

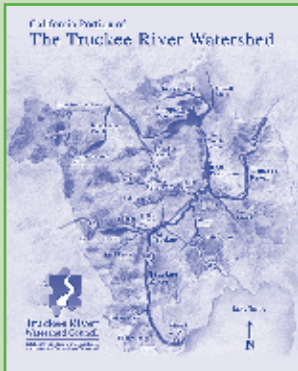


TRUCKEE RIVER CURRENTS

PUBLISHED BY THE TRUCKEE RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

WINTER 2011

Check out our new website:
truckeeriverwc.org



Stay up to date with our blog, report a weed, find River-Friendly Landscaping tips and much more.

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NOTES & QUOTES

What makes a river so restful to people is that it doesn't have any doubt—it is sure to get where it is going, and it doesn't want to go anywhere else.

~ Hal Boyle

Over 500 Volunteers Help Out at the 16th Annual Truckee River Day

Perazzo Meadows Restoration

Leaders: Randy Westmoreland, Sarah Green, Sara Taddo Jones, Rachel McCullough, Garrett McCullough, Chris Otto
Volunteers: 40

The Perazzo Meadows system was intensely used and modified during the gold rush and westward migration of the late 1800s and 1900s. Significant changes to the Little Truckee River channel form and function within Perazzo Meadows most likely began during this time frame. Land uses that contributed to the degradation included: road building, road use, logging, ranching, and dairying. Historic analyses of the stream channels through Perazzo Meadows indicate that the cattle and sheep ranchers actively modified the channel of Perazzo Creek through the Upper Meadow area. This modification led to serious degradation of the stream channel and an increase in erosion.

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 constructed plugs, plant willows, and plant sod.

2011 was the third year that volunteers assisted with the revegetation effort at Perazzo meadows. Each year volunteers focus on a different site within the project. The volunteers have made a big difference in the revegetation success.

Truckee Revegetation

Leaders: Shana Behan, Shelley Harris, Jim Schmidt, Jamie Adams, Jim Katt
Volunteers: 80

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, mulched the area, and established an irrigation system on Truckee River Day. Adventure Risk Challenge, Cub Scout Pack 734, Girl Scout Troop 1084 and 136, Truckee River Winery and a group of volunteers from the Town helped at this site.

Stockrest Springs

Leaders: Kris Boatner, Jeannette Halderman, Catherine Schnurrenberger, Jeff Glazner, Amy Horne, Anne Liston, Paul Smith, Sue Lowder
Volunteers: 180

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 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 seeded and mulched the bare areas. They transported mulch from the adjoining hillsides and scattered it over the removed railroad grade and filled the gully. Colfax High School Go Green Club, Cub Scout Pack 264 and Tahoe Baikal Institute assisted at this site.

Continues on page 4

Martis Wildlife Area Trail Re-Route, Revegetation and Fence Removal



KAITLIN BACKLUND



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Coldstream Canyon Floodplain Restoration

Habitats and water quality will benefit from this project

Cold Creek flows through Coldstream Canyon. The 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, including construction of the Central Pacific Railroad in the mid-1800's, many decades of timber harvests and grazing, construction of I-80 and gravel mining.

These land uses continue to cause increased size of peak floods, increased erosion, loss of riparian habitat and degraded aquatic habitat. The restoration will address these problems by increasing the size of the creeks floodplain in the lower part of the canyon.

The project began this past summer with pre-project monitoring. Construction of the project will begin in late summer 2012. 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 our funders including the Truckee River Fund at the Community Foundation of Western Nevada, the California State Water Resources Control Board, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, California Natural Resources Agency, and our donors (see page 7).



Coldstream Canyon: Typical eroding bank in the project area. Restoration will reduce erosion in the project area and the amount of sediment reaching the Truckee River.

KEVIN FISHER

River-Friendly Landscaping Contest Winners

But it's not too late to receive a landscaping evaluation and a rebate of up to \$400

The River-Friendly Landscaping program will award Susie Urie (Glenshire area), Steve Ramos (Tahoe Donner area), and Eric Premack (Tahoe Donner area) with \$5,000 rebates and Donner Pines East with \$10,000 to reimburse for completed river-friendly landscaping soil erosion measures.

The River-Friendly landscaping contest started in September with the objective to restore residential properties with significant erosion problems near rivers and streams in Truckee. Residents were asked to fill out an application and submit photos. Ten Truckee area residents applied.

The Truckee River Watershed Council and the Sierra Nevada Alliance launched the River-Friendly Landscaping Program to counteract the harmful runoff from residential homes. Funded by grants from the State Water Resources Control Board, the program aims to implement erosion-control and landscaping measures on residential properties that reduce pollution to the river and create sustainable landscapes.

