

Conservation Almanac

Trinity County Resource Conservation District

Fall 2002

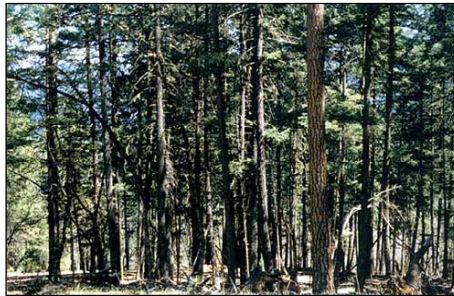
Vol. XI No. 4

Cooperative Efforts of the Trinity County Fire Safe Council Proves Successful

Members of the Trinity County Fire Safe Council have been tremendously successful in obtaining funds from a variety of sources to implement a wide range of fuels reduction projects around the county and to continue fire safe education and outreach efforts.

Just over the past year, Trinity County Fire Safe Council members have obtained over \$827,000 in funds from sources including the Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee, Bureau of Land Management, Sacramento Regional Foundation, and US Forest Service to implement fuels reduction projects. These projects include thinning, shaded fuel breaks, planning, and education and outreach.

The Trinity County Fire Safe Council was formed in 1998 to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire in Trinity County and to promote management activities to achieve this goal. The Fire Safe Council is a cooperative effort of several agencies, including many local Volunteer Fire Departments, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the US Forest Service (both Shasta-Trinity and Six Rivers), the Bureau of Land Management, Trinity County, the Trinity County Resource Conservation District, Post Mountain PUD, the Watershed Research and Training Center, Trinity County Realtors Association, RC&D Council,



Current Condition--Fire Hazard!



Desired Condition-Open, Parklike

Natural Resources Conservation Service, and members of the public.

Together, these groups are working to involve the residents and landowners of Trinity County in fire prevention and response preparation in order to best avoid catastrophic fires in the future.

Trinity County, with its hot, dry summers, is an area that is extremely prone to wildfires. One of the goals of the Fire Safe Council is to involve the whole community in working to protect their property as well as their neighbors' by being aware of the risk of fire damage and taking some simple steps to help prevent it. Currently the Fire Safe Council is leading an effort to develop a Landscape Scale Strategic Fire Management Plan for Trinity County. A fire safe inspection program will be conducted by the 16 volunteer departments during the coming year to guide landowners in making their properties more defensible.

Also In This Issue:

TRRP-AEAM Team-Staff Bios	2
West Weaver Creek Trail	3
Salmon Fest. & Bar 717 Camp Pics ...	4
SFTR Watershed Restoration	5
Do We Need a Grading Ordinance? ...	6
SFTrinity River Monitoring	7

Trinity River Restoration Program

Adaptive Environmental Assessment and Management Team Staff Biographies

by Doug Schluesner, Trinity River Restoration Program Executive Director

The Trinity River Restoration Program recently held an open house to celebrate the completion of its new office, located at 1313 South Main Street (next to Tops Market), and the arrival of several new employees. We are providing the following series of short biographies and photos as a handy reference, and encourage you to stop by and meet the staff in person. The new telephone number for the office is 530-623-1800.

Doug Schleusner, Executive Director Doug received his Masters degree in regional planning from the University of Massachusetts, and his Bachelors of landscape architecture from the University of Idaho. He comes to the Restoration Program from the National Headquarters of the USDA Forest Service, where he was a program manager on the forest and rangelands staff. His 25-year career in land use planning and recreation management with the Forest Service included assignments in Southeast Alaska, northern California, and northern New Mexico.



Ed Solbos, Branch Chief, Implementation Ed has a wealth of practical engineering experience that spans 25 years and many western states. He comes to the Restoration Program from the Mid-Pacific Region of the Bureau of Reclamation, where he was Regional Engineer for the past six years. Prior to that time, Ed was Area Manager for the Lahontan Basin in Carson City, NV for four years and Project Manager for the Trinity River Basin Field Office in Weaverville from 1986 to 1991. Ed received his Bachelors degree in civil engineering from Brown University in Providence, RI. His intimate knowledge of the Trinity River, the local communities, and past restoration activities will be extremely valuable to the current program.



