

Spring 2013

Vol. XXII No. 2

2012: The Year of Cooperation and Collaboration

Rural American counties share many of the same characteristics. Set in scenic locations off the beaten path, life runs on a different schedule where neighbors have time to talk and when an acquaintance asks, ‘How are you?’ she actually wants to know. Trinity County residents benefit from the same amenities as other rural counties with an added bonus - a spirit of cooperation, collaboration, and a sense of community.

As many of you know, I took the position of TCRCD district manager in 2012 after working in the organization for five years. The fact that I grew up in Trinity County and knew it as a great place to live and raise a family weighed heavily in my decision to stay and invest myself in the community. I see the role of the RCD as integral to the health of our community with its influences in natural resource management, economic stability and social well-being. We know we can't do it alone. Employees of federal, state, local and non-profit agencies, along with active community members, all work together in cooperation and collaboration on equal footing with the RCD to get projects going. Here are just a few examples of the District's projects from 2012:

- Fuels reduction work funded by the USFS and Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee employed conservation crews through Cal-Fire and local workers to keep the county safe from catastrophic wild fire.
- Road work on forest roads funded through the California Parks Department OHV Commission and implemented with input from off-highway vehicle groups.
- Sediment reduction to salmon-bearing waterways through the decommissioning of roads built before modern standards were set - work funded through the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP), California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and State Water Resources Control Board.
- The introduction of two new events in the Weaverville Community Forest by the California State Horsemen's Association and Rotary International - both raised funds for community groups, both used volunteers, and both brought additional spending power to the county economy.
- The formation of the Trinity Collaborative with multiple interests coming together for the benefit of all.
- Organized volunteer days in the Weaverville Community Forest resulting in new trees planted and new trails forged.
- A newly signed forest stewardship agreement with the Bureau of Land Management.
- Work with private land owners to reduce fuels through the NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program.
- Work with the Watershed and Research Training Center in Hayfork to improve the health of the South Fork Trinity River.
- Coordination of the Weaverville Salmon Festival with the Trinity Chamber of Commerce, where the community came together to celebrate the return of the salmon and the fall harvest.

Based on this partial list it's obvious the District's range of projects is broad-based. At first glance it may seem that there is no common thread. But there is. Through cooperation and collaboration, the Trinity County Resource Conservation District is working to help this county thrive now and grow into the future. I look forward to being part of this ongoing effort.

~Alex Cousins

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FOREST HEALTH / FUELS REDUCTION



The District's Forest Health and Fuels Reduction program made considerable progress on a number of fronts in 2012. The Trinity County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) guides the implementation of forest health projects in the county. The District continued to promote the CWPP with the Trinity County Fire Safe Council, the Firewise Communities Recognition Program and participation in the Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee.

These planning and outreach efforts directly led the way to important projects. The Weaverville Community Forest was the focus of a new partnership in 2012. The District assisted the California Conservation Corps (CCC) in obtaining state funding for one of their crews to work on fuels reduction projects in the Community Forest under the supervision of the District. The CCC obtained \$75,000 for their crew to help complete the China Gulch Fuels Reduction project. The success of this first project has led the CCC to expand their work in 2013. The District looks forward to a long-term partnership with the Corps.

The forest health program is all about partnerships, like the one with the CCC. The District provided assistance to landowners participating in Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The District used its Fee for Service ability to implement forest stand improvement projects on 100 acres in 2012. We strengthened our partnerships with the USFS and NRCS as we moved forward with the Burnt Ranch All Lands Pilot Project. The Burnt Ranch project was the only community-based project the District submitted for funding to the CA Fire Safe Council that received funding. For more information on this unique approach to designing and implementing forest health projects see the Winter 2012-13 Conservation Almanac. We also requested funding for a Coffee Creek All Lands Project, but unfortunately did not receive it.

