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# Alameda County Resource Conservation District 2011-2012 Annual Report

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# Message from the Board President



In this publication we are pleased to report on the Alameda County Resource Conservation District's accomplishments from 2011 to 2012. As we look back on the last two years, we are proud to be leading the way in Alameda County to protect our environmental resources and provide assistance to landowners, our primary constituents. As many of you know, we provide a wide range of management practices that benefit the land and natural resources. We share a wide scope of conservation information, host workshops and offer training programs. Workshops for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers have been very well attended this year.

Our efforts to support healthy ecosystems and to provide landowner support to implement sustainable rangeland and agricultural practices are demonstrated through the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Farm Bill Incentive Programs which are supported by the District. Another fascinating effort is our Wildlife Friendly Ponds Program which improves habitat for native wildlife and increases the availability of water for livestock.

The District could not have accomplished our objectives without our collaborative relationship with NRCS and other key partners whose efforts are outlined throughout this report. *Thank you to our partners and to our dedicated staff as we continue working toward sustainable conservation in Alameda County!*

Best regards,

Jim Perry, President

## Meet Our Board Members



Jim Perry  
President



Becky Dennis  
Vice President



Dan Sachau  
Treasurer



Paul Banke



Tim Koopmann



Darrel Sweet

## Alameda County Resource Conservation District Overview: ACRC D

The Alameda County Resource Conservation District (ACRC D) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) collaborate as the **Conservation Partnership** to serve as the lead conservation agency in Alameda County.

We provide technical and educational services for natural resource conservation and agriculture enhancement. The Conservation Partnership collaborates with many partners including private landowners, local, state and federal agencies and other organizations to develop and implement various conservation and agricultural strategies.

## Mission Statement

*The mission of the Alameda County Resource Conservation District is to provide leadership in the County and region about natural resources conservation and agricultural enhancement through partnerships, education, outreach, resource services, and technical expertise.*

# Alameda County Resource Conservation District 2011-2012 Annual Report



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Technical Assistance

The Conservation Partnership serves as the link between public agencies, stakeholders, land managers and landowners through successful development and implementation of projects. The foundation of our success comes from the Conservation Partnership’s ability to work in the middle to achieve conservation in Alameda County.

In doing so, the Conservation Partnership provides landowners, stakeholders, and other agency partners technical assistance to address opportunities, concerns, and problems related to the use of natural resources and to help make sound resource management decisions. Technical assistance is provided in many ways and may be in the form of resource assessment, resource monitoring, or on-going evaluation of installed projects. Examples include:

- Coordination and pooling of funds from multiple partners to demonstrate biotechnical engineering practices at several sites along the Arroyo de la Laguna.
- Conservation planning with landowners and land managers to provide sound resource management plans.
- Assistance to local landowning agencies through collaboration with their grazing lessees.



[Above:] Range Conservationist, Ling He plants native trees (in the cages) and shrubs (in the tubes) at Sabercat. [Below:] District Conservationist, Alyson Aquino and NRCS staff Ecologist, Jackie Charbonneau use a dip net to survey a livestock pond for amphibian larvae. [Right:] Orchard in June.



Farm Bill Programs

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers. Cost-share funding through Farm Bill programs is very successful in Alameda County.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program that provides financial and technical assistance for approved conservation practices based on a conservation plan. In Alameda County, most EQIP participants are livestock ranchers, orchard managers, or vineyard operators; but any agricultural operations are eligible. This program is a resource for landowners or land-managers who wish to implement changes to their operation, that will have a benefit to the natural resources on the property. EQIP contracts are currently funded under the 2008 Farm Bill. Where \$900,000 was obligated to EQIP program participants by the ACRC/ NRCS Livermore Office on over 40,000 acres. EQIP contracts will be available again under the new 2013 Farm Bill.

The Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) is part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). AWEP targets key geographic areas and offers a subset of Conservation Practices to focus on conserving surface and ground water and improving water quality.

In 2009, the ACRC/CD applied for five years of funding through AWEP to target water quality issues in the Upper Alameda Creek watershed, which includes parts of Alameda County and the northern portion of Santa Clara County. Like EQIP, all agricultural land uses are eligible. Since 2009, over \$200,000 has been allocated to AWEP contracts on approximately 10,000 acres. 2013 will be the last year of funding for this Partnership agreement.

The Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) is another focused conservation effort. In Alameda County, CCPI is funded through the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) and focuses on improvements to wildlife related resources. Similar to AWEP, the ACRC/CD applied for five years of funding through CCPI in 2009 and prioritizes the geographic extent of the Upper Alameda Creek watershed. Since 2009, almost \$350,000 has been allocated to CCPI program participants in Alameda and Santa Clara counties, covering over 10,000 acres and other NRCS programs. The 2013 funding cycle will be the last year for these CCPI funds.

