

PLACER COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Draft

2009-2010 Annual Plan

6/22/09

MISSION: *The Placer County Resource Conservation District is dedicated to supporting wise natural resource management and conservation, providing education and technical assistance or direction to private landowners/operators, local and regional entities. Independently and in collaboration with other local, state and federal agencies and organizations, the RCD will implement programs, hold land, easements and endowments, and plans to conserve and enhance the natural resources of the District while inspiring and mobilizing public conservation awareness and involvement.*

The RCD 2009-2010 Annual Plan (Plan) is the last year to be based on the Board adopted RCD 2004-2009 Strategic/Long Range Plan. The Plan continues to outline core conservation assistance programs addressing; Watershed values, healthy forest/fuels reduction, water conservation; reduction of topsoil erosion; wildlife habitat improvement, enhancement, and preservation; political communication and education/outreach.

The RCD 2009-2010 Annual Plan maintains continuity with and extends general concepts adopted in the RCD 2008-2009 Annual Plan.

Anticipating a slowing of the economy the Board took action to approve a three year budget for fiscal years 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010. This Three Year Budget Projection was based on known factors and assumptions related to economic constraints. It was expected that new opportunities and possibly unknown constraints would present themselves throughout the three fiscal years.

The Board continues to recognize economic instability causing a slowdown in housing and retail market services which will continue to have an effect on secured taxes. It is anticipated that the urbanization in Placer County will continue and the agricultural landscape will reflect that change. Competing environmental values such as keeping a viable agricultural community, restoring and enhancing and appropriate open space will remain high priority. Increasing urbanization continues to require the RCD be flexible in the services the District provides.

Conservation assistance efforts will continue to provide services to private landowners, government agencies and other community groups.

The RCD will organize projects within the following Plan Goal areas: **Fuel Load Reduction**/Fire Safety efforts; **Individual Landowner Assistance** programs which meshes with NRCS cost-share programs and related technical assistance; **Urban and residential Erosion Control**, which includes assistance to Placer County regarding storm water management efforts, and **Education/Outreach Activities** that assist and promote awareness of conservation practices and related watershed

management/improvement efforts and new this year **Management and New Initiatives** which relate to personnel policies, staffing and long range strategy development.

Education Activities are included within each of the Plan Goal areas and are targeted at school age children, 4-H'ers and Future Farmers of America (FFA) as well as decision makers and the general public. The RCD will continue to expand its web site as an additional tool to reach out to constituents and maintain a Geographic Information System (GIS) which graphically displays project achievements and helps identify future needs.

Implementation of the following Plan Goal areas represents RCD Board priority issues and opportunities. Goals will be accomplished through: 1) partnerships with agencies/entities 2) promoting and assisting NRCS programs for landowner/land managers, 3) brochures and website development, 4) public education and outreach efforts, 5) continued support of watersheds efforts, 6) storm water assistance and 7) submission of proposals for grants and contracts to implement projects on the ground which include conservation easements and the ownership of land for the purpose of conservation/protection of habitat and species.

RCD staff will strive to implement activities within these program areas by obtaining contracts and grants which will supplement normal RCD tax revenues. The RCD will attempt to obtain grants for "on-the-ground projects", which seek to improve resource management through conservation planning, habitat enhancement or preservation and fuel load reduction efforts.

All strategy and priority actions are important and will be addressed as staff time and funding permits. The numbered sequence does not represent an intended order of priority. In many instances opportunistic funding through appropriate grants or contracts will shape the order of annual actions.

Goal: Fuel Load Reduction; By June 2010 the RCD will reduce threats from wildfire and reduce greenhouse gases in the course of reducing fuel load by 7,000 tons; assist NRCS and CALFIRE in improving forest health on 300 acres; assist Placer County in treating 20 acres on Hidden Falls Regional Park and completing fuel reduction at Squaw Valley Park.

Strategy and Priority Actions:

1. Provide Landowner Technical Assistance as Requested
2. Administer existing WUI Grant & Chipper Program/Fire Safe Inspection Programs
3. Collaborate with NRCS for Conservation Planning and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to promote Healthy Forest Practices
4. Assist CALFIRE with Proposition 40 Fuels Reduction program in improving forest health as requested through the Sierra Coordinated Resources Management Council.