The Weaverville Community Forest continues to serve as a model for accomplishing landscape - scale forest health projects through partnerships, especially through the federal Stewardship Contracting Authorities. The District entered into a new stewardship agreement with BLM for approximately 19,000 acres of forestland in the Grass Valley Creek watershed in 2012. The agreement builds on the decades' long relationship the District has with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the earlier restoration of the Grass Valley Creek watershed, a critical watershed for the restoration of the Trinity River.



CCC crews in the Weaverville Community Forest

WATERSHED PROJECTS

TCRCD Road-related Sediment Reduction Projects 2012

The TCRCD, in cooperation with the USFS, BLM and several private landowners, decommissioned 19 miles and upgraded 51 miles of road. The road decommissioning completed in 2012 were part of a larger USFS project called the Westside Watershed Restoration Project (2011). The project identified routes that no longer have management needs or have had a high risk of failure. The routes addressed in 2012 were located in the Soldier Creek watershed near Junction City, Rattlesnake Creek in the South Fork of the Trinity River near Post Mountain and the Upper Hayfork Creek area south of Hwy 36 near Wildwood. Decommissioning involves the excavation of all stream crossings, swales and hydrologic features with the intention of restoring the hillslope and the restoration to the pre -road conditions (see before, during and after photos); after equipment work is completed sites are seeded, mulched and planted with trees and other riparian plants.



Before



During



After

Decommissioning can be a controversial issue, but in most cases, the roads that have been identified by the USFS were already closed to public vehicle access by earthen berms or overgrown and in need of restoration due to lack of road maintenance.

The road upgrade projects were spread over a large area of the county including the Soldier and Conner Creek area near Junction City, Oregon Mountain area, Little Browns Creek, Democrat Gulch, the Corral Creek area west of Big Bar, Tule Creek area near Hayfork and the South Fork Trinity River near Forest Glen. Road upgrade projects have the goal of reducing controllable road-related sediment delivery to creeks. They can save money by improving the design of a road so that a variety of drainage features convey the water safely across the road. This can include installation of rocked rolling dips, disconnecting ditches from stream crossings, construction of critical dips and the replacement of undersized culverts with larger diameter pipes so water will not overwhelm the road, causing a washout of the road crossing.

Funding for the TCRCD road-related projects in 2012 came from the Trinity River Restoration Project, US Forest Service, Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee, State Water Resources Control Board, California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California OHV Commission. The TCRCD is here to assist the landowners of Trinity County so please contact us if you need more information or assistance.



Grading on Upper Democrat Gulch Rd.

NATIVE HABITAT RESTORATION

The District's native plant habitat restoration plan continues to focus on invasive plant management and re-establishment of native plants on disturbed sites. Invasive plants often take over sites where soil and native vegetation has been disturbed by human activity. Construction sites, old mining sites and highway shoulders are all examples of where invasive plants can become established. These plants out-compete native plants, upsetting the balance between plant communities as well as the balance of the food web. Funding and partnership with Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) and the US Forest Service (USFS) were crucial to achieving our goals.

We are currently in our third year managing two long-term noxious weed projects funded by the USFS. One is focused on dyer's woad (*Isatis tinctoria*) populations north of Trinity Lake and the other targets scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) in the Junction City area. For the third consecutive year, more than 100 miles of roadsides and 560 acres of public and private lands were treated. Treatment involves hand and mechanical removal of invasive species since the the District does not use herbicides.

In 2012 the District continued participation in the statewide invasive plant mapping project coordinated by the California Invasive Species Council (Cal-IPC). As part of the North Central Cal-IPC Region, the District contributes to the development of regional strategies for invasive plant management across county boundaries. Cal-IPC is developing excellent resources to help private landowners and public agencies identify, map and manage these problematic plants. This collaborative approach may assist in securing more funding to support these projects in Trinity County. The interactive map developed through this project is a living document and changes as work happens on the ground. The map can be viewed at calweedmapper.calflora.org.

In addition to removing non-native plants, the District planted more than 6,900 native trees and other plants on public and private lands in partnership with TRRP, USFS and with landowners participating in NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Local organizations and individuals sought and obtained help from the District for biological support with botanical surveys, assessments and wetland delineations.



