



DEDICATED TO RESTORING
A GREAT RIVER

Board of Directors

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FRIENDS OF TRINITY RIVER NEWSLETTER

June 3, 2005

TRINITY RIVER RESTORATION PROGRAM

The Return of Some of Trinity River's Water

After 42 years, this year **Trinity River** is experiencing a significant return of some of its life saving water. Not since **Trinity Dam** was completed in 1963, except for a couple years in which releases exceeded 6,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) for safety of dam reasons, has so much water been returned to the river. For four days – May 10 through 13 – 7,000 (cfs) was released into the river.

The 2005 water year was determined to be a “normal” water-type year, and a total of 646,959 acre feet of water will be returned to the river, as provided by the **Interior Secretary's December 2000 Record of Decision (ROD)**. That compares to a low return of 120,500 acre feet from dam completion until 1981, 340,000 acre feet until 2001, and 453,000 the past few years. These returns of water are from a watershed that produces an average 1.2 million acre feet of water runoff a year. A complete schedule of 2005 water year flows is on our website at <http://www.fotr.org>

Floodplain Work to Accommodate ROD's Higher River Flows

Much more work is required in the floodplain to allow for flows as prescribed in the **ROD**. To provide for flows of 8,500 cfs and 11,000 cfs in wet and extremely wet water-type years, roads need to be raised, pump houses, wells and sewer systems need to be moved or reconstructed, driveways rebuilt, houses raised or otherwise protected, and additional properties purchased in fee title.

The **ROD** states that, “Reclamation will take appropriate steps in a timely manner to ensure that affected bridges, houses, and out-buildings are structurally improved or relocated or otherwise addressed before implementing recommended peak releases for Wet or Extremely Wet water years (8,500 and 11,000 cfs, respectively).” With a combination of state and federal funds, reconstruction of four bridges and/or approaches has been completed.

Until floodplain modifications are accomplished, however, water returns to the river cannot be released that will achieve needed geomorphic changes in the channel and sustain channel manipulation projects planned for construction.

The objective of these high flows, geomorphic changes and channel manipulation projects is to increase juvenile rearing habitat to restore wild fish populations to pre-dam, or at least two-thirds of pre-dam population levels.

Funds to complete floodplain modifications have been grossly under-budgeted through the **Restoration Program** thus far. Several of us have pushed hard to achieve increased funding for this critical need to allow for higher water returns and flows to the river that cannot occur without completion of floodplain modifications. We – **Tom Weseloh** of **CalTrout** and **FOTR** and **Byron Leydecker** of **FOTR** - are pursuing possible alternative funding for floodplain modifications.

Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group Status (TAMWG)

The stakeholder’s group within the **Trinity River Restoration Program**, **Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group (TAMWG)**, on which we serve, still does not have its new members appointed by the **Interior Secretary** eight months following expiration of its original charter. Many inquiries to the **Interior Department** have resulted in continued no action on appointments. The last we heard, the appointments were on an **Assistant Secretary’s** desk.

We have provided and continue to provide valuable recommendations, support and input to the **Trinity Management Council (TMC)** and work closely with all other **Program** elements. We have been and continue to be an effective and significant contributor to the **Program**. This timely failure to act is very undesirable for the **Program**, for us, for other stakeholder and public interests, and for achievement of **Program** purposes. It’s difficult to understand the failure of **Interior** to act. Do the stakeholders have no meaning to them? And, if it’s designated a “working group,” as it is, shouldn’t appointments be made?

Technical and Modeling Analysis Group

Under the leadership of **Rod Wittler**, PhD, the **Restoration Program’s Technical and Modeling Analysis Group (TMAG)** has attracted highly competent scientists to the **Program** and is beginning to fulfill its role as defined in the **ROD**. **TMAG** is one of the two sub-groups within the program. **TMAG** deals with science, the other sub-group deals with implementation of restoration plans/actions. While the science staff

is not yet fully complete, it has made enormous progress. It had lagged far behind implementation actions.

Program Budget

The budget planning process for next year is a refreshing change from prior years. The **Program's** executive director, **Douglas Schleusner** has characterized the attempted process as, "zero based budgeting."

In furtherance of this objective, **Leydecker** presented an outline of the **Professional Management Process**, of which the budget is merely a financial expression, to the budget sub-committee at its initial meeting last month. The effort was an attempt to introduce some private sector management processes into **Restoration Program** actions. What are the quantified objectives? In what priority are objectives to be pursued? What are the strategies to achieve the objectives – who does what and when? What is the cost of the various strategies, and which are likely to be most effective?

