



2005 Annual Report

2005 ANNUAL REPORT
NEVADA COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
AND NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Introduction

The annual report summarizes the activities and accomplishments of the Nevada County Resource Conservation District (NCRCD) and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) during 2005. The Nevada County Resource Conservation District, which serves all of Nevada County and Western Sierra County, was founded in 1943 to provide community leadership on resource conservation issues.

The mission of the NCRCD and the NRCS is to promote responsible resource management within our jurisdiction through leadership, education, technical assistance, financial assistance and facilitation. The vision of the NCRCD and the NRCS is to assist landowners and land managers to establish a balance between a high quality rural environment, a biologically diverse landscape, and a healthy economy for the community.

The services provided to the local residents through the NCRCD/NRCS office are free and available to any landowner in our jurisdiction.

2005 Summary Statistics

- \$859,500 towards conservation from cost share incentives and landowner contributions
- 550 landowners assisted with natural resource issues
- 2,000 acres affected by conservation
- 12,000 trees and plants given away to the public



Lisa Bjorn and Marney Blair with Lisa's family. Lisa and Marney were awarded the 2005 Conservationists of the Year for their sustainable, organic, community supported agriculture (CSA), and for their educational outreach program for local students.

Nevada County USDA Office Funds Conservation Projects

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), formerly known as the Soil Conservation Service, has been providing technical conservation assistance to private landowners since the 1930's. In addition to conservation technical assistance the NRCS administers the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP). The services, technical assistance and financial assistance programs provided in 2005 included implementation of the following practices:

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| Fuel Load Reduction | Forest Health Improvement |
| Tree Thinning & Pruning | Rangeland Health Improvement |
| Weed Eradication | Rangeland Re-Seeding |
| Brush Management | Spring Development |
| Water Conveyance Improvement | Soil Erosion Reduction |
| Improved Water Quality | Stream Site Monitoring |
| Stream Bank Restoration | Wildlife Enhancement |

The Grass Valley NRCS office provided 39 local landowners with a total of \$573,000 in cost share incentives to implement conservation projects in Nevada County. The implementation of best management practices during the conservation projects significantly improves the health of the surrounding forests, grasslands, and watersheds.

The funds provided through the USDA cost share programs and the 10-50% provided by the landowners will result in total expenditures of over \$859,500 in local Nevada County business.



Arbor Day



The NCRCD and PG&E partnership resulted in another fantastic Arbor Day. The NCRCD provided 400 native western redbud

(*Cercis occidentalis*) seedlings and PG&E provided several thousand Douglas Fir and Ponderosa Pine tree seedlings that were given away to Nevada County residents. Staff and directors enjoyed visiting with members of our community and providing them with resource related assistance.



Speak-Off Contest

Annually, the RCD sponsors a speech contest open to all local high school students. The topic for the 2005 contest was "The Impacts of Fire and the Role of the RCD." Karen Henderson, a local teacher inspired her class to compete in a preliminary Speak-Off contest. The top 9 students were contestants in NCRCD's event, where all of them exceeded expectations. The winner, Casey Moreno, from Nevada Union High School, went on to win at both the regional and state level Speak-Off contests. The focus of Casey's speech was his family's experience in the 49er Fire and how their farm animals helped to manage the fire fuels on their property. Through good grazing techniques, the animals helped save the Moreno's home and land from the catastrophic fire that consumed more than 30,000 acres in Nevada County in 1989. The NCRCD is proud to acknowledge Casey and his family for their accomplishments.



Casey Moreno and NACD President Bill Wilson

Bear River Watershed Coordinator Grant



The Bear River west of Highway 49 (Nevada-Placer County Line)

The Bear River Watershed Group meets monthly and is made up of agencies, local businesses, environmental groups, and concerned citizens. The meetings are open to the public and everyone is encouraged to attend. The watershed group is always looking for volunteers to assist with water quality monitoring and watershed assessment, website design and maintenance, and watershed related events.

The storm drain marking event was a great success in 2005. With the help of more than 100 volunteers, over 800 storm drains were marked in Grass Valley. In addition, more than 3,000 hang tags with information about recycling and protecting waterways were hung on the doors of homes in our community, and information and media were disseminated to approximately 31,000 residents.



Director Ken Roberts and his family marking a storm drain in Grass Valley.



Grass Valley merchant marking a storm drain.



David Rosseau water monitoring.



Local students preparing to mark storm drains and distribute informative door hang tags.

Water quality monitoring is on-going in the watershed. Currently, 13 sites are being monitored monthly by NRCS and NCRCD staff, Beal Air Force Base staff, and the very dedicated volunteers Geri Stout, David Rosseau, and Alex Ezzell, with several students from Grass Valley Charter School.

Bird Boxes

The Nevada County Resource Conservation District has partnered with the Nevada County Contractors Association (NCCA) to implement a wildlife box building project with the students and faculty of Sierra Foothill High School and, more recently, Nevada Union High School. On May 10th the NCRCD presented the Sierra Foothill High School Woodshop class with a check for \$540.00 that was a portion of the proceeds from the bluebird and wood duck box sales. The wood for the boxes was recycled and donated by local contractors through the coordination of the NCCA. The check was presented to the woodshop teacher, Art Anderson, by the President of the NCRCD Board, David Vertin. Barbara Bashall, Executive Director for NCCA, and Craig Souter, Board Member for NCCA, were also on hand for the presentation. Bluebird, bat, and wood duck nest boxes continue to be available for purchase at the NCRCD office to benefit our local students and wildlife.



