

# East Merced Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate  
District 12  
State Assembly  
District 17

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Prepared a lay-person's version of the Biological Assessment

Held 7 Landowner Workshops with 347 participants

Prepared and distributed a water quality self-assessment tool to 40 landowners

Held the first Merced River Summit

Facilitated the Merced River Stakeholders group

Catalogued listed species

Mapped endangered species

## PARTNERS

- National Resource Conservation Service
- Sustainable Conservation
- Supervisor Deidre Kelsey
- Merced Irrigation District
- Merced County Public Works
- Merced County Planning
- UC Merced
- Department of Fish and Game
- US Fish and Wildlife
- Cramer Fish Sciences
- Stillwater Sciences
- Merced County Farm Bureau
- East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition
- Private Landowners
- Merced River Alliance
- Merced County UC Cooperative Extension
- Army Corps of Engineers
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- CALFED



## 1921% Matched Funding

Grant Award: \$123,386

Funds raised:

Federal	50,000
State	2,315,977
Local	4,850
Private	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,370,827</b>

## Endangered Species and Biological Assessment

The DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant allowed the Watershed Coordinator to continue to advance the goals of several watershed plans by connecting and managing the relationships and actions of participating landowners, agencies, organizations and other stakeholders. The Watershed Coordinator conducted outreach and trained landowners on self-assessment and best management practices (for compliance with the Central Valley's Irrigated Lands Conditional Waiver Program); planned and laid groundwork to provide incentives for voluntary conservation work, identified appropriate funding sources and submitted grant applications; and collaborated with local, regional and statewide watershed groups and interests for training, information sharing, watershed enhancement and fundraising purposes. The Watershed Coordinator brought local interests forward in order to make real progress in the watershed. Thanks to her work, the watershed works more efficiently in a more cohesive, intact manner.

### Protecting Endangered Species through Science

In order to provide sound science to guide local residents in the protection of endangered species, the Watershed Coordinator catalogued listed species in the region, described their life history, mapped their distribution and elucidated protection measures that can be implemented by landowners. When funds become available, the East Merced Resource Conservation District hopes to publish the map and make it available for local schools and organizations. Finally, a Power Point Presentation was prepared on endangered species found in

Eastern Merced County, which includes the Merced River Watershed. This presentation was adapted from work done for permit coordination and was presented to six landowner groups. Local landowners now know more about the endangered species in their area and how to protect them.

### Creating Tools to Help Landowners

The Watershed Coordinator created a self-assessment tool that allowed landowners to assess their impact on water quality without fear of reprisal from regulatory agencies. The tool was presented in a workshop, demonstrations and through one-on-one meetings with individual landowners. Landowners were guided through the process, allowed to keep their results private, and given simple activities to mitigate impact. This allows landowners to make the corrections necessary to protect their watershed.

### Biological Assessment

The Watershed Coordinator participated in the completion of a biological assessment of the entire watershed. The assessment catalogued the birds, fish, and macro-invertebrates living in the watershed. Once the assessment was completed, the Watershed Coordinator translated the scientific information into a format that is understandable and relevant to local residents. Local landowners can now work to protect species on their properties with the guidance of solid scientific data.

### Contact Info:

2135 Wardrobe Avenue, Suite C  
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www.emrcd.org

# El Dorado Irrigation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

305%  
Matched  
Funding

Grant Award: \$214,157

Funds raised:

Federal	5,000
State	618,236
Local	30,000
Private	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>653,236</b>



## Science and Planning in the Watershed

El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) depends upon reliable, well-managed water resources and a healthy, well functioning watershed. Having a Watershed Coordinator is critical to ensure a future of quality water for humans and wildlife. Watershed work is important for the assurance of clean water, adequate supply, and a balance of human needs, wants, and natural services and order; raising the value of the management of these issues in the public eye means that greater emphasis will be put on project implementation, funding, and all-around public support. The Watershed Coordinator worked throughout the three year period to engage citizens, complete important studies, and provide solid scientific information on which the community can make well-informed water management decisions. Because of the success of the Watershed Coordinator, the watershed perspective will remain an important aspect of EID's overall operations. EID now has a division devoted to watershed management and planning.

