



The Dirt

SIR Newsletter Insert
Fall 2015

*Cultural and Environmental News
brought to you by the Susanville Indian Rancheria
Natural Resources Department (NRD)*



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Tribal Youth learn about conservation and forest health at Cradle Valley...

During June, the TYCC participated in field lectures from local professionals working in forestry and natural resources. They received hands-on experience in soils, insects, meadow restoration and forest health.

Pictured above... Tribal youth listening for the mountain chickadee call with NRCS Biologist Tiffany Russell in an aspen stand at Cradle Valley.

See page 3 for more details!

Meet the NeRDs...



Natural Resources Department Mission Statement:

To assess, protect and enhance the tribal and environmental resources (culture, language, land, air, water) on the ancestral homelands of the tribes and bands of SIR in order to maintain a healthy community and to manage for multiple land uses.

About us ... The SIR NRD Newsletter “*The Dirt*” was first published in 2006. The department and publication experienced many changes since that time and we are trying this revived approach as an insert of “*The Dirt*” in the SIR quarterly newsletter. We hope you like this new development!

We are sad to say goodbye to a NeRD that has been with the SIR for over 13 years, Laura Medvin. Laura’s hard work and dedication toward improving environmental conditions on the Rancheria is immeasurable. She has been a strong advocate for the SIR Forestry Crew and their involvement with wildland fire. Laura is moving on to a full-time position as the Environmental Manager for Reno-Sparks Indian Colony.

If you have any questions or comments about the stories or programs in this newsletter, please contact the writers:

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Hello my name is Fawn Robinson. I go to Lassen High School and will be a sophomore. Last summer and this summer I was able to work in the Natural Resource Department. It was a great experience to work with such amazing people and learn many new things. While working I got to input letters into a database, file papers, plant elderberry trees with Meredith, help Melany teach the kids who go to the summer program about acorn processing and learn how to say different phrases in Maidu with Donna. My plans are to work in the Natural Resource Department next year as a summer job. The work experience that I’m getting in culture will help me now and as I get older.



NRD Summer Intern Fawn Robinson

SIR Natural Resources Department
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Field Notes from the TYCC

This year we had three summer Tribal Youth Conservation Crews consisting of four youth each from June through August. The program is supported by funding from the US Forest Service through the Resource Advisory Committee (RAC). Through this program, tribal youth get to work outdoors on public, private and tribal lands while gaining valuable experience in natural and cultural resources protection.

Learning about forest health at Cradle Valley.



Removing Dyer's Woad, a non-native invasive weed, from National Forest land.



Repairing the fence at Papoose Meadow.

Meadow Restoration Project with Lassen Land and Trails Trust in July.



Planting native elderberries at Cradle Valley.

Elderberry facts.... Native Americans consider all parts of the elderberry plant (wood, leaves, berries and flowers) to be valuable for food, medicine, dyes, instruments, games and arrow shafts.

- Blue and purple elderberries are edible and high in Vitamin C
- Elderberry plants have numerous medicinal properties and have been known to aid in indigestion, infections, colds and rheumatism
- Mature elderberry plants have layers of vegetation that provide shade, food and habitat for bird and animals
- Canopies of the plants cool stream water and the roots stabilize stream bank soils for fish and aquatic organisms

Information gathered from historical knowledge, NRCS Plants Database 2015 and the NRCS publication "Native Uses of Native Plants".



Language Revitalization

Tosidum (Mountain Maidu) Language Classes...

The SIR is hosting Maidu Language Classes on Mondays and Wednesdays in the Resource Center. We would love for anyone interested in learning the language to join us. The language program is supported by funding from the Administration for Native Americans (ANA). In 2012, the SIR was awarded a grant from ANA for the Weye-bis “Keep Speaking” Mountain Maidu Language Project. In 2016, the SIR will continue to move forward with work on the Tosidum language and apply for funding to support the revitalization of the other three languages associated with the SIR.

WHEN: Most Mondays and Wednesdays

WHERE: SIR Resource Center at 735 Joaquin Street

For more information, please contact Donna Clark,
SIR Language Program Coordinator, at (530) 257-5449.



“Chim kuti”
Rabbit

Maidu Language Immersion Camp...

was held from July 24th—26th at the SIR Cradle Valley Property in Plumas County. Throughout the weekend, there were over 30 participants that got to experience language learning sessions, games and a scavenger hunt. It was refreshing to watch the children and adults laughing and conversing in the Tosidum language. We were blessed to have our sole surviving fluent speaker, Wilhelmina Ives, and her family join us and assist with the camp. On the last day of Immersion Camp, we hosted a language conference for the tribal community where our guests were treated to a fabulous meal including tri-tip, mushroom risotto, garlic bread, fresh fruit, desserts, lemonade and a raffle.

A big THANK YOU to everyone who helped make this event a success!



FIRE on the 875 Acre Property

Fire Response on the 875 Acres
on July 7, 2015.

Climate Change and Increased Fire Danger...

Mother Earth is facing some tough issues including an ever-expanding human population, increased development and a changing climate which can be attributed to humans. Some of the effects of climate change that can be seen in our region are the loss of snowpack, prolonged drought, and a greater risk of catastrophic fire.

BE PART OF THE SOLUTION and BE FIRE SAFE!

On July 7, 2015, a fire broke out in the vicinity of the 875 Acre Property and Upper Rancheria. Several large junipers and oak trees went up into flames and a ground fire crept through 3 acres of sagebrush, cheatgrass and native plant communities leaving behind charred ground with no vegetation.

Emergency response to the area included many collaborating agencies such as CAL FIRE, BLM, USFS, Susan River Fire Department and the SIR. Helicopters and planes dropped buckets of water on the flames and fire retardant on the surrounding area. A dozer line was created around the perimeter of the fire to prevent spread into other areas and residential housing.

