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Comments: Mr. Robert Lorens

Caldor Fire Restoration Project

Forest Service LTBMU

35 College Drive

South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

Dear Mr. Lorens,

On behalf of the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT), I am writing to express our support for the Caldor Fire Restoration Project as described in the Draft Environmental Assessment prepared by the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.

The Caldor Fire Restoration Project represents a necessary and well-justified post-fire response to the ecological conditions created by the 2021 Caldor Fire. As documented in the Draft EA, large portions of the burned landscape within the Lake Tahoe Basin have a low probability of natural forest regeneration and face an elevated risk of long-term conversion to shrub-dominated vegetation, increased future fuel accumulation, and repeated high-severity fire. Without active management, recovery timelines for these areas may extend decades, with significant implications for forest structure, wildlife habitat, watershed function, and community risk.

TFFT supports the Project's integrated approach to post-fire restoration, which appropriately combines forest restoration, fuels reduction, reforestation, prescribed fire, and watershed and aquatic habitat restoration. This approach reflects current science and recognizes the need to actively guide recovery in severely burned landscapes to improve forest resilience to drought, insects, disease, and future wildfire, while also reducing hazardous fuel accumulation within and adjacent to the wildland-urban interface.

From a Basin-wide perspective, the Caldor Fire Restoration Project is a critical component of long-term recovery and resilience efforts in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Active management following large, high-severity wildfire is essential not only to restore ecological processes and habitat connectivity, but also to reduce the likelihood of future fires that could further compromise forest recovery, watershed health, lake clarity, and nearby communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Environmental Assessment. TFFT appreciates the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit's leadership in advancing this important restoration work and supports continued progress toward implementation of the Caldor Fire Restoration Project.

Sincerely,

Annabelle Monti

Program Manager

Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team

***I have also included the original letter of support provided during the scoping period for this project as an attachment.