These programs, and additional NRCS programs not listed, encourage farmers and ranchers to adopt new land management strategies or to improve the conservation of resources on their properties. On farmland, these strategies may include seeding cover crops, establishing hedgerows, or improving the efficiency of irrigation systems. On rangeland, these strategies include installing cross-fence, expanding the locations of water troughs for livestock, livestock pond repair, and making improvements to the natural plant communities.



# Education/Outreach

## Youth and Community Stewardship

The Conservation Partnership offers two innovative conservation education and stewardship programs for youth, Hands-On Conservation (HOC) and the Palomares Elementary School Watershed Education Program. Both programs educate and provide field experience in conservation, stewardship, wildlife enhancement, agriculture, and watershed protection. While actively participating in stewardship activities in local natural and agricultural areas, students also learn about careers and educational opportunities in these fields.

The HOC program was conceived in 2007 and is in its fifth year of providing opportunities for local youth and community volunteers to clean up creeks, plant natives to improve wildlife habitat, and remove invasive plants at several “adopted spots” in the Alameda Creek and San Lorenzo Creek watersheds.

The Palomares program began in 2000 and focuses on the creek adjacent to the school. Program activities include weekly creek studies for grades 1-5 at the outdoor classroom and annual Palomares Watershed Science Expo for over 1,500 students (from all of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes in schools within the San Lorenzo Creek watershed). Primary funding for both programs is provided by the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and the Alameda County Clean Water Program.

Community volunteers also participate in creek cleanups through the Hands-on Conservation program on Coastal Cleanup Day, Earth Day, Make-a-Difference Day, and for other numerous events.



Students and community volunteers plant native trees and shrubs at Bay Trees Park in Castro Valley as part of the District's Hands-on Conservation program.

## Alameda Creek Watershed Council

The Conservation Partnership participates in and helps facilitate events for the Alameda Creek Watershed Council. This group's mission is “to protect and enhance beneficial uses and resources in the Alameda Creek watershed in order to create a healthy and sustainable watershed for the community.” The Council promotes collaboration and the sharing of information among all watershed stakeholders, and hosts an annual conference as well as other workshops and field visits.

Visit : <http://www.acrcd.org/watershed-council.aspx> for further information about upcoming events.

## Clean Water Public Outreach and Education Program

The Conservation Partnership provides assistance to the Alameda County Clean Water Program's Unincorporated Area and Flood Control and Water Conservation District programs by coordinating their Public Information and Outreach Program. This program is mandated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board in an effort to raise awareness of the impacts of stormwater pollution in local communities, and to give local residents information on how they can help protect our watersheds and the Bay. A large component of the program involves participating in community outreach events each year, and providing seasonal stormwater pollution prevention tips to the public through interactive games and activities at our booth.

In the fall, we focus on reducing the amount of litter that ends up in our creeks and the Bay, and each spring we talk about reducing pesticides that end up in our waterways by using less toxic methods to eliminate pests around the home and garden. We work closely with city representatives through the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program to collaboratively implement various stormwater permit compliance requirements that help improve water quality. The Public Information and Outreach Program also includes: a stormdrain marking program, a regional advertising campaign, local media efforts, maintaining a stormwater point of contact, citizen involvement events, watershed stewardship collaborative efforts, school-aged children outreach, and outreach to municipal officials.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.acrcd.org/PartnershipProjects/EducationPrograms/CleanWaterProgramOutreach.aspx>.



[Above:] Girl Scouts from Fremont plant natives along the edge of Sabercat Creek. The blue tubes protect the plants from grazing by deer.



[Above:] Renee at Sunol Glen Elementary for Earth Day 2012.  
[Below:] Creek Cleanup Day at Castro Valley Creek in September.





# Education/Outreach

## Beginning Farmer & Rancher Education

With support from the USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development program funded by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), the Conservation Partnership has undertaken an ambitious education program encompassing all aspects of agricultural production in the East Bay. With our partner organization, Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE), this program includes a 3-year, 18-workshop series on topics ranging from how to secure a lease on public land, to succession planning on the farm and ranch, to niche marketing, business planning, and certifications. Accompanying these workshops are a series of field days, enabling participants to see how certain production challenges and opportunities are accommodated on other farms and ranches in the region. Also central to the program is a commitment of ongoing technical assistance for new producers from Conservation Partnership staff, both with regards to conservation programs, as well as other production-related questions. Often this technical assistance may be as simple as referring a new farmer or rancher to another local expert!

