



2007 ANNUAL REPORT

This annual report summarizes the activities and accomplishments of the Nevada County Resource Conservation District (NCRCD) during 2007. The NCRCD, which serves all of Nevada County and Western Sierra County, was founded in 1943 to provide community leadership on natural resource conservation issues.

The NCRCD continues to accomplish education and technical assistance for their mission to promote responsible resource management through leadership, education, promoting awareness, technical assistance, financial assistance, and facilitation.

The vision of the NCRCD is to assist landowners and land managers to establish a balance between a high quality rural environment, a biologically diverse landscape, and a healthy economy for the community.

The services provided to local residents through the NCRCD and USDA

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office are free and available to any land owner in our jurisdiction.



NCRCD Board President, David Vertin, talking to 3rd grade students at an Agriculture Fair.



Smith Ranch



Hopeful Hill Ranch

NEVADA COUNTY FAIR



Kristy Sherr from Cal State Parks and Audubon Society, at the Nevada County Fair.

Every year the Nevada County RCD hosts and organizes over fifty education seminars for the public. Seminars include topics such as raising horses and animals on small acreage, Best Management Practices, fuel load reduction, water quality enhancement, erosion control, invasive weeds, planting for pollinators, and forest health management.

We had another successful year of presentations at the Nevada County Fair with presenters such as Mark Fredericks, Linda Carlson, Roger Ingram, Randy Oliver, and many more. Over a hundred fair attendees learned about local native plants, pollination, invasive species, and energy saving techniques.

The Nevada County RCD strives to continue building partnerships and bonds with local landowners through making available formats for education and awareness of issues of local importance.

ARBOR DAY

Thanks to Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) generously donating over 500 Japanese Red Maple seedlings and the NCRCD donating 300 Red twig Dogwood seedlings, we had another highly successful Arbor Day Plant Give-Away on March 9th, 2007.

PG&E provided information about compatible planting choices near power lines, a tree or shrub with a maximum mature height of no more than 35 feet. PG&E reminds customers to plant the “right tree in the right place” during this Arbor Day and upcoming spring planting season. Visit www.safetree.net and www.pge.com provide information regarding proper tree selection and landscaping tips.

Wildlife boxes were also be available for purchase, and we supplied free information on many resource conservation topics.



Arbor Day Plant Give-Away at the NCRCD/NRCS office.



Smith Ranch, Nevada County

SCOTCH BROOM CHALLENGE



The NCRCD and Fire Safe Council Nevada County have teamed up to start combating Scotch broom infestations on local private lands. The Scotch Broom Challenge team consists of many key participants in Nevada County. In fall of 2007 we started the gears rolling with the Fire Safe Council and the motivation has spread. Our goal is for this to be an ongoing campaign to increase on-the-ground efforts to manually control Scotch broom in our area.

Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) is a highly aggressive non-native invasive weed species. It was introduced to the United States as an ornamental and as packing material for cases of whiskey and beer from the British Isles, central and southern Europe. It is now considered a pest plant by many eastern and western states.

COMMUNITY SHADED FUEL-BREAK

The Shaded Fuelbreak project area is approximately fifteen miles long and up to one half mile wide and consists mostly of large parcel landowners. To date, the project is approximately 70% completed by private landowners, USDA Forest Service and BLM.

The Fuelbreak project provides education to landowners, improves watershed health, improves forest health and reduces fuel loads, reduces soil erosion and protects water quality, enhances wildlife habitat and adds protection to a public recreation area and a public water source (Scotts Flat Lake).



NEVADA COUNTY'S REAL GOLD: AGRICULTURAL VIDEO

The Nevada County Farm Bureau, Nevada Irrigation District and the Nevada County RCD teamed up to create a video showcasing agriculture in Nevada County. The purpose was to create awareness and education of the local agriculture, where to find it and how to support it. The video was shown daily to thousands during the annual Nevada County Fair at the new Agriculture Exhibit. The five top agricultural commodities in Nevada County are: timber, cows/calves, wine grapes, nursery stock and fruits and vegetables. Agriculture, in addition to producing food and fiber, provides open space, wildlife and plant habitat, fuelbreaks and fuels reduction for communities along with rural aesthetics. There is a new movement called the Local Food Coalition which consists of a network of people trying to encourage others to reconnect to the land and /or support the local food.

CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR - READER RANCH

In 2007, the Reader Ranch was recognized for their long term land stewardship and presented the 2006 Conservationist of the Year award.

