

Trinity County Resource Conservation District

Fall 2022 Conservation Almanac

Trinity County Resource Conservation District Quarterly Newsletter

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Dispatches from the TCRCR Roads Program

The TCRCR Roads Program continued another busy season in Upper Grass Valley Creek with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) funding for the upgrade and maintenance of Mainline and Corral Creek Roads. We then moved into a project on Bule Gulch on the 30N25 road, as well as high priority Shasta-Trinity National Forest (STNF) roads, implementing Burn Area Emergency Response (BAER) work in the South Fork of Goodes Creek and Upper Hayfork Creek related to the McFarland Fire. Typical work related to post fire rehabilitation of roads includes: removing downed trees, filling holes in the roadbed created by burned-out stumps, rebuilding rolling dips, as well as cleaning out ditches and culvert inlets at stream crossings. Unfortunately, there has been a lot of need for this type of work over the last 10 years.

After work on the 30N25 road and in the McFarland burned area, we moved onto a large STNF project in the headwaters of the South Fork Trinity River, funded by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). This road improvement project involved almost 17 miles of upgrade and maintenance work on a road known to locals as the Tombstone Road. The 27N23 and 27N22 roads both dead-end at the boundary and trailhead to the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness. It's a beautiful area if you have more than a day, as it will take you half a day just to get to the end of the road from Weaverville.

This project was especially rewarding as the road had been blocked at the very beginning, with a slide hampering access to the rest of the area. Our work allowed recreationists access to the area again, and we were happy to have finished work the day before archery season started! Concurrently with this project, we had maintenance funding from the California Off-Highway Motor Vehicles (OHV) Division to replace much-needed road signs that were burned in fires, and minor road work, which included removing downed trees and filling in burned stump holes on both sides of Upper South Fork Trinity River and Bierce Ridge.



Following severe fire, roads often need extensive repairs.



27N23 MM 9.01
Culvert Upgrade

Culvert upgrades on the 27N23 road that leads to a Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness trailhead.

Dispatches from the TCRCD Roads Program, Cont.

By mid-summer, we moved over to assist Six Rivers National Forest (SRNF) with four large road fill failures on main forest roads. The first project was near Horsehead Mountain on the 27N02. The second repair was the Wild-Mad (30 road) just below Cedar Gap on the Mad River Side. The third site, on Lassic Loop Road (1S07), is a breathtaking area with stellar views of Black and Red Lassic! Lastly, we repaired the 2S05 road above the Ruth Guard Station on Mad River Ridge. As described, the SRNF kept us busy this summer!

Coinciding with the Six Rivers National Forest repairs, we completed a road improvement project on Potato Creek Road (31N04) in the STNF, which was funded by NFWF. This road accesses the trailhead to the Chancelulla Wilderness area. By late October, our Roads Program moved to roads in the Monument Fire footprint for the STNF, working on roads from Hayfork over the hill to Junction City and Big Bar, until we get rained out.

Our TCRCD Roads Program would like to encourage everyone to get your roads ready for winter by clearing culverts and brushing the inlets!



Views of the upper South Fork Trinity River Watershed



Road repairs on the Lassic Loop Road in the SRNF

Fuels Reduction at the Junction City Park

The TCRCD Forest Health Program has been engaged in efforts over the course of the 2022 season to remove large amounts of hazardous fuels from the Junction City County Park. This 40-acre property had received only voluntarily maintenance by the North Fork Grange over the last 12 years, and in that time had accumulated high loads of dense vegetation. Seeing the serious fire threat that the fuel load posed to the park and the surrounding community, the North Fork Grange reached out to TCRCD in Fall of 2021 for help.

This Park is regularly utilized by the community for recreation and large gatherings. The Park also borders State Route 299, and has had wildfires pushing dangerously close several times in recent years, with a few arson-related fires started in the Park itself. These were some of the factors that led TCRCD to incorporate this project into the Trinity County Hazardous Fuels Reduction Phase II project, which is funding fuels reduction on privately or locally owned land in communities all over Trinity County. This project is part of a CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant, funded through the California Climate Investments.

