

# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

## COLUSA COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT



## COLUSA COUNTY



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### 2018 Directors

Ben Felt-President  
Beth Nall-Vice President  
Bob Alvernaz (1971-2018)  
Kim Gallagher  
Jay Dee Garr  
Tom Hickok  
Gil Ramos (2000-2018)

### 2018 Staff

Patti Turner – Executive Director (1997-Dec 2018)  
Liz Harper-Assistant Executive Director (June 2018)  
Jackie Filter-Natural Resource Coordinator (Jan 2017-April 2018)  
Emily Harmon-Natural Resource Coordinator (May 2018)

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### OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

The year 2018 will go down as a significant year of transition for the Colusa County Resource Conservation District. Some of the changes and grown the district experiences were re-active to unexpected circumstances and some were pro-active to expected changes which would occur at the end of the year. It was also a year of emerging opportunities to provide services to other entities and transferring knowledge between staff. 2018 was a year of preparing and positioning the CCRCD so it will be a stronger, more valued and better-known entity in the future.

### BOARD AND STAFF

In 2018 the CCRCD Board included Ben Felt-President, Beth Nall-Vice President, Robert Alvernaz, Kim Gallagher, Jay Dee Garr, Tom Hickok, Beth Nall, and Gil Ramos. Three directors' terms expired in December but were appointed by the Colusa County Board of Supervisors to serve additional four-year terms. They included Robert Alvernaz, Ben Felt and Tom Hickok. The CCRCD was able to maintain a quorum at all meetings during the year. On December 31<sup>st</sup> Director Alvernaz retired from the board after 38 years (1971-2018) of dedicated service. His board meeting attendance and participation was exemplary. Alvernaz served as president during his tenure. The CCRCD believes his longevity is a record for the State of California. Director Ramos passed away on December 30, 2018 after a lengthy illness, he was a vital member of the board for eighteen years and will be sorely missed. Associate Directors active in 2018 included Jim LaGrande, George Green, Amy Gibbons (2017 to December 2018)

The year 2018 was a year of many staff changed at the CCRCD. In April Jackie Filter the CCRCD's Natural Resource Coordinator unexpectedly resigned her position to become the District Manager at the Sutter County RCD. After a short recruitment period and interviews Emily Harmon, a recent graduate from the University of Nevada with a Bachelor of Science in Rangeland Ecology and Management was hired. Harmon also had experience working with the NRCS. She started working as the new Natural Resource Coordinator in May. After discovering there was enough funding left in the NRCS Cooperative Agreement to hire a second employee part-time. A plan was formulated to hire an Assistant Executive Director to assist with NRCS tasks until the end of September and then train for the Executive Director position in preparation for Turner's retirement on December 31, 2018. Liz Harper was selected as the candidate to take over the future leadership of the CCRCD. Harper was a prior employee of the CCRCD when she served as a Conservation Technician. Her passion for agriculture and natural resources and her deep roots in Colusa County made her an ideal choice for this position.

### CCRCD GRANTS & PROJECTS



**COLUSA COUNTY GROWN** remained an active project for the CCRCD in 2018. Staff attended and participating in CCG Board meetings, helped to plan the CCG Stakeholder meetings and helped maintained the website and FaceBook page. The original Board of Director of Colusa County Grown, appointed by the CCRCD Board, included Ben Felt, Amy Gibbons and Theresa Bright. Later is the year Harper and Alyssa Lindman from the Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust were appointed to the board. Theresa and Amy resigned from the board at the end of the year. The board actively solicited new board members throughout the year. Monthly board meetings were held throughout 2018

The **2016 NRCS COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT** (August 2016-September 2018, \$75,000) was completed September 31, 2018. The three-year project provided the CCRCD with funding to hire a Natural Resource Coordinator part-time to assist the NRCS Colusa Office with landowner outreach and documentation associated with Farm Bill programs. During 2018 alone the NRCS awarded \$2,328,384.00 in cost share funding and incentive payments to local producers to help protect and enhance natural resources on 28,496 acres in Colusa County. Jackie Filter worked under this agreement until April 2018 and then Emily Harmon started in May of 2018. Upon the completion of this agreement the new **2018 NRCS COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT** (October 2018-September 2021, \$180,000) was executed. The new agreement had enough funding to hire a full-time person for almost three years to work in both Colusa and Glenn counties to assist with Farm Bill programs. Harmon continued to work in the position and receive training from NRCS for the remainder of the year.



