



Trinity River Restoration Program

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MEMORANDUM

To: TMC

From: Mike Dixon, Executive Director
Trinity River Restoration Program

Subject: Director's Report

Date: July 21, 2020

Major TRRP activities between March and July 2020 include:

The refinements coordinator contract was awarded starting June 1. Work has begun at the Dutch Creek Channel Rehabilitation Site. An EA/IS for the Chapman Ranch Phase B Channel Rehabilitation project has been completed. Several routine and targeted science and monitoring projects have proceeded with precautions for COVID-19, while others were temporarily or entirely suspended.

Organizational Updates

- Chad Abel has been selected as the TRRP Implementation Branch Chief. He comes to the program from most recently serving as the Administrator of the Treaty Natural Resources Division of the Red Cliff Tribe and was previously the Fisheries Director for the Burns Paiute Tribe. He will be moving with his family from Wisconsin. He will start August 31.
- Oliver Rogers has been selected for the civil engineer vacancy. Oliver has served for the last three years as the restoration engineer for the Northwest California Resource Conservation and Development Council (5C's). He completed a B.S. in Environmental Engineering at Humboldt State University. He lives in Weaverville with his family and will start August 31.
- The remaining vacancies are still in queue for recruitment, except for one of the civil engineering technicians which will be discussed during the budget topic later in this meeting.

COVID-19 Impacts

Several ongoing monitoring projects have experienced delays, travel challenges, or have been suspended entirely. Challenges that have been conveyed by TRRP partners have included:

- *DWR*: Computer time has increased due to remote access network limitations. Increase in safety equipment cost. Decrease in travel costs.
- *NMFS*: Inability to do site visits/field studies or in person meetings, including those associated with the new TRRP Biological Opinion. Acknowledged that they have learned that much of their work safely while maintaining social distancing.

- *CDFW*: They were able start of the Junction City weir and have been able to adapt practices for safety. There is concern that projects which require multiple vehicle occupants like redd/carcass surveys could be challenging. There are other projects including the off-channel fish growth study in which CDFW staff participation was precluded and this may have impacts on data quality later.
- *YT*: Several projects have had to adjust due to travel restrictions. As of the week of July 13, they are now allowing more than person in a vehicle when unavoidable (e.g. shuttling boats).

Implementation Update

Dutch Creek Channel Rehabilitation Site: Equipment mobilized to the site on July 1 and in-channel construction began on July 15. Major construction is expected to continue through the end of September and revegetation will extend into the fall.

Chapman Ranch Phase B Channel Rehabilitation Site: An Environmental Assessment/Initial Study has been completed and FONSI is planned for July 27; program staff are in the process of securing permits. This project is slated for construction in 2021. Costs exceed one year's construction funding and so the project will either be phased for two seasons or will be executed with one mobilization spanning two fiscal years, to be determined based on feasibility and cost efficiency discussions that are ongoing.

Sky Ranch Channel Rehabilitation Site: Design development has been paused pending progress on a portion of the project being public land following a multi-party land exchange. Also, minor changes to the design in response to reviewer comments and private landowner concerns will require updates to the design once the new TRRP engineer is on board.

Oregon Gulch Channel Rehabilitation Site: A 90% design report for the project has been completed. Importantly, a disposal location for all of the non-BLM sourced material has been identified within three miles of the project site, which makes the project substantially more feasible. The Yurok Tribe, with some support from TRRP office staff, has applied for state Fisheries Restoration Grant Program funding to implement the large-scale floodplain lowering portion of the project. NEPA for this project will begin this year.

Evans Bar Channel Rehabilitation Site: Design development for this project kicks off soon. As part of a longer-term consolidation driven by the mature state of the program's implementation efforts, the State and Yurok design groups will be consolidating and sharing resources in the development of this design.

Upper Conner Creek Channel Rehabilitation Site: A handful of comments were received on the Hoopa Valley Tribe design group's conceptual design report for this project. A 30% design report with alternatives is anticipated in September.