5. Prepare or assist Placer County with proposals to treat fuel load for Placer County Parks Division.
6. Administer CALFIRE Forestry Stewardship Program Committee Grant & Participate in CARCD Forestry & Fuels Mgt Subcommittee
7. Continue GIS contract with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and coordinate with local, state and federal agencies to identify and capture fuel load reduction projects.
8. Support and Participate in Placer County Fire Safe Alliance and councils as requested.
9. Provide GIS analysis to discover key locations in order to assist NRCS in meeting Conservation planning goals.
10. Support all fuel load reduction partners with up to date clearinghouse for natural resource management data.

Implementation Strategy:

Our implementation strategy is to support our healthy forest and fuel load reduction partners (NRCS, USFS, BLM, CDF, HSRC&D, Placer County, Cities, Fire Safe Alliance and Fire Safe Councils) in obtaining and/or administering grants to promote Proposition 40 Fuels Reduction Program (using a process patterned after California Forestry Incentives Program (CFIP)), Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), and the Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) as tools to reduce fuel load and promote healthy forest project activities. GIS analysis will enable us to prioritize high-risk areas identified within the adopted Placer County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (PCCWPP). We will work to reduce fuel load by assisting with project location identification, project planning, and in grant funding opportunities.

Deliverables include:

1. Management of existing grants/contracts which include the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) grant.
2. Manage the CALFIRE Forest Stewardship Committee grant.
3. Continue to manage Sierra Nevada Conservancy agreement, documentation of fuel reduction activities, and capturing new projects to bring continuity on the landscape.
4. Participation on the Placer County Fire Safe Alliance and Community Fire Safe Councils will maintain relationships with partners at all levels and will promote future grants to treat acres and/or achieve tonnage goals.
5. At County request, the RCD will provide technical assistance (including site-specific recommendations) for erosion and sediment control, water conservation, vegetation management and hazardous fuel load reduction.
6. Continue as manager for the Prop 40 Fuels Reduction Program through the Sierra Coordinated Resources Management Council.
7. Assist Placer Sierra FSC to implement the beetle infestation grant program.
8. GIS will be used to assist in targeting potential landowners interested in resource management.

Goal: Individual Landowner Assistance; By June 2010 the RCD will assist 40 new and follow-up with 20 previous landowners, promote landowner grants and/or cost share programs, and conduct 5 workshops.

Strategy and Priority Actions:

1. Facilitate Financial and Technical Assistance sources to Landowners.
2. Assist NRCS with outreach efforts explaining available cost share programs
3. Administer CalFed American Basins Working Landscapes Project
4. Administer Red Sesbania invasive weeds eradication project
5. Conduct or assist with water quality, erosion control, irrigation, pasture management, invasive species, and riparian habitat restoration workshops
6. Support HSRC&D programs serving individual landowners (see HSRC&D '09-'10 Annual Plan).
7. Promote Firesafe and Firewise strategies through targeted assistance development.

Implementation Strategy:

The RCD implementation strategy is to continue providing on-going technical assistance to homeowners, landowners and/or operators in the conservation of natural resources. Technical assistance is provided directly by RCD staff or in partnership with NRCS; Ducks Unlimited; Sutter, Nevada, and El Dorado/Georgetown Divide, Tahoe RCD's; UC Extension Service; County Agriculture Commissioner and High Sierra RC&D. Scheduling of workshops will be coordinated and completed with partner agency consultation and based on appropriate time of year. Workshop topics of interest will include but not be limited to Irrigation Water Management (IWM), invasive weeds eradication and management, voluntary landowner activities in reducing impacts from herbicide/pesticide application, integrated pest management, erosion control, water efficient irrigation system designs, and fuel load reduction methods and techniques.

The RCD will participate with NRCS in the promotion of the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) to develop wetland habitat sites and the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). The RCD will cooperate with Sutter RCD and Ducks Unlimited to promote conservation easements providing habitat for waterfowl programs/projects and Fish and Wildlife Service in promoting the Partners in Wildlife Program.

Furthermore, the RCD's GIS program will continue to help the decision-making processes by providing the most up to date GIS information available to natural resource managers.

