

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.

Meeting Notes

Tuesday February 7, 2017

TCRCD Conference Room, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

In attendance: David Schmerge , Carla DeJulio and Phil Fishella (USFS), Sandra Perez (5Cs), Cindy Buxton (WRTC); Donna Rupp, Zack Blanchard, and Tracy McFadin (TCRCD), Samantha Chilcote (TCFGC), Marie Peterson (Down River Consulting), Pat Frost (TC CSD), Kelli Gant (N. Trinity Lake), Bob Morris (SAFE), Jerry Payne and Jake Gaitero (Junction City Stakeholders).

Note: Several regular members were out of town at a conference.

1. Introductions. Because several new attendees were present, there was a review of the history of the Watershed Council and what is prompting the expansion. The Council was started well over a decade ago to bring tributary restoration projects to the TRRP to help fulfill that part of their commitment to fishery restoration. It's original focus was the 40 mile reach between Lewiston Dam and the North Fork. With funding from the Bureau of Reclamation WaterSmart program, it is expanding to focus on the entire watershed and more inclusive issues. It is also a venue for natural resource professionals to share ideas and new information. Council meetings have always been open to the public and have been listed on the TRRP website calendar. With the WaterSmart funding, TCRCD is developing a web page as well (see item 3) to provide more public visibility and interaction.

The second phase of the grant will be to create a gap analysis of work that would benefit the watershed, using past reports and analytical work. Some (not all) of the past analysis work that the Council members have completed included a watershed analysis of the South Fork by the Watershed Center and funded by the state Fish Restoration Grant Program; The Watershed Center also did a cumulative Ag impact study in the South Fork watershed using Google Earth and are now gathering on-the-ground data to corroborate the analysis ; Upper Trinity River Watershed Assessment by the TCRCD and funded by the State Water Resource Control Board; Trinity County Grading Ordinance by 5Cs when they were under the County umbrella; and water resource use and demand, road assessments/inventory (for sediment) and fish passage assessments by the 5Cs funded by state and local agencies; and road assessments/inventory by the USFS and TCRCD.

2. Final review of Bylaws (Draft attached) – Donna
Group discussion on draft that had been circulated and comments/edits received through email prior to meeting. After discussions, agreement was made that each voting member

organization would only get one vote, regardless of the number of representatives at the meeting. That being agreed on, Cindy made the request that if an item is going to be voted on, organizations should be able to review it at least two weeks prior to the meeting so that they could discuss it within their organization in order for the vote to truly represent the organization. Discussion around the logistics of new groups becoming voting members. Group agrees that under Article IV, the language of “own or manage property” within the watershed should be added to be sure that federal agencies are covered. Jerry asked if neighborhood association organizations could be included and the answer is yes. The bylaws also need to address how a special meeting would be handled. Donna will update the bylaws and resend to the group. We should plan to vote on them at the next meeting.

3. New website project page for TRWC on trrp.net. Suggestions for content & links.
 - When looking at the suggested dates for 2017 quarterly meetings, it was noted that the first Tuesday time slot conflicts with the County Board of Supervisors meeting time. It was noted that there are several meetings in the County and we will try to find a time that works for everyone. Donna will send out email requesting feedback on new meeting dates, and then re-send new schedule.
 - The blue font is difficult for some people to read on the brown background.
 - Add a link to the TC Fish and Game Advisory Commission
 - Add links to more events

4. Future speakers/topics: Who should we invite to the May meeting for presentation? Suggestion made that we should invite the Trinity County Building Dept. rep to review how they address building roads and new developments while considering runoff into the watershed. Discussion regarding grading ordinance (see 5. Other).

5. Program work/updates/news (*Note: Several regular members were out of town at a conference.*)
 - Yurok – not present
 - Hoopa – not present
 - 5Cs – Updated on the Weaver Crk. private road inventory for sediment sources. Cindy said had to stop because of growing season/harvest and she had some difficulties reaching land owners. Sandra said they have received funding from the North Coast Resource Partnership for water reliability grant to improve private diversions, assess willing participants and install slow-flow/solar-trickle fill water systems to replace traditional pumping systems. RCD & Watershed Center will sub-contract with them on this project for outreach and work in the South Fork, respectively. Sandra reported that they are working on the final (report?) for Brown’s Creek sediment/road inventory; they have received funding for the Sidney Gulch final design phase for fish passage improvement; they are drafting water resources policy for Trinity County; will be working on a rapid assessment road inventory for BLM and have road work planned for Oregon Street/Valdor.
 - Watershed Center – Cindy reviewed the Watershed Science Exchange conference held last week. The first day dealt with forestry/fire science and the second day with water conservation/restoration projects; they are concerned about federal funding reductions,

including loss of RAC funding for youth programs. They are working on weeds programs; and OHV planning with RCD.

