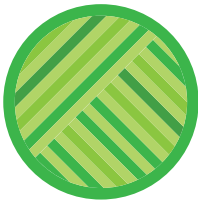


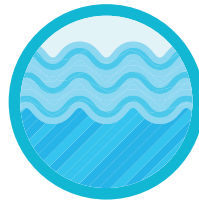
PLACER RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT



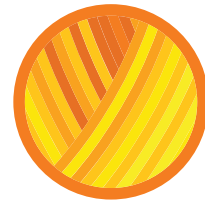
Agriculture



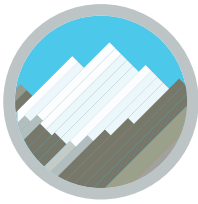
Urban
Agriculture



Water



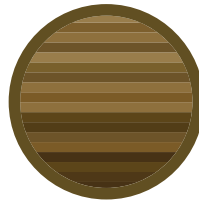
Fire



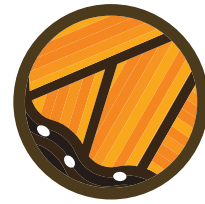
Climate



Forest



Soil



Habitat

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2020 - JUNE 2021





SARAH JONES
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“ Despite the challenges over the past year, Placer RCD has seen tremendous growth in staffing, capacity, and community impact.

Since June 2020, we have grown from 4 to 14 employees, implemented more than a dozen projects, and received multiple grants to protect our soils, waters, and forests. We are grateful for the support of the community, partner organizations, and collaborating agencies who help strengthen existing programs while investing in new projects as we evolve to address natural resource challenges in Placer County.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Claudia Smith, *Chair*

Christine Johnson, *Vice Chair*

Stephen Jones, *Secretary/Treasurer*

Thomas Wehri, *Director*

Patricia Beard, *Director*

Cathy Johnson, *Director*

Kristin Lantz, *Director*

Placer RCD appreciates the dedicated service of Board Members who resigned in 2020.

Mica Heilmann, *Director*
(served 2016 – 2020)

Steven Garcia, *Director & Board Chair*
(served 2006 – 2020)

DISTRICT STAFF

Sarah Jones, *Executive Director*

Kate Espinola, *Executive Assistant*

Allison Erny, *Conservation Project Manager*

Cordi Craig, *Conservation Project Coordinator*

Brian Pimentel, *Conservation Program Coordinator*

Andrew Fritz, *Grants and Outreach Specialist*

George Alves, *Program Administrator*

Jerry Reioux, *Conservation Planner*

Mark White, *Conservation Planner*

Tony Quatela, *Chipper Program Manager*

Jason Graydon, *Chipper Operator*





WHO WE ARE

For the last 74 years, Placer County Resource Conservation District (Placer RCD, District) has provided technical assistance to private landowners, collaborated with state and local agencies, and implemented projects that promote sustainable land management.

Placer County boasts a wide range of natural resources, from working rangelands to oak woodlands and alpine forests. District programs reflect the diversity of needs in the community from wildfire resilience to pollinator preservation, and priorities are rooted in the best available science to generate positive change.

As an independent, special district, we rely on a Board of Directors to guide decision-making and program development. The Board is comprised of local community members, invested in developing a suite of programs that serve the community's changing needs and promote the enduring health of our beautiful lands.

Our Mission

Advance the sustainable management of natural resources in Placer County among private landowners, local organizations, and public agencies through action, education, and outreach.

