



# COLUSA COUNTY CONSERVATION

VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 2 | DECEMBER, 2011

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## WELCOME *by Mary Fahey, Watershed Coordinator*

It's hard to believe that another year is ending. We've been keeping busy here at the Colusa County Resource Conservation District, and in these challenging economic times, we're hoping to *stay* busy through 2012. Here are a few things to expect from the CCRCD in the new year:

We received a **Farmers Market Promotion Program grant** that will be starting up in 2012. Our project is called "**Colusa County Grown**," and our task is to promote Colusa County Agricultural producers that sell directly to the consumer. Look for a county-wide marketing campaign complete with a *Colusa County Grown* logo on signs, flyers, posters and other marketing materials. We will also launch a nutrition education campaign as part of this project. Similar marketing programs have been carried out in Solano County and Placer County, among others. All of these efforts encourage folks to shop local, and eat fresh, nutritious, seasonal foods.

The **Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Planning (NSV IRWMP)** group will be going full steam ahead in 2012. This project will address water-related issues in the Northern Sacramento Valley. As a staff representative for Colusa County on the TAC committee, I (along with staff representatives from Glenn, Butte, Sutter, Tehama and Shasta counties) have been tasked with performing outreach for this project. The first round of public outreach meetings will be held in January (more info on page 10). If you live in the NSV area, we want to hear from you. If you can't make the meetings, there are opportunities to provide feedback on the group's website: [www.nsvwaterplan.org](http://www.nsvwaterplan.org). Or, you can contact me any time with comments, questions, etc. Expect to hear much more about this effort in 2012.



I will be wrapping up the **Colusa Basin Watershed Management Plan** in 2012. This is a stakeholder driven plan that addresses eight natural resource issues of concern in the watershed. When completed, it will be an invaluable resource to get important, locally led projects on the ground in Colusa County (more info on page 7).

*Continued on page 3*

## MISSION

The mission of the CCRCD 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 CCRCD 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.

*(Adopted: March 21, 2002)*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Beth Nall, Director  
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## ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Ben Felt, Associate Director

## STAFF

Patti Turner, District Manager  
Mary Fahey, Watershed Coordinator

## CONTACT US

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100 Sunrise Blvd., Suite B  
Colusa, California 95932  
Phone: 530.458.2931, ext. 3  
Fax: 530.458.3683  
info@colusarc.org

## VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

[WWW.COLUSARCD.ORG](http://WWW.COLUSARCD.ORG)

## ABOUT THE COLUSA COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT (CCRCD)

### THE CCRCD FOCUSES THEIR EFFORTS ON:

- Promoting resource management and conservation practices that will improve the health of Colusa County Watersheds
- Supporting measures that provide for the best use of the land while sustaining our natural resources and local economy
- Providing conservation education to ensure Colusa County's natural resources will be valued and protected in the future

### CCRCD'S NATURAL RESOURCE PRIORITIES:

- Identify natural resources issues and concerns within all Colusa County Watersheds
- Reduce erosion and sedimentation
- Work with all agencies of authority to reduce and control flooding
- Improve water quality and development
- Promote conservation practices for municipal, industrial and residential use
- Encourage the use of native vegetation and removal of non-native invasive species
- Improve Rangeland and Forest Resources
- Improve and Conserve wildlife and fishery habitat
- Reduce roadside pollution
- Protect agricultural viability
- Promote conservation education
- Promote director and staff development



*Festive downtown Arbutle, photo by Mary Fahey*

## WELCOME *Continued*

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The CCRCDC recently applied for three **Specialty Crop Block Grants** and we will find out in February if we are selected to write full proposals. Our pre-proposal projects include pollinator conservation in almonds, pollinator conservation in specialty crop seed production, and a project to promote native plants at the California State Fair.

The CCRCDC's rental equipment has been very busy this year. We have a Truax no-till seed drill and two rice rollers available for rent to local growers. The **no-till drill** has been out seeding pastures, rangelands and orchard cover crops, and our rice rollers have been out helping growers with decomp.



