

STEWARDS OF THE LAND

NEWSLETTER OF GOLD RIDGE RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SPRING/SUMMER
2012

Gold Ridge RCD inspires and partners with the community to protect the natural resources and agricultural future of our District since 1941.

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 1



We Have Moved!!

We have the same mailing address
but we will be located at:

2776 Sullivan Rd., Sebastopol, CA 95472
New office phone: 707-823-5244
New office fax: 707-823-5243
Mailing Address: PO Box 1064,
Occidental, CA 95465

We have found a bigger space to hold our growing staff (see page 7), our field equipment and supplies and there is even a shower to clean up after those muddy field days. We are sad to leave our beloved Occidental but happy to have more room and the views are spectacular!

New rainwater catchment and off-channel storage project opportunities

The Gold Ridge RCD currently is developing and implementing rainwater catchment and water storage projects to assist landowners with water security, while improving streamflow conditions for threatened and endangered salmon in our District. Read below for more information...

Salmon Creek

Last month we received approval of our funding request to the Department of Fish and Game for Phase 2 of the Save Our Salmon Program, which will entail the construction of eight more rainwater projects in the Bodega Valley, starting in the spring of 2013. If you live in the Bodega area and are interested in hosting a rainwater catchment system, take a look at our website. You'll find details on the SOS Program, as well as a landowner questionnaire that you can download, fill out and mail in. This will provide us with important information for evaluating your property for inclusion in the SOS Program.

For more information please contact
John Green (GRRCD) john@goldridgercd.org or
Lauren Hammack (PCI) lauren@pcz.com
or visit www.goldridgercd.org or
www.cohopartnership.org

Dutch Bill and Green Valley Creeks

Gold Ridge RCD is also working with the Russian River Coho Water Resources Partnership to improve summer streamflows for coho salmon in the Dutch Bill Creek and Green Valley Creek watersheds. The Partnership is exploring projects that will enable landowners to reduce the amount of water they draw from the creek during summer low-flow periods that are critical to the development of young salmon. Under this project, we recently assisted a vineyard owner in the Green Valley watershed with converting their irrigation from overhead sprinklers to a drip system, which will save hundreds of thousands of gallons of water each year. We are also working with a large landowner in the Dutch Bill Creek watershed to design and build a water tank so that they can collect and store water during the winter to use for irrigation during the summer.

Recent Changes to our Board of Directors



Board Members (from left to right): Joe Dutton, Richard Hughes, Ann Cassidy and Don Petersen. Associate Directors (Bob Burke and Al Gerhardt not pictured)

We are excited to announce that the Gold Ridge RCD has one new Board Member, Richard Hughes and two Associate Directors, Bob Burke and Al Gerhardt. We are honored to have them serving the RCD. We would also like to thank Martin Albini for his 2 years of service as a Board Member. Don Petersen is never one to brag but he has been on the Gold Ridge RCD board now for 29 years! We are so honored to continue to work under his leadership and experience. Thank you, Don.

This Spring are you looking to get rid of unwanted items? Please check out our wish list:

- * Large Redwood rootwads or logs grater than 14" diameter
- * Wooden office desks
- * Ergonomic desk chair
- * Tall wooden bookshelves
- * Couch (in good condition)
- * Work truck
- * Conference table and chairs for 12-18 people
- * Picnic table
- * Vertical or horizontal filing cabinets/storage racks for large plans
- * Computer monitors or towers in good working order less than 2 years old

Please contact Michele Rocha (Michele@goldridgercd.org) or phone 707-823-5244.

Call for Volunteers

Gold Ridge RCD is committed to keeping our operating costs low and using funding for on-the-ground projects to enhance our District. In order to do that, we would like to be able to enlist some volunteers. We have many now that donate their time and expertise to further the mission of Gold Ridge RCD and are asking if you or anyone you know can help us with:

- * Fundraising by producing events
- * Marketing and communications, including media outreach
- * Accounting, legal and human resource skills
- * Native plant installation and maintenance
- * Becoming an associate or full Board member

If you have any skills to share in these areas, or have ideas of your own, please contact us at: 707-823-5244 or email Brittany Heck, Executive Director at: Brittany@goldridgercd.org.

Gold Ridge Receives Watershed Coordinator Grant

In June 2011, the Gold Ridge RCD received three years of funding from the Department of Conservation for watershed coordination within the Bodega Bay Hydrological Unit, which includes the Salmon Creek Watershed, the Estero Americano Watershed, and the area draining into Bodega Bay. New staff members Krista Lindley (Watershed Coordinator) and Trisha Meisler (Project Assistant) will share the responsibility to implement a diverse set of tasks designed to improve water quality and overall watershed health through public outreach and education.



