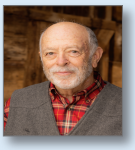
NEVADA COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Greetings!

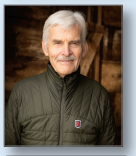
This year the message that resonates with me the most is integrated sustainability, despite what is transpiring outside of our local regional boundaries, the importance of supporting our agricultural community, is vital to our future. I believe that we have all the resources, passion, and expertise, as a community in Nevada County, to be a role-model for other rural counties. Our generational history in land stewardship and soil health, whether it be in livestock grazing, forestry management, farming and ranching, and conservation practices, truly does set us apart as a county. Despite our vast topography, elevation, and weather conditions, we prevail. As you will see from this report, last year's focus at the RCD, was collaboration. We are focused on our mission and being a valuable partner in our community, even with our small, but mighty staff, we have worked to achieve some notable impacts across multiple areas. In 2025, our focus will be a strategic plan that highlights sustainability and long-term planning for our partnerships, as a leader in education for our continued mission: to promote responsible resource management within our jurisdiction through education, leadership, technical assistance, and project facilitation. This is illustrated the best in the words of our board members when asked "What value does the NCRCD have regarding short- and long-term community benefit?":

DIRECTORS



Jim Drew
President

JoAnn Fites-Kaufman
Vice-President



Reed Hamilton
Director

Alana Fowler
Director

Linda Miller
Director

Robert Ingram
Associate Director

NCRCD STAFF

Briana Bacon
Executive Director

Nate Alcorn
Program Manager

Emma DiClementi
Conservation Program Manager

Anne Solik
Office Manager

Jennifer Crosby
Prescribed Fire Program Manager

Haley Coopergard
Prescribed Fire Program Manager

Jason Jackson
Conservationist

"In the short term:

1. *An educational source for individuals moving into Nevada County, with many preconceived notions, but virtually zero knowledge of how farming, ranching, and forestry functions and fits in our community.*
2. *Inspiring students through educational programs to become future ranchers, farmers, foresters or otherwise knowledgeable good land stewards.*
3. *Teach landowners the basic sciences controlling our Sierra ecosystem showcasing how a healthy ecosystem functions and thrives."* -Robert Ingram

"We provide education to landowners about the resource and how to protect and enhance it with programs and services we offer, such as advisory visits, educational events, equipment rentals, and directing landowners to continued resources." -Reed Hamiliton

Long-term Benefits?

1. *Creating a well-known go-to-source for individuals in need of basic land use information.*
2. *Partner with schools for resource related education to students on an ongoing basis.* -Robert Ingram

"One of the best things that the RCD does is help people realize that the land we all live on is a resource, a place we go to over and over for clean water, healthy soils, resilient forests, food, recreation. To keep going back to that well we have to conserve and protect it." -Reed Hamilton

Why do I serve?

Originally, curiosity. I wondered what my county's RCD knew and conveyed to the public about forestry and forest related issues. Now, just as a source for forestry or forest related information." -Robert Ingram

"The reason I serve on the board is to see that we can continue providing that education, those resources, to not only maintain the land and all that lives on it, but to make it better. We can keep learning as research and shared learning shows us things we didn't know before or lost along the way.-" Reed Hamilton

In summary, we are better together. All aspects of natural resource management, conservation and agriculture in this community are vital, your support of these services matter.

Briana Bacon
Executive Director

Highlights of 2024

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Resource Conservation Districts

On May 20, 1862, the Homestead Act accelerated the settlement of the western territory of the United States by granting any adult citizen a claim of 160 acres of surveyed public land. Claimants were required to "improve" the plot by building a dwelling and cultivating the land. After 5 years on the land, the original filer was entitled to the property, free and clear, except for a small registration fee. The Homestead Act led to a massive influx of new and inexperienced farmers across the Great Plains, greatly increasing the acreage under cultivation.

At this point in time, the Great Plains had been covered by miles upon miles of prairie grass. But widespread conversion of the land by deep plowing and other methods ended up eliminating the native grasses which held the soil in place and helped retain moisture during dry periods.

In 1917, the United States entered World War I, creating a huge demand for wheat. Farmers began to push their fields to their limit, plowing under more and more grassland with the newly invented tractor, which chewed up huge amounts of land at unheard of rates.

Then, in 1931, a severe drought hit the mid-west and southern plains states. This drought is the worst ever in United States history, covering more than 75 percent of the country and affecting 27 states severely. As the crops died, the "black blizzards" began. Dust from the over-plowed and over-grazed land began to blow.

