

Nevada County Resource Conservation District Natural Resources Conservation Service 2009 Annual Report



2009 Annual Report Introduction



The Nevada County Resource Conservation District's (NCRCD) focus for 2009 was irrigation efficiency and water saving techniques on this third drought year for California.

Founded in 1943, the Nevada County Resource Conservation District serves all of Nevada County and western Sierra County. Our mission is to promote responsible resource management within our jurisdiction through leadership, education, technical assistance, financial assistance and facilitation. Our vision is to offer assistance to landowners and land managers in establishing a balance between a high quality rural environment, a biologically diverse landscape and a healthy economy for our community.

In 2009, we focused on working landscapes consisting of farms, ranches and actively managed forestlands; mostly privately owned; covering more than 1.4 billion of the nation's 2.2 billion acres. California alone has over 20 million privately grazed acres.



*Wildflower slope in Nevada County
grazed by livestock
(photo by Roger Ingram)*

Summary of Statistics for 2009:

- *Over 3,000 landowners received assistance with natural resource issues and questions*
- *46 educational seminars were offered with 1,090 landowners in attendance*
- *\$1,432,882 in conservation dollars were made available for natural resource projects from cost share incentives & landowner contributions*
- *31,945 acres implemented resource conservation practices*

Working Landscapes / Grazing

The NCRCD received a grant from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) to develop a multi-regional speaking tour in California on the Environmental Benefits of Grazing. Our goal was to educate the public on what is involved in livestock production and grazing while highlighting the coincidental and purposeful benefits to wildlife and the environment.

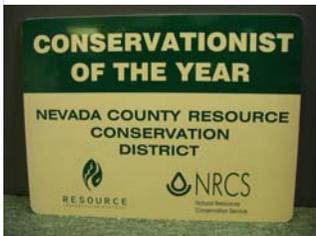
This grant funded project developed and produced a ten minute educational DVD in addition to developing, planning and coordinating ten workshops co-hosted by other Resource Conservation Districts throughout the Sierra Nevada Conservancy region. The project attracted 655 attendees from very diverse backgrounds and strengthened education and collaboration among the groups. This project was supported by hundreds of organizations and agencies locally, regionally, statewide and nationally. The educational opportunities brought about from this project can positively affect land management strategies to further protect water quality, support wildlife and habitat, support working landscapes and recognize livestock grazing as a long term, holistic land management tool. With the increased understanding, awareness and support of managed grazing, local communities will prosper with a sustainable local food supply and support of the local economy.



Conservationist of the Year

The Nevada County Resource Conservation District hosts the Conservationist of the Year event annually to recognize landowners of Nevada and western Sierra County for their good land stewardship and natural resource conservation. In 2009 we recognized and presented the award to two landowners who displayed exemplary roles in conservation and land stewardship.

The **2008 Conservationist of the Year** award went to Bill Trabucco and Anna Reynolds Trabucco. They are true stewards of their land with a great conservation ethic and a compassion for their community and the world at large.



Their 865 acre 'Linden Lea' ranch has a long ranching and mining history in Nevada County. To preserve the open space, the Trabuccos have placed their ranch in an agricultural conservation easement with the Nevada County Land Trust.

Award plaque for winner of the Conservationist of the Year



Nevada County Board of Supervisor Hank Weston presents Bill Trabucco & Anna Reynolds Trabucco with the 2008 Conservationist of the Year Award at the annual COY dinner.

32 NCRCD Conservation Seminars at the Nevada County Fair



Standing room only at one of the wildlife seminars

Each year, the Nevada County Resource Conservation District hosts watershed educational seminars at the Nevada County Fair. This year we showcased a **Living With Wildlife** series featuring speakers from Wildlife Rehabilitation & Release, Farm Advisor Roger Ingram and USDA Wildlife Specialist Mark Fredericks.

In addition, Rob Slay, Chris Bierwagen, Dr. Doug McCreary, Corky Quirk, Eric Carr, Lynn Lorenson, Bruce Kirk, Keith Crabtree, Marney Blair and Ray Darby spoke on topics ranging from bats, bees, oaks, grasses and composting to tree diseases, fruit trees, local birds, ponds and solar energy.

The NCRCD is committed to offering free seminars to assist landowners with their questions and needs.

River Clean-Up

The Nevada County Resource Conservation District (NCRCD) partnered with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and the South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) in the 'Great Sierra River Clean Up' in September, 2009.

There were 33 sites designated in the Yuba & Bear Watersheds for participation in the event, with over 700 volunteers picking up trash. In addition to paper and plastic bags, beverage cans and bottles, food wrappers and cigarette butts, discarded sleeping bags, soccer balls, newspapers and magazines, the most noteworthy item was a helicopter rescue basket. Also a car door, picnic table, water heater, stoves and refrigerators and a guitar.

