

Trinity River Watershed Council

March 11th, 2025 at 10:00am – 12:00pm

TCRCD Conference Room, #30 Horseshoe Lane, Weaverville

Our Mission:

To protect, enhance, restore and revitalize the watershed through collaborative efforts that leverage external resources, work toward common goals, educate and engage community stakeholders, address natural resource issues, and support healthy ecosystems for future generations.

Agenda

10:00-10:10 Welcome and Introductions

10:10-10:45 Guest Speakers Topic: Trinity Headwaters: Community-owned forests for people and conservation with Nick Goulette of the Watershed Research and Training Center

10:45-10:50 Announcements

10:50-11:55 Partner Updates

a. USFS – Shasta Trinity National Forest

b. USFS- Six Rivers National Forest

c. Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

d. California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)

e. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

f. Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP)/
Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)

g. Trinity County

h. Hoopa Tribal Fisheries

i. Yurok Tribal Fisheries

j. Tsnungwe Tribe

k. Nor Rel Muk Wintu Nation

l. Trinity County Resource Conservation District

m. The Watershed Research and Training Center

n. 5 Counties Salmonid Conservation Program/
Northwest California Resource Conservation &
Development Council

o. Trinity County Fish and Game Commission

p. Trinity County Agricultural Alliance

q. Flowra

r. New Attendees

11:55-12:00 Close

Next Meeting is June 10th, 2025 at 10 am-12 pm

Virtual Meeting Information

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89707228772?pwd=WUo1VW5hS2x0UC85ODE4dFVlNEFYUT09>

Meeting ID: **897 0722 8772**

Passcode: **96093**

+16694449171,,89707228772#,,,,*96093# US +16699009128,,89707228772#,,,,*96093# US (San Jose)

Questions?

Contact Annyssa Interrante at 530 623 6004 X 209 or email at ainterrante@tcrd.net

Trinity River Watershed Council – March 11th, 2025

Total Attendance – 19 people

Meeting start: 10:03am

Online (14) :

Kelly Sheen – Trinity County Resource Conservation District
Bobbie Miler – Shasta Trinity National Forest
Amelia Fleitz – Shasta Trinity National Forest
Justin Garwood – California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Josh Smith - Watershed Research and Training Center
Bridger Cohen - Watershed Research and Training Center
Manashi Paul – California State Water Board
Lauren Alvares – Trinity River Restoration Program
Dave DeLange – Trinity Public Utilities District
Dylan Kirkley - Trinity County Resource Conservation District
Kate Blanchard - California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Cyndie Childress Nor Rel Muk Wintu Nation
Tracy McFadin - Watershed Research and Training Center
Kyle DeJulio - Yurok Tribe

In person (5):

Chris Losi - Flowra
Sarah Acuar- Flowra
Nick Goulette - Watershed Research and Training Center
Cindy Buxton- Watershed Research and Training Center
Clay Groetsch - Trinity County Resource Conservation District, Grizzly Corps

Adjourned 11:28 am

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Project to Conserve and Enhance the Trinity Headwaters

Nick Goulette, Watershed Research and Training Center

- Who owns land and who will own land and what that mean
 - o Community owned forest land -> Trinity Headwaters
 - Compelling for public money
 - Part of larger water infrastructure for CA water
 - o Pipeline of funding for watersheds as key infrastructure
 - How to make these places good options for public conservation funds
- This watershed is the last recently unburned
 - o Lots of issues of land use and the variety of infrastructure in the watershed
 - Hard to mitigate risks
- Project Vision
 - o Bring watershed out of private timberland and into community run
 - Still w/ timber harvest (sustainable)
 - Shared stewardship
 - Goal is to keep land privately owned but managed by a community based non-profit
 - Create stewardship agreement w/ FS to manage checkerboard
 - o Goal to break down the checkerboard boundaries
 - Cooperative work w/ feds
- Forest would include Deadfall Meadow (Source of Headwaters of Trinity River)
 - o Goals of conifer removal
 - o Standing timber can be used as revenue stream for managing the land while thinning for forest health
 - Create uneven aged stands
 - o Good access, not overly steep
 - o Many downstream benefits
 - Lots of people have interests in the water across California, would like to collaborate and work together
- Status and Next Steps
 - o Acquired philanthropic and public funds
 - \$15 mil for acquisition
 - \$1.5 mil earmarked from state
 - \$1.5 mil SNC
 - \$12.5 mil State Wildlife
 - o Acquired August 2024
 - o Have a working relationship with Pacific Forest Trust
 - o Considerations of legal structure
 - Community input and flexibility
 - o Forest Management Plan being created
 - Looking for stakeholder input
 - o Goal to implement in '25
 - o Want to have more community authority and responsibility over management
 - o As restructuring of family timber companies has them selling to international real estate

