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Trinity Student Wins Statewide Speak-Off

Trinity High School sophomore Katie Tenneson won the statewide Conservation Education Speak-Off contest in Santa Rosa in November with her oratory on this year's topic, "Biofuels: The Energy of the Future." The competition, open to all high school students, is an annual event put on by the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts to promote conservation awareness and education.

Katie, the daughter of Art and Renie Tenneson of Weaverville, was the youngest of the eight competitors vying to win the state finals. She was awarded with a plaque and $300. Each finalist had competed and won at local and regional Speak-Off competitions held this fall throughout California before heading to Santa Rosa. All of this year's competitors also were offered summer internships with their local Natural Resources Conservation Service office by State Conservationist Ed Burton of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Katie's advisors were Trinity High School Agricultural Science instructors Molly Greenwood and Mike Rourke. Trinity Minerals helped sponsor her participation.

THS instructor Molly Greenwood, Katie and her mom Renie Tenneson.

Competitors researched the topic in depth and were judged on their mastery of information, organizational and delivery skills, and in explaining how resource conservation districts can provide assistance on the issue. Students interested in competing in the 2007 Speak-Off should contact the Trinity County Resource Conservation District.

Also In This Issue:

The art of making it green again

Now that the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) has completed the earth-moving portion of its Canyon Creek River Rehabilitation Project near Junction City, the next step is to replant the river corridor there with native plants and seeds.

Revegetation is the art and science of re-establishing healthy native plant communities where they have been lost or weakened due to fire, erosion, construction or displaced by invasions of non-native plants. Here the challenge is to restore native plants and seeds appropriate for the location.

TRRP plans call for seeding then mulching upland areas (those not inundated by high flow events) to minimize erosion and weed invasion. Since this is where the TRRP placed much of the sediment it moved from the river floodplain, it wants to convert and maintain these areas in a more native vegetative condition than existed prior to the project. This is done using techniques intended to give new plantings a head-start so they can quickly out-compete weeds and undesirable non-native plants like star thistle, tree of heaven and Dalmatian toadflax.

Wheat seeds and native grass seeds will be spread, then weed-free straw applied as mulch. The mulch protects newly-sown seeds while it helps limit the return of local weeds by blocking those seeds from reaching soil. The wheat seed will grow rapidly the first year or two, taking up the space weeds need to get a foothold and then dies off. This assists native grasses to become established as the long-term seed source and dominant groundcover. Planting will be done by hand or a straw blower may be used to spread mulch.

Along the river corridor, emphasis will be on planting certain riverine species which are native to the area but have not remained dominant since the Trinity River was dammed and its flows regulated. For instance, the present dominant riverine species, the narrow-leaf willow, will not be re-planted. Instead, cuttings from black cottonwood and arroyo, red, and shiny species of willow trees will be planted. In addition, desirable trees were left standing in areas of the rehabilitation work so that they might serve as local seed sources. In some places, roots from old willows will send up shoots for rapid regeneration of native riparian vegetation. Most new tree plantings will be done with "pole-cuttings." These are trimmed tree limbs that have the potential to quickly sprout roots. These will be planted using a device called a "stinger." The stinger, a special attachment on the head of an excavator, can force a hole down to about six feet deep in the rocky floodplain, allowing insertion of a pole-cutting into the water table. This ensures maximum survival, even in dry conditions.

Another valuable step of rehabilitation work in this project has been the placement of large intact logs on the floodplain and on the river's edge. The purpose of these logs, technically referred to as "large wood debris," is to provide structural integrity to the river ecosystem and critical habitat for salmonids. It is important these logs be left undisturbed by the public. In time, these pieces of wood will help create and maintain pools and backwaters that salmonids use for foraging, overwintering, refuge from predators, and for rearing habitat. When these trees become submerged they provide important slow water habitat for small fish.

New Indian Creek Alternative Poses Option for Resourceful Re-use

The TRRP is considering another alternative to meet its project objectives for the Indian Creek area of the river and is seeking public comment on the new approach. The proposed change is intended to make better use of on-site materials while restoring more of the natural floodplain.

The purpose and need of the project remains unchanged — to increase juvenile salmonid rearing habitat and reduce Trinity River flow impacts to structural improvements.

