

Feather River Resource Conservation District



STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-17

Prepared by

Feather River Resource Conservation District

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Executive Summary

Purpose

The Feather River Resource Conservation District (RCD) serves, cooperates with, and assists private landowners, agricultural producers, and other citizens and landowners to help analyze, plan, design, and implement soil, water, forest, and wildlife conservation practices within the RCD's boundary (Figure 1). The RCD provides equal opportunity services with assistance by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service via an operational agreement (Appendix A). The RCD Board of Directors helps develop partners and organizational capacity to administer these services.

Background

The Board's efforts are augmented by the assistance and cooperation of the landowners of Plumas County as well as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Forestry and Fire protection (CAL FIRE), Feather River Land Trust, Greenville Rancheria, Plumas Audubon Society, Plumas County, Plumas County Resource Advisory Committee, Plumas National Forest, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, U.C. Cooperative Extension, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other partners, collaborators, and funding sources.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to advocate resource conservation through education and collaborative efforts with willing landowners and organizations that promote the economic and ecological sustainability of the upper Feather River Watershed.

Authority

Organized under Division 9 of the California Public Resources Code, the RCD is a public agency and authorized to provide conservation work within its boundaries. The RCD has the legal authority to cooperate with the United States, the State of California, counties, cities, public districts, other resource conservation districts, persons, associations, and corporations. With the consent of the landowner, RCDs also have the authority to implement resource conservation measures on privately and publicly owned lands. The expenditure of public funds for planning, designing or implementing resource conservation work constitutes expenditure that benefits the general public (RCD Guidebook, 2000).

History

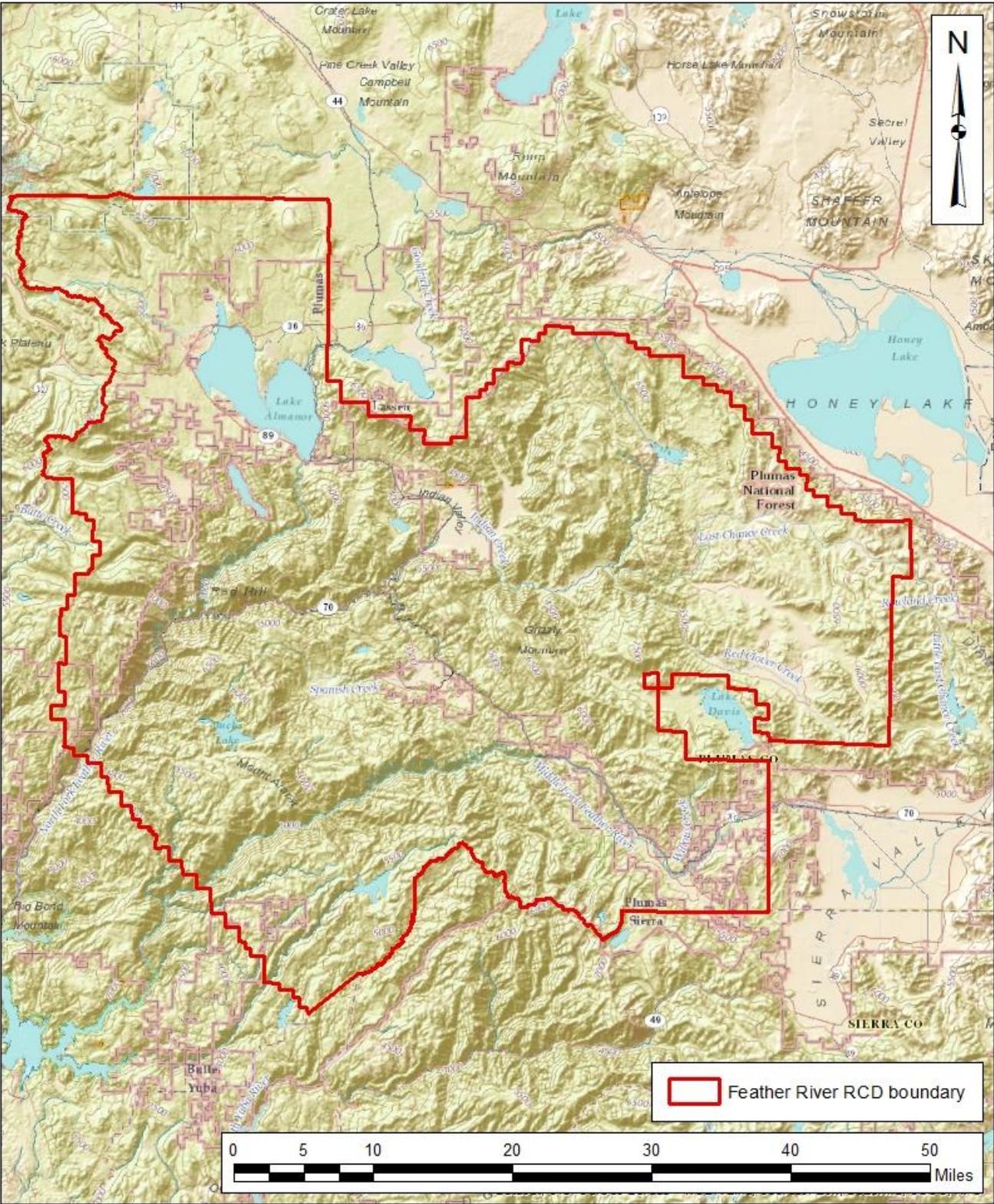
In response to the national “Dust Bowl” crisis of the 1930s, the federal government passed legislation in 1937 establishing the Soil Conservation Service (SCS). Local Conservation Districts were set up under state law to be controlled by board of directors in order to provide local input and direction to the SCS. In California, Conservation Districts have been formed in nearly all parts of the state beginning in the 1940s. Many have been consolidated over time and of the hundreds of districts that once existed in California, 102 remain. Soil Conservation Districts were originally empowered to manage soil and water resources for conservation, but these powers were expanded in the early 1970s to include “related resources,” including fish and wildlife habitat. This expansion is responsible for the name change to “Resource” Conservation Districts (RCDs) in 1971.