Winners will also receive a custom evaluation and site plan to help determine the needs of their property. Awards will reimburse for materials and labor paid for by homeowners. River-friendly features can include native plants and flowers, retaining wall structures, gravel and mulch among a multitude of other options.

Even if you're not one of the winners there's still an opportunity participate in the River-Friendly Landscaping program. By signing up, homeowners will receive a custom evaluation and site plan as well as up to \$400 rebate.

For more information, visit www.truckeeriverwc.org/river-friendly-landscaping or contact Andy Otto at 530-550-8760 x3.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE:

Susie Urie – Glenshire area

Steve Ramos – Tahoe Donner area

Eric Premack – Tahoe Donner area

MULTI-FAMILY:

Donner Pines East – Donner Lake area

What Is a Watershed?

Watersheds are nature's boundaries. A watershed is the geographic area of all land that water flows across, under and through on its way to a particular body of water. No matter where we are, we all live in one. (We are in the Truckee River watershed.)

On the edge of a watershed are the landscape's ridgelines, mountains, and hills. If a raindrop falls on the east side of the Continental Divide, it may end up in the Mississippi River. But if it falls just a foot to the west, it travels a different path entirely—one that leads towards the Pacific Ocean. (The Sierra Crest is one of our ridgelines; the Truckee River terminates in Pyramid Lake.)

Everything we do impacts our watershed. Land and water uses from any part of the watershed—such as polluted run-off from highways, trails, yards, forests, ranches, and towns—eventually affect the health of the whole watershed. Each one of us can make a difference within our own watershed.



CARMEL STUDIOS

TRUCKEE RIVER DAY

Continued from page 1

Little Truckee Survey and Restoration

Leaders: David Lass, Deborah Urich, Stefan McLeod, Brian Hastings

Volunteers: 60

The Little Truckee River between Boca and Stampede Reservoirs supports a wide diversity of aquatic life, including a healthy trout population. However, habitat along this river reach could be improved. Trout Unlimited in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service is conducting habitat surveys of the river to identify areas that could benefit from the placement of habitat structures such as log jams or other woody debris.

On Truckee River Day, volunteers assisted with data collection for the future habitat improvement project. Volunteers also planted willows along eroded streambanks. A large group of Trout Unlimited volunteers helped on this project, along with members of the Tahoe Truckee Fly Fishers and University of Nevada, Reno American Fisheries Society.

Davies Creek Restoration

Leaders: Sharon Falvey, Robie Litchfield, Sarah Trebilcock

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 many sites. The Truckee River Watershed Council and the U.S. Forest Service have finished restoration at most of the sites. Activities to be performed at each site are different, 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 off and the stream restored to its original course. These restoration actions will decrease erosion, increase water storage capacity, and restore meadow habitat.

Volunteers helped finish off the work by seeding and mulching disturbed areas, and planting willows. At previous work sites, we found the contribution that volunteers make on Truckee River Day helped to speed the restoration efforts. The Sodergren Memorial Group assisted at this site.

Tahoe Donner Trail Maintenance

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

Volunteers: 60

On Truckee River Day, volunteers worked to improve erosion control along trails at Tahoe Donner. The primary work site was near the equestrian center where volunteers raised the trail bed, installed drainage dips, and built a walkway. The trails are heavily used. The work of the volunteers will help to decrease erosion and to ensure the sustainability of the Tahoe Donner trail network. A large group of volunteers from the Ritz-Carlton hotel participated in this project.

Truckee Revegetation



CATHY HOWARD

Little Truckee Survey and Restoration



CATHY HOWARD

Martis Wildlife Area Trail Re-Route, Revegetation, and Fence Removal

Leaders: Jacqui Zink, John Eaton, Georgia Smith, Ellie Hyatt

Volunteers: 25

The Martis Wildlife Area is a very popular walking area, especially the user-created Martis Creek Trail. Because this trail was never properly located or built, problems arose. Sections of the trail were located along the tops of the creek banks and are now falling into the creek, causing sedimentation and other water quality problems. Starting in 2004, volunteers worked to re-route the damaging trail away from the fragile creek banks. The pre-existing trail was then revegetated and fenced for protection.

In 2011, volunteers worked to remove the fence. The revegetation of the old trail is mostly complete, and several fence sections were not needed. Volunteers also helped to spread native seed on some areas that are not fully revegetated. Girl Scout Troop 116 and the Mountain Area Preservation Foundation assisted at this site.

Martis Drainage Repair

Leaders: David Shaw, Jake Hudson, Jim Herzman

Volunteers: 15

Over the winter of 2010-2011, erosion occurred at an area on the hillside above Martis Lake. The hillside formed a gully, depositing sediment onto a wetland area adjacent to Martis Lake. On Truckee River Day, volunteers created a series of rock check dams in the gully to prevent future erosion. The check dams were top filled with soil and seeded with native plants. Boy Scout Troop 267 assisted at this site

Sugar Pine Planting

Leaders: Dan Warren, Bill Wendin

Volunteers: 25

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 100 rust-resistant sugar pine seedlings in Glenshire to help with the recovery of this native pine species.

