



# Trinity River Restoration Program

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NC-150

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** TMC Members and Alternates

**FROM:** Doug Schleusner, Executive Director  
Trinity River Restoration Program

**CC:** TAMWG Members; Science Advisory Board; Staff

**SUBJECT:** Director's Report; December 11, 2004 – April 14, 2005

**DATE:** April 11, 2005

1. Summary: Primary areas of emphasis for the TRRP staff and partners during the past four months have included: 1) preparation for and participation in the January and February TMC conference calls regarding the FY2005 budget; 2) implementation of critical path activities by RIG and TMAG staff to prepare for a possible 8,500 cubic feet per second (cfs) release in April, including an inventory of potentially impacted properties; 3) continued development of the Scientific Framework and monitoring plan, 4) efforts to resolve the impasse over designating a CEQA lead agency for restoration projects; 5) continued planning for channel rehabilitation sites, including development of contract specifications for Hocker Flat and preliminary designs for the Canyon Creek sites 6) preparation for water year 2005 release schedule, including development of options and trade-offs;; 7) contract administration and inspection of bridge construction; and 8) continued administration of FY2005 financial assistance agreements.
  
2. General Program Administration:
  - TMC Membership: It has been confirmed that Neil Manji (California Department of Fish and Game) will be the designated TMC representative for the California Resources Agency. Curtis Anderson (California Department of Water Resources) will continue as the designated alternate.
  
  - TAMWG Membership: The new members have not yet been appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. A TAMWG meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 12, with previously appointed members in attendance. The latest information is that the nomination package has been reviewed by the Fish and Wildlife Service Director, and forwarded to the Secretary's office for final review and approval.

- Budget and Financial Agreements: Following TMC discussion of the FY2005 budget on December 9-10, 2004, a conference call was scheduled for January 31, 2005 to resolve the remaining items in dispute. A second call on February 15 was necessary to complete the discussion, followed by series of motions and votes conducted by email. Refer to the minutes of those calls for details, and the FY2005 budget handout for final numbers.
- Staffing: On January 5, Rod Wittler accepted the permanent position of TMAG Branch Chief. He will continue his full-time detail until May 1, when the assignment will become permanent. Personnel actions for two additional TMAG positions (second fishery biologist and physical scientist) will start in the near future.

Our Grants and Cooperative Agreements Specialist, Scott Crawford, recently submitted his resignation effective April 19 to pursue new opportunities in the San Diego area. Priscilla Henson, Budget Assistant, will assume grants and agreements administration duties in the short term while we evaluate longer term requirements. Priscilla has past experience in grants and agreements and has already been actively involved in many aspects of the program.

- Office Expansion: We are now waiting for the General Services Administration (GSA) to issue a revised Occupancy Agreement, based on the owner/contractor's designs and cost proposal. Building permits have been acquired, and we hope to have a notice to proceed within the next several weeks. Construction should be completed within 8 weeks of the start date.
- Public Education and Outreach: The TRRP website mentioned in my last report is making substantial progress and is nearly ready for internal review prior to release. This will allow program partners and the public to access TMC/TAMWG and Weaverville office information, including meeting agendas and minutes, a calendar of events, project updates, key environmental documents, etc. The website is being completed as an additional task within the existing NSR/ESSA Science Framework contract.

Since litigation over the EIS was resolved in November 2004 when plaintiffs chose not to appeal to the Supreme Court, news articles have highlighted our ability to release full ROD flows based on water year type. Some people have interpreted this to mean "the reservoir will be drained". At least one major real estate transaction has been influenced by this issue. In response to concerns expressed by the Trinity Lake Resort Owners Association, the US Forest Service invited to address their annual operators meeting on Monday, March 28. I asked Paul Fujitani of Central Valley Operations to assist in that presentation and help answer questions. That same evening we held a public open house to discuss lake levels and other items of interest (flow schedules, river front properties) with local residents and landowners. Refer to the "frequently asked questions" handout. Approximately 35-40 local residents attended.

