



Trinity River Restoration Program

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NC-150

MEMORANDUM

TO: TAMWG

FROM: Doug Schleusner, Executive Director
Trinity River Restoration Program

CC:

SUBJECT: Director's Report; September 4 – December 8, 2003

DATE: December 2, 2003

1. Summary: This is an updated version of the report originally prepared for the September 18 TMC meeting that was rescheduled to October 29. Due to the separation in time between the last TAMWG and TMC meetings, this report is somewhat different in content than the one presented to the TMC. Primary areas of emphasis have included: 1) completion of the realty actions and contract specifications for the bridges; 2) implementation of the Cableway spawning gravel project; 3) implementation of the late-summer/fall fishery flows action plan; 4) development of the statement of work for the Scientific Framework; and 5) initiation of FY2004 financial assistance agreements.
2. General Program Administration:
 - Status of SEIS/SEIR: The four co-lead agencies (USBR, USFWS, Hoopa Valley Tribe and Trinity County) are continuing with the SEIS/SEIR analyses. The administrative draft of the SEIS/EIR was distributed on November 10 for internal review, with comments due on December 15. Co-lead agencies and tribes heard presentations from Westlands, et al, for a settlement proposal regarding their lawsuit. No action has been taken as of this date.
 - Budget: The TRRP's Draft FY 2004 Budget was approved in concept by the TMC on June 26, 2003. Appropriation bills for Reclamation and the Fish and Wildlife Service have been signed, with no change to the projected levels of funding for the program. The TRRP's request for \$2 million from the CVPIA Restoration Fund for bridges and other floodplain infrastructure improvements has been approved, and is being used to partially fund the bridge construction contracts. Trinity County's proposal for \$1.2 million from the Coastal Salmon Recovery Program to assist with construction of the Poker Bar and Bucktail bridges ranked very high in the November evaluations, but results will not be known until January 2004.

- Program Website: The initial version of the website is still undergoing review by the TMC. Questions related to scope, amount of detail, tone (technical vs. informal), etc. still need to be resolved. The prototype of another website, the Trinity River Information Network, has been completed as the result of a contract between the Hoopa Valley Tribe and Humboldt State University, with assistance from Lori Kleifgen. This website will feature an interactive mapping and data access capability for information within the Trinity Basin, and should be operational this fall.
- Strategic Plan: Only a small number of comments have been received to date on the first draft of the Strategic Plan distributed earlier this year. There is an increasing need to move forward with this effort to provide overall direction to the Science Framework. To help achieve this, I have been setting up individual meetings to solicit feedback, and revise the Strategic Plan as necessary. A revised and expanded draft was mailed electronically on December 5, and will be reviewed and discussed at the December 2003 TAMWG and TMC meetings.
- Staffing: The budget assistant position is being readvertised due to lack of qualified applicants, with a selection planned for January-February, 2004. A referral list for the Grants and Agreements Specialist position has been received, and applicants are now being interviewed. A selection should be made within the coming month. Glenn Yoshioka, fishery biologist, resigned on October 17. This vacancy will be advertised in the near future. Lori Kleifgen will be leaving the program in January 2004, and that position will also be filled as quickly as possible.
- Public Information and Outreach: A portable exhibit and display materials were delivered in time for use at the Trinity County Fair on August 23-25, as well as promotional items (rain gage, floating key chain, etc.) that are being used to increase public awareness of the TRRP. These materials were produced through a financial assistance agreement with the Trinity County Resource Conservation District. The exhibit was displayed at the September 4 TAMWG meeting, the October 18 "Return of the Salmon" festival at Coleman Hatchery, the October 29 TMC meeting, and at Reclamation's River Systems Management Conference, Ft. Collins, CO, November 3-6.
- FY02-03 Accomplishment Report: Using a financial assistance agreement with the Trinity County Resource Conservation District, TRRP staff is preparing a program accomplishment report for the past two years. A draft of this report should be ready for review in January.

3. Rehabilitation and Implementation Branch:

- Trinity River Bridges: Only one bid was received on September 10 for the Salt Flat and Biggers Road bridges, and it was substantially (100%) above the government's estimate. A detailed review of the bid revealed indefensibly high unit costs for many items of work that cannot be justified. Specifications have been rewritten for spring/summer construction, and the contract was readvertised December 2, with the goal of having a contract award by February 6, 2004. The notice of intent to sue by Westlands Water District was withdrawn in late October. All necessary realty actions have been completed for the Biggers Road Bridge, and are nearly complete for the Salt Flat Bridge. Award of the construction contract for the other two bridges (Bucktail and Poker Bar) is planned for spring 2004. All four bridges should be open for traffic by December 2004. Actions are also ongoing to inventory and address other floodplain structures potentially impacted by fishery restoration flows.

