



Sustainable Conservation

{BIG IDEAS @ WORK}

FARMING CLEAN AIR

Pg 4



Farmers dramatically reduce on-farm air pollution and boost public health by doing less.

WEEDING OUT INVASIVES

Pg 6



One of California's largest agricultural industries protects wildlife and communities by eliminating invasive plants.

CULTIVATING CLEAN WATER

Pg 8



Landowners improve water quality and wildlife habitat with the next big idea in conservation.

DEAR FRIENDS



California has always been a place for big ideas.

Our innovation led to the first personal computer and, at the same time, has made California the most productive farming state in the nation for the last half-century. We helped launch the modern environmental movement.

With your generous support, Sustainable Conservation has kept this think-big legacy alive. Nearly two decades ago – long before “sustainability” was in vogue – we posed a simple but powerful question: **Why can't promoting a healthy environment also be good for the economy?**

Challenging conventional wisdom, we pioneered working *with*, not *against*, California industries to make clean air and water, thriving wildlife and a healthy climate business as usual. We were the first to recognize that for environmental solutions to stick and have the biggest impact, they've got to be profitable.

Nearly 20 years of dreaming up, perfecting and expanding a bold vision for a vibrant state has paid off. As you'll read inside, this includes teaching California farmers on more than 800,000 acres how to cut harmful emissions by 70% and boost public health in some of the most polluted regions in the country – all while saving money and supporting local economies.

But there's more to be done. Over half of our rivers and streams that millions of Californians depend on for drinking and growing food get a failing grade for their poor quality. Wildlife and habitat are disappearing at an alarming rate. California still produces some of the dirtiest air in the nation. The list goes on.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Together, we can continue proving that a flourishing environment and economy are not only possible, but essential to a bright future. We can, together, keep California a place for big ideas.

Thank you,

Ashley Boren

Ashley Boren
Executive Director

Russell Siegelman

Russell Siegelman
Board Chairman

{MAKING BIG IDEAS WORK}



[BIG IDEA]
Farming
Clean Air

“My family has lived here for 120 years, and we have a personal interest in protecting our environment,” explains Dino Giacomazzi – a fourth-generation dairy farmer in the San Joaquin Valley.

“The Valley’s geography and increased urbanization – along with agricultural activities – have led to some pretty dirty air. I’ve operated for years in ways that promote clean air because farmers must lead in fixing the problem.”

For nearly a decade, Sustainable Conservation has shown Dino and farmers like him how they can get more – like clean air and cash in their pockets – by doing less.

The “less” is called conservation tillage, a suite of low-impact cultivation practices that involves leaving crop residue in fields (imagine chopped-up corn stalks) and planting new crops on top.

This reduces the number of tractor passes needed to prepare fields for planting, resulting in less dust and diesel pollution. In fact, conservation tillage can cut dust pollution alone by an average of 70%.

That’s a breath of fresh air for Dino and his neighbors in and around Hanford, which was ranked the second most polluted city for particulate matter by the American Lung Association in 2012.

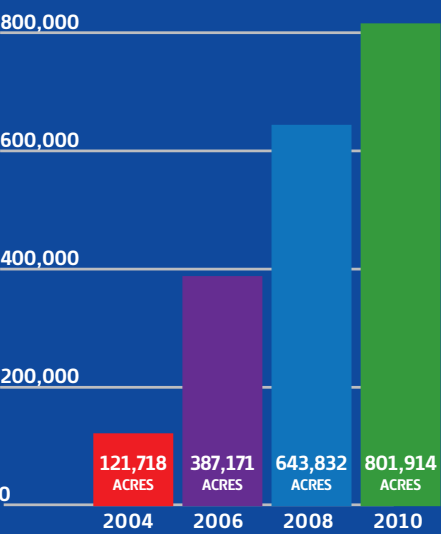
A GROWING TREND

Since Sustainable Conservation began spreading the word about conservation tillage, farmers have adopted it on more than 800,000 acres throughout the Central Valley. That’s over 1,200 square miles. Nearly half of all row crops in the San Joaquin Valley are now farmed using conservation tillage.

“The ‘more’ of conservation tillage is that I save a ton of fuel, labor and maintenance costs because I don’t use my tractor as much,” says Dino. “Less pollution, lower costs ... that’s how you turn things around for the country’s most productive farming region.”

