



Nevada County Resource Conservation District 2000 Annual Report



This Annual Report summarizes the activities and accomplishments of the Nevada County Resource Conservation District during 2000. This report illustrates the many diverse activities of the RCD that benefit the natural resources and the community within our area of jurisdiction. The activities described reflect the efforts of the RCD staff, the RCD Board of Directors, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and others in our community who actively promote the wise use and management of our natural resources.

The mission of the Nevada County Resource Conservation District is to promote the responsible resource management within our jurisdiction through leadership, education, technical assistance, coordination, and facilitation.

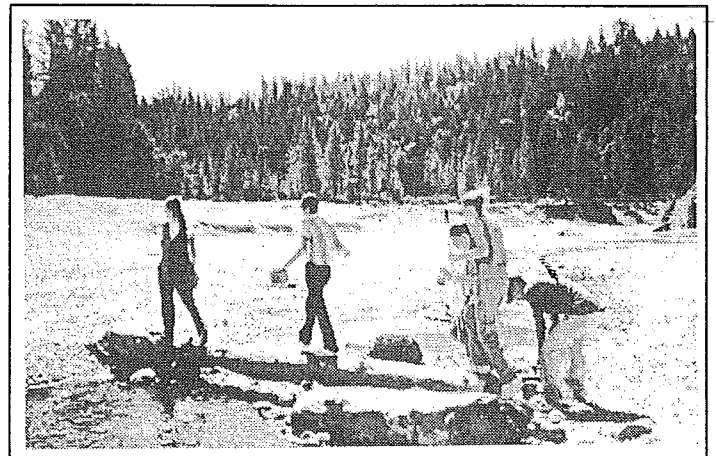
The vision which guides our efforts is having a balance between high quality rural environment, a biologically diverse landscape, and a healthy economy for the community. The services provided through the NRCS/RCD office are free and available to any landowner in the County. In an effort to express the value of our services to the community, we have calculated that the existence of this office including staff salaries, services, and reference materials are valued at \$600,000 per year.

Watershed Conservation

The Bear River Coordinated Resource Management Program began implementing the \$197,000 proposition 204 grant in January. During the past year, a monitoring plan was designed and is currently being carried out. A Quality Assurance Protection Plan, required by the state in order for non-training monitoring to be reimbursed has recently been approved. Until now all monitoring has been training with volunteers, particularly students. In the coming year we will accelerate our monitoring efforts to generate scientifically reliable data on a monthly basis about watershed conditions.

The monitoring plan has three hydrology principles behind its design: water quality, macroinvertebrate ecology, and channel morphology. Water chemistry monitoring is the most difficult set of parameters to monitor due to it being an instantaneous snapshot of the water quality at any time and place. Macroinvertebrate ecology permits the monitor to see trends in the water quality through the distribution on creatures residing in any given water environment. Channel morphology permits the monitor to annually assess the rate of change in the riparian geology and relate that change to prior weather conditions and surrounding landform geology.

Our monitoring project also requires an educational component, which we are fulfilling through our student monitoring program. This program allows students to contribute directly to the watershed monitoring while at the same time the teachers will be using the results in their science and math curricula. Teachers from local high schools will be working with the monitoring program to help implement a countywide conservation education program called WATER.



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.

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Tree Planting Program

On June 16, our office gave out approximately 15,000 surplus trees that were left from the USFS spring planting operations. Ponderosa pine, Jeffery pine, Sugar pine, Douglas fir, white fir, giant sequoia, and red fir trees were distributed to more than ninety landowners. Planting and care instructions were also provided, helping to make ninety extremely pleased landowners.



Arbor Day

Our office celebrated Arbor Day on March 3 by giving away 200 western spiraea and 100 leopard lily seedlings to the public. The event was very successful and the public was very excited to receive free seedlings of native shrubs. The office celebrates Arbor Day each year by giving away free seedlings to the public with each year more popular than the last. The RCD chooses a different plant each year to distribute.

Forestry Incentive Program

NRCS administers the Forestry Incentive Program in cooperation with California Department Of Forestry. During 2000, fifteen landowners have received cost-share assistance treating 350 acres of forestland in Nevada and Western Sierra Counties.

Conservationists of the Year

Each year the District selects individuals or groups to honor for their conservation efforts. The award winners for 2000 are Maureen Deto and Nelson Deglandon, and Melvin and Bert Brown.

Maureen Deto and Nelson Deglandon have a beautiful twenty-two acre livestock ranch on Oak Tree Road east of North San Juan. They have seven ponds as well as dryland and irrigated pasture, and woodland. In 1999 and 2000, under the EQIP program, they made their property more fire safe by clearing brush and thinning trees. They have also replanted pastures to improved mixes and to help control star thistle and other weeds. Not only are they making their land more productive for livestock, but they are also improving it for many types of wildlife. Their land now looks park like set among the chain of ponds.

Melvin and Bert Brown are ranchers in the Spenceville Road area south of Penn Valley. Their ranch of several hundred acres has been in the family since the 1850's. They had the last dairy in Nevada County. Since the early 1970's, they have managed a cow-calf operation. Particularly in the past 20 years, the Browns have implemented many conservation practices to improve the ranch. About 100 acres was brushed and converted to productive rangeland. Many acres of weeds, including blackberries, were controlled with herbicides and other methods, to improve the pastures. Recently, ponds were enlarged, and made part of the irrigation system where tailwater can be picked up and reused. Also, a gravel road was installed through the pastures where Mel can observe and manage his cattle in any kind of weather.