Other Compliance

Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation: We reinitiated consultation with the USFWS in May and development of a new wildlife biological opinion is ongoing. The NMFS biological opinion, originally due in June, has been pushed back to August 30 to allow for adequate buy-in by the USFS, BLM, USACE, and USFWS who have submitted requests to be participating agencies in the NOAA Fisheries consultation. The intent of this programmatic consultation is that each of these agencies (and NGOs) could be covered for similar restoration work in the

Trinity River watershed, even when TRRP funding is not involved. Existing ESA compliance documents remain in effect until new biological opinions are issued.

Water Quality (401) Permits: New five-year permits from the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board have been received.

Public Outreach Update

Publications and Education Materials

- April 2020: coordinated public notification for the 2020 ROD flow release
- TRRP 2019 Annual Report expected early Fall 2020
- Spring 2020: Conservation Almanac – summer for TRRP activities in 2019
- Updated TRRP Overview brochure – Product Fall 2020

Public Events and Environmental Education

All spring and summer scheduled and planned environmental educations and community events have been cancelled. Resources have been committed to the following alternatives:

- Nature Hike Video tour highlighting local riparian plants and animals and salmonids
- Submission to local environmental education pamphlet to be distributed by the Watershed Research and Training Center to local schools
- Photograph contest with the theme focused on local watersheds

Landowner and Stakeholder Meetings

- Coordinated with private landowners to finalize realty agreements for Dutch Creek project
- June 23, 2020: Pre-construction meeting with private landowners at the Dutch Creek project to discuss upcoming construction season
- Continued working with private landowners for monitoring and survey access at study sites and at previously constructed and proposed channel rehab sites

Upcoming Materials

- Bureau of Reclamation video highlighting the Dutch Creek channel rehabilitation project – Product Dec. 2020

FY20 Budget Update Adjustments since March TMC Meeting:

Based upon the TMC's motion last spring, funding has been added to the service agreement with Reclamation's Technical Service center to cover costs of three-dimensional model development for the pool stratification study. Additionally, largely due to substantial salary savings from ongoing vacancies, \$300k has been funded for implementation materials supply (large wood and gravel processing) to reduce the cost of those tasks in FY21.

Science Update

In Peer Review

- None in peer review at present.

In Final Edits

- Bair, J., S. Loya, and J. Lee. **Vegetation encroachment synthesis for the Trinity River.**
- Gast, T. **Analysis and Model Evaluation of Long Term Data Collected at the Willow Creek Outmigrant Trap [synthesis].**
- Lee, J. and J. Bair. **Riparian vegetation monitoring (FY2017).**
- Boyce, J. **Streamflow and Juvenile Salmonid Habitat Availability at Six Rehabilitation Sites on the Trinity River, California 2008-2017.**

Final Publications and Reports

- North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, Trinity River Restoration Program, U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Forest Service. 2020. **Trinity River Channel Rehabilitation Site Chapman Ranch Phase B (River Mile 83.5-83.8) draft environmental assessment/initial study.** Report DOI-BLM-CA-NO60-2020-0015-EA and CGB-EA-2020-025 for the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP). Trinity River Restoration Program, Weaverville, California. Available: <https://www.trrp.net/library/document?id=2466>.

Synthesis Reports (Appendix II: Synthesis Reports Tracking and Estimated Completion Dates)

No additional reports have been submitted for peer review, nor have additional reports been finalized. We stand at two reports fully completed and publicly posted (Cottonwood Seed Dispersal and Bed and Bar Scour). Status details for all synthesis reports are in Appendix II.

TRRP staff have created a web page for linking synthesis reports as they are completed. It incorporates additional reports that have had an synthesis intent but were not specifically funded by the FY2018 effort. The page is live at <https://www.trrp.net/restoration/adaptive-management/synthesis-reports/>.

Program Science Metrics Objectives and Targets

- The Fish Workgroup completed one metric, habitat capacity (see technical workgroup briefing below)
- The Physical Workgroup made progress in identifying several potential metrics (see technical workgroup briefing below)

Final Data Packages

- GMA (GMA Hydrology, Inc.). 2020. **2019 Trinity River Gravel Implementation Monitoring Report.** Data Package for the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) under U.S. Bureau of Reclamation contract R14PC00122. GMA Hydrology, Inc., Arcata, California. Available: <https://www.trrp.net/library/data?id=135>.