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companies, the community forests can get in the middle of these transactions

- High conservation value to these lands, like recreation access, water resources, wildlife habitat
- Approached Nor Rel Muk on land reparation, not a strong interest in this land but a consideration going forward (considered 1st)

Questions

- Bobbie: Have you thought of recreation management?
 - Nick: Been forging relationships w/ NF managers, trail users of Siskiyou-Callahan Trail have worked on the Mt Shasta side, and WRTC has been working to connect this trail to PCT and have worked a lot. Would like fix historic trails. Plan to restore old cabins on private land
- Manashi: Elevation, snow impact
 - Nick: 4000 -> 6800, road is often closed in winter due to snow, snow is hydrological driver
- Sarah: Any plans for stream restoration?
 - Nick: Focused on meadow restoration and emergency work, will think about what infrastructure is needed
- Chris: Can you use receipts from timber harvest?
 - Nick: Yes, the timber plan has assumption of timber harvest in general forest zone w/ restrictions w/ goals of larger trees
 - Chris: Have you thought of a PTIR
 - Nick: Probably do individual timber harvest plans

Announcement

- Watershed Council funded through 2025
- Effort toward Weaver Creek management
 - Josh: Yurok tribe working on restoration project 5Cs restoring, TCRCD doing BDAs, CalTrans upgrading stream crossing, trying to tie these together (Watershed Council Subgroup?)
 - Council will not have standing committees, need super majority vote for ad-hoc committees

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Partner Updates

Shasta Trinity National Forest

Eric Wiseman is no longer with the Forest Service. He is now with the Yurok Construction Company. If you have any grants or agreements that you're working on with him, make sure to email Amelia and Monique.

Galen Anderson of hydrology has also retired. Christine Mai is going to be back soon and she will be potentially retiring later this spring. If you have any hydrology needs, contact Fran Nesler for any west side hydro needs.

And if you have any grants or agreements managed by Christine or Galen, CC Monique when submitting documents, unless you're directed otherwise. Lots of changes going on at the forest.

Bobbie Miller, is taking on the fish bio and hydro responsibilities at the forest level now. But it is just two portions of her position. She's also leading the NEPA review at the forest level and coordination of large projects between the forest and the region.

Bobbie and Amelia have been working closely with Ironwood and Trinity River Restoration Program to make sure the programmatic EA that has been brought up in past meetings is consistent with Forest Service conditioned based management process for implementation.

The Hyampom Community Risk Reduction Project decision document is likely to be signed this week. They're just waiting on the water board to approve enrollment before work gets started. The Bowerman Cooperative Fuel Break Project is still working through the process, hoping to have that buttoned up by the end of the month.

Big Ranch Community Risk Reduction Project initiation letter should be coming out soon. Fuel reduction from Big Bar to Salyer. The Shasta Trinity is the lead and the Six Rivers National Forest is supporting. Surveys are planned for this summer.

South Fork Mountain Fuel Break, Six Rivers is the lead and the Shasta Trinity is supporting. Surveys are planned for this summer.