We don't know exactly what 2012 will bring, but the CCRCDC will continue to work hard to assist local landowners with their resource conservation needs throughout the new year.

We wish you all very Happy Holidays!

*Toyon, New Years Day 2011, photo by Mary Fahey*

## TWO DIRECTOR VACANCIES

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The Board of Directors of the Colusa County Resource Conservation District has two vacancies to fill. Appointments will be made on or after January 4, 2012.

Qualified candidates must be a registered voter in the State of California and

1. Reside within Colusa County and either own property in Colusa County or have served two or more years as an Associate Director of the CCRCDC

OR

2. Be a designated agent of a resident landowner within Colusa County

For more information, please contact the CCRCDC at 530.458.2931 X 3, or email: [info@colusarc.org](mailto:info@colusarc.org)

### DO YOU NEED ASSISTANCE WITH A NATURAL RESOURCE CONCERN?

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When the Colusa Basin Watershed Management Plan is completed, the Colusa County Resource Conservation District will begin work on projects to address the goals and objectives of the Plan. We are planning for new projects now. Do you have a natural resource issue on your land that you would like to see addressed, but need help? The CCRCDC is currently creating a database of potential projects and seeking funding opportunities for implementation. **Please let us know if we can assist you, or if you would like more information:**

530.458.2931 X3 or email: [mary.fahey@ca.usda.gov](mailto:mary.fahey@ca.usda.gov).

## Part II: So You Want To Start A Small Farm Business?

While many people choose to live on small acreage properties simply to enjoy a rural lifestyle, some folks purchase property with the intent to make a living off the land. While this is an exciting notion, poorly planned enterprises can lead to a number of disasters including damaged natural resources, strained family relationships and financial difficulties.

As with any entrepreneurial endeavor, emphasis should be placed on thorough planning and evaluation of your resources before starting a new small farm-based business. Some things

... doing the research will teach you a lot about yourself, your land, and what it takes to produce farm products.

to consider are: personal and family goals, existing resources including your time and energy level, and realistic opportunities for business sales. You should also take into

consideration your level of knowledge of land and natural resource management. Creating a business plan is an excellent way to work through the planning and decision-making process, and there are many resources that can help with this, some of which are listed at the end of this article.

There are a variety of options for generating income off of small acreage, but realistically, it is very difficult to make a comfortable living without another source of income such as off-farm employment. The section below outlines some possibilities. Sustainability depends on several factors including your location, land resources, energy level and marketing skills. Another important factor is your desired lifestyle. If you are willing to live very frugally, you will obviously be able to live with less income than someone who is not willing to give up any modern comforts.

While evaluating your situation, always bear in

mind that maintaining healthy natural resources on your land is essential to a productive farming system. A healthy and diverse system will produce healthier crops and livestock.

### Opportunities

Some small farm production opportunities include: fruit and vegetable crops; livestock production (milk, meat, cheese, fiber, brush clearing); poultry (meat, eggs); honeybees (honey, pollination services, beeswax); cut flowers; nursery stock; value-added products (crafts, wreaths, etc.); agritourism (farm stay, farm tours, etc.); and teaching classes.

You might consider starting a market garden by growing a variety of seasonal vegetables and fruit. If done properly in the right geographic location, it is possible to make a decent income off of a small parcel of land. It takes a lot of dedication, hard work and long hours, but it can be done.

Of course, growing the crops is just one aspect of the business. You will also have to market and sell your products. Fresh fruit and vegetables can be sold at farmers markets, farm stands, CSAs (local deliveries), or wholesale to restaurants and grocery stores. Cut flowers can be integrated into a market garden business, or they can be the single focus of a farm-based business. Fresh cut flowers can be sold through the same outlets as fruit and vegetables.

Livestock products, such as meat, eggs and fiber can also be sold at farmers markets and farm stands. Meat and eggs can be marketed to restaurants and grocery stores,



and even local deliveries. Fiber can be made into value-added products such as yarn or knitted and woven items and sold through a variety of markets including online. Another possible livestock business is maintaining a goat herd to rent out for brush control.

