



2017 Annual Report



Nevada County Resource Conservation District & Natural Resources Conservation Service

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2017 Annual Report

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Marcoantonio Salazar
Agricultural Engineer



Nevada County Resource Conservation District
113 Presley Way, Suite 1, Grass Valley CA 95945
(530) 798-5529 www.ncrcd.org





Your Resource Conservation District

The Nevada County Resource Conservation District (NCRCD) was founded on January 4, 1944 with a mission to promote responsible resource management. The NCRCD is a state mandated 'Special District' that is neither a regulatory group nor a city or county entity. We are a Not-For-Profit entity, as described under California Public Resources Code - Division Nine and Section 170(C) (1) of the Internal Revenue Code. We receive a small percentage of revenue from property taxes of Nevada County residents. The NCRCD is governed by a board of 5 directors appointed by the Nevada County Board of Supervisors and is made up of local landowners who provide input for local resource management.

The NCRCD partners with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in assisting landowners and land managers in improving their land. The NCRCD and the NRCS provide technical assistance regarding issues that include erosion control, pond management, invasive weed control, fuels management, wildlife habitat improvement, pasture, orchard and vineyard management, and rangeland management.

MISSION

Our mission is to promote responsible resource management within our jurisdiction through education, leadership, technical assistance, and project facilitation.

We offer seminars throughout the year on conservation practices for western Nevada County landowners. Topics have included Rural Property Management, Native Grass Meadows, The 'Dirt' on Soils, Minimizing Wildlife Impacts of Brush Control, Tree Diseases and Forestry

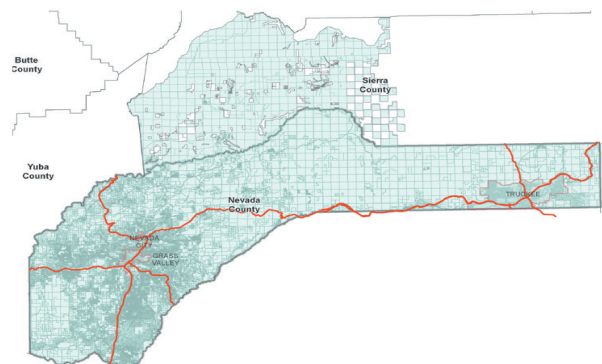
Health, Raising 'City' Chickens, Forest Raptors of Nevada County, Pond Management, Fire Ecology and Your Property, Northern California Bats, and Rural Irrigation.

Our office offers great planning tools, such as soil surveys, and other information that can help determine if a property can accommodate planned uses. We promote grazing as a land management tool and we have a free loan program where landowners can borrow hand tools including a weed wrench puller, soil sampler, pond rake, and seed/fertilizer spreader. We also offer a Minimum-Till Drill for rent.

VISION

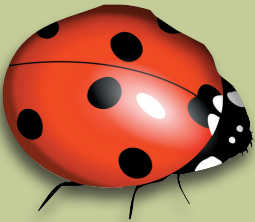
Our vision is to educate and assist landowners and land managers in establishing a balance between a high quality rural environment, a biologically diverse landscape, and a healthy economy for the community.

The NCRCD also collaborates with federal, state, and local agencies and community groups to encourage healthy forest practices and fuels management in our community. We've developed numerous educational brochures and other materials for distribution to the public. ■





3rd Annual Farm Day



695

Number of Students
Attended

12

Number of
Schools Participated

27

Number of Ag
Demonstrations

50+

Number of Bear River
and Nevada Union
FFA Volunteers

Nevada County Ag in the Classroom's 3rd Annual Farm Day

*hosted in partnership with Nevada
County Fairgrounds*

We had the wonderful support of our agricultural community again this year sharing with the elementary students from all around Nevada County. From Myra Davies (in full cattlegirl attire) telling her family history of ranching to Cairo the pest-detecting dog. Each station addressed the theme of agriculture in their presentations.



This year booths consisted of:

Activities: FFA - barrel racing with stick horses and roping a "steer"; Fowler Family Farm-irrigation relay; and Placer Nevada Cattle Women - story time and learning the different cuts of meat.

Commodities (meat, milk, fiber): FFA - beef, goats, and Nevada County's Top 10 agricultural commodities; 4-H poultry, swine, and sheep.

Food Production: (different ways food is cultivated and processed): Bierwagen Farm - cider production; CA Dairy Council - milk processing; and Sierra Harvest - threshing.

