

Quarterly Meeting Notes

TRINITY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

December 11th–12th, 2023
(Rescheduled from December 5th–6th, 2023)

9 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. PST

Shasta-Trinity National Forest Headquarters, 3644 Avtech Parkway

Redding, CA

MS Teams Video Conference

Trinity Management Council (TMC) Members in Attendance (12/11 and 12/12/2023)

Name	Representative Seat
Don Bader	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), Chair
Mike Dixon	USBR, Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) Director
Liam Gogan	Trinity County (TC) Core
Tim Hayden	Yurok Tribe (YTFD) Core ¹
Justin Ly	National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Core
Mike Orcutt	Hoopa Valley Tribe (HVTFD) Core
Radley Ott	California Natural Resources Agency Department of Water Resources (CNRA-DWR) Core
Keli McElroy	U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Core
Bill Pinnix	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Core

Others in Attendance (in-person):

Eric Peterson, TRRP-USBR; Michael Burke, USBR; Chris Laskodi, YTFD; Justin Alvarez, HVTFD; Nora Al; James Lee, TRRP-USBR; Lauren Alvares, TRRP-USBR; Jenny Hutchinson, USFWS; Tyler Wallin, USFWS; Todd Buxton, USBR; Kyle De Juilio, YTFD; Patrick Flynn, TC; Yadao Inong, YTFD; Ken Lindke, CAFE; Seth Naman, NOAA; Zac Reinstein; YFTP; Oliver Rogers, USBR; Andrew Harris, Fishing Guide; Heidi Carpenter-Harris, TC; Bobbie Miller, USFS; Elizabeth Hadley, USBR; Dave Gaueman, YTFD; Morgan Knechtle, CNRA-DFW; Mark Lancaster, Northern California Resource Conservation & Development Council; Emelia Barnum, USBR; Michael Palmer.

Others in Attendance (Microsoft Teams):

Kiana Abel, TRRP-USBR; Cassandra Holmes, HVTFD; George Kautsky, HVTFD; Steve Gough, USFWS; Roman Pittman, NMFS; Vickey Ryan, USFWS; Elliot Sarnacki, USBR-TRRP; Trent Tuthill, TC; Adam Witt; Brett Kormos, CNRA - DFW.

Notes: Aspen Howard (Chloeta)

¹ Kyle De Juilio serves as the alternate for Tim Hayden when unavailable.

Monday, December 11th, 2023
(Scheduled from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. PST)

Welcome and Introductions (Don Bader)

Attendees on one or both days are listed above. Any omission of attendees outside of the TMC is accidental and regretful.

Don Bader, Bureau of Reclamation and TMC Chair, opens the meeting for public comments. No public comments were given, and the discussion was closed.

Approval of Agenda

Motion

Motion: Justin Ly, NMFS representative, motions to approve the agenda.

Second: Bill Pinnix, representative of the USFWS, seconds this motion.

Amendment: No amendment.

Outcome: The motion to approve the agenda passed with no opposition.

Approval of September Meeting Minutes

Motion

Motion: Radley Ott, on behalf of CNRA-DWR, motions to approve the September meeting minutes.

Second: Ly seconds this motion.

Amendment: No amendment.

Outcome: The motion to approve the agenda passed with no opposition.

Comments on Non-Agenda Items (Don Bader, Chair)

Public Comments

Bader opens the discussion. No public comments were given, and the discussion was closed.

Reports and comments of TRRP entities

Liam Gogan, on behalf of Trinity County, offered an additional agenda item considering winter flow comments. Bader mentions it may be in Ken Lindke's presentation on WY24 TMC guidance to Flow Work Group in the next day. He is willing to include winter flows in the discussion if it is not already planned to be discussed. A placeholder was set to address this topic for tomorrow after lunch.

Program Updates (Mike Dixon)

Recognition of Staff and Partners

Dixon recognized TRRP staff members Justin Alvarez and Kyle De Juilio for their excellent service.

Concerning Alvarez, he said the following:

Dixon met Alvarez while both were in previous positions, and Alvarez has a grounded and programmatic touchpoint. He keeps open lines of communication effectively. He recently took on workgroup responsibilities despite his already existing management duties. He maintains exceptional operational and technical level competencies in spite of his responsibilities as deputy director. Alvarez is a main driver on recent pursuit of outside funding for tribal work. He is a key contributor in restoration for tributary flow monitoring. Moreover, he is a key partner in a three-tribe monitoring efforts concerning fish leaving the upper Klamath and Trinity rivers. He is an overall well-rounded and effective manager.

Concerning De Juilio, he said the following:

De Juilio is very enthusiastic and can speak to people from all backgrounds, elementary to expert. He is a fish biologist by trade but can hold his own in conversations with experts of all disciplines; he thinks like a river. He has a great understanding of how rivers work and possesses powerful public communication skills across the board. Dixon wanted to thank him for his efforts. De Juilio mentioned he had spent most of his career involved in the program and the kind comments towards him are due to the people he has worked with during his experience working here.²

Public Comments

Dixon opened the discussion. No public comments were given, and the discussion was closed.

Director's Report

Dixon presents the TMC Executive Director's Report Memorandum, available on the TRRP website at <https://www.trrp.net/calendar/event/?id=11777>.

Major TRRP activities between September 2023 and December 2023 include the following:

Construction at the Oregon Gulch project wrapped up in October and revegetation is essentially complete. The ceremonial ribbon cutting event is on December 19th to recognize the workers' efforts and is open to for everyone to attend. Bader indicated that Sacramento Public Affairs will send out invites. Congressman Jared Huffman will be invited to attend. A draft EA regarding gravel processing and augmentation was released for public comments. Work is underway to develop a work plan for a chinook salmon limiting factors analysis. With the completion of a TRRP-funded watershed project to

² De Juilio was recognized by Dixon the following meeting day due to availability issues.

remove an antiquated dam, there are no longer any artificial barriers to adult fish passage on East Weaver Creek.

Organizational Updates

- The Public Affairs Specialist (GS 7/9/11) was advertised but the certificate of applicants warranted readvertising. It will likely be readvertised sometime in early 2024.
- Eric Peterson's detail as Science Coordinator has ended. There is no update on when the permanent position might be advertised. It is possible that both this position and the public affairs position will be included with the HR "tiger team" effort that is being focused on NCAO in January. Dixon will be available for any questions concerning this position.
- The USFWS selected Tyler Wallin to serve as the Arcata Fish & Wildlife Office's coordinator/liaison with the TRRP and the Designated Federal Official for the Trinity Stakeholder Advisory Committee. He started in that position at the beginning of December. He most recently served as a fish biologist in the USFWS' Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program in Arcata.

Budget Updates/Adjustments

The initial FY24 budget that was approved in June and July of 2023 included a speculative amount of funding that would be available for channel rehabilitation activities, using that activity as a balancer because the planned project for 2024 will be constructed over two-plus years and is thus scalable. A handful of items have arisen since the initial budget was adopted which will influence the amount of funding available for channel rehabilitation.

- Because of frequent delays in getting annual funding agreements (AFAs) in place with the Yurok and Hoopa Valley Tribe and because monitoring years for several tasks span fiscal years, Reclamation is pursuing a shift to a calendar-year AFA. However, this will require that the first calendar year AFA (for 2024) also fund the work that started or was underway in October of 2023, which will increase the cost of all of those tasks. Dixon mentioned documentation will be available the next day.
- NFWF has requested that we fund the final \$500k in our watershed restoration grant. They are concerned that if we wait to fund it next fiscal year and then solicit applications, then grantees would only have several months to complete work before the overall grant expires. I will be asking TMC to consider fully funding that agreement this year.
- We will be soliciting for a contract to remove the infrastructure at the River Acres Road house in Junction City in the coming year, prioritizing the building and electrical. We have an independent government cost estimate, but the actual contract cost will be determined when a selection is made.

