

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.

Minutes

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

Zoom, 10 AM – Noon

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84335596514?pwd=Q2xQdzlWYlVCOUFuN2xaT2pCbEpSdz09>

Meeting ID: 843 3559 6514

Passcode: 728128

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1. Introductions 10:03
 - a. Amelia Fleitz, Molly Breitmün, Kelly Sheen– TCRC
 - b. Patrick Flynn – Environmental Compliance Specialist with Trinity County supporting the Trinity River Restoration Program
 - c. David Colbeck – Trinity County DOT and Cannabis
 - d. Nicole Eastman – Grizzly Corps at TCRC
 - e. Kate Blanchard – CDFW 1600 Permitting
 - f. Danielle – Flora
 - g. Josh Smith, Cindy Buxton, Zack Blanchard, and Tracy McFadin – WRTC
 - h. Kenneth Baldwin – BBW
 - i. Eric Wiseman and Galen Anderson- USFS
2. Additions/Changes
3. Report out on Trinity County Water Security and Conservation Meetings – Amelia Fleitz
 - a. Participation is dwindling due to winter and people now have water again. We plan to mail out the survey County-wide in 2022.
4. Discussions:
 - a. Drought in Trinity County – Future Planning/Direction
 - b. Trinity River/Watershed Representation for the General Plan Update
 - i. Amelia asked if anyone is interested in being the liaison between the General Plan and the Trinity River Watershed Council – Cindy Buxton. To Lisa Lozier.
- ~~5. Presentation: (Tentative) Oregon Gulch Project – Yurok Tribe~~
6. Program work/updates/news
 - ~~5 C's~~
 - ~~BLM~~
 - CDFW – Kate
 - Matt Mitchell in cannabis permitting has been promoted to work on biodiversity initiative for compliance monitoring on existing LSAs and take permits.

- ◆ Cannabis position won't be back filled for a few months.
- ~~Down River Consulting~~
- ~~Hoopa Tribe~~
- ~~SAFE~~
- ~~SPI~~
- TCCG – Kelly
 - Field Trip to see the McFarland Fire for the initial recovery plans, but there was not a lot of interested. The USFS moved forward with those interested (mostly from Post Mountain) and the next meeting will be in January.
- ~~TC Fish and Game Commission~~
- TCRCO
 - Amelia - The Hayfork Transition site for the Riverview Beautification Project has been completed, successfully removed the vehicles, burned-down houses, and waste. The property has been fenced to prevent future dumping
 - ◆ Nicole has been working on the Trinity River Headwaters Assessment. She has been gathering background research, looking at previously developed plans, and culminating that into the initial introduction for the Plan draft. Excited to work collaboratively with WRTC. We will have a stakeholder's meeting in late January or early February
 - ◆ Still trying to acquire some grant funding for the Moon Lee ditch project and working with the Weaverville Community Service District to improve the intake at the ditch. There are three phases to that project. 1) Immediate diversion 2) Decommissioning the ditch between the pipeline and the wastewater treatment plant, where the pipeline follows the hillside, wraps along the highway and carries the water to the wastewater treatment plant off of Trinco reconnecting the gulches to their traditional plains, so we are not catching the water within the ditch line. Working to maintain trail 3) Piping the ditch line to the water treatment plant. Molly is working with the NRCS, Young Family Ranch, and the Moon Lee Ditch Association on a EQUIP proposal that could fund the piping from the tap placed at the treatment plan to the end user which is the YFR and it would provide the cemetery with their water allotment. There is potential to build off of the proposal and increase water storage with the landowners. How far they get with the project is based on their timelines and the support they receive from the NRCS.
 - Kate asked if they contacted the Cemetery Association. Amelia said they are in contact with Linda Lindsay.
 - There was rainwater caught in the ditch and the crew went out and cleared the ditch and fixed breeches a few months ago. Molly identified a breach yesterday and the crew went out to fix the breach.
 - ◆ The RAC committee voted on projects and they will send their recommendation for funding to the USFS.
 - ◆ Molly - Amelia mostly covered her work. She is helping NRCS with EQUIP applications across the county with Moon Lee Ditch being her main project. She is working with landowners from Coffee Creek all the way down to Hyampom with conservation practices.
 - ◆ Patrick asked Amelia if she was talking about the trail north where the drainage is located. She responded, yes, maintaining that path as a user-friendly path, but eliminating the catchment areas where they need to reconnect the seasonal streams to their traditional routes so we are not catching the water in the ditch and adding any additional storm damage and erosion.
 - Patrick asked if the bridge near the trail would stay? Amelia responds that it depends on the compliance and the consultations with the state historical group's decision of

