



RUNNOFF

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Dave Rose

Greetings to all across California and Nevada. As I write this we are marching toward Spring, with some of Winter left to get through. For some of you, Winter has brought tremendous snows and cold weather. The snow pack will help as we move through the upcoming Summer.



The big news is the postponement of our annual conference. Our President-elect, Lisa Hokholt, and the annual conference committee did a tremendous job crafting a fantastic agenda. Current budget woes for our biggest supporters, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the California Resources Agency, have left us in the position of having a great conference ready to go but nobody to attend. Lisa and the committee have arranged for our conference to occur at the same resort in Bass Lake, CA, but the dates will now be April 21-23, 2009. We will be scheduling an annual business meeting to attend to chapter business, but it will be of the one-day variety to allow for easy travel. Thanks to all who helped so much. We need to discuss moving forward as a chapter in an era of tight budgets.

The passage of a new Farm Bill has become increasingly important as we entered 2008. Some political wrangling has gotten in the way of final passage. While both the Senate and House have passed their versions, as I write this the conference committee has not begun to deliberate on the unified

version. The Farm Bill is a major player for funding and assistance for conservation of natural resources on private lands. Private lands are the best place for significant improvement of wildlife habitat, wetland conservation, improvements in water quality, and now even air quality. Stay tuned.

Hey folks, remember membership? I've said it before: it's a top priority for me all this year as President. I also submit that it should be a top priority for you too. At the risk of being a "broken record", I ask yet again, have you talked to a non-member and talked about the advantages of joining the society? The member benefits are easy to list off, but perhaps the best message that you can use when recruiting is to talk about what you have gained from society membership. What have you learned? How has the networking benefited your professional life? Personal testimonials are very powerful. If you haven't talked to someone and asked them to join us, I urge you to take that step. Most people say that they join organizations because someone asked them to. The chapter and parent society becomes stronger and more vibrant when we gain members. Those new members give us insight and perspective that we haven't had. Walt reminds me that shirts and vests are still available to proudly show your association with the chapter and society. Thanks again to you all for your efforts.

We also have an election coming up, so keep in mind that there will be chances to serve on the Executive Board. Mark Steffek, our past President, is heading up the Nominations Committee and will put together a fabulous slate for us to consider.

My year as President is in the home stretch now. What can I do for you in my last few months as President? Leaders cannot lead in an information vacuum, if something is a concern to you, let me in on it and maybe we can have a positive effect.

Yours in conservation,

Dave

YOLO LAND & CATTLE COMPANY WINS NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD

by Stevie Ipsen, Director of Public Relations, CCA; Nita Vail, Executive Director, CRT; Anita Brown, Public Affairs Director, NRCS

RENO, Nev., February 13, 2008—The California Cattlemen's Association (CCA), California Rangeland Trust (CRT) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are excited to announce that the Hank Stone Family from Yolo Land & Cattle Company, Winters, Calif., was announced as the 2008 Environmental Stewardship Award national winner on February 7, 2008, at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Annual Convention in Reno.

"The Stone family is a tremendous asset to the cattle industry, serving as leaders in beef production, rangeland conservation and natural resource enhancement," CCA President Bruce Hafenfeld said. "Their legacy of environmental stewardship exemplifies the commitment of ranchers throughout the state who manage California's open spaces, water sheds and wildlife habitat."

Supporters and active members of the California agriculture community, Yolo Land & Cattle Company was originally nominated by CCA and CRT for NCBA's Region VI Environmental Stewardship Award, which the Stone family won, putting them in the company of five other beef cattle operations for the national award.

"It is so rewarding to work with conservationists like the Stones," says Lincoln "Ed" Burton, State Conservationist for NRCS. "They are big picture people, and their work and its results carries benefits across two watersheds and their easement and ethics mean that their efforts will transcend time."



Hank and the Family Stone: From left to right: Scott, Karen, Hank, Angela and Casey Stone accept the National Environmental Stewardship Award.