- The group developing the Limiting Factors Analysis work plan is working toward having a scope of work to solicit by the end of January. The hope is to have the LFA funded with FY24 dollars (there was a placeholder with no dollar amount in the approved budget).
- Our proposal for BIL funding for a portion of the Upper Connor Creek project was well received (as a reclaiming mined lands task) and it appears that the revegetation component of the project will receive funds in FY24 and FY25.
- There is funding remaining on a recently expired five-year interagency agreement. My request to recover those funds and apply them to FY24 needs was approved, adding an additional \$465,899.49 to our available funding for the year. The current working budget for FY24 is included as an attachment. The channel rehabilitation budget is just under \$3 million, close to the long-term average.

Dixon opened the discussion up to questions. No questions were given.

Implementation Update (James Lee)

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 in February 2024, and then TRRP can initiate National Environmental Policy Act (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 2026 or 2027.

Oregon Gulch Channel Rehabilitation Site: Civil construction, including demobilization, was completed in November. Revegetation continues and is expected to continue through the beginning of December. Initial repairs to Sky Ranch Road were made and will be monitored through the spring to ensure the surface is repaired to pre-project condition.

Evans Bar Channel Rehabilitation Site: The design remains at the existing conditions report stage. Designers and TRRP staff met with residents located in the environmental study limit (ESL) in October to discuss their concerns with a project.

Sawmill Gravel Processing Site: A 60% design was prepared by the Yurok Tribe and State design group and submitted to the TRRP design team in September, it was reviewed by the Design Team in November.

Upper Conner Creek Channel Rehabilitation Site: The 90% design plan set was submitted to the design team in November by the HVT design group. Outreach and agreements with landowners within the ESL are ongoing. The project is expected to be ready for implementation in FY 24, or as soon as adequate funding is available. With current annual funding levels, it is expected to be a 2-year project. BIL funds are going to Upper Conner Creek, and the program will be receiving funds for native seed and other plant

material collection on an order of \$1 million dollars. Veronica Yates will be implementing these funds.

EA Development

- Upper Conner Creek and Sawmill Environmental Assessment (EA)
 - The EA is in progress with no set end date, although the public scoping period opened for Dec 4- Dec 17, 2023. The scoping notice can be viewed here: <https://www.trrp.net/ucc-sawmill/>
- Gravel and Wood Augmentation EA
 - The public comment period for the EA concluded on November 22. TRRP is responding to comments. Lee indicated the comments were sparse.
- Watershed Programmatic EA
 - Progress continues on this EA. The team is currently reviewing technical descriptions of activities and collaborators to be covered by the PEA.

Public Outreach Update (Kiana Abel)

Abel gave the public outreach update, presenting the River Riffle September and October newsletters with links attached.

Publications and Education Materials:

- [River Riffle](https://www.trrp.net/outreach/riverriffle-2023-05/) (<https://www.trrp.net/outreach/riverriffle-2023-05/>)
 - [September](https://www.trrp.net/outreach/river-riffle-newsletter-september/) (<https://www.trrp.net/outreach/river-riffle-newsletter-september/>)
 - Trinity River: Current Conditions
 - TMC Meeting Recap
 - Article: Flow Variability in the Trinity River
 - Program Update: River Acres, Junction City
 - Upcoming Events
 - [October](https://www.trrp.net/river-riffle-newsletter-october/) (<https://www.trrp.net/river-riffle-newsletter-october/>)
 - **Trinity River:** Current Conditions
 - **Draft Environmental Assessment Open for Public Comment –** New Gravel Augmentation Sites Proposed Beginning Winter 2023/2024
 - **Program Update:** Latest Reports
 - **[Featured Article:](#)** New Challenges in the Struggle to Save Pacific Salmon (A story map from the US Fish and Wildlife Service)

(<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/13f637e9157c443db10a1d168c2b1995>)

- **Trinity River Watershed:** Animal Spotlight – North American Beaver
- Upcoming Events
- The TRRP Facebook page is up 47 followers from the end of September topping out at 865 followers.
 - The top post in the last 60 days was the East Weaver Dam removal project near Weaverville. The TRRP was the primary funder for this watershed restoration project that was carried out by Five Counties Salmonid Conservation Program.

Public Events and Environmental Education:

- SCIENCE ON TAP, at Trinity County Brewing Company
 - September: Lenya Quinn-Davidson: Rebuilding a Culture of Fire: People, Policy and Practice
 - Lenya Quinn-Davidson presented the work that she and others have done to break down barriers and rebuild a culture of fire in California on September 27th. There was good attendance as she discussed the new state-certified burn boss program, recent policy changes, and the social movement around community-based fire that is taking place across the state.
 - October: Chris West, Yurok Condor Program: Cultural and Ecological Restoration of the California Condor
 - West presented about the cultural and ecological restoration of the California condor on October 25th. West began working with California condors as an intern with the Ventana Wildlife Society in 1999, leading to his master's research at Humboldt State University investigating condor vigilance behavior while feeding. He began working for the Yurok Tribe in 2008, working to set up the first reintroduction site in the Pacific Northwest and is now the Manager of the Northern California Condor Restoration Program. West mentioned that condors might be visible flying in the Trinity Alps around this time of year.
- OTHER EVENTS
 - October 7 – The Annual Salmon Harvest Festival occurred on October 7th. This was a combined effort with North Fork Grange and the annual

harvest festival. Activities included a Chili cookoff, local vendors, children's activities, and a raffle.

- October 12 – TRRP adopted a portion of HWY 3 – During the inaugural clean up, volunteers gathered 15 bags of trash on entire stretch of highway just north of Weaverville next to the airport. A speed limit sign will be posted in the area soon.
- October 21 - Adopt-A-Plot Native Plant Day at the Bucktail Restoration Site. This year we adopted 18 out of the 30 plots, targeting the roadside and first parts of the trail. Volunteers finished the season spreading seed and planting native plants. Digging in the rocky soil can be challenging; Abel made sure to commend those willing to help.

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

- September: The Bar 717 Ranch, Camp Trinity
- Toured the 6-8th grade Junction City Elementary School class around Oregon Gulch in October. This field trip served as a great opportunity for young minds to connect with the environment and witness the positive impact of restoration efforts on the Trinity River ecosystem.
- Toured Several Groups of kids at the Hatchery during spawning season to talk about the salmon life cycle.
 - Trinity High School Science Class: Eric Peterson and Kiana Abel
 - Weaverville and Hayfork Homeschool Groups: Chris Laskodi and Kiana Abel

Landowners and Stakeholder Notifications:

- Public comment period (October 10, 2023, to November 22, 2023) for public review of the draft Sediment and Wood Augmentation Environmental Assessment/Initial Study (EA/IS).
- Scoping Period (December 4 – 17) for two proposed restoration projects, the Sawmill Gravel Processing Site and the Upper Conner Creek Restoration Project is underway.

Upcoming

- December 19 – Oregon Gulch Ceremonial Ribbon Cutting
- Outreach partner sent out an annual survey and is hoping for higher numbers than last year.
- Science on Tap series picks back up in January.
 - January 24, 6pm Max Ramos – Modelling the re-establishment of coho salmon in Klamath River tributaries after dam removal.

