



PLACER COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT 2006

2006 Board of Directors

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Katie Maloney

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Bill Templin, Jr.

Dry Creek Watershed

Coordinator:

Gregg Bates

GIS Coordinator:

Austin Mulder

Chipper Program Coordinator:

Don Lane

Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff

District Conservationist:

Mike Brenner

Soil Conservationist:

Carol Rutenbergs

Agricultural Engineer:

Kirsten Losse

The Placer County Resource Conservation District (RCD/District)

The Placer County RCD is an independent, self governing body organized in 1946 and dedicated to the conservation of natural resources. The RCD develops and enables programs in partnership with others that assist private landowners and public agencies to accomplish the goal of conserving natural resources.

The District is governed by a seven member Board of Directors either elected, or currently, by RCD request, appointed by the Placer County Board of Supervisors. Directors serve a four year term without monetary compensation. RCD Directors can and often do serve more than one term.

The RCD encompasses all of the County of Placer except for the Tahoe Basin and covers approximately 1,500 square miles of diverse stakeholders, habitat, and elevation, from the Sacramento Valley floor over the crest of the Sierra down the eastern slope to the Nevada State line.

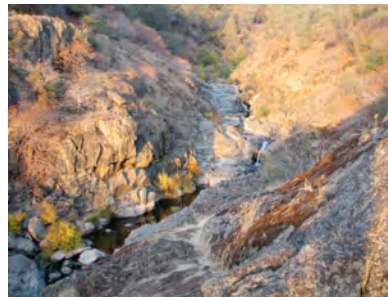
The RCD works through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide soil, water, wildlife, fuel load reduction and related technical assistance to landowners, local, state, and federal agencies.

2006 Grand Jury Commendation

In 2006 the Placer County Grand Jury's Special Districts Committee reviewed the operations of several special districts including the RCD.

After the review, the RCD received Special Commendation in the Grand Jury's 2006 Report for our efforts and ability to leverage our limited resources through the development of numerous partnerships with local, state, federal agencies, and others that share mutual objectives to actively promote wise management and use of our natural resources.

Services and assistance provided by the RCD including those achieved through these partnerships are summarized in this report.



In 2006 the RCD developed a Fuel Reduction/Range Management Plan for the county's newly created Hidden Falls Park. The property, obtained under the Placer County Legacy Program, consists of 1,181 acres and over 5.3 miles of trails.

251 Auburn Ravine Road, Suite 107 Auburn, CA 95603

Phone: (530) 885-3046, ext. 6 Fax: (530) 823-5504 Email: pcrd@sbcglobal.net

FUEL LOAD REDUCTION

Landowner Assistance

The RCD continues to partner with CDF, Placer County Fire, Placer County Sheriffs, and the Placer County Air Pollution Control District, administering the Placer County Chipper Program that provides residents with a free chipper service with the intention of encouraging private landowners to comply with defensible space requirements and encouraging homeowners to convert chipped vegetation into mulch, providing an alternative to burning thereby reducing air quality impacts.

In 2006 the program chipped over 33,514 tons up from the 5,600 tons of material chipped in 2005 on 15,667 parcels up from 3,268 parcels receiving service in 2005 in Placer County.



Free chipping services can be requested at (530) 889-0111 ext. #3.

Proposition 40 Fuel Load Reduction Program

In 2006 the RCD pursued a partnership with CDF through the Sierra Coordinated Resources Management Council, a Joint Powers Authority formed by six area RCDs, to serve landowners in a fifteen county area by providing a cost share program to reduce fuel loads, funded by Proposition 40 passed by CA voters in 2005.

The \$2 million Proposition 40 Fuels Management Program will be administered by the Placer County RCD on behalf of the Sierra Coordinated Resources Management Council and will begin in early 2007.

