

Strategic Plan **2012**

**North Coast Resource Conservation
&
Development Council**

**"Our success has really been based on partnerships
from the very beginning." ~ Bill Gates**

www.ncrcanddc.org

www.cultivatingcommerce.org

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Introduction

The North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council is a non-profit and non-governmental organization which was first formed and officially incorporated as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization in 2003 to advance the conservation of natural and agricultural resources within Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino, and Lake Counties in Northern California. Initially, the US Department of Agriculture authorized the area under the Federal Farm Bill, and provided funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Service



(NRCS), including office space and a full time coordinator to work with the Council to identify problems, establish goals and objectives, build strategies, and implement plans. In 2011, all funding and support from the NRCS abruptly ceased for our organization as well as all RC&DCs across the nation, including complete elimination of office space and the Coordinator position.

Although the loss of NRCS support was challenging, our Council was well positioned to continue to implement its programs to achieve our goals and objectives, and continues to thrive. Just a few months earlier, in late Fall of 2010, the Council held a Retreat and determined that it was time to re-focus priorities and revise the bylaws to facilitate implementation of a new initiative, *Cultivating Commerce*. A new



mission statement, revised priorities and modified bylaws were subsequently developed, and were adopted in Spring of 2011.



The new mission statement for our organization is to support economic growth through sustainable use and conservation of natural and agricultural resources in the region of Marin, Sonoma, Lake and Mendocino counties of California.

Our revised priorities are:

- fund development of demonstration businesses which have open books as a goal
- developing partnerships to achieve our

goals

- focusing on the following four areas for development in Years 1 and 2:



1. agri-tourism
2. beekeeping/pollinator supply
3. support local food distribution/development/cooperative food gardens
4. biochar or other product from biomass energy development

The above priorities would be addressed in a planned process through the *Cultivating Commerce* initiative.



Subsequently, the Council moved forward with work to diversify the income streams for our organization. Over the 2011 year, the Council identified the following income stream areas to focus effort:

- Initiate applications for private foundation



and corporate giving grants for general support as well as project support (we were successful with one grant application: The Rose Foundation)

- Continue applications for appropriate federal grants
- Develop appeal letters for donation fundraising
- Produce a limited expense Poetry Competition for fundraising in 2011 and onward
- Produce a Garden Tour variation for Fundraising in 2012 and onward
- Include an End-of-Year 2011 and onward fundraising appeal to active partners and members
- Begin planning work on a large fundraising event for Anderson Valley that includes local wine and food tasting that also has an educational component



At the same time, the Council continued to work on Project areas, recognizing the need to provide actual and in-kind funding for our service area as a responsible charitable organization. The project work areas in 2011 were:

Agri-tourism

- Attending a workshop on “Growing Agritourism, a workshop for the North Coast Region” developed by the Small Farm Program at UC Davis, and continuing to coordinate with workshop participants.
- Conducting limited outreach via MailChimp web email service to announce information related to ag-tourism



Beekeeping/Pollinator Supply

- Developing Pollinator Habitat Outreach program for Mendocino County in coordination with the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District for early 2012 presentation
- Continuing partnership with Partners for

Sustainable Pollination (PFSP), including
submittal of modified “Bee Buddies” grant
to:

- ◇ Dean Witter Foundation (pending)
- ◇ CS Fund (unaccepted)
- ◇ Mary A Crocker Trust (unaccepted)
- Conducting outreach
 - ◇ via MailChimp web email service to
announce information related to
pollinator habitat
 - ◇ coordinating with PFSP at several
Sonoma County events and distrib-
uting pollinator useful seeds



- ◇ Attending Earth Day in Fort Bragg in Mendocino County and distributing educational materials and pollinator useful seeds

Support Local Food Distribution/ Development/Cooperative Food Gardens

- Continuing participation in the Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) including membership in the North Coast Regional Food Systems Network Group, covering Napa, Lake, Sonoma, Marin and Mendocino Counties
- Submitting grants to support projects including:
 - ◇ National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) People's Garden grant for Sonoma, Marin, Mendocino and Lake Counties (unaccepted)



- ◊ NIFA grant for Anderson Valley Community Food Security Project (pending)
- Sponsoring gardens in the 350 Garden Challenge in Sonoma County
- Sponsoring two scholarships to the Small Commercial Urban Farming Initiative (SCUFI) workshop May 1-2, 2011, allowing low-income/students to attend
- Conducting outreach
 - ◊ via MailChimp web email service to announce information related to community gardens

Biochar or Other Product from Biomass Energy Development

- Partnered with Redwood Forest Foundation, Inc. (RFFI), in grant applications for a prototype biochar facility on Usal Forest

Photograph Credit
Richard Gienger





General Farm and Rancher Entrepreneurship Support

- Developing website for *Cultivating Commerce* initiative
- Partnering with ShadeFund to assist in funding of sustainable and organic agriculture activities
- Submitting grant applications to support entrepreneurships in sustainable agriculture
 - ◇ NIFA Beginning Farmer and Rancher grant for Lake County (pending)
 - ◇ Columbia Foundation Farm and Rancher Entrepreneurship Pilot Project for Mendocino County (pending)



What's Ahead

In 2012, the Council plans to continue to focus its activities on gaining financial stability through increasing the revenue streams while continuing the same priority goals as shown in the 2011 activities.

FUNDRAISING

Planned fundraising activities include:

- Annual applications to Mendocino Community Foundation for supporting healthy foods, entrepreneurships, and biomass energy opportunities within that county
- Annual Application to Marin Community Foundation to expand healthy foods through People's Garden opportunities to low income residents of Marin County
- Annual application to Mendocino Redwoods Company for supporting Council activities in Mendocino County
- Annual Application to Rose Foundation for general support of Council Activities

- Re-application to funders such as Clif Bar Family Foundation, Dean Witter Foundation, Heller Foundation, Gaia Fund, and the Wallace Genetic Foundation emphasizing new program support areas that match their giving priorities
- Initiate new applications to Foundations and Corporate Giving programs as yet untapped
- Continue applications for appropriate federal grants
- Develop appeal letters for donation fundraising
- Produce a limited expense Poetry Competition for fundraising in 2012 with online





submissions and Paypal fee payments;
consider combining with a photography
competition.

- Produce a Garden Tour variation for Fundraising in 2012 and onward
- Include an End-of-Year 2012 and onward fundraising appeal to active partners and members
- Complete the groundwork for a large 2013 fundraising event for Anderson Valley that includes local wine and food tasting that also has an educational component
- Expand *Cultivating Commerce* website to include a registration fee for accessing some services

ADMINISTRATIVE PRIORITIES

Several administrative activities are needed in 2012, including those that:

- Secure a permanent headquarters with little or no rent
- Engage an Executive Director (volunteer)
- Hire an Administrative Assistant
- Expand Facebook and Twitter presence

PROJECT PRIORITIES

A continuing priority for 2012 is outreach to Tribes within the 4-county area to include the Tribes in Council membership and operations. The Council intends to continue the same program priorities as in 2011, focusing on entrepreneurships for sustainable farming, food production and distribution, pollinator habitat protection, and value-added farming activities such as agricultural tourism. We will work to secure additional partners, including West Company and California Farm-link, for assisting us in implementing *Cultivating Commerce*.

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California Association of
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In partnership
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Partners (continued)



Southern Sonoma County
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