



Annual report

THE ALAMEDA COUNTY CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP...
MAKING CONSERVATION HAPPEN

Fiscal Year 2007-2008

The Alameda County Resource Conservation District (ACRC D) provides leadership in the County and region about natural resources conservation and agricultural enhancement through partnerships, education, outreach, resource services, technical assistance, and funding. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

Workshops California Red-Legged Frog and California Tiger Salamander Workshops

We were excited to offer workshops on the California red-legged frog (CRLF) and California tiger salamander (CTS) for the fourth consecutive year. These workshops provide the latest science on these rare species to the biologists and landowners who decide how habitat is managed. The CRLF workshop was presented by Norman J. Scott, Jr., Ph.D. and Galen Rathbun, Ph.D. This workshop was in such demand this year that we offered a second course. The CTS workshop was presented by UC Davis CTS researcher Chris Searcy.

For the second year in a row, we also offered shorter versions of both workshops to local ranchers. We were happy to offer these workshops free of charge, and to help local land stewards learn more about some of the species on their properties. All of the workshops included opportunities to see wildlife in their habitats. A big thanks to Los Vaqueros Watershed and the Koopmann family for hosting the field visits!



Left: Presenter Norman Scott demonstrates frog tracking techniques. Right: Presenter Chris Searcy explains CTS habitat requirements to local land managers. Far Right: RCD Biologist Leslie Koenig surveys for CTS in the Koopmann pond.



Conservation Easement Workshops This year the Conservation Partnership and the Alameda County Partnership for Land Conservation and Stewardship (PLCS) hosted a continuing series for rural landowners on Conservation Easements. Various guest speakers who shared their experiences included Michele Clark, California Rangeland Trust; the Koopmann family, ranchers from Sunol; and the Stone family from Yolo County, this year's NRCS and National Cattlemen's Beef Association's Environmental Stewardship Award winners. The Koopmann and Stone families shared their experiences and motivations to develop perpetual conservation easements on their lands. This series will continue. For more information about PLCS, workshops and easements, contact Karen Sweet at karen.sweet@acrcd.org or 925-371-0154, ext. 111.

Inside

Page

<i>Workshops</i>	2
<i>Youth Education</i>	2
<i>From the President</i>	3
<i>Ag Tour</i>	3
<i>RCD Board</i>	3
<i>Future Projects</i>	4
<i>Amy Evans Celebrates 20 years</i>	4
<i>Year in Review</i>	4
<i>Financial Report</i>	5
<i>Farm Bill Projects</i>	5
<i>Partnership Staff</i>	5

Workshops, continued...

Ranch Conservation Planning

This spring, we held



a workshop series to help ranchers identify their management goals, needs and opportunities, and to learn new practices to increase productivity and sustainability. UC Cooperative Extension livestock advisor Sheila Barry co-led the course with Partnership staff. Speakers talked about rare plants and animals found on Alameda County ranches, the different ways in which ranchers can help these species and keep common species common, and funding opportunities. Participants developed detailed maps and estimated stocking capacity for their ranches. We also toured a local ranch that has installed several practices to help both the ranching operation and resident wildlife. A big thanks to Sheila and our

CattleWomen for sponsoring the class. *If you are interested in future workshops on similar topics, please contact Peggy Kiefer at 925-371-0154, ext. 122 or peggy.kiefer@acrkd.org.*

Native Pollinators and Native Plants: Habitat Conservation for Wild Bees in Alameda County

Over the past year the European honey bee has made headlines as beekeepers and growers have struggled with the effects of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). While only a few stories touched upon our 4,000 species of native bees, scientific research is putting a new spotlight on the valuable role these pollinators can play in agricultural landscapes—if their habitat needs are met. The Conservation Partnership sponsored a free workshop on the importance and diversity of native bees and how to increase habitat for these important pollinators. This workshop was presented by Mace Vaughan, Conservation Director for the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and was included in a series of workshops throughout northern California this year.



Youth Education

Hands-On-Conservation (HOC)

The Conservation



Owl Box made by Livermore High School Ag Department students.

Partnership created new opportunities for local students to learn about conservation and for partnering with local schools and youth groups. In fall 2007 students from the Tri-Valley Regional Occupational Program's Natural Resources class helped with willow staking and trash cleanups along the banks of the Arroyo de la Laguna in Pleasanton. The Partnership also worked with Livermore High Agriculture Program students to start a project in which they build and sell barn owl nest boxes. Partnership staff also supported the creation of a display for the Alameda County Fair that showcased FFA and Livermore High School Ag Program projects. HOC projects in west Alameda County included an Earth Day planting activity at Sunol Glen School and the establishment of two Adopt-A-Creek sites along Alameda Creek in Fremont.

