



Spring 2012

Vol. XXI No. 1

Message from the District Manager - 2011 Annual Report

It is that time of year again - time to take a look at the previous year's accomplishments. The pages of this year's annual report have many of the same elements as the 2010 report. That is because the District's annual work plan is guided by our Five Year Strategic Plan, which the Board of Directors just updated in December 2011. In my mind, this annual report and our strategic plan reflect the overarching theme of *We All Live in a Watershed*.

Each project that we implement, as highlighted in this report, has a primary purpose. It may be a project to improve forest health and help protect a neighborhood from wildfire. It may be a project to stabilize a road, or to construct a new recreational trail. Yet all of them provide some secondary benefits to the watersheds that are essential to our health and well-being.

It is easy to see how projects like the road project described on page 3 is a benefit to Tom Lang Gulch and even to the fish and wildlife that use the Trinity River this small stream drains into. Projects designed to improve forest health conditions also have benefits for these watersheds. Folks in Trinity County are all too aware of the negative impacts catastrophic wildfires have had on our streams and rivers - on the fisheries and wildlife that make these forests and waterways home. Every time we complete a forestry project listed in our Community Wildfire Protection Plan we are certainly also addressing a watershed and fisheries concern, too.

We have had a long-time partnership with the USFS in the area of noxious weed management, as noted on page 4. The focus of this program of work is obvious - to remove non-native, invasive species. Watersheds and their fisheries benefit directly from removing these noxious species and by replacing them with native plant communities.

Even our education and outreach program sits comfortably under the umbrella of the watershed theme. This newsletter, our website and the many community events we help organize help us to say the same thing ~ *We All Live in a Watershed*.

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FOREST HEALTH / FUELS REDUCTION



During 2011, the Trinity County Fire Safe Council completed the update of the countywide Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Led by the District and the Watershed Research and Training Center (WRTC), the Fire Safe Council compiled and mapped the information gathered at more than a dozen meetings in communities throughout the county. The Plan was approved by CalFire and the Trinity County Board of Supervisors in May 2011 and can be found on the District's website at:

http://www.tcrd.net/fsc/pdf/CWPP_2010_Update_Final.pdf.

The Trinity County Resource Conservation District continues its strong commitment to planning and implementation. Several fuels reduction projects were completed this year and a few new ones begun, though funding for new fuels reduction projects has diminished. The China Gulch Phase II project just north of Weaverville, and the Oregon Mountain Community Forest Restoration received funding from the Resource Advisory Committee. Federal stimulus money continues supporting the Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project in plantations above Lake Forest Estates in the north lake area. This project will treat a total of 348 acres through plantation thinning. Three community protection projects were completed with funding from the California Fire Safe Council - the North Lake, Mid Trinity and Southern Trinity fuels reduction projects (410 acres total).

During 2011, the District began planning an "All Lands" approach to fuels reduction with the WRTC, USFS and NRCS. Burnt Ranch, a community-at-risk in the wildland urban interface of Trinity County, was chosen by the USFS as a pilot project. An All Lands Fuels Reduction approach reduces the threat of catastrophic fires on the public/private lands interface. The RCD sought funding to work on private lands along with the Natural Resources Conservation Service's EQIP program. The USFS will target funds to implement work on contiguous parcels of public land, so all fuels reduction work will be more effective.

New projects in the Weaverville Community Forest during 2011 included the Browns project on USFS lands (180 acres) and the West Weaver Creek Mining District on BLM lands (over 230 acres of fuels reduction) designed to improve forest health and reduce fuel loads. These projects are intended to generate funds to support much needed additional stewardship work in the Community Forest.



Horse Logging in the Mining District Forest Health Project

WATERSHED PROJECTS

2011 was another busy year for the TCRCDD with the implementation of a significant number of watershed restoration projects. A heavy emphasis of this work is road upgrade and road decommissioning work as roads are the single greatest source of controllable sediment in our watersheds. Many unpaved public roads have not been maintained adequately. This results in erosion and runoff that pollutes the streams and rivers. Watershed conditions are improved by reducing the delivery of fine sediment into streams through this work.

In 2011 the District completed work for the Trinity River Restoration Program including Tom Lang Gulch Road Decommission, Conner Creek Road Decommission, Carter Ranch Decommission and road upgrade, Westside road decommissioning and Grass Valley Creek Stream Crossing Improvement. These projects were developed by the Trinity River Watershed Council. Other funding for watershed restoration projects came from US Forest Service, the Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee, Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and the State Water Quality Control Board.



