

Summer 2001

Vol. XI

## District Kicks Off Fuels Reduction Demonstration Project in Timber Ridge

A Community Meeting was held on May 15 with landowners in the Timber Ridge community in Weaverville to extend outreach regarding the defensible space fuels reduction demonstration project. The TCRCD led the effort sending a letter of invitation to all 44 landowners and prepared informational packets for distribution at the meeting. The TCRCD Project Manager, John Condon, Kenneth Baldwin, a Registered Professional Forester, and the CDF Battalion Chief, Bill Britton, conducted the meeting. Informational brochures were provided and sample inspections were conducted with the landowners. Eight landowners were represented.

One of the outcomes of the Timber Ridge Community meeting was the need to mow a large commonly owned field to serve as an emergency safety zone. The Property Owners Association contracted to have the field mowed.

Another concern identified at the community meeting was the need for an alternate route out of the community in the event of a fire blocking travel along Mill Street. In response to this concern, the Trinity County Road Department bladed a BLM road from



Fuels Reduction Demonstration Project in Timber Ridge

Meadow Lane to the Democrat Gulch Road. This road is now passable by passenger cars in the event of an emergency.

Implementation of fuels reduction work in the Timber Ridge subdivision began in May, subsequent

*(Continued on page 6)*

### **Also In This Issue:**

**Air Quality Concerns-Open Burning  
Watershed Coordination Projects  
Trinity River Restoration FAQs  
Streambed Alteration Workshop  
District Manager's Corner**

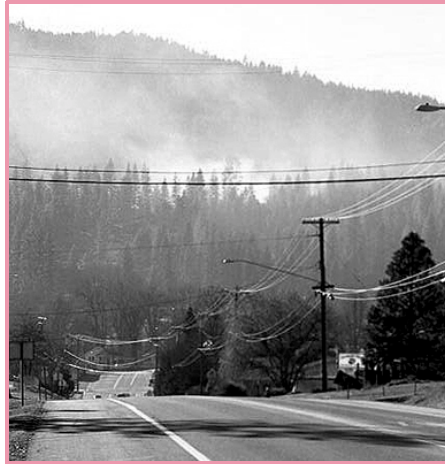
# Air Quality Concerns—Open Burning

by  
North Coast Air Quality Management District

According to a recent study by EPA on emissions from burn barrels, a family of four burning trash in a barrel can potentially put as much dioxin into the air as a well-controlled 200 ton per day municipal waste incinerator that serves thousands of households. Dioxin is one of the most toxic air pollutants known, and is a suspected cancer causing agent even in extremely low concentrations. Fire in a burn barrel isn't hot enough to destroy poisonous substances released by burning materials. The low combustion temperatures and oxygen starved conditions result in incomplete combustion and increased pollutant emissions. These emissions are released at ground level resulting in decreased dilution and increased direct inhalation exposure for the local neighborhood. Even burning of permitted combustibles like paper and cardboard produce toxic air pollutants due to chlorine bleaching, dyes, inks, glues, and adhesives.

Smoke from burning vegetation and trash is composed of tiny particulates that get past the protective filters of the nose and lodge deep in the lungs, causing symptoms like coughing, chest pain, and shortness of breath, sometimes days after the initial exposure. Smoke is particularly harmful to children, the elderly, and people with asthma and other lung disorders.

In most cities in the United States residential open burning has been banned for years, if not decades. There is simply no way open burning can be conducted on a typical city lot without impacting neighboring residents. Smoke



Smoke Over Weaverville

from backyard burning is the number one air pollution complaint received by the North Coast Air Quality Management District, and is a constant problem for local fire departments. But there are alternatives to all this burning. Paper and cardboard can be recycled for free. Wood waste and vegetation can be composted, burned in a power boiler, or even burned at specially designated disposal sites. As for people burning prohibited substances, in many cases these residents choose not to pay for garbage service and instead dispose of their waste by burning everything that can be burned. Many communities have instituted mandatory garbage service for all residences to combat this problem. The mandatory garbage service premise is that people who pay to have their garbage handled in a safe manner shouldn't have to subsidize their neighbors waste disposal practices with their health and well-being.

