

Fall 2006

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Canyon Creek Suite of Rehabilitation Sites under construction!

If you've driven west through the Junction City area recently, you may have noticed some big equipment working along the river. The Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) began construction in early October on a large project that involves four work areas downstream of Canyon Creek. The project, officially known as the Canyon Creek Suite of Rehabilitation Sites, will affect a mix of privately and publicly owned lands at Conner Creek, Valdor Gulch (Cooper's Bar), Elkhorn, and Pear Tree Gulch.

The purpose of this project is to provide much needed juvenile fish habitat on the mainstem Trinity River downstream of Canyon Creek. This will be accomplished by implementing a combination of channel and riparian rehabilitation measures to restore river form and function. These new project sites, plus the recently completed Hocker Flat Project, are expected to function together to restore complex river habitat while reducing erosive pressure of high flows on the area's steep banks.



The principal designers for the Canyon Creek project were engineers from the California Department of Water Resources and the private consulting firm of McBain and Trush. Several habitat features have been incorporated in their designs that will provide immediate juvenile fish habitat at medium and low river flows. Other features will facilitate the formation of habitat under higher river flows. Canyon Creek habitat enhancements include a low meander cut on the river right at Conner Creek site (right side as the observer looks downstream) and low water alcoves at Elkhorn, Pear Tree Gulch, and Valdor Gulch. A side channel at Valdor Gulch has been re-opened as well. In addition, the accumulation of fine sands, which could not be swept out by lower flows resulting from construction of Lewiston dam in the early 1960s, are being excavated and removed from the berms along the river's banks throughout the project. Please check out the pictures and their captions to get a better feel for the developing project.

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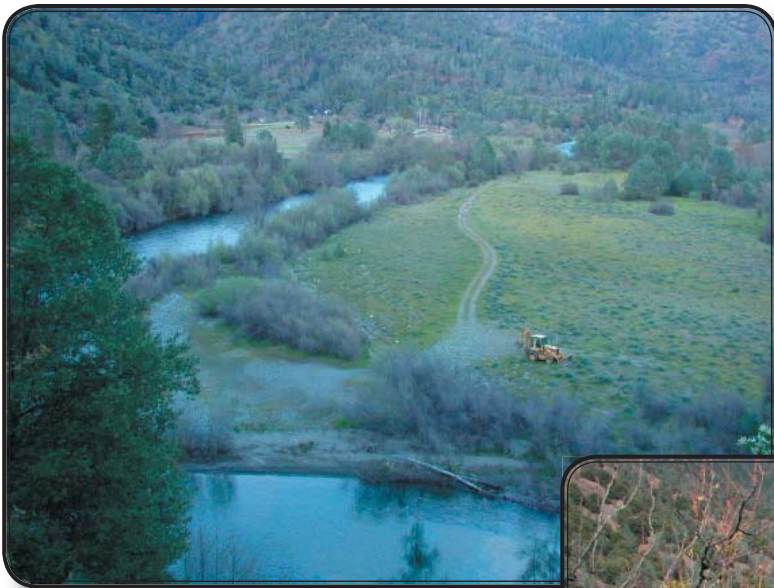
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Canyon Creek Rehabilitation Sites ...continued from page 1

Since the Trinity River Restoration Program's (TRRP) Hocker Flat Channel Project was completed in fall 2005, monitoring has indicated that leaving certain trees and vegetation may benefit the development of fish habitat and natural movement of the river within its floodplain. Within the Canyon Creek Project, approximately 32 miles downstream of Lewiston dam, there is more room for a vegetated floodplain than directly downstream of the dam where high flows are confined to the narrow river corridor by vegetation. What is more, leaving select mature native trees in place may assist in efficiently seeding areas of the floodplain, thereby reducing the need for manual re-planting after project completion.

The TRRP wants to thank all the landowners involved for their patience and cooperation, both during project implementation and as the river's edge habitat evolves and vegetation re-grows during the next several years.

