



Annual report

FY 2006-2007

MAKING CONSERVATION HAPPEN IN ALAMEDA COUNTY

The Alameda County Resource Conservation District (ACRCD) 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.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORT PROTECTS ARROYO DE LA LAGUNA

The Arroyo de la Laguna is the main tributary to Alameda Creek, the second largest drainage to San Francisco Bay. The arroyo, its wildlife habitat, and its flood protection capabilities are severely impacted by runoff from upstream Tri-Valley development. In Fall 2006, the Conservation Partnership implemented a streambank stabilization project along a 1,000-foot section between Pleasanton and Sunol, a half-mile south of the Verona Road Bridge. The project was designed to reduce streambank erosion, establish vegetation, and improve riparian habitat. The Arroyo is important habitat for the Western pond turtle, a California species of special concern and could someday serve as an important steelhead migration corridor if downstream barriers are removed. The project was a successful collaboration with San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (landowner), Zone 7 Water Agency, Alameda County Public Works Agency, the Dublin San Ramon Services District, and Alameda County Water District on this \$620,000 pilot project. Hanford ARC was the contractor for the project. Please see our website for more before and after photos.



Left: Before restoration, demonstrating severe erosion, evidenced by fallen trees Right: After restoration

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The site will be closely monitored over the next five years and will provide a demonstration of potential biotechnical restoration and protective practices that can be utilized over similar stretches of the Arroyo. These efforts not only address the serious habitat issues both on-site and downstream but will lead to additional habitat restoration throughout the watershed as these demonstrated



Left: Rock barb construction at the Arroyo de la Laguna Right: Western pond turtle, a California species of concern, found during construction at the Arroyo de la Laguna.



Alameda County Conservation Partnership Programs

Alameda County Partnership for Land Conservation and Stewardship (PLCS)

The Board of Supervisors established the PLCS in 2006 to advance and expand the range of land conservation efforts that protect and enhance the working landscapes and natural resources of Alameda County. The PLCS will build reliable, long-term relationships that enable County-wide collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including private landowners.

Advisory Board members were appointed by the Board and include: Sheila Barry, UC Cooperative Extension Natural Resources Advisor; agricultural landowners David Kent (Concannon Winery) and Charles Crohare (The Olivina); Rodney Tripp, ACRCO Board; and Chris Bazar, Alameda County Planning Director. The ACRCO currently administers the PLCS, which works with the ACRCO and the NRCS to communicate with landowners, develop the Conservation Mitigation Program, and to provide technical services to the PLCS clients.

To date, the PLCS is working with 17 private landowners who desire to learn more about their natural resources and the potential for conservation easements. The ACRCO and the PLCS will provide a series of educational workshops this Fall about easements and other land succession topics. For more information, contact Joe Ciolek, the Interim Conservation Facilitator, at the ACRCO office.

Sunol AgPark

In 2006, the ACRCO began serving on the Advisory Committee for the Sunol AgPark, a project of the local organization, Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE), providing information about natural resources conservation practices and potential educational activities for the new, 18-acre Sunol AgPark farm situated on farmland leased from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. The AgPark was developed as a model farm that provides land, infrastructure, an on-site farm manager, farmer training and land preparation services to beginning and limited-resource farmers. Each farm group sub-leases a 1 to 4 acre ready-to-farm plot from SAGE. The farm is located in the scenic hamlet of Sunol in central Alameda County, about 10 miles inland from the urban centers of the East Bay.

Three farm groups raise row crops at the farm for sale at East Bay farmers markets. They include Mien farmers raising Laotian vegetables for their own community as part of the East Bay Asian Youth Center, an inner-city youth program that is part of Peoples' Grocery in Oakland, and a specialty organic lettuce and heirloom tomato grower/breeder, Baia Niccia. A small Sunol enterprise, Swarm Catcher, has bee boxes and chickens at the farm. The ACRCO participated in the annual fall Harvest Festival that introduced the local com-



Sunol AgPark farm crops, September 2006

munity to the farmers and their unique crops.

