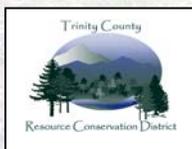


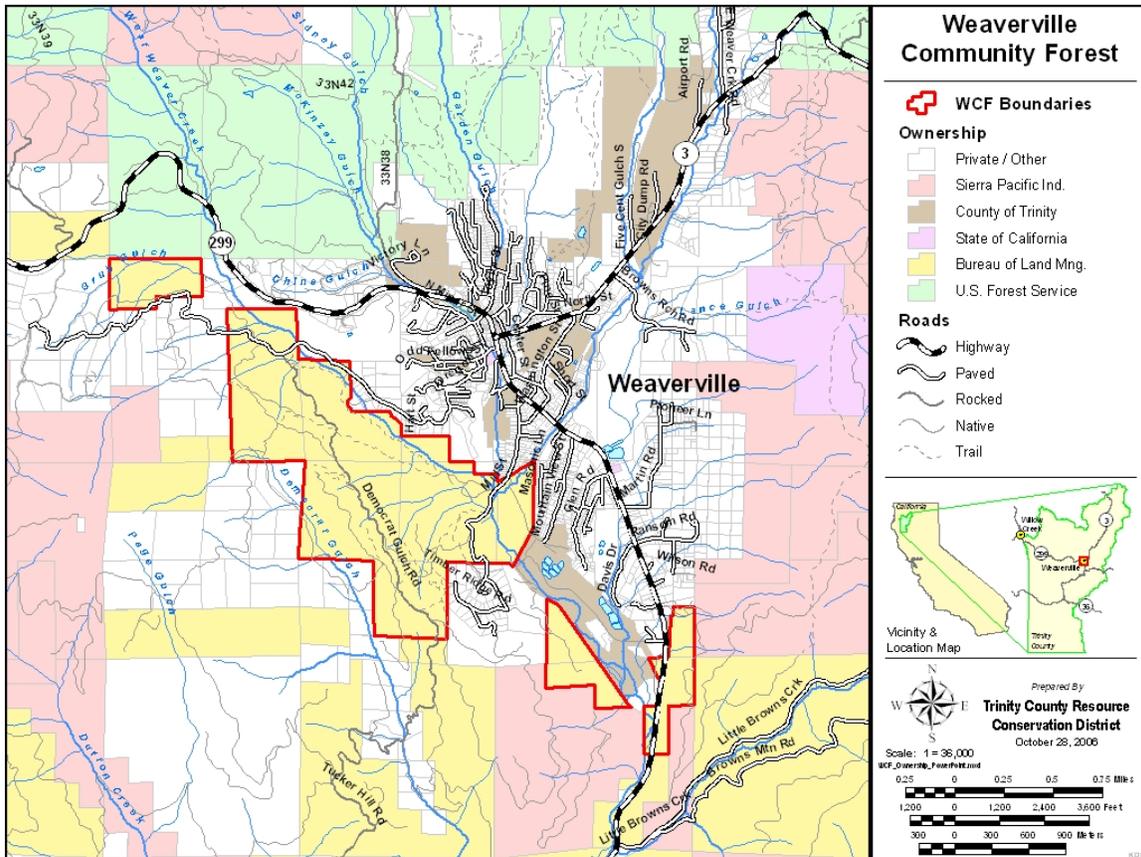
WEAVERVILLE COMMUNITY FOREST STRATEGIC PLAN (2006 - 2009)

**A Collaborative Effort of
Trinity County Resource Conservation District
And
Bureau of Land Management – Redding Field
Office**



BACKGROUND

The Weaverville Community Forest is within the wildland-urban interface of the town of Weaverville in Trinity County California. Weaverville was founded in 1848 as a gold mining settlement approximately 45 miles west of present-day Redding, California. This historic town, which is the county seat, still exhibits much of Trinity County's 19th century character. It is nestled in the Weaver Creek basin, surrounded by public and private forest lands, and is near the Trinity Alps Wilderness. Weaverville is Trinity County's largest community, with a population of approximately 3,500 in an otherwise sparsely populated county (Trinity County has a population of less than 14,000). Trinity County is in the western part of California's 2nd Congressional District.



INTRODUCTION

The Weaverville Community Forest (WCF) is 984 acres of productive timberland, historic and prehistoric resources, recreational uses and high visual quality for the southwest side of Weaverville. The anadromous West Weaver Creek flows through it, and the Forest provides a wildlife corridor between industrial timberlands to the south and residential parcels to the north. BLM is using a new federal tool, Stewardship Contracting, to manage the lands as a community forest through the TCRCD, a local special district.

