



Local  
Government  
Commission

*Leaders for Livable Communities*

# 2021 IMPACT REPORT



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# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



2021 has been a challenging year in many respects, from the ongoing pandemic and racial injustice to the exponentially increasing impacts of climate change.

At the same time, crises often create the conditions for fundamental change—we have what will likely be the most significant opportunity of our lifetimes to see rapid transformation.

During times of stability, we seem willing to accept inefficient, ineffective systems. But in times of distress we have to clarify our priorities, and remove barriers that seemed impossible to tackle before.

These times show us the extent to which people are willing and capable of making significant changes in the face of adversity.

With unprecedented levels of funding at the state and federal level, we have the opportunity to move away from the incrementalism that has plagued progress to date and to make significant investments in climate equity and resilience initiatives.

Like many, we've taken this opportunity to reflect on what really matters and to prepare for new beginnings. For us that's meant increasing our policy work with a new policy director; deepening our diversity, equity and inclusion work with an internal organizational assessment and several external initiatives; launching our largest CivicSpark AmeriCorps program of 100 fellows and moving closer to expansion outside of California with the completion of a planning grant in Washington state and planning work in Colorado; helping to bring almost \$35M in funding for communities to advance clean mobility and active transportation projects; convening over 750 people for the California Climate & Energy Collaborative conference and California Adaptation Forum; and working across the state to ensure equitable, effective implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

As part of our introspection and preparation for new beginnings, we've also been embarking on a rebranding process that will launch early next year.

We're looking forward to exciting things to come in 2022! We believe that this period has the potential to be a renaissance of innovation, stewardship, and shared humanity.

Thank you for your partnership and support.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Wright".

**Kate Wright, Executive Director**

«—————◆—————»

"We believe that this period has the potential to be a renaissance of innovation, stewardship, and shared humanity."

«—————◆—————»

# LGC APPROACH

For decades, the Local Government Commission has served as a visionary policy advocate, implementation support, and experienced partner for local communities and their leaders. As a nonprofit organization, we inspire, equip, connect, and cultivate leaders who are committed to helping their communities thrive.

## INSPIRE

LGC highlights the interdependencies and intersections across many issues relating to sustainability and livability. When a new idea hasn't been implemented yet, LGC is willing to take the risk and has a track record of delivering.

## EQUIP

LGC's policy guidance, support finding funding, and experience navigating the challenges of government help leaders increase their effectiveness. Through direct assistance LGC supports communities and partners in moving projects forward. LGC sees local communities as the experts on their unique vision, needs, and challenges—and follows their lead.



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## CONNECT

LGC convenes and facilitates action-oriented dialogue among public servants, community leaders, and technical experts so they can advance policy goals. LGC offers conferences, training forums, and resources that grow local knowledge for creating healthy, climate-resilient, thriving communities.

## CULTIVATE

LGC develops a pipeline of capable and committed leaders who are passionate about solving local climate and community challenges. Through CivicSpark, member networks, coalitions, and community engagement, LGC helps rising leaders gain experience and contacts across networks they will help lead in the future.

# 2021 IMPACT

## INSPIRE

**41** 

### LETTERS WRITTEN

Additionally we took positions on 44 bills, and testified on 24 bills

 **104**  
BILLS TRACKED

Through the CA Assembly & Senate

 **\$35**  
MILLION

Provided outreach and technical assistance to under-resourced communities, with \$35 million awarded to local governments, nonprofits, transit agencies, and tribal governments for active transportation, clean mobility, urban greening, and water sustainability projects

## EQUIP

**21**   
RESOURCES

New factsheets and best practice guides for local government pandemic recovery, climate and energy goals, and water resilience

 **60**  
PLANS

Submitted public review and comment letters on 60 draft Groundwater Sustainability Plans

## CONNECT

 **25K**  
LEADERS

connected through coalition work, projects, community events & LGC resources

**31**

### MILLION+ RESIDENTS

live in areas of California where LGC is building local government capacity

 **750**  
PEOPLE CONVENED

for the California Climate & Energy Collaborative conference and California Adaptation Forum

## CULTIVATE

 **600**  
CIVICSPARK ALUMNI

These changemakers are at the forefront of ensuring a better tomorrow for future generations

 **69%**

of CivicSpark alumni say that the program had a significant impact on their lives and careers

 **2**  
NEW STATES

Began planning work to expand LGC's work into Colorado and Washington state

# CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY

The image features a landscape with several wind turbines silhouetted against a sky transitioning from a deep blue at the top to a warm orange and yellow at the horizon, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The turbines are of varying heights and are positioned across the horizon line. The overall mood is clean and sustainable.

