Grant Awarded for Second Phase of Oso Flaco Lake Remediation

The Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District (RCD) has recently been awarded a grant to complete our second phase for remediation of pesticides in Oso Flaco Lakes and Creek with help from the State Water Quality Control Board. Phase two will entail designs, permits and implementation based on phase one findings. Work is anticipated to begin in mid 2020.

The first phase began in 2016 with planning and assessing the characteristic and quantifying the extent and concentration of legacy pesticides, primarily DDT, in Oso Flaco Lakes and Creek. In December 2018, the RCD completed the three-year planning and assessment effort. The assessment found sediment-
bound DDT, a highly effective pesticide banned in the early 1970s because of its devastating impacts to avian populations, in sediment up to five-feet deep and in high concentrations.

A plan for remediation based on these findings was developed that included removal of sediment from the Lakes and Creek, as well as implementation of on-farm erosion control measures to prevent ongoing sediment deposition. In addition to reducing the volume of DDT-laden sediment in the water course, the plan would also enhance riparian and aquatic habitats and increase water quality.

Two recent workshops walked cannabis growers through current regulations and introduced a self-certifying tool to navigate permit requirements and to help conserve natural resources.

RCDs Offer Technical Assistance for Cannabis Cultivation

As California’s landscape begins to formally include cannabis cultivation, the resource conservation districts are a natural vehicle to help growers reach compliance with all the regulatory requirements and also to adopt conservation practices — erosion control, pollution reduction, water-use efficiency, soil health, etc. The goal is for RCDs to serve as a conservation advocate and trusted consultant to provide technical expertise to cannabis producers.

The Coastal San Luis Resource RCD joined Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD and Cachuma RCD to hold two workshops. The RCDs walked growers through the regulations and introduced them to a self-certifying tool, Growing Responsible and Socially Sustainable Cannabis (GRASS-C), that will help them navigate permitting requirements as well as ensure cannabis operations are developed with minimal impacts to natural resources.

CSLRCD to Help Cal Poly Develop Carbon Farm Plan on Their Ranches
Carbon Farming involves implementing practices to improve the rate at which CO₂ is removed from the atmosphere and converted to plant material and/or soil organic matter. There are at least 32 on-farm Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) practices known to improve soil health and sequester carbon, while producing important co-benefits: increased water retention, hydrological function, biodiversity and resilience.

To create a Carbon Farm Plan (CFP), the Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District team works with a farmer or rancher to assess all of the opportunities to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) and carbon sequestration on their property. The first step to develop a CFP for Cal Poly is to assess existing conditions and then to estimate the amount of carbon associated with each practice by using assumptions built into a tool called the COMET-Planner. It compares the changes in carbon capture and GHG emissions between current and alternative future practices. The CSLRCD plans to hold at least two workshops and offer at least two seminars on the CFP for College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES) students and the wider campus.

The working ranches on Cal Poly’s campus offer an unmatched opportunity to widely demonstrate the benefits of developing a CFP. The nexus between active land management and academia will broaden opportunities for outreach and education to current and future land managers.

Keyline Plowing Benefits Farmers

A rangeland demonstration, held June 14 at Cerro Alto Ranch, exhibited the benefits of using a keyline plow, or Yeomans Plow. At the workshop were CSLRCD board director Linda Chipping (left) and staff Hallie Richard and Lindsay Ringer.
What is Keyline Plowing?
Keyline Plowing increases soil water-holding capacity while minimizing disturbance to forage and root structure. The plow is fitted with specialized shanks that lift and loosen soil, rather than ripping, leaving soil structure intact. The lifted soils can hold moisture longer, and the aeration increases forage productions and root development, resulting in increased soil health.

Dunes' Doings

In Oceano Dunes (above), an excavator digs out and pulls up fencing from the 40-acre wind fence site in preparation for this year’s revegetation efforts. Much of the fencing, up for two wind seasons, was buried by shifting sand on the western edge. California Conservation Corps crews and park maintenance also removed fencing. This winter, 20 to 40 acres of this plot will be revegetated.

Recently staff members Seamus Land and Grant Johnson, both working at Oceano Dunes State Park, attended a coastal dunes conference in Humboldt County. Along with attendees from Oregon, British Columbia, Arizona and California, they visited multiple dune complexes managed by agencies such as state parks, CDFW, BLM and nonprofits.

Most of the work being done there is to remove invasive
European beachgrass. Land and Johnson visited the Lanphere Dunes, the South Spit, Little River State Park and the Humbolt Coastal Dunes Nature Center. They also attended multiple presentations on past and future projects in the Humbolt area.

Staff News...

Thanks, Bridget!

This summer flew by, but we could not have accomplished as much as we did without Bridget Hobscheid, our summer intern. She spent about three days a week working in the State Park’s Oceano Dunes on restoration projects and here and there on the various other projects we cover. She didn’t have to go far to find her next employment when the internship ended. State Parks picked her up the next day, where she continues to work on the Oceano Dunes restoration efforts and with our Dunes staff.

Best to you Bridget.

RCD Services

Call us today at (805) 772-4391 for help with all of the following:

- Irrigation Evaluations
- Engineer Design
- Alternative Agricultural Grading Review (ARP)
- Erosion & Stormwater Control
- Conservation Easements
- Conservation Planning
- Permit Coordination

Conservation Clip List is a weekly collection of articles distributed by NACD (National Association of Conservation Districts). This link discusses CDFA’s Healthy Soils Program in all 10 California RCD regions: 
http://www.nacdnet.org/2017/06/15/california-rcds-cdfas-healthy-soils-program-leading-way-climate-smart-ag/
• Watershed & Habitat Restoration