

SPEECH TO KLAMATH-TRINITY RIVER
SALMON RESTORATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 22, 1982, EUREKA

I'd like to start with two or three minutes of history as to how and why the Trinity River Task Force got started, then spend a few minutes on Task Force actions from 1974 to 1982, followed by some slides showing examples of these actions, then review the Management Program and the Draft EIS.

I'm not much inclined toward detailed history, so the dates and events will be somewhat generalized and summarized. I will get more specific as the events get closer to the present.

The Trinity River has been a recognized source of water supply and hydroelectric power since at least the 1920s. By 1931, a Trinity Project was included in the State's California Water Plan. By 1940, the plans were quite refined; construction in the 1940s was undoubtedly postponed by World War II.

During the late 1940s and early 1950's, planning for a Trinity River Project was again undertaken by the USBR. These plans culminated in authorization of the Trinity River Division of the Central Valley Project in August 1955. Eight years later (1963), the final project was completed and in operation. Fish problems began to show up almost immediately. For the next ten years, the problems got larger while the fish runs got smaller. I believe the most severe fish problems can be placed in three categories: river blockage, inadequate instream flows, and siltation.

First, since the Trinity River Division entirely blocked salmon and steelhead migrations to over 100 miles of historical

spawning grounds, the Trinity River Hatchery at Lewiston was constructed to replace the lost spawning habitat above the dams. However, as most of you are aware, fish hatcheries historically require a period of years of operation before they meet their planned purposes. Trinity Hatchery was no exception; diseases, improper fish diet, and cold water temperatures combined to cause problems in the early years. These problems have now been pretty well worked out, but there are still some things that need to be done to make the hatchery completely successful.

Second, both DFG and FWS grudgingly agreed to a minimum flow release schedule that was designed to protect the downstream fishery and the progeny from the hatchery. It appears obvious in hindsight that the amount of flow granted -- about 10 percent of the annual runoff -- just wasn't enough to sustain historic fish runs. This problem has also been worked out (I hope permanently) by a Secretary Decision Document dated January 14, 1981. This decision allowed for greatly increased streamflows essentially in accordance with Task Force recommendations.

Third, at the time the dams were constructed, it was assumed that fish populations below Lewiston would remain at historic numbers. However, diversion of nearly 90 percent of the natural runoff, accompanied by the fact that winter storms no longer provided necessary flushing flows, resulted in a completely unforeseen and therefore unplanned problem downstream from Lewiston Dam. Silt and sand that historically was washed into the river by tributary streams was no longer flushed out and sent to the ocean. As a result, major spawning areas below Lewiston became covered; resting pools were filled in; and food-producing areas (aquatic insect production) became smothered

and unproductive. As the river became more sterile, fish runs declined dramatically and public concerns became more and more vocal, and angry.

This concern was best expressed in about 1969 when a conservation class at Weaverville High School erected a sign and held a mock funeral service for the "Dead Trinity River". The sign read:

"Entering the home of the Trinity River, studied to death, ruined through neglect and mismanagement by the Bureau of Reclamation."

Along with the sign, a coffin containing dead fish and silt was buried at the site. At about the same time, representatives of the conservation class, taught by Roger Hardison, went to Washington, D. C., to plead for help for the river.

Finally, in 1973 representatives from the USBR, DFG, FWS, USFS, BLM and DWR met to develop a work proposal for fish and wildlife restoration. These agencies became the first six members of the Trinity River Basin Fish and Wildlife Task Force. As soon as the proposal was completed, it was submitted to Congressman "Biz" Johnson in the hopes he could obtain authorization and funding. It worked. In late 1975, funds totaling about \$7.5 million were made available for interim restoration work, and to develop a long-range Management Program.

During the next few years, several other Federal, State, and local agencies requested membership, and by 1980 the Task Force reached its thirteen members: USBR, FWS, USFS, BLM, DFG, DWR, SCS, NMFS, WRCB, BIA, Humboldt County, Trinity County, Hoopa Valley Tribe.

The Task Force's first duties included: (1) set objectives, (2) establish a detailed work program, and (3) set priorities for action.

The objectives were simple:

1. Define and correct the fish and wildlife problems, associated with construction of Trinity Dam.
2. Define and correct fish and wildlife problems resulting from other causes.

To accomplish these objectives, two broad tasks or work programs were undertaken:

1. An interim action program was initiated to perform work that could be accomplished quickly and within the available funds. This program has resulted in the restoration efforts that have been undertaken over the past six years.
2. A comprehensive (long-term) Management Program (MP) to solve problems that were beyond the financial means of the initial \$7.5 million appropriation. This program was completed and approved by the Task Force in March 1982. It contains eleven action items costing upwards of \$50 million over a ten-year period. I think each of you has a copy of the report. (I assume you will have some questions later concerning some of the actions contained in the MP.)

Interim Action Program Accomplishments

Fairly soon after the Task Force was activated and expanded, we began to set priorities. Over the years, about 25

actions were undertaken. By far the two highest priority problems we have identified are: (1) insufficient streamflow releases below Lewiston Dam, and (2) sand accumulations in the 30-mile primary spawning area below the mouth of Grass Valley Creek. I would like to spend a few minutes discussing these critical items.

