



# STEWARDS OF THE LAND

PHOTO: STEVE KNUDSEN

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# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR A YEAR OF COLLABORATION



**DEAR NEIGHBORS  
AND PARTNERS,**

As the season turns to fall, I find myself feeling grateful for the wonderful partnerships and relationships in which Gold Ridge RCD plays a part. For decades, our Sonoma County community has made us what we are. This area's dedicated farmers, talented engineers and contractors, vocal environmental advocates, progressive political leadership, and creative local partners in natural resource conservation all advance the work that our small RCD can do.

Now more than ever, I feel the strength that our time-tested relationships afford. Projects such as the Laguna de Santa Rosa Dairy Enhancement Program, completed this year, underscore the value of collaborative vision and partnership. Under this program, the RCD and local partners assisted 20 of 22 dairies in the ecologically sensitive watershed to develop plans for better manure management. We've been blessed with a hardworking and forward-thinking community. Together, we plan towards and achieve a shared goal for natural resource conservation.

Other newly initiated programs promise to address regional conservation goals. Mendocino County, Napa County and Sonoma County RCDs have launched the innovative North Coast Soil Health Hub program to advance the use and understanding of appropriate climate and soil beneficial practices on north coast farmland. Similarly, Gold Ridge, Sonoma, Napa County, Mendocino County and Marin RCDs have begun working

with farmers within our respective districts to design and fund carbon farm plans. Both of these regional efforts help meet the carbon emission reduction goals set forth by the state of California by empowering farmers to act on climate change.

With the strength of these relationships, our ambition keeps growing. I am especially proud and appreciative of the many ways we grow with our neighboring RCDs and RCDs across the state. Under the leadership of the Mendocino County RCD, we have created an RCD Project Tracker tool that will one day publicly present the data for hundreds of RCD projects across state and serve to advance statewide RCD program collaboration.

This year, the Gold Ridge RCD has also joined with eligible entities to form the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency. We felt this decision was important to ensure we had a seat at the table to represent our rural community in the face of future groundwater regulation. Participating has come at a cost to us, and in order to keep our seat, we need your help. Please read about this important issue on pages 6-7.

Looking ahead, I am hopeful and excited to see the wonderful work we will achieve together. We have already done so much. Thank you for your support of the Gold Ridge RCD.

**WITH GRATITUDE,  
BRITTANY JENSEN**

# FINANCIAL REPORT: HOW FUNDING MEETS OUR RCD STRATEGIC GOALS

**W**hat are Gold Ridge RCD's strategic goals to enhance the community, and how are they funded?

Last year's budget was just over \$2.55 million. We are always curious how those funds are spent and thought you might be too. Check out what our grantors are paying for and what kind of projects have been keeping us busy.

## OUR STRATEGIC PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIONS:

**CLIMATE RESILIENCY AND CARBON FARMING:** We work with our partners to develop and fund programs which reduce greenhouse gases, increase carbon sequestration, improve on-farm and community water security, and enhance wildlife habitat.

**LANDSMART PLANNING:** Prepared with landowners or land managers, LandSmart plans describe the natural and agricultural resources of the property, document the practices that protect natural resources, identify opportunities to maintain or improve the quality of natural resources, and prioritize management practices according to clients' needs, goals, timelines and existing regulations.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE:** In partnership with our community, we help landowners understand and voluntarily comply with or exceed federal, state and local regulations.

**STREAMFLOW ENHANCEMENT AND WATER CONSERVATION:** We work cooperatively with landowners and land managers to meet domestic and agricultural water needs, while ensuring that streams in district watersheds have sufficient flow to support aquatic and riparian ecosystems.

**CLEAN WATER:** We work to enhance water quality, prevent non-point source pollution, and protect aquatic ecosystems.

**SCIENCE, MONITORING AND PLANNING:** With many partners, we assess and document environmental conditions and trends, and use this information to guide activities and evaluate proposed management projects and strategies.



**WILDLIFE HABITAT ENHANCEMENT:** We collaborate with and educate partners and landowners to restore and enhance habitat for native wildlife, including riparian and wetland habitat restoration, instream improvements, and promotion of on-farm biodiversity.

**AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION:** We create educational experiences for our community, which inspire and encourage a connection to and an appreciation for the conservation of land and its agricultural and natural resources.

**ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY:** With 76 years of experience, we strive to be relevant, excellent and visible as an organization so that we can provide service to our community for decades to come.

Read our entire 2016-19 Strategic Plan for more information on our mission, vision, priorities, and major strategies and objectives planned for the 2016-19 period, online at <http://goldridgercd.org/html/StrategicPlan.htm>

# RCD STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE AND PLANNED ACTION: CLIMATE RESILIENCY AND CARBON FARMING THE SOLUTION BENEATH OUR FEET

FARMERS ARE CONTINUALLY TRYING TO INCREASE FARM RESILIENCY, STAY AHEAD OF THE REGULATORY CURVE, SAVE MONEY AND ENHANCE MARKETABILITY. THE SONOMA, NAPA AND MENDOCINO COUNTY RCDs ARE WORKING TOGETHER TOWARD THESE GOALS BY IDENTIFYING THE CO-BENEFITS OF IMPROVED SOIL HEALTH TO FARMERS ON THE NORTH COAST.

With funding from a CDFA Specialty Crop Block Grant, the three counties have created an information sharing network called the North Coast Soil Health Hub. The North Coast Hub is focusing initial efforts on the region's vineyards with the eventual goal to expand to include all agricultural industry sectors, and more counties in the region.

The Gold Ridge RCD, in collaboration with Sonoma, Napa County, and Mendocino County RCDs, is working with local wine grape producers to support an online farmer-to-farmer forum; facilitate in-person discussions; survey producers to help identify vineyard practice challenges, successes, and interests; host field workshops focused on soil and climate beneficial conservation practices; conduct long-term (3- to 10-year) field trials to evaluate the effectiveness of soil and climate beneficial practices; provide one-on-one technical assistance to producers; complete vineyard carbon farm plans; and complete soil health assessments.

## JOIN YOUR HUB

Online at [www.SoilHub.org](http://www.SoilHub.org)

### WHAT ARE THE WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN YOUR SOIL HEALTH HUB?

- Vineyard owners and managers: Answer a brief, anonymous survey to help us identify current vineyard practices in your region
- Join the mailing list to follow events and receive newsletters
- Participate in the farmer-to-farmer online forum
- Learn about local demonstration sites
- Reach out to us for information on receiving a soil health assessment or partnering on a carbon farm plan. Contact [William@goldridgercd.org](mailto:William@goldridgercd.org).



### WHAT FARMERS SAY ABOUT OUR NON-TILLAGE SEED DRILLS

Gold Ridge RCD has two no-till seed drills available for rent: The Great Plains 606NT has a working width of 7.5 feet. It is an end-wheel drill and requires a 40 hp tractor with hydraulic hookups. It is available for rent within (\$150/day) and outside (\$200/day) the district area.

The Great Plains 1006NT has a working width of 10 feet. It is an end-wheel drill and requires a 75 hp tractor with hydraulic hookups. It is available within the Laguna de Santa Rosa, \$150/day.

Contact [William@goldridgercd.org](mailto:William@goldridgercd.org) to rent.

*"I think it's fabulous that the RCD has this service for land owners... Implements to do this kind of work are expensive, and it does not really pencil out to purchase them."*

**Michael Scott**  
LIVE OAK FARM

*"We don't have to plow and seed with two separate machines, which saves on fuel and time. Plowing would disrupt the natives we already have here, so not plowing is beneficial for us, and we can run the no-till over previously seeded lands without destroying what we planted first."*

**Jeff Wilcox**  
SONOMA MOUNTAIN RANCH

*"After using [Gold Ridge's] smaller no-till drill, I realized right away what a valuable tool this was... I had struggled for years with trying different combinations of implements to achieve such results and never even came close. This now allows me to introduce specific types of seed to an already semi-established field with one pass, minimal effort and less disturbance to the soil for years."*

