

Conservation Almanac

Trinity County Resource Conservation District

Winter 2008

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Local Conservationist, Jim Spear Named to Regional Post

Jim Spear, District Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Weaverville, has been named Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations for Area 1 (northern California) and will soon be moving to Red Bluff.

Spear has been a valued leader in conservation efforts throughout Trinity County during his 18 years here, helping many landowners improve their lands and personally nurturing a spirit of cooperation here among federal, state and local agencies. By all accounts, he is one of the people most responsible for bringing heads together to make good things happen. Such collaborations have led to innovative agreements, greater efficiencies, and leveraged more funding to get more work done on private and public lands throughout the entire Trinity River watershed. That approach has garnered national recognition for its effectiveness.

The Trinity County Resource Conservation District (RCD) works in close partnership with the Weaverville office of NRCS, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture with the mission of "Helping People Help the Land." The RCD relies on NRCS specialists in soils, engineering, revegetation and fisheries in order to provide conservation guidance and services to Trinity County landowners.

During his time here with NRCS, Spear has been instrumental in the growth and success of the RCD by advocating for its involvement in larger projects like the Trinity River and Grass Valley Creek restoration programs. "I am very proud of the organization the RCD is today and how critical it has become to this community," Spear said, "and I'm proud of the partnership our two organizations enjoy."

Bob Lowden, Superintendent of Weaverville Elementary School District, pointed out Spear was instrumental in pulling together community resources to create the annual Environmental Education Camp for sixth graders at Bar 717 Ranch near Hyampom and has also taught the soils courses there. "He has really made a difference in the lives of many young people in Weaverville," Lowden said.

Spear also helped organize the Trinity County Resource Conservation and Development Council in 1993, (now the Northwest California RC & D Council) a volunteer-led entity focused on sustainable economic and community development throughout the region. It ordinarily takes several years to win approval from the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to form a new RC& D council, but Spear got approval and funding in just six months after submitting the application. That council now serves Trinity, Del Norte and Humboldt counties.

Spear graduated from Cal Poly, Pomona in 1981 with a degree in Soil Science and immediately took a job with the NRCS. In 1990 NRCS assigned him to Weaverville as a soil conservationist and watershed project leader and in 1992 made him District Conservationist. He has seen considerable change during his tenure. The dramatic growth of the RCD from one part-time employee in 1990 to 25 employees in 1993 was due to Spear serving as NRCS repre-

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Trinity River Potable Water and Sewage Disposal System Assistance Program Still Available

The Trinity River Potable Water and Sewage Disposal System Assistance Program (AP) was established in September 2006 to provide landowners with financial assistance to relocate, replace, modify, or otherwise improve their potable water and sewage disposal systems in response to increased fishery flows provided under the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP). These flows are associated with releases from Lewiston Dam for the purpose of restoring the anadromous fishery of the Trinity River and generally occur in the April through July timeframe. Depending on the water year type these flows can range up to 11,000 cubic feet per second.



To become eligible for the assistance program, a landowner must apply for assistance, and must own land on which a legal potable water or sewer system existed and was in operation during 2005. They must also demonstrate that the system(s) has been or will be adversely affected by the increased releases from Lewiston Dam for fishery restoration purposes which began April 22, 2006.

As of January 2008, 32 households and businesses along the Trinity River have taken advantage of this program, with over \$275,000 in assistance provided to qualifying property owners to upgrade their systems. Over 90 applications have been received since the inception of the assistance program. Of those applicants, most have been determined eligible and those who submitted valid cost estimates have been determined qualified.

Applications, instructions, and additional information on eligibility and qualification requirements are available from Trinity County Planning Department - Natural Resources Division, 60 Glen Road, Weaverville, or by calling Joshua Allen, Assistant Planner at 530-623-1351 x 222. You may also obtain this information from the TRRP, located adjacent to Top's Supermarket or by calling Diana Clifton at 530-623-1804. The application and requirements are also located on the TRRP website at <http://www.trrp.net/implementation/infrastructure.htm#ap>. The application form can be filled out on-line or hand written for submittal.

