



# Trinity River Restoration Program

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NC-150

## MEMORANDUM

To: TMC

From: Mike Dixon, Executive Director  
Trinity River Restoration Program

Subject: Director's Report

Date: June 2, 2023

### **Major TRRP activities between March 2023 and June 2023 include:**

Excavation and hauling is ongoing at the Oregon Gulch Channel Rehabilitation Site, which is starting to really take shape. Short- and long-term planning ongoing regarding future gravel processing and placement activities. We are moving forward with programmatic analysis of future watershed restoration activities.

### **Organizational Updates**

- Pre-recruitment information submitted for the project coordination specialist vacancy (vice Kevin Held, vacant since 2020). It will be reclassified as a Public Affairs Specialist, GS 7/9/11. It likely will not be advertised until the end of the fiscal year. Kiana Abel will be performing this role in a developmental detail assignment for 120 days.
- We had a total of 14 applicants referred for the (GS-0401-7/9/11/12) position that was previously held by Brandt Gutermuth. There was a great slate of candidates. A selection has been made and is currently being processed by HR.
- James Lee is filling the Implementation Branch Chief role on a 120-day detail assignment.
- Eric Peterson will be serving in a 120-day temporary promotion to the Science Coordinator position starting in May.
- Todd Buxton is serving in a part-time detail assignment with the San Joaquin River Restoration Program.

### **Budget Updates/Adjustments:**

A variety of developments have led to an unanticipated surplus of funds this year, though the exact amount will not be known until later in summer of 2023. The priority for surplus FY23 funds that was identified at the June 2022 TMC meeting was the Oregon Gulch Channel Rehabilitation Project, which we believed would require a third year of construction funding in FY24 for completion. However, with external funds brought to bear on that project, there is now

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funding available. Because those external (state restoration grant) funds were intended to accelerate the pace of implementation of channel rehabilitation work, it is important that we largely focus the resulting surplus TRRP funds on items that would otherwise have been funded in FY24 in order to free up funding for the channel rehabilitation project that is slated next year (which will require multiple years of funding). The actual amount of surplus funds and the cost of some of the priorities below will not be known until later this summer. Priorities for allocating surplus funds will be presented as part of the broader budget discussion during the June TMC meeting.

### **Watershed Restoration Grant**

Four grantees have recently been notified of their selection to receive a total of \$483,254.77. The Northwest California Resource Conservation and Development Council will receive \$120,631.57 to complete the final phase of the East Weaver Creek Dam Removal Project, which will open over 2.5 miles of coldwater habitat for steelhead. They will also receive \$98,948.23 to expand upon previous work to stabilize portions of the Deadwood Creek watershed which were devastated by the Carr Fire and which continue to be a major fine sediment problem nearly five years later. The Yurok Tribe will receive \$184,837.73 to carry out design and environmental compliance work to restore a section of Indian Creek that is highly compromised by past mining practices. Finally, the Watershed Research and Training Center will receive \$78,837.24 to work with an engineering firm on a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a Douglas City Community Services District which would use Trinity River water to meet the needs of residents in much of the Browns Creek and Reading Creek watersheds, with the intent of substantially reducing water withdrawals from those key streams.

### **Phase II Implementation Review Contract**

The Phase II review is largely complete. A draft retrospective report was submitted to the IDT and the Design Workgroup for review. A version of the report that incorporates those edits and includes recommendations from the expert panel for future design and implementation actions will be presented at the June TMC meeting.

### **Implementation Update**

#### **Sky Ranch Channel Rehabilitation Site:**

The design is at 60% and the VE study was completed. The land transfer from TPUD to USFS to BLM is anticipated to be completed by the end of the calendar year, and then TRRP can initiate NEPA. A right-of-entry was established with the largest private landowner on the project. TRRP is communicating with landowners on the changing project timeline. Depending on the availability of funding and the land transfer, the project may be constructed in 2025 or 2026.

