

# PLACER RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## FY23-24 Annual Work Plan



**Sarah Jones**

Executive Director

**Chad Chaney**

Chipper Program Crew Lead

**Kate Espinola**

Executive Assistant

**Allison Erny**

Forestry Project Manager

**Chris Paulus**

Forestry Technical Advisor

**Lewis Campbell**

Forestry Project Coordinator

**Andrew Justus-Fritz**

Community & Conservation Director

**Cordi Craig**

Prescribed Fire Program Manager

**Liana Vitousek**

Community Engagement & Outreach

**Anthony Corral**

Chipper Program Crewmember

**Donna Thomassen**

Administration and Finance Manager

**Liliana Santellano**

Chipper Program Crew Lead

**Brandi Hankins**

Chipper Program Crew Lead

**Jason Graydon**

Chipper Program Crew Supervisor

**Mark White**

Conservation Planner

**Brian Pimentel**

Agriculture Program Manager

**Jerry Reioux**

Forestry Conservation Planner

**Scott Stephenson**

Forestry Director

- Objectives will be completed by June 30, 2024 unless otherwise noted
- Budget totals indicate anticipated expenditure for FY23-24
- Partner category indicates funder and collaborating entities
- Regular Board Meetings of the Placer County Resource Conservation District occur the fourth Tuesday of each month at 4pm, at 11641 Blocker Drive, Auburn CA 95603

# Dry Creek Watershed Red Sesbania Removal Project

Staff: Andrew Justus Fritz, Liana Vitousek  
Partner: Sacramento Area Flood Control District (SAFCA)  
Budget: \$50,000

Objectives: Remove Red Sesbania along approximately 31 riparian miles on Dry Creek, Secret Ravine, Antelope Creek, and Miner's Ravine and submit an Annual Report by February 28, 2024  
*Strategic Plan Goal #3*

Red sesbania (*Sesbania punicea*) is a highly invasive deciduous shrub that is rapidly spreading throughout the Central Valley and Sierra Foothills. According to the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC), red sesbania has earned a "high" overall invasive score, which translates to severe negative impacts on native plant communities and abiotic ecosystem processes. The plant grows in dense clusters and impedes water access for humans and wildlife. Since 2007, Placer RCD has collaborated with SAFCA to manually remove Red Sesbania from creeks and streams in the Dry Creek watershed to mitigate streambank erosion and flooding risk for downstream communities.



# Climate Resilience Through Habitat on California Lands (WCB Pollinator Habitat)

**Staff:** Andrew Justus Fritz, Brian Pimentel, Liana Vitousek  
**Partners:** Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), California Association of Conservation Districts (CARCD)  
**Budget:** \$107,974

**Objectives:** 7,200' of Pollinator Hedgerow and 1.5 acres of habitat cover with 33% of funds spent on Disadvantaged or Underserved populations/areas  
*Strategic Plan Goal #3*

In 2023, the Wildlife Conservation Board awarded \$19.4 million to Placer RCD and 39 other Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) in California. This funding will be used by the RCDs to carry out projects aimed at creating new habitats and sequestering carbon, which will provide substantial benefits to both working and public lands. Placer RCD received \$450,000 from this grant, which will pay, at a minimum, the cost of plants and materials. The grant comes at a critical time when California's pollinators and wildlife are facing significant threats due to habitat loss and climate change. With this funding, a large-scale effort will be initiated, resulting in long-term advantages for California's land, climate, and its people.



# Atwood Conservation Easement Monitoring and Reporting

Staff: Andrew Justus Fritz, Mark White, Cordi Craig  
Partner: Auburn Recreation District (ARD)  
Budget: \$4,000

Objectives: Provide technical assistance upon request, 2 general inspections, 2 biological surveys, submit Annual Report by February 28, 2024  
*Strategic Plan Goal #3*

The Placer RCD provides technical assistance and compliance inspections for ARD at the Atwood Nature Preserve in Auburn, CA. The Preserve is under a U.S. Army Corp of Engineers permit as mitigation for the surrounding development. Placer RCD's role is to ensure that the agreements of the permit are upheld.



**NATURAL RESOURCES, WATERSHED, HABITAT**

# Placer Riparian Restoration Project

Staff: Andrew Justus Fritz, Brian Pimentel, Liana Vitousek  
Partner: US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Budget: \$35,937

Objectives: Install 2,000 feet of fencing at Lincoln High School and treat approximately 1 acre of red sesbania in Granite Bay along Miner's Ravine  
*Strategic Plan Goal #3*

Healthy riparian areas, like those found alongside streams or rivers, play a vital role in providing a wide array of benefits and ecosystem services, including water filtration, wildlife habitat, erosion prevention, and flood risk reduction. However, some riparian areas in Placer County are challenged due to invasive species and habitat degradation. By addressing these challenges to riparian ecosystems and more. Removal of invasive species like red sesbania (*Sesbania punicea*) will enhance and protect riparian areas through fencing, planting, or other restoration activities.