Planned for 2013 is the launch of an informal mentor matching program through which new farmers and ranchers can be paired with established producers to share wisdom and best practices, conduct site visits and provide a sounding board for all the questions that arise in the first years of production. This exciting program will be built upon models already implemented across the county, in an effort to encourage peer-to-peer learning, while drawing on our incredibly knowledgeable local producers. In addition, the Conservation Partnership collaborated closely with other organizations serving beginning farmers and ranchers in the Bay Area, thereby enhancing our ability to support these new producers across a range of production systems and geographies.

For further information on beginning rancher and farmer education, please visit our website: <http://www.acrcd.org/NewFarmersRanchers.aspx>.



[Above:] NRCS Engineer, Neftali Velez consults with Luciana Messina, a fig and persimmon grower at the Sunol AgPark. Her farm is called FICO and her fruit is sold to East Bay restaurants.



## Technical Workshops—8 Consecutive Years

In 2012, the Conservation Partnership hosted our 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive technical workshops for both the California red-legged frog and the California tiger salamander. The workshops cover detailed information such as species identification and life history, field sampling techniques, and habitat requirements. The workshops are intended for land managers and planners, resource agency personnel, biological consultants, and researchers. Both workshops were filled to capacity this year and will be offered again in 2013.

The California red-legged frog workshop was led by Norman Scott, Ph.D. and Galen Rathbun, Ph.D., and co-sponsored by the Contra Costa Water District Los Vaqueros Reservoir and Watershed. They are held in late spring and space is limited to 24 participants, allowing for a more interactive experience with the presenters and species. This workshop includes a nighttime component, allowing participants to explore optimal survey techniques for California red-legged frog adults.

The California tiger salamander workshop was led by Pete Trenham, Ph.D. with the field portion hosted on a private ranch. The workshop is held in mid-summer and space is also limited in order to allow for a more intimate learning experience. In 2012, Dr. Trenham and the Conservation Partnership also led a special half day field visit for a dozen US Fish and Wildlife Service biologists to show them California tiger salamanders and their habitat on a working ranch in Alameda County.



[Above:] Dr. Pete Trenham leading a talk on California tiger salamanders near a livestock pond on a private ranch. [Left:] A bumblebee enjoying the lupines at the Sunol AgPark in April 2011.



# On the Ground Projects

## Arroyo del la Laguna Streambank Restoration Project

In 2012, the Conservation Partnership completed two streambank restoration projects along the Arroyo de la Laguna between Pleasanton and Sunol. One project is at Verona Bridge, and the other is at a site near the intersection of Koopmann Road and Pleasanton-Sunol Road, both on San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) property. Each project is using “biotechnical” stream restoration practices that incorporate woody material and native vegetation to protect the streambank and water quality, while also improving wildlife habitat.

The Arroyo de la Laguna is not adapted to handle the significant flows that result from water runoff during rain events from upstream impermeable surfaces in the Tri-Valley area. The stream is being severely impacted by these high flows, with several feet of streambank eroding each year. An inventory of the stream from Verona Bridge south on SFPUC property was conducted to identify which areas need restoration. Techniques and lessons learned from a project completed in 2006 along the Arroyo de la Laguna about a half-mile south of Verona Bridge were incorporated at these two sites.

The Verona Bridge Project occurs along a 700-foot section of the Arroyo de la Laguna just downstream of the bridge owned by the SFPUC. In addition to addressing significant streambank erosion, this project also removed concrete rubble from under the bridge. The project is funded by a 2009 federal appropriation from Congressman Jerry McNerney’s office, the Alameda County Public Works Department, the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, the Zone 7 Water Agency and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. The unique location of the project site allows the public to view our permanent signage that describes the project and regional context.

The second project is located along a 350-foot section of the Arroyo de la Laguna, owned by the SFPUC, near the confluence with Sheep Camp Creek. This project is funded by the SFPUC as mitigation for impacts from their Bay Division Pipeline project. A conservation easement will be established for the property that this project is located on, preserving the creek and its banks.

At both project locations, crews used trees, rocks and other vegetation to help slow down the water and deflect it back to the Arroyo’s center, while creating healthier habitat for a variety of species. The use of in-stream rock structures coupled with the use of vegetation demonstrates how these habitat-friendly biotechnical practices can work to direct stream flows away from unstable banks and reduce erosion. Both of these projects will improve habitat in the Arroyo de la Laguna for species such as the Western pond turtle, migrating song birds and other local wildlife.



[Above:] Verona Bridge site before restoration (2003).



[Above:] Verona Bridge site after restoration (2012).



[Above:] Key partners in the project receive a Certificate of Congressional Recognition from Congressman Jerry McNerney.