- February: Aaron Martin will be presenting about the Oregon Gulch
 - March: Water Always Wins Author, Erica Geis
 - April: Klamath Mountain Wildflowers
- Science on the River will occupy the summer months in 2024. Kyle De Juilio will conduct a tour out of Indian Creek potentially.
 - June & July: Unconfirmed
 - August: Todd Buxton: Diurnal Pool Stratification in August
- 2024 Science Symposium – Open house projected to be in Junction City. The public is invited, dates to be determined. March – May
- General Outreach Programming: January - April
 - Open House (February)
 - Birding Days
 - Invasive Plant Pull (Spring)
 - Day at the Wetland (expanding to downriver schools)

Science Update (Eric Peterson)

- **Water Year 2023 variable flow implementation review.** Although a winter storm synchronization flow did not occur, elevated baseflows were scheduled for the period from February 14 through April 15. The elevated baseflows were partially constrained by dam infrastructure limiting the release to 2000 CFS prior to April 1. Preliminary results assembled by the Flow Workgroup include bed mobility, inundation, benthic macroinvertebrates, and outmigrant fish data. These findings will be summarized in a report which will be submitted for peer review in the coming months. Peterson indicated that preliminary results should not be cited because the peer review process has not commenced.
- **SAB recruitment.** Contracts are in preparation for Dr. John Hayes for the Aquatic Ecology position, Dr. Kurt Fausch for the Riparian and Watershed position, and Dr. Daniele Tonina for the Hydrology position. We hope to have them onboard in January.
Peterson mentioned a desire for SAB to be able to attend science symposium.
- **Limiting Factors Analysis (LFA).** The team that was selected by the IDT to work with Cramer Fish Sciences has identified a suite of reports and data to be provided to the contractor. They are working to develop a work plan which will be used to solicit a contract to conduct the actual limiting factors analysis with a soft target of the end of January 2024.

The intent is to develop study plan and then implement it during a second phase. Dixon represented that technical work groups are reviewing to synch with objectives and targets.

Flow management is in review to include the right models to influence decisions instead of using them for the sake of using them.

Core Monitoring and Decision Support System review. In recent years, TRRP completed a set of Objectives and Targets as a living document to help focus the science program. The IDT is using these as the basis for two coordinated reviews. The Science Plan directs the IDT and workgroups to conduct a review of Core Monitoring during FY24 activities in order to focus our limited science and monitoring budget on the right tasks, and the Flow WG has requested a review of our current DSS for hydrograph review to ensure that we are applying the right measures in scheduling flows. The IDT intends that coordinating these reviews will provide better alignment from Objectives and Targets to Core Monitoring and DSS modeling.

- **FY25 Science priorities.** The technical workgroups are actively developing research questions that will address key uncertainties from the Science Plan, specifically related to nutrient flux, wetted area, and temperature. These research questions will be reviewed by IDT and SAB and the highest priority questions will be the basis for an RFP for science and monitoring proposals for FY25. Proposals will also be reviewed by the SAB in preparation for the June meeting of the TMC.

Synthesis Reports – See Appendix II.

Incomplete:

- Adult Salmonid Spawning – in final edits
- Cohort Reconstruction – a roadblock on modeling is actively being remedied.

Updates are being made on implementation. The target date was January. The hope is to have estimates ready to be included in the LFA.

- Large Wood Management – actively progressing on a new timeline
- Flow Synthesis – regaining momentum
- Channel Complexity

Informational/Discussion

- Orcutt expressed concerns about setting priorities for the group in the absence of a science coordinator.
- Dixon mentioned that Eric Peterson is engaged with the IDT in the absence of a coordinator.
- Peterson explained that the organization of the IDT's work comes from the science plan, which assigns the IDT for core monitoring reviews and outlines the process for developing fiscal year priorities.
- Dixon indicated that Tyler would take a more active role in this aspect.

- Orcutt discussed the cohort reconstruction in the Fishery Management Council, aiming to reanalyze stock review analysis for consolidated climate and considering the potential need to separate the Trinity. The focus is on restoring pre-dam levels of populations.
- There are plans to use reconstructive models for fall run chinook and consult with interested parties.
- Liam Gogan raised questions about actions related to dams and climate.
- The discussion included plans for cohort reconstruction models and software updates to segregate Trinity stocks separately. The goal is to have the updated software in January.
- Dixon discussed the reconciliation process for the EIS, emphasizing that the analysis of project impacts will focus on populations in the southern part for the Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation.
- Orcutt raised questions about the determination for upper Trinity in 2024, and Justin Alvarez clarified that it is not in the proposal.

Yurok Tribal Fisheries Program (YTFP) and Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP). 2023. Digital Elevation Model (DEM) exported at 1 ft resolution from the 2022 Trinity River Focal Reach Digital Terrain. Data Package for the TRRP. YTFP, Arcata, California. Available: <https://www.trrp.net/library/data?id=158>.

- “Terrain” format is ~24GB, available upon request.
- Raw lidar/sonar are hundreds of GB, available upon request.

Informational/Discussion

- Ly inquired about the status of the program document review.
- Bader mentioned ongoing discussions with Regional Directors for document review and expected approval within a week or two.
- Gogan mentioned plans to present a proposal authored on behalf of Trinity County after lunch break the next day.

Break

Updates to FY24 TMC Budget (Mike Dixon)

Comments of TRRP Entities

Dixon handed out physical copies of the budget and presented the document. Changes were made to the previous version and can be shown in different shadings. Reclamation funding is highlighted because it has increased \$400,000 with funds recovered from an expired cooperative agreement.

On the second page of the budget document, there is no update except the amount of funding to the tribes. More funding is given due to the extra quarter required to shift AFAs to a calendar year cycle, which will be seen throughout the budget in costs for the Hoopa Valley and Yurok tribes.

Pinnix sought clarification on the technical assistance values for state/federal agencies, questioning if they were paid forward. Dixon confirmed this, FY24 was funded with surplus FY23 dollars.

When addressing the implementation page, Dixon proposed funding the Watershed Restoration grant at \$1 million, recognizing that the project is currently funded at \$500,000 and explaining the concerns of the grantee that if we waited to add the final \$500k in the next FY, there most likely would not be enough time for sub-awards to be completed before the grant expired.

Orcutt inquired about the increase in Watershed funds and whether it would affect subsequent years, to which Dixon explained the funding history of the grant to date.

The conversation covered various projects and their funding, with Ott questioning the inclusion of Limiting Factors Analysis in the 2024 working column, prompting Dixon to clarify that there was no dollar amount assigned, and it would be discussed later.

The discussion touched on the allocation of funds, criteria for appropriate projects, and the need for continuous monitoring. Ott inquired about the science team's planning, and Dixon explained that it would be discussed during the FY25 budget proposal in June.

The effectiveness monitoring was discussed with a focus on long-term plans and how it relates to winter river flows. Gogan expressed concerns about the potential impacts of the changes in water flows and emphasized the need for comprehensive monitoring to assess outcomes effectively.

Pinnix and Gogan discussed the importance of data collection and the challenges of expanding monitoring sites. Dixon clarified that some changes were already underway and highlighted the robustness of their long-term monitoring programs.

The conversation concluded with discussions about the survival study, concerns about tributary work being defunded, and the commitment to funding NFWF. McElroy clarified the commitment to \$500,000 a year and the consequences of not fully funding it.

Public Comments

None.

TMC Decision - (The TMC will consider an addition to the initial budget approved in June and July of 2023) (Blind Vote Results)

List of Motions

Motion: Orcutt proposes that in light of information provided in 2024 budget, Watershed restoration remain at \$500,000.

Second: Gogan seconds for discussion.