#### **Oregon Gulch Channel Rehabilitation Site:**

The last QC report, which is a few months old, showed excavation was 65% completed (of roughly 520k total cu yds moved, of which 320k is exported to Eagle Rock). Yurok Tribe did a lidar flight on 02 June to update status. There are currently 13-14 trucks off-hauling materials to Eagle Rock daily, as an example, 15k yards were moved the week of May 22.

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The anticipated last day of off-haul 28 July. Then, floodplain wood placement through mid-October, final grading, seeding and mulching, and revegetation. Revegetation activities are scheduled to begin in July, with no post-planting irrigation planned.

Local residents regularly visit the construction trailer to speak with Greg Aikins or other project personnel about progress and plans, suggesting good rapport with local residents.

#### Evans Bar Channel Rehabilitation Site:

Review draft of existing conditions report was submitted to the Program (Yurok/CA team). Local residents have organized under Bill Rich and the Implementation Branch is communicating directly with them to solicit their ideas and concerns for the upcoming design.

#### Sawmill Gravel Processing Site:

Anticipating 60% design expected in the near future (Yurok/CA). VE study is complete.

#### Upper Conner Creek Channel Rehabilitation Site:

Ironwood is starting NEPA process with wetland delineations. TRRP still working to gain landowner access. Design is at 60% (Hoopa). Preliminary planset for 60% design is complete. CLOMR are in the cue. BLM acquisition of Smith Pit should happen by end of fiscal year, which would potentially add more area for contractor use. This project is scheduled to be constructed in FY 2024.

#### EA Development

- Gravel Augmentation EA – TRRP scheduled a workshop with BLM (cooperating agency) on June 20, could have it ready for public comment shortly after if they are comfortable.
- Watershed Programmatic EA – TRRP just met with implementers- YT, WRTC, TCRC, TC, USFS, WCS. Completion- anticipated end of calendar year.

#### Gravel Processing & Augmentation: B

Added 2,800 cu yds augmented at the Lowden fenceline and Cableway in late March and early April, TRRP staff seeded and mulched the access routes, and the operation was successful.

#### **Public Outreach Update**

##### Publications and Education Materials:

- [River Riffle](#): a monthly newsletter distributed by trrp.net, email and Facebook launched in May. Please send any comments/critiques/suggestions for the newsletter to Kiana at: [jabel@usbr.gov](mailto:jabel@usbr.gov)



River Riffle Newsletter  
May 2023

- **FACEBOOK**

- The TRRP Facebook page is up 69 followers from the end of March topping out at, 749 followers.
- Top post in the last 60 days was the Aaron Martin shot of the cottonwood tree obstructing the main channel Trinity in Junction City. Reach 3,840 with 146 reactions and 15 comments.



- **2022 ANNUAL REPORT**

- Most of the .pdf version 2022 AR is complete and out for edits. Kiana is working simultaneously on a 2022 Story Map AR which is nearly complete as well.

- **SUBMITTED ARTICLES**

- The Conservation Almanac – published in May
  - 2022 - TRRP in Review

- **EARNED MEDIA/TRRP FEATURE**

- March 31, 2023. *\$66 million funded for Trinity River Hatchery modernization.* Trinity Journal
- April 12, 2023. *Guides - Winter flows washing out early fishing season.* Trinity Journal
- April 12, 2023. *Flows Drawing Debate Lake rise may be negated by increased flows.* Trinity Journal
- April 12, 2023. *A Wet year upon us.* Trinity Journal

- May 3, 2023. *Winter flow town hall suggests possible path to banking more water.* Trinity Journal
- May 3, 2023. *Dam shutting, river still running high.* Trinity Journal
- May 24, 2023. *Recreational ocean, in-river salmon fisheries in California to close for remainder of 2023.* Trinity Journal
- May 31, 2023. *Science on Tap talks environmental impacts, dangers of illegal cannabis grows.* Trinity Journal

Public Events and Environmental Education:

