



PLACER COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT 2008

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Shelley Mathews, Interim
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GIS Coordinator:

Ryan Bellanca

Chipper Program Coordinator:

Don Lane

Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff

District Conservationist:

Mike Brenner

Soil Conservationist:

Carol Rutenbergs

Agricultural Engineers:

Kirsten Losse
Mike Stermock

Farm Bill Assistant

Marie Bankus

OUR MISSION

The Placer County Resource Conservation District is dedicated to identifying natural resource management and conservation issues, providing education and technical assistance or direction to private landowners and local entities for implementing programs and plans to conserve and enhance the natural resources of the District while inspiring and mobilizing public conservation awareness and involvement.

Placer County RCD Service Through The Years

The Placer County Resource Conservation District has served as an independent, self-governing entity, dedicated to the conservation of natural resources since 1947! Partnering with others, the RCD assists private landowners as well as public agencies in conserving natural resources in a 1500 square mile area of Placer County.

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

The RCD Board of Directors works with the Placer County Board of Supervisors. They govern by serving a four year term on a voluntary basis. These volunteers have experience as farmers, foresters, civil servants and retired civil service workers to serve a diverse population.

This publication will offer information to citizens and stakeholders by showcasing a wide variety of projects that have been successfully completed in the last twelve months. We look forward to working with you in 2009 by continuing to enhance and preserve our natural resources for generations to come.



Stan MacDonald has retired after serving 14 years as RCD Director! In retirement, Stan will enjoy capturing the beauty of nature through his painting and spending time with his wife, Judy and daughter, Heather.

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THE RED SESBANIA PROGRAM

The Red Sesbania plant is native to South America. It was introduced to our area to be used as an ornamental addition to many gardens. However, its seeds are toxic to poultry, cattle, sheep, goats and humans so there is a great urgency to eradicate this plant from our environment for the safety of all.

The Placer RCD administers the Red Sesbania program in the Dry Creek Watershed. The partners include Placer County, Ducks Unlimited, Sacramento County and the City of Roseville, to name just a few.

The eradication program began in 2003 with a major removal project completed in 2006. The maintenance phase has been in place since 2007 continuing through 2008.

Treatments were conducted in July and September of 2008 with 13 people collecting 84 lawn-sized bags of seed pods. They treated the Dry Creek Watershed by the pulling method followed up by a chemical spray. By October 15, 99% removal had been achieved! Great job, everyone!!



Have you seen this plant? (This is Red Sesbania prior to eradication.)

WATERSHED GROUP UPDATES- 2008

The Department of Conservation awarded their second Bear River Watershed Coordinator grant to the Nevada County Resource Conservation District. In partnership with The Placer County RCD, the Bear River group managed to complete several important projects in 2008. Some of the projects included: the Scotch Broom Challenge, Aquatic Weed Identification Day, Watershed Seminar Educational Series and Eco Kids Day. A lot of volunteers made it happen!



Volunteers from the Bear River Watershed work hard on the "Scotch Broom" challenge.

The RCD continues to work with the American River Watershed Group conducting educational outreach in the community. Look for more workshops to be held in 2009.

NRCS Reports a Busy Year

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has had another busy year! Through the 2008 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), NRCS provided technical and financial assistance to 17 local landowners and agricultural producers, contracting \$240,180 to install conservation practices on 218 acres of private lands in Placer County. Contracts included 12 forestry, 3 irrigation and 2 pasture projects, ranging from \$500 to \$31,820. For the previous years' contracts, \$379,600 in payments were processed.

Thirty-eight applications for the EQIP 2009 program were received, and are awaiting guidance under the new Farm Bill.

In addition to those landowners directly benefiting from financial assistance, NRCS helped 126 other people throughout the County with technical conservation assistance requests and guidance for everything from soil erosion, forestry, irrigation and grazing, to soils surveys, topographic maps and aerial photo information.

NRCS continues to offer Conservation Planning to landowners in Placer County. Such a plan includes aerial photos, soils information and maps, as well as

guidelines and recommendations that conserve and enhance resources on private lands.

Natural Resource Education

Placer County Agricultural Tour

Over 80 attendees participated in the annual Placer County Ag Tour held last June in Foresthill. The event, coordinated by the RCD, had the theme “Can you See the Agriculture Through the Forest??”

The stops on the tour highlighted issues focusing on the timber and nursery products that contribute significantly to Placer County’s economic well-being. The tour demonstrated that one can be looking right at a forest, and not really appreciate that the forest is not only a beautiful natural resource but also a sustainable, significant agricultural product.

