



2014 YEAR IN REVIEW

This has been a very busy and productive year for the Nevada County Resource Conservation District.

-We have completed our *Vegetation Management & Forest Health Project* in Condon Park (page 3) that demonstrated invasive species & diseased tree removal as well as erosion control;

-Continued our partnership with the Agricultural Commissioner on the invasive mussel program (page 3);

-Partnered with the Sierra Foothills Audubon Society for a scientific collecting permit (page 5);

-Began the *Advisory Visit Program* (page 4) to assist landowners with their resource concerns;

-Developed the *Manure Exchange Program* (page 4) to connect landowners with a source of compost materials;

-Facilitated a grant project with NID, Tahoe RCD, & County of Nevada for a California State Parks grant regarding the mussel infestation (page 3),

-Joined the Placer-Nevada-South Sutter-

North Sacramento Subwatershed Group (page 2) to assist landowners in registering for the mandatory program;

-Acquired our third *Minimum-Till Drill* (page 5) for use by Nevada County landowners;

-Coordinated a *Land Health Assessment Program* with Point Blue Conservation Science (page 6);

-And participated in *AgSpierience* at the Fair (page 3); coordinated our annual *Plant & Seedling Giveaway* (page 6); sponsored programs for local high school students such as *Range Camp* (page 5); and continued offering our yearly Seminar Series (page 4).



We are very excited about the coming year and have completed our 5-year Strategic Plan which will add additional programs such as *Roadside Vegetation* program; *Ag in the Classroom*; *Forestry & Fire Protection Program*; *Drought Condition Monitoring*; *Invasive Species Assistance*; *Historic Ranch/Farm Tour* and much, much more!

Conservationist of the Year Award



We honored Darlene Moberg as our 2014 Conservationist of the Year. Darlene is a member of the historic Rolph ranching/farming family and has been an active member of the Nevada County Farm Bureau for over 36 years.

She has participated in 4H and Future Farmers of America through scholarship programs; served as Farm Bureau President and Manager; organized the annual Nevada County Farm Tour; coordinated the

Farm Bureau's exhibit booth at the annual Nevada County Fair; and is a member of the Native Daughters of the Golden West.

Darlene's commitment to agriculture and education is exemplary and we are fortunate to have her in our community. The RCD staff has benefited from her experience and look forward to more opportunities in the coming years, as Darlene is one of our new Associate Directors!

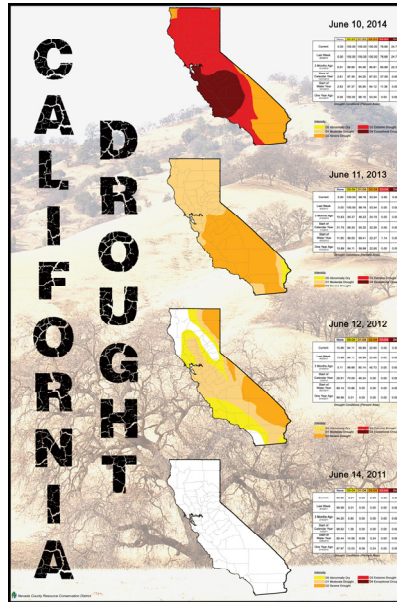


2014 Drought / NID / PNSSNS

In 2014, California was on track to experience its third driest year on record. Our agricultural economy, wildfire effects, and ecosystems all faced significant impacts.

The RCD was committed to getting the word out regarding any workshops or seminars that addressed this issue. In addition to public information:

- ◆ We sponsored an “Outsmarting the Drought” workshop;
- ◆ Partnered with the Placer- Nevada-South Sutter-North Sacramento (PNSSNS) Subwatershed Group to assist landowners in registering with the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and complying with regulations;



- ◆ Planned our display at the annual Nevada County Fair around drought issues including snowpack, wells, groundwater, water curtailments, reservoir storage, ecological damage, and drought monitoring. We also created two drought bookmarks and supplied copious amounts of information for fair goers;
- ◆ We joined with the Nevada County Farm Bureau in the annual Farm Tour where we heard from the Farm Bureau, NID, and the Farm Advisor regarding the drought.

