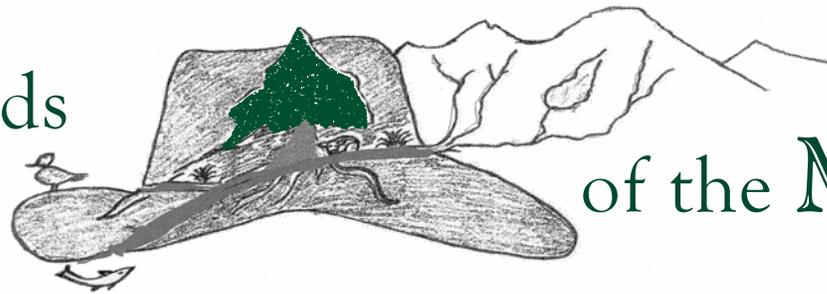


# Watersheds



# of the Modoc

Your source for watershed information in Central Modoc County

Published by the Central Modoc Resource Conservation District

Winter 2004

## The River Center Gift Store is Now Open!



- Stuffed Audubon Birds with Real Bird Calls
- Canada Goose and Mallard Duck Kites
- Pit River Watershed Posters Painted by Sophie Sheppard
- Bitter Brush and Aspen Pen Sets Handmade by Doug Probst

Be sure to come by and check out the unique items we have for sale. All proceeds from the store help support The River Center.

The River Center is located at 136 Henderson Street in Alturas and we are open Tuesday through Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Tours are available on weekends by making an appointment. If you have any questions or would like to schedule a tour, please call The River Center at 233-5085.

### What's Available at the MAIN STREAM MERCANTILE:

- River Center Tote Bags
- River Center Hats
- An Assortment of Wildlife Books
- River Center Coffee Mugs and Trivets Handmade by Dick Mackey



### What's Inside:

<i>Watershed Success: Talbott Project.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Watershed Success (Cont.).....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>What a Year! 2003 River Center Highlights.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Shaw Ranch Sets the Standard.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Who to Contact.....</i>	<i>6</i>

# ***Watershed Success: Talbott Project Nears Completion***

---

*By Cliff Harvey, Central Modoc Resource Conservation District Watershed Coordinator*

**TALBOTT PROJECT NEARS COMPLETION:** Channelization of streams in Modoc County has served many useful purposes over the years. This practice was begun early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continued up through the 1960's. In hindsight, we see that we traded water quality and habitat value for flood control and agricultural improvement when we made those changes to our streams.

In an effort to reduce the adverse effects of those past management practices at one site, CMRCD is nearing completion of a project with landowner Curt Talbott on the South Fork of the Pit River just outside Alturas.

Mr. Talbott has put a lot of time and effort into his stretch of river over the years, including extensive wetland developments conducted in cooperation with Modoc National Wildlife Refuge. CMRCD has joined that partnership to assist in channel improvement work for about 3000 feet of streambanks in a one mile reach. The project site is already fenced to allow management of livestock utilization, and Mr. Talbott is following standards established by the California Rangeland Water Quality Management Plan (CRWQMP).

We have removed old levee remnants that were eroding the banks and inhibiting the growth of more desirable riparian vegetation. Some 10,000 live willow cuttings have been planted in patterns designed to reduce the force of flood flows. Juniper boughs add structure to these "biotechnical" plantings. By the time those boughs decay, the new willow plantings should be well established. As we go to press, native grasses have been planted and erosion control netting is being laid along the bank edges.

Later this winter when flows are lowest, juniper and willow wattles plus juniper toe revetments will be installed at selected sections of the project reach. Additional plantings are set for next spring, to be followed by irrigation for the first season of growth.

Mr. Talbott has been on site every day, contributing hundreds of hours of help in the project's implementation, plus a lot of the materials and other costs. That's cooperation in action!

Project details are available upon request. We wish to express our appreciation to the Cantara Trustee Council for their support of this project.

**NEW FUNDING EXPECTED:** We are promised a shot of new funding this spring. Much of that is earmarked for two specific projects that have been on the drawing board for a while. In addition to work with various private landowners, we are happy to announce that cooperative efforts with the City of Alturas and the Pit River Tribe's X-L Ranch are also slated.