Appendix I: Technical Workgroup Briefings

July 2020

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

Workgroup: Fish

Coordinator: Ken Lindke

The Fish work group met once this quarter, on 20 April. About half the meeting was dedicated to objectives/targets refinement. As a result of the meeting, three new proposed targets were circulated to work group members for review: juvenile flow-to-habitat target, adult spring Chinook harvest, and brown trout predation and competition on/with juvenile salmonids. We also developed a recommendation to use Capacity to quantify juvenile salmonid physical habitat across all applications in the Program. The group discussed the application of S3 to hydrograph selection, noting that S3 model outputs show little difference between ROD and proposed hydrographs. Because there is so much similarity in the timing and magnitude of flows between ROD and proposed hydrographs, work group members suspected that no meaningful difference in juvenile salmonid population response should be expected between these hydrographs, thus we also shouldn't expect a difference in S3 output. The workgroup will revisit this topic before hydrograph development in 2021. The next meeting has not been scheduled, but it will likely occur in July. Work group members continue to work on targets refinement and synthesis reports.

Workgroup: Design

Coordinator: Justin Alvarez

The design workgroup has a handful of rehabilitation sites at various stages of development. Dutch Creek is ramping up construction and started in earnest July 15th. Oregon Gulch is past the 80% design and moving toward final, Sky Ranch is in a holding pattern given lack of staff on the federal team, and Upper Connor Creek has three design alternatives and the Hoopa team will be completing the 30% design by the end of summer. Evans Bar is in the beginning phases of design. One note on Evans Bar is that the State design team and the Yurok design team are joining forces on Evans Bar and the gravel augmentation site at Sawmill. The hope is that the strengths of each team will complement the other creating a more efficient and cost effective joint team. This trial combination will be evaluated as the designs hit standard benchmarks such as a 30% design. The design workgroup is still trying to schedule a float given the March trip was cancelled due to covid restrictions.

Workgroup: Flow

Coordinator: Seth Naman

The fish work group met on June 30 via video call and teleconference. Topics discussed at the meeting included updates on the flow synthesis report, updates on projects including macroinvertebrate research and off channel juvenile rearing. The majority of the meeting focused on developing a strategy to implement the TMC December 5, 2019 motion to "*continue and/or initial studies to analyze the effects of synchronizing Lewiston Dam flows and tributary flows on TRRP goals, contingent on available funding, that assist in the development of potential environmental document.*" The outcome of that discussion was to begin the development of a short briefing paper to ensure that the TMC and Reclamation support the flow work group's strategy for implementing a flow event in the winter, synchronized with a storm event. The flow work group plans to share this strategy with the TMC in the coming months. The flow work group was in agreement that this should be the highest priority of work and effort for the work group in the near term.

Workgroup: Watershed

Coordinator: Eric Wiseman

The Watershed Work Group has not met since March.

Workgroup: Physical

Coordinator: Conor Shea

The Physical Workgroup is planning to meet the week of July 13. Since the March 2 meeting, several workgroup members developed proposals for new gravel augmentation sites. The proposals have been shared with workgroup members and will be discussed and refined at the next meeting. The workgroup also worked on defining several process based performance metrics. Several workgroup members are developing metric definitions that will be discussed at the next meeting.

Workgroup: Riparian and Aquatic Ecology

Coordinator: Chris Laskodi

The RAEWG had a planned meeting in April to discuss the future science symposium. We had to postpone it and are waiting to see how Covid will affect future planning of the symposia. We may need to shift to a virtual event. We are shooting for a short meeting in late July/early August.

