



Central Coast Soil Hub Newsletter

Spring 2026

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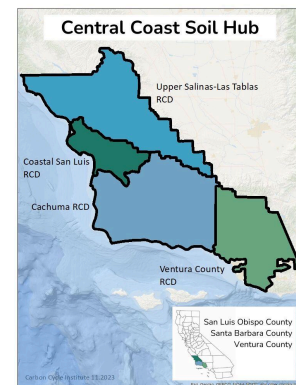
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- Ag Resources 101 Event

[Click here to view all of the flyers and resources referenced in this edition of the newsletter](#)

Regional Updates

The Central Coast Soil Hub spans three counties and includes four Resource Conservation Districts. The following updates are relevant to farmers, ranchers, and other land managers throughout this entire region.



Resources for Ranchers and Graziers

RANCHER-TO-RANCHER AND THE CENTRAL COAST SOIL HUB PRESENT **GRAZING THROUGH THE DORMANT SEASON**



Friday, April 24th, 2026
From 9am-4pm
Santa Rita Ranch
3520 Old Creek Rd
Templeton, CA 93465

The Central Coast Soil Hub invites you to join the Rancher-to-Rancher team at the Santa Rita Ranch to connect with fellow ranchers and land managers, discuss challenges and opportunities of ranching, and engage in soil health demonstrations. We'll focus our discussion on managing through the dormant season. Participants will be encouraged to share their experiences and strategies, as well as successes and lessons learned. Bring your questions and curiosity.

We welcome participants from San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and neighboring counties!

Coffee, snacks, and water will be provided - please bring a **lunch and reusable water bottle** and a camp chair. We plan to be outside as much as possible, so plan accordingly.

After the event concludes, there will be an optional dinner from 4:00-6:00, provided by our partners **Grassroots Carbon**. This will be a great chance to get to know your fellow ranchers and discuss questions and lessons learned from earlier in the day.

Register today for Free!

<https://SantaRitaR2R.eventbrite.com>

Please Register by April 20th

For more information, please contact Grant Johnson at gjohnson@coastalrcd.org



THE LAND
CONSERVANCY
of San Luis Obispo County



CENTRAL COAST SOIL HUB
COASTAL SAN LUIS
UPPER SALINAS-LAS TABLAS
CACHUMA
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Grassroots
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Carbon
coalition

