



Connections

October 2008

El Dorado Ag Tour Oct. 24

SACOG will lead the third tour of agricultural and open space lands on Friday, **October 24** in El Dorado County.



Looking at the challenges and opportunities in our rural communities, the tour will feature agriculture, eco-tourism and agritourism site visits, and presentations from residents, staff, local growers, activists and elected officials.

The SACOG Board meeting will be at 9 a.m. at the Apple Mountain Golf Resort in Camino, followed by the tour starting at 10:30 a.m.

Next month, a tour is set for Placer County on Thursday, **November 13**.

You Are *Where* You Eat

Are you a “locavore”? The term was coined in 2005 by a group of women in San Francisco promoting eating only food grown or produced within a 100-mile radius. The term has become so popular that last year it was the New Oxford American Dictionary’s Word of the Year. The “buy local” movement appears to be gaining momentum as consumers, businesses and institutions seek local sources of food from farmers’ markets, CSAs, restaurant menus and local grocers. Kaiser Permanente and Grant High School, for example, are bringing local food into school kitchens and educating students about where their food comes from and how to prepare it.

SACOG has partnered with Valley Vision and Agriculture in Metropolitan Regions (AMR) to conduct a Local Market Assessment for the Sacramento region.

Stakeholder interviews combined with quantitative data will result in a detailed report showing opportunities and challenges to increasing local consumption of local produce, expanding local markets and distribution networks, and supporting agritourism and diversified, multifunctional agriculture. The assessment will also involve studying the current status of each of these areas, including information on dietary patterns and consumer spending on food, local marketing efforts, and the basic characteristics of a diversified farm. This research will help public and private interests develop strategies that will enhance access to the abundance of locally-grown food.

To find out more about buying fresh and local, visit the Community Alliance with Family Farmers website at www.caff.org.

Yolo County Tour Highlights

On **September 18**, over 60 elected officials, staff and community members from across the six-county region toured Yolo County’s rural lands and several types of agriculture operations.

SACOG Board Vice Chair and Yolo County Supervisor Helen Thomson and UC Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Dean Neal Van Alfen introduced the group to the challenges and opportunities in the county.

Mariani Nut Company, one of the largest nut processors in the region, was the first stop on the tour. Winters Councilmember Harold Anderson gave an overview of the downtown community design project as well as goods movement and traffic issues impacting this rural city.



Many conservation efforts are underway in the county, including private habitat enhancement on agricultural lands such as the Yolo Land & Cattle Company and the Yolo Natural Heritage Program.

The tour also visited Esparto and Woodland, looking at the transportation

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Yolo Tour (continued)

and economic development challenges facing communities of all sizes, and how smart growth developments are bringing jobs, housing and services closer together.

A trip to Yolo County is not complete without some local produce. During a stop at Durst Organic Growers, Georgeanne Brennan, a Slow Food advocate and author, and Yolo County Agricultural Commissioner Rick Landon discussed the policies and programs that have kept agriculture sustainable.

The tour ended with an overview of rural road safety and maintenance issues, and strategies to increase safety and provide transportation options, such as the Woodland-Davis Alternative Transportation Corridor.



Project Contacts

David Shabazian
Project Manager
(916) 340-6231
dshabazian@sacog.org

Monica Hernández
Tours & Meetings
(916) 340-6237
mhernandez@sacog.org

Erik Johnson
Publications
(916) 340-6247
ejohnson@sacog.org

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Placer County Conservation Plan Passes

The Placer County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved furtherance of the Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP) on **September 23**, and in doing so brought front-and-center the debate of how an environmentally superior solution that ensures the economic viability of all participating entities can be reached.

SACOG staff and Stacey McKinley, the regulatory consultant for the RUCS project, have been engaged over the last several months in the PCCP effort, seeking a strong connection to the Sacramento region's Blueprint, pursuit of the best possible data, and a winning solution for all SACOG member jurisdictions and partners in Placer County.

Continued involvement in the PCCP process will not only benefit the interests of cities and counties throughout the region, but will inform the linkage of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) and

Special Area Management Plans (SAMPs) across the region, and establish the framework for substantive regulatory reform.

Two days after the affirmative vote for the PCCP, McKinley and SACOG Executive Director Mike McKeever were in Washington, D.C. meeting with top officials at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. They briefed Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) John Woodley, and his top deputy, Chip Smith, on the action taken on the PCCP and updated them on the RUCS project.

Secretary Woodley reaffirmed both policy and fiscal support for these efforts in the Sacramento region. Smith will be visiting the region on **October 23**, where he hopes to meet with SACOG Board members, receive a full briefing on the RUCS projects and HCPs/SAMPs, and to tour some key sites in the region.

Land Use Workshop

On **September 29**, SACOG held a land use workshop—the first RUCS workshop. Stakeholders from across the six-county region helped gather information on current rural land use policies and conditions in the region.

Participants included land use and transportation planners, agriculture commissioners, and representatives from resource conservation agencies, local agency formation commissions, farm bureaus, and various other advocacy and conservation groups.

SACOG staff presented its research on current conditions in the rural areas of the region and then participants grouped by county identified two study areas: one with rural character and another with urban character.

In the innovations phase—the next phase for the land use working group—these study areas will be used

For more about land use:

The Land Use Working Group has developed a working paper looking at current policies and plans. To read about the issues and comment, visit www.sacog.org/rucs and select RUCS Wiki.

by SACOG to research land use policies being implemented in the region and the effectiveness of them to preserve agriculture and rural character.

SACOG staff will conduct research throughout October and will host a second land use workshop in November to present the findings of the innovations research and develop implementation ideas.

For more information contact Kacey Lizon at klizon@sacog.org.