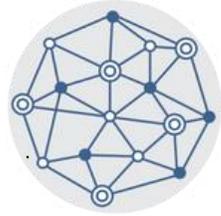
**LGC began designing a new capacity building and technical assistance program for San Diego Community Power (SDCP), which aims to help SDCP member agencies advance their clean energy initiatives. This new program will launch in early 2022.**

# CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY

## Advancing Policy

LGC helped to facilitate stakeholder engagement to advocate for local and regional adaptation funding in the State's Climate Resilience Budget. The [final joint letter](#) garnered support from 103 local and regional government agencies, CBOs, NGOs, universities, private sector companies, collaboratives, and professional associations.

We spearheaded [a joint letter](#) urging the California Air Resources Board to conduct greenhouse gas inventories for all cities and counties in California. The letter garnered support from 76 local governments throughout the state.



**ARCCA**  
Alliance of Regional Collaboratives  
for Climate Adaptation

Through [ARCCA](#), a coalition program of LGC, we facilitated the Adaptation Policy Working Group and organized comment letters in response to the State's [Draft 2021 Climate Adaptation Strategy](#) and [Draft Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy](#).

[LGSEC](#) has hosted two webinars, a members-only forum, and a public forum. It held 12 monthly regulatory engagement calls for its members and created four working groups for different proceedings. The working groups met with California Public Utilities Commission staff to represent local government voices. LGSEC also worked with a consultant to develop a Strategic Plan for 2021-2023, and created a new [LinkedIn page!](#)



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
SUSTAINABLE  
ENERGY COALITION**

## New Climate Change & Energy Resources



## Providing Technical Assistance

As part of [Resilient SLO](#), LGC led internal capacity and coordination assessments for the City of San Luis Obispo to help streamline their adaptation work, developed an updated organizational chart and ecosystem map, hosted three community events on building capacity for local resilience, and supported the release of the city's Vulnerability Assessment.

We also began designing a new capacity building and technical assistance program for [San Diego Community Power](#) (SDCP), which aims to help SDCP member agencies advance their clean energy initiatives. This new program will launch in early 2022.

## Partners Advancing Climate Equity

Through the [Partners Advancing Climate Equity](#) pilot program, LGC provided training and technical assistance to 21 community leaders to build foundational skills for advancing climate equity initiatives. We also developed a Community Needs Assessment Toolkit—to be unveiled in 2022—to support other community leaders in advancing local visions for climate equity.

*"This has been a great experience; awesome peers and excellent trainers and facilitators have expanded my way of thinking outside of my community to all of the other communities like mine. I will be taking all these skills into practice in my future projects and community work."*  
- PACE Leader



***"[LGC has] the reputation of being the go-to entity and they attract a lot of folks that have clout and reach."***

Stakeholder survey respondent

***"LGC's gift is to bring a community's vision to life and help counties find resources to make them happen."***

Stakeholder survey respondent

## Connecting Leaders



The [Embedding Equity in Adaptation Initiative](#), implemented through ARCCA, created space for over 250 adaptation practitioners from across the state to learn from marginalized communities working in the climate space through the “Building an Inclusive and Equitable Adaptation Movement” seminar series. Practitioners were also able to share lessons and success stories in Peer Learning Circles focused on three dimensions of adaptation work: Network, Community, and Organization. This effort culminated in an update to ARCCA's Guiding Principles and Governance Bylaws and Board Policies and a series of case studies.

