

Alameda County Resource Conservation District

FY2017 & FY2018 Combined Annual Report

*Your Local Partner in Natural Resources Conservation,
Wildlife Preservation, Working Lands, and Agriculture*



Photo Courtesy: USDA

— Alameda County Resource Conservation District —

Our Mission. The mission of the Alameda County Resource Conservation District (ACRCD) is to provide leadership in the county and region to enhance natural resources conservation, preserve wildlife and habitat, perform rangeland management and agricultural improvements through partnerships, education, outreach, resource services and technical assistance to clients, providing funding support when feasible.

Resource Conservation Districts

RCD's are independent, non-regulatory, special districts of California. They are authorized by Division 9 of the State of California, Public Resources Code to provide resource conservation services within district boundaries. They are locally governed agencies with their own County appointed, independent boards of directors. Contributions to RCD's are tax deductible under federal law.

The Conservation Partnership

The ACRCD and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Livermore staff work closely together to serve the conservation and agriculture needs of Alameda County. Housed in the same office, we work in collaboration as the Conservation Partnership (Partnership). The Partnership leverages expertise from both agencies to provide the best possible services for natural resource conservation and agricultural enhancement. We work with many entities, including private landowners, local, state, and federal agencies, non-profits and the private sector, to develop an implement best practices as applicable to the specific challenges identified.

Our Services

ACRCD and NRCS provide a variety of services including:

- **Ecosystem Management & Habitat Restoration**
 - Habitat Assessments
 - Wildlife and Botanical Surveys
 - Restoration Project Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring
 - Streambank Restoration, Protection, and Improvements
 - Planning and Implementation of Transportation Wildlife Corridors
- **Rangeland Ecology & Management**
 - Development of Grazing Management Plans
 - Rangeland Health Surveys
 - Residual Dry Matter (RDM) and Plant Composition Monitoring
 - Livestock Pond Restoration and other Stockwater Improvements
 - Carbon Farm Planning and Implementation
- **Education and Outreach**
 - Workshops and Field Tours
 - Rangelands and Environmental Stewardship
 - Agriculture and Food Systems
 - Special Status Species Workshops
 - Conservation and Stewardship Education
- **Technical Assistance**
 - Landowner and Manager Support (Private Landowners, Manager Lessees, Local, State and Federal Agencies and Private Sector Corporations)
 - Urban Agriculture
 - Permitting Assistance
 - GIS Mapping



Top: Katie Bergmann (NRCS Engineer) feeding hay out of the back of a pickup truck. Middle: Flowers in bloom at the Sunol AgPark. Bottom: Questions after a panel discussion at the Alameda County Watershed Confluence Conference in 2018.

FY2017-FY2018 Project Highlights

Rangeland Resilience Project. The Alameda County Rangeland Resilience Pilot Project increases ecosystem and cattle operation resilience to extreme drought by repairing and redistributing spring-fed stockwater systems and livestock ponds that are beneficial to grazing operations and wildlife. In collaboration with the East Bay Regional Park District, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, a private grazing lessee, and the NRCS team, we restored four livestock ponds and five spring-fed water systems in the Sunol-Ohlone area.

Sunol AgPark & Education Program. In 2017, the ACRCD took over the management of the San Francisco Public Utility Commission's Sunol AgPark. Currently within the AgPark, six small-scale organic farms produce fresh foods and flowers for various Bay Area communities. The SFPUC and ACRCD partnership provides land and technical assistance to the farmers and hands-on environmental education programs for Bay Area school children. During these two years, the AgPark hosted approximately 5,500 schoolchildren on topics related to the Alameda Creek watershed, the water system, and sustainable agriculture.

Alameda Creek Healthy Watershed Program. The Healthy Watershed program concluded in 2017 with the completion of nine implementation and monitoring projects on a mix of public and private lands. Partnering with six ranchers and two public agencies, we supported a variety of projects aimed at improving water quality. Implemented strategies included developing three off-stream livestock water systems, developing two grazing management plans, completing two streambank enhancement and stabilization projects, and completing three erosion control efforts in ephemeral drainages and gullies. The program supported land owners and managers responsible for over 22 miles of creeks and drainages across 8,700 acres of land in the Alameda Creek watershed.

