

Conservation Almanac

Trinity County Resource Conservation District

Summer 1999

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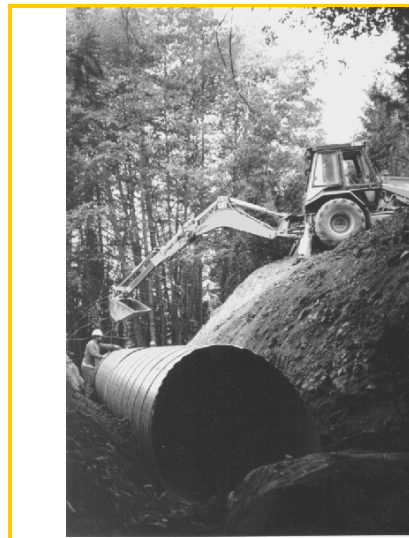
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Cooperation Gets Results in the South Fork Trinity River

The South Fork Trinity River Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) is a unique partnership that has provided everything from a Watershed Analysis to on-the-ground restoration projects. The CRMP is the cooperative effort of a group of landowners, timber companies and agencies that has resulted in watershed restoration that might not have been possible otherwise.

A new approach was taken in the East Fork/Smoky Creek watershed analysis when the Forest Service (USFS) entered into the project jointly with the South Fork CRMP and utilized specialists from a diverse array of agencies and organizations working as an interdisciplinary team. This collaboration was envisioned by the USFS and the CRMP members to speed up the analysis process and accelerate the rate at which watershed protection and restoration was occurring within the South Fork Trinity River basin. The members were drawn from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Trinity County RCD, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Humboldt State University, Pacific Watershed Associates, as well as several private consultants and the USFS. The watershed analysis project was so successful that it has led to an on-going partnership between the USFS and the South Fork CRMP. Some of the accomplishments to date within the South Fork are:

- comprehensive inventory of road and stream crossings risks and problems, estimated to be roughly 700 miles of road and almost 50% of the South Fork Trinity River drainage area, excluding Hayfork Creek
- 76 miles of road storm-proofing
- 19 miles of hydrologic road closure



South Fork Watershed Road Improvement Project

- 10 miles of road decommissioning
- reduction in road-related impacts to anadromous fish habitat
- Over \$1,000,000 for watershed restoration and road maintenance work
- Public support

One of the benefits of collaborating is the pooling of

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resources it allows. Much more work is able to get accomplished than if pursued individually. More money actually goes into on-the-ground projects. In another example of cooperative projects in the South Fork involved the CRMP working closely with Simpson Timber, a CRMP participant, on their private lands in the Pelletreau Creek watershed. A comprehensive inventory of roads and stream crossings was conducted with funds provided by the Northwest Emergency Assistance Program (NEAP), which was established to provide assistance and training for displaced fishermen in the wake of serious declines in ocean harvesting. Technical oversight was provided by Danny Hagans of Pacific Watershed Associates. Undersized culverts were upgraded to prevent plugging that can occur in high storm flows and cause road fill to enter the stream as additional sediment.

The RCD has partnered with the Post Mountain Public Utilities District (PUD) to reduce sediment delivery from road systems within the Post Mountain/Trinity Pines area. Sedimentation from these eroding roads had the potential to enter tributaries to Rattlesnake Creek and work its way into the South Fork Trinity River, adversely affecting important spawning and rearing habitat. The funding of this project was a combination of two sources. The Post Mountain PUD received emergency grant funds through FEMA to address storm-related damage to roads as well as Trinity River Restoration program funds. The road network was inventoried, mapped on a GIS, and implemented with typical practices including upgrading culverts, installing rolling dips and placing rock surfacing on the road in order to reduce sediment delivery.

Other projects have been undertaken at the request of landowners in the South Fork Trinity River basin. Hidden Valley Ranch and River Spirit community requested assistance to repair damage to roads as a result of the January 1997 storms. In some places, entire sections of road on these properties were washed out

where culverts had plugged and water ran down the road for extended distances. Upgrades to the roads similar to those discussed above have been undertaken by the RCD on these properties, because of the direct impact that sediment from road crossing failures has on the South Fork Trinity River and its fishery. Both properties are located adjacent to the South Fork Trinity River itself, so sediment delivery to the river is potentially very large when erosion does occur.