We plan to continue with this information in 2015 and will be sponsoring two workshops for landowners to complete their mandatory Farm Evaluations for the SWRCB.

Farmer / Rancher Drought Report

The U.S. Drought Monitor, established in 1999, is produced jointly by the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC).

This weekly report and map of drought conditions is based on reported impacts and observations from contributors around the country. *Drought Monitor authors rely on on-the-ground observations from ranchers and farmers.*

This map is important for several reasons:

- ◆ Used to determine eligibility for government-funded drought relief programs for ranchers and farmers.
- ◆ Used to determine how long a rancher who has sold breeding stock can defer capital gains tax bills.
- ◆ Helps assess forage production & other vegetation responses.
- ◆ Assists land managers in preserving data and current research for future generations.

What would you report?

- ◆ Your rain gauge totals.
- ◆ Rangeland production (pounds of forage) compared to previous years.
- ◆ Photographs to show differences in vegetation from year to year (try an iPhone app called GrassSnap at <http://centralsandhills.unl.edu/GrassSnap>).
- ◆ Bloom and leaf-out dates for landscape plants.
- ◆ Dates of first leaf-out for blue oaks (important indicator).
- ◆ Date of first killing frost.
- ◆ Date of first Sandhill crane flyover (spring and fall).

- ◆ Dates the creeks start or stop running.
- ◆ Dates when vernal pools or stockponds start to fill or become dry.
- ◆ Dates when your springs stop or start.
- ◆ Have you sold livestock because of lack of forage or stockwater?
- ◆ Did your fruit trees die?
- ◆ Has your irrigation water delivery been curtailed?
- ◆ Have your groundwater levels dropped?
- ◆ All of this information provides valuable, real-world information to the Drought Monitor.

The RCD has added a link to this report on our website for ease of use. If ranchers and farmers do not have access to the internet, or would like assistance to get started, they can contact the RCD and we will help!

Vegetation Management & Forest Health Project

In 2012 we contacted the City of Grass Valley to propose a project within Condon Park to:

- ◆ Remove invasive species.
- ◆ Improve wildlife habitat.
- ◆ Improve forest stand health through fuels reduction, limbing, and thinning.
- ◆ Help stabilize Peabody Creek bank from further erosion.
- ◆ Increase the recreational value of Condon Park.
- ◆ Promote education through



informational signage and walking paths.

We partnered with the City of Grass Valley, USDA/NRCS, Sierra Pacific Industries, and Point Blue Conservation Science to assess this area and develop a project that would enhance the park for Nevada County residents.



This project was completed in 2014 and has been a great success in the education of forestry health and invasive species.

Our final step will be to create interpretive signage for the area to help educate residents regarding fuels reduction and wildfire safety on their own property.

Nevada County Fair

Our theme for 'AgSperience' at the Nevada County Fair was the California Drought. We provided literature on:

- ◆ Snowpack
- ◆ Hydrozoning
- ◆ Rain Harvesting
- ◆ Groundwater and wells



- ◆ Water monitoring
- ◆ Irrigation
- ◆ Soil moisture
- ◆ Reservoir levels and more...



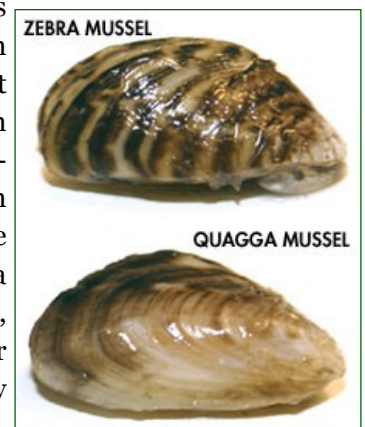
We also informed landowners of our Advisory Visit Program and encouraged them to sign up for a site visit to help them with drought mitigation issues on their property.

California State Parks Quagga & Zebra Mussel Grant

In addition to the information on our Resources/ Invasive Species webpage, we are also actively participating in the Department of Parks and Recreation, Division of Boating and Waterways' Quagga and Zebra Mussel Infestation Prevention Grant Program. This grant program is available to managers of recreational reservoirs in preventing the infestation of quagga and zebra mussels.

