

The Partnership Newsletter



ALAMEDA COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Issue 3

March/April 2008

Alameda County Celebrates Ag Week



Banner hangs at the gate of the Martinelli Center

The Alameda County Resource Conservation District (ACRCD) and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) along with its many supporters celebrated National Ag Week March 16–22. A banner was hung at the front gate at the Martinelli Center on Greenville Road to announce Ag Week to passers-by. 4H and FFA students put posters in windows throughout

Alameda County to thank all farmers, ranchers, wine growers and vintners and others involved in Alameda County agriculture for their continued efforts. The campaign was to remind the community of agricultural activities that exist in the county. Alameda County's agriculture products include the sale of hay, cattle and pasture, orchard and viticulture crop, and bee products as reported in 2006

in the Ag Commissioners Crop Report was valued at \$8,900,000. The Alameda County RCD and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the sponsors of Alameda County's Celebration including, Garre Winery, Livermore Valley Wine Growers Association, Alameda County Farm Bureau, Cattleman's Association and 4H and FFA Clubs, (cont. page 2)

Terry Huff selected as one of California's Featured Employees for the new NRCS National Outreach Campaign, "Conservation... our Purpose. Our Passion".



Terry Huff

Our own District Conservationist, Terry Huff, has been selected by NRCS California as one of its featured employees in the new national NRCS Campaign, "Conservation... Our Purpose. Our Passion". Mr. Huff, a 30-year employee with NRCS, is a soil scientist by training and also a member of the National Employee Development Center

Training Cadre, which provides training on regional planning efforts throughout the country.

Strategic Planning Compounds Countywide Conservation Interest

Since arriving in Alameda County in early 1994, Huff has helped transform his formerly small field office into one of California's most effective

WILDFLOWERS ARE BLOOMING EVERYWHERE! CHECK-OUT THE WILDFLOWERS ON EACH PAGE INSIDE.



IF YOU HAVE A PICTURE OF

WILDFLOWERS, E-MAIL IT TO PEGGY.KIEFER@ACRCD.ORG

IT MIGHT GET PUBLISHED!

USDA Awards \$38.7 Million in California Conservation Contracts

DAVIS, CA, March 19, 2008 – Lincoln E. Burton, State Conservationist for USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in California today announced that statewide distribution of conservation cost-share contracts has been completed for fiscal year 2008. According to Burton, 1,078 farmers and ranchers are receiving contracts totaling nearly \$39 million under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

"Agricultural producers work hard to find the best ways to be economically and environmentally sustainable," says Burton. "EQIP helps us combine the vital work of conservation planning for the landscape with an economic assistance tool to implement needed improvements on a scheduled timetable."

The Partnership Newsletter

March/April 2008

AG QUOTE

"The most peaceful thing in the world is plowing a field. Chances are you'll do your best thinking that way."
Harry S. Truman

Ag Week (cont.)

(cont. from page 1) would like to increase awareness of the producers of agriculture in their community this includes the 4H and FFA youths with their horticulture and livestock projects. Increased awareness will encourage the Alameda County community to select locally grown products such as wine, olive oil and pistachio nuts, and to support the agriculture education youth programs.



Poster in window in downtown Livermore



Poppies at the Martinelli Center in Livermore



Stone Family Wins Stewardship Award

The Partnership is excited to announce that the Hank Stone Family from Yolo Land & Cattle Company, was selected as the national 2008 Environmental Stewardship Award national winner on February 7 at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association Annual Convention in Reno. "The Stone family is a tremendous asset to the cattle industry, serving as leaders in beef production, rangeland conservation and natural resource enhancement," California Cattlemen's Association President Bruce Hafenfeld said. "Their legacy of environmental stewardship exemplifies the commitment of ranchers throughout the state who manage California's open spaces, water sheds and wildlife habitat." The Stone Family were guest speakers at a recent ACRC/ NRCS

NRCS Announces New Campaign



Conservation... Our Purpose. Our Passion.

The purpose and passion for conservation is shared among many. It is shared between NRCS employees and partners who help people help the land. And it is shared by the landowners with whom we work. Our passion is manifested through the benefits derived from stewardship of private lands—benefits we all enjoy, such as cleaner water and air, improved soils and abundant wildlife habitat.