All these projects reflect the CRMP's philosophy that people who "live, work, and recreate on a given piece of land are the people who are most interested in, and capable of, developing plans for its sustainable use." The CRMP welcomes opportunities to create partnerships between private landowners such as Simposon Timber, Hidden Valley Ranch, River Spirit, and local, state, and federal agencies in order to meet the needs of the parties and protect and enhance valuable aquatic resources. The collaboration that has taken place in this watershed is becoming the way to get things done, by combining resources and objectives of different groups, consolidating these and preventing duplication of efforts. We hope to see this trend continue.

RCD HOLDS FIRST STREAM CARE WORKSHOP

Schedule to be Changed.....

The RCD held its first Stream Care workshop at the Weaverville library on May 15th. Supervisor Ralph Modine kicked off the workshop with a description of the challenges with which the citizens of Trinity County are faced in managing natural resources, while trying to restore economic health to our communities. He described the efforts of Trinity County and its north coast neighbors to work with regional and federal agencies involved in endangered species and water quality regulations to find alternatives to new regulations. The stream care workshops are one such effort.

The workshop participants had the opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues, including Miles Croom, National Marine Fisheries Service, discussing the status of the proposed riparian buffer. Staff from the RCD and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) presented information on stream health, native trees and how to plant them, and wildlife that use streams and the riparian vegetation along the banks. Tree seedlings were given away to all of the participants. A special children's program was set up with birdhouse building and *Creek Critters* coloring books. The highlight for most participants was the short trip to Sydney Gulch at Lee Fong Park, where Tim Viel, a fisheries biologist with the NRCS, led teams through a simple, landowners stream assessment process. As Bonnie O'Connor, one of the participants put it, "There's so much here to learn. Don't miss the opportunity."



Workshop Stream Assessment

At least three more workshops are planned, but the schedule is being changed to accommodate the busy summer schedules of Trinity County residents. Pat Frost, the RCD District Manager, said "This is such an important issue for residents in the county that we want to make every attempt to make it available to everyone. There is so much going on in the summer that the workshop team has decided to shift the schedule until September and October." The RCD will provide a revised schedule for workshops in Lewiston, Big Bar, and Hayfork. Call the RCD for more information.

District Manager's Corner

Managing the natural resources of Trinity County – achieving a balance between utilization and conservation – is central to the mission of the Trinity County Resource Conservation District. One of the most important tools that we have available for meeting this challenge is the people in our own communities. If you read the papers or watch TV, you have probably heard about the importance of biodiversity, and its relationship to the health of our natural resources. Greater diversity results in a stronger and more resilient environment. It also holds true that diversity of interests and opinions strengthens our ability to manage our resources – our forests, fish, wildlife, soil and water. Bringing varied interests to the table helps resources agencies make sound, balanced management decisions. Getting people involved is what the District is all about. One way has been through a process called Coordinated Resource Management Planning, or CRMP. A problem, or set of problems, in a watershed is identified and all of the interested parties are invited to share in the development of the solutions. This has been used successfully in the South Fork of the Trinity River to begin to address declining fisheries and economies, the possible reasons for their decline, and the methods that can be used to restore both. It is an ongoing, dynamic process. The management strategies are adjusted, as new information becomes available. Bill Huber, a landowner and grape grower in Hyampom, is the coordinator of the South Fork Trinity River CRMP, and through his efforts the South

Fork CRMP group continues to work towards its restoration goals – strengthening existing partnerships and seeking new ones.



