

Conservation Almanac

Trinity County Resource Conservation District

Fall ~ Winter 2014

Vol. XXIII No. 3

Trinity County Drought Update

It's been a long, dry year. In January 2014 Governor Brown proclaimed a State of Emergency, as the state experienced the driest year on record. Recent rains have refreshed our outlook, but have not eased drought conditions.

What did we see in Trinity County in 2014?

- By the end of May, water content of snowpack in the Northern Sierra/Trinity region was 4% of normal, the lowest ever recorded. (<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cdecapp/snowapp/sweq.action>)
- The County Sheriff declared a local emergency due to the drought, which was ratified by the board on August 12. On October 28, the Board of Supervisors confirmed the continuance of the local emergency due to drought.
- The USGS South Fork Trinity River gage near the confluence with the mainstem Trinity, recorded the lowest flow for the South Fork ever recorded in a 50 year history. (<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/>)
- The USDA offered drought assistance to farmers and ranchers in the County. (www.TrinityCounty.org > News and Updates > 2014 Drought assistance available from USDA)
- Trinity County issued 250 well drilling permits as of November 5, which is 100 more than last year and an all-time high.
- Trinity Lake Reservoir continues to hold at about 25% of total capacity and 35% of the historical average. (<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cdecapp/>)



"Went to town yesterday to get mail and gas. Every conversation centered around water. People don't say hello anymore, they say, 'got water?' At first I said yeah, I got water. By the last one, I felt like maybe I should be careful, someone might come and steal it..."

posting on Trinity County-Drought Facebook page in August.

Continued on Page 3...

Conservation Almanac Going Digital

Part of the mission of the Trinity County Resource Conservation District is to make available technical, financial, and educational resources available to local land users for conservation of soil, water and related resources.

The Conservation Almanac has been helping us meet that mission strategy for over a decade. It started as a simple 4-page document published in-house and has grown to a 12-page, stapled and professionally printed publication, which we mail to every box holder in Trinity County. After much review and analysis, we've decided to move to the digital age and improve our online publication. This will be our last mass mailing of the Conservation Almanac. The Almanac will be available quarterly online at tcrd.net and in our office or by request.

We recognize that some County residents, for a variety of reasons, do not have access to the internet. If you would like to receive a printed version of our electronic Conservation Almanac, please call our office at 623-6004 and provide your name and mailing address. We will happily mail our next issue to you in early 2015.

Alex Cousins, TCRCD District Manager





Trails Program Update

The Trinity County RCD (TCRCD) trails program was active in 2014. The TCRCD trail crew split their time between trails and revegetation projects this season. Weaver Basin Trail System maintenance work was focused on the McKenzie Gulch, Garden Gulch, Weaver Basin, Musser Hill and Shasta Springs Trails. The trail crew also worked with the California Conservation Corps Backcountry crew doing maintenance on the East Weaver Lake Trail leading from the Weaver Basin Trail System into the Trinity Alps Wilderness.

Early spring brought hikers out for the ongoing *Explore Trinity!* hiking series, a joint endeavor between TCRCD and the Watershed Center. While walking the meandering Trinity Lakeshore Trail from Pinewood Cove Campground to Clark Springs Campground, participants learned about wildflowers from Forest Service Botanist Lusetta Simms. Trinity Collaborative member Ross Molyneax also shared his ideas for a proposed Trinity Lakeshore trail expansion project.

Twenty community members hit the Weaver Basin Trails in May for a National Trails Day volunteer event coordinated by TCRCD, the Forest Service, and the Cooperative Weed Management Area. A half-mile spur trail was constructed connecting the McKenzie Gulch Loop Trail with Weaver Bally Road at Garden Gulch Spur trailhead. Volunteers also removed Scotch broom, a noxious weed, along Sydney Gulch.

The Weaver Basin Trail System map has been updated and is now available online (www.tcrd.net). The new version

incorporates highly accurate GPS location data and trail profiles are displayed.