In addition to these field projects, funds will be available to assist landowners with the installation of riparian fencing. We'll provide the materials if you provide the labor. Landowners with frontage on the Pit River or primary tributaries are eligible for this support if they currently are covered by NRCS conservation plans, the CRWQMP, or similar plans. Those who are not currently under such plans will find opportunities to develop CRWQMPs for their land in order to qualify.

Note that this is a state funded program. If you currently are enrolled in EQIP or other USDA programs that will involve riparian fencing, this CMRCD sponsored support will help you meet the required 50% non-federal match requirement.

**DO YOU HAVE ANY PROJECT IDEAS FOR US?** CMRCD is always open to new project ideas and new partnerships. Our job is to respond to your concerns. Call us to get on the agenda for one of our regular board meetings to discuss your ideas with the directors and staff. Finding the right approach and the funding can take time, but if you are patient, we can usually get the job done. Our main requirement is that landowners show a long-term commitment to implementation of improved conservation practices through sound conservation planning.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Department of Conservation Watershed Coordination Program for funding the position of Watershed Coordinator for the last 34 months. We also appreciate the ongoing support from the State Water Resources Control Board / Central Valley Regional WQCB, Prop. 13 and the Cantara Trustee Council.



## BEFORE PHOTO

Talbott Project Photo 1A, Summer 2001: Relict channelization spoils (dirt piles) contribute sediment to the South Fork and inhibit natural vegetation.



## AFTER PHOTO

Talbott Project Photo 1A, December 2003: Same view. The spoils are gone and new willows and grasses are planted.



## BEFORE PHOTO

Talbott Project Photo 1C, Summer 2001: View upstream to the site in 1A and 1B, before excavation. Spoils from channelization are eroding soil into the stream and natural vegetation has not occurred.



## AFTER PHOTO

Talbott Project Photo 1D, December 2003: View upstream to the site in 1A and 1B. After excavation spoils are removed

# What a Year! 2003 River Center Highlights

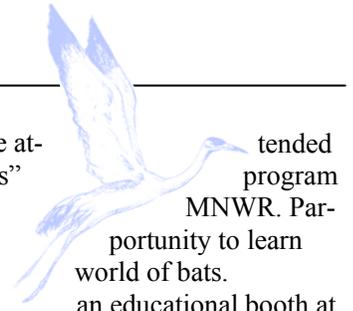
By Paula Fields, Education Coordinator

Many, many thanks to all that have supported the River Center and made our first year of operation so prosperous!!

## 2003 River Center Highlights:

- April through December over 500 Modoc County students toured the River Center. Through grant funding the River Center was able to cover school transportation costs for tours and natural resource related field trips.
- February ~ Laura VanAcker was hired as a part-time Education Coordinator with Modoc County Title III Funds.
- February ~ We assisted the Modoc High School Natural Resources Academy plant native grasses seed. Later the seedlings were transplanted by students to a restoration project along the Pit River on the Modoc National Wildlife Refuge (MNWR).
- May ~ The River Center Grand Opening Celebration
- May ~ The River Center and Modoc County Farm Bureau sponsored a countywide Water Awareness Poster Contest.
- June ~ Thirty youngsters participated in the River Center Kids Day.
- June ~ We sponsored Morgan Davis so that he could participate in the week long Nevada Range Camp.
- June ~ The Early Morning Goose Roundup event was co-sponsored by the MNWR and the River Center. The public assisted refuge biologists in rounding up flightless Canada geese, banding them, and releasing them unharmed back into the wild.
- July ~ In cooperation with the Modoc National Forest, MNWR and Carri Piroso, Agricultural Biologist with California Department of Food and Agriculture, we sponsored an invasive weed identification and collection project with the Modoc High School Natural Resources Academy.
- July ~ Both River Center Education Coordinators and three Modoc County teachers attended the Adopt A Watershed Program Leadership Program.
- July ~ Participated in Fandango Days by setting up an educational booth and providing fun activities for kids.

