



GLENN COUNTY



RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2009-2010 ANNUAL REPORT



**Glenn County Resource Conservation District
2009-2010 Annual Report**

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November 10, 2010

Dear Community:

This has been an exciting year of growth, new grant projects and expanded awareness of the benefits that the Glenn County Resource Conservation District (RCD) brings to our area. We have successfully weathered the economic storm of 2008-2009 using internal fiscal responsibility measures and creative forward thinking on the part of Directors and Staff. This current period of accomplishments will always be measured with care and respect as they relate to an unpredictable economic climate. We will think positively, be proactive, listen to our community members and resource managers and go forward with pride and commitment.

The County of Glenn continues to be an incredible place to live, work, recreate and visit. Farmers, ranchers and residents know this intimately and the word is getting out that this county is becoming an even greater destination point. Our mission is both contemporary and forward thinking and has applications we have yet to explore. This statement of dedication continues to motivate us: ***“To promote a sustainable, economically healthy county, through the management of natural resources, maintain a desirable environment, and address local resource issues in a timely manner.”***

We continue to encourage relationships and partnerships with landowners, farmers, ranchers, gardeners and concerned citizens. In addition, providing educational opportunities that foster awareness amongst our youth of the rich agricultural heritage and bountiful natural resources continues to be a priority for us.

In conclusion, the RCD Board of Directors and Staff are pleased to present this FY 2009/2010 Annual Report to you and our community. The enclosure is filled with a snap shot of projects, events and more that occurred within the last twelve months with support from the our partners and the community.

Sincerely,

Mike Landini
President

INTRODUCTION

Established in 1989, the Glenn County Resource Conservation District (RCD) was organized to provide leadership to help people conserve, improve, and sustain our natural resources, our environment, and our county's economic viability.

Our mission is:

“To promote a sustainable, economically healthy county, through the management of natural resources, maintain a desirable environment, and address local resource issues in a timely manner.”

Our function is:

“To make available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land manager with conservation of soil, water and related natural resources.”

As a “Special District”, organized under the California Public Resources Code, Division 9, we have many powers to carry out our goals and objectives. Priority issues include outreach and education on water resources, maintaining our agricultural land base, range management, control and/or eradication of invasive species, as well as evaluating the potential impacts of loss of wildlife habitat, maintaining air quality, and researching and promoting alternative methods for energy. One of the primary areas the RCD has actively been working in is the Lower Stony Creek Watershed.

The RCD Board, comprised of local landowner volunteers, dedicates their personal time to represent the local voice on natural resource concerns. ***It is estimated that the volunteers worked over 2,600 hours during this period.*** We thank them and their hard work in making Glenn County a better place to live!

The RCD is funded entirely by grants, donations, and contracts, and receives no general tax revenues. Thank you sponsors!

PURPOSE OF RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

“The Legislature hereby declares that resource conservation is of fundamental importance to the prosperity and welfare of the people of this state.”

Conservation Districts emerged during the 1930s as a way to prevent the soil erosion problems of the Dust Bowl from recurring. Formed as independent local liaisons between the federal government and landowners, Conservation Districts have always worked closely with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service).

In California, they are termed Resource Conservation Districts (RCD) and are "Special Districts" organized under the state Public Resources Code, Division 9. Each RCD has a locally elected or appointed volunteer board of directors made up of landowners in that RCD. RCDs address a wide variety of conservation issues such as forest fuel management, water and air quality, wildlife habitat restoration, soil erosion control, conservation education, and much more.

California now has 105 Resource Conservation Districts, most of which are funded largely through grants. A few receive limited funds through county property tax revenues. The Department of Conservation and the Natural Resources Conservation Service provide training and in-kind support, as well as a watershed grant program for RCDs.

Today, RCDs work in urban areas as well as with farmers and ranchers on agricultural-related concerns. California's size and geographical diversity, along with an ever-growing population, make natural resources stewardship a great challenge in the Golden State.

