



Summary Report

2nd Interagency Summit on Advancing Restoration
March 10th & 11th, 2026
Flamingo Resort & Spa, Santa Rosa



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Executive Summary

The 2nd Interagency Summit on Advancing Restoration took place March 10th and 11th, 2026, at the Flamingo Resort & Spa in Santa Rosa (see full agenda in **Appendix A**). The nearly 75 attendees (see **Appendix B** for full list of attendees) included staff from the [California Department of Fish and Wildlife](#) and the [State Water Resources Control Board](#) and its nine [Regional Water Quality Control Boards](#). The Summit was facilitated by the [California Landscape Stewardship Network](#).

The Summit came on the heels of the [February 27th Secretarial Memo on Cutting Green Tape](#), which focused on institutionalizing improvements made so far, as well as a number of directives aimed at continuing to move this interagency initiative forward. Building upon that, attendees explored the driving question, “how far have we come, how far do we still have to go?” through the Summit’s goals of:

- **Assessing progress and celebrating bright spots.** This discussion included questions such as: Where do we see clear progress with intra- and interagency coordination to advance regulatory efficiencies? How can we measure progress in relation to our desired goals? Since the 1st Interagency Summit in 2023, what bright spots have we experienced as we’ve worked together to advance restoration projects?
- **Creating a supportive mindset and culture.** Attendees delved into thinking about the individual mindsets and institutional norms that support environmental restoration permitting.
- **Engaging leadership on staff members’ priorities for advancing restoration.** Staff members offered their requests, recommendations, insights, and ideas for how leadership can help advance restoration within and across these agencies.

What emerged from these discussions is that the effort to increase the pace, scale, and quality of environmental restoration is going strong in California. It was also clear that agency staff have tremendous passion for moving good restoration projects through the permitting process. As with any large-scale effort aimed at systems change, new needs have arisen, and areas that need strengthening have become clearer over time. There are also dynamic tensions inherent in acknowledging bright spots while critically assessing needs for improvement, as well as in finding further efficiencies while remaining steadfast caretakers of California’s water, fish, and wildlife.

Summit attendees highlighted three key themes:

- **Risk Management:** Inaction can pose the greatest risk in the face of climate change and biodiversity crises, yet concerns about the risk of negative outcomes from streamlined permitting loom large. How can risk be managed in ways that ultimately advance essential restoration work?
- **Staff Support:** Supporting staff members and trusting their expertise is key to advancing restoration projects in efficient and innovative ways. This includes building the individual and collective capacity to do this work.

- **Process Improvement:** While Cutting Green Tape and other permitting pathways increase regulatory efficiencies, there are broader needs within and across agencies for processes that result in faster, more consistent information-sharing, deliberation, and decision-making. As California institutionalizes Cutting Green Tape improvements, it is essential to consider how innovative administrative processes can increase the pace, scale, and quality of restoration.

Glossary of Acronyms

| Acronym | Meaning |
|---------|---|
| BRRIT | Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team |
| CDFW | California Department of Fish & Wildlife |
| CEQA | California Environmental Quality Act |
| CLSN | California Landscape Stewardship Network |
| CNRA | California Natural Resources Agency |
| HREA | Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Act |
| PEIR | Program Environmental Impact Report |
| RMP | Restoration Management Permit |
| RWQCB | Regional Water Quality Control Board |
| SERP | Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects |
| SHRP | Small Habitat Restoration Project General Order |
| SRGO | Statewide Restoration General Order |
| SWRCB | State Water Resources Control Board |
| USACE | United States Army Corps of Engineers |

Summary of Key Themes & Takeaways

Advancing Restoration: How Far Have We Come, How Far Do We Still Need to Go?

The 2nd Interagency Summit on Advancing Restoration opened with a panel that included **Paul Hann (SWRCB)**, **Nick Savino (Central Valley RWQCB)**, **Alisa Ellsworth (Inland Desert Region CDFW)**, and **Megan Rooney (Central Region, CDFW Cutting Green Tape Strike Team)**. Their exploration of bright spots and progress on ongoing needs set the tone for the themes that would later emerge in greater detail, including:

- The 1st Interagency Summit created space to identify ways to build more coordination pathways; several years later we see the benefits of greater exchange and connectivity among regulatory staff in both agencies. How do we continue to build upon this momentum?
- Our time is a limited resource. How can we maximize our impact by spending less time on projects that are relatively straightforward so that we can focus on those that are more complex or pose greater impacts or risk?
- Making decisions requires resolving differing perspectives and building consensus – a challenging task when balancing different priorities across an agency’s structure. How can we make this an open door to greater collaboration?
- We need to celebrate wins like creating new positions for Cutting Green Tape, while still doing what we can in resource-constrained areas. How can we continue finding ways to streamline permitting in the absence of new hires?

Following the panel, attendees engaged in a Rose-Thorn-Bud exercise:

- *Roses*: Where are things working well, such as a success story or area of strength for your team, region, agency, or the state?
- *Thorns*: Where are there pinch points, or those areas that are especially difficult or need renewed focus?
- *Buds*: Where do you see potential for new or emerging ideas for gaining efficiencies and advancing your missions?

The hundreds of responses to these three questions (see **Appendix C**) offered an early glimpse of where agency staff note things going well and where they sense the growing impact of their work...

- Staff within and across agencies are sharing more information, increasing coordination pathways, and creating opportunities for deeper collaboration that all translate into better on-the-ground restoration projects.
- The volume of restoration projects permitted through streamlined pathways continues to increase, with hundreds of projects now approved.
- SERP and SRGO, along with a suite of other permitting pathways, are saving time and money.
- The quality and sophistication of restoration projects are growing, as is the expertise of the project proponents who are proposing them.
- The growing quantity and quality of projects creates a stronger sense of accomplishment and pride in advancing restoration in California, especially with high-profile wins (e.g., the Klamath Dam removal).
- Agency staff are highly expert and deeply passionate, traits which are amplified when their leadership supports their ability to advance good restoration projects.

...While remaining clear-eyed about areas of friction and need...