- August ~ Fifty plus people at the “Evening with the Bats” co-sponsored with the MNWR. Participants had a unique opportunity to learn more about the amazing world of bats.
- August ~ We also setup an educational booth at the Modoc County Fair and staff helped kids and the young-at-heart paint with fish molds.
- September ~ Modoc Migratory Bird Festival was held at the Veterans Memorial Park. River Center staff served on the Modoc Migratory Bird Festival Planning Committee.
- September ~ Approximately 25 volunteers helped give the Pit River a good fall cleaning as part of the 2nd Annual Pit River Cleanup Day.
- September ~ Paula Fields gave birth to Jacob Patrick Fields.
- October ~ Sally Clark’s 7th grade class completed a vegetation mapping project on the Pit River with help from the center.
- October ~ Participated in Countywide Teacher Conference.
- October ~ Laura VanAcker organized a fourth grade “Day in the Forest” for Alturas Elementary students at the Cedar Pass Snow Park and a 6th grade geology field trip for Modoc Middle School also at Cedar Pass.
- October ~ The River Center presented “Talk About Trees” an evening family event.
- December ~ Laura VanAcker organized a teacher workshop at the Alturas Elementary School. The workshop was designed to give teachers an opportunity to talk to Laura about their needs for natural resources field trips and activities for the 2004 school year. She also shared with teachers the various natural resources curriculum available to them at no charge through the center.
- December ~ Joyce Prisco and Mrs. Franklin’s 5th grade students designed a wonderful “Introduction to the River Center” PowerPoint presentation to be used by Modoc County Schools.



Wow...what a great year!



# Pit River Watershed Alliance News: Shaw Ranch Sets the Standard

By James Rickert, Pit River Watershed Alliance Coordinator

Somewhere between Nevada and the ocean, the meandering Pit River winds through pristine meadows shadowed by massive stands of Ponderosa Pines. At the junction of the historic Lassen and Applegate Trails, a rustic sign reads, 'Shawville, elevation 4270 feet, population 3'. This sign indicates the headquarters of the 2003 Pit River Watershed Alliance Stewardship Award winner, the Shaw Ranch.

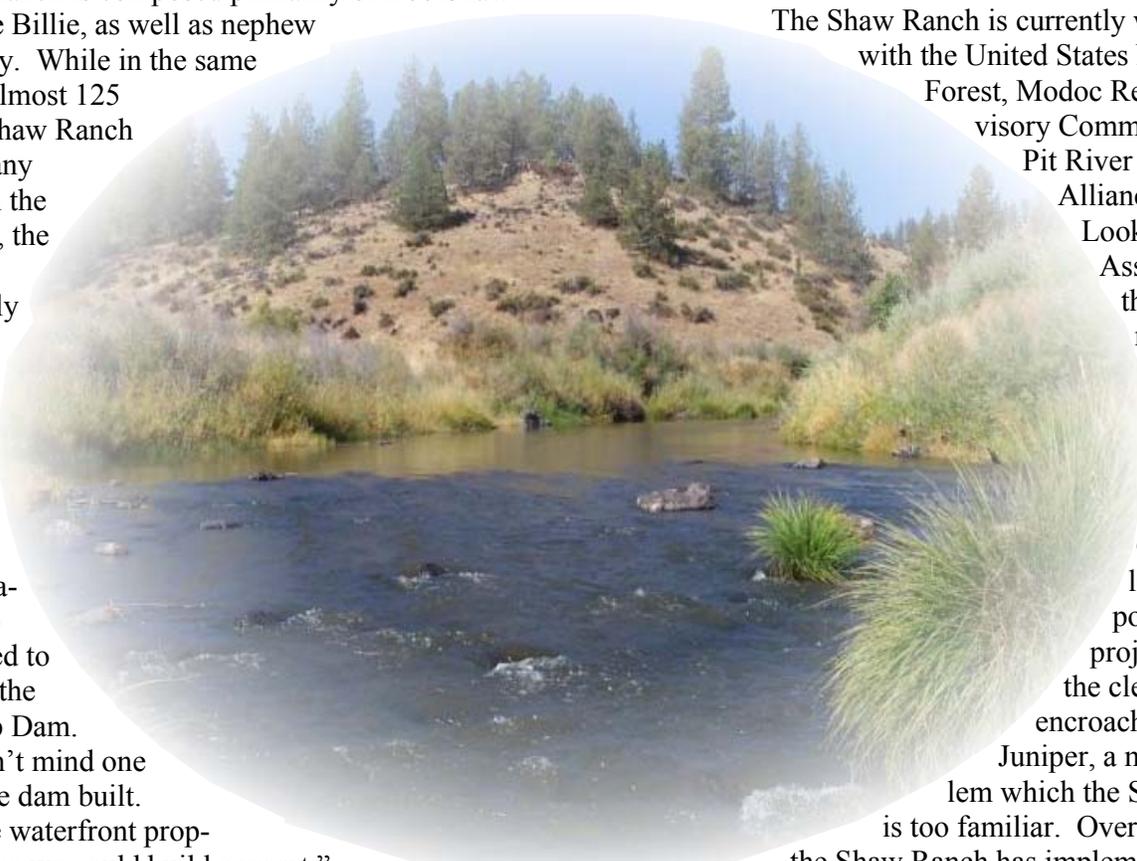
The Shaw Ranch is composed primarily of Bob Shaw and his wife Billie, as well as nephew Don Lindsay. While in the same family for almost 125 years, the Shaw Ranch has seen many changes. In the early 1900s, the ranch was also formerly the town of Craig, complete with a post office, school, and was even home to a Shell gas station. It also was analyzed to be home to the Allen Camp Dam. Bob wouldn't mind one bit to see the dam built. "We'd have waterfront property... maybe we could build a resort," chuckles Bob.

