



# Tuolumne River Trust

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August 24, 2011

Gaylon Lee  
Division of Water Quality  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street, 15th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

### Comment re: USFS Waiver

Dear Gaylon Lee:

I'm writing to encourage the State Water Resources Control Board to deny the waiver permit that would exempt the Forestry Service (USFS) from certain water quality requirements.

Many activities approved by the USFS, such as grazing, logging, off-road vehicle use, and road building, can cause serious harm to downstream water users and fish and wildlife. We need to strengthen water quality requirements, not relax them.

The Tuolumne River flows through the Stanislaus National Forest before filling the Don Pedro Reservoir downstream. Don Pedro provides irrigation water for 200,000 customers in a 1,000 square mile area. The Modesto and Turlock Irrigation Districts, which own and operate Don Pedro, also serve several municipalities with drinking water.

Riparian species listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA that occur downstream of the Stanislaus National Forest include California tiger salamander, California red-legged frog, and steelhead trout. These species can be harmed by increased sediment load and fecal matter from livestock.

The Tuolumne River Trust supports the comments filed by the Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center (CSERC). We hope you will take their recommendations into consideration and deny the waiver. The Forestry Service's best management practices need to be strengthened significantly.

Sincerely,

Peter Drekmeier  
Program Director