Brandt Gutermuth, Environmental Specialist, Implementation Brandt is an aquatic biologist and comes to the Restoration Program from the Weaverville Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management, where he gained valuable experience as the Trinity River project coordinator for the past two years.



Prior to that he held positions with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon and Utah Departments of Wildlife, and a private consulting firm. Brandt received his Masters degree in fisheries management from the University of Washington and his Bachelors in aquatic biology from the University of Michigan.

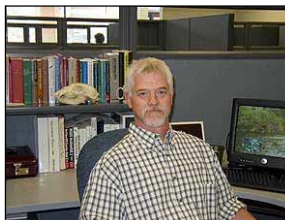
Daryl Peterson, Branch Chief, Monitoring & Analysis Daryl is a riparian ecologist and comes to the Restoration Program from The Nature Conservancy's Sacramento River Project, where he worked for the past seven years. He received his Masters degree in biology, with an emphasis in river restoration, from California State University, Chico, and his Bachelors in biology from Whittier College. His interest and experience in ecological modeling within the Sacramento River system will have great application to the Trinity River Restoration Program.



Glenn Yosioka, Fish Biologist, Monitoring and Analysis Glenn comes to the Restoration Program from the California Department of Fish and Game, where he was a fisheries biologist for the Northern California - North Coast Region. He received his Masters degree in wildland resource science, with an emphasis in riparian restoration, from the University of California, Berkeley, and his Bachelors degree in fisheries biology from the University of California, Davis. His many years of anadromous fisheries experience in northern California with Fish and Game and several private consulting firms will be very valuable to the program.



Robert Sullivan, Wildlife Biologist, Monitoring and Analysis Bob received his PhD in biology from the University of New Mexico, and Masters degrees in wildlife management and biology from Humboldt State University. He comes to the Restoration Program from the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife, where he was senior wildlife ecologist for the past four years. Bob brings a wide variety of experience to the program, having held positions as Endangered Species Specialist at the Physical Science Laboratory at New Mexico State University, Assistant Professor of Wildlife and Biology at



continued on page 3...

...continued from page 2

Texas A&M University, and senior curator of vertebrate zoology at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science.

Andreas Krause, Hydraulic Engineer, Monitoring and Analysis



Andreas received his Masters degree in civil engineering from the University of California,

Davis, and his Bachelors degree in the same subject from Northern Arizona University. He comes to the Restoration Program from the consulting firm CH2M Hill in Redding, CA where he was a project engineer and technical specialist in hydrology, hydraulics, fluvial geomorphology, and river restoration. Prior to that, Andreas worked as a hydrologist for the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources in Arizona.

Deanna Jackson, Secretary to the



Executive Director and Office Administrative Assistant

Deanna comes to the

Restoration Program from the Northern California Area Office of the Bureau of Reclamation where she worked as a fiscal technician for the past six years. Prior to that, Deanna worked in the original Reclamation project office in Weaverville from 1989 to 1996, where she filled many support roles as office automation assistant. A Trinity High School graduate, her familiarity with the area, people, and Trinity River issues will be a valuable asset to the program.



Trinity Occupational Training Assists with West Weaver Creek Trail Development

A Trinity Occupational Training (TOT) crew of four spent one week in July helping to cut tread and brush in an important mile-long segment of the Weaverville Basin Trail System along West Weaver Creek between Oregon and Mill Streets. The TOT crew included crew leader John Garrett, Lennon Sun, Brian Skeen, Michell Connor (and not pictured, Greg McQuilliams). This project took place under the supervision of Trail Volunteer, Jim Love, who has devoted a significant number of hours in the layout and construction of this trail.



The West Weaver Creek Trail supports the community's effort to complete a trail system that will be enjoyed not only by the local community, but also by tourists interested in hiking, running, biking, horseback riding and sightseeing in a close-to-town location.

This particular trail segment is rich in historical and natural features and highlights the overall historic theme of Weaverville. It also links two major residential areas, providing an important alternative transportation route that bypasses Highway 299. There are parking areas at both ends of the trail, on Mill and Oregon Streets, just south of West Weaver Creek.