# Placer County Chipper Program

**Staff:** Jason Graydon, Chad Chaney, Anthony Corral, Brandi Calderon, Liliana Santellano, Donna Thomassen, Kate Espinola, Sarah Jones, Andrew Justus-Fritz, Liana Vitousek

**Partners:** Placer County, CAL FIRE

**Budget:** \$703,503

**Objectives:** 1000 chipper services  
*Strategic Plan Goal #1.3*

The Placer County Chipper Program is a cost-share program funded by Placer County and CAL FIRE that provides low-cost residential chipper service for Placer County residents, promotes defensible space, and incentivizes fuels reduction and fire prevention activities. This program is implemented with support of the Placer County Probation Department's Alternative Sentencing Program.



**FOREST HEALTH & WILDFIRE RESILIENCE**

# Prescribed Burning on Private Lands Program (PBPL)

Staff: Cordi Craig, Chris Paulus

Partners: CAL FIRE, University of California Cooperative Extension(UCCE), Placer County Air Pollution Control District, United Auburn Indian Community, Todd's Valley Maidu Cultural Foundation, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Budget: \$164,595

Objectives: 15 acres treated, 5 workshops, 8 demo burns, 1 high complexity burn  
*Strategic Plan Goal #1.2, #1.3, #1.5*

The Prescribed Burning on Private Lands (PBPL) Program provides a mechanism to support landowners in reducing fuel load on private property with prescribed burning, including broadcast and pile burning. Prescribed burning is one of the essential tools used to manage wildfire risks today. As catastrophic wildfires continue to be a growing concern in California, the use of prescribed burning to reduce hazardous fuels is projected to increase. The primary goal of the PBPL Program is to assist landowners in using prescribed fire to manage vegetation on their properties through workshops, technical assistance, and education.



# Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Staff: Jerry Reioux, Allison Erny, Lewis Campbell, Scott Stephenson  
Partners: CARCD, NRCS, UCCE  
Budget: \$12,660

Objectives: 22 site visits, 6 intake forms, conservation notes and photos for 15 clients, 7 practice inspections and certification for RCPP contracts, 5 contracts managed  
*Strategic Plan Goal #1.3, #1.5*

In response to large-scale tree mortality, Placer RCD has partnered with the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) and secured funding from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) for removing dead and dying conifers on private non-industrial forestland. The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) was developed to address the effects of prolonged drought and bark beetle infestation on forests throughout the Sierra Nevada.





# North Fork American River Shaded Fuel Break (Phase 1B and Phase 2)

**Staff:** Scott Stephenson, Lewis Campbell, Allison Erny, Chris Paulus  
**Partners:** CAL FIRE, U.S Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Placer Land Trust  
**Budget:** Phase 1B- \$454,474, Phase 2- \$ 1,026,838

**Objectives:** Phase 1B – 300 acres treated (72 hand work, 78 prepped for burning, 150 sprayed), botanical and wetland surveys along 10 miles of Interstate 80, Phase 2- 240 acres treated  
*Strategic Plan Goal #1.3, #1.4, #1.5*

The North Fork American River Shaded Fuel Break (NFARSFB) is a landscape-scale fuels reduction project in the wildland-urban interface between the densely vegetated North Fork American River canyon and adjacent communities of Placer County. In Phase 2 the project area includes treating 865 acres of private and federal lands located east of Weimar and continues north along the canyon rim to connect with Phase I of the NFARSFB, which was implemented in 2019/20. Phase 1B expands on project treatments completed in Phase 1. Treatments include mastication, hand work, and herbicide. Phase 1B funding will also be used to fund botanical and wetland surveys and reports for a Caltrans fuel reduction project along Interstate-80.



# Mosquito Fire Restoration

**Staff:** Allison Erny, Scott Stephenson, Lewis Campbell  
**Partners:** US Forest Service (USFS), CAL FIRE, Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District (RCD)  
**Budget:** \$2,582,077

**Objectives:** Hazard tree removal on 4 properties, 290 acres treated  
*Strategic Plan Goal #1.4, #1.6*

Placer RCD was funded \$11,980,000 to provide technical assistance and treatments for forest recovery and reforestation for areas impacted by the Mosquito Fire. Placer RCD is collaborating with partner agencies including the Georgetown Divide RCD, CAL FIRE, US Forest Service, and NRCS to maximize the benefits of multiple post-fire recovery options on private land. Through this effort approximately 2000 acres of private land in the Mosquito Fire burn scar will be treated over the next 5-7 years with approximately 200,000 seedlings planted.



