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

March 24, 2008

Jim Micheaels
Gold Fields District
California State Parks
7806 Folsom-Auburn Road
Folsom, CA 95630

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Folsom Lake State Recreation Area and Folsom Powerhouse State Historic Park Preliminary General Plan/Resource Management Plan, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento Counties, CA (CEQ# 20080040)

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 our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

We commend the efforts of the California State Parks and the Bureau of Reclamation to address key resource management issues such as boating noise; the demand for marina facilities, trails, and camping sites; wildfire risk within the wildland-urban interface; and increasing user conflicts. EPA particularly commends the proposals to develop a central database for timely input of water quality results from all sampling programs, add more water quality monitoring stations, continue the weekly bacteriological sampling program, and to promote use of reclaimed or recycled water.

While there are positive management goals proposed in the General Plan, we have rated the DEIS as Environmental Concerns – Insufficient Information (EC-2) (see enclosed "*Summary of Rating Definitions*") due to the need for additional information regarding air quality effects, funding, enforcement, and commitments to future environmental analysis. We recommend the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) describe and evaluate air emissions from current and proposed recreational uses, demonstrate general conformity to the applicable State Implementation Plan, and describe proposed funding and enforcement to ensure implementation of the General Plan priority actions. Our detailed comments are enclosed.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this DEIS. When the FEIS is released for public review, please send one hard copy and one CD ROM to the address above (mail code: CED-2). If you have any questions, please contact me at (415) 972-3846 or Laura Fujii, the lead reviewer for this project. Laura can be reached at (415) 972-3852 or fujii.laura@epa.gov.

Sincerely,
/s/ Laura Fujii for

Nova Blazej, Manager
Environmental Review Office

Enclosure:
Summary of EPA Rating Definitions
Detailed Comments

cc: Laura Caballero, Bureau of Reclamation

EPA DETAILED DEIS COMMENTS FOLSOM LAKE SRA & FOLSOM POWERHOUSE SHP PRELIMINARY GENERAL PLAN/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN, EL DORADO, PLACER, SACRAMENTO COUNTIES, CA, MARCH 24, 2008

Air Quality

Demonstrate general conformity to the applicable State Implementation Plan. The draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) states that the proposed General Plan/Resource Management Plan (General Plan) is consistent with local land use General Plans and therefore does not conflict with any Air Quality Management Plans. However, the DEIS does not appear to evaluate whether the direct and indirect emissions from the federal action conform to the applicable State Implementation Plan (SIP) as required by the General Conformity Rule (40 CFR 93.150).

> ***Recommendation:***
> Include in the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) a description of the General Conformity regulatory framework and how it applies to the proposed General Plan and future project-specific implementation. The FEIS should demonstrate conformity for all pollutants for which the Mountain Counties and Sacramento Valley Air Basins are nonattainment or maintenance, and whose construction or operational emissions exceed the applicable de minimis levels. Conformity may be demonstrated by a showing that the total direct and indirect emissions from the action are specifically identified and accounted for in the SIP. If analysis of general conformity to the SIP is more appropriate at the project-specific analysis level, we recommend the FEIS include a specific commitment to future project-specific general conformity analysis.

Provide a description and impact analysis of air emissions from the proposed marina expansion and increased number of boats, personal watercraft and recreational vehicles. Marinas, boats, personal watercraft and off-highway vehicles such as all-terrain vehicles (ATV) are significant sources contributing to ozone or carbon monoxide (CO) nonattainment.[1] Part of the emissions are aromatic hydrocarbons, including polyaromatic hydrocarbons, which are considered to be the most toxic component of petroleum products. Aromatic hydrocarbons are also associated with chronic and carcinogenic effects. The proposed marina expansion and increased use of boats, personal watercraft, and recreational vehicles could increase pollutant emissions in locations that have frequent inversion conditions and periods of poor air dispersion; contributing to the existing nonattainment for ozone (p. IV-320).

> ***Recommendations:***
> We recommend the FEIS provide a description and impact analysis of the potential accumulation of hazardous pollutants and ozone from the proposed marina expansion and increased number of boats, personal watercraft and recreational vehicles. Of specific concern are potential increases of emissions in use areas subject to frequent inversion conditions.

[1] EPA Fact Sheets on Spark-Ignition Engines, Equipment, and Vessels; Snowmobiles, Dirt Bikes, and ATVs; and Marinas/Boating. http://www.epa.gov/otaq/regs/nonroad/marinesi and http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/NPS/marinas.html.

