

EXHIBIT TRINCO 35

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- Region 1

TRINITY COUNTY PLANNING

Trinity River Water Temperatures

An unexpected development has taken place regarding USBR operation of water releases from Trinity Dam. It could cause another Trinity River disaster for fish.

Ever since last spring in all of our discussions within the Department and with the Bureau of Reclamation, we have counted on Trinity Lake being too low to produce power by September 15. This meant that instead of 69 or 70 degree water at the hatchery and in the river below Lewiston, we would have water in the mid-50's during September and October and on through the fall and winter. This cold water would come from an auxillary outlet near the bottom of the dam.

Early this week we learned that the Bureau has now changed their plans for Trinity. Demands for Trinity water into the Sacramento River have diminished to the point where the Bureau intends to run all of the Trinity Dam releases through the power house. This means continued warm water in the Trinity, and problems with fish in the hatchery and fish in the river.

Temperatures at the hatchery have been running 69 degrees each afternoon. While juvenile silver salmon and steelhead seem to be making it, we are taking increasingly high losses in the king salmon being held for release later this fall and next spring. Losses have been averaging about 2,000 fish per day from columnaris and gill disease. These are fish that average about 15 to 20 per pound. We have on hand about 120,000 spring-run fish that we had planned to release next spring. The 750,000 fall-run fish would be planted later this fall, or early winter after being nose-tagged.

If we do not get colder water immediately, we will undoubtedly lose a large number of the salmon.

Around the first of September we opened the ladder to Trinity Katchery and captured 596 adult spring-run salmon. During the holding and sorting, we lost 62 of them, and learned that most of them were still green; probably about two weeks away from spawning. Because of our poor success with holding and handling the adult fish in the prevailing water temperatures, we returned them to the river.

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We are now experimenting with icing down the water in our recirculating water system for the incubators. If this works, we can hatch around 2,000,000 eggs. The problem is getting the eggs for the incubators.

A few spring-run kings are just beginning to show signs of spawning activity in the river. Unless we are badly mistaken, any spawning in the river during the water temperatures that now exist will be lost.

Yesterday, September 6, we observed the Bureau of Reclamation testing the auxillary outlet at Trinity Dam tunnel by running around 2,000 cubic feet per second through it. This water was clearer than the water coming through the generators and was 50 degrees instead of the 64 degrees coming through the power house. The water warms about 4 or 5 degrees going through Lewiston Lake before it reaches the hatchery.

We strongly recommend that the Bureau forego power generation at Trinity until the lake surface cools below 58 degrees. Any water released from Trinity Dam over and above fish flows would still be going through three power drops and available for other uses in the Sacramento-San Joaquin system. Running the water through the auxillary outlet rather than through the power house would give us a quick and certain way of saving the only remaining strain of salmon or steelhead that has amounted to anything in the Trinity River in recent years. If we don't get the cooler water we and the Bureau may well attain a batting average of .750. First the steelhead, then the fall-run kings, now the spring-run kings; this will leave us with the silvers.

We think the Director should do whatever must be done to get the Bureau to give salmon preference over some kilowatts during the next five or six weeks. This is one time we might be able to justify it on economics alone. We know there are other sources of power.

R. J. O'Brien
Regional Manager

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