



RUNNOFF

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2009

NRDC ANNOUNCES FOUR WINNERS OF THE 2010 “GROWING GREEN AWARDS” - TWO FROM CALIFORNIA!



Awards recognize leaders and innovators in the field of sustainable food

San Francisco, CA (April 13, 2009) – In anticipation of Earth Day, four winners of the second annual Growing Green Awards were announced today by the Natural Resources Defense Council. The 2010 winners are:

Food Producer: Russ Lester of Dixon Ridge Farms, who is also the recipient of a \$10,000 cash prize for his achievements in sustainable food production

Water Steward (new category): Mike Benziger of Benziger Family Winery

Thought Leader: Fred Kirschenmann of Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture

Business Leader: Karl Kupers of Shepherd’s Grain
 “These innovators are saving energy, nurturing soils, reducing water use and showing all of us how to produce food in harmony with the environment,” said Jonathan Kaplan, Director of the Sustainable Agriculture Project at NRDC. “The impact of their leadership goes far beyond their farms, inspiring consumers, growers, policy-makers and entrepreneurs.”

An independent panel of prestigious sustainable food experts selected the four winners from a pool of 170 impressive candidates that included diverse growers, entrepreneurs and business leaders across the country.

Food Producer winner Russ Lester is co-owner of Dixon Ridge Farms, the largest U.S. handler of organic walnuts. Located in Winters, CA, Dixon Ridge has dramatically slashed its environmental impacts, with the goal of becoming 100% energy self-sufficient by 2012.



Recipients of the 2010 Growing Green Awards from the Natural Resources Defense Council. Clockwise from top left: Russ Lester, Mike Benziger, Fred Kirschenmann, and Karl Kupers.

Dixon Ridge walnuts are grown without harmful chemicals, amid carefully selected cover crops and irrigation systems that minimize the need for tillage and reduce global warming pollution. Lester converts walnut shells into energy that is used to power other stages of walnut processing.

“At Dixon Ridge Farms, we’ve been improving our sustainable farming practices for the past 30 years and changing consumer perceptions of organic walnuts along the way,” said Lester. “With our goal to be energy neutral, we plan to reduce our impact on the environment

even more. I’m honored to be recognized by NRDC and such a distinguished panel of judges.”

Mike Benziger, founder of Benziger Family Winery in Glen Ellen, CA, won in the new Water Steward category for his industry-leading methods of water use reduction and water recycling. With an innovative constructed wetland and pond treatment system, Benziger Winery recycles an average of 2 million gallons of water per year. The winery significantly decreases water inputs using new grape sorting technologies, water sensors and cover crops that reduce runoff.

“At Benziger Winery, we consider water conservation a major priority in planning vineyards, growing grapes and making wine, and we’ve seen the quality of our grapes and wines increase noticeably,” said Benziger. “It’s good for the environment and the wine. My family and I are honored to receive the Water Stewardship Award from NRDC.”

Thought Leader winner Fred Kirschenmann has

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Erik Beardsley

The moon will be high and bright over Susanville California the night of June 24. The night breeze will carry the scent of sage brush and the sounds of good music and conservation conversations.

We will celebrate a fine day of instructive workshops on sage steppe habitat restoration projects, and partnerships, as well as the installation of new CA - NV Chapter officers. The music will be "Southwestern Americana" sounds of Michael Hearne and South by Southwest.

I hope to see you at this important annual business meeting to vote on by-law changes and take part in the discussions that will shape future professional development opportunities for the chapter. Come meet the chapter scholarship winner and participate in the silent auction that makes such help possible.

There will be a lot to be learned. More importantly, the conference is a vehicle to reconnect with colleagues and make new connections with other "doers" and "shapers" in the conservation industry.

Take Care.

Erik Beardsley
President, CA-NV Chapter



NEW CHAPTER MEMBERS

by Walt Bunter

We extend a GREAT BIG WELCOME to the following six members who recently joined or rejoined the SWCS and our California-Nevada Chapter or transferred in from another state chapter. We have 154 members as of June 2, 2010.

Dwane Coffey, Amherst, MA
Adam Dellinger, Arcata, CA
Valerie Eviner, Davis, CA
Toby Goyette, Vacaville, CA
Shelly Ingram, Lompoc, CA
Shani McCullough Pynn, Riverside, CA

THERE'S STILL TIME... CAST YOUR VOTE!

If you haven't sent in your ballot for the Chapter Board of Directors and Officers election, please do so now! The tally will be done on June 14, and results will be announced at our Chapter conference.

Find us on the Web!

***Access RunOff, get
conference information,
and details about the
Chapter!***

WWW.CASWCS.ORG



NRDC AWARDS CONTINUED...

inspired sustainable food advocates, researchers and policymakers for over three decades with his writing and leadership. Kirschenmann serves as the President of the Board of Directors for the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture, a nonprofit that operates as a sustainable farm, kitchen and teaching campus for nearby New York City residents. Kirschenmann is a professor at Iowa State University and third-generation farmer, teaching others the importance of local food systems that work in harmony with nature and human health.