Applications for the program will be available only through June 30, 2008. All work by qualified applicants must be completed with paid invoices for reimbursement submitted to Trinity County or the TRRP no later than August 1, 2009. Funding for the AP will expire September 30, 2009.

Jim Spear, Cont.

sentative on the Trinity River Task Force. He put forward the RCD as the best entity to manage and administer the multi-million dollar restoration of Grass Valley Creek, a project that greatly increased the capacity of the District to handle large projects and partner on others.

RCD Chairperson Colleen O'Sullivan explained Spear will be missed for his sense of humor, innovative thinking and low-key approach. "He found myriad ways to apply NRCS programs up and down our county," she said. "He always contributed ideas and strategies, but in a way that did not call attention to himself."



Wildfire or Prescribed Fire: What's the difference?

A wildfire, by definition, is a fire that is uncontrolled. People often view wildfire as a catastrophic event, burning at the wrong time and wrong place. In contrast, prescribed fire is a controlled application of fire to a specific area with the intent to accomplish management goals. A prescribed fire has a predetermined boundary and is applied under specific weather elements, enabling land managers to control fire location, growth, and intensity.

It's true that fire has important ecological benefits to our forests and grasslands. In recent years, however, wildfires have been very destructive because many forests have become dense and overgrown with underbrush. A century of aggressive fire suppression tactics has resulted in higher fuels accumulation in the forests, along with unforeseen changes to ecosystem dynamics and species composition. These well-intentioned management tactics have backfired and actually added to the severity of some of the largest, most intense wildfires yet.

Prescribed fire is one way to reduce fuel loading and allow fire to play its natural role in the ecosystem. The forests around Weaverville were shaped by frequent fires of low to moderate intensity, many of which were started by Native Americans to burn understory vegetation. The type of forest we have here, called Klamath Mixed Conifer, is considered to be the most diverse coniferous forest in North America, due in part to frequent burnings that occurred in the past.

The use of prescribed fire can reduce the threat of wildfire and promote important ecological forest functions. Some of the benefits of prescribed fire include:

- **Reduced fire risk by reducing fuels build-up**
- **Thinning overcrowded forests results in healthier trees**
- **Improved seed germination and sprouting**
- **It helps prepare soil for new growth**
- **Creates habitat diversity for wildlife**
- **Controls disease and insects**
- **Controls invasive plants and competing vegetation**
- **Stimulates growth of fire adapted plant species**
- **Improves growth and gathering areas of cultural-use plants**
- **Restores threatened oak woodlands and meadows**
- **Improves important forage and habitat for wildlife**

Forestry Institute for Teachers Invites Applicants

The Forestry Institute for Teachers (FIT), a series of free summer workshops for K-12 teachers on forest ecology and natural resource management issues, still has openings for 2008 sessions. The program brings together natural resource specialists and teachers for one-week "institutes" at four locations in northern California to provide a deeper understanding of the intricate interrelationship of forest ecosystems and human use of natural resources.

The FIT program is closely linked to California Department of Education's subject area standards, its frameworks for Science and Social Science, and its goals for Environmental Education. Presenters and staff include natural resource managers, environmentalists, and science and environmental education curriculum specialists.