In August, the Oregon Fire burned across some of the Weaver Basin Trail System. The trail rehabilitation work is occurring this fall and next spring on portions of the McKenzie Gulch Loop, Garden Gulch and Jackass Ridge Trails that were affected by the fire. Funding is provided by Forest Service Burned Area Emergency Response grant. Burned trail signs will be replaced in spring 2015 as part of this project.



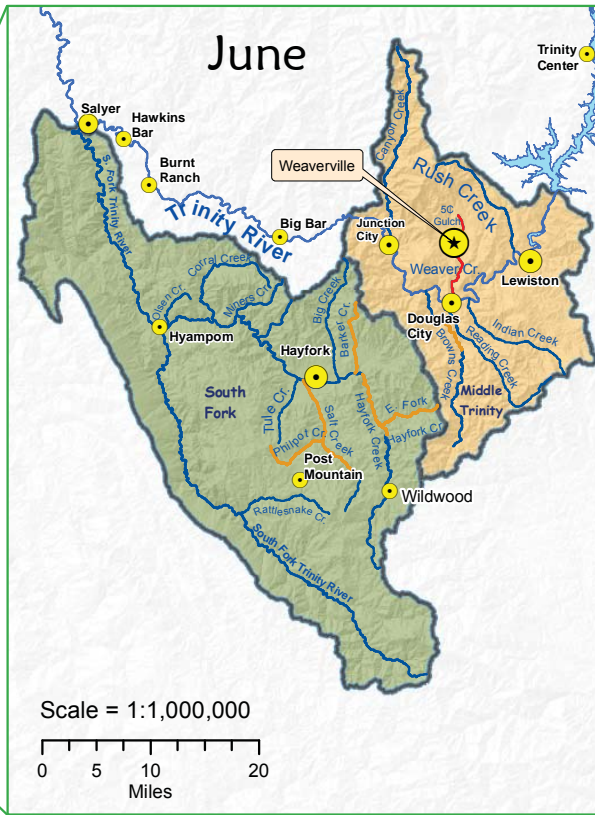
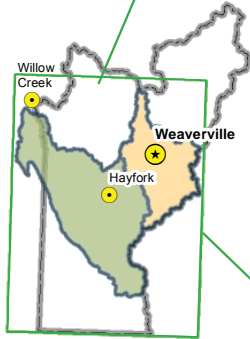
Hikers on the Trinity Lakeshore Trail