### Infrastructure

Depending on your production goals, you will need equipment and facilities to carry out your business. Some of the basics include:

**Vegetable and tree crops:** irrigation water, irrigation supplies, seed, soil amendments and fertilizers, pest control, hand tools, tractor, cultivating equipment, planting equipment, harvest equipment, greenhouse, packing shed, refrigeration

**Livestock:** fencing, water, pasture, supplemental feed, shelters/housing facilities, veterinary care, medical supplies, lead ropes and halters, transportation, manure management tools

### Natural Resources

Efforts should be made to keep your land healthy and productive by protecting your natural resources. Integrating the following options into your farming system will serve to create biodiversity on your land while improving water and soil quality as well as habitat value:

- ~ Plant a variety of flowering native shrubs and forbs to provide habitat for native pollinators
- ~ Install native habitat in the form of hedgerows or mass plantings of native plants in unused areas of your farm
- ~ Provide buffer strips between crops/livestock and waterways and plant native grasses along banks of waterways to filter runoff and prevent bank erosion
- ~ Practice crop rotation and managed livestock grazing to keep your soil and pastures healthy while reducing weed and pest populations
- ~ Utilize cover crops for soil health and for a source of pollen and nectar for beneficial insects
- ~ Be diligent with invasive species control
- ~ Install a wildlife pond
- ~ Install raptor nest boxes for natural rodent control

- ~ Compost everything you can and return it to the ground to reduce waste and enrich the soil

### Diversify Your Operation

Any agricultural endeavor is dependent on the forces of Mother Nature, and production will vary from year to year. Bearing this in mind, it would be wise to diversify your operation so if one crop fails or disease strikes your livestock, you will have something to fall back on. Wise management decisions will keep your land healthy, but you cannot control natural variables that are bound to affect your operation. A simple way to diversify your operation is to grow a variety of crops that might include vegetables, fruit, nuts and/or grains. If one crop fails, you have other resources. You could take this a step further and integrate chickens for egg or meat production. This way, if it is a late spring and your spring/summer crops are delayed, you will still have poultry producing a product for the farm. Creating value-added products, teaching farm-oriented classes or providing farm tours are other good ways to

The more you can learn, plan and prepare before launching a new business, the better your chances of success.

diversify your operation, and these activities can take place nearly year-round.

There are many options available for creating a small farm business, but there are also many variables to take into consideration when deciding on a venture. The more you can learn, plan and prepare before launching a new business, the better your chances of success. Take classes, attend workshops, visit working farms and do your research. You may find a perfect fit for your farm and your family, or you may decide that a farm business is not for you. Either way, doing the research will teach you a lot about yourself, your land, and what it takes to produce farm products. So, if you're ready to investigate your options for starting a small farm business, the links on page 6 can help you get started.

[SEE PLANNING RESOURCES NEXT PAGE](#)

## **Planning Resources for starting a small farm business** (see article on previous page):

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### **U.C. Davis Small Farm Program**

<http://sfp.ucdavis.edu>

### **California Small Business Association**

<http://www.beginningfarmers.org/farm-business-planning>

### **U.C. Agriculture and Natural Resources**

<http://ucanr.org/sites/placernevadasmallfarms/FarmBusinessPlanning>

### **USDA National Agricultural Library Rural Information Center**

[http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/small\\_farm\\_funding.htm](http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/small_farm_funding.htm)



### **Beginning Farmers**

<http://www.beginningfarmers.org/farm-business-planning>

### **NC State Small Farm Decision-making and Enterprise Planning Workbook**

<http://agmarketing.extension.psu.edu/begfrms/SmlFrmDecisionMakingWrkbk.pdf>

### **Natural Resources Management:**

Colusa County Resource Conservation District - <http://colusarcd.org>

Colusa County Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) - 530.458.2931 x112

## **A FEW OF CCRCD'S PROJECTS**

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### **COLUSA BASIN WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Plan is currently being written and distributed in sections to stakeholders for feedback. See page 7 for more information.