On May 11th, 1934, a massive dust storm two miles high sent millions of tons of topsoil flying toward the East Coast, right over the top of Washington, D.C. and 300 miles out into the Atlantic Ocean. This prompted Congress to declare soil erosion "a national menace" and as a result, both the Soil Conservation Act and Soil Conservation Service (SCS) were created. This new federal agency (now called the Natural Resources Conservation Service or NRCS) developed extensive conservation programs to retain topsoil and prevent further irreparable damage to the land.

But by 1936, the damage had been done. Eight hundred and fifty million tons of topsoil had been blown off the southern plains. Soil conservation laws were enacted in 1937 that allowed farmers to set up their own local conservation districts (now called Resource Conservation Districts). These RCDs were controlled by local boards of directors and empowered to manage soil and water resources for the purpose of conservation. Until the formation of these RCDs, farmers and ranchers often had no way of reaching SCS scientists for soil and water information and guidance. The RCD program recognized that new farming science and technology needed to be tested, accepted, and enforced by the farmers working the land, rather than bureaucrats in Washington.

The Nevada County Resource Conservation District (NCRCD), like other RCDs across America, have worked hand in-hand with land managers for the past 75-plus years to conserve and restore natural resources, support agriculture, and provide community benefits. Our NCRCD works to target needs with timely support and education through ongoing outreach and programs.

1. Supporting our farmers, ranchers, landowners, and land stewards in taking care of our watersheds and take climate action through a variety of real hands-on programs such as our Advisory Visit Programs and our Prescribed burn Visit Programs all at no cost to the community.

2. Providing useful resources such as our Manure Exchange program, Equipment Loan program, the Min-Till Drill Program, and in-person seminars as well as a variety of on-line resources.

3. Engaging and educating youth through programs such as our Annual Farm Day to introduce the importance of agriculture with outreach to over 1,000 students. ▪

In Remembrance of
Janey Powers, NCRCD Board Director

Jane Hershey Powers

November 24, 1943 - March 31, 2024

Janey Powers, was Awarded Conservationist of the Year in 2002 by the Nevada County Resource Conservation District (NCRCD). She also Chaired of the NCRCD Education Committee and later became our Director and Board Vice-President of Nevada County Resource Conservation District, spanning eight years, - 2008 - 2016. But her volunteerism at NCRCD wasn't her only show, Janey was very active both in the community as well as her busy family life. Here are some of her accomplishments:

- Editor of the Sierra Foothills Audubon Society newsletter, 2003-2010
- Member of Nevada County Farm Bureau, 2000-2007
- Instructor at the Sierra College Ranch Management Class, 2000-2008
- Sierra Foothills Audubon Society's 2012 "Volunteer of the Year
- Mother of Robert, Matthew, Jason, and Joe, Grandmother of Caitlin, Christopher, Kenneth, Aiden, and Olivia
- Married 59 years to John Powers

Janey was born and raised in Fort Smith, Arkansas, graduated 1961, Fort Smith High School Graduated 1965, Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas with a B.A. in Psychology. Post-graduate studies in Guidance and Counseling at Purdue University 1965-1966. Moved to Columbus, Ohio, in 1966. She was a founding partner of The Authorship Resource, Columbus, Ohio where she designed and coded interactive children's stories for the Cyber-vision Home Computer sold by Montgomery Ward. The Powers moved to California in 1980, when Janey became Publications Manager for the San Jose School District. She was also Vice-President of Marketing for the Golden Bay Credit Union at Moffett Naval Air Station.

In 1999, the Powers moved to Nevada County where she became a Volunteer and then President,of Newcomers Club of Nevada County Volunteer and President, But Janey didn't stop there, she also joined Wildlife Rehabilitation and Release, Grass Valley, Volunteered and became a trainer at Gold Country Wildlife Rescue,in Auburn.

Janey's love of traveling took her to many exotic places such as the Arctic Circle (2 times), China (3 times), Europe (2 times), the Middle East, the National Parks in Western North America, Oceania, and Southeast Asia. While at home, Janey had a flock of chickens and sold "Hopeful Hill Rainbow Eggs, and through that experience, she taught courses on how to raise backyard chickens. In 2013, she was featured on the YouTube Food and Farm Show as "The Chicken Lady". Janey had a wonderful droll sense of humor. She always enjoyed telling chicken jokes, Especially at the Nevada County Newcomers Club where she'd have a captive audience. It wasn't unusual for a member to stop Janey at SaveMart and say how much they enjoyed her chicken jokes. Here is a sampling:
How did the chicken end up in the soup pot?