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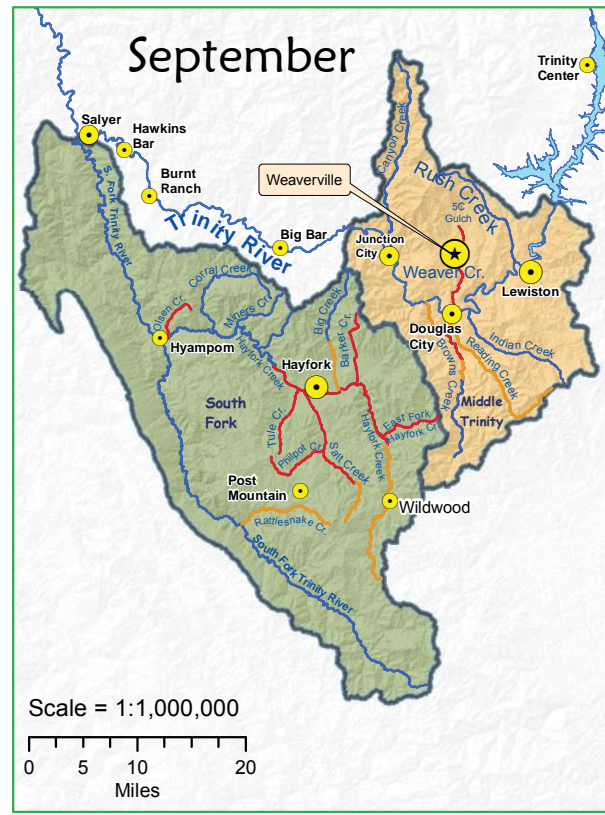
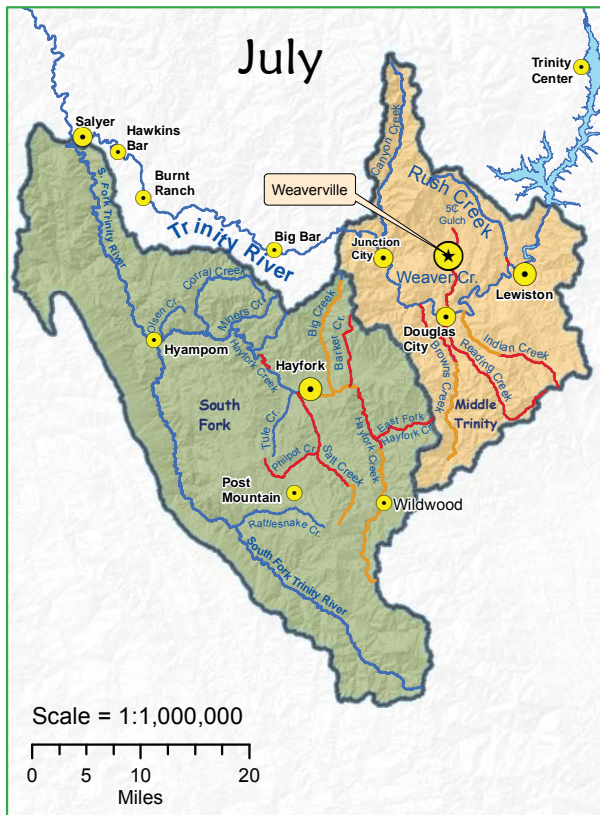
Trinity County Drought Update, cont.

Trinity County Drought Impacts 2014



2014 Stream Conditions

- Historically Low (>1CFS)
- Subsurface
- Other Major Streams & Rivers



These maps are based on flow data gathered by the Watershed Center and Trinity County RCD through a grant from the California Department of Conservation. Information was also provided by citizens monitoring their local waterways. Due to the size of the County, not all streams were monitored every month. If you have information about your local waterways, please contact the Watershed Center at 628-4206 or the TCRCD at 623-6004.

Trinity River Salmon Festival 2014



Kyle Cox and Ethan McFadin, Webelos Den of Cub Scout Pack 15, race their sail boats in the Raingutter Regatta.



Members of the California Conservation Corps Crew Shasta Cascade Operations out of Redding helped make the festival a success and were able to enjoy themselves as well.



Salmon posters created by Trinity Alps Preparatory School's sixth grade students were displayed and attendees cast ballots for "People's Choice." Winner of the People's Choice award was Tesla Ehlerding.



Making Japanese fish prints, Gyotaku, a tradition at the Salmon Festival, allows kids of all ages to express themselves through art.



Sponsored by the Trinity River Restoration Program



Children are enchanted by the space inside the salmon tent.

Illicit Marijuana Grow Impacts in Trinity County

The week of October 13, 2014 saw a whole cadre of inter-agency folks working to clean up illicit marijuana grow sites on public lands in Humboldt and Trinity Counties. Organized by Integral Ecology Research Center, employees and volunteers from the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, Hoopa Valley Tribe, U.S. Forest Service, CA Air National Guard, National Guard, University of California Davis, High Sierra Environmental Reclamation Team, The Watershed Center, Redwood Community Action Agency, Trinity County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD), Weaverville Volunteer Fire Department and North Coast Environmental Center converged on sites cleared of plants but still covered in the detritus of the trade. That week in mid-October showcased the outcomes from months of coordinated inter-agency efforts.



