



# YUROK TRIBE - WATERSHED RESTORATION

## WATERSHED RESTORATION DEPARTMENT

### ANNUAL REPORT May 2008

#### STAFF

**Walt Lara III, Project Coordinator/Acting Director**

**Richard Nelson, Project Coordinator/Heavy Equipment Operator**

**Larry Proctor, Tech II/Heavy Equipment Operator**

**Dewey Myers, Tech I**

**Eugena Stacona, Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper**

Additional staff is hired during the summer months. The number varies from year to year but averages about 3-6 temporary employees.

#### ***Mission Statement***

The Yurok Tribe's long-term Watershed Restoration plan aims to protect and restore native anadromous fish populations by focusing on strategies that provide the greatest benefits for the ecosystems that support these native fish, as well as the Tribal members who depended on these resources since time immemorial.

#### ***Goals***

It is the goal of the Yurok Tribe to restore aquatic spawning habitat conditions within the Lower Klamath River tributaries to a level that supports viable self-sustaining populations of native salmonids.

#### ***Objectives***

Protect and Restore Tribal Watersheds.

1. Prioritize watersheds for upslope restoration;
2. Develop watershed restoration projects;
3. Acquire funding to implement watershed restoration projects;
4. Implement upslope watershed restoration projects annually;
5. Monitor the effectiveness of watershed restoration work.

Reduce Aquatic habitat Impacts:

1. Minimize the future risks of erosion entering streams;
2. Reduce slope and road water diversion problems;
3. Prevent future failure of non-maintained roads and culverts;
4. Upgrade or decommission existing roads;

5. Reduce the impacts of land-use management.

Provide Jobs and Training to Tribal Members:

1. Obtain funding to support Training and Job Development;
2. Seek seasonal and full-time opportunities;
3. Develop watershed restoration teams composed of:
  - Site supervisor
  - Excavator Operator
  - Dozer Operator
  - Any future equipment operators (dump trucks, etc.)
4. Ensure that tribal members have opportunities to apply learned or existing skills;
5. Maintain an annual watershed restoration budget.

Build Working Relationships:


1. Maintain a good working relationship with Private and Public entities;
2. Seek long-term cooperative agreements and funding;
3. Participate in coordination and planning sessions within and outside the Tribe.


#### ***Project Background***

In the early 1990's, the California Coastal Conservancy began working with Simpson Timber company, now called Green Diamond Resource Company, the Yurok Tribe and other entities to build the foundation for a common effort in fisheries and watershed restoration. The Conservancy funded a study that confirmed the main cause of impaired habitat in Lower Klamath tributaries was sedimentation resulting from intensive logging and road building on naturally fragile slopes in the 1950's to 1970's.

In 1995, the Lower Klamath Restoration Partnership was formed, composed of representatives of the Yurok Tribe, Green Diamond Resource Company (formally Simpson Resource Company), and the California State Coastal Conservancy to facilitate a coordinated approach to watershed restoration planning. This partnership was formed to perform three goals simultaneously: 1) improve the health of the Klamath River and its tributaries, 2) improve the health of the anadromous fish, 3) and train unemployed tribal members to become experts in the new and growing field of watershed restoration.

In order to guide this coordinated watershed restoration effort, the Yurok Tribal Fisheries Program prepared the "Lower Klamath River Sub-basin





Watershed Restoration Plan” (Gale and Randolph 2000) with California Coastal Conservancy funds. This document prioritizes restoration activities for the sub-basin, as well as the tributaries where these activities will be implemented

### ***Watershed Restoration Program***

The Watershed Restoration Department, (*also known as YTRP; Yurok Tribe Restoration Program*), focuses on reducing sediment that has the potential to deliver into fish bearing streams and to improve upslope conditions to enhance fish population and recovery. Tributaries known to have salmon or steelhead populations are prioritized based on data collected in the field. Project proposals are submitted to funding agencies. When funding is received, the priority watersheds are assessed during winter months and roads causing the greatest risk to fish populations are decommissioned during the summer months of each year.

The primary goal is to treat the most critical erosional and/or chronic sediment sources in the watershed in the most cost-effective manner, though road and skid trail decommissioning of obliteration. The majority of the work needs to be performed with the use of heavy equipment (excavators and bulldozers). Restoration staff and technicians perform site surveys in the spring called “layout” and supervise heavy equipment operators who perform restoration treatments, as prescribed to each individual site on a truck haul road or skid road above or below a crossing that would otherwise deliver sediment into a nearby stream.

