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Thank you for the chance to comment on the TRFR program and its charters. I send these comments as a non-industrial forest landowner (“NIFL”), environmental sociologist, and member of Forest Landowners of California (which represents NIFLs), and The Buckeye (which advocates for owners of rural working landscapes- forests, ranches, farms, dairies- in Humboldt County). To summarize up front, my comments concern the need, in crafting TRFR processes, to protect landowner viability, and to include NIFLs as a unique stakeholder group in your deliberations, because the forestland they steward is their private property (and their financial responsibility). The TRFR processes’ criteria and measurement methods need to be designed to be as simple and affordable as possible. NIFLs’ (and other stakeholders’) awareness of TRFR upcoming meetings will be strongest if public notices are as ubiquitous as possible- in other media in addition to agency websites. Designers of the TRFR process should make it easy for stakeholders to find and install, early on, the third-party “Web conference connecting” software that is a prerequisite for web conferencing of TRFR process meetings. Rural stakeholders would be aided by moving some meetings outside the Capitol so that rural NIFLs can afford to participate face to face in TRFR processes. These efforts will enlarge public participation, as the Agency intends.

Non-industrial forest landowners need to be a strong part of the TRFR processes, because they are easy to overlook and live a different reality than do large industrial timber firms, yet they play a crucial part in California forests’ health. Over half of all private forest acres of California are held by individuals and families; and held mainly but not exclusively in small acreages. All TRFR measures chosen will bring costs to these non-industrial landowners, and those costs will be proportionately higher than they will be for industrial timber firms. Already, the high cost of implementing the simplest management plan- a Timber Harvest Plan (mandatory for a timber harvest except for limited 3-acre exemptions) puts timber harvests out of the economic reach of most non-industrial owners (UCCE, 2011). This means California’s forests are not all being actively managed as they should be to protect the “public trust resource” that is our forest; this puts over half of California’s private forestland at risk of conversion to parcelization, a trend common in Washington state (UCCE, 2011).

The Forest Practice Rules demand use of a RPF (registered professional forester); the Endangered Species Act demands professional biological scientists for species surveys; the Clean Water Act calls for physical scientists for streamside protection zone design and monitoring, so landowners cannot “do it

yourself” to lower their costs of timber harvest, species protection/restoration, and water quality monitoring. Regulatory rules already add much greater cost to forest landowners in California than do those in its neighboring states. So , as each TRFR committee designs how to measure/monitor those regulations for effectiveness and efficiency, kindly remember to include **landowner viability** in criteria for measuring/monitoring, so as to make those efforts as affordable (in both money and time) as possible, to help make NIFLs able to participate in the TRFR processes that will determine how well they can continue as forestland owners and stewards of California’s forests.

Non-industrial forest landowners in California are barely hanging on in the economic sense, with the continuing disappearance of industry infrastructure (particularly Green Diamond Resources’ December 2014 closure of its Korb mill, leaving Humboldt County with only one mill capable of processing large-log second/third growth redwood- the “highest and best” wood). Loggers and mills have trouble recruiting and retaining young workers because California logging can operate for less than five months a year for all but the industrial firms who can rock their logging roads. Small trucking firms are shutting down, as the new “diesel rules” mandate the purchase of new trucks by middle-aged haulers who dare not sacrifice their own retirement savings to buy a new rig. Their disappearance makes it harder to get timber to what mills remain. The addition of new species to the “threatened” and “endangered” lists mean more survey costs, and more forested acres that cannot be harvested. Even the growing agency staffs that AB 1492 made possible inadvertently threaten landowner viability, until their “recent hires” can receive sufficient training, and gain the knowledge that only experience imparts. No matter how well-intentioned, “recent hires” can and do interpret regulations overcautiously and/or overzealously, and are less skilled at intra- and inter-agency communication, adding unpredictability and thus cost for nonindustrial forest landowners and their RPFs/other scientists. To give one example: the NSO (Northern Spotted Owl) data base is maintained by the State but only the Federal government can remedy its known errors; this calls for excellent interagency communication and reliance on written rules. To challenge an error in the database , private landowners must pay consulting biologists and foresters; until the challenged site is “released” by the agencies, NIFLs cannot harvest that area. The TRFR processes should investigate and remedy the detrimental impacts of between-agency communication and authority gaps, as well as ensure that staffers cite the written rule on which their findings are based. Staffers who subjectively exert their authority without citing a written basis for their interpretation harm NIFLs, and hasten the trend of forest conversion into large lot subdivisions, vineyards, and (on the North Coast) large-scale marijuana grows, to the detriment of California’s humans, as well as its Coho salmon and other species of concern, and its physical environment. This example is only one of many, but illustrates the complexities involved in finding solutions.

Again, I urge that TRFR Committees’ measures consider landowner viability. Each monitoring activity, each report that professionals – foresters, biologists, geologists, hydrologists, etc.- must provide to/for regulatory agencies, each inspection, each provision of duplicative information to two or more agencies- in short, every action that landowners must do to satisfy regulatory agencies- costs them money. The fewer and simpler the actions required of landowners, the healthier the state’s forests will be. Private non-industrial landowners need to be able to harvest timber profitably, to survive as individuals/families, which will help protect the state’s public trust resources.

As the TRFR program's committees do their work, I would ask that the State recognize that non-industrial forest landowners be at the table, part of the conversation, and have their 'ground truths' heard and carefully considered. Industrial timber firms' needs are different from those of non-industrial forest landowners. FPR-, ESA-, and CWA-related solutions that the large timber firms can afford are punishing, even deadly to non-industrial forest landowners. Regulations designed for the large players are not "scalable in reverse" to fit non-industrial forest landowners. Non-industrial ("family") forest landowners are not just another stakeholder group: the forestland being regulated is their private property and they have a direct financial stake in its profitability. As the stewards of over half of private forestland in California, they play a crucial role in public trust resource protection, and do so on their own dime. For many, profit is far from their key motivator; but the State must enable all NIFLs to actively manage and do so at a profit, or California's forest landscape will be broken up to the detriment of everyone.

To make the involvement of non-industrial forest landowners in the TRFR processes easier, I would suggest very regular, widespread announcements of upcoming events, which use but move beyond TRFR website postings, by all possible means- including contacting landowners' groups such as the Forest Landowners of California (www.forestlandowners.org; 877-326-3778), and the Buckeye (www.buckeyeconservancy.org; 707-725-8847). Web conferencing is valuable, to the extent that folks can be alerted ahead that it is happening. In order to attend the Dec.19, 2014 meeting by webconference, I needed to have a piece of third-party software installed on my computer. I did not know this, so could not connect for real-time listening. Later, Russell Henly helped me get that software, and I thank him for that. To help others connect via the web in future, there could be a simple tutorial placed on the TRFR website, teaching how to download this software. And warnings that it is needed (and where to find the tutorial) could be included in all meeting announcements. In this way, broader participation would be more likely.

The TRFR Committees' processes offer great promise, and without speaking to specifics of the Charters of each Committee, I would simply implore you to take what obvious steps you can, to get your news to your regulated community's harder-to reach members, such as nonindustrial forest landowners, to invite them to participate in your deliberations. UCCE maintains a database of forest property owners that they used in their survey research; such a list would provide addresses for mailouts.

Thanks for making the effort to reach out to all, including to those of us whose hearts and often livelihoods are bound up in non-industrial ownership of California's forests.

Most respectfully,

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Cc: Larry Camp, President, Forest Landowners of California;
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