LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
A YEAR OF ACHIEVEMENTS
WITH COMMUNITY SUPPORT

DEAR NEIGHBORS AND PARTNERS,

2016 has been a big year for Gold Ridge RCD. We turned 75 years old, completed our strategic plan, and became a part of some larger regional projects we hope will make dramatic and long-lasting benefits for our community, now and future generations.

This year, Gold Ridge RCD has participated in the Sonoma County Venture Conservation project with funding through NRCS’s Regional Conservation Partnership Program, we contributed to the Russian River Confluence, and we are working with a team of nine counties to embark on a program using Carbon Farm Plans that can help farmers sequester carbon dioxide and be more resilient in the face of climate change.

We can’t do these projects without support from our RCD community. It’s important to note how conservation projects are funded and how your tax dollars are being spent.

The conservation projects on the ground, such as monitoring soil, water and wildlife concerns, as well as providing public education and opportunities to better understand our agricultural lands and environment.

While our RCD receives funding from in and outside of our community, a majority of RCD dollars are spent right here in Sonoma County. Our conservation projects employ local contractors, buy from local businesses, and engage our community’s youth. One RCD dollar is leveraged 10 to 30 times at the local level.

The RCD also runs some services at a fee, such as renting the no-till drill seeder, having your well-water level monitored, biological surveys, or property assessments. These modest fees are meant to support the continuation of the service and are not profit-earning programs.

Lastly, our generous donors—who are farmers, ranchers, residents and even elected officials—provide our RCD with their vote of confidence and their donations. We appreciate with all our hearts the generosity shown to us by those community members who let us know they appreciate with all our hearts the generosity shown to us by those community members who let us know they appreciate.

We are proud to be addressing some of the nation’s and state’s most pressing conservation needs at the local level through these programs.

Gold Ridge RCD is also supported by a Memorandum of Understanding with the County of Sonoma to provide services like bringing in state and federal grants to our District, answering calls from the public to address their

FISCAL YEAR 15/16 REVENUES TOTAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Revenue Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Grants</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>$1,812,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Grants</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>$472,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Contracts</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>$351,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County MOU</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>$70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Taxes</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>$22,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fee for Service</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>$10,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>$2,807</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$2,812,023

WITH GRATITUDE,

BRITTANY JENSEN

in our county including identifying high-priority conservation easements and projects to improve water supply and water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on local agricultural lands. The partnership will leverage local knowledge, funding, and resources with RCPP funding to match federal funds 2:1.

...they had brought together an impressive constellation of partners representing research, science and agriculture to sustain both agriculture and open space.

Jason Weller

NRCS CHIEF

GOLD RIDGE, RCD

STEWARDS OF THE LAND

COORDINATING REGIONAL CONSERVATION TOGETHER

O

n May 6, Pepperwood Preserve hosted the kick-off meeting for Sonoma County Venture Conservation, which was recently awarded $8 million through the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The kickoff included a special field tour attended by NRCS Chief Jason Weller, visiting from Washington, DC, and the NRCS State Conservationist for California, Carlos Suarez.

Core partners of Sonoma County Venture Conservation include Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Sonoma and Gold Ridge RCDs, NRCS, Pepperwood Dwight Center for Conservation Science, Sonoma County Water Agency and a Technical Advisory Committee of thirty organizations.

"This project is about fulfilling your vision," said Weller. He continued by telling the group that they had brought together an impressive constellation of partners representing research, science and agriculture to sustain both agriculture and open space. "I do a lot of travelling and I am very impressed by what you have assembled here—you guys in Sonoma are innovators."

