



TRUCKEE RIVER CURRENTS

PUBLISHED BY THE TRUCKEE RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

WINTER 2010

Public Meeting

Perazzo Meadows
January 25, 2011



Learn about the work completed in 2009 and 2010. There will be time for discussion.

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NOTES & QUOTES

The true ownership of the wilderness belongs in highest degree to those who love it most.

~ John Muir

15th Annual Truckee River Day

October 17, 2010

Perazzo Meadows Restoration

Leaders: Randy Westmoreland, Jamie Adams, Shana Behan, Tom Archer, Jeff Glazner, Sarah Green, Shelley Harris, Amy Horne, Jake Hudson, Anne Liston, Sara Taddo Jones, Rachel McCullough, Garrett McCullough, Annaliese Miller, Jim Schmidt, Kevin Thomas, Bill Wendin

Volunteers: 180

The Perazzo Meadows system was intensely used and modified during the gold rush and immigration of the late 1800s and 1900s, a time when significant changes to the Little Truckee River channel form and function within Perazzo Meadows most likely began. Causes of degradation included road building, road use, logging, ranching, and dairy farming. Historic analyses of the stream channels through Perazzo Meadows indicate that cattle and sheep ranchers actively modified the channel of Perazzo Creek through the Upper Meadow area.

The entire Perazzo Meadows Restoration project includes six sites. The U.S. Forest Service and TRWC began work at the Upper Meadow site this year. Perazzo Creek had been moved into a constructed channel at this site, which led to downcutting, erosion, loss of meadow habitat, and lack of floodplain access. Prior to Truckee River Day, the eroding channel was plugged and the stream was restored to its historic channel. Volunteers helped to seed and mulch the plugs, plant willows, and plant sod.

Stockrest Springs

Leaders: Kris Boatner, Jeannette Halderman, Gina Layh, Scott Dailey

Volunteers: 80

Stockrest Springs was a historic watering hole for cattle waiting to load onto trains. A railroad grade ran straight through the meadow to get the cattle to the main line by the Truckee River. The railroad grade impinges upon the natural flow of water through the meadow. This project consists of removing the railroad grade and reconnecting natural hydrologic patterns.

On Truckee River Day, volunteers transported mulch from nearby hillsides and scattered it over the removed railroad grade and filled gully.

Continues on page 4



Truckee River

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Perazzo Meadows

ROBIE LITCHFIELD



Truckee River Watershed Council
Collaborative solutions to protect, enhance and restore the Truckee River Watershed

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What's Happening in the Truckee River Watershed?

Measuring Water Quality of the Truckee

Adopt-a-Stream is a volunteer-based water quality monitoring program providing reliable scientific data on local streams. We collect, identify and analyze benthic macro-invertebrates (water bugs) and various types of water samples. We have a dedicated crew of experienced volunteers and gladly welcome new volunteers. The winter lab season runs November 2010 through May 2011. Call 550-8760 or check www.truckeeriverwc.org

Coldstream Canyon Floodplain Restoration

On October 27, 2010, we held a public information meeting regarding Coldstream Canyon restoration project design and implementation. Coldstream Canyon, or Cold Creek, extends from the crest of the Sierra Nevada to just west of the Town of Truckee, and is part of Donner Memorial State Park. There is a long history of human disturbances in the canyon, from construction of the Central Pacific Railroad in the mid-1800's to construction of I-80. These land uses continue to cause increased size of peak floods, increased erosion, loss of riparian habitat and degraded aquatic habitat. Restoration will begin 2011 to expand the existing floodplain. With additional floodplain, fine sediment erosion will be significantly reduced, riparian vegetation will increase, and some flood protection will be gained. The project will have both water quality and habitat benefits. Many thanks to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy for funding the design and permitting of this project.

Perazzo Meadows Restoration

The U.S. Forest Service and the Truckee River Watershed Council completed the second phase of restoration in Perazzo Meadows. Perazzo Meadows is the northern part of the Truckee River watershed, about 10 miles northwest of the Town of Truckee. The meadows are ranked by state and national agencies as some of most valuable stream and meadow habitat in the Sierra Nevada. Phases 1 and 2 have put the stream back on its original course to meander through the meadows and allow proper spreading of floodwaters to recharge plant life and water tables. Learn more about this project a public information meeting in January 2011.



