

Final Minutes

TRINITY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

March 18, 2020
Web Teleconference

Attending Members

Member	Representative Seat
Justin Ly	National Marine Fisheries Service, Chair
Dan Everson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Michael Dixon	Trinity River Restoration Program, Executive Director
Mike Orcutt	Hoopa Valley Tribe
Don Bader	Bureau of Reclamation, Vice Chair
Tony LaBanca	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Dave Hillemeier	Yurok Tribe
Scott Russell	U.S. Forest Service
Keith Groves	Trinity Council

Other Attendees: Kyle DeJulio, Eric Wiseman, Dave Gaeuman (Yurok Tribe), Seth Naman (NMFS), George Kautsky, Justin Alvarez (Hoopa Valley Tribe), Teresa Connor, Nancy Snodgrass (CDWR), Lois Shoemaker (USFS), Elizabeth Hadley (Reclamation), Ken Lindke (CDFW), James Lee, Eric Peterson, Todd Buxton (TRRP), Nick Hetrick, Conor Shea, Nick Som, (USFWS), Joe Polos

Notes: Sabrina Kleinman (EPP)

List of Motions

Keith Groves made a motion to approve the March TMC Agenda

Teresa Connor seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously

Dave Hillemeier made a motion to adopt the flow recommendation to DOI of the hydrograph recommended by the IDT for both water year types.

Keith Groves seconded the motion

The motion passed with 7 votes in favor and Hoopa Valley Tribe opposed.

Keith Groves made a motion to accept the gravel augmentation proposal of “no action” for both water year types for this year.

Dave Hillemeier seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously

Keith Groves made a motion to accept the budget changes highlighted in yellow in the budget spreadsheet as presented.

Dave Hillemeier seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously

Keith Groves made a motion to fully fund the top 5 watershed grant proposals for \$536,509.84 as ranked and presented by the review committee.

Tony LaBanca seconded the motion.

The motion passed with 7 in favor and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service abstaining.

Action Items from the Meeting

- Kyle De Juilio, George Kautsky, and Mike Orcutt will send their additional edits for the December TMC meeting minutes to Mike Dixon to incorporate.
- Don Bader will schedule a budget analyst from the Reclamation's Regional Office to meet with the TMC next month to discuss budget concessions for the Program.
- Kautsky will email Bader and Hadley requesting a table of restoration fund contributions by power users over the past decade to explore any trends in contributions.
- Dixon will send the (budget) PPT to TMC members.
- Nick Som will inform the TMC on whether field work for the drift macroinvertebrate study is still moving forward.
- Michael Dixon will update the minutes and send them to TMC members for a vote at the next meeting.

Regular Business

Welcome and Introductions

Justin Ly opened the meeting and conducted roll call. The meeting was held as a web-based teleconference due to COVID-19 concerns. Teresa Connor reported Tony LaBanca would join the call but was running late as the State's Primary representative. Kyle DeJuilio reported Dave Hillemeier would join the call at 10: 00 am.

Approval of Agenda

Ly opened discussion on the March TMC meeting agenda.

Keith Groves made a motion to approve the March TMC Agenda

Teresa Connor seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously

Approval of December TMC Meeting Minutes

Ly opened discussion on approval of the December TMC Meeting Minutes. DeJuilio and Kautsky had additional changes to submit for the December minutes and recommended that the TMC review the changes later in the meeting. Both sent their changes to Michael Dixon for the TMC to review later.

- Kyle De Juilio, George Kautsky, and Mike Orcutt will send their additional edits for the December TMC meeting minutes to Mike Dixon to incorporate.

Report from the Executive Director

Dutch Creek is moving forward to clear vegetation and facilitate access to the site. Clearing is done now due to the riparian bird nesting season and to avoid pushing it back to August.

Organizational Update

The TRRP currently has 9 of 15 positions filled. James Lee started as the Science Coordinator in January. Dixon is currently working to fill the Implementation Branch Chief position, which requires additional review and scrutiny by Reclamation as it is interdisciplinary. The Program is currently waiting for HR to post the position once they have approval from Policy. The Engineering position has been submitted, reviewed, and approved and should open by the end of this week or early next week. Sacramento has hired more staff to prioritize recruitment, which should help the process run faster.

DeJulio noted the Yurok Tribe had concerns about staffing up the Program office when they were also considering budget cuts. He suggested the Program leverage existing experience and resources that exist in partnerships, especially as there are number of Fish Biologists working under other partners. Dixon noted that Yurok currently has been building more capacity than the other partners and Reclamation was discussing its needs internally. DeJulio noted that much of Yurok's capacity is not necessarily related to the Program.

Science Update

An updated table on synthesis report progress was included in this quarter's Executive Director Report. James Lee reported that two more synthesis reports were finalized: the cottonwood seed dispersal report and the bed and bar scour report. Both were posted on the Program's dataport. Three reports are responding to peer review. Eric Peterson and Kevin Held created a website for the completed reports, which will be released to the public soon.

Program Science metrics and targets work is on-going. The Work Groups have shifted it to a routine business item as they continue to refine them. Lee will do a status check with each group before the next TMC meeting. Dixon noted that presentations were cut due to time constraints and suggested having brief updates during the teleconference call next month.

The flow-related science and modeling projects are moving forward following approval at the December TMC meeting. Full proposals have been through external peer review and are being funded. The only change is the first year of calibration for the acoustic bedload study is being deferred because of critically dry conditions and the current GMA contract with USGS expiring. Instead, equipment will be purchased and USGS will do analysis on existing calibration data from its pilot study.