Tom Lang Gulch- Before



Tom Lang Gulch- After

The photo above shows a small creek draining onto a gullied road contributing to severe erosion and sediment delivery to Tom Lang Gulch, a tributary of the Trinity River. The restoration of this area was accomplished by correcting the road drainage with rolling dips and excavating a swale to remove the diversion.

NATIVE HABITAT RESTORATION

Native habitat restoration is a broad term covering a wide range of activities. In 2011, the District engaged in two major areas of native habitat restoration: invasive plant management and re-establishing native plants on disturbed sites. Funding and assistance from Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Forest Service, the Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee, Western Shasta RCD and Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) were essential to these endeavors.

Managing invasive plants or “noxious weeds” is an important part of native habitat restoration. There are six major steps we follow in noxious weed removal strategy: identify the plant species as a threat to the area, map the extent of that plant’s population, prioritize sites needing treatment, manually remove existing plants, monitor and pull out new plants sprouting from seeds or old plants respouting until no more are found.

In 2011, the District focused on monitoring and retreating areas previously treated for Scotch broom, Spanish broom, dyer’s woad and poison hemlock infestations. We also discovered and pulled out new infestations. Our crews treated more than 100 miles of roadsides and 558 acres of public and private lands. Crews from Trinity River Conservation Camp and the BLM joined us in much of this work.

The US Forest Service, through our long-standing partnership with the Weaverville Ranger District, provided the District with two grants this year to support noxious weed eradication projects in Trinity County for the next five years.

The District also participated in a statewide invasive plant mapping project coordinated by the California Invasive Species Council (Cal-IPC). Cal-IPC is developing excellent resources to help private landowners and public agencies identify, map and manage these problematic plants. This interactive map developed through this project is at <http://calweedmapper.calflora.org/>.

The District planted over 14 acres of TRRP restoration sites along Trinity River with more than 8000 native plants this past season. The plant material was harvested locally, soaked in water until they were fully hydrated and stored in a refrigerated unit. Once we were ready to begin planting, the cuttings were soaked once more before being put in the ground. These included arroyo willow, red willow, shining willow and cottonwood. Ponderosa pine and black oak container stock were manually planted at the Wheel Gulch site in Junction City. The District mapped all of these plantings for future monitoring.



Planting of native floodplain trees at a TRRP restoration site



Removal of Scotch broom plants in Junction City funded by USFS

RECREATION

Each year the District engages in a variety of projects that support outdoor recreation throughout Trinity County. Among our projects in 2011 were enhancements to the Weaverville Basin Trail System. This growing network of enticing recreational trails in and around Weaverville gives easy access to the scenic pleasures of the Weaverville Community Forest. District projects to develop and improve trails provides better access and recreation opportunities for equestrians, bicycle riders and day hikers. Well-maintained trails are a valuable amenity for residents plus help to stimulate the economy of this rural community by attracting tourists and outdoor enthusiasts from throughout the region.

We provided maintenance on Shasta Springs Trail and guided considerable work to complete McKenzie Gulch Trail this year. Trail maintenance includes clearing brush, installing waterbars to improve drainage, repairing trail surface and removing fallen trees. The District completed required environmental certification for the Garden Gulch Trail so we can begin work on this segment of the trail system next year. Trail work was funded by the Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee, the US Forest Service and by the Bureau of Land Management Community Forest Stewardship Agreement.



The Annual La Grange Classic Mountain Bike Race takes place on the Weaverville Basin Trails

To help more people of all ages share enjoyment of hiking, the District worked closely with the Weaverville Basin Trail Committee and the Lewiston Trail Group to sponsor a series of day hikes in 2011. We look forward to many more enjoying Trinity's outdoor wonders in 2012.



McKenzie Gulch Trail Construction-Volunteer Day with Environmental Sciences Class from Trinity High School



District and Trail Groups Sponsored Hike to Boulder Lake



ADMINISTRATION

Our Board of Directors is strongly committed to supporting the goals and efforts of our many partners, all of whom recognize that projects which are locally led can yield a multitude of benefits, including increased community trust, cost-effectiveness, timeliness, job creation and economic stimulation.

District Manager Patrick Frost, under the Board's direction, develops and guides activities that provide assistance to landowners and land managers throughout Trinity County. An important element of delivering this assistance is securing the necessary funding. The District's board and our staff work diligently at many levels to obtain and sustain funding to continue to meet the District's mission.

