



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

September 25, 2006

Victoria Touchstone
Refuge Manager
San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex
6010 Hidden Valley Road
Carlsbad, California 92011

Subject: Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (CCP/FEIS) for the Sweetwater Marsh and South San Diego Bay Units of the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge, California (CEQ #20060346)

Dear Ms. Touchstone:

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

The FEIS describes the proposal for managing the Sweetwater Marsh and South San Diego Bay Units of the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge over the next 15 years. These two Refuge Units encompass approximately 2,620 acres of land and water in and around San Diego Bay. Refuge habitat provides essential resting, foraging, and nesting habitat for tens of thousands of migratory shorebirds and wintering waterfowl. The FEIS evaluates three alternatives for the Sweetwater Marsh Unit and four alternatives for the South San Diego Bay Unit. Alternative C (Implement Habitat Enhancement and Restoration and Improve Existing Public Uses) is the preferred alternative for the Sweetwater Marsh Unit; Alternative D (Expand Habitat Management, Enhance Nesting Opportunities, Maximize Habitat Restoration, and Provide Additional Public Use Opportunities) is the preferred alternative for the South San Diego Bay Unit. EPA has no objection to the preferred alternatives and supports their habitat enhancement and restoration goals.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this FEIS. When the Record of Decision is signed, please send one copy to the address above (mail code: CED-2). If you have any questions, please contact me at (415) 972-3988 or Ann McPherson, the lead reviewer for this project. Ann can be reached at (415) 972-3545 or mcpherson.ann@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

/S/

Duane James, Manager
Environmental Review Office
Communities and Ecosystems