

Josué Medellín Azuara

Josué Medellín-Azuara is a Professor in Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of California, Merced. He also serves as an Associate Director for the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences and the UC Agricultural Issues Center, and as an Adjunct Research Fellow at the Water Policy Center of the Public Policy Institute of California. His expertise includes water resources management for agriculture, communities, and the environment, and is a principal investigator for studies on drought, climate adaptation, consumptive water use, and policy analysis for regulation with emphasis on California, for state and federal agencies as well as the National Science Foundation. He has also been on advisory committees on Climate, FloodMAR, the Delta Drought Response Pilot Program, the Delta Science Advisory Board, and the Delta Social Science Task Force, and the CDFA Statewide Water Efficiency and Energy Program. Currently he is a member of the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine Ad Hoc Committee the Review of the Long Term Operations of the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project. Professor Medellín-Azuara holds degrees in engineering, business and economics, and obtained his Ph.D. from UC Davis with his dissertation on managing environmental flows in the Colorado River Delta.



Tim Godwin

Tim Godwin is a Supervising Engineering Geologist and Technical Advisor to the Deputy Director in the Department of Water Resources' Sustainable Groundwater Management Office. Tim has more than 20 years of experience working in California groundwater; coming to DWR and the SGMA program in 2015 supporting the initial steps of SGMA helping to develop regulations, guidance documents, and early implementation steps through to today. Tim is a licensed California Professional Geologist and Certified Hydrogeologist, with a M.S. in Geology from Northern Arizona University and a B.S. in Geology from CSU Sacramento.

Ajay Goyal

Ajay Goyal is the Manager of the Statewide Infrastructure Investigations Branch within the Division of Planning at the California Department of Water Resources. Over the past 30+ years, he has worked on the planning, design, and construction of many large water resources projects. For the past fifteen years, Ajay has served as the program manager for several critical initiatives, including the Surface Storage Investigations Program, the System Reoperation Program, and the Flood-MAR Program. He also led the development of the Water Available for Groundwater Replenishment report. Currently, Ajay is directing watershed studies for the Calaveras, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Merced, and Upper San Joaquin river watersheds, and overseeing the San Joaquin Valley Conveyance Study. Ajay holds both a bachelor's and a master's degree in civil engineering and is a licensed Civil and Structural Engineer.

Erik Ekdahl

Erik Ekdahl is the Deputy Director for the State Water Board's Division of Water Rights. The Division is responsible for establishing and maintaining a stable system of water rights to develop, conserve, and use the water resources of the State, while protecting vested rights, water quality, and the environment. Erik joined the State Water Board in 2008, where he focused on nitrate and groundwater contamination. He has worked at the Board in the Division of Financial Assistance, Division of Water Quality, and as Director for the Office of Research, Planning and Performance. Erik is a licensed Engineering Geologist, with a PhD in Geology from the University of Michigan.



Tina Cannon Leahy is an Attorney Supervisor with the State Water Resources Control Board Office of the Chief Counsel where her primary duties include serving as lead attorney to the Office of Sustainable Groundwater Management implementing California's landmark Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and assisting with the amendment, implementation, and defense of the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary. Before coming to the State Water Board, she was the Principal Consultant for the California Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee where, from 2010 through 2015, she served as the Assembly's water law and policy expert, including working as a principal technical drafter of SGMA. Prior to the Assembly, Ms. Leahy was Senior Staff Counsel at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and an associate attorney in private practice counseling clients and litigating water, environmental quality, and endangered species matters. In addition to her duties with the State Water Board, Ms. Leahy is a water law Lecturer in the University of California, Davis, Department of Land, Air, and Water Resources. She is also the Co-Chair of the Alumni Advisory Board for the California Environmental Law and Policy Center at King Hall, the UC Davis School of Law, and a Fellow of the American College of Environmental Lawyers.



Director Stephanie Dietz is currently the Executive Director of the Community Foundation of Merced County. Her professional career has encompassed nearly 20 years of municipal and public agency experience, most notably as the Merced City Manager. She serves as the treasurer for the Golden State Agriculture Foundation and as an Advisory Board Member for the Central California Small Business Development Center. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies and a Master of Arts in English and is a proud Fresno State Bulldog alumnus. Stephanie and her husband continue to own and operate the sheep ranch that has been in their family for four generations.

Elijah Greidanus

Elijah Greidanus is a 3rd generation farmer and dairy calf raiser. His family grows pistachios and wheat near the Tule River in Tipton, Ca. In Fresno County, his family grows corn, wheat, and pistachios. Most of his family's farming operations do business in the Lower Tule River Irrigation District and GSA and in Westlands Water District and GSA. In March of 2023, his family enrolled in Landflex for the purposes of fallowing and transitioning 160 acres of the ranch into permanent SGMA compliance as part of the State's overall response to crippling drought. When the rains came in Spring of 2023, his family's property was at the apex of being able to recharge off the Tule River. In response to the threat of flood to the surrounding communities of Porterville and Allensworth, Mr. Greidanus turned his enrolled Landflex ground into a sinking basin for the purposes of recharge -where the property still stands ready to receive recharge today.

Jennifer Markarian-Peters

Jennifer Markarian-Peters is a 4th generation farmer for Markarian Family Limited Partnership. She is a wife, mother and grandmother. Jennifer retired from teaching in 2012 when her father, Robert Markarian, contracted West Nile Virus. From that time forward, Jennifer has worked alongside her father and son, Kevin Markarian, growing approximately 800 acres of certified sustainable grapes and almonds.

With three generations at the helm of the family business, Markarian Family LP has learned to combine proven farming practices with modern concepts in farming efficiency, creating an environment of being good stewards of the land. Acreage has been taken out of production to create solar for the ranch and land was sold to provide the only adjacent property for the Ardagh Glass Plant to have a solar array of 120 acres. Other projects include, building a warehouse for a parts and service industry which travels north and south of the location thus reducing carbon footprint for a business that serves the central valley and creating the ability to use district water to irrigate through the drip system alleviating the need to pump water.

In 2023, Markarian Family LP joined forces with NRCS and Madera Irrigation District, to take 20 acres out of production and create a water basin for recharge of the aquifer upon which it feeds. An adjacent 20 acres is dedicated to on farm recharge.

Jennifer has spent her 12 years on the ranch trying to keep farming alive for the generations to come. She is proud to be a part of a family business that works diligently to take care of the land, the amazing people who work for the business, and the community that has taken care of her family for over 100 years. Her concern these days is figuring out how to navigate “red tape” that prohibits filling the basin.

Vicky Garcia-Moya

Vicky Garcia-Moya started [Eco-Family Farms in 2010](#), farming 29 acres of almonds. She runs the business with the help of her husband Alberto and daughter Cathy. They sell a variety of almond products, including almond butter and almond chocolate treats. With a commitment to land stewardship, they have implemented a number of conservation practices like planting native hedgerows, winter cover crops, and improving the irrigation system. Every week they look forward to seeing their customers at farmers markets and festivals around California.

Michael Claiborne

Born in Chico but raised in Boise, Idaho, Michael Claiborne is a directing attorney based in the Sacramento office of Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability (LCJA). He attended Boise State University, where he received a B.A. in philosophy, and the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, where he received a J.D. with great distinction. Before joining the LCJA team, Michael worked at a private law firm in Fresno where he practiced insurance coverage litigation. He works to find solutions to water issues affecting California's most vulnerable communities, along with the myriad of environmental justice issues plaguing low-income communities of color in California.