We recommend tracking the results of studies regarding the air emission and noise effects of personal watercraft, ATV, and recreational vehicle use and factoring these results into future management direction. Where appropriate we recommend the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area (SRA) Interpretive Program include information on the air emissions, noise, and safe and minimal impact use of boats, personal watercraft and recreational vehicles.

Describe and commit to aggressive air quality mitigation measures during future project-specific construction. The SRA is located in a nonattainment area for ozone and fine particulate matter (p. IV-320). Future construction-related emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx), a precursor for ozone, and particulate matter less than 10 and 2.5 microns in diameter (PM10 and PM2.5) could exacerbate nonattainment air quality standards and contribute to adverse cumulative air quality impacts (p. IV-394). Mitigation measures will be necessary to reduce these construction emissions.

Recommendations:
In addition to all applicable local, state, or federal requirements, we recommend the FEIS include in an appendix a list of mitigation measures to consider when designing specific construction projects. Possible measures to include are:

Fugitive Dust Source Controls:

- Stabilize open storage piles and disturbed areas by covering and/or applying water or chemical/organic dust palliative where appropriate. This applies to both inactive and active sites, during workdays, weekends, holidays, and windy conditions.
- Install wind fencing and phase grading operations where appropriate, and operate water trucks for stabilization of surfaces under windy conditions.
- When hauling material and operating non-earthmoving equipment, prevent spillage and limit speeds to 15 miles per hour (mph). Limit speed of earth-moving equipment to 10 mph.

Mobile and Stationary Source Controls:

- Reduce use, trips, and unnecessary idling from heavy equipment.
- Redistribution of material hauling and disposal to minimize haulage miles,
- Maintain and tune engines per manufacturer's specifications to perform at EPA certification levels and to perform at verified standards applicable to retrofit technologies. Employ periodic, unscheduled inspections to limit unnecessary idling and to ensure that construction equipment is properly maintained, tuned, and modified consistent with established specifications.
- Prohibit any tampering with engines and require continuing adherence to manufacturer's recommendations.
- If practicable, lease new, clean equipment meeting the most stringent of applicable Federal or State Standards. In general, only Tier 2 or newer engines should be employed in the construction phase.

- Utilize EPA-registered particulate traps and other appropriate controls where suitable to reduce emissions of diesel particulate matter and other pollutants at the construction site.
- Use of electrical power for all stationary equipment.
- Use of the most recent pollution control equipment for all off-road equipment.

Administrative controls:

- Identify all commitments to reduce construction emissions and update the air quality analysis to reflect additional air quality improvements that would result from adopting specific air quality measures.
- Identify where implementation of mitigation measures is rejected based on economic infeasibility.
- Prepare an inventory of all equipment prior to construction and identify the suitability of add-on emission controls for each piece of equipment before groundbreaking. (Suitability of control devices is based on: whether there is reduced normal availability of the construction equipment due to increased downtime and/or power output, whether there may be significant damage caused to the construction equipment engine, or whether there may be a significant risk to nearby workers or the public.) Utilize cleanest available fuel engines in construction equipment and identify opportunities for electrification. Use ultra low sulfur fuel (diesel with 15 parts per million or less) in engines where alternative fuels such as biodiesel and natural gas are not possible.
- Develop a construction traffic and parking management plan that minimizes traffic interference and maintains traffic flow.
- Identify sensitive receptors in the project area, such as children, elderly, and infirm, and specify the means by which you will minimize impacts to these populations. For example, locate construction equipment and staging zones away from sensitive receptors and fresh air intakes to buildings and air conditioners.
- Identification of available air quality emission credits.
- Scheduling and sequencing work so there is not a significant overlap with other activities that contribute to air quality emissions.

Provide information on the presence of naturally occurring asbestos on trails and roads and the potential effects on upland recreation. Serpentine and other soils in the SRA have been found to contain chrysotile and amphibole asbestos (pps. IV-314, 322, 367). While the DEIS considers the effects of construction activities in the presence of naturally occurring asbestos (NOA), it does not describe potential risks to current and future visitors who may be exposed to NOA on existing trails and roads through recreational activities.

Recommendations:
We recommend the FEIS provide information on the presence of NOA on trails and roads within the SRA and the potential for exposure to elevated levels of NOA from common activities such as Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use, hiking, mountain biking, camping, and patrols and road maintenance activities.