Tasks include:

- * A hands-on workshop series designed to assist landowners in the early identification and treatment of gully erosion sites
- * Restoration activities along key riparian corridor reaches
- * Water quality monitoring and data analysis
- * A workshop series focusing on water conservation strategies and distribution of information on programs to assist landowners in implementing water conservation projects
- * Environmental education activities for K-6 school children
- * Fuel load reduction assistance, including property assessments and invasive weed removal
- * Assistance and support for watershed councils
- * Coordination with watershed activities of RCDs throughout California

Salmon Recovery Update



On a sunny December morning a group of Salmon Creek Watershed community members and professionals interested in salmon recovery gathered on the banks of lower Salmon Creek to participate in the fourth annual release of adult coho. The California Department of Fish and Game and National Marine Fisheries Service staff oversaw the

release of 175 adult coho salmon (90 males and 85 females) from the Russian River Coho Salmon Captive Broodstock Program into Salmon Creek.

As in previous years, this year's fish were released near the mouth of Salmon Creek, at Chanslor Ranch, with the hope that the fish will migrate upstream to find suitable spawning habitat in one of Salmon Creek's tributaries. We are grateful for the continued cooperation of the Chanslor Family for allowing us access to their property for the release and monitoring of the released fish.

Did they or didn't they spawn? That is the question...

Fortunately, they did despite the low rainfall. Thanks to the significant mid-January storm events the creeks filled up and surveys conducted by Gold Ridge staff, Michael Fawcett from Fawcett Environmental Consulting and Jennifer Michaud from Prunuske Chatham, Inc., revealed adult coho, steelhead and redds in Fay, Tannery, Nolan Creeks and upper Salmon Creek.

For more information, see the summary report posted on our website www.goldridgercd.org or contact Sierra Cantor: sierra@goldridgercd.org at (707) 823-5244.

The Community Salmon Celebration on February 25th was a great success!



The theater at the Salmon Creek School was filled to capacity where attendees listened to informative talks about the current state of salmon in the Salmon Creek watershed and heard from local landowners and school children all with an interest in salmon. A huge thank you to all who helped pull off this event. We couldn't have done it without you!!

Gold Ridge Receives over \$800,000 in Grant Funding

Gold Ridge has been awarded 5 grants from the CA Department of Fish and Game totaling \$ 795,208.65 and includes; 3 instream habitat projects one in Salmon Creek one in the Willow Creek on State Park land, and one in Dutch Bill Creek, a phase 2 water conservation project in Salmon Creek, and hydrologic modeling study in Dutch Bill and Green Valley Watersheds. We also received a contract from the Sonoma County Community Foundation in the amount of \$3750 to fund Sierra's participation in the North Bay Climate Adaptation Initiative where she represents the voice of conservation on private lands. In partnership with Sotoyome RCD, Humboldt RCD and Southern Sonoma RCD the CDFA Dairy CARES program has awarded a \$100,874 grant to provide mapping assistance to Dairies in our respective districts, \$18,794 of which is slated for Gold Ridge. Gold Ridge also received a contract from CA State Parks for managing the construction of the Mussel Point Dune Restoration in the amount of \$34,998.93.

Pollinator Program Is Expanding

Building on its pilot project launched with a 2009 **Conservation Innovation Grant** award from the **Natural Resources Conservation Service**, the Gold Ridge RCD has received additional funding to expand its pollinator program, which works to improve biodiversity on farmland to support native bee species. With matching funds from the **Wildlife Conservation Board** and the **Sonoma County Fish and Wildlife Commission**, the project team has thus far installed nearly 5,600 plants on six farm properties, in plantings designed to provide nesting habitat and year-round pollen and nectar sources for bees and other pollinators. Planting days on participating properties have been made possible with the help of dozens of volunteers, including those through the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County, local Cub Scout Pack 134, students from Sonoma State University, and employees from The Fruit Guys, a San Francisco-based company that distributes fresh produce to workplaces.



Yellow-faced bumble bee (*Bombus vosnesenskii*), one of California's over 1,500 native bee species. Photo by Steve Johnson © SMJ@a-j.org

While landowners water and weed the plantings during their crucial establishment stage, Gold Ridge staff continue to monitor the sites, to determine both survival rates and effectiveness at supporting native bee species. Species monitoring is done using the Citizen Science Monitoring protocol developed by project partner The Xerces Society, which allows laypeople to track the abundance and diversity of fourteen groups of bee species. Additional plantings are planned for Spring 2012. If you are interested in volunteering for the planting days, or would like more information about the pollinator program, please contact: Noelle Johnson, Conservation Planner, at Noelle@goldridgercd.org, or call (707) 823-5244.



Cub Scouts participate in a planting day at Gabriel Farm

Upcoming Events:

April 13, 2012—Application Deadline for NRCS Healthy Forests Reserve Program Grants

June 6-8, 2012—Sonoma County Forest Conservation Conference, Shone Farm, Forestville
(Forest2012@sonomalandtrust.org)

We want your input.

Please let us know if there are any other workshops you'd be interested in just contact Krista at Krista@goldridgercd.org.