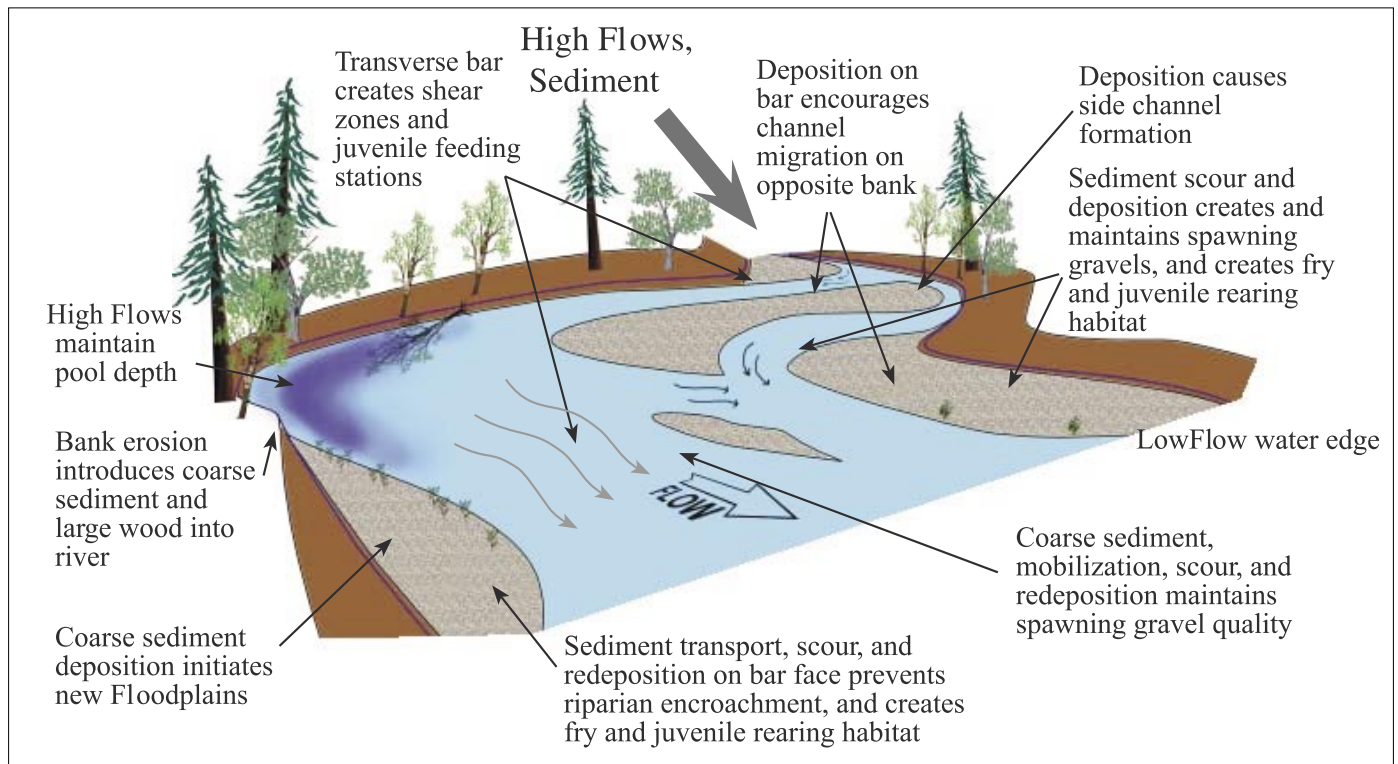
For more information or an application visit <http://www.forestryinstitute.org>

Or call 800-738-8733 or email: info@forestryinstitute.org

TRINITY RIVER RESTORATION PROGRAM COARSE SEDIMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN, Part 4

The Strategy

The CSMP proposes implementing a strategy of short and long-term coarse sediment introductions. Short term introductions will occur at multiple locations between Lewiston Dam and Indian Creek to quickly replenish coarse sediment storage. Fifty-seven potential short-term coarse sediment introduction sites have been identified in the CSMP, although the actual number of sites implemented will likely be lower. Short-term introduction sites could range from as small as a few hundred cubic yards to over 10,000 cubic yards. Where possible, channel rehabilitation projects upstream of Indian Creek will incorporate coarse sediment introduction into the design. Coarse sediment volume and placement will be unique to each site, based on local hydraulic and geomorphic conditions. The final choice of placement locations, augmentation volume, and method(s) will be determined through a multi-agency design process, responsive to the environmental permitting process and public involvement. Long-term introductions will occur at a small number of locations to maintain coarse sediment storage. Annual replenishments will occur at the long-term sites to approximately match the volume transported by the ROD high flows (currently estimated at approximately 10,000 cubic yards per year).



Conceptual diagram of how coarse sediment supply, transport, and deposition creates diverse aquatic habitat for Fish and other species.

Coarse sediment: is defined as sediment particle sizes 0.08 in. (2 mm) and larger. Proposed coarse sediment introduction sizes range from between 0.3 in. (8 mm) to 6 in. (152 mm), with most between 0.3 in. (8 mm) and 4 in. (102 mm).