- New tools (and their applicability) are inconsistently understood and interpreted within agencies and their regional offices.
- Compounding this internal challenge, project proponents' knowledge of these tools also varies.
- Ambiguity around how to interpret a new tool's applicability can offer more discretion but also lead to challenges in fully understanding direction from leadership, which can stymie progress.
- It takes time to redirect project proponents who mislabel projects as restoration in order to apply for Cutting Green Tape tools.
- There continue to be inter- and intra-agency coordination challenges driven by differences in interpretation or approach, and/or administrative and technical challenges (e.g., data sharing).

...And, most importantly, emphasizing opportunities to have even greater impacts...

- Implementing process-based restoration / low-tech restoration projects that can be scaled and that further emphasize California's prioritization of nature-based solutions.
- Developing decision-making systems that apply across regions can greatly increase our agencies' ability to meet their missions.
- Having leadership that is willing to innovate and take on risk to prioritize restoring ecosystem health.
- Developing learning systems that consolidate key findings, lessons, and effective approaches based directly on completed projects, in order to scale up what's working and reassess what's not.
- Leading with a "restoration-first mindset" when evaluating projects, punctuated by a willingness to always ask, "could this be a restoration project?" and leveraging regulatory efficiencies as an incentive rather than a filter.

A series of facilitated discussions within and across agencies built upon this initial set of reflections, revealing three key themes:

- **Risk Management:** Inaction can pose the greatest risk in the face of climate change and biodiversity crises, yet concerns about the risk of negative outcomes from streamlined permitting loom large. How can risk be managed in ways that advance essential restoration work?

- **Staff Support:** Supporting staff members and trusting their expertise is key to advancing restoration projects in innovative ways. This includes building the individual and collective capacity to do this work.
- **Process Improvement:** While Cutting Green Tape and other permitting pathways increase regulatory efficiencies, there are broader needs within and across agencies for processes that result in faster, more consistent information-sharing, deliberation, and decision-making. As California institutionalizes Cutting Green Tape improvements, it is essential to consider how innovative administrative processes can increase the pace, scale, and quality of restoration.

What follows is a more detailed look at each of these interrelated themes.

If I spend less time permitting a low-risk, high-benefit project, I can focus more time on high-risk, high-impact projects [...] that's using my limited time most efficiently.

- Summit Attendee

Theme 1: Risk Management

The ability of staff to appropriately account for risk in their decision-making requires that agency leadership clarify definitions and thresholds as well as perceived versus actual risk, and then provide consistent direction on what risks are acceptable in order to advance restoration.

Understanding Risk & How It Is Calculated

Managing risk and the diverse ways people perceive and experience risk emerged as a primary theme throughout the Summit. Attendees acknowledged this complexity and worked to clarify their shared understanding of risk: risk of what, risk to whom, and how to prioritize risks (e.g., risk of the status quo versus risk of taking an action through a project). The kinds of risk that agency staff must navigate include:

- Litigation, which drives a significant amount of decision-making about permitting.
- Unclear definitions or inconsistent understanding of what constitutes risk.
- Uncertainty, for example, about whether a project will result in net benefit (tied to the challenge of inconsistent definitions of “net benefit”).
- Habitat deterioration or significant species loss.

These risks come with different consequences, including:

- More conservative decision-making that can center concerns over short-term impacts rather than emphasizing long-term benefits, or the risks posed by maintaining the status quo.
- A lack of certainty about outcomes that can also further the preoccupation about short-term impacts over long-term benefits.
- Unclear direction about acceptable levels of risk leading staff to avoid innovative approaches.
- Impacts to staff morale and confidence in their expertise and discretion.
- Slower and more costly permitting.

On the heels of the new [Secretarial Memo on Institutionalizing Cutting Green Tape Improvements](#) that gives direction to act boldly to restore California's habitats and landscapes, staff presented a number of recommendations and key needs to interagency leadership present at the Summit.

Needs & Recommendations for Managing Risk

- **Find ways to implement complex, multi-benefit projects.** Staff may feel hesitant to move forward when a multi-benefit project doesn't neatly fit a permitting pathway. There is a need to establish agency-wide understanding that these projects are eligible for streamlined pathways, as well as a need for building better decision-making processes in these situations.
- **Integrate efficiencies throughout agency structures.** Attendees often noted that while project-level staff and agency leadership convey the importance of regulatory efficiencies and using new tools, there are disconnects across organizational structures about this as a clear mandate. The new Secretarial Memo emphasizes that advancing restoration is essential and requires institutionalizing this approach throughout agency hierarchies.
- **Increase opportunities for iterative learning to reduce the risk of unknowns.** Numerous lessons can be learned from previously permitted projects. Agencies should create readily accessible repositories of these takeaways to help inform more efficient decision-making frameworks. More opportunities to travel and learn first-hand from others would increase regional coordination and enhance staff members' experience and technical expertise. Projects on CDFW-owned lands could be used as an opportunity for regulatory staff to learn about project implementation and pilot new techniques.

**The risk of not doing enough outweighs the risk
of not doing everything perfectly.**

- Summit Attendee

Theme 2: Staff Support

Equipping & Empowering Staff

Staff expressed pride in and appreciation for the myriad new opportunities for training and peer-to-peer learning that have been created. They also shared ongoing needs to continue to train and empower staff, as well as to address capacity constraints and administrative burdens that limit their efficiency.

Challenges that emerged under this theme included: increased awareness of available tools, access to training, building capacity, and making time for developing trusting relationships. Attendees emphasized the importance of leveraging their collective expertise and deep experience. They also highlighted capacity and resource issues such as:

- Passionate and service-oriented staff wish to say yes to helping advance projects and broader agency goals, which can result in unsustainable workloads.
- Uneven levels of experience and expertise among staff can be compounded by a lack of regular training, mentorship, and succession-planning opportunities.
- New staff and/or changing roles create a need for ongoing training and onboarding, as well as finding ways to establish institutional knowledge.

- There are notable examples where some staff are equipped with resources to accelerate restoration (e.g., CDFW Cutting Green Tape program staff), which offer valuable models for how targeted capacity can have tremendous impacts.
- More restoration project staff are needed, as are positions such as contracting and procurement specialists to help meet the significant administrative workload.
- A bottleneck exists in getting permits signed when they have to go through multiple levels of executive leadership.

