



Winter 2014



Robert Vlach
District Conservationist

Stacy Kavanaugh
Soil Conservationist

Rebecca Klein
Rangeland Management Specialist

Lyle Thompson
Agricultural Engineer

Sherry Mills
Farm Bill Assistant



Ben Martin
Partner Ecologist

GLENN COUNTY



Kandi Manhart
Executive Officer

Kellie Wilson
Glenn County Certified Farmers' Market Manager

Inside this edition:

- Meet Ben Martin!
- RCD 2013 Awards
- Field Edge Management Option
- Healthy Soil

USDA Launches Effort to Assist California Producers Affected by Drought

DAVIS, Calif. Feb. 4, 2014 – USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service is providing information for farmers and ranchers interested in applying for the \$20 million in drought assistance announced by USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack last Tuesday, Feb. 4. Farmers and ranchers should consult with their local NRCS offices as soon as possible in order to apply for assistance by the **March 3, 2014**, deadline.

"In recent days many farmers and ranchers have visited one of our 55 California offices seeking help from the drought," said Carlos Suarez, California State Conservationist for NRCS. "Unfortunately, we don't have a magic wand, but we do have a toolbox of scientifically vetted conservation practices that have helped in many past droughts, including 2009," said Suarez. "We can help farmers and ranchers understand the options for their particular water situation, soil type and production goals and develop a plan to get through this drought."

The top priority will go to helping farmers without access to water who need to protect

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Colusa Glenn Subwatershed Program's BDI/EQIP Sign-Up!

Up to \$719,000+ may be available to help you implement water conservation and water quality practices on your farm or ranch!

Deadline to Apply: February 21, 2014

Contact NRCS (530) 934-4601 x3 or visit 132 N Enright Avenue, Suite B, Willows today!

Additional programs also available...

Interested in Conservation?

If you are a landowner or land manager in Glenn County and would like to get more involved with Conservation and Your Community, the Glenn County Resource Conservation District (RCD) Board of Directors would like to invite you to participate on its Board. There is currently one Director seat available and waiting to be filled through appointment by the County Board of Supervisors. For additional information, please contact Kandi Manhart, RCD Executive Officer at (530) 934-4601 x120. ~

NEW Point Blue Partner Biologist

I, Ben Martin, grew up in El Dorado County but have spent a lot of time in the Sacramento Valley with my family hunting and observing waterfowl and upland birds. It is through these activities I developed a strong appreciation and fascination for the Sacramento Valley, along with the avian species that inhabit it. My deep rooted passions for birds, especially waterfowl, lead me to attend Humboldt State University where I obtained a B.S. degree in Wildlife Management and Conservation.

Throughout my time, both in and out of college, I have been privileged to work all over North America. In 2009, I was invited to the University of Michigan to help their natural resources department conduct a study on landscape changes over a 50 year span in southeast Michigan using GIS. After Michigan I flew north to help conduct nesting research and banding efforts on many different waterfowl species throughout the Alaskan tundra during 2011 and 2012. In 2013, I decided to stay home in California and help conduct more nesting research and banding efforts in the Suisun Marsh, the Sacramento Valley, and the Klamath Basin. My passion for waterfowl has taken me to some captivating places and I am in no rush for the adventures to end anytime soon. ~



Glenn County RCD's 2013 ♦

CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR: THE SCHULLER FAMILY
PARTNER OF THE YEAR: GLENN COUNTY FARM BUREAU

For many years, Glenn County Resource Conservation District (RCD) has recognized a landowner or land manager who is a good steward of "Glenn County" land and a partner who continually goes above and beyond in assisting the Glenn County RCD and the Glenn County community in conserving our resources, while providing education and outreach.

This year the RCD's 2013 *Conservationist of the Year Award* went to The Schuller Family and *Partner of the Year Award* went to the Glenn County Farm Bureau.

The Schullers produce almonds and pistachios on their family farm, as well as keep bees, in Willows, Glenn County, California. They are focused on producing a good crop and strong bees, but also look at the long-term sustainability of their land, and their family farm succession. Dan and John are always willing to try new things and think outside of the box in

order to meet their daily, yearly and multi-year goals and objectives!

The Schullers have incorporated a variety of best management practices into their farming operation. They use micro-sprinklers to conserve water, they have an efficient fertility program based on soil and leaf analysis, and they have planted cover crops and maintain a vegetated buffer at the edge of their field to prevent runoff and protect water quality. They have also installed bat and owl boxes to encourage nesting, which results in natural pest management for their operation. Most recently, they planted a hedgerow containing California

native shrubs, forbs and grasses to provide food and other nesting resources for native bees, which complements the bee boxes they have installed.