Volunteer tree planting day.



Wetland work in Zenia.

RECREATION

The Weaver Basin Trail System is a community supported recreational area the District oversees with the help of the Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, Weaver Basin Trails Group and community volunteers. It was a busy year on the trails with two new fundraising events in 2012: the California State Horsemen's Association's (CSHA) "Weaver Basin Express" poker run in July and Rotary International's Weaver Basin 50k run in October. Both events are returning for 2013. The District added new bridges to the West Weaver Trail loop and volunteers forged a new spur off the Garden Gulch trail.

Horsemen, bicyclists, and hikers all joined in on the two day Weaver Basin Express poker run held in conjunction with the Annual 4th of July celebrations in Weaverville. The event is a fund raiser for the American Endurance Ride Conference Trails Grant Fund, CSHA Royalty Scholarships, and a future equestrian campground in the Weaverville Community Forest. The District thanks CSHA for their 2012 donation of \$100 towards the campground project. Check their website at www.californiastatehorsemen.com for details on the July 2013 event.

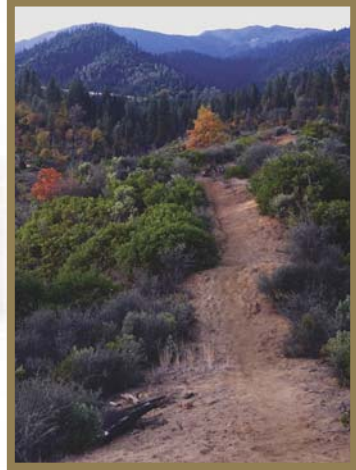
Rotary International had a successful first event with the Weaver Basin 50k - 30k - 10k footrace, which raised funds for the Trinity High School Athletics Booster Club. Rotary welcomed 75 participants on a fine October day, and raised \$2000. Check their website at www.weaverbasin50k.com for details on the October 2013 event.

Improvements to the trail system in 2012 included four new engineered bridges on the West Weaver Trail Loop between Oregon and Mill Streets. These wet locations were a hazard to hikers and horses alike. The bridges are engineered to accommodate equestrian travelers.

In recognition of National Public Lands Day 2012, the District sponsored a trail building volunteer event with the help of the Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee and the US Forest Service on the Garden Gulch spur trail. Over 20 people, of all ages, came out with shovels, axes and wheelbarrows to enhance the trail.

Trail projects were funded by the Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee, the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Community Forest Stewardship Agreement.

California State Horsemen's Association's (CSHA) "Weaver Basin Express" poker run



McKenzie Gulch Trail

Installation of handrails by TCRC D employees (l-r) Jeff McGrew, Duke Klang, John Condon and Darrel Tate. Doug Crispin works on underside of bridge.



ADMINISTRATION

Our Board of Directors is committed to supporting the goals and efforts of our many regional, state and federal partners. These entities recognize that locally-led projects yield the greatest benefits. Involvement by the TCRCD enhances public trust and provides greater cost-effectiveness. This approach generates local jobs, adds to the local economy and increases timeliness.



TCRCD District Manager Alex Cousins, under the Board's direction, develops and guides programs and projects that provide assistance to landowners and land managers throughout Trinity County. In order to do this, the District works to obtain funding through grants and agreements, typically from state and federal agencies. The District's board and our staff work diligently at many levels to obtain and sustain funding so we can continue to meet the District's mission.

Conservation Fund

The **TCRCD Conservation Fund** was established to accept donations to support the mission and ongoing work of the **TCRCD**. This fund provides a meaningful way for you and others to invest in local efforts to conserve our natural resources and to help promote conservation education. Your tax deductible donations to the Conservation Fund enable the District to extend its special programs and enhance conservation efforts.

