Conservation Almanac

Trinity County Resource Conservation District

Spring 2005 Vol. XIV No.2

Trinity County Community Chipper Program

Do you and your neighbors need help with getting rid of the piles of brush from your fuels reduction projects around your home? The RCD may be able to help you!!

The District recently received a grant from the North Coast Air Quality Management District to use a chipper instead of homeowners burning the branches, brush and small trees that have been cut on private property. The Trinity County RCD will provide a chipper and crew to dispose of these kinds of woody material for private landowners, who are doing their own defensible space work in the communities of Weaverville, Lewiston, and Hayfork.

Here is all you have to do – Get with your neighbors to work together so that the District crew will have at least 3 hours of chipping to do. Pick one person from the neighborhood to coordinate with the District – someone who can collect the Request Forms and return them to the District and help us schedule our visit to the neighborhood.

~ Stack the material so that it is easy and safe to handle.

~ Stack the material with the cut ends facing the road.

~ Keep piles no higher than 4 feet.

~ Piles need to be free of rocks, mud, poison oak and blackberries.

~ Estimate the time needed to complete the chipping (cedar, pine & fir require 20 minutes for a 4 ft x 4 ft x 8 ft pile. Oak and manzanita take 30 minutes per pile).

~ Keep track of the time that each landowner spends cutting and piling.

Chipping is a great alternative to burn piles. It is safer, reducing the chances of escaped fires turning into wildfires. Chipping decreases the amount of smoke in the air, and the chipped wood makes great mulch for those hard-to-maintain areas in your yard. This is a small grant and the District will respond to neighborhoods on a first-call first-served basis. So don't wait too long. Get with your neighbors today and get on the RCD Community Chipper list before it is too late. For more information or to get copies of the Request Forms, call 623-6004.

Also In This Issue:

Conservation Districts Join Forces

The six conservation districts in the Klamath River Basin have signed a Memorandum of Understanding that highlights the importance of working together to help solve the complex and controversial issues confronting landowners and land managers throughout the Klamath Basin, which includes the Trinity River watershed. The districts – Lava Beds-Butte Valley RCD, Humboldt County RCD, Shasta Valley RCD, Siskiyou RCD, Trinity County RCD and the Klamath Soil and Water Conservation District in Oregon – realize that they each have conservation issues that are unique to their areas, but they also recognize that they have a lot in common.

The overarching goal of the newly formed **Klamath River Coalition of Conservation Districts** is to provide support for each. The districts will share project ideas and designs, track conservation practices and restoration projects that are implemented throughout the basin and work with the NRCS Klamath Basin Watershed Planning team on comprehensive watershed planning that will lead to better resources stewardship. Each district has an active education and outreach program and the Coalition will be able spread the word about the great work that landowners are doing to protect and manage the precious natural resources in the Klamath Basin; the challenges land managers face and the opportunities available to practice better conservation.

So, look for future articles in the *Conservation Almanac* that feature one of the other conservation districts in the Klamath River basin.

Save This Date:

Saturday, July 9th, 2005
Forest Management for Small Landowners
Hayfork, Trinity County Fairground Dining Hall, 9:00 am - 4:30 pm

Are you a forest landowner? Would you like to know more about forest management for your property? The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) workshop will cover basic forest health and types, fuels reduction, and forest products. The Watershed Center will provide an update on their Small Diameter Utilazation Project. For more information on the workshop, call Carol Fall, UCCE Trinity County office, at 628-5495

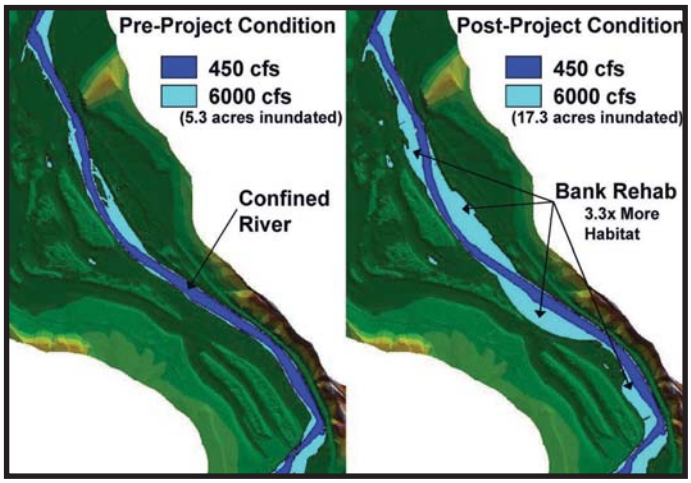
Trinity River Bank Restoration to begin at Hocker Flat