Brenda Reynolds

The dedicated efforts of individuals are another important way that we are able to meet the District's goal of landowners assisting landowners. Brenda Reynolds is a good example. Brenda, whom many of you probably have met, came to Trinity County in January. She is a second year, AmeriCorps member with the Watershed Stewardship Program working in the Trinity County Planning Department. Her background, a B.S. in zoology from Humboldt State University and previous work with The Watershed Stewardship Program in Willow Creek, has been a valuable addition to the District's staff. Her field work has included salmon monitoring, and fishery's habitat restoration, but her skills in education and outreach are where she has contributed the most. Last year in Willow Creek she helped to develop classroom and field projects highlighting the importance of our natural resources, especially the rivers and streams. She also coordinated

the Trinity River Clean-up during the summer of 1998. This year Brenda has been an important behind-the-scenes player in the District's Stream Care Workshops, and a regular contributor to the *Conservation Almanac*. Her next major project at the Planning Department will be the Urban Stream Coho Project. This is a part of the Five-County Coho Plan, in which she will assess stream conditions and identify candidate sites for Coho habitat restoration.

We at the Trinity County RCD are very thankful that Trinity County Planning Department has been able to share Brenda's skills and time with us, and as a landowner in Trinity County I am pleased to be able to say that the county has benefited from the dedication and efforts of people like Brenda and Bill.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

SF CRMP

July 21 RCD office Weaverville
10am

Aug 31 Hayfork Fairgrounds
10am

Stream Care Workshops

Lewiston \

Big Bar — **to be scheduled
in September
and October**

Hayfork /

DID YOU KNOW?

Senate Bill 271 (SB-271) provides funding for salmon and anadromous trout habitat restoration in coastal waters through the Department of Fish and Game's Fishery Restoration Grants Program. It provided \$2.65 million in fiscal year 1997/1998 and provides up to \$7 million per year until the year 2002.

Message From the South Fork
CRMP Coordinator
Bill Huber, Hyampom

Everyone would like to think they have the answer to improve the rivers in Trinity County. And everyone does! A problem arises when people don't agree whose answer is "right". If you read the Trinity Journal, then it's clear, we've got a problem, because people don't agree, except on some of the most basic facts, like... oh... say... the weather, and even that's open to plenty of discussion (but nobody does anything about it)!

So, "How do you "fix" a river?" How are we ever going to come up with an "answer" and get people to agree on something as big and complex as a river? After all, rivers here in Trinity County really start at the top of the ridge and go to the ocean! We're talking BIG problem!

Maybe we should look at smaller pieces! Something in the range of 980 square miles, over 600,000 acres. That happens to be the area of the South Fork of the Trinity River, so let's take a look at it as a whole watershed. It's one of the largest unregulated (un-dammed) rivers in the United States!

The South Fork of the Trinity River, including Hayfork Creek, drains the north side of the Yolla Bolly Wilderness and flows north to meet the mainstem of the Trinity River near Salyer. It's mostly uninhabited, with people concentrated in the not-so-huge metropolis of Hayfork, and it's even smaller neighboring communities of Hyampom, Wildwood, and Forest Glen. There was a time when these were booming timber towns. The South Fork and it's environs provided huge volumes of timber that fed mills from Forest Service land and private timber company land, which together cover 85% of the watershed.

As with most booms, the resource, (in this case, wood), became less available, and the economy it built and supported collapsed, or "went bust".

Trinity County is no stranger to this type of boom and bust cycle. First it was fur, then gold, then wood. As booms and busts go, people and resources get shoved aside. Nobody ever dreamed that we wouldn't have wood available, or that the huge runs of salmon and steelhead could ever be diminished. They were as dependable as the weather!



Beautiful Upper South Fork Trinity River

Dependable indeed! The same weather that filled Trinity Lake the winter that the gates were closed on Trinity Dam, flooded the South Fork of the Trinity River, too. To be sure, the South Fork had flooded before, but the intensity of the '64 flood, coupled with all of the roads and cut-over land: gutted creeks and delivered thousands of tons of sediment to the river! Salmon and Steelhead populations diminished as the silt smothered their eggs. **BIG, BIG, PROBLEM!**

Now, we say the South Fork is unregulated. By that we mean no dams. There are plenty of regulations, statutes, ordinances, and opinions that go

along with (or against) them! Put the regulations together with a dozen agencies, passionately opinionated individuals, environmental organizations, and private timber companies; "How could we ever hope to agree on anything, much less accomplish anything?" The answer is the South Fork Trinity River Coordinated Resource Management Planning Group! Or South Fork CRMP for short.

