

Draft FY2007 Budget – Q&As

Developed from B-Team Meeting Notes (August 17, 2006)

September 7, 2006

General Process Questions:

1. **How are new line items added to the spreadsheet (e.g. Coho surveys or genetics studies)?**

New items/tasks have typically been added when there appears to be a consensus among technical representatives and/or when TRRP staff believes it is fundamental to implementation of the ROD. This is admittedly a loosely structured process, and ways to improve/formalize it will be discussed by the TMC budget subcommittee on August 31.

2. **Since there is no certainty that the Senate's addition of \$2 million for the TRRP will survive Conference Committee and become final, should we develop options for different funding levels rather than proposing just one budget at \$10.3 million?**

We agree, and have developed proposals for three likely levels of funding: 1) President's Budget (PB) only which would equal about \$9.2 million; 2) PB plus the average of House/Senate actions ($0+2/2=1$) which equals \$10.2 million; and PB plus the full amount of Senate action (\$2 million add-on) totaling \$11.2 million. This should allow the TMC to approve a budget(s) that can be applied to any of the realistic funding levels.

3. **Why wasn't the \$1.1 million carryover (FWS) used in FY2006 for unfunded or underfunded projects?**

The Interagency Agreement that transfers funds from the Service to Reclamation is typically executed in June or July. This is late in the fiscal year after many of the Region's acquisition deadlines have passed, and limits our ability to process requisitions in a timely manner. This "cash-flow" issue is being addressed in the TMC budget subcommittee which met on August 31.

4. **Fill in (where possible) other important information such as detailed breakout by funding recipient in the project descriptions.**

We think it is generally inappropriate to specify individual funding recipients and amounts in a planning budget. What we do and how we do it is most important. Who accomplishes the work is secondary. The goal of the program is to get the best product for the least cost. The issue of "sole-source" vs. "open and competitive" is also being addressed in the TMC budget subcommittee which met on August 31.

5. **"Getting to full program" may be appropriate rationale for some tasks – but more explanation should be provided by staff to explain changes in funding, relative priorities, etc.**

In the budget development process we consider many factors including: last year's tasks/costs; newly identified data needs and analyses; acquisition dates and guidelines; cross-discipline integration; relationship to program goals and management actions; input from work group participants, and others. We will continue to improve upon the way in which this office documents its rationale in forming proposed budgets.

Program Administration:

1. **Why are some Weaverville staff salaries shown in the RIG & TMAG sections of the budget?**
Reclamation establishes cost authorities which track as closely as possible the type of work that is being accomplished. With the exception of the two Branch Chiefs (where 50% of each salary is charged to Program Administration), all RIG and TMAG staff salaries and associated indirect costs are tracked within their respective program areas.
2. **TAMWG costs need to be increased to \$26,000.**
This change has been incorporated.
3. **Where is the TRRP website funded?**
For the past year it was funded as a modification to an existing NSR/ESSA contract. In the future it will likely be considered as a component of Public Information/Outreach.
4. **Why are Reclamation's indirect cost rates (RIC/OIC) so high (60%)?**
These rates are established by the Mid-Pacific Region and are consistent with rates used throughout Reclamation. During the year they may be adjusted/readjusted several times, but this percentage is a fairly accurate estimate.
5. **Program Administration is generally ok but some disagree with proposal to increase TMC support costs by 3%, should hold it constant and put more funding into gravel; several different views expressed on this point.**
As the current proposal was developed in recent weeks, 3 % was applied to TMC support costs in each of the three levels. We were also able to execute multi-year grants or agreements for several TMC members using FY2006 funds. The only two members still requiring FY2007 funding are the two Tribes. In recent G2G meetings between Reclamation and the Tribes, the Area Manager agreed to their proposal which included an increase of approximately 5 percent. This amount has been included in the current spreadsheet.