The new alternative provides opportunities to maximize side channel habitat. It also provides opportunities to minimize impacts by decreasing in-channel construction, reducing the overall quantity and area of excavation, and by reclaiming onsite materials for use as spawning gravel at future project sites. No in-channel excavation is considered under this alternative.

The new alternative would utilize on-site processing of excavated alluvial materials (sand, gravel, cobbles) and dredge tailings as a source for spawning gravel enhancement efforts upriver. Such re-use would reduce potential environmental impacts from placing excavated material within the project boundary. It would also restore additional floodplain areas by removing dredge tailings. Export of processed gravels from the project site would, however, require seasonal increase in truck traffic on state and local haul routes.

The supplemental Environmental Assessment delineating this proposed alternative is available for review in Weaverville at the County Library, 211 North Main St.; the TRRP office, 1313 South Main St.; and Trinity County Planning Department, 60 Glen Road. Comments are due by February 13, 2007 to Brandt Gutermuth, TRRP, Box 1300, Weaverville, CA; 96093.

The Indian Creek stretch of the river has large deposits of sand, gravel and cobble along its edges. Accumulations of alluvial material resulted from reduced water flows following construction of Trinity Dam and diversion system. Some of the largest deposits here are dredge tailings, huge mounds of gravel and stones left from mining activities. In order to rehabilitate the river corridor, this material needs to be relocated. Much can become salmonid spawning gravel.

PROPER PRUNING TECHNIQUES FOR FUELS REDUCTION

Often, recommendations for creating defensible space around homes and other structures on private property call for at least some pruning of trees to help protect against the spread of wildfire. But healthy plants are often weakened or deformed by improper pruning methods. Cuts made in the wrong place may never heal properly and leave the plant exposed to disease and insects. In order to keep the trees healthy, it's important to trim them in a manner that avoids causing harm. Here are some basic guidelines to assist you in successfully pruning your trees.

When pruning twigs and small branches, always cut back to a vigorous bud or an intersecting branch. When cutting back to a bud, choose a bud that is pointing in the direction you wish the new growth to take. Make the pruning cut at approximately and 45 degree angle ¼ of an inch above the bud.

When pruning branches greater than ½ of an inch in diameter, cuts should be made just outside the branch bark ridge and the branch collar. Branches should not be removed flush with the trunk.

Thick and heavy branches should be removed flush to the collar at the base of the branch, not flush with the trunk. The collar is an area of tissue containing a chemically protective zone. When the collar is removed, the protective zone is removed, causing a serious trunk wound.

When cutting branches more than 1-1/2 inches in diameter, use a three-part cut to eliminate splitting and peeling. The first step is to saw an undercut from the bottom of the branch about 6 to 12 inches out from the trunk and about one third of the way through the branch. Make a second cut from the top, about 3 inches further out from the undercut, until the branch falls away. The resulting stub can then be cut back to the collar of the branch.

WHEN TO PRUNE

In general, the best time to prune most plants is during late winter or early spring before growth begins. The least desirable time is immediately after new growth develops in the spring. It also is advisable to limit the amount of pruning done late in summer as new growth may be encouraged on some plants. This growth may not have sufficient time to harden off before cold weather arrives.

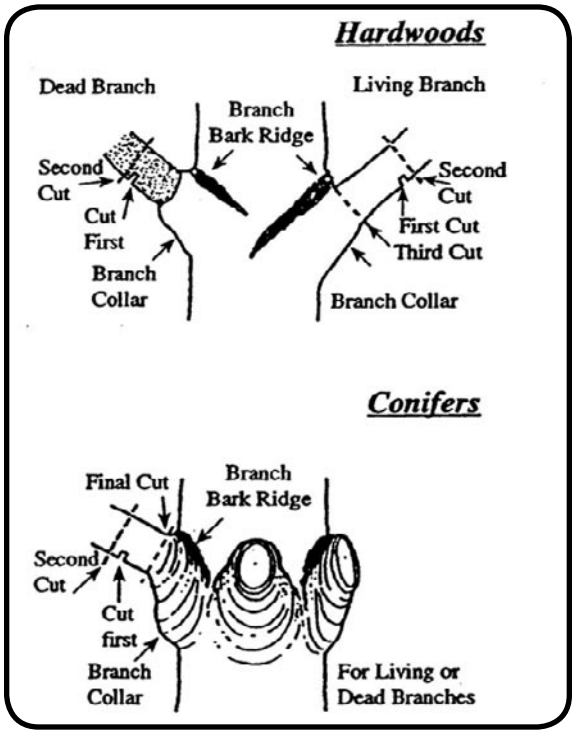
Young Douglas-fir with branches less than five feet off the ground that need to be pruned. Do not remove more than a third of the live crown when pruning a young tree.

