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

October 9, 2012

Corbin Newman
Regional Forester
333 Broadway Blvd., SE
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Prescott National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, Coconino and Yavapai Counties, Arizona. (CEQ# 20120274)

Dear Mr. Newman:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Prescott National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Project) 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.

Based on our review of the DEIS, we have rated all action alternatives (B, C, D) and the document as LO-1, Lack of Objections – Adequate (see enclosed EPA Rating Definitions). The EPA commends the Forest Service for its commitment to vegetation restoration and adaptive management strategies for climate change as proposed in the Project. We recognize the need for the use of mechanical thinning and prescribed fire and wildfire to achieve long-term restoration objectives. We also commend the Forest Service for committing, in the proposed alternative, to wilderness designations and private land acquisition to preserve open space and enhance the human environment. We would also like to acknowledge the thorough description, throughout the DEIS, of the possible effects of climate change in regards to ecosystem resilience and the need for adaptation to climate change, and the commitment, through the proposed alternative, to mitigate these effects.

We support the ongoing consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer, (SHPO) and encourage the Forest Service to include Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPO) in consultation, as appropriate.

EPA appreciates the opportunity to review this DEIS. We also appreciate the Forest Service's coordination with us during our review via phone to discussion the project. When the FEIS is released, please send one hard copy and one 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) 972-3800 or munson.james@epa.gov.

Please note that as of October 1, 2012, EPA Headquarters no longer accepts 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).

Sincerely,

Kathleen Martyn Goforth, Manager
Environmental Review Office

Enclosure:

Summary of the EPA Rating System

Cc:

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