RIG:

1. **Is there money in the budget for CEQA lead agencies?**
No. There are no funds specifically identified for covering costs incurred by CEQA lead agencies (e.g., Trinity County for Indian Creek and the North Coast Regional Water Control Board for Canyon Creek Suite in FY2006) in the current FY2007 proposal. Some leads, such as Trinity County, may be able to use funding for their TMC support costs to assist in some cases. Because the assigned CEQA leads have discretionary authority over the projects they should be able to support their CEQA lead requirements with some level of funding via permit fees.

2. What is the Program's goal for 2007 peak spring release (11,000 + 10 year tributary flows or 11,000 + 100 year tributary flows)?

11,000 cfs + 10-year spring tributary flows will be possible in WY2007. Construction of the downstream portion of the Indian Creek project before the WY2007 spring release, as well as the completion of a number of other realty actions, will allow for flows in excess of 11,000 cfs + 10 year tributary flows, potentially up to 100 year tributary flow events.

3. Why can't Reclamation acquire more outside funds similar to those used to repair Browns Mountain Road?

Reclamation managers have committed to securing non-TRRP funds to pay for repair and/or replacement of the previously constructed road/culvert. This is a one-time, atypical activity that cannot really be used as a precedent for future funding.

4. What does \$400,000 for structure relocations include?

This allows for full implementation of the Trinity River Potable Water and Sewage Disposal System Assistance Program, several major structure modifications, and a larger number of realty agreements.

5. What does the programmatic EA/EIR involve, which rehab sites?

Environmental documentation and permit applications for the first 9 defined channel rehabilitation sites (Hocker Flat = 1, Canyon Creek Suite = 4, Indian Creek = 3, Hatchery area = 1) will be completed by Sept. 30, 2006. The EA/Master EIR will provide programmatic compliance for all 38 remaining sites, site-specific environmental compliance for the 15 remaining Phase 1 sites, and site-specific environmental compliance for long-term coarse sediment placement at 3 locations. Some additional lower level site-specific environmental compliance may be required (e.g., EA/Negative Declaration) before implementing projects covered in the EA/Master EIR. Depending on the speed with which the EA/Master EIR is developed, the first several projects scheduled for the programmatic document (e.g., Dark Gulch and the Lewiston 4) may need to be covered in separate project-specific EA/EIRs similar to those used for previous channel rehab projects.

6. What is involved in the Cultural Resource compliance task?

Reclamation is the responsible federal agency for cultural resource issues related to the TRRP and has a programmatic agreement with the BLM, USFWS, the HVT, and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to comply with all state and federal regulations protecting historic properties (e.g., Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)). This requires site inspection and reporting at all planned rehabilitation areas and determination of their eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Reclamation archeologists identify, document, and recommend measures that will avoid, minimize or mitigate potential adverse effects to historic properties within the Area of Potential Effect for each channel rehabilitation project. They coordinate their activities with publication of the TRRP's environmental documents and communicate with state-recognized tribes and the SHPO to meet all state cultural resource requirements, as well.

7. Why did maintenance costs for Hamilton Ponds go up?

This line item was increased during FY2006 to allow for removal of a large volume of fine sediment in the Dark Gulch drainage that resulted from this past winter's storms. This action was taken to prevent the material from reaching the main stem during future storm events.

8. Why are gravel costs so much higher?

Local coarse sediment costs are comparable to costs in other areas in Northern California. Gravel delivery and placement costs (e.g. at the Lewiston Hatchery) are higher than expected due to increased fuel costs, stringent water quality standards (turbidity not to exceed 20% over background levels, which are close to zero) which requires extra time/care during placement.

9. Suggest processing gravel under mining permit at rehab sites to reduce costs.

Good idea, where practical. For example, it doesn't make sense to process gravel at the Canyon Creek suite for placement at Lewiston, since there are already established processing plants closer to Lewiston. Where rehab sites are near placement locations, it makes sense to use excavated materials onsite rather than spoil them.

10. What does "implementation of watershed source control" include?

These funds are intended for watershed projects that reduce fine sediment delivery to the river. For example, \$30,000 was recently obligated to the RCD to excavate sediment from the filled drainage on Old Lewiston Road Dark at Dark Gulch. This year, additional money was needed to fund assessment and mitigation activities associated with the severe landslides in the Lewiston burn area, but no funds were available. This line item reserves funds under TRRP control that can be obligated in such cases of unforeseen developments, or awarded to conduct watershed improvements proposed by partners or others who respond to RFPs.

