



# CRC Ag Producers Working Group Meeting Notes

December 6, 2022  
In person & via Zoom Meeting

## In Attendance

Jessica Anderson  
Devere Dressler, Ace Hereford Ranch  
Joe Frey, Rambling River Ranches  
Shane Fryer, CWSD  
Valerie Gordon, Ace Hereford Ranch  
Brenda Hunt, CWSD  
Ed James, CWSD  
Skylar Jones, NDA  
Rachel Kiefer, AWG  
Lori Leonard, TNC  
Wendy Loomis, WTDC

Kelly Nicholas, AmeriCorps  
Karen Nichols  
Nik Noomen, Wild Harmony Ranch  
Nancy Ogden, Ogan Family Farm  
Laurel Saito, TNC  
Catrina Schambra, CWSD  
Chuck Schembre, NDEP  
Christy Sullivan, LCD  
Cassi Uhart  
Rich Wilkinson, CVCD  
Woody Worthington, NVFB

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## Welcome & Introductions

This being the inaugural meeting, introductions included recalling the first seed you ever planted, or your first job and how you still use something you learned, and a brief statement of current agricultural producer role.

## Why are we meeting? Why form a Carson River Coalition Agricultural Producers Working Group?

Brenda Hunt explained the Carson River Coalition (CRC) program and its many working groups: Education & Outreach, Floodplain Management, Invasive Species Weed Management and now, the Agricultural Producers Working Group. CWSD is excited to put this group together to share, collaborate and network throughout the watershed to all help each other in our efforts to improve water quality and overall watershed health.

## What's the connection between Soil Health and Water Quality?

Water quality, soil health and floodplain management are all interconnected and to be able to have all facets working together and sharing ideas has long been a goal of the CWSD.

Nik, Wild Harmony Ranch, is a regenerative farmer and wants to meet others interested in creating a healthy clean environment. Regenerative landscaping and nourishing food are his passions. His ranch is right on the river so he would like to floodproof his property as much as possible. He is happy to meet like-minded individuals.

Woody Worthington, NV Farm Bureau, said he is excited to see all the producers that are attending. Biodiversity and regenerative ag is his interest. If anyone is interested in talking his contact is [woody@nvfb.org](mailto:woody@nvfb.org).

Joe Frey, Western States Hemp, stated his passion is soil health and how regenerative ag can benefit the watershed. He would like to open his farm up to be an educational center. Education on the watershed and agriculture is so important!

Jessica Anderson, local Beef Ambassador, said as a first-generation farmer, she sees a disconnect between producers and the community. The Ag community coming together is great!

Chuck Schembre, NDEP, feels he brings a global perspective. He is passionate about healthy soils in agriculture. His life quest is to reduce degradation of soil. Nevada needs more soil education. Winter cover crops, regenerative ag, etc. needs to be taught in this area.

The CRC was founded in 1998 using a 208 grant to fund the forming of this coalition. CWSD has a facilitation function for the CRC. These are guiding principles of all the working groups from the Carson River Watershed Stewardship Plan:

## 2.6 Guiding Principles

**Table 2.6-1: Carson River Watershed Guiding Principles**

Main Theme	Guiding Principle	Why is Principle Included?	How Might it be Implemented?
Property rights, overall quality of life	1. Manage the water resources for economic sustainability, quality of life, and protection of private and public property rights.	Program will respect basic property rights.	Water projects & programs implemented within the confines of the Alpine Decree
Work with the river's natural processes not against them	2. Acknowledge and respect the watershed's natural processes in land use decisions.	Must look at solutions over the long term, not on a short-term basis.	Encourage preservation of open space in floodplain, possibly through easement dedication or acquisition.
Water Quality	3. Maintain or improve the quality of the water to support a variety of beneficial uses.	Water Quality protection is critical to all uses on the river.	Implement erosion control programs to reduce sediment and chemical load to the river.
Alpine County portions of the watershed	4. Protect the headwaters region as the system's principal water source.	The lands in Alpine County that drain into the river supply over 80% of the total water.	In conjunction with Alpine County, work with federal agencies to ensure that land use plans protect land's water holding/snow storage capability.
Inclusion of all stakeholders in plan	5. Recognize and respect that interests of all stakeholders upstream and downstream by fostering collaborative and mutually respectful relationships.	With implementation of watershed planning, we must consider concerns of all stakeholders.	Work to include all stakeholders in the process; hold open forum meetings; ask for input
Floodplain Protection	6. Maintain the riverine and alluvial fan floodplains of the Carson River Watershed to accommodate flood events.	Floodplains are critical to the river's normal functions, including flood protection and recharge.	Work with local planners to reduce development burden within the river and alluvial fan floodplains.
Integrated land management	7. Protect and manage uplands, mountain ranges, wetlands, and riparian areas to enhance the quality of surface flow, groundwater recharge, and wildlife habitat.	Lands surrounding the river perform important functions for the long-term health of the watershed.	Work with major landholders (federal agencies) and resource agencies to promote the quality of natural areas.
Water Conservation	8. Promote conservation of water from all sectors of the community's water users for the benefit of municipal, industrial, agricultural, domestic, recreational, and natural resources.	We need to be aware of how water can be conserved.	Develop water conservation programs that raise awareness about water consumption.
Open Space Preservation; growth management	9. Encourage management of growth that considers water quality and quantity; open space preservation, and maintenance of agriculture in floodplains.	Growth and development have the single largest impact on the watershed. Must be planned for carefully.	Bring local planners into process.
Recreation access opportunities	10. Protect and support opportunities for public recreational access to natural areas throughout the watershed, including the river corridor, where appropriate.	People need opportunities to enjoy the resources within the watershed.	Work with local agencies and landowners to develop recreational access through voluntary programs.
Education and public information	11. Promote understanding and awareness of watershed resources and issues through cooperative education efforts throughout the watershed.	The more people understand, the more they have the ability to appreciate and act responsibly.	Promote existing educational programs & develop new ones to reach all portions of the watershed.