By: Joe Riess, Civil Engineer, Trinity River Restoration Program

The banks of the Trinity River downstream of Junction City look different these days. If you drive on Highway 299 you will notice patches that have been cleared of trees and blackberries along about a mile of the Trinity River's edge. The Trinity County Resource Conservation District recently completed clearing this riverbank vegetation to set the stage for the Trinity River Restoration Program's first channel rehabilitation project. Major construction of the project — the actual earthmoving with heavy equipment — will start later this summer, but the trees and blackberry bushes were cut this winter before birds began selecting nesting sites, as required under agreements with the California Department of Fish and Game. This summer a contract will be awarded to a local contractor to feather back the river's banks to form a gradual slope (at a 10% grade), excavate materials from the floodplain, and move excavated materials outside of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) 100-year inundation zone. The project is designed to flood when flows in the Trinity River are above 6,000 cubic feet per second, creating much needed slow water rearing habitat for young salmon. The channel manipulation will allow the floodplain to be scoured by high water more frequently, to provide seasonal aquatic habitat for fish and other aquatic species, and to prevent riparian vegetation from encroaching along the river's edge. A wide range of plant species will be planted next winter to help keep the less desirable plants such as star thistle from taking over the rehabilitated floodplain.

The Hocker Flat bank rehabilitation project is just one of 47 sites along 42 miles of the Trinity River between Lewiston Dam and the North Fork Trinity River near Helena. Preliminary designs are underway for four additional sites on the River near Canyon Creek, with construction anticipated to begin in spring of 2006. This first project at Hocker Flat is intended to work with these future projects to create a broader, more diverse river that will function, on a smaller scale, like the historical Trinity River. Overall, access to the river and views of the river from the surrounding area will be enhanced, and fish and wildlife habitat associated with the properties will increase. The negative visual impacts associated with this summer's construction will fade and improve over time as revegetation takes hold.

Initial planning efforts have already begun for 11 sites near Lewiston and Indian Creek.
For additional information you can call Joe Riess, Trinity River Restoration Program, at 623-1811.



Rust Fungus ~ A New Treatment for Starthistle

Thanks to all of you, who returned the weed survey that was in the last issue of the Conservation Almanac. It is apparent from the response that yellow starthistle is the noxious weed most commonly known to the Trinity County residents. You all will be happy to know that ongoing biological control methods are continuing and that a new agent has been approved for testing in our county. Previously, efforts of control have focused on six species of insects all collected from yellow starthistle in its native range, the Mediterranean. The insects were all extensively tested to ensure that they were safe to our native and agricultural species. Ongoing studies show that the insects destroy a large proportion of each year's seed production; however, this is not enough to control yellow starthistle. A new pathogen recently has been approved for testing, *Puccinia jaceae* var. *solstitialis*, a rust fungus that diminishes the vigor of yellow starthistle's capacity to produce large quantities of seed. Mark Lockhart, the County Agricultural Commissioner, shown in the photograph, began testing the fungus by spraying it on yellow starthistle on March 31, 2005. Mr. Lockhart treated an area heavily infested with yellow starthistle with a solution of 100 miligrams of spores within 200 mililiters of water. The spores will germinate within 8 to 12 hours under a black polyethylene film cover. The inoculation will be deemed successful, if rust colored pustules appear upon the treated weeds in the following weeks.

Thank you Mr. Lockhart for your long-term efforts to achieve biological control of yellow starthistle.

Wildfire Awareness Week May 8-14, 2005

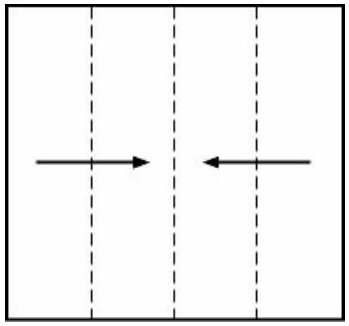
Wildfire Awareness Week is an annual campaign to remind people to take steps to reduce the risk of wildfire damage and to act in a fire safe manner. This year's theme is, It's a Clear Choice. "Residents of Trinity County do have a clear choice: Be fire safe! This means clearing defensible space to give firefighters a safe zone to fight fires," said Jesse Cox, Chairman of the Trinity County Fire Safe Council.