11. What has been accomplished by USGS strategy – how will the \$100,000 be spent?

The proposed USGS agreement is for \$35,000, not \$100,000, so it seems there is some confusion over how the USGS agreements are related to the watershed source control item in the previous question. Our present intent is for the USGS to develop a GIS database that will allow us to prioritize sub-basins for watershed work, and for the \$100,000 to be used for site-specific assessments of watershed condition and actual mitigations on the ground. At present there isn't a complete list of mitigation projects, but the RFP process should stimulate partners and others to propose projects that are consistent with TRRP objectives.

12. How can the Program get BLM and SPI to fund watershed sediment control on their lands?

Apart from directly providing them money to do the work, a Trinity Basin Watershed Council was recently formed to serve as a forum for coordinated watershed management and mitigations, opportunities for cooperative projects, and cost sharing.

13. What is the latest estimate for updated FEMA flood maps?

The TRRP believes it is its responsibility to inform the County of flood levels associated with ROD flows (much lower than FEMA flood flows) and is supporting the County as it works towards updating the FIRM maps. FEMA is currently about 2 years into a 5 year map modernization program, and Trinity County is towards the bottom of the priority list. The DWR has recently finished a new hydraulic model from Lewiston Dam to the North Fork Trinity River that may be used with updated hydrology to update the FIRM maps. It is expected that Trinity County (through BOR grant) will acquire the hydrology study in FY2007. New maps could be produced in 2008.

14. Will this budget allow us to stay on schedule for Phase 1 rehab sites? Are there any cost-saving efficiencies in NEPA/CEQA?

A reduction in implementation funds will result in a delay of Phase 1 construction of rehabilitation sites. The TRRP is working towards preparing a "Master EIR" to analyze general/common impacts of all rehab sites, to streamline the environmental compliance component of rehab site implementation.

TMAC:

1. Clarify costs for sediment monitoring; why is FY2006 so high and 0 for FY2007?

The planning level estimate for sediment monitoring of \$400,000 per year is based on the normal water year with 3 significant winter storms and no safety-of-dam releases. Last winter, the TMC approved additional funds to cover the extra monitoring involved with the extremely wet water year including a) more winter storms; b) two safety-of-dam releases, and c) a modified extremely wet year spring flow release. This resulted in total sediment monitoring costs of about \$585,000. Late in the fiscal year we looked for ways to use unobligated funds that would result in maximum budget flexibility in FY2007. Exercising the FY2007 option-year provision in the sediment monitoring contract was a very effective way to use \$400,000 of the remaining FY2006 funds, thus reducing the need for FY2007 funds to zero.

2. There is a perception that the sediment contract was treated differently than other tasks.

The initial multi-year sediment monitoring scope of work was reviewed by an expert panel and advertised competitively. This contract has already met the necessary acquisition requirements for timely unilateral modification, where many other tasks/activities have not.

3. Is sediment monitoring and gravel augmentation monitoring redundant?

They are not redundant. Sediment monitoring refers to measurement of all sediment transport, and is needed to assess program success in meeting ROD sediment management objectives. Gravel augmentation monitoring is specifically targeted for determining the minimum quantities and optimum size distributions of added gravel necessary to achieve ROD habitat creation objectives at an economically viable cost.

4. What does USGS do for \$46,000; is “research grade” data (QA/QC) really necessary?

The USGS provides independent QA/QC review of the field sampling, laboratory analysis, and records computations conducted by the sediment monitoring contractor. If the data meet USGS standards, as contractually required, the USGS will approve and publish the data. In the past, this program has received legal challenges over volume of water required to meet the stated high flow sediment transport objectives (approximately 40 percent of all ROD water allocations). The independent review by the USGS is appropriate and is supported by the Science Advisory Board.

