

December 2019 Yuba Co RCD Meeting – NRCS Report

Our office consists of 3 Soil Conservationists – Pa Yang, Diego Camacho and Shanna Farmer (Part time), 1 Farm Bill Assistance – Meagan Estrada and the District Conservationist. We also have two State Office employees Nathan Key – WEP Leader and Alan Forkey – Resource Conservationist. We currently have 2 Soil Conservationist vacancies and 1 Civil Engineer. We will be doing interviews for one of the Soil Conservationist positions next week and the Civil Engineer position will be posted soon. We are expecting Soil Conservationist student pathways for the summer. Our office is the office with the highest workload in Area 1 with over 80 active contracts. We also take and process about 300 new applications each year.

The main programs we work in our office are:

- Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EWIP)
 - CA Air Quality Initiative for Ozone and PM Reductions
 - National Air Quality Initiative (NAQI) – Tractors
 - High Tunnel Systems [Hoop Houses]
 - Cropland – Cover Crops
 - Water Conservation – Irrigation Systems, Irrigation Water Management, Pumps.
 - Forest – Thinning and pruning, Brush Management, Fuel Reduction
 - Rangeland – Water Troughs, Forage & Biomass Planting, Fence, Grazing Management
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) – Water Birds [Aimed at Rice Producers]
 - Seasonal Flooding and Water Level Drawdown

To apply for our programs, farmers and ranchers will go through 5 basic steps (see 5 Steps to Assistance brochure).

We currently don't have batching periods. We are hoping to have our first batching period some time in February. The programs rules and tools we use are all new this year. We are mandated by the national office to use this new tool called CART – Conservation Assessment and Ranking Tool. This tool will be released this month and will be available for the field office late January. This tool will be used to assess client's resources concerns, planned practices and site vulnerability as part of the conservation planning

process and will rank client applications for NRCS program funding. CART ranking applies to all programs including easements. We also have a new planning tool called Conservation Desktop (CD).

AGI letters and deferral letters were sent out to producers. The staff is taking trainings for the new tools. Planners are calling producers to schedule field visits for applications that didn't get funded last fiscal year. Planners are going out to certify irrigation systems and other engineering practices with the area cluster engineer. They are also working on new applications and planning interest forms.

District Conservationist

Litza Y. Lopez Ramos