Many communities have met and solved these challenges, and we need look no further than Scotia, California as a model on how to handle solid wastes. This small company town is the only commu-

nity in Humboldt County that prohibits all open burning, has mandatory garbage service, provides for free curbside pick-up of recyclables, and picks-up and disposes of green waste. The green waste is collected by Pacific Lumber and burned in power boilers to generate electricity, and the emissions are controlled with efficient pollution control devices. What an ideal solution! Instead of waste creating pollution, it creates power for homes and businesses.

If you must burn, please remember to only burn clean paper, cardboard, and properly dried vegetation. When burning make sure your smoke is not impacting your neighbors or other public places, keep a hot active fire going, and extinguish your fire when the active burning has stopped. Smoldering burn piles or burn barrels release much greater amounts of pollution and can smoke for days. All burning should be extinguished by sunset, since smoke dispersion after sunset is very poor and the potential for generating smoke complaints greatly increases.

Violations of air quality open burning laws can result in fines up to \$10,000, so make sure you are burning only approved combustibles and have the proper air quality and fire department permits before you strike that match. Please contact the North Coast Air Quality District (707) 443-3093, the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection, or your local fire department for more information on open burning laws. Ralph Modine, on the Board of Supervisors, represents Trinity County at the North Coast Air Quality Management District.

## Watershed Coordination Activities

For the past several months the Trinity County Resource Conservation District has been actively involved in Watershed Coordination in both the Trinity River and the South Fork Trinity River Watersheds with funding from the California Department of Conservation. These grants have enabled us to play an important role in assisting stakeholders in developing watershed restoration priorities and in seeking the funds to implement them.

### Trinity River Watershed

With the demise of the Trinity River Task Force and its associated Technical Advisory Committee, there has been a void in local input to the Trinity River Restoration Program projects and priorities. The RCD has managed to fill this void by organizing and facilitating the Trinity River Watershed Coordination Group meetings. This group is comprised of stakeholders interested in continued restoration of the Trinity River. Participation in this Group is high and broadly representative of stakeholder interests. This ad hoc group has been meeting since April and has a strong interest in providing input to the new Trinity Management Council and assisting with the difficult task of shepherding the Trinity River Restoration Program through the transition from the Task Force to the new management structure envisioned by the Trinity River Record of Decision (ROD) that was signed in December 2000 by former Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt.

A framework has been developed for the Trinity River Watershed Coordination Group. We developed an e-mail list for the work group with 26 addresses. A goal of this Group is to prioritize actions that support the ROD for FY 2002. This effort is a critical step in assuring that the program is fully funded from all available sources and receives support from stakeholders. Other important parts of watershed coordination in-

clude meeting with individual landowners to discuss concerns and bringing awareness of watershed to the classroom.

Since March, the District has submitted six proposals to the California Department of Fish and Game, two to the State Water Resources Control Board, two to the Bureau of Reclamation, and one to the Bureau of Land Management for restoration projects that will benefit the Trinity River Watershed.

### South Fork Trinity River Watershed

The RCD participates in the South Fork Coordinated Resource Management Planning Group. South Fork CRMP efforts currently include the development of a monitoring program to assist landowners and land managers; developing road and erosion control workshops; coordinating partners in securing funding for restoration work in the South Fork; and meeting with individual landowners to discuss concerns.

The District is implementing road related watershed restoration activities on US Forest Service lands in the Upper South Fork Trinity River, finishing a road inventory in Rattlesnake Creek, and beginning a road inventory of private lands in the Grouse Creek subwatershed.

Since March, the District has submitted two proposals to the California Department of Fish and Game, two proposals to the State Water Resources Control Board, one to the Bureau of Reclamation, and one to the US Forest Service for restoration projects that will benefit the South Fork Trinity River Watershed.