*Wendy Krehbiel-NRCS and Emily Harmon-CCRCD digging soil pit to test soil in an orchard.*

The **DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION RCD CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT** (MAY 2017-FEB 2019, \$46,209) was active during the year. The program was extremely important to the CCRCD as it afforded the District with funding to help train new staff and plan for the future. Grant tasks were directed towards hiring and training the new Executive Director and developing a well thought out plan to fill director openings. The grant also supplied funding to cover staff time to investigate grant and fee for service opportunities. In fact, all the new projects and grants listed in this report were supported in some manner through this funding.

A proposal was submitted to the **CALIFORNIA FIRE SAFE COUNCIL** in August to create of a Wildfire Protection Plan for Western Colusa County. The CCRCD applied for \$10,000 to cover salary, mileage and administrative costs associated with spearhead the development of the document. The grant required a 50% match. The CCRCD will bring together the proper Federal, State and Local entities to create the community-based plan. During the proposal writing period the Ranch Fire burned through Colusa County and destroyed the majority of the Mendocino National Forest within the county and private inholdings within the forest boundaries. This fire made the need for wildfire prevention planning and recovery more critical than ever. The CCRCD was notified at the end of the year that they had received a conditional award of funding. The 50% match required for the Fire Safe Council project was requested from **TITLE III FUNDING UNDER THE SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT OF 2002**. An application was submitted to the Colusa County Board of Supervisors for \$10,000 of the County's available Title III funding. After following the protocol required by the act the funding was awarded to the CCRCD. On December 18, 2018 the CCRCD entered an agreement with the County of Colusa to receive this funding.



In 2018 the CCRCD completed project verifications for the **CA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE STATE WATER EFFICIENCY AND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (SWEEP)** (June 2017-May 31, 2018). A total of \$28,000 was received by the CCRCD during the project period for services rendered. CCRCD staff verified the implementation of fourteen Colusa County contracts during the project's duration. This involved site visits to insure the irrigation efficiency equipment was properly installed, the landowner was competent in using the equipment and completing and forwarding the SWEEP Project Verification Completeness Check form to CDFA.

*Photograph: CCRCD NRC-Filter inspects weather station with SWEEP participants.*

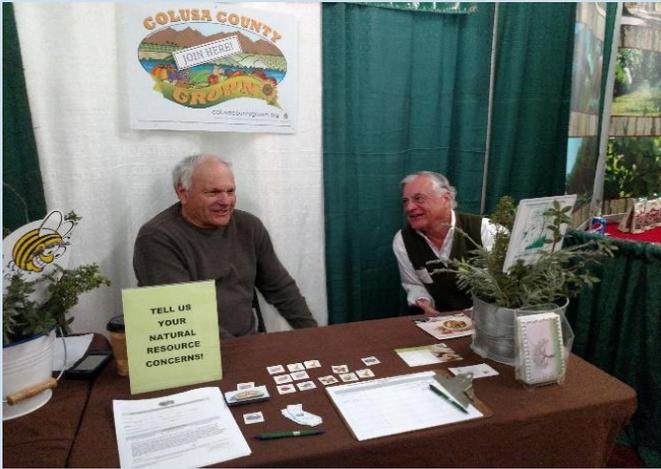
A **2018 CA DEPT OF FOOD AND AG, HEALTH SOIL PROGRAM INCENTIVES PROGRAM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT** (March 2018-May 2018, up to \$5000 awarded, total reimbursement \$907.28) was awarded to the CCRCD to assist local landowners' complete applications seeking cost share to implement healthy soil practices. CCRCD staff assisted seven potential applicants of which three submitted proposals. These applicants requested funding to implement practices such as adding compost, cover crops, organic crop conversion and practices to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers. Two of the applicants successfully obtained cost share funding totaling \$54,820.

