

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.

AGENDA

Tuesday, September 14, 2021

Zoom, 10 AM – Noon

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84335596514?pwd=Q2xQdzlWYlVCOUFuN2xaT2pCbEpSdz09>

Meeting ID: 843 3559 6514

Passcode: 728128

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1. Introductions

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. Mike Dixon - TRRP | f. Sandra Perez – 5C’s |
| b. Amelia Fleitz - TCRC | g. Samantha Chilcott - TCFG |
| c. Josh Smith - WRTC | h. Tracy McFadin - WRTC |
| d. Cindy Buxton – WRTC | i. Chris Laskodi – Yurok Tribe |
| e. David Colbeck – Trinity County DOT | j. Pat Frost - TCCG |

2. Additions/Changes

3. Report out on Trinity County Water Security and Conservation Meetings – Amelia Fleitz

- a. Meeting biweekly right now and discussing upcoming funding for drought relief opportunities.
- b. Mike – Lewiston Release peaked at 2650 for a few days and then base flow earlier this week, it was a ceremonial release for the Hoopa, with the water and smoke the stream temperatures are much more preferable and we are extremely lucky. Good for temperature targets at base flow.
- c. Sandra – alerted that there was a fish kill on east weaver creek on the 30th of august – don’t know what the cause was – but the water was back up later – potentially someone turned their pump on – it was reported to CDFW and has been in contact with CSD because there was no flow past their diversion, but coming up later on down.
 - i. Mike – CSD has been taking all the water in East Weaver throughout August and with no return into the creek past at the return.
 - ii. Engaged with the CSD as to it being unacceptable.
 - iii. CDFW does not particularly have a good way to track fish kills in this area. Sandra said they don’t have a formal way to track it other than CalTips. It will be posted to the website for public education – many diversions on the Creek.
 - iv. Amelia – Rush Creek fisheries rescue – moving into the Trinity River
 1. Mike – shock to the system due to high temperatures on the Rush Creek and low temperatures on the Trinity River.

- a. There are no guidelines for Fish Rescues because CDFW does not support fish rescues.
 - b. Sandra states that there needs to be a license to move fish.
 - c. Cindy thought that one needed to relocate the fish, and that you needed to put them within the same tributary within normal conditions.
 - d. Sam – you do need a permit to transfer fish and there are best management practices associated with this. Kyle was going to development for a framework for the beaver, which may be applicable for fisheries relocations in the future.
 - e. Amelia mentioned when she temperature
- 4. Discussion: Long-term planning for water sources for Weaverville throughout drought and low water seasons – Kyle DeJulio
 - a. Amelia updated on the conversation thus far (see Trinity County Water Security and Conservation Minutes for background information).
 - b. Sandra has a history with the CSD and a drafted design for a water reclamation plant that needs additional funding to finish, and update the Tributary diversions
 - i. And has engaged to pump more from the River – but the plant need to defer that site and the electricity to pump the water up to town costs more and would increase their operating costs.
 - ii. Sandra has re-engaged with the conversations – next meeting is pending.
 - iii. David was part of some of the workshops – there are larger long-term planning fund for the infrastructure – water security for fish relief may not have funding at this point in time. Some funds through OES – direct support for individual households – bottled water and improving the wells, tanks, and upgrading connection from well to the house. Some small scale funding, but the bigger large scale funding may be harder to get. And the problem with the funding is that it is a reimbursement program and would limit out smaller entities to foot the bill of this style of program, and the County does not have someone that could oversee this kind of program.
 - iv. Cindy – they understood that the funding was to provide an individual with a temporary tank or a temporary water bottles, only if it would provide help with well drilling if it provided for more than 3 households.
 - v. David mentioned that the development of the funding overall is still of question and the committee is still debating who the funding will help and if it will be permanent or temporary. The structure of a reimbursement grant will be a tough sale.
 - c. Amelia – asked if Sandra has any interest in support in the upcoming meetings moving forward.
 - i. Sandra – CSD is interested in moving forward, not ready for more support at this point in time, their next meeting is pending.
 - d. Video of workshop:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/embed/CoouTFnuxXY?modestbranding=1&rel=0&autoplay=1>
 - e. Drought Funding for Counties (or others):
 - https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/drought_funding_for_counties/
 - f. <https://water.ca.gov/News/News-Releases/2021/Aug-21/State-Agencies-Announce-First-Round-of-Commitments-for-Drought-Funding-Small-Communities>

