



Mendocino County

Resource Conservation District

Conserving Wild and Working Landscapes Since 1945

To conserve, protect, and restore wild and working landscapes to enhance the health of water, soil, and forests of Mendocino County

Resource Conservation Districts

- First established after the Dust Bowl to assist landowners in land conservation and to lessen the risk of similar man-made disasters
- There are approximately **3,000** special districts operating as conservation districts across the U.S. Nearly every county in the U.S. falls within the jurisdiction of one of these districts. There are **98** RCDs throughout California.
- California is one of only three states that does not provide base funding of any kind for its Resource Conservation Districts, although many California RCDs receive some kind of local tax base (sales tax or property tax) or dedicated support from their counties.

MCRCRD, the County's Government Partner in Providing Vital Services to Underserved Rural Communities since 1945

Professional, Capable, Fiscally Sound, and Transparent

- Non-regulatory government body that works directly with private landowners and public land managers to protect soil, water, forests, and wildlife
- Annual audits, publicly-noticed meetings, a board-approved annual budget, accessible website with agendas and minutes of meetings, social media, blog, and YouTube channel.
- Financial base of grants and contracts, with occasional support from foundations or the County. No income from property or sales taxes, unlike other RCDs
- Workforce of approximately 16.5 with competitive salaries and benefits
- Dedicated volunteer board members with lifetimes of expertise in rural conservation issues.
- Steady growth each year with increased involvement with public, private, and Tribal partners.

Working with Public and Private Landowners to Provide Technical Assistance and to Implement Projects

Healthy Soils

- Supporting orchards, vineyards, cannabis, flowers, herbs and food crops

Healthy and Resilient Forests

- Forest management plans, fire hardening and thinning, beneficial burning

Clean and Accessible Water for All

- Restoration of riparian habitat, water storage, water conservation assistance, road treatments to reduce sediment runoff, water monitoring

Willits Bypass Mitigation Project

- Habitat restoration and maintenance of almost 2000 acres

MCRCD Partnerships and Clients

- Trout Unlimited
- Nature Conservancy
- Mendocino County Fire Safe Council
- City of Ukiah
- Ukiah Valley Fire Authority
- Potter Valley Band of Pomo Indians
- Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians
- Guidiville Rancheria
- Hopland Band of Pomo Indians
- County of Humboldt
- California Conservation Corp.
- NRCS – Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Local contractors, farmers, architects, engineers, and other environmental professionals
- North Coast Soil Hub
- Mendocino Winegrowers Association
- Anderson Valley Land Trust
- Fibershed
- Anderson Valley Winegrowers Association
- City of Willits
- UCANR Hopland Research and Extension
- California Native Plant Society- Sanhedrin Chapter
- Cal Poly Humboldt
- SSU - Galbreath Wildlands Preserve
- California State Parks
- CalFire
- Jackson State Demonstration Forest
- UCCE University of California Cooperative Extension
- Conservation Works
- Lake County RCD
- CLERC
- Sonoma RCD
- Gold Ridge RCD
- Napa RCD
- Humboldt RCD
- Mendocino College
- Caltrans
- Mendocino Redwood Company
- Camp Navarro
- Mendocino County Museum
- Bureau of Land Management
- CCC – California Conservation Corps.

A Conservation and Economic Driver in Our County

By assisting landowners in conservation efforts, the MCRCDD has become an Economic Driver in our County:

- This year, the MCRCDD's actuals will exceed \$6.5 Million.
- This money directly flowed into benefiting our land and watersheds and in bringing technical expertise to our residents, young and old.
- Next year's budget is projected to bring over \$10 Million to Mendocino County.
- This money was paid to Mendocino County businesses and workers!
- *MCRCDD procurement policy allows preferences for local companies and Tribal entities.*

Sustainable Agriculture Program FY 2025-26 Accomplishments



Hybrid Indigenous Stewardship planting native riparian habitat with the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians



Anderson Valley apple farmer applying compost through the CDFA Healthy Soils Program

- Planned and funded nearly a mile of on-farm native pollinator habitat
- Secured \$1M in funding for sustainable ag practices on 30+ farms through CDFA Healthy Soils Program
- Planned over 3 acres of turf removal and climate appropriate planting replacement for fall implementation
- Developed conservation plans for vineyards, orchards, cropland, and grazing lands

Community Engagement in Agriculture and Habitat



Potter Valley FFA students planting one of several native pollinator hedgerows at the rodeo