### **BEAR CREEK WATERSHED**

Work is winding down on this cooperative effort to enhance the ecological, agricultural and recreational conditions in the Bear Creek Watershed in Colusa County.

### **INTEGRATED REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT PLANNING**

CCRCD staff have been assisting our local government by representing Colusa County through participation in the Westside and Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Planning (IRWMP) efforts. See page 8 for information on public workshops for the North Sacramento Valley IRWMP.

### **COLUSA COUNTY GROWN**

The CCRCD will be launching the Colusa County Grown campaign in 2012. This marketing campaign will highlight Colusa County agricultural producers that sell their products directly to the consumer. We will create a local food guide among many other marketing and educational materials.

### **WATERSHED EDUCATION**

The Colusa Basin Watershed Coordinator is working on developing a Watershed Education Program to be presented to local youth to engage them in learning activities centered around watershed function.

For more information on our projects, please visit our website at [www.colusarcd.org](http://www.colusarcd.org)

## COLUSA BASIN WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

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Writing of the Plan continues and the Colusa Basin Watershed Coordinator is receiving stakeholder feedback along the way. The draft Plan is about halfway done. Once the full draft is completed, it will be distributed to stakeholders and TAC for a final review before the Plan is completed.

To date, drafts of the following sections have been completed: the Introduction, Goal #3: *Preserve Agricultural Land and Open Space*, Goal #4: *Manage and Reduce Invasive Plant Populations*, Goal #5: *Reduce Destructive Flooding*, Goal #6: *Eliminate Erosion*, Goal #7: *Preserve and Enhance Native Habitat*. Still to come are the sections on Water Supply, Water Quality and Climate Change.

If you would like to be added to the list of stakeholders participating in the review process, please contact the Colusa Basin Watershed Coordinator, Mary Fahey at: 530.458.2931 X117, or email: [mary.fahey@ca.usda.gov](mailto:mary.fahey@ca.usda.gov). You can also view the draft sections of the Plan on the CCRCD website at [www.colusarc.org](http://www.colusarc.org), on the Projects page.



## COLUSA COUNTY RCD SPEAK-OFF CONTESTANT WINS AT STATEWIDE COMPETITION

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The Colusa County Resource Conservation District held their Annual High School Speak-Off Contest on Wednesday, October 5, 2011 at 7:00 pm. This year's theme was "What can RCD's do to help bridge sustainable conservation practices with food safety practices." Ashley Flood, a senior at Pierce High School in Arbuckle, was the first-place winner at the district level for the second year in a row. The contest was sponsored by the Colusa County Resource Conservation District and was open to all Colusa County high school students.

Ashley advanced to the regional Speak-Off contest on October 20, where she again took first place. From there, Ashley went on to compete at the State level against five other speakers. The State competition was held at the annual California Association of Resource Conservation Districts conference which was held in Stockton this year. Much to our delight, Ashley took first place at the State competition! The Colusa County RCD would like to congratulate Ashley and her coach, Mr. Green!



Click on the links below to see articles about Ashley's Speak-off adventures:  
<http://www.colusa-sun-herald.com/news/ashley-7556-flood-pierce.html>  
<http://www.colusa-sun-herald.com/news/flood-7451-competition-high.html>

*Ashley accepting Regional 1st Place plaque from Mike Yalow, Sacramento Valley Region Chair*

# UPCOMING MEETINGS, WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

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## COLUSA COUNTY RCD BOARD MEETINGS

CCRC Board meetings are held the first Wednesday of every month at the Colusa Industrial Park conference room, 100 Sunrise Blvd., Colusa, CA 95932 at 5:00 p.m. The public is welcome to attend. For more information, visit our website: [www.colusarc.org](http://www.colusarc.org)

## CALIFORNIA RANGELAND CONSERVATION COALITION SUMMIT

January 19 & 20, 2012

U. C. Davis Freeborn Hall

More info: [www.carangeland.org](http://www.carangeland.org)

## NORTHERN SACRAMENTO VALLEY INTEGRATED REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT PLANNING (NSV IRWMP) TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) MEETINGS