Urban Farm Conservation Mini-Grant Program. In 2014, the ACRCD launched the Urban Farm Conservation Mini Grant Program after recognizing an ongoing unmet need to assist small urban food producers with scale-appropriate agricultural practices. Through this program, urban farms and gardens may apply for funds to support conservation practices that also enhance production capacity while enhancing water quality. In FY2017, 14 grants (6 mini-grants and 8 materials and supplies grants) were awarded, totaling \$13,500. In FY2018, 9 mini-grants were awarded totaling \$20,283. Primary funding for this program is provided by the Alameda County Flood Control & Water Conservation District in collaboration with NRCS, UC Cooperative Extension, and USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program.

Livermore Stream Maintenance Program. The City of Livermore's (City) Stream Maintenance Program (SMP) is a streamlined permitting program designed to allow the City to identify and maintain waterways to prevent flooding and improve overall functioning. In 2016, the City contracted with the ACRCD to assist the City of Livermore with numerous and ongoing SMP projects, permits and reporting requirements. ACRCD staff have helped manage multiple stream maintenance projects throughout the Arroyos, including \$1.1 million in storm repair work required after the high rainfall year of 2016-17. The destabilized banks caused flooding throughout the area. We also assist with the identification, revegetation and monitoring of mitigation sites which offset any impacts of within stream activities.

Carbon Farm Planning. Carbon farming encompasses a broad variety of agricultural practices that aim to increase the carbon sequestration potential of agricultural operations. We have begun assisting landowners, land managers, and various stakeholders in planning and implementing agricultural projects that will enhance soil conditions and improve carbon sequestration in soils and vegetation. Some examples of these practices are: compost application, prescribed grazing management, planting cover crops, wind breaks, riparian plantings, and hedgerows. We are able to offer additional assistance to farmers and ranchers with carbon farming related objectives by helping to locate funding sources, developing site-specific carbon farm plans and implementing projects, and measuring the efficacy of those projects. Contact us for more information!

Wildlife-Friendly Ponds Program. We continue to partner with ranchers through our Wildlife-Friendly Pond Program to enhance stock ponds to provide habitat for listed amphibians while also providing drinking water for cattle. During the last two years we have restored 4 ponds in Alameda County. Projects have included desedimentation as well as embankment and spillway repair. NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) continues to prioritize ponds and fund projects and the Partnership continues to seek additional funding opportunities to help incentivize rancher and agency participation in the program.

Alameda Watershed Maps. The Alameda County Watershed Maps project has been completed by the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, in collaboration with SFPUC and the ACRCD. It is an interactive, online map of every watershed in Alameda County that lets professionals, educators, and outdoor enthusiasts explore and learn more about the watershed. If you would like to learn more about this exciting project go to www.acfloodcontrol.org/resources/explore-watersheds/.



Outreach, Education, & Workshops

Day in the District Symposium. The goal for the 2019 'Day in the District' Symposium was to provide an innovative outreach event that would highlight the expertise and diversity of the District's multiple programs and projects. The target audience was key decision makers from local, county and state agencies as well as private corporations. District 16's newly elected Assemblywoman, Rebecca Bauer-Kahan provided the Opening Remarks and David Bunn, the Director of the California Department of Conservation, provided the Keynote Luncheon address. The ACRCDD was pleased to host over eighty attendees from a variety of agencies and organizations.

Alameda County Watershed Confluence. The Alameda County Watershed Confluence Conference was designed to provide a forum for local groups, community members and representatives from the public and private sectors interested in creek and watershed health to meet, network, share innovative ideas and inspire new partnerships in watershed management in Alameda County. ACRCDD staff assisted in the planning of this event, as well as a collaborative presentation and our own Amy Evans received the 'Youth Educator' Award.

Clean Water Public Information and Outreach. ACRCDD staff continued coordinate and participate in a wide array of events and projects that serve to educate the community in ways to reduce stormwater pollution in county watersheds, including hosting outreach booths at community festivals and environmentally themed events. In addition, the Palomares Elementary School's Watershed Education Program in Castro Valley provides outdoor, creekside lessons to students and visiting schools. Clean Water Volunteers provides opportunities for the public to clean up local creeks and enhance habitat, such as at Coastal Cleanup and Earth Day. These activities are implemented by the ACRCDD to assist the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District in meeting their clean water goals and requirements.

2017-2018 Workshops. The ACRCDD's 2017 and 2018 Professional Workshops included: Yolo Press and Yolo Bulb Field Day, Olive Tree Pruning Field Day, Beginning Olive Producer's Group Meeting, Alameda Whipsnake Workshop, California Red-legged Frog Workshop, California Tiger Salamander Workshop, Getting the Lease Workshop, Livestock Production 101, and Ranching 101. Workshops were held both in the field and classroom.



CA Assemblywoman Rebecca Bauer-Kahan providing Opening Remarks at 'Day in the District'.

