

The Partnership Newsletter



ALAMEDA COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Issue 7 January/February 2009

The Conservation Partnership Announces 2009 Workshops and Events

by Peggy Kiefer, Outreach & Workshop Coordinator

The Conservation Partnership has many exciting things planned for 2009. It is our pleasure to announce that due to popular demand, the Conservation Partnership will once again host **California red-legged frog** and **California tiger salamander workshops** this year. Both will be scheduled this spring. Also planned for this year are **Alameda whipsnake** and **Native Pollinator Workshops**.

Other events include a celebration of **National Ag Week**, March 16-20 and a **poster contest** for the National Association of Conservation Districts annual **Stewardship Week** April 27—May 2 (story inside). We will again host a **Local Workgroup Meeting** this summer and we will announce **Conservation and Stewardship Awards**. Applications will be posted soon on our website for anyone who wants to nominate individuals they believe are outstanding natural resource conservationists and stewards of the land. **The Natural Resources Education Scholarship** has been created to honor out-going Board President Jocelyn Combs (story inside). We will again be awarding scholarships for students to attend **Range Camp**. For more information see our website www.acrcd.org for continuous updates.



A California red-legged frog hides in the grass during field study at our workshop in Spring '08.

New RCD Board Members Selected

by Peggy Kiefer

At the January board meeting, the RCD Board of Directors recommended to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors two board member appointments. Rod Tripp will continue as a board member and Becky Dennis was recommended for the other board position left open by Jocelyn Combs, who retired from the board last month. Becky was an Associate Director for eight years. She was also a Pleasanton City Council Member for almost 10 years, appointed Pleasanton's vice mayor and worked as Chair of Vision 2010's Open Space and Agriculture Committee. The Board of Supervisors will confirm this appointment January 27th.

Mark Swisher will join the RCD

(Continued on page 5)

"Beefcake Comes to Beef Country" Ag Calendar a Big Success



calendars, we'll take it," said Peggy Kiefer, project coordinator.

The organizations working with Peggy and the Conservation Partnership, which include CattleWomens Association, Livermore Valley Winegrowers Association and the Alameda County Farm Bureau, hosted a calendar signing event on December 19th. The event brought the calendar "models" together

The Alameda County Men in Agriculture "Out in the Open" calendar fundraiser is a huge success. The calendar was created to raise funds for agriculture awareness and education in Alameda County. "Beefcake Comes to Beef County" (as quoted by the Independent Newspaper) isn't necessarily the publicity we thought we would get, but if it helps the agriculture community and sells

In Memoriam Norman Marciel Bob Vieux

It is with great sadness that we announce the recent passing of two former board members. Bob Vieux and Norman Marciel both contributed many years of service and dedication to the District, agriculture and natural resources of Alameda County. Collectively they contributed 28 years of service to the district. They served as great models of community and public service to the agriculture community and will be greatly missed.

(Continued on page 4)

Hands-On Conservation's "Free the Trees" in West Alameda County

By Amy Evans, Resource Conservationist



Logan High School students doing ivy removal.

This winter, students from Logan High School in Union City have been working to "Free the Trees"- in other words, remove the thick vines of invasive Algerian ivy that are climbing up the trunks of the huge trees that line the banks of historic Alameda Creek in William Cann Park. The ivy damages the bark of the tree, and when it reaches the upper branches and crown of the tree, it causes it to become top-heavy, and in winter storms the whole tree can topple over. If it is not pulled out on a regular basis, the ivy will completely cover the stream banks and prevent the more wildlife-friendly native plants from growing and regenerating.

The Logan students have spent many hours at the park during six workdays, and gotten dirty and dusty pulling and cutting the ivy. They also pick up trash from along the creek banks while taking walking tours of the creek area. The benefits of the Free the Trees project for the students include earning community service hours for their work, learning about the importance of protecting and enhancing stream corridors, and learning how to actually do the "work" of conservation.

The parks department staff from the city of Union City, notably Nelson Kirk and Bill Bontadelli, has been highly supportive of the project- bringing in a fully-equipped tool shed to the project site, supplying food, tools and volunteers to the "Make A Difference Day" workday in October, and in December bringing a special landscaping crew to help with the ivy clearing in the less accessible areas.



Cutting ivy from trees at Cann Park.

Streamside Hedgerow Planting and Sunol AgPark Farm Tour

By Leslie Koenig, Biologist

Youth & adult volunteers are invited to participate in upcoming Streamside Hedgerow planting days at the Sunol AgPark through the Hands-on-Conservation Program! The Sunol AgPark, located at the Sunol Water Temple, is an organic farm that is run by the non-profit organization Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE) (www.sage.org). The farm is located right next to the Arroyo de la Laguna. The first hedgerow planting work day is scheduled for February 7th and will continue to take place on the first Saturday of each month.

