

# Conservation Almanac

Trinity County Resource Conservation District

Summer 2010

Vol. XIX No. 2

## District and BLM team up to help local economy

The District has completed several projects in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management using “economic stimulus” funding from the American Reinvestment Recovery Act to improve public access to BLM lands and recreation sites. The renovation of Steel Bridge campground is an excellent example of how the District used this funding to provide work locally and to develop infrastructure with long-term benefits. Improvements at Steel Bridge include paving road and parking areas, providing solar-generated electricity, and reducing the risk of wildfire by removing hazardous brush and low-hanging limbs in the area.

Albert Zaitz of Mountain Energy and electrician Troy Jones designed and are installing a solar system to provide electricity for lighting bathrooms and the campground entrance, and for the campground host. Eric Blomberg (Fine Line Building), Dave Hazard Construction, and Jim Casebolt constructed the block building for batteries and solar system equipment. Park’s Arcs Welding and Supply is constructing a new kiosk. Paving was by Ron Yingling and District employees. Ken and John Herrett worked on excavation. Materials for the project were purchased locally to stimulate the economy.

The District improved BLM’s access road to Steiner Flat to provide better public access and to reduce sediment going into Trinity River. Other BLM public access road sections scheduled for maintenance or improvement are at Bucktail Hole River Access, Bagdad River Access and Rush Creek Access. Work will occur this fall when usage and water level are lower.

The District is assisting BLM with a variety of resource management tasks to conserve and restore fish and wildlife habitats. Projects include control of noxious weeds such as Scotch Broom, and improvements to Lowden Meadow and the 10-acre Union Hill pond, which received a new spillway/dam this summer and an improved day-use parking area.

All these projects with BLM are intended to directly stimulate the local economy through hiring of personnel and local contractors. Purchase of materials locally can assist local businesses maintain or increase the number of employees. BLM Area Manager Steve Anderson stated, “The hiring of personnel, contractors and the purchase of materials will directly infuse the local populace and economy with funds that increase local spending on other consumptive and non-consumptive goods.”



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## Evolving Trinity River Restoration Projects & Natural River Hazards

Salmon populations have declined in Northern California roughly corresponding to the extent and intensity of human development and its effects on the amount and condition of freshwater habitat. Since their first channel rehabilitation project at the Hocker Flat site in Junction City in 2005, the Trinity River Restoration Program has been working to combat declining fish populations by improving spawning, summer rearing, and winter holding habitats. This is accomplished by using high flow releases and gravel augmentation to restore river processes, along with channel rehabilitation projects that work together over time to restore the river's form and function.

Over the last several years, wood structures have been forming naturally on the Trinity River and are also being constructed as part of the river restoration efforts. Monitoring on the Trinity River and research from other rivers in the Pacific Northwest has indicated that wood structures are an important element of salmon habitat. The wood itself increases the production of macro-invertebrates (aquatic bugs) that the salmon eat. Woody debris, including large wood, provides cover, shade, and structure, which play an important role in the juvenile life stages of fish. It also promotes local scour that refreshes gravel, and increases the number and size of pools or holes for fish to use during low flow periods. It also provides excellent holding and cover habitat for salmon during high flows. Wood can also increase the amount of "edge water" habitat required by salmon fry by helping to maintain natural or constructed side channels, or by anchoring a mid-channel island that splits the river flow into multiple channels. Wood structures will help create the necessary diversity within the Trinity River to support and sustain thriving salmon populations, particularly in areas where spawning gravel is located in proximity to deep rearing pools and sheltered side channels.

Reduced flows and consistency of dam releases for the last several decades have contributed to habitat loss and declining salmon runs. Restoration activities and higher flows will produce a more dynamic river with the complexity and diversity that salmon and steelhead need to survive and successfully reproduce. Rivers naturally move and change. With the addition of higher flows and river channel rehabilitation activities, we are moving toward restoring the natural river processes. There are inherent hazards associated with river recreation that will also continue to change and evolve over time. Fisherman, boaters, and other users of the river will need to continue to ensure that they have the skills, knowledge, and equipment necessary for safe recreation on the river. Please be aware of the risks as you enjoy the Trinity River. Visit the Trinity River Restoration Program office or website (See [www.trrp.net](http://www.trrp.net)) for more information about current construction activities at Trinity House Gulch and Lowden Ranch in Lewiston and Reading Creek in Douglas City.



