



# Butte County Resource Conservation District Newsletter, Winter 2014



## AmeriCorps Comes to Butte County

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. See "Environmental Education: A Hands On Approach", on page 3, for information on how Sam can reach out to your group or classroom.



## Working Partnerships in Forest Ranch

The timely acquisition of the AmeriCorps member has 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

## - Upcoming Events -

### ***Adopt-A-Highway Volunteer Work Day***

**January 15, 2014 @ 9 am**

Meet at the intersection of Highway 99 and Highway 162 in the dirt parking lot west of Highway 99.

Volunteers are needed from **9 a.m. - 12 noon** to help cleanup litter and make a positive statement to visitors and residents regarding litter along Butte County roadways.

### ***Broom Eradication Events***

**Every Saturday in February & March**  
Forest Ranch, CA

Volunteers are needed to help eradicate the invasive plant species to improve environmental conditions from Forest Ranch to Chico. Contact Sam Rossi, Conservation Associate, for more information.

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 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.”



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

His involvement with BEEP could have come at a 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.”

Those interested in helping further the valuable work of BEEP and the FRFSC should contact Sam to learn how to become involved. For more information on the Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership visit [www.servingthesierra.org](http://www.servingthesierra.org).

## 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.



Sam Rossi, Conservation Associate

His eagerness to improve environmental conditions and collaborate with community members has brought him to serve at SNAP's Northern Sierra Site with the Butte County RCD. 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.

## Environmental Education: A Hands-On Approach

Is your group, classroom, or after school program looking for new ways to engage students in environmental education? The Butte County RCD can help! Our Conservation Associate, Sam Rossi, is eager to build new relationships with organizations involved in education through the use of the Butte County RCD's EnviroScape® Watershed Model.



EnviroScape® Watershed Model  
(Source: EnviroScapes.com)

This model creates an interactive learning experience for the students while getting across some major environmental concepts. Students will grasp such topics as industrial pollution, deforestation, harmful farming practices, the fundamental elements of their environment, and their own impact on the watershed in which they live through a hands-on presentation. Please contact Sam if you have any interest or questions.

## Help Us Keep Your Local Roadways Clean

The Butte County RCD along with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are pleased to announce the recent adoption of a four-mile

stretch of highway through the Caltrans's Adopt-A-Highway Program. Drive on Highway 99, near its junction with Highway 162 and you will see new signs promoting work done by these organizations to keep Butte County roadways litter free.

Friday, November 22, 2013 was the first Adopt-A-Highway Volunteer Work Day and it was a complete success!

Employees from the Butte County RCD and NRCS worked alongside local volunteers to pick up litter and make a positive



Kelly Peterson & Mary Thompson

contribution. A total of six volunteers worked diligently for three hours to remove plastic bags, soda cans, and fragments of rubber from Highway 99. By the end of the day, large shreds of tire were stacked against 12 bags filled with litter.

Kelly Peterson was involved in the cleanup and said that, "Although it's tough work, litter removal from our highways is extremely important and is actually quite fun when it comes down to it because you not only feel like you're making a significant difference, you're also getting to know the person next to you."

This **Wednesday, January 15, 2014** will be our second Adopt-A-Highway Volunteer Work Day to continue this valuable work!

Anyone interested in volunteering should meet at 9 a.m. at the intersection of Highway 99 and Highway 162 in the parking lot west of Highway 99. It is recommended to wear long pants, long sleeves, and sturdy boots. Bring your own food and water; safety gear and work supplies will be provided. The work is usually from 9 am – 12 noon, but don't feel obligated to work the entire three hours if you have other pressing matters. Any amount of time is truly appreciated!

## - OTHER WAYS TO HELP -

We are currently seeking donations from local businesses to help provide food and water for volunteers on future work days. Donations include:

- Any \$ amount
- In-kind donations

Please see the section titled "How to Donate" for more information on donations and how your support helps us!

## 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 (especially the USDA NRCS) 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.



Kelly Peterson, District Manager

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 secure the Butte County RCD's important role in the county.

## Director Highlight

The Butte County RCD is governed by a five member Board of Directors; one from each supervisory district. The Board is made up of local land owners, ranchers, and farmers. Directors are appointed by the Butte County Board of Supervisors on their strengths as active partners in the conservation community.



Mary Thompson, Board President

Mary is our first Board member to be featured in our "Director Highlight" section and serves as the Board President. Mary was born and raised in Paso Robles, CA in Northern San Luis Obispo County.

Mary and her husband Mel have been residents of Butte County since 1998. They are owners of Sierra Farms in South- Eastern Butte County where they raise sheep and have a lamb marketing business. They work closely with USDA NRCS in implementing conservation practices on their land, as well as being involved with the Lower Feather River/ Honcut Creek Watershed Group in Lower Butte County.

For several years Mary worked with the Butte County RCD in an outreach and education role before being appointed to serve on the Board of Directors. Mary is also the Butte County RCD's representative to the Central Sacramento Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council.

**Directors:**

Mary Ann Thompson appointed by Bill Connelly  
District 1  
Wes Gilbert appointed by Larry Wahl  
District 2  
Colleen Hatfield appointed by Maureen Kirk  
District 3  
Terrell Storm appointed by Steve Lambert  
District 4  
Dave Lee appointed by Doug Teeter  
District 5

**Associate Directors:**

Rod Carter  
Rob Mackenzie  
Bill Kellogg

**Can We Survey You About Our Newsletter?**

We here at the Butte County RCD are interested in receiving your feedback concerning our newsletter. We also would like to know how this newsletter increased your knowledge regarding the various topics covered. The survey is one short question that would substantially help the future of the AmeriCorps partnership and secure conservation projects here in Butte County! Please follow the link below to take our survey!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JGSLM8X>

**Next Regular Board Meeting**

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for January 28, 2014. The meeting is from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and is held in the Butte County Farm Bureau Conference Room at 2580 Feather River Blvd in Oroville. Public comment is encouraged!

**- How to Donate -**

Go to the Butte County RCD's website (<http://buttecountyrcd.org/>) and click on the green box found on the left margin just below the heading, "Resources".

All donations will receive a follow up letter describing how the donation was specifically used. Donations may be tax deductible to the extent provided by law. Supporters will receive acknowledgment for donations with a Butte County RCD receipt indicating our Federal Tax ID number.

Remember, the Butte County RCD is a not-for-profit organization that exists based on contributions large and small. That being said, any amount really does help the Butte County RCD improve Butte County natural resources for all. Donations also help the critical projects drafted by the AmeriCorps member by supporting the continued funding of the Butte County RCD's partnership with the SNAP program.

**Contact**

If you would like to join our mailing list please contact Kelly Peterson at [bc-rcd@carcd.org](mailto:bc-rcd@carcd.org). If you have any other questions concerning your community and the Butte County RCD, please feel free to contact us!

Sam Rossi, Conservation Associate  
150 Chuck Yeager Way Suite A  
Oroville, CA 95965  
Phone: 530.534.0112 x 125  
Fax: 530.533.4936  
[buttecountyrcd@gmail.com](mailto:buttecountyrcd@gmail.com)  
[www.buttecountyrcd.org](http://www.buttecountyrcd.org)



South Eastern Butte County

*Butte County Resource Conservation District Newsletter, Winter 2014*