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5. Discussion: RAC Funding - Share out from all agencies

- a. David – DOT is working on Hazard Tree Removal for the current fires. Rick is leaving
- b. Pat Frost – RAC Chair – the total amount of funding is \$1,000,500. There needs to be NEPA for the projects, the USFS Ranger needs to sign off on the project, we will likely be looking at scalability, it can be on any federal land or private land if you can identify direct benefit to federal land. RAC tries to spread money across the project types and across the landscape so that communities throughout the County are benefiting from the RAC Funding.
- c. Sandra – has there been insight of the availability with the Ranger for RAC meetings to have these meetings.
 - i. Pat – is working with USFS to get the District Rangers to get times available for the agencies to meet with them to discuss projects. Tara has agreed to Fridays from Noon – 2:30pm to meet and talk about these projects.
- d. Sandra – will likely apply, but it is unknown what we would apply for.
- e. Projects don't have to be NEPA ready to apply.
- f. Timeline schedule and process – to get NEPA ready, not ready with NEPA by Sept 2022 we move onto the next project.
- g. Amelia – the RCD is going after lots of funding for many different project. looking to get funding for planning for Beaver Dam Analogues in the North Lake Area and the WCF.
- h. Josh – South Fork Trinity Stewards – get volunteers to help will weed pulls and other small projects that are hard to get funding for.

6. Program work/updates/news

- 5 C's - Sandra
 - Put out a bid for the Hanson Ditch Water Conservation Project – all have been higher than the engineers budget. We will likely be able to complete it next summer if all the materials come in on time.
 - Planning to do a full solicitation for the East Weaver Dam Project which will be a 2 year project, 1 year to install the new intake and the following year to remove the structure.
 - Sydney Gulch project is moving forward and they have been working with the County. The USFS has been hard to engage with due to revolving door of Rangers, USFS concerns have been addressed at this point and 5C's is working to finish the design downstream. And the contractor is working on finishing the development of the fisheries improvement in the Lee Fong Park Stretch.
 - Browns Creek – buttoning up a project there to add one more tank forbearance project.
 - Staffing – more staff on board and also a lot of transitioning, and generally still pushing all of our project along.
 - Deadwood Creek – road sediment treatments from the Carr Fire impacts to help finish that off. It will be finished this fall or next summer.
 - In active design on Manzanita Creek – the house survived, but the water system did not – we need to reconnect to see if they are still interested in the development of an alternative system to take out the Dam.
- BLM - *absent*
- CDFW - *absent*
- Down River Consulting - *absent*

- Hoopa Tribe - *absent*
- SAFE - *absent*
- SPI - *absent*
- TCCG
 - Collaborative meeting for Friday is cancelled due to fires.
- TC Fish and Game Commission – Sam
 - Beaver issue – sent a letter to the BOS to recommend that they work with State Fish and Game Commission and CDFW to support a relocation program rather than an elimination program.
 - Preparing to make recommendations for additional regulations in their next meeting.
 - CDFW Game Wardens are not permitted to attend the Fish and Game Commission meetings any more. And there was to be an investigation, but the Fish and Game Commission has not been apprised of any of the conclusions from that yet.
- TCRCO
 - Cynthia is working on BAER projects in Southern Trinity and has been working in Ruth and Mad River most of the summer.
 - Amelia is working on temperature and flow monitoring throughout the Trinity River Headwaters and Mainstem tributaries north of the Hayfork Divide.
 - Amelia and Nicole are developing a Trinity River Headwaters Assessment with funding from the California Department of Conservation. Some of the work has been put on hold this summer due to wildfires.
- Trinity County - David
 - Waiting for the BAER Reports from these meetings and is waiting for them to initiate the work. And then will be looking for partnerships to implement the work. There is a lot of work from last winter and spring from the August Complex.
 - Cannabis Program lost its CEQA lawsuit in superior court recently, September 24th the court order will come forward. They will likely be pursuing individual CEQA compliance, if the County does not have active County Licenses – it could compromise existing grant proposals that are in the area. If they do not have the funding stream from the cannabis application program, that was paying for the general plan update – so that would put that project on hold. The General Plan update advisory meetings will be coming forward shortly; deputy director Lozier will be working on that project when it is back on line.
 - Director Tippet is leaving which creates some fluctuation, but would not impact any floodplain development projects, which was last Thursday. He will be at the board meeting on September 21st.
- TRRP – Mike Dixon
 - Anyone know of work being done in the riparian corridor in the bottom of the floodplain. Taken from the side of the road.
 - Looks like one of the early restoration projects, before they
 - Just East of Willow Creek – Cindy mentions that there is active Gravel Mining in the River Bed down that area – upstream of Tish Tang – bull dozers on the gravel bar, looks similar to this.
 - Sam – are they constructing a fire line? – the knob fire?
 - Update
 - ◆ Tentatively identify the USFWS that they have been notified they have been selected to administer the grant projects in the future.
 - ◆ Chapman Ranch Phase B Started and then it was evacuated, yesterday we are back to work. There is some riparian work right now, and heavy equipment is going back to work on Monday with an exemption from the USFS to work within the USFS closure order. We hope to be finished by October per the Biological Opinion requirements. It would certainly be

