



Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District

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On November 18, 2024, a program founded in San Luis Obispo County to help farmers was presented by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to the United Nations to help small scale farmers and ranchers succeed in adopting climate smart agriculture practices. The Sustainable Land Initiative (SLI) is an innovative approach enabling farmers to request technical assistance in line with their vision for their land and receive rapid planning, funding, and implementation support.

The Sustainable Land Initiative was the vision of Devin Best, executive director of Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District (USLTRCD), who saw the need to make it easier for landowners to navigate government bureaucracy. “If we are going to meet our climate and environmental goals, then we need to make it easier for landowners to adopt the practices we are asking of them and that they already want to adopt. Our biggest obstacle is the speed at which government approves and funds projects,” said Devin. USLTRCD partnered with cBrain to develop the digital platform that enables SLI to increase the efficiency of the RCDs.

The Sustainable Land Initiative has already increased funding for local farmers and institutions. SLI enabled Cal Poly’s Initiative for Climate Leadership and Resilience to receive \$1.75M to fund implementation of climate smart agriculture practices and to measure the beneficial financial impact on farm operations and to the environment.

SLI is a simple digital process by which landowners can articulate their vision for their land and get rapidly connected with technical assistance, funding, and implementation support. According to Devin, “SLI enables the RCD to more efficiently and effectively navigate government bureaucracy so that landowners don’t have to. It’s wonderful to see that the work we are doing here on the Central Coast is garnering international attention.”

To learn more about the Sustainable Land Initiative, please visit: <https://www.us-ltrcd.org/sustainable-land-initiative-accelerating-climate-smart-agriculture>