

TEHAMA COUNTY



COUNTY INFORMATION

Size: 2,962 sq. miles (7,672 sq. kilometers)

Population: 56,039 (as of 2000 US Census)

Location: North-Western Sierra/Cascade

Official Website: www.co.tehama.ca.us/

CONSERVATION STORY

The Nature Conservancy Protects Un-fragmented Habitat of Lassen Foothills

In September 2007, The Nature Conservancy purchased Childs Meadow in Tehama County and successfully preserved the area from encroaching development. Located in the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Range foothill regions, the meadow is a 1,440-acre mix of creeks, springs, mountain meadows and conifer forest south of Lassen Volcanic National Park. It rests at an elevation of 5,000 feet and is well-known for providing spectacular views along State Highways 36 and 89.

For many years, the Simmons family moved their horse herd between Childs Meadow and Chico. In 2007, the forward-thinking Simmons family opted to keep Childs Meadow connected to its ranching roots and create a conservation outcome rather than sell the property to a developer.



Commercial developers offer alluring profits to landowners. Though many developers propose unsustainable development plans, the money offered is frequently difficult to turn down. When landowners sell their land to developers, “fragmentation,” or the

parceling off of wildlife habitat, occurs. This, combined with the steady growth of rural sprawl (also called “rural ranchette”), threatens native wildlife and causes damage to natural ecosystems, resources, scenic landscapes, and rural economies alike.

However, with the help of the Simmons family and the Nature Conservancy, Childs Meadow has escaped from fragmentation and rural sprawl. Childs Meadow is a recent acquisition in the Nature Conservancy’s “Lassen Foothills Project, which aims to protect important wildlife habitat lands stretching from Lassen Peak to the Sacramento River.

Together with fee-simple acquisitions like Childs Meadow, the Nature Conservancy has turned to conservation easements as a means of protecting the Lassen Foothills. Conservation easements are voluntary land preservation agreements that restrict future development while allowing landowners to retain ownership and management of their lands. So far, many areas of the Lassen Foothills, like the Simmons Ranch, remain protected because large private cattle ranches have not yet been sold and subdivided.

Like the foothills surrounding it, Childs Meadow houses a large numbers of rare and declining bird species. Willow flycatchers, Yellow Warblers and Greater Sandhill Cranes find important riparian habitat along Gurnsey Creek, which winds through it. The findings of Point Reyes Bird Observatory monitoring data show that this area supports one of the most diverse bird populations in the region.

“Childs Meadow is especially critical for birds and the property’s creek plays an important role in the regional watershed,” says Rich Reiner, a senior ecologist for The Nature Conservancy. “Plus, these meadows are also a keystone of the rural economy because of the grazing land they provide.”

The meadow also serves as the headwaters of Deer Creek and helps protect a rare salmon run further downstream. Like most mountain meadows, Childs Meadow stores cold water during winter storms and slowly releases it during the hot, dry summer. This cool water is critical to the survival of Deer Creek’s spring-run salmon, a genetically distinct sub-species listed as threatened by state and federal resource agencies.

One of the most internationally successful conservation organizations in history, the Nature Conservancy encourages people to learn more about these issues by visiting their website at www.nature.org. They also encourage people to visit the Lassen Foothills and experience it for yourself. Child's Meadow is both a working ranch and an ecological preserve and is only open on a guided tour basis. Large group tours can be arranged by contacting the Nature Conservancy. Within the Lassen Foothills Project, seasonal guided tours are also available at Dye Creek Preserve, Vina Plains Preserve, and McCloud River Preserve.



Among the Nature Conservancy's partners in the Lassen Foothills are the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy, Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy, Mill Creek Conservancy, the Center for Land Based Learning, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, California Department of Fish and Game and Wildlife Conservation Board, CALFED, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and PG&E.

ORGANIZATIONS

Butte Environmental Council

Contact Name: Barbara Vlamis
Address: 116 W. Second Street, Suite 3, Chico, CA 95928
Phone: 530.891.6424
Email: barbarav@becnet.org
Website URL: www.becnet.org

Counties of Activity: Butte, Glenn, Tehama
Issue Focus: air quality, botanical, global warming, land use, water supply, watershed quality, wildlife and habitat
Group Type: advocacy, litigation, restoration, coalition, outreach

Public Events: Annual Endangered Species Faire (www.endangeredspeciesfaire.org); Annual Bidwell Park and Creeks of Chico Clean Up
Volunteer Opportunities: Events coordination and participation, advocacy (letter writing, monitoring local issues and agencies, public hearings participation), photography, newsletter (article writing, proof-reading, advertising sales, mailing assistance), fundraising (including events), in-office assistance.
Accepts Donations: yes

Description: For 31 years the Butte Environmental Council has been a leading voice for protecting the environment, public health, and health of all species in the northern Sacramento valley and foothills. BEC's mission is to protect the Sacramento Valley Foothills Ecoregion and our quality of life. We do this through the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the land, air, and water.

