



**SPECIAL
POINTS
OF INTEREST:**

WORKING TOWARDS THE
PLAN

INNOVATIVE
EDUCATION &
OUTREACH
ENDEAVORS

GARDENING CHOICES:
NON-INVASIVES &
CALIFORNIA NATIVES

ARUNDO IN GLENN
COUNTY

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Planning THE PLAN

The Saga Continues . . .

by Claudia Street, Conservation Planner

draft Lower Stony Creek Watershed Restoration Plan (Plan)

We might as well put it in writing . . . landowners and agency folks are all wondering **when** the Plan will be finalized and **if** it will reflect their concerns and more importantly, **how** will it ever be put to use. Honestly, haven't you all asked yourself these questions?

I am placing this article on the first page, straight out of the box. No sense in dancing around a touchy subject. But do read on as I am a true believer in wonderful things to come.

On October 7, 2008, an LAC meeting was held to receive all final comments to the second, draft Plan. To say the least, the group came responsibly prepared with substantial concerns. As a result of the meeting, we have revised our revisions and created a revised timeline for a revised Plan. Yes, we are poking fun at ourselves, but we do take our jobs very seriously and our job is to provide landowners, resource agencies and stakeholders with a document that will reflect their input and be responsible to the resources we are trying to protect. And as a reminder, the intent of the Plan is to serve as a guidance document for addressing the issues and concerns of Lower Stony Creek landowners, resource agencies, and other stakeholders regarding the physical and biological integrity of the Lower Stony Creek Watershed. The Plan will provide specific actions and activities that support restoration of the Lower Watershed to protect property from erosion, enhance riparian habitat, and for the removal of invasive plant species.

THE NEW TIMELINE:

- October 31, 2008: Received all final comments from LAC
- December 1, 2008: third, draft Plan available from RCD
- January 8, 2009: TAC Meeting to review third, draft Plan
- January 8, 2009: LAC Meeting to review third, draft Plan
- February 27, 2009: FINAL Lower Stony Creek Watershed Restoration Plan

Now for my encouraging words . . . your RCD staff is working diligently to seek out grant sources and secure implementation funding. We have visited other project sites and are enthusiastic and excited about what **can** be accomplished on Lower Stony Creek. But, this isn't about us, it is about the landowners and their desires to go forward and make a difference on the creek. We are just happy to be here and assist.

The Plan, written by staff at Glenn County Resource Conservation District (RCD), is funded by the CALFED Watershed Program through the California Department of Water Resources (DWR).

If you are interested in a copy of the draft Plan, please call the RCD at (530) 934-4601 x4 or visit our website at www.glenncountyrcd.org.





TAMARIX LEAF BEETLE

aka:

*Diorhabda
elongata*

OR

Salt Cedar Beetle

Size Range:

Adults: 5-6 mm long

& 2.5 mm wide

Larvae: range from

1-9 mm long

For more information on
the Tamarisk Leaf Beetle
life cycle and
testing procedures:

www.tamariskcoalition.org

OR

Glenn County RCD

Tamarix Leaf Beetle

A mighty, minuscule beetle is munching away on those non-native, invasive Tamarix shrubs in Lower Stony Creek. You would have to look hard to find them, and they have not yet technically reached the status of "established", but we are keeping our fingers and toes and bug-sweeping nets crossed.

In September, 2007, the Tamarix Leaf Beetle (*Diorhabda elongata*) was released on Lower Stony Creek by the CA Department of Food and Ag (CDFA) in conjunction with the RCD. The releases continued in 2008. In July, approximately 10,000 second generation beetles (the second cycle of beetles to emerge for the season) were collected on Cache Creek in Yolo County and brought to their new home in Glenn County. Again in late August, another 10,000 critters (third generation) were swept into nets, carefully transferred into pillow cases and transported via Coleman ice chests to join the forces on Lower Stony.

Baldo Villegas, CDFA Associate Environmental Research Scientist and Claudia Street, RCD Conservation Planner, carefully monitored the beetles throughout the year. Our last assessment for the season took place in October and the observations supported prior findings that second generation releases appear to be the most successful at remaining on-site and successfully reproducing. Damage to Tamarix bushes was noted and beetle larvae in various stages was reported. According to CDFA, the goal is for populations to become "established". The term is defined once adults and larvae have been documented to survive two winters. At that point, populations have taken up residence and should continue feeding on local Tamarix bushes for many years to come.

