

Final Minutes
TRINITY ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

Monday September 12, 2011
Public Library, Weaverville, CA

Monday, September 12, 2011

Start of meeting: 10:06 AM

Attending members:

Member:	Representative Seat:
Arnold Whitridge	Trinity County Resident
Ed Duggan	Willow Creek Community Services District
Gil Saliba	Redwood Regional Audubon Society
Kelli Gant	Trinity Lake Alliance
Dana Hord	Big Bar Community Development Group
Richard Lorenz	Trinity County Resident
Pat Frost	Trinity County Resource Conservation District
Elizabeth Hadley	City of Redding Electric Utility Department
David Steinhauser	Six Rivers Outfitters and Guides Association
Emelia Berol	Northcoast Environmental Center
Joe McCarthy	Commercial Fishing Guide
Jeffrey Sutton	Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority

Members that did not attend:

Member:	Representative Seat:
Sandy Denn	Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District
Spreck Rosekrans	Environmental Defense

Designated Federal Officer: Randy Brown, Fish and Wildlife Service, Arcata, CA.

1. Welcome, Introductions, Adopt Agenda and Approval of May Minutes

Chair Arnold Whitridge called the Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group (TAMWG) meeting to order and asked about the agenda and any suggested changes. It was decided to move Robin Schrock's Executive Director's report up.

The meeting minutes from May were next addressed; no changes were made.

Ed Duggan made a motion to accept the May 2011 minutes.

Kelli Gant seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. Open Forum and Public Comment

Ed Duggan commented on the savings that may be gained by 100 % marking of fish in the Trinity River Hatchery. He suggested that, by using the automated trailer, they could save two months work and mark 100 % of the Chinook.

Ed Duggan made a motion that the TAMWG request the TMC to take up discussion of use of the marking trailer to mark fish at the Trinity Hatchery.

Pat Frost seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

3. TMC Chair Report

Brian Person, chair of the Trinity Management Council (TMC) thanked those that participated in the joint TMC and TAMWG meeting June 29. He opined that it was a good use of time. He commented on the updates to the Lewiston power plant and that the NEPA compliance is moving forward. He commented on several other topics: the considerations on the Hatchery response letter are still ongoing; a Trinity Lake resident had complained that lake levels are too high, and the super majority issue was not resolved. He thought that the TMC is nearly caught up with being more responsive to the TAMWG, though several responses are still outstanding (e.g., guides letter, Trinity County 50,000 acre feet).

4. Further Observations of Effects of Peak Releases

The agenda moved forward to discussion of Item 9, Executive Director's Report before returning to Item 4. Andreas Krause, of the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP), made a presentation on the effects of the high flow release to the river. He passed out a handout (Attachment 1). He showed slides and aerial photos of significant and positive changes to the river as a result of the high flow releases this past spring. He showed new and changing bar formation at Bear Island and at Lowden. He showed large woody debris structures and change at

Lowden. Steel Bridge, far from any gravel injection, also showed change with gravel deposits, presumably just to flow and natural bank erosion. He noted that some of this change was a surprising to him. He asked why did we see so much change this year with the 11,000 cfs (that actually peaked at 12,400 cfs for a couple of hours) this year compared to the 10,000 cfs in 2006? The slightly higher flow is one reason, but he also thought there could be other reasons and this is what they want to tease out. At this point, he described a newly modified adaptive management approach for flows. This new approach incorporated more assessment and reporting to better learn in an adaptive manner. He proposed an annual flow report and a current knowledge report that would lead to proposed flow experiments, predictive modeling, and presentations at the 2013 Science Symposium. He noted this would require additional resources of funds and time.