# New Projects Funded by the Trinity River Restoration Program

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The Trinity River Restoration Program is funding six restoration projects in 2010 for \$260,700. These projects were selected for implementation by the Trinity Watershed Council and Watershed Workgroup and approved by the Trinity Management Council. The new projects are:

- **Coffin Fire Road Rehabilitation:** Upgrade roads in Snipe Gulch near Lewiston that were impacted by the 2009 Coffin Fire.
- **Phillips Gulch Road Rehabilitation:** Upgrade roads on BLM land in the Grass Valley Creek watershed near Fawn Lodge that were impacted by the Coffin Fire
- **Bierce Creek Road Rehabilitation:** Reduce sediment production from a 2.5 mile portion of road 28N54. This is the first project in the South Fork Trinity River Watershed funded by TRRP.
- **Soldier Creek Main Haul Road Sediment Reduction:** This project will stabilize the surface of approximately the first mile of the main haul road into the Soldier Creek watershed. This road is heavily used by the public traveling between Hayfork and Junction City and drains directly into Soldier Creek.
- **Indian Creek Rehabilitation and Sediment Control, Phase 1:** develop a conceptual design for sequestering fine sediments and improving habitat along a reach of Indian Creek on BLM land between Frietas Gulch and Mule Gulch. TCRCD has contracted Philip Williams & Associates to conduct this investigation and present a technical report outlining a potential restoration concept for sediment control and habitat restoration.
- **Lower Sidney Gulch Rehabilitation and Sediment Control, Phase 1:** This project is to develop a conceptual design for sequestering fine sediments and improving habitat along the reach of Sidney Gulch through Lee Fong Park in Weaverville. This project will be implemented by the Northwest CA RC&D Council and 5-Counties Salmonid Conservation Program.

In 2008, the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) funded 10 restoration projects for \$405,000. Projects included outreach and inventory, feasibility study, fire rehabilitation, revegetation, and road upgrade and decommissioning. In 2009 an additional 5 projects were funded for \$280,000.



# Assistance to Forest and Woodland Owners



## INTRODUCTION

The United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is a federal agency that emphasizes voluntary, science-based assistance to help private forest landowners. The NRCS promotes and informs private forest landowners about forestry practices that can improve growth, reduce risk, and improve forest health. Many of these practices can be cost-shared through Farm Bill programs.

## PLANNING

The NRCS works with forest and woodland owners to develop a conservation plan customized to meet the owner's objectives for their land. The conservation plan will address resource concerns and propose improvements that can be voluntarily implemented on the landscape. Conservation planning provides direction to forest and woodland owners to achieve goals and improve natural resources. Landowners with a conservation plan may receive priority for Farm Bill funding.

## HEALTHY FORESTS

Forest health is a very broad term. Many forests are both healthy and productive. However, a number of different concerns have been identified as major forestry problems in the west. These include fire and fuels, invasion of non-native and native pests, loss of biodiversity, air pollution, and degraded riparian forests.

Many forest stands have too many trees per acre (overstocked) or contain a disproportionate amount of shrubs in the understory. This competition for light, nutrients, and water leaves forests extremely susceptible to disease and insect damage, increases the risk of catastrophic fire, reduces productivity, and provides poor quality wildlife habitat as well as limited recreational opportunities. Other forests, for a number of reasons, have too few trees.

## FUEL HAZARD REDUCTION

Private, non-industrial forests and woodlands make up about 14% of California. Many of these acres are overstocked and at risk of wildfire damage. California and many of our neighboring states have experienced abnormally dry conditions. These adverse conditions have fueled severe wildfires that are challenging our natural resources.

Fire, a natural phenomenon, is a key to maintaining natural processes of most California ecosystems. Previously the majority of fires were of low intensity at a fairly short return interval that prevented the accumulation of large amounts of fuel. Under natural conditions, the more destructive wildfires of today were an exception and not the rule.

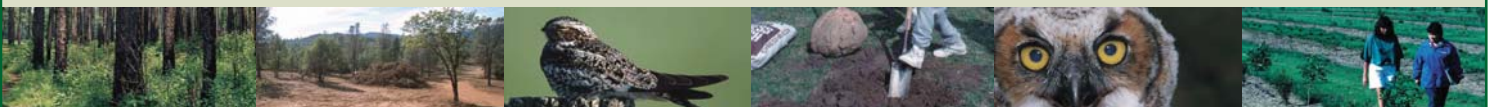
Destructive fires contribute to accelerated erosion/sedimentation, health hazards from smoke, property damage, lack of suitable habitat for wildlife, reduction of water quality/quantity, increased risk of flooding, and reduced recreational opportunities.

Present and past management activities have impacted a number of plant and animal species. Proper management of habitat provides shelter, cover, food, and transportation corridors for wild animals that inhabit an area during a portion of their life cycle.

## ASSISTANCE

NRCS conservationists can assist landowners with management decisions as well as providing technical and financial cost share to assist landowners in improving forest health and reducing the impacts of catastrophic wildfires.

In almost 70 years of assisting forest and woodland landowners, NRCS has assembled a body of technical standards to help



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producers address a large number of natural resource concerns. Forest conservation activities, such as those found in the right sidebar on this sheet, exemplify the type of practices for which NRCS provides technical and financial assistance.