Implementation Update

The Program worked extensively with Policy, Contracting, and Acquisitions to get language reviewed and approved by the Solicitor's office to fund the improvements at the Junction City House. Then the homeowner submitted four bids for the improvements to move the house outside of the maximum fisheries flow, which came in between \$400,000 - \$500,000 and a mean of \$458,000. Inflation from post-Carr and Camp Fire reconstruction likely resulted in the elevated costs for the property, which was purchased a few years ago for around \$284,000. These costs make it unlikely for the project this year. The Program needs to determine if it should move the house now while the landowner is willing or wait until they are looking to increase flow

variability when it will likely affect the property. Dixon was not comfortable with doubling the funding without a motion from the TMC and had removed it from the budget for now.

Keith Groves asked if there was interest from the landowner in selling the property. Dixon explained the property had been purchased two years ago and is currently used as a vacation home and short-term rental. The owner may be willing to consider selling but is not inclined right now. Dixon noted he had not offered the option for selling directly to the owner. Currently the property is in the maximum fisheries flow and 100-year floodplain, which makes its value fairly low. The government can only pay fair market value for property, which the current bids exceed by double.

Dutch Creek is slated for construction this summer. The tribes are slated to do the work. The Pacific Northwest office in Idaho is reviewing the cost estimate now. Mobilization is scheduled for July 15.

Hoopa Valley Tribe is editing the Phase B designs for Chapman Ranch based on as-built modeling for Phase A, which share elements. The contractor is developing the EA and decision documents are expected by the end of the fiscal year. This is the next project in the queue for construction. The majority of the work will be out of the channel, so some portion could start construction in the fall or spring pending permits.

The federal team will start work on the Sky Ranch project once the new engineer is in place. There are still some landowner access issues as they wait for land transfers between TPUD and BLM, which are contingent on a transfer between USFS and TPUD in another part of the county. Most of the transfer issues have been resolved, but it has not been officially finalized. Until the TPUD parcel becomes public land, the project cannot be done as designed but the design should be easy to complete. Orcutt asked if there were other models for land purchases the Program could use to make land exchanges faster, such as the recent land purchase by the Yurok tribe. Dixon explained it was a mixed bag that depended on who the landowners were and if they were willing to sell. The biggest challenge are the constraints with federal acquisitions and the time it takes the feds acquire property, which is not in the interest of the seller. Also, the current administration is hesitant to purchase lands unless it improves recreation access, which makes it hard to accept land. While the BLM might be the logical recipient of a property, they may not be able to accept it. Orcutt commented that using tried and true ways might help things get done quicker and he thought the administration was supportive of finding ways to cut red tape.

The Oregon Gulch project design should be completed this year. The biggest hurdle is the volume of excavation need to create a functional floodplain due to 40 foot tailing piles. There is an informal agreement with Eagle Rock Quarry to accept the spoils. Dixon noted the agreement was largely due to the hard work of the staff of the Yurok Tribe and Program Office in convincing the owner to help.

Design on Evans Bar Channel Rehabilitation is slated for this year. DWR has done a site visit and Connor added they are finishing work on Dutch Creek before starting. Design work will partner with the other design groups to fill capacity at State.

The existing conditions report for Upper Conner Creek was completed by the Hoopa Valley Tribe and they are requesting concepts from the design team.

The Program is currently working on the BA to reopen consultation. The updated BA will describe the in-channel and watershed work done by Reclamation and its partners better. There is formal buy-in from USFS, BLM, USFWS, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who will have programmatic ESA coverage. The update will substantially reduce permitting work for each. Consultation has been reinitiated with NOAA Fisheries and will be reinitiated soon with USFWS. Connor asked if Hamilton Ponds is included in the BA. Dixon answered it would be covered but they needed discussion about what will be done at the site.

Public Outreach

A number of articles have been published and are listed in the Executive Director's report. The 2019 Annual Report is in development now in the hopes it will be finalized closer to the start of the year. Kevin Held is currently working with partners on it.

A number of public events have been done including a backyard bird count and the Art Cruise event. The Art Cruise was done in partnership with Main Street Gallery and RCD to feature artwork on Northwestern California rivers. Dixon heard a lot of supportive comments from the community at both events. He has invited Elizabeth Sandoval from RCD to speak with the TMC. Orcutt added he has also seen a broad base of support for the Program and suggested they continue to look at different locations and locales to engage the public on what they do.

Dixon met with the new District 3 supervisor, Liam Gogan, who is a river guide. While the guides are critical of the work, their issues are largely not with the restoration work itself and there may be support for late winter and early spring flow variability. If presented right, there could be common ground on the issue.

Decision Items

FY20 Budget Updates and FY21 Budget Decisions

Dixon provided a PowerPoint Presentation on budget updates from the last quarter. The updates focused on the prioritized list of funding items discussed and approved during the December TMC meeting, which included a summary table in the Executive Director's report. For the FY21 budget, the TRRP will not try to pass a budget in March since there are some contentious issues that need negotiation and Dixon is working to build consensus with the partners.

The top priority for the FY20 budget updates was based on a suggestion by Terri Simon-Jackson to ensure Interagency agreements were funded. The agreement with NOAA Fisheries was increased due to expected work on the Program's BO and other technical contributions. Program administration costs were adjusted as Linsey Walker's salary was removed from the TRRP since her position is moving to the NCAO and she will be funded through another mechanism.