RCDs continue to render assistance today because farmers, ranchers, foresters and other landowners still need up-to-date scientific and technical information as well as techniques to manage the natural resources on their properties (RCD Guidebook, 2000). Once called the Indian-American Valleys Resource Conservation District, the Feather River RCD was instated in 1954. In 1993, the District boundaries were expanded to coincide closer to the boundaries of Plumas County. It was during this boundary expansion that the District’s name was changed to the Feather River RCD. The Feather River RCD is located in the Sacramento Valley Region of California RCDs.

District Boundary

The District Boundary encompasses a service area of approximately 2,259 square miles (1,445,907 acres) including a variety of land owners and land uses. The District Boundary falls in and around many communities including Quincy, Portola, Genesee, Taylorsville, Greenville, Crescent Mills, Lake Almanor, Canyon Dam, and Chester. The District’s boundary extends to the Lassen, Shasta, Tehama, Butte, Yuba, and Sierra County lines (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Feather River Resource Conservation District Boundary (2,259 square miles).



Natural Resources within the District Boundary

Climate

The climate within the District Boundary is highly varied due to the broad geographic and elevational range. Elevation ranges from about 900 feet in the western foothills to 8,372 feet at Mt. Ingalls. The average annual temperature ranges from about 46 to 57 degrees Fahrenheit and the average annual precipitation ranges from about 15 to 70 inches. The annual frost-free period ranges from about 60 to 120 days (Plumas National Forest Soil Resource Inventory, 1983). West of the Sierra crest, weather is primarily of a maritime pattern with wet winters and dry summers. East of the crest, the marine influence lessens and there is a greater range in daily and seasonal temperatures, lower precipitation amounts, a greater contribution to total precipitation from summer thunder storms, and lower humidity.

Over 95% of the precipitation falling within the District Boundary occurs during the winter months. Winter temperatures below zero and summer temperatures over 100 degrees Fahrenheit have been recorded. A snowpack of 5-10 feet or more is commonly present from December through May at elevations above 6,000 feet. Thunderstorm activity, generally in the summer months, occurs most frequently on the east side.

Soils

There are approximately 30 different soil types and 13 soil mapping units within the Feather River RCD boundary (Plumas National Forest Soil Resource Inventory, 1983). This area mostly consists of deep glacial soil deposits making for a combination of loams, clays, and some sands.

Agriculture

Agriculture within the Feather River RCD boundary is a \$41 million industry (annually). Commodities include alfalfa hay, meadow hay, grain hay, irrigated pasture, non-irrigated pasture, range pasture, timber, cattle, and other livestock. Plumas County ranked fifth in California's list of leading timber counties.

Water Resources

The water resources within the Feather River RCD boundary consist of rivers, creeks, stream and lakes, both natural and man-made, including the Feather River and its reservoirs such as Lake Almanor. The Feather River watershed is the largest in the Sierra Nevada (~2.4 million acres) and is the headwaters of the State Water Project. It has also long been recognized for its recreational and aesthetic value. Plumas County is encompassed by the Sacramento River Hydrologic Region because all of the County's watersheds drain to the Sacramento River, eventually feeding the Pacific Ocean through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Summary of Strategic Areas and Objectives for 2016-2017

Strategic Areas:

- Forest Health projects in Genesee Valley;
- CEQA lead agency capacity;
- Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) participation;
- Outreach and Education;
- Develop new RCD directors;
- Financial sustainability;
- Landowner assistance;
- Get people on the land more;
- Control noxious weeds.

Goals:

- Continue forest health efforts in the Genesee Valley planning area;
- Participate in the Feather River Stewardship Coalition;
- Continue developing capacity to serve as a CEQA lead agency;
- Move endowment funds from county to NFWF;
- Assist landowners with efforts including herbicide, forest health, and water efficiency;
- Support youth in agriculture- support local efforts to improve access to ag facilities for youth lacking access to such infrastructure;
- Eradicate Scotch Broom along North Valley Road;
- Control Yellow Starthistle in Genesee Valley
- Identify opportunities to collaborate with Sierra Valley RCD
- Develop projects in anticipation of available funding via Prop 1 and the RAC
- Secure funding to hire a part time employee/contractor

Objectives:

- Work collaboratively with the Plumas National Forest, Feather River Land Trust, Greenville Rancheria, and Plumas Audubon Society on forest health efforts in Genesee Valley;
- Develop project/collaborations as CEQA lead agency;
- Move endowment funds from county to NFWF;
- Use available funds to assist landowners with resource conservation efforts;
- Offer assistance to local landowners to improve water infrastructure/water use efficiency.