Amendment: None

Outcome: Motion fails 7 to 2.

Don Bader (USBR): No

Mike Dixon (ED): No

Kelly McElroy (USFS): No

Bill Pinnix (USFWS): No

Mike Orcutt (Hoopa Valley Tribe): Yes

Raddley Ott (CAPWR): No

Liam Gogan (Trinity County): Yes

Justin Ly (NMFS): No

Tim Hayden (Yurok Tribe): No

Motion: Ott motions to adopt the budget as proposed and add qualifying when we award Watershed grants that they have significant value. Funds allocated to projects that have a commensurate benefit to other mainstem Trinity work.

Second: Ly seconds this discussion

Friendly Amendment: Friendly amendment by Orcutt to strike everything after proposed, accepted by Ott and Ly.

Outcome: Motion passes with 7 in favor, 1 vote in opposition, and 1 vote abstaining.

Don Bader (USBR): Yes

Mike Dixon (ED): Yes

Kelly McElroy (USFS): Yes

Bill Pinnix (USFWS): Yes

Mike Orcutt (Hoopa Valley Tribe): No

Raddley Ott (CAPWR): Yes

Liam Gogan (Trinity County): Abstain

Justin Ly (NMFS): Yes

Tim Hayden (Yurok Tribe): Yes

Adult synthesis report findings (Steve Gough)

The previous discussion regarding the budget ran long. Therefore, Steve Gough's report findings presentation will be rescheduled for another meeting.

Public Comments

None.

TMC Discussion and comments, as appropriate

Pinnix stated that Gough's findings were presented last September.

Lunch

TRD, CVP, and Klamath Project reconsultation update (NCAO/BDO Staff Kristin Hiatt, Tim Warner, & Armond Hallston)

Kristin Hiatt, Natural Resource Specialist for BOR, presented the slides for Reinitiation of Consultation of the Long-Term Operations of the CVP and SWP (Central Valley and State Water Projects). She detailed the environmental compliance processes for the Central Valley delta. The presentation included a schematic overview of NEPA and the ESA processes for the CVP and Delta.

Key milestones were highlighted, starting with the Notice of Intent (NOI) scoping and preparatory work, the release of the initial alternatives report, cooperating agency draft EIS, and the release of the Biological Assessment. Notably, a chronological biological assessment was transmitted to cooperative agencies on June 30th, and a quantitative assessment was sent to fisheries on November 9th.

The presentation introduced draft alternatives for the Central Valley and Delta, including a No-Action alternative, Alternative D1641, a multi-agency consensus (Alt 2), a modified natural hydrograph (Alt 3), and water deliverables and drought protection (Alt 4). Upcoming NEPA milestones were outlined, with Reclamation undergoing a 30-day review period in mid-September, followed by the release of the public EIS draft notice of availability for a minimum 45-day comment period. The process includes public meetings, both in-person and virtual, for interagency coordination and public involvement.

Hiatt emphasized the consideration of all comments, providing responses, and a 30-day wait period before finalizing the EIS and Record of Decision, which will include discussions on mitigation and monitoring.

Armond Hallston, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist with Reclamation, presented the Reinitiation of Consultation of the Operations of the Klamath Project slides. His portion of the presentation focused on the environmental compliance process, following the NEPA and ESA Schematic Process. Hallston mentioned that they are currently working on a draft EA that will lead to a Biological Assessment. The Klamath Area Office is drafting the EA, including resource areas, and there is ongoing multi-agency coordination on the proposed action. Interested party meetings are scheduled for the future.

For the Biological Assessment, the same approach for analysis as the CVP is being employed, with modeling efforts currently in progress. Hallston provided a preliminary schedule and coordination plan, indicating that the public draft environmental assessment and final biological

assessment are expected in spring 2024. Biological opinions and the completion of NEPA are targeted for fall 2024.

Public Comments

None.

Reports and Comments of TRRP entities

Trinity River Update (Mike Dixon)

- The next joint meeting with Hoopa, Yurok, and NOAA Fisheries is scheduled for Wednesday to finalize an agreed-upon proposed action for the development of the biological assessment.
- The assessment remains on schedule for a decision next year, with intermediate NEPA steps still to be completed.
- Hiatt emphasized that the analysis will be integrated into the CVP under NEPA, resulting in a single EIS and a unified record of decision for the CEP. New operations may necessitate a supplemental NEPA document and could require additional documentation. The focus is on preparing and submitting a Biological Assessment under the ESA for Trinity.
- The team is collaborating on foundational documents and strategy with joint leads. Meetings with cooperating agencies are underway to develop alternatives. Initial modeling of alternatives has commenced, and the team is reviewing and applying screening criteria. The preparation of the biological assessment for the CVP and delta biological assessment is in progress.
- Future meetings with interested parties will be scheduled based on product availability, determined through consensus with joint leads. These meetings will encompass discussions on knowledge-based papers, cooperating agency EIS, the public draft EIS, and other relevant topics.
- Trinity River Draft Preliminary Alternatives:
 - No Action Alternative – 2000 ROD / 2017 ROD
 - Alternative 1 – WQCP
 - Alternative 2 – Joint Leads Consensus Alternative
 - Alternative 3 - Modified Natural Hydrograph
 - Alternative 4 – Risk Informed Operation
 - Alternative 5 – Low Emissions with Flexible Management
 - Alternative 6 – Trinity County Local Alternative
 - Submitted by Trinity and geared toward prioritizing storage in Trinity Lake.

- Alternative 7 – Maximum Flow Alternative
 - Submitted by Yurok and will be a modification of what was included in 2000 EIS.

Dixon outlines a coordination opportunity and input request:

- Cooperating agencies shall provide comment on 2nd draft cooperating agency EIS.
- Parties who are interested in a particular resource will work with representative cooperating agencies on 2nd draft cooperating agency draft EIS.
- WIIN Quarterly Update Meeting – December 12, 2023

TMC Discussion and comments, as appropriate

Pinnix raised a question regarding Humboldt County's proposal to exercise a 50,000-acre contract and its incorporation into the alternatives. Hiatt clarified that the Trinity River component in the CVP includes a common component holding 50,000 acre-feet in storage. Reclamation is currently determining the details following the recent WMP statement. The 50,000-acre feet are indeed included, and more specific information will be provided as the coordination progresses.

Bader emphasized the need to conduct consultations simultaneously, acknowledging that Trinity was behind but highlighting the importance of taking the necessary time for proper decision-making. There is no rush to finalize it at this moment.

When asked about the timeframe, Bader mentioned that it is not determined yet. The coordination with joint leads is in the early phases, and more information is expected in early 2024. Several steps, including public meetings, the NEPA process, public draft, final draft, and a 30-day period, are still ahead.

Dixon posed a question about the decision to start with an EA instead of an EIS and expressed a preference for the latter due to its more durable outcome. Hiatt explained that this approach aligns with the past procedure in the Klamath Basin. They are currently exploring alternatives, and if the NEPA process leads to an EIS, they will proceed in that direction.

Framework to establish the Trinity Stakeholder Advisory Committee (Tyler Wallin)

In Tyler Wallin's presentation, he introduced a framework to establish the Trinity Stakeholder Advisory Committee (TSAC) as part of the TRRP. The presentation began with an introduction, highlighting new staff and the new position of Liaison for TRRP, responsible for coordinating representation and forming the advisory group.

Wallin provided a brief review of advisory groups, referencing the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) of 1972 to promote public and federal agency collaboration. He noted the dissociation of the Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group (TAMWG) in 2019 as part of a government-wide reduction of FACA groups, leading to the need for a new advisory committee.

