

Sustainable Conservation

Newsletter

Fall 2002

The Future of Sustainable Conservation

This September, the United Nations convened the Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa. At the summit, political leaders, leading scientists, and economists developed plans to address the world's growing population, shrinking supply of natural resources, and deteriorating soil, water and forests. This summit was the continuation of a global dialogue that began at the UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the same year that Sustainable Conservation was founded.

In the past decade, Sustainable Conservation has achieved notable successes and raised awareness of some of California's most critical environmental problems. We have more challenges ahead of us, however. In this issue of our newsletter we will share our plans for the future: to increase the impact of our work and share the knowledge we have gained from working with others to improve the environment.

The organizers of the UN Summit in Johannesburg spoke of the need to create partnerships between the action and dynamism of local-level nonprofit organizations, the resources of corporations, and the commitments of governments. That's a lesson that Sustainable Conservation has already learned, as our approach relies on bringing together business, government, and other environmental organizations. These partnerships add credibility to our work and enhance our capacity to implement solutions. In the coming years, we look forward to expanding our network of partners and continuing to produce measurable results for the environment.

To guide us in these efforts, the Board and staff of Sustainable Conservation have been developing a Strategic Plan for our growth in the next five years. In the past year, we gained valuable information to guide this process by talking with regulators, funders, environmentalists and others about emerging issues and growing trends in conservation, business, and government.

As part of our planning for the future, we wanted to develop a new brand identity that will promote our mission and programs to a wider audience. Through a grant from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Sustainable Conservation has begun to work on this exciting, creative process that will result in a new "look" to our logo and our publications.

Our plans are ambitious, and will require a tremendous commitment of time and resources if we are to succeed. Your support will be more important than ever before as Sustainable Conservation embarks upon our plan to take up new, larger projects and intensify our existing efforts.

I look forward to sharing our progress with you in future newsletters.

Ashley Boren
Executive Director

Our Mission

Sustainable Conservation advances the stewardship of natural resources using innovative and pragmatic strategies that actively engage businesses and private landowners in conservation.

Wetlands Report

With only 9% of California's natural wetlands remaining, which create food and shelter for wildlife, Sustainable Conservation wanted to take on a project to increase these critical ecosystems. Wetlands in California are extraordinarily dynamic and complex, filling a diversity of purposes and harboring a wealth of wildlife. Constructed wetlands are a way to treat contaminated wastewater while simultaneously providing habitat for wildlife.

So, why is this exciting technology not widely utilized by industrial sources of wastewater, such as produce processors, vineyards, and dairy farmers? That is what Suscon wanted to find out. After studying a variety of constructed wetlands in other locations, SusCon found economic, technical and regulatory barriers to using this technology. We also discovered that industries were willing to consider constructing wetlands once they learned of their many advantages and knew how to overcome these barriers. The report, *Wastewater to Wetlands: Opportunities for California Agriculture*, is now available at www.suscon.org.

Welcome!

We are pleased to welcome Janet Foster as our new Development and Communications Manager. She comes to Sustainable Conservation with a strong background in fundraising and writing, having worked for such organizations as The Women's Building, Forests Forever, Working Assets and Swords to Plowshares.

Originally from Utah, Janet studied French literature and English at Scripps College in Claremont before moving to the Bay Area. Janet is very excited to join SusCon's team and to apply her skills to support our goals and programs.

On Board

Chuck Ahlem

Chuck Ahlem is a lifetime resident of California's Central Valley, and he's been one of the region's most active and prominent advocates for many years. As of September, he's also one of Sustainable Conservation's two new Board members.

After graduating from California State University at Fresno, Chuck began his own farming operation, and still farms 500 acres. Chuck is also the owner/operator of Charles Ahlem Ranch, a 2,000 cow, Grade-A Jersey dairy—which he began in 1975 with just 100 cows. In 1984, Chuck became one of the Founding Partners in the Hilmar Cheese Company—which accepts milk from nearly 250 California dairies and is the largest single-site cheese plant in the world, producing up to 1,000,000 pounds of cheese every day.

Chuck has also found the time to serve on the California Dairy Council, California Dairy Quality Assurance Program, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, the University of California President's Advisory Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, and many other state and local agricultural groups. Chuck is also a member of the US Department of Agriculture's Trade Policy Committee. With all of this, it's no wonder Chuck wanted to gain his Pilot's License—he now flies to many of his meetings!

Chuck has often spoken about his desire to bring care and concern for the environment to a higher level among his fellow dairy farmers. Now, through his work with Sustainable Conservation, Chuck will be able to share his passion for the environment with business and agricultural leaders throughout California.