The goal of the Sonoma County Venture Conservation partnership is to create a platform for large-scale, coordinated conservation action...
RCDS MEET & EXCEED COUNTY GOALS

HOW SONOMA COUNTY IS BOOSTING THE WORK OF THE RCDs

The Sonoma County-RCD Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a contract between the County and the Sonoma RCD and the Gold Ridge RCD that awards the RCDs $380,000 over a two-year contract period so that the RCDs can provide new or extend existing services to the community. In the 2014-2016 contract, the RCDs together met and exceeded every deliverable the County required in its MOU:

• Exceeded the target of conservation technical assistance to 72 landowners on 15,000 acres by providing assistance to 190 AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL LANDOWNERS on over 28,000 ACRES.
• Exceeded the target of 1,000,000 gallons of water saved/stored with 2.7 MILLION GALLONS.
• Exceeded the targets of 1 mile of instream habitat improved with 1.7 MILES.
• Exceeded the target of four County coordination meetings with 58 MEETINGS convened or attended with county organizations.
• Exceeded the target of 700 youth reach with 1,849 YOUTH ENGAGED through various educational opportunities.
• Exceeded the target of submitting eight grant proposals by submitting 36 competitive state and federal grants totaling $21,205,560.

This contract is a direct investment in our local ecology and in the local economy. RCDs almost exclusively hire, contract and purchase from local businesses to get the work done.

COUNTY MOU WITH RCDs SUPPORTS COUNTY’S STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

• Community is proactive in mitigating and adapting to the causes and impacts of climate change to safeguard the environment, human health and the economy.
• Protect, maintain and manage parks, public lands and open space systems that promote recreation, health, agricultural viability and protects watersheds, promotes biodiversity and contributes to the economic vitality.
• Agricultural resources are preserved, valued for food and for maintaining links to our County’s heritage.
• Community members have access to clean air, water, and safe, reliable solid and liquid waste management systems.
• Community understands and supports the services provided by the County
• Increased or enhanced community-based partnerships.

WATER STORAGE PROJECTS

MORE THAN CATCHING RAIN....

With funding from state and federal programs targeted at drought mitigation, climate change adaptation and sensitive species protection, the Gold Ridge RCD is working to design and build rainwater catchment systems this year at several sites.

DOMESTIC ROOFTOP RAINWATER HARVESTING IN 2016
• 5 Projects in the Green Valley Watershed – TOTALING 250,000 GALLONS OF STORAGE
• 2 Projects in the Salmon Creek Watershed – TOTALING 130,000 GALLONS OF STORAGE

AGRICULTURAL RAINWATER STORAGE SYSTEMS IN 2016
• A Bodega farm will catch 68,000 GALLONS for watering stock and irrigating vegetables and fruit trees.
• Redwood Hill Farm will use 110,000 GALLONS of rainwater to supply their goats.
• Bodega Goat Ranch will water their goats and forage crops with 63,000 GALLONS straight from the sky.

These systems are important for our community and ecosystems because water harvested by these systems replaces water that otherwise would have been sourced from local streams, shallow wells and groundwater during the summer, at a time when wildlife also need scarce water resources.
Every three years, the RCD sets new goals and strategy framework to help guide and direct us. In preparation, we conducted a small community survey to hear what natural resource concerns you, the public, have and what types of projects you’d like to see the RCD taking on.

Here are the results:

The top natural resource concerns from survey respondents were:

- Creek (Riparian) health 71%
- Groundwater Supply 54%
- Low instream flows 39%

NOTE: The amount of interest in creek and riparian health was somewhat of a wonderful surprise! We know that salmon are a valuable natural resource and that water resources within creeks beg for attention, but were not prepared to hear so uniformly that our community is concerned too. Farmers (71%), rural residents (75%), and urban residents (80%) all responded that creek health was a top concern.

With these results, the 2016-19 Strategic Plan has been designed to include in its scope programs that address streamflow enhancement, water conservation, clean water, riparian wildlife habitat enhancement and climate resiliency. In addition, other programs like LandSmart® planning, water quality monitoring, and environmental education contribute to these same priorities indirectly.

Request a copy of the 2016-17 Strategic Plan to read the complete list of objectives and planned actions for the 2016-19 period.