The South Fork CRMP has had some remarkable accomplishments.

We found out that by meeting and talking and planning we CAN agree on some things, and actually work together to accomplish some common goals. From the Coordinated Resource Management Plan for the South Fork of the Trinity River:

The CRMP process operates on the local level with the underlying philosophy being that those who live, work, and recreate on a given piece of land are the people most interested in and capable of developing plans for its use. Inevitable conflicts in resource use that arise from diverse interests and goals are best solved by face-to-face communication among all interested groups and

individuals. Experience has shown that people with diverse viewpoints who voluntarily meet together as a planning team will find common ground as they interact with one another and have a chance to observe resource problems first hand. Through discussion, landowners, users, and resource managers begin to understand and respect each other's viewpoints. The end result is constructive problem solving through cooperative resource planning.

This actually happens! Now, I know, meetings are not everyone's cup of tea. But, the South Fork CRMP meetings aren't always the slow, deliberative yawners typical of government, nor are they packed with the rants and raves of angry malcontents. We try to insert a small dose of levity, lest we take ourselves too seriously; and brevity, to avoid the dreaded meeting creep (and to keep from starving!). All with the stated goals and objectives in mind; no small task. Again, from "The Plan":

Goals:

- Develop and implement a coordinated resource management plan for the recovery of the fisheries and economies of the South Fork Trinity River Basin.
- Promote equality, cooperation and voluntary participation among all members of the CRMP process.
- Build trust.

Objectives:

- Provide the leadership necessary to bring diverse interest groups to agreement on resource management opportunities.
- Perform upland watershed analysis and inventory.
- Determine risk potential for sediment yield from private and public land.
- Assess water quality and quantity improvement opportunities.

- Strive to prevent listing of species under the Endangered Species Act through habitat improvement and population recovery.
- Increase forest productivity through soil conservation.
- Provide access to, and facilitate transfer of, technical information and expertise.
- Serve as a liaison between the agencies, industries and local grass roots groups.

So, you might ask, "What has the South Fork CRMP accomplished?" We can agree on the weather. And we have helped all of the agencies get together and identify the problem -- sediment; it's main source -- road-related erosion; and the solution -- reduction of sediment delivery to streams by those roads

Through the efforts of the CRMP group, roads get addressed through repairs, upgrades, and/or closed. We have gotten agencies from the county, state, and federal governments and large and small landowners to work together in unique relationships to achieve restoration projects that simply wouldn't occur without a CRMP.

The CRMP continues to foster these collaborations and help find ways to fund them, and encourages anyone with an opinion to participate. Little by little, we are working toward the goals where we find agreement. While it won't change the weather, it does make a difference, and it's no small accomplishment!

For more information, or to get on the mailing list of the South Fork CRMP, contact Bill Huber at (530) 628-5128, or the TCRCD.

South Fork Trinity River Sediment Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

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. The sedimentation in the South Fork Trinity River watershed was judged to exceed the existing Water Quality Standards necessary to protect the beneficial uses of the basin, particularly the cold water fishery. Accelerated erosion from past and present land use practices and natural sources impacts the migration, spawning, reproduction, and early development of cold water fish such as spring and fall run chinook salmon and steelhead trout.

The South Fork Trinity River TMDL was completed by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in December 1998. The EPA was committed to develop TMDLs for 18 rivers by December 31, 2007 as a result of a consent decree entered in the US District Court, Northern District of California (Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman's Associations vs. Marcus). The purpose of the South Fork TMDL is to identify sediment loading targets that, when implemented, are expected to result in the attainment of applicable water quality standards for sediment.

The components of the TMDL include:

- **Problem Statement**-including assessment of instream and up-slope conditions
- **Instream Numeric Targets**-intended to represent acceptable conditions for cold water fish
- **Analysis of Significant Sediment Sources**-past and present impacts on streams
- **Linkage Analysis**-to assess the magnitude of impairment and associated levels of sediment

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source reductions necessary to address the problem

- **Allocation of Loads**-to distribute needed load reductions among various sources

The TMDL was developed by reviewing and analyzing existing data on instream resources and desired conditions. The numeric targets were developed based on literature sources, existing data for the South Fork, and best professional judgment. A sediment source analysis was developed to determine sources and quantities of sediment delivery to the stream system utilizing air photo analysis, modeling and literature-based erosion rates to estimate sediment production over time. This analysis estimates that sediment delivery to the stream averaged 1,053 tons per square mile per year over the period 1944-90.

