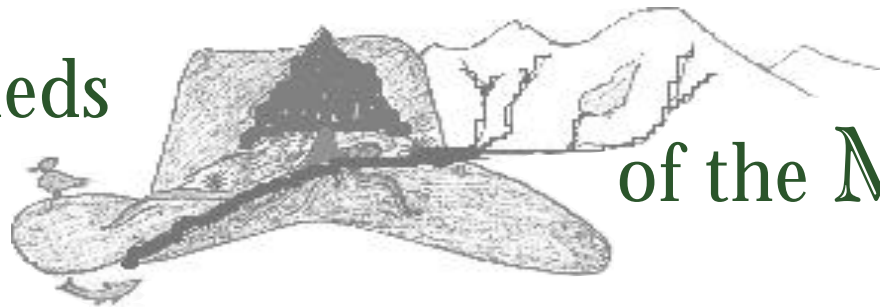


Watersheds



of the Modoc

Your source for watershed information in Central Modoc County

Published by the Central Modoc Resource Conservation District

Spring 2002

Calendar of Events

Central Modoc Resource Conservation District Board Meeting, Tuesday, April 16th, 3:00 p.m. at The River Center (136 West Henderson Street).

We're taking orders now! The deadline for placing your tree sale order is Friday, April 19th, 5:00 p.m. For more information please call the CMRCD office at 233-8872.

Trees and shrubs will be available for pickup on Saturday, April 27th from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Citizens Utility Shop on 4th Street. **Fun educational materials will be distributed, so don't forget the kids.**

It's time to think about the many gifts we get from trees. Celebrate "The Gift of Trees" during the 2002 Soil and Water Stewardship Week, April 29-May 5. For more information log onto www.NACDnet.org.

Free to Fly in Modoc Skies is the theme for the first ever combined balloon and migratory bird festival, September 13-15 in Alturas. Help plan this fun and educational family event by us attending the planning committee meeting on Monday, April 22nd, 3:30 p.m. at The River Center.

Make sure your voice is heard. The Pit River Watershed Assessment process will be the focus of the next Pit River Watershed Alliance Meeting on Thursday, April 25th, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Canby Fire Hall.

Don't let these beauties fool you! Many weeds are very pretty, but they are a growing pain. Join the Modoc County Noxious Weed Management Group on the fourth Wednesday of every month from 9:00 a.m to 12:00 p.m. at The River Center. For more information please contact Irene Davidson, Modoc National Forest 233-8836.

Are we missing an important event? Please let us know by contacting Paula Fields at 233-5085.



What's Inside:

<i>A Center for Learning</i>	2
<i>Celebrate "The Gift of Trees"</i>	2
<i>PRWA Kicks-Off Watershed Assessment</i>	3
<i>All About Riparian Areas</i>	<i>Insert</i>
<i>It's All Tied Together</i>	3
<i>Who to Contact</i>	4

A New Center to Showcase Modoc County's Natural Resources

With many committed partners and volunteers, Paula Fields the new CMRCD education coordinator is very excited to be coordinating the development of Modoc County's very own River Center. In December the CMRCD received \$130,000 from the State Water Resources Control Board to begin developing an educational and informational center for schools and the general public.

The River Center will showcase natural resources in Modoc County by developing an appreciation for how a watershed affects and benefits the community. The center will house interactive displays featuring such as agriculture and the river, fisheries, watersheds and how they function, wildlife in the watershed, and a resource library for teachers, students and the public. Plans also include a native plants garden and an investigation station for students to study water samples from the Pit River.

"To the best of my knowledge, there are no interpretive facilities of any kind currently serving Modoc County. The River Center will fill that need," says Paula.

The River Center Development Committee invites anyone with ideas or an interest in the center to get involved in the planning process. Visitors are always welcome to stop by the center located at 136 West Henderson Street in Alturas. You may also reach Paula Fields at 233-5085.

