

Draft Minutes

Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group

Weaverville Victorian Inn, 1709 Main Street, Weaverville, CA

November 4, 2005

The meeting was open to the public.

8:30 A.M. convene

Members in attendance:

Member:	Representative Seat:
Arnold Whitridge (Chairman)	Safe Alternatives for Forest Environment
Ed Duggan	Willow Creek Community Service District
David Steinhauser	Six Rivers Outfitter and Guide Association
Tom Weseloh	California Trout, Inc
Elizabeth Soderstrom	Natural Heritage Institute
James Feider	City of Redding Electric Utility Department
Richard Lorenz	Trinity County Resident
Serge Birk	Central Valley Project Water Association
Patrick Frost	Trinity County Resource Conservation District
James Spear	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Byron Leydecker	Friends of the Trinity River
Steve Anderson	Bureau of Land Management
Ann Hayden (alternate)	Environmental Defense
Joan Hartman	Local Landowner

Members absent: Dana Hord, Dan Haycox.

Designated Federal Official: Mike Long Fish and Wildlife Service, Arcata, CA

1. Welcome and Introduction; Adopt Agenda; Approve Minutes of September meeting

Arnold Whitridge opened the meeting and the TAMWG members introduced themselves. The first part of this meeting was to offer an orientation for four new TAMWG members. The remainder was to discuss TAMWG organization and strategies.

Mike Long, the Designated Federal Official introduced himself and made introductory remarks. He thanked old members and welcomed the four new members, Tom Weseloh,

Steve Anderson, Ann Hayden, and Joan Hartmann. Long briefly explained his role as the Designated Federal Official. He approves meetings and agenda, attends the meetings, and adjourns meetings if needed. Long also explained that Fish and Wildlife Service provides logistical support for TAMWG.

Joe Neil sitting in as a member of the public also introduced himself as an alternate for Byron Leydecker.

Changes to Agenda

Whitridge suggested a change to the agenda: to reverse the order of items 6 and 7. There was no discussion and the change was made.

Changes to minutes

Tom Weseloh changed a statement of his from “disagreed” to “questioned.” Serge Birk corrected a spelling error.

Tom Weseloh made a motion to accept the minutes as changed.

Seconded by Jim Feider.

Motion passed unanimously.

During the discussion of the minutes, Serge Birk raised the issue of how information is delivered to the TAMWG. Birk noted that he had raised a question during the September TAMWG meeting about the funds and the water that had been set aside for emergency fall flows. These flows were not used and Birk had asked in September what was the disposition of the water or the funds used to purchase the water. He noted that he still did not get an answer nor was there an agenda item on today’s meeting. He noted that simply posing a question during a meeting was not sufficient, since answers did not arrive. He asked how questions brought up during meetings should be addressed in future meetings.

It was decided that a presentation and discussion regarding the funds and/or water for the emergency fall flows would be put on next the agenda and that a letter would be written to either the Trinity Management Council or the Regional Director of Reclamation asking for a response to this issue. Whitridge asked Mike Long if such a letter to the Regional Director is allowed. Long responded in the affirmative, as long as the question was seeking clarification.

Serge Birk made a motion that the chairman drafts a letter to request the Bureau of Reclamation Regional Director for an explanation of the disposition of emergency fall flow water or funds for 2005.

Seconded by Steve Anderson.

Motion passed unanimously.

Whitridge said that he would draft this letter and circulate to the TAMWG members for comments.

2. Open Forum; Public Comment

Doug Schluesner used the public comment period to introduce Ed Solbos, Joe Riese, and Brant Gutermuth, three members of the Trinity River Restoration Program office in Weaverville.

3. Historical Overview - Trinity restoration efforts pre-2001

Tom Stokely, Trinity County Planning Department, gave a slide presentation on the history of the Trinity River restoration efforts. Stokely's presentation covered the history of the program and made specific references to the various legislations that resulted in the evolution of the program. He described the start of the building of Trinity and Lewiston Dams on the Trinity in 1952 and Congressman Clair Engle's statements about "no adverse effects" arising from this project. Subsequent legislation set the stage for up to 90 % of water to be diverted out of the basin by the Bureau of Reclamation and an agreement to supply 50,000 acre-feet to Humboldt County to preserve fish. The positive effects were water deliveries to users in the Central Valley--agribusiness, electrical generators, and municipal users. The negative results of the project were 109 miles of stream habitat above the dams was blocked for anadromous fish access, the low flows resulted in high water temperatures, a 303D listing of impaired waters for sediment, and loss of floodplain habitat. Anadromous fish species in the Trinity were listed as threatened. Students from Weaverville High School held a mock funeral for salmon in 1970, which brought attention to the river.