You may be wondering what happens if and when the Tamarix Leaf Beetles have consumed every last Tamarix in Glenn County. Years of studies have shown that when substitute food supplies are presented, the beetles simply choose to starve to death. They are considered preferential feeders and as food supplies diminish, beetle populations diminish proportionally. To add to the security of these studies, there are no other existing plants in California (either naturally occurring or planted as an agricultural product) that are closely related to Tamarix.

For comparative purposes, in Yolo County's Cache Creek, the beetles were on site for three years (including the two winter criteria) before being deemed "established" and widespread visual damage to the Tamarix bushes has taken 5-6 years. Utilizing the capabilities of this biological control insect has the potential to significantly reduce the populations of this invasive plant while saving future project implementation dollars.



Baldo Villegas, CDFA, with Lee and Ry Smith releasing Tamarix Leaf Beetles



EDUCATION & OUTREACH

The Glenn County RCD's Education and Outreach Committee is dedicated to engaging local youth and the community at large in resource conservation educational opportunities and information.

RCD HIGH SCHOOL SPEAK-OFF CONTEST "The RCD's Role in Wildfire Recovery & Restoration"

Bravery comes in many forms and standing in front of a crowd and working through public speaking jitters is certainly one of them. But, as many employers and professionals will attest to, the person who speaks with confidence and maturity has a big step up on the rest of us.

All the more reason to commend the three students who researched, practiced and performed their speeches at the annual Glenn County RCD Speak-Off Contest in September. This year's topic, "The RCD's Role in Wildfire Recovery & Restoration" allowed for creativity and individual interpretations on the subject.

Jose Mendoza, an Orland High School Senior placed first with his take on how research, long-range planning and education play important roles in fire prevention. Orland Junior High School student, Karissa Leonard placed second as she focused on the use of fire retardant and water supplies on rangelands during wildfires. The causes of fires and reforestation strategies highlighted Hamilton High School Junior B.J. Rosen's third place speech. Cash prizes of \$75, \$50 and \$25 were awarded.



Speak-Off Winners: Jose Mendoza, 1st Place; Karissa Leonard, 2nd place; B.J. Rosen, 3rd Place

PLANT RIGHT Keep Invasive Plants in Check



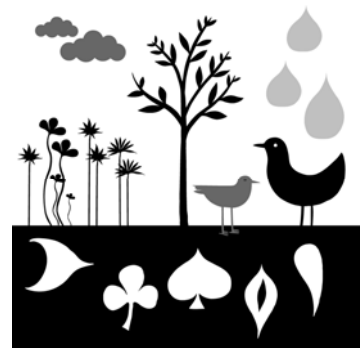
Fall is the preferred time for planting in North State gardens. Our unpredictable springs and hot, dry summers are tough on newly transplanted flowers, shrubs and trees. Not only should we consider *when* to plant, but more than ever, *what* we plant is of prime importance.

Just ask any farmer or rancher the outlook for water supplies in years to come and you will go away with a new criteria for your plant selection: drought tolerant landscaping. Then if you ask a landowner along Stony Creek about the horror of invasive plants (Arundo and Tamarisk), you will want to refer to a new publication put out by PLANT RIGHT.

Every smart gardening choice makes a significant difference to your water uses, the potential for introducing an aggressive non-native species to our area, and to wildlife (birds and butterflies) in California. Your choices can make a real difference! And now there are thousands of gorgeous non-invasive plants to meet your gardening needs.

Ask your local nursery professional to suggest non-invasive plants that will flourish in your garden. Some nurseries even specialize in California native plants and the selections provide beautiful alternatives to standard choices.

For more information on PLANT RIGHT, visit:
WWW.PLANTRIGHT.ORG





EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Big Splash at the Glenn County Farm Day

Every year, the Glenn County Farm Bureau hosts a very fun and educational event for all 4th grade classes in the county. This year's topic was "Every Day is Earth Day for Farmers & Ranchers". The RCD staff prepared a hands-on experimental station titled: "Water Quality-Dirty to Clean". The presentation discussed the water cycle and demonstrated the value of maintaining vegetation cover (rangeland forage and/or cover crops) on ag lands. Vegetation functions as a filter for water, in the form of rain or irrigation, as it travels across farming fields and pastures. The goal is to prevent "dirty" water from entering our creeks and rivers. Students were able to create dirty water, get their hands wet and visualize the process while having fun in assisting with the experiment!! RCD staff landed a spot on the evening news and coverage in the local papers.