**Charlie Dotti**  
DOTTI BROTHERS DAIRY

# RCD STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE AND PLANNED ACTION: CLIMATE RESILIENCY AND CARBON FARMING RANCHES TAKE ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE BY FARMING CARBON

Along with Sonoma, Mendocino County, Napa County and Marin RCDs, Gold Ridge RCD is partnering with qualified landowners to prepare carbon farm plans for their agricultural properties. Carbon farming uses a set of known methods for reducing on-farm operational carbon emissions and for sequestering atmospheric carbon dioxide within soils. The latter is done by converting carbon dioxide into plant material and/or soil organic matter by way of

the carbon cycle. Carbon farming is not only a way that farmers can fight climate change; its methods also often enhance a farm's soil, productivity, biodiversity, and water resources. and ecosystems because water harvested by these systems replaces water that otherwise would have been sourced from local streams, shallow wells and groundwater during the summer, at a time when wildlife also need scarce water resources.

PHOTO: CATTLE CROSS A POND'S SPILLWAY ON FREESTONE RANCH.

## FARMER HIGHLIGHT: JONATHAN AND MISTY GAY OF FREESTONE RANCH IN VALLEY FORD, CA

### Q Why are you participating in carbon farm planning?

"Increasing the carbon content of our soils will make our land more productive, improve water utilization, reduce erosion, provide learning opportunities for us **and make a contribution to stabilizing the global climate...** Working with Gold Ridge RCD on the carbon farm plan gives us **access to expertise and resources** that we could not provide on our own."

### Q How does carbon farming fit or change your business model?

"Our business model is to produce the most nutritious and highest quality beef we can. Improving our soils with carbon farming will **improve the health and quality of our animals.**"

### Q Can you give us some examples of how your ranch plans to capture and store carbon?

"We plan to apply compost to some of our soils that have been damaged by past tillage. By increasing the carbon content of these soils, we hope to increase their depth and productivity. We are working to **increase vegetation in our riparian areas** to capture carbon, keep water on the ranch longer and reduce erosion. Increasing the native tree cover on the ranch will capture carbon, improve water utilization, access deeper soil nutrients and provide shelter for our animals."

## A CLIMATE STRATEGY THAT'S GAINING SPEED

Torri Estrada, Executive Director of the Carbon Cycle Institute, weighs in on the political and economic implications.

*"Carbon farming is among the most cost-effective strategies to address climate change... It uniquely produces a multitude of co-benefits, including food production, water quality improvements, reductions in soil erosion, habitat enhancements, and overall agro-ecosystem health... Without carbon farming and agriculture, California (and the world) cannot successfully address the climate threat... We at CCI feel we are on the verge of a sea change with respect to state (and local) level support for carbon farming and voluntary on-farm practices that improve soil health and resilience to drought and climate change. Agriculture and land use are one of five core pillars for state climate policy; we expect continued support for the Healthy Soil Initiative along with CDFA's agricultural water use efficiency and manure management programs. This year, the state will set an aspirational goal for agriculture, recognizing a portfolio of strategies in agriculture to reach that goal in its strategic plan for climate policy (called the AB32 Scoping Plan). State funding, including revenue from the Cap-and-Trade Program, will be allocated to support the scoping plan goals and strategies for agriculture. Stay tuned!"*

Carbon farming programs at the Gold Ridge RCD are funded by the CA State Coastal Conservancy, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) through the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the CA Dept. of Food and Agriculture.

RCD STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE AND PLANNED ACTION:  
ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE

# GOLD RIDGE RCD JOINS THE SANTA ROSA PLAIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

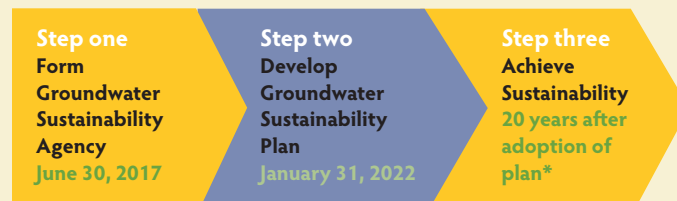
## WHAT ARE GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCIES (GSAs)?