The West Weaver Creek Trail is located

on public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The BLM granted Trinity County a 50-year right-of-way for this trail in August 1999. This major milestone was critical, because most of the BLM lands near Weaverville were included in a proposed land trade. Without this 50-year right of way, public access to West Weaver Creek could have been denied by the new landowner. This right-of-way will now remain in existence if/and or when ownership changes.

Trinity County, Trinity County RCD, and Trinity RC&D Council have all attempted to obtain funds from the California Department of Parks and Recreation's Recreational Trail Program (RTP) over the past three years to construct this trail, but the intense statewide competition for funds usually results in the money going to trails with much higher potential usage. The Bureau of Land Management encouraged the Trail Committee to find other ways to establish the trail so that we did not lose the easement. The opportunity to work with TOT and provide our dedicated Trail Volunteers with a project of this magnitude has resulted in a beautiful new section of trail for members of the community and visitors alike.

The vision that was put forth in the Weaverville Basin Trail Master Plan is for a trail on the south side of town that allows people to hike, bike or horseback ride all the way to the Industrial Park. This West Weaver Creek segment is an important first step in this effort. As one new user of this trail told Jim, "This is like a fairy tale trail!" Come check it out. Join the Weaverville Basin Trail Committee on a hike or a workday. Trail enthusiasts meet on the first Wednesday of each month at the RCD office. For more information, or to get on the mailing list, call us at 623-6004 or 623-2009 ext. 3.

Bar 717 Environmental Camp - Sept. 2002

Weaverville Elementary School sixth grade students at environmental camp at Bar 717, in Hyampom. Week-long activities included: watershed, soils, and forestry education; with various hands-on activities such as water-quality monitoring. Of course the week was not all work, the students enjoyed horseback riding, arts, crafts, music and campfire activities.

Observe



Learn



Fun!



4th Annual Salmon Festival- Oct. 5, 2002



Upper South Fork Trinity River Watershed Restoration Implementation

Trinity County Resource Conservation District is implementing a large-scale restoration project in the Upper South Fork Trinity River Watershed. Approximately 2 miles of high-risk road is being decommissioned to reduce the amount of sediment going into the river. Past land management practices have significantly increased the rate and volume of sediment being delivered to nearby streams by erosion. Roads and other management activities have altered natural drainage patterns in a variety of ways to accelerate erosion and increase deposition of sediment into area streams.

This project includes: survey and design; removal of all culverts and hardware; excavation of associated fill material; where feasible, placement of fill material along the existing roadbed with a slope not to exceed 2:1; removal and disposal of all extra fill material to a USFS approved location; outsloping areas without spoil material; and mulching and seeding of all disturbed areas with weed-free straw and native grasses. There are 16 ditch relief culverts and 5 large stream crossings with culverts that are being removed. The total estimated volume of dirt to be moved is 23,000 cubic yards with 20,000 cubic yards coming from the stream crossings.

hired two Trinity County residents to operate the equipment.

The District's implementation team for this project is led by Cynthia Tarwater, Project Coordinator, with Arrow Harrington and Scot Lindsey, Restoration Technicians.



Cynthia Tarwater, Project Coordinator



The project is designed to minimize potential erosion to the streams. The Trinity County RCD has been performing this type of work successfully for a number of years. The work was designed by

This project has been funded in the amount of \$233,779 by the California Department of Fish and Game's California Coastal Salmon Restoration Project and the Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) Title II Program.

The 29N30D road is located on remote lands within the Shasta-Trinity National Forest (Forest Service). The Forest Service has identified no future land management needs for this road, and aquatic risk is considered high. Consequently, the 29N30D road was identified as a road to be decommissioned in the "Upper South Fork/Happy Camp Watershed Restoration Decision Notice" in June of 2000.

Lorrie Bundy, a Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Engineer stationed in Weaverville, in cooperation with the Forest Service and the South Fork Coordinated Resource Management Planning group. Heavy equipment work began in mid-August with a subcontract to John Buick Construction, who



Grading Ordinance—Do We Need One?