This report concludes that an overall improvement of about 30% from the historical sediment loading rate would achieve target conditions, although there is variation between indicators. Targets include fish population recovery, channel form and structure recovery, improved substrate size distribution, as well as decreased sediment delivery. Implementation and meeting the targets of this TMDL is the responsibility of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

This TMDL addresses only sediment impairment. High temperatures were identified as additional sources of impairment in the 1998 303(d) listing process, but were not included in this TMDL. The EPA indicates that temperature impairments will be addressed in a future TMDL.

CFIP FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR LANDOWNERS

Funds for fish and wildlife habitat improvement, tree planting, thin and release, and erosion control projects will soon be available through the California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP).

CFIP is a state-funded program aimed at improving the economic value and environmental quality of forestlands. CFIP can help rebuild forest and wildlife resources to meet our future needs for a healthy environment and productive forests. Forest landowners can be reimbursed up to 75% of their expenses for the following practices:

Fish and wildlife habitat improvement, including creation of corridors and openings, planting blue, valley, coast live or Engelmann oaks or riparian species, installing exclusion fencing along watercourses and wetlands, and stream restoration projects.

- Preparation of a Management Plan.
- Tree thinning or release.
- Site preparation, tree planting, and follow-up work, such as adding browse guards or fertilizer.
- Erosion control, including revegetation, road rehabilitation, and installation of structures such as waterbars, rock crossings, or check dams to reduce soil erosion and stream sedimentation.

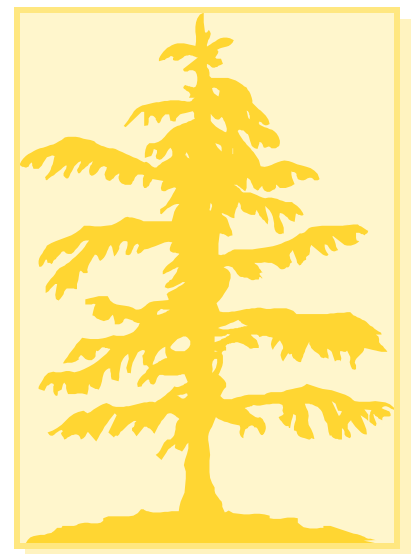
- Project supervision by a Registered Professional Forester.

The minimum project size for tree planting or thin/release work is five acres and 20 acres for forest resource management projects.

Erosion control and fish and wildlife habitat improvement projects have no size limitations. Any work required under the Forest Practices Act is not eligible for CFIP funding.

Ninety percent cost share rates are provided for work on lands damaged by wildfires, insects, disease, wind, floods, landslides or earthquakes during the last ten years.

Please contact Duane Shintaku at the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (530) 623-5681, if you have any questions or would like to submit an application.



KIDS PAGE

South Fork Trinity River Watershed

The South Fork Trinity River watershed is a large area of Trinity County, covering about 980 square miles. Thousands of insects, birds, mammals and fish, including humans, make their home in or near the many creeks and streams in the South Fork watershed. Look at the map of the South Fork Trinity River watershed on the right of this page. Do you live in this watershed? Have you visited any of the places identified on the map?

Try to name 20 types of living creatures found near your home. Write them down on a piece of paper. Next, unscramble the following words of animals found in the watershed. How many words match your list of creatures?

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| rede _____ | otutr _____ |
| rbdls _____ | adot _____ |
| maslno _____ | etotrs _____ |
| atb _____ | ltretbuyf _____ |
| kciertc _____ | legae _____ |
| cdku _____ | pograsprehs _____ |
| whka _____ | eanks _____ |
| romtam _____ | xfo _____ |
| rbea _____ | tnoamuni oiln _____ |