CONSERVATION TILLAGE FLOURISHES

Since 2004, the number of conservation tillage acres in California has grown to more than 800,000 – that’s over 1,200 square miles.



Standard cultivation (bottom) produces significant dust and diesel pollution. Low-impact conservation tillage cuts pollution dramatically while lowering farmers’ costs.



“Sustainable Conservation provided the expert know-how, and was there every step of the way to help me integrate low-impact practices on my farm. The Central Valley has cleaner air because of them.”



Dino Giacomazzi
Giacomazzi Dairy
Hanford, CA

Fourth-generation dairy farmer Dino Giacomazzi and Sustainable Conservation Senior Project Manager Ladi Asgill inspect a field cultivated using clean-air practices.

{BIG IDEA}

Weeding Out Invasives



“Invasive plants are an often overlooked problem that can negatively impact California’s most sensitive landscapes and habitat,” says Nicholas Staddon, Director of New Plants for Monrovia, one of the country’s largest nurseries.

“In collaboration with Sustainable Conservation, I learned that half of all invasive plants in California have origins in the horticultural industry. Realizing that this is a national issue with regional solutions, it was a natural fit for Monrovia to take the lead in helping fix the problem.”

Through our PlantRight campaign, Sustainable Conservation teamed up with Monrovia and other major plant growers and retailers to stop the sale of invasives – and trim the more than \$80 million California spends each year on control and eradication.

A cornerstone of PlantRight’s approach is offering scientifically sound, non-invasive alternatives that not only look beautiful in the garden, but make economic sense to the industry.

IN FULL BLOOM

“Our work together has really paid off,” explains Nicholas. “With the industry driving and Sustainable Conservation navigating, the number of invasive varieties for sale has plummeted by 75%.”

This includes major offenders like Arundo that not only damage the environment, but fuel wildfires and threaten homes.

PlantRight’s efforts have also resulted in a 70% drop in the number of independent and big-box retailers statewide selling invasives.

“Through PlantRight, the industry has proven itself as an effective leader in combating a serious environmental threat in a way that’s good for business,” states Nicholas. “There’s no problem we can’t beat with that combination.”



KEEPING INVASIVE PLANTS IN CHECK



PHOTO: SAVE THE BAY



Invasive highway iceplant (left), which has been sold at garden centers for decades, harms native wildlife and habitat, and is extremely difficult to control. The non-invasive PlantRight alternative, *Delosperma cooperi* (above), is pretty, fast-growing and doesn't wear out its welcome.



“Sustainable Conservation not only challenged one of California’s major industries to help protect the environment ... they showed us how to do it in a way that keeps our industry going strong.”



Nicholas Staddon
Monrovia
Azusa, CA

Bob Adams, Sustainable Conservation’s Director of Business Partnerships, and Nicholas Staddon, Director of New Plants for Monrovia, discuss the beauty of non-invasive plants in reducing impacts to California’s landscapes, wildlife and communities.

{BIG IDEA}

Cultivating Clean Water

“Sustainable Conservation is taking a bold idea and making it work on the ground. It’s one thing to talk big ... but it takes something special to actually make it work.”



Craig Ledbetter
Vino Farms
Lodi, CA

“Usually I’m paid for growing grapes ... not willow trees,” jokes Craig Ledbetter, whose family farms award-winning wine grapes along the scenic Mokelumne River near Lodi.

“But when Sustainable Conservation asked Vino Farms to team up on a new program that pays me for improving the health of the river that flows past my property, I jumped at the chance.”

Private land like Craig’s 4,300 acres of vineyards provides important benefits to California’s environment and people – like fish populations kept strong and drinking water kept clean by vegetation that prevents dirt from escaping into waterways.

More than 50% of California is privately owned – and a majority of the state’s rivers and streams wind through or along private property. So, how these folks manage their land has a dramatic effect on the environment.

That’s why Sustainable Conservation launched a novel initiative in 2011 that rewards farmers, ranchers and other landowners – in real dollars – for providing measurable benefits to the natural resources under their care.

CHANGING COURSE

“The Mokelumne needs our help,” says Chris Storm, viticulturist for Vino Farms. “It and the wildlife that depend on the river for survival are threatened by degraded water quality, farm runoff and fragmented habitat. More than a million people in the Bay Area depend on the river for clean drinking water.”