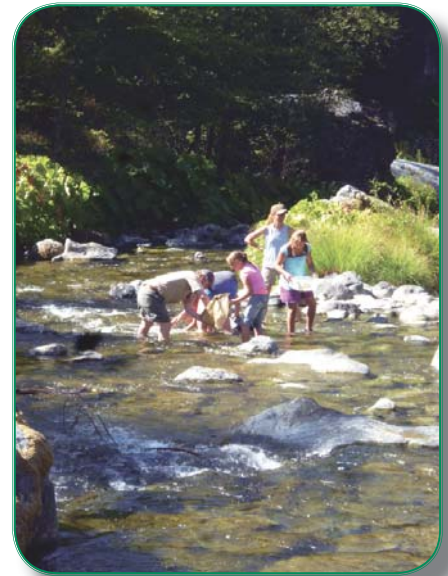
Directors Affiliations

In addition to serving as unpaid volunteer directors for the District, our board members work to benefit Trinity County in a variety of ways. Board Chair Colleen O'Sullivan serves on the **Forestry and Fuels Management Committee of the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD)**. She also serves on the **Weaverville Community Forest Steering Committee**. Director Greg Lowden is active with the **Lions Club of Weaverville** and the **Weaverville Basin Trail Committee**. Rose Owens is executive director of **Roderick Senior Center** and is on the board of directors of the **Trinity Public Utilities District**. Director Mike Rourke teaches Natural Resources/ Environmental Life Sciences and Agriculture Mechanics at Trinity High School and is the advisor for **Future Farmers of America**. Director Patrick Truman serves on the **Northwest California Resource Conservation & Development Council**. He has been **CARCD** president and is now the **CARCD** representative to the **National Association of Conservation Districts**.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

During 2012 the TCRC D shared conservation information with adults, families, and students at events, workshops, and camps. Outdoor education provided by the District augmented school curriculum with lessons in the classroom, in the field and during special events at the Young Family Ranch. This year we saw an increase in volunteer participation and wish to thank the many community members who help make Trinity County a better place to live.

The District received funding and assistance for conservation education and outreach from Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP), Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Young Family Ranch Trust, Trinity County Child Abuse Prevention Council, Department of Conservation, Natural Resource Conservation Service, California Fire Safe Council, Trinity Trust, UC Cooperative Extension, Watershed and Research Training Center, and individual contributors. Here are a few highlights from the District's education and outreach work in 2012:



Sixth grade students learning about stream ecology on Hayfork Creek.

- Worked with Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and non-profit groups to organize volunteer events to replant forests, maintain trails and restore wildlife habitat;
- Provided outreach at the Trinity County Fair, Children's Festival and Salmon Festival;
- Organized and supported the 14th Annual Environmental Science Camp for Weaverville sixth grade students at Bar 717 Ranch (Camp Trinity);
- Salmon-centered outreach and education for residents of the South Fork Trinity River watershed;
- Facilitated Trinity County Fire Safe Council and Firewise Communities Program and hosting their website at www.tcrd.net/fsc/index.htm;
- Conducted four, week-long sessions of Summer Day Camp at the Young Family Ranch;
- Informed landowners of Natural Resources Conservation Service programs and technical assistance, and advised landowners on native plants, weed eradication and fuels reduction;
- Facilitated the Trinity River Watershed Council, which prioritizes tributary restoration and conservation projects;
- Hosted the District's conservation information website, www.tcrd.net and Facebook page;
- Hosted the 14th Annual Salmon & Heritage Fruit Festival with Trinity County Chamber of Commerce, Trinity Arts Council and University of California Cooperative Extension;
- Hosted family centered activities at the Young Family Ranch;
- Facilitated Weaverville Community Forest steering committee meetings and hosted the Weaverville Community Forest website, www.tcrd.net/wcf/index.htm;
- And communicated with local, regional, state and federal elected officials and agency personnel about local conservation needs and accomplishments.



October 2012 volunteer tree planting brought 25 people out to help.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

The District's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) / Information Technology (IT) department continued to expand its capability to provide services, both within the organization, as well as to the community at large.

