UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10
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FEB 1 2010

OFFICE OF
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Chad Benson, District Ranger
Powell Ranger Station
Lolo, Montana 59847

Subject: Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Plants Management Project
EPA Project Number 06-067-AFS

Dear Mr. Benson:

In accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Clean Air Act § 309, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Forest Service's (FS) Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the proposed **Selway Bitterroot Wilderness Invasive Plants Management Project** on Nez Perce, Clearwater, Bitterroot, and Lolo National Forests in western Montana and north central Idaho.

In our comments on the draft EIS in May 19, 2008, EPA expressed environmental concerns about potential herbicide treatment impacts to water quality within waterbodies that presently do not meet water quality standards. Also, we recommended that the final EIS include information demonstrating that weed treatments would be protective of water quality.

The FEIS indicates that the FS was responsive to our comments on the draft EIS. We appreciate additional information and clarifications provided in the FEIS, especially supplementary details on water quality protection, monitoring, and adaptive management measures to reduce impacts. In addition, we are pleased with other changes made to the EIS between draft and final using comments received from agencies and the public. Your responses address our concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the FEIS and ROD for this project. If you have questions or comments concerning this review, please contact Theo Mbabaliye at (206) 553-6322 or me at (206) 553-1601.

Sincerely,

Christine B. Reichgott

Christine B. Reichgott, Unit Manager
Environmental Review and Sediment Management Unit