Amelia talked to engineering about the fuel tanks on the forest service compound relevant to the Sydney Gulch Restoration Project. The tank was removed, but additional abatement of the soils is needed prior to moving forward with the Sydney Gulch Restoration Project. The Forest Service has not been able to secure funding for this, even though they have tried through state and federal funding sources. If another entity would be interested in helping with this, please reach out.

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Amelia can gather the specs and previous cost estimates for the hazard abatement to get that moving forward again.

Two special use events on the Trinity River are coming up this year, including the Big Flat Jamboree in May and the U.S. Rafting National Competition in September. Both will be launching out of Pigeon Point and pulling out in Big Flat.

Snorkel surveys will continue this year. CDFW, NEMS, Forest Service and Watershed Center are waiting to see what the water year looks like before we try to schedule for July versus August. Be sure to contact Amelia or Cindy, if you want to be on the invite list. Agency or former agency folks only, please. That extends to partners, so it's not just agency.

Shasta-Siskiyou County RACs are accepting proposal applications.

If you have questions, reach out to Monique. We are still waiting on the status of the Trinity County RAC and are needing members on that board.

Trinity River Restoration Program

Currently working on Upper Conner Creek phase two. We're currently working on River Right. And then once the in-water work season opens up July 15th, we will cross over and finish up the project on River Left.

We are planning to start our Sawmill Project, phase one of that. We'll be repairing a side channel breach on River Right of the project. And we're also still working on our Trinity Watershed Restoration EA, what we had previously called the Programmatic EA with the Forest Service and the BLM.

Bobbie and Amelia have been super helpful in working on that and making sure it is consistent with their forest, like Amelia had mentioned. We're really hoping to get this project out for public comment this week, but with the changes to NEPA regulation implementation and just additional agency reviews that are needed at this point, it's just delaying the process a little bit, but we're really still trying to push to get it out this week. So that's really close, we're working with the times and the new administration and how NEPA is changing.

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Yurok Tribal Fisheries

We're working on the Sawmill and Conner Creek projects with the restoration program.

We are in design on Indian Creek phase two, below the bridge. We're also going to be contracting out a feasibility study for replacing the county crossing at that location, at that site. Those are moving forward this year.

We received a couple of different funding sources for implementation of our Weaver Creek project that Josh mentioned. Some of those funding sources are in question. We're hoping to get some more clarity on that in the coming weeks and months.

We hope to go to implementation on that next year. That, and then on the fisheries monitoring side, we're installing the screw traps at Willow Creek to start our out-migrant monitoring season. The Hoopa Tribe has been monitoring since January, although it's been interrupted by flow events at their Pear Tree site, and we're just getting started down in Willow Creek.

Trinity County Resource Conservation District

Dylan:

We have begun doing some site scoping for the Upper Trinity project. We've narrowed down some places in the lower section, but haven't been able to make it to the northern sections due to snow. Got some good data up there. And we are looking to do some contracting with Watershed Center, with Josh and Leslie over there for some BDA work. So we'll have those contracts hopefully ready for them soon.

Also wrapping my head around the changes to NEPA. I feel like I've got a pretty good wrap on that if anyone wants to talk with me at some later point. The NEPA changes are essentially just going back to 2020 rules and skirting a lot of the more recent changes as of last year, those are basically thrown out.

Figuring out changes to SQL as well. Still trying to figure out exactly what those mean.

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Kelly:

We're working with the Watershed Center on a SERGO based programmatic. It's being paid for by the Department of Conservation and we're trying to have a little bit wider view than just the Upper Trinity, but it will be largely focused on restoration efforts in the Upper Trinity with the intent to have at least one shovel ready project when we've complete that. The date on that was extended from March 31st to December 31st of this calendar year.

Also working with the Watershed Center on identifying potential BDA sites within the Weaver Basin, as was discussed earlier, through RAC funding that we have that is intended just to identify sites and then hopefully begin the process of getting some level of environmental compliance completed on those projects. We're currently working on some vehicle abatement projects that are both funded by Cal Recycle and the Trinity RAC.

