

# DIXON/SOLANO RCD WATER QUALITY COALITION



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ANNUAL NEWS - OCTOBER 2024

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# Close to Completion: The Lookout Slough Tidal Habitat Restoration Project



## The Lookout Slough Tidal Habitat Restoration and Flood Improvement Project

If you are not familiar, the Lookout Slough Tidal Habitat Restoration and Flood Improvement Project is approximately 3,400 acres of natural freshwater tidal marsh in the Cache Slough Complex on Shag Slough in Solano County. The project will provide habitat for multiple sensitive species including Delta smelt, longfin smelt, steelhead, salmon, sturgeon, giant garter snake, western pond turtle, and Swainson's hawk. When complete, the project will also provide 100-year flood protection with additional height for climate change and sea level rise resiliency.

*Credit Sources: Article-NCWA and EIP, Picture-DWR*

For more information:

<https://resources.ca.gov/docs/ecorestore/projects/Lookout-Slough-Tidal-Habitat-Restoration-Flood-Improvement.pdf>

<https://ecosystempartners.com/project/lookout-slough/>

<https://www.hanfordarc.com/all-projects/lookout-slough-restoration>

# Water Quality

## **Surface Water Report: Ulatis Creek Sediment Toxicity Management Plan**

In 2022, we had an exceedance for sediment toxicity at this site which extended our management plan for an additional three years, through 2025. As of August 2024, we have had zero exceedances in 2024 and we also had zero exceedances for pesticides in 2023. Thank you growers for using BMP when applying pesticide products.

To complete this management plan, we must have zero pyrethroid pesticide or sediment toxicity exceedances next Spring at Ulatis Creek. We then can submit a completion report to the Executive Officer (EO) at the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Once approved by the EO, we will have completed this management plan.

For BMP-best management practices for pesticides, go to:  
<https://www.dixonrcd.org/bmp-for-pesticides>

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## **Shag Slough Monitoring Site**

Now that the Lookout Slough Tidal Habitat Restoration and Flood Improvement Project is near completion, that means the Shag Slough/Liberty Island Bridge (SSLIB) integrated monitoring site is no longer accessible. The site was used to sample for the Irrigated Lands Program compliance monitoring. Sediment samples were taken from the bank while the water quality samples were taken from Liberty Island Bridge. The actual bridge is set for demolition by the DWR - Department of Water Resources in 2025.

The Sac-Valley Water Quality Coalition is looking for a new site with ease of access that integrates multiple water sources like the SSLIB site did with inputs from Yolo and Solano counties. We will keep everyone posted when we find a suitable replacement for the new site.

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## Groundwater Protection (GWP) Formula, Values, and Targets

Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) Waste Discharge Requirements General Orders is to establish township-level nitrogen loading performance goals – not compliance goals - necessary to ensure leaching to groundwater meets drinking water Receiving Water Limitations.

The proposed GWP Targets build upon previous Coalition efforts to quantify current township-scale nitrogen loading at the root zone based on grower-reported Irrigation and Nitrogen Management Plan Summary data.

So as a grower what does this mean for you? Keep doing what you are doing by reporting accurate data on your farm reporting, being good stewards of the land, and following the 4Rs.

### The 4Rs - Right Source, Right Rate, Right Time, Right Place



## Groundwater Recharge Efforts

Groundwater recharge efforts are statewide for landowners, especially related to impacts on disadvantaged communities and focus areas.

State and local agencies are collaborating with landowners to find the right land for flood diversions during the rainy season in hopes of groundwater recharge and flood management. Although these efforts may seem to transpire slowly, the effort is worth it in the end.

If you are a landowner interested in opportunities for multi-benefit projects and practices on your property and want to know if your land is a good fit sign up at:

<https://www.dixonrcd.org/technical-assistance>



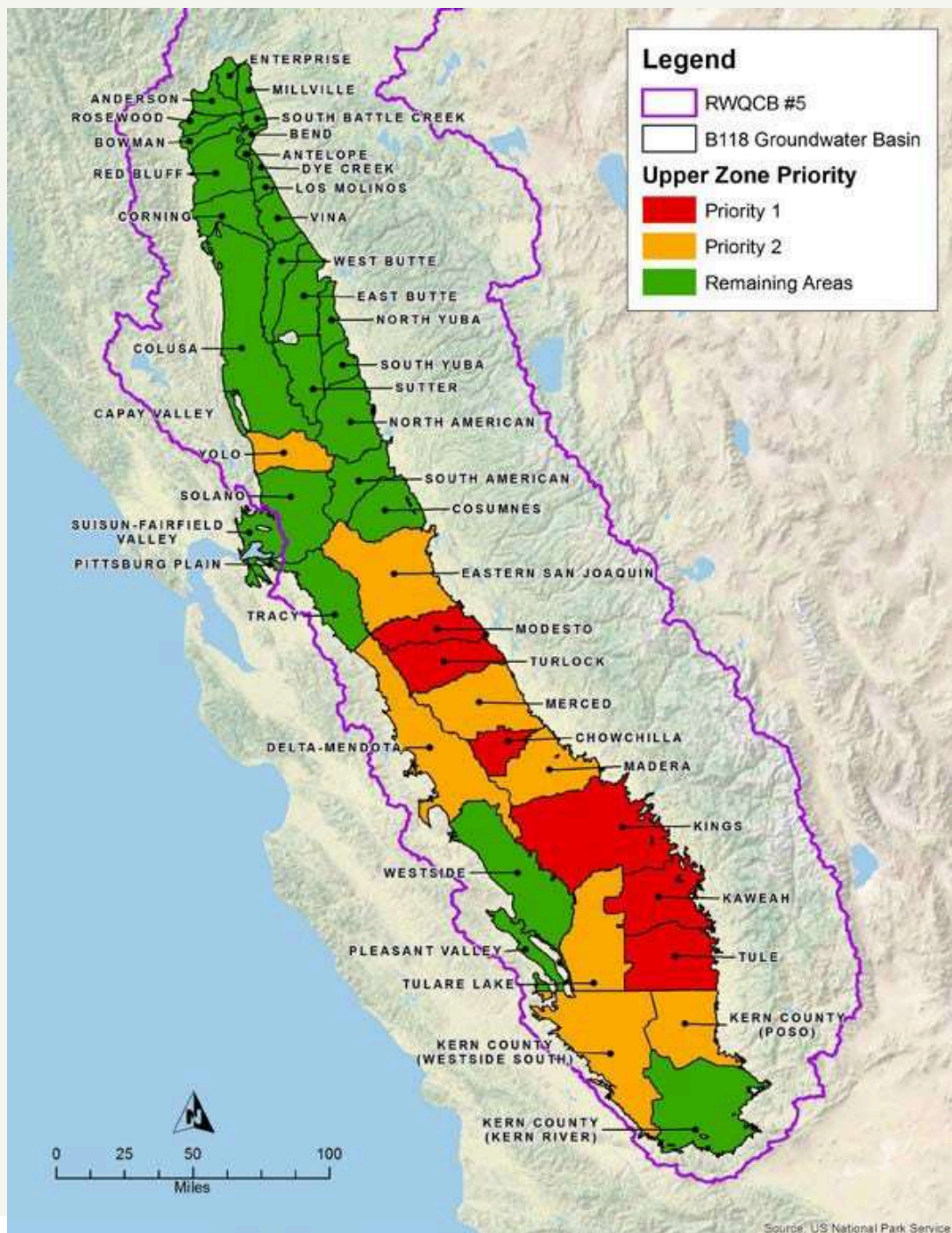
# CV Salts Program

Priority 1 Area (Red) Notice to Comply - May 29, 2020

Priority 2 Area (Yellow-Orange) Notice to Comply - December 29, 2023

Remaining Areas (Green) Implementation to be phased in if needed at a later date

- Solano County is not prioritized at this time.  
"Implementation to be phased in if needed at a later date."
- Yolo County is in a Priority 2 basin.



## CV Salts - Nitrate Control Program

The Central Valley Water Board and the State Water Board approved the CV Salts program. This program is set to provide safe drinking water as quickly as possible to residents in an affected area, and requires a plan to manage nitrate discharges to reduce or eliminate impacts to groundwater.

**This is a totally separate program from the Irrigated Lands Program.**

The Irrigated Lands Program has a Waste Discharge Permit through Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition so all property owners within the Yolo Basin area are covered under that permit if they are enrolled in the Irrigated Lands Program.

Priority 1 and Priority 2 basins were identified. Priority 1 areas were considered worse so they had to start complying with the program 4 years ago. All are located South of the Delta, **except part of Yolo County shown in green.** The areas between Cache Creek and Putah Creek are identified as Priority 2 areas in the Yolo Basin. For those who are interested in more information you can visit [www.CVsalinity.org](http://www.CVsalinity.org)

By the end of this year, Yolo Basin permit holders are required to comply with the program by choosing Pathway A or Pathway B. The following pages include information about these choices.

