Trinity River Restoration Program
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June 16, 2009

Brian Person, Chair
Trinity Management Council
c/o Trinity River Restoration Program office
P.O. Box 1300, Weaverville CA 96093
By Hand

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US Fish & Wildlife Service
Arcata, CA

Dear Mr. Person and TMC members,

At the June 10-11 meeting of the Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group, Dr. Clair Stalnaker reviewed the organization and operation of the Trinity River Restoration Program as conceived by the developers of the Flow Evaluation Study and the subsequent Record of Decision, and TAMWG members were struck by the divergence of present practice from the ROD intention. Because TRRP's present situation is unsatisfactory, and because many current program participants may not be familiar with the painstakingly developed original concept, TAMWG recommends that the TMC arrange for a similar presentation by Dr. Stalnaker.

TAMWG continues to think that a successful Restoration Program requires an effective Trinity Management Council, and TAMWG currently lacks confidence in the willingness and ability of the TMC to be effective. TAMWG members discussed requesting orders from Washington for changes in TMC structure and process, but have agreed to delay action on this until the end of the year, in hopes that in the intervening months the TMC will make good use of Mike Hamman's collaborative talents, Brian Person's chairmanship, Clair Stalnaker's perspective, and the opportunity presented by recent and impending personnel changes to develop for the Restoration Program:

1. A TMC that makes timely, appropriate, decisions and provides timely, appropriate, program guidance; and
2. A credible, RFP-driven AEAM science program, featuring independent review of requests and proposals.

TAMWG members believe that significant progress towards these goals is only possible if measures are taken to eliminate or substantially reduce TMC member-entity conflict of interest in TMC decisionmaking. To facilitate progress towards the primary goals, TAMWG renews its recommendations that the TMC:

1. Discuss and act on outstanding recommendations and suggestions of the 2004 TMC Subcommittee Report and the CDR Situation Assessment;
2. Provide written responses to TAMWG and SAB recommendations;
3. Expand TMC membership (the continuing exclusion of BLM is particularly glaring); and
4. Move to simple-majority voting for TMC decisions.

For consideration of possible changes in hatchery operations, TAMWG recommends that the TMC support the "Collaborative Framework and Decisionmaking Process" outlined to TAMWG on June 10 by Larry Hansen, and arrange to have recommendations from this process generated time in time for implementation in the upcoming brood year. TAMWG further recommends that the TMC act without delay to commission a review of the scientific literature on the effects of hatchery practices on wild fish. We recommend that the report from this review provide synopses of the relevant findings and management recommendations of each paper.

TAMWG members appreciate Mike Hamman's effort to improve the consideration of Trinity basin needs in CVO's reservoir-management decisions, and are pleased with his proposals to develop a "Program Operating Agreement" and begin implementing an RFP-driven science program. We hope the TMC will support and participate actively in these initiatives.

I'll be happy to discuss TAMWG's views on these matters further at the June 17-18 TMC meeting.

Sincerely,

Arnold Whitridge

Arnold Whitridge, TAMWG chair