

REDWOOD FOREST FOUNDATION, INC

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December 15, 2015

Russell K. Henly, PhD
Assistant Secretary of Forest Resources Management
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assistant Secretary Henly,

I was pleased to be able to participate via internet in the October 14th Public Workshop on Forest Planning Watershed Pilot Projects. The discussion about the proposed pilot projects and the related draft concept paper were very interesting, and the workshop helped me understand what these pilot Projects can mean for improving California's forest practices process. The Redwood Forest Foundation's (RFFI) Usal Redwood Forest has a number of planning watersheds, including those described as examples in the concept paper, that I believe would serve as ideal sites for the initial pilot project.

In the Usal Forest, much information has been developed during the modern forest practice era that is digitalized within timber harvest plans (THPs). The land has been significantly adversely affected over a long period of time, and a large amount of historical information extending back into the late 1800s also exists. Most of the property has been recorded using LiDAR-based technology, which provides rich and detailed descriptions of existing landscape and forest conditions, and the balance of the property is scheduled for LiDAR early in 2016. The Usal Forest is also home to listed Chinook and Coho salmon, and Steelhead trout, as well as significant numbers of listed Northern Spotted Owls. In addition, there is a rich population of North Coast mammals, from ring-tailed cats to Roosevelt Elk. A pilot project would not only help meet the intents of the TRFR Program and broad applicability to private and state forestlands, but would also greatly help RFFI be able to better manage the Usal Redwood Forest consistent with its founding mission to establish long-term stewardship on depleted forestlands and to integrate and benefit surrounding communities in that mission.

Of course, each pilot, by the nature of conditions and history, will be complex and present a range of difficulties. The Usal Redwood Forest project examples would allow, in most cases, a single or a few closely-related ownerships that would permit a closer, easier pilot evaluation and a response that is more purely confined to classic timber harvest impacts. We believe a Usal project would present a good first step, before the agency delves into more complicated planning watersheds involving multiple ownerships and more complicated conditions and issues.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,

Mark Welther
President & CEO