

Water Quantity, Quality, and Security Program Team Annual Meeting - April 15-16, 2026 University of California, Merced

Wednesday, April 15		
9:00-9:45	Welcome, Introductions, and Overview	
	Welcome and Updates from Water Program Team Leadership	Safeeq Khan, Ali Montazar
	Introduction and lightning talks of New PT Members	5-min talk from New PT Members
9:45-10:20	Updates from Leadership	
	Vice Provost, Research and Program Integration	Erin Marnocha
	UCM Vice Chancellor for Interdisciplinary Research and Strategic Initiatives	Josh Viers
	Director of California Institute for Water Resources	Erik Porse
10:20-10:50	Updates from Workgroups	
	Irrigation Management Workgroup	Curt Pierce, Andre Biscaro
	Watershed Resilience Workgroup	Laljeet Sangha, Esther Lofton
10:50 Break		
11:00-12:00	California Water Policies: Issues and Updates (Moderator: Erik Porse)	
	Groundwater Management and SGMA Developments	Paul Gosselin (Deputy Director of Sustainable Groundwater Management, DWR)
	Water Quality Policy Developments, Recycled Water, Non-point Source Pollution	Annalisa Kihara (Assistant Deputy Director, Division of Water Quality, State Water Board)
	Updates on CDFA Incentive Programs and Climate Action Planning	Carolyn Cook (Senior Environmental Scientist, Office of Agricultural Resilience and Sustainability, CDFA)
12:00 Lunch		
13:00-14:15	Interactive Break-out Session 1 (PT research and extension priorities; programmatic support/needs)	Program Team
14:15 Break		
14:30-16:00	Technical presentations – session 1 (Moderator: Safeeq Khan)	
	Evaporation from Canals Covered with Solar Panels	Brandi Mckuin
	Sensor-Based Monitoring of Plant Water Stress	Reza Ehsani
	Tools for Design and Analysis of On-farm and Large-Scale Water Distribution Systems	Andre Daccache

	Water Yield and Carbon Sequestration: Evaluating Restoration Outcomes in a Changing Climate	Safeeq Khan
	Economic Issues Related to Managed Aquifer Recharge	Ellen Bruno
	Urban Greenery under Irrigation Interruption: Legacy Effects of Deficit Irrigation on Aesthetic Value and Evaporative Cooling During Extreme Drought	Amir Verdi
Time for individual meetings of workgroups (16:00-17:30)		
Group Dinner (18:00-20:00)		
Dinner Venue: Details will be provided closer to the event date		
Thursday, April 16		
8:00-9:30	Technical presentations – session 2 (Moderator: Ali Montazar)	
	Data-Driven Discovery: How AI Is Changing Soil Science	Teamrat Ghezzehei
	Agricultural Managed Aquifer Recharge: Recent Research Advances and Lessons from Field and Modeling Studies	Helen Dahlke
	Intermittent Agricultural Managed Aquifer Recharge (Ag-MAR) on Alfalfa	Khaled Bali
	Advances in Irrigation Water Management Research and Extension in Southern California	Ali Montazar
	Advances in Water Management Research and Extension in the North San Joaquin Valley	Abdelmoneim Zakaria Mohamed
	Irrigation and Water Resources in the North Sacramento Valley	Curt Pierce
9:30 Break		
9:45-10:45	Interactive break-out session 2 (new positions call)	Program Team
10:45-12:00	Technical presentations – session 3 (Moderator: Erik Porse)	
	Multibenefit Land Repurposing for Groundwater Sustainability: Evaluating Agricultural, Economic, and Environmental Trade-offs in the San Joaquin Valley	Thomas Harmon
	Drinking Water Microbiology and Nitrate on Cattle Water Trough - Challenges to Clean Water Access	Pramod Pandey
	Space-based Tools for California’s Water Quality Challenges: Linking Satellites to Solutions	Erin Hestir
	Water Quality in California: 1,2,3-TCP Contamination, Treatment, and Analysis	Colleen Naughton
	Assessing the Effect of Soil Moisture and Water Quality on Macrophomina Development in Strawberries	Andre Biscaro
12:00 Lunch		

13:00-15:30	<p><u>UCM ESF Field Tour</u></p> <p>We will meet outside the conference room and take trollies to the farm. Here is the tentative agenda:</p> <p>Departure: 1 PM</p> <p>Stop 1: UCM Green House (led by Danny Royer and Bárbara Dos Santos)</p> <p>Stop 2: Agrivoltaics Research (led by Sarah Kurtz and Andrew Silverstein)</p> <p>Stop 3: MAR (led by Jorge Andres Morande and Humberto Flores-Landeros)</p> <p>Stop 4: Almond Demonstration (Danny Royer)</p> <p>Stop 5: Agave Research (Josh Viers)</p> <p>Return to Legrand Parking Lot by 3:30 PM</p>	
15:30 END		

Parking Information

We suggest you park in Bellevue Lot (see map below). You can park in Green Zone, any non specially-marked space. Avoid parking in Gold and Resident H Zones as those are not open for visitors. Hourly and daily permits are available via "Pay by Text", or kiosks located in Bellevue Lot.

Online Map: <https://taps.ucmerced.edu/campusparkingmap>

Offline Map:

https://taps.ucmerced.edu/sites/g/files/ufvvh1811/f/documents/uc_merced_campus_map_final_202208.pdf

Meeting Venue

We will be meeting in California Room. From Bellevue Lot, walk along the University Avenue (look for the palm trees by the transit center) and then take right on Scholars Lane. The California room is located inside Terrace Center, towards the Scholars Lane.