In October 2018, the CCRCD was awarded additional funding under the California Department of Food and Ag Climate Smart Agriculture Programs for both **HEALTHY SOILS INCENTIVE PROGRAM (HSP) AND STATE WATER ENERGY AND EFFICIENCY PROGRAM (SWEEP)** (October 31, 2018- June 30, 2020, up to \$44,000). Harper was trained in December to be the Technical Assistant and the Grant Solicitation opened December 28th, 2018. Harper worked with UC Extension Advisor, Allan Fulton, and Resource Conservation District of Tehama County to put on a SWEEP workshop in the coming new year. She started promoting the program to spark interest from potential applicants once the application period opens.

In 2018 the CCRCD entered an agreement with the Glenn County RCD in 2018 to assist with the **COLUSA GLENN SUBWATERSHED PROGRAM**, a sub-watershed within the Sacramento Valley Coalition to implement regulation and report for the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Harper attended a Sacramento Valley Subwatershed Coalition Meeting, Colusa Glenn Subwatershed Member meeting, and a Nitrogen Management Continuing Education course in preparation for offering reporting assistance to Colusa members.

## CONSERVATION EDUCATION & OUTREACH

In 2018 the revamping of the **CCRCD WEBSITE**, [COLUSARCD.ORG](http://COLUSARCD.ORG) was completed. The beautiful new website was created by a website design firm out of Chico and many hours of staff time. Funding was provided through the DOC Capacity Building Grant and a generous donation the CCRCD received from Wadham Energy Inc. CCRCD's presence on social media has been successful with 140 followers and posts reaching up to 1000 people.



*Photograph; CCRCD Associate Director, Jim LaGrande assists local producer at 2018 Colusa Farm Show*

The District's **2018 COLUSA FARM SHOW EXHIBIT** featured general information about California Resource Conservation Districts. It was also used to gather information from the producers concerning their natural resource concerns. Messaging language currently being drafted by RCDs throughout the state and the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) was used in the booth to help teach spectators "what a RCD is and what they do". During the 2018 show Turner had the opportunity to be briefly interviewed by a popular radio station about the CCRCD

The CCRCD hosted the **"NRCS, RCD, FSA-101 WORKSHOP"** during the 2018 Colusa County Farm Show and invited their partners to participate in the presentation. The workshop was created to teach the basic services offered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Colusa County Resource Conservation District (CCRCD) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA).



The **CCRCD's ANNUAL SPEAK-OFF CONTEST**, held in conjunction with the CARCD Regional and State Contest, took place on October 3rd at the Colusa Industrial Park Conference Room. The 2018 theme was "How can RCDs help landowners reduce the threat of fires?". First place went to Morgan Erickson from Pierce High School. Ashley competed in the CARCD Sacramento Valley Regional Contest in Woodland where she received second place.



*2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> place 2018 CCRCD local Speak-Off Contest winners with CCRCD President-Ben Felt*



*CCRCD winner took 2<sup>nd</sup> Place 2018 Sac Valley Regional Speak-Off Winner with CARCD Executive Director, Karen Burr and Sac Region Chairperson, Colleen Hatfield.*

The CCRCD was listed as a partner in the **FARM 2 SCHOOL** proposal submitted by the Colusa County Superintendent of Schools requesting funding to create an on-campus agriculture learning laboratory at the Williams' Education Village facility. The proposal was selected for funding and CCRCD staff attended stakeholder and sub-committee meetings to provide input on introducing conservation practices within the crop planting areas.

As in past years the CCRCD applied for and received a \$1,000 **GOLDEN STATE RISK MANAGEMENT SCHOLARSHIP** to help provide risk management training for district staff. The CCRCD applied this year's scholarship towards the Assistant Executive Director's travel expenses to attend the 2018 CARCD Annual Conference in San Diego. Harper was able to attend valuable training sessions and engage in conversations with experienced peers that will help her to meet the legal requirements associated with leading the CCRCD into the future.



In early 2018 the CCRCD receive funding from the **PREMIER MUSHROOM LOCAL GRANT PROGRAM**. The project provided funding to pay stipends for speakers and cover the costs of supplies for Colusa County Grown's bi-annual stakeholder meetings. In late 2018 an application was submitted to the program to support educational materials for the CCRCD.

