



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: September 2, 2020

Major TRRP activities between March and July 2020 include:

Work at the Dutch Creek project is ongoing albeit with some schedule delays. Several routine fisheries monitoring projects are ongoing, as data collection for the pool stratification study. Staff are working on getting agreements and funding in place for FY21. New fisheries BiOp received from NMFS. The program office remains in a maximize telework status.

Organizational Updates

- Chad Abel started as Implementation Branch Chief on August 31.
- Oliver Rogers started as Civil Engineer on August 17.
- We are considering filling our fish biologist vacancy (formerly a physical scientist position) through a MOA with the Yurok Tribe, similar to what has been done with riparian ecology through a MOA with the Hoopa Valley Tribe. Discussions on this topic are ongoing.

Implementation Update

Dutch Creek Channel Rehabilitation Site: Construction of this restoration project has progressed substantially in spite of unforeseeable delays. Equipment break downs had already forced some Saturday work and longer work days in order to stay on track when, on August 13, we learned that a Hoopa Valley Tribe heavy equipment operator had gone home sick and subsequently tested positive for COVID 19. The project was shut down for 4 days pending completion of contact tracing and testing. Work resumed on August 18 with enhanced adherence to existing safety and sanitation protocols. Civil construction is on track to be completed by September 15, with revegetation continuing until October 15.

Chapman Ranch Phase B Channel Rehabilitation Site: An Environmental Assessment/Initial Study has been completed and FONSI is planned for signature in September. This is somewhat later than initially envisioned, in part due to delays in agency review of proposed responses to comments. A large portion of the project is out-of-channel excavation, so work may begin on some of the features in winter-spring 2021.

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. Minor changes to the design in response to reviewer comments and private landowner concerns will require updates to the design now that a new civil engineer is on board.

Oregon Gulch Channel Rehabilitation Site: An administrative draft NEPA document for this project should be ready for agency review by October. We have not yet heard the outcome of the Yurok Tribe's Fisheries Restoration Grant Program application for a portion of this project.

Evans Bar Channel Rehabilitation Site: Design development for this project by the joint State/Yurok Tribe design group has been paused to allow for focus on design development for the Sawmill gravel processing site.

Sawmill Gravel Processing Site: Recurring gravel processing for up-river coarse sediment augmentation is close to the 100-year floodplain. In order to analyze flood impacts of further excavation, a design for an end state needs to be developed and modeled. The design will likely be akin to a channel rehabilitation project, though the bulk of the excavation will be taken off site for augmentation rather than spoiled in upland piles. A design will be developed in the coming months by a joint State/Yurok Tribe design group.

Upper Conner Creek Channel Rehabilitation Site: A 30% design report is anticipated this fall. A presentation on early designs will be given on September 3.

Other Compliance

Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation: Our new biological opinion for non-flow related restoration actions was completed on August 21. The new BiOp gives programmatic coverage for restoration work not just by the TRRP, but other agencies and nonprofits that fall within the action area and have similar restoration project types.

Public Outreach Update

Publications and Education Materials

- Completed the 2019 Annual Report, electronic copy available here: <https://www.trrp.net/library/document/?id=2442>
- Prepared TRRP Overview Brochure for final technical editing and review
- Provided resources for Trinity Journal articles on channel rehabilitation and the riparian revegetation strategy

Public Events and Environmental Education

- Completed a virtual Nature Hike video on the fish, wildlife and plants in the Trinity River watershed: <https://youtu.be/plxHRYkxR5Q>
- Sponsor the Trinity River photo contest August 10 – 21

Landowner and Stakeholder Meetings

- Continued working with private landowners for monitoring and survey access at study sites.

Upcoming

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

- Supporting river clean-up activities with physical distancing for National Public Lands Day on Sept. 26, 2020
- Provided resources for an informational booth at the Weaverville Farmer's Market

FY20 Budget Update Adjustments since March TMC Meeting:

Spend-out of some prior fiscal year funds, as well as the discovery that relocation wasn't being paid for a vacancy, freed up some FY20 funding. We are too close to the end of the fiscal year to be able to reprogram those funds onto grants, interagency agreements, or cooperative agreements, but were able to get an annual funding agreement modification in place to fund \$200,000 of gravel processing. These funds are designated for processing at next year's channel rehabilitation site and will reduce the overall cost of that project, helping ensure that most of the project is completed with FY21 funding.

Science Update

In Peer Review

- The draft synthesis report, "History of fine sediment and its impacts on physical processes and biological populations in the restoration reach of the Trinity River, California" (Todd Buxton) was submitted to TRRP for peer review.

