

Nevada County  
Resource Conservation  
District &  
Natural Resources  
Conservation Service

2016 Annual Report



*Your Partner in Conservation & Agriculture*



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113 Presley Way, Suite 1  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
(530) 272-3417  
[www.ncrcd.org](http://www.ncrcd.org)



# Your Resource Conservation District



In 1935, Congress passed Public Law 46 declaring soil and water conservation a national policy after the worst man-made crisis in U. S. history — the “Dust Bowl”. Decades of bad farming practices and a 10-year drought prompted President Roosevelt in 1937 to write to the governors of all the states recommending legislation allowing landowners to form soil conservation districts.



Thus, the Nevada County Resource Conservation District (NCRCD) was founded on January 4, 1944... 73 years ago.

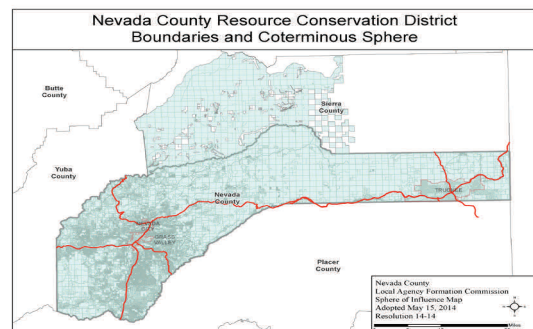
Since that time, the NCRCD has served thousands of landowners with technical assistance on forest stand improvement, grazing land improvement and planting, rangeland re-planting, brush reduction, soil surveys, wildlife habitat improvement, native plant re-vegetation and more. In addition, the NCRCD has worked on water quality monitoring projects, fuel break projects, and educational videos.

The NCRCD is a state mandated ‘special district’ under Public Resource Code — Division 9, as a locally governed agency with an independent Board



of Directors that is neither a regulatory group, nor a city or county entity. The NCRCD receives a small percentage of revenue from the land value of property taxes in Nevada County.

The NCRCD has changed over the years as funding opportunities and partnerships have changed. The District currently has three areas of program interest – agriculture, conservation education, and technical assistance. As you might expect, there is considerable overlap in each area. The NCRCD collaborates with federal, state, and other local agencies and community groups to encourage healthy forest practices and fuels management in our community.



## Our Mission

*“To promote responsible resource management within our jurisdiction through leadership, education, technical assistance, financial assistance, and facilitation”.*



# Agriculture in Nevada County

Agriculture in Nevada County is a \$22+ million dollar a year industry, with crop sales at \$10+ million and livestock sales at \$12+ million. Agricultural producers within the Nevada County Resource Conservation District's (RCD) province are important suppliers with forage-land, grapes, harvested vegetables, cut Christmas trees, and apples and bees as the top crop items. Top livestock categories include layers, cattle and calves, and sheep and lambs.

The RCD has historically worked to benefit agriculture, however, more recently our main emphasis has been on assisting in the preservation of open space and educating residents about the rich history of agriculture within Nevada County. With increasing urbanization, the RCD has a greater focus on agricultural education and public outreach. The RCD excels in this area and continues to build on this strength.

The RCD's agricultural programs focus on maintaining long-term agriculture in Nevada County. We actively participate in and/or sponsor community related agriculture programs such as 'Ag-Sperience' at the Nevada County Fair, the annual Agricultural Tour of Nevada County (in cooperation with the Nevada County Farm Bureau), our annual Conservation Dinner, and various workshops and seminars with an agricultural theme.

We have a Minimum-Till Drill to rent and we coordinate a Manure Exchange Program. We also have a loan program for landowners to borrow a seed spreader, pond rake, weed wrench, and soil probe.



# Education & Outreach



In 2016, the RCD offered 11 seminars and 5 events to the community. The seminars ranged from dealing with bark beetles to information on local wildlife to pond management. The events were varied as well: “Mulch Magic” (in cooperation with Nevada Irrigation District) offered ½-cubic yard of cedar or redwood mulch to 437 local landowners to help with landscape-water reduction during the drought; a QuickBooks workshop (partnering with the Nevada County Farm Bureau) for local residents; a Ponderosa Pine seedling giveaway (seedlings donated by Sierra Pacific Industries); in July we again partnered with NID for Watershed Camp at Scotts Flat Lake—teaching 6th graders about our local watershed; and in September, we hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Farm Day at the Nevada County Fairgrounds.



