



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

August 1, 2005

John Berry
Forest Supervisor
Eldorado National Forest
100 Forni Road
Placerville, CA. 95667

Subject: Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Power Fire
Restoration Project, Amador County, California (CEQ #20050263)

Dear Mr. Berry:

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 Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

EPA reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Power Fire Restoration Project. We rated the DEIS as Environmental Concerns - Insufficient Information (EC-2). We raised several issues to the Forest Service regarding potential adverse effects on water quality and aquatic resources. Air quality was also a concern due to potential cumulative high levels of criteria air pollutants.

EPA is pleased that most of the issues identified in our review of the DEIS have been addressed in the FEIS. In response to comments from EPA, the Forest Service provided clarification on the impacts to aquatic resources resulting from sediment delivery from the proposed alternative logging systems. Additional information was also provided regarding air quality standards and to support the cumulative impacts analysis for that resource.

EPA has continuing concerns regarding ground disturbing logging methods in watersheds with very high risk of Cumulative Watershed Effects in 2010 (i.e., Lower Bear River, Beaver Creek, East Panther Creek, and North Fork Mokelumne River). We recommend greater use of helicopter or skyline logging systems in those watersheds in order to minimize potential impacts to water resources. The Record of Decision (ROD) should include a commitment to the increased use of helicopter or skyline logging systems. We also recommend that ongoing monitoring activities performed by other agencies (as described in the FEIS) be evaluated to determine how those monitoring results can assist the Service in the adaptive management of this project to achieve the greatest environmental benefits.

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 any questions, please contact me or David Schmidt, the lead reviewer for this project. David can be reached at 415-972-3792 or schmidt.davidp@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Nova Blazej, Acting Manager
Environmental Review Office
Communities and Ecosystems Division

cc: Patricia Ferrell, Eldorado National Forest
Robert Schneider, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board