Section 323 of Public Law 108-7 (Title 16, United States Code, section 2104 as revised February 28, 2003 to reflect Sec. 323 of H.J. Res. 2 as enrolled (16 U.S.C. 2104)), the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003, amended Pub. L. 105-277, sec. 347, to grant the Forest Service (FS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) authority until September 30, 2013, to enter into stewardship projects with private persons or public or private entities, by contract or by agreement, to perform services to achieve land management goals for the National Forests or public lands that meet local and rural community needs for a duration of up to 10 years.

The Wyden Amendment (P. L. 104-208, Section 124), as amended (P.L. 105-277, Section 136) expands the authority and provides the framework by which BLM may enter into contracts or agreement to permit funding to do restoration work.

Using this tool, BLM retains public ownership and cooperatively works with the TCRCD, with which it has an excellent working relationship, to manage the forest-based objectives defined by the community. There has been a high level of community involvement since 1999 and the community has articulated its objectives for managing the forest resources as follows: protecting view-sheds, maintaining and improving forest health through timber harvesting with products to the local community, recreation and education, fuels reduction, firewood collection, salmon habitat improvement, and invasive weeds eradication.

Funds that are generated from sales of forest products pay for forest health project costs. Excess funds are deposited in an account that pays for subsequent projects that meet the objectives of the stewardship agreement, community goals and this strategic plan.

For Weaverville and surrounding communities, this unique Forest Stewardship model

offers a way to recruit and sustain local involvement in the management of federal lands for local needs and desires by matching the resource needs of federal land managers with the skills of a locally run conservation district. In particular, the Weaverville Community Forest embodies the spirit of Stewardship Contracting, because of its high level of public involvement, broad range of objectives, and diverse interests of the community. The Stewardship Agreement provides an opportunity for multi-use, community-driven forest management that creates and retains living wage jobs in an otherwise economically challenged rural community. This project provides timber for the town mill, educational and historical venues for local and tourist populations, and maintains high visual quality for the town residents.

The Weaverville Community Forest hopes to keep expanding its opportunities by providing community involvement on a number of levels, and by continuing to strengthen the connections between the land and its people, as outlined in this Strategic Plan for the Weaverville Community Forest.



WEAVERVILLE COMMUNITY FOREST VISION

High visual quality

WEAVERVILLE COMMUNITY FOREST GOAL

Healthy, productive forest in the landscape setting of the Wildland-Urban Interface of Weaverville

Prescription

- Entire forest treated for forest health and fuels reduction once in a 10-year period in 5 phases of approximately 200 acres every other year

- 'Fire-safe' forest as a part of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan for Weaverville
- Restore Oregon Fire and Junction Fire areas within the WCF (approximately 90 acres) by removing dead material and planting exposed ground and treating damaged riparian and stream habitats.

EMPHASIS AREAS

1. Watersheds: The Weaverville Community Forest lies within the Weaver Creek watershed. Sound stewardship of the WCF will support improvements to overall conditions in this watershed.

- Implement Sediment Control projects to reduce delivery of fine sediment to Weaver Creek & its tributaries
- Protect Domestic Water Supply
- Eradicate Noxious Invasive plants
- Implement projects such that they protect and restore habitat for fish & wildlife

2. Recreation: The Weaverville Community Forest is an integral part of nature-based recreation in the Weaverville Basin, as envisioned in the Weaverville Basin Trail Master Plan, and the Weaverville Community Plan

- Fully implement Weaverville Basin Trail Master Plan to link WCF to basin's trail network
- Develop Interpretive tools for forestry/environmental resources (flora, fauna, wildlife management), and human experience in the WCF

3. Forestry/Forest Health: The Weaverville Community Forest is within the Wildland Urban Interface for the Community of Weaverville, especially for the neighborhoods of Timber Ridge, Democrat Gulch and Oregon Street. Improving the health of, and fire-safe conditions within, the Weaverville Community Forest is a central theme to the long-term management of these lands within the stewardship model.

Develop forest health plan for WCF that incorporates

- Fuels Reduction
- Monitoring
- Sustainable Timber Harvest that produce merchantable timber for the local mill(s), providing local jobs and funds to support longer-range stewardship of the WCF. Sustainable Forestry is defined as: The stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfill, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social

functions, at local, national, and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems.