# Placer County Wildfire Prevention Support

Staff: Lewis Campbell, Scott Stephenson, Chris Paulus  
Partner: CAL FIRE  
Budget: \$103,414

Objectives: Notice of Exemption filed, archaeological survey completed for 1,157 acres, 200 acres sprayed, 25 acres hand treated or masticated  
*Strategic Plan Goal #1.4, #1.5, #3*

This project will provide support services as requested by CAL FIRE including, but not limited to development of CEQA compliance documents for fuels reduction and fire prevention projects, professional forestry, technical forestry, biological surveys and protection, air quality permitting and monitoring, fuels reduction / fire prevention implementation and maintenance including prescribed fire use, project coordination and oversight. And any logistical support needs for implementation as directed.



# Landowner Technical Assistance

**Staff:** Brian Pimentel, Mark White, Jerry Reioux, Allison Erny, Lewis Campbell, Andrew Justus-Fritz

**Partners:** NRCS, UCCE, US Department of Agriculture (USDA)

**Budget:** \$64,724

**Objectives:** Host Local Working Group Meeting, technical assistance for 45 landowners, 7 Conservation Plans, 1 educational workshop  
*Strategic Plan Goal #2*

Placer RCD offers Landowner Technical Assistance through a cooperative agreement between Placer RCD and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that enables Placer RCD staff to provide on-the-ground technical assistance and project or program management across a broad range of natural resource conservation practices, methods, and strategies.

Through this partnership, Placer RCD provides conservation planning and technical assistance to a variety of land-use types within the District including forest, small farm, commercial agriculture, and woodlands. Assistance will be provided to producers that are eligible for USDA funded practices through NRCS and Farm Bill programs.



# Urban & Community Initiative

**Staff:** Andrew Justus Fritz, Brian Pimentel, Liana Vitousek  
**Partners:** National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), NRCS, USDA  
**Budget:** \$41,799

**Objectives:** Perform 30 backyard and community garden site visits, 1 community garden tour, 2 community garden network gatherings, 1 rancher-to-rancher workshop, 1 additional workshop  
*Strategic Plan Goal #2.3, #3.2*

With an emphasis on nurturing place and culture through relationships, conservation, and leadership, Placer RCD's Urban & Community Initiative project will provide backyard and community agriculture technical assistance, create innovative, fresh food access initiatives, deliver peer-to-peer learning experiences, and create a county-wide community garden network to support and sustain strong conservation and innovative leadership values.



# Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants Program (CAPGP)

Staff: Brian Pimentel, Andrew Justus-Fritz  
Partners: Sacramento Region RCD's, Yolo County RCD  
Budget: \$11,994

Objectives: Complete 1 Soil Health Management Plan  
*Strategic Plan Goal #2.3*

The Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants Program (CAPGP) is a new program in the Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation. This program will fund the development of plans that will help farmers and ranchers identify actions for climate change mitigation and adaptation, further environmental stewardship on farms and ranches and ensure agricultural food security into the future.



# Healthy Soils Program

**Staff:** Brian Pimentel, Andrew Justus Fritz, Mark White, Liana Vitousek, Kate Espinola, Donna Thomassen

**Partners:** California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), Amador County RCD, El Dorado County RCD, Nevada County RCD, Sloughhouse RCD, Florin RCD, Tuolumne County RCD, Calaveras County RCD, Georgetown Divide RCD, Lower Cosumnes RCD

**Budget:** \$216,855

**Objectives:** 2 Soil health workshops, Implementation assistance to 5 farmers (2021 HSP), 2 outreach events, 2 outreach workshops, 35 2023 HSP Applications  
*Strategic Plan Goal #2.1, #2.3*

The Healthy Soils Program aims to provide farmers and ranchers with knowledge, resources, and financial support to improve soil health, sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in their agricultural operations. In partnership with CDFA, the program extends technical and implementation support to recipients of the 2021 CDFA Healthy Soils Program awards. To further support producers, the Placer RCD was awarded \$4 Million to administer a 2023 CDFA Healthy Soils Program Block Grant, benefiting the Central Sierra region and involving collaboration with nine resource conservation districts. This initiative entails outreach and technical guidance to producers, encouraging grant applications for soil health projects. Successful applicants chosen for funding will enter into contracts receiving financial compensation and dedicated technical assistance to facilitate successful implementation for the funded producers.

