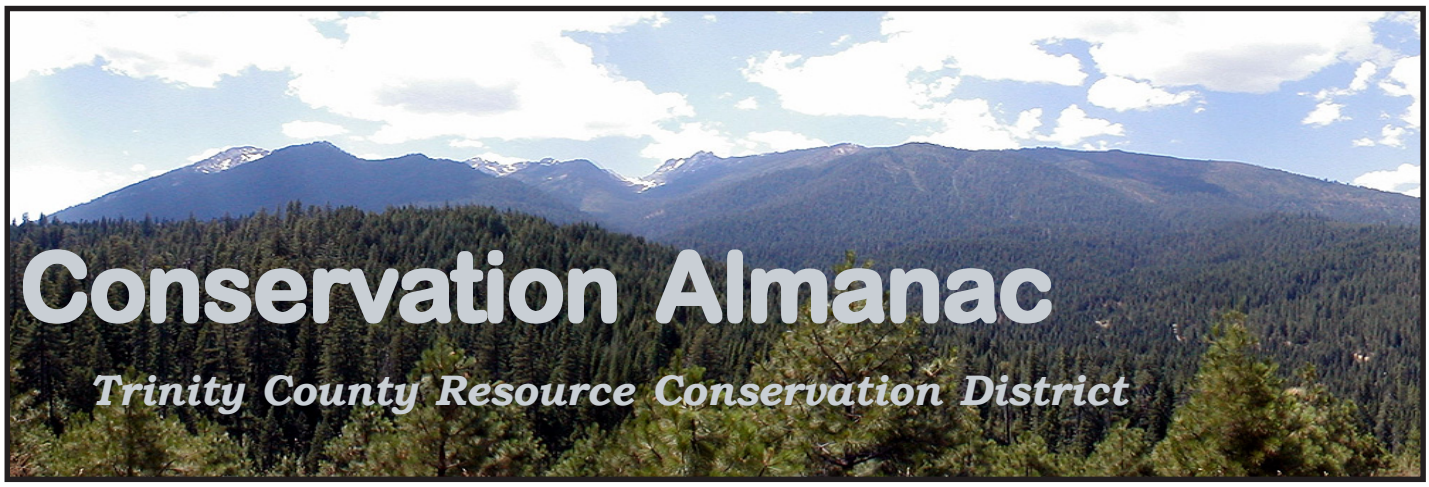

Conservation Almanac

Trinity County Resource Conservation District

Winter 2004 Vol. XIII No. 1

New Chipper to Assist With Community Fuels Reduction

So you and your neighbors have decided to get together and start a fire safe project around your properties. What do you do with all of the small trees, the branches and the brush?

Maybe the RCD can help. The RCD just obtained a new Bandit Industries chipper (Model 150XP) with a grant from the US Forest Service's Economic Action National Fire Plan program. This chipper, when combined with a new crew vehicle outfitted to tow the chipper, is at the center of our efforts to encourage landowners to get out there and create some defensible space around their homes. This new equipment increases the capacity of the District to serve fuel reduction projects in neighborhoods throughout Trinity County. The District's crew of five will be able to implement community-protection projects on one site, with the potential to haul chips to fuels utilization sites, for composting or energy production, and a smaller crew can help landowners dispose of materials that they have already cut and piled on their property.

The District has applied for funds through the California Fire Safe Council to provide this service to communities for free, and we hope to have the program up and running this year. Currently the chipper and a 2-man crew is available to interested landowners who have cut and piled vegetation from around homes and roadways at a fee of $410 per day to cover the District's costs.

Reducing the risk of catastrophic fires in, and around, our communities starts with each landowner. The District, working closely with its partners on the Trinity County Fire Safe Council, realizes that landowners need help and we will continue to find ways to provide that help. It is becoming increasingly important to reduce the level of fuels around homes, but it is also becoming more difficult to dispose of the material. The North Coast Air Resources Management District began a new permitting program for burning woody

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material, because of deteriorating air quality; especially around Weaverville.

