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

DEC 3 0 2013

Lawrence Crabtree
Eldorado National Forest
100 Forni Road
Placerville, CA 95667

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Blacksmith Ecological Restoration Project, Eldorado National Forest, Placer and El Dorado Counties, California. (CEQ# 20130346)

Dear Mr. Crabtree:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Blacksmith Ecological Restoration Project, Eldorado National Forest, Placer and El Dorado Counties, California. Our review is pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

EPA acknowledges the importance of the Blacksmith Ecological Restoration Project's goals to improve forest health and decrease fuels. We support the use of prescribed underburning as an important measure necessary to reduce the risk of fire, promote biodiversity, and restore natural ecological processes within the forest.

The EPA commends the Forest Service for limiting operations in spotted owl habitat, 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. For these reasons, we have rated the DEIS and Preferred Alternative 4 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 1 cd to the address above (mail code: CED-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,

Connell Dunning

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