The Wildland Fire Investigation indicates that the fire was started by **ILLEGAL fireworks** on the morning of July 7th. Remnants of Triple Whistle Bottle Rockets, Black Cats and Jumping Jacks were found in the immediate vicinity of the fire.

**PLEASE HELP PROTECT
OUR TRIBAL LANDS!**



A plane drops retardant on the fire.



The landscape after the fire was extinguished and the area had gone three days "smoke-free".

Field Notes on Water Quality



Groundwater and surface water sampling bottles: seven total bottles are filled from each site to test for different hazardous constituents including oil, gas and volatile organic compounds.

NRD tests the water quality on the Upper Rancheria drinking water system, 875 springs and Herlong groundwater well with funding from the EPA and SIR. Drinking water is tested once per month from residential housing on the Upper Rancheria while surface and groundwater is tested once per quarter. NRD is currently analyzing water quality data from over 10 years of sample collections.

If you live on the Upper Rancheria then you received the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) from the SIR which informs water users of water quality sampling results. City residents should also receive a CCR that is sent out by the City of Susanville.

To date, the presence of bacteria has not been detected in the SIR drinking water and tests for lead, copper and chlorine have all been within EPA allowable levels.



A spring site in 2003 where surface water is sampled.

One water sample bottle that was sent to Western Environmental Testing Laboratory (WETLAB) in Reno, NV for sample analysis.



The same site in April 2014 under much drier conditions. Evidence of the 4-year drought we are experiencing in northern California.



Drinking water sample supplies include bleach and a chlorine meter among other scientific equipment.

Forest and Restoration Projects...

Some of the projects we are working on during the 2015 field season include:

Cradle Valley: wildfire protection projects, thinning of overcrowded tree stands and restoration of pre-European settlement conditions. The Forestry Crew utilized prescribed fire to burn slash piles and remove woody debris from the forest floor during the spring when conditions were acceptable for burning.

Spring pile burning and training with the Plumas National Forest.



Tribal Trails: clear 26 miles of designated trails in wilderness areas on the LNF with hand tools and 2-man crosscut saws. Work includes removing trees from the trails and creating water bars to protect trails from erosion. This season we've seen an extensive amount of blow down trees across trails resulting from the 2015 spring wind event that affected Lassen County.



Brian McGrath using the crosscut saw.



Joaquin Dixon and Curtis Dixon perform crosscut saw maintenance on the trail.



Ciacincio Sailors moving rocks from the trail.

Barry Creek: Removal of invasive plants and willow trimming, wildlife habitat improvements, water flow improvements in Barry Creek and parking lot retention pond overflow improvements.



A deer foraging in the new growth of native willows and shrubs in Barry Creek drainage between the Diamond Mountain Mini Mart and Diamond Mountain Casino.

Restoration activities took place in late April and this photo was taken in June. Treatments in the Barry Creek drainage followed a traditional management approach to restore and promote healthy new growth of native riparian plants.

Tribal Solid Waste...

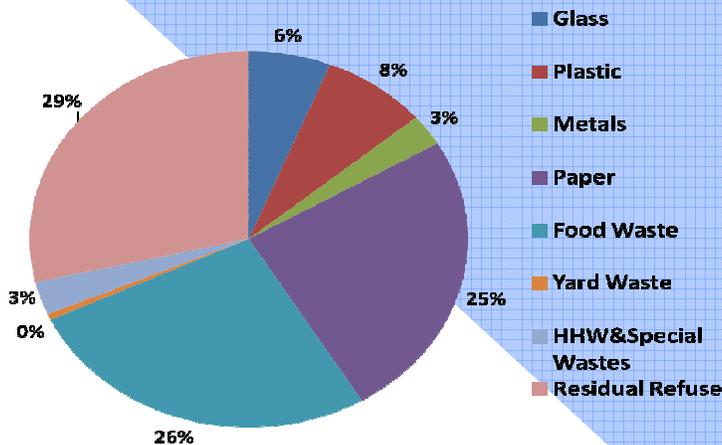
How Much Municipal Solid Waste Does The SIR Generate?

That was the question asked by the NRD and the reason why we performed a Waste Stream Characterization Audit. A Waste Stream Characterization Audit is basically where we collect all the trash that has been generated (in this case by our tribal member households) and characterize the trash by material type. Why do we want to dig through the trash? Well that is very good question!

We don't necessarily want to dig through the trash, but we do want to know what it consists of so that we can reduce, reuse and recycle as much of it as possible. The best way to perform the Waste Audit to get 100% of the trash being generated is usually between trash collections. With the many Tribal households, businesses, departments/offices and even our clinic, it would be too much for NRD to handle collecting all of it. So we took a sample from the tribal Municipal Solid Waste (household trash) to be able to estimate the materials and amounts being generated.



SIR Resident Waste Audit 2015



Total Tribal Household Waste

When you take the results from the audit and use those numbers to estimate what the Tribal households generate we end up with the following.

In a Week: Glass 162 lbs Plastic 208 lbs
Metals 72 lbs Paper 667 lbs Food Waste 714
Residual Trash 768 lbs
Household Hazardous Waste & Special Wastes 76 lbs
A Week Total: 2667 lbs

In a Year: Glass 8424 lbs Plastic 10,816 lbs
Metals 3,744 lbs Paper 34,684 lbs
Food Waste 37,128 lbs Residual Trash 39,936 lbs
Household Hazardous Waste & Special Waste 3,952 lbs
Yearly Total: 138,684 lbs

**The SIR NRD would like to encourage all Tribal Members to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.
If you would like more information about the Recycling Program
please contact the NRD at (530) 251-5636.**