ABOVE Perazzo Meadows is the northern part of the Truckee River watershed, about 10 miles northwest of the Town of Truckee. It is ranked by state and national agencies as some of most valuable stream and meadow habitat in the Sierra Nevada.

BELOW Coldstream Canyon, or Cold Creek, which extends from the crest of the Sierra Nevada to just west of the Town of Truckee, and is part of Donner Memorial State Park, has a long history of human disturbances.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RIVER FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING LAUNCHES IN TRUCKEE

Did you know soil loss from your property is a form of pollution

Truckee, Calif. (June 9, 2010) – In an area that features some of Mother Nature's finest work, Truckee homeownership has both its joys and unique responsibilities.

Many of our town's residents have the pleasure of living close to lovely bodies of water such as Donner Lake, the Truckee River, and Donner and Alder Creeks. However, many of these properties may actually have a negative impact on the region's water quality. The Truckee River Watershed Council and the Sierra Nevada Alliance have kicked off a River Friendly Landscaping campaign to help remedy the situation.

"Basically, the Watershed Council is asking homeowners to voluntarily install erosion control on their properties," explains Andy Otto, Director of Land Use Compatibility Programs. "When implemented correctly, these landscaping methods will help reduce soil erosion, prevent storm water runoff and stop pollutants from eventually making their way to the Truckee River. If they get to the water, the pollutants cause harm to the watershed and to the fish and animals that feed there."

The Watershed Council and Sierra Nevada Alliance have identified neighborhoods where they hope homeowners will jump onboard the River Friendly Landscaping program. These neighborhoods are close to sensitive lakes and streams. The following property types are of special interest: homes on steep slopes, sites with highly compacted soil, and homes that are close to surface water. There are four identified neighborhoods: north shore of Donner Lake, Tahoe Donner, and the Truckee River corridor in Placer County, and along East and West River Streets. Evaluations will be given on a first come, first serve basis. While any homeowner in any neighborhood can participate in the program, homes in the focus areas will be given priority.

Interested property owners are encouraged to call (530) 550-8760 to schedule a free site evaluation. Based upon the assessment, an engineering consultant will design a plan with recommendations (free of charge) for the property based on erosion control issues. When the project is completed, River Friendly Landscaping staffers will once again visit the property. Upon certification of completion, the homeowner will be eligible for up to a \$400 rebate.

In addition to reducing sediment and pollution in the Truckee River, a native plant/low maintenance landscaping makeover may increase property value and esthetics.

Besides the joy of helping to protect the water quality of the Truckee River—a stunning local asset—homeowners are eligible for other incentives. Each month, two lucky homeowners who voluntarily comply with the BMP directives will receive two Reno Aces tickets. A \$400 rebate program is also available.

The River Friendly Landscaping program is a joint project by the Truckee River Watershed Council and the Sierra Nevada Alliance. The program has been funded by the State of California through the State Water Resources Control Board.

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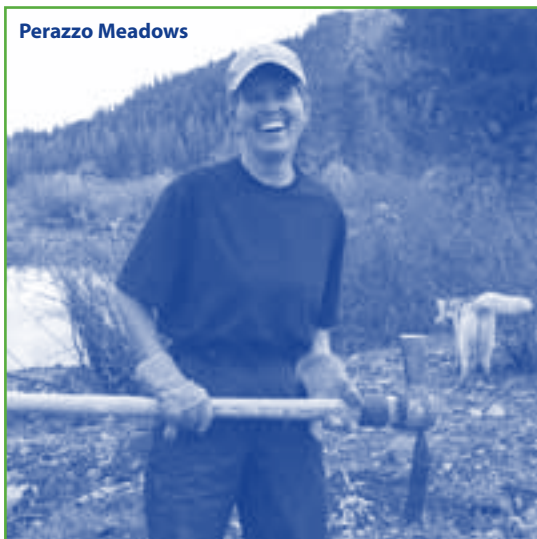
Perazzo Meadows

ROBIE LITCHFIELD



Truckee Wetlands

GAYLE DANA



Perazzo Meadows

ROBIE LITCHFIELD

TRUCKEE RIVER DAY

Continued from page 1

Little Truckee River Hill Climb Restoration

Leaders: David Lass, Tamara Anderson, Deborah Urich

Volunteers: 60

The Little Truckee River between Stampede and Boca Reservoirs is a sanctuary of upland birds and coldwater fish species, and a primary migration route for the Verdi subunit of the Loyalton-Truckee mule deer herd.

