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NC-152

MEMORANDUM

To: Trinity Management Council

From: Mike Dixon, Executive Director
Trinity River Restoration Program

Subject: Director's Report

Date: November 29, 2024

Major TRRP activities between September 2024 and December 2024 include:
It has been a relatively quiet quarter. We wrapped up work for the year at the Upper Conner Creek channel rehabilitation project. The Yurok Tribe completed work at the Indian Creek valley restoration project in the portion of the site which had previously been shelved because of a mining claim. Gravel processing is ongoing at the Sawmill site.

Organizational Updates

- Previous recruitment efforts for our secretary position have been unsuccessful, but the most recent solicitation yielded several promising applicants. A tentative offer has been accepted.
- An offer was made for the TRRP Data Steward and is in negotiation.
- The HVT Riparian Ecologist position has been filled by Simone Groves, who has recently started in that role.
- The second TRRP physical scientist vacancy is being reclassified so that it can be advertised as a developmental position to broaden the candidate pool. The target is to solicit for a GS-9/11/12.

Budget Updates/Adjustments:

We remain under a continuing resolution for the time being, and another continuing resolution is anticipated to succeed the current December 22 funding expiration. Depending on the duration of the new CR, the timing of funds for new agreements (e.g. CY25 Annual Funding Agreements) may be impacted.

The FY25 budget adopted by TMC recommended funding the Sky Ranch Channel Rehabilitation Project if the permitting timeline allowed, with the Sawmill gravel processing site close-out and side channel repair and watershed restoration work as contingencies. With the Sky Ranch land exchange still incomplete, NEPA has not been initiated for that project. Therefore, the intent is to pivot to repairing the Sawmill side channel breach, which will reengage a substantial amount of previously-constructed spawning and rearing habitat; and to continue gravel production and stockpiling on river left. If funding

is available and permitting can be completed under the Watershed Programmatic Environmental Assessment, a process-based restoration project may also be undertaken in the Deadwood Creek watershed in tandem with previously TRRP-funded watershed work there that is planned for next year.

Implementation Updates

Sky Ranch Channel Rehabilitation Site: The design for this site is a the 60% stage. This site remains TRRP's priority for implementation; however, moving forward with NEPA and finalization of the design requires the finalization of the land transfer to BLM, which continues to see delays. It is a potential site for FY 2025 if the land transfer is completed in time to initiate NEPA.

Evans Bar Channel Rehabilitation Site: The Yurok Tribe and California Design Group has been working with local landowners and anticipate having a conceptual design ready for Design Team review in January 2025. A VE study is planned for August 2025.

Sawmill Gravel Processing Site: A draft final design report was prepared by the Yurok Tribe and State design group and was submitted to TRRP in November. The EA for the project was completed in July 2024, so this project will be ready for implementation in 2025. Depending on the final cost estimate, this project could be completed in 2025, or broken up into two phases. At a minimum, along with stockpiling several years' worth of sediment for augmentation into the Trinity River, the breach in the Sawmill/Cemetery side channel will be repaired in FY 2025.

Upper Conner Creek Channel Rehabilitation Site: The Hoopa Valley Tribe and Yurok Tribe completed the initial phase of the Upper Conner Creek Rehabilitation Site civil construction and revegetation. CY 2024 work included floodplain lowering on the upstream, river left portion of the site (R-1 and associated civil and revegetation features). The remaining portions of the project on river right, including the relocation of the public river access, will be completed in 2025.

EA Development

- Watershed Programmatic EA

  Work on the Watershed PEA continues and is forecast to be completed in early 2025.

Other Ongoing Implementation Branch Work

- Remaining sites prioritization and scoping
- Potential opportunity to complete Reading Creek site
- Watershed restoration projects in Deadwood Creek and other tributaries

Public Outreach Update

Header photo: Aerial image looking downstream at the first Stage 0 design in California, Indian Creek rehabilitation site in October 2024. [Elliot Sarnacki, Trinity River Restoration Program].