[Above:] SFPUC’s site “Arroyo 2” before project implementation (2010).

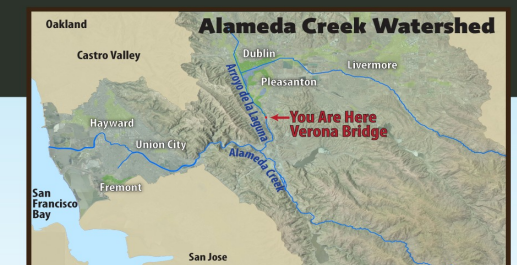


[Above:] SFPUC’s “Arroyo 2” Project Site after project restoration looking up stream (2012).

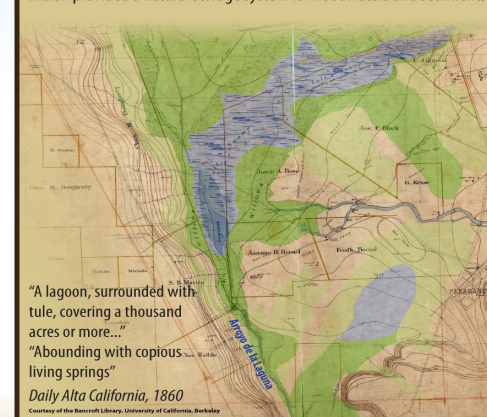
## Dramatic Developments

### A Watershed In Transition

Arroyo de la Laguna runs for 7.5 miles, discharges into Alameda Creek, and then into San Francisco Bay. The Alameda Creek Watershed drains 700 square miles of what was once an open landscape with wooded streams and marshes but today includes cities, farms, and industrial areas. These dramatic changes have caused the creek to rapidly adjust. This streambank restoration project is one of many ways to address these changes, reduce erosion, protect water quality, and preserve wildlife habitat.



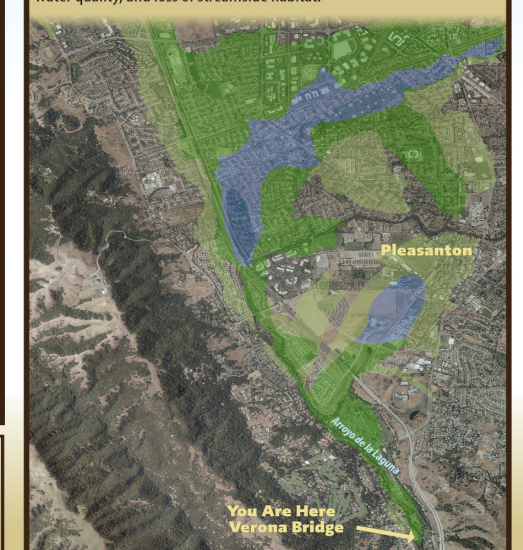
**1880** Where Pleasanton is today was once part of Tulare Lake, a large marsh covering much of the valley until the end of the 19th century. The area was frequented by Native Americans and home to wildlife. The marsh provided a natural storage system for floodwaters and sediments.



**1907** Rapid changes began in the late 19th century. Canals were built to drain the marsh and lower the water table for farming. The Arroyo de la Laguna and other streams were channelized and cleared of trees to make way for agricultural and urban development.



**Today** Extensive pavement prevents water from sinking into the ground where it can drain gradually into streams. Instead, storm drains send water rushing into streams, often causing stream erosion, reduced water quality, and loss of streamside habitat.



As you walk across the bridge, observe the results of the restoration efforts and the serene streamside wildlife corridor created by these changes.

To learn more about this project and others like it, visit the Alameda County Resource Conservation District on the web at [www.acrcd.org](http://www.acrcd.org) or scan this with your smart phone:



This streambank restoration project was completed in 2011 and made possible in partnership with:





# On the Ground Projects

## Vegetative Bank Treatment Demonstration Projects: Zone 7 Water Agency Canals

In 2012, the Conservation Partnership completed two vegetative bank treatment demonstration projects along two canals that are owned and managed by the Zone 7 Water Agency. This project was funded by the 2009 federal appropriation from Congressman Jerry McNerney and Zone 7 Water Agency.

Two flood controls canals; Line G-1-1 and Line B-5 (Pleasanton Canal) are located in an area that the Pleasanton/Tulare Lake and marsh complex occupied prior to being drained in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both canals currently drain to the Arroyo de la Laguna. They were designed to have extremely steep (2H:1V) side slopes and have experienced frequent winter bank failures. The Conservation Partnership partnered with the Zone 7 Water Agency to evaluate the effectiveness of alternative vegetative bank treatments in these locations that could alleviate the need for a typical rip-rap rock repair which has been used to repair the slope failures in the past.