BEC assists an average of 500 area resident each month with calls involving land use regulations and law, toxic threats, habitat destruction, and solid waste referrals. A small, dedicated staff and large cadre of volunteers implement our programs.

Some major current efforts include stopping the export of the northern Sacramento Valley's and foothill's ground water; protecting vanishing vernal pool habitat throughout California; and educating the community about toxics in our air, water, and soil through our Chico Urban Streams Alliance program and our toxics outreach and education program.

Citizens for a Healthy Community

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 153

Red Bluff, CA 96080

Phone: (530) 526-8750

Email: rclapdirch@yahoo.com

County: Tehama

Issue Focus: air quality, land use, global warming, transportation, water supply, watershed quality

Group Type: volunteer

Public Events: Environmental Faire in Chico, CA; Tehama County Health Fair; Earth Day event in Redding, CA; fund raising events: yard sales, karaoke event, silent auctions and chocolate sales; Educational Forum with Sanitec medical waste treatment company in Red Bluff, CA.

Volunteer Opportunities: computer research, passing out flyers, letter writing, phone calls, signature collecting, attending public meetings and speaking out.

Accepts Donations: Yes (501c3 pending)

Description: The Citizens for a Healthy Community maintains vigilance of the democratic process in Tehama County. We watch for legal notices and public hearings pertaining to environmental and public health issues. For its work the CHC has received one grant for \$5,000 about a year ago.

Currently, the CHC is in litigation with a proposed plasma-arc medical waste treatment facility in Tehama County. The company planned to truck in 40 tons of medical waste a day and run the facility 24/7 with no EIR. We educated the community through news articles, letters, and brought expert witnesses to the Tehama County Air Pollution Control

District hearing in the Fall of 2005. After 5 months of sworn testimony, in December 2005, our Hearing Board revoked their construct permits, but we continue to keep a watchful eye on the public health of our community.

We also educated our community regarding another company (Sanitec) that treats medical waste with microwaves which was interested in coming to our community. CHC members invited the company to an educational forum in our town of Red Bluff, as well as invited all citizens, and public officials to attend a presentation by the company, followed by a question and answer period.

Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy

Contact Name: Holly Savage
Address: PO Box 307 – Vina, CA 96092
Phone: (530) 839-2105

Email: deercreekwatershed@gmail.com

Website: N/A

County: Tehama

Issue Focus: watershed health, wildlife and habitat conservation, sustainable land use, water quantity/quality, fuels/fire management, flood management/control, sustainable forestry, responsible recreation, invasive species

Volunteer Opportunities: Yes, contact the organization

Accepts Donations: Yes

Public Events: Monthly Board Meetings, Stakeholder Workshops/Presentations, Annual Meeting and Watershed Tours

Description:

The Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy (DCWC) is a non-profit organization made up entirely of landowners who own land within the Deer Creek watershed. DCWC is dedicated to preserving natural resources, private property rights, and responsible land stewardship. The Conservancy joined together with resource managers to protect the unique ecological values associated with the Deer Creek watershed. The Conservancy focuses its attention on conserving the natural resources of Deer Creek through sensitive stewardship practices. The Conservancy also serves as a forum for communication and group action within the Deer Creek watershed. By working in a cooperative, organized manner, the Conservancy identifies needs and implements programs and projects to achieve its goal of protecting the resources located in the Deer Creek watershed. By taking an active role in the Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy, landowners help shape the direction of these activities.

In 1998 the Conservancy completed the development of a Watershed Management Plan (Plan) for Deer Creek. The Plan consists of both a description of existing conditions of the watershed and a comprehensive Watershed Management Strategy (Strategy) that

outlines implementation measures to meet private concerns and fulfill the public's objectives.

The Plan and Strategy reflect the diversity of interests and natural resources in the watershed. The Strategy represents a successful collaborative effort to review and discuss new data/information, identify any new issues and concerns and revise and update watershed goals. The watershed-related goals in the Strategy focus on cooperative, watershed-wide management actions that integrate and implement local, state and federal programs. The recommendations in the Strategy emphasize preventative rather than reactive management actions and include advisory notes. The Strategy reflects community based watershed goals that promote and sustain; healthy fish and wildlife populations, clean and reliable water, agricultural based land use, reduced flood damage, responsible land stewardship and private property rights.