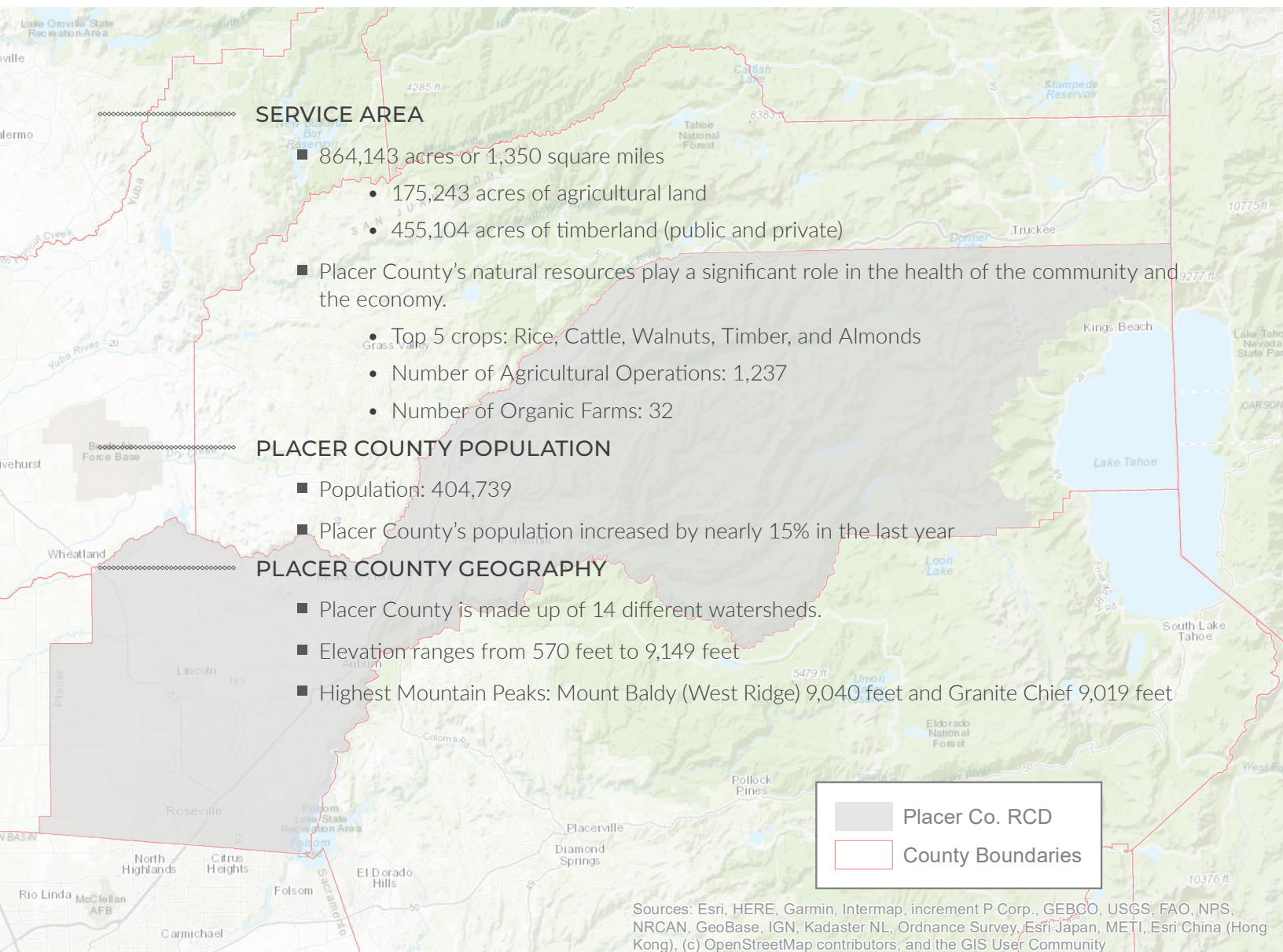


Our Vision

Create a legacy of conservation in Placer County by engaging with the community to support and inspire environmental stewardship.



OUR DISTRICT AT A GLANCE



PROGRAM AREAS

FOREST HEALTH & FIRE RESILIENCE



A changing climate, overcrowded forests, and expanding development in the wildland-urban interface threaten many communities with catastrophic wildfire. According to CAL FIRE, most of Placer County falls within a Very High Fire Severity Zone. The District seeks creative and reliable ways to protect the health of forests and the communities that depend on them from drought, disease, and fire. The District is responding by implementing strategic fuels reduction, engaging in community education, and providing technical assistance to residents across the county.