So far, roughly 20 acres have been thinned with the most utilized areas of the park being prioritized, such as the forest surrounding the play structures, softball field, horse arena, and disc golf course. Future work in the area may include mastication along the highway on the western portion of the park and fuel reduction on the ridge behind the park.

Recognizing that these fuel loads will grow back within a matter of years, The Watershed Research and Training Center (WRTC) is working on supporting the Junction City Community in its goals of keeping fuel loads down through prescribed fire. Their tactic will involve providing cooperative training for residents, volunteer fire department personnel, and other partners through the formation of a local Prescribed Burn Association (PBA). "There is a strong and growing movement to develop community-led PBAs across California, with the WRTC fire personnel providing leadership both at home and across the state," states Nick Goulette, Executive Director of the WRTC. "Junction City is ripe for PBA development with strong community leadership and the park serving as a demonstration and training ground for expansion into private parcels across the community. WRTC has applied for grant funding from two sources over the last month to support its role in training, burn planning, environmental compliance, and implementation assistance. With luck, planning could begin as early as Spring 2023 with first chances for implementation in Fall 2023."

This work has been well-received by the North Fork Grange, the stewards of the Junction City Park, as well as the Junction City Community at large. "Since this county park is larger than the volunteers at the North Fork Grange can maintain, the support of the TCRCD is warmly welcomed and we are excited at the prospect of keeping the park clean with low-intensity fire as a tool." Roger Smith, chairperson of the North Fork Grange Park Committee. TCRCD is proud to serve our Trinity County communities in reducing hazardous fuels and increasing wildfire resiliency.



A view of the Junction City Park post-fuels reduction treatment

Updates from the Trinity County Fire Safe Council

The Trinity County Fire Safe Council (TCFSC) is coordinated by TCRCD, with Amelia Fleitz as the Fire Safe Council Coordinator and many additional TCRCD staff supporting. GrizzlyCorps Fellows Miles Raymond and Charlie Curtin are also taking on major roles in coordination of TCFSC programs. TCFSC has had a busy fall, with even more programs and projects coming up in 2023! Stay tuned into all of the TCFSC happenings on Facebook (@FireSafeTrinity), Instagram (TrinityRCD), Twitter (TrinityRCD), and online (FireSafeTrinity.org).

County Level

- Updates to the 2020 Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)
- Trinity County evacuation route mapping
- Trinity County Hazard Mitigation Plan update for 2023
- Support of the County-wide Community Chipping programs
- Revamping the Big Red Truck Program with Wildland Fire Assessment Program trainings

Community Level

- Firewise Community Meetings (held in 9 communities this fall with remaining communities to be served in the Spring 2023)
- Firewise Community Renewals
- Coordination of the Local Area Advisor program which enrolls individuals who will be willing and able to represent their community's needs with Incident Management teams during wildfire incidents. Local Area Advisor orientation will be held in December.

Neighborhood Level

- Coordination of the Neighborhood Ambassador program which identifies community members who want to lead Firewise events and initiatives in their neighborhoods. The first Neighborhood Ambassador orientation was held in October.



Amelia, Chris, and Dave lead a Wildland Fire Assessment Program Training October 25 - 26, 2022 at the Weaverville Volunteer Fire Department. Our newly certified assessors are ready to go out and assess homes under the Big Red Truck Program. If you would like your home assessed please contact the TCRCD and we will match you with an assessor



Miles leads Wildland Fire Assessment Program Training at the Young Family Ranch on November 12, 2022. This is the assessment that will be utilized under the Big Red Truck Program

Mapping Trinity County Evacuation Zones

Throughout the spring of 2022, Trinity County Fire Safe Council in collaboration with the Trinity County Sheriff's Department developed the Trinity County evacuation zone boundaries which TCRCD GIS Program Manager Denise Wesley digitized. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was used to map the evacuation zone boundaries along with hydrologic & topographic features, residential & commercial structure locations, roads, wilderness, and land ownership boundaries.