good to host a field trip for anyone who would like to visit, willows planted in 2019 look like they are 8 years old.

- ◆ Oregon Gulch Project is gearing up – may be good to bring up a further presentation. Would take about ½ million cubic yards of gravel out of mine tailings, increase 45% of the riparian forest habitat – open valley wall to valley wall in the Junction City Valley – 1 permit left to secure before they move forward.
 - Mike will see if the Yuroks will like to present at the December Meeting.
 - ◆ Feedback for the proposal for the Environmental Assessment for the Winter Flow Variability to shift water out of the April to August Window into the December and March. This will set aside a block of water to set with a major tributary flow event – to mobilize some of the sediment coming out of the tributaries and to increase base flows and adding modest variability in the late February through April, which is currently flatlined at base flow.
 - Cottonwood establishment benefits, etc. Consumptive and non-consumptive recreation.
 - ◆ Looking to develop an EA on additional sedimentation location for the reach immediately below Lewiston Dam and Rush Creek – look at deposition of fine sediments in the far upper reaches above Lewiston Dam – to determine if there should add fine sediments into the deposition permit into the far upper reaches.
 - ◆ Interesting feedback on the gravel augmentation in 2021, there have not been gravel in 2017, it is the longest running gravel augmentation site in since 1970 and it is the most logical site because it is the most impounded. If anyone has ideas, thoughts, or help, as there was such a reaction from the public to this action.
 - David – appears to be somewhat of a public battle with supervisor Gogan – the public criticism. Are you still working with public outreach with the RCD?
 - The RCD funding agreement has been caught up in limbo. TRRP is working on a better outreach schedule, and the RCD is working on the education and the outreach. Will field offices be available to complete their social media. BOR suggested putting it under the central valley projects on Twitter. Which would not be a great way to disseminate the information.
 - David would look forward to how someone would duke it out in the social media arena.
 - Mike – the outreach coordinate took a job in Colorado, and it has not been filled. Everyone has been wearing the hat intermittently, Todd Buxton has been out working there. Many have been working with the public float. Don't have a dedicated person working to hire a person for that.
 - RCD the grant does not have a lot of funding or flexibility for reactive media, and that it would be better coming from the TRRP with the scientific background. The RCD can help support in some ways, but we should not be the ones out on the social media battle. And that Twitter is not an appropriate social media outlet for Trinity County, Facebook and Instagram would be better.
 - ◆ Sandra – general timing for the next funding? – TBD – may be annual solicitations, it is still up for debate.
- USFS - *absent*
 - The Watershed Research and Training Center (Josh and Cindy)
 - Some projects have stalled a little.
 - Indian Valley meadow restoration – botany surveys have been completed. USFS small NEPA is going to take on one of the tribs, that is a smaller project with smaller infrastructure. Thought we couldn't get the larger project done because of bridges and campgrounds etc. We will be working on corral gulch once we get it more figured out.

