

Weaverville Community Forest

STRATEGIC PLAN

(2010-2015)

**A Collaborative effort of the Community
and
Trinity County Resource Conservation District
and
The Bureau of Land Management – Redding Field Office
and
The US Forest Service – Shasta-Trinity National
Forest/Trinity River Management Unit**

PLAN COMPLETED FEBRUARY 2010



BLM

Francis Berg, Assistant Field
Office Manager
Walter Herzog, Forester



TCRCD

Colleen O'Sullivan, Chair
Patrick Frost, District Manager



USFS

Allen D. Olson, Acting District
Ranger
Steve Graves, Fuels Officer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	1
<i>COMMUNITY FOREST VISION</i>	2
<i>MAP</i>	3
<i>EMPHASIS AREAS</i>	
Watersheds	4
Recreation	5
Forestry/Forest Health	6
Education and Outreach	7
Marketing and Economic Development	8
Monitoring	10
<i>PROJECT TIMELINE AND ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN</i>	11
<i>APPENDICES</i>	
Stewardship Authorities	12
Organizational Structure	14
Partners	15
Funding Sources/Leveraging Opportunities	16
Meetings and Outreach	16
References	17

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and US Forest Service (USFS) have signed stewardship agreements with the Trinity County Resource Conservation District (RCD) to manage the lands of the Weaverville Community Forest.¹

This Weaverville Community Forest Strategic Plan articulates a multi-year strategy for project development and implementation on the public lands within the WCF boundary.

The Weaverville Community Forest is being managed through a Cooperative Stewardship Agreement between BLM, USFS and the TCRCD. The BLM agreement is 10 years in length and was signed in 2005. The USFS agreement is also 10 years in length and was signed in 2008. The TCRCD has contractual obligations with BLM and the USFS, who have oversight, and the three entities work cooperatively to fulfill their respective responsibilities. BLM and the USFS have responsibility under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to ensure that individual and cumulative environmental consequences are analyzed and disclosed to the public prior to authorizing any undertaking consistent with this Strategic Plan. This includes the USFS Watershed Analysis for the Weaverville Basin, the Weaverville Community Plan, BLM and USFS land management plans, and other applicable documents.

The TCRCD is the public face of the Agreement and is responsible for holding public meetings, conducting community outreach, outlining and refining community goals for the forest, and implementing projects. The stewardship-contracting program benefits the BLM and Forest Service by providing a local connection between program-level policy development on public resource land and the community at large. Local resources, labor force, commercial interests and other local entities are engaged on an ongoing collaborative process.²

The Weaverville Community Forest (WCF) is 13,000 acres of oak woodland, mixed conifer forest, shrub lands, and historic and prehistoric resources in the Weaver Creek Watershed of Trinity County in northwestern California. It has high public use, including productive timberlands, recreational uses, and serves as part of the watershed of the Weaverville Basin. The Weaverville Community Forest also encompasses the wildland-urban interface of the town of Weaverville.

¹ Refer to Appendix 1 for Stewardship Authorization

² Refer to Appendix 2 for a more complete description of interagency cooperation and organization

The town was founded in 1848 as a gold mining settlement approximately fifty miles west of present-day Redding, California, and still exhibits much of Trinity County's 19th century character. The town is surrounded by public and private forest lands, and is adjacent to the Trinity Alps Wilderness. Weaverville is Trinity County's county seat and largest community, with a population of approximately 4,000 in a sparsely populated county of 14,000.

