



# The Dirt .....

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SIR Newsletter Insert  
August 2016

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

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Susanville Indian Rancheria wildland firefighters on the Forestry Crew hike to the top of the 875 acre property to work on the Wildland Urban Interface fire protection project (photo above).

A black oak tree is rejuvenating in the restoration area on the 875 acre property. The 3-acre area burned by a wildfire that was caused by illegal fireworks during July 2015 (photo right).





## 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.*

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

**ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS** — Aaron Brazzanovich Jr.  
*Environmental Technician and TYCC Supervisor*  
530-251-5636, [abrazzanovich@frontiernet.net](mailto:abrazzanovich@frontiernet.net)



**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION NEWS** — Sarah Hubert  
*Environmental Coordinator*  
530-251-5646, [envcoordinator@frontier.com](mailto:envcoordinator@frontier.com)



Sarah came on board in May as the new Environmental Coordinator. She jumped right in leading the water quality program and planning activities for the Forestry Trainee Crew with local government agencies. Welcome to the SIR!

**CULTURAL NEWS** — Melany Johnson  
*Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and NAGPRA Coordinator*  
530-251-5633, [nagpra1@citlink.net](mailto:nagpra1@citlink.net)



**CLIMATE CHANGE NEWS and EDITOR** — Meredith Gosejohan  
*Natural Resources Director*  
530-251-5623, [nrd\\_director@frontier.com](mailto:nrd_director@frontier.com)



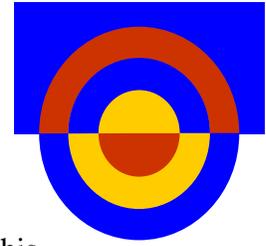
### **NRD seasonal staff also consists of:**

Forestry Crew Supervisor, Brian McGrath, and Assistant Supervisor, Curtis Dixon  
Tribal Forestry Trainee Crew (who developed their own story in the newsletter): Anthony Garcia, Nikko Amador-Carmen, Richard Lent, Ashley Merino  
Tribal Youth Conservation Crew: Stephen Young, Audie Noneo, Taylor Greer, Angel Mullen, Damon Buff Jr., Juan Reyes-Sanchez, Gage Acuna and Adrianna Flores-Miller  
and NRD Summer Intern, Fawn Robinson

**THANK YOU** to our summer staff for their persistence and hard work protecting the natural and cultural resources of the SIR.

**SIR Natural Resources Department**  
735 Joaquin Street, Susanville, CA 96130

## Cultural Resource Protection...



### Graffiti discovered at Tommy Tucker Cave

BLM checked in on Tommy Tucker Cave located in the Honey Lake Valley early this summer and discovered that it had been vandalized sometime within the last three years. Graffiti was written over pictographs inside Tommy Tucker Cave and additional markings including derogatory language were spray-painted on the opening of the cave.

Tommy Tucker Cave is an important cultural site that is sacred to members of the SIR and Tribes in the surrounding area. This special place is the only known location in the region that contains pictographs (paintings) from long ago. The cave was named for Tommy Tucker, a California Indian and the first man residing in Lassen County who fought and was killed in World War I.

**The SIR and BLM are jointly offering a \$5000 reward leading to the arrest and conviction of those involved with the vandalism of Tommy Tucker Cave.**



**If you have information,  
please call BLM  
law enforcement at  
(916) 978-4450.**



"Damaging this ancient cave, a sacred site, is no different than vandalizing a church," said Melany Johnson. "These ancient areas cannot be duplicated. We are appalled and heartbroken by these acts of vandalism."

## Climate Change...



### Impacts on Tribal Communities in California

Did you know that, historically, tribal communities have contributed little to cause climate change, but they are at greater risk to the negative impacts of climate change than other communities???

#### First things first, what is climate change?

Climate Change can be defined as a change in regional climate patterns caused by increased levels of carbon dioxide and other gases that trap heat in the atmosphere. Essentially this process warms the surface of the Earth.

