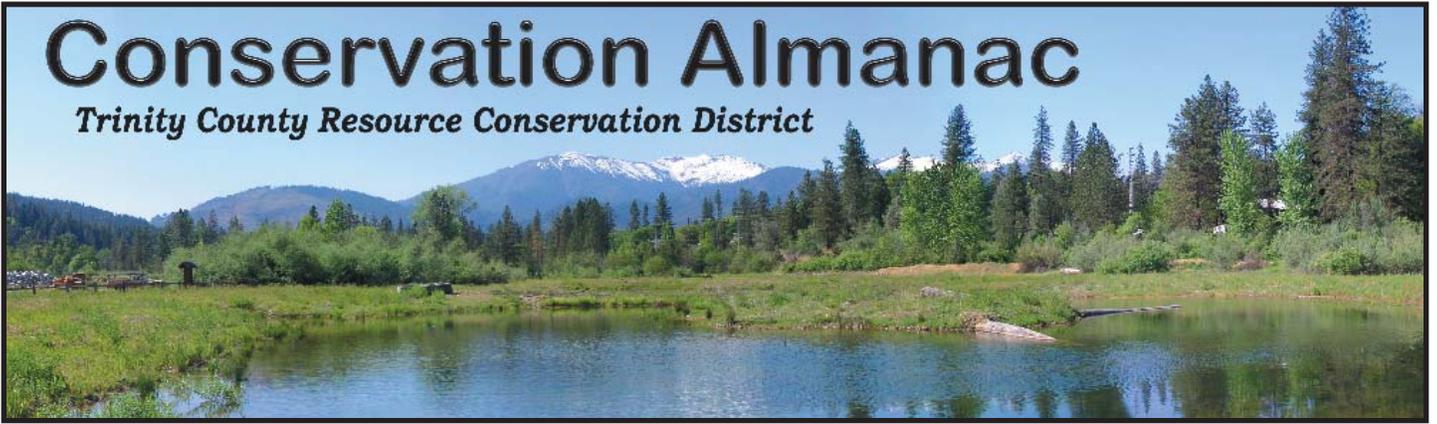


Conservation Almanac

Trinity County Resource Conservation District



Spring 2007

Vol. XVI No. 2

Coffee Creek Students Learn about their Watershed

AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project (WSP) members Christy Wagner and Russ Spangler had fun this spring instructing students at Coffee Creek School about the importance of local watersheds as habitat for salmonids and other life forms. The school has nine students, with Francie Epperson teaching grades K-3 and Elizabeth Gill instructing grades 4-8.

“The students were eager to participate and the teachers were delightful to work with,” Wagner said. The mission of WSP is to “conserve, restore and enhance anadromous watersheds for future generations by linking education with high quality scientific practices.” Wagner and Spangler gave lessons about the water cycle, the life cycle of salmon, and provided fun facts about the needs and importance of the fish and their habitat, including macro-invertebrates. The RCD’s Geographic Information Systems Manager, Kelly Sheen, provided the school with hydrographic maps depicting the entire Trinity River watershed and its sub-basins, and also a localized map showing details of Coffee Creek watershed where the students live. “It’s great to see the students’ energy and the enthusiasm for learning,” Spangler said.

Students learned about topographic aspects of the maps then team-built models of their local watershed using paper mache. They also performed a theatrical production of the Life Cycle of the Salmon in full costume. Topping off the six weeks of lessons was a field trip to Coffee Creek to collect and identify macro-invertebrates as an assessment of water quality. Students learned they have a very healthy stream. This project is partially funded by the California Department of Fish & Game through its Fisheries Restoration Grant Program.

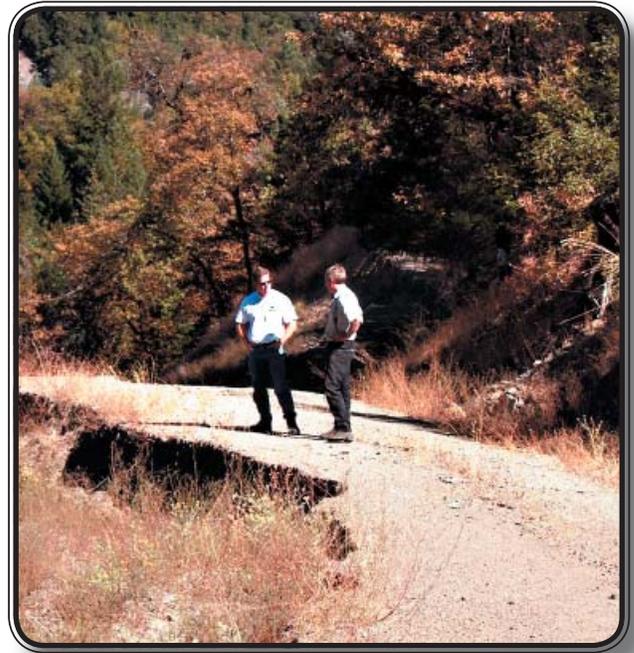


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Free Conservation Planning

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office in Weaverville is accepting sign-ups now from private landowners for 2007 Conservation Planning. The free conservation planning is for farmers, ranchers, non-industrial timber landowners and other agricultural operations in Trinity County who desire conservation planning assistance on lands they own or manage.