**IN 2014, THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA ADOPTED THE SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2014 ("THE ACT" OR "SGMA"). WHILE THE ACT IS A COMPLEX PIECE OF LEGISLATION, ITS PRIMARY GOALS ARE TO:**

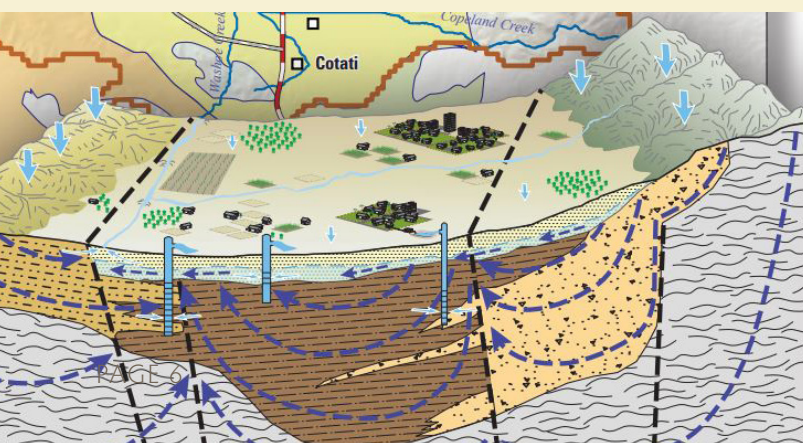
- Ensure that the significant groundwater basins in California (those designated as high and medium priority by the Department of Water Resources) are "sustainably managed," and
- Provide local groundwater agencies with the authority and the technical and financial assistance necessary to sustainably manage groundwater.

There are three medium priority basins in Sonoma County: the Petaluma Basin, the Santa Rosa Plain Basin and the Sonoma Valley Basin.

### STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION:



CONCEPTUAL MODEL SHOWING THE GROUNDWATER-FLOW SYSTEM, SANTA ROSA PLAIN WATERSHED, SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA. COURTESY OF THE U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.



## WHY IS GOLD RIDGE RCD INVOLVED?

At our April 20th, 2017 Board meeting, our Board of Directors approved our involvement as a voting member for the Santa Rosa Plain Basin GSA, the only medium priority basin within our district. The RCD is not required to be involved in the local GSAs. We have been hearing from our community that they want the RCD to help represent the ideas and needs of well owners in the Santa Rosa Plain. We have taken very seriously our decision to participate and the investment in time and money that is required to do so. The RCD is a non-regulatory local district that works closely with rural and agricultural landowners, urban residents, schools, resource agencies, and others on a variety of voluntary conservation programs. We are proud of the trusted relationships we have with our district's landowners that we have fostered over the last 76 years.

## WE CHOSE TO BE INVOLVED FOR TWO KEY REASONS:

1. We believe that our experience over the last 75 years working closely with hundreds of groundwater users gives us an understanding of their issues and concerns. We can be a voice for those concerns on the governing board of the GSA.
2. We believe that we are part of the solution to effective groundwater management. We are focused on working with local landowners, using a science-based approach, and advocating for voluntary approaches to key aspects of the implementation of future Groundwater Sustainability Plans. Our experience in implementing on-the-ground conservation projects, monitoring groundwater levels, and working with local communities aligns us to help implement future solutions to potential groundwater issues. The RCD can effectively bridge environmental concerns with the pragmatic needs of groundwater users.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON UPCOMING GSA BOARD MEETINGS, BASIN BOUNDARIES, AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION GO TO:  
[WWW.SONOMACOUNTYGROUNDWATER.ORG](http://WWW.SONOMACOUNTYGROUNDWATER.ORG)

GOLD RIDGE, RCD

# DONATE TO GIVE RCDS THEIR SEATS ON THE GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCIES

Dear Sonoma County resident,

As you doubtless have heard, the California Legislature has adopted a set of laws that will forever change the face of groundwater management within Sonoma County. The law, commonly known as "SGMA" (Sustainable Groundwater Management Act), is intended to provide for local control while mandating that medium risk groundwater basins be brought into a condition of sustainability with specific deadlines. These include the Petaluma Valley, Santa Rosa Plain, and Sonoma Valley basins.

The Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) that have formed in each basin will be responsible for **developing plans to assure groundwater sustainability, and making decisions on issues such as taxes or fees to support GSA operation.**

## We want to make sure your thoughts are represented!

Many of the entities that comprise the three GSAs in Santa Rosa, Petaluma Valley, and Sonoma Valley Basins *do not rely on groundwater wells and do not work closely with rural and agricultural interests.*

Fortunately, the **Sonoma and Gold Ridge Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs)** are locally organized agencies that have worked closely with many of you and your neighbors on voluntary soil and water conservation projects for over 75 years.

## Unlike most agencies, we must raise our own funds in order to keep our seats representing YOU on the GSAs.

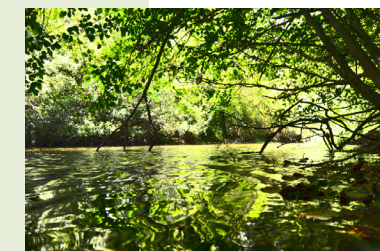
Both RCDs have voting seats on the governing board of the new agencies: Sonoma RCD in all three basins and Gold Ridge in the Santa Rosa Plain Basin. The RCDs need your financial support to provide the financial contributions necessary to stay on the governing board and to ensure that the interests of rural and agricultural landowners are adequately represented.

SGMA provides a long-term funding source for the GSA, but that source isn't available for the start-up costs. Initial cost for the Sonoma RCD is \$60,000 per year for two years. Gold Ridge RCD will have to contribute \$55,000 in the first year and \$64,000 the second year. This is equal to \$239,000 in the first two years for RCD participation. **Collectively, the RCDs have raised \$30,000 thus far.** If we can't raise the required funding, the RCDs may not be able to continue our involvement representing rural and agricultural interests at the GSAs.

## PLEASE DONATE to keep our seat at the table so we can represent your interests.

Sincerely,

**Joe Dutton** Gold Ridge RCD President  
**Mel Sanchietti** Gold Ridge RCD Director  
**Dennis Murphy** Sonoma RCD Director  
**John Nagle** Sonoma RCD Director



## AND DONATE TO GOLD RIDGE RCD'S STRATEGIC GOALS!

From community education, to conserving water, to supporting on-farm innovation, to saving and enhancing healthy soil, to addressing climate change on local farms, Gold Ridge RCD couldn't do this great work without the support of our community! Use the enclosed envelope to make a **tax-deductible donation.**

STEWARDS OF THE LAND

RCD STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE AND PLANNED ACTION:  
STREAMFLOW ENHANCEMENT AND WATER CONSERVATION  
**GIFT FROM THE SKY: RAINWATER  
CATCHMENT ON MANY SCALES**

A GALVANIZED STEEL TANK STORES RAINWATER HARVESTED FROM MULTIPLE ROOFS ON THE BODEGA GOAT RANCH.

**W**ith funding from local, state and federal programs targeting drought preparedness, climate change adaptation and summer streamflow enhancement, the Gold Ridge RCD is working to design and build rainwater catchment systems this year at several sites. These systems are important for our community and ecosystems because water harvested by these systems replaces water that otherwise would have been sourced from local streams, shallow wells and groundwater during the summer, at a time when wildlife also need scarce surface water and aquifers are being depleted.

