



TRUCKEE RIVER CURRENTS

FALL 2013

ADOPT-A-STREAM



LAB SESSIONS: NOV TO FEB

Join us to learn what these bugs tell us about our water quality (see page 8).

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NOTES & QUOTES

"Altogether the Truckee River is fed or stored in seven lakes or reservoirs: Lake Tahoe, Donner and Independence Lakes, Martis Creek Reservoir, Prosser Creek Reservoir, and Stampede and Boca Reservoirs."

A Doubtful River
(Dawson, Goin, Webb)

Over 450 Volunteer Help Out at 18th Annual Truckee River Day

COLDSTREAM CANYON FLOODPLAIN RESTORATION

Leaders: Cyndie Walck, Nathan Shasha, Jeff Glazner, Jeannette Halderman, Sam Zabell
Volunteers: 45

In 2012, TRWC and California State Parks partnered on a major restoration project along Cold Creek in the lower reach of Coldstream Canyon. This section of creek was channelized many years ago to accommodate gravel mining. The channelization led to massive erosion in the constrained creek channel. The restoration project included creating nearly an acre of riparian habitat, removing approximately 5,000 tons of fine sediment from the eroding banks, and regrading streambanks along 1,000 feet of Cold Creek to sustainable angles.

A key component of the restoration work was completed on Truckee River Day 2013. Volunteers revegetated the site by planting native plants, mulching the area, and fencing riparian vegetation to protect against beavers.



Volunteers at work in Coldstream Canyon on Truckee River Day.

STEFAN MCLEOD PHOTOGRAPHY

JOHNSON CANYON TRAIL RELOCATION

Leaders: Kevin Starr, Jake Hudson
Volunteers: 15

Johnson Canyon is a key tributary to Donner Lake. The watershed is steep and naturally erosive. Land use history includes logging and grazing. In 1960, the Donner Fire burned through the canyon. A poorly constructed road network has developed as a result of these past land uses. In numerous locations, the road network intercepts drainages, causing severe erosion. In partnership with the Truckee Donner Land Trust, TRWC is planning a large scale restoration project in Johnson Canyon involving reconnecting natural drainage patterns and reducing erosion. The restoration plan includes decommissioning an old road that is currently used for Donner Lake Rim Trail access.

On Truckee River Day, volunteers helped finish a new trail that will replace the eroding road segment. The new trail will be much more stable than the old alignment and will be open to the public in 2014.

LITTLE TRUCKEE RIVER CAMPGROUND TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Leaders: Joe Flannery, David Shaw, Tamara Anderson, Steve Disbrow, Pat Souza
Volunteers: 50

There are two campgrounds located along the Little Truckee River north of Truckee. Between the two sites, there are sensitive meadow and riparian areas. Many years ago on Truckee River Day, a trail was formally established between the two sites. Prior to that, access was uncontrolled and leading to damage of the meadows and riparian zone.

For Truckee River Day 2013, volunteers maintained the trail and re-routed a few sections. A group from the Truckee Trails Foundation participated at this site.

Continues on page 4

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

What Will Your Legacy Be?

The Sodergren Group has honored Mike and Meriam's memory for 16 years at Truckee River Day.

In 1997 a large landslide careened through staff lodging facilities in the middle of the night at the Thredbo ski resort in Australia killing 18 people. Two of those people were well-regarded local ski instructors, Michael and Miriam Sodergren. The loss was a tragedy that affected many members of our community here in Tahoe and Truckee, including close friend Robie Litchfield. Robie feels strongly that Mike and Miriam represented a breed of people who made their lives in the mountains and devoted their time to teaching others how to love and respect our natural ecosystem.

Together with Robie and other friends, Mike's brother decided that the best way to memorialize the couple was to get their friends together and donate their time to an environmental project. Truckee River Day was a perfect match.

It's been 16 years and the Sodergren Group hasn't missed a Truckee River Day yet! Robie has been instrumental as a steward of their legacy and a group leader. They've worked on some of our biggest restoration projects—including the Merrill Davies project where they hauled sod mats onto small earthen plugs to promote vegetation growth on bare dirt. They spent hours in Perazzo Meadows waddling willows and pounding stakes to help reduce erosion on stream banks.