If you have any questions concerning the ongoing Canyon Creek Suite of Rehabilitation Sites, Please contact Brandt Gutermuth or Joe Riess at the TRRP office (623-1800).



New Projects for the Trinity County Fire Safe Council

The California Fire Safe Council recently announced that funding for several new projects has been approved for implementation through the Trinity County Resource Conservation District.

One project will conduct fuels reduction work on private parcels contiguous to US Forest Service lands in, and around, the communities of Salyer and Hawkins Bar. The Down River Communities Fuel Reduction Project is designed to create 44 acres of roadside buffers near Salyer and Hawkins Bar. This work was identified as high priority in the Down River Fire Management and Protection Plan prepared by Registered Professional Forester, Kenneth Baldwin in 2005.

Another project was approved for similar work on private parcels next to Bureau of Land Management properties, specifically those in the Odd Fellows Camp on Highway 299 near Buckhorn Summit and those on Oregon Street next to the Weaverville Community Forest.

Landowners in both the Odd Fellows Camp and on Oregon Street requested the assistance of the TCRCDD to obtain funding to develop a total of 83 more acres of shaded fuel breaks. This work will continue the fuels reduction efforts started in the Grass Valley Creek Watershed along Highway 299 in 2002 and 2003, and along Oregon Street in 2003 and 2004.

Another of the approved grants will continue the successful Trinity County Fire Safe Council Planning and Outreach effort that began back in 1998.

With the occurrence of the Junction Fire this summer, plus the Bar Complex of fires, landowners are anxious for additional protection from wildfire. The District is very appreciative of the California Fire Safe Council's assistance to make these important fuels reduction projects a reality.

In other efforts to help protect residences and properties, the District is beginning three shaded fuel break projects on private land. These are Poker Bar; Lower South Fork Road; and the Bear Creek/Rush Creek Roads Project.

Fuel Reduction Work is almost complete on 184 acres of public forestland in the Lower Trinity District of Six Rivers National Forest. This work is part of the Salyer / Hawkins Bar Community Protection Fuels Project and involves thinning, pruning, and cutting of understory brush. Trimmings and brush are hand piled, and will be burned this winter by USFS staff under appropriate conditions. Most of this project is funded by the Trinity County RAC and links to the work on private lands in Salyer and Hawkins Bar.

The RCD was recently awarded a grant from the State Water Resources Control Board. Two projects in that grant will help address fire issues, with funding provided to conduct fuels reduction in the Weaverville Community Forest and to replant areas burned in recent wildfires.

Weaverville Elementary School Environmental Education Camp



AmeriCorps Watershed Steward Jessie Oliver instructs students in use of binoculars for bird watching.



Students learned about the use of hot stones and woven baskets in the making of traditional acorn soup.

NRCS Forester Randi Paris explains tree identification.



AmeriCorps Watershed Steward Russ Spangler involves students in testing water quality.

Mark Dowdle guides students in calculating stream flow.



Tiffany Riess, Natural Resources Conservation Service, explains soils, sediment and erosion in a watershed.

Students take water sample they will test for quality.



2006 Salmon Festival

This year's Salmon Festival was held on the meadow at Highland Art Center. Highlights included a wide range of educational games and activities for children, a salmon barbecue and an apple cider pressing.



Valdor Road gets Critical Dip Recipe

A plugged culvert caused serious erosion in December 2005, during heavy rainfall and high runoff that magnified the flow of Wheel Gulch, a small tributary to the Trinity River just west of Junction City. The blocked drainage caused the stream to divert out of its natural channel and flow down the road, causing considerable damage (see photo).

The Bureau of Land Management, which manages the affected area, contacted District to repair the road this year and make changes intended to eliminate the potential for this kind of failure in the future.

The District's crew first addressed the main cause of this road failure, the stopped-up culvert that had been plugged for many years. Next they added a flared end to the culvert to increase its flow capacity and reduce plugging potential. Most importantly, the team constructed a Critical Dip in the road over the culvert. This important step ensures that, if the culvert ever plugs again, Wheel Gulch stream flow will follow its natural channel and not run down along the roadway. To finish the project and make the road passable, the District filled in the huge, gaping hole in the road and along its edge with approximately 400 cubic yards of local and imported material, protected with large rock.