## Frequently Asked Questions Trinity River Fisheries Restoration Program

**Q: *What is this restoration program?***

**A:** In accordance with several Acts of Congress, the Secretary of the Interior created, with a Record of Decision (ROD) on December 19, 2000, a program to restore the decimated salmon and steelhead runs on the Trinity River. This plan is based on the recommendations of a 12-year scientific study. The plan calls for increased flows to the Trinity River by decreasing water diversions to the Central Valley, mechanical restoration, sediment management, and an Adaptive Management program to fine-tune the restoration program to adapt to changes in the river.

**Q: *What does "mechanical restoration" mean?***

**A:** Mechanical restoration is a one-time reshaping of gravel bars with heavy earth-moving equipment to recreate the natural, pre-dam, *alternating bar sequence*. The higher flows mandated by the ROD are expected to maintain this form naturally. The restored gravel bars will allow the river to use its historic floodplain in doing so will provide slow water habitat during floods that is needed by juvenile salmon and steelhead.

**Q: *The Record of Decision was signed on December 19, 2000. I haven't seen any mechanical restoration yet. When will it start? Why is it taking so long?***

**A:** The mechanical restoration requires a long list of permits from a variety of federal, state, and county agencies before they can proceed. The Record of Decision was also successfully challenged in court. It is not yet clear how this ongoing lawsuit will affect the mechanical restoration. The first restoration projects are *scheduled* to begin in the summer of 2002.

More FAQs in the next newsletter....

## Streambed Alteration Agreement Workshop

Twenty-five landowners gathered at Lee Fong Park in Weaverville to learn about Streambed Alteration Agreements (SBAA) on Saturday, June 9th. Carl Harral, an environmental specialist from California Department of Fish & Game (Fish & Game), led the workshop. Weaver Creek at the Mill Street Bridge. Landowners generally guided the discussion with questions about real-life and hypothetical situations at several streamside sites including Sidney Gulch at Lee Fong Park, Ten-Cent Gulch near the Highlands Art Center and Weaver Creek at the Mill Street Bridge.

The workshop began with an overview of the SBAA program. Fish & Game requires a SBAA for any project that will disturb or adversely alter any stream. A streambed agreement between a landowner and the Fish & Game specifies what work will be done, when work can be performed, necessary erosion control measures, and any other requirements.

- A stream is generally defined as having flowing water, at least during part of the year and typically has vegetation along its banks, and the presence of aquatic insects, and/or wildlife.

Streams are classified according to what type of life they support.

- Class I streams are ones that bear fish;
- Class II streams are those that support aquatic insects or species that live near or along the stream including plants (streamside plants and animals are called riparian species).
- Class III streams have no fish, riparian species, or aquatic insects. Only Class III streams do not currently require a SBAA.

- Even work in streams that run dry might require a permit.
- Generally, for a SBAA to be required, the change must be substantial.
- The most important considerations are the fish or wildlife resources at risk.
- Grandfathering and maintenance of existing facilities are not exempt. The only exception is if there is an existing CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) document, since CEQA contains provisions for grandfathering.
- Diversions of the natural flow of rivers or streams are handled on a case-by-case basis.

I, II, or III); and downstream conditions (like the number of downstream bridges). Harral noted that performing work by hand versus machine is not a determining factor on whether a "permit" is required or approved. But, he provided several helpful hints for anyone considering work in a stream:

- Use natural structures like logs and tree plantings to stabilize banks whenever possible.
- Provide easy to understand drawings with enough detail to help the Fish & Game staff understand your project.
- Consider obtaining a five-year agreement for maintenance. It will save you money.
- You don't need a permit to do emergency work – work that is needed to protect public health and safety during a bonafide emergency.
  - Call Fish & Game and ask questions.
  - Call the Trinity County Planning Department to find out what other permits might be required, including permits from the US Army Corps of Engineers and floodplain encroachment permits from the County.



Streambank Workshop

Harral strongly encourages anyone considering a streambed project to call the California Department of Fish & Game with any questions – even hypothetical or anonymous ones. Feel free to contact Fish and Game at (530) 225-2309.

Some of the most important factors that Fish & Game will consider include: the project's impact on all aquatic wildlife, vegetation, and water quality; the type of stream (Class

One thing everyone learned was that there may not be easy answers to all of the questions about streambed permitting, but that with staff like Carl Harral willing to spend a Saturday morning with landowners is a good start to making the process more user-friendly.

