

Conservation Almanac

Trinity County Resource Conservation District

Spring 2010

Vol. XIX No. 1

Message from the District Manager - 2009 Annual Report

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.

Also In This Issue:

Forest Health - Fuels Reduction.....	2-3
Watershed Projects	4-5
Recreation & Trails.....	5
Native Habitat	6
Education & Outreach.....	7
Information Technologies	8
Administration	9
Projects & Funding	10
Weaverville Summer Day Camp.....	10
TRRP Current Events	11

FOREST HEALTH / FUELS REDUCTION

Trinity County Fire Safe Council

The Trinity County Fire Safe Council, which the District has coordinated since 1998, works to improve cooperation and coordination 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 California RC&D Council and private citizens. All are working to involve residents and landowners of Trinity County in fire prevention and response preparation in order to avoid catastrophic fires in the future. Firewise Community status for 14 communities in the county was earned by demonstrating that a Firewise Board has been established, that a Community Assessment has been completed, and by 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 District continued to obtain funding for a wide variety of fuels



reduction projects during 2009 representing 38 percent of the District's budget. New projects will include a brushing project for Six Rivers National Forest with federal stimulus funding, fuels reduction work

on private lands in MidTrinity, 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

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan update is a collaboration between community members, the District, and the Watershed Research and Training Center through Trinity County Fire Safe Council. This project aims to advance the Fire Safe Council's efforts 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. Since the CWPP was created between 1999-2001, an update is overdue. The existing CWPP has been a key guide for 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 requirements of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, a future source of project funding. Key elements of the update process include continued collaboration with the volunteer fire departments, federal and state fire managers, and our 15 at-risk communities through a series of community meetings and county-wide firewise activities. Products will include a continually updated database showing Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) boundaries, emergency routes for communities, reduction projects, restoration and fuel management plans, historical fire data, critical fire response data (homesites, water sources, bridges, turnarounds, etc.), and updated values-at-risk. The database will be available to all via the TCRCDC website, www.tcrdc.net. It will facilitate advanced prefire planning as well as improved fire suppression coordination 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 District obtain funding from the California Fire Safe Council to reduce fuels in the Mid Trinity area of the Trinity River. This area was heavily affected by the 2008 fire season and community members have an increased awareness of wildfire. Updating the CWPP has already begun to enable funding for projects in Trinity County and will continue to do so for the next few years.

Weaverville Community Forest

The TCRCDC implemented several projects in the Weaverville Community Forest. This included building a 15 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 15 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 Watershed 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.



WATERSHED PROJECTS

Road Work to Reduce Sediment

The Roads crew were busy during 2009, implementing a significant amount of road decommission 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 include 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



Browns Road Decommission

WATERSHED PROJECTS

Watershed Coordination

Watershed Coordination in Trinity County has led to many challenging projects being implemented in 2009. One such project was the “Weaverville Airport Hazard Tree Removal.” Initially, the USFS was contacted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), asking that they remove a number of large trees near the airport. The USFS originally wanted to sell the trees through a timber sale with the logs delivered to a local sawmill, but because of low value they were unable to find a purchaser. Under pressure from the FAA, the USFS planned to cut the trees and leave them on the ground. TCRCD caught wind of this through the Trinity River Watershed Council monthly meetings and developed a plan to remove the trees for use in restoration efforts by the Trinity River Restoration Program in its mainstem channel rehabilitation projects. The trees were bought by TCRCD and removed with an excavator to ensure entire trees, root wad and all, were taken. The trees were then transported to Lewiston to be stored and used in 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 projects that will occur in the tributaries of the Trinity River Watershed. Projects will continue to include storm proofing, 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 in 2010 will be placement of large woody debris 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 work will involve planting of native species to provide shade and future large woody debris.

Recreation & 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 15 mile loop. Benches and a picnic table were placed at strategic locations to encourage use of the community forest.

