



# TRINITY COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT



*By William Welsch, Conservation Technician*

## Annual Report 2009

### Mission Statement

To assist people in protecting, managing, conserving and restoring the natural resources of Trinity County through information, education, technical assistance and project implementation.

# MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT MANAGER...

RCD District Manager, Patrick Frost



This Annual Report is many things. It is our self-evaluation of 2009 and our opportunity to reflect on what we accomplished, how we got things done and what we need to improve upon. This report can be seen as a series of individual accounts of project highlights, but I like to look at the Annual Report and find a common theme or thread that runs from page to page linking everything together. This year three threads run strong through the fabric of our accomplishments and they are spun from the same raw material – the people who care about Trinity County, its precious natural resources and stewardship.

Our staff is one of our greatest strengths. They have diverse backgrounds and many have been with us for a decade or more. Some are the seasoned veterans leading many of our programs. They know how to get things done on the ground, but they also are experienced at building partnerships and recognizing that everyone in Trinity County is our constituent. You will see that we are just one partner in every project highlighted in this report and that most of the work that we completed was guided by those partners and their needs. Others are new to the District. They bring new perspectives, energy and ideas.

Our partners represent the second thread of the fabric. These partnerships take many forms. Partners bring project ideas to us and we bring project ideas to them. They are the many agencies that help fund these same projects. The strength of these partnerships is the diversity they represent – many different types of projects and various sources of funding that we are able to leverage. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) or “Stimulus Act” and the opportunities it has provided us were of particular interest in 2009. Through ARRA we have been able to get more work done – and get it done by hiring locally through the SMART Business Center and subcontracting locally.

All of you who volunteer in one way or another are the third thread that has made 2009 a successful year. Every page of this Annual Report is a tribute to all of you. Conservation Districts are, at their core, about neighbors helping neighbors, and I am proud of what we have done together – and hopeful for what we will do in the future.

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## FOREST HEALTH / FUELS REDUCTION

### Trinity County Fire Safe Council



The Trinity County Fire Safe Council, which the District has coordinated since 1998, continues to work to improve cooperation and coordination in all aspects of wildfire management in Trinity County. Members of the Fire Safe Council include US Forest Service, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Volunteer Fire Departments, Trinity County, the Watershed Research and Training Center, Bureau of Land Management, Northwest RC&D Council and private citizens. Together, these groups are working to involve the residents and landowners of Trinity County in fire prevention and response preparation in order to best avoid catastrophic fires in the future. Firewise Communities status for 14 communities in the county was obtained by demonstrating that a Firewise Board has been established, that a Community Assessment has been completed, and investment in Firewise projects. As a result of the success of the Trinity County Fire Safe Council's planning process and education and outreach efforts, the RCD continued to obtain funding for a wide variety of fuels reduction projects during 2009 to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire, representing 38 percent of the District's budget. New projects this year include a Brushing project for Six Rivers National Forest with stimulus funding, fuels reduction work on private lands in Mid-Trinity, North Lake and Southern Trinity areas with funding from the California Fire Safe Council. Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee has also funded the China Gulch Fuels Reduction Project on Forest Service lands within the Weaverville Community Forest.



## Forest Health / Fuels Reduction

### Weaverville Community Forest



The TCRC D implemented several projects in the

Weaverville Community Forest. This included building a 1.5 mile loop trail that links to West Weaver Creek Trail, completion of the Jackass Ridge Trail, hazard fuels reduction and prescribed fire unit prep, treating 1.5 miles of Democrat Gulch Road with spot rocking and ditch relief culverts and a culvert upgrade, and treating 12.37 miles of roads in the Roundy Road and Musser Hill area.

In March of 2009 we hosted a tree planting day with the Forest Service and AmeriCorps Wa-

tershed Stewards. More than 50 individuals helped plant 2,000 seedlings to continue the reforestation of the Oregon Fire burn area in the Weaverville Community Forest. The event also served as a kickoff event to celebrate the expansion of the community forest onto 12,000 acres of Forest Service lands, bringing total acreage to approximately 13,000 acres. Other lands in WCF are administered by the Bureau of Land Management.