Stokely also reviewed the various restoration efforts and the successes and failures. The Trinity River Task Force was organized in 1975 and experiments with increased flows began. Trinity County and Hoopa Valley Tribe filed lawsuits against the Department of Interior. A 12-year flow study was initiated (but it took 16 years to complete). First restoration projects were started in Grass Valley, a tributary to the Trinity. EISs were initiated and legislation was passed under a variety of names (Rectification Act, Fish Management Act, Klamath Act, Central Valley Improvement Act).

More recently, flow evaluations were completed and the Record of Decision (ROD) was signed in 2000. The ROD seemed to provide the final statement for increased flows and restoration activities for the Trinity. The ROD was legally challenged, but successfully defended.

Stokely also handed out a CD with a variety of documents relating to the history of the Trinity River. He also passed out a DVD movie entitled "Waters of these Mountains."

Jim Feider asked about mining damages before the dam construction. Stokely noted significant damage to the spring chinook by mining and noted this earlier damage was the reason legislation only requires restoration of fish to "pre-dam" levels.

Elizabeth Soderstrom asked about Humboldt County's claim for 50,000 acre-feet. Stokely thought that the County might need to go to court in order to get this water. Ed Duggan said one justification given not to provide this water is that the County does not use it. Arnold Whitridge noted that Humboldt County offers the water for emergency use for the river fisheries.

4. Introduction to Trinity River Restoration Program

Douglas Schluesner, Trinity River Restoration Program, gave a slide show on the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) and the progress of the 4-year-old program.

Major accomplishments include increased flows (7,000 cfs this past May); channel rehabilitation projects started this year (increased rearing habitat);

The problem is a confined channel, limited salmon rearing habitat, lack of spawning gravels, and excess fine sediment from the tributaries. . The program is attempting to create healthy river condition with the increased flows. Increased flows will help to create better habitat. This is considered a novel program in that habitat is being created via recreation of hydrologic processes. The program is driven by prediction, measurement, and evaluation of progress toward program goals as laid out in the flow study.

The goals are to restore populations of naturally spawning salmon and steelhead to pre-dam levels. It is expected with the increased flow, removal of the berms, introduction of gravels, and reduction of sediment inputs from tributaries, that a three-to-four fold increase in rearing habitat can be achieved. This three-to-four fold increase in habitat is expected to result in a two-fold increase in salmon production.

Schluesner noted that private properties, construction easements, and gaining rights of title has been a huge issue and was underestimated by the ROD.

The program evaluation report on the TRRP during 2004 identified that too little progress had occurred in the sciences element of the program. There has been increased emphasis on science recently.

There is no condemnation of properties. Property issues may require modifications or abandonment of a project. Trinity County has floodplain ordinance and has found that existing floodplain maps are inaccurate. The program is working with developers to prevent building in the floodplain. The new floodplain maps that are being produced will likely include a much larger area of "no build."

5. CVP Water Association perspective

Serge Birk, Central Valley Project, gave the perspective of his stakeholders. Birk noted that, from the viewpoint of the Central Valley Project stakeholders, the arguments about the amount of diversions from the Trinity River have been settled and the ROD, as intended, is being implemented. Fifty-two percent of the flows go to the CVP. He expressed his hope for the continued success of the potentially one of the most successful restoration programs in the west.

Birk made several recommendations and suggestions for the TRRP:

- develop an annual budget based on realistic expectations,
- organize the program based on the scientific role of peer-review,
- articulate the goals and objectives and evaluate the program on this,
- increase the stakeholder involvement (they currently do not have an equal say),
- include wildlife as a focus along with fish,

- increase the focus on tributaries,
- the science program is not moving fast enough,
- the program has no biologist with experience with salmonids or IFIM techniques,
- budget process needs to be transparent.