Palomares School Watershed Science Expo

The Conservation Partnership hosted "Creek Critters" and "Watershed Adventures" stations at the Palomares School Watershed Science Expo in May. This day-long outdoor event drew children from schools throughout the San Lorenzo Creek watershed to learn about watershed protection, wildlife and plants in the riparian area around the school grounds, Native American uses of local plants, and other natural resources topics. The Science Expo is funded by the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, with extensive volunteer support provided by the Palomares PTA. During the 2007-08 school year the Palomares Watershed Education Program's Sherry Johnson conducted 34 class trips to the creek with elementary school students, a guided watershed-wide field trip for a 6th grade class from San Lorenzo, an afterschool Junior Naturalists program, teacher trainings, and curriculum development. The school was designated a California Distinguished School by the California Department of Education for the year—in part because of the watershed education program! Sherry will continue to bring her engaging program to students during the 2008-09 school year that includes plans to do improvements to the creekside trail with the help of the ACRCd and local volunteer groups.



NRCS ecologist Jackie Charbonneau at the "creek critters" station.

Youth Education, continued...

Watershed Adventures Program

The Watershed Adventures Program was presented to 169 fourth grade classes in west Alameda County during the 2007-2008 school year. Students learned about watershed protection and their local creeks, and also worked on an exciting watercolor painting project. Students also entered our T-Shirt Art contest. Watershed Adventures will be celebrating its 15th year during the 2008-2009 school year so there will be additional activities going on. Please continue to check our newsletters and website for more information.



The Conservation Partnership Leads Ag Tour



Adam Engelhardt of the Olivina explains the differences in olive oils to members of the League of Women Voters

Outreach Coordinator Peggy Kiefer led the League of Women Voters on a tour of local farms and ranches. This gave the tour participants an opportunity to discuss agricultural needs and issues with local farmers and ranchers and will help with their participation in local agriculture policy and development.

A message from the President...

This has been a thoughtful as well as active year for the Partnership. Of course, it would not be a partnership at all without the hard work and dedication of the staff of the Alameda County Resource Conservation District (RCD)



Jocelyn Combs, RCD Board President

the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and our contractors. As we juggle our joint and separate tasks and tap into both secure and elusive funding sources, working together is what really makes conservation happen.

The Board has spent many hours this year honing its vision for conservation in Alameda County. What does the vision look like? How will it play out over the next decade and beyond? You can see the results with our strategic plan on our website at www.acrcd.org. Link to "About us/Strategic Plan".

The year has also been active because we are matching conservation in theory with conservation on the ground - implementing projects such as Partnership for Land Conservation Service (PLCS), Farm Bill, Caltrans mitigation, and the new youth program: "Hands-On Conservation". These projects and others, in partnership with local landowners, project funders and agencies, support our working landscapes and provide education and future conservation opportunities.

Come join us! Help us help you with your resources and your vision for conservation in Alameda County. Get acquainted via the website; become an associate director; volunteer; or attend our meetings.

Jocelyn Combs is retiring from the RCD Board in November.

Thank you Jocelyn for your important contributions!

Alameda County Resource Conservation District Board of Directors

Jocelyn Combs, President
Pleasanton

Rod Tripp, Vice President
Castro Valley

Paul Banke
Livermore

Tim Koopmann
Sunol

Brenda Vieux
Fremont

2007-2008 Additional Highlights

The 2007-2008 fiscal year has brought a lot of changes to the Alameda County Conservation Partnership. We added four new team members: Peggy Kiefer, Outreach and Workshop Coordinator, Ling He, Range Conservationist, Leslie Koenig, Biologist and Marilyn Harvey, Accountant. We started a bi-monthly newsletter. Our new website is up and receiving a lot of positive feedback. The Partnership logo was redesigned and given new colors. We celebrated Ag Week, Stewardship Week and Earth Day.



Terry Huff, District Conservationist

Special Recognition...

- Terry Huff, our District Conservationist received recognition as a California NRCS featured employee. See <http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/news/ourpurpose/employees.html>.
- Presented two students scholarships for attending Range Camp at Elkus 4H Ranch in Half Moon Bay.
- Local ranchers and their contributions to supporting federally threatened amphibians were recognized in the US Fish & Wildlife Service's Endangered Species

Bulletin. See <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/bulletin/2008/bulletin.spring2008pdf>.

Looking at next year...

- We will host a Local Work Group Meeting and BBQ.
- We will continue to hold technical and rural resident workshops.
- An article about our California Tiger Salamander workshops will be published in the September issue of *Special Districts Magazine*
- We are leading a partnership with Alameda County Farm Bureau, Alameda County, CattleWomen and Livermore Winegrowers Association to print a "2009 Tri-Valley Men in Agriculture Calendar" to raise funds for the agriculture community including scholarships and the Livermore High School Ag Department.
- The Partnership and the Livermore Winegrowers Association are planning an Ag Tour for the Alameda County Planning Department.
- We will help with the completion of the East Alameda County Conservation Strategy.
- We will add new workshops to the 2009 workshop plan
- New partnerships will help us expand our watershed and stream conservation goals in Alameda County.
- We will continue to work closely with the Partnership for Land Conservation and Stewardship (PLCS), providing guidance in the easement mitigation process.