Collaboration between law enforcement and environmental groups and agencies began in Trinity County last year, resulting in contaminated sites being reclaimed and cleared of rodenticides, fertilizers, pesticides, tons of garbage, miles of irrigation piping, hundreds of propane canisters and intentionally destroyed wildlife. A portion of the cleanup effort was funded through a CalRecycle Farm and Ranch Solid Waste Cleanup and Abatement Grant to TCRCD.

While agencies are all working together to reclaim the health of exploited grow sites, the environmental impacts continue to mount. Illegal diversion of streams, springs and seeps stress wildlife and plant communities and interrupt the entire food web from primary producers (plants) to predators. Poisoned wildlife found at sites range in size from rodents to bears. Excess use of fertilizers create algae blooms and create water quality so impaired it is unable to support insect life, let alone fish. That is, if the entire watercourse has not run dry due to dams installed by growers. The link between illicit grow sites and the decline in Pacific Fisher populations is under study. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to list as threatened the West Coast distinct population segment of Fisher under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Public comments will be accepted through Jan. 5, 2015. (<http://www.fws.gov/cno/es/fisher/>) More information can also be found at <http://www.ierceecology.org/>.

85% of fishers examined have rodenticide in their systems. Source: Integral Ecology Research Center.

NEW: Trinity County Resource Conservation District Scholarship Fund

The Trinity County Resource Conservation District is proud to announce a Scholarship Fund established by the TCRCD 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 2014-2015 school year is \$500.00. Students interested in applying for the scholarship can find all of the information online at tcrd.net or stop by the office at 1 Horseshoe Lane, Weaverville. See the bottom corner of page 11 for a donation form you can clip and mail.

2014 Summer and Fall Youth Outreach

Weaverville Summer Day Camp was a great success with help from the many community volunteers, Young Family Ranch, US Forest Service RAC funds, Lowden Park Aquatic Center, Trinity Transit, Trinity County Health and Human Services and parents.

Trinity Preparatory Academy's (TPA) sixth grade students attended their annual Environmental Camp at Bar 717 Ranch outside of Hyampom in mid-September. Hayfork Elementary School students joined them for the first day of camp this year. This experience was made possible by Trinity County Office of Education, TPA-sponsored fund-raisers, and sponsorships from the Trinity County Resource Conservation District, Watershed Center, California Department of Conservation and Trinity River Restoration Program.



Meal time is a good time at Environmental Camp.



Sixth graders learned that the subject of "soils" has many layers.



Learning about water quality is more fun at Environmental Camp.



Sam Pearce collects water bugs from Hayfork Creek at Bar 717.



Sixth grade student looking at aquatic macroinvertebrates under a magnifying viewer.



Day campers "hooping" it up.



Ethan Coleman shows a toothy grin at day camp.



Day campers had a great time at the Trinity County Fair, getting into the farm spirit.



Hayfork Elementary School sixth grade students got a kick out of their field trip to Bar 717.



It's fun to get dirty – even in sixth grade!



Kids love kids at camp.



TAP student calculating stream flow at Environmental Camp.

TCRCD and USFS: Joint Effort on Scotch Broom Control in Junction City

As the common name suggests, Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) is a European native. With its showy lemon yellow or deep red flowers, Scotch broom is a pretty plant that was imported to California in the 1800s. Today Scotch broom thrives in open sunny places across the region, and often takes over whole plant communities at the expense of native vegetation.

Scotch broom can grow up to ten feet tall and forms dense stands. The roots contain bacteria that change the soil chemistry. Both physically and chemically, it is a bully that crowds out other plants. Although some animals eat its seeds, a monoculture of Scotch broom provides lower quality habitat for wildlife because it replaces botanically diverse areas that can provide food and shelter for a wider variety of animals.