Appendix II: Synthesis Reports Tracking and Estimated Completion Dates

Synthesis Reports											
Project No.	Brief Title	Involved Entities	Proposed Due	FY19 q2	FY19 q3	FY19 q4	FY20 q1	FY20 q2	FY20 q3	FY20 q4	Notes
TRRP-2018-002	Tributary Delta	<i>Program Office</i> (POC: Todd Buxton, TRRP)	March 2019				*				incorporating WY19 and 20
TRRP-2018-003	Fish Habitat	<i>HVT, USFWS, YT, USBR TSC</i> (POC: Damon Goodman, USFWS)	2 nd Q 2019		*			PR done			
TRRP-2018-007	Juvenile Chinook Production	<i>USFWS, YT, HVT</i> (POC: Bill Pinnix, USFWS)	July 2017	*		YT		PR done			
TRRP-2018-009	Cohort Reconstruction	<i>HVT, USFWS, CDFW</i> (POC: Ken Lindke, CDFW)	2 nd Q 2019							*	
TRRP-2018-011	Adult Salmon Spawning	<i>USFWS, HVT, YT, CDFW</i> (POC: Steve Gough, USFWS)	2 nd Q 2019		*						"PR draft to be ready in April"
TRRP-2018-018	Bed Mobility and Scour	<i>HVT, USFWS</i> (POC: Geoff Hales & Scott McBain, McBain Associates)	2 nd Q 2018		*			Posted			FINAL POSTED!
TRRP-2018-019	Cottonwood Seed Dispersal	<i>HVT</i> (POC: John Bair, McBain Associates)	3 rd Q 2018		*			Posted			FINAL POSTED!
TRRP-2018-021	Riparian Encroachment	<i>HVT</i> (POC: John Bair, McBain Associates)	4 th Q 2018		*			PR done			
TRRP-2018-022	Sediment Storage	<i>HVT, USFWS</i> (POC: Geoff Hales & Scott McBain, McBain Associates)	4 th Q 2018		*						"submitted to Program March"
TRRP-2018-025	Channel Complexity	<i>HVT, USFWS</i> (POC: Smokey Pittman & Scott McBain, McBain Associates)	August 2019			*					Delayed- uncertain timeline
TRRP-2018-027	Fine Sediment	<i>Program Office, NMFS, HVT</i> (POC: Todd Buxton, TRRP)	July 2020							*	
TRRP-2018-032	Water Temperature	<i>YT, USFWS, HVT, USBR, NMFS</i> (POC: Eli Asarian, Riverbend Sciences)	May 2019					*			Expected completion date: 9/2/20
TRRP-2018-033	Large Wood Management	<i>NMFS, YT, HVT</i> (POC: Scott McBain)	April 2018			*					Internal review

* = due date for TRRP Peer Review process according to status assessment in December 2018.

Appendix III: FY21 Budget Narrative

The difference between available funds and status-quo expenditures is approximately **(-) \$1,780,979.05**. This assumes agency TMC and Technical Assistance funding at typically requested levels, and accounts for agreements which will not require additional funding this year due to efficiencies. In order to recommend a balanced budget, TMC will need to consider cuts to certain program areas.

Based upon shifting program needs, changes in TRRP Office and program partner staffing, and the reduction in appropriated funds for FY20 and FY21, the TRRP Executive Director and Science Coordinator propose the following for the FY21 budget. References are in order of the FY21 TMC budget spreadsheet.

Administrative Budget

TRRP Program Office Personnel

Proposed based on salary projections. Includes a reduction in proportion of Indian Self Determination Specialist's salary billed to the program based on time spent on non-TRRP work.

TRRP Office Operations

Proposed based on annual operating cost projections, **no change**

Annual Report:

This task can be performed by the TRRP Office Administrative Assistant and Outreach Coordinator who are skilled in graphic design and editing. Production will be solely electronic. Recommend funding at \$0, **a reduction of \$25,000.**

TMC Notetaker

Having an objective, professional notetaker is very beneficial. Proposed at contract option year cost, **no change.**

TCRCD Outreach Grant:

This is a valuable task that has substantially increased community support and understanding of TRRP. They conduct a broad suite of environmental education, outreach, and community events. This grant is up for renewal in July of 2021, so without an interruption in support, it would need to be funded in with FY21 dollars. I have met with the grantee to discuss a new agreement; we have identified some items to eliminate and some areas to reduce effort to focus on areas of highest importance. I propose to fund the grant at \$102,858.52, **a reduction of \$29,112.29.**

TMC Participation

TMC agency staff will need to assess the number of personnel who participate in-person for TMC meetings, possibly reducing travel costs and some staff time by taking a hard look at need for non-voting, non-presenting support staff participation. This could impact staff availability for development of Refinements products (Program Document). In FY20, the Yurok Tribe made a good faith effort to tighten their hours under this task in response to Reclamation-mandated added specificity in their AFA

and reduced their costs for TMC participation by over 20%. I propose to cap their funding at the FY20 level for FY21. For the balance, I propose an **across the board reduction of 20%**.