- Stewardship Contracting to support local contractors & workforce
- Utilization of Sub-merchantable Materials that contribute to community projects
- Firewood Collection

This forest health plan will be the basis for the WCF Environmental Assessment (NEPA) that will guide implementation activities within the Community Forest.

4. Education and Outreach: The Weaverville Community Forest is a living classroom and highly accessible to students and the general public for the purpose of increasing awareness of natural and cultural resources of the Weaverville Basin.

- Cultural/Historical Resources – History told as Story
- General Public Awareness
 - Volunteer network from the community
 - Website
 - Map
 - brochure – electronic and paper
- Educating the broader public about community forestry and Stewardship
- Promote transferability of the Community Forest Model to other communities
- Presentations to and field tours for volunteer groups and service organizations
- Exhibits at fairs, workshops and conferences
- Student Education (elementary school through college level)
 - Use the WCF as a “living lab” (for all emphasis areas) for the Conservation Legacy Program

5. Monitoring: The long-term success of the stewardship program in the Weaverville Basin and the transferability of the community forest model requires a solid understanding of the effectiveness and efficacy of the stewardship that was implemented – did the program result in the desired outcomes.

- Establish permanent forest plots
- Monitor: [a] forest health through timber growth, re-growth, herbaceous layer, wildlife; [b] Water Quality – turbidity, temperature, dissolved oxygen, wildlife; [c] Post-fire—turbidity and regeneration
- Use the Weaverville Community Forest monitoring program to provide “hands-on” educational opportunities for students and community members
- Monitor community/public perception of Weaverville Community Forest Stewardship (measure against Community Vision)

- Monitor economic viability of stewardship contracting on the Weaverville Community Forest

6. Marketing the Community Forest and the unique BLM/TCRCD Partnership: The Weaverville Community Forest is a citizen-driven effort, that has come to fruition due to BLM’s forward-thinking and willingness to build this partnership with the community through the RCD. The viability and visibility of this unique model depends on citizen input and the leadership of the BLM/TCRCD Partnership, as well as the forest’s place in the community.

- Develop a logo that becomes the symbol for the community forest – the Weaverville Community Forest “brand” that encapsulates the unique partnership between BLM, the TCRCD and the community.
- Provide signage and other identifiers that associate projects as belonging to this stewardship partnership (e.g. firewood collection sites, trail markers, publications, advertisements, value-added products).
- Sponsor events that feature the Weaverville Community Forest logo to the public, highlighting the unique partnership.
- Value-added products feature the forest logo.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Implementation of this strategic plan will result in a set of desired outcomes being realized within each of the Emphasis Areas of the Plan.

Watersheds

Provide healthy, productive riparian areas will be maintained within the forest and West Weaver Creek.

Meet adopted Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for sediment for beneficial uses, such as anadromous fisheries habitat, domestic water supply and recreation

Recreation

Increased recreational opportunities for residents and visitors

Cultural heritage interpretation in forest

Forestry/Forest Health

Forest Condition that is more fire resistant for community protection.

Forest displays attributes of a “healthy forest”

Forest is managed sustainably and the use of the stewardship fund result sin improvements in forest health

Forest is free of invasive weeds

Education and Outreach

Cultural heritage interpretation

Educational opportunities provided through service learning (Creek Watch and Conservation Legacy programs) to students providing increased understanding of forest ecosystems

Increased public awareness about the Weaverville Community Forest resources through volunteer monitoring.



Monitoring

Long-term monitoring demonstrates effectiveness of stewardship practices within community forest ecosystem

Increased public awareness about the Weaverville Community Forest and what it provides to the community

Forest condition that is more fire resistant for community protection and displays attributes of a “healthy forest”

Forest is managed sustainably and “stewardship fund” results in improvements in forest health, recreation, watershed conditions, and other resource-based opportunities

Invasive-weed free

Marketing

WCF is recognized as a unique “brand” representing a partnership between the federal land manager and a local community, using a local government to facilitate this partnership. AS such:

The stewardship agreement is extended for an additional 10 years

The WCF Stewardship partnership becomes a model for other stewardship projects.

Transferability of this community forestry model to other federal lands within Weaverville basin and to other communities

Projects implemented are easily recognized as projects developed by and funded through the stewardship agreement.

Stewardship funds become a recognized source of matching funds for leveraging with other funding sources.

