

THE Bridge

Sustainable Conservation partners with business, agriculture and government leaders to find practical ways to combat climate change, and promote clean air, clean water and biodiversity.



Sustainable Conservation Turns Fifteen

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEAR FRIENDS,

I am delighted to celebrate Sustainable Conservation's 15th anniversary with you. It has been an incredible time of change and, thanks to your support, progress.

The environmental community was quite different when Sustainable Conservation opened its doors in 1993. The use of "sustainable" was still in its infancy. And, our approach of collaborating with business received a fair amount of skepticism. Few yet understood the power of working *with* the private sector, not *against* it, to achieve lasting benefits for our planet and people.

Bringing a new approach to environmental problem-solving has paid off.

As you'll read inside, Sustainable Conservation has led major efforts to combat climate change, and promote clean air, clean water and biodiversity throughout California. At the top of the list is pioneering the use of on-farm digesters to capture methane – a potent greenhouse gas – from cow manure and convert it into clean, renewable energy. We've reduced greenhouse gas emissions in the state by 12,000 tons since 2003. That's like taking 40,000 cars off the road. In the process, farmers saved \$2 million in energy costs and helped slow the paving of irreplaceable farmland.

Through our popular PlantRight campaign, we've worked with California's horticultural industry to stop the sale of harmful invasive plants which cost the state millions of dollars each year to control. In partnership with major retailers like Lowe's, the industry is replacing problem plants with beautiful, safe alternatives while helping businesses grow.

Turning skeptics into believers over the last 15 years has been extremely rewarding. We're even more excited about the next 15 as we work with you, our supporters and partners, to make California a leader in environmental and economic sustainability.

Warm regards,

Ashley Boren
Executive Director

Celebrating 15 Years of Results

SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION'S COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO A HEALTHY CLIMATE, CLEAN AIR AND WATER, AND VIBRANT BIODIVERSITY PRODUCES LASTING RESULTS FOR THE PLANET AND PEOPLE.



CLIMATE CHANGE

- ⊙ Reduced California agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions by 12,000 tons. That's like taking 40,000 cars off the road. We did this by promoting methane digesters – proven technology for converting cow manure into renewable energy.
- ⊙ Generated enough clean, renewable energy to power more than 3,000 homes and offset \$2 million in energy costs to farmers.
- ⊙ Through our renewable energy efforts, diverted 500,000 tons of manure that could have contaminated drinking and irrigation water.

CLEAN AIR

- ⊙ Cut dust pollution by 70% and diesel emissions by 45% on California farms practicing conservation tillage. This farming method requires fewer tractor passes to prepare fields for planting and saves farmers money.
- ⊙ Encouraged the adoption of conservation tillage across 80,000 acres in California. That's a breath of fresh air for communities in the San Joaquin Valley, which has some of the dirtiest air – and highest rates of asthma – in the nation.
- ⊙ Saved farmers \$2 million in fuel, maintenance and labor costs.

CLEAN WATER

- ⊙ Improved water quality and fish habitat by expanding our permit coordination program, Partners in Restoration, across millions of acres in California. The program earned a 2004 Governor's Environmental and Economic Leadership Award, the state's highest environmental honor (sidebar).
- ⊙ Partnered with California automobile recyclers to keep polluted runoff out of waterways. Safely disposed of 63,500 car and truck convenience switches – containing nearly 150 pounds of mercury – before they had a chance to harm people and wildlife.

BIODIVERSITY

- ⊙ Helped cut the more than \$85 million California spends to control and eradicate invasive species. The PlantRight campaign (PlantRight.org) engages the horticultural industry, landscape professionals and home gardeners to prevent the spread of damaging invasive plants and promote safe, beautiful alternatives.
- ⊙ Enabled landowners across 800,000 acres in California to protect endangered wildlife like the kit fox (above) through innovative conservation tools.

15
YEARS
1993-2008



Governor Schwarzenegger congratulates Executive Director Ashley Boren on her award.

2007 JAMES IRVINE FOUNDATION LEADERSHIP AWARD for our innovative, collaborative approach to solving critical environmental problems facing California.



CHARITY NAVIGATOR TOP HONORS since 2003 for exceptional fiscal management and operational efficiency.



2004 GOVERNOR'S ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP AWARD for our Partners in Restoration program, and its effective strategy to restore and enhance watersheds throughout California while promoting working landscapes.



2004 U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD for our efforts to reduce impacts to water quality from California's dairy and auto recycling industries.



MILESTONES



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Cow Power Makes National TV Debut

Sustainable Conservation's work to turn cow manure into clean, renewable energy made its national television debut in April. NBC's "Today" show featured Executive Director Ashley Boren in an engaging piece about the promise of "cow power" to help meet the country's energy needs. With the help of our industry, government and nonprofit partners, we've led the charge to promote methane digesters in California for years – and we are thrilled that millions of viewers nationwide learned about this innovative solution. Visit www.suscon.org to watch the broadcast.

Farmers Boost Health of Santa Cruz County Streams, Fish

According to a recent report by our partners at the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District, farmers in Santa Cruz County are protecting the health of local streams and endangered fish like never before. The reason? Partners in Restoration (PIR). The program simplifies the complex and costly regulatory process landowners face when restoring their properties and waterways flowing through them. Over the last two years, PIR participants in Santa Cruz County stopped nearly 20,000 tons of sediment from polluting ecologically rich streams in eight county watersheds. Besides dramatically reducing silt that clouds streams and the future for endangered coho and steelhead salmon, fish benefited from the removal of barriers that interfered with their natural migration and successful breeding. By the end of 2008, landowners hope to prevent another 1,000 tons of sediment from washing downstream.



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Sustainable Conservation

98 Battery Street, Suite 302, San Francisco, CA 94111 www.suscon.org
phone 415-977-0380 fax 415-977-0381 e-mail suscon@suscon.org