Entities who chose Path B (the cheaper path) are required to form a Management Zone and develop an Early Action Plan. Both must be completed and submitted to the Water Board before the end of this year. It took a long time to get organized so we are now scrambling to get the required plans and reports completed.

Parcels with domestic wells on them are to be identified. The residents will be contacted and offered a free well test to test for nitrates. If the test results are 7.5 or above, they will be offered free drinking water.

### WHAT IS PATHWAY A OR PATHWAY B?

#### Pathway A: Individual Permitting Approach

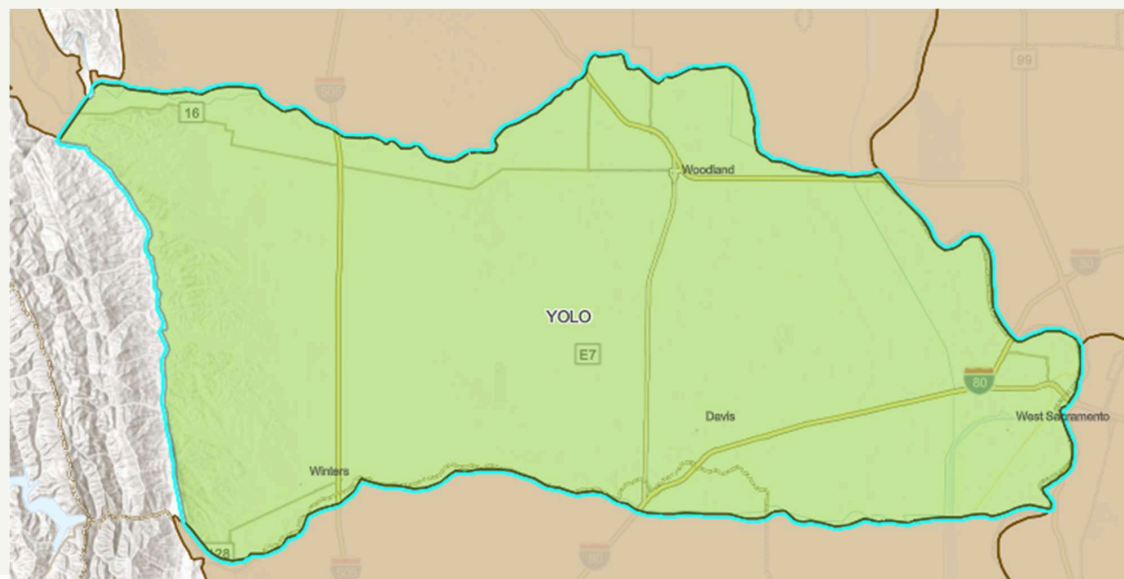
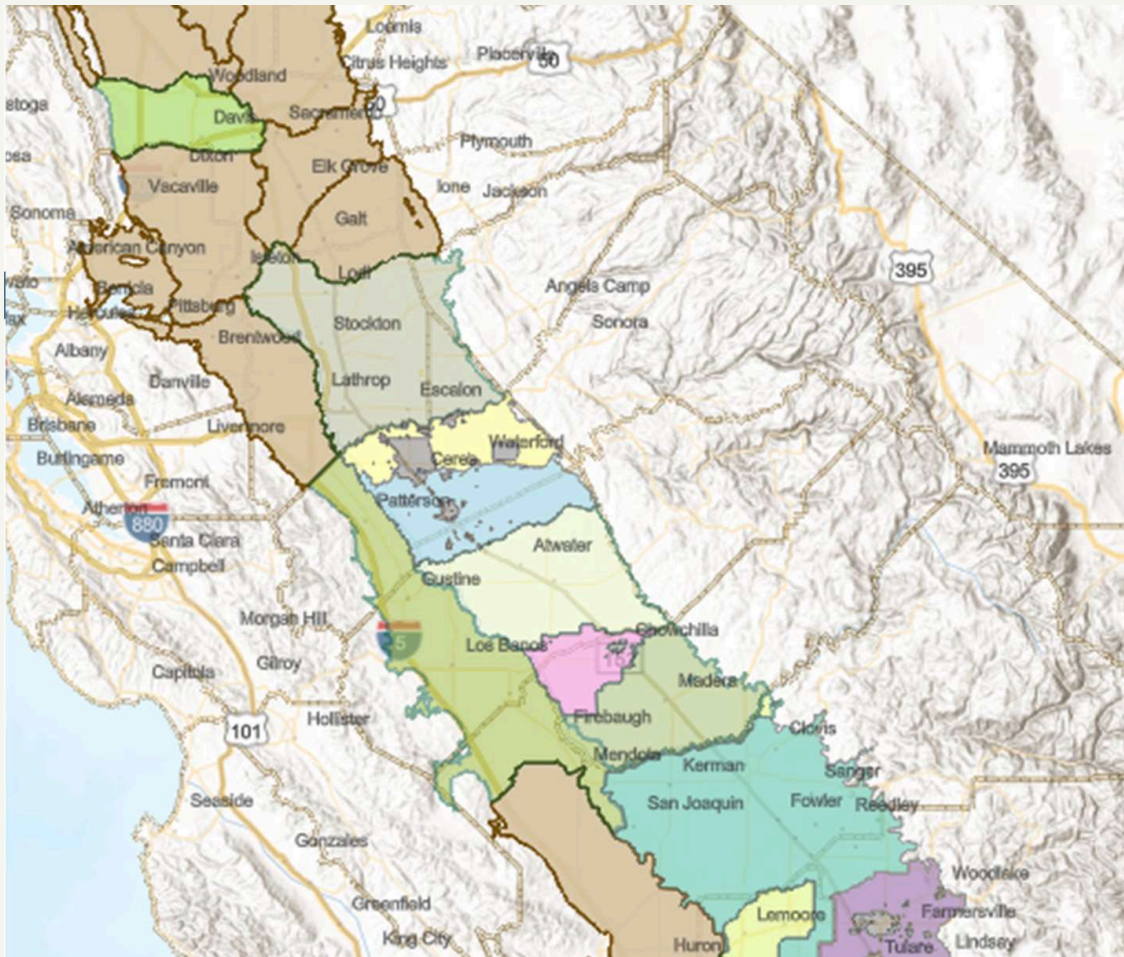
A permittee or group of permittees may opt to comply under the individual permit requirements. However, Pathway A compliance options are difficult and expensive if there are 1) drinking water wells near your facility that are high in nitrate, 2) your discharge is high in nitrate, or 3) local shallow groundwater exceeds 75% of the nitrate drinking water standard.