The Trinity Stakeholder Advisory Committee was proposed to support communication and provide unique perspectives to influence agency operations. Wallin explained FACA compliance, emphasizing the role of obtaining advice and recommendations for executive agency operations.

The presentation also touched on the lifecycle of a Federal Advisory Committee, including reevaluation and nonrenewal processes.

Public Comments

None.

Reports and Comments of TRRP entities

None.

TMC Discussion and comments, as appropriate

Bader inquired about establishing members, questioning if that process could be delegated to directors. The response indicated that it must go through the Secretary.

McElroy sought clarification on the functional difference between FACA and collaborative groups; there was a discussion of the relative roles and leadership of FACA vs collaboratives..

Orcutt raised a question about funding, and it was clarified that funding would be through FWS.

Lee inquired about recruitment and outreach to potential members, and Wallin mentioned ongoing work with Trinity County and associations.

Ly proposed the idea of FWS hosting public meetings and inviting representatives from different groups to which Wallin explained the limitations and the need to pull from appropriate demographics.

Questions were raised about member compensation, future administration concerns, and the budget. Dixon highlighted the annual FWS funding reduction to TRRP and its potential impact.

Lee asked about input on community of interest, and Wallin mentioned getting feedback from a variety of sources, including TMC meeting members.

Gogan inquired about any knowledge from TAMWAG, and Wallin shared efforts to contact previous members for recommendations and insights.

Orcutt questioned the determination of the composition of stakeholders, and Wallin mentioned the draft charter from the Program Document. Orcutt then raised a pitch for considering the tribal/nontribal division in fishery allocation representation.

East Weaver Dam Removal (Mark Lancaster, Director of 5Cs)

In Lancaster's presentation, he provided a detailed overview of the East Weaver Dam Removal project, which received substantial funding through the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP). The project, spanning Phase 1 and 2A, has been planned since 2006 and aimed to remove a 12-foot-high dam with a concrete core situated in East Weaver Creek, Weaverville's primary water system.

Lancaster highlighted the historic significance of the dam, its elevation, and its role in supplying water to various areas of Weaverville. Notably, the dam was scoured 6 feet below the bottom to a

clay bedrock formation, and the presentation included details on the construction of a new 8-inch water line with meters and electronic control valves in 2022. The project also involved the relocation of the community trail and aquatic species.

Lancaster discussed the installation of water diversions for the new intake, featuring an ISI four foot width self-cleaning operating screen system. The presentation covered the project's progress, including the successful demonstration of its operation in 2023, reconstruction the channel, and the incorporation of habitat elements.

Lancaster emphasized ongoing monitoring to assess channel performance and structure, with a focus on habitat improvement both upstream and downstream. He acknowledged the Weaverville Community Services District and other partners for their contributions to the project's success.

Public Comments

None.

Reports and Comments of TRRP entities

None.

TMC Discussion and comments, as appropriate

Bader inquired about the overall funding, to which Lancaster responded with the total project cost, with specific costs for the screen and pipe.

Pinnix asked about the budget distribution among funding agencies, and Lancaster explained the split between TRRP, USFWS, CA, and the design and permitting components.

Lee questioned if the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) would extend the monitoring program, and Pinnix raised concerns about changes in water needs. Lancaster clarified that the project addressed water right and fish passage, adapting to a maximum processing capability of 2 CFS.

De Juilio shared plans for Yurok Tribe's restoration downstream, and Orcutt inquired about project eligibility for restoration program funds, with discussions on the change in leadership prompting the initiative.

Break

Angler Effort on the Trinity River (Chris Laskodi)

In Laskodi's presentation on Angler Effort on the Trinity River, he focused on the implementation of winter flows and presented an overview of fishing seasons, covering Spring Chinook Salmon, Fall Chinook Salmon, and Steelhead/Trout. The primary objective was to provide an overall view of angler activity on the Trinity River, specifically emphasizing the recreational aspects.

Data sources, including the Steelhead report card and North Coast Salmon report card, were discussed as tools to monitor catch trends over time and generate revenue for restoration projects. The presentation delved into the fishing seasons' patterns, revealing peak periods and

drop-offs influenced by factors such as fly fishing section opening and concurrent fisheries in nearby areas like Redding. Laskodi analyzed data on angler demographics, economic implications, and geographical origins using ZIP Codes.

The presentation also incorporated data from BLM Guide logbooks, highlighting the similarities and differences between guided fishing trips and other angler efforts. Additional data from the Trinity Creel survey, conducted for the first time since the late 1990s, provided insights into angler effort trends, emphasizing the popularity of the steelhead fishery.

Laskodi concluded by addressing challenges, potential biases associated with self-reported data, and the need for linking data sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of total angler effort on the Trinity River.

Public Comments

None.

Reports and Comments of TRRP entities

De Juilio emphasized using data to inform decision-making and inquired about evaluating days of fishing lost in the EIS. The response mentioned using average data for calendar days to quantify anglers affected, delving into economic aspects, and suggesting steps for better data utilization. Laskodi discussed the limited electronic format data due to COVID, lacking a baseline effort.

De Juilio discussed the importance of guidebook data for assessing different management scenarios specific to Trinity River restoration. He pointed out the Cedar Flat Bridge's significance in the restoration reach and discussed potential changes in fishing patterns based on altered water flow management.

TMC Discussion and comments, as appropriate

A question was raised about the possibility of incorporating Department of Fish and Wildlife guide logs. The response indicated that the logs are currently in a warehouse in Sacramento, and the guide logbooks are not separated, requiring funding for data entry, with a significant amount of data entry for irrelevant information.

Gogan recommended revisiting the use of paper logs, emphasizing the ease of numbering pages. Regarding steelhead report cards, he suggested a means of returning them and discussed the importance of the January 31st deadline. Laskodi acknowledged the possibility of asking for data and monitoring changes over time. Gogan highlighted the significance of higher limits for salmon trips and expressed concerns about online report cards, suggesting that they should be filled out as anglers go.

Adjourn

Tuesday, December 12th, 2023
(Scheduled from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. PST)

Welcome, Comments on Non-Agenda Items (Don Bader, Chair)

Public Comments

Don Bader opened the discussion for public comment. No comments were discussed.

Reports and Comments of TRRP entities

Dixon shared that there was a big turnout at the TMC Dinner at Final Draft Brewing Company.

Dixon also shared that the TRRP received media attention through an article posted on The Revelator titled ‘Like a Dead Zone’: Undoing Decades of Environmental Harm on a California River, by Juliet Grable. The article can be found by following this link:

<https://therevelator.org/trinity-river-restoration/>

TMC Discussion and comments, as appropriate

Orcutt indicated that he had requested a specific number of items to be included on the agenda. He explained that he did not ask many questions during the meeting because there were numerous changes in the program, including discussions on climate, dam removal, and redefining productivity. Orcutt expressed his intention to be vocal on the topic of hatcheries and emphasized the importance of making this stance known for strategic purposes.

Modeling the reestablishment of coho salmon in Klamath River tributaries following dam removal (Max Ramos)

In Max Ramos's presentation on the modeling of coho salmon reestablishment in Klamath River tributaries following dam removal, he began by introducing his thesis work at Humboldt State University, conducted in collaboration with NOAA, NIMS, and others, with a focus on the climate aspect. Ramos highlighted the publication of the ecology of freshwater fish in 2023. The presentation aimed to explore the potential for coho salmon recolonization in Klamath River tributaries above Iron Gate Dam, considering the upcoming dam removals.

