



Butte County Resource Conservation District

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Butte County RCD and AmeriCorps Partner with Local Non-Profit Organizations for the Betterment of Butte County

By Sam Rossi, Conservation Associate
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This summer the Butte County Resource Conservation District became a new host site for AmeriCorps members through the Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership (SNAP). The recent venture has allowed the Butte County RCD to recruit Sam Rossi, Conservation Associate, in efforts to restore local watersheds, recruit volunteers, and provide environmental education and outreach to communities in Butte County. Above all, Sam's position extends the Butte County RCD to form new working relationships with organizations throughout the county. The timely acquisition of the AmeriCorps member has recently brought the Butte County RCD to partner with organizations in Forest Ranch.

The Broom Eradication and Education Program (BEEP) has served Forest Ranch since 2006 by providing necessary removal of two harmful invasive plant species (French and Spanish broom). This article could go on by explaining the immense misfortune French and Spanish broom present to Forest Ranch and communities in the valley, but it will instead focus on the unique collaboration currently taking place to control the species.

In the recent months, BEEP organizer and aficionado, Dulcy Schroeder has decided to "pass the torch" to the Butte County RCD to help with project coordination. Kelly Peterson, District Manager of the Butte County RCD, explains that, "We here at the Butte County RCD are thrilled to partner with BEEP to protect the natural resources of Forest Ranch by removing invasive plants and their fire hazards." The Butte County RCD has worked with BEEP in the past by managing grants and donating resources for plant removals. The unique partnership directly coincides with the Butte County RCD's mission which is to protect, enhance, and support Butte County natural resources and agriculture by working with willing land owners and citizens through education, land management, and on-the-ground projects.

Sam will be moving BEEP's projects forward through recruiting volunteers, organizing broom eradication events in February and March, and embracing community involvement. As Sam put it during a recent meeting with Dulcy, "I feel honored to lead

such a productive group of people that have been well organized from the very beginning. BEEP is an excellent example of community members working together to address a serious environmental issue that involves the entire watershed, from Forest Ranch down the hill to Chico.”

His involvement with BEEP could have come at no better time and extends beyond removing the invasive plants for ecological benefits. Hazardous fuel loading and invasive plant species abundance are often used in the same sentence when considering the risk of fire danger. So, while in Forest Ranch working with BEEP, Sam will also work with the Forest Ranch Fire Safe Council (FRFSC) as a volunteer to help with their defensible space home visitations and Adopt-A-Highway maintenance program.

Sam deeply agrees with the work that both BEEP and the FRFSC are doing in Forest Ranch as his personal goal is to someday work with his Tahoe City community in the same way.

Referring to his fear that someday a wildfire will destroy all that the Tahoe community has worked so hard to preserve, Sam stated that, “Like natural resource organizations located in Tahoe, the need for groups such as BEEP and the FRFSC are immeasurable and usually underappreciated.” He and the Butte County RCD believe that, “The AmeriCorps partnership is the perfect piece in this collaborative puzzle to focus efforts by presenting some new ideas.”



Figure 1. BEEP Volunteers after a work day.
(Source: Dulcy Schroeder)

Those interested in helping further the valuable work of BEEP and the FRFSC should anticipate a meeting sometime in early January for volunteers and community members to learn how to become involved.

About Sam

Sam, 24, grew up in Tahoe City where his love for the outdoors developed along with his appreciation for the land. Whether it was backpacking to a remote lake in the wilderness, or experiencing a wildfire only two miles from his home, he knew from an early age that land stewardship is paramount. He recently graduated from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo earning a Bachelor of Science in Forestry and Natural Resources Management with minors in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Land Rehabilitation. He became familiar with GIS and various surveying technologies that were instrumental in completing a number of soil erosion, forestry, and watershed management projects. In the summer of 2012 he was fortunate enough to serve as a Watershed Management Intern at Cal Poly’s Swanton Pacific Ranch located in the Santa Cruz Mountains. There he monitored water quality and quantity, soil characteristics following a fire, and conditions for a streambank stabilization project.

His eagerness to improve environmental conditions and collaborate with community members has brought him to serve at the Northern Sierra Site with the Butte County RCD through a partnership they hold with the Sierra Nevada Alliance called the Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership. Sam will spend the next eleven months working towards



Figure 2. Photo of Sam Rossi.

watershed restoration, watershed education and outreach, volunteer recruitment, and resource attainment goals. Sam is excited to develop his professional skills, while combining his experience with his ability to be a concise hard worker to make positive contributions to Butte County's unique and resilient natural resources and communities.

About Butte County RCD

Since 2002, the Butte County RCD has worked with and acted as a liaison between willing private landowners, organizations, and agencies to offer a variety of programs that meet land management goals while also working towards natural resource conservation objectives. These efforts are not only beneficial to the unique plant communities, pristine waterways, and diverse wildlife populations Butte County has to offer; they are also regarded as cost-effective management practices by local landowners. The Butte County RCD has partnered with local, county, regional, state, and federal organizations to successfully complete projects related to forestry, fire prevention, erosion control, grazing, wildlife restoration, land conservation, invasive species control, and environmental education in an effort to educate the public, manage lands, and conserve natural resources. Kelly Peterson joined the Butte County RCD team in 2011 as the District Manager and has worked diligently to develop new projects, finish existing projects, meet deadlines, and secure the Butte County RCD's important role in the county.

If you would like to learn more about the Butte County RCD and its plans for collaboration in your community please feel free contact us. Also, for more information on the Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership visit www.servingthesierra.org. We thank you for your time!

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