

Ecesis

California Society for Ecological Restoration Quarterly News Journal

How Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) are Catalyzing Restoration across California

First created almost 100 years ago, California's Resource Conservation Districts have evolved over time to meet the changing needs of people and the land, to ensure that California is home to thriving and resilient communities, landscapes, and economies. Today, California's 95 RCDs share a common mission of working collaboratively to conserve natural and cultural resources on both private and public lands. Across the state, each RCD's projects and programs are tailored to the communities they serve, and their services often include habitat restoration, forest and soil health, public education, landscape-scale conservation planning, and climate resilience. This issue highlights a selection of RCDs from across the state, with an emphasis on restoration projects and community engagement—something RCDs do exceptionally well. This is just a taste, and alas, far from the full picture of restoration currently underway by RCDs. Nonetheless, we hope it inspires you to dig deeper, reach out to new partners in your communities, and consider how RCDs might support restoration in your backyard.



Above: An upland wetland on the Willits Mitigation Project six years after creation. See article on page 11.

Fall 2022 Volume 32, Issue 3

Guest Editor: Isaiah Thalmayer,
Point Blue & UC Davis
ithalmayer@pointblue.org

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Managing Editor: Julie St John
Contributing Editor: James Mizoguchi

Ecesis is published quarterly by the California Society for Ecological Restoration, a nonprofit corporation, as a service to its members. Newsletter contributions of all types are welcome. See sercal.org/newsletter for a link to our Guidelines.

Call for Abstracts: **SERCAL 2023**
Cultivating Connections

First Call for Abstracts Oct 28–Nov 28 at sercal.org



You're invited to present!
See page 21 for details

Dearest Members, Beat the Holiday Rush and Renew Today!

There's a distinct possibility we may be raising our membership dues beginning 1 Jan 2023. We have been holding steady at these rates for a very long time but the price of everything has skyrocketed, in the last few years especially.



If there is a rate increase for 2023, it will not affect the \$80 Joint Membership with CNGA; and Students, Emerging Professionals, and those from under-served communities will still have their membership dues waived.

Ch-ch-ch-changes...

The Bad News:

We are saying goodbye to a few members of the Leadership Team in December.

The Good News:

If you are interested in joining the Team as a Board Member, an Affiliate (non-voting), or a Volunteer, [learn more here!](#) Send a letter of interest and a resumé via <https://bit.ly/3zGwiYm>.

The AWESOME News:

Sean Lee joined SERCAL as Admin Assistant in September. He is managing social media, outreach to under-served, under-represented communities, and organizing us in our new Google Workspace. More on Sean in the Winter issue of *Ecesis*.

Speaking of Holidays, Get great gifts while supporting SERCAL during our Year-End Online Auction Dec 4–10



We're talking vacation packages, dining, delightful accommodations, art, and more awesome goodies that you won't want to miss out on. All while supporting SERCAL!

And it's not too late to add an item to be auctioned off... do you have a timeshare? How about using your expertise or favorite pastime to provide a one-of-a-kind experience? *belly dancing anyone?*

What Is a Resource Conservation District?

The Value and History of Resource Conservation Districts in California

This article was written by Bark Media in support of the Resource Conservation Network, a group working together to amplify the resources, services, and stories of California North Coast RCDs. You can learn more about this initiative and connect with their stories at <https://medium.com/resource-conservation-network>.

Thinking of the Dust Bowl Era of the 1930s often brings to mind grainy images of barren landscapes; stories of dust storms that lasted days and made it impossible to walk from one house to a neighbor's home; and long lines of Midwestern farmers moving west, often to California, to try to build a better life. It was a time in U.S. history when the consequences of not tending to natural resources led to transformative impacts on our society that reverberate through to today. Resource Conservation Districts, or RCDs, were born out of the catastrophic soil losses and devastating societal impacts witnessed during the Dust Bowl Era. The need to conserve America's natural resources, most notably its agricultural soils, was federally prioritized and led to the development and funding of RCDs across the country.

To this day, Resource Conservation Districts bring public and private funding alongside technical assistance to farmers and ranchers so that they can voluntarily conserve water, soil, and wildlife habitat on their land with the help of the RCD as a local and neutral partner. Spanning many generations, RCDs have maintained deep connections to farmers and ranchers, but they have also evolved with the changing needs of California's diverse communities. Today each RCD's projects and programs are different, with services that include habitat restoration, forest health, soil health, public education, landscape-scale conservation planning, climate resilience, water conservation, water quality improvement, and preparing for drought and fire.

What Is a Resource Conservation District?

Resource Conservation Districts work to be relevant, responsive, and transparent hubs for natural resource conservation and agriculture on public and private lands at local, regional, state, tribal, and federal levels. RCDs were designed to evolve with the changing needs of people and the land to ensure that local communities are thriving and resilient. Resource Conservation Districts are committed to utilizing voluntary, cooperative, and scientifically sound methods to ensure that the natural resources within the District are sustained, conserved, restored, and protected within a landscape of productive agriculture, growing cities, and open spaces. There are 95 RCDs throughout California, each covering a distinct geographic area. Nationwide, there are more than 3,000 Resource Conservation Districts.

Resource Conservation Districts are established under state law to be locally governed with independent Boards of Directors that are accountable to their communities. The relationships with the communities RCDs serve are crucial to how they accomplish their work in agricultural, rural, and urban landscapes. Traditionally, RCDs have focused a large percentage of their work on directly supporting landowners. Now, the organizations are opening their work to broader

groups to include more people who often have been marginalized or left out of the conservation work, including people who lease land and community organizers. RCDs are special districts, a form of local government created by the community to meet a specific need, similar to districts created for needs such as fire protection, schools, open space, or flood control. As trusted stewards of public and private funds, RCDs are subject to transparency and accountability laws that require public meetings, open records, annual audits, and financial reporting.

As a legal subdivision of the state, each RCD is organized to support natural resource management solutions through partnerships with individuals, organizations, and agencies. RCDs across California collaborate to drive conservation initiatives locally, regionally, and statewide.

Resource Conservation District Directors are typically local landowners in the district who volunteer for the role. The Board of Directors is made up of people who are actively engaged with rural, agricultural, and natural resource conservation issues and businesses. Surprisingly, although RCDs are subdivisions of state government, they receive no dedicated funding from the State, and most RCDs receive a small percentage, typically less than 10%, of their annual budget from the county tax base. The remainder of an RCD's annual budget comes from competitively sought grant funding and fee-for-service contracts. Technical assistance is provided to landowners, farmers, ranchers, and others in the district who voluntarily seek expertise, guidance, and input from their local RCD.

Why Are Resource Conservation Districts Important?

Skilled technical assistance is an important, strong foundation for conservation projects. Technical assistance includes the relationship-building, expertise, coordination, permitting, and project management needed to site, design, implement, and monitor multi-benefit projects that sequester carbon and otherwise conserve and enhance natural resources on the land. RCDs also provide critical technical assistance to farmers and ranchers applying for funding, including programs such as the California Department of Food and Agriculture Climate Smart Agriculture grants.

Resource Conservation Districts combine the accountability and transparency of a public agency with the flexibility and non-regulatory approach of a nonprofit organization. This nimbleness allows RCDs to adapt to the ever-changing needs of their communities, build trusted relationships, and act as the crucial bridge that connects individuals with state and federal partners and programs.



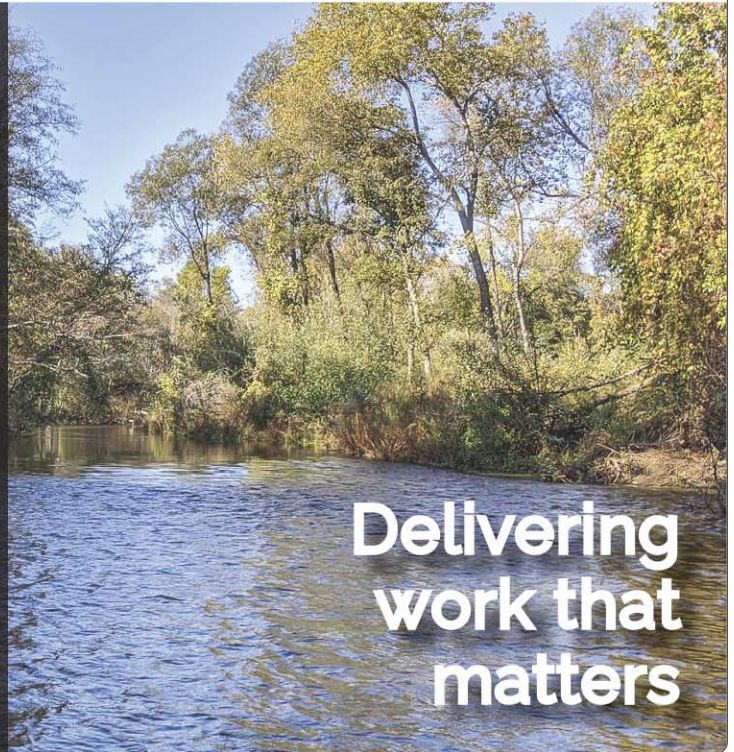


Contact:

Ramona Swenson, rswenson@esassoc.com, 916.825.2758

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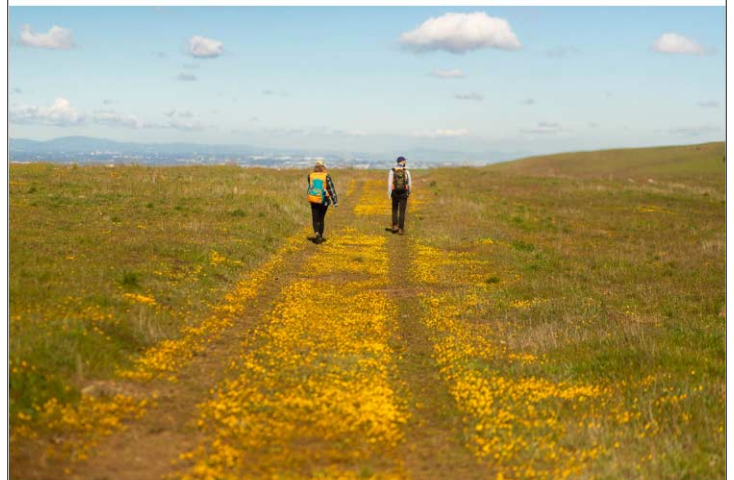
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Marin Resource Conservation District: *Enhancing Shared Resources by Stewarding Private Lands*

by Nancy Scolari¹

The need to protect and conserve our natural resources has been a public concern for decades but rarely has the issue felt more urgent than today. For the past 50-plus years, the Marin Resource Conservation District (Marin RCD) has been working to conserve and enhance the county’s natural resources — including soil, water, vegetation, and wildlife — and help solve some of our most challenging environmental issues by providing technical assistance and educational resources to Marin landowners and land managers.

Marin County has a rich agricultural heritage that remains foundational to our community. Our district comprises approximately 250,000 acres including the watersheds of Stemple, Walker, and Lagunitas creeks. Our county’s agricultural health and productivity rely on the application of practices that conserve and enhance our natural resources.

Marin RCD works to improve the health of our county’s working landscapes to ensure our agricultural community thrives. Since its founding, Marin RCD has administered more than 25 million dollars in government and private foundation grants to provide ecosystem benefits such as increasing biodiversity, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, sequestering carbon, creating wildlife habitats, and restoring water quality. The results of this work are promising. In recent years, two of our watersheds have witnessed rebounds in endangered coho salmon populations.

A Half Century of Building Trust

The infrastructure for resource conservation districts was established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in response to the environmental and economic catastrophes of the Dust Bowl Era. In a letter to all State Governors from 1937, President Roosevelt underscored the importance of working to collectively engage farmers and ranchers as a critical part of the climate solution:

“The dust storms and floods of the last few years have underscored the importance of programs to control soil erosion... We are

confronted with the fact that, for the [erosion] problem to be adequately dealt with, the erodible land in every watershed must be brought under some form of control... The Act [Standard State Soil Conservation Districts Law] provides for the organization of ‘soil conservation districts’ as governmental subdivisions of the State to carry on projects for erosion control, and to enact into law land-use regulations concerning soil erosion... Such legislation is imperative to **enable farmers to take the necessary cooperative action.**”

Founded as the Marin County Soil Conservation District in 1959, the district was formed to serve landowners and stewards at their request and provide them with on-the-ground, innovative technical assistance to best manage their land for multi-generational climate resilience. Over the decades, the Marin RCD’s work has evolved and expanded to meet the growing needs of land stewards and encompass all natural resource conservation efforts. Yet throughout these changes, its mission has remained grounded in a shared spirit of cooperation that enables farmers, ranchers, and stewards to work together to take meaningful action.

What began as a commitment to support ranch productivity through soil erosion protection and pasture improvement evolved into helping agriculture be a positive force for the environment and our communities. Today, Marin RCD is proud to be a trusted community partner that works to ensure landowners have the tools and resources to take the steps necessary to protect our shared ecosystems — with benefits for farmers and the public at large.

A Focus on Supporting Private Land Stewards

All land, whether publicly or privately held, is managed in some way — and land management practices can either actively degrade or restore the environment. Stewardship and preservation make Marin’s rolling hills and scenic landscapes more climate-resilient. Nature does not know property boundaries, which means our work to protect our land and natural resources must also work beyond those limitations.

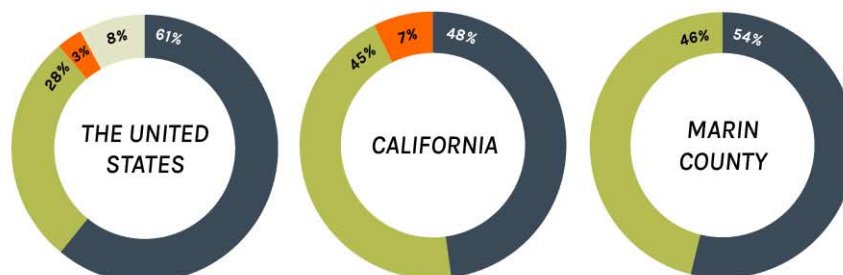
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¹Executive Director for the Marin Resource Conservation District

Public-Private Land Ownership in the United States

KEY:

- privately-owned
- federally-owned and managed
- tribal land
- other (other federal, city, county)



54% of land privately-owned and managed includes approximately 343 family farms on 160,000 acres of land. 46% of land is publicly-owned (federal, state, county, cities, towns, and special districts).

*Information sourced from the Congressional Research Service, Federal Land Ownership, Feb 2020 and Marin County Public Lands & Marin Agricultural Land Trust

Marin Resource Conservation District *continued*

The majority of public land in the U.S. is managed by the four major federal land management agencies — Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service in the Department of the Interior, and the Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture — which manage a combined 606.5 million acres, or 95% of publicly owned land in the United States (Federal Land Ownership: Overview and Data, Congressional Research Service). While Marin County is the beneficiary of an abundance of public land, more than half of the land in our county is privately held (Marin County Public Lands). Resource conservation districts are positioned to engage private landowners to adopt voluntary land conservation plans with long-term community benefits.

In Marin County, approximately 343 family farms and 1,274 farmworkers work on 160,000 acres of land. These local farms provide our community with food and fiber, support a thriving and robust local

food system, and create a sustainable supply chain for grocers, restaurants, and farmers' markets. Managed agricultural lands help reduce wildfire risks through grazing grasslands and firebreak roads. As members of an interconnected community and as consumers of farm products, we all have a vested interest in how our food and fiber are produced and how our agricultural land is managed and supported.

Working directly with private landowners enables Marin RCD to generate meaningful public benefits. RCDs work directly with many partners and private land managers to ensure climate-smart and community-positive land stewardship models. By connecting with working lands, examining the implications of how that land is managed, and actively supporting land stewards, we can start to identify opportunities to strengthen our shared ecosystems and enact practical solutions in collaboration with land managers.

Program Spotlight: Carbon Farming

Today, one of the significant ways Marin RCD is working with private land managers to produce public benefits is through its carbon farming program. Traditional farming can deplete soil and release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Through the implementation of carbon farming practices, farmers and ranchers can actively restore soil while sequestering carbon dioxide and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Carbon farming has the potential to increase agricultural productivity naturally while strengthening the resilience of our food and fiber systems.

Carbon farming includes practices such as planting riparian areas, cover crops, not tilling the soil, prescribed grazing, establishing hedgerows, and applying compost to rangeland. Carbon farming practices can improve soil health, water-holding capacity, crop and forage productivity, water conservation, on-farm habitat, biodiversity, and climate resiliency. The benefits extend beyond individual property lines to the public at large through the enhancement of shared watershed resources, increased resilience, and the inclusivity of disenfranchised communities.

Marin RCD provides farmers and ranchers with financial and technical assistance for the planning, design, and implementation of carbon beneficial practices. As of 2020, Marin RCD and partners in the Marin Carbon Project have completed 19 Carbon Farm Plans.

One example of this work in action is Toluma Farms — Tamara Hicks and David Jablons completed a Carbon Farm Plan and immediately got to work, applying compost and installing hedgerows. They are now working on riparian restoration. It is a collaborative effort involving Point Blue Conservation Science, Marin Agricultural Land Trust, and the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.