Laytonville HS students learning about rainwater catchment and crop rotation at Irene's Garden

Technical Assistance



Prescribed grazing in orchards, vineyards, and wild lands workshop in Hopland



MCRCD site visit and soil sampling for a conservation plan at a flower and produce farm in Manchester

Planning and Implementation



Draft Landscape Transformation Plan for turf replacement project in Hopland

Ukiah farmer applying compost through the CDFA Healthy Soils Program

Mendocino County Resource Conservation District Forest Health and Resiliency Program



2023 – 2026 Large Project Grant Funds in Mendocino County:

- CAL FIRE Forest Health Grants: \$14.2M (committed), \$7.9M (pipeline)
- CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grants: \$1M (pipeline)
- CAL FIRE Reforestation & Biomass Utilization: \$2M (committed)
- State Coastal Conservancy Wildfire Risk Reduction: \$2.1M (committed)

Total Committed: \$18.3 Million

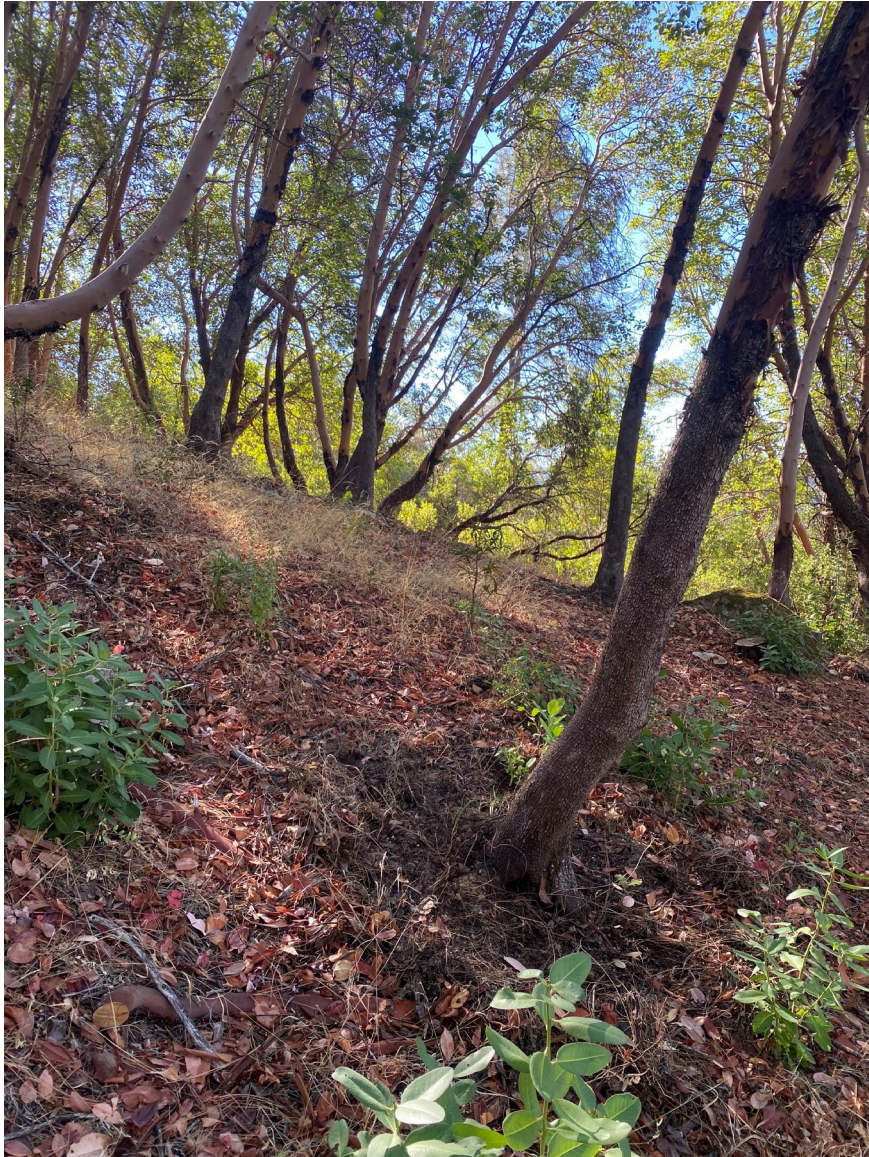
Total Pipeline: \$8.9 Million

Treatment Acres Completed: **2421**

Treatment Acres Planned (Funded): **2669**

Treatment Acres Planned (Unfunded): **1761**

Mendocino County Resource Conservation District Forest Health and Resiliency Program



