



People, Food & Land Foundation

Nourishing Land Empowering Communities

Concept Note

The Marigold Fund for Unincorporated California

California's Central Valley is among the most productive agricultural regions in the world, yet decades of extractive industrial farming have fractured human, animal, and microbial systems, concentrating harm among those with the fewest protections. Declining groundwater availability, rising temperatures, and accelerating corporate consolidation of farmland have intensified vulnerability for low-income residents, particularly in disadvantaged unincorporated communities and Tribal lands. The loss of biological diversity, sterilization of soils, depletion of carbon sinks, and the export of both financial and natural resources out of the region have left many communities spiraling. Today, corporate farming enterprises continue to benefit disproportionately from subsidized land, water, and labor. Land consolidation shows no sign of slowing.

As California allocates public investments towards fixing the climate crisis, we need to fund what we know works. Instead of repeating history, allowing industry to author the next chapter of California's climate future, it's time to focus on community-led alternatives with proven potential to restore ecosystems, strengthen rural economies, and keep resources in the ground.

Resourcing Proven Climate Solutions



The Marigold Fund for Unincorporated California funds community-led natural resource management in the Central Valley, supporting agroecological land stewardship, soil-based bio resource economies, composting/responsible biomass management, and nature-based climate solutions. Importantly, it draws funding into areas of the state that have the least visibility to state agencies and philanthropy, and to organizations that are historic land stewards, but who lack formal status or funding to grow their climate impact. Projects do not just benefit disadvantaged communities– they are proposed and led by residents of unincorporated communities and Tribal lands of the Central Valley, people long excluded from political representation, capital access, and natural resource governance. These deeply rural communities, often beyond municipal boundaries and lacking basic services, are essential stewards of land and water in California's agricultural backbone.

Emerging from more than a decade of organizing by agroecology practitioners and farmworker community service providers, the Marigold Fund is built on a reparative, decentralized approach to climate stewardship and regenerative agriculture led by farmworkers, small farmers, and Tribes whose labor and knowledge built the region.

Core Funding Principles

1.

Build on existing agroecological recovery through locally rooted ecological knowledge, demonstrating scalable alternatives to industrial land management.

2.

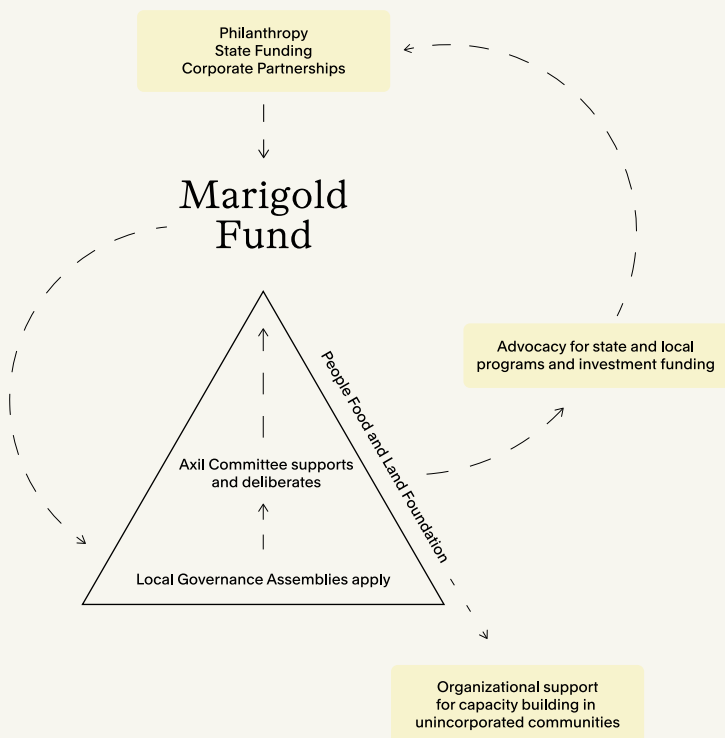
Prioritize community-owned and cooperative models that ensure infrastructure investments generate local jobs, worker ownership, and long-term access to land and water.

3.

Center communities excluded from land-use planning, particularly unincorporated communities and Tribes that have been systematically denied services and sustainability investments.

How It Works

The Marigold Fund is a program of People Food and Land Foundation. Janaki Anagha serves as the interim administrator. The Fund supports both capacity-building and project operations and provides an investment pathway for public agencies, partnered philanthropies and donors to sustain these projects over time. People Food and Land Foundation offers fiscal sponsorship to grantees where desired, and assistance in retaining counsel, consulting, and more.