Inadequate road design and maintenance led to the washout of a portion of Valdor Road last winter. RCD crews and contractors corrected the problem and rebuilt the road in 2006.

Mark Dowdle, New TCRCD Employee

Mark Dowdle has joined the TCRCD as our new education coordinator and office assistant. In addition to helping with day-to-day operation of our busy office he will be coordinating the District's Environmental Education program, including our very successful school programs.

Mark is impressed with the many ways the TCRCD collaborates with local, state and federal agencies to provide benefit to Trinity County's communities, landowners and environment. He will be providing information to the public about the District's programs and projects plus helping to develop outreach materials that build greater understanding and participation.

He recently completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Resources Management and is looking forward to putting it to good use in Trinity County. Prior to coming to the District, Mark worked in the library at California State University, Bakersfield for nine years. He had earlier earned a BA in Communications and spent several years as a newspaper editor and journalist.

An avid bicyclist, Mark considers Trinity County the ultimate riding environment with its spectacular scenery, clean air, friendly drivers, and great back roads. He's also developed a yearning to kayak on the lakes here.



District Manager's Corner Pat Frost



Fall always strikes me as a season of transition and this year's wonderful display of autumn colors seems to underscore that sense of change. The pages of this issue of Conservation Almanac highlight transitions as well. The Trinity River Restoration Program's Canyon Creek Rehabilitation sites are all about changing the river in ways that will improve habitat for salmon in the Trinity River. Drive down river and you can see these changes first hand. The banks of the river are being reshaped and exposed to the natural forces of flowing water – forces that will create a wide range of conditions necessary for the fish.

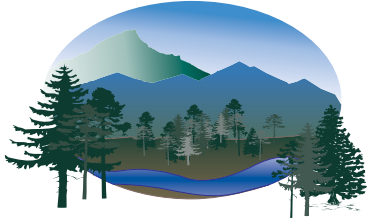
The District is experiencing some changes, too. Mark Dowdle joins the District as our new Office Assistant and Education Coordinator. I am excited about what he brings to the RCD family – not only his skills and experience, but also his enthusiasm for our mission. You might think of him as a newcomer, but Mark has been a landowner in Trinity County for some time and he has a strong sense of the opportunities and challenges that come with land stewardship.

It is a transitional season for our AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards members, too. It doesn't seem possible that Nancy Small and Jessie Oliver are completing their terms with us. They have been great additions to our organization and did much to carry our education program this past year. Any of you who have had an opportunity to work with them or have had your children taught by them know what I mean. Nancy and Jessie are poised for new adventures and all of us wish them great success in the coming year. The baton is being passed onto Russ Spangler – our newest Watershed Stewards Member. This is Russ's second year with AmeriCorps and he plans on focusing on our environmental education programs with Mark. We will give you a more thorough introduction to Russ in our Winter issue. For now please join me in giving him a warm welcome to Trinity County.

RCD Garners Accolades

TCRCD received state and national recognition this month with three awards from different organizations honoring our collaboration with community members and other agencies. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) honored TCRCD for outstanding leadership in cooperative conservation in Trinity County. State Conservationist "Ed" Burton presented the award to our directors Greg Lowden, Colleen O'Sullivan, and Patrick Truman at the annual California Association of Resource Conservation Districts conference. Additionally, that state association bestowed its 2006 Conservation Star award on TCRCD and re-elected Patrick Truman president. The National Association of Conservation Districts gave its 2006 Regional Collaborative Conservation Award to TCRCD to spotlight leadership and funding efforts in management of forestlands and fuel reduction in northern California.

Trinity County



Resource Conservation District

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



Established 1956

District Board Meetings

Third Wednesday
5:30 PM
Open to the Public

TCRCD Office

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Weaverville, CA 96093

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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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