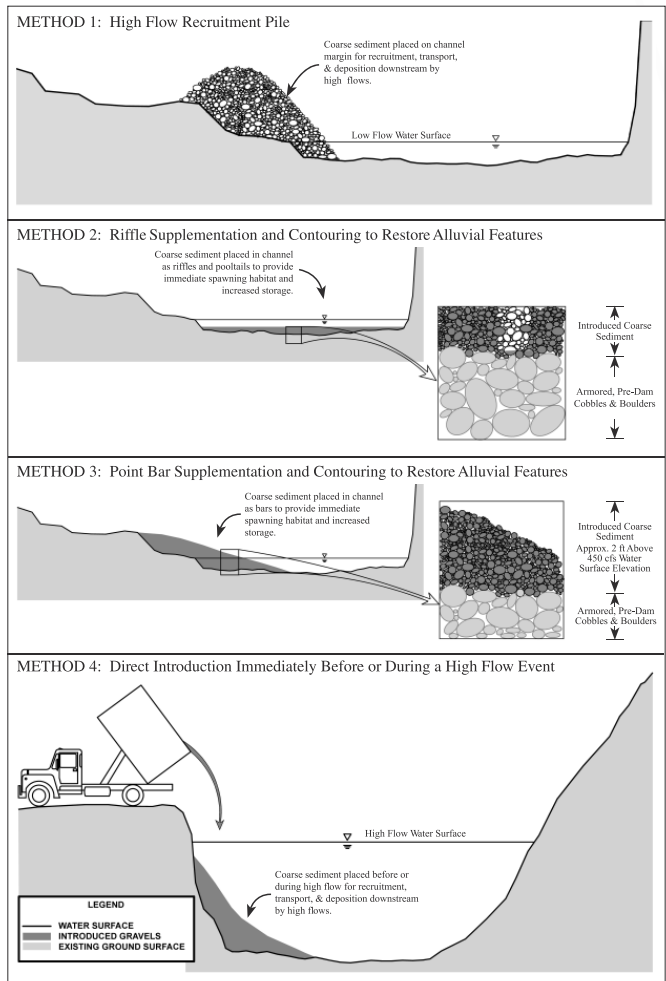
Coarse Sediment Placement Methods

Site specific conditions at each introduction location should dictate which of four methods is best suited and is most appropriate, given the following considerations:

- Topography and high flow hydraulics at each site;
- Maximizing long-term geomorphic benefit;
- Maximizing short- and long-term fish habitat benefits;
- Minimizing construction related impacts on fisheries and landowners;
- Preserving/restoring site aesthetics;
- Placement feasibility and cost effectiveness;
- Analysis of site specific environmental assessment;
- Permitting requirements.

Additional methods may be developed as site conditions and learning dictate.

Illustration of conceptual coarse sediment placement methods.



Performance Monitoring and Adaptive Management

The Trinity River Restoration Program will assess how well individual and cumulative coarse sediment introductions achieve CSMP and ROD goals and objectives. Topographic monitoring will assess how storage changes with high flow releases. Sediment transport measurements during high flow releases will help evaluate how fast coarse sediment moves downstream, which will inform subsequent coarse sediment introductions and high flow releases. Habitat monitoring will assess how coarse sediment introductions, transport, and deposition improve salmon spawning and rearing habitat quality, quantity, and diversity. For more information, contact: **Trinity River Restoration Program**, 1313 South Main St. Weaverville, CA 96093. Phone: (530) 623-1800.



Sediment sampling during high flows measure the effectiveness of dam releases in routing gravel and sand through the Trinity River. (Photo courtesy of 4 Graham Matthews and Associates).

RCD Welcomes New AmeriCorps Members

The RCD is pleased to welcome Erica Spohn and Tom Dey as the most recent members of the AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project to join the District. Each has a strong appreciation of natural resources and a record of doing good works, so they should fit in well in Trinity County.

Erica arrived in Trinity County eight months ago from Colorado, where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology with a concentration in Environmental Resources from Colorado State University. "It involves more about water and soils than a regular geology degree," she explains. "I like big earth processes and I liked the idea of working outside." Erica enjoys running, hiking, biking, rock climbing, fast horseback trail riding, telemark skiing, rafting and is learning to kayak, so had an instant affinity for Trinity. Plus, as a central Oregon native, she's now several hours closer to her family.