Fish & Game, Trinity County Property Owners Protective Association, Trinity County Planning Department, and the TCRCD sponsored this workshop with funding from the NRCS EQIP Environmental Education Program. For more information or to get a copy of the RCD's Stream Care Guidebook, contact us at 623-6004 or [trcrd@snowcrest.net](mailto:trcrd@snowcrest.net). The Trinity County Planning Department can be reached at 623-1351.

## Noxious Weeds to Watch in Trinity County

### Tall whitetop (*Lepidium latifolium*)

Tall whitetop, also known as perennial pepperweed, is a highly invasive herbaceous perennial that has recently been noticed growing in Weaverville by members of the Trinity County Weed Co-op. It can invade a wide range of habitats that are at least seasonally moist including riparian areas, wetlands, marshes, and floodplains. Once established this plant creates large, contiguous stands that displace native plants and animals. Once established, this noxious weed can be very difficult to remove.

Perennial pepperweed is a member of the mustard family. In its early stages of growth, it is difficult to distinguish from other members of this family. Seedlings are very rare in established stands, with new stems arising from the creeping root system. Plants die back during the winter to the soil surface. Stems of this weed are very woody at the base and persist for several years as dry material. Accumulations of old stems often hide the new growth of leaves in the spring.



Leaves of tall whitetop generally appear sometime in March, when rosettes of bright green foliage spread on the soil surface. By late April, stems begin to elongate. Stems can grow up to 6.5 feet. Flowering occurs from late June to

early July with a dazzling display of individual small, white-petaled flowers that are packed in dense clusters at the tips of branches.

With the exception of continual flooding, no non-chemical treatments have been found to effectively control this weed when well established in large stands. Excellent control can be obtained with several herbicides, but limited recovery of desirable plants is seen in treated areas unless the soil surface is disturbed. Additionally, herbicide use in habitats that are at least seasonably moist can be detrimental to water quality and should be undertaken with extreme care. Perennial roots can also remain dormant in the soil for several years. Intense monitoring with early detection and removal is the best control measure for perennial pepperweed.



Small infestations can be removed by repeated removal of above, and below, ground parts of the plant. Care must be taken to remove as much of the root as possible as small pieces re-sprout. If this process is repeated several times it can be successful, but it is very labor intensive.

If you believe that this weed is found on, or around, your property, the District can help with plant identification and a plan to control this harmful plant.



### Trinity County Salmon Festival & 5K Fun Run/Walk

The Trinity County Salmon Festival & 5K Fun Run/Walk is held annually at Lee Fong Park to celebrate the fall harvest and Chinook spawning run. It is organized by the TCRCD, the Trinity County Arts Council (TCAC), and the Frontier Nutrition Project. Everyone is welcome to this all day event on **Saturday, October 6th**. There is no entrance fee. There will be live music, food, arts & crafts, resource and non-profit booths, raffles, farmer's market, vendor booths, fly-fishing demonstrations, and more. Activities for kids include hayrides, a giant salmon storytelling tent where kids dress up as the characters, fish printing, a clown, bubble-making, games, and lots more.



The day will start off with a 5K Fun Run/Walk at 9am. The easy loop course starts and ends at Lee Fong Park. Refreshments will be provided for all runners/walkers and top finishers will win prizes. If you would like to register for the Run/Walk, contact Sandra Pérez at the TCRCD 623.6004. If you dress up as a salmon, you might even win a special prize for best salmon costume.

The event goes from 9am until 6pm. If you would like more information, or be a Salmon Festival sponsor, or would like to volunteer for the Salmon Festival, contact the TCRCD at 623.6004 or [tcrcd@snowcrest.net](mailto:tcrcd@snowcrest.net) or the TCAC at [tcarts@tcarts.com](mailto:tcarts@tcarts.com) or 623.2760.

