

Soil Health & Funding Opportunities

Meagan Hynes, PhD, CPSS

Mendocino County

Resource Conservation

District

UCCE Organic Crops Day

April 24, 2024

Overview

Introduction/What's an RCD?

Soil Health

Carbon Practices

Funding Opportunities

Practices in Action

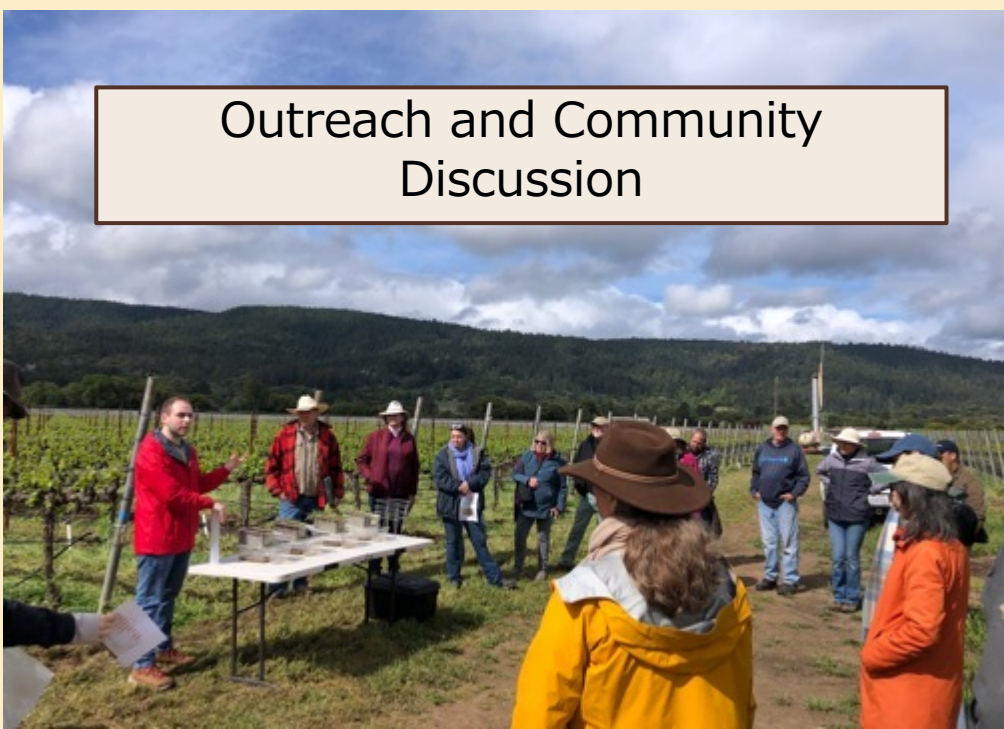
Workshop/Questions



What's an "RCD"?

- "Resource Conservation District"
- Formed after the "Dust Bowl" in 1930's to provide technical assistance and funding to farmers and ranchers
- Mendocino County RCD
 - 1945 (Willits, Little Lake)
 - 1956 (County Wide)
- Special district, subsist on grant funding
- Assist land stewards on a *voluntary* basis
- Non-regulatory
- Evolved over time:
 - **Healthy Soils**
 - Habitat Restoration
 - Forest Health
 - Public Education
 - Water Use
 - Climate Resilience

Outreach and Community Discussion



Implementation Assistance



Education



Planning



Soil Health & Organic Farming

- Organic Farming
 - *Legal Definition of “Organic”*
- Heart of organic farming
 - 1) *Tending the land in a way that respects **soil**, water, air, plants, wildlife, and us!*
- **Soil Health**
 - NRCS Definition
 - *“The continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans.”*



5 essential functions of soil

Sustaining plant and animal life

Need soil to grow plants and provide habitat for animals

Regulating water

Water flow from irrigation, precipitation, and snowmelt (into and overland) and storage

Filtering and buffering potential pollutants

Soil and microbes in soil filter, buffer, degrade/detox, and immobilize chemicals

Cycling nutrients

Carbon storage, nutrients accessed, transformed, and/or stored,

Providing physical stability and support

Root support, buildings, sidewalks, roadways, etc.



