



Nevada County Resource Conservation District & Natural Resources Conservation Service 2015 Annual Report



Nevada County Ag in the Classroom's 1st Annual Farm Day



Nevada County Ag in the Classroom is a local grassroots collaboration of ranchers, farmers, agriculture teachers and students, businesses, food networks, and community volunteers that provide quality agriculture-related educational resources, programs, and training opportunities.

shoeing, horses, barrel racing, draft horses and much much more!

The community support for our **1st Annual Farm Day** made this event a tremendous success. The Nevada County Fairgrounds donated the use of the area during the opening day of the Draft Horse Classic; over 70 FFA students from Bear River & Nevada Union High Schools acted as personal liaisons to teachers as well as sponsoring numerous stations. Twelve schools participated and over 100 volunteers hosted and/or created more than 32 stations!



The Nevada County Resource Conservation District (RCD), Nevada County Agricultural Commissioner, Nevada County Farm Bureau, Placer Nevada Cattlewomen, Sierra Foothills Research & Extension Center, and Sierra Harvest spearheaded the Ag in the Classroom program (**Food, Fiber, Flowers, Forest**) that provides valuable resources for teachers and students in Nevada County. The goal of the program is to encourage educators to teach students about agriculture while meeting math, science, social studies, and language arts benchmarks. Through our **Farm Day** fieldtrip and hands-on projects, students learn about agriculture's role in Nevada County's history and where our food comes from.

Many local businesses and organizations made generous donations of their time and resources including: Bierwagen Farm, Nevada Irrigation District, Nevada County Farm Supply, Nevada County Beekeepers Association, Bear Yuba Land Trust, A to Z Supply, Dairy Council of California Mobile Dairy, Nevada County 4-H, Nevada County Grown, Foresthill Lumber & Wood Products, Sierra Foothills Audubon Society, Gold Country Wildlife Rescue, the U.S. Forest Service and Ambassador Smokey Bear!

We couldn't have done it without our community!

Looking forward to our **2nd Annual Farm Day** scheduled for September 22, 2016!



On September 24, 2015, Nevada County Ag in the Classroom hosted the **1st Annual Farm Day** at the Nevada County Fairgrounds. Over 700 local elementary-grade students, their teachers, and chaperones joined us for a day-long, fun, hands-on experience where lessons of agriculture and its role in our everyday lives, our county, our state, and its economy, were taught in the context of local farms and ranches.

See You There!



There were over 32 demonstration stations featuring: California commodities, FFA, birds, mule packing, cattle, irrigation, 4-H, poultry, wildlife neighbors, forestry, a mobile saw mill, welding, fishing, natural resources, irrigation, dairy & milking, bees, goats, pigs, weaving, spinning, tractors, gardening, soils, sheep & fire control, fiber, pollinators, wheat threshing, animal tracks, an apple cider press, horse



Nevada County Resource Conservation District



2015 was quite a year for the Nevada County Resource Conservation District!

- We spearheaded the Ag in the Classroom group with other like-minded organizations.
- We partnered with Chris Flores, our Nevada County Agricultural Commissioner, regarding an Agritourism Program.
- We partnered with NID on a Fish & Wildlife Grant for Quagga & Zebra mussel education.
- We continued working on our Condon Park Vegetation Management project and will have the interpretive signage installed soon.
- We participated in the annual AgSperience at the Nevada County fair.
- We produced our first agricultural calendar “Barns of Nevada County”.
- And our most outstanding event was the First Annual Farm Day!
- Nevada Irrigation District (NID) General Manager Rem Scherzinger was the featured speaker at our Conservation Dinner.
- We began filming our Nevada County Historical Ranching and Farming documentary.

MHL Display / 2016 Calendar

Each month the Madelyn Helling Library in Nevada City offers local organizations the opportunity to create an exhibit and showcase it in their lobby to educate the public regarding their organization.

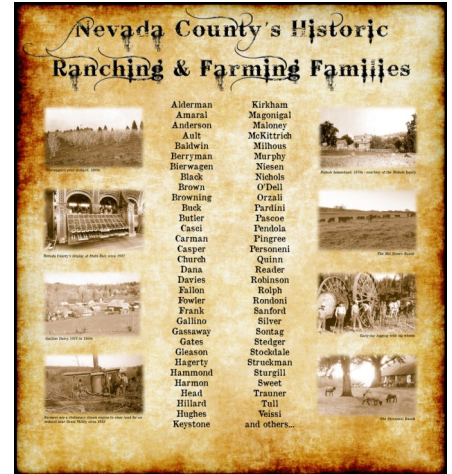
With the help of several local families, the RCD developed a display that featured historical agricultural pictures, equipment, artifacts, and names of current and past Nevada County ranches and farms.

