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BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
TRINITY RIVER RESTORATION PROGRAM

YUROK TRIBAL FISHERIES PROGRAM

TRINITY RIVER DIVISION

HWY. 96, RT. BOX 196, HOOPA, CA. 95546

June 18, 2003

Doug Schleusner
Executive Director
Trinity River
Restoration Program
P.O. Box 1300
Weaverville, CA. 96093

John Lielich
Planning Director
Trinity County Planning
P.O. Box 156
Hayfork, CA. 96041

Chuck Schultz
Field Office Manager
Redding Field Office
355 Hemsted Lane
Redding, CA. 96001

Re: Trinity River Bridges Project, EA/EIR

Dear Mr. Schleusner:

On behalf of the Yurok Tribe, I'd like to express our support for certification of the Trinity River Bridges Project EA/EIR by the Trinity County Board of Supervisors and for immediate implementation of the planned Trinity River Bridges Project. Furthermore, the Yurok Tribe requests the Bureau of Reclamation and the Bureau of Land Management to adopt a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the proposed Trinity River Bridges Project.

As you are aware, the delay of this critical project hinders the full implementation of the Record of Decision regarding the restoration of the Trinity River and the fisheries resources it suports. Yurok People and the fish populations we depend upon have suffered far too long from the habitat degradation caused by the Trinity River Division of the Central Valley Project. Therefore, we support full implementation of all components of the ROD, including "all non-flow measures", such as the Trinity River Bridges Project. a.

The Yurok reservation comprises a one-mile strip of land on each side of the lower 44 miles of the Klamath River, from near the confluence of the Klamath and Trinity Rivers to the Pacific Ocean. The Yurok Tribe is the largest single harvester of Klamath River Basin fisheries resources, which includes Trinity River chinook and coho salmon, steelhead, as well as lamprey and sturgeon. Uncounted generations of Yurok People have depended upon the fisheries resources of the Klamath-Trinity River Basin for subsistence, ceremonial, cultural, and economic purposes. The decline of Trinity River fisheries that has resulted from construction of Trinity Dam and subsequent diversion of flows from the Trinity River has dramatically impacted the Yurok way of life.

The legislation that authorized the construction of Trinity and Lewiston Dams clearly mandated the preservation and protection of fish and wildlife resources in the Trinity River Basin. Prior to passage of this legislation, Congress was told that just 56 percent of the river's water would be diverted. However, since the Trinity Dam was completed in 1963, Bureau of Reclamation immediately started diverting up to 90 percent of the river's water contributing to dramatic declines in the abundance of all the species that our people depend upon.

Yurok People have waited for nearly two decades for the best available science to be developed regarding the restoration of the Trinity River, during which time our fisheries resources have continued to decline. The Yurok Tribe believes that implementation of "all non-flow measures" of the ROD, including modification or replacement of the existing Salt Flat, Bucktail, Poker Bar and Biggers Road Bridges is a critical step towards restoration of Trinity River Basin fish resources. Modification or replacement of these bridges will:

- Allow dam operators maximum flexibility to provide instream flow releases from Lewiston Dam for fishery and geomorphic flow needs for the mainstem Trinity River.
- Provide flexibility for implementing Trinity River flow alternatives, including extremely wet year flows up to 11,000 cfs.
- Contribute to the recovery of fish and wildlife resources that are listed as threatened and endangered, including tribal trust species.

In conclusion, I ask the Trinity County Board of Supervisors, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Bureau of Land Management to recognize the importance of the restoration of the Trinity River, as well as the needs of Yurok People. Hence, we recommend and encourage immediate certification of the Trinity River Bridges Project EA/EIR.

Sincerely,

Tim Hayden
Senior Fish Biologist
Yurok Tribal Fisheries Program
Trinity River Division
Hwy. 96, Rt. Box 196
Hoopa, CA. 95546

RESPONSE TO COMMENT: 8

Yurok Tribal Fisheries Program, Trinity River Division (Tim Hayden)

8-a: Thank you for your comment. Your comment has been noted, and will be transmitted to the Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors, and federal officials for their consideration in connection with the merits of the proposed project. No further response is required.