



# GOLDEN STATE PLANT NEWS

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## Field Office Plant Materials Activities

*This issue of the Golden State Plant News is focused on NRCS field office plant materials activities. The intent is to facilitate technical networking among field office staffs. An effort was made to include as many field offices as possible; however, some were not included due to space limitations.*

### AREA 1

**Alturas FO:** Secar bluebunch wheatgrass had the best performance on a BLM fire reseeding in MLRA 21. The site had gravely loam soils and the seed was drilled. Secar provided 20% of the overall cover and competed well with medussahead.

**Colusa FO:** Demonstration sites for a 319 watershed grant in MLRA 17 were established over the past year. This included a thirty acre Zorro annual fescue orchard cover crop planting and a legume mix cover crop planting. Also, a grassed waterway was established on clay loam soil using Rio

wildrye, Perla koleagrass and blue wildrye.

**Napa FO:** Stream bioengineering is on their agenda along with working with a study group in regards to the spread of Pierce's disease form riparian areas to vineyards. A sustainable agriculture conservation field trial (CFT) which included cover crops (Needlegrass, Molate red fescue, Idaho fescue and Covar sheep fescue) and vegetative buffer strips was established in a vineyard.

**Petaluma FO:** The Marin Co. RCD has a successful range drill rental program. It's a Tye drill, eight feet wide and rents for \$50.00 per day. In MLRA 15, purple needlegrass has been the most successful native grass in all of the range seeding trials and vegetative buffer strips on highly erodible land. Their ongoing challenge is getting native perennial grasses established in a competitive annual grass setting.

**Ukiah FO:** Major bioengineering efforts have been made using willows to improve stream channel dynamics. The practices used are: 1. Brush mattress, this practice is the placement of willow cuttings in a trench along the stream flow using willow stakes and rock on top to secure the

brush mattress; 2. Sediment baffle, this is a practice where the willows are placed pointing down stream in a trench which is perpendicular to the stream flow. There is a J at the end of the trench. This is a low cost jetty which allows sediment to be trapped, which in turn allows alders to get established.

**Weaverville FO:** A 200 page restoration and erosion control manual will be completed in April. DG decomposed granite soil on construction sites in MLRA 5 have been the erosion control focus to date. In the future they will be helping implement the local RCD and BLM vegetation management plan on upland sheet erosion. The plan has a goal of restoring 100 acres per year using native plants. Some of the DG areas have 100 tons of soil loss per year.

**Willows FO:** Rangeland seeding efforts in MLRA 15 on star thistle infested areas were successful in some treatments. First there was a fall burn of the star thistle, then after some rainfall the following treatments: 1. disking and broadcast planting (50% stand was produced of Perla koleagrass, Berber orchardgrass, blue wildrye and purple needlegrass); 2. chemical spraying and broadcast planting (this produced a 10% stand and was not successful); 3. animal im-

pact - 30 cattle provided the hoof action to chip the soil surface and plant the seed ( this did not produce a significant stand and it was determined that about 150 to 200 cattle, along with dogs to move them, would be needed to get the required animal impact). They had success in establishing a seed mix of Perla, Berber and sub-clover by doing a fall chisel, Feb. application of Goal and Round-up, and a mid March planting date using a no-till drill. Just below a blown out dam, a late broadcast seeding in May of Sudangrass was very successful. In the Stoney Creek watershed, they have had great success using rice straw wattles in front of willow wattles. The rice straw wattles allowed sediment to be deposited on top of the willow wattles.

**Woodland FO:** The BIOS program is being used to promote cover crops, IPM, residue management and nitrogen issues. Hedgerows are being used to increase nectar plants. The Yolo RCD is active with roadside vegetation with native grasses. Project HAWK successfully used Lana vetch to control yellow star thistle which also provided an excellent wildlife habitat. Streamco willow did an excellent job controlling active erosion areas on stream channels.

**Yreka FO:** A field planting of Manska wheatgrass was planted using Oahe wheatgrass as a standard. There is interest in doing additional field plantings looking at possible yellow star thistle reduction with wheatgrass seeding in Shasta Valley and Scott Valley.