Third Thursday of every month, 9:00 a.m., Willows City Hall

Next meeting is January 19, 2012

For more information visit the **their NEW website:** [www.nsvwaterplan.org](http://www.nsvwaterplan.org)

## NSV IRWMP PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETINGS *(more information on page 10 & 11)*

**January 18, 2012**, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Feather River Tribal Health Auditorium, 2145 5th Ave., Oroville, CA

**January 18, 2012**, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Red Bluff Community and Service Center, Westside Room, 1500 S. Jackson St., Red Bluff, CA

**January 19, 2012**, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Colusa Indian Community Council, 3730 Highway 45, Colusa, CA - *This meeting will also be webcast*

For more information visit the NEW NSV IRWMP website: [www.nsvwaterplan.org](http://www.nsvwaterplan.org)

Or contact your County representative:

Colusa: Mary Fahey @ 530.458.2931 X117 | email: [mary.fahey@ca.usda.gov](mailto:mary.fahey@ca.usda.gov)

Glenn: Lester Messina @ 530.934.6501 | email: [wateradv@countyofglenn.net](mailto:wateradv@countyofglenn.net)

Butte: Vickie Newlin @ 530.538.2179 | email: [vnewlin@buttecounty.net](mailto:vnewlin@buttecounty.net)

Tehama: Gary Antone @ 530.385.1462 | email: [gantone@tcpw.ca.gov](mailto:gantone@tcpw.ca.gov)

Sutter: Daniel Peterson @ 530.822.7450 | email: [dwpeterson@co.sutter.ca.us](mailto:dwpeterson@co.sutter.ca.us)

Shasta: Eric Wedemeyer @ 503.225.5661 | email: [ewedemeyer@co.shasta.ca.us](mailto:ewedemeyer@co.shasta.ca.us)



## WEED MAPPING IN AND AROUND THE WATERSHED

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The CCRCD continues work on creating a GIS weed map of eight species of concern in the Colusa Basin Watershed. The Colusa Basin Watershed Coordinator is working with local stakeholders to gather existing information and also conducting field surveys in order to produce a comprehensive base map. The map is meant to be a starting point and weed populations will be updated on the map as information is gathered and as funding allows.



The Yolo County Resource Conservation District is also working on an invasive weed project in the Cache Creek Watershed. They are developing a watershed-wide invasive weed management plan. The plan will: inventory and map existing invasive species and control efforts (using existing information and targeted data collection); develop a consensus on priority species, strategies, and actions between land managers and agencies; develop a coordinated identification, monitoring, and reporting system; assess environmental compliance issues and permitting needs, and; identify funding needs for eradication, control and long-term maintenance efforts.

For more information, contact:

Gillies Robertson

Vegetation Management Specialist, Yolo County Resource Conservation District

221 West Court Street, Suite 1, Woodland, CA 95695

530/662-2037 x114 or 530/680-7118 cell

## NRCS YOUTUBE VIDEOS

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Videos of NRCS conservation practices are available on the same medium, and with the same world-wide ease and accessibility, that is enjoyed by everyone from world leaders to piano-playing cats: YouTube.

Using the tagline “Conservation: There’s a Plan for that,” the videos introduce eight different scenarios where the NRCS approach of voluntary conservation has made a difference to satisfied customers in California. A brief glimpse is given of the planning and techniques used to benefit the land and the landowner. The NRCS “actors” are simply employees doing their everyday jobs, who are passionate professionals dedicated to helping people help the land. Hopefully, for many, these will make the world of NRCS conservation practices seem more accessible and familiar.

