Fisheries and Ecosystem Restoration

Trinity River Channel Rehabilitation

Background:

- A key component of the Trinity River Restoration Program is the physical reshaping of the channel that has degraded over the past 40 years as a result of regulated flows from Lewistown Dam, lack of high, channel-shaping flows, and land use practices.
- The restoration implementation plan for the Trinity River EIS/ROD recommended aggressive restoration of the river channel, with half of the 43 identified sites being constructed during the first four years of the Program.
- This aggressive schedule was recommended to maximize the effectiveness of high flows in creating and maintaining fish habitat.
- The remaining projects are to be implemented following an evaluation of the effectiveness of the initial channel rehabilitation projects.

Current Status:

- Planning and design for the first instream restoration project, Hocker Flat, is complete and the project will be constructed during the summer 2005.
- Initial designs for the next four projects, the Canyon Creek Complex, have been completed and construction is planned for 2006.
- The current plan is to complete the first half of the restoration sites by 2008, depending on available funds and completion of permitting and compliance documents.

Program Challenges:

- Environmental compliance associated with restoration projects has created delays and a financial strain on the Program.
- Implementing channel rehabilitation projects is behind schedule, primarily due to infrastructure (bridge and houses/outbuildings) and funding constraints.
- Increased costs of construction (construction of Hocker Flat was estimated to be $500,000 and the construction bid was ~$750,000) may slow channel rehabilitation efforts.
- New issues concerning structures in the floodplain (Indian Creek is the primary area of concern) will present a significant financial burden on the Program, which may slow channel rehabilitation.
- The influence of constrained funding on the rate of channel rehabilitation implementation has been a perpetual issue raised at TMC and TAMWG meetings.