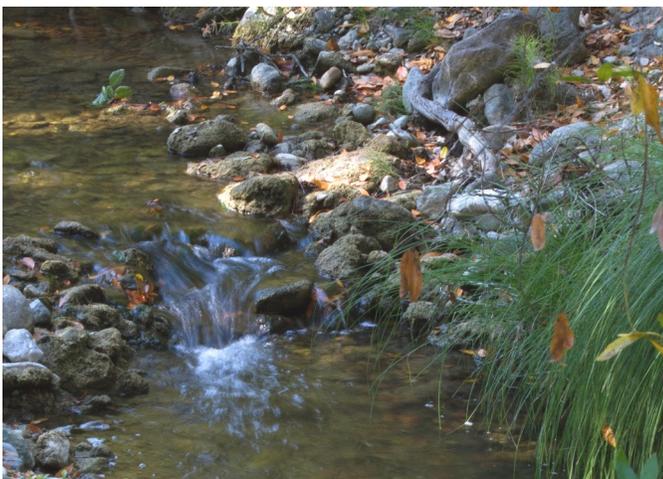




UPPER SALINAS-LAS TABLAS
RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



ANNUAL REPORT 2018/2019

Our Mission

Provide services and education to landowners supporting their management and stewardship of soil, water and natural resources.



IN THIS REPORT....

Letter from the Executive Director

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Board of Directors and Staff

Dear Friends,

I have been with this organization for several years, all of which were dry years. After a long, dry period the rains this past winter were a welcome relief. Streams and rivers are flowing, springs are recharged again, and the grass is growing. While there is much to be grateful for, we must be mindful of where we were not long ago and where we may be soon again. In addition to having good ground cover and healthy soils to retain all the rain we received, the importance of having good groundwater recharge and water conservation cannot be stressed enough. From ridgetop to stream, every little bit helps.

Momentum is gathering. Several projects and programs are coming to fruition. One of which occurs in Santa Rosa Creek where a bank failure along the road is causing erosion and jeopardizing the integrity of the road and impacting the stream, fish, and wildlife. Thanks to National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Pacific Gas & Electric, and San Luis Obispo County we have secured sufficient funding to begin implementing the designs developed by Stillwater Sciences in 2016 to rehabilitate this area. The Santa Rosa Creek Streamflow Enhancement Project, which evaluates the feasibility of recharging groundwater during winter storm events, is moving along well and gaining interest. The program is a flagship of working with landowners, academia, consultants, and resource agencies to develop small, but significant, projects that accumulate to greater watershed health.



Devin Best, Executive Director

What is the most exciting, and perhaps the most rewarding, part of being with the RCD is the ability to be creative, to be visionary, and to connect with people and their land. For example, our two Healthy Soils Demonstration projects will provide scientific information on conservation practices aimed at improving soil health.

As we look forward to the year ahead, we see significant potential and opportunities to further the mission of the US-LTRCD by building on the partnerships and experiences of the past several years.

Sincerely,

Devin Best



Healthy Soils in Northern San Luis Obispo County

In 2018 the US-LTRCD was awarded a CDFA Healthy Soils Demonstration grant for cover crop management trials on 4 vineyards in northern San Luis Obispo County. These four plots were selected to reflect common differences in vineyard growing regions of the north county. This grant allows for implementation of different cover crop management techniques such as mowing, chem/mow, till, and no till. Soil organic matter tests as well as phospholipid fatty-acid tests are being conducted annually on the plots to determine changes over time in the microbial communities



Jeff Borum collecting soil samples



Black Diamond Vermicompost
Facility Tour

In 2019 the US-LTRCD was awarded a second CDFA Healthy Soil Demonstration grant to conduct vermicompost trials on vineyards in our district. This grant features our partnership with Mesa Vineyard Management Castoro Cellars, Black Diamond Vermicompost, and Cal Poly. Over the course of three years we will apply vermicompost and Liquid Compost Extracts to our test plots in a variety of ways. This is a Type 'A' Demonstration project which requires consistent greenhouse gas emissions data collection from the soil. This is the only vermicompost grant funded through the CDFA Healthy Soils Demonstration Program. Therefore, the information gathered will possibly allow vermicompost application to be an available technique for the Healthy Soils Incentive program in the future.

Growing Responsible and Socially Sustainable Cannabis

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After the passage of Prop 64, our RCD took initiative in providing technical services to local cannabis growers. We worked with local growers to develop a Best Management Practice self-assessment, third-party verification program, known as Growing Responsible and Socially Sustainable – Cannabis (**GRASS-C**). The goal of the program is to objectively identify, prioritize, and rank natural resource issues relevant to cannabis production.

