



Truckee River Watershed Council

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

TRUCKEE RIVER CURRENTS

WINTER 2016

21st Annual Truckee River Day *It rained, it poured, and you restored!*

It was cold and blustery on Truckee River on October 16, 2016—thank you to the 175 volunteers who came out to work! You helped in taking back The Truckee River’s meadows, creeks, streams and ponds. Home to the bugs, fish, birds and...humans. Our work helps brings them all back—all with commitment from people like you!

MIDDLE MARTIS WETLAND RESTORATION – REVEGETATION

Leaders: Jamie Adams, Shana Behan, Brenda Gilbert, Dave Shaw
Volunteers: 10

In the 1800s, Middle Martis Creek spread out as it entered Martis Valley. When the road was constructed, the creek was confined to a single channel. This led to channel erosion in the Martis Wildlife Area and degradation of the wetlands to the north. The Middle Martis Creek Wetland Restoration project, completed this year, restored flows to the north side of Highway 267, while maintaining flows on the south side. On Truckee River Day, volunteers helped stabilize the bare soil by placing slash, seeding and mulching.

MIDDLE MARTIS WETLAND – BEAVER DAMS



PETER KULCHAWIK

MIDDLE MARTIS WETLAND – REVEGETATION



BRENDA GILBERT

MIDDLE MARTIS WETLAND RESTORATION – BEAVER DAMS

Leaders: Jake Hudson, Peter Kulchawik, Lorenzo Worster
Volunteers: 10

In addition to degradation from Highway 267, Middle Martis Creek was altered by legacy logging and historical land uses. On Truckee River Day, volunteers built “beaver dams” in remnant channels downstream of the restoration site to slow the restored flows, spread the water, and revive the meadow.

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Aligning people and projects to restore and protect the watershed

Join us in taking back The Truckee River's meadows, creeks, streams and ponds. Home to the bugs, fish, birds and...humans.

Our work helps bring them all back—all with commitment from people like you.

Become a Weed Warrior and help prevent and control invasive weeds in the Truckee River watershed. Call Matt at 530-550-8760 x6.

Adopt-A-Stream—it starts with the watershed and monitoring is a critical step!

Chemical, Physical, and Habitat Monitoring takes place four times a year, May through September. Training and equipment are provided. To join a team or adopt a stream, call Eben at 530-550-8760 x7.

Biological Aquatic Monitors collect aquatic bugs and organisms from local streams during the summer and identify collected benthic macroinvertebrates during winter lab sessions. Call Beth at 530-550-8760 x1.

TRWC Ambassadors spread the word about our work. We're looking for ambassadors to invite 10 people to a River Talk to learn more about our watershed. The River Talk is a one-hour virtual tour of a few of our projects. Call Brenda at 530-550-8760 x5.

River-Friendly Landscaping helps homeowners improve water quality by reducing sediment flowing from our yards into creeks and streams. For a free site evaluation of your yard, call Eben at 530-550-8760 x7.

Three simple steps to volunteer with the TRWC

STEP 1 Sign up for our E-newsletter, *Truckee River Currents* at truckeeriverwc.org.

STEP 2 Find a program you're interested in and RSVP to the staff member.

STEP 3 Mark your calendar and join us!



JEANNETTE HALDERMAN

Volunteer Weed Warrior Trisha Ruby removes Musk Thistle along the Truckee River at a Weed Pull event.



KATHY WHITLOW

You can help during the winter too! An Adopt-A-Stream volunteer counts and identifies macroinvertebrates.

Taking back Middle Martis Wetland

For the past 20 years, we've been transforming the health and resiliency of close to 200 sites like the Middle Martis Wetland restoration project. Year by year, project by project, the Watershed Council has worked to restore, preserve and protect precious watershed parcels that sustain The Truckee.

When it comes to commitment to the vibrancy of this amazing place we call home, we're on it. We do it for the bugs, the fish, the fauna and flora. We do it for the bird-watchers, bicyclists, hikers—and all of us. And that includes you.

Restoration projects like our Middle Martis Wetland—which supports 40 acres of meadowland—require multifaceted expertise along with ongoing financial support. And they take the generosity of those who believe what we believe that nature and people can thrive together for generations to come.

The Middle Martis Wetland project is a perfect example of how the Watershed Council is transforming the sustainability of our area. Drive by the site (about five miles south of Truckee on Highway 267) to see for yourself. Right now, we're redirecting the flow of Martis Creek to counteract damage from the construction of Brockway Road (now 267) in the 1800s.

In October 2016, we returned Martis Creek back to its original alluvial fan shape—made up of multiple stream channels as opposed to the single channel—caused by decades of abuse. Now that the creek is on the right course, we are beginning the re-establishment phase. On page 1 of this newsletter, see how volunteers help with this on Truckee River Day.

Incorrectly directed flow of water caused the eroded stream channel below where the project engineers are standing.



BETH CHRISTMAN



BETH CHRISTMAN

Left: Logs were used to stabilize eroding banks and help recreate a natural flow of water.