Through programs like Carbon Farming, Marin RCD makes critical contributions to the health, well-being, and resilience of our communities that extend beyond private boundaries. By examining the implications of our land management practices, we can engage in solutions that restore and protect our natural resources.

Here's a brief summary of how Marin RCD's projects have evolved over the decades:

- ✳ During the 1960s, sustainable agriculture and the goal to keep sediment out of Tomales Bay were the focus through cross-fencing, pasture improvement, and ponds and water development.
- ✳ In the 1970s, water quality became critical for the dairy industry, leading to manure management system installations and upgrades that protected surface water and provided nutrients for pasture management.
- ✳ The 1980s was a period focused on erosion control to repair degrading headcuts and eroding streambanks, through which USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service practices and bioengineering techniques were adapted and brought to Marin farms.
- ✳ During the 1990s, priority was placed on stream ecosystem restoration through control fencing and native tree and shrub planting. In the last ten years, climate change, local food systems, stream flow, and instream habitat have received more attention.
- ✳ Today the Marin RCD and its partners are coordinating all of these objectives with focused attention on Justice, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. Marin RCD continues to improve and coordinate carbon farm planning and practice implementation while providing leadership for new county-wide initiatives, including the successful approval of a new quarter-cent sales tax measure to support county-wide 2030 Climate Action Plan goals, a Marin County Biomass Study, and the Marin Carbon Project.

Adapted from a report originally published by University of California Cooperative Extension-Novato.





Meet the Partners

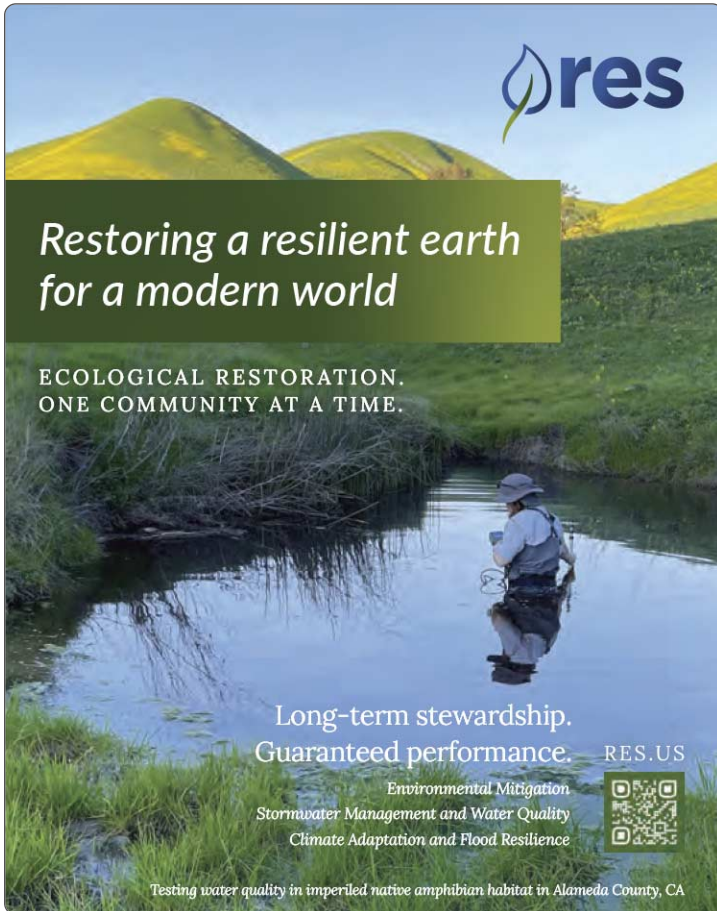
Nancy Scolari, Executive Director of the Marin Resource Conservation District, and John Parodi, STRAW Restoration Director for Point Blue Conservation Science, have been working together for more than 20 years to implement community-based restoration on working lands. Their collaboration helped forge a thriving partnership that has now restored 23 miles of stream and engaged more than 26,000 students. On a sunny August afternoon, overlooking a riparian restoration site — now with trees towering overhead — we sat down with Nancy and John to hear insights on their work.


It seems common to wear a lot of hats in this line of work. As best as possible can you describe your job in a few sentences?

Nancy: I think the RCD's role is to be something akin to a circus conductor, we're managing different aspects of different projects, we're a hub for getting projects done by making connections between the landowners and state programs, and then putting all of the pieces together. When something gets stuck, we push it forward, we're like, 'okay, how do we solve this problem?' I think it's fun to problem-solve, especially when you have to get creative. I always think of my role as being like Lucy on Peanuts, if you have a problem, you just go to her.

John: I see a lot of similarities! In a sense, I feel like my role is to really listen to people. A huge part of my role is supporting our team, which is hard, but my most favorite part. I think a lot about how we can keep moving forward, keep leveraging what we have to offer, and stay relevant for partners, which involves a lot of listening internally and externally. So I think my role is to continue to look for opportunities to leverage what we do to help other organizations meet their goals. The problem solving is one of the funner parts — it keeps it creative, even if in the moment it's a challenge. We prioritize our people first, not only our own staff at Point Blue, but our close partners. And that's always been a good solid guide. I think a big part of my job is to create the space to pause and really listen to

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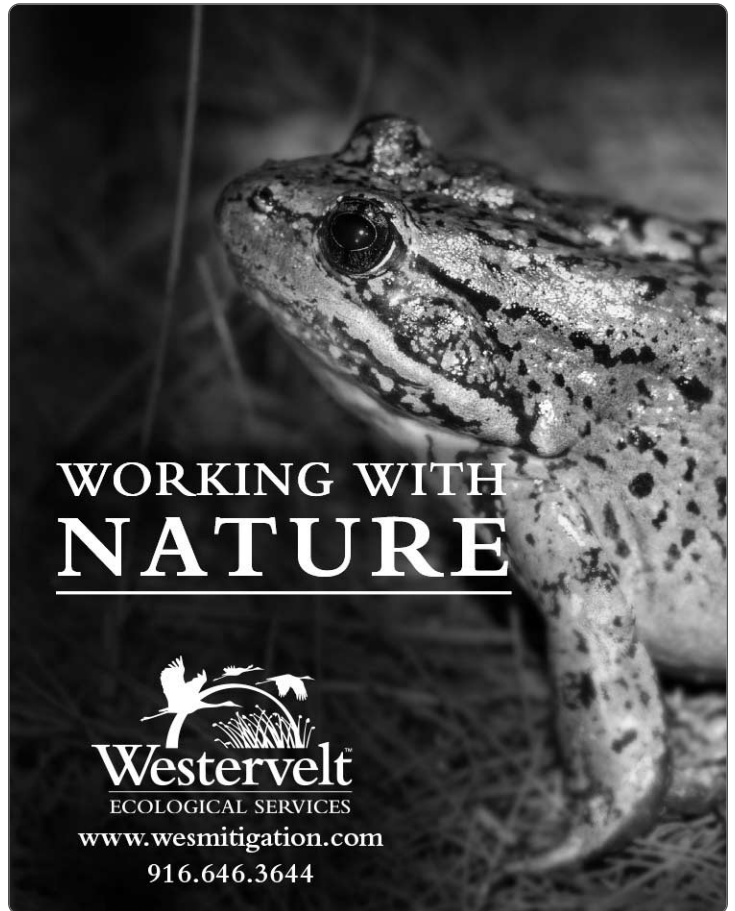
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Meet the Partners *continued*

and act on people's needs, instead of forcing what we think should happen.

This year marks 25 years of partnerships between Marin RCD and STRAW. What are some of the ingredients of your collaborative success and longevity?

Nancy: I'd say relationships. The relationships are key to all of it, relationships with the land managers, land stewards, the public, relationships with our partners. If I were to think of one thing that's most important, I think that's it. It's deep listening, treating people with respect, being responsive to what their needs are, coming through with integrity, you know, stuff like that. If you can design a project with all of those elements in mind, I think it'll come through.

I think it's important to use the resources we have available to us, so that we don't have to empire-build within our organizations. If we already have people in the community who are doing that work really well, how do we maximize some of the skills that are out there already and build partnerships that way. And it's fun to be able to do that. So, I think what's important is having those partnerships and being able to support each other, and build each other up.

John: I think leveraging as opposed to doing it all is something I think about and have learned a lot from how you've operated, Nancy. They're richer relationships and more sustainable in so many ways because it's not one person or entity trying to take on everything — there's so much more efficiency, fun, and spontaneity. And that's part of it, really tracking on those leveraging opportunities so we're additive and not taking up too much space. That's something you've always done well as an RCD, prioritizing restoration and construction as a main focus for the RCD. I think that's huge for so many reasons, including for relationships, as people see that investment in their properties and the follow-through that goes with it. That's something I've really noticed, there's such a focus on building these projects and working with landowners and managers to problem-solve, it builds relationships and makes the projects more successful.

