

2004 Annual Report

2004 Statistics

\$1,000,000 towards conservation from cost share incentives and landowner contributions
 850 landowners assisted with natural resource issues
 5,000 acres affected by conservation
 3,000 acres addressed by coordinating a community shaded fuel break
 24,000 mosquito fish handed out to landowners
 21,000 trees and plants given away to the public
 44 educational seminars hosted

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 2004. The Nevada County Resource Conservation District, which covers 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.



◀BEFORE
This parcel was untreated, overgrown and a large fire hazard. The landowner applied for

AFTER▶
The brush has been modified and the trees have been thinned and pruned.



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). The services, technical assistance and financial assistance programs provided in 2004 included implementation of the following practices:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 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 35 local landowners with a total of \$573,000 in cost share incentives to implement conservation projects in Nevada County. The affect of implementing these practices has many positive and measurable benefits to the surrounding forest and watersheds. The funds provided by the USDA, plus the additional 25 to 50% provided by the landowner through the cost share program, totals over \$1,000,000 and will be spent in the county thereby supporting local business.



2004 NCRCD

Board of Directors

David Vertin, President
 Ken Roberts, Vice-President
 David Gallino, Secretary/Treasurer
 Robert Ingram
 Jon Shilling

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Carol Hollingsworth
 Keith Crabtree

NCRCD STAFF

Manager

Lesla Osterholm

Resource

Conservationists

Tamara Gallentine
 Brittney Keema

NRCS STAFF

District Conservationist

Mike Brenner

Resource and Soil Conservationists

Dan Taverner
 Paul Lake

Field Engineer

Kirsten Losse

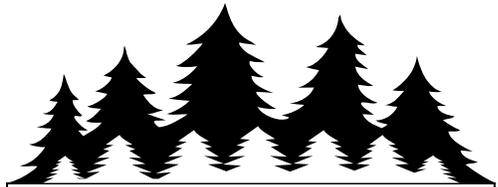
Speak Off Contest

Annually, the RCD sponsors a speech contest for local high school students. The topic for the 2004 contest was "Urbanization in Our Environment." NCRCD had 4 contestants at the local level; the winner was Kaitlin Spak from Bear River High School, who went on to win the Regional level. This qualified her to compete at the CARCD state contest at San Luis Obispo in November. NCRCD is proud to acknowledge Kaitlin and her family for their participation.

NCRCD Forestry Committee Proposes Community Shaded Fuel Break

Nevada County Resource Conservation District (NCRCD) continues its long tradition of assisting landowners in projects designed to improve long term natural resource protection. With the knowledge that catastrophic wildfire poses the greatest watershed level threat to resources and communities, the NCRCD through its forestry committee, designed a fuel break strategy. The committee members include NRCS, CDF, BLM, NID and USFS. To be effective with the potential to protect the most people and resources, a 15 mile long and 1,500 to 2,500 feet wide shaded fuel break was proposed north and east of Nevada City, Grass Valley, and adjacent communities. Locally, hot dry northeast winds are the hardest to suppress and most dangerous to fight. Providing fire suppression crews, a long wide band with dramatically reduced forest fuels, may provide the conditions needed to stop a catastrophic northeast wind driven event from destroying our neighboring forests and reaching our homes. The NCRCD with assistance from the NRCS are actively assisting landowners within the fuel break project area in fuel modification projects.

Example of a shaded fuel break where ladder fuels have been removed and brush has been modified. →



Arbor Day

The NCRCD and PG&E partnership had a splendid 2004 Arbor Day. The NCRCD provided 400 native Oregon Grape seedlings (*Mahonia aquifolium*) and PG&E provided several hundred Colorado Blue Spruce that were given away FREE to the community. Staff and directors had a great time greeting people and giving assistance in the office, where the event was held.

Tree Giveaway

The NCRCD and USFS 2004 Tree Giveaway concluded with approximately 10,000 seedlings being given away to more than 150 residents. A big thanks to the US Forest Service for their continued support of our activities. This was a great event that promoted and educated people on the importance of planting trees for soil conservation, wildlife habitat and water quality. A big thank you to volunteer Chuck Douglas, a Registered Professional Forester who helped identify the seedlings and provide detailed information on each specie down to the cones and needles.



NRCS Office Welcomes Two New Employees

During the last year, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service's Grass Valley office has undergone some significant personnel changes. Mike Brenner was hired as the District Conservationist in December 2003. Mike transferred from the USDA Forest Service Mendocino National Forest in Willows, CA. Mike's background includes education and experience in Forestry, Civil and Environmental Engineering, and Hydrology & Water Resources. Mike is a State of California Registered Civil Engineer.

Also new to the office is Dan Taverner, a Soil Conservationist from the Templeton area. Dan is a recent graduate from Cal Poly with a degree in Soil Science. Dan had been working previously for NRCS through a USDA internship known as the Student Career Employment Program. Prior to his college education, Dan served with the U.S. Navy as a member of a Construction Battalion (Sea Bees) operating heavy equipment.