The [California Climate & Energy Collaborative \(CCEC\)](#) hosted the 12th Annual CCEC Forum. It featured 20 events - 2 plenaries, 6 lunch events, and 12 webinars - and 441 attendees, 76 of whom were from disadvantaged and low-income communities.

In addition, CCEC launched the [Local Energy Resources Network \(LERN\)](#), released 3 editions of the CURRENTS newsletter and 44 weekly updates, conducted 3 best-practice interviews, and provided technical assistance to 10 jurisdictions throughout the state.



The [2021 California Adaptation Forum](#) virtual series ran from June to October, convening two plenary sessions, 6 track-based webinars, and 9 interactive workshops. The forum focused on the Grand Adaptation Challenge and engaged 296 participants on key adaptation topics spanning 3 overarching tracks:

*Advancing Equitable Adaptation | Integrated Planning for Holistic Solutions | Catalyzing Meaningful Adaptation Action*

LGC continued facilitating the [Capital Region Climate Readiness Collaborative \(CRC\)](#) and formed working groups focused on Building Electrification and Extreme Heat. We also hosted quarterly member meetings to provide learning and networking opportunities, and to better understand member priorities. LGC is also



**CAPITAL REGION  
CLIMATE READINESS  
COLLABORATIVE**

A Coalition of the Local Government Commission

working in close partnership with SACOG to spearhead a robust stakeholder engagement initiative to align local adaptation efforts, elevate regional priorities and needs to the State, and prepare for State and federal climate investments.

# COMMUNITY DESIGN



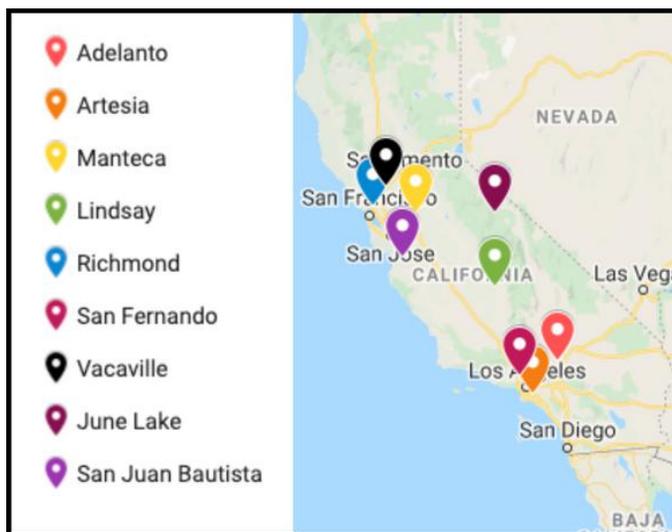
**In 2021, LGC partnered with communities around the state to conduct local visioning, planning and implementation of solutions for equitable and sustainable transportation, housing, downtown and neighborhood revitalization, and placemaking.**

# COMMUNITY DESIGN

## Local Plan Development

\$1.7 Million was raised for collaborative community projects and planning efforts in:

- City of Adelanto Safe Routes to School Plan
- City of Artesia Active Transportation Plan
- City of Manteca Downtown Transit Center Connectivity and Enhancement Plan
- City of Lindsay West Hermosa Street Corridor and Neighborhood Enhancement Plan
- City of Richmond Greenway Gap Closure and Connectivity Study
- City of San Fernando Safe and Active Streets Implementation Plan
- City of San Juan Bautista Active Transportation and Community Connectivity Plan
- City of Vacaville Downtown Specific Plan
- Town of June Lake (Mono County) Loop Active Transportation Plan



An additional \$1.2 Million was raised for 2022 projects in Colfax, Pico Rivera, Corcoran, Reedley, and Dunsmuir.

LGC also drafted eight pending proposals for active transportation, shared mobility, corridor transformation, and downtown revitalization projects. Communities include Placerville, Isleton, San Leandro, Firebaugh, Stanislaus County, Lakeport and Monterey County.