Conservation Fund

The TCRCDD Conservation Fund was established in association with the Trinity Trust under the auspices of the Humboldt Area Foundation. The purpose of the TCRCDD Fund is to support the mission and ongoing work of the Trinity County RCD. This fund provides you a meaningful way to invest in local efforts to conserve our natural resources and to help promote conservation education. Your tax deductible donations to this fund enable the District to extend its special programs and enhance conservation efforts.

Local & Regional Affiliations

Director Mike Rourke teaches Natural Resources/Environmental Life Sciences and Ag Mechanics at **Trinity High School** and is advisor for **Future Farmers of America**. Director Patrick Truman serves on the **Northwest California Resource Conservation & Development Council**. Director Lowden is active with Lions Club and **Weaverville Basin Trail Committee**. Director O'Sullivan took the lead in development of a **Community Forest** in Weaverville and serves on the **Weaverville Community Forest Steering Committee**. Rose Owens is Executive Director of **Roderick Senior Center** and is on the Board of the **Trinity Public Utilities District**. District Manager Pat Frost continues to serve on the **Trinity River Adaptive Management Group (TAMWG)**, the **Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee** and as a board member for the **Human Response Network**. Assistant District Manager Alex Cousins is the District's alternate on the TAMWG and is the chairman of the local non-profit, **Ascend Wilderness Experience**.

TCRCDD staff coordinate **Trinity County Fire Safe Council**, provide programs and maintenance of the **Young Family Ranch** community trust property, participate in the **Trinity County Weed Management Cooperative** and the **Trinity River Watershed Council**.

State & National Affiliations

Board Chair Colleen O'Sullivan serves on the **Forestry and Fuels Management Committee of the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD)**. Director Patrick Truman served as **CARCD** president and now serves as **CARCD** representative to **NACD** and was elected Secretary/Treasurer of the North Coast Area of **CARCD**.

Mike Rourke is advisor to **Future Farmers of America**. District Manager Pat Frost serves on the board of the **California Fire Safe Council**, the **Society of Wetland Scientists Professional Certification Board** and on the **California Statewide Watershed Advisory Committee**.



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Conservation education continues to be at the forefront of our efforts. In addition to sharing information about conservation with adults and families at events and workshops, we endeavor to serve the youth of Trinity County by providing fun nature learning opportunities and by augmenting school curriculum with natural resource specialists to provide lessons in the classroom, in the field and in special events at the Young Family Ranch.

The District received funding and assistance from Bureau of Land Management, Trinity Trust, U.S. Forest Service, Young Family Ranch Trust, Department of Fish & Game, Trinity County Child Abuse Prevention Council, Department of Conservation, Trinity River Restoration Program, California Fire Safe Council and individual contributors to conduct conservation education.

The District engaged in a growing range of outreach and education activities during 2011 and succeeded in reaching out to many residents, landowners and visitors to Trinity County. The District's work in 2011 included:

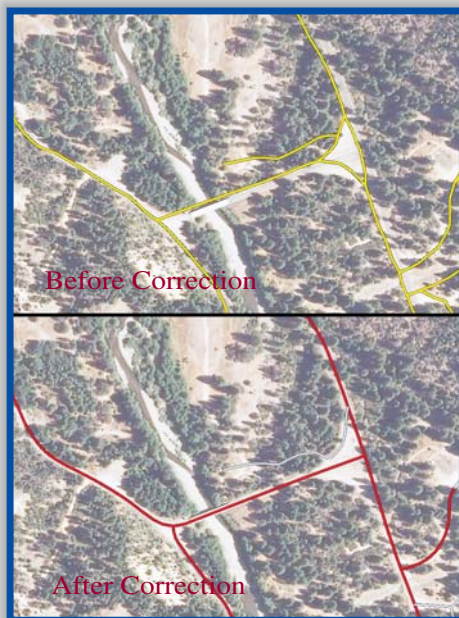
- Partnering with AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project to provide watershed and fisheries based Real Science lessons to K-12 students in Trinity County.
- Free family gardening and nutrition workshops at Young Family Ranch in Weaverville with the University of California Cooperative Extension and the Trinity County Child Abuse Prevention Council.
- Booths at the Trinity County Fair, Children's Festival and Salmon Festival.
- 13th Annual Environmental Science Camp for Weaverville Elementary School sixth graders at Bar 717 Ranch (Camp Trinity) in Hyampom.
- Facilitating Trinity County Fire Safe County and Firewise Communities Program.
- Conducting four week-long sessions of Summer Day Camp and Field Trips Program.
- Informing landowners of available Natural Resources Conservation Services programs and technical assistance.
- Facilitating Trinity River Watershed Council, which prioritizes tributary restoration and conservation projects.
- Teaming up with Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and non-profit outdoor recreation groups to organize volunteer events for all ages to replant forests, maintain trails and restore wildlife habitat.
- Hosting conservation information website, www.tcrd.net.
- Developing and distributing informational pamphlets and brochures.
- Advising landowners on weed eradication and fuels reduction.
- Hosting the 13th Annual Salmon & Heritage Fruit Festival in collaboration with Trinity County Chamber of Commerce, Trinity Arts Council and University of California Cooperative Extension.
- Hosting Trinity County Fire Safe Council website, www.tcrd.net/fsc/index.html.
- Organizing community volunteer days for trail-building and watershed-related work.
- Facilitating Weaverville Community Forest steering committee meetings and hosting the Weaverville Community Forest website, <http://www.tcrd.net/wcf/index.htm>.
- Communicating with local, regional, state and federal elected officials and agency personnel about local conservation needs and accomplishments.
- Participating in the Hayfork Small Farm Show promoting Trinity County's small farms, local food producers and naturecrafters.
- Providing information to Trinity Journal and other media outlets about projects.
- Participating in the Hayfork Natural Resources Fair for 1st through 8th grade students to share knowledge about natural resources, agriculture, nutrition and career possibilities.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

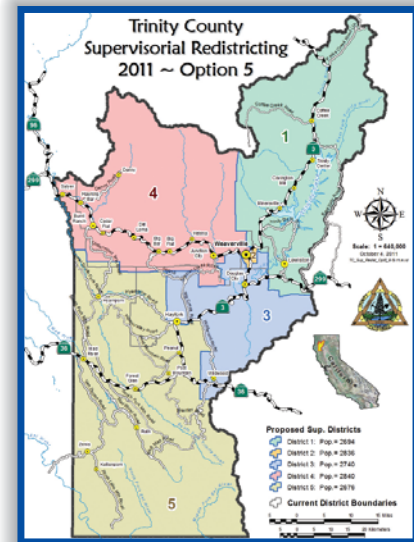
Trinity County continued to provide the District's Information Technology (IT) department with opportunities to serve the community with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) support services. The County Department of Transportation has secured four grants over the past five years through CalTrans' Blueprint Planning Project, which is intended to help counties and communities in their long term transportation and community planning efforts. These funds have been used by Trinity County to employ the District's GIS expertise in the development and improvement of important county-wide spatial data layers.

In 2011, one of the major tasks completed with these funds was to spatially correct the county roads layer to precisely overlay the USDA's National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP) aerial imagery, which is an important background layer in the County's GIS. Another task completed for this project was the conversion of existing parcel, zoning, land use, tax rate area, and other related land records layers from an older, more simplistic shapefile format to the more powerful industry standard geodatabase format in order to streamline updates and management of the spatial data in the future.

A separate project the District undertook at the request of the County Administrative Office was to assist the County in its State mandated Supervisorial redistricting effort, which by law must be completed within one year following each decennial Census. This project primarily consisted of the collection of block level Census spatial data and its corresponding population and demographic data, and then using this information to evenly distribute the County's population into five equally represented Supervisorial Districts.



