

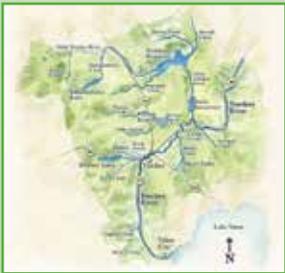


TRUCKEE RIVER CURRENTS

PUBLISHED BY THE TRUCKEE RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

WINTER 2012

Staying in Touch



Learn what's happening in the watershed all year long! Visit truckeeriverwc.org for program and project information, or to subscribe to our weekly e-news and blog.

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NOTES & QUOTES

The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction.

~ Rachel Carson

More than 500 Volunteers Help Out at the 17th Annual Truckee River Day

COLDSTREAM CANYON PONDS

Leaders: Cyndie Walck, Jeannette Halderman, Jeff Glazner

Volunteers: 15

There are a series of ponds in Coldstream Canyon created by gravel mining. Although mining ceased at the site in the 1980s, little reclamation was done. Historically, the overall quality and quantity of the vegetation has been poor largely due to a lack of topsoil. The site was also commonly used as a 4WD "mudding" area, which further hampered the ability of wetland plants to establish.

In partnership with California State Parks, TRWC implemented a wetland creation/restoration project in 2008 at one of the Coldstream ponds, blocking access with large boulders and revegetating the area. We used the opportunity to test a series of different soil treatments to see which was most effective in promoting plant growth. After monitoring the site for 4 years, we have determined which treatments were most effective (compost), and which were least effective (wood chips). In 2012, volunteers replanted the areas that did not experience adequate plant growth.

EMIGRANT TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Leaders: Kevin Starr, Bob Holland, Jim Herzman

Volunteers: 10

The Emigrant Trail is a very popular hiking, biking, and running trail near Truckee. A portion of the trail goes through a wetland near the Donner Camp picnic area. Over recent years, drainage through the wetland has been captured along a portion of the existing trail, keeping the trail wet and impacting water quality.

On Truckee River Day, volunteers improved the drainage of this section by installing culverts and raising the trail surface to help prevent water from running across the trail. Water quality and adjacent wetlands will benefit.

LITTLE TRUCKEE RIVER RESTORATION

Leaders: David Lass, Deborah Urich, Courtney Hart, Robie Litchfield, Sarah Trebilcock

Volunteers: 60

The Little Truckee River between Boca and Stampede Reservoirs supports a wide diversity of aquatic life, including a healthy trout population. However, this also means that the area is heavily used. A series of user-created trails has developed over the years, many of which are redundant and causing erosion.

On Truckee River Day, a group of volunteers helped to eliminate redundant trails, revegetate the unnecessary trails, and planted willows and other native vegetation along eroding stream banks. The project will help benefit the fish population by improving water quality and providing additional streambank cover. Several different groups helped at this site: Trout Unlimited, Tahoe Truckee Fly Fishers, the Sodegren Memorial group, and the UNR chapter of the American Fisheries Society.

Continues on page 4

Little Truckee River Restoration



STEFAN MCLEOD



Phone: 530-550-8760
Fax: 530-725-4407

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 8568
Truckee, CA 96162

Physical Address:
10418 Donner Pass Road, Suite B
Truckee, CA
info@truckeeriverwc.org
www.truckeeriverwc.org

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Everyone Can Help the Truckee!

*Do you love the river?
Are you looking for something more that you can do? There are many ways to help the Watershed Council protect, enhance, and restore the Truckee River watershed.*



JEANNETTE HALDERMAN

Above: Weed Warrior Trisha Ruby removes Musk Thistle along the Truckee River at our June 23, 2012 Weed Pull event.

Right: TRWC's Kathy Whitlow, volunteer Anne Liston and TRWC's Beth Christman greet and check people in at the 2012 River Breakfast.

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, contact Jeannette at (530) 550-8760 x6.*

Join Adopt A Stream Aquatic Monitors

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. *To volunteer, 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. 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.*

Become a Table Captain

Host a table at our annual fundraising event, The River Breakfast. It is free, 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 for contributions, 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.*



TROY CORLISS



Mother Nature Highlights Erosion Problems

River-Friendly Landscaping can help with free site evaluations and rebates

Downed trees and branches, localized flooding, mud and debris overflowing storm drains... these are just a few of the damage reports coming out of the Glenshire-Devonshire area of Truckee after a brief but intense hailstorm this past August.