Hank and Suzanne Stone, owners of Yolo Land & Cattle Company, along with their sons, Scott and Casey Stone, and their wives, Karen and Angela Stone, have made it a family goal to continually enhance and improve their ranching operation while involving the community. Their efforts have brought together their neighbors, surrounding school children, Audubon California and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, NRCS and other state and local organizations and agencies. Their vegetative management program has become California's largest for the purpose of conducting annual spring grass burns and fall brush burns on a total of 45,000 acres in western Yolo County.

"This is exciting, especially when it happens to a friend in our own back yard," said Devere Dressler, CRT board chairman. "The Stones are a tremendous example of how California ranchers are using innovative techniques to maintain the viability of their ranching operation while using existing ranching practices to protect and enhance the natural

environment. The partnerships they have created help insure that ranchers keep ranching and their stewardship continues."

The Stone family's operation fully lives up to its management philosophy: "Take care of the land and the land will take care of you." In addition to vegetative management, a few of the projects that Yolo Land & Cattle

Company has implemented on their ranch and their landlords' ranches include cross-fencing of pastures, fencing of ponds and riparian areas, planting of native grasses, trees and shrubs, rotational grazing, grazing on Conservation Reserve Program lands and invasive weed control.

"We are very honored to have been chosen for this award by the judges, NCBA, NRCS, and Dow Agrisciences. Through the Environmental Stewardship Award Program process we have had the ability to see firsthand what a great job ranchers are doing across America to manage their lands in an environmentally beneficial and sustainable manner. This award helps showcase what we can achieve with our many partners in being true caretakers of the land, and the continued value of keeping ranchers on the land and having a viable ranching industry in California and the USA," Scott Stone said after reflecting on the honor.

Editor's Note: This marks the third time in four years that a California producer has brought home this prestigious award.

AFT CALIF. DIRECTOR ED THOMPSON JR. DISCUSSES “PAVING PARADISE”

by *Phil Hogan*

Ed Thompson, Jr., American Farmland Trust (AFT) California Director, stopped by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Sacramento Cluster meeting on Wednesday, March 5 in Woodland.

In AFT's new report, "Paving Paradise: A New Perspective on California's Farmland Conversion," Thompson states that the first step towards preserving California's best farmland is to understand what is happening to it and where. "One of the problems that we have is that land use decisions at the local level are often based on emotion, even though the data exists to make necessary decisions to protect the highest quality land."

According to Paving Paradise, the San Joaquin Valley is the state's region where farmland is most at risk from conversion to urban use. Development is disproportionately claiming high quality farmland. "In the San Joaquin Valley," Thompson said, "development is 1 ½ times more likely to consume high quality farmland than less productive land."

Thompson stated that in California, growth is going to come no matter what. "Mitigation programs in California help to minimize loss of farmland," Thompson said. "However, for this state, increasing development efficiency is the best way to protect agricultural land."

Thompson said increasing the efficiency of development (as opposed to simply increasing density of housing) will be necessary. Development efficiency takes into account the number of people per acre of all urban uses of land—schools, parking lots, and roads, as well as housing. In the San Joaquin Valley, there were only 6.5 people per urban acre in 2004, while in the

Sacramento Valley, it was around 9.0.

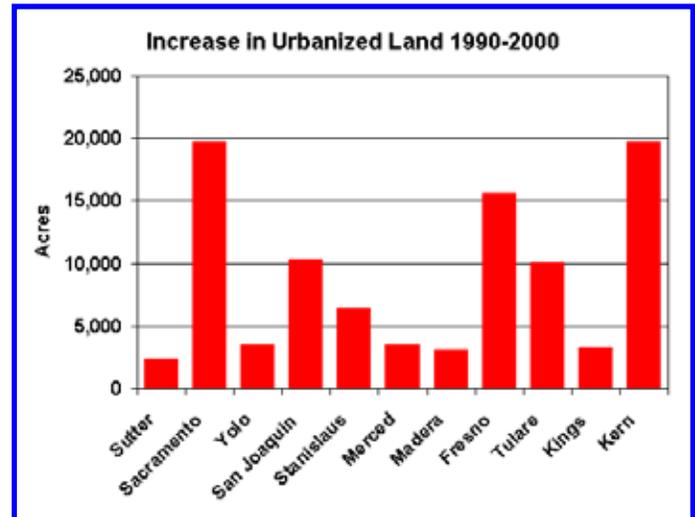
These statistics can be a little misleading, because they are averages. In Sacramento County, there are 20.6 people per urban acre. However,

in the rest of the Sacramento Valley, the density falls to 6.3. "If the efficiency of development does not improve," stated Thompson, "2.1 million additional acres of California land will be developed by 2050."