Geographic Information Systems Coordinator

The RCD in partnership with NRCS, Nevada County, Georgetown Divide, and El Dorado County RCDs have cost shared a full time Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Coordinator to assist NRCS with the implementation of its GIS program and provide the partner RCDs with the ability to map projects pertaining to fuel load reduction and invasive weeds control projects for use as an area planning tool.

NRCS Cost Share Programs

The RCD continues to support the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), a cost share program that provides private landowners with financial support to sustain a healthy forest. An important benefit from these practices is the reduction in fuel load on eligible productive forest lands. In 2006, NRCS contracts over \$324,101 provided a cost share of \$155,088 to enhance Placer County forestlands.

EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL

Landowner Assistance

The RCD, in partnership with the USDA-NRCS, continues to provide erosion and sediment control recommendations to farmers, ranchers and residential property owners throughout the County. Those recommendations included assistance with forage improvement, the establishment of cover crops in orchards and vineyards, home-site erosion and sediment control, and pasture and rangeland improvement.

Rural property owners were provided erosion and sediment control *Best Management Practices* (BMPs) on over 100 acres within the county during 2006.

Erosion and Sediment Control Workshops

The RCD provided seven erosion control and storm water workshops to over 300 people in 2006 including the general public and staff members from Placer County and the Cities of Lincoln and Auburn. The workshops contained information useful for the development of erosion control plans, the implementation of "on-site" erosion and sediment control practices, the reduction of non-storm water discharge, and site monitoring in terms of storm water runoff.

Erosion and Sediment Control, continued

Construction Review

Placer County once again, grew at a very rapid rate in 2006. This growth increased the number of construction sites and increased erosion and sediment transport potential.

The RCD maintains contracts and/or working agreements with Placer County, the Cities of Auburn, Roseville and Lincoln. The RCD Resource Management Planner, a Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC), can provide review of erosion and sediment control plans upon request. The CPESC also provides on-site recommendations, as requested, in an effort to effectively determine appropriate *Best Management Practices* (BMPs).

In 2006, the RCD provided erosion control recommendations on 47 construction projects of various types on over 750 acres of ground.

A typical construction site can easily discharge 10 to 20 tons of soil, per acre, per year, into the watershed. A well-vegetated, protected acre of soil will result in only 2 to 5 tons of sediment discharge per year. It's estimated that the implementation of erosion and sediment control practices may have prevented more than 4,000 tons of soil, roughly 3,000 cubic yards, from discharging into Placer County watersheds.

The RCD also developed a Fuel Reduction/Range Management Plan, at the request of Placer County, for the county's newly created Hidden Falls Park. The property was obtained under the Placer County Legacy Program and consists of 1,181 acres and over 5.3 miles of trails.

The RCD also developed the Fuel Reduction Management Plan and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), at the county's request for the Squaw Valley Park.

Coon Creek Erosion Control and Restoration

The Coon Creek watershed has a history of flooding in the lower reaches and through a partnership with the Sutter County RCD and Ducks Unlimited, the Placer County RCD has been awarded a \$1.8 million grant to stabilize and restore portions of Coon Creek in both Placer and Sutter Counties. The partners will conduct workshops, improve riparian habitat and offer conservation easements to willing landowners.

Water Quality

Water quality encompasses the prevention of sediment discharges into drains that degrade streams, waterways, rivers, and their dependant ecosystems including fisheries and wildlife communities.

The RCD is actively involved in erosion and sediment control and diligently works to prevent the delivery of sediment within our watersheds to streams and lakes. The District also supports area watershed groups that actively conduct water quality monitoring programs.



American River Sediment Dynamics Study

A consortium of stakeholders including the RCD, the Placer County Water Agency, the US Forest Service, Sierra Pacific Industries, CA State University-Sacramento, and the North American River Watershed Coordinator, with support from Sierra College, have stewarded a study, funded by CALFED through the CA Department of Water Resources (DWR) which is due to be completed by mid 2007.

The effort conducted an assessment of erosion potential in the North Fork American River watershed as a basis for further study and the identification of *Best Management Practices* to reduce the risk of erosion in the watershed thereby reducing degradation of water quality flowing to the Bay-Delta.

WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT

The NRCS continues to manage three contracts for wetland restoration through their Wetland Reserve Program with 890 acres to be restored and encompassing two perpetual easements and one thirty year easement.

WATER CONSERVATION

Irrigation Water Management

The RCD's Certified Irrigation Auditor continues to provide irrigation system evaluations and irrigation water management recommendations to landowners within Placer County. These recommendations help improve irrigation system efficiencies, thereby conserving water and reducing runoff.

Irrigation Workshops

The RCD, in cooperation with the Placer County UC Cooperative Extension's Farm and Home Advisors office, provided an irrigation management workshop for local Mandarin Growers.

Irrigation Management System Project

The RCD assisted the Placer County Water Agency with the implementation of their Irrigation Management System (IMS) project. Seven landowners were selected to have neutron probes installed within their irrigated crops/orchards. The probes monitor soil moisture and compare water application rates versus the crop/orchard water usage. The IMS project, funded through a grant from the Calif. Department of Water Resources, will help producers determine the appropriate intervals at which to irrigate.

Irrigation Assistance

In 2006 the USDA-NRCS and RCD staff provided irrigation water management schedules, irrigation water management recommendations and/or water efficient irrigation system designs to Placer County landowners. The NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) provided \$28,653 to improve irrigation system efficiencies on pastureland and an additional \$63,198 in EQIP funds to improve irrigation system efficiencies on irrigated cropland.

NATURAL RESOURCE EDUCATION

Annual Placer County Agricultural Tour

At Placer County's request, the RCD again coordinated the Annual Placer County Agricultural Tour. The 2006 Ag Tour theme was "You Are What You Eat...and Drink". Three stops on the tour highlighted issues related to organic food marketing, organic farming, vineyard management, and highlighted an urban development project's provisions for agriculture and wildlife habitat improvement.

The first stop, at Newcastle Produce, highlighted issues relating to the local organic food marketing outlet. The second stop, the Twin Brooks Farm, illustrated how fresh produce is grown and harvested. The third stop included a discussion of the farming and

wildlife provisions incorporated within the Montserrat subdivision.

Once again, a record number of people attended the tour and included members from the Placer County Board of Supervisors, city council members, city and county planning commissions, and planning department staff members from both the county and cities.

CA Envirothon

The RCD supported a student team from Foresthill High School in their first CA Envirothon led by teacher Katie Cantrell. The team placed seventh overall in the event that is largely based on conducting in the field hands on science activities including data collection and analysis. After the event, the students came before the RCD Board to talk about their learning experiences and enthusiastically expressed the desire to participate in the next year's event.

Community Events

The RCD participates in numerous community events including Meadow Vista's *Pioneer Day*, Foresthill's *Fire on the Divide* event, Auburn's *Gold Country Fair*, the annual *Farm and Barn* event, and the annual PlacerGROWN *Farm Conference* in Lincoln.

The RCD in partnership with PG&E distributed approximately 1,000 Ponderosa Pine seedlings to the public during Sierra College's *Earth Day* activities. Planting and management tips were provided to the public along with the seedlings.

The District's Resource Management Planner provided a "soils" presentation to the Foresthill High School science class where a six foot deep soil trench was excavated so the students could physically get a hands-on approach to observations of top soil, subsoil, and bedrock.

Alert! Invasive Weed Species, Red Sesbania, Found in the Dry Creek Watershed

The RCD in partnership with the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, Placer County, and the City of Sacramento has established a program to eradicate Red Sesbania (Scarlet Wisteria) in Dry Creek. This ornamental has large seed pods which float down stream to the American River sprouting along the streambanks and waterways. While colorful, this weed is not only toxic to wildlife including bird populations, it is responsible for causing localized flooding. The eradication effort will begin in early 2007. For information on this and other invasive species please contact Placer County Agricultural Commissioner office at 889-4000.