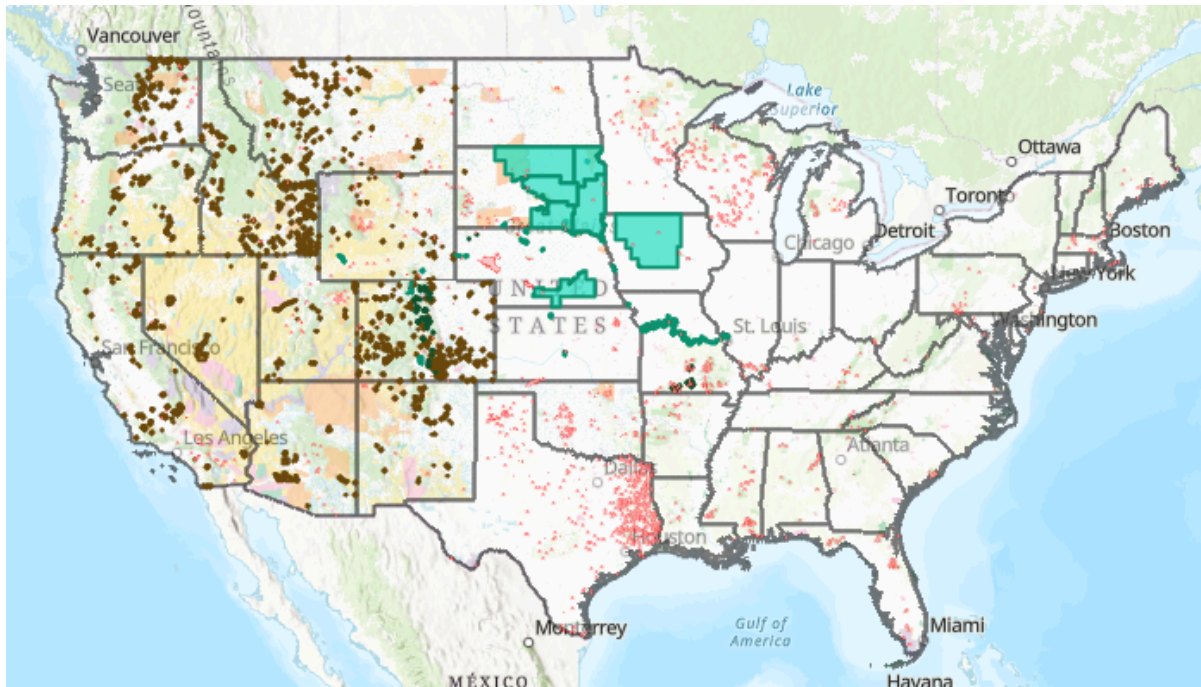
Rancher-to-Rancher: Santa Rita Ranch

April 24th, 9:00-4:00, Templeton

The [Coastal San Luis RCD](#) and the [Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County](#) invite ranchers and rangeland managers to join the Rancher-to-Rancher team at the Santa Rita Ranch to connect with fellow ranchers and land managers, discuss challenges and opportunities of ranching, and engage in soil health demonstrations. We'll focus on strategies for grazing through the dormant season, with pasture walks and breakout groups to share experiences and lessons learned.

There will be an optional dinner after the event, provided by [Grassroots Carbon](#).

[Click here to learn more and register.](#)



BLM Releases New Grazing Allotment Tool

Interactive Map of Federal Grazing Lands Potentially Available

The BLM recently released a new, interactive online map designed to help ranchers identify federal grazing lands that may be available for lease. You can view land managed by the BLM, USFWS, and USFS. Clicking on the parcels on the map will show available acres, contact information, and other relevant details.

[Click here to visit the map.](#)

Other Upcoming Rangeland Events

Healthy Soils Program Field Day

May 2nd, 8:30-12:00, Ted K. Martin Preserve, Clovis

The Sierra Foothill Conservancy is hosting a field day focused on rangeland compost applications through the Healthy Soils Program. The theme of the day is "Rangeland Health: Drought Resilience and Financial Stability Through Soil Health Practices." This participatory learning experience will include field visits of stewardship practice sites as well as presentations by SFC, UCCE, Point Blue Conservation Sciences, and Sierra RCD to assist producers in applying rangeland improvement practices on their own operations.

[Click here for registration and more information](#)

Reading the Land: Monitoring Soil, Water, and Biodiversity

\$475 - May 2nd-3rd, 9:00-4:00, Jalama Canyon Ranch, Lompoc

White Buffalo Land Trust is hosting a 2-day Ecological Monitoring Course this May at Jalama Canyon Ranch. This immersive course equips farmers, ranchers, conservation professionals, and agricultural practitioners with practical ecological monitoring tools that inform real-world land management decisions.

[Click here for registration and more information](#)

Rural Roads Workshop

June 9, 2026, San Luis Obispo

Coastal San Luis RCD, in partnership with Pacific Watershed Associates, will host a Rural Roads Workshop on June 9, 2026. This full-day workshop will focus on practical approaches to improving and maintaining rural dirt roads.

Participants will learn about best management practices for upgrading or maintaining rural roads, how to identify erosion and drainage issues caused by roads, and potential treatment options. These practices can help improve road performance during wet conditions, reduce ongoing maintenance needs, and limit potential sediment delivery impacts to nearby waterways.

The Rural Roads Workshop will include a morning presentation and an afternoon field tour of a completed project on a Cal Poly rangeland road and a site prior to treatment, using progressive methodologies from PWA's *Handbook for Forest, Ranch, and Rural Roads: A Guide for Planning, Designing, Constructing, Reconstructing, Upgrading, Maintaining and Closing Wildland Roads*. (<https://www.pacificwatershed.com/roadshandbook>).

Email hbarnes@coastalrcd.org to be notified when registration opens.

Resources for Specialty Crop and Organic Growers

New Cover Crop Species Selector Tool

The Western Cover Crops Council recently announced the release of the [Cover Crop Selector](#) online tool. This free tool allows growers to get customized cover crop recommendations that fit their location, cash crop, and production goals.

USDA Farm Service Agency Funding Available

Second Stage of Crop Disaster Assistance

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is now accepting applications for assistance through the second stage of the Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP) from agricultural producers who suffered eligible non-indemnified, uncovered or quality crop losses due to qualifying natural disasters in 2023 and 2024.

Stage Two covers eligible crop, tree, bush and vine losses that were not covered under Stage One program provisions, including non-indemnified (shallow loss), uncovered and quality losses. Stage One assistance, announced in July, remains available to producers who received an indemnity under crop insurance or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for eligible crop losses due to qualifying 2023 and 2024 natural disaster events.

The deadline to apply for both Stage One and Stage Two assistance is April 30, 2026.