Source: California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, www.carcd.org

PROJECTS

Lower Stony Creek Watershed Project

- ⇒ \$400,000 for a watershed plan awarded by the DWR (*Years 07-10*)
- ⇒ \$7,500 for riparian restoration awarded by the USFWS (*Years 07-12*)
- ⇒ \$5,000 for Arundo removal awarded by private gravel miner (*Years 07-12*)
- ⇒ \$203,995 for a Watershed Coordinator through the DOC Watershed Grant Program (*Years 08-12*)

Growing Glenn – A County Farmers' Market

- ⇒ \$79,021 to develop a certified farmers market awarded by USDA FMPP (*Years 10-11*)

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

- ⇒ \$21,887 for planning awarded by CA Fire Safe Council – BLM Grant (*Years 10-12*)

Pollinator Conservation on California Farms Project

- ⇒ \$7,590 for planning awarded by CA Fire Safe Council – BLM Grant (*Years 10-12*)

Total \$724,993 Project Investment

FEE FOR SERVICE

Colusa Glenn Subwatershed Program – Outreach and Education Memorandum of Understanding

The Colusa Glenn Subwatershed Program was developed to assist members of their non-profit 501 (c) 6 to manage their discharges of agricultural waste to surface or ground waters so they do not cause or contribute to surface or ground water pollution; and, to enhance and improve water quality in the Sacramento River Watershed while sustaining the economic viability of agriculture, associated values of managed wetlands and sources of safe drinking water. The purpose and goals undertaken by the MOU are for the RCD to provide Outreach and Education services to help meet their obligations to the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition, thus to comply with the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Conditional Waiver for Discharges from Irrigated Lands (Resolution No. R5-2003-015). Commonly, it is referred to as the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program.

HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS

Lower Stony Creek Watershed Project

In 2004, the RCD organized a Landowner Advisory Committee (LAC) to help guide the RCD in implementing projects in the Lower Stony Creek Watershed. The RCD also organized a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of local, state, and federal government agencies with interests in the natural resources of the watershed. While the LAC acts as the voice of landowners, TAC assists the RCD in reviewing environmental reports and provides advice on how to be successful in implementing projects to the benefit of all those involved in the watershed. These two groups guide the Lower Stony Creek Watershed Project.

During 2005-2006, the RCD finished drafting a watershed assessment and analysis, established a demonstration site for *Arundo donax* and *Tamarix* removal and bank stabilization and implemented the initial practices, finished drafting a monitoring program, and worked on a Memorandum of Agreement to implement a Permit Coordination Program. A Notice of Determination for the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Lower Stony Creek Permit Coordination Program was also achieved. In addition, the RCD received funding to develop a watershed restoration plan to begin removing *Arundo* and *Tamarix* just below Black Butte Dam.

During 2007-2008, the RCD began focusing on developing the Lower Stony Creek Watershed Restoration Plan (Plan) with the LAC and TAC. In addition, 20 acres of *Arundo donax* was removed just Below Black Butte Dam, workshops were held for stakeholders, such as the Bioengineering and Erosion Management Workshop, there was continued effort to implement landowner driven projects, and the majority of all Stony Creek Watershed Project documents were posted on www.glenncountyrcd.org.

Within this reporting period the Plan and companion publication, Lower Stony Creek Aerial & LiDAR Atlas, were completed and presented at LAC and TAC meetings. The Plan will serve as a useful planning document for landowners who wish to begin implementation projects on their property.



Growing Glenn – A County Farmers’ Market

A Farmers Market Promotion Program, funded through the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, was established to promote the direct marketing of agricultural products which includes local farmers markets. Farmers markets are an integral part of the urban/farm linkage and have continued to rise in popularity, mostly due to the growing consumer interest in obtaining fresh products directly from the farm. Farmers markets allow consumers to have access to locally grown, farm fresh produce, enables farmers the opportunity to develop a personal relationship with their customers, and cultivate consumer loyalty with the farmers who grows the produce. Direct marketing of farm products through farmers markets continues to be an important sales outlet for agricultural producers nationwide. As of mid-2009, there were 6,132 farmers markets operating throughout the U.S. This is a 16 percent increase from 2009.

The RCD was successful in receiving a two year grant from this program for the development of a farmers market in Glenn County. The initial 2010 Market Season was established as a four month event that would rotate between Orland and Willows. Funds from the grant will pay for market staff for the two year period and advertisement expenses. Critical to the grant proposal was the inclusion of the development of a Market Association that would assure the long-term sustainability of the market past the term of the grant.