The Sodergren Group shows up every year with at least 20 people and includes an ever-expanding net of friends, families and new generations who never even met Mike and Miriam. They are an inspirational group we can always count on to bring the big numbers, do the hard work, and get the job done. Their volunteerism and the improvements in our watershed are the Sodergren's legacy.



FAR RIGHT: ROBIE LITCHFIELD



LEFT: Michael and Miriam Sodergren were among the 18 people killed in 1997 when a landslide careened through staff lodging at the Thredbo ski resort in Australia.

RIGHT: Long-time Truckee River Day Team Leader Robie Litchfield (white shirt) and Sodergren Group volunteer Heidi Shaughnessy at Martis Creek Trail.

The Watershed Council appreciates the efforts of the Sodergren Group and all of our volunteers. There are so many others that have this depth of commitment—this is just one story. But in the face of changes in our community, we continue to depend on all the watershed's users to support our restoration efforts. The Truckee River Watershed Council identified 50 high priority projects within the watershed that require restoration and protection. We need everyone's help get the work done.

It's clear that many of our volunteers feel that they get more than they give at Truckee River Day. Robie reflects on her volunteer experiences, "Truckee River Day introduced us to new areas of the watershed in our back yard that we never would have visited if it weren't for the Watershed Council. It has taught us to recognize erosion and poorly-functioning ecosystems, as well as ways we can contribute to halt and even reverse these processes. More importantly, each year we get to see and feel how we can contribute to conservation first hand."



Double Your Gift for the Watershed!

Help complete 50 priority projects over the next 10 years to improve water quality, wildlife habitat, and watershed function. Make a pledge today of \$1,000 or more a year for the next 5 years, and...
your donation will be matched dollar for dollar!

○ 2003 - 2012 1 OR 2 PROJECTS PER YEAR

○ 2013 5 MAJOR PROJECTS

○ 2023 50 PROJECTS COMPLETED

TRUCKEE RIVER DAY

Continued from page 1

MARTIS WILDLIFE AREA TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Leaders: Jacqui Zink, Dan Warren, Bill Wendin, Erin Casey
Volunteers: 40

Martis Wildlife Area is a very popular walking area, especially the user-created Martis Creek Trail. Problems have arisen because this trail was never properly located or built. Sections of the trail that ran along the tops of the creek banks were falling into the creek, impacting water quality. Starting in 2004, volunteers have worked to re-route the trail away from the fragile creek banks. The old, damaging trail was then revegetated and fenced for protection.

The revegetation of the old trail has been very successful, but requires maintenance to keep people using the new trail. In 2013, volunteers performed maintenance on both the new and old trails. Groups of volunteers from Tahoe Mountain Resorts Lodging and the Truckee River Winery participated at this site.



ERIN CASEY

Volunteers maintain fencing to protect fragile creek banks in the Martis Wildlife Area.

TRAIL REVEGETATION – MARTIS CREEK

Leaders: Robie Litchfield, Brian Hastings, Shane Fryer
Volunteers: 20

Several user-created trails have developed in sensitive wetland and riparian zones in the Martis Wildlife area. The trails cause resource damage and are redundant with the existing trail network. Over time, we have worked to maintain and develop a sustainable trail system in Martis Valley. On Truckee River Day, volunteers helped that effort by closing off unnecessary trails, spreading seed, and planting bare areas with willows and sod. The Sodegren Memorial Group participated at this site.

LAKESIDE CAMPGROUND REVEGETATION

Leaders: Susi Urie, Gene Urie, Jane Lufkin, Kim Nolan, Paul Smith, Kathy Tallant, Sue Lowder
Volunteers: 120

The Lakeside Campground at Prosser Lake is located immediately next to the water. The area was fairly open with very little official road designation. To help alleviate erosion problems at this site, the U.S. Forest Service blocked off unnecessary roads and improved drainage on existing roads. On Truckee River Day, volunteers helped with the revegetation effort in the closed off areas. They raked seeds and mulch, scattered additional seed, and placed mulch on the bare areas. High school students from Truckee High and the Squaw Valley Academy completed this project.



KATHY WHITLOW

Maria Mircheva, Executive Director of the Sugar Pine Foundation, demonstrates how to properly plant Sugar Pine seedlings before work begins in the Waddle Ranch area of Martis Valley on Truckee River Day.