It has become increasingly popular among anglers, birdwatchers, hunters, bikers, hikers, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) users, resulting in degraded wildlife habitat and aquatic resources. Our Truckee River Day project involved closing the two hill climbs/trails that are the primary portals to the meadow system.

Tahoe Donner Planting and Trail Maintenance

Leaders: Bill Houdyschell, Tahoe Donner Forestry Staff

Volunteers: 60

On Truckee River Day, volunteers worked at two sites in Tahoe Donner. At one site, near the equestrian center, they planted native plants to help improve habitat. At the other site, they worked to move a trail segment out of a wet area. There is an extensive trail network maintained by Tahoe Donner. The trails are heavily used by residents and others. The work of the volunteers will help to decrease erosion and to ensure the sustainability of the Tahoe Donner trail network.

Martis Wildlife Area Trail Re-Route, Revegetation, and Fencing

Leaders: Jacqui Zink, Leora Sapir, Georgia Smith, Jim Herzman, John Svahn

Volunteers: 45

Martis Wildlife Area is very popular for walking, especially the user-created Martis Creek Trail. Because it wasn't properly located or built, sections along the tops of the creek banks were falling into the creek causing water quality problems. Starting in 2004, volunteers have worked to re-route the trail and revegetate.

The final section of the trail to be re-routed ran through a very wet section of meadow along the upstream-most reach of Martis Creek. The re-route into an upland area was completed last year when the old trail was blocked off using willows and other on-site materials. The final revegetation and trail work took place this year.

Truckee Wetlands Cleanup

Leaders: Hardy Bullock

Volunteers: 30

A wetland complex runs through the heart of Truckee—from near the top of Hilltop past the Regional Park, to the Truckee River. It has been highly altered from infrastructure development. A group of stakeholders is forming a plan to restore as much of these wetlands as possible. On Truckee River Day, volunteers worked in a portion of the wetland area to remove debris and trash.

Davies Creek Restoration

Leaders: Susi Urie, Courtney Hart, Steve Disbrow

Volunteers: 20

The Davies and Merrill watersheds have seen a long history of disturbance, starting in the early 20th century. The watersheds were logged and mills and railroad spurs were constructed to process and convey the logs.

The entire Merrill Davies restoration project involves 13 sites, and the Truckee River Watershed Council and the U.S. Forest Service have finished restoration at most of them. Activities to be performed at each site varies, but all involve restoring hydrologic function and improving habitat in the Merrill and Davies watersheds.

At the Truckee River Day site in Davies Creek, the stream was diverted when the railroad grades were constructed, forcing the stream into a narrow, erosive channel. This eroded gully was plugged and the stream restored to its original course. Volunteers helped finish off the work by seeding and mulching disturbed areas, and planting willows.



Davies Creek

GAIL STEPHENS

Squaw Creek Pebble Counts

Leaders: Mike Liquori, Dave Shaw, Ed Heneveld

Volunteers: 15

A restoration plan is under development for restoring Squaw Creek. At present, the reach of the creek that runs through the meadow is highly eroded and supports little aquatic life. Part of the restoration plan calls for understanding the distribution of different sized sands, silts, gravels, and cobbles. These types of data are not difficult to collect, but it is time consuming. On Truckee River Day, volunteers were trained to conduct "pebble counts", a standard hydrologic study method. They collected data from several stream reaches which will be used to help inform the restoration design.