5. Draft Systems Status Report

Nina Hemphill of the TRRP gave a slide show of the current status of ecosystem properties of the Trinity River. She showed changes as a result of restoration and the effects of added gravel and changes in fine sediment storage. She noted that while seedling scour targets are being met, seedling recruitment is not being met. Fry rearing habitat appears to be increasing, but there has not been a sufficiently long period of record. She showed a graph that smolt outmigration numbers of fingerling-sized Chinook have almost doubled since 2007. Rich Lorenz asked how many of the Chinook juveniles are of hatchery origins. Hemphill thought that most were hatchery but said they are looking into this. She showed a graph of natural Chinook returns since 1992 that showed large year-to-year variation of fall and spring runs, but with no real increase over time. Whitridge asked if greater confidence may be gained with a 100 % marking of hatchery Chinook. Hemphill thought that the spring run may benefit but that the estimates for fall are pretty good. Brian Person asked if there is any idea of why there were such good returns in 1996 and 2008. Hemphill thought it could be due to ocean conditions. Hemphill showed graphs that the coho and steelhead resident fish also demonstrate high year-to-year variability but she noted some higher numbers in recent years. The riparian bird surveys suggest there are some species with increases and some with decreases. She reported that amphibians are not thought to be doing well. Hemphill described steps in finalizing this report into a document—perhaps within a month.

Elizabeth Hadley appreciated this type of presentation and noted that TAMWG had been seeking this sort of information for some time. Travis Michel asked about the availability of the before and after photos and that he was interested in whether the Sawmill site is actually gaining more diversity or if it is being converted from adult habitat to juvenile habitat.

Break for lunch.

6. Channel rehabilitation program: Phase I review

D.J. Bandrowski of the TRRP introduced himself as an engineer and interim director of the Restoration and Implementation Group (RIG). He passed out two handouts—one that summarized his presentation (Attachment 2) and another that described the Phase I review (Attachment 3). For the construction update, he showed slides of the Wheel Gulch design and

photos of the site that was started this summer. He next described two new projects being designed for 2012—Upper Junction City and Lower Steiner Flat. He moved to the Phase I review and mentioned that there is a need to move forward on this. The purpose of the Phase I review is to review the first half of the restoration projects. Ernie Clarke reviewed the milestones of the Phase I review noting that the project stalled last January due to changing personnel. Bandrowski noted that a contactor is being hired and an expert review panel is being formed to help with the process. He also presented two flow charts to show how the review would be carried out and completed by June 2012. The result will be an advisory document to guide restoration. He noted that they are polling people to assess interest in a river float. He wants to balance guides with TRRP folks.

7. Science program; reviews; Big Guiding Questions

Ernie Clarke of the TRRP provided a review of the Science Program and passed out a handout (Attachment 4). He directed the TAMWG to the FY 2012 prioritized project list of his handout and noted about 21 projects that were being funded and another 13 that were not likely to be funded. He noted that another 5 projects that were not listed and were at the bottom of the list. There was some discussion about projects that were not likely to be funded. He next referred the TAMWG to page 4, the Fiscal Year 2013 work planning. He noted the new concept of introducing of “Big Questions” and specific inclusion of Science Advisory Board review. Next he referred to a list of Review Updates that listed completed reviews and reviews in progress. Lastly he referred to a list of Big Questions taken from the Platte River program. He wants a set of Big Questions to be defined for the Trinity by November. He has distilled a list of questions and proposed that a contractor would help in the process. The TAMWG discussed the concept of the Big Questions and its value. Several questions were posed about how the river is doing. Ed Duggan asked whether the river is doing what the scientists have said it should do. “Are we accomplishing what was intended?” Arnold Whitridge summarized it as, “What would make the fish happy?”

8. Watersheds Work Program

Dave Gaeuman of the TRRP commented on the implementation of watershed (e.g., tributaries) projects since 2008 and passed out a handout listing projects by year with funding amounts (Attachment 5). TRRP funding for implementation since 2008 totaled \$1.4 million. There was another \$1.9 million of leveraged funds. He described some of the funding complications for this year. The TAMWG discussed some of the projects and those they thought were important. Emelia Berol expressed her frustration over the failure of the program to address issues in the South Fork Trinity River. Arnold Whitridge noted that the Bureau of Reclamation is considering an answer to whether or not they should be working in the South Fork. George Kautsky commented on a letter sent to the TRRP from the Hoopa Valley Tribe. He noted this letter was a comment on the TRRP budget shifts from science to implementation and lack of input by program partners on implementation budgets. The Hoopa Valley Tribe specifically requested that watershed funding be reduced to \$250 K until a Watershed Workgroup could be restarted. There was discussion of support for and value of watershed restoration. The question is how important the tributaries are to the mainstem and how this importance may have changed with the construction of the dams. There were several TAMWG members (Whitridge, Duggan and

Frost) that thought the tributaries are now more important and that they are important sources of excessive fine sediment from old logging roads.

