

Shasta-Trinity acquires South Fork river properties

The Shasta-Trinity National Forest has added three parcels and approximately 336 acres of land on the South Fork of the Trinity River.

The first parcel of 160 acres, which includes pristine coho salmon habitat, was purchased from Western Rivers Conservancy using Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act funds. The conservancy rehabilitated the site by removing five structures and a well before completing the transaction with the Forest Service. The land is located approximately eight miles northwest of Forest Glen off Highway 36.

"Western Rivers did a magnificent job of cleaning up the property before we finalized the transaction," Kathy Valenzuela, a Forest Service forester and realty specialist working on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, said. "It's a beautiful location, quiet and peaceful near the river, and they returned it to pristine condition."

Two additional parcels of land on the South Fork of the Trinity River, south of Hyampom, are known as French Ranch and Cold Creek, respectively, and make up a total of about 176 acres. The land was acquired in a land exchange with Stephen Hagen, president of Hagen and Sons Timber Co. Inc.

"The whole idea about the exchange just came to me one day,"

Hagen said. "I had these two pieces of property, but neither of them have roads on them. I bought them in 1999 and helicopter logged them, and they still looked good, but I knew I wasn't going to have much more use for them."

Both parcels of land were surrounded by the Shasta-Trinity National Forest and are high quality salmon and steelhead habitat.

Hagen approached the Forest Service in 2004 with what he considered a long-shot proposal to exchange the land for a piece of property he wanted in the McKinze Gulch area west of Weaverville High School.

"It's 140 acres adjacent to where I live now," Hagen said. "I think it's some of the nicest property in the Weaverville basin. It's got a 360-degree view with southern exposure."

Five years later, with environmental assessments and biological opinions complete, the deal is done.

"We appreciate Mr. Hagen's initiative and patience to help bring about this mutually beneficial exchange," Sharon Heywood, Shasta-Trinity National Forest Supervisor, said. "He received a parcel of land on which he plans to build a home in the Weaverville community, and the public benefits with beautiful additions of land suitable for all kinds of outdoor recreation."

BUILDINGS: Too costly?

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Based on last year's revenues versus costs, it is generating about \$10 a day and costing \$20, said County Administrative Officer Dero Forslund.

Sup. Howard Freeman said he is able to justify a negative cash flow if the building is serving community needs, "but when it's not, then I question keeping it." He said he believes other facilities that now exist in Weaverville could fill the void if the vets' hall was decommissioned.

General Services Director Mark Lockhart said that every time his department suggests raising rental rates, "you get users here pounding their fists and there ends up not being any changes. In the meantime, we go on trying to take care of the buildings and we're at a place where we can't really go on anymore. You don't have the resources to say keep going another three years."

He said the lapidary house in Lowden Park and the historic Blanchard Flat Schoolhouse in Hayfork Park are in such a state of disrepair now due to termite damage and dry rot that "they will dissolve themselves."

The Lee Ranch House in Weaverville's Lee Fong Park is on a similar track if deferred maintenance issues are not addressed there, he said.

The ranch house expenditures last year including maintenance, utilities and a new water heater and toilet were \$7,161. Revenues from rent were \$3,000 with the largest space once occupied by Shasta College remaining vacant and there's an estimated \$13,000 in deferred maintenance needs.

"We need to determine if we're being good stewards. It's deteriorating because we can't afford to maintain it and that's a shame," Freeman said, adding he thinks county ownership has become a liability to the Lee Ranch House.

Options were discussed including asking the local veterans to take over the Veterans Memorial Hall and the Trinity County Arts Council or Trinity County Historical Society to take the Lee Ranch House.

The county's buildings in Lowden Park are also generating insufficient revenues to cover deferred maintenance. The teen center has been vacant since last July due to state budget cuts to the former tenant and the building has about \$11,500 in deferred needs.

The cook shack is in sound condition, but needs new roll-up doors that cost an estimated \$10,000. It generates very little in revenue since its biggest users, the Weaverville Lions Club that built the structure and the

Weaverville/Douglas City Parks and Recreation District, are exempt from paying rent.

The recreation hall has some expensive deferred maintenance needs including floor repair and only one regular tenant, the Weaverville Parent Nursery School.

"We're only renting out 35 percent of the building and the rest is a money-sucking cavern," Freeman said. "Maybe we need to move the nursery school into the teen center and wipe the rest from the face of the earth. That discussion needs to happen."

In Hayfork, the Murray building housing the library and sheriff substation generated nothing in revenue last year for the middle section that's been vacant since Shasta College moved out. Finding another tenant for the empty section has proven difficult since there is currently an abundance of vacant space available for rent in Hayfork, Supervisor Reiss said.

The building needs repairs to the sewer system as well as a new roof, rain gutters and downspouts, carpets, and paint inside and out. The total estimated cost of deferred maintenance there is \$127,000.

"The lapidary house, teen center, rec hall and ranch house are facilities we should look at no longer having on our books. They are liabilities, not assets," Reiss said.