In California as a whole, 61% of all the land urbanized from 1990 to 2004 – 326,521 acres was agricultural land. According to Paving Paradise, an even higher percentage of the total land developed was at one time used for agricultural purposes, but has been idled for a number of years in anticipation of development.

The Paving Paradise report states that rural ranchettes are the most wasteful type of development. The development efficiency is very low for this land use, with an estimated 0.6 people per acre, according to a 1990 AFT study, or about one-tenth the 'efficiency' of urban development. The California Department of Conservation tracks ranchette development in only four counties right now in the San Joaquin Valley. "These ranchettes are the bow wave in front of a large ship," stated Thompson. "They inflate rural land prices, making it even more difficult for farmers, particularly young farmers, to enter or continue in agriculture."

Thompson concluded that what California really needs is a Strategic Farmland Policy. This policy, suggested Thompson, needs to



answer questions such as "how do you direct growth, where are urban limit lines to be placed, and how is agriculture going to be sustained for the long term?" Thompson pointed to one exciting example of a new planning effort in Fresno County, where the County of Fresno requested that Fresno Council of Governments facilitate discussion between the County, incorporated cities, unincorporated towns, and stake holders to look into the feasibility of implementing some form of land buffers within Fresno County. AFT has taken the lead role, and the UC Davis Information Center for the Environment has created a GIS program that incorporates soils, water, and rural fragmentation as a way to identify the best lands to protect.

Another example of AFT's precedent-setting projects in California is a website entitled '**The Future is Now: Central Valley Farmland at the Tipping Point?**' where the general plans for counties in California are examined and suggestions are given on how they can be improved to protect farmland from development.

The message that Thompson left echoes 'The Future is Now' web site: Together, we can make a difference. And don't delay. The future is now.

SOCIETY SHORTS

NEW CHAPTER MEMBERS IN FEBRUARY

by *Walt Bunter*

We extend a GREAT BIG WELCOME to the following five members who recently joined or rejoined the SWCS and our California-Nevada Chapter or transferred in from another state chapter.

Anita Brown – Davis

Richard Johnson – Laguna Beach

Ben Letton – Eureka

Robert Remillard – Redding

Byran Yates – Rocklin

“The diligent farmer plants trees, of which he himself will never see the fruit.”
-Cicero

SUBMIT NOMINATIONS FOR CHAPTER AWARDS BY MARCH 31

by *Phil Hogan*

The Chapter Awards Committee goal is to recognize the outstanding contributions of members and partners for their efforts in promoting SWCS goals through their work. There are plenty of worthwhile nominees in California and Nevada deserving of recognition.

Nominations will be accepted up to March 31 for Chapter Recognition Awards, Merit Awards, Distinguished Service Awards, and Outstanding News Media Awards. Awards will be presented at the Chapter Annual Business Meeting, location and date TBA.

If you know of an individual, group, or organization deserving of recognition, send your nominations to Committee Chair Phil Hogan in Woodland via e-mail: Phil.Hogan@ca.usda.gov.



Achieving Sustainable Mixed Agricultural Landscapes in Grassland Environments
Oklahoma City, OK

PLAN TO ATTEND THE FARMING WITH GRASS CONFERENCE

SWCS is organizing “Farming with Grass: Achieving Sustainable Mixed Agricultural Landscapes,” to be held October 20-22, 2008 in Oklahoma City, OK. The focus is on enhancing the multi-functional benefits and sustainability of mixed agricultural systems that dominate many sub-humid to semi-arid grassland ecoregions of the U.S. and other parts of the world. The conference will consist of invited speakers, submitted papers, and facilitated roundtable discussions. The overall goal of the conference is to address agriculture at a crossroads, through the convergence of increased environmental awareness, widespread recognition of human-induced climate change, emerging bio-based energy systems, rural demographics, and commodity prices that are higher than they have been for many decades.