In addition to our offering seminars and events to the public, the public has asked us to speak to their particular groups as well. The RCD was requested to speak to 12 different groups: the Board of Supervisors requested presentations from us 3 times—twice for information on the bark beetle infestation and once on Farm Day; the Food and Farm Conference requested we have a booth at their event; and the Melody Oaks Mutual Irrigation Company, KNCO Radio, Nevada County Board of Realtors, Sierra Foothills Research and Extension Center, Nevada County Landmark Commission, Grass Valley Rotaries, Chicago Park Garden Club, PG&E, Nevada County Agricultural Advisory Commission, Penn Valley Rotary, and the Men’s Welcome Club all requested we speak to them about the Resource Conservation District and the bark beetle issue.



Technical assistance is provided through our Natural Resources Advisory Visit Program. We contract with a local experienced resource manager to offer site visits to landowners who have concerns about their soils, erosion, drainage issues, road maintenance, ponds, pasture, rangeland, forest health, livestock, fencing, wildlife habitat, pest management, and available cost-share programs.



In 2012 the RCD undertook a long-term project documenting Nevada County’s long agricultural history and legacy. Our first project, a documentary on twelve of our historic ranching and farming families, was completed in March 2016. See page 6 for more details.



# Working Lands—A History of Agriculture in Nevada County

## Ranchers and Farmers Honored



Recognized for their continued contribution to Nevada County's heritage were (l to r): Gary & Don Sweet from the Sweet Ranch; Darlene Moberg from the Rolph Ranch; Linda Miller from the Personeni Ranch; Tom & Cindy Browning from the Browning Ranch; Debbie, Jim & Chris Bierwagen from Bierwagen Farm; Neil Robinson from the Robinson Ranch; Shannon & Jeannie Gleason from the Gleason Ranch; Rob Graham and Ron & Denise Koster from the Brown Ranch; Gaylene Collins from the Nichols Ranch; and Kathryn, Bill, Dylan & Ryan Tanner from the Rondoni Ranch.

In 2012 we honored 12 families who have ranched and farmed the same land as their ancestors (photo above). Some of these families have 7th and 8th generations working these same ranches and farms.

As we researched these families, we realized that their stories were important to the agricultural community in Nevada County. The RCD supports and honors the hard working families who continue to provide food for our tables, care for the land, preserve open space, and help keep Nevada County a beautiful agricultural community.

Through their hard work and commitment to preserving the landscape of Nevada County, we have begun to collect their histories and stories—which is ultimately the story of Nevada County.

In 2016 the RCD completed part I of our documentary series which showcased these families and other ranchers and farmers as a testament to our mission statement and to educate the public about where their food and resources come from. This documentary was shown locally and was broadcast on PBS and its' affiliate stations multiple times.

In addition we worked with the Union newspaper in the publication of the Nevada County Rancher magazine (available in February 2017) and with a local author who is writing a book about these families which will be available later this year (2017).

**Watch on PBS!**  
Documentary on Nevada County's  
Historic Ranching & Farming Families

Wednesday, September 28th @ 7pm  
Friday, September 30th @ 4pm  
Sunday, October 2nd @ 6pm

**WORKING LANDS**  
A History of Agriculture  
in Nevada County

Nevada County  
Resource Conservation District  
(530) 798-5530  
www.ncrzd.org

*"Ranching is both challenging and rewarding. In winter we're busy calving and feeding, and in the summer we are irrigating, clearing brush, etc. A new problem can arise in a minute but most days I really love it and am so proud of what my family has created in this community. I feel blessed that we can continue in their footsteps."*  
*Susan Hoek (Robinson).*

# Barns of Nevada County

## 2016 Calendar



While filming part I of our documentary, we began taking photos of old barns in Nevada County. Originally the pictures were to catalogue historical agriculture, but were so remarkable, we decided to turn these photos into a 2016 calendar.



*Photo by Debora Totoonchie*



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 following ranches: Brown, Frank, Reader, Sanford, Vogt, Ennor, Robinson, Pingree, Loney, Elster, Rondoni, Bierwagen, Beyers, Sweet, Peniwell, and Ghidotti ranches.





