



California
DRIP Collaborative

**2025 Workgroup: Reducing Ecosystem Impacts
of Drought**

Drought Resilience Interagency & Partners (DRIP) Collaborative

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

1-2:30PM PT

Remote Participation (via Zoom)

Facilitated by Workgroup Point of Contact: [Zoe Kanavas \(zoe.kanavas@water.ca.gov\)](mailto:zoe.kanavas@water.ca.gov)

California Department of Water Resources - Water Justice Office

Meeting Information

1. This meeting is being recorded.
2. This meeting must adhere to the Bagley Keene Open Meeting Act rules. The workgroup quorum is required (4 out of the 7 on the workgroup). If we don't meet quorum, we will offer this time and this space for an informal discussion about reducing ecosystem impacts of drought.
3. DRIP Collaborative workgroup members must keep their cameras on during the meeting. You must notify the group if you turn off your camera and state why.
4. Members of the public and other DRIP Collaborative members are welcome to listen. A public comment session is included later in the meeting.
5. Please practice electronics courtesy and mute when not speaking.

Meeting Purpose and Agenda

Objective: Finalize the focus area problem statement and begin brainstorming recommendations to present at the Spring 2025 DRIP Collaborative meeting.

Meeting Agenda

- 1:00pm Welcome, Roll Call, and Vision Setting
- 1:10pm Process Review
- 1:15pm Problem Statement
- 1:45pm Recommendation Brainstorming
- 2:25pm Public Comment
- 2:30pm Next Steps & Adjourn

WORKGROUP PARTICIPANTS

(Quorum= 4 DRIP members)

1. **Redgie Collins**, CalTrout
2. **Anna Schiller**, Environmental Defense Fund
3. **Sierra Ryan**, Santa Cruz County
4. **Brent Hastey**, Plumas Self Storage (Public Member)
5. **Matessa Martin**, Buena Vista Ranchera of the Me-Wuk Indians
6. **Laura Ramos**, California Water Institute at Fresno State
7. **Alvar Escriva-Bou**, UC Davis

VISION SETTING

In five or 10 years from now, **reducing ecosystem impacts of drought has been addressed**. What is one thing that was accomplished to get us there?

Other Workgroup Members: Please share your thoughts in the chat.

PROCESS OVERVIEW (5 MINUTES)

Focus Areas, Problem Statements, Recommendations

Focus Area

Focus Areas are **ideas, opportunities, and aspirations** that DRIP Members have identified as **important to improved California drought resiliency**. These were captured on the Reference List and are sequenced and prioritized based on feedback during in-person and virtual meetings.