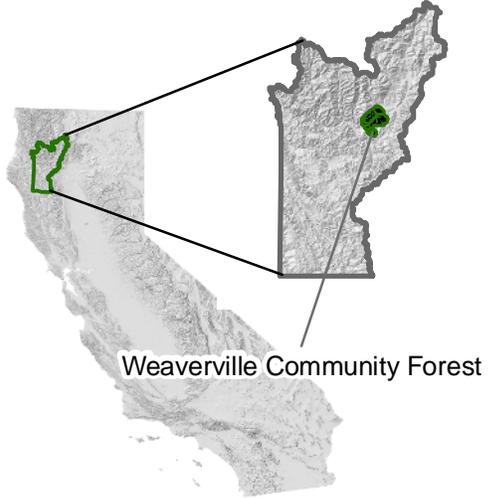
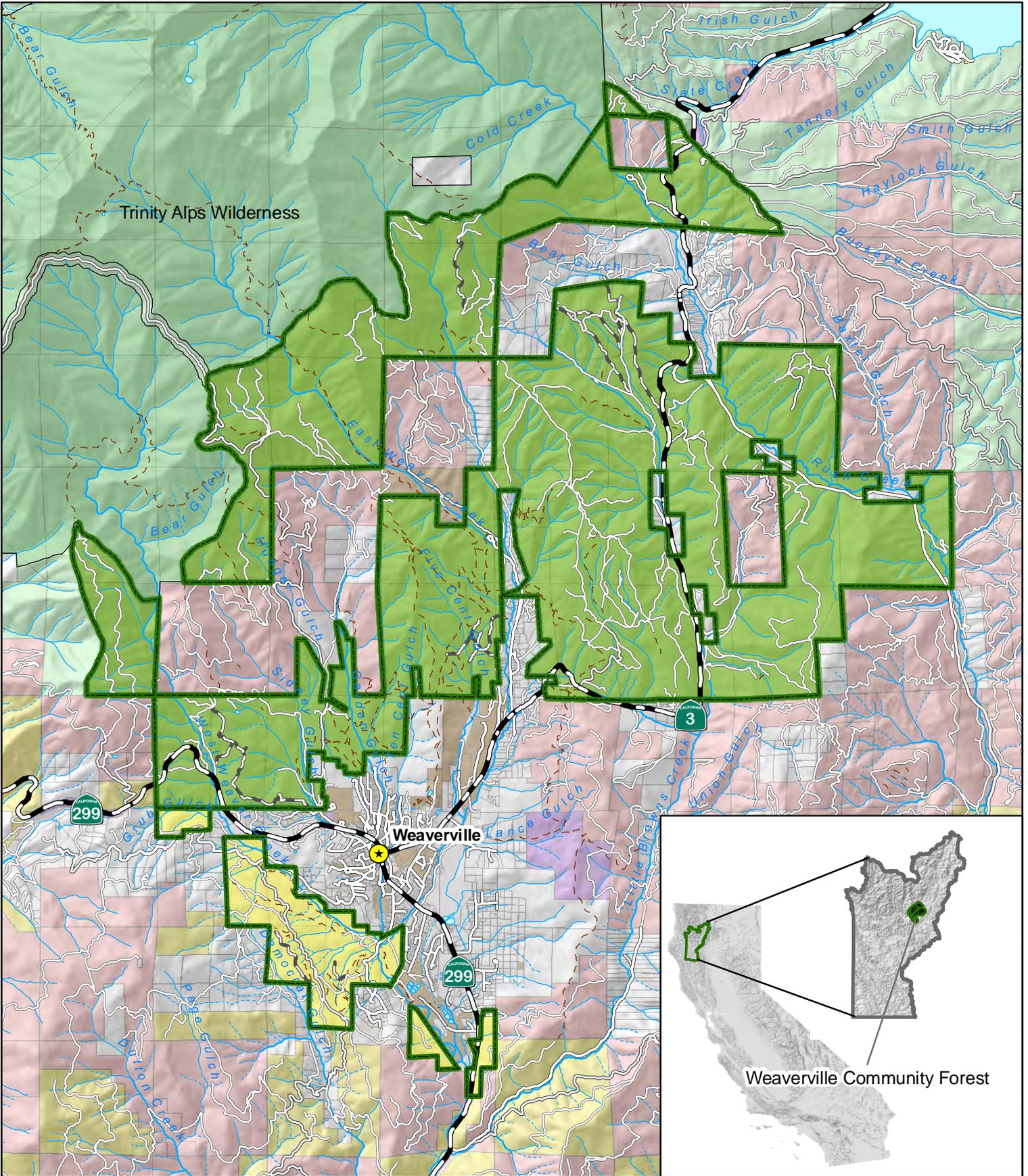
The Weaverville Community Forest contains several anadromous streams, riparian zones, and provides critical deer winter range and wildlife corridors to private timberlands and the Trinity Alps wilderness.

Trinity County is in the western part of California's 2nd Congressional District.

WEAVERVILLE COMMUNITY FOREST VISION

The Weaverville Community Forest vision is to maintain a healthy, productive forest that emphasizes improved forest health, healthy wildlife populations, high visual quality, and a variety of recreational activities and reduced fire hazard.