Landowner assistance remains at the core of the District's programs. In a continuing partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Placer RCD provides landowners with options for financial assistance to incentivize conservation practices. In addition to promoting general forest stewardship, Placer RCD works with NRCS and California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) to provide landowners with funding options dedicated to the removal of dead and dying trees.

In 2020/2021, in collaboration with CAL FIRE, federal agencies, and private landowners, the District managed two large fuels reduction projects. When completed, the Auburn Shaded Fuel Break and the Placer County Coordinated Fuel Break, combined, will reduce fuels on more than 550 acres of dense forestland. The projects are utilizing a variety of treatments including handwork, mastication, pile burning, and grazing to mitigate fire severity and improve evacuation and access routes for landowners and first responders in the wildland-urban interface.

Education complements many of the District's programs. In 2020, Placer RCD showcased the Firewise Trailer, a tool cache to support community cleanup days and inspire home hardening. The Prescribed Burning on Private Lands (PBPL) Pilot Program documents barriers and solutions to prescribed burning and seeks to overcome obstacles in real-time by hosting focused workshops and assisting landowners who are prepared to burn. In addition, Placer RCD writes, edits, and distributes the *Forestland Steward*, a CAL FIRE-funded newsletter focused on promoting sustainable management practices to forest landowners throughout the state. In 2021, the *Forestland Steward* turned 25 and continues to provide relevant advice and stories that guide socially responsible conservation for a broad community.



THE NUMBERS



FUELS REDUCTION

- 207 acres of strategic fuels reduction completed
- Engaged with 10 landowners to implement fuel breaks on private property
- Treatments included handwork, chipping, mastication, grazing, and pile burning



LANDOWNER Technical Assistance

- 30 Landowners assisted
- Provided technical assistance and information on state and federal agency cost-share programs
- Popular visit topics: fuels reduction, defensible space, and bark beetle



PRESCRIBED BURNING

- Co-hosted 1 Rx Burn Workshop and trained 30 future burn practitioners
- Hosted 4 Technical Advisory Committee meetings and collaborated with 6 agencies to identify barriers to and solutions for prescribed burning for private landowners
- 5 Site Visits specifically for prescribed burning assistance



RCPP Regional Conservation Partnership Program (USDA NRCS)

- Removed more than 400 acres of dead and dying trees in Placer County
- Helped 11 landowners successfully apply for funding for hazardous tree removal
- Properties of funded participants ranged in size from 2.5 acres to 127 acres



NEWSLETTER Forestland Steward

- 2,886 Households Reached
- 644 Email Inboxes Reached
- More than 3,500 readers nation-wide



FIREWISE TRAILER

- Secured 3 grants totaling nearly \$15,000 to support equipment and community outreach
- Showcased at multiple events including the Fall and Spring Auburn Home Shows, the Placer County Fair, and the Foresthill Fire Preparedness Fair
- In the future, the Firewise Trailer will support neighborhood cleanup events and contribute to improving defensible space throughout the county





CHIPPER PROGRAM



One of Placer RCD's most enduring successes is the Placer County Chipper Program (Chipper Program). The program has been in operation for more than a decade and incentivizes landowners to achieve defensible space and reduce the overall threat of wildfire in the community. In March 2020, challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic forced a suspension of the program. In response, the District restructured by hiring employees instead of utilizing contracted labor and inmate crews. By October 2020, the program resumed and actively serves residential neighborhoods across the county. In 2021/2022, the Chipper Program is increasing residential services with financial support from Placer County and CAL FIRE. Additional crews provided by Placer County Probation Department's Alternative Sentencing Program are drastically reducing wait times.

THE NUMBERS

Placer RCD owns 5 tow-behind chippers and 2 tracked chippers.