Be cautious with the placement of the tool. Notice the wrinkled tissue where the branch connects to the stem - this is the branch collar. Do not cut into the branch collar.

An example of a properly pruned branch. The stub of the branch is short and close to the stem, but the branch collar is not cut into and damaged.

DO NOT TOP OR TIP!

Topping, the pruning of large upright branches between nodes, is sometimes done to reduce the height of a tree. Tipping is a practice of cutting lateral branches between nodes to reduce crown width.



The below picture is of a young big-leaf maple, a hardwood that loses its leaves in the winter. Notice the wrinkled tissue where the branch comes off of the trunk. This is the branch collar or bark ridge, which is also illustrated in the diagram to the left.

Another common hardwood found along streams in Trinity County is the white alder. The branch bark ridge is readily apparent.

The white line in both photos of hardwoods shows where to make the final cut.

An example of a branch bark ridge on a mature ponderosa pine tree. Please note the drawing above that illustrates steps for pruning larger branches.

An example of an improperly pruned branch. The branch collar is damaged, the tree will take longer to heal and may be more susceptible to insect attack and disease.

Be careful not to nick the trunk of the tree if using your chainsaw. This type of damage can be detrimental to the health of the tree.

Fruit Tree Workshop

Do you want to know more about the care and maintenance of fruit trees? UC Cooperative Extension will have two workshops on Saturday, February 10th to answer your questions. In the morning workshop you can learn about the types of fruit that grow well here, rootstocks, planting tips, fertilization, irrigation, control of pests and disease, training and pruning.

The afternoon workshop will teach you how to revitalize old, neglected fruit trees. We'll have a 3-hour demonstration and practice session at the Steiner Flat Orchard in Douglas City. You'll learn how to save our heritage fruit trees and bring them back into production.

Workshop instructors include Rich Buchner, Tehama County Orchard Advisor, and Rico Montenegro, a certified arborist who has been directing the restoration of Whiskeytown's Tower House orchard.

Fruit Tree Care and Maintenance will be from 9:00 am until noon at the Weaverville Fire Hall. Pruning to Restore Neglected Fruit Trees will be from 1:00 pm until 4:00 pm at the Steiner Flat Orchard. Both workshops are free and you can attend either or both. Pre-registration is encouraged for the morning workshop to make sure that there are enough handouts. Pre-registration is required for the workshop at Steiner Flat.
For more information and to pre-register, contact the University of California Cooperative Extension office at 628-5495.

Community Chipper Program may be offered in 2007

The TCRCD hopes to provide free chipping for homeowners and landowners this spring similar to a program it offered in 2006. As before, the program will be contingent upon approval of grants the District has applied for. The free chipping service will be for material removed during tree pruning and fuels reduction clearing around homes and along road frontage. This program offers an alternative to burning or hauling these trimmings. Remaining chips, which are not hauled away, make great mulch and ground cover to prevent erosion.

To assist us in providing this service, the following conditions must be met.

~ Please have at least 3 hours worth of chipping before requesting this service. Neighborhoods can qualify for the three-hour minimum if enough material is stacked at each home. Neighbors may want to work together to achieve this minimum.

~ Branches must be stacked with all cut ends facing in the same direction. Piles not stacked in this manner cannot be chipped.

~ Stacks may be no more than 4 feet high. Try to make them 4 feet wide and about 8 feet long. Ideally, stacks should be approximately 4x4x8.

~ Stacks must be free of nails, wire, rocks, mud, poison oak, scotch broom, and berry vines.

~ Stacks must be placed in an accessible area and situated so chipping equipment can be placed next to the cut ends of the branches. This facilitates easy work for our crews and means more people can be served by the program.

~ Unpaved driveways over 16% grade are inaccessible to the truck and chipper.

It's easy to determine when there is enough to schedule a chipping session. Use the following to estimate the amount of time needed to chip each properly stacked pile. For stacks of cedar, pine and fir, calculate 20 minutes per 4x4x8 pile. If a stack is primarily hardwoods like oak, manzanita or other shrubs, it will likely require 30 minutes per 4x4x8 pile.