Freeman said he is "on the same page," but would add the vets' hall to the list.

CAO Forslund suggested that if the county were only maintaining three rental buildings instead of seven, it could do a much better job on the three.

"We can't continue to take away from the department that prepares these facilities for public use. We aren't funding them, but we keep expecting them to step up and take care of everything," Reiss said.

Lockhart noted his department also has the obligation to maintain all other county buildings housing county departments and many of them have issues as well, "so you are juggling two balls in the air right now, pretending they aren't coming down pretty soon."

The board didn't reach any conclusions during its strategic planning session, but members agreed to pursue possible alternatives with community residents and service groups.

"It's on us to get creative," said Sup. Judy Morris as she thanked General Services staff for maintenance work in the parks when there is no budget for it.

"I'm not sure we can solve any of this, but at least we're shedding some light," Reiss said.

Oil America Group Inc. doubles gold claim acreage

American Energy Production Inc. has announced that its wholly owned subsidiary Oil America Group Inc. has signed a letter of intent to acquire an additional 200 acres of placer gold claims in Trinity County. Roughly 140 acres is contiguous with the previously announced 200 acres currently operated by OAG in a joint venture with Dorado Gold LLC. The remaining 60 acres is located close to Helena, where the Trinity River

runs through the property.

Charles Bitters, president of AENP, said, "We are adding more Gold Claim acreage in the Trinity area because of two fundamental reasons; number one is competition from other potential mining operations that might enter the area and two, there is significant potential for finding additional large deposits of gold along the Canyon Creek proven area."

Sustainable soil workshop at Young Family Ranch

Learn about sustainable soil management through a hands-on gardening workshop from noon to 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 28, at the historic Young Ranch, 260 Oregon St., Weaverville — then enjoy baked goods from the ranch's earth oven.

All ages are invited to this easy gardening event. Kids' activities will include digging, bulb planting and learning about how worms improve soil. There will be planting of orna-

mental and garlic bulbs and discussion of soil improvement. Informative materials will be provided.

This workshop is part of the Young Family Ranch Healthful Foods and Family Gardening Workshop series, sponsored by Young Family Ranch, Inc. and the Trinity County Resource Conservation District. The series was begun with a grant from the Trinity County Child Abuse Prevention Council.

MARIJUANA: Moratorium

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The revised draft clarifies inspection provisions to ensure that no inspection of private property occurs unless the owner consents or a lawful search warrant is obtained.

It also provides for contact with a property owner to ensure there is reasonable time and opportunity to address and resolve violations the owner may not have been aware of.

On the issue of storefront marijuana collectives, the board will consider a temporary moratorium to

block any from opening in the county while the county planning commission considers possible zoning restrictions that could be enacted to regulate where and how collectives operate.

There are currently no storefront collectives operating in Trinity County, but plans are reportedly under way to open one in Hayfork.

Enactment of a temporary moratorium requires a four-fifths vote of the Board of Supervisors and could be extended from 45 days to as much as two years with future board approval.

Compassionate use group sets goals

TRINITY JOURNAL STAFF

A member of the Compassionate Use Association of Trinity County spoke about the association's goals.

The member, Edward Guenette of Hayfork, said the association is an unincorporated nonprofit chartered by the Secretary of State for educational and charitable purposes.

The association is seeking to open an office in Hayfork, and rumors have been circulating, Guenette said, resulting in the medical marijuana-related moratorium to be considered by supervisors next week.

Asked if marijuana will be dispensed to medical marijuana patients from the location, Guenette said, "To my knowledge the answer is no."

Guenette is not on the association's board, but has advised the association's members in his capacity as an independent business consultant.

Guenette said the group's purpose is to inform Trinity County residents about issues surrounding the legal status of medical marijuana and provide information so opinions are not fed by "innuendo and fear."

"This is a very polarized issue," he said. "It also happens to be the legal right of citizens of California if they qualify to choose to use medicinal cannabis under a doctor's direction and approval."

He said the association has made a charitable contribution for a summer swimming program and is exploring contributions to local scholarship funds.

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Garden Gnome Solar Light \$5
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Friday & Saturday, November 27 & 28 while supplies last

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Santa will be at the Bandstand from 1 to 3 p.m.

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Lucky Bucks are good through Dec. 31 and can be spent at any participating merchant!

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Sustainable Soil Workshop at The Young Family Ranch

A COMMUNITY TRUST AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE PROPERTY
260 Oregon Street, Weaverville

Saturday, November 28, noon - 2 p.m.

Learn about sustainable soil management through a fun hands-on gardening workshop. Then enjoy baked goods from the Ranch's earth oven. All ages are invited to this easy gardening event. Kids' activities will include easy digging, bulb planting and learning about how worms improve soil. We will be planting ornamental and garlic bulbs as we discuss soil improvement. Informative materials will be provided. All participants will get to observe how well the new earth oven works. Community members are encouraged to bring items to bake as well.

Everyone is welcome to come and participate in this fun project. (No pets please.)

For more information 623-6004 or 778-0120