Key Needs & Recommendations for Supporting Staff

- **Provide support to staff and trust their expertise.** Consistent and timely support is needed from agency leadership and legal teams when a project deemed beneficial by staff becomes controversial or risky.
- **Distribute and delegate decision-making responsibility.** Reducing the rounds of review signals trust in and support for staff members' expertise, while reducing their overall workload. Revising the project-approval system could create more expedient processes that delegate responsibility to a broader array of decision-makers.
- **Advocate for targeted hires to support the mission to advance restoration.** While acknowledging budgetary realities, agency staff continue to call for additional capacity – especially technical specialists (e.g., engineers) and administrative roles (e.g., contract specialists) that reduce bottlenecks.
- **Value different forums for staff support.** Diverse pathways for staff empowerment such as informal systems of mentorship, coaching, and peer exchange are as valuable as formal training.
- **Empower staff by balancing autonomy with direction.** An intentional balance between providing overarching direction and uniform guidance, while making room for autonomy and expert discretion, lies at the heart of effective action.
- **Leverage partners to expand capacity.** With the help of nonprofit partners like [Sustainable Conservation](#) that specialize in technical assistance, project applicants can gain access to knowledge and resources that reduce agency staff workloads and expedite permitting timelines.
- **Invest in more robust onboarding.** New staff need training beyond understanding permitting tools, including navigating partners and relationships, as well as discussions about risk, priorities, and mandates.
- **Use leadership platforms to amplify the message of trusting, equipping, and empowering staff.** Leadership in Sacramento can continue signaling support for staff by providing direction and inspiration (like with the [Secretarial Memo on Institutionalizing Cutting Green Tape Improvements](#)), by encouraging meaningful change, and by dissolving silos within and across agencies.
- **Look to regions as “cauldrons of innovation.”** Discussions about staff support routinely emphasized the need for more consistent application of tools across regions, while also leveraging the power of learning from different regions' innovative approaches to restoration projects.

Theme 3: Process Improvement

Broader efforts to streamline administrative processes and improve decision-making systems are needed to fully realize the efficiencies gained through new regulatory frameworks.

Institutionalizing Efficiencies Beyond Permitting

The ongoing need for improved processes, such as stronger coordination and communications across agencies and regions, is the genesis for holding the 2nd Interagency Summit on Advancing Restoration. As already highlighted in this report, there has been remarkable progress over the last several years:

- Key forums for interagency coordination – such as holding project consultations with CDFW and RWQCB staff both present – are producing better projects while building trust between project applicants and regulatory staff.
- Similarly, conducting site visits with both agencies present and finding opportunities for shared decision-making early in the permitting process are upfront investments that can increase permitting efficiencies.

Furthermore, the dynamics discussed above regarding risk management and staff support can also impede permitting efficiency, resulting in:

- Uneven levels of technical knowledge about a project’s eligibility to use certain permitting tools.
- Inconsistent application of policies.
- Layers of review that create longer timelines.
- A concern about being perceived as “rubber stamping” projects, thus hindering the ability to focus resources on critically reviewing more complex projects or those that are more likely to have adverse impacts.

Key Needs & Recommendations for Improving Processes

- **Distribute and delegate decision-making responsibility.** This thematically cross-cutting recommendation encourages leadership to reassess the system of approving projects and delegating responsibility to a broader array of decision-makers to make the process more efficient.
- **Sustain existing tools by continuously improving them.** Attendees emphasized the need for reissuing the SHRP, updating it to remove the linear foot eligibility requirement, and making it usable for projects that do not require a USACE 404 authorization.
- **Share models of process improvement.** Effective processes happening within agencies and regions should be amplified for the benefit of all staff and project applicants. These include updates to CDFW’s “Permitting Academy” as well as RWQCBs that have developed a checklist for the PEIR or decision-making trees that clarify eligibility for certain permits.
- **Improve internal communication and cross-regional consistency.** Provide agency staff clearer guidance on how to navigate recurring friction areas, such as offering more efficient decision-making processes and clarifying how to permit certain types of complicated projects.

Given my role, it feels like I’m often the ‘green tape’ that needs to be cut [...] how do we get past this narrative and talk about how we’re all working together toward the same goal?

- Summit Attendee

Lay of the Land: Permit-specific Bright Spots, Needs & Opportunities

Attendees offered a rich set of insights related to the suite of permitting tools that they use to advance the pace, scale, and quality of restoration. The following summary of the “Rose-Thorn-Bud” exercise for a selection of these permits reveals bright spots, needs, and opportunities for improving the efficacy of these permitting pathways.

Statewide Restoration General Order (SRGO)

- Staff report that the SRGO has enabled more efficient approaches to restoration project permitting. Its strengths are that it has no project size cap and it includes both 401 and/or Waste Discharge Requirements compliance so that it can be used with or without a USACE 404 permit. Regions that have established restoration programs and staff familiar with SRGO have found that it can be especially effective. However, it also leaves significant room for interpreting mitigation measures under its requirements. Staff are uncertain about its use for multi-benefit projects that may not fit squarely into the definition of an eligible restoration project. Developing a resource library of successful SRGO projects can help spread the use of this tool. There is also a need for additional statewide staff training on using this new tool. Lastly, there are administrative bottlenecks around reviewing projects permitted by the SRGO, especially if there's a high perception of risk.

Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (SERP)

- SERP use has grown rapidly, with some regions developing a robust set of restoration projects that have obtained CEQA compliance through this exemption. However, similar to experiences with the SRGO, staff and project applicants both experience a lack of clarity around SERP's eligibility and documentation requirements. A refrain heard throughout the Summit was that CDFW staff see SERP as underutilized because of perceived risk with applying this CEQA exemption pathway. Attendees noted several improvements that could strengthen SERP use, including clearer decision trees around CEQA exemptions, additional training for regulatory staff and project applicants, increased outreach to CEQA practitioners and lead agencies, more consistent coordination with RWQCBs, and better guidance from leadership on when SERP is a preferred approach.