Squaw Creek Pebble Counts



NICOLE CARLSEN

Sagehen Fish House Repair



MIKE WOLF

Sensitive Plant Fence

Leaders: Susi Urie

Volunteers: 15

A population of Plumas mousetail (*Ivesia sericoleuca*) grows in the Stockrest Springs area. On Truckee River Day in 2002, volunteers constructed a fence to protect this population. The plant population increased in size, and the fence needed to be expanded and maintained. On Truckee River Day 2011, volunteers helped to complete the new fence to continue to protect this sensitive plant species.

Summit Canyon Creek Cleanup

Leaders: Kevin Starr, John Svahn

Volunteers: 10

In 2011, the Truckee Donner Land Trust acquired Summit Canyon Creek. The property is located along Summit Creek and provides a key link to other open space parcels on Donner Summit. The property was in need of cleanup. On Truckee River Day, volunteers helped to remove some of the old debris from an area adjacent to Summit Creek.

Squaw Creek Pebble Counts

Leaders: Mike Liquori, Ed Heneveld, Lauren Cleaves, Taylor Currier, Jenny Hatch

Volunteers: 30

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. 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. Volunteers from the Friends of Squaw Creek and from California Trout helped with this project.

Sagehen Fish House Repair

Leaders: Mike Wolf, Kim Nolan, Jeff Brown, Faerthen Felix

Volunteers: 15

The Sagehen Creek Field Station Fish House is an important research facility. When the field station was established in the 1950's a stream profile chamber was constructed. The “Fish House” allows researchers to observe fish, birds, and insects underwater while staying dry. The walls of the fish house and constructed channel require periodic maintenance. On Truckee River Day, volunteers helped to perform that maintenance. University of Nevada, Reno Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society assisted at this site.

Perazzo Meadows Restoration



BRUCE EUZENT

Want to Do More? Here are a Few Ways You Can Help the Truckee River



**Nicole Carlsen and Michele Prestowitz
volunteering at the Truckee Thursdays booth**

CREDIT

Do you love the river? Are you looking for something more that you can do? Many of you just had the wonderful experience of working directly in the watershed for Truckee River Day. You were literally taking the watershed in your own hands to help with restoration and protection efforts. Now you might ask, "What else can I do to help the Watershed Council protect and preserve of our river, streams and meadows?" Here are some ways to get more involved:

Become an Ambassador

The best way you can help us right now is by spreading the word. We are looking for individuals who can commit to inviting at least 10 people to a River Talk to learn more about the current state of 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 coordinate activities to help prevent and control invasive weeds in the Truckee River watershed. We focus on the detection, 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, contact Andy at (530) 550-8760 x3.

Join Truckee River Aquatic Monitors

Collect and identify benthic macroinvertebrates (aquatic bugs and organisms) from local streams. The types of aquatic organisms 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. To become a TRAMer, call Beth at (530) 550-8760 x1.

Adopt A Stream

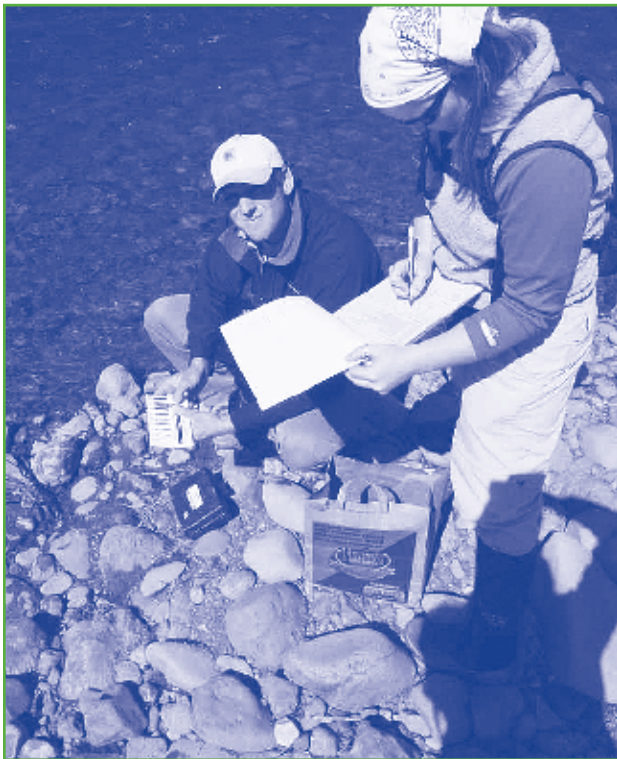
Adopt a stream in your neighborhood, and commit to help with monitoring four times a year, May through September. We train the teams and provide all the equipment and supplies. Depending on the location of the stream, it takes two to four hours to complete each monitoring session. To join a team or adopt a stream, call Andy at (530) 550-8760 x3.