576 orders completed

5,900 tons of material chipped

AGRICULTURE & COMMUNITY



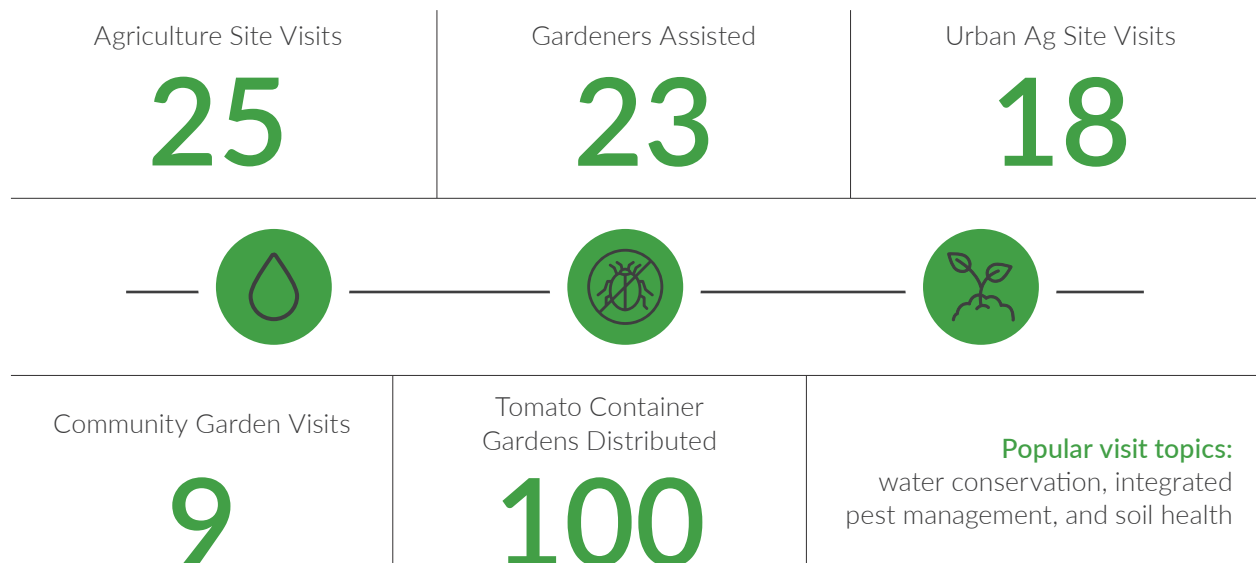
The District was founded to promote conservation on working landscapes and strives to create relevant programs that address the shifting needs of the community and natural resources. In collaboration with the USDA NRCS, District staff offer technical assistance to local producers to reduce soil degradation, improve water use efficiency, and more. In spring 2021, Placer RCD received funding to promote the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Healthy Soils Program and help ranchers and farmers apply for small grants to implement sustainable farm management practices. Additional funding from the Carbon Cycle Institute enabled the District to design a program framework centered on carbon farming practices. An advisory panel provides direction and includes representatives from local government agencies, nonprofits, and producers dedicated to the widespread adoption of carbon-smart practices such as cover cropping and no-till farming.

In 2021, the Urban Ag Program expanded the District's reach by providing technical assistance, outreach, and education for backyard and balcony vegetable gardeners. The program supports initiatives to improve access to fresh food and address food insecurity in the community. A Donate Your Produce directory is being developed to build community connections and unite backyard gardeners with surplus produce to local food pantries. Placer RCD staff is reviewing existing infrastructure throughout the county, such as community gardens, to better inform future initiatives.

In October 2020, following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and increases in unemployment and financial insecurity, Placer RCD hosted Planting Hope, a drive-through food donation event. Community members received donation boxes filled with fresh produce and seedlings from local producers. Building new partnerships, increasing program relevance, and adapting to changes in community needs improves inclusivity and strengthens the quality of our services.