The ACRCO and the NRCS assisted SAGE with conservation practices including seeding a winter cover crop, installing a filter strip/insectary hedgerow along the farm edge that parallels the Arroyo de la Laguna, and irrigation and farm road improvements. The ACRCO will continue to provide conservation and education assistance to the farm in 2007-08 through the advisory committee and contracted work with SAGE. Follow the progress at the farm and the ACRCO's activities at www.acrcd.org.

NRCS and Farm Bill Programs

Leveraging federal dollars to support wildlife and agriculture in Alameda County

The Federal Farm Bill programs administered by the NRCS are designed to support both environmental improvement and agriculture through conservation cost-share programs that enhance resources on agricultural lands. The Partnership has been working with landowners participating in Farm Bill programs to take this a step further. As an example, restoring livestock ponds is cost-shared under the Farm Bill at 50%. Under the Wildlife-Friendly pond program (see page 3), landowners can cost-share with the NRCS at 50% for the basic pond repair. If the landowner agrees to restore the livestock pond specifically for listed species such as the California Red-legged frog, they can receive additional cost-share at 40% through the ACRCO. As part of the ACRCO agreement, the landowner must also agree to make their restored conservation values public and maintain the pond for wildlife for a period of 10 years. Additional funding is provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Coastal Conservancy. The Partnership continues to work with landowners and the Farm Bill on other creative approaches to addressing our agriculture and wildlife needs in the county.

Alameda County Conservation Partnership Programs

From the President's Pen....

I want to share with you my pride, as President for the many conservation successes and the conservationists who make them happen.

I certainly thank retiring directors Virginia Coelho and Norman Marciel for their many years of service to the ACRC. I heartily welcome our new directors Brenda Vieux, Paul Banke and Tim Koopmann, who are contributing a new and distinctive expertise and perspective that is enabling a bolder vision for the ACRC.

The Board of Directors thanks the Conservation Partnership team and our project partners.

Please visit our website to review the Conservation Partnership's 2012 Strategic Plan focusing on priority natural resource issues and education.

The Strategic Plan's goals include:

- Education and outreach including both stand-alone programs and integration with conservation programs
- Stewardship and preservation of sustainable, privately owned and managed working landscapes
- Stewardship of public working landscapes and linkage to private working landscapes
- Wildlife habitat enhancement and management
- Watershed planning and water quality protection and enhancement

The Conservation Partnership looks forward to continuing its partnership with you! Please call on us and attend our Board meetings.

Sincerely,
Jocelyn Combs
ACRC Board President

Wildlife-Friendly Pond Program

Livestock ponds have become important aquatic habitat for local wildlife, especially the federally threatened California Red-legged Frog and California Tiger Salamander. Many of these ponds were created decades ago and now require repair. We partnered with the US Fish & Wildlife Service and Environmental Defense to create the Wildlife-friendly Pond Program to help ranchers repair the ponds while enhancing habitat. Two stock ponds were repaired and enhanced this year, with several more projects ready to go



Livestock pond being desilted to improve habitat for California Red-legged Frog.

this fall. Because the Pond Program is supported by ranchers, agencies, and environmental groups alike, there has been a good deal of interest. This winter, our program was presented at an amphibian conference in Missouri and the Society for Range Management conference in Nevada. In May, Jackie Charbonneau was a keynote speaker at the annual meeting of the Partners for Amphibian and Reptile Conservation in New Mexico. The Pond Program is a pilot project for the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition.

We thank our project partners, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Coastal Conservancy, Environmental Defense and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, for their support of this unique program.

For more information on this program please contact Jackie Charbonneau at (925) 371-0154 ext. 114.



The Conservation Partnership website will be under renovation in the coming months! Check back this fall to experience our new website!
www.acrcd.org

Alameda County Conservation Partnership Programs

Alameda County Appoints ACRCO Directors

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors unanimously appointed Brenda Vieux, Paul Banke and Tim Koopmann to the ACRCO Board. They assume the four-year positions previously held by Loree Cornwell, Norman Marciel, Livermore, and Virginia Coelho, Fremont.