So we're hoping to have those things wrapped up within the next month or two. And we're trying to kind of expedite getting some of that stuff completed sooner than later and identifying locations and things of that nature.

We are continuing to work with both the Six Rivers and the Chess Trinity National Forest on road sediment source reduction through road work that has been both funded through the forest and the wildfire crisis strategy, some of which is sort of on hold at this point, but we're getting good feedback that that may be changing soon. So hopefully we'll be hearing some word on that sooner than later, but we do have a fair bit of funding through disaster relief funding through the forest and some mitigation funding through the Department of Transportation, CalTrans, that is going to be focused on our continuing work that we started last season within the Monument Fire footprint.

Watershed Research and Training Center

Bridger:

Corral Gulch project, big stage zero project in Indian Valley near Hayfork. Not any huge updates on that, but we are progressing forward with some of the NEPA compliance, finishing touches and engineering review and getting that hopefully on the ground late this summer, early fall. Salt Creek project in Hay Fork as well. We are far along in the process of getting some funding for that.

Also there are some potential changes or at least coordination that needs to happen with the county. So we're working through that as well. But again, trying to get this project on the ground, hopefully next year, again, probably in the late summer.

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Meadows work, we have been working with the KMP, the Klamath Meadows Partnership on taking all the meadow delineations and inventory work that we did last year and the other partner groups for that organization did last year and using those to train a new version of the Lost Meadows model for this region. The initial release of that updated version should be coming out here really soon in the next week or two. And we'll be super curious to see how that performs and if it can locate some potential restoration areas in our area.

And then other sides of things, Leslie, our compliance specialist has been doing a ton of work getting various programmatic options set up for restoration work in Trinity County and at least in the Trinity County River Watershed. So she's quite far along in getting a programmatic CEQA and Clean Water Act Section 401 coverage. This is through that statewide restoration general order so the Watershed Center will be the lead permit holder on that, but it should be available to other organizations through the Watershed Center and it covers low-tech process-based restoration, the things like beaver dam analogs, things like native species planting. Then there's also some accommodation for larger scale stuff. So road and trail improvements and even heavy equipment work, like wood loading or stage zero projects, as well as grazing and fencing management and monitoring. So quite a lot gets covered by that and we're really looking forward to having that fully on board here.

The other programmatic that we're not as far along on, but are investigating the option is a new program that the state has put out and it's a restoration management permit. So this would cover California Endangered Species Act take for certain species and then also the Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement permit.

Josh:

Leslie and I are also still working on storage and forbearance tanks projects. So there's two more tank arrays that should be installed in the next couple of months. So many more gallons of water stored for in-stream use.

Roads projects, Zach Blanchard has been working on projects, he implemented a bunch of projects in the McFarland Complex and the Sims Wildfire; the South Fork Trinity River areas last fall. Right now he's working with the Yurok Tribe on the McKinney Fire Roads restoration in the kind of Big Klamath area.

Trails wise, we've got projects this summer in the South Fork Trinity River Trail, which is August complex recovery. And then the Hay Fork Ruth Trail, which is also August complex recovery.

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Cindy:

On the monitoring side of things it's looking like a good water year so far. It will be gearing up here real soon to get ready for placing out temperature loggers, doing stream flow. As Amelia's update said, the snorkel surveys, we're unsure if we're going to start in July or August. Water flow is one of the issues. So if you're interested in the snorkel surveys, by May or June, please have an email out to the Forest Service. I help lead the South Fork one, so send one to the Watershed Center.

Flowra:

We got a grant from the Water Board to do a sediment reduction study in Post Mountain. And over the last three months, we've had some pretty good accomplishments.

We produced a sediment source inventory for sites on Post Mountain roads that contribute sediment to the stream. We made calculations of sediment, and we submitted the report to the Water Board. We got some comments.