6. Role of the TAMWG within TRRP (presented following Item 7)

Byron Leydecker, Friends of the Trinity River provided his comments about the early years of restoration and he gave his ideas about how the TAMWG can become more effective.

He first noted how much improvement has occurred in the program. Early attempts at restoration were superseded after 1984 by a federally legislated restoration program, which existed until 1996. He noted how, when he served on the Trinity River Task Force, they were little more than a “rubber stamp.” In the old days, activities were driven by RFP’s without an overall strategy. The budget was incomprehensible. Projects were not based on science, but based on ease of completion.

Leydecker noted that the program has come a very long way from those days. The journey has been slow but significant progress has been made--thanks to Douglas Schleusner and Ed Solbos. Implementation has occurred ahead of science, but that has been due to timing and staffing. The Science baseline will be established—thanks to Rod Wittler. The budget process is becoming more transparent. The role of the executive director is not easy, as he has to deal, in effect, with several boards with varying objectives. The TRRP is becoming a restoration program. While the program is experimental, it can become a national model for restoration below a federal dam. The evaluation report has helped and many suggestions have been followed.

Where are we going? How should we organize ourselves to be effective contributors? Leydecker commented his belief that TAMWG contact with the TRRP should be through the executive director and that the staff be left alone. Leydecker also presented an outline of a the “Professional Management Process.” He noted that the TAMWG spends too much effort on the budget; the budget should be thought of as a “financial expression of the plan.”

He also noted the problems with too many committees that were established but never really met. Excess committees tax staff time. He hopes for a new turn for the TRRP and he noted that a new committee structure was suggested in the Evaluation Report.

Tom Weseloh reiterated the need for TAMWG members to be a part of subcommittees and not be satisfied only advising the Trinity Management Council.

Steve Anderson asked if the involvement of TAMWG through subcommittees is efficient. Tom Weseloh noted that the ROD was setup that way.

Douglas Schleusner noted in the past, the Designated Federal Official raised concerns about how the TAMWG interacted with the TRRP. He noted that meetings are now open.

Serge Birk thanked Leydecker for his synthesis and noted that the TAMWG needs to decide what it wants and how much influence it should have.

7. Bonus Item: Restoration afield Elizabeth Soderstrom (presented before Item 6)

Elizabeth Soderstrom, Natural Heritage Institute, spoke about some of her non-TAMWG activities and her restoration activities in Africa. She gave a slide show on the Okavango River basin in Angola and Botswana.

The Okavango River creates the largest inland delta in the world. It is remote, undeveloped and highly diverse. Angola has had civil war for 30 years and is littered with land mines. This has kept many people out, but people are returning. Management is directed toward pre-development (i.e., conserving conditions before they are developed in undesirable ways). The Natural Heritage Institute has hosted workshops to develop power sharing among the various interest groups. They have also created a shared online database that is maintained by University of Botswana. The Institute has also developed a river basin management model, performed legal and institution analyses, and looked at environmental flows.

Some of their successes have been using site visits to strengthen relationships among interest groups. This has helped to build capacity and common understandings about river basin management.

These successes are applicable to the Trinity River. She recommended that the TRRP consider transparent decision making models, capacity building, raising stakeholder understanding, institutional and legal analysis, and environmental flow analysis.

8. TAMWG priorities, committee structure, interaction with other TRRP entities, operations, bylaws, officers

This was an open discussion of how the TAMWG should operate. Tom Weseloh began the discussion with a short presentation of the TRRP Executive Director's proposal for improved workgroup organization. He handed out the Executive Director's proposal (Attachment 1).

TAMWG participants in an earlier TMC meeting on this subject were Byron Leydecker, Serge Birk, Richard Lorenz, and Tom Weseloh. The TMC subcommittee's goal was to come up with constructive comments for the TRRP and goals for the future. Weseloh noted that there has been progress and follow up on the recommendations. There have been meetings of a subgroup of this subcommittee and TRRP staff about how to move the program forward. At first, there were some disagreements about the criticisms of the Evaluation Report. But, there have been more productive meetings since then. Weseloh noted that it is important that TAMWG be more involved than simply listening.