Heavy brush occupying forest land may be the result of a previous catastrophic fire.



Without effective management, opportunistic understory plants compete with trees for nutrients and light.

## How to Apply

Persons interested in participating in Farm Bill programs should contact their local NRCS field office. Applications may be submitted at any time during the year. Eligible projects will be evaluated, prioritized and selected for funding as budget allocations permit. Submitting an application does not obligate the landowner or the NRCS to the enrollment of property or any future expenditure of funds.

For more information on EQIP and other Farm Bill programs available in Trinity County, please contact District Conservationist Tiffany Riess at the NRCS Weaverville Office, #3 Horseshoe Lane, P. O. Box 1450, Weaverville 96093 or email: [Tiffany.Riess@ca.usda.gov](mailto:Tiffany.Riess@ca.usda.gov)

# Typical NRCS Conservation Forestry Activities



### SITE PREPARATION:

Treating areas to improve the site conditions for the successful establishment of trees.



### TREE PLANTING:

Establishing trees by planting seedlings or cuttings, direct seeding, or natural regeneration.



### FOREST STAND IMPROVEMENT (TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT):

Treating areas made to improve the composition, structure, condition, health, and growth of even- or uneven-aged stands. Smaller trees in an immature stand may be removed to provide adequate growing space, accelerate diameter growth, and improve the form of the remaining trees.



### CONTROLLING COMPETING VEGETATION:

Reducing the numbers of shrubs in the understory to an acceptable level to reduce the competition between trees and shrubs. As the competition increases, plants slow in growth, become weakened, and prematurely die from insects and disease.



### PRUNING:

Removing the lower limbs from trees to improve the appearance, the quality of the wood, and to reduce fire and/or ladder fuel hazards.



### SLASH DISPOSAL:

Treating woody plant residues created during forestry activities to reduce hazardous fuels, the risk of harmful insects and disease while maintaining air quality, improving access to forage for grazing and browsing animals, and improving soil organic matter.



### FUEL BREAK:

Creating an area where the vegetation and debris have been reduced and/or modified to control or reduce the risk of the spread of fire.



### WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES:

Providing and managing upland habitats and connectivity within the landscape for wildlife through treatment of the habitat. This enables movement, or provides shelter, cover, and food to sustain wild animals that inhabit the area during a portion of their life cycle.



# Weaverville Summer Camp

Trinity County Resource Conservation District, with the assistance of AmeriCorps/ Watershed Stewards Project members have provided local youth with the very successful Weaverville Summer Day Camp for the past seven summers, serving approximately 120 youngsters during four week-long sessions. In 2009 the District added the Summer Field Camp providing field study day trips for older children (9-12 years) to learn about stream monitoring, forest and watershed health, and to visit restoration projects in the surrounding areas. This provides youth with hands-on experience in natural resources education and management. Involvement of local natural resources professionals introduces students to the range of rewarding career opportunities in the fields of natural sciences and natural resources.

Gardening projects and food preparation inform students about healthy nutrition options. Solar oven and Cobb oven baked snacks, introducing campers to alternative energy sources. Fun games and activities such as hiking, stretching, and swimming provide needed exercise. Campers are introduced to beekeeping, forestry practices, and water quality monitoring. Recycling and awareness of the waste we generate is part of camp's theme: Our Connection to the Land.



Summer Camp is funded by a variety of partners including Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee, Trinity Trust, UC Cooperative Extension, Trinity Child Abuse Prevention Council, Trinity Kids Coalition for Activity and Nutrition, US Forest Service, and Weaverville/Douglas City Parks and Recreation District.









# Watershed Restoration Project Implementation

This spring a restoration project was implemented by Project Coordinator Cynthia Tarwater, and her crew on private land at Buckhorn Station within fifty feet of Little Grass Valley Creek. An actively failing culvert (120 feet of rusted and collapsing 24-inch Mining Pipe) under a large landing was replaced with a new 120 feet of 36-inch Corrugated Metal Pipe. Other miscellaneous road improvements aimed at sediment reduction to Little Grass Valley Creek were also addressed as a part of this project. The property owner submitted a letter to the editor of the Trinity Journal expressing her gratitude for the work done on her property. "So many times a government entity does not receive the credit they deserve. In fact often no matter how well the job is done, there are complaints. Not so with the project that you spearheaded." This project was funded by Trinity River Restoration Program and the State Water Resources Control Board.



## FORESTRY LECTURE

Are you thinking about doing fuels treatment projects on your property? Then you may be interested in a series of presentations on "Balancing Wildlife Needs and Fire Hazard Reduction in Northern California Forests". These educational programs will describe practices for achieving reduced fuel loads while protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat.