- ADDRESSING PUBLIC CONCERN
  - April 19: Presentation to the Sacramento Fly Fishing Association
    - Chris Laskodi, (Yurok Tribe) and James Lee (TRRP) travelled to Redding to give a presentation on Winter Flow Variability to the Sacramento Fly Fishing Association.
  - April 27: Ric Leutwyler Trinity River town hall event in Lewiston
    - Ric Leytwyler.com – [update](#) & [survey results](#)
  - May 1: [Congressman Huffman Town Hall Recording](#)
  - May 16: [Trinity County Board of Supervisors Presentation](#)
- SCIENCE ON TAP, at Trinity County Brewing Company
  - April 26 – 80 participants
    - Bureau of Land Management Archeologists Dr. Eric Ritter, Sara Balmuth, and Alden Neel - *Historic Mining Adventures and Archaeology in Central Trinity County*
  - May – 60 participants
    - Integral Ecology Research Center’s director Dr. Greta Wengert – *The Growing Web of Environmental Impacts from Illegal Cannabis Cultivation*
- OTHER EVENTS
  - April 1 & May 6 – First Saturday Art Walk - Rock Painting and Adopt-A-Plot marketing
  - April 22 - Native Plant and Seed Exchange – Rock Painting and Adopt-A-Plot marketing
  - April 29 – Spring Wildflower Hunt and guided tour.
  - May 13 – Adopt-A-Plot – noxious weed pulling event.
    - We have 16 plots (target 32 plots) adopted at the 2014 Bucktail Restoration Site. The group is targeting Star Thistle, Himalayan blackberry, Toads Wart & Scotch Broom.
- EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH
  - May 5 – Creekside Arts and Education School Field Trip. Elliot Sarnacki (TRRP) lead kids in a Beaver Dam Activity & Lauren Alvares (BLM) lead an activity on water quality and pollution in our watersheds.



- - May 10 – Duncan McIntosh, RCD’s outreach and education coordinator, led a rock painting activity and talked invasive plants with Douglas City School Elementary kids.
    - May 23 – Day at the Wetlands. 4<sup>th</sup> graders from Lewiston and Weaverville Elementary Schools got to see a salmon dissection, play with bugs, make art, study fish behavior, find birds and learn about wetland plants - all from adults who work in those fields. A huge shout out to those who made this event happen: Trinity County RCD, The Watershed Research and Training Center, Hoopa Valley Tribe, The Yurok Tribal Fisheries & The Bureau of Land Management.

Landowner and Stakeholder Notifications:

- 2023 WY Hydrograph & Spring Release Notifications
  - We mailed over 550 letters out to river front homeowners
  - Email blast via TCRC
  - Email – trinity environmental list-serve
  - Flyer posting along river boat launches and other posting locations. Flyer emailed to local newspaper, sheriff’s office.
  - Social media posting
  - Website updates

Upcoming

- JUNE
  - June 28 - Science on Tap - Aaron Simms, Director California Native Plant Society – *Rare Plants of Trinity*
  - June 24 - Trinity River Public Float
  - Article: Trinity River Hatchery Update – Derek Rupert
- JULY
  - July 26 - Science on Tap - Brook Thompson – *Tribal Ecological Knowledge*
  - Weaverville Summer Day Camp
  - Article: Indigenous Plant Naming – Veronica Yates
- AUGUST
  - August 23 - Science on Tap – John Bair – *Rock Piles to Riparian*

- *Conservation Almanac* Article: Anadromous Fish of the Trinity River (or something similar)

### **Science Update**

Science Plan – Approved at last TMC meeting. A 508-compliant PDF is available at <https://www.trrp.net/library/document/?id=2605>.

SAB Recruitment – Applications close June 16. We have reached out to a list of a dozen people identified by the IDT. The intent is to fill 3 empty positions, yet only a couple people have indicated interest so far. Please continue to distribute the flyer.