The Axil Committee

is named after the part of a plant that directs nutrients towards fresh growth. It functions as the Fund's governing body, developing policies, funding priorities, and strategic direction. Members of the committee are women and/or gender queer people of color from the Central Valley with demonstrated experience leading agroecological land stewardship projects. This committee defines funding criteria and approves grants, vets funders and partnerships for values alignment, and participates in storytelling, media, research, and public speaking.

Grantee Assemblies

are formal or sometimes informal groups of small farmers, community residents, and Tribal members who are Fund beneficiaries. These assemblies often predate the Marigold Fund and have been bootstrapping climate action for years. They may not have a nonprofit, or even any type of formalized organization yet, but they have a vision, have started creating jobs and leadership pathways within their communities, and are working towards climate resilience. Assemblies develop proposals, budgets, and work plans and steward projects that respond directly to local environmental and economic conditions. They apply and are selected for funding by the Axil Committee.

Project Examples



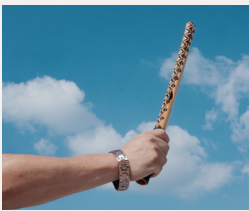
Five Points Community Garden

Cinco Puntas, or Five Points, Community Garden is advancing community-led agroecology and regenerative land stewardship in a rural farmworker community. The project focuses on building local capacity for food production, soil health, and community resilience while creating opportunities for residents to participate directly in shaping the future use and stewardship of local lands.



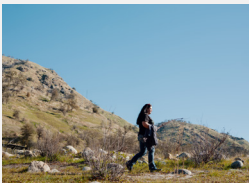
Northern Band of Mono Yokuts

The Northern Band of Mono Yokuts plan to build a traditional roundhouse on family land in Fresno County. The project is envisioned as a place for Indigenous healing, cultural revitalization, intertribal gatherings, education, and recovery, reconnecting people to traditional land-based practices and community relationships. The project leaders have relatives who are loggers, firefighters, ranchers, and builders. They envision “relying on our family working together to build the structure” and source the materials. The roundhouse project is a culmination of the way the Tribal members were brought up to value and care for natural resources.



Native Star Foundation

Native Star Foundation supports Indigenous food sovereignty, cultural preservation, and community wellness through land-based education and agriculture. The organization develops opportunities for Native families, particularly youth, to reconnect with traditional foods, medicines, and ecological knowledge while strengthening local food systems and community leadership.



Fresno American Indian Health Project (FAIHP)

The Fresno American Indian Health Project serves Native communities throughout the Central Valley by integrating health, cultural wellness, and food sovereignty initiatives. Its work includes community gardens, traditional foods programming, youth engagement, and culturally grounded approaches to improving health outcomes and strengthening Indigenous identity.



Comunidad Nuevo Lago

Comunidad Nuevo Lago is a predominantly farmworker community in Fresno County that purchased their mobile home park as a cooperative after winning a lawsuit against their landlord. They are now building more community-based infrastructure, like space for food production and a soccer green, on additional acres just outside their mobile home park.



Traditional Choinumni Tribe

The Traditional Choinumni Tribe is working to restore ancestral burial grounds in their homelands. Estimated to be at least 6,000 years old, the burial ground, which once had a much larger footprint across the valley, was taken away from the tribe early in the last century. Then, in the 1960s, after a protracted battle, the county returned about one acre of land to the Choinumni people, which is the only land the federally unrecognized tribe with about 100 active members has legal access to. Their efforts on burial ground restoration focus on cultural revitalization and reconnecting tribal members with the land.

Why Partner?

Through its integrated governance structure, the Marigold Fund will expand a regional network of community-led agroecological projects. Over time, it will

Secure long-term public and philanthropic investment for just land transition

Elevate the needs of unincorporated communities and Tribes in policy arenas

Restore agroecological land stewardship to California's agricultural narrative through culture, research, and practice



Through deep relationship building and a history of grassroots connection, the Fund's governance structure supports communities and Tribes that often lack formal legal status or grant-writing capacity to initiate their trajectory towards land ownership. The Fund also documents and shares lessons learned, helping philanthropy and public agencies avoid duplicative efforts and accelerate the growth of agroecological land stewardship across the region.

Contact

To learn more or partner on this project, contact Janaki Anagha at janaki@11thhourproject.org