(Continued from page 1)

to the Community Meeting. The following activities have been a part of the demonstration project:

- ❖ Fuel condition inspections and treatment recommendations by TCRCD staff and the RPF.
- ❖ Cutting and piling on demonstration lots with highest risk and “least able” landowners.
- ❖ Chipping of cut and piled fuels.
- ❖ Field work for development of the Community Fire Management Plan.
- ❖ Ongoing photo point documentation of fuel treatments.

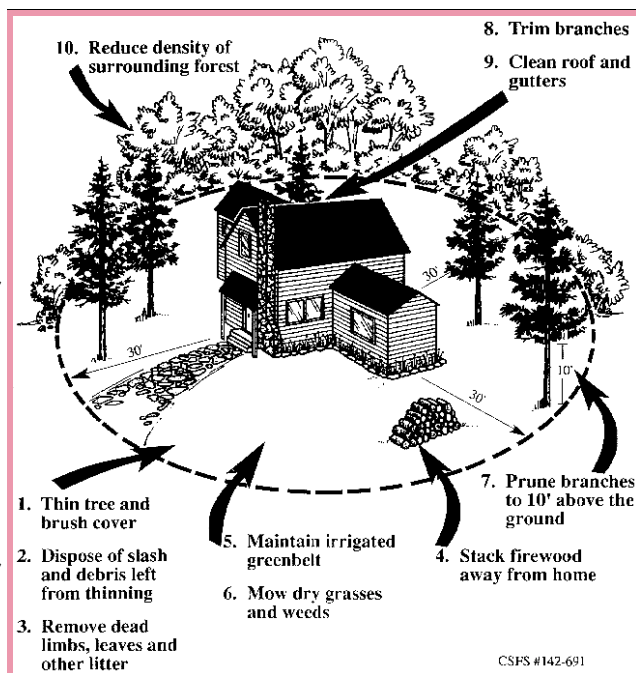
Realizing that fuels reduction efforts are most successful when the entire neighborhood participates, some homeowners went door to door asking their neighbors to take advantage of it. Twenty-five homeowners have participated thus far.

Kenneth Baldwin is developing a community-wide Forest Health/Fire Management Plan similar to those completed for the East Branch of Weaver Creek and the Covington Mill/Long Canyon communities. BLM has requested his assistance in locating appropriate fuel breaks on their lands north, west, and south of the

Timber Ridge community.

The TCRCD has also facilitated a fuels reduction prescription with the landowners of the historical Chinese cemetery in Weaverville. A site inspection was conducted with the TCRCD Project Manager, John Condon, the representative of the syndicate, and Mark Lancaster, Registered Professional Forester. Fuels reduction work took place in late June 2001 to reduce the fuels load and protect the upslope communities, Timber Ridge and the adjacent Glenn Road community.

The next community demonstration project that the RCD will be implementing with funds from Prop 204 will be in the Post Mountain community east of Hayfork. This project will be undertaken with the cooperation of the Post Mountain Public Utilities District, and the Watershed Research & Training Center. Fire Safe Council meetings are held the 4th Thursday of each month. For more information contact the District at 623-6004.



## Local Forester SmartWood® Certified



*Kenneth Baldwin, RPF,  
is an RCD Consultant*

Local Registered Professional Forester, **Kenneth Baldwin**, recently completed training to lead forest certification assessments for SmartWood® Certified Forestry.

SmartWood certification is based on the premise that forests, when managed sustainably, can provide long-term outputs of commercial products, protect the environment, and provide economic benefits to local economies. Certification sets guidelines for improved forestry and enhances both forestry's public image and long-term outlook.

Baldwin, a twenty-nine year resident of Douglas City, explains that there is an increase in retail suppliers who have made a commitment to buy and promote certified wood. For instance, Home Depot plans to sell certified wood exclusively by 2003. Surveys indicate that a growing number of American and foreign consumers seek out environmentally responsible products and are increasingly buying forest products from certified companies.

SmartWood, accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council, is one of the forerunners in sustainable forestry certification, and the first worldwide certifier. Baldwin concludes by saying “**this is a conservative model of forestry, one which I hope will continue to expand worldwide as more people become aware of the value of sustainable forests balanced between the needs of people and nature.**”

To learn more about SmartWood, log on at [www.smartwood.org](http://www.smartwood.org) or email [info@smartwood.org](mailto:info@smartwood.org).