The YTRP began in McGarvey and Ah Pah Creeks in 1998 and progressed into Tectah Creek and Blue Creek in 2002 and 2003. The 2004 work season started in McGarvey Creek and Ended in Pularvasar Creek, a tributary to Blue Creek. During the summers of 2005-2007 work was concentrated in the McGarvey Creek watershed in an effort to complete one entire watershed, so that the positive long term effects could be monitored over time. We completed culvert projects on Geneva Road and the M-line for Redwood national Parks Service. We also worked with the State Parks Service to remove invasive beach grass on Gold Bluff Beach. We will embark on our third year of this project hopefully bringing the Caruthers Cove area to competition.

### ***Program Funding***

The Watershed Restoration Department conducts erosion control activities almost entirely on grant funds. Funding is obtained from a variety of government sources: Green Diamond Resource Company (formerly Simpson Timber Company) contributes matching funds each year to assist in the watershed restoration effort, BIA, USEPA, California

Coastal Conservancy, US Fish & Wildlife, Cal Fish & Game, and Redwood National and State Parks and the Trinity River Restoration Program.

### **YTRP Updates:**

#### **Location:**

We purchased a piece of property on Hunter Creek Road where we have a modular for our office and use the existing shop and structures on site. We use the large shop to complete repair and maintenance projects on our heavy equipment and to store department’s supplies. At this time, we are remodeling the existing home into our new office area.

#### **Program Information:**

The YTRP continues to employ tribal members throughout the year. The restoration program operates in two seasonal time frames. Watershed assessment and layout occurs in the winter and spring months from November to May of each year. Road decommissioning occurs in the summer and fall from June to October.

Watershed assessments have been completed for:


1. McGarvey Creek
2. Ah Pah Creek
3. Blue Creek
4. Pularvasar Creek
5. Tectah Creek
6. Mettah Creek
7. Terwer Creek
8. Roach Creek
9. Hunter Creek


#### **Our Crew and Hiring:**

We currently employ five people and will hire up to five additional people for the equipment season, which will start in the second week of June. Our job positions consist of Project Director, Site Supervisors, Heavy Equipment Operators, Field Techs, and Administrative work. We will also have ten Watershed trainees for four months this summer as well as one instructor for the Watershed technician training.

#### **YTRP Heavy Equipment:**

The YTRP recently paid off it’s two 850c Dozers, and continued the lease on the following machines, 330 LC John Deere Excavator, 2554 John Deere Excavator, Komatsu D155 Dozer, and our newest addition to our fleet the





D7 dozer. Other equipment owned by the department to make the day to day rigors easier are a service truck , an International dump truck that can be converted to a fuel and lube truck when needed and two enclosed tool trailers to help with organization of tools and small equipment in the field.

**Things we have accomplished:**

With our new shop and large yard for storing all of our equipment we were able to complete major repairs and maintenance on our equipment this winter. We completed \$20,000.00 worth of repairs on the under-carriages of the two 850-C bulldozers. We also performed routine maintenance, such as oil and hydraulic fluid changes on our other machines as necessary. We have found that it is much more economical to have departmental employees perform routine maintenance and repairs to our equipment for a couple of different reasons. First, they work with the equipment all year and know what needs to be checked out. Second, we do not have to pay an outside mechanic to complete projects that we are capable of doing ourselves as a department this includes travel time which is at least 2 hours but usually more depending on where the mechanic is based out of. We took advantage of the Tire Amnesty Day to dispose of 50 plus tires around the new property.

Three proposals have been written this year: 1. \$150,000.00 through Environmental Protection Agency, 2. \$448,000.00 through Department of Fish & Game, and 3. \$102,000.00 through the Bureau of Reclamation. Funds secured for implementation this year include: \$111,000.00 through Bureau of Reclamation, \$617,000.00 though Department of Fish & Game for the Watershed Training Program and \$367,000.00 through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. We are currently in the process of hiring the 10 Watershed Training Technicians and the Watershed Trainer for the program this summer.

We have entered into a cooperative agreement with the United States Forest Service and the Karuk Tribe to complete restoration work on Bluff Creek. This year the Trinity River Restoration Program Gravel Augmentation Project has already been completed. The TRRP were so enthusiastic about our work last year that we were invited back this year to complete phase two of the Hamilton Pond Project. For the past two years we worked with the State Parks removing European Beach Grass on Gold Bluff Beach and will be doing this again for the third year. Last year we conducted \$600,000.00 worth of road restoration work for the Redwood National Park Service. We are currently in negotiations with them to secure another \$600,000.00 for this year to do more road restoration work within the boundaries of our aboriginal territory.

The current and new employees at the Watershed Restoration Department have worked hard to regain strength and dignity of this Department, The professionalism, and trust of this Department have been revitalized and

working partnerships have been reestablished with our funding agencies after being lost by former management. Putting forth the ability of this department to grow and continue restoring watersheds and fish habitat for future generations.