Weaverville Community Forest



Weaverville Community Forest



Ownership		WCF Boundaries	
Private / Other	State of California	BLM WCF 2010	USFS WCF 2010
Private - Ag. (APZ)	Bureau of Land Mgmt.		
Private - Timber (TPZ)	Bureau of Reclamation		
County of Trinity	U.S. Forest Service		



EMPHASIS AREAS

WATERSHEDS

The Weaverville Community Forest (WCF) lies within the Weaver Creek and Rush Creek watersheds. For purposes of planning and resource management in this Plan, the USFS portions are separated into the Upper and Lower Basins (separated by private timber lands). Project priority and emphasis will be initially concentrated on BLM and the Lower Basin. Longer-range planning for the Upper Basin can be incorporated into the USFS's *Program of Work*. Sound stewardship of the WCF will support improvements to overall conditions in these watersheds.

Sediment control projects will provide many benefits to the WCF and adjacent lands, including limiting the delivery of fine sediment to forest streams, addressing point and non-point pollution sources, improving water quality for wildlife, fish and downstream users, and protecting domestic water supplies.

Management of noxious and invasive plants will limit their impact and is important to watershed restoration.

Proper trail construction and maintenance will enhance visitor experience and provide more opportunities for a local connection to the forest.

Desired Outcomes

- ***Maintain healthy, productive riparian areas.***
- ***Meet adopted Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for sediment for beneficial uses, such as anadromous fisheries habitat, domestic water supply and recreation.***
- ***Minimize the introduction and spread of noxious weeds, and reduce known populations.***
- ***Restore forest fire burn areas in a timely manner.***

Watershed Objectives

1. ***Continue to implement the 'Weaverville Watershed Analysis' (USFS 2004).***
2. ***Target the Lower Basin for near-term project priority.***
3. ***Begin Upper Basin (USFS) assessment and NEPA planning.***
4. ***Identify and target erosion and pollution sources.***
5. ***Inventory plant and animal species and establish baseline data, as needed.***
6. ***Map and treat known invasive and noxious weed populations, as needed.***
7. ***Engage the community in forest projects, management and goal development through at least two field demonstration projects annually.***
8. ***Limit Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) use to designated areas.***

RECREATION

The WCF is an integral part of nature-based recreation in the Weaverville Basin as envisioned in the Weaverville Basin Trail Master Plan and the Weaverville Community Plan. The cultural history including native peoples, gold rush, Chinese influence and Depression-era occupation are an inseparable part of the WCF.

Desired Outcomes

- ***Provide recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.***
- ***Provide natural history and cultural heritage interpretation through a variety of media.***

Recreation Objectives

1. ***Secure funding and implement the Weaverville Basin Trail Master Plan.***
2. ***Develop interpretive tools for forestry, environmental, cultural resources and human impacts.***
3. ***Develop new recreational opportunities that meet the goals and objectives of the forest.***
4. ***Solicit input at annual community meetings on trails and other recreational opportunities.***
5. ***Develop multiple media outlets (internet, community outreach, print and field trips) to underscore recreation and cultural heritage resources.***
6. ***Limit Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) use to designated areas.***

FORESTRY/FOREST HEALTH

The WCF is located within the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) of Weaverville. A central theme of the WCF is to improve forest health and fire-safe conditions, including improved resistance to wildfire, promoting late-successional and old growth characteristics.

Forest health treatments within the WCF will incorporate fuels reduction, sustainable timber harvesting, development of biomass opportunities, and monitoring for various objectives.

Sustainable Forestry is defined as:

Balancing environmental, social and economic factors to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.³

Desired Outcomes

- ***Improve forest and woodland health.***
- ***Make timber available to local mills.***
- ***Increase local employment opportunities.***
- ***Utilize biomass and small diameter material.***
- ***Make firewood available to the public.***
- ***Increase resilience to wildfire.***
- ***Cooperate with other community forestry efforts.***
- ***Maintain high visual quality.***
- ***Promote watershed-wide restoration.***
- ***Improve and maintain viable wildlife habitat.***

Objectives

1. ***Implement fuels reduction projects that include prescribed fire and/or mechanical treatments.***
2. ***Harvest and sell firewood, small diameter timber, and other forest products.***
3. ***Provide natural resource employment opportunities.***
4. ***Implement biomass projects to improve forest health and reduce fire hazard.***
5. ***Restore wildfire burn areas, mimicking natural, variable stand characteristics.***
6. ***Make timber sales available to local purchasers.***
7. ***Time timber sales to take advantage of strong markets.***

³ From B. Bruce Bare, College of Forest Resources, University of Washington, Seattle, 3/29/00.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

The WCF is a living classroom and is readily accessible to students and the general public for the purpose of learning about natural and cultural resource management. It also serves as a model of community forestry to be shared.