THE NUMBERS

50 boxes of fresh produce and seedlings donated at Planting Hope





HABITAT



Sprawling development throughout the state is increasing habitat loss and fragmentation for native wildlife. In 2020, Placer RCD pursued several projects focused on the preservation of wildlife habitat. For example, the District holds a conservation easement for the Atwood Nature Preserve, a 10.6-acre Preserve in Auburn originally protected from development by the Army Corps of Engineers. In partnership with the Auburn Recreation District, Placer RCD conducts biological surveys to monitor biodiversity and reports and responds to fire hazards or potential erosion issues. To address the devastating decline of the western monarch butterfly, Placer RCD is working with CARCD, the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, and local producers to improve habitat and nectar sources amidst threats of pesticide use, habitat loss, and disease. Western Placer County is one of the first stopover zones following overwintering for this species and in November 2020, Placer RCD built a 500-foot hedgerow at a local farm in Lincoln. The District continues to work with landowners to plant native nectar and milkweed sources and follow best management practices for the preservation of monarchs.

THE NUMBERS



500' of hedgerow

including native milkweed and nectar sources installed

Plants included: coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), and showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*)



WATERSHED HEALTH



The District is dedicated to protecting the county's natural hydrologic infrastructure. California depends on the precipitation that falls in the higher elevations of source watersheds to provide drinking water, supplies for the agricultural sector, and habitat for native fish. Placer County is made up of 14 different watersheds and protecting water quality and quantity is increasingly important as we experience more extreme weather patterns and prolonged periods of drought. Since 2006, the District has teamed up with the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) to remove red sesbania (*Sesbania punicea*) from the Dry Creek Watershed every year. Red sesbania is an invasive species that rapidly spreads in creeks and streams. Although it is unlikely that it will be completely eradicated, Placer RCD is optimistic that continued treatment and community involvement will help contain further spread. In addition to invasive species removal, Placer RCD is working with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) to restore an upstream tributary of Doty Creek, an important watercourse that has since been restored to improve waterfowl and beaver habitat. The project reduced livestock encroachment, decreased nutrient loading, and improved streambank stabilization to benefit downstream water quality and quantity and represents a successful step toward larger-scale watershed restoration.

THE NUMBERS

2021 marks the 15th year of red sesbania removal

31

miles monitored
for invasive
species

40 cubic yards of
red sesbania **removed**

10x



Or 10 pickup trucks full!