The **CCRCD WINTER NEWSLETTER** was published electronically through a website service called Mailchimp. This easy, no-paper publication highlighted the CCRCD new programs and projects but focused on reflecting on the retirement of the Executive Director, Patti Turner, and the longest-standing Director, Bob Alvernaz. The newsletter can be found by following this hyperlink: <https://mailchi.mp/f7c2d35675bf/winter-2018-newsletter-240141>

## OTHER STAFF CAPACITY BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES

During 2018 staff attended many workshops and webinars to further their knowledge about in the field resource management. A few of the training events including Carbon Farm Workshop and a Healthy Soil Seminar which focused on compost.



*Emily Harmon and Glenn County Executive Director listen in on Carbon Farm Planning at TomKat Ranch in Pecos, CA.*

Harper and Director Nall received scholarships to attend the **RCD BOARD BOOTCAMP** in October. The boot camp trained Harper and Nall on board purpose, development, maintenance and growth. Harper and Nall expressed their appreciation for the two-day leadership intensive coming home with a more focused and toiled intention with how to participate as an Executive Directors and as Board Members for the Colusa County RCD.

Western Shasta RCD led the efforts to apply for funding through the CCRCD's Bechtel Foundation grant funding to fund a consultant to oversee the **SACRAMENTO VALLEY REGION DURABLE COLLABORATION**. The purpose of the collaboration is to identify ways the RCDs within the Region could work together and share resources to address mutual goals. Efforts during the year focused on trying to identify a common resource concern. Through activities associated with this group a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was created and adopted by Shasta, Tehama, Glenn and Colusa Counties RCDs allowing the districts to work together easily. The original intent of the document was to be a vehicle to utilize equipment and staff between districts to address wildfire damage in adjoining forest. At year's end efforts were underway to expand the MOU to include the remaining RCDs in the CARCD Sacramento Valley Region.

Turner, Harper and Nall attended the **GOLDEN STATE RISK MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY CONFERENCE (GSRMA)** annual conference in Corning, Ca on October 18<sup>th</sup>. This was the first year that an RCD Director attended the event. Nall gave the conference a very high appraisal due to the keynote speaker Gordon Graham. Graham's message was focused on risk management and ways to identify and head-off situations that could lead to exposure to personal injury and litigation.

The CCRCD participated in the **2018 CARCD SACRAMENTO VALLEY REGION FALL AND SPRING MEETINGS**. In-lieu of the normal Spring meeting the region convened the initial gathering of the Durable Collaboration group. At this meeting ideas on how the region of RCDs could work together address mutual infrastructure needs and local natural resource concerns. The Fall meeting was hosted by the Yolo County RCD and included the regional Speak-Off contest. A valuable discussion took place to enlighten the group and gather further input for the Durable Collaboration efforts.

Harmon and Harper attended the **CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS' ANNUAL CONFERENCE** in San Diego. During Wednesday's "free day of training", Harper attended the Healthy Soils Summit as Harper participated in the Capacity Building training day in which the Communications Academy was kicked off. The Communications Academy will be a 3-month course focusing on "telling the RCD story". Throughout the formal conference, Harper focused on seminars covering RCD management and public agency laws while Harmon focused on project-based training such as forest recovery and rangeland management.

## **CCRCD ADMINISTRATION**

In 2018 the CCRCD requested and received **BASIC OPERATING EXPENSES** from the Colusa County General Fund in the amount of \$28,260. This funding is vital to support costs of mandatory items such as staff salary devoted to administration and financial management of the CCRCD, liability insurance and annual audits. The CCRCD's ability to generate adequate annual revenue to sustain the basic operating expenses of the District and maintaining staff remains a top concern. The CCRCD deposits their funds with the Colusa County Treasurer and submit claims for payment to the Colusa County Auditor.

**COLUSA TAX SERVICE** continues to do an excellent job providing payroll and tax reporting services for the CCRCD.

**GOLDEN STATE RISK MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY** provides Liability and Property coverage and Worker's Compensation Insurance for the CCRCD.

The CCRCD's **AUDIT FOR YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2018** was completed by Larry Bain, CPA. The CPA's opinion was that the basic financial statements presented fairly in all material respects and conformity with the modified cash basis of accounting. This was the final audit for a three-year contract with Larry Bain. In 2019 a Request for Proposals will be sent out seeking the next three-year contact for 2019, 2020 and 2021 audits.