In 2012, the District partnered with the Watershed Research and Training Center, commissioning the skills of their GIS Specialist to increase our GIS output and timely completion of projects from a steadily growing workload. Their specialist helped with projects such as merging multiple roads layers into a single master transportation layer for the entire county, mapping areas served by private mutual water and sewer companies, and compiling known hazard layers such as flood plains and dam inundation areas, historic and existing landslides, fire threat and hazard, seismic zones, and sites with hazardous materials.

Over the past six years, the Trinity County Department of Transportation has secured four grants through the CalTrans' Blueprint Planning Project (BPP), which is intended to help counties and communities in their long term transportation and community planning efforts. All of the work mentioned above was funded through these grants.

Also funded in part by the BPP was the spatial adjustment of the county-wide parcel layer to more accurately represent the location of property ownership throughout the county. The original layer was based on flawed Public Land Survey (PLS) data, which has since been greatly improved by BLM. Using the new PLS data, the process of adjusting parcel boundaries began in 2012 and will be completed in 2013. This effort will bring the parcels into a much more accurate alignment with other base map layers such as transportation and aerial imagery. Once completed, the layer will be distributed (without specific individual ownership information) to online mapping services such as Google Earth, MapQuest, and Apple Maps. With additional funding from the Trinity River Restoration Program, this

project was taken one step further with parcels along the river corridor from Lewiston down to Helena being adjusted using Records of Survey and GPS data to give this area the highest possible degree of accuracy.

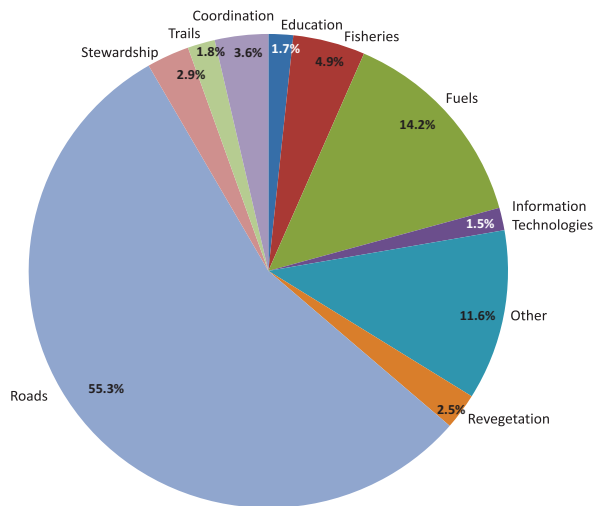


An example of county parcel correction.

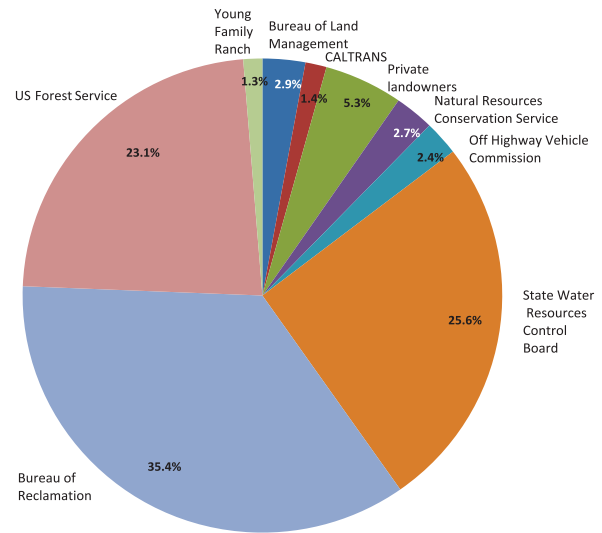
Another highlight for the year was working with the Fire Chief of the Weaverville Fire Protection District (FPD), Scott Alvord. The District assisted him with a thorough inventory of the fire hydrants within the FPD. Once the inventory was completed, the District created a detailed 14 page map book showing the location of all the hydrants, named roads, addressed properties, and structures throughout the FPD. The map book will be actively used in each of the fire engines serving the FPD when responding to calls, and can be distributed to other first responders and visiting fire crews the case of an emergency.