### Community Wildfire Protection

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan update is a collaboration between Community members, the TCRC D, and the Watershed Research and Training Center through the Trinity County Fire Safe Council. This project aims to advance the Fire Safe Council's efforts to take part in the national Firewise Communities Program and to update the Trinity County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The CWPP was approved in September 2005 by the Fire Safe Council, CalFire, Trinity County Board of Supervisors and Trinity County Chiefs' Association. However, the CWPP was largely created in 1999-2001 and an update is overdue. The existing CWPP has been a key guide in setting project implementation priorities for the federal land management agencies and funding sources, such as the Trinity County Resources Advisory Committee and California Fire Safe Council. The CWPP update is needed to meet the requirements of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, a future source of project funding. Key elements of the update process include continued work with the Volunteer Fire Departments, federal and state fire managers, and the 15 at-risk communities through a series of targeted outreach and data collection, community meetings, and county-wide firewise activities through the TCFSC. Products will include an updated "living" CWPP database that includes; updated Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) boundaries, emergency ingress and egress routes for communities, tracking implementation of fuels reduction projects, landscape scale restoration and fuel management strategies, historical fire and fire suppression data, critical fire suppression response data (locations of homesites, water sources, bridges, turnarounds, etc.), and updated values-at-risk. The database will be available via the TCRC D website in data formats useful for all responsible agencies as well as the public. It will facilitate advanced pre-fire planning as well as improved fire suppression coordination and response in the future.

In 2009 meetings were held in Junction City and Hyampom. These meetings were very productive with many new projects being identified and prioritized. In Hyampom the development of projects will lead to the Hyampom Fire Safe Council applying for their first California Fire Safe Council Grant to implement fuels reduction around homes and major roads. In Junction City, community involvement has helped the TCRC D obtain funding from the California Fire Safe Council to reduce fuels in the Mid Trinity area of the Trinity River. This area was heavily effected by the 2008 fire season and the community members have an increased awareness of the danger of wildfire. Updating the CWPP has already begun to help with funding for projects in Trinity County and will continue to do so for the next few years.



## WATERSHED PROJECTS

### South Fork and Trinity River Watersheds

The Roads crew were busy during 2009, implementing a significant amount of road decommissioning and upgrade projects in both the Trinity River and South Fork Trinity River Watersheds. This work took place primarily on US Forest Service lands, but also included some work for Bureau of Land Management, as well as some private land.

Road decommissioning includes excavating culvert and road fill from stream crossings, and outsloping remaining road sections to properly drain. Road upgrade includes grading, cleaning inboard ditches, constructing rolling and critical dips, replacing undersized culverts, installation of ditch relief culverts, and applying rock surfacing where needed.

In the South Fork Trinity River Watershed over 15 miles of roads were treated, while in the Trinity River Watershed about 33 miles of road were treated for a total of nearly 12,000 cubic yards of sediment excavated from stream crossings. The District implements these projects to reduce the amount of sediment delivery to improve fisheries habitat.

Funding sources for this work is diverse, from State Water Resources Control Board, California Department of Fish and Game, US Forest Service, Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee, and Bureau of Reclamation (Trinity River Restoration Program).



Browns Road Upgrade During and After



Browns Road Decommission





## WATERSHED PROJECTS

### Watershed Coordination

Watershed Coordination in Trinity County has led to many interesting projects being implemented on the ground. One such project became known as the "*Weaverville Airport Hazard Tree Removal*". Initially the USFS was contacted by the FAA asking that they remove a number of large trees near the airport. The USFS originally wanted to sell the trees through a conventional timber sale with the logs being delivered to a local sawmill, but because of the low value of the sale they were unable to find a purchaser. With pressure from the FAA the USFS planned to cut the trees and leave them on the ground. TCRCDC caught wind of this through the Trinity River Watershed Council monthly meetings and developed a plan to remove the trees for use during restoration efforts by the Trinity River Restoration Program—Mainstem Channel Rehabilitation Projects. The Trees were bought by TCRCDC and removed with an excavator to ensure the entire tree, root wad and all, was taken. The trees were then transported to Lewiston to be stored and used in current and future restoration efforts. Had Trinity County Watershed Coordination not been so effective, the trees would not have been made available for restoration efforts. These trees are considered very valuable for restoration efforts because of their size and length.