Squaw Creek

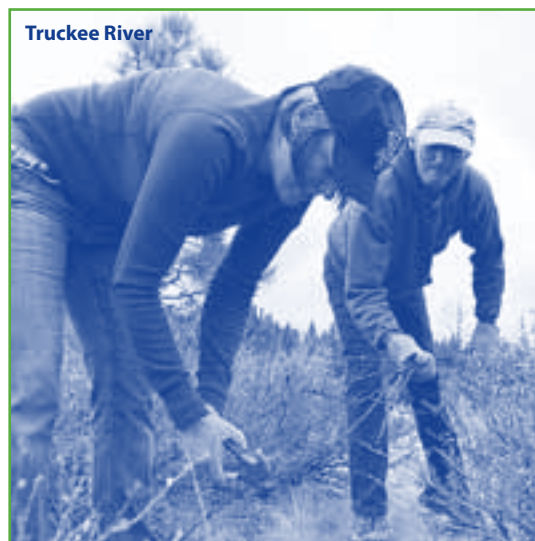
DAVE SHAW

Truckee River Barbed Wire Removal

Leaders: Lauri Soule

Volunteers: 10

The section of the Truckee River across from the Olympic Heights neighborhood is a popular area for hiking, fishing, and wildlife viewing. The California Department of Fish & Game manages the area for wildlife values. An old fence line runs through the area and there is a large amount of barbed wire and abandoned fence posts. Most of this presents a danger to wildlife, humans, and dogs. Volunteers worked to clean up the area and removed a large amount of barbed wire.



Truckee River

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Moonlight Meadows Barbed Wire Removal

Leaders: Dan Warren, Marie Delgrego

Volunteers: 10

There is a large amount of abandoned fence line in the Moonlight Meadows of Martis Valley, a popular recreation site. A lot of the barbed wire is partially buried in the meadow grasses, presenting a danger to wildlife, humans, and dogs. Volunteers worked to remove a large amount of barbed wire.

In Profile: Joanne Roubique



KRISTIE BOATNER

The U.S. Forest Service is a valuable piece of our local watershed management, and Joanne Roubique, District Ranger for the Truckee Ranger District since 1982, is a valuable partner.

Shifting Perspectives, Coming Together

Back in 1989, Joanne worked with the community-at-large on the Truckee River Operating Agreement (TROA). The underlying issue was who (Nevada/California) owns the region’s water and who (Nevada/California) owns the right to send it downstream. A major challenge was transitioning everyone’s perspective on the Truckee River from just a “water delivery system” to an “ecosystem” where, for example, a meadow restoration project could yield many benefits—healthier vegetation, higher temperatures, and improved water quality. This shift in thinking allowed the two groups to come together over time and agree on many complex issues.

Through TROA, Joanne quickly realized that a federal agency can be more effective with the community’s help. Joanne carried this theme throughout her career and her alliances with regional organizations have demonstrated that working closely together with the public is a stronger case for success than working separately.

Shaping the Watershed Council

Following the success of the first Truckee River Day in 1995, Joanne volunteered to facilitate the mission and goals of the Truckee River Habitat Restoration Group. She continues to actively support the group and its evolution into the current Truckee River Watershed Council. Since its inception, a primary tenet of the TRWC has been to use a collaborative approach with diverse parties in identifying and resolving watershed issues. This not only reflected Joanne’s prior experience with TROA but also allowed her as a USFS Ranger to be involved in a leadership role in watershed projects with the Council without compromising her federal role. As chairperson of the Watershed Issues Forums, Joanne facilitated public discussions of issues in the community, where individuals came together with differing perspectives, became informed through discussion, and then agreed where they can take action together. Joanne sees this approach as a model for solving very real problems (e.g. groundwater, New Zealand mud snail etc). Many communities polarize, form factions, and are contentious—yielding poor results. But the collaborative approach yields cost-effective results with less angst.

Challenges Ahead

The Sierra Nevada is beautiful and therefore, very popular. We need to prepare for the effects of growth on our ecosystem both from an infrastructure (roads, houses) and use (people, trails, campgrounds) perspective. We are not quite prepared to accommodate and/or mitigate this impact to our National Forests. We need to come together to find the means to allow use to continue while minimizing the negative effects of that use.

Significant Watershed Accomplishments:

- Truckee River Habitat Restoration Group (1997 – 2001)
- Truckee River Coordinated Resource Management Planning Committee (1999 – 2001)
- Truckee River Watershed Council Coordinating Committee (2001 – present)
 - Committee Chair (2001)
 - Watershed Issues Forum Chairperson (2004 – present)

Education:

- Bachelors in Landscape Architecture, Louisiana State University

Favorite Activity:

- Joanne loves to be on the water and sail!

Our thanks to Marilyn Disbrow for interviewing Joanne and compiling this profile.



The donors below 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.

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\$5,000 a year for 5 years**

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We thank the following donors who have made contributions since October 2009. They have provided resources to find solutions to protect, enhance and restore the Truckee River watershed. Together we are making a difference.