However, this hasn't happened yet due to the backlog of recruitment needs. For now, the TRRP will continue to pay her salary and step increases. Dixon noted the budget for office operations is lower this year but was not sure why. He did note that vehicle utilization costs are lower this year than projected because of reduced staffing.

Costs for the Refinements Facilitator were added based on the internal government cost estimate of \$278,000. The solicitation closes on Friday so the actual cost will be determined then and a contractor will be hired soon.

The Program Implementation budget was increased to account for potential staff salaries and costs for filling current vacancies. Currently, there are four open positions in the Implementation Branch but not all will be filled this year. The original budget did not account for relocation costs as it was assumed they would remain vacant for much of the year. The increased budget is based on the worst-case scenario for recruitment, with relocation costs included as a single year expense depending on the individual. The costs for recruitment were added to recruit qualified people due to known challenges of attracting people to the area.

The Junction City House budget was changed to zero due to the concerns discussed during the Implementation update. The budget for Acquisitions was reduced for temporary access agreements, which will cost \$30,000 for Dutch Creek. Due to attrition, there are no staff to serve as the Government Inspector. There is an agreement with the Willows Construction Office to provide inspection services for just over \$100,000, which is a modest reduction from the original budget.

The Program Science budget was increased modestly to account for the Science Coordinator's partial salary for the year. The Riparian Ecologist position was reduced due to a funding agreement with the Hoopa Valley Tribe since it is uncertain how long it will take to recruit a new one. The costs reflect the government's cost for James Lee's salary through the 3rd week of January. If Hoopa Valley hires the position, a modification for additional costs are needed.

Since gravel implementation will not be done this year, the budget item has been zeroed. Costs for channel rehab work was initially approved at \$140,000 but the actual cost estimate came in at around \$77,000 [note: this number was an error; the actual amount is approximately \$111,000]. Outmigrant monitoring was also reduced, but Dixon was unsure why. He asked the tribes to speak to the reduction in costs.

The proposed flow variability projects were added as the next six items, which will be funded by salary savings. The costs for the hydrophone project were reduced to allow for purchase of the equipment and calibration of existing data. Dixon explained the dry water year would result in a modest flow peak, meaning there would not be enough sediment movement for calibration. Since the original interagency agreement with USGS did not include a report, the study will pay USGS to analyze existing data from their pilot study to determine how tight the relationship is between acoustics and bed transport.

DeJuilio thanked Dixon for the review of the FY20 budget and noted that some of the lines still appear to have soft numbers. He asked if someone on staff could fill the Inspector role. Dixon answered an engineering tech with a construction management background may be able to fill the role, but it was hypothetical. Since the Program had a service agreement in place, it may not be possible to get the money back at this point. Dixon added the Program Implementation budget was likely the softest as it would depend on how many were hired, the timing of hires, and if relocation costs needed. He invited suggestions from the TMC on how to use any available funds. Connor asked if some of the funds for the inspector could be used to train new staff before the end of the construction season. Dixon answered the money could not be taken back for staffing at this point. Ly asked why the budget for the flow synthesis report changed and why the TMC-approved amounts were not reflected in the table. Dixon clarified the TMC-approved column reflects what was in the December budget before TMC-approval. The new amounts column are items added to the budget based on TMC's ranked fund availability list from December.

Nick Hetrick asked if the pool stratification study would still drop flows from 450 cfs, noting that it might not be prudent with the water year outlook. Dixon explained it was no longer part of the study since it was not part of the original proposal and was just for validation data. Groves suggested the initial USGS hydrophone study should not have been funded without including the analysis of the data. Dixon noted the initial interagency agreement was misguided in how it was initially set up and the current project would close the loop to fund the analysis before funding any additional data collection.

Dixon continued budget discussions for FY21 with a graph comparing the actual costs for the program and the adjusted costs to show the decline in the Program's buying power since 2014. With the budget held flat in FY21 and a modest reduction by USFWS for monitoring agreements, the Program's buying power will have been reduced by a 1/3, from \$18 million to \$11.5 million. Some costs were still overfunded in FY21, such as agreements with Trinity County and the USFS, but those overages will not carryover to FY22. There will be some real hits in the FY22 as annual costs for agencies increase. The TMC should make some decisions now on priorities to reflect a reduced budget environment.

Kautsky asked how the budget planning process and discussions were done, noting that previously the partners would provide their expected budgets and out-year priorities on a three-year horizon. He asked if DOI was reacting to a proportional response to a national budget reality or if the Program has been providing sufficient out-year guidance regarding true program need during its construction phase. Dixon explained it was reactive as Reclamation tells them what they have to work with for upcoming years. Kautsky stated it would be a slippery slope for the Program to concede and that it should be clear about its needs by updating the Mid-Pacific Regional Director with a three-year planning budget or it will have failed with little justification. He asked if these reductions were based on needing less or just responding to having a smaller box. Hadley explained the BOR still provides its request for what they need but the feedback is

that the reduced levels are the status quo moving forward. Kautsky noted the Mid-Pacific Region [sic; California-Great Basin Region] made a commitment to fully fund and make the program a budget priority and asked if that was still true. Bader explained the reductions came from Washington DC, not the Regional Office and that the Region asked for \$2 million more for FY21 along with the hatcheries, but both amounts were walked back. Orcutt explained the Hoopa Valley Tribe is invested in understanding how budget planning works through Reclamation and wants to understand the rationale for the reductions. He asked if the reductions were due to the investment in updating the BA and ROD for the ROC on LTO process, which the TRRP was not a focus, or if it was tax cuts. Bader offered to get someone from the Regional budget office to talk with TMC on where they made concessions to DC for the budget.