Featured Landowners and more information on the campaign can be seen at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/ourpurpose/index.html>

Terry Huff is USDA/NRCS Featured Employee (cont.)

conservation partnerships. Huff's efforts have helped to link partners and programs in ways that have improved technical capability, increased conservation capacity and reduced barriers to conservation in the county. The result is that farmers, ranchers and landowners are enthusiastically participating in conservation projects that benefit everyone while improving the environment. When asked about his favorite accomplishments, Huff expressed great satisfaction with the Wildlife Friendly Pond Program. Huff said, "Ranchers are restoring old livestock ponds at great personal expense to improve landscape aesthetics and to provide habitat for threatened and endangered species that include the California Red-Legged Frog and the California Tiger Salamanders."

"It takes a strong conservation ethic, trust and mutual respect to make this program work. The Alameda County Conservation Partnership Team (ACRC/CD and NRCS) has helped to reduce the barriers to conservation for the benefit of ranchers and the wildlife. When concerned regulatory agencies are assured that the landowners are willing to restore and manage the resources for the critters—and when the landowners are assured that they have someone they trust by their side to assist them—then the program is easy and the entire community benefits", said Huff.

Range Camp Applications now being accepted



Wildflowers at Vallecitos and 84 in Livermore

ANNOUNCING:

California-Pacific section of SRM
24th ANNUAL RANGE AND NATURAL RESOURCES CAMP
JUNE 15-20, 2008
ELKUS YOUTH RANCH - HALF MOON BAY, CA



Opportunity for students 15-18 years old to experience the benefits of our natural resources. Interactive learning with resource professionals.

Sessions and Activities include:

- Riparian Watershed Management
- Rangeland Management
- Wildlife Management
- Field Projects
- Forestry
- Careers
- Recreation
- Private & Public Lands
- Rangeland-Urban Interface
- Tour of Working Ranch
- Team Project Planning Competition



Awards Available
Trip to SRM's High School Youth Forum, in Albuquerque, NM* (2008-12) and belt buckles and for top 3 eligible campers. Certificates and shirts awarded to all participants. *Must be a current high school student in Feb 09

Sponsored By:
California-Pacific Section of the Society for Range Management
U.C. Cooperative Extension
California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD)
Host District - San Mateo County RCD
East Bay Municipal Utility District
U.S. Navy - Natural Resources Program
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

For more information contact:
Mary Kimball, Northern California (530) 795-1520
Edie Jacobsen, Southern California (619) 532-3618
Jennifer Gabor, Central California (569) 674-2108 x111

Photos, Brochures and Applications are available at WWW.CASRM.ORG

APPLICATIONS DUE MAY 10, 2008

The Alameda County Resource Conservation District is encouraging young people to attend the June 15-20, 2008 California Range and Natural Resources Camp in Half Moon Bay. Students enrolled in natural sciences or agriculture classes may be interested in this unique opportunity to learn from range scientists about wildlife management, forestry, environmental careers, riparian watersheds, and other topics. Students not enrolled in natural science or agriculture classes are also invited. Range Camp provides a unique educational experience with classroom and outdoor activities. This camp is sponsored by resource conservation districts, University of California Cooperative Extension, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Society of Range Management. It is designed to introduce 15-18 year olds to California's natural resources and to encourage leadership and good stewardship. It can be an important experience for career decisions. The camp fee is \$350.00. This includes meals, lodging, recreation, emergency medical insurance at camp and transportation costs while at camp. **The Alameda County Resource Conservation District offers to reimburse the camp registration fee to the first three county students who attend and request it. Contact Peggy Kiefer at 925-371-0154, ext. 122 for application information.**

Ecology and practical land management skills are emphasized, especially plant identification, livestock management, wildlife, forestry, fire, soils, water resources, rangeland analysis and improvement. Sessions by specialists

are given every morning and afternoon, and include both indoor lectures and outdoor activities. Campers are tested at the end of the week to determine their understanding of the materials presented. A trip to SRM's High School Youth Forum, in Albuquerque, NM, and belt buckles will be awarded to the top 3 eligible campers. Certificates and shirts will be awarded to all participants. Students must be a high school student in Feb. 2009.



Pollinator Workshop and "The Great Sunflower Project"

The Conservation Partnership would like to announce two opportunities for people interested in native pollinators....

