

# Trinity County Collaborative Group

“ You have our commitment to craft and work with all of you to figure out precisely where we can reduce fuels and risk, and at the same time, create marketable timber opportunities ” - Sect. of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack

## United for a Better Future

The Trinity County Collaborative Group (TCCG) is a model of what can be accomplished by a partnership of open-minded citizens, receptive government agencies, and private landowners.

Through the hard work and dedication of all members, TCCG has crafted a common mission and is building the trust and relationships that make our projects successful, our Collaborative sustainable, and our forests and county stronger.

### OUR BEGINNING

Long-standing controversy and impasse over public and private forest management in Trinity County, wildfire risks and impacts, water use and rights, and the decline of a natural resource-based economy demanded a collaborative strategy. County citizens and leadership recognized that we needed to develop collaborative solutions.

In 2005, Trinity citizens launched the very successful Weaverville Community Forest. This award-winning effort is a partnership between Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Forest Service (USFS), and Trinity County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD.) The partnership is collaboratively managing 13,000 acres of federal lands.

Building on that success, in fall 2012, Trinity County Board of Supervisors (TCBOS) approved the formation of a natural resources and economic development advisory team. That winter, a group of national, state, regional, and local agencies, including Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack, participated in meetings with Trinity County representatives and citizens to frame a path towards an improved economic, social, and ecological condition built around land stewardship.

One identified priority was formation of a countywide collaborative group to address land management in Trinity County. In spring 2013, the Trinity County Collaborative Group was formed.

### THE COLLABORATIVE TEAM AND PARTNERS

The success and effectiveness of our efforts is the product of tireless participation by fifty-five varied and passionate stakeholders, including land owners, local and regional conservation groups (SAFE, CBF, Conservation Congress), business owners, Sierra Pacific Industries, Trinity River Lumber Company, Fire Safe Councils, local NGOs, The TCRCD, USFS (Shasta-Trinity and Six Rivers), BLM, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), TCBOS, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Collaborative priorities fall into overlapping categories: federal land management, forest stewardship, fire, economic development, ecological restoration, watershed management, recreation and tourism, infrastructure and communications, education and training, and agriculture.

For two years, TCCG met monthly to craft its mission and goals, develop consensus, and to work on landscape assessment, project prioritization, and time-critical projects. The full group now meets quarterly with active subgroup meetings independently pursuing collaborative priorities around our zones of agreement.



### Trinity County Quick Facts

- Population: 13,020
- Located in the Klamath Mountains of Northwest California
- 3,208 square miles (larger than Delaware)
- 72% of land managed by USFS, 4% BLM
- 5% of land available for development
- Unemployment: 10.5%; Poverty 19.2%

### Key Challenges

- Efficiently planning projects that restore fire resilience while protecting Threatened Species
- Optimizing project economics while maximizing local benefits
- Scaling up project planning and implementation

### Our Solution - Priority Landscape Projects

#### Collaborative Roads and Plantations Pilot Project

- Begin with 3,000 acres in 2015-16
- Expanding to the full project area of 30,000+ acres, along all Trinity County major road systems, beginning in 2016-17

#### Red Fir Restoration Project

- Approx. 1,400 acres

#### Westside Plantation Thin

- Over 5,500 acres NEPA-ready



# Our Pathway to Success

Trinity Collaborative members share with each other a rich experience of past county-level collaborative efforts. Facilitators help minimize the emphasis on individual identities and interest group issues to focus on areas of agreement. This professionalism enables members to embrace a shared-vision that is constructed through meetings, field trips, and the TCCG charter.

## TIME FOR ACTION

Current forest conditions jeopardize critical wildlife habitat, watershed health, recreation, and public safety. It is time to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration and stewardship of public and private lands in Trinity County.

While Trinity County citizens are reaching new consensus on forest management across ideological divides, federal land managers are facing reduced budgets with fewer specialists to perform project planning and analysis work. This dwindling capacity threatens progress to accelerate restoration and stewardship work.

## BUILDING ON SUCCESSES

TCCG's first project addressed wildfire risk and the local economy. TCCG participated in the USFS Stafford Fire determination of emergency status for a restoration and salvage project. With consensus endorsement and no litigation, the local mill bought the fire-killed timber, and local workers continue to implement risk reduction and restoration projects to this day.

From there, the TCCG helped complete a National Forest Foundation, Community Capacity and Land Stewardship grant-funded project to develop a set of assessments of current county landscape, recreation, and workforce conditions. With that data, frameworks and analysis tools were developed to support planning, prioritization, and capacity development.

Additional TCCG subgroup successes include the on-going multi-use Trinity Lake trail system, the Bowerman Ranch restoration, and Trinity Lake access enhancements, while the agriculture opportunities assessment has been successfully completed.

## GETTING TO LANDSCAPE-SCALE

The TCCG and land management partners at the USFS, NRCS and BLM are looking to scale up the accumulation of Collaborative successes. By aligning strategic projects, the partners will build more ambitious projects that affect fire on the landscape, protect communities, and build economic activity and opportunity.

The USFS' Red Fir Restoration project will restore this unique forest community atop South Fork Mountain following long-term decline from disease. Several "Fire-Resilient Community" projects are in the works that blend community protection, ecological restoration, and all-lands strategies. The Westside Plantation Thin project, at over 5,000 acres, is an ambitious first step towards restoring resilience on over 30,000 acres of maturing plantations across the Trinity Forest. BLM's Grass Valley project marks the start of a watershed-scale stewardship agreement with the TCRCO that will protect threatened coho salmon habitat. Combined, these projects represent multiple points of collaborative agreement that are scaling up for meaningful impacts.

The TCCG's most ambitious project yet is the Collaborative Roads and Plantations Pilot Project. Hatched by a TCCG subgroup with strong forest industry and environmental leadership, the project aims to prove key concepts around NEPA planning efficiency, operational efficiency and project economics, and minimizing resource impacts while maximizing treatment efficacy and longevity.

Based on the TCCG's emerging successes and consensus, we hope to raise the needed funds to fully implement our strategies for creating and maintaining a resilient landscape in Trinity County and beyond.

## Our Vision

Serve as an inclusive and successful natural resources, land management and economic development advisory group that supports safe and vibrant communities, thriving economies, and ecological resilience, through sustainable resource use and stewardship practices.

## Our Mission

To create and recommend for implementation, natural resources, land management and economic development strategies driven by local values and goals that:

- acknowledge the interrelation between community, economy and ecology
- provide solutions for sustainable and resilient economic and ecological practices and projects
- foster a culture of stewardship
- improve our community, economy and ecology
- create a better place for future generations

## Our Goals

- Create local capacity for an engaged and educated community
- Promote practices and projects that contribute to public safety and fire resilience
- Develop a strong economic base
- Advise the Trinity County Board of Supervisors on practices and projects that fit the vision and mission of the Trinity Collaborative
- Work with agencies and partners on designing and implementing projects

## The Trinity County Collaborative Group



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