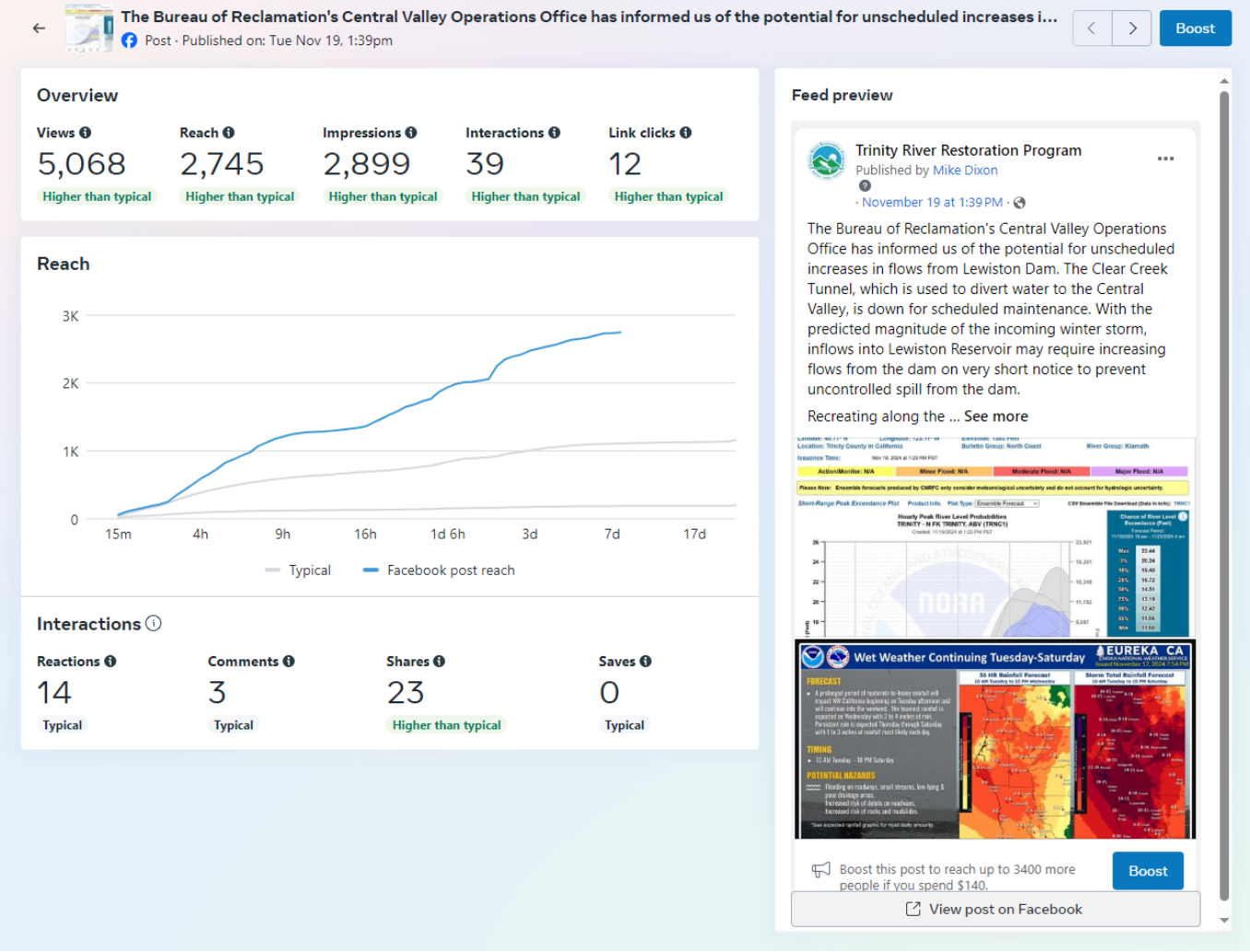
Publications and Education Materials:

River Riffle – September, October, November

- **Current Conditions:** Flow, Temperature, Fish Health & Monitoring
- **Program Updates:** 2024 Science Symposium, Upper Conner Creek Phase 1 Rehabilitation**, New webpage for Science on Tap Series**
- **Articles:** Flow variability, the pulse of a river system, The Language of Flow
- **Spotlights:** Common Green Darner *(Anax junius)* TRRP, Bug of the Month: Mayfly *(Isonychia)* Chris Laskodi, Blue Elderberries Muriel Ammon, Bug of the month: October Caddisflies Chris Laskodi

The TRRP Facebook Page is up 35 followers since our last meeting. We are currently at 1094 followers. Top post in the last 90 days was a post about the warning we received from CVO that Lewiston Dam Operations could be affected by significant winter storms due to scheduled maintenance on diversion infrastructure.

