabilities:

#5 Aquatic, riparian, and coastal ecosystems degraded by extended droughts, extreme temperature events, and shifting precipitation patterns, threatening native species and ecological functions.

#6 Native habitats, water quality, and infrastructure threatened by increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires, while post-fire conditions heighten erosion and invasive species spread.

#8 Public access to safe, equitable, and enjoyable outdoor recreation spaces across the watershed threatened by rising temperatures, drought, wildfire, and coastal flooding.

#11 Agricultural and ranching lands are increasingly vulnerable to soil degradation, reduced productivity, changing cropping patterns, and land conversion pressures under intensifying drought, extreme heat, and wildfire conditions.

Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
#7 Implement managed retreat approaches for coastal and inland hazards	7a	**Increase the number of vertical access points to the California Coastal Trail between Manresa State Beach and Zmudowski State Beach** (Santa Cruz Section 7). Vertical access points are paths, trails, or stairways that provide a way for the public to get to the coast from the nearest public road, trail, or other public area. Placement and design should consider sea level rise, along with triggers for relocating over-time. Partner with community based organizations to support educational programs and increase access to the coast for underserved and Tribal youth.	• Santa Cruz County Coastal Trail Master Plan • Watsonville Dunes Access Management Plan (Land Trust of Santa Cruz County + State Parks) • Manresa State Beach and Sunset State Beach Access Improvements • Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail/Coastal Rail Trail • Latino Outdoors Monterey Bay + Regeneración Pajaro Valley Climate Action • Castroville to the Coast led by Central Coast Wetlands Group
	7b	**Accelerate the implementation of managed retreat for the estuary and wetland slough system through land repurposing and relocation of infrastructure**. Assess projects and approaches using established thresholds and triggers to adaptively manage in response to sea level rise.	• PV Water Multibenefit Land Repurposing Plan • Elkhorn Slough Natural Estuary Reserve • Resilient Pajaro Estuary Project - Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
	7c	**Relocate wastewater treatment plants, stormwater systems, and water supply, as well as flood management and transportation infrastructure** to avoid projected sea level rise and storm surge hazard areas.	• Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project (PRFMP) • Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Project • Watsonville Wastewater Treatment and Recycled Water Facility Adaptation Planning • Valley Water – Infrastructure Resilience Program • Elkhorn Road and Strawberry Road (raising road elevation)
	7d	**Deploy rolling easements (and other mechanisms) that allow for adaptive management** as sea levels increase, gradually restricting development in newly affected areas.	• Lower Salinas Valley Managed Retreat Strategy – Monterey County • Elkhorn Slough Restoration Projects – Monterey County

Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
#8 Partner with the agricultural community to identify and enhance at-risk and underutilized lands for multi-benefit purposes.	8a	**Incentivize seasonal or rotational land fallowing in overdrafted or saline-impacted zones** to reduce regional water demand	• PV Water Multibenefit Land Repurposing Plan • PV Water Fallow Land Incentive Program (pilot, 2017) • RCD of Santa Cruz County + Community Water Dialogue — "Covered Fallow Plan • Land Trust of Santa Cruz County — Watsonville Slough Farm
	8b	**Identify and map priority zones for repurposing that align with groundwater recharge potential, habitat connectivity, agricultural viability, and community health**, under changing climate conditions. Evaluate the community implications of land transitions, including impacts on air quality, local economies, employment, and pesticide exposure. Integrate land repurposing into Groundwater Sustainability Plans and County General Plans.	• PV Water Multibenefit Land Repurposing Plan • Upper Pajaro acquisitions (POST) – recent 668-acre farmland purchase on the Santa Clara/San Benito line for wetland/floodplain restoration blended with continued ag use • North San Benito GSP– embed land-transition/recharge strategies for sustainability by 2042. • Amah Mutsun Land Trust – Acquisition funding to purchase 30 acres in Santa Clara County (awarded $2.170 million in October 2025 by Strategic Growth Council) • San Benito Agricultural Land Trust – Acquisition funding to purchase 395 acres of land in San Benito County (awarded $3.2 million in October 2025 by Strategic Growth Council) • Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area – Acquisition funding to purchase 154 acres in Santa Clara County ($4.5 million awarded in October 2025 by Strategic Growth Council) • Pajaro Valley Ecological Floodplain Inundation Potential (EcoFIP) Report • EcoFIP analysis for Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project • Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project • Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Project • Pajaro River-Salsipuedes Creek Confluence Area Restoration Project • Upper Pajaro River and Coward Creek Restoration and Recharge Project • Resilient Pajaro Estuary Project - Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
	8c	**Secure MLRP funding through Prop 4 to implement multi-benefit land repurposing projects** in coastal and flood-prone areas, integrating recharge basins, floodplain restoration, and habitat connectivity to enhance drought and flood resilience. Establish riparian buffer strips and setback zones along creeks and drainage channels.	• PV Water Multibenefit Land Repurposing Plan • Harkins Slough MAR (8,700+ AF recharged since 2002), College Lake Project (in construction), and Watsonville Slough System MAR & Recovery • Santa Cruz County riparian corridor ordinance & setbacks – codified buffer and setback requirements • California Rangeland Trust- SALC Acquisition funding for 1,538 Acres in Monterey County ($3.9 million awarded from Strategic Growth Council in Oct 2025) • Amah Mutsun Land Trust – Acquisition funding to purchase 30 acres in Santa Clara County (awarded $2.170 million in October 2025 by Strategic Growth Council) • San Benito Agricultural Land Trust – Acquisition funding to purchase 395 acres of land in San Benito County (awarded $3.2 million in October 2025 by Strategic Growth Council) • Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area – Acquisition funding to purchase 154 acres in Santa Clara County ($4.5 million awarded in October 2025 by Strategic Growth Council)

Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
#9 Improve soil health and ecosystem functioning in agricultural landscapes	9a	**Assess long-term financial costs and benefits of transitioning acreage to low-water, heat-tolerant, climate resilient crops, through pilot programs.** Facilitate deficit irrigation and crop diversification demonstration projects in the Lower Pajaro and San Benito areas in partnership with UC Cooperative Extension and local RCDs. Integrate long-term soil health monitoring to evaluate how current and alternative management practices affect productivity, groundwater demand, and overall economic resilience—balancing short-term profitability with sustained agricultural viability under extended drought and groundwater pumping constraints.	• Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PV Water) – Conservation and Water Efficiency Program • UC Cooperative Extension (Monterey & Santa Cruz Counties) – Crop Diversification & Irrigation Trials
	9b	**Develop a regional certification program for farms that achieve measurable soil health, pesticide reduction and water infiltration outcomes**. Tie participation to market incentives (e.g., local labeling, institutional procurement preferences, or carbon credit markets). Ensure integrated pest management (IPM) and pollinator habitat enhancement is integrated, to mitigate pesticide use increases under warming conditions.	• UC ANR local crop R&D. PV Water conservation + rebates • Pajaro River Toxicity Reduction Project (Santa Cruz RCD) • RCD of Monterey County – Healthy Soils and Water Quality Enhancement Programs • County Farm Bureaus • The Nature Conservancy
	9c	**Scale-up deployment of customized technical assistance for adoption of climate-smart practices for disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.** Partner with local RCDs, UC Cooperative Extension, and growers to collect data, share findings, and demonstrate how on-farm improvements enhance water retention, reduce erosion, and increase drought resilience, improving economic viability in the face of climate change.	• RCD of Santa Cruz County & RCD of Monterey County – Equity-Focused TA Programs • Regeneración Pajaro Valley Climate Action, Kitchen Table Advisors, and CAFF • UC Cooperative Extension – Underserved Farmer Outreach
	9d	**Expand rotational grazing and native grass reseeding programs on rangelands in San Benito and Upper Pajaro subregions**. Collaborate with local RCDs and NRCS to fund demonstration sites where adaptive grazing improves soil carbon, infiltration, and drought resilience. Training and cost-share opportunities can help ranchers monitor forage productivity, reduce erosion, and restore native perennial grass cover.	• Measure in San Benito Climate Action and Adaptation plan - Measure AG-3: Increase carbon sequestration across agriculture sector to sequester 291,179 MT CO_2e by 2030 and 582,342 by 2045, San Benito RCD Conservation Program
	9e	**Expand peer-to-peer learning programs, including field days, for farmers and ranchers to exchange on-farm innovations, and technologies** that demonstrate how soil management practices improve infiltration, retention, and drought resilience.	• RCDs of Santa Cruz County, Monterey County, and San Benito County - “Soil Health Field Days” and “Water Cycle on Working Lands” • Central Coast Rangeland Coalition (CCRC) • Elkhorn Slough & Pajaro Valley demo farms: Cover crop and compost trials measuring infiltration rates and soil carbon. • San Benito County vineyard demo: Mulching and reduced tillage to retain soil moisture and improve infiltration. • EcoFarm and CAFF - host farmer-led workshops and panels in the Pajaro and Salinas Valleys, connecting soil management with drought and flood resilience. • Regeneración Pajaro Valley Climate Action

Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
#11 Improve biodiversity and habitat resilience through enhancement, restoration, and connectivity approaches	11a	**Advance a watershed-wide nature-based solutions design and prioritization program that address climate-exacerbated vulnerabilities.** Develop and refine a coordinated ecosystem restoration and enhancement portfolio that leverages existing frameworks (e.g., EcoFIP, UPNEET) to identify priority locations for floodplain reconnection, riparian corridor expansion, and groundwater-beneficial recharge. Ensure new design concepts explicitly target climate-exacerbated vulnerabilities, maximize habitat connectivity, and include measurable biodiversity objectives.	• Existing conservation plans, MLRP, Pacific Institute Multi-Benefit Framework, CalWEP Landscape Transformation Multi-Benefit Tool, Nature Conservancy Tools (e.g., Marxan, Resilient Lands Mapping), Esri Conservation Land Management Solutions, Upper Pajaro Watershed Master Plan Modeling from Valley Water including Native Ecosystem Enhancement Tool (UPNEET) for restoration projects • Elkhorn Road and Strawberry Road (raising road elevation), Pajaro Valley Ecological Floodplain Inundation Potential (EcoFIP) Report, EcoFIP analysis for Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project
	11b	**Construct and maintain climate-resilient habitat enhancement and restoration projects in priority locations.** Implement or construct multi-benefit projects throughout the watershed by scaling up existing programs and advancing new projects that address key ecosystem vulnerabilities to climate change and benefit communities that lack access to nature.	• Uvas, Pacheco and Llages Creeks Valley Water Projects • Middle Struve Slough Water Quality and Habitat Enhancement Project • Amah Mutsun Land Trust Native Plant Program and Restoration Program • Santa Cruz County RCD Forest Management Plan consultation program • Amah Mutsun Land Trust – Acquisition funding to purchase 30 acres in Santa Clara County (awarded $2.170 million in October 2025 by Strategic Growth Council) • San Benito Agricultural Land Trust – Acquisition funding to purchase 395 acres of land in San Benito County (awarded $3.2 million in October 2025 by Strategic Growth Council) • Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area – Acquisition funding to purchase 154 acres in Santa Clara County ($4.5 million awarded in October 2025 by Strategic Growth Council) • Castroville to the Coast led by Central Coast Wetlands Group • Elkhorn Road and Strawberry Road (raising road elevation), Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project, Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Project, Pajaro River-Salsipuedes Creek Confluence Area Restoration Project, Upper Pajaro River and Coward Creek Restoration and Recharge Project
	11c	**Advance wildlife corridor planning to increase access to water for animals and improve riparian corridors, by implementing the Pacheco Pass Wildlife Overpass Planning Project** at Highway 152, evaluate, design and implement an underpass below Highway 1 and at SR-129/SR-101, and establish land use controls to protect wildlife corridors identified as part of the San Benito County Conservation Plan.	• Pacheco Pass Wildlife Overpass Planning Project at Highway 152 by the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency. (Valley Water part of working group)
	11d	**Expand Valley Water's biodiversity and stock pond incentive programs to enhance climate-adapted species,** supporting habitat improvements and water storage projects that collectively enhance acres of rangeland and aquatic habitat.	• Valley Water Stock Pond Incentive Program