### Ground breaking Scientific Information

Thanks to the Watershed Coordinator we will have much more information available to us as we face the water shortages that California is predicted to have in the near future. Little research has been performed on the effects of recreation on water quality, yet recreation continues on the main supply source for EID's water. The Watershed Coordinator's research will assist the agency in making management decisions for human and ecosystem health. In addition, the Watershed Coordinator expanded the study to include the impact of increasing recreation on all of the deli-

cate Sierra Nevada Ecosystem. This study will assist Sierra Nevada Communities in facing upcoming management decisions in their community. Finally, the Watershed Coordinator completed one of the first studies assessing the effects of climate change on fire frequency and intensity in the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

### Watershed Planning Process

Creating an Intergrated Regional Watershed Management Plan (IRWMP) was instrumental in securing funding and providing high quality management throughout the American River Watershed. The Watershed Coordinator was instrumental in creating the CABY (Cosumnes Bear American Yuba) IRWMP. CABY is now well-respected and received the highest ranking in the Prop 50 round of IRWMP grants. Now all members of the region can share resources, compare management ideas and plans, and assist each other in reaching watershed goals.

### Getting the Community Informed and Involved

The Watershed Coordinator worked to inform and educate the community in order to create a more educated, engaged community. Through watershed events including World Water Quality Monitoring Days, Ag in the classroom day, and the first EID customer appreciation day thousands of people were exposed to basic water issues and concepts and informed of ways they can protect their watershed.

#### Contact Info:

2890 Mosquito Rd  
Placerville, CA 95667  
(530) 642-4007

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Created an Interregional Watershed Management Plan

Completed the first formal study on the impacts of increasing recreation on the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem

Created the El Dorado Drought Preparedness Plan for the local water supply

Compiled a GIS database of water quality issues in the Sacramento Region

Studied the effects of climate change on fire intensity and frequency in the South Fork American River

Developed watershed monitoring and assessment protocols

Began a stakeholder planning process for a watershed management plan

Held El Dorado's first World Water Quality Monitoring Event

## PARTNERS

- Georgetown Divide RCD
- El Dorado and Tahoe National Forests State of California
- Regional water agencies (CABY)
- El Dorado County Water Agency
- Placer County Water Agency
- Nevada Irrigation District
- Sacramento River Watershed Program
- Regional Watershed Coordination Team
- EPA

# Fall River Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate  
District 1  
State Assembly  
District 2 & 3

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Developed management plans and cost analysis for 3 invasive weed species

Implemented a monitoring plan

Completed Fall River physical and biological assessments

17 water quality sample sites established and monitored

Mapped noxious weeds

Developed a restoration project for Big Bear Flat

Treated 200 acres of Pepperweed

Monitored bank erosion sites

## PARTNERS

- NRCS
- UC Cooperative Extension
- Calif. Dept. Food and Ag
- BLM
- USFWS
- Big Valley Pest Abatement District
- Wildlife Conservation Board
- Shasta County Dept. Food and Ag
- Regional Water Quality Control Board
- CALFED
- PG&E



332%  
Matched  
Funding

Grant Award: \$195,518

Funds raised:

Federal	69,000
State	578,332
Local	0
Private	1,512
<b>Total</b>	<b>648,844</b>

## Weed Control and Monitoring with Citizens

The Fall River Resource Conservation District used the DOC Watershed Coordinator funding to complete four important objectives toward the better health of the watershed. The Watershed Coordinator developed, prioritized, and implemented a noxious weed management plan; promoted a district wide noxious weed eradication education program that reached out to landowners and agency partners; developed a monitoring program that supports the weed management plan; and developed and coordinated funding to sustain support for the weed management plan and related restoration activities.