From a human perspective, a stand of Scotch broom is not very productive either. When seeds hitch a ride on trucks, or logging disturbs an area where seeds have been dormant in the seed bank for years, Scotch broom can quickly take over. Broom grows quickly and can outcompete trees and inhibit regrowth of the forest. Scotch broom causes problems for ranchers as it replaces grasslands that provide forage and can poison livestock in large amounts. Despite the pretty flowers, Scotch broom's tough, flammable, mildly toxic foliage makes it a nuisance and a hazard in forests, ranches, backyards and roadsides all over California.

Fortunately, projects focused on Scotch broom removal are yielding positive results. In August 2011, the Trinity County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD) received funding from the Shasta Trinity National Forest west side botany program through a special project grant from the National Fire Plan. The intent of this five-year partnership is to remove broom on private property in Junction City near the National Forest, and in areas that are within, or near the 2008 Iron Alps Wildfire Complex. Specific areas targeted for broom removal include properties on Red Hill and Dutch Creek Road.

Accomplishments to date include removing broom along

seventeen miles of road in and around Junction City. TCRCD staff have treated five acres of broom on private property and at the Junction City Park. The District has also utilized the help of the Trinity River Conservation Camp in treating 14 acres of broom on private property since 2011. Work on this project will continue through spring 2016. If you live in Junction City and are interested in no-cost broom removal on your property, please contact TCRCD.

You can help in the battle against Scotch broom and other noxious weeds by participating in volunteer weed pull days; cleaning your clothing, boots and gear when traveling; and using certified weed free rice straw. Most importantly, do not plant noxious weeds. If you have your heart set on landscaping with broom-like plants, find alternatives. Better yet, consider landscaping with native plants from the northern California region. The Shasta Chapter of the California Native Plant Society holds a native plant sale each year in the spring and fall at Shasta College. In addition, the RCD is beginning to offer more native plants for sale, grown in TCRCD's nursery. For more information on these topics, contact:

- Trinity County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD): 623-6004
- Trinity County Weed Management Agency (TCWMA): contact Amy Livingston at alivingston@tcrd.net or call the TCRCD
- Shasta Trinity National Forest (SHF) West Zone Botanist: Lusetta Sims 623-1750
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): 623-3991
- Watershed Research and Training Center (WRTC): 628-4206

Submitted by: Lusetta Sims and Jenny Cribbs USFS, and Amy Livingston TCRCD.



Scotch broom in fruit. Photo by Julie Kierstead Nelson.



Scotch broom in bloom.

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Prescribed Fire Aids Suppression Efforts in the Community Forest