Erosion is constantly occurring. Fortunately, it's rare to see it happening so quickly. RFL Conservation Assistant Erin Casey remarked, "This is the kind of erosion damage you see over the course of several years. With this storm, it happened in a matter of minutes."

Homeowners who wouldn't normally think about the impacts of erosion from their property got a wake-up call as they considered what they could do to repair the damage and help control future erosion. Homeowner Fernando Garcia had this to share upon receipt of his customized site evaluation and treatment workbook: "Erin, this is incredible! Right after you left we had two major downpours with large amount of hail. Dirt washed into the areas you predicted and several grooves were left around the decks. I am very impressed with your work and I will start fixing these issues. Thanks to you and your team." Recommendations made to the Garcias include stabilizing slopes with mulch and native grasses as well as armoring under elevated decks.

The River-Friendly Landscape program is a combined effort of the Truckee River Watershed Council and the Sierra Nevada Alliance. All California properties within the Truckee River watershed are eligible for a FREE site evaluation and potential rebates. (Properties in the Lake Tahoe Basin are excluded due to the mandatory program in effect there.)

Approved applicants may receive a rebate of up to \$400 (while funding is available) to help offset the costs of installing suggested erosion control measures. Site evaluations for potential soil erosion sources are free and can usually be completed within ten days, weather permitting. Sign up today and if we can't evaluate your property before the snow flies, you'll be first on our list come spring! Call Andy Otto to schedule your FREE site evaluation today: (530) 550-8760 x 3.

Funding for this project comes from the State Water Resources Control Board.



ERIN CASEY

Erosion from the August hailstorm deposited large amounts of sediment on the existing lawn on this property in Glenshire. Without measures to capture and convey runoff from local properties, sediment can have a significant, negative impact on our creeks and streams.

Why Monitor Water Quality?

Changes in water quality can signal problems upstream. Decline of stream health can snowball, affecting a wide community of plants and animals.

If trees on a stream are downed and more sunlight on the water causes the temperature to rise, aquatic plants might die, leaving bare banks to erode. The channel can deepen, leaving plants high and dry. The eroded sediment can travel downstream, which may increase sediment load.

The Watershed Council's Adopt-A-Stream volunteers look for these situations by monitoring our creeks. They measure temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, as well as observing and recording the stream's physical characteristics and populations of water insects (macro invertebrates)—all of which tell us about the health of river life. Teams go to the same stream several times a year. We compare the data from trip to trip and year to year.

You can help with this important work by adopting a stream. The Truckee River Watershed Council works in the 35-mile stretch of Truckee River that runs from Tahoe City to the California/Nevada state line, and all the tributaries that feed into this stretch of the river. We have 12 Adopt-A-Stream teams, but we'd like to monitor at least 23 sites at area streams. Call us to volunteer or to sponsor a team: (530) 550-8760.



TRUCKEE RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

Volunteers monitor the health of the stream.

TRUCKEE RIVER DAY

Continued from page 1

PERAZZO MEADOWS RESTORATION

Leaders: Randy Westmoreland, Tony Lashbrook, Jan Lashbrook
Volunteers: 20

The Perazzo Meadows system was intensely used and modified during the gold rush and immigration 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 a serious degradation of the stream channel and increased 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. 2012 was the fourth year that volunteers assisted with the revegetation effort at Perazzo Meadows. Each year volunteers focus on a different site within the project. Their work has made a big difference in the revegetation success.

SUGAR PINE PLANTING

Leaders: Maria Mircheva, Erin Casey, Leora Sapir, Kathy Whitlow
Volunteers: 50

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 300 rust-resistant sugar pine seedlings in Donner Memorial State Park to help with the recovery of this native pine species.

Sugar Pine Planting



KATHY WHITLOW

MARTIS WILDLIFE AREA TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Leaders: Jacqui Zink, Jake Hudson, Rachel Rosenberg, Ellie Hyatt, Dan Warren

Volunteers: 15
 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 were located 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 2012, volunteers performed this additional maintenance. A group of volunteers from the Ritz-Carlton participated at this site.

KYBURZ FENCE REMOVAL

Leaders: Roberta Lim
Volunteers: 5

On Truckee River Day in 1999, volunteers revegetated a small stream channel in Kyburz Flat and the US Forest Service installed a fence to protect the area. The revegetation was very successful; the streambank is fully protected with willows and sedges. This year, Truckee River Day volunteers removed the fence, fully completing the restoration project!