In 2002, an evolving development plan was implemented by the Shaw Ranch. This plan is complete with the protection of two and a half miles of riparian lands along the Pit River, minimum tillage farming to prevent soil loss, and intensive and rotational grazing practices to maximize agricultural productivity.

The Shaw Ranch primarily focuses on raising top quality livestock. Irrigated and non-irrigated fields adjacent to

the Pit River provide winter hay for their cattle. Alfalfa and grain crops are grown to help sustain the cattle through winter.

As the Master of the Lookout Grange #415 and a board member on the Pit Resource Conservation District, Bob is committed to the local community. Bob is also a shareholder in the Lookout Stock Association. While active with many local groups, the Shaw Ranch also works with local and federal agencies to improve local resource conditions that will benefit the ranch as well as the local community.



The Shaw Ranch is currently working with the United States National Forest, Modoc Resource Advisory Committee, the Pit River Watershed Alliance, and the Lookout Stock Association on the beginning stages of a meadow restoration project in Rose Creek Canyon. A large component of that project requires the clearing of encroaching western Juniper, a major problem which the Shaw Ranch is too familiar. Over the years, the Shaw Ranch has implemented numerous Juniper thinning projects over hundreds of acres to improve both grazing productivity and wildlife habitat, while also preventing catastrophic wildfires.

Noxious and invasive weeds are controlled on multiple fronts by the Shaw Ranch. The control of invasive weeds such as Medusahead, Scotch Thistle, Canadian Thistle and Mediterranean Sage have been a nightmare for the Shaw Ranch. Integrated Pest Management techniques have been implemented in conjunction with

*Continued on page 6*  
Page 5



**Central Modoc  
Resource Conservation District**

804 West 12th Street  
Alturas, CA 96101  
(530) 233-8872  
<http://cmrcd/carcd.org/>



*Funding for this newsletter has been provided in part by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) pursuant to Assistance Agreement No. C9-98998901-0 and any amendments thereto which has been awarded to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) for the implementation of California's Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the USEPA or the SWRCB, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use. Additional funding and staff support from the USDA, NRCS, Modoc County Office of Education, CA DOC, Prop. 13, Cantara Trustee Council, CALFED, Modoc National Forest and North Cal-Neva RC&D is greatly appreciated.*

## Shaw Ranch Sets the Standard (cont.)

---

efforts from the Modoc Noxious Weed Control Program to help decrease weed populations and minimize future infestations.

While residing in one of the most remote areas in California, the Shaw Ranch sure sets the standard for stewardship in the Pit River watershed. Working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Pit River Watershed Alliance, the Shaw Ranch has been able to secure funding to implement fencing and erosion controls on the Pit River. These projects will provide numerous benefits, ranging from wildlife and water quality as well as increased agricultural productivity. All these qualities have made the Shaw Ranch the 2003 Pit River Watershed Stewardship Award winner.

### **Congratulations to the Shaw Ranch!**

### **Central Modoc Resource Conservation District**

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

Dick Mackey, President  
David Hoxsey, Vice President  
Chris Knoch, Treasurer  
Jerry Hoxsey, Tim Martinez,  
Larry Osborne & Chico Pedotti

#### **STAFF:**

Laura Shinn, Business Manager  
Cliff Harvey, Watershed Coordinator  
Paula Fields, Education Coordinator  
Laura VanAcker, Education Coordinator

#### **BOARD MEETINGS:**

CMRCD meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month. Anyone is welcome to attend!