UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

December 18, 2007

John F. Davis
Acting Regional Director
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825-1898

Dear Mr. Davis:

Thank you for your recent letter inviting EPA to be a cooperating agency for preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the San Joaquin River Restoration Program. As you know, EPA has long been involved with efforts to improve conditions in the San Joaquin River, and we believe the current Program can be a turning point for successful restoration. In this spirit, we accept the offer to participate in aspects of the environmental analysis and documentation best suited to our expertise and jurisdictional interests.

A meeting with Jason Phillips last May provided us with information on how work for the Program EIS is being organized and gave us an opportunity to discuss how topics of particular interest to EPA are being handled. We have more recently contacted Shane Hunt. Based on this information and internal discussions here at EPA, we anticipate involvement of staff from two offices: the Environmental Review Office (ERO, within the Communities and Ecosystems Division) and the Water Division. The corresponding areas of expertise would be compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and water quality. Our recent scoping letter provides additional detail on these subjects.

The lead contact for our work will be Carolyn Yale, in the Water Division (415-972-3482; yale.carolyn@epa.gov). She will be coordinating with Laura Fujii in the ERO, which conducts our NEPA document reviews. At this time we do not anticipate the need for a memorandum of agreement formalizing our participation. However, we would like to emphasize that our role as a cooperating agency during document preparation will be technical in nature, and that this assistance does not abridge our responsibilities for independent review of the Draft and Final EIS.

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We look forward to working with Reclamation and the other participating agencies.

Sincerely,

Nova Blazej, Manager
Environmental Review Office
Communities and Ecosystems Division