At Line G-1-1, native perennial grasses grown in sod form were installed to provide soil stability. The sod application was chosen at Line G-1-1 due to flood capacity limitations at the site that prevented installation of trees and shrubs. Native grasses typically have deep root systems that provide strength to the soil and native grasses grown in sod form minimize the weed competition. Three different treatments with native sod were installed on the west bank of 3 sections of Line G-1-1, next to Val Vista Park:

- Native Sod without grass plug augment
- Native Sod augmented with Creeping Wildrye Plugs
- Native Sod augmented with Purple Needlegrass Plugs

To our knowledge, this is the first application of native sod along a flood control channel.

Along Line B-5, native riparian trees and shrubs with deep root systems were selected and installed along a 400-foot and 140-foot sections to provide soil stability. The plants will be irrigated for the first two years to provide an opportunity for them to establish. We are looking forward to monitoring the effectiveness of these efforts along these canals in the coming years. If successful, this could prove to be a valuable alternative that Zone 7 can utilize along the rest of its canals to stabilize slopes while at the same time establishing native vegetation and habitat.

[Right:] Strands of Western toad eggs in an Alameda County creek.



## BART Funding for Wildlife-Friendly Pond Restoration

In September 2011, the Conservation Partnership restored California red-legged frog and California tiger salamander habitat to four existing livestock ponds on a 5,000 acre, private ranch in Alameda County. The projects were funded through Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and serve as mitigation for the temporal loss of habitat functions and values associated with wetlands and open waters for the Warm Springs BART extension project.

The pond projects were part of the Conservation Partnership's Wildlife-friendly Pond Program, with the primary purposes to improve habitat for native wildlife and improve availability of water for livestock. The project scope for all four ponds included de-sedimentation in accordance with habitat requirements for the two species. Effects included: deep water areas to ensure adequate breeding habitat, shallow water to encourage larval development, and maintaining some vegetation for structure when applicable. In 2012, Conservation Partnership biologists observed evidence of California tiger salamanders and/or California red-legged frogs breeding in 3 out of the 4 restored ponds – confirmation that restoration efforts were effective and beneficial to these species!



[Above:] A foothill yellow-legged frog found during a biological survey of a local creek in January. [Below:] Photo of livestock pond before restoration. Lack of open water makes the pond undesirable breeding habitat for native amphibians.





# On the Ground Projects



## Restoration Efforts at Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPDP)

In September 2011, the Conservation Partnership, together with the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPDP), restored and enhanced an existing 0.7 acre-ft livestock pond for the California red-legged frog. The pond is located in Livermore, in LARPDP's Sycamore Grove Park. ACRCDD, collaborating with NRCS as the technical lead, was contracted to design, provide permit assistance, and administer the project. The project was funded by a Coastal Conservancy Grant that was awarded to LARPDP in 2007.

The pond had a failing spillway and was becoming choked with cattails. The encroachment of cattails was becoming a limiting factor for wildlife by reducing space for various wildlife species and hindering their movement and access to water. The primary purpose of the project was to prevent further failure of the spillway, improve habitat for the California red-legged frog, western pond turtles, and other native wildlife, including control of non-native fish and bullfrogs and improving habitat for breeding. The scope included spillway repair, de-sedimentation and cattail removal, and embankment stability improvement. An important part of the project included re-routing a trail/road that went through wetland habitat. The trail/road was re-routed over the dam embankment and the wetland area was replanted with native wetland vegetation. Native oaks were also planted near the pond and an observation deck and educational signage were installed. In 2012, one year after project implementation, Partnership staff and LARPDP rangers, have observed an increasing population of CRLF juveniles. There has also been evidence of native tule elk and a variety of bird species using the pond. These wildlife occurrences are good signs that the habitat improvements are working.

[Left:] Oaks in Livermore hills. [Below:] Western pond turtle, one of the many species that benefit from pond restoration.



[Above:] Before Restoration—Dense cattail made it difficult for wildlife to access the pond.



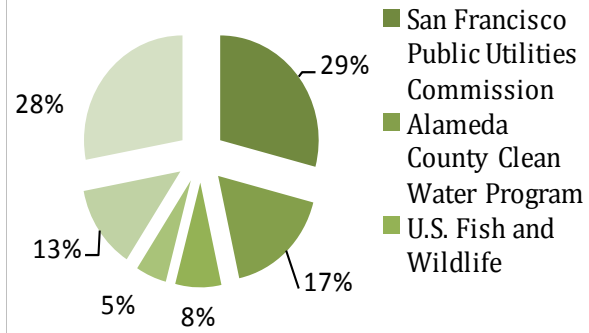
[Above and Below:] After restoration —Cattails and vegetation were left intact on the upstream edge of the pond.





