



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

August 1, 2005

Alan Whalon, Superintendent
Chiricahua National Monument
13063 E Bonita Canyon Road
Willcox, AZ 85643

Subject: Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Chiricahua National Monument
Fire Management Plan [CEQ #050265]

Dear Mr. Whalon:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the document referenced above. Our review and comments are provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementation Regulations at 40 CFR 1500-1508, and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

It appears that the proposed action will provide for more flexible and efficient fire management to reduce hazardous fuels in and around Chiricahua National Monument. The Final EIS provides additional information regarding impacts to water quality and stream and wetland habitat from the proposed action, and commits to several mitigation measures to protect streams and wetlands during controlled burns. We understand that Chiricahua National Monument is a member of the Sonoran Desert Network Inventory and Monitoring Program and will begin long-term monitoring of water quality, quantity, and aquatic ecology parameters this year. Therefore, the Final EIS satisfactorily addresses the concerns we raised in our February 2, 2005, comment letter on the Draft EIS.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this Final EIS and request a copy of the Record of Decision when it is filed with our Washington, D.C., office. If you have any questions, please call me at (415) 972-3846 or Jeanne Geselbracht at (415) 972-3853.

Sincerely,

/S/

Nova Blazej, Acting Manager
Environmental Review Office

cc: Coronado National Forest