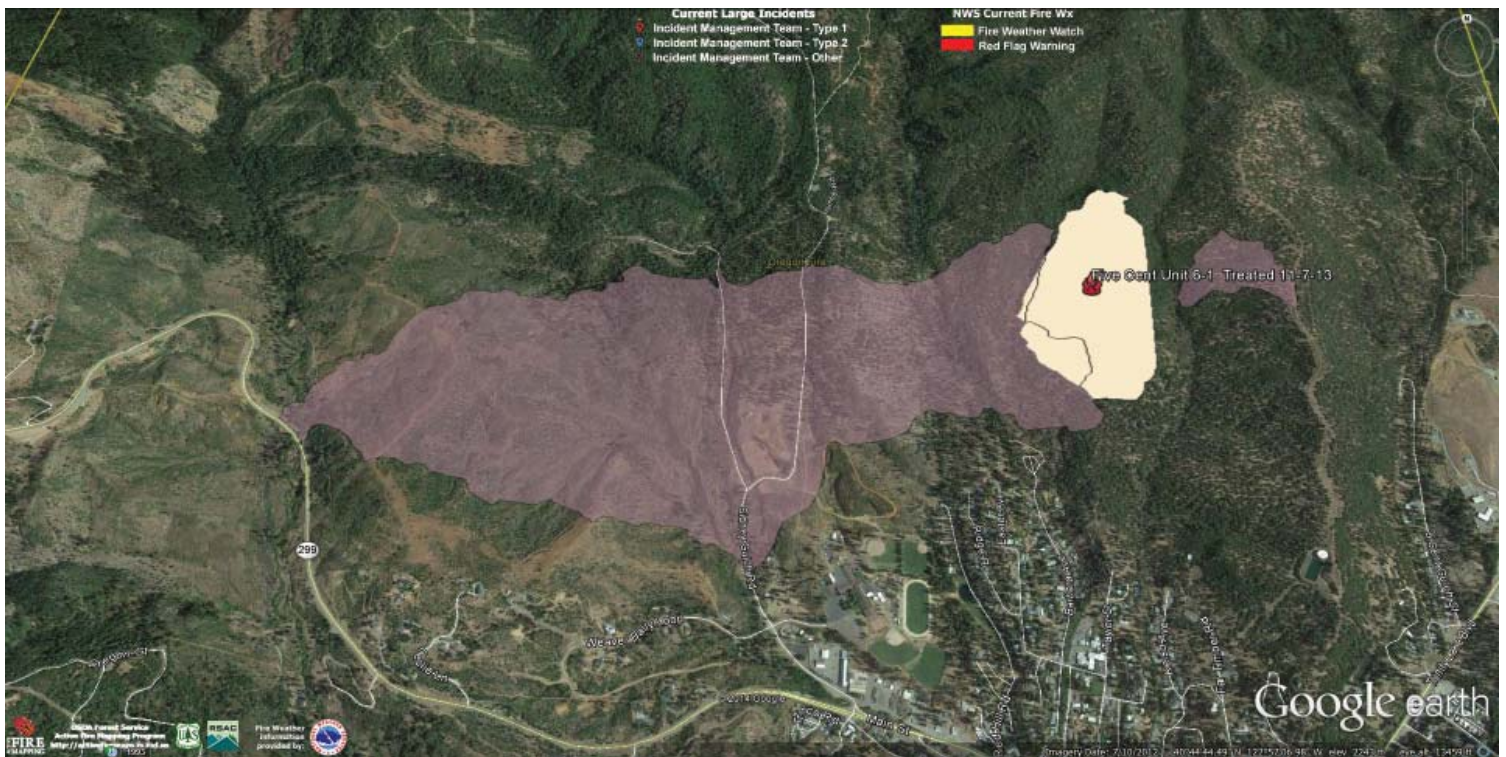
The Shasta-Trinity National Forest's Five Cent Gulch prescribed burn project in November 2013 included a wide variety of local stakeholders taking part in the planning, implementation and execution over multiple parcels within the Weaverville Community Forest. Ultimately this proactive project to create a buffer at the wildland and urban interface aided firefighting during the aggressive suppression efforts of the August 2014 Oregon Fire. The burn was specifically designed to address fuels reduction and wildlife habitat enhancement for the benefit of the community.

The prescribed burn met the intended objectives of the reduction of leaf litter, branches, and ladder fuels, which add to the spread of wildfire. It also created openings in brush fields for deer movement. Approximately five tons per acre of dead and downed woody material were consumed as a result of the burn.

Historically, wildfire is an element in the landscape creating its own natural fire cycle to replenish the ecosystem by

burning overcrowded vegetation and trees in the forest's understory as well as bug-killed trees. When vegetation density increased in more remote areas of the wildland landscape and fires were suppressed, the suppression of such fires disrupted the natural cycle of fire and has led to major catastrophic wildfire events. Through the use of prescribed fire, land managers reduce the risk of large catastrophic wildfires and their impact on communities.

The Musser Hill Wildlife Enhancement burn, located adjacent to the East Branch community was completed on October 19, 2014. The purpose of the project was to reduce hazardous fuel loadings and to improve browse in critical winter deer range. A total of 115 acres were burned under a partnership with Weaverville Fire Department, Cal-Fire, California Deer Association, The Nature Conservancy TREC program, Trinity County RCD, and the USDA Forest Service. There are 109 acres left to complete the project. Residents will be alerted prior to the next scheduled burn.