# Condon Park—Vegetation Management & Forest Health Project

The NCRCD's mission *is to promote responsible resource management within our jurisdiction through education, leadership, technical and financial assistance, and project facilitation. To that end, the NCRCD partners on projects that fulfill our mission.*

**Vegetation Management & Forest Health Project**

Funded by:  
**Nevada County Resource Conservation District**

In partnership with:  
**Natural Resources Conservation Service**  
**City of Grass Valley**      **Sierra Pacific Industries**

For more information:  
 Contact (530) 272-3417 x103

The Vegetation Management & Forest Health Project at Condon Park fulfilled many of these resource conservation goals through conservation education, recreational land restoration, soil and water management, urban resource conservation, wildlife habitat enhancement, and much more. Working with the City of Grass Valley, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI), Point Blue Conservation Science (PBCS), and



others ensured that the NCRCD worked closely within our community to address all conservation issues and met the educational needs of the residents of Nevada County.

The NCRCD viewed this project as a teaching tool that would benefit the community of Nevada County. We wanted to demonstrate how non-native invasive plants could envelope an area making it inaccessible and use techniques for removal while addressing habitat. In addition to clearing the area, walking paths and interpretative/educational signage were installed. Extended maintenance is part of this project, to ensure that the area remains accessible to Nevada County residents.



The benefits of this new area within the park are: education regarding forest health, clearing invasive species, and stream protection as residents are able to access this previously unavailable area.

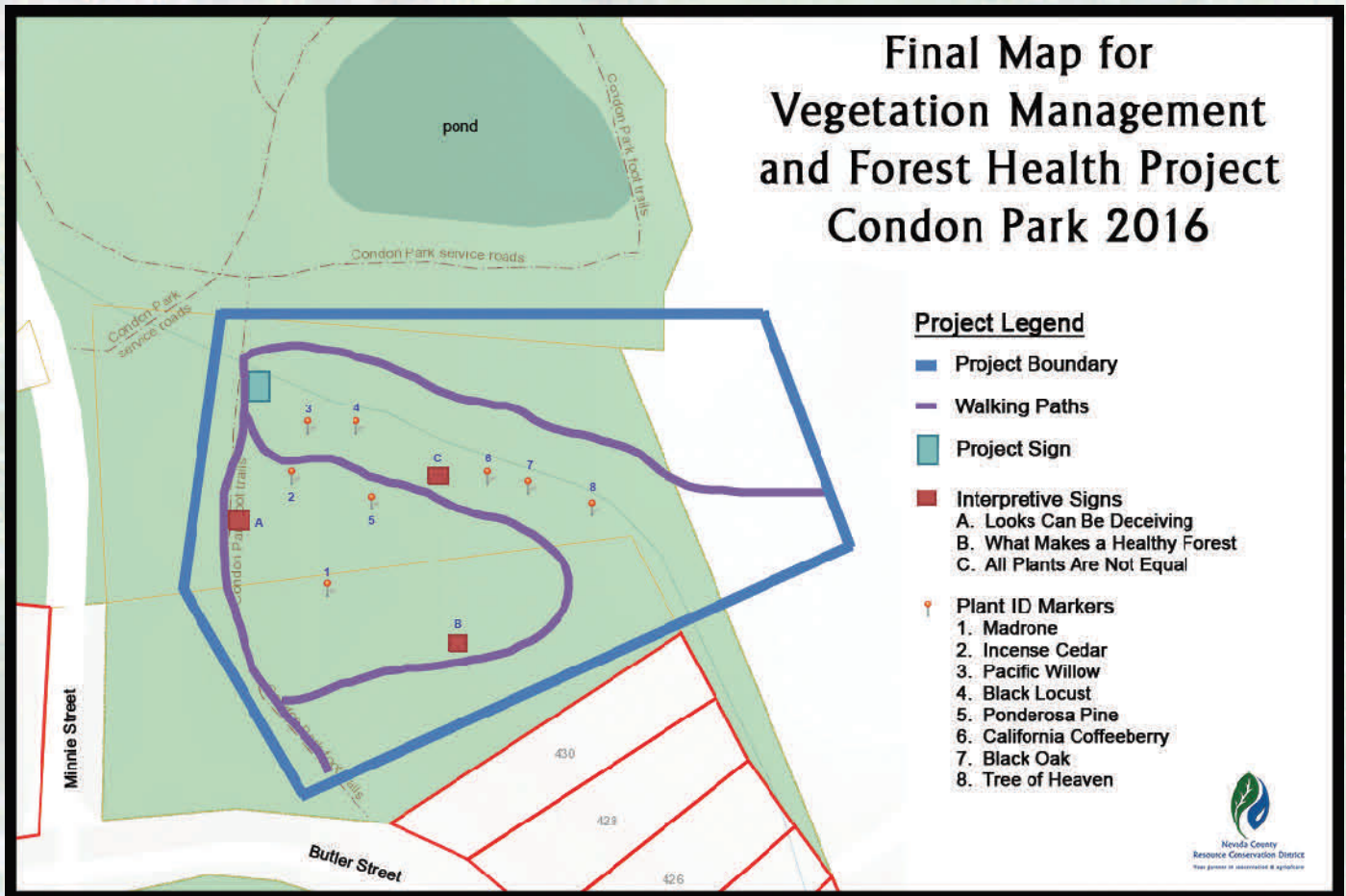
The walking paths and signage enable people to learn about native and non-native plants, wildlife habitat, erosion, and other resource conservation issues, such as:



- Increasing botanical diversity of native plants by removing competing invasive plants;
- Improving wildlife habitat by removing competing vegetation;
- Improving the forest stand within the park through removal of dead and dying trees, fuels reduction, and limbing and thinning for forest health;
- Assisting in stabilization and erosion control along Peabody Creek; and
- Increasing the recreational value of Condon Park.



# Condon Park—Vegetation Management & Forest Health Project





# Ag in the Classroom's 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 who provide quality agriculture-related educational resources, programs, and training opportunities.

On September 22, 2016, Nevada County Ag in the Classroom hosted their 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Farm Day at the Nevada County Fairgrounds. With the support of the Nevada County Fairgrounds CEO & staff, this event hosted over 550 local elementary-grade students and their teachers and chaperones from 11 different schools for a day of fun hands-on experiences, where lessons of agriculture are taught in the context of real-world circumstances for local farms and ranches.

In conjunction with the opening day of the Draft Horse Classic, students rotated between stations to view and learn about: a variety of animals; an active bee hive; mobile saw mill; story telling; irrigation relay race; a mule-packing demonstration; soils; seeds; wool spinning and more.

## Nevada County Ag in the Classroom members are:

- California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom
- Nevada County Agricultural Commissioner's Office
- Nevada County Farm Bureau
- Nevada County Resource Conservation District
- Placer Nevada Cattle Women
- Sierra Foothills Research and Extension Center
- Sierra Harvest



## Local businesses that generously donated funds to sponsor this event were:

- APi marketing,
- Builders & Consumers True Value Hardware,
- Nevada County Farm Bureau,
- Nevada County Resource Conservation District, and
- Peaceful Valley Farm Supply.



# Ag in the Classroom's Annual Farm Day

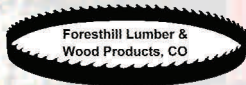


In addition to the more than 50 Bear River and Nevada Union FFA student volunteers, we acknowledge and sincerely thank: Danielle Berry, Norman & Allyn Carman, Jim Drew, Jim & Jeannie Donovan, Maddison Easley, Phil Easley, Kathy Engals, Linda Miller, Steven Steele and the organizations below.

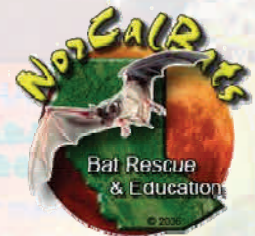


Foothill Fibers Guild

University of California  
Agriculture and Natural Resources  
4-H Youth Development Program



Producing the Finest Mountain Grown Fruit  
A Family Farming Tradition Since 1902



RECS  
University of California  
Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Research and Extension Center System  
Sierra Foothill





# Natural Resources Advisory Visit Program

The Natural Resources Advisory Visit Program 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 at no cost to the landowner.