### Weed Control Management Plans

Management plans were developed for three invasive weeds in the Lower Pit River Watershed: perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*), Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), and purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*). Draft plans were submitted to the RCD board and stakeholders to ensure a community supported plan was adopted. The Watershed Coordinator then implemented the management plan including finding appropriate funding sources and acquiring permits.

### Outreach

Helping citizens understand invasive species is a key part of eradicating noxious species. Educating local citizens about the weed eradication program was carried out through outreach to individual landowners, articles written in newsletters and local newspapers, quarterly progress reports for public RCD board meetings, and presenting restoration activity information at the local annual fair. The

Watershed Coordinator also submitted 2 annual reports and a final report to the DOC, developed landowner access agreements to allow implementation of the weed management program, conducted worksite training for the management plans, and created 5 noxious weed posters to inform local citizens. Landowners are now on the lookout for noxious weeds and better able to eradicate them.

### Monitoring

A monitoring plan was necessary to ensure that the management plans were effective. The Watershed Coordinator developed a monitoring plan that included increased stakeholder awareness, established ongoing monitoring sites, determined monitoring protocol, and created directed steps to implement monitoring. All of these tasks were completed and future monitoring programs are planned based on the results of current monitoring.

### Continued Improvement

Monitoring results help to identify weaknesses in the plans in order to fix the problems and are a crucial part of watershed management. The Watershed Coordinator refined the program constantly and sought funding to further improve weed management strategies. As part of continued plan refinement, he applied for 16 grants and received \$648,844 in funding. Because of the continued efforts of the Watershed Coordinator, work will continue well past the funding provided by the DOC.

Contact Info:

PO Box 83  
McArthur, CA 96056  
(530) 336-6591

787%  
Matched  
Funding

Grant Award: \$145,000

Funds raised:

Federal	210,000
State	0
Local	1,400
Private	929,750
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,141,150</b>



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Removed over 2000 lbs of non-native strangling ivy.

15% reduction in sediment pollution into deer Creek

Wastewater treatment plan upgrades reduce pollution by 50%

Grazing education reduces nitrates and phosphates by 50%

4 critical habitat sites restored with the efforts of high school and junior high school classes

Community action on mercury reduction

Education programs reached just about every member of the watershed

## PARTNERS

- City of Nevada City
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Board
- State Water Resource Control Board
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Forest Service
- Bitney Springs High School Community Service Class
- Nevada Union High School Stream Club
- Forest Charter School
- Delta Tributaries Mercury Council
- County of Nevada County
- United States Geological Survey
- Natural Heritage Institute
- Nevada County Fish & Wildlife Commission
- U.S. EPA
- The Resources Agency
- Teichert Foundation
- Sierra Nevada Alliance
- USGS
- and many more

## Reducing Impairment of Watersheds

“Through scientific analysis, education, and stakeholder cooperation and participation, Friends of Deer Creek was able to make a positive impact on the present water quality of Deer Creek and lay the foundation for future improvements and protection of the watershed.” Watershed Coordinators provide local solutions for state-wide problems with a great return on the investment. The Deer Creek Watershed Coordinator is no exception. Friends of Deer Creek saw problems with eroding roads, high levels of Mercury and little community awareness of local problems. By partnering with local community members, federal agencies, state agencies, the city, county, local schools, businesses, non-profits and the wastewater treatment plant, the Deer Creek Watershed Coordinator created real change reducing mercury, phosphorous, nitrogen and sediment loads. Thanks to her efforts, we all have cleaner water, more wildlife and a healthier ecosystem. But the Watershed Coordinator didn't stop there. She knew that restoration without community education would not have lasting results. The education and outreach program reached almost every family in the watershed.