Collaboration between city and county officials, potential new and existing vendors and community members proved a great amount of interest in the grant project, Growing Glenn - A County Farmers Market. The Market Season kicked off in June, 2010 with great success and support from farmers, ranchers, crafters, food vendors, musicians and the community.



Community Wildfire Protection Plan

In 2009, the RCD submitted a grant proposal to the California Fire Safe Council for the development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for Western Glenn County. According to the California Fire Alliance website, a CWPP enables a community to plan how it will reduce the risk of wildfire. The plan identifies strategic sites and methods for fuel reduction projects across the landscape and jurisdictional

boundaries. Benefits of having a CWPP include National Fire Plan funding priority for projects identified in a CWPP. The United States Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management can expedite the implementation of fuel treatments, identified in a CWPP, through alternative environmental compliance options offered under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act.

Following the firestorms of 2008 in the North State, the RCD proposed the concept to landowners on the west side of the county regarding the concept of a CWPP. Situated adjacent to the Mendocino National Forest, the western region of Glenn County is at risk from catastrophic wildfires originating from within the forest and from excessive fuel loads that exist in the lower chaparral and blue oak woodlands. Within the forest, increased use of roads by tourists and hunters continue to pose threats of fires ignited by misuse. In the lower rangelands, invasive weeds have significantly reduced the economic value of rangelands while increasing fuel loads along rural roads frequented by visitors to the forest. A collaborative, unified effort to address fire and land management issues is seen by local residents and resource agencies as a necessary tool to meet the needs of fire safety, fuel load reduction, education and outreach, communities at-risk and the management of all valued natural resources. A CWPP supports the need for planning on a landscape scale as a proactive approach to preventing devastating events from occurring in western Glenn County.



Pollinator Conservation on California Farms Project

The RCD is responsible for monitoring a rangeland pollinator project spearheaded by The Xerces Society who received USDA NRCS funds through a Conservation Innovation Grant. This project, the first of its kind in California, will result in the development and testing of pollinator habitat job sheets for six regions of the United States and is field testing wildflower species selection, site preparation techniques, planting strategies and weed control methods to promote native bee pollinators on rangelands.

This three year project has quickly become a model for collaboration between conservation groups, agencies and a willing and dedicated landowner. According to a Press Release for The Xerces Society, pollinators are essential to our environment. The ecological service they provide is necessary for the reproduction of nearly seventy percent of the world's flowering plants. This includes more than two-thirds of the world's crop species, whose fruits and seeds together provide over thirty percent of the foods and beverages we consume. The economic value of insect-pollinated crops in the United States was estimated to be \$18.9 billion in 2000. Native insects are responsible for pollinating at least \$3 billion worth of these crops.

Native pollinators across the United States are in decline, especially in heavily managed landscapes. Managed pollinators, including honey bees, are in need of increased pollen diversity to help bolster their resistance to disease, pesticides and

other stressors. The 2008 Farm Bill explicitly establishes pollinators as a priority resource concern.

In response to this concern, the NRCS awarded two grants to The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. This local project has brought local, state and national attention to the issue at hand and the efforts of Glenn County to be forerunners in the efforts to address native pollinator habitat.

USDA-NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2008 (Farm Bill) to provide a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

Glenn County USDA NRCS field office awarded 8 EQIP contracts for a total of \$400,954 in FY 2010.

USDA-NRCS Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)

The Colusa Glenn Subwatershed Program (CGSP) submitted a proposal on behalf of irrigated landowners in the Colusa and Glenn County area for the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP). Notification was received by US Department of Agriculture that the proposal was successful and \$5,999,000 in AWEP cost-share funding will be available for water quality and conservation projects over the next five years.

AWEP, established by the 2008 Farm Bill, is part of the NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which is the USDA's largest conservation program on working lands. The new AWEP program will assist producers in implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will increase irrigation system efficiency, decrease runoff, sediment and flooding, and provide improvements to surface water quality in an effort to decrease dependence on groundwater.

Glenn County USDA NRCS field office awarded 20 AWEP contracts for a total of \$1,379,729 in FY 2010.