Over a series of meetings with TCRCD staff and the Trinity County Sheriff's Department, 387 zones were defined throughout the County. This process involved reviewing paper and digital maps for each community using aerial imagery, and identifying boundary locations which were then digitized into an online mapping system.








The process was long and thorough, taking into account many different factors. We asked critical questions about how residents accessed roads and routes of escape. We looked at population density and made determinations about the size of an evacuation boundary in relation to the number of residents living in or potentially recreating in an area. We took care to lump neighborhoods together in one zone when manageable or split them if necessary, while attempting to eliminate possible sources of boundary confusion.

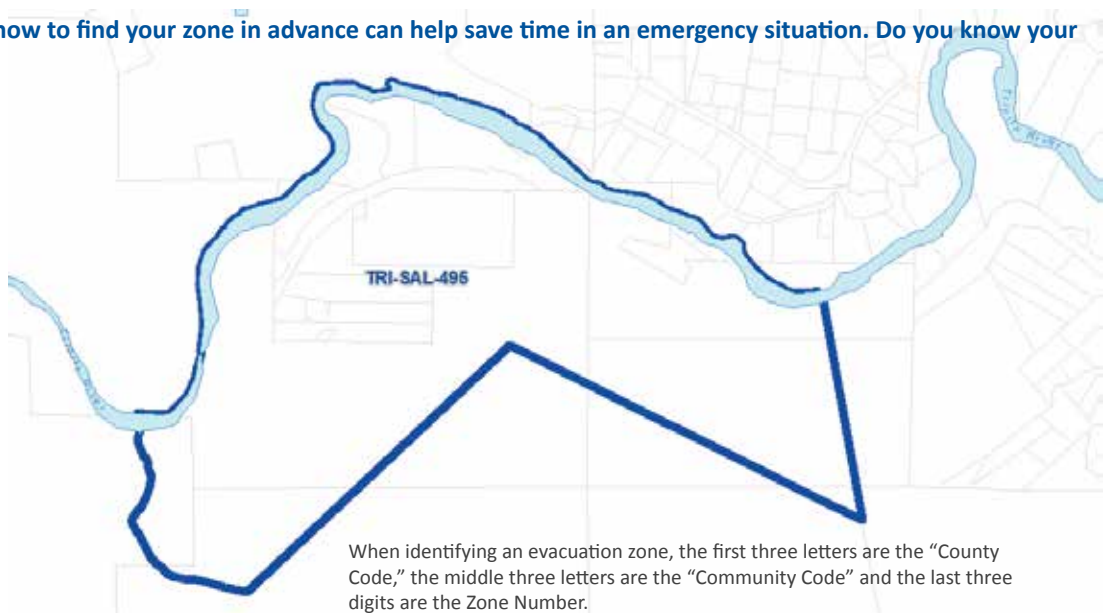
These zones were loaded into Code Red, the online emergency alerts platform that Trinity County uses. The zones are used in a statewide map used by the California Office of Emergency Services. This data also helps local fire and emergency management personnel to notify the public of their evacuation status. Brochures were made for each zone and disseminated to the public in the mail. If you would like a copy of an Evacuation Zone brochure, with pertinent information in case you need to evacuate your home, please check with your local Volunteer Fire Department or contact the TCRCD: info@tcrd.net.

The Know Your Zone mapping application was built to help Trinity County residents find the zone they live in and view their evacuation status. In the application, you can simply browse the map or use the search tool to find your zone based on your address. This mapping application can be found online at firesafetrinity.org or at trinitycounty.org/OES.

Understanding where and how to find your zone in advance can help save time in an emergency situation. Do you know your zone?