Since the Nevada County Resource Conservation District does not manage any reservoirs, we are partnering with the Nevada Irrigation District (NID) to help spread the word about this devastating organism. Both NID and the Tahoe Resource

Conservation District (TRCD) are applying for these grant monies. NID is applying for an education/outreach grant with the long-range plan of installing a decontamination station in western Nevada County. As Tahoe already has a decontamination station, they are applying for monies to staff and supply the station.



Advisory Visit Program

YOU LOVE THE Lifestyle...



WE HELP YOU PRESERVE IT

The Nevada County Resource Conservation District has an [Advisory Visit Program](#)! It provides technical services, assessments, and information on the natural resource management of your property - all at no cost to you.

Topics include:

- Forest health management
- Livestock water development
- Cross fencing
- Nutrient management
- Wildlife habitat improvement
- Pest management
- Watershed issues
- Soils information
- Erosion control
- Drainage issues
- Rural road maintenance
- Pond management
- Pasture management
- Rangeland management

Call or visit our website for more information or to set up an appointment.

 Nevada County Resource Conservation District
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Your Partner in Conservation and Agriculture

We began a **Natural Resources Advisory Visit Program** in 2014 that offers landowners personalized assistance with natural resources management on their property. This program provides general guidance and information in addition to facilitating referrals to other public and private resource professionals at no cost to the landowner.

We contracted with retired USDA/NRCS employee Jason Jackson, whose 37 years of experience have been an invaluable addition to our programs to assist landowners in Nevada County.

In addition to the site visits, Jason prepares a report for the landowner and RCD staff adds pertinent information and literature to mail

to the client. We request feedback from these visits and have received great reviews:

“Jason’s visit was an invaluable source of information...What a great way to spend taxes.” - Jannette P.

“What a gift to have this service in our community!” - The W. Family

“Jason was a pleasure to work with...It has helped us to be more confident in meeting the needs of our property.” - David & Renee B.

“Thank you! Lots of good info & support.” - Caela W.

“Jason is a wonderful resource!” - Jenn B.

“Thank you for this valuable service.” - Jill & David D.

Manure Exchange Program

We also organized an exchange service that can benefit both livestock owners and gardeners. The **Manure Exchange Program** helps connect farmers, growers, gardeners, and landowners searching for sources of local manure/compost with livestock owners and managers who have excess fresh and/or composted manure.

This program is a resource for the community

seeking a nearby source for fresh fertilizer and is a great way to recycle local natural resources!

In addition we created **Manure Happens** t-shirts!

There are short-sleeved and long-sleeved styles for men & women available at our office.



Seminar Series



The Nevada County Resource Conservation District strongly believes in assisting landowners and land managers in improving their land. To this end, we offer seminars, workshops, and classes that benefit property owners that are in keeping

with conservation planning and implementation. Our seminars offer information regarding good land stewardship using

conservation methods for water efficiency, planting with natives, proper resource management and much more.

Over 300 people signed up for our seminars or workshops this past year. Some of our topics were:

Outsmarting the Drought, Raptors of Nevada County, Rodent Control, Northern CA Bats, Raising City Chickens, Wild Bird Habitat, Horse Property Management, and many more!

Minimum-Till Drill

Keeping your property healthy and fire safe is an on-going project. It takes vigilance and work to keep invasive plants and pests away, maintain your healthy forest, coax your land to grow and thrive, and keep it fire safe.

In 2014 the NCRCD purchased a Minimum Till Drill for landowners to rent that can help in minimizing soil disturbance, soil erosion, and time spent on seeding a larger area.

The Min-Till Drill is a 6-foot-wide farm implement designed to get into places big drills simply can't - like wooded areas, orchards, and vineyards.



Soil disturbance is minimal with this implement that creates a seedbed, applies seed, and firms the seed into the soil all in one pass – saving you time and money. It helps control noxious weeds (such as star thistle), decreases soil erosion, and conserves water for easier plant establishment. Pasture can be established in one season for earlier crop production. We generally recommend using the drill in the spring for Irrigated Pasture and in the fall for Dry-land Pasture.

We have made the drill available through our website or by calling our office.