Small Landowner Support

Support Provided	# of Landowners
General Technical Assistance	160
Forest Management Plans	22
Vegetation Treatment Projects Planned	58
Vegetation Treatment Projects Funded	39

Total Treatment Acres Completed: 530

Total Cost Share Funds Awarded: \$1,201,018

Water Resources Program

FY 2025–2026 Accomplishments

\$3 million secured



Mill Creek Ponds in the Russian River Watershed



Mill Creek in the Navarro River Watershed

Water storage — implemented three projects totaling 535,000 gallons.

Aquatic monitoring — supported County Water Agency invasive mussel monitoring.

Education & cleanup — hosted Russian River Cleanup and delivered stormwater pollution education to students in Ukiah.

Restoration planning — advanced stream restoration and water conservation on commercial cannabis farms.

Rural roads & grants — upgraded/decommissioned 4 miles of rural roads

Grants — submitted water quality/security grants.

Fisheries Restoration- projects contributed to historic salmon recovery along the Mendocino Coast 2024/2025 population 30,000 adult salmon

Tribal climate resilience

Transformative Activities for Tribal Communities

Russian River Watershed and surrounding areas

Supporting the Hopland Band of Pomo, Potter Valley Tribe, and Guidiville Rancheria to become climate resilient communities through water and energy efficiency improvements, solar power, and greening activities.

Priority workstreams

Clean energy feasibility — solar studies for residential and community buildings.

Demonstration projects — biochar installations and home weatherization pilots.

Workforce development — pathways in clean energy and construction.

BIOCHAR SOLUTIONS FOR MENDOCINO COUNTY TRIBES

Production, Applications, and the Future

The collage features several key elements: a map of the Russian River Watershed in the top left; a biochar production facility with large metal bins in the top center; a large fire burning in a bin in the top right; a biochar installation in a garden in the bottom left; a scatter plot titled "% Fuel Moisture vs PM_{2.5}" in the bottom center; and a biochar application site with people and equipment in the bottom right.

% Fuel Moisture vs PM_{2.5}

PM _{2.5} (µg/m ³)	% Fuel Moisture
1.5	1.5
2.0	2.0
2.5	2.5
3.0	3.0
3.5	3.5
4.0	4.0
4.5	4.5
5.0	5.0
5.5	5.5
6.0	6.0

Statistical values:
 $y = 0.1529x - 2.5603$
 $R^2 = 0.8772$
 $p = 2.17\text{e-}16$

South Fork Eel Sustainable Water Systems



First-of-its-kind CDFW Cannabis Restoration Grants Program award at Happy Day Farms, Laytonville

Field outcomes

Catchment tanks — three large-volume rainwater tanks (~100K gal each).

Water systems — rainwater catchment for three Bell Springs cannabis cultivators.

Stormwater treatment – bioswales to slow, spread, and sink stormwater to increase infiltration

Habitat stewardship — invasive species plan, native pollinator-friendly plants, legacy fencing removed.

Navarro River Streamflow Enhancement



Navarro Streamflow Enhancement Partnership-
Mendocino County RCD, The Nature
Conservancy and Trout Unlimited

Field outcomes

Increasing water security for land stewards and fish - Rural Residential Off-stream Storage and Forbearance ~58,000-gallon water tank with forbearance July-October on a priority coho salmon stream

Groundwater Infiltration - 2400 sq ft. Infiltration basin and repairing an incised channel, including a pond release plan

Habitat Enhancement - Improving instream habitat for salmon and steelhead

County of Mendocino Project Partnerships

Partner-led monitoring, cleanup, and education efforts

QZ Mussels

- Water temperature and quality monitoring
- Lab testing for invasive freshwater mussels

Russian River Cleanup

- Community cleanup day
- Classroom and outdoor environmental education in local schools

Covelo Cleanup

- Community trash drop-off days with Round Valley Indian Tribes and C&S Waste

QZ Mussels



Russian River Community Cleanup





Land Stewardship Program

Willits Bypass Mitigation Project

- Long-term management including land ownership
- Working Landscape with local agricultural partnerships
- Local Staff
- Protecting and enhancing rare plants and habitats
- Improving watershed and wetland function
- Reduce targeted invasive plant species
- Protecting wildlife and habitats
- Outreach and education
- Partnership with Mendocino County Museum
- Partnership with the City of Willits
- Protecting cultural resources
- Infrastructure maintenance

