

99-A-12

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Pacific
Southwest
Region

Regional Office, R5
630 Sansome Street
San Francisco, CA 94111-2214
415-705-1098 Text (TTY)
415-705-2896 Voice

File Code: 1900

Date: January 20, 1998

Lester Snow
Director, CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Lester:

We have reviewed the draft (1/7/98) of the Watershed Management Strategy. Although we are encouraged that the upper watersheds are included as part of the CALFED vision of reducing stressors to beneficial uses, we find the discussion of their importance inadequate. The Strategy lacks rigor in relating the role of the upper watersheds to the Bay-Delta.

Approximately 85% of the water delivered to the Delta originates on National Forest land in the upper watershed. Healthy upper watershed conditions are critical to the reduction of stressors in the Bay-Delta. Healthy watersheds can attenuate flood flows, shift the time delivery of water and ensure that water delivered is of the highest quality.

The "General Principles of Good Watershed Management" emphasize that restoration must occur at the watershed level and must include elimination of continuing causes of watershed degradation. As stated in the Strategy, current conditions in some upper watersheds have the potential to negatively effect downstream beneficial uses if not corrected. If CALFED does not foster restoration in the upper watersheds, the General Principles would be violated.

Long term solutions to the improved health of anadromous fish stocks may require innovative technological strategies such as those being considered in the Pacific Northwest. Dams may not always be a barrier to upstream migration and the upper watersheds may become essential habitat for the restoration of some species. Thus it is critical to include the upper watersheds in any solution to the Bay-Delta.

The Forest Service is willing to provide assistance in developing an upper watershed strategy. We look forward to working with you in this matter. If you have further questions, please contact either Julie Tupper, CALFED representative in our Sacramento Office at 498-5324 or Kathy Clement, Assistant Regional Forester for Ecosystem Conservation at 415-705-1834.

Katherine Clement
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Regional Forester's Team