



MAMA TREE

Hello Friends,

This newsletter features a [special deep dive into why focus on water](#) by our farm co-director Jeffrey Reidl as we launch our [Water Cycle Restoration Series](#) as an opportunity to learn, connect, and explore how we can restore healthy water cycles and create more resilient landscapes and communities.

Our first free online session [Intro to Ecohydrology](#) is coming up on this **Saturday, August 29th at 10AM** where we will answer questions such as: What is Ecohydrology? What is Small Water Cycle Restoration? The session will illustrate the vital connections between water, soil, plants, climate, and the landscapes we call home.

Join us at our farm in Upper Ojai for events running from September through November to learn and practice techniques that help slow, spread, and sink water into the landscape. **Collectively, we can rehydrate our landscapes, regenerate our communities, and build resilience in the face of drought, wildfire, flooding, and climate change.** By coming together, sharing knowledge, and taking action, we can help create a healthier, more vibrant future for our communities and children.

Learn more below. 

JOIN US FOR AN ONLINE INTRO LESSON

Intro to Ecohydrology



Intro To Ecohydrology

SAT. 8/29 | 10 AM - 11:30 AM

Join us for a free, online introductory lesson to learn: What is the small water-cycle? What is water-cycle restoration and why is it important? How does the health of our ecosystems and regenerative land stewardship -- e.g. (agro-)forestry, grazing, and soil -- relate to water-cycle restoration, our climate, and fire resilience?

Free Registration Online

WATER-CYCLE RESTORATION WORKSHOP SERIES



Intro to Ecohydrology

SAT. 8/29 | 10 AM - 11:30 AM

FREE ONLINE INTRO



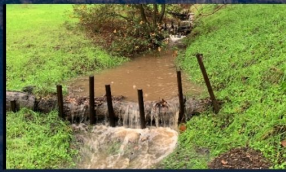
Rock Check Dams

SUN. 9/6 | 9 AM - 12:30 PM



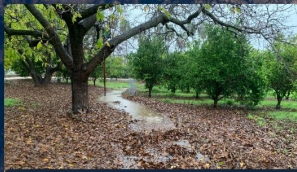
Spillway & Rock Armoring

SAT. 10/31 | 9 AM - 12:30 PM



Gully Stuffing, Log & Rock Check Dams

SUN. 11/7 | 9 AM - 12:30 PM



Earthworks: Contour Swales & Spillways

SUN. 11/22 | 9 AM - 12:30 PM

Learn and practice hands-on ways to rehydrate landscapes and revive wetlands while mitigating flooding and increasing ecological resilience.

REGISTER ONLINE: [MAMATREEOJAI.COM/WATER](https://mamatreeojai.com/water)



Water Cycle Restoration Series

Advocacy in action: Join us at our farm in Upper Ojai this September through November for hands-on workshops exploring techniques and strategies to slow, spread, and sink water into the landscape—helping restore healthy, hydrated, resilient ecosystems.

Upcoming Workshops on the Farm

Rock Check Dams

Sun. 9/6 | 9 AM–12:30 PM

Hands-on construction of rock check dams to slow stormwater, reduce erosion and flooding, reconnect gullies to floodplains, and increase landscape hydration

and groundwater recharge.

Spillways & Rock Armoring

Sat. 10/31 | 9 AM–12:30 PM

Hands-on rock armoring of inlets and spillways, with a look at swale, basin/pond, and spillway design for managing water and erosion.

Gully Stuffing, Log & Rock Check Dams

Sun. 11/22 | 9 AM–12:30 PM

Explore low-tech, nature-based strategies to slow and spread water, restore wetlands and springs, reduce erosion and flooding, and build fire resilience.

Earthworks: Contour Swales & Spillways

Sun. 11/22 | 9 AM–12:30 PM

Use a laser level and hand tools to re-grade a contour swale to approximately 1% off-contour, with potential spillway and rock-armoring work.

[Sign Up Here](#)

We'd love to have you join us for these workshops and be part of advocacy in action.



[DEEP DIVE -- Rehydrating California:](#)

Aligning land, water, fire, and climate policy through de-centralized water retention & infiltration

by Jeffrey Reidl

California's long-term water crisis is not merely dependent on how much or how little water we receive or import, store in reservoirs, and distribute via concrete or plastic infrastructure. A major part of our water crisis is our landscape's ability to receive and retain water; water infiltration hydrates the broader landscape, recharges our groundwater, and creates climate and fire resilience.