Learn more about the program [HERE](#)

Farmer Bridge Payments

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has opened the enrollment period for the Farmer Bridge Assistance (FBA) program, providing \$11 billion in one-time bridge payments to row crop producers in response to temporary trade market disruptions and increased production costs. The FBA enrollment period opened Feb. 23 and closes April 17, 2026.

Pre-filled applications will be available online to producers with a Login.gov account who timely filed their 2025 crop acreage report for eligible commodities. Producers who have a Login.gov account can access and submit their pre-filled application from fsa.usda.gov/fba. Additionally, producers can also request their pre-filled FBA application from their FSA county office.

Free Soil Tests Available Through SHAPE Project

A new public–private partnership aimed at improving how soil health informs management decisions is underway in the United States. The project, “Probing Our Country’s Soil Health,” is currently seeking farmers and ranchers to participate. Landowners who take part will receive compensation for approximately one hour of their time, a personalized soil health report for their fields (with lab work valued at about \$1,200 per field at no cost), and a complimentary hard-copy photo book titled *Probing Our Country’s Soil Health*, which highlights soil conditions and project outcomes nationwide.

Participation involves signing up for a one-hour Zoom meeting to complete a management survey for two or three fields, and later granting access for hand-probe soil sampling at two or three sites per field (typically conducted 3–6 months after the survey, with advance notice). If you’re interested, you can enroll by scheduling an appointment through this [booking link](#).

Opportunity for Free Compost for EQIP-Eligible Growers

The **U.S. Composting Council** and **PhD Soil Scientist, Jessica Chiartas**, are investigating the impacts of **compost use** on **soil health**, **crop yield**, and **profitability** in California orchards and croplands. They are looking for EQIP eligible growers who produce broccoli or strawberries to participate in on-farm trials.

Each trial site would include 4-6 treatments or application rates (i.e. 0, 2, 4, 6, and 8 tons/acre), replicated 3 times. Each treatment plot can be up to 0.5 acre, can be situated on either a single or multiple rows, and can run the length of the row or be divided across (see potential designs in attachment). Growers receive up to \$20,000 in compost, full

technical assistance over the life of the project, and extensive soil health testing on trial fields. If you are interested in participating, please reach out to [Jessica Chiartas](#).

New Energy Savings Program from SoCalREN

Introducing the SoCalREN Agriculture Sector Programs, a new initiative tailored to help small, rural, and underserved agricultural communities in Southern California save on energy costs. Its main goal is to promote and implement affordable energy efficiency upgrades by implementing cost-effective energy efficiency projects, making energy efficiency expertise accessible and available, and integrating energy efficiency as a standard business practice for Agriculture customers.

The initiative consists of:

- **Agricultural Project Delivery Program:** Comprehensive project management, technical services and financial solutions for energy efficiency projects.
- **Rural-HTR Agricultural Direct Install Program:** No-cost energy efficiency upgrades for small and medium agricultural customers in disadvantaged communities.
- **Agriculture Retrofit Program:** Deep energy retrofits with technical assistance and financial incentives, including well pump and boost pump variable frequency drives, steam and process boilers, and greenhouse heat curtains and IR film.

Interested in enrolling? Reach out at: agriculture@socalren.org or 213-312-1702

Organic Resource Database from UC Organic Ag Institute

The UC OAI Organic Resource Database is a tool for you to connect with organizations or individuals in your region and across the state that offer a range of activities - from technical, financial and other forms of assistance to applied research for organic agriculture. [Click here](#) to view the database and start searching for local resources.

San Luis Obispo County

Earth Day Celebration at Willow Creek Conservancy

Join the Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District for a fun and relaxed **Earth Day Celebration** on **April 25, 2026 at 10:00 AM!** It's a great chance to connect with nature, meet like-minded people, and directly engage in environmental restoration. Whether you're passionate about the environment or just want to have a good time outdoors, this event is for you. Bring your friends and let's make a positive impact together! [Learn more and register here.](#)

Registration open for Cuesta College Ranch Education classes

Registration is now open for the Cuesta College Ranch Education Classes (you can register up to the day of classes).

June 20- July 25 in person on Saturdays, taught by Nic Moss

VOCE 565E INTRODUCTION TO RANCH/TARGETED GRAZING BUSINESS

Provides students with an introduction to basic business practices relating to ranch /and or targeted grazing enterprises. Students will identify requirements for a business plan, contract and legal options, cost estimation and price setting for services, insurance costs, advertising and public relations programs.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

Pollinator Habitat Planting Party

May 16th, 9:00-12:30, Tomorro Farm, San Luis Obispo

Help native bees and birds thrive—join the Coastal San Luis RCD on May 16th to plant pollinator-friendly flowers and trees! This hands-on, community workshop will focus on hedgerows and other soil health practices that support healthy, productive agricultural lands. Learn how these practices benefit local farmers, improve soil and water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat.