Small Habitat Restoration Projects General Order (SHRP)

- SHRP emerged in many discussions, with staff noting great opportunity to strengthen and expand use of the tool by changing the maximum limit of disturbance from the existing 500 linear feet limit requirements to either a larger limit or removing the limit so that it is consistent with the CEQA exemption that it is a companion to (e.g. 5 acres with no linear feet maximum). For this reason, staff perceive the SHRP as relatively outdated and constrained compared to other tools and incongruous with the broader interagency effort to make restoration permitting more efficient. The renewal also offers an opportunity to add WDRs to cover waters of the state as well as federal waters, so that SHRP can be used with or without a USACE 404 authorization, and to cover waters of the state as well as federal waters. Like HREA, some staff sense that fee structures present a barrier to broader uptake. Many staff advocated reissuing the SHRP with updated terms that remove linear feet requirements, and also expand it beyond a 401 Certification to also act as a Waste Discharge Requirement similar to SRGO.

Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Act (HREA)

- HREA is a longer-standing permitting tool that is well used by some, although there can still be inconsistent interpretation of eligibility across regions. Applicant fees for HREA (vs RMP below) may discourage its broader use. Attendees also discussed how some projects seeking to use HREA may require more technical oversight than the Act provides and how, when, and if this perceived discrepancy should be addressed. Because HREA and SHRP are so closely linked, this requires a high level of coordination between the Water Board and CDFW. Building off permit-specific discussions on SERP and SRGO, staff are seeking clearer guidance on when HREA is optimal relative to the other CDFW permitting pathways. As with other tools, staff all agreed that better interagency coordination can clarify some of these questions.

Restoration Management Permit (RMP)

- Staff reported excitement around the use of this relatively new permit, and requested additional training so that they can use it more. In particular, there is confusion about which projects can qualify and also how to apply it to mitigation projects. As with the SRGO, there remains confusion around how to apply the RMP to multi-benefit projects. Echoing points made in discussions of other permitting pathways, staff see potential for

more efficient decision-making from leadership, delegation to staff to make more decisions around issuing this permit, and support to manage risks associated with utilizing new permits.

Summary of Bright Spots, Needs, and Opportunities Across Permits

Acknowledging major differences in these permitting pathways, staff recognized that these tools can save significant amounts of time and money when paired with clear guidance on their eligibility as well as the ability to work with informed project applicants. This is especially true when interagency coordination is activated early and often. Staff think that these permits are generally well designed, but that they usually require expanded training and guidance on their applicability.

They also noted consistent challenges with all of the permitting pathways, including:

- inconsistent interpretation across regions,
- uneven amounts of applicant knowledge on eligibility and documentation requirements,
- fees that may disincentivize the use of a particular permit, and
- two systemic elements that slow their use: pervasive perceptions of risk and redundant processes that create inefficiencies (e.g., multiple rounds of review and executive approval).

The needs and recommendations to advance the utility of these tools resonate with broader takeaways on risk management, staff support, and process improvements: staff seek clearer guidance from agency leadership; more training and capacity-building opportunities; and more coordinated, integrated processes for decision-making and permit implementation.

Commitments to Advance Restoration

As the 2nd Interagency Summit came to a close, each attendee described how they would personally address needs that had been identified, turn ideas into action, or otherwise help advance restoration. Some of these commitments are highlighted below (a full list can be found in **Appendix D**).

COMMITMENTS

- Commit to fighting for a good project in a legal gray area and testing early policy direction.
- Further Region 5 RWQCB participation in coordination meetings that we started since 1st Summit.
- Work with Region 2 RWQCB staff to work towards collective understanding of what a restoration project looks like for the region.
- Better training and outreach to applicant community.
- Commit to using my authority to act through rulemaking process this year, continue making the case for statutory and legislative changes for expanded toolkits, and keep on championing CGT.
- Continue to lean in and use tools to better manage for bullfrogs and other invasive species in California.
- To follow advice of my daughter: don't be afraid to be brave
- Support my staff in identifying and managing risk with legal counsel.
- Urge management to delegate approval power.
- Commit to taking energy and inspiration I feel from the Summit to develop new permit materials for applicants, making it more digestible and accessible.
- Institutionalize CGT further by working with the Office of General Counsel.
- Watch out for my team and staff to look for signs of burnout, taking care of our greatest resource.
- Take upper management to successful restoration sites.
- Develop successful, high net benefit project with CalTrans.
- Renew SHRP in an efficient manner and invite you all get to comment on it.
- Commit to not being a bottleneck, do a better job expediting review and signing permits.
- Complete an analysis on permitting roadmap for Delta.
- Help facilitate convos with regional managers at CDFW to advance restoration, prevent burnout.
- Commit to working with partners to apply CGT tools in marine zone.
- Commit more training and resources for all CDFW staff, expand interagency monthly meetings.
- Have a more open mind about risk.
- Work closely with CDFW staff in my region to be on the same page about restoration projects.



Attendees gather at the closing of the 2nd Interagency Summit on Advancing Restoration. Credit: CLSN

For inquiries, please contact Devin Landry (dlandry@stewardshipnetwork.org)

Appendices

Appendix A. 2nd Interagency Summit Agenda



2nd Interagency Summit on Advancing Restoration

March 10th & 11th, 2026

Flamingo Resort & Spa, Santa Rosa, CA

AGENDA

Summit Themes & Desired Outcomes

- *Assess progress and celebrate bright spots:* How far have we come since the 1st Summit in December 2023? Where can we mark clear progress with intra- and interagency coordination to advance regulatory efficiencies? How can we measure progress in relation to our desired goals? What bright spots have we experienced over the last two years of working toward a more coordinated interagency effort to advance restoration?
- *Provide ongoing technical exchange and peer-led workshopping:* Explore scenarios and dynamics that are challenging and find shared solutions that enable more consistent, coordinated interagency efforts that advance restoration in California.
- *Support mindset and culture:* What are the individual mindsets and institutional norms that support permitting for environmental restoration.
- *Engaging leadership on key opportunities for advancing restoration:* Staff will convey their needs, requests, recommendations, and ideas directly to their agency leadership.

