

Capitol Land Trust

Capitol Land Trust encourages the inclusion of land acquisition projects into the list of eligible projects for the Streamflow Restoration Grant program. Moreover, we encourage land acquisitions to be prioritized to the same level as acquisition of water rights for multiple reasons: 1) many landowners, especially farmers, may not want to retain land that has severed water rights, for obvious reasons; 2) even land that doesn't have a water right certificate has the right to drill an exempt well, so while it might not be immediate "water for water" it is highly probably it would be at some point in the future, once the property is developed. Thus, voluntarily preventing the placement and use of exempt wells (through land acquisition) should be a high priority under this program; and 3) restoration on private land is only as permanent as the current landowner's whims. Important restoration work could be undone unless the land is permanently protected through acquisition of either a conservation easement or fee title. For these reasons, I hope the Department will incorporate land acquisitions into this grant program and recognize it as a high priority project option when identifying the ranking criteria. Sincerely, Laurence Reeves