The farmer's wife told her it was a chicken jacuzzi.

What is Superchicken's real identity? Cluck Kent.

Which side of a chicken has the most feathers? The outside.

Why should a school not be near a chicken farm?
So the pupils don't overhear fowl language.

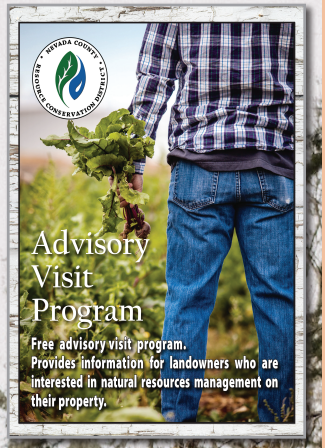
What happened to the baby chicken that misbehaved at school? It was eggspelled.

The Resource Conservation was delighted to have had Janey give several presentations about wildlife most notably, "Birds in Black". These were the most popular of the NCRCD Seminar Series.

While the District appreciates Janey's service to the Board, the NCRCD will miss her leadership, her willingness to engage in local events, but surely her friendship and smile will be missed by so many!

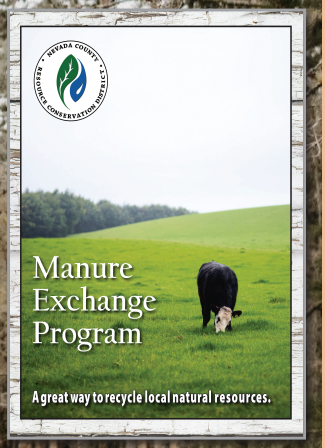
Donations in Janey's name can be made to:
Wildlife Rehabilitation and Release
P.O. Box 868, Penn Valley, CA 95946
Web site: www.cawildlife911.org

PROGRAMS



ADVISORY VISIT PROGRAM

Offers Nevada County landowners personalized assistance with the natural resource management of 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. In the past 6+ years, we have received over 800 requests for assistance on over 8,000+ acres of land! Resource issues have ranged from erosion control, forestland management, pond maintenance, drainage problems, wildlife habitat improvement, rural road maintenance, and pasture/rangeland management. This program has developed into one of the most important programs the RCD has ever offered.



MANURE EXCHANGE

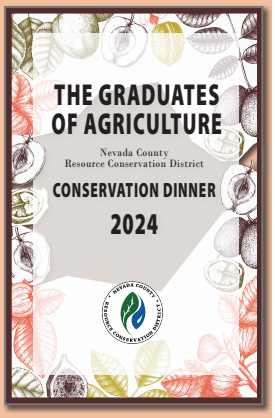
Our RCD has organized an exchange service that can benefit livestock owners and gardeners. The Manure Exchange Program helps connect farmers, gardeners, and landowners searching for sources of local manure/compost with livestock owners and managers who have excess fresh and/or composted manure.

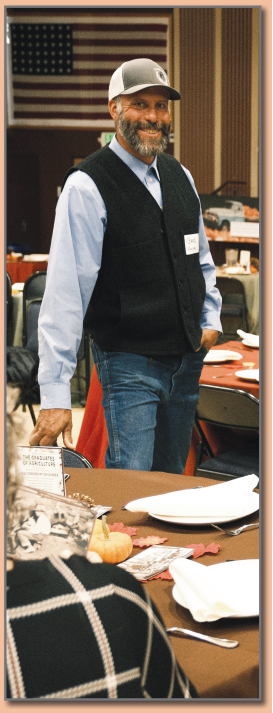
This program is a resource for the community seeking a nearby source for fresh fertilizer and is a great way to recycle and it's a local natural resource for our local farmers and gardeners with soil supplements for little or no cost!

MIN TILL DRILL

Available to rent, first-come, first-served basis. 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.





CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR DINNER

Celebrating a Legacy of Agriculture

At our annual Conservationist of the Year dinner, we gathered to celebrate the rich legacy of agriculture we are so proud of here in Nevada County. Each year, the NCRCD hosts the Conservationist of the Year event recognizing key people in our community and honoring them for their extraordinary efforts in natural resource conservation. This year's Conservationist of the Year award was given to Maddison Easley for her countless measures on conservation efforts in Nevada County.