Summit Materials

- [Property Map](#) (showing locations for meetings, meals, and social events)
- [Summary Report](#) 1st Interagency Summit on Advancing Restoration (2023)
- [Secretarial Memo](#) on Institutionalizing Cutting Green Tape Improvements (2026)

| MONDAY MARCH 9 th (Travel Day) | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| TIME | TOPIC / ACTIVITY |
| 4:00pm onward | Check in at Flamingo Resort & Spa |
| | <i>Dinner on your own</i> |

TUESDAY MARCH 10th (Day 1)

* All meetings will take place in the Aviary
 * All meals will take place in Palm Room ([see map](#))

| TIME | TOPIC / ACTIVITY |
|--------|--|
| 7:30am | Breakfast in Palm Room <i>As attendees arrive, they can visit the Aviary beginning at 8:30 to get their nametag and settle in.</i> |
| 9:00 | Welcome to the 2nd Interagency Summit on Advancing Restoration Set the stage for our first full day, provide a high-level overview of the Summit goals, and build a shared understanding of our work together in permitting and compliance to advance the pace, scale, and quality of restoration projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome from the Interagency Summit Planning Team about the exciting opportunity for this Summit, why regulatory efficiencies are so vital to advancing restoration projects in California, and how we can work together to increase the pace, scale, and quality of restoration statewide. • Welcome and overview of the Summit’s purpose and goals from lead facilitators Kellyx Nelson and Devin Landry. • Get to know who’s in the room through a round of introductions. |
| 9:45 | Panel: How Far Have We Come, and Where Do We Still Need to Go? This moderated panel discussion will explore the efficiencies and improvements we’ve made for permitting environmentally beneficial projects over the last two years and offer a vision for future efficiencies. <hr/> Following the panel, attendees will conduct a Rose-Thorn-Bud exercise, offering three key insights on sticky notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rose: Where are things working well – a success story or area of strength for your team/regional office/agency? • Thorn: Where are there pinch points – areas that are especially difficult or need renewed focus? • Bud: Where do you see potential – new or emerging ideas for gaining efficiencies and advancing the mission? |
| 10:30 | BREAK <i>Refreshments served</i> |
| 10:45 | Identifying Bright Spots, Needs & Opportunities We’ll build off the morning panel through further group discussion paired with breakout exercises, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generating insights from attendees about furthering successes and addressing needs to accomplish their agency’s and personal goals to advance environmental restoration |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> building a shared understanding of the current resources, capacities and support necessary to implement agency-wide goals on-the-ground, and what else is needed to further support staff. <p>Breakout groups will re-join in plenary and report out, with facilitators noting key themes on where needs/opportunities exist, how agencies are addressing that need/opportunity, and what more can be done.</p> |
| 12:00 | LUNCH (Palm Room) |
| 1:00 | Intra-agency Workshop: Themes & Issues in Permitting Workshop key themes and issues with colleagues within your agency across different regions. |
| 2:45 | BREAK <i>Refreshments served</i> |
| 3:00 | Interagency Workshop: Themes & Issues in Permitting Workshop key themes and issues with colleagues across agencies within the same region. |
| 4:45 | Closing Thoughts Reflections from lead facilitators: What have we learned today, and where are we headed tomorrow? <i>Adjourn Day 1</i> |
| 6:00 | EVENING SOCIAL & DINNER (Cove) (see map) |
| 8:00 | Ongoing Social Time |

WEDNESDAY MARCH 11th (Day 2)

**All meetings will take place in the Aviary Room*

*All meals will take place in Palm Room ([see map](#))**

| TIME | TOPIC / ACTIVITY |
|--------|--|
| 7:30am | Breakfast (Palm Room) |
| 8:30 | Welcome & Reflections on Day 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roadmap for the day: distilling and refining themes for advancing restoration, and bringing those forward to leadership Hear a few reflections from around the room: Did anything new come up for you last night or this morning that didn't come up yesterday? After hearing a summary of key themes and cross-cutting issues from the facilitation team, we'll conduct a group exercise to emphasize and clarify those themes. |
| 9:15 | Focusing the Conversation with Leadership This session will help attendees prepare for engaging interagency leadership joining the Summit on Day 2. Small group sessions will build from previous conversations by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> focusing on key elements within each theme, identifying what approaches, actions or commitments could be undertaken to best advance those key themes, and |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying who needs to be involved. <p>Facilitators will work with attendees to translate these sessions into specific recommendations and then work with subset of individuals willing to present these requests to agency leadership.</p> |
| 10:45 | BREAK <i>Refreshments Served</i> |
| 11:00 | Speaking to Leadership An overview of key needs, requests, recommendations & ideas of staff to leadership, followed by reflections from leadership. |
| 12:00 | LUNCH |
| 1:00 | Commitments to Advance Restoration To cap off the Summit, we'll go around the room and make commitments to advance restoration through our various roles, programs, and agencies. |
| 1:45 | Parting Thoughts Facilitators will offer their key takeaways and parting thoughts from the 2 nd Summit on Advancing Restoration. |
| 2:00 | Adjourn |