It is our hope that the new chipper program will result in:

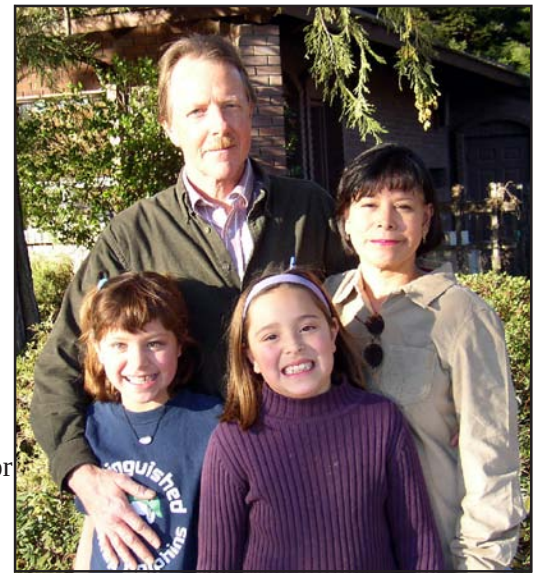
- More landowners participating in community fuels reduction efforts;
- Improving air quality by providing an alternative to burning;
- Reducing material sent to landfills;
- Reducing the threat of fires escaping when landowners burn their woody debris;
- Providing landowners with chips for landscaping;
- Reduced risk of catastrophic fire;
- Improved public safety; and
- Watershed protection

KRIS Klamath/Trinity Version 3 to be Released in March

Over the past four years, the Trinity County RCD has overseen the centralization, updating and dissemination of available data from the various agencies involved in the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP). This involves intensive data management and integration of baseline and trend monitoring data, photographs, and other information with a user-friendly interface on CD. This project provides for comparisons over time of habitat conditions, fish populations, and water quality and provides a working tool for adaptive management for the TRRP.

The newest version of KRIS will span three CDs and include recent data, expanded bibliographic content, and major enhancements to the interface. One such enhancement is an integrated map tab/GIS viewer that provides access and comparison of actual GIS layers of the basin like streams, roads, ownership, landuse, and vegetation that are included on the disks. These spatial datasets can also be used in any standard GIS software package, such as ArcView or AutoCAD Map. KRIS Version 3 will be available and freely distributed in early March. For the current online version, see http://www.krisweb.com/krisweb_kt/index.htm.

John Tiedeman - New Engineer in Town



The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Trinity County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD) are pleased to welcome John Tiedeman to Weaverville and Trinity County. Although new to Weaverville, John brings a varied background in engineering, including 7 years of private consulting engineering, and 20 years with USDA-NRCS. State registered in civil and agricultural engineering, John has a passion for soil and water conservation, and sees brand new horizons in northern California.

John began his NRCS career in the San Joaquin Valley, and has worked throughout California, including the central coast, southern valleys (Imperial, Coachella), Sacramento Valley, and a 3-year assignment with NRCS in Mexico. From 1999-2001, John made multiple trips to Central America as part of a USDA team assisting in the recovery from hurricane Mitch. In all of these locations, the work consisted of planning, surveying, designing, and constructing soil and water conservation projects to support agriculture and wildlife habitat improvement. Each geographic area has different natural resource challenges, providing perspective for solutions.

Project types in northern California since arriving in August 2003 have included irrigation, water development for livestock and irrigation (creeks, springs, reservoirs), and stream restoration. Both a challenge and reward in NRCS conservation engineering is the diversity of projects, plus the field-to-finish responsibilities. An important part of the job satisfaction is assisting farmers, ranchers, and other private landowners in realizing their visions and dreams. The NRCS and TCRCD field office staff of natural resource specialists are diverse and dedicated team players. That could sum up the satisfaction of an engineering career of this nature – technical challenges, grateful clients, capable co-workers.