## AREA 2

**Dixon FO:** Ditchbank plantings in MLRA 17 over the past few years have demonstrated that saltgrass planted in the first part of April did the best. On the seeded ditchbank areas, Calif. meadow barley and Rio beardless wildrye had the best performance.

**Escondido FO:** The Inter-agency Riparian Improvement Program has been successful in the removal of giant reedgrass and the replanting of native vegetation on streambanks.

**Los Angeles UO:** A thirty acre wildland park, Mt Washington-Elyria park, is a wildland island in an urban setting. The Los Angeles UO staff are working with them to get native grass areas established and help solve other park problems.

**Salinas FO:** An ongoing effort is the testing of erosion control grasses on hillside strawberry production areas. Calif. brome and purple needlegrass has done well on sediment control basins and barley is doing a good erosion control job on the steep roads. They are also working with a CRMP and the BLM on Fort Ord revegetation guidance with a goal of only using native seed from Fort Ord.

**San Francisco UO:** Golden Gate Park staff are getting assistance in establishing test plots of ten species— mostly native grasses, on sloping sandy soils in shade areas under large trees.

**Santa Maria FO:** This office has four Cardy nitrate meters in use (18 field offices got one last year).

**Somis FO:** CFT—Determining the correct irrigation levels with fire resistant landscape plants has been installed. It has four replications and three treatments (0.5,1.0,1.5 gal. per week) and there will be burn tests this summer. They have been active in developing low flammability native plant seeding mixes to be seeded on urban interface areas after fires.

**Templeton FO:** The HWY 41 fire seeding (4 lbs/ac Cucamonga and 1 lbs/ac Zorro) produced a fair stand and appeared to provide a moderate level of sheet and rill erosion protection on most of the slopes. A rangeland field planting of Crimson clover (5 lbs/ac planting rate) produced an excellent stand. A grassed waterway field planting of blue wildrye in the Morro Bay area produced an excellent stand.

## AREA 3

**Apple Valley FO:** Work continues with the National Park Service - Joshua Tree National Park native plant nursery. They have developed a lot of innovative ways to get desert shrubs established. Assistance was provided to Fort Irwin with restoration work and with getting desert plants established using secondary irrigation water. They are very active in an interagency desert restoration

task force. The local RCD has developed a beginners guide to desert restoration.

**Bakersfield FO:** An innovative windbreak program with the Lost Hills School is a show case on how to do the job right. Raul Ramirez is developing a "How To" technical note on this topic.

**Fresno FO:** Frank Menezes is considering the development of a technical note on agroforestry which will focus on the past ten years of tree evaluations, clone selections and "How To" systems to utilize drain water. The BIFS program is being implemented with the Westside RCD on row crop areas. The Panoche Watershed CRMP has requested that field plantings be used on problem soils.

**Hanford FO:** If you would like to learn more about agroforestry, the Hanford FO sponsors a two day workshop during the first week of October.

**Indio FO:** They are very active with the local RCD and USDA-ARS in regards to cover crop research and have established seven field plantings. Blackeye peas are the star cover crop performer in MLRA 30. The black

eye peas have increased snap green bean production by 18% or 1800 lbs/ac. Also, they just completed a date palm root study which concluded that slip plowing to five feet and planting a Lana vetch cover crop can substantially increase date production. Landscape water use studies are on going.

**Merced FO:** The BIOS program started here and is continuing to grow. They are increasing the use of Cardy nitrate meters to monitor the nitrogen dynamics of cover crops on sandy soils and they developed a good evaluation form to do this. A Buffalo grass field planting was established to determine shade tolerance.

**Modesto FO:** Soil quality issues and working with the Soil Quality Institute to establish priorities are ongoing goals.

**South Lake Tahoe FO:** Three plant materials technical notes on wetland restoration in the Lake Tahoe area have recently been released. A legume study with CalTrans was completed. Various shrub plantings continue to be evaluated for adaptability.

**Stockton FO:** An aggressive - BIFS - biologically integrated farming systems program was

started with the Lodi-Woodbridge Winegrape Commission. The local RCD and FO are involved in the effort. This included an in-depth evaluation of the ARS soil quality test kit.

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In regard to the progress reporting system:

***Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts.***

Albert Einstein

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