

Trinity County Collaborative Group  
c/o Alex Cousins, facilitator  
Trinity County Resource Conservation District  
P.O. Box 1450, Weaverville, CA 96093

July 23, 2013

Tom Hall, Acting District Ranger  
SFMU, Shasta-Trinity National Forests  
P.O. Box 159  
Hayfork, CA 96041

RE: Stafford Fire Salvage and Restoration Project

Dear Mr Hall,

We've been asked to convey the comments of the Trinity County Collaborative Group on the Stafford Fire Salvage and Restoration Project Environmental Assessment. The Collaborative Group exists to work with federal agencies in developing broadly-supported land management and economic development initiatives, and to advise the Trinity County Board of Supervisors on such topics. Participants in the Collaborative Group are Trinity County citizens with a wide range of perspectives and experiences.

The Collaborative Group supports the Proposed Action described in the Environmental Assessment as Alternative 1. Please note, however, that Group participants are concerned about the Forests' imperfect record on timely implementation of projects, and about the Forests' historical failure to perform necessary follow-up work, particularly in plantations. Statements such as "These activities are anticipated to occur within the next 5 years" and "It is recommended that this area be monitored every 3-7 years..." tend to stimulate rather than alleviate this concern, because they seem to lack conviction and commitment. To increase the likelihood that the Stafford project will prove satisfactory, and to build support for local Forest Service management more generally, we ask that the decision for the Stafford project feature a strong explicit commitment from the Forest Service that the initial and follow-up activities will be accomplished on time and as described.

The Environmental Assessment is unclear about the amount of large wood that would remain after initial project implementation. The section describing Alternative 1 says in several places that "Coarse woody debris will be reduced to 10 tons per acre" and on page 8 that a mosaic of fuel loading would be created "that does not exceed 10 tons per acre". The section on environmental consequences and the specialist's fuels report say that 10-20 tons per acre of coarse woody debris would remain after initial treatments. Given the importance of large wood in forest processes, and the consensus that 20 tons per acre of large wood is acceptable from a fire management standpoint (both acknowledged in Stafford documents and references), we recommend that 10-20 tons per acre be the adopted standard.

Thanks for considering our comments on what we hope will be a successful project.

  
Clarence Rose

  
Richard Seel

  
Arnold Whitridge

For the Trinity County Collaborative Group