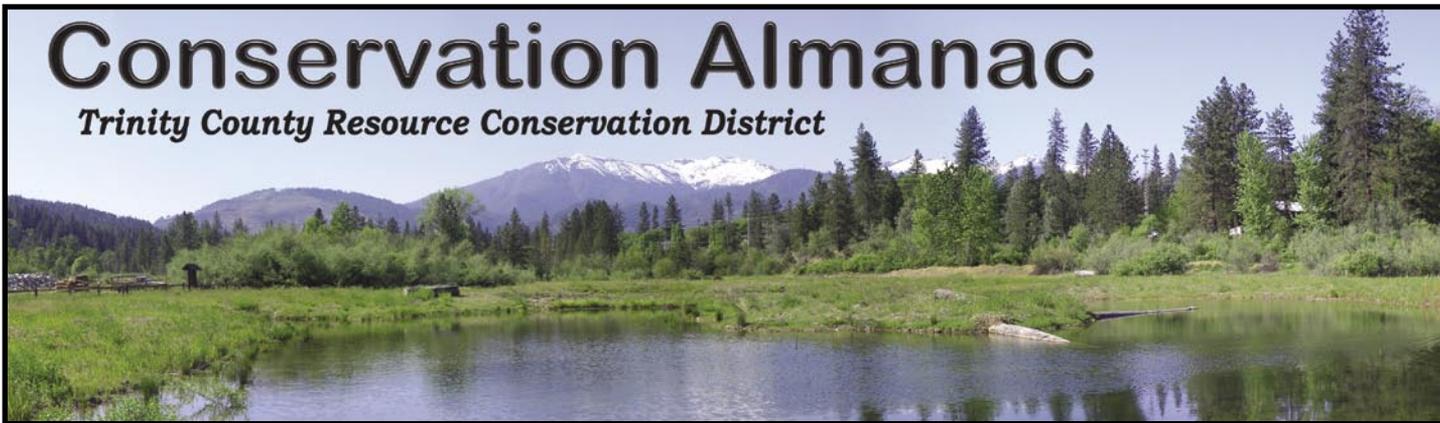


Conservation Almanac

Trinity County Resource Conservation District



Spring 2006

Vol. XV No. 2

Trinity Heritage Orchard Project

Do you have a very old fruit tree? Maybe an apple, pear, plum or cherry that was planted by Trinity County pioneers? If so, the Trinity Heritage Orchard Project wants to know.

Following the 1850's gold rush, miners and settlers streamed into Trinity County. Some of their fruit orchards still survive, with apple and pear varieties rarely found today. These "heritage", "antique" or "heirloom" fruit varieties were generally introduced in the U.S. pre-1900. These early varieties were bred for flavor and specific uses, such as sauces, ciders, dessert or long-keeping. Heritage apple varieties planted in Trinity County include Baldwin, Ben Davis, Blue Pearmain, Holland Pippin, King, Northern Spy, Red Limber Twig, Rhode Island Greening, Swaar, and Yellow Bellflower. Heritage pears include Fall Butter and Clapp's Favorite. How many of those varieties have you seen at a market lately?

The Trinity Heritage Orchard Project plans to use this unique horticultural heritage to provide a food resource and promote economic development. The first step is to develop a list of where our ancient fruit trees are, and then collect fruit each fall to identify the variety. For some trees, a bud or shoot will be collected to graft onto new rootstock to propagate a new tree. These descendants of our pioneer trees will be planted along with the existing heritage fruit trees at Lee Fong Park, the Trinity County Fairgrounds Pioneer Homestead and other public locations.

Most heritage fruit trees on public lands receive little maintenance. The fruit rots or is eaten by deer and bear. We plan to change that by promoting the use of heritage fruit trees as a food resource and showing you how to care for fruit trees. Look for our upcoming workshops on harvesting and processing fruit (September) and pruning (February).