Technical Assistance

This task funds substantial in-kind capacity within the program that is not otherwise billed out to other tasks. It is the closest thing that we have to base funding of positions. Reduction of this task will have ramifications for the availability of personnel to take on routine (e.g. work group coordinator) or non-routine (e.g. white paper) tasks. It could also impact availability of support staff for development of Refinements products (Science, Monitoring, and Decision Support Plan). I propose an **across-the-board reduction of 20%**.

Implementation Budget

TRRP Program Office Personnel

Propose to continue to hold vacant one GS-9/11 civil engineering technician, a **reduction of \$126,972**.

FEMA/Flood Compliance Updates

It is our intent to assume these responsibilities upon the hiring of a new civil engineer; however, that engineer will require training and we will have to continue funding TSC to do this work in FY21.

Junction City House

The structure will continue to be an impediment to piggybacking of flow releases in storm events, particularly if further analysis allows ROD flows to be moved into the winter period. I propose to hold off on this task until we are closer to changing the timing of flow releases or until the budget environment improves, whichever comes first.

Realty Acquisitions

This pays for temporary access agreements with private landowners. It has historically been kept at \$50k for budgeting purposes to account for access route changes and other unknowns. The FY21 construction project(s) are fairly clear and we can probably safely drop this number to \$30k, a **reduction of \$20,000**

NEPA/CEQA Compliance/Permits

This will be the third year of this contract.

BA Development

This contract will be complete in FY20 and thus does not require funding in FY21.

BLM Technical Assistance

BLM has been incredibly supportive and responsive to the needs of this program. This is the amount requested by the Redding Field Office for support this FY. Propose to fund at this amount.

Geophysical Support Services

Our contract for GMA has expired. At present we do not have a contract in place to conduct this work, and for FY20 we are working with the Yurok Tribe in a trial year to collect as-built data and 40 mile aerial photography. Proposed cost assumes these same tasks as well as data collection to support an update of our 40 mile hydraulic model to support both implementation and science needs.

Hoopa Valley Tribe Design Support Services

This FY the HVT design group will support field implementation of Chapman Ranch Phase B. They will also be advancing the Upper Conner Creek design from 30% to 60% before handing it off to the TRRP Office for final design report production. Propose funding at estimated amount.

Yurok Tribe Design Support Services

The YT completed their assigned Oregon Gulch design and they will use existing funding to assist the state design group with their Evans Bar design. We propose to fund 900 hours of field time of the habitat biologist during implementation of FY21 construction work in the amount of \$56,595.27, a **reduction of \$165,089.69.**

DWR Design Support Services

DWR has judiciously managed their funds and do not anticipate requiring funds to develop the Evans Bar design through the 60% level in FY21.

USFS Technical Assistance

The USFS has underspent their interagency agreement primarily due to the program not requesting use of the USFS Enterprise Team as frequently as anticipated. They have indicated that they do not require funds in FY21.

TSC Design Support

If TMC chooses to fund data collection for a new 40 mile hydraulic model, approximately \$40k would be required to update the model.

Construction Projects

This year will see construction of the Chapman Ranch Phase B project. The project will be phased across two fiscal years and we will use \$2.5m of FY21 funds to build the project.

Construction and Augmentation Materials Supply

In order to increase flexibility to varying interannual wood and gravel needs, I propose combining the large wood and gravel/coarse sediment processing/placement lines. Because gravel augmentation did not occur in FY20, there is still a stockpile available and this does not need to be funded in FY21. Additionally, we were able to fund some construction materials in advance from FY20. I propose not to fund these tasks in FY21, a reduction of **\$200-300k** from the long-term average.

Construction Inspector

Our intent is that this role will be filled internally by a civil engineering technician and it should not require funding this year, a **savings to the program of \$100,000-125,000.**

Value Engineering Study

This remains an obligation for the design development process per Reclamation policy. In this FY we will be prepared for a VE study of the Upper Conner Creek design as well as potentially Evans Bar and the Sawmill gravel close-out design. Will likely cost approximately \$42,000.