3. GOAL C: Build Multi-Benefit Infrastructure

Integrate nature-based-based and engineered solutions to strengthen flood protection, restore wetlands and coastal systems, and extend the lifespan and reliability of critical water infrastructure through proactive maintenance and upgrades.

Key Vulnerabilities:

#3 Aging water and wastewater infrastructure threatened by increasing intensity of extreme precipitation and heat events, lead to service disruptions and water quality risks.

#12 Regional flood risks, runoff, and pollutant loading are worsened by more frequent and intense precipitation when combined with soil hardening and wildfire burn scars.

#1 Lower Pajaro water supply and sustainable groundwater management are threatened by seawater intrusion, and regional droughts and extreme heat conditions will worsen conditions.

#4 The Lower Pajaro Watershed's existing infrastructure, communities and land management practices are threatened by coastal flooding driven by sea level rise.

#5 Aquatic, riparian, and coastal ecosystems degraded by extended droughts, extreme temperature events, and shifting precipitation patterns, threatening native species and ecological functions.

#6 Native habitats, water quality, and infrastructure threatened by increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires, while post-fire conditions heighten erosion and invasive species spread.

#7 Climate change threatens culturally significant species, landscapes, and practices, compounding existing barriers to Tribal access and stewardship.

Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
#10 Advance nature-based solutions in wetland, floodplain, and coastal areas	10a	**Accelerate floodplain conservation easements (in the Soap Lake Floodplain and others) and develop new climate-informed construction standards** in historically impacted areas.	• San Benito Ag Land Trust (established goal of 5000 acres) • Soap Lake Restoration Floodplain Preservation Project • Conserve and Enhance San Felipe Lake • PRFMA Pajaro River Flood Risk Management • 30x30 California
	10b	**Implement established multi-benefit coastal protection and restoration projects and identify opportunities for scaling these concepts** to improve restoration, recreation, flood mitigation, and sea level rise mitigation opportunities.	• Resilient Pajaro Estuary Program (Beach Ranch) protect/restore tidal wetlands Moss Landing Community Plan Actions (coastal sloughs) protect/restore • Castroville to the Coast led by Central Coast Wetlands Group • Elkhorn Road and Strawberry Road (raising road elevation)
	10c	**Secure funding to enable comprehensive levee improvements and floodplain restoration that protect all communities and critical infrastructure from more extreme precipitation events, prioritizing improvements for those who have faced historically disproportionate flood impacts**. Support local implementing agencies by prioritizing grant strategies, technical assistance, and partnerships that reduce disparities in access to resilient flood protection.	• City of Watsonville Levee Embankment Stabilization Project • PRFMA Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project (lower river) • Castroville to the Coast led by Central Coast Wetlands Group • Elkhorn Road and Strawberry Road (raising road elevation)
	10d	**Focus geomorphic and ecosystem restoration efforts on channel confluence areas and incorporate climate-informed design**. Provide additional accommodation space for sediment storage in the confluence area, including the potential to safely retain large woody debris that will enhance habitat through the introduction of geomorphic complexity.	• Pajaro River-Salsipuedes Creek Confluence Area Restoration Project • Winter Preparedness Program

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#15 Improve regional stormwater and flood management system upgrades	15a	**Upgrade and upsize culvert and stormwater systems to handle increased flow rates expected under standardized CMIP6 climate change model**, particularly for communities with pluvial flooding. Prioritize upgrades in areas that would benefit DACs.	• Master Plan Projects – Storm Drain Improvements – 900760 (City of Gilroy)
	15b	**Upgrade flood infrastructure and levee embankments to meet or exceed federal standards and standardize O&M**. Levee embankment upgrades in lower Pajaro River; fix gaps left by USACE. Incorporate public access options where feasible.	• Complete Planning Study for Uvas-Carnadero Creek from Luchessa Avenue to Highway 25 • Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project • Pajaro River Bridge to Bay Project • Pajaro River-Salsipuedes Creek Confluence Area Restoration Project • Upper Pajaro River and Coward Creek Restoration and Recharge Project • Pajaro Bridge Infrastructure Resilient Design Study (BIRDS) Project • Orchard Park Flood Risk Mitigation Project • PRFMA Stream Maintenance Program
	15c	**Develop watershed-scale Flood Forecast and Monitoring System**. Centralized and/or coordinated Watershed or region wide flood forecast system to improve coordination for flood preparedness activities. Pilot on priority assets (levees, culverts, pump stations, College Lake facilities)	• Valley Water (Santa Clara Co.) ALERT network + Flood-Ready hub • Cal-Adapt datasets and a method to derive future IDF • Corralitos Creek Watershed Flood Modeling and Forecasting Tool Development (tributary to Pajaro River)
	15d	**Develop watershed wide technical guidance manual for design, operation, maintenance and inclusion of CMIP6 climate change projections for flood management and stormwater systems.** Define performance thresholds, redundancy requirements, adaptive operation protocols, inspection and maintenance cycles, and asset-specific triggers for upgrades. Deliver technical training to local jurisdictions to ensure consistent adoption and integration into General Plan Safety Elements, Capital Improvement Programs, and permitting review.	• County of Santa Cruz—Zone 5 Storm Drain Master Plan Update
	15e	**Conduct cost-benefit analyses that quantify avoided flood damage and reduced insurance liabilities to support funding decisions.** Implement a programmatic cost-benefit framework that evaluates flood risk reduction outcomes of infrastructure upgrades, including avoided physical damage, reduced emergency response costs, and lower insurance premiums or NFIP payouts for vulnerable communities. Utilize updated hydrologic modeling, asset condition assessments, and socioeconomic data to identify communities with the highest exposure and the greatest resilience benefit per dollar invested.	• Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program (FMA) • BCA Guidance & Tools by FEMA

Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
#20 Implement infrastructure preventative maintenance, improvements, and upgrades	20a	**Adopt water infrastructure design standards to account for worsening climate conditions**, including changes in temperature related to heating and cooling, or materials expansion and contraction, as well as changes in precipitation intensity-duration-frequency assumption for storms of different duration.	• Pajaro River Basin Climate Change Assessment (USACE Appendix, 2018) • Valley Water – Watershed Master Plan & UPNEET • Santa Cruz County Design Guidelines
	20b	**Share jurisdictional asset management plans and prioritize major repair or extraordinary maintenance**, assessing against climate-risk mitigation and multi-benefit interests across the Network water resource systems, and set up potential cost-sharing strategy to inform jurisdictions' CIPs and other planning frameworks.	• PV Water – Tracks wells, pipelines, and recharge facilities (BMP & AMP 2019–2029); already uses climate-risk scoring and could share framework via PRWRP • PRFMA/Santa Cruz County Flood Control – Maintains levees and flood channels; could add multi-benefit criteria (habitat, recharge) to maintenance planning • Valley Water – 10-Year Master Plan and Asset Management Policy apply risk-based prioritization; could align approach with lower Pajaro watershed agencies • San Benito County Water District – Hollister-area CIP focused on groundwater and imported water; could integrate climate hazard screening • City of Watsonville – Stormwater and sanitation CIPs include adaptation upgrades; strong pilot candidate for shared watershed asset database
	20c	**Continue upgrading conveyances and culverts to handle projected increases in heavy precipitation runoff.** Widen conveyances to accommodate higher storm flow events. Improve culverts to widen them to accommodate higher water flow events. Include Fish Passage/ Fish Barrier Removal and Expansion and Connection to Riparian Corridors as co-benefits. Prioritize upgrades in areas that would benefit DACs.	• Valley Water Upper Pajaro Watershed Report, fish passage barriers and impediments and riparian corridor actions • PRFMA projects

4. GOAL D: Protect and Improve Water Quality

Implement decentralized surface water quality improvement technologies and small water system measures to ensure clean, reliable water quality.

Key Vulnerabilities:

#1 Lower Pajaro water supply and sustainable groundwater management are threatened by seawater intrusion, and regional droughts and extreme heat conditions will worsen conditions.

#2 Upper Pajaro Sub-Watersheds' local and imported water supply, water quality, and sustainable groundwater management threatened by drought and extreme heat. Upper Pajaro Sub-Watersheds' water supply, water quality, and sustainable groundwater management threatened by drought and extreme heat.

#3 Aging water and wastewater infrastructure threatened by increasing intensity of extreme precipitation and heat events, lead to service disruptions and water quality risks.

#12 Regional flood risks, runoff, and pollutant loading are worsened by more frequent and intense precipitation when combined with soil hardening and wildfire burn scars.

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Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
#12 Advance regional water capture and infiltration	12a	**Scale Recharge Net Metering (ReNeM) Pilot from lower Pajaro to rest of watershed** and incentivize on-farm stormwater capture projects using small ponds and retention basins.	• PV Water Recharge Net Metering (ReNeM) Pilot/Rebate Programs
	12b	**Conduct site suitability studies to identify and inventory MAR opportunities at watershed scale:** including AgMAR, FloodMAR, Lage-Scale/Regional stormwater capture in urban/suburban environments (e.g., capture basins in neighborhoods and institutional campuses). Support financing of capital costs to expand FloodMAR infrastructure and build networks of Managed Groundwater Recharge (MGR) to increase infiltration at scale.	• California State Coastal Conservancy project 13-118, "Regional Managed Aquifer Recharge And Runoff Analysis In Santa Cruz County, California" • Andy Fisher's recharge suitability models
	12c	**Offer financial incentives for acquisition of strategic parcels of land for FloodMAR recharge, restoration, and stormwater management.**	• POST acquisitions on the Upper Pajaro River (2025) • State Coastal Conservancy–funded Watsonville Slough/Estuary acquisitions • Amah Mutsun Land Trust – Acquisition funding to purchase 30 acres in Santa Clara County (awarded $2.170 million in October 2025 by Strategic Growth Council) • San Benito Agricultural Land Trust – Acquisition funding to purchase 395 acres of land in San Benito County (awarded $3.2 million in October 2025 by Strategic Growth Council) • Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area – Acquisition funding to purchase 154 acres in Santa Clara County ($4.5 million awarded in October 2025 by Strategic Growth Council)
	12d	**Use surface-water diversions and storage to hold stormflows as far upstream as possible**, implementing traditional Tribal upland retention practices and land stewardship concepts promoted by RCDs, TNC, and others.	• AMLT: Native Stewardship Corps, Quiroste Valley Cultural Preserve, Star Creek Ranch • Soap Lake Floodplain Preservation Project • Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) & ReNeM Program • Integrated Watershed Restoration Program (IWRP) by SC RCD
	12e	**Advance projects that promote in-channel recharge through levee setbacks or floodplain grading.**	• Pajaro Regional Flood Risk Management Project, EcoFIP

Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
#13 Establish low impact development and climate smart landscapes	13a	Implement urban greening to reduce stormwater runoff from more extreme precipitation events and mitigate the urban heat island effect from increasing extreme heat events. **Pilot "green street corridors" in urban centers with vulnerable communities**	• Watsonville and Hollister- Cities integrate bioswales, permeable sidewalks, and shade trees.
	13b	**Incorporate LID and green infrastructure requirements into County and City Capital Improvement Programs for publicly funded projects**, updating public works design manuals to include onsite stormwater treatment, climate-smart landscaping, and equitable multi-benefit site design across all municipal projects. Provide technical and financial assistance to ensure compliance is not cost-prohibitive.	• Watsonville: Ramsay Park Master Plan and Renaissance Project, Hollister: Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELO), Gilroy: LID in larger developments like Glen Loma Ranch and Royal Way Townhomes, San Juan Bautista: developing an Active Transportation and Community Connectivity Plan funded by Caltrans, Morgan Hill: has several residential and mixed-use developments with sustainability goals including Magnolias Modular Housing and Quail Vineyards, Rosewood, and Crosswinds developments
	13c	**Require private development to implement onsite Low Impact Development measures into project proposals**. Establish local ordinances that require new development and major retrofits to include onsite stormwater treatment and detention, along with drought-resilient and low-maintenance landscaping, coupled with technical and financial assistance programs to support equitable compliance	• xxxx
	13d	**Develop policy to require and incentivize distributed stormwater capture systems in new and redeveloped residential properties**. Establish stormwater management performance standards (e.g., infiltration volume, pollutant load reduction) tied to development permits.	• Santa Cruz County Low Impact Development (LID) Ordinance & Post-Construction Stormwater Management Program (2015, updated 2020) • City of Watsonville Stormwater Ordinance (Chapter 6-3) • Valley Water – Stormwater Resource Plan (Santa Clara Basin)
	13e	**Create a stormwater fee rebate or credit program for properties implementing LID practices**. Offer green building tax incentives or low-interest retrofit loans for developers meeting LID performance thresholds.	• Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program (SCVURPPP) • Implements Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) Incentive Policies • California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen, Title 24)

Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
#19 Invest in support for domestic and small water systems	19a	**Develop a community-focused point-of-use/ point-of-entry monitoring program** regionally or watershed-wide that expands the ability of water agencies and municipalities to engage and support underserved communities.	• State Water Board – SAFER Program (Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience) • San Benito County Environmental Health and Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Division – provide low cost well testing, mapping and rebates • PV Water's Groundwater Management Program routinely monitors nitrate, TDS, and chloride at municipal, agricultural, and monitoring wells, through partnerships with Community Water Center and Regeneración Pajaro Valley Climate Action. • SB 200/AB 685 equity directives through data-sharing with counties and SAFER. • Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program (CCAMP) is expanding to include domestic well results
	19b	**Establish emergency and backup water supply programs** that provide backup water supplies and emergency well replacement funding for small water systems and rural households during drought or system failure.	• GSPs, Water Districts, County/City programs, SAFER Drinking Water Program (State Water Board), Drinking Water Partnerships & Consolidation (State Water Board), USDA Rural Development – Water & Environmental Programs,
	19c	**Secure SAFER funds to develop alternative water supplies and support consolidation of vulnerable domestic systems** into more resilient regional systems.	• Accelerated Drought Response Project (ADRoP), City of Santa Cruz Water Supply Augmentation Program, EPA WIFIA Program, Regional Water Management Foundation (RWMF), Water Systems Council – Cost Savings Act Guidance, Santa Cruz County Small Water System Regulatory Program • Existing SAFER TA networks
	19d	**Protect water quality for vulnerable households by providing subsidized point-of-use treatment** (e.g., nitrate and arsenic filters) to rural households.	• Statewide SAFER Drinking Water Program, Santa Cruz County Free Water Quality Testing & Assistance, Community Water Center Assistance, Santa Clara County & Valley Water Programs
	19e	**Address regulatory barriers to provide financial assistance for all septic systems and groundwater wells at high risk of failure due to flooding and high groundwater**. Transition households to safer wastewater solutions through technical assistance and funding.	• Hollister City Sewer Connection Policy Update • Streamlines emergency sewer connections for residents with failing septic systems) • State Water Board Septic-to-Sewer Funding Program (Available statewide, including San Benito County), Santa Cruz County Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) (requires inspections and repairs for failing septic systems; offers permitting and compliance support), County of SC Advanced Septic System Upgrade Guidance (Encourages transition to advanced treatment systems for vulnerable areas), Santa Clara County OWTS Program (Provides permitting, inspections, and emergency repair approvals for failing septic systems) • EPA Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Initiative (No-cost technical assistance for communities with failing septic systems • Helps apply for Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) grants and loans)

4. GOAL E: Build and Balance Connections Between People, Water and Land

Advance equitable and efficient water management approaches that sustain cultural traditions, community water use, and recreational activities.

Key Vulnerabilities:

#7 Climate change threatens culturally significant species, landscapes, and practices, compounding existing barriers to Tribal access and stewardship.

#8 Public access to safe, equitable, and enjoyable outdoor recreation spaces across the watershed threatened by rising temperatures, drought, wildfire, and coastal flooding.

#4 The Lower Pajaro Watershed's existing infrastructure, communities and land management practices are threatened by coastal flooding driven by sea level rise.

#9 Fragmented governance and limited coordination across jurisdictions constrain the ability to plan and implement multi-benefit, watershed-scale resilience projects.

Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
#3 Support technical assistance providers and programs	3a	**Establish formalized public-private partnerships between local agencies, industry leaders, and conservation organizations to address regulatory challenges to on-farm climate-smart and resilience practices.**	• Partners in Restoration (PIR) Permit Coordination Program formalizes a multi-agency partnership (RCD, NRCS, Sustainable Conservation, County, CDFW, USFWS/NOAA, RWQCB, ACOE, Coastal Commission)
	3b	**Secure funding on a recurring annual baseline to sustain core operations of technical assistance providers across the watershed**. Identify and seek a steady funding stream to support technical assistance that increases resilience of agricultural, ranching and forest lands.	• Santa Cruz County Measure Q creates an annual revenue stream (~$7.5M/yr expected) with 20% allocated to the RCD of Santa Cruz County and a land stewardship partner (e.g., Land Trust of Santa Cruz County)
	3c	**Create and fund embedded partner staff positions (e.g., soil health coordinator, watershed planner) within county planning or public works departments**, modeled after NRCS partnership agreements, to integrate conservation and climate adaptation goals into local government decision-making.	• Monterey Bay Regional Climate Project Working Group (RCPWG) and MBCAAN

Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
	5a	**Expand workforce development programs focused on climate, restoration and green careers**, like Pajaro Valley Climate Corps and MBCAAN training for alternative economic opportunities and local industries, such as green and restoration careers. Prioritize training for local youth and underserved residents.	• AMLT Amah Mutsun Native Stewardship Corps, AMLT Amah Mutsun Restoration Program
	5b	**Enhance Tribal access and rights to steward climate-resilient landscapes.** Identify opportunities to return traditional Tribal homelands or restore Tribal access to natural areas, habitat restoration sites, and culturally significant resources in ways that strengthen climate resilience, safeguard cultural traditions, and support adaptive land uses under changing environmental conditions	• Indian Canyon Indigenous Botanical Restoration • Indian Canyon Restoration Program • Good Fire: The Case for Cultural and Prescribed Burns
#5 **Support tribal co-management and workforce development**	5c	**Advance climate-adaptive Tribal co-management agreements and education exchange grounded in Traditional Ecological Knowledge.** Establish Tribal co-management agreements that formalize long-term stewardship partnerships and embed Traditional Ecological Knowledge into restoration, fire management, and climate adaptation programs throughout the watershed, following models such as the Amah Mutsun Land Trust–BLM Coast Dairies collaboration.	• AMLT–BLM Coast Dairies partnership • Inclusion of Ancestral descendants • Language, culture, and ecological connection and revitalization
	5d	**Fund Tribal-led training for local planners and engineers to integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge into land management policies and operational guidelines**. Ensure training outcomes are embedded into local policies, technical standards, and operational procedures, and establish ongoing consultation requirements to maintain culturally informed practices	• Natural Resources Training Group (NRTG) – Indigenous Programs • Indigenous Climate Resilience Network (ICRN) – Education & Training Resources • Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) – Tribal Climate Change Program
	21a	**Launch a community science program in partnership with local schools, Tribal youth, and community-based organizations** that serve underserved communities to monitor watershed health in the face of climate extremes (e.g., monitoring and reporting on algal blooms). Engage with recreationists and visitors as part of the program to increase awareness and education.	• Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency Reserve System • 2023-2027 Conservation Roadmap (Land Trust of Santa Cruz County). • Amah Mutsun Land Trust • Regeneración • Watsonville Wetlands Watch
#21 **Improve recreational access to water resources**	21b	**Increase public access opportunities to water bodies and open space areas as areas of refuge from extreme heat where current access is limited or restricted**, including Hernandez Reservoir, San Felipe Lake, and Pacheco Reservoir. Integrate new or improved access points, trails, and recreational features into flood management projects and restoration projects, such as the Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project (PRFMA), especially in and near communities that have the least access to such areas.	• Lower Pajaro: New Nature Center in City of Watsonville, Watsonville Slough System Industry and Ecosystem Partnership, Watsonville Trails and Urban Greening • Upper Pajaro-San Benito - Riverview Regional Park

6. GOAL F: Fund and Implement Climate Readiness

Strengthen the region's capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from climate extremes by expanding funding and technical support, improving data and monitoring systems, and advancing wildfire preparedness and restoration.

Key Vulnerabilities:

#6 Native habitats, water quality, and infrastructure threatened by increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires, while post-fire conditions heighten erosion and invasive species spread.

#10 Agencies, Tribal governments, and community-based organizations face persistent staffing, funding, and technical capacity limitations that constrain proactive projects and investment, particularly in underserved communities.

#3 Aging water and wastewater infrastructure threatened by increasing intensity of extreme precipitation and heat events, lead to service disruptions and water quality risks.

#12 Regional flood risks, runoff, and pollutant loading are worsened by more frequent and intense precipitation when combined with soil hardening and wildfire burn scars.

#4 The Lower Pajaro Watershed's existing infrastructure, communities and land management practices are threatened by coastal flooding driven by sea level rise.

#9 Fragmented governance and limited coordination across jurisdictions constrain the ability to plan and implement multi-benefit, watershed-scale resilience projects.

Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
#4 Develop new funding and finance mechanisms	4a	**Submit joint large-scale state or federal grant applications (e.g., through Proposition 4) to implement resilience actions** that bundle complementary flood, water quality, and habitat projects under a single regional resilience portfolio.	• MBCAAN
	4b	**Establish a revolving loan and rebate fund for AgMAR and FloodMAR recharge projects**, managed by participating Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) to provide low-interest loans or cost-share incentives.	• Bay Area Conservation District Revolving Loan Fund (2022 feasibility concept)—piloted by Sustainable Conservation and CARCD
	4c	**Advance County funding measures for counties within the watershed to generate funding for operations and maintenance of existing water infrastructure, and advancement of new projects**. Modeled after Santa Cruz County's Measure Q or LA County's Measure W—to generate at least $10 million annually for operations and maintenance of water infrastructure, flood control, stormwater management, and watershed restoration projects that provide multi-benefit outcomes across all four counties in the Pajaro River Watershed. Public campaigning for new funding measures should account for funding streams already in place.	• Santa Cruz County Measure Q - 1/8-cent sales tax generates ~$7.5 million annually, with 20% dedicated to the RCD and local land trusts • LA County's Measure W (Safe Clean Water Program), which raises ~$300 million annually for distributed stormwater capture and water-quality projects • Valley Water - Clean, Safe Creeks and Natural Flood Protection parcel tax ("Safe, Clean Water," Measure S, 2020) (note this is only for Valley Water service area)
	4d	**Implement a watershed investment fee or tax-based revenue mechanism—such as a stormwater utility fee or water quality surcharge**—to fund operations and maintenance of flood, water quality, and recharge infrastructure. Leverage Watershed-wide JPA or governance body to advance financial mechanism.	• City of Watsonville – Stormwater Enterprise Fund • Valley Water - Clean, Safe Creeks and Natural Flood Protection parcel tax ("Safe, Clean Water," Measure S, 2020) (note this is only for Valley Water service area)
	4e	**Establish a Climate Resilience District (SB 852) to raise and allocate funds for climate resilience projects and the operating expenses** of projects that would address sea level rise, extreme heat, extreme cold, the risk of wildfire, drought, or the risk of flooding.	• SB 852 (Becker, 2020) authorizes cities, counties, special districts, or joint powers authorities to form Climate Resilience Districts

Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
#22 Advance wildfire preparedness and post-fire restoration	22a	**Streamline permitting and regulatory coordination for prescribed burns.** Remove regulatory barriers that limit the expansion of prescribed burns by coordinating with fire agencies, Tribes, and resource managers to improve permitting pathways, ensure compliance with air quality standards, and integrate climate-adaptive forest management into local and regional policies.	• CalFire Coordinator Positions, TREX program, Prescribed Burn Association Advocacy • Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association (CCPBA) • Good Fire: The Case for Cultural and Prescribed Burns • Air Resources Board
	22b	**Implement prescribed burns with community education and Tribal leadership.** Identify priority upland areas for prescribed burn treatments and conduct burns in close partnership with Tribal governments. Co-develop educational outreach with Tribal and community-based organizations to increase public understanding of cultural burning practices, ecological benefits, and public safety measures.	• CalFire Coordinator Positions, TREX program, Prescribed Burn Association Advocacy • Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association (CCPBA)
	22c	**Collaborate with County RCDs and County staff to implement projects in Regional Priority Plans (RPP)** that address wildfire risk reduction for water resource systems.	• San Benito Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and RPP, Santa Clara RPP
	22d	**Perform hydrologic modeling to inform debris flow planning and sediment control**. Build community-scale sediment steering structures, diversions and erosion barriers after fires to reduce downstream impacts.	• Regional Priority Plans • CAL FIRE's Vegetation Management Program (VMP) & Forest Health Grants • Post-Fire Forest Health Partnership
	22e	**Expand home hardening support in high-risk areas through Firewise communities and offer permit waivers for eligible upgrades**. Partner with county assessors to clarify which upgrades affect property assessments and offer permit fee waivers for approved retrofits. Develop standardized upgrade specifications with County staff. Prioritize Wildlife Urban Interface areas in the CZU footprint (Santa Cruz Mountains), North Monterey Hills, South/Southeast Santa Clara foothills, and San Benito's oak-woodland fringe. Secure funding for free site visits and bundled contractor services through Fire Safe Councils in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties.	• Scale Santa Cruz ReCoverCA- up to $50k/home for mitigation & hardening (helpful in CZU-impacted areas. Firewise Communities Program • Bonny Doon Firewise Community - free defensible space and home-hardening inspections • Hollister Hills and San Juan Canyon Firewise Initiatives • San Benito Firesafe Council • Santa Clara County "Defensible Space & Home Hardening Inspection Program" - Free inspections and compliance reports • Santa Cruz County Fire Safe Council – "Home Hardening Grant Program"
#23 Expand monitoring and data management capabilities	23a	**Coordinate Integrated Monitoring and Real-Time Decision Support** Standardize climate model selection, and water quality, ecosystem, and hydrologic data collection across agencies to inform decision making. Invest in advanced, real-time monitoring and visualization technologies to improve operational decision-making and support proactive protection of vulnerable communities, resources, and assets.	• CASGEM, GeoTracker, GDEs, CCAMP, RCDs, Ag Order, etc. • Advanced well metering, ReNEM, SCADA, Telemetry, Stream gaging, deliveries, flood model/projection warning systems, Connect to Existing Databases (water quality, discharge, groundwater level, water imports), WATERS GeoViewer, Water Boards Open Data, Model My Watershed • PRFMA, County Flood Agencies, Flood Authority, EcoFIP SWAT • SGMAand SGMA Portal
	23b	**Expand Predictive Modeling and Community-Centered Data Access** Enhance regional hydrologic and watershed modeling tools to better characterize climate-driven flood and drought risks. Develop accessible, community-focused dashboards and information-sharing platforms that increase transparency and enable equitable involvement in planning and adaptation decisions.	• PV Water Basin Monitoring Dashboard, USGS Water Data Tools, WATERS GeoViewer (EPA), Pajaro Compass

7. GOAL G: Improve Community Collaboration

Strengthen cross-jurisdictional and interagency coordination to enhance emergency response, foster shared climate and water planning, and ensure inclusive participation from all communities and Tribal partners in decision-making.

Key Vulnerabilities:

#9 Fragmented governance and limited coordination across jurisdictions constrain the ability to plan and implement multi-benefit, watershed-scale resilience projects.

#10 Agencies, Tribal governments, and community-based organizations face persistent staffing, funding, and technical capacity limitations that constrain proactive projects and investment, particularly in underserved communities.

#8 Public access to safe, equitable, and enjoyable outdoor recreation spaces across the watershed threatened by rising temperatures, drought, wildfire, and coastal flooding.

Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
#1 Improve cross-jurisdictional climate and water supply planning	1a	Develop watershed-scale water budget model and decision-making tool to quantify climate hazard effects on water resources, evaluate complex trade-offs through a data-driven process, anticipate and manage extreme events, and provide transparency of competing objectives across geographies and agencies.	• EcoFIP SWAT, HEC-RAS from ACOE, and PRFMA • Pajaro River Watershed Study Models (hydrology and sediment) from Pajaro River Watershed Flood Prevention Authority (PRWFPA) • PRWRP watershed-wide water budget • DWR Delivery Capability Report • Cascade Routing Tool (CRT) from USGS, GSP models (PV Water PVHM • Valley Water MODFLOW and WEAP models • SBCWD MODFLOW and rainfall-runoff models)
	1b	Establish watershed-specific guidelines for incorporation of climate change data into the design and maintenance of public facilities and infrastructure, and new development. This will better enable climate hazard coordination across Agencies, Counties, and Cities. Consider the development of a clearinghouse of what metrics others are using to guide regional consistency, and advance approaches that develop feasibility studies earlier in the project planning and implementation process.	• Local and Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plans, IRWM, CIPs, Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project • Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (Federal FHWA tool)
	1c	Build upon existing tools to implement a watershed-wide ecosystem and decision-support tool. Build upon existing models like Valley Water's UPNEET and the Coyote Creek Native Ecosystem Enhancement Tool. The tool will help prioritize multi-benefit projects and ecosystem enhancement actions by evaluating land use tradeoffs and alignment with physical, cultural, and ecological priorities. The tool will help maintain region-wide consistency and ensure decision-making reflects Tribal priorities, vulnerable communities, and local land use conditions.	• Pajaro Compass, Upper Pajaro Watershed Master Plan Modeling from Valley Water including Native Ecosystem Enhancement Tool (UPNEET) for restoration projects, Coyote Creek Native Ecosystem Enhancement Tool, PRWRP Climate Projections (CMIP6+) Online MapViewer, Pajaro Valley Ecological Floodplain Inundation Potential (EcoFIP) Report, EcoFIP analysis for Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project

Strategy	Action #	Implementation Action	Existing Projects to Advance/Build on
#2 Develop collaborative agreements and partnerships to advance effective program and project implementation **Note: only one of these actions may be advanced, and these actions are options**	2a (Option 1)	Strengthen one or more existing regional collaboratives to unify watershed planning, monitoring, and implementation across agencies and partners. Leverage the Pajaro Compass, IRWM Working Group, and MBCAAN to coordinate watershed resilience implementation, align funding and monitoring efforts, and expand participation to include a broader spectrum of implementation entities (e.g., Tribes, RCDs, flood managers, fire managers, land management, etc.).	• Pajaro Compass, GSPs, UWMPs, MBCAAN, MBRCPWG, DWR and other State funding and technical assistance programs, IRWM group (Valley Water, SBCWD, PV Water, PRFMA)
	2b (Option 2)	Establish a Pajaro River Watershed Council to implement the WRP and lead coordinated, inclusive, and climate-resilient watershed decision-making. Form a watershed-specific Pajaro Watershed Council to serve as the central governance body for implementing the Watershed Resilience Plan, bridging agency-led and community-driven initiatives, and aligning GSPs, IRWMs, and climate programs.	• Pajaro Compass, GSPs, UWMPs, MBCAAN, MBRCPWG, DWR and other State funding and technical assistance programs, IRWM group (Valley Water, SBCWD, PV Water)
	2c (Option 3)	Develop a new long-term governance model—such as a Joint Powers Agreement or nonprofit—to sustain funding and regional collaboration to implement the WRP. Conduct a governance options study to evaluate and establish sustainable institutional structures—such as a Joint Powers Authority or 501(c)(3) nonprofit—to secure long-term funding, coordination, and accountability for watershed-scale implementation.	• Community Water Center (CWC) in San Joaquin Valley, The Bay Institute in SF Bay and Delta, Mono Lake Committee in Eastern Sierra • Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency (PRFMA) • Pajaro River Watershed Flood Prevention Authority (PRWFPA) • Central Coast Community Energy (3CE), a Regional JPA for clean energy serving Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo counties • Outside of the watershed: Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA), Regional Water Authority (RWA)
#6 Advance emergency response capabilities	6a	Establish an interagency water quality alert platform to track and respond to wastewater discharges, post-wildfire sediment pulses, and water quality exceedances in real time.	• Automated Local Evaluation in Real Time (ALERT) gages managed by Pajaro River Watershed Flood Prevention Authority (PRWFPA) to monitor Rainfall, Stream stage levels, Flood forecasting in lower and upper watershed • Pajaro Flood and Community Emergency Action Plan led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in partnership with the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency (PRFMA). California Public Alert and Warning System (CalPAWS), a Statewide system managed by Cal OES - Each county (Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito, Santa Clara) has its own OES that integrates with CalPAWS and local alert systems
	6b	Implement agency-specific threshold and trigger protocols that automatically activate pre-approved flood response actions when specific river flow or rainfall levels are reached to increase warning times to communities and farms located within floodplains and to increase real-time information exchange between agencies within the watershed.	• Valley Water – ALERT Flood Warning Network • DWR Flood-MAR and Forecast-Coordinated Operations (F-CO) Programs; SBCWD WSCP and Hollister WSCP use imported CVP allocation thresholds to trigger drought stages
	6c	Advance integrated, multi-agency drought contingency plan, on a shorter agreed upon timeframe, to align water supply, agricultural, and ecosystem drought response and pumping response actions across groundwater and surface water agency jurisdictions.	• Valley Water's Drought Response Plan (2023) • Pajaro IRWM Plan (2019 Update) • Valley Water – Water Shortage Contingency Plan (WSCP, 2023) • PV Water's Basin Management Plan (BMP) and Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) implementation