- Views: 5068 | Impressions: 2899 | Reach: 2745
- Reactions: 14 | Comments: 3 | Shares: 23



With the TMC vote to recommend a change to Program Environmental Flow Management we created several materials to help illustrate the recommended change.

- Webpage: https://www.trrp.net/restoration/flows/current/
- Trinity Journal Articles: Flow variability, the pulse of a river system
- Press Release: September 18
- October Science on Tap focus, "*Environmental Flows and the Factors that Limit the Chinook Salmon Life Cycle"*
- December 3: Trinity County Board of Supervisors Presentation

Public Events and Environmental Education

September 25: Science on Tap (84 ppl)

- Josh Smith and Bridger Cohan, the Watershed Research and Training Center, *"Trinity meadows, lost and found."*

October 5: Salmon meets Harvest Festival

October 12: Trinity River Public Float

October 23: Science on Tap (68 ppl)

- Eric Peterson, Science Coordinator TRRP, *"Environmental Flows and the Factors that Limit the Chinook Salmon Life Cycle"* **Watch on Youtube**

Nov 13: Science on the Tap (54 ppl)

- Darren Mierau from CalTrout, *"Key Lessons Learned from the Klamath/Trinity programs that we're applying to the Eel River"*

Educational Outreach

Sept 18-20: Bar 717 Environmental Camp

> 6th Graders from 6 schools: Weaverville, Burnt Ranch, Hayfork, Lewiston, Trinity Center, Van Duzen/Ruth who explored the ranch, learned about local ecology, and made new friends and lasting memories.

October 7: Hatchery Tour (Trinity County homeschool group) – thank you *Chris!*

October 17: Willow Creek Community film showing and presentations from Mike Belchek (Yurok Tribe) and Eric Peterson (TRRP) – thank you *Eric!*

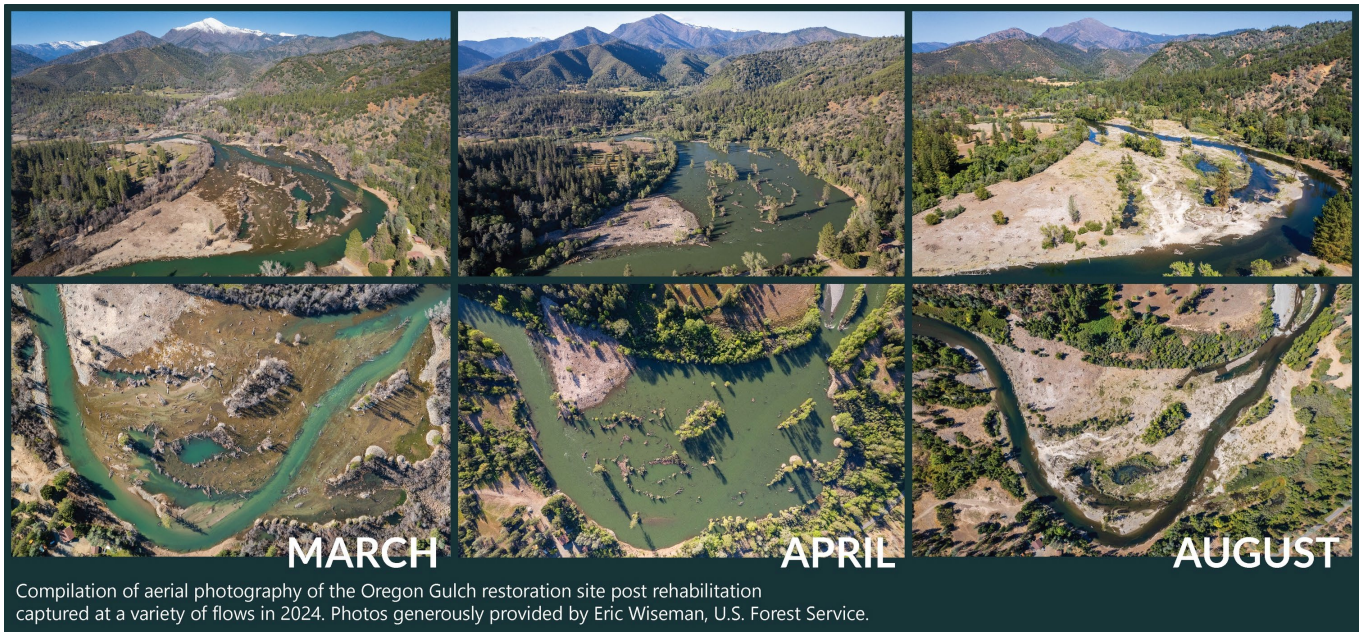
November 18: Rise Academy students and teachers toured Upper Conner Creek Phase 1 *(3 stations – thank you Elliot Sarnacki, John Bair, Brian, Shamalee and the Hoopa Valley Tribe revegetation crew)*