TAHOE DONNER TREE PLANTING

Leaders: Sarah Collamer and other Tahoe Donner Forestry Staff
Volunteers: 25

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.

BOCA ROUTE CLOSURE

Leaders: Karie Wiltshire, Paul Smith, Bill Wendin, Other Truckee High School teachers
Volunteers: 85

An illegal Off-Highway Vehicle route has been established through an arm of Boca Reservoir, impacting water quality. In 2003, students successfully closed off half of the road by blocking it with logs, slash, and mulch. In 2012, a large group of Truckee High School students completed the restoration work by blocking off the other half of the road with slash and mulch.



Martis Wildlife Area Trail Maintenance

LAUREN SCHAAKE

SQUAW CREEK PEBBLE COUNTS

Leaders: Mike Liquori, Ed Heneveld

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. 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. Volunteers from the Friends of Squaw Creek as well as the Tahoe Baikal Institute helped with this project.

MARTIS DRAINAGE REPAIR

Leaders: David Shaw, Lauren Cleeves

Volunteers: 15

Over the winter of 2010-2011, erosion occurred at an area on the hillside above Martis Lake, forming a gully and depositing sediment onto a wetland area adjacent to Martis Lake. Past 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. The work they started in 2011 prevented further erosion over the winter of 2011 – 2012. This year, Truckee River Day volunteers finished restoring the drainage by installing additional check dams and re-seeding. A group of volunteers from the UNR Ecohydrology Club helped at this site.

TRUCKEE RIVER EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL REMOVAL

Leaders: Theresa Crimmens, Andy Otto, Chris Otto

Volunteers: 20

The invasive aquatic weed Eurasian watermilfoil can be found in the Truckee River. Besides interfering with swimming, fishing and boating, this invasive species can damage a natural aquatic habitat and threaten the natural ecosystem. Watermilfoil makes it challenging for larger fish to hunt, reduces native plants that waterfowl and other fish rely on for food and degrades water quality by interfering with the natural cycling of nutrients in the water.

Truckee River Eurasian Watermilfoil Removal



STEFAN MCLEOD PHOTOGRAPHY

Sagehen Fish House Repair



JEFF BROWN

SAGEHEN FISH HOUSE REPAIR

Leaders: Dan Saylor, Jeff Brown, Faerthen Felix

Volunteers: 10

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 constructed channel require periodic maintenance. On Truckee River Day, volunteers helped to perform that maintenance by rebuilding the channel wall. A group of volunteers from the UNR Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society helped at this site.

MARTIS LAKE BARRIER MOVE

Leaders: Phil Caterino, Tamara Anderson

Volunteers: 20

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 cut off sunlight from the plants, causing them to 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.

TRUCKEE REVEGETATION

Leaders: Rachel McCullough, Garrett McCullough, Shana Behan, Jamie Adams, Shelley Harris, Jane Lufkin, Kim Nolan, Mike Wolf, Robin Short, Jim Schmidt

Volunteers: 90

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. A group of volunteers from the Truckee River Winery participated at this site.

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We thank the donors below who made contributions since November 2011. Together we are making a difference.

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The donors below 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

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\$5,000 a year for 5 years**
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If we missed or misidentified you or your organization, please call and let us know. Our phone number is 530-550-8760.

WHO'S HELPING THE WATERSHED?

The Zipkins—Getting Involved in Important Work

We appreciate the generosity of the Watershed Council's many volunteers and donors. There are many ways to help, and it will take everything we've got to return the watershed to healthy function and to protect it into the next generations. Below we are pleased to introduce the Zipkins, who are trying to do it all.

"The watershed is so important, and Truckee River Watershed Council is one of the most important organizations in our community," declare Janet and Charles Zipkin.

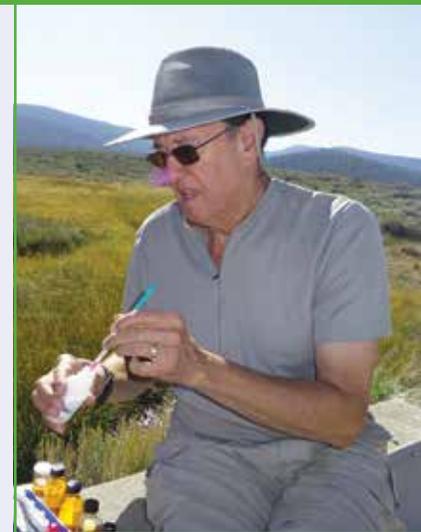
Chuck explains, "When we volunteer in the field and when we come to presentations, we have so many 'aha' experiences of how things work. You tie it all together—the science, the business. Each project contributes to the health of the watershed, and it's really fun to see the results!"

