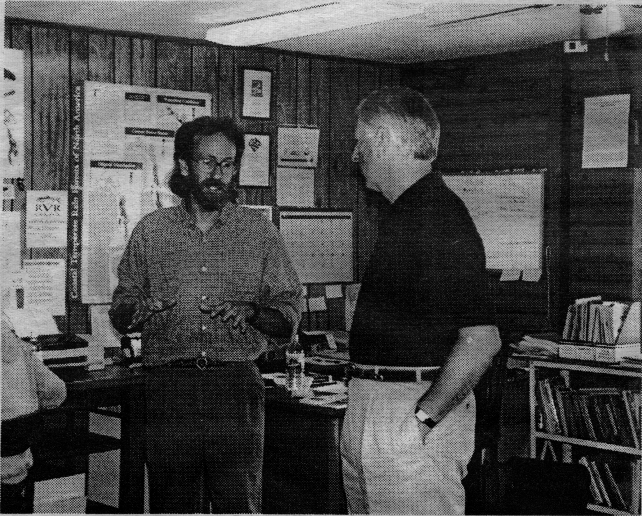
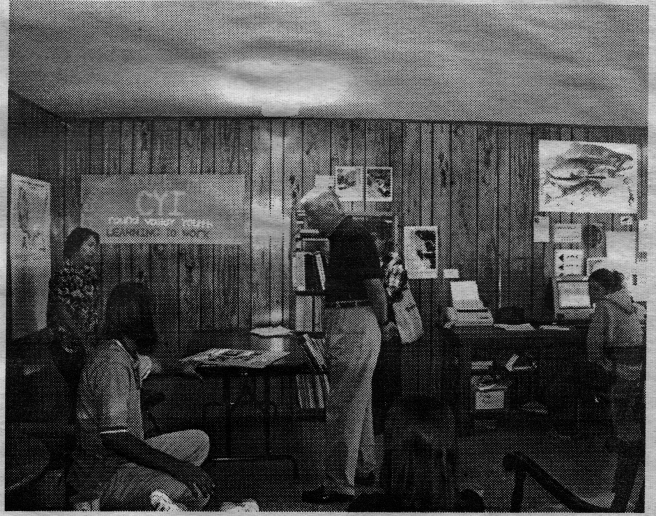


## COMMUNITY FOCUS

# U.S. Congressman Mike Thompson spends a day touring Round Valley, August 20, 2001



After a 2.5 hour drive from Fort Bragg, the congressman arrived in Covelo at 10:30am. His first stop was the Round Valley Resource Center, the recipient of a national "Spirit Award" for its community development work over the last four years. Here, RVR Center coordinator Brian Dick explains to the congressman the network of projects generated by the RVR Center, including watershed education and restoration projects funded by SB 271, an initiative developed by Thompson while he was a state senator; a culinary herb gardening development project, a small timber development project and the Creative Youth Initiative, funded by the USDA; and the Watershed Steward project funded by AmeriCorps. The RVR Center is also supported by Federal Option 9 funds. The congressman commented that it was impressive to see the range of endeavors centered at the site, and the number of young people directly involved in creating their community's future.



Evan Peterson showed the congressman pictures of activities taken on by the new Creative Youth Initiative, which was developed to encourage and inspire watershed related entrepreneurial activities for youngsters in our community.



At left, Rob Hatfield described for the congressman how he grew up in Covelo and returned last fall, after earning a degree in Water Resources Management at HSU, to be a Watershed Steward through the AmeriCorps program.



A tour of the Native Plant nursery tended by members of the Creative Youth Initiative.



The congressman's next stop was the Round Valley Indian Housing Project. After a ride through the project and seeing the recent home renovations and improvements, he met with board members Caliesta Hart and Clifford Sloan and Housing Director Wanda Balderama (pictured above) as well as other Housing Staff. They discussed the need for more coordination of services with the various federal agencies associated with providing Indian housing components, and the hidden costs of infrastructure encountered by the board in developing new housing.



At the Round Valley Indian Health Center, in addition to having a TeleMed Conference with UC Davis, the congressman played guinea pig so the staff could demonstrate how quick and easy it was to do retinal scans with their new Tele Ophthalmology equipment. The scans, which are quick and "absolutely painless" will be used in the Center's Diabetic Monitoring Program. They can be easily sent to an ophthalmologist in Ukiah over the internet, where they are reviewed to monitor macular degeneration—a silent, yet common cause of blindness in diabetics.