The biggest contributing factor to the changing climate that we see today is increasing greenhouse gases that can be attributed to human beings. Here's an example: the cars we drive produce fumes that warm the atmosphere and at the same time humans are tearing down forests with trees that would help convert this carbon dioxide to oxygen. It's a misconception that climate change means warmer temperatures worldwide; what it actually means for our area is more extreme weather conditions and events meaning colder extreme temperatures in winters and hotter drier conditions in summers.

Some of the impacts on tribal communities in California include:

- Ecosystem health and water quality declines; WHY?
- Biodiversity declines and extinctions take place at a faster rate; WHY?
- Human health is at risk; WHY?

We aim to help you answer some of these questions in our newsletter climate change series and hope you've found it interesting so far. Stay tuned for more!

NRD applied for supplemental funding from the EPA in 2017 to begin assessing the effects of climate change for the SIR. If awarded, this will include developing a vulnerability and risk assessment for the Tribe to help identify ways that the Tribal community and resources can be more resilient to the effects of climate change.



If you're interested in learning more about climate change on your own, try searching around on the internet for phrases like:

- Climate Change in California
- Drought and tribal communities
- Tribal climate change

## Fish and Wildlife...

### Eagle Lake Rainbow Trout Fish Tagging at the Eagle Lake Spaulding Fish Trap



NRD has a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that involves the restoration and natural spawning run of Eagle Lake Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss aquilarum*), a California Heritage Trout species endemic to Eagle Lake. Work under this grant includes tagging Eagle Lake Rainbow Trout and tracking their migration upstream in Pine Creek as the fish swim up to spawn.

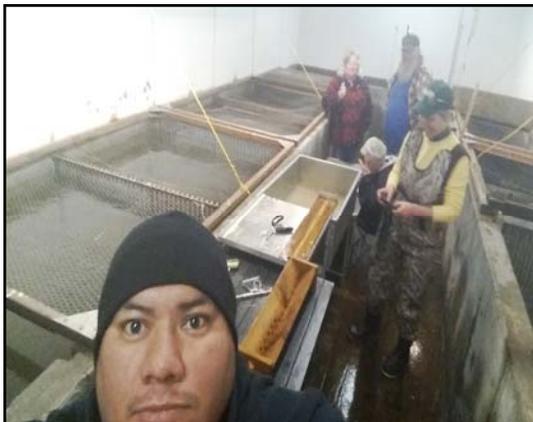


**Paul Divine , CA Department of Fish and Wildlife Biologist Floy tags a large Eagle Lake Rainbow Trout.**

Pine Creek, which is the main tributary to Eagle Lake, has gone from a historically perennial creek (prior to the 1950's), to an intermittent creek, with only the headwaters now being perennial. This change in the Pine Creek watershed was a result of multiple anthropogenic (human-caused) impacts, which include over-logging, overgrazing of livestock, construction of culverts/, roads and water diversions. As a result of the degradation to Pine Creek the fish do not have a perennial stream in which to spawn naturally. In the mid 1900s a fish trap was installed at Spaulding to prevent fish from swimming upstream and potentially getting trapped due to inconsistent duration and flow in Pine Creek.



**SIR Contract Biologist, Teresa Pustejovsky PIT tags an Eagle Lake Rainbow Trout.**



The NRD works with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to be able to tag a limited number of Eagle Lake Rainbow Trout and release them above the Spaulding fish trap in order to track the migration and spawning of the fish. The NRD would like to thank the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the opportunity to work together.

**SIR NRD Environmental Tech, Aaron Brazzanovich Jr. takes a photo from inside the Spaulding fish trap.**



## Environmental Protection...

### Wildland Fire Home Protection Tips

Wildland fire season is well underway and although we've been very lucky locally, we could all use a little reminder on ways to help protect our homes. Wildfires typically affect homes in three ways: 1) direct contact with flames, 2) flying embers (which can travel up to 1 mile) and 3) radiant heat. Creating a Defensible Space around your home can help reduce the damage these factors can cause and frees up fire fighting personnel to focus on stopping the spread of fire instead of focusing on preparing residential properties for the potential of an oncoming wildfire. Creating a defensible space doesn't require any special equipment or skill, just proper planning and a little bit of hard work. CalFire has a very informative website ([www.readyforwildfire.org](http://www.readyforwildfire.org)) which describes how to create an effective defensible space.