Deliverables include:

1. The RCD will cooperate with partner entity/agencies to organize and help conduct workshops
2. Staff will provide technical assistance to landowners when requested promote and promote financial program opportunities.
3. Working with NRCS, RCD staff will complete periodic follow-up phone calls and/or field visits with past RCD/NRCS clients.

4. Cooperate with Weed Management area partners to establish an invasive weed eradication effort and provide regional Agricultural Offices with current invasive weed maps.
5. Strategic landowners will be identified through GIS to bring connectivity among various projects and stakeholders.

Goal: Urban Erosion Control; By June 2010 the RCD will reduce erosion up to 20 construction sites, conduct four (4) construction industry training courses and up to eight (8) county staff trainings, and continue to assist in updating one Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

Strategy and Priority Actions:

1. Provide Urban Erosion Control Assistance for County and Municipalities
2. Provide Storm Water Quality assistance, & Staff Training
3. Provide site plan and grading review training for county employees
4. Assist Placer County with the development of building site Best Management Practices (BMPs) and construction site BMPs.
5. Assist Placer County with up to date erosion information.
6. The RCD will provide on-site technical assistance pertaining to erosion and sediment control to Placer County and the Cities of Roseville, Auburn and Lincoln.

Implementation Strategy:

These technical assistance efforts are included in approved contracts and generally relate to proposed urban construction sites, County Parks and Road departments. RCD staff will review grading/winterization/plans and/or monitor erosion and sediment control BMPs as requested. It is anticipated that several trips per site will be required for follow up. RCD will review and revise winterization and storm water plans SWPPPs for Placer County. GIS staff will help plan and map project locations in order to keep current records of sediment input locations.

Deliverables include:

1. Staff will provide recommendations and comments to the County of Placer and Cities on construction site erosion control plans
2. Staff will conduct construction industry training courses and county staff trainings

Goal: Watershed Activities; By June 2010 the RCD will attend meetings of established watershed groups and pursue long-term partnership with Corp of Engineers, Caltrans, public utilities, California Department of Fish and Game, Regional Water Quality Control Board and US Fish and Wildlife Service relating to habitat and species conservation and preservation.

Strategy and Priority Actions:

1. Continue to attend monthly meetings in the American, Bear and American Basin Council Watersheds and make recommendations as to projects and assist with grant proposals as needed.

2. Continue partnership with Auburn Recreation District/Wetland/Habitat Management for Atwood Phase III
3. Support the American Basin Working Group
4. Participate in the Cosumnes, American, Bear and Yuba (CABY) planning process
5. Continue to work with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy
6. Promote watershed scale management and integrate it with Sierra Crest to the San Francisco Bay Watershed Initiative concept.
7. Work with federal and state agencies to promote a wetlands habitat restoration conservation/mitigation program and protection of T & E species populations.
8. Participate with the County in development and implementation of the Placer Legacy Program conservation goals and the Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP).

Implementation Strategy:

The RCD will participate and provide support with established watershed groups. RCD staff will continue to administer the existing American Basin Working Landscapes Project. The District will continue to pursue a Wetlands Habitat Restoration program through retaining in lieu Army Corp. of Engineer (ACE) funds within Placer County. These ACE funds will be routed to projects within Placer County which benefit watershed restoration goals identified by agencies and watershed groups. The RCD will identify potential private stakeholders and public entities to assist and possibly take an active role, in long- term preservation and recovery of habitats supporting T & E species within Placer County. The District will participate in efforts with stakeholders and entities such as Caltrans, public utilities, COE, USFWS, California Fish and Game, Regional Water Quality Control Boards and local/regional Air Quality Control Boards.

Deliverables include:

1. Develop collaborative local, state and federal partnerships in the areas of conservation planning, water quality, air quality and water efficiency to provide reliable capacity and enhance natural watershed ecosystem values.
2. Incidental deliverables will be those projects implemented by and through each of the watershed groups and land trusts.
3. Coordinate with Placer County and map potential restoration sites through GIS program to gain site-specific information of restoration project location attributes.
4. Identify locations of T&E and special status species and their habitat through private property owner contacts, existing data, from sources such as California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB), PCCP projects, and other similar databases and programs.
5. Locate additional T&E and special status species populations through focused survey efforts on properties of willing landowners.

