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Russell Henly  
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Comments from Richard Gienger, and on the Behalf of Forests Forever,  
RE: 10.14.15 Public Meeting & the Draft Concept Paper for Planning Watershed Pilot Projects,  
and Related Matters

Dear Russ:

I have read the well thought out and excellent comments by the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) regarding the workshop and draft concept paper. I will be trying to emphasize some of their points and also make specific suggestions and responses to the evolving Planning Watersheds Pilots Projects process and needs – as well as related matters in the overall Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Program.

I think it needs to be stressed that the first Planning Watershed Pilot Project should be as direct and 'simplified' as possible. I do agree that Planning Watersheds with varieties of ownerships, information, and including 'unaltered' reference/paired Planning Watersheds should be taken on as the Pilot Project foundational program evolves. What I mean by direct and 'simplified' is that the initial pilot should be mostly in one ownership, has been entirely logged at least once since 1974, with THP information digitalized by CalFire, has listed species, and a supportive landowner(s). Additional information could be helpful, but the primary task (aside from meeting various TRFR intents) is to evaluate the information produced in the THP process by RPFs and the other involved resource professionals – and determine its utility and capability in meeting those TRFR intents and the needs and responsibilities of all the stakeholders.

Of primary need, and a long time concept, is the formation of multi-stakeholder and multidisciplinary pilot project teams. This, I think, is different than the Pilot Project Working Group (PPWG) as sketched out in the concept paper. Yes, agency staff should facilitate information organization, but the actual types of information organization and consideration should involve the pilot project team at the basic and subsequent levels.

Of course, there are a several immediate problems – one of several years duration is the lack of funding to ensure high quality and consistent public participation in all phases of the pilot projects, in the working groups established for the TRFR, in the proposed advisory group for the larger TRFR process, and in the Board of Forestry appointed Effectiveness Monitoring Group (EMC). This EMC needs to be drastically changed to protect the short & long term credibility in reforms resulting from the TRFR Program. The EMC is a threat, with its current composition and “unholy” relationship to

what is touted as the independent multidisciplinary guiding partnership of the Natural Resources Agency and CalEPA. What appears as 'complementariness' to many agency and industry people appears to be a 'conflict-of-interest' to the public with a Board constrained appointed committee filtering the reform findings and recommendations of the TRFR Program prior to implementation.

There is a lack, not only of funding, but of an available and informed pool of good representatives of the range of stakeholders and disciplines from the public – along with a selection process that ensures good representative to be part of TRFR at all levels. This is not to disparage the Review Team lead or responsible agencies. There are well qualified people from those agencies involved now and will be in the future. It's just that this TRFR process, especially because of public funding from assessments/taxes on retail timber products, requires a public equity and participation at a higher level than has been accepted for decades. A part of this is undertaking expanded and steady outreach past previously accepted individual and organizational contacts.

If one will recall, the EPIC v. Johnson decision regarded more than the necessity to consider, evaluate and respond, to cumulative impacts. The decision also stated that there was inadequate consultation with California Indians, and that there was inadequate assurance the the Native American Heritage was being adequately protected. There have been some improvements made since then over protective measures and process, but there is still no true steady consultation. This makes it even more imperative that California Indians be represented in the TRFR process at every level as well – and specifically on the Pilot Project multi-stakeholder and multidisciplinary teams.

There are other thoughts and responses that I can not get to today – and will include in an addendum on or before Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard Gienger  
on behalf of himself and Forests Forever