- Don Bader will schedule a budget analyst from the Reclamation's Regional Office to meet with the TMC next month to discuss budget concessions for the Program.

Keith Groves added that power customers also had reduced value than they did 10 years ago, which may contribute to lower revenue for the Program and Washington DC. If 40% of the costs to power customers goes towards restoration and their costs are lowered, they may be pulling money away since they don't see it as an essential. If power users are members, it might be easier for them to see what's needed as they may currently see the efforts as a failure as there are no fish in the river. LaBanca asked if that only applied to hydropower and Groves answered it was across the board as heavy power industries move out of California or switch to natural gas and renewable sources, which have brought costs down. Kautsky asked if the presentation with Region could look at how trends in contributions to restoration funds may explain the reduction in budgets. Ly asked Kautsky to email Bader and Hadley to clarify the hypothesis about how reductions in restoration funds by power customers affects the Program budget.

- Kautsky will email Bader and Hadley requesting a table of restoration fund contributions by power users over the past decade to explore any trends in contributions.

Dixon continued that the budgets in FY21 and FY22 need to be trimmed, which will involve individual discussions with agencies. Dixon is going to recommend to the TMC that the Program will address reductions as follows:

- No reductions to on-the-ground restoration work. More targeted reductions to the Science budget than the Implementation budget.
- Increased scrutiny of grants and agreements to allow funds on a task-by-task basis and avoid overfunding items. This would apply to Cooperative and Interagency agreements as well.
- Leveraging Program staff more efficiently to address work previously funded through contracts and agreements. For example, an engineer will do the FEMA flood modeling and interagency design reviews will be limited after 60% design to reduce the iterative back and forth for permits.

- Reducing TMC participation on technical assistance, which will be ironed out through one-on-one agency discussions.
- Reduce and cap monitoring tasks pending external SAB review of the Program.

The next steps over the next few months include:

- March – early April: one-on-one listening sessions with agencies to look for consensus and identify strong positions and outliers that require constructive consensus building.
- April: Finalize the Executive Director’s Proposed budget.
- April – May: Government-to-Government meetings to negotiate and reach agreement-in-principal funding levels by task.
- June TMC: Pass initial FY21 budget with upfront contingency funding options.

Hillemeier asked if the increases to staffing at the Program Office would take away key positions from the Program’s partners. With the Program going through Refinements, it might not be a good time to restaff the Program office. For example, there is lots of experience in the Program that could allow the partners to work as a team instead of hiring the Fisheries Biologist.

Hillemeier asked if the hiring was a done deal or if there was still an opportunity to provide guidance. Dixon answered that the reductions would not take positions away from other entities and the Program office was not looking to fully staff up. One of the Implementation positions would remain vacant with the Program using existing expertise. The Fish Biologist would engage with monitoring and support flow modeling, being reclassified from the vacant geomorphology position. Dixon did lower its position in the queue and thought it unlikely that having a core of expertise in the program office would change with refinements. Hillemeier noted Chad made recommendations on different models for how the Program is structured, which could include staffing, but the conversation keeps getting delayed. The Program may find where they may not need some positions by looking at other models. Dixon and Hetrick explained the office had three fish biologists at one point, but they were slowly reduced for various reasons (moves to Arcata, reclassifications, and attrition). Hillemeier asked the Program to have an open mind on what was needed and what could be filled with existing expertise.

BREAK

Dixon noted the budget discussion was listed as a decision item, but there was no proposal up for a vote. The presentation was to review the list of funding priorities from December and relay needs for creating the FY21 budget.

- Dixon will send the PPT to TMC members.

WY20 Hydrograph Recommendations

Todd Buxton presented the flow proposal and hydrograph approved by the IDT for WY20. The IDT approved both the critically dry and dry year hydrographs, with the Hoopa Valley Tribe voting to not approve the critically dry hydrograph.

The current water year (WY) started out strong with various small precipitation events followed by a dry February and some substantial rainfall during the past week. The current projection for

the state is dry to moderate drought. Trinity County is currently in D1 (moderate drought) status for the next three months. Projected precipitation is below normal with above normal temperatures. This year's forecast results from the CNRFC (California-Nevada River Forecast Center) for the B120 (Bulletin 120 published by CDWR) indicate that the previous storms delivered large amounts of precipitation, but are still well below WY averages, indicating critically dry conditions. Long-term trends show a progressive shift from cool and wet to hot and dry statewide. Thus, the TRRP is considering how to address flow resilience in fish producing tributaries under these conditions. Current forecast numbers are stabilized around 516 kAF, which indicates a ROD allocation of 369 kAF.

The Flow WG started the hydrograph in December, starting the process earlier to avoid timing issues. The WG makes its recommendation to IDT, which is approved and then brought to the TMC. Following TMC approval, the TRRP will present the hydrograph to DOI for approval before the hydrograph goes to Central Valley Operations for implementation. Flow releases this year are proposed to start April 14th with the water determination finalized on April 9.

The technical recommended hydrograph incorporates flows for the flow variability studies. At the beginning are three replicate peaks for the drift macroinvertebrate study, followed by the peak daily average flow of 3,900 cfs. The peak flow is followed by a slow decline with two bumps to provide off-channel rearing opportunities and wetlands. The flows before the peak will also disperse juvenile steelhead from the hatchery and the flow bump in June will disperse hatchery Chinook. Built-in flows are also incorporated for seed dispersal periods and the last two peaks are intended to discourage germination on lower bar flanks and riparian recessions to promote ground water for riparian trees.