- Accomplishment Report: We have been compiling information to include in our first TRRP accomplishment report. Initially planned as an annual report, then revised to cover the period 2001 to 2004, it now seems more appropriate to include the substantial progress achieved in 2005, including completion of the bridges, construction of the first

rehabilitation sites, and acquisition of the first property subject to inundation by 8500 cfs flows. It will be organized around the major components of the Record of Decision, and be similar in content and appearance to an annual shareholders report. Our target completion date is late summer.

- TRRP Principal's Meeting: Invitation letters for the previously discussed Principal's Conference) were signed by Reclamation's Regional Director and the Manager of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's California / Nevada Office and mailed on April 11. Upper level decision makers from each of the TMC organizations have been requested to participate in field tours and panel discussions. May 18-19 has been tentatively selected because of the variety of activities occurring in mid-May (peak spring releases, bridge completions, Hocker Flat ground breaking). The County Board of Supervisors meeting room (library) has been reserved for those dates.

### 3. Rehabilitation Implementation Branch:

- Trinity River Bridges and Floodplain Structures: The Bucktail Bridge approach road and culvert were completed in November 2004; Poker Bar Bridge was reviewed and accepted on April 11, 2005. Bridges at Biggers Road and Salt Flat will be completed by May 1, 2005, including removal of the old railroad flatcar bridge decking. The original piers and abutments will be removed later in the summer during low flows.
- Floodplain Structures: The lengthy negotiations with the owner of the "little yellow house" were successfully concluded in February, with acquisition of the property by the federal government. This action will allow release of flows above 6000 cfs (the foundation becomes inundated at 6700 cfs). Because the owner is physically disabled, there were unanticipated costs and legal requirements associated with his relocation that are still being dealt with by our staff. Plans for removal of the house and garage are underway, and will likely involve a competitive bidding process. Using orthophotos taken in November 2001, Denise Wiltse and Noelyn Habana have plotted inundation lines for 8500 and 11000 cfs releases using DWR's latest HEC-RAS model runs for the entire 40 mile reach from Lewiston dam to the North Fork. An inventory of all structures within these limits is underway. We are looking at houses, as well as smaller structures (pump houses, wells, out buildings, etc.). Denise has developed an interview form (see handout) which we will use with each landowner to verify type, location, and elevation of potentially impacted structures. Two RCD Americorps volunteers are being trained to assist with this survey. This will allow us to estimate costs for various types of structures for the different inundation levels and to prioritize implementation.
- NEPA/CEQA and Permit Streamlining: On March 7 I received a response to my February 1 letter to the State Office of Planning and Research (OPR). OPR requested additional information from the TRRP office to clarify the nature of the project (single vs. multiple sites, etc.) and written statements of contention from each of the potential lead agencies. OPR will designate a lead agency within 21 days of the receipt of all required documentation. We responded to their request for more information on March 17, and disputing agencies are providing OPR with written statements of contention. Trinity County and State agencies are continuing to discuss other options, but in the

absence of a voluntary decision, designation of a CEQA lead by OPR should take place in early May. Copies of the letters and TRRP's statement of contentions are attached.

- Channel Restoration Sites: Clearing of vegetation at the first project site, Hocker Flat, was completed in March. The contract will be awarded in June and earthwork will begin in July, with completion scheduled by October. Four additional sites are planned downstream of Hocker Flat for the spring of 2006. Planning efforts will then shift upstream to the Lewiston area and near Indian Creek. A set of integrated grant proposals are being prepared and will be submitted to DFG's Coastal Salmon Recovery Program. They include a mainstem proposal focused on the two mile reach above and below Indian Creek which will look at both channel rehab opportunities and ways to lower risk of inundation to houses in that area (Tom Stokely is the lead). Pat Frost is heading up our proposal to address control of sediment sources in the Indian Creek tributary. Together these two proposals should be very competitive for funding. We anticipate some TRRP funds and in-kind activities being included in this cost share package. Proposals are due in May, and if successful funds would be available in the summer of 2006.