Land Health: UCCE – soils and invertebrates; SFREC - grazing of grasses and brush for sustainability; and NID – where your water comes from.





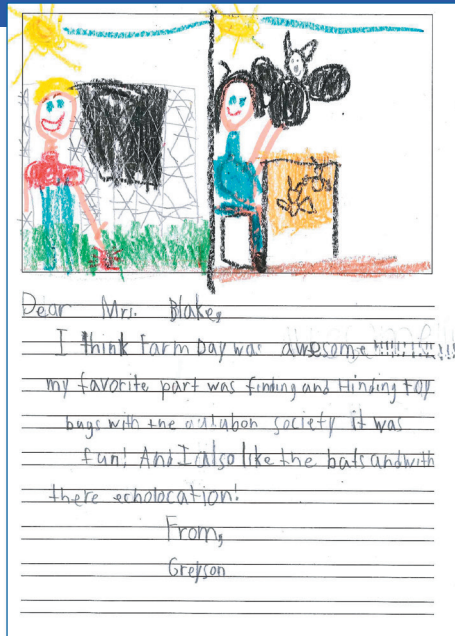
“ My favorite part of Farm Day was Coco the dairy cow and the bats because I never have seen a cow and I never heard a bat before! ”
Claire, Farm Day Participant

Machinery (showing how machines help with work on the farm/mill/ranch): Robinson Timber - logging; Forest Hill Lumber - milling; Nevada County Flywheelers - grinding; Foothill Fibers Guild - spinning.

Nutrition CalFresh – benefits of healthy and nutritious food.

Pest Detection/Suppression: NorCal Bats – the importance of bats to farms/ranches; SFAS-birds as pest suppression and California Department of Agriculture-pest-detecting dogs.

Pollinators – NC Grown and NC Beekeepers: why we need pollinators for propagation and food production.





Agriculture Tour



104

Number of Visitors

5

Number of Venues

- Super Tuber Farm
- Heart & Soul Alpaca Ranch
- West Coast Equine Sports Therapy
- Miller's Pond
- Chacewater Ponderosa Vineyard



2017 NEVADA COUNTY AGRICULTURE TOUR

In partnership with the Nevada County Farm Bureau and the Agricultural Commissioner of Nevada County.

The Agriculture Tour of Nevada County is always a popular event. Every year we visit working agricultural, horticultural, and agri-business operations to promote agritourism, education, and active involvement in the activities of the farms and other agricultural operations in our area.

Our tour started at the Super Tuber Potato Farm and AM Ranch operation in Penn Valley. Jeremy, Michael, and Ciara explained to us how they created a sustainable and thriving business for the livestock, land, and supporting community. They work hard to provide their customers with locally grown, superior quality meat, eggs, and vegetables.



Our second stop was at the Heart & Soul Alpaca Ranch and Spinnery in Penn Valley. We met their champion, show-quality, Suri and Huacaya alpacas and learned about their impressive family-owned business, which includes a full-service fiber mill that turns fleece into felted products, bumps for hand spinning, and beautiful, incredibly soft alpaca yarn.

West Coast Equine Sports Therapy in Penn Valley was next. They gave us a tour of their facility and demonstrated their state-of-the-art equipment.



Heart & Soul Alpaca Ranch





They offer rehabilitation and therapy services for both equines and canines. They shared their extensive knowledge in the benefits of hydrotherapy and the use of their underwater treadmill, the AquaPacer. They combine that with deep-heat shockwave, cold compression, and vibrational therapy for stress-free results that aid in the animal's health and a happy mental and physical state.

From there, we took the scenic route to Miller's Pond where we learned about fire-evolved ecosystems and timber harvest plans from Robert Ingram (retired professional forester). A wonderful BBQ lunch was served next to the pond where everyone enjoyed the beautiful weather along with a treat from Lazy Dog Creamery.



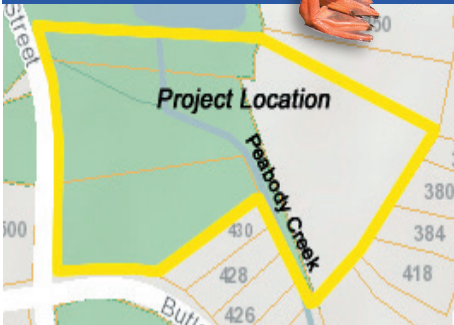
Our final stop for the day was at the award-winning Chacewater Ponderosa Vineyards for a tour of their certified organic vineyards and wine tasting.

