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# **Pit River Watershed Alliance**

## ***Annual Report***

### **FY01**

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## **I. Partnership Overview**

The Pit River Watershed Alliance (PRWA) is a *non-regulatory* organization that is composed of federal, state, county, tribes, individuals, and local agencies. The effort of the group is to collectively pursue watershed health and restoration within the Pit River Drainage through watershed restoration projects, local community and economic support, and resource education.

The Pit River watershed, which is about 3 million acres in size, is located in northeastern California and provides 20% of the water to the Sacramento River, a major river within California. The watershed is sparsely populated (less than 10,000 people in each of the three counties) and composed of a 60-40 split of federal lands to private lands. The primary use of the private lands is for agriculture/livestock production and forestry practices. Management of federal lands ranges from multi-use, such as the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, to more focus management such as the Modoc National Wildlife Refuge.

The PRWA was formed in March 2000, when the U.S. Forest Service convened a public meeting to explore the opportunity to establish such a group. The ideas for an integrated approach to watershed management was the result of the Modoc National Forest's Pit River Watershed Restoration project, which was selected as one of 12 national demonstration projects that emphasize watershed restoration through adaptive management activities. The overwhelming support for such a group culminated in the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that establishes the Mission and Vision of the PRWA.

The PRWA is in its infancy stage as an organization, with fiscal year 2001 being the first year of any major efforts. Thus, this is the first annual report for the PRWA. However, many of its members have been practicing watershed management for numerous years.

## II. Partnership Goals

The partners for the PRWA are composed of land management agencies, such as the U.S. Fish Wildlife Refuge Management System, Bureau of Land Management, U.S Forest Service; tribal governments, private land management companies, such as Sierra Pacific Industries; regulatory agencies, such as the Central Valley Water Control Board, Natural Resource Conservation Services, as well as local agencies and districts, such as Central Modoc Resource Conservation District, City of Alturas, Modoc County Board of Supervisors, and the North Cal-Neva Resource Conservation and Development Council. This broad range of membership provides for a diverse interest and goals for watershed management within the Pit River Drainage. Contained in the MOU for the PRWA are the collective goals for the "partners". The Mission and Vision states the collective goals for PRWA. The primary purpose of the partners of the PRWA is "to foster partnerships that achieve integrated long-term cultural, economic and environmental health of the watershed through active community participation". With that goal in mind the PRWA established three main objectives for the first five years. These objectives are contained in the MOU. They are to:

1. Obtain funding to conduct watershed assessments to determine base-line conditions and identify additional opportunities for improvements.
2. Implement key watershed improvement and demonstration projects throughout the watershed.
3. Obtain funding to develop a computerized watershed database connected to a geographic information system including available monitoring data, digital photos, and maps.

In concert with these broad based goals, the partners of the PRWA desire to:

4. Increase the capacity of the organization.
5. Emphasize the need to continually outreach through educational avenues.

## III. Accomplishments

For FY 01, the PRWA was extremely successful in making great strides toward achieving their agreed-to goals. Most of the projects are ongoing and completion of each is dependent on securing additional funding. The success to date of each project ensures that there is a strong likelihood the additional sources as well as current sources of funding will be obtained. Following is a summary of accomplishments by each objective:

**Objective 1**– The PRWA obtained \$40,000 in funding from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board to establish baseline water parameters of the main stem of the Pit River. The parameters include flow, nutrients, pathogens, sediment, chemical,

macro invertebrates, and fish populations. In addition the Central Modoc Resource Conservation District (CMRCD) obtain funding for (ADD CLFF HARVEYS INPUT. PRWA was successful in obtaining a grant from the Cal-Fed Bay Delta Program for initiating a watershed assessment for the Pit River watershed. This project, which was funded for approximately \$460,000, will describe the current condition of the watershed in terms of its physical, biological and social condition and identify opportunities for watershed enhancement or restoration. The assessment should be completed within two years and will be used as a basis for future project identification.

**Objective 2.** The major projects that were implemented were the Upper Pit River Watershed Enhancement and Restoration Project (Modoc NF) and the Central Modoc RCD Upper Pit Rehabilitation Project). In regards to the Modoc NF project;

- 25 acres of wetland enhancement
- 6000 acres of hazardous fuel reduction through burning or mechanical thinning
- 5000 acres of layout for out year fuel treatment
- Two in-stream watershed restoration projects
- 26 range land allotment decision which improve or maintain riparian conditions, and
- 1700 acres of wildlife enhancement

The Central Modoc RCD project included:

- 3000 feet of riparian restoration on the main stem of the Pit River
- Re-vegetation along main stem of Pit River

**Objective 3**– The PRWA is pursuing funding through the Natural Resource Conservation Service to obtain the appropriate GIS hardware and software. When obtained, the information from the baseline work (Objective 1) can be electronically stored for future references and incorporated into project monitoring.

**Objective 4**- The PRWA obtained funding to establish a Watershed Coordinator position. Part of the duties of the Coordinator is to initiate outreach for additional members/partners for the Alliance as well as securing funding for continuation of the Objectives of the PRWA. The funding is approximately \$100,000, with the primary contributors being the State of California Proposition 13, Bay-Delta Watershed program and the Forest Service.

**Objective 5**- The Central Modoc RCD in concert with the local school district and the PRWA, have established a River Center in Alturas, which is being developed to serve as an educational/informational center for schools and general public. Funding has been obtained for a Coordinator for the River Center. The program, which includes rent of a temporary location, Coordinator, field trips and educational materials, is funded by a \$160,000 state grant. The PRWA is proud of this effort and believes that the future of watershed management resides in continual education of both old and young.

## IV. Challenges and Change

The challenges for the Pit River Watershed Alliance are to build the trust and confidence of its members to work collectively toward a goal. Exchange of information sometimes becomes “bogged” by federal and state regulations. The goal of the Alliance is to implement the intent of the regulations without jeopardizing the spirit of cooperation and partnerships.

## V. Future Actions and Opportunities

The PWRA has established the primary objectives for the next five years. The objectives will be evaluated on yearly basis to determine if 1) they are still appropriate, 2) are there conditions which would warrant new objectives, and 3) how successful have the organization and its member been in achieving the objectives.

In regards to opportunities, the primary emphasis will be to expanding the capacity of the organization and to secure of funding for implementation of the projects.

## VI. Partnership Budget/Costs

The PWRA will continue to seek outside funding to implement its goals and objectives. The following table identified some of the respective partnership budget for the PRWA:

Members		
Central Modoc RCD		\$390,000
North Cal-Neva RC&D		\$100,000
Modoc National Forest		\$1,200,000
Contributors		
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation		\$100,000
Warner Mountain Range Permittees		\$50,000

## VII. Partnership Contacts.

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