To add on, focusing on the relationship itself and not just the outcomes and the transactions — that's a big one, especially as we work to build relationships with diverse communities. I appreciate that we focused on the relationships in and of themselves.

There's expanding engagement of more diverse voices in restoration and conservation—and still major inequities to overcome. Where do you see opportunities to make change through collaborative restoration moving forward?

John: I'm interested in exploring even further, what is community, what is place? Where is restoration happening, where are places we can do restoration relative to where different communities are living? There's a lot more opportunity to reinvigorate the idea of urban and suburban restoration and valuing the often underrecognized community and health benefits of community-based restoration.

Nancy: At MRCD, there's a foundation and relationship of trust built over the years with producers, and at this point, we're in the position of being able to work with other people in the community, like tribes, because we've done the work of relationship-building with ranchers. I think now we're in the place of saying, 'Hey, how do we bring in people that should have been here all along?' My dream is to be at a place where we, as a community, refer to ourselves as 'we' and 'us' and are asking ourselves, 'how are we going to do this,' instead of 'they need to do that.' I would really love to get to that point where we have streams with thousands of fish, and millions of birds flying overhead, and we also have a change in the way we talk about ourselves in our community.

Nancy and John, what are some recommendations for people who want to partner more, including with RCDs?

Nancy: Most counties have RCDs, so I would start there, look them up, learn about what they do. If you want to take it to the next level, participate in a workshop or a project. You have to be patient working with RCDs because they're usually short-staffed and have volunteer board members. I think there are different levels of participation with RCDs depending on where you're located, because they're not state-supported or funded even though they're agencies of the state. But they are a vehicle, they have the structure in place, and they can tap into funding that an individual can't tap into, which is our strength.

John: RCDs are such valuable resources, in particular the trust they already have in the ag community. So that's a reason to work with them and to trust the instincts of RCD board and staff in how to engage landowners.

Upcoming: Learn to Restore Fire-safe Communities and Oak Woodlands, November 11–13 by Madeline Sides¹

This November, a coalition of community organizations from the greater Bay Area and Santa Cruz Mountains have come together to offer a timely and unique ecocultural restoration event: *Restoring Fire Safe Communities*. Hosted by and on the land of Indian Canyon Nation, and led by Ecocamp Coyote, the event will take place November 11–13, 2022. During the three days, participants will camp, eat, and work together to learn and practice methods of oak woodland and stream restoration.

Ecocamp Coyote is an internationally-recognized Ecosystem Restoration Camp who works in partnership with Indian Canyon Nation. The event will be led by ecologist Lee Klinger (Sudden Oak Life), Kanyon Sayers-Roods (Indian Canyon Nation), Ammon Felix (Balsamroot Design), and Tom ‘Little Bear’ Nason (Esselen Tribe of Monterey County).

¹Madeline Sides is a SERCAL member who works with Ecocamp Coyote. madelinesides@gmail.com

This event has two interrelated areas of focus: fire mimicry and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). The work of fire mimicry not only returns health to oak trees and forests, helping them become resilient in the face of long-term drought, climate change, and infectious disease, but also creates conditions in which cultural “good” fire can also be safely returned to landscapes and people can come into deeper relationship with this keystone species. Participants will be introduced to stream restoration with an emphasis on the connections between soil, streams, and fire. Traditional ecological knowledge is the deeply rooted knowledge that indigenous peoples have acquired over thousands of years through careful observation and cultivation of the environment, which honors the sacred relationships formed between plants, animals, climate, fire, and human intervention.



Participants learn the basic chainsaw skills, safety protocols, and ecological awareness needed to thin the woody materials that can become hazardous fuel in oak woodlands. *Photo courtesy @twoowlsproductions.*

This is a family-friendly event and children are welcome to attend. Learn more at <https://www.facebook.com/ecocampcoyote> or by contacting ecocampcoyote@gmail.com. Sign up through EventBrite at <https://bit.ly/3MqFZzo>.

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Willits Valley bypass mitigation lands.

Mendocino County Resource Conservation District and Management of the Willits Bypass Mitigation Project: A Success Story

by Marisela de Santa Anna¹, Chris Bartow², and Maureen Doyle³

The Willits Bypass Mitigation Lands, located in Mithom Kia (Little Lake Valley) near the town of Willits in Mendocino County, is currently the largest public wetland restoration and mitigation project in the State of California. Located on the ancestral lands of the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians, the project encompasses approximately 2,080 acres of wet meadows, riparian corridors, wetlands, and oak woodlands. It is a rich and diverse site with beavers, Tule elk, abundant resident and migratory birds, towering valley oaks (*Quercus lobata*), groves of Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*), numerous species of carex and juncus, and two rare endemic plants of note — Baker's meadowfoam (*Limnanthes bakeri*) and North Coast semaphore grass (*Pleuropogon hooverianus*). Landscapes associated with the project can be described as

a mix of expansive, non-native, naturalized pasture grasses with pockets and scattered populations of high-value native flora. After over 100 years of Anglo European settlement and subsequent farming practices, the Mitigation Lands are currently undergoing significant bio-engineering efforts by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in an effort to return natural processes to the landscape. This work includes the creation, restoration, and preservation of wetlands, and rehabilitation of stream channels and their associated riparian corridors. Over 2,000,000 native propagated plants have been installed in order to meet restoration goals. The project also utilizes managed domestic livestock grazing to maintain and improve habitats, and all efforts are working towards fulfilling regulatory requirements for compensatory mitigation associated with the adjacent roadway construction.

The construction of the highway bypass around the town of Willits was initially proposed in 1957, but not realized until 2014, 57 years later.

¹Mendocino County Resource Conservation District (MCRCD), Project Interpreter/Wildlife Biologist, Willits Bypass Mitigation Lands marisela@mcrcd ²MCRCD, Project Manager chris.bartow@mcrcd.org
³Caltrans, Environmental Scientist maureen.doyle@dot.ca.gov

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From left: Propagated *Juncus* prepared for installation in high-density planting. Baker's meadowfoam is a rare plant endemic to this location.

Mendocino County RCD and Management of the Willits Bypass Mitigation Project *continued*

Funding for the project, a mix of state and federal transportation dollars, was secured in 2008, and construction of the bypass began in 2014. The roadway construction was completed in 2016 with associated compensatory mitigation efforts continuing to this day. Mitigation Lands were established to offset impacts to wetlands, wet meadows, and oak woodlands that were displaced during highway construction and the installation of an elevated viaduct. Mendocino County Resource Conservation District (MCRCD) was approached by Caltrans to take on the role of land manager for both short-term and long-term management responsibilities. Currently, MCRCD is working in partnership with Caltrans to complete mitigation requirements. Once state and federal regulatory requirements for success criteria have been met, MCRCD will hold title to these lands and manage them in perpetuity. This work will be guided by project planning documents and a conservation easement to be held by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

Resource Conservation Districts are non-regulatory local county charters that support voluntary stewardship of natural resources on wild and working landscapes. MCRCD has been serving Mendocino County since 1945, collaborating with private organizations, public agencies, tribes, family farms, and individuals, to conserve, protect, and restore natural resources and help landowners meet regulatory requirements. MCRCD provides technical assistance, educational programs, monitoring, assessment services, and grant funding to help land managers meet their conservation goals. Making a long-term commitment to a project the size and scope that is the Mitigation Lands was not a typical role for a Resource Conservation District, and there was little precedence for MCRCD to consider when weighing the decision to become involved. Ultimately, the importance of this project

to the landscape and natural resources, as well as the implications to the greater community, guided MCRCD to agree to assume the role of land manager.

In 2015, after several years of negotiation, MCRCD became the short-term manager with an eventual transition into the long-term management role for the Mitigation Lands. Caltrans created an initial wasting fund for the first three years of operation intended for capital investment and staffing costs, followed by a non-wasting endowment held by the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation as a permanent source of annual funding for management and monitoring of the Mitigation Lands. MCRCD is currently in the 7th year of a 10-year interim cooperative agreement with Caltrans to provide necessary on-the-ground land management and monitoring services during the short-term management phase of the project. The agency has dedicated three full-time employees and one part-time staff member to work exclusively on the Mitigation Lands to map and treat invasive species, manage grazing contracts and monitor grazing impacts based on a Grazing Management Plan, perform stream channel surveys and associated tasks, maintain project infrastructure, monitor and document ecosystem function, and document overall biological diversity. MCRCD also administers a public outreach and education program that includes walking tours of the project and publishes a weekly blog and associated media from a network of trail cameras and staff photography. The MCRCD works closely with Caltrans, the Army Corp of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, NOAA Fisheries, and the local community to manage these public lands.