Working with Craig and other farmers along the river, Sustainable Conservation will bring back the thick, lush forests that once blanketed the Mokelumne’s banks to keep the river clean, and at just the right temperature for wildlife like imperiled steelhead trout and Chinook salmon.

“My family has a long history of taking care of this land, and I want to make sure that legacy lives on,” states Vino Farm’s owner John Ledbetter. “Sustainable Conservation is helping me do just that.”

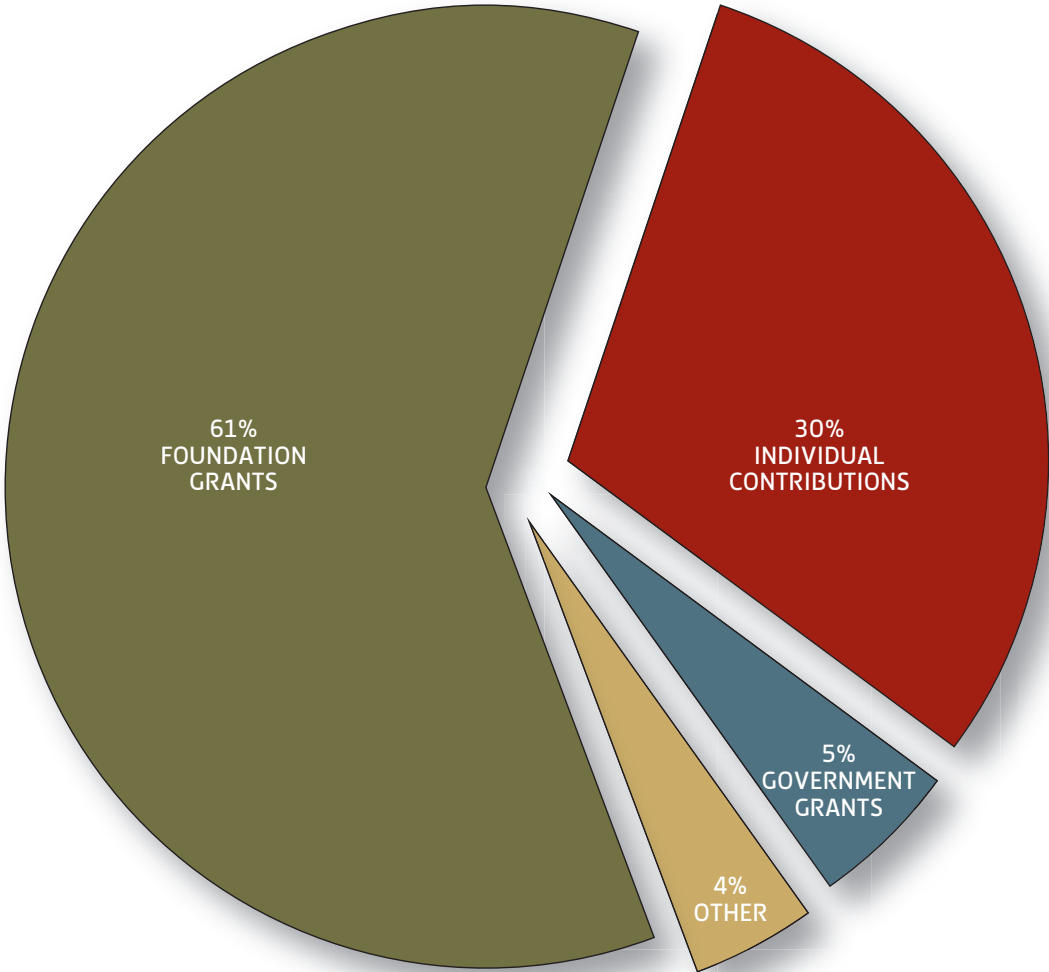
FORESTS AS FILTERS

Planting vegetation along the Mokelumne River will prevent soil runoff from farms and other private land (left). New riparian forests will improve water quality (right), and habitat for fish and other aquatic species.