Below: In addition to installing an irrigation system (circled in blue), we've planted willow stakes (circled in white).



BETH CHRISTMAN

Once restored, the Middle Martis Wetland project will:

- Restore 40 acres of meadow and two acres of riparian wetland
- Reduce erosion to improve water quality
- Improve passage for fish in the existing stream channel
- Reintroduce bugs, birds and beauty to the wetlands
- Restore sedge and willow species to riparian areas south of 267

Partners: *The Watershed Council leads this important coordinated effort in a terrific partnership of Caltrans, Northstar California, Northstar Community Services District, Truckee Donner Land Trust, Truckee Tahoe Airport District, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.*

Funders: *Thank you to all the partners for supporting the project with funding. And thank you to these groups who helped with additional funding: Donors of the Truckee River Watershed Council, American Rivers, CA Dept Fish and Wildlife, CA Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, Liberty Energy, The Martis Fund, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Overall Family Foundation, and the Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation.*

Truckee River Day

Continued from page 1

DRY CREEK RESTORATION



MARILYN DISBROW

DRY CREEK RESTORATION

Leaders: Marilyn Disbrow, Steve Disbrow, Susi Urie, Randy Westmoreland

Volunteers: 12

The Dry Creek watershed, home to the community of Russel Valley, was heavily logged starting in the 1800s. This led to significant impacts on the meadows with gullies up to 6 feet deep. The Watershed Council and the U.S. Forest Service – Tahoe National Forest started large scale restoration in 2015 to restore these meadows. The project eliminated eroding gullies in the meadows and fixed instream erosion along Dry Creek. This year on Truckee River Day volunteers seeded and mulched one of the recently restored meadows.

PROSSER CREEK TRAILHEAD



JANET ZIPKIN

LITTLE TRUCKEE RIVER RESTORATION

Leaders: Karyn Erikson, Jim Herzman, Zach Martindale, Jim Schmidt, Leora Sapir, Sam Sedillo, Deborah Ulrich

Volunteers: 22

The Little Truckee River between Boca and Stampede Reservoirs supports a population of wild trout. Trout Unlimited and the U.S. Forest Service – Tahoe National Forest completed a restoration project in 2015 to increase fish habitat, but there were still erosion problems on access routes. On Truckee River Day volunteers re-routed a trail, installed water bars, and revegetated a former road. This reduces sedimentation and erosion, and improves access. Volunteers from Trout Unlimited and the Tahoe Truckee Fly Fishers worked at this site.

JOHNSON CANYON RESTORATION



EBEN SWAIN

JOHNSON CANYON RESTORATION

Leaders: Eben Swain, Kincade Stirek

Volunteers: 10

Johnson Canyon is a tributary to Donner Lake. The watershed is steep and naturally erosive, with a long history of logging, grazing, and wildfire. Today poorly constructed roads intercept drainages causing severe erosion. With the Truckee Donner Land Trust, the Watershed Council implemented a large scale restoration project in 2014. This year on Truckee River Day volunteers completed additional seeding and mulching of the restored areas, and removed invasive weeds. This helps restore natural features and stabilize bare soils.

LITTLE TRUCKEE RIVER RESTORATION



SAM SEDILLO

PROSSER CREEK TRAILHEAD

Leaders: Joe Flannery, John Groom, Robie Litchfield, Allison Pedley, Todd Rawlinson, Karen Sessler, Kathy Whitlow, Fred Zabel

Volunteers: 45

The parking area and trail head for the Commemorative Overland Emigrant Trail near Prosser Creek and Highway 89 caused natural resource and safety concerns. So, the U.S. Forest Service – Tahoe National Forest opened a new trail head on Hobart Mills Road. On Truckee River Day the new trailhead was dedicated and volunteers helped with seeding and mulching, building a connector trail, and installing stormwater drainages. This reduces erosion, improves habitat, and limits user impacts. Volunteers from the Sodegren Group and Truckee Trails Foundation participated at this site.

TAHOE DONNER – TREE PLANTING

Leaders: Tamara Anderson, Ben Gwerder, Bill Houdyschell

Volunteers: 30

Sugar pines were once widespread throughout the Truckee River watershed. However, their populations have been severely reduced due to logging starting as early as the 1800s. The Watershed Council, the Sugar Pine Foundation, and Tahoe Donner partnered to plant several hundred seedlings of sugar pines and Jeffrey pines to help establish a forested landscape on a previously bare lot. Volunteers from the Friends of Tahoe Donner Trails participated at this site.

MARTIS WILDLIFE AREA



NICOLE LUTKEMULLER

MARTIS WILDLIFE AREA

Leaders: Nicole Lutkemuller, Jacqui Zink

Volunteers: 5

Martis Wildlife Area is a very popular walking area, especially the user-created Martis Creek Trail. Starting in 2004, volunteers 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. On Truckee River Day, volunteers performed maintenance on both the new and old trails.

