



TRINITY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Carson Anderson, Senior Planner
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SUBJECT: Update on Trinity River Restoration Program's Bucktail Channel Rehabilitation Project, Survey of Other Current Projects, and Related Floodplain Permit Process

Requested Commission Action

This item is informational only. Receive the report and a presentation from staff and Brandt Gutermuth of the Trinity River Restoration Program, and public comment if any.

Trinity River Restoration Program - Purpose Overview

The Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP) is a multi-agency program housed within the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation. There are eight partnering entities that together constitute the Trinity Management Council (TMC), as well as a variety of other collaborating organizations and institutions, a Science Advisory Board, and work groups that help to support, validate, promote and implement TRRP projects.

Several decade-long actions along the Trinity River, including nineteenth- and early-twentieth century mining activities, dam construction, water diversion, and other actions reducing flows, have impacted the ecology of the river, resulting in channel simplification and a reduction of habitat for juvenile salmon. The TRRP is implementing the strategy presented in the Trinity River Flow Evaluation Final Report (1999) and Record of Decision (2000), as clarified by subsequent restoration modeling studies, implementation planning and assessment guidance. The basic components of the program include flow management, channel rehabilitation, gravel augmentation, addressing sand and silt (fine sediment) delivery from tributary watersheds to the mainstem, the improvement of infrastructure (e.g., bridge modification) along the river so that the restoration flow releases set forth in the Record of Decision can be met science-based adaptive management, and ensuring environmental compliance.

In total, approximately 47 individual projects were proposed per the Record of Decision as part of the TRRP effort. Projects on Lower and Upper Junction City and Upper Douglas City, Lower Steiner Flat, and on the Indian Creek bank naturalization effort, were completed within the last two-three years. During 2017, proposed projects are expected to include work at Deep Gulch, Sheridan (Junction Creek area) and Lower Dutch Creek.

County Floodplain Management Obligations

Per the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the US. Department of Homeland Security – Federal Management Agency (FEMA hereafter) requires the County to approve all proposed floodplain development, consistent with the County's flood hazard ordinance, and to ensure that all permits required by federal or state law have been received. The County is also obligated to submit data reflecting revised flood hazard information so that NFIP maps can be revised as appropriate. Over the past decade, a number of floodplain development permits have been issued for TRRP projects. Staff will be working with FEMA to ensure that Letters of Map Amendment (LOMAs) are processed as follow-up measures for those past project reviews.

The current focus is on the Bucktail Channel Rehabilitation Project located in Lewiston along the bend of the Trinity River north from Browns Mountain Road. Hydrologic analysis for Bucktail is underway, in consultation with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and FEMA. As part of its floodplain development review obligations, the County will be working closely with TRRP, DWR and FEMA in an effort to ensure that the requirements are met for problem-free FEMA review, including providing appropriate environmental documentation (per NEPA/CEQA) and conforming project detail to FEMA methodological and modelling assumptions.

The County will continue providing technical assistance under the existing agreement between the County and the Bureau of Reclamation (per the TRRP) for Trinity County Trinity Management Council (TMC) for the restoration, enhancement, and conservation of natural production of anadromous fisheries, native plant communities, and associated wildlife resources to the Trinity River basin.

Under the current services agreement, and subject to approval by TRRP and the TMC, the County has proposed adding the following within-scope tasks in order to clarify the activities now proposed under the agreement:

1. FEMA Map Changes and Floodplain Administrative Activities (Task 5.1.3.1) – *The County proposes to work with the TRRP to complete FEMA floodplain map change processes as required for completed and proposed TRRP projects. Tasks to complete this work may include but are not limited to: Development of CLOMRs (in coordination with California DWR and the TRRP, Conditional Letters of Map Revision Based on Fill (CLOMR-Fs), and/or Letters of Map Revision (LOMRs). All public notification and outreach requirements associated with map changes will be included with this work.*

As the Floodplain Administrator, the County will provide Floodplain Development Permit guidance to TRRP to ensure that Trinity County guidelines are met during construction and thereafter (e.g., permits and rights-of-way to facilitate timely use of infrastructure-related resources within the Trinity River floodplain or Trinity County managed lands).

2. GIS Updates (Task 5.1.4.1) – *The County proposes to complete GIS updates to County parcel maps within the Trinity River corridor to improve the accuracy of parcel lines, particularly between Lewiston and Poker Bar, and in areas where future TRRP projects are proposed and where FEMA updates will be required. This activity will help ensure an accurate assessment of environmental impacts related to implementation of Trinity River channel rehabilitation projects, while also facilitating FEMA review during map change processes and public notification for project construction and/or monitoring.*