

Conservation Almanac

Trinity County Resource Conservation District

Winter 2017-18 Vol. XXVII No. 1

Your Local Conservation District

We'd like to thank those who participated for taking the time to complete our stakeholder survey. Your honest feedback helps provide direction for our organization.

We did learn from the survey that despite being in existence for 60 years, confusion still exists over our role in Trinity County. We will strive to clearly communicate who we are and what we do for the residents of the County.

Who we are not: Although "Trinity County" is in our name, we are not part of the county government. Our employees do not work for the county, we do not receive direct financial support from the county, and we do not have offices associated with the county. Rather than "Big Government", we are Your Local Conservation District.

Who we are: We are a special district of the state. The state of California has 97 Resource Conservation Districts, each with an identifying location in their names – such as Tehama, Sonoma, Humboldt, etc. Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) were established after the horrific erosion that blew away tons of precious top soil during the 1930's, in the events that became known as the "Dust Bowl."

As a special district of the state, we receive no base funding from local, state, or federal governments. All of our projects are funded by grants and agreements, often through a competitive process. The type of projects we work on are limited by the type of funding available at any given time. For example, if funding is not available to remove a certain type of noxious weed in a certain area of the county, we cannot do the work as much as we would like to see it completed.

With so many government entities in Trinity County, it is often difficult to keep all of the acronyms straight. The Trinity County RCD is Your Local Conservation District. We are governed by a volunteer board of directors who are local land owners themselves, and represent the values and norms within our communities. Several of our employees are graduates of Trinity County schools and are happy to be living and working here. Those who have not lived here as long, have put down roots and are invested in our communities.

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Welcome Elizabeth Sandoval

The District welcomes Elizabeth Sandoval as our new Education and Outreach Coordinator. Elizabeth is a life-long resident of Trinity County. Her interests include environmental conservation and rehabilitation, being involved in the community, outdoor recreation, gardening, and most of all--spending time with her son John Bear.

Elizabeth attended Shasta College focusing on Environmental Studies, English literature, and Communications. In the past she worked for the District as a Conservation Technician and Office Assistant. Other past experience includes being a member of the California Conservation Corps, and working for the US Forest Service and the Northwest CA RC&D Council (5 Counties Program).

Her goals are to work full-time for the District, and continue her education while raising John and having fun.

"I am honored to be part of the team again. RCD is doing many amazing things to enhance opportunities for our community, and manage our natural resources. I am excited and grateful to be the new Education and Outreach Coordinator. I think my skills and interests are a perfect match for this position."



Elizabeth with her son John

The Trinity County Resource Conservation District Natural Resources Scholarship Fund was established by the RCD Board of Directors in 2014. The purpose of this scholarship fund is to encourage and support high school seniors and continuing education students from Trinity County who are pursuing a degree in natural resources or conservation. Tax deductible donations to this fund can help maintain funding from year to year and to increase the offered amount when possible. The current amount being offered to students for the 2017-2018 school year is one scholarships at \$500.00. Please give thought to this new opportunity for contributions to community-based scholarship programs that emphasize natural resources and conservation.



TCRCD Conservation Scholarship Fund Donation

TRINITY COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Make a tax-deductible donation today! We will mail you a receipt or you are welcome to stop by the office.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email: _____

Amount: \$ _____

Please return to: TCRCD Scholarship Fund,
PO Box 1450, Weaverville, CA 96093
530-623-6004 www.tcrcd.net

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Jesse Cox Recieves Leadership Award

In November 2017 the Trinity County Board of Supervisors adopted a proclamation honoring Jesse Cox for his many years of service to the county in his leadership role for the Trinity County Fire Safe Council.

Jesse was a founding member of the Trinity County Fire Safe Council and served as its first Chairman.

The Trinity County Fire Safe Council was formed in 1998 to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire in Trinity County. The Council established priorities for reducing risk of catastrophic fire on a landscape-level scale in order to improve forest health, water quality and quantity, and community well-being.



Under Jesse’s leadership of 19 years, the Trinity County Fire Safe Council:

- Authored one of the nation’s first Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP)
- Spearheaded the “Big Red Truck” defensible space inspection program;
- Completed Firewise Community Recognitions for 15 communities in Trinity County; and
- Supported implementation of dozens of fuels reduction projects throughout Trinity County, representing millions of dollars of investment and thousands of acres of work to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire.