For modeling, outputs for the ROD and recommended hydrographs were compared to the scaled WY18 natural hydrograph from Canyon Creek. The natural hydrograph was chosen as the closest to full water year volume to the ROD and recommended.

In comparing the ROD with the recommended hydrograph, most differences in modeling results were insignificant, indicating similar results. The ROD had slightly better temperatures at Weitchpec for juvenile rearing in the restoration reach, however Buxton noted it was a draft metric that has not been approved by the IDT. For the juvenile salmonid temperature rearing, the results are presented as a 7-day average of daily average temperatures as two different numbers. The first shows how much temperatures diverge from the April 1 to July 21 period objectives and the second is extreme temperature departures. While the recommended is slightly colder, it's not significantly so. The only significant difference between the two hydrographs was in black cottonwood initiation, with 918 nodes under ROD flows versus 588 under the recommended. The ROD did slightly better for froglet survival and had an earlier metamorphosis median date, which allows the frogs to grow for longer before hibernating in the winter. Stream bed mobility and scour measures did better for the recommended hydrograph. And neither shows any impacts to construction start dates. Overall, the ROD did slightly better than the recommended but not significantly so. However, the recommended will support the funded studies this summer.

Comparing the recommended to an unimpaired natural hydrograph, while the number of fish produced was not significantly better, biomass was better. Frog production was also better in the scaled as froglet numbers were higher and they had an extra month before the cold season. The scaled does worse, however, at meeting temperature objectives, hitting 50 cfs in the summer.

Kautsky asked how the marginal differences in Chinook fry, parr, and smolt abundance resulted in similar biomass measures at Pear Tree and if factors like number of fish, size, temperature, and habitat affected it. Som clarified that for the vast majority of the time when fish are in the river, most conditions are the same with flows elevated over the same time. As a result, there shouldn't be significant changes. Kautsky asked where the TMC should look for significant differences. Buxton recommended looking at differences in the riparian and physical measures. Lee added that under the recommended hydrograph, bank position for cottonwoods was higher, whereas the nodes under the ROD had lower position and more vulnerable to scour. Kautsky noted that per the flow workgroup lead, the selection of the recommended hydrograph was also influenced due to its opportunities for science and learning. He asked the federal partners if they had direction on how they would conduct field work given social distancing and if the science studies were achievable under such measures.

Buxton explained the modeling results were used to modify the hydrograph. The last bump was initially higher and deeper to the unintended detriment of frogs. Moving the bump reduced impacts to riparian production by 40% as it lowered the peak and improved frog production. They did note that frogs tend to lay eggs on bars during the first week of April, when flow variability is low, and temperature is higher. However, the peak flow occurs right after that, resulting in increased mortality, which suggests the ROD winter base flows may be giving the frogs cues too early. Orcutt asked what the TRRP goals for frog production were, as they were not as firm as for fish production and that the Program had looked at creating refugia in the South Fork in the past. He asked if these goals fit in with other wildlife needs and Program objectives. Buxton explained there were no specific frog production numbers. What the modeling results indicate is that scheduling flows earlier may benefit both fish and frog populations. He noted that under the natural hydrograph, the frogs waited until mid-April and were not affected by the peak flows, increasing their numbers.

Joe Polos added that the peak in June would benefit smolt migration. Trinity Hatchery can only get about 30% of its target fall Chinook out, and the peak would help benefit fisheries 2-3 years down the road. He asked if the hatchery would do anything to time the releases with the peak flows. Buxton explained that timing is based on moon phase. The preferred dates and locations for the hatcheries was considered when setting the June flow peak, but that hatchery production is not a goal of the flow releases. Polos suggested the hatcheries work with BOR to help get the fish out but acknowledged that it may compromise other objectives.

Buxton continued with an analysis of a recommended dry year hydrograph. The recommended hydrograph contains a higher peak and a steeper recession rate. The flows would peak around April 25 and reach summer baseflow around June 20. The recommended hydrograph has the

same considerations and modifications for the study objectives of the macroinvertebrate study as the critically dry hydrograph. Slow recession rates are present to promote root growth and a second peak to keep cottonwood establishment on lower banks down. The hydrograph was compared to a dry hydrograph at Canyon Creek scaled to ROD volumes, which has flows at 5-600 cfs that do not vary much from March until the summer. The modeling for the ROD and recommended showed equal temperature and fish production numbers with the recommended hydrograph showing slightly better temperature targets for Weitchpec and juvenile temperatures and better results for physical metrics. The ROD outperformed for riparian production. Both had similar frog production results with the ROD doing better for the median metamorphosis date. Buxton noted that under the scaled natural hydrograph, biomass was significantly higher for fish while populations were lower. Som explained that lower populations were in large part due to the run time estimates as the fish migrated out later so there was more baseline mortality. However, the natural did poorly in meeting temperature objectives, which were 3-12 times higher in some cases. Overall, biological production and physical processes were greater for the scaled natural hydrograph. Groves asked why there were less fish in the models for the dry vs. the critically dry analysis. Som explained that comparisons between the dry and critically dry scenarios was not appropriate as they were based on two different years of historic data. Comparisons should only be done for hydrographs under the same WY as the inputs were different between the two.