- CEQA Lead Agencies: The lack of clearly identified State CEQA lead agencies has been a matter of concern for the past year. Highlighted during the environmental review process for the Cableway gravel project, it is increasingly evident that one or more State and/or local government agencies must be willing to participate in this role in order to implement the various restoration activities envisioned by the Record of Decision. This situation was outlined in a letter dated June 6, 2003 (copies provided upon request) from the Executive Director to the four most likely agencies: Trinity County, Departments of Fish and Game and Water Resources, and the North Coast Water Quality Control Board. The current CEQA leads include: SEIS/SEIR and bridges - Trinity County; Cableway gravel project - WQCB; Hocker Flat channel restoration - DWR. No other CEQA leads have been identified for future restoration activities at this time. Although some progress has been made recently, this issue deserves the attention of the TMC.
 - Channel Rehabilitation Sites: Design team meetings for Hocker Flat are continuing, and NEPA/CEQA analysis and documentation should be completed this winter. A construction contract should be awarded in early 2004. Recent awareness of floodplain mapping and "letter of map revision" (LOMR) procedures required by FEMA have added some additional steps to the project.
 - Gravel Introductions: The Cableway gravel introduction project (upstream of the Old Lewiston Bridge) was completed on September 15, 2003. Surveys by the U.S. Forest Service indicate that the new gravel was used almost immediately, with over 100 redds reported in the project area.
 - Rush Creek Watershed: Members of the TAMWG watershed restoration subcommittee, along with TMC technical representatives and TRRP staff have met several times to identify the scope of work for this assessment, and to coordinate with other inventories in progress. Funding has been identified in the FY 2004 budget to accomplish this work.
4. Monitoring and Analysis Branch:
- Fall fishery flows: The Action Plan release schedule (33,000 acre feet) began on August 27 and ramped back down to the fall base flow of 450 cfs on September 15. Preliminary results of water and fishery conditions are being evaluated (preliminary findings presented by Daryl Peterson). Initial indications are that the additional releases were beneficial, and a repeat of the 2002 fish die-off was avoided.
 - Science Advisory Board: I am pleased to announce the appointment of four initial members of the Science Advisory Board (SAB). They include: Edmund "Ned" Andrews, Stewart Rood, Josh Korman, and Mike Sale. A brief summary of their professional qualifications is attached. The fifth position will require additional outreach, and will be filled at the earliest opportunity.
 - Scientific Framework: This framework will provide the basis for setting research, monitoring, and modeling priorities for the TRRP. Starting next spring, a series of workshops will be used to develop conceptual models, a monitoring strategy, a modeling strategy, and an adaptive management/experimentation plan. These workshops will include participation by TMC technical representatives, TRRP staff, and TAMWG subcommittee representatives. A scope of work is being developed to contract with a river system modeling and monitoring firm to provide expert facilitation to ensure timely completion of the project. Initial results should be available for use in the FY 2005 budget cycle. Lori Kleifgen has been instrumental in developing the process that will be used to develop the Science Framework, and is to be commended for her persistence.

5. Key Contacts and Meetings:

- September 10 – Bid opening for Biggers Road and Salt Flat bridge construction contract
- September 15 – Last day of fall fisheries releases, ramp down from 1,000 cfs to base flow of 450 cfs
- September 15 – Cableway spawning gravel placement completed
- September 17 – Field tour with Klamath Deputy Area Manager Christine Karas
- October 10 – Trinity River field tour, HSU students in NEPA/CEQA policy class
- October 15 - FY04 coordination meeting with MP-3800 Acquisitions (financial assistance agreements)
- October 18 – TRRP exhibit at Coleman Hatchery's "Return of the Salmon" Festival
- October 23 – Conference call with FEMA, Trinity County, DWR on process for "Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) and floodplain mapping required for TRRP projects
- October 29 – TMC meeting, Weaverville (rescheduled from September 18)
- October 31 – CVPIA public meeting – FY04 Restoration Fund work plans, Sacramento
- November 3-7 – River Systems Management Conference, Ft. Collins, CO
- November 6 – CVPIA Restoration Roundtable meeting, Sacramento
- November 10 – Begin internal review of administrative draft of SEIS
- November 13 – TMC/Program Review, ad hoc subcommittee meeting, Arcata
- November 12-21 – TMC visits by Executive Director – Strategic Plan
- December 2 – Pre-solicitation notice (advertisement) posted for Trinity bridges

6. Upcoming Events:

- December 8 – TAMWG meeting, Weaverville
- December 9 – TMC meeting, Weaverville
- December 10 – Completion of internal review, administrative draft SEIS
- December 22-31 – Holidays (annual leave), reduced staffing at TRRP
- February 6 – Trinity bridges contract award