Janet and Chuck are involved in pretty much every program the Watershed Council can think of. They have volunteered with Adopt-A-Stream since 2008, and feel like they "own" their stretch of Martis Creek by the bridge. They have T-shirts from Truckee River Day for at least four years—a point of pride amongst our participants. They joined Weed Walks and Weed Pulls this year. They signed up for River Friendly Landscaping, and already implemented recommendations to reduce soil erosion on their property. And they are donors.

"Keep coming up with more ideas, and we'll do them," they tell us. So we asked them to be Ambassadors to help spread the word about our work.

The Zipkins are involved in numerous other organizations in our community. Janet is Vice President of the Truckee Donner Land Trust, sits on the Cancer Advisory Council, and volunteers for Tahoe Forest Hospital. They are supporters of the Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation's Queen of Hearts, Sierra College Speakers Series, Community Chorus, and Measure C.

"There are lots of organizations around, but it's the collaborative perspective—how well you work with other groups—that makes you even more valuable."



Chuck Zipkin monitors water quality at East Martis Creek while Janet Zipkin takes care of the camera work.

Project Update: Coldstream Canyon Floodplain Restoration

Construction began in mid-August on the Coldstream Canyon Floodplain Restoration project. The heavy earth-moving equipment has come and gone, transforming severely eroded stream banks (some up to 20 feet high!) into more sustainable slopes.

The amount of material removed totals a staggering 4,995 tons; that's about 250 truckloads! This work will result in the addition of 0.8 acres of riparian habitat and provide a significant decrease in erosion from the streambanks. Reduced erosion means improved water quality—less fine sediment will reach Cold Creek and the Truckee River. To keep the newly graded slopes stable through this coming winter and spring, some initial revegetation was completed this year. The final replanting of the project area will occur on Truckee River Day 2013.

Before: An eroding bank in the project area before work began.



JEFF FISHER

During: Heavy equipment was brought in to re-grade the project area, moving earth, rocks, trees and other material.



BETH CHRISTMAN

After: The eroding bank in the "before" shot has been re-graded to a sustainable angle and replanted with willows. Note the significant expansion of floodplain area.



BETH CHRISTMAN



What Does the Future Hold?

From the desk of Lisa Wallace, Executive Director, Truckee River Watershed Council

What does the future hold for the Truckee River watershed? Looking ahead, I am inspired by the way the River is featured in the Town of Truckee the way it is Reno. When all the industrial sites from Tahoe City to Pyramid Lake have been *successfully* relocated. When the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout is truly at home in Pyramid Lake and in the Little Truckee River. This is the vision that keeps the Truckee River Watershed Council going, that keeps me going.

We bring the community together for the Truckee—to protect, enhance and restore the watershed.

- In restoration, we've healed over 1,000 acres of meadow and many miles of stream. We're particularly proud of the Coldstream Canyon Floodplain Restoration project (see story this page). The site continues to mature, improving water quality, water supply, and habitat for fish and wildlife.
- In protecting our precious streams before they're damaged—over 260 people joined River Friendly Landscaping to prevent soil erosion and water run-off from their yards. We have kept an estimated 31.2 tons of soil in yards and out of streams.
- On Truckee River Day, at Weed Pulls, and during Adopt-a-Stream days, kids, teens, and adults volunteered to remove invasive weeds, to plant seedlings and willows, to compost and mulch, and to help us spread the word about helping the Truckee River.

We are committed to restoring and protecting our watershed because, while it is in trouble, restoration is achievable. What that means is that the Watershed Council—with you and our partners—needs to triple the number of projects we do every year. We are only doing 2-3 a year right now. We need to get to 5-6 annually. Projects such as Sagehen Creek east of Highway 89; Goose Meadows at 89 south; 10 projects in Martis Valley; Squaw Creek meadow restoration; West River Street; Pole Creek; the rest of Trout Creek; Coldstream Canyon; the tributaries and wetlands of Donner Lake. We know these places. We know they need help.

And we also know from successful past projects that these places are savable. We want our river and streams to be drink-able, swim-able, and fish-able... that is what will make our watershed more resilient to future damage.