Ramos provided a detailed overview of coho salmon biology, their life cycle, and the challenges they face, including low returns (6% of historic abundance). The presentation addressed the potential for tributaries to support coho recolonization, incorporating factors such as summertime water temperature, the Habitat Limiting Factors Model (HLFM), and the Intrinsic Potential (IP) model. Specific tributaries discussed included Jenny Creek, Camp Creek, Fall Creek, Spencer Creek, Shovel Creek, and Scotch Creek.

Various models and methods were employed, such as the Occupancy Model, HLFM, and IP Model, each contributing to the assessment of habitat suitability, water temperature, and other critical factors for juvenile coho salmon. Ramos shared findings for each tributary, detailing water temperature data, habitat suitability scores, and potential barriers for coho salmon recolonization.

Results indicated promising conditions in some tributaries, with Camp Creek showing high potential, Jenny Creek facing challenges due to barriers, Fall Creek displaying positive attributes, Shovel Creek presenting mixed results, and Scotch Creek holding potential in certain sections. Spencer Creek stood out with the highest total accessible habitat and predicted occupancy.

In the discussion section, Ramos addressed the potential pitfalls and limitations of the study, including the need for further investigation into dewatering in Scotch and Camp Creeks, understanding food availability, assessing downstream coho populations as sources for streams above Iron Gate Dam, and considering the viability of adult coho salmon above the dam.

The presentation concluded with future work considerations and acknowledgment of the collaborating entities, including CDFW, HSU Thesis Committee, HSU, NOAA, ODFW, PacifiCorp, REU, and USFWS. Overall, Ramos's presentation provided a comprehensive analysis of the potential for coho salmon recolonization in Klamath River tributaries, considering multiple environmental factors and modeling approaches.

Public Comments

None.

Reports and Comments of TRRP entities

During the discussion, Lee inquired about the units for the x-axis and coho habitat quality in the stream characteristic/valley width graph for the IP. Ramos clarified that the Valley Width index represents the width of the valley and is measured in meters, indicating how far the stream is expected to branch out.

Lee sought confirmation about the 5 meters value for the inflection point, and Ramos explained that it is a ratio of the actual high-flow bank.

Lee then observed that, based on the graph, wider valley width is associated with better coho habitat quality. Ramos affirmed this observation, stating that, after the valley width index, wider is considered better, with a target of 1 regardless of the circumstances.

TMC Discussion and comments, as appropriate

During the meeting, Orcutt inquired about the umbrella under which the evaluation is conducted and how populations are anticipating strategies for a later time. Ramos was unable to provide a response to this question.

Orcutt then raised the concern about the limited production of coho, prompting Ly to suggest consulting with Branch Supervisor Jim Simondet for answers regarding overarching strategies and monitoring. Orcutt mentioned that the State had reached out to Hoopa about the matter.

Klamath dam removal (Mike Belchik)

Mike Belchik's presentation includes the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRC) reported on the progress of removing four dams: Coho, JC Boyle, Iron Gate, and Copco dam, discussing issues related to bed mobility and fish disease. The dams, creating reservoirs that impede water flow, were situated in a geographic area crossing the Oregon state line. A detailed Gantt chart

overviewed the project timeline, which commenced in 2023, highlighting completed and upcoming tasks, such as coho incubation and egg removal during the concluding preconstruction phase.

Visual aids included maps depicting Copco 1 and Copco 2 dam locations, progress task maps, and representative pictures. Ward's Canyon was shown pre-tree removal, a necessary step for dam removal, with KRC contracting Yurok for tree removal. Pictures of the canyon post-removal, blasting remnants of water intake, and a dam insight picture of cement intake illustrated the ongoing work. Copco 2 was deemed complete, while Iron Gate was undergoing extensive preparation, including the evacuation of the reservoir through an old emergency tunnel, which required grouting and smoothing. Representative pictures showcased historic dam structures, circular tanks for construction in tunnels, and the Copco No. 1 dropdown preparation.

Belchik detailed the stages of reservoir drawdown, including operational and initial drawdown, reservoir refilling and releasing period, dam demolition, and Klamath River reconnection. Sediment information revealed approximately 17 to 20 million cubic yards accumulated behind the dams, with 5 to 7 million cubic yards traveling downstream during drawdown. The Klamath River historically moved 5 to 7 million cubic yards of sediment annually, with the sediment being non-toxic, primarily consisting of dead algae and gravel.

Iron Gate drawdown and dam removal were slated for May through June of 2024, involving large trucks and excavation equipment to remove the dam embankment, filling existing spillways, and demolishing the powerhouse. Post-removal, a new river channel would be built in the dam footprint, with channel grading expected to conclude in October 2024. Similar plans for Copco 1 removal and concurrent decommissioning of structures at the Copco 1 facility were outlined, designating Copco 2 as the visitor center for the dam.

Belchik detailed the restoration scope and metrics, including the revegetation of 2,200 acres of formerly submerged ground, the design, construction, and long-term management of 18,000 feet of high-priority tributaries, and vegetative stabilization of sediment using native plant species. The presentation highlighted pictures of Copco using sonar imagery for prioritizing tributary sites and discussed uncertainties regarding channel shape, emphasizing the potential resolution over time.

The presentation addressed 98 species of native plants, their germination, and cultural/ecological significance. Flood risks were discussed, emphasizing that dams were not flood control structures. A specific bridge to lower right, was highlighted, with plans for a new pipeline attachment to the bridge, cultural monitors on-site, and cultural significance for tribes.

Belchik provided contact information for the KRRC Public Information Officer, Ren, and answered questions regarding monitoring efforts. Different monitoring plans, including the State of California's detailed plan and efforts by IFRRP, were discussed. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's reintroduction plan was outlined, covering the active reintroduction of all species except spring chinook. Details on the hatchery, funded by Pacific Corps for eight years, with construction costs covered by the same entity, were shared. The hatchery's relocation to the mouth of Fall Creek was mentioned, emphasizing the primary motivation for dam removal:

enabling fish access to stable cold water in the Upper Klamath, known for producing a substantial number of quality fish. The hatchery, 90% complete, comprises two buildings for Chinook and coho.

Public Comments

None.

Reports and Comments of TRRP entities

Lee raised concerns about channel bed mobility and *C. shasta* below Iron Gate after dam removal, asking about the expected frequency. Belchik emphasized the potential benefits of dam removal for *C. shasta* but acknowledged uncertainties in bed stability. Another member discussed flows and hypothesized that small to medium gravel would mobilize in the mobile area, influencing the river over time.

TMC Discussion and comments, as appropriate

Gogan focused on the sediment portion of the discussion, inquiring about the expected influence of the Trinity River on the Klamath River after dam removal. The response indicated significant effects this winter, sensitive to precipitation events, with considerations for cosmetics and visual effects. The discussion touched on the challenges of sediment relocation, potential impacts on juvenile salmon, and the need to monitor hydrology.

Gogan further inquired about the role of springs in meeting cold water objectives, prompting a discussion on temperature analysis, run timing, and the net effect of dam removal on temperature conditions. Bader questioned if the target at 23°C would improve with dam removal, leading to considerations of cold water release and its effects at lower flow.

Orcutt discussed challenges, referencing the fish kill of 2002 and the need for reevaluation, particularly regarding thermal refuges. He emphasized the importance of structured evaluation, referencing ongoing studies and collaborative efforts by various institutions. The discussion touched on increased flows to mitigate challenges, ongoing assessments, and the need for specificity in response to elevated presentation levels.