The ROD and Implementation Plan recognized the need for technical work groups but gave little guidance on how these would be structured. The subgroup of the TMC subcommittee developed a way to structure these technical workgroups.

Weseloh proposed that TAMWG use more work group (subcommittee) meetings. These meetings should be open to everyone and be scheduled regularly. He stressed that this

may improve two-way communication. He showed a flow chart of how committees and groups will have a flow of input to each other. Science framework is important and may need a work group.

In the interest of time, it was proposed that the TAMWG focus on a set of questions Weseloh had posed: Is this the best proposal? Are these the correct groups? What about liaisons? Each member gave his or her view.

Joan Hartman: in favor as an experiment.

Pat Frost: it is a good place to start.

Jim Feider: liked the process, but thought it could be too bureaucratic or over-engineered at this time.

Rich Lorenz: liked concept and would be willing to serve on some groups. Did not want the workgroups to eventually supplant staff jobs. There would be more requirements on time to go extra meetings.

Tom Weseloh: work groups can solve some problems, but not all problems.

Arnold Whitridge: it would help to move program forward. But, some big topics might need to be addressed in workgroups other than those proposed. .

Ed Duggan: has been disappointed with committees thus far. He likes the grouping. These groups may help to get things happening in the field. He was interested in several groups.

Steve Anderson: it is worth a try and membership in a group would force one to learn more about specific topics.

Ann Hayden: groups could be streamlined and she could serve on some.

Elizabeth Soderstrom: it is a good idea and these should replace existing committees. Is there a place for interdisciplinary ideas? She was willing to serve. There needs to be a reimbursement for travel. Is teleconferencing an option? Could group meetings be scheduled concurrent with TAMWG meetings?

Byron Leydecker: agreed with most of the earlier comments. He disagreed that this is an attempt to supplant TRRP staff.

Serge Birk: the ROD provides direction for technical groups.

Tom Weseloh made a motion for TAMWG members to make individual comments on the proposal for restructuring work groups. Serge Birk suggested that these comments be sent out to everyone via email and that everyone would copy each other on the comments they make, and the results would be discussed in December.

Rich Lorenz seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

Joan Hartman agreed to work on the list of groups.

Next, the discussion moved to TAMWG members using designees for meetings and reimbursement for travel expenses.

Mike Long provided some guiding comments. Long noted, as a FACA committee, there are limitations to use of designees. Only TAMWG members or officially designated alternates can be reimbursed for going to subcommittees. A pre-approval process needs to be worked out. Getting official designation is a complicated process that may require White House approval, and that can take up to a year. Long stated that members and alternates can go to subcommittee meetings.

Arnold Whitridge summarized Long's statements as: friends can go to meetings as "eyes and ears," but reimbursement may not be available.

The discussion moved to bylaws. Arnold Whitridge noted that TAMWG has 16 members. He asked, whether TAMWG still needed ten votes to get an affirmative vote, or whether nine (a quorum of sixteen) was sufficient.

Whitridge proposed to rewrite a draft of the bylaws with some of these changes and this would be discussed at the next meeting.

Whitridge also asked TAMWG members to think about new elections of officers and whether that was needed.

9. Open Forum; Public Comment

No comments.

10. Assignments; agenda topics for next meeting

Request for fall fish numbers.

Discussion about 50 versus 90 % exceedance values.

Birk's motion to have someone to talk about emergency water or funds.

Long to talk about reimbursements and how this is done in Klamath Task Force meetings.

Technical teams and groups.

Science framework.

Wildlife.

Instream flow council.

Duggan's restoration presentation.

Meeting was adjourned.

Tom Weseloh made a motion to accept the minutes as changed.

Seconded by Jim Feider.

Motion passed unanimously

Serge Birk made a motion that the chairman drafts a letter to request the Bureau of Reclamation Regional Director for an explanation of the disposition of emergency fall flow water or funds for 2005.

Seconded by Steve Anderson.

Motion passed unanimously.

Tom Weseloh made a motion for TAMWG members to make individual comments on the proposal for restructuring work groups. Serge Birk suggested that these comments be sent out to everyone via email and that everyone would copy each other on the comments they make, and the results would be discussed in December.

Rich Lorenz seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

List of Attachments:

Attachment 1: Proposal for Improved Communications Among Technical Work Groups and Teams