



Board of Directors

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<http://www.fotr.org>

FRIENDS OF TRINITY RIVER NEWSLETTER

March, 2009

OUR ANNUAL - ONCE A YEAR ONLY - RENEWAL REQUEST

If you have contributed in the last few months, please disregard this request. Otherwise, please take the time now to send us your check. All contributions are fully tax deductible. A return envelope is enclosed with this Newsletter.

Unlike many non-profit organizations that bombard us with creative requests for contributions, **Friends of Trinity River (FOTR)** makes a request for financial support but once a year. That time is upon us. We have made significant strides in working toward restoration of **Trinity River**. We could not have been as effective as we have been without your financial help. Your support is invaluable for successful restoration of **Trinity River**, and that objective clearly is achievable.

With your assistance, we can help restore **Trinity River** within the next few years. The **Trinity River can become a national model** of a restored ecosystem and fishery below a federally financed dam. We have that opportunity for major restoration of the river's fishery and wildlife resources.

We're not a large organization, and we rely completely upon your continued support to continue our work through this single annual request. We have no paid staff, and our overhead is at a minimum, but we do have significant costs. In order for **FOTR** to continue representing **you**, the **Trinity River** and our **precious fishery resource**, we ask for your financial help for this year now if you have not already contributed.

NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR RESTORATION PROGRAM

Mike Hamman is the newly engaged **Executive Director** of the **Trinity River Restoration Program (Program)** following the retirement of **Douglas Schleusner** at the end of the year.

Hamman most recently has been self employed as a consulting engineer and previously was employed for about nine years by the **Jicarilla Apache Nation (JAN)** in **New Mexico**. He has served **JAN** most recently as its chief executive officer, and previously as its chief operating officer and water administrator. He also has worked for the **Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)** for more than 12 years in resource management and as a construction engineer in **Albuquerque, New Mexico** and **Provo, Utah**.

He has a bachelor's degree from the **University of New Mexico** in civil engineering. **Hamman** has published two professional articles on federal water operation impacts to water users, tribes, recreational users and endangered species.

We welcome him to the **Program** and look forward to his leadership. We will provide him with all of our support to help assure his success and to help assure the success of the **Program**. His task will not be easy.

STEELHEAD - WILD FISH OR HATCHERY FISH

As written in our last **Newsletter**, the **Restoration Program's** Steelhead objective is for the river to produce 40,000 wild steelhead and 10,000 Hatchery fish. The numbers currently are inverted: about 54,000 Hatchery fish and about 8,000 wild fish. While **Hatchery** production of juvenile Steelhead has remained constant at 800,000 smolts, hatchery fish survival for adults has dramatically increased as river flows have increased and that trend continues. Although final numbers are not yet complete, it appears that there will be a significant decline this year in the return of both natural and hatchery fish.

We were successful in initiating a unanimous decision by the **Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group (TAMWG)**, on which **FOTR** board members **Weseloh** and **Leydecker** both serve, in March 2008 recommending that the **Trinity Management Council (TMC)** communicate with and actively engage the **Secretary of Resources** to direct the **Trinity River Hatchery** to take actions to move toward adherence of the established objective of escapement of hatchery produced adult steelhead to the **Trinity River** annually.

At its March meeting a few days later, the **TMC** unanimously approved a motion "to write a letter to **BOR** regarding management authority and the mitigation goals at **Trinity River Hatchery**. The issue we wish to address is the process to evaluate and/or adjust those goals, and to express our concerns regarding the effect of hatchery returns on the

natural production of fish.” A letter from **TMC** chair to the **BOR** finally was written in June 2008. No reply has been received thus far despite repeated prodding by **TAMWG** and **FOTR** at every meeting and through other venues.

Meanwhile, **Weseloh** and **Leydecker** have discussed the issue with **Gary Stacey**, a member of **TMC** and **Northern California Manager** for the **California Department of Fish and Game (DFG)**. **DFG** operates **Trinity Hatchery**. **Weseloh** also has presented the issue to the **DFG Commission**. Both **Stacey** and the **Commission** have expressed willingness to work to provide a solution. We have asked to be involved in any planning effort to adjust **Hatchery** practices to meet **Restoration Program** objectives.