Fire Safe Council meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each month (except November) in the Trinity County Resource Conservation District conference room at 30 Horseshoe Lane, Weaverville. All concerned members of the public are welcome to attend.

Meeting agendas, notes and more information about wildfire safety can be found on the website at: <http://tcrd.net/fsc/index.html>

Jesse Cox Recieves his Leadership Award from the Trinity County Board of Supervisors.

Plant and Seed Exchange 2018

Mark your calendars:

Saturday April 21, 2018

Young Family Ranch, Weaverville

Free Community Event

For all gardeners in the area it is time to start planning for your contributions to the 10th annual Trinity County Plant and Seed Exchange, scheduled for Saturday April 21 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the historic Young Family Ranch in Weaverville.

Gardeners of all skill levels are encouraged to bring cuttings, seeds, plants, gardening books to share at no cost with all who attend. New gardeners are encouraged to participate and take away seeds and plants, even if a contribution is not made.

All donated plants must be free of disease and pests. Be sure to check and clean the bottoms of your pots for slugs, earwigs and other hitchhikers before bringing to the exchange. Please label all plants and seeds.



Your Local Conservation District, cont.

What you told us: The complete list of survey responses can be found on our website at www.tcrd.net. Below are just a few highlights.

Q1: What do you think the most important role is for the TCRC in our community? (Please rank 1-7, with 1 as Most Important). Respondents could only rank one category as number 1, one as number 2, etc.

The seven categories to rank were:

- Implement restoration projects, including: Fuels reduction and forest health; Native plant revegetation; Invasive plant removal; Road work (erosion control); Stream enhancement
- Technical assistance to landowners
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Services
- Watershed collaboration, planning and assessments
- Environmental monitoring and data collection
- Environmental education and outreach
- Natural resource-based recreation

The category with the highest ranking was implementing restoration projects: 55% voted it as the most important role. This also came in with the highest ranking for the second highest priority with 27% ranking it as the second most important role for the District.

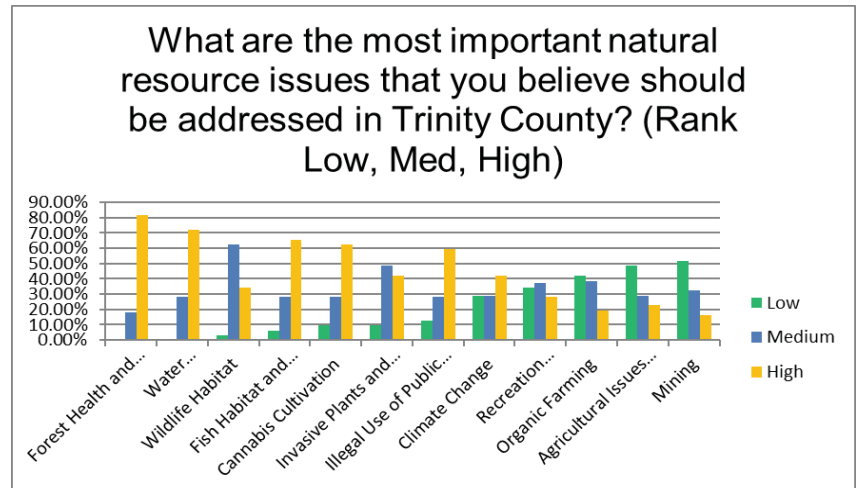
82% of respondents see implementation of restoration projects as either the number one or number two most important role for the District in our community.

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The category with the second highest ranking was technical assistance to landowners: 24% ranked this as the number one role, with 15% ranking it as the number two role.

39% of respondents see this as either the number one or number two most important role for the District in our community.

We followed this question with an open-ended question to allow people to offer up other important roles that we did not capture in question one. Specific projects that relate to forest health, such as prescribed fire and management of the Weaverville Community Forest were mentioned, in addition to helping small farmers, recreation, and collaboration on a County-wide scale.



Q5. What are the most important natural resource issues that you believe should be addressed in Trinity County? (Rank Low, Med, High). This question allowed for multiple high, medium and low rankings, as there were 17 categories, with only three rankings to apply to the categories.

Question 5 responses

One of the most telling results from question five was that no one ranked “Forest Health and Fuel Loads” and “Water Conservation, Quality and Quantity” as low priorities.