Stewardship management contributes to the local economy and to the sustainability of the TCRCD and the WCF.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Stewardship Benefits

The Weaverville Community Forest is being managed through a Cooperative Stewardship Agreement between BLM and the TCRCD. The agreement is for 10 years and was signed in 2005. The TCRCD has contractual obligations with BLM, who has oversight, and the two entities work cooperatively to fulfill their respective responsibilities. BLM has responsibility under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to ensure that individual and cumulative environmental consequences are analyzed and disclosed to the public prior to authorizing any undertaking consistent with this Strategic Plan. The TCRCD is the public face of the Agreement and is responsible for holding public meetings, conducting community outreach, outlining and refining community goals for the forest, and implementing projects. The stewardship-contracting program benefits the BLM, by providing a local connection to their management of these federal lands with full public access to the TCRCD.

The TCRCD is a special district under California law and is governed by Division 9 of the Public Resources Code and such guiding legislation as the “Brown Act”. Its Board of Directors acts as an Executive Committee and sets policy, budgets and timelines for completing projects. Most importantly, it provides direction and

assistance to staff as it assumes the primary duties of implementing the Stewardship Agreement. The TCRCD has a staff that implements the policies and projects of the Board. The District Manager answers directly to the Board and is the organizational bridge between the Board of Directors, the staff and the public. The Board conducts monthly, public meetings. The Weaverville Community Forest is a standing agenda item every month for updating the Board. Any action item related to the Weaverville Community Forest would be a separate agenda item on the Board's agenda, which must be posted in accordance with the Brown Act.

Agreements

The 10-year Stewardship agreement between BLM and the TCRCD provides the authorities and process under which the two organizations will cooperate, including the approval of specific projects to be implemented. The TCRCD enters into agreements with a wide range of entities and it is anticipated that a variety of agreements for services will be used by the TCRCD to implement this Strategic Plan. The TCRCD has well-established fiscal policies, approved by the Board of Directors, for contracting, securing professional services and entering into grants and agreements to fund District-sponsored projects, including agreements that will leverage stewardship funds with other funding sources.

Partners

The primary partnership for the implementation of this Strategic Plan is the long-established cooperation between BLM and TCRCD. Both organizations bring a set of other partners into the Weaverville Community Forest. The BLM Resource Advisory Committee (RAC), with members from around northwestern California, has been a partner ever since the community brought the idea of a community forest forward. TCRCD partners include local organizations and agencies and funders interested in the Weaverville Community Forest. The following is a partial list of TCRCD partners:

Local

Weaverville Basin Trail Committee
Lewiston Trail Group
Northwestern California Resource Conservation & Development Council
Trinity County
Weaverville and Trinity County Chambers of Commerce
Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee
Weaverville Elementary School
Trinity High School
Watershed Research & Training Center
Trinity County Fire Safe Council
Trinity County Fire Chiefs' Association

Trinity County Office of Education
Baldwin, Blomstrom, Wilkinson & Associates

State

California Department of Fish & Game
California State Water Resources Control Board
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
California Fire Safe Council
California Department of Forestry & Fire Prevention
Caltrans

Federal

BLM
USFS
USF&WS
NRCS
Trinity River Restoration Program
AmeriCorps (Watershed Stewards Program)
US EPA

Funding Sources/Leveraging Opportunities

The TCRCD has a strong record of successfully leveraging funds to expand its capacity to implement projects. The establishment of the Weaverville Community Forest Stewardship Fund will become an important source of “seed” money that the TCRCD will use to obtain other funding to realize the full potential of the Weaverville Community Forest Strategic Plan. The above list of partners represents a partial list of organizations that have contributed funds to District projects, or provided in-kind services to match funding.

Meetings/Outreach

The TCRCD has established a Weaverville Community Forest page on its website (www.tcrd.net), and has an active email list serve hosted by the Trinity County Office of Education. The local newspaper provides print coverage of meetings and other events. Periodic presentations are made about the Community Forest to various service organizations, and articles appearing in TCRCD newsletters are written by both staff and board members. Poster presentations are made whenever possible, including the county fair, RCD regional and statewide meetings, and other venues.

The District holds periodic Community Forest meetings, field trips and workshops. Through its outreach efforts, the RCD is establishing committees to perform

monitoring tasks, trail maintenance and interpretation, historical descriptions of the landscape and public relations work. Other committees will be formed as needs and interests arise. These are all volunteer committees, and they will work with TCRC D staff and board members to provide input and content to the RCD Board of Directors as they develop and refine the policies and goals of the community forest.