The Schuller Family's Almond Orchard
Photo courtesy of Lindsay Scott Photography

Additionally, the Schullers have protected water resources in Glenn County. They irrigate efficiently using micro-sprinklers and manage irrigation scheduling according to crop needs. They have protected water quality through the use of Integrated

Pest Management (IPM),

Healthy Soil – Making Every Drop of Rain Count

by Stacy Kavanaugh, Soil Conservationist, NRCS

We all know that 2013 was a very dry year. The U.S. Drought Monitor shows Northern California is in a severe drought. While we cannot control the rain, we can improve the health of our soils so that they capture and store rain more effectively.



Among its many functions, the soil is also a water reservoir for our crops. Healthy Soil allows water to penetrate into the soil without running off. Healthy Soil also stores that water for future use, without losing it to evaporation. Many soil properties play a role in how a soil captures and stores water. Let's focus on two of these-- soil organic matter content and soil structure.

Soil Organic Matter Content – Soil organic matter is formed from decaying plant and animal material, including decomposing crop residues. Soil organic matter acts as the “glue” that holds soil particles (sand, silt and clay) together to form soil aggregates. These soil aggregates create interconnected pore spaces throughout the soil which allow water and air to enter and move throughout the soil. Soil organic matter also binds to water, so that water is stored in the soil for future use. In fact, organic matter holds 18-20 times its weight in water.

Soil Structure – Good soil structure occurs when there are numerous pore spaces in a variety of sizes in the soil, allowing water and air to move freely. These pore spaces are formed in the spaces between soil aggregates. Good soil structure at the

surface will allow water to infiltrate into the soil so that every precious drop can be captured. These pore spaces also store water, so when you improve the soil structure you are increasing the water-holding capacity of the soil.

Healthy Soils have high soil organic matter contents and good soil structure, so they capture and store water more effectively. Here are four basic principles to improving the health of your soil, so you can make every drop of rain and irrigation count:

- ◆ Keep the soil covered as much as possible
- ◆ Disturb the soil as little as possible
- ◆ Keep plants growing throughout the year to feed the soil
- ◆ Diversify as much as possible using crop rotation and cover crops

If you are interested in learning more about how to improve the health of your soil, contact the Glenn County NRCS office or visit the NRCS website at www.nrcs.usda.gov and click on “Soil Health”. ~

USDA-NRCS SOIL HEALTH INFOGRAPHIC SERIES #002

what's underneath



Interested in reducing pesticide use, increasing beneficial insects?

The University of California Cooperative Extension Service (UCCE) in Yolo County is currently working in Colusa, Glenn, Yolo, Solano and surrounding Counties, under funding from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation, on a project that focuses on field edge management practices. The overall goal of the project is to encourage growers and landowners in the northern Sacramento Valley to adopt or consider adopting hedgerows as an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) tool for reducing pesticide use on their farms.

Specifically the 3-year project will focus on replacing clean or semi-managed weedy field edges with hedgerows of native California perennial vegetation in order to help

suppress noxious weeds, plant diseases, and insect pests that thrive in residual weeds in herbicide treated field edges. The project will also demonstrate the benefits that field edge plantings provide, including: minimize herbicide use, increase beneficial insect activity (native bees and natural enemies), and enhance biodiversity.

Opportunities will be available for growers and landowners to learn how hedgerows can reduce pesticide use and provide water quality benefits. The project includes 12 workshops and field meetings, development of printed materials, and web-based information on hedgerow planting practices and benefits for pesticide reduction and enhanced biodiversity on farms in the northern Sacramento Valley. Field days will be facilitated throughout the

region and outreach materials will be widely available to growers.

Project coordinators will be seeking willing landowners to install hedgerows along field edges. Five demonstration hedgerows of native California perennial shrubs, forbs and grasses will be planted. Grant funding will cover the costs of implementation of these hedgerows and planting plans will be developed for each site. Ideally, these demonstration hedgerows will be located in different areas throughout the region.

If you are interested in more information about this project, please contact:

Mary Fahey Project Assistant, UCCE at 530-383-4625 (cell) mfahey@ucdavis.edu



Rachael Long Farm Advisor/ County Director UCCE at 530-681-7661 (cell) rflong@ucanr.edu

70 Cottonwood St.
Woodland, CA 95695
530-666-8734 (office)

Photos courtesy of Mary Fahey

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nutrient management, filter strips and cover crops, as well as implemented best management practices to minimize runoff.