Defensible space used to be a minimum 30-foot clearance of flammable plants from around a structure. The California Legislature expanded that zone to 100 feet last year This does not mean 100 feet of bare dirt, but means thinking about a fire resistant landscape. Homeowners can assess their home's defensibility by using the homeowner's checklist at **www.firesafecouncil.org**.

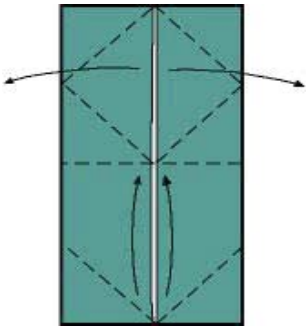
The **California Fire Safe Council** recently approved three proposals to implement fuels reduction work. Poker Bar Property Owners Association requested the assistance of the RCD to implement shaded fuel break and defensible space for their community that borders Bureau of Land Management. The other fuels reduction projects funded were for the Bear and Rush Creek communities and the residents of Lower South Fork Road.

Make an Origami Salmon!

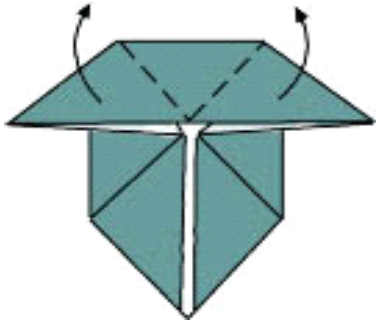
Begin with a square piece of paper. One side can be plain and one side can be colored or designed with the hues of your salmon! When following the pictures, the dark side is the colored side of your paper, and the white is the plain side of your paper. Be sure to make good creases with your thumb along the paper folds.



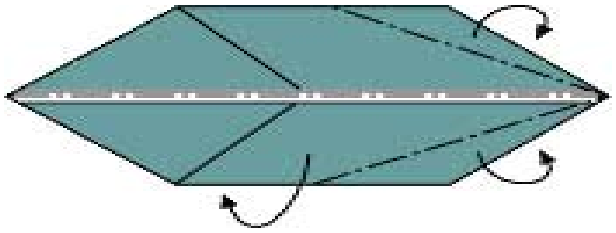
1. Crease on the dotted lines, then fold the sides in to meet at the middle.



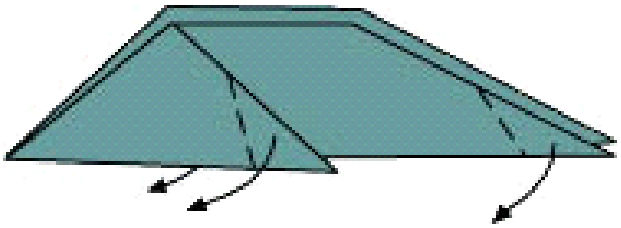
2. Fold along the dotted lines.



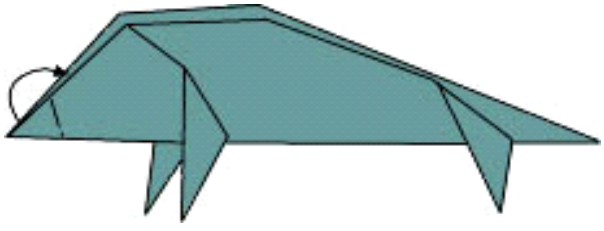
3. Fold corners up along the dotted lines.



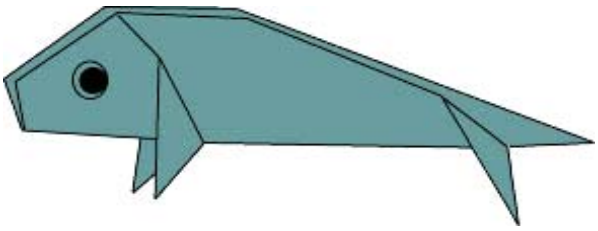
4. Fold the corners away along the dotted lines, then fold the entire object away along its center.



5. Fold the corners along the dotted lines.



6. Fold the nose into the fish's body.



7. And it's done!

Waste Management Project Funded

The RCD and Watershed Research and Training Center in Hayfork were awarded a grant on April 20th to clean up several illegal dumpsites on forest lands. The **California Integrated Waste Management Board** approved the funding for this first phase of the project. Illegal dumping has become a serious problem in our county. Just look over the edge of almost any remote dirt road and chances are you will find evidence of trash, including appliances, computers, and even old cars.