Desired Outcomes

- ***Increased public understanding of the natural and cultural resource management of the WCF.***
- ***Increased public involvement in resource management activities.***
- ***An effective volunteer network is developed and maintained.***
- ***Service learning projects are developed and implemented.***

Objectives

1. ***The cultural and historical story of the forest is captured and told through various media.***
2. ***The WCF model is available to others in the form of a DVD.***
3. ***Various media outlets and materials are developed and established for education and outreach purposes.***
4. ***At least two community forest days are held each year.***
5. ***At least one WCF community meeting is held each year.***
6. ***The Forest Legacy Program (USDA/NRCS) and Project Learning Tree (CalFire) are established in the forest.***
7. ***Local schools are provided venues in the forest for outdoor education.***

MARKETING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

The Weaverville Community Forest is a citizen-driven effort that has come to fruition due to the BLM and USFS's forward-thinking and willingness to build these partnerships with the community through the RCD. The viability and visibility of this unique model depends on citizen input and the leadership of the BLM/USFS/TCRCD Partnership, as well as the forest's place in the community. The Weaverville Community Forest has been developed over time as one of the most unique partnerships in forestry, with collaboration occurring across federal, state and local jurisdictions in a collaborative partnership with the citizens of the local community. The continued success of this model is renewed public participation and larger regional and national promotion of successes.

Through effective marketing strategies, other opportunities arise, which can result in increased economic potential for the community. Through responsible stewardship, the forest becomes a living, working landscape that can continue to provide long-term economic benefit to its citizens. The health of the local economy and the environmental sustainability of the stewardship area result in more economic opportunities.

Desired Outcomes

- ***The reputation of partner agencies within the local community and region are enhanced.***
- ***Effective marketing strategies result in increased economic opportunities and public awareness of forest stewardship principles and implementation.***
- ***The forest is a working landscape that provides economic opportunity to the local community.***
- ***The WCF logo is recognized as a symbol of the forest.***

Objectives

1. ***Continue to sponsor school and public events that feature the WCF logo.***
2. ***Continue to develop value-added products that feature the forest logo.***
3. ***Continue to explore and develop a variety of media to get the message out.***
4. ***Provide and maintain signage and other identifiers that connect projects with the forest and the stewardship partnerships (e.g. firewood collection sites, trail markers, publications, advertisements, value-added products).***
5. ***Continue to raise and maintain the forest profile in order to attract***

and leverage funds with Stewardship funds.

- 6. Site conditions allowing, hold an annual firewood sale and collection event.*
- 7. Hold at least two forest field days and one community meeting a year.*
- 8. Develop economic outlets for storefront firewood sales, wreath sales (in conjunction with LAPP), poles, clothing and other value-added products.*
- 9. Initiate a periodic Trinity Journal column that highlights the Stewardship program, partners and projects.*

MONITORING

The long-term success of the stewardship program in the Weaverville Basin can be measured by the effectiveness and efficacy of the stewardship agreement that was implemented, and can answer the question – did the program result in the desired outcomes? Monitoring can also measure economic activity, marketing goals and outcomes, and other community desires.

Desired Outcomes

Monitoring yields data that helps partners manage the forest to achieve the goals and objectives in this plan.

Objectives

- 1. Establish permanent forest plots.***
- 2. Monitor forest health through timber growth, re-growth, herbaceous layer, wildlife.***
- 3. Monitor water quality through turbidity, temperature, dissolved oxygen, aquatic wildlife, and riparian composition.***
- 4. Monitor post-fire conditions through turbidity and regeneration measurements.***
- 5. Use the Weaverville Community Forest monitoring program to provide “hands-on” educational opportunities for students and community members.***
- 6. Monitor community/public perception of Weaverville Community Forest Stewardship (measure against Community Vision).***
- 7. Monitor economic viability of stewardship contracting on the Weaverville Community Forest***

PROJECT TIMELINES and ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN

Each year the Steering Committee will develop an Annual Operating Plan (AOP). The AOP is the document that describes what will be getting done within the Weaverville Community Forest during the year. This will include projects for the entire Weaverville Community Forest, including BLM, USFS and Private Lands when applicable.