whether they can alter the bridge at all. The RCD, with TRRP funding, are generating a historical sign of the history of the ditch, water rights, and modern-day use of the ditch which will be installed at the YFR which may help in addressing concerns with the historical compliance. Patrick notes it's a unique trail with the historical mining infrastructure.

- ◆ Amelia shared the draft of the sign she created for the Moon Lee Ditch Project. What we're looking at is a map of the ditch line and the diversion occurs at the top northwest corner of the map. It passes through historic mining trellises, and it's a combination of plastic pipelines, open ditches, metal piping all the way through. One project is to completely pipe it and close it in, to make it more efficient and a closed system and helps with fire resilience. The second objective is to decommission the pipeline down to the Trinco water treatment plant. They would maintain the ditch line as a trail but pull out the areas where water enters deep gullies and reconnect those areas to the floodplain so they don't have stormwater entering the catchment and contributing to erosion that causes floods on 299 and affects landowners receiving sediments from the Moon Lee ditch. Then, water for next year will flow out of the tap onto the Moon Lee ditch line and end at the YFR. That water is currently going to ponds and entering Sydney Gulch, but hopefully after NRCS pipes the lower section and cap it off it will become a more sustainable system. The Moon Lee Ditch has the right to maintain the ditch so they hired the RCD to maintain it from the wastewater treatment plant to the YFR. But the sections in between haven't been maintained and landslides caused the middle section to be too heavy a lift to maintain so I suggest they decommission the center part. We are looking at evaporation data and in 2017 there's an estimated 12.3 million gallons of water lost to evaporation in the middle section. So to reduce this loss, decommissioning would help. The trail is open for use and property owners recognize that the ditch is allowed to be maintained and they're open to the public using it.
 - David said the 5C ditch line work along weaver creek lost trees when the ditch was shut off. Amelia said the trees along the side of 299 have already died so they want to complete mitigation of wildfire in the area.
- Trinity County
 - Patrick – letters of map provision, surface mining and reclamation, and community rating work with FEMA
 - Formulating a plan to address the particular parts to the plan and the community rating system (CRS)
 - ◆ A well-executed CRS can pass insurance savings down to the landowners. This is a well to easily to present the County is a positive light as far as environmental compliance.
 - ◆ Flood Plain modification is a direct application and has been working with the applications and processing it ASAP and public notification and established systems in processes to make it happen.
 - ◆ Bulk of the work will be for TRRP as they are funding a significant amount of the program with all the responsibilities of their work. The Oregon Gulch project and helping with their flood plain.
 - ◆ CLOMAR – Conditional and map revisions requiring specific information, TRRP has been doing the application and the County files it. Oregon project needs to truck a significant amount of rock to Eagle Rock.
 - ◆ SMARA – working with David to go over those as a lot of mines are within a drainage. Oregon project needs to truck a significant amount of rock to Eagle Rock.
 - ◆ Amelia asked how the Patrick will liaison with the Board of Supervisors and TRRP as the County provided the dissenting TMC Vote to the recent motion to support the Flow

Modification plan. Patrick will mostly be working with the planning commission and not so much with the board of supervisors. Roll is for land use, David mentioned that other TRRP considerations. Lisa Lozier is still the floodplain administrator.

