

Effort under way to promote river friendly landscaping

In an area that features some of Mother Nature's finest work, Truckee homeownership has its joys and unique responsibilities.

Many live close to bodies of water such as Donner Lake, the Truckee River, and Donner and Alder Creeks. However, many of these properties may actually have a negative impact on the region's water quality. The Truckee River Watershed Council and the Sierra Nevada Alliance have kicked off a River Friendly Landscaping campaign to help remedy the situation.

"Basically, the Watershed Council is asking homeowners to voluntarily install erosion control on their properties," Andy Otto, director of Land Use Compatibility Programs, said in a statement. "When implemented correctly, these landscaping methods will help reduce soil erosion, prevent storm water runoff and stop pollutants from eventually making their way to the Truckee River. If they get to the water, the pollutants cause harm to the watershed and to the fish and animals that feed there."

The Watershed Council and Sierra Nevada Alliance have identified neighborhoods where they hope homeowners will jump onboard the River Friendly Landscaping program. These neighborhoods are close to sensitive lakes and streams. The following property types are of special interest: homes on steep slopes, sites with highly compacted soil, and homes that are close to surface water. There are four identified neighborhoods: north shore of Donner Lake, Tahoe Donner, and the Truckee River corridor in Placer County, and along East and West River Streets. Evaluations will be given on a first come, first serve basis. While any homeowner in any neighborhood can participate in the program, homes in the

focus areas will be given priority.

Interested property owners are encouraged to call (530) 550.8760 to schedule a free site evaluation. Based upon the assessment, an engineering consultant will design a plan with recommendations (free of charge) for the property based on erosion control issues. When the project is completed, River Friendly Landscaping staffers will once again visit the property. Upon certification of completion, the homeowner will be eligible for up to a \$400 rebate.

In addition to reducing sediment and pollution in the Truckee River, a native plant/low maintenance landscaping makeover may increase property value and aesthetics.

The program has been funded by California through the State Water Resources Control Board.

An informational mixer is slated for June 19 from 4-6pm at the Truckee Donner Public Utility District's Patricia S. Sutton Memorial conservation garden. Call (530) 550.8760, ext. 4 to RSVP to River Friendly Landscaping or just show up. You can also visit www.truckeeriverwc.org for more information.