#### Pathway B: Joining a Management Zone

When permittees join a Management Zone they work collectively to comply with the Nitrate Control Program, which is more efficient and typically more economical. For most permittees, Pathway B (joining a Management Zone) is the best choice.



FEES: The cost for the 2024 program is \$205,000. When possible, reports from the Irrigated Lands Program will be used so there is not a duplication of work. California Rice Commission chose to go Path A and spent over a year working with the Regional Board to get their program approved. It cost them over \$300,000. They have been involved in the Yolo County process (as advisors) and generously donated \$25,000 to help pay a portion of the cost of our 2024 program. This left \$180,000 to be split between the enrolled permittees, \$127,000 has been pledged and the balance of \$53,000 remains to be negotiated between the Management Zone permittees.





# Upcoming Outreach Events



## **SRCD Native Plant Sale Saturday, November 9, 2024**

Time TBD

Green River Brewing & Taproom  
4513 Putah Creek Rd  
Winters, CA 95694

Check the SRCD website events page often  
for details.

Contact: Caitlyn Morrissey  
[caitlyn.morrissey@solanorcd.org](mailto:caitlyn.morrissey@solanorcd.org)

## **All Members Annual Meeting**

**Date: Tuesday, November 19, 2024**

**5:30 pm - 7 pm**

Location: Online

This is a virtual meeting only.

- Membership and Coalition Updates
- Solano Groundwater Sustainability Plan Update
- Management Plan-Pyrethroid Pesticide Update

## **The 3rd Annual Groundwater Workshop**

**Date: Thursday, January 30, 2025**

**9 am to Noon**

Location: [American Legion Hall 1305 N. 1st. Street Dixon, CA 95620](#)

This is an in-person event only.

Learn about the latest information on groundwater in our area and around California from expert speakers.

Registration information and a detailed agenda coming soon.  
Applying for INMP CEUs for this event.

## **New for Solano County! Spray Safe Workshop**

**Date: Wednesday, February 19, 2025**

**8 am to Noon**

Location: Dixon May Fair Dixon, CA 95620

This is an in-person event only.

Pesticide Training

Registration information and a detailed agenda coming soon.

