



SOTOYOME



RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**BI-ANNUAL
REPORT**

JANUARY 2009

MISSION OF THE SOTOYOME RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

“To provide technical, financial, and educational support to landowners in rural and urban communities to help sustain agriculture, the economy and the environment.”

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

This has been an extraordinary past two years for the Sotoyome Resource Conservation District (RCD). With our long positive history working with private landowners and the increasing public awareness of our services, we are seeing growing support throughout our district. This growth is shown in the scope of our projects, the diversity of our partnerships and relationships with individuals and partner agencies, and in the strength and numbers of our board members and staff.

The Sotoyome RCD implements conservation work with landowners and public agencies to protect and improve agriculture and natural resources, watershed monitoring to inform our education and restoration projects, and educational workshops and conservation programs to assist landowners in land stewardship. Our board includes recognized leaders from throughout the agricultural and natural resource community who share the vision of the RCD as a thriving resource for the constituents in our District and for Sonoma County’s future.

Times are changing and the need for natural resource conservation and education is greater than ever. Thank you all for your commitment to the stewardship of our resources and the important work of the Sotoyome RCD. It is your support that makes our work to provide conservation education and land management assistance possible.

Kara Hukert

ACHIEVEMENTS 2007–2008

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Education is the cornerstone of all RCD programs and the Sotoyome RCD has a long history of providing educational opportunities to private landowners to help them steward their land. The RCD collaborated with several partners over the last two years to present educational workshops on a variety of important natural resource topics, including: Implementing Road Restoration Projects, 3rd Annual Funding Workshop for Watershed Restoration and Conservation Practices, Livestock Grazing on Vernal Pool Landscapes, and Forest and Watershed Stewardship Workshops in Mark West, Austin, and Mill Creek Watersheds.

In addition, Sotoyome RCD completed publications for landowners and managers to assist them in the stewardship of their land, including the “Grazing Handbook: A Guide for Resource Managers in Coastal Watersheds” in partnership with Lisa Bush and “Management Tips To Enhance Land & Water Quality For Small Acreage Properties: Laguna de Santa Rosa Watershed.”

City of Santa Rosa Bioassessment Program

Since 2004, the RCD has been collaborating with the City of Santa Rosa’s Storm Water Team to deliver the Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Bioassessment Program. Working with six different city schools and partnering with Envirichment, the RCD teaches students about watershed science, aquatic ecology, land use, water quality monitoring, and storm water pollution.

RESTORATION PROGRAM

Rural Road Improvement Program (RRIP)

Phase I of the Upper Mark West Creek Sediment Reduction Project was completed in 2007. This project reduced approximately 14,106 cubic yards of sediment from entering Mark West Creek, a high quality salmon and steelhead stream. The RCD worked with 73 landowners on this project and received an environmental achievement award from Congressman Mike Thompson. Through the RRIP, roads are also being assessed for sediment sources in Mark West, Pena, and Austin Creek watersheds.

Streambank Stabilization Projects

Three important streambank stabilization projects were completed in 2007, including a project on Sausal Creek in Alexander Valley and urban streambank repair projects on Matanzas and Spring Creeks.

Russian River *Arundo donax* Removal and Riparian Enhancement Program

Since 2001, over 1,150 acres of invasive *Arundo donax* has been removed from streamside habitat in the Russian River watershed. Russian River mainstem

One of many successful workshops on natural resource topics that the RCD led over the last two years





This emergency streambank repair project is just one of several projects that the RCD implemented with landowners throughout the district in 2007-8.

mechanical removal began in 2007 with over 260 acres removed in the summers of 2007-8. This program, formerly led by Circuit Rider Productions Inc., in partnership with the Sotoyome and Mendocino County RCDs, is now being coordinated by both RCDs in partnership with West Coast Watershed and will continue to require support from private landowners in order to achieve control of this highly invasive plant.



Austin Creek Watershed Restoration Program

This restoration program in Austin Creek will include sediment source assessments on over 50 miles of roads, instream fish habitat improvements, and the formation of a technical advisory committee.

Salmonid Coalition

The RCD is a technical advisor to a cooperative effort to restore and enhance salmonid habitat on selected tributaries in the Alexander, Knights, and Dry Creek Valleys. The RCD has assisted in assessing habitat on 12 of the 15 streams listed in the Coalition's focus area and is assisting landowners in the development of habitat restoration projects.