Here is what participating landowners have to say about the benefits of their rainwater systems:

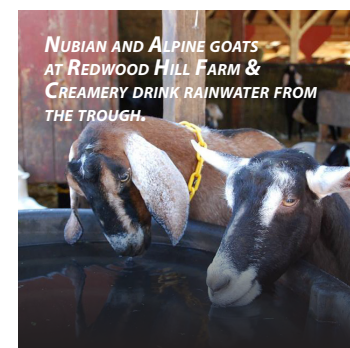
**RURAL RESIDENTIAL (9,000-40,000 GALLONS)**

*"[It makes me and my community] more self-reliant, more aware and more secure."*

**Salmon Creek resident**  
PARTNERED IN 2010

*"[The biggest benefit to me has been] diversifying my water sources. Not having to totally rely on a shared water source right at the creek or a well that regularly runs dry. Not having to truck in water for additional uses. Helping to think more deeply about my role as current steward of this land and what I can do to make to work more in harmony with our ecosystem."*

**Green Valley Creek resident**  
PARTNERED IN 2013



NUBIAN AND ALPINE GOATS AT REDWOOD HILL FARM & CREAMERY DRINK RAINWATER FROM THE TROUGH.



THE BICE CHILDREN, NICOLE AND COLTON, STAND PROUDLY WITH THEIR RAIN TANK.

**SMALL AGRICULTURE  
(60,000 -1.4 MILLION GALLONS)**

*"Although a small farm, we had big goals when it comes to water, which we consider the key to our operation. We had already made long-term efforts on the water infrastructure on the ranch by adding a second pond... We also had swales over two-thirds of the property. To finish these projects, we wanted to add the 68,000-gallon water tank...to plant trees and shrubs [for goat fodder].... This system will be a complete sustainable water model, with use of grey water, prevention of evaporation, drought tolerant plants.... This [project with the RCD] complements my goals of land stewardship by allowing the public to understand (through tours) ways to lower a carbon footprint, and make a profit not based on increasing volume, but stepping lightly on mother earth."*

**—Patricia Karlin owns and operates the Bodega Goat Ranch, uphill of Salmon Creek, in Bodega, CA.**  
SHE PARTNERED IN 2016 TO DEVELOP 68,000 GALLONS OF RAINWATER CATCHMENT AND STORAGE TO WATER HER HERD AND IRRIGATE FODDER TREES.

*"This project fell in line with our ideals of sustainability, good stewardship of the land, and helping protect our local watershed. It also helped us gain more water security in times of erratic weather and climate change. Water is a precious resource. We all need to do a better job of slowing water, spreading it and sinking it. And, storing water for when we need it, instead of just sending it away as fast as we can. We believe this will be better for our land, tributaries, and watersheds. This project has helped compliment these ideas greatly. As a diverse farm, we are excited how this project will help irrigation of our hop yard and olive grove and provide drinking water for our dairy goats throughout the summer months. We are thrilled to have more water security. We offer tours to the public many months of the year and hope our project can help inspire others to do what they can to help protect their watersheds and conserve resources."*

**—Siblings Scott and Jennifer Bice of Redwood Hill Farm and Creamery partnered with the RCD in 2016 to develop 100,000 gallons of rainwater for their large operation in Green Valley Creek watershed in Sebastopol, CA.**

RCD STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE AND PLANNED ACTION:  
WILDLIFE HABITAT ENHANCEMENT  
**FISH HABITAT ENHANCEMENT ON  
GREEN VALLEY CREEK**

**T**his summer, Gold Ridge RCD and partners made major fish passage and hydraulic improvements in the upper reach of Green Valley Creek. A damaged and undersized stream crossing culvert on the Green Valley Farm + Mill and Chenoweth properties was upgraded. Previously an impassable barrier to migrating coho salmon, the corroded culvert was perched 11.5 feet above its downstream pool, and prevented fish access to nearly one mile of spawning and rearing habitat upstream. The potential failure of the stream crossing also presented a threat to water quality, stream bank stability and flood plain connectivity.

The reconstructed stream crossing now features a bottomless arch culvert and roughened channel specifically designed to pass the 100-year return storm flow and allow fish unimpeded passage through the culvert. A series of boulder weirs both upstream and downstream of the stream crossing work in tandem with the constructed step-pool roughened channel to improve fish passage and stabilize the channel grade through the 600-foot project reach, and retain essential floodplain connectivity upstream.