### Restoring Habitat

Our Squirrel Creek Restoration Site is an abandoned road crossing and tributary to Deer Creek that was partly filled in with nonnative weeds and had eroding banks causing unacceptable amounts of sediment to enter the watershed. Partnering with the Applied Ecology Class at Nevada Union High School, the Watershed Coordinator offered a hands-on educational opportunity for high school students. The students conducted pre-restoration vegetation surveys,

learned about native plants and riparian ecology, and constructed willow wattles for erosion control and bank revegetation to improve water quality, decrease water temperatures, decrease fine sediment levels, and improve riparian structural habitat.

### Reducing our Impact

In the past three years, we have partnered with the City of Nevada City to install five storm drain traps within Nevada City city limits. The storm drain traps have had a 15% cumulative reduction in sediment deposition into Deer Creek. Further improvements to the storm drains are estimated to reduce sedimentation from the road by 75%. By formulating and discussing our Erosion Best Management Practices, we have worked with contractors and City and County staff to reduce sediment flow by approximately 20% from dirt roads into the creek.

### Cleaning up Mercury

A mercury working group was developed and divided into two sub-groups to better reflect their purposes: The Mercury Advisory Group consisting of scientists and researchers with technical expertise and the Mercury Community Affiliates consisting of local stakeholder and project partners. We continue to meet with and strengthen cooperation between both groups. In order to reduce mercury levels in our local waterways for the health of humans and animals alike.

### Contact Info:

**132 Main Street  
Nevada City, CA 95959  
(530) 265-6090**

# Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate  
District 1  
State Assembly  
District 4

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Developed and distributed 5000 agricultural land use brochures

Published a South Fork American River Stewardship Strategy

Implemented an irrigated lands program

Reduced fire hazard by chipping over 2440 residential properties

Collected 3 years of water quality data using the citizen's water quality monitoring program

Installed demonstration xeriscape gardens.

Reduced fire risk by implementing a fuel load reduction program

Held a conservation planning workshops

## PARTNERS

- NRCS
- El Dorado County RCD
- USFS
- Bureau of Reclamation
- El Dorado County
- Sierra Pacific Industries
- Division of Water Resources
- Mosquito Volunteer Fire Association
- CABY
- El Dorado Irrigation District
- El Dorado County Water Agency
- CALFIRE
- Watershed Groups
- Fire Safe Councils
- City of Placerville
- Homeowners Associations
- High Sierra RC&D
- Georgetown Fire Dept
- RDC
- Diamond Valley High School
- Alpine Historical Society
- High Sierra Flycasters
- Local Stakeholders



899%  
Matched  
Funding

Grant Award: \$123,386

Funds raised:	
Federal	11,000
State	1,061,115
Local	37,453
Private	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,109,568</b>

## Fuel Load Reduction in the Watershed

The Watershed Coordinator promoted a community based watershed-wide approach to build cooperation and collaboration, collect and disseminate watershed and resource information, conduct citizen monitoring using specific monitoring and assessment protocols, and develop a framework for local watershed programs to function more efficiently under a long-term comprehensive SFAR watershed management plan. The major accomplishment of the 3 years of the DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant was the creation of the "Stewardship Strategy." The Stewardship Strategy is a community based plan that includes the protection and improvement of water quality and a reduction in fuel loading in order to decrease the threat of catastrophic wildfire. The strategy promotes a community based stewardship of the South Fork American River. The coordinator used community identified strategies to prioritize watershed projects.

### Water Efficient Plants

One of the easiest and most effective ways for citizens to reduce water use is to remove lawn and plant a low water use garden (xeriscape garden). Homeowners often are not familiar with xeriscape gardens or do not feel comfortable installing them. The Watershed Coordinator worked with the El Dorado County Fairgrounds to install a demonstration garden complete with plant lists and educational materials. Now everyone who attends the county fair will get an education in water-efficient plants. In addition to installing this garden, the Watershed Coordinator also worked to maintain and enhance 3 additional gardens.