The eight practices portrayed are as follows:

- \* Conservation Planning
- \* Managing/Monitoring Irrigation Water (2 videos)
- \* Improving Forest Stands
- \* Managing for Livestock and Wildlife on Rangeland
- \* Building Hedgerows for Pollinators and other Benefits
- \* Decommissioning a Well
- \* Managing Nutrients (Wastewater) on Dairies



Take a look. You might see someone you know: <http://www.youtube.com/user/NRCSCalifornia>



## Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Plan

### About the Board

The Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Board (Board) has been working since January 2011 to guide the IRWM process. The Board consists of three appointments made by each of the six Boards of Supervisors in Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Shasta, Sutter and Tehama Counties, for a total of eighteen members. A Technical Advisory Committee has been appointed to advise the project staff and make recommendations to the Board. The TAC will meet monthly and the Board meets quarterly. Members of the public are welcome to attend all Board and TAC meetings.

**The six counties of the Northern Sacramento Valley have been working together** for over 10 years to lay the foundation for an integrated regional plan to address water-related issues such as economic health and vitality; water supply reliability; flood, stormwater and flood management; water quality improvements; and ecosystem protection and enhancement. The counties have committed to developing a valley-wide Integrated Regional Water Management Plan by September 2013.

### Project Overview

**The Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM)** is a collaborative effort to enhance coordination of the water resources in a region. IRWM involves multiple agencies, stakeholders, tribes, individuals and groups to address water-related issues and offer solutions which can provide multiple benefits to the region.

Representatives of the six counties are working in partnership with community stakeholders, tribes and the public to identify the water-related needs of the region. This information will be used to develop goals and objectives of the IRWM Plan, and ultimately lead to the identification of projects and programs to be included in the Plan. When it is adopted in September 2013, the Plan will better position the region and local partners to receive funding for high-priority projects.

## Public Outreach Workshops

There will be several public outreach workshops held throughout the course of the project. The first of these will be held in January 2012.

**Wednesday, January 18th—  
Oroville,** 9 to 11am at Feather River Tribal Health Auditorium

**Wednesday, January 18th—  
Red Bluff,** 2 to 4 pm at the Red Bluff Community and Service Center, Westside Room

**Thursday, January 19th—  
Colusa,** 3 to 5 pm at the Colusa Indian Community Council  
*(This meeting will also be webcast.)*

Please check the website for more specific information.



## Outreach Meetings

County staff are also conducting outreach in several communities throughout the region and are available to attend meetings to share information and gather ideas from community members. Please contact the staff representative in your county to learn more.

## Get Involved!

**We want to hear from you!** The project team invites the public to be involved in the development of the IRWM Plan. There are several ways to get involved. You can get more information about local watersheds and water-related issues and provide your comments at the project website [www.nsvwaterplan.org](http://www.nsvwaterplan.org). At the website, you can also sign up to receive regular updates via email.

## County Outreach Representatives

**Gary Antone,** Tehama County  
gantone@tcpw.ca.gov  
530-385-1462

**Lester Messina,** Glenn County  
wateradv@countyofglenn.net  
530-934-6501

**Mary Fahey,** Colusa County  
mary.fahey@ca.usda.gov  
530-458-2931x117

**Vickie Newlin,** Butte County  
vnewlin@buttecounty.net  
530-538-2179

**Daniel Peterson,** Sutter County  
dwpeterson@co.sutter.ca.us  
530-822-7450

**Eric Wedemeyer,** Shasta County  
ewedemeyer@co.shasta.ca.us  
530-225-5661

## IRWMP Timeline and Plan Development Schedule

### Phase 1: Develop Goals and Objectives



**Public Outreach Workshops**



**Board Meeting**  
December 5



**Board Meeting**  
March 5



**Board Meeting**  
June 4



**Board Meeting**  
September 10



**Board Meeting**  
December 3

### Phase 2: Develop Actions and Prioritize Project



**Public Outreach Workshops**



**Draft IRWMP Released for Public Comment**



**Public Outreach Workshops**



**Final Plan Adopted**



**Board Meeting**  
March 4



**Board Meeting**  
June 3



**Board Meeting**  
Sept. 9

TAC TAC

OCT JAN MAR MAY JUL SEP NOV JAN MAR MAY JUL SEP

2011

2012

2013

*Merry Christmas*

*Happy Holidays*

*and*

*Happy New Year!*



*from*

*The Colusa County  
Resource Conservation District*