- Salt Creek – Mike Love and Associated did at 30% design on their floodplain design and we are looking to get some comments from this group. Fed into the hydrogeological analysis from geoserve found some interesting stuff and some infrastructure issues leading to what has been designed now.
- South Fork Wood Loading Project with the Yurok Tribe – they are working on hydraulic models right now and working on surveying. There is a good idea of what plan to do moving forward, with a yarder to move large wood structures on a section of private property and then later on to use a helicopter to augment the structure. This will be blue ridge who has lots of experience using this in the past.
- Using the new habitat restoration general order that is coming out in the spring from the state.
- Browns Creek – working on the installation for tanks for a forbearance project, there is one that is completely finished, one that is close to done that is working temporarily, and one more to move forward. There are designs for two new sites.
- Tule Creek – working with Cascade Stream Solutions for fish passage design with enough monitoring that we feel more comfortable with screen sizing and start moving forward with the design. We feel that there are still some improvements to be made there are still some improvements for how the landowners take water and use the water for irrigation, but there has been good success so far as far as keeping water in the stream.
- Riparian planting projects – just trying to keep plants alive that they have planted in the last few years. Riverview in Hayfork is a neat group that purchased a property there and plant some riparian plants there when the NEPA is cleared.
- Upper Trinity Project – BOR WaterSmart Project – waiting on the funding, but it will be working in collaboration with the TCRCD. Trust for public Lands to purchase lands along the PCT to convert to wilderness and have been doing an assessment with geoserve to see if some of these lands are worthwhile and what work would be done to pull roads and restore meadows to turn it into Wilderness.
- Cindy Buxton –
 - ◆ WRTC and Nature Conservancy received a grant from WCB to implement a community water management plan – Mike sent out the collaborative water management guide, which is the basis for the project. Bring neighbors together and find out the needs and look at the ecological characteristics of the watershed to compile into a report. This will be in the Browns Creek area to re-engage with the members to bring them into the fold of what the watershed and the people need. This would allow folks to have engagement and by-in on the project. We have had success with a private rancher with a private diversion.
 - ◆ Cindy participated in on KMUD to talk about what a few different entities are doing within the region. <https://sanctuaryforest.org/programs/education/radio/>
 - ◆ Good summer for drought and low water and the fires have been challenging – some have been blocked out for monitoring – upper Big Creek – did not lose its flow. Hopefully the pressure transducers are good and weren't burnt over. There is a private diversion that was burnt over and see what can be salvaged off those data. Fires have stopped a lot of field work.
 - ◆ Snorkels – adult spring chinook were all cancelled due to the fire and they were not actively burning in the watershed the smoke levels were hazardous. A few select folks did a short two sections out of the Forest Glen Area, there was one spring chinook and a handful of steelhead. One adult springer and one adult steelhead and not a lot of juveniles. Large gap in the data from this – it would have been a good chance to see the low water year to see what is accessible.

- ◆ Post fire rapid assessment in the August Complex – check on select spots along the SF Trinity River – some really fantastic burn to clear the understory and the alders and everything was still intact in the riparian corridor and large wood recruitment. Some streams were completely nuked, lots of destabilization – some stage zero like impacts without a plug. We will see some pretty significant fine sediment and debris from Smokey Creek drainage when the next heavy rain comes, which did not come through last year.
- ◆ David – rapid assessment – RAVG data from the tail end of the BAER report – used the burn severity maps to target where to go, but it was select areas and not across the whole watershed. Some of the selection process Cindy did not use the RAVG.
 - David – will you be looped in on the spatial data as it is developed on the BAER team data.
 - Josh has not engaged in the resource advisor work this year. It just depends on the fire. Lusetta will be working on the upcoming fires and there will be multiple different BAER teams working in the area.
- ◆ Amelia – similarly field work has been halted due to the wildfires – and there are a lot of loggers out there that could have been damaged due. We pulled one out of Coffee Creek
- Yurok Tribe – Chris Laskodi
 - Many projects have already been mentioned. Chapman and one in the central Valley.
- Two presentations for next meeting – Yurok Tribe – Kyle CSD and then Oregon Gulch.

7. Next Meeting: December 14, 2021 at 10am