

# TRINITY RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

## *Mission Statement*

*To protect, enhance, restore and revitalize the watershed through collaborative efforts that leverage external resources, work toward common goals, educate and engage community stakeholders, address natural resource issues, and support healthy ecosystems for future generations.*

## Minutes

Tuesday December 8, 2020

Zoom, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

### 1. Introductions

Sam Chilcote – Trinity County Fish and Game Commission

Cindy Buxton, Zack Pattek, WSP Member Liz, Tracy McFadin – The Watershed Research and Training Center

Mark Lancaster and Sandra Perez – Five Counties Salmonid

Eric Wiseman, Galen Anderson, and Jotham Barragar - USFS

Kyle DeJulio – Yurok Tribe

Kate Blanchard – California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Amelia Fleitz, Kathleen McCully, and Chris Cole – Trinity County Resource Conservation District

Mike Dixon – Trinity River Restoration Program

David Colbeck – Trinity County

### 2. Additions/Changes

#### a. Weaverville Community Forest Strategic Planning Presentation from Kathleen McCully

- i. Trinity County Resource Conservation District is working to update the WCF Strategic plan which will be effective 2021-2028 which will be more detailed than the previous plans.
- ii. Community meetings have been scheduled for each of the key objectives of the WCF monthly throughout this process, with the hope to review and edit the draft in March and April.
- iii. If there are projects that community members would like to see competed with in the Weaverville Community Forest in the future or have ongoing projects, please reach out to Kathleen to share those thoughts with her.
- iv. Integrated Fisheries Restoration and Monitoring Plan is underway for the Klamath Basin at the HUC 12 Scale. <https://kbifrm.psmfc.org/>

### 3. Set 2021 Schedule and Hosting Responsibilities

- a. Second Tuesday in March, September, and December from 10-12am set for 2021 to be hosted by the TCRCD.
  - i. March 9<sup>th</sup>, September 14<sup>th</sup> and December 14<sup>th</sup>
- b. Potential for WRTC to host in 2022 if funding allows.

### 4. Program work/updates/news

- **Hoopa Tribe**
- **TC Fish and Game Commission (Sam Chilcote)**
  - State Office is closing due to COVID. Sam is working on Thule Creek Project with WRTC.
- **Watershed Research and Training Center (Cindy Buxton)**
  - Currently working on the stream flow and fisheries monitoring report for Thule Creek and working with Cascade Stream Solutions for a new fish passage design for the diversion on Thule Creek.
  - Monitoring has been completed for this year, but due to low flows Cindy has reached out to see how others are surveying and modeling.
  - WT3 is a temperature model for a temperature modeling for the instream benefit for instream temperature and the carrying capacity of the stream. For Big Creek if the diverter does not pull ½ of his diversion the temperature benefit is less than 1 degree, they hope that another year of data will help to fine tune the results.
  - California Environmental Water Network to get the South Fork Trinity River and Trinity River for a lot of the state streamflow improvement projects.
  - Josh has been out on the August Complex as a Resource Advisor, there are a lot of dozer lines and dozer bladed roads that have not been remediated. Josh is evaluating how to fix these up because there is no urgency to get the roads fixed while the weather is good, but there is potential for the spring. Majority of the South Fork Trinity is burned, mostly good burn but some specific areas have been burned at high severity specifically in the Forest Glen area. A lot of new wood is in river and will be looking are more post fire effects and engage more private landowners in the Heliwood Phase II project.
  - Browns Phase II flow monitoring has continued; the data has been collected but not analyzed yet. Browns Creek did maintain flows this year and observations indicate that increased regulations on the legitimate cannabis farmers not taking water out during low flows.
  - Hayfork Creek Restoration Project the plantings have been conducted on the south side of the road with some mortality with replanting and mulching occurring this fall. Future plantings to occur on private properties along the Riverview Property and potentially along Thule Creek.
  - Indian Valley Project is gaining support with Ray Patton (Stakeholder) and Chris Losi (USFS), next step is to work with Paul Powers to do a cut and fill design and the area impact then to the Arch and the ethno botany after. Furthermore, there is a discussion to do the project in phases.
  - Salt Creek – TRRP has funding to get the Lidar Projects and to fine tune with Mike Love to fine tune the lidar, they were surveying the thalweg and flow gage to capture the high winter flows this year. There are issues with the floodplain modeling due to lack of high flow modeling.
  - WaterSmart Phase II funding focusing on implementation, there is Phase I funding open that the Watershed Center is looking to apply to for Watershed Council coordination and some planning funding. This would be a second application for the same funding, the first application was implemented by Donna. The second application needs to build upon the first round to implement the second round. If anyone has suggestions, please reach out to Cindy or Josh to catch up on this.
  - **Education and Outreach (Zack Pattek)**– Salmon Gathering cancelled and were able to hose a virtual salmon gathering with an art contest and scavenger hunt. Indian Valley Summer Camp working to develop what that program look like.
  - **WSP (Liz)** – working on the plantings in the riparian planting and looking at riparian planting on the private properties.
- **5 Counties Salmonid (Mark Lancaster)**
  - East Weaver Dam initial study is completed and signed off by the Culturalist and will be moving forward with informal consultation with CDFW, USFWS and NOAA for with the goal to release

