IDT Meeting Notes

02 August 2018

Attending in person: Mike Dixon (TRRP), Dan Everson (USFWS), Seth Naman (NMFS), James Lee (TRRP/HVT), George Kautsky (HVT), Bill Pinnix (USFWS), Ken Lindke (CDFW), Mike Orcutt (HVT), Kyle DeJuilio (YT), Robert Franklin (HVT), Justin Alvarez (HVT)

Attending via WebEx: Seth Lawrence (DWR), Aaron Martin (YT), Eric Peterson (TRRP), Bill Brock (USFS), Todd Buxton (TRRP), DJ Bandrowski (YT), Jenny Norris (TRRP)

The meeting commenced with introductions and a request for additions to the agenda. Bill P. mentioned that Jenny (who was not yet on the call) wanted to add an update on the white paper. Robert F. asked to hear more about the refinements as he feels that there are important things we could be doing rather than just waiting for the outcome of the process. Dixon said he would follow up with the Executive Director to see if she could provide an update (which will come via email because she is on leave).

We moved to the Implementation Update. Mike D. highlighted upcoming test pit excavation at Dutch Creek and Evans Bar (scheduled for week of August 20), the status of compliance for dredging the Hamilton Ponds (planned for last two weeks of September), upcoming gravel processing at Sawmill (occurring from August 13 through October), and the status and timeline for the Dutch Creek and Chapman Ranch projects.

> There were some discussion and questions regarding litigation concerns with Dutch Creek, specifically regarding NGOs with spotted owl concerns. Mike D. described the project as not occurring in real spotted owl breeding habitat, though the FS portion of the project (primarily access) crosses designated critical habitat. Both TRRP staff and the YT have invited the most likely litigant (Conservation Congress) to visit the site to discuss its objectives and the measures we have built in to negate impacts to owls, but as yet have been unsuccessful at meeting with that group.
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> George inquired about the purpose of gravel processing. Mike D. explained that this is to rebuild our gravel supply, primarily for augmentation in the upper river.
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> Robert expressed interest in using unwashed rock for augmentation, particularly for rock introduced at high flows. He believes there is justification for managing sediment comprehensively, including the fine sediment fraction. In the past, restoration efforts were focused on reducing inputs of sand from Grass Valley Creek, but now we are seeing reasons to manage small caliber sediments in view of their ecological benefits, including the role played in geofluvial processes. There was general support for this idea, but acknowledgement that there are regulatory hurdles which would require higher-level policy decisions. Might be a topic for TMC discussion.

Next up was the Science Update, which was deferred pending Jenny joining the meeting in favor of moving the Oregon Gulch 30% design discussion up. However, Jenny called in shortly into Aaron's presentation so we paused to allow her to present the science update while she had service. She discussed the metrics conversation occurring in the workgroups. The SAB selection process was also a topic of interest that had been requested; she is asking the existing SAB members to develop position descriptions for themselves and the vacancies to cover what they feel is the scope of expertise required for our purposes. Once the PDs are developed, they will be reviewed internally by program staff and by

the IDT. A scope of work will be developed and solicited through contracting. SAB lacks clarity on their roles and both sides feel that we have been underutilizing them; this process is a great way to address that. Next presented was the FY19 science workplan process. Most of our money was allocated as of last winter but there is now some uncertainty about funds possibly being available. If that pans out, it is possible some projects that were not already funded could be implemented.

Bill P. asked about what was going on with filling out the metrics table. There was a reminder to the work group coordinators to fill out the table but not to change the columns

George identified a concern that we need to be careful about how we address objectives. We need to make sure we are using adaptive management, not just changing objectives ad hoc. Jenny agreed wholeheartedly.

Kyle mentioned that some of the objectives need to be fleshed out in order to be meaningful and measurable, using the example of the "inundate floodplains" metric of the Flow WG.

Seth N. countered that it is important for us to get a first cut of the objectives and metrics down on paper before we start further refining the objectives.

There was an observation that if we get to a point where we are spending money on a project but can't develop metrics for it (but intuitively know it's important) that would be a good place to reassess objectives.