# 2011 Operating Expenses

## Revenue for Fiscal Year 2011

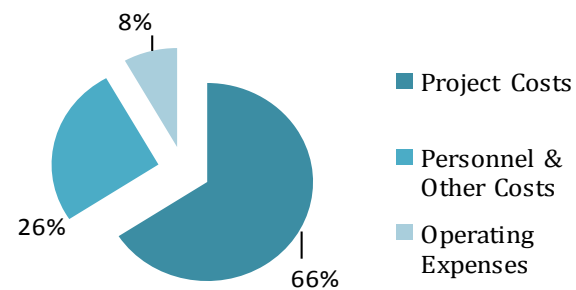


### Revenues

In the 2011 fiscal year, the Conservation Partnership received \$1,210,078 in revenue. This included various projects, taxes, and programs.

| Audited Revenue for Fiscal Year 2011      |                    |             |
|---|--------------------|-------------|
| Revenue Categories                        | Dollar Amount      | %           |
| San Francisco Public Utilities Commission | \$351,893          | 29.10%      |
| Alameda County Clean Water Program        | \$211,400          | 17.50%      |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife                    | \$91,384           | 7.50%       |
| Sabercat Creek                            | \$61,442           | 5.10%       |
| Alameda County Tax                        | \$155,281          | 12.80%      |
| Other                                     | \$338,678          | 28.00%      |
| <b>Total Revenue:</b>                     | <b>\$1,210,078</b> | <b>100%</b> |

## Expenses for Fiscal Year 2011



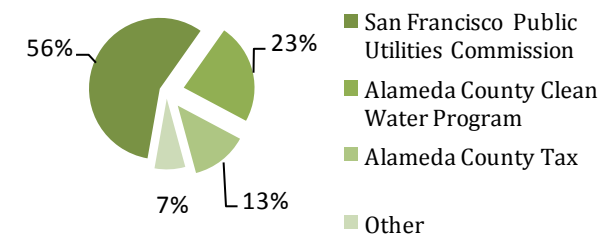
### Expenses

In the 2011 fiscal year, expenditures totaled \$1,110,773. The Alameda County Resource Conservation District strives to minimize costs, while being efficient with expenditures.

| Audited Expenses for Fiscal Year 2011 |                    |             |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Revenue Categories                    | Dollar Amount      | %           |
| Project Costs                         | \$730,742          | 65.79%      |
| Personnel & Other Costs               | \$288,961          | 26.01%      |
| Operating Expenses                    | \$91,070           | 8.20%       |
| <b>Total Revenue:</b>                 | <b>\$1,110,773</b> | <b>100%</b> |

# 2012 Operating Expenses

## Revenue for Fiscal Year 2012

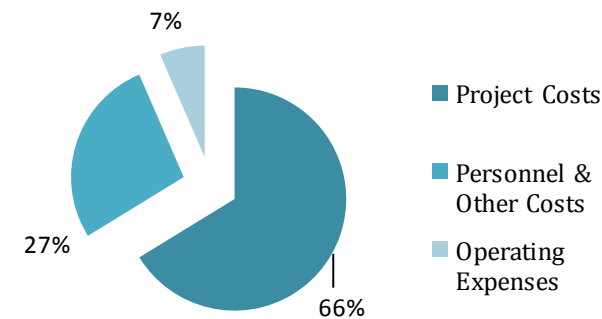


### Revenues

In the 2012 fiscal year, the Conservation Partnership received \$1,346,094 in revenue. This included various projects, taxes, and programs.

| Audited Revenue for Fiscal Year 2012      |                    |             |
|---|--------------------|-------------|
| Revenue Categories                        | Dollar Amount      | %           |
| San Francisco Public Utilities Commission | \$762,883          | 56.7%       |
| Alameda County Clean Water Program        | \$309,930          | 23.0%       |
| Alameda County Tax                        | \$171,798          | 12.8%       |
| Other                                     | \$101,483          | 7.5%        |
| <b>Total Revenue:</b>                     | <b>\$1,346,094</b> | <b>100%</b> |