400 feet

fencing installed to reduce livestock
impacts on streambank erosion



More than **100** native grasses and
trees planted to improve bank stabilization





Agriculture



Urban Agriculture



Water



Fire



Climate



Forest



Soil



Habitat



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FISCAL YEAR 2020 - 2021

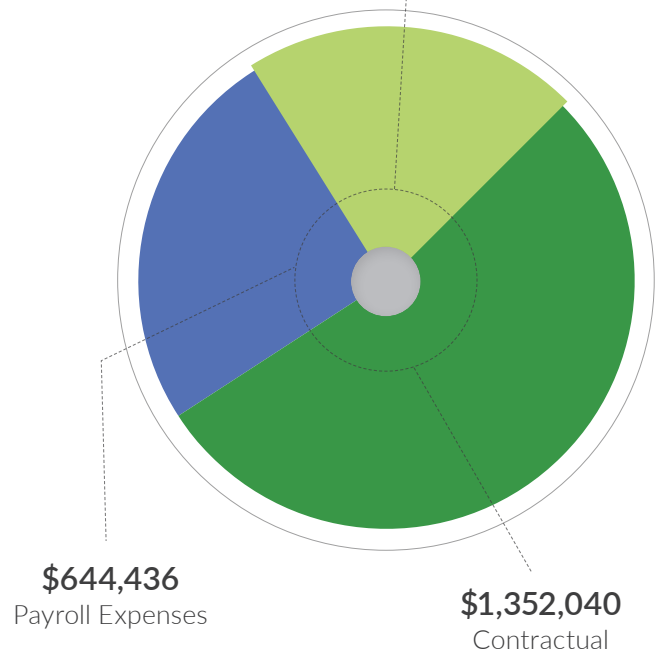
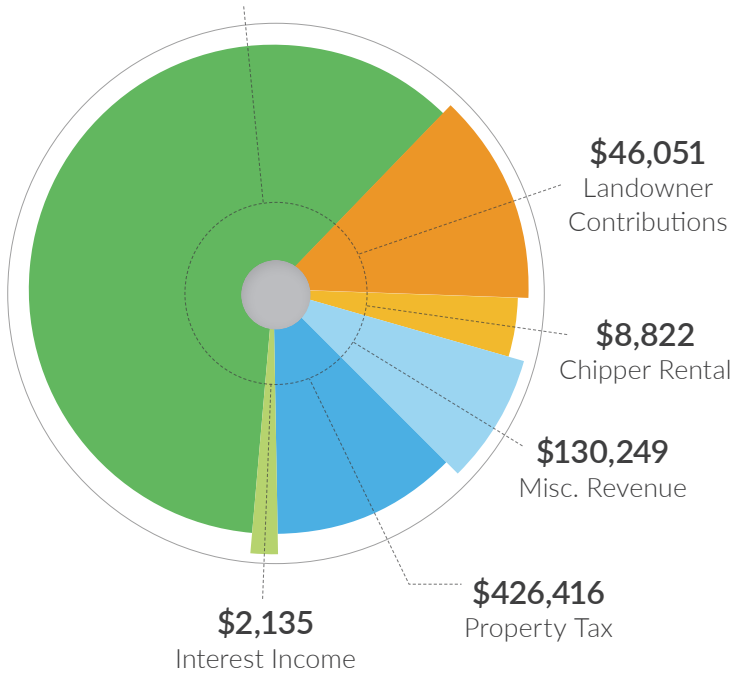


\$2,707,957
Revenue

\$2,541,584
Expenses

\$2,094,284
Grants & Contracts

\$545,108
Operating Cost





2021 - 2022

Placer RCD is excited for another busy year. Ongoing programs including the Placer County Chipper Program, Red Sesbania Eradication and Management Program, Atwood Preserve Monitoring, and Landowner Technical Assistance, will continue to be offered. The Chipper Program is increasing residential services with financial support from Placer County and CAL FIRE. Additional crews provided by Placer County Probation Department's Alternative Sentencing Program are drastically reducing wait times.

The District will showcase a variety of new projects in 2021/2022 that address the diverse natural resources in Placer County. Forestry staff will begin Phase II of the North Fork American River Shaded Fuel Break, a \$4.8 million dollar CAL FIRE-funded project to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire in the wildland-urban interface in Colfax and Auburn. The agriculture department continues to extend its roots with the Urban Ag and Healthy Soils Programs. The District is collaborating with Placer County Parks Division and a local producer to implement two new hedgerows, totaling an additional 2,000 feet of native plants for monarch conservation. We are excited to continue working with and supporting our regional partners and anticipate forming new partnerships along the way.

A STRONG DEDICATION TO COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP AND PASSION FOR CONSERVATION WILL HELP DRIVE THE DISTRICT'S SUCCESS FOR DECADES TO COME.




ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

GRANT FUNDERS & PARTNERS

CAL FIRE, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD), Placer County, Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA), California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS), Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Auburn Recreation District (ARD), American Forest Foundation, Bureau of Reclamation, Greater Auburn Area Fire Safe Council (FSC), Placer County Fire Safe Alliance, Placer Land Trust, California Fire Foundation, LISTOS California, California State Parks, Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), Placer Farm Bureau, Tahoe RCD, El Dorado RCD, Auburn City Fire Department, Health Education Council, Placer Community Foundation



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Helping people help
the land since 1947