The AOP will have projects to be implemented, including estimated cost, funding mechanisms, desired outcomes, start date, required environmental compliance, and list the related environmental document.

At the end of each year, the AOP will be revisited and updated according to project completion. Projects not completed will be adjusted and added to the following year AOP.

Timely completion of the AOP is crucial as it is the mechanism for implementing the goals and objectives of the Weaverville Community Forest.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – STEWARDSHIP AUTHORITIES

Both the US Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have the authority to enter into Stewardship Contracts with agencies, groups or individuals to accomplish land management objectives on federal land.

Section 323 of Public Law 108-7 (Title 16, United States Code, section 2104 as revised February 28, 2003 to reflect Sec. 323 of H.J. Res. 2 as reenrolled (16 U.S.C. 2104), the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003, amended Pub. L. 105-277, sec. 347, to grant the Forest Service (FS) and Bureau of Land Management (B>M) authority until September 31, 2013, to enter into stewardship projects with private persons or public and private entities, by contract or agreement, to perform services to achieve land management goals for the National Forests or public lands that meet local and rural community needs for a duration for up to 10 years.

The Wyden Amendment (P.L. 104-208, Section 124), as amended (P.L. 105-277, Section 136) expands the authority and provides the framework by which BLM may enter into contracts or agreements to permit funding to do restoration work.

Using this tool, BLM and USFS retain public ownership and cooperatively work with the TCRCDD, with which they have an excellent working relationship, to manage the forest-based objectives defined by the community. There has been a high level of community involvement since 1999 and the community has articulated its objectives for managing the forest resources as follows: protecting view-sheds, maintaining and improving forest health through timber harvesting with products to the local community, recreation and education, fuels reduction, firewood collection, salmon habitat improvement, and invasive weeds eradication.

Funds that are generated from sales of forest products pay for forest health project costs. Excess funds are deposited in an account that pays for subsequent projects that meet the objectives of the stewardship agreement, community goals and this strategic plan.

For Weaverville and surrounding communities, this unique Forest Stewardship model offers a way to recruit and sustain local involvement in the management of federal lands for local needs and desires by matching the resource needs of federal land managers with the skills of a locally run conservation district. In particular, the Weaverville Community Forest embodies the spirit of Stewardship Contracting, because of its high level of public involvement, broad range of objectives, and diverse interests of the community. The Stewardship Agreement provides an opportunity for multi-use, community-driven forest management that creates and retains living wage jobs in an otherwise economically challenged rural community. This project provides timber for the town mill, educational and historical venues for local and tourist populations, and maintains high visual quality for the town residents.

The Weaverville Community Forest hopes to keep expanding its opportunities by providing community involvement on a number of levels, and by continuing to strengthen the connections between the land and its people, as outlined in this Strategic Plan for the Weaverville Community Forest.



APPENDIX 2: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Stewardship Benefits

The Weaverville Community Forest is being managed through a Cooperative Stewardship Agreement between BLM, USFS and the TCRCD. The BLM agreement is for 10 years and was signed in 2005. The USFS agreement is for 10 years and was signed in 2008. The TCRCD has contractual obligations with BLM and the USFS, who have oversight, and the three entities work cooperatively to fulfill their respective responsibilities. BLM and the USFS have responsibility under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to ensure that individual and cumulative environmental consequences are analyzed and disclosed to the public prior to authorizing any undertaking consistent with this Strategic Plan. The TCRCD is the public face of the Agreement and is responsible for holding public meetings, conducting community outreach, outlining and refining community goals for the forest, and implementing projects. The stewardship-contracting program benefits the BLM and Forest Service by providing a local connection between program-level policy development on public resource land and the community at large. Local resources, labor force, commercial interests and other local entities are engaged on an ongoing collaborative process. The TCRCD is a special district under California law and is governed by Division 9 of the Public Resources Code and such guiding legislation as the "Brown Act". Its Board of Directors acts as an Executive Committee and sets policy, budgets and timelines for completing projects. Most importantly, it provides direction and assistance to staff as it assumes the primary duties of implementing the Stewardship Agreement. The TCRCD has a staff that implements the policies and projects of the Board. The District Manager answers directly to the Board and is the organizational bridge between the Board of Directors, the staff and the public. The Board conducts monthly, public meetings. The Weaverville Community Forest is a standing agenda item every month for updating the Board. Any action item related to the Weaverville Community Forest would be a separate agenda item on the Board's agenda, which must be posted in accordance with the Brown Act.