Principles to Manage Soil for Health

- Maximize Presence of Living Roots
- Minimize Disturbance
- Maximize Soil Cover
- Maximize Biodiversity



What to do if your soil isn't functioning as expected?

Soil Health & Carbon Sequestering Practices

Alley Cropping	Carbon Amendment Application	Conservation Cover	Conservation Crop Rotation	Contour Buffer Strips	Cover Crop
Field Border	Filter Strip	Forage, Pasture, and Hay Planting	Grassed Waterway	Hedgerow Planting	Herbaceous Wind Barrier
Mulching	Multi-story Cropping / Forest Farming	Nutrient Management	Prescribed Grazing	Range Planting	No-Till
Reduced Till	Riparian Forest Buffer	Riparian Herbaceous	Silvopasture	Strip Cropping	Tree / Shrub Establishment
	Vegetative Barriers	Whole Orchard Recycling	Windbreak or Shelterbelt Establishment		

Funding for Healthy Soil Practices

Funding Sources

Federal, state,
county, non-profit

Time of
Year/Application
Period

\$-\$\$\$

Commitment

Free technical
assistance from
your local RCD!

Examples of Healthy Soil Grants

Granter	Grant Name	Application Period	New Practice/Upgrades	Practices
CDFA	HSP Incentives	Closed Feb 9 th	Yes – New Area	Many!
CDFA → Zero Foodprint	HSP Block Grant	Open until Fall 2024	Yes – New Area	~10
Zero Foodprint	Restore	Closed April 20 th	No, but \$75k limit	~10
Zero Foodprint	Compost Connector	Open	No	Compost
WCB	Pollinator	Open	New Area/Extension	Hedgerows

Other Grants – Carbon Farm Plan and Irrigation

Granter	Grant Name	Application Period	Purpose
NRCS RCPP → MCRCD	Carbon Farm Plan	Until	Whole Farm Evaluation and Planning

Granter	Grant Name	Application Period	New Practice/ Upgrade	Practices
CDFA	SWEEP	2025?	Yes	Many!
CDFA → Fish Friendly Farming (Mendocino)	SWEEP Block Grant	Now!	Yes	Many!
CDFA → Colusa Indian Community Council (Lake)	SWEEP Block Grant	TBD 2024	Yes	Many

Come & see these practices in action!

Register at www.mcrccd.org

We are almost full! Register today!

May 1st, 9:30 am-12:00 pm
Ferrington Vineyard
Booneville, CA

Soil Health & Carbon Beneficial Practices Workshop

May 1st, 2024, 9:30 am-12:00 pm

Join us for an interactive discussion with local winegrowers exploring ways to improve and assess soil health and habitat in vineyards.

Focusing on soil health involves managing land as a living ecosystem, positively impacting:

- Drought Resiliency
- Increased Rainwater Infiltration
- Diversity Above and Below Ground
- Carbon Sequestration
- Nutrient Cycling
- Soil Organic Matter
- Soil Structure

Register online at
<https://forms.gle/hFastGLrxmNrvyF96>

For more info, contact: Meagan Hynes, m.hynes@mcrccd.org
Seth Myrick, seth.myrick@mcrccd.org

Presentations include:

Norman Kobler (Ferrington Vineyards) & Erica Lundquist (NRCS) – Cover Crop and Tillage Field Trial, Microsprinklers, and Grazing

Seth Myrick, Meagan Hynes, Linda MacElwee, and Jessica Reid (MCRCD) – Soil Health, Hedgerows & Habitat, Compost, Carbon Farm Planning, and Funding Resources

Demonstrations – Water Infiltration, Aggregate Stability, Compaction, and Rainfall Simulator

13401 Hwy. 128, Booneville

Coffee and pastries will be provided



Thank You! Questions?

Meagan Hynes

m.hynes@mcrcd.org

www.mcrcd.org