The response from growers has been well received. Many are appreciative to have a local, non-regulatory, non-profit organization available to ask resource issues and to shed some light on regulations regarding cannabis. This program is designed to help with the permitting process as well as to be a marketing tool, assuring consumers that the product they are purchasing was produced with care for natural resources.

The GRASS-C program has expanded beyond the Central Coast and is being utilized by RCDs throughout the state.



South Central Coast Invasive Species Eradication



Dalmatian Toadflax

(*Linaria dalmatica*)

Santa Barbara County

99% reduction



Russian Wheatgrass

(*Thinopyrum junceiforme*)

San Luis Obispo County

99% reduction



European Sea Lavender

(*Limonium duriusculum*)

Santa Barbara County

60% reduction

San Luis Obispo County
95% reduction



Japanese Dodder

(*Cuscuta japonica*)

Santa Barbara County

90% reduction



Canada Thistle

(*Cirsium arvense*)

Santa Barbara County

99% reduction

San Luis Obispo County
99% reduction

In 2016 we began working toward the reduction of 5 invasive species in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties.

A true collaborative effort, we are working with multiple non-profits, public agencies and landowners throughout the two counties. Our goal is to reduce the populations of these 5 species by 95% by December 31st 2021.



As a result of our work thus far, we have seen over 95% reduction in all of the targeted species, save for European Sea Lavender in Santa Barbara County. The Thomas fire and subsequent mudslide exacerbated the problem and slowed treatment, but with renewed

determination and a new plan of action, we anticipate more positive results in the next year.

Fiscalini Ranch Wildland Fire Management



Watershed Stewards Program members David Lopez-Portillo and Sal Zaragoza partnered with the Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, Cambria Community Services District, and the California Conservation Corps to develop a habitat enhancement project on the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve in Cambria, CA.

This was a grassroots effort that engaged local community members to address natural resource concerns in their own backyard, including wildland fire management and riparian habitat enhancement.