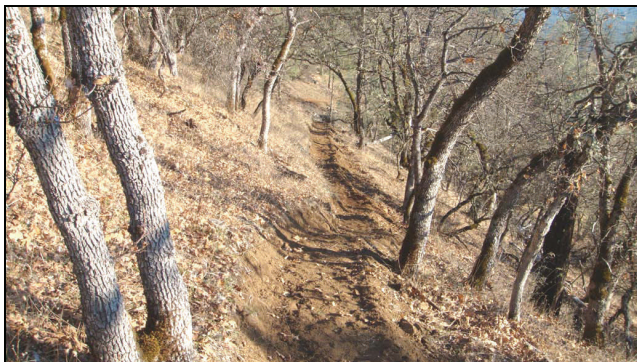
Another development in Watershed Coordination is the expansion of project types that will be occurring in the tributaries in the Trinity River Watershed. Projects will continue to include storm proofing and upgrading and decommissioning, and will now include in-channel restoration work to increase complexity and develop more habitat for local fish populations. One such project will occur in 2010, which is placement of large woody debris (LWD) in one of the tributaries to the Trinity River. This will increase habitat and well as provide for shade during the summer months. Some wood will be placed directly in the stream, while other activities will include planting of native species to ensure future LWD and shade trees.

## RECREATION AND TRAILS



In 2009, the District constructed trails in the Weaverville Community Forest to increase recreational opportunities. One of these trails is located along West Weaver Creek on Bureau of Land Management Land and provides a 1.5 mile loop. Benches and a picnic table were placed at strategic locations.

Another section of trail that the District constructed was 3/4 miles of new trail to complete the Jackass Ridge section of trail on US Forest Service lands with funds from the Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee.



West Weaver  
Creek Loop  
Trail

Jackass Ridge  
Trail





## NATIVE HABITAT RESTORATION

The Sawmill Restoration Project is a continuation of Trinity River Restoration Project's (TRRP) efforts to improve salmon habitat and populations in the Trinity River watershed. The Sawmill Restoration Project area is located along the Trinity River Mainstem approximately two miles downstream from Lewiston Dam. These channel rehabilitation projects release the river from its straightened condition (confined by vegetation and historically high banks) and allows the river to meander and create complex habitat within its floodplain. This is done by excavating the river's edges and opening up river banks so more area is inundated with water more often. This work requires the removal of much of the vegetation on the banks and new floodplain. This vegetation (willows and cottonwoods) provides fish and wildlife habitat. Thus, the vegetation lost during construction needs to be replaced. This is done using a combination of planting and by creating conditions that encourage natural recolonization. The replanting is a joint project between the Trinity County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD) and the TRRP and occurs in the wet months following project construction.

To ensure a diversity of plants recolonizes the constructed channel rehab sites, with naturally occurring species, mature trees are preserved as seed sources. These "save trees" are the relatively rare and tall "tree type" willows and cottonwoods. Additionally, cuttings from a variety of native riparian trees are planted and small depressions and logs are left in the floodplain to capture drifting seeds and encourage natural riparian regeneration. To enhance these sites even further, wetland plant species like sedges and rushes (and various willow species) also are being planted on the edge of side channels and wetlands. Altogether, these plants will provide important shelter and food for fish and wildlife.

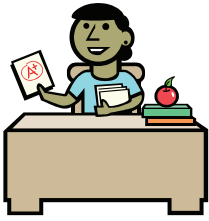
The revegetation of the Sawmill project included many steps, including identification, collection, storage, and propagation of plant materials. The District used GPS to record data, such as planting locations by species and planting methods, and then mapped this information in GIS. Collection of planting materials is a very exact process that included maintaining an inventory, tagging and painting bundled willow and cottonwood poles that were soaked, stored and delivered to the project for installation. Revegetation consisted of site staging, and planting a mixture of riparian plant species using a variety of methods to ensure best planting practices. Tasks varied by plant species, but included installing hardwood poles, herbaceous plugs, salvaged willow clump installation, rooted cuttings, fertilizer tablets, seeding and mulching, and muddying in the cluster plantings. TCRCD was responsible for excavator assisted hardwood pole planting (cluster plantings), manual herbaceous plant installation, tracking the collection data related to each cutting, fertilizing and watering cluster plantings.



TCRCD crew assisting excavator



Upstream Floodplain planted



## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Stewardship education and outreach is at the forefront of District activities. In addition to sharing information with adults and families at events and workshops, we are committed to serving the youth of Trinity County by providing fun learning opportunities and by augmenting school curriculum with natural resource specialists and lessons in the classroom and in the field.