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 Program's (TRRP) efforts to improve salmon habitat and numbers 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 change the river from its straightened condition (confined by vegetation and historically high banks) and allows the river to meander naturally 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 removal of much vegetation on banks and new floodplain. Since willows and cottonwoods provide fish and wildlife habitat, vegetation lost during construction needs to be replaced. This is done by planting and by creating conditions that encourage natural recolonization. Replanting is a joint project between the Trinity County Resource Conservation District and the TRRP and occurs in the wet months following project construction.

Mature trees are preserved as seed sources to ensure a diversity of plants will recolonize the constructed channel rehab sites with naturally occurring species. These saved trees are 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 an exacting process that includes maintaining an inventory, tagging and painting bundled willow and cottonwood poles 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. TCRCRD 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.



Upstream Floodplain planted.



TCRCRD crew member assisting excavator

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

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 TCRCD 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.

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 .



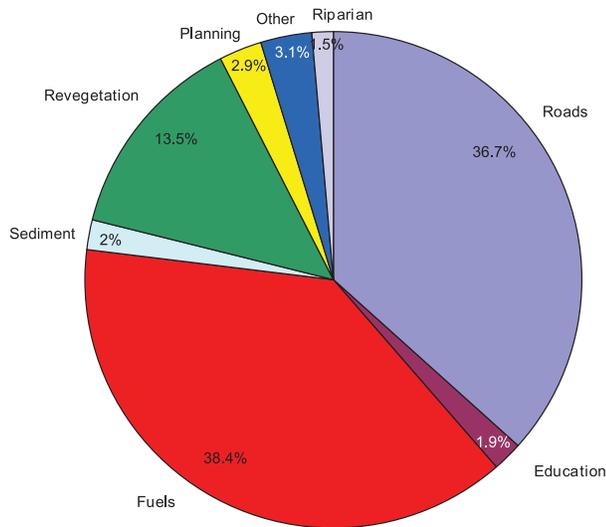
Board Directors (left to right): Greg Lowden, Rose Owens, Mike Rourke, Colleen O'Sullivan (Board Chair), Patrick Truman

Local Affiliations

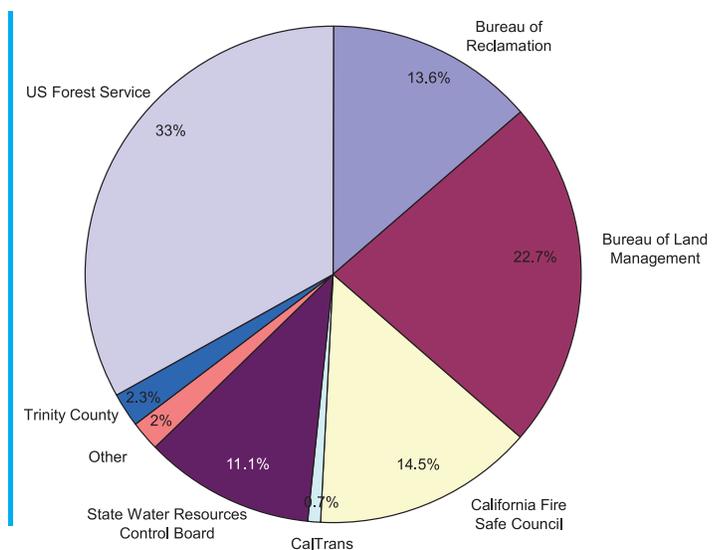
Director Mike Rourke teaches Natural Resources/ Environmental Life Sciences and Ag Mechanics at Trinity High School. Director Patrick Truman serves on the Northwest California RC&D Council. Director Lowden is active with Lions Club and Weaverville Basin Trail Committee. Director O'Sullivan took the lead 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.