TEAM

(Teaching Environmental and Agricultural Memories Conservation Project)

An Educational and Outreach Program funded by the Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District
By Krista Lindley

The T.E.A.M. program is off to a great start for 2012! We were funded by the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District for another three years of field trips and are looking forward to an exciting season. This year we are expanding our field trip sites to include a visit for fourth graders to the Dutton's Apple Orchards near Graton. Amongst the apple trees, students will discover the biological and human components of apple production by participating in fun and thought-provoking activities developed by Stephanie Lennox of Envirichment. Third graders will continue to visit the Bianchi Dairy where they will learn about dairy cows, milk production, and get a hands-on introduction to cheese making. Fifth grade classes will explore riparian ecology and all things salmon at the Gilardi Ranch in the town of Bodega.

We are still accepting classes for field trips, and interested educators should contact Krista Lindley (krista@goldridgercd.org) right away to secure a spot for this spring.

In addition, we are honored to announce that Gold Ridge RCD recently received a \$10,000 grant from the National Conservation Foundation District Award for our T.E.A.M. video. The winner was collectively chosen by over 700 attendees at this year's annual NACD conference, and we are very grateful for their support. Check out the award winning video on our homepage at www.goldridgercd.org.



Acknowledging Our Partners

A big thank you goes out to Karen and the whole Bianchi Family of the Mountain View Jersey Dairy for hosting our first TEAM field trip in 2012. A group of third graders from Apple Blossom School in Sebastopol had a great time stomping through mud and manure learning about the process of raising and caring for dairy cows and turning all that milk into delicious locally produced cheese.

Welcome Four New Staff Members to the Gold Ridge RCD!



We are happy to announce the very newest and smallest addition to our GRRCD family. Noelle Johnson gave birth to little girl Sadiya Luna Hope McBride on January 8th. Mommy and baby are doing quite well. Noelle will back to work in May.

New staff: Trisha Meisler, Krista Lindley, Michele Rocha and Jeremy Schroen

Krista Lindley, Watershed Coordinator.

Krista is bringing her infectious enthusiasm to our outreach and educational programs along with her expertise in invasive plants and plant ecology to our restoration projects. As Watershed Coordinator you are likely to see her sampling water quality and organizing public meetings. She is eager to join our team and looks forward to working with all of our partners and landowners.

Trisha Meisler, Project Assistant.

Trisha is working part-time and is assisting with several projects from workshop planning to spawning surveys to grant writing. She too will be working as Watershed Coordinator and will be helping to carry out the many workshops and events the RCD has planned in the future.

Michele Rocha , Office Manager.

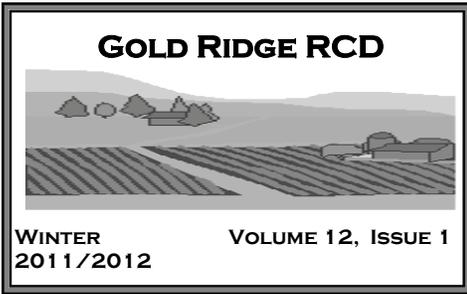
A graduate of USF with a degree in Public Administration, Michele has lived and worked in Sonoma County for the last 24 years. She is dedicated to the mission of GRRCD and happy to bring her administrative skills to the task of preserving our precious natural resources.

Jeremy Schroen, Project Assistant.

Jeremy joined GRRCD in 2011 as a field technician supporting water quality, streambed enhancement and pollinator projects. After earning a B.A. in Anthropology at the University of California at Santa Cruz, Jeremy lived and worked in Southeast Asia for several years as a volunteer teacher and habitat restoration manager. He returned to U.S to pursue a master's degree in Sustainable Development. Having been raised in the greater Sebastopol area, he relishes in the opportunity to explore local streams and meet local landowners.

Brittany Heck is promoted to Executive Director

Brittany Heck has changed positions from Project Manager to Executive Director. Brittany started working at the Gold Ridge RCD as an intern in 2005. Brittany is honored and excited to serve the RCD in her new role.



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Petaluma, CA 94954

Phone: 707-794-1242 ext.3



**BOARD OF
DIRECTORS
MEETINGS:**

Third Thursday of each
month at 6:00 pm

2776 Sullivan Rd.,
Sebastopol, CA 95472

**MEETINGS ARE
OPEN TO THE
PUBLIC**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Don Petersen

Joe Dutton

Ann Cassidy

Richard Hughes

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Bob Burke

Al Gerhardt

THE GRRCD STAFF

Brittany Heck

Executive Director

Joe Pozzi

District Manager

Noelle Johnson

Conservation Planner

John Green

Lead Scientist

Sierra Cantor

Ecologist

Michele Rocha

Office Manager

Jeremy Schroen

Field Technician

Krista Lindley

Watershed Coordinator

Trisha Meisler

Project Assistant

THE NRCS STAFF

Charlette Epifanio

District Conservationist

Kristan Flynn

*Range Management
Specialist*

Jennifer Walcer

Soil Conservationist

Brooke Cole

Field Office Engineer

Heidi Howorten

Field Office Engineer

Andrew Loganbill

Soil Conservation Tech

Ben Garland

Soil Conservationist

Heather Cuevas

Farm Bill Assistant

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