The budget still is in the initial phases of development, but hopefully the result will be more effective use of available funds with restoration actions based upon highest priority **Program** needs.

The budget process that has been in existence largely is a holdover from pre-**ROD** days. If someone had an idea for a project, a grant application was submitted. Based upon evaluation of these submissions, funds were spent. The objective now is to determine what projects are necessary to assure restoration and to specify in requests for grant proposals exactly what projects – scientifically determined - are needed and will be funded.

It is intended to have at least half of all grants funded on that basis in the next fiscal year and all of them by the next year. This was one of the recommendations of the **Program Evaluation Review Subcommittee** on which both **Weseloh** and **Leydecker** served.

TED WELLMAN WATER AWARD

We recently were honored by the **Marin Conservation League (MCL)** being awarded the **Ted Wellman Water Award**. Wellman was an **MCL** volunteer who became an expert on **California** water issues. He testified many times before legislative committees and subcommittees, and he was regarded as highly knowledgeable and objective in his assessment and recommendations on **California** water issues. While we do not begin to approach **Ted Wellman's** knowledge and contributions in this field, we very much appreciate the recognition of our efforts.

We have been involved heavily in **California** developed water resource allocation issues because of the potential threat to **Trinity Restoration**. With the **Bureau of Reclamation** in the process of entering into contracts to deliver more than 1.5 million

acre feet of water that doesn't even exist, the threat is real. This is an ongoing effort that requires considerable time and energy.

FRIENDS OF TRINITY RIVER STAFFING

It has become obvious that if we are to continue to be as effective as we must, we will need to add staff beyond the single volunteer and the support of **Tom Weseloh, Northcoast Manager of CalTrout** and member of **FOTR's** board.

We need a full-time, on the ground person of unquestioned credentials and stature to be involved in every facet of the **Restoration Program**. This person needs to interact continually with **Program** staff, **Trinity Management Council (TMC)** and **TAMWG** members and the technical representatives of both groups, the **Science Advisory Board** and with members of scientific **Independent Peer Review Panels** when they finally are appointed.

To fulfill this significant need means that we will require additional funding. We have plans underway to obtain this funding for both the short and long term. As our plans progress, we will fill you in our planned actions.

RENEWAL AND NEW MEMBERS, AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION

We again want to express appreciation and our thanks to **Mr. Jeff Bright**, of **Jeff Bright Design** in **San Francisco** <http://www.jeffbrightdesign.com> - graphic and website design services - who updates our website for us when we're able to provide information to him to do so.

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

Our very genuine appreciation to the following people and organizations:

Charles Alfs, Joseph Aaron, James Allen, Clifford Anderson, Michael Anderson, Anonymous, Tom Beatty, William L. Berry., Jr., Joseph Bower, Darrell Boyle, Alan Brayton, Peter Bruck and Rebecca Sharpe, Connie and Dick Burton, Pat, Herb, Kellie and Chris Burton, Warren Carlson, Lloyd Carter, Cindy Charles, Janelle Chiu, and Jack Coleman

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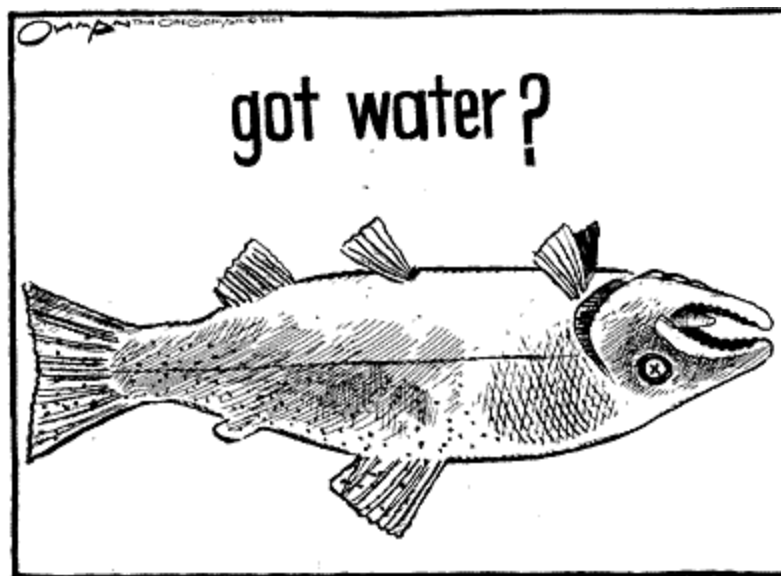
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