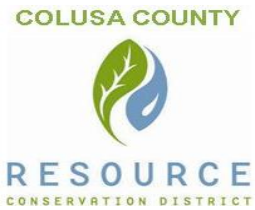


# 2008 Annual Report (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008)

## Colusa County Resource Conservation District



### Colusa Basin Watershed Assessment & Capacity Building

#### Facilitating the Colusa Basin Watershed Assessment & Capacity Building

##### Goals and Objectives of the Project:

After years of "Random acts of Conservation", the CCRCD identified the need to obtain a locally led watershed assessment for the Colusa Basin Watershed (CBW). It is the CCRCD's aim that this watershed assessment will help direct future projects to address holistic watershed health by providing the foundation to develop a community driven watershed management plan. This project, along with a Watershed Coordinator's continued efforts, will help with decision making concerning ecosystem restoration that affect the Bay Delta.

The project provided funding to hire a Watershed Coordinator (WC) who is facilitating the creation of the Colusa Basin Watershed Assessment, and is focusing on improving and sustaining collaboration and communication between local stakeholders. The WC's efforts will ensure that holistic watershed health is addressed, that watershed efforts are not duplicated, and that new and existing data pertaining to the Colusa Basin Watershed is readily accessible to the public. The WC will also assist the CCRCD in educating the public about watershed processes & functions, management opportunities, and aid in the decision making processes.

##### 2007/2008 Project Summary:

The CCRCD's first WC hired for the project left his position in June of 2007. The current WC was hired in August of 2007, and came on board just as the contract with the consultant who is creating the watershed assessment was taking shape. The WC is presently working approximately 60% of fulltime on the project and 40% on another project that addresses similar objectives within the watershed. In the interim, the CCRCD's District Manager (DM) served as the WC and continues to assist with the project at a higher level than originally anticipated to complete the project in the most efficient manner possible.

To date, the WC has facilitated meetings, workshops, and seminars, has formed new partnerships and fortified those already existing, educated local stakeholders on watershed functions and processes, has gained valuable input for this locally led project, and has forwarded all information and comments received regarding the watershed assessment to the consultant in an attempt to attain the best possible final product.

##### Results and Accomplishments:

##### **Formation of the Colusa Basin Watershed Assessment -**

The firm H.T. Harvey and Associates was selected to complete the Colusa Basin Watershed Assessment (CBWA) and entered into a contract with the CCRCD in September of 2007. The watershed assessment will include an executive summary, existing conditions and historical conditions, data gaps, and recommended next steps for the CBW.

In an effort to provide the best assessment possible, the WC has:

- Assisted the consultant in gathering pertinent information to include in the document
- Directed the consultant to valuable information sources
- Compiled comments from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) into a markup copy of each draft
- Forwarded each markup copy to the consultant for editing.

To facilitate the creation of the Colusa Basin Watershed Assessment, the WC has organized –

- 2 Community Advisory Group meetings
  - Information received at these meetings was presented to the Technical Advisory Committee to give a direction for the locally led watershed assessment.
- 4 Technical Advisory Committee meetings
  - These meetings were focused on helping direct the information gathering process by providing the

consultant with good sources of sound data; and ensuring data integrity in the document through review and comment periods. Upon input from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) before and during these meetings, the WC incorporates these comments into markup copies of each draft and provides them to the consultant for editing.



TAC meeting – reviewing information gathered at the Community Advisory Group meeting: facilitating a “Locally Led” Watershed Assessment.

The following documents for the Colusa Basin Watershed Assessment (CBWA) have been completed, reviewed, commented upon, and have had the comments compiled and forwarded to the consultant by the WC –

### Outline for the Colusa Basin Watershed Assessment -

Initially, the draft outline for the Colusa Basin Watershed Assessment (CBWA) was arranged in a manner that presented each subject area into two separate sections at two separate times within the document – the historical conditions section and the existing conditions section.

This format meant that the reader would have to flip back and forth between the two sections (historical and existing) to get a complete picture of just one area of the report.

