



RCDs & the Natural Resources Conservation Service

Partnerships in Action

In local communities all around the State, RCDs and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) have partnered to make concrete conservation happen with fantastic results. These partnerships have included various conservation and restoration projects that have positively impacted their communities. The following are examples of these projects from this partnership.



The beautifully secluded Hoopa Valley is home to the Klamath Trinity RCD, California's first tribal conservation district.

Photo Credit: NRCS



With the RCD's plans for adequate irrigation the land in the Hoopa Valley has potential for very successful agriculture.

Photo Credit: NRCS

NRCS Helps Establish California's first Tribal RCD

In 2007 the Klamath Trinity RCD (KTRCD) became California's first Tribal conservation district. The *Hupa* homeland remains well-off the freeway in the isolated, serene, and beautiful Hoopa Valley in the northwest corner of California. Residents on the 12 mile-square reservation which straddles the Trinity River are self-sufficient through necessity. Timber has been the Tribe's biggest cash crop, but they felt like they should dig into agriculture since they have the land to support it.

The Tribe learned about Resource Conservation Districts from Reina Rogers, the tribal liaison for NRCS. They found the potential benefits and opportunities to be appealing, so under Tribal law in 2007 the first Tribal conservation district in California was born.

The KTRCD developed a 5 year plan with help from NRCS which focuses on increasing agriculture in the region, restoring land and water resources, food security, education and partnerships. Forging effective partnerships is also an important goal to the RCD. They are authorized to form partnerships with the NRCS, other agencies of the Department of Agriculture, and other organizations as well as entities of the Hoopa Valley Tribe. The RCD plans to serve surrounding communities although the formal district boundary is the Hoopa square.

One of the first projects the RCD and NRCS worked on was developing a soil survey. The soil survey helped farmers and ranchers to better understand the chemical and physical properties of their soil and guide them in supporting their farm and ranch operations. The NRCS also helped develop a plan for a Valley-wide irrigation system, which was a key need for agriculture on the level that the KTRCD had envisioned.

Overall, this has been a very successful partnership between the NRCS and for RCDs.

RCDs are a leader in on-the-ground conservation efforts. The 99 districts statewide are the center of locally led conservation in their communities and accomplish thousand of practical, hands-on conservation projects every year. Typically these projects involve agriculture and private land, but we also accomplish much more. RCDs are special districts that are a good example of strong local government. We are responsive and accountable to our communities to promote local conservation goals.

Shasta Valley RCD & the Araujo Dam Project

In 2007 with funding from the NRCS' Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) the Shasta Valley RCD created the Araujo Dam Project, a cooperative effort in northern California to conserve water, improve irrigation systems, and remove fish barriers on the Shasta River. The California Department of Fish and Game, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the North Coast Regional Water Board, the California State Water Resources Control Board, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Siskiyou County, and five individual ranches were also in partnership with the RCD and NRCS on this project.

The goals of the project were to design and install a more efficient irrigation system that would improve upstream migration of fish passage and water quality on the river while ensuring Araujo Dam users were still able to receive irrigation water for their land. Additional goals of the project were to design and install a new fish screen at the diversion location, and remove the existing flashboard of the diversion dam. In order to meet these goals the Araujo Diversion Dam had to be removed and leaky irrigation ditches had to be replaced with 18 inch pipes over seven miles, this saved about 2,000 gallons of water per minute.

The completed system ensures ranchers are able to meet water quality requirements in the Shasta River TMDL and receive Incidental Take Coverage in the Shasta Watershed Wide Programmatic Permitting Program. Overall, this partnership has greatly improved the water efficiency for Araujo Dam users and will continue to do so.



*Shasta Valley RCD Staff and Siskiyou County Supervisor viewing the project site.
Photo Credit: NRCS*



*The Araujo Dam presented a major problem for spawning Coho Salmon. The flashboard dam has been removed and replaced by pump diversions.
Photo Credit: US Fish & Wildlife Service Photo*