We recommend review of the California Air Resources Board (CARB) regulations and guidance at http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/asbestos/asbestos.htm. which addresses California's Asbestos Airborne Toxic Control Measures for Surfacing Applications which apply to unpaved roads. Managers of the SRA may also wish to review the results and road surfacing recommendations in the Department of Toxic Substances Control report "Study of Airborne Asbestos From A Serpentine Road in Garden Valley, California" (April 2005) at: http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/loader.cfm?url=/commonspot/security/getfile.cfm&pageid=33546.

As appropriate, we recommend posting signage to inform users that NOA is present in areas found to contain asbestos in amounts greater than 0.25 percent (per specimen) or where airborne asbestos is found at hazardous levels.

Traffic

Work with local, state, and federal transportation agencies to promote use of the existing bike, bus, and light rail access and consider a Folsom Lake SRA Public Transit Hub. The DEIS reports increasing traffic congestion, traffic backuping onto major access routes, and filled parking facilities at major day use areas (pps. II-77, IV-278). As a result there are traffic delays, illegal parking, pedestrian hazards, noise, and access difficulties for neighbors. To address these traffic issues, the General Plan proposes reconfiguration of entrances at major day use areas and use of temporary electronic message boards and radio announcements to report use area closures and parking lot conditions (p. II-78). While most visitors access the SRA by vehicles, access is available by bus, bike trails, and light rail (p. IV-270).

Recommendation:
We recommend SRA management and Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) work with local, state, and federal transportation agencies in promoting use of the existing bike, bus and light rail access. If not already in existence, we recommend evaluating the benefits of a Folsom Lake SRA Public Transit Hub to promote access by different transportation modes.

Proceedural and Full Disclosure Comments

Commit to future detailed environmental analysis of project-specific impacts. The DEIS has inconsistent statements regarding future project-specific impact assessments. Therefore, it is not clear what future environmental analysis will occur. For example, the DEIS states both that subsequent environmental review may be limited or not required if there are no new effects or new mitigation (p. IV-6) and that specific projects will be subject to further environmental review (p. IV-76).

This DEIS is a programmatic evaluation of the General Plan and does not contain or support project-specific impact analyses (p. IV-3). As an example, the General Plan calls for 30-50% expansion in boat slip capacity at the existing marina including additional upland facilities and infrastructure changes, potential dredging to extend the boating season due to low water, and possible construction of an artificial whitewater kayaking course. All of these projects could have significant impacts that are not described or evaluated in this programmatic DEIS.

> ***Recommendation:***
> We recommend the FEIS include a clear commitment to future detailed environmental analysis of project-specific impacts. One option is to augment the table in Appendix E: General Plan Implementation and Monitoring with a column specifying the proposed level of environmental analysis for each listed action.

Include a description of funding and management resources to ensure implementation of General Plan priority actions. Appendix E: General Plan Implementation and Monitoring provides a list of proposed actions, the responsible Agency/Group and estimated timeframe. However, there is no description of the funding sources and resources to support implementation of these actions or of the consequences of not meeting General Plan goals and guidelines.

> ***Recommendation:***
> We recommend the FEIS include a brief description of funding and management resources available to support implementation of the high priority proposed actions. We recommend describing the consequences of not implementing high priority actions, especially if sensitive or valuable resources may be at risk.

Describe measures to enforce General Plan guidelines. The DEIS describes General Plan guidelines that restrict or prohibit specific activities such as vehicle use outside designated roads, parking areas, and travel routes; expanded 5 mile per hour boat speed zones; and a proposed trail classification scheme for shared-use dirt trails with alternating day/time separation option (III-102, IV-365, III-83).

> ***Recommendation:***
> We recommend the FEIS describe the enforcement program to ensure implementation and compliance with General Plan guidelines.

State the reasons for the delay in finalizing the revised General Plan and long-term lease agreement The DEIS states that work to revise the General Plan began in the Spring of 2002. Both California State Parks and Reclamation anticipated that both the long-term lease agreement and General Plan would have been completed prior to the expiration of the existing lease agreement in April 2006. Both agencies are committed to finalizing the lease agreement and General Plan. However, the DEIS states that should the two agencies fail to reach a new agreement, all or portions of the proposed management plans may no longer be valid and would need to be revised, amended or redone (p. I-16).

Recommendation:
Six years have elapsed since initiation of work on this General Plan. We believe it would be useful for the public and decisionmakers to understand the context for this delay. We recommend the FEIS include a short description of the reasons for the delay in finalizing the revised General Plan and long-term lease agreement.