Streamflow Releases

During the 1978 and 1979 federal fiscal year, Task Force funds were provided to FWS and DWR to perform instream flow needs studies and to prepare an EIS. These studies established a recommended flow schedule that would be most effective at bringing back the fish runs. Because of the effects a changed schedule would have on power and water supply, a Secretarial Issue Document was prepared listing several possible flow schedules that could be used to resolve all or part of the problems associated with inadequate flow releases. In supporting the Task Force schedule, we relied heavily on some words contained in the 1955 Authorizing Act:

"The Secretary (of the Interior) is authorized and directed to adopt appropriate measures to insure the preservation and propagation of fish and wildlife in the Trinity River Basin."

In January 1981, Secretary of the Interior Andrus made a decision to increase flow releases from 120,000 to 287,000 acre-feet annually, subject to reductions in dry and critically dry years (220,000 and 140,000 acre-feet), but with a provision for a 12-year study by FWS to determine if additional flows, up to 340,000 acre-feet annually, would ultimately be required. Almost immediately after Secretary of the Interior Watt was appointed,

Secretary Andrus' decision came under review. Many of us were very concerned that the decision would be overturned in favor of a much lower release schedule. However, our fears were somewhat reduced by a letter from Secretary Watt to Congressman Clausen in March 1982, which stated that he would maintain the flows in the Trinity River "...in accordance with the plan of flow releases established for the Trinity River."

Our fears were further allayed by a letter dated September 7, 1982, from Director Jansen of Fish and Wildlife Service answering a letter from Directors Robie and Fullerton to Secretary Watt. The letter stated that he (Secretary Watt) would continue the flows established in January 1981 and, further, that "...fisheries evaluation studies will be conducted during the next 12 years to document the effect of the increased flow regime (and other restorative measures) on rebuilding the river's anadromous fish populations." This seems to confirm that we can expect flows of 287,000 acre-feet or more annually for at least the next 12 years.

Sand Accumulations from Grass Valley Creek

As of October 1982, we have spent in the neighborhood of \$2 million on watershed restoration, feasibility studies, and removal of sand originating from Grass Valley Creek. We also have signed an agreement with USBR, DFG, and DWR to spend an additional \$2 million over the next five years to remove sand accumulations in the Trinity River immediately downstream from the mouth of Grass Valley Creek. The first \$100,000 has been approved, and is now available for sand-removal activities.

In September 1980, we obtained federal authorization (PL 96-335) to build Buckhorn Mountain Dam on Grass Valley Creek to

stop most of the sand at its source, and to perform sand dredging in the Trinity River below the mouth of Grass Valley Creek. Funding for the dam has not been approved, but chances are quite good that we will get some appropriation either this year or next. Total cost: \$6 million.

Other Significant Actions

- Removal of barrier dam below Lewiston
- Construction of 14 (or 15?) spawning riffles
- Construction of seven deep (resting) pools
- Gravel ripping (nine miles) – Junction City area.
- Construction of a water temperature control structure at Trinity River Hatchery – \$15,000
- Preparation of a feasibility report for a dam on Grass Valley Creek
- Barrier removal on several tributary streams
- Controlled burns for wildlife (deer) restoration
- Fisheries investigations (continuing) – \$275,000 per year
- Sand removal below Grass Valley Creek (three years)

(SLIDE SHOW SHOWING SIGNIFICANT ACTIONS)

Trinity River Basin Fish and Wildlife Management Program

So, with so much already done and since the two highest priority items are essentially solved or at least in process, you might wonder what is there left to do? That's where the Trinity River MP comes in.

For example, even though we stop the sand from coming into the river at Grass Valley Creek, we still have an accumulation from the past 20 years that must be cleaned up. We have estimated that this cleanup will cost about \$10 million.

I mentioned earlier that the Trinity River Fish Hatchery is now working pretty well—but there are a lot of improvements that can be made. For example, all the raceways are earth, rather than concrete-lined. We have estimated that hatchery modernization and improvements will cost about \$3 million. To rehabilitate and maintain productivity of the tributary streams and their watersheds will cost about \$10 million, and the South Fork Trinity will add at least another \$3 million. The MP contains several other actions which we can talk about if you wish.

Status of Trinity River Management Program

Immediately after the MP was approved (March 1982), Supervisor Jim Smith, Jerry Meral (Deputy Director of DWR), and I went to Washington, D.C. to gain support for authorization and funding. I think we were quite successful in gaining a lot of friends and supporters. We also initiated some action.

- On June 7, 1982, Congressmen Chappie, Clausen, and Shumway coauthored HR 6535 to authorize and fund the MP. Two months later, Senator Hayakawa introduced companion legislation in the Senate (S 2808) .
- Congressman Vic Fazio of the House Appropriations Committee has kept good his promise to support funding for the Buckhorn Mountain Dam and sand dredging (PL 96-335). He successfully got the appropriation through the House Appropriations subcommittee. In fact, we seem to have support from essentially the entire California delegation. We also have unanimous support from the Task Force agencies, the California Water Commission, and many other

organizations. But, in light of several federal money problems, the fate of these bills remains uncertain at this time.

I guess this might be a good time to make a sales pitch to you, as representatives of the user groups and land managers, to lend your support to this program, from whatever political directions you may feel are most appropriate. I'm sure it would be very helpful to have the fisheries and timber management groups united in support of this restoration program. We already have this support in Trinity County.