Overall, the Schullers were a prime recipient for *Conservationist of the Year!*

RCD Directors, Associate-Directors and Staff have the opportunity to nominate a landowner/land manager, city, county, state or federal agency, organization/club or private business for *Partner of the Year* to help recognize their efforts. Nominations are considered with the following criteria;

- * Actively involved with RCD in current and/or planned projects.
- * Plays an integral role in moving RCD projects forward.
- * Demonstrates rapport with landowners/land managers and pro-actively communicates with them.
- * Shown innovation and creativity in determining methods to accomplish RCD goals and objectives.
- * Demonstrates willingness and cooperation with others to assist in meeting RCD goals and objectives.
- * Actively provides RCD with information and resources, and identifies areas for RCD involvement.



The Glenn County Farm Bureau Board of Directors and Staff met this

criteria and enthusiastically continues to support the RCD *Connects with Kids* educational program through: offering a Range Camp Sponsorship each year to a Glenn County high school student, participating at the annual 5K/10K fundraiser held at Black Butte Lake and, more recently,

supporting the Glenn County Certified Farmers' Market which operates in both Orland and Willows in a variety of ways. For example, they donated permanent signage during the 2013 Market Season and offered a kids activity, planting pumpkins, at the Markets. Not only do they support RCD projects and programs, they also support the farmers and ranchers who collaborate with the RCD.

The Glenn County RCD Board of Directors, Associate-Directors and Staff sincerely applaud the Glenn County Farm Bureau for their efforts in making Glenn County a GREAT place to live and work now and in the future! ~



(L to R) Darin Titus, 1st Vice President, Farm Bureau, accepts award from Mike Landini, RCD President.

Drought, Page 1

fragile, uncovered soil, according to Suarez. "There are options such as cover crops, surface roughening, residue management, mulching and other practices we can recommend. And there are payments available for farmers willing to adopt these critical steps to keep our essential topsoil from becoming a wind-borne, dust hazard," said Suarez.

To help ranchers suffering from drought conditions, NRCS can offer practices such as livestock well development, piping, troughs, and fencing. "For some ranchers this may allow livestock to take advantage of available grass while protecting vulnerable ranch resources," said Suarez.

Finally, for farmers who have access to water and want to make every drop count, NRCS can provide improved irrigation hardware with an irrigation management plan to optimize efficiency.

This drought assistance package is being funded through NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) that shares the cost of conservation practices with agricultural producers willing to voluntarily invest in conserving natural resources on their farm or ranch.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is also providing drought assistance through the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP). Farmers and ranchers are encouraged to consult with the Agency to gain a full understanding of the drought assistance options available from both Agencies. FSA and NRCS are often co-located in service centers throughout California. Call Glenn County's USDA Service Center at (530) 934-4601.

To hear an audio clip of State Conservationist Carlos Suarez discuss NRCS' drought response go to <https://soundcloud.com/#nrccs-california/carlos-suarez-usda-nrccs>. ~

FREE Irrigation Evaluations!

Learn how to make the most of your irrigation system! The Tehama County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD) provides free irrigation evaluations through their Mobile Irrigation Lab (MIL). This service is for you... if you are a grower of any crop, pasture, or restoration project – or even a homeowner - in Tehama, Glenn, Shasta, and Butte Counties. To schedule an irrigation evaluation or to learn more, contact TCRCD at (530) 527-3013 x102. ~



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

132 North Enright Avenue, Suite B
Willows, CA 95988
(530) 934-4601 x3

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.CA.NRCS.USDA.GOV

WWW.GLENNCOUNTYRCD.ORG

IMPORTANT DEADLINES & DATES!

**Colusa Glenn Subwatershed Program's BDI/EQIP
Applications due February 21**

*\$719,000+ available to implement water conservation
and water quality practices on farms in Glenn County*

**CA Rice Commission's Waterbird Habitat WHEP/EQIP
Applications due February 21**

*\$650,000+ available to implement conservation practices
and bird habitat in the Sacramento Valley*

**Drought Program: For Cropland and Grazing Lands
Applications due March 3**

*\$20 million available for agricultural water conservation
and soil erosion practices prevention efforts throughout
California to combat the effects of drought*

**3rd Annual Run Your Tail Off... through the
Watershed 5k/10k to support
RCD Connects with Kids May 3**

**Glenn County Certified Farmers Market:
WILLOWS MARKET May 24**

Glenn County RCD Annual BBQ May 29

**Glenn County Certified Farmers Market:
ORLAND MARKET May 29**

USDA Service Center Open House July 21

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