The Ag Tour is an opportunity for ordinary citizens to learn, enjoy, and celebrate the people, places, and important history of agriculture in Nevada County and we hope you'll join us again in 2018! ■





Condon Park



CONDON PARK VEGETATION MANAGEMENT & FOREST HEALTH PROJECT

In partnership with the City of Grass Valley, Sierra Pacific Industries, and Natural Resources Conservation Service

The project to remove invasive species, restore wildlife habitat, improve forest health, install interpretive signage, create park access through installation of walking paths, and fencing around the creek was approved by the NCRCD Board of Directors in March 2013.

PROJECT GOALS

The NCRCD viewed this project as a teaching tool that would benefit the community. We wanted to demonstrate how non-native invasive species could envelope an area making it inaccessible and use techniques for removal while addressing wildlife habitat. In addition to clearing the area, walking paths and interpretative/educational signage were installed, enabling people to learn about native and non-native plants, wildlife habitat, erosion, and other resource conservation concerns. A 5-year maintenance plan was included with this project to ensure that the area remains accessible to Nevada County residents.

WILDLIFE SURVEY

Two separate wildlife surveys were completed in May of 2013 by NRCS Partner-Biologist Kelly Weintraub with Point Blue Conservation Science. Kelly was able to identify 16 different bird species, 2 mammals, and 2 reptiles that live in the project area. She advised conducting tree and shrub removal outside of the breeding season to comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and avoid disturbance to nesting birds and other breeding animals.



5

Number of Invasive Species Removed

17

Number of Diseased Trees Removed

11

Number of Trail Signs Installed

\$95,900

Number of Dollars Spent over 5 years

GRADING / EROSION CONTROL

To minimize impact, and to prepare the area for the pathways, we performed minor grading on the site. The existing swales were contoured to lessen further erosion and straw wattles were placed along the severely eroded creek bank to help re-direct some of the rain flow.

INSTALLATION OF FENCE/ PATHWAYS / WALKING BRIDGE

The project included the installation of a fence along both sides of Peabody Creek within the project area. The purpose was to protect the severely eroded section of the creek while also allowing the public to view it. The design matched an existing fence along a pond near the project. To help stop further erosion we installed a small walking bridge on a well used path to re-direct traffic.

RESULTS

With the completion of the Condon Park Vegetation Management and Forest Health Project, the Nevada County Resource Conservation District assisted the City of Grass Valley in removing significant fuel loads for fire safety, increased and improved wildlife habitat,



helped with erosion control and invasive species control, and helped promote a healthy forest within this section of the park.

Our contractors were extremely efficient and conscientious regarding potential disturbance this work may have caused due to the close proximity of the park to the surrounding neighbors. Clean-up of debris occurred simultaneously as the vegetation was cut, leaving the area accessible during the project.

This project was successful for many reasons, not the least of which was the maintenance portion of the project. We continued to spray and pull invasives as they re-sprouted, and had a second, minor “clearing” done in 2017. The City of Grass Valley removes the taller grasses and keeps the paths clear of pine needles.

The NCRCD is extremely satisfied with the outcome of this project. One of our main goals is public education regarding a variety of resource conservation concerns and this project really conformed to that specific goal. ■





Conservation Dinner



2017 CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR DINNER

Nevada County Resource Conservation District honors Roger Ingram

Roger Ingram retired last year after 31 years of service to our community in the area of agriculture, home economics, education, and youth and community development.

The Farm Advisor Division is a cooperative venture between the County of Nevada, the University of California Extension system, and the United States Department of Agriculture. Expertise is provided in the areas of horticulture, livestock, pasture and range management, irrigation, farm planning, agriculture economics, small farms, agriculture marketing, soils, water, and pest and disease control.

In the area of youth and community development, the Farm Advisor Division administers the 4-H Community Club which serves over five hundred youngsters and two hundred adult volunteers annually.

Additionally, the Farm Advisor Division serves as a liaison

with the University of California and the hundreds of campus-based Cooperative Extension specialists. Hundreds of publications, leaflets, newsletters, and audio-visual materials are available through the Farm Advisor Division, in addition to trainings, workshops, and short educational courses.

In 1986, Roger joined the UC Cooperative Extension in Nevada County as a 4-H/livestock and natural resources advisor, later transitioning to livestock and natural resources advisor for Placer and Nevada counties.

In 2007, Roger became County Director for both Nevada and Placer counties and supervised programs in nutrition, 4-H, youth development and master gardeners, in addition to livestock and natural resource work.