There are different types of evacuation orders, which are signified by specific colors in the Know Your Zone application.

Evacuation Zone Orders	
	Evacuation Status
	Advisory- Be on alert and follow county recommendations
	Clear To Repopulate- It is now safe to return to your home post evacuation.
	Evacuation Order- Immediate threat to life. This is a lawful order to leave now. The area is lawfully closed to public access.
	Evacuation Warning- Potential threat to life and/or property. Those who require additional time to evacuate, and those with pets and livestock should leave now.
	Normal- No active public safety incidents.
	Shelter In Place- Go indoors. Shut and lock doors and windows. Prepare to self-sustain until further notice and/or contacted by emergency personnel for additional direction.



When identifying an evacuation zone, the first three letters are the "County Code," the middle three letters are the "Community Code" and the last three digits are the Zone Number.

In the Know Your Zone application, you can search for your zone using only the number:

(example: type 495, to zoom to zone 495 in Salyer)

Or you can search for your zone using an address:

Environmental Camp Returns to Bar 717 Ranch

In early September, Environmental Camp returned to Bar 717 Ranch in Hyampom after a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19 and wildfires. Around 120 students, along with numerous teachers, parent chaperones, and natural resource professionals gathered for three days of environmental education and outdoor fun! Hayfork Elementary School 6th graders attended for one morning, and Weaverville Elementary School 6th, 7th, and 8th graders attended for all three days, staying overnight in the Bar 717 lodging.

Students rotated through a total of thirteen engaging environmental education lessons, led by local educators and natural resource professionals. Topics included salmon, streamflow, macroinvertebrates, outdoor ethics, forestry, fire management, botany, pollinators, lichens, soils, paleontology, and wildlife tracks. The event was a resounding success, leaving all those involved with new knowledge, connections, and memories to take forth. Planning for 2023 has already begun, which will hopefully include students from many schools across the County.

TCRCD would like to extend a big thank you to all of our partners for making this event possible, including all of the passionate and knowledgeable presenters from The Watershed Research & Training Center (WRTC), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Hoopa Tribal Fisheries, Ascend Wilderness Experience, and Trinity Together. Special thanks go to the Trinity Alps Unified School District for the effort to make sure the students who missed the event in 2020 and 2021 still had the opportunity to participate this year. Thank you to the main sponsor of this year's event, the Trinity River Restoration Program, for providing the funds to support this environmental education opportunity for local youth. Additional thanks to the WRTC for support in coordination of this year's event. Finally, thank you to Bar 717 Ranch for graciously hosting this unforgettable event year after year.



Students examined and identified different types of trees during a botany lesson with staff from Hoopa Tribal Fisheries



Dave Johnson of TCRCD teaching about oak woodlands and forest management



Maya Williams of TCRCD teaching about the salmon life cycle



Students learned about many aspects of fire management and safety with staff from The Watershed Research and Training Center

Weaverville Community Forest Annual Community Meeting

The Weaverville Community Forest (WCF) is a mosaic of 14,963 acres of US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management land in the Weaverville Basin. This land was set aside to be managed by TCRCD with the public's interest at the heart of the decision-making process. On October 16th, the annual WCF public meeting was held, at which local agencies presented, highlighting a number of current and proposed projects. At the end of the meeting, there was time for discussion between agencies and members of the community.

Within the past year, multiple agencies have collaborated to carry out numerous projects in the WCF ranging from fuels reduction, to youth education, and trail development. Recent projects from TCRCD include: noxious weed removal in West Weaver Creek and Little Browns creek; a series of high school field trips focusing on natural resource stewardship and career pathways; and updates to the Weaver Basin Trail System maps. The two new GrizzlyCorps fellows at TCRCD, Miles Raymond and Charlie Curtin, presented a number of events they plan on carrying out throughout the year. These include art events, community hikes, and more, all with the intent of drawing the community to the WCF. Bureau of Land Management presented on their fuels reduction projects on Oregon Mountain and Little Brown's creek, as well as plans to implement broadcast burning and manual thinning to keep the landscape healthy. The Shasta Trinity National Forest presented on recent fuel reduction projects in and around Weaverville, with the intent of creating a buffer between the community forest and the town. The Watershed Research & Training Center (WRTC) presented on their recent and upcoming trail work initiatives to create and improve the trail system for mountain bikers, hikers, and equestrians to enjoy.