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Trinity Heritage Orchard Project

We'll also be handing out information at the farmers markets and County Fair on how to dry or freeze fruit and make fruit leathers.

We'll promote heritage fruit as a marketable product. Would you like to try a Duchess of Oldenberg apple jelly? How about Winter Nellis pear butter? We hope to develop a market for these unique products. We'll promote agritourism through activities such as a heritage orchard "trail" and fall harvest festival, with apple tastings, cider pressing and other fun activities.

We recently received grants from the University of California's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (\$9584) and the California Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils (\$2000) to kick off the project. We'll be applying for additional grants to fund portions of the project.

The Trinity Heritage Orchard Project is a joint effort by UC Cooperative Extension and the Trinity Resource Conservation and Development Council. For more information or to add your tree to our list, call Carol Fall, Trinity UCCE at 628-5495 (Tuesdays & Thursdays).



Weaver Basin Wetlands - getting better every day

The Weaver Basin Wetlands at the Trinity Alps Industrial Park has something to offer many kinds of visitors depending on the season. The wetland, owned by Trinity County, is a great place for a noon time stroll or for a field trip. For information on the wetland, or to arrange a field trip for your group, contact Jessie Oliver, Watershed Stewards Member, at 623-6004 or joliver@trcrd.net.



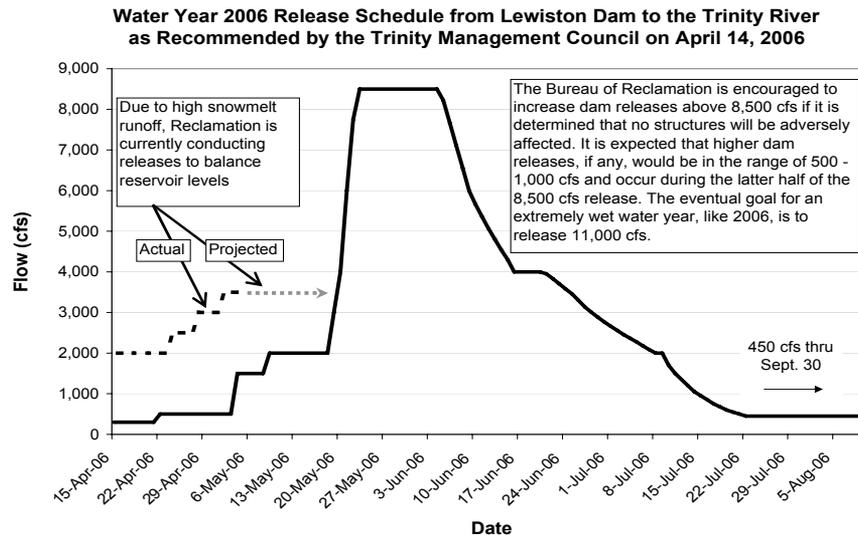
The Weaver Basin Wetlands in Spring



Extremely Wet Water Year Means High Flows on the Trinity River

By: Doug Schleusner, Executive Director

On April 26, 2006 the Department of the Interior approved the flow schedule recommendation submitted by the Trinity Management Council (TMC) on April 18. Reclamation's Regional Director Kirk Rodgers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's California/Nevada Operations Manager Steve Thompson stated: "As the Secretary of the Interior's designated representatives for the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP), we are informing you of our concurrence with the TMC's recommendation to use the modified version of Option 3, with the full allocation of 815,000 acre feet (AF) established in the Record of Decision (ROD) for an Extremely Wet water year, as this year's flow schedule." That schedule is illustrated in the following hydrograph.