Landowners who desire technical assistance from NRCS conservationists to prepare comprehensive soil and water conservation plans on their property are encouraged to sign up for conservation planning between March 15 and June 1 to receive priority planning status. Participants will receive soils information and soils map, color aerial photo and topographic maps of their property. NRCS will work with landowners to complete a self-assessment workbook to help them identify the resource concerns, goals and objectives for their properties. This information will help guide NRCS planners in developing a personalized conservation plan.

Benefits of preparing a voluntary conservation plan for private landowners are many, according to District Conservationist Jim Spear. "A well thought out conservation plan helps landowners implement projects on their land that meet their goals and objectives while also improving natural resource conditions on cropland, irrigated pasture, rangelands, orchards and vineyards." Having a conservation plan in place can help a landowner when applying for USDA programs that provide cost-share financial assistance to implement sound conservation practices, Spear explained.

To sign up for the Conservation Planning assistance contact Jim Spear or Tiffany Riess at the Trinity County USDA-NRCS Field Office at #3 Horseshoe Lane (PO Box 1450), Weaverville, CA 96093; telephone (530) 623-3991, extensions 104 or 109; or, find the application form at the RCD's website, www.tcrd.net.

First Annual Science Symposium Focused on the Trinity River

The Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) convened the first annual Science Symposium for program partners, stakeholders, and the public in early February. The event, held in Weaverville, featured 45 presentations by resource specialists and scientists representing the many agencies, tribes, and organizations that work within the Trinity Basin. The purpose of the symposium was to share information, research findings, and accomplishments related to restoration efforts, and to facilitate cross-disciplinary dialog.

Nearly 125 individuals registered to attend the three day session, with an average daily attendance of about 75. Eleven different sessions and panels addressed a myriad of topics. The variety of scientific disciplines involved provides a feel for the complexity of restoration efforts and the amount of interaction taking place among scientists.

Panel topics included such titles as Fish Response to Implementing ROD Flows; Fine Sediment Measurement and Modeling; Fish and Avian Habitat; Impacts to Natural Production; Coarse Sediment Measurement and Modeling; Information Management; Water Temperature Compliance and Modeling; Biologic Response to Water; Temperature; Hatchery Impacts; and Integrating Habitat and Geomorphic Process.

Abstracts and PowerPoint presentations, along with symposium notes, have been posted for all to read at www.trrp.net/science/2007scienceSymposium.htm.

The first-ever symposium also contributed to accomplishing other priorities for TRRP this year, including the Integrated Assessment Plan, Fiscal Year 2008 budgeting, and Water Year 2007 flow scheduling for the Trinity River.



Weaver Creek Watershed Day

Come Help us Celebrate Our Local Watersheds

When: Sat. May 19th from 9:00am to 12:00 pm

Where: Mill Street Bridge at Weaver Creek Trail Head

What: Creek Watch Kickoff, Monitoring, Hikes, Creek Clean-up, Music, Food, and Fun!

Tobacco Free Event

LOWER SOUTH FORK ROAD FUELS REDUCTION PROJECT

Removal of highly flammable, overgrown brush and small trees is in full swing along Lower South Fork Road. Crews from the Trinity County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD) are clearing out “ladder fuels” that have the potential of to carry flames upward into the treetop canopy where they can quickly spread.

TCRCD’s hard-working crew of 4-5 started March 9, and using chainsaws and a chipper blazed away on a stretch of undeveloped property, thinning dead and low limbs while clearing heavy brush back 100 feet from the county road. Landowners along South Fork Road had given permission by signing temporary entry permits that allowed work to be done on their property within that corridor.

Residents have been worried that it’s just a matter of time before a fire jeopardized their safety, their homes and their scenic surroundings. Private parcels are patch-worked along the narrow 11-mile, single-lane road that is heavily traveled by tourists and locals alike. The road leads to several public river access points and to a popular trailhead, which means it gets a lot of traffic during the high-risk fire season. Increasing off-highway vehicle (OHV) use on Hennessey ridge, plus wood-cutting and hunting in the area have all heightened the risk of fire.