The hedgerow is a farm border including native plants that creates additional, valuable habitat for beneficial species. In addition to spreading mulch and planting native plants, there will be a farm tour to explore the surroundings.

Please see the flyer on page 6 or visit our website at www.acrcd.org and click on Youth Education, Hands-on-Conservation for more details. RSVPs are required. Contact Leslie Koenig at (925) 371-0154 ext. 115 or leslie.koenig@acrcd.org for more information!

Amy Evans—Conservation Districts Employee of the Year!

Amy Evans, RCD Resource Conservationist since 1988, was recently awarded the Conservation Districts **Employee of the Year** for 2008 by the California Organization of District Employees.



Amy is a dedicated and innovative conservationist, and a local leader in environmental education and watershed stewardship. Her program Watershed Adventures, now in its 15th year, has taught over 70,000(!) 4th graders about our local creeks and watersheds. She recently created a new program, Hands-On Conservation, that gets older students actively involved in projects at parks, ranches, and farms. Amy co-wrote the manual "Horse Keeping: A Guide to Land Management for Clean Water", now a regional standard, and she's worked with many local stables to put the manual's recommendations on the ground. She is a key member of the Alameda Creek Watershed Council, the Sunol AgPark, and too many other projects to count. Congratulations, Amy, on this well-deserved award!

The Alameda County Resource Conservation District Board of Directors and the Conservation Partnership Team have established the

Natural Resources Education Scholarship Fund

to recognize Jocelyn Combs for her contributions to the Alameda County Conservation Partnership from 2000 to 2008.



Jocelyn's support of environmental education and her commitment to the preservation, protection, and enhancement of the natural resources of Alameda County has inspired this scholarship fund. The primary purpose of this fund is to support natural resources education through financial assistance and/or enhancing student involvement in environmental education activities.

The Board of Directors and Conservation Partnership Team wish to express their sincerest gratitude for Jocelyn's commitment, expertise and innovative approach to enhancing the natural resources of Alameda County.

If you would like to contribute or get more information on this scholarship, please contact Peggy Kiefer at peggy.kiefer@acrcd.org, (925)371-0154 ext. 122 or visit our website www.acrcd.org.

A Note from Jocelyn Combs, RCD Past President

As usual our newsletter is brimming with information and good things that the Partnership is doing to make conservation happen in Alameda County. We are also highlighting some of the people who make the Partnership a true partnership - our staff and our ranchers and farmers. As you will read, Amy Evans has been spreading good will and information for 20 years. Thank you! Then our men in agriculture take it almost all off for the cause. Thank you too!

It is difficult to leave an organization like the RCD when it is running on all cylinders but that's what I am doing. It is time for me to move along to other pursuits. Up until recently I hadn't understood what it meant to "spend more time with family", but now I do and I will. Public service has been a large part of my life since 1987 when I joined my first board of directors. Along there somewhere I was attending one board meeting or another three times a week. On top of that my day job is working in public service. So I'm going to take a rest, but probably not for too long. Something else will grab my interest again. I'll say to myself "I think I can make a positive difference" and I'll be off again. What a great country we live in where an ordinary citizen can do that.

Thank you to my fellow board members. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with you, especially when we had to make the tough decisions.

Thank you to the Partnership staff. Your skill and determination make our dreams a reality. And finally thank you to the land and the people who love it and work with it. You make it all worthwhile.

Jocelyn Combs
Past President
Alameda County Resource Conservation District
Board of Directors

Stewardship Week Poster Contest "Can You Dig It?"



The National Association of Conservation Districts is sponsoring a Poster Contest. The 2009 Poster Contest theme is "Dig It! The Secrets of Soil." NACD is using the Dig It!

theme in partnership with the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and the Soil Science Society of America. This collaboration will complement the Smithsonian "Dig It! The Secrets of Soil," exhibition which will run July 19, 2008 through January 3, 2010 at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. and travel to museums across the United States May 2010 to September 2013. See <http://forces.si.edu/soils/> for more information.

The annual National Conservation Poster Contest provides kindergarten through twelfth grade students an opportunity to convey their thoughts about soil, water and related natural resource issues through art. It also highlights the educational outreach efforts of conservation districts and their state conservation associations, auxiliaries and agencies.

The Conservation Partnership is sponsoring a poster contest at the district level. Individuals and teachers with questions regarding the poster contest should contact Peggy Kiefer, Outreach and Workshop Coordinator at peggy.kiefer@acrcd.org or (925) 371-0154 ext. 122 for more information. Rules and entry forms are on the Conservation Partnership website at www.acrcd.org. District winners advance to the state level; then state winners advance to the National Contest. National winners are recognized each year at the NACD Annual Meeting.

What your poster will be
judged on

- Conservation message—50 percent
- Visual effectiveness—30 percent
- Originality—10 percent and
- Universal appeal—10 percent.



