

Palo Verde Land Fallowing — Metropolitan Water District Paying Farmers to Fallow for Colorado River Supply (California, USA)

PES & Nature-Based Solutions · Good practice · United States of America

Quality score: 27/100

Evidence strength: Cautionary / limited

Summary

A 1992-94 test paid Palo Verde farmers \$620/acre/yr to fallow 20,215 acres, saving ~186,000 acre-ft at ~\$135/acre-ft; since 2005 a 35-year deal fallows up to 26,000 acres. Independent work questions how much water is really saved.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Carbon — sequestration / storage, evidenced	0/3
Biodiversity — conservation / improvement, evidenced	0/3
Water & soil — retention, infiltration, erosion control	2/3
Fire resilience — risk reduction, evidenced	0/3
Governance, certification & transferability	2/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

[C-NAPSE web research](#) — accessed 2026-10-15

[Metropolitan Water District of Southern California / Palo Verde Irrigation District](#) — accessed 2026-10-15

[Davisson & Kamand 1996, Palo Verde case study \(CSU Mountain Scholar\)](#) — accessed 2026-10-15

[InkStain: Paying to fallow may not save as much water as we think](#) — accessed 2026-10-15

[US Bureau of Reclamation 2023 Decree Accounting Report](#) — accessed 2026-10-15

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