

Executive Director Report June 12, 2017

Preparing for Construction Season

Staff is continuing to prepare for projects going to construction this summer and fall. Work this past month has focused on contractor selection, permitting, and site preparation/ invasive species removal.

The projects include:

1. improvements to instream habitat in San Gregorio Creek at the Driscoll Ranch Rodeo Center and OVY Camp and Event Center;
2. irrigation infrastructure upgrades and a new 2 acre-foot reservoir at Harley Farms Goat Dairy in Pescadero (serving multiple agricultural operations);
3. irrigation infrastructure upgrades and a new estimated 14 acre-foot reservoir at Butano Farms in Pescadero (serving multiple agricultural operations);
4. irrigation infrastructure upgrades and a new estimated 20 acre-foot reservoir on a private farm in San Gregorio (serving multiple agricultural operations);
5. two 4,995 gallon water storage tanks on an orchard with wildlife habitat in Pescadero, enabling the landowner to irrigate during off-peak hours to reduce demand on Pescadero Creek during peak diversion hours;
6. possible pipeline replacements at Cuesta La Honda Guild to reduce leaks and failures in their domestic water supply system; and
7. possible assistance to Cuesta La Honda Guild for repairs to domestic water supply reservoir.

In addition, the NRCS will oversee implementation of three projects on which the RCD partnered to complete the designs, including:

8. irrigation infrastructure improvements on a row crop operation in San Gregorio;
9. irrigation infrastructure improvements and water storage tanks on a row crop operation in Pescadero; and
10. infrastructure to bring a 40 acre-foot rainfed reservoir online for use in a row crop operation in Pescadero, enabling the farm not to divert from Pescadero Creek during low flow.

RCD staff will also continue to provide technical assistance to landowners at 4 locations in Pescadero and San Gregorio who will be implementing conservation improvements to irrigation systems based on RCD guidance.

Agricultural Water Needs Assessment

After Supervisor Horsley's December 2014 workshop about agricultural water supply, his staff convened a series of meetings to identify collaborative projects that would move agricultural water reliability efforts forward. As a result the RCD and UC Cooperative Extension partnered on an assessment to better quantify agricultural water needs. The RCD has largely completed Phase 1 of the assessment. Staff

collected existing data such as precipitation, crop type and soil type and developed a database for the information to be used in Phase 2. As part of Phase 1, the RCD is installing three weather stations (funded in part by Peninsula Open Space Trust) to monitor evapotranspiration rates of different crops. This is exciting because for the first time, our farmers will have local information about how much water their crops need so that they do not over- or under-water. The second phase, assessment of the data and collection of new data, will be completed by UC Cooperative Extension with assistance from the RCD.

Funding Updates

- Staff submitted proposal to California Coastal Conservancy's Proposition 1 Grant Program for \$250,000 for off-stream agricultural ponds.
- The request for \$4M in the State budget to re-establish the Butano Channel in Pescadero Marsh to alleviate flooding on Pescadero Creek Road, restore fish passage into the Butano Creek watershed, and improve water circulation in the marsh has passed through State Assembly and Senate and will be considered by the governor.
- Staff submitted an application to NOAA's Community Based Restoration Program for \$712,140 for supplemental funding for two water storage projects in Pescadero watershed.

New Staff

Please join me in welcoming Naftali Moed as our newest staff member, focusing on habitat restoration projects. Naftali grew up in Pacifica and graduated from UC Davis with a BS in Environmental Policy and Planning (Conservation Emphasis) with a minor in Landscape Restoration. Naftali has worked with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, Pie Ranch, Trust for Public Land, UC Davis Arboretum and Public Gardens, Putah Creek Watershed Council, and two other RCDs.

Statewide Perspective

On May 5, 2017 CARCD entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish the California Farm Demonstration Network to increase the adoption of economically viable resource conservation in California's agricultural systems. These systems have the potential to increase production efficiencies, provide healthier and more sustainable food production, enhance environmental benefits, and result in more vibrant farm economies. The Network is dedicated to the increased adoption of conservation agriculture, soil health, and climate smart systems in California. Parties to the MOU are UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, UC Davis College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, California Department of Food and Agriculture, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the California Farm Bureau Federation.

National Perspective

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) has been working on the USDA's planned reorganization. Per the plan issued by USDA Secretary Perdue on May 11th, the NRCS will be removed from the "Natural Resources and Environment" mission area and housed under a new mission area called "Farm Production and Conservation." The NRCS was given 60 days to review its office locations

and administrative functions and report to the USDA secretary any opportunities in which co-locating offices or sharing administrative services would be appropriate. Because many of the nation's 3,000 conservation districts are co-located with USDA field offices, there has been some speculation that NRCS and Farm Service Agency (FSA) may be consolidated and a loss in service could result. NACD and CARCD are prepared to respond, should that occur, and have stated their commitment to ensuring that conservation districts and the NRCS can continue to make available the tools and technical assistance needed for landowners to conserve and enhance our nation's natural resources. CARCD and NACD are submitting comments on the proposed reorganization by the June 14th deadline.

Recent and Upcoming Events

- *May 31:* San Mateo Food System Alliance forum on Urban Agriculture in San Mateo County
- *June 6:* Presentation to Half Moon Bay City Council about the RCD
- *June 12:* Presentation to Pacifica City Council about the RCD
- *June 21:* RCD presentation to San Mateo County Harbor Commission about Capistrano Beach water quality
- *July 20:* Stockmanship Workshop at TomKat Ranch co-hosted by RCD
- *July 30:* Public site visit to Butano Floodplain Restoration Project site open to all, 2pm.
- *August 16:* Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting at the Half Moon Bay Yacht Club
- *August 31:* San Mateo RCD will host the Central Coast Region of RCDs at TomKat Ranch.
- *November 15-18:* 72nd annual conference of the California Association of RCDs (CARCD) in Sacramento. The theme will be "Dynamic Partnerships, Relevant Results."