Stan Van Vleck

Stanley Van Vleck is our other new Board Member, having joined Sustainable Conservation at its September meeting, but the agricultural issues Sustainable Conservation addresses are nothing new to him. Stan is a partner in the law firm of Kahn, Soares and Conway, LLP. Kahn, Soares & Conway is widely recognized as one of the leading governmental advocacy firms in California with particular focus on agriculture.

Stan earned his Juris Doctor Degree from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law and his Bachelor of Science Degree from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, California. Stan is also a graduate of the California Agricultural Leadership Fellowship Program, which provides two years of extensive training in the areas of communication, economics, government and international studies. During his fellowship he traveled to and worked with dignitaries from China, Iran, Mexico, Tibet, and Uzbekistan.

In addition to his law practice, Stan and his wife Nicole co-manage their families' two commercial cattle ranching operations in Rancho Murieta, California and a rice farming operation in Yuba City, California. Stan is a board member for the California Cattlemen's State Association, and the Amador, El Dorado and Sacramento Counties Regional Cattlemen's Association.

When asked about joining the Board, Stan said, "Sustainable Conservation builds partnerships that make sense. I was eager to become involved with an organization that creates 'win-win' opportunities for agriculture and the environment and understands that California is about more than one region or one industry. Only by working together will we be able to preserve the environment we all share."

You Can Support Sustainable Conservation!

Sustainable Conservation is committed to building collaborations that work to solve critical environmental problems. Using innovative strategies that engage businesses and private landowners, Sustainable Conservation advances the stewardship of natural resources.

We welcome inquiries from individuals, foundations, and corporations interested in supporting our efforts. For more information on how to make a contribution or to learn more about our mission and programs, please contact:

Sarah Beth Lardie
Sustainable Conservation
121 Second Street, Sixth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
SBLardie@suscon.org
(415) 977-0380, Ext. 305

Sustainable Conservation has been designated a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization by the United States Internal Revenue Service. Your gift is tax-deductible as a charitable contribution.

Emerging Leaders Spend Their Summer at SusCon

Since 1998, SusCon has hired MBA students between their first and second years for our Summer Associates Program. We gain access to talented individuals who can help further our projects while educating the next generation of business leaders about innovative approaches to addressing environmental issues.

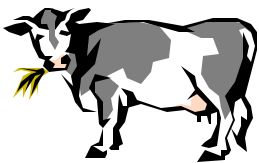
The tradition continued in 2002. Jason Oppenheimer, of UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business, and Velina Peneva, of Harvard Business School, spent ten weeks applying their skills to SusCon's projects. By adding value to ongoing projects, helping plan for geographic expansion, and developing measurement tools, Jason and Velina helped SusCon explore opportunities for growth and expanded impact.



Adding value to ongoing projects:

Pollution credit trading is a potential financial incentive for farmers to adopt environmentally friendly management practices. Before incorporat-

ing this option into the Dairies Project, we needed to assess these programs, which trade emissions from one source for reductions from another. After evaluating trading programs for air pollution, water pollution, and carbon emissions, Jason recommended that SusCon focus on carbon trading by developing a protocol for carbon offsets from methane digesters on dairy farms. Acting on this assessment, we submitted a draft protocol to the California Climate Registry.



Planning for expansion: As part of our efforts to expand the geographic scope of our projects, we need to understand how to efficiently move beyond California. Velina evaluated options for translating the work we

have done with California's dairy industry to a larger scale. She looked at four potential areas of focus for expanding the program, including California's cattle feedlot industry; dairies in western states with rising herd sizes (New Mexico, Arizona, and Idaho); dairy, hog, and poultry farms in targeted states (in the same way we've worked in California); and dairy, hog, and poultry industries at the national level through the major corporations that dominate the market. The results of the research recommend starting with the dairies in other western states. Then, as we gain expertise at a broader geographic scope, we can determine the best strategies for further expansion.



Systematically documenting results:

In 2001, recognizing the need to document results, SusCon began developing a set of evaluation tools to measure and monitor our progress on projects and as an organization, in terms of impact, activities, and capacity. Jason

and Velina further developed these measures, and created a plan to implement their use.

SusCon clearly benefits from having the talent of students such as Jason and Velina. But the Summer Associate Program also helps us improve the private sector's stewardship of natural resources in another way—Summer Associates leave SusCon with a balanced and action-oriented perspective on the role the private sector can play in protecting the environment.

Summer Findings

Greenhouse Gas Facts

Greenhouse gases contribute to global warming by trapping heat within the earth's atmosphere rather than allowing it to radiate out into space.

The most prevalent greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide.

Methane is the second most prevalent greenhouse gas.

Methane is responsible for about 15% of the greenhouse gas buildup in the atmosphere to date.