The District's outreach and education programs for the year 2009 included:

- California Environthon and Canon Envirothon student competitions
- River Day Environmental Education Fair at Coffee Creek School
- Collaboration with Trinity County Office of Education to develop a Watershed Exploration and Monitoring Project for students in the After School Program.
- Environmental Education Camp for Weaverville Elementary and Junction City School
- Development of CreekWatch Volunteer Monitoring program in Weaverville Basin
- Free family gardening and nutrition workshops at Young Family Ranch
- Facilitating Trinity County Fire Safe Council and Firewise Communities Program
- Partnering with AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project to provide watershed and fisheries based Real Science lessons to K-12 students in Trinity County
- Four week-long sessions of Summer Day Camp at Young Family Ranch for children
- Booths at Trinity County Fair, Salmon & Heritage Fruit Festival, Children's Festival
- Salmon & Heritage Fruit Festival in collaboration with Trinity County Chamber of Commerce, Trinity County Arts Council and UC Cooperative Extension
- Maintain and update website WWW.TCRCD.NET with topical information
- With NRCS provided resource information to landowners affected by Coffin and Lowden Fires.
- Facilitation of the Trinity River Watershed Council
- Development and distribution of informational brochures
- Articles in the *Trinity Journal* about District projects, programs, and events
- Content for 2009 "Living With Wildfire" insert for the *Trinity Journal*

### Summer Day Camp

The District again held Summer Day Camp for children K-5th grade at Young Family Ranch. 2009 was the inaugural season for our special Field Camp, which leads older children on field trips each weekday. Camp provides a safe place for children to have fun activities centered on natural



resources and conservation. Camp also provides teenagers summer employment as camp counselors. Activities included learning about stream inhabitants, watershed health and wildlife.

### Environmental Education Camp

This year 4th - 8th grade students from Junction City School joined sixth graders from Weaverville Elementary School for ***Environmental Education Camp*** at Bar 717 Ranch This

camp has a unique approach of using professionals who work and live in our own communities as camp instructors.







## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

This year was a very busy year for the GIS/IT department, taking on a diverse range of projects. In addition to providing GIS support on many of the District's new and ongoing watershed restoration and fuels reduction projects, we have continued our work with numerous other local organizations and agency field offices. Early in the year, District staff completed the first phase of primary development on county-wide zoning layers for the Trinity County Department of Transportation. The officially recognized LAFCO boundaries for all the Special Districts in Trinity County were also produced and finalized under this contract. A new agreement with the DOT was made later in the year that tasked the District with providing an updated County roads atlas to replace the existing eighteen year old hardcopy set.

A collaboration with the Watershed and Research Training Center to update the Community Wildfire Protection Plan has required substantial GIS support for data collection, documentation, and project planning. A stand-alone web site was also developed for the Trinity County Fire Safe Council. See below.

Internally, refined network infrastructure and implementation of a data server with a scheduled backup system has helped to secure the District's valuable electronic documents. An extensive photo library was also created on the server, which is organized by project number and houses digital pictures of District efforts going back many years. Centralizing access to these files has increased their ease of use and simplified workflow for District staff.





## ADMINISTRATION

The Board of Directors have maintained a strong commitment to support the efforts of our many partners, who recognize that locally-led activities can yield multiple benefits. Programmatic plans and initial implementation strategies are developed with Board approval. Under the Board's direction, District Manager Patrick Frost, guides activities that provide assistance to landowners throughout Trinity County. An important element of delivering assistance is securing adequate funding. The Board and staff have worked diligently at many levels to sustain funding to continue to meet the District's mission.

### Conservation Fund

The TCRCO Conservation Fund was established in association with the Trinity Trust with the Humboldt Area Foundation. The purpose of this fund is to support the mission and ongoing work of the Trinity County RCD. This fund provides residents with a meaningful way to invest in local conservation of our natural resources. Tax deductible donations to this fund can help the District extend its programs and increase effectiveness.



**Board Directors (left to right): Greg Lowden, Rose Owens, Mike Rourke, Colleen O'Sullivan (Board Chair), Patrick Truman**

### Local Affiliations

Director Mike Rourke teaches Natural Resources/Environmental Life Sciences and Ag Mechanics at Trinity High School. Director Patrick Truman serves on the Northwest California **RC&D Council**. Director Lowden is active with Lions Club and **Weaverville Basin Trail Committee**. Director O'Sullivan took the lead in the development of a **Community Forest** in Weaverville and serves on the Weaverville Community Forest Steering Committee. Rose Owens is Executive Director of **Roderick Senior Center**, is on the Board of the **Trinity Public Utilities District**, and helps conduct the Trinity County Fair monthly Gymkhana Series. Staff continues to coordinate the **Trinity County Fire Safe Council**, and maintained active participation in the **Trinity County Weed Management Cooperative**. District Manager Pat Frost continues to serve on the **Trinity River Adaptive Management Group** and the **Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee** and as a Board Member for the **Human Response Network**.