Prior to starting construction on the roadway, Caltrans surveyed, identified, and documented the biological resources present in the

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A created upland wetland during (left, Year 1) and after construction (right, Year 2).

Mendocino County RCD and Management of the Willits Bypass Mitigation Project *continued*

footprint of the proposed project. This included rare plants, threatened and endangered species such as the Northern Spotted Owl, salmonids, and other wildlife. During those survey, two endemic and endangered plants were identified that would require restoration efforts — Baker’s meadowfoam and North Coast semaphore grass. To mitigate projected impacts, Caltrans was required by state regulatory agencies to provide 109 total acres of wetland mitigation credits. This requirement translated to 45 acres of wetland creation, 240 acres of wetland rehabilitation (planting), 255 acres of riparian enhancement and establishment, 25 acres of oak woodland preservation, 23 acres of oak woodland establishment, Baker’s meadowfoam habitat enhancement, and North Coast semaphore grass habitat enhancement. To achieve these goals, two Mitigation and Monitoring Plans (MMPs) were drafted by Caltrans — a Federal MMP and a State MMP. The Federal MMP is associated with approximately 1,000 acres of primarily riparian and wetland habitats, and sets guidelines for management of native, non-native, and invasive plant species. Mitigation Lands covered by the Federal MMP do not allow managed grazing. The State MMP is associated with approximately 131 acres of riparian habitat and approximately 1,100 acres of wet meadow habitat, and sets guidelines similar to those found in the Federal MMP with one notable difference: the State MMP allows for managed grazing to occur. Managed grazing and the associated treatment to nonnative plants and thatch layer are linked to the health and ongoing survival of the two listed plant species, Baker’s meadowfoam and North Coast semaphore grass. The two MMPs serve as the guiding hand for the management of this project. Both the Federal and State plans recognize adaptive management as a necessary tool for addressing changing landscapes and climates.

When developing the compensatory mitigation strategies for the project, extensive input was incorporated from resource agencies,

professional consultants, and the local community. The MMP states that “the vision of the projects’ compensatory mitigation strategy is to establish, rehabilitate, reestablish, and preserve a mosaic of high-functioning habitats in perpetuity, thus increasing the ecological value of Little Lake Valley and improving water quality in the Eel River Basin.” Historically, Little Lake Valley was wetter than it is today. Once a year-round lake, the valley now experiences seasonal inundation from winter rains. This evolution from a perennial body of water to a seasonal one was a result of state and federal agencies working with local farmers in the turn of the last century to remodel the valley floor to accommodate agricultural practices including row crops, hay production, and livestock grazing. Prior to this, the valley supported extensive riparian forests, meandering streams, and wide floodplains fringed with marshes and wet meadows. Valley areas that were not inundated for long periods of time supported oak savannah. The MMP seeks to return to the valley many of the ecological functions associated with the historic hydrology and habitat types that have been lost or reduced due to past development and agricultural practices.

As part of the mitigation strategy, Caltrans graded and seeded approximately 45 acres for wetland establishment; scraped, seeded and planted approximately 240 acres of wetland rehabilitation; and planted 25 acres of oak woodland and mixed riparian habitat. Contractors also removed 69 acres of Himalayan blackberry and other target weed species. Hundreds of pounds of seed were gathered from Mitigation Lands by contractors with restoration specialists installing propagated plants and seed. Since the project’s inception, around 2.5 million native plants have been installed throughout the property. The approximately 136,000 trees and shrubs that have been planted along the riparian corridors have had a discernible impact. The new vegetation is remarkable — providing cover for a variety of wildlife and lifting overall ecological function.

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Riparian (pink flags in the background) and wetland restoration plantings (foreground) adjacent to the elevated viaduct of Willits Bypass.

Mendocino County RCD and Management of the Willits Bypass Mitigation Project *continued*

The work on Mitigation Lands has significantly informed the knowledge base for restorative work. Many different planting techniques have been developed and used by Caltrans restoration specialists, such as planting native sod trays. Twelve hundred 17” x 17” trays of 15 different rhizomatous species were installed in plots ranging from 2’ x 2’ up to 8’ x 8’ in over 382 locations. High-density planting was another technique that was very successful in some locations. These were areas that were cleared of all other vegetation (scraped utilizing heavy equipment) and planted with plugs of native plants in polygons ranging from 2’ x 2’ to 40’ x 8’ polygons. Over eleven hundred high-density plots were installed using species such as beardless wild rye (*Elymus triticoides*), Santa Barbara sedge (*Carex barbarae*), common juncus (*Juncus patens*), and California aster (*Symphotrichum chilense*). These species in particular have been highly successful in establishing and spreading into areas dominated by non-native naturalized species.

Annual monitoring on Mitigation Lands is currently being performed by Caltrans contractor, ICF International. Data collection, analysis, and reporting requires thousands of hours annually. This yearly monitoring work tracks the survival of installed plants, the performance of created and rehabilitated wetlands, inventories rare plants, and tracks invasive species populations. Monitoring methodologies include transect line/quadrat cover measurements for native wetland species, Relevé surveys for wetland diversity, survival counts and vigor assessments for riparian corridors, collection of hydroperiod data in wetland establishment sites, and CRAM (California Rapid Assessment Method) monitoring for slope wetlands, riparian wetlands, and riverine locations. Annual monitoring and reporting began in 2015 and is currently in year 7. Due to the phased implementation of the mitigation work over several years, the final year of reporting to document success

in meeting the performance standards will be in 2027. “Results from the 2021 monitoring efforts show a slow but steady increase in native wetland species in both cover and diversity across all wetland types, as well as an almost 100% survival of native tree and shrub species along all riparian zones (It must be noted that a policy of overplanting was used by Caltrans Restoration Specialists when looking at trees and shrubs to ensure that survival rates would meet or exceed expectations of regulatory agencies).” Yearly data also shows the populations of Baker’s meadowfoam and North Coast semaphore grass have remained stable and expanded, respectively. While these successes are encouraging, there are still challenges to overcome to ensure the ultimate success of the Mitigation Lands in 2027.

Annual monitoring results inform management on the ground by both Caltrans and the MCRCD. As the project moves closer to meeting success criteria, monitoring reports show where restoration efforts are succeeding and where they are needing attention. MCRCD works closely with Caltrans when reviewing annual monitoring data, and plans accordingly to address issues as needed. MCRCD will continue to implement semi-annual monitoring on the project after success criteria is reached and Mitigation Lands move into the long-term management phase. Habitat health will continue to be tracked to ensure Mitigation Lands progress towards planning goals and quantifiable milestones.

The Willits Bypass Mitigation Lands is a vast and complex project and opportunities for the future are endless and exciting. To learn more, visit our website at <https://mcrcd.org/programs/land> or contact MCRCD at (707)462-3664. You can also reach Caltrans District 3 Environmental Scientist Maureen Doyle, Willits Mitigation Specialist/Botanist at (530)741-4470.



Meet the Contributing Author: **Marisela de Santa anna**

Occupation: Project Interpreter and Wildlife Biologist for Mendocino County Resource Conservation District on the Willits Mitigation Project.

County of residence or work: Mendocino.

How long have you been a SERCAL member? About 2 months! I am looking forward to learning more about the awesome restoration work happening in California and other places.

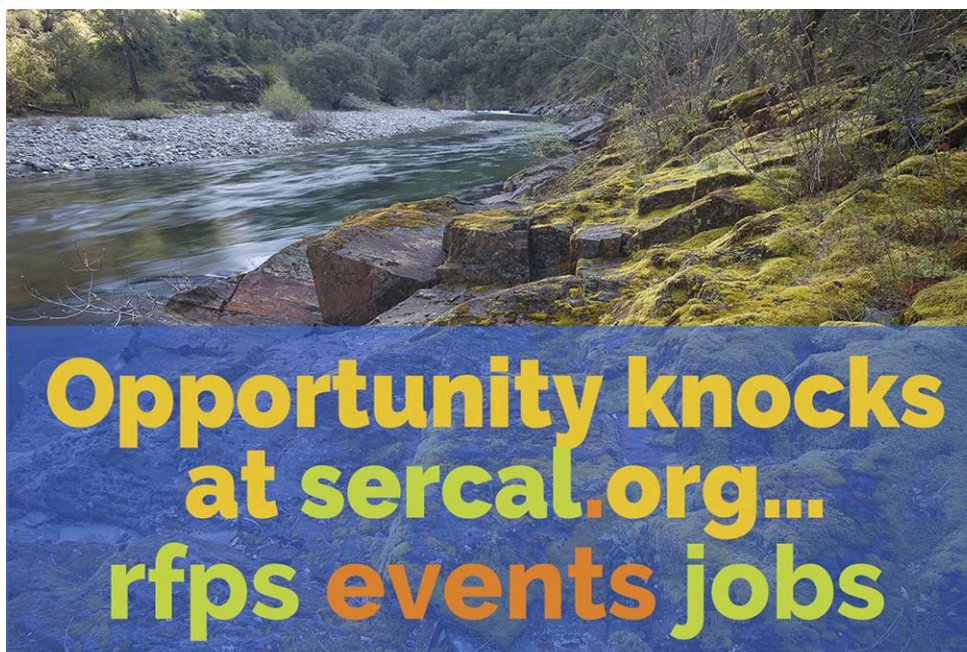
What is your specific discipline (or underlying education)? Ornithology and Natural History