Chuck Schembre explained that to capture, irrigate and hold the water means growers see a change in the first year. Soil health is a tool to solve a lot of problems on land. Pollution from erosion of soil in

our water is the #1 source of pollution. Joe Frey said that he could tell by sight that his water was cleaner going into the river after his first year.

Brenda Hunt mentioned that we will need to work on a Mission Statement, Purpose and Vision for this working group. Ed James said that CWSD can apply for grants to fund ideas brought forth by this group.

Nik, Wild Harmony Ranch, wants to open his ranch to the community. It is critical to get lay people out to the ranch to learn hands on. Then what we learn, we want to share. Lori Leonard agrees that field days are powerful learning tools. Christy Sullivan from Lahontan Conservation District adds having the younger generation included is a must. Woody Worthington thinks community outreach and education is so important! The Joe Frey workshop was phenomenal. We need more events like that. He believes new farmers coming into the area need guidance.

Valerie Gordon, Alpine County rancher, said the riparian flood zone is being eroded. Everyone here today is on the same page, but the community needs to be educated. What are we going to do to move the bar and getting beyond preaching to the choir? **(Note: Hoping we can address this head on during our next meeting when we discuss the mission, vision and purpose to see what this group wants to achieve).**

Chuck Schembre, NDEP, asks what are our main topics we want to discuss? Consensus was Soil Health and technical assistance, and to promote Ag as a good land use in the watershed.

Joe Frey, Western States Hemp, wants to keep floodplains as open space. He suggests education of Boards of municipalities, pursuing conservation easement money and community education.

Brenda Hunt mentions that there is a Floodplain Management Plan that all counties have signed onto. Valerie Gordon, Alpine County rancher, said wildlife is not mentioned much in the CRC Guiding Principles so we should address this with our work. She suggests we promote Ag with a balance to health of the whole river system.

## What Funding Opportunities are available?

Producer funding comes from NRCS and CWSD can't access that funding, producers must apply themselves. CWSD will be researching more into that funding opportunities so we can help/collaborate with local producers to get some on-the-ground projects and educational efforts underway. There is a lot of funding becoming available for Soil Health and Regenerative Ag.

CWSD, NDEP and NRCS is collaborating to obtain NRCS National Water Quality Initiative Funding for the four HUC 12 watersheds in the Carson Valley. It is hoped in the future that this funding then can be obtained watershed wide.

NDEP has US EPA Clean Water Act Section 319(h) funding for non-point pollution. This funding focuses on-the-ground projects and water quality enhancement work that is consistent with the NV State Management Plan. The next round of funding is August/September 2023.

The infrastructure Bill may have funding available for protecting riparian habitats and Outreach & Education.

Chuck Schembre says that he sits on the Western SARE Board (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) which has funding available and its programs are flexible. Up to 3 producers can work together on each grant.

The USDA is posting lots of Federal funding opportunities under its Climate Smart grant program. "Climate Smart Ag" is the government term.

Laurel Saito stated Conserve Nevada may be an option, especially for conservation easements or enhancing riparian/floodplain areas and habitat.

## Group Discussion:

Chuck mentioned that he has been asked to speak along with Joe Frey and Nik Noomen, at an NRCS National Webinar on December 21, 2022. This is a national level conversation and he can send a link to whoever may be interested. He wants to be a networker and bridge to Nevada producers to get into these national conversations. **(Note: Brenda Sent out a link to the workshop. The workshop was recorded and will be available soon).**

Rich Wilkerson, CVCD, says this group is exciting and he looks forward to working together! NFWF funded a large scale no-till drill seeding project for DVCD in Dayton Valley a few years ago.

Karen Nichols is a new orchard rancher on the Carson River and is so glad to be here and part of this group!

Chuck Schembre suggests arranging a workshop: Conservation & Regenerative Ag in the Watershed. He also asks if anyone is working on cover crops to please contact him. He is writing a white paper on this and wants local data.

Shane Fryer announced the Invasive Species Weed Group is meeting December 12, 1-4pm in the Ormsby Room at the Sheriff's Department. There will be lots of presenters and all are invited to attend. Nik from Wild Harmony Ranch says goats are his go to for weeds. Christy Sullivan suggests mapping would really help this area. Nik says he is studying Canadian Thistle that he has been constantly battling. He is looking at amending his soil to limit the thistle.

Brenda mentioned that CWSD is applying in Fall 2023 for a Conserve Nevada grant for the Carson River Watershed Geomorphology and Sediment Transport Study and Plan. AWG is applying for 319 Funding in CA to complete a Geomorphology Assessment of the West Fork. Brenda also noted NFWF has multiple funding sources available.

Discussion on when to meet resulted in folks wanting to meet in late January to not lose momentum and avoid being swamped with Spring tasks. Brenda will send out a Doodle Poll with the meeting notes soon.

Adjourned at 3:28.