5. What is the linkage between gravel augmentation and RIG construction contracts (monitoring requirements)?

The monitoring requirement for gravel augmentation construction contracts is limited to surveying “as-built” topography to verify gravel augmentation volumes. The gravel augmentation monitoring is needed to understand the fate and transport of the injected gravels as part of building habitat.

6. Is \$70,000 for ortho-rectification of aerial photos (ground control) sufficient?

Recent information suggests that the cost may actually be considerably higher. We are investigating whether a commercial contractor would be more cost-effective than working through Denver.

7. Bathymetry – do we need to do this amount after every event; can some of \$300,000 for bathymetry be shifted to other priorities; what is the minimum desired product?

Recent discussions among TMAG staff and TMC technical representatives suggest that new bathymetry for the full 40 miles may not be necessary. It may be sufficient to obtain updated bathymetry at specific study sites on an as-needed basis. The originally proposed cost of \$300,000 has been reduced/eliminated in the current proposal.

8. Temperature Monitoring/Modeling – describe possibility of transferring some probes from FWS to BOR; go to 0 in FY2008?

Reclamation provides water temperature monitoring on the Trinity River at no cost to TRRP. As a cost saving measure, TRRP intends to consolidate all water temperature monitoring under Reclamation by FY2008. During the transition in FY2007, funding is provided for: a) USFWS to continue water temperature monitoring, and b) start up equipment costs associated with transferring temperature monitoring operations to Reclamation. No costs are currently anticipated in FY08.

9. What is difference between riparian initiation monitoring and integration with the bed scour model?

Riparian initiation monitoring tracks the success of seeds in germinating and surviving the first summer or two (mode of mortality is desiccation) along defined transects. As presently implemented, this monitoring has no provisions for predicting the probability that scour will remove seedlings or established plants. The current model either needs to be improved by adding this predictive capability, or replacing it entirely with an alternative. This budget item aims at improving the present approach.

10. What is the source document that describes wildlife tasks at \$155,000 vs. \$210,000; clarify role of FWS/RSL and scope of work; complete and distribute the white paper on "wildlife policy"?

A position paper entitled "Why wildlife monitoring is important to the TRRP" has been prepared by TMAG staff and scientists from the Redwood Sciences Laboratory (USFS) and is included with the updated budget spreadsheet.

11. Was SAB input used in developing habitat assessment costs?

The SAB has communicated their desire for more studies of fry habitat utilization and of fry distribution and abundance (density). In addition, Sam Williamson (USGS) has also encouraged the TRRP to get fry density data, not just distribution data. A comparison of techniques is proceeding, and we are conducting the EHM part of the assessment with recent SAB comments in mind.

12. There is a perception that 2-D and EHM assessment activities were not treated equally?

We are currently completing EHM fieldwork for FY2006. This includes two full geomorphic reaches of the river as a pilot effort. After analyzing the results, a report will be prepared that analyzes accuracy and repeatability, and reviews/compares EHM and other assessment methods, especially 2-D and those used in biomonitoring. This analysis and comparison will be used to facilitate discussion among program scientists and to finalize habitat assessment methods for use in future years.

13. Why aren't we funding the full scope of EHM proposed in December 2004 (Turtle Bay meeting)? Does the habitat assessment budget line item allow for consideration of other methods?

None of the potential assessment methods are being funded in full at this time. Following the comparison of methods described above, and discussion at the TRRP Habitat Assessment Symposium, more definite plans can be made regarding method, scope, and cost.

14. When will the habitat assessment workshop occur? It is difficult to make budget decisions without more information.

The Habitat Assessment Workshop or Symposium will occur as soon as possible given competing work priorities such as the IAP. To achieve the greatest benefit, it will very useful to finish collecting and analyzing the data obtained from this summer's field work, leading to a report comparing the methods. Data collection and processing for the two reaches where EHM was conducted is slated for completion by the end of October. Some additional time will be required for analysis and report writing.