What services do you provide for restoration in California, or what is your restoration passion? Also, how did you get into the field of ecological restoration? My passion began with the buying of a 42-acre parcel in Mendocino County that had been burned, logged, and then overgrazed in 1980. My husband and I began by planting 5,000 tiny trees, taking down all the fencing and cross fencing, and putting in culverts to stop the massive erosion that was occurring. Because the creek that ran through the property was a Coho and Steelhead salmon breeding area, we teamed with Soil Conservation and did

stream restoration to put in willows, rock buttresses, and other plantings. Today the property is completely different, including the weather! The trees have had to be thinned 3 times, the hot, dry, south-facing hillsides have become woodlands and have stopped moving downward. The birdlife has changed dramatically — the increase in diversity of trees from pines to oaks to redwoods has increased the diversity and numbers of birds. We have on this land now for 42 years and the difference that 90- to 100-foot tall trees make has made me a believer in the healing that restoration can give to a very damaged piece of property. Now working with the Willits Mitigation Project, and seeing again the affect of planting natives on a landscape that has been heavily altered by human needs, I am thrilled to watch the changes even in just the 5 years I have been working here. In 20 and 50 and 100 years it will be a truly different landscape.

What is your favorite California native species? Oaks of all species!

Any advice for others in the field of restoration? It takes time but is so worth it!





NACC participants and State Parks staff.

Native American Conservation Corps (NACC) Program

by Heather Marlow¹ and Ann Baldrige²

In 2021, the Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County (RCDGSDC) was invited to collaborate on a new pilot program to engage local indigenous youth in workforce training in forest management practices. The Native American Conservation Corps (NACC) Program was the vision of staff at CA State Parks Colorado Desert District, a vision that was shared by our team at the RCDGSDC. In collaboration with State Parks and the San Diego River Conservancy, an early supporter and funder, we participated in creating and managing this innovative and impactful program. Other partners include the Kumeyaay-Diegueno Land Conservancy and the Santa Ysabel Iipay Nation.

The program was designed along the lines of Conservation Corps with the objective to offer youth from local tribes knowledge and on-

the-job experience during their six-month training session in the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. Ultimately the goal of the NACC program is to provide youth with the training and experience needed to access careers in forest management and wildland fire.

Outreach was conducted in the fall of 2021 to recruit tribal youth to the program and all participants were onboarded as State Parks volunteers. The first session of the two-year pilot program started in the winter of 2021 and was completed on June 14, 2022. Prior to beginning work in the field, participants attended two weeks of safety and basic wildland fire training. Several local partners, such as the American Red Cross and CAL FIRE, collaborated with State Parks staff to provide this training.

Like a Conservation Corps program, participants worked eight-day spikes, camped near the work site, and were provided with a stipend at the end of each spike. Seven individuals (six crew members and one lead) completed the six-month immersive training session. In addition to the initial training and on-the-job experience, they received training in Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Chainsaw Use

continued next page

¹Heather Marlow, Director of Forestry & Fire Prevention Programs, Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County, Heather.marlow@rcdsandiego.org / 619-562-0096. ²Ann Baldrige, Executive Director, Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County, Ann.baldrige@rcdsandiego.org / 619-562-0096

Native American Conservation Corps (NACC) Program *continued*

in Wilderness, Basic First Aid and CPR, Native and Invasive Plant Identification, and GPS training (with programs such as Avenza and Collector). They also gained skills in navigating job postings and the job application process using resources such as CalCareers. Having completed their six-month program, these local youth are prepared to enter the workforce either within their communities or with a state or federal agency.

During the first session, the daily on-the-job training was led by State Parks staff with collaboration from local experts and partner agencies to provide training on the topics outlined above. The RCDGSDC supported the program through regular meetings and check-ins with the program team, coordinating the purchase of supplies and materials needed for the program, rental of vehicles, and feedback and guidance as we navigated through the first session of this pilot program.

Funding was leveraged from several sources for planning, administering, and implementing the NACC program. San Diego River Conservancy awarded a total of \$1M to California State Parks

Colorado Desert District, the RCDGSDC, and the Kumeyaay Diegueño Land Conservancy. California State Parks Colorado Desert District contributed \$354,000, and through a grant from the CA Department of Conservation Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program, the RCDGSDC contributed \$287,000 to NACC.

We heard from participants that the training was intense and hard work, and for many, it was their first experience with having the responsibility of being at work, on time, and when scheduled. Many discovered passions they were not aware of and plan to take their new skills back to their tribal communities or pursue other new activities such as further education and travel. In addition, one participant was offered a job at their tribal fire department as a fire fighter, and three others were offered jobs with a local fuels reduction crew. As we begin planning the second pilot NACC session, we will draw on our learning from the first as well as from participant feedback, and we look forward to continued collaboration to build on the success of the program.



Meet the Contributing Author: **Ann Baldrige**

Occupation: Executive Director, Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County.

County of residence or work: San Diego.

How long have you been a SERCAL member? This is my first interaction with the SERCAL community — I'm not a member, but very grateful for the opportunity to share our work through your newsletter!

What is your specific discipline (or underlying education)? I have a bachelor's degree in Psychology and a Masters degree in Environmental Psychology, which studies the relationship between people and place. Fits in well with the world of resource conservation!

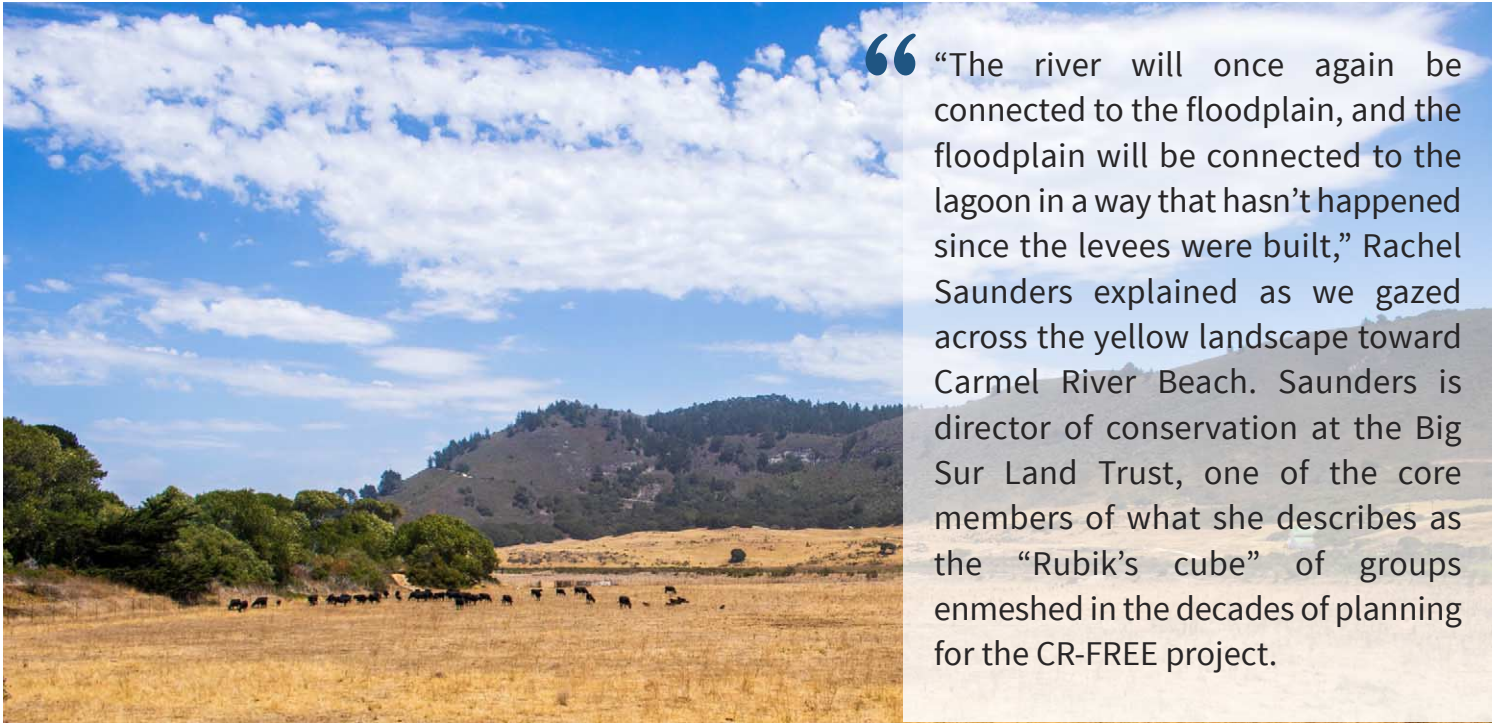
What services do you provide for restoration in California, or what is your restoration passion? Our RCD manages a variety of projects and programs focused on conserving and restoring natural

resources. These include creating pollinator habitat with native plants and a project to create a San Diego County source of native milkweeds; helping farmers and ranchers to implement farming practices that improve soil biology and overall soil health, and use water more efficiently; teaching people how to conserve natural resources through gardening and farming; and helping farmers and ranchers access resources to restore their land after wildfire.