SUGAR PINE PLANTING

Leaders: Maria Mircheva, Catherine Schnurrenberger, Kathy Whitlow
Volunteers: 40

Sugar Pines were once abundant in the Truckee – Tahoe region. However, during past eras of logging, sugar pines were selectively cut and other tree species such as white fir moved in and replaced them. Sugar pines are also highly susceptible to white pine blister rust. Rust-resistant sugar pines are being grown in the Tahoe area. On Truckee River Day, volunteers planted over 400 rust-resistant sugar pine seedlings in the Waddle Ranch area of Martis Valley to help with the recovery of this native pine species.

MARTIS LAKE BARRIER MOVE

Leaders: Phil Caterino, Mike Wolf
Volunteers: 15

Martis Lake hosts a population of Eurasian water milfoil, an invasive aquatic weed. To eradicate the weeds, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has placed a series of barriers on the bottom of the lake. The barriers cutoff sunlight from the plants and the plants then die. Once the barriers have killed off the milfoil at one spot on the lake bottom, they need to be moved to another spot. On Truckee River Day, volunteers assisted divers to remove, clean, and relocate the barriers to eradicate milfoil from another section of the lake bottom.

BARBED WIRE REMOVAL IN MARTIS VALLEY

Leaders: John Alexander, Ed Heneveld
Volunteers: 10

Martis Valley was once used for grazing. Remnants of barbed wire fence are still left over from that period of time. The barbed wire presents a hazard for wildlife, dogs, and people. On Truckee River Day a group of volunteers removed barbed wire from a sensitive meadow area in Martis Valley.



JANE LUFKIN

A large group of high school students from Truckee High and Squaw Valley get ready to re-seed and mulch areas around the Lakeside Campground at Prosser Lake to help prevent erosion.

Good news! No invasive New Zealand mud snails were found during the survey conducted by this year's Truckee River Day volunteers.

TERESA CRIMMENS



NEW ZEALAND MUD SNAIL SURVEYS

Leaders: Teresa Crimmens, Andy Otto
Volunteers: 10

New Zealand mud snails are an invasive species that has been recently found in the Truckee River near Reno. These snails are very small and can be difficult to detect until their population reaches a certain size. The mud snails are capable of high rates of reproduction. Once they become established, they quickly outcompete other native invertebrates. They are able to close off their shell, so they pass unharmed through fish's digestive tracts. The mud snails can alter the entire food web of a river, impacting fish populations.

On Truckee River Day, volunteers followed an established protocol to survey for this invasive species. Good news—none were found!

RIVER FAIR

A young Truckee River Day volunteer releases a fingerling Lahontan Cutthroat trout (LCT) into the Truckee River during the River Fair, doing his small part to help with LCT recovery.

STEFAN MCLEOD PHOTOGRAPHY



TAHOE DONNER TREE PLANTING

Leaders: Sarah Collamer, Bill Houdyschell and other Tahoe Donner Forestry Staff
Volunteers: 20

On Truckee River Day, volunteers helped to plant trees at Tahoe Donner. The work area was in the greenbelt in an area that was burned several years ago. Tahoe Donner has been working to restore the landscape. The volunteers planted conifer trees in an area near Donner Ridge to help promote this reforestation.

PROSSER CREEK SPAWNING GRAVEL

Leaders: David Lass, Jim Herzman
Volunteers: 20

Prosser Creek is an important spawning area for fish in the Truckee River watershed. However, Prosser Dam blocks the movement of critical material such as spawning gravel. On Truckee River Day a group of volunteers placed appropriately sized gravels in the streambed to improve habitat for fish. A group of volunteers from Trout Unlimited participated at this site.

STEFAN MCLEOD PHOTOGRAPHY



Volunteers place appropriately sized gravels in Prosser Creek to improve fish habitat.

TRUCKEE REVEGETATION

Leaders: Michele Prestowitz, Rachel McCullough, Garrett McCullough, Leora Sapir, Dan Wilkins
Volunteers: 50

In partnership with the Town of Truckee, we completed a partial restoration of the old Town Corporation Yard. The Town of Truckee moved their operations to a new site, and is working to restore the old site along the Truckee River. Volunteers planted native plants, spread native seeds and mulched the area on Truckee River Day.