On the flip side of those ranks, almost 82% of respondents consider “Forest Health and Fuel Loads” as an issue of high importance, with 72% considering “Water Conservation, Quality and Quantity” also of high importance. Rounding out the top five were “Fish Habitat and Stream Restoration”, “Cannabis Cultivation”, and “Illegal Use of Public Lands.”

The category ranked with lowest importance was Mining, with 51% ranking it as low importance, 32% ranking it of medium importance and 17% ranking it as high. Beyond Mining, “Agricultural Issues and Grazing” and “Organic Farming” ranked on the low side.

The two categories that really showed an equal spread among the respondents were Climate Change and Recreation Opportunities.

Your Local Conservation District, cont.

While Climate Change ranked medium-high as an issue, it impacts the top two ranking issues in the county: Forest Health and Fuel Loads and Water Conservation, Quality and Quantity. As such, the District will consider climate change impacts in all of our project and planning work.

Of the 31 who ranked Climate Change, 9 considered it a low priority, 9 a medium, and 13 a high priority. Of the 32 who ranked Recreational Opportunities, 11 considered it a low priority, 12 a medium and 9 a high priority. Based on these numbers, Climate Change ranges to medium-high, while Recreation Opportunities range to medium-low.

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There were eight open-ended responses for question five that addressed concerns ranging from cannabis cultivation on public lands to politics.

Q9. Would you support a local, Trinity County tax to provide operating funds for the TCRCD?

One of the District's on-going challenges is funding. While we receive project funding from competitive grant applications, this source of funding is very restrictive on how it can be used. It

often does not include enough "overhead" allowances to cover rent, utilities, support staff and vehicle maintenance. Yet the documentation required by funders has increased dramatically in the last ten years, without providing funding to cover the amount of work needed to meet the new requirements.

As the District looks for more sustainable funding avenues, we thought to ask Question nine about support for tax-based revenue. Respondents provided a wide array of responses, with a little over half (62%) in support of some kind of tax. This avenue of funding may be something the District explores in our long range plans, if all legal hurdles can be met.

One of the most telling results from question five was that no one ranked "Forest Health and Fuel Loads" and "Water Conservation, Quality and Quantity" as low priorities.



As a result of the feedback from this survey and discussion with staff and our Board of Directors, the District is committed to working to improve communications with our partners and constituents, and to clarify our identity. To accomplish this, we plan to increase outreach through both

local print and electronic media, and continue to highlight our work accomplishments. It was clear that our respondents still want to receive

information in a printed format and we will honor that wish. The geographic reach of our projects is county-wide, but we have not emphasized this fact – something we will also address in our outreach efforts through the use of maps. Another area where our services may be applied in the future is related to non-regulatory cannabis issues where there is a cross over into natural resource use, conservation and rehabilitation.

This survey and the District's strategic planning process are made possible through funding from the California Department of Conservation. If you missed the opportunity to participate in this survey, the District welcomes your feedback at any time.

Cleaning up our Forests

Whether you enjoy hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, riding horseback or quads, our forests are beautiful places to spend time and connect with nature. Unfortunately there are people who think it is okay to dump garbage, appliances, old cars and even use our public resource to illegally grow cannabis.

In 2016 the District applied for, and received funding from the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) to address these unsightly and dangerous sites.

Over the last two years we have worked with our partners at the Watershed and Research Training Center and Integral

Ecology Research Center to clean up both dump sites and reclaim trespass grow sites. While we have made some progress, the sad news is that there is so much still left to clean up.

The sites the District has worked to clean up are located across the county – from Highway 3 north outside of Weaverville, to Highway 36 south of Hayfork; and from Lewiston in the east to the Humboldt County line in the west.

Please get the word out to everyone you know: Our Forests Are For Reconnecting and Recreating – Not Dumping and Destroying.



These photos were taken at an illegal trespass grow site outside of Hyampom. All trespass grow sites involve some type of water damming and diversion like this one, which have negative impacts on fish, wildlife and vegetation.



Typical trash pile at an illegal trespass grow site. Human food waste attracts bears, which the trespassers illegally kill – often by poisoning.

Water Conservation in 2018

While the 2017 water year offered us a reprieve from the drought, 2018 is shaping up to be dry once again, with snowpack at the beginning of February at only 22 percent of average.