### State, Regional and National Affiliations

Board Chair **Colleen O'Sullivan** serves on the Fire and Fuels Committee of the CARCD. **Patrick Truman** served as CARCD President and now serves as CARCD representative to NACD. **Greg Lowden** serves on the California chapter of the Canon Envirothon. Mike Rourke is advisor to Future Farmers of America ,



# FINANCIAL

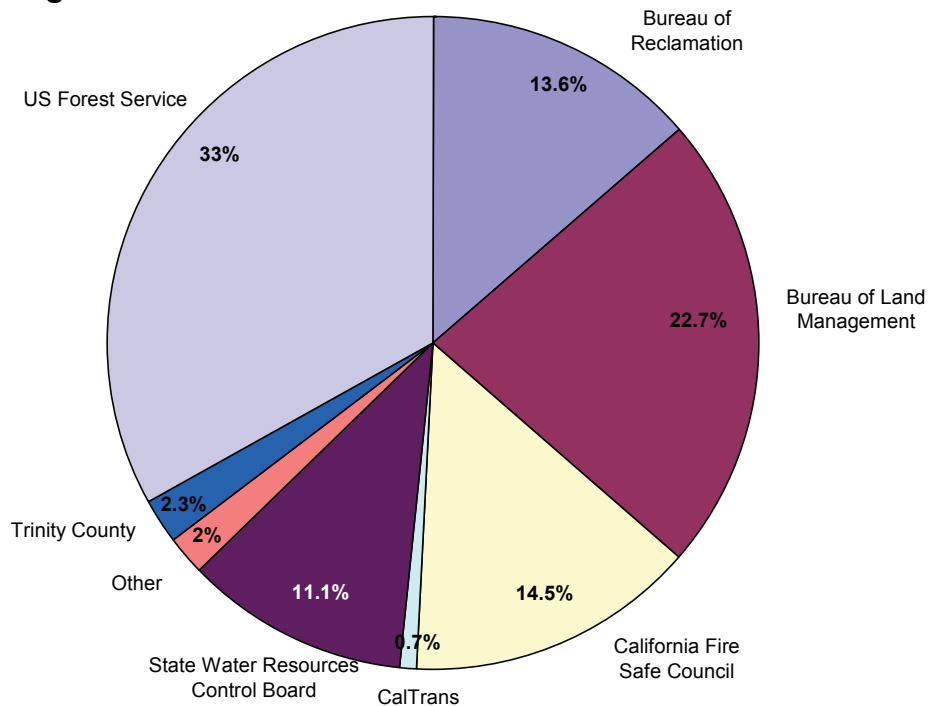
**Trinity County Resource Conservation District  
Statement of Revenues & Expenditures  
for the Period January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009**

<b>Revenue</b>	
Grant & Contract Revenue	2,062,189
Services Revenue	21,369
Dues/Sales/Interest Revenue	12,903
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b><u>\$ 2,096,461</u></b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Wages	\$ 783,850
Fringe Benefits	240,033
Advertising	12,182
Board Expense	19,641
Dues & Subscriptions	5,107
Field Materials Expense	251,238
Field Subcontracting Expense	586,490
Insurance	4,035
Interest	136
Licenses & Fees	328
Office Supplies/Commun/Publishing	36,409
Professional Fees/Accounting	108,479
Public Education	-
Rent	9,931
Staff Training	167
Travel Expense	10,747
Utilities	8,087
Vehicle Fuel & Maintenance	44,697
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>\$ 2,121,556</u></b>
<b>Excess Revenue over Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ (25,095)</b>

