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Resource Conservation District recounts 15 years of work

Helps locals save water

By Sebastian Miño-Bucheli
Oct 25, 2023



The Pescadero Municipal Advisory Council heard a summary of 15 years of resource conservation work during a meeting on Oct. 18.

With a focus on restoring a healthy watershed in the South Coast, the San Mateo Resource Conservation District reflected on 15 years of restorative work in a report presented to the Pescadero Municipal Advisory Council. The RCD took the opportunity to promise to keep addressing issues in the Pescadero-Butano watershed.

From the mountains to the sea, the RCD is working on 44 projects that will focus on developing water storage, restoring floodplains, building healthy soil and studying water quality, according to the report.

The presentation was kicked off by RCD's Joseph Issel, director of stewardship. He said, with the work the district is doing, the farms and residents across the district are using 74 million gallons less water, and storage is being created for water that could fill up 97 Olympic-sized pools. The work has prevented creeks from drying up during the droughts. Since the Pescadero-Butano district has no snowpack, unlike other districts around California, it can't depend on the melting of winter snow to fill up reservoirs and replenish groundwater.

"We are working on water quality throughout the coast," said Issel during the presentation. "Helping to monitor sites and filter water before it enters our creeks and oceans."

In terms of forest health work, the RCD is looking to create defensible space projects around communities in wild and urban areas. The community chipper program helped Loma Mar and Butano Canyon residents' homes to be fire-resilient. As for dams in the watershed, eight were removed which would restore 118 miles of creeks and allow migrating fish to return.

"For our work, in protecting coho salmon, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration recognized us in their report to the U.S. Congress as one of nine partners in the spotlight helping prevent extinction of the nation's most imperiled marine species," the report states.

The RCD will continue to host workshops, webinars and tours that will help benefit community members from all backgrounds. In one outreach meeting,

the Woods and Creek, focused on living next to a creek and hosted at Harley Farms, 50 participants showed up.

Every year, the RCD is bringing in more grants, but the organization was able to obtain more than \$10 million in the fiscal years 2020 and 2022.