## Technical Assistance

*Helping marginalized communities access funding for local planning and infrastructure projects that improve public health and sustainability.*

This year, we have worked with communities to conduct visioning, build capacity, and develop projects and partnerships. Highlights include:

### Clean Mobility Options Voucher Pilot Program

LGC is in the second year of implementing the California Air Resources Board's [Clean Mobility Options Voucher Pilot Program](#) that funds shared mobility projects serving under-resourced and marginalized communities. In 2021, \$20 million was awarded to nonprofits, local governments, transit agencies, and Tribal governments to develop and launch zero-emission mobility projects.

### FundingResource.org

[LGC's funding navigation and technical assistance program](#) helps marginalized communities engage stakeholders, assess project readiness, interpret grant guidelines and requirements, and prepare competitive applications. This platform supports local leaders in navigating the complex landscape of sustainable transportation, affordable housing, urban greening, and water resources management to identify viable and appropriate funding sources. One recent highlight is that our proposal guidance and support for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy helped secure \$555,000 for an Asian American Heritage Park in Isleton.

## COMMUNITY DESIGN



### Active Transportation Program

LGC has been an Active Transportation Program (ATP) technical assistance provider on behalf of [Caltrans](#) since 2015. We led a team in 2020-21 with Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and Fehr & Peers that assisted eleven communities with webinars, scoping, and application development support. Of the 7 grant applications we supported, three were awarded for a total of \$11.5 million. We are continuing to provide capacity-building support to these communities to gear up for the 2022 round of ATP grants.

### SACOG Rural Main Streets Technical Assistance Program

We worked with seven communities on behalf of the [Sacramento Area Council of Governments \(SACOG\)](#) Rural Main Street Technical Assistance Program to develop strategies and pursue funding to transform downtowns and key corridors into more livable, walkable, and economically successful environments. Selected 2021 projects include:

- A pop-up temporary conversion of an intersection in Meadow Vista, Placer County to help elected leaders and residents identify traffic-calming and pedestrian-friendly strategies
- An interactive presentation on housing types and densities to inform the Town of Loomis general plan update
- A successful \$211,000 Caltrans Sustainable Communities planning grant to develop our initial Main Street Colfax visioning workshop design concepts into a full-fledged plan for implementation



LGC, CivicSpark, County staff, and community volunteers at Meadow Vista pop-up demonstration

## Supporting Health Equity and Resilience Through COVID-19 Recovery

With funding from The California Endowment, LGC provides best practices, technical assistance and policy advocacy to support low-income communities in achieving health equity and resilience through COVID-19 recovery. A few 2021 highlights:

- LGC developed resilient recovery principles and is working with a coalition to encourage state leaders to invest stimulus and infrastructure dollars in projects that support a resilient and equitable recovery
- We submitted letters to legislators encouraging more investment in housing, infill infrastructure grants, SGMA implementation and climate adaptation work
- We created the [Pandemic Recovery and Beyond](#) factsheet series to inform future resiliency strategies. Topics include reimagining our streets and public spaces, invigorating public transit and shared mobility, access to broadband, resilient watershed and fire smart planning, and more

# PANDEMIC RECOVERY AND BEYOND FACTSHEETS



# NATIONAL SERVICE



It's never easy to say goodbye to a standout staff member. After spending a year on the LGC National Service team playing a critical role in making Governor Gavin Newsom's California Climate Action Corps program a reality, Angeline was offered an opportunity she couldn't pass up.

And not just any opportunity: it was the role she helped to lay the foundation for during her time as a CivicSpark Fellow. Angeline served with the City of Goleta, working to shape their Strategic Energy Plan and move it forward. Now she's implementing it as the City's Sustainability Management Assistant.

Her work includes improving alternative transportation networks and developing equity-centric sustainability programs. She is working with a team to develop the first municipal solar project for the City and has helped secure funding for electric vehicle charging stations at key community centers. Future projects will include resource hubs to keep the lights on and provide shelter to Goletans in the event of an emergency, implementing a bikeshare program, and improving public transit access.

Her time as a CivicSpark Fellow helped Angeline lay the foundation for her future career success and the climate work her community needs. And this full circle story might just come full circle again: we are proud to have two Fellows serving with the City of Goleta this year.