“Stone Barns has put together a food system that restores the biological health of the land, while producing delicious, healthy food. We are helping urban residents become new “food citizens” who will shape the food system of the future,” said Kirschenmann. “The privilege of receiving this award makes me even more dedicated to working to bring about the food revolution we need.”

Karl Kupers, winner in the Business Leader category, is co-founder of Shepherd’s Grain, which reconnects 33 growers in the Pacific Northwest to local markets through the sale of sustainably farmed wheat. Based out of Harrington, WA, Shepherd’s Grain sources from suppliers that use no-tillage growing methods, preserving their soils from erosion and likely reducing global warming pollution. With a pioneering pricing model, Shepherd’s Grain empowers growers to profit from higher levels of environmental stewardship.

“Winning the NRDC Growing Green Business Leader award is very special, as it recognizes how a business can successfully use the marketplace to build support for and reward better stewardship,” said Kupers. “Shepherd’s Grain is creating relationships between producers and consumers, allowing a value chain to be developed that can truly be called sustainable. I am honored to receive this award from NRDC.”

The Growing Green Awards judging panel was chaired by Susan Clark, Executive Director of the Columbia Foundation, and included A.G. Kawamura, California Secretary of Agriculture, Michael Pollan, New York Times best-selling author of *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, and Nora Pouillon, chef and founder of Restaurant Nora, the nation’s first certified organic restaurant.

Read blogs by judges Nora Pouillon and Susan Clark in NRDC’s Greenlight. Winners’ blogs will be posted in the coming days.

CA-NV SWCS SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT PROFILE: ARIANA GEHRIG

Sophomore at Sierra College, a returning student planning to pursue a degree in Land Resource Management/ Sustainable Agriculture
Major – Agriculture



Activities – over years assisted with all aspects of family certified organic farm work from planting to sales and marketing. Was farm manager for Shared Abundance Farm 2006-2007, was certified as an organic crop inspector 2008 from the International Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA). Supported college environmental club-Environmentally Concerned Organization of Students (ECOS) by coordinating and manning booth and seedling sale, on college “Earth Day” event.

Awards – On “Presidents List” fall semester of 2009

The Adjunct Professor, department of science and math- Sierra College, described Ariana as committed, conscientious, and exemplary as a student with special affinity toward studies with a regard to agriculture and the issues in that field.

Another faculty member described her as being an excellent student, knowledgeable, and a willing participant in class discussions having the ability to describe and define an issue in a succinct manner. Ariana was also described as having the ability to formulate original ideas and challenge existing problems.

Ariana plans to continue her education at CSU Chico majoring in Crop Science and Land Resource Management. After graduating she aspires to either take over management responsibilities on the family farm or pursue a higher degree in the biological sciences or conservation ecology. Ariana wrote “I want to use my education to make a difference in my local farming community.”

Submitted by Tina van der Hoek, scholarship committee chair.

NATIONAL MERIT AWARD RECOGNIZES CA-NV CHAPTER NOMINEE

by Lisa A. Hokholt, Past-President CA-NV Chapter

The California Small Farm Conference has stepped it up a notch to be recognized for yet another SWCS award, this time as winner of a 2010 National Merit Award. The Merit Award is given in recognition of an outstanding activity, product, or service by a group, business firm, corporation, or organization that promotes the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources.

Excerpt from the award nomination package:

Dedicated to promoting the long-term viability of California's smaller-acreage and family farms and the markets that sell their products, the California Small Farm Conference provides an annual 3-day training conference which, in 2009 and 2010 offered a selection of six full-day short courses and five themed plenary tracks spanning an additional two days. The learning focus is on economically sustainable production agriculture in harmony with environmental stewardship on smaller-acreage farms and ranches throughout California. Each Short-Course and themed Track workshop series includes emphasis on or integration of state-of-the-art resource management topics including soil and water



The 2010 California Small Farm Conference hosted several field short courses, workshops, keynote speakers and networking sessions, all designed to maximize the learning experiences for California's smaller-acreage agricultural producers. (Above): The "Outlasting the Drought" field short course, organized by CA-NV Chapter Past-President and NRCS Outreach Coordinator Lisa Hokholt, showcased a variety of resource management strategies that conserve water, enhance soil health, and save money and energy.

conservation, organic farming methodologies, new technologies, and technical and financial resources for implementing conservation enhancements.

The California Small Farm Conference was recognized last year with the CA-NV Chapter's Conservation Education Award.

For more information about the California Small Farm Conference: www.californiafarmconference.org

Greetings, Members of the CA-NV Chapter SWCS,

Each year the Chapter awards a \$1,000 scholarship to one very deserving student and encourages that scholar to attend the conference and receive their award in person.