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).**

Final Publications and Reports

- McBain Associates. 2020. **Upper Conner Creek rehabilitation site existing conditions report.** Report for the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP). McBain Associates, Arcata, California. Available: <https://www.trrp.net/library/document?id=2469>.
- NMFS (National Marine Fisheries Service). 2020. **Endangered Species Act Section 7(a)(2) Biological Opinion, and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Response for the Trinity River Restoration Program's Mechanical Channel Rehabilitation, Sediment Management, Watershed Restoration, and Monitoring Actions in Trinity County, California.** Report. National Marine Fisheries Service, Santa Rosa, California. Available: <https://www.trrp.net/library/document?id=2472>.
- TRRP. 2020. **TRRP 2019 Annual Report.** TRRP, Weaverville, California. Available: <https://www.trrp.net/library/document?id=2470>.
- USBR (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation). 2019. **Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed Fish Species that May be Affected by the Trinity River Restoration Program's Mechanical Channel Rehabilitation, Sediment Management, Watershed Restoration, and Monitoring Actions [Biological Assessment and Essential Fish Habitat Assessment For the Trinity River Restoration Program, California].** Report for the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP). U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Weaverville, California. Available: <https://www.trrp.net/library/document?id=2471>.

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

No additional reports have been submitted for peer review. One report has been finalized (Boyce et al. – listed above). A total of three reports fully completed and publicly posted. 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 a synthesis intent but were not specifically funded by the FY2018 effort. The page is live at <https://www.trrp.net/restoration/adaptive-management/synthesis-reports/>.

Program Science Metrics Objectives and Targets

Workgroups are on track to provide write-ups of finalized objectives and targets by January 1, 2021.

Final Data Packages

N/A

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 has not met since the last TMC meeting. A meeting is planned for the fall.

Workgroup: Design

Coordinator: Justin Alvarez

Since the last TMC meeting the design workgroup had one in-person quarterly meeting. The meeting started at the Dutch Creek Restoration site so the members could see the design being implemented. After walking the site the participants went to Chapman to tour the construction site from last year. This provided work group members a view of the impressive revegetation response and a look at how this site is evolving with time and flow.

Workgroup: Flow

Coordinator: Seth Naman

The Flow Work Group met on August 20, 2020 to discuss a draft of its Peak Flow Synchronization memo. The Flow Work Group collectively decided in its June 30, 2020 meeting to produce the memorandum in keeping with the TMC's December 5, 2019 motion to "*continue and/or [initiate] 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 documents.*" During the August 20, 2020 meeting, work group members provided comments and feedback on the document, and some written comments were also provided. The draft memorandum, meeting notes, and written comments were then provided to the IDT for discussion. The Flow Work Group will provide the draft memorandum along with a presentation to the TMC.

Workgroup: Watershed

Coordinator: Eric Wiseman

The Watershed Work Group has not met since March.

Workgroup: Physical

Coordinator: Conor Shea

The Physical Workgroup met on July 17 via a TEAMS meeting. There were two major points of discussion.

The first discussion was a review of proposals to implement gravel augmentation at six new sites. The proposals were developed by David Gaeuman (YT), Todd Buxton (TRRP/Reclamation), and Smokey Pittman (HVT – McBain Associates). The proposals identified locations, placement objectives, and monitoring needs. The proposals were submitted to TRRP staff for further development.

The second discussion was a review of physical process based monitoring metrics that are under development by Workgroup members. David Gaeuman presented on a revised R* metric which assesses bed relief complexity and on a wetted width/discharge relationship which correlates well with habitat suitability indexes. Scott McBain (HVT – McBain Associates) and Smokey Pittman presented on gravel bar storage and bed mobility and scour metrics. Todd Buxton presented work on sediment mobility, fine sediment storage, riparian aquifer storage, and channel migration. Team members will continue to work on refining the metrics.

Workgroup: Riparian and Aquatic Ecology

Coordinator: Chris Laskodi

The RAE work group has not met since the last quarterly TMC meeting.

Workgroup: Interdisciplinary Team

Coordinator: James Lee

The IDT met on August 11 via a TEAMS meeting. The workgroup discussed their FY 21 workplan, discussed forming a subgroup to recommend an approach to managing Hamilton Ponds, and coordinated efforts to finalize the objectives refinement exercise.

An additional topic that is of proximate interest to the TMC is the organization of the IDT, specifically the co-coordinators. For much of its history, the IDT has been co-coordinated by USFWS and Reclamation personnel (i.e., the Science Coordinator and Implementation Branch Chief). Since the SC has become a Reclamation position, USFWS has not had the opportunity to co-coordinate the IDT. The workgroup decided to recommend to TMC one of the co-coordinators be assigned by the Arcata USFWS office. The other would remain a Reclamation employee, typically the Science Coordinator, but perhaps alternating between the Science Coordinator and Implementation Branch Chief documented in an update to the Workgroup Manual and reviewed by the IDT during the October meeting and subsequently submitted to the TMC for approval.

At the time of this writing (26AUG20) an IDT meeting was scheduled for August 27. Topics include a review of the flow workgroup's proposal, Science Advisory Board member selection, and the objectives refinement exercise.

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		Posted	FINAL POSTED!
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							*In PR	
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. Green= on time, blue= complete, orange=delayed.