John likes to say his best reward from Mexico was meeting his wife Irene, and the birth of their older daughter, Elena. Their younger daughter, Emily, was born in Santa Maria, on the central coast of California. Both girls attend Weaverville Elementary School. John enjoys playing guitar and mandolin, and helps Elena on the piano, and Emily with the violin. Irene had a career as a children's dentist in Mexico, but now devotes her time as mother, homemaker, and to creative pursuits (knitting, sewing, quilting). The Tiedeman family are active new members at First Baptist Church of Weaverville.

John and his family are grateful for the friendly people of Weaverville who have made them feel welcome in their new home.

RCD Completes Seventh Year of Restoration in South Fork Trinity River

Imagine a football field covered from end-zone to end-zone with 13 feet of dirt. That's about 23,000 cubic yards of soil and how much the RCD removed from stream crossings along 2.8 miles of old Forest Service roads in the Upper South Fork and Happy Camp watersheds last year. This soil, if not removed, poses a severe threat of being washed into the South Fork Trinity River, which already has a problem with the amount of sediment that gets into the river each winter damaging critical habitat for salmon (See Fall 2003 *Conservation Almanac* "RCD Completes South Fork Trinity River Monitoring Project").

Cynthia Tarwater, Project Coordinator, led the District team that oversaw local contractors, who implemented last summer's work, which included hydroclosing 2.1 miles and decommissioning 0.7 miles of roads. Hydroclosing consists of removing all of the drainage structures from the roadway. Hydroclosed roads are "put to bed" indefinitely to reduce the impacts to fisheries habitat, but can be reopened for future timber management, fire control or forest stewardship projects.

Decommissioning a road includes removing all culverts and hardware permanently; ripping the road bed and reshaping it to match the original contours of the land, as shown in the accompanying photos. Roads that are targeted for decommissioning pose a higher threat to fisheries and are no longer needed for forest management. Therefore, they are completely removed and are not intended to be reopened.

The California Department of Fish and Game's California Coastal Salmon Recovery Program and the Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee funded the work described in this article.

The RCD has been implementing road-related, sediment reduction projects in the South Fork Trinity River Watershed since 1997, including a third category of project--upgrading roads. Upgrading roads reduces the potential for soil to reach the streams and keeps the roads drivable by redesigning the drainage of the road, especially through the installation of larger culverts that can withstand 100-year storms. To date, nearly 163 miles of roads have been treated with 67 stream crossings upgraded, 92 stream crossings excavated and over 70,000 cubic yards of soil excavated from the stream courses. The Bureau of Reclamation's Trinity River Restoration Program, the USFS and California Department of Fish and Game have funded this work in the past.

The District will be back in the South Fork Trinity River Watershed in 2004 with funding from the State Water Resources Control Board's 319(h) Program, the USFS and Trinity County RAC. For more information on the important resource conservation program visit the District's website to view back issues of the *Conservation Almanac*.

Restoration of Native Plant Communities in Trinity County

In 1996, the Trinity County Resource Conservation District (District) drafted a ten-year revegetation plan for the Grass Valley Creek (GVC) Watershed. GVC is a major contributor of sediment into the Trinity River. It contains 17,000 acres underlain by highly erodible decomposed granite, has been heavily logged over the last fifty years, and has an extensive network of haul roads, skid roads, crossings, and landings created to facilitate timber removal. The District is currently implementing its eighth planting season in GVC and, since the implementation of the plan is ahead of schedule, planning for its last season in the fall of 2004 and spring of 2005. From the fall planting season in 1996 to the fall of 2003, 1,145,400 grasses, shrubs, hardwoods, and conifers have been planted in the watershed.

The District collects seed from federal lands in, and around, the watershed in order to propagate this large quantity of plants for GVC revegetation activities. All plants utilized by the District in its revegetation projects are Trinity County native plants and, in most cases, the seed originates from the county, as well. While the bulk of the plant material used by the District is grown by various nurseries around northern California, the revegetation staff, notably Larry Cooper and Brian Stewart, has established a small, native plant nursery to produce the needed planting stock, especially for the smaller revegetation projects that the District executes in any given year.