Appendix B. Participant List



2nd Interagency Summit on Advancing Restoration (2026) Participant List

| Name | Affiliation | Email |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Adam Cohen | Division of Water Rights, SWRCB | adam.cohen@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Adam McKannay | Northern Region, CDFW | adam.mckannay@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Agnes Farres | San Francisco Bay RWQCB | agnes.farres@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Alicia Pisani | San Francisco Bay RWQCB | alicia.pisani@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Alisa Ellsworth | Inland Deserts Region, CDFW | alisa.ellsworth@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Amy Kaesar* | San Mateo RCD | amy@sanmateorcd.org |
| Andrew Weltz | Marine Region, CDFW | andrew.weltz@wildlife.ca.gov |
| April Zohn* | Ducks Unlimited, Inc. | azohn@ducks.org |
| Bill Christner | Division of Water Quality, SWRCB | william.christner@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Brad Henderson** | Watershed Restoration Grants Branch, CDFW | brad.henderson@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Briana Seapy | North Central Region, CDFW | briana.seapy@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Bryan Talmadge | Lahontan RWQCB | bryan.talmadge@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Camille Agnew** | Program Analyst, CDFW | camille.agnew@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Carson Blodow | Central Valley RWQCB | carson.blodow@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Carter Cook | Central Valley RWQCB | carter.cook@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Celina Rong | Santa Ana RWQCB | celina.rong@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Chelsey Hunts | Division of Water Quality, SWRCB | chelsey.hunts@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Chloe Seifert | Los Angeles RWQCB | chloe.seifert@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Corinne Gray | Bay Delta Region, CDFW | corinne.gray@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Corrina Kamoroff | Northern Region, CDFW | corrina.kamoroff@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Darcie Collins* | Keep Tahoe Blue | darcie@keptahoeblue.org |
| Desiree Dela Vega | Bay Delta Region, CDFW | desiree.delavega@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Devin Jokerst | Division of Water Quality, SWRCB | devin.jokerst@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Devin Landry* | California Landscape Stewardship Network | dlandry@stewardshipnetwork.org |
| Elijah Portugal | Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program, CDFW | elijah.portugal@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Emma Tracy | North Coast Regional Water Board, RWQCB | emma.tracy@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Erika Lovejoy* | Sustainable Conservation | elovejoy@suscon.org |
| Frederic "Fritz" Friedman | South Coast Region, CDFW | frederic.rieman@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Gil Falcone | North Coast RWQCB | gil.falcone@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Graham Meese | Inland Deserts Region, CDFW | graham.meese@wildlife.ca.gov |

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Gretchen Murphey | Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program | gretchen.murphey@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Hayley Sue | San Diego RWQCB | hayley.sue@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Jackson Fimrite | San Francisco Bay RWQCB | jackson.fimrite@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Jake Shannon | North Coast RWQCB | jacob.shannon@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Jen Olson | Watershed Restoration Grants Branch, CDFW | jennifer.olson@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Jerred Ferguson | Central Valley RWQCB | jerred.ferguson@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Jim Robins* | ALNUS Ecological | jrobins@alnus-eco.com |
| Joanne Heraty | Habitat Conservation Planning, CDFW | joanne.heraty@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Joaquin Esquivel | Chair, SWRCB | joaquin.esquivel@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Jonathan Warmerdam | North Coast RWQCB | jonathan.warmerdam@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Joseph Martinez | San Francisco Bay RWQCB | joseph.martinez@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Karen Buhr* | California Delta Conservancy | karen.buhr@deltaconservancy.ca.gov |
| Keith Lichten | San Francisco Bay RWQCB | keith.lichten@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Kellyx Nelson* | San Mateo RCD | kellyx@sanmateorcd.org |
| Kelsey Vella | North Central Region, CDFW | kelsey.vella@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Kim Caringer* | Tahoe Regional Planning Agency | kcaringer@trpa.gov |
| Kirsten Ramey-Burbank | Marine Region, CDFW | kirsten.ramey@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Kyle Evans | South Coast Region, CDFW | kyle.evans@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Lauren Kim | San Diego RWQCB | lauren.kim@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Libby Lee | Los Angeles RWQCB | libby.lee@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Liz Morrison | San Francisco Bay RWQCB | elizabeth.morrison@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Logan Raub | Colorado River Basin RWQCB | logan.raub@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Lucy Haworth | Habitat Conservation Planning, CDFW | lucy.haworth@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Lynn Coster | Central Valley RWQCB | lynn.coster@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Madeline Drake | Asst. Secretary for Biodiversity & Habitat, CNRA | madeline.drake@resources.ca.gov |
| Matt Clifford* | Trout Unlimited | matt.clifford@tu.org |
| Matt Wells** | Watershed Restoration Grants Branch, CDFW | matt.wells@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Megan Rooney | Central Region, CDFW | megan.rooney@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Meghan Hertel | Director, CDFW | meghan.hertel@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Meghan Walsh | Lahontan RWQCB | meghan.walsh@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Melissa Farinha | Bay Delta Region, CDFW | melissa.farinha@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Michael Stuhldreher | Bay Delta Region, CDFW | michael.stuhldreher@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Michael van Hattem | Northern Region, CDFW | michael.vanhattem@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Michelle Forsha | Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program, CDFW | michelle.forsha@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Michael Memeo | Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program, CDFW | michael.memeo@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Nicholas Martorano** | Division of Water Quality, SWRCB | nicholas.martorano@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Nicholas Savino | Central Valley RWQCB | nicholas.savino@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Noa Banayan* | Keep Tahoe Blue | noa@keeptahoeblue.org |
| Paul Hann** | Division of Water Quality, SWRCB | paul.hann@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Rebecca Garwood | Northern Region, CDFW | rebecca.garwood@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Ryan Bey | North Coast RWQCB | ryan.bey@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Sarah Paulson | Central Region, CDFW | sarah.paulson@wildlife.ca.gov |

| | | |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Sharon Farrell* | California Landscape Stewardship Network | sfarrell@stewardshipnetwork.org |
| Stacey Alexander | Northern Region, CDFW | stacey.alexander@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Stephanie Falzone* | Sustainable Conservation | sfalzone@suscon.org |
| Stephen Barlow | Wetlands Permitting and Enforcement, SWRCB | stephen.barlow@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Sydney Chamberlin* | The Nature Conservancy | s.j.chamberlin@tnc.org |
| Tami Schane | Bay Delta Region, CDFW | tami.schane@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Tiana Huling | Division of Water Quality, SWRCB | tiana.huling@waterboards.ca.gov |
| Victoria Tang | South Coast Region, CDFW | victoria.tang@wildlife.ca.gov |
| Wade Crowfoot | Secretary for Natural Resources, CNRA | wade.crowfoot@resources.ca.gov |
| Zachary Kearns | North Central Region, CDFW | zachary.kearns@Wildlife.ca.gov |

* *Interagency Summit Facilitation Team*

** *Interagency Summit Planning Team*

Appendix C. Detailed Responses from Select Sessions

Introductions: In 5 words or less, what inspires you to do this work?