We received excellent feedback from folks who saw the display — which led to additional discussions on the many programs the RCD offers to local landowners.

With this theme in mind, we began taking photos of old barns in Nevada County while out on our site visits.

While originally the pictures were to catalogue historical agriculture, we decided to turn these photos into a 2016 calendar.

We requested others to share their images and received the beautiful cover photo of the Personeni Ranch from a Farm Bureau member. Other barns and buildings we included were from the Brown, Frank, Reader, Vogt, Sanford, Bierwagen, Beyers, Sweet, Robinson, Ennor, Loney, Pingree, Elster, Rondoni, Peniwell, and Ghidotti ranches.



Agritourism



Agritourism refers to the act of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural, or agribusiness operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation.

Agritourism can include farms, ranches, farm stands or shops, U-pick, tours,

on-farm classes, fairs, festivals, pumpkin patches, Christmas tree farms, winery weddings, orchard dinners, youth camps, barn

dances, hunting or fishing, guest ranches, and more.

The Nevada County Agricultural Commissioner, Nevada County Farm Bureau, and the Nevada County Resource Conservation District are partnering with the UC Small Farm Agritourism Project to bring more groups together to share ideas and resources and to develop and promote visitor-serving tours.

The RCD and the Ag Commissioner are going door-to-door to local farm operations to gauge where interest may be for this program.

Nevada County Agriculture Documentary

The NCRCD has served the agriculture community in Nevada County and western Sierra County for 71 years. We support and honor the hard working families who continue to provide food for our tables, care for the land, preserve open space, and help keep Nevada County an agricultural community.

In 2012 we honored 17 long-time families who have ranched and farmed the same land as their ancestors. Some of these families are 7th and 8th generation working ranches and farms their grandparents and great-grandparents worked.



David Gallino

This legacy is a testament to values passed down that acknowledge the importance of knowing where your food comes from, preserving the land for future generations, and promoting locally grown and raised food.

NCRCD Vision:

Our vision is to educate and assist landowners and land managers in establishing a balance between a high quality rural environment, a biologically diverse landscape, and a healthy economy for the community.



Jo McProud & Alan Haight

We are always looking for ways to promote and support our agricultural community in their efforts to maintain our open space, provide us food, flowers, fiber, and forest products, and to honor the legacy of our founding families.

Through their hard work and commitment to preserving the landscape of Nevada County, we have begun to collate their history and stories that ultimately is the story of Nevada County.

We are working on a professional documentary that showcases these 17 families and many other ranchers, farmers, and timber producers that will be a testament to our mission statement and to educate the public about where their food and resources come from.



Don Sweet

This documentary will be shown locally in 2016 and we are working on showing it on PBS and its' affiliate stations.

The Nevada County Resource Conservation District was formed with a mission to promote responsible resource management.

"From the cotton in our jeans and the food on our tables, to our landscaped yards and playing fields, we all depend on agriculture. The survival of this vital industry depends on educating and encouraging the next generation of decision-makers." – from California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom.



John Reader



Myra Davies-Easley



Chris Bierwagen



Tom Browning & Pat Browning



Rob Graham



Molly Nakahara & Paul Glowaski

Envirothon, Range Camp, & Speak Off Contest



Brianna Cebollero, Wyatt Price, Kari Jarvis, Heath Mullen

Each year, the Nevada County Resource Conservation District sponsors local high school students in competitions and events that help them learn more about resource conservation, agriculture, and the environment, while challenging their peers and sharpening their public speaking skills.

The **National FFA Environmental and Natural Resources CDE** is a competitive event that focuses on testing students individual and team problem solving and decision making skills in environmental and natural resources; a national and global issues interview; soil tests and profiles; air and water analysis; GPS use; waste management; and more. Each team competes at local and state levels for the privilege of representing their home state at the National FFA Convention & Expo.

This year we sponsored the California State winners, Nevada Union FFA students Brianna Cebollero, Wyatt Price, Kari Jarvis, and Heath Mullen. They placed **FOURTH IN THE NATION!**



Range Camp is designed to offer an appreciation of the extent, importance, and value of California's rangelands and natural resources. It fosters an appreciation for several fields of applied science and management through interaction with university faculty and experienced professionals in classroom and field activities. The top two campers are awarded an all-expense-paid trip to represent California and the Pacific Islands at SRM's High School Youth Forum held in conjunction with its national science meeting each year in Sacramento, CA.