Emerson Austin Stoner Egg & Nest Collection

We were approached by the Sierra Foothills Audubon Society (SFAS) regarding a partnership for the housing of a very impressive egg and nest collection. The RCD was excited to be able to display this collection and received over 700 eggs and a variety of nests from the **Emerson Austin Stoner** collection.



Mr. Stoner was a self-taught naturalist and this portion of his private collection is over 100 years old, with the first box collected in 1906 and the last collected in 1978.

The SFAS built wooden boxes to display the eggs and we have since met one of Mr. Stoner's granddaughters and a great-granddaughter. They were thrilled to see it and have offered additional information about him and his lifetime of collecting.



The RCD is very excited to help in the preservation and history of this collection, which is on display at our office.

Range Camp

Each year the Range and Natural Resources Camp, sponsored by the California Pacific Section of the Society for Range Management (SRM) and the University of California Cooperative Extension is held at the Elkus Youth Ranch near Half Moon Bay. The RCD offers a sponsorship to one (or more) of our local high school students who apply to our Board of Directors for the opportunity to attend this camp.

The camp is designed to offer an appreciation of the extent, importance, and value of California's rangelands and natural resources. Range Camp fosters an

appreciation for several fields of applied science and management through interaction with university faculty and experienced professionals in classroom and field activities.

In 2014, we selected Colten Sullivan from Nevada Union High School to attend this 5-day event. Colten attended an NCRCD board meeting and gave a brief report on the camp and his experiences.

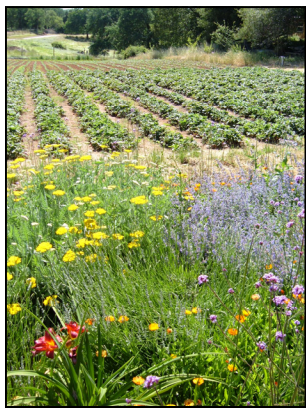


Nevada County Farm Tour

We partnered with the Nevada County Farm Bureau and the Nevada County Agricultural Commissioner to help the Farm Bureau with their annual Farm Tour.

This year's tour focused on the Cement Hill area in Nevada City. We visited an organic vegetable farm, the Felix Gillet historical orchard, and an educational farm. The tour included lunch and wine tasting.

This year's turnout was fantastic and there were a record number of attendees. One stop was at Sierra Harvest's Food Love Project (right), which is an educational farm devoted to promoting nutrition education, food security and community involvement.



Another stop was at Riverhill Farm (left) which produces a diverse mix of organic vegetables and fruits on ten acres, including many heirloom and specialty varieties. We heard from NID, the Farm Bureau, and the Nevada County Farm Advisor on the many issues regarding the California drought.

In addition to the farms, we visited the historic Felix Gillet orchard. Felix Gillet was one of Nevada City's most notable residents, a famed horticulturalist who in 1871 established the world-renowned Barren Hill Nursery in Nevada City. His trees were planted throughout the world (most notably in orchards throughout the Santa Clara Valley in California and the Willamette Valley in Oregon), many of which are still



producing today. A plaque commemorating Felix's contribution to horticulture is on the stone gates on Nursery Street (named for his nursery) at the former entrance road to his home and nursery.

Annual Plant & Seedling Give-Away

At our annual Native Plant & Seedling Give-Away, we offered:

- ♦ California Meadow Sedge / *Carex pansa*
- ♦ Mountain Dogwood / *Cornus nuttallii*
- ♦ Snowdrop Bush / *Styrax californicus*
- ♦ Wild Lilac / *Ceanothus 'Dark Star'*
- ♦ Western Chokecherry / *Prunus virginiana*
- ♦ Red Autumn Sage / *Salvia greggii*
- ♦ Foothill Penstemon / *Penstemon*
- ♦ Incense Cedar / *Calocedrus decurrens*
- ♦ Sugar Pine / *Pinus lambertiana*
- ♦ Douglas Fir / *Pseudotsuga menziesii*



Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) and Pacific, Gas & Electric (PG&E) partnered with us and supplied the trees and many of the shrubs.

This annual event is always well received and many of the participants look forward to the giveaway each year.



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