An Example of County Roads Correction

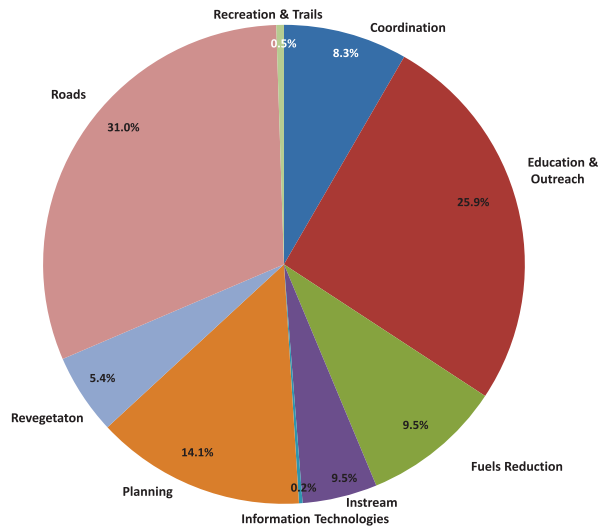


Example of Supervisorial Redistricting Map

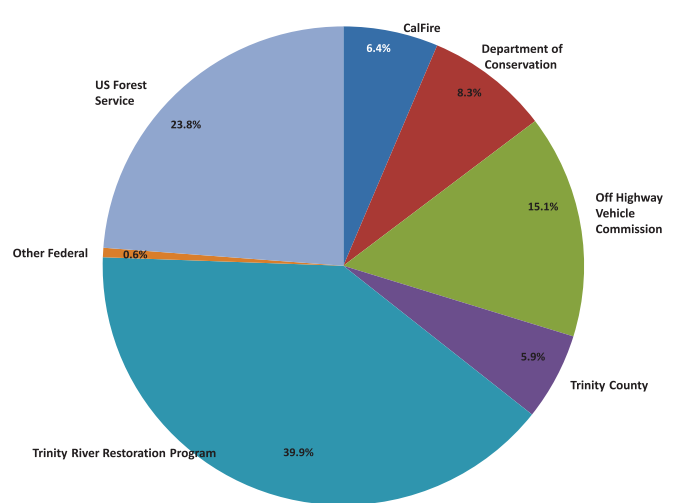
We started with the existing District boundaries developed after the 2000 Census, but made a significant change to District 4 (Down River) by including the Salyer area, which was previously in District 5 (South County). From there it was an exercise of refinement, particularly around District 2 (Weaverville), to balance the populations of all five Districts to within three percent of average. Four options were presented to the Board of Supervisors with varied versions of the District boundaries. The Board made several recommendations which were used to create a fifth option that was then officially adopted by the Board.

NEW PROJECTS 2011

Projects by Type



Funding Sources



Total: \$3,123,590



Weaverville Summer Day Camp

**At the Young Family Ranch — 260 Oregon St.
For students entering 1st through 6th grade**

- July 9 through July 13 - 1st Session
- July 16 through July 20 - 2nd Session
- July 23 through July 27 - 3rd Session
- July 30 through August 3 - 4th Session

Nature Exploration and Study Field Trips for 4th-6th Graders

Cost is \$30.00 per week session

Day Camp times are 9:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

Contact: Donna Rupp

Trinity County RCD ~ 623-6004

Space is limited to 35 children each session



Trinity River Restoration Program 2011 Accomplishments

The Trinity River Restoration Program (Program, TRRP) has reached the halfway mark by completing 23 of the 46 projects outlined in the Record of Decision (ROD - Phase 1).

The Program cannot take credit for the good fish runs in the Trinity River this year and the great runs projected for next year, yet we are happy to be nationally recognized as one of the partnerships tasked with restoring managed rivers in order to restore historic fisheries.

New performance measures, providing insights on TRRP progress in 2011, can now be accessed at www.trrp.net. Updated annually, these measures address aquatic habitat, fish and wildlife, and riparian vegetation. The context for each of these in the restoration of natural river processes and fisheries is explained broadly and in detail on the website.

First Maximum Restoration Water Release: The ROD was responsible for retaining more water for the Trinity River and it created the opportunity to establish natural river dynamics to restore the fisheries. The ROD describes the range of flows needed to create the variability found in unmanaged rivers with robust salmon and steelhead populations. Under the ROD, the allowable maximum flow of water released from the dam is 11,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). As 2011 was determined to be a “wet” water-year with good snowpack and rainfall, it enabled the maximum restoration flow release into the Trinity River. This was the first maximum flow since the ROD was signed in 2000 and was the highest flow in the river since 1974.

Field observation by TRRP technical staff and others confirmed the maximum flows resulted in significant changes to the river's path. There were changes to side channels, constructed bars and natural bars. Scouring and deposition of banks and pools were seen. As a result, the Program accelerated or expanded scheduled assessments of these changes. Those assessments included LiDAR and aerial photography of the entire 40-mile reach, geomorphic assessment by the US Geological Survey, topographic mapping and channel bathymetry – the measurement and imaging of changes in the river's underwater streambed.