How did you get into the field? I found my way into the RCD world after several years of working on sustainable food systems. I love the holistic approach to conservation and being able to work on a lot of different types of projects that make a positive impact on the communities we serve.

What is your favorite California native species? Any of the salvias.





“The river will once again be connected to the floodplain, and the floodplain will be connected to the lagoon in a way that hasn’t happened since the levees were built,” Rachel Saunders explained as we gazed across the yellow landscape toward Carmel River Beach. Saunders is director of conservation at the Big Sur Land Trust, one of the core members of what she describes as the “Rubik’s cube” of groups enmeshed in the decades of planning for the CR-FREE project.

Cattle graze on the Carmel River floodplain, where the CR-FREE project will soon break ground. *Photo: Sierra Garcia.*

Excerpts: Restoring the Carmel River Floodplain

by Sierra Garcia¹. Originally published in [Estuary News](#) October 2022. Used with permission.

Editor’s note: Sierra, a reporter for *Estuary News*, requested a press pass just before our SERCAL 2022 conference in Carmel Valley — she felt the information exchanged in the sessions would be relevant to *Estuary* readers. At the conference, it seemed like every time I turned around I saw her talking with yet another restoration practitioner. When she sent me the resulting article last month, I found it so compelling that I invited her to SERCAL 2023 in Davis. Our bad luck (but not so surprising to me), she’ll be out of the country next year on a Fulbright research project and National Geographic storytelling fellowship.

When the storm hit, it was lucky that my parents had a habit of leaving one car on each side of the Carmel River as they commuted from Big Sur into Monterey each day. The 1995 El Niño rainfall had pushed the Carmel River into hundreds of homes, and destroyed the Highway 1 bridge that connected Big Sur with the rest of the world. Most Big Sur residents were trapped during the week it took the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to repair the freeway bridge.

But in the era before Zoom, my mother couldn’t just stay home from nursing school. So my parents trekked past the mud of submerged artichoke fields on the river’s south bank and onto the flooded Rancho Cañada golf course, where my dad was “surprised as hell” to find an intact wood-slatted suspension bridge. They crossed it with the river seething around their ankles, then backtracked past the flooded homes and parking lots on the north bank to where my mom’s old blue pickup truck was waiting safely just above the floodwaters to carry them to school and work.

The Carmel River of the late 20th century was a tale of California water extremes writ small. In 1998 it flooded homes again, but in most years, the river was largely reduced to a trickle as it was siphoned off to water the blooming tourist mecca of the Monterey Peninsula. Endangered steelhead trout, members of the southernmost surviving population, would often find their attempts to swim upriver and spawn thwarted by strandings in low water before they could even reach the impassable dams upstream. The national advocacy group American Rivers even included the Carmel on its infamous “Most Endangered Rivers” list in 1999.

But in the last decade, the river has staged a surging comeback, with a high-profile dam removal in 2015 presaging a new wave of restoration about to break ground. The river’s degraded floodplain is now poised for a transformation born of decades of advocacy—just in time, many hope, to turn the fortunes of the fish, frogs, and people who are threatened by the river’s status quo.

continued next page



“Linda Yamane says she “almost jumped out of [her] chair with excitement” when she learned that sandbar willow will be among the species planted along the restored Carmel River floodplain. The ancestors of the Rumsen Ohlone master basketweaver and tribal scholar lived along the Carmel River a mile upstream from the Rancho Canada project, and relied on tender willow shoots, earthy sedge rhizomes, and fibrous dogbane to craft everything from ceremonial baskets to jewelry and practical tools of everyday life.

Sandbar willow switches, center, are among the plants essential to local native cultures that will be planted along the restored Carmel River floodplain. Photo: Sierra Garcia.

Restoring the Carmel River Floodplain *continued*

Life After Dam

On a breezy July afternoon, I retraced my parents’ path upriver from Highway One along the southern edge of the Carmel River floodplain. The artichoke fields my parents slogged through decades ago had long since given way to a flat, sun-baked pasture dotted with grazing cattle, with only a distant line of trees hinting at where the sunken river flows beneath the freeway bridge that replaced the one it destroyed in 1995. Just on the other side of the freeway, where the river flows into the Carmel River Lagoon, I could see a slice of white beach where the lagoon meets the sea. Several leaders of the Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Environmental Enhancement project (CR-FREE) walked alongside me.

“The river will once again be connected to the floodplain, and the floodplain will be connected to the lagoon in a way that hasn’t happened since the levees were built,” Rachel Saunders explained as we gazed across the yellow landscape toward Carmel River Beach. Saunders is director of conservation at the Big Sur Land Trust, one of the core members of what she describes as the “Rubik’s cube” of groups enmeshed in the decades of planning for the CR-FREE project.

So far in the 21st century, the river’s biggest claim to fame has undoubtedly been the 2015 toppling of the San Clemente Dam, the largest dam-removal project ever completed in

California. Saunders describes the ambitious floodplain plans now in motion as a “bookend” to that event, with the restoration leaving as monumental a mark on the river’s fate as destruction of the century-old dam.

Today, the hundreds of people who have invested time, money, and expertise into returning the floodplain to some semblance of its original self fall into two camps: those working on the CR-FREE site, which abuts the freeway where the surging river once washed the bridge seaward, and those involved in a separate, more recent, project on county-park property just upstream called Rancho Cañada. Both projects boast similar aims: restoring floodplain habitat for threatened species like steelhead while diminishing future flood damage to homes and businesses.

The CR-FREE restoration plan hinges on punching a series of holes in the century-old levees along roughly a mile of the river’s south bank. The levees were originally built to protect the farmland on the south bank, and in most years, they accomplish that—but they have also corralled the river over time into a sunken incision, like a canyon. The holes in the levees will allow smaller channels of water to spill onto the floodplain when the river fills.

The broad vision of reshaping the lower floodplain, where the river flows seaward beneath the freeway, has existed since the

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Restoring the Carmel River Floodplain *continued*

catastrophic El Niño floods of the 1990s. Planning began moving “in earnest” a decade later, Saunders tells me, and by the mid-2010s, efforts to make what became known as the CR-FREE project a reality were fully underway. CalTrans had come on board for the eventual construction of a second causeway bridge under the freeway, and actor-cum-local-politician Clint Eastwood, who had acquired the old artichoke farmland decades previously and committed part of it to CR-FREE, had agreed to donate his remaining acres of that property to the project.

But decades of coming out on the losing end of local water politics was still straining the river and its denizens, especially as chronic drought gripped the state. The historic San Clemente Dam removal upstream brought hope for the river to conservation groups, and steelhead advocates in particular, but nobody expected the water windfall that was to come.

• • •

Timing is Everything?

Although the San Clemente Dam existed almost 18 miles upstream of the present-day restoration sites, it offered some lessons for the floodplain project planners. After the dam was dismembered, engineers refashioned the riverbed around it with meticulous care (and millions of dollars) to create a variety of natural-looking pools that would nurture endangered steelhead traveling upstream to spawn.

The river had other ideas. The first heavy rains after the project’s completion rearranged boulders, branches, and embankments at will. This time, says Rancho Cañada project consulting hydrologist Ben Snyder, the plan is to stay hands-off after the excavation and planting and “[allow] the river to do river things.”

“Our whole approach that we’re taking to rewilding this river is really taking the shackles off ... [and] helping to create a safe space for river processes,” he added. “By [removing enough

earth to] lower the floodplains as much as 13 to 15 feet, we’re going to be creating these nice open spaces where this channel can meander and occupy new parts of the floodplain.”