D.J. Bandrowski asked if the TAMWG had any guidance on how the TRRP should respond to the Hoopa Valley letter. Whitridge responded that the TAMWG endorsed the budget that had \$1 million budgeted for watersheds and that is still their position. George Kautsky acknowledged that watersheds were not being funded at their full level but the program is not funded at full levels. He also added that science questions remain that can guide the program and these are more important right now. Robin Schrock noted that the Bureau of Reclamation Regional Director stated his committed to finding funding for the South Fork and other watersheds if the TRRP thought it was critical to accomplishing their goals of restoration.

9. Executive Director's Report

This item was discussed following Item 3. Robin Schrock, newly hired Executive Director of the TRRP, presented her report. She commented on the 20:30:50 split in funding, noting it was complicated to adhere to it and asked for some discussion on it. Arnold Whitridge gave some background that, early on, the split was instituted to get some work going so there was something to study. He noted that it wasn't a permanent arrangement, but that TAMWG probably likes this split. There was discussion of whether it was a rule or only a guide. Elizabeth Hadley noted that she will always continue to support the 20:30:50 in order to see projects completed in the river. Emelia Berol supported giving Schrock flexibility in adjusting the split so to support the adaptive management philosophy of the program. Rich Lorenz noted that historically there had been too much studying the river. He noted that, given the Phase 1 review, he could support more study for one year, as long as the review was done in a timely manner and the program returned to working in the river. Jeff Sutton echoed Lorenz's comments. Gil Saliba noted his recollection that the split was a guideline and that the 20 % for program management was likely the most important. He expressed support for giving Schrock the flexibility. Ed Duggan noted that historically there was a notion that there was too much study. The discussion moved into the philosophy of the restoration program and notification of Workgroup meetings.

The discussion returned back to the 20:30:50 split and Gil Saliba noted that this has come up and that a motion should be made. Hadley pointed out that a motion had been made and approved at the most previous TAMWG meeting which provided some flexibility, but that the budget should try to follow the 23:30:50 split as best possible. No motion was made.

Since the discussion had taken more time than expected, Schrock offered to let the agenda continue and hold off on the rest of her topics.

Following Item 8, Schrock made one more comment to close out her report. She mentioned that the hiring of an implementation branch chief is entering the selection of interviewees phase.

10. Designated Federal Officer topics

Randy Brown noted the nominations for existing and new TAMWG members are nearing an end. He asked those that had not submitted information as part of their re-application to do so. Pat Frost announced that the Trinity County RCD will be stepping down from the TAMWG since their participation could be a perceived conflict of interest since the RCD is receiving

increased funding from the TRRP. Rich Lorenz and Dave Steinhauser both asked that Frost reconsider as they saw no conflict of interest.

Brown mentioned the trouble they had last time with the Washington office in getting the nominations approved and expected similar bureaucratic issues this time around.

11. Tentative date and agenda topics for next regular meeting

December 7th was set as the tentative date for the next meeting. Rich Lorenz noted that the guides were interested in gravel augmentation and would like a presentation on this topic. Ed Duggan asked that using the marking trailer be discussed. Gil Saliba asked about the status of the fish hatchery review.

LIST OF MOTIONS

Ed Duggan made a motion to accept the May 2011 minutes.

Kelli Gant seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Ed Duggan made a motion that the TAMWG request the TMC to take up discussion of use of the marking trailer to mark fish at the Trinity Hatchery.

Pat Frost seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

Attachment 1: WY2011 Flow Release Update and Flow Report Planning. September 8, 2011.
Handed out by Andreas Kraus.

Attachment 2: Implementation Update. September 9, 2011. Handed out by D.J. Bandrowski.

Attachment 3: Phase I Review; Trinity River Restoration Program. 9-12-11. Handed out by D.J. Bandrowski.

Attachment 4: Trinity River Restoration Program, Science Program Report. September 12, 2011.
Handed out by Ernie Clarke.

Attachment 5: Summary of TRRP Watershed Implementation, FY 2008-2011. Handed out by Dave Gaeuman.

Other Documents:

1. Letter from TAMWG to TMC Chair May 25 2011
2. Trinity River System Status