This year's alternatives were originally developed by the TRRP's Flow Schedule Work Group using Reclamation's initial projections for a Wet water year. The Technical Modeling and Analysis Group (TMAG) and representatives of partner agencies conducted model runs for sediment transport, temperature conditions, and riparian recruitment for each alternative. Results were presented to the TMC on March 29, 2006, and after hearing comments from the Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group (TAMWG), they tentatively approved a recommended flow schedule. Recognizing that heavy rain and snow were likely to continue in coming weeks, the TMC made contingency plans in case the water year determination changed. This did occur, and on April 10, Reclamation officially classified the Trinity Basin as "Extremely Wet". The Flow Schedule Work Group met again on April 11 to consider alternative schedules given this updated information.

A key issue in this year's flow scheduling process was how to best deal with the large volume of fine sediment deposited in the mainstem Trinity River below Lewiston dam during this past winter's storms. Given that Extremely Wet water years are relatively infrequent (occurring about 12% of the time); the Flow Scheduling Work Group explored ways to transport the greatest volume of fine sediment possible with the available volume, while accomplishing as many other Extremely Wet water year management targets as possible.

The approved schedule balances two key objectives: transporting fine sediment out of the system, while also potentially improving black cottonwood seed germination at the recently constructed Hocker Flat channel rehabilitation site. Additionally, incremental increases in peak flows above 8,500 cfs to further achieve geomorphic objectives will be implemented if prudent monitoring of adjacent floodplain structures indicates that higher flows could be accommodated.

Although Reclamation approved a delay in the schedule to accommodate the opening weekend of trout season, the agency later found it necessary to release additional water over and above the recommended fishery restoration flows in order to maintain reservoir storage capacity given the unusually large snow pack this year. These conditions will also result in a full reservoir throughout much of the summer.

Illegal Dumping

Illegal dumping hurts us all. It affects public health and safety. It decreases property values and the quality of life in our communities.

What is illegal dumping?

Illegal dumping is the improper disposal of waste. Illegal dumping often occurs on remote roads and in isolated areas. Illegal dumping also happens in and around business and apartment dumpsters, residential property and public property such as parks, boat ramps and camping areas.

Typical dumpsites contain household garbage; large bulky items such as appliances, furniture, yard waste and tires; and construction and demolition debris. In Trinity County it also includes abandoned vehicles.

How does illegal dumping affect you, your community and our environment? Illegal dumpsites:

- *Trash attracts rats, which carry diseases. Tires are a breeding ground for mosquitoes – carriers of diseases like West Nile Virus.*
- *Are dangerous to children who play around these sites. Illegal dumpsites contain sharp objects and/or hazardous chemicals and drug paraphernalia.*
- *Can lower property values*
- *Are unsightly and costly to clean up*
- *Can pollute our rivers and streams*
- *Can make areas more susceptible to flooding when waste blocks ravines, creeks, culverts, and drainage basins*
- *May contaminate wells if the dumpsite contains chemicals*
- *Can cause a fire, either by spontaneous combustion or by arson*
- *Invite more illegal dumping, if not cleaned up*

Don't let illegal dumping negatively impact you and your community. Help protect our environment by reporting illegal dumpsites as soon as you see them.

Trinity County Illegal Dumping Ad Hoc Committee

Trinity County Board of Supervisors authorized the Illegal Dumping Ad Hoc Committee in August 2005. It is made up of representatives from many different agencies and organizations. This committee was asked to develop recommendations to reduce illegal dumping. The committee has brainstormed the root causes of the illegal dumping problem and come up with solutions help win the war against trash. To date the Ad Hoc Committee has:

- *Created a "Keep Trinity County Beautiful" Campaign to help prevent illegal dumping.*
- *Set up a toll free hotline—1-888-NO DUMPIN with funds from a matching grant for residents to call in illegal sites.*
- *Published two articles in local newspapers about the illegal dumping issue.*
- *Created an amendment to the County Ordinance regarding vehicle abatement, and a Memorandum of Understanding that can be used for partnerships with private landowners that have found illegally-dumped abandoned vehicles on their land.*
- *Promoted increased investigation and prosecution of guilty parties with a "short form" that reduces law enforcement officers' time in filling out the initial reports to begin a prosecution.*
- *Partnered with the local Channel 22 TV station to cover the issue.*
- *Investigated the surveillance equipment options that will help in future prosecution of illegal dump cases.*
- *Submitted three proposals to the California Integrated Waste Management Board to clean up illegal dump sites on forest lands and been awarded \$179,480 for addressing 46 sites throughout Trinity County*

