

## East Merced Resource Conservation District

Middle San Joaquin-Lower Merced-Lower Stanislaus (Lower Merced portion) & Middle San Joaquin-Lower Chowchilla Watersheds



**Amount Funded:** \$59,600

**Match Provided:** \$14,900

**Additional Funding Obtained:** \$286,957

**Watershed Coordinator:** Teri Murrison

**Watershed Goal:** Preserve or enhance the Merced River and floodplain environment.

### Watershed Coordinator Objectives and Progress

**Objective 1:** Metamorphosis of Merced River Stakeholders (MRS) Group from a single project focus to a watershed group.

- The Merced River Stakeholders Group has successfully transitioned into a viable watershed group. The group meets every other month and has adopted a mission statement, goals and objectives.
- The MRS co-sponsored a stream bank stabilization workshop with Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) during the fifth quarter. Implementation of certain Best Management Practices (BMPs) taught at the workshop have been delayed due to permitting costs and requirements; however, a grant to develop a river-wide master coordinated permit process was submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board and is pending review. The MRS also co-sponsored a watershed fair designed to celebrate the Merced River and share watershed facts with the public. Approximately 250 people attended the fair.
- Four grant applications were submitted during the grant period.

**Performance Measures:** 1) MRS remains viable watershed group with average active participation of 35 stakeholders; 2) Provide staffing for 12 monthly meetings; 3) Adopt mission, goals and objectives by June 2003; 4) Participation of at least 15 MRS members at each of two field days with implementation of prescribed practices by five stakeholders after each event; 5) Submit at least three grant applications for continued funding of stakeholder group.

**Objective 2:** Implement voluntary individual water quality monitoring program on Lower Merced watershed.

- Co-sponsored Streambank Stabilization Workshop (30 attended) and Farmscapes (beneficial hedgerows) Workshop (35 attended).
- Planned and conducted a two-day workshop on water quality monitoring. Secured 25 water quality testing kits from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service which were distributed to landowners. Unfortunately, the water quality monitoring program could not be fully

implemented due to stakeholder concerns over regulatory penalties. However, SWRCB's repeal of the Agriculture Waiver Program has helped to overcome this initial hesitancy. The program is still in progress, with a commitment from USFWS to provide additional training on use of the test kits.

- A proposal was submitted to the SWRCB under its Proposition 13 grant program. If awarded, the grant would fund a K–12 water quality education/monitoring program.

**Performance Measures:** 1) Provide 30 stakeholders with water monitoring training and monitoring kits by August 2003 then complete a survey of same 30 stakeholders by October 2003 to verify that at least 10 have adopted BMPs for water quality by comparing monitoring results; 2) Submit at least one grant application to fund a school-based water quality monitoring project by May 2003.

**Objective 3:** Administer watershed coordinator grant program.

- All reports were submitted on a timely basis and the coordinator attended three conferences related to watershed issues.
- A proposal was submitted to the DOC under its 2004 Watershed Coordinator Grant Program.

**Performance Measures:** 1) Prepare and submit quarterly reports to DOC; 2) Attend CARCD annual meeting; 3) Submit at least one grant application for continued funding of watershed coordinator position.

**Additional Funding Obtained:**

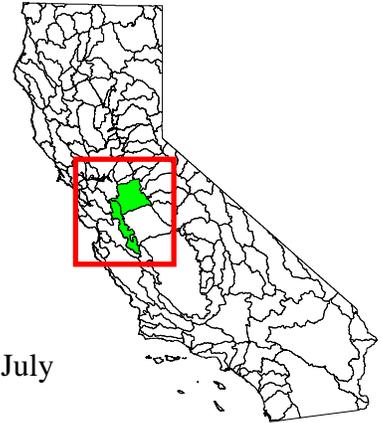
- Awarded a DOC 2004 Watershed Coordinator grant in the amount of \$286,957.

