

## **Central Sierra Watershed Committee Overview**

Central Sierra Watershed Committee (CSWC) began in 1997 to develop a cooperative effort to improve and protect our area's watersheds and other resources. There is an average of 15 to 20 attendees per meeting with over 50 participants total on the list serve and mailing list who attend when they are able.

The CSWC consists of representatives from the private sector – interested citizens, ranchers, homeowners; Chowchilla Red Top, Mariposa County, Sierra, and Coarsegold Resource Conservation Districts; North Fork Community Development Council; Madera and Mariposa County Board of Supervisors; North Fork, Big Sandy, Cold Springs, and Picayune Rancherias; Mariposa and Madera Fire Safe Councils; Sierra Foothill Conservancy; Upper Merced River, Upper San Joaquin River, Chowchilla/Fresno Rivers Watershed Councils; Chowchilla City Council; California Water Institute; Madera and Chowchilla Irrigation Districts; Yosemite/Sequoia and San Joaquin Valley Resource Conservation and Development Councils; Madera County Department of Agriculture; California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection; US Army Corp of Engineers; Regional Water Quality Control Board; Department of Water Resources; Madera County Environmental Health, Planning, and Engineering Departments; Madera County Grant Writer; California Department of Fish and Game; California Department of Food and Agriculture; San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District; Natural Resource Conservation Service; and United States Forest Service.

The CSWC has developed common ground solutions/agreements for improving watershed and local habitat. Through the monthly public forums the CSWC members have learned to air their differences while working together to provide solutions to watershed issues. The CSWC provides a non-political/ad hoc venue for all the participating members to resolve problems; share knowledge; provide innovative solutions with each other; and learn that positive communication is the key to everyone's success. The CSWC is the key to a long-term watershed effort for three counties, involving more than 60 public, tribal, and private representatives participating in a consensus building effort. Committee management includes a facilitator, ground rules, code of ethics, and is solution oriented. The CSWC success has been rooted in its ability to bring all those involved in watershed issues to the table and focus on capacity building, while the members/partners focus on the implementation of projects, the education of the communities in the watersheds, and the distribution of information. Many of the CSWC members did not communicate with each other before attending these meetings; now they sit side by side at meetings and work together to resolve the watershed's issues.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Central Sierra Watershed Committee is to promote the quality, quantity, and aesthetic values of our water resources through the conservation and restoration of our watersheds.

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