Conservationists cont.

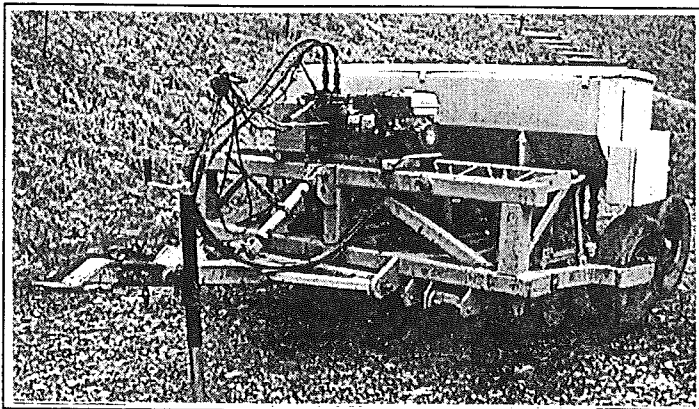
The 2000 Farm Bureau tour honored the Browns with a stop to see a fine working ranch. Their ranch is an example to their neighbors of many successful conservation practices and improvements applied. The Browns were honored by the District Conservationists of the Year in 1987. This year they are being honored for their many conservation efforts over the past 20 years.

The recipients will be recognized at an awards ceremony in May among past recipients, their peers, and community leaders.

Ezra Herback was honored as volunteer of the year for helping with various office projects including the 2000 Speak-Off contest for high school students. He is a California State University Sacramento student who put in close to 100 hours at the NRCS/NCRCDC office.

No-Till Drill

The RCD rents out a no-till range drill to Nevada County residents to help establish or improve good range and pasture land. This tractor pulled machine is designed to plant seed and fertilizer in one application, thus saving the landowner time and money. Using the no-till drill cuts down on weed competition by minimizing the amount of soil disturbance.



Erosion Control

RCD staff reviews and makes erosion control recommendations on development plans submitted to us by the City of Grass Valley, Nevada City and Nevada County. This ensures that proper erosion control measures are taken on every new construction site. Our staff also provides assistance to the city through periodic erosion control monitoring visits to construction sites.

Technical Assistance

NRCS/RCD staff provide technical assistance to private landowners upon request. In 2000, we assisted about 1000 landowners and groups with natural resource problems, including erosion control, pond management, star thistle eradication, fuels management, wildlife improvement, pasture, orchard and vineyard management, and rangeland and forest improvement.

Engineering Assistance

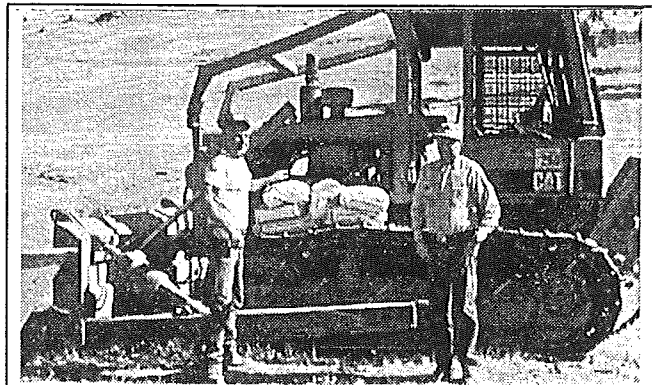
Engineering assistance is available for survey and design of complex irrigation systems, as well as restoration of stream banks and river banks after extreme storms and floods. We assisted several homeowner associations and small water districts with survey, design, and cost estimates of bringing piped agricultural water to rural landowners.

Nevada/Placer Weed Management Area

During the past year, the office assisted in the combined effort to establish the Weed Management Area in Placer and Nevada counties. The focus of the group is to prevent the reproduction and spread of noxious weeds in the two county area. The group has been very active in educational outreach efforts in the community.

EQIP

Hundreds of acres of forestland and rangeland are made fire safe as well as more productive each year through programs such as Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) which is funded by NRCS. In 2000, seven local landowners received cost-share assistance to help them become better land stewards. This program is targeted to improve natural resources in the Yuba River Watershed.



Public Awareness

We are continually striving to increase community awareness of NRCS/RCD.

We had a tremendous response to our 2000 Nevada County Fair booth, featuring materials on pond management.

The staff writes a bimonthly newspaper column for The Union entitled "Conservation Corner", where local residents can read backyard conservation related educational materials.

Our video library contains taped workshops on a variety of subjects. Residents are welcome to check out these videos and learn more about the topics that interest them. We also have aerial photos from 1952, 1971, 1984, and 1993 available for the public to view.

NRCS/RCD staff continues to meet with Fire Safe groups, the Farm Bureau, and other community groups to address the concerns related to the protection and conservation of Nevada County's natural resources.

New Employees

In May, Diane Emmett was selected to fill the vacancy left by Joyce Donnelly. Diane, a native of Wisconsin, has lived here since 1960. A graduate of Nevada Union, Diane remained in Nevada County to raise her family.

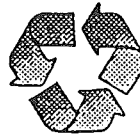
Loren Schilder, NRCS Ag. Engineer, retired after 36 years of service. He provided superior service to Nevada and Sierra counties since 1980.

Monthly Meetings

The RCD board meets regularly on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm at the NRCS/RCD office, 113 Presley Way, Suite 1, Grass Valley, CA, 95945. Phone (530) 272-3417 Please Contact the office for more information.

Our agencies prohibit discrimination on the basis of national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

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