Members of the community made sure to voice their opinions about the projects. There was much excitement about the trail improvements and expansions, as well as voices of content over the general management of the WCF. Discussion of adding a trail that meets compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as an increase in the accessibility of cultural and natural history information in the WCF, were proposed.

Meetings like this allow for communication, criticism, and collaboration between the community and local agencies. If you are interested or concerned about something in the WCF, please reach out to TCRCD at: info@tcrd.net or 530-623-6004.



WRTC staff present on current and future trail-building projects at the Weaverville Community Forest Annual Community Meeting

Young Family Ranch

This fall, the Wintu Education and Cultural Council (WECC) of Northern California held their annual Harvest Ceremony on September 10th at the Young Family Ranch to gather and give thanks for the acorn harvest. The ceremony included soapstone carving, beading, making pine needle baskets, painting on stones and wooden acorn shapes, small bark tipi construction, and a potluck feast. Tribal member Ted Dawson provided the large bark shelter set up in the field for all to enjoy and learn about. The Trinity Drum group sang and drummed for the dances. It was an honor to have the North Eastern Feather Dancers from the Wintu lands around the Redding area, who demonstrated a beautiful dance with songs, clap sticks, and a wonderful group of youth dancers. The ceremony brought together the tribal Nor Rel Muk Wintu people, neighboring tribes, as well as the multi-cultural community of Trinity County. WECC thanks Northern California Indian Development Council for sponsoring the event, and TCRCD for assisting with coordination of the Young Family Ranch venue.

The next WECC event at the Young Family Ranch will be the annual Spring Acorn Dance in 2023 to pray for an abundant year of acorns.



Photos of the Harvest Ceremony contributed by Rosalie Jones and Tracy Foster-Olstad