One of the most exciting, upcoming projects in the planning stages is the creation of a wetland complex on undevelopable county land in the Trinity Alps Industrial Park. The complex will consist of four interconnected ponds of various sizes and depths. Ann Francis, a Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) botanist, collaborated with the District to design a revegetation plan for the project. Sedges and rushes will be salvaged from the project site and these grass-like plants will be grown in sod-like mats, that are rolled out and secured to the ground. The District will revegetate the entire wetland complex, once the construction is complete, locating plants like the rushes and sedges at the water margin, seeding disturbed areas outside of the wet areas with native grasses and wildflowers, and planting native shrubs and riparian trees to increase the complexity of the plant community.

Every year, the District tends to work with Caltrans to revegetate roadside areas disturbed by roadwork. After sections of Highway 299 were washed out in the floods on New Year's Day in 1998, the District, under contract with Caltrans, developed and implemented a plan to plant riparian trees along Weaver Creek. Today these trees have grown tall enough to shade the creek and prevent erosion of the stream bank. Other Caltrans revegetation sites include the bridge reconstructions at Rush Creek on Highway 3 and at Little Brown's Creek on Highway 299. Roadside revegetation tends to be a challenge, because the soils are compacted by heavy equipment and have little organic material or soil structure to help the plants grow.

Finally, the revegetation staff is preparing to work with the Trinity River Restoration Program's Weaverville Office to revegetate areas along the river that will be affected by Trinity River Restoration projects. Since the dams were built along the Trinity River, the plant community has changed dramatically. The goal of the river restoration is to recreate a better functioning floodplain on a smaller scale given the managed flows of the river. Part of the process is to restructure the plant community to enhance the functioning of the floodplain and provide valuable wildlife habitat.

The District has come a long way since it began restoring the upland forests of the GVC watershed. It now works on more types of projects and in many different plant communities. As a result, the District has been able to expand its nursery facilities and try new methods of growing plants for revegetation projects, such as the willow "orchard" that will be established this year to provide a source of planting materials for some new projects.

Manually Controlling Brooms In & Around Junction City

in cooperation with

Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans),

& Trinity County Weed Management Cooperative

The Trinity County Resource Conservation District (District), as a member of the Trinity County Weed Management Cooperative (Cooperative), has spearheaded a project to control the infestation of brooms in, and around, Junction City. The most common broom found infesting wildlands across California is Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*). Other species, such as French broom (*Genista monspessulana*), Portuguese broom (*Cytisus striatus*), Canary Island broom (*C. canariensis*), and Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*), are closely related and are equally invasive, although less common. Working in a partnership with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the District with assistance from the inmate crews at the CDF Trinity River Conservation Camp has been manually pulling younger, vigorously growing plants and cutting out large broom plants in order to prevent the spread of this plant into uninfested areas. In infested areas, the long-term goal is to eliminate brooms and replace this non-native, high-invasive plant with native grasses, shrubs, and trees. Approximately, 20 acres are currently occupied by broom in the Junction City area along Highway 299.

Brooms do not stay where they are planted. One can observe the slow creep of the infestation along the roadways of the county from infested sites, such as in Junction City. If one looks closely at the roadside when traveling west on Highway 299 from the Buckhorn Summit to Weaverville, small populations of broom can be detected and have the potential to spread into important streamside habitats. This shrub displaces native plant and forage

species, is toxic to livestock and deer, makes reforestation difficult by out competing tree seedlings, and can increase both the frequency and intensity of wildfires.

Scotch broom is native to Europe and North Africa and was originally introduced to California in the 1860s as an ornamental. Later, it was used to prevent erosion, because of its fast growing nature, ability to fix nitrogen, and ability to grow on harsh sites. In the spring this shrub is awash in bright yellow, fragrant flowers. It can grow up to 10 feet tall and form impenetrable thickets effectively out competing any other plants on sunny sites. Broom is generally found in disturbed areas such as riverbanks, road cuts, and forests clear cuts, but it can also invade undisturbed grasslands, shrublands, and open canopy forests below 4000 feet. Not only does this plant produce seed prolifically, seeds are also known to survive at least five years and as long as thirty years in the soil. Seeds are dispersed when the seedpod bursts at maturity. Birds and ants do their part in moving seed around. Humans tend to move the seed to new sites on vehicles, muddy boots, and heavy equipment.