# NATIONAL SERVICE

## Congratulations to the 7th graduating cohort of CivicSpark!

In July we welcomed 82 new alumni into the CivicSpark network. Nearly 600 members strong, this network is making its mark in boardrooms, council meetings, and at the forefront of ensuring a better tomorrow for future generations.

And at 100 Fellows, the 8th cohort is the largest yet.

The 21-22 service year is already shaping up to be record-breaking, with Fellows addressing a variety of resilience issues all over the state.



## Taking Action for Racial Equity

Alumni, staff, partners, and Fellows played a critical role in the formation of the CivicSpark Racial Equity Action Plan. Funded by California Volunteers, the plan focuses on ensuring that race is not a predictor of access, treatment, and success for CivicSpark participants in five key areas:

1. Fellow Recruitment and Hiring
2. Fellow Supervision & Support
3. Fellow Training
4. Partnerships
5. Staff Culture & Program Support

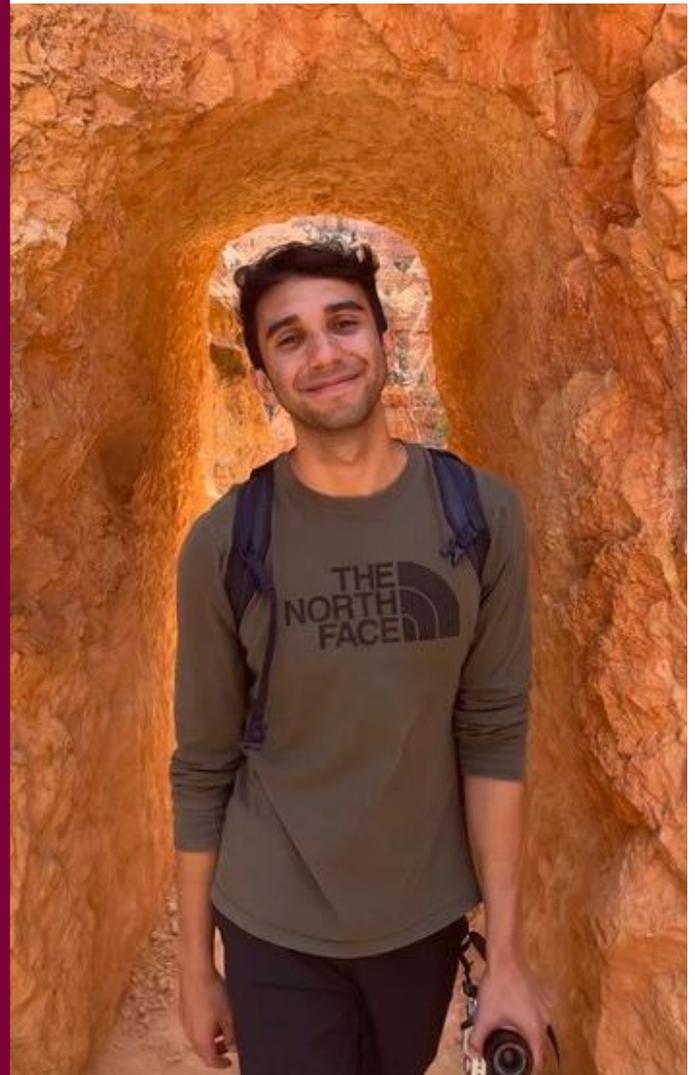
The full plan can be found at [civicspark.lgc.org/what-we-do/reap](https://civicspark.lgc.org/what-we-do/reap).

Today's world is not the same place as it was in 2010. Outdated handbooks, models and plans of that time did not adequately address critical equity and environmental justice needs.

Enter Matthew.