NEW PROJECTS 2012

Projects by Type



Funding Sources



Total: \$1,560,000



Weaverville Summer Day Camp

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

- July 8 through July 12 - 1st Session
- July 15 through July 19 - 2nd Session
- July 22 through July 26 - 3rd Session
- July 29 through August 2 - 4th Session

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

Cost is \$30.00 per week session

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

Contact: Donna Rupp

Trinity County RCD ~ 623-6004

Space is limited to 35 children each session



Trinity River Restoration Program 2012 Accomplishments

The Trinity River Restoration Program (Program, TRRP) is well on its way to completing the channel rehabilitation projects outlined in the Record of Decision (ROD). Nineteen projects remain to be completed. 2012 was a great year for the Trinity River with increased salmon and steelhead returns reported by TRRP management partners and fishers. The projected return was so great that the Program fishery biologists recommended Reclamation increase flows in late summer to keep the lower Klamath River above the low flow levels implicated in high fish mortalities in 2002.

Fish

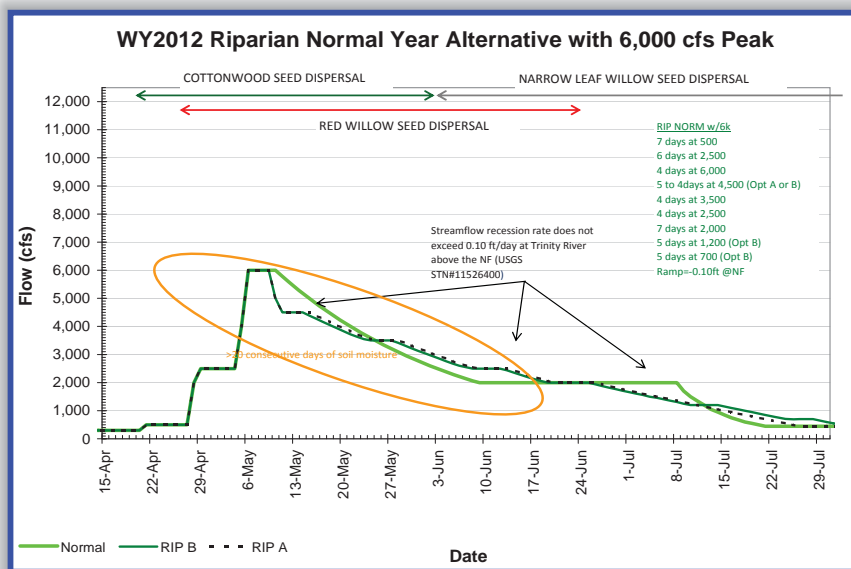
The great Trinity River fish runs in 2012 were exciting for the Program, the fishing public and all the fishery management agencies with responsibilities for anadromous salmon and steelhead in the Trinity. These partners include the US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, NOAA-Fisheries, Hoopa Valley Tribe Fisheries Department, Yurok Tribal Fisheries Program and US Forest Service. Preliminary reports of the 2012 Klamath Basin fall Chinook run describe some firsts for the fish, many of them Trinity bound. Final numbers come out this spring; however, early estimates reveal the largest recorded Basin run and the fourth largest escapement of adult fall Chinook to the Trinity since 1978. The Tribal quota was 160,000 and the largest sport harvest quota since quota management was instituted. Ocean fisheries also benefitted from a liberal fishing year. Good runs are projected for this year, depending on precipitation amounts.

Flows

An objective of spring flows is to encourage the regeneration of riparian trees on floodplains, and the results of previous years' flows suggested that a slower streamflow recession would help this. The 2012 flow schedule included a slower streamflow recession, and it also included "benches", or 4-5 day periods of steady flow, to help keep floodplains moist during times when cottonwoods and willows disperse their seeds. This modification was within the limits of the normal water year flow allocation of 647,000 AF and spring peak of 6,000 cfs. Preliminary observations confirmed that cottonwoods, red willows, and shiny willows responded favorably to the new flow schedule. TRRP plans to refine

annual flow schedules as more is learned about how flows affect vegetation in the Trinity River riparian corridor.