While studying niche-meat marketing and the need for more USDA inspected processing facilities, Roger began to see farmers and ranchers in Placer and Nevada counties as “endangered species.” Since 2007, Roger’s efforts have emphasized farm and ranch business planning, grazing, niche-meat marketing, and

30

Years of
Conservation Dedication

1

Big Heart and a pair of
shoes that need to be filled



Farewell Roger Ingram



training beginning farmers. These efforts have involved a collaborative approach with the UCCE Horticulture and Small Farms Division, and several local farmers and ranchers. In recent years, Roger's efforts have expanded to food security, coinciding with a growing community awareness and appreciation for a local food system. Roger was part of the team that helped establish Nevada County Grown.

Additionally, Roger has participated in our Seminar Series at the annual Nevada County Fair as a guest speaker on agricultural topics.

In 2012, a California Department of Food and Agriculture Specialty Crops Block grant resulted in

the Eat Local Placer Nevada Project. Over the years Roger helped develop and implement the California Grazing Academy, the California Browsing Academy, the California Multi-Species Academy, Niche Meat Marketing Conference, and Farm Business Planning workshop; all of which support local education through FFA, 4-H, and fairgrounds events. Roger has been involved in all aspects of the Farm Advisor Division. His dedication to agriculture is exemplary, tire-less, and impactful. During his long tenure he has been selected to receive the 2013 Pedro Illic Award for Outstanding Educator and was honored by the Nevada County Fairgrounds.

In addition, the Bear Yuba Land Trust honored Roger for a lifetime of conservation with the William Nickerl Award for Conservation Leadership.

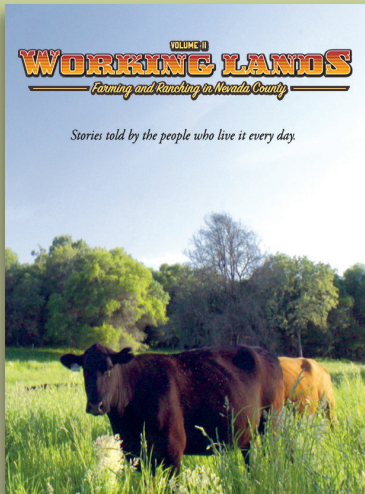
He was a treasure to both Placer and Nevada Counties and he will be sorely missed. ■





ALAN HAIGHT

Working Lands II



WORKING LANDS VOLUME II Farming and Ranching in Nevada County

Produced by Matthew Gottschalk

This just released documentary follows 10 agriculturists as they incorporate their sense of understanding the land into the local community while enhancing and managing the natural resources of the land.

Our objective in Working Lands Volume II was to create

an educational video for our district and affiliates that would showcase the traditional and innovative methods in agriculture currently being practiced in Nevada County.

Working Lands Volume II makes the case that agriculture in Nevada County is flourishing today through a combination of innovation, inherited practices and strong ties with the community and legacy of our area.

Join us as we explore the economic viability, legacy, and shared passion for small-scale agriculture as told by the people who live it every day in Nevada County.



ROSIE BIERWAGON



Look for it on PBS KVIE
Channel 6 in 2018!



MADDISON EASLEY

Stories include:

- A look into the different livestock, ranching and farming methods used in the area.
- A snapshot into the lives of families, past and present, who were drawn to the area to work the land.
- An emphasis on the families who have remained in Nevada County and continue to work the same lands of their ancestors.
- The cooperation between established ranches/farms and the newcomers in the area.
- Innovations being pioneered in agriculture.

This video continues with the style and aesthetic presented in “Working Lands: Volume I: A History of Agriculture in Nevada County,” using a combination of narration, interview clips, archival materials, aerial cinematography, and motion graphics. This video weaves a compelling tale of how understanding the history of agriculture in our area informs current practices and innovations, and strengthens our community. ■



RANDY OLIVER

DIRECTOR

Matthew Gottschalk-artist, videographer, instructor, and award winning multi-media artist. Matthew has been involved in many aspects of filmmaking; directing, editing, shooting, art design, writing, music composition, and audio editing.



portfolio includes multi-media festival design in Rijeka, Croatia, original music composition and recording for a documentary feature filmed in Stuttgart,

Germany and principal editor of the 2016 documentary “Working Lands: A History of Agriculture in Nevada County”. Matthew currently serves as an adjunct professor of Video Production in the Applied Art & Design Department at Sierra College in Grass Valley, CA. He holds degrees in art and video from UC Davis and Mills College.