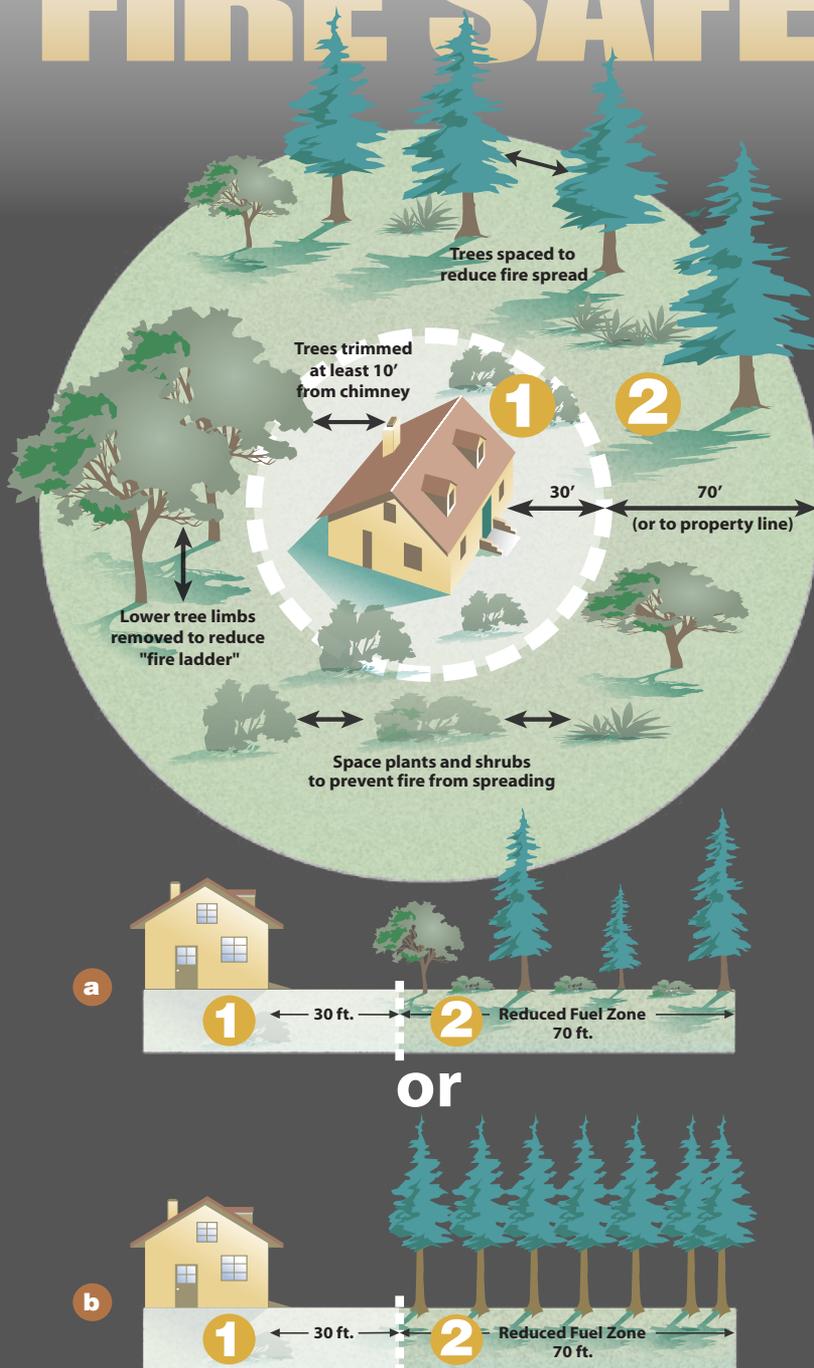
The ad-hoc committee continues to work on other options available to stop the illegal dumping and is drafting a Round IV grant proposal that will continue our countywide effort to Keep Trinity County Beautiful. Thank you for your support.