Applying for CCA and INMP CEUs for this event.

Contact: Lisa Shipley

[lisa@solanofarmbureau.org](mailto:lisa@solanofarmbureau.org)

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## **Membership**

### **Farm reporting is due February 15, 2025**

Late fees apply after that date.

Farm reporting emails/letters will be sent in late November/early December with the details on reporting. The DMT-data management tool will be ready to accept 2024 crop year farm reporting at that time. It looks like the reporting will be the same as the 2023 crop year with no new requirements for the 2024 crop year.

Please contact Martha McKeen at 707-678-1655 x103 or [martha-mckeen@dixonred.org](mailto:martha-mckeen@dixonred.org) if you need assistance completing your reporting or need your DMT login credentials.

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### **Stay Informed**

Be sure to check out our website periodically for events and updated water quality information. Here are some important links.

[https://  
www.dixonrwd.org/  
irrigated-lands](https://www.dixonrwd.org/irrigated-lands)  
[https://  
www.sacvalleydmt.org/  
login](https://www.sacvalleydmt.org/login)

### **Keep Us Informed**

There are three different ways you can update your contact information:

- Make the changes on the bottom portion of your invoice and then send it in with your payment.
- Log in to the DMT, go to 'My Info' in the upper right-hand corner of the screen to make your changes

Call Martha at 707-678-1655 x103 and she would be happy to make any changes for you.

Thank you for your help on this matter!

# Financial

## Water Quality Budget Snapshot

Dixon/Solano RCD Water Quality Coalition July 2023 - June 2024 Finances		Dixon/Solano RCD Water Quality Coalition July 2024 - June 2025 Finances	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 504,313.64</b>	<b>Budgeted Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 449,161.20</b>
Membership Fees (\$3.75/acre)	\$ 491,809.28	Membership Fees (\$3.75/acre)	\$ 445,061.20
Interest	\$ 12,504.36	Interest	\$ 4,100.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 462,161.92</b>	<b>Budgeted Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 551,007.03</b>
State Board Fees (\$1.47 per irr/acre)	\$ 168,583.38	State Board Fees (\$1.49 per irr/acre)	\$ 174,292.20
RCD Staff	\$ 112,595.75	RCD Staff	\$ 139,416.00
RCD Direct Cost	\$ 11,762.98	RCD Direct Cost	\$ 5,850.00
Surface Water Monitoring	\$ 48,936.47	Surface Water Monitoring	\$ 105,245.83
Groundwater Monitoring	\$ 40,707.55	Groundwater Monitoring	\$ 59,044.00
Reporting Requirements	\$ 37,169.95	Reporting Requirements	\$ 33,246.00
SVWQC Fees	\$ 27,853.52	SVWQC Fees	\$ 33,913.00
<b>Fund Balance - 06/2024 (Projected)</b>	<b>\$ 234,726.29</b>	<b>Fund Balance - 06/2025 (Prelim)</b>	<b>\$ 132,880.46</b>

Please contact Martha McKeen at 707-678-1655 x103 or [martha-mckeen@dixonrwd.org](mailto:martha-mckeen@dixonrwd.org) if you have any questions about the WQC budget.

## Membership Dues and Online Payments



Annual invoice were sent on October 3, 2024, with a due date of December 3, 2024. The fees are the same as last year at \$3.75 per irrigated acre. In addition to paying with a check (or cash) for annual membership dues, you can pay online or by phone. There is a 2.25% service charge to use your debit or credit card. Scan the QR code, call 1-888-604-7888, or come to the office to swipe your card! For questions, please contact Martha McKeen at 707-678-1655 x103.



# Solano RCD Partners in Action

## Solano RCD can help you apply for Healthy Soils funds and help you implement your projects!

*By: Amy King, SRCD Watershed Project Manager*

We are fortunate to have two opportunities for this CDFA program in Solano County, which can fund a wide variety of practices that build soil organic matter and establish vegetation:

- Cover crops
- Compost
- Hedgerows
- Riparian restoration
- Pasture/range planting
- Mulch
- Reduced tillage
- Grassed waterways

Our office works with two Healthy Soils Block Grants, and can help you with all phases of your project application:

1. Fibershed – if you raise livestock (sheep, alpaca) or crops (flax, cotton) for fiber, you can apply to this Healthy Soils program. **Applications are accepted on a rolling basis in Fall 2024.**
2. Solano County Farm Bureau – all other cropping systems and rural properties can apply to this Block Grant. **Applications accepted October 1 – 31 2024, and once more in early spring 2025.**

Please email [Amy.King@solanorcd.org](mailto:Amy.King@solanorcd.org) if you are interested in applying for a Healthy Soils project or want to talk wool!

