



Getting Together, How Collaboration Led to a Stewardship Contract

A California resource conservation district known for leading the way on forest health activities has received Bureau of Land Management approval for a 1,000-acre stewardship contract.

The Trinity Resource Conservation District received approval for the Weaverville Community Forest Stewardship Project this year. The district is working with BLM's state office to set out a work plan. "The goal is a cooperative agreement between the Resource Conservation District and BLM this spring, and then implementing work this summer," says Pat Frost, district manager.

Receipts generated by stewardship contracts are reserved for future stewardship work, notes BLM State Forester Glenn Lahti. "We think there will be merchantable timber, and receipts would come back into a contributed account that we can use for future projects."



The Trinity Resource Conservation District in northern California hosted meetings to identify resource goals for a stewardship contract on the Weaverville Community Forest.

Identified projects in the Weaverville area would be priorities, with nearby watersheds another choice. When stewardship contracts generate receipts, "We can be doing restoration work in future years that would have ended up costing money," Lahti says. A local sawmill will be called upon to handle the saw logs, and that will support local businesses.

The conservation district in northwestern California will use its own forest fuels reduction crew and private contractors to accomplish the work. It has been active in on-the-ground fuels reduction work and also technical assistance, outreach

and education about hazardous fuels and protecting private lands. The district also led efforts to establish a community wildfire protection plan for Trinity County. It works closely with other community groups, including the Trinity Resource Conservation and Development Council.

Named for the nearby community of Weaverville, the project will achieve multiple resource goals identified during a community meeting in May 2004 and two others held in November.

The Trinity Resource Conservation & Development office hosted the meetings. The May session was attended by citizens, county supervisors and planning staff, representatives of the resource conservation district and two BLM staff members, including Assistant Field Manager Francis Berg. Ray Ledgerwood of Spokane, Washington, a professional

facilitator, helped the group to establish goals, identify issues and conflicts, and evaluate possible ownership and management options.

On the resource front, there was general consensus on pursuing community-based management of the forest lands, including view shed protection, fuels reduction, timber management, and wildlife habitat improvement -including fisheries, firewood collection, and enhancing recreational and educational opportunities.

Other potential benefits identified at the community meeting included providing saw logs to a local mill and otherwise providing economic benefits to the community, jobs for local citizens, research opportunities, expansion of the local trail system, management of unstable slopes, retention of archeological values and providing a laboratory for local schools and universities.

At the suggestion of BLM Field Manager Steve Anderson at one of the follow-up meetings, the district worked with the agency to implement a stewardship contract for management of the 1,000 acres of public land to meet community and resource management goals.

The local community has shown a strong interest in the lands, and local collaboration has been high. The community has been clear about how it would like BLM to manage and restore these lands.

That makes the stewardship contract a good fit, says Frost. “This vision now can be integrated into a multi-year stewardship agreement that will lay out a work plan with specific projects for the next couple of years and longer-term restoration and management goals. It’s all about building a strong link between the people of Weaverville and the natural resources that brought them here in the first place,” he says. “Ultimately, I see our school children participating in this land stewardship through our Conservation Legacy Program and creating a link to future generations of our community.”

BLM is working on eight stewardship contracts in California, says Lahti. He likes the possibility. “It extends our workforce,” he says of efforts like the Weaverville Community Forest project.

To find out more about the Weaverville Community Forest Stewardship project, visit the district’s Web site at www.tcrd.net/. Click on Weaverville Community Forest on the home page.

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