## Expenses for Fiscal Year 2012

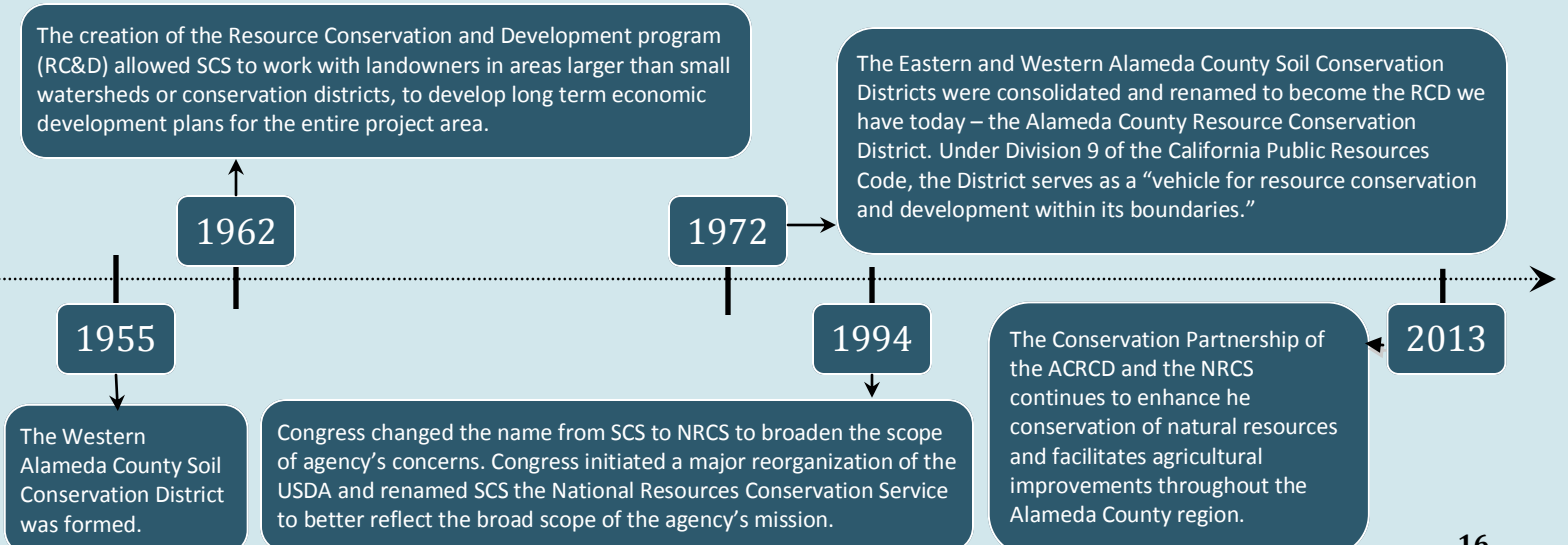
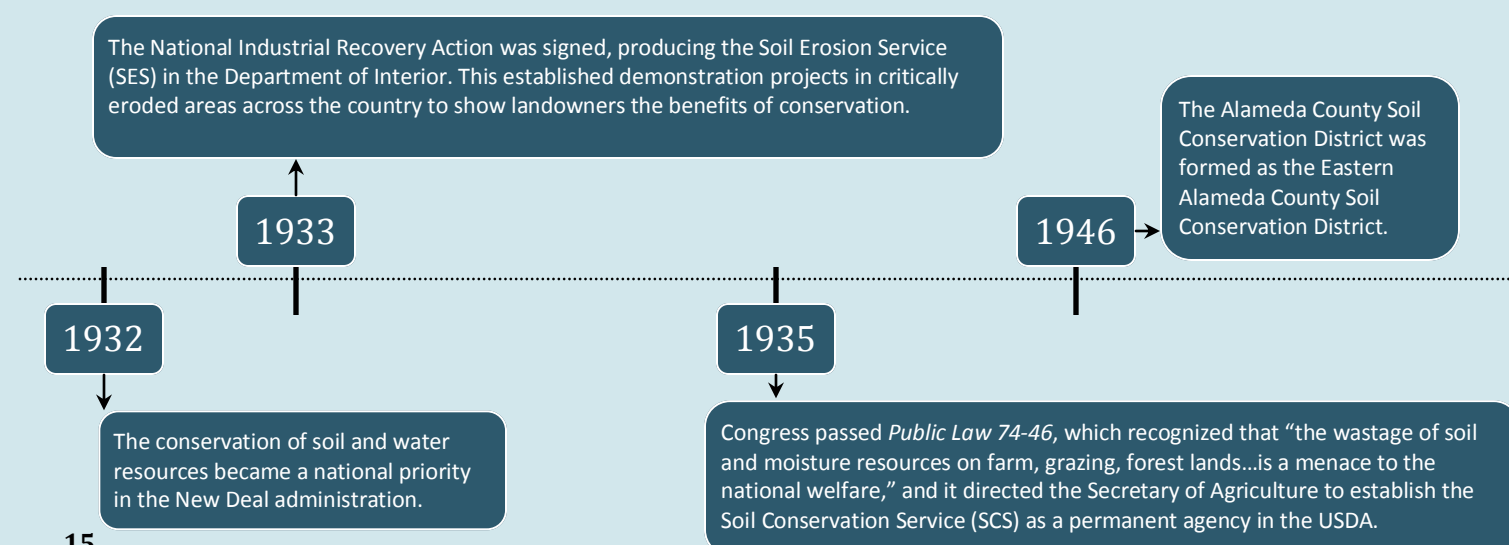