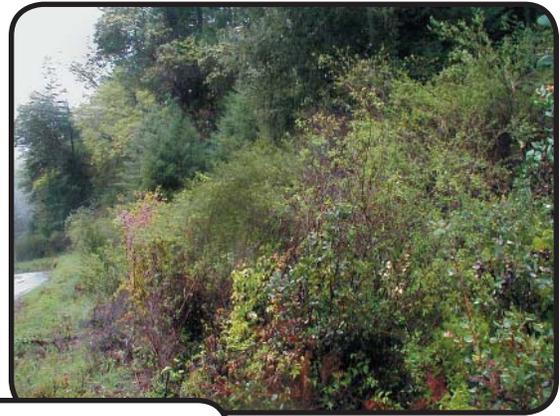
Residents are happy to see this fuels reduction project moving forward, but it didn’t start overnight. The first community planning meeting took place at Salyer Volunteer Fire Department back in December 2004. With the help of Trinity County Fire Safe Council and the TCRCD, concerned landowners and local fire officials worked to have this area identified as “high risk” for fire danger because of the heavy fuel load. That gave it priority as a project in the Trinity County Community Wildfire Protection Plan to receive funding for fuels reduction work.

That funding, provided by California Fire Safe Council with monies from the USDA Forest Service National Fire Plan, is targeted for use on private lands only, and is intended to reduce fire hazards while ensuring good access for responding firefighters and equipment in the event of a wildfire. Landowners in the area view the project as a complement to their own ongoing seasonal fuels reduction efforts, and everyone knows there’s always more to be done.

For more information on this project or how to determine if your area is high priority for fuels reduction within Trinity County, call the Trinity County Resource Conservation District at (530) 623-6004, go online at www.tcrd.net, or visit www.firesafecouncil.org.

May is Wildfire Awareness Month in Trinity County

Proper clearance of flammable vegetation to 100 feet away from buildings dramatically increases the chance of your house and other structures surviving a wildfire. This defensible space also provides for firefighter safety when protecting homes during a wildland fire



Lower South Fork Road corridor was overgrown with flammable brush prior to fuels reduction work by TCRCD crews.



Clearing out low branches and brush along roadway reduced risk for flames to spread, helping make this area fire safe. TCRCD crews chipped much of the cut material.



Trinity River Restoration Work

The RCD was recently awarded a grant of \$575,000 from the Department of Fish and Game to help fund restoration work on the Trinity River. While the majority of this funding will be passed on to the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) to assist them in completing river restoration work in the Lewiston area, the RCD will be responsible for completing the state required environmental documents.

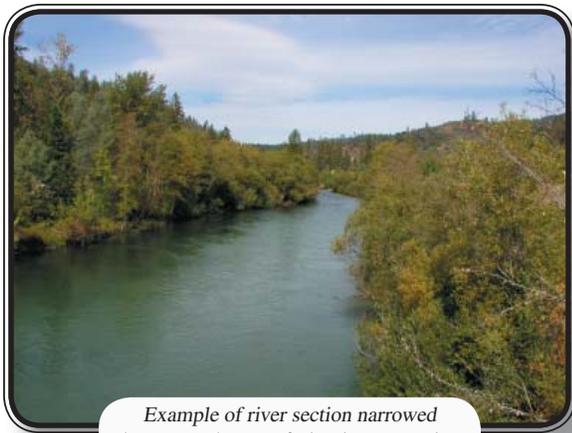
The Record of Decision that was signed in 2000 by the Secretary of the Interior calls for river restoration that focuses attention on the need to physically manipulate the bank and floodplain features of the Trinity River between River Mile 112.0 (Lewiston Dam) and River Mile 72.4 (North Fork Trinity River near Helena). The channel reconstruction is intended to restore the Trinity River's historic channel features and habitat complexity to improve fishery resources that have been altered due to lack of high flows in the river since Trinity Dam was built in 1963. The Lewiston-Dark Gulch Rehabilitation Project will occur between Trinity River Mile 105.0 to 111.5 and will be the fourth channel rehabilitation project constructed by TRRP that will enhance river processes and increase fisheries habitat downstream of Lewiston Dam. The project purpose and need is to provide increased juvenile salmonid rearing habitat on the mainstem Trinity River and to reduce impacts to homes and other human improvements located adjacent to the river, from the high flows that will be released from Trinity Dam in the future during extremely wet years.

Some of the following work may be conducted in one or more activity areas as part of this project:

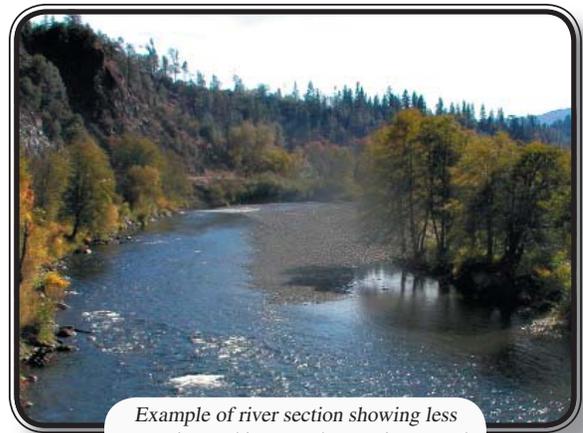
- *Removal of vegetation that is encroaching on, and narrowing, the width of the river.*
- *Earthwork in the Trinity River Floodplain and within the active river channel*
- *Excavation and relocation of gravels and cobble to improve spawning areas*
- *Revegetation of disturbed areas with native plants, shrubs and trees.*

The RCD will serve as the state California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) with assistance from North State Resources, a private environmental consulting firm in Redding. The EIR will be developed jointly with the Environmental Assessment (EA) that is the federal version of the state EIR.

During the EIR process, the RCD will be requesting input from the public concerning the scope and content of the environmental information at a public meeting. This initial meeting is an opportunity for the design team to present information on the proposed project and for the team to receive comments from the public. The meeting will be announced in Weaverville's local newspaper, the *Trinity Journal*, and by letter to local landowners near the project site and other interested parties.



Example of river section narrowed by encroachment of riparian vegetation before rehabilitation.



Example of river section showing less vegetation and increased spawning gravels after rehabilitation.

District Manager's Corner Pat Frost

“The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.” *Albert Einstein.*

Conservation Districts are a testament to this observation. A devastating crisis gripped the nation from the epicenter of severe drought in the Great Plains in the 1930's. Our predecessors had to find new ways to tackle the problem of soil erosion. They had to think at a new level. They did it, in part, by creating a network of local organizations – soil and water conservation districts.



This spirit of innovation is still alive and drives our District to look at our problems and seek new ways to solve them. I like to think the Weaverville Community Forest is an example of thinking about a set of issues at a different level. The community's partnership with BLM through the District is the template for a similar partnership with the USFS. We will be asking you to help us develop a vision for a Weaverville Community Forest that grows to include federal lands being managed by the USFS in the Weaverville Basin.

Climate Change has finally come to the forefront as a conservation topic. Here is a truly significant problem we all face. Solving it will require thinking at a new level. I believe that the forests we live in, and around, can play an important role in the solution to Climate Change. Today we can get on the Internet and buy "carbon credits" to offset the impact of our travel. These credits might be to plant trees in the tropics, buy energy efficient lighting for a school in Europe or to help install windmills in Kansas. Noble efforts for sure, but I would like to propose that we look closer to home and create a Climate Change Credit Bank that captures the benefits that the federal forestlands in Trinity County provide. Instead of buying credits to restore rainforests in the Amazon, why not market Trinity Forest Credits. A market-based carbon credit (or offset) bank for our forests could be used to pay for work that needs to be done to improve our forests' health and resiliency so that these forests will provide benefits to a stable climate for many years to come. The Weaverville Community Forest is the perfect place to test out this new level of thinking. Let's demonstrate that we can face a significant problem with a new way of thinking about our forests. Let's find a new way to have the forests finance themselves and the forest-dependent way of life of Trinity County.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FREE CHIPPING

Getting ready for fire season? Pruning trees? May is Wildfire Awareness Month and you can avoid hauling or burning your tree and brush trimmings by taking advantage of TCRCDD's free chipping service. You or your neighborhood must have at least 3 hours worth of chipping in order to qualify. All branches must be stacked in the same direction.

Call the District at 623-6004 or go to www.tcrcd.net for more information.

This chipping project of the TCRCDD is intended to provide fire safe communities and improve air quality. It is funded by the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District and the Western States Wildland Urban Interface Grant Program.

Trinity County
Resource Conservation District Presents



Weaverville Summer Day Camp

Where: Lowden Park Recreation Hall

Who: Students entering 1st through 5th grade

When: June 25th through June 29th - 1st Session

July 9th through July 13th - 2nd Session

July 16th through July 20th - 3rd Session

July 23rd through July 27th - 4th Session

Cost: \$23.00 per week session
Day Camp times are 9:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

Contact: Christy or Russ
Trinity County RCD ~ 623-6004

Space is limited to 35 students each session



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, NRCS, U.S. EPA, the California Department of Fish and Game, the California Fire Safe Council and the State Water Resources Control Board.