Higher soil moisture levels also increase local evaporative cooling and moisture recycling. Increasing the land's ability to slow, hold, and store higher volumes of water in the dry season has shown remarkable cascading outcomes, even in arid, degraded, and dehydrated regions. 'Green Water' – water driven by and moved through soil, plants, and micro-organisms – is a crucial, disrupted link in our landscape's climate. The small water cycle is a vital ecohydrological process that has the power to reverse a dehydrating landscape and the death spiral of drought – fire – flood.

The co-regulatory relationship between soil health and microbiome, vegetation, and atmospheric processes such as rainfall, wind, and temperature, is under-considered in land-use policy and understudied in academia. It's common to blame the generic 'climate change' for extreme storms, floods, droughts, and fires. But the increase in frequency and severity of extreme storm events, floods, and droughts can be partially attributed to the drastic changes to ecosystems and their small water cycles, particularly the disruption of evapotranspiration and hydrological feedback loops, soil moisture and groundwater recharge, soil biology, water-holding capacity, bio-precipitation, and more.

While we wait for global economies to de-carbonize...we are committed to addressing watershed disruptions at a regional level. We're inspired by indigenous elders such as Rajendra Singh in Rajasthan, Yacouba Sawadogo in the Upper Volta, and elder leaders in the southwest US, who are reviving ancient practices and rehydrating landscapes with seemingly miraculous results. We're optimistic about the regional impact of their action-oriented approach, centered on watershed health and function.

Dr. Millán Millán, a climate change expert working in the Mediterranean, studies how the loss of healthy wetlands and forests disrupts rainfall formation and transport. He calls the disruption of the small water cycle the 'second leg' of human-induced climate change, after greenhouse gasses. He summarizes it beautifully: "Water begets water, soil is the womb, vegetation is the midwife".



Recent research underscores the potential of what practical, often indigenous, and community-led examples have shown across the globe: widespread adoption of cheap, small-scale, nature-based, and de-centralized retention and infiltration strategies can reverse the disruption of water cycles, reverse desertification, and establish wetlands. These regional efforts positively impact carbon and climate cycles, precipitation, and temperatures.

The degradation of wetlands and riparian ecosystems in the southwest US has reduced groundwater levels and floodplain connectivity, reducing the landscape's ability to access groundwater in the hot, dry season. Historical and current analysis underscores the correlation between loss of wetlands, soil moisture, and decreased groundwater levels with a drop in regional moisture recycling/rainfall, along with an increase in temperature, drought, and fire.

Nature-based, de-centralized water retention and infiltration strategies have the potential to turn a degrading landscape suffering from droughts, flooding, and soil loss into a wetland ecosystem that builds soil, holds and infiltrates water, and functions as a carbon sink. Rural land stewards, farmers, and foresters hold one of the crucial keys to enhancing California's climate and fire resilience. The widespread implementation of nature-based, de-centralized retention and infiltration strategies is one of the most crucial factors in future-proofing our region, including our agriculture and food systems.

MAMA TREE is a living laboratory and demonstration site for regenerative land-use – or, rather, land-relationship – practices. Our goal is to trial and illustrate

how regenerative farming can be integrated with water cycle restoration to positively impact our watershed and regional climate resilience. Using an agro-ecological approach and ecohydrological principles, all our land-use practices – including regenerative grazing, agroforestry, soil management, nature-based water retention, and infiltration infrastructure – serve as strategies to enhance our small water cycles and the integrity of our watershed.

Come join us online to dive a bit deeper into small water cycle restoration and how it relates to our regenerative practices. Then come join us in person throughout the Fall for a handful of small water-cycle restoration workshops to restore our watershed and help prepare us for the upcoming El Nino winter.

Also, don't miss our Agroforestry planting and tending days, our soil and compost workshop, and our animal workshops to learn the ins and outs of tending living systems in a regenerative way, maximizing small water cycle restoration and ecosystem health.



THE MAMA TREE TEAM



📍 Upper Ojai

🌐 MAMATREEOJAI.COM

📺 [YOUTUBE](#) | [INSTAGRAM](#)



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