After much debate by the Technical Advisory Committee and CCRCD Board, it was concluded that each subject area of the assessment (e.g. Hydrology, Land Use and Social Characteristics, Geology, etc.) would be in the same section for continuity.

Therefore, in the Final Outline, each subject area of the assessment begins with a historical overview, followed by the current conditions of each subject area.

\*\*\*Note how the historical and existing conditions are listed below each heading rather than each heading listed under either historical or current conditions\*\*\*

To better explain the above said change, next is the Final Outline of the CBWA:

#### Executive Summary

- 1.0 Introduction
  - 1.1 Assessment Goals and Objectives
  - 1.2 General Watershed Description and Geomorphic Setting
  - 1.3 Stakeholder Organization and Process
  - 1.4 Stakeholder Concerns
- 2.0 Geography (Watershed/Subwatershed Boundaries) and Climate
- 3.0 Geology
- 4.0 Soils (Existing Conditions)
- 5.0 Land Use and Social Characteristics *(we will begin with this topic as it is a driver of temporal change to be described in the sections below)*
  - 5.1 Historical Conditions and Temporal Change
    - 5.1.1 Watershed Community Characteristics
    - 5.1.2 Land-use and Agricultural Cropping Patterns
  - 5.2 Existing Conditions
    - 5.2.1 Watershed Community Characteristics
    - 5.2.2 Land-use Patterns (City and County Zoning, Plans, and Policies)
    - 5.2.3 Agricultural Cropping Patterns and Irrigation Practices
    - 5.2.4 Soil Class Effectiveness in Regard to Agricultural Preservation
    - 5.2.5 Easements (agricultural and conservation)
    - 5.2.6 U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Refuges
- 6.0 Hydrology
  - 6.1 Historical Conditions and Temporal Change
    - 6.1.1 Surface Water
    - 6.1.2 Groundwater
    - 6.1.3 Effects of Agricultural Diversions and Withdrawals
    - 6.1.4 Flooding and Flood Control
  - 6.2 Existing Conditions
    - 6.2.1 Surface Water
    - 6.2.2 Groundwater
    - 6.2.3 Effects of Agricultural Diversions and Withdrawals
    - 6.2.4 Flooding and Flood Control
- 7.0 Geomorphology
  - 7.1 Historical Conditions and Temporal Change
    - 7.1.1 Floodplain Connectivity
    - 7.1.2 Channel Incision and Bank Erosion
    - 7.1.3 Sediment Transport and Deposition
    - 7.1.4 Soil Erosion
  - 7.2 Existing Conditions
    - 7.2.1 Floodplain Connectivity
    - 7.2.2 Channel Incision and Bank Erosion
    - 7.2.3 Sediment Transport and Deposition
    - 7.2.4 Soil Erosion
- 8.0 Water Quality
  - 8.1 Historical Conditions and Temporal Change
    - 8.1.1 Surface Water
    - 8.1.2 Groundwater
  - 8.2 Existing Conditions
    - 8.2.1 Surface Water
    - 8.2.2 Groundwater
- 9.0 Biology
  - 9.1 Historical Conditions and Temporal Change
    - 9.1.1 Biotic Habitats (Vegetation and General Wildlife Use by Habitat Type)
    - 9.1.2 Invasive Plants
    - 9.1.3 Special-status Species (Plants and Wildlife (excluding fish))
  - 9.2 Existing Conditions
    - 9.2.1 Biotic Habitats (Vegetation and General Wildlife Use by Habitat Type)

## Existing Conditions Section of the Colusa Basin Watershed Assessment –

After the Final Outline was approved, the Existing Conditions portion of the CBWA was formed, and presented to the TAC and CCRCD Board for review. Valuable input was received and recorded to confirm that the information sources incorporated into this section of the CBWA was as current and correct as possible.

After diligent review, suggested changes to the Draft Existing Conditions Report were integrated into the Draft, and the Historical Conditions section was added to create the Preliminary Draft CBWA.