**Grant Benefits to the Watershed:**

- The grant is absolutely responsible for the ongoing existence and efficacy of the lower Merced River Stakeholder (MRS) group. Without neutral facilitation and leadership in pursuing funding and collaboration between members, the previously highly contentious group would not have been able to stay together, let alone achieve the metamorphosis from a restoration plan-focused public participation group to a functioning multi-issue watershed group.
- The MRS group has contributed to CALFED's goals in the watershed by becoming a high-profile forum for coordination and problem solving. The group made a concerted effort to focus agencies and groups within the watershed on pursuing funding for stakeholder approved priorities. The group also encouraged a collaborative approach among educators and saw Adopt a Watershed, River of Words, and the Merced River Education Initiative begin to work with MRS to eliminate duplication of effort and to support each others programs.

## East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District

Middle San Joaquin-Lower Merced-Lower Stanislaus  
& Panoche-San Luis Reservoir Watershed



**Amount Funded:** \$44,986

**Match Provided:** \$28,425

**Additional Funding Obtained:** \$906,610

**Watershed Coordinator:** Audrey Johnson (replaced Norman Crow in July 2003)

**Watershed Goal:** To improve water use efficiency, water quality, riparian health and ecosystem quality in the watersheds in the district.

### Watershed Coordinator Objectives and Progress

**Objective 1:** Assisting the East Stanislaus RCD and West Stanislaus RCD in achieving their long-term goals for watershed benefit through information exchange, education and outreach.

- East Stanislaus RCD partnered with UC Cooperative Extension and Marsha Campbell-Mathews to support research regarding dairy waste management. The watershed coordinator has provided assistance in the grant process for the research project.
- The watershed coordinator is on the technical advisory committee for East San Joaquin Valley Water Coalition (ESJVWC). The coalition is providing outreach to local farmers to educate them about the current Regional Water Quality Control Board guidelines.

**Performance Measure:** Number of new stakeholders attending annual and workshop meetings (22). Number of referrals seeking information or assistance from NRCS or the RCDs.

- Assisted 32 growers request and receive funding to implement BMPs through NRCS' EQIP program.

**Objective 2:** Provide assistance for implementation of conservation practices that improve water use efficiency, ecosystem quality, and water quality.

- No activity this quarter.

**Performance Measure:** Number of landowners that participate in irrigation scheduling short course (1 workshop). Number and extent of conservation practices installed (ten practices). Number of growers who participate in irrigation evaluations (18). Amount of funding obtained for funding conservation practices and future funding of Total Irrigation Management (one proposal submitted).

- Approximately 100 landowners attended the irrigation workshop.
- 17 growers participated in the Total Irrigation Management program representing over 900 acres of irrigated land.

**Objective 3:** Assisting West Stanislaus RCD in achieving their long-term goals for watershed benefit through information exchange, education and outreach.

- The watershed coordinator is assisting West Stanislaus RCD monitor conservation easements.

**Performance Measure:** Number of landowners who form into a watershed stewardship group (8 land-owners). Amount of funding obtained by watershed stewardship group (1 proposal submitted).

- The Agriculture Waiver Program instituted by the RWQCB resulted in the creation of the San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority and East San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority. Growers are joining these two organizations in response to the new mandates. As a result, a watershed stewardship group was not formed.

**Objective 4:** Assisting the East Stanislaus RCD and West Stanislaus RCD in achieving their long-term goals for watershed benefit through information exchange, education and outreach.

- Monitoring continues on the flow and salinity stations installed in concert with the RWQCB.

**Performance Measure:** Number of monitoring sites developed (15). Establish database for flow and salinity of drains into the San Joaquin River.

- Eleven monitoring sites were established.
- A website was established to assist monitors track real-time water quality status in the monitored areas.

#### **Additional Funding Obtained:**

The following additional funds were received during the grant period:

- CALFED Drinking Water Grant Program  
Orestimba Creek Watershed Agricultural Water Quality Pilot Program  
Amount funded: \$285,000
- CALFED Drinking Water Grant Program  
Dairy Nutrient Management Program  
Amount Funded: \$271,930 with matching federal funds (319h) of \$349,680

#### **Grant Benefits to the Watershed:**

- The Total Irrigation Management (TIM) workshops and outreach resulted in growers establishing an irrigation scheduling technique for their crops. Three growers found that they used too much water on their land. This project will continue for another year.