**Poster Entry Deadline is
April 25, 2009—Earth Day!**

Conservation Staff Attends Rangeland Coalition Annual Summit



Conservation Partnership staff traveled to Chico, CA to participate in the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition 4th Annual Summit. In addition to staff, many local ranchers attended the informational summit.

"The Summit was a great opportunity to see landowners, agency personnel and environmentalists come together to support such a valuable (collaboration to conserve private rangeland). The take home message was that while we've come so far, there are still many issues that need to be addressed, and support from all sides of the table must be engaged to continue a working relationship to protect private lands and their associated habitats," states Leslie Koenig, Conservation Partnership Biologist.

For more information on this story and the California Rangeland Coalition go to their website at <http://www.carangeland.org>.

Ag Calendar a Big Success (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

to autograph calendars for all who attended the event. "It was great to support a great cause and see (meet) some great Livermore families," said Karl Wente, Mr. January.

"We don't have grand totals yet, but orders are still coming in daily and we expect to sell out soon," stated Kiefer. Proceeds from the signing event and calendar will benefit agriculture education in the community.

Calendars can be ordered by going to the Conservation Partnership website at www.acrcd.org or by coming to the Partnership or Winegrowers offices at 3585 Greenville Road, Livermore.



Abbie & Brandon Batteate

Calendars are also still available at local wineries, the Riata in downtown Livermore and Krayons in Castro Valley. Contact Peggy Kiefer for more information at peggy.kiefer@acrcd.org or (925) 371-0154 ext. 122.



Livermore High School
FFA Students



Karl Wente signs calendars
for Stacy Schindler.

Celebrate Agriculture

NATIONAL AG DAY • MARCH 20, 2009
AG WEEK • MARCH 15-21, 2009



American agriculture provides the necessities of everyday life...food, fiber, clothing and even fuel. The Agriculture Council of America, The Conservation Partnership, Alameda County Farm Bureau, and Contra Costa/Alameda County Cattlemen's Association, Livermore Valley Winegrowers Association and Freitas Rangeland Improvements encourage you to join with fellow citizens to celebrate the abundance provided by agriculture on March 20, 2009—the first day of spring.

Let our farmers and ranchers know you care!
See our website for more information.

www.acrcd.org

If you or your organization would like to participate in Ag Week, please contact Peggy Kiefer at the Conservation Partnership at peggy.kiefer@acrcd.org or (925) 371-0154 ext. 122.

New RCD Board Members Selected (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

Board as an Associate Director (a non-voting position). RCD Directors are local citizens who are familiar with local agricultural and natural resource issues. They are appointed by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors to serve four-year terms. A Director must either be a landowner or a representative of a landowner within RCD boundaries or have served as an Associate Director for two years.

The other current members of the Board of Directors are Tim Koopmann, Brenda Vieux, and Paul Banke.

The Alameda County RCD Board meets on the third Monday of every month at 6:30 pm at the RCD office. All Board meetings are open to the public. Please contact Karen Sweet at (925) 371-0154 ext. 111 or visit our the website www.acrcd.org for more information.

Please note...

The Alameda County Resource Conservation District Board meetings have changed to the third Monday evening of the month. See website for agenda. (Exception: Feb. 9th)

The Conservation Partnership Invites You to Browse Our Website at www.acrcd.org for Continuous Updates.

**Newsletter Editor
Peggy Kiefer
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peggy.kiefer@acrcd.org**

Volunteers Wanted

For a Hands-on-Conservation

Streamside Hedgerow Planting and Sunol AgPark Farm Tour



Help needed to spread mulch and plant native plants

FIRST WORK DAY: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH, 2009

WORK DAYS WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE PLACE ON THE FIRST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH

Students and adult volunteers wanted.
Youth groups with leaders welcome!
Community Service credit awarded!

RSVP Required!

For directions and details contact:

**Leslie Koenig at (925) 371-0154 x 115
leslie.koenig@acrccd.org**

Or

**Cynthia King at (510) 526-1793 ext 5
Cynthia@sagecenter.org**

**Meet at Sunol AgPark (Niles Canyon and
Pleasanton-Sunol Road)**

**Hedgerow Installation between
10am and 2 pm**

**Drop by anytime and work as long as
you can!**

**Bring your gloves, shovels and wheel
barrows if you have them!**

**Bring water, snacks, and rain
gear/warm layers!**

Hands-on-Conservation is a project of the Alameda County Resource Conservation District.
Additional program funding and support provided by the USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service and the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District.

More information online at www.acrccd.org.



SAGE developed the successful Sunol AgPark as a model —integrating community benefit agriculture, natural resource stewardship, and public education.
More information online at www.sagecenter.org



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If you wish to receive our newsletter via e-mail only please
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Recycle by sharing with others!