Josh and Cindy are looking at it, so we look forward to their comments as well. But we're now moving into thinking about implementation from the perspective of a civil engineer we've had out there in Post Mountain on those roads, looking at costs and logistics of doing repairs. We're going to use his notes and his estimates to identify areas and prioritize the first areas for restoration. And then the third step will be doing permitting for the restoration. Probably want to use the Five C's waiver.

May need to do some Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreements but Flowra is set up to do that because we do that on our clients all the time. So we're maybe about halfway through now with this project and hoping that by the end of the year, we will have applied for grants to do implementation on a subset of the roads and culverts. Hopefully we can tie some planning dollars to that so that we can do implementation of areas that have had permits along with piggybacking some other planning and permitting dollars to that. So we can do planning and permitting for other parts of the area.

26 miles of road that are managed by the Post Mountain PUD. They've got something like a \$40,000 annual budget to maintain all their roads. We've got a lot of support and several of you have written letters of support. We appreciate that.

Feel free to reach out to me if you've got any questions or thoughts or identify other grant opportunities because I think there's a real need to do a road restoration down in that part of the county.

Adjourned 11:28 am.

Questions?

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A Project to Conserve and Enhance the Trinity Headwaters



PACIFIC FOREST TRUST



Trinity Headwaters in context

- Part of the essential water infrastructure for the state of CA – prioritized in state law and policy (AB 2551)
- Prioritizing, funding and implementing active forest management is a key part our pathway to watershed resilience

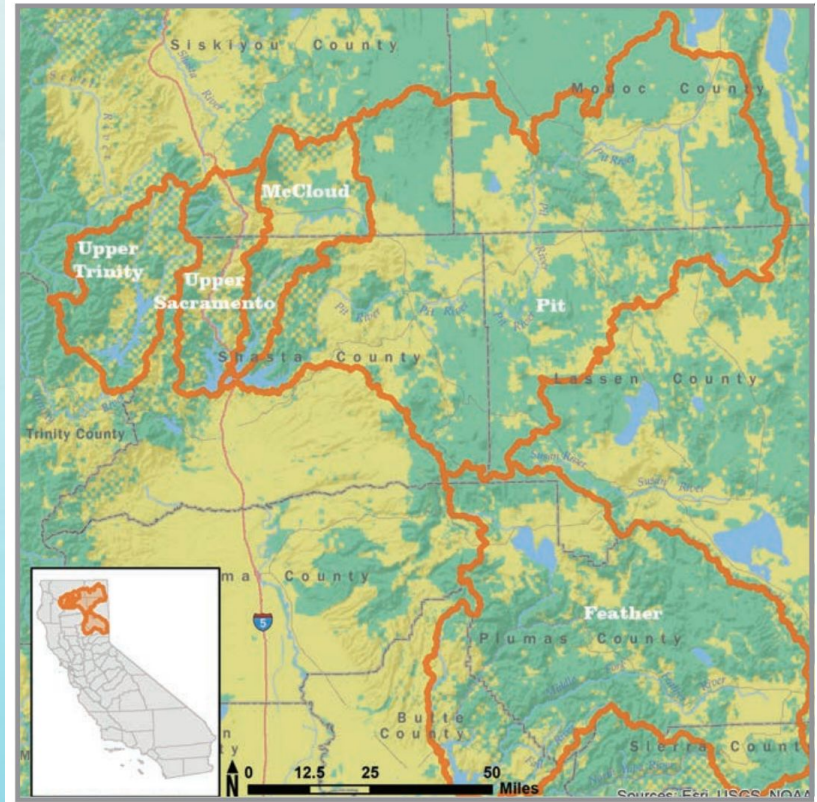
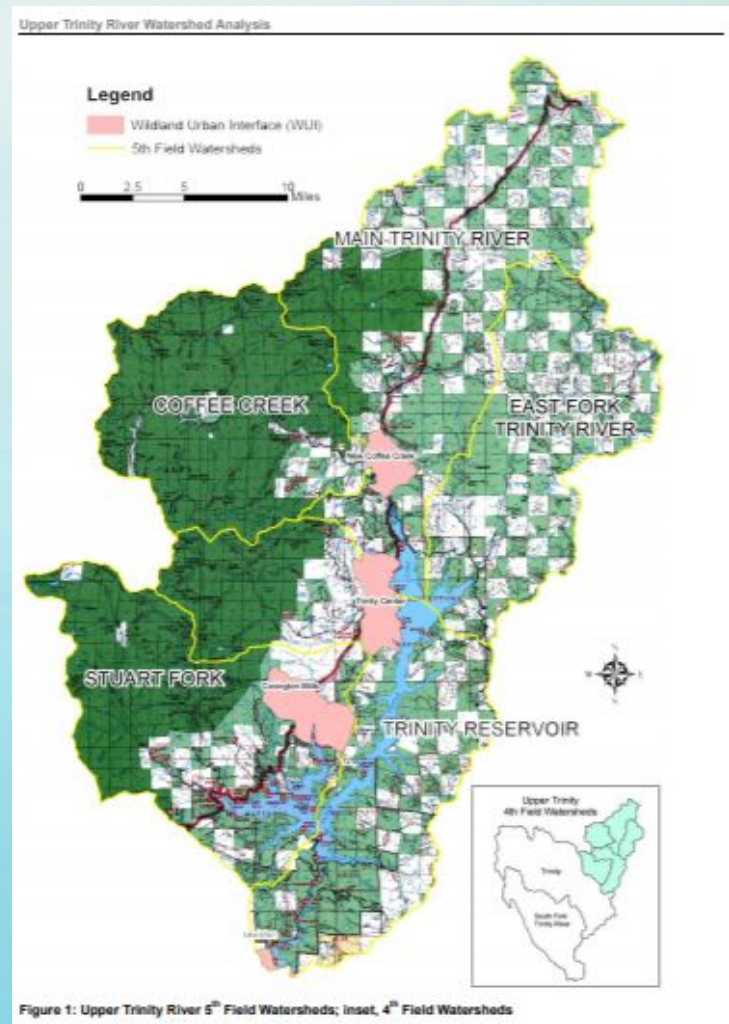