the CEQA document for the dam removal in February and community meetings in March for the Biological Opinion. Inlet structure being installed in September of 2021 and dam removal in September of 2022.

- Browns Creek Water Conservation Project – the Harmon Tanks are in place and it will be plumbed to start forbearance next year, need to clear the hurdle of DWR with CEQA. More forbearance projects will be going in next week along Browns Creek, Reading Creek, and Sharber Creek.
- Hanson Ditch water conservation project they have been working with Weaverville CSD to extend a water main up the East Branch of East Weaver to improve the water supply for the ditch users that agree to forbearance. Water will be provided free to a set amount and then at a reduced cost after that.
- McKnight Ditch and Hanson Ditch project – expect 4 or 5 cfs that has otherwise been diverted in the past.
- Little Browns Creek to do a channel rehabilitation there have been efforts to move the TPUD lines out of the creek.
- Sydney Gulch project for the section at Lee Fong Park a 65% design has been completed. Park District meeting on the designs will be upcoming this Thursday at 5pm. Upstream at the USFS compound they are working on a parking analysis based on the concerns of the facility's engineer to progress that project to 65% and to 90%. USFS is working to remediate the site for old underground fuel tanks.
- Garden Gulch – CalTrans is planning to update the SR 299 crossing there as the Sydney Gulch restoration would be impacted by that change.
- Manzanita Dam Removal – hope to get more response from the USFS to get the selection of the preferred alternative to complete the NEPA.
- Kate asked who was lead for the Sydney Gulch project at Lee Fong Park for CEQA and it is yet to be determined.
- **USFS (Amelia Fleitz, Eric Wiseman, and Galen Anderson)**
  - Fisheries Department Technicians has spent a lot of time out on wildfires this summer and are working to collect temperature probes now. USFS has contacted with the WRTC to complete work on the South Fork Trinity River Spawning Surveys. USFS also looking to work with Hoopa to continue Coho Spawning surveys in the Winter when USFS technician season wraps up, low numbers this year. Low chinook returns and redds seen recently would usually be attributed to coho, but with the late run they could be chinook, but we have not seen many fish on the redds to complete the IDS.
  - WRTC saw 20 new redds in the South Fork Spawning Survey this week and they will be looking how to utilize drone photography in some of the heliwood reaches.
  - Hydrology – USFS has a meeting for the strategies for suppression repair for the August Complex and the South Fork Trinity Mountain to mediate the contingency line on that project. WCF Fuels and Recreation Project for Phase I for fuels reduction treatments around West Weaver Creek and bringing in trails into to USFS system and bringing them up to USFS standards. Mike Dixon inquired if they could yard trees down into West Weaver, and Eric responded adding wood to the creek was not an action for the plan at this point in time. Seven legacy sediment sites will be treated which is 600 tons to have the potential to be removed that have potential to be mobilized into the creek, the amount the project may create is 60 tons. All dry channel work including removing culverts etc.
  - Rough Gulch burned at high severity and the Shell Mountain Creek burned at very high severity. David Schmerge developed a watershed restoration action plan for Shell Mountain Creek, but

now the plan is to look at how to keep the sediment up in the watershed. Shell Mountain Creek needs to be designated as a priority watershed which has not happened.