### **We are looking for wool producers!**

Solano RCD is working with our partners at Fibershed, a non-profit third-party certifier of Climate Beneficial Wool, to assess the feasibility of a market for coarse wool. If you raise



A pollinator-friendly cover crop in vineyard alleys builds soil organic matter and helps recharge groundwater in the winter.



Healthy Soils projects can plant pasture and establish shade trees for livestock.



A pollin-friendly cover crop in vineyard alleys builds soil organic matter and helps recharge groundwater in the winter.



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## Hands-on Science Helps Students Understand their Local Water Resources

*By: Shea Kinser, Solano RCD Education Program Manager*

Hands-on science is the best way to bring lessons about our environment to life, and our team at Solano Resource Conservation District is doing just that. We kicked off our sixth grade Suisun Marsh Watershed Education Program in September with classroom lessons at area schools and field trips to Rush Ranch Open Space. The goal of the program is to educate students about human impacts on their watershed and about their drinking water sources, as well as to empower them with ways they can help keep our local waterways free of pollution. For the first session of the program, we worked with students from Dixon's John Knight Middle School and Vacaville's Fairmont Charter Elementary School.



Students from John Knight Middle School use binoculars to observe their environment at Rush Ranch Open Space.



## **Solano Prescribed Burn Association – Is Fire Right for You?**

*By: Karin Young, SRCD Project Manager*

If there was a tool that could reduce invasive weeds, improve forage and soil health, and reduce your risk of wildfire, would you use it? What if it involved setting your property on fire? Maybe with some buddies who know what they're doing? Enter the Solano Prescribed Burn Association (PBA): a Solano RCD project with the goal of helping landowners and managers use good fire in a safe, effective, and legal manner. Good fire, often called prescribed fire, can be used to accomplish a wide variety of goals. With the right timing and frequency, fire can reduce tough weeds like yellow starthistle and medusahead; even a single burn will effectively remove thatch to improve forage the following year. Fire can be used on slopes where equipment can't traverse, in rocks where a mower isn't usable, and the lower temperatures of prescribed fire won't cause soils to become hydrophobic. California's landscapes evolved with fire, both natural ignitions and those intentionally set by humans for cultural or land management purposes.

Decades of fire suppression have left landscapes with accumulated fuels and left people disconnected from the tradition of safe, effective burning. Prescribed Burn Associations have adopted a barn-raising approach to address these challenges, bringing together people with land and people who can help them burn it. Solano RCD staff have been working to gain experience in prescribed fire, both on-the-ground with fire training and behind the scenes with permitting and compliance. Furthermore, California has passed laws in recent years that increase protections for broadcast burning, and some burns can even be eligible for a fire damages claims fund for additional coverage.

RCD staff are happy to meet with Solano County residents interested in using fire to manage their land. We will assist you in determining whether and how fire could benefit your land, what preparation work needs to be done, and other considerations like a smoke management plan or local fire permit. And if you decide to burn, we'll help round up some helping hands to raise the barn...or raze the weeds!



# Board of Directors, Committee and Staff

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Spencer Bei  
Daniel Jones  
Eric Schene  
Alexis Harvey  
Jim Campbell, Associate  
Leo Soukeris, Associate

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Chris Calvert  
Paul Lum  
Kathie Stutz  
Randi Thompson  
Glenda Riddle, Associate

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Sam Beukelman-Farmer/Landowner  
Bruce Brazelton-Farmer/Landowner  
Paul Lum-SRCD  
Cork McIsaac-Farmer/Landowner  
Eric Schene-DRCD  
David Viguie-DRCD

## **D/S RCD WATER QUALITY COALITION STAFF**

Martha McKeen, DRCD Program  
Coordinator

Joanna Yac, DRCD Office Manager

Kelly Huff, DRCD District Manager

Chris Rose, SRCD Executive Director

## **Solano RCD Board Contact:**

Caitlyn Morrissey  
caitlyn.morrissey@solanorcd.org  
707-678-1655 x113

## **Water Quality Coalition and Advisory Committee Contact:**

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martha-mckeen@dixonrcd.org  
707-678-1655 x103

**Want to get involved? Contact us  
about possible vacancies on the  
boards and committees.**