Thanks to the volunteers we collected 9,000 pounds of trash and 3,000 pounds of recycling. The youngest volunteer was 2 years old and the oldest volunteer was 87 years old!

Wolf Creek at Wolf Road. One of 33 sites designated for the 2009 River Clean-up



Arbor Day Plant Give-Away

Thanks to PG&E for generously donating over 400 Redbud seedlings and the NCRCD for donating 400 Butterfly Bush seedlings. We had another highly successful Arbor Day Plant Give-Away on April 22, 2009 with over three hundred residents coming to the annual event.



PG&E was on hand to offer information and assistance to landowners and provided information about compatible planting choices near power lines, reminding customers to plant the “right tree in the right place”.

Wildlife nesting boxes were also available with the donation for the boxes going to wildlife funds.

Free information on ‘Planting to Attract Wildlife’, ‘Pollinators and Nectar Producing Plants’, ‘Soil Stabilization’, ‘Pond Management’ and many more resource conservation topics were available to landowners.

*2009 Arbor Day Plant Give-Away
at the NCRCD office*

Forestry & Wildlife Workshops

The Nevada County Resource Conservation District (NCRCD) and the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) co-sponsored two workshops in 2009. ‘Forest Stewardship in the Rural-Residential Interface’ and ‘Balancing Wildlife Needs in Mixed Conifer Forests’ were the workshops offered.

The forestry workshop provided landowners and land managers with information on the ecology, history, risks and management of forested properties.

Landowners were shown examples of management practices undertaken to reduce risk and enhance forest health. They were introduced to agencies and programs that they could participate with to gain technical and financial support for their management.



Pileated woodpecker

At the wildlife workshop, landowners were provided with information on wildlife habitat requirements. In addition, this workshop showed participants how to maintain habitat values while improving forest health and reducing fire hazard. Forest landowners were given techniques in forest management design and implementation that balanced wildlife needs with forest health.

The California Department of Fish & Game, wildlife biologists and UCCE presented information regarding wildlife habitat and fire conditions in Nevada County forests.



Gary Nakamura, Forest Specialist, UC Berkeley

Nevada County Community Shaded Fuelbreak Grant

The Nevada County Community Shaded Fuelbreak was developed out of a need to have a strategic plan to help protect cities and communities in the event of a catastrophic fire and to protect the forests from fires in the urban-wildland interface.

Cooperating agencies provide education, awareness and cost-share funding information for private landowners. The program is voluntary and has flexible prescriptions for a shaded fuel break while educating landowners to Best Management Practices (BMP's) on their land including clearing brush, thinning and pruning.



The project area has over 60 years of fuels accumulation and is in a high fire severity zone.



Map Created: 8-26-08
NCRCD Aerial Imagery: 2006

Watershed Coordinator Grant

The Bear River Watershed Coordinator Grant continues to coordinate efforts of the Bear River Watershed Group in the Upper and Lower Bear River Watersheds. Funds are used to help facilitate outreach and educational activities to collaborate with stakeholders, to disseminate information to landowners, and to work with local groups to increase water quality monitoring efforts and events to promote watershed health. NCRCD will be influential in representing the Bear River Watershed Group's focus during the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) process, where two major hydroelectric projects are in the process of relicensing.



Bear River

Providing leadership in implementing the Bear River Management Plan, the coordinator helped implement programs to maintain and improve water quality to provide habitat for aquatic life, and aesthetic and recreational enjoyment for the public. Working with the long-term goal to reduce the risk of catastrophic fires within the watershed, the coordinator assisted in facilitating non-native invasive plant species removal and control as well as fuel load reduction programs.

Other goals:

- Watershed seminars
- Storm Drain Marking
- Scotch Broom Challenge
- Partner with local watershed groups
- Remove sediment from Lake Combie reservoir
- Fuelbreak
- Community Forest
- Weed ID Day



Raccoon visitor
(photo by Carol Hollingsworth)

NCRCD Board of Directors

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www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) 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 2009 included the following practices:

- Tree Thinning & Pruning
- Forest Stand Improvement
- Brush Management
- Agricultural Water Conservation
- Water Quality Improvement
- Green Manures & Cover Crops
- Rangeland Improvement
- Integrated Pest Management
- Soil Erosion Reduction
- Wildlife Enhancement

The Grass Valley NRCS office provided 11 landowners with a total of \$716,500 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 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 \$1.4 million in local Nevada County business and the implementation of conservation practices.