



Trinity River Restoration Program

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February 17, 2012

ENV-1.10
NC-100

Mr. Arnold Whitridge
Chairman, Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group
P.O. Box 128
Douglas City, CA 96024-0128

Subject: Response to Your Letter of December 13, 2011, and Clarifying E-Mail of January 5, 2011

Dear Chairman Whitridge: *Arnold-*

Thank you for your December 13, 2011, letter providing an update on the proceedings of the December 9, 2011, meeting of the Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group (TAMWG). The letter provides several recommendations regarding the fiscal year 2012 program of work and other ongoing areas of interest. Each recommendation is summarized in italics below, followed by the Trinity Management Council's (TMC) response.

- *Work should proceed with the Lower Steiner Flat, Upper Junction City, and Indian Creek projects after consulting with concerned stakeholders.*

The TMC has passed three motions closely mimicking this recommendation since receiving your letter. Representatives of the Trinity River Restoration Program Office (Program) met numerous times with affected landowners and representatives of the Trinity River Guides Association (TRGA) over the course of calendar year 2011 to discuss the TRGA members' specific concerns with the Lower Steiner Flat and Upper Junction City site designs. At the TMC's recommendation, Program staff held an all-day session with TRGA members and other stakeholders on December 19, 2011, to further refine the designs. At the close of that discussion, a TRGA spokesperson expressed his approval of the modified designs for both sites, and further, commended Program staff for their cooperation and openness in addressing their concerns. The TMC met on January 4, 2012, to discuss the outcome of the December 19 meeting and provide further guidance to the Program. After further discussion at the January 4 meeting, the TRGA reaffirmed their support for both projects in a January 24, 2012, letter to Executive Director Robin Schrock.

While progress has been made, the Design Team indicates that the Indian Creek project will require further development to assure it meets the intended design objectives. Our goals are to improve aquatic and terrestrial habitat and reduce fine sediment inputs to the river by replacing steep grassy banks composed of

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Brian Person, Chair, Bureau of Reclamation - Ann Garrett, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration-Fisheries
Sharon Heywood, USDA Forest Service - Mike Orcutt, Hoopa Valley Tribe - Dave Hillemeier, Yurok Tribe -
Curtis Milliron, California Department of Fish and Game - Roger Jaegel, Trinity County
Nancy Finley, US Fish & Wildlife Service - Robin Schrock, Executive Director

fine sand with gently sloping banks supporting native trees and other riparian vegetation that provide cover for juvenile salmon and steelhead rearing. Increasing the availability of salmonid-rearing habitat and reducing fine sediment inputs to the river are both primary objectives of the Program.

- *The Phase I review should continue as planned, while providing a timeline for the review now, a status update by March, and completion by July.*

The TMC fully supports completion of the Phase I review and has expressed on many occasions its importance in guiding subsequent restoration undertakings. At present, the Science Advisory Board (SAB) is expected to deliver its interim report by approximately mid-May to an independent panel, which is currently being established under the guidance of the Scientific Advisory Board. The panel will have 30 days to review the interim report and submit comments to the SAB. The final report is due in July.

- *TAMWG wishes to review the gravel injection analysis prior to the next injection phase.*

The TMC passed a unanimous motion on January 26, 2012, recommending that there be no gravel injection during the 2012 work season. In the interim, Program staff will conduct a thorough evaluation of 2009-2011 pool depth evolution between Lewiston Dam and the North Fork Trinity River as new bathymetric data is received. Recommendations from the Phase I review report, described above, will also be incorporated in future coarse- sediment augmentations. The TAMWG will be provided results and recommendations as they become available.

The TMC has urged that Program staff investigate measures to streamline the regulatory permitting requirements (local, state, and federal) for future gravel introductions since there have been some concerns voiced by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board regarding the implementation of the Program gravel-introduction projects.

- *The Trinity Management Council (TMC) should request a written opinion from the Office of the Solicitor regarding the Trinity River Restoration Program's liabilities and responsibilities concerning public safety issues possibly associated with the use or management of large wood within the river channel.*

The TMC has discussed this concern at some length and acknowledges this recommendation, but has not yet taken formal action. Reclamation staff is consulting with the Office of the Solicitor regarding the relative merits of requesting a written opinion and will report back to TMC.

- *The TMC and the Executive Director should provide timely written responses to written communications from stakeholders and the public, at a minimum providing a timeline for the anticipated substantive response.*

The TMC and the Executive Director agree with this recommendation and are making every effort to provide timely written responses. There have been some instances (the March 2011 letter from the TRGA,

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for example) where the Program's ongoing dialogue with the letter's author caused the response to be significantly delayed as the issue evolved. We have pledged to issue an interim response in any future similar instances.

Sincerely,



Brian Person
Chairman, Trinity Management Council

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