Erica learned about Watershed Stewards Project (WSP) after moving here and liked the idea of joining a program where she could benefit her community and its wonderful natural surroundings. She plans to use her knowledge of geomorphic processes to increase public awareness about ways to reduce erosion and sediment in the Trinity River and its tributary streams. Erica especially wants to share her enthusiasm for science and the outdoors with children through classroom educational programs and the RCD's Summer Day Camp. Before becoming a member of WSP, Erica spent eight seasons working as a trail crew leader and a wilderness ranger for the US Forest Service in Colorado and Oregon, so she's also looking forward to helping with trail building projects here in the Community Forest.

When Erica moved to Weaverville last July, she brought her two Arabian horses she raised and trained. Endurance horse racing has been a hobby of Erica's since she was a teenager, and she hopes to compete in some Northern California races this spring and summer. She's also looking forward to exploring Trinity Alps Wilderness Area and hopes to build confidence as a kayaker this summer on Trinity River. She's been having a great time this winter playing in snow and finding backcountry ski adventures around Trinity County. "I'll do anything to make my dog tired," she said.

Tom Dey grew up in New York State enjoying ice boating, backpacking, camping, spelunking and sailing. After graduating high school in Bedford, New York, he spent a year traveling with 15 other students throughout 40,000 miles of North America, living outdoors and studying environmental issues through a program of the Trailside Country School, (now Audubon Expedition Institute). Tom earned his B.A. in Environmental Science from State University of New York at Purchase, spending summers as an expedition leader for Trailside. After graduating he spent a couple of years working as a photographer's assistant in New York City and as a cinematographer with a start up venture on 3D photographic medical technology.

Tom headed west, backpacking on the Pacific Crest Trail, climbing Mt. Rainier, and exploring the Olympic Peninsula before landing an entry level job with MCI Telecommunications. He spent the next 23 years in San Francisco, helping build MCI into America's second largest telecommunication provider before it was acquired by WorldCom. Tom then returned to school and obtained his Masters of Science in Environmental Management from University of San Francisco. His early studies focused on water management, land use and development issues. His master's project included an in-depth study of arsenic in drinking water and how its regulation could serve as a blueprint for regulating other contaminants.

Tom likes improving conditions for others. He has supported and volunteered with San Francisco Green Connect Project, Shanti Organization, Community United Against Violence, and Pets Are Wonderful Support. He has also served on San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Citizen Advisory Committee and the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program. With his newly-minted Masters degree he cast about for an opportunity where he could take an active role in solving problems and discovered the AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project. He applied for one of its openings in Trinity County and was assigned to the County's Natural Resources Planning Division. There his tasks will include work on policy issues related to protecting Trinity River from excessive diversions to the Central Valley Project that delivers water to southern California. Tom will also provide classroom education on aspects of watershed conservation for area schools. He looks forward to helping with other community projects during his 11-month assignment here.

AmeriCorps WSP members are involved in a wide variety of watershed restoration, assessment and conservation projects, teaching watershed and fisheries-based curriculum to K-12 students, participating in myriad community outreach events, and receiving high quality training in natural resources and professional development topics. Each AmeriCorps member is placed with an organization which is committed to preserving and restoring California's watersheds and native salmon runs, whether it is a Federal, State or County agency, Tribal department, or a grassroots-based non-profit. Watershed Stewards Project members each work under the guidance of a natural resource professional at their placement site to fulfill the WSP mission and provide support for their site. The mission of the AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project is to conserve, restore and enhance anadromous watersheds for future generations by linking education with high quality scientific practices.

2008 Events

March 15 Integrated Pest Management Workshop - Free workshop sponsored by the University of California Cooperative Extension. Learn about the least toxic ways to control common insects and other garden pests. Also learn about organic growing certification. Recreation Hall, Lowden Park, Weaverville. Call (530) 628-5495 for registration information.

April 29 Community Meeting for Weaverville Community Forest - Weaverville Fire Hall, 6:30 p.m. Hear an update on expansion plans and projects for the WCF. Meeting hosted by the WCF Steering Committee.