**Mariposa County  
Resource Conservation District  
Upper Merced River Watershed**



**Amount Funded:** \$68,400

**Match Provided:** \$24,800

**Additional Funding Obtained:** \$398,641

**Watershed Coordinators:** Nancy McConnell & Holly Warner

**Watershed Goal:** Improve and protect watershed resources and values through cooperative, comprehensive, and watershed-wide resources management by all public and private sector stakeholders.

**Watershed Coordinator Objectives and Progress**

**Objective 1:** Promote community and landowner involvement in the planning process for the Upper Merced River Watershed.

- Conducted a second Rangeland Water Quality Short Course in December. The training was co-sponsored by UC Cooperative Extension, NRCS and the Upper Merced River Watershed Council. Twenty-one landowners or rangeland managers attended the course.
- Encouraged stakeholders to participate in the public process of developing a new general plan for Mariposa County. Attended scoping sessions on projects in Yosemite National Park and worked closely with the local Weed Management Area.



*Day in the Watershed event*

**Performance Measure:** Provision of two educational workshops for local ranchers and grazing land managers, including one Rangeland Water Quality Short Course.

- This performance measure was modified to two Rangeland Education Workshops after the public notices for Water Quality Short Courses generated little interest. The first workshop was changed to a “Rangeland Toolkit” workshop that was coordinated with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and UC Cooperative Extension. That workshop generated community interest and 21 landowners attended the subsequent Water Quality Short Course.

**Objective 2:** Promote watershed education through outreach to private landowners and other stakeholders.

- The outreach and education efforts of the coordinators have focused on raising awareness and understanding of watershed issues. The coordinators have partnered with other organizations and agencies to provide workshops, walks, and talks on control of invasive weeds, rangeland management for water quality, and reducing recreational impacts.

**Performance Measure:** Hold one region-wide “Day in the Watershed” event.

- Developed and conducted two Annual Watershed Days with activities for adults, families, and children. The events were attended by 75 people in 2003 and 125 people in 2004.

**Objective 3:** Promote historic and cultural education.

- Arranged two presentations on cultural and historic topics at the Upper Merced River Watershed Council’s meetings and sponsored three history walks.

**Performance Measure:** Adoption of South Fork Trail system and signing of MOU with U.S. Forest Service.

- Adoption of the South Fork Trail system and signing of a MOU with Sierra National Forest was completed in the spring of 2003.

**Objective 4:** Promote data coordination.

- Substantial progress was made during the fifth quarter to gather information on water quality between El Portal and Briceburg. Collected data was published in two annual reports. Efforts to create a watershed data management system continue, but the system was not completed within the grant timeframe.
- This objective has been the most challenging to achieve. Research studies in the Upper Merced River Watershed have been numerous because of the many agencies involved in managing public land and because of long-time interest in Yosemite National Park. However, no single catalog of existing research exists. There is also no agreement on the digital format that an eventual catalog should take. The watershed coordinators have taken initial steps in identifying research studies and have written a grant proposal to fund an initial scientific literature search by a subcontractor.

**Performance Measure:** Collection and publication of current data on Upper Merced River Watershed.

- Collection and publication of current data on the watershed is 75% complete. Water quality data gathered in the summers of 2002 and 2003 has been collated and published. Water quality and resource data collections have been identified and some documents have been collected. A presentation on water rights issues pertaining to the Merced River and its impoundment at Lake McClure has been held.

**Objective 5:** Protect and restore the ecology of the Upper Merced River Watershed.

- Grantee met this objective by hosting Bear Creek Trash Clean-up Day in July 2002, Hite Cove Trail Maintenance Day in November 2002, and five weed pulls completed during the fifth quarter. Stakeholders have contributed over 100 hours of volunteer time in pulling invasive weeds.
- Discreet signposts with the message “Take Care” were installed at heavily used beaches and swimming holes.

**Performance Measure:** Successful completion of two service projects in the Upper Merced River Watershed Water Monitoring Program in place.

- Over the course of the grant, seven service projects have been completed. A water quality monitoring program has begun and will be continued with the help of additional grant funding.