Volunteers are needed for the following committees:

- Displays and Activities Subcommittee
- Library and Research Subcommittee
- Native Plants Garden Subcommittee

The grand opening for the The River Center is scheduled for January 2003.



Celebrate "The Gift of Trees" This Spring!

The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now!

"The Gift of Trees" is the theme of this year's National Soil and Water Stewardship week, April 26 through May 3. To help bring "The Gift of Trees" to Modoc County, the Central Modoc Resource Conservation District is now taking orders for its annual Conservation Tree Sale. Nearly thirty species of trees and shrubs are available once again this year.

This annual event is sponsored by the CMRCD to encourage the planting of trees for a wide range of conservation purposes, including windbreaks, livestock shelterbelts, wildlife plantings, and erosion control.

We have been selling trees for over twenty years and we would like to know how your plantings from previous years are doing. Send us your photos and stories, or give us a call and we'll come by and take a few snapshots to share with you. By looking back at

what we've grown, we can better appreciate "the Gift of Trees" as we move into the new planting season.

Central Modoc Resource Conservation District
ANNUAL CONSERVATION AND WINDBREAK

TREE SALE

Order Forms: Available at the CMRCD Office, located at the USDA Service Center (USFS Building, 804 W. 12th Street) or order by phone at 233-8872.

Order Deadline: 5:00 p.m. Friday, April 19th

Pickup Date: Trees and shrubs will be available for pickup on Saturday, April 27th, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at the Citizens Utility Shop on 4th Street.

Thank you for your support!



Central Modoc Resource Conservation District
804 West 12th St., Alturas 233-8872, Fax 233-8869

What is a Riparian Area and How Does it Work?

Healthy riparian areas are green zones along streams and rivers and around lakes, springs, and bogs.



Reasons Riparian Areas are Important:

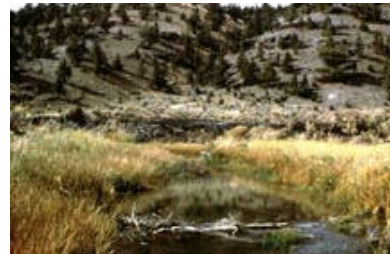
- Riparian vegetation stabilizes creek banks, protecting the soil from the erosive energy of raindrops and high flows.
- Streamside vegetation improves water quality by serving as a natural trap to retain sediments during high flows.
- Habitat is provided for fish and wildlife.
- Woody streamside cover shades the water and reduces stream temperatures during the summer months which benefits cold water fish.
- Riparian vegetation increases infiltration rate, getting water into the ground where it can be utilized rather than running off as overland flow that can erode soil.
- These areas also play an important role in the rebuilding of degraded stream banks because the sediment trapped by the vegetation forms the physical basis for a new bank structure.

Degraded Riparian Area



Lowered water table
Poor water storage with downstream floods and reduced summer flows
Low vegetation productivity
Little shade - warm water
Poor water quality - poor fish habitat
Little vegetation to protect and stabilize banks
Low wildlife habitat diversity

Healthy Riparian Area



High water table
Good shade - cool water
Higher vegetation productivity
Good water quality - good fish habitat
High wildlife habitat diversity
Vegetation, including roots and debris, protects and stabilizes banks

What Can We Do To Improve Riparian Areas?

Since riparian areas cross ownership boundaries we can work together to keep these unique areas healthy.

Prevention

Research and experience have helped land managers and owners develop new management systems to protect and improve riparian areas. These include:

- Rotating livestock to other pastures
- Reducing numbers of livestock
- Fencing to protect sensitive areas
- Changing the time of year when riparian areas are used.



Buffers can be created around riparian areas to protect them from excessive use.



Restoration

Where damage has been done, repairs can be made by:

- Building in-stream rock or log structures to trap sediment, slow the stream and create fish habitat
- Replanting willows or other fast growing species along banks, trap sediment and reduce water temperature to improve fish habitat.



For More Information

Check out these websites!

