



TRINITY COUNTY

Board of Supervisors

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February 17, 2016

The Honorable Jared Huffman
U.S House of Representatives
317 Third Street, Suite 1
Eureka, CA 95591

Robert Bonnie, Under Secretary,
Natural Resources and Environment
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W. Suite 240E
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Representative Huffman and Mr. Bonnie,

Trinity County appreciates the encouragement and assistance you have provided to the Trinity County Collaborative Group. We're pleased that the Collaborative has been able to develop promising, widely-supported forest management proposals, and pleased that the Shasta-Trinity and Six Rivers Forests have accepted the proposals and are working to implement them. We now ask for your help to navigate a set of bureaucratic perils that threatens to delay or even defeat successful implementation.

As you know, Forest Service proposals cannot proceed to implementation until they've received Biological Opinions from the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service that the effects on endangered species would be acceptable. These BOs can take months to finalize, which can delay projects by a full operating season, which would be quite frustrating for the multi-year projects envisioned. Worse, for fire salvage projects slated for this year and salvage opportunities that will inevitably become desirable after future fires, delays of a season or even a substantial part of a season would render projects economically unviable and thus deficient under the evaluation criteria (ecologically beneficial, economically viable, and socially accepted) that the Collaborative has agreed upon. In addition, delay or defeat of proposed projects would have a harsh effect on the energies of the Collaborative, which has worked hard for three years and needs success, defined in part as "on-the-ground project implementation," in order to maintain its community momentum.

We fully recognize that regulatory agencies must fulfill their responsibilities. However, we've been assured (and the Congressman heard in a January 22 conference call) that the regulatory agencies are working closely at every step with the Forest Service to develop project details during preparation of the Biological Assessments that lead to the BOs. We consider it unreasonable that regulatory agencies should require additional months to form an opinion on

KEITH GROVES
DISTRICT 1

JUDY MORRIS
DISTRICT 2

KARL FISHER
DISTRICT 3

BILL BURTON
DISTRICT 4

JOHN FENLEY
DISTRICT 5

projects they worked actively to guide and design. We suggest a federal agency “efficiency experiment” in which regulatory agencies are required to render a Biological Opinion within days instead of months on Trinity Collaborative projects which they helped to prepare. We ask for your help in arranging this.

We believe that federal interagency collaboration can and should be at least as effective as the collaboration that disparate local interests have managed to exercise in Trinity County. We’ll be grateful for whatever help you can provide.

Sincerely,



L. Karl Fisher, Chairman
Trinity County Board of Supervisors

Cc: USFS Chief Tom Tidwell
USFS Regional Officer Randy Moore
USFS Regional Officer Barry Gant
USFS Forest Supervisor Dave Meyer
USFS Forest Supervisor Merv George
US Fish and Wildlife Services
NOAA
Trinity County Collaborative