

MODOC COUNTY



COUNTY INFORMATION

Size: 4, 203 sq. miles (10,886 sq. kilometers)

Population: 9,449 (as of 2000 US Census)

Location: Northernmost Sierra

Official Website: www.modocounty.us

CONSERVATION STORY

The Central Modoc River Center Brings Education to Pit River Neighbors

Modoc County is the North-Easternmost County in California. The Pit River runs through the center of this remote county and is the longest tributary to the Sacramento River, stretching approximately 110 miles from the Warner Mountains to the Sacramento River.

Water flows into the Pit River from hundreds of tributaries that join it in its course. A series of small dams over large portions of the river provide for irrigation on farm and ranch lands.

While diversion structures and small dams create a plentiful source of irrigation water, the diversion structures also result in bare banks during winter months that are subject to erosion during high flows.



To combat the erosion, the Central Modoc Resource Conservation District (CMRCD) is working with local land-owners on restoring the Pit River through their Upper Pitt River Watershed Enhancement and Protection Project.

The CMRCD states that, “With increasing state/federal attention on non-point source pollution (i.e. from agriculture, timber, grazing, etc.), it

is important to demonstrate that a locally directed watershed management program can be effective.”⁽¹⁾

The CMRCD and the River Center participate with the Pit River Watershed Alliance, made up of other agencies and landowners, in developing a Pit River Watershed Management Strategy that addresses watershed issues.

The CMRCD employs restoration techniques utilized by Resource Conservation Districts all over the Sierra. These methods include planting stream bank vegetation to stabilize banks, removing invasive non-native species, planting appropriate vegetation to improve water quality, and otherwise improving the health and quality of the watershed through general restoration.

The creation of the Central Modoc River Center represents the district’s efforts at educating the general public. The center’s mission is to “foster natural resource stewardship and promote the sustainability of the local community” by teaching elementary through high-school students about environmental science and their local watershed.

Valerie Lantz, Director of the Central Modoc River Center, explains that the center offers a variety of programs: “We host kindergarten through 12th grade classes, hold watershed events and activities at the River Center, organize tours for geology, bird watching, nature-scaping and other watershed related subjects, have a booth at the annual Modoc District Fair and help organize the ‘Wings of the Warners Migratory Bird Festival’ and other workshops too.”

One particularly popular offering at the River Center is information and birding kits for the Basin and Range Birding Trail. “The children get so excited about having the binoculars, their little fingers grab them so quickly,” chuckled Lantz.

Another student favorite is the Watershed Adoption Program.” Twice each year, this program takes students K-12 on field trips to the Upper Pit River watershed. With assistance from natural resource specialists from the River Center, the Modoc National Wildlife Refuge, the Pit River Watershed Alliance, and the Modoc National Forest, these students help with projects that may include wetland restoration, animal and plant observation and inventories, water quality monitoring, soil sampling, and other enhancement projects. Students then create a portfolio tracing their watershed experience and activities through the years, an important memento of their volunteer experience.



To volunteer with, visit, donate to or for more information on the Central Modoc River Center visit the website www.centralmodocrivercenter.org. For more information on the Central Modoc Resource Conservation District visit the site <http://cmrcd.carcd.org/>.

ORGANIZATIONS

Central Modoc River Center (The River Center)

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Website URL: www.centralmodocrivercenter.org

Counties of Activity: Modoc, Shasta, Lassen

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

Group Type: non-profit, volunteer, staffed, private interests, partnerships with schools, governmental agencies and other organizations

Public Events: The River Center is open to the public Tuesday through Friday, 9 AM to 4 PM, Children’s Fair (May), Tours & Workshops (various subjects and times), Summer Camp week (June), Modoc District Fair (August), Wings of the Warners Migratory Bird Festival (Sept), Pit River Clean-Up (Sept), Day in the District (Sept or Oct), Mixer/Open House w/ Chamber of Commerce.

Volunteer Opportunities: Teaching environmental education on outdoor field trips, Staffing activities at the River Center including: improvement projects, fish and turtle care, gardening, scrapbooking, membership mailings, computer support, event planning, event staffing, research, photography, writing, tour guide.....and more!

Accepts Donations: Yes

Description: The Central Modoc River Center's mission is: to foster natural resource stewardship and to promote the sustainability of the local community. The Central Modoc River Center (CMRC) or 'The River Center' as its known locally, began in 2003.

The River Center provides educational information and programs related to watershed conservation. The River Center is an interpretive facility designed to educate the public about natural resources and watershed health, focusing on the Pit River. The River Center's Pit River Adoption Project provides environmental education on two outdoor field trips per year for Modoc County's K through 8 classes and supervises interns from Alturas High School who mentor the younger children. The River Center hosts workshops, classes, tours, field trips and community meetings. The River Center develops presentations and activities for community festivals and events. The Center's facility contains interpretative displays, exhibits, an interactive nocturnal room and aquaria. It has displays that showcase Modoc County habitats, products, culture, art, native plants, geology, birds, and wildlife. The River Center serves as a repository for watershed research and information pertaining to the Pit River watershed.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND AGENCIES

Senate Representative – 1st District:

Counties Represented: Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Lassen, Modoc, Mono, Plumas and Sierra, as well as portions of Nevada, Placer and Sacramento Counties.

Website: <http://republican.sen.ca.gov/web/1/>

Assembly Representative – 2nd District

Counties Represented: Modoc, Siskiyou, Shasta, Tehama, Glenn, Colusa, Yolo, Sutter

Website: <http://republican.assembly.ca.gov/members/a2/index.aspx>