

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

January 9, 2012

Nancy J. Gibson, Forest Supervisor
Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
35 College Drive
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

Subject: Final Environmental Impact Statement for the South Shore Fuel Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration, El Dorado County, California (CEQ# 20110412)

Dear Ms. Gibson:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the above project. Our review and comments are 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 commends the Forest Service for its efforts to address fuel loads and forest health in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). EPA reviewed the Draft EIS and provided comments to the Forest Service on June 5, 2009. We rated the Draft EIS as Environmental Concerns – Insufficient Information (EC-2) because of concerns regarding water quality monitoring, cumulative watershed effects, and impacts to stream environment zones (SEZs). In response to comments, helpful revisions were made, both in format and content, which greatly improved the document. Additional information was provided to address EPA's concerns about SEZs, including updated criteria for Best Management Practice Evaluation Program (BMPEP) monitoring, as well as additional forensic and stream and shade temperature monitoring (p. 4-4).

We continue to encourage Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit to work with the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board to address all remaining concerns regarding modeling and monitoring. Although we recognize the many challenges of conducting fuel reduction and forest restoration projects in the WUI, we continue to encourage the Forest Service to limit, to the extent feasible, the number of roads, ephemeral crossings, and landings that will be constructed or rebuilt. As a primary source of direct sediment and erosion, roads can adversely alter hydrology and generate higher sediment levels, which can reduce water quality.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this Final EIS. Should you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact me at (415) 972-3521, or contact Stephanie Skophammer, the lead reviewer for the project. Stephanie can be reached at (415) 972-3098 or skophammer.stephanie@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Kathleen Martyn Goforth, Manager
Environmental Review Office
Communities and Ecosystems Division