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

September 24, 2012

Mr. John Kasbohm,
Project Leader
Sheldon-Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge Complex
P.O. Box 111
Lakeview, Oregon 97630

Subject: Final Environmental Impact Statement and Comprehensive Conservation Plan – Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge, Washoe and Humboldt Counties, Nevada, and Lake County, Oregon (CEQ#20120271)

Dear Mr. Kasbohm:

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

The EPA reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and provided comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) on November 21, 2011. We rated the DEIS as Environmental Concerns – Insufficient Information (EC-2) due to concerns about the proposed increased use of herbicides in the preferred alternative, and the lack of analysis of the impacts of this use in the DEIS. We recommended that the Service provide additional information in the FEIS on anticipated impacts to water resources from herbicide treatments. Additionally, we recommended that the Service describe how observed and predicted climate change effects were used in the formulation of alternatives and management actions in the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP).

The FEIS addresses our concerns regarding the potential for an increased use of herbicides. The EPA commends the Service for providing detailed responses to our concerns; explaining the process for completing and approving pesticide use proposals; discussing potential impacts associated with herbicide use; and providing a complete copy of the integrated pest management guidance document. Additionally, we thank the Service for explaining, in the FEIS, how observed and anticipated climate change effects within the Refuge informed the development of alternatives, analyses of impacts, and selection of the preferred alternative.

Please note that, starting October 1, 2012, EPA Headquarters will not accept paper copies or CDs of EISs for official filing purposes. Submissions on or after October 1, 2012, must be made through the EPA's new electronic EIS submittal tool: *e-NEPA*. To begin using *e-NEPA*, you must first register with the EPA's electronic reporting site -

https://cdx.epa.gov/epa_home.asp. Electronic submission does not change requirements for distribution of EISs for public review and comment, and lead agencies should still provide one hard copy of each Draft and Final EIS released for public circulation to the EPA Region 9 office in San Francisco (Mail Code: CED-2).

We appreciate the opportunity to review this FEIS. If you have any questions, please contact me at (415) 972-3521, or contact Jason Gerdes, the lead reviewer for this project. Jason can be reached at (415) 947-4221 or gerdes.jason@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Martyn Goforth, Manager
Environmental Review Office (CED-2)