This issue is of great concern to us because a mountain of scientific information and evaluation concludes that hatchery fish negatively affect wild fish. Suffice to say, the scientific evidence is established and it is voluminous. In the end, the **Hatchery** must bring its production into compliance with established goals so as not to impact adversely wild Steelhead and to meet the **Program’s** objectives.

COLD WATER FOR FISH SURVIVAL IN SUMMER

Over the past few years, the **BOR** has increased dramatically its pumping of water south out of the **Sacramento/San Joaquin/San Francisco Bay Delta** from **Northern California** reservoirs including **Trinity Lake**.

While there is a possibility of a dry water-type this year, it could turn out to be a normal water-type year. Under various scenarios, timing and amount of water returns to the river could result in higher temperatures of water released through **Trinity** and **Lewiston Dams** in the summer months. That could lead to unacceptably high water temperatures in **Trinity River** in violation of state established standards and could lead to fish kills.

The answer to averting such a problem is to maintain a minimum pool in **Trinity Lake**. We have been attempting to pursue through the **TMC** agreement with the **BOR** to maintain sufficient water in **Trinity Lake** to avert just such a problem/disaster. Thus far, little progress has been made. We have succeeded in educating Program participants about this problem. This is despite the fact that the **BOR’s Water Permit** from the **State Water Resources Control Board** and the latter’s **Order WR 90-5** specifically require that water temperatures in **Trinity River** have priority over “diversions to the **Sacramento River**” and ultimately to the **San Francisco Bay Delta** and pumped from there south.

No progress has been made in obtaining any agreement that the **BOR** will conduct its water operations in a manner that will accomplish the objective of fish survival water temperatures in **Trinity River**. The issue is not merely precipitation, but the manner in which **BOR** operates its dams. With no multi-year planning and major increases the past few years in sending water south from Northern California reservoirs and then pumped out of the San Francisco Bay Delta, all reservoir levels are extremely low.

We do not want to see an avoidable and illegal fish kill in the **Trinity River** from unacceptably high water temperatures so we will continue to pursue vigorously the issue of a minimum cold water pool in **Trinity Lake**. The **BOR** must address this obvious problem.

TRINITY ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

The **Program's** stakeholder group, (**TAMWG**), is a **Federal Advisory Committee Act** entity that must be re-chartered every two years. New or existing members are appointed or re-appointed at that time. **TAMWG's** role, on which **FOTR's** board members **Weseloh** and **Leydecker** both serve, is to advise the **TMC** on stakeholder views related to policy and **Program** actions just as the **Science Advisory Board** and **Independent Review Panels** are to advise **TMC** on science issues.

TAMWG went unchartered from its former termination date last September until early January. Also, some new members have been appointed and some prior members have not been reappointed. Reasons for the non-reappointment of two valuable former members, one from **Environmental Defense Fund** and one from **Redding Electric** have not been made available. The only answer is that final appointment decisions were made in Washington, D.C. The lack of transparency is disconcerting. A listing of current members is available on the website of **Arcata Office** of the **USF&WS**:
http://www.fws.gov/arcata/fisheries/tamwg_contact.html

TAMWG fulfills a vital **Program** role. Its membership consists of "stakeholders." **Stakeholders** are persons or representatives of interests paying for, benefitting from, interested in or otherwise involved in trying to help achieve success in restoration of the river. The group is able to discuss and to recommend actions and policy to the **TMC** that are considered thoroughly by and emanate from a very broad base of interests.

Members of **TAMWG** serve on all committees (workgroups) of the **Program** and put in countless hours in trying to help the **Program** succeed. **FOTR** board members, **Weseloh** and **Leydecker**, will continue to represent **you** on **TAMWG** at **Program** subcommittees and meetings. With **TAMWG** now re-chartered and in a position to be fully operative for the next two years, we will continue, as written previously, **to work for you, for water and for wild fish**. That's our underlying and unrelenting pursuit and advocacy within the **Program**.

TRINITY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

The **Trinity Management Council** again has been unable to adopt a budget for the **Program**. As a result, final decisions on the budget are determined by negotiations between **Brian Person** of the **Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)** and **Mike Long** of the **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (F&WS)**.