Bear River Watershed Coordinator



Our Conservation District received a watershed coordinator grant from the Department of Conservation in May 2004. The grant is for 3 years and represents an award of \$232,000. The grant tasks include watershed seminars, fair booth events, community storm drain marking projects, school involvement and education, fuel load reduction through a community shaded fuel break and landowner fire safe property projects, water quality monitoring and coordination of stream restoration and fish habitat.

In 2004, Lesa Osterholm, the Bear River Watershed Coordinator lead the Bear River Watershed Group and worked on several projects. She worked with the City of Grass Valley, Nevada County and interested residents to improve the notification process to downstream residents of the sewage treatment plant in case of an incident.

Water quality monitoring is on-going in the watershed. Currently, six sites are being monitored monthly by volunteers, teacher Geri Stout and volunteer David Rosseau. Tamara Gallentine, RCD staff, trained new volunteers for water quality monitoring. The Grass Valley Charter School teachers agreed to monitor two new sites along the south fork of Wolf Creek along with the District. The Bear River Watershed Group meets monthly and is made up of agencies, local businesses and environmental groups as well as private land-

owners. The meetings are all open to the public and anyone is encouraged to attend. The watershed group is always looking for volunteers to assist with water quality monitoring, website assistance and watershed event participation.

NCRCD Sees New Changes in 2004

In November 2003, Lesa Osterholm was hired as the new manager for NCRCD. In just a short time, she implemented new accounting and office protocol and procedures for efficiency. A whole slate of outreach activities were planned for the year. She was also appointed the Bear River Watershed Coordinator in May. Lesa brings a wealth of management and event experience. She was the manager of a world cup finals event, managed a horse racing track, event manager at the Del Mar Fairgrounds and worked as a horse specialist in nutrition and management for Purina Mills.

In September, Brittney Keema was hired as an Assistant Resource Conservationist to assist with some of the watershed coordination activities. Brittney is a 2004 graduate of Chico State with a B.S. degree in Animal Science.

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

As part of the public outreach effort of the NCRCD and NRCS, a colorful, educational booth was designed with the small acreage owner in mind. The booth exhibited an outdoor scene of a small creek, native plants and local wildlife. The booth was manned around the clock as staff and directors answered questions about getting conservation on the ground. There were more than 100 pieces of helpful literature available and a sign up sheet for individuals that wanted more information or preferred a site visit from the resource conservationists. The top questions by fair goers were how to eradicate star thistle, how to manage ponds and how to establish pastures on small acreage. In addition to the educational display in the building, NCRCD hosted 40 watershed education seminars during the fair that covered topics like septic system issues and water quality, soil erosion, managing livestock on small acreage, wildlife habitat, planting pastures and native grasses. Approximately 800 people attended the seminars that were held each day, every hour on the hour. The fair goers enjoyed it so much, the Fairgrounds asked us back for 2005. Staff performed additional outreach by presenting at Sierra College’s classes, hosting workshops and creating new “how to” literature for landowners. The NCRCD and NRCS office is stocked with lots of free literature that is available to the public. The staff can assist landowners with soil surveys, conservation planning and implementation on their property. The office has numerous “how to” videos for free rental, in addition to seeding equipment that can be loaned out.



Mosquito Fish

The year 2004 proved to be prosperous for our mosquito fish. Mosquito abatement is a growing concern in this county because of the numerous ponds and the presence of the West Nile Virus in California. Currently, Nevada County does not have an Abatement District so we were it! During drive thru giveaways and office visits, over 24,000 fish were given away and traveled to over 490 loving homes. We had three breeders providing us with fish at no cost to the office. Nevada County Environmental Health Department participated with some fish purchases and creating awareness of the threat of West Nile Virus.



▲ Drive thru mosquito fish giveaways occurred three times through the year in the parking lot of the NCRCD office. ▶



No-Till Range Drill

The no-till drill contributed to approximately 81 total acres of conservation; 22.5 acres of irrigated pasture and 58.5 acres of dryland pasture were planted. The drill made 11 visits to landowners, 1 pasture management workshop, and a couple of class visits to Keith Crabtree's Ranch Management Course. The no-till drill is available to landowners in our district for a low rental fee. The drill saves time, energy and labor by planting seed and fertilizer at the same time. It also assists in controlling weeds, decreasing soil erosion, conserving water, and enhancing crop production. Landowners wishing to use the no-till drill can contact the NCRCD office.

NCRCD Staff training teachers from Grass Valley Charter School and volunteers for Water Quality Monitoring on Wolf Creek. ▶



◀ *NCRCD Director, Carol Hollingsworth, giving a seminar at the 2004 Nevada County Fair on using goats for brush control and weed eradication.*

2005 Activities

January 12th	Soil Erosion Workshop
March 1st	Bear Watershed Group General Meeting
March 11th	Arbor Day Giveaway
March 25th	Conservationist of the Year Banquet
May 14th	Storm Drain Marking in Grass Valley
June 3rd	Tree Giveaway
August 10th-14th	Fair Booth and Watershed Seminars
September 17th	Bear- Yuba River Clean Up Day

Throughout the Year:
 ~ Water Quality Monitoring
 ~ Wildlife Box Project
 ~ Monthly Educational Seminars
 ~ No Till Drill Planting (Spring & Fall)
 ~ Mosquito Fish Giveaway (April-Sept.)

For more information:
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