Amador Resource Conservation District

MARCH 2024 NEWSLETTER

PROGRAMS & ASSISTANCE

FOREST HEALTH ASSISTANCE

The Amador Resource Conservation District (ARCD) has partnered with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide landowners of forested lands with technical and financial assistance! If you are dealing with dead/dying trees, concerned about wildfire risk, or just want to improve the health of your forest, please follow the QR link to our interest form, complete to the best of your ability, and an ARCD forestry professional will get in touch with you.

www.amadorrcd.org/forest-health Interest Form:

NO-COST CHIPPING PROGRAM

The ARCD is offering free residential fuels Roadside Chipping services, Neighborhood Chipping services, and Community Chipping services to help encourage continued vegetation maintenance throughout the county. ARCD administers the chipping services through grant funding awarded by Cal Fire and the California Climate Investments program. This chipping program is open to all Amador County residents who first, pile vegetative slash according to program specifications listed on the website, then submit a request for chipping service. Fill out your application today or contact Megan Watts for further assistance or information!

www.amadorrcd.org/roadside-and-neighborhood-chipping
Megan Watts: megan@amadorrcd.org / (209) 214-9727

WILDLIFE STRUCTURES PROGRAM

ARCD, in collaboration with Calaveras County and Tuolumne County RCDs, has received Climate Resilience Through Habitat Restoration on California Lands funding through the California Wildlife Conservation Board and California Association of Resource Conservation Districts to install and monitor wildlife structures on private property. ARCD, CCRCD, and TCRCD anticipate awarding up to 140 wildlife structures to Amador, Calaveras, and Tuolumne County residents. Visit our website at the link below or use the QR code to fill out our Wildlife Structures Interest form!

www.amadorrcd.org/wildlife-structures Interest Form:

MONARCH & POLLINATOR HABITAT

ARCD has received Climate Resilience through Habitat Restoration on California Land funding through the California Wildlife Conservation Board and California Association of Resource Conservation Districts to plan, install, and monitor two large monarch and pollinator habitat restoration projects on working lands in Amador County. For more information, visit the website and/or fill out our interest form using the QR code!

https://www.amadorrcd.org/natural-and-working-lands-monarch-and-pollinator-habitat-projects

Interest form:

HEALTHY SOIL - WHAT IS IT AND WHY WE SHOULD CARE

Although we spend the vast majority of our lives with our feet on the ground, benefitting from its byproducts and ecosystem functions, soil is one of the least understood environments on Earth. Thankfully, we're learning. We now know soil is teeming with life and as the saying goes, "There is more life in a teaspoon of soil than there are humans on Earth." In fact, ¼ of the world's biodiversity lives in the soil, from megafauna (think burrowing animals), to microorganisms such as soil viruses and single celled organisms, and everything in between, including earthworms, nematodes, and fungi. We are greatly indebted to these soil species as they play a critical role in a complex relationship between the organic (flora, fauna, fungi) and inorganic (minerals, water, gases, sunlight). That relationship is delicately connected, in constant flux, and is as important as the dynamic interactions across the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and lithosphere in allowing life to thrive. From the macro to the micro, each plays a role in producing the Earth's diverse and beautiful landscapes, including Amador's spring foothills of abundant wildflowers, sprawling oak woodlands, and mountainous coniferous forests.

The intrinsic role the living soil environment plays in producing and adapting has recently become a significant topic in the context of working lands. Why? Because we don't just want Healthy Soil, we NEED Healthy Soil. To put it straight, the productivity of our working lands and the health of our soils are intertwined, not exclusive. Our wellbeing is dependent on soil staying stable and functioning well, so that we can continue feeding, housing, and clothing ourselves. Anyone who survived the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, or those who have heard their lived experiences, understand just how precious our topsoil is, and the value it brings to our lives.

Soil's ecosystem services extend beyond producing our commercial outputs. They include absorbing and holding water, regulating water movement, filtering pollutants, influencing water and air quality, and nutrient cycling. Soil provides these ecosystem services when it can function well with soil species' activities supporting those processes. When the collective living medium that is soil can cultivate a richer environment below ground, regulate itself in the face of environmental and climatic pressures, and sufficiently capture and store energy and water then we have Healthy Soil.

Each environment is going to have a different version of Healthy Soil. In California alone, we have 2,500 soil types. With consideration to Working Lands, Healthy Soil is going to differ between agricultural system types (i.e., grazing lands, croplands, orchards, vineyards, timber) and local soil types, climate, and ecoregion. However, there are two common threads that allow us to understand soil health across various scenarios.

The first is soil's ability to cycle and store Carbon – the critical energy source whether you're a plant, human, or truck. Carbon influences nutrient retention and availability, water infiltration and retention, aggregate stability, soil structure and texture, and stable soil life. These factors in turn influence forage abundance and quality, weed presence, water and air quality, biodiversity, and soil's adaptability to erosive forces and drought.

THE SECOND FACTOR IS US. AS WORKING LAND LANDOWNERS, MANAGERS, AND LABORERS, THE PRACTICES WE EMPLOY TO MANAGE OUR LANDS PLAY A DECISIVE ROLE IN THE HEALTH OF OUR SOIL, IN ITS ABILITY TO FUNCTION, ADAPT, AND SUSTAIN. FOLLOW ALONG IN OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP CULTIVATE AND SUPPORT HEALTHY SOIL.

www.amadorrcd.org/healthy-soils

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

ANNA MARISCAL

HEALTHY SOILS NATURAL RESOURCES SPECIALIST

Anna Mariscal is the ARCD's Healthy Soils Natural Resources Specialist, responsible for developing both our Working Lands Assistance and Wildlife and Pollinator Assistance Programs. Working across Amador, Alpine, Calaveras, and Tuolumne Counties, she provides technical assistance in soil conservation and habitat restoration, and helps farmers, ranchers, and working land landowners navigate conservation grant opportunities.

Having worked across a variety of land management and agricultural operations throughout California and abroad, she has supported agricultural producers and landowners in various technical, advisory, and managerial roles for nearly a decade. Anna is passionate about providing the educational resources and community support necessary to help producers feel informed in their management choices and implementation planning. She is invested in establishing and building local and regional relationships and collaborations amongst agricultural and conservation stakeholders to achieve and protect healthy and productive working lands and rural communities.

Anna's passion for working lands was fostered in her youth at her family's berry farm in San Luis Obispo County, California, where she learned land management practices from her grandparents.

anna@amadorrcd.org

«« UPCOMING EVENTS »»

TOWN HALL

JACKSON CREEK WATERSHED FUEL REDUCTION PROJECT

Tuesday, April 16th
5:30p-7:00p
12200 B Airport Rd
Jackson 95642
Agriculture Dept.

DEMONSTRATION

MITCHELL MINE FUEL BREAK MAINTENANCE DEMONSTRATION

Tuesday, May 9th
10:00a-12:00p
Wednesday, May 15th
4:00p-6:00p
Lupe Rd., Pine Grove

www.amadorrcd.org/events-news

Sign up for our newsletters and program notifications on the ARCD website under 'Join Our Mailing List'

www.AmadorRCD.org

AMADOR RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT