

High Sierra RC&D Council

2008-2009 Annual Report



Council Members

Bill Bennett, President
Georgetown Divide RCD

John Taylor, Vice-President
Nevada County Land Trust

John Waskiewicz, Secretary/CFO
Yuba County RCD

Robert Wiswell Jr., Past President
Placer County RCD

Ray Nutting
El Dorado County Board of Supervisors

Dale Pierce
El Dorado RCD

Jeff Pylman
Nevada County Board of Supervisors

Eric Carr
Nevada County RCD

Jennifer Montgomery
Placer County Board of Supervisors

Tim Beals
Sierra County

Eileen "Beenie" Rose
Sierra Valley RCD

Roger Abe
Yuba County Board of Supervisors

Brent Smith
Sierra Economic Development Corp.



Placer County Farm Bureau's Sandy Schwartzler, Executive Director; Carol Schreiber, President, and JR Smith, 1st Vice-President; Jennifer Montgomery, Placer County Supervisor; and Claudia Smith, Placer County RCD.

President's Message...

With input from the communities served, the Council has updated their 5-year area plan, including "Our Vision".

"The High Sierra RC&D area is made up of strong, economical viable communities and that its natural resources are conserved for future generations".

and our "Our Mission".

"The High Sierra RC&D Council will provide regional leadership and assistance to communities to strengthen the local economy, rural heritage, conservation and management of our natural resources.

Using those as the guides, we developed strategic priorities for the following categories:

- Land Conservation
- Water Management
- Community Development
- Land Management

Within these categories the priorities identified are Forest Fuels Reduction, Water Resources (quality, quantity and conservation), Increase Sustainable Businesses (that related to natural resources), Agriculture Development and Promotion; Sustainability of the RC&D (financial, recognition and public support), Education and Outreach, and Watershed Management. For more detail on our Area Plan and out projects, visit our new website HighSierraRCandD.org.

William J. Bennett
President



For additional information, please contact the High Sierra Resource Conservation and Development Council

Since 1976

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Visit our new website

www.highsierrarcandd.org

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Adding Value to Local Agriculture

PLACER COUNTY AG TOUR “Local Ag...REAL Economic Stimulus?”



High Sierra was a co-sponsor of the Placer County Ag Tour. Local, State and Federal decision maker's visited with Nancy and Dick Fowler at Fowler Nurseries, Inc., Newcastle which has been in the family for 100 years. Their second stop was Mickey Forester Ranch, Ophir, where Mike Brenner from the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service talked about the very successful Forester Ranch water conservation program that started 20 years ago with Mickey's father. The tour ended at Placer County Dewitt Center where the local Foothill Farmer's Market was holding their Wednesday market. Lunch was prepared by Placer Nevada Cattle Women using locally grown product.



Community Development

PLACER COUNTY AG FUTURES

Funding was received from WSARE for implementation of an Ag Internship Program. Two interns completed a 2-week rotation on four farms to learn about different farming operations. These included a citrus farm, a vegetable farm, a vineyard and livestock/forestry farm. A website is also being developed to improve communications between farmers in Placer County. A scholarship program has been developed with money raised to pay for local farmers to attend educational training.

MOBILE POULTRY PROCESSING UNIT



The much anticipated Mobile Poultry Processor is up and running providing local poultry to eager consumers. The trailer is being leased to farmers in the High Sierra area that are raising chickens and turkeys. We are seeing an increase in the amount of poultry being raised due to the availability of the trailer for processing.

SIERRA NEVADA SMALL FARM PROGRESS DAYS

Sierra Nevada Small Farm Progress Days, co-sponsored by High Sierra RC&D, held their 4th annual producer workshops that promote small-scale farming and forestry in the Sierra Nevada region through education, networking and the demonstration of appropriate equipment and production methods. This year the format was changed to 1-day crop specific workshops. There were five on-farm workshops held in the spring along with a farmer resource fair held in the fall.

Land Management

GIS INVENTORY OF FIREFIGHTING WATER RESOURCES



This project's need became apparent during two devastating fires, Williams (1997) and Pendola (1999). A total of 135 homes were lost and there was a great impact to water quality in the Yuba River watershed area. During those fires, it was identified that directing outside fire agencies brought in to fight the fire to water was a weak link in the system. To address that, this project contracted with five Yuba fire districts to use Global Position Systems to locate and inventory water sources. Yuba County pulled all of this information together. Hard copy maps along with the GIS information is now available for use by local, state and federal fire fighting officials.

SIERRA-AT-TAHOE BIOMASS STUDY

This 'Biomass Conversion Technologies Technical Assistance Project' was approved and funded to determine the feasibility of and technical requirements for a biomass facility at Sierra at Tahoe. Sierra At Tahoe requested assistance to assess possible best uses, locations and options for biomass utilization at the ski resort.

WAKAMATSU TEA AND SILK FARM COLONY

High Sierra is assisting the American River Conservancy in acquiring the historic 272 acre Veerkamp property in El Dorado County. This is believed to be the first Japanese settlement in the United States. The people from the Aizu Wakamatsu clan brought mulberry trees, silkworm cocoons, tea plants and bamboo shoots in the hopes of establishing an agricultural settlement.

Land Conservation

FORBESTOWN SHADED FUEL BREAK



High Sierra is assisting the Yuba and Butte Fire Safe Councils with a 2.5 mile long fuel break on a ridgeline between Yuba and Butte Counties. The fuel Break will provide watershed protection for two sub-watersheds of the Feather River. Funding has been received for 148 acres of mastication and the completion of the environmental review for the entire project area.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL TOUR



High Sierra RC&D Council was awarded a Western Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education grant that provided the opportunity for producers to interact and network, assist producers in adoption of sustainable agricultural production systems, and showcase previous and current WSARE funded projects. On Oct. 11th, 40 producers visited 2 WSARE grant recipient sites, Riverhill Farm in Nevada County with their Monitoring Project for a Zero Discharge Farm, CSA and on-farm internship program and Edwards Tree Farm in Placer County where they learned about Sierra Nevada Small Farm Progress Days, the Placer Ag Futures Project, and stackable enterprises.