

Truckee River Basin Water Group

Meeting Notes for Wednesday, March 24th, 2021 10:00 AM – 12:00 noon

Location: On-line/phone Meeting only
Truckee River Basin Water Group Meeting

Chairperson: Hardy Bullock, Nevada County Supervisor

Convener: Truckee River Watershed Council, Beth Christman, bchristman@truckeeriverwc.org, 530-550-8760, x1 #

Time	Item
Meeting Logistics	<p>We are using Go To Meeting for this meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please log in 5 – 10 minutes early if you have not used this platform before, you will need to download and install the connection app (you can also use the link above to install it any time prior to the meeting) • Please mute your phone or computer during the presentations • We will use the “chat” function for questions
10:00	<p>Call to Order – Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Agenda Review
10:10	<p>Standing Item: Committee Report Back</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No committees met since the last meeting <p>Objective: Provide updates from Technical Response Team, Fish Team and any other ad hoc teams</p>
10:10	<p>California Environmental Credit Water Investigation – Beth Christman, TRWC & Chris Thomas The Freshwater Trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California does not currently control any “California Environmental Credit Water” (CECW) to use under TROA • CA Department of Water Resources (DWR) has identified that ~3,000 acre-feet (annually) would help California meet our environmental goals • TRWC is working with TFT on potential avenues for acquiring CECW <p>Objective: Provide information to members on coordination with TFT and update status of progress to date.</p> <p>Outcomes: Continue to determine feasibility of California to obtain “California Environmental Credit Water” (CECW) to use under TROA.</p> <p>Q&A:</p>

	<p>Will the study that TFT is conducting be available for review by the TRBWG? Yes, the general analysis can be made available to the group for review – timing of distribution will likely be within the next 2-3 months.</p> <p>Steven Poncelet noted that TDPUD has rights to 980 acre feet of water in Donner Lake, and that there may be opportunities to use this water as an asset and to maximize the benefit to the greater community by allowing this water to be used as Environmental Credit Water. Steven noted that the PUD is still very much in preliminary discussions as to whether this 980 acre feet could be utilized as credit water.</p> <p>Response from representatives of TFT and DWR to Steven comment are as follows: If TDPUD is willing to dedicate the use of their water rights on a temporary basis, and if this is determined to be feasible, this dedication may serve as a pilot study that would help to clarify and solidify the establishment and use of CA credit waters for other persons or entities who currently own water rights. However there may be additional restrictions on PUD water as per TROA regulations.</p> <p>It was also noted that the establishment of CA environmental credit water would be a lengthy process and that there are still many hurdles and barriers that need to be addressed, however, we have a starting point with the work that TFT has completed to date and that there are opportunities to continue to make progress based on the initial study.</p>
10:25	<p>Streamflow and reservoir updates – Tom Scott, DWR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes from previous forecast • Streamflow and reservoir levels forecast • Questions and discussion on projected operations <p>Objective: Provide latest information on projected reservoir operations and model output, increase TRBWG member knowledge about TROA</p> <p>Outcomes: See attached presentation.</p> <p>Questions posed for Tom: If Lake Tahoe is not expected to get above 6,224 during mid-summer months, why not keep additional water in Tahoe until that time to ensure additional downstream flow?</p> <p>The flow releases in Tahoe are determined by other TROA parties and by blending of Floriston Rate water between Boca and Tahoe. Driving force is rim of the lake. Once Tahoe is near the rim, there is limited to no opportunity for the parties to get their water out of Tahoe. Another factor is Tahoe evaporates about 3 ½ feet of water from Tahoe elevation and water used for operations is about 1 foot annually, which indicates the need to move water out of Tahoe is mainly driven by evaporation. .</p>

