



## TRINITY RIVER RESTORATION PROGRAM

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### MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** TRINITY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

**FROM:** DOUG SCHLEUSNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**CC:** TRINITY ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

**SUBJECT:** QUARTERLY REPORT, JANUARY 09, 2003 TO APRIL 29, 2003

**DATE:** APRIL 29, 2003

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1. Summary: During the past quarter, the Trinity River Restoration Program staff has focused on five major areas: 1) preparation of requisitions and statements of work for financial assistance agreements for selected FY2003 proposals; 2) preparation for the first meeting of the Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group (TAMWG), 3) environmental analysis, planning, and design for the Salt Flat and Biggers Road bridges, 4) development of a draft strategic plan for the program, 5) development of an integrated monitoring and design process for the Hocker Flat channel restoration site, and 6) preparation for the 2003 Trinity River flow releases.
2. General Program Administration:
  - Budget: The final omnibus appropriations bill for FY 2003 was signed by the President on February 20, 2003. Although field allocations for both Reclamation and the USFWS have not been finalized, there is a general sense that the estimate of available funds made early in the fiscal year is still valid. Funding agreements, including statements of work and technical evaluations, were initiated in early March, and are in various stages of completion at Reclamation's acquisition and contracting offices (Northern California Area and Mid-Pacific Region). The objective is to have signed agreements beginning in May 2003. Modifications will be submitted for deferred projects, if appropriate, once the final field allocations are known.
  - Staffing: Lori Kleifgen, with a background in information systems and modeling, was hired from the National Park Service in Santa Fe, NM, to fill the Geographic Information System (GIS)/Data Management Specialist position, and reported for duty on March 9, 2003. The Grants and Agreements Specialist position was advertised in late March, and closed on April 18. A referral of qualified applicants should be available by May 2.
3. Advisory Committee: On February 20-21, 2003, the Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group (TAMWG) met for the first time. Seventeen of the nineteen members were present. The Designated Federal Official, Mary Ellen Mueller, chaired the first day's

agenda which focused primarily on orientation and background material presented by Restoration Program staff. The second day was devoted to procedural matters, including election of officers. Arnold Whitridge was elected chairperson, and Serge Birk was elected as vice chairperson.

The second meeting was held April 22-23 in Weaverville, with agenda topics including adaptive management, the program's draft strategic plan, an update on the 2003 Trinity River releases, and initial discussion of draft bylaws. Several sub-committees were established to interact with the Executive Director and TMC in development of the FY 2004 budget and other topics. The group also heard presentations from members of the public on desire for public access at the Salt Flat bridge site and a proposal to acquire land and tailing piles as a gravel source at Gold Bar. The major action item involved a request by the TAMWG to the TMC to consider alternatives to the current dry year flow schedule that would "optimize" benefits of available water this year. This recommendation will be considered on April 29.

4. Status of SEIS: In response to additional information submitted by the co-lead agencies and tribe, Judge Wanger agreed in late February to extend his original completion date for the SEIS from December 2003 to July 2004. The judge denied a request by the Hoopa Valley Tribe to lift the dry water year cap and allow normal or wet year releases.
5. Rehabilitation and Implementation Branch:
  - Trinity River Bridges – The public review draft of the EA/EIR will be available in early May, 2003, with the comment period closing in mid-June. Subject to completion of the environmental documents and obtaining the necessary permits, this year's funding will lead to the award of a single construction contract in late September for the Salt Flat and Biggers Road bridges, allowing traffic by March 2004. The construction contract for the other two bridges at Bucktail and Poker Bar is planned for in FY2004. All four bridges are scheduled to be open for traffic by February 2005.
  - Channel Rehabilitation Sites – Design activities for the Hocker Flat channel rehabilitation project are proceeding. Engineering drawings are being prepared by the California Department of Water Resources. Design elements include berm removal, side channel development, flood plain revegetation, and wildlife habitat restoration. A proposed action for the site has been developed and environmental studies are well underway. Subject to completion of the environmental documents and obtaining the necessary permits, construction is scheduled for the fall of 2003.
6. Monitoring and Analysis Branch:
  - Financial Assistance Agreements for FY2003 Restoration Program Annual Work plan. – Eight grants and/or agreements over \$100,000 and 14 grants and/or agreements less than \$100,000 are in various stages of completion. Statements of work have been refined, SF-424 application forms requested from proponents, and technical evaluations initiated after the final appropriation bill was signed in late February.