### Education of Landowners

Educating landowners on land management guidelines is essential to the health of the watershed. The Watershed Coordinator worked to educate the public in multiple ways. First, he distributed over 5000 agricultural land use brochures to inform working landscape management decisions. Information will lead to better practices on private property and more interaction of landowners with local agencies. He also held workshops to help landowners assess their own property. In face-to-face meetings, landowners have the ability to learn more, ask questions, and have someone to follow up with when practices do not make sense. The end of the workshop resulted in the creation of conservation plans for each of the participants. Finally, he followed up with landowners to make sure they could implement their plans. Educating the public one landowner at a time is a great way to change the watershed.

### Fuel Reduction in Action

Catastrophic wildfire is a large potential hazard in the foothills and mountain communities. The Watershed Coordinator worked extensively with landowners, fire-safe councils, and management agencies to reduce fuel loads through prescribed burns, education, and grant writing. The result is a reduced risk of catastrophic wildfire that can hurt wildlife and human populations alike.

### Contact Info:

100 Forni Road, Suite A.  
Placerville, CA 95667  
(530) 295-5630

559%  
Matched  
Funding

Grant Award: \$78,292

Funds raised:

Federal	7,500
State	430,000
Local	0
Private	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>437,500</b>



## Permit Coordination for Environmental Enhancements

The Stony Creek Watershed is a highly impacted and altered ecosystem. The initial disturbance to the physical integrity by Black Butte Dam and its continued influence on increasing the distribution of non-native invasive species has created a very difficult situation. Thanks to the DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant, the Watershed Coordinator improved watershed coordination and awareness through organizing, coordinating, and promoting outreach and education; improved watershed-wide planning efforts through facilitating the development of a Watershed Assessment; improved watershed project effectiveness through facilitating the development of a Monitoring Program; and reduced invasive vegetation in the watershed through facilitating a Mapping Project of *Arundo donax* (giant reed) and *Tamarix* (salt cedar); and began the watershed planning process. The efforts of the Watershed Coordinator led to a healthier, more intact watershed.

### Educating the Community to Increase Environmental Awareness

The Watershed Coordinator hosted 20 educational events during the course of the Grant. Events including community water monitoring days, watershed tours, community restoration projects, invasive species removal events, and workshops for landowners. Over 300 watershed members participated in at least one of the activities.

When community members are educated about the issues that face our watershed, they are better able to correct problems, prevent future problems, and manage problems that will arise in the future.

### Weed Removal from Start to Finish

The Watershed Coordinator organized and implemented a comprehensive weed removal program. He started by coordinating the creation of a watershed assessment to identify priority issues, locations of invasive species, and weed management needs. Once *Arundo* was classified as a major issue, the Watershed Coordinator mapped the *Arundo* distribution in the watershed. Treatment followed with the completion of a demonstration site to try experimental removal techniques. Finally he monitored the locations to ensure that invasive removal was successful. The weed management program was a successful demonstration of how science can be used to create effective, long-lasting, informed watershed management.

### Permit Coordination Program

Permitting for environmental restoration projects can be a substantial impediment to completing important work for the health of the environment. Landowners that want to make sound management decisions often find the time and expense of permitting to be prohibitive. The Watershed Coordinator worked with local, state, and federal permitting agencies to secure streamlined permitting through the Resource Conservation District. Now, landowners that want to do good work for the watershed can work with the Resource Conservation District to implement standard projects in a timely manner.