# NEW PROJECTS LIST 2009

<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Bureau of Land Management	Forest Inventory	43,853
Bureau of Land Management	WCF Stewardship	26,000
Bureau of Land Management [ARRA]	Trinity River Habitat	450,000
Bureau of Land Management [ARRA]	Trinity River Recreation	400,000
Bureau of Reclamation TRRP	TRRP Education & Outreach	26,000
Bureau of Reclamation TRRP	Trinity River Watershed Restoration	280,000
Bureau of Reclamation TRRP	TRRP Revegetation	245,333
US Forest Service	Roads Project	250,000
US Forest Service	Weed Restoration Treatment	45,320
US Forest Service (Six Rivers)	Six Rivers Fuels Reduction	49,000
US Forest Service (Six Rivers) [ARRA]	Brushing	263,331
US Forest Service [ARRA]	Hazardous Fuels Reduction	425,000
US Forest Service RAC	Weaverville Basin Trail Maintenance	5,000
US Forest Service RAC	WCF Riparian Improvement	31,000
US Forest Service RAC	Oregon Mtn Forest Restoration	53,227
US Forest Service RAC	China Gulch Fuels Reduction	144,450
US Forest Service RAC	Jackass Ridge Trail Construction	5,000
US Forest Service RAC	Musser Hill Road Upgrade	50,000
US Forest Service RAC	WCF Road Upgrade	15,000

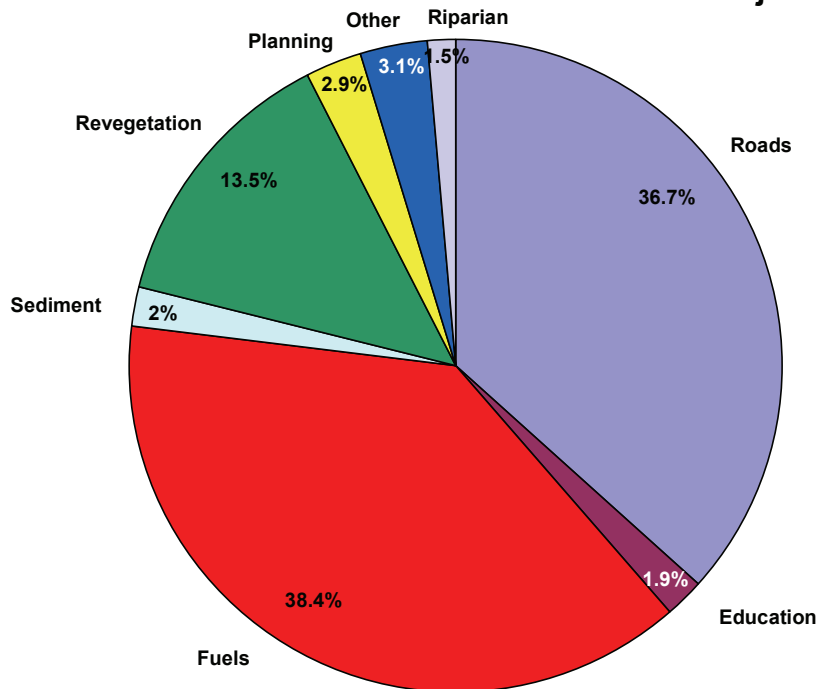
## Funding Sources 2009



# NEW PROJECTS LIST 2009

<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
California Fire Safe Council (USFS)	Mid-Trinity Fuels Reduction Project	224,400
California Fire Safe Council (USFS)	North Lake Communities Fuel Reduction Project	125,000
California Fire Safe Council (USFS)	Southern Trinity Community Fire Protection Project	238,700
CalTRans	DWR Hamilton Ranch	8,800
CalTrans	Sandhouse Projects	20,603
CARCD	Forest Projects	9,250
California Department of Fish & Game	Salmon & Riparian Habitat Education Project	27,873
McConnell Fund	Young Family Ranch Public Access	4,000
State Water Resources Control Board	SFTR Watershed Restoration	450,000
Trinity County	GIS Support	5,000
Trinity County	Regional Transportation Plan	14,000
Trinity County (Title III)	Trinity County Fire Safe Council	75,000
Trinity PUD	Biomass Stimulus Funding Research	18,929
Young Family Ranch	Young Family Ranch	20,000

**Projects by Type 2009**



**Total: \$4.049 million**

## VISION STATEMENT

Trinity County Resource Conservation District 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.



**South Fork Crew**

Mike Gadbury, Cynthia Tarwater (Project Coordinator), Arrow Harrington, Jack McGlynn, Zack Blanchard

### **Board of Directors**

Colleen O'Sullivan, *Chairman*  
Rose Owens, *Vice-Chairman*  
Mike Rourke, *Director*  
Greg Lowden, *Director*  
Patrick Truman, *Director*

**Trinity County  
Resource Conservation District**

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