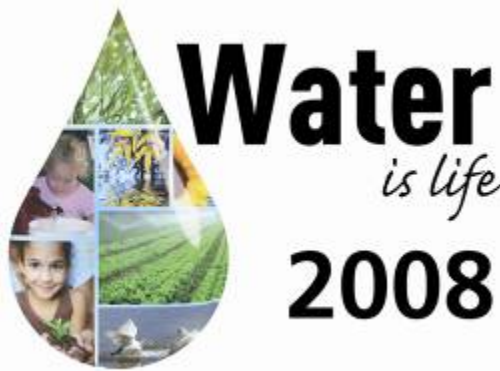
San Francisco State University is undertaking a massive project to gauge the health of pollinating bees, and researchers need your help. **The Great Sunflower Project** is the first coast to coast study on bee pollination. Dr. Gretchen LeBuhn, an associate professor of biology, is soliciting the help of "citizen scientists" across the country to collect scientific data on the bees. "We need to know where our bees are doing well and how parks, gardens, natural areas and all sorts of habitats effect our bees" says, Dr. LeBuhn, the Sunflower Project's Queen Bee. "Once we identify where bees need help, we can start improving their habitats!" The Great Sunflower Project will provide you with everything you need, including sunflower seeds, instructions and data sheets. For more information go to their website at www.greatsunflower.org.

The Conservation Partnership is hosting a free workshop "**Native Pollinators and Native Plants: Habitat Conservation for Wild Bees in Alameda County**". The workshop is at 6:30 PM on May 7th at the Dublin Civic Center, 100 Civic Plaza, Dublin. Mace Vaughan, Conservation Director for Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation is the guest speaker. To RSVP or for questions, contact Peggy Kiefer at peggy.kiefer@acrcd.org or call 925-371-0154 ext.122

The Partnership Newsletter

March/April 2008

The RCD and USDA/NRCS Support Stewardship Week



Stewardship Week April 27 to May 4, 2008

What can we do? We can become aware of water quality and quantity in our community and better understand how watersheds work. We all live in a watershed. Watersheds are the places we call home, where we work and where we play. Everyone relies on water and other natural resources to exist. What we each do on the land impacts the quality and quantity of water and our other natural resources.

Managing the water and other natural resources, such as wildlife is an effective and efficient way to sustain the local economy and environmental health. For more information go to www.nacdnet.org or contact the Alameda County Resource Conservation District 925-371-0154, ext. 122 or peggy.kiefer@acrkd.org.



Wildflowers at Goff Ranch

FUN AG FACT

CALIFORNIA
GROWS ABOUT
70% OF ALL THE
ASPARAGUS
GROWN IN THE
UNITED STATES.

AgPark by Amy Evans, Resource Conservationist

It was a great day to get out of the office and take in the sweet springtime air at the AgPark in Sunol, an 18-acre organic farm where a variety of groups and individuals raise crops to sell in their East Bay neighborhoods, and at local farmer's markets and restaurants. RCD and NRCS staff met with several landscape architects, irrigation system designers, a native plant specialist and others at the farm on March 21st to plan the Farm Edge Habitat Area, a 30' x 600' strip of land situated between the farm and the Arroyo de la Laguna, that will be planted with primarily native shrubs and perennials order to attract and sustain beneficial insects and pollinators. NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding is helping with the installation costs of the habitat area, as well as the annual cover crop that is planted each fall at the farm. The San Francisco Water Department, which leases the land to the AgPark, has provided additional funding as match for the EQIP projects.

The RCD is active in the Advisory Committee for the Sunol AgPark, a project of Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE), and continues to provide information about natural resources conservation practices and potential stewardship and education activities. The District also assisted in the development of the Natural Resources Element of the AgPark Management Plan and wrote the plan for the creek setback area which evolved into the Field Edge Habitat Area. There are plans underway to involve youth in installing the plantings at the habitat area later this spring through the RCD's Hands-On-Conservation program. Check for more news about these activities in future newsletters and on our website.

More information on the Sunol AgPark can be found at SAGE's website:
<http://www.sagecenter.org/Projectareas/AgParks/Sunol.htm>



Partnership staff and specialists work on the layout for the Sunol AgPark's "Field Edge Habitat Area"

2008 Great Backyard Bird Count by Leslie Koenig, Biologist

Members of the RCD and NRCS staff participated in the 2008 Annual Great Backyard Bird Count. Their summary for the day was ...

15 species and
105 birds!
For information
on how to
participate next
year go to

www.Birdsource.org/gbbc/ or
www.ebird.org.



For you bird watchers...
an ongoing activity eBird helps you keep track of your lists and archives your everyday sightings so they're accessible to everyone, including other bird watchers and scientist. This service is free!