- David – flyer is out now for a new director and for the planning director the flyer has been put together. Hopefully we can get those positions filled shortly.
 - ◆ Culvert replacements east branch of east weaver and deadwood. Storm Damage recovery from 2018 and 2019 for the Sky Ranch Road, August Fire hazard tree removal and culverts. Fire this year are working with CAL OES and FEMA – in the news is the Coffee Creek Debris Flow and engaged with NRCS to get some emergency funds and working with the Yurok Tribe to get in the creek and get the trees removed to protect the road to do partial clean-up for any snow and partial clean-ups. Sydney Gulch – did the County ever replace the earlier culverts up Oregon St? David believes that funding was diverted to Deadwood after the Carr Fire. Oregon St upper still on the books, but he doesn't know about the time line. David is meeting with 5Cs later today to discuss the projects. Kate is concerned about the 1600 permit expiring for the upper Oregon St culverts.
 - ◆ Cannabis – Kim Hunter left, but David is essentially the cannabis manager and working with the individual review with consultants and legal for environmental review to process the applications. Applied for the local jurisdiction funding to increase capacity.
 - ◆ Kate inquires on the Oregon Gulch – is the culvert replacement going to move forward? David said no – the County is getting pressure from NOAA/NMFS to address the migration barrier and it is complex – it is an old concrete box culvert and it needs to be updated and improved and how to hit grade in that area due to the backwater potential from the Trinity River. TRRP is interested in 30,000 truckloads over that road in a year for their projects. The County applied to funds with FEMA, but it was only to replace to existing funds. CalTrans called David about mitigation banking to work on other sites and they brought up that site specifically, not sure which site will develop first. Patrick asked TRRP and they stated that they will restore the road back to current road improvement, but not improving the passage at this point in time. Kate was concerned about the landowner and the mine were not interested in fisheries passage, and with the SMARA asked Patrick to look at the 1600 permits on the active mines in the County. How can the rearrange the creek without any problems – CDFW has not been interested in pursuing action with these mines. Kate states that there is a 1600 permit for gravel specifically to extract and rearrange gravel beds for the purpose of gravel extraction. Monitoring and compliance that they request of the mine is more so what Kate is looking on for the site plans and photos. Kate can't find records, if there is an agreement it is extremely old. David has not been able to keep up with inspections and Patrick will plan to keep up with it. A TRRP reclamation plan will address the materials imported to the site.

■ ~~TRRP~~

■ USFS – Eric Wiseman

- Concerns about the Coffee Creek Debris Flow for temporary spoils storage on some USFS sites. Eric saw the Yurok Tribe technicians up there. What is the plan for the trees? David mentioned that the Yurok Tribe may be able to utilize the trees for the Trinity River Work – depending on the funding would determine on the cradle to grave policies required to specific funding either to gift it to a neighboring landowner already doing a harvest, or store and use the county tub grinder to get it done.
- Galen Anderson
 - ◆ Pilot Project is getting close to decision. McFarland project is work, but not sure that we are doing on Monument yet and the trees that are down on the 16 road. August Complex still in

work – Phase 1 the trees in the campgrounds have been worked on. Providing a Spot for the Coffee Creek Spoils and the 299 and SR 36 Spoils.