**TEMRA COSTA OF THE GREEN VALLEY FARM + MILL WEIGHED IN ON WHAT THIS PROJECT MEANS TO THE FARM AND ITS PARTNERS.**

**Q** What does this project mean for the Green Valley Farm + Mill?

"Stewardship and conservation are core principles for our land project and farming operations. We are thrilled that the fish passage enhancement project is going to make it possible for salmonids to get to the upper reaches of Green Valley Creek once again! We look forward to collaborating on the ongoing care and maintenance of this project's infrastructure and of the creek in general"

**Q** How does this project compliment your goals for stewarding your land?

"The removal of invasive [plant species] such as blackberry and the installment of this fish-friendly culvert are only moving us ahead in achieving more connected land management strategies. We couldn't have done this without the work of GRRCD.... After the creek work is completed and revegetation has taken hold, we hope that this project will demonstrate the positive potential between private/ public collaborations in improving the environment upon which we all depend.... It's exactly the kind of project and partnerships that we want to foster here."

**Q** How do you feel about water issues in your watershed?

"Use of water will continue to be a contentious issue into the foreseeable future... As rural dwellers and farmers, our goal is to manage this resource as well as we can, for us, our neighbors throughout our watershed, and for all the species that depend on it."



PARTNERS OF GREEN VALLEY FARM + MILL FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: JEFF MENDELSON, JOSIAH CAIN, AUBRIE MAZE, SCOTT KELLEY, JEREMY FISHER, TEMRA COSTA.

AT TOP: McCULLOUGH CONSTRUCTION CREW MEMBER SEALS ROCK WEIRS. TOGETHER, THE WEIRS FORM A SERIES OF STEP-POOLS THAT WILL STABILIZE THE GRADE AND RESTORE PASSAGE FOR ADULT AND JUVENILE TROUT AND SALMON.

# RCD STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE AND PLANNED ACTION: CLEAN WATER; ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE GRANT FOR DAIRIES IN THE LAGUNA DE SANTA ROSA COMES TO A CLOSE

For the last four and a half years, Gold Ridge and Sonoma RCDs have been partnering on the Laguna Dairy Enhancement Program, a grant program through California State Water Resources Control Board to improve water quality in the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed.

## THE THREE MAIN GOALS OF THE PROGRAM HAVE BEEN TO:

1. Assist dairy operators in the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed to manage manure in a manner compliant with current and future water quality standards,
2. Prioritize dairy management improvement projects through the development of Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs), and
3. Implement best management practices (BMPs) identified in these planning efforts that will result in reductions in excess nutrients and improved watershed health.

## A CNMP IS A CONSERVATION PLAN THAT IS UNIQUE TO ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATIONS.

It is a grouping of conservation practices and management activities, which, when implemented as part of a conservation system, will help to ensure that both production and natural resource protection goals are achieved.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF CNMPs HAS PROVEN TO BE A GOOD TOOL FOR PRODUCERS INTERESTED IN IMPROVING NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT ON THEIR FACILITIES.

For dairy producer Jack Dei, he was relieved to have the partnership and technical assistance of local agencies on this matter.

Gold Ridge RCD Project Manager William Hart, RCD Partner Engineer Erica Mikesh, and NRCS Agricultural Engineer Brooke Pippi collaborated with Jack on a stormwater management design that would divert rainwater away from manure and toward clean grassy pastures.

In past years, the wet season has required a significant amount of labor on Jack's part to manage stormwater. This fall, Jack says he's anxious to see what a difference the new rainwater infrastructure will have on his operation and on his daily schedule. He's excited that this improvement will leave him time to take care of other matters at hand.

The Laguna Dairy Enhancement Program has been recognized for its effectiveness in addressing a critical issue in the watershed. This project was made possible by the Dairy Operators in the Laguna de Santa Rosa, California State Water Resources Control Board, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, USDAs Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Environmental Protection Agency.