Every Trinity County resident lives in a region where water is scarce between April and October, even in a good year. Whether you have your water supplied by a Community Service District, small water district or have to fend for yourself and get it from surface water or wells, using water wisely is the right thing to do in this climate. Here are a few ideas for water conservation :

For the backyard gardener:

- Always mulch your plants. From landscape to lettuce, your plants will need less water if mulched.
- When growing a vegetable garden, consider how much your family and friends will truly eat. If your food is rotting on the vine, you are wasting water. How many melons can you eat and give away before they go bad? How many tomatoes can you put up before you reach preservation burn-out? The fish and wildlife that depend on our water never have too much in the summer. Think of them before planting just one more tomato plant.
- Remember: "City" water still comes from a creek or river. Your water use does have an impact on your watershed.

For households using surface water for domestic use:

Based on the watershed where you live and your use of surface water, there are several programs currently available to help you take less water in the summer, leaving more for fish and wildlife. Current funding exists for property owners in Little Browns Creek, West Weaver Creek, East Weaver Creek, Browns Creek and sub-watersheds of the South Fork Trinity River. The programs range from help with planning to installation of water storage systems, with minimal financial contribution required. Funding for these programs has been made available from the Wildlife Conservation Board, North Coast Resource Partnership and The Nature Conservancy.

For more information on these programs, contact Donna Rupp at 623-6004 x208



Investing in the Trinity River Watershed

Last fall, the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) completed work on the Deep Gulch and Sheridan Creek channel rehabilitation project near Junction City. Salmon and steelhead were observed swimming in the area as crews wrapped up habit restoration efforts.

After months of intense work, salmon and steelhead were a welcome sight to contractors, including the Yurok and Hoopa Valley Tribes, and area residents. Today, as for generations, salmon and steelhead are a crucial part of the upper Trinity River environment and culture.

When we commit to protecting Trinity River salmon and steelhead, we commit to bolstering our communities and the environment we all depend on. The work to restore naturally spawning salmon and steelhead on the Trinity River honors the federal trust responsibility to the Yurok and Hoopa Valley Tribes' treaty rights to salmon and steelhead of the Trinity River, which are invaluable to their economic and cultural livelihoods. In addition to benefiting those who directly depend on a naturally spawning fishery, habitat restoration work also benefits other species and the environment, contributes towards improving water quality, and strengthens the local economy.

While there have been few studies to identify the direct economic impact that each in-river salmon and steelhead brings to a rural economy through angler expenses, it is evident that recreational fishing is an important source of revenue for Trinity County.

Using data collected in 2013 from the Pacific Fishery Management Council, National Marine Fisheries Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife, FishBio.com¹ reported that each salmon caught in-river by a recreational angler had an economic impact of roughly \$1,200 for California in terms of jobs, sales, and ripple effects to the economy. Independent studies have found the value of each

Each salmon caught in-river by a recreational angler had an economic impact of roughly \$1,200 for California in terms of jobs, sales, and ripple effects to the economy.



Figure 1 Salmon seen swimming at the Deep Gulch and Sheridan Creek channel rehabilitation site in fall of 2017. Photo by Matt Mais - Yurok Tribe

in-river salmon ranges between \$200 up to \$500 in local economies through expenses on guide fees, licenses, fuel, bait/tackle, food and beverage, lodging, and other associated costs for recreational anglers².

Naturally spawning salmon and steelhead are not just sources of revenue; they are a keystone species of a healthy river environment. Their presence through each stage of their life cycle is vital to the health of the river.

Salmon and steelhead bring large amounts of rich marine nutrients from the ocean to nutrient-depleted areas of the upper watershed. These nutrients are incorporated into food webs in the river and the surrounding landscapes by dozens of species of mammals and birds.

Spawning salmon in healthy river systems, such as in southeastern Alaska, contribute up to 25% of the nitrogen in the foliage of trees, creating tree growth rates nearly three-times higher than areas without spawning salmon³. The trees eventually return to the river and form logjams that provide shelter for young salmon and provide habitat for future spawning salmon. In this cyclical process, healthy salmon populations feed the rivers and shape the habitats that support the next generation of wild fish.

Investing in the Trinity River Watershed, cont.



Spawning salmon observed in Grass Valley Creek

However, in Trinity County, these natural processes have been disrupted by a century of mining and logging, combined with 109 miles of habitat loss (roughly one-quarter of the watershed) and reduced flows after the construction of the dams. After severe human pressures, nature requires a helping hand though human-driven habitat restoration to revive more natural processes. That's where river habitat restoration comes in.