The area in the chart that is circled in orange shows the change from "Normal" flow release compared to "Riparian" flow release A & B. Rather than the "normal" gradual decline in flows, the riparian flows were decreased in steps and maintained over time, helping the floodplains to remain moist while cottonwood and willow seeds (top of chart) were dispersing. The objective is to encourage naturally sprouting vegetation from these seeds.



Channel Rehabilitation Projects

TRRP rehabilitation projects cannot be accomplished without close coordination among Program agencies and organization, collaborating entities, stakeholders, and private landowners. **The Upper Junction City Rehabilitation Site** was completed with the participation of four private landowners and the BLM, and construction by a local contractor. Activities included removal of encroaching riparian vegetation, rehabilitation of the floodplain and in-channel alluvial features. Added features included a split flow channel and island, several side-channels including one with connected ponds, and wood habitat and hydraulic structures. The ponds were constructed for aquatic and riparian species, and upland habitat was rehabilitated by planting riparian vegetation. Small fish were observed in one of the ponds within days of completion of construction, and salmon quickly established redds within the project boundaries. The TRRP federal team, including Reclamation, USFWS, and USFS designed the site. Riparian revegetation designs were completed by the Hoopa Valley Tribe. This was the first time rooted nursery stock was used, and irrigation provided to aid in the success of both riparian and upland revegetation renewal.

The **Lower Steiner Flat Rehabilitation Site**, located near Douglas City was constructed entirely on BLM property. Design support was provided by a private consulting firm and construction implementation performed by the Yurok Tribe.

Public Outreach

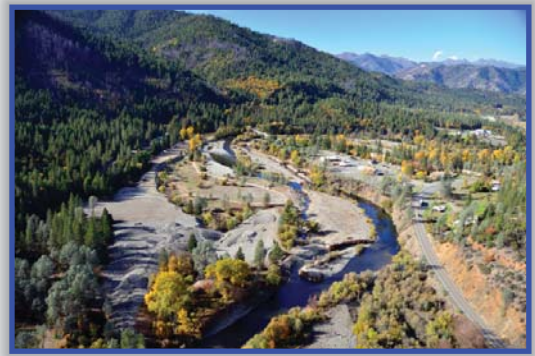
TRRP staff continued to volunteer at community events, helping to sponsor the Weaverville Salmon Festival, and hosting informational booths at the Trinity County Fair and the Return of the Salmon Festival at Coleman National Fish Hatchery. Additionally, the Program actively solicited community feedback through “Community Conversation” and other public meetings, printed brochures and maps, held workshops, and updated the website, www.trrp.net.

Student Trainees

TRRP mentored five college students, three as summer interns and two local students as Pathways Student Trainees who combine their studies with career building activities. All students receive training including CPR and First Aid certification, and some receive Cold Water Rescue classes. The students train in their areas of interest including surveying, biological and physical monitoring techniques; and a suite of rehabilitation, compliance, mitigation and assessment procedures related to river and fishery restoration science. The students serve as vital members of the TRRP team.

Performance Measures

Several performance measures were completed in 2012. These measures provide insights on TRRP progress and are updated as new information becomes available. They are accessible and downloadable at www.trrp.net.

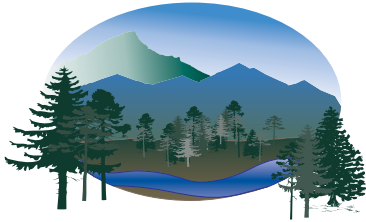


Upper Junction City split flow channel with juvenile salmon habitat.



Student trainee hauling willow bundle used to create habitat for fish and other aquatic species.

Trinity County



Resource Conservation District

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

Non-Profit Org.
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POSTAL PATRON

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@tcrcd.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 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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