LUNCH

Kautsky explained that the selection of the hydrograph depended on the flow variability studies and while each agency needed to decide how important the studies were going forward, he wanted to discuss whether it was safe to proceed with them and all other TRRP activities given social distancing. He asked for guidance from Reclamation on how to move forward. Dixon explained that he was not sure how their current guidelines would translate for contractors and AFAs but it was prudent to determine if a particular study could be done. Currently all non-mission critical travel was canceled. He asked that Buxton finish his presentation on the hydrographs and discuss guidance on how to proceed given social distancing constraints. Kautsky added that the reason the Flow WG gave for selecting the recommended hydrograph was to support the studies, while the ROD hydrograph provided some marginal benefits. If the studies are deferred for a year given current restraints, what is the incentive for using the recommended hydrograph? He added that it was the third year that the modeling results were not used in deference to another objective. Dixon noted that the differences between the results are not statistically significant and that the riparian recruitment is mixed. Buxton explained that for the physical results, the bed does not move under the ROD hydrograph for critically dry years. While there is riparian recruitment, it's low in the channel, which isn't desirable. Under the recommended hydrograph, the bed is moving and recruitment is higher in the channel, which is preferred. Kautsky added that by giving added meaning to some metrics and minimizing others suggests that the models may not entirely be appropriate for the intended purpose.

Dixon explained that both points are valid and that no one model should be used for decision-making, but the interpretation is important. It's not that the models are the wrong ones, they're

part of evaluating the hydrograph and each are constrained by how the flows are released. Som added that it wasn't about sensitivity as the flows are not that different from each other, hence contrast is not that great among alternatives. Overall, they are looking to see if the populations would be sensitive to minor changes.

Orcutt explained that the Hoopa Valley Tribe was concerned about whether this was the right year for conducting the recommended hydrograph, explaining that there are emergent and valid questions about what field monitoring activities may be classified as essential. Som suggested he get in touch with Jasmine Shen, who will be doing the field work during the initial three peaks. He agreed to get back to the group on whether her advisor has allowed her to do that work. DeJulio noted that he received an email the day before that she was still planning to do it but agreed it could change quickly.

- Nick Som will inform the TMC on whether field work for the drift macroinvertebrate study will occur.

To address social distancing concerns, Bader explained each partner needed to make their own plans for staff safety. There is still uncertainty on what Reclamation can do in the future, but the priority is to do it safely. It's unknown how it will affect the hydrograph. Reclamation's plan is to not send staff out to do work in an unsafe manner, but they will likely still go out.

Ly asked if bedload transport monitoring would still happen COVID-19. Buxton explained it would since construction this past summer introduced fines to the mainstem, which cause streaking in the gravel bed channel [note: no bedload transport monitoring is occurring in FY20]. While not an emergency, it is causing problems which the recommended flows would remedy. Kautsky asked which studies were still likely to occur and what agencies were involved. DeJulio explained the drift forage study will be done with HSU, Yurok, and Hoopa Valley Tribe. Jasmine Shen is writing her thesis on the study with field work between April 1 – April 28. The large peak coincides with the Habitat team's study to measure surface elevation to validate the Chapman Ranch as-built model, which involves USFWS, Hoopa Valley, and Yurok. The off-channel rearing study will be done between the two peaks with CA, Yurok, and USFWS. Finally, the beginning and last peaks would enable hatchery releases for steelhead and fall Chinook. Kautsky asked if monitoring activities were planned. DeJulio explained that traps would be in and they could look at the data, but only existing monitoring was planned.

Dave Hillemeier made a motion to adopt the flow recommendation to DOI of the hydrograph recommended by the IDT for both water year types.

Keith Groves seconded the motion.

The motion passed with 7 votes in favor and Hoopa Valley Tribe opposed.

Gravel Augmentation Program Update and WY20 Recommendations

Connor Shea represented the Physical Work Group and their recommendation to not conduct gravel augmentation and monitoring for WY20. Currently there are five permitted sites in the river for gravel placement. Gravel is added to address long-term gravel deficiencies and provide

a continual input which are limited by the dam. The Physical WG believes that the Program has caught up with the deficit at currently permitted sites and is learning how the river processes gravel. During the flow evaluation study, it was thought the river acted as a conveyor belt moving gravel from the top to the bottom with continual movement in the system; our conceptual model for gravel movement in the system has evolved over time.

The Physical WG evaluated the current sites and found that gravel would not provide any habitat or supply benefits during critically dry or dry years and may cause a detriment through over storage that can't be processed. Their recommendation is to not do augmentation as it will provide no benefits or meet the augmentation goals. Instead, they will take this year to plan for future years. They've identified six new sites that would provide habitat benefits and are developing conceptual plans for gravel additions and mixtures and what mechanisms to use. Those will be refined over the next year and they will work with the permit staff on permits for FY21. Each site will have specific objectives for river and habitat responses that can be monitored effectively for the augmentation program.

Keith Groves made a motion to accept the gravel augmentation proposal of “no action” for either dry or critically dry water year types.

Dave Hillemeier seconded the motion.

Orcutt asked if there was any difference between the two water year types. Shea answered there was no advantage between the water years. If it was a big water year, there may be some areas where they could look closer as they may move. Ly asked if this recommendation was for any critically dry water year. Shea clarified it was for this year only.

The motion passed unanimously.