Since 2014 this program has assisted 229 landowners with the resource concerns on over 3,700 acres of Nevada County property. Some of the most popular topics included:

Pond management

Forest health management

Pest management

Pasture management

Rangeland management

Erosion control

Drainage issues

Wildlife habitat improvement

Rural road maintenance

*“Jason did a great job at informing us as to various issues on our property and how to maintain and improve conditions in a field that needed erosion control and in managing our pond.” Peter and Mary C.*

*“Mr. Jackson was prompt and professional. He was very knowledgeable and his comments and suggestions were informative and helpful. An excellent representative.” John and Sharon M.*

*“Thank you! Jason was very professional, courteous, and kind. He was very informative and took time to explain things.” Janice H.*

*“I enjoyed the consult with Jason and got a lot out of it. The handouts are exceptional. Thank you.” Cathé F.*

*“Thank you for coming to my ranch and spending time discussing the issues I have. It was nice that for the most part it confirmed that I am being a good steward of my land. God bless!” - Rich L.*

*“Kathleen and I are very grateful to Jason for his visit to our property on June 23 of this year. He was knowledgeable and informative, and communicated in terms we could understand. He took time to listen to what we had to say and we were particularly impressed that he seemed unhurried although we are sure there is a significant demand on his time. The packet we received from your office is very thorough. The documents with multiple color pictures will be a helpful asset. I am particularly pleased to get identification of the Single-seed Hawthorn we have growing here and to learn of the need to eradicate it. Thank you for your good work for our community.” Dan and Kathleen P.*



# The Minimum-Till Drill



In 2014, the RCD purchased a Land Pride Minimum-Till Drill to replace our old non-functioning drill. This new drill is smaller, it is 6 feet wide with single press wheels, center mounted drive wheel, and two seed boxes. It was thoroughly tested upon receipt and has been rented 30 times since purchase totaling approximately 240 acres “tilled”.

Some of the benefits of the drill include: easy three-point mounting on various types of tractors (minimum 35 HP); press wheel options to allow tailoring to various soil conditions; larger seed box reducing downtime (more acres per fill); makes seed rate changes quickly and painlessly; gives you a range of 90 to 180 lbs. of consistent down-pressure; and provides 18 different positions for accurate depth.



# Manure Exchange Program

The RCD has organized an exchange service to benefit livestock owners and gardeners. The **Manure Exchange Program** helps connect farmers, gardeners, and landowners searching for sources of local manure/compost with livestock owners and managers who have excess fresh and/or composted manure. This program is a resource for the community seeking a nearby source for fresh fertilizer and is a great way to recycle local natural resources!

We currently have 39 providers listed on our website ranging in location from Auburn to North San Juan.

If you are interested in being listed as a provider on the Manure Exchange Program list, simply go to [www.ncrcd.org](http://www.ncrcd.org) and click on the *Manure Exchange Program* button, fill-in the requested information, then click Submit. You will receive a verification e-mail within 48 hours and your name will be added to our list of local manure providers.

If you are looking for manure, click on the *List of Manure Providers* button to view the list. You can either call or e-mail the providers listed to schedule a pick-up.





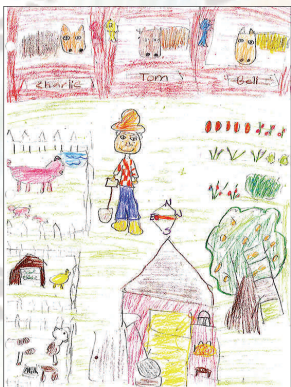
# 2016 Crop Report Art Contest

The Nevada County Department of Agriculture, under direction of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, is responsible for conducting regulatory and service functions pertaining to agriculture in Nevada County. These functions are mandated by state and federal laws and regulations and by local measures and ordinances of the Nevada County Board of Supervisors. Although the enforcement of these laws and regulations is important, the primary purpose and objective of the Agricultural Commissioner's office is the promotion and protection of the county's agricultural industry and the general public.

In 2016, the Nevada County Agricultural Commissioner, in partnership with the Nevada County Resource Conservation District, sponsored an artwork contest for local students. Students from grades 1 through 8 had three topics to choose from: (1) Agriculture in Nevada County; (2) What does Nevada County agriculture mean to you; and (3) What did you learn about Nevada County agriculture during your Farm Day trip. First, second, and third place winners will be featured in the 2016 Agricultural Crop and Livestock Report and receive recognition from the Nevada County Board of Supervisors.



1st Place Winner  
Faith Day



2nd Place Winner  
Riley Lubarsky

Enter your original artwork to be included in the Nevada County 2016 Crop Report!