Be sure to check out the new **RCD Project Tracker** at www.rcdprojects.org The Project Tracker was created to help our partners stay informed about projects in development and those that have recently been completed. Over 100 projects from 18 different RCD's from around the state have been identified.



Staff and Partners assessing a livestock pond for wildlife habitat value and restoration needs



Amy (left) receiving the "Youth Educator" Award at the Alameda County Watershed Confluence in 2018



Amy leads volunteers in planting native plants at Bay Trees Park in Castro Valley on the MLK Day of Service with community volunteers and Friends of San Lorenzo Creek

Amy Evans retiring after 35 years of service at the ACRCDD

Amy is retiring in June from the ACRCDD after a career of nearly 35 years. She began part time work as a graduate student intern in 1981 doing creek erosion fieldwork with NRCS (then Soil Conservation Service) and learning how conservation measures can be effectively applied on the land. Her next area of work included leading two multi-RCD, grant-funded programs that helped integrate best practices in conservation "on the ground" at equine facilities. During this time Amy also helped spearhead, then lead the ACRCDD's long- running classroom education programs 'Bay Savers' and 'Watershed Adventures', with their interactive presentations that inspired many thousands of 4th graders to care for our watersheds. Over the last 10 years Amy has been focused on Hands-On Conservation and Clean Water Volunteers, both field-based stewardship programs that have provided students and community members opportunities to directly enhance watershed health in many areas of Alameda County.

Amy recognizes and appreciates the ongoing funding and support for these conservation education and stewardship programs from the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and Clean Water Program over the past 20 plus years, which has helped both the Flood Control District and the ACRCDD reach their goals to engage the public in the care of our watersheds.

Amy has a contagious enthusiasm for conservation, education and watershed stewardship that has resulted in long-standing partnerships with local organizations and volunteers that share those common interests.

Amy plans to continue her involvement in environmental stewardship as a volunteer at Alameda Creek Alliance's monthly workdays at their restoration site along Alameda Creek in Niles near where she lives, so please join her at a monthly workday.

Thank you for your many years of hard-work and dedication, Amy!
Board of Directors and Staff of the Alameda County Resource Conservation District

From the President of the Alameda County Resource Conservation District's Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer

It is our pleasure to bring you the 2017-2018 Alameda County Resource Conservation District's (ACRCD) Annual Report which showcases our recent projects and services and highlights the technical expertise of District staff. We would both like to express our sincere gratitude to our clients and partners in utilizing the District for their respective natural resource management needs. The ACRCD's multiple and diverse project successes not only attest to the District's capabilities but further emphasizes the importance of the valued relationships we have with owners of working lands, government agencies, and corporations.

The ACRCD's all-volunteer Board of Directors meet monthly to approve project contracts and agreements, help define District policies, conduct governance of the ACRCD as a special district and provide keen insight's into strategic priorities in coordination with the District's Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer. The Alameda County Resource Conservation District works hard to stay on the leading edge of natural resource management best practices and emerging science. The Board of Directors, executive management and the talented staff all recognize that we have serious challenges ahead.

Whether it is determining optimal strategies to mitigate climate change (carbon farming), planting vegetation that monarchs rely on to help stop the rapid and sudden population decline of this beautiful butterfly, restoring creeks to enable safe passage for species breeding upstream, through grazing research developing and implementing effective management plans on watersheds, restoring livestock and wildlife ponds on ranchers' working lands, initiating the development of transportation wildlife corridors throughout Alameda County to protect habitat connectivity to ensure safe movement of wildlife throughout their natural ranges, enabling healthy biodiversity to continue to flourish. Thanks to the knowledge and foresight of the Alameda County Resource Conservation District, numerous local and state agencies, corporations, ranchers, vineyards and other producers, competitive funding made available through primarily state and federal grants and the Natural Resources Conservation Services EQIP program, together we can ensure the preservation and sustainability of the region's natural resources for the benefit of human, ecological and biologically diverse environments.

Thank you. We greatly appreciate your interest and support!