RCD Staff left to right, Claudia Street, Conservation Planner and Kandi Manhart, District Manager with assistance from 4th grade students at Glenn County Farm Day

Do you know of a classroom where a Natural Resource Demonstration might supply a specific curriculum need?

Give the Glenn County RCD a call!!!

530.934.4601 x4

Murdock School Pioneer Days Landini Divide Ranch & Dick Mudd Ranch

Seven years ago, Murdock teacher Jill Egly had the vision of providing students with the chance to head to the hills and discover the past. The fourth grade curriculum covers California's pioneer history and Mrs. Egly understands the value of providing outdoor educational opportunities whenever possible. Mrs. Egly and the Landini Family believed in the same dream and Murdock School Pioneer Days was born.

This year, students had the opportunity to see calves roped, doctored and branded. There were hands-on learning stations where students made primitive style ropes, roped a steer dummy, listened to experts explain the roles of birds of prey and their impact on domestic livestock, identified native plants and animals, learned about the importance of clean water, and participated in community service projects.

The Willows Unified School District partnered with a diverse group of local agencies, organizations and community volunteers. Dedicated members of the beef industry from Willows, Elk Creek, Cottonwood and Gridley helped to make the days special. The US Forest Service, local RCD and NRCS offices, Elk Creek Buckaretttes, Glenn-Colusa Cattlewomen, Yolo Land & Cattle, Western Cowman Magazine and Willows FFA Chapter all came together to help out with the many learning activities and presentations. The Mudd Family Ranch was the site for animal and plant health, barn building, resource conservation and restoration presentations. The Landini Divide Ranch provided a cattle working demonstration, hands-on learning activities and served a delicious tri-tip BBQ lunch.



FFA members lend a helping hand to 4th grade students at the roping station during the 2008 Pioneer Day event

WHY IS ARUNDO SUCH A THREAT TO CALIFORNIA'S STREAMS?

WHAT IS ARUNDO?: As prevalent as Arundo is in Glenn County, let's start with the basics. Arundo (*Arundo donax*), also called giant reed or giant cane, is an invasive non-native plant with stems that resemble bamboo and leaves that look like corn. It is an extremely fast-growing plant that can grow up to 4 inches in one day and reaches a height of 30 feet. Arundo is found primarily in moist places (just look at Lower Stony Creek), usually along streams, but provides little food or habitat for insects, bird and other wildlife.

ARUNDO IS AGGRESSIVELY INVADING OUR CREEKS & WATERWAYS: It spreads quickly . . . break off a 2" piece, let it float downstream and you have a new plant. Even in thickly vegetated areas, Arundo crowds out native plants. Over the course of time, colonies merge to form large infestations that can cover vast tracts of riparian (creekside) habitat. When colonies form in the middle of the creek (this exact scenario is occurring in Lower Stony Creek!), the massive invasion acts to deflect water with extreme force to the opposing creek banks. Severe erosion occurs, sloughing off large tracts of land valued as personal property. Thankfully, in Glenn County we don't have Hurricane Katrina, but we have Arundo which is causing devastation **every single year**. We just don't receive spectacular news coverage or national sympathy.

ARUNDO + FIRE = DANGER 2 U: Arundo is highly flammable and burns even when green. When Arundo carries fire into and through a waterway, native riparian trees are killed and nearby homes, crops and buildings may be destroyed. Do you remember the Orland fire in June 2008? Arundo LOVES a fire! It grows back quickly from its roots with no competition from other plants. It may seem elementary, but do the math:

Arundo + drought conditions + high Valley winds = a constant threat to precious human life and personal property.

ARUNDO DISPLACES NATIVE PLANTS: Arundo is a tough competitor due to its ability to grow so quickly. Arundo infestations can and are reducing our rich, creek ecosystems to a wasteland of pure Arundo. Say "See ya Later" to our lovely cottonwoods, alders and willows that have long been a part of our heritage and home to wildlife. Plus, a single plant can consume an estimated 300-600 gallons of water per day!