Stats on States Considered for Dairy Project Expansion

Idaho:

377K cows

1000 farms

6th largest dairy state

Arizona:

150K cows

250 farms

13th largest dairy state

New Mexico:

290K cows

179 farms

10th largest dairy state

Sustainable Progress

When Sustainable Conservation was founded in 1992, Frank Boren wanted to turn the concepts of sustainability into tangible projects that would engage and leverage the resources of the business sector.

From the beginning, Sustainable Conservation selected challenging projects with significant environmental value that lay beyond the capability of conventional strategies—litigation, legislation, and land acquisition—for addressing environmental issues.

During our first years, Sustainable Conservation learned some important lessons. We refined our approach to working with business by forming strategic partnerships and focusing on a few key issues to maximize our impact. In recent years, Sustainable Conservation has applied our model toward the development of successful pilot projects that are now ready for broad adoption and replication.

Throughout 2002, Sustainable Conservation's Board and staff have been working to create a Strategic Plan that spells out the core strategies and specific goals that Sustainable Conservation will pursue over the next five years. As part of our planning process, we interviewed representatives from other environmental organizations, current and potential partners, funders, government officials, business leaders, and many others. Then, we used what we learned to inform our design.

Sustainable Conservation's 2003-2007 Strategic Plan was approved at the September meeting of the Board of Directors and we are excited to share a few of the highlights with you.

Over the next five years, Sustainable Conservation will:

Focus on a Few Industry Sectors to Address Multiple Environmental Issues. For the past five years, we have focused primarily on water quality issues. Now, we plan to reorient our focus from a specific resource to specific industry sectors. We believe this will allow us to more fully leverage the strong partnerships we have and develop a range of solutions so that an industry may address the full array of environmental issues they face. In all our projects, we will continue to identify industries that significantly affect the environment, where traditional tools have not been sufficient and where collaboration with these sectors has the potential to bring about meaningful change.

Share Our Success by Moving Beyond California. Now that SusCon has developed and replicated several successful pilot projects throughout the state we will work to share these efforts with partners in other states and to help adapt our solutions so that they can be successful outside of California.

Increase the Visibility of the Organization. In order to become more widely recognized among environmental funders and potential partners for our unique approach to conservation, SusCon is expanding our efforts in media outreach and public education.

Expand Our Base of Supporters to Increase Our Effectiveness. To strengthen the impact and scope of our projects we need to grow. As part of our strategic plan, SusCon is working to increase the quantity and diversity of funds that support our efforts. Increased funding will improve our ability to tackle large projects and give us the flexibility to explore new solutions to environmental challenges.

Foster a Culture of Collaboration, Creativity and Innovation. Collaboration, creativity and innovation have all been critical to SusCon's success. We strive to support a working environment and partnerships where people can share a wide range of ideas and backgrounds to further our environmental goals.

During the last ten years, Sustainable Conservation has grown from a start-up nonprofit working to find new solutions to environmental problems, to a leader in bridging the gaps between the private, public and environmental sectors for long-term solutions. As we achieve the goals in our five-year plan, SusCon will expand its impact on new industries, increase its effectiveness with its current partners, and grow into regions outside of California.

"We are excited about the path our new plan sets out to expand the impact of our successful programs and to explore new industries and solutions."

*Ashley Boren,
Executive Director
Sustainable
Conservation*

Looking Ahead

In the year 2020:

The global population is estimated to reach over 8 billion people.¹

Municipal waste is projected to increase by 43%, to approximately 700 million metric tons a year in industrialized countries.²

Total motor vehicle stock in industrialized countries is expected to grow 35%, to 742 million cars.²

U.S. car and light truck CO² emissions are projected to grow 61%, to 487 million metric tons a year.³

¹www.ibiblio.org/lunarbin/worldpop

²Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development.(2002).*Towards Sustainable Household Consumption? Trends and Policies in OECD Countries.*

³Environmental Defense.(2002).*Sinful Emissions:Weighing in on Automakers' Carbon Burdens.*

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Sustainable Conservation
121 Second Street, 6th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
Phone: 415-977-0380
Fax: 415-977-0381
Email: suscon@suscon.org
Website: www.suscon.org

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It

Email

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Tell a Friend!

Do you know someone who would be interested in SusCon?

Maybe you know someone who would like to learn more about one of our projects?

Send us their name and address (e-mail or "snail" mail) and we'll send them our latest newsletter!

Miss an issue?

You can also access back issues of the newsletter via our website. Go to www.suscon.org and click on the newsletter archive link.

Worried about privacy?

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SustainableConservation

121 Second Street, 6th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105

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San Francisco, CA
Permit 735