2008 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The conference includes workshops, concurrent sessions, symposia, posters, plenary sessions, and technical tours designed to involve participants to recent developments in the science and art of natural resource conservation and environmental management on working land—the largely privately-owned land comprising working farms, ranches, forests, and rural and urban communities.

Join us for the 63rd Annual SWCS Conference!

Sunday, July 27

Illegal Immigration and the Conservation Consequences

Monday, July 28

Dig It! The Secrets of Soil:

A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Smithsonian Soils Exhibit

Special Events

**Evening Event at the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum
State of the Society Address and Town Hall Meeting**

Workshops, Tours & Networking Opportunities

Eight tours, five workshops and dozens of opportunities to make connections with your colleagues, exhibitors and speakers.

Complete schedule and registration for attendees, exhibitors, and sponsors available online.

www.swcs.org



**Soil and Water Conservation Society
2008 Annual Conference
July 26-30, 2008**

Tucson, Arizona

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS 173

February 1, 2008

by *Walt Bunter*

If any of your colleagues are not listed, please encourage them to become a member of SWCS.

Phillip	Blake	- Napa
George	Borst	- Fallbrook
Jenna	Brazil	- Scotia
Corinne	Brooks	- Salinas
Joe	Browde	- Petaluma
Anita	Brown	- Davis
Billy	Bruner	- Visalia
Walter	Bunter Jr.	- Davis
Ed	Burton	- Acampo
Jim	Bushey	- Napa
Joel	Butterworth	- Sonoma
Roy	Cameron	- Las Vegas, NV
Richard	Casale	- Aptos
Andrea	Casey	- Corning
Barry	Cavanna	- Pleasant Hill
George	Chan	- San Marino
Denny	Churchill	- Quincy
Richard	Clark	- La Verne
Livy	Coe	- Colusa
Contra	Costa RCD	- Concord
Duane	Cornett	- Marysville
Dennis	Corwin	- Riverside
C.	Crews	- San Francisco
Bill	Daily	- Reno, NV
Charles	Davis	- Davis
Jason	Davison	- Fallon, NV
Shanon	Dean	- Novato
W.	Denham	- Pasadena
Gylan	Dickey	- Bakersfield
Jeff	Dlott	- Soquel
RaeAnn	Dubay	- Red Bluff
Gail	Durham	- Minden, NV
Jim	Earsom	- Loma Linda
Norman	Elam	- Palm Desert
Tom	Esgate	- Penn Valley

Michael	Evasovic	- Huntington Beach
Angela Gayle	Evenden	- Reno, NV
Clarence	Finch	- Fresno
Josh	Fodor	- Santa Cruz
Alan	Forkey	- Yuba City
Dennis	Fox	- Bakersfield
Donald	Funk	- Templeton
Jody	Gallaway	- Chico
Christoper	Giovannoni	- Watsonville
Orvil	Godman	- San Diego
E.	Griner	- Bonsall
Patricia	Grover	- Sacramento
Brent	Hallock	- San Luis Obispo
Keith	Hamblin	- Redding
Douglas	Hanford	- Sonoma
Howard	Harris	- Ridgecrest
Jeff	Hayes	- Santa Paula
David	Heilig	- Long Beach
Rick	Hill	- Morro Bay
Michael	Hogan	- Tahoe City
Phil	Hogan	- Sacramento
Lisa	Hokholt	- Livermore
Diane	Holcomb	- Davis
Frederick	Hotes	- Chico
Glenda	Humiston	- Richmond
Ray	Hunter	- Fresno
Ray	Huxtable	- Henderson, NV
Chris	Ince	- Porterville
Jason	Jackson	- Grass Valley
Ellen	James	- Somis
Janice	Jinings	- Elk Grove
Richard	Johnson	- Laguna Beach
Kay	Joy Barge	- Auburn
Stacy	Kavanaugh	- Chico
David	Kelley	- Davis
Salim	Khalil	- Corona
James	Kocsis	- Davis
James	Komar	- Red Bluff
Todd	Kraemer	- Arcata
Eric	Larson	- Sebastopol
Ben	Letton	- Eureka
Harold	Loudermilk	- Victorville