Attendees included members of the Placer County Board of Supervisors, City Council members, and County Planning Commissioners and representatives from the U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives, the California State Assembly and the California State Senate.

Ginger and Jim Armstrong (foreground) speak about Christmas tree production at the 2008 Ag Tour.



Erosion and Sediment Control Landowner Assistance

In partnership with the USDA-NRCS, the RCD continues to provide erosion and sediment control recommendations to farmers, ranchers and residential property owners throughout the District.

Assistance included forage improvement, irrigation water management, home-site erosion and sediment control and pasture and rangeland improvement.

Rural property owners were provided erosion and sediment control Best Management Practices (BMP's) on over 218 acres this year.

Erosion and Sediment Control Workshops

The RCD provided eleven (11) erosion control and Storm Water workshops to over 300 people in 2008. The general public and staff members from Placer County, the City of Lincoln, and the City of Auburn attended these workshops. The workshops contained information useful for the development of erosion control plans, the implementation of “on-site” erosion and sediment control practices, non-storm water discharge concerns on building sites, and site monitoring observations pertaining to storm water runoff.

Soil Erosion Control Activities

While slowing significantly during 2008, Placer County once again, grew in 2008. This growth increased the number of construction sites and increased erosion and sediment transport potential.

The RCD maintained contracts and/or working agreements with Placer County and the City of Auburn. The RCD retains a Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC) to review erosion and sediment control plans and to provide effective on-site erosion and sediment control Best Management Practices (BMPs) recommendations.

In 2008 the RCD provided erosion control recommendations on 60 + construction projects on over 1000 acres of ground, including areas around Truckee, Tahoe, Loomis, Auburn, and Western Placer County. Additionally, the RCD responded to erosion control issues on 30 individual home sites within Placer County.

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 5,000 tons of soil (or roughly 4,000 cubic yards) of soil from discharging into Placer County watersheds.

**“The conservation of natural resources is the fundamental problem. Unless we solve that problem it will avail us little to solve all others.”
Theodore Roosevelt – 1907-**

Achievements At A Glance

- Under contract with the Placer Co. Parks Department, the RCD provided erosion and sediment control Best Management Practices (BMPs) recommendations on the newly opened "Hidden Falls Park". The property was obtained through the "Placer County Legacy Program" consisting of 383-acres with over 5.3 miles of trails.
- The RCD reviewed and provided input to the Parks Department on the erosion and sediment control plan for the Franklin School Community Park construction that began in 2007. The RCD met on-site and reviewed erosion and sediment control concepts with Parks and the contractor.
- Washoe Fire: The RCD assisted the Tahoe RCD, Placer County and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency on development of "post fire" erosion and sediment control Best Management Practices on the Washoe Fire site.
- Outfall Inventory: Placer County is required to inventory "outfalls" within the Tahoe Basin and Truckee areas. "Outfalls" are defined as the last County maintained drainage feature leaving the County's jurisdiction. The RCD helped define "outfall", map outfalls, and field check outfalls using a Global Positioning System.

WATER CONSERVATION

Irrigation Water Management (IWM)

The District'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. In 2008 the RCD staff provided irrigation water management schedules, irrigation water management recommendations and/or water efficient irrigation system designs to over 20 landowners on more than 350 acres.

Irrigation Assistance

The NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) provided more than \$ 28,000 to improve irrigation system efficiencies on pastureland. An additional \$36,100 in EQIP funds were utilized to improve irrigation systems.

Wildlife Enhancement

Although there was no WHIP program in 2008, NRCS collaborated with the RCD in the Wetlands Reserve Program. This program restored a wetland habitat on an existing 22 acre easement, which provided a critical link along the Coon Creek corridor for wildlife and watershed values.

Fuel Load Reduction

The NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provided cost-share, and the related technical information, to 12 forestland owners in 2008 and contracts totaling more than \$ 175,000.

District Outreach

"The District's outreach efforts included participation in:

- Foresthill's *Fire on the Divide* event
- Auburn's *Gold Country Fair*,
- The *Farm and Barn* event, and
- The annual *Placer Grown* conference in Lincoln.
- Erosion Control presentation at Foresthill's "*Fire Wise*" workshop".
- Assisted Placer County with water quality informative brochures.
- Involvement with Placer County Fire Safe Alliance.
- Participation with the American River Watershed Group and the American Basin Council of Watersheds.
- Working with the Placer County Regional Occupation Program (ROP), the RCD continues to mentor students in conservation and forestry careers.



ROP students from Foresthill High School gain experience at a burn in Foresthill. Under the direction of Ryan Bellanca, the RCD will continue to participate in the Regional Occupational Program again in 2009.