They suggest creating two zones surrounding your home:

**Zone 1:** extends 30 ft out from your home. Within this zone it is important to remove all dead vegetation, trim tree branches so they are a minimum of 10ft from each other and the lowest branches are not in contact with ground vegetation, relocate wood piles to zone 2, keep vegetation healthy and green, and remove any unnecessary, flammable items.

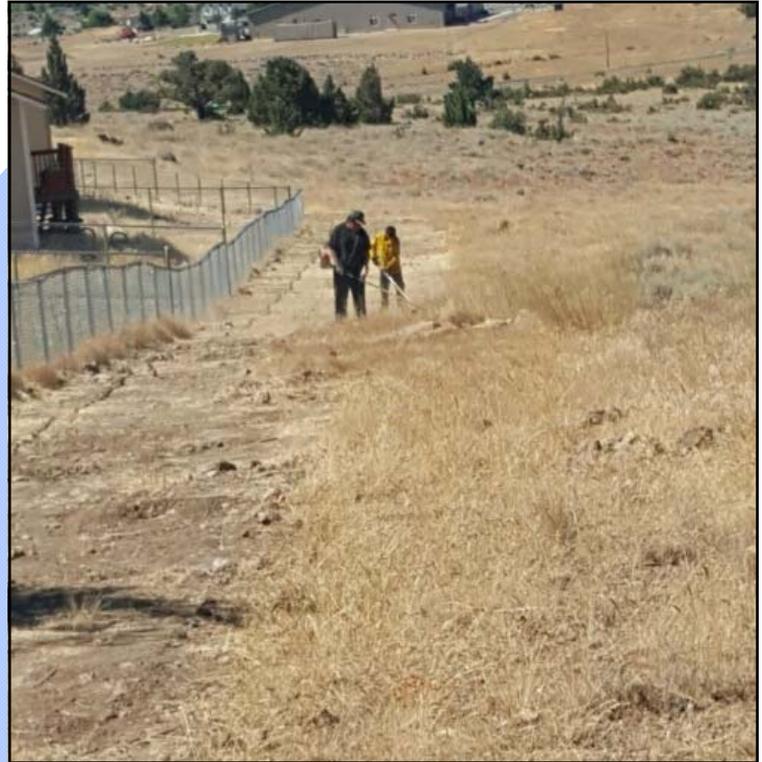
**Zone 2:** extends 100 ft from structures. Within this zone it is important to keep annual grasses below 4 in high, trim tree lower tree branches so they are not in contact with ground vegetation, keep the area free of dead vegetation, and thin out thick shrubs.



Photos: Examples of defensible space zones and tree trimming (photo credit: readyforwildfire.org).

## Environmental Protection...

SIR Forestry Crew members and Forestry Trainees enhancing the defensible space around the Upper Rancheria residential housing during June 2016.



Grasses, weeds and brush are removed behind all of the houses to prevent wildfire from carrying into these areas and to protect the houses and people from fire.