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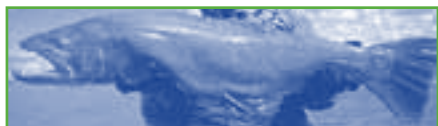
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Truckee Tahoe Community Foundation
USFS Tahoe National Forest

**Special thanks to our Board members,
volunteers, and supporters.**

If we missed or mis-identified you or your organization, please call and let us know. Our phone number is 530-550-8760.

Lahontan Cutthroat Trout



Only two self-sustaining Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (LCT) lake populations persist in their native habitats: the Summit Lake LCT in the Quinn River watershed in Nevada and the Independence Lake LCT in the Truckee River watershed. The Truckee River Watershed Council in partnering with The Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Geological Survey to restore the spawning habitat of the LCT in Independence Creek. The restoration is funded in part by Patagonia and by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

The article below is from California's Wild Heritage. Peter Steinhart. Published by the California Department of Fish and Game, 1990.

The loss of the great Lahontan cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki heshawi*) is considered to be one of the most tragic episodes in the history of American fisheries management. At one time these giant trout were abundant in lakes and streams throughout the Lahontan Basin of eastern California and north central Nevada. Native waters included the Truckee, Carson and Walker rivers, Donner, Independence and Pyramid Lakes and Lake Tahoe. There were so many trout they supported a substantial commercial fishery in addition to popular sports fisheries. Anglers from around the world make pilgrimages to these waters in hopes of catching huge trout and they were not disappointed. Twenty- to thirty-pound fish were common. A Paiute Indian fisherman caught a forty-one pound specimen in Pyramid Lake in 1925 and a 1916 photograph shows a sixty-plus pounder taken from the Indian fishery.

By 1940, impassable dams and excessive diversions of water from lakes and spawning tributaries combined with commercial overharvesting to destroy most of the lake LCT fisheries. Competition from and hybridization with non-native trout eliminated the LCT from most native stream habitats. Today, natural populations of the Lahontan cutthroat are limited to small remnants within a few isolated tributaries and lakes of the Truckee, Carson and Walker watersheds.

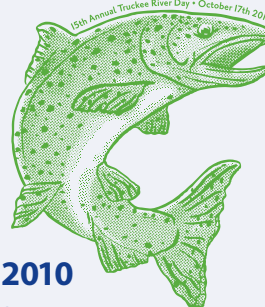
The preservation of this subspecies' gene pool is particularly important to fishery managers because the LCT can tolerate wide ranges in alkalinity and flourish in waters such Walker Lake in Nevada under conditions that would be lethal to all other trout.

The California Department of Fish and Game, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies and organizations, has initiated a long term plan to protect existing populations of the Lahontan cutthroat trout and to reintroduce the trout to selected lakes and tributaries in the Truckee, Carson and Walker watersheds.

For more information on the Lahontan cutthroat trout:
www.fws.gov/nevada/protected_species/fish/species/lct.html
<http://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/FactSheet.aspx?speciesID=890>

thank you

T-shirt Designers



2010

Sara Zimmerman

Sara Zimmerman Art,
Illustration and Design

SaraZimmerman.net

2008

Annaliese Miller

AniNau Graphic Design

AniNau.com



MARTIS FUND

MATCHING GRANT

The Martis Fund is offering up to \$30,000 a year for 5 years to the Truckee River Watershed Council to match multiple-year pledges. This is a tremendous incentive for our supporters to make a long-term financial commitment to the restoration and monitoring projects in the watershed. Already, 19 individuals, families and local businesses contributed in 2010, resulting in \$26,000 towards the match. This is a great start, but we are still looking for supporters to help us raise the remaining funds.

Contributions that qualify for the match are those from new members of the Together for the Truckee Society at the level of \$1,000, \$5,000 or \$10,000 a year for 5 years. The Society provides an opportunity for all of us to join together to protect water quality and restore habitat in our local rivers, streams and lakes. We thank the Martis Fund for helping Society donations go even further.

"The Truckee River Watershed Council play an important role in ensuring our vision for a healthy Martis Valley," said David Welch, President of The Martis Fund. "We're confident our matching grant will encourage more involvement in Truckee and beyond."

If you are interested in learning more about the Together for the Truckee Society or the matching grant from the Martis Fund, please contact Michele at (530) 550-8760.

thank you

Martis Fund