In partnership with his site supervisor Shelley Jiang and her team, they are working to center human perspectives and combat the history of marginalized communities being overlooked and exploited in the name of development. Through the help of the rich and diverse CivicSpark network, they are weaving equity into the fabric of the CAPCOA Handbook (California Air Pollution Control Officer Association's Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions, Assessing Climate Vulnerabilities, and Advancing Health and Equity) and the CalEEMod (California Emissions Estimator Model). Matthew developed the Health and Equity Evaluation Scorecard for CalEEMod, providing developers and community members with a new tool to ensure project accountability and assess a project's practice of equitable development in pursuit of environmental justice.

This work will be completed in early 2022, giving Matthew the opportunity to engage stakeholders and community members across the state with these updated tools before wrapping up his second service year with CivicSpark.



## Transforming Vision Into Action

Since the inception of the CivicSpark program in 2014, we have envisioned expanding our work to states with more limited local resources to address issues around climate change. With the completion of a planning grant in Washington state and early planning work in Colorado, we are one step closer. This year is shaping up to be an exciting one as we begin working with local organizations outside of California to build more resilient, equitable, and vibrant communities.



### Drumroll, Please

CivicSpark 20-21 Fellows **Natalie Arreaga, Amanda Caswell,** and **Vannesa Reyes Salazar** worked on the *Southern California Regional Climate Adaptation Framework* during their time with the Southern California Association of Governments. We're excited to announce that this project was selected by The American Planning Association's Sustainable Communities Division (SCD) as a winner of their eighth annual Awards for Excellence in Sustainability!

## What our partners say about us...

*"I appreciate the organizational level at CivicSpark and the level of training and support provided for the Fellow. This was the reason we went with CivicSpark instead of hiring our own intern during the pandemic. We did not want to bring on an intern that would not have a network of other interns/Fellows and training support. I am glad we made that decision and hope to stick with CivicSpark going forward. We really appreciate the focus on diversity of applicants/fellows and the recent completion of a Racial Equity Action Plan."*

Amy Hutzler, California State Coastal Conservancy

*"The impacts of the pandemic have greatly affected us all, both personally and professionally, but throughout everything LGC has been supportive and found solutions that work. We appreciate the flexibility and willingness to remain nimble throughout such an unpredictable Fellowship year."*

Justine Quealy, Sierra Business Council

*"Our fellow added incredible value to our department. CivicSpark is such a great program for our team!"*

Michael Germeraad, Metropolitan Transportation Commission



# WATER



**“Recently I reviewed the best practices guide you put together for conducting virtual engagement and thought that it was great. We are all trying to figure out how to function as effectively as possible during these dark days of the pandemic and the resource you put together is concise, helps people ask good questions and provides a roadmap to engaging virtually.”**

**-Community Advocate**

# WATER

In the Water sector, our work focuses on advancing policy, building local capacity, and providing training and technical assistance to benefit communities across the state. This year, we have:

- Managed the construction and implementation of three rain gardens that collectively achieve 400,000 gallons/year in stormwater capture potential
- Supported three marginalized communities in applying for a total of \$634,000 for multi-benefit water sustainability projects
- Submitted public review and comment letters on 60 draft Groundwater Sustainability Plans
- Met with state agency officials at Natural Resources Agency, Department of Water Resources, State Water Resources Control Board, and Department of Food and Agriculture to advocate for budget allocations that support local community engagement, technical assistance, and equitable, effective implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)
- Convened and/or participated in six different coalitions with nearly 200 combined participants
- Served as a technical contributor on the Solano Groundwater Sustainability Plan
- Presented at and/or hosted 33 workshops and events

## Groundwater Work

### Solano GSA Collaborative

As leader of the “Severely Disadvantaged Community” engagement team for the [Solano GSA Collaborative](#)—a partnership between 5 individual Groundwater Sustainability Agencies working together to create a shared Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP)—our team reviewed all nine sections of the Draft GSP, providing substantive comments and probing questions.