The CR-FREE planners downstream don’t have as much leeway to let the river freely flood and meander—although they hope and expect it to do so some years, within the limits of the land currently used for cattle grazing. If the river’s primary channel under the freeway were to migrate, it could jeopardize the wastewater treatment plant that sits precariously near the lagoon where the river runs into the sea. Still, the river will have far more leeway than at any point in the last century to wander and carve new paths through the surrounding landscape.

Both the Rancho Cañada and CR-FREE projects will need years to realize their fullest benefits. The final heavy-lifting steps of the downstream CR-FREE project, constructing the second causeway bridge beneath the freeway, could be completed by 2027. But even then, it will take years for the native saplings and sedges to form the rich riparian canopy around the expanded riverbed with enough root structure to withstand stronger flood flows.

One certainty is that the floodwaters will rise again, and much higher than the ones that my parents forded in the 1990s. Based on historical modeling, a 100-year flood is overdue. But climate change’s altering of precipitation patterns may make a “100-year” flood of the last century more likely in this one. An atmospheric river in 2017 came close to overtopping the levees, Saunders points out, and climate change is stacking the odds of more extreme rain higher than past records would suggest.

“People who live on the other side still have very clear memories of what it was like on their second floors looking down at the water that filled their garages,” Saunders says. “So every year it’s a concern. We’re living on borrowed time.”

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Read the full article online via <https://bit.ly/3fbcxl3> or download it at <https://bit.ly/3DF8Ihe>.

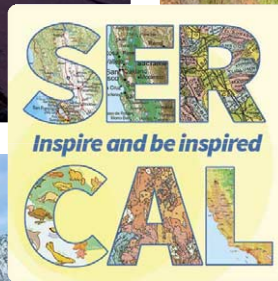
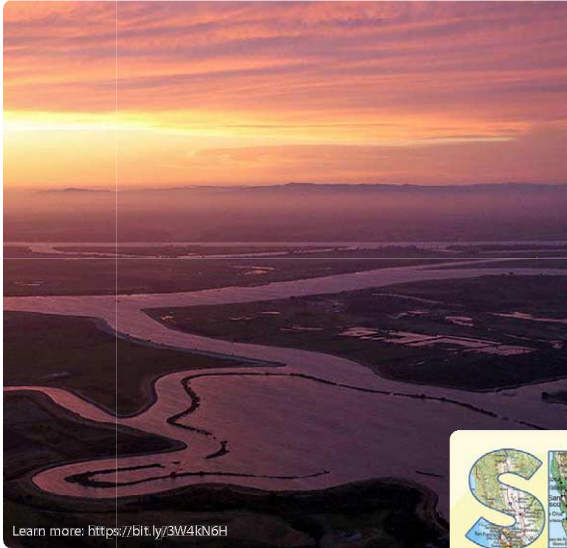
Inset: The Carmel River along the Carmel River Trail in the Ventana Wilderness, Big Sur, near the Sulphur Springs campground. Photo: David.c.stone at English Wikipedia CC by 3.0.

Call for Abstracts: SERCAL 2023

Cultivating Connections

April 13–15 at the Davis Veterans Memorial Center

First Call for Abstracts Oct 28–Nov 28 at sercal.org



Please share your science, your story, your passion...

These themes will be woven throughout the conference, but we are not limiting your participation to these topics — Restoring floodplains by thinking beyond the channel ✨ Listening to Indigenous Wisdom ✨ Reducing catastrophic fire ✨ Working with under-served communities to create living classrooms and opportunities ✨ Beating back invasive species ✨ Fostering a sense of place for humans in their habitats ✨ Invigorating corridors and core habitats for native species ✨ Dismantling barriers for The Next Generation — Abstracts accepted during the First Call will solidify session themes for the Second Call, so if you feel strongly about presenting your topic, please submit an abstract in this First Call.



The Leadership Team met SERCAL's new Admin Assistant, Sean Lee, at the Q3 Board Meeting in Petaluma!

Pictured from left are Sean Lee, Geoff Smick, Nina Omomo, Lindsay Teunis, Cassie Pinnell, Julie St John, Will Spangler, Allegra Bukojemsky, and Isaiah Thalmayer.

Not pictured, but attending via Zoom were Kari Dupler, Cindy Thompson, Jeannine Ross, Mauricio Gomez, Sonya Vargas, and Joanna Tang.

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*Big Sur Land Trust & Monterey County
Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and
Environmental Enhancement (CRFREE)
Project Anticipated groundbreaking
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Regional Directors

NORTH COAST & HIGH DESERT

Kari Dupler *RestorCap* karidupler@gmail.com

Geoff Smick *WRA, Inc.* smick@wra-ca.com

Isaiah Thalmayer *Point Blue* ithalmayer@pointblue.org

CENTRAL COAST & VALLEY

Thor Anderson *Burleson Consulting, Inc.*
ta@burlesonconsulting.com

Allegra Bukojemsky *Westervelt Ecological Services*
abukojemsky@westervelt.com

Will Spangler *Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency*
will.spangler@scv-habitatagency.org

SOUTH COAST & EASTERN DESERT LANDS

Mauricio Gomez *South Coast Habitat Restoration*
mgomez@schabitatrestoration.org

Jeannine Ross *KMEA* jross@kmea.net

Cindy Thompson *Habitat Restoration Sciences*
cthompson@hrs.dudek.com

At Large Directors

Cassie Pinnell *Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting*
cpinnell@vollmarconsulting.com

Jamie Silva *Central Valley Flood Protection Board*
Jamie.Silva@cvflood.ca.gov

Lindsay Teunis *SWCA* Lindsay.Teunis@swca.com

Affiliates

Greg Andrew *Retired* AndrewEnv@aol.com

Brian Bartell *WRA, Inc.* bartell@wra-ca.com

James Mizoguchi *Triangle Properties*
jmizoguchi@teichert.com

Nina Omomo *Literacy for Environmental Justice*
nina.omomo@lejyouth.org

Chelsea Palisoc *California Department of Water Resources*
Chelsea.Palisoc@water.ca.gov

Joanna Tang *UC Santa Barbara*
joanna.tang@lifesci.ucsb.edu

Sonya Vargas *Environmental Science Associates*
SVargas@esassoc.com

Ashley Zavagno *WRA, Inc.* zavagno@wra-ca.com

Administration Team

Julie St John julie@sercal.org << new email!

Sean Lee sean@sercal.org << new staff!



Calandrinia breweri

You are crucial to the resilience of California's native habitats

Just like our floral first responders, SERCAL members make California's ecological systems healthy and whole again. In the three decades since SERCAL was founded (let alone, the last two years) so much — almost everything — has changed. Yet one thing remains constant: *The exceptional power we have when we work together.* We are grateful for all our members and want to recognize these individuals and businesses for their generous support in 2022:

Sustaining Individuals:

Gina Darin California Dept of Water Resources *Sacramento* *
Robert Mazalewski Consulting Horticulturist *La Mesa* * **Cassie Pinnell** Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting *Sacramento* * **Ross N. Taylor** Ross Taylor & Associates *McKinleyville* * **Karen Verpeet** San Francisco Estuary Institute *Richmond*

Sustaining Businesses:

Diana Benner **The Watershed Nursery** *Richmond* * **Vic Claassen** **Soil Scientist** *Davis* * **Robert Freese** **Irvine Ranch Conservancy** *Irvine* * **Travis Gramberg** **Koheid** *Costa Mesa* * **Denise Knapp** **Santa Barbara Botanic Garden** *Santa Barbara* * **Patrick Riparetti** **Big Sur Land Trust** *Monterey* * **Isaiah Thalmayer** **Point Blue** *Petaluma*

Sustaining Foundations:

Terracon Foundation
Victor and Susan Schaff Family Foundation

California Society for Ecological Restoration SERCAL

Admin Office
515 N Desert Stravenue, Tucson AZ 85711

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Psst... Your membership and support make a HUGE difference as we continue to ramp up our support of The Next Generation!



Time to turn up the volume! Who do YOU follow?

Better yet, take over [sercal_restoration](#) on Instagram and amplify new voices to our community! Contact julie@sercal.org for details!

GOING BEYOND LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
11.8.2022 ON ZOOM
10AM | PST

RSVP: redbudresourcegroup.org

127 likes
redbudresourcegroup We are excited to announce our November public masterclass ... more

A Native nonprofit improving education and public health outcomes for Natives and their Allies.

83 likes
josebilingue I got an ask about this type of stack of books so here you go 🥰📚

José G González, MeXicano Founder @latinooutdoors, Co-Founder #CAParksNow and @outdooristoath.

Dr. Earyn McGee, Scientist, #Scicommer, Public Speaker, AAAS IF/THEN Ambassador, @forbesunder30 C/O 2021.