Norman	MacLeod	- Santa Barbara	Colleen	Schneider	- Davis
Dan	Martynn	- Quincy	Jerry	Schneider	- Los Angeles
Sandra	Mathews	- Hayward	Thomas	Schott	- Palm Springs
Rob	Mazalewski	- Davis	Charles	Schwabauer	- Moorpark
John	McLain	- Carson City, NV	Lee	Seidell	- Albany
Dan	Meyer	- Lodi	Lisa	Shanks	- Novato
Roland	Meyer	- Davis	Michael	Simmons	- Goleta
Louise	Miller	- Potter Valley	Michael	Singer	- Davis
Laura	Mitsch	- Capitola	Steven	Singer	- Santa Cruz
Daniel	Mountjoy	- Salinas	Robert	Slayback	- Lodi
Louis	Nagy	- Ventura	David	Smiley	- Sacramento
Sally	Negrone	- Vacaville	Scott	Smith	- Oceanside
Robert	Neilson	- Visalia	James	Spear	- Weaverville
Tim	O'Halloran	- Woodland	Richard	Starnes	- Salinas
Mark	Parson	- Davis	Mark	Steffek	- Alturas
Sajeemas	Pasakdee	- Fresno	Nancy	Stein	- Martinez
Arthur	Pearson	- Cambria	David	Steiner	- Napa
Heath	Pearson	- Fremont	Aaron	Steinwand	- Bishop
Steven	Perkins	- Fallon, NV	Floyd	Stephens	- Auberry
Jeff	Peters	- Pt. Richmond	April	Stinson	- Sacramento
G. Stuart	Pettygrove	- Davis	Carlos	Suarez	- Elk Grove
Roger	Poff	- Nevada City	Karen	Sweet	- Livermore
Paul	Prange	- San Jose	Ron	Taskey	- San Luis Obispo
Gil	Pridmore	- Napa	Michael	Taylor	- Oroville
Azizur	Rahman	- Clovis	Lorin	Trubschenck	- Lompoc
Jeff	Raifsnider	- Salinas	Tina	Vander Hoek	- Templeton
Wendy	Rash	- Winters	Richard	Wagner	- San Francisco
Floyd	Rathbun	- Fallon, NV	Gordon	Watts	- Carmel
Robert	Remillard	- Redding	Kenneth	Weaver	- Susanville
Paul	Robins	- Woodland	Thomas	Wehri	- Roseville
John	Rogers	- Davis	David	West	- Coarsegold
Frances	Rond	- Clovis	Robert	Wheeler	- Murrieta
David	Rose	- Willows	Christina	Whidden	- Clovis
Andrew	Rosenau	- Sacramento	Mark	White	- Auburn
Ann	Rossi	- Riverside	Ruth	Wildman	- Davis
Robert	Roy	- Madera	Bruce	Williams	- Weaverville
Jeffrey	Rubin	- Oakland	John	Wilson	- Los Angeles
Carol	Rush	- Quincy	Jane	Wohletz	- Berkeley
Carol-Anne	Rutenbergs	- Auburn	R. Cub	Wolfe	- Wellington, NV
Charles	Saari	- Winchester	Hank	Wyman	- Davis
George	Sato	- Rancho Cordova	Bryan	Yates	- Rocklin
Larry	Schmidt	- Minden, NV	Willard	Youtz	- Escondido

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FIRST CLASS

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2008

RunOff is the official California-Nevada Chapter SWCS newsletter.

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Submit articles and photos for the next issue of RunOff by May 16, 2008