Watershed Restoration Grant Proposal Recommendations

Eric Peterson reviewed the proposals submitted for the Watershed Restoration Grant Opportunity. Dixon and Eric Wiseman were recused from the review and approval process due to conflicts of interest. Peterson explained that priorities for funding were benefits to the stream reaches under the SONCC Coho Recovery plan and in increasing stream flows. Proposals were categorized based on fine sediment reduction and prevention and fish habitat connectivity improvements. Eight proposal were received and presented in order of rank by the review committee.

1. Lower Supply Creek Floodplain and Fish Habitat Enhancement Project. Request for \$183,000 with no match. Project will remove an existing levee, create floodplain habitat and boulder structures, and connect Supply Creek to the existing floodplain. Project is scalable and funds will go toward planning and implementation. It is the second phase of an existing project that was off-channel and disconnected due to flooding. Pros: directly benefits fish, floodplain reconnection, and substantial amount of wood. Cons: no match
2. Tule Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project. Request for \$44,000 with total project cost of \$80,000. Submitted by Watershed Research and Training Center. Funds for

design and implementation. Project will move a 22 ft. concrete dam near Hayfork, which is a partial barrier for adult and juvenile salmon at various times of the year. Will be done alongside another project to increase flows. Tule is a cold water refugia and has been monitored for redds below the dam. Pros: benefits anadromous fish, large cost-share, improves flows, and increases 1.5 miles of stream access. Con: only scalable by seeking further funds.

3. Deadwood Creek-Carr Fire Sediment Reduction Project. Request for \$107,000 with total project cost of \$280,000. Submitted by California Resources Conservation and Development Council. Match does involve a reallocation of \$68,000 from a prior TRRP watershed grant. Reduces road stream crossing sedimentation by 6,200 cy in a high severity burn area from the Carr Fire. The Creek is heavily used by Coho and steelhead. The October 2018 storm destabilized the highly erodible soils and resulted in damage to the crossing and the culvert. Project is on non-federal lands that did not qualify for BAER funding. Pros: reduces fine sediment delivery in an impaired channel, directly benefits Coho. Cons: Portions are requested to be removed from previous watershed grants, would have been good to have funding from other sources.

Buxton asked if a reasonable amount of the area was on BLM. Peterson explained there was some BLM land, but the majority was on private land. Nancy Snodgrass (DWR) noted Brown Bear Mine was one of the properties and Dixon added it was privately held by investors. Ly asked what the \$68,000 previously funded and why it was reallocated. Peterson explained it was part of a grant to remove a crossing in West Weaver Creek. Dixon added the projects were substantially complete. LaBanca asked if the funds would have reverted back to the Program. Dixon explained it was unlikely they could keep the funds, which would revert back to Reclamation, not the Program and LaBanca noted that the funds would then stay in watershed restoration. Ly asked why the project was not advised to be scalable. Peterson's understanding was they could use a downscaled amount without needing the additional \$107,000, but it would still leave the road crossing in poor shape.

4. Mainstem & South Fork Trinity Road Decommissioning Project. Request for \$45,000 with total project cost of \$62,000. Submitted by Trinity County Resource Conservation District. Funds are for design and implementation. Work will excavate material from several road crossings in areas and streams that are undergoing decommissioning and further stream improvements. After decommissioning, road and logs are placed along with riparian corridor planting. Projects are at Little Brown Creek at Weaver Creek and at the Upper Hayfork Creek watershed near the Chanchellula Wilderness. Pros: restores ecological integrity of stream crossings, enhances stream crossings beyond existing decommissioning, Little Brown Creek is near a SONCC area of Intrinsic Potential for Coho. Cons: the Chanchellula Gulch is not likely Coho habitat, scalability would prioritize Chanchellula but would have preferred Little Brown Creek.

Hillemeier noted that while there are high temperature mask issues in the area during the summer, the site could provide overwintering habitat.

5. Weaver Creek Restoration Planning Project for No-Rel-Muk-Wintu. Request for \$156,500 with no match. Project is for design and planning and is scalable. Funds are for design plans and permits for one mile of Weaver Creek near Weaverville. Goal is to deal with mining impacts from an old levee and mine and to reconnect the floodplain. Work will be done by the Yurok tribe. Pros: large aquatic restoration in Weaverville basin, directly benefits fish, part of SONCC Coho plan, and floodplain reconnection. Cons: only for planning and no implementation, and no cost share.
6. Mill Creek Sediment Management Project. Request for \$195,000 with no match. Submitted by Hoopa Valley Tribe. Funds are for implementation. Project is for road-related sediment management projects on 2 landslide areas, 1 ditch relief culvert, and along 13.3 miles of unpaved road segments. Mill Creek is one of the most productive for anadromous fish in the Hoopa Valley Reservation. Pros: fine sediment reduction to a SONCC stream. Cons: no cost share, no hydraulic analysis to show that culverts will be properly sized, includes 12 miles of road maintenance that will not benefit fish.
7. Heliwood Phase II Project. Request for \$98,000 with project total of \$800,000. Submitted by the Yurok Tribe. Funds are for design and implementation. Project will increase habitat quality and conditions for spring-run Chinook with whole tree placement along the South Fork. Pros: adds wood and complexity, area has intrinsic potential for Coho under SONCC, highly supportive matching funds. Cons: prior wood loading in the South Fork was significantly washed out during a major flood event, monitoring report from that event has not been completed so no indication of lessons learned, notable copy/paste errors that made budget details confusing.
8. Indian Creek Habitat Connectivity Project – Phase II. Request for \$500,000 with no match. Submitted by Yurok Tribe. Funds are for planning, design, and implementation. Project will restore aquatic connectivity to Indian Creek, which is subsurface during critical months of fish migration, creating a barrier to spawning and rearing of Coho and Chinook. Goal is to raise the groundwater table, which previous restoration efforts have failed to do. Project would use a stage 0 design by wiping the valley bottom clear, level it out, and add structural components before letting the stream rebuild itself. Pro: 2nd phase of an existing project, SONCC Coho area, addresses an area with a major issue. Cons: No cost share, confusing proposal. Sounds like a major project but claims it does not need CEQA as it is under 5 acres.