ARUNDO DESTROYS FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT: The riparian forests along our creeks and rivers support a vastly diverse number of plants and animals. These areas make up some of the richest and most threatened ecological communities in the state. Numerous bird, fish, reptile and mammal species that depend on riparian areas are declining across the country. Arundo contributes to this loss of habitat by displacing native plants that provide the necessary food, shelter and breeding habitat for these species.

THE FUTURE OF ARUNDO IN GLENN COUNTY: Begin by repeating after me: "Death to Arundo!!" Okay, the credit goes to Kara Baker for the mantra, but you get my point. Currently, there is an exotic insect herbivore present in California's Santa Clara watershed that has been discovered feeding on Arundo. This means the parasitic wasp's, *Tetramesa romana*, native home is NOT California (native to Mediterranean climates of southern Europe), but has somehow hitched a ride to the USA and the larvae are now feeding on young Arundo shoots in Southern California. The wasp is in a quarantine testing facility in Texas, but since it is already present in California, testing for host specificity in the field is possible and redistribution of the insect is easier and less risky. To transfer the insect to areas within California, the CA Department of Food and Ag (CDFA) applies for an internal permit and then would request permission from the Ag Commissioner in the county of distribution. Since Glenn County has been working with CDFA in the past with the Tamarix Leaf Beetle, CDFA is looking at Glenn and Yolo Counties as possible release sites for 2009. The initial comments from the experts doing the research state that the wasp will **not** yield extensive damage working by itself. Perhaps in future combinations with other agents (ie. a specialist microbial pathogen or a project using a combination of chemical and mechanical removal approaches) it may be more effective.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?: Landowners and small community groups can make a big difference in ridding our creeks and waterways of this noxious weed.

Learn more and be part of the solution ~ you **CAN** make a difference!

In spite of the serious threat Arundo poses ~ it **CAN** be controlled.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) & Conservation Planning

EQIP was reauthorized in the 2008 Farm Bill and awards cost share assistance to projects which provide significant environmental benefit on ag producing lands. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has outlined specific practices that are eligible for cost share programs. Eligible farmers and ranchers may apply for EQIP program benefits at any time. Application ranking periods are established to allow evaluation of projects and awarding of contracts based upon an environmental score for each application that achieves the natural resource benefits identified by local, state and national priorities. Each application is ranked based on criteria developed with input from Local Work Groups and Stakeholders.

According to Conservation Planner Claudia Street, EQIP can assist eligible producers remove exotic weeds including Arundo and Tamarisk from Stony Creek. Cost share assistance up to \$1,840.00 per acre may be awarded to those applicants that come in early and work with the Glenn County Resource Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service to develop a conservation plan. "The conservation plan is the foundation on which any restoration project is successful" says Street. "It is critical that the plan includes a follow-up treatment when managing Arundo and Tamarisk infestations".

Eligible producers engaged in livestock or crop production on eligible land may apply for EQIP program benefits. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, grassland, and pastureland.

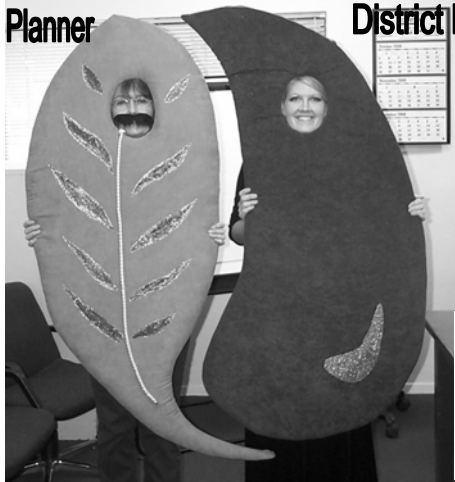
For more information on conservation planning, please contact Claudia Street at (530) 934-4601 x126.