## District Manager's Corner

Pat Frost

This issue of the **Conservation Almanac** has a wide variety of articles, but as I read through the newsletter I am struck by a unifying theme. I see the health of watersheds central to everything that the District does. Whether we are talking to a neighborhood about removing the fuel load around their houses to make their properties more defensible from wildfire or I am standing by the side of a stream trying to harness the exuberance of 15 elementary school children for a study of the health of the creek next to their school, I know that we all live in a watershed. Our newsletter is one way that we can let all of you know what kinds of projects your Resource Conservation District has available. We are here to serve you, to find ways to deliver conservation practices and education, and to coordinate the technical and financial resources of other agencies to help you manage your watershed.

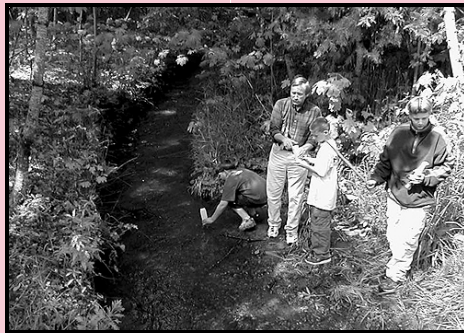


the mystery out of the permitting process and replaced it with facts and real live folks like Carl Haral and Mark Lancaster, who are here to help you.

The newsletter is filled with examples of other projects that the District would not have coordinated, if there had not been some of you out there willing to pick up the phone and ask for assistance. Our fuels reduction program is reaching into new neighborhoods each year, because landowners realize that they can make a difference when they are armed with good information and that they aren't in it alone. After all their property is either uphill or downhill from someone else's. Everyone relies on his or her neighbors, because, after all, we all live in a watershed.

There are examples in every part of the county where the District has been asked to help deliver technical help.

A great example was our recent Streambed Alteration Workshop with the California Department of Fish and Game. Permitting programs are scary, when you don't know what to expect. Remember the knot in your stomach when you went to get your first driver's license? I know that I fretted for weeks. I had heard the horror stories (and had friends, who failed miserably). Once you have been exposed to the process, it isn't quite the same ordeal. Local landowners have the same sinking feeling when anyone mentions Fish & Game and streambed permits in the same conversation. Everyone has heard stories, and some are true. One group of landowners decided to confront their fear head on and asked the District to help them. The article on page 4 gives you some highlights of a very productive workshop that we were able to coordinate, because someone asked for help. The effort took some of



Establishing a water quality monitoring program with Coffee Creek School

We work closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to bring landowners help from the US Department of Agriculture through programs like EQIP – haven't heard about it?

Give us a call.

AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards members are important partners in reaching out to schools, like Coffee Creek Elementary School. If you are a teacher, and would like us to incorporate watershed and conservation education into your classroom, give us a call.

Even if you have no immediate needs, maybe something will come up in the future. We'll be at the Trinity County fair and the Third Annual Salmon Festival. So stop by, and get to know us. I wouldn't be surprised that we have something in common, because we all live in a watershed.

## Update on Trinity River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Sediment

The US Environmental Protection Agency is continuing development of the sediment TMDL for the Trinity River. Graham Matthews and Associates (GMA), technical consultant for the assessment, is compiling sediment source, storage and transport data and will submit a report in July. The schedule for the steps to complete and adopt the TMDL are identified below:

### July

Sediment Budget Assessment Report submitted by GMA

### August

Development of Draft Sediment TMDL by EPA

### Sept-October

Public Comment Period—copies will be made available via the internet ([www.epa.gov/region09/water/tmdl](http://www.epa.gov/region09/water/tmdl)) and public repositories

### November

EPA responds to comments and revises TMDL as necessary

### December

EPA finalizes and adopts TMDL

For any questions on the TMDL process, please contact Chris Heppe, EPA, at (707) 825-2311 or e-mail [Heppe.Christopher@EPA.MAIL.EPA.GOV](mailto:Heppe.Christopher@EPA.MAIL.EPA.GOV).