### Expenses

In the 2012 fiscal year, expenditures totaled \$1,329,073. This included project costs (such as San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Alameda County Clean Water Program), operating expenses (i.e. office lease, insurance, postage, etc.), personnel and other costs. The Alameda County Resource Conservation District strives to minimize costs, while being efficient with expenditures.

| Audited Expenses for Fiscal Year 2012 |                    |             |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Revenue Categories                    | Dollar Amount      | %           |
| Project Costs                         | \$880,468          | 66.8%       |
| Personnel & Other Costs               | \$362,104          | 27.2%       |
| Operating Expenses                    | \$86,501           | 6.5%        |
| <b>Total Revenue:</b>                 | <b>\$1,329,073</b> | <b>100%</b> |

## Historical Timeline Conservation Partnership 1932-present





# Changes at the Conservation Partnership



## Haley Michelle Burgardt

As a Project Assistant, Haley joined the Livermore office team in September 2012. She is a recent graduate from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo with a B.S in Environmental Management and Protection. Haley is passionate about addressing resource concerns and promoting agriculture. Outside of work, she enjoys volunteering for local Organic Farms and pruning her own garden. Haley has been helping the office with a range of tasks: research, site visits, and data input, to name a few. This Alameda County native has enjoyed her time with the ACRCD thus far and is looking forward to gaining more experience.



## Katherine Boxer

Katherine Boxer joined the District in January, 2013 as Executive Officer. Katherine holds a Bachelor's degree in Biology from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Ms. Boxer possesses an extensive background in parks, recreation, natural resources management and emergency planning. Katherine's management experience encompasses the public, private, and non-profit sectors. Katherine has a menagerie of animals and enjoys gardening, volunteering with animal rescue organizations, and antique treasure hunts.



## Susan Ellsworth

In June 2012, Susan Ellsworth joined the Alameda Conservation Partnership in the role of Farm and Ranch Education Coordinator. Her work focuses on developing educational, technical and peer-to-peer support services for beginning farmers and ranchers to help ensure they get started successfully. Susan also collaborates with local partners to begin laying the groundwork for an increasingly diversified and robust local food system. A beginning farmer herself, Susan is excited about the role that new farmers and ranchers stand to play in preserving our local agricultural land base and the essential conservation role that those lands play. A recent graduate of UC Davis' Master's program in Community Development, Susan farms in Winters, lives in Oakland and works in Livermore.



## Crystal Ward Simons

Crystal joined the Conservation Partnership as a Resource Conservationist in 2012. She manages projects related to watershed planning, landscape and habitat conservation, and ecosystem service assessment. She is passionate about connecting resource and conservation science with social values. Prior to moving to the East Bay, Crystal was the Sustainability Project Coordinator at the Park City Municipal Corporation in Utah where she contributed to the city's GHG emission inventories and wrote their Climate Action Plan. She has two master's degrees from UC Berkeley in Landscape Architecture and City and Regional Planning, with expertise in Environmental Planning and Design.



## Lisa Hokholt

Lisa Hokholt (NRCS), Outreach Specialist, retired in October 2012 after 35 years with the NRCS. Among the many achievements throughout her career, Lisa was California's first Federal Women's Program Manager, where she implemented many programs such as sexual harassment training, collaborated with the State Civil Rights Committee to help eliminate barriers to success for all employees, and facilitated self-development in women by providing workshops, access to lending libraries, and showcasing successful women. Whether it was her goal or not 35 years ago, Lisa has created a more equal, diverse, and empowered NRCS workforce. While Lisa will always be a part of the

# Conservation Partnership Staff



Top row (from left): Marilyn Harvey, Jackie Charbonneau, Susan Ellsworth, Ling He, Amy Evans, Katherine Boxer  
Bottom row (from left): Crystal Simons, Katie Bergmann, Neftali Velez, Alyson Aquino, Haley Burgardt, Leslie Koenig  
\*Not pictured: Cynthia Butler, Steve Zweber



[Above:] NRCS staff meet around a pond to discuss management strategies.



[Above:] A group of cows come to greet Conservation Partnership staff on a site visit in February.