This comes about as a result of a super majority voting requirement for any action by the **TMC** and other factors. Super majority voting in this case means seven of eight **TMC** member votes are required to take any action.

Some of the other factors involved in an inability to reach decisions are differences of opinion about the size and scope of projects, a history of activities undertaken by some entities with representatives on the **TMC**, an as yet unfulfilled need for all proposals (**Requests for Proposals - RFPs**) to be precisely specific in detailing projects to be put out to bid, and financial and control conflicts of interest. It was anticipated that all **RFPs** would meet this requirement for fiscal year 2010 projects, however, that now has been delayed again. Other issues affect the inability of **TMC** to make decisions.

The **Trinity County Board of Supervisors** wrote to the **Interior Secretary** some months ago asking that he enforce simple majority voting on the **TMC**. He responded by sending the request back down to the Regional level, and then it went on down to the local level. That is how decision making has wound up with **Person** and **Long**. This is a major breach in the **Trinity Record of Decision (ROD)** which set forth the **TMC** as the policy/decision making group with any unresolved differences determined by the **Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C.**

A consulting organization has been interviewing all persons associated with the **Program** in an effort to assess individual views on the roles and responsibilities of the **TMC** and its relationships with the various other entities within the **Program**. It is to provide some of its conclusions orally in March and in writing in April.

TAMWG forwarded a **unanimously** adopted list of several suggested positive changes within **TMC** to it in June. Among other recommendations, was action by simple majority vote and the addition of members from agencies/entities that were not financially conflicted. In December, the **TMC** finally acted and voted down all of **TAMWG's** suggestions. It is difficult to understand how these issues within the **Program** can be solved administratively.

WATER TYPE YEAR

Based upon this year's current snow depths in the **Trinity Alps** and the overall amount of precipitation in **Trinity Basin**, it appears that this will be a "Dry" water-type year although as mentioned above it could become a normal water-type year. Flow schedule for the river in a "dry" water year provides for a maximum release of 4,500 cubic feet per second. The final decision on water-type year will be made at the end of this month. The exact flow schedule currently is being discussed by **Program** participants, including **FOTR** representatives, with a final decision on water-type year to be made by the **BOR** on April 1.

We are very concerned about summer water temperatures in the river, as mentioned above. We are pursuing solutions with other **Program** partners.

CHANNEL MANIPULATION PROJECTS

Construction of the first phase of 47 channel manipulation projects in the upper 40 miles of **Trinity River** should be completed by summer's end this year. That group of projects consists of 24 different sites. It is anticipated that the remaining 23 sites will be completed in 2012-2013. Necessary environmental document preparation is underway for remaining sites. Of recently constructed sites, in-river work for the Lewiston and Dark Gulch sites was completed this fall. Revegetation in the constructed areas should be completed by mid-year or earlier.

There is some continuing debate about the size, the scale of construction projects. The initial vision for channel manipulation construction dating back to the early 1980s was that riparian encroachment upon the river that channelized it should be removed and that thereafter the river's water would "do its own thing," create its natural alluvial characteristics based upon the amount of water returned to it.

The river's water clearly will "do its own thing" regardless of the scale of the projects – smaller or larger. The river largely will carve its own paths, create its own river bars and islands, and otherwise will become a functioning alluvial river – assuming we retain the water allocated to it under the **ROD**.

We have supported smaller scale construction projects because we believe providing necessary adequate juvenile rearing habitat - the objective - will be achieved best by that approach. The section of the river where these activities are taking place and will take place now are the headwaters of **Trinity River**. That section of the river is not supposed to appear and never will appear as does the **Eel River** at **Fortuna**, for example.

JUST WHERE ARE WE 25 YEARS LATER?

The initial **Trinity Restoration Program** was initiated in 1984 with federal passage of enabling legislation. Some restoration efforts had been undertaken prior to that including purchase of the **Grass Valley Creek** watershed from **Champion International** after it had clear cut the watershed. Huge amounts of decomposed granite were entering the river from that watershed. **Buckhorn Dam** was built to try to eliminate some of the sediment from entering the river and the **Hamilton Ponds** were constructed on **Grass Valley Creek** just before it enters the **Trinity River**.

