

Resource Conservation Workshops Serve Diverse Communities

The Contra Costa Resource Conservation District (CCRCD) is committed to raising awareness in our community about important issues in natural resource conservation.

We sponsor workshops and tours periodically that can help individuals and local organizations improve their stewardship of the land, water, vegetation and wildlife in Contra Costa County. In this fiscal year the following workshops reached a wide variety of county residents and local agencies.

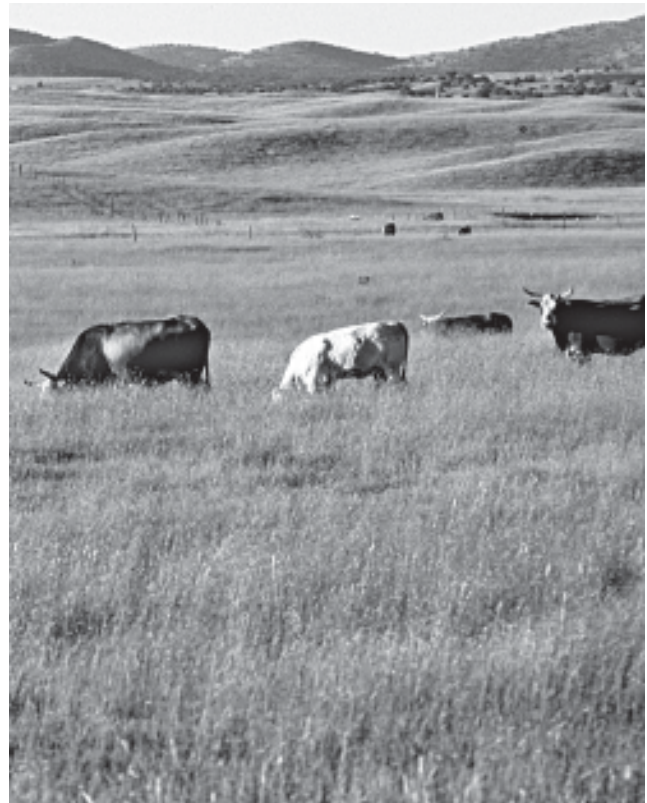
Priority for Pollinators

Because the nationwide decrease in bee populations has become a growing concern and has sparked discussion about the effect a bee shortage could have on our food supply, the CCRCD sponsored a workshop on pollinating insects for home gardeners, farmers, land managers, and gardening educators. As bee expert Katherina Ullman from the Xerces Society explained, historically a wide spectrum of insects including wasps, flies, moths, butterflies and native solitary bees have all played a role in plant pollination along with the introduced colonies of European honeybees. As the native pollinators have decreased over time, dependence on honeybee colonies has increased. With the rise of “colony collapse disorder,” which is wiping out thousands of commercial honeybee colonies, it has become more important to use gardening and land management practices that encourage and sustain native pollinators. Our workshop attracted a large audience of people eager to learn a variety of simple techniques they could implement to help address this national problem.

Mace Vaughan - Xerces Society Pollinator Program



Wild native bees like this Bombus sp. help pollinate crops. Learn more at www.xerces.org.



Protecting healthy rangeland from noxious invasive weeds preserves habitat value, herd productivity and land value.

Rangeland Weed Warriors

No one likes weeds in their garden, but few of us see weeds as a real threat to our local ecosystems. Invasive exotic plants, however, actually take a very costly but silent toll on our environment. The CCRCD partnered with the Contra Costa Agriculture Department and University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) to organize a workshop for ranchers and open space managers on how to identify and control the weeds and invasive grasses that are proliferating in our precious remaining open spaces. Some of these grasses and broadleaf plants are toxic or harmful to livestock; others simply displace the plants that insects, wildlife and livestock depend on, rendering the land unusable even though it looks green and healthy to the untrained eye. At this all-day workshop, experts in weed identification and management from NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service), the National Park Service, the California Dept. of Food and Agriculture, East Bay Regional Parks District, USDA Forest Service and the organizing agencies shared their knowledge, and the latest research with a packed house of participants who take their responsibility for good land stewardship seriously.