



Board of Directors

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<http://www.fotr.org>

FRIENDS OF TRINITY RIVER NEWSLETTER

December 2008

TRINITY RIVER RESTORATION PROGRAM

As written in our last **FOTR Newsletter**, many changes are taking place within the **Program**. The Executive Director, **Douglas Schleusner**, is retiring at the end of this month. **Mike Hamman** is replacing him. He will be in Weaverville in early December for a time and then will return to lead the **Program** in mid-January. Information about his background and experience will be provided in our next **Newsletter**.

Schleusner's performance in leading the **Program** from its inception has been exemplary. He organized and staffed the **Program** as envisioned in the **Interior Secretary's Trinity Record of Decision (ROD)**. He created considerable, if not yet complete transparency within the **Program**. He fostered participation of all stakeholders and was responsive to it, and he achieved the necessary physical work to accommodate planned returns of the river's water to it. His leadership will be missed.

No one yet has been selected to run the **Program's** science function (**Adaptive Environmental Assessment and Management – AEAM**), one of the two major functions of the **Program**. It appears there are differences of opinion within the **Program** as to who or what entity will have the major leadership role for the science function. With the **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's (F&WS) Arcata Office** having withdrawn its **Congressionally** appropriated funds to it for the **Program** to employ them as it sees fit outside established **Program** procedures, and the **Hoopa Valley Tribe's (HVT)** scientists and policy representatives having many additional ideas, also beyond established committee evaluation processes, just what constitutes the leadership of **AEAM** currently is confused. This void needs to be filled and in accordance with the **(ROD)**.

Unrelated to the Program, but significant to it, was the retirement of **Tom Stokely**, **Trinity County** Senior Planner, at the end of October. He is a walking encyclopedia on **Trinity River** restoration issues. He has spent more than two decades on the **Trinity** restoration effort. His involvement has been at the core of most significant activities leading up to the **Interior Secretary's Trinity ROD** in December 2000. He generally has represented **Trinity County** on the **Trinity Management Council (TMC)**. In many respects, his knowledge of and participation in **Trinity** restoration efforts is unsurpassed. His departure is a major loss to the **Program**. Any replacement acting on behalf of **Trinity County** has neither the knowledge nor relationships to represent its interests as **Stokely** has been able to do.

The **(TMC)**, the intended top policy/decision making **Program** entity, continues to be dysfunctional. This is a result of two factors: a super majority vote provision in its By-laws and members with blatant financial conflicts with the **Program**. As a result of this dysfunction, the individual representatives of the **Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)** and the **(F&WS)** who serve on the **(TMC)** now make most all significant decisions with no clarification of roles and responsibilities in sight.

The two-year charter for the stakeholder advisory group, **Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group (TAMWG)** on which **Friends of Trinity River (FOTR)** board members **Tom Weseloh** and **Byron Leydecker** have served, has expired. However, they continue to stay engaged fully in the **Program's** objectives. While the charter has been in the process of being renewed for some time, thus far it has not been. For this reason, **TAMWG's** planned December meeting has been cancelled. **TAMWG** is an entity created under provisions of the **Federal Advisory Committee Act**. Within the **Program** organization as set forth in the **(ROD)**, it serves on an equal level with the **Independent Review Panels**, which includes the **Science Advisory Board**, to advise and to make recommendations to the **TMC**.

COLD WATER FOR FISH SURVIVAL

As of late November, Trinity Lake was about 40 feet below its crest. In August, **Central Valley Project Operations (CVO)** projected that the water level will be about 115 feet below its crest at the end of this December. These same projections indicate the lake level the end of next April would be two feet below the late August level of 47 feet below its crest. These numbers can change somewhat based upon actual precipitation this fall and winter, but they are cause for great concern.

Fish need cold water to survive, and this significantly reduced lake level could result in unacceptably high water temperatures in the lake and then in the river next summer. As **(TAMWG)** has recommended, staff and others are working with **(CVO)** to provide better coordination between the two offices, and to discuss upgrading reservoir temperature models. Absent changes, the **(BOR)** will keep pumping water over the hill to **Whiskeytown Lake** and ultimately South of the **San Francisco Bay Delta** at the possible expense of fish survival in **Trinity River**.

RIVER, CHANNEL AND OTHER CONSTRUCTION

Construction of the **Lewiston-Dark Gulch** Channel Project began in late August. In-river work was completed by mid-September. Work outside of the **Trinity River** channel started in mid-October, and is planned to be completed by December.

Some areas of the river have been altered in an attempt to reflect a natural river channel. In the end, the river “will do its own thing,” but it is anticipated that these actions will accelerate the return to a more natural pre-dam river channel. Floodplain and side channel construction is designed to address the limiting factor for salmonid production and to create additional juvenile rearing habitat – shallow, slower moving water.

The project also includes adding about 11,000 cubic yards of coarse sediment to the river. Coarse sediment is added to the river to offset gravel losses blocked by **Trinity Dam**. At this point, gravel introductions have filled most of the pools - holding water – in the upper river for returning adult fish. The presumption is that high flow releases in the spring each year will scour pools and move this gravel downstream to provide a more natural river system. Presumably, more juvenile rearing habitat also will be created.

RENEWAL AND NEW MEMBERS, AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION

If you have renewed your membership, or joined **FOTR** since our last Newsletter and **if your name(s) has been omitted below**, please let us know – we want to recognize your support. Also, in a couple of cases in the past, contributions sent to us have not been received. People notified us and we resolved the issue of stray mail.

We express our appreciation again to **Jeff Bright**, of **Jeff Bright Design** <http://www.jeffbright.com> for his development and maintenance of our website. We also thank **John Leydecker** for his volunteer work for **FOTR**.

The following persons/organizations have contributed since our last Newsletter:

Caroline Palden Alioto, Janice and Roy Beamon, Tom Beatty, Darrell Boyle, Alan Brayton, Pat, Herb and Chris Burton, Kurt Christiansen, Alan Cooper, Charles Dilworth, Larry Drew, M.D., David Goeddel, Nicholas Graves, Kenneth Haupt, Totton Heffelfinger, Gregory Jensen, Jim Johnston, Pat and Marshall Kilduff, Raymond Koch, M.D., Chuck Lane, John Leydecker, James Mauch, and

Phil Morris, Suzan and Joe Neil, Justice William A. Newsom, Tom Nicholson, Robert Norman, Outdoor Adventures, Dennis Pagonos, Bob Pauli, Janice Parakilas and Roy Baker, James Powell, PhD., and Joan Hartmann, Edward and Theodore Purcell, Marybeth and Curt Ries, Jim Ritter, Riverbend Adventures, Phil Ryan, Kellie, Mason and Chad Sayre, Lucretia and John Sias, Mary and John Simons, Norman Stevenson, Abbey Stockwell, Gary Thompson, Gene Toschi, Trinity Angling Experiences, Trinity Fly Shop, John Triska, Mark Triska, Joe Tupin, and Warren and Janis Watkins.

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