



Trinity River Restoration Program

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Trinity Lake Resort Owners Meeting and Public Open House
Monday, March 28, 2005

Water Year Classification

1. What method do you use to forecast the water year type?

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation determines the water year type on April 1 by comparing the calculated inflow to Trinity Reservoir to Table 1. The inflow to Trinity Reservoir is calculated by summing the amount of runoff that has occurred from October 1 until April 1 and a volume of water that Reclamation forecasters predict will runoff during the months remaining in the water year (i.e. April 1 through September 30).

Table 1 – Water Year Classification

Water Year Type	Inflow to Trinity Reservoir (Acre-Feet)
Extremely Wet	>2,000,000
Wet	1,350,000 to 2,000,000
Normal	1,025,000 to 1,350,000
Dry	650,000 to 1,025,000
Critically Dry	< 650,000

2. What is the current water year forecast?

The preliminary March water forecast for the Trinity basin is in the middle of the range for a “normal” water year classification. There has been a drying trend since February, although recent storms have improved conditions somewhat. Consequently, the official April water forecast (used to determine the Trinity water year type) will most likely remain “normal.”

Spring Release Schedule

3. Given the current forecast, how much water will be released into the Trinity River?

If the water year remains “normal,” a total volume of 647,000 acre-feet would be available for release into the Trinity River.

4. How is the spring flow release schedule determined?

Once the water year is determined, the Trinity River Restoration Program develops flow release recommendations to meet various restoration objectives for the Trinity River. These flow recommendations are presented to the Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group and the Trinity Management Council (TMC) for consideration. The Trinity Management Council then recommends a flow release schedule to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to implement as closely as technically possible.

5. How can I stay informed about current and planned flow releases?
The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation posts the annual flow schedule on the internet (<http://www.usbr.gov/mp/cvo/vungvari/trinsch.pdf>). Additionally, the Trinity River Restoration Program maintains an email list to keep the public informed about planned flow release changes. If you are interested in being added to the email list, please contact Andreas Krause by phone (530-623-1800) or email (akrause@mp.usbr.gov). Otherwise, please feel free to call or stop by the Trinity River Restoration Program office (Address: 1313 Main Street, next to Tops Market in Weaverville; Phone: 530-623-1800).
6. How high will the peak flows be this year, and how long will they last?
2005 is expected to be a "normal" water year. Peak releases during a "normal" water year are typically about 6,000 cfs, but may be increased or decreased to accomplish various river restoration objectives. Flow releases generally begin to ramp up during the last week of April and peak for approximately five days in early May. Flows releases then gradually ramp down to approximately 2,000 cfs about June 10 and remain at that level through mid-July. The summer base flow of 450 cfs would start about the third week in July.
7. Will you be releasing late summer/fall fishery protection flows this year?
Fish biologists and other scientists from the Trinity River Restoration Program staff and partners are reviewing monitoring data collected during and after the fall flows released in August and September of 2003 and 2004. They are evaluating biological implications of the fall releases on population genetics and possible mixing of the spring and fall runs of Chinook salmon. Findings will be presented to the TMC in April.

Reservoir Operations

8. How do Central Valley Project (CVP) operations impact withdrawals from Trinity Lake?
The amounts and timing of Trinity basin exports are determined by subtracting Trinity River scheduled flows and targeted carryover storage from the forecasted Trinity water supply. Trinity River Division operations are integrated with the Shasta Division and other CVP water supply reservoirs. Exports are made after considering many different operational factors including: water year type, minimum flow and water temperature requirements for the Trinity and Sacramento Rivers, storage levels and refill potentials in both reservoirs, as well as demand for water supply and hydroelectric power generation.
9. How much lower will Trinity Lake be compared to recent years?
Potential changes to reservoir storage levels resulting from implementation of the Record of Decision (ROD) were modeled using the computer program CALSIM in the original Trinity River Restoration Program EIS/EIR, and updated for the draft SEIS/EIR and the Central Valley Project Operations Criteria and Plan (OCAP). As a result of implementing the ROD, it is projected that average end-of-water-year carryover storage would decrease by about 116,000 acre-feet (-8%). This equates to an average end of year lake elevation of 2286 ft. under current conditions compared to 2296 ft. prior to implementation of the ROD. This will vary depending on water year type and other factors described above.

10. What time of the season is the greatest draw down likely to occur?

The largest volume of water released to the Trinity River for fishery restoration purposes would take place from early May to mid-June. Water exports to the Sacramento Basin are more likely to occur later in the summer as Reclamation's Central Valley Operations office balances competing needs for irrigation, power generation, and Sacramento River temperature control.

Floodplain Modifications

11. What will happen to existing private structures that are impacted by the higher dam releases?

Work is proceeding as quickly as possible to identify and address structures at risk. Four river crossings (Browns Mountain, Salt Flat, Poker Bar and Biggers Road) are nearing completion and will be completely open to traffic by May 2005. One house has been acquired and will be removed. Other potentially impacted structures are being located on aerial photographs and owners are being contacted to determine structure type and to identify any issues not evident from the photographs. It is our goal to contact all property owners along the river from Lewiston Dam to the confluence of the North Fork Trinity River to discuss their individual situations prior to implementing the higher releases.

Channel Rehabilitation Sites

12. What other restoration work is planned for the river?

Forty-seven major channel rehabilitation sites will be constructed along the river within the next ten years. Heavy earth-moving equipment will be used to remove vegetation and to excavate existing channel berms to allow the river to create a more natural, scaled-down version of the pre-dam river channel and floodplain. The restored channel will provide the slow water habitat at high flows that is needed by juvenile salmon and steelhead. The first project is called Hocker Flat and is located just downstream of Canyon Creek. Construction at this site will begin in the summer of 2005. Four additional sites are planned downstream of Hocker Flat for the spring of 2006. Planning efforts will then shift upstream to the Lewiston area and near Indian Creek.