- 15. Why the variability in juvenile fish health costs (FY06 approved vs. actual, FY07, FY08); look at cost-share opportunities with Klamath; is this sufficient funding; increase amount in the full program column.**

The Klamath Area Office covered \$28,000 of the amount in FY2006; additional funds were requested to expand the time for sampling in the estuary. We will continue to look for cost-share opportunities; and if appropriate increase the full program amount.

- 16. Confirm whether SALMOD (or another model) will be used as the fish production model for TRRP.**

The Flow Study used this model, which was developed for the Trinity River. This model was intended for predictive purposes only. These predictions improve our ability to test the effectiveness of our restoration activities.

- 17. What is the status of the proposed RST sub program review and/or workshop(s) and what are the results? How will concerns be addressed?**

The cost comparison study prepared by TMAG staff was distributed on August 17. It is expected that more discussion will be necessary, but preliminary information suggests that the TRRP can realize significant cost savings if this activity is advertised competitively. This topic will be discussed at the next Fisheries Workgroup meeting in October.

- 18. The proposed genetics studies (HVT) are not just related to fall flows; show them as separate line items.**

NOAA Fisheries and Oregon State University are working on the genetics of Chinook. This office believes it would be premature to fund the proposed genetic studies until the results of studies funded by the KBAO and NMFS are finalized and made public. This is an example of the earlier question on how new line items are established in the budget development process. The TMC could add this item during the budget approval process if it chooses to do so.

- 19. Clarify the Hatchery Practices line item; describe in more detail in the one-page descriptions; does it (could it) include genetics, competition, predation?**

The only TRRP line item in this category is for Chinook coded wire tagging. Reclamation currently funds the two Tribes about \$100,000 each (from O&M, not TRRP) to allow for evaluation of hatchery practices. The HGMP for the Trinity Hatchery is being developed using these funds. When approved, this document will provide a clearer idea of any additional data needs or analysis requirements.

- 20. In the Adult Migration (task 94) clarify whether it should include Coho/Chinook or both.**

Participants in this year's redd/carcass surveys are meeting September 8 to determine whether Coho can be covered this year within the current budget. This review should give us better information on the scope and costs of this task.

21. How should we consider the issue of possible future fall flows; is there a need for a programmatic EA/EIR?

If there continue to be requests/proposals for late summer releases as mitigation for high water temperatures or low flows this will be an issue. Rather than continuing to address this in annual EAs, we should find a way to conduct a comprehensive and programmatic analysis that considers issues and concerns such as genetic mixing, straying, etc. At this time, however, there is no funding proposed for this type of analysis.

22. Separate the line items for tribal harvest and angler harvest and show Lower Trinity and Lower Klamath; add \$150,000 for HVT tribal monitoring.

These requests have been incorporated in the current spreadsheet.

23. Carcass/Redd surveys – why is this \$40,000 less than FY2006; are Coho/steelhead data at risk with current funding level; discuss in the fish work group?

The 2006 level is much higher than in 2005 specifically to allow field crews time to gather data on Coho. Last year was the first time in recent years that data on Coho were collected. The Fisheries Working Group will schedule this topic for a future meeting.

24. Redd Scour - is more info needed, have we answered the question, are there other way to get this data, e.g., through habitat assessment work? Expand and explain or rename (bed scour?) the one-page project description.

The Redd Scour study is completed, with the final report due soon. The Bed Scour item is intended to determine the spatial distribution of scour in a stream reach and relate that distribution to elements of channel morphology and to interactions between the flow and flow obstructions e.g., clumps of vegetation and/or woody debris. Results will include: a) development of effective plans for monitoring geomorphic activity through simple transect-based methods, and b) an improved capacity for predicting the flows needed to prevent the establishment of excessive vegetation in the channel while maintaining patchy habitat conditions.

25. Fry density – this may not be a high priority for FY2007, can it be deferred to FY2008?

Based on communications with Josh Korman (SAB) and Sam Williamson (USGS), this task should begin in FY2007. The SAB believe the TRRP should consider fry habitat utilization, fry growth, number (density) and movement over time. Sam Williamson has encouraged us to get fry density and movement data not just distribution data, and is willing to assist with the planning of this study. Josh Korman is willing to review the planning documents.