Aerial photo compilation of before (in July) and on the last day of civil construction (first week in October). Elliot Sarnacki, Trinity River Restoration Program.

Landowner and Stakeholder Notifications

- Communications continued with Junction City neighborhood and stakeholders of the Upper Conner Creek Restoration Site.

- On-site landowner meeting with State and Yurok design teams at Evans Bar.
- Notification mailer to the Lewiston neighborhood regarding gravel processing at the Sawmill site.



Compilation of aerial photography of the Oregon Gulch restoration site post-rehabilitation captured at a variety of flows in 2024. Photos generously provided by Eric Wiseman.

Upcoming

January 1-31: Annual Trinity River Survey
January 22: Science on Tap – Mike Belchek, Yurok Tribe, *"Klamath Dam Removal"*
February: Birding Days, Open House
February 26: Science on Tap – Todd Buxton TRRP, *"Fine Sediments in the Trinity River"*
March 26: Science on Tap – Zac Rinestine Yurok Tribe, *"Remote Stream Incubators on Trinity River Tributaries"*

Science Update

- **Limiting Factors Analysis (LFA).** Phase 2 (implementing the study plan) contract was awarded via NFWF to Cramer Fish Sciences (CFS) in August 2024, ending August 2026. The IDT met with CFS on November 20 to further review of data availability and relevant literature. CFS also met with several California Fish and Wildlife on __ to discuss the ongoing cohort reconstruction analysis.
- **FY26 Science Priorities.** Per the Science Plan, the IDT began discussion of FY26 priorities in June. The focus is on 3 Key Uncertainties: nutrient flux, fish production, and temperature. Initially 5 questions were identified across these uncertainties, however two have been deferred until more information is available from the Limiting Factors Analysis and S3 modeling efforts. Research Briefs have been written on these 3 topics and an RFP should be released within the month.

- **Objectives, Targets, Monitoring and DSS.** The IDT requested workgroups review Objectives and Targets in preparation for reviewing monitoring and modeling of Targets; thus far the groups have not identified any changes to Objectives, but found several refinements for Targets, plus a need to add one target to address Northwestern Pond Turtles. Objectives and Targets are then being used as a foundation for a review of monitoring (per the Science Plan) and DSS (per request by the Flow Workgroup). The IDT has assigned reviews out to workgroups. Reviews should be completed in time to inform the TMC's efforts next year on the FY26 budget.

In Review or Final Edits

- Gough, S. A., R. B. Smit, K. Lindke, K. De Juilio, C. Laskodi, G. Kautsky, and B. Matilton. 2024. **Assessment of adult salmonid spawning in the Trinity River.** Arcata Fisheries Technical Report TR 2024-71. [pending 508 compliance]

Final Publications and Reports

- Quiet quarter.

Synthesis Reports – See Appendix II.

Incomplete:

- Cohort Reconstruction – last substantive adjustments to the new model are being completed.
- Large Wood Management – a group has formed to tackle this
- Flow Synthesis – regaining momentum
- Channel Complexity

Design Reports- See Design Workgroup Report below

Environmental Reports and Findings

-

Post-Implementation Reports

-

Final Data Packages

- [aerial photography?]

Appendix I: Technical Workgroup Briefings
December 2024

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

Workgroup: Fish **Coordinator:** Chris Laskodi

The Fish Workgroup met on October 3 at the TRRP office. The workgroup developed an annual work plan which was presented to the IDT at their November meeting. The workgroup was tasked with developing 2-page briefs in preparation for the upcoming RFP. Foodscape modeling to support the S3 model and effects of suspended sediment and deposition on the bed in the mainstem were the two

topics that the workgroup was involved in developing. Both briefs were presented to the IDT at the November meeting and will be finalized in early December. The workgroup was also tasked with monitoring and modeling review for the various projects that TRRP funds. In total, the workgroup will evaluate 11 separate modeling and monitoring projects which we expect to be completed in Q4 2025. Lastly, the workgroup heard a presentation about the limiting factors analysis and how the workgroup will be tasked with data requests from Cramer Fish Sciences. The workgroup anticipates on having two meetings next quarter.