**ART REPORT**  
**ART CONTEST**

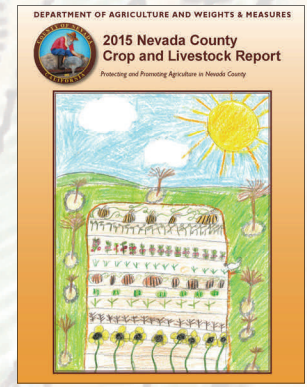
1st Place      2nd Place      3rd Place

**Theme:**  
Nevada County Agriculture  
**Entry Deadline:**  
October 28, 2016

Contact the Nevada County Agricultural Commissioner's office at (530) 273-2648 or the Nevada County Resource Conservation District's office at (530) 798-5529 for details.



3rd Place Winner  
Willow West



# Fall 2015—Spring 2016 Seminar Series



We continued our partnerships with the Nevada County Farm Bureau, Sierra Foothills Audubon Society, Nevada County Agricultural Commissioner, Nevada Irrigation District, Nevada County Fairgrounds, Sierra Foothills Research & Extension Center, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the County of Nevada, and other groups and entities to further the goals and mission of the District.

We offered workshops through our annual Seminar Series on erosion control, composting, tree diseases and forest health management, pollinators, pond management, road maintenance, wild bird habitat, and other topics to provide valuable information to residents.

## Resource Conservation District 2016 Seminar Series

Sponsored by the:

*Nevada County Resource Conservation District (NCRCD)*

March 30, 2016 / 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

*Forest Raptors of Nevada County Featuring "Buddy the Wolverine"*

*\*Amanda Shufelberger\**

April 4, 2016 / 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm –

*California Drought & the Centennial Project Update*

*\*Rem Scherzinger\**



April 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 / 8:00 am to 2:00 pm –

*Irrigation Workshops in partnership with Nevada Irrigation District*

*\*Roger Ingram\**

May 5, 2016 / 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

*Tree Triage "Know the Signs & Symptoms of Unhealthy Trees"*

*\*Robert G. Ingram\**



*"Mulch Madness" Giveaway*

*In partnership with Nevada Irrigation District*

May 31, 2016 / 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

*Pond Problems and Management* *\*Jason Jackson\**

June 9, 2016 / 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

*Monarch Butterflies and Milkweed* *\*Bonnie Bradt\**

June 28, 2016 / 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

*Northern California Bats* *\*Corky Quirk\**

Space is limited. To register or for more information call 530-272-3417 x 104

[sabrina.nicholson@ncrcd.org](mailto:sabrina.nicholson@ncrcd.org), or register online at [www.ncrcd.org](http://www.ncrcd.org)

Locations for seminars vary, call for more information.



*"Your Partner in Conservation and Agriculture"*

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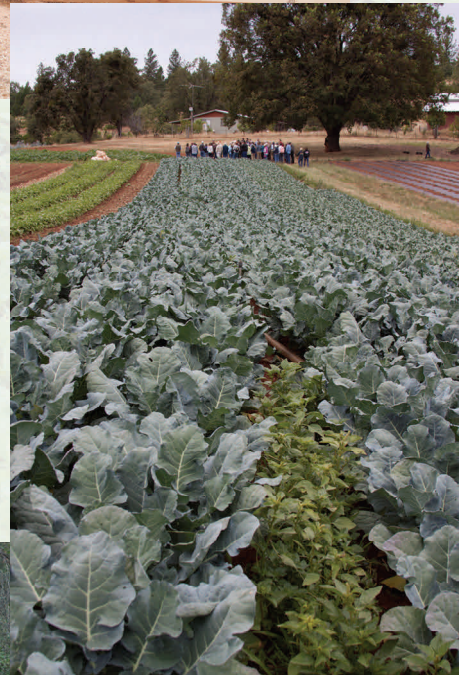
# Nevada County Agricultural Tour

Each year we are proud to co-sponsor the Nevada County Agricultural Tour with the Nevada County Farm Bureau to honor the hardworking people and landscapes of this county. This is an outstanding educational opportunity and tour of agriculture for residents of Nevada County. The 2016 Agricultural Tour highlighted farming, ranching, and forestry with stops at Mountain Bounty Farm, a managed forest site owned by Sierra Pacific Industries, the historic Browning Ranch, and Double Oak Winery.





