



Trinity River Restoration Program

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NC-150

MEMORANDUM

TO: TAMWG Members

FROM: Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, Acting Executive Director
 Trinity River Restoration Program

SUBJECT: Director's Report

DATE: May 25, 2016

Major TRRP activities between February 17, 2016 and May 25, 2016 focused program efforts to:

- 1) Attend and participate in the TRRP Science Symposium in Weaverville;
- 2) Finalize the Bucktail Channel Rehabilitation Project environmental document with the project's co-lead, BLM, and work on associated permits including FEMA, rock Free Use permit with BLM at Sawmill, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, and others;
- 3) Coordinate with the Yurok and Hoopa Valley Tribes on a proposed bid for joint construction of the Bucktail Project
- 4) Develop the 2016 fishery restoration flow schedule and hydrograph for a Wet water year classification based on the April 1, 2016 California DWR forecast;
- 5) Develop gravel augmentation schedule and implement along with associated monitoring;
- 6) Interview and select new Implementation Branch Chief; and
- 7) Work with TMC members to discuss and refine FY2017 proposed budget. Details on some of these activities follow.

Flow Release Update:

The releases for this "wet" 2016 water year will result in a total volume of 701,000 acre-feet. This year releases included two peak flows as compared to only one peak flow in previous years. The two peak flows were to better meet coarse sediment management objectives as part of the Trinity River Restoration Program.

Flow releases from Lewiston Dam to the Trinity River have followed the scheduled flow releases closely. Provisional data indicates actual release volumes are within a few acre-feet of scheduled release volumes. During the scheduled 10,000 cfs peak releases the maximum recorded flow rate at the Lewiston gage (11525500) was 10,300 cfs and the average flow rate during the peaks was 10,000 cfs. Higher than expected river stage could occur as a result from deposition within the channel.

Temperature targets set at the confluence with the Klamath have mostly (20 out of 32 days) been in the 'optimal' range for outmigrating steelhead smolts (e.g. <55 degrees). Trinity River water at the Klamath

confluence have risen above 'optimal' range into the 'marginal' range for outmigrating steelhead smolts on 12 of 32 days. Flows and temperatures will continue to be monitored throughout the water year.

Public Concerns: Many individuals called the TRRP office or came in to express concerns and anger over the flows during the week of the high flow releases. Concerns included impacts to wildlife and fauna, impacts to landowner riverfront property including debris left on property from flows, erosion, concerns over rising water levels towards homes, and property such as patio furniture being swept away in the flows. TRRP staff fielded calls, discussed issues with people who came to the office and went out to landowner property to discuss concerns. An extensive publication was run in the Trinity Gazette regarding the restoration flows and issues with the flow releases and gravel augmentation.

A Public Meeting was held April 14, 2016 at the TRRP office to share the schedule for the Flow Releases and Gravel Implementation.

Gravel Augmentation Update:

Gravel augmentations during the high flow release went off as planned, with coarse sediment injections totaling 2000 cubic yards at the Diversion Pool and 1600 cubic yards at Lowden Ranch.

Budget Update (see FY 2017 Budget handouts)

Science Updates

- Workgroup Summaries (see Technical Workgroup handout)
- Science Symposium March 29-31, 2016 (see final agenda)
- A memorandum was drafted by the Watershed Work Group recommending final rankings for the TMC for the FY 2016 watershed project proposals. The IDT met and reviewed the Watershed WG recommendations and concurred with the recommendations with one deviation. The IDT recommended that the \$13,700 overage in recommended projects beyond the \$500k budget should be met by reducing each project by 2.7% to cover difference. The watershed group recommended reducing the project that was ranked 5th by the \$13,700. See May 3, 2016 Memorandum.

Implementation Update

Bucktail Channel Rehabilitation Site:

- The Final EA/IS and FONSI for the Bucktail Channel Rehabilitation Site (River mile 105.45-107.0) was signed on 5/12/2016, and posted to the BOR and TRRP websites on 5/16/2016
- All landowner agreements have been signed and submitted to Denver for payment
- Contract negotiations for construction of the project continue with TRRP Partners Hoopa Valley Tribe and Yurok Tribe as of 5/24/2016

FEMA developments at Bucktail:

- For a community to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), it must adopt and enforce floodplain management regulations that meet or exceed the minimum NFIP standards and requirements.
- While Trinity County has participated in the NFIP program since the initial 1988 FIRM (Flood Insurance Rate Map) for Trinity County became available, the FIRM did not include a mapped, regulatory floodway. The floodway is defined as the channel of a stream, plus any adjacent floodplain areas, that must be kept free of encroachment in order to carry the 1% annual chance flood.
- Per FEMA regulations, and to participate in the NFIP, communities that had NOT been provided a mapped floodway map may permit projects that affected the BFE (base flood elevation) by up to 1'. TRRP projects that were built before 2016 complied with this standard.
- Trinity County provided base map information to FEMA that was used to revise the 2014 FIRM and map the floodway. FEMA provided a mapped, regulatory floodway in the PMR (preliminary map revision). The adoption of the revised FIRM by Trinity County would trigger a more stringent set of standards for issuing County floodplain permits.
- The PMR becomes effective on July 20, 2016. The new, stricter regulations were anticipated by the Program and thought to apply to permitting for the 2017 projects and beyond, since the effective date was after the 2016 project start date. However, FEMA has a 6-month adoption phase that requires projects planned 6 months before the effective date to be included in the new regulations.
- FEMA is requiring the County to follow the Conditional Letter of Map Revision CLOMR/LOMR process for Bucktail to receive a County floodplain development permit. Even if there is no rise in the BFE as a result of the project activities, every project that infringes on the floodway is subject to the CLOMR/LOMR process. This is normally a 90-day process, if no comments are received.
- DWR is conducting the flood elevation models for FEMA. TRRP worked with DWR and the site designer (Hoopa/McBain Associates) to ensure that the design resulted in no estimated rise in BFE in the area of structures.
- If there is any rise in the BFE, a full CLOMR with an evaluation of alternatives (that did not cause a rise in BFE), PE certification that no structures will be impacted (Reclamation's Denver Technical Service Center is currently conducting this review), and notification of all landowners affected by the increased BFE, is required by FEMA. The County plans to issue the floodplain development permit based on FEMA's technical review response rather waiting for the full CLOMR.

TRRP Personnel:

Michele Gallagher, Project Coordination Specialist, Realty and Compliance Outreach, last day with TRRP was May 20. Michele accepted a new position with Reclamation in Albuquerque.

Interviews were held for the **Science Coordinator** position on May 16 in Weaverville. Three candidates were interviewed.

The **Implementation Branch Civil Engineer** position has been flown twice and the second vacancy announcement extended.

Mike Dixon will be joining the TRRP staff as Implementation Branch Chief beginning June 13.

Mike is a USFWS employee currently managing a complex of five National Wildlife Refuges in Colorado and Wyoming. In this position he supervises up to eleven employees, oversees annual work plan, grazing plan, and habitat management plan. His position includes working closely with external partners including federal, state and local agencies, and he develops grant proposals for funding scientific research and habitat management. His duties also include regulatory compliance including NEPA, NHPA, ESA and CWA permitting.

Some of Mike's other work experience includes: Senior Biological Adviser and Land Protection Planner positions for the Division of Refuge Planning, and NEPA Project Manager for development of a complex EIS for the largest U.S. wind energy project. He has also served 14 active and reserve duty years with the U.S. Coast Guard, where he is currently the Senior Reserve Officer at USCG Marine Safety Detachment, St. Paul.

Mike has a PhD in Conservation Biology from the University of Minnesota, a Master's degree in Biology, and a Bachelor's degree in Ecology and Systematic Biology.

Brandt Gutermuth has served for a year as Acting Implementation Branch Chief and several months as Acting Executive Director. Brandt has excelled in both positions effectively leading the Implementation Branch and the entire TRRP office. He has showed incredible devotion to the goals of the Program, and has given every extra amount of effort feasible to keep projects moving forward to successful implementation. Brandt's exemplary ability to build and maintain positive relationships with the Program's many stakeholders and Partners is a quality that is often the primary reason that many Program accomplishments are achieved each year. Brandt is an extraordinary asset to the TRRP and his work is highly appreciated.

Public Outreach Update

2016 Public Outreach

- **2015-2016 Winter Conservation Almanac TRRP** article on fish response to Upper Douglas City Channel Rehab Project
- **January 2016 – “Cartoon” Map/Drawing of Trinity River Program Area** free product for public distribution
- **Trinity Journal notice for TMC/TAMWG Meetings**
- **March 2016 – Trinity River Restoration Program** outreach article in *Fishing the California Alps* publication
- **March 2016 – Humboldt State University** Environmental Planning students’ field trip
- **April 14, 2016 – 2016 Flow/Gravel Recommendations Informational Meeting** including over 500 mailings to area residents
- **2016 Spring Conservation Almanac TRRP** article on 10th anniversary of first in-channel rehabilitation project and 2015 Limekiln Gulch project
- **May 2016 - Day at the Wetlands** Douglas City 4th grade environmental field trip
- **May 2016 – Foothill Yellow-legged Frog Workshop** 8th grade Citizen Science Workshop
- **Kiosk installation for information and outreach at 2 new sites:** Douglas City and Junction City
- **RCD Public Raft Trip with TRRP staff:** Date not set, anticipated end of June/early July.

Save the Date

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