MADDISON EASLEY

Maddison is a Partner Biologist for Point Blue Conservation Science, as well as a Resource Conservationist for the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service in Grass Valley. Not only does Maddison hold a B.S. degree from CalPoly in San Luis Obispo, she worked for the UC Sierra Foothill Research & Extension Center studying rangeland ecology and invasive species dynamics. She is past President NU FFA chapter and President of the National winning Parliamentary Procedure team.

Her help and guidance has been invaluable for many of our RCD projects including a substantial Point Blue Grant involving pond restoration on the Ranch School and other large scale land projects in the county.

Congratulations, Maddison, and thank you for all of your incredible work!

PRESCRIBED FIRE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Prescribed fire or controlled burning is a tool used for good land stewardship. Low-intensity controlled burns can be used to improve defensible space, clean up forest debris and restore forest and soil health. These burns will lower fire hazard and make communities safer, enhance forest health and resilience, increase wildlife habitat, improved forage, restoration and enhance native wildflowers, and control pests (like ticks) and invasive grasses and weeds.

If we step up and educate ourselves about beneficial fire and learn how to safely put it on the ground, we can return the land to health and shrink the severity of wildfire in our state. We can do this by applying good fire to our property, helping neighbors with their property, bit by bit, acre by acre. The state of California has recognized the importance of prescribed fire as a tool to combat catastrophic fires. They have ambitious goals for increasing the acres burned by private landowners. Our goal is to help our neighborhoods be safer and restore the fire adapted forests and ecosystems so they are resilient to wildfire. NCRCD has created a comprehensive fire curriculum, ABC's of Prescribed Burning, that is free to the public. This curriculum is followed up with newsletters, calendar of events, and many local classes.

Our Approach

To give community members the knowledge and skills they need to take care of their land with good stewardship. For the NCRCD prescribed fire program, that includes education, community support, and technical advice. Our programs safely illustrate a number of topics including:

- Why we burn, fire ecology and effects, how fire affects fuels & forest resilience
- How to plan a burn, how to permit, how to prepare a site, tools and safety, organizing a burn and managing volunteers, how to light and control the fire, how to make sure it's out
- Smoke management, post-burn monitoring and evaluation
- The all important liability factor. We will also elaborate on how the NCRCD can provide additional education and technical support.

PRESCRIBED FIRE ADVISORY VISITS

Nevada County RCD also offers free advisory visits to anyone in Nevada County looking information and advice for holding a burn on property over one acre. The Advisory Visit Program (AVP) offers personalized, science-based, land management advice to Nevada and western-Sierra County landowners. NCRCD provides site visits to evaluate whether prescribed fire is a good tool for the public's objectives and needs. ▪

MEET JENNIFER CROSBY: Prescribed Fire Community Outreach Coordinator

Jennifer is a long-time resident of Nevada County. Her prior career was in the arts, painting, and illustration. She designed 12 narrative tapestries for the San Juan Ridge Tapestry Project. In 2021 she changed course and began working with fire on a hand crew specializing in under story fuels management. This led to working on prescribed fires and pursuing becoming a CARX. Jennifer is passionate about prescribed fire, teaching people how to use fire safely and creating a culture of fire resiliency in Nevada County.

MEET HALEY COOPERGARD: Prescribed Fire Operations Coordinator

After getting a Bachelors of Science in Biology, Haley spent the last 7 years doing conservation work like native plant restoration, trail work, and fuels reductions. Finding a passion for fuels reduction, Haley has focused on mitigation efforts for severe wildland fires via chainsaws, crosscuts, wildland firefighting, and prescribed fire. Haley is also pursuing her State-Certified Prescribed-Fire Burn Boss in hopes to implement more good fire. She hopes to get her hometown community more fire-prepared and understanding of fire's place on the natural landscape.

NCPBA

The Nevada County Resource Conservation District (NCRCD) in Grass Valley has launched the first Prescribed Burn Association (PBA) in Nevada County. Prescribed Burn Associations are comprised of community members that work together facilitating prescribed burns on the ground.

In 2023, NCRCD received funding from the U.S. Forest Service grant through the United States Department of Agriculture to launch a prescribed burn education program. Since then, the district has held 20 courses and workshops for more than 200 community members learning how to conduct safe, legal, responsible and beneficial burns on their property.

Formalizing the Prescribed Burn Association will improve the district's competitiveness for future grant funding. The PBA will support development of neighborhood burn groups, provide ongoing education and training opportunities and support capacity building for ranchers and other community groups to burn larger areas. ▪

FARM DAY

September 18, 2024, NCRCD hosted thier annual Nevada County Ag in the Classroom's Farm Day at the Nevada County Fairgrounds. Farm Day gives our local 2nd and 3rd graders the opportunity to become familiar with nearly all facets of agriculture. The Nevada County Fairgrounds generously hosts our event during the Draft Horse Classic week, generously allowing our small visitors a personal up front visit with award winning draft horses from all over the county and even giving every child an entry ticket to the grand event.