NEW PROJECTS 2009

Projects by Type



Funding Sources



Total: \$4.049 Million



Weaverville Summer Day Camp

**At the Young Family Ranch — 260 Oregon St.
For students entering 1st through 6th grade**

- July 5 through July 9 - 1st Session
- July 12 through July 16 - 2nd Session
- July 19 through July 23 - 3rd Session
- July 26 through July 30 - 4th Session

Nature Exploration and Study Field Trips for 4th-6th Graders

Cost is \$25.00 per week session

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

Contact: Bo or Mandy

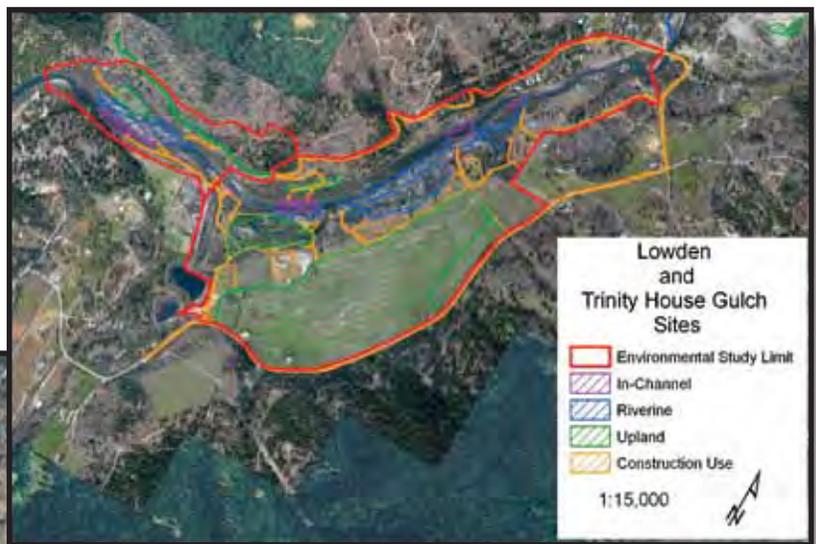
Trinity County RCD ~ 623-6004

Space is limited to 35 children each session

2010 Mechanical Channel Rehabilitation Projects Funded by the Recovery Act

The Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) has awarded nearly \$5 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds this year to local contractors for their mechanical channel rehabilitation projects at the Lowden, Trinity House Gulch and Reading Creek sites. This ARRA funding will accelerate the completion of the channel rehabilitation aspect of the program resulting in a more efficient construction schedule and providing important aquatic habitat in support of the Trinity Basin tribal, sport, and commercial fishery. Channel rehabilitation projects are intended to increase the amount of shallow, low velocity areas for salmonid fry rearing, increase fish habitat complexity in the Trinity River, and allow the river dynamics necessary to maintain an alluvial system.

Construction activities for this year's projects will be carried out beginning in July 2010 and finishing by December 2010, thus concluding the Phase 1 portion of the channel rehabilitation mission. With more in-channel work than ever before, there may be some temporary rafting and fishing disruptions within the project areas due to construction. Restoration activities will include floodplain lowering and recontouring, side channel development, gravel augmentation, large woody debris placement, riparian establishment, and other geomorphic and aquatic habitat enhancement activities. An overview of the sites planned for implementation in 2010 is shown above.



TRRP and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) also wish to advise all locals and visitors that the Douglas City campground will be closed temporarily until the 2011 season as a safety precaution, due to the rehabilitation work being performed at the Reading Creek site. The Steiner Flat, Steel Bridge, and Junction City sites

are a few other campgrounds nearby that will remain open for public use. If you have any questions regarding additional alternative locations you may contact the BLM Redding Field Office at (530) 224-2157 or visit www.ca.blm.gov/redding.

Since 2005, construction activities have been completed for 17 of the 47 planned sites along the Trinity River mainstem. Please visit our website at www.trrp.net to learn more about the Trinity River, the Restoration Program and our accomplishments. Most importantly, we would like to thank the community for your continued support of this important program. It takes a lot of work and cooperation from many to restore the fishery along this wild and scenic river and contributes to the overall enhancement of Trinity County for future enjoyment.

Trinity County



Resource Conservation District

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

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
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POSTAL PATRON

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, State Water Resources Control Board, California Department of Fish and Game, Young Family Ranch Trust, California Fire Safe Council, and the Trinity County Title III Fund.