#### Contact Info:

132 N Enright Ave, Suite B  
Willows, CA 95988  
(530) 934-4601 x4  
[www.glenncountyrcd.org](http://www.glenncountyrcd.org)

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Organized 20 education events
- Completed a Watershed Assessment
- Created a demonstration site to test various management practices
- Facilitated a Water Quality Monitoring Program

Implemented a permit coordination program for environmental improvement projects

Mapped *Arundo donax*

Created 8 newsletters that reached 448 landowners

## PARTNERS

- Department of Water Resources
- CARCD
- City of Orland
- County of Glenn
- Department of Conservation
- Department of Fish and Game
- Lower Stony Creek Landowners
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- NOAA Fisheries
- Regional Water Quality Control Board
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Bureau of Reclamation
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Wildlife Conservation Board
- Stony Creek 4-H
- SLEWS
- Orland Unified School District
- California State University Chico

# Los Angeles & San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WATERSHED COORDINATOR FINAL REPORT 2004 - 2007

State Senate  
District 17 & 19 - 30  
State Assembly  
District 38 - 59

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Created a "Plant Profiler" database of recommended native landscaping species

Planned a native and water-efficient plant landscaping project at Griffith Observatory

Held 5 Landscape Design seminars for over 160 landscape designers

Developed a Weedwatch outreach program including a "Terrible Ten" invasives poster and wallet card

Coordinated a Watershed Symposium on post-fire recovery Best Management Practices attended by 94 people

Published a SAFE Landscapes calendar and guidebook

Planned a Native Seed Resources Program

## PARTNERS

- City of Los Angeles
- County of Los Angeles
- San Gabriel Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
- Los Angeles WMA
- California Native Plant Society
- American Society of Landscape Architects
- Metropolitan Water District
- Los Angeles County Fire Department
- Long Beach Aquarium
- Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority
- Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden
- National Park System - Santa Monica Mountains
- The River Project
- TreePeople and many more



54%  
Matched  
Funding

Grant Award: \$249,854

Funds raised:	
Federal	0
State	133,693
Local	0
Private	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,693</b>

## Landscaping for Water Conservation

The Goal of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Sustainable Landscape Watershed Coordinator was to develop and promulgate a program that highlights both the water conservation and ecosystem restoration benefits of sustainable landscape practices. Through innovative programs such as Plant Profiler, WeedWatch.org, and the Sustainable Landscape Design Seminar Series for landscape and planning professionals, we directly addressed objectives in CALFED program. The Watershed Council is very proud to have been a part of the Department of Conservation's effective Watershed Coordinator program.

### Spreading the Word about Invasive Species

To help facilitate a new understanding of the habitat and water conservation values of native plants, the Watershed Coordinator developed the Plant Profiler ([www.theplantprofiler.com](http://www.theplantprofiler.com)) an online image and information database and website. He gave presentations demonstrating the site's functionality to targeted potential users and the site is now widely recognized as a resource by landscape architects, biologists, and planners for developing ecological restoration and landscape plans within the watershed. He then developed a biannual series of sustainable landscape seminars targeted at landscape architects, designers, builders, municipal planners, and maintenance professionals. Over 160 professionals attended at least one of the seminars.

But the Watershed Coordinator did not stop there. He collaborated with other Watershed Council staff and partners outside of the Watershed Council to develop

three outreach publications along with a map that compiled existing locations of *Arundo donax* (giant reed) for 11,000 square miles of coastal Southern California. Additionally, funding allowed Watershed Council staff to survey for twenty select high water-use, habitat degrading invasive plant species in the upper reaches of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel River watershed, primarily in the San Gabriel Mountain foothills. The results of all four projects can be found on their WeedWatch.org website.

### Native Seed Resources Program

Co-developed the Native Seed Resources program and developed an initial proposal for a mapping, collecting, banking and distribution effort that will provide eco-typical native plant seed to growers for watershed restoration and landscaping efforts. This program seeks to ensure that locally native plants are used when restoring "native" habitat in public landscapes, especially along the rivers. A secondary goal is to assure that genetically distinct remnant populations of native plants are protected when landscaping and restoration takes place adjacent to natural areas and wildlands. The mapping phase of the program is currently underway with our staff ecologist and an intern having completed most of the work. We continue to seek additional funding resources.

### Contact Info:

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[www.lasgrwc.org](http://www.lasgrwc.org)