UPCOMING

Dry Creek Fisheries Enhancement Projects

The RCD is in the planning stages of 3 fish habitat improvement projects in the Dry Creek Valley in partnership with the Sonoma County Water Agency under the conditions of the Russian River Biological Opinion. Two of the three projects will be completed in the summer of 2009.

CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Stewarding Small Acreages

To address the impact of the rapid increase of land subdivision and fragmentation on our local resources, the RCD developed an educational workbook and workshop series entitled "Management Tips to Enhance Land & Water Quality for Small Acreage Properties." The RCD is pursuing funding for a second phase of this program for 2009.

Land Management in the Santa Rosa Plain

The RCD continues to manage properties in the Santa Rosa Plain that are owned by the Department of Fish and Game. Management activities include grazing plan development, oversight of grazing leases with local grazers, infrastructure improvement, and weed management.

UPCOMING

Livestock & Land

The Sotoyome RCD is in the beginning stages of developing and pursuing funding to assist livestock and horse owners with their resource management concerns. This program, called Livestock & Land, will include workshops, conservation planning, and technical and financial assistance for implementing best management practices such as mud and manure management, buffer strips, and pasture fencing.

Water Conservation Program

In an effort to address a growing need for water conservation in our district, the RCD is working with agricultural producers and rural landowners to develop an innovative Water Conservation Program.

WATERSHED MONITORING & ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The monitoring and assessment program continues to inform and prioritize restoration activities by identifying habitat conditions and landowner needs in key tributaries in the Russian River watershed.

Continuous Temperature Monitoring Program

Over the last two years, the monitoring program has doubled its temperature monitoring stations to better represent watershed conditions. In addition, we have augmented our program with additional bioassessment parameters including macroinvertebrate monitoring. This data assists greatly in evaluating long term water quality trends. Lastly, we continue to coordinate the Russian River temperature monitoring work



group to better maximize the limited temperature monitoring resources throughout the Russian River watershed.

Synoptic Monitoring—Russian River First Flush

The RCD has been able to revitalize and continue this vital event after Russian River First Flush stopped in 2006. The First Flush sampling design has been overhauled to focus only on urban stormwater quality and its effect on the receiving waters of the nearby creeks. The Russian River 2007 First Flush Report was just released and can be found at: www.sotoyomercd.org/monitoring.

Russian River First Flush 2008 volunteers sampling at Piner Creek.