The Reader Ranch has been a family-operated cattle ranch for five generations since 1854. Brothers Fred Langdon and John Reader, 4th generation family members manage the cattle operation and the ranch.

The family has done an outstanding job sustaining their land while under agricultural production, using multiple conservation practices in managing the Ranch's nearly 1,000 acres.

The management practices include prescribed burning, rotational grazing and range planting to increase rangeland health and reduce invasive weeds environmental benefits. Off-stream livestock watering facilities were installed to protect water quality, provide stock water and increase grazing distribution.

The land supports an abundance of wildlife and plant diversity while providing a strategic fire break for the community. The Reader Ranch is one of the few ranching operations that still has a trail drive to move cattle from their summer range in the mountains back down to the home ranch.

Every September, family and friends can be seen moving cattle along Hwy 49 through North San Juan on their way back home. The family has also invited class field trips to the ranch to educate landowners about the many values associated with a working cattle ranch.

The Reader Ranch demonstrates that ranching as a lifestyle choice not only promotes and preserves the rural way of life while providing food and fiber for humans, but can also provide multiple environmental benefits.



John and ?? Reader



Shaunda Sawyer, state Speak-off winner 2007.

SPEAK-OFF CONTEST—STATE WINNER

The Nevada County RCD sponsors a high school student to enter the regional Speak-Off Competition. This year local Nevada Union senior Shaunda Sawyer won first place in the State-Wide Speak-Off competition at the annual California Association of Resource Conservation Districts conference in Sacramento, November 9, 2007. She was able to compete in the state-wide competition after winning the regional Speak-Off contest this past October at Incline Village, Nevada. To date, Sawyer has won a total of \$600.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has been providing technical conservation assistance to private landowners since the 1930's. In addition, the NRCS administers the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP). The services, technical assistance and financial assistance programs provided in 2007 included implementation of the following practices:

- Cover Crop Planting
- Fence Installation
- Forest Health Management
- Brush Management
- Agricultural Water Conservation
- Riparian Restoration
- Soil Erosion Reduction
- Wildlife Enhancement
- Mulching
- Pasture Planting
- Pest Management
- Prescribed Grazing
- Range Planting
- Water Quality Improvement
- Tree Thinning & Pruning

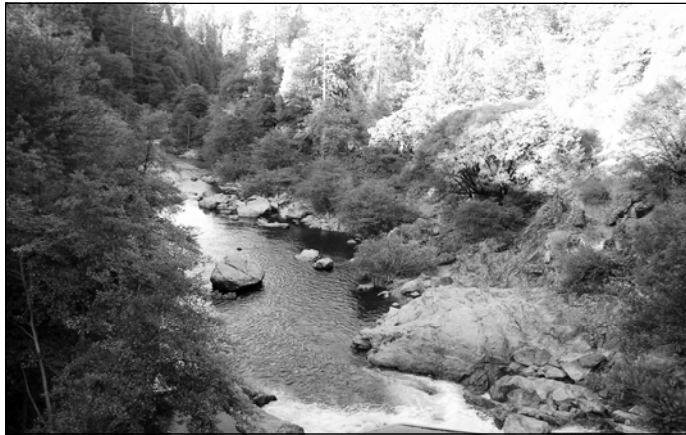


2007 NRCS SUMMARY STATISTICS

- \$ 533,347 EQIP dollars spent on 22 properties towards conservation from cost-share incentives and landowner initiatives.
- \$8,758 spent on 1 property through WHIP funding
- Over 12,285 acres implemented conservation practices through NRCS
- 880 acres of land treated resulting in improved water quality
- 165 acres of land treated resulting to improve irrigation efficiency
- 2,989 acres of grazing/forest land treated to improved the resource base



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WHAT TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN 2008...

- Scotch Broom Challenge - weed pulling events in March and April
- Arbor Day Plant Giveaway - April 25th
- Nevada County Fair Watershed Seminar Series - August 6th - 10th
- Environmental Benefits of Grazing Seminar and book signing.
- Vegetation and Forest Management for Landowners Workshops
- Check our website for more information regarding these and other events at: www.ncrcd.org

NCRCD Board of Directors

David Vertin, President
Robert Ingram, Vice-President
David Gallino
Eric Carr
Ken Roberts

Associate Directors

Keith Crabtree
Carol Hollingsworth



NCRCD & NRCS Staff



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