FIGURE 1. The Feather, Pit, McCloud, Upper Sacramento, and Trinity watersheds supply the Oroville and Shasta reservoirs. With their ultimate confluence in the Sacramento River, these watersheds also provide over 80% of the freshwater flowing into the San Francisco Bay.

Risks and management challenges abound

- Wildfire poses extreme risks to:
 - Communities – life and property
 - Recreation and amenity economy
 - Ecological values
 - Timber resources
 - Water resources
 - Power production
- The scope and scale of current land management is misaligned for mitigating risks and optimizing benefits



Trinity Headwaters Project Vision

Easement and Land Acquisition

- Acquire approx. 11,000 acres of private timberland to be managed as community forest asset
- Establish permanent working forest conservation easement

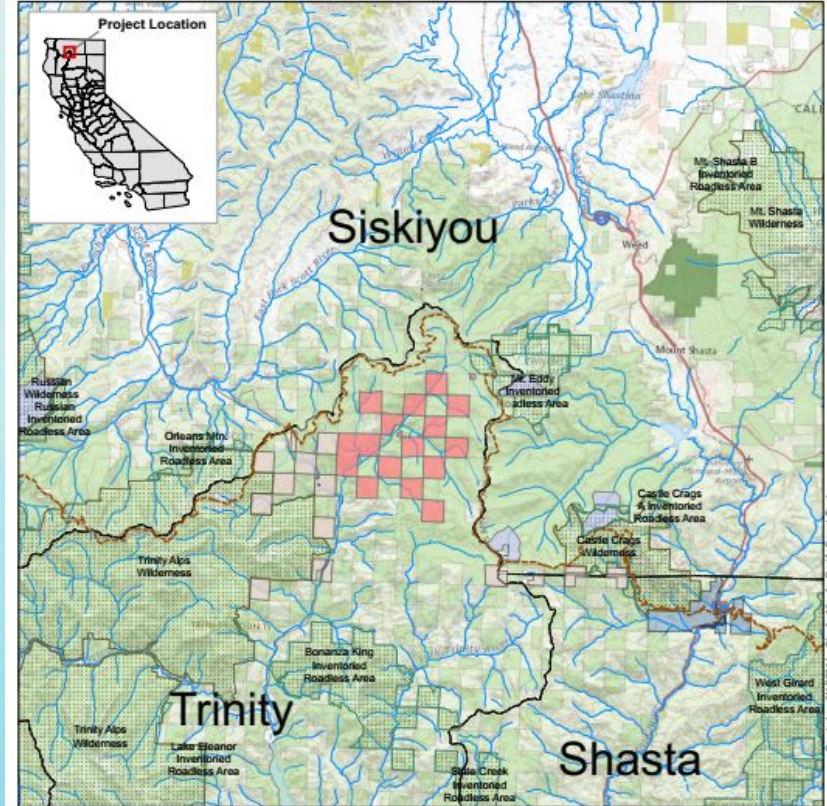
Long-term Shared Stewardship

- Leverage partnerships and funding to establish 20-year stewardship agreement with USFS
- Manage watershed for resilience and community-benefits, at-scale and across boundaries