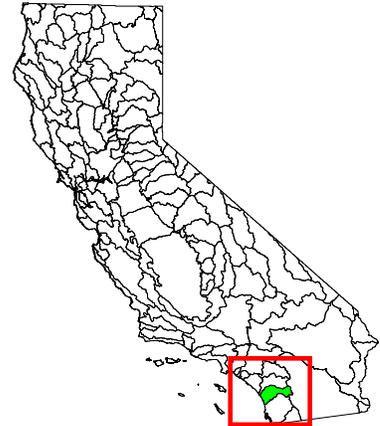
**Additional Funding Obtained:**

- Awarded a DOC 2004 Watershed Coordinator Grant in the amount of \$155,654.

**Grant Benefits to the Watershed:**

- The yellow starthistle demonstration project has made a 2.5 mile stretch of trail along the Wild and Scenic River usable again for walkers, hikers and bikers. The trail had previously been overgrown by yellow starthistle and other invasive thistles. This work will continue for an additional two years with funding from other grants.
- The adoption of the South Fork Trail is the first step in rehabilitating a historic trail and improving access for hikers, kayakers and equestrians.
- Volunteer workdays hauled several hundred pounds of abandoned junk and broken glass from popular swimming holes along a tributary to the Merced River. Discreet “Take Care” signs were installed. Volunteers will continue to monitor for trash and will encourage “taking care” among those who use the swimming holes.
- Volunteers on two trail days pruned brush, especially poison oak, along a famous wildflower trail and thus enhanced visitor experience.
- Two water quality snapshot days in the summers of 2002 and 2003 gathered baseline data on water temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, conductivity, nitrates, fecal coliform, and heavy metals. The protocols of the State Water Resource Control Board’s Clean Water Team were followed. Streamside conditions were also assessed using the Department of Fish and Game’s Streamside Assessment Protocol. Monitoring will be continued on a quarterly basis and will provide the assessment needed for joint management decisions.
- Twenty-one landowners or managers responsible for managing over 12,000 acres of rangeland in the Merced and Chowchilla watersheds completed the Rangeland Water Quality Short Course developed by UC Davis for the State Water Resource Control Board.
- Most important, the Upper Merced River Watershed is now recognized by local residents, organizations, and agency staff as a “can-do” partner. As a result individuals and agencies are suggesting more projects and activities that will continue to enhance the health of the watershed.

## Mission Resource Conservation District San Luis Rey-Escondido Watershed



**Amount Funded:** \$69,982

**Match Provided:** \$27,518

**Additional Funding Obtained:** \$1,007,129

**Watershed Coordinator:** Cynthia Mallett

### Watershed Goals, Objectives, and Progress

**Goal 1:** Sustain the progress of the San Luis Rey Watershed Council by providing continuing coordination through a watershed coordinator and by seeking funding to implement projects to address priority issues identified in the San Luis Rey River Watershed Guidelines developed by the council.

**Objective 1:** Conduct presentations, coordinate a watershed field event, submit grant applications and provide administrative support to the Watershed Council.

- Conducted five presentations. The presentations provided an overview of watershed issues, including: water conservation, the amount of water imported by the watershed, other issues affected the watersheds, and suggestions for ways to address critical watershed issues. Presentations were given to the Valley Center Rotary Club, Pauma Valley Lions Club, Santa Margarita-San Luis Rey Watershed Planning Agency, and the Inter-Tribal Water Protection Network. Participants included both watershed professionals and local citizens.
- A State of the Watershed tour was held on November 20, 2003. The tour was originally scheduled for October 30, 2003 but was postponed because of the October wildfires in the region.
- Worked with a watershed council subcommittee to develop a supplement to the San Luis Rey River Watershed Guideline. The supplement included information about water use in San Diego County and why water conservation and education programs are a necessity for the county. The supplement also includes a list of projects that could be implemented to reduce county water use.
- Arranged for nine guest speakers to give presentations at the watershed council meetings. Speakers presented on topics such as fuels management, the county general plan, water quality, NPDES permits, groundwater storage, the energy outlook for San Diego County, among others.

**Performance Measure:** Six watershed presentations to stakeholders, 25 stakeholders attend watershed field event, 100 copies of the Guideline supplement distributed to stakeholders, 12 guest speakers make presentations at watershed council meetings.