- USFS Hydrology – David has been working on the Draft EIS for the Westside Salvage Project. It should be published in the Federal Register in about 2 weeks and then can request copy.

To comply with its Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements, the Forest Service is expected to identify at least one priority sub-watershed within each total maximum daily load (TMDL) listed sub-basin to help assure reasonable progress with TMDL compliance. The South Fork Trinity River sub-basin is TMDL listed, and it does not have an identified priority sub-watershed. The Upper South Fork Trinity River Key Watershed lies within the South Fork Trinity River sub-basin, and Key Watersheds are highest priority for watershed restoration. Sub-watersheds in the best condition are to be selected for priority and restored first. There are five sub-watersheds within the Upper South Fork Trinity River Key Watershed that are classified as functioning properly (the best rating) according to the Watershed Condition Framework: Cave Creek-Miller Springs, Happy Camp Creek, Shell Mountain Creek, Smoky Creek, and Sulphur Glade Creek-Waldorf Flat. The participation of partners in the watershed prioritization process is both expected and highly encouraged. Long term opportunity that might be able to work with TC Collaborative Group too. David will have report ready for next meeting and we can review it and provide feedback.

- ◆ Agenda item for next meeting: Upper S. Fork Trinity River key watersheds prioritization.
- USFS Fisheries – Phil has been working on evaluation for the Burnt Ranch EIS, Trinity Roads and plantations projects, other fuels roads projects and stream inventories/surveys. The stream inventories/surveys report will provide current conditions analysis and recommend resource protection measures. He noted that hatchery and wild stock returns are very low this year.
- USFS Wildlife – Carla told the group that she is interested in riparian community environments, specifically with beavers. On Feb. 27 there will be a workshop on beavers at TAPAC at 2:30 for natural resource professionals. It will be bookended by the public events at Noon and 6:30.
- NRCS – not present
- CDFW – not present
- TCRCO – Donna reported that the West Weaver Creek salmon habitat enhancement project is moving forward with scoping letters set to be sent this month. Also that CalRecycle funding for cleaning up illegal dumps is available as long as the property meets zoning criteria. Zach reported that the roads projects include Browns Creek decomms, storm-proofing on Smokey, OHV decomms at East Fork of South Fork and Lewiston Lake, and some new work in the Grass Valley Creek watershed. Tracy reported that RCD is still waiting to hear on the Wildlife Conservation Board Stream Flow Enhancement proposal submitted last fall and that there is a Timber Fund grant pending.
- TRRP – not present
- BLM – not present

- Other
 - Jerry Payne brought his concerns about roads being installed without BMPs and the huge amounts of sediments being generated because the County has no grading ordinance. He would like to have the County consider no more permitting for grows until an ordinance is in place. He plans to go to the County with this suggestion. Long discussion about the need for a grading ordinance. All sides are in support of one and believe that now is the time. Sandra reviewed the 5Cs involvement in drafting one, but acknowledged that it is now out of date and large parts would have to be re-written. She said that 5C is seeking funding to update the 1997 draft. Kelli is on the NC Water Quality Control Board and she said she could ask to get their support. It was mentioned that Bobbi Chadwick (BOS) is also in support. Donna mentioned that based on a conversation she had last week, the Trinity Farms for Compliance are also in support. It was suggested that the Council also draft a letter of endorsement for a County grading ordinance. Mentioned made that there is an ordinance for dealing with Decomposed Granite (DG) soils. Discussion that it does take funding to create one because CEQA needs to be completed and the ordinance written. Bob suggested Humboldt Area Foundation environmental grants as a possible source of funding.
 - ◆ Item for next meeting: Review 1997 grading ordinance and create suggestions.
 - Kelli Gant with N. Lake Revitalization said she is attending because of her interests in economic and recreational development and also to represent the North Lake area for fire safe interests and road grading problems. She said it would help the watershed if we had signs “Welcome to the Trinity River Watershed” like other areas do. She supports education about the watershed for both people who live here and for visitors. Pat mentioned that the signs were opposed several years ago by CalTrans. But maybe things have changed. Bob said that SAFE is trying to get one installed at Buck Horn pass on Hwy 299.
 - Additional discussion about what a healthy watershed (forest) looks like and suggestion to have a demo area where it has been thinned vs over grown (like defensible space area on 299 outside of Redding.)
 - Pat Frost is representing Trinity Center CSD and is concerned about the state of roads above the dam and how they are deteriorating. He wants to see the recommendations in the Upper Trinity River Watershed Assessment implemented. Roads to the Alps Wilderness area trailheads are in sad state of repair and the sediment is impacting all beneficial uses. Group discussion on forest management and water yields, valuation of Trinity River water, and beavers in the watershed above the lake.
 - Bob Morris is representing SAFE. They support non-chemical treatments for weeds, watershed health, and forest resilience.

6. Next Meeting: TBD.