

## **Area Horticulture Advisor (with emphasis on small farms)-Trinity-Shasta-Tehama Counties**

**Developed and proposed by:** Shasta/Trinity County Director, Larry Forero and Tehama County Director, Josh Davy.

**Position title:** The Trinity and Shasta Horticulture Advisor will focus on supporting local horticulture issues and small-scale agriculture. The advisor will work with local clientele to develop and extend strategies that improve efficient use of water, integrated pest management, soil health, and plant resilience under a changing climate.

**Headquarter location and coverage area:** The position is headquartered in Weaverville (Trinity County). The advisor will also have programmatic responsibility in Shasta and Tehama Counties. Having the advisor located in Trinity County will provide a critical UC academic presence which the county has not had a resident academic for many years. The position will build relationships and develop trust that will ensure effective community-based partnerships and programming. This position is expected to work closely with staff based in the UCCE Shasta office (Community Nutrition Health Advisor, Livestock/Natural Resource Advisor and Forestry/Natural Resource Advisor and appropriate academics who work out of the UCCE Humboldt office).

**Justification:** The advisor would address the ANR Condition Changes *Promoting economic prosperity in California* by improving agricultural efficiency and productivity and *Protecting California's natural resources* by improving the management and use of land and increasing ecological sustainability of agriculture. The position is uniquely capable of achieving these missions in two ways. First, a UC ANR Advisor conducting research and extension targeting horticulture and small-scale farmers does not exist in Northern CA. Secondly, the local Master Gardener program is taught at Shasta College (Community College district is composed of Trinity, Shasta, and Tehama Counties). This 100% volunteer program addresses homeowner horticulture concerns and presents the advisor with an established network of support to multiply the effectiveness of the position and expand delivery to historically underserved clientele.

**Extension:** The extension content delivered at workshops and seminars will vary from building basic agronomic comprehension to innovative information in one of the agronomic areas previously mentioned. Management of the Master Gardener program will include training of Master Gardeners, visits from the public, and educational seminars. Collaboration with work groups, program teams, and statewide programs will assist in newsletter development targeting both clientele groups. The necessity of developing new information for commercial growers will serve as a benefit in the statewide Master Gardener program by keeping curriculum on the cutting edge of crop production.

There is a well-organized wine grape growers' group locally that has historically been interested in research and education opportunities that would welcome local expertise. The defined clientele for this position includes owners, operators and managers of small farms, and UC Master Gardener trainees and volunteers. The advisor will deliver programs through workshops, field trips, meetings, and electronic media as appropriate. They will also work with improving horticultural practices to reduce water consumption and fertilizer use in home landscapes. Cities and municipalities locally are interested in these topics also as well offering opportunities to develop new partnerships locally.

**Research:** This position will develop a research and education program that focuses on horticulture as well as small farm management/production, integrated pest management, marketing, and ag/nature tourism. There are opportunities within the Healthy Families and Communities strategic initiative to seek opportunities to collaborate with the Community Health and Nutrition Advisor to use locally produced farm products in school nutrition programs. Trinity County provides an excellent opportunity to conduct research to better understand and evaluate ecosystem services. Research questions in this geographic area should center around economic and environmentally sustainable production of local food and reduction of pesticides, fertilizer and water used in landscaping. Likely publication outlets include peer-reviewed publications as well as trade magazines, local newspapers and newsletters.

. Examples of programmatic activities by Initiative include:

1. *Healthy Families and Communities* - Work with community leaders to develop key social and economic information on the economic viability of communities. Develop strategies to enhance community economic development.
2. *Sustainable Food Systems* - Develop and disseminate science-based practices for food and fiber production.

This advisor will work closely with existing advisors and specialists serving small farms as well as academics working on grape and strawberry production. UC has strong ANR programs in small farm/specialty crop and natural resource disciplines on both the Berkeley and Davis campuses. It is expected that the new advisor seeks collaborative projects that bring campus-based solutions to the communities they serve. The horticulture and small disciplinary focus will complement other CE expertise in the region.

**Network external to UC ANR:** Serving a rural and isolated area effectively will require extraordinary collaborative efforts. It is expected this program will be implemented in concert with a host of partners that include community and school gardens, local farm and food coalitions, Superior California Economic Development, Watershed Research and Training Center, and U.S.D.A.

**Support:** Trinity County will provide an office, phone, computer, clerical, and travel budget. Travel to other counties will be reimbursed by the receiving counties.

**Other support:** The advisor will work closely with the UC Master Gardener Program state office for support, resources, and direction on program policies, volunteer and community engagement, marketing/communications, fundraising, and virtual training. Statewide office personnel and projects are described at [https://mg.ucanr.edu/Contact\\_Us/](https://mg.ucanr.edu/Contact_Us/).