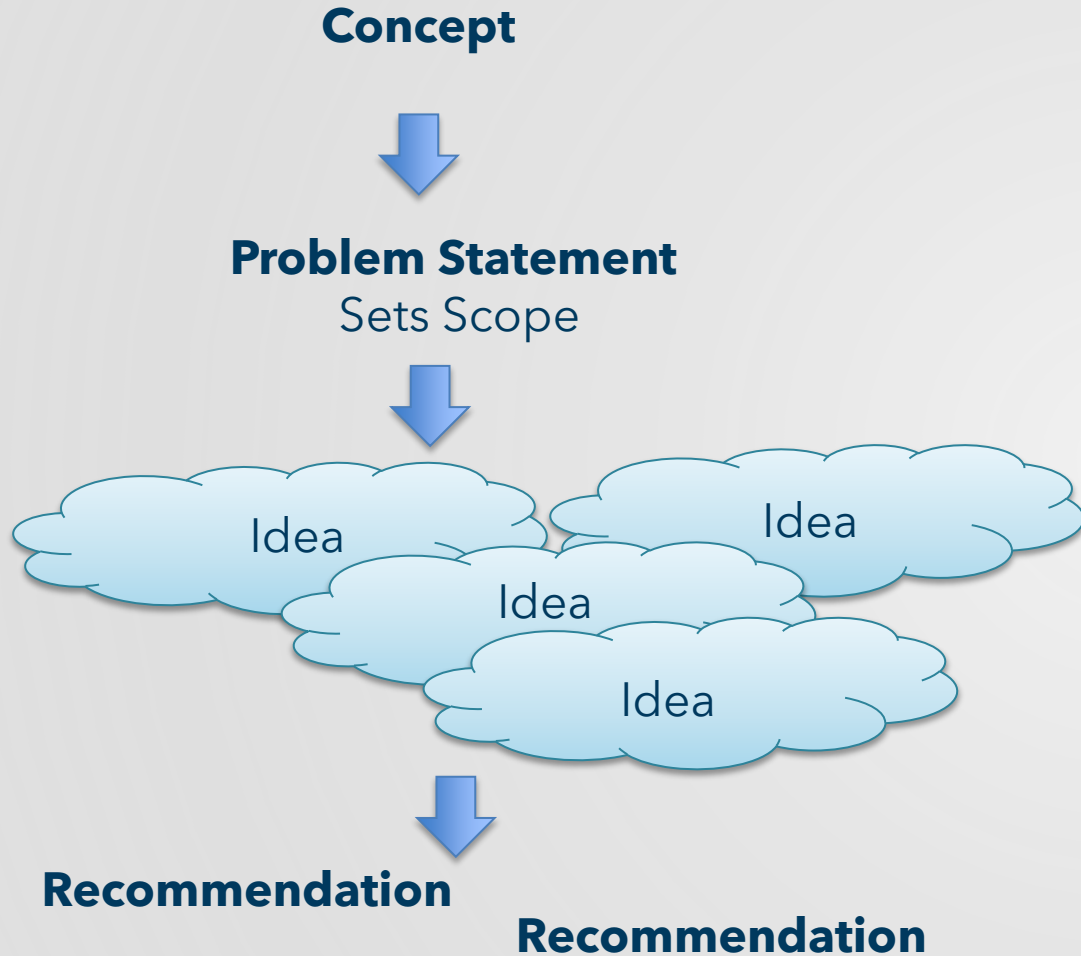
Problem Statement

A Problem Statement is a **concise description of the issue or challenge faced by a Focus Area**. Developed by DRIP Members, Problem Statements seek to **capture the essential problems** within each Focus Area, including identification of key sub-topics within each focus area.

Recommendation

A DRIP Recommendation is a **thoughtful, formal suggestion** that addresses the issue or challenge described in a Problem Statement, providing solutions that are **specific and actionable** related to the preparation of, responding to, and recovering from periods of extreme water shortages and drought.

Recommendation Process



Mar - Apr Virtual Meetings: Refine 2025 Focus Area problem statement

Meeting #1 (May): Ideate on potential 2025 recommendations

May - Jun Virtual Meetings: Develop recommendations

Meeting #2 (July): Working session to refine recommendations. Initial votes

Aug - Sep Virtual Meetings: Complete recommendations templates; Prepare for Oct vote

Meeting #3 (Oct): Final vote on recs that may be ready. Decide on which recs may need until April 2026

2025 Proposed DRIP Collaborative Timeline



Finalize problem statements; Ideation of new recommendations
May 16, 2025

Working session to develop recommendations. Initial vote for further development
July 18, 2025

Conduct final vote for any recommendations ready by this date
Oct 17, 2025

2025 Strategies/ Recommendations Development



Feb 2025
Launch 2025 process. Select State and Non-State leads. Align on roles

Mar/Apr 2025
Conduct virtual discussions for focus area problem statements

May/June 2025
Align on recs, begin populating rec templates

Aug/Sep 2025
Complete rec templates (where possible)

Nov/Dec 2025
Write DRIP Report and plan for 2026

-  In-Person Meeting
-  Virtual Meeting

**Note: The timeline for each focus area/workgroup will vary and may extend beyond the proposed 2025 timeline.*

For Group Discussion:

1. Does this capture the essence of the problem?
2. What are the ~2-4 key sub-topics to highlight?

PROBLEM STATEMENT

30 minutes

Working Problem Statement

For Group Discussion:

1. Does this capture the essence of the problem?
2. What are the ~2-4 key sub-topics to highlight?

Increased freshwater withdrawals and continued loss of wetlands and riparian habitats have disrupted California's freshwater dependent ecosystems. Significantly altered river flow regimes have caused over 90% of vital habitats to diminish. This change has seriously impacted fish and wildlife, with approximately half of the state's listed endangered freshwater plants and animals now considered at risk of extinction. **Many of California's rivers also lack environmental flow protections** crucial for species like salmon, smelt, steelhead, trout, and sturgeon, which depend on specific environmental flow conditions for their life cycles.

Even during wetter periods, water management in California often fails to prioritize ecosystem health. This makes it harder for the state's native species, that have adapted to the State's arid Mediterranean climate to recover from water shortages and impacts from climate change. **Rising temperatures, prolonged dry periods, increased evapotranspiration rates, and diminishing snowpack exasperate conditions**, further damaging ecosystems that provide essential services such as clean water, healthy soils, and climate regulation.

These ecological changes directly affect human communities, impacting water availability, agricultural productivity, diversity of fauna and flora, and the overall quality of our environment. Restoring, enhancing, and protecting wetlands, riparian zones, and river flows can strengthen the resilience of both natural ecosystems and the communities that depend on them. **Recommendations for this focus area will improve pre-drought planning and emergency response strategies to enhance habitat quality, preserve biodiversity, and improve water dependability.**

Working Problem Statement

For Group Discussion:

1. Does this capture the essence of the problem?
2. What are the ~2-4 key sub-topics to highlight?

Essence of the problem:

- The severe degradation of California's freshwater ecosystems threatens safe drinking water availability, agricultural productivity, biodiversity, and overall environmental health.
 - This severe degradation is a result of excessive water withdrawals, habitat loss, and altered river flows, and is exacerbated by climate change impacts on water supply.

Subtopics to highlight:

- **Environmental Flow Protections** - Ensuring adequate water flows to sustain freshwater ecosystems, particularly for species that rely on specific flow conditions.
- **Habitat Loss and Degradation** - Addressing the decline of wetlands, riparian zones, and aquatic habitats that support biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.
- **Integrated Planning** - Adapting water policies to account for rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, and ecosystem needs, integrating climate resilience into water planning.

RECOMMENDATION BRAINSTORMING

30-45 MINUTES

Brainstorming Recommendation Ideas

Environmental Flow Protections

- Advance instream flow requirements to protect fish, wildlife, and ecological functions
- Promote the California Environmental Flows Framework

Habitat Loss and Degradation

- Reconnect waterways to floodplains through restoration
- Support Multi-benefit Land Repurposing Projects
- Streamline permitting process & increase funding and resource allocations

Integrated Planning

- Develop environmental water plans at the watershed-scale
- Incorporate nature-based solutions in water resource planning
- Integrate fire and forest management & climate change projections into drought planning for ecosystems



PUBLIC COMMENT

NEXT STEPS - GETTING READY FOR THE DRIP COLLABORATIVE MAY MEETING

What's Next

MARCH-APRIL: Workgroup virtual meetings to refine the problem statements and early recommendation ideas.

- **March 28th** - Cross-Cutting Themes Workgroup Meeting
- **April 3rd** - Infrastructure Workgroup Meeting
- April TBD - Drought Communications Workgroup Meeting
- Other DRIP Collaborative members, as well as members of the public, may join these workgroup meetings

APRIL: Co-leads will assist DWR Development Team Contacts to inform breakout discussions during the May meeting

MAY 16: DRIP Collaborative meeting (in-person)

- Finalize problem statements and begin ideation process for new recommendations



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Adjourn

Thank you!