Laura Mercier

Laura Mercier, President

Katherine Boxer

Katherine Boxer, Chief Executive Officer



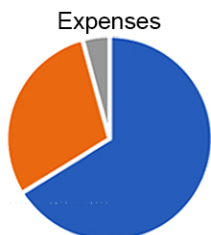
Laura Mercier
ACRCD Board President



Katherine Boxer
ACRCD Chief
Executive Officer

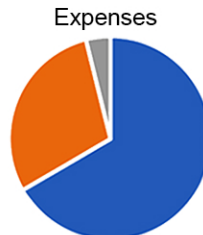
FY 2017 Financial Summary (per 2016-2017 audited reports)

Expenses			
Project Costs	\$1,084,858	66%	
Personnel & Other Cost	\$485,018	30%	
Operating Costs	\$69,636	4%	
Total Expenses	\$1,639,512	100%	
Revenue Categories			
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission	\$528,219	32%	
Alameda County Clean Water Program	\$384,214	23%	
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service	\$107,888	7%	
City of Livermore	\$82,145	5%	
Alameda County Property Tax	\$220,592	13%	
Other	\$319,394	20%	
Total Revenue	\$1,642,452	100%	



FY 2018 Financial Summary (per 2017-2018 audited reports)

Expenses			
Project Costs	\$1,136,360	67%	
Personnel & Other Cost	\$503,016	29%	
Operating Costs	\$66,317	4%	
Total Expenses	\$1,705,693	100%	
Revenue Categories			
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission	\$725,766	43%	
Alameda County Clean Water Program	\$327,621	19%	
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service	\$47,786	3%	
City of Livermore	\$115,647	7%	
Alameda County Property Tax	\$237,056	14%	
Other	\$249,871	14%	
Total Revenue	\$1,703,747	100%	



Connect with us and visit www.acrcd.org to learn more about the wide scope of services we provide, the projects we work on, our partners, and much more!



Alameda County Resource Conservation District
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Livermore, California 94550-6710

Looking Forward

Transportation Wildlife Corridor Initiative. The ACRCD has partnered with the UC Davis Road Ecology Center to establish an initiative to develop and construct transportation wildlife corridors under or over the East Bay's major highways (Interstate 680, Interstate 580, and Highway 84). Wildlife need the capability to move through their natural ranges to survive. Rapidly increasing human population, fast-paced urban development, new highways and infrastructure, and land-use changes in the Bay Area have resulted in geographic islands with diminishing biodiversity on both the east and west sides of the surrounding rangelands and woodlands. If you would like to learn more about this initiative, please contact ACRCD's CEO or visit our new website.

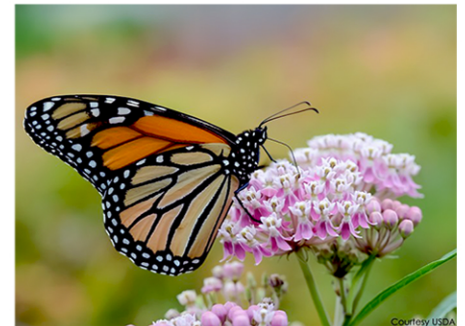
Monarchs & Milkweeds. The western population of the monarch butterfly is at high risk of extinction, with their numbers plummeting over 95% in the past decade. To address this pressing issue, the ACRCD and NRCS are working together to develop a monarch program in the county that will focus on restoring milkweed (their host plant) and nectar plants on rangelands. We've received funding from the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission to begin collecting local milkweed seed and are collaborating with the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts to apply for additional grants. We plan to host tours of the demonstration sites we are developing in collaboration with 7 ranchers, as well as other educational events. Stay tuned for more soon.

Urban Agriculture Grant Program. The ACRCD was thrilled to receive grant funding from the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Urban Agriculture Initiative in 2019. This project will address three primary needs: the provision of expanded, site-specific technical assistance including soil health and water quality; workshops for community farmers on topics critical to the success of natural resources conservation on urban farms, and District staff training and capacity building on relevant topics to urban producers.

If you or your organization are interested in our programs or services, please contact us at:

3585 Greenville Road, Suite 2, Livermore, CA 94550
(925) 453-3861 | www.acrcd.org

Cover photo: Green Valley in Sunol Regional Wilderness in Alameda County (courtesy of USDA).



Alameda County Resource Conservation District

ACRCD Board of Directors: Laura Mercier (President), Darrel Sweet (Vice President), Dan Sachau (Treasurer), Bill Hoppes, Marilyn Russell, Mark Connolly, and Niki Wenthe.

ACRCD Staff: Katherine Boxer (CEO), Marilyn Harvey (CFO), Amy Evans, Cynthia Butler, Ian Howell, Susan Ellsworth, Andrew Engstrom, Hillary Sardiñas, PhD., and Kyle Marsh; Resource Conservationists.

NRCS Staff: Alyson Aquino, Jackie Charbonneau, Ling He, and Katie Bergmann.

Learn more about our staff and board members at our website www.acrcd.org