NRCS Conservation Reserve Program

www.nrcs.usda.gov/NRCSProg

Bureau of Land Management

www.blm.gov/riparian

Habitat Restoration Center

www.habitat-restoration.com

Pit River Watershed Alliance Kicks - Off Watershed Assessment

The Pit River Watershed Alliance (PRWA), a working group of private and public land managers, is just starting a three-year project to compile the first-ever watershed assessment for the entire Pit River basin above Fall River. CMRCD, and our neighbors at the Goose Lake, Pit/Big Valley, and Fall River Resource Conservation Districts are participating in this effort to ensure that private land concerns are addressed. We believe that an honest assessment can help us better manage our own watershed so that pressure for new levels of regulations can be headed off.

The goal of the Watershed Assessment is to prepare a balanced document that will serve as an educational tool to provide available information to stakeholders, build consensus within the watershed, and to provide a baseline for future action. The assessment will include a historical perspective and summary of physical and ecological conditions within the watershed.

Any old photos that show the landscape as it appeared in years gone by are vital to the success of this project. Even if it's just an old photo of Uncle Bob and his new Packard, if the background shows a part of the countryside, then it's a piece of the puzzle. Please let us know if you have any images to contribute. We can scan your old photos at our office or in



The status of Sage Grouse is one of many topics that will be addressed in the watershed assessment.

your home, so that these precious memories do not leave your possession.

VESTRA Resources, Inc, a consulting firm from Redding, was selected to conduct this assessment by the PRWA. VESTRA has a good record of working with the agricultural community, and has a lot of good people working with them. We are confident that they will do a good job for all of us.

Watch for public meetings coming soon to ensure that your voice is heard in this assessment process.

It's All Tied Together...

We have a number of stream projects wrapping up right now, and are beginning the planning for several more. If you have conservation concerns on your property, the RCD is ready to work with you in solving them.

Our first step is always, you guessed it, monitoring. We collect as much information as we can about a site to help us come up with a range of possible actions. Then we work with the landowners to formulate a conservation plan that fits their needs. Then we assist in finding additional funding and dealing with the bureaucracies and permits and such. Finally, we work with landowners to manage conservation pro-

jects right through to the final reports.

"I'm glad to be a part of the program. It's giving us better water quality and wildlife habitat, it's cut down on erosion, and it's increased our acreage of productive land."

*-John Flournoy
Likely Land & Livestock*

Our list of cooperating landowners is growing all the time, and there's no reason you can't join it. We can't fix everything, and sometimes it takes a while to get

Continued on page 4



Central Modoc
Resource Conservation District
804 West 12th Street
Alturas, CA 96101
(530) 233-8872
<http://cmrkd/carcd.org/>

Funding for this newsletter has been provided in part by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) pursuant to Assistance Agreement No. C9-98998901-0 and any amendments thereto which has been awarded to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) for the implementation of California's Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the USEPA or the SWRCB, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.

It's All Tied Together... (cont.)

a project going, but we sure try to assist everyone who asks.

The South Fork Pit River Riparian and Wetland Restoration Project is nearing completion, in cooperation with Likely Land & Livestock. Landowner John Flournoy says, "I'm glad to be a part of the program. It's giving us better water quality and wildlife habitat, it's cut down on erosion, and it's increased our acreage of productive land. We believe the taxpayers got good value for their money here."

Value to the taxpayers is enhanced even more when all of the landowner's time, materials, and expenses are added in. This project could not have happened without the major contributions from the Flournoys and Likely Land & Livestock.

Central Modoc Resource Conservation District

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Dick Mackey, President
David Hoxsey, Vice President
Chris Knoch, Treasurer
Jerry Hoxsey, Tim Martinez,
Larry Osborne & Chico Pedotti

STAFF:

Debra Betters, Admin. Assistant
Paula Fields, Education Coordinator
Cliff Harvey, Watershed Coordinator

BOARD MEETINGS:

CMRCD meets the **3rd Tuesday** of every month. Anyone is welcome to attend!