

Summary of the Minutes of the 8/20/04 Trinity Management Council Meeting

Location: Conference Call

Purpose: Review and approve recommended monitoring needs for fall fishery protection flows.

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Mike Ryan.

There was a motion by Ralph Modine to go forward with monitoring activities out of the high and medium priority list, with the exception of genetic sampling, with a cap of \$75,000. Bill Brock seconded.

The motion was approved with 6 of 7 TMC members voting yes. The Hoopa Valley Tribe abstained.

DRAFT Minutes of 8/20/04 TMC conference call meeting on Monitoring Needs for Fall Water release.

TMC Members Present: Chairman Mike Ryan, BOR; Mary Ellen Mueller (MEM), USFWS; Irma Lagomarsino, NOAA Fisheries (at 9:25 am); Bill Brock for Sharon Heywood, USFS; Mike Orcutt, Hoopa Valley Tribe (HVT); Troy Fletcher, Yurok Tribe; Ralph Modine, Trinity County

TMC Members Absent: Neil Manji, State of California

Others Present: Doug Schleusner, Executive Director; Tom Stokely, Trinity County Planning/Note Taker; Dave Hillemeier, Yurok Tribe; Joe Polos, USFWS; George Kautsky, HVT;

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Ryan.

A list of potential projects to monitor the late summer/fall flow release was provided to all participants prior to the meeting through a memorandum from MEM of USFWS and an attached Excel spreadsheet. It showed low, medium and high priority projects.

Doug said that funding is available this fiscal year for high and medium priority items, but the timing of completing the contract documents may not be possible – the regional acquisitions division is swamped with the fiscal year end looming.

Ralph Modine asked if this money isn't spent, are we taking away possibilities to fund other priorities or is this use it or lose it this year?

Mike Ryan said No- if we didn't do any monitoring this year, this money would go to pay the bridge contractors or they could pay the bridge contractors out 2005 funding. They have \$900,000 yet to obligate from the second bridge contract. It will be covered out of FY 05. They have \$700,000 to \$900,000 to apply to the bridges this year out of remaining 2004 funds, but it provides flexibility. If funding for the fall flow is obligated from money for the bridges, the bridge funding will come out of 2005 funding.

Mike Orcutt said he supported the effort to release the extra water. However, he has a question on the background document statement as follows:

“The Council stated that it has the responsibility to weigh the monitoring recommendations developed and find the funding to conduct them if necessary.”

Orcutt questioned the TMC commitment to find the funding through the Trinity River Restoration Program. He also is worried that committing funding now will cut into other programs next year. Ralph added concerns about lack of funding for watershed programs.

MEM said it was clear that they don't have the money to fund it all. She may not have stated it exactly in the memo.

Orcutt asked about funding through the CVPIA Restoration Fund?

MEM said she's just talking about money from the Arcata office of USFWS.

Troy Fletcher said this amplifies the point that there should be money coming from the Klamath side- has anybody contacted the Klamath BOR about funding because this water release the result of their operations?

Mike Ryan said he hasn't directly contacted them, but he thinks some mainstem monitoring is being funded through them.

Troy said there is some funding from BOR for this monitoring, but BOR denies they are the cause of the (2002) fish kill, so they deny responsibility for any funding related to preventing another fish kill. This group should forward a letter to BOR asking for more coordination between the Klamath and Trinity projects.

Orcutt said there's lots of verbiage about integrating the 2 systems, but there really isn't a whole lot of integration and coordination.

Mike Ryan said if it's a good idea and it needs to be done, funding source shouldn't be an issue. If the source of funding changes the idea about what to do, maybe it's not a good idea to do it.

Irma joined the meeting at 9:25.

Ralph Modine asked if this is going to end up being the long-term fix to solve Klamath problems and impacting our local resources such as storage at Trinity Lake?

Mike Ryan said that the TMC discussed earlier in the year that they wouldn't use the ROD flows to augment flows in the fall. We may gather information this year to help decide next year if we need to reserve Trinity ROD water for a fall release.

Mike Orcutt said the HVT supports the water release, but is critical of such short notice. He expressed concerns with funding issues. It will create budget problems for 05, which will be a tough year.

Mike Ryan agreed that the 05 budget is tight, and this could exacerbate funding problems for 05.

Troy expressed concerns about Trinity footing the bill for something that is caused by the Klamath side. The Trinity ROD didn't foresee that the Klamath Project would kill fish and that Trinity would have to bail out the Klamath. There is a coordination responsibility that needs to be fulfilled.

Ralph Modine asked what do we want to know that will come out of the monitoring studies?

MEM said a top priority is the beacon transmitters on chinook. Joe Polos said it may not be timely to put radio beacons on fish. Joe said some of these monitoring things are falling off the feasibility realm with the water showing up next week. They also considered what might be needed to facilitate an emergency release. There were 2 meetings on Aug 4 and 9 about this and different monitoring needs and priorities. The report prepared by USFWS was not a consensus report, but instead was summarized by Charlie Chamberlain of USFWS and forwarded to BOR.

There was a general discussion of monitoring projects and their usefulness.

Mike Ryan said he'd contact the Klamath office and see if he can get them to fund any of this, but the TMC should assume that they won't and if it needs to be done, the TRRP will likely have to pay for it.

Joe Polos said the high priority ones- direct observation and increased pathology are labor-intensive, but they will have a hard time getting crews mobilized by early next week. Maybe later in the week it would be better. It is important to get surveys standardized but it's a busy time of the year.

Irma pointed out that NOAA Fisheries has provided funding for various studies by USFWS. Can some of that funding be made available for some of this work? She feels that some of that money could be used for this purpose with USFWS.