52

VOLUNTEERS PARTICIPATED

100

NATIVE PLANTS PLANTED

8

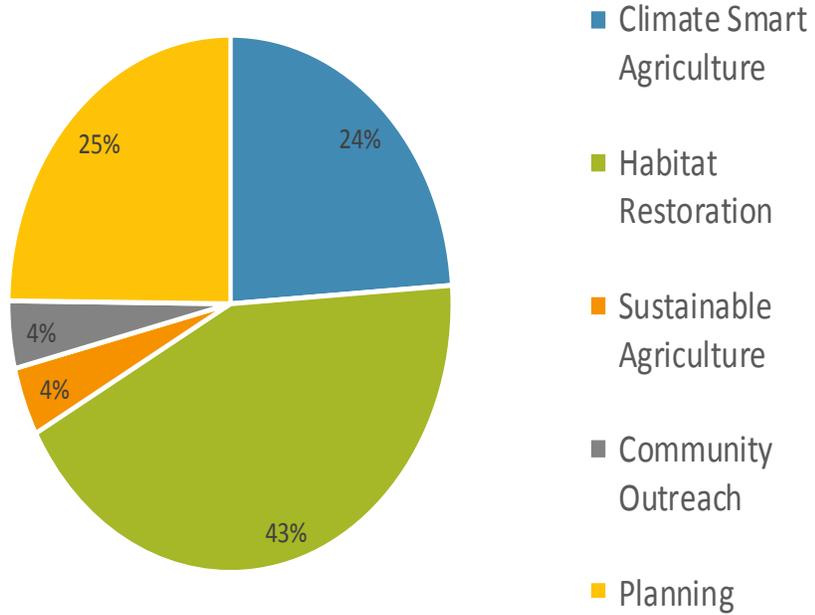
CUBIC FEET OF MULCH PRODUCED

20

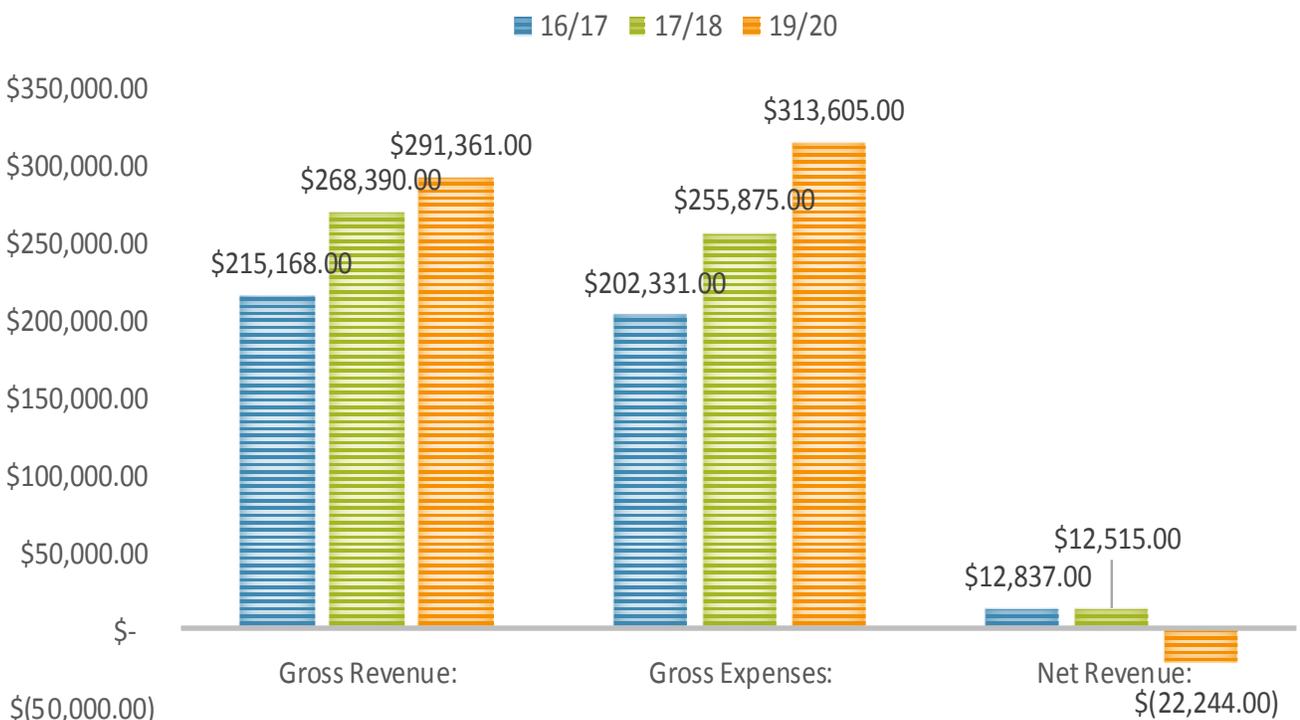
CUBIC YARDS OF INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVED

Finances and Funders

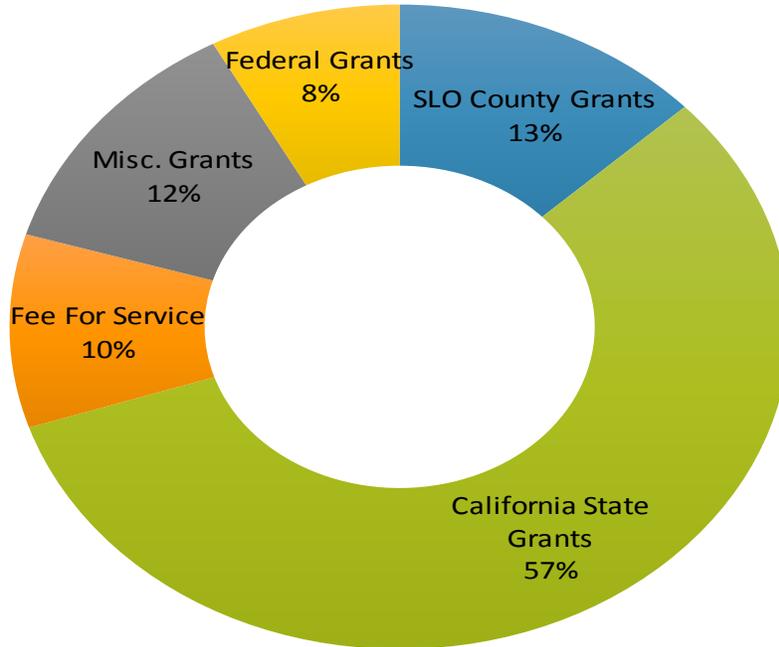
Program Allocations



REVENUE AND EXPENSES



Sources of Revenue



Thank you to our funders:

BioDiversity First

Department of Food and
Agriculture

Carbon Cycle Institute

County of San Luis Obispo

Department of Conservation

Department of Water Resources

JUSTIN Community Grant

Pacific Gas and Electric Company

Natural Resources Conservation
Service

Resource Legacy Fund

United States Fish and Wildlife
Service

Wildlife Conservation Board

Mapping Our Impact



Legend

-  District Boundary
-  Healthy Soils Incentive Program 2018
-  Irrigation Evaluations 2019
-  Technical Assistance
-  GRASS-C
-  CDFA Healthy Soils Demonstration Project
-  NFWF Streambank Restoration Grant
-  PG&E Mitigation Project
-  Creek Restoration Projects
-  Workshop/Outreach Events
-  Invasive Species Removal



Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA





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