Fortunately, broom is found in only limited areas in the county. The largest known populations are along Trinity Dam Boulevard and Highway 3 within the recreation areas upstream of the Trinity Dam; in Junction City along Highway 299, Dutch Creek Road, and Red Hill Road; and along the road to Ruth Lake. Small populations and individual plants are found along many roads throughout the county. Addressing these small infestations and limiting the spread of large populations is an important task not only to protect botanical diversity and wildlife habitat, but also to minimize fire hazard and negative impacts to working lands in the county. Manual techniques can be an effective method of controlling this invasive weed. Small plants can either be hand pulled during the rainy season or mowed at the driest time of the year, which minimizes resprouting. Large plants with well-established roots need to be removed so that the majority of the root system is not left in the ground while soil disturbance is minimized. Areas from where large plants have been removed should be monitored afterwards to eliminate any regeneration of broom from the seedbank.

If you know of a population of broom in the county that may be a problem, feel free to call us at (530)623-6004 or to e-mail the District at rparis@tcrcd.net, because the District is trying to get a better idea of the distribution of this noxious weed to plan weed management activities.

RCD To Lead Watershed Coordination

The RCD entered into an agreement in January 2004 with the Trinity County Planning Department to provide local expertise on watersheds critical to the restoration of the Trinity River, with a focus on the tributaries between Lewiston and Junction City. Restoration work in these tributaries is a key element of the overall restoration strategy for the river. The District was asked to provide watershed coordination in concert with efforts being made by the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) and Trinity County Planning Department, because of the District's expertise in landowner outreach and community coordination.

The District has a great deal of experience working with the full range of interested parties on conservation issues, including the various federal, state, regional and local government agencies involved in the Trinity River restoration. The District also works closely with private landowners on these same issues, from the planning stage through acquisition of funds to implementation of projects. The Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group, a stakeholder advisory group appointed by the Secretary of Interior, and Trinity Management Council have approved the proposal to have the District provide local coordination that includes the following:

- Coordinate efforts and serve as a liaison between the Trinity River Restoration Program and other agencies on watershed analysis and evaluations;
- Reach out to private landowners interested in restoration projects involving fisheries and/or watershed restoration;
- Educate landowners and stakeholders about effective watershed and tributary restoration practices;
- Implement small, demonstration projects on private property;
- Assist the Trinity River Restoration Program in development of the watershed restoration component of its Strategic Plan;
- Coordinate with public and private landowners to develop and prioritize watershed restoration needs; and
- Secure significant matching grant funds to implement those restoration projects that will improve fishery habitat in the Trinity River and its tributaries downstream of Lewiston Dam.

Fire Safe Council to Host Workshop

Members of fire safe councils from all over northwestern California will be meeting in Weaverville in April. The idea for this get-together grew out of the FireWise Workshop held in Fortuna in November of last year (See Fall 2003 *Conservation Almanac*). Participants at that workshop began to realize that fire safe councils have been formed throughout the region to deal with the issues surrounding the protection of communities and our forests from wildfire. Some councils, like the Trinity County Fire Safe Council, are countywide while others, like those in Orleans/Somes Bar and the Lower Mattole, are working within specific communities. The Trinity County Fire Safe Council is known around the region for its successes – it has a Fire Management Plan and an action plan that were developed at community meetings held throughout the county from November 1999 through May 2002, and the Trinity County Fire Safe Council has maintained a strong emphasis on implementing projects all over the county through organizations such as the Post Mountain PUD, Watershed Research and Training Center, Humboldt Trinity Recreation Alliance and RCD.