# Nevada County Agricultural Tour





# Partnerships & Opportunities

We partner with local, state, and federal organizations regarding natural resource conservation, agriculture, and education.

Bear River Watershed Group  
Bear Yuba Land Trust  
California Department of Conservation  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
California Department of Food and Agriculture  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection  
Future Farmers of America  
Master Gardeners of Nevada County  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Nevada County 4H Groups  
Nevada County Agricultural Commissioner  
Nevada County Board of Supervisors  
Nevada County Fairgrounds




Nevada County Farm Bureau  
Nevada Irrigation District  
Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District  
Pacific Gas and Electric  
Sierra Foothills Audubon Society  
Sierra Harvest  
Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
Sierra Pacific Industries  
Sierra Streams Institute  
South Yuba River Citizens League  
State Water Resources Control Board  
UC Cooperative Extension  
Yuba-Bear Watershed Council



100 year-old Emerson Stoner egg & nest collection with Sierra Foothills Audubon Society.





## MULCH MAGIC VOUCHER

Valid April 1, 2016 - June 30, 2016

Voucher good for 1/2 cubic yard of shredded cedar/redwood mulch ONLY

Nevada Irrigation District  
1036 W. Main Street  
Grass Valley, CA 95945


**Come to NID or NCRCD to get your voucher. One voucher per household.**

Nevada County RCD  
113 Presley Way, Suite I  
Grass Valley, CA 95945

Sponsored by Nevada Irrigation District & Nevada County Resource Conservation District

Mulch giveaway with Nevada Irrigation District.

Tree Mortality and Bark Beetle Workshop for Nevada County landowners



Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to Noon

Find out what to do about your bark beetle infested trees

- Responsibility for removal of trees
- Removal costs
- Logistics in removal (cranes, etc.)
- Clean-up - what to do with the trees once they're down

To register or for more information contact us at (530) 798-5530 or [www.ncrcd.org/index.php/seminars/](http://www.ncrcd.org/index.php/seminars/)

Sponsored by the Nevada County Resource Conservation District



Invasive species grant opportunity with Nevada Irrigation District.

Bark beetle workshops with PG&E, Cal Fire, Sierra Pacific Industries, Robinson Enterprises, and Spar Tree Service.

# Natural Resources Conservation Service



On April 27, 1935, Congress passed Public Law 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 under the United States Department of Agriculture.

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 commitment to the conservation of the nation's soil and water resources, first made 77 years ago and 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. To help ensure this, the NRCS administers the **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**. This cost-share program includes the following practices:

Pasture Management	Green Manures & Cover Crops
Forest Stand Improvement	Rangeland Improvement
Brush Management	Integrated Pest Management
Agricultural Water Conservation	Soil Erosion Reduction
Water Quality Improvement	Wildlife Enhancement

The implementation of these best management conservation practices significantly improves the health of forests, croplands, grasslands, and watersheds in Nevada County.

Since 1935, 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 to the Grass Valley office for free, voluntary, conservation assistance. In the past fourteen years alone, NRCS has helped local landowners develop customized strategies to protect natural resources on more than 30,000 acres. That's approximately 5 percent of Nevada County's private lands.

Such strategies, along with NRCS' cost-share assistance, over the course of this 77-year history, have enabled local people to save tons of valuable topsoil, conserve vast amounts of irrigation water, protect critical habitat for fish and wildlife, and improve forest health across the county. This legacy of conservation has resulted in profound benefits to the productive working lands, pristine landscapes, and quality of life enjoyed here in Nevada County.

# Environmental Benefits of Grazing



❧ Preserves open space in a rapidly growing state ❧

Reduces wildfire threat by controlling the amount of grasses and other potential fuels ❧ Controls water runoff to minimize erosion and improve water quality ❧ Controls the growth of non-native grasses and herbs so native grasses and plants can flourish ❧ Increases diversity of plant and wildlife species by providing habitat ❧



Provides for restoration and diversity of habitat for threatened and endangered species such as: Sierra Nevada Yellow-legged Frog, California Black Rail, Coast Horned Lizard, Bay Checkerspot Butterfly, Western Pond Turtle, Golden Eagle, and California Red-legged Frog



Nevada County Resource Conservation District  
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