#### 4. Modeling and Analysis Branch:

- Flow Scheduling: Reclamation informed this office on April 8 that their final water year determination for the Trinity basin was for a normal water year. There was a drying trend during February and March, but recent storms improved conditions to the point where both 90% and 50% exceedence factors fell into a normal year range (1084 TAF and 1244 TAF, respectively). The flow schedule technical team made up of TRRP staff, and TMC and TAMWG representatives met on February 15 and March 10, and most recently on Monday, April 11. The first meeting was to develop initial alternatives and solicit monitoring results from program biologists on late summer releases conducted in 2003 and 2004. The March meeting was used to refine alternatives; focusing on the Normal Water Year schedule and Extended Spring Bench schedule. A request for additional temperature data and analysis was submitted to the Arcata FWS staff for the Extended Spring Bench alternative. On April 11 the TMAG staff presented four primary alternatives. Following discussion among technical team members, two additional alternatives were suggested. A summary of late summer release impacts on Trinity fishes was also presented. The results of those meetings have been incorporated into materials that will be presented to the TAMWG on April 12 and the TMC on April 14.
- Scientific Framework: A second workshop was held on March 14-16 in Arcata, with the primary objective of completing a detailed outline for the Integrated Monitoring plan and making writing assignments for the content. A review draft will be circulated for thorough review later this summer.
- Independent Peer Review: This component of the Implementation Plan is largely tied to the intended RFP (request for proposals) process for awarding scientific work. Because of the transition from prior methods, the TRRP is just now beginning to implement RFPs for certain projects. Examples of independent peer review that have already occurred include: 1) the technical proposal evaluation committee convened to review bids for the sediment monitoring contract about to be awarded, 2) several external scientists that

participated in the October 2004 science framework workshop, 3) FY2005 budget items for independent reviews of outmigration methodologies and adult migration / run size estimates. Additionally, although not technically an "independent" review, the sediment symposium in November 2003 served to obtain expert input and review of the sediment program.

- 2006 Budget Process: The TMAG has been working on a proposed set of criteria to assist in the development of the FY2006 budget process. This initially includes the following steps or components: Program Evaluation, Types of Analyses, Types of Data and Data Management, Development of Data Needs, Development of RFP's, Independent Review Panels, Science Advisory Board Review, and Agreement implementation.

5. Recent Events and Meetings:

- December 14 – Lewiston Hatchery Kiosk design team meeting, Lewiston Hatchery
- January 20, 2005 – TRRP presentation to Six Rivers NF Management Team, Arcata
- January 25 – Coordination meeting with Regional Director and Contracting, Sacramento
- January 27 – Coordination meeting with TAMWG Chair and DFO, Weaverville
- January 31 – TMC conference call, FY2005 budget issues
- February 7 – Meeting with TMC Subcommittee small group, budget concerns
- February 8 – TRRP presentation to Wintu Audubon Society, Redding
- February 15 – First WY2005 flow schedule planning meeting, Weaverville
- February 15 – TMC conference call, FY2005 budget issues
- February 15 – Planning meeting with RCD and County, DFG grant proposals
- February 18 – Salt Flat bridge open to traffic
- March 10 – Second WY2005 flow schedule planning meeting, Weaverville
- March 14-16 – Science Framework workshop, Arcata
- March 17 – Meeting/conference call with Central Valley Operations, lake level concerns
- March 21 - Meeting with TMC members (NOAA, FWS), initial ideas for FY06 budget
- March 24 – Hocker Flat visit with TRRP staff, Willows Construction Office, contractor
- March 28 – Meeting with FS Trinity marina operators, lake level concerns, Weaverville
- March 28 – Public open house, water year type, flow schedule, realty issues, Weaverville
- March 30 – Reclamation and Hoopa Valley Tribe G2G meeting on remaining FY05 tasks
- April 6 – Reclamation and Yurok Tribe G2G meeting on remaining FY05 tasks
- April 6 – Trinity HS Career Day, TRRP exhibit and staff presentations
- April 7 – CVPIA Restoration Fund conference call regarding FY2006 process
- April 8 – Final water year determination
- April 11 – Flow schedule technical team meeting, Weaverville
- April 12 – TAMWG meeting, Weaverville
- April 14-15 – TMC meeting, Weaverville

6. Upcoming Events:

- April 22 – Spring releases begin (approximate date)
- May (?) – first of several budget team meetings for FY2006 program of work
- May 16 – CVPIA Restoration Fund public meeting, Sacramento
- May 18-19 – TMC Principal's Conference, Weaverville (tentative)
- June 20 (?) – TMC meeting, FY2006 budget

