

## **San Mateo County Resource Conservation District Awarded \$1.3 Million for Partnerships in Resource Protection**

(Half Moon Bay, CA- June 17, 2011) In an unprecedented meeting of the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District (RCD), the Board of Directors voted unanimously last night to accept more than \$1.3 million to protect and enhance natural resources in coastal San Mateo County. Kellyx Nelson, the RCD's Executive Director, said, "We are thrilled that funding has become available to assist landowners with critical resource protection in our region. Like everyone else, we have felt the pinch of the economy these last few years. We are hopeful that this is an indication of better times just around the corner."

The Fisheries Restoration Grant Program of the California Department of Fish and Game awarded \$245,550 to the RCD for the San Gregorio Watershed Enhancement Program to enhance the survival of rare and endangered fish, including coho salmon, steelhead trout, and tidewater gobies. The watershed is a state and federal conservation priority and is identified as a focus watershed for recovery of the critically endangered species in the Draft Recovery Plan for Central California Coast Coho Salmon released by the National Marine Fisheries Service in 2010. The project is a partnership of the RCD, local landowners, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, American Rivers, San Gregorio Environmental Resource Center, and others.

An agreement with Caltrans for \$575,000 will mitigate for impacts to habitat for the endangered San Francisco garter snake and threatened California red-legged frog from construction to seismically retrofit a section of Highway 101. Under this agreement, the RCD will assist Peninsula Open Space Trust in their longstanding efforts to enhance habitat on their 5,777-acre Cloverdale Coastal Ranches property in Pescadero. This project will repair nine ponds and improve their habitat value for the snake, the frog, and other wildlife.

An agreement between the RCD and the County will provide \$500,000 to help landowners reduce pollution entering the James V. Fitzgerald Marine Reserve by improving erosion and sediment control and managing stormwater runoff.. These funds are part of a grant awarded to the County under California State Proposition 84 to improve water quality entering Areas of Special Biological Significance, those areas designated by the State for special water quality protection for marine life. The Reserve, which lies within the boundaries of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, is one of the richest intertidal areas on the California coast and is home to a plethora of marine life.

During the Board meeting, staff presented the final report concluding a 5-year effort to improve water conservation and the quality of water in runoff from agricultural lands. The \$1,010,615 initiative was completed in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, San Mateo County Farm Bureau, and 20 farms in coastal San Mateo County.