Strong Run of Spring Chinook in the Trinity River

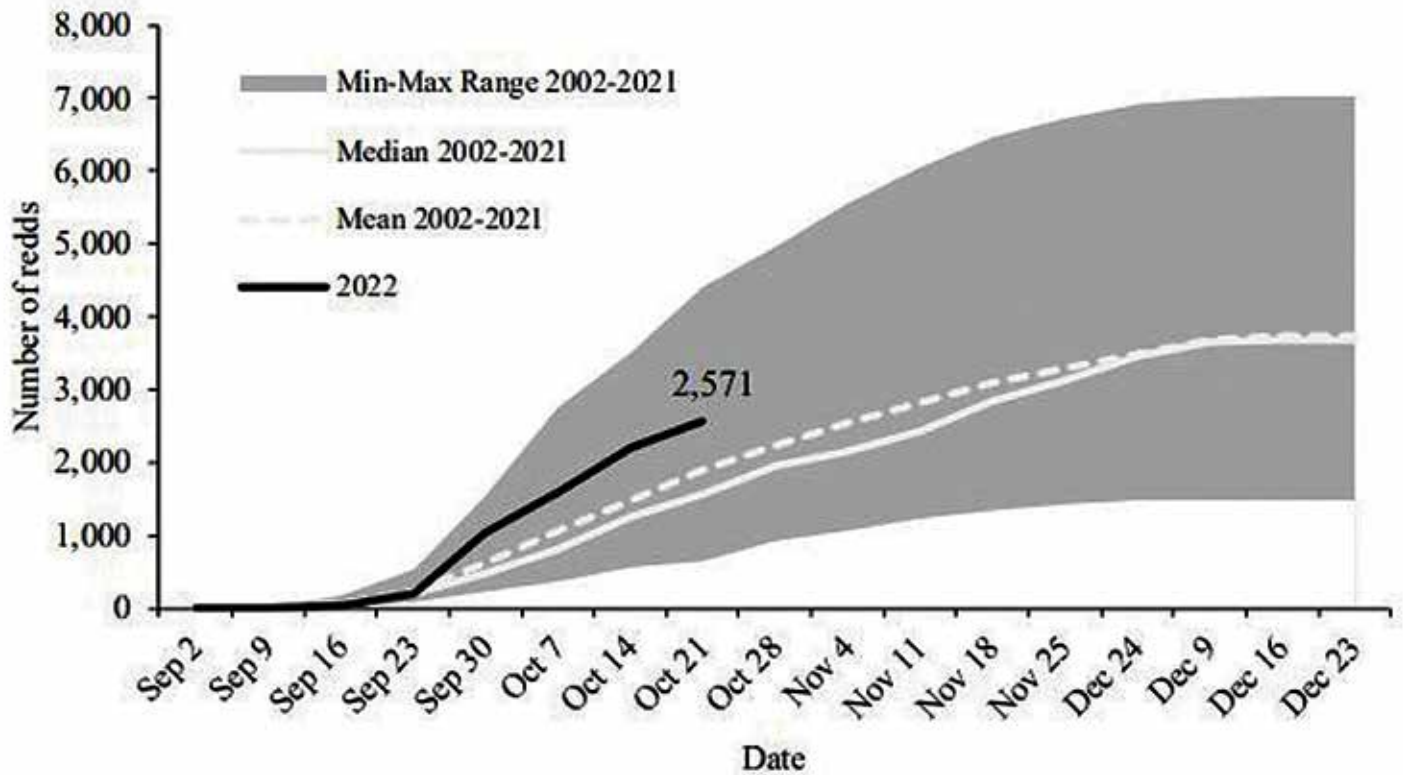
By Chad Abel, Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP)



Chinook salmon, credit Thomas Dunklin

This year, the spring chinook run on the Trinity River appears stronger than it has been in years! Returning chinook at the Junction City weir was the highest since 1978, and spring chinook redd counts in the mainstem Trinity River were the highest observed in a decade. Redds are the rocky nests that salmon make in the riverbed to lay their eggs, and are one of the main ways scientists monitor salmon populations in the Trinity River. The redd surveys are a collaborative annual effort conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Yurok Tribe, Hoopa Valley Tribe, and Shasta-Trinity National Forest (STNF) with additional funding from TRRP. Summer snorkel surveys on tributaries to the Trinity River also showed higher spring chinook numbers than in recent years. A total of 129 stream miles were surveyed throughout the month of July, with 171 spring chinook recorded. The snorkel surveys aim to count all spring chinook and summer steelhead in the main tributaries to the Trinity River, and are considered an index of the population abundance. The 2022 dives were coordinated by the TCRCD and Watershed Research & Training Center with funding from STNF.

Trinity River Restoration Program, cont.



Cumulative redd counts in the mainstem Trinity River in 2022, in comparison to past surveys from 2002-2021

There are many possible explanations for the strength of this year’s run, but ocean conditions are undoubtedly a factor. “The Northwest Pacific warm water blob persisted for years,” says Kyle DeJulio, Fisheries Biologist for the Yurok Tribe. “Ocean conditions turned around in late 2019 or early 2020, lasting through the present. This year’s strong return of three and four-year old adults likely advantaged from improved ocean conditions since that time.”

