UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10
1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98101-3140

OFFICE OF
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

May 26, 2009

Reply to
Attn Of: ETPA-088

Ref: 05-074-AFS

Mark Hummel, District Ranger
Tongass National Forest
Wrangell Ranger District
PO Box 51
Wrangell, Alaska 99929-0051

Dear Mr. Hummel:

The EPA has completed its review of the **Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) for the Navy Timber Sale** project (CEQ No. 20090118) on the Wrangell Ranger District, Tongass National Forest, in accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

We rated the draft EIS and preferred alternative (Alternative D) as EC-2 (Environmental Concerns-Insufficient Information) primarily due to concerns regarding potential impacts to water quality and Productive Old Growth (POG) habitat. We recommended that the FEIS include additional information about the Anita Bay Log Transfer Facility (LTF), Environmental Justice issues (if applicable), funding for road maintenance, as well as baseline water quality. EPA also recommended the selection of Alternative F in the ROD.

From our review of the FEIS and ROD, we have determined that the FS has addressed the majority of our concerns relating to the disclosure of water quality impacts and the Anita Bay LTF. The FS also included a more detailed EJ analysis, consistent with relevant guidance. Finally, although Alternative D was identified in the ROD as the FS's Preferred Alternative, all proposed harvest and road construction within the Navy watershed has been eliminated. This addresses our significant environmental concerns with Alternative D.

We appreciate the FS's responsiveness to our comments and inclusion of additional information and analysis of the issues identified above. We are also quite pleased with the modification of the Preferred Alternative. We believe that with the changes the FS has incorporated into the FEIS, potential environmental impacts have been further minimized, as well as sufficiently evaluated and disclosed.

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FEIS and ROD. Please contact Jennifer Curtis of my staff at (907) 271-6324 or curtis.jennifer@epa.gov with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

/s/
Christine Reichgott, Manager
NEPA Review Unit

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