Science Symposium? – Discussion has begun toward a future science symposium, likely next winter after new SAB members are on board. IDT will be tapped to guide timing and content.

Limiting Factors Analysis (LFA) – Identified as a top priority in the Science Plan, the IDT has envisioned a process to achieve an independent analysis to identify bottlenecks in the life cycle of the Trinity River’s Chinook Salmon. NFWF has been targeted as the funding vehicle and the Scope of Work is under review. The first step is to develop a study plan through a team of external experts and TRRP scientists by the end of the calendar year, then have that plan implemented in 2024.

Cohort Reconstruction Model – We are funding the USBR Technical Services Center to complete R based code to conduct modeling that will be performed by CDFW. Current timeline is for the code completion by the end of calendar year 2023 and model output completed in early 2024. This timeline is supportive of the Cohort model contributing to the LFA.

2022 Topography Model – Delivery of data is expected any day now.

Flow Modeling on 2022 Topography – We are funding USBR Technical Services Center to conduct the SRH2D flow modeling within FY24.

Aerial Photography for summer 2023 – Currently targeting July for flight. Data delivery in fall.

### **In Review or Final Edits**

The draft synthesis report, “Synthesizing 87 years of scientific inquiry into Trinity River water temperatures”, (J. Eli Asarian, Kyle DeJulio, David Gaeuman, Todd Buxton, and Seth Naman) remains in final edits.

The draft synthesis report, “Coarse Sediment Storage Synthesis on the Trinity River: Recommendations and Correlations to Juvenile Chinook Salmon Rearing Habitat” (McBain Associates and Hoopa Valley Tribe) is in final edits.

### **Final Publications and Reports**

Five Counties Salmonid Conservation Program (5Cs). 2023. [Valdor, Oregon Street, & Deadwood Roads sediment reduction projects and Sidney Gulch Compound rehabilitation design project](#). Report for the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) (Contract number R16AP00211). 5Cs, Weaverville, California.

Hoopa Valley Tribal Fisheries Department (HVTFD) and McBain Associates. 2022. [Supply Creek Watershed Restoration Project As-built Report](#). Report for the Trinity River Restoration Program. McBain Associates, Arcata, California.

Synthesis Reports – See Appendix II.

Design Reports- See Design Workgroup Report below

Environmental Reports and Findings- N/A

Post-Implementation Reports

Final Data Packages

## **Appendix I: Technical Workgroup Briefings March 2023**

**Updates have been prepared for the Trinity Management Council by the Trinity River Restoration Program Technical Workgroup (WG) Coordinators.**

**Workgroup:** Fish

**Coordinator:** Kyle De Julio

Met May 22. Agenda included a review of modeling that is used for the hydrograph selection DSS table and discussion of fish-oriented synthesis report efforts.

**Workgroup:** Design

**Coordinator:** Oliver Rogers

The Design Team met on March 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, to discuss revegetation and rehabilitation design considerations on site at Oregon Gulch and Sawmill. The Design Team also met on May 10<sup>th</sup>, for a quarterly meeting and received updates from the Federal Design Team, Hoopa Design Team, and Yurok-State of California Design Team. Topics covered included: a progress update on the Sky Ranch project, a presentation of the preliminary 60% design plan set for the Upper Conner Creek Rehabilitation Site, and a progress update on the Sawmill Gravel Processing Site Rehabilitation design and Evan's Bar project. The revised Oregon Gulch Revegetation Design was presented and an update on the draft TRRP Phase II Retrospective Report was given. The Design Team was informed of the decision to pivot to the Upper Conner Creek project for implementation following completion of the Oregon Gulch project due to continued delays related to the Legislated Land-for-Land Exchange at Sky Ranch.

**Workgroup:** Flow

**Coordinator:** Ken Lindke

No meetings since last TMC. The next meeting (to be scheduled) will attempt to identify a subgroup to evaluate WY2023 winter variable flow implementation. The intention is to provide a presentation to TMC at the September meeting that includes any analyses that can be done prior to completion of the water year and using currently available data and models.