DONNER LAKE BOAT RAMP CLEANUP AND PLANTING

Leaders: Shana Behan, Jamie Adams, Shelley Harris, Sandy Rademacher, Sarah Trebilcock
Volunteers: 40

Donner Lake is an important recreation site—the lake is heavily used by visitors and residents. The Donner Lake Boat Ramp located at the west end of Donner Lake is a critical access point. Over the years, the area adjacent to the lake has eroded. On Truckee River Day a group of volunteers cleaned up the area, planted native plants, mulched the site, and set up a drip irrigation system.

RIVER-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING:

Area Homeowners Can Help Protect the

Everyone can have a role to play in protecting the Truckee River watershed and the involvement of local homeowners is essential. Science shows that implementation of soil erosion control measures on already-developed properties—your home—is a critical step towards improving and preserving water quality.

The Truckee River Watershed Council's River-Friendly Landscaping program helps homeowners prevent or reduce soil erosion from area residential properties, a major source of pollution in our area streams and the Truckee River.

The soil that erodes from residential properties is nonpoint source (NPS) pollution. NPS is caused by any water such as rainfall, snowmelt, or even from irrigation and hoses, moving over and through the ground. As the water moves, it picks up and carries pollutants such as phosphorus, depositing them into rivers, wetlands, and lakes.

River-Friendly Landscaping participants have implemented over 160 soil erosion control measures to prevent NPS pollution. These measures are also referred to "Best Management Practices," or BMPs. BMPs are a way to describe practices that could be implemented to protect water quality and promote soil conservation. For homeowners, BMPs are a "measure" that you install such as a retention basin to capture runoff or groundcover vegetation over bare soil areas.

What difference does one home make? With no BMPs installed on your property, an average of one ton of soil may be lost per year, per lot. (Derived by NRCS/USDA from USLE home sites.)

Often, it's simple measures that can make the most difference. Our top recommended measures after visiting over 300 area homes are:

- **Driplines:** runoff from your rooftop can cause "drip line erosion." Roofs are impervious surfaces and rain that drips below the eaves can cause significant erosion and water damage. Using gravel, vegetation or other measures under your driplines protects the area, allowing runoff to soak back into the ground.
- **Bare soil.** Bare soil areas are hot spots for erosion, susceptible to wind and water that can carry soil off the property to streams and rivers. Native or adapted drought tolerant plants combined with mulch creates a low maintenance landscape and is great for stabilizing soils.

River-Friendly Landscaping is a FREE, voluntary program that provides you with a site plan and assistance to install soil erosion control measures. Getting your free site evaluation will help you understand the things you can do on your specific property to protect our native ecosystems! Qualifying homeowners can receive up to \$1,000 in reimbursement for labor and material costs until all rebate funds are exhausted. For more information, call Andy at 530-550-8760 x3.

Funding for this project has been provided in full or in part through the State Water Resources Control Board and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program (Clean Water Act Section 319) and donors of the Truckee River Watershed Council.

Donors to the Truckee River Watershed Council

\$2,500+

Georgine Casella
The Herbst Foundation, Inc.
Martis Community Foundation

\$1,000 – \$2,499

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If we missed or misidentified you or your organization, please contact us at 530-550-8760 x4.

Watershed

YOU CAN HELP THE TRUCKEE:

Become an Ambassador. The best way you can help us right now is by spreading the word. We are looking for individuals who can invite at least 10 people to a River Talk to learn more about our watershed. Host a River Talk at your home or in your office, or invite friends and colleagues to our office. The River Talk is a one-hour virtual tour of a few of our projects. We will not ask for a financial contribution, but we will welcome comments and feedback.

To become an Ambassador, call Michele at 530-550-8760 x4.

Become a Weed Warrior. The Weed Warriors prevent and control invasive weeds in the Truckee River watershed. We focus on the identification, reporting, containment, and eradication of invasive weeds. Weed Warriors search the watershed for infestations, report them to headquarters, and then dispatch a brigade of other warriors to remove or otherwise eradicate the invaders.

To become a Weed Warrior, call Jeannette at 530-550-8760 x6.

Join Adopt-A-Stream

Biological Aquatic Monitoring

Collect and identify benthic macroinvertebrates (aquatic bugs and organisms) from local streams. The types of bugs found in a stream are strong indicators of water quality. Volunteers participate in field sampling events each summer and twice monthly lab sessions each winter (see page 8).

To volunteer, call Beth at 530-550-8760 x1.