This image of the Oregon Fire's perimeter shows the location of the wildfire, the town of Weaverville and the Five Cent Gulch Prescribed Fire. When the fire reached the area that had been treated in 2013, the fire behavior changed dramatically, allowing firefighters to gain control. Controlled, prescribed fires such as the 2013 Five Cent Gulch burn will continue to be part of a healthy forest plan within the Weaverville Community Forest.

TRRP and the Community

This year marks the tenth year since the first in-channel project was implemented in the Trinity River by the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP/ Program). Over the last decade, the Program and its employees have supported the community through both official and casual outlets. Staff children attend local schools and their parents coach sports, volunteer for field trips and help with a wide range of school activities. The Program supports local events such as the annual Salmon Festival, Trinity Alps Prep Environmental Camp for 6th grade students, Weaverville Day at the Wetland for 4th grade students, and several other student-focused events.

The Program is a partnership of eight agencies who all provide resources and technical staff in support of TRRP activities: Trinity County, Hoopa Valley Tribe, Yurok Tribe, California Resources Agency (Department of Water Resources and Department of Fish and Wildlife), U.S. Forest Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Reclamation.

In 2014 the Program supported several additional regional events, benefitting both youth and adults.

In August, TRRP attended the Hoopa Sovereign Days Celebration. The Program is proud to support one of our partner members – the Hoopa Valley Tribe – in celebration of their past accomplishments and future plans.

In early October, the Program was proud to host the sixth annual CAMNet Rendezvous in Weaverville. The Collaborative Adaptive Management Network (CAMNet) brings together innovative natural resource managers, scientists, policy makers, and citizens to share successes and challenges from programs and projects that are conducting collaborative adaptive management on the ground. Fifty practitioners from across the region and North America participated in the event.

One popular item on the three day agenda featured a float trip on the Trinity River to view previous TRRP restoration

sites and meet with the scientists knowledgeable about different aspects of river restoration. Members of the public participated in a free float trip stopping at the same sites as conference participants.



Weaverville CSD manager Wes Scribner (left, next to yellow tub) informs CAMNet and public float participants about the Program work that also upgraded the District's water intake at the Douglas City Bridge.

In mid-October TRRP held a science field day for 7th and 8th grade students from Douglas City School. Students visited a newly constructed restoration site, Lorenz Gulch, and learned how the various improvements in riverine and riparian habitat increase geomorphic complexity and enhance cover for fish and wildlife species of the Trinity River. With instruction from TRRP staff, roughly 40 students used high-tech equipment along with good old-fashioned



James Lee, riparian ecologist for the Hoopa Valley Tribe working out of the TRRP office, shows students how ground water depth can be assessed based on river surface water elevation during field science day in Douglas City.



field skills, learning how projects are first designed and constructed, and then monitored to assess improvements in fish and aquatic habitat as part of the program’s adaptive management approach to river restoration. The event ties into the Department of Interior’s Youth in the Great Outdoors (www.doi.gov/youth) and America’s Great Outdoors initiative (<http://americasgreatoutdoors.gov>) which empower young Americans to share in the responsibility to conserve, restore and provide better access to our lands and waters, and leave a healthy and vibrant outdoor legacy for generations to come.

Also in October, volunteers from Trinity County Cub and Girl Scouts planted native vegetation at the Lorenz Gulch

restoration site (mentioned above). More than a dozen scouts along with family members planted Oregon white oak acorns in an upland area roughly one acre in size. The acorns were collected locally by AmeriCorps Hoopa Tribal CCC members. Planted acorns were flagged to allow TRRP staff to track the success of the planting.

All of the eight agency partners in the Program value the communities where we work and play and look forward to another productive and enriching year in Trinity County.



Cub Scout Ethan McFadin digs a hole to plant Oregon white oak acorns at the Lorenz Gulch restoration site.



Douglas City student examines aquatic macroinvertebrates riverside during the October science field day.



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

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

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 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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