Ken opined that work groups don't have a common vocabulary, approach, or work product for the metrics exercise so WGs are approaching the task differently. Ken thinks we need clarity and that the IDT is the venue for that discussion. There was some roundtable conversation on that topic. George proposed that the Science Coordinator disseminate definitions and guidance; further conversation on this topic was punted to the afternoon.

We then returned to the YT design group presentation on the Oregon Gulch design proposals. Aaron finished his presentation and there was conversation on a couple topics

Robert specifically stated the need for artist's renderings so that both the public and the program staff and partners could visualize what we were proposing. Mike D. and Kyle chimed in that this is a recognized need and that the YT are planning to include artist's renderings in Oregon Gulch documents. The TRRP office is also exploring hiring landscape architect expertise either through a contractor or internally.

Regarding Alternative 2 which would certainly promote deposition and channel evolution, Robert also stated his understanding that the Design Team or IDT are charged with developing designs that do the best job of meeting objectives of river health and restoration of fish populations, not with maintaining navigability. Robert stated that issues of navigability and fishability are to be considered at the policy level; it is a disservice to forward from the Design WG an alternative that has differs from the primary objectives of the TRRP for socioeconomic or sociopolitical reasons. Proposed that it would be worth exploring at TMC.

Bill P. asked about the process and next steps. Mike D. explained that the two design groups have received comments from the Design Team WG and the Value Engineering team. Over fall they will

work to revise the design to incorporate that feedback and late fall/early winter will be proposing a single design for each of their sites which they will advance to further design.

Dave then provided a presentation on the Sky Ranch channel rehabilitation site 30 % designs. There was some clarifying discussion but no major questions were raised.

Next up was the stream gauge review led by Todd, who presented the recommendations of the workgroups and agencies by gage/measurement.

Because some of the sampling being reviewed was fine sediment sampling in tributaries, Robert gave a quick overview of how tributary sediment monitoring has evolved since the early 1990s. Bill P. asked what we use the fine sediment sampling for. Todd stated that we have not completed the fine sediment synthesis report yet and don't know for sure whether substantial fine sediments are stored beneath the armor layer of the bed (though he doesn't expect that to be the case).

George asked if, rather than looking at just reviewer comments on the usefulness of the data, if they had considered the objectives of monitoring those items at each station.

Ken mentioned that several of the gauges serve secondary purposes, such as the redd survey crews who reference them when scheduling their work.

Bill B. offered that having fine sediment data in these tributary watersheds provides justification when the USFS pursues emergency response funding following wildfires.

Kyle suggested that having suspended sediment data in some of these streams could help with the effectiveness monitoring that is known to be lacking for watershed grant fine sediment reduction projects.

There was then a move to ask for recommendations on the suite of suspended sediment monitoring. Mike D. cautioned that while most people perceive that most of the Trinity is no longer fine sediment impaired, it may be premature to nix the suite of sampling that occurs until the related synthesis report is complete. Ken proposed using the Physical WG recommendation; *this carried by consensus*.

Regarding bedload transport monitoring, the workgroup recommendation was to continue everywhere except Trinity River at Lewiston, where hydrophones would replace the bedload monitoring once they were appropriately calibrated.

Mike D. inquired why hydrophones could not be used to measure other stations as well; Todd elaborated that he was somewhat unsure but that it could be due to the hydrophone at Lewiston being calibrated to a known sediment load from the upstream gravel augmentation area.

George asked if we need to monitor bedload transport every year.

Robert responded that he doesn't think the program is quite at a place where we can run to ground all the questions relating to coarse sediment transport as interwoven with management of alluvial features (e.g. active bars, high-flow channels, alcoves) and their relationship to primary objectives of TRRP.

Robert and Kyle support passing the WG recommendation with the caveat that the frequency and location of sampling would be reviewed periodically. Dave mentioned that there had recently been an extensive presentation and discussion on this topic.

Bill proposed that we just adopt the recommendation of the Physical WG; Robert added that we will have more to inform the discussion when synthesis reports are completed.

After lunch, we jumped ahead to the proposal for a River Health/Stream Ecology Workgroup because Todd was tied up with another issue in Weaverville. Kyle presented a concise overview of the role of basic ecological processes like disturbance, succession, and trophic interactions. He also talked about the fact that river health and flow variability are topics enshrined in our foundational documents but that there is not currently a venue to discuss those topics in the program. He proposed three possible approaches: A wholly new River Health/Stream Ecology WG, an IDT subgroup on the same topic, or amending the charter of the Wildlife/Riparian WG. He recommended the latter, with a change from ad hoc to active.