Western Bluebird

“Conservation One Acre at a Time, Because Every Acre Counts”

As part of the public outreach effort the NCRCD and NRCS presented a booth featuring a planting for wildlife display, a natural resource Jeopardy game, and a soils display. The planting for wildlife display included an arrangement of native nectar producing plants and other plants that provide food, shelter, and/or nesting material for wildlife. The staff and directors were on hand every hour of the fair to answer people’s questions about implementing conservation practices. There were more than 100 different brochures and handouts available for people to read and use as informative references, and there was a sign up sheet for individuals wanting more information or a site visit from the resource conservationists.

In addition to the educational display in the building, the NCRCD hosted 38 educational seminars during the fair with a focus on resource conservation from a watershed perspective. The seminar topics included septic system maintenance and well-water water quality, soil erosion, managing livestock on small acreage, wildlife habitat, pond design and management, and earth friendly home building. Approximately 620 people attended the seminars that were presented hourly each day from 11am to 6pm.

The NCRCD/NRCS staff and directors and local experts provided additional outreach through the presentation of evening seminars at Sierra College, Sierra College classes, and hosting workshops for landowners. The NCRCD and NRCS office is stocked with an abundance of free literature that is available to the public. The staff can assist landowners with soil surveys and conservation planning and implementation on their property.



Dr. Doug McCreary’s (UC Prof.) presentation on landscaping with native oak trees.

No-Till Range Drill

The no-till drill contributed to approximately 50 acres of conservation; both irrigated pasture and dry-land pasture were planted. The drill made several visits to landowners and a couple of visits to Keith Crabtree’s Ranch Property Development and Management Course. By planting seed and spreading fertilizer at the same time, the drill saves time, energy, and labor, and it is available to landowners in our district for a small rental fee. The drill also assists with controlling weeds, decreasing soil erosion, conserving water, and enhancing crop production. Landowners wishing to use the no-till drill should contact the NCRCD office at 272-3417.



NCRCD and NRCS Welcome New Employees

NCRCD

Tamara Taliaferro was hired as a resource conservationist in June of 2005. Tamara studied biology and chemistry as an undergraduate at Oregon State University and environmental sciences as a graduate at the University of Maryland. She has been a science teacher for the past five years, during which time she and her students completed water quality and stream habitat analyses, bioassessments with macroinvertebrates as well as many other environmental projects.

Susan Stewart was hired as a Resource Conservationist in November 2005. She is a graduate of Humboldt State University with a minor in Botany and a special option bachelor's degree with the majority of course work in Soil Science, Geology, and Forestry. Susan has worked with a geotechnical engineering firm, as a soil science laboratory instructor and technician, as the Landscaper at Denali National Park Hotel installing native plant gardens, and as a volunteer with local public schools and Girl Scouts participating in Yuba River Clean-up Day and many gardening projects.

NRCS

Jason Jackson accepted the District Conservationist (DC) position in December 2005. Jason's family has lived in the Sacramento area for five generations, giving him a strong connection with the Sierra Foothills. Jason earned a degree in Natural Resources Management with a concentration in forestry at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and he is a Certified Professional Erosion and Sediment Control Specialist. Jason transferred from the NRCS Escondido field office where he served as DC for the past 17 years. Jason administered a \$30,000,000 congressional earmark to remove dead and dying trees in the San Diego mountain communities with the intention of reducing the threat of future wildfires.

Alyson Aquino was hired as a Soil Conservationist in July 2005. Alyson has a master's degree in Forestry Sciences from Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo, and a bachelor's degree in Environmental biology from Humboldt State University. She has worked on many projects in the central coast area, focusing on stream restoration, native plant establishment, and watershed management.

<p><u>NCRCD</u> <u>Board of Directors</u></p> <p>David Vertin, President Ken Roberts, Vice-President David Gallino, Secretary/Treasurer Robert Ingram Jon Shilling Carol Hollingsworth Keith Crabtree</p>	<p><u>NCRCD Staff</u></p> <p>Lesla Osterholm Susan Stewart Tamara Taliaferro</p> <p><u>NRCS Staff</u></p> <p>Jason Jackson Dan Taverner Alyson Aquino Paul Lake Kirsten Losse</p>
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2006 Activities

Special Events, Workshops, and Seminars:

- ~ **March 10th** Arbor Day Native Plant Give Away -FREE
- ~ **April 1st** Managing Horses on Small Acreage Seminar
- ~ **May 23rd** Septic Systems and Wells Seminar -FREE
- ~ **June 2nd** Tree Give Away –tentative
- ~ **July 3rd** Pasture and Irrigation Systems Seminar -FREE
- ~ **August 9th-13th** Seminar Series and an Educational Booth, Nevada County Fair (Free after fair admission)
- ~ **September TBA** Sustainable Building and Erosion Control Seminar -FREE
- ~ **September 16th** Yuba & Bear Rivers Clean-Up Day
- ~ **October 20th-22nd** Sierra Nevada Small Farm Progress Days

Throughout the Year:

- ~ Water Quality Monitoring
- ~ Wildlife Box Project
- ~ Educational Seminars
- ~ No Till Drill Planting (Spring & Fall)

For More Information:

Give us a call (530) 272-3417
Or visit our website
<http://www.ncrcd.org>



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 NRCS Web Site: <http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov>