- Rapid Assessment of the August Complex Repair and looking to craft salvage projects.
- Down River Consulting
- **Yurok Tribe (Kyle DeJulio)**
  - Dutch Creek project completed this year.
  - Indian Creek watershed restoration funded by TRRP and the Coastal Conservancy.
  - Klamath Basin project for a lot of native seed collection for the dam removal projects.
  - Sacramento restoration projects in action.
  - Heliwood Phase II is in the works.
  - Close out design for the sediment processing Saw Mill site with potential enhancement for the side channel.
  - Chapman Ranch to continue for implementation in 2021.
- **CDFW (Kate Blanchard)**
  - Review EA for removal of the bridge at the end of Lorenz Rd for the bridge that leads to Lee Fong Park.
  - Consulting with Aspen Consultants that are working the TPUD that are working on the right of way widening. Impact to riparian corridors was questioned and with the proposed project there could be large impacts to stream crossings throughout the County. Operation and maintenance plan will come out of this development and all the stream crossings will be mapped.
- **TCRCD (Amelia Fleitz)**
  - Trinity County Community Wildfire Protection Plan is in development with the intent to have it finalized in February.
  - WCB Weaver Creek Stream Flow Enhancement project. Noxious Weed treatment plan is in review with BLM. West Weaver Creek Diversion (Weaverville CSD) Enhancement design is in development, with three actions no action, hand manipulation, or infiltration gallery. Furthermore, stop the excess flow along the Moon Lee Ditch and piping the water from the Trinco Treatment plant to the Moon Lee Ditch association users.
  - \$100,000 from California Department of Conservation to update the Trinity River Headwaters Assessment.
  - **Cynthia** – Gimmel projects near Wildwood this year for road upgrades and decommissioning, 7500 mixed conifers in Grass Valley Creek, and recon on the August Complex in the South Fork area.
- **TRRP (Mike Dixon)**
  - Consultation finished USFWS and NMFS earlier this year on a biological opinion for habitat restoration and connectivity projects. USFS, BLM, and Army Corps were all signed on as participating agencies. TRRP can also adopt your projects for the authorized take and email or letter head exchange for project to be included. Additional NGOs that want to participate in this contact Mike Dixon.
  - Finishing permitting for Phase B of the Chapman Ranch in Junction City planned for 2021, BLM and TRRP have signed the FONSI. USFS needs to sign their own FONSI.
  - Oregon Gulch project, the Yurok are the primary designers, online public meeting worked well. EA will be out for public comment around Christmas/January, fast track for implementation in 2021 as funding is available.
  - Likely start an EA for up to six additional sediment augmentation sites. There are existing sites that will not receive implementation this year and sites that need course gravel augmentation that permitting does not exist for.

- Developing an EA for a targeted action for reshape the ROD for the restoration volume allowed to release into the Trinity River for restoration purposes. There are arbitrary dates such as the State's determination of the water year that hinder the current releases. The Program is looking to move some of the allocations from late spring early summer into the winter and early spring period, scoping on this project has already started with a community meeting that was held in 2018.
- TRRP Riparian Ecologist position is now filled and will start in January – Shawn Green and will be a Hoopa Valley Tribe employee, he can provide inkind support and botanical surveys etc. If you have a capacity gap let Mike know and he can see about working it into his plan of work for the upcoming year.
- Mitigation specialist from CalTrans to bring outside funding into the watershed. Caltrans needs mitigation for known scheduled projects for planned and unplanned obligations they will need to satisfy to potentially provide more funding for the watershed grant program.
- Water year 20 driest water year in the last 20 years in the Upper Trinity, and operations are looking at 33% availability of water. If you have good on the ground relationships with landowners anything we can do to encourage minimize of use of diversion on important tributaries this year will be really important for floodplain and aquifer recharge if the forecast proves true.
- SAFE
- SPI
- TCCG
- **Trinity County (David Colbeck)**
  - Collaborating with the BAER team on their assessment.
  - Corral Bottom Bridge is under CEQA review.
  - Cannabis EIR to hopefully be certified soon.
  - Indian Creek Project – floodplain development permit in the joint NEPA/CEQA. If there is a County nexus on any of the projects, please contact David for NEPA/CEQA compliance.

## 5. Trinity County Temperature Data Collaboration

- TRRP and USFS lost temperature probes this year, but there are also areas that have an abundance of temperature and flow probes.
  - How can we work to share this info rather than duplicate efforts and enhance coordination?
  - Mark Lancaster has temp probes in East and West Weaver Creek.
  - WRTC shares their data with the State and Waterboard and the Klamath Basin, data portals account for spot data and not continuous. Watershed Council and TRRP would be a good way to coordinated and share this data. WRTC and USFS coordinate in the Spring.
  - Big French Creek had three temperature probes in a small section near the confluence.
  - Taylor Daily from USFS has a temperature monitoring program which is incorporated into a database.

## 6. Next Meeting: March 9<sup>th</sup> at 10am