DCWC is currently involved in 4 grant-funded projects and is seeking funding to carry out additional projects and activities. The DOC Watershed Coordinator Grant scope of work encompasses numerous activities and funds the Coordinator's efforts to carry out the recommendations of the Strategy.

Goals

Maintain and improve the high water quality of Deer Creek.

Maintain and enhance anadromous fish populations by protecting and restoring functional habitats and reducing negative impacts.

Improve watershed health through best management practices.

Develop feasible solutions to the flooding problem on lower Deer Creek that are sensitive to the needs and values of the local landowners.

Maintain watershed health through by sustaining the Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy and Coordinators.

Preserve the ecological, cultural and economic heritage of the watershed.

The Nature Conservancy – Lassen Foothills Project

Contact: Jake Jacobson

Address: 500 Main Street
Chico, CA 95928

Phone: (530) 897-6370

Email: jjacobson@tnc.org

Website: www.nature.org

County: Shasta, Tehama

Issue Focus: botanical, land use, watershed quality, wildlife and habitat

Group Type: volunteer, staffed

Public Events: guided tours

Volunteer Opportunities: restoration opportunities

Accepts Donations: yes

Description: The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on earth by protecting the lands and waters the need to survive. TNC is an international organization that takes a non-confrontational approach to conservation work. In the Lassen Foothills, TNC works collaboratively with landowners and other partners to preserve the important biological and ecological resources of eastern Tehama county and southeastern Shasta county.

The Lassen Foothills Project area includes seven important tributary streams to the Sacramento River, extensive blue oak woodlands and four vernal pool complexes. Conservation targets include Steelhead trout, several wild Chinook salmon runs, neo-tropical migratory birds, vernal pool plants and animals, the largest migratory deer herd in California and numerous other at-risk species.

TNC's primary protection tool in the Lassen Foothills is the acquisition of conservation easements, typically over large cattle ranches. TNC owns three properties in fee in the Lassen Foothills: the 4,600-acre Vina Plains Preserve (a vernal pool complex north of Chico), the 1,844-acre Wildcat Ranch (an oak woodland on the North Fork of Battle Creek) and 1,440-acre Childs Meadow (a mountain meadow near Lassen Volcanic National Park). TNC also manages the 37,540-acre Dye Creek Preserve (an oak woodland in multiple watersheds east of Los Molinos) on behalf of the State Controller Environmental Trust.

Shasta Land Trust

Contact Name: Ben Miles, Executive Director

Address: P.O. Box 992026, Redding, CA 96099-2026
(office located at 1918 West St., Redding)

Phone: 530-241-7886

Email: info@shastalandtrust.org

Website URL: www.shastalandtrust.org

County/Counties: Shasta, Tehama

Issue Focus: land use, wildlife and habitat

Group Type: conservation

Public Events: Nature hikes, Bird walks, Conservation property tours, Land restoration workdays, Stargazing trips, Mountain bike rides, Horseback rides, Wine tastings

Volunteer Opportunities: event planning, office, watershed restoration, land stewardship, photography, newsletter, website, other

Accepts Donations: Yes

Description: Shasta Land Trust is dedicated to permanently protecting and enhancing natural habitats, agricultural lands, and open spaces.

Founded in 1998, Shasta Land Trust works with private landowners, statewide and national organizations, and government agencies to accomplish its land conservation mission. The Trust protects land permanently and directly, by purchasing conservation easements, accepting easement donations, and buying land. Shasta Land Trust's current areas of focus are the Cow Creek and Bear Creek Watersheds in the foothills east of Redding, and the Fall River Valley. Currently, Shasta Land Trust holds over 11,000 acres of prime wildlife habitat, streams and rivers, cattle ranchlands, and productive lands in conservation easements and land purchases.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND AGENCIES

Tehama County Board of Supervisors

Mailing Address: PO Box 250,
Red Bluff, CA 96080
Phone: 530 527-4655

Assembly Representative – 2nd District

Counties Represented: Modoc, Siskiyou, Shasta, Tehama, Glenn, Colusa, Yolo, Sutter
Website: <http://republican.assembly.ca.gov/members/a2/index.aspx>

Senate Representative – 4th District:

Counties Represented: Butte, Colusa, Del Norte, Glenn, Nevada, Placer, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity and Yuba counties
Website: <http://republican.sen.ca.gov/web/4/>