As required by California Public Resources Code, Directors must be landowners or representatives of landowners in the district. Director Vieux is from Fremont, where her family has a long ranching heritage, as do Directors Banke, Livermore and Koopmann, Sunol. Their leadership and experience along with that of Directors Jocelyn Combs, Pleasanton, Rodney Tripp, Castro Valley and other, preceding Directors enables conservation program expansion and innovation.

ACRCO Board of Directors

Jocelyn Combs
Former Director, East Bay Regional Park District

Paul Banke
Livermore Rancher

Tim Koopmann
Natural Resource Manager, SFPUC, Pleasanton Rancher

Rod Tripp
East Bay Municipal Utilities District

Brenda Vieux
Fremont Rancher

Palomares School Science Expo and Watershed Festival

Partnership staff worked two creek exploration activity stations at the Palomares Elementary School Watershed Science Expo in Castro Valley this May. The event offered students, teachers and chaperones from schools located within the San Lorenzo Creek watershed the opportunity to see first-hand the restored Palomares Creek which flows adjacent to the school. The Expo focused on watershed science education activities for 800 third graders. More than 20 local environmental agencies and non-profit groups hosted "hands-on" learning at activity stations situated near the creek. Students learned about watershed protection and Palomares Creek's ecology through study of creekside plants, aquatic invertebrates, water quality, and opportunities to see live amphibians and mammals. The event was coordinated by Sherry Johnson, a former teacher at the school and current ACRCO staff member funded by Alameda County who leads creek study programs for the school throughout the year.

The Partnership has been involved with stream restoration and related education activities at the school site since 2000, when bio-engineered stream bank stabilization practices to reduce bank erosion and improve wildlife habitat were implemented by the NRCS in coordination with Alameda County Public Works.



Palomares Creek



NRCS Ecologist Jackie Charbonneau teaches 3rd graders about their local watershed.



Ranching families learn about the species they steward in stock ponds.

Species Workshops – not just for biologists anymore

This spring we again offered our popular workshops on the California Red-legged Frog (presented by Galen Rathbun, Ph.D. and Norm Scott, Ph.D.), the California Tiger Salamander (presented by Pete Trenham, Ph.D.) and the Alameda Whipsnake (presented by local expert Karen Swaim). These 1-2 day technical workshops are aimed at agency staff and consultants. We also added condensed versions of the frog and salamander workshops for local ranchers and other rural landowners – an important audience since they own and manage most of these species' habitat. Look for more landowner workshops in 2008.

To be included on our workshop mailing list, please email workshops@acrcd.org.

Alameda County Conservation Partnership Programs

OUR PARTNERS

- Alameda County Water District
- Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
- Alameda County Public Works Agency
- Alameda County Clean Water Program
- California Coastal Conservancy
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- California Rangeland Conservation Coalition
- Dublin San Ramon Services District
- Environmental Defense
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC)
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Zone 7 Water Agency

The Conservation Partnership sincerely appreciates the interest and dedication to our programs provided by our many partners. Partners provide funding, inspiration, information and other resources.

Thank you!

Volunteers and Sponsors
Make Conservation Happen
Check out our website for more
information! www.acrcd.org