Workgroup: Design **Coordinator:** Oliver Rogers

The Design Team met on November 19th, for a quarterly meeting and received updates from the State of California-Yurok Tribe Design Team, Hoopa Valley Tribe Design Group, and the Federal Design Team. Topics covered included an update on the Sawmill Gravel Processing Site Rehabilitation project. The 90% Project Report has been finalized and will be distributed for review/comments by the Design Team. The YT/State of California Design group for the Evans Bar project met with landowners in September and are working on having conceptual designs for review in January 2025, with landowner buy in by February 2025. A 30% design is planned for a value study in August 2025 prior to the mid-August Design Team meeting. – The Hoopa Valley Tribe Design Group presented on the evolution of the Upper Reading Creek site implemented in 2008 and an updated 2024 design. - The Federal Design group provided an update on the land transfer that has delayed the Sky Ranch project, with an anticipated completion end date in 2026 per BLM. The DWR Design group's memo describing project possibilities at Steel Bridge will be distributed soon. Additionally, the Design Team WG discussed the Draft Existing Conditions Preliminary Scoping for Remaining Channel Rehabilitation Sites. Two draft documents (Upper/Lower Rush Creek and the Hatchery reach) have been submitted to the Program office for review and have been distributed to the Design Team.

Workgroup: Flow **Coordinator:** Patrick Flynn

Met 11/14/2024 to establish a subgroup to conduct monitoring and modeling review of streamgaging as requested by IDT and assigned by Science Coordinator. Subgroup consists of Todd Buxton (USBR), Justin LaNier (CADWR), Smokey Pittman (McBain/Hoopa). Reviewed annual workplan, made one change to move the WY2025 Flow Action Review from Q1 24/25 to Q3 24/25.

Work planned for next 30-60 days: Subgroup will work streamgaging monitoring and deliver results to workgroup, hopefully by Feb/Mar for IDT review.

Workgroup: Watershed **Coordinator:** Justin Alvarez

The Watershed Workgroup has not had need for a meeting this quarter.

Workgroup: Physical C**oordinator:** Smokey Pittman

Workgroup met Oct. 10, 2024 to cover reviews of the augmentation EA, assess use of the Fish Workgroup's action Tracker, revisit Objectives and Targets, and initiate Core monitoring reviews. Toward Objectives and Targets, a subgroup was formed to look at the Valley Width target, there was an update from a group working on Bar Area, and the Workgroup determined remaining targets are adequate to facilitate monitoring review. Toward monitoring review, 6 subgroups were identified to conduct the reviews assigned to the PWG.

The Bar Area subgroup also met on Nov. 12 to envision completion of task.

An additional subgroup completed a 2-page Research Brief toward the FY26 Science Plan.

Workgroup: Riparian and Aquatic Ecology **Coordinator:** Brad Nissen

The subset of the Riparian and Aquatic Ecology Workgroup (RAEWG) met on Oct. 7, 2024 to strategize and develop a 2-page research brief on the Key Uncertainty of water temperatures as it relates to Northwestern Pond Turtles, as well as to discuss the development of a new turtle-focused temperature target within an existing thermal heterogeneity objective (RAE 2). This sub-group consisted of Don Ashton, Brad Nissen and Eric Peterson.

The full workgroup met on October 28th, and draft versions of the 2-page brief, a memo on the newly proposed temperature target, and the FY25 Workgroup Annual plan were sent out for review prior to the meeting. The group discussed revisions to these documents and made subsequent changes prior to the IDT meeting on Nov. 20. Additionally, the RAEWG is working on moving along the Wood Management Plan and Synthesis Report with new dedication on this effort by Jackie Bridegum (USFWS), Patrick Flynn (Trinity County), and Aaron Martin (Yurok Tribe).

During the meeting, the decision was made to postpone investigating the proposed key uncertainty of temperature effects on periphyton and benthic macroinvertebrates (BMI) due to staff at capacity and this effort benefiting from other efforts such as the foodscape modeling in S3.