Grading is primarily undertaken for the construction of roads, building pads, new sewage disposal systems and many other earthmoving needs. “Grading” includes earthmoving activities such as excavating, placement of fill, terracing hillsides, clearing away natural vegetation to begin construction, or contouring. A grading ordinance provides one means to control erosion, prevent damage to off-site property, avoid creation of unstable slopes or filled areas and protect streams from accelerated rates of sedimentation. A grading ordinance is typically adopted by a county in order to promote and protect public safety, convenience, comfort, prosperity, general welfare, and natural resources.

Is a grading ordinance needed in Trinity County?

Over the past five years there has been a lot of attention given to grading problems in Trinity County. Grading within sensitive areas such as floodplains, streams zones and steep hillsides for driveways, roads, building pads and other projects has increased, because much of the flat, private land in the County already has been developed. Many landowners have not been able to obtain building permits due to poor grading practices including inadequate compaction of fill material, damage to leach field areas or the creation of unstable slopes. In some cases, damage has occurred in buildings, parking lots and roads, due to these unstable soils settling underneath of the structures.

The case for better grading practices and erosion control techniques has been building for a long time. In 2000, the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), while studying a portion of the Eel River, found that the percent of sediment from small

landowner and county roads was actually increasing proportional to timber industry related sediment. The study found that erosion from timber management has been decreasing over the past 15 years, because improved grading practices, road designs and drainage controls have been implemented. Many of these improvements were the result of changes in the Forest Practice Act regulations. Similar changes had not been implemented on county roads or on those of small, private land holdings within the Eel River basin.



In 1997, a lawsuit filed under Section 303(d) of the Federal Clean Water Act (*Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations v. Marcus*) resulted in the designation of all rivers of Trinity County as sediment impaired due to past and/or current human activities including mining, logging, and the construction of roads and dams. Once this designation was made, the EPA and the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board were held responsible for establishing sediment load allocations for these river systems and for adopting an implementation plan to achieve these allocations, called Total Maximum Daily Loads. (visit

www.epa.gov/region09/water/tmdl for more on sediment load limits and Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act). The US EPA adopted these limits for the South Fork Trinity River in 1998 and for the Trinity River and all of its tributaries in 2001.

There are other indicators that grading practices are a concern. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Fisheries Branch (formerly National Marine Fisheries Service) has said that high sediment levels can clog salmon spawning gravels reducing fish reproduction. This and many other factors led to the federal listing of the Coho salmon as a threatened species in 1997. In August 2002, the California Fish and Game Commission followed the federal lead and listed the Coho as a state threatened species. State and federal agencies also have looked at steelhead populations and have reviewed their status under endangered species regulations, with no listings to date. In addition, the California Department of Fish and Game and North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board have issued fines and increased enforcement of water quality rules in response to citizen complaints, increasing the urgency for local governments to provide guidance to landowners, those maintaining our road network and equipment operators.

Improved grading practices could be one tool in our management toolbox to help us be the best stewards of our land and water resources, and maybe a locally-led approach will be better for Trinity County than having the State of Federal Government tell us how we should respond to these issues.



South Fork Trinity River Hydrologic and Geomorphic Monitoring Project

Trinity County Resource Conservation District is working on a comprehensive monitoring program in the South Fork Trinity River Watershed. The South Fork Trinity River watershed is included on California's Clean Water Act Section 303 (d) list as water quality limited due to sediment. That means that the State Water Resources Control Board believes that the amount of soil getting into the streams of the South Fork Trinity River is harmful, particularly to the cold-water fishery. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) completed a sediment Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for this watershed in 1998. With the completion of the TMDL Planning Process it is clear that additional monitoring is necessary in the South Fork Trinity River watershed.

This monitoring project begins or continues data collection and analysis to help landowners meet the TMDL targets set by the EPA through an adaptive management process. The State is required to adopt a plan to reduce the amount of sediment reaching the streams. This plan has not been developed yet, but reductions in sediment load are anticipated through existing restoration programs (see Page 5 of this issue). The program is an attempt to measure progress toward meeting the targets set by the EPA and to provide information that will help us to design more effective sediment reduction projects.

