



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Tahoe
National
Forest

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File Code: 2500

Date: May 8, 2009

Harold Singer
Executive Director
Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
2501 Lake Tahoe Blvd
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

Dear Mr. Singer:

We appreciate the efforts of your staff to work with both our Regional and Forest staffs to develop clearer regulatory procedures, and to streamline approval and permitting of vegetation management projects. The complexity of the Timber Waiver has been a concern and will require ongoing communications to continue to improve our shared knowledge base and waiver processing. It is our hope that we will continue to maintain this dialogue, with the intent of protecting water quality while achieving fuel reduction goals.

We still have a few concerns with the current version of the waiver and have been told your staff has been drafting changes, which we think may improve the waiver, if implemented. We have also been communicating with the Staff at the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) and feel that, due to the similar restrictions in the Truckee River watershed, most of our concerns are similar and have been addressed in the letter from Terri Marceron, Forest Supervisor, LTBMU, dated May 8, 2009.

Our primary issues with the current waiver language are the proposed restrictions on burn piles allowed within the WBZ, and the prohibition exemptions that may be required for many of the fuel reduction activities in near stream environments. We are also concerned about the required monitoring for winter operations and recommend that you do not require daily monitoring during dry weather periods, and that operations should be based on actual soil conditions, not on past weather events.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to the proposed Timber Waiver. If you have questions, please contact Carol Kennedy, Watershed Program Manager, at 530-478-6239.

Sincerely,

TOM QUINN
Forest Supervisor