Gold Ridge RCD 2016-19 Strategic Plan Natural Resource Priorities
- Sustainable diverse agriculture
- Climate change resiliency
- Clean water, water conservation and water supply sustainability
- Education, awareness and outreach about resource conservation
- Resource conservation projects built on sound science
- Diverse and resilient wildlife
- Soil health and conservation
- Watershed and natural resource planning and enhancement

Gold Ridge RCD 2016-19 Strategic Plan Objectives

- Watershed and natural resource planning and enhancement
- Soil health and conservation
- Diverse and resilient wildlife
- Education, awareness and outreach about resource conservation
- Resource conservation projects built on sound science
- Clean water, water conservation and water supply sustainability
- Climate change resiliency
- Sustainable diverse agriculture

Associate Director Chris Choo has this to say about why she chose to join the Deep Roots monthly giving program:

“I support my RCD to sustain local people working for our future. Gold Ridge is able to leverage my dollars 27(1) to 1 to strengthen our community. Projects like rainwater capture work with big and small water users to secure our water supply in times of drought, leave water in creeks for salmon, and reduce erosion from runoff. This work is funded through grants written by staff and through partnerships with landowners, technical experts, and local businesses to supply and construct the project. West County is strong because of our commitment to our community and Gold Ridge has been a part of that history. Please join me in providing ongoing support.”

Chris Choo
Gold Ridge RCD, Associate Director

Donate to the Gold Ridge RCD

From community education, to conserving water, to supporting on-farm innovation, to saving and enhancing healthy soil, to addressing climate change on our local farms, Gold Ridge RCD couldn’t do this great work without the support of our community.

Donating to the RCD is a way of voting your support. Your donations allow us to do more, be more and feel the support of our constituents. All members of our district benefit from the work we do, and we hope that with donations, our constituents can promote our work even further.

You can donate once, or you can become a member of our monthly giving program, ’Deep Roots’. We’ve named it Deep Roots for many reasons. One is that our RCD has deep roots in Sonoma County. At first an agency of farmers, established in 1941 by local berry and apple farmers, dairy-men and cattle ranchers, the RCD has over the last 75 years become an agency for farmers. Leading on a long and deep history, the RCD team continues to help this district’s farmers and families.

We also call it Deep Roots because your donations allow us to deepen our roots here. With your donations, we can bring more services to the district, such as well water-level monitoring, renting the no-till drill, and more. We can host more public outings, power our team to write more grant proposals, and bring more projects to our district. Your donations also help keep this modest RCD’s lights on.

Thank you for voting your confidence in the work we do by making a tax-deductible donation to your RCD this year.

Visit our website to see a video celebrating the RCD’s history and our 75th anniversary.
INSTREAM HABITAT ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS

Within our mission as an RCD is building habitat for our community’s most sensitive species. This year, two in-stream habitat enhancement projects are underway: the removal of a fish passage barrier on upper Green Valley Creek, and the installation of large wood habitat structures in lower Dutch Bill Creek. Both projects protect and enhance the habitat of local threatened and endangered species of salmon.

Carbon Farming uses a set of known methods for reducing on-farm operational carbon emissions and for sequestering atmospheric carbon dioxide within soils and converting them to plant material and/or soil organic matter by way of the carbon cycle. Carbon farming is not only a way farmers can fight climate change, its methods also often enhance a farm’s soil biodiversity, and water resources. Compost application on rangeland has been a major focus for scientists and ranchers, and is proving to be a powerful method for sequestering CO2 in the soil. See below for a more extensive list of farming practices that are part of “carbon farming.”

SONOMA COUNTY CARES ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE, and has set a high goal for reducing the activities and sources of emissions that cause warming in the atmosphere. With the use of a wide variety of beneficial practices, Sonoma County farmers have the ability to reach our County’s goal for greenhouse gas reductions. From the County’s community-based Climate Action Plan 2020: “Agricultural soil carbon levels will be substantially higher in 2050 through soil management practices supporting crop development and carbon sequestration.”

NEXT STEPS:
The Gold Ridge RCD has funding to write carbon farm plans with farmers through our Regional Conservation Collaboration Program (RCCP) Grant for the next few years. However, there is a regional shortage of compost, the application of which on rangelands is a major practice on rangeland carbon farms. We are looking for new sources of large quantities of compost.

CONTACT JASON HOORN at JASON@GOLDRIDGERCD.ORG if you want to provide RCDs with your compost.

“By helping farmers make carbon farming a part of their daily operations, we have the opportunity to work on a global problem—climate change—and make a local difference. By working on carbon farming with other North Bay RCDs, we also have an opportunity to strengthen our regional mission to build climate resilience across northern California.”