Input was also gathered from the TAC and CCRCD to direct the consultant toward good historical information sources that are available to utilize in the formation of the Preliminary Draft.

## Preliminary Draft of the Colusa Basin Watershed Assessment –

This draft of the CBWA included the Existing Conditions section as well as the Historical Conditions section, which was very interesting to read. A great deal of fascinating historical information was revealed in this draft report of the CBWA such as:

- in 1868-1871 individuals had the opportunity to purchase swamplands through the Green Act at \$1.00 per acre - as long as it was drained and cultivated

The information included on the subject of the historical flooding conditions and the formation of reclamation districts within the CBW is also astounding. This historical information is invaluable to examine where we have been in the past, and will help shape the direction we should head in the future.

## Capacity Building -



Throughout the year, the WC has been very active in building the capacity of the CCRCD through personal contacts, taking an active part in watershed related stakeholder meetings, and participating in other capacity building endeavors.

### Capacity Building in the Ag. Community:

- Throughout this year, the WC has been working with local almond growers in the CBW to facilitate utilizing conservation practices in their farming operations.
- Contact with these growers as well as other farmers/ranchers has resulted in enhanced credibility for the CCRCD and an increased willingness among farmers and ranchers to participate in CCRCD projects.
- The WC also helped facilitate the creation of the Colusa County Oak Woodland Management Plan (adopted by the Colusa County Board of Supervisors: May 2008)
  - The Working Group for the Oak Woodland Management Plan consisted of 7 local stakeholders

The WC made personal contact with at least 50 Colusa Basin Watershed stakeholders including:

- Businesses
- Conservationists
- Landowners
- Organizations
- Policymakers

The WC has played a part in 32 other capacity building endeavors including but not limited to the following:

- Cache Creek Discovery Day
- Colusa County Farm Day

- Colusa County Farm Show
- Facilitating workshops & seminars for the Xerces Society
  - Workshop held 01/31/2008
  - Seminar held at the 2008 Colusa County Farm Show.
  - Booth space provided to the Xerces Society for their display at the 2008 Colusa County Farm Show
- Participating and providing input in the Colusa County Groundwater Management Planning process



Above: WC sets up subsidence monitoring equipment (Old Hwy 99W - North of Arbuckle) to facilitate information gathering for the Sacramento Valley Height Modernization Project. Information collected through this collaborative process will help direct future groundwater planning and management within the watershed.

- Taking part in the Cooperative Subsidence Network for the Sacramento Valley Height Modernization Project which created an increased cooperation among all involved including:
  - Butte County Public Works
  - Butte County Water & Resource
  - Colusa County Public Works
  - Dept. of Water Resources
  - DGA&V Surveying
  - Frame Surveying and Mapping
  - Glenn County Ag. Dept.
  - Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District.
  - Tehama County Public Works
  - UCD Cooperative Extension

Through successful grant writing, the WC position for the CBW has been extended through June 2011, through the California Department of Conservation.

Watershed Education and the facilitation of a management plan for the CBW will be the focus of the WC's continued endeavors.

### Key Partnerships Created and/or Fortified –

The WC participated in 34 Colusa Basin Watershed related stakeholder meetings, programs, or functions including:

- Audubon California
  - The CCRCD is currently working on a project with Audubon and the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) involving almond farmers in Colusa County
- Center for Land Based Learning
  - The CCRCD worked with 2 local high schools and the Student and Landowner Education and Watershed Stewardship (SLEWS) Program during the 2007-2008 school year.
- Central Sacramento Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council
  - Contact with the President and Treasurer of the council is maintained to keep abreast of projects that may be presented in the area.
- Colusa Basin Drainage District
  - Partnership fortified: the CBDD provided in-kind match on the CCRCD's DOC grant application to extend the WC position through 2011.
  - There is also continued discussion regarding a fee for service project that would benefit both the CBDD and the CCRCD. This possibility may help the CCRCD sustain in the future with fewer Grant funds.
- Colusa County Board of Supervisors
  - The WC talks regularly with District 4 Supervisor – former CCRCD director – to inform him of the CCRCD's current and future projects, and to explore the possibility of working with the county on future projects.
- Colusa County Department of Agriculture
- Colusa County Farm Bureau