The current **Restoration Program** was established by the **ROD** in December 2000. It didn't get fully underway for more than a year, but it has accomplished much – replacement of four bridges and relocation of structures in the floodplain to allow for higher flows, construction of several channel manipulation projects and necessary revegetation. These **Programs** have now cost in excess of \$200 million. Success cannot yet be measured in a return of anadromous fish to the river, but progress is being made. We will continue to fight for activities benefitting fish and for retention of the river's water.

RENEWAL AND NEW MEMBERS, AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION

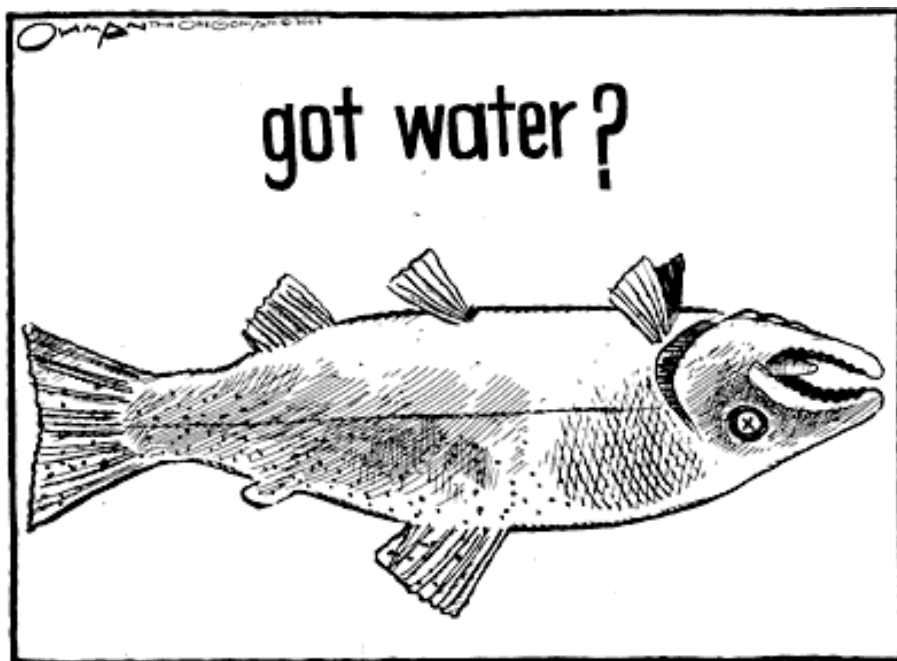
If you have renewed your membership, or joined **FOTR** since our last Newsletter and **if your name(s) has been omitted below**, please let us know – we want to recognize your support. Also, in a couple of cases in the past, contributions sent to us have not been received. People notified us and we 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. Thanks also and our appreciation to **John Leydecker** for his volunteer work on behalf of **FOTR**.

We express our thanks and appreciation to the following persons/organizations that have contributed since our last Newsletter:

Michael Aldrich, James Allen, John Barrena, Atsuko and Keith Bennett, Per Brandin, Peter Callander, Calvin Chin, Norman Christensen, M.D., Ron Dickenson, The Honorable Stan Dixon, Robert Dufort, Doug Durham, William J. Evans, Jr., Steve Haskell, Janice and Maurice Holloway, Henry Holt, Jr., Richard Kauffman, Clint Kelley, Jr., Cal Laney, William McDevitt, Jr., Bob Montgomery, Robert Neff, David Nesmith, Palo Alto Flyfishers in honor of Jan Triska, Marian L. Perry, and

Gale H. Pike, Nancy and Frank Pipgras, Bob Rathborne, RDD Field Services, Ronald Reece, M.D., Tim Regan, Jr., Jess Rogers, John Rusimel, Linda and Coach George Siefert, Mary and John Simons, Igor Skaredoff, Thomas Stokely, John R. Stokes, David K. Stone, Thendara Foundation, Vicky Turner and Rudy Ramp, Jerry Waybright, Jeanne and Bill Weseloh, Sally Williams, and Larry Wilson.



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I would like to help further by ___ **Volunteering** ___ **Writing letters**
___ **Other (Specify)** _____

My check is enclosed _____ **\$50** ___ **\$75** ___ **\$100** ___ **Other** _____