The April workshop will provide an opportunity for fire safe councils to share their success stories on how to educate communities, secure funding for projects and implement fire safe strategies in, and around, their communities. Organizers hope this workshop will enhance fire safe projects throughout the region and result in forming a network of fire safe volunteers and professionals, who can share information that will benefit everyone.

For more information, contact us at pfrost@tcrcd.net or ndoyas@tcrcd.net. To become more involved in your Trinity County Fire Safe Council, join us at our monthly meetings at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of every month. To receive Fire Safe Council meeting minutes and announcements, send Pat or Noreen your email address.

Come Join Us

For information on how to get your free pine seedlings and tree planting information contact the RCD at (530) 623-6004

Oregon Mountain Fuels Reduction

The District's fuels reduction crew, led by Jack McGlynn, has been working with private landowners on Oregon Mountain to reduce the risk of wildfire with funding from the Community-Based Wildfire Grant Program of the Sacramento Regional Foundation and the US Forest Service's Community Protection Program. It all began when a group of landowners headed by John Richards asked the District for assistance in November 2002. The RCD developed a proposal and obtained $150,000 to implement needed fuels reduction in the vicinity of Oregon Mountain in Weaverville. The project includes defensible space around homes, and shaded fuel breaks along the roads and ridge tops.

The Oregon Mountain area was identified as a high priority by the Trinity County Fire Safe Council in its *Community Recommendations Report (Nov 2000),* due to the heavy build-up of dense stands of trees and brush in an area with a relatively high population density. This project is contiguous to BLM lands and builds on the work that the RCD completed in, and around, Timber Ridge. Fire starts along roads are one of the most common causes of fire in Trinity County according to California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and that is why this project focuses on upper Oregon Street and other residential roads in the area.

The success of community fuels reduction projects such as this one and others in communities like Long Canyon, Covington Mill, Timber Ridge, and Post Mountain have encouraged other neighborhoods to get organized and get Fire Safe. Most recently Mark Stewart, the Chief of the Douglas City Volunteer Fire Department, approached the RCD to assist residents of the Poker Bar area between Lewiston and Douglas City to apply for a fuels reduction grant for their neighborhood, and to assist landowners in Vitzum Gulch to develop a fire safe plan. It is clear that projects are most effective when community members mobilize and at least one local landowner spearheads the effort. For more information on how your community can join the growing list of neighborhoods working together to make their properties more fire safe, contact the Resource Conservation District.

District Manager's Corner --Pat Frost

I like to think of the District as a work table supported by four stout legs. One leg represents our partners providing technical assistance (See New Engineer In Town- Page 2) and funding like the support from the Forest Service for the new chipper that is featured on the front page. Another is you, our constituents, who are letting us implement projects with you. This issue is filled with examples like John Richards and his neighbors on Oregon Mountain or Caltrans and BLM working with us to eradicate Scotch Broom from their property in Junction City. The third leg is volunteers, folks willing to sit on the many advisory committees and landowner groups like the Fire Safe Council, the Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee, South Fork CRMP, Weed Management Cooperative and our trail committees. The ideas that come out of these groups help the District set its priorities, keep its focus and adapt to the needs of the communities. The announcement on page 6 inviting everyone to join us in a celebration of Arbor Day on March 7th is a case in point.

The fourth leg is the District's staff. There is not a District project that would move forward, if it were not for the talented individuals, who have chosen to work here. The diversity of our projects is a reflection of the diversity of skills and the many years of experience housed at the Trinity County Resource Conservation District. Thumb through this issue of the *Conservation Almanac* and you will get a feel for the experience and expertise that our employees bring to the table. I am very proud of the fine work that they do and I am extremely fortunate to be able to count them as my colleagues in conservation.

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

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(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 non-profit, self-governing district whose board of directors volunteer thier time.

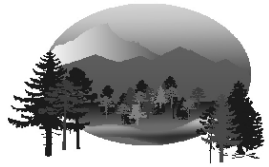
The TCRCD Vision

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**

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