All 2nd and 3rd grade classroom throughout Nevada County are invited every year to spend a day learning from local timber harvesters, farmers, and ranchers. Farm Day teaches the importance of our rural community lifestyle, the preservation of open space, and learning where our food really comes from.

Ag in the Classroom group is made up of volunteers and representatives from the following organizations: The Nevada County Resource Conservation District, Nevada County Ag Commissioner's office, Nevada County Fairgrounds, Nevada County Farm Bureau, and the Placer Nevada Cattlewomen.

VOLUNTEERS

"I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do."

Edward Everett Hale

Over 700 children passed though the Fairgrounds gates to visit over 35 stations. Our FFA guides kept everyone aligned and engaged. We also added a hospitality booth for exhibitors and FFA students. There they were given breakfast treats before the event, drinks throughout the day, and lunch for all the volunteers after the event. We are lucky and blessed to live such a wonderful community that will step up and volunteer their time to teach our children the value of agriculture and give them an understanding and appreciation of the food and fiber system that we all rely on every day. ▪

PROJECTS

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Grant $500,000 (Department of Conservation)

The Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program funds the development of an Agricultural and Working Landscape Conservation Plan. This plan will create the framework, policies, and collaborative efforts necessary to preserve agricultural lands. Key objectives include addressing climate change, enhancing food security, and ensuring that farming and ranching remain sustainable, equitable, and vital to the community for future generations.

"Funds for the Nevada County Sustainable Agriculture Lands Conservation Program Planning Grant was made available through the California Strategic Growth council's Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC) in collaboration with the Department of Conservation. SALC is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment – particularly in disadvantaged communities."

Serene Lakes Ingress-Egress Shaded Fuel Break $30,000 (PG&E)

PG&E has granted NCRCD funding to complete a wildfire mitigation project that focuses on enhancing evacuation safety for the Serene Lakes Community and providing safe ingress for fire suppression resources during a wildfire. This project will establish a shaded fuel break along Soda Springs Road, the sole access route to the community. The project area will involve a minimum of 7 acres of vegetation clearance (50 feet of treatment on both sides of the road) with a possibility of more clearance depending upon budget, topography, and necessity.

Livestock Fuel Reduction Program $150,000 (Nevada County OES)

Livestock has been a vital tool for wildfire fuel mitigation in Nevada County for decades. Local ranchers continue to use this practice on various lands throughout the county. The project has three strategic goals:

1. Treating vegetation on strategic school and publicly owned properties.
2. Educating the community on livestock as a wildfire mitigation resource.
3. Engaging youth in climate resilience efforts while supporting the agricultural industry and workforce development.

Healthy Soils Block Grant $9,360 (USDA)

The Regional Block Grant is a partnership grant to provide technical assistance and facilitate financial assistance for agricultural operations to promote the development of healthy soils on California's farmlands and ranchlands. The NCRCD assisted with outreach for the Nevada County Region, as well as assisting with on-farm project selection and approval. The Block Grant Award was received by Placer County Resource Conservation District for a total of $4,000,000. The extensive funding was used to provide financial assistance directly to farms and ranches within the following counties: Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer Sacramento and Tuolumne.

NRCS Technical Support $75,000 (USDA)

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), NCRCD continues to provide technical assistance and project management across a range of natural resource conservation practices. These efforts support diverse land uses and promote sustainable resource management.

NEU NCORx Fire Project $509,592.60 (CAL FIRE)

NCRCD has received funding to reduce hazardous fuels and increase ranchers' capacity to implement prescribed burns. Sixty acres on two ranches, heavily infested with highly flammable invasive grasses, will be treated with prescribed fire. This approach effectively manages invasive species while restoring ecological balance.

"Funding for this project provided by the California Department of Forestry and fire Protection's (CAL FIRE) Wildfire Prevention Grants Program as part of the California Climate Investments Program."

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund – Nevada County RCD Fuels Reduction and Fire Prevention Project Support $299,936 (CAL FIRE)

This project supports the NEU Unit Forester in implementing fuel reduction and fire prevention activities on State Responsibility Area (SRA) lands. Efforts include:

1. Treating vegetation on strategic school and publicly owned properties.
2. Developing CEQA compliance documents for fuel reduction.
3. Providing professional forestry, biological surveys, prescribed fire services, reforestation, and project oversight.