USDA-NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) encourages land stewards to improve their conservation performance by installing and adopting additional activities, and improving, maintaining, and managing existing activities on agricultural land and nonindustrial private forest land. The program is available nationwide on a continuous application basis.

Through the CSP, NRCS will provide financial and technical assistance to eligible producers to conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest lands, agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe, and other private agricultural land (including cropped woodland, marshes, and agricultural land used for the production of livestock) on which resource concerns related to agricultural production could be addressed. Participation in the program is voluntary.

Glenn County USDA NRCS field office awarded 16 CSP contracts for a total of \$201,601 in FY 2010.

Glenn County USDA NRCS Summary

Category	Funded Applications	Total \$ Amount
EQIP	8	\$400,954
AWEP	20	\$1,379,729
CSP	16	\$201,601
TOTAL		\$1,982,284

By Rob Vlach, District Conservationist, NRCS

EVENTS

Pioneer Day for Murdock 4th Grade Students at Mudd Ranch

RCD Staff and Colusa County RCD provided a hands-on activity using a watershed model to demonstrate the effects on waterways of the usage and disposal of household products, farming and ranching practices and industrial facilities. Students learned the importance of keeping areas healthy and pollution free is vital to providing clean water sources for a variety agricultural, recreational and industrial uses along with drinking water.

World Water Monitoring Day

RCD Staff provided water monitoring gifts to Mrs. Egly's 4th grade class at Murdock Elementary with water monitoring kits to be used in conjunction with World Water Monitoring Day, an international education and outreach program that builds public

awareness and involvement in protecting water resources around the world by engaging citizens to conduct basic monitoring of their local waterbodies.

Speak-Off Contest

RCD organized the Annual Speak-Off Contest for High School students.

Natural Resources & Range Camp

RCD sponsored two High School students to attend the camp to learn about natural resources and rangelands.

Annual BBQ

This annual event allows RCD the opportunity to invite the community, partners landowners and land managers to a delicious lunch and provide a relaxed atmosphere to discuss RCD projects and create a greater understanding of the needs of the county.

AWARDS

Conservationist of the Year





The RCD feels it is important to recognize individuals, groups or agencies that have made significant contributions of time and effort towards the conservation of our natural resources. The Conservationist of the Year was awarded to Vereschagin Farms, Inc., owned and operated by Mike Vereschagin.

Partner of the Year

For his technical and professional assistance on a riparian vegetation project, the Partner of the Year was awarded to Craig Isola, Conservation Easement Manager for the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex (USFWS).

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Program & Funding Organizations

CA Department of Conservation (DOC)	\$203,995
CA Department of Water Resources (DWR)	\$400,000
US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	\$7,500
 USDA AMS Farmers Market Promotion Program	\$79,021
California Fire Safe Council	\$21,887
 USDA/NRCS/The Xerces Society/CARCD	\$7,590
 Private Gravel Miner	\$5,000
 USDA-NRCS Cooperative Agreement	\$20,000
Private Donations	\$650
Total Brought to Glenn County as a Result of RCD Efforts	\$745,643

In-Kind & Match Value

Overhead Provided by NRCS

Office Supplies	\$720
Rent	\$4,800
Equipment	\$1,200
Vehicles	\$8,000
Salaries/Technical Support/Engineer	\$250,000

Other

Multiple sponsors for events (*value unknown*)

Total Value of Additional Support **\$264,720+**

FUTURE PROJECT FUNDING

The RCD continuously works to obtain sustainable funding through all avenues in order to further the critical natural resources goals and objectives in Glenn County.

Projects Where Funding Has Been Applied For:

- ⇒ \$242,831 for a Middle Stony Creek Watershed Coordinator
- ⇒ \$244,252 for a Lower Stony Creek Watershed Coordinator

FUNDING AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

STATE

California Department of Conservation
California Department of Water Resources
California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
California Fire Safe Council

FEDERAL

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
US Fish and Wildlife Service
USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, Farmers Market Promotion Program
Bureau of Land Management (CWPP)

LOCAL

Multiple

OTHER

Private Donators

THANK YOU sponsors and all partners for allowing us to accomplish so much!
(List does not name all sponsors as to honor those who want to remain private.)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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