Jordan Somervill

The **California Association of Resource Conservation District's Speak-off Contest** is designed to assist high school students in learning about our natural resources and gain experience in public speaking. We sponsored the contest for Nevada County high school students and Bear River's Jordan Somervill won the local contest. He then went on to compete in the regional contest in Yosemite, where he won **FIRST place!** And finally, Jordan moved up to the state competition where he placed **FOURTH in the STATE!**

CONGRATULATIONS TO NEVADA COUNTY'S FFA STUDENTS!!!

Advisory Visit Program

The RCD has a **Natural Resources Advisory Visit Program** 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.

The purpose of the Advisory Visit Program is to provide contact with landowners who are interested in natural resources management on their property.

Examples of the technical services, information, assistance, and assessments we offer are:

- Soils information
- Erosion control
- Drainage issues
- Rural road maintenance
- Pond management
- Pasture management
- Rangeland management
- Fire ecology
- Forest health management
- Livestock water development
- Cross fencing
- Soil nutrient management
- Wildlife habitat improvement
- Pest management
- Defensible space
- Watershed issues



Since 2014 we have provided over 132 individual site visits comprising over 2,560 acres. Our program addresses a multitude of resource and environmental concerns. In the past two years most of these concerns centered around the California drought and the many issues directly effected by it: forest health, fire ecology, pond management, watershed issues, etc.

Condon Park Vegetation Management & Forest Health Project

The Condon Park Project meets the objectives of the RCD’s mission statement through conservation education, recreational land restoration, soil and water management, urban resource conservation, and wildlife habitat enhancement.

Working with the City of Grass Valley, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Sierra Pacific Industries, along with other local companies, ensures that the RCD works closely within

regarding forestry health; increased native plant diversity by removing competitive invasive species; improving wildlife habitat; and improving the forest stand within the park by fuels reduction for forest health.



In addition to the many signs denoting our native plants, we will also be placing three interpretive signs:

- What Makes a Healthy Forest?
- Looks Can Be Deceiving
- All Plants Are Not Equal



our community to address all conservation issues and meets the educational needs of the residents of Nevada County.

The benefits of this new open area within the park include: education

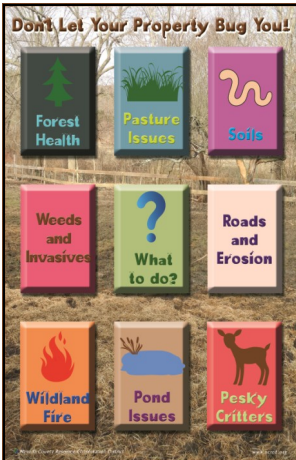
Nevada County Fair / AgSperience

Each year the RCD continues to fulfill it’s mission by promoting resource management at the Nevada County Fair. We are a part of the *AgSperience* program at the fair and offer a myriad of educational and informational literature, handouts, charts, and “how to” flyers.

We offer technical assistance, answer questions, and provide referrals to other appropriate agencies regarding issues of concern for landowners.

This year the topics of concern centered around the problems a fourth year of drought has created:

- Forestry health
 - * Bark beetles
 - * Dead and dying trees
 - * Tree removal
 - * Defensible space
- Watershed issues
 - * Pond management
 - * Erosion
 - * Soils
- Invasive species



Conservation Seminars / Workshops

The RCD 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, and proper resource management.

In 2015 we offered 7 different seminars with a total of 361 people attending.

Our partnerships with other organizations such as Sierra Foothills Audubon Society, Nevada County Fairgrounds, Master Gardeners of Nevada County, Sierra Pacific Industries, NorCal Bats, Point Blue Conservation Science, and many others, demonstrate the common goal we have of educating local property owners to use best management practices to conserve the natural resources of Nevada County.



Natural Resources Conservation Service



On April 27, 1935, Congress passed Public Law 74-46, in which it recognized that "the wastage of soil and moisture resources on farm, grazing, and forest lands... is a menace to the national welfare" and established the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) as a permanent agency in the USDA.

In 1994, SCS's name was changed to the **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** to better reflect the broadened scope of the agency's concerns. In doing so, Congress reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to the conservation of the nation's soil and water resources, first made 75 years ago, that continues to this day.

NRCS has expanded to become a conservation leader for all natural resources, ensuring private lands are conserved, restored, and more resilient to environmental challenges, like climate change.



Seventy percent of the land in the United States is privately owned, making stewardship by private landowners absolutely critical to the health of our nation's environment.

NRCS works with landowners through conservation planning and assistance designed to benefit the soil, water, air, plants, and animals that result in productive lands and healthy ecosystems.

Since 1944, the Nevada County Resource Conservation District has partnered with the NRCS to fulfill both our goals, visions, and mission statements.



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2015 First Annual Farm Day