The Value of a Walking Advertisement
<p>Not everyone in Glenn County knows about the RCD and it can be a disadvantage as we try to forge new relationships. We are a staff of two so it is really important to be creative and innovative. Other RCD's have the luxury of hiring an image marketing firm or web designer but we are extremely resourceful and look for inspiration in free publications that come our way. A recent document addressed the marketing dilemma and created an eight-step plan that included: Communicating; Know Your Audience; Have a Plan; Develop the Message; Maintain a Consistent Image; Be Creative; Pursue New Audiences; and Remember the Value of a Walking Advertisement.</p> <p>Some inexpensive fabric, an entire roll of duct tape, a few bottles of glitter and you have it! Please note the resemblance to our GCRCD logo.</p>

<p>GCRCD Website:</p> <p>www.glenncountyrcd.org</p>
<p>The Glenn County Resource Conservation District (RCD) is continually updating its website.</p> <p>The website offers information about the Resource Conservation District including education and outreach projects, workshops, meetings, and available resources such as the documents prepared for or by the RCD for the Lower Stony Creek Watershed and Glenn County.</p> <p>Lower Stony Creek Watershed documents available for download from the website are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Draft Lower Stony Creek Watershed Restoration Plan ◆ The Landowner's Manual ◆ Stony Creek Watershed Assessment ◆ Monitoring Plan (Lower Stony Creek Environmental Monitoring Program and Quality Assurance Project Plan for the Stony Creek Project or QAPP) ◆ Arundo Mapping Project ◆ Bioengineering & Erosion Management Workshop

**Claudia Street
Conservation Planner**

**Kandi Manhart
District Manager**



I M P O R T A N T

Please help us update our mailing list. Notify us if you have a change of address or if you would like to be removed from the list. **THANK YOU!!**

UPPER STONY CREEK RAPID WATERSHED ASSESSMENT



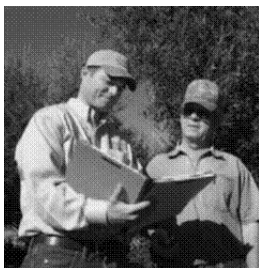
In Glenn County, a unique partnership between the Resource Conservation District (RCD), The California Rangeland Conservation Coalition and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has led to the development of a rapid watershed assessment in the Upper Stony Creek Watershed. A rapid watershed assessment is a document that is used to increase the speed and efficiency of generating information to guide conservation implementation, as well as the speed and efficiency of putting it into the hands of local decision makers.

According to Rob Vlach, NRCS District Conservationist, rapid watershed assessments provide initial estimates of where conservation investments would best address the concerns of landowners, conservation districts, and other community organizations and stakeholders. These assessments help landowners and local leaders set priorities and determine the best actions to achieve their goals.

During a recent Glenn-Colusa Cattlemen's meeting held in Elk Creek, local landowners were asked to identify their specific resource concerns. Of the public responses received, management of elk depredation on irrigated lands and improvement of habitat for local deer populations received the most interest. Fuels management issues in the upper watershed has a long history with residents in western Glenn County and was identified as a serious, ongoing threat. Other alternatives voiced included invasive weeds and brush, roads, groundwater development and grazing management. Based on the public responses that received the most interest, a focus on the first two alternatives, elk depredation and deer habitat along with fuels management, would help provide for long-term sustainability of working landscapes in the area. The proposed assessment will offer paths towards reduced depredation (elk), development of new economic resources (deer) and protection of sensitive soils and existing agricultural infrastructure (fuels management).

Proposed actions include mapping the extent and characteristics of deer and elk habitat in the CA Department of Fish and Game hunting zones. Once geographic areas where limitations of elk and deer populations occur are identified, NRCS will specify practices that may be of some value addressing these limitations. Collaboration with Cal-Fire and the Mendocino National Forest has already begun to inventory the extent and types of fuels in the upper watershed where treatments may be most effective in minimizing erosion acceleration from wildfire and damage to infrastructure and private property. Further surveys and cooperation will specify NRCS practices that may be applicable in the management of fuel loads.

For more information, contact the Willows NRCS office, 934-4601 x3.



"Rapid watershed assessments provide initial estimates of where conservation investments would best address the concerns of landowners, conservation districts, and other community organizations and stakeholders. These assessments help landowners and local leaders set priorities and determine the best actions to achieve their goals." Rob Vlach, NRCS

Funds for this newsletter have been provided by a grant from the CALFED Watershed Program and administered by the Department of Water Resources

Please contact the Glenn County Resource Conservation District if you have natural resource concerns or issues you would like the RCD to address.

E-mail: Kandi.Manhart@ca.nacdn.net

Fax: (530) 934-8667

Phone: (530) 934-4601 x4

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Wishing a Wonderful Holiday Season to All Happy Thanksgiving & Merry Christmas

From your RCD Directors, Associate Directors and Staff

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