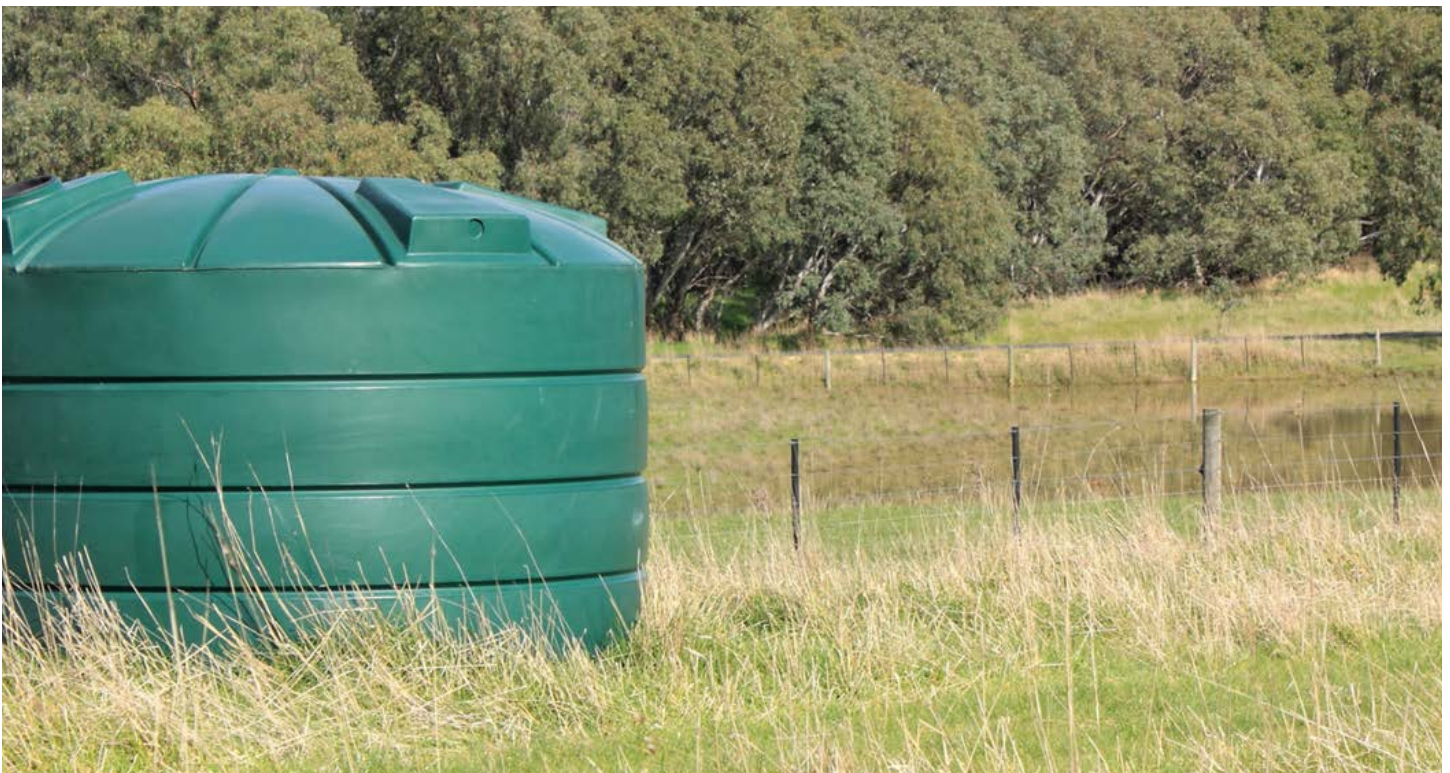


# PCWA Untreated Water Storage Tank Rebate Program

Staff: Brian Pimentel  
Partner: Placer County Water Agency  
Budget: \$18,560

Objectives: 30 applications  
*Strategic Plan Goal #2*

Funded by the Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), the Untreated Water Tank Rebate Program provides up to \$1000 to PCWA customers to improve untreated water system reliability through customer-side storage. Funding for this program is limited, and applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. If awarded, the customer will be issued as a credit on the customer's account. Participants are eligible for one storage tank rebate per account. Placer RCD will provide technical assistance, outreach and education for landowners and residents during the coordination and implementation of the program.