- Streamflow gaging –The stream gaging technical workgroup is continuing to meet and discuss data collection methods, data quality and gage maintenance issues.
- Science Advisory Board – Additional suggestions were received from the TMC and TAMWG in March, and a letter soliciting applications for the five positions has been mailed to over 75 individuals, along with publication of a news release. The review and selection process is scheduled for June. A suggestion under consideration is to have at least one of the positions filled by one of the scientists originally involved in the Flow Evaluation Study to provide continuity.
- Annual flow recommendations – On March 6, the USFWS asked Restoration Program staff to participate in developing flow recommendations in response to Judge Wanger’s request. The Program’s Monitoring and Analysis Branch Chief, Physical Scientist (hydraulic engineer), and Fishery Biologist assisted in this effort, which focused on late summer pulse flow options. The TMAG also coordinated the analysis of optimized 2003 flows requested by the TAMWG on April 23.
- Wildlife habitat enhancement – Cooperative projects to enhance floodplain and adjacent uplands are being developed with representatives of USFWS, TCRCD, BLM, and private interests.
- Fisheries technical working group – This group began meeting on a regular basis in March to help coordinate field activities and provide advice on restoration site design.
- Channel restoration planning – Planning for sites below Canyon Creek continues, with environmental site limits (ESLs) now delineated to begin environmental clearance surveys.
- Information Management – An information framework (file structure) has been created facilitate file storage and retrieval for TRRP projects.
- FY 2004 RFP process – Basic ideas for improvement of the RFP process to be used in the FY 2004 call letter include: clearer distinction between on-going monitoring and new projects open to competitive proposals; potential for multi-year funding agreements; and a shift to a study design approach rather independent tasks.

#### 7. Key Contacts and Meetings:

- January 15-16, 2003 – Hocker Flat rehab site design meeting and field trip
- January 17 – Coordination meeting with FWS and HVT on out-migrant monitoring and rotary traps
- January 24 – Coordination with CalTrans engineers and planners
- January 28 – Presentation by Branch Chiefs to the Sierra Trinity Abandoned Mine Lands Agency Group, Sacramento
- February 5 – Presentation by Executive Director at Water Resource Managers of Shasta County (WRMS) meeting
- February 6 – Presentation by Greg Pasternak (UC Davis) to TRRP staff on spawning gravel design model
- February 7 – Hocker Flat design team meeting
- February 13-14 – Presentation by Executive Director and Mary Ellen Mueller at Seattle, WA public utilities adaptive management workshop
- February 20-21 – first TAMWG meeting, Weaverville
- March 5 – Poker Bar bridge; homeowners association meeting

- March 7-8 – TRRP staff meets with USFWS to assist in flow schedule recommendations
- March 12 – Field office operations trip to Willows, Red Bluff
- March 14 – Meeting with North Coast Water Quality Control Board (NCWQCB) at Santa Rosa regarding future potential projects requiring permits
- March 15 – Attendance of TRRP staff at American Fisheries Society (AFS) meeting on Klamath fish kill, Arcata, HSU
- March 18-19 – TRRP strategic planning session
- March 20 – Coordination meeting with Reclamation Mid-Pacific Region GIS staff
- April 7 – Fish biologists technical working group meeting
- April 17 - Coordination meeting with Reclamation Mid-Pacific Region acquisition and contracting staff
- April 22-23 – TAMWG meeting, Weaverville
- April 28 – 2003 Trinity River fishery releases begin

8. Upcoming Events:

- May 2-6 – Peak Trinity River flows of 4,500 cfs
- May 13-15 – Presentation by Executive Director at DOI Conference on the Environment, Phoenix, AZ
- May 19 – Initial B-Team meeting for FY 2004 budget
- May 30 – Science Advisory Board applications due
- June 6 – Follow-up B-Team meeting (others as necessary)
- June 14 – Bridge construction EA/EIR public comment period closes
- June 19 – TAMWG budget meeting
- June 26 – TMC budget meeting (goal of approved budget by June 30)