Brittany Jensen
GOLD RIDGE RCD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STEWARDS OF THE LAND

GOLD RIDGE, RCD
WATERSHED MOMENTS

Watersheds are “basins of relations,” to quote local water steward, Brock Dolman. Watersheds are systems that drain and hold water, have their own micro-climates and biomes, host wildlife, human life, and agriculture. Gold Ridge RCD was proud to support its community this year in better understanding, stewarding and celebrating its watersheds.

MARCH 2016: DUTCH BILL AND GREEN VALLEY WATERSHEDS UPDATE MEETINGS

Held in Camp Meeker and Sebastopol, these meetings brought residents together under one roof with RCD staff, University of California biologists, and hydrologists to examine the conditions of water resources in these two watersheds. Landowners brought questions, concerns and an interest in doing more to act progressively in the face of drought, changing water supply and water regulation. Biologists impressed the importance of steadily flowing, connected streams, cold and clear water, and diverse in-stream habitat to local salmon populations. RCD staff pointed to the research conducted by local hydrologists that suggest these watersheds are best supported when landowners slow, spread, sink and store stormwater on their property before allowing it to drain into creeks and out to the ocean. For more information, search www.goldridgercd.org for “Green Valley Meetings” and “Water Stewardship Guides”.

FALL 2016: RUSSIAN RIVER CONFLUENCE HEADWATERS-TO-OCEAN PADDLE AND TRIBUTARY TOURS

“I’ve been a part of projects and programs, but what I want for the Russian River is a movement,” Fourth District Supervisor James Gore organized a passionate team of community members to host what he calls the Russian River Confluence—a series of events meant to bring the greater community’s focus to the health of the Russian River. This fall, Confluence partners hosted tours of multiple tributaries to the Russian River. Gold Ridge RCD toured the public through Willow Creek in Jenner, CA, observing the meandering channels of its lush floodplain and the redwood-covered canyons of its headwaters. Also, Gold Ridge presented at LandPath’s conservation workday in the Dutch Bill Creek watershed at Bohemia Ecological Reserve in Occidental, CA. Other tours included Mark West Creek on Rancho Mark West in Santa Rosa, hosted by Sonoma RCD.

NOVEMBER 2016: CLIMATE-BENEFICIAL PRACTICES IN VINEYARDS ARE WATER-BENEFICIAL

The Gold Ridge, Sonoma, Mendocino and Napa RCDs, the USDA’s NRCS Ukiah Office, UCCE Mendocino and the Santa Rosa Junior College came together this November to discuss the options this region’s vineyard managers have for enacting climate-beneficial practices on the land. These might include timed irrigation, compost application, hedgerow planting, cover cropping and grazing, reducing tillage, and more. These practices are being examined for their ability to sequester carbon dioxide, retain water, reduce the need for synthetic fertilizers, amendments and pesticides, and maintain grape quality. This meeting will help inform the RCDs as they start assisting vineyards to create LandSmart Carbon Farm Plans. (See page 9 for more information).

SPECIAL THANK YOU

TO MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY WHO VOLUNTARILY STEWARD THEIR WATERSHEDS THROUGH TRASH CLEAN UPS, REPLANTINGS, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

“The pleasure and satisfaction that comes out of these Sunday mornings is a gift to ourselves and to the fish in the streams. It also helps keep us in connection with our environment, both the good and the not so good.” These are the words of Atascadero-Green Valley Watershed Council organizer John Roberts about the Council’s volunteer clean-up days held in September 2016.

TRIBUTARY TOUR OF WILLOW CREEK

in Jenner, CA explored the hydrology, wildlife and history of this dynamic watershed, September 24th, 2016. This event was hosted as part of the Russian River Confluence.

- Duckworth Ranch is the place for wildlife! Attendees learned how this ranching family welcomes fish, otters, owls, deer, and much more onto the land, November 5th, 2016.

- Families gathered at Haverton Hill Creamery for “un dia de campo,” a day in the field, at this Latino-focused outing to the family-owned and operated Bloomfield sheep dairy, July 16th, 2016.