Bypass Construction:

- 5.9 miles bypass roadway
- 2 interchanges
- 6 bridges spanning local roadways/RR & creek crossings
- Viaduct spanning 100-year flood plain of several creeks

Impacts:

- Wetland impacts:
 - 48.5 acres (permanent impacts)
 - 25 acres (temporary impacts)
- Other Waters of the US
 - 2.6 acres (permanent impacts)
 - 3.5 acres (temporary impacts)
- North Coast semaphore grass 0.3 acre impacted
- Baker's meadowfoam habitat: 121 acres impacted
- Riparian corridors:
 - 16.1 acres impacted
- Oak woodland (tree canopy) habitat: 12.5 acres impacted
- Oak woodland (grassland) habitat: 53 acres impacted

Bypass Mitigation Framework:

The overall vision of the project's compensatory mitigation strategy was to establish, rehabilitate, reestablish, and preserve a mosaic of high functioning habitats in perpetuity, thus increasing the ecological value and improving water quality in the Eel River Basin.

Compensatory mitigation efforts by CalTrans:

- Wetlands establishment (60.5 acres)
- Wetlands enhancement (442.6 acres)
- Riparian preservation (201 acres) and Establishment (53.5 acres)
- Oak woodland preservation (230.3 acres) and establishment (6.5 acres)

Mitigation Accomplishments by CalTrans:

- 265,384 herbaceous plants 14 Wetland Establishment sites
- 509,720 herbaceous and 6,248 tree and shrub plantings installed across most of the Wetland Rehabilitation sites (approx. 25 acres)
- 400 acres of Riparian Establishment was also planted (76,836 herbaceous and 38,019 trees and shrubs)
- Overall, just under 1 million plants went into the ground by the fall of 2016

MCRCDD contracts with County of Mendocino - 2020

- **Ukiah Valley Fire and Fuels Reduction Project, #19-241**
Amount: \$1,443,000 Dates: October 23, 2019 – March 15, 2022
- **Redwood Complex Fire Recovery Hazardous Tree Removal Project, #19-018**
Amount: \$840,900 March 27, 2019 - March 15, 2022
- **The Road to Recovery: Redwood Complex Fire Restoration - Implementation Project, #19-09** Amount: \$622,015 March 27, 2019 - May 31, 2021
- **Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC), #20-022**
Amount: \$198,600 March 15, 2020 – March 14, 2022
- **CASGEM Groundwater Elevation Monitoring/NPDES MS₄ Russian River Cleanup/UVBGSA Collaboration, #21-29** Amount: \$46,000 2020 – June 30, 2021
- **Invasive Mussel Prevention Monitoring and Outreach, #21-74**
Amount: \$39,580.00 Dates: October 27, 2020 – December 31, 2022

2020: \$3,190,095

MCRCRD contracts with County of Mendocino - 2022

- **Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program, #20-022, \$198,600**
- **Drought Technical Assistance, #21-50, \$25,000**
- **Invasive Mussel Prevention Monitoring and Outreach, #21-74, \$39,580**
- **CASGEM Groundwater Elevation Monitoring/NPDES MS4 Russian River Cleanup/UVBGSA Collaboration/Drought Preparedness, #21-205, \$49,824**
- **County Funding, #21-259, \$45,000**
- **CEQA for 4 Projects, #22-053, \$40,000**
- **Road Stormproofing, #22-073, \$500,000**

2022: \$898,004

MCRCDD contracts with County of Mendocino - 2026

2025 - 2026

- 240033 QZ Mussel Prevention, \$50,000
- Russian River Cleanup, \$24,882.50

2026: \$74,882

How Can We Work Together More Effectively?

Annual Funding

- This year will be the first year that the MCRCDD has not requested support. As grants do not pay for grant-writing, your support has enabled us to invest in Mendocino County's on-going conservation needs.

Inter-Agency Contracts

- The county contracts with the MCRCDD for water monitoring, mussel monitoring, and community clean-ups. But we have done and can do so much more!

What the RCD needs from the County

- Points of contact for the MCRCDD to discuss grant-funding opportunities for future contracts.
- Storage space for equipment!

Check us out at www.mcrccd.org

Follow-us on Instagram (@mendocinorcd),
Facebook (Resource Conservation District of
Mendocino County) and YouTube (Mendocino
County RCD)

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Thank You!