## Forestry News...

### New this year: the Forestry Trainee Summer Program

This summer NRD was able to hire 4 young adults (ages 17-22) for the Forestry Trainee Program with funding from the BIA, which is aimed at providing natural resource management experience to youth and young adults. During the 8 week program, the trainees were able to work on a number of natural resource projects. These projects included: wildland fire fuel reduction on the Upper Rancheria and at Cradle Valley, cattle exclusion fence maintenance at Cradle Valley, bat and bird house installation at Cradle Valley, sage grouse habitat improvement on BLM land, trail maintenance on Forest Service land, and meadow enhancement on Forest Service land. Additionally, the trainees learned about wild horse and burro management and visited the BLM corrals, learned about the importance of soils from Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) scientists, explored various habitats for different bird species with a NRCS scientist, learned about Pine Creek and factors contributing to the decline of Eagle Lake Rainbow Trout, learned about wildland fires including the importance of decreasing fuels in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), and discovered the importance of fire in to our ecosystems. One of the Trainees even became certified as a wildland firefighter. Along with this knowledge, the trainees also gained many valuable skills including: Wilderness first aid and CPR certification, instruction on how to use a 2 man cross cut saw, hazard awareness, how to pile cut brush and trees, tree identification, how to identify birds by their calls, how to properly care for a chainsaw and unravel a tangled chain.



# Environmental News...



The Susanville Indian Rancheria holds a spring clean up event every year for tribal members that reside on tribal lands. This year the event took place from May 27 through June 13. During the spring clean up event, tribal residents have the opportunity to discard trash and other unwanted debris free of charge. To do this, the tribe partners with the SIR Housing Authority to cover the costs of the trash disposal. Bins are delivered to two separate locations, one on Wada St. on the Upper Rancheria and the other on Joaquin St. on the Lower Rancheria. The SIR Natural Resources Department helps out during the annual spring clean up by collecting e-waste,



tires, scrap metal, appliances and batteries. The NRD also coordinates with other tribal departments and tribal members to divert materials that can be recycled or that need special consideration to dispose of properly.

This year NRD collected used motor oil, tires, batteries, appliances, fluorescent light bulbs, e-waste and scrap metal from tribal members during this spring cleanup event.

**Totals from this year's event included 29 TVs, 8 appliances, 9 fluorescent light tubes, 10 pieces of e-waste, 128 quarts of used motor oil, 72 lbs of batteries, 5 gallons of anti-freeze and 6,020 lbs of scrap metal. Way to go!**



**Used Motor Oil Disposal is available for free at Bass Hill Landfill.**

## TYCC Summer 2016...

# TRIBAL YOUTH CONSERVATION CREW 2016

The Natural Resource Department has a seasonal Tribal Youth Conservation Crew (TYCC) which is a Tribal summer program for youth to receive training in environmental protection and management.

This year we had two crews. The first crew included Stephen Young, Taylor Greer, Angel Mullen, Audie Noneo and TYCC Supervisor Aaron Brazzanovich Jr.



## SESSION ONE





## SESSION TWO



The second crew included TYCC Crewmembers Adrianna Flores-Miller, Damon Buff Jr., Juan Reyes-Sanchez, Gage Acuna and TYCC Supervisor Aaron Brazzanovich Jr.



## Fun times in NRD...a few photos from this summer.

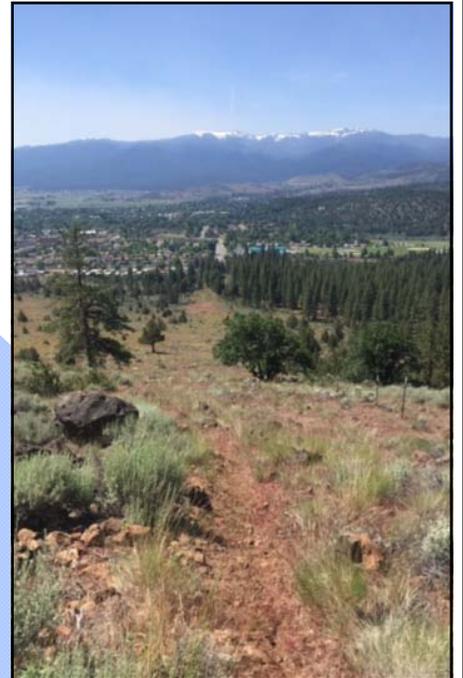


Forestry Trainees and their crew leader. "We out here".

Session 2 of TYCC learns about birds and meadows.



Composting behind the Resource Center.



View from the top of the 875 acre property.

Tribal Trails work near Heart Lake.