I am requesting donations of raffle items to raise funds for our Chapter scholarship. The raffle will be held at the annual conference in Susanville June 23-25 this year. For those that can attend and would like to donate to the cause, please think of what you could donate and bring to the conference.

Raffle items should be of value or interest to our members, easily displayed on a table, able to travel well, perhaps unique to the area you are from, and

linked with our natural resources.

If you choose to support SWCS by donating an item, please leave it at the registration table at the beginning of the conference. Raffle tickets will be available at registration from the scholarship committee if you would like to support your chapter SWCS in this way. Individuals will have an opportunity to buy more tickets as the conference proceeds. The more items we have the more opportunities attendees will have to win something. Please help make this event a memorable one. Thank you for your support of our scholars and see you at Susanville in June.

Tina Vander Hook

CA-NV SWCS Scholarship Committee Chair

65th International Annual Conference

Hundreds of conservation professionals will gather in St. Louis this summer for the 65th annual international conference of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. The conference, held July 18-21, includes four workshops, more than 300 presentations through concurrent sessions, symposia, and posters, three plenary sessions (one on Gulf Hypoxia and two on Ecosystem Services), and seven technical tours. All are designed to raise the awareness of conference participants to recent developments in the science and art of natural resource conservation and environmental management. The 2010 conference will take place at the Hilton at the Ballpark in downtown St. Louis. Detailed information online at www.swcs.org/10ac.



Ecosystem Services

Applications for
Conservation Science,
Policy, and Practice

July 18-21, 2010
St. Louis, Missouri

THE CA-NV SWCS CHAPTER TO HOLD ANNUAL MEETING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH COOPERATIVE SAGEBRUSH STEPPE RESTORATION INITIATIVE

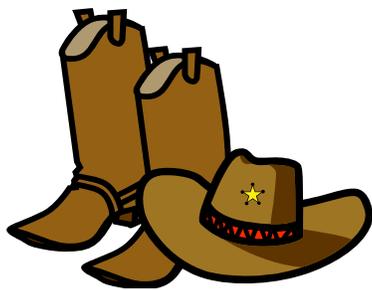
Next month's event marks a new direction for CA-NV SWCS Annual Meetings, which will be held in partnership with regional or local efforts that complement our goals and objectives. Our first such meeting is a partnership with the Northeastern California based Cooperative Sagebrush Steppe Restoration Initiative (CSSRI) whose principal partners include the Pit Resource Conservation District, Lassen County Fire Safe Council, Inc., Susanville Indian Rancheria and University of California Cooperative Extension/Lassen County Farm Advisor.

Over the past 5 years thousands of acres of sagebrush steppe and eastside forest have been restored through partnered efforts in northeastern California. The work of the CSSRI partnership has generated millions of dollars of economic activity while at the same time producing thousands of tons of biomass fuel for use in the production of clean renewable energy. Our Annual Business Meeting will be conducted in conjunction with CSSRI presentations and a field tour/barbeque. Highlights include:

June 23 rd	Late afternoon: Honey Lake Power Biomass Plant Tour Evening: Pre-conference no-host dinner
June 24 th	Morning: Annual Business Meeting Late Morning and Afternoon: CSSRI presentations
	Evening: No-host bar, dinner with dancing and music by Michael Hearne with South by Southwest
June 25 th	Morning: Field tour and noon barbeque on 3,000-acre CSSRI project site

For more information and to register for our Annual Business Meeting & Joint CSSRI Conference, see our CA-NV SWCS Chapter website: www.caswcs.org

Or email: twesgate@sbcglobal.net



Bring Your Boots and Hat
You're going to experience the best
of the Southwest when:



and South by Southwest



Play Thursday Evening after our conference dinner.

Over the past several years, Michael Hearne and South by Southwest have created a new and unique kind of music. "Southwestern Americana" as Michael calls it "Songs about the southwest with an acoustic feel". Michael Hearne's incredibly smooth voice and amazing acoustic guitar style combined with Carmen Acciaoli's musical mastery of the steel guitar, fiddle, mandolin, dobro, and hammered dulcimer, with the extremely talented Zeke Severenson on stand up and electric bass and you have what people all over the Southwest and beyond call their favorite band.

Hear Michael Hearne & South by Southwest on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYmaQp5ogFo&feature=related>

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FIRST CLASS

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RunOff is the official California-Nevada Chapter SWCS newsletter.

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YOUR EXPERIENCES WANTED!

PLEASE SHARE A CONSERVATION STORY WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES. SUBMIT ITEMS BY AUGUST 20, 2010



These adjacent orchards show a dramatic difference in stormwater infiltration, due to cover crops.

**NOT A WRITER? A PICTURE IS WORTH 1,000 WORDS!
PHOTOGRAPHS OF YOUR PROJECTS ARE WELCOME.**