



G L E N N C O U N T Y

R E S O U R C E C O N S E R V A T I O N D I S T R I C T

Long Range Plan 2024–2028

Adopted October 16, 2023

Natural resource conservation needs in Glenn County, CA

Glenn County is a rural county located in the heart of the Sacramento Valley, between the Coast Range mountains to the west and the Sacramento River to the east. Interstate 5 runs north and south through the middle of this rich farmland. As of 2023, the population of Glenn County is around 29,000¹. Our two major cities, Willows and Orland, lie along Interstate 5 about 1.5 hours north of Sacramento. In addition, Glenn County is home to the Grindstone Indian Rancheria, an important federally-recognized rancheria located in western Glenn County.

With over 1,000 farms and 705,000 acres under cultivation, agriculture remains the primary source of Glenn County's economy. Major commodities include rice, almonds, dairies, walnuts, corn and wheat. Soil health, water quality and availability, and invasive weeds are primary natural resource concerns for the county's farmers and ranchers, along with maintaining economic viability.

The county also contains significant federal land including the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge and part of the Mendocino National Forest. Large wildfires over the past five years have burned extensive acreage on the National Forest, leaving major needs for erosion control and reforestation. Wildfire risk remains high in the western foothills portion of the county including areas of wildland/urban interface.

Meeting the needs: Glenn County RCD

Our mission

To help people and communities in Glenn County enhance our natural resources for an economically and environmentally healthy future.

Our vision

Established in 1960 (originally as the Elk Creek Soil Conservation District), the Glenn County RCD has been serving the natural resource conservation needs of our community for many decades. As we execute this Long Range Plan, we will move towards a vision of the future that includes:

¹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/glenncountycalifornia/PST045222>. Accessed July 21, 2023

- **Economic and environmental health:** The well-being of our communities depends on the survival of our farms and ranches, and also on the health of our local environment. The RCD can play a role in identifying conservation practices that support natural resources and help farmers and ranchers save funds or access new sources of income.
- **Healthy soils:** Healthy soil supports everything from food production, to pollinator habitat, to wildlife, to reducing carbon in the atmosphere. Soil conservation is at the heart of the RCD's history, and we continue to work towards a future where soil health is an increasing focus for local partners, farmers, ranchers, and all community members.
- **Clean and abundant water:** Reducing erosion in the upper watershed and the valley, controlling invasive species that consume major amounts of water, reducing herbicide and pesticide use, and continuing to adopt wise irrigation practices are all important goals for protecting the water we all depend on for drinking and irrigation.
- **Wildfire safety and recovery:** We envision a future where our communities and resources are at much lower risk of catastrophic fires, thanks to dedicated restoration and ongoing stewardship of our forests and rangelands.
- **Connected communities:** Community engagement, education, and understanding will help us move towards our goals. We envision a future where the RCD continues to understand and respond to community needs, and where our education efforts encourage many people to be involved in resource conservation as volunteers, farmers/ranchers, scientists, educators, and more. Our collaborations with Glenn County and dozens of public and private partners will continue to help build this strong network.

Goals and Strategies 2024–2028

Goal #1: Support farmers, ranchers, and others to implement soil health and other conservation practices.

- 1.1 Expand the RCD's soil health programs with an increased focus on providing technical and financial assistance to support rangeland and forest soil health, through events, in-person communication, neighbor to neighbor outreach, partnerships, and other activities.
- 1.2 Connect farmers and ranchers with technical partners who can support their conservation practices such as revegetation, rangeland soil health, carbon capture, and wildfire risk reduction.
- 1.3 Seek additional funding for future soil health and other conservation programs through state, federal, and other funding sources.
- 1.4 Research and share with farmers and ranchers the emerging potential for economic support through carbon mitigation efforts.

Goal #2: Provide technical and financial assistance to help landowners implement practices that improve water quality and increase water conservation.

- 2.1 Continue to administer the Colusa Glenn Subwatershed Program through coordinator and outreach/education services.
- 2.2 Support farmers and ranchers to implement irrigation efficiency practices.
- 2.3 Provide technical support by request to landowners implementing groundwater recharge projects.
- 2.4 Continue efforts to reduce the presence of invasive *Arundo donax* on waterways in Glenn County, through partnerships with the County of Glenn and other interested agencies.

Goal #3: Play a leadership role in recovery from recent wildfires and in preventing future wildfires.

- 3.1 Partner with the Mendocino National Forest to implement large-scale restoration and reforestation.
- 3.2 Use the Glenn County Community Wildfire Protection Plan prioritization matrix and technical advisory committee to select projects with a focus on key outcomes including safety for the community and firefighters, protection of public and private property, watershed restoration, soil conservation, maintenance potential, vegetation management strategies, landowner support, and agency support.
- 3.3 Partner with CAL FIRE and other state and local agencies to implement hazardous fuels reduction projects.
- 3.4 Work directly with landowners in Glenn County's ranching community and inholders in the Mendocino National Forest to help them reduce wildfire risk through vegetation management, grazing, and other practices.
- 3.5 Partner with the County of Glenn, the Glenn County Fire Chief's Association, USDA-NRCS and others to increase coordination of wildfire recovery and risk reduction efforts.
- 3.6 Support the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan as being facilitated by California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force.

Goal #4: Promote practices that benefit wildlife and native plant habitat.

- 4.1 Promote wildlife and native plant habitat benefits to landowners and agencies involved in agriculture and wildfire conservation projects.
- 4.2 Monitor, document, and publicize habitat benefits of completed projects.
- 4.3 Partner with federal and state agencies and other organizations focused on wildlife such as Point Blue, to promote beneficial habitat practices.
- 4.4 Research potential engagement in beaver relocation projects.

Goal #5: Increase community understanding of natural resource conservation and the role of the Glenn County RCD.

- 5.1 Conduct regular outreach to understand natural resource needs and how the RCD can help.
- 5.2 Broaden outreach methods to reach stakeholders throughout Glenn County, including public meetings, one-on-one conversation, and other means.
- 5.3 Engage Glenn County youth in conservation through the RCD *Connects with Kids* Program, including in-school education, events, scholarships, and other outreach.
- 5.4 Orchestrate and/or participate in events where there are important opportunities for conversations and information sharing with farmers and ranchers and community leaders.
- 5.5 Work with the Supervisors and staff leaders at the County of Glenn to find ways to increase our collaborative partnership.
- 5.6 Develop relationships with leaders within key partner organizations including US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife, Grindstone Rancheria, etc.
- 5.7 Seek funding to increase monitoring and reporting on the success of previous projects.

Goal #6: Enhance the RCD's long-term sustainability and organizational health.

- 6.1 Hire and support professional staff as funding and management capacity allow; maintain flexibility with contract support when funding stability is less likely.
- 6.2 Reconfigure RCD office space and implement a hybrid work system to support growth in the number of staff members.
- 6.3 Recruit associate directors who represent the community and help support RCD functions.