Goal: Education Activities; By June 2010 the RCD will organize one (1) Placer County Agricultural Tour, prepare ten (10) news releases, One (1) Annual report, support conservation efforts of three (3) elementary, middle, high schools or Sierra College, Maintain contract with Calfire to conduct five (5) Hired Equipment Safety

Training Classes, promote local conservation activities and continue to develop and maintain an RCD website.

Strategy and Priority Actions:

1. Develop and coordinate the 2010 Placer County Ag Tour
2. Develop Newspaper Articles/Press Releases and Newsletters
3. Promote and support CARCD Speak-off Contest
4. Promote and support Range Camp, Support Nature Bowl &/or CA Envirothon
5. Maintain RCD Website.
6. Participate in Gold Country Fair, Sierra College Earth Day, Foresthill Wildfire on the Divide, Meadow Vista Pioneer Day, PlacerGrown Farm and Barn, the Small Farm Progress Days events.
7. Secure funding to update and digitize the Defensible Space and Healthy Forest Handbook and Erosion and Sediment Control Guidelines.
8. Support ROP and other youth educational programs.
9. Continue contract with Calfire to conduct Hired Equipment Safety Training.

Implementation Strategy:

RCD staff will organize, with participation from our partners, the 2010 Placer County Ag Tour and participate in the annual Placer-Grown Farm Conference (held at the Lincoln High School). Staff will draft and distribute appropriate press releases and television/radio announcements on seasonal resource management topics and to publicize existing RCD/NRCS programs (including newspaper inserts, if appropriate) and help promote watershed stewardship, conservation activities, fire safe concerns, and forest management issues. Staff will coordinate registration, collect appropriate fee per participant, maintain database and provide postage for mailing 2010 training mailer.

Provide presentations and information about the CARCD Speak-off Contest, work with the UC Extension and the 4H to select a high school student to represent the RCD at the annual Range Camp competition, and work with individual students and teachers as requested for the CA Envirothon.

RCD will bi-annually update and maintain a web site for the RCD with current information, archives and links to relevant information and agencies. Furthermore, we will explore an opportunity for the public to be able to directly donate towards programs such as educational programs or fuels reduction programs in order to boost revenue through grassroots direct funding.

Staff will continue to build active partnerships with local elementary, middle and high schools in order to develop or enhance the natural resource curriculum. As requested, staff will provide assistance to school groups and classes for field trips to visit business, farms, ranches, and other agricultural operations to observe and learn about agriculture and forestry in Placer County. The RCD will collaborate with Placer Nature Center on educational programs including partial financial support for the Nature Bowl.

As requested, speak to community organizations (service clubs, trails and equestrian groups, youth groups) on topics relating to forestry, recycling, water quality, agriculture, watershed awareness and other natural resource issues.

Deliverables include:

1. Provide materials for local community events, and other public activities.
2. Participate in appropriate regional activities, such as the American River Confluence Festival, Salmon Festival, Wildfire Awareness Week, Earth Day, Arbor Day, Creek Week, Fire on the Divide, Pioneer Day, Gold Country Fair etc.
3. Biannually update and promote website to increase public knowledge and participation.
4. Fulfill contract obligation with Calfire for the 2010 Hired Equipment Safety Training program.

Goal: Administration; By June 2010 the RCD will implement its 2009-2010 Annual Plan through an adopted budget and comply with local, state and federal accounting rules and regulations and carry out normal administrative duties.

Strategy and Priority Actions:

1. Prepare agenda for RCD regular, special and committee board meetings.
2. Prepare RCD budget, monthly, quarterly & annual accounting, regular board reporting data and information.
3. Training - Irrigation/Erosion Certification, GIS/GPS, Computer security, etc.
4. Assist walk-ins, respond to phone calls, emails, mail, prepare payroll, maintain District insurance coverage, and participate in miscellaneous staff, Agricultural Center, EQIP, etc. meetings.
5. Continue inter-agency networking and appropriate interagency MOU and/or agency agreement development.
6. Expand relationship with Sierra Nevada Conservancy
7. Attend CARCD Annual Meeting and Regional Meetings
8. Develop Relationship with PG&E Stewardship Council and Land Trusts
9. Participate in “Day in the Capitol” and DOC advisory committee meetings.
- 10 Attend High Sierra RC&D Meetings and coordinate annual planning activities
11. Attend NACD Conferences as appropriate

Implementation Strategy:

RCD staff will maintain accounting records and present a financial report to the Board each month; the RCD Board will fund an annual audit.