**“I just wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the great work that you all did together to develop the approach, review GSPs, share comments with GSAs and the state, and develop the white paper that highlights what you reviewed, why it is important, where things were lacking, and examples/models of where elements were handled well. Despite a pandemic and other pressures, you all continued to work together to develop something to share not only with the state and 2020 GSPs, but also to inform development of 2022 GSPs.”**

**-Funder**



LGC continued serving as the co-convenor and co-facilitator of the [NGO Groundwater Collaborative](#), a network of over thirty local CBOs, community members, and NGO representatives working to ensure equitable and effective implementation of SGMA. In October, LGC led planning and implementation of the 2021

NGO Groundwater Collaborative Virtual Convening, an invitation-only event about SGMA implementation that was attended by 56 participants.

## Technical Assistance and Engagement

### Great Urban Parks Campaign

In 2021, LGC completed the [Great Urban Parks Campaign](#) through the National Recreation and Park Association. Three rain gardens—in Morro Bay, Elk Grove, and Woodland—were designed and constructed to mobilize green infrastructure approaches and improve stormwater management for their communities. We raised awareness about the role of nature-based stormwater management in these communities through targeted outreach and engagement.



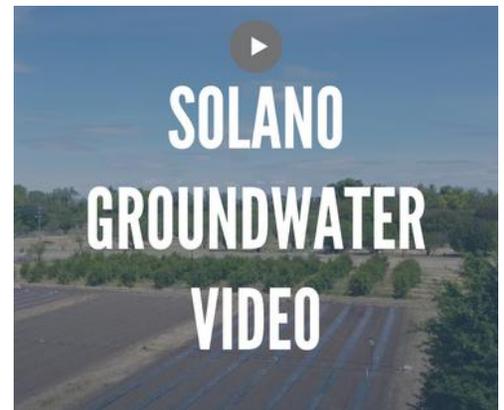
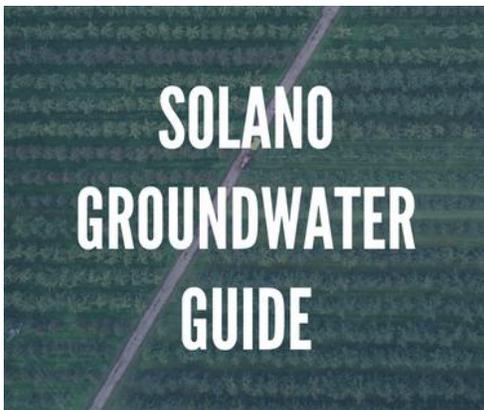
The Tidelands Pocket Park in Morro Bay, awarded "Small Project of the Year" by the American Society of Civil Engineers

### Integrated Planning in Borrego Springs

LGC continued to support the [Borrego Valley Stewardship Council](#), a sustainability-focused community network, in pursuing formalization as an NGO to better meet local planning and advocacy needs. We are coordinating between the Stewardship Council, the Community Sponsor Group, and the Watermaster Board to develop a shared vision for the community's future, and ensure this vision is incorporated into upcoming revisions to the county general plan and community plan. We are working to ensure broad representation of marginalized community members.

# WATER

## Water Resilience Resources



# LGC BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Supervisor, Kern County



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Vice Mayor, City of Davis



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Wendy Root Askew  
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Esmeralda Soria  
Councilmember, City of Fresno



Das Williams  
Supervisor, County of Santa Barbara

*We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Steve Hansen for his years of devoted service on our Board of Directors. Steve's energy and commitment have been an important part of our growth and momentum as an organization.*

# BUSINESS PARTNER PROGRAM

Connecting visionary businesses with local government leaders for smart growth projects.

Are you a business leader who wants to support local projects for thriving communities? Do you want to build strong local government relationships?

Through the LGC [Community Matters Business Partner Program](#), we connect our network of local government officials with strategic private sector leaders who can provide a range of support—from planning to feasibility to financial implementation.



Thank you to our 2021 Business Partners!



*“Finding community partners that are committed to transforming the energy industry is not an easy proposition. That’s why becoming a business partner with LGC was an easy decision for us. No other organization has the depth of experience advocating for transformational policies and working with communities to enact real change. As a Business Partner, we get from the opportunity to engage with and be thought partners to communities and policy makers that are looking for real solutions to big challenges.”*

Josh Brock, Executive Vice President, Calpine Energy Solutions



## Contact

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