TAHOE DONNER – TREE PLANITING



TAMARA ANDERSON

ELIZABETHTOWN MEADOW RESTORATION – REVEGETATION

Leaders: John Eaton, Jeannette Halderman, Amy Horne, Jeff Glazner, Rachel McCullough, Garrett McCullough

Volunteers: 24

The Elizabethtown Meadows are impacted by logging and roads. The unmaintained road network was capturing water flow, leading to severe erosion, wetland degradation, and sedimentation to Middle Martis Creek. The Truckee Donner Land Trust and the Watershed Council worked in partnership to restore the meadow, improve drainage, and decommission roads. On Truckee River Day, volunteers worked to spread seed and mulch to help stabilize bare soil, and restore meadow and wetland habitat.

ELIZABETHTOWN MEADOW RESTORATION – REVEGETATION



JEFF GLAZNER

Thank you to the donors of the Truckee River Watershed Council, Northstar California, Patagonia, and the Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce for their support of Truckee River Day.

For more information on our Truckee River Day Projects, contact Michele Prestowitz at 530-550-8760 x4.

Donors to the Truckee River Watershed Council

We thank the following donors who made contributions since November 2015. They provide resources to find solutions to protect, enhance and restore the Truckee River watershed. Together we are making a difference. (Please see page 7 for members of the Together for the Truckee Society.)

\$1,000 – \$5,000

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If we missed or misidentified you or your organization, please let us know: 530-550-8760 x5.



These donors pledged a minimum of \$1,000 a year for five years toward the long-term sustainability of the Truckee River Watershed Council. They're members of the Together for the Truckee Society. We deeply appreciate their confidence in our restoration and protection projects.

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

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| The Martis Fund | Tahoe Mountain Resorts |
| Northstar California / Vail Resorts | Environmental Fund |
| Gail and Rick Stephens | Cathy and Tom Van Berkem |

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

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Dave Giacomini | San Francisco Fly Casting Club |
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Restore a Stream – \$1,000 a year for 5 years

- | | |
|---|--|
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All in!

Leadership Matching Gift

These donors demonstrated their extraordinary commitment to the TRWC with their early and generous contributions totaling \$39,000 of our 2016 River Breakfast goal of \$100,000.

- Coachland RV Park
- Leslie and Andy Price
- Marti and Michael Park
- Gail and Rick Stephens
- Tahoe Mountain Resorts Foundation
- Cathy and Tom Van Berkem
- Chuck and Janet Zipkin

Donors are listed in alphabetical order.

PLANNED GIVING

Consider planned giving to create a natural legacy protecting the Truckee River watershed for the next generation. It's in your nature and ours! For more information, call Brenda at 530-550-8760 x5.



STEFAN MCLEOD PHOTOGRAPHY

If we missed or misidentified you or your organization, please let us know: 530-550-8760 x5.

Enhancing The Truckee's first 4 miles

F4M—we're on it!

The first four miles of The Truckee River—which flows from Tahoe City to Bear Creek—draws rafters, kayakers, swimmers, anglers and more to its gentle waters. But because there are no formal access points, people have been entering the water at all points, all up and down the banks. And doing it for decades.

This ongoing ingress/egress, of course, has resulted in serious stream bank erosion, loss of habitat, vegetation die-off—even safety concerns. Once thriving stream banks have been literally hollowed out, accelerating massive erosion and altering the flow of the river. All of which is exactly the kind of challenge the Truckee River Watershed Council thrives on. And they're on it.

The First 4 Mile (F4M) project was designed to stop erosion and excess sedimentation through stream bank stabilization and habitat restoration. The project enhanced approximately 1,200 feet of floodplain and stream bank include installing natural barricades like boulders, dense vegetation, vegetation with prickles (roses), log jetties and interpretive signage.

In addition to enhancing and protecting the river bank and its access points, the F4M Project restored habitat for native species, both aquatic and terrestrial, and controlled and prevented invasive species. The work also improves water quality up and down this threatened stretch of The Truckee.

Pre-installation monitoring started in May 2015 and the project was installed in September and October 2016, and it:

- Restored an acre of meadow and riparian habitat right along The Truckee's banks
- Re-established habitats for native fish
- Provided four environmentally-compatible staging areas for recreational users
- Stabilized 1,200 feet of stream bank with logs, root wads, and boulders
- Re-established 3,000 square-feet of meadow plants
- Improved water quality in the Truckee River by reducing erosion and sedimentation

Keep an eye on the First 4 Mile progress bar on our website to track the project's development.



KYLE MATTHEWS

The Watershed Council partnered on this exciting project with the Tahoe City Public Utility District (TCPUD) and the U.S. Forest Service.

Additional funding comes from Truckee River Watershed Council, which includes donations from Truckee residents, vacation homeowners, outdoor enthusiasts and people like you. Grants from the California Resources Agency, the Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation, and the Community Foundation of Western Nevada Truckee River Fund also contributed to this project.

The Truckee River streambank at Restoration Area 9 received boulders, root wads, and willow stakes. Sod and container plants were also used.



**90%
FUNDED**



**Start
date**



**Restoring
meadow**



**Planting
vegetation**



**Thriving
wildlife**



**Completion
date**