Spring chinook are born in freshwater streams and migrate to the ocean as juveniles where they mature into adult fish. Spring chinook typically spend 1-3 years in the ocean before migrating back to the streams. This time in the ocean is a critical part of the salmon life cycle. Salmon have a much higher chance of survival if ocean conditions are good and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported that ocean conditions in 2021 were the second best in the last 24 years. Strong oceanic upwelling, paired with cold water and a high abundance of northern copepods defined a highly productive year in the Pacific Ocean off the northern California coast. Copepods are small energy-rich organisms at the base of the food web that support species all the way up to the top. These improved conditions could help explain the higher salmon survival rates in the ocean, and the higher returns to the river, though there are many other factors that can contribute to a successful salmon return.

Fishery managers are excited to see evidence of strong returns this year but temper their enthusiasm about the big picture. Kyle DeJulio notes, “The six-year period from 2015 – 2020 had five of the lowest observed run-sizes ever recorded. Reversal of that trend is welcome, but abundance remains low and is still a cause of concern.”

Klamath-Trinity River Spring Chinook were newly listed as a threatened species by the State of California in June 2021. This listing allows agencies to acquire more funding for restoration, and restricts actions that would threaten the species. Klamath-Trinity River Spring Chinook have yet to be listed by the federal government under the Endangered Species Act.

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Trinity County RCD Board Meetings

Third Wednesday
5:30 PM
Open to the Public

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**Greg Lowden, Heidi Carpenter-Harris, Josh Brown,
Kent Collard, and Mike Rourke.**

Kelly Sheen, District Manager

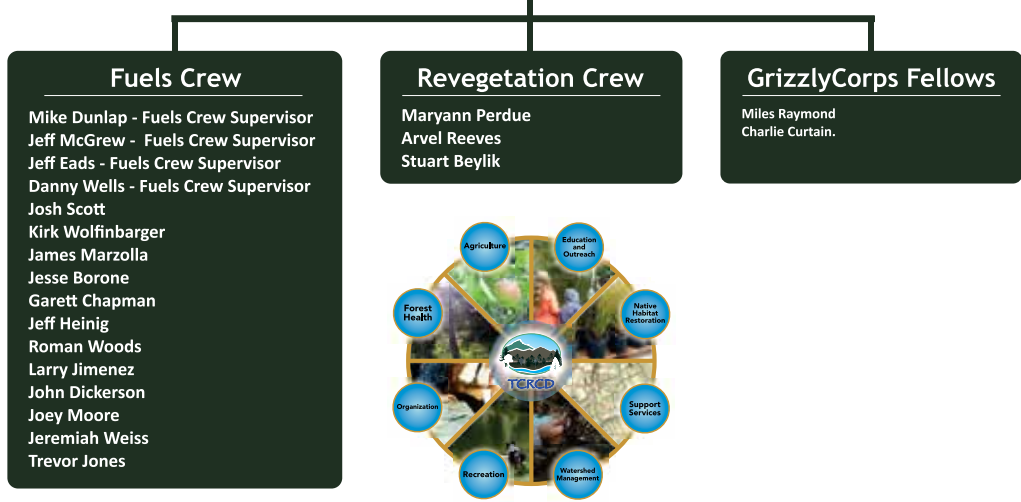
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Rebekah Wolfinbarger - Office Manager
Jessica Tye - Administrative Assistant
Amelia Fleitz - Watershed Program Manager
Maya Williams - Education and Outreach Project Coordinator
Annyssa Interrante - Watershed Project Coordinator
Jacob Johnson - Conservation Planner
Duncan McIntosh - Education and Outreach Project Coordinator
Denise Wesley - GIS Manager
Erik Flickwir - Systems Administrator, Mechanic, & Graphic Design
Cynthia Tarwater - Road-related Sediment Reduction Program Manager
Chris Cole - Forest Health Program Manager
Dave Johnson - Forest Health Project Coordinator
Bethany Llewellyn - Forest Health Project Coordinator
Annie Barbeau - Revegetation Program Manager
Kaety Howard - Revegetation Project Coordinator

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 led by a volunteer board of directors.

The Trinity County RCD Vision

The Trinity County RCD 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.



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