Not only do these sites detract from the natural beauty and tranquility of the woods, they pose severe hazards to the humans and wildlife. Many of the sites include soiled baby diapers, televisions, decomposing mattresses and box springs, along with used radiators, refrigerators and building materials, on top of the usual family garbage. Seepage from the garbage leaches into the soil and runs into the creeks and waterways. Residents downstream are exposed to the human waste and toxic chemicals that can make its way into drinking water from wells and streams. One of the largest identified sites is on Hayfork Creek and much of the waste is within 50 feet of the water. Another site that will be cleaned up has waste that drains into Tule Creek and could affect many families downstream that depend on Tule Creek for their domestic water supply. Plastics and non-biodegradable garbage can harm wildlife.

Reduced funding for public services, especially law enforcement, has made clean-up and prosecution of guilty parties difficult. Community clean-up days have been organized in various locations of the county, and phenomenal amounts of trash have been cleaned up. Voluntary efforts have barely touched the tip of this overwhelming problem and it is unreasonable to expect volunteers to do it all.

Upper Trinity River Watershed Survey

If you've been following the Upper Trinity River Watershed project, the watershed survey was sent out to residents of the basin north of Trinity Dam in the middle of January. The goal of the survey was to identify existing problems and issues of concern that will help the District identify and recommend projects that will help maintain and improve the overall water quality of this part of the Trinity River Basin, including Trinity Lake and the streams that feed it.

The response was wonderful. Of the 945 surveys sent out, 320 were completed and returned. Although we would have liked to have heard from everyone, we consider the 34% return rate a great success and it proves to us that the residents and landowners in the watershed care about the area they live in. An initial review identifies several areas of concern that many of you share such as the high risk of wildfire and the amount of fuel in the forests around you. The fuel load is the amount of dead woody debris and the thick growth of brush and small trees that have built up in the forests over the years that could lead to catastrophic fires. Not only does the fuel load pose a potential threat to residential areas, the aftermath of intense fires can remove valuable ground cover and desiccate the soil, leaving it vulnerable to erosion, which leads to increased sediment delivery to the creeks and streams and the lake. We are currently compiling the returned surveys and will be able to report the results back to you in the next newsletter and in community meetings that will be scheduled early this summer.

Again, a hearty thanks to all of you who took the time to fill out and return the survey and we hope that you enjoy the packet of wildflower seeds that were mailed out on the 4th of April. Happy Planting !

District Manager's Corner
Pat Frost

Happy birthday to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, which is celebrating its 70th year this April. NRCS, or more accurately its predecessor the Soil Conservation Service, grew out of the Dust Bowl with the help of Hugh Hammond Bennett, "the father of soil conservation". In the early 1930s, along with the greatest depression this nation ever experienced, came an equally unparalleled ecological disaster known as the Dust Bowl. Following a severe and sustained drought in the Great Plains, the region's soil began to erode and blow away, creating huge dust storms that blotted out the sun and swallowed the countryside. Thousands of "dust refugees" left the black fog to seek better lives. The storms stretched across the nation reaching south to Texas and east to New York. Dust even sifted into the White House and onto the desk of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

On Capitol Hill, while testifying about the erosion problem, soil scientist Hugh Hammond Bennett threw back the curtains to reveal a sky blackened by dust. Congress unanimously passed legislation declaring soil and water conservation a national policy and priority. Since about three-fourths of the continental United States is privately owned, Congress realized that only active, voluntary support from landowners would guarantee the success of conservation work on private land. The Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1935 was created to repair the eroded soil and prevent further damage — the Soil Conservation Service was born.

During its initial year, the SCS was exceedingly effective; it compiled several existing techniques into a system that dealt with an array of problems. For instance, strip cropping and contour plowing could be combined on land vulnerable to erosion. These techniques both prevented erosion and maintained the organic matter, and thus the quality, of the soil. Crop rotations, rearrangement of fields, and conversion of steep cropland to pasture or woodland successfully preventing erosion — these are all of the farming methods that I remember my grandpa talking to his neighbors about when I would be lucky enough to be able to spend a day driving around with him. He was a member of his local soil and water conservation district that linked the experts of SCS to the local landowners. The importance of this link was recognized in 1937 when President Roosevelt wrote the governors of all the states recommending legislation that would allow local landowners to form these soil conservation districts. Today nearly 3000 conservation districts, like our own, are helping local people to conserve land, water, forests, wildlife and related natural resources, and every day we do this in close cooperation with our colleagues at the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Trinity County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution acknowledging the great work of NRCS. So when you see Jim Spear, Tiffany Riess, John Tiedeman, Tim Viel, Judy Carter and Scott Eberly thank them for their dedication to the vision of Hugh Hammond Bennett.

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

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

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 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.

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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