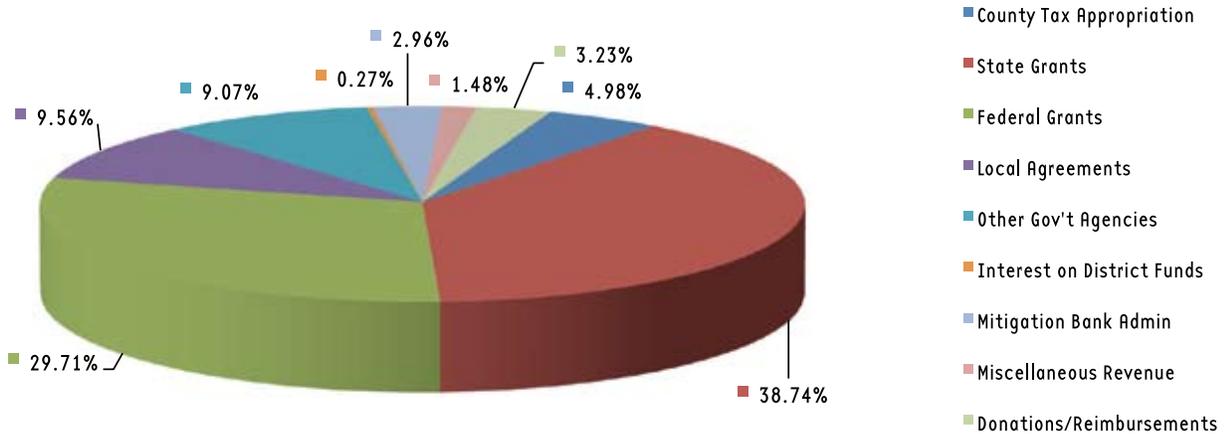
UPCOMING

Upper Mark West Management Plan

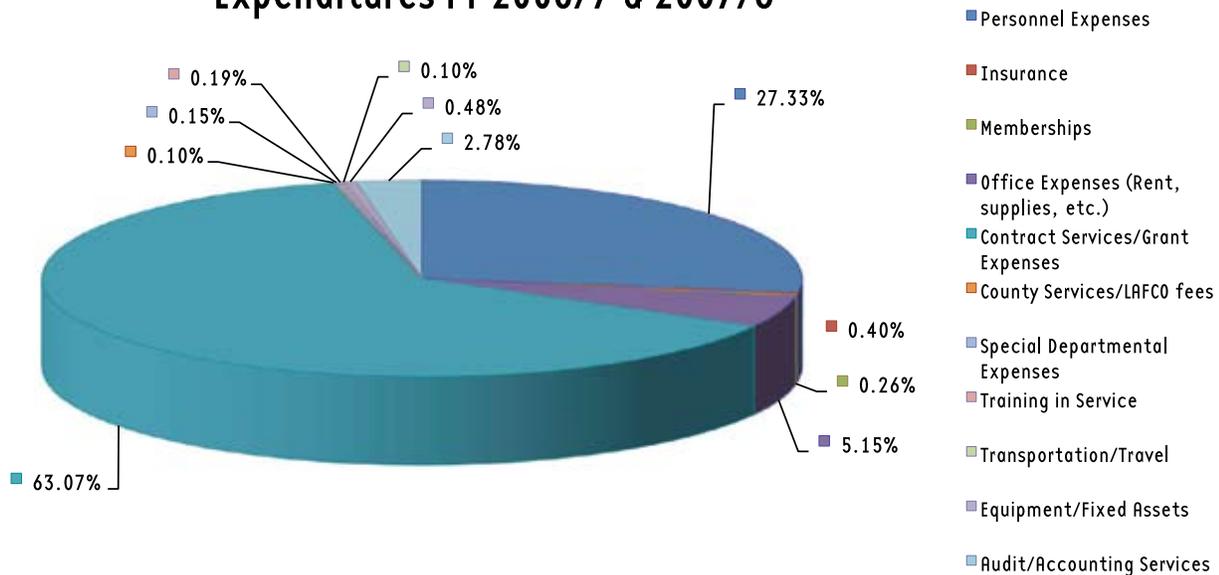
Building on years of cooperation with landowners in the Upper Mark West watershed, the RCD has begun development of the Upper Mark West Watershed Management Plan. This will be an interactive, web-based tool stakeholders can use to make management decisions on their properties. 🌱

SOTOYOME RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT BI-ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2006/7 & 2007/8

Revenue FY 2006/7 & 2007/8



Expenditures FY 2006/7 & 2007/8



BOARD MEMBERS

Ron Rolleri, President
Dennis Murphy, Vice President
Richard Mounts
Earle Cummings
Walt Ryan

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Steve Thomas
Bill Roop
Pat Cummings
Matt Greene

STAFF

Kara Heckert, Executive Director
Sierra Cantor, Watershed Biologist
Greg Fisher, Restoration Program Manager
Valerie Sherron, Project Coordinator
Trisha Meisler, Development Coordinator
Amy Richards, Bookkeeper



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RESOURCE
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PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT

Private landowners

CalFire

California Department of Fish and Game

California State Coastal Conservancy

Center for Ecosystem Management and Restoration

City of Rohnert Park

City of Santa Rosa

Department of Water Resources

Friends of Mark West Watershed

Gold Ridge RCD

Gualala River Watershed Council

Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation

Mendocino County RCD

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Natural Resources Conservation Service

NOAA Fisheries

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

North Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council

Pacific Watershed Associates

Prunuske Chatham, Inc.

Russian River Property Owners Association

Sonoma County Farm Bureau

Sonoma County Water Agency

Sonoma County Winegrape Commission

Sonoma Land Trust

Southern Sonoma County RCD

Trout Unlimited

UC Cooperative Extension

US Fish and Wildlife Service

US Army Corps of Engineers

West Coast Watershed

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