**Workgroup:** Watershed

**Coordinator:** Justin Alvarez

No meetings since last TMC.

**Workgroup:** Physical

**Coordinator:** Conor Shea

No meetings since last TMC.

**Workgroup:** Riparian and Aquatic Ecology

**Coordinator:** Chris Laskodi

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No meetings since last TMC.

**Workgroup:** Interdisciplinary Team

**Coordinator:** Eric Peterson /  
James Lee

Met June 30 to prepare for the TMC meeting, cover a number of program updates, and start conversations about flow modeling needs (with the 2022 topography) and a future Science Symposium.

## Appendix II: Synthesis Reports Tracking and Estimated Completion Dates

Synthesis Reports				
Project No.	Brief Title	Involved Entities	Proposed Due*	Status
TRRP-2018-002	Tributary Delta	<i>Program Office (POC: Todd Buxton, TRRP)</i>	March 2019	<b>Published in <i>Ecohydrology</i> 2022;e2463</b>
TRRP-2018-003	Fish Habitat	<i>HVT, USFWS, YT, USBR TSC (POC: Damon Goodman, USFWS)</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Q 2019	<b>USFWS portion Posted; YT portion Posted</b>
TRRP-2018-007	Juvenile Chinook Production	<i>USFWS, YT, HVT (POC: Bill Pinnix, USFWS)</i>	July 2017	<b>YT Portion Posted USFWS portion in final edits</b>
TRRP-2018-009	Cohort Reconstruction	<i>HVT, USFWS, CDFW (POC: Ken Lindke, CDFW)</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Q 2019	In progress
TRRP-2018-011	Adult Salmon Spawning	<i>USFWS, HVT, YT, CDFW (POC: Steve Gough, USFWS)</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Q 2019	<b>In final edits</b>
TRRP-2018-018	Bed Mobility and Scour	<i>HVT, USFWS (POC: Geoff Hales &amp; Scott McBain, McBain Associates)</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Q 2018	<b>FINAL POSTED</b>
TRRP-2018-019	Cottonwood Seed Dispersal	<i>HVT (POC: John Bair, McBain Associates)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Q 2018	<b>FINAL POSTED</b>
TRRP-2018-021	Riparian Encroachment	<i>HVT (POC: John Bair, McBain Associates)</i>	4 <sup>th</sup> Q 2018	<b>FINAL POSTED</b>
TRRP-2018-022	Sediment Storage	<i>HVT, USFWS (POC: Geoff Hales &amp; Scott McBain, McBain Associates)</i>	4 <sup>th</sup> Q 2018	<b>In final edits</b>
TRRP-2018-025	Channel Complexity	<i>HVT, USFWS (POC: Smokey Pittman &amp; Scott McBain, McBain Associates)</i>	August 2019	Delayed- uncertain timeline
TRRP-2018-027	Fine Sediment	<i>Program Office, NMFS, HVT (POC: Todd Buxton, TRRP)</i>	July 2020	<b>FINAL POSTED</b>
TRRP-2018-032	Water Temperature	<i>YT, USFWS, HVT, USBR, NMFS (POC: Eli Asarian, Riverbend Sciences)</i>	May 2019	<b>In final edits</b>
TRRP-2018-033	Large Wood Management	<i>NMFS, YT, HVT (POC: Scott McBain)</i>	April 2018	Recently reorganized team, in progress, external review draft expected late CY 2022
NA	Flow Synthesis	<i>HVT et al. (POC: Justin Alvarez)</i>	Mid FY 22	In Progress

\* = due date for TRRP Peer Review process according to status assessment in December 2018. TRRP staff have created a web page for linking synthesis reports as they are completed. It incorporates additional reports that have had a synthesis intent but were not specifically funded by the FY2018 effort. The page is live at <https://www.trrp.net/restoration/adaptive-management/synthesis-reports/>.