The District has subcontracted with the local hydrology consulting firm, Graham Matthews & Associates (GMA), to develop the program, train landowners and District staff, and coordinate the data collection and analysis. Funding comes from the Trinity River Restoration Program's, Trinity County Grants, the State Water Resources Control Board's Clean Water Act 205(j) program and the California Department of Fish and Game.

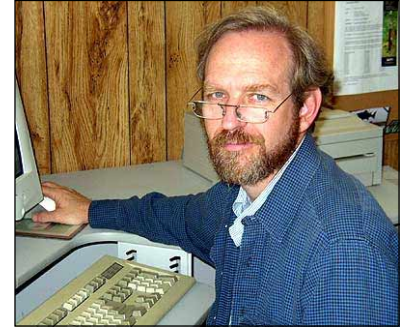
- Quality Assurance (QA) Plans for all of the procedures were developed, submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board and approved. These QA Plans guide field data collection, laboratory analysis and reporting.

- Sixteen continuous stream flow stations were installed and are operated throughout the watershed. 20 manual sites, consisting of a staff gage and a crest stage gage also are operated throughout the basin. A key partner in this project is the USFS. They operate approximately 15 other manual stations. Gage operation, which includes downloading dataloggers, calibrating the instruments, and collecting stream discharge measurements, provides critical information on the amount of water in these streams as it relates to rainfall. Over 100 of these discharge measurements have been collected so far.
- Turbidity and suspended sediment samples were collected at 39 sites by GMA and various volunteers. This information combined with the stream flows will tell us about the sediment loads for different streams.
- Barker Creek and Rattlesnake Creek were selected for more detailed stream flow and sediment transport monitoring. The purpose of the more detailed monitoring is to refine the relative sediment loading from smaller areas within each creek's drainage.
- Geomorphic monitoring is taking place this fall. This monitoring is designed to look at changes in the shape of stream channels over time. Several streams were surveyed for cross sections and a selected length of each stream. The types and amounts of fine sediments and gravels are being analyzed with bulk samples of sediment, permeability measurements, pebble counts, and pool volumes. The USFS is cooperating in this monitoring to maximize our efforts and to insure that we use similar methods.

Dry autumn weather will shift to rain, and the winter monitoring of streams will begin for a third year. So, if you see someone standing on a bridge in the middle of a storm this winter they possibly are one of the members of our dedicated team.



District Manager's Corner-- Pat Frost



Thirty years ago this October President Nixon signed the Clean Water Act into law. The Clean Water Act set the stage for efforts across the nation to improve the quality of our waterways with a back drop of massive fish kills and even one river that caught on fire.

We have come a long way in making our rivers, lakes and streams safe for fishing, swimming and drinking. The first major improvements came by installing state-of-the-art technology to clean up the water flowing from the ends of pipes at factories, and the construction of new wastewater treatment plants. The new treatment plant in Hayfork is an example – when County public health officials announced closing popular swimming holes this summer, Hayfork Creek was not on that list!

The second step has been to look at how we manage our land with an eye towards clean water. A lot of improvements have come from the good land stewardship that we see all over Trinity County. Of course more still needs to be done. This issue of the *Conservation Almanac* is filled with examples of what folks in Trinity County are doing to help meet Richard Nixon's vision in 1972 of clean rivers and streams for future generations.

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

E-mail: tcrcd@snowcrest.net
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 non-profit, self-governing district whose board of directors volunteer their time.

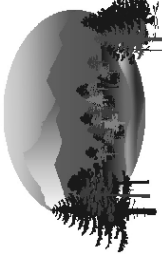
The TCRCD Vision

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.

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



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
- Erosion/Sediment Control
- Watershed Improvement
- Wildlife Habitat
- Water Supply and Storage
- Soil and Plant Types
- Educational Programs



Printed on Recycled Paper

This issue of the Conservation Almanac is being funded in part by grants from the State Water Resources Control Board, Department of Fish and Game, Bureau of Reclamation, Trinity County Title III, and Sacramento Regional Foundation