Participants will have the opportunity to plant a hedgerow while connecting with community members engaged in sustainable agriculture and land stewardship. Light breakfast pastries, snacks, and coffee will be provided.

[Learn more and register here](#), or email CSLRCD's Sustainable Agriculture Project Manager at rravarra@coastalrkd.org.

POLLINATOR HABITAT PLANTING PARTY



MAY 16

Saturday, 9 to 12:30

@ Tomorro Farm

*Hedgerow Planting Workshop and
Community Volunteer Day hosted by*



Scan the QR code to learn more & sign up, or email rravarra@coastalrcd.org!

Cuesta College Offers Sustainable Water Infrastructure Classes

Cuesta College will be hosting two Community Program classes with Sara Sternberg, a Restoration Hydrologist with Creeklands Conservation. These hands-on courses introduce students to the principles and practices of sustainable water management through landscape rehydration and rainwater catchment systems.

Sustainable Water Infrastructure: Rehydrating Landscapes

\$90 - May 9th, 9:00-4:00, Cuesta College SLO Campus

This hands-on course introduces students to the principles and practices of sustainable water management through landscape rehydration. Participants will learn how swales, rehydration basins, and keyline design can slow, spread, and sink water to restore

ecological function, improve soil health, and increase groundwater recharge. Emphasis will be placed on practical skills, including reading the landscape, laying out contour lines, and using simple tools to shape landforms that capture and store water. The class culminates with a field-based project at Cuesta's ranch, where students will work together to dig a swale on contour and directly apply the concepts covered in class. [Register here](#).

Sustainable Water Infrastructure: Rainwater Catchment

\$100 - May 16th, 9:00-5:00, Cuesta College SLO Campus

This course explores the principles and practices of capturing and storing rainwater as a sustainable water source. Students will learn how to design and size rainwater catchment systems, including roof collection, conveyance, storage, and basic filtration. The class emphasizes both theory and practice: participants will first study the fundamentals of system design, then work collaboratively to install a functional rainwater catchment system on the Cuesta campus. [Register here](#).

City Farm SLO Community Events and Programs

- [Sheep Shearing Shindig - May 9th, 12:00-4:00](#)
- Applications open for [Youth Empowerment Program](#) - June 15-25th
- Enrollment open for [Junior Farmers After School Programs](#) - April - July

Ventura County

Agricultural Resources 101 Event

April 30th, 9:00-1:00, Oxnard or Virtual

The Ventura County RCD invites you to join the annual "Agricultural Resources 101" event. Hear presentations with Q&A from organizations serving agricultural producers in Ventura County, learn more during the tabling session, and network with producers in the area. Refreshments and light food provided.

Presenters include Ventura County Resource Conservation District, Farm Bureau, UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service!

[Register in person here](#) or [register for the virtual option here](#). Questions? Contact cristina.czochanski@vcrd.org

Find Funding Opportunities with the Farmer Funding Database

The [Farmer Funding Database](#) is now available from the Central Coast Soil Hub! This document lists funding opportunities for farmers and ranchers on the Central Coast and will be updated periodically as new opportunities become available. Funding opportunities include project planning and implementation, infrastructure and equipment purchases, educational scholarships, and more.

OPEN NOW:

- **New Producer Grant** from AgWest Farm Credit - up to \$15,000 awarded as start-up funds for new producers. Application deadline: May 31st.
- **Seeds for Bees** program from Project *Apis m.* - up to \$2,500 in free cover crop seeds. Apply by Aug. 31st.

We Want to Hear From You!

The Central Coast Soil Hub was created to serve the local agriculture community and to support resilient and sustainable agricultural operations. To do this well, we need to know what farmers and ranchers in the Central Coast *actually* want and need. We are conducting a survey to understand how we can best meet the needs of all agricultural producers on the Central Coast. This survey is anonymous, so please answer honestly.

[Take the Survey Here.](#)

Thank you for your participation and feedback!

[Click here to view all of the flyers and resources referenced in this edition of the newsletter](#)

[Click here to subscribe to future editions of the Central Coast Soil Hub Newsletter](#)

Thank You For Reading

If you have suggestions for what to include in future editions of the newsletter, please reach out and let us know! If you would like to learn more about the Central Coast Soil Hub, [visit our webpage here](#). Thank you!

Questions? Email the Hub Coordinator, Joshua Kouri: josh@coastalrcd.org

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