

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



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

June 3, 2014

Rick Stevens, District Ranger
Western Divide RD, Sequoia NF
32588 Highway 190
Springville, CA 93265

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Tule River Reservation Protection Project, Tulare County, California. (CEQ# 20140128)

Dear Mr. Stevens:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Tule River Reservation Protection Project, Tulare County, California. Our review is provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The project location is adjacent to the Tule River Indian Reservation, which holds significant importance historically, culturally, and spiritually to the Tule River Indian Tribe. EPA supports implementation of the project as soon as possible to protect life and property in the Tule River Indian Reservation from catastrophic wildfire that could potentially spread from the Sequoia National Forest onto the Tule River Indian Reservation. We recognize that Tribal Consultation is an important component of the decision-making process associated with this project. As such the Forest Service should continue consultation throughout the NEPA process with all potentially affected tribal governments. We recommend the results of consultations with tribal governments and with the Tribal Historic Preservation Office/State Historic Preservation Office be included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

EPA commends the Forest Service for limiting operations during Condor activity, which will avoid direct adverse impacts to the species. We also support the best management practices and resource protection measures included in the project design such as mitigation measures to protect water quality. For these reasons, we have rated the DEIS and Preferred Alternative 3 as Lack of Objections—LO (see enclosed “Summary of Rating Definitions”).

EPA appreciates the opportunity to review this DEIS. When the FEIS is released, please send one hard copy and one CD to the address above (mail code: ENF-4-2). If you have any questions, please contact me at (415) 972-3521, or have your staff contact James Munson, the lead reviewer for this project. James can be reached at (415) 972-3852 or Munson.James@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Mulvihill, /s/ for;

Kathleen Martyn Goforth, Manager
Environmental Review Section
Enforcement Division

Enclosure: Summary of the EPA Rating System