Chemical, Physical and Habitat Monitoring

Adopt a stream in your neighborhood and commit to help with monitoring four times a year, May through September. We train the teams and provide all the equipment and supplies. It takes two to three hours to complete each monitoring session.

To join a team or Adopt-A-Stream, call Andy at 530-550-8760 x3.



TRUCKEE RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

BEFORE: Bare dirt, and evident erosion necessitate steps to prevent soil erosion at this Tahoe Donner property.

AFTER: The homeowners have installed mulch, gravel and vegetation to protect the previously bare soil under driplines, stairways and decks. Water from the roof and structures now stays on the property, soaking back into the ground.

We thank the donors below who made contributions since November 2012. They provided resources to find solutions to protect, enhance and restore the Truckee River watershed. Together we are making a difference. Please see page 8 for multi-year pledges to the Together for the Truckee Society.

Salix Consulting, Inc.
Emily and Michael Salmon
San Francisco Fly Casting Club
in Memory of Ted Birr
Leora Sapir and Ron Barzel
in memory of John Guerra
Hanni and Werner Schuster
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GRANTS

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ADOPT-A-STREAM:

Small Insects Provide Big Clues About Watershed Health

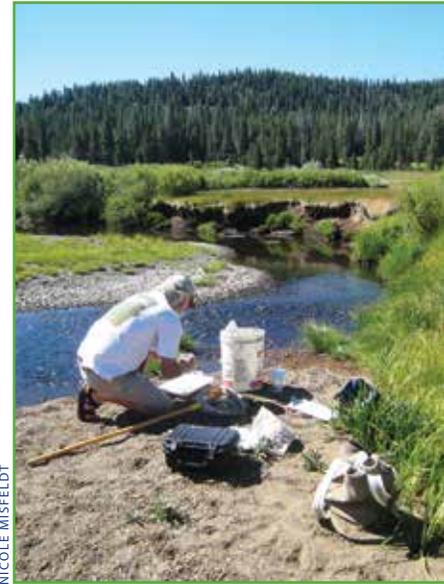
The Truckee River Watershed Council has a comprehensive program using Adopt-A-Stream volunteers to perform biological, chemical, physical and habitat monitoring at multiple streams within the watershed each year.

Starting in 1999, a group of citizens concerned about water quality in the area sought training from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to help them collect insect larvae in the summer and evaluate and document the samples during the colder months. By 2002, it was clear that the group would need funding for better microscopes and paid staff to oversee the work. That's when the Watershed Council stepped in with volunteers to collect and identify benthic macroinvertebrates (BMIs) from local streams.

During the winter months, volunteers sort and identify a subset of the samples. The remaining samples are sent off to professional laboratories. Once TRWC receives all the data, we analyze the results to obtain an index of water quality for our watershed. The results are published in our annual Monitoring Reports. The data provided by BMI samples is valuable—the insects are integrating water quality over a period of weeks, months, or years, as they mature in the stream. This gives us an indication of water quality over time, whereas standard water quality measurements indicate conditions at a single point in time.

Sound complicated? It's not! Studies have shown that citizen volunteers can help scientists with important environmental monitoring. Without our committed Watershed Council volunteers, this valuable data would go uncollected. Experienced folks and newcomers are equally welcome to join us for lab sessions; we provide training at the beginning of the lab season to bring everyone up to speed. For more information, call Beth at 530-550-8760 x1.

Funding for this project has been provided in full or in part by the California Department of Water Resources, Lahontan Community Foundation, and donors of the Truckee River Watershed Council.



NICOLE MISFELDT

Volunteer Jerry Misfeldt processes a sample collected from the Upper Little Truckee River in Perazzo Meadows.



These donors have made a long-term commitment to the Truckee River watershed. They are members of the Together for the Truckee Society. We deeply appreciate their confidence in our restoration and protection projects.

If we missed or misidentified you or your organization, please call 530-550-8760 x4.

Protect the Watershed – \$10,000 a year for 5 years

Anonymous
The Martis Fund
Northstar California/
Vail Resorts Echo
Tahoe Mountain Resorts
Environmental Fund
Cathy and Tom Van Berkem

Protect the River – \$5,000 a year for 5 years

San Francisco Fly Casting Club
Sierra Mountain Mortgage
Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows

Restore a Stream – \$1,000 a year for 5 years

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