May 1-2 BioMass Workshop - Woody Biomass Heat: Making it Work for Communities. This workshop will explore the potential for schools, public and commercial buildings, and for industrial drying processes to use woody biomass for heating. Bend, Oregon. www.sustainablenorthwest.org/community-biomass-workshop or (503) 346-0661.

May 30-31 Salmon Poster Art Exhibit Opening - Weaverville Elementary School Environmental Camp Salmon Posters. Trinity County Library, Weaverville Branch from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on May 30 and 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on May 31. (530) 623-1373

July 7-Aug 1 Weaverville Summer Day Camp - (These are the tentative dates for 2008). For information call the Trinity County Resource Conservation District (530) 623-6004.

October 11 Salmon and Heritage Fruit Festival - Cider pressing, kids games, food booths, artisan booths, salmon barbecue, live music and more. On the Meadow at Highland Arts Center, Main St., Weaverville. Call Trinity County Chamber of Commerce (530) 623-6101.

District Manager's Corner *Pat Frost*



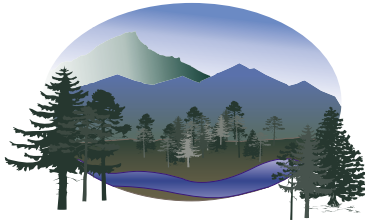
Conservation Districts are all about relationships, including our relationships with the land and water, relationships between neighbors managing their properties and the relationship between agencies and individuals wanting to be good stewards of natural resources. One very special relationship is between the conservation district and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The ties between the two go back to the very beginning of the soil and water conservation movement in the 1930's. Groups of local landowners came together to help the brand new Soil Conservation Service deliver new ideas about reducing erosion and improving agricultural production to their neighbors. And there is no better example of this relationship than the one that the Trinity County RCD has had for 18 years with Jim Spear, our NRCS District Conservationist.

Jim has been an incredible resource to our county and he has been a valued friend and colleague for me. I came here 9 years ago. Jim was a wonderful guide and mentor, someone I could turn to with ideas or questions – a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm for natural resources conservation and management.

It is our turn to share Jim with our neighbors in the north state as he embarks on a new adventure in conservation. Jim will have begun a new phase in his career with NRCS by the time you read this newsletter. He will be the Assistant State Conservationist, one of only four in California. He will be providing the same high quality service to most of northern California. We will miss him, but we are all better public servants and stewards of the land for having had Jim work with us in the past. Healthier rivers and streams, forests and rangeland are a part of the legacy that Jim's labors will leave for us. New generations of conservation-minded citizens have been inspired and guided by Jim, and for that I am especially thankful.



Trinity County



Resource Conservation District

Trinity County Resource Conservation District
P.O. Box 1450
Weaverville, CA 96093



Established 1956

District Board Meetings

Third Wednesday
5:30 PM
Open to the Public

TCRCD Office

Number One
Horseshoe Lane
PO Box 1450
Weaverville, CA 96093

Telephone

(530) 623-6004
FAX 623-6006
E-mail: info@tcrd.net
Internet: www.tcrd.net

The Trinity County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD) is a special district set up under state law to carry out conservation work and education. It is a not-for-profit, self-governing district whose board of directors volunteer their time.

The TCRCD Vision

TCRCD envisions a balance between utilization and conservation of our natural resources. Through economic diversity and ecosystem management our communities will achieve and sustain a quality environment and healthy economy.

The TCRCD Mission

To assist people in protecting, managing, conserving and restoring the natural resources of Trinity County through information, education, technical assistance and project implementation programs.

**TCRCD Board of Directors are
Mike Rourke, Rose Owens, Patrick Truman,
Colleen O'Sullivan, and Greg Lowden.**

The RCD is landowners assisting landowners with conservation work. The RCD can guide the private landowner in dealings with state and federal agencies. The RCD provides information on the following topics:

- **Forest Land Productivity**
- **Watershed Improvement**
- **Water Supply and Storage**
- **Educational Programs**
- **Erosion/Sediment Control**
- **Wildlife Habitat**
- **Soil and Plant Types**
- **Fuels Reduction**

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