



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

June 28, 2010

Jack Collins
Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Department of Interior
1243 N Street
Fresno, CA 93721

Subject: Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Cachuma Lake Resource
Management Plan, Santa Barbara County, California (CEQ# 20100195)

Dear Mr. Collins:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the above-referenced document pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

EPA provided comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on October 30, 2008 to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau). We rated the DEIS as Environmental Concerns – Insufficient Information (EC-2) due to the need for additional information regarding potential air and water quality effects from proposed activities.

We appreciate the Bureau's attention, in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and the Response to Comments, to the issues we identified in our review of the DEIS. In particular, we commend the commitment to project-specific air quality analyses, including General Conformity analyses and the development of mitigation measures for construction emissions, and encourage their implementation. In addition, we note the inclusion of the water quality sampling data and the development of the water quality mitigation measures included in the Boat Management Plan, which include the phase-out of nonconformant engines within 2 years. We commend the addition of the 6 month phase-out time frame if BTEX compounds are detected

We note that the Fisheries Management and the Vegetation Management Plans will be periodically updated to manage the potential effects of climate change. We understand that the Vegetation Management Plan will address issues of noxious weeds, native plant restoration, and fire management, support the Bureau's commitment to specific best management practices for herbicide use, and provide alternatives.

We acknowledge the information provided in the Response to Comments that there is no naturally occurring asbestos or ultramafic rock in the vicinity of Cachuma Lake, that public transportation would not be feasible for the majority of the visitors that tow boats or camping equipment, and that the Bureau will collaborate with the local managing partner in acquiring funding.

EPA encourages the Bureau to consider the impacts of all activities, including vegetation management and recreation, on the bald eagle nesting activities, which encompass breeding, feeding, and roosting. We defer to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the adequacy of 1.35 miles from the documented bald eagle nest to the Plan boundary.

We recommend that the Record of Decision include a firm commitment to project-specific NEPA analyses.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this FEIS. When the ROD is signed, please send one copy to the address above (mail code: CED-2). If you have questions, please contact Anne Ardillo, lead reviewer for the subject FEIS, at (415) 947-4257, or contact me at (415) 972-3521.

Sincerely,

/s/

Kathleen M. Goforth, Manager
Environmental Review Office