Agreements

The 10-year Stewardship agreement between the USFS, BLM and the TCRCD provides the authorities and process under which the three organizations will cooperate, including the approval of specific projects to be implemented. The TCRCD enters into agreements with a wide range of entities and it is anticipated that a variety of agreements for services will be used by the TCRCD to implement this Strategic Plan. The TCRCD has well-established fiscal policies, approved by the Board of Directors, for contracting, securing professional services and entering into grants and agreements to fund District-sponsored projects, including agreements that will leverage stewardship funds with other funding sources.

APPENDIX 3: PARTNERS

The primary partnership for the implementation of this Strategic Plan is the long-established cooperation between the USFS, BLM and TCRCD. Both organizations bring a set of other partners into the Weaverville Community Forest. The BLM Resource Advisory Committee (RAC), with members from around northwestern California, has been a partner ever since the community brought the idea of a community forest forward. TCRCD partners include local organizations and agencies and funders interested in the Weaverville Community Forest. The following is a partial list of TCRCD partners:

Local

The WCF Steering Committee
Weaverville Basin Trail Committee
Lewiston Trail Group
Northwestern California Resource Conservation & Development Council
Trinity County
Weaverville and Trinity County Chambers of Commerce
Trinity County Resource Advisory Committee
Weaverville Elementary School
Trinity High School
Watershed Research & Training Center
Trinity County Fire Safe Council
Trinity County Fire Chiefs' Association
Trinity County Office of Education
Baldwin, Blomstrom, Wilkinson & Associates
Douglas City Girl Scouts

State

California Department of Fish & Game
California State Water Resources Control Board
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
California Fire Safe Council
California Department of Forestry & Fire Prevention
Caltrans

Federal

BLM
USFS
USF&WS
NRCS
Trinity River Restoration Program
AmeriCorps (Watershed Stewards Program)
US EPA

APPENDIX 4: FUNDING SOURCES/LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITIES

The TCRCD has a strong record of successfully leveraging funds to expand its capacity to implement projects. The establishment of the Weaverville Community Forest Stewardship Fund will become an important source of “seed” money that the TCRCD will use to obtain other funding to realize the full potential of the Weaverville Community Forest Strategic Plan. The above list of partners represents a partial list of organizations that have contributed funds to District projects, or provided in-kind services to match funding.

APPENDIX 5: MEETINGS AND OUTREACH

The TCRCD has established a Weaverville Community Forest page on its website (www.tcrd.net), and has an active email list serve hosted by the RCD. The local newspaper provides print coverage of meetings and other events. Periodic presentations are made about the Community Forest to various service organizations, and articles appearing in TCRCD newsletters are written by both staff and board members. Poster presentations are made whenever possible, including the county fair, RCD regional and statewide meetings, and other venues.

The District holds periodic Community Forest meetings, field trips and workshops. Through its outreach efforts, the RCD is establishing committees to perform monitoring tasks, trail maintenance and interpretation, historical descriptions of the landscape and public relations work. Other committees will be formed as needs and interests arise. These are all volunteer committees, and they will work with TCRCD staff and board members to provide input and content to the RCD Board of Directors as they develop and refine the policies and goals of the community forest.

The District has well-developed public education and youth education programs. The Weaverville Community Forest will be embedded in both aspects of the District’s on-going education and outreach, in particular the Conservation Legacy Program and Creek Watch pilot projects.

APPENDIX 6: REFERENCES

- Strategic Plan for Trinity County RCD— 2006-2011** (TCRCD, 2006)
Trinity County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (Trinity County Fire Safe Council, 2005)
Developing a multiparty monitoring plan (USFS, 2005)
Forest Resource Analysis of the Weaverville Community Forest (BBWA, 2004)
Proposed Weaverville Community Forest – A Community Vision (Ledgerwood, 2004)
Recommendations on Trinity County Values at Risk From Fire and Pre-fire Fuels Treatment Opportunities(Trinity County Fire Safe Council, 2000)
Weaverville Basin Trail Master Plan (Weaverville Basin Trail Committee & TCRCD, 2000)
An Archeological Treatment Plan For The West Weaver Creek Mining Landscape (BLM, 1999)
A Cultural Resources Inventory of Weaverville Area Units of the Proposed SPI-BLM Land Exchange (KEA, 1998)
Redding Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (BLM, 1993)
Healthy Forest Initiative (2002)
Healthy Forest Restoration Act (2003)
National Fire Plan