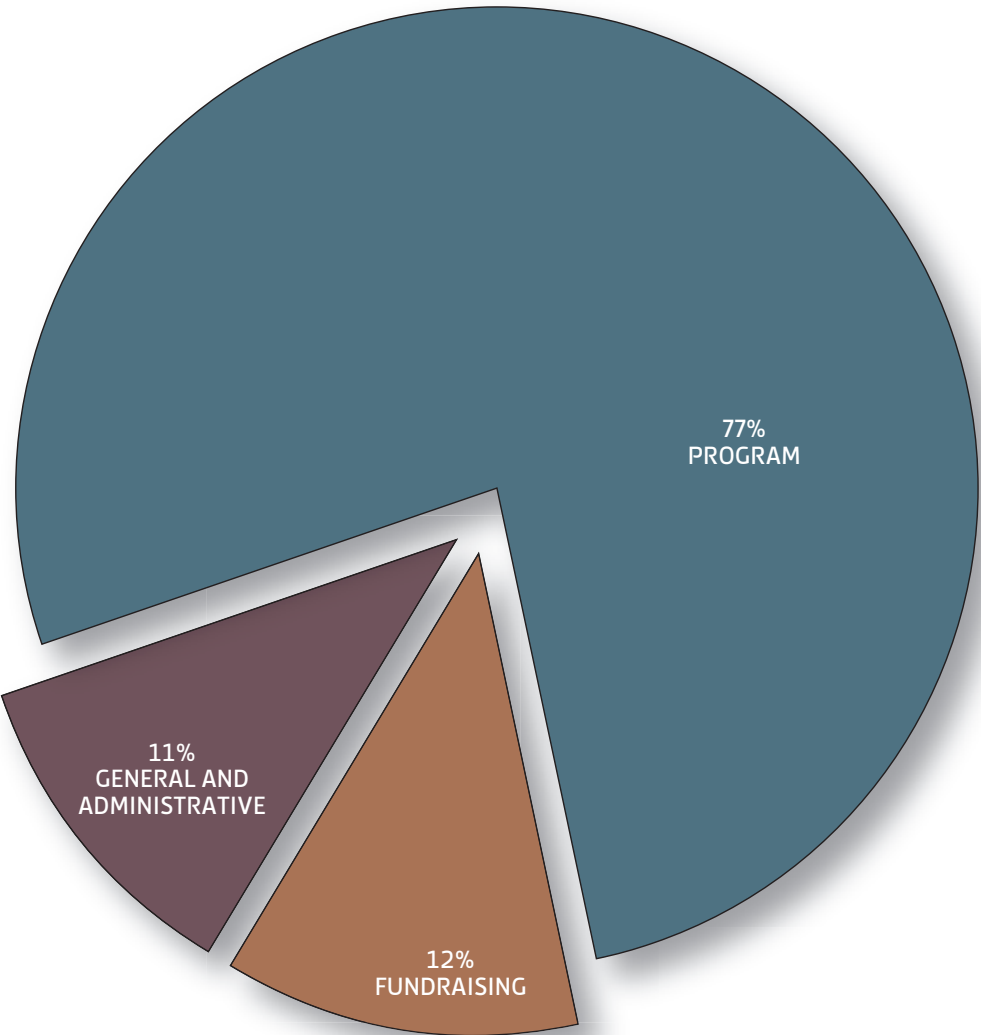


Sustainable Conservation Project Manager Kelli McCune plants native vegetation along the Mokelumne River with (left to right) Vino Farm’s Chris Storm, Craig Ledbetter and John Ledbetter.

SUPPORT AND REVENUE



EXPENSES



STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Foundation Grants | \$ 1,659,855 |
| Individual Contributions | 812,728 |
| Government Grants | 126,937 |
| Other | 104,411 |

Total Support and Revenue \$ 2,703,931

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Program | \$ 2,139,413 |
| Fundraising | 342,260 |
| General and Administrative | 317,559 |

Total Expenses \$ 2,799,232

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Net Assets Beginning of Year | \$ 2,658,424 |
| Net Assets End of Year | 2,574,480 |

Change in Net Assets (\$ 83,944)

For a complete financial report audited by Ghaffari Zaragoza LLP, Certified Public Accountants, please visit www.suscon.org.

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Kathy Viatella, Managing Director of Programs

DESIGN: SAN FRANCISCO ART DEPARTMENT
PHOTOGRAPHY: PAOLO VESCIA





Sustainable Conservation

Since 1993, Sustainable Conservation has partnered with the private sector to find environmental solutions that make business sense. Our healthy climate, clean air and water, and abundant wildlife initiatives produce lasting benefits for California.