River restoration contributes to the community not only by working to restore a keystone species, but also by creating revenue through local jobs, grants, and by supporting local agencies, such as the TCRCD. A study from the University of Oregon found that 15 to 24 local jobs were created for every million dollars spent on habitat restoration in Oregon, and more than 80 cents of every dollar stays in the county where projects are located⁴.

1. Fish Report. 2017. The Value of a California Salmon. FishBio. <http://fishbio.com/field-notes/the-fish-report/value-california-salmon>
2. Ransom, M.M. 2001. Economic Impacts of Salmon Fishing. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
3. Helfield, J.M.; Naiman, R.J. 2001. Effects of Salmon-Derived Nitrogen on Riparian Forest Growth and Implications for Stream Productivity. *Ecology* 82: 2403-2409.
4. Nielsen-Pincus, M. and C. Moseley. 2010. Economic and Employment Impacts of Forest and Watershed Restoration in Oregon. *University of Oregon: Ecosystem Workforce Program*, Working Paper Number 24.

Recently the TRRP provided funding to the county to test water quality in the Trinity River watershed, which will provide a better understanding of baseline conditions. A central aim of the TRRP is to connect with and support community members and stakeholders, including the U.S. Forest Service, Trinity County, California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the TCRCD to support watershed level efforts that help salmon ecosystems, which are inseparable from a healthy community.



West Weaver Creek Restoration Project

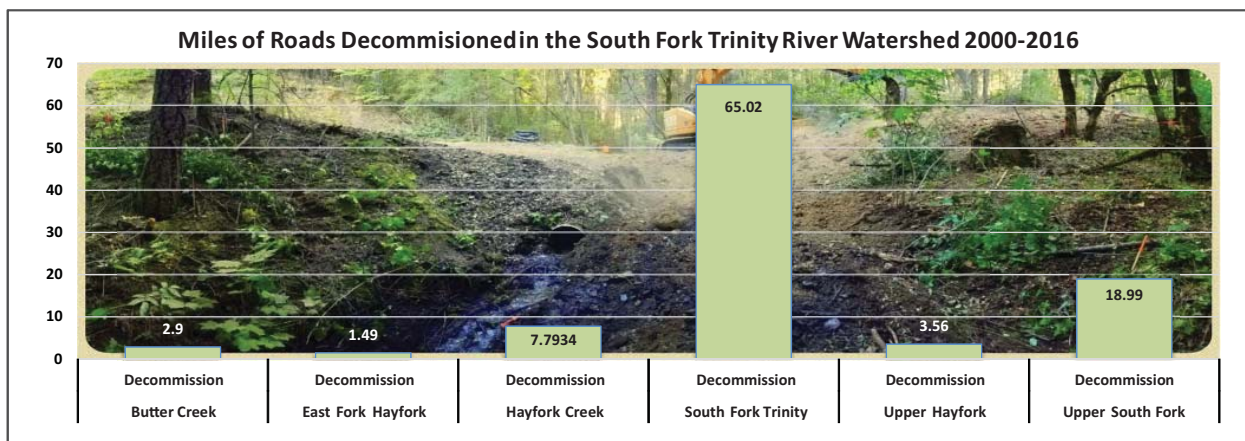
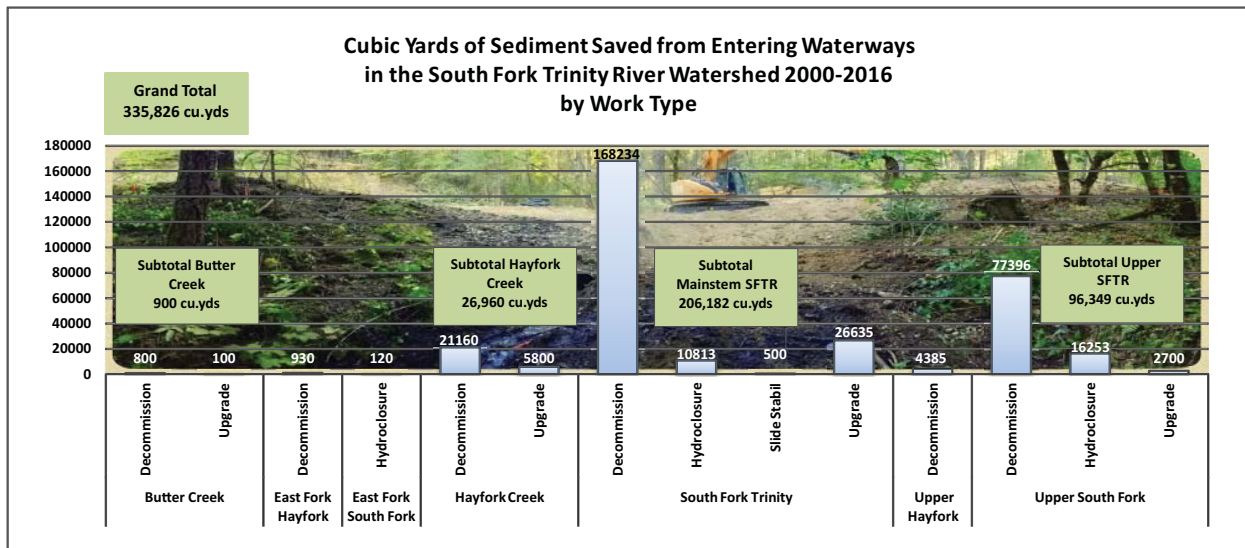
Reducing Sediment in the South Fork Trinity River Watershed