RCD staff and contractors will prepare and submit activity reports as appropriate (monthly, quarterly and final reports) to the RCD Board, the county, and any state and/or federal grants requiring such reports. RCD staff will support grant activities through “Technical Advisory Committee” (TAC) collaboration and grant management services. RCD staff will continue to support NRCS Community Technical Assistance, Farm Bill Programs, and other related activities though the Local Working Group and with landowners.

Continue to work with the County of Placer, the Cities of Lincoln, Roseville, and Auburn on budget development and management of RCD joint-work and assistance programs. RCD Directors and staff will contact local “decision makers” to inform and advocate for collaborative projects.

Continue to build partnerships with agencies, citizens’ groups and organizations to further the goals of conservation stewardship and management of natural resources including participation on the Placer County Conservation Plan Inter-Agency Working Group with the preparation of the Placer County Conservation Plan, CABY Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) and Placer County Water Agency with their FERC relicensing program. Assist the American Basin Working Group, and with adjacent RCD’s and NRCS in developing GIS data.

RCD staff and/or NRCS and/or RCD Director(s) will attend various RCD, CARCD, NACD, weed management area, joint powers authority (JPA) and other meetings deemed necessary for RCD operations.

RCD staff will attend technical training sessions (continuing education), which are required to retain “certification status” in the areas of Erosion/Sediment Control, Storm Water and Irrigation Water Management.

Staff and contractors will complete general office duties as needed such as receptionist duties; receiving and replying to letters, e-mail and phone calls; acquisition of office equipment/supplies, printing and similar services; producing agendas, minutes, and mailings.

RCD staff and Board will review the adopted RCD 2010-2015 Strategic/Long Range Plan at least once annually and prepare an Annual Work Plan. RCD staff will coordinate with NRCS in identifying availability of NRCS staffing during an Annual Workload/Annual Plan analysis.

Deliverables include:

Staff will prepare an Annual Plan with proposed budget by September 2010. RCD staff will prepare RCD Board agendas with appropriate financial and monthly narrative staff/consultant reports.

RCD staff will participate with partners in attending collaborative meetings with decision makers, scheduled conferences such as “Day in the Capitol” and DOC advisory committee.

GOAL: Management and New Initiatives: By June 2010 the RCD will implement the following strategy and priority items.

Strategy and Priority Actions:

1. Implement the RCD Board revised personnel policies by December 31, 2009
2. Fill conservation technician/planner position by September 30, 2009

3. Fill District Manager position by January 31, 2010
4. Develop/Update a Strategic Plan for the RCD for the years 2010 – 2015. This effort to be led by new District Manager and is to be completed by June 1, 2010.
5. Develop a conservation easement program via coordination with CALTRANS, USFWS, County of Placer and other partners.
6. Implement 2 projects to support the conservation and wildlife programs.

Implementation Strategy

The RCD board and District Manager will assure that contact is made with the CALPERS program and will arrange to facilitate the proposed changes to the personnel policies. Goal is for all changes to be effective for new employees.

To fill positions RCD will advertize, rank and interview top candidates. Selected person will be offered position.

After the selection of the District Manager, RCD board in coordination with manager will collect information and data to assist in the development of an updated strategic plan. Several public meetings will be held to obtain input from the public and partner agencies, 501 (c) (3) and others interested in RCD activities. A draft plan will be developed and inputs solicited. The RCD board will approve the plan which will be used to guide RCD activities in future years.

New initiatives such as the conservation easement program will be completed by the appropriate committee representing the area of expertise. All developed material and projects will be completed by RCD staff and approved by the RCD board. The Board will explore RCD Capital Improvements-Building options.

Deliverables include:

1. Staff will assist the Board in replacing District Manager and creating a position for additional technical assistance.
2. RCD will hold several public meetings to obtain input from the public and partner agencies and adopt Strategic Plan for the RCD for the years 2010 – 2015 by June 30, 2010.
3. Adopt a conservation easement program and implement 2 projects.
4. New District Manager by January 31, 2010.
5. New conservation technician/planner by September 30, 2009.
7. Implement the RCD Board revised personnel policies by December 31, 2009