The presentations will be held at Shasta College's Downtown Campus in Redding on October 6, 13, 20 and 27 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. The registration fee is \$25. For more information, check [www.norcalsaf.org](http://www.norcalsaf.org). The program is presented by US Fish & Wildlife Service, CA Dept of Fish & Game, USFS, Society of American Foresters and the Trinity County RCD.





# Invasive Weed Removal

Over several months this spring and early summer Trinity County Resource Conservation District has been involved in several projects that involve removing a variety of invasive weed species.

## Dyer's Woad Removal North of Carville

**D**yer's Woad (*Isatis tinctoria*) growing in large scattered patches and isolated clumps north of Carville Ponds was targeted for control in late June. District personnel found and mapped where this weed had invaded approximately 329 acres and 19 miles of Highway 3 and County Roads 140, 152 and 135. Crews were able to use pruners, pulaskis and pulling to treat 261 of the infested acres plus all of the road miles. The plants were all in the fruiting stage with viable seed, so they were carefully bagged to prevent the spread of additional seed and taken to the solid waste transfer station. The plants filled 327 42-gallon bags. Inmate crews from the Trinity River Conservation Camp treated an additional 75 acres around Carrville Ponds and south of Eastside Road. These eradication efforts were funded by the Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee.



Dyer's Woad

## Highway 299 Weeds

**T**he District was invited to partner with Western Shasta Resource Conservation District to control invasive weeds along Highway 299 in a project funded by the California Department of Food and Agriculture. TCRCD tackled the stretch from Buckhorn Summit to Felter Gulch with the assistance of crews from Trinity River Conservation Camp. Targeted species included Scotch, Spanish and French Broom, plus Dyer's Woad. A tool that grabs the base of the plant and then provides mechanical leverage, known as a 'weed wrench,' proved to be most effective in pulling out the deeply rooted Broom plants. Dyer's Woad was hand pulled.



Poison Hemlock Removal

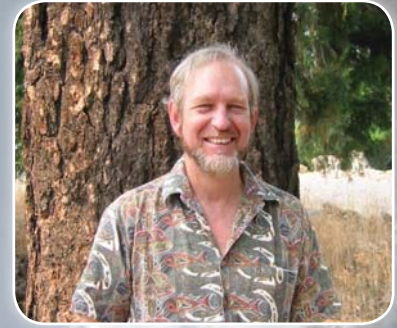


Weed Warrior



## District Manager's Corner

This issue of the newsletter is a tribute to the old saying, "Many Hands Make for Light Work." Articles on each page highlight recent RCD projects that became great successes because of the efforts and expertise our partners contributed when teaming up with the District. Two of these projects underscore especially well the importance of teamwork. One is the just-completed Steel Bridge Campground renovation that brought in several local contractors who worked closely with John Condon and Alex Cousins of the RCD, and with Bill Kuntz of the BLM's Redding Area Office. I encourage you to visit the campground to see the improvements when you have the chance.



Summer Day Camp at the Young Family Ranch always gives me a morale boost in the middle of summer. The photo-essay only touches on the incredible support that we receive and pass onto the children during the month-long camp. Every year our camp gets better. Bo Kimball and Mandy Monroe, our AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project members, orchestrated it with great skill with the able assistance of our camp counselors, Morgan Green, Boston Jones, Geraldine Pedrotti, and Tasha Weaver — all students from Trinity High School. Camp could not have been such a great success without the many individuals who donated their time to lead some of the daily activities. We enhanced our summer field camp program for the older children this year with almost daily nature field trips. Two new partners were critical to the field camp. Trinity County Health and Human Services provided the use of their van for field trips and Ascend Wilderness Experience (AWE) helped us cap-off the season with an overnight trip to Boulder Lakes for eight adventurous youngsters.

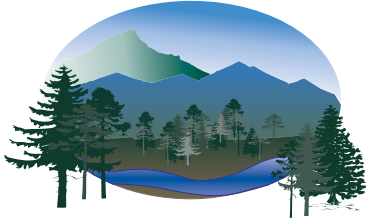
As a final note, I'd like to make mention of another unique partnership. This year the RCD and Trinity County Fire Safe Council partnered with Weaverville Volunteer Fire Department and Rotary Club of Weaverville to apply for, and receive, a grant of \$6,000 from Rotary International. The grant was used to purchase much-needed wildland fire equipment for the volunteers. I mention this because you may have an idea for a project that you'd like us to consider. If so, please don't be shy – let us know. All of us at the District are here to serve you. The Conservation Almanac may be published by the RCD, but it is all about you, our friends and partners and the work that we can accomplish together.

*Pat Frost*

**I t ' s F a i r T i m e**

**Come Visit Our Booth  
At the Trinity County Fair!  
August 27-29**

## 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](mailto:info@tcrd.net)**  
**Internet: [www.tcrd.net](http://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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