Sediment run-off, erosion, wash-outs...earth moving and running into creeks and rivers is an on-going problem in the South Fork Trinity River Watershed. Decades after logging roads were plowed into the erodible soils in this watershed, work continues to repair the damage. Current forest practices restrict the most damaging procedures of the past, but returning the hillsides to their pre-logging slope and removing under-sized culverts to let creeks run their natural course is a slow and arduous task.

The District has a long history of reducing sediment, removing stream crossings and decommissioning old logging roads in the South Fork Trinity River Watershed. Our dedicated roads program, led by Cynthia Tarwater since 1997, has completed work all over the watershed, including in all of these sub watersheds listed below:

Barker Creek	Digger Gulch	Hayfork Creek	Prospect Creek	Smoky Creek
Bierce Creek	Dubakella Creek	Indian Valley	Raspberry Gulch	Swift Creek
Big Canyon	East Fork South Fork	Johnson Creek	Rattlesnake Creek	Tule Creek
Big Slide	Glen Creek	Little Creek	Red Mountain	Upper Hayfork Creek
Canyon Creek	Goodes Creek	Monroe/Big Slide	Saddle Gulch	Upper South
Cold Creek	Grapevine Creek	Mud Creek	Salt Creek	Upper South Fork
Corral Creek	Grassy Flat	Plummer Creek	Shell Mountain	West Fork Hayfork Creek
Dark Canyon	Happy Camp	Potato Creek	Silver Creek	

A review of the District's completed work in the South Fork Watershed between 2000 and 2016, reveals that almost 100 miles of roads have been decommissioned, 335,826 cubic yards of sediment saved from entering waterways, and 525 stream crossings excavated.



WANTED

NOXIOUS WEED: GIANT REED AKA ARUNDO DONAX

GROWTH SHOULD BE CONTROLLED, DISCOURAGED, OR ERADICATED



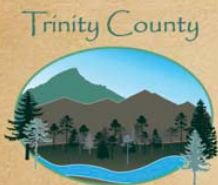
This plant is non-native and invasive. Do not intentionally plant for landscaping, restoration, revegetation, or erosion control.

IDENTIFICATION:

- ◆ Arundo can resemble corn or bamboo
- ◆ The canes are erect, semi-woody, about 1 to 2 inches thick, and can reach heights of 25 feet tall.
- ◆ Arundo grows mostly from roots also known as rhizomes

ENVIRONMENTAL RISK FACTORS:

- ◆ Uses approximately 3X as much water as native plants
- ◆ Poses risk of fire danger—the canes are easily flammable
- ◆ Susceptible to viruses which can spread to native vegetation
- ◆ Crowds out native vegetation, reduces wildlife habitat, and increases flooding



Resource Conservation District

Your Local Conservation District

For control information contact:
Ian Erickson
Project Coordinator
ierickson@tcrd.net
(530) 623-6004 ext 212

Trinity County



Resource Conservation District

Established 1956

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



District Board Meetings

Third Wednesday
5:30 PM
Open to the Public

TCRCD Office

30 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, Morgan Rourke, 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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