His video shorts have been screened both nationally and internationally. In 2010, his work, “How Many Heroes Do We Need?” was screened at the first annual Film Festival for Video Art in Gaza. Matthew’s diverse



2017 Seminars...



JUNE

Attracting Pollinators in Nevada County
Bonnie Bradt
Master Gardeners of Nevada County

MARCH

*Planning for Succession Workshop
for Ranchers & Farmers*
California Farm Link and
Nevada County Farm Bureau



MAY

Fruit Trees & Tree Fruit Production
Chris Bierwagen and Donner
Trail Fruit



MARCH

*Forest Raptors of Nevada County with
an update on "Buddy the Wolverine"*
Amanda Shufelberger
Sierra Pacific Industries Wildlife Biologist

MAY

Pond Management
Jason Jackson / NCRCD



RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

APRIL

Mulch Madness
In partnership with
Nevada Irrigation District

APRIL

Fire Wise Landscaping with Animals
Fowler Family Farm / Alana Fowler



APRIL

Irrigation Workshop
Cindy Fake / UC Cooperative Extension
Roger Ingram / UC Cooperative Extension
Nevada Irrigation District





Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) draws on a long history of helping people help the land. For more than 80 years, NRCS and its predecessor agencies have worked in close partnerships with farmers and ranchers, local and state governments, and other federal agencies to maintain healthy and productive working landscapes.

NRCS was created as the Soil Conservation Service. Formed in 1935 during the Dust Bowl, when valuable agricultural land in Nevada County and across the country was severely eroding, farmers and ranchers were struggling, and private landowners were gaining a new understanding of their critical role in caring for the land and the environment.

Since then, farmers, ranchers, and other private and tribal landowners have relied on NRCS' technically-trained conservationists to help them protect and improve natural resources on their property. Every day, landowners come or call in to our Grass Valley office for free, voluntary conservation assistance.

Your locally based NRCS staff works directly with farmers, ranchers and others to provide technical assistance suited to each client's specific needs. We provide technical information and guidance, plan conservation systems and practices, and offer financial assistance for conservation activities.

In the past ten years alone, Nevada County NRCS has helped local landowners develop customized strategies to protect natural resources on more than 20,000 acres. That's approximately 5 percent of the county's private lands.

NRCS employs a diverse staff of technical personnel such as soil scientists, foresters, engineers, biologists, and hydrologists to provide the expertise to solve simple as well as complex environmental problems, with the primary focus of conservation on private lands.

In celebration of over 80 years of public-private conservation partnership, NRCS would like to recognize the resource professionals and private land managers and celebrate our joint history of land stewardship in Nevada County. ■

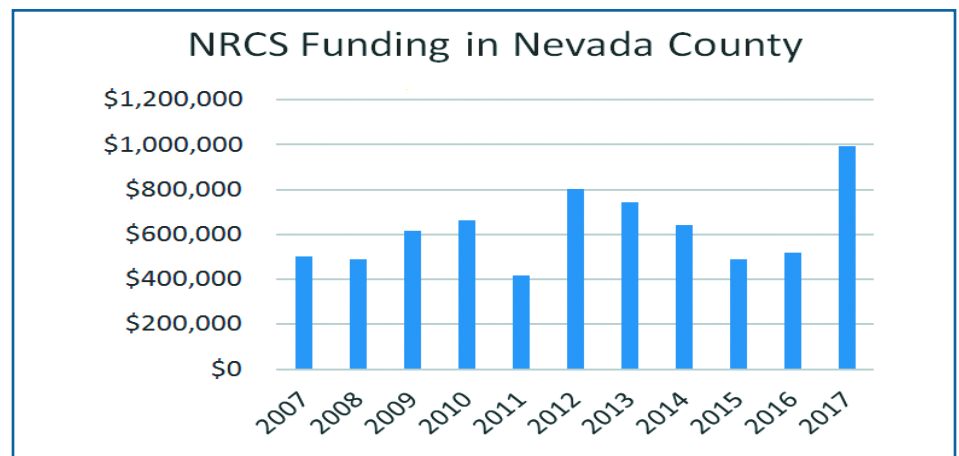


NRCS STAFF
(from Left to Right)

- Josue Gandia-Rivera, Soil Conservationist
- Pamela Hertzler, District Conservationist
- Peggy Holbrook, Farm Bill Assistant
- Evan Smith, Forester
- Kelly Weintraub, Point Blue Biologist
- Marcoantonio Salazar, Engineer



Natural Resources Conservation Service



Thank you!