Concerns were raised about the responsibility for hatchery expenses after eight years, with uncertainties about the remaining years and potential transitions to other entities. Orcutt highlighted the Pacific Council's fish management plan for fall chinook and ongoing reassessments. Dixon questioned the existing fish passage at Keno Dam; Belchik responded raising concerns about water quality there and the need for passage, especially considering the Yurok tribe's long-standing concerns expressed to DOI over the past two decades.

Break

Integration of natural and hatchery origin salmonid management (Mike Orcutt/George Kautsky)

Mike Orcutt's presentation focused on the evolution of hatchery management over the past decade and emphasized the need for a structured and integrated approach. The separation of

hatchery management occurred around 10-12 years ago, primarily to mitigate impacts on steelhead and coho salmon 100 miles above the dam.

The Trinity River Management Council (TRMC) addressed concerns related to harvest, habitat, hydropower, and hatcheries. However, disputes over production numbers arose, leading to the dissolution of discussions around a structured management process. The presentation highlighted the earlier efforts to create an integrated strategy for managing both natural and hatchery salmon populations.

The definition provided for integrated strategy emphasized interrelated objectives and actions that logically sequence to support both hatchery and natural salmon population targets. The presentation overviewed the integration involving coordination across habitat, hatchery, and harvest management domains, considering the effects of actions and uncertainties through monitoring and AEAM (Adaptive Environmental Assessment and Management).

Habitat considerations were discussed in the context of restoring and sustaining natural production downstream of Lewiston Dam, emphasizing coordination between flow management, dam operations, habitat actions, and hatchery and harvest objectives. The presentation addressed the interaction between hatchery and habitat, suggesting hatchery staff involvement in local habitat restoration planning and formalizing a TRH (Trinity River Hatchery) management structure for decision-making and communication improvements.

The presentation also touched on hatchery goals expressed as adult production goals, maximizing the use of natural-origin-brood stock, and considering progressive changes such as off-site egg/fry stocking. Harvest management was discussed with a focus on fall Chinook, PFMC (Pacific Fishery Management Council), and the consideration of selective harvest tools in freshwater fisheries.

Communication was highlighted as a crucial element, with formalized communication among habitat, hatchery, and harvest co-managers. Sharing information regarding impending management actions was emphasized to optimize benefits for both naturally and hatchery-produced fish populations.

The presentation concluded by emphasizing the importance of optimizing mutual benefits for natural and hatchery-origin salmonids through coordination, prediction, monitoring, and hypothesis testing. Models like the H Analyzer were suggested to help predict and evaluate outcomes of integrated management actions. The call for a structured approach to integrated management and the acknowledgment of the need for adaptation and sequencing of actions were central themes in Orcutt's presentation.

Public Comments

None.

Reports and Comments of TRRP entities

A question was raised by the Trinity River Watershed Alliance about the effort to differentiate hatchery fish from natural spawners for better tracking. The response highlighted that 100% of

Steelhead are marked, 100% of coho are tagged, and in Chinook production, a study initiated by Hoopa resulted in marking 25% of fingerlings and yearlings at the Trinity River Hatchery. The discussion extended to the challenge of determining whether individual Chinook are natural or wild, emphasizing the complexity of estimating the hatchery origin of fish that spawn in natural areas.

Another question touched on how to identify the success of restoration programs when there's no accurate count, especially when placing stations indicated that 50% were from hatchery programs and the other half were not. The response affirmed the existence of a method for accurate identification through representative hatching, despite the challenges posed by estimating populations based on sampling. A mention was made of a study from the '90s, Hankin and Newman 1996, which became broadly applied in the central valley, providing a constant fraction for estimation throughout the state.

Jerilyn Smith raised a concern about the 25% marking causing problems in data collection, referring to a recent report. The response explained that the system estimate is based on sampling. Orcutt provided a follow-up, stressing the importance of the governance board and decision-making processes, along with a general hatchery update on construction. The emphasis was placed on the ongoing efforts to refine the decision management structure and work on areas where the IDT team has visible overlap.

TMC Discussion and comments, as appropriate

Concerns were raised about the potential negative impact of hatcheries on wild salmon populations, referencing a recent synthesis report that found a decline in salmon populations across the Pacific Ocean.

The focus shifted to Trinity River, and the question arose on how to ensure that hatcheries have a positive influence on habitat and populations rather than detracting from them.

Recommendations from the CA Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) 2012 were mentioned, emphasizing the need to avoid breeding yearlings to prevent perpetuating a hatchery-adapted fish pedigree. The discussion also touched on the importance of avoiding unnatural practices on spawning grounds and decentralizing the reach by moving coho down to Hoopa and developing habitats in other areas.

A specific question was posed about using brood analysis to model the effects of eliminating hatchery production on natural salmon populations in the Trinity River. Orcutt clarified that the presentation was not intended to delve into the hatchery debate but acknowledged the valid questions raised.

He highlighted the significant BIL funding for the Trinity River hatchery and the ongoing efforts in integrated hatchery production as instructed by Congress. The need to modernize hatchery practices was emphasized, and support was expressed for producing unnaturally bred fish to mitigate the impact on natural populations.

The discussion touched on the challenges posed by solicitor's opinions and the importance of reevaluating and making necessary changes to ensure the success of restoration efforts.

Lunch

WY24 TMC guidance to Flow WG (Ken Lindke)

Lindke's presentation focused on seeking guidance from the Trinity Management Council (TMC) on how to manage flows for the year 2024. The foundational outline highlighted the importance of the Implementation Plan of the 2000 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), emphasizing the need to adaptively manage daily releases to achieve the fishery goals of the restoration program. Lindke mentioned a document put together by Joe Polos, which reflected the scientific understanding at the time, and emphasized adaptive management as a crucial tool in meeting program goals.

The objectives for flow management included increasing the amount and improving the quality of rearing habitat, with a specific focus on linking the phenology of prey and California species to disturbance caused by management to enhance biomass production.

Constraints for flow management were outlined, including water year volumes in April, winter flow triggers, leveraging B120 forecasts in February and March, ensuring compliance with summer minimum baseflows, and adhering to maximum fisheries flows. Lindke also mentioned conflicting guidance received by the Flow Work Group (FWG) and the IDT Technical Recommendation resulting from the September meeting.

TMC motions were discussed, including a motion by Justin Ly in September to approve the IDT's recommendation, which failed. The presentation highlighted that the FWG had received conflicting guidance and needed specific guidance from the TMC for flow management in 2024. Despite offering the best available science, it was not adopted, and there seemed to be a conflict between defaulting to traditional flow management and the TMC's expectations. The conclusion emphasized the need for more specific objectives or constraints to guide hydrograph development.

Summary:

- Foundational documents establish Adaptive Management (AM) and the directive for TMC to use the best available science to meet Program objectives.
- Winter Variability Flow (WVF) is considered the best available science for meeting program objectives.
- WVF and traditional ROD flow scheduling are in opposition to TMC direction based on the September meeting.
- If the TMC wants a different flow recommendation, specific guidance on objectives and constraints from TMC is needed.

Comments of TRRP entities

Bader discussed the absence of a TMC motion and mentioned fallbacks to traditional ROD flows.

Ly inquired about the differences between the motion and traditional ROD flows. Gogan clarified Trinity County's proposal, "Mimic 2," emphasizing elevated base flows and specific

hydrograph shapes. He mentioned economic impact, the lack of income for Trinity due to winter flows, and the potential for a cost-benefit analysis.

Orcutt highlighted the need for statutory language consideration, and De Julio emphasized the complexity of adding water to the river. The importance of economic analysis and potential impacts on Lewiston turbine repairs on the 2023 release were also raised.