- Colusa County Fish and Game Advisory Commission
- Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF)
  - The CCRCD is currently working on a project with CAFF and Audubon
- Family Water Alliance
  - The WC keeps open lines of communication with the Executive Director on issues that affect the Colusa Basin Watershed.
- Glenn County Department of Agriculture
  - The WC maintains regular contact with the Water Resources Coordinator in the Glenn County Dept. of Ag.
- Glenn County RCD
  - The WC attends and reports on the CCRCD's current projects and plans at the Glenn Co. RCD's board meetings.
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
  - Provided in-kind match on the CCRCD's DOC grant proposal to extend the WC position through 2011.
- University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE)
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Yolo County RCD
  - In submitting the DOC grant to extend the WC's position, the CCRCD and Yolo County RCD submitted their proposals in collaboration to DOC – both Yolo County and the CCRCD were funded and will continue to work closely together in the Colusa Basin Watershed.

### Interesting Tidbits -

The WC has endeavored into educating the public on watershed processes and function. Education concerning the importance of soil in the watershed includes an original interactive song that the WC composed. With the help of the District Manager (DM) - who created a poster to go along with the

song - the WC has delivered this interactive presentation to roughly 250 youth and adults.

The WC has continually updated the CCRCD's website on a regular basis to make certain that information about the CCRCD is readily available, and to keep the public informed on the CCRCD's current projects, meetings, and upcoming events.

The WC worked on creating a watershed related publication & directory of watershed services that would lend to educating both young and mature ages about watersheds.



Above is the map insert from the middle of the publication.

The watershed publication was sent out in the local newspaper to approximately 2,200 readers. The remaining 2,800 are being disseminated throughout the watershed in a number of locations.

### Lessons Learned –

Through this project, the WC recognized that information pulling (from individuals) is rather difficult – sometimes like pulling teeth. The WC acknowledges the need to be very persistent – and extremely specific – when asking for involvement in; meetings, review of the document, and in gaining vital expertise to provide to the consultant. The effort required to gain participation in the project is highly due to individual priorities, and the priority level placed on this project by members of the TAC. The WC has worked very hard to achieve participation through communication; both written and verbal.

Also, prior to this project, the CCRCD had never employed a consultant on any other projects in the District, and this has been a great learning experience. In order to ensure that the end product is completed to the highest standards, keeping the consultant abreast of TAC input and providing relevant information sources has been key. Through this project, the WC reinforced her knowledge of the importance of maintaining open lines of

communication as enormously valuable, and necessary in achieving a suitable end product.

**Project Completion -**

The Colusa Basin Watershed Assessment is scheduled for completion by January 2009. Further analysis of key issues as funding allows will be completed by June of 2009.

**Project Expenditures -**

Colusa Basin Watershed Assessment  
To date: \$177,734 of the original \$399,808 project budget has been expended.

**Project Contract Adjustments -**

At this time, the CCRCDD anticipates requesting budget realignment between tasks. Modification will not exceed 10% of the annual budget and will not affect the scope of the project.

**For More Information Contact:**

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**Mission Statement of the Colusa County Resource Conservation District:**

The mission of the CCRCDD is to assist local landowners to protect, conserve, and restore, natural resources through information, education, and access to technical assistance programs. In doing so, the CCRCDD will always take measures to protect the individual landowner's rights and fully support 'from the ground up' conservation planning that promotes local, social, and economic sustainability through wise land use.

**Colusa County Resource Conservation District Board of Directors:**

Gilbert Ramos – President  
Tom Hickok – Vice President  
Brandon Ash – Director  
Bob Alvernaz – Director  
Jay Dee Garr – Director  
Ryan Parker – Director  
Darrin Williams – Director

**Staff:**

Patti Turner – District Manager  
Jennifer Masters – Watershed Coordinator