- Steve Moody, a Valley Ford-based milk producer for Clover-Stornetta, expressed his interest in working with the wetland wetland ecosystem of the Estero Americano at “Flurry of Feathers: Birds of the Estero Americano.”

- Families gathered at Haverton Hill Creamery for "un dia de campo," a day in the field, at this Latino-focused outing to the family-owned and operated Bloomfield sheep dairy, July 16th, 2016.

- Duckworth Ranch is the place for wildlife! Attendees learned how this ranching family welcomes fish, otters, owls, deer, and much more onto the land, November 5th, 2016.

- Steve Moody, a Valley Ford-based milk producer for Clover-Stornetta, expressed his interest in working with the wetland wetland ecosystem of the Estero Americano at “Flurry of Feathers: Birds of the Estero Americano.”

GET OUTSIDE WITH GRRCD & STAY INFORMED ON CONSERVATION EFFORTS

"FARMING FOR THE FUTURE" celebrates stories of farmers who have enriched their properties and businesses by taking on conservation practices and projects.

REQUEST A COPY OR VIEW THE 12-PAGE INSERT ONLINE AT GOLDRIDGERCD.ORG/HTML/LATEST-NEWS.HTM

AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE OUTINGS BRING FAMILIES TO PRIVATE PROTECTED FARMS

Families gathered at Haverton Hill Creamery for "un dia de campo," a day in the field, at this Latino-focused outing to the family-owned and operated Bloomfield sheep dairy, July 16th, 2016.

- Duckworth Ranch is the place for wildlife! Attendees learned how this ranching family welcomes fish, otters, owls, deer, and much more onto the land, November 5th, 2016.

- Steve Moody, a Valley Ford-based milk producer for Clover-Stornetta, expressed his interest in working with the wetland wetland ecosystem of the Estero Americano at “Flurry of Feathers: Birds of the Estero Americano.”

- Families gathered at Haverton Hill Creamery for "un dia de campo," a day in the field, at this Latino-focused outing to the family-owned and operated Bloomfield sheep dairy, July 16th, 2016.

- Duckworth Ranch is the place for wildlife! Attendees learned how this ranching family welcomes fish, otters, owls, deer, and much more onto the land, November 5th, 2016.

- Steve Moody, a Valley Ford-based milk producer for Clover-Stornetta, expressed his interest in working with the wetland wetland ecosystem of the Estero Americano at “Flurry of Feathers: Birds of the Estero Americano.”

GET OUTSIDE WITH GRRCD & STAY INFORMED ON CONSERVATION EFFORTS

"FARMING FOR THE FUTURE" celebrates stories of farmers who have enriched their properties and businesses by taking on conservation practices and projects.

REQUEST A COPY OR VIEW THE 12-PAGE INSERT ONLINE AT GOLDRIDGERCD.ORG/HTML/LATEST-NEWS.HTM
GRRCD STAFF

Brittany Jensen  Executive Director
Joe Pozzi  District Manager
Noelle Johnson  Conservation Planner
John Green  Lead Scientist
Sierra Cantor  Ecologist
Adriana Stagnaro  Project Coordinator
William Hart  Project Manager
Jason Hoon  Project Manager
Michele Harris  Bookkeeper
Erica Mikesh  Engineer
Mare O’Connell  Financial Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joe Dutton
Ann Cassidy
Torrey Olson
Richard Hughes
Mel Sanchietti

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS
Bob Burke
Chris Choo
Guy Smith

MEETINGS

Third Thursday of every month
3:30–5:30PM (unless otherwise posted)
2776 Sullivan Road,
Sebastopol, CA  95472

MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

CONTACT INFORMATION

Gold Ridge RCD
707-823-5244 (PHONE)
707-823-5243 (FAX)
www.goldridgercd.org

MAILING AND PHYSICAL ADDRESS

2776 Sullivan Road
Sebastopol, CA  95472
Email: Brittany@goldridgercd.org

NRCS SONOMA-MARIN OFFICE

5401 Old Redwood Hwy, Ste. 100
Petaluma, CA 94954
Phone: 707-794-1242, ext. 3