High Flow Gravel Augmentation

Gravel augmentation was funded in FY20 but not carried out due to water year type. This money can carry forward to largely fund augmentation in FY21, a **savings to the program of \$123,432.02**.

Revegetation Maintenance/Irrigation

This funding is to support 3 years of maintenance following construction. Based on sites constructed and their performance, the only site which will require irrigation in FY21 is Chapman Ranch Phase A. The cost will be \$41,824, a **reduction of \$35,739.54**.

Watershed FOA

There are millions of dollars of fish passage, flow management, and habitat improvement projects remaining in the Trinity River watershed. This work was mandated by the ROD and is essential, particularly for coho and steelhead. We are likely going to issue this as a 5-year grant for grant administration by a third party (similar to NFWF's administration of Reclamation coho restoration funds in the Klamath River) to reduce bureaucratic impediments to funding. Proposed to fund at the long-term average of \$500,000.

Science and Monitoring Budget

Program Office Personnel

I do not anticipate changes to our staffing structure for science support by Reclamation staff at this time.

Riparian Ecologist

This position has provided invaluable support for both science and implementation, and has served as a staff-level bridge between the TRRP and HVT Fisheries offices. Filling this position ensures that this unique and important discipline is represented across the technical work groups. With adequate work planning, there is ample monitoring and revegetation design and implementation work for a full time position, and we should be able to lean less on contractors.

SAB

By July of 2020 we will be without an SAB. While the role of the SAB will certainly be discussed as part of the ongoing refinements process, they will most likely play a role in the future. I propose that we staff up the SAB and task them with conducting a detailed and critical review of our full suite of fisheries monitoring tasks in the coming year in order to develop a plan that more clearly and efficiently focuses resources on key questions. Assuming costs are similar to previous years for new agreements, this would be approximately \$115,000.

Stream Gaging

This suite of stations and instruments was thoroughly evaluated by the technical workgroups and IDT recently and stations were removed. No changes are proposed.

Channel Rehab Habitat Effectiveness Monitoring

The habitat team's work has perhaps the strongest ability to measure the effectiveness of the TRRP's restoration actions and to inform changes in those actions. It has also proven to be of immense value as an internal and external outreach tool to demonstrate that we are truly adapting to what we learn. The TMC Executive Director's Report July 21, 2020

team's own techniques have evolved substantially, increasing in both utility and efficiency. That said, this project does not specifically rely on a running multi-year data series and could be suspended without statistical problems. The dollar amount proposed is not for typical site-specific habitat team work; rather, it is to gather cover and calibration data for the 40-mile hydraulic model which underpins their work.

Status and Trend Monitoring

These projects all require a hard, probably external look for ways to focus effort and minimize redundancy, whether it be reduced geographic extent, sampling frequency within and between years, etc. Some of this work will be conducted during the development of the Science, Monitoring, and Decision Support Plan as part of the TRRP Refinements; the projects should also be subject to an external review, most likely by a reconstituted SAB.

Until such a review is conducted, there are three alternatives laid out based upon strong philosophical opinions articulated by agency representatives on the IDT in favor of both equal across-the-board reductions or restricting funding to highest priority projects.

- **18.5% across the board reduction.** This is just what it sounds like. All projects would take a 16% reduction; research teams would be required to determine where to scale back to meet that target with least impact on data quality
- **Rank and cut.** At the strong recommendation of the USFWS and HVT, the IDT undertook a re-ranking exercise. All agencies were assigned 6 votes to be doled out among the 9 projects. Under this alternative, the bottom two projects (Lower Trinity Creel Survey (0 votes) and State Lower Klamath Harvest Survey (2 votes)) would not be funded. There was a tie for third from bottom between HVT Harvest Survey and Redd and Carcass Surveys (3 votes each).
- **Hybrid.** Under this approach, the bottom ranked project (Lower Trinity Creel Survey) which received no agency support in the ranking exercise would be cut in its entirety. The balance of the required reduction would be distributed equally across remaining projects, reducing the across-the-board reduction to 12%.

A detailed review of each of these approaches is provided in the 15 July 2020 Memo from the Science Coordinator to the TMC.