Watershed Adventures Program

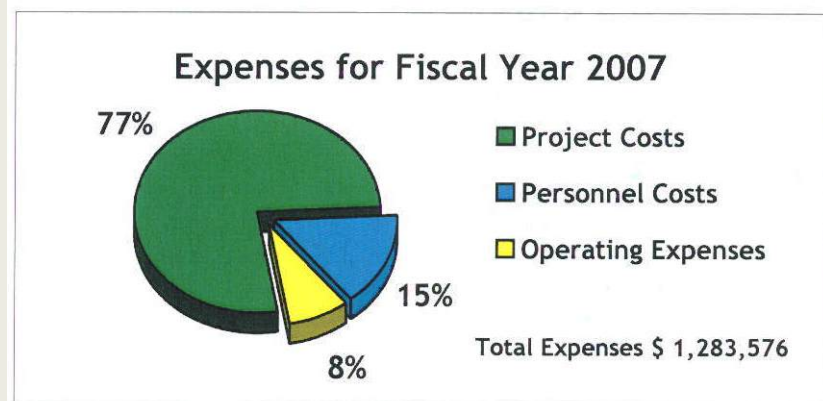
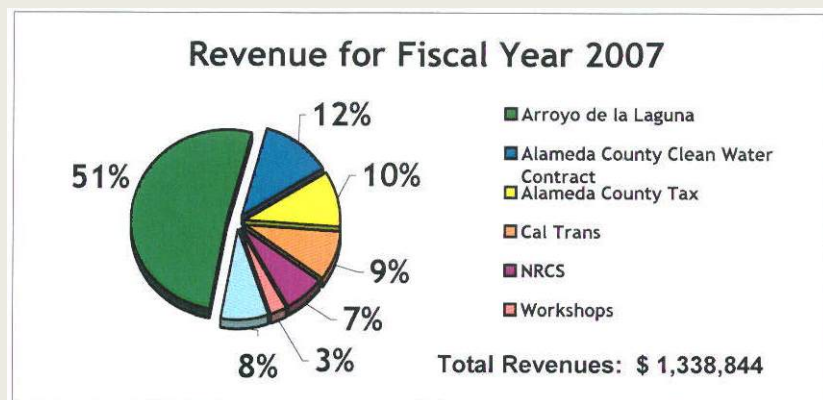


T-Shirt winner
Nathaniel with his
teacher from
Brookvale School in
Fremont.

Watershed Adventures is a watershed education program for 4th grade students in Alameda County presented by the ACRC. The 2006-2007 school year marked the program's 13th year. Presenters use a wide variety of exciting teaching strategies to involve students in learning about watersheds, the creek nearest their school and specific actions they can take in their neighborhoods to help keep water clean and healthy for people and wildlife. Each class gets two 75-minute, in-class presentations given one week apart. Students enter a T-Shirt Art Contest at the end of the presentations depicting how to protect their local watershed.

In the 2006-2007 school year, Watershed Adventures presentations were conducted in 170 classes in 61 schools throughout west Alameda County, reaching 4,940 students and teachers. The program is funded by the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and the Alameda County Clean Water Program and managed by the ACRC.

2007 Financial Report (Unaudited)





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Alameda County Conservation Partnership



2007 Conservation Partnership Staff

Back Row from left: Jackie Charbonneau, NRCS Ecologist; Terry Huff, NRCS District Conservationist; Morpheus Anima, NRCS Soil Conservationist; Morri-Ann Nagata, NRCS Summer Intern. Front Row from left: Marilyn Harvey, ACRCD Accountant; Steven Phan, NRCS Summer Intern; Amy Evans, ACRCD Resource Conservationist; Katie Bergmann, NRCS Engineer; Leslie Koenig, ACRCD Project Assistant; Karen Sweet, ACRCD Executive Officer; Pete Van Hoorn, ACRCD Range Conservationist; Maria Wendler, ACRCD Project Assistant.

Not Pictured: Barbara Maroney, ACRCD Workshop Coordinator; Joe Ciolek, Interim Conservation Facilitator PLCS; Lisa Hokholt, NRCS Resource Conservationist.

The Conservation Partnership welcomes new staff members. Katie Bergmann, an agriculture engineer, started with the NRCS as an Earth Team Volunteer, and was soon hired. Katie's expertise was appreciated during the Arroyo de la Laguna construction. Morri-Ann Nagata worked with us this summer as an NRCS scholarship student. She was raised on a coffee plantation in Kona, HI and plans a career with the NRCS. Leslie Koenig, a biologist, joined the ACRCD staff as an administrative assistant to the NRCS. Steven Phan, a Tracy High School student who placed in the 2006 CARCD speech contest, helped the Conservation Partnership this summer as well, funded by Ed Burton, State Conservationist. Marilyn Harvey is the ACRCD's new Accountant, following a career in agricultural finance.

Welcome, everyone!