Ken asked a clarifying question of whether this proposal was to be a temporary move related to the metrics exercise or permanent; the proposal is for the latter.

Robert described the history of there being incomplete analysis of certain ecological fundamentals in the early-middle stages of the program, saying "we missed that in the flow study." The science was not as well resolved, and there was a lack of recognition of the importance of the intermittently wetted margins of the low-flow channel to the health of the river, including the ecological role of flow variability. The ideas we are discussing are not new but have come together now in an important way. We have a chance to ask the questions of "what makes fish habitat profitable vs. survivable?"

Todd asked if adding the aquatic ecology load to the wildlife/riparian workgroup would contribute to the workgroups being overloaded.

Both James and Mike D. chimed in that riparian and aquatic ecology are intimately tied, as riparian is just the intersection of the terrestrial and aquatic environment. It is a natural fit, and the workgroup as it stands has been meeting very infrequently anyway.

James and Kyle also mentioned that there is substantially less overlap in membership between this and other workgroups so it wouldn't add much to an existing burden.

Todd asked what topics we view as needing to be immediately addressed.

Bill P. echoed this question. He thinks we need to define what the flow study missed. He suggested that we need revive the science symposia and have a stream ecology symposium. Get the scientists together to help coalesce what we know and what we don't know to line out the work to be done by that WG.

There was some difference of opinion on whether the WG should wait to start working until a symposium.

Ken and others said that the IDT needs to be more active in directing the work priorities of the WGs.

IDT, with consensus, recommends to TMC that:

- **The charter of the Wildlife and Riparian WG be revised to reflect a broader Aquatic and Riparian Ecology focus,**
- **The status of the above workgroup be changed from ad hoc to active, and**
- **A science symposium focused on aquatic and riparian ecology applicable to the Trinity River is scheduled in the short term to help guide the work of that body.**

Kyle will circulate a revised charter and will, with James Lee, present the proposal to TMC.

George asked how aquatic and riparian ecology topic relates to the variable flow white paper work. There was a quick discussion of the ongoing saga of white paper development. Robert has substantially revised the draft as the emphasis changed from a flow narrative written to accompany a specific winter/spring hydrograph to a broader review paper; in its current form, it is written as a TMC-level primer on environmental flow science.

Bill P. said that Jenny was looking for some level of review on this draft right now.

Kyle opined that the development of the white paper exemplifies why we need an Aquatic and Riparian Ecology Workgroup.

We then shifted back to reviewing the WG recommendations on stream gauging. **Notes and the IDT's recommendations to TMC on the topic were captured by Todd (Flow WG coordinator) who will provide them via separate correspondence. Following any corrections, Todd will present the recommendations to TMC.**

We finally circled back to Ken's identification in the morning of a need for further guidance form the Science Coordinator on the metrics exercise. There is substantial confusion regarding what constitutes an objective versus a target, what is a method vs. a metric, etc. The workgroups seem to be operating under different definitions and going different directions. Also, while the process and purpose of the exercise has been described verbally on several occasions, there are many who don't seem clear on what we are working towards. Further, some WGs are proposing to revisit objectives, while others are focused on currently measured metrics.

Following this brief discussion, the IDT requests the following of the Science Coordinator, to be reviewed by IDT and then provided as a directive to the WG coordinators:

- **A common vocabulary (e.g what is an objective versus a method)**
- **A detailed, fleshed out process *in writing* for what the work groups are to produce and why, and what next steps will follow.**
- **Written sideboards on what is or is not in bounds. Are we revisiting objectives that may not be quantitative enough? Are workgroups able to add sub-objectives? Do we or do we not add columns to the table provided by the Science Coordinator?**

Our last topic was to schedule our next meeting to further discuss the metrics exercise and to take further action on any outcome from the upcoming TMC meeting in September, as well as to discuss workgroup priorities for the coming fiscal year. **Mike D. will send a poll**. It was further decided that IDT should convene quarterly approximately one month prior to TMC so that we can discuss topics which may result in recommendations to them. **Mike D will send a poll to set dates for FY19.**