The District has a well-developed public education and youth education programs. The Weaverville Community Forest will be embedded in both aspects of the District's on-going education and outreach, in particular the Conservation Legacy Program and Creek Watch pilot project.

PROJECT TIMELINE – 2006-2009

Implementing this strategic plan will be adaptive, changing as the needs and circumstances dictate. This proposed timeline is meant as a guide for the first 5 years of the Stewardship Agreement. It is a means of measuring the progress in achieving the goals of the Strategic Plan and the community's vision for the Weaverville Community Forest, but it needs to be flexible.

2006

Forestry/Forest Health

- PG&E logs to mill and first payments into the Weaverville Community Forest Stewardship Account - **concluded**
- Complete Prospectus for Phase I Fuels Treatment on approximately 200 acres in the Timber Ridge vicinity
- Conduct Community Field Trip and meeting for Phase I
- Award contract for Phase I Fuels Treatment
- Begin to implement Phase I Fuels Treatment

Watersheds

- Submit funding requests (grant applications) for high priority erosion control project(s)

Education/Outreach/Marketing

- Complete Virtual Brochure for Historical Resources (with BLM funds)

2007

Forestry/Forest Health

- Complete implementation of Phase I Fuels Treatment

- Design and implement strategic fuels reduction [non-harvest]

Compliance

- Write Environmental Assessment (NEPA) for the Strategic Plan (RCD to complete with BLM)

Watersheds

- Address erosion control needs on access roads in the community forest-
conduct road inventory
- Map and develop an eradication plan for invasive weeds

Education/Outreach

- Conduct one Conservation Legacy Field day with local students
- Hold community meetings on the next phase of fuels treatment/forest health plan
- Provide firewood collection opportunities
- Conduct one Conservation Legacy Field day with local students
- Hold community meetings on the next phase of fuels treatment/forest health plan
- Install Community Forest Informational Kiosks

Monitoring

- Establish monitoring protocols for various objectives

Recreation

- Continue trail maintenance, in cooperation with the Weaverville Basin Trails group, on West Weaver Trail
- Develop Recreational Plan in cooperation with users and potential users

2008

Forestry/Forest Health

- Next 200 to 300 acres of fuels treatment area (repeat tasks identified in 2006/02007) – contract awarded and executed
- Continuation of existing efforts in areas of trails, weeds, firewood, water quality and wildlife habitat
- Begin to lay out program of work for 2010 – 2015.

Education/Outreach

- Reassess, through community meetings, efficacy of fuels treatments and impacts to visual quality
- Integration of education component (i.e. school classes involved, field trips, student projects) is completed

Monitoring

- Continue implementing monitoring protocols in concert with “Conservation Legacy” Program

Recreation

- Construct connector trail to West Weaver Trail (approximately 2.5 miles)

2009

- Address ongoing erosion control needs – road inventories are completed
- Various monitoring protocols are observed and documented within context of “Conservation Legacy” Program
- Community meetings help to refine and adjust community vision for the forest

REPORTING

Each year, the TCRCD will complete an annual WCF Stewardship Project operating/annual report. The report will describe projects that are completed, projects planned, funds earned and spent, products created, cumulative totals, jobs created, with photos.

PLAN COMPLETED JANUARY 31, 2007

TCRCD

Colleen O’Sullivan, Chairperson
Patrick Frost, District Manager

BLM

Francis Berg, Assistant Field Office Manager
Walter Herzog, Forester

REFERENCES

Strategic Plan for Trinity County RCD— 2006-2011 (TCRCD, 2006)

Trinity County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (Trinity County Fire Safe Council, 2005)

Developing a multiparty monitoring plan (USFS, 2005)

Forest Resource Analysis of the Weaverville Community Forest (BBWA, 2004)

Proposed Weaverville Community Forest – A Community Vision (Ledgerwood, 2004)

Recommendations on Trinity County Values at Risk From Fire and Pre-fire Fuels Treatment Opportunities (Trinity County Fire Safe Council, 2000)

Weaverville Basin Trail Master Plan (Weaverville Basin Trail Committee & TCRCD, 2000)

An Archeological Treatment Plan For The West Weaver Creek Mining Landscape (BLM, 1999)

A Cultural Resources Inventory of Weaverville Area Units of the Proposed SPI-BLM Land Exchange (KEA, 1998)

Redding Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (BLM, 1993)

Healthy Forest Initiative (2002)

Healthy Forest Restoration Act (2003)

National Fire Plan