"Funding for this project provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protections Wildfire Prevention Grants Program."

CAL FIRE Defensible Space Training $3,000 (CAL FIRE)

NCRCD coordinated and hosted CAL FIRE's "Home Hardening and Defensible Space" training for Qualified Entities in Nevada County. This program standardizes hazard assessment efforts across California and educates property owners on reducing the risk of structure ignition during wildfires.

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program $30,000 (USDA)

In collaboration with Sierra Harvest, Nevada County Economic Development Office, and the Nevada County Development Agency, NCRCD is expanding its Beginning Farmers and Ranchers education, outreach, and technical assistance programs. The goal is to empower new farmers and ranchers, enabling them to thrive in their enterprises and contribute to the prosperity of local food systems and rural communities.

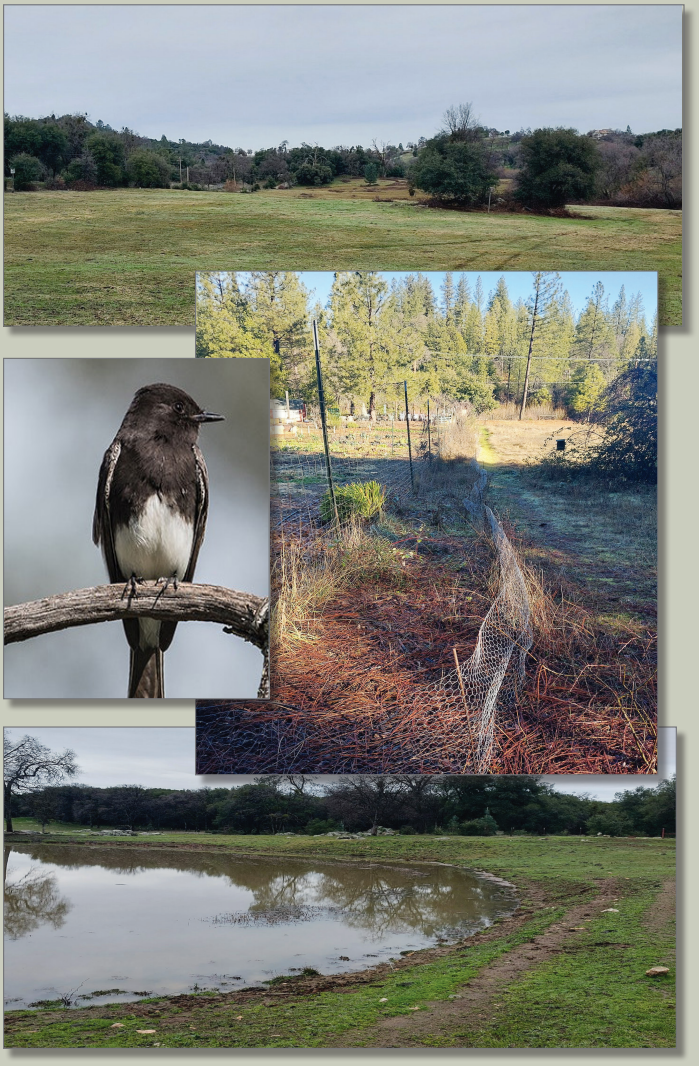
Community Wildfire Defense Grant $392,542 (USDA)

The purpose of this project is to reduce hazardous fuels and restore frequent-fire ecosystems on private and residential lands through broadcast prescribed fire training.

The primary goal is to enhance the capacity of Nevada County residents to conduct prescribed burns. This initiative is particularly critical as 90% of Nevada County lies within very high or high fire hazard severity zones.

"This institution is an equal opportunity provider."

Point Blue's 160 scientists develop nature-based solutions to climate change, habitat loss, and other environmental threats to benefit wildlife and people.



Point Blue Roots - $231,560

Point Blue Conservation Science, funded by the California Wildlife Conservation Board, is undertaking habitat restoration on approximately 40,000 acres across the state. Nevada County RCD was selected as a project partner due to its leadership in conservation across forests, farms, and ranches in Nevada and Sierra counties. This project focuses on enhancing pollinator and monarch habitats, improving livestock management at vulnerable sites, and increasing habitat quality and quantity.

Point Blue Roots Fencing Seminar

Nevada County RCD & Live Wire Products partnered up for a hands-on workshop at the Barhydt Ranch in Nevada County. Local ranchers gathered to learn about different fencing types & how to install portable polywire electric fencing.

