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Date: May 4, 2018

Dear Six Rivers National Forest Partner,

Good news... the Six Rivers has just completed the environmental analyses for projects with our three formal collaboratives and now are shifting focus to the *Six Rivers Aquatic Restoration Project*.

Over the last three years, momentum for aquatic restoration across the Six Rivers National Forest (SRNF) has been building. Since public scoping, the SRNF and its partners have been busy conducting fieldwork to refine proposed aquatic restoration activities and location footprints. In 2017, the Coastal Conservancy approved funding for the Mid Klamath Watershed Council to jointly administer the grant, in collaboration with the SRNF and Humboldt State University to conduct wildlife, fish, and archaeology and botany field surveys.

All of this hard work now sets the stage for the preparation of the *Six Rivers Aquatics Restoration Project Draft Environmental Assessment* (draft EA) to fulfill the National Environmental Policy Act/California Environmental Quality Act (NEPA/CEQA), and other relevant federal and state laws and regulations, with the draft EA planned for public release and review in late spring.

The *Six Rivers Aquatics Restoration Project* area is within the boundary of the SRNF, as well as Ukonom District of the Klamath National Forest, which is administered by the SRNF, in California's Del Norte, Humboldt, Siskiyou and Trinity counties.

There has been increasing recognition of the suite of benefits of aquatic restoration for California watersheds, including enhanced water quality, reduced peak flood flows, healthy critical habitats and quality ecosystem services supporting quality of life. The SRNF administers 13 percent of the land base and associated stream networks in Del Norte, Humboldt, Siskiyou and Trinity counties, managing over 1,500 miles of streams, constituting about 9 percent of California's total freshwater runoff. The Smith, Klamath, Salmon, Trinity, Mad, Van Duzen and Eel rivers provide spawning and rearing habitats for salmon and steelhead.

Many stakeholder groups—including the Karuk, Yurok, Hoopa tribes, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, National Marine Fisheries Service and local watershed restoration groups—have expressed a keen interest in exploring partnerships and collaborative funding opportunities with the Forest Service to employ an “all lands” landscape/watershed approach to fisheries restoration. This approach is designed to optimize procedural NEPA/CEQA requirements and effective project design and implementation, so more restoration work can be achieved on the ground to:

- Uphold tribal trust responsibilities and obligations for maintaining healthy fisheries beneficial to tribal communities;
- Contribute to the economic viability of local coastal and inland community livelihoods dependent on healthy commercial and recreational fisheries natural resources; and



- Conserve species for future generations.

For an overview of the project, visit www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=42051. If you need additional information, please contact Carolyn Cook, natural resources staff officer, at cacook@fs.fed.us or (707) 441-3551.

I appreciate your interest in public land management and welcome your participation on this and other Six Rivers National Forest projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Merv George Jr.", with a stylized, cursive script.

MERV GEORGE JR.
Forest Supervisor

cc: Carolyn Cook, Carol Spinos