- Childhood outdoors
- Exploration, outdoors, others
- Biodiversity, scuba
- Enhance California
- Restore what we lost
- Beautiful places for public
- Monkey Wrench Gang
- Sound of a stream
- Water is life, nature is joy
- Lifelong landscape lover
- I love being outside
- Keep wild for kids to enjoy
- Exposure, quiet, effort + connection
- Appreciation of environment
- High Sierra alpine forests
- Public land recreation
- Lake Superior
- Feral child discovers yucky trash
- I like fish & San Joaquin needs it
- Making a difference in this world
- Sowing seeds with grandpa
- Grandmother's love of free-flowing rivers
- Teaching kids about environment
- Wetland protection
- Born/raised in Santa Rosa watershed
- Zambeze River
- Protecting places that inspire
- Because I like the fish
- Catching newts in the creek

- Handing off what I grew up with
- Love for exploring outdoors
- Swimming in fresh cold water
- Developing sense of place
- Protecting creek walks
- Offset what we develop
- Grew up in Lake Tahoe
- Making things better
- Connected landscapes for wildlife
- Yellow-billed cuckoos
- Protecting our waters
- Childhood ocean cleanup tidepools
- Salton Sea degradation, desert region, soil
- Make world better for future generations
- Love of horseshoe crabs & fireflies
- Backpacking in wilderness
- Spend more free time outdoors
- Trail walking – fell in love with help
- Kelp & sage
- Lifelong passion for outdoors & exploring
- Love for cuddling wildlife
- Red willow tree as a kid could climb
- Enjoyment for peers & future generations
- Place-based climate work
- Giving back to nature
- Mt. George H.S. science teacher
- Urban escape
- No planet B
- Part of something bigger than yourself
- Peace below the canopy – we all deserve it
- Loving wetlands, creeks, kelp forest
- Best way to contribute
- All about conservation & fun
- Long hikes on public lands
- Meaningful stewardship for ecological health
- Catching newts at the creek
- Handing off what I grew up with
- Love for exploring outdoors
- Swimming in fresh cold water
- Developing a sense of place
- Fishing with dad
- Making things better

Rose-Thorn-Bud Exercise: What's working well, what's challenging, and where do you see potential for greater impact?

ROSES – Successes, Strengths, What's Working

Tools, Permitting, and Regulatory Efficiency

- The SRGO is an excellent tool that we're using all the time!
- Regulatory efficiency – using SRGO for projects that would require WDR before the Board = save time
- SRGO has been developed and is being used to save time and money for project proponents
- Restoration projects able to use statewide general restoration order
- Use of restoration general orders (small hab/SRGO) to streamline permitting for project proponents
- Programmatic stream maintenance permitting (SF Bay)
- Wetland regional monitoring program (SF Bay)
- More projects under the RMP
- Improved Permit Tools – Changing Posture – Good Salmon news!
- Habitat Restoration Enhancement Act (HREA) – Around 350 small restoration projects approved!

Restoration Outcomes and Momentum

- More restoration is generally better / more restoration is happening
- Getting Good Projects Completed
- KLAMATH DAM REMOVAL ♥
- Restoration is happening faster.
- Permits are being written faster.
- Increased the number of applications.

Staff Strengths and Culture

- Great staff, enthusiasm + drive. Doing a great job.
- Experience leads to efficiency
- Our processes are dialed
- CGT staff are doing a great job.
- HQ can appreciate CGT staff's work.

Interagency Coordination and Collaboration

- Increased interagency coordination
- Increased use of watershed-based or state-wide standards & BMPs
- Interagency Coordination
- Through interagency collaboration and streamlined permitting, we have been able to simplify access to and implementation of projects that aim to meet environmental benefits.
- Helpful to check in periodically

Mindset and Field Evolution

- Increased comfort level and mind shift related to restoration
- Restoration is a strategy.
- Collective mindset shift

THORN – Challenges, Barriers, Pain Points

Tool Confusion, Inconsistency, and Application Issues

- Unclear how to use tools
- How/when to apply mitigation
- When/how to use which CEQA tools
- Inconsistent understanding of application of tools by applicants
- Lack of internal consistency in interpreting/applying tools
- SRGO vagueness a “double-edged sword”
- Still confusion on what tools are available & how to use them
- Inconsistency between regions & agencies
- CGT tools maybe good for typical projects but what about tricky ones?
- CGT is of a one size fits All – is that O.K.?

Capacity, Staffing, and Resource Constraints

- Lack of capacity + resources to do work
- Not enough resources/staff/time
- Need for technical knowledge expertise
- No funding to cover the work of staff not directly funded by CGT
- Need more finance administration to assist with budgeting, procurement
- Staff stretched thin
- Lack of technical Restoration expertise from applicants impacts workload + project quality

Applicant Challenges

- How do applicants see the tools?
- Missing opportunity to educate applicants at a larger scale
- Lack of training for applicants (will help staff!)
- Applicants getting more experienced
- Huge differences in how projects are described
- Local gov’t + sister agencies need more exposure to CGT mindset + tools
- Agency websites hard to navigate

Policy Ambiguity, Leadership Gaps, and Direction

- Lack of mgmt direction + resources
- Lack of policy direction on tricky issues / gray areas
- Unclear direction of calculation/interpretation
- Leadership support for decisions → need more
- Lack of consistency in policy interpretation across different regions
- Unclear policy direction from headquarters.
- Need common understanding of constraints / needs on both sides.

Risk, Litigation, and Fear of Mistakes

- Being willing to accept more risk
- Lasting impacts of one mistake. Bad things stick with you.
- Some regulators play more conservatively...to avoid being sued.
- Fear of consequences of rubber stamping

- Still concerns/convos around mitigation for restoration projects
- Difficult to decide trade-offs
- See the forest through the trees

Monitoring, Data, and Effectiveness

- Monitoring post restoration not clearly defined
- Actual outcomes of restoration not being known
- Grants don't fund monitoring
- Measuring effectiveness is hard
- Even when we do have the monitoring data, don't have expertise or resources to do anything with it
- IT infrastructure, data systems to collect metadata + tell stories

Fees and Financial Barriers

- Fees can be deterrent for applicants
- SWRCB fee increases
- Inflexibility in ecological enhancement fee structure → SRGO fee
- HREA fees
- Fees / Application costs

Interagency and Regional Inconsistency

- Regional inconsistencies in authority
- Disconnect on who can make decisions
- Regions doing this differently
- CGT not getting into hands of community groups
- CGT not being utilized enough by local gov't

BUD – Opportunities, Potential, Emerging Ideas

Building Expertise and Capacity

- Learnings from previous projects to drive future training
- Creating More Expertise In-House
- A new SERP position
- Hiring more conservation engineers

Process Improvements and New Tools

- Technical advisory capabilities.
- New permitting policies + training
- Developing a program to report trials + findings + lessons learned

Leadership and Culture Change

- New CDFW leadership with SERP and CEQA experience!
- Lot more examples of successes in this Summit, more optimism
- Still opportunities for culture change
- First though should be, "how could this be a restoration project?"
- There is already a paradigm shift underway!

