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June 15 1998

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Subject: Trinity Dam Spillway

Dear Stein:

Having proposed the construction of a spillway on Trinity Dam as a cost efficient and environmentally low impacting project, I will now give you some of the background, alternatives I have proposed and the things I have learned from these proposals.

Trinity Dam and Claire Engle Lake have had a name reversal in Trinity County out of a desire to blame it for many of the County's ills. As there is a north vs the south in the state water wars, so is there also one in Trinity County of those north of the dam vs those to its south. The dam is 565 ft. high but earthen with a glory hole instead of a spillway. This is undersized, I suspect from an increase in runoff from timber harvest practices, and, since overtopping of this dam would be catastrophic, the lake is not filled to capacity in order to have a safety cushion. The pool is so far from the normal vegetation edge that the fishing sucks, as would be expected with the fish so far from their lacustrine food source. Fish and Game had planted Kokanee in the lake, but they are stunted; so, they have decided to plant chinook either on the assumption that stunting results from a genetic, not a nutritional, lack or from an excess of hatchery stock. The distance from resorts and campgrounds to water is sometimes quite far. Below the dam fish interests decry the lack of flows to flush out the accreted sand, lack of cold water and spawning areas due to the dam.

The County is generally united in its resentments against water exports going to corporate farms of the San Joaquin's west side. They often have not considered three factors: 1) that contractor payments subsidize river restoration efforts. 2) costs to buy out corporate, or even family farms, would eat up any restoration account and 3) water would continue to flow as entitlements are paper shuffled around in a sort of water laundering scheme of the moisture mafia.

More importantly forgotten is the fact that the water transported from the Trinity to Whiskeytown Reservoir near Redding is used to dilute the waters of the Iron Mt. watershed. These waters are the most toxic entering a river in the U.S., and their dilution is necessary to forestall further salmonid kills.

It is my contention that a spillway of some sort would allow filling of Trinity Lake and also some natural vernal flushing flows for Trinity County's economic benefit, the Trinity River's fishery benefit, and an increase in pool capacity for water consumer and Sacramento fishery benefit. As alternatives to a standard spillway on the dam, I have also proposed the following:

Re-activating the LaGrange Mine ditch: This flume goes for 27 miles from near the Alps Wilderness border past the Weaverville Basin. It gets regularly proposed as a Weaverville water supply concurrent with restoring Weaver Creek and chilling the River. While not large enough to actually effect the pool capacity, it does demonstrate the sad state that to which Fish and Game has allowed this watershed to decline. It is the generative reason that I favor a basin pumping tax to be assessed on drilling permits, electricity bills and solar cell sales. Monies collected would go to interface watershed restoration to offset these impacts.

An overflow tunnel from Trinity Lake to Rush Creek: While I do not know the costs associated with this scheme, it would have less impacts to the structures that the County has allowed to be

built on the River in the Lewiston area. The County has tried to access Prop 204 restoration funds for house moving operations, being, of course, unsuccessful in this endeavor. In addition to this poor planning, the County is without a grading ordinance. There are several campaigns to decommission roads throughout the area. While often acting from the best of motives, these decommissionings can become a "bale and berm" cure, causing as deleterious impacts as the original road construction. Environmental water allotments to flush sediment ought to be tied to possession of a grading ordinance with teeth in both protocols and oversight, and being concerned with both construction and decommissioning.

While having enjoyed discovering some interesting impacts and aspects in these peripheral proposals, the main concept of a dam spillway does remain to have aspects that make it an alternative worthy of review keeping in mind the following points when doing an assessment of benefits:

The economic and recreational benefits on both lakes and rivers

The environmental work that would not have to be done when compared to that of off stream storage schemes.

The swiftness of construction, basically being a repair, when contrasted to the opposition already to new construction.

The alleviation of flushing flow/flooding arguments as they return to a more natural state and fish and FEMA do what they do best.

I do not propose this as a magic bullet for all of the Bay-Delta, but as one that is doable and has measureable benefits. What only remains is for some competent engineering cost estimates to determine if it is worth pursuing.

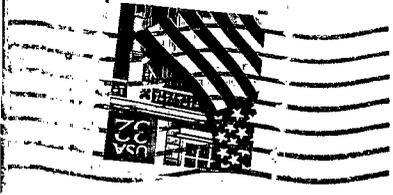
Sincerely,

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