How do I report illegal dumping?

The new Trinity County Illegal Dumping Hotline has been set up to receive calls about illegal dumping. Staff will record your complaint and direct it to the appropriate agency for follow-up action.

Please call 888-No-Dumpin (1-888-663-8676).

100' DEFENSIBLE SPACE Make Your Home FIRE SAFE



Contact your local CDF office, fire department,
or Fire Safe Council for tips and assistance.

www.fire.ca.gov

Why 100 Feet?

Following these simple steps can dramatically increase the chance of your home surviving a wildfire!

A **Defensible Space** of 100 feet around your home is required by law.¹ The goal is to protect your home while providing a safe area for firefighters.

1 "Lean, Clean and Green Zone."

– Clearing an area of 30 feet immediately surrounding your home is critical. This area requires the greatest reduction in flammable vegetation.

2 "Reduced Fuel Zone."

– The fuel reduction zone in the remaining 70 feet (or to property line) will depend on the steepness of your property and the vegetation.

Spacing between plants improves the chance of stopping a wildfire before it destroys your home. You have two options in this area:

- a Create horizontal and vertical spacing between plants. The amount of space will depend on how steep the slope is and the size of the plants.
- b Large trees do not have to be cut and removed as long as all of the plants beneath them are removed. This eliminates a vertical "fire ladder."

When clearing vegetation, use care when operating equipment such as lawnmowers. One small spark may start a fire; a string trimmer is much safer.

Remove all build – up of needles and leaves from your roof and gutters. Keep tree limbs trimmed at least 10 feet from any chimneys and remove dead limbs that hang over your home or garage. The law also requires a screen over your chimney outlet of not more than ½ inch mesh.

¹ These regulations affect most of the grass, brush, and timber-covered private lands in the State. Some fire department jurisdictions may have additional requirements. Some activities may require permits for tree removal. Also, some activities may require special procedures for, 1) threatened and endangered species, 2) avoiding erosion, and 3) protection of water quality. Check with local officials if in doubt. Current regulations allow an insurance company to require additional clearance. The area to be treated does not extend beyond your property. The State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection has approved Guidelines to assist you in complying with the new law. Contact your local CDF office for more details.



April 2006

Control of Yellow Starthistle

The magnificent beauty of Trinity County's mountains and the charm of our towns are compromised by the presence of noxious weeds, notable yellow starthistle, *Centaurea solstitialis*. Noxious weeds depreciate land values; diminish wildlife habitat and ecological health.

Yellow starthistle, an unwanted occupant of Trinity County that has the potential to diminish property values and wildlife habitat, needs to be controlled. Disturbances created by cultivation, road building and maintenance, overgrazing and poorly timed mowing aid in the spread of this invasive weed. Starthistle forms a dense thicket that rapidly depletes available soil moisture, which in turn inhibits native grasses from becoming established or expanding their coverage. The competitive ability of this invasive weed is tremendous; one mature plant can produce up to 100,000 viable seed. Most of the seed will germinate upon dispersal; however, seed may remain viable in the soil for up to 3 years. It is critical to use control measures before the seed becomes viable. The picture depicts the developmental stages of the yellow starthistle flower.

At Stage 6 some of the seed are viable, most however, are partially or unfilled seed. At Stage 8 the seed has become viable and will germinate shortly after dispersal unless high temperatures and low moisture occur causing the seed to become dormant. This adaptive mechanism accounts for the extended duration for germination to occur. It is imperative that control measures be implemented at or before Stage 5.