Orcutt asked if the project was on private land. Peterson answered it was primarily on BLM land, but there were private landowners who were involved and supportive. Orcutt asked why they did not need CEQA. Peterson answered the project does acknowledge that they need NEPA, but the requirement for CEQA was not needed due to its size.

Ly asked what the process was for the IDT to evaluate the proposals. Peterson explained that given the time constraints for the proposals, there was not time for the IDT to weigh in on the projects and that there was the potential for unequal representation for applicant presentations since the meeting was limited. Ly asked what had happened to the \$500,000 watershed grant funds from FY19, which were not awarded last year. Dixon determined that funds were used to fund other priorities and needs for FY19 and FY20, and they were not available to fund grants this year beyond the budgeted \$500,000.

Peterson explained the review committee recommended funding the top ranked 4-5 grants, but not to fund the last two. This was not because they are not needed, but information was needed before moving them forward and the proposals needed to be cleaned-up. The Mill Creek proposal, which is ranked #6, could be funded if there were sufficient funds. Overall, the TMC has control over the final ranking of the proposals and how it wants to use the funds. Dixon suggested the TMC decide how far over the allocated \$500,000 it wanted to go, stating the Program could support the additional \$36,000 but probably not the additional \$194,000 for Project #6.

Keith Groves made a motion to fully fund the top five proposals as ranked by the review committee for \$536,509.84.

Tony LaBanca seconded the motion.

Everson commented there were a lot of great projects and efforts to reduce conflicts of interest and commended the review team on getting the reviews done in a timely manner. He recommended the proposals be reviewed by NFWF next time to avoid debates about conflicts. He suggested adding a future agenda topic to look for an outside reviewer. Dixon added he and Don spoke and the budget proposal for FY21 included funds for a grant administration contract.

Orcutt asked if the grants should be assumed to be ready to go or if permit considerations were needed. Peterson explained some projects did include funds for planning and permits, but not all permits were completed. Orcutt asked if the limit for grants was \$500,000. Dixon explained they could vote to fund more. Hillemeier asked if the TMC could vote for proposal that members had submitted. Dixon explained that they were voting on the dollar amount based on the ranking committee's recommendation, not for funding to go to the Yurok tribe.

Motion passed with 7 votes in favor. USFWS abstained.

Hillemeier asked why the budget items in the Executive Director's report were not voted on, as there was an action item passed several years ago by the TMC that gives the Executive Director authorization to deviate from the TMC recommended budget items by up to \$100,000, and some of the items listed are more than that amount. Dixon explained they were funded based on priorities and availability approved by the TMC in December. Hillemeier asked why staffing positions weren't discretionary considering there would be substantial budget reductions that could affect a diminishing budget for years to come. Dixon stated it could be discussed but while partners provide input on staffing, the TMC does not decide how agencies choose to staff

themselves. Hillemeier reasoned the TMC should decide what positions need to be filled and which don't, given that the TRRP budget is being used for those positions, and this has a direct effect upon how much funding is available to restore the fish for years to come. Dixon explained questions have been raised regarding the Fish Biologist and the Riparian Ecologist positions, so discussions for those are needed. DeJuilio asked if the other vacant civil engineering tech position was being kept open. Dixon replied it was and they are looking to better optimize their work to get by without it. He noted he had not yet sat down with the Hoopa Valley Tribe to discuss the budget changes and added the reduction did not mean a course change by Reclamation for the Program. Kautsky commented that if the Fish Biologist position was in question, other positions may need to be considered. Dixon raised concerns about the TMC making determinations of staffing for positions at other agencies. He explained hiring the position had not been considered until budget reductions came up. Discussing it with the TMC may not be appropriate but may be better to discuss directly with Reclamation. Hillemeier maintained their agency had a lot of fish biologists which could support the Program rather than funding a new position. Bader reminded the group that this was not a new position, but reclassifying an existing vacancy based on an analysis of work capacity needs at the program office. Ly suggested the discussion be moved to the next TMC teleconference or the next Refinements meeting instead.

Approval of December TMC Meeting Minutes (Continued)

Dixon requested TMC members to review the meeting minutes and submit their comments and edits before they needed to vote on them. He offered to send out calendar reminders and emails, if needed.

Dixon received changes to the December TMC minutes from DeJuilio and Kautsky. After reviewing a few of Kautsky's changes, Groves and Ly suggested Dixon update the minutes with their changes and resend a clean version of the notes.

- Michael Dixon will update the minutes and send them to TMC members for a vote at the next meeting.

Hillemeier requested adding an agenda topic on how detailed the notes should be. DeJuilio commended the TMC for changing the bylaws to allow motions to be made over the phone, given recent events.

Public Forum

Dixon reported that Ed Dugan had been on the call and was heartened by the direction of the watershed proposals because they support steelhead restoration has been concern by river guides, though Mr. Dugan did not ask for him to convey that comment.

MEETING ADJOURNED 4:15 PM