Amy Evans honored for 20 years of employment with Alameda County Resource Conservation District



Amy has been a Resource Conservationist at the RCD since 1988. Previous to that she spent a year as a college student intern with the RCD in the Livermore office working on fact sheets and doing field work with NRCS staff, primarily stream bank erosion surveys in Cull Canyon. The primary projects that Amy has worked on for the RCD include:

- Managing two multi-year, multi-partner EPA 319h water quality protection grants that included several demonstration sites at equine facilities, and developing a series of fact sheets and a manual on environmentally friendly horse keeping.
- Developing and conducting workshops for equine facility owners and managers.
- Developing and coordinating a County Clean Water Program-funded watershed education program called Watershed Adventures (originally called Bay Savers), now in its 15th year, that serves nearly 5,000 fourth grade students annually.
- Developing projects for the RCD's new Hands-On Conservation youth stewardship program.
- Serving on the advisory committee for the Sunol AgPark and advising on natural resource management issues.
- Helping to reactivate and participating in the Alameda Creek Watershed Council.

Congratulations, Amy!



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) EQIP is one of the conservation programs available under the federal Farm Bill. This program provides technical and financial assistance for California's farmers and ranchers to implement conservation practices. In 2008 Alameda County NRCS partnered with farmers and ranchers on nearly \$300,000 in conservation cost share contracts. This matched the landowner's contribution of more than \$330,000.

Farm Bill Projects Installed in Alameda County in 2008

- *79 acres of plantings (includes cover crops, native revegetation projects, etc.)
- *Over 17,000 feet of livestock fence (almost 3.5 miles)
- *Over 7,900 feet of livestock water pipeline (1.5 miles)
- *17 livestock watering facilities (tanks and troughs)
- *13 ponds restored, including 5 on private lands through the Conservation Partnership's Wildlife-Friendly Pond Program, and 8 on public lands
- *13,000 acres of grazing land with conservation practices applied (21 square miles!)
- *2,300 acres of land managed for wildlife habitat

The Partnership Staff

Karen Sweet

ACRCD Executive Officer

Terry Huff

NRCS District Conservationist

Morpheus Anima

NRCS Soil Conservationist

Katie Bergmann

NRCS Engineer

Jackie Charbonneau

NRCS Ecologist

Amy Evans

ACRCD Resource Conservationist

Marilyn Harvey

ACRCD Accountant

Ling He

NRCS Range Conservationist

Lisa Hokholt

NRCS State Outreach Coordinator

Peggy Kiefer

ACRCD Outreach and Workshop Coordinator

Leslie Koenig

ACRCD Biologist

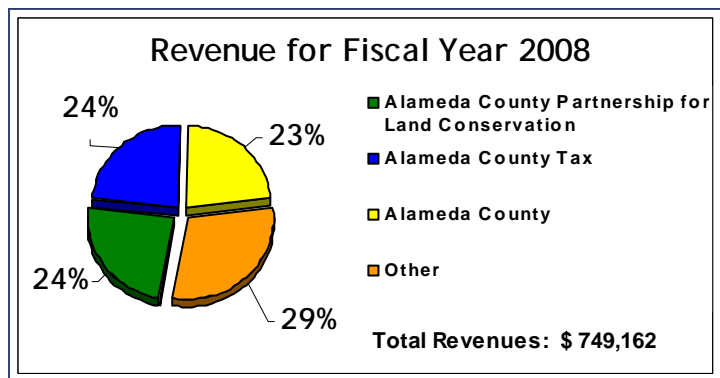
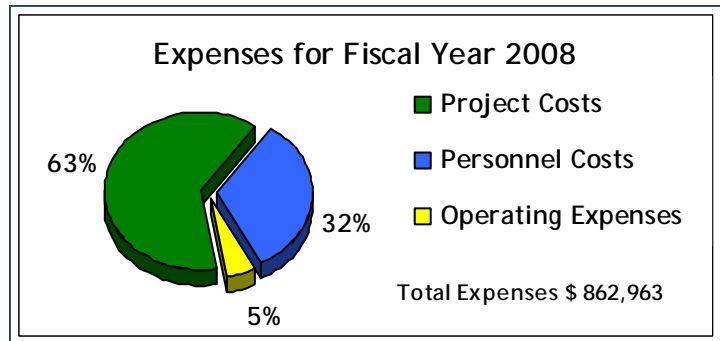
Pete Van Hoorn

ACRCD Range Conservationist

Maria Wendler

ACRCD Project Assistant

2008 Financial Report (Unaudited)



This information can also be found on our website

www.acrcd.org

You can also find archived annual reports and newsletters, future newsletters and new information.



Alameda County Resource Conservation District
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
3585 Greenville Road, Suite 2
Livermore, CA 94550-6710

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(925) 371-0154, ext. 122 (925) 371-0155 fax
3585 Greenville Road, Suite 2, Livermore, CA 94550
Please check our website for continuous updates.