Finally, the group assigned leads for the monitoring and modeling review effort. Our next meeting will be in late January or early February.

Workgroup: Interdisciplinary Team **Coordinator:** Ty Wallin / Eric Peterson

The IDT had been scheduled for two meetings over this last quarter: one for the Limiting Factors Analysis and a second for the variety of other topics that the IDT currently has in play. However, a shift in schedules with Cramer Fish Sciences required combining these into a single meeting on November 20th. The IDT reviewed 2-page briefings on 3 topics toward an FY26 RFP. On objectives and targets, the Riparian and Aquatic Ecology workgroup forwarded a target for turtles that fit within an existing thermal diversity objective; the IDT concurred/returned. The group then checked-in on the reviews of long-term monitoring projects and DSS models. We hope to have initial reviews completed sometime this winter.

Appendix II: Report and Data Tracker

This indicates the most recent reports data received for active long-term projects, or their ETA for short-term projects.

Long-Term Monitoring

Topic	Frequency	Last Report For	Last Data For
Streamgaging (discharge, temperature at gages)	Continual	Not applicable	Realtime online
Reservoir Ops	Annual	Not applicable	WY2015 online WY2022 @TRRP
Flow Report	Annual	WY2023	[see above]
Aerial Photography (64 km)	Annual	WY2023	WY2023
Topography (64 km)	~5 year	WY2022	WY2022
Hydrology (64 km SRH2D) and Juvenile Capacity	~5 year, new in process	2018 (WY2016)	2018 (WY2016) WY2022 @TRRP
Height Above River and Wetted Areas	~5 year, new in process	WY2016 @TRRP	WY2016 @TRRP
Grain Size Facies	~5 year, new in process	Not applicable	WY2014
Active Bar Monitoring (5yr)	~5 year	WY2023	WY2023
Riparian Vegetation	~5 year, new in process	WY2019	WY2019
Aerial Photography (as-built)	~Annual	2024 OG	2024 OG
Topography (as-built)	~Annual	2024 OG	2024 OG
LWD Surveys	Annual		WY2016
Temperature Monitoring (USFWS)	Annual	WY2014 (?)	WY2009 @TRRP
Sediment Transport (Hydrophones)	Annual	WY2017	
Sediment Transport (bedload)	Not active	WY2019	WY2019
Outmigrant (Willow Ck) – separate report not required	Annual	-	-
Outmigrant (Pear Tree) – separate report not required	Annual	WY2021	-
Outmigrant (Population)	Annual	WY2018	WY2009 @TRRP
Redd/Carcass Distribution	Annual	WY2019	WY2020
Chinook Run Size Estimate	Annual	Run 2022	-
Fall Run Scale Age	Annual	? PFMC?	? PFMC?
YT Harvest (Lower Klamath)	Annual	2013	-
HVT Harvest (Lower Trinity)	Annual	-	2013
Lower Klamath Creel Survey	Annual	2020	-
Sport Harvest / Trinity Creel	Annual	2004	2013

Short-Term Projects

Items will be retained for at least one TMC meeting after completion.

Initiated	Topic	ETA Report	ETA Data/Model
FY18	Synth: Cohort Reconstruction	2025 (Spring?)	2025 (Winter?)
FY18	Synth: Adult Salmonid Spawning	Pending 508	*overdue*
FY18	Synth: Channel Complexity	*overdue*	*overdue*
FY18	Synth: Large Wood Management	Late 2025?	*overdue*
FY18	Video Weir	In peer review	
FY19	Synth: Flows	*overdue*	*overdue*
-	Periphyton (single-year)	Posted: 2022	
-	Periphyton (multi-year)	2025	2025
	Pool Stratification (analysis 2 pools)	Posted: 2022	tbd
	Pool Stratification (model)	Posted: 2022	-
	Pool Stratification (numerous pools, 3d flows and HECRAS 1d temp)	2025?	tbd
	Hyporheic Flow	2025?	2025?
	Lewiston Reservoir Temperatures	2026?	2026?
	Updated RBM10 (merging Trinity with Klamath)	Trinity: _	tbd
FY24	Limiting Factors Analysis	2026 (August)	2026 (August)
FY25	Inundation/Scour Model	2025 (Spring)	2025 (Winter)

FY25	BMI sampling	2026 (Dec)	tbd
FY25	Riparian Response	2026 (June)	2026 (June)