Concerns were expressed about the lack of analysis and the need for clarity. The meeting addressed the potential for a special meeting, the timeline for proposing changes, and the importance of communicating with the public. The discussion covered the unpredictability of fishing days and weather forecasts. The need for more specificity in guidance and the suggestion to provide a middle ground for further discussion were emphasized.

The discussion concluded with a proposal for a modified flow work proposal to be evaluated by the Flow Work Group and distributed by January 11th, with ongoing discussions on the timeline and potential impacts.

Jerilyn Smith pointed out that while the volume in the ROD cannot change, it can be moved around.

Kiana Abel clarified that the ROD volume is set based on the water year. Smith agreed with this. She also questioned why the BOR does not stick to the release flows outlined in the ROD for each water year.

The Trinity River Watershed Alliance talked about the impact of fisheries on local businesses until April 15th and discussed potential benefits like white water rafting and snorkeling. They emphasized the importance of flows that fisher folks can manage, ideally at 1200 CFS or less.

Todd Buxton showed interest in finding ways to maximize river benefits without harming user groups, the environment, or fish populations.

Gogan discussed the County's proposed Mimic-2 winter hydrograph, and that he is open to over 1200cfs after March 15, and generally open to geomorphic flows. There's flexibility with the proposed hydrographs, as long as flows are no more than 1200cfs between Feb 15-March 15.

Bader said the IDT has the guidance it needs to work with Polos and the Trinity County to refine the Trinity County's proposal so that the TMC can decide on the refined proposed winter flow.

Public Comments

None.

TMC decision

The TMC will discuss giving directions to the Flow Work Group regarding expectations for WY24 flow scheduling at a later meeting date.

Break (2:48-3:00)

Sawmill gravel processing site 60% restoration design (Dave Gaeuman)

In this presentation, Dave Gaeuman, Senior Geomorphologist for the Yurok Tribal Fisheries Program, outlines the plans and challenges associated with the restoration of the Sawmill gravel processing site 60% restoration design.

The Sawmill gravel processing site restoration project has undergone significant development, with past efforts dating back to the 70s and 80s by a task force preceding the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP). Noteworthy work included burner hole identification and gravel augmentation, along with the construction of riffles to stabilize the landscape. The cemetery side channel, established in the '80s, persisted until subsequent flows. The 2009 rehabilitation project, Sawmill 5, focused on the gravel processing area, introducing a contractor use zone. Adjustments, such as lowering certain areas, allowed for redirected water flow, avoiding the cemetery side channel.

The current restoration project, at the 60% design stage, entails two primary components: a gravel processing area and a breach plug to retain water within the side channel. The design includes meander bend, gravel additions to reduce incision, the creation of an island from processed material, and a floodplain. The goal is to enhance fish habitat by ensuring a consistent water supply. Challenges arise from the high riverbank elevation, low flows, and the need for extensive excavation. The design team initially opted for a smaller plug but is considering a larger one, emphasizing the importance of consensus among stakeholders.

The project is planned as a response to future encroaching into the 100-year floodplain and FEMA compliance during gravel processing. A comprehensive strategy involves the creation of spoil areas (U1, U2, U3) for materials, with considerations for accessibility and processing. Spoiled areas serve various purposes, including storing and processing excavated material.

Modeling outputs showcase the impact of the design on flow velocities and fish habitat. The floodplain inundation at 600 CFS is crucial for supplying water to the desired habitat areas. The design aims to increase fish capacity, with significant gains in habitat, particularly during frequent winter flows. The design team evaluated alternative plug sizes, with ongoing discussions about adopting a larger plug for better habitat preservation.

In summary, the Sawmill gravel processing site design integrates several elements to enhance habitat, including a main channel meander, a floodplain plug for the side channel habitat, and an expanded footprint for the plug. The design anticipates a 130% increase in fry habitat during winter flows. The project also addresses challenges such as the scouring of the sawmill burner hole and the orderly harvesting of course 7s for gravel augmentation and restoration materials needed by TRRP. The ongoing collaboration and input from the design team and partners underscore the project's commitment to achieving its restoration objectives.

Summary:

- The Sawmill gravel processing site design encompasses several key elements:
- A main channel that meanders, providing a dynamic and natural flow.
- Plugging the floodplain reach to enhance side channel habitat.
- Expanding the footprint of the plug to ensure effective water retention.

- Anticipating a remarkable 130% increase in fry habitat during winter flows.
- The meander bend is strategically directed at the Sawmill Burner Hole to address scouring issues. This was one of the few holes which was clearly filled as a result of gravel augmentation though subsequent work has scoured it back out; this project aims to minimize these concerns in the future.
- The project involves 8,500 cubic yards for cutting and filling. This design is specifically tailored to enable the orderly harvesting of course 7s, essential for TRRP's gravel augmentation and other restoration material needs. The careful consideration of these elements underscores the project's commitment to successful and sustainable habitat enhancement.

Public Comments

None.

Reports and comments of TRRP entities

None.

TMC discussion and comments, as appropriate

Dixon expressed concerns about encroaching into the 100-year floodplain and FEMA compliance during gravel processing at the Sawmill site. He emphasized the need for permits, especially in relation to BLM agreement/lands, to continue processing gravel.

Gaeuman provided details about existing terrain (U1 & U2) as of 2020, highlighting two spoiled areas. U2 serves as a stockpile for materials to be processed, with considerations for accessibility and placement of better material in the north. U3, another spoiled area, is used to stockpile processed material and is not a raw material pile. The speaker explained the elevated surface of U3 for storing and processing material.

Pinnix raised concerns about water leakage and velocity scour with a smaller plug, suggesting that a larger plug would be more effective in maintaining water flow and preventing scouring. The speaker acknowledged the fluid forces at play and emphasized the role of vegetation in holding the plug together, especially considering the constant flow of 40 CFS year-round.

In summary, the TMC discussion focused on permitting issues, terrain considerations for spoil areas, and the importance of plug size in preventing water leakage and maintaining stability. Ongoing considerations include the need for permits, the strategic placement of materials in spoil areas, and the impact of plug size on water flow and stability.

TMC dates for 2024 (Don Bader, Chair)

- Monthly calls will be Thursdays, with November 14th being the only deviation to the schedule because of Thanksgiving.
- Quarterly meetings: March 20-21, June 5-6, Sept 11-12.
- Bader suggests switching Weitchpec in June and Arcata in September. Hutchinson agrees.

- Pinnix is willing to host in September.
- January 18th is the pending call to discuss the FWG.

Topics for March TMC meeting (Don Bader, Chair)

Public Comments

None.

Reports and comments of TRRP entities

Lindke discusses that the multi-day science symposium is in its early planning phases.

TMC discussion and comments, as appropriate

Dixon highlighted the potential for TMC to receive a presentation from DWR on how the B120 forecasts are determined, as that has been a topic of much attention and misinformation recently.

Pinnix brought up the topic of the LFA and its study, plan, development, and decision point, suggesting a discussion in February.

The reconsultation update, scheduled for March, was confirmed by Hayden, with Bader mentioning it as a standing item until resolved on a quarterly basis.

Pinnix also raised the question of an update on the IDT fiscal year '25 science priorities in March, to which Peterson indicated uncertainty due to ongoing proposal reviews.

Dixon inquired about the readiness of an overview of the programmatic watershed restoration environmental assessment by March, and Lee expressed confidence, though said it might not be ready for public comment it could provide an umbrella coverage for watershed restoration activities for the TRRP and partners..

Dixon concluded by proposing the consideration of an on-site trip.

Bader thanked the Forest Service for hosting the quarterly meeting.

Adjourn