Do Outreach for Weed Warriors and River-Friendly Landscaping

Volunteer to staff our outreach tables at various public events in the area, distributing handouts, answering questions, and encouraging interested people to sign up for a Weed Walk, Weed Pull, or River Friendly Landscaping evaluation. To help with outreach, contact Andy at (530) 550-8760 x3.

Become a Table Captain

Host a table at our annual fundraising event, The River Breakfast. It is an absolutely free event, and there is no requirement to donate. Each Table Captain agrees to fill a table of ten people by personally inviting friends, family, and acquaintances. You do not have to ask anyone for money, rather it is up to *us* to inspire people at this one-hour event. To become a Table Captain, call Michele at (530) 550-8760 x4.



Adopt-a-Stream volunteers taking water samples.

JOEL ERIKSON



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.

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

The Martis Fund

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

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Shelley and Michael Perry
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Restore a Stream – \$1,000 a year for 5 years

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We thank the following donors who have made contributions since October 2010. They have provided resources to find solutions to protect, enhance and restore the Truckee River watershed. Together we are making a difference.

\$1,000-\$2,500

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Truckee River Fund at the Community Foundation of Western Nevada
Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation
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Vail Resorts Echo

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.

you're invited

THE TRUCKEE RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL INVITES YOU TO A PRESENTATION ON MARTIS VALLEY ASSESSMENT



Learn more about our restoration and protection projects.

January 24, 2012 • The Cedar House Sport Hotel, 10918 Brockway Road

6:00 – 7:30 pm: The Martis Valley Assessment Presentation

In 2010, to prioritize additional restoration, we launched a watershed assessment for the Martis Creek watershed. The assessment was finalized in September 2011 and includes a compilation of all existing studies and a recommended set of projects.

Join us for a presentation about potential restoration in the Martis Creek watershed.

Bring a guest or a friend

RSVP by January 19th to Michele at 530-550-8760 or mprestowitz@truckeeriverwc.org

Thank you to our funders, the Bella Vista Foundation and the Martis Fund.

Perazzo Meadows Restoration

Degradation of the Meadows and Streams

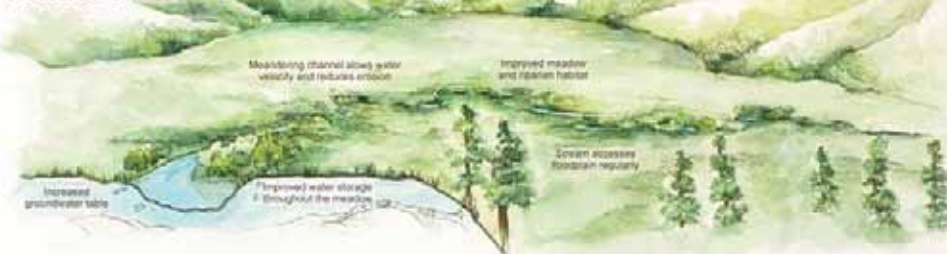
The damaging changes in Perazzo Meadows began in the mid-1800s and continued into the early 1900s. In the era of the Gold Rush, Comstock silver mining and westward expansion land uses included road building, dairy operations, cattle and sheep ranching, and logging. These land uses created many alterations in the Little Truckee River, Perazzo Creek and the adjacent meadows. For example, both streams were diverted off their original courses to manage grazing.

Some 100-150 years later, the streams that were diverted into straighter channels have cut deeply into the meadow's surface and eroded into wide channels. Water in these deep channels can no longer regularly reach the meadow surface. The seasonal groundwater table is lowered. Meadow and riparian vegetation have been replaced by species adapted for drier conditions such as sagebrush. Water quality has declined and fish and bird populations decreased.

Degraded Stream



Restored Stream



Restored to a Healthy Meadow

Restoration in Perazzo Meadows will create a healthy environment for native species in the streams and in the surrounding meadows, keep the water running clear, and increase groundwater levels.

The first steps are to return the Little Truckee River and Perazzo Creek to their natural channels. This is done by blocking off the eroding channels, which forces the water back into its natural channel. Then, during high stream flows, the water will over-top the stream banks and flow onto the meadow surface, re-watering it and recharging the groundwater table. Soil moisture will increase and the existing drier vegetation will be replaced with plants that are adapted to wetter environments. The vegetation will shade the streams and provide valuable habitat for fish, birds and other Sierra Nevada meadow-dependent species, like willow flycatchers and mountain yellow-legged frogs.