Dynamic changes occurred throughout the river, both at natural and channel rehabilitation sites, so TRRP partners and the public await the results of these assessments with interest. The Phase 1 review initiated in 2011 was expanded and includes independent analysis and review of all aspects of project design, implementation and outcomes under oversight of the Scientific Advisory Board. A draft report is due out in August 2012.

Projects: The Wheel Gulch Channel Rehabilitation Project was made possible through a partnership with CalTrans and the cooperation of a private landowner. The seven-acre construction site consisted of a split flow channel, a low flow side channel, an alcove, and a habitat enhancement channel to reconnect the existing Wheel Gulch drainage to the mainstem river. A mid-channel island was constructed with wood structures added to provide geomorphic complexity and fish habitat. Lowering of existing topography created floodplain that inundates at various flow levels and adult fish were seen in the split flow channel this fall. Revegetation was completed and regrowth can already be seen.

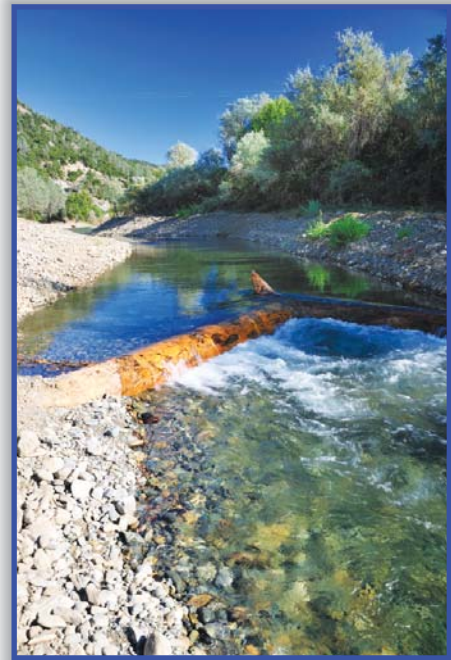
Scientific review and adaptive management: Peer review, an essential aspect of the scientific



High Flows in Progress



Photos from the Wheel Gulch Channel Rehab Project

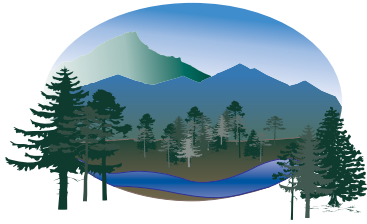


process, ensures that results and conclusions are reproducible and defensible. The process is rigorous and in 2011 was applied to all products sponsored by the TRRP. Twenty TRRP investigation plans and four reports were reviewed by external experts and all channel rehabilitation project designs were peer reviewed.

Public outreach: TRRP engaged in intensive public outreach this year. A brochure was developed and a public meeting held to describe the use of wood as geomorphic and habitat features in the river. Public meetings were held to provide information about the upcoming Wheel Gulch project design in July. Staff attended a Lewiston Townhall to answer questions about the high flow event, and three formal presentations were given to the Trinity River Guides Association about upcoming projects, with an additional ten face-to-face meetings to discuss project design features. Observational floats were also instituted to gather community and guide observations about changes in the river in 2011. TRRP staff also volunteered at community events and had a booth at the Weaverville Salmon Festival, the Trinity County Fair, Sovereign Day, Tops Customer Appreciation Day and the Return of the Salmon Festival. Outreach events were held to gather community recommendations for the river's future with six events planned down the river beginning in December. Riparian vegetation improvement was the focus of the Shasta - Trinity Fly Fishers' effort. They teamed with the Trinity River Restoration Program and the RCD to sponsor a tree planting event in March to improve habitat along the Trinity River near a newly constructed side channel at Lowden Ranch.

First youth intern: TRRP mentored a Yurok Tribe Summer Intern for the month of August by involving the intern in daily restoration, monitoring and science activities. The internship provided training and field activities related to restoration site design, construction, monitoring and assessment, and fisheries and aquatic science and management. These activities were coordinated with the Yurok Tribal Fisheries Program and TRRP Weaverville staff. The hope was to develop a new river rehabilitation physical scientist but alas the lure of fish was too great and he preferred snorkeling and other fisheries sciences to surveying and topographic mapping.

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**

This issue of the *Conservation Almanac* is funded in part by grants from the Trinity River Restoration Program, State Water Resources Control Board, California Department of Fish and Game, Young Family Ranch Trust, California Fire Safe Council, Trinity County Title III Fund, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service and the Trinity County Resource Advisory Council.