### BEFORE THE LAGUNA DAIRY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM:

- 18 DAIRIES IN THE WATERSHED
- 10 WITH CNMPs
- 8 WITHOUT A PLAN

### AFTER THE LAGUNA DAIRY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM:

- 20 DAIRIES IN THE WATERSHED
- 6 WITH CNMPs EXISTING
- 9 WITH NEW CNMPs
- 3 WITH CNMPs EXISTING AND AMENDED
- 2 WITHOUT A PLAN



### PROGRAM PARTNERS

Standing with dairyman Jack Dei in front of a rainwater gutter and downspout—part of Dei Dairy's stormwater management infrastructure— from left to right: William Hart, Gold Ridge RCD; Erica Mikesh, RCD shared engineer; Jack Dei, the Dei Dairy; Brooke Pippi, NRCS; Bernadette Reed, CA Regional Water Boards.

# GOLD RIDGE RCD NEWS & EVENTS

## CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE TOUR BRINGS STATE LEGISLATORS TO SONOMA COUNTY



*THIS ARTICLE HAS BEEN REPUBLISHED FROM CALCAN'S ARTICLE ENTITLED "STATE LEGISLATORS AND STAFF LEARN FROM FARMERS LEADING THE WAY ON CLIMATE CHANGE."*

On July 26th, CalCAN co-organized a Climate Smart Agriculture tour in Sonoma County, inviting representatives from six state legislative offices to visit two innovative farms. Co-hosted by Organic Valley, Sonoma and Gold Ridge RCD, we visited Hughes Dairy, an organic pasture-based dairy in Bodega, and Gabriel Farm, an organic diverse orchard in Graton.

The tour highlighted farmers employing practices that reduce methane emissions (a potent greenhouse gas) on dairies, sequester carbon in soil and woody plants, and enhance on-farm resilience to climate change impacts. Discussion throughout the tour focused on several of California's cap-and-trade funded Climate Smart Agriculture Programs that provide incentives for farmers transitioning to practices with climate benefits.

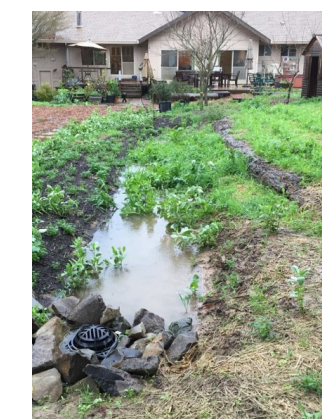
READ THE FULL ARTICLE AT [CALCLIMATEAG.ORG](http://CALCLIMATEAG.ORG)

## THE RUSSIAN RIVER CONFLUENCE CELEBRATES THE RIVER, ENVISIONS A BETTER FUTURE



» On March 24th, the Russian River community and stakeholders gathered at Shone Farm in Forestville to discuss, celebrate and create a vision for the watershed worth working towards. Residents, artists, non-profits, conservationists, students, vintners, educators, the regional RCDs, Sonoma County Water Agency, Russian Riverkeeper, Dry Creek Rancheria, Pepperwood Preserve, and many, many more came to tell stories that matter and identify actions to promote a holistic, 'beyond sustainability' approach to the watershed that ensures its resiliency and renewal. The Confluence promises to lay a plan for the future of the watershed. Learn more at [Russianriverconfluence.org](http://Russianriverconfluence.org)

## RCD HOSTS STORMWATER MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS



» On March 15th, Gold Ridge RCD invited landowners to discuss the methods for slowing, spreading, sinking and storing winter water. Copious rain delivered in the months before brought a drastic change to the landscape after five consecutive years of drought. How do we

take advantage of water when it is available, and how do we prepare for dry times? A panel of local experts presented their best practices for preparing homes and gardens for both deluge and drought. Rainwater storage, rain gardens, permeable pavement, earth works, drought-tolerant plants and more were featured. Thank you to our partners who made the event possible: Daily Acts, Harmony Farm Supply, Permaculture Artisans, and Sonoma County Master Gardeners.



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## GRRCD STAFF

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**Sierra Cantor** *Ecologist*

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**Jason Hoorn** *Project Manager*

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Third Thursday of every month

3:30-5:30PM (*unless otherwise posted*)

Gold Ridge RCD Office

2776 Sullivan Road,

Sebastopol, CA 95472

**MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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