- ◆ David asked about the Wildwood Bridge to fix the USFS directly adjacent to the County Bridge – it is getting worse – Galen documented storm damage on that road which he sent to region this year.
- The Watershed Research and Training Center (Josh and Cindy)
 - Josh – in terms of the storage and forbearance tanks program we have three systems installed and one in process. Started off slow, but it is coming together, we are looking to do more outreach soon to get more landowners to sign up.
 - Cindy – end of season, buttoning things up – it has been a successful year with all of our projects even in light for the wildfires, we worked with the RCD and the USFS to put out a lot of temperature probes that the majority were collected with a few still out there. The flows are still being monitored in seeing some successful results from previous projects. Following the Community Watershed Management Plan model for the Browns Creek Forbearance project and will be presenting on the project to the California Water Network today. Chinook returns on the South Fork has been very poor this year – less than 10 identifications and minimal redds (fall chinook in Hyampom specifically), more steelhead than chinook documented. Questioned the successful return on the Mainstem Trinity is very
 - Salt Creek Flood Plain Restoration Project – Mike Love and Associates have done 30% designs and are moving forward with that.
 - Large Wood on the South Fork there are good idea for the plan and working on permitting pathways.
 - Fish Passage on West Tule Creek Diversion Design is approved.
 - Indian Valley Floodplain Restoration Project – focus on Corral Gulch rather than the whole valley due to constraints on road systems and campgrounds. Will pilot a stage 0 project in Corral Gulch subwatershed of Indian Valley Creek.
 - New Funding: Upper Trinity Watershed Assessment with BOR Watersmart Funding looking at the road systems and meadows, and a Cannabis Restoration Grant for Barker Creek in the Hayfork Watershed looking at the road systems and sediment issues in the Barker Creek watershed.
 - ◆ David hopes that Patrick will be able to support for the Environmental Compliance and floodplain development permits for these programs.
 - ◆ Upper Trinity Watershed Assessment – Will there be a County road system assessment, initially looking at the GIS analysis and using the new lidar data sets. Kick off meeting planned in January to see what we will focus on. David asked what the focus is- Amelia's grant is different than Josh's grant. Both grants focus on increasing water yield to the reservoir but sediment and fire related sediment impact on water impacts will be considered in the assessment.
 - ◆ Kenneth – fires will help with water yield; RCD did the Assessment in 2005 which is on their website. Forbearance on Browns Creek – if it involves water storage – he has been notified that when he diverts water that he is not allowed to store the water.
 - Josh plans to incorporate the RCD's 2005 work and Donna Rupps Analysis, and for the permit it is a different permit to store the water. Josh has worked with CDFW and the Waterboard and the Nature Conservancy and CalTrout to insure all the permits are meeting the requirements for the state and benefitting the streams. It is about storing 3500 gallons of water in the spring using that water throughout the summer. It is has taken a long time to get to this level. It was more time and money to get to this point that previously anticipated. Cindy or Josh can help Kenneth out. Kenneth mentioned

that the Upper Matole has used this project very successfully and now into the Klamath and Mendocino's.

- Amelia mentioned that for the Assessment we will be utilizing previous work including the previously mentioned documents and the 2006 USFS Assessment as well.
- David asked about the Indian Valley Project – Josh mentioned that they dropped the larger project temporarily with the roads and would not allow for a streamlined environmental compliance project. It is simpler than Indian Creek incision is obvious, no clear historical mining, Corral gulch portion is much smaller than the Indian Creek Project and it is a narrow incised channel with no road system issues and it is pretty straight forward. Josh is staying away from the majority of roads, there is one wet road that is a ford of the creek that will be impacted, but that is it.
- Barker Valley Cannabis restoration project, when will that begin? Josh anticipates starting stakeholder meetings in January.
- Kenneth states that the Indian Creek project is a major failure, stating that there has been no flow over land and there is no water. There are sum reaches below the dam where the water has gone sub surface. David adds that part of the goal is to replenish the groundwater table and is wondering if that is benefit and the gage of success is primarily revegetation. Kenneth added the water at the upper end goes underground and it comes out where it always did at the springs and then it goes under the ground and then it goes sub surface after the first rain. To increase the groundwater and for the creek to find the channel to find a surface flow. Josh knows they have been monitoring it with piezometers. Amelia noted that Kyle did show her some valley wall to valley wall flows during rain events and concur that we have not had the high flows to implement the intended results from the project yet.
- Josh and David continue to discuss stage zero and the application in Corral Gulch and hope to show that it works. David believes that this is a component on their work on Weaver Creek through Weaverville in their restoration designs.

■ ~~Yurok Tribe~~

7. Next Meeting: Set 2022 Meeting Schedule

- a. Following the same schedule meeting dates would be: March 8, September 13, December 13