Risk Navigation and Problem Solving

- Less aversion to risk
- How to best use tools and minimize temporary impacts
- How to manage risk for new types of projects, standardization and better decision support
- Imagine a consistent decision tree that all applicants go to at beginning of Permit process
- More standardization needed

Appendix D. Commitments to Advance Restoration

- Get updated phone tree from CDFW for more coordination with new RWQCB staff.
- Commit to fighting for a good project in a legal gray area and testing early policy direction.
- Coordinate with CDFW by inviting them to RWQCB Region 4 pre-application meetings for SRGO.
- Further Region 5 RWQCB participation in coordination meetings that we started since 1st Summit.
- Commit to working with Region 2 RWQCB staff to work towards collective understanding of what a restoration project looks like for the region.
- Working on tools that provide incremental improvement and potentially permit changes at statewide level.
- Continue to be accessible to other programs to reinforce what they have learned about CGT.
- Protect the fish!
- Establish a uniform model of restoration terms.
- Continue implementing process changes and provide staff support.
- Support staff in CGT and review docs as quickly as I can.
- Explore alternative funding sources to support staff and look at other viable options outside of fees.
- Continue to support staff with CGT tools navigating restoration in ocean waters, commit to educating managers on utility and benefit of these tools.
- Better training and outreach to applicant community.
- Commit to using my authority to act through rulemaking process this year, continue making the case for statutory and legislative changes for expanded toolkits, and keep on championing CGT.
- Continue to lean in and use tools to better manage for bullfrogs and other invasive species in California.
- Help to identify opportunities for transferring CGT processes and support structures into CDFW Habitat Conservation units.
- Take back learnings from the Summit to my leadership team and emphasize the importance of reissuance of SHRP, especially the removal of linear feet limitations.
- To follow advice of my daughter: don't be afraid to be brave
- Support CGT training with staff, pick up the phone when needed. Share Region 1 RWQCB tools for streamlining with those interested.
- Commit to sharing Region 1 RWQCB resources, coordinate with agencies, and train applicants.
- Support my staff in identifying and managing risk with legal counsel.
- Continue to coordinate closely with BRRIT partners, staff and marine region and applicants to get these permits efficiently issued.
- Commit to urging my management to delegate approval power and streamline restoration projects, communicate with colleagues about restoration, and inspire other colleagues.
- Continue to offer help to people across the region.
- Commit to taking energy and inspiration I feel from the Summit to develop new permit materials for applicants, making it more digestible and accessible.

- Commit to following up with CDFW teams, institutionalize CGT further by working with the Office of General Counsel.
- Commit to turning my camera on during interagency meetings, and reaching out sooner to improve interagency communications.
- Commit Ducks Unlimited to continue to collaborate with agency partners to make processes better and make our applications really good.
- Continue to improve interagency coordination, calling Region 5 RWQCB next week to talk respective permitting programs.
- Help to close the feedback loop between monitoring, design, and permitting.
- Watch out for my team and staff to look for signs of burnout, taking care of our greatest resource.
- Within my power, make application process as easy as possible for restoration partners
- Extend the invitation to all partners and offices to join pre-consult meetings and site visits. Sharing Region 1 RWQCB resources for CGT tools, offering support to SWRCB to reissue SHRP.
- Take upper management to successful restoration sites.
- Commit to collaborating more with CDFW in 401 Certification pre-filing meetings, be more proactive to seeking out site visits and restoration projects, invite other staff and agencies out as well.
- Develop successful, high net benefit project with CalTrans to help shift interagency culture further.
- Set up regular interagency meetings within SoCal, update phone rosters, support my staff to utilize tools and implement restoration projects on our own lands and public lands where possible.
- Commit to working with RWQCBs and applicants via 319 program.
- Continue to advocate for SWRCB at mitigation bank review team meetings.
- Expand list of contacts in Salton Sea for CDFW participating in restoration in our region.
- Renew SHRP in an efficient manner and invite you all get to comment on it.
- Commit to not being a bottleneck, do a better job expediting review and signing permits.
- Commit to getting great projects on the ground, engage with you all early and often, make applications easier to approve.
- Complete an analysis on permitting roadmap for Delta.
- Obtain the checklist for PEIR to use in Lahontan RWQCB.
- Continue advocating for SWRCB training opportunities and gather resources to share with everyone.
- Commit to getting responses from leadership.
- Commit to interagency cooperation early on in the permitting process.
- Work with RWQCB staff, open joint agency office hour, move things forward when we can. Commit to reaching out when I need help.
- Continue to work with project proponents to make process easier for them and myself.
- Help facilitate convos with regional managers at CDFW to advance restoration, prevent burnout.
- Work to find funding strategies that support staff, and any policy initiatives needed.
- Commit to working with partners to apply CGT tools in marine zone.
- Commit more training and resources for all CDFW staff, expand interagency monthly meetings.
- Work with CDFW staff to develop internal CGT permitting training.
- Share resources from my region, make it as easy as possible for project proponents to get permits.
- Commit to learning more about gray areas to help staff with discernment and empowerment in decision making.
- Have a more open mind about risk.
- Commit to getting the use of these tools expanded in RWCB Region 6.
- Work closely with CDFW staff in my region to be on the same page about restoration projects.
- Make myself more available to collaborate more with colleagues on materials like flow charts.
- Commit to being on a facilitation team next time, and continue advancing CGT in Tahoe.

- Help educate the public and the community about your good work, commit to continuing help CLSN facilitate great convos.
- Continue to be a champion of great restoration work!