	<p>In addition, due to the dam safety project at Boca (now complete) Boca is trying to be filled at a steady one inch rise of elevation per day resulting in more fluctuations for Lake Tahoe release than normal years (usually changes to adjust for operations occur at Boca but this year will be more limited due to the one inch rise criteria).</p> <p>Is it anticipated that anglers and other users of the river corridor will likely see variations in the flow release from Tahoe? Please see attached presentation for forecasted cfs flow information for Lake Tahoe and other reservoirs through the end of the 2021 water year. It is expected to see more variation in Tahoe flow when Boca is filling due to one inch fill rate per day.</p> <p>Please clarify that flows below Lake Tahoe and along the HWY 89 corridor will remain at 350 cfs during the rafting season. Flow rates are anticipated to be between 300 & 320 cfs beginning July 1 and continue at this rate through September.</p> <p>TU appreciates the consistent flow rates within the Little Truckee River, however there were a number of fluctuations through the months of August-November noted in the presentation and TU would like to see these flows equaled out to protect spawning grounds during this time. Yes, flows will be expected to be equaled out during this time.</p> <p>As related to Prosser Reservoir, what would the benefits of maintaining 35 cfs vs 40 cfs? A primary consideration in increasing flow rates to 40 cfs or above is related to the ability to activate backwater areas that is beneficial for purposes of habitat and spawning. Additional consideration in the difference in flow levels, is that if levels are increased, then there may be less amounts of joint credit water available in the future (if there is no place to exchange JPCFW, then the water is released to Pyramid Lake).</p>
11:05	<p>Opportunities for algae management in the Truckee River System – Beth Christman, TRWC & Andy Rost, Sierra Nevada University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excess algae can be problematic in stream reaches affected by TROA • What types of flows could be used to control populations? • What flow conditions promote algal growth? <p>Objective: Provide information to members, consider incorporating recommendations for algae management into “Basis for California Guidelines” update</p> <p>Outcomes: See attached presentation.</p>

Q&A:

What is the duration of pulse flows that would be needed to manage nuisance algae?

Not long – most biomass is removed fairly quickly. Likely need a timeframe of 4-10 hours at a given flow for the pulse to be effective at removing didymo.

If nuisance algae is dislodged, are we just moving the problem downstream?

No – once dislodged the benthic algae will not grow back or re-colonize. Most of the material is dead, so cannot colonize new areas.

The amounts of nuisance algae can be alarming during drought years, however there is often a significant observed reduction after heavy water years. Why is this the case?

With a normal flow regime the amount of nuisance algae present is often self regulated, however the planned pulse events may be beneficial especially with conditions that are related to extended growing seasons (ie extended periods of low flows/low precipitation).

Pulse releases should be based on historical flow regimes (early snow melt/spring, or late season rain event) as related to the effects on spawning grounds, however this is an aspect that has not been well studied to date. Also need to find the balance between effectively managing algae and potentially doing damage to the existing stream channel (i.e. increased erosion)

What flow levels (cfs) do we need to investigate to effectively manage high algae concentrations? (i.e. Prosser shows flows at 150 cfs as being beneficial).

There is probably more ability to address flow level fluctuations between Stampede and Boca than there would be at Prosser, however specific flow levels that would effectively manage high algae concentrations need to be investigated further.

Have surveys been conducted to determine areas of excessive benthic algae growths in the Truckee watershed?

Yes, but the surveys have been conducted on a watershed wide scale, not within specific stream reaches. Need to determine problem areas and then investigate further.

What additional opportunities are available to investigate pulse flow events for purposes of managing algae blooms?

There may be additional opportunities to examine a late fall pulse for management purposes, but would need to be coordinated with other TROA parties and would likely need to use joint credit water for this purpose. Again, may be more opportunities to establish a late fall pulse from Stampede than from Prosser.

*Algae is the plural of alga!!

11:50	<p>Standing item: Suggestions for future agenda topics</p> <p>Objective: Gather input from attendees for topics of interest</p> <p>Outcomes: Several topics were proposed: TU noted that they have recently conducted a macro-invertebrate survey in a stream reach near Glenshire and that ~ a dozen New Zealand mud snails were found. This is an issue of concern and, if desired, TU is willing to circulate the report to members of TRBWG.</p> <p>Is there an opportunity to examine the benefits of native fresh water mussels with relation to algae management or in the context of the greater Truckee River ecosystem? Possibility of determining if this would be an appropriate topic for a future TRBWG meeting presentation.</p>
11:55	<p>Standing item: Action Item report back</p> <p>Objective: capture key decisions, discussion points, and action items to include in meeting summary.</p> <p>Discussion items are noted in the agenda items above.</p>
12:00	Adjournment – Chair

2021 Meeting Dates

TRBWG – monthly*

- January 27, 2021
- March 24, 2021
- April 28, 2021
- May 26, 2021
- June 23, 2021
- July 28, 2021
- September 22, 2021
- November 17, 2021

Technical Response Team

- TBD

Fish Team

- TBD

*Note: no TRBWG meeting in February, August, October, or December