Joe Polos said pathology information is the key for an emergency response. Right now it's a voluntary effort by fishermen, so it's not a rigorous, directed sampling effort. Fish from fishermen sit around for awhile and aren't always usable.

Dave Hillemeier said they have been working hard to get the 20 fish in the last week. They can't be dead for more than an hour, a half hour is best. Joe Polos said the money would allow crews to go out and get the fish.

Dave Hillemeier said it's difficult to get the fish if fishing is bad. It's a very labor intensive effort.

Joe said it would also require a lot of help from Scott Foote (USFWS pathology lab) in Anderson. All agencies can do an initial assessment of Ich, but Scott Foote needs to validate the findings, which is critical to ensure we are properly identifying the pathogens. They need to minimize the time to get these studies done.

Mike Ryan said he doesn't understand the higher priority for pathology monitoring in the Klamath vs. Trinity?

Dave Hillemeier said the fish kill occurred in the Lower Klamath, so that was the higher priority.

Bill Brock asked if direct observation going to use the scientific method? Joe Polos responded yes- they will set up protocols and get something more quantitative than in the past to look at fish densities increasing and not migrating upstream.

There was a general discussion of acquisition and operation of beacon transmitters (on migrating adult chinook). Hillemeier said they have been trying to tag as many fish as possible this week.

George Kautsky asked if there is a difference between adaptive and emergency flow releases, if there are costs, does it include both adaptive and emergency flow costs, or is it less if there isn't an emergency flow?

Joe Polos said the estimate is to cover the entire fall flow period for both as a continuous effort. For instance, for direct observation, you'd want to continue that to see how the fish behave. Hillemeier said it's the same for pathology monitoring. A lot of this is new to see how the fish are reacting and they want to observe the fish during an extended time period.

Kautsky said one of concerns was the early return of fall chinook on top of spring chinook and monitoring of that issue.

Orcutt said he wants to approve the high priorities and let the TRRP office figure out whom it goes to. He wants to allocate a ceiling to cover high and moderate priority funding with cap of \$150,000. The totals equal \$123,000, but he wants to add a cushion for emergency work.

Ralph wanted some justification of the genetic sampling- what will it tell us? Kautsky responded that a concern is that by artificially increasing flows, fall chinook migration may be accelerated and the fall chinook would spatially and temporally overlap in the upper Trinity River. Last year they found that 30% of the last week of spring chinook spawning were actually fall chinook. The hatchery uses a 12 day hiatus between spring and fall chinook spawning. However, last year the fall chinook moved in early. The flow may have a negative impact on separation of the 2 runs.

Hillemeier said the information may not be useful if there is only one year of genetic information from the hatchery (1997).

Kautsky said it may still provide a baseline, and they may be able to do a scale comparison to the previous year.

Hillemeier- are there markers to distinguish between spring and fall chinook?

Kautsky- yes

Hillemeier- The 25% tagging rate of hatchery chinook may give us the info we need to determine fall or spring chinook.

Mike Ryan summarized that there may be concerns about the genetic monitoring because it needs further clarification.

Modine- wondering about the necessity of water quality grab samples in estuary?

Hillemeier said that in the past they have taken samples in estuary to see where the salt wedge moves- it would be nice to know how the high flows affect the salt wedge. He didn't know if they could even pull it off before the pulse flow hits. If can be done, the TMC might want to provide funding.

Ryan asked what parameters are they sampling for?

Hillemeier said temperature and salinity. He also said that it helps estimate the quality of holding habitat in the estuary as a result of the pulse flows.

Mike Ryan said that sounds important to determine the effects/benefits of the higher flow.

A cap of \$100,000 for the various studies without the genetic sampling was suggested.

Mike Ryan proposed asking the TRRP office to work with contracting persons in Sac. to get the work paid for and determine who would do the work.

Doug Schleusner said Sacramento doesn't have the staff or expertise to determine who should do the work. The technical group that met on the 4th and 9th of August should determine who should do the work.

Joe Polos said they would reconvene the group the following Monday or Tuesday.

Doug said it is very difficult from a contracting sense. He has contacted Sac. contracting folks and the most effective would be to redirect existing funds, recognizing that there would be tradeoffs, but no additional funds would be made available.

One mechanism to facilitate additional funding is through the Yurok Tribe's annual funding agreement. So the Yurok Tribe would distribute the funds to others. Doug said that Frank Perniciaro (BOR tribal liaison) affirmed that is an appropriate way to distribute the funds.

Hillemeier said that pathology monitoring and water quality monitoring would be easy, but they'd have to execute contracts with others to perform the other work. He doesn't know if his fiscal persons would go for it.

Hillemeier reiterated the line items in the spreadsheet with potential implementing entities as follows:

Pathology in Klamath- Yurok Tribe

Pathology in Trinity- HVT

Stranding studies- unidentified

Direct Observation- Joe Polos said he'd work with others to find somebody. USFWS can coordinate that effort.

Water quality in estuary- Yurok Tribe could try, but no guarantees.

Photo documentation of riparian areas- he doesn't know who would do that.

Polos offered to do some stranding assessments by USFWS. He said that some folks know the 'hot spots' to look or stranding.

Ryan suggested supporting high and medium projects (w/o genetic studies), with a cap of \$80k.

Modine supported that.

Joe Polos said stranding, direct observation, and pathology could be 3 USFWS projects. He said they'd plan to meet Monday to put this together- Joe, Hillemeier and Kautsky to put it together.

Doug- when he knows who does what task for what amount, he can pursue the contract amendments to make it happen.

There was a motion by Ralph Modine to go forward with monitoring activities out of the high and medium priority list, with the exception of genetic sampling, with a cap of \$75,000. Bill Brock seconded.

The motion was approved with 6 of 7 TMC members voting yes. The Hoopa Valley Tribe abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 am