- Five presentations given to stakeholder groups. (83%)
- Twenty-two stakeholders attended a “State of the Watershed” tour. (88%)
- 125 copies of the Guideline supplement were distributed (100%)

- Nine guest speakers gave presentations at Watershed Council meetings (75%)

**Goal 2:** Develop working relationships with other agencies.

**Objective 1:** Submit grant applications in conjunction with local, state and national organizations to implement watershed related projects.

- Worked with the Upper San Luis Rey RCD to submit a proposal to the CA Integrated Waste Management Board's Farm and Ranch Clean Up and Abatement grant program. Their proposal was selected for funding. The \$96,129 grant will fund a project to remove illegally dumped trash along a 1.5 mile stretch of agriculturally zoned land in the watershed. The Pala Band of Mission Indians is also a partner and will assist with implementing the project.
- Worked with San Diego County staff to begin drafting a proposal for a wetland restoration project. This proposal will be submitted later this year when the SWRCB releases its 2004 consolidated request for proposals.
- A project NEMO scoping workshop was conducted on October 17, 2002. Mission RCD was awarded \$4,000 to cover the costs of the workshop. Representatives from several state and local agencies attended the workshop.
- Submitted a proposal to the SWRCB to fund a full project NEMO training workshop. The proposal was not selected for funding however, the coordinator intends to revise the proposal and resubmit it in 2004.
- Designed and produced a San Luis Rey Watershed Council brochure that will be used to promote the Watershed Council.

**Performance Measure:** Three grant applications submitted for watershed improvement projects, 100 brochures distributed to stakeholders, project NEMO scoping workshop presented to ten municipal officials.

- Submitted two proposals for watershed improvement projects and worked with County staff to begin drafting a third proposal. (83%)
- A project NEMO workshop was presented to 12 municipal officials. (100%)

**Goal 3:** Development of water conservation and efficiency resource information.

**Objective 1:** Work with local municipalities, planning groups, building industry groups and developers to research feasibility of implementing drought tolerant landscapes and gray water systems in new development projects.

- The Rainbow Municipal Water District was awarded a grant to develop a water conservation garden at their offices. The coordinator is working with the water district to finalize plans for the garden.

**Performance Measure:** Installation of drought tolerant landscape, develop new conditions of approval with a local planning group or municipality and develop two Memorandum of Understanding documents with two development related groups (water district, building industry group, developer and/or planning group).

- This performance measure was not completed.

### **Additional Funding Obtained/Pending:**

The coordinator submitted a total of nine grant proposals during this grant period. Of these, three were awarded. Grants Received include:

- A \$911,000 grant for a Upper San Luis Rey Watershed project that includes Arundo Donax control and riparian habitat restoration.
- A \$97,932 grant from the CA Integrated Waste Management Board to fund farm and ranch solid waste cleanup.

### **Grant Benefits to the Watershed:**

- The grant was effective in improving needed dialogue between stakeholders because of the watershed coordinator position that served as a facilitator for the stakeholders. Additional voting delegates were added to the Watershed Council and more stakeholders are freely communicating with one another. The Indian tribes in the watershed have now begun to share grant proposals and project ideas between tribal groups. This communication is vital to the watershed and can be directly attributed to the facilitation provided by the coordinator.
- Funding for the watershed coordinator position provided the staff time needed to draft and submit grant proposals to implement watershed related projects. The coordinator's efforts resulted in \$1,007,129 in new funding for watershed improvement projects.
- The task related to water use efficiency provided the time to research the feasibility of installing drought tolerant landscapes and gray water systems. By speaking with watershed stakeholders, the coordinator was able to establish a list of needs to address these water use efficiency issues. Though some of the tasks were not completed, the time spent in researching and discussing the issues is vital to the development and implementation of future water use efficiency projects. A list of follow-up watershed improvements relating to water use efficiency is listed in the section below.
- Conducting presentations to stakeholders groups also provided the first step in educating the community about the importance of the San Luis Rey Watershed Council and how it can be mutually beneficial. In order to make the Watershed Council sustainable with local funding, these presentation will be vital and an ongoing part of the watershed coordinator's position.