# Placer County Cooperative Agreement

Staff: Mark White, Andrew Justus Fritz, Liana Vitousek  
Partners: National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), NRCS, USDA  
Budget: \$38,305

Objectives: Ag Tour, Forestry Tour, 3 stormwater workshops  
*Strategic Plan Goal #3*

The overall goal of this Agreement is for the District to respond in a timely manner to variable requests from the county for assistance in supporting mutual objectives of Placer County and the District. Mutual objectives include: the promotion of agriculture, enhancement of Placer County's watershed health, providing Placer County's staff and residents updated information that will reduce the threat of wildfire, the reduction of soil erosion and sediment deposition, and improvements to stormwater quality.



# Forestry and Natural Resources Mentorship Program

Staff: Allison Erny, Liana Vitousek

Partners: CAL FIRE, Bakersfield College, Cal Poly Humboldt, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, College of the Redwoods, Feather River College, Reedley College, Shasta College, University of California Berkeley, California Licensed Foresters Association, Women in Timber, UC Cooperative Extension

Budget: \$51,856

Objectives: Deliver the program to 50 students at 8 academic institutions throughout California. Organize and host 2 career development workshops, 5 trainings on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice, and 4 career panels. Facilitate at least 2 in-person meetups for program participants. Complete 2023-2024 Annual Report. Facilitate distribution of grant dollars to at least 20 students for attendance at professional forestry events and conferences  
*Strategic Plan Goal #3.4*

The mission of the Forestry and Natural Resources Career Mentorship Program is to increase recruitment and retention of early-career forestry professionals by pairing university and community college students with a professional mentor, providing networking and training opportunities, and offering insight into a forestry career. The program recognizes that a diverse and expanded workforce is essential to addressing current and future challenges facing the field. We encourage support for underrepresented groups in the profession, including women, Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and LGBTQIA+ by providing training on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) for participants, pairing participants based on shared professional interests and identity (when requested), and highlighting the diversity of identities and specialties that exist within the field of forestry.



# Wildfire Prevention Education Program

Staff: Liana Vitousek, Andrew Justus Fritz  
Partners: CAL FIRE, Placer County Office of Emergency Services (OES)  
Budget: \$6,202

Objectives: District staff will attend Auburn Home Shows (x2), Gold Country Fair, Mandarin Festival, Foresthill Day, and Railroad Days. Coordinate with CAL FIRE and Placer County OES to host a minimum of 1 educational workshop  
*Strategic Plan Goal #1.3*

The CAL-FIRE Education Grant provides funding for outreach and education on wildfire prevention. The work to be completed this year includes primarily promotion of wildfire education through attendance at events and workshops.



# Forestland Stewardship Newsletter (FSN)

Staff: Cordi Craig, Liana Vitousek  
Partners: CAL FIRE, CARCD, USFS, UCCE  
Budget: \$42,647

Objectives: 3 newsletters completed and distributed, develop new FSN website  
*Strategic Plan Goal #1.3*

The Forestland Steward newsletter is a collaborative publication between CAL FIRE, Placer RCD, UC Cooperative Extension, and the US Forest Service. The newsletter is published 2-3 times a year and offers private forest landowners throughout the state helpful and relevant information for managing their land. With up-to-date policy information, agency input, and science-driven management recommendations, the newsletter strives to provide landowners with all the facts (and some fun, too!) to create a healthy and sustainable landscape.



# Outreach & Communications

Staff: Andrew Justus Fritz, Liana Vitousek, Sarah Jones  
Budget: \$58,729

Objectives: Communications Plan, District newsletter, District collateral (brochures), Annual Report, swag for events, lobby sign  
*Strategic Plan Goal #2.3, #3.1, #4, #4.3*

Effective outreach and communication are vital for positioning the District as a valued community partner in the successful execution of conservation and natural resource initiatives. These efforts not only enhance our visibility among community members but also attract potential funders to our programs and services.

# Organizational Improvement

Staff: Sarah Jones, Donna Thomassen, Kate Espinola  
Budget: N/A

- Objectives:
- Update Records Retention Policy
  - Update Contracting Policy
  - Create Fee for Service Policy
  - Create a Board Recruitment and Development Plan
  - Update Board Policies Manual (Director Binder)
  - Establish permanent 4/10 schedule for Chipper Program staff
  - Develop framework for Staff Development/Work Plans
  - Develop Long Range Funding Plan
  - Executive Director will participate in a minimum of 2 committees or working groups
  - Update Salary Schedule
  - Provide leadership training for all staff

*Strategic Plan Goal #2.3, #3.1, #4, #4.3*