Manual removal of yellow starthistle is most easily achieved upon smaller acreages when the soil is moist and the entire root system can be pulled from the soil. Depending on the rapidity of soil moisture depletion, one may wish to wait until the plant has fully elongated to minimize the soreness of one's back.

There is new product labeled for yellow starthistle control, Brush-Weeds & Grass Herbicide for organic production. The constituents of this non-synthetic herbicide are vinegar and citric acid. Greenergy, Inc., www.greenergyinc.com, produces it. It works by drying plants out. Therefore it should be applied before the plants become too woody and prior to seed viability.

Unfortunately it is very difficult to control yellow starthistle by simply mowing, because of the plants ability to grow close to the ground below the level of most mower blades. To Mowing after the plants have fully bolted and the flowers have expanded minimizes the formation of low branching plants. Researchers recommend mowing when about 2 to 10 percent of the starthistle is at Stage 6. It is critical that one does not aid in the dispersal of the seed by not employing a bag attachment when seed has become viable. Mowing is most effective when soil moisture is low and no precipitation follows.

Grazing has been demonstrated to be a very effective control. Sheep, goats and cattle eat yellow starthistle before spines form on the plants. Goats will continue to browse on yellow starthistle even after the spines have formed.

Burning 2 consecutive years can deplete the seedbank substantially. It should be performed in spring when the flowers have expanded. Burning can also increase the recovery and density of native plants. Burning should only be conducted under the guidance of someone with extensive experience along with copious quantities of available water.

Lastly, the best control is to minimize soil disturbance. If soil is disturbed, competitive non-invasive annual seed should be broadcast or perennial grass plugs planted so that the soil is occupied by more desirable vegetation.

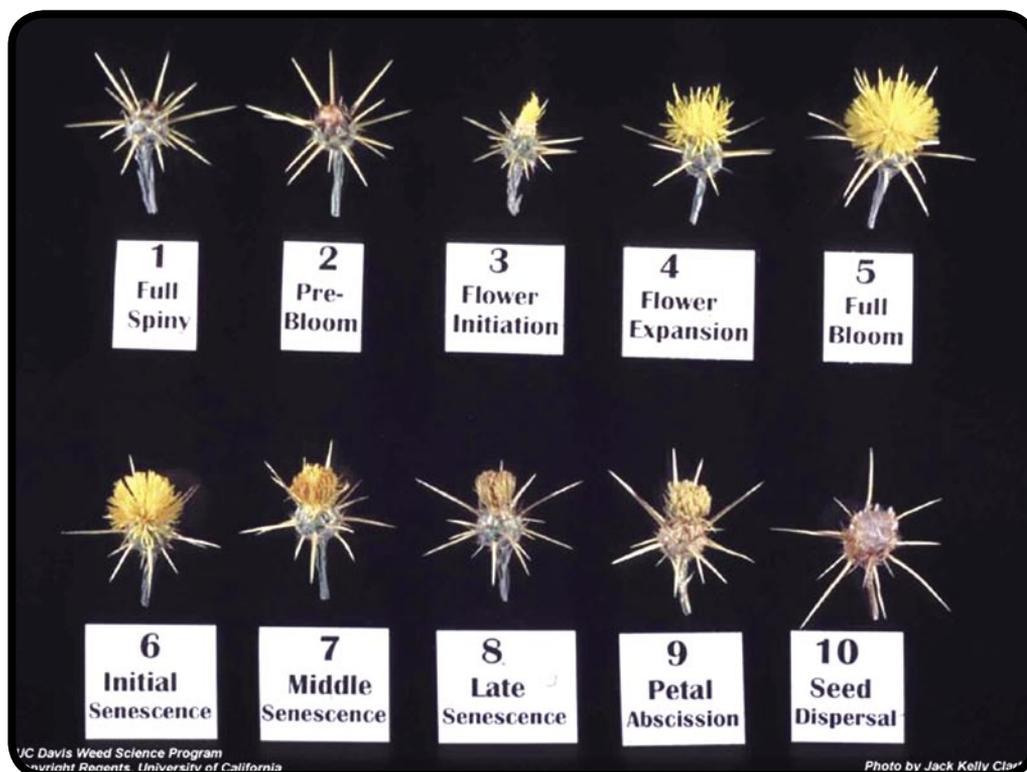


Photo by Jack Kelly Clark courtesy of Dr. Joe DiTomaso, UC Davis Weed Science Program