Trinity Headwaters Location



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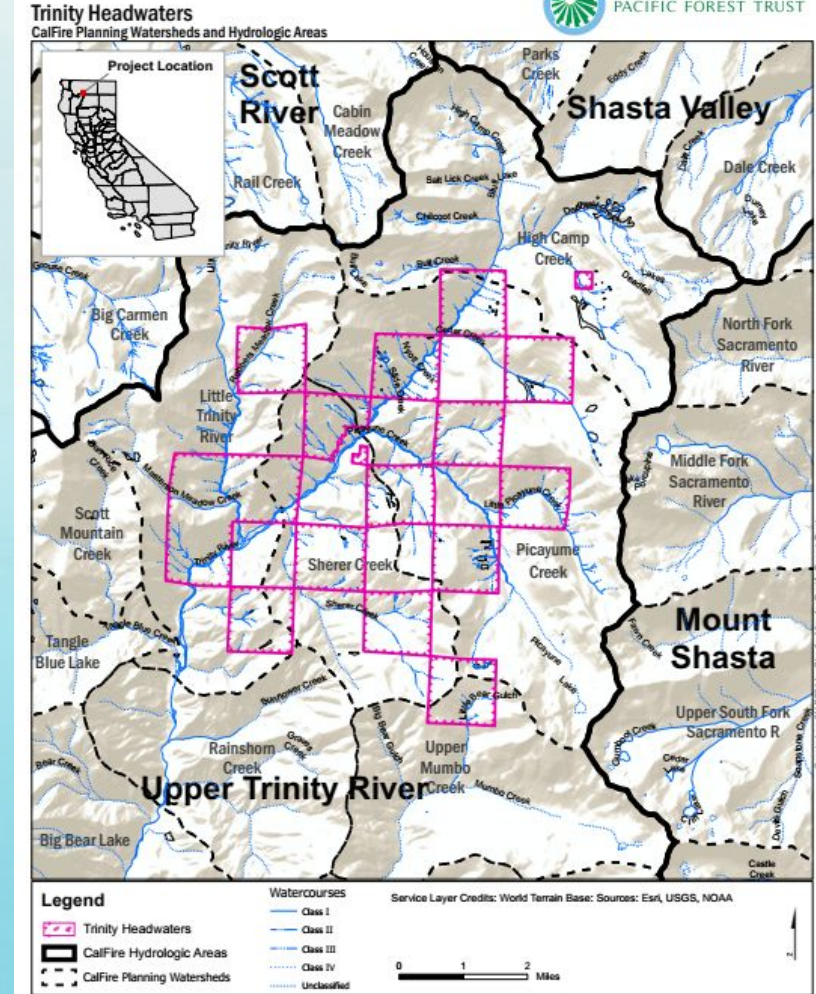
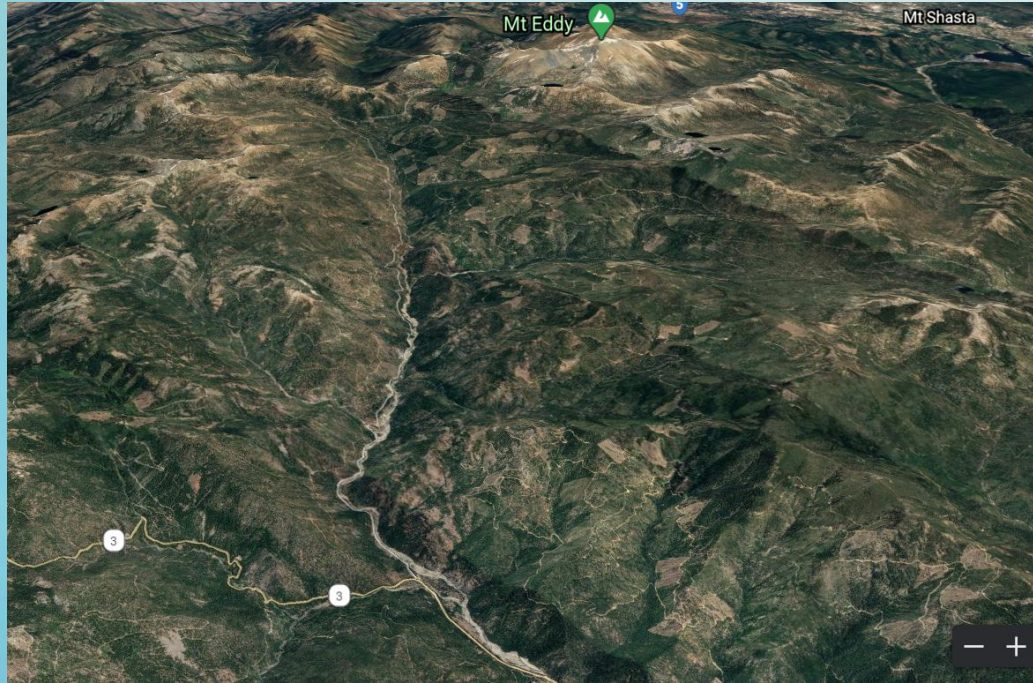


Legend

- Property Boundary
- US Forest Service
- US Bureau of Land Management
- Castle Crags State Park
- Wilderness Areas
- Inventoried Roadless Areas
- USFS Special Interest Management Areas
- SPI - possible USFS acquisition
- Existing PFT Conservation Easements
- Pacific Crest Trail

Service Layer Credits: USGS Topo; USGS The National Map; National Boundaries Dataset; 30EP Elevation Program; Geographic Names Information System; National Hydrography Dataset; National Land Cover Database; National Structures Dataset; and National Transportation Dataset; USGS Global Ecosystems; U.S. Census Bureau TIGER/Line data; USFS Road data; Natural Earth data; U.S. Department of State Humanitarian Information Unit; and NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, U.S. Coastal Relief Model. Data released May 2020.

Trinity Headwaters Forest – Management Potentials and Benefits



Status and next steps



- Project initiated - 2020
- Acquisition completed - Aug. '24
 - Philanthropy and public funding
- Consideration on legal ownership structure ongoing
- Forest Management Plan development underway
- Scope for stakeholder comments - May or June '25
- Prioritizing projects for planning
- Implementing in '25 and beyond
- Expanding community-owned natural and working lands in Trinity County
 - Working Forests/timberlands
 - Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)
 - High conservation value lands
 - Water resources, special habitats, recreation access, etc.

Many thanks!

Contact me:

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