If you are unable to accomplish the work necessary to prepare for chipping, the TCRCD may be able to provide a crew of two to perform thinning, limbing, moving and stacking of materials for a fee-for-service.

Please contact the TCRCD at (530) 623-6004 for a chipping request form if you are interested in this program or download the form from our website at www.tcrcd.net

RCD Welcomes New AmeriCorps Members

The RCD welcomes Christy Wagner and Russ Spangler as the most recent members of the AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project to join the District.

Christy hails from West Virginia, where she recently obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Protection with a minor in Geology from WVU in Morgantown. She loves to cook and experiment with flavors, and her favorite job there was preparing vegetarian dishes at the Mountain People's Kitchen. Christy also has a talent for nurturing plants and enjoyed retail nursery work back east. Just prior to beginning her term as a Watershed Steward. she helped reorganize and inventory the District's native plant nursery as a volunteer member of the Natural Resources Conservation Service EarthTeam.

Christy arrived in Trinity County last August, 2006, just in time for the prayer wheel consecration at Ridgzin Ling Gonpa, the Buddhist retreat center in Junction City. She is quick to say it was love and spiritual pursuits that caused her to cross the continent, and good fortune connected her with Americorps and the Watershed Stewards Project (WSP). Christy enjoys the out-of-doors and serendipitous road trips to out-of-the-way places. She is especially enthused about the educational aspects of the WSP in schools and is looking forward to helping with environmental education in area classrooms during her year of service here.

Russ Spangler committed to doing a second year with Americorps' WSP and chose to spend it with the RCD preparing educational materials and providing classroom lessons in Trinity County. During his first year he served as a science aid to the California Department of Fish and Game, helping to plant hatchery-raised Coho salmon and hiking along tributaries of the Russian River to assess habitats and conduct surveys. Russ says he was disappointed to learn there are so very few fish left in the Russian River watershed.

Russ likes working outdoors but found he really enjoyed the opportunities to teach that WSP has provided. Last year he conducted classroom presentations for elementary students in Ukiah and Santa Rosa on salmon life cycle and macro-invertebrates and discovered how much fun it was. He also served as a volunteer instructor at the Weaverville Elementary School Environment Camp last September during his transition to the RCD and helped students learn how to assess water quality.

Russ is from York, Pennsylvania and studied engineering at Penn State. His experiences with WSP have inspired him to consider switching his studies to Education or Communications when he returns to school next year. Russ enjoys sharing knowledge and likes to explore ways to make learning fun for others. The RCD is already making use of his talents to design and enhance classroom presentations on natural resources.

Russ has rafted both the Gaulley River and New River in West Virginia and hopes to have a chance to experience the thrills of the Trinity River while he is here. He's having fun getting to know the area and meeting new people, and is looking forward to his year of service in Trinity County.

District Manager's Corner
Pat Frost

This has been a wonderful winter for getting fieldwork done and District crews have been very busy. One crew has been working on fuels reduction projects in Poker Bar and in the Bear Creek Road/Rush Creek Road neighborhoods. These projects have me thinking about the relationship between the District, landowners and the partnership of shared responsibility. Our projects are successful because there are landowners and land managers interested in the conservation and management of natural resources. Our projects are successful, because people are willing to pitch in and help. The fuels reduction projects are happening because neighbors got together to help find a solution to a common problem. Folks have taken time out of their busy schedules to meet with the District, to help design the projects, and to do some of the work themselves.

Everyone shares the responsibility for making our forests healthier and safer. There are opportunities for anyone to lend a hand, even in a small way. This issue of the Conservation Almanac highlights a couple of ways you can get involved. The Community Chipper program will be offered again this year – and not just in Weaverville, Lewiston and Hayfork. You cut it and stack it. We'll chip it. Call us to find out more. The University of California Extension Service is having a Fire Safe workshop in Trinity Center in April where you can learn about fire resistant building materials and designs to increase your home's chances of surviving a wildfire. We will highlight other opportunies for you to get involved in the coming months. Until then, give us a call if you have a project idea. We are here to help you help yourself.

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

Trinity County
Resource Conservation District

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
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Internet: www.tcrcd.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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