Meet Our New AmeriCorp Members



Shasta County was the place **Jessica Oliver** called home, until she moved to attend Humboldt State University. She has recently completed a degree in Zoology and Biology with a marine concentration. Jessica's field experience includes grey and humpback whale observations and radio-telemetry of harbor seals, which she helped tag in the Humboldt Bay last summer. She has also conducted wallaby research in the Outback and studied marine and tropical ecology as an exchange student at the University of Queensland, Australia.

By joining AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project, Jessica hopes to gain greater knowledge of riparian ecology and conservation efforts of Northern California. Sharing knowledge that she has learned is also extremely important to her, and she looks very forward to working with a wide range of kids throughout Trinity County during her year of service with the District. Jessica is not certain what path she will pursue after that, but she tentatively plans to attend University of Florida, or work on a post-graduate degree in Australia with an emphasis on ecology.

Nancy Small moved to Weaverville from Florida in January. She is one of the two new AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project members. Nancy was a Peace Corps volunteer in Senegal, West Africa working as an Environmental Education Extension Agent. She enjoyed the experience immensely and decided to further her education on the environment by joining AmeriCorps.

Nancy has been busy working on various projects at the RCD including teaching environmental education at Weaverville Elementary School. She looks forward to helping organize this year's Salmon Festival as well as the Weaverville Summer Day Camp. She enjoys living in Weaverville and meeting new people. She looks forward to her year in Weaverville.

District Manager's Corner Pat Frost



I continued to think about the 50th birthday of our District while I read the articles going into this issue of the Conservation Almanac. It reminded me that the District's history is just one small thread in the history of stewardship in Trinity County. There was no dam in 1956. There was no need to "manage" the spring flows to restore the Trinity River, but floods like the 1955 flood were on everyone's mind. Just as the issues have changed during the past 50 years, so have the names and faces of the RCD. The thread of our history includes the experience that comes with time and the enthusiasm of newness. I welcome Nancy and Jessie for their year of AmeriCorps service and appreciate the energy and ideas that they bring to our conservation family. I also want to thank Elena Letton for her many years of dedication to the District. She is leaving the daily routine of the office to pursue other interests. Elena's contributions are like the Trinity River. They run deep and cover the broad landscape of the District's work. I know that I speak for everyone, who has been associated with the Trinity County Resource Conservation District since the mid-1990's, when I say "Thank you for everything, Elena!"

Trinity County
Resource Conservation District Presents



Weaverville Summer Day Camp

Where: Lowden Park Recreation Hall

Who: Students entering 1st through 5th grade

When: June 26th through June 30th - 1st Session
July 5th through July 7th - 2nd Session*
July 10th through July 14th - 3rd Session
July 17th through July 21st - 4th Session
July 24th through July 28th - 5th Session

Cost: \$20.00 per week session

*\$15.00 for 2nd Session (shortened due to July 4th)

Day Camp times are 9:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

Contact: Nancy or Jessie
Trinity County RCD ~ 623-6004
Space is limited to 35 students each session

Trinity County



Resource Conservation District

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



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@tcrd.net
Internet: www.tcrd.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**

This issue of the *Conservation Almanac* is funded in part by grants from the Trinity River Restoration Program, U.S. EPA, CA Intergrated Waste Management Board, California Department of Fish and Game and the Trinity County - Title III Program