There was a live demonstration of fencing a paddock, and discussion about the benefits of prescribed grazing, animal exclusion, and why incorporating impermanent and portable fence is beneficial to land and livestock operations. This was a lively and informative seminar with lots of information useful to local ranchers.

Point Blue Wildlife Habitat Restoration

Point Blue was awarded funding by the State of California Wildlife Conservation Board to complete wildlife habitat restoration projects on approximately 40,000 acres throughout California. This project was selected because of NCRCD's involvement and commitment to conservation across forests, farms, and ranches in Nevada and Sierra counties.

The project sites are durable locations, with history and future management objectives involving community and education around wildlife habitat and working lands. Key elements of this work include enhancing and protecting pollinator and monarch habitat, and altering livestock management at vulnerable sites, directly improving the quality and quantity of habitat.

Project Sites:

Ranch School: Passive riparian restoration; pond restoration on three existing ponds to improve water quality, reduce erosion from livestock, and increase wildlife habitat.

Barhydt Ranch: Cross fencing for a grazing management plan and hedgerow establishment to increase pollinator habitat and foraging habitat for wildlife.

Food Love Farm: Community school garden enhancement for native plantings to provide habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. ▪

OUTREACH & PARTNERSHIPS

SCHOOL MICRO-GRANT

The Nevada County Resource Conservation District has established a micro-grant program for Schools in Nevada County to encourage children and promote agriculture in Nevada County. Schools can receive up to $5,000 to start, grow, or improve a local children's garden project. (May be subject to limited opportunities per fiscal year). This year, NCRCD invested over $20,000 for School Projects, to Grizzly Hill, Living Wisdom, Twin Ridges, and Bear River Schools.

The RCD connects with educators and students alike by developing and sharing unique classroom curriculum. By cultivating the curiosity of students, we're creating a deeper awareness of our environment and the role of agriculture. School gardens are a great way to engage students with hands-on learning opportunities. Such activities encourages them to create meaningful connections to the environment and extend learning beyond the classroom. ▪

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Nevada County Resource Conservation District offers scholarships to local students pursuing studies within the wide variety of agricultural and conservation-led fields with possible careers including but not limited to: heavy equipment operation, agricultural engineering, forestry, chemistry, biology, research, rangeland management, welding, Ag economics, firefighting, Ag teaching, and Ag communications among many other career concentrations.

NCRCD offers scholarships to passionate students with the intention of becoming future agriculturalists and conservationists, and perhaps even bringing that acquired knowledge and experiences back to our community to inform and lead. Our future depends on the future of agriculture, and through these scholarships, we hope to inspire and enable students to develop into working lands managers, advocates, and leaders. This year, NCRCD invested over $5,000 for scholarships. ▪

WORKING LANDS III

NCRCD has embarked on another cinematic journey, unveiling the hidden narratives of our region's dynamic relationship with the land with two previous films highlighting ranching and farming in our county. "Working Lands: Volume 1" and "Volume 2" were both filmed in Nevada County, California, showcasing historic ranching and farming families who share their history, the need for open space, the preservation of agriculture, their passion for where our food comes from, and the legacy they hope to leave behind. Through "Working Lands: Volume 3," we aim to continue this tradition, shedding light on the captivating history of the timber industry in Nevada County. Our lens will capture the untamed tales of the old-timers who once shaped the timber landscape, showcasing their indomitable spirit. We'll also delve into the present-day challenges that have left our forests overstocked, teetering on the brink of catastrophic fire.

Amidst these trials, we share some beacons of hope—locals who are pioneering innovative solutions. Through this film, our shared mission with NCRCD is to educate, inspire, and ignite a passion for responsible and creative forest management and the storied legacy of our timberlands in the hearts of our community. This proposal outlines our vision to bring "Working Lands: Volume 3" to life, bridging the past, present, and future of Nevada County's timber heritage. Working Lands III will celebrate the history and legacy of Timber production in Nevada County, as well as share perspectives on the future of the of the industry. The film is expected to be released in early 2025, more details to come. ▪

Nevada County
FARM BUREAU

2024 Ag Tour:

- NC Fairgrounds
- Weiss Nursery
- Rollins Dam
- Mt. Olivia Winery

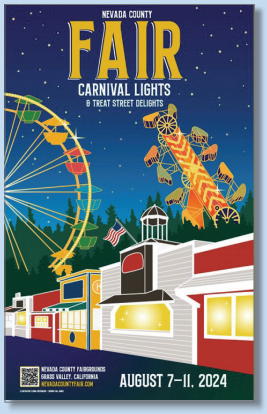
NEVADA COUNTY AGRICULTURE TOUR

Every year we team-up with the Nevada County Farm Bureau (NCFB) to provide support for their annual Nevada County Agriculture Tour. Agriculture tours are important for many reasons. With most of the population at least two generations removed from farming, it gives people an opportunity to learn how their food is produced, to make connections with local farmers and ranchers. The Board of Supervisors and others are invited to attend and understand local agriculture issues.

This all-day event featured sites that represent the diversity and beauty of agriculture in Nevada County. ▪

NEVADA COUNTY FAIR 2024

Each year the NCRCD offers natural resource information to the public at the Nevada County Fair. We strive to educate and raise awareness of important local natural resource issues such as: forest health, hazardous fuels reduction, erosion control, invasive species, living with wildlife, the importance of "open space", and much more. We partner with the Nevada County Farm Bureau where children get to play "farmer for a day" and receive prizes for answering agriculture-related questions geared to teach them that agriculture isn't just animals, fruits, & vegetables. ▪



RANCH SCHOOL

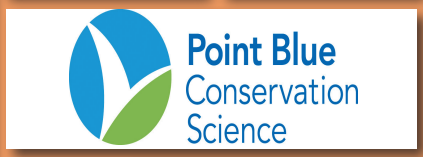
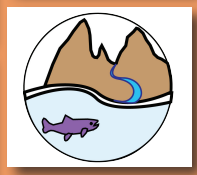
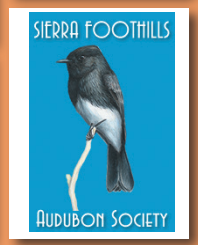
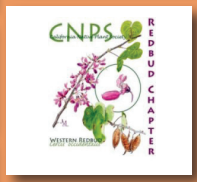
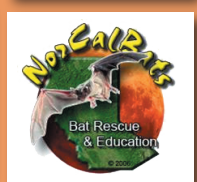
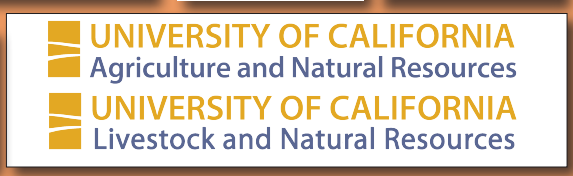
Students of the Nevada Joint Union High School District have been donated an 86-acre ranch to further hands-on agricultural education. "It's an 86-acre ranch (donated) to the district so it's pretty incredible," said Noah Levinson, director of Career and Tech for the Nevada Joint Union High School District. "It needed renovations to bring it up to a 21st century learning environment. The Jennings Foundation donated money to help with the ranch. We've had an outpouring of community support."

The property lies equal distance from both Bear River and Nevada Union high schools, and is intended to offer students a place to hone their skills in raising and caring for animals. Some families, Kohler mentioned, might not have the available space on their property for students to learn their ways around husbandry.

The mission of the NCRCD is to promote responsible resource management within its jurisdiction through leadership, education, technical assistance, financial assistance, and project facilitation. The Nevada County Resource Conservation District continues to support the Farm School and encourage our youth to come back and continue good works, right here in their own back yard. The NCRCD is actively participating with the school district to support and encourage all efforts to maintain such an incredible asset to education in agriculture. ▪

RANGE CAMP

Range Camp is an environmental science & management camp for high school students from across California. The camp takes place at the University of California's Elkus Youth Ranch in Half Moon Bay, CA. Range Camp is a week long program for teens that consists of lectures, hands on activities, a ranch tour, BBQ at the beach, group projects, a plant identification test, and a final exam. At the end of camp the three Top Campers are invited to represent CalPac SRM at the annual Society for Range Management's High School Youth Forum.

Every year, the Nevada County Resource Conservation District offers for up to four junior and senior high school students full paid scholarships for Range Camp in Half Moon Bay California. On average, about 25 campers from across California and Hawaii attend. Campers have hands on projects each day associated with lectures that often includes digging a soils pit to examine and compare soils, hiking local trails to learn plant families and